A town’s History

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

Lily glanced up at the clock in front of the classroom. The minute hand was moving much too slowly. There was still more than an hour before lunchtime and Lily could already hear her stomach complaining. She slumped down in her seat and started to fiddle with the pencils on her desk.

“Is the speaker going to be here soon, Mr. Gardiner?” Kevin eagerly asked the teacher. On Monday, the teacher had told the class that someone would come give a presentation that Friday, but he hadn’t told them who it would be. All week, Lily and her classmates had been trying to guess the speaker’s identity.

“What about the President?” Steven asked. Everyone laughed at the idea of the President of the United States coming to talk to the fifth-grade class in their small town on Oregon.

“Okay, class,” said Mr. Gardiner. “I will finally tell you the name of our speaker: Ms. Traynor. She works at the local history museum and will be sharing information with us about our town’s history.

“History is so boring,” Lily thought. “I can’t imagine that anything interesting ever happened here.”

Just then, there was a knock at the door, and the principal came in with a business-like woman carrying a large briefcase. Mr. Gardiner introduced her to the class.

“Your teacher has told me that you are studying the Oregon Trail,” Ms. Traynor said. “Does anyone know how this town is an important part of the trail’s history?”

“It’s at the very end of the Oregon Trail,” Bethany said.

“That’s right. Today, I’m going to tell you about some of the first settlers in our town.” Ms. Traynor began to pull several old black-and-white photographs from her briefcase, displaying them for the class. Some were faded at the corners, and most showed people posing stiffly for the camera. Even the children looked serious.

Lily liked looking at the photographs that demonstrated what people had worn back then. One photograph showed a pretty woman standing tall in a long dress with long sleeves and a flowered bonnet.

“She must have sweltered in that outfit, like I do when I wear a sweatshirt on a warm day,” she thought. The photo made Lily think of what it might have been like to not be able to wear a short-sleeved shirt when she wanted to, or enjoy air-conditioning!
“One of the ways we study history is to read the letters and journals written by the people of the time,” Ms. Traynor explained.

“Where do you get the journals and letters?” was Steven’s query.

“People donated them to the museum so we don’t have to buy them. Many of the people who live here are descendants of the first settlers. Sometimes people have saved letters and journals from their great-grandparents. Other people find old journals and mementos when they are cleaning out their houses. I am going to share some of these historic treasures with you today.”

In one letter, a woman wrote to her sister back east describing her journal on the Oregon Trail. She told of long, hot, dusty days on the trail and cold nights camping with the wagons circled around them. She had written about crossing a river on a small, wooden raft that was rocked by the strong rapid. Some of her belongings had fallen into the river, but she had been relieved to make it safely to the other side.

When Ms. Traynor passed around the journal that had been discovered in someone’s attic, Lily couldn’t wait to look at it. It had been written by a girl around Lily’s age. She turned the pages of the small book carefully. She saw that the girl had written about her new town and her new school. The girl had been nervous about beginning school in a place where she didn’t know anyone, but the other students made her feel welcome. She had even met her new best friend at the new school.

Then suddenly, Ms. Traynor said, “I know you all have to go to lunch, so we will end our discussion here.”

Lily looked up at the clock and saw that it was already 12:30. The hour had flown by. Then Lily thought about her grandmother’s attic. She knew her grandmother kept family letters and journals. What kinds of stories could Lily find in those journals? She couldn’t wait to find out.

1. Read the sentence from the text.

“She must have sweated in that outfit, like I do when I wear a sweatshirt on a warm day,” she thought.

What does sweated mean as it is used in the sentence?

A. looked nice
B. felt overly hot
C. been proud of herself
D. thought she was stylish

2. Read the sentence from the text.

“Where do you get the journals and letters?” was Steven’s query.
The word **query** comes from the Latin word, **quaere**, meaning “ask.” What does query mean in the sentence above?

A. interruption  
B. question  
C. reaction  
D. remark

3. The following question had two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**: What is the theme of the text?

A. History can be interesting.  
B. Some surprises are pleasant.  
C. Traveling the Oregon Trail was hard.  
D. Please should keep journals about what they do.

**Part B**: Which detail from the text best supports your answer in part A?

A. “All week, Lily and her classmates had been trying to guess the speaker’s identity.”  
B. “‘that’s right. Today, I am going to tell you about some of the first settlers in our town’”  
C. “‘Other people find old journals and mementos when they are cleaning out their houses.’”  
D. “What kinds of stories could Lily find in those journals? She couldn’t wait to find out.

4. Read the sentence from the text.

“People **donate** them to the museum so we don’t have to buy them.”

**How does the phrase “don’t have to buy” help you understand the meaning of **donate** in the sentence?**

A. It tells why people do not like the spend money.  
B. It shows that the speaker works in a museum.  
C. It describes people who are interested in history.  
D. It explains what happens when people give things to museum.

5. How does the use of dialogue help the reader understand Lily’s feelings? Select two options.

A. by telling Lily’s thoughts  
B. by telling what Lily says  
C. by showing Lily’s reactions  
D. by describing what Lily does
6. Explain why Lily’s feelings about history change as a result of Ms. Traynor’s visit to the class. Support your response with examples from the text.

_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Tiny Wintry World

Hold the glass globe in your hands and turn it over gently. Then flip it back and watch as snow falls slowly over a tiny village. For kids and grownups everywhere, snow globes hold a special delight. Yet these fun keepsakes actually came to be because of an experiment that did not work.

In 1900, a man named Erwin Perzy was trying to figure out a way to create more light. Perzy lived in Vienna, Austria, and he made tools to be sued for surgery. At that time, the electric light bulb had just been invented, but it created inadequate light. A surgeon asked Perzy to come up with a way to make the light brighter for his operating room.

Perzy contemplated the problem carefully. He remembered how shoemakers would use a special trick to get more light from candles. They would place a glass globe full of water in front of the flame. The light would shine through the globe and cast a golden glow about the size of a hand.

With this in mind, Perzy filled a glass globe with water and placed it in front of his electric light. He was not satisfied with how bright it was, so he decided to add to the idea. First, he tried adding glitter to the water. When it first dropped into the water, the glitter reflected the light and added brightness to the room. However, it sank to the bottom, and the shining effect was gone.
Although his first idea had failed, Perzy felt he was onto something. He tried to find a material that weighed even less than the glitter. After searching, he came upon a fine white powder called semolina. It was usually used to make baby food. Perzy thought the powder would be perfect for his light globe, so he dropped it in. Once again, the powder made the light brighter, but also soon came to rest on the bottom of the globe. Perzy’s experiments failed again. However, it sparked a new idea. For to Perzy, the sinking white powder looked just like fresh falling snow.

Fascinated by his new discovery, Perzy decided the snow should fall onto something. He took a soft, silvery metal called pewter, which he had in his workshop, and made a tiny model of a famous building in Austria. Perzy placed the little structure into the globe and watched the “snow” fall on it. He became even more excited—surely other people would enjoy his globes just as much as he did! Quickly, Perzy got a patent for his “glass globe with snow effect.” The patent would prove that he invented it.

Over the next few years, Perzy experimented with different materials to find the right one for his snow. He also tried different miniature buildings. In 1905, Perzy opened a small factory to make the snow globes and they quickly became popular. The Austrian emperor, Franz Josef I, even gave Perzy a special award for his new toy. Soon, snow globes could be found in homes all around the world, from cottages to the White House.

Today, Perzy’s company, Original Vienna Snow Globes, still produces hundreds of thousands of snow globes each year. Each one is handmade. There are more than 2,000 scenes to choose from, including buildings, animals, nature scenes, and characters. Perzy’s family has continued his work, and Erwin Perzy III now runs the company.

Erwin Perzy III really enjoys seeing children visit the company and its museums. Even though snow globes do not have batteries, bright lights, or fun noises, kids are fascinated with them. “…When kids come here,” he says, “their eyes are wide open, they are enchanted, and everyone has one or two snow globes in their hands, and they are shaking them. That is a very nice moment for me.” While his grandfather’s experiments long ago did not work, it actually led to something even more wonderful.

7. The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read the sentence from the text.

At the time, the electric light bulb had just been invented, but it created inadequate light. A surgeon asked Perzy to come up with a way to make the light brighter for his operating room.
Reading CFA 3.1

What is most likely the meaning of the word inadequate?

A. unclean  B. expensive
C. difficult to find  D. not enough

Part B: Which phrase from the sentence best supports your answer in part A?

A. “electric light bulb”  B. “just been invented”
C. “make the light brighter”  D. “for his operating room”

8. Which statement best represents the author’s point of view about Perzy?

A. Perzy was not skilled in using electricity  B. Perzy was not creative enough to be an inventor.
C. Perzy was able to learn from his failures  D. Perzy was mainly interested in surgical tools

9. The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read the sentence from the text.

Perzy contemplated the problem carefully. He remembered how shoemakers would use a special trick to get ore light from candles.

What does the word contemplated mean in the sentence above?

A. changed around  B. solved quickly
C. thought about  D. worried over

Part B: Which word from the sentences helps you understand the meaning of contemplated?

A. carefully  B. remembered
C. special  D. candles

10. Read the sentences from the text.

He took a soft, silvery metal called pewter, which he had in his workshop, and made a tiny model of a famous building in Austria. Perzy placed the little structure into the globe and watched the “snow” fall on it.

Which words from the sentences help to define structure? Select all that apply.
Reading CFA 3.1

Name: __________________________                                           Date: ____________________
A. metal     B. pewter
C. workshop   D. model
E. building   F. snow

11. What is the main idea of this passage?
A. snow globes made Erwin Perzy famous
B. snow globes were discovered accidentally
C. snow globes can have different kinds if scenes inside

12. Which detail from the passage supports the main idea?
A. “because of an experiment that did not work”
B. “even gave Perzy a special award for his new toy”
C. “including buildings, animals, nature scenes, and characters”

13. Which did the author most likely choose to write about Erwin Perzy? Support you answer with details from the text.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
14. Select three details that best support the main idea of the text.

A. Erwin Perzy’s first invention failed.
B. Erwin Perzy III now runs the snow globe company.
C. Erwin Perzy used semolina in his first snow globe.
D. Erwin Perzy originally made tools used for surgery.
E. Erwin Perzy’s company makes its snow globes by hand.
F. Erwin Perzy thought the falling white powder looked like fresh snow.