



ROBERT L. MERRITT MIDDLE SCHOOL

8TH Grade Learn-At-Home Packet

Reading

Week 4

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

from *The Call of the Wild*

by Jack London

In the following excerpt from the novel The Call of the Wild, an Alaskan dog runs long distances as part of a sled team.

They made Sixty Mile, which is a fifty-mile run, on the first day; and the second day saw them booming up the Yukon well on their way to Pelly. But such splendid running was achieved not without great trouble and vexation on the part of François. The insidious revolt led by Buck had destroyed the solidarity of the team. It no longer was as one dog leaping in the traces. The encouragement Buck gave the rebels led them into all kinds of petty misdemeanors. No more was Spitz a leader greatly to be feared. The old awe departed, and they grew equal to challenging his authority. Pike robbed him of half a fish one night, and gulped it down under the protection of Buck. Another night Dub and Joe fought Spitz and made him forego the punishment they deserved. And even Billee, the good-natured, was less good-natured, and whined not half so placatingly as in former days. Buck never came near Spitz without snarling and bristling menacingly. In fact, his conduct approached that of a bully, and he was given to swaggering up and down before Spitz's very nose.

The breaking down of discipline likewise affected the dogs in their relations with one another. They quarreled and bickered more than ever among themselves, till at times the camp was a howling bedlam. Dave and Sol-leks alone were unaltered, though they were made irritable by the unending squabbling. François swore strange barbarous oaths, and stamped the snow in futile rage, and tore his hair. His lash was always singing among the dogs, but it was of small avail. Directly his back was turned they were at it again. He backed up Spitz with his whip, while Buck backed up the remainder of the team. François knew he was behind all the trouble, and Buck knew he knew; but Buck was too clever ever again to be caught red-handed. He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him; yet it was a greater delight slyly to precipitate a fight amongst his mates and tangle the traces.

At the mouth of the Tahkeena, one night after supper, Dub turned up a snowshoe rabbit, blundered it, and missed. In a second the whole team was in full cry. A hundred yards away was a camp of the Northwest Police, with fifty dogs, huskies all, who joined the chase. The rabbit sped down the river, turned off into a small creek, up the frozen bed of which it held steadily. It ran lightly on the surface of the snow, while the dogs ploughed through by main strength. Buck led the pack, sixty strong, around bend after bend, but he could not gain. He lay down low to the race, whining eagerly, his splendid body flashing forward, leap by leap, in the wan white moonlight. And leap by leap, like some pale frost wraith, the snowshoe rabbit flashed on ahead.

All that stirring of old instincts which at stated periods drives men out from the sounding cities to forest and plain to kill things by chemically propelled leaden pellets, the blood lust, the joy to kill—all this was Buck's, only it was infinitely more intimate. He was ranging at the head of the pack, running the wild thing down, the living meat, to kill with his own teeth and wash his muzzle to the eyes in warm blood.

There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life, and beyond which life cannot rise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes when one is most alive, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive. This ecstasy, this forgetfulness of living, comes to the artist, caught up and out of himself in a sheet of flame; it comes to the soldier, war-mad on a stricken field and refusing quarter; and it came to Buck, leading the pack, sounding the old wolf-cry, straining after the food that was alive and that fled swiftly before him through the moonlight. He was sounding the deeps of his nature, and of the parts of his nature that were deeper than he, going back into the womb of Time. He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars and over the face of dead matter that did not move.

- 1** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following is the **best** inference that can be made based on the events in this text?

- (A) Buck is becoming head of the pack.
- (B) Buck is risking the safety of the sled.
- (C) Buck is making an enemy of François.
- (D) Buck is trying to escape from bondage.

Part B: Which of the following quotations from the text gives evidence for the **best** inference about the meaning of the events?

- (A) "Directly his back was turned they were at it again."
- (B) "Buck led the pack, sixty strong, around bend after bend."
- (C) "But such splendid running was achieved not without great trouble and vexation on the part of François."
- (D) "They quarreled and bickered more than ever among themselves, till at times the camp was a howling bedlam."

- 2** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following **best** describes François?

- (A) He is frustrated by the dogs' lack of discipline.
- (B) He is too cruel to be effective in running his team.
- (C) He is a kind-hearted owner who loves his animals.
- (D) He is inexperienced at leading a team of sled dogs.

Part B: Which of the following gives the **best** evidence about François's character?

- (A) "The breaking down of discipline likewise affected the dogs in their relations with one another."
- (B) "François swore strange barbarous oaths, and stamped the snow in futile rage, and tore his hair."
- (C) "Such splendid running was achieved not without great trouble and vexation on the part of François."
- (D) "He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew."

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- 3** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following states a central theme in the text?

- ☐ (A) Humans and animals will never understand each other.
- ☐ (B) Life in the wilderness is the most exciting type of experience.
- ☐ (C) Cooperation between humans and animals is the key to a good life for both.
- ☐ (D) The greatest moments in life occur when a creature follows its truest instincts.

Part B: Which quotation **best** supports a theme in the text?

- ☐ (A) "He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him."
- ☐ (B) "The encouragement Buck gave the rebels led them into all kinds of petty misdemeanors."
- ☐ (C) "He was sounding the deeps of his nature, and of the parts of his nature that were deeper than he."
- ☐ (D) "The rabbit sped down the river, turned off into a small creek, up the frozen bed of which it held steadily."

- 4** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following describes a theme that can be inferred from the events in this text?

- ☐ (A) Natural ability is a factor in success.
- ☐ (B) A group is smarter than a single individual.
- ☐ (C) Animals, like people, find it hard to change.
- ☐ (D) Those who try to seize control of a group usually fail.

Part B: Which of the following quotations from the text **best** supports a theme of the action?

- ☐ (A) "At times the camp was a howling bedlam."
- ☐ (B) "It no longer was as one dog leaping in the traces."
- ☐ (C) "No more was Spitz a leader greatly to be feared."
- ☐ (D) "Buck was too clever ever again to be caught red-handed."

- 5** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read the following sentences from the text.

The breaking down of discipline likewise affected the dogs in their relations with one another. They quarreled and bickered more than ever among themselves, till at times the camp was a howling bedlam. Dave and Sol-leks alone were unaltered, though they were made irritable by the unending squabbling. François swore strange barbarous oaths, and stamped the snow in futile rage, and tore his hair. His lash was always singing among the dogs, but it was of small avail. Directly his back was turned they were at it again. He backed up Spitz with his whip, while Buck backed up the remainder of the team. François knew he was behind all the trouble, and Buck knew he knew; but Buck was too clever ever again to be caught red-handed. He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him; yet it was a greater delight slyly to precipitate a fight amongst his mates and tangle the traces. At the mouth of the Tahkeena, one night after supper, Dub turned up a snowshoe rabbit, blundered it, and missed. In a second the whole team was in full cry.

Based on the context, what does the phrase his lash was always singing mean?

- ☐ (A) The lash had a life of its own.
- ☐ (B) François used the lash angrily.
- ☐ (C) The lash made a high, ringing sound.
- ☐ (D) The dogs wailed when the lash hit them.

Part B: Which sentence from the text **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of his lash was always singing?

- ☐ (A) "At times the camp was a howling bedlam."
- ☐ (B) "He backed up Spitz with his whip."
- ☐ (C) "François swore strange barbarous oaths."
- ☐ (D) "In a second the whole team was in full cry."

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- 6 Read the following sentences from the text.

This ecstasy, this forgetfulness of living, comes to the artist, caught up and out of himself in a sheet of flame; it comes to the soldier, war-mad on a stricken field and refusing quarter; and it came to Buck, leading the pack, sounding the old wolf-cry, straining after the food that was alive and that fled swiftly before him through the moonlight. He was sounding the deeps of his nature, and of the parts of his nature that were deeper than he, going back into the womb of Time. He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars and over the face of dead matter that did not move.

Based on the text, what does the word ecstasy mean?

- (A) a sensation of being carried away by joy
- (B) the comfort of belonging to the group
- (C) the knowledge of having done one's best
- (D) a sense of having been in the same place before

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

from “A Piece of Chalk”

by G. K. Chesterton

In this excerpt from the essay “A Piece of Chalk,” the author recalls an incident of searching for chalk and drawing a picture.

I remember one splendid morning, all blue and silver, in the summer holidays when I reluctantly tore myself away from the task of doing nothing in particular, and put on a hat of some sort and picked up a walking-stick, and put six very bright-coloured chinks in my pocket. I then went into the kitchen . . . and asked the owner and occupant of the kitchen if she had any brown paper. She had a great deal; in fact, she had too much . . . When she understood that I wanted to draw she offered to overwhelm me with note-paper . . .

I then tried to explain the rather delicate logical shade, that I not only liked brown paper, but liked the quality of brownness in paper, just as I liked the quality of brownness in October woods, or in beer, or in the peat-streams of the North. Brown paper represents the primal twilight of the first toil of creation, and with a bright-coloured chalk or two you can pick out points of fire in it, sparks of gold, and blood-red, and sea-green, like the first fierce stars that sprang out of divine darkness. All this I said (in an off-hand way) to the old woman; and I put the brown paper in my pocket along with the chinks, and possibly other things. I suppose every one must have reflected how primeval and how poetical are the things that one carries in one’s pocket; the pocket-knife, for instance, the type of all human tools, the infant of the sword. Once I planned to write a book of poems entirely about the things in my pockets. But I found it would be too long; and the age of the great epics is past.

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I crossed one swell of living turf after another, looking for a place to sit down and draw. Do not, for heaven’s sake, imagine I was going to sketch from Nature. I was going to draw devils and seraphim, and blind old gods that men worshipped before the dawn of right, and saints in robes of angry crimson, and seas of strange green, and all the sacred or monstrous symbols that look so well in bright colours on brown paper. They are much better worth drawing than Nature; also they are much easier to draw. When a cow came slouching by in the field next to me, a mere artist might have drawn it; but I always get wrong in the hind legs of quadrupeds. So I drew the soul of the cow; which I saw there plainly walking

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before me in the sunlight; and the soul was all purple and silver, and had seven horns and the mystery that belongs to all the beasts. But though I could not with a crayon get the best out of the landscape, it does not follow that the landscape was not getting the best out of me. And this, I think, is the mistake that people make about the old poets who lived before Wordsworth, and were supposed not to care very much about Nature because they did not describe it much.

They preferred writing about great men to writing about great hills; but they sat on the great hills to write it. They gave out much less about Nature, but they drank in, perhaps, much more. They painted the white robes of their holy virgins with the blinding snow, at which they had stared all day. They blazoned the shields of their paladins with the purple and gold of many heraldic sunsets. The greenness of a thousand green leaves clustered into the live green figure of Robin Hood. The blueness of a score of forgotten skies became the blue robes of the Virgin. The inspiration went in like sunbeams and came out like Apollo.

.

But as I sat scrawling these silly figures on the brown paper, it began to dawn on me, to my great disgust, that I had left one chalk, and that a most exquisite and essential chalk, behind. I searched all my pockets, but I could not find any white chalk. Now, those who are acquainted with all the philosophy (nay, religion) which is typified in the art of drawing on brown paper, know that white is positive and essential. I cannot avoid remarking here upon a moral significance. One of the wise and awful truths which this brown-paper art reveals, is this, that white is a colour. It is not a mere absence of colour; it is a shining and affirmative thing, as fierce as red, as definite as black . . .

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I sat on the hill in a sort of despair . . . I stared stupidly round, racking my brain for expedients. Then I suddenly stood up and roared with laughter, again and again, so that the cows stared at me and called a committee. Imagine a man in the Sahara regretting that he had no sand for his hour-glass. Imagine a gentleman in mid-ocean wishing that he had brought some salt water with him for his chemical experiments. I was sitting on an immense warehouse of white chalk. The landscape was made entirely out of white chalk. White chalk was piled more miles until it met the sky. I stooped and broke a piece off the rock I sat on; it did not mark so well as the shop chalks do; but it gave the effect. And I stood there in a trance of pleasure, realising that this Southern England is not only a grand peninsula, and a tradition and a civilisation; it is something even more admirable. It is a piece of chalk.

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

Part A: Read the following sentences from the text.

I remember one splendid morning, all blue and silver, in the summer holidays when I reluctantly tore myself away from the task of doing nothing in particular, and put on a hat of some sort and picked up a walking-stick, and put six very bright-coloured chalks in my pocket. I then went into the kitchen . . . and asked the owner and occupant of the kitchen if she had any brown paper. She had a great deal; in fact, she had too much When she understood that I wanted to draw she offered to overwhelm me with note-paper . . .

Which word **best** describes the author's purpose and point of view?

- ☐ **A** bitter
- ☐ **B** ironic
- ☐ **C** nostalgic
- ☐ **D** melancholy

Part B: Which phrase from the text **best** demonstrates the author's purpose and point of view?

- ☐ **A** "I reluctantly tore myself away"
- ☐ **B** "I remember one splendid morning"
- ☐ **C** "to overwhelm me with note-paper"
- ☐ **D** "the owner and occupant of the kitchen"

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

Part A: Which of the following claims does the author make in paragraph 2?

- (A) Small everyday objects are beautiful.
- (B) Visual art is more lasting than literature.
- (C) Drawing is one of life's greatest pleasures.
- (D) The most important things are hardest to explain.

Part B: Which of the following phrases **best** supports the author's claim in paragraph 2?

- (A) "the rather delicate logical shade"
- (B) "the age of the great epics is past"
- (C) "the primal twilight of the first toil of creation"
- (D) "how poetical are the things that one carries in one's pocket"

- 9 Read the sentences from the text.

But as I sat scrawling these silly figures on the brown paper, it began to dawn on me, to my great disgust, that I had left one chalk, and that a most exquisite and essential chalk, behind. I searched all my pockets, but I could not find any white chalk. Now, those who are acquainted with all the philosophy (nay, religion) which is typified in the art of drawing on brown paper, know that white is positive and essential. I cannot avoid remarking here upon a moral significance. One of the wise and awful truths which this brown-paper art reveals, is this, that white is a colour. It is not a mere absence of colour; it is a shining and affirmative thing, as fierce as red, as definite as black . . .

Which **two** of the following phrases from the text offer the **best** clues to the meaning of affirmative?

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (A) "positive and essential" | (D) "white is a colour" |
| (B) "wise and awful truths" | (E) "as fierce as red" |
| (C) "not a mere absence" | (F) "as definite as black" |

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- 10** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following points of view about England does the author express in the last paragraph?

- ☐ **A** He regrets being English.
- ☐ **B** He is proud of his country.
- ☐ **C** He hopes to improve England.
- ☐ **D** He thinks English customs are fun.

Part B: Which phrase from the last paragraph provides the **best** evidence of the author's attitude toward England?

- ☐ **A** "a piece of chalk"
- ☐ **B** "a trance of pleasure"
- ☐ **C** "it did not mark so well"
- ☐ **D** "a tradition and a civilization"

Read the texts. Then answer the questions.

Leave Orcas in the Ocean

A recent documentary film attacked the treatment of orcas at an ocean amusement park. The film suggested that one of its whales caused the death of a trainer. It blamed the whale's behavior on the stressful conditions of its captivity. On social media sites, people began talking about "abusement" parks and orcas trapped in tanks like pickles in a jar.

Some lawmakers tried to pass bills that would prevent orcas from being held in captivity. The amusement park quickly defended itself by saying that the film contained many errors. Its officials insist that they spend millions of dollars on state of the art facilities to provide comfortable pools for marine mammals. Animal rights groups point out that orcas can swim one hundred miles a day in their natural environment while captive orcas float for hours in the blazing sun, in tanks that aren't deep enough to dive down for relief from the heat and light.

Complicating matters is the fact that little is known about orcas in the wild. They live in remote northern waters and travel much of the time. Scientists working for this amusement park have discovered details about orcas' reproductive system, anatomy, and learning behaviors. Critics point out that the amusement park only knows this because it trains animals in performing for their profit. They also criticize the park for breeding orcas too often, though park representatives claim that its breeding program prevents them from having to take orcas from the wild. The film also highlighted this barbaric practice, illustrating how separating captive orcas from their tight-knit family pod causes great stress and even death.

The causes and blame for the tragic deaths of handlers is also a subject of much debate. The park admits that there is danger in allowing tiny humans to interact with creatures vastly larger and more powerful. Yet their staff maintains that every precaution is taken to avoid injuries. They claim that the deaths were rare and unusual events, and not the result of stress or faulty treatment of orcas. The film suggests the opposite. It maintains that these complex creatures have minds of their own and choose to react capriciously because they are unhappy or suffering.

Humans cannot get into the mind of a giant sea mammal to understand whether the recent death of an orca's trainer was the result of a game gone wrong or behavior outside the norm that could not be controlled. The park insists its animals aren't forced to perform, and that they do so willingly. However, it is obvious that these animals would rather be in the wild. It is too late for those in captivity, who would not know how to hunt and would not be able to join a pod. Perhaps the only answer is to stop using animals for human entertainment.

I Have Trained Camels to Dance

I have trained camels to dance, hairy spiders to hit their spots from twenty feet up, and I have caused a dog to argue with her master in clever, convincing barks. That is the gift I as an animal trainer bring to our nation's television networks, which I now regret. I cajoled dolphins to do whatever the director wanted, things they didn't do in their natural lives. But they were so intelligent that they gave their boss what was wanted and then they'd be rewarded. This is a lesson few members of the human workforce ever master.

I was the man hired to train an orca at an amusement park that entertained guests with 12,000-pound beasts breaching into the air and splashing down on cue, obeying their handlers. From the very first time I worked with orcas I sensed that they needed extremely delicate conditions in order to feel calm. I could easily detect the off-ness of these mammals. I could tell when they did not want to perform. The problem was that my employer wanted me to work with an older bull male they had bought from another, failing park. He had caused the death of a trainer, whom he had "playfully" pinned to the bottom of his tank.

When I first observed the bull they called Tadam, I noticed the telltale sign of a captive male. He had a drooping dorsal fin at the top of his body. Wild orcas do not have this. Some scientists think it is the first sign of stress. Other say its cause is unknown or unproven. Yet as I began to read more about orcas in the wild and in captivity, I realized that there is nothing natural about a huge animal living in a tank instead of roaming the sea.

I had heard rumors that Tadam was considered aggressive. However, he is a "killer whale" after all, a name given to these intelligent, social mammals because they munch on seals to provide the three hundred pounds of prey they need per day to survive. Tadam has the rake marks of sharp teeth down his sides. He had put a few rake marks on the other orcas he used to live with. He was removed after he kept ramming another male, injuring it. When I met him, he floated listlessly in a tank too shallow for his tail, which trailed along the bottom in defeat. He didn't eat well and his fins were covered with warts from a virus he couldn't shake. And worse, he wouldn't make eye contact with me. It has been my experience with every critter from snakes to giraffes, that if they won't engage with you, there is trouble. If they won't begin a relationship and stare you down, they either don't care because you are nothing to them, or they think you are something they may have to attack.

I told Tadam's owners he needed to be set free in a giant net enclosure in a nearby bay. I realized he had been in OceanPlanet too long to return to the wild like any other orca. He now swims around in a deep refuge. He's mostly alone, but at least he has fresh seawater and can breach when he wants to, not just to hear the squeals of the crowd as his splash soaks them.

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Answer these questions about "Leave Orcas in the Ocean."

- 11 What is the author's **main** claim in "Leave Orcas in the Ocean"? Use details from the text to support your answer.

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

Part A: How does the author of "Leave Orcas in the Ocean" respond to conflicting viewpoints?

- (A) The author shows how the park's owners have been able to discredit the film.
- (B) The author reveals how the amusement park argues against the claims made in the film.
- (C) The author uses scientific data to show that the amusement park is harming the orcas.
- (D) The author discusses how opinions on social media disprove the park owners' statements.

Part B: Which of the following sentences from the text **best** illustrates the author's response to critics?

- (A) "Complicating matters is the fact that little is known about orcas in the wild."
- (B) "The amusement park quickly defended itself by saying that the film contained many errors."
- (C) "It maintains that these complex creatures have minds of their own and choose to react capriciously because they are unhappy or suffering."
- (D) "On social media sites, people began talking about 'abusement' parks and orcas trapped like pickles in a jar."

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- 13 Read the following sentences from the text.

Critics point out that the amusement park only knows this because it trains animals in performing for their profit. They also criticize the park for breeding orcas too often, though park representatives claim that its breeding program prevents them from having to take orcas from the wild. The film also highlighted this barbaric practice, illustrating how separating captive orcas from their tight-knit family pod causes great stress and even death.

Based on the context, what is the meaning of barbaric?

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| (A) brutal | (C) difficult |
| (B) crafty | (D) outdated |

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

Part A: Read the sentences from the text.

The causes and blame for the tragic deaths of handlers is also a subject of much debate. The park admits that there is danger in allowing tiny humans to interact with creatures vastly larger and more powerful. Yet their staff maintains that every precaution is taken to avoid injuries. They claim that the deaths were rare and unusual events, and not the result of stress or faulty treatment of orcas. The film suggests the opposite. It maintains that these complex creatures have minds of their own and choose to react capriciously because they are unhappy or suffering. Humans cannot get into the mind of a giant sea mammal to understand whether the recent death of an orca's trainer was the result of a game gone wrong or behavior outside the norm that could not be controlled.

Based on the context, what does capriciously mean?

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (A) wildly | (C) angrily |
| (B) unpredictably | (D) intelligently |

Part B: Which **two** expressions in the text **best** help the reader understand the meaning of capriciously?

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (A) "tragic deaths of handlers" | (D) "minds of their own" |
| (B) "creatures vastly larger" | (E) "get into the mind" |
| (C) "rare and unusual events" | (F) "a game gone wrong" |

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Answer these questions about "I Have Trained Camels to Dance."

- 15** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of the following **best** describes a main lesson learned by the narrator of "I Have Trained Camels to Dance"?

- (A)** The only solution was not training the orca.
- (B)** Dolphins were smarter than most workers.
- (C)** A new pool would allow this animal to be trained.
- (D)** The best way to train an orca was get its attention.

Part B: What evidence from the text **best** supports the narrator's main lesson?

- (A)** "... I realized that there is nothing natural about a huge animal living in a tank instead of roaming the sea."
- (B)** "When I met him, he floated listlessly in a tank too shallow for his tail ..."
- (C)** "And worse, he wouldn't make eye contact with me."
- (D)** "I realized he had been in Ocean Planet too long to return to the wild like any other orca."

- 16** How is the narrator's character revealed to the reader in the first paragraph of the text?

- (A)** The narrator admits he was hired to do a job that he now realizes was harmful to the animals he trained.
- (B)** The narrator realizes how excited he is to have a job that gives him fame and television exposure.
- (C)** The narrator is not able to understand why anyone could be critical of his job.
- (D)** The narrator is happy to have a job that pays him well in addition to contributing positively to society.

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- 17 What does the narrator mean when he says he could easily detect “the offness of these animals”? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

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18 In what ways are these texts similar? In what ways are they different? Include details from both texts in your explanation.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Explanatory Performance Task

Task

Your class is learning about explanatory writing. Your teacher has asked you to write an explanatory article on a topic based on two sources. Before you begin, you will read two informational articles on environmental topics.

After you read these articles, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the articles and the three questions that follow. Then, go back and read the articles carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and write your own explanatory article. Take notes as you read.

In Part 2, you will write your explanatory article based on the two informational sources about environmental topics.

Directions for Part 1

You will now read two informational articles on environmental topics. You can re-examine both as often as you like.

Research Questions

After reading the two articles, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the articles you have read, which should help you write your own conclusions.

You may refer to the articles when you think it would be helpful. You may also refer to your notes. Answer the questions in the space provided.

Source #1: Fracking Threatens Everyone

At first, the idea of fracking seems harmless, brilliant, and at the same time a godsend. It helps America remove its dependency on foreign oil and dirty coal. The practice has been around for a long time. Originally, it was called hydrofracking. Over time, water wells become plugged up with sand and other minerals. A machine is brought in to inject water into the well at extreme pressure to blow out the tiny cracks and fissures in the rock through which the water flows. This increases the water flow out of the well. This has been safe and effective. However, today, hydrofracking uses more than water and its purpose is to draw oil and gas out of the layers of rock deep beneath the surface.

Shale layers of rock hold a type of oil that doesn't flow up to the surface in a gusher like in the movies. Fracking injects large quantities of water under great pressure with sand and many toxic chemicals mixed in. Many of these can cause cancer. Under perfect conditions, the oil industry maintains that the polluted water and chemicals that come back up the well with the extracted oil and natural gas can be cleaned up without any problems. Like all things in life, this doesn't always work out perfectly. Unfortunately, when fracking goes wrong, sources of drinking water can be ruined and all different types of pollution can happen in a second.

This makes fracking a gamble for communities and individuals who may be tempted by the large amounts of money being offered to those who allow their land to be used for fracking. There are horror stories of runoff from fracking operations killing everything in a local stream or even polluting lakes and water systems. There are videos of farmers lighting their kitchen faucets on fire. The methane released from fracking burns a blue flame. Small earthquakes have been reported from changes of the rock structure thousands of feet underground. Additionally, gases that have been released create air pollution and contribute to climate change.

The industry has argued that only a few bad operators doing shoddy work have caused this. They point out that when best practices are used with quality equipment fracking is safe. There's no arguing that this source of energy will keep us from having to burn as much coal because natural gas is far cleaner. And some of the pollution does come from older practices. Nevertheless, as scientists study water samples of wastewater from fracking that was supposedly cleaned up and realize it is still bad, they are learning that undoing pollution isn't that easy. Since 2012, over 280 billion gallons of wastewater has been generated. Much of this has become salty brine that is extremely difficult to purify.

Complicating all this is a lack of state and federal regulations of this new technology. The oil lobby is very skilled at keeping politicians from passing laws that threaten their profits. Fracking remains a dangerous practice that poses a threat even if it is done correctly and is carefully monitored.

Source #2: The Curse of Water Bottles

Not long ago, if someone was thirsty, they went and got a glass of water out of the faucet. Today, families bring home cases of small plastic bottles filled with water. Sometimes people pay nearly \$2 for a water bottle in a convenience store for a drink, which only costs pennies from their tap. Americans bought 29 million water bottles last year. They used more than any other country. But however convenient they are to bring to a soccer game or the gym, those little bottles are destroying our land, oceans, and atmosphere. What was once so easy to enjoy is proving very hard to control.

If you filled a fourth of any water bottle with crude oil, you'd see that it takes that much oil pumped out of the ground to make that single bottle. The oil used to create water bottles in America would power a million cars for a year. This would be manageable if those 29 million bottles were recycled into carpets, clothing, and playground equipment. Yet only 1 out of every 6 bottles is returned. The other five are scattered across vacant lots or take up valuable space in our landfills. They will take hundreds of years to break down.

People say they use water bottles because the water in them is cleaner. However, tests have shown that tap water is even cleaner in most places in America. And the real joke is that 25% of the water in those bottles came from public water supplies. What is not funny is that the cheap plastic used in many bottles may contaminate the water inside if it is left in some warehouse for too long. Chemicals leach out of the plastic and can cause major health problems like damaging the human immune system.

Shipping water in bottles uses even more oil and adds costs. Eighteen million bottles of Fiji water were brought across the ocean to California. Water from Western Europe is hauled to New York and then trucked across the country to states that have plenty of good fresh water at the turn of a faucet. Advertisers market countless brands without any control of the water in those bottles.

Some states have tried to put a nickel return fee on water bottles like those on soda and other beverages. But millions of dollars go unredeemed and grocery stores hate handling the garbage. Many have called for states to create redemption centers that would recycle all kinds of plastic and electronics.

We are drowning in plastic. Every five minutes we throw away enough bottles to cover deeply 8 football fields. Floating plastic in the ocean forms trash mats and one of them off the California coast is bigger than Texas.

There are solutions like using your own personal water bottle and refilling it. Some cities are fining homeowners and businesses for not recycling. The simple fact remains: if people took the time to recycle these bottles, enough energy to light up a light bulb for six hours could be saved from every single water bottle.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 19 Which **two** major central ideas can be found in both sources?
- (A) Even things that help us can pose a threat to our health.
 - (B) The burden of something becoming popular will often make it hard to control.
 - (C) When something is not properly controlled and regulated, it can pose great danger.
 - (D) The solutions to serious problems can be found as long as humans keep trying to solve them.
 - (F) Something that was once safe can when used for different purposes become dangerous.

- 20 In “The Curse of Water Bottles” and “Fracking Threatens Everyone,” what are the most important details each author uses to support the central idea? Use details from **both** sources to support your answer. Be sure to identify each piece of information by the source title or number.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 21** The author of each source writes with a clear purpose. Explain each author's purpose for writing the text, using information from **both** sources to support your answer.

Directions for Part 2

You will now look at the two articles, take notes, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your explanatory article. You may use your notes and refer to the two articles that provide research sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your explanatory writing will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment

You have read “The Curse of Water Bottles” as well as “Fracking Threatens Everyone.” Both articles will provide research sources for you to use to write your explanatory article that serves a purpose and is well organized. You will discuss the environmental impacts of water bottles and fracking. You will use rich vocabulary and show an identifiable style while using proper English grammar and spelling.

Explanatory Article Scoring

Your explanatory article will be scored using the following:

- 1. Organization/Purpose:** How well did you state your thesis/controlling idea and maintain your thesis/controlling idea with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How well did you narrow your thesis/controlling idea so you can develop and elaborate the conclusion? How consistently did you use a variety of transitions? How effective was your introduction and your conclusion?
- 2. Evidence/Elaboration:** How well did you integrate relevant and specific information from the sources? How well did you elaborate your ideas? How clearly did you state ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose?
- 3. Conventions:** How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

Now begin work on your explanatory article. Manage your time carefully so that you can plan, write, revise, and edit the final draft of your article. Write your response on a separate piece of paper.

