



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## THE PANDA BEAR

One of the most unusual bears known to man is the panda bear. Panda bears live in southwestern China. They live in misty forests of bamboo. There are two main types of pandas. They are the giant black-and-white panda and the red panda. They weigh anywhere from 175 to 275 pounds. They get anywhere from five to six feet in height. A newborn panda cub is about the size of a chipmunk. They are born blind and are completely helpless. They rely heavily on their mother. Once the baby panda leaves its mother, it will live all alone.

Pandas are active during both the day and at night. The most important plant in the life of a panda bear is bamboo. They spend about 12 hours of their day eating bamboo. That's a lot of bamboo! Pandas have special bones in their wrists that enable them to grab the stalks of the bamboo. Pandas will peel away the outer edge of the stalk and eat the soft inner portion of the bamboo. Their giant molars crush the bamboo stalks. The panda will also eat the bamboo leaves. Pandas have also been known to eat mushrooms, insects, grasses, fish, fruit, and rice.

Pandas move in a very slow, methodical manner. Unlike some bears, the panda bear does not hibernate. They live in a climate where they can be active and eating throughout the year.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. A different title for this reading passage could be . . .
  - a. "Panda Paradise."
  - b. "China's Bear."
  - c. "All You Want to Know About Bears."
  - d. "Illegal Bear Hunting."
2. Newborn panda cubs are not born . . .
  - a. being able to see.
  - b. blind.
  - c. the size of a chipmunk.
  - d. helpless.
3. The author wrote this passage to . . .
  - a. justify keeping pandas in captivity.
  - b. inform the reader of how pandas are mistreated.
  - c. share general information about panda bears.
  - d. raise awareness of the shrinking of the panda population.
4. If you wanted to find out more about pandas, you could . . .
  - a. read a book about how bears hibernate.
  - b. watch a television program about bamboo.
  - c. meet somebody who lives in China.
  - d. watch a television program about the different types of bears.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## HELEN KELLER

Can you imagine what it would be like not to be able to see or hear? When Helen Keller was 19 months old, she became very ill. Doctors expected her to die, but she survived. Helen's mother soon noticed that Helen was not responding when the dinner bell rang or when she waved her hand in front of Helen's face. It then became apparent that Helen's illness had left her blind and deaf. She was born on June 27, 1880 in Alabama, where she lived with her family. She was frustrated and confused. She didn't know what was going on in her world. Her parents knew that they needed help. They hired a tutor for Helen. Her name was Anne Sullivan.

Success didn't happen right away. But one day at the water pump, a breakthrough happened. Anne spelled the word *water* in Helen's hand. Helen began to catch on. Suddenly, her brain was on fire. She reached down to touch the ground, and Anne spelled the word *earth* in her hand. She continued pointing and learning. She learned to spell 30 words on that day.

By the age of 10, Helen had learned to speak by feeling her teacher's mouth when she talked. Some people couldn't understand Helen, but she kept trying. She learned to read French, German, Greek, and Latin in Braille. Braille is a way for people who can't see to read. Raised dots are used to represent letters and words. Soon Helen could read, write, and speak.

Helen Keller went on to give speeches all over the world. Most of the money she earned was given to the American Foundation for the Blind. She met 12 U.S. presidents, wrote a dozen books, and went to college. Helen Keller lived to be 87. She continues to inspire many people worldwide.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. Why was Helen Keller so successful in life?
  - a. People felt sorry for her and took pity on her.
  - b. She eventually got her vision and hearing back.
  - c. She learned to overcome obstacles and work hard.
  - d. She was able to meet 12 U.S. presidents and speak worldwide.
2. What can you learn about Anne Sullivan from reading this passage?
  - a. She traveled the world to give speeches.
  - b. She was diligent in her efforts with Helen Keller.
  - c. She was blind herself.
  - d. She was placed in an orphanage.
3. According to the passage, which of the following statements is true?
  - a. Helen Keller was unable to overcome great obstacles to do great things.
  - b. Helen Keller didn't have to work hard to succeed.
  - c. Helen's parents made the right choice in hiring Anne Sullivan.
  - d. Blind people can be taught how to read Braille, but not deaf people.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LITTERING

It is very sad to see litter on the highways or in parks and other public places. Littering is a big problem that needs to be stopped. There is no reason why people need to litter. Someone who litters is a lazy person. It means he or she is too lazy to get up and throw away his or her own trash.

Many things have been tried to stop people from littering. Laws have been passed to try to prevent littering. If someone is caught littering on the highway, he or she can be fined to pay for it. This seems to discourage some people, but certainly not everyone.

Littering can cause a lot of problems. Littering can be harmful to the wild animals that live in the parks and forests. Littering can kill animals or make them sick. Sometimes food is left with trash and other things. Wild animals eat this food, and then sometimes they get sick. Littering also looks bad. It's hard to enjoy nature when it is serving as a trash can for us!

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the author's opinion about littering?
  - a. tolerant
  - b. pathetic
  - c. disgusted
  - d. annoyed
2. Which of the following sentences clarifies the how the author feels about littering?
  - a. This seems to discourage some people from littering.
  - b. It is very sad to see litter on the highways or in parks.
  - c. There should be a fine for everyone who litters.
  - d. Littering is more and more common today.
3. Which of the following is not an effect of littering?
  - a. Littering is harmful to animals.
  - b. Animals can get sick and die from litter.
  - c. Littering looks bad.
  - d. People can get paid if caught littering.
4. Who does the author blame for littering?
  - a. the audience
  - b. lazy people
  - c. wild animals
  - d. children



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## BAKE-SALE BLUES

Jesse, Milo, and Heidi had been planning all week to have a bake sale on Saturday. They had been so excited for the big day to arrive. Saturday arrived before they knew it. The table was ready. Jesse showed up bright and early with her homemade chocolate chip cookies. They were large cookies. Milo came next and he put his plate of cookies on the table. Heidi came riding up the street on her bike. She had her cookies in the basket of her bike.

They put up their sign and sat back to rake in the profits. Their first customer was four-year-old Sam from next door. He had a dollar to spend. Jesse, Milo, and Heidi unwrapped all the plates so Sam could take a look. To their astonishment, everyone had brought chocolate chip cookies! How were they going to be able to sell a lot of goodies if they were all the same things?

Milo was the first to speak. "What? I can't believe this!"

Jesse said, "I told you guys I was going to make chocolate chip cookies. I didn't know you were all going to copy me."

"Copy you?" replied Heidi. "You just said you were making chocolate cookies."

Milo added, "This is a disaster!"

"Relax," interrupted Sam. "This isn't such a big deal! Just change your sign. Change it to say nuts, oatmeal, or plain."

The three kids looked at each other and grinned. Heidi went inside to get a marker to change the sign.

### STORY QUESTIONS

- Which sentence shows how the children feel about the change of plans?
  - "This isn't such a big deal!"
  - "I didn't know you were all going to copy me."
  - "What? I can't believe this!"
  - The three kids looked at each other and grinned.
- The second paragraph shares with the reader . . .
  - how to solve the problem.
  - what the problem was.
  - the disagreements between the children.
  - the relationship between the children.
- Why is Sam's idea a good one?
  - It makes the best of the situation.
  - They will be able to save all the cookies.
  - Sam always has good ideas.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## THE RACE OF THE WOLVES

There once were two wolves named Sam and Seneca. Sam and Seneca did everything together. They would race around the forest, competing against each other constantly. One day Sam was racing as fast he could to get across the forest before Seneca. He dug his heels into the dirt and was as fast as the speed of lightning. Seneca was not far behind. She was mad that she was behind. She was growling as she ran. But alas, Sam won the race.

The following morning, the two challenged each other to another race. Seneca was not about to let Sam beat her this time. So she got up early and did a practice run. When the time of the race came, she felt fit and ready. A bird in the tree sounded the start of the race and the two were off. They were flying through the forest at dizzying speeds. For the first time, Seneca was outrunning Sam. She was gaining more speed as they raced, and Sam was getting upset.

Up ahead on the trail was a family of quails. The proud parents were taking their little babies out for their first walk. They had no idea of the thunder and pounding just moments away.

As the wolves rounded the bend, Seneca could see the covey of quail. For a split second she chose to ignore them, but she could not. She skidded to a stop just in the nick of time. Sam came close behind her. He did not stop. He saw this as his chance to sail past Seneca. He narrowly missed the last little quail. At the end of the race, Sam questioned Seneca as to why she stopped. She confidently replied, "It's better to be safe than sorry."

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### STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is a "covey" of quail?
  - a. small group or family
  - b. organization
  - c. mass
  - d. hierarchy
2. How is Seneca's behavior an example of how it's better to be safe than sorry?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which sentence shows that an accident was likely to occur?
  - a. They were flying through the forest at dizzying speeds.
  - b. He narrowly missed the last little quail.
  - c. She was gaining more speed as they raced and Sam was getting upset.
  - d. The proud parents were taking their little babies out for their first walk.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## *WILL POWER*

One Sunday, I was flipping through the ads with my mom. “Boring, boring,” I said. I flipped through the colorful pages. I got to the recreation pages. Then, I saw it! A trampoline! Wow! Then a rush of disappointment filled my body. It wouldn’t fit in our backyard.

Just to make sure, I went out in our backyard to check. It is REALLY long, but not very wide. It’s like a long creek, without any room. I then decided to measure the backyard. Thirteen feet! Yes! There was just one problem. Would our parents let us get it?

I rushed into the house. “Mama, Mama!” I yelled.

“What?” she asked.

“I measured the backyard and the trampoline will fit!” I shouted.

“Let’s go measure it,” she said. She went outside with me and I helped her measure the yard. Then my dad came out and my siblings begged them to get it. They replied that there just wouldn’t be room.

Later, my mom and dad had a “secret talk” about getting it. Before I knew what was happening, my mom was snapping her fingers and the yard was widening. That’s right, the yard began to grow.

The next day after school, when we got home, there was the trampoline waiting for us. It sure is nice to have a mom who has special powers.

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### *STORY QUESTIONS*

1. A theme to this story could be . . .
  - a. “Dreams granted.”
  - b. “Make a wish and it will come true.”
  - c. “If there’s a will, there’s a way.”
  - d. “Mom and Dad are the best.”
2. According to the passage, how did the mother make room for the trampoline?
  - a. She snapped her fingers.
  - b. She made plans to move.
  - c. She cut out a new section for the yard.
  - d. She rented a bulldozer.
3. A good way to find the answer to question #2 above is to . . .
  - a. try to remember.
  - b. reread the first paragraph and determine the main idea.
  - c. ask the author.
  - d. skim the passage searching for clues about the mother.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

The adult brain weighs about three pounds. This doesn't seem like much, but it is one of the most important organs in the human body. The brain is made up of millions of nerve cells. These nerve cells tell the rest of the body what to do. Without a brain, we could not live. The spinal chord is connected to the brain. It runs from our neck down through our back. The spinal chord and the brain make up what is called the central nervous system.

The brain is like the body's computer. It controls body temperature and reminds us to breathe. The brain allows the body to have voluntary movement, thought, language, and reasoning. Different parts of the brain have different jobs. The brain tells us when we are hungry and thirsty. It also is responsible for memory and emotion.

Our brain relies on food to give it energy. You need to eat healthy foods to keep your brain and the rest of your body working right. Healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, cereals, grains, milk, and other dairy products are all important foods for us to eat. We also need to keep our brains active. Research has shown that the less active our brain is, the less we are able to remember and do. So keep thinking, moving, and doing. It's great for your brain.

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### STORY QUESTIONS

1. After reading the passage, what do you think would happen if your brain was injured?
  - a. It would immediately double in size.
  - b. Our bodies might not be able to perform certain things.
  - c. The heart would begin to take over the body.
  - d. Doctors have not yet determined what happens in this case.
2. The main idea of this passage is . . .
  - a. to inform the reader about what happens when they are thinking.
  - b. to inform the reader about the connection between the heart and brain.
  - c. to inform the reader about how important healthy food is to the brain.
  - d. to share general information about the brain and the spinal chord and how they work.
3. Where can you find information about the spinal chord?
  - a. second paragraph
  - b. not in the passage
  - c. third paragraph
  - d. first paragraph



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## IRONING BOARD SURFING

Charles had been looking forward to his summer vacation with his family. He was excited to go to the beach. His parents finally agreed to let his best friend Henry come along. Henry and Charles had been practicing their surfing on his mom's ironing board.

Despite the broken hinges and the goose egg on Henry's head, practicing had gone well. The six-hour drive to the beach passed quickly, as Charles and Henry had video game competitions.

They finally arrived at the beach and set up camp that night. Henry and Charles could hardly sleep. As the sun was peeking over the hills, the boys were trotting down the beach to catch some waves. As they paddled through the water and turned to catch a wave, they quickly learned that their ironing-board training was inadequate for the strength of the ocean.

In their focus and concentration, the boys lost track of time. They decided to head in for lunch. Fighting the waves, they finally made it to shore. As they walked across the sand, they found themselves on a strange beach they did not recognize. Charles' parents were nowhere in sight. There wasn't a single person on the beach.

"Whoa!" exclaimed Henry.

"What are we going to do?" moaned Charles.

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### STORY QUESTIONS

1. According to the story, Henry and Charles are . . .
  - a. intelligent.
  - b. immature.
  - c. friends.
  - d. only children.
2. Which paragraph helps you answer the previous question?
  - a. second paragraph
  - b. first paragraph
  - c. fourth paragraph
  - d. third paragraph
3. Why was the ironing board not good for training?
  - a. It is heavier than a surf board.
  - b. It is not the right shape of the surf board.
  - c. The waves were too strong.
  - d. The ironing board was broken.