

7th Grade Language Arts Mrs. Phinick's Classroom

For students who do not have the internet

Please complete the following assignments for week 2:

The assignments are dated 3/30/20-4/3/20, students will complete these assignments instead of IXL-Reading

The Run [The Run Series, #1]

by ReadWorks



Dennis and Mac had been driving for almost a week, and they hadn't seen a single soul. They were worried. When they'd left the ranch, they'd thought maybe they'd run into someone, another survivor. But there was no one. The roads were almost empty. There was the occasional abandoned car, but that was it. They drove mostly on highways, to make better time. Mac wondered if they might not have better luck on the smaller country roads, but Dennis wouldn't have it. Those roads had curves and were thick with trees. There was no way of seeing danger coming. If someone wanted to spring a surprise on you, you wouldn't know it until it was too late.

When the plague came, Dennis and Mac had been working as ranch hands on a cattle farm. Both had just finished their first year of college. Dennis went to school on the East Coast, Mac on the West. They found that they were very similar people. They both studied hard and read a lot of books. But they also both liked being outdoors. At the end of a good day, they came home smelling of sweat and dirt. They quickly became friends.

The ranch was a small, family-run operation, with only about 50 head of cattle. The family that ran it, the Greersons, would advertise in college newspapers in the spring. There were plenty of ranch hands in the area who needed work, but Bucky Greerson felt city kids could benefit from an exposure to country life. Young men would apply, and then the Greersons would hire about a half-dozen hands every spring to help them run cattle. It was tough work, but Dennis and Mac felt lucky to be picked.

The farm didn't have a TV or the Internet or a telephone. As a result, the first they heard of the plague was on the radio. Every night, the ranch hands liked to gather in the mess hall and play cards. While they played, they listened to the radio. The ranch was so far up in the hills that the radio only got one station. At night they listened to the station's best DJ, Petey "The Muskrat" Coltrain, who spun old bluegrass records. Sometimes, between records, The Muskrat told stories. Dennis and Mac thought he was hilarious.

One night, though, The Muskrat's radio show was very different. It couldn't have been more than six months ago, but to Dennis and Mac, thinking back on it now, it felt like another lifetime. The Muskrat had been playing a cheery Bill Monroe song, "Footprints in the Snow," when he cut out the record halfway through the chorus. The ranch hands stopped their game of Gin Rummy. They turned and looked at the radio. The Muskrat always played a record all the way through. What could be wrong?

"Folks," said the Muskrat "I don't know how to tell you this, but I'm going to ask you to stay very calm

asking us radio folks to tell you, our listeners, that... well, a disease is spreading."

The ranch hands put down their cards. Dennis and Mac exchanged a glance.

"Now," The Muskrat said, his rich voice sounding uncharacteristically shaky, "they don't quite know what this disease is, but it's real bad. It's very contagious, and people who get it don't have a lot of luck recovering. Now, doctors are trying to figure out a cure, but there's been no luck yet. So, in the meantime, we're asking that you stay in your homes as much as possible and avoid public places until the disease dies down."

One of the ranch hands, a big, cocky boy named T.J., laughed. "Like heck I'm not going into town," T.J. chuckled. "I got a date." The other ranch hands stared at him. T.J. stopped laughing.

"Please, folks, do what the doctors say," The Muskrat pleaded. "I'm sure it'll just be for a few days." He was quiet for a moment. Then the ranch hands heard the sound of a turntable needle hitting the record, and an old Earl Scruggs song came on.

That was the beginning of it. For the next few days, the ranch went about its business. The Greersons told the boys not to worry, that this would all be over soon. They had enough food on the ranch to last months. In the meantime, there were plenty of new calves that needed branding. At night, everyone gathered around the radio and listened to updates. The news seemed only to get worse. More and more people were getting sick. The symptoms were strange. People would become violently ill, then fall into a long, deep sleep. The big cities - New York, Los Angeles, Chicago - had become like ghost towns. No one would go out into the street for fear of catching the disease.

The news kept getting worse until, finally, the radio station stopped transmitting. The Greersons called a meeting in the dining room of the main house. Everyone sat around the big dining room table where Ann Greerson served Sunday supper. After everyone was seated, Bucky Greerson stood up. He was a short, plump man with a droopy handlebar mustache. You wouldn't think it looking at him, but his voice boomed.

"Now," he said, "I know you're worried about your families, and I don't feel right chaining you here while you don't know what's become of your people. So, anyone who wants to leave is free to go. Ann and I will make do."

Dennis and Mac looked at each other. They'd talked about leaving but had tried to pretend they wouldn't need to. They had hoped the plague would be over soon, that the world would return to the way it was, that it had all been a strange hallucination. Now that they had the option to venture out into the world, to see how bad things really were, they weren't sure they wanted to know.

"By a show of hands," Bucky Greerson asked, "how many of you want to leave?"

Mac and Dennis looked around. They were the only two with their hands up.

The Greersons gave them enough food to last a couple weeks - corn bread and apples and cured ham and syrupy peaches in mason jars. Mac and Dennis packed up their things and loaded everything into Mac's truck, a sputtering old pickup. The Greersons and the ranch hands gathered around to see them off.

remember your manners." As Mac and Dennis pulled away, they saw her husband holding her, her body shaking with sobs.

A week later, Mac and Dennis had zigzagged through dozens of small towns and a few larger cities. What they found frightened them: every place was empty. Not a person was out. Sometimes, they would stop and knock on doors. No one would answer. If they went inside, they wouldn't find a single soul home. Sometimes they'd find the dinner table set, plates piled high with molding food. Every time they entered a new room, they both winced, thinking they'd find a dead body. But they never did. It was indescribably eerie.

Sometimes, if the place still got electricity, they'd try to use the phone. Every time, no matter what number they dialed, the same recorded message came on: "The number is not in service. Please check the number and try again."

Finally, the young men decided to make tracks to the nearest big city. It would be a full day of driving, but there had to be someone there. You can't abandon a whole city.

Dusk had come, and Mac was at the wheel. Dennis had been driving for the last eight hours and was taking a nap in the passenger seat. They were passing through a long, flat piece of pastureland when Mac saw a flicker of movement in the distance. He stopped the car, turned off the engine and shook Dennis awake.

"Look," Mac said excitedly. "I think someone's coming."

Dennis squinted his eyes. The flicker of movement was becoming larger. What had been a dot of motion became a long line, stretching across the horizon. Mac and Dennis strained to see.

"I think it's some people," said Dennis. "Let me get my binoculars."

He rustled in his backpack and pulled out his pair. Dennis put them to his eyes and looked through them. Mac heard him gasp.

"My gosh," whispered Dennis.

What he saw was people. Thousands of people. Hundreds of thousands, maybe a million. A swarm of people like the world had never seen. And the people were all running. They were running as fast as they could go, like something was chasing them, or like they were chasing something. As they grew closer, Dennis could just make out the people's faces. Their eyes were wild.

"Start the car," said Dennis.

Ed.: *The tale continues in Part 2, "Refueling."*

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What news do Dennis and Mac hear on the radio while at the ranch?

- A. There is a cattle farm that hires young men to work over the summer.
- B. Thousands of people are running as fast as they can across the country.
- C. There is a bad disease spreading among people.
- D. Food is getting moldy on dinner plates because people are not staying at home.

2. What is the sequence of events at the beginning of this story?

- A. The story begins after the disease has struck and then takes the reader back in time to a point before the disease.
- B. The story begins before the disease has struck and then takes the reader forward in time to a point after the disease has ended.
- C. The story begins as the disease is striking and then takes the reader back in time to a point before the disease.
- D. The story begins as the disease is striking and then takes the reader two years into the future.

3. The Muskrat says that the disease is "real bad."

What evidence in the story supports his statement?

- A. T.J. wants to go into town even though The Muskrat has advised people to stay in their homes.
- B. After The Muskrat warns people about the disease, an old Earl Scruggs song comes on the radio.
- C. The Greersons tell the boys not to worry, saying that the disease will end soon.
- D. The disease is very contagious, and doctors have not been able to figure out a cure.

4. Why do Dennis and Mac decide to drive to the nearest big city?

- A. They want to find a person.
- B. They are running out of food and need more.
- C. They see thousands of people running.
- D. They both like being outdoors.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A. a married couple who own a ranch, the young men they hire to work for them one summer, and the music they listen to together
- B. two young men, a mysterious disease, and what happens when they go out to explore after the disease hits
- C. a radio DJ; the music he likes to play, and the effect that his song choices have on the people who listen to them
- D. a long line of people running through a flat piece of pastureland and what happens when two young men see them

6. Read the following sentence: "More and more people were getting sick. The **symptoms** were strange. People would become violently ill, then fall into a long, deep sleep."

What does the word **symptoms** mean?

- A. fears of getting sick
- B. signs of a disease
- C. serious injuries
- D. suggestions that doctors give to patients

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Dennis and Mac are frightened after leaving the ranch _____ the towns and cities they visit have no people in them.

- A. although
- B. as a result
- C. because
- D. however

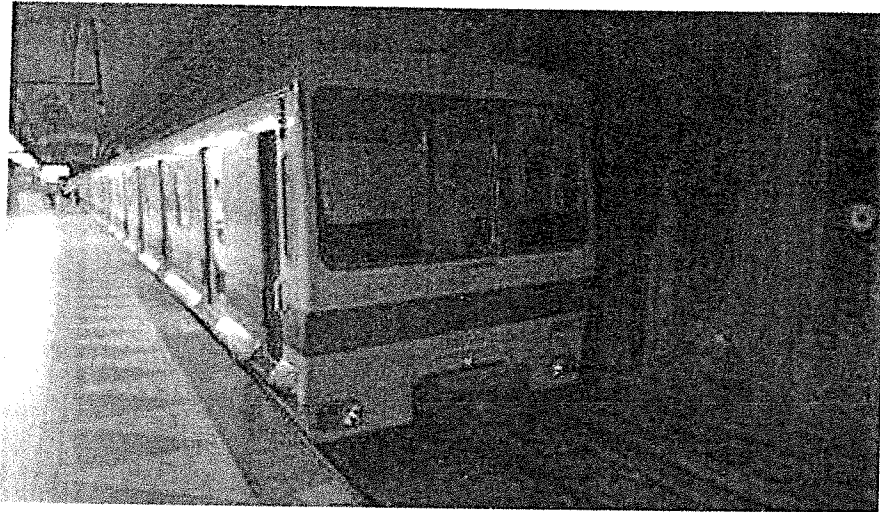
8. What happens to people when they get sick with the disease described in the story?

9. What are the people Dennis and Mac see at the end of the story doing?

10. Is there a connection between the disease and the people Dennis and Mac see at the end of the story? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the story.

Taken by Surprise

by Edward I. Maxwell



CAUTION: Only fully trained and equipped subway employees should ever walk the subway tunnels and tracks. Pedestrians should never step down off a subway platform onto the track for any reason; if there is a dropped item on the track or an emergency, seek out an employee or police officer.

Tim loved working in the subway.

Loved it.

If you pushed him, he'd admit he loved it more than his father. Not more than his mother, but definitely more than his old man.

The subway, its tracks, tunnels, rails, and switches were his. Dirty and run-down to most everyone else, but magnificent and sprawling to Tim.

The strangest part is that Tim loved the subway most when it rained. When it poured, it didn't matter if Tim was even on the clock. He would check in, grab his vest, hard-hat, and lantern and walk the tracks.

It was just such a night.

Off the clock, but still on the job.

Thunder crashed overhead. The tunnel was a cool, wet 50 degrees.

Rain dripped through the grates overhead. Little streams flowed underneath the railroad ties. For Tim, this was when the subway really came alive and showed the world its true self--the greatest cavern ever built; the greatest network of caves ever used by man.

Tim missed the next tie, and his boot fell hard into the river running between the rails. A critter squealed at

the long curving way, flecks of light glancing off the steel. He took a deep, satisfied breath, and walked on.

Tim did not always walk the subway; he did not always work for it. He used to have a job behind a cramped desk, in a cramped office, working with cramped people who couldn't imagine much beyond their cubicles. Needless to say, they did not share Tim's enthusiastic dreams of urban spelunking.

But Tim made those dreams a reality and left his cubically-caged mates for subterranean trusses, I-beams, and engineered slopes.

Moving further along the tracks, Tim grew aware of something completely unexpected out in front of him. With each step, the void ahead seemed to quiet more. After another 30 yards, Tim was standing in a completely silent stretch of tunnel. Water did not drip, critters did not scurry, and street traffic overhead was muffled beyond recognition. Tim felt anxiety grip him, and he immediately switched on his lantern. He needed more light than what laced off the tracks to investigate this exception.

The I-beams were the first sight to set his stomach seizing. There was not a single, rusted, wrought iron pillar as far as his lantern could stretch. Instead, the beams had been covered-or replaced entirely, he could not tell-by concrete columns, gray and sterile to the touch. The concrete had been purposefully pockmarked to absorb vibrations as trains passed through. While the iron beams had acted as tuning forks, allowing the clanging chorus of steel wheels on steel rails to resonate around a bend, the new pillars seemed capable of soaking up any din like a sponge.

Tim let his hand run over each geometric dimple and shuddered at the thought of every ding or clang already trapped, unable to dance along, weaving in and out of subway cars.

It was in that moment Tim realized also that there was no water dripping down onto his helmet from overhead. He looked up and was confronted by a modern ventilation duct, gently circulating the air. If his journey had begun here in this part of the tunnel he would not have known that rain was coming down in buckets up above.

Tim rested his chin on his chest, shook his head, and cursed to himself, *what have they done to this place?* His eyes turned downward, Tim realized that the streams between the rails had dried up. The ties were made of pre-poured concrete, the channel was carved with smooth right angles and drainage points all along the way. There was no sign of the ragged, splintered wooden ties that would give way under a car's weight and send a wobble through each passenger's legs.

What have they done to this place?

The anxiety started to creep back into Tim's mind. The pockmarked concrete pillars started to resemble the pressed fireproof boards used as part of his old cubicle walls. The space in between tracks looked like linoleum office flooring underfoot, the pre-poured railroad ties were like simple inlaid design work. The vent and clean truss work overhead resembled the ceiling and air conditioning grates that hung lifelessly over his old desk.

What have they done to my place?

Tim wasn't spelunking anymore. He was moving past the standard forms of an office. He was walking down rows of cubicles on his way to the water cooler, and he hated it. He wanted to go back to the rundown caverns he loved so dearly. He wanted to run his hands over a man-made creation that could not resist the pull of a more natural order. He wanted to walk through a space engineered to be one thing, but

It was in this moment that a train horn sounded, steady and deep. Tim lifted his head to watch twin eyes about 300 yards down the track moving toward him. He quickly stepped out from between the rails, off to the side between two columns. Making sure he was far enough back, Tim braced up against the pillar and waited for the train to pass.

The train began to file by him only a few moments later, but Tim only knew it by the faint rush of air. There was no sound, and he had closed his eyes in a vain attempt to hold back the tears running down his cheeks.

What have they done?

Tim cried for some time after the train passed. He knew it wasn't going to be long before the rest of the tunnels were redone in the same way. There would be nothing left of the subway of which he had grown so fond. He made his way back down the tunnel and out one of the access points. He was off the clock for good.

Back on street-level, the rain had stopped, thunder and lightning had abated. The moon was even beginning to peek out from behind the wisps of cloud. The city was coming back as people began to realize the storm was done with trying to stake a claim. Tim shuffled along, wondering, *what do I do now?*

He found a bench, sat down, and tried to push those searching questions out of his mind. He watched people step out into the night, hail cabs, meet friends, and walk into restaurants. He watched people enjoy the sterile streets, buildings, places, which had all pushed him underground to what had been the last place of refuge from the austere.

Tim longed to smile blissfully as these people did, to smile as he had only hours earlier at the sound of a critter's fearful squeal. But the smile would not come to his lips. They remained set; the thin line unparted, shallow breaths moving through his nose. *Do I leave?*

No one gave Tim much notice. He was only sitting silently, nothing threatening about him. It was as if he was part of the bench, no reason for concerned or worried looks. He didn't want to be part of this world, so the world did not acknowledge him.

The moon rose higher in a clear night sky and the streets were quiet once more. Tim stood and took off his hard-hat and vest. Moving to the nearest garbage can, he dropped them in without a second thought. Digging into his pocket, Tim found his subway badge and tossed that in as well. He set his lantern down beside the can for anyone to find and use as he or she wished. He took a deep breath in through his nose and let it out slowly through his mouth. *Where do I go?*

Tim walked the 20 blocks to the main train station. He quietly purchased a rail pass, destination unmarked, and found his way to the main board. The next departing train was already boarding. Tim stopped at a kiosk on the way to the track and purchased a newspaper. Taking the stairs, he was on the platform in moments, staring at a train that waited patiently for the last few passengers. Newspaper under his arm, Tim stepped on board and found an open seat by the window. The conductor sounded the whistle, calling for all aboard. The train doors closed, and Tim opened his paper as the train left the station.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is Tim's job at the beginning of the story?

- A. police officer
- B. subway employee
- C. office worker
- D. train conductor

2. What is a major turning point in the story?

- A. Tim quits his office job.
- B. Tim discovers a stretch of subway tunnel that has been rebuilt.
- C. Tim decides to go on a walk in a subway tunnel during a thunderstorm.
- D. Tim oversteps a rail tie, and his boot slips into the river running between the rails.

3. Tim cries while in a stretch of subway tunnel that has been rebuilt.

What does Tim's action suggest?

- A. Tim misses the office where he used to work.
- B. Tim is pleased by the changes made to the subway tunnel.
- C. Tim is upset by the changes made to the subway tunnel.
- D. Tim does not notice the changes made to the subway tunnel.

4. Why is there no water between the rails in the rebuilt section of the subway tunnel?

- A. The channel under the rails is carved with smooth right angles and has places for the water to drain.
- B. There are no splintered wooden rail ties that would give way under the weight of a subway car.
- C. It has not been raining long enough for water from the thunderstorm to reach the rebuilt section of the tunnel.
- D. There used to be water there, but the critters that live under the rail ties drank it all.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A. a subway worker who sneaks into a subway tunnel to see what it is like
- B. a man who hates his job in an office and leaves it to become a train conductor
- C. a subway train that almost kills a subway worker when it passes him in a tunnel
- D. a subway worker who is deeply upset by the changes made to the tunnel

6. Read the following sentences: "There would be nothing left of the subway of which he had grown so fond. He made his way back down the tunnel and out one of the access points. He was **off the clock for good.**"

When the author writes that Tim was "off the clock for good," what does he mean?

- A. Tim is running late for work.
- B. Tim has trouble keeping track of time.
- C. Tim does not like to use clocks.
- D. Tim is quitting his job.

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

The changes made to a subway tunnel disturb Tim; _____, he no longer wants to work in the subway.

- A. however
- B. because
- C. although
- D. therefore

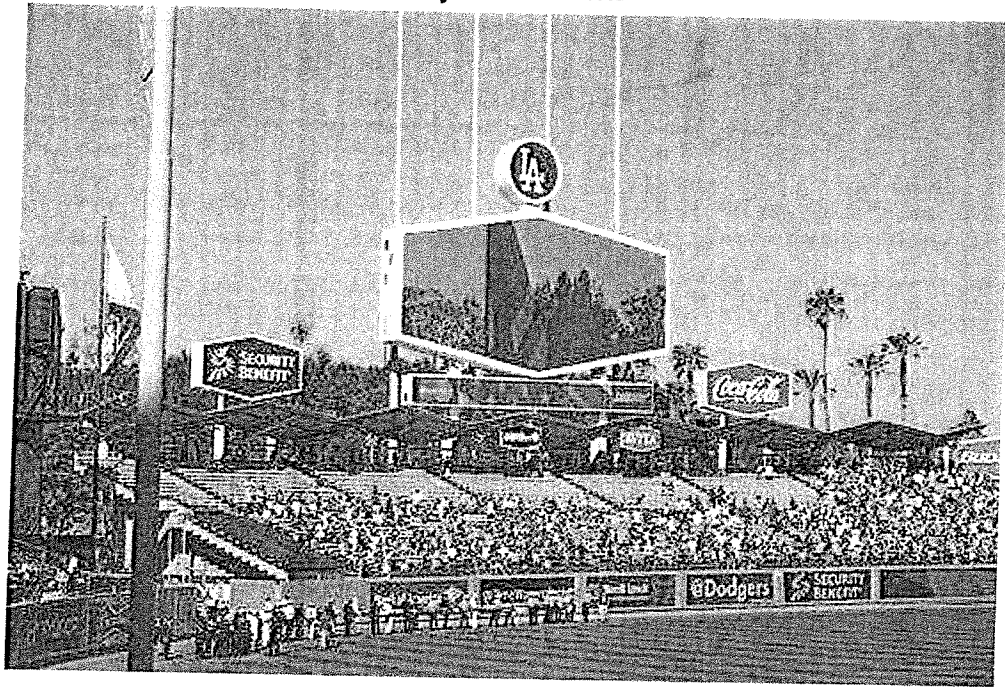
8. Explain whether Tim always worked for the subway.

9. Describe what Tim did not like about being in an office, and what Tim did like about working for the Subway.

10. Are the changes made to the subway tunnel a good thing or bad thing? Use evidence from the story to explain why.

Fanhood

by ReadWorks



Sam Martinez *knew* baseball. He couldn't count the number of Los Angeles Dodgers games he had been to: his Uncle Gabriel had season tickets and had been taking Sam to games ever since he was three years old. When spring turned into baseball season, he got so excited that his parents practically had to bolt him to his desk after school so that he would do his homework before the night games. His little sisters knew that if they bothered him when he was either watching or listening to the game, they would get yelled at. Even Sam's friends tended to steer clear and tread softly when baseball season began.

Sam couldn't help it: he was obsessed. The smell of freshly cut grass, the feel of the hard and perfectly aerodynamic ball, the ping of the bat as it made contact, the crunch of peanut shells as you made your way down the aisles to the seats, the groans and shouts of the crowd-what could be better than all of this?

Sam had turned his bedroom into a Dodgers shrine, complete with pennants, framed newspaper articles, glass-encased fly balls, and a few autographed headshots. He didn't like other people to come into his room, though-sometimes he was worried it was a bit too much. He had once made the mistake of bringing a friend to a Dodgers game when Uncle Gabriel couldn't go, and it had been a disaster. Jordan had wanted to talk the entire time and barely paid attention to the game. He had then gotten annoyed at Sam for *not* wanting to talk: it was awful. Sam had felt too embarrassed to take notes and jot down the stats for the game, which had really messed up the seasonal scorecard he and Uncle Gabriel usually kept.

The first game of this year's season found the Dodgers pitted against the Chicago Cubs, those eternal underdogs. Sam and Uncle Gabriel handed their tickets to the collector and made their way to the section they had sat in for the last ten years.

"Think Puig will be as awesome as he was last year, Uncle G?" Sam asked, pulling his blue baseball hat down over his eyes to guard against the sun.

Uncle Gabriel, his pinstriped Dodgers jersey stretched across his heavyset belly, stepped gingerly aside as a family of six rushed past holding containers of popcorn and cotton candy. "Puig is the gift that keeps on giving," he said, looking back at Sam. "Don't worry-he'll make us proud."

They finally reached their section and headed to their seats. Uncle Gabriel took small steps down the row, shouting out greetings as they passed by old friends and fellow season-ticket holders. These guys had been sitting in the same row and section for years together and shared Sam and Uncle Gabriel's passion for the game.

Sam plopped down and took a sip from his Coke, taking in the scene of the half-full stadium in front of him, the brown mountains beyond, and the beautiful bright lights that made Dodger Stadium visible from airplanes. Uncle Gabriel leaned forward to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Salvatore, and Sam closed his eyes and smiled. He felt like he was home.

"Ehem... Pardon me... Excuse me... Sorry... Just need to get in here."

Sam looked up. Jessica Alder, from Sam's eighth grade math class, was leading her dad down the row of seats, looking glum. She sat right next to Sam and made a production of setting her purse down on her feet so that it didn't touch the ground.

"Hi, Jessica," Sam said.

She looked up in fake surprise. "Oh hi, Sam. How are you?"

"Pretty good. I didn't know you liked baseball," he said.

She twitched her head toward her dad, who was looking around at the stadium with the same rapturous expression that had been on Sam's face just a few moments before. "He loves it. He just bought season tickets, and my brother couldn't go tonight, so my mom decided we needed some father-daughter time." She rolled her eyes. "I don't even understand how baseball works."

Sam smiled. "Want me to teach you?"

Jessica smiled back and nodded.

It was the first time Sam barely paid attention to a baseball game without being overly upset. He liked talking to Jessica: despite her initial negativity, she actually seemed to get into the game and had even heckled a player or two by the top of the seventh. She didn't laugh at Uncle Gabriel, who was watching with extreme concentration, a small pencil pressed to a pad of notebook paper filled with numbers and notes about the individual players. During the seventh-inning stretch, she sang the baseball fan's pledge of allegiance with gusto, and let her dad hug her when the Dodgers won. Sam couldn't help wondering if maybe, at some game in the future, he himself would hug her if the Dodgers won.

"Maybe I'll come to the next game with my dad," Jessica said, as she, Sam, her dad, and Uncle Gabriel made their way down the stairs, following the slow-moving crowds to the parking lots.

"That'd be cool," Sam said. "See you in school." He waved briefly and followed Uncle Gabriel to their car in the first lot.

Sam was quiet as they got into the car and waited in a long line of traffic to exit the stadium.

"Good game, huh?" Uncle Gabriel asked, looking at him out of the corner of his eye.

Sam felt conflicted: he had really liked watching the game with Jessica, but he had barely paid attention to the action itself. He didn't regret talking with Jessica, but he definitely regretted missing the game. "Yeah, I guess so," he said.

Uncle Gabriel laughed. "Will that young lady be at many games this season?"

"Probably," Sam said, feeling sick-how many games would he miss?

"Don't worry about it, Sammy!" Uncle Gabriel said. "Baseball games should be fun in all sorts of different ways. Don't be too hard on yourself." He chuckled and patted Sam's shoulder. "You can always stay home and watch on TV!"

Sam punched his shoulder and grinned.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. With whom does Sam go to baseball games?

- A. his dad
- B. his little sisters
- C. his mom
- D. his uncle

2. How does Jessica's attitude toward baseball change in the story?

- A. Jessica likes baseball a little bit at the beginning of the story and loves it by the end.
- B. Jessica slightly dislikes baseball at the beginning of the story and hates it by the end.
- C. Jessica is interested in baseball at first but loses her interest later on.
- D. Jessica is not interested in baseball at first but then becomes interested.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

Sam had turned his bedroom into a Dodgers shrine, complete with pennants, framed newspaper articles, glass-encased fly balls, and a few autographed headshots. He didn't like other people to come into his room, though-sometimes he was worried it was a bit too much. He had once made the mistake of bringing a friend to a Dodgers game when Uncle Gabriel couldn't go, and it had been a disaster. Jordan had wanted to talk the entire time and barely paid attention to the game. He had then gotten annoyed at Sam for not wanting to talk: it was awful. Sam had felt too embarrassed to take notes and jot down the stats for the game, which had really messed up the seasonal scorecard he and Uncle Gabriel usually kept.

Based on this evidence, why might Sam not have wanted to talk during the game?

- A. He wanted to give his full attention to the game.
- B. He missed his uncle.
- C. He did not like Jordan.
- D. He was upset that the Dodgers were losing.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

It was the first time Sam barely paid attention to a baseball game without being overly upset. He liked talking to Jessica: despite her initial negativity, she actually seemed to get into the game and had even heckled a player or two by the top of the seventh. She didn't laugh at Uncle Gabriel, who was watching with extreme concentration, a small pencil pressed to a pad of notebook paper filled with numbers and notes about the individual players. During the seventh-inning stretch, she sang the baseball fan's pledge of allegiance with gusto, and let her dad hug her when the Dodgers won. Sam couldn't help wondering if maybe, at some game in the future, he himself would hug her if the Dodgers won.

What can you infer about Sam's feelings toward Jessica from these sentences?

- A. Sam is developing a crush on Jessica.
- B. Sam is getting sick of being around Jessica.
- C. Sam is starting to feel uncomfortable around Jessica.
- D. Sam is becoming suspicious of Jessica.

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. A girl goes to a baseball game without understanding how baseball works.
 - B. A boy is torn between his interest in baseball and his interest in a girl.
 - C. A man has been taking his nephew to Los Angeles Dodgers games for years.
 - D. A boy gets annoyed at a friend of his for wanting to talk throughout a baseball game.
-

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Sam Martinez *knew* baseball. He couldn't count the number of Los Angeles Dodgers games he had been to: his Uncle Gabriel had season tickets and had been taking Sam to games ever since he was three years old. When spring turned into baseball season, he got so excited that his parents practically had to bolt him to his desk after school so that he would do his homework before the night games. His little sisters knew that if they bothered him when he was either watching or listening to the game, they would get yelled at. Even Sam's friends tended to steer clear and tread softly when baseball season began."

Why might the author have italicized the word "knew" in the first sentence?

- A. to provide an example of something Sam knows about baseball
- B. to imply that Sam knows too much about baseball
- C. to question how well Sam knows baseball
- D. to emphasize how well Sam knows baseball

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Sam liked talking with Jessica during the baseball game. _____, he did not like missing out on a lot of the game.

- A. On the other hand
 - B. For instance
 - C. In conclusion
 - D. Most importantly
-

8. Sam enjoys watching baseball with Jessica more than he enjoyed watching it with Jordan. Support this conclusion with evidence from the text.

9. What is Sam's conflict at the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

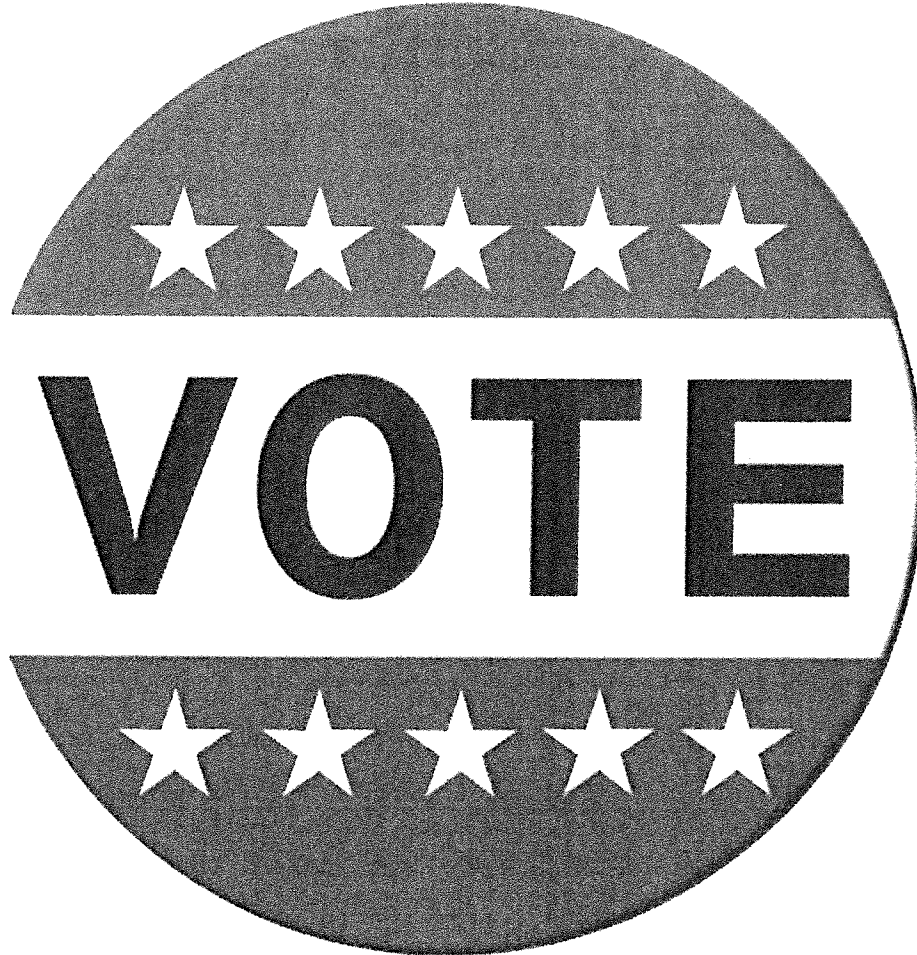
10. How might Sam's conflict be resolved? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

write one paragraph
(5-6) sentences about your
spring break.

4/2/20 Thurs

A Crooked Election

by Kyria Abrahams



Kelly is running for class president of Wright High School. Some of Kelly's classmates think elections are pointless. Kelly's best friend Maya doesn't believe in voting at all.

"I'm not voting," Maya tells her. "Voting is pointless."

"But if you don't vote, someone else will. And then they'll get what they want and you won't get what you want!" Kelly says.

"I don't want anything. I just want to be left alone." Maya responds.

Kelly is running for class president because she says she thinks the school can be better. She wants to see less meat served in the cafeteria and more vegetarian options. She also wants the school to stop bringing a live goat onto the field during football games.

"Kelly has good ideas, but won't be able to change anything," Maya tells her classmates. "She's just idealistic. No one can change anything."

Kelly's opponent, Roger, is running for class president of Wright High School because his brother was president last year. In fact, Roger has three brothers, and all three of them have been class president.

"I'm not losing to anybody," Roger tells his brothers. "Especially not a *girl*."

Roger has really nice banners professionally printed and hangs them around the school. Roger's banners say: "Roger Whitaker. The Right Man for the Wright Job." The phrase "right man" is a reference to the fact that Kelly is a girl. Roger says that girls can't be president because they cry too much. He only says this secretly to his brothers. He would never admit this opinion to his classmates.

"All Kelly cares about is that we have tofu in the cafeteria," Roger tells his classmates. "But I want to fix the broken doors in the bathroom!" Roger holds up a screwdriver as he says this and makes a grunting "man" sound.

The election banners were given to him as a gift by the Harrison kids. Their dad owns Harrison Sign Manufacturers and made the signs for free.

"Just make sure that when you get elected-and we are confident that you will-you tell the school that they need new signs." They shake hands and give him the free signs, which suddenly don't seem so free.

Roger looks around the school and sees that they do, in fact, need new signs. The exit sign above the main door is cracked. The sign above the library just says "Librar." The menu next to the school cafeteria is so old it says you could get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for 50 cents.

So, maybe it is a bit unfair to take something from a student who's going to vote for you. But Roger figures they have a good point about the signs.

Meanwhile, Kelly has been running around the school putting up signs of her own. They are all handmade from construction paper with fresh flowers on them. They say, "Make the school beautiful. Vote Healthy for Kelly."

Maya tells Kelly they look nice, but she doesn't think they'll do anything.

"It's just lipstick on a pig," she says. "Just because you make it look nice doesn't mean it's not still a pig."

Kelly's handmade signs make Roger nervous, because they seem more honest and down-to-earth. Although his signs are really nice and professional, it's also obvious that they cost money. Roger feels like the students don't relate to him.

He wants the other students to think he's just like them, so he organizes a barbecue during school lunch hours with free hot dogs. Actually, it's the Harrison brothers' idea. They even get him a deal on the hot dogs, from their cousin's supermarket, of course.

A few kids come by, but Roger also notices that a good amount of students stay in the cafeteria, eating food they brought from home. He can't figure out why someone would want to eat a stale sandwich when he's offering free hot dogs.

The hot dog giveaway is definitely a flop. Roger goes home dejected and sad.

The next day, the school holds a debate between the two candidates. The debate is moderated by their civics teacher, Mrs. Graham.

Roger and Kelly sit on stage, opposite each other. The auditorium is filled with students, all of whom will have the opportunity to vote. All the students are watching with great interest, as this is how they will make their decision. One wrong answer today and it could mean losing the presidency.

Mrs. Graham asks the first question.

"As class president, how would you see fit to spend the school's extra money?"

Kelly answers first. "Well, I certainly wouldn't be spending our money on expensive signs and hot dogs," she says.

The audience gasps. This is a low blow. It's surprising that Kelly would say something like that.

Roger looks into the audience and sees the Harrison brothers sinking down into their seats.

Kelly continues, "I would like our school to be healthier, and I know we have many students who are vegetarian. They don't have many options for lunch, and if they forget to bring lunch from home, sometimes they don't eat lunch at all!"

At this, at least 50 students stand up and applaud. Even Maya stands and applauds, although she rolls her eyes a little, too. The other students join in the cheering.

Of course, a few students start booing, just to be jerks.

"Eat more bacon!" says one, cupping his hands around his mouth so the sound will carry.

"Eat a vegetarian!" says another, laughing and throwing pieces of paper.

"Okay everyone, that's enough!" the moderator says from stage. The students who are booing the vegetarians just look like troublemakers now.

Roger looks into the audience. He finally realizes how many students are vegetarian; he has never thought to find out before.

"What about you, Roger? What will you spend money on?"

"Well, I would like to have a new sign for the cafeteria," he says. "And that could certainly include any vegetarian options that the school may end up providing."

"Oh please! Without me to push for it, the school will never change its menu," Kelly says. "Roger offers empty promises. And he thinks he is better than me because I'm a girl!"

The students start to applaud and Roger watches the Harrison brothers sneak out the back door.

When the debate is over, Roger can tell that he lost. His failure is palpable; he can feel it. Students clamor around Kelly in a group, hugging her and telling her how they can't wait for the new lunch menu.

Only a few people come up to Roger.

"I liked your nice sign," says Peggy, pushing her glasses up on her nose and squinting.

"Thanks," said Roger. "Can I count on your vote next week on election day?"

"Oh, that," Peggy says. "Well, actually, I'm voting for Kelly. I just wanted to be nice to you."

After school, the Harrison brothers are waiting outside to talk to Roger. He notices they are carrying some of Kelly's signs.

"We're going to have to withdraw our support," Boyd Harrison tells him.

"We just don't think you look like the winning candidate," Trent Harrison says. "And we really need to get behind someone who can help bring our dad more business."

"What are you talking about?" Roger says, angrily. "I was your guy! You supported me! I thought we were friends."

"Yeah, friends. Well, about that...You see, it's just that Kelly will bring in a lot more business for our dad's company," says Trent.

Boyd nods in approval. "It's nothing personal. You're a nice dude and all. But Kelly has a little more... *spirit*."

"Kelly? Oh please!" Roger is yelling now. "Her signs are all handmade! Didn't you see them? It's just hipster junk!"

"Oh, yeah, you noticed that? We went for a more 'indie' feel with these." Trent says.

"Tried to make them look handmade." Boyd interjects. "The hipsters love that. We're glad you noticed."

Kelly is coming out of the school now, and the Harrison brothers walk away from Roger without saying a word. Each brother puts an arm around Kelly.

"How's our best girl?" they ask.

Kelly smiles. "Doing just great now," she says. "Now that Roger looks like a woman-hating meat-eating loser."

"We've got this election in the bag," Boyd says. "A vegetarian bag, that is."

Trent holds up a bag of veggie burgers. "We've even been eating these at lunch, showing all those health-conscious kids that we're one of them."

"Well, you sure do look trustworthy now, don't you?" Kelly says, laughing. "But do you have any real food? I'm so sick of this vegetarian junk. My stomach is killing me!"

"You bet we do," says Boyd. "In fact, we have a whole bunch of hot dogs left over from Roger's barbeque yesterday. Let's go to our house and have dinner."

"By the way," Kelly says, "How did you convince people not to go get delicious free hot dogs? I think he could have really turned people to his side with that."

"It was easy," Boyd says. "We started a rumor that Roger left the hot dogs out in his car overnight. Nobody wanted to get sick. He was so depressed; he just left everything sitting there. We grabbed all the leftovers and took them back home."

"That's brilliant," Kelly says. "I can't thank you enough!"

"Well, you won't have to thank us once you're elected. Just make sure the school uses our dad's business. And, oh yeah, when the cafeteria goes vegetarian, you know which veggie burgers are the best choice."

Boyd dangles the bag in front of her and, for the first time, she reads the label: "Harrison's Burgers."

"Victory has never tasted so sweet," Kelly says.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why does Kelly say she is running for class president?
 - A. She says the school needs new signs.
 - B. She says the school cafeteria should have more hot dogs.
 - C. She says she thinks the school can be better.
 - D. She says the football games can be more exciting.

2. What motivates the actions of Boyd and Trent Harrison?
 - A. They want to be elected class presidents.
 - B. They want to bring in money for their family's businesses.
 - C. They want to prove they are better than Kelly.
 - D. They want to embarrass Roger in front of the school.

3. The Harrison brothers give Roger free signs for his election campaign so that their father's sign company will get money from the school. Which evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?
 - A. "The election banners were given to him as a gift by the Harrison kids. Their dad owns Harrison Sign Manufacturers and made the signs for free."
 - B. "They shake hands and give him the free signs, which suddenly don't seem so free."
 - C. "Roger looks around the school and sees that they do, in fact, need new signs. The exit sign above the main door is cracked."
 - D. "'Just make sure that when you get elected-and we are confident that you will-you tell the school that they need new signs.'"

4. How can Boyd and Trent Harrison best be described?
 - A. loyal
 - B. unintelligent
 - C. opportunistic
 - D. idealistic

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. an election with two crooked candidates
- B. a kindhearted and honest girl who runs for class president
- C. reasons why teenagers don't believe in voting
- D. why vegetarian food is healthier than hot dogs

6. Read the following sentences: "When the debate is over, Roger can tell that he lost. His failure is **palpable**; he can feel it. Students clamor around Kelly in a group, hugging her and telling her how they can't wait for the new lunch menu."

What does "**palpable**" mean as used in the passage?

- A. unnoticeable and minor
- B. disappointing and annoying
- C. helpful and encouraging
- D. obvious and intense

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

In her election campaign, Kelly says that she wants more vegetarian food in the cafeteria; _____, she does not actually like vegetarian food.

- A. therefore
- B. however
- C. obviously
- D. particularly

8. Who made Kelly's posters?

9. Trent and Boyd Harrison want to use the class election to make money for their family. They give Roger free signs from Harrison Sign Manufacturers so that, if Roger is elected, he will get the school to buy new signs from the Harrison business.

What is another way that the brothers use the election to make money for their family?

10. The word "crooked" can be used to describe something that is dishonest or corrupt. Explain why the election and the people involved in it are crooked.