



Name _____

Date _____

CHILDHOOD OBESITY

These days, more and more children are overweight. A name for being extremely overweight is *obese*. Why is this happening? Doctors, teachers, and other adults believe that children are not getting the right amount of exercise and are not eating the right kinds of food.

In the past, children used to be more active. In early America, there was a lot of work to be done. Children helped on the farms and in the factories. Children didn't have much time to sit around. Today children go to school and come home to watch the television or play video games. Too many of their activities involve sitting and not being active enough. Children are not getting enough exercise, such as running, walking, or riding a bike.

Another main reason for children being overweight is the types of food they eat. More and more families are eating at restaurants or fixing quick foods that are loaded with calories. These types of food begin to add up day after day. Children are eating too many of the wrong foods and not enough of the right foods.

Some of the foods that children should be eating include fruits and vegetables, dairy, grains and cereals, and meat and poultry. These types of foods can help children maintain their weight and help the body fight disease.

STORY QUESTIONS

- Which of the following is not a reason why children don't eat enough healthy foods?
 - Children eat more prepared foods than homemade foods.
 - Children eat out at restaurants more than they used to.
 - Children weigh more than they used to.
 - Unhealthy foods are more readily available these days.
- Which of the following statements would be the best one to be added to the passage?
 - Children need to be taught about the foods they eat and the food choices they make.
 - Parents are obese and overweight.
 - Doctors are finding that more and more children are obese.
 - Scientists are concerned about the food children eat.
- What is the meaning of the word *maintain* in this passage?
 - increase
 - decrease
 - think about
 - keep steady



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 _____

TEACHER SELECTION

It would be a great idea to let children choose their own teachers. So many problems would be solved this way. Besides, children should have the right to choose the teacher that they think would best meet their needs. There should be a day set aside for students at the end of the year to meet all the available teachers for the following year. This could be a question-and-answer period where the students ask questions and the teachers answer. The teacher could also discuss his or her teaching style. Students could determine if they would be comfortable in that classroom.

Many students do not get along with their teachers. Other students are afraid of their teachers. Both of these issues get in the way of the student learning. If the student had more input on his or her teacher, school would be a happier place to be.

Of course the parents would need to be involved. The parents could also interview the teachers and ask questions. This would help alleviate many problems and concerns during the school year. There is the possibility that there would be students and parents who don't care who their teachers are. If this were the case, then these students would go wherever the principal felt like they should be placed. Teacher selection is an idea that needs to be considered!

STORY QUESTIONS

- Which would be the best title for this reading passage?
 - “Choose Your Own Adventure”
 - “My Education—My Choice”
 - “Parental Requests”
 - “Teachers Choose to Teach”
- Which of the following is the main reason to choose your own teacher?
 - Students would be able to select a teacher that meets their particular learning style.
 - Parents would be more comfortable in school.
 - You would get to choose the kids in your class.
 - Students would be able to pick a teacher whom they have heard good things about.
- What is meant by the phrase *teacher's style* in this passage?
 - the way a teacher teaches and the classroom environment
 - the clothes a teacher wears
 - the way a teacher decorates the bulletin boards and classroom
 - the way a teacher begins class each day



Name _____ Date _____

CHARACTER EDUCATION

There has been a lot of talk lately about the importance of teaching values in the classroom. Values are characteristics such as honesty, kindness, hard work, and integrity. The classroom should not be responsible to make sure these ideas are taught. Schools should support these values, but they should not be held responsible to teach them. It is up to the parents to decide what values should be taught. This is the parent's job and right.

One reason is that the schools do not have time to teach all of the necessary values. Teachers barely have enough time to teach the subjects and topics they are already responsible for teaching. How would the schools decide which values to teach? There would be teachers who disagree with parents on what to teach.

Another reason is that there isn't enough money to take on this job. School budgets are already stretched too thin. Schools do not have the resources to teach values adequately. Students need consistent modeling and instruction on these life skills. Let the schools support these values but focus on the curriculum.

STORY QUESTIONS

- People who agree with this passage probably feel that . . .
 - parents should take more responsibility in teaching their children.
 - schools need more responsibilities.
 - schools have enough money to teach values.
 - teachers should receive more training and instruction.
- The main question this passage asks is . . .
 - When did values begin being taught in schools?
 - Why doesn't the school teach values?
 - Who should be responsible to teach values?
 - If the school doesn't teach the values, how will students be taught?
- _____ is an example of a value.

a. Aggression	c. Courage
b. Passiveness	d. Disagreement
- Which of the following statements is not a reason why schools shouldn't be responsible for teaching values?
 - Schools do not have enough teachers to teach values.
 - Parents and teachers would disagree on which values should be taught.
 - Schools are not aware of what values are.
 - Schools do not have time or money to be responsible for teaching values.



Name _____

Date _____

TOO MUCH TV!

How many hours a day do you watch television? How many hours a week? Most children watch way too much television. If children are watching too much television, it means that they are not reading enough books. They are probably not getting enough exercise either. Watching television doesn't challenge our bodies mentally or physically. It is a "brain dead" activity.

Television is also not good for children because many shows are too violent. There aren't very many shows at night that could be considered children's shows. Many shows that are made for adults are shown during the time when children are watching television. It is not good for children to see so much violence. Some researchers say that watching this kind of program on television leads some children to do violent things in real life.

Many children say that there is nothing to do but watch television. This just isn't true. Children can go on walks, take a bike ride, or learn how to cook. They can play a game, do their homework, play jump rope, and do jumping jacks. They can also play soccer, basketball, football, or dance. There are so many things to do and so little time. Children should turn off the television because they are missing out on too much fun!

STORY QUESTIONS

- What is the main idea of the reading passage?
 - Children enjoy free time outside.
 - Children watch too much television.
 - Television programs are too violent.
 - There should be a way to block violent television shows.
- What is meant by the term "brain dead" in this passage?
 - They are condemned.
 - They are unsafe.
 - They are not using their brains.
 - They are torn down.
- According to the passage, why do children watch too much television?
 - It is a requirement for families with small children.
 - They are enticed to watch with the commercials.
 - It is easier than reading or playing games.
 - Television is a profitable industry.
- Which of the following statements is not a result of watching violent television?
 - Children model what they see on television.
 - Children are exposed to violence on a daily basis.
 - Children are too young to watch some programs.
 - Children learn from their parents how to treat others.



Name _____ Date _____

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Do you like to go school shopping each year? For many students, school shopping just isn't necessary. These students go to school where school uniforms are required. School uniforms are typically a white shirt with dark pants or a skirt. There is no need to check out the local ads for the new styles or trends—these children already know what they will wear on the first day of school long before it arrives.

Some people feel that uniforms are not a good idea. They think that children should be able to have a choice in what they wear. Wearing uniforms seems too strict. Bad behavior doesn't happen because of the clothes they are wearing. Uniforms can be a hassle. Some people feel that they are uncomfortable. It can be boring to wear the same thing every day.

On the other hand, many people agree with student uniforms. These people feel that uniforms make all students feel safe and comfortable. You don't have to worry about gangs when everyone is wearing the same uniform. Behavior improves when students wear a uniform and dress nicely. Uniforms can also be much cheaper than the latest fads. Some say that uniforms are easy to wear, and they are comfortable, too.

So what is your opinion?

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of the third paragraph about school uniforms?
 - a. School uniforms may be a good idea.
 - b. School uniforms show school spirit.
 - c. School uniforms can be expensive.
 - d. School uniforms are uncomfortable, but they keep the students in line.
2. What is one of the reasons presented in the passage that supports the idea that student uniforms improve student behavior?
 - a. Students are more comfortable in school uniforms.
 - b. There are winter and summer uniforms available.
 - c. Students can't wear gang-related clothing if school uniforms are the rule.
 - d. Students feel safe at school because the uniforms are protective gear.
3. Which statement shows that the author is trying to appeal to the parents in the audience?
 - a. Wearing uniforms seems too strict.
 - b. Uniforms can be much cheaper than the latest fads.
 - c. Uniforms are easy to wear and comfortable.
 - d. Uniforms can be a hassle.



Name _____

Date _____

ENOUGH SLEEP

Yawn! Are you getting enough sleep? There are experts who don't think you are. The average bedtime for most children today is much later than it used to be. Years ago, children used to go to bed by 7:30 P.M. Today, children are lucky to get in bed by 9:00 P.M. There are many reasons why experts believe this is the case.

One of the reasons is because children are involved in too many activities. Children have the opportunity to be involved in soccer, ballet, basketball, ceramics, Girl Scouts, football, piano, and more. There is no end to the number of activities in which children can become involved. This means that as soon as school is out, many children are expected to attend practices. By the time children get home, they get a quick bite of dinner to eat. After dinner, there needs to be time set aside to complete homework. Most children want to watch some television before they take a bath or shower and get to bed.

Another reason children aren't sleeping as much is because more and more families have both parents working. By the time parents get home, they have a lot of work to do. They need to get dinner going. They need to run children here and there. And they need to help children with homework.

Families need to cut back. Children need to be involved in fewer activities. Parents need to come up with a better schedule for the family. Children need more sleep!

STORY QUESTIONS

- What is meant by the phrase *cut back* in the passage?
 - budgets are being reduced
 - pulling away
 - reduce and simplify
 - eliminate activities
- Which of the following statements is not one of the reasons kids don't get enough sleep?
 - Children are involved in too many activities.
 - Both parents are working and there isn't enough time.
 - Children are busy attending practices and doing homework.
 - Children have to be at school too early in the morning.
- Which words best describe the children mentioned in this passage?
 - harried and worn out
 - prepared and adjusted
 - calm and peaceful
 - chaotic and smooth



Name _____ Date _____

AMOUNT OF HOMEWORK

Did you get your homework done last night? Do you feel you have enough homework, or do you feel that you have too much? This has been an argument that has been going on for years. Teachers and parents have differing opinions on the matter. Some teachers feel that a lot of homework should go home. On the other hand, some parents feel that there is not enough or just too much homework coming home! How much is enough?

Many experts believe that some homework should go home, but they don't all agree about the amounts. Experts also say that homework should be for review only. This means that a teacher shouldn't send home anything that is new. A student should only practice and complete work that has been taught in school. It can be confusing for a student to do new material alone.

Experts also say that teachers should only send homework that students can do without any parental assistance. Too many times, teachers send homework that requires an adult to assist in completing it. This is too demanding on the families. Teachers should never send homework just for fun. Homework should always be meaningful and helpful. So, what are your thoughts? Do you agree with the experts? What type of homework do you have? Is it the right kind and right amount?

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 - a. The type and amount of homework should be reasonable.
 - b. There is not enough homework going home.
 - c. Homework can be time-consuming for the family.
 - d. Experts disagree on the amount of homework that is sent home.
2. Who is the audience for this reading passage?
 - a. school experts
 - b. teachers
 - c. parents
 - d. students
3. Which statement from the reading passage shows who is the audience for this passage?
 - a. Experts say that teachers should only send home work that students can do on their own.
 - b. Homework should always be meaningful activities.
 - c. Did you get your homework done last night?
 - d. Homework should never be something new.



Name _____

Date _____

HEAVY BACKPACKS

Do you carry a backpack to school each day? How heavy is the backpack? Some experts believe that the backpacks that students carry are too heavy. It isn't because books are heavier these days. Rather, experts say that students are expected to carry more and more books in their backpacks. These books are heavy and cause a strain on the students' backs.

Experts say that the backpack should not weigh more than 10–15% of a student's body weight. Anything heavier than that can lead to back problems. The problems range from muscle strain to poor back alignment. The number of people being treated for backpack strain has increased. Emergency rooms are noticing a rise in the problem.

Does carrying a backpack that is too heavy really cause a problem? Apparently it does. Some of the signs to watch for are if the student complains of back pain or if he or she walks bent over sideways to adjust for the weight. Another sign to watch for is if they complain of tingling in the arms or hands.

To accommodate for the weight, experts recommend that students bring a backpack to school that has wheels. Another recommendation is a backpack with a waist strap. The strap helps to support the waist.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. "To *accommodate* for the weight, experts recommend that students bring a backpack to school that has wheels." *Accommodate* means . . .
 - a. to make room for.
 - b. to show strength for.
 - c. to compensate or adjust for.
 - d. to rely on.
2. Why are the backpacks that students carry heavier these days?
 - a. Students are more comfortable with the amount of homework assigned.
 - b. Students are expected to carry more books around.
 - c. Students risk muscle strain or poor back alignment.
 - d. Students are assigned more homework these days.
3. The passage is mostly about . . .
 - a. learning to use a backpack correctly.
 - b. bringing less books in your backpack.
 - c. being aware of the weight you carry around in your backpack.
 - d. knowing the signs of back pain and muscle strain.



Name _____ Date _____

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are not allowed at most schools, but not all students are happy about this fact. There are two sides to the issue. Some feel that cell phones at school are distracting and are not necessary. Others feel that having access to a cell phone is a must.

Many parents give their children a cell phone so that they can have immediate contact. With more and more violence occurring at school, parents want to know that their children are safe.

Those on this side of the issue also believe that students should keep the cell phone on vibrate to prevent interruptions. This group understands that students may not be able to immediately answer a phone call because they may be in the middle of a test or a lecture.

On the other side of the issue, there are those who feel that cell phones should not be allowed at schools. There is no reason that parents need to be able to contact their children during school hours. Parents have always been able to check in with the school if they need to communicate with their children.

Cell phones also add to the problem of cheating in school. If students have access to their cell phones during school, they are able to send text messages back and forth to other students. A student could text message the answers to test problems to another student.

STORY QUESTIONS

- This passage is mostly about . . .
 - how cell phones disturb the learning at school.
 - using the cell phone appropriately at school.
 - learning to eliminate cheating with the cell phone.
 - whether or not cell phones should be allowed at school.
- Which of the following statements is a reason why some people would want to have access to a cell phone at school?
 - to allow students to use the cell phone during a test
 - to occupy students during recess
 - to contact students/parents in an emergency
 - Text messaging at school can save paper.
- The passage says that cell phones add to the problem of cheating at school. Which sentence supports that statement?
 - There are those who feel that cell phones should not be allowed at schools.
 - Parents have always been able to check in with their children at school.
 - Not all students have cell phones, so text messaging wouldn't be fair.
 - A student could text message the answers to test problems to another student.



Name _____

Date _____

SCHOOL LUNCH MENU

School lunches have never been known for their quality and taste, but things have gotten even worse. The school lunches that students are expected to eat not only taste bad, but they are unhealthy.

For many students, the school lunch is the only chance they have for a well-balanced meal. But most school lunches are anything but healthy. Most school lunches do not meet the minimum standards for protein, vitamins, calcium, or iron. Most school lunches, however, have more than the suggested amount of fat.

There are things parents can do to help their children make better choices at lunchtime. One way is to look over the lunch menu at home before any choices are made. Discuss choices together. Parents can suggest healthier choices. If there are no healthy choices available, then parents can suggest a lunch from home. Parents can teach children to avoid chips, sodas, and sweets.

One of the best ways that parents can teach children how to eat healthy is to set a good example. The family eating habits at home often follow the student to school. If the student is used to eating unhealthy meals, then the same habits will take place during lunchtime at school.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
 - a. Money should be set aside in the school budget for healthier lunches.
 - b. Parents should discuss healthy lunch choices with their child.
 - c. Sending lunch from home is always a healthier choice.
 - d. Parents are sharing their eating habits with their children.
2. You can infer from the passage that the author feels school lunches should be required to . . .
 - a. serve appetizing lunches to the students.
 - b. meet minimum standards for protein, vitamins, calcium, and iron.
 - c. help children make better food choices.
 - d. set the standards for parents to follow at home.
3. What does the author say will happen if the student is used to eating unhealthy meals at home?
 - a. The student will have the same eating habits at school.
 - b. Parents will change their habits of eating at home.
 - c. The lunch menu will be more closely observed.
 - d. School lunches have less fat in them.



Name _____ Date _____

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S MOVIES

Since the beginning of animation, movie producers have used animated movies to entertain children and adults alike. But lately it seems like that is all that's offered to children. Studios spend lots of money making movies for adults, but little money is spent on making real movies for children—real movies with real people.

When children read a book, they are taken to another place. A book helps the reader experience new things in life through the eyes of a character. Lessons are learned, and children gain from these experiences. These same things can happen with real movies. But what can be learned from an animated movie with a make-believe character or animal? How can children relate to the make-believe setting? Most of these movies have little to offer except for a few laughs.

It seems another goal of these movies is to make money. Pajamas, toys, food, games, and a variety of other items are sold with the pictures of characters on them.

Bring back movies with substance. Bring back the characters with values. Provide children with entertainment that inspires and enlightens. There are more than enough animated movies to last a lifetime. Let's create movies that inspire for a lifetime.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the author's opinion of animated movies?
 - a. Animated movies are shallow and do not inspire.
 - b. Animated movies are funny and entertaining.
 - c. Animated movies are an inexpensive way to make a movie.
 - d. Animated movies are amazing creations.
2. Which statement in the passage portrays the author's opinion?
 - a. Pajamas, toys, food, and games are sold with characters from animated movies.
 - b. Animated movies take place in a make-believe setting.
 - c. Studios spend a lot of money making movies for adults.
 - d. Animated movies have little to offer except for a few laughs.
3. What does the statement "Let's create movies that will inspire for a lifetime" mean?
 - a. The author wants movies to be shown for a lifetime.
 - b. Movies with value and substance can have an impact that lasts for a lifetime.
 - c. Movies should be re-run for many years to come.
 - d. Movies should be shown to each generation.



Name _____ Date _____

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Can children be involved in too many activities? Some people believe they are. Some experts say that kids are overworked and overstimulated. They feel that students do not have enough time to be kids.

One of the reasons for this is because there are so many choices available. Children can be involved in activities any hour of the day and any day of the year.

How should parents decide how many activities are the right amount? Experts say that parents should set aside time for homework, time to eat dinner as a family, and time for kids to be kids. This means that kids are allowed free time. If these three criteria are met, then extra activities outside of this are considered okay.

Parents should listen closely to their children as well. Children give signals to their parents all the time about how they are doing. Children who are tired all of the time or are struggling with school may need to have their schedules examined and rearranged.

Children may not state their feelings, but they will send messages to parents letting them know how they are feeling about their life. It takes a strong parent to step back and reevaluate how children spend their time.

STORY QUESTIONS

- What are the criteria suggested by experts for balancing extracurricular activities?
 - Kids are allowed free time and money.
 - There is time for homework, dinner as a family, and free time.
 - There is time for one extra curricular activity.
 - The family needs to organize a calendar to keep track of all the activities
- What type of parents do experts say are the ones who are able to keep their child's life balanced?
 - dedicated
 - ambitious
 - organized
 - strong
- Which of the following is not an example of a signal that a child uses to show he or she is "overbooked"?
 - The child acts tired all the time.
 - The child feels excited about participating in an activity.
 - The child feels like they don't have time to eat as a family.
 - The child is not doing well in school.



Name _____ Date _____

DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOL

Think of the behavior of the students at your school. How do students behave? Do they show respect for teachers and leaders? Do teachers follow up on discipline? Are students respectful of themselves and other students? Is there room for improvement at your school?

Violence is becoming a serious problem in schools today. Experts believe that strict rules and procedures are the only way to curb this violence. But this is not what seems to be happening. Many schools seem to be loosening up the accountability they place on their students. In previous years whatever the school said was the law.

Today, parents can come in and complain about how their child is being treated. Parents get their children out of all kinds of situations, only to find that the child repeats the poor behavior. These kinds of parents are, in effect, lessening the security of the school. Children who do not feel there are any boundaries take risks that are unsafe and disrespectful.

Parents need to support the teacher and leaders at school better. Parents need to teach their children that the school rules and expectations should be followed. Teachers should not be afraid to discipline students and follow through on consequences. Violence at school begins with how adults respond to inappropriate student behavior.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. You can tell from the passage that the author feels that poor discipline at school leads to . . .
 - a. less control from parents at school.
 - b. security issues at school.
 - c. stronger teachers and administration.
 - d. confident teachers and students.
2. Which statement from the passage portrays the author's opinion about how to curb violence at school?
 - a. Violence is becoming a serious problem in schools today.
 - b. Violence at school begins with how adults respond to inappropriate behavior.
 - c. Violence at school begins at home.
 - d. Children who do not feel there are any boundaries take risks that are unsafe and disrespectful.
3. What is meant by the phrase *loosening up*?
 - a. letting go
 - b. being more strict
 - c. being less strict about rules
 - d. designing new rules



Name _____

Date _____

DRUG-PREVENTION PROGRAMS

There are many programs that have been set up to help keep kids off drugs. The question is whether or not these programs really work. Once a week, time is set aside to allow police officers and teachers to teach these programs. Time is taken away from the important topics and subjects to teach these programs.

It's not that teaching kids to say no to drugs isn't important. The problem is that sitting in a program like this doesn't really change whether or not a child tries drugs.

Research has shown that the most effective way to teach kids not to take drugs comes from the home. Conversations that parents have with their children are more powerful than a quick lesson in class.

There is so much money that is wasted in these programs. Parents need to take back the responsibility. The school needs to get back in the business of teaching math, reading, and writing skills.

STORY QUESTIONS

- What is the main idea of the reading passage?
 - The government is not spending enough money on drug-prevention.
 - The money for these programs should be given to the parents to teach their children about drugs.
 - More time needs to be set aside for the drug-prevention programs.
 - Parents should be responsible to teach their children about drug-prevention, not schools.
- You can tell from the passage that the author . . .
 - believes that drug-prevention programs are a waste of money.
 - believes that drug-prevention programs need to be restructured.
 - believes that parents should not be responsible for teaching their children about drugs.
 - believes that drug-prevention programs need better funding.
- Which of the following statements does not support the author's opinion?
 - Parents are the best drug-prevention program.
 - Money for drug programs should be increased.
 - It is very important to teach children about the effects of drugs.
 - Sitting in an hour class each week has no effect on drug use and experimentation.