

Name _____

Storms of Life

"Are you ready?" Walter nodded as he clambered up into his pa's truck. Finally, he had permission to accompany his father on his daily milk-delivery route. Walter had noticed that even in the midst of dust, failed crops, and hard times, life went on. He'd heard the grownups discussing how they'd stick it out no matter what, but he also heard their wishful thinking: *If only it would rain.*

The truck sputtered to life, with the rattling of chains in the rear. Walter's mother scurried off the front porch, waving to catch their attention. "George! Your lunch!" Walter reached out the window to accept the paper bag. He knew even without looking what the bag would contain. Cold biscuits left from breakfast, dried jerky, and maybe some peas she'd managed to salvage from the garden near the house. He didn't mind working in the garden; they were all grateful for it, but having a few hours today away from the farm felt like a vacation.

"Why are there chains attached to the rear bumper?" Walter hollered over the noise as they made their way down the lane rutted with potholes.

"If a dust storm comes up, I don't want the engine to short out from the static electricity in the air," his pa replied. "Can't afford the repairs or the time it would take away from the delivery route."

Walter quit trying to converse over the racket and, instead, idly gazed out the window. He watched as the bare wheat fields passed before his eyes. The fields, plowed and planted before the market fell, were now dried up and left exposed to the prairie winds. For entertainment, Walter decided to count how many rabbits he saw. He'd probably have better luck counting grasshoppers, as they seemed to be everywhere, ravaging the few remaining crops.

Pa jerked the steering wheel, and Walter was pulled from his thoughts. Walter stared, wishing he could shut his eyes and forget about the ominous black cloud that swirled their way.

Text Questions

- Given the clues in the story, during what period of history is this story most likely set?
 - the Civil War
 - the Dust Bowl
 - the Great Depression
 - World War II
- What is most likely the meaning of the word *salvage* as it is used in the text?
 - Walter's mother was able to rescue the peas from peril.
 - The peas were saved from someone else's garden.
 - Walter's mother was able to sell the peas for money.
 - Walter's mother was able to rescue the peas from being damaged by insects.
- Given the setting, what does the ominous black cloud probably indicate?
 - a heavy rainstorm
 - a tornado
 - a dust storm
 - a steam locomotive
- What is the main idea of the text?
 - People get through hard times the best they can.
 - Walter's family decided to give up.
 - People can't get their work done when it rains.
 - Chains keep engines from being affected by static electricity.
- How do Walter's feelings change throughout the story?

Name _____

Held for Ransom

Sean stumbled on the uneven boardwalk as he made his way over to rest against the rough-hewn planks of the hotel. If only someone would have pity on him and take him in for a night, he could make himself presentable. If he cleaned up well enough, maybe he could convince someone of his prior bank clerk experience, and he could get a job to support himself.

"Hey you," voices mocked him as they passed by. "The port is that way, if you want to board a ship and go back to where you came from."

Running a hand through his unkempt auburn hair, Sean ignored the rude remarks and limped toward the hotel entrance, hoping for a drink of water. His body bore the trauma of the recent eight-week voyage in the ship's hold across the Atlantic. He'd boldly proclaimed his political views back in Ireland, which resulted in his transport against his will, but he'd learned his lesson.

No one would hear a peep out of him in Boston, not that any would listen with so many politicians here.

"Bank clerk, eh?" The manager peered over his spectacles, studying Sean. "Care to elaborate on your story?"

With effort, Sean kept his temper in check. He'd get this job on his own merits, or he'd go elsewhere. It hadn't taken him long to learn no one wanted to hear his tales of woe. His kidnappers claimed they'd taken him prisoner for treason, when in reality he had been held for ransom. A sentinel on board the ship had let it slip that a merchant had ordered his capture, hoping any ransom paid would satisfy the master's unpaid debts. When it was discovered Sean's family had no money, his captors threw him overboard. Fortunately, by the time this happened, the vessel had already entered the Boston harbor.

Text Questions

- Why didn't Sean's family pay the ransom?
 - The master's debts were paid.
 - The ship had arrived in the Boston harbor.
 - Sean's family didn't have any money.
 - Sean was taken prisoner for treason.
- Which of the following is the most recent event to happen in Sean's life?
 - Sean stumbled on the uneven boardwalk.
 - Sean ignored the rude remarks and limped toward the hotel entrance.
 - One of the sentinels on board the ship had let it slip that a merchant had ordered his capture.
 - He boldly proclaimed his political views back in Ireland.
- What does it mean to say Sean had *prior* bank experience?
 - He worked in a bank previously.
 - His bank job was not very important.
 - He kept the books for a religious institution.
 - He was the first person in line to apply for the bank job.
- What is the best summary of the story's problem?
 - Sean must find a way to pay the ransom money.
 - Sean is starting over in a new country and needs to find a job.
 - Sean was held as a political prisoner.
 - Sean endured a rough voyage across the Atlantic.
- What might have happened if the truth about Sean's family had been discovered out at sea?

Name _____

Friend or Foe

Sunlight poured in the windows on that crisp autumn day in 1950, creating a glare that made the writing assignment on the chalkboard difficult to read. The door opened, and a short, dark-haired boy entered.

"Mrs. Lorenzo?" he asked.

Smiling, Mrs. Lorenzo announced his arrival. "Class, Raymond is joining us from Chicago." She directed him to a desk across the aisle from Marlene.

Whispering spread throughout the room as students watched Raymond limp to his desk. His school uniform, consisting of a button-up, long-sleeve shirt and tan shorts, did nothing to conceal the metal braces strapped to his legs with strips of leather.

"Polio," Patricia, Marlene's best friend, whispered. Marlene shivered. She was terrified of that disease. Every summer, newspapers reported the latest victims of the deadly virus. No one knew how it spread. Even if the virus didn't kill you, it could still leave you paralyzed. Doctors and scientists struggled to find a cure or way to prevent polio but with no success.

Patricia went pale as if she had seen a ghost. Some students averted their gaze, while others pointed and

whispered with neighbors. Raymond kept his head down as he made his way to his seat.

Sighs of relief sounded around the room when the lunch bell rang. Scanning the lunchroom, Patricia noticed Raymond, sitting by himself. "No one wants to be around him," she observed as she stood. "Well, I'm going to invite him to eat with us."

"No, Patricia, you can't do that."

Raymond didn't notice her until she had reached his table and stood next to him. "What do you want? Another opportunity to tease?"

"No, just wondered if you wanted some friends." Patricia smiled.

"Why?" he challenged her.

Patricia lowered her head and whispered, "You look lonely . . . and, my brother died of polio two years ago, so I know what it's like."

"I guess that would be all right." For the first time that day, Raymond smiled.

Text Questions

- What caused Raymond to limp?
 - He had sprained his ankle.
 - He wanted to get attention.
 - He had previously had polio.
 - He had been in an accident.
- Based on what you read, which is not a medical effect of polio?
 - People could die.
 - It could paralyze people.
 - Some people had to have braces to walk.
 - It made it difficult for people to do schoolwork.
- What does the word *paralyzed* mean as it is used in the text?
 - make it so people could not help themselves
 - make it so people didn't have any power over others
 - make it so people couldn't move normally
 - make a person die
- In which way did Patricia react to Raymond?
 - She offered to be a friend.
 - She pointed at him.
 - She teased him at lunch.
 - She refused to eat with him.
- What disease or condition might cause similar reactions in people today?

Name _____

Salvage, Anyone?

Gerald whistled in admiration. "Hey, with those swell slats in your wagon, we can carry more salvage in one load." They'd agreed to meet at the bus stop near Gerald's house to canvas the neighborhood for newspaper and aluminum to aid the war effort.

Henry's momentary silence goaded Gerald on even more. "You seem a little distracted. What'cha thinking about? Anna, the new girl? She does have some excellent qualities."

"I'm not thinking about her. Too many other things going on."

"Really? There's another girl?" Gerald couldn't help teasing.

"No, I haven't started to study for the history exam yet." Henry sighed as he turned up a walkway to knock on a neighbor's door, while Gerald went to the adjacent house.

"Thank you very much, ma'am." Henry balanced the cans he'd just received in his arms and staggered to the wagon.

"So what are you going to do?" Gerald continued the conversation where they left off. "The exam is tomorrow, and it covers three or four chapters."

"I know that, and you know that, but fortunately, Dad doesn't realize that. He'd have a fit if he knew I was gathering salvage instead of studying."

Gerald listened sympathetically, depositing the contents of a bulky sack into the wagon. "So why are you out here on a Sunday, taking time away from your studies to collect newspapers and tin cans?"

"I'm not sure. Hearing reports of all those guys enlisting to serve our country, and there isn't anything I can do . . ." His voice trailed off as they parted ways once again to solicit more donations.

"Hey, Henry, do you know anyone in the neighborhood who has a truck? This guy's got some old tires in his garage that he says we can get tomorrow." Gerald gestured over his shoulder.

Text Questions

- Which statement gives the best clue as to the time period of this story?
 - "We can carry more salvage in one load."
 - Henry turned up a walkway to knock on a neighbor's door, while Gerald went to the adjacent house.
 - "The exam is tomorrow, and it covers three or four chapters."
 - They'd agreed to meet at the bus stop near Gerald's house to canvas the neighborhood for newspaper and aluminum for the war effort.
- What does the word *adjacent* mean as it is used in the text?
 - near or close to
 - in the same neighborhood
 - touching
 - with a fence between
- Why is Henry distracted from the task at hand?
 - He'd rather think about the new girl.
 - He hasn't started studying for the history exam.
 - He keeps thinking about how to fix up the wagon, so they can carry more things.
 - He's trying to keep track of which houses they've visited.
- What prompted Henry to take time away from his studies?
 - He wanted to impress his friend.
 - He didn't want his dad to find out about the history exam.
 - He wanted to help the war effort.
 - He wants to get out of studying for the test.
- How would you describe the story's problem and a possible resolution?

Name _____

Space Wars

Theresa entered homeroom and started toward her desk before pausing, a bit puzzled. Nearly all the students were gathered around Stephen's desk, which was unusual. Everyone liked Stephen just fine; he was the smartest guy in class and friendly enough, but he didn't quite fit in. Intrigued, she wandered over to see for herself what was happening.

"What's this all about?" Theresa asked Rebecca.

Motioning toward Stephen's desk, Rebecca said, "Steven's got a magazine. Do you remember the headlines from last summer?"

Not surprised that Stephen would not only have a magazine, but also have already read it, Theresa shook her head no. She hadn't paid any special attention to newspaper headlines, although she did remember someone saying something about sending a man to the moon.

"It's about the space program," Rebecca said, stepping to one side so Theresa could get a closer look at the glossy photograph in the magazine.

Overhearing their conversation, Stephen spoke up. "Specifically, this article's about the next steps we might take in space exploration. An administrator from NASA predicts a manned space station, as well as expeditions to Mars."

"Well, I don't see how launching people into space is going to do anything to help us with wars and rumors of wars here on Earth." Theresa fussed at nobody in particular.

Rebecca tugged her friend away from the gathering. "Don't sweat it; let the government worry about it." She turned her notebook to a clean page and began to doodle. "What are you going to wear to the all-skate Friday night?"

Ignoring Rebecca, Theresa stared absently out the window. She'd taken her friend's advice to heart and, leaving the cares of the world behind, was lost in a daydream about what it might be like to voyage into space and see the surface of the moon for herself.

Text Questions

- What role does Stephen play in the story?
 - He attracts attention because he is the smartest kid in class.
 - He disagrees with Theresa about what is important.
 - He brings a news magazine to class, which generates a discussion about current events.
 - He provides comic relief for the tension in the story.
- Which historical event does the story refer to?

a. World War II	c. the first man on the moon
b. the Civil Rights movement	d. a space shuttle accident
- What does the word *predicts* mean as it is used in the text?

a. describes plans NASA has already in place	c. tells exactly what will happen in the future
b. states facts about the space program	d. says what he thinks will happen
- How did Theresa respond to the discussion?
 - She began to dream about what it would be like to travel to the moon.
 - She debated the pros and cons of the space-exploration program with Stephen.
 - She ignored the discussion and planned a Friday-night outing with Rebecca.
 - She borrowed the magazine from Stephen to read the article for herself.
- How would you describe the story problem, or conflict, for the main character?

Name _____

Leap from the Sky

"He'll surely break himself into bits on the cobblestones," a bystander muttered, shaking his head.

Craning his head to look at the strange contraption above, Antonio watched, spellbound. Everyone had gathered in the public square to watch this breathtaking event. For weeks, townspeople had talked of Faust's latest invention—a half-moon shaped piece of linen held open by a few light pieces of wood. This device, in theory, would allow Faust to float gently to the ground.

A gasp echoed through the crowd. "He's jumping off the ledge of the tower!"

Antonio's mouth dropped open in amazement as Faust descended from the sky, falling slowly enough that he might actually escape with his life. Local tales claimed the inventor had constructed his device based on a drawing Leonardo Da Vinci had made over a century

earlier. Antonio had heard how Faust dared to deviate from the original plans, changing the shape of the canopy from a pyramid-shaped chute because he wanted to create more drag.

"Call the doctor!" Antonio found himself swept along with the throng of people who rushed from the square toward the meadow outside of town, chasing the drifting form in the sky above. Would Faust ever land? It was unbelievable that the weight of the frame hadn't already pulled him to the ground in a heap of rubble.

The mob of people prevented Antonio from observing the actual event, but the cheers alerted him to Faust's successful landing. "What will this lead to next?" Antonio couldn't help contemplating the potential uses for this marvelous machine.

Text Questions

1. Why did Faust land in the meadow?
 - a. He didn't want to land on the people.
 - b. The parachute had faulty steering.
 - c. He didn't want to injure himself on the cobblestones.
 - d. He drifted in the breeze.
2. What does the word *bystander* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. someone who was observing but not participating
 - b. someone who helped Faust ascend to the tower
 - c. someone who stood by ready to catch Faust when he fell
 - d. someone who watched and recorded the occasion for history
3. What kept Faust from crashing to the ground?
 - a. the wood frame
 - b. the grass in the meadow
 - c. the billowing cloth canopy
 - d. the ability Faust had to fly a machine
4. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?
 - a. to show that Faust was the first person who had this idea
 - b. to show the development of the invention of the parachute
 - c. to show Antonio's amazement
 - d. to show that Faust survived the experiment
5. How has the structure of parachutes changed, and what are they used for today?

Name _____

Maria Isabella Boyd

The soldiers surrounded our house, taking livestock for food and stealing our horses. Then, those Union soldiers broke into our house! They demanded to raise their flag in our house against our wishes. They were rude and insulted my mother. When I couldn't take any more abuse, I reacted and did something foolish.

I was placed on trial and should have been hanged, but due to my young age, I was acquitted by a board of inquiry. Even so, they placed me under surveillance at my father's hotel. "What a fantastic opportunity to spy on the Union army," I thought.

The Union officers and generals visited the hotel on a regular basis. Two guards were assigned to watch me, but nobody bothered to try to keep their talk secret from me, perhaps because I am a girl. I would always be so polite and charming, but I also listened very carefully.

Later, I would write down what I heard, give it to my maid, Eliza Hopewell, and she would carry it to the Confederate generals. After a while, when my notes proved to be correct, I was accepted as a true spy!

One evening in 1862, I overheard some Union generals making elaborate plans to attack a fort. This was such critical information that I went to see the general at the fort myself. I even had to dodge bullets to get there! For this endeavor, I was awarded the Southern Cross of Honor. I was later arrested and thrown into a Union prison.

After a month in prison, I was freed, arrested again, imprisoned, freed, and then finally sent to England for the duration of the war. The one thought that helped me through it all was that I had done all a woman could for her country's cause.

Text Questions

- Which statement does not give a clue as to the time period of this story?
 - They demanded to raise their flag in our house against our wishes.
 - The Union officers and generals visited the hotel on a regular basis.
 - I would always be so polite and charming, but I also listened very carefully.
 - I overheard some Union generals making elaborate plans to attack a fort.
- What is the main conflict in the story?
 - The narrator was tried and hanged for treason.
 - A young girl becomes a spy for the Confederate army while being held under surveillance.
 - The narrator has to dodge bullets on her way to the fort.
 - The maid was caught while delivering messages to Confederate officers.
- What does the word *acquitted* mean as it is used in the text?
 - she was released from a duty or obligation
 - she paid a debt
 - she conducted herself honorably
 - she was cleared from a charge
- Which title would be a good alternative for this text?
 - "Escaping Imprisonment"
 - "A True Spy"
 - "A Confederate Spy"
 - "Confederate Courier"
- What role did spies play in the Civil War?

Name _____

The Raft

Marc shut the book with a satisfied sigh and leaned back against the headboard with his hands locked behind his head. Imagine, he thought, what it would be like to sail across the ocean like the men who had sailed a raft from South America to the Polynesian islands. Growing up in Hawaii, he'd logged hours in and on the ocean—surfing, kayaking, and snorkeling. Through his experiences, he had cultivated a healthy respect and love for the ocean. His favorite stories were about the people of the islands who had arrived in crude boats centuries earlier.

Jumping up, Marc struck his fist in his hand, exclaiming, "I'll do it! I'll build my own raft and sail to the Pacific coast to visit my cousins in California."

"Plan carefully, son," his dad said when Marc presented the idea to him. "There are many obstacles confronting you that you'll have to overcome. Consider the best wood to use, how you'll keep food fresh, how long your voyage will take, how you will navigate, and how you will steer."

Marc grinned, pleased his dad hadn't rejected the idea or teased him. "I realize survival out on the ocean is a challenge. I'll start small with a raft I can test in a local bay."

Eventually, Marc managed to tie some small, straight logs together. He constructed a mast and, with his mom's assistance, fashioned a sail out of a sheet. No navigational tools would be needed as he was just sailing from one side of the bay to the other.

He and his father placed the raft, which had been christened "Leaky," onto a trailer and they unloaded it at the dock. Marc jumped on the raft, hoisted the sail, and set forth for the other side of the bay. However, he'd forgotten one of the things his father had mentioned. He also failed to account for waves close to the beach. Sadly, Marc never made it to the other side.

Text Questions

- What did Marc likely forget that his dad had mentioned?
 - food for the journey
 - a rudder for steering
 - a mast for the sail
 - navigational tools
- Why did Marc decide to sail across the bay?
 - He wanted to test his raft before going out on the ocean.
 - He had never been out on the ocean before.
 - He wanted to get to the other side of the bay.
 - His raft was too small to sail on the ocean.
- What historical event forms the basis for this story?
 - men sailing a raft from South America to the Polynesian islands
 - early explorers who sailed in crude boats and populated the islands
 - the invention of rafting
 - a hurricane in the Hawaiian Islands
- What does it mean to say people sailed in *crude* boats?
 - The boats were made out of natural materials.
 - The men who sailed them used rough language.
 - The boats were rough and not carefully made.
 - There weren't any decorations on the boats.
- What inspired Marc to build a raft?

Name _____

The Midnight Ride

Mom woke me before dawn, just as the roosters were starting to crow, so I could feed the chickens and do my other chores. For days, folks in town had been speculating about the British. Would there be fighting? From when and where would they come?

After a breakfast of oats, Pa and I went out to chop wood for the day. After Pa left for the silversmith shop, Mom and I worked on reading, ciphering, and writing. When that was done, I left to help the local minister of the Old North Church.

When I arrived at the church, I spotted several men whom I recognized as local leaders. These men, the “mechanics,” as they were known, spied on the British and gathered to share information among them. The talk of the British was getting serious. I did my best to listen and tried to understand.

The minister gave me two lanterns and a task. “Clean the glass as shiny as possible, and make sure they have

good wicks and plenty of oil.” Afterwards I carried them up, one by one, to the top of the church tower. I left some flint and papers to start a fire in case I needed to light them. But why? This made no sense to me.

Pa came by in a rush, leapt off his horse before it stopped, and gathered the men for a hurried meeting. “Stay here at the church tonight,” he said, then left.

After dark, I was reading by the fire when the minister scurried in. “Make haste to climb the ladder and stairs of the tower and light both lanterns.” I didn’t ask why but made my way to the top and lit both as bright as possible.

Soon after, I heard the pounding hooves of a horse as Pa raced through the countryside, letting his comrades along the way know that “the Regulars are on the move.”

Text Questions

- Which words relate specifically to the historical setting?
 - shiny, bright, light
 - church, tower, countryside
 - folks, minister, leaders
 - lantern, flint, wicks
- What did the mechanics do?
 - They worked in the silversmith shop.
 - They mended wagon wheels.
 - They spied on the British and shared information.
 - They worked on the British ships.
- What does it mean to say the townspeople were *speculating* about the British?
 - They were guessing what the British might do next.
 - They were pondering whether or not to join with the British.
 - They were taking part in the risky venture of spying on the British.
 - They were reflecting on the past history of the British.
- What significant event in history does this story retell?

a. The Boston Tea Party	c. The Boston Massacre
b. The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere	d. The Stamp Act
- Based on what you read, what is the role of the narrator of the story?

Name _____

Bombs Away

High-pitched air-raid alarms sounded as Mother gathered us, and we made our way into the cellar. German bombers were approaching the shores and would arrive at any moment.

We lit candles, and Mother worked on her sewing. "Can I please go back upstairs to watch the bombs fall?" my brother begged. I played with my dolls, and soon the distant booms began, rattling our house like a kettle drum.

The booming sounds grew increasingly louder as the ground trembled, and bits of dust fell from the ceiling. From time to time, Mom would glance upwards with a worried look.

After a while, the alarms whirled again, and the noise and ground shaking finally ceased. Mom cautiously led us upstairs. Broken dishes littered the kitchen, and the cupboard doors stood askew.

"We don't have any electricity, and the water isn't running," Mother informed us. "It's a good thing you

helped fill the five-gallon drums with water so we'll be able to cook and drink. But most importantly, the house is still standing." She breathed a small sigh of relief.

I walked out into the front yard to discover that ours was not the only house with shattered windows. Several large fires were burning around London, including the house two doors down, which was now demolished and ablaze. People scurried with hoses to attempt to extinguish the fires.

Down the street, officials worked to secure ropes and stakes around an unexploded bomb. I'd heard that the bombs could get buried in debris and explode before being found.

Despite all the chaos, everyone pitched in to help each other and remained as positive as possible. So many people had been killed or lost their houses. Food was rationed, and we had little gas for our cars, but we held out hope that this was only temporary, and the end of the war would come soon.

Text Questions

- What is accomplished in the first paragraph of the story?
 - It introduces the characters.
 - It explains the theme of the story.
 - It sets up the story and introduces the problem.
 - It foreshadows how the story problem might be resolved.
- What does the word *demolished* mean as it is used in the text?

a. overturned	c. constructed
b. torn down	d. destroyed
- Which statement gives the best clue as to the historical setting?
 - Several large fires were burning.
 - From time to time, Mom would glance upwards with a worried look.
 - High-pitched air-raid alarms sounded.
 - Broken dishes littered the kitchen, and the cupboard doors stood askew.
- Based on clues in the story, in which country does this story most likely take place?

a. Japan	c. China
b. England	d. Russia
- How did the events portrayed in the story shape the characters?

Name _____

Texas Quilts

"Hand me the scissors, please," Bessie said, as she reached for the black thread and prepared to cut a length. Threading her needle, she held the calico print circle in place on the muslin with her thumb.

Julia tilted her head to one side. "Do you plan to go around the petals like that in black also? I can't imagine how that would look. Wouldn't it detract from the fabric?" She watched Bessie make generous stitches with the ebony thread, one-quarter inch in from the edge of the circle.

Pausing, Bessie considered. "Well, I might. Guess I'll have to see how it looks when I get to that point." She resumed her stitching, working quickly to get as much done as possible before the sun got too high in the sky. Bright Texas sunshine poured through the window, the natural light ideal for the intricate detail work of quilting.

In the corner, Helen sat quietly sorting swatches of fabric, pieces from clothing no longer usable. She set

blues in a pile and oranges and reds in another. "I reckon these would make a fine wagon-wheel pattern, don't you think?"

"Sounds like a lot of work to me," Julia stated. "Good thing you don't have too much of the orange and red; you can make it a smaller quilt." She idly sifted through the blues, adding some pieces of pink to the pile.

Bessie glanced out the window and started suddenly. "Dust storm coming!" She frantically began gathering quilt pieces, along with the paper pattern template, and stuffed them in pillowcases.

"Wait," Helen said. "Try to keep the colors sorted." Holding out a pillowcase to Julia, she pointed to the stack of blues and pinks and said, "Here, those can be used for a hexagon pattern."

Just as the girls finished stowing the fabric safely, Pa sauntered through the door. "Pack up, girls. Once we survive this, we're moving west."

Text Questions

- Which title would be a good alternative for this text?
 - "Three Sisters"
 - "Dust Storm"
 - "Fabric of Life"
 - "Sunny Sewing"
- What is a synonym for the word *idly* as it is used in the text?

a. uselessly	c. lazily
b. slowly	d. unprofitably
- Which statement best describes the story problem?
 - Bessie worked quickly to get as much done as possible before the sun got too high in the sky.
 - "Dust storm coming!"
 - Helen sat quietly sorting swatches of fabric, pieces from clothing no longer usable.
 - "Pack up, girls. Once we survive this, we're moving west."
- What is the purpose of the last paragraph?
 - It offers resolution for the conflict between characters.
 - It introduces a new character.
 - It shows why the girls put the fabric pieces in pillowcases.
 - It creates additional tension in the story.
- What do you suppose happened to the quilts next?

Name _____

Farewell at Independence, Missouri

Independence, Missouri was bustling with people. Samuel pressed his nose against the general store's window and moaned, "Whenever will we get to see them?" Suddenly, he spotted the billowing canvas top of a covered wagon being pulled by four brown oxen. "They've arrived!" In his haste to greet the pioneers, he slammed the door, causing the bell to ring wildly.

The Abrams family extracted themselves from the wagon as Daniel, Samuel's best friend, dismounted from a gray gelding he'd been riding alongside. Daniel tied the horse to a hitching post as Samuel peered into the back of the wagon. He was dumbstruck by the sight of all of Abrams's belongings stuffed into the four-foot-by-twelve-foot wagon. Sacks of flour and sugar, boxes of medicine, and rolls of bedding crowded the interior. "We hung the guns from hooks last night," exclaimed Daniel, pointing to the hoops that stretched the canvas tight. "We'll have to rely on hunting and fishing out on the trail."

"Great job," Samuel slapped his comrade on the back. "Just imagine all the adventures you'll have—crossing

ivers, meeting mountain men, encounters with Indians." He couldn't keep the jealousy from tinging his voice.

Daniel nodded. "Dad is anxious to start farming once we arrive in Oregon. It's supposed to be the best soil around, and it's all free!"

A bleak horn sounded mournfully. "We best get going," Daniel's dad said as he started towards the lead ox. "The ferry will be leaving soon."

"I guess this is farewell," Samuel lightly stroked the gelding's nose. "You are so fortunate. I'm stuck here, doing farm chores and attending school, while you're off to Oregon territory!"

"At least you don't have to leave all your friends and family." Daniel quickly gave Samuel a heartfelt handshake and mounted his horse. "Take care of yourself, Samuel." Daniel didn't look back as he trotted down to the river after the wagon.

Text Questions

- What statement does not give a clue about how Samuel feels in the story?
 - In his haste to greet the pioneers, he slammed the door, causing the bell to ring wildly.
 - He couldn't keep the jealousy from tinging his voice.
 - Samuel lightly stroked the gelding's nose.
 - "You are so fortunate. I'm stuck here, doing farm chores and attending school, while you're off to Oregon territory!"
- What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
 - Daniel is excited for his new adventure.
 - Daniel is sad to leave his friends.
 - Daniel has to obey his parents.
 - Daniel thinks their move is a good idea.
- What does the word *extracted* mean as it is used in the text?

a. to pull out with effort	c. to obtain something by pressing
b. to separate	d. to concentrate a substance
- What is one theme of the text?

a. honesty	b. independence	c. acceptance	d. friendship
------------	-----------------	---------------	---------------
- What would be your greatest anticipation in traveling to new territory by covered wagon? Your greatest hesitation?

Name _____

Penicillium

The Great War was over. Alexander could finally return to his research laboratory. The war, awful though it had been, renewed his motivation to find an answer for bacterial infections. His experience on the battlefield helped him realize that bacteria were just as deadly as bullets.

"Where did I leave those notes?" he muttered, as he sorted through the jumble in the lab. "I know that one enzyme from tears has an antibacterial effect, but it's just not strong enough. There must be a better solution. If I can only discover it."

After rummaging around a bit more, he gave up and tried to organize his lab. Since the war, the lab seemed in a constant state of disorder; piles of notes and books lay everywhere, and empty test tubes showed where experiments had taken place. He decided to start cleaning the pile of petri dishes out of the sink. He had

used them to grow staph bacteria, but now he was ready to start some new experiments. As was his habit, Alexander opened each one, examining it before placing it in a cleaning solution. "That's funny," he said, as he opened one containing the characteristic mold. Strangely, around this particular mold sample, the bacteria had died.

"Look at this." Alexander handed the specimen to a lab assistant. "See if you can extract a sample of this mold, so we can identify it."

A little while later, the assistant identified the mold as *Penicillium notatum*. Alexander grew more of the mold and then tested it, over and over again. Each time, the mold killed the deadly bacteria in the petri dish. "This is the antibacterial effect I was looking for! Think of how many lives can be saved!"

Text Questions

- What is the main character's goal in this passage?
 - He wanted to clean his laboratory.
 - He wanted to find a treatment for bacterial infections.
 - He wanted his lab assistant to help extract the mold.
 - He wanted to start some new experiments.
- Which sentence gives you a clue as to the time period of the story?
 - The Great War was over.
 - The war, awful though it had been, renewed his motivation to find an answer for bacterial infections.
 - Alexander handed the specimen to a lab assistant.
 - Alexander grew more of the mold and then tested it, over and over again.
- What does the word *specimen* mean as it is used in the text?

a. a particular type of person	c. an example
b. one part of a group	d. a sample taken for analysis
- Which of the following could not be said about Alexander?
 - He has a routine of checking petri dishes.
 - He is motivated to find a solution.
 - He is organized.
 - He is persistent.
- How does this historical discovery affect our lives today?

Name _____

Kit

"Payday!" The cry rang through the camp, and we all hustled to secure a place in line. The first opportunity I have to go into town, I've decided to take a bit of money to celebrate my recent 17th birthday. I clearly remember the day when I enlisted, lying about my age as I signed up to fight the Southerners, alongside other concerned citizens from Pennsylvania.

As a private, we're supposed to get paid \$11 per month, but that doesn't always happen. Often the money arrives so late, I can't remember what month it's supposed to be for.

They rouse us early and sometimes feed us a morsel or two, but usually we have to do without food. We mostly eat hardtack, which are crackers made from flour, water, and salt. There might occasionally be a bit of dried pork, but if not, we forage for berries and hunt small game. I've seen fellow soldiers starve in these harsh conditions.

We drill each morning and afternoon, so we'll know our place on the battlefield and work together as a team.

They bark at us to listen and obey orders from the officers. Without it, they fear we would panic, and all order would break down.

Between drills we clean, fix our tattered uniforms, and mend socks (if we have any). We sometimes play a few games, such as checkers or dominoes, or we write letters to loved ones back home. But most of our time is spent being bored. I miss my parents, brothers, and sisters beyond belief.

When aren't we bored? When we fight. Imagine total madness. Shouting, cursing, and fear so bad you're certain you will die from it rather than being shot. The sight is horrific; men and boys are wounded, dying, and dead.

Eventually, this will all be over, and I shall once again go home and reunite with my family. I hope that in time we can all forget this horrible event.

Text Questions

- What do you learn about Kit from reading this passage?
 - He is an officer in the army.
 - He has joined the Confederate forces.
 - He thinks fighting is boring.
 - He learns to drill and obey orders.
- What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
 - It introduces the main character, setting, and time period of the story.
 - It gives the reader a clear idea of the conflict the main character will face.
 - It explains the details of a confederate soldier's daily experience.
 - It shows how the main character responds to his experiences.
- Which title would be a good alternative for this text?

a. "The Life of a Confederate Soldier"	c. "Behind the Front Lines"
b. "Union Diary"	d. "A Letter Home"
- What is the best synonym for the word *horrific* as it is used in the text?

a. nerve-wracking	c. dreadful
b. scary	d. frustrating
- Based on what you read, how would you describe Kit's view of the war?

Name _____

Labor for Grain

"Quit daydreaming and let's get chores done before Papa catches us idle," Regenard's brother, Marellus, urged. Caught in a daydream, Regenard jumped slightly and then shifted his attention back to his duties. The sight of the huge blades turning lazily in the breeze never failed to mesmerize him.

Regenard supposed the windmills eased their labor, but he could never completely agree with the theory. He recalled a day not long ago when a visitor had arrived on horseback, carrying a scroll with drawings, which he displayed to all the men at a town meeting. The stranger had described how the drawings had been meticulously copied and passed around, having been brought from the east by crusaders. Upon careful perusal of the sketches, they had reached a consensus to build such a contraption, called a "windmill," in their village.

"Garçon," the elder called, "gather the other boys to turn the blades!" Regenard and his brother dropped

their milk pails and raced to the windmill. It was true, since they had built the monstrosity, they no longer needed as many horses to turn the mills and grind grain. It seemed, however, that there was no end of other work created by this labor-saving device. Occasionally, a shaft would need replacing. Or a mill stone would slip, which required every able-bodied man in the village, it seemed, to shove it back in place.

Grunting, Regenard worked alongside the others to turn the windmill so the massive wood sails could catch the wind. "Mind your head!" His brother nimbly ducked under the swinging blade, but Regenard didn't move quickly enough, and he was knocked senseless.

"Oh," he moaned, holding the lump on his forehead. Marellus produced a damp cloth, pressing it to the tender area. Strong arms then lifted him and carried him home. "Well," Marellus teased, as Regenard was laid on his cot, "that's one way to get out of carrying grain sacks today."

Text Questions

- What can you infer about the time period from the setting of the story?
 - The story takes place in modern-day times.
 - The story takes place in pre-industrial times.
 - The story takes place during the Industrial Revolution.
 - The story takes place during the Westward Expansion.
- What obstacle or problem does the main character face in the story?
 - He is daydreaming and doesn't get his chores done on time.
 - He has to do more work because of the windmill.
 - He is injured while working at the windmill.
 - He doesn't want to haul sacks of grain.
- What does it mean to say the villagers reached a *consensus*?
 - They took a survey to see who agreed to the plan.
 - They gave the stranger permission to construct a windmill.
 - They had a debate about whether or not to use the plans.
 - They all agreed to build a windmill.
- What role does the windmill play in the story?
 - It provides tension and conflict in the story.
 - It is an obstacle the main character must overcome to reach a goal.
 - It sets the mood and tone of the story.
 - It helps the reader understand the main character better.
- How does windmill technology today differ from that described in the story? How is it the same?

Name _____

Golf for Everyone

"Hey, Willie, I've gathered more balls this morning." Frank set the bucket down on the torn-up lawn and went to fetch their old clubs. Their proximity to the neighborhood golf course gave the friends ample opportunity to watch the masters from outside the fence, and Frank in particular was determined to learn the game. They had even devised a three-hole course in the backyard for practice.

Frank took his stance and swung the club a few times. He aimed his sights on the hole, trying to emulate the great players he'd observed. His family had no money for lessons, so he taught himself, trying to remember every nuance of the game. "I'm going to play on that course someday," he gestured vaguely across town with his club, "and I'm going to have my own caddy."

"How do you know about caddies?" Willie's gaze challenged Frank.

"I've been working over at the club to earn some extra income to help out; they pay me two bits per round."

Trotting dutifully to fetch wayward balls, Willie waited patiently for his turn. The game didn't hold nearly the fascination for him that it did for Frank, but he admired his comrade and was willing to help out, just for the enjoyment. It was also a great excuse not to do schoolwork, although Frank often got in trouble for neglecting his studies.

The next day, they walked a mile to catch the streetcar headed across town. After transferring twice to connecting streetcar lines, they walked over half a mile more to a public course, talking golf the entire time. "When I grow up, I'm not going to forget people like us. I'll have some young fellow caddy for me just like you're helping me now."

Text Questions

1. What is the theme or moral of the text?
 - a. honesty
 - b. courage
 - c. perseverance
 - d. sacrifice
2. Which statement will not help you answer the previous question?
 - a. Frank in particular was determined to learn the game.
 - b. His family had no money for lessons, so he taught himself, trying to remember every nuance of the game.
 - c. "I'm going to play on that course someday."
 - d. Frank often got in trouble for neglecting his studies.
3. What does the word *emulate* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. to rival
 - b. to imitate
 - c. to compete against
 - d. to follow
4. What is the purpose of first paragraph?
 - a. It introduces the conflict in the story.
 - b. It introduces the characters and setting in the story.
 - c. It sets the mood for the story.
 - d. It shows the resolution of conflict.
5. What is the connection between Frank's situation and his dreams?