

Name _____

Meeting of Two Worlds

Reagan glanced up from his browsing as the bell rang over the entrance to the bookstore. Puzzled, he watched for a minute as Darya advanced toward the counter as if to ask a question. It didn't make sense that Darya, one of the school's top athletes, was in a bookstore. Not wanting to be noticed, Reagan quickly found another volume to peruse. He wouldn't know what to say if she tried to start a conversation. Reagan let his thoughts wander a bit, thinking it would be nice to have someone to talk to or hang out with. Then he wouldn't be so lonely.

"Hey, Reagan." Her greeting startled him, and his breath caught in his throat as it became apparent he hadn't escaped after all. "Maybe you can help me."

He doubted it, but he managed to choke out a reply. "Me?"

"I'm trying to locate a book on soccer skills. I won't be able to go to camp over spring break, and I need to improve my game before the next season begins."

Reagan swallowed, then motioned randomly with his hands before he found his voice. "Sure. Over here." He figured it would save hassle and confusion if he just led the way, rather than try to point her in the right direction. As she followed him through the stacks, he dared to imagine they might not be so different after all. He felt a brief glimmer of hope, the sun shining suddenly where all had been gray. Immediately, one of Darya's teammates seemed to materialize, urging her to finish any purchases or they would be late for practice. Sighing, Reagan realized nothing had really changed; society would never let them break down those barriers, even if they so chose.

Text Questions

1. What might have happened if Darya's teammate hadn't come along?
 - a. Darya would have found a book to read.
 - b. Darya would have decided not to buy the soccer book.
 - c. Darya and Reagan would have had a conversation.
 - d. Reagan would have left Darya alone and gone back to reading.
2. Based on what you read, what can you infer about Reagan?
 - a. He is not a very good student.
 - b. He is not a very good athlete.
 - c. He does not like to talk to people.
 - d. He was in the bookstore with his friends.
3. What is one theme, or moral, of the text?
 - a. Often we stereotype people and place them in groups.
 - b. Darya showed compassion for Reagan by talking to him.
 - c. Playing sports is an admirable pastime.
 - d. It takes perseverance to find a book on soccer skills.
4. What happened when one of Darya's teammates *materialized*?
 - a. She developed into a real friend.
 - b. She took on the appearance of an athlete.
 - c. She emerged from the shadows.
 - d. She appeared suddenly and unexpectedly.
5. How might the story change if told from Darya's perspective?

Name _____

Change of Plans

A pair of studded boots sat side by side waiting. Their owner wore dark socks with markings, and the boots were shrouded by studded pants—quiet, for he had removed the chains. He was not tall by any means but of medium stature with a slight build. His black ops jacket could easily be mistaken for a gang jacket. Warren Black stood out from the other passengers on the flight, which included tourists and natives bound for Ireland. He had no camera, and he did not look Irish.

Warren sat contentedly gazing at the small, curious medallion around his neck, with an imprint of a dying rose on one side and on the opposite, the sun. He stared at the edges, worn smooth, and the ebony finish, which was flaking in places to reveal a brilliant blue sheen. As the captain put on the seat belt warning, the plane jolted suddenly as if experiencing heavy turbulence.

Without warning, the left engine stopped spinning entirely, and the plane began to vault and buck as the pilot instructed everyone to remain calm. The plane continued its violent descent as Warren clutched the armrests on either side of him. The left wing hit the ground first, causing the cabin to shudder from the impact. The wing dug a deep trench into the grassland and was stopped short by a boulder. People screamed as the plane slowly tipped downward and came to a halt on its belly, all the landing gear torn up. As the passengers dismounted on the slides, a head count was taken. No fatalities and no severe injuries were reported. A young girl struggled to catch her breath, and Warren himself was experiencing some chest pains. In shock, the group moved slowly to the nearby village, but Warren opted to wander off to a nearby lake with his luggage to set up a tent. He made himself a fire and began cooking a small dinner.

Text Questions

- Which phrase or sentence shows that no one was seriously injured?
 - As the passengers dismounted on the slides, a head count was taken.
 - No fatalities and no severe injuries were reported.
 - A young girl struggled to catch her breath, and Warren himself was experiencing some chest pains.
 - In shock, the group moved slowly to the nearby village.
- What might be the reason for Warren's journey?
 - He wants to tour Ireland and go sightseeing.
 - He is Irish, and he wants to visit his homeland.
 - He is on a special assignment for the government.
 - He knows what to do in a crisis.
- What does the word *violent* mean as it is used in the text?
 - forceful
 - mean
 - unjust
 - furious
- What caused the accident?
 - The left engine failed.
 - The right engine failed.
 - The pilot fell asleep.
 - The landing gear malfunctioned.
- How might this incident affect Warren's travel plans?

Name _____

Climb a Mountain

"Hey, Jordan, over here!" Jordan's best friend, Mahir, waved his hand, pointing to a fissure in the side of the cliff. "We could climb this!"

Jordan clipped his harness on and checked his rope and carabiners. He weighed one of them in his hand, calculating. Then he eyeballed potential placement locations, considering the difficulty of the task. "That crack is unbelievably small. I don't think we'd get up very high."

"At the time of a test, a person rises or falls," said Ghanim, Mahir's dad. Shaking his head in confusion over the foreign proverb, Jordan examined the crack. It was nothing more than a sliver in the solid face of the cliff. He shifted in his harness as Mahir gave the proverb his own interpretation: "If you're not falling, you're not trying hard enough." Jordan recognized the bit of advice from a previous climbing lesson.

His own father's voice echoed in his thoughts, as if in a half-forgotten dream. "Climb a mountain, son, and you climb the insecurity in your own life. You climb over your shadow, climb over your doubt." That was five years ago, before the automobile accident that took his dad's life. Jordan couldn't help replaying the story in his mind, how the other driver had veered out of control around a corner. Jordan's dad swerved across the lane of oncoming traffic, effectively blocking the other car from a cliff. But his father's car careened over the edge. The sudden move had saved the lives of three people in that car.

Jordan's dad had never hesitated. And now Jordan wouldn't either. Concentrating on his balance, he took a deep breath and began to climb.

Text Questions

1. What did Mahir do when he gave the proverb his own *interpretation*?
 - a. He paraphrased it in different words.
 - b. He restated it to say what he thought it meant.
 - c. He argued with his dad about what it meant.
 - d. He read it aloud to Jordan.
2. What must Jordan overcome to start the climb?
 - a. his hesitation
 - b. his memories
 - c. his failures
 - d. his father
3. What does the word *fissure* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. a long, narrow, deep crack
 - b. something that is divided into parts
 - c. a groove between parts of an organ
 - d. a space between two rock walls
4. What is the theme or moral of the text?
 - a. Practice makes perfect.
 - b. People's real worth is known only through trial.
 - c. Easier said than done.
 - d. People who have a weakness show it.
5. How do the words of his father affect what Jordan decides to do?

Name _____

Friendly Ferns

Stooping, Mara glanced under the deck to reassure herself that the minute fern was still alive only to discover it had doubled in size. Today, finally, she had time to carefully transplant it to a different location. If asked, Mara wasn't sure she could explain the importance of these tiny plants that she had moved and tended, one each year, to develop her fern garden. Best to transplant when they were young; within a few years, they grew to half her height.

"Brandon, what are you doing?" Mara shuffled cautiously across the brick slippery with moss. Perhaps her brother would consider this an endeavor reminiscent of hobbits and agree to join her.

Mumbling came from the general direction of the computer room, a dead giveaway as to his whereabouts. Mara couldn't see the sense in perusing the idea any further; she'd never get him to surface if he was engrossed in a computer game. Wanting to get the

project completed before it got too dark, Mara stuffed her phone in her pocket, swigged down half a glass of water, and headed back to the shed.

She had just finished rummaging around for digging tools and a bit of compost when her phone rang. Balancing the tools in the container that held the compost, she answered the call. "Sorry, Casey, not at this moment. I'm working with the fern garden, but I have an idea. Come visit until I finish this, then I'll help you practice." Casey was forever looking for someone to kick her a few balls so she could practice her dribbling and goal kicks for the girls' soccer team. They both laughed at Mara's soccer abilities, but Casey agreed it was better than nothing.

"Sounds like a good deal to me." Casey ended the call, and Mara sighed with relief. She hadn't mentioned this particular task to her friend, but Casey always sympathized even if she didn't fully understand.

Text Questions

1. What is the theme or moral of the text?
 - a. The best way to move ferns is one at a time.
 - b. If you don't have sports skills, you don't have to help a friend.
 - c. It's good to accept people as they are.
 - d. If you help a friend, he or she will help you.
2. Which statement is an opinion?
 - a. Tiny ferns are beautiful.
 - b. Plants are easier to transplant when they are small.
 - c. You should use potting soil when transplanting a fern.
 - d. Moss on brick can be slippery.
3. What does the word *minute* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. unimportant
 - b. very small
 - c. one part of an hour
 - d. a specific point
4. Why didn't Brandon want to keep Mara company?
 - a. He didn't like ferns.
 - b. He didn't like to read about hobbits.
 - c. He was engrossed in a computer game.
 - d. He didn't hear Mara call him.
5. In what ways did Mara and Casey accept each other? Why is this important?

Name _____

Fast Pitch

Adar finished arranging her science-fair project just as Mr. Delaney entered the arena.

"Looks like you're ready for the judges," he greeted her. "Refresh my memory—what exactly are you trying to do with a Popsicle baseball diamond?"

Adjusting a notecard for better visibility, Adar said, "My project demonstrates the answer to my inquiry question." She went on to explain how she had written a major-league hitter asking for his tips on the best way to bat when the wind blew.

Not only had he sent some valuable information, but she'd also received a signed baseball card to add to her collection. She pointed out the handwritten letter that was part of the display.

Mr. Delaney leaned over to peruse the letter. "Hmm, says here one thing he incorporates is shifting his

weight in the batter box to accommodate the wind. I'll be watching to see you try that at our next practice." Mr. Delaney smiled and moved over to the area where his students had their displays.

Sure enough, at practice a few days later, Mr. Delaney noticed Adar observing the wind speed and direction and adjusting her stance accordingly. Between drills, he sauntered over. "How did your project do at the science fair?"

Adar beamed. "I did the math, wrote my observations and analysis, and the judges thought the Popsicle model was great! I won an award, with an invitation to advance to the regional competition."

"Good for you! Hey, what flavor Popsicle did you use?" Mr. Delaney teased as he patted Adar on the shoulder and announced the next drill.

Text Questions

- What does the word *diamond* refer to as it is used in the text?
 - a mineral made of carbon
 - a gem used in jewelry
 - a closed plane figure with four sides
 - the infield of a baseball playing field
- What is an important fact in the story?
 - A prominent sports figure took the time to respond.
 - Popsicle sticks make interesting science fair displays.
 - What students learn from a science project might not be applied to real life.
 - Most science-fair projects require math.
- How would you describe the relationship between Adar and Mr. Delaney?
 - They are friends.
 - Mr. Delaney is Adar's teacher.
 - Mr. Delaney is Adar's coach.
 - Mr. Delaney wrote a letter to Adar to help her with her project.
- What will happen now that Adar has won an award?
 - She will take her science-fair project home.
 - She will compete in a regional science fair.
 - She will write to the major-league player and tell him about her award.
 - She will show her friends how to build a Popsicle model.
- Why might the major-league player have been willing to respond to Adar's letter?

Name _____

Rescue Companion

Surf pounded as Roberto meandered down the beach, his companion Sam by his side. Suddenly, Roberto collapsed, gasping for breath, in a heap on the sand. Sam circled, anxious, then hurried off to fetch Roberto's uncle Tomás, a little ways up the beach. At first, his uncle assumed Roberto had just fallen and would rally to his feet. When that didn't happen, Tomás darted back to check.

"Hey, Berto, what happened?" When his nephew only groaned in response, Tomás hastened to reassure him. "I'll get the car and meet you in the parking lot."

Roberto moaned again, while Sam continued to pace around his master, licking his face. As Roberto struggled to lift his weight in the soft sand, Sam nudged him, then grasped his shirt and began to drag his comrade up the slope. With Sam's help, Tomás managed to get Roberto situated in the passenger seat

and later, into the beach cottage where their family was vacationing.

His mother and aunt fussed over Roberto, asking about his symptoms and the cause of his mysterious ailment. "Sweat was pouring off me," he recalled. "I felt dizzy and shaky." Tomás affirmed that his nephew's skin was cold and clammy when he maneuvered him into the car. After further questioning, they determined Roberto had experienced a sudden drop in blood sugar due to his diabetes.

For the following two days, Roberto rarely left the couch, as his body recuperated and he regained his strength. During that time, Sam lingered close, more subdued than Roberto had ever seen him. Roberto wondered if Sam would become a more loyal companion in days to come or if he would revert to his previously independent ways.

Text Questions

- How does the setting impact the story?
 - The sound of ocean waves soothes Roberto.
 - The ocean distracts Sam from helping Roberto.
 - The sand gave Sam good traction as he dragged Roberto up the slope.
 - The soft sand made it more difficult for Roberto to get up.
- What was the second incorrect assumption Tomás made?
 - He assumed Roberto had fallen and would get up on his own.
 - He assumed Roberto would be able to get into the beach cottage without assistance.
 - He assumed Roberto would be able to get to the car without assistance.
 - He assumed Roberto would be fine once he took a nap.
- When Sam circled, *anxious*, what did he display?
 - worry
 - doubt
 - eagerness
 - fear
- Which sentence continues the development of an idea from the early part of the story?
 - Tomás managed to get Roberto into the beach cottage.
 - His mother and aunt fussed over Roberto.
 - He regained his strength.
 - Sam lingered close.
- Describe a time when a pet (belonging to you or someone else) showed loyalty or gave assistance to a person.

Name _____

Perfect Planets

Kyle and Brennan lounged around after school, discussing their upcoming social-studies project. "Create a perfect society?" Kyle asked. "We'll have a great time dreaming, I suppose, but this doesn't seem like a very practical assignment. How will this help us prepare for exams?"

"Ah, come on, humor me, let's have some fun with this." Brennan encouraged Kyle to indulge in one of their favorite pastimes, *what if*. "What if you could make a perfect planet?" he asked. "How would you describe it?"

Not waiting for an answer, Brennan rubbed his hands together in glee. "That's easy. It would have the same appearance as Earth, with a few modifications."

Kyle dropped the straw from a juice drink onto the floor, wrapper and all, and poured the beverage into a glass. He hunched forward, holding the drink in both hands. "Such as?"

"More oceans, gigantic mountains, and a few grass-covered hills would be a nice touch, don't you think? Let's include rippling creeks, mossy trees, huge ferns,

massive redwoods." Brennan resisted the urge to grab colored pencils to sketch the wonders of his world.

"People?" Kyle quirked his eyebrows characteristically, in a way Brennan had never quite been able to imitate, even though they were identical twins.

"Of course. Now let's talk about the special properties of this planet. Snow feels warm to the touch, yet doesn't melt too quickly."

"Awesome." One of Kyle's favorite activities was inner-tubing in the snow; the more snow and the longer he could keep warm and dry, the better.

Brennan grinned. "It gets better—people on the planet don't have accidents or get hurt, and there aren't any diseases." At Kyle's skeptical glance, he continued. "No germs, no pollution."

Kyle nodded. "Maybe our assignment should have been to make *this* a perfect planet."

"Exactly!" Grabbing Kyle's juice drink straw, Brennan aimed it toward the wastebasket. "You could start by throwing away your garbage. No pollution, remember?"

Text Questions

- What does it mean to say Kyle and Brennan were *identical* twins?
 - They agree on many things.
 - They look very similar.
 - They dress very differently.
 - They enjoy the same activities.
- Based on what you read, what can you infer about Kyle's personality?
 - He enjoys drawing pictures.
 - He is practical when it comes to schoolwork.
 - He thinks people should care about pollution.
 - He doesn't want to do well in school.
- Which sentence shows one of Brennan's values?
 - People don't have accidents or get hurt.
 - Snow feels warm to the touch.
 - Let's have some fun.
 - It would have the same appearance as Earth.
- What overall conflict or problem can be identified in the story?
 - Kyle and Brennan think that people should not try to change Earth.
 - Kyle and Brennan disagree on what to do after school.
 - Kyle and Brennan disagree on the best approach to a social-studies assignment.
 - Brennan wishes Kyle would throw away his garbage.
- What change do you think would help make Earth a more perfect planet?

Name _____

Restart

"Hey, new guy! Over here." Pike turned slowly, full circle, to discover three teens waving him toward the ditch that ran alongside the vacant field. Even though he had enrolled just yesterday, he instantly pegged these guys as belonging to a particular group. He knew, too, from past experience, the activities they engaged in that set them apart.

Raised in Africa by his aunt and uncle, Pike was now stateside, attending a different school every year as his relatives shuffled him about, agreeing on only one thing: Pike should finish his education in the United States. Everywhere he went, he heard the same thing, "You're Pike? Aren't you the one who lived in Africa?" He had determined this time around would be a new start and he'd even saved some money to purchase a new outfit for school.

Hesitantly, Pike walked toward the ditch, wondering if he even wanted to go there.

The one he'd identified as the leader spoke again. "My dad owns the local market. I'm sure he wouldn't mind if we helped ourselves to an after-school snack. Some soda, a bag of chips, what do you say?" Sounded harmless enough to Pike; he knew how to pull off something that simple without getting caught. Just as he took another step to follow them, he heard a slight rustle.

Turning, a glorious sight met his eyes—the prettiest girl he'd seen yet. Her long, blond hair caught the light, and she had shiny gloss on her lips. "Hi, I'm Melody. Have you had a tour of the school yet?"

His adviser had shown him around the day before, giving him a brief "here's what you need to know" introduction. However, he'd be a fool not to take this opportunity to begin to implement his new image. He trailed after her like a puppy, leaving the group of mischievous guys behind.

Text Questions

1. What was the leader of the boys inviting Pike to do?
 - a. Have a snack at his house.
 - b. Go to his dad's store to buy some snacks.
 - c. Take a tour of the school.
 - d. Shoplift some items from his dad's store.
2. What does the word *implement* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a. a device used for a particular activity
 - b. to fulfill or put into effect
 - c. to give an instruction
 - d. a tool used for scientific purposes
3. What is Melody's role in the story?
 - a. She wants to help Pike decide what to do.
 - b. She provides an alternative option for Pike.
 - c. She makes fun of Pike because he's new to the school.
 - d. She tells him he shouldn't go with the guys.
4. How would you characterize the guys who waved at Pike?
 - a. They are athletes.
 - b. They are part of the popular crowd.
 - c. They often get in trouble.
 - d. They are studious and get good grades.
5. Why do you suppose Pike wanted a new image?

Name _____

Tunnel Tour

"Come on, boys, this is our stop." Kenneth and Brian stood up quickly, following Mom to the passageway where they would exit the train after it rumbled to a halt. The doors opened, and the three of them shouldered their way out with the crowd, stepping away from the edge of the platform to assess their surroundings.

Brian pointed to a broad staircase fifty feet away. "Looks like we need to head that direction along with everyone else."

Once they reached street level, Mom asked Kenneth to consult his invitation. "What time is the reception? We want to allow plenty of time to locate the building and find your photograph hanging in the tunnel."

Kenneth had enjoyed sharing his photography with his teacher, including his shots from an earlier family vacation. Without his awareness, the instructor had entered one particular photo in a congressional art contest. One winner in each category, from each district, would have their entry displayed in the tunnel on Capitol Hill.

"I still can't believe you won," Brian congratulated his brother. "Thanks for inviting me to use one of your free tickets."

They made their way through the crowds of people hastening up Capitol Hill. Mom kept them moving right along so they would be able to check in with their senator, view the exhibit, and find the reception hall on time.

Fidgeting with his sleeves, Brian fussed about the humidity. "Why did we have to dress up so much? This is Kenneth's reception, not ours."

At last, they entered the tunnel with their escort. "Wow." Both boys stood mesmerized, turning slowly to take in the sight. They didn't stall long, though, quickening their steps to catch up with Mom and the senator.

There it was, just before the tunnel rounded a corner. Brian skidded to a stop to avoid missing it entirely on their brisk walk down the corridor: a seagull, soaring over a radiant white mountain.

Text Questions

- Which is a synonym for the word *radiant* as it is used in the text?
 - beaming
 - energetic
 - brilliant
 - bright
- Which statement best describes the story problem?
 - Kenneth's family couldn't find their way to the reception.
 - The photograph wasn't displayed properly.
 - Mom was concerned about making it to the reception on time.
 - Kenneth's photograph didn't win the competition.
- What role does the photograph play in the story?
 - It is what caused the story to happen.
 - It is a symbol for something that happens in the story.
 - It is an obstacle for the main character.
 - It sets the tone and mood for the story.
- Why was it an honor for Kenneth's photograph to be displayed in the tunnel?
 - His photograph was of a famous person.
 - Only a few entries from each region were chosen.
 - The senator had promised his photograph would be displayed.
 - Kenneth's teacher wanted everyone to know about the photograph.
- How would you imagine Kenneth's experience at the reception?

Name _____

Mountains and Mushrooms

"Fine! I'm going, I'm going!" Alyssa stomped out of the house, taking the bag of trash with her. It wasn't fair, she thought, that she had to do all the chores while her younger brother got to play video games. Snarling to herself, she continued to stew over the discrepancies. As the oldest, she didn't have fun watching Brent get away with things, as if their parents thought he was a perfect angel. In her opinion, Brent was a stuck-up, selfish brat.

Alyssa opened the lid of the trash can and dumped the bag in. Imagining it was Brent's face, she grinned and headed to the backyard before returning to complete the chores. She pulled the crumpled list out of her pocket and muttered to herself, "Scrub the kitchen, finish the laundry, vacuum the stairs." Alyssa closed her eyes briefly, savoring the moment. Nobody would bother her out here behind their cabin near the base of Mount Jabus. Beyond their fence, miles and miles of trails traversed the mountain.

Hiking was one of Alyssa's passions, while her brother hated outdoor activities. This gave her free reign of the trails, and what better time to go exploring? Hopping the fence, Alyssa set out on her trek, contemplating whether or not to return in time for dinner. Her parents might yell at her, but what did it matter? They wouldn't ground her because they knew she would return with renewed patience for her tasks. As she wandered along, Alyssa began to search for mushrooms. She had studied and learned the characteristics of over ten varieties and could tell which were poisonous and which were not. Poking around, Alyssa found a few Yellow Chanterelles. Then she spied a Matsutake, her favorite, which was difficult to find and known for its spicy aroma. She decided to continue her hunt a little longer before heading home.

Text Questions

- What is the story problem?
 - Alyssa needs to find mushrooms for dinner.
 - Alyssa is frustrated with her brother.
 - Alyssa finds poisonous mushrooms.
 - Alyssa's brother follows her on the trail.
- What does the word *discrepancies* mean as it is used in the text?

a. differences	c. complaints
b. lack of agreement	d. alternatives
- How does Alyssa react to the perceived unfairness in how she and her brother are treated by their parents?
 - She confronts them with her opinion.
 - She forces her brother to help her with the chores.
 - She takes some time away from the situation to cool down.
 - She tells her parents to ground her brother.
- What does it mean to say a mushroom has a *spicy aroma*?
 - It has an exciting atmosphere.
 - It has unusual characteristics.
 - It smells awful.
 - It has a pleasant fragrance.
- What is one lesson readers can learn from the story? Give evidence from the story to support your answer.

Name _____

Runaway

Keyona crouched in the gravel next to the fence, willing herself invisible lest any family members should wander nearby. This was much more serious than an established game of hide and seek, in her opinion. She wanted a break from all of them, for an indefinite period of time, although she hadn't considered what she might do later, say, at dinnertime or when it got dark. It's not that she was afraid of the dark; she spent hours outside and was well acquainted with the neighborhood.

She heard rustling sounds behind her, but she hesitated before turning to check for the source.

"Hey, it's me," her younger brother Rashan whispered. "Why are you out here?"

She sighed in exasperation, "Just go away and leave me alone, okay?" Keyona turned away from him, thinking that she needed to find a better destination immediately, if not sooner. She would have gone farther away initially, if she could have figured out

where to go. Her temporary plan hadn't taken into consideration anyone seeking her out.

"And don't tell anyone where I am," she called to Rashan's retreating back.

Keyona took a deep breath then blew it out. Siblings were the primary cause of her departure in the first place. Mentally, she listed the reasons: six siblings were entirely too many, especially when they were all gathered together at the same time; the younger ones drove her crazy; and being the middle child left her feeling insignificant.

Hoisting her backpack, Keyona debated whether to go to her friend's house, which was three blocks over. She slumped down again to think about it. Her friend had three brothers and one sister—not exactly an oasis of peace and quiet. Often, when visiting, she missed the relative peace of home. As she pondered, her older brother stepped into the alley and, without a word, squatted next to her, his back against the fence.

Text Questions

- What prompted Keyona's distress?
 - Her entire family had gathered for the afternoon.
 - She wanted time away from too many siblings.
 - She wanted to visit her friend who wasn't home.
 - Her brothers ganged up on her.
- What does it mean to say Keyona had a *temporary* plan?
 - She was running away.
 - She hadn't thought through all the ramifications of the plan.
 - It would last indefinitely without changing.
 - It was a plan she had thought about carefully.
- In what way could Keyona show perseverance in the story?
 - She could talk to Rashan.
 - She could talk things over with her friend.
 - She could return home and show patience with everyone.
 - She could insist on getting her own way.
- Which statement best describes Keyona's feelings about her family?
 - Being the middle child left her feeling insignificant.
 - The younger ones drove her crazy.
 - She hadn't planned on anyone seeking her out.
 - She would have gone farther away initially.
- What do you think will happen next in the story? Give reasons to support your answer.

Name _____

Morning Meal

Jorge couldn't help hovering in the doorway, absently rubbing the back of his neck while observing his mother under the comforter. He'd never seen her rise later than him, and he wondered what prompted it now.

"Mom?" he finally dared speak. "Is there anything you need before I catch the bus?"

"Mercy, what time is it?" She gave him a wan smile. "I should start my day, but it was such a horrid night. I hardly slept at all."

He twisted his hands in front of him, while attempting to reassure her. "Not to worry. I fixed breakfast and packed a lunch. Are you sure there isn't anything I can bring you?"

Mom tried to lift herself up to a sitting position but fell back on the pillows. "What an awful migraine. It left me dizzy. I'd better take this slowly." She turned her head to gaze at him. "Maybe some toast and juice, if you have enough time?"

Jorge practically bounded down the hall in his eagerness to please her. He fumbled in the kitchen, retrieving the toaster from the lower cupboard and putting a bagel down. While it toasted, he rummaged around for butter and jam, considering the options and trying to recall her favorite flavor. There wasn't any strawberry, and his dad was the one who used raspberry, so that settled it: pomegranate jam. Jorge poured juice and searched for a tray to carry everything. His preparations kept him from noticing the acrid smell of burning bread. Glancing at the clock, he hastily assembled the food and delivered the tray to Mom. He didn't have time to consider what he'd do if she didn't approve.

"Thank you, Jorge." Mom had managed to rouse herself a bit. "I'm sure the food will be just the thing to strengthen me. Don't worry about me; I'll be fine."

As he departed, Jorge marveled that she hadn't even hollered about the burnt toast!

Text Questions

- Which word best describes the *acrid* smell of burning bread?
 - sharp
 - sour
 - sarcastic
 - stinging
- Which statement explains a possible reason for Mom not getting up for breakfast?
 - She usually got up later than Jorge.
 - She slept through the alarm.
 - She felt dizzy and lightheaded.
 - She wanted Jorge to fix breakfast.
- Which words best describe Jorge's feelings about his mother's unusual behavior?
 - puzzled, surprised
 - anxious, concerned
 - fearful, afraid
 - angry, resentful
- Which of the following is best supported by evidence in the story?
 - Jorge doesn't care about missing the bus.
 - Jorge is willing to help.
 - Jorge knows how to cook.
 - Jorge isn't very independent.
- Why might Mom have disapproved or hollered about the breakfast? Give reasons to support your answer.

Name _____

Kite Competition

The sight of the waves as he clambered out of the car made up for the fact Jonathon was here with his parents, missing his friend's much discussed birthday party. Family vacations didn't always make his list of preferred ways to spend a weekend, but Jonathon did love the ocean. He'd brought his skimboard, with the thought that he'd snag some time to himself.

"Hey, Jonathon," Dad motioned to him. "Here's an announcement for the kite festival this weekend. They have a competition for the best handcrafted kite, with awards based on its flying ability."

Jonathon reluctantly perused the poster tacked to a utility pole. "Honestly, Dad, I'd rather skimboard."

"Okay," Dad laid a hand on Jonathon's shoulder. "I can't force you to enter, but I can encourage you."

You've often said you wish you could express your creativity. Well, here's your opportunity."

"Huh?" Puzzled, Jonathon considered his dad's words. Maybe making a kite would be a creative way to express himself, but he had his doubts. Still, Jonathon agreed to give it a try to please him.

Carrying his kite, Jonathon advanced to the area where his fellow competitors had gathered. The wind tugged the frame, threatening to pull the canvas into the air. It felt like an extension of himself, soaring and showing everyone what he was made of, instead of feeling invisible as he so often did. Jonathon braced himself. His orange and green kite contrasted sharply to the dull brown of the sand and gray-blue of the ocean. With glee, he flung his kite skyward.

Text Questions

- Based on what you read, what is Jonathon's decision, or dilemma, in the story?
 - He didn't want to miss his friend's birthday party.
 - He wanted to snag some time for himself.
 - He couldn't decide whether to skimboard or enter the kite competition.
 - He didn't care what his dad thought.
- How does Jonathon's dad influence him in the story?
 - He said Jonathon could go to the birthday party.
 - He helped Jonathon build a kite.
 - He forbid Jonathon from skimboarding.
 - He gave Jonathon a suggestion and supported him.
- What is one theme of the text?
 - honesty
 - self-expression
 - insecurity
 - fear of failure
- What does the word *threatening* mean as it is used in the text?
 - a warning
 - approaching quickly
 - frightening
 - menacing toward another person
- What do you learn about Jonathon in the last paragraph?

Name _____

Runner-Up

Emily checked her shoelaces and began to jog in small circles, slowly, waiting for Sierra. She didn't mind the brief delay; she was so grateful to have a running partner. Practically the first thing Emily had done after enrolling in this new school was to sign up for cross-country. Her mom said getting involved was the best way to make new friends, and Emily agreed.

"Hi, sorry I'm late. Have you checked the route? It's a good day for a run, don't you think?" Sierra arrived, talking nonstop as was her habit. Sierra ran every day, and her consistency had motivated Emily to take her own training more seriously. The regular practice had enabled both of them to improve their times over various terrains.

Continuing her warm-up, Emily asked, "Are you racing next week in the big regional meet?"

Sierra jogged a bit, bouncing in her impatience to start the course for the day. "Yeah, the coach encourages everyone to participate."

"Oh." Emily trailed behind Sierra just a bit, processing this information as they loped across the field, setting a comfortable pace. It was difficult for Emily to keep from fretting, knowing Sierra was easily the faster runner. She worried that her own time might hinder the team.

Race day arrived, and Emily gathered with the other team members to receive a colored wristband that identified their school, along with final instructions about the course. "Sierra, where's your band?"

"You're running in my place today because your times will contribute as much to the team as mine, and I want you to have the opportunity to show your stuff to the team. I'll be your water girl at the end." Sierra grinned and gave Emily a high-five.

"Wow, you'd give up a race for me?" Emily gave her friend a quick hug and determined this race would be her best performance ever.

Text Questions

1. What does it mean to give your best *performance*?
 - a. to finish the race
 - b. to achieve and do well
 - c. to present music before an audience
 - d. to function
2. Which title would not be a good alternative for this text?
 - a. "Water Girl"
 - b. "Cross-Country Race"
 - c. "Friends Forever"
 - d. "Running Partners"
3. Why was Emily fretting?
 - a. She didn't like waiting for Sierra.
 - b. She wouldn't be able to race in the regional meet.
 - c. She was afraid she would lose her wristband.
 - d. She was concerned her times would hinder the team.
4. Which statement best explains Sierra's reasons for her actions?
 - a. "It's a good day for a run."
 - b. "The coach encourages everyone to participate."
 - c. "I want you to have the opportunity to show your stuff to the team."
 - d. "I'll be your water girl at the end."
5. What is the theme, and how is it developed? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Name _____

A New Language

Bohdan took a deep breath as he scanned the crowd for someone who might be seeking him. Balancing his name card with his carry-on bag, he wandered away from the relative safety of the gate area toward the main corridor of the terminal. He hoped these few steps wouldn't be a foolish move that would result in missed connections with his host family. He'd traveled a bit in Europe before—short distances on family vacations—but nothing had quite prepared him for the vastness of America. After crossing the Atlantic, he had changed planes in Philadelphia and flown another five hours to reach his destination. He focused again on looking intently at faces as people bustled by, hoping for a face made familiar only by photographs.

"Ah, here you are," a man approached him, extending his hand for a welcoming handshake. Bohdan sighed with relief. "Jeremy," he said, in introduction. "My wife, Melissa and my daughter, Amy. Our son had football practice. Do you have checked luggage?"

Bohdan nodded as he scrambled to mentally translate the unusual sounds of English, which was so different

from what he heard in his native Slovak. Eleven-year-old Amy peppered him with questions as they made their way through the airport. He attempted to answer, knowing this was only a preview of the next day when everyone would notice a new student midway through the year.

After eating his American-style sandwich with two slices of bread, Bohdan wandered outside to watch a group playing basketball. His mind spun from the effort of functioning all morning in a nonnative language. A girl came to sit next to him on the bleachers, greeting him in Slovak.

"You speak Slovak?" Shocked, Bohdan couldn't help reverting to his own language.

Smiling, she nodded. Her next words were in English, as if she was uncertain of all the vocabulary words. "I've been studying through an online language program. You can help me practice."

Text Questions

- What is the significance of the girl studying language online?
 - She wants to show Bohdan her intelligence.
 - She shows friendship and acceptance to a newcomer.
 - She helps Bohdan feel ill at ease.
 - She tells Bohdan this is the best way to learn English.
- Why might Bohdan use the term *vastness* to describe America?
 - It is a very large country.
 - A great number of people live in America.
 - It has a lot of space without people.
 - The country does not have boundaries.
- What is the theme or moral of the text?
 - loyalty
 - honesty
 - fear of failure
 - belonging
- What would cause Bohdan to be noticed at school?
 - He is carrying a name card.
 - He has never traveled before.
 - He is a new student partway through the year.
 - He is not speaking English at school.
- What does Bohdan struggle with the most in his adjustment to a new country? Give evidence to support your answer.

Name _____

Return of the Aunts

Always they descended in a pair, flinging open the front door. Auntie Rachel and Auntie Cordelia arrived in a clamor, saying hello as they clunked too many suitcases on the hall floor, and the dogs howled. Auntie Cordelia headed for the kitchen, where Mother stood speechless, holding a wooden spoon. "Cordelia," Mother's voice quivered, and the spoon hit the counter.

"We're here, Mary Jane. You sit right down and rest them feet. What you got cooking—baked beans? Let's spice them up a bit." Soon, horribly strong odors colored the air. Auntie Rachel commenced to dusting—everything wood and some things that weren't. You daren't sit still too long when Auntie Rachel flung her cloth. Dad heard the ruckus and snuck in the back door, creaking up the stairwell but not quick enough.

"Robert," Cordelia crooned. "Come and taste these beans, and see if I've got enough flavor."

"How long are you staying?" Mother asked, her voice still shaky.

"Oh, maybe a fortnight. Ha! I've always wanted to say *fortnight*, ever since we traveled to England."

However, it turned out the aunts didn't stay long, once my brother, Caleb, and I decided to act. At dinner, Caleb told about the pheasant he had hanging in the barn and how he'd skin it for dinner tomorrow. Mother seemed to catch on and pondered which pot would be big enough. Auntie Rachel attempted to eat her Brussels sprouts, but imagination took over and she fled the table. Cordelia went pale. "You expect me to cook wild animals?"

"Oh, yes," Caleb said proudly. "How you gonna fix them, Auntie Cordelia? I'm sure Mother would be overjoyed to find you a recipe."

The aunts left before dessert. We could hear banging suitcases in the spare room; they didn't even mess up the comforter on the bed with sleeping. Caleb got a big dish of ice cream with chocolate sauce and whipped cream as the door slammed behind the aunts.

Text Questions

- Which words describe Mother's response to the aunts?
 - clamor, ruckus, banging
 - speechless, quivered, shaky
 - snuck, creaking, quick
 - spice, odor, flavor
- What was Mother doing when she *pondered* which pot would be big enough?
 - She considered it carefully.
 - She didn't give it much thought.
 - She weighed each pot in the kitchen.
 - She reflected on why she would use a pot to cook pheasant.
- What is the main problem in the story?
 - The aunts come to cook and clean.
 - The aunts are unwelcome and cause a ruckus.
 - The aunts catch Dad sneaking up the stairs.
 - The aunts do not like to eat pheasant.
- Which of the following did not happen in the story?
 - Auntie Cordelia headed for the kitchen.
 - Auntie Rachel commenced to dusting.
 - Auntie Cordelia traveled from England.
 - Auntie Rachel fled from the table.
- How might the story change if Caleb hadn't claimed to have caught a pheasant?