

READ THE PASSAGE As you read, think of a question you have about the passage.**Huck and Me**

What started as a normal summer day relaxing outside in Dad's hammock with a copy of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* turned into something, well, very bizarre. You might think a 13-year-old boy reading an actual book on a beautiful Missouri day is weird enough, when he could have been playing ball with his friends or swimming in Mark Twain Lake, but you haven't heard the rest of my story. I had just read the part where Huck escapes from his father, having faked his own death, when I must've fallen asleep.

I awoke to this repetitive metallic sound. Was Dad banging pots together? And why did his hammock feel hard beneath me? Wait, this wasn't a hammock. I was on a raft, surrounded by heavy fog. Boatmen were banging pots to announce their presence nearby.

Sitting up, I saw a strong African American man across from me. His husky voice sounded oddly comforting. "You been out a while," he said, nodding at me.

A keelboat drifted by, barely visible through the fog. "Jim?" I asked.

"Yes, Huck," the man replied.

"We haven't passed the mouth of the Ohio, have we?" I inquired.

"Fog's just liftin'. Cain't hardly tell."

I had no idea if we'd passed the river that we were going to take north to where Jim would be a free man, and I was clueless as to how I'd left the twenty-first century and become Huck Finn. But floating free on the smooth early-morning Mississippi, back in the 1880s with a friend whose company I'd first come to enjoy on a printed page, seemed like a real fine place to be.

STRATEGY PRACTICE Write a question you have about the passage. Discuss it with a partner.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

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| <p>1. What is the author's purpose in this passage?</p> <p>(A) to inform</p> <p>(B) to express</p> <p>(C) to persuade</p> <p>(D) to entertain</p> | <p>3. How are the narrator and Huck alike?</p> <p>(A) They enjoy Jim's company.</p> <p>(B) They escaped from their fathers.</p> <p>(C) They live near a river.</p> <p>(D) They like to read books.</p> |
| <p>2. The setting at the beginning contrasts with the setting at the end because _____.</p> <p>(A) it starts in the morning, then continues in the afternoon</p> <p>(B) it is in modern time at first, then in the 1880s</p> <p>(C) it starts on a raft, then continues in a hammock</p> <p>(D) it is foggy at first, then the fog lifts</p> | <p>4. One theme of this story is _____.</p> <p>(A) getting revenge</p> <p>(B) the loss of innocence</p> <p>(C) the joy of reading</p> <p>(D) fear of the unknown</p> |

READ THE PASSAGE Ask yourself questions as you read the passage.

Dance Company on Wheels

Mary Verdi-Fletcher was born with spina bifida, a disease that causes weakness in the legs and spine. Undiscouraged, she was not about to be told what she could or could not do. She dreamed of dancing and was determined to make her dream a reality. While still young, Verdi-Fletcher—dancing in her wheelchair—entered a dance contest with a friend. They won first prize. She entered and won more contests, refusing to listen to people who said to her “You can’t dance if you’re in a wheelchair” or “Dancing in a chair is not really dancing.”

However, Verdi-Fletcher was not satisfied with personal success alone. She wanted to make dance available to others with disabilities. In 1980, she founded a dance company called Dancing Wheels. Based in Cleveland, Ohio, Dancing Wheels performs all over the world. In productions like “The Snowman,” sit-down (seated) dancers perform with stand-up (standing) dancers. Dazzling lighting designs, fanciful sets and props, melodious music, and festive costuming draw audience members into fairy tales and other stories.

In one show, a young stand-up dancer named Devin played “The Brother Who Cannot See” while a young sit-down dancer named Jenny (now an adult member of the company) performed the role of “The Sister Who Cannot Walk.” It was a lovely way to express a theme Verdi-Fletcher has embodied all through her life: We all have disabilities. Some disabilities may be more visible, but hard work and dedication to our dreams can make the seemingly impossible become a reality.

STRATEGY PRACTICE Write one question you thought of while reading the passage. What is the answer?

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- The author wrote this passage mainly to _____.
 - entertain with the story of “The Snowman”
 - teach people how to dance in wheelchairs
 - provide details about spina bifida
 - persuade readers to believe in their dreams
- The author quotes what people said to Mary Verdi-Fletcher to tell readers _____.
 - that no one can dance in a wheelchair
 - the wisdom of the people who are quoted
 - that wheelchair dancing is not real dancing
 - to ignore discouraging opinions
- The main difference between Dancing Wheels and other dance companies is that most companies _____.
 - present elaborate productions
 - accompany dance with music
 - have only stand-up dancers
 - perform all over the world
- The main theme of this passage is that _____.
 - dancing is the best form of art
 - with dedication dreams can become reality
 - dancing is great exercise for children
 - diseases can cause disabilities

READ THE PASSAGE Ask yourself questions to make sure you understand what you read.

Canyon Country

Canyon Country, Utah. Sarah had wanted to hike there ever since she'd seen pictures of it. Finally, she'd talked her parents into camping there in their RV. But now it seemed all they did was eat, sleep, watch movies, and roast marshmallows. The marshmallows were fine, but while her parents slept in after staying up late to watch the latest Tom Cruise film, Sarah rose with the birds. One morning, she gazed around. Gorgeous! She wasn't about to miss another early morning hike; she'd have to go alone.

Sarah opened the RV door and called for her dog. "Kip!" The chocolate Lab ambled over to the steps. "Let's go hiking!" Kip whimpered and stared longingly at the RV door. "Cassie's not coming," Sarah explained, referring to her little Scottish terrier. "She's still sleeping with Mom and Dad. Besides, you're big, so you can frighten away wild critters."

The rocky trail spiraled through canyons, then up to an outcropping that intrigued Sarah. "Are those native ruins up there?" she wondered. The pair had climbed hardly a quarter of a mile when they stopped short. Some 50 yards ahead, a cougar stood in the middle of the trail. Kip trembled at Sarah's side. What to do? Make yourself look big! That's all she could remember from what she'd read in nature books.

Suddenly, Cassie appeared out of nowhere, barking her tiny head off. Whether the cougar was startled or just not hungry, Sarah didn't know. The cougar hurried up the cliff into a thicket of manzanita bushes.

"So I guess my parents are awake now," said Sarah, hugging Cassie as they followed the scent of coffee. "Glad you're up!" she said, arriving at camp. "Cassie scared away a cougar!"

STRATEGY PRACTICE How did asking questions before reading help you better understand the passage?

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. What is the author's main purpose?
 A to entertain
 B to express
 C to inform
 D to persuade
2. How did Sarah's dogs react differently to the cougar?
 A Kip was scared; Cassie acted bravely.
 B Kip frightened the cougar; Cassie made noise.
 C Kip made himself look big; Cassie looked tiny.
 D Kip startled the cougar; Cassie chased it up a cliff.
3. What lesson does Sarah probably learn?
 A Nature is most beautiful at sunrise.
 B You can accomplish a lot if you start early.
 C It is important to be prepared for anything.
 D Reality is not as good as what you expect.
4. Which proverb is a theme of this passage?
 A Let sleeping dogs lie.
 B Beauty is only skin deep.
 C A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
 D Don't judge a book by its cover.

READ THE PASSAGE Think of a question as you read. Look for the answer in the passage.

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera

Mexico has produced many excellent artists, but two of its best known are Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Interestingly, they were married to each other. Both were intensely tied to their Mexican heritage.

Diego Rivera painted pictures on canvases and murals on walls, so he can be called both a painter and a muralist. Many of his murals, boldly painted in earth colors, take up entire walls. Most show common people in everyday scenes—selling flowers on a sidewalk or working in a factory—but the common images carry powerful messages. Studying his paintings, you come away understanding the dignity of hard work, the daily life of native people, and the humble beauty of flowers. Rivera's paintings are personal because they represent the people and the culture around him—the culture of Mexico.

Frida Kahlo's paintings are likewise personal—perhaps more personal than those of Rivera because they reflect her inner world. "I paint self-portraits because I am the person I know best," she once said. Even though she was born into a wealthy family, Kahlo did not enjoy an easy life. As a child, she contracted polio. The disease shrank one leg and led to merciless teasing by schoolmates. When she was 18 years old, she was in a horrific bus accident. For the remainder of her life, Kahlo was in constant physical and emotional pain. She painted 55 self-portraits, the majority of them reflecting her pain.

Like his paintings, Rivera lived large and bold. Beside him, Kahlo looked tiny. Yet her presence, life, and paintings, like his, have always demanded attention.

STRATEGY PRACTICE Write a question about information from the passage. Ask a partner to answer it.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- Frida Kahlo's paintings contrast with Diego Rivera's because they _____.
 - are self-portraits
 - tell about her marriage
 - focus on the beauty of flowers
 - do not reflect her Mexican identity
- Which word from the passage signals that the couple's paintings are alike in some way?
 - interestingly
 - boldly
 - likewise
 - many
- What is one theme of Kahlo's paintings?
 - the beauty of ordinary people
 - the complications of polio
 - Mexico's wealthy class
 - the pain she felt in body and soul
- Which best represents the author's purpose?
 - to give information about two famous painters
 - to tell about how painters work
 - to teach the importance of painting
 - to persuade readers that one painter was more important than the other

READ THE PASSAGE If something you read does not make sense to you, write a question about it.**Cultural Proverbs**

Many of us grow up hearing sayings repeated over and over. These pieces of wisdom are passed down from one generation to the next in proverbs. Proverbs often use metaphors that apply to many situations, some of which are not literal. Variants of the same ideas appear in many cultures, using different metaphors. Benjamin Franklin collected American proverbs in his book *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Here are some proverbs from two other cultures. How are they like sayings you have heard?

Italian Proverbs

- Don't say four if you don't have them in the sack.
- To each bird, his nest is beautiful.
- You can catch more flies with honey than with a barrel of vinegar.
- Fine words don't feed cats.
- Since the house is on fire, let us warm ourselves.
- Like father, like son.

Irish Proverbs

- A trout in the pot is better than a salmon in the sea.
- To the raven, her own chick is white.
- Soft words butter no parsnips, but they won't harden the heart of the cabbage, either.
- Mere words do not feed the friars.
- When the sky falls, we'll all catch larks.
- As the hound is, so will the pup be.

STRATEGY PRACTICE Write one question you had while reading the passage. If you learned the answer, write it down.

SKILL PRACTICE Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

1. Which best represents another way to express the proverb "To each bird, his nest is beautiful"?
 - (A) Many hands make light work.
 - (B) Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
 - (C) Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
 - (D) A watched pot never boils.
2. What is the meaning of the proverb "When the sky falls, we'll all catch larks"?
 - (A) There's a positive side to everything.
 - (B) Disaster is just around the corner.
 - (C) Bad things happen to everyone.
 - (D) Beware of falling birds.
3. The proverbs are arranged to _____.
 - (A) appear in order of length
 - (B) show similar proverbs from different cultures
 - (C) compare Italian people to Irish people
 - (D) show which proverbs are the oldest
4. What is the main purpose of the passage?
 - (A) to persuade people to read proverbs
 - (B) to inform people about wise sayings
 - (C) to entertain with humor
 - (D) to explain how proverbs are collected