



Name _____

Date _____

LUNCH CHOICES

What did you have for lunch today? Did you like your choice? When most adults go to work, they can choose from many different places to eat their lunch. Children, on the other hand, have very limited choices. This just isn't right. Children are growing and developing their bodies. They need healthy choices at every turn. They are bombarded with sweets and high-fat snacks. Providing more choices at lunch will help students grow to be healthy and strong. School administrators need to make changes.

The current choices students have now are not enough. The first choice kids have is the school cafeteria lunch. In theory, these lunches are supposed to be nutritionally sound. The reality is very different. These lunches are typically high in fat and they usually taste bad. They are bland and do not have many spices. This is done so that the meal will appeal to a large audience, but the results are boring and not very healthy.

The other choice available to students is to bring a sack lunch from home. Although this sounds like a great idea, lunches from home aren't much better. There is no refrigeration available for school lunches at school, so sack lunches are pretty limited. Usually sandwiches are the main dish. Sack lunches are typically thrown together at the last minute, and that can be a problem. They are often filled with already-packaged foods that are very high in sugar and calories. You see, this option isn't much better. There have to be more options for students to choose from at lunch so that they can have well-balanced meals at school.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 - a. Children should be given more options on what to eat for lunch.
 - b. The meals in the cafeteria are bland and not appetizing.
 - c. Adults have more choices than kids do for lunch.
 - d. Experts disagree on the daily nutritional value of cafeteria lunches.
2. Who is the audience for this reading passage?
 - a. cafeteria workers and school administrators
 - b. teachers and students
 - c. parents and guardians
 - d. all of the above
3. Which of the following is not how the author describes school cafeteria lunches?
 - a. bad tasting
 - b. bland
 - c. nutritional
 - d. high in fat



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TOO MUCH FUNDRAISING

Every time you turn around, there seems to be another fundraiser being pushed at school. Where is the imaginary sign that reads, "Public School: Fundraising Welcome!"? It seems like every other month there is a new fundraising program taking place in the schools.

All students are pressured to participate for the good of all students. The need for fundraisers seems to be endless: new playground equipment, materials and supplies, overnight or out-of-state school trips, etc. How many tubs of cookie dough, candy, coupons, and magazines can a kid sell? Instead of getting an education, it seems that kids are getting trained to be salespeople.

The pressure tactics placed on children is also too much. Children are enticed to participate in the programs by having prizes and toys dangled in front of them. The reality is that few, if any, students actually receive any of the high-end items. It is almost impossible to sell enough items to earn the prizes promised.

Most children end up with the plastic and cheap toys. These toys are a great example of false advertising. Let's give the fundraisers a rest. Most parents would rather donate a dollar or two instead of being asked to sell another thing!

STORY QUESTIONS

1. "Children are enticed to participate in the programs by having prizes and toys dangled in front of them." *Enticed* means . . .
 - a. make room for.
 - b. show strength for.
 - c. to compensate or adjust for.
 - d. lured.
2. Which of the following is probably a reason why students feel pressured to participate in fundraisers?
 - a. The school has presentations for all students, and packets are given out at school.
 - b. The companies have the phone numbers of all students.
 - c. Students receive grades based on their fundraising success.
 - d. Teachers make sure that students are selling items door to door.
3. The passage is mostly about . . .
 - a. how students are learning about false advertising.
 - b. how students are learning to be salespeople.
 - c. how students are pressured to get prizes.
 - d. why fundraising should be kept out of school.



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AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Why don't the schools offer more after-school activities for students? Schools have the perfect set up to provide more opportunities for students to participate in healthy and meaningful activities. These activities would help keep students involved and exercising. Children do not have enough free activities available to them.

The school doesn't need to spend money to accomplish this proposal. The money has already been invested. The baseball fields and the gymnasiums in the schools should be put to good use. These facilities are not being used to their full potential. The school could easily offer activities such as baseball, basketball, volleyball, football, soccer, and running clubs.

The school could charge a nominal fee for students. The funds would go to providing a supervisor or coach. Parent volunteers could be recruited. If desired, schools could charge extra for craft, cooking, and art classes to allow more children the opportunity to participate. This proposal would not only help the children in getting their much-needed exercise, but it would also give the school a more positive image in the community.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. This passage is mostly about . . .
 - a. how children are not getting enough exercise.
 - b. using the school playing fields and facilities to provide more activities for kids.
 - c. how the school could make more money by charging for after-school activities.
 - d. whether or not schools need insurance to provide after-school activities.
2. Which of the following reasons was mentioned in the passage explaining why some people think that schools should provide after-school activities?
 - a. to allow students safe places to go after school
 - b. to allow a safe place for working parents to send their children after school
 - c. to use the resources of playing fields and gymnasiums already built
 - d. to allow schools to spend time teaching the basics during school, and to have physical education after school
3. The passage says that after-school activities would benefit the students. Which sentence supports that statement?
 - a. The school could charge a nominal fee for students.
 - b. Parent volunteers could be recruited.
 - c. These activities would help keep students involved and exercising.
 - d. If desired, schools could charge extra for craft, cooking, and art classes to allow more children the opportunity to participate.



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TAKE THE TEST

Do you feel like you are constantly taking tests? It's been reported that the educators today administer more tests to students than ever before. There are tests to begin kindergarten. There are two or three achievement tests administered each year. In order to graduate from high school, students are required to take yet another test. Tests, tests, and more tests.

It's a known fact that tests are a means to determine whether or not students are learning the material being taught. However, there are many different ways to assess student comprehension and understanding. Besides, the tests seldom evaluate the information desired in the first place.

You may think that teachers are to blame for all the tests. This just isn't the case. Most teachers wish there was less testing. Did you know that many teachers are threatened if their students do not perform at a certain level on a test? They are threatened with having tenure taken away or being monitored. Teachers are also pressured to teach to the test so that students will be successful taking it. This means that important curricula and material are being ignored so that students will know how to answer questions on a test. Will knowing the answer to these test questions really make a difference in their future education or their future livelihood?

Students deserve to be taught meaningful information that will be relevant and help them excel in life. Too much time is wasted in teaching to the test. Teachers should be given more support and encouragement instead of being constantly judged on how well their students perform on various tests. All this testing has got to stop.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
 - a. Money should be set aside in the school budget to teach test taking skills.
 - b. Parents should be held accountable for how students do on the test.
 - c. The curriculum being taught in school needs to align with the test questions.
 - d. Teachers should not be pressured concerning tests administered in schools.
2. Standardized tests are administered in schools with the intent to . . .
 - a. determine the skills and abilities of the students.
 - b. meet minimum standards set by the teachers' unions.
 - c. help children become better test takers.
 - d. test how well of a job the teacher is doing.
3. What does the author say will happen if the students spend too much time taking tests instead of learning valid material and subjects?
 - a. Students will leave school with an insufficient education.
 - b. Parents will have to start home schooling their students.
 - c. The testing companies will go out of business.



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SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Every child who attends a public school or even a private school has to deal with the idea of school assemblies. Some assemblies are put on to generate school spirit. These assemblies certainly have their place. On the other hand, there are many other school assemblies that are nothing more than a big waste of time. This practice has got to stop.

School assemblies usually turn into a punishment based on student behavior. Students are out of seats, usually sitting on the floor in a crowded room. The main feature of the assembly is usually far away, and the sound quality is very poor. No wonder students start to act up in school assemblies. It's boring, it's hard to hear, and it's uncomfortable. Heard in the background during any assembly are the harsh whispers by teachers saying, "Shhh!"

Assemblies should be optional. Students shouldn't have to participate if they wish to engage in something else—perhaps even something educational! As it is, valuable educational moments are lost while students are forced to sit through one more mind-numbing school assembly.

Students are seldom asked what type of assemblies they might find interesting. Students are never asked to share their opinions of which guest speaker they think would be interesting. Teachers need to consider the educational needs of the students before putting together one more assembly.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the author's opinion of school assemblies?
 - a. School assemblies are usually shallow and do not inspire students.
 - b. School assemblies funny and entertaining.
 - c. School assemblies are an excuse to get out of class.
 - d. School assemblies are relevant and play an important role in education.
2. Which statement below from the passage portrays the author's opinion?
 - a. Some assemblies are put on to generate school spirit.
 - b. Students are out of seats, usually sitting on the floor in a crowded room.
 - c. As it is, valuable educational moments are lost, while students are forced to sit through one more mind-numbing school assembly.
 - d. Heard in the background during any assembly are harsh whispers.
3. What is meant by the statement, "Teachers need to consider the educational needs of the students before putting together one more assembly"?
 - a. The author wants assemblies to be put together by the students.
 - b. School assemblies can have an impact that lasts for a lifetime.
 - c. School assemblies should be put together by teachers.
 - d. Time spent on school assemblies shouldn't detract from the true education of the students.