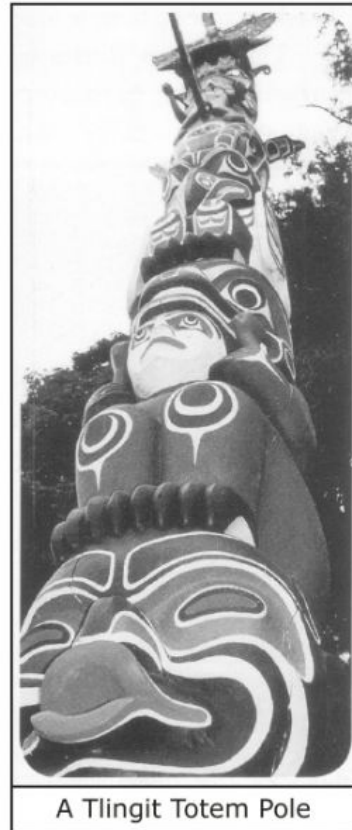


Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.
Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Storytelling Trees

by Micki Huysken

- 1 Cedar trees grow in the Alaskan forest. A Tlingit (CLING-it) Indian walks among them searching for the right one. He finds a strong, straight tree that has been growing long before his grandfather's grandfather lived there. He marks its rough bark. This is the first step in making a magnificent storytelling tree.
- 2 Long ago, before writing was used by Indians, totem poles were carved to tell stories of battles or to record events happening in the tribe.
- 3 Shapes of bears, wolves, whales, eagles, and other wild creatures were carved into soft tree trunks. The tree was read from top to bottom by a storyteller. Stories often included animals with superhuman powers and stories about the Eagle and Raven clans. These totem poles were read again and again like a library of wooden stories.
- 4 Have you seen pictures of totem poles or visited the state of Alaska or Washington where poles stand? Even today, totem-pole carving continues in Ketchikan, Alaska, where Tlingit Indians still live.
- 5 Once a stone adze (an ax-like tool) brought down an 80-foot giant. Today, chain saws do the work in less time.
- 6 Thick bark is stripped away; then knots, once burned with hot rocks, are sanded smooth. At last, the tree is ready for the master carver chosen by the tribe. Poles that once took a year to carve can be completed in three months.
- 7 The carver chants to help his concentration and to keep a cutting rhythm. It is a chant he learned from his father who learned it from



Storytelling Trees by Micki Huysken From Hopscotch Magazine, October/November 2010.

his. Wood chips pepper the air. Animals with beaver tails, whales, wolves, and birds with oversized beaks are chiseled into the soft wood. Some carvings have human shapes.

- 8 Black paint dabbed into pale wooden eyes gives them a look of power. Long ago, artists mixed salmon eggs with minerals like hematite, graphite, and copper to make bright-colored paints for the poles.
- 9 At last, the weary carver puts down his tools. He is ready for a crane to lift the new pole. He thinks back and remembers stories of his grandfather's first pole raising. That one took place at the river's edge. No crane was used then, just dozens of men holding tightly to ropes. Their groans rippled like a chorus of bears; sweat beaded on their brown backs. Drums and voices swelled like thunder when the pole rose.
- 10 The old carver blinks away the memories as a ray of sun touches his sensitive eyes. The steel arm crane is placing his new pole upright facing the road. Arriving visitors look up in awe. Cheers and laughter roll forth like water from a bubbling pot. What was once a mighty cedar growing tall in the Alaskan forest is now a magnificent totem pole.



People stand among a group of Tlingit totem poles.

Storytelling Trees by Micki Huysken from Hopscotch Magazine, October/November 2010.

- 11 Think about stories told by your parents and grandparents. If you put those stories on a totem pole, what would your storytelling tree look like?

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- 9 Which sentence from the selection shows that totem poles were important for teaching Tlingit history?
- A *These totem poles were read again and again like a library of wooden stories.*
 - B *At last, the tree is ready for the master carver chosen by the tribe.*
 - C *Animals with beaver tails, whales, wolves, and birds with oversized beaks are chiseled into the soft wood.*
 - D *Long ago, artists mixed salmon eggs with minerals like hematite, graphite, and copper to make bright-colored paints for the poles.*

-
- 10 Read the dictionary entry below.

strong \ˈstrɒŋ\ *adjective*
1. muscular 2. consisting of solid material 3. determined
4. moving rapidly or with force

Which definition best fits the way the word strong is used in paragraph 1?

- F Definition 1
- G Definition 2
- H Definition 3
- J Definition 4

- 11** What conclusion can the reader make about the Tlingit totem poles?
- A** Specialized carving machines are required to make totem poles.
 - B** The carvers selected to make totem poles must be good singers.
 - C** The meanings of the figures carved on totem poles have changed.
 - D** The process of carving totem poles has changed over time.
-

- 12** The author uses questions in paragraph 4 and paragraph 11 as a way to —
- F** show that American Indian art is similar to other types of art
 - G** establish a connection between the reader's experiences and totem poles
 - H** encourage the reader to reflect on what is considered art
 - J** help the reader understand why totem poles attract visitors
-

- 13** The author organizes paragraph 9 in a compare-and-contrast pattern to illustrate —
- A** how the images carved into totem poles have changed over time
 - B** which carvers in the tribe are the most talented
 - C** the way that modern machinery has made raising a totem pole easier
 - D** how the totem pole has changed during the carving process

14 The language the author uses in paragraph 10 emphasizes —

- F** the emotional responses people have toward the totem poles
- G** that the new totem poles are more important than totem poles from the past
- H** how quickly the new totem pole was raised using the crane
- J** that the types of trees used to make the totem poles affect their beauty

15 In paragraph 9, the word weary means —

- A** amused
- B** confused
- C** worried
- D** tired

16 Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

Even today, totem-pole carving continues in Ketchikan, Alaska, where Tlingit Indians still live.

In this sentence, what does the author help the reader understand about the culture of the Tlingit people?

- F** Their master carvers are highly skilled.
- G** Their carvers use special tools to make each totem pole.
- H** Their history is told through images on the totem poles.
- J** They have maintained their tradition of making totem poles.

17 Which sentence from the selection is best supported by the photographs?

- A** *Shapes of bears, wolves, whales, eagles, and other wild creatures were carved into soft tree trunks.*
- B** *Once a stone adze (an ax-like tool) brought down an 80-foot giant.*
- C** *Thick bark is stripped away; then knots, once burned with hot rocks, are sanded smooth.*
- D** *Drums and voices swelled like thunder when the pole rose.*