Text 4

St. Bernard Dogs

St. Bernard dogs are famous for saving lives. Since the 1700s, monks have kept these dogs to help them with their work rescuing people after bad snowstorms on the 49 mile St. Bernard Pass, which is a little more than 8,000 feet above sea level through the western Alps between Italy and Switzerland. It is a treacherous route and for over 200 years, the monks have rescued about 2,000 people, from lost children to Napoleon's soldiers. They could do this because St. Bernard dogs have an uncanny sense of direction and resistance to cold.

Servants called marroniers, were assigned to accompany travellers between the Monks' hospice and Bourg-Saint-Pierre, a municipality on the Swiss side. By 1750, marroniers were accompanied by the dogs, whose broad chests helped to clear snow from the paths for travellers. The marroniers soon discovered the dogs' tremendous sense of smell and the ability to discover people buried deep in the snow, and sent them out in packs of two or three alone to seek lost or injured travellers.

Today, St. Bernard dogs are used for dog sports such as carting and weight pulling. They are rarely used on rescue missions anymore and through much cross-breeding, the dogs have become giant dogs, with the largest weighing in at 140 kg. However, in the 1700s, the dogs were a lot smaller in size and had shorter, reddish brown and white fur and a longer tail.

St. Bernard dogs are sweet, gentle, calm, loyal, affectionate and patient, and make ideal pets in households.

26. What are St Bernard dogs famous for?

a. being good pets
b. saving people's lives
c. doing dog sports

27. How long is the Great St Bernard Pass?

a. 8,000 feet
b. 200 miles
c. 49 miles

28. How was the snow cleared along the Pass?

a. By the Marrioners' chests
b. By the dog's chests
c. By the monk's chests

29. What does the word treacherous mean on line 6?

a. dangerous
b. high
c. long

30. What were servants called, at the turn of the century?

a. Mariners
b. Travellers
c. Marroniers

31. What did the dogs have a good sense of?

a. sight
b. smell
c. hearing