Name_____

The Chicago Fire

In the state of Illinois on October 8, 1871, one of the most infamous events in the city of Chicago's history began: the Chicago Fire. The Chicago Fire of 1871 had such an enormous impact on the city that one of the four stars on the city's official flag stands for this event.

No one is certain what caused the fire, which burned for several days. Most historians believe the fire started in a barn owned by a Mrs. O'Leary. It is thought that perhaps a cow may have started the spark that led to the burning of Chicago by kicking over a lantern located in the barn. Regardless of the source, the damage from the fire was widespread. Fire destroyed four square miles of the city and cost more than 300 people their lives. Another 100,000 people lost their homes.

The determination of the citizens of Chicago to rebuild eventually saved their beloved city. Within four years, the people had rebuilt much of what was destroyed by the fire. Today, the city has overcome its bleak past, but no one will ever forget the disaster of 1871.

Text Questions

1. What personal quality did the citizens who survived the fire of 1871 need to be successful in rebuilding their city?
   a. weakness
   b. determination
   c. creativity
   d. imagination
2. Why does the author mention the star on Chicago's flag?
   a. To show the historical significance of the event to the citizens of Chicago.
   b. To explain that Chicago's flag has four stars.
   c. To show the city's flag has stars just as the flag of the United States of America has stars.
   d. To infer that one star has more significance than the other three stars.
3. Based on the information given, what can one conclude about the source of the fire?
   a. The source of the fire is not as significant as the actual event and the results of the fire.
   b. Historians feel compelled to find out the exact source of the fire.
   c. The citizens needed to know the source of the fire to stop such an event from ever occurring again.
   d. Electricity would be added to all new outdoor structures being built after the fire to prevent the use of lanterns or other sources of possible fire.
4. Which title would be a good alternative for this text?
   a. "Stop the Destruction"
   b. "Mrs. O'Leary's Cow"
   c. "The Citizens Rebuild"
   d. "The 1871 Chicago Inferno"
5. What was the author's purpose in writing this text?
   a. to entertain
   b. to persuade
   c. to inform
   d. to explain

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