Name_____

Just an Ordinary Guy

Louis Sachar, the author of *Holes*, is just an ordinary person. He spent part of his childhood in New York, but his family moved to California while he was still in elementary school. While living in New York, his father worked on the 78th floor of the Empire State Building. Sachar says this may have been the inspiration for the Wayside School.

Sachar studied economics in college. He received a flier on campus one day that offered college credit in exchange for helping out as a teacher's aide at a local elementary school. Sachar thought it sounded like a good way to obtain free credit, so he signed up. It quickly became his favorite college class. He helped in classrooms and on the playground as a lunch supervisor. Sachar says that the kids in his books are based on kids he knew while working at that school.

After college, Sachar got a job at a warehouse. During this time he wrote his first book, *Sideways Stories from Wayside School*. It took him almost a year to write the book, which was accepted by a publisher during his first week at law school. He passed the bar exam and then did part-time legal work. He went on to practice law, continuing to write children's books in the evenings. Nearly ten years later, Sachar was making enough money from the sales of his books to leave the law profession and devote himself to writing full-time.

One of Sachar's most well-known works, *Holes*, won a Newbery Award in 1999. Sachar says when he started writing the book, it was more about the place than the characters. As he wrote, the characters became more developed. It took him a year and a half to write the book, the same length of time Stanley was sentenced to Camp Green Lake.

Text Questions

1. Where did Louis Sachar receive the inspiration for his stories?
   a. from the books he read
   b. from things that happened in his life
   c. from his job
   d. from his teachers
2. Based on the text, what can you infer about the author of *Holes*?
   a. He doesn't have a strong understanding of childhood behavior.
   b. He had an unhappy childhood.
   c. He finds inspiration for his books from real-life events.
   d. He enjoys writing books about law schools.
3. Which statement is <u>not</u> true?
   a. There is a real Wayside school building that is sideways.
   b. Sachar helped in classrooms and on the playground as a lunch supervisor.
   c. It took Sachar a year and a half to write *Holes*.
   d. One of Sachar's most well-known works, *Holes*, won a Newbery Award in 1999.
4. What does the word *inspiration* mean as it is used in the first paragraph?
   a. breathing
   b. something supernatural
   c. an action that prompts a reaction
   d. something that influences someone to do something creative
5. After reading this passage, what can you learn from Sachar about success?

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LIVEWORKSHEETS