

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Great Quake

Today, in most industrialized countries in the world, buildings are designed to withstand various, unexpected natural disasters. Safety measures are installed in modern-day designs to help contain the spread of fire, and design engineers make sure newer structures are deliberately planned to hold against the violent shifting of the earth during an unexpected earthquake. However, such deliberate design and planning was not the case during the early 1900s.

On April 18, 1906, in the morning hours of the day, the citizens of San Francisco, California, were witnesses to an earthquake so monumental the tremors were felt as

far north as Oregon. Neither the city nor its people were prepared for what would happen next: the devastation of their city.

The actual earthquake only lasted two minutes. Of course, the violent tremors must have seemed much longer to the actual eyewitnesses, but the fires that came after the earthquake lasted for nearly three days. The enormous loss from the disaster included the lives of at least five hundred people, and an estimated three thousand acres of the city were destroyed. This disaster is often called simply the “Great Quake” because of the vast destruction that occurred.

### Text Questions .....

1. After reading this passage, what can you predict will most likely happen to San Francisco in the future if another earthquake hits the city?
  - a. The city will be less prepared than in 1906.
  - b. Fires will ravage the city after an earthquake.
  - c. The citizens will refuse to rebuild the city.
  - d. The city will be better prepared due to modern-day designs and safety measures.
2. What is the meaning of the word *vast* as used in the last paragraph?
  - a. extensive
  - b. miniature
  - c. simultaneous
  - d. perpetual
3. Which would be the best source to learn more about the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906?
  - a. a personal website by someone who currently resides in San Francisco
  - b. a journal written by someone who survived the 1906 earthquake
  - c. an atlas showing the epicenter of the 1906 quake
  - d. an online encyclopedia entry about earthquakes
4. Using information from the text, what can you say is true about the 1906 earthquake?
  - a. Flooding was a huge problem after the earthquake.
  - b. The earthquake left everyone in the city without shelter.
  - c. People were ill-prepared for any type of disaster in the 1900s.
  - d. The destruction by fires after the earthquake caused major damage to San Francisco.
5. Using information from the passage, explain why the 1906 earthquake became known as the “Great Quake.” Write at least two complete sentences.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**The Dust Bowl**

Imagine day turned into night. The world is so covered in a thick, blinding dust that all sunlight is blocked out from view. Everyone around you is running from the cloud of dust that will suffocate its victims with a blanket of dust. Think it couldn't happen? Think again.

In the United States during the 1930s, an area in the middle of the country became known as the Dust Bowl. Huge dust storms ravaged areas in the states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico. The dust storms were mainly caused by a lack of planning on the part of those who continuously farmed the areas of land and a series of droughts that swept through the ravaged farmlands. The loose soil easily succumbed to the strong winds ready to sweep the land in huge clouds across the already suffering Midwestern states.

The environmental disaster caused over three million people to leave their homes in the Great Plains area. Those leaving hoped to find food, shelter, and a new way of life for their families by moving out West. Although some did find new homes, sadly, many of those people hoping for a better life were often forced to take whatever jobs they could find just to survive. People in other areas did not often treat the immigrants with kindness, believing the flux of people in their own lands would cause overcrowding and hardships for their own families. However, the Dust Bowl did have at least one positive effect on agriculture: people learned to implement farming practices that would save the soil and save the settlers of the Great Plains from facing such an economic disaster of such magnitude ever again.

**Text Questions** .....

1. Why do you think the author included the first paragraph in this reading passage?
  - a. to provide a visual image for the reader
  - b. to give factual information about the Dust Bowl
  - c. to describe what it would be like to be blind
  - d. to give a strong conclusion to the text
2. Compare the word *flux* as it is used in the third paragraph to the examples below. Choose the sentence that uses the word *flux* in a similar way.
  - a. All of the computers were not working because the entire system was in a flux.
  - b. The flux of tourists to the area caused overcrowding at every train station.
  - c. Because of the flux in her temperature, the doctor worried about her recovery.
  - d. She felt a flux of emotions when she was around her former boyfriend.
3. What is one inference the reader can make about the Dust Bowl of the 1930s?
  - a. With better soil management, much of the Dust Bowl could have been prevented.
  - b. Lack of rain was the only cause of the Dust Bowl.
  - c. The Great Plains should be prepared to face another disaster similar to what occurred in the 1930s.
  - d. The Great Depression was the key cause of the dust storms that ravaged the Great Plains.
4. Which sentence would be a good concluding sentence for the first paragraph?
  - a. Don't ever stop thinking about it.
  - b. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was an environmental and natural disaster that caused unimaginable tragedy.
  - c. Earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes are all natural disasters that can occur in the United States.
  - d. Having a farm on the Great Plains was the dream of many immigrants.
5. Which statement is not a fact about the Dust Bowl?
  - a. The Dust Bowl was the worst natural disaster of all time.
  - b. The Dust Bowl occurred in the Great Plains.
  - c. Many farmers of the Great Plains moved West.
  - d. Lack of rain was one cause of the Dust Bowl.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Galveston Hurricane

Coastal towns are changed forever when hurricane winds strike. On September 8, 1900, the citizens of Galveston, Texas, found out how true this would be for them. The city was ravaged by winds that reached nearly 130 miles per hour. Unlike today's world, where weather stations are often able to give warnings about impending hurricanes, leaving people time to prepare for upcoming storms, those living in the 1900s had no way of knowing the magnitude of what was about to happen.

When the storm was over, one-sixth of Galveston's population—approximately 10,000 people—was gone.

The death toll was staggering, but especially sad were the deaths of many children. At St. Mary's orphanage in Galveston, all but three of the children living there were reported to have perished that day.

Thousands were left homeless after the hurricane. Volunteer agencies such as the Red Cross rushed to help those in need. Through the caring of others and the help of its citizens, Galveston managed to rebuild; however, those who survived the hurricane would be forever changed by what had occurred.

### Text Questions .....

1. What does the text imply about the hurricane of 1900 and the events surrounding the storm?
  - a. Galveston was prepared for a storm of this magnitude.
  - b. The citizens were taken by surprise at the force of the storm.
  - c. People who live in coastal towns are always ready to leave when bad weather erupts.
  - d. Many people in Galveston were homeless before the storm ever hit.
2. Choose the best definition for the word *coastal* as it is used in the first paragraph.
  - a. a slope or area that is downhill
  - b. a rural area
  - c. a town built near the ocean
  - d. a city that is a tourist attraction
3. Which statement is not a fact about the story?
  - a. The Galveston hurricane occurred on September 8, 1900.
  - b. Winds from the hurricane reached nearly 130 mph.
  - c. Citizens of Galveston knew the risk they were taking by living in a coastal city.
  - d. Many children died as a result of the Galveston hurricane.
4. Where in the text can you find information about the number of deaths as a result of the hurricane?
  - a. the title of the text
  - b. the first paragraph
  - c. the second paragraph
  - d. the third paragraph
5. Which would be the best source to learn about other hurricanes that have happened in Texas?
  - a. a newspaper article about the hurricane that hit Galveston on September 8th
  - b. an encyclopedia entry about hurricanes
  - c. a research paper comparing the world's worst hurricanes and tsunamis
  - d. a book about natural disasters in the state of Texas

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## The Black Death

Plagues of all types have haunted humans since the dawn of civilization. One of the worst plagues to strike was during the mid 1300s. This plague was so deadly it became known as the Black Death.

The Black Death began to be seen in Europe in 1347 and lasted for nearly four years. During this time in history, Europeans were doing much trade with those living in Asia. Unfortunately, trading did not just bring new goods to the Europeans; it also brought new diseases. The unsuspecting adventurers never realized they were importing rats, who came as stowaways, into

the previously uninfected areas. These rats carried with them the deadly plague, which quickly spread to the human inhabitants of the area.

Various diseases were a part of the Black Death. The bubonic plague was one type of disease that spread quickly throughout Europe during the middle 1300s. Some of the diseases could even spread through the air, and those infected would be dead in less than twenty-four hours. Literally, millions of people died as a result of the deadly sickness. No wonder history has given this plague the name the Black Death.

### Text Questions

1. What can you infer about the plague from the first paragraph?
  - a. Plagues such as this one happened often in Europe and Asia.
  - b. The Black Death was devastating during the mid 1300s.
  - c. Vaccinations for diseases were developed as a result of the Black Death.
  - d. People should have stopped all trade with other countries during the plague.
2. What is the main idea of this text?
  - a. The Black Death was one of the deadliest plagues known to Europe.
  - b. Trading goods with people from different countries is not always a good idea.
  - c. Most plagues could be controlled if people were more aware of what caused various diseases.
  - d. People from earlier civilizations lived dangerous lives.
3. Which is a synonym for the word *various* as it is used in the third paragraph?
  - a. some
  - b. different
  - c. remarkable
  - d. similar
4. Which statement best explains how the plague was brought from Asia to Europe?
  - a. The plague was carried through the air.
  - b. Deadly diseases were already in Europe and did not come from trading with Asia.
  - c. People were infected with the plague from ingesting fish and seafood from other regions.
  - d. Rats, traveling with goods from Asia, brought the deadly disease with them.
5. What happened to Europe's population as a result of the Black Death?
  - a. The population remained the same.
  - b. The population decreased.
  - c. The population slightly increased.
  - d. The population doubled in size.