Name_____

The *Titanic*

In 1912, one of the most majestic ships of all times—the *Titanic*—set sail for America from England. The ship held not only some of the world's wealthiest people but also hundreds of immigrants hoping to find a new life in America. Sadly, many of those on board never reached American shores.

On the fifth night of the ship's first voyage, disaster struck when the ship came into deadly contact with an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean. The force of the contact caused the ship, which had once been called "unsinkable," to be doomed.

By the end of the night, 1,500 of the 2,200 people on board would be dead. Too few lifeboats and inadequate safety procedures caused the demise of those who might have survived the terrible tragedy. For many, what happened to the *Titanic* is considered one of the greatest shipwrecks of all time.

Text Questions

1. What does the word *majestic* mean as it is used in the first paragraph?
   a. grand
   b. colossal
   c. enlightened
   d. imposing
2. What is the meaning of the last sentence—"what happened to the Titanic is considered one of the greatest shipwrecks of all time"?
   a. The ship was the largest to ever sink.
   b. There was a plethora of people who died when the ship sank.
   c. The shipwreck is a tragedy no one will ever forget.
   d. The story of the shipwreck is known by people in both England and America.
3. Based on the text, which of the following statements can be proven true?
   a. The *Titanic* was the grandest ship of its time.
   b. The immigrants on board the *Titanic* felt lucky to be going to America.
   c. There were not enough lifeboats for the number of passengers on board the *Titanic*.
   d. The ship's voyage was taking longer than expected.
4. What was the author's purpose in writing this text?
   a. to entertain
   b. to persuade
   c. to encourage
   d. to inform
5. Which would be the best source to learn more about icebergs?
   a. an encyclopedia
   b. an atlas
   c. an almanac
   d. a dictionary

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Name_____

The Twin Towers

The side-by-side towers in New York City, which were home to Manhattan's World Trade Center, were more commonly known as the Twin Towers. Each skyscraper was an incredible one hundred and ten stories high. Then, on September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center was attacked by terrorists. What happened on that date in history should never be forgotten.

The attack on September 11th was not the first time the area had been targeted. In 1993, a bomb had been detonated in the North Tower. This explosion killed six people and injured thousands of others. The tower, however, was able to withstand the explosive power of the blast.

In 2001, both towers were attacked. Two planes were flown directly into the buildings. The effect of these attacks was immediately catastrophic. Neither building was built to withstand such structural damage, and the collapse of each building was imminent. The south tower fell in less than one hour after being attacked, and the north tower collapsed soon afterwards. Both towers were completely gone. The land where the World Trade Center once stood is now known as Ground Zero. The day when the towers were attacked is remembered as one of the most infamous days in America's history.

Text Questions

1. What is most likely the reason the World Trade Center buildings were also called the Twin Towers?
   a. The two buildings had similar working hours.
   b. The two buildings were built on the same acre of land.
   c. The two buildings were identical in design.
   d. The two buildings were nothing alike.
2. Which statement is a fact about the story?
   a. The World Trade Center was attacked more than once.
   b. The buildings would have survived the attack if they had not been identical in design.
   c. September 11, 2001, is the most infamous date in America's history.
   d. No one should ever construct another building at Ground Zero.
3. Which is a synonym for the word *infamous* as it is used in the last paragraph?
   a. notorious
   b. fabulous
   c. famous
   d. cordial
4. Which title would be a good alternative for this text?
   a. "September: A Bad Month"
   b. "The End of Time"
   c. "The World Trade Center Attack"
   d. "A Day When All Hope Died"
5. Using information from the third paragraph, list three things in sequential order that happened that day.
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

Name_____

The New Madrid Fault

In 1812, an earthquake caused by the New Madrid fault caused such seismic activity that the Mississippi River actually flowed backwards. The first tremors began in 1811, giving warning that the New Madrid Fault was about to get interesting. This fault line, which is named after the city New Madrid and is located along the Mississippi River in the state of Arkansas, would soon produce an earthquake that would have likely measured well above an eight on the Richter scale.

Unlike the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, this area near the New Madrid fault was sparsely populated. However, some towns were totally wiped out when the tremors caused landslides that covered the areas below them. Then, in February of 1812, the largest of the earthquakes would strike the area.

The quake that hit the region in February of 1812 is estimated to have measured at a strength of 8.8 and is undoubtedly one of the strongest earthquakes to ever hit this region. The tremors were so strong that church bells rang in Boston, Massachusetts, from the shaking of the earth. Waterfalls were created in the mighty Mississippi as the riverbed shifted and people unlucky enough to be on the water were killed instantly in the tumultuous waters. Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee was created as the earth shifted and water from the Mississippi poured into the new depressions of the ground.

The activity finally began to wane in March of the same year, but the landscape of the area had been permanently changed. Towns had been destroyed, fields were flooded, and new lakes were created. Historians estimate that the series of events eventually caused the deaths of over one thousand people.

Text Questions

1. Based on the text, which statement is not true?
   a. The New Madrid fault is located near the Mississippi River.
   b. Tremors from the New Madrid fault were so strong that the effects were felt as far away as Boston, Massachusetts.
   c. There were no serious injuries as a result of the earthquakes because there were no large towns.
   d. At one point, the Mississippi River flowed backwards as a result of the earthquakes.
2. Which would be the best source to learn more about the New Madrid Fault?
   a. a book about major fault lines in the United States
   b. a book about major earthquakes that have happened throughout the world
   c. an online encyclopedia entry about major earthquakes in the United States
   d. an online site about the history of the Mississippi River
3. Which is an antonym for the word *sparsely* as it is used in the second paragraph?
   a. barely
   b. lightly
   c. thinly
   d. densely
4. What is the main idea of this text?
   a. In the past, the New Madrid fault caused major damage near the Mississippi River.
   b. The earthquakes caused by the New Madrid fault were worse than the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.
   c. People all over the world should know about the life-changing effects of earthquakes.
   d. The New Madrid fault is still a serious threat in today's world.
5. Using the information in the text, list two things that happened as a result of the earthquakes.
   a. _____
   b. _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Name_____

Mount St. Helens: A Deadly Volcano

Modern history has had its share of deadly volcanic eruptions. Mount St. Helens, located in the state of Washington, was once called "the Smoking Mountain" by Native Americans. The once smoking mountain was becoming extremely active, and by March of 1980, the activity within the volcano had begun to increase significantly.

Because of the increased activity, those living near the mountain were encouraged to evacuate. Unfortunately, not everyone listened to the warnings and left the area. One can only assume that those who chose to stay did not realize just how dangerous the situation was about to become.

Then, on May 18, 1980, the area around the volcano was hit with an earthquake. Parts of the mountain began to shift and one of the largest landslides ever recorded followed as a result of the earthquake. But the mountain wasn't finished. The volcano erupted with a blast that took out trees and leveled the area as far as twelve miles from the point of the blast. The explosion caused the debris from the landslide to become liquefied, and everything was propelled by the force of the explosion down the mountain at speeds surpassing one hundred miles an hour. The rush of debris, in turn, flooded the surrounding riverbanks, causing them to overflow and destroy everything in their path.

Despite the warnings, everyone did not reach safety. Fifty-seven people died as a result of this natural disaster. Scientists continue to monitor the still active volcano and hope such a catastrophe as what occurred in 1980 will not repeat itself in the near future.

Text Questions

1. Using information from the text, explain why people may not have evacuated the area around Mount St. Helens.

_____

_____

_____

2. What was the author's purpose in writing this text?
   a. to explain
   b. to entertain
   c. to persuade
   d. to inform

3. Which statement is an opinion?
   a. Mount St. Helens led to the deaths of fifty-seven people.
   b. The eruption in 1980 of Mount St. Helens is, without a doubt, the worst natural disaster to ever occur in North America.
   c. The state of Washington experienced an earthquake and a volcanic explosion on the same day.
   d. Mount St. Helens was called "the Smoking Mountain" by Native Americans.

4. Why were the residents of the mountain encouraged to evacuate?
   a. The volcano was showing signs of increased activity.
   b. The property around the volcano was being used by the government for an interstate highway.
   c. Animals trying to escape volcanic activity were causing a stampede.
   d. Secret government experiments were taking place near the mountain.

5. Which would be a good primary source about the 1980 volcanic eruption?
   a. a website about volcanic eruptions in South America
   b. an atlas with maps showing the Pacific Northwest
   c. a letter written about the volcanic explosion by a survivor from the area
   d. an encyclopedia entry about volcanoes

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

Name_____

Chernobyl: A Nuclear Disaster

In the 1970s, the Chernobyl nuclear plant, located in the Ukraine, was one of the largest nuclear power plants on the planet. In 1986, the facility would experience an explosion that would forever change how much of the world viewed nuclear power. The effects of one fateful day would change the surrounding area forever.

Not until years after the incident would those investigating the cause finally be able to understand the origins of the disaster. An explosion in the reactors created a power surge that eventually led to an explosion that blew the lid off the nuclear reactor. This explosion caused radioactive material to spread to surrounding areas. Many of those areas were inhabited by civilians who were now exposed to dangerous levels of radiation.

Thirty-two people died as an immediate result of the explosion. The radiation that spread out from the facility would contaminate millions of acres. Eventually thousands of people died and thousands of others suffered from radiation poisoning and cancers caused from the nuclear explosion. Those people who lived near Chernobyl but did not die all lost their homes because of the contamination. Chernobyl was officially shut down in 2000, but the disastrous results of the nuclear meltdown remain even today.

Text Questions

1. Which statement is true about the text?
   a. Because of the Chernobyl disaster, nuclear power is no longer used today.
   b. After the meltdown, scientists managed to contain radiation within the area of the nuclear facility.
   c. Inhabitants of the area surrounding Chernobyl were not affected by the nuclear explosion.
   d. Thirty-two people died as an immediate result of the explosion, but many more would die as a result of the nuclear meltdown.

2. Which sentence in the first paragraph best foreshadows the fact that the nuclear meltdown would have long-term effects?
   a. In the 1970s, the Chernobyl nuclear plant, located in the Ukraine, was one of the largest nuclear power plants on the planet.
   b. In 1986, the facility would experience an explosion that would forever change how much of the world viewed nuclear power.
   c. The effects of one fateful day would change the surrounding area forever.
   d. Those people who lived near Chernobyl but did not die all lost their homes because of the contamination.

3. According to the text, which event most likely caused the nuclear meltdown?
   a. a loss of electricity in the facility
   b. a bird flying into some electrical wires outside the plant
   c. an unexpected freeze that caused a sudden drop in temperatures
   d. an explosion in the reactors that caused a power surge

4. After reading this text, what can one conclude about the nuclear plant at Chernobyl?
   a. The plant will reopen within the next decade.
   b. It will continue to provide power from the portions of the plant that were not affected by the explosion.
   c. The people living in the area hope to see the facility providing nuclear power within the near future.
   d. The plant is no longer in operation.

5. Why were people outside of the plant affected by the explosion?
   a. Nuclear radiation spread through the air.
   b. People came to the site to see what had happened.
   c. Vehicles leaving the plant unknowingly carried radiation outside of the facility.
   d. Birds flying in the vicinity of the facility carried radiation to other areas.

LIVEWORKSHEETS