

READING COMPREHENSION

20 “BULLET TRAINS”



If you visit Japan, you might choose to travel around the country by Shinkansen train. These high-powered trains connect the major cities of Japan. They are nicknamed “bullet trains” because they go very fast and have pointy noses like a bullet.

Bullet trains are a good way to travel for several reasons other than their speed. They are very punctual, often leaving on time to the second. They are also comfortable. All the seats face forward, and there is plenty of leg room. Most importantly, bullet trains are very safe. In their 35-year history, there have been only a few accidents and no deaths.

The only downside to the bullet trains is that they are expensive. A ticket to travel to another city can cost almost as much as an airline ticket would. However, if you fly, you will land at an airport at the edge of a city. Train stations are usually right in the middle of the city. This means that it is often more convenient to take a bullet train instead of flying, because you will arrive exactly where you want to be.

1. What is the main idea of the passage? [1]
2. Which of the following details support the main idea? [1]
3. What are two reasons the bullet train got its nickname. [1]

4. How does the passage support the fact that bullet trains are safe? [2]

5. In **paragraph 2**, we learn that bullet trains “are very punctual.” As used in the paragraph, which of these students can also be described as punctual? [1]

21 “MARTIN the MONKEY”



Martin the Monkey lives in an oak tree at Cragmore Park in Bananaville. He works for the Banana Telephone Company. He is the best employee they have because he can climb the telephone poles twice as fast as everyone else.

On Saturdays, Martin pitches for the Cragmore Craters Baseball team. The Craters are a semi-professional team. Martin has become extremely famous for what he calls his “Primate Pitch.” The “Primate Pitch” is thrown straight up. The pitch then comes straight back down and travels directly over the home plate. The pitches travel at over one hundred miles per hour.

On Wednesday nights, Martin takes painting lessons with Sarah Able. She is a famous oil painter who lives in the same town as Martin. Martin is one of the only artists in the area that paints with his tail.

1. Martin lives in a _____ tree.

2. Why was he considered the best employee at the telephone company?

3. In which sport was Martin involved?

4. What makes Martin such an unusual artist?

5. Which of the following words best describes Martin?

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CAUSE and EFFECT

1. **“The birdhouse blew down because of the strong winds last night.”**
Which part of the sentence is the **CAUSE**?

2. **“Saturday is my eleventh birthday, therefore I will have a birthday party.”**
Which part of the sentence is the **EFFECT**?

3. **“Marion did not study for his spelling test, so he got an F.”**
Which part of the sentence is the **EFFECT**?

