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 <u>not</u> 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.

LIVEWORKSHEETS