

# MIRACLE ABOVE MANHATTAN

Read this article about a park in New York City. Then do the multiple choice.

**New Yorkers can relax over busy streets in an innovative park called the High Line**

Parks in large cities are usually thought of as refuges, as islands of green amid seas of concrete and steel. When you approach the High Line in the Chelsea neighborhood on the lower west side of Manhattan, in New York, what you see first is the kind of thing urban parks were created to get away from - a hard, heavy, black structure supporting an elevated rail line that once brought freight cars right into factories and warehouses and that looks, at least from a distance, more like some abandoned leftover from the past than an urban oasis.

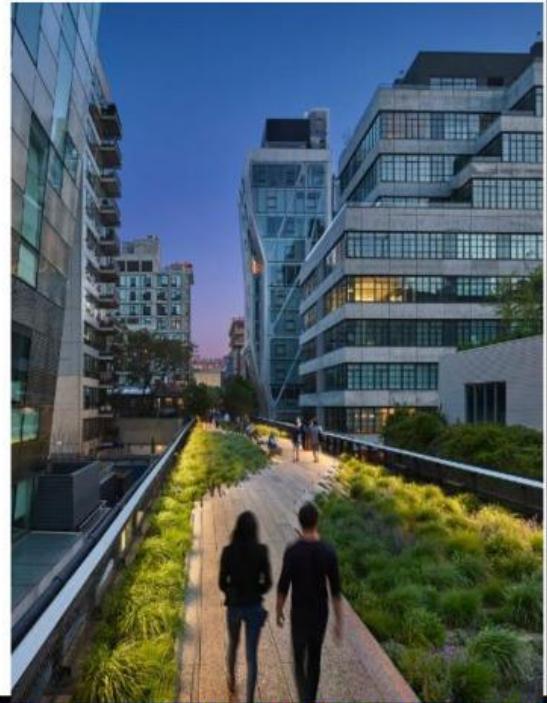
Until recently that's precisely what the High Line was, and a crumbling one too. Many people couldn't wait to tear it down. Almost a decade later, it has been turned into one of the most innovative and inviting public spaces in New York City. The black steel columns that once supported abandoned train tracks now hold up an elevated park - part promenade, part town square, part botanical garden.

Walking on the High Line is unlike any other experience in New York. You float about eight meters above the ground, at once connected to street life and far away from it. You can sit surrounded by carefully tended plantings and take in the sun and the Hudson River views, or you can walk the line as it slices between old buildings and past striking new ones. I have walked the High Line dozens of times, and its vantage point, different from that of any street, sidewalk, or park, never ceases to surprise and delight.

The High Line is a wonderful idea that was not only realized but turned out better than anyone had imagined. The real heroes of the story are Joshua David, a freelance writer who lived near the midsection of the High Line, and Robert Hammond, an artist who also lived nearby. "I saw an article saying that the High Line was going to be demolished, and I wondered if anyone was going to try to save it." Hammond said to me when I interviewed them. "I was in love with the steel structure, the rivets, the ruin. I assumed that some civic group was going to try and preserve it, and I saw that it was on the agenda for a community meeting. I went to see what was going on, and Josh was sitting next to me. We were the only people at the meeting who were interested in saving it."

"The railroad sent representatives who showed some plans to reuse it, which enraged the people who were trying to get it torn down," David explained. "That's what sparked the conversation between me and Robert - we couldn't believe the degree of rage some of those people had." David and Hammond asked railroad officials to take them to look at the High Line. "When we got up there, we saw a mile and a half of wildflowers in the middle of Manhattan. New Yorkers always dream of finding open space - it's a fantasy when you live in a studio apartment," David said. And that's how the project began.

From the day the first section of the High Line park opened, it has been one of the city's major tourist attractions. Yet it is just as much a neighborhood park. When I was there on a sunny day last autumn, a section the designers had designated as a kind of sundeck was jammed, and there seemed to be as many locals treating the area as the equivalent of their own beach as visitors out for a promenade. Sometimes dreams really do come true.



For questions 1-8 choose the answer - A, B, C or D.

1. What does the writer say about the High Line park in the first paragraph?

- A. It may initially appear unattractive.
- B. It is most easily reached by train.
- C. People may wonder where the plants are.
- D. People are amazed to find out how old it is.

2. What does "that" (first line of 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph) refer to?

- A. an urban oasis
- B. a black steel structure
- C. a leftover from the past
- D. a group of factories and warehouses

3. When walking on the High Line, the writer notices that

- A. the weather seems much better there.
- B. he seems to walk further in a shorter time.
- C. new buildings keep being built around it.
- D. he can see everything in the streets below.

4. Why did Robert Hammond go to the community meeting?

- A. He was told about it by his friend Joshua David.
- B. He was responding to an appeal for volunteers.
- C. He believed other people there would share his views.
- D. He thought he could persuade people to join his campaign.

5. How did Joshua David feel about what happened at the meeting?

- A. pleased to realize they might succeed
- B. encouraged by everyone's determination
- C. worried that their way of life might change.
- D. surprised by the reaction to the ideas proposed

6. What does the writer say about the park in the final paragraph?

- A. It satisfies a range of different needs.
- B. Local people wish fewer tourists came to see it.
- C. Some of its features are not being used as intended.
- D. Its popularity has increased recently.

