



SPRING BREAK ACTIVITIES

GRADE 7 ELA

STUDENT NAME

Day 1

Norway fell quickly to Nazi Germany's superior military during World War II. Many individuals surreptitiously worked to fight back against the Nazis while managing to go unnoticed. Jan Baalsrud was someone that helped in the fight against Germany after the Nazis invaded Norway. He escaped Norway after the Nazi invasion and ended up joining a resistance movement in Britain. He returned to Norway in 1943 as part of a mission to undermine the German army there. He was working with a group of eight other men that planned on using explosives to destroy an air control tower. Their group spent a lot of time planning their mission, but a grave mistake ended up endangering the safety of everyone involved.

1. What does surreptitiously mean?
 - a. proudly
 - b. secretly
 - c. bravely
2. What does grave mean?
 - a. tomb
 - b. small
 - c. serious
3. Underline the clues that helped you determine the answers to 1 & 2.
4. What is the effect of the foreshadowing in the last sentence?
 - a. It lets the reader know that the mission will be successful.
 - b. It suggests to the reader that a problem will affect the mission.
 - c. There is no foreshadowing in the last sentence.

Day 2

Jan Baalsrud and the rest of the crew arrived in Norway on a ship that contained nearly eight tons of explosives that they were going to use to destroy an air control tower. Part of their mission depended on them contacting someone that had committed to helping. Unfortunately, they contacted someone else that had the same name. The man they mistakenly got in touch with alerted the Germans to their plan. Baalsrud and his companions were attempting to escape on their ship the next day when they were attacked by the Nazis. The men managed to detonate the explosives after they jumped off the ship, which destroyed much of the evidence. Baalsrud was able to circumvent capture but many in his group were caught by German soldiers.

1. What does detonate mean?
 - a. blow up
 - b. cover up
 - c. assemble
2. What does circumvent mean?
 - a. avoid
 - b. assist
 - c. argue
3. Underline the clues that helped you determine the answers to 1 & 2.
4. What inference can be made about today's passage?
 - a. All Norwegians wanted to help fight against the Germans.
 - b. Not all Norwegians wanted to help fight against the Germans.
 - c. Baalsrud and his men were not prepared for their mission.

Day 3

Baalsrud was the only one from his mission that was able to make it out of the icy Norwegian waters uncaptured. He managed to swim to a nearby island where he immediately began running through the snowy landscape. Baalsrud was fortunate to encounter accommodating people who were willing to endanger their lives in order to help him. He was often provided with food and shelter. He could never safely stay in one place for very long and had to walk for extended periods of time through the frozen wilderness. At one point, he saw the lights from German soldiers who were undoubtedly still trying to locate the escaped saboteur. He finally was able to get help from a man who took him by boat to the Norwegian mainland in the middle of the night.

1. What does accommodating mean?
 - a. mean
 - b. hidden
 - c. helpful
2. What does saboteur mean?
 - a. ally
 - b. rebel
 - c. inmate
3. Underline the clues that helped you determine the answers to 1 & 2.
4. What inference can be made about today's passage?
 - a. The Germans would have likely punished anyone caught helping Baalsrud.
 - b. Many people were unwilling to help Baalsrud.
 - c. The Germans didn't try to catch Baalsrud.

Day 4

Baalsrud faced constant threats from both German soldiers and the harsh Norwegian weather as he attempted to escape to the neighboring country of Sweden. The man who rowed him to the Norwegian mainland provided him with skis to help expedite his journey and Baalsrud was able to make great time despite the terrible snowstorms he encountered. Unfortunately, Baalsrud got caught in an avalanche and fell nearly 300 feet and became trapped in the snow. His skis were mangled in the fall and he suffered a concussion but he did manage to survive. He was able to find help and was pulled on a sled back up the mountain where someone was supposed to come and pick him up and take him on the next leg of his journey. Unfortunately, the weather prevented this from going as planned.

1. What does expedite mean?
 - a. quicken
 - b. slow
 - c. expand
2. What does mangled mean?
 - a. unaffected
 - b. improved
 - c. crushed
3. Underline the clues that helped you determine the answers to 1 & 2.
4. Which of the following quotes show that the author wanted Baalsrud to survive?
 - a. "Baalsrud faced constant threats from both German soldiers..."
 - b. "He was able to find help and was pulled on a sled..."
 - c. "Unfortunately, Baalsrud got caught in an avalanche..."

Day 5

Once Jan Baalsrud reached the top of the mountain, his companions left him under a shed to wait for the men who were supposed to pick him up to complete his journey to Sweden. Baalsrud was still confined to the sled and was injured, frostbitten and starving. A storm prevented the men from picking up Baalsrud as planned, and he was left alone for nearly a week before someone came and discovered that he was still alive. He was given food and other supplies and continued to wait there for nearly a month. Eventually, Baalsrud was able to complete the final leg of his journey to Sweden with the aid of men who used reindeer to carry him across the border.

Once in Sweden, it took Baalsrud nearly two months to recover from his formidable experience. Exposure to the elements and frostbite had caused permanent damage and he had to learn how to walk again. Once well enough, Baalsrud continued to work for the resistance and eventually was able to return to Norway. Baalsrud was in Norway when the war ended and he was finally able to reunite with members of his family that he hadn't seen in five years. His incredible story of survival has captivated the hearts of many people. He was honored with awards in both Britain and his home country of Norway. Every year in Norway, a group of people spend nine days retracing the steps of his journey. His story has been published as a book and has also been turned into a movie.

1. What is the meaning of confined as it is used in the passage?
 - a. open
 - b. limited
 - c. playing

2. What is the meaning of formidable as it is used in the passage?
 - a. easy
 - b. exciting
 - c. difficult

3. Underline the word or words that helped you determine the answers to 1 & 2.

4. What was the most important factor in Jan Baalsrud's survival?

5. Write an objective summary of today's passage.

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Treasure of Lemon Brown

By Walter Dean Myers
1983

Walter Dean Myers (1937-2014) was an American writer of children's books and young adult literature. Myers wrote over one hundred books and received the Coretta Scott King Award for African-American authors five times. In this short story, a boy meets an old man who will protect his treasure at all costs. As you read, take notes on Greg Ridley's feelings and how they change over the story.

- [1] The dark sky, filled with angry, swirling clouds, reflected Greg Ridley's mood as he sat on the stoop of his building. His father's voice came to him again, first reading the letter the principal had sent to the house, then lecturing endlessly about his poor efforts in math.

"I had to leave school when I was thirteen," his father had said, "that's a year younger than you are now. If I'd had half the chances you have, I'd..."



*"Thorn Apple Valley Slaughter House-Detroit" by Mike Boening
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Greg sat in the small, pale green kitchen listening, knowing the lecture would end with his father saying he couldn't play ball with the Scorpions. He had asked his father the week before, and his father had said it depended on his next report card. It wasn't often the Scorpions took on new players, especially fourteen-year-olds, and this was a chance of a lifetime for Greg. He hadn't been allowed to play high school ball, which he had really wanted to do, but playing for the Community Center team was the next best thing. Report cards were due in a week, and Greg had been hoping for the best. But the principal had ended the suspense early when she sent the letter saying Greg would probably fail math if he didn't spend more time studying.

"And you want to play basketball?" His father's brows knitted over deep brown eyes. "That must be some kind of a joke. Now you just get into your room and hit those books."

- [5] That had been two nights before. His father's words, like the distant thunder that now echoed through the streets of Harlem, still rumbled softly in his ears.

It was beginning to cool. Gusts of wind made bits of paper dance between the parked cars. There was a flash of nearby lightning, and soon large drops of rain splashed onto his jeans. He stood to go upstairs, thought of the lecture that probably awaited him if he did anything except shut himself in his room with his math book, and started walking down the street instead. Down the block there was an old tenement¹ that had been abandoned for some months. Some of the guys had held an impromptu² checker tournament there the week before, and Greg had noticed that the door, once boarded over, had been slightly ajar.

1. a room or a set of rooms forming a separate residence within a house or block of apartments
2. unplanned

Pulling his collar up as high as he could, he checked for traffic and made a dash across the street. He reached the house just as another flash of lightning changed the night to day for an instant, then returned the graffiti-scarred building to the grim shadows. He vaulted over the outer stairs and pushed tentatively³ on the door. It was open, and he let himself in.

The inside of the building was dark except for the dim light that filtered through the dirty windows from the streetlamps. There was a room a few feet from the door, and from where he stood in the entrance, Greg could see a squarish patch of light on the floor. He entered the room, frowning at the musty smell. It was a large room that might have been someone's parlor⁴ at one time. Squinting, Greg could see an old table on its side against one wall, what looked like a pile of rags or a torn mattress in the corner, and a couch, with one side broken, in front of the window.

He went to the couch. The side that wasn't broken was comfortable enough, though a little creaky. From the spot he could see the blinking neon sign over the bodega⁵ on the corner. He sat awhile, watching the sign blink first green then red, allowing his mind to drift to the Scorpions, then to his father. His father had been a postal worker for all Greg's life, and was proud of it, often telling Greg how hard he had worked to pass the test. Greg had heard the story too many times to be interested now.

- [10] For a moment Greg thought he heard something that sounded like a scraping against the wall. He listened carefully, but it was gone.

Outside the wind had picked up, sending the rain against the window with a force that shook the glass in its frame. A car passed, its tires hissing over the wet street and its red taillights glowing in the darkness.

Greg thought he heard the noise again. His stomach tightened as he held himself still and listened intently. There weren't any more scraping noises, but he was sure he had heard something in the darkness — something breathing!

He tried to figure out just where the breathing was coming from; he knew it was in the room with him. Slowly he stood, tensing. As he turned, a flash of lightning lit up the room, frightening him with its sudden brilliance. He saw nothing, just the overturned table, the pile of rags and an old newspaper on the floor. Could he have been imagining the sounds? He continued listening, but heard nothing and thought that it might have just been rats. Still, he thought, as soon as the rain let up he would leave. He went to the window and was about to look when he heard a voice behind him.

"Don't try nothin' 'cause I got a razor sharp enough to cut a week into nine days!"

- [15] Greg, except for an involuntary tremor in his knees, stood stock still. The voice was high and brittle, like dry twigs being broken, surely not one he had ever heard before. There was a shuffling sound as the person who had been speaking moved a step closer. Greg turned, holding his breath, his eyes straining to see in the dark room.

3. **Tentative** (*adjective*): without confidence or certainty
4. a room to receive guests
5. a small grocery store

The upper part of the figure before him was still in darkness. The lower half was in the dim rectangle of light that fell unevenly from the window. There were two feet, in cracked, dirty shoes from which rose legs that were wrapped in rags.

"Who are you?" Greg hardly recognized his own voice.

"I'm Lemon Brown," came the answer. "Who're you?"

"Greg Ridley."

[20] "What you doing here?" The figure shuffled forward again, and Greg took a small step backward.

"It's raining," Greg said.

"I can see that," the figure said.

The person who called himself Lemon Brown peered forward, and Greg could see him clearly. He was an old man. His black, heavily wrinkled face was surrounded by a halo of crinkly white hair and whiskers that seemed to separate his head from the layers of dirty coats piled on his smallish frame. His pants were bagged to the knee, where they were met with rags that went down to the old shoes. The rags were held on with strings, and there was a rope around his middle. Greg relaxed. He had seen the man before, picking through the trash on the corner and pulling clothes out of a Salvation Army box. There was no sign of a razor that could "cut a week into nine days."

"What are you doing here?" Greg asked.

[25] "This is where I'm staying," Lemon Brown said. "What you here for?"

"Told you it was raining out," Greg said, leaning against the back of the couch until he felt it give slightly.

"Ain't you got no home?"

"I got a home," Greg answered.

"You ain't one of them bad boys looking for my treasure, is you?" Lemon Brown cocked his head to one side and squinted one eye. "Because I told you I got me a razor."

[30] "I'm not looking for your treasure," Greg answered, smiling. "If you have one."

"What you mean, if I have one." Lemon Brown said. "Every man got a treasure. You don't know that, you must be a fool!"

"Sure," Greg said as he sat on the sofa and put one leg over the back. "What do you have, gold coins?"

"Don't worry none about what I got," Lemon Brown said. "You know who I am?"

"You told me your name was orange or lemon or something like that."

[35] "Lemon Brown," the old man said, pulling back his shoulders as he did so, "they used to call me Sweet Lemon Brown."

"Sweet Lemon?" Greg asked.

"Yessir. Sweet Lemon Brown. They used to say I sung the blues so sweet that if I sang at a funeral, the dead would commence⁶ to rocking with the beat. Used to travel all over Mississippi and as far as Monroe, Louisiana, and east on over to Macon, Georgia. You mean you ain't never heard of Sweet Lemon Brown?"

"Afraid not," Greg said. "What... happened to you?"

"Hard times, boy. Hard times always after a poor man. One day I got tired, sat down to rest a spell and felt a tap on my shoulder. Hard times caught up with me."

[40] "Sorry about that."

"What you doing here? How come you don't go on home when the rain come? Rain don't bother you young folks none."

"Just didn't." Greg looked away.

"I used to have a knotty-headed boy just like you." Lemon Brown had half walked, half shuffled back to the corner and sat down against the wall. "Had them big eyes like you got. I used to call them moon eyes.⁷ Look into them moon eyes and see anything you want."

"How come you gave up singing the blues?" Greg asked.

[45] "Didn't give it up," Lemon Brown said. "You don't give up the blues; they give you up. After a while you do good for yourself, and it ain't nothing but foolishness singing about how hard you got it. Ain't that right?"

"I guess so."

"What's that noise?" Lemon Brown asked, suddenly sitting upright.

Greg listened, and he heard a noise outside. He looked at Lemon Brown and saw the old man pointing toward the window.

Greg went to the window and saw three men, neighborhood thugs, on the stoop. One was carrying a length of pipe. Greg looked back toward Lemon Brown, who moved quietly across the room to the window. The old man looked out, then beckoned frantically⁸ for Greg to follow him. For a moment Greg couldn't move. The he found himself following Lemon Brown into the hallway and up the darkened stairs. Greg followed as closely as he could. They reached the top of the stairs, and Greg felt Lemon Brown's hand first lying on his shoulder, then probing down his arm until he took Greg's hand into his own as they crouched in the darkness.

6. **Commence** (*verb*): to begin

7. eyes wide open, as in wonder

[50] "They's bad men," Lemon Brown whispered. His breath was warm against Greg's skin.

"Hey! Rag man!" A voice called. "We know you in here. What you got up under them rags? You got any money?"

Silence.

"We don't want to have to come in and hurt you, old man, but we don't mind if we have to."

Lemon Brown squeezed Greg's hand in his own hard, gnarled⁹ fist.

[55] There was a banging downstairs and a light as the men entered. They banged around noisily, calling for the rag man.

"We heard you talking about your treasure." The voice was slurred.¹⁰ "We just want to see it, that's all."

"You sure he's here?" One voice seemed to come from the room with the sofa.

"Yeah, he stays here every night."

"There's another room over there; I'm going to take a look. You got that flashlight?"

[60] "Yeah, here, take the pipe too."

Greg opened his mouth to quiet the sound of his breath as he sucked it in uneasily. A beam of light hit the wall a few feet opposite him, then went out.

"Ain't nobody in that room," a voice said. "You think he gone or something?"

"I don't know," came the answer. "All I know is that I heard him talking about some kind of treasure. You know they found that shopping bag lady with that load of money in her bags."

"Yeah. You think he's upstairs?"

[65] "HEY, OLD MAN, ARE YOU UP THERE?"

Silence.

"Watch my back. I'm going up."

There was a footstep on the stairs, and the beam from the flashlight danced crazily along the peeling wallpaper. Greg held his breath. There was another step and a loud crashing noise as the man banged the pipe against the wooden banister. Greg could feel his temples throb as the man slowly neared them. Greg thought about the pipe, wondering what he would do when the man reached them — what he could do.

8. **Frantic** (*adjective*): wild or distraught with fear, anxiety, or other emotion
9. **Gnarled** (*adjective*): twisted and rough, especially with age
10. unclear speech when sounds run into one another

Then Lemon Brown released his hand and moved toward the top of the stairs. Greg looked around and saw stairs going up to the next floor. He tried waving to Lemon Brown, hoping the old man would see him in the dim light and follow him to the next floor. Maybe, Greg thought, the man wouldn't follow them up there. Suddenly, though, Lemon Brown stood at the top of the stairs, both arms raised high above his head.

[70] "There he is!" A voice cried from below.

"Throw down your money, old man, so I won't have to bash your head in!" Lemon Brown didn't move. Greg felt himself near panic. The steps came closer, and still Lemon Brown didn't move. He was an eerie¹¹ sight, a bundle of rags standing at the top of the stairs, his shadow on the wall looming over him. Maybe, the thought came to Greg, the scene could be even eerier.

Greg wet his lips, put his hands to his mouth and tried to make a sound. Nothing came out. He swallowed hard, wet his lips once more and howled as evenly as he could.

"What's that?"

As Greg howled, the light moved away from Lemon Brown, but not before Greg saw him hurl his body down the stairs at the men who had come to take his treasure. There was a crashing noise, and then footsteps. A rush of warm air came in as the downstairs door opened, then there was only an ominous¹² silence.

[75] Greg stood on the landing. He listened, and after a while there was another sound on the staircase.

"Mr. Brown?" he called. "Yeah, it's me," came the answer. "I got their flashlight."

Greg exhaled in relief as Lemon Brown made his way slowly back up the stairs.

"You OK?"

"Few bumps and bruises," Lemon Brown said.

[80] "I think I'd better be going," Greg said, his breath returning to normal. "You'd better leave, too, before they come back."

"They may hang around for a while," Lemon Brown said, "but they ain't getting their nerve up to come in here again. Not with crazy rag men and howling spooks. Best you stay a while till the coast is clear. I'm heading out west tomorrow, out to east St. Louis."

"They were talking about treasures," Greg said. "You really have a treasure?"

"What I tell you? Didn't I tell you every man got a treasure?" Lemon Brown said. "You want to see mine?"

"If you want to show it to me," Greg shrugged.

11. **Eerie** (*adjective*): strange and frightening

12. **Ominous** (*adjective*): suggesting that something bad is going to happen

[85] "Let's look out the window first, see what them scoundrels¹³ be doing," Lemon Brown said.

They followed the oval beam of the flashlight into one of the rooms and looked out the window. They saw the men who had tried to take the treasure sitting on the curb near the corner. One of them had his pants leg up, looking at his knee.

"You sure you're not hurt?" Greg asked Lemon Brown.

"Nothing that ain't been hurt before," Lemon Brown said. "When you get as old as me all you say when something hurts is, 'Howdy, Mr. Pain, sees you back again.' Then when Mr. Pain see he can't worry you none, he go on mess with somebody else."

Greg smiled.

[90] "Here, you hold this." Lemon Brown gave Greg the flashlight.

He sat on the floor near Greg and carefully untied the strings that held the rags on his right leg. When he took the rags away, Greg saw a piece of plastic. The old man carefully took off the plastic and unfolded it. He revealed some yellowed newspaper clippings and a battered harmonica.

"There it be," he said, nodding his head. "There it be."

Greg looked at the old man, saw the distant look in his eye, then turned to the clippings. They told of Sweet Lemon Brown, a blues singer and harmonica player who was appearing at different theaters in the South. One of the clippings said he had been the hit of the show, although not the headliner. All of the clippings were reviews of shows Lemon Brown had been in more than fifty years ago. Greg looked at the harmonica. It was dented badly on one side, with the reed holes on one end nearly closed.

"I used to travel around and make money to feed my wife and Jesse — that's my boy's name. Used to feed them good, too. Then his mama died, and he stayed with his mama's sister. He growed up to be a man, and when the war come he saw fit to go off and fight in it. I didn't have nothing to give him except these things that told him who I was, and what he come from. If you know your pappy did something, you know you can do something too.

[95] "Anyway, he went off to war, and I went off still playing and singing. 'Course by then I wasn't as much as I used to be, not without somebody to make it worth the while. You know what I mean?"

"Yeah." Greg nodded, not quite really knowing.

"I traveled around, and one time I come home, and there was this letter saying Jesse got killed in the war. Broke my heart, it truly did.

"They sent back what he had with him over there, and what it was is this old mouth fiddle and these clippings. Him carrying it around with him like that told me it meant something to him. That was my treasure, and when I give it to him he treated it just like that, a treasure. Ain't that something?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Greg said.

13. a mean or wicked person

[100] "You guess so?" Lemon Brown's voice rose an octave¹⁴ as he started to put his treasure back into the plastic. "Well, you got to guess 'cause you sure don't know nothing. Don't know enough to get home when it's raining."

"I guess... I mean, you're right."

"You OK for a youngster," the old man said as he tied the strings around his leg, "better than those scalawags¹⁵ what come here looking for my treasure. That's for sure."

"You really think that treasure of yours was worth fighting for?" Greg asked. "Against a pipe?"

"What else a man got 'cepting what he can pass on to his son, or his daughter, if she be his oldest?" Lemon Brown said. "For a big-headed boy you sure do ask the foolishhest questions."

[105] Lemon Brown got up after patting his rags in place and looked out the window again.

"Looks like they're gone. You get on out of here and get yourself home. I'll be watching from the window so you'll be all right."

Lemon Brown went down the stairs behind Greg. When they reached the front door the old man looked out first, saw the street was clear and told Greg to scoot on home.

"You sure you'll be OK?" Greg asked.

"Now didn't I tell you I was going to east St. Louis in the morning?" Lemon Brown asked. "Don't that sound OK to you?"

[110] "Sure it does," Greg said. "Sure it does. And you take care of that treasure of yours."

"That I'll do," Lemon said, the wrinkles around his eyes suggesting a smile. "That I'll do."

The night had warmed and the rain had stopped, leaving puddles at the curbs. Greg didn't even want to think how late it was. He thought ahead of what his father would say and wondered if he should tell him about Lemon Brown. He thought about it until he reached his stoop, and decided against it. Lemon Brown would be OK, Greg thought, with his memories and his treasure.

Greg pushed the button over the bell marked Ridley, thought of the lecture he knew his father would give him, and smiled.

"The Treasure of Lemon Brown" © 1983 by Walter Dean Myers from Boy's Life with permission from DeFiore and Company.

14. an interval of eight notes

15. a person who behaves badly

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following identifies the theme of the text?
 - A. Fathers only want what's best for their sons.
 - B. Parents try to give children what they can to help them have a better life.
 - C. An education is the most important thing a person can pursue.
 - D. It's important to keep moving forward, even during hard times.

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "He stood to go upstairs, thought of the lecture that probably awaited him if he did anything except shut himself in his room with his math book, and started walking down the street instead." (Paragraph 6)
 - B. "'Hard times always after a poor man. One day I got tired, sat down to rest a spell and felt a tap on my shoulder. Hard times caught up with me.'" (Paragraph 39)
 - C. "'I didn't have nothing to give him except these things that told him who I was, and what he come from. If you know your pappy did something, you know you can do something too.'" (Paragraph 94)
 - D. "'They sent back what he had with him over there, and what it was is this old mouth fiddle and these clippings. Him carrying it around with him like that told me it meant something to him.'" (Paragraph 98)

3. PART A: How does Greg and Lemon Brown's relationship develop throughout the text?
 - A. Greg and Brown look out for one another by the end of the text.
 - B. Greg and Brown develop a father-son relationship.
 - C. Greg and Brown learn to tolerate each other.
 - D. Greg and Brown become best friends.

4. PART B: Which quote from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. "'I used to have a knotty-headed boy just like you.' Lemon Brown had half walked, half shuffled back to the corner and sat down against the wall." (Paragraph 43)
 - B. "'Well, you got to guess 'cause you sure don't know nothing. Don't know enough to get home when it's raining.'" (Paragraph 100)
 - C. "'You OK for a youngster,' the old man said as he tied the strings around his leg, 'better than those scalawags what come here looking for my treasure. That's for sure.'" (Paragraph 102)
 - D. "'Looks like they're gone. You get on out of here and get yourself home. I'll be watching from the window so you'll be all right.'" (Paragraph 106)

5. How does the weather contribute to the story?
- A. The weather emphasizes how unpredictable Greg's mood can be, and it gets worse when he is angered by the intruders who threaten Lemon Brown.
 - B. The bad weather represents how negatively Greg feels about his academic future and how his father responds to his bad grades.
 - C. The storm reflects how Greg is upset at the beginning of the story, but by the end the clear skies represent how Greg feels better after meeting Lemon Brown.
 - D. The storm highlights how frightening Lemon Brown appears when Greg first meets him.

6. How does Greg's attitude change over the course of the story?

Name: _____

TEXT STRUCTURE

Hands Across America was an event that happened on May 25, 1986. Much like its name suggests, the objective was to form a human chain of people holding hands all the way across the country. The goal of the event was to raise money for organizations to end hunger and homelessness.



The idea behind Hands Across America was bold. Organizing a chain of Americans that ran across the United States took a lot of work. Many people wanted to participate in the event because nothing similar had ever been attempted before.

Hands Across America took place before social media and the internet made spreading information easy. Most people in the United States found out about the event through a commercial that aired during the Super Bowl. Many celebrities also helped advertise it.

The planned path for Hands Across America did not go in a straight line across the country. Organizers wanted to make sure that they included many major cities. The route seemed to zig zag in some places and went through 16 states. The decision to exclude specific cities was criticized by some people.

The goal of the event was to raise \$50 million to donate to charity. The event also aimed to raise awareness of the problems of hunger and homelessness in the United States. Many companies donated money to Hands Across America. In addition, participants had to donate \$10 in order to participate.

On May 25, over six million people joined hands to participate in the event. Many celebrities also took part. The President of the United States at the time, Ronald Reagan, also joined in. Participants in the event held hands for 15 minutes and sang songs. The event was covered by newspapers and television stations locally and nationwide.

The name of the event may imply that there was a single line that crossed the country. In less populated areas of the country, there were no people in parts of the line. In some cases, rope or a ribbon was stretched across the distance to make up for the lack of people. In areas of more populated cities, people stood in big groups rather than a line.

The goal of the event was to raise \$50 million. The actual amount raised fell short of that goal at \$34 million. Organizing the event took many people and only around \$15 million went to charity because of the operating costs. The event was criticized by many people because less than half of the money that was raised actually went to charity.

Name: _____

TEXT STRUCTURE

Choose the best answer for the following questions.

1. How does the way the author organized the text help develop the central idea of the passage?

- A. The cause and effect structure helps the reader understand why Hands Across America took place.
- B. The problem and solution structure helps the reader realize how severe the problem of homelessness was in the 1980s.
- C. The chronological structure helps the reader understand the work it took to organize the event and how people felt about it afterwards.
- D. The compare and contrast structure shows the reader the differences between Hands Across America and other events.

2. What is the effect of the following line from the 2nd paragraph?

The idea behind Hands Across America was bold.

- A. It helps the reader understand that the idea for the event was impressive.
- B. It shows the reader that the event was unpopular.
- C. It suggests that many people were critical of the event from the start.
- D. It shows that the event was considered impossible.

3. Which paragraph in the text BEST shows that Hands Across America was successful?

- A. paragraph four
- B. paragraph five
- C. paragraph six
- D. paragraph seven

4. How does the final paragraph develop the central idea of the passage?

- A. It helps the reader understand that Hands Across America helped people learn about the problems of homelessness in the United States.
- B. It shows that while many people participated in Hands Across America, it did not meet its fundraising goal.
- C. It helps the reader understand that Hands Across America was not considered successful in any way.
- D. It helps the reader understand why Hands Across America was so expensive to organize.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Tiny Plastic, Big Problem

Scientists find that tiny pieces of plastic travel great distances, threatening the ocean ecosystem

By Alison Pearce Stevens
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When plastic was invented at the turn of 20th century, it was lauded as a miraculous new material that could be used to create innumerable products. Few could have recognized the impact that plastic would have on our world – particularly in our oceans – over the course of a century. As you read, take notes on the problems that plastic has caused in the oceans and the potential solutions to them.

- [1] Plastic bottles lying in the gutter. Grocery bags tangled in branches. Food wrappers scuttling across the ground on a windy day. Although such examples of litter easily come to mind, they only hint at the serious and growing problem of plastic pollution — a problem mostly hidden from view.

The problem with plastics is they do not easily degrade.¹ They may break down, but only into smaller pieces. The smaller those pieces get, the more places they can go.



["Microplastics 11b - Beach Clean up - 25g plastics / 22m That's 638KG along the Oregon Coast"](#) by Wolfram Burner is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

Many pieces wind up at sea. Tiny bits of plastic float throughout the world's oceans. They wash up on remote² islands. They collect in sea ice thousands of kilometers from the nearest city. They even meld with rock, creating a whole new material. Some scientists have proposed calling it plastiglomerate (pla-stih-GLOM-er-ut).³

Exactly how much plastic is out there remains a mystery. Scientists are hard at work trying to find out. So far, though, experts haven't found as much plastic floating in the oceans as they expected. All that missing plastic is worrisome, because the smaller a plastic bit becomes, the more likely it will make its way into a living thing, whether a tiny plankton or an enormous whale. And that may spell some real trouble.

Into the soup

- [5] Plastics are used to make countless everyday products — from bottles to auto bumpers, from homework folders to flowerpots. In 2012, 288 million metric tons (317.5 million short tons) of plastic were produced worldwide. Since then, that amount has only grown.

1. **Degrade (verb):** to break down
2. **Remote (adjective):** far away from the main population; distant or isolated
3. "Plastiglomerate" is a name some scientists have proposed for a category of rock created when plastic melts and fuses with chunks of stone, shell or other materials to create a long-lasting record of human pollution.

Just how much of that plastic winds up in the oceans remains unknown: Scientists estimate about 10 percent does. And one recent study suggests as much as 8 million metric tons (8.8 million short tons) of plastic wound up in the ocean in 2010 alone. How much plastic is that? “Five plastic bags filled with plastic for every foot of coastline in the world,” says Jenna Jambeck. She’s the researcher from the University of Georgia, in Athens, who led the new study. It was published February 13 in *Science*.

Of those millions of tons, as much as 80 percent had been used on land. So how did it get into the water? Storms washed some plastic litter into streams and rivers. These waterways then carried much of the trash downstream to the sea.

The other 20 percent of plastic ocean trash enters the water directly. This debris includes fishing lines, nets and other items lost at sea, dumped overboard or abandoned when they become damaged or are no longer needed.

Once in the water, not all plastics behave the same way. The most common plastic — polyethylene terephthalate (PAHL-ee-ETH-ill-eeen TEHR-eh-THAAL-ate), or PET — is used to make water and soft-drink bottles. Unless filled with air, these bottles sink. This makes PET pollution tough to track. That’s especially true if the bottles have drifted to the ocean depths. Most other types of plastic, however, bob along the surface. It’s these types — used in milk jugs, detergent bottles and Styrofoam — that make up the abundance of floating plastic trash.

- [10] Abundant, indeed: Evidence of plastic pollution abounds across the world’s oceans. Carried by circular currents called gyres (JI-erz),⁴ discarded pieces of plastic can travel thousands of kilometers. In some areas, they amass in huge quantities. Reports on the largest of these — the “Pacific Garbage Patch” — are easy to find online. Some sites report it to be twice the size of Texas. But defining the actual area is a difficult task. That’s because the garbage patch is actually quite patchy. It shifts around. And most of the plastic in that area is so tiny that it’s hard to see.

Millions of tons... gone missing

Recently, a group of scientists from Spain set out to tally just how much plastic floats in the oceans. To do so, the experts traveled the world’s oceans for six months. At 141 locations, they dropped a net into the water, dragging it alongside their boat. The net was made of very fine mesh. The openings were only 200 micrometers (0.0079 inch) across. This allowed the team to collect very small bits of debris.⁵ The trash included particles called *microplastic*.⁶

The team picked out the plastic pieces and weighed the total found at each site. Then they sorted the pieces into groups based on size. They also estimated how much plastic might have moved deeper into the water — too deep for the net to reach — due to wind churning⁷ up the surface.

4. A ringlike system of ocean currents that rotate clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and counterclockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. Many of the biggest gyres have become collection sites for floating long-lived trash, especially plastic.
5. **Debris (noun):** scattered pieces of waste or remains
6. A small piece of plastic, 5 millimeters or smaller in size. Microplastics may have been produced at that small size, or their size may be the result of the breakdown of water bottles, plastic bags or other things that started out larger.
7. to break up the surface of an area or ground

What the scientists found came as a complete surprise. “Most of the plastic is lost,” says Andrés Cózar. This oceanographer⁸ at the Universidad de Cádiz in Puerto Real, Spain, led the study. The amount of plastic in the oceans should be on the order of millions of tons, he explains. However, the collected samples lead to estimates of just 7,000 to 35,000 tons of plastic floating at sea. That’s just one-hundredth of what they had expected.

Most plastic that Cózar’s team fished out of the seas was either polyethylene⁹ or polypropylene.¹⁰ These two types are used in grocery bags, toys and food packaging. Polyethylene is also used to make microbeads. These tiny plastic beads can be found in some toothpastes and facial scrubs. When used, they wash down the drain. Too small to be trapped in filters at wastewater treatment plants, microbeads continue to travel into rivers, lakes — and eventually down to the sea. Some of this plastic would have been too small to have been caught in Cózar’s net.

- [15] Most of what Cózar’s group found were fragments broken from larger items. That comes as no surprise.

In the oceans, plastic breaks down when it’s exposed to light and wave action. The sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays weaken the otherwise strong chemical bonds within the plastic. Now, when waves smash the chunks against each other, the plastic breaks into smaller and smaller pieces.

When the Spanish team began sorting its plastic by size, the researchers expected to find larger numbers of the very smallest pieces. That is, they figured that most of the plastic should have been tiny fragments, measuring just millimeters (tenths of an inch) in size. (The same principle applies to cookies. If you were to smash a cookie, you would wind up with many more crumbs than you would large pieces.) Instead, the scientists found fewer of these tiny bits of plastic.

What had happened to them?

Entering the food web

Cózar proposes several possible explanations. The tiniest bits might have broken down quickly into particles too small to catch in his net. Or maybe something caused them to sink. But a third explanation seems even more likely: Something ate them.

- [20] Unlike the organic matter found in living things, plastics do not provide energy or nutrients¹¹ to growing animals. Still, critters do eat plastic. Sea turtles and toothed whales gulp down plastic bags, mistaking them for squid. Sea birds scoop up floating plastic pellets, which can resemble fish eggs. Young albatross have been found dead from starvation, their stomachs full of plastic garbage. While feeding, adult seabirds skim floating trash with their beaks. Parent birds then regurgitate¹² the plastic to feed their young. (These plastic bits eventually can kill them.)

8. Someone who works in the field of oceanography, or the branch of science that deals with the physical and biological properties and phenomena of the oceans.
9. A plastic made from chemicals that have been refined (produced from) crude oil and/or natural gas. The most common plastic in the world, it is flexible and tough. It also can resist radiation.
10. The second most common plastic in the world. It is tough and durable. Polypropylene is used in packaging, clothing and furniture (such as plastic chairs).
11. vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates and proteins that are needed by organisms to live and comes mainly from one’s diet
12. to vomit or throw up

Yet such large animals wouldn't eat pieces just millimeters in size. Zooplankton¹³ might, however. They are much smaller marine¹⁴ creatures.

"Zooplankton describe a whole range of animals, including fish, crab and shellfish larvae," explains Matthew Cole. He is a biologist at the University of Exeter in England. Cole has found that these tiny critters are just the right size to snap up the millimeter-size bits of plastic.

His research team has collected zooplankton from the English Channel. In the lab, the experts added polystyrene¹⁵ beads to tanks of water holding the zooplankton. Polystyrene is found in Styrofoam and other brands of foam. After 24 hours, the team examined the zooplankton under a microscope. Thirteen of the 15 zooplankton species had swallowed the beads.

In a more recent study, Cole found that microplastics limit the ability of zooplankton to consume food. Zooplankton that had swallowed polystyrene beads ate smaller bits of algae. That cut their energy intake nearly in half. And they laid smaller eggs that were less likely to hatch. His team published its findings January 6 in *Environmental Science & Technology*.

- [25] "Zooplankton are very low on the food chain," Cole explains. Still, he notes: "They are a really important food source for animals like whales and fish." Reducing their population could have a widespread impact on the rest of the ocean ecosystem.

And, it turns out, not just tiny zooplankton are eating the plastic bits. Larger fish, crabs, lobster and shellfish do too. Scientists have even found plastic in the guts of marine worms.

Once there, the plastic tends to stick around.

In crabs, microplastics remain in the gut six times longer than food does, says Andrew Watts. He is a marine biologist¹⁶ at the University of Exeter. What's more, eating plastic causes some species, such as marine worms, to store less fat, protein and carbohydrate, he explains. When a predator (such as a bird) now eats those worms, it gets a less nutritious meal. It also ingests the plastic. With each meal consumed, more and more plastic makes its way into a predator's body.

That's cause for concern. "Plastics might pass up the food chain," says Cole, "until it gets into food that ends up on our own dinner plates."

An accumulating problem

- [30] The thought of eating plastic isn't pleasant. But it isn't just the plastic that's cause for concern. Scientists also worry about a variety of chemicals found on the plastic. Some of those chemicals come from the manufacturing process, explains Kara Lavender Law. She is an oceanographer at the Sea Education Association in Woods Hole, Mass.

13. Small organisms that drift in the sea. Zooplankton are tiny animals that eat other plankton. They also serve as an important food source for other marine creatures.
14. having to do with the ocean or sea
15. A plastic made from chemicals that have been refined (produced from) crude oil and/or natural gas. Polystyrene is one of the most widely used plastics, and an ingredient used to make styrofoam.
16. A marine biologist is a scientist who studies creatures that live in ocean water, from bacteria and shellfish to kelp and whales.

Plastics also attract a variety of dangerous pollutants,¹⁷ she notes. That's because plastic is hydrophobic — just like oil, it repels water.

But plastic, oil and other hydrophobic substances are attracted to each other. So oily contaminants tend to glom onto pieces of plastic. In a way, plastic acts like a sponge, soaking up hydrophobic contaminants. The pesticide DDT¹⁸ and polychlorinated biphenyls¹⁹ (or PCBs) are two such toxic²⁰ contaminants that have been found in ocean-going plastics.

Even though both contaminants have been banned for decades, they are slow to break down. So they persist in the environment. To this day, they hitch a ride on trillions of pieces of plastic floating in the oceans.

One reason these contaminants were banned is because of the way they affect animals and people. When eaten, the chemicals work their way into an animal's tissues. And there they stay. The more of these chemicals a critter consumes, the more that gets stored in its tissues. That creates a constant exposure to the pollutants' toxic effects.

- [35] And it doesn't stop there. When a second animal eats that first critter, the contaminants move into the new animal's body. With each meal, more contaminants enter its tissues. In this way, what had started as trace amounts of a contaminant will become increasingly concentrated as they move up the food chain.

Whether contaminants hitching a ride on plastic work their way into the body tissues of marine animals in the same way remains unknown. But scientists are concerned that they might. Just how much of these chemicals in marine organisms came from eating contaminated plastic and how much from eating contaminated food is a big question, says Law. And no one yet knows whether the problem affects people.

Managing microplastics

The very nature of microplastics makes cleanup impossible. They are so tiny and so widespread that there is no way to remove them from the seas, notes Law.

The best solution is to prevent more plastic from reaching the ocean. Trash traps and litter booms can snag garbage before it enters waterways. Even better: Reduce plastic waste at its source. Be aware of packaging and buy items that use less of it, Law suggests. Skip the plastic bags, including zippered ones used for foods. Invest in reusable water bottles and lunch containers. And say no to straws.

17. A substance that taints something — such as the air, water, our bodies or products. Some pollutants are chemicals, such as pesticides. Others may be radiation, including excess heat or light. Even weeds and other invasive species can be considered a type of biological pollution.
18. DDT is short for dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane. This toxic chemical was for a time widely used as an insect-killing agent. It proved so effective that Swiss chemist Paul Müller received the 1948 Nobel Prize (for physiology or medicine) just eight years after establishing the chemical's incredible effectiveness in killing bugs. But many developed countries, including the United States, eventually banned its use for its poisoning of non-targeted wildlife, such as birds.
19. A family of 209 chlorine-based compounds with a similar chemical structure. They were used for many decades as a nonflammable fluid for insulating electrical transforms. Some companies also used them in making certain hydraulic fluids, lubricants and inks. Their production has been banned in North America and many countries throughout the world since around 1980.
20. **Toxic (adjective):** containing poisonous substances

Law also recommends asking restaurants to stop using polystyrene foam containers. These break up quickly and are not recyclable. Talk to friends and parents about the problems of plastic, and pick up litter when you see it.

- [40] Law recognizes that reducing plastic use won't be an easy change. "We live in an era of convenience," she says. And people find it convenient to throw things away when they are done with them.

That's not to say that we should do away with plastic altogether. "Plastic has a lot of beneficial uses," says Law. But people need to stop looking at plastic as disposable, she argues. They need to view plastic items as durable things to hold on to and reuse.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. In your own words, summarize the central ideas of this article:

2. What is the purpose of paragraph 1?

- A. to make readers curious about the "hidden" pollution
- B. to introduce the topic of pollution on the ground and in trees
- C. to argue that pollution on land is a more serious problem than pollution in the ocean
- D. to claim that pollution is becoming harder to see because people are ignoring it

3. Based on the information in paragraph 4, what is the likely reason why experts have found less plastic floating in the ocean than they expected? Cite evidence from the text.

4. PART A: As it is used in paragraph 10, the word "abundant" most closely means:

- A. dangerous
- B. minimal
- C. challenging
- D. widespread

5. PART B: Which phrase best provides support for your answer to Part A?
- A. "plastic pollution"
 - B. "across the world's oceans"
 - C. "circular currents"
 - D. "difficult task"
6. What is the purpose of paragraphs 22-23?
- A. to prove that zooplankton consume as much plastic as other species of sea animal even though they are extremely small
 - B. to provide support for the theory that scientists cannot find much of the missing plastic because it was likely consumed by organisms in the ocean
 - C. to argue that sea animals would be less likely to consume plastic if people could prevent them from breaking down into smaller particles
 - D. to show that most zooplankton will not consume plastic particles if they are exposed to them
7. Which of the following is an inference based on the information in the section "Entering the Food Web"?
- A. If humans continue to pollute the ocean with plastic, it could have serious effects on the ocean's food chain and beyond.
 - B. The plastic particles that end up in the ocean will be so degraded and small that they will not have a significant effect on the animals that might consume them.
 - C. Many sea animals will likely learn to avoid consuming plastic so that it does not affect their health.
 - D. Sea animals are being forced to eat more plastic particles because their natural food supply is decreasing.
8. As it is used in paragraph 32, infer the meaning of the word "glom."

9. Based on the information in paragraphs 32-34, how did the banned substances DDT and PCBs end up in the ocean? Cite evidence in your answer.

10. Explain 2 or more ways people can help prevent further pollution of the ocean with plastic.
