

**SPECTRUM**<sup>®</sup>

# Reading

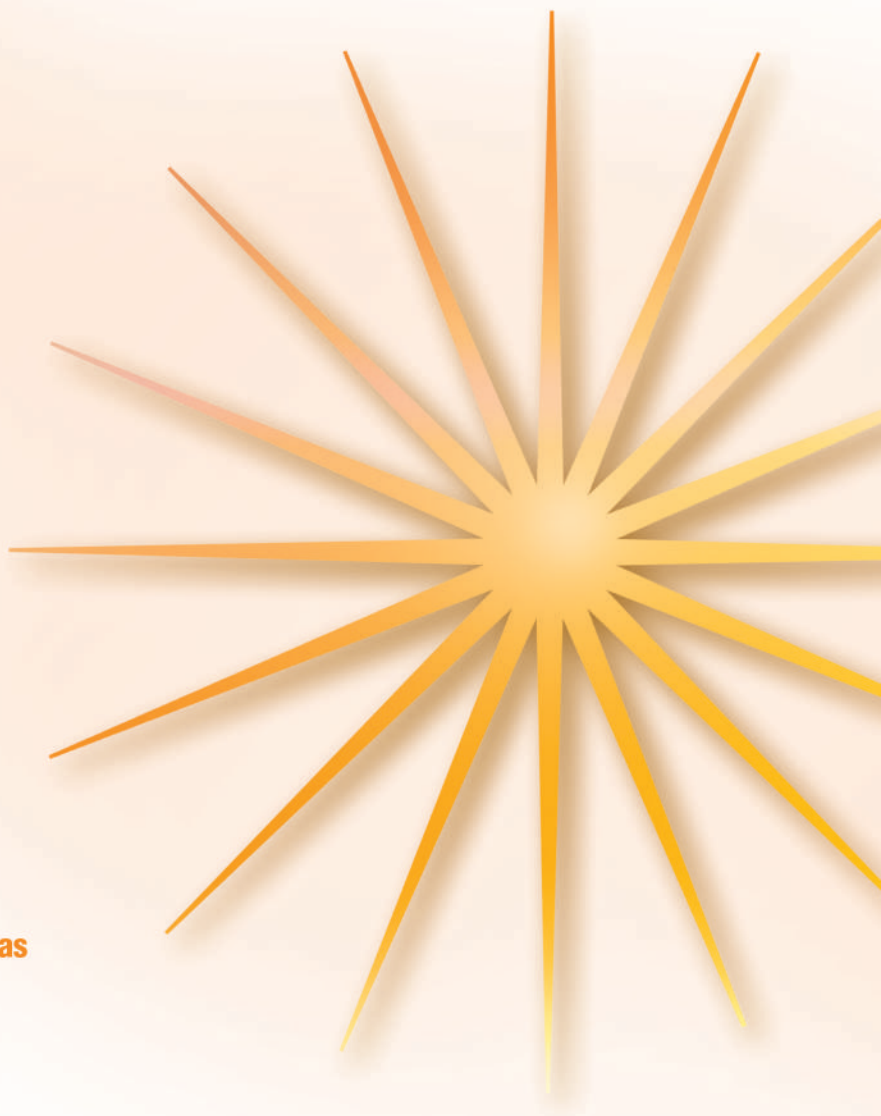
GRADE

**5**



## **Focused Practice for Reading Comprehension**

- Fiction and non-fiction passages
- Theme and summarization
- Integration of knowledge and ideas
- Key ideas and details
- Answer key



**SPECTRUM<sup>®</sup>**

**Reading**

**Grade 5**

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# A New Mate

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

What would it be like to live in Australia?

<sup>1</sup> "I think most of you have already met our new student, Gemma," said Ms. Dimitri to her class. "As you know, she has recently moved here from Australia. I know you all have lots of questions about Australia, and Gemma has said she'd be happy to answer them. We can also try to give her an idea of what life is like here in Massachusetts."

<sup>2</sup> Gemma was a tall girl with thick, dark brown hair. She had pale blue eyes, and there was a dusting of freckles across her nose. She smiled shyly at the class. "I'm very happy to be here," she said. "Everyone has been really nice to me. It feels like I've been here longer than a week already."

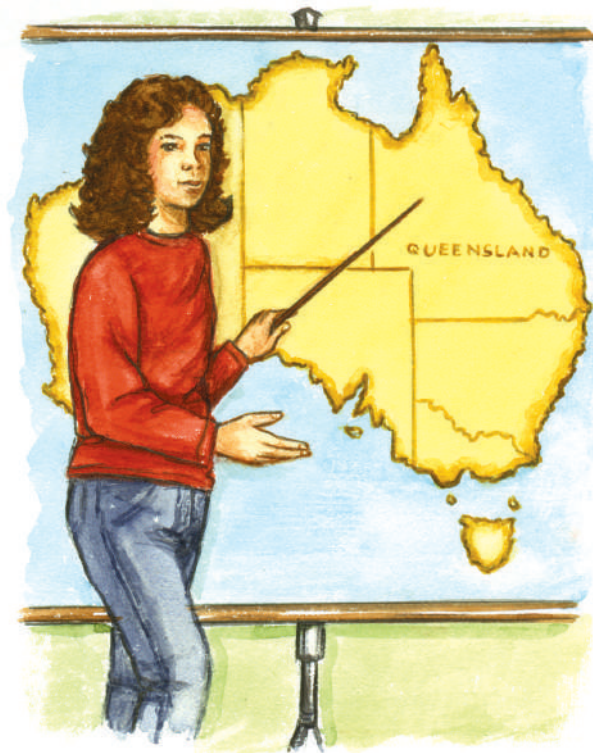
<sup>3</sup> Ms. Dimitri smiled. "I'm glad to hear it. We're excited to have you here, Gemma. Before we get started, why don't you tell everyone where you lived in Australia."

<sup>4</sup> "My family lived in Queensland," began Gemma. "It is one of Australia's six states, and it's located in the northeast part of the continent. Queensland is the second largest state in Australia. It's a bit more than twice as big as Texas."

<sup>5</sup> "What is the weather like there?" asked Kayla. "Do you have cold, snowy winters like we do here?"

<sup>6</sup> "Actually, because Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons are the reverse of what they are in the United States," said Gemma. "Queensland is in a tropical part of Australia, so it doesn't get very cold. In January, which is summertime, it is in the 80s and 90s. In July, which is wintertime, it might be in the 60s. Queensland gets a lot of rain, and I won't miss that at all. I can't wait until it snows here this winter! I've never built a snowman or gone sledding before."

<sup>7</sup> "Queensland is near Australia's Great Barrier Reef," Ms. Dimitri told the class. "Gemma, can you tell us a little about it?"



<sup>8</sup> Gemma nodded. "The Great Barrier Reef is the largest coral reef in the world. It lies off the coast of Queensland and is more than 1,200 miles long. It is home to all kinds of animal and plant life. It is an amazing place to go scuba diving."

<sup>9</sup> Vijay raised his hand. "Can you teach us how to say some words in Australian?" he asked.

<sup>10</sup> "Most people in Australia speak English," said Gemma. "But we do have some different words and expressions than you do in America. For example, the word for *friend* is *mate*. *Bonza* means *very good*. *Umbrella* is *broolly*, and *honest* is *fair dinkum*."

<sup>11</sup> "Is there another word or expression for thank you?" asked Ms. Dimitri.

<sup>12</sup> "Yes, *ta* means *thank you*."

<sup>13</sup> "Gemma, you have given us an excellent idea of what it is like to live in Australia. *Ta*, Gemma. We're so glad to have you in our class!"

Write the words from the story that have the meanings below.

1. just before the present time

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 1

2. one half of Earth when divided by the equator

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 6

3. opposite

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 6

4. specific words or phrases

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 10

A **fact** is something that is known to be true. An **opinion** is what a person believes. It may or may not be true. Write **F** before the sentences that are facts. Write **O** before the sentences that are opinions.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Gemma moved to the United States from Australia.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Queensland is more than twice as big as Texas.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ It would be exciting to visit Australia.

8. \_\_\_\_\_ The weather in Australia is more enjoyable than it is in Massachusetts.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere.

10. What is the Great Barrier Reef?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What does *fair dinkum* mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. How are the seasons different in Australia than they are in the United States?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. If you could ask Gemma a question about living in Australia, what would it be?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Australia's Giant Toads

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*How did cane toads get to Australia, and why do people see them as such a pest?*

<sup>1</sup> Think about toads that you may have seen in the woods, on a hike, or at a zoo. How large do you think they were? Even the largest toads probably were not as big as the cane toad. This toad, native to South America and the Caribbean, can weigh as much as four pounds!

<sup>2</sup> In 1935, sugar cane farmers in Australia were having a problem with two types of beetles that were destroying their crops. About one hundred cane toads were shipped to Australia from Hawaii. People hoped the toads would be a solution to the problem. Unfortunately, things turned out very differently than they had anticipated. The cane toads quickly became a more annoying pest than the beetles had ever been.

<sup>3</sup> There are several things that make the cane toad so unusual. First of all, the cane toad has almost no natural predators. If the cane toad feels threatened, it will secrete a poisonous liquid. This liquid can kill children and small animals. It can even blind an adult for several hours.

<sup>4</sup> The cane toad is also poisonous in all stages of its life. Fish normally feed on the eggs of frogs and toads, but even the eggs of the cane toad are poisonous. Each pair of cane toads can produce more than 30,000 eggs each season. Because many of the eggs and tadpoles are able to mature, the cane toad population can grow very rapidly.

<sup>5</sup> This is exactly what happened in Australia. Without any predators, there were suddenly thousands of cane toads in the Queensland area. People might have been more tolerant if the animals had been successful in getting rid of the sugar cane beetles. It turned out, however, that the cane toads did not have any effect on the beetles, which could easily fly out of harm's way.

<sup>6</sup> The Australians are not quite sure how to get rid of cane toads. In fact, they continue to spread across the continent. Cane toads eat many types of Australian wildlife. They can also be dangerous to pets and children. Even so, not everyone in Australia hopes that the plans to rid the country of these animals will be successful. Some people even leave food in their backyards or adopt the giant toads as pets!



1. Do you think cane toads will continue to be a problem in Australia? Explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why were cane toads first brought to Australia?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why are there so many cane toads in Australia if only one hundred or so were originally released?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Check the sentence that best states the main idea of the selection.

- Cane toads can weigh as much as four pounds.
- Cane toads do not have any natural predators in Australia.
- Cane toads were brought to Australia to eat sugar cane beetles, but they ended up becoming a dangerous pest.

5. In paragraph 3, what does the word *secrete* mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Which has been a bigger problem—cane toads or sugar cane beetles? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you think is a good solution to the cane toad problem?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Aussie Animals

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

How are the animals in Australia different from those you might see where you live?

<sup>1</sup> Gemma, Kayla, and Vijay were eating lunch on the small patio behind the school's cafeteria. Kayla and Vijay were asking Gemma questions about Australian animals. They couldn't believe that Gemma didn't think it was anything special to see a kangaroo hopping along the side of a road or grazing in a field.

<sup>2</sup> "When you see something all the time," Gemma explained, "you hardly even notice it. Do you know how many times you've seen a squirrel, or a deer, or a raccoon in your life?"

<sup>3</sup> "Of course not," said Vijay. "But seeing a kangaroo would be completely different."

<sup>4</sup> Gemma laughed. "Not if you lived in Australia," she said.

<sup>5</sup> "Is it true that a mother kangaroo carries her baby in her pouch?" asked Kayla.

<sup>6</sup> "Sure," replied Gemma, pausing to take a bite of her sandwich. "Aussies call baby kangaroos *joeys*. They live in their mother's pouch until they grow a bit larger. Then, they can take care of themselves and keep up with the others in their group. Did you know that kangaroos can travel more than 30 miles per hour?"



<sup>7</sup> "That's pretty fast!" exclaimed Vijay.

<sup>8</sup> "Do any other animals carry their babies in a pouch?" wondered Kayla aloud.

<sup>9</sup> "The koala and the wombat do," said Gemma. "They are marsupials like the kangaroo."

<sup>10</sup> "I know what a koala bear is," said Vijay, "but what is a wombat?"

<sup>11</sup> "Well, a koala isn't really a bear," Gemma explained. "People just call them that because they resemble a teddy bear. Koalas spend most of their lives sleeping. There is a type of tree called a *eucalyptus* (*yoo kah LIP tuss*) that grows in Australia. It's pretty much the only thing that koalas eat. They don't get much energy from the leaves, though, which is why they spend so much time sleeping."

<sup>12</sup> "It sounds like they need a change in their diet," laughed Vijay. "Is the wombat similar to the koala and kangaroo?"

<sup>13</sup> "The only real similarity is that it is a marsupial, too. Otherwise, the wombat looks like a beaver or a groundhog. It burrows underground and makes tunnels that are 10 to 15 feet long. Some people get wombats as babies and train them. I had a friend who had a very nice pet wombat named Gillian."

<sup>14</sup> "Won't you miss the animals in Australia?" asked Kayla. "No one in Massachusetts has a wombat for a pet."

<sup>15</sup> Gemma smiled. "I might miss them a little," she said, "but I've never seen snow. I never saw a real raccoon or a deer before I moved here. I also never saw a cardinal or a chickadee. I think Massachusetts is going to be a very interesting place to live."

<sup>16</sup> "I guess it all depends on what you are used to," said Vijay. "But I'd take the animals of Australia over a deer any day of the week!"

1. What are baby kangaroos called in Australia?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Why do koalas spend so much of their time sleeping?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What kind of pet is Gillian?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do you think a baby kangaroo lives in its mother's pouch for a while after it is born?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Which of these words describe Gemma?

\_\_\_\_\_ knowledgeable

\_\_\_\_\_ competitive

\_\_\_\_\_ friendly

\_\_\_\_\_ stubborn

\_\_\_\_\_ irritable

6. Name one characteristic of marsupials.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the setting for this story?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. In the story, Vijay thinks that Australian animals are more interesting than American animals. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# The First Australians

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the Aboriginal people of Australia?

<sup>1</sup> The Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Australia. Archaeologists believe that they have lived in Australia for about 50,000 to 60,000 years! Today, they make up a little more than two percent of the population of Australia.

<sup>2</sup> In the past, Aboriginal people were hunters and gatherers. This means that they survived by hunting, fishing, and gathering plants. They did not settle permanently in one place. Instead, they moved around the continent when they needed to refresh their supply of food. The Aboriginal people had, and still have, a strong respect for and connection to the land and nature. It influences almost every part of their culture, from food and shelter, to art and religion.

<sup>3</sup> Things quickly changed for the Aboriginal people when Europeans began arriving in Australia in 1788. They brought diseases that the Aboriginal people had never been exposed to before. The Aboriginal people also had to fight for the land that was theirs. There were many years of difficult times. The Aboriginal people had to learn to live in a society that was very different from their ancestors'. They had to fight to keep their culture alive.

<sup>4</sup> The situation started to improve for the Aboriginal people in the 1960s. They were finally given the right to vote. Later, the Australian government also began trying to make up for some of the unfair treatment the people had suffered. They returned some of the land to the Aboriginal people that had been taken from them more than a century before.

<sup>5</sup> The contributions of Aboriginal people to Australia can be seen in many areas. For example, they created the boomerang, a curved piece of wood that has been used both as a weapon and for sport. Aboriginal rock paintings can be found in many areas of Australia. Some are believed to be 30,000 years old. The didgeridoo (*didge er ee DOO*) is a well-known Australian wind instrument. It is a straight trumpet made from a hollow piece of wood or bamboo. Some people believe it may be one of the world's oldest wind instruments.

<sup>6</sup> The Aboriginal people are an important and valuable part of Australian society. Today, many still live a traditional lifestyle in the bush, or Australian wilderness. Others have become a part of modern-day Australian culture and live in cities around the country. Their influences can be found in many aspects of Australian life.



Write the words from the passage that have the meanings below.

1. people who live in a particular place

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 1

2. scientists who study past cultures

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 1

3. for a long time

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 2

4. has an effect on

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 2

5. left open to harm without protection

\_\_\_\_\_ Par. 3

6. Why did Aboriginal people move around instead of staying in one place?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What influences almost every part of the Aboriginal culture?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Another name for Australian wilderness is \_\_\_\_\_.

9. How did life change for the better for aboriginal people in the 1960s?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Explain what a didgeridoo is.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Shall We Dance?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever attended a dance performance?

<sup>1</sup> "Gavin!" called Mr. Capshaw. "We're ready to go. Are you coming?"

<sup>2</sup> Gavin shuffled slowly down the stairs and joined his parents at the front door. "I'm ready," he said with a sigh.

<sup>3</sup> "This will be fun. I know you'll enjoy the performance," Mrs. Capshaw told her son. "Afterward, we might even get to go backstage and meet Dad's friend from college. Joseph has one of the lead roles in the show," she explained.

<sup>4</sup> The Capshaws walked down the street toward the subway station. "I don't even like ballet," Gavin complained.

<sup>5</sup> "Not all dance is ballet, Gavin," said Mr. Capshaw. "The show we're going to see tonight is modern dance. But there are many other kinds of dance, too—tap, jazz, break dancing, square dancing, the tango, the waltz. I'd like you to keep an open mind about this."

<sup>6</sup> Gavin sighed again. "Okay, Dad. I'll do my best."

<sup>7</sup> About 45 minutes later, the Capshaws arrived at the theater. A woman wearing a bright red vest and carrying a flashlight helped them find their seats in the mezzanine. Gavin looked around him while he waited for the performance to begin. He couldn't believe how many people there were in the theater. Gavin looked straight up at the ornate ceiling painted in gold, midnight blue, and maroon. Suddenly, the lights dimmed, and the audience began to clap.

<sup>8</sup> Once the performance began, Gavin forgot all about the usher, his parents, the rest of the audience, and the ornate ceiling. He listened to the music and watched the dancers move. The performers made the moves look so easy, but he could tell it was much more difficult than it appeared. He leaned forward in his seat and tapped his toes in time to the rhythm of the music.

<sup>9</sup> "Well, what did you think?" asked Gavin's parents when the lights came back on.

<sup>10</sup> "That was amazing. I'm so glad we came," he replied.

<sup>11</sup> "Come on, let's go see if we can find Joseph," said Mr. Capshaw, putting one arm around Gavin's shoulders. The Capshaws made their way to a small hallway at the front of the theater. A moment later, they were shaking hands with Joseph and complimenting him on his performance.

<sup>12</sup> "Is it a lot of work to prepare the show?" Gavin asked Joseph.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph chuckled. "I've never worked so hard in my life," he said, "but I've also never had so much fun. Are you a performer, Gavin?"

<sup>14</sup> Gavin shook his head.

<sup>15</sup> "Do you think dance is something you'd like to try?" asked Joseph. "You seem very enthusiastic about tonight's show. The performing arts center is only a few blocks from here, and they offer a beginner's class in modern dance. I know some of the teachers there. I'd be happy to introduce you if you're interested."

<sup>16</sup> Gavin grinned. "When can I start?" he asked.



1. Find one sentence that shows Gavin was not looking forward to going to the dance performance. Write it on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What problem did Gavin have at the beginning of the story?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. How did Gavin feel about the performance once it began?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Write **F** before the sentences that are facts. Write **O** before the sentences that are opinions.

4. \_\_\_\_ Modern dance is interesting to watch.

5. \_\_\_\_ Joseph has one of the lead roles in the performance.

6. \_\_\_\_ The Capshaws took the subway to get to the theater.

7. \_\_\_\_ Gavin will be a good dancer.

8. What does the word *ornate* mean in paragraph 7?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you think Gavin will try taking a dance class? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you think Joseph enjoys his job? How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# STOMP!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of everyday objects could you use to make music?

<sup>1</sup> You might have used pencils to tap a rhythm on your desk or noticed that the ringing sound of basketballs was almost like the beat to a song. But did you know that these sounds could be taken seriously as music and even performed onstage?

<sup>2</sup> The dance and percussion group STOMP has taken everyday objects and turned them into instruments. The performers strap oil drums to their feet and smash trash can lids together. This creates an exciting rhythmic music and dance that is a hit all over the world.

<sup>3</sup> STOMP was formed by British musicians Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas. They met in the early 1980s when they were both working as buskers, the British term for street performers. Busking has a long tradition in England and is still a popular way for musicians and actors to share their talents. The performers have to be extra creative and enticing to be able to capture the attention of people who are walking by. Cresswell and McNicholas were part of a busking group called *Pookiesnackburger* that became very popular throughout Britain. Eventually, they even had their own television show.

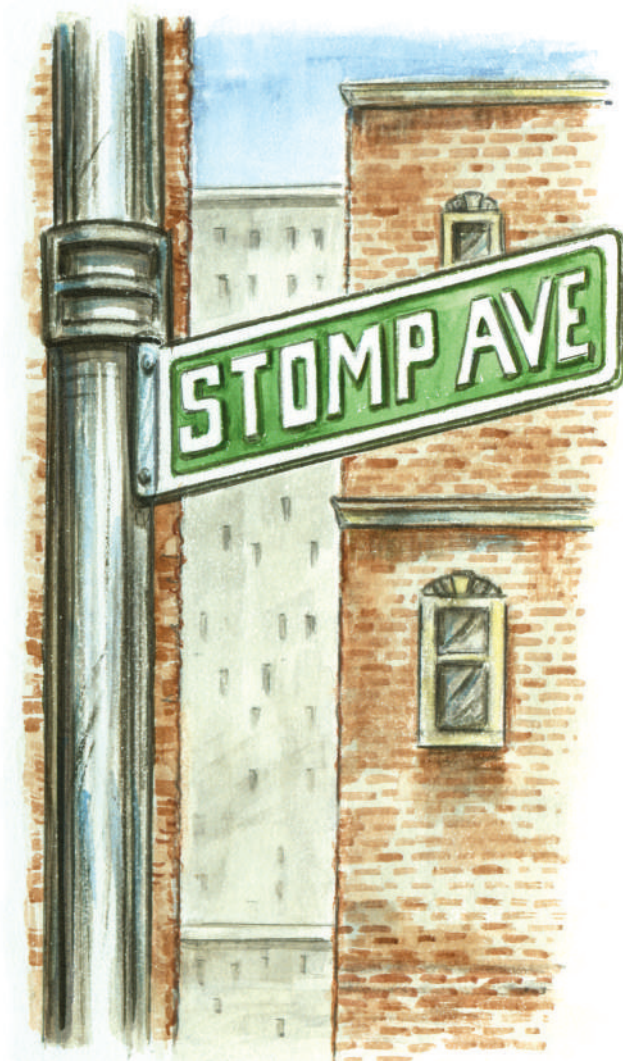
<sup>4</sup> Cresswell was a drummer for the group. Because they performed on the street, he could not set up a traditional drum set. Instead, he wore one drum that hung around his shoulders. To be able to make a variety of sounds, Cresswell began beating on objects like lampposts and trash cans that were available wherever the group performed. This creative drumming formed the idea for STOMP.

<sup>5</sup> STOMP made its debut at London's Bloomsbury Theatre in 1991. The performers used one-of-a-kind instruments, such as brooms, empty water jugs, basketballs, and matchboxes to bang out rhythms. Wearing overalls and T-shirts, they danced around

on a stage made to look like a closed warehouse. STOMP was an instant success, winning many theater awards and drawing huge crowds.

<sup>6</sup> In 1994, STOMP came to the United States and played at the Orpheum Theater in New York City. Two decades later, it is still playing there! To honor its ten-year anniversary, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg renamed the street outside of the theater STOMP Avenue.

<sup>7</sup> STOMP has now toured all over the United States and most of the world. One reason STOMP is so popular is that anyone can enjoy it. There are no words or story. People from all cultures can understand it, regardless of the language they speak.



Write **T** before the sentences that are true. Write **F** before the sentences that are false.

1. \_\_\_\_ The performers in STOMP use common objects and turn them into instruments.
2. \_\_\_\_ Luke Cresswell, one of the founders of STOMP, played the trumpet.
3. \_\_\_\_ There is a street called STOMP Avenue in New York City.
4. \_\_\_\_ STOMP's first performance was at London's Bloomsbury Theatre.
5. \_\_\_\_ STOMP was formed by two Latin American musicians.
6. In Britain, what does the word *busker* mean?

7. Why couldn't Luke Cresswell use a traditional drum set when he was performing?

8. Which words best describe the founders of STOMP?

- \_\_\_\_ caring
- \_\_\_\_ talented
- \_\_\_\_ creative
- \_\_\_\_ shy
- \_\_\_\_ sneaky
- \_\_\_\_ imaginative

9. Give three examples of objects that STOMP performers might use as instruments.

10. Why does STOMP appeal to people worldwide?

# The Best Hooper of All

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*How did Savion Glover bring tap dancing into the 21st century?*

<sup>1</sup> What comes to mind when you think of tap dancing? You might picture a black-and-white movie with a performer dressed in a tuxedo. Tap dancing might not seem like something popular and modern. If that is how you picture tap, then you have never seen Savion Glover dance! This choreographer, dancer, director, and producer has changed the way people think about tap dancing today.

<sup>2</sup> Savion Glover was born in New Jersey in 1973. He showed a talent for drumming when he was only four years old, so he began going to school at the Newark Community School of the Arts. By the time he was seven, he had begun taking rhythm tap classes at the Broadway Dance Center in New York. Rhythm tap is a special kind of dance that uses all the parts of the foot to create sounds.

<sup>3</sup> When Savion began taking tap lessons, his family could not afford the special shoes he needed. Savion had to wear a pair of cowboy boots to his first lesson! Just a few years later, Savion landed his first role in a Broadway performance, *The Tap Dance Kid*.

<sup>4</sup> Savion continued working in a variety of areas. He learned much of what he knew about tap dancing from masters like Sammy Davis, Jr. and Gregory Hines. He participated in other Broadway productions, and he even made a movie. Savion also became well-known for his recurring role on the children's television show *Sesame Street*.

<sup>5</sup> In 1995, Savion choreographed and starred in a production called *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*. The show, which followed African American history from the times of slavery through the 20th century, was extremely popular. People loved its energy. They were amazed at how the story could be expressed through dance. *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* won four Tony Awards, the highest honor a musical can receive. One of those awards was for best choreographer, Savion Glover.

<sup>6</sup> The style of tap that Savion is best known for is often called *hoofing*, or street tap. It is a hard-hitting form of tap, and the movements are more acrobatic than those of traditional tap. Savion's work combines elements of jazz, funk, hip-hop, rock 'n' roll, and the blues to create something unique and exciting. People love to watch Savion's feet move. It is hard to keep up with them, but that is part of the fun in watching Savion Glover perform!



1. Check the words that describe Savion Glover.

- \_\_\_\_\_ energetic
- \_\_\_\_\_ motivated
- \_\_\_\_\_ nosy
- \_\_\_\_\_ quiet
- \_\_\_\_\_ enthusiastic

2. In what show was Savion's first professional performance?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What story did *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* tell?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who did Savion study to become better at tap dancing?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The \_\_\_\_\_ Award is the highest honor a musical can receive.

6. What is hoofing?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How do you think Savion Glover has made people think differently about tap dancing?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. If you could go to a dance performance, what type of dance would you most like to see? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Looking for Something Green

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Will Fiona and Nora ever get used to living in the city?

<sup>1</sup> Fiona and Nora stared out the window of the apartment. If they looked up State Street to the right, they could see several skyscrapers with shiny windows that glittered like jewels in the midmorning sun. If they looked down the street to their left, they could see a parking garage and an impressive looking building their mother had told them was the downtown library. Straight below them was a tangle of traffic that seemed to stretch as far as they could see. They could hear the honking of horns and the shouting of street vendors.

<sup>2</sup> "It's so different here," sighed Fiona. "I miss our old farmhouse. When we looked out the window at home, all we could see were acres of green grass and trees. I don't think I can see a single green thing from this window in any direction."



<sup>3</sup> "Well," said Nora, "that man is wearing a green jacket. And I see a green truck. Look! That woman is carrying a potted plant that has a lot of green leaves!"

<sup>4</sup> Fiona gave her little sister a look. "You know that's not what I'm talking about," she said. "I just feel like everything here is made of stone and steel and glass. We don't even have a lawn or a tree that we can sit under and read. What if we wanted to have a cook-out like we used to do in our backyard? Where will Mom plant her flowers? What if we wanted to play ball?"

<sup>5</sup> Mom walked into the room just in time to hear what Fiona was saying. "Okay, girls," said Mom. "I think it's time we went on a walk. We're going to go exploring. Our mission is to find ourselves a little piece of green space right here in the city."

<sup>6</sup> "Mom," said Fiona, "I don't think there is any green space here. We live in the city now, not the country."

<sup>7</sup> "Come on," said Mom, grabbing her daughters by the hand. "Let's see what we can find."

<sup>8</sup> Fiona, Nora, and their mother walked past the vendors selling hot dogs and pretzels. They walked past the skyscrapers with shiny windows, the tangle of traffic, and the bustle of people in business suits. Suddenly, Fiona and Nora saw a bit of grass and a park bench. They turned the corner and began to grin. They saw an enormous grassy park filled with trees. There was even a pond with a fountain. A girl on a bicycle stopped to let two ducks waddle past her.

<sup>9</sup> As Fiona, Nora, and Mom made their way toward the pond, Mom smiled and said, "What do you think, girls?"

<sup>10</sup> Fiona and Nora smiled back. "We found our little piece of green in the city," said Nora.

Read the descriptions below. Write **F** next to the phrase if it describes Fiona. Write **N** if it describes Nora.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ says she can't see anything green from the window
2. \_\_\_\_\_ feels like everything is made of steel, stone, and glass
3. \_\_\_\_\_ points out several green things on the street below
4. \_\_\_\_\_ says she misses their old farmhouse
5. \_\_\_\_\_ says they found their piece of green in the city
6. What do you think "green space" is?

7. What problem do Fiona and Nora have in this story?

8. Where do you think Fiona and Nora used to live before they moved to the city?

9. Nora points out three green things she can see from the window. What does Fiona mean when she says, "You know that's not what I'm talking about," to her sister?

10. On the lines below, summarize paragraph 8.

11. Do you live some place where there is green space nearby? How important is that to you? Explain.



# A Garden in the Clouds

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Will Fiona and Nora find a place where they can have a garden in the city?

<sup>1</sup> Fiona and Nora were becoming accustomed to life in the city. They were learning their way around, and they were discovering all kinds of exciting things. The best library they had ever been to was right across the street from their apartment. It had an enormous selection of books, and they had already made friends with Ms. Applebaum, one of the librarians. Sometimes, she put books aside that she thought Fiona and Nora might enjoy.

<sup>2</sup> The sisters still missed some things about living in the country, but they had learned that they just needed to look a bit harder to find similar things in the city. After they had discovered the nearby park with their mother one day, they spent a lot of time there. They roller-bladed on the trail that ran around the perimeter of the park. Their dad made friends with the man who sold food for the ducks, and he always gave them an extra handful.

<sup>3</sup> The one thing that Fiona and Nora still missed about their old farmhouse was having a place for a garden. Both girls had inherited their mother's green thumb. Last summer, they had grown so many tomatoes they were able to make enough spaghetti sauce to last most of the winter.

<sup>4</sup> One afternoon, Fiona, Nora, and Mom decided to take a different route to the park. They liked to explore the side streets on their way there. Nora looked up when a large cloud passed overhead. She noticed something that looked like a tree on top of the building beside her.

<sup>5</sup> "That looks like a tree on the roof!" she exclaimed. Fiona and Mom looked up. They couldn't see very well because they stood directly below the building. They walked a bit further down the street, and then they crossed over to the other side to get a better view.



<sup>6</sup> "You're right, Nora," said Fiona. "I think there's actually a whole garden up there! I can see a trellis with some flowers creeping up it. And there are some more pots along the far side of the roof."

<sup>7</sup> "It looks like they have a rooftop garden," said Mom. "I've heard of them, but I've never actually seen one before. People who live in cities sometimes use the space on the top of their buildings for gardening."

<sup>8</sup> "Do you think we could start one on the roof of our building, Mom?" asked Fiona.

<sup>9</sup> Mom smiled. "We'll have to check with the superintendent of our building first," she replied. "But I doubt it will be a problem. I've seen a sign for stairs leading to the roof. I've even seen a family taking a picnic dinner and a telescope up there."

<sup>10</sup> Nora grinned. "Sometimes, you just have to look a little harder to find what you're looking for in the city."

1. Check the phrase that best describes the author's purpose.

\_\_\_\_\_ to tell a story about two sisters discovering rooftop gardens

\_\_\_\_\_ to persuade the reader to start a rooftop garden

\_\_\_\_\_ to share information about the best type of plants to use in a rooftop garden

**Dialogue** is what a character says. The words in dialogue are always in quotation marks.

2. On the line below, write the words that are dialogue in paragraph 5.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Check the word or words that best describe what type of selection this is.

\_\_\_\_\_ historical nonfiction

\_\_\_\_\_ folktale

\_\_\_\_\_ fiction

4. Do you think Mom will help the girls start a rooftop garden of their own? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

An **idiom** is a group of words that has a special meaning. For example, the idiom *hit the hay* means *go to bed*. Write the idiom from paragraph 3 on the line under its meaning.

5. a talent for growing plants

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why is the title of the story "A Garden in the Clouds"? Think of another title that could fit this story.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why does Mom think that a rooftop garden won't be a problem in their building?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the main idea of paragraph 2?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Green Roofs

Have you ever seen a rooftop garden?

<sup>1</sup> Why would anyone want to plant a garden on a roof? People are finding out that it is good for the environment and good for them. The roof of a building can get extremely hot, especially if it is covered in tar. Dark colors absorb the light of the sun, which causes them to become hotter than things that are light in color.

<sup>2</sup> Cities can be as much as four to ten degrees warmer than rural areas. Green rooftops can actually help cool the air in cities. A single green roof will not do much to change the temperature of a city. However, when more buildings begin to convert their rooftops to green spaces, a real difference can occur. Buildings that are cooler also use air conditioning less often. This reduces the amount of energy a building uses, which is good for the environment.



<sup>3</sup> Cities are usually more polluted than other areas. The addition of plants to rooftops can even help clean the air. Plants use carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. Because people breathe oxygen, a large number of plants in an area creates more breathable air. Gardens in the city can also provide a place for birds and bugs to live.

<sup>4</sup> One unusual rooftop garden is located above Children’s Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. The garden covers an area of 7,500 square feet. It is a place for the children and their parents to relax and be close to nature without leaving the hospital. The garden has flowers, fountains, and even a goldfish pond. There are also paths that children can walk on in slippers or with bare feet.

<sup>5</sup> Another interesting garden is on the rooftop of the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Canada. A large herb garden has been planted on the roof. The hotel’s chefs can pick all of the herbs they use fresh from the roof. Other hotels and restaurants maintain gardens where they grow fruits and vegetables to use in cooking. They just need to make sure that there are gardeners to care for the plants. Rooftop gardens can dry out quickly in the summer sun, and vegetables need frequent watering.

<sup>6</sup> Why don’t all buildings have green rooftops? One reason is that they can be more expensive than traditional rooftops. However, they may save a company on heating and cooling bills in the future. Also, a roof needs to be flat and strong enough to support the weight of the garden.

<sup>7</sup> Many people do not know about rooftop gardens and how good they can be for the environment. But word is starting to get out. You may want to keep your eyes on the skies when you walk the streets in your town or city. You never know when you might catch a glimpse of a secret garden many feet above the ground.

1. Why do the rooftops of buildings get so hot?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How big is the rooftop garden at the Children’s Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you think that more buildings will begin to convert their roofs to green spaces? Explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is planted in the rooftop garden of the Royal York Hotel?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. A **summary** is a short sentence that tells the most important facts about a topic. Check the sentence below that is the best summary for paragraph 2.

\_\_\_\_ Cities are warmer than rural areas.

\_\_\_\_ Rooftop gardens can cool the air in cities and reduce the amount of energy used.

\_\_\_\_ Buildings with rooftop gardens use less air conditioning.

6. In paragraph 3, the author says, “The addition of plants to rooftops can even help clean the air.” What support does he or she give for this statement?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What are three advantages of rooftop gardens?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Wasteful or Resourceful?

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*How green is your school? What about your home or the places your parents work?*

<sup>1</sup> What can people do to help the places they go every day become friendlier to the environment? Large buildings are often hard on the environment. The good news is that there are many ways even the biggest offenders can make improvements.

<sup>2</sup> One problem is the amount of energy that is used every day in large buildings. Rooftop gardens are one way to reduce the amount of energy needed to air condition a building in the summer and heat it in the winter. But rooftop gardens are not the only solution. Some companies have installed solar panels. This allows them to gather energy from the sun and then turn it into electricity. Solar panels can be expensive, but companies that want to make protecting the environment a priority think it is worth the money.

<sup>3</sup> Other companies have all kinds of special gadgets that help save energy. For example, in some offices, lights automatically go out when a person leaves a room. The plumbing is set up in a way that allows water to be reused. In new buildings, recycled materials might even be a part of the walls or the floor. Tile can be made using recycled glass. Floors can be made from old tires. Walls can even be insulated with newspaper or bales of straw.

<sup>4</sup> You do not need to live in a green building or go to a green school in order to help the environment. There are lots of things you can do on your own. For example, turn off the water when you brush your teeth. Turn off the lights when you leave a room. If you can walk or ride your bike somewhere, do that instead of riding in a car.

<sup>5</sup> Does your school recycle paper? If it does not, see if you can work with a teacher to start a recycling program. Do you know what happens to the food that is not used in your school's cafeteria? Maybe it can be donated to a local food bank.

<sup>6</sup> You can also tell people you know about ways they can help the environment. The more people you tell, the more people will become aware of things they can reuse and recycle. The sooner that happens, the sooner we'll be able to see a healthy change in the world around us.



Write the words from the passage that have the meanings below.

1. people who are guilty of something

\_\_\_\_\_

Par. 1

2. working on its own; without being controlled

\_\_\_\_\_

Par. 3

3. covered with a material that keeps warmth or sound from passing through it

\_\_\_\_\_

Par. 3

4. How do solar panels work?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What types of recycled materials can tile and floors be made of?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name two things you can do at home or at school to help the environment.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Does your school recycle? If so, what kinds of things are recycled? If not, what could you do to start a recycling program?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. What does it mean for a company to make protecting the environment a priority?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Circle the correct answer.

Everyday people can have a large (impact, resource) on the environment.



# Poetry Slam

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever written a poem?

<sup>1</sup> “For the next two weeks, we’re going to be talking about and writing poetry,” Ms. Jorge told her class. “What comes to mind when you think about poetry?” she asked.

<sup>2</sup> “Feelings and personal thoughts,” Maya said.

<sup>3</sup> “Rhyming words,” said Maurice.

<sup>4</sup> “Descriptive words,” said Taylor.

<sup>5</sup> “Images that tell a story,” said Ana.

<sup>6</sup> “Those are all excellent answers,” said Ms. Jorge. “One reason I love poetry is because of its diversity. You can find a poem to fit any mood or feeling. Some poems make you laugh, and others make you think. Poems can remind you of things you have forgotten, and they can take you places you have never been.”

<sup>7</sup> “I didn’t hear any of you use the words *exciting* or *competitive* to talk about poetry,” said Ms. Jorge. “What do those words make you think of?”

<sup>8</sup> Maya raised her hand. “They make me think of sports,” she answered. “Poetry seems quieter and more serious.”

<sup>9</sup> Ms. Jorge smiled. “We’re going to learn about a form of poetry today that might change your mind. A poetry slam is a competition for poets. Each poet has three minutes to deliver his or her poem. The judges are all chosen from the audience. The poets are judged on the content of the poems and on the way they present the poems. After a poet finishes, the judges hold up signs to show the scores they’ve given the poet. The scores range from one to ten, with ten being a perfect score.”

<sup>10</sup> “That almost sounds like an Olympic event,” joked Taylor.

<sup>11</sup> Ms. Jorge nodded. “It’s a different way of becoming involved with poetry,” she said. “Anyone can try it. Throughout history, poetry has been a part of the oral tradition.

It is meant to be spoken or read aloud. Many types of poetry would never have survived if they had not been passed down through the generations by word of mouth.”

<sup>12</sup> “Are there poetry slams for kids?” asked Maurice.

<sup>13</sup> “Yes, they have been popping up all around the country in the last few years,” answered Ms. Jorge. “There is even a Youth Poetry Slam League and a national competition.”

<sup>14</sup> “Don’t kids get nervous reciting their poetry in front of a big audience?” wondered Ana.

<sup>15</sup> “I’m sure they do get nervous,” said Ms. Jorge. “But they also enjoy having a chance to share their feelings and get new perspectives on things. Some of the poets like the excitement and the competitive atmosphere. Others like the support of being with and performing for other poets.”

<sup>16</sup> Ms. Jorge walked to her desk and picked up a stack of paper. “Does anyone know where we’ll be going on our next field trip?” she asked. When no one had an idea, she continued. “The city of Riverview will be holding its first youth poetry slam at the Book Nook. I’m passing around applications right now. I encourage all of you to think about performing!”



Write **F** before the sentences that are facts. Write **O** before the sentences that are opinions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Poetry can be exciting.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Jorge’s class will be going on a field trip to a poetry slam.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Poetry slams can be interesting to attend.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Poetry has been a part of the oral tradition throughout history.
5. Ms. Jorge loves poetry because of its \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Do you think any of Ms. Jorge’s students will participate in the poetry slam? Explain your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is a poetry slam?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Why do you think Taylor says that a poetry slam sounds like an Olympic event?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Name two things that Ms. Jorge says kids enjoy about poetry slams.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. If you were to write a poem for a poetry slam, what would you write about? Name three possible topics.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Where the Poetry Begins

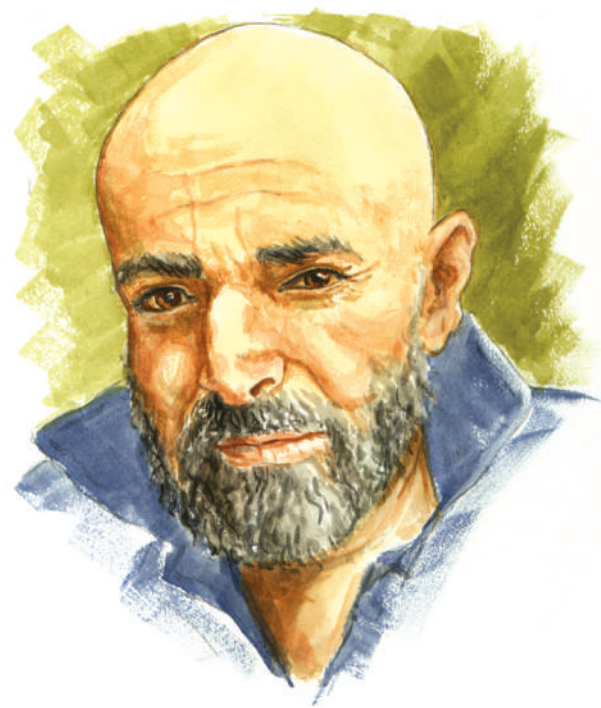
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite poem? Who is your favorite poet?

<sup>1</sup> Who is your favorite poet? For many young people, the answer is Shel Silverstein. Shel's first book was published in the 1960s, and since then his children's books have sold more than 30 million copies! Young people recognize that Shel really understood his audience.

<sup>2</sup> Shel Silverstein was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1932. He began writing poetry when he was young. He was not familiar with the work of any famous poets, so he invented his own style. This turned out to be a good thing, because style is one of the most distinctive things about Shel's poetry.

<sup>3</sup> Although he was best known for writing children's literature, Shel was creative in many ways. He began his career in the arts as a cartoonist. He also was a talented singer, songwriter, composer, and illustrator. In fact, Shel illustrated all of his children's books himself. This is one reason the pictures seem to accompany the poetry so perfectly.



<sup>4</sup> *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, first published in 1974, is one of the most beloved children's books of all time. But what makes Shel's poetry so timeless and popular? His poems are often hilarious, and young people love Shel's type of humor.

<sup>5</sup> In one poem, he told the story of a girl who refused to take out the garbage. It piled up higher and higher until it finally threatened to take over the town. Many kids have experienced the feeling of not wanting to do a chore. They love how out of control the author let the situation get because they know that it would never happen that way in real life.

<sup>6</sup> In another popular poem, a girl pretends to be sick so that she will not have to attend school. Shel made fun of the situation by having the character exaggerate her symptoms to the point where they became ridiculous. The punch line of the poem occurs at the end. The girl discovers that it is Saturday, and she would not have had to go to school anyway.

<sup>7</sup> Shel also liked to play with language in his poetry. He often used elements like alliteration in his work. *Alliteration* is the use of words that begin with the same sounds. In the poem about the girl who refused to take out the garbage, the character's name is Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout. This type of alliteration can make poetry fun to read aloud. Shel's poems also often rhymed and had a good rhythm, two more elements that make his work easy and interesting to read.

<sup>8</sup> In 1999, Shel Silverstein died in his home in Key West, Florida. Children and adults will miss his quirky humor and incredible imagination. But a bit of Shel Silverstein is captured in his work, which will live on and bring joy to children for many generations to come.

1. Number the events below to show the order in which they happened.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Shel's first book was published.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shel died in 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shel began his career as a cartoonist.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shel Silverstein was born in Chicago.
- \_\_\_\_\_ *Where the Sidewalk Ends* was published.

2. What does it mean when the author says that Shel Silverstein illustrated all his children's books himself?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. About how many copies of Shel's books have been sold?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Write your own example of alliteration.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Check the words that describe Shel Silverstein.

- \_\_\_\_\_ funny    \_\_\_\_\_ lazy    \_\_\_\_\_ talkative    \_\_\_\_\_ artistic    \_\_\_\_\_ clever

6. In the last line of paragraph 3, it says that Shel's pictures accompany his poetry perfectly. What does this mean?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Name four characteristics of Shel Silverstein's poetry.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Shel's book \_\_\_\_\_ was one of the most popular books of kids' poetry ever.

9. Tell about a poem or poet you've read and enjoyed. What did you like about it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_