

Name _____

Date _____

The Grasshopper Plague

Read the text. Then answer the questions.



In 1874, many people moved west and settled in Minnesota. They were farmers. They worked hard to grow crops. That year, millions of grasshoppers came to the state.



The swarm of grasshoppers was like a dark cloud. They landed everywhere. The ravenous insects ate everything in sight. The farmers lost all their crops to this "grasshopper plague."



These insects destroyed much more than the farms in Minnesota. They swarmed across large parts of North America.



When the grasshoppers arrived in 1874, there was a bad drought. The hot, rainless weather caused more problems. Some farmers did not have enough food for the winter. Others had no crops to sell to earn money. They had to start over.

continued

Pre-/Post-Assessment (continued)



Then things got worse. The insects made the water supply dirty. The chickens ate the insects. As a result, eggs and meat from the chickens had a bad taste. Worst of all, the insects laid millions of eggs. The eggs could hatch in the spring, and a new plague would begin.



People worked hard to stop the grasshopper attack. They built smoky fires around their fields. They used nets to catch the bugs. They plowed the fields to dig up the grasshoppers' eggs. None of these plans worked.



Some settlers gave up and moved away. Some left to find jobs elsewhere and then returned later. But many others stayed and kept trying.



The people who stayed got some help from the government. Farmers planted more crops. They saved food and grain to protect against future hardships. Still, they always worried that the grasshoppers would return.

continued

- 1.** What is the main idea of this text?
 - A** A family farm was destroyed when millions of grasshoppers attacked.
 - B** In 1874, there was a bad drought in Minnesota and in other states.
 - C** Grasshoppers were among many challenges faced by settlers in Minnesota.
 - D** In 1874, a grasshopper plague caused huge hardships for farmers in Minnesota.

- 2.** Reread panel 2. What does the word ravenous mean?
 - A** unfriendly
 - B** having no value
 - C** very hungry
 - D** having wings

- 3.** Why did the farmers think that the grasshoppers would return?
 - A** The grasshoppers had laid eggs in the fields.
 - B** The grasshoppers could fly great distances.
 - C** The farmers had planted many new crops.
 - D** The farmers had lost their spirits.

continued 

Pre-/Post-Assessment (continued)

4. Look at the map in panel 4. What new information does the map add to what is presented in the text?
- A** how many people were affected
 - B** how big the grasshopper swarms were
 - C** what direction the grasshoppers traveled
 - D** where the grasshoppers did the most damage
5. The author organizes most of this text by—
- A** comparing and contrasting.
 - B** telling events in time order.
 - C** giving a problem and a solution.
 - D** asking questions and giving answers.

continued



- 6.** What problem was caused by chicken eggs that tasted bad?
- A** Farmers could not eat or sell them.
 - B** It made the chickens stop laying eggs.
 - C** Farmers had too many eggs each day.
 - D** It caused chickens to leave their nests.
- 7.** What evidence does the author give to show that the farmers tried to protect themselves against the next swarm of grasshoppers?
- A** They built smoky fires.
 - B** They gave up and moved.
 - C** They saved food and grain.
 - D** They planted all new crops.

continued 

A Letter from Nebraska

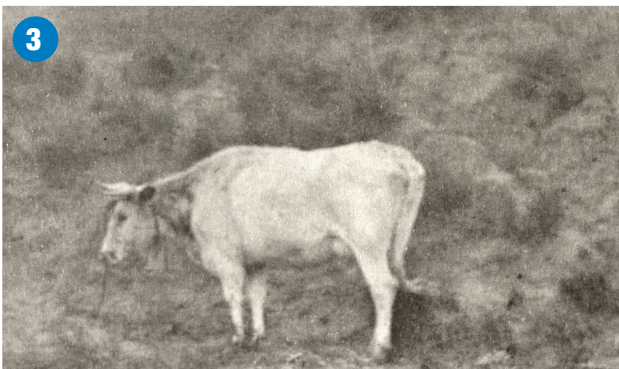
Read the text. Then answer the questions.



Dear Cousin,
By now, you have heard about our disaster. I have never asked for help in my life. But I am asking now. My children are hungry. The grasshoppers have left us in desperate shape.



The swarm arrived on July 22. It stayed for two days. Those vermin ate every plant in our fields. They chewed up every last seed and piece of hay. They ate most of our stored food. They made our drinking water dirty.



The government says they would give us aid, but we still have a cow and a mule. They say we could sell the animals for money. But then we would have nothing at all to help us start over.



We cannot wait for aid. Winter will be here soon. I beg that you help us. We need food, clothing, seed, and money for supplies. We cannot pay you now, but you can count on us if you ever need help.
—Susannah

continued

- 8.** What is the author's main point in this letter?
- A** The swarm of grasshoppers left people hungry.
 - B** The grasshoppers did not eat all the crops.
 - C** The farmers tried to trap the grasshoppers.
 - D** People should be able to keep their animals.
- 9.** In panel 2, what is the meaning of vermin?
- A** farm animals
 - B** monsters
 - C** pests
 - D** robbers
- 10.** What is this letter mostly about?
- A** A woman asks her cousin for help.
 - B** Grasshoppers ate the woman's crops.
 - C** The woman's children are hungry.
 - D** The woman wants to buy some food.

continued 

Pre-/Post-Assessment (continued)

- 11.** You have read “The Grasshopper Plague” and “A Letter from Nebraska.” Which detail is given in both accounts?
- A** The grasshoppers came during a bad drought.
 - B** Getting help required people to sell everything.
 - C** The grasshoppers made the water supply dirty.
 - D** Growing some new crops helped farmers recover.
- 12.** How is the Nebraska family like the farmers in Minnesota?
- A** They never ask other people for aid.
 - B** They need help from the government.
 - C** They can grow new crops to earn money.
 - D** They plan to quit farming and move away.

continued 

The New King of Frogs: An African Folktale

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

1



Crocodile



Wise Old Frog



Other Frogs



**The Great Voice
(unseen but very loud)**

Setting: an African lakeside

(When the directions say *FROG PARTY*, all the *OTHER FROGS* make frog noises and move about.)

2

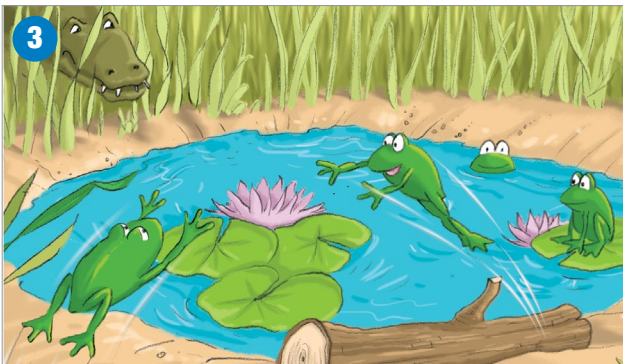


SCENE 1 (*LIGHTS ON*) (*FROG PARTY*. *CROCODILE* creeps out from the plants, heading for the lake. *OTHER FROGS* immediately become quiet and crouch down in the water.)



(to audience): Did you see that? All I did was take one step toward the lake. Watch this.

3



How can a hungry reptile get any dinner around here?



Don't feel too sorry for him. He eats plenty. (*sighing*) It's our own fault he's here. I remember the days before Crocodile came. I remember when the frogs asked for a king.

4



SCENE 2 (*Lights dim, then brighten.*)



Frogs . . . FROGS!! We can't go on like this. It's too noisy, and nothing gets done. We need someone to be in charge.



Let's get a king!

continued

Pre-/Post-Assessment (continued)



Kings are dangerous. What if we get a bad one?



We want a king! We want a king!



I tried to talk them out of it, but they insisted, so I went and spoke with The Great Voice.



So they want a king, do they? Okay, HERE!



(A log flies through the air and lands in the water with a splash. OTHER FROGS crouch down fearfully.)



King Log settled the frogs down for a while. Things got quieter and more orderly. But then one day . . .

(OTHER FROG slides over and pokes the log.)



Hey, this isn't a king, it's just an old log!

(OTHER FROGS circle the log, poking it timidly, then more boldly. They begin chanting for a new king.)



You don't like the king I sent you? You foolish little creatures. See how you like THIS one!



(CROCODILE moves grandly into view; OTHER FROGS cheer. Then CROCODILE grabs a frog and pulls it out of sight. This happens twice more. OTHER FROGS crouch down in the water.)



Go walking near a lake full of frogs and you'll hear their special voices.

(LIGHTS OFF)

continued

- 13.** Reread panel 7. What does the word timidly mean?
- A** in a brave way
 - B** in an angry way
 - C** in a foolish way
 - D** in an unsure way
- 14.** How does the setting change from Scene 1 to Scene 2?
- A** The place changes from a lake to a pond.
 - B** The time changes from the present to the past.
 - C** The time changes from day to night and back to day.
 - D** The place changes from Crocodile's home to the frogs' home.
- 15.** How did the frogs know the log was not a real king?
- A** The Great Voice told them it was not.
 - B** It did not move when they touched it.
 - C** Wise Old Frog told them it was a log.
 - D** It did not look like a king to the frogs.

continued 

Pre-/Post-Assessment (continued)

- 16.** What happens after the frogs ask for a new king?
- A** King Log tries to lead the frogs.
 - B** A frog pokes the log a few times.
 - C** Crocodile appears and eats a few frogs.
 - D** Wise Old Frog remembers the old days.
- 17.** Why do the frogs in the lake become quiet when someone walks close to the water?
- A** They are hiding from Crocodile.
 - B** They want to surprise the walker.
 - C** They have been eaten by Crocodile.
 - D** They are listening to the walker's steps.

continued 

18. Reread panel 4. What does the phrase be in charge mean?

- A** pay some money
- B** act as a leader
- C** move toward someone
- D** attack the enemy

19. Why did The Great Voice send Crocodile to the frogs?

- A** They asked for a crocodile king.
- B** They needed protection from animals.
- C** They complained about the log "king."
- D** They invited Crocodile to a party.

continued 

How Moles Came to Be

Read the text. Then answer the questions.



Long ago, there lived two brothers. Ivan was rich and Sasha was poor. They inherited a field from an uncle and divided it in half. Ivan took the half that looked better. Both brothers planted and sowed the same seed.



But Sasha's field did much better. Ivan became upset. "That was my field," he said. "You tricked me." "I did not trick you," stated Sasha. "You chose the field you wanted."



That night, Ivan's sly, lazy son thought of a scheme. The next day, Ivan's son hid in a pit under bushes. Ivan and Sasha met at the field to decide who owned the better field. Ivan called out, "Whose field is this?" A voice that seemed to come from the earth said, "It belongs to Ivan."



Then a voice that really came from the earth yelled, "Stop! Look under the bushes." The people saw Ivan's son. "You had a good field, but you were greedy. So now you will live beneath that field!" Ivan and his son grew gray fur, pointed noses, and tiny hands. And Sasha got both fields.

continued

20. In panel 3, what is the meaning of the word scheme?

- A** great idea
- B** new thought
- C** quick answer
- D** sneaky plan

21. How does Sasha act toward Ivan?

- A** Sasha does not let Ivan bully him.
- B** Sasha is afraid of Ivan's strength.
- C** Sasha does not take Ivan seriously.
- D** Sasha is jealous of Ivan's riches.

continued 

Pre-/Post-Assessment (continued)

- 22.** What happens at the end of the story?
- A** Sasha fights with his brother, Ivan.
 - B** Ivan and his son turn into moles.
 - C** The villagers give the land to Sasha.
 - D** Ivan's son hides under the bushes.
- 23.** How is the narrator in this story different from Wise Old Frog?
- A** The narrator takes sides against Sasha.
 - B** The narrator does not remember the old days.
 - C** The narrator wants the story to end happily.
 - D** The narrator is not a character in the story.

continued 

- 24.** You have read "The New King of Frogs" and "How Moles Came to Be." In what way are they alike?
- A** The characters are talking animals.
 - B** One character saves all the others.
 - C** A mysterious being controls the events.
 - D** Characters ask advice from someone old.
- 25.** How is "The New King of Frogs" different from "How Moles Came to Be"?
- A** It has characters and a plot.
 - B** It moves from one setting to another.
 - C** It tells a story with only dialogue.
 - D** It presents events in the order they happen.

