

Name _____

Summer Reading Assignment for New 6th Graders

Dear Students and Guardians:

I hope everyone has a fun and adventurous summer! I look forward to the upcoming school year in preparation for your future.

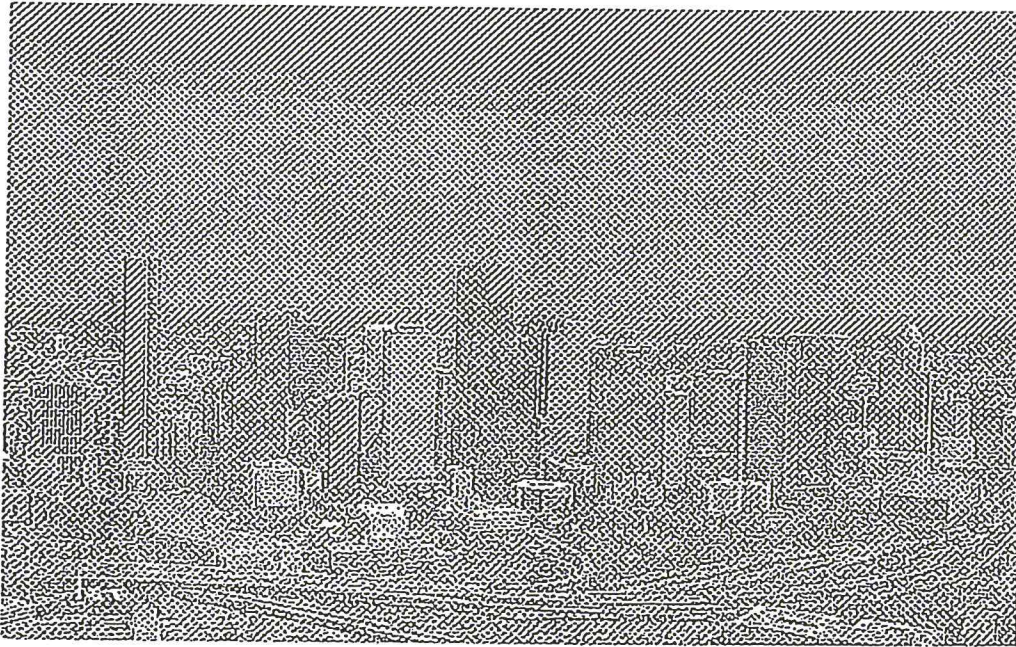
The summer reading assignments include:

1. Reading and completing two comprehension articles
2. Reading the novel *The Island of the Blue Dolphins*
3. Completing a test for your novel

Don't wait until the last week to start your summer work but most importantly have a good summer!

Predicting the Future

by ReadWorks



Houston, Texas

Garry Golden sits in a small cafe in Brooklyn, New York. In front of him, sheets of paper with diagrams litter the table. He rapidly sketches trains, cars and highways as he explains his ideas. Garry Golden has one passion: transportation. The science of how to move people from place to place fascinates him. He spends his days studying the relationships between cars, subways, and trains. But he's most excited about imagining the way these relationships will change in the next 20 years.

Golden is a futurist. Futurists are scientists who analyze the way the world is today and use that information to make predictions about what the world will be like in the future. In this way, they are the opposite of historians, who try to better understand the present through studying the past. Futurists hope that by making scientific predictions about the future, we can make better decisions today.

Some futurists study the environment. Some study human society. Golden focuses on the study of transportation. He earned his graduate degree in Future Studies from the University of Houston. Living in Houston for those two years changed the way he viewed transportation in the United States.

Many public transportation advocates dislike Houston. They argue the city is too sprawling (it can take more than three hours to drive from one side of the city to the other during rush hour) and that there aren't enough buses and subways. However, Houston was a source of inspiration for Golden.

"Houston is a really interesting place, and their transportation is a fascinating story-it's worth watching. When you think about it, what is the U.S. like? It's more like Houston. So you need to understand how Houston approaches things to understand the country as a whole. New York City is the exception," said Golden in an interview with *The New York Times*.

Golden points out that people in New York City own fewer cars and walk much more than anywhere else in the United States. "It's a unique environment," says Golden. "Very different from the rest of the country."

However, Golden believes American cities will become more similar to New York City in several ways over the next 20 years. He sees a trend toward fewer cars in the future. He explains, "Cities have a cost of car ownership that is a challenge. All these vehicles cost the city: in services, in having to repair roads and all of the other things." Cars also take up a lot of space. Houston, for example, has 30 parking spaces for every resident. That's 64.8 million parking spaces in only one city.

Golden points out that having so many parking spaces is inefficient. Much of the time the parking spaces sit empty. At high-use times—for example, Saturday afternoon when everyone is running errands—every parking space at a shopping center is full. But at 3 a.m. on a Monday, no one is at the shopping center. What is the solution? "I think cities are going to start to legislate cars in very new ways," says Golden. He explains that cities will make new laws to limit the number of cars people can have within city limits. Instead, people will use taxis, subways and buses. New technology, like smartphones, can make these forms of public transportation even better.

Buses have the same problem of inefficiency as parking spaces, explains Golden. Sometimes they are full; and sometimes they are empty. But imagine if everyone had a smartphone and used them to signal when they wanted to ride the bus. Buses could change their route, depending on who wanted to ride.

How soon would these changes come? Golden admits that it will take several years. Cities can be slow to change. Also, new systems of transportation can be expensive. "But it's coming," he says. "The trend of the empowered city will be here soon."

The other trend that excites Golden is electric cars. "We need to reduce the amount of fuel we consume," says Golden. "Everyone agrees on this. The question is how to do it." Golden especially believes in the future of electric cars that have sensors to understand the world around them. "If we have cars that can communicate with one another, they can adjust speeds to eliminate traffic jams," he says. Rush hour in Houston would suddenly be much less painful.

One challenge related to the production of electric cars is that it is hard to cheaply produce batteries that are strong enough for these cars. This is partially because cars are so heavy. But Golden argues you could also make cars out of strong plastic composites. The cars would then be much lighter and much cheaper to make. "This could revolutionize the highways," he says. When could electric smart cars become the norm? Golden argues as soon as 2030.

As a futurist, Golden shares his predictions with other scholars at conferences across the country. He also provides advice to companies that want to know what the future will be like so that they can make better strategies. Golden remains optimistic about the future. "There are so many exciting developments," he says. "In thirty years we will live a very different world."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is Gary Golden's one passion?

- A. Houston, Texas
- B. the environment
- C. human society
- D. transportation

2. One problem with electric cars is that they require very strong batteries. Part of the reason the batteries have to be so strong is that cars are so heavy. What solution does Golden propose for this problem?

- A. build cars out of strong plastic composites so that they are lighter
- B. find an easier and faster way to produce strong batteries for cars
- C. build cars out of lighter weight metals so they don't need as many batteries
- D. create a way for cars to communicate with each other and adjust their speeds

3. Cars require a lot of space in cities. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A. Cities have to build parking spaces and repair roads for cars.
- B. Cities may limit the number of cars people can have within the city.
- C. In Houston, there are 30 parking spaces for every resident.
- D. Parking lots at shopping centers are not full all of the time.

4. Based on Garry Golden's predictions, how can transportation systems of the future best be described?

- A. expensive and complicated
- B. high-tech and efficient
- C. high-tech yet impractical
- D. inexpensive yet outdated

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. how one futurist thinks transportation will change in the coming years
- B. reasons why cars cost the city money and are an inefficient use of resources
- C. how to improve electric cars so that they are more widely used and available
- D. a comparison of public transportation systems across the United States

6. Read the following sentences: "Houston, for example, has 30 parking spaces for every resident. That's 64.8 million parking spaces in only one city. Golden points out that having so many parking spaces is inefficient. Much of the time the parking spaces sit empty. At high-use times—for example, Saturday afternoon when everyone is running errands—every parking space at a shopping center is full. But at 3 a.m. on a Monday, no one is at the shopping center."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "inefficient" most nearly mean?

- A. productive without wasting time and materials
- B. successful and effective
- C. imaginative and creative
- D. wasteful of space and materials

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Historians study the past in order to better understand the present. _____, futurists analyze the present in order to make scientific predictions about the future.

- A. In particular
- B. Such as
- C. In contrast
- D. Ultimately

8. What does Garry Golden spend most of his days studying?

9. Buses are currently inefficient. According to Golden, how could this type of transportation be improved?

10. Explain how communications technology (such as smartphones and sensors) could help improve transportation in the future. Support your answer using information from the passage.

Research Ideas

Describe three things that you read in *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* that you would like to learn more about.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

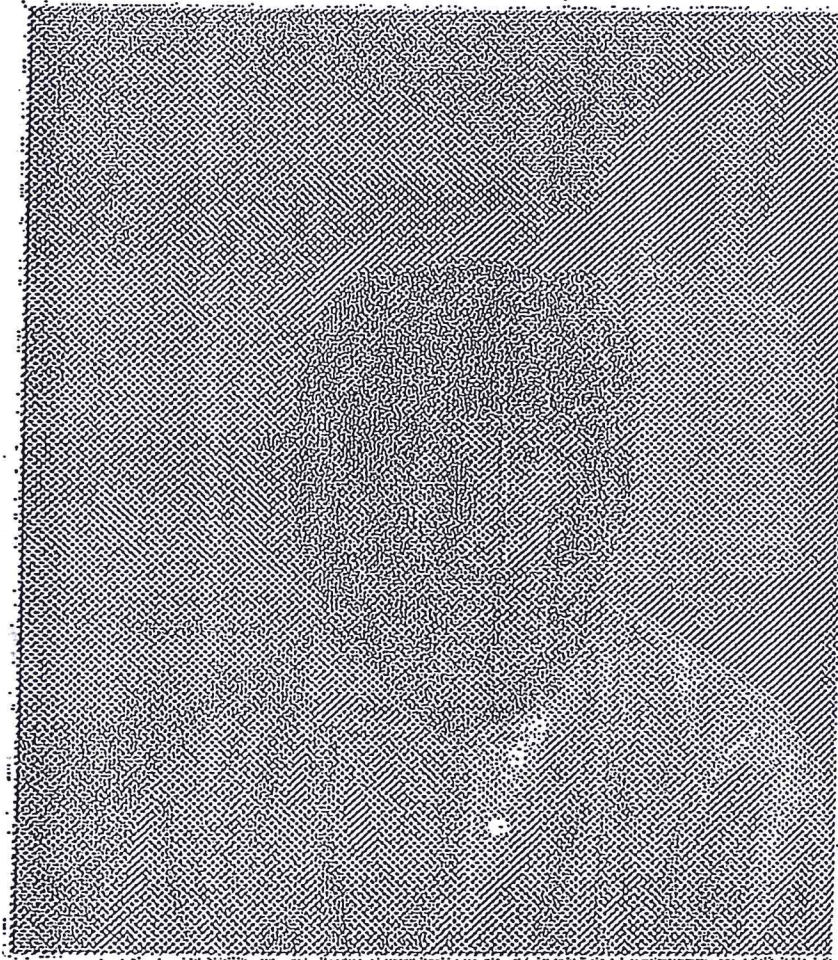
As you read *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, you encountered many geographic locations, true-life people and events, colonial customs and lifestyles, ways of speaking, religious beliefs, political struggles, legal practices, and more that require some background knowledge to make the reading really meaningful. To increase your understanding of the characters and events of the book, as well as appreciate Elizabeth George Speare's craft as a writer, research to find out more about these people, places, and things.

Work in groups to research one or more of the areas you named above or the areas that are listed below. Share your findings with the rest of the class in any appropriate format for oral presentation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puritans • Quakers • witch hunts/witch trials/witchcraft • Connecticut Colony • Wethersfield • Barbados • England • New England • Massachusetts • West Indies • seasons in New England and Barbados • colonial life • the slave trade • plantations • trading (commerce) • sailing • swimming • spinning • <i>The Bible</i> • <i>Accidence</i> • <i>The Tempest</i> • <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> • Latin • house-raising • Thanksgiving • All Hallows Eve | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early American: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – education – home life and families – medical practices (like bleeding) – clothing – cooking – farming – celebrations • Anne Bradstreet • Sir Edmond Andros • King Charles II of England • King James II of England • Eleazer Kimberley • Dr. Gersholm Bulkeley • Reverend John Woodbridge • Captain Samuel Talcott • Governor Treat • William Shakespeare • the Connecticut charter and the charter oak • Indian raids • Royalist • Roundhead • Court of Assistants • selectmen • hornbooks • dame school |
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The Boy Who Didn't Want to Catch

by Michael Stahl



David was a good boy. He had a flock of friends, a 94% average in school, and always ate dinner with his family in the dining room, where he practiced good manners. David never talked back to his elders. He always respected their wisdom. Like most teenage boys, he enjoyed going for pizza and ice cream with his friends; he even relished studying history lessons out of his textbook. The thing David liked to do most though was play baseball. And he was an outstanding player, too:

David was only in tenth grade, but he was the starting left fielder on the varsity baseball team. Usually, sophomores would play on the junior varsity team and take time to get ready to play with the older kids, but David was so advanced that the coach of the varsity team, Coach Adams, welcomed him onto the advanced squad.

David did not take playing on the varsity team for granted. Because he was the youngest kid on the team, he knew he needed to put in extra effort just to compete with his teammates. Coach Adams recognized David's desire and ability and would often tell the rest of the players to follow David's example. One day though, an unfortunate event created a conflict for David like none other before.

It was a warm, sunny Tuesday afternoon and the Woodside High School Woodchucks, David's team,

were practicing at a nearby park. David was out in his usual spot, left field, tossing a baseball back and forth with Caesar, the center fielder. Suddenly, they heard a cry of pain coming from the other side of the diamond. Sammy, their catcher, hurt his ankle while practicing his handling of wild pitches. The rest of Sammy's teammates quickly surrounded him, while Coach Adams picked him up and helped Sammy walk over to a bench. Sammy struggled with the short walk; he could barely put any weight on his left leg. Still, fighting back tears, Sammy told the team, "I'll be alright. I'm not going to miss Friday's game." That was just like Sammy. He was a tough guy, which was exactly the reason he played catcher for the Woodchucks.

Coach Adams cancelled the rest of practice because he had to drive Sammy to the hospital where Sammy's parents would be waiting. David, like the rest of his teammates, was very upset. They went to the pizzeria together to talk about the incident.

"Do you really think Sammy will be able to play this Friday?" asked Caesar at one point. "It's an important game. We're going to need him."

Caesar was not exaggerating. The Woodchucks were having a good season, winning eleven out of twelve games, but were only in second place. The Barons of Rockefeller High had won all of their games, including their first one against the Woodchucks. The Barons slaughtered the Woodchucks 13-1. In that game, David failed to get a hit—the only time that had happened all season. David wanted to beat the Barons badly, just as everyone else did. If the Woodchucks would be victorious, they'd be tied for first place with only three games remaining in the regular season.

The next morning, David was sitting at his desk in homeroom.

"Did you hear the news?" asked Tyler, who sat in front of David and was the younger brother of Corey, the senior starting pitcher of the Woodchucks.

"What news?" replied David, who had turned off his phone early last night to study for his History exam.

"I sent you a text," said Tyler. "Sammy severely sprained his ankle. Corey called him last night. It doesn't look like Sammy is going to play for the rest of the season."

David was shocked. He knew Sammy had hurt himself, but also knew Sammy's reputation. The catcher of any baseball team has to work really hard and go through grueling practices, not to mention the games themselves. Catchers have to be able to crouch down to catch all those pitches. They have to think of pitching strategies to get the other team's batters out. If a batter hits a groundball, catchers must run up the first base line along with the batter, just in case an infielder accidentally throws the ball too far from the first baseman. The catcher is there to back up his teammate. Catchers have to take off all of their equipment in the dugout—the chest protector, the mask, and the shin guards that have so many buckles and straps—when it is their turn to bat. Fielding and batting was hard enough even without all of those extra duties! Sammy was so strong, such a hard worker, and very tough. David simply could not comprehend that Sammy would miss any game, especially a game as important as the one against the Barons that coming Friday.

Later that day, at the start of baseball practice, Coach Adams pulled David aside and asked to speak to him.

"The team needs you to be the catcher this Friday." Coach Adams told David. "We might need you to

catch the rest of the season too."

"Are you serious?" asked David. He almost never questioned adults, but this time, he could not hold back his surprise.

Coach Adams explained that David would be the best choice because he was the hardest worker on the team. Even though he had no experience being a catcher, Coach Adams was confident he was the one player who could handle it. After all, he had tried so hard to play on a team with the older kids, and had succeeded in doing so.

"Well, Coach, whatever you think is best for the team," David said. However, David did not really want to play catcher. He only agreed to it because of the lessons his parents taught him about respecting adults, especially coaches. In David's mind though, he thought playing catcher would be too difficult for him and the rest of the team would suffer as a result.

David went into the dugout to put on the entire heavy catcher's gear. As he walked toward home plate, he saw Corey, Friday's starting pitcher and their best, waiting for him on the pitcher's mound. Coach Adams stood close by watching.

"Don't worry, David," shouted Corey. "You're going to be fine. We'll work on everything we need together. That's what teammates are for."

"That's right!" agreed Coach Adams.

David appreciated the words of support, but stayed quiet. He was too worried about his new position and the big game against the Barons to speak.

When David woke up the next morning, his legs were so sore that he was having trouble walking. He thought to himself, "This is a bad idea."

David went through the day tired. He got his History test back from his teacher with a score of 100%, which made him feel a little bit better about missing all of those texts from his teammates about Sammy two nights before, but did nothing to help his knees.

At practice that afternoon, while putting on the catcher's equipment, David heard a voice call out to him. "Hey! There's my replacement!" It was Sammy coming towards him on crutches. David was glad to see him in such good spirits.

"How are you feeling today?" Sammy asked David.

"Tired. And sore," replied David with a groan.

Sammy laughed and told David that was not surprising at all.

"You'll feel better tomorrow," insisted Sammy. "Believe me. I know."

David said he'd hoped so. Tomorrow was the game against the Barons! Sammy could see the worry in David's eyes and could hear it in his voice too.

"Listen, kid," began Sammy, who was two years older than David. "The team needs you to do this. Coach Adams didn't nick your name out of a hat to be the new catcher. You're the one player on this

team who could do this with me being hurt. The fact that you even made the team as our starting left fielder as a sophomore showed how hard you're willing to work. I saw that; Corey did too. Not to mention Coach Adams and everyone else."

David began to understand what was most important. It wasn't just the results. It was how hard one worked to achieve those results.

David got through practice that Thursday and, sure enough, just as Sammy said, David felt ready to go Friday. He just needed to get used to crouching a little bit.

Corey, the starting pitcher, was obviously ready to go too. He pitched the best game of the year, telling David throughout the game that David was giving him excellent choices of pitches to throw.

The Woodchucks beat the Barons 3-0, tying them for first place, and they scored their three runs all because of the home run Derek hit in the sixth inning. Derek took David's place that day in left field.

After the game, David was the happiest of all the Woodchucks, even though he did not get a hit. David knew that a big reason for the team's victory was that he agreed to be the catcher. From then on, he loved playing catcher because he could help the Woodchucks win in ways he never could before.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What position did David normally play for the varsity baseball team?

- A. right fielder
- B. pitcher
- C. left fielder
- D. catcher

2. What conflict does David face in the story?

- A. Coach Adams moved David to the junior varsity baseball team after David failed to get a hit in the last game against the Barons.
- B. Coach Adams welcomed David on the varsity baseball team even though David was only a sophomore.
- C. David is asked to play left fielder in the big game against the Barons even though he actually wants to play catcher.
- D. David is asked to play catcher in the big game against the Barons even though he doesn't want to play catcher.

3. "However, David **did** not really want to play catcher. He only agreed to it because of the lessons his parents taught him about respecting adults, especially coaches. In David's mind though, he thought playing catcher would be too difficult for him and the rest of the team would suffer as a result."

What can be concluded about how David feels based on this evidence?

- A. David was beginning to question the lessons his parents taught him about respecting adults.
- B. David feared he would not be a good catcher and would hurt the team's chances of winning as a result.
- C. David was annoyed that he had to practice being a catcher even though he really liked being the left fielder.
- D. David was certain he would help his team win the game even though being catcher would be too difficult for him.

4. How did the Woodchucks team benefit when David played catcher?
- A. David played so well as catcher on the Woodchucks team that the team was able to easily beat the Barons.
 - B. Other players on the Woodchucks team had to work even harder to make up for the bad way David played as catcher.
 - C. Other players on the Woodchucks team had the chance to play really well because of David's new position.
 - D. The Woodchucks team was able to beat the Barons because of the number of hits David got.
5. What is the main theme of this story?
- A. the importance of baseball in a young man's life
 - B. the importance of moving on after loss
 - C. the drawbacks of being motivated by fear
 - D. the importance and benefits of helping a group

6. Read the sentence: "Like most teenage boys, he enjoyed going for pizza and ice cream with his friends; he even **relished** studying history lessons out of his textbook. The thing David liked to do most though was play baseball."

What does the word "relished" mean as used in this sentence?

- A. enjoyed
- B. detested
- C. consumed
- D. achieved

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ David initially did not want to play catcher, David knew that a big reason for the Woodchucks' victory was that he agreed to be the catcher.

- A. Although
- B. Because
- C. Instead
- D. However

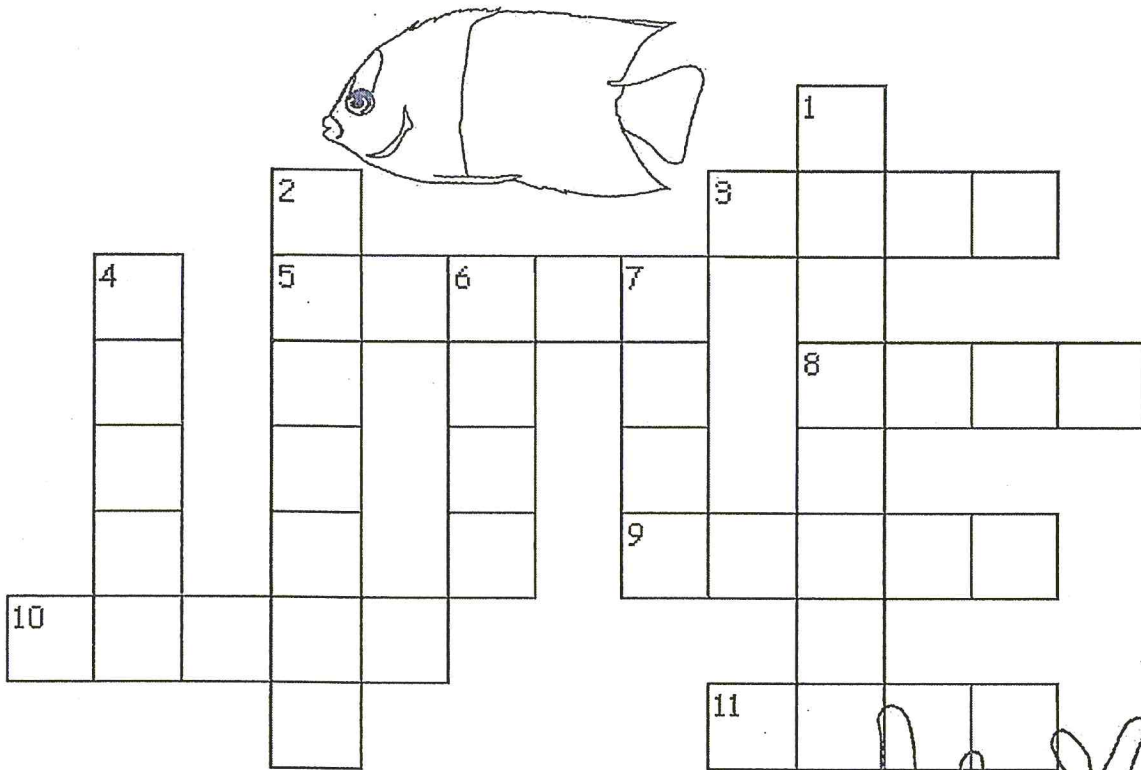
8. Why does Coach Adams ask David to play catcher?

9. Describe the two ways David's position as catcher influenced the performance of other players on the Woodchucks team. Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

10. The author states that David loved playing catcher because "he could help the Woodchucks win in ways he never could before." In what ways can David help the team win in ways he never could before? Use information from the story to support your answer.

Crossword Puzzle: Geography Words

Karana's island survival depended upon her knowledge of geography. Your survival as a reader of this book depends upon your knowledge of geography words. Use the word bank on the right to fill in the crossword puzzle below.



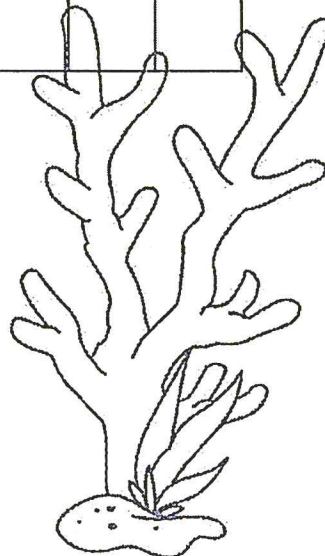
- league
- crevice
- ledge
- kelp
- beach
- reef
- gorge
- dune
- cove
- mesa
- headland
- ravine
- pitch
- cliff
- spit
- island
- rocks
- trail
- cave

Across

- 3. high, flat plateau of land
- 5. heavy stones
- 8. hill of sand built up by the wind
- 9. path
- 10. sandy area at the water's edge
- 11. shelf of rock

Down

- 1. piece of land extending into a large body of water
- 2. small crack in rocky hillside
- 4. narrow canyon with steep, rocky walls
- 6. hollow in the earth usually opening horizontally into a hillside
- 7. long, narrow piece of land extending from the shore



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Name _____

Date _____

Comprehension Assessment

Directions: Circle the best response to each question.

1. What is the meaning of the word *sinew* as it is used in the book?
 - A. a large island landform
 - B. a large stringy muscle or tendon coming from an animal
 - C. a type of bird
 - D. a den for wild animals

2. Which statement best supports your answer for question 1?
 - E. Karana uses the material to bind her sharp rock to the end of the stick.
 - F. Karana asks her father if she can get some sinew.
 - G. Karana accidentally steps on sinew outside her house.
 - H. The chief tells Karana that the sinew is near the water on the edge of the beach.

3. Which detail from the book best describes how Karana feels about Tutok?
 - A. "I wished to use a sea elephant's tusk for the tip of the spear because it is hard"
 - B. "At dawn I took him in my arms and left the cave."
 - C. "All night I sat there with the body of my brother and did not sleep"
 - D. "I worked five nights on the circlet and on the fifth day"

4. What statement provides the best evidence for your answer to number 3?
 - E. Karana vows to get revenge for the death of her brother.
 - F. As she stands on the cliff, Karana thinks of her friend and realizes the island is very quiet.
 - G. Looking at the ship sailing into the distance, Karana is glad the Aleut people have left.
 - H. Karana held the rock but did not throw it, afraid she would hit her tribemates.

Comprehension Assessment (cont.)

5. Which of the following can be inferred from this passage in the novel?

“Looking at his body I knew he should not have told Captain Orlov his secret name, and back in our village all the weeping women and the sad men agreed that this had so weakened him that he had not lived through the fight with the Aleuts”

- A. Captain Orlov tells everyone on the boat the leader’s secret name.
 - B. Numerous men and women die in the battle with the Aleut people.
 - C. Karana’s father trusted the Russian visitors too much.
 - D. The villagers seek revenge against the Aleut people.
6. Which character from the story is the passage referring to?
- E. Karana
 - F. Ramo
 - G. Kimki
 - H. Chief Chowig
7. What is the purpose of this sentence from the novel: “Would the weapons break in my hands at the moment when my life was in danger, which is what my father had said?”

8. Which of the following statements is used to convey the same meaning as the one in question 7?
- A. The dogs do not come to the camp while Karana makes the weapons.
 - B. Karana wonders if the four winds will blow in from the four directions of the world and smother her as she prepares her weapons.
 - C. Karana uses the handmade weapon to capture and kill the mysterious devilfish.
 - D. As the dog lies lifelessly near her, she realizes she cannot raise the weapon to finish him off.