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NAME _____

SUMMER READING PROJECT FOR NEW 8TH GRADE STUDENTS

Welcome to your Eighth Grade Summer Reading Assignment. Should you decide to accept it, and you will, your life will be enriched beyond your wildest dreams. You are required to read one book and several articles this summer but feel free to continue from there and read anything else you may enjoy.

You must read Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank and complete the accompanying worksheets. There are three articles and assignments that accompany them also.

Have fun!!!!
Mr. R

The Unknown Hall of Famer

Michael Stahl

New York City is famous for many things: pizza, Broadway shows, skyscrapers, and baseball. The New York Yankees are possibly the best-known sports team in the world. Baseball has been so popular in New York City that there have been four professional major league baseball teams, including the Yankees, that have made their homes in New York City since the beginning of the 20th century.

So many kids in New York have always wanted to play baseball. However, playing baseball can be difficult in such an urban setting if the game is going to look like the real thing. There needs to be a large grass field with a dirt diamond. The players need bases, bats, balls, and gloves to play with. In order to get a game of baseball going without having all of the required items, many New York City boys created their own version of baseball, one that would be played on the hard concrete streets. They would call it "stickball" because it could be played with a simple broomstick handle instead of a large, heavy bat. They'd use small, pink rubber balls instead of expensive hardballs made of leather and twine. Those kids, who were good, would incredibly one day find themselves in an actual Hall of Fame. George "Lolin" Osorio is one of those players.

Osorio's family moved to Manhattan from his home in Puerto Rico when the ink on World War I peace treaties was still wet. In Puerto Rico, he was given his nickname because, as a very young boy, he was known to chase after a girl named Lola, so neighbors took to calling him the masculine form "Lolin" since the two always seemed to be together. At nine years old in New York City, he did not hesitate to immerse himself in the king of the street games—as long as his homework and chores were done. He and the other kids on his block would take to the streets in t-shirts and cut-off shorts to enjoy the "cheap game." All they needed was one broomstick, a few rubber balls, and nine or so other guys from another block to prove themselves against.

"We'd play for a little money, five cents a game or a quarter when I was about ten years old," Osorio says, recalling that if his team won, they'd often use their money to see a movie. Sometimes kids would save their winnings to buy two-dollar Puma sneakers, which were more desired than one-dollar Converses because they were better for running; plus, everyone knew they were twice as expensive.

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"But really we played for bragging rights," Osorio insists. "You were on the team from your block. You played for pride."

"Lolin was one of the best because he always hit the ball hard on the ground, and was so fast that nobody could throw him out," remembers Carlos Diaz, the curator of New York City's Stickball Hall of Fame, of which Osorio is an esteemed member. "He was also very clutch and reliable. He could get a hit just about any time," Diaz adds.

Osorio and his friends, who were all of Puerto Rican descent, would play stickball for hours; that is, until the Irish cops would show up. Though there were few cars driving through the city streets in those days and the rubber balls with which they played were as harmful to windows as a summer wind, many of the police officers would discover games and immediately order the kids to hand over their makeshift bats.

"I could never understand why they'd break up our stickball games," Osorio says. "We played to stay out of trouble."

For a time, Osorio remembers the cops slipping the sticks down into the sewer. But after the officer had moved along and the boys had faked disappointment long enough, one of the smaller kids would climb beneath street level into the muck and come up with the bat, covered in sludge. There was always an open fire hydrant somewhere they'd use to clean off the grime from both the bat and the brave boy.

"Then the cops got smart," Osorio says. "They started taking our bats, hold them halfway down in the sewer's grating and snap them in two."

Still unafraid, Osorio and his block mates continued to play throughout their adolescence, traveling farther away from their neighborhood with each passing year, challenging players in various neighborhoods and having tons of fun.

A frequent teammate of Osorio's, Alfred Jackson, another Stickball Hall of Fame member, remembers one particularly incredible shot struck by a rival of theirs named Tony Taylor. "He crushed the ball," Jackson begins. "He hit it so hard that it went off the third-floor siding of a building, came down, bounced off a car, hit the building again. Then it hit a lamppost and ricocheted to one of our outfielders who caught it for an out. The ball was in fair territory the whole time!"

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As Osorio's clan got older, more and more money was bet on their games. They can recall games played for upwards of three to five thousand dollars, with the victorious team getting a cut. Some players depended on winnings as a sort of additional income, so some teams felt pressured to win for their players' financial stability. Fans who had their own best interests in mind heckled batters trying hard to focus on a potentially game-changing pitch.

Still, money was not as important as the feelings of self-respect and community, which truly compelled Osorio to go outside and play each and every Sunday, even 24 hours after his wedding. "I got married on a Saturday," Osorio says. "We had a bunch of leftovers from the wedding in the refrigerator. The players' wives always made food for all of us, so I woke up and packed the leftovers to bring to the game," he laughs, adding with a shake of his finger, "My wife wasn't very happy about that."

In the late 1950s and throughout the '60s, Osorio made a living building clock radios—and, briefly, delivering zippers—but always found time to participate in the first organized stickball leagues that were emerging throughout Manhattan and beyond. Though he has continued to play, Osorio and his friends have seen the game nearly completely disappear.

"Not as many guys play anymore," says Carlos Diaz, who has tried for many years to revitalize stickball in New York City. "And most of the young ones that do play are sons and grandsons of the guys who played fifty or sixty years ago." Diaz's efforts include opening a gallery this past winter, giving the Stickball Hall of Fame a more permanent home.

No matter what, Osorio still finds himself out on the streets of New York City every Sunday playing the game he loves, around the guys that he loves, all of whom have respected, and even honored him, for decades.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is stickball?

A) another name for baseball
B) a traditional Puerto Rican game
C) a version of baseball played in New York City
D) a street game played with a hockey stick

2. What does the author describe in the passage?

A) Osorio's troubled childhood in Puerto Rico
B) the rules of stickball
C) how Osorio got rich by playing stickball
D) the origins and development of stickball

3. Stickball is a "cheap" game. What evidence from the text supports this statement?

A) It can be played with minimal equipment.
B) It can be played on concrete streets.
C) It can be played for money.
D) It was only played by poorer children.

4. What can be inferred from the following sentence:"Still, money was not as important as the feelings of self-respect and community, which truly compelled Osorio to go outside and play each and every Sunday, even 24 hours after his wedding."

A) Money is the main reason Osorio plays stickball.
B) Osorio really loves playing stickball.
C) Osorio is not very fond of his wife.
D) Osorio is not very religious.

5. What is this passage mainly about?

A) the street game stickball and one of its best players
B) the way New York City kids can adapt to difficult situations
C) reasons why baseball is so popular in New York City
D) how the Stickball Hall of Fame was built

Running a Real "Zombie 5K"

By Kyria Abrahams

I exercise a lot and try to keep healthy. Last year, I ran in the Boston Marathon with my mom.

Recently, I learned about something called Obstacle Course Racing. This is like a marathon, but they have all these different types of obstacles for you to overcome. You have to climb over walls and slide down ropes. You even crawl through the mud.

They also have a "fun run" called the Zombie 5K. It's a three-mile race during which you are chased by people dressed like zombies!

When I found out about the Zombie 5K, I knew I had to train for this race and win it. I went to the park and found an area where the city has built some free exercise equipment. They have a little jungle gym and some benches to do push-ups on.

Every day after school, I'd go home and change into my gym clothes. I'd ride my bike over to the park and lock it up real tight with a chain. Then, I'd spend about an hour doing pull-ups on the monkey bars and jumping over blocks of wood.

As I did this, I pretended that zombies were chasing me. Sometimes I would scream and run wildly around in a circle. This generally resulted in people looking at me sideways. People would start laughing and pointing. I didn't care. I had a race to prepare for.

The only problem was, I didn't actually know what it would feel like to run while being chased by zombies. So I called my friends Jeff, Amy, and Kristen. I asked if they wanted to have some fun helping me train.

Since it was close to Halloween, a lot of them had monster makeup lying around their homes. A zombie costume isn't that hard—it's mostly just old clothes that you were going to throw out anyway!

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The next day, we waited until dusk. I went to the park as planned. I don't know how Jeff and the gang got there. Maybe they changed into their zombie costumes behind a tree. Maybe they got dressed at home and then rode their bikes there (now that would have been funny!).

All I know is that I was running along the track when all of a sudden I heard a loud roar coming from behind me. I turned around, and there was Zombie Amy running full speed in my direction.

"BRAAAAINS!" she said.

"Aw, Amy, come on! That's so cliché! No real zombie says 'brains'!" I said.

She wasn't stopping, though. In fact, she was getting faster. And she seemed to be foaming at the mouth. I noticed other families start to scream and scatter. I guess they believed she was really a zombie.

Amy was obviously really getting into the part, so I decided to play along. I ran as fast as I could until I got to the gate. I jumped over the gate and got the side of my shorts stuck on a prong. Amy wasn't slowing down.

"Come on, Amy, it's just a game!" I yelled. I struggled to free myself from the gate as she got closer and closer. Her eyes looked black, and I could smell her breath.

Suddenly, I felt an arm grab me around my waist and pull me off the gate.

"Come on, let's get out of here!" It was Jeff. He wasn't in a zombie costume.

"Jeff, why aren't you in costume?"

"Because that isn't a costume! She was bitten by a real zombie! Run!"

We started running. I could hear her close behind me now. I could still almost smell her.

We built up speed, and I ran faster than I ever thought I was capable of. Amy was doubling back around now, having gotten in front of us somehow. That's when I saw Jeff grab his neck and start convulsing.

"Amy... she bit me a little bit," he said. "Just a little."

His eyes were getting dark, and he started foaming at the mouth. I knew I had to get to a place they couldn't follow me: the outdoor gym.

I'd been training there for months. I knew the course backwards and forwards. I leaped over the sit-up planks and the balance beams. The zombies were falling all over themselves. They tripped on the grass and couldn't stand up straight on the beam.

Since it had rained last night, there was a puddle of mud surrounding the monkey bars. I looked behind me to see my former friends were slowly gaining on me. I figured they'd fall in the mud puddle, but so would I! So I got my footing on a balance beam and jumped high into the air. I grabbed onto the first monkey bar and swung as hard as I could. The next thing I knew, was all the way across on the other side.

My zombified friends were slipping around in the mud. They couldn't even stand up straight. Panic was setting in. I knew I could keep running, but where was I running to? Where would I hide?

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That's when I saw Kristen.

She didn't appear to be a zombie... yet. She was waving her arms frantically. Could I trust her? I decided that I had to. I had no choice.

I noticed Kristen appeared to be sobbing on the ground. But wait—no. She was *laughing*. Our friends are monsters trying to murder us and she was *laughing*?

She pointed back towards Jeff and Amy, and they were on the ground laughing, too.

"We got you... so... good!" Amy said, laughing so hard she could barely finish speaking.

"You did what? Are you kidding me?"

"It's a joke!" she said.

I was so incredibly angry. I mean, I was really livid! My face felt hot and flushed. "What's wrong with you?" I asked them.

Amy came toward me, wiping away the fake foam from her mouth. Jeff was removing contact lenses.

"You smell horrible!" I said.

"Yeah, uh. We kind of rubbed some spoiled milk on our clothes before we came. You know, to get the full effect," Amy said.

"You've got to admit it was pretty brilliant," Jeff said.

"You really tricked me, you guys."

"We're sorry," Kristen said. "But I watched the whole thing. You *owned* that obstacle course, and you did it under pressure!"

"Well, I guess that's true. I'm not nervous about the race any more!"

"You're going to be amazing, and we'll be there to cheer you on! In zombie makeup, of course."

I started to laugh a little bit. I was still fuming mad and didn't want to laugh. I just couldn't help it.

"I knew real zombies didn't say BRAINS!" I said. "You guys are hacks!"

"BRAAAAINS!" said Amy, holding out her arms to my neck.

I couldn't hold in the laughter any more.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does the main character decide to train for?

A) an obstacle course
B) the Boston Marathon
C) a Zombie 5K
D) a pull-up contest

2. What is the climax of this story?

A) when the main character finds out about the Zombie 5K
B) when the main character asks her friends to help her train for her 5K
C) when the main character is being chased by what she thinks are real zombies
D) when the main character realizes her friends are just pretending to be zombies

3. The main character is in good physical shape. What piece of evidence from the text best supports this conclusion?

A) She ran in the Boston Marathon with her mother last year.
B) She knew she had to train for the Zombie 5K and win it.
C) Every day after school, she would change into her gym clothes.
D) She would sometimes scream and run wildly around in a circle.

4. What three words best describe the main character in this passage?

A) lazy, unhealthy, serious
B) hardworking, strong, gullible
C) cheerful, intelligent, weak
D) shy, quiet, lonely

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

A) A girl trains for the Boston Marathon with the help of some terrifying zombies.
B) A girl trains for a Zombie 5K with the help of her enthusiastic friends.
C) A girl gets chased through a park by a group of actual zombies.
D) A girl trains for a Zombie 5K by doing pull-ups on monkey bars.

6. Read these sentences from the passage:
"Amy wasn't slowing down.

'Come on, Amy, it's just a game!' I yelled. I struggled to free myself from the gate as she got closer and closer. Her eyes looked black, and I could smell her breath."

What feeling is the author trying to create with this description?

A) happiness
B) annoyance
C) disgust
D) suspense

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.
The main character wanted to train for a Zombie 5K, _____ she asked her friends to act like zombies and chase her.

A) after
B) if
C) but
D) so

3. Why did the main character ask her friends to help her train for the "Zombie 5K"? Use evidence rom the text to support your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

. The main character experienced different feelings at different points while she was running way from her "zombified" friends in the park. What are three different feelings she experienced hile she was running away from her "zombified" friends? Use evidence from the text to support our answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

10

Read the following sentence: "Osorio's family moved to Manhattan from his home in Puerto co when the **ink on World War II peace treaties was still wet.**"

/hy does the author note that the **"ink on World War II peace treaties was still wet"** when sorio's family moved to Manhattan?

A) to show that Osorio's family moved a long time after World War II ended
B) to show that Osorio's family moved right before World War II ended
C) to show that Osorio's family moved right after World War II ended
D) to show that Osorio's family moved a long time before World War II ended

. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.
olice officers would break up games of stickball _____ Osorio and his friends were not ausing any trouble.

A) therefore
B) even though
C) primarily
D) specifically

. Why did children in New York City create their own version of baseball?

_____
_____
_____
_____

. Why did Osorio play stickball as a child, and why does he continue to play as an adult?

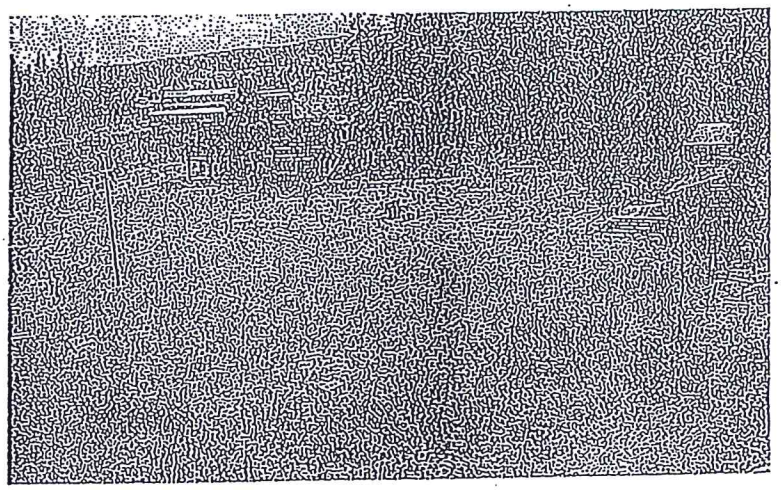
_____
_____
_____
_____

). How did stickball provide its players with a sense of community? Use information from the :xt to support your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____

//

The Run



Dennis and Mac had been driving for almost a week, and they hadn't seen a single soul. They were worried. When they'd left the ranch, they'd thought maybe they'd run into someone, another survivor. But there was no one. The roads were almost empty. There was the occasional abandoned car, but that was it. They drove mostly on highways, to make better time. Mac wondered if they might not have better luck on the smaller country roads, but Dennis wouldn't have it. Those roads had curves and were thick with trees. There was no way of seeing danger coming. If someone wanted to spring a surprise on you, you wouldn't know it until it was too late.

When the plague came, Dennis and Mac had been working as ranch hands on a cattle farm. Both had just finished their first year of college. Dennis went to school on the East Coast, Mac on the West. They found that they were very similar people. They both studied hard and read a lot of books. But they also both liked being outdoors. At the end of a good day, they came home smelling of sweat and dirt. They quickly became friends.

The ranch was a small, family-run operation, with only about 50 head of cattle. The family that ran it, the Greersons, would advertise in college newspapers in the spring. There were plenty of ranch hands in the area who needed work, but Bucky Greerson felt city kids

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One of the ranch hands, a big, cocky boy named T.J., laughed. "Like heck I'm not going into town," T.J. chuckled. "I got a date." The other ranch hands stared at him. T.J. stopped laughing.

"Please, folks, do what the doctors say," The Muskrat pleaded. "I'm sure it'll just be for a few days." He was quiet for a moment. Then the ranch hands heard the sound of a turntable needle hitting the record, and an old Earl Scruggs song came on.

That was the beginning of it. For the next few days, the ranch went about its business. The Greersons told the boys not to worry, that this would all be over soon. They had enough food on the ranch to last months. In the meantime, there were plenty of new calves that needed branding. At night, everyone gathered around the radio and listened to updates. The news seemed only to get worse. More and more people were getting sick. The symptoms were strange. People would become violently ill, then fall into a long, deep sleep. The big cities — New York, Los Angeles, Chicago — had become like ghost towns. No one would go out into the street for fear of catching the disease.

The news kept getting worse until, finally, the radio station stopped transmitting. The Greersons called a meeting in the dining room of the main house. Everyone sat around the big dining room table where Ann Greerson served Sunday supper. After everyone was seated, Bucky Greerson stood up. He was a short, plump man with a droopy handlebar mustache. You wouldn't think it looking at him, but his voice boomed.

"Now," he said, "I know you're worried about your families, and I don't feel right chaining you here while you don't know what's become of your people. So, anyone who wants to leave is free to go. Ann and I will make do."

Dennis and Mac looked at each other. They'd talked about leaving but had tried to pretend they wouldn't need to. They had hoped the plague would be over soon, that the world would return to the way it was, that it had all been a strange hallucination. Now that

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they had the option to venture out into the world, to see how bad things really were, they weren't sure they wanted to know.

"By a show of hands," Bucky Greerson asked, "how many of you want to leave?"

Mac and Dennis looked around. They were the only two with their hands up.

The Greersons gave them enough food to last a couple weeks — corn bread and apples and cured ham and syrupy peaches in mason jars. Mac and Dennis packed up their things and loaded everything into Mac's truck, a sputtering old pickup. The Greersons and the ranch hands gathered around to see them off.

"Be safe, boys," said Ann Greerson, kissing them each on the cheeks and hugging them hard. "And remember your manners." As Mac and Dennis pulled away, they saw her husband holding her, her body shaking with sobs.

A week later, Mac and Dennis had zigzagged through dozens of small towns and a few larger cities. What they found frightened them: every place was empty. Not a person was out. Sometimes, they would stop and knock on doors. No one would answer. If they went inside, they wouldn't find a single soul home. Sometimes they'd find the dinner table set, plates piled high with molding food. Every time they entered a new room, they both winced, thinking they'd find a dead body. But they never did. It was indescribably eerie.

Sometimes, if the place still got electricity, they'd try to use the phone. Every time, no matter what number they dialed, the same recorded message came on: "The number is not in service. Please check the number and try again."

Finally, the young men decided to make tracks to the nearest big city. It would be a full day of driving, but there had to be someone there. You can't abandon a whole city.

Dusk had come, and Mac was at the wheel. Dennis had been driving for the last eight hours and was taking a nap in the passenger seat. They were passing through a long, flat piece of pastureland when Mac saw a flicker of movement in the distance. He stopped the car,

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turned off the engine and shook Dennis awake.

"Look," Mac said excitedly. "I think someone's coming."

Dennis squinted his eyes. The flicker of movement was becoming larger. What had been a dot of motion became a long line, stretching across the horizon. Mac and Dennis strained to see.

"I think it's some people," said Dennis. "Let me get my binoculars."

He rustled in his backpack and pulled out his pair. Dennis put them to his eyes and looked through them. Mac heard him gasp.

"My gosh," whispered Dennis.

What he saw was people. Thousands of people. Hundreds of thousands, maybe a million. A swarm of people like the world had never seen. And the people were all running. They were running as fast as they could go, like something was chasing them, or like they were chasing something. As they grew closer, Dennis could just make out the people's faces. Their eyes were wild.

"Start the car," said Dennis.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What news do Dennis and Mac hear on the radio while at the ranch?

A There is a cattle farm that hires young men to work over the summer.
B Thousands of people are running as fast as they can across the country.
C There is a bad disease spreading among people.
D Food is getting moldy on dinner plates because people are not staying at home.

2. What is the sequence of events at the beginning of this story?

A The story begins after the disease has struck and then takes the reader back in time to a point before the disease.
B The story begins before the disease has struck and then takes the reader forward in time to a point after the disease has ended.
C The story begins as the disease is striking and then takes the reader back in time to a point before the disease.
D The story begins as the disease is striking and then takes the reader two years into the future.

3. The Muskrat says that the disease is "real bad."

What evidence in the story supports his statement?

A T.J. wants to go into town even though The Muskrat has advised people to stay in their homes.
B After The Muskrat warns people about the disease, an old Earl Scruggs song comes on the radio.
C The Greersons tell the boys not to worry, saying that the disease will end soon.
D The disease is very contagious, and doctors have not been able to figure out a cure.

4. Why do Dennis and Mac decide to drive to the nearest big city?

A They want to find a person.
B They are running out of food and need more.
C They see thousands of people running.
D They both like being outdoors.

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5. What is this story mainly about?

A a married couple who own a ranch, the young men they hire to work for them one summer, and the music they listen to together
B two young men, a mysterious disease, and what happens when they go out to explore after the disease hits
C a radio DJ, the music he likes to play, and the effect that his song choices have on the people who listen to them
D a long line of people running through a flat piece of pastureland and what happens when two young men see them

6. Read the following sentence: "More and more people were getting sick. The **symptoms** were strange. People would become violently ill, then fall into a long, deep sleep."

What does the word "**symptoms**" mean?

A fears of getting sick
B signs of a disease
C serious injuries
D suggestions that doctors give to patients

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

Dennis and Mac are frightened after leaving the ranch _____ the towns and cities they visit have no people in them.

A although
B as a result
C because
D however

8. What happens to people when they get sick with the disease described in the story?

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9. What are the people Dennis and Mac see at the end of the story doing?

10. Is there a connection between the disease and the people Dennis and Mac see at the end of the story? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the story.

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Unit Test

Matching: Match the descriptions of the characters with their names.

1. _____	Anne Frank	A. Mumsie
2. _____	Peter Van Daan	B. Otto Frank
3. _____	Dussel	C. Gave the girls office work to do
4. _____	Adolf Hitler	D. Gave a young girl her first kiss
5. _____	Margot	E. A young girl's secret friend
6. _____	Miep	F. Hated Jews
7. _____	Mrs. Van Daan	G. Didn't speak to the Van Daans for 10 days
8. _____	Mrs. Frank	H. Queen of the kitchen
9. _____	Pim	I. Her diary captured the hearts of the world.
10. _____	Kitty	J. Beautiful and intelligent
11. _____	Kraler	K. Brought strawberries and potatoes
12. _____	Elli	L. Brought film magazines

True or False: Answer true or false in the blanks below.

1. _____ Anne dislikes history and mythology.
2. _____ Mrs. Van Daan liked tiny potatoes.
3. _____ Whatever happened, Anne remained optimistic and cheerful.
4. _____ Mr. Frank played favorites with his daughters.
5. _____ Miep, Henk, Kraler, Elli, and Koophius risked their lives daily for the Franks.

Short Answer: Write a brief response to each question in the blank provided.

1. What did Anne call their hiding place? _____
2. Who got a dentist's instrument stuck in her tooth? _____
3. In what city was the Frank's hiding place? _____
4. Name three hobbies of Anne's._____
5. How did Anne feel about the Germans?_____

Essay: Respond to the following on the back of this page.

Sometimes it is said that everyone we know is a teacher for us. While you have met Anne Frank only through her diary, you are able to know her more intimately than we usually are able to know a person. With what you know, how has Anne Frank been a teacher to the world? Has she helped you to know others better than you did? What is the most important thing she taught you, and why is it important?

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Write a Letter to Anne

Adolescence is often a difficult time of life for many young people. They are just beginning to learn how to use their suddenly large bodies, and they are trying to find ways to assert their new desire for greater independence. In a matter of a few years, they have gone from being young children to being close to adulthood. While this is exciting and gives a new sense of having personal power, it is also a little frightening, because there is sometimes a little fear of what will come next.

Think about your own adolescence. How do you feel? How do you respond to others, especially adults? What do you want to do with your life? Next, think about Anne's adolescence having to be spent in a tiny attic apartment hidden away from all the fun and friends which she had every right to expect and living with people she doesn't always like very much. Below, write a letter to her explaining how you empathize with her and want to help her. Give her your best advice as a friend on how she can best deal with the daily problems she now faces.

Date _____

Dear Anne,

_____

_____

_____

_____

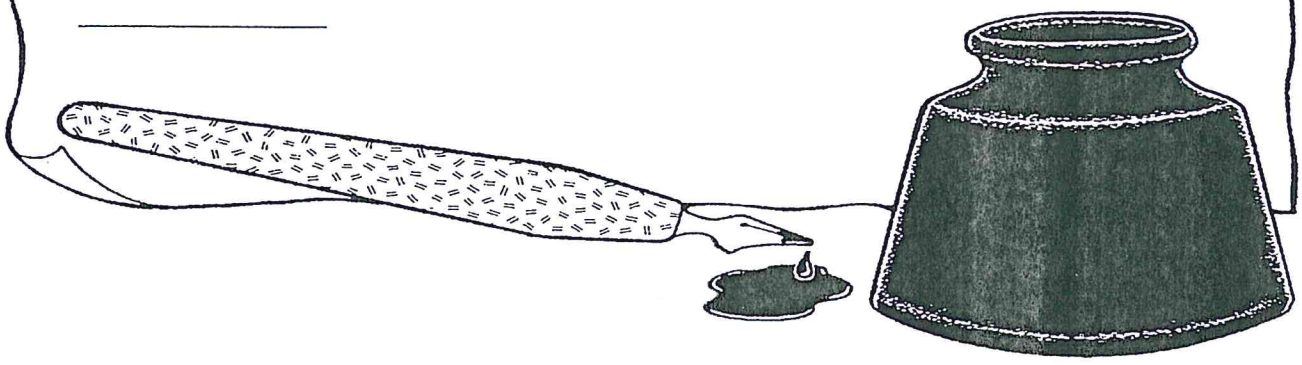
_____

_____

_____

Sincerely,

_____



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