

## Black Friday

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

The day after Thanksgiving is the start of the holiday shopping season. Thanksgiving is always on a Thursday, so the day after is a Friday. This day has come to be known as Black Friday. It has been the busiest shopping day of the year since 2005.

Most stores offer great deals on Black Friday. They open their doors in the wee hours of the morning. They try to attract shoppers with big discounts. Some items like TVs are much cheaper than usual. Stores may even lose money on these items. They hope that shoppers will buy gifts for other people while they are in the store.

Black Friday is a great time to get good deals. The problem is that there are not enough low-priced items to go around. Each store may only have a few. These items are in high demand. People stand in long lines to get such great deals. They may line up hours before a store opens. They may be hoping to get a low price on a TV or laptop, but not everyone who wants one will get one. Some people leave disappointed.

The situation can be tense. Some Black Friday events have been violent. Large, eager crowds have trampled workers. Fights have broken out over toys or people cutting in line. People have shot one another over parking spots. But most Black Friday events are safe and fun. Still, if you plan on going, expect large crowds and a bit of shoving.



So where does the name "Black Friday" come from? It was first used in Philadelphia in the 1950s. The police called this day Black Friday because of the heavy traffic it drew. In the 1960s, stores tried to rename the day "Big Friday." It did not stick. The name "Black Friday" continued to spread across the country. It seems that it is here to stay.

Now people all over the country take part in the event known as Black Friday. It is even spreading to other parts of the world. Stores have held Black Friday events in the U.K., Australia, and Brazil since 2012. In Costa Rica Black Friday is known as "Viernes Negro." And in Mexico, stores offer an annual weekend of discounts. They call it "El Buen Fin," which means "the good weekend" in Spanish. I guess the language of savings is universal.

1. According to the text, why do stores set prices so low on some items that they lose money?
  - a. They want people to enjoy the holidays.
  - b. They hope people will buy other gifts while they are in the store.
  - c. They are in a giving mood because the holiday season is just beginning.
  - d. They are trying to get rid of old items from last year to make room for new items.
  
2. Which is **not** true about Black Friday?
  - a. Black Friday is always the day after Thanksgiving.
  - b. Black Friday is the busiest shopping day of the year.
  - c. Black Friday is a national holiday.
  - d. Black Friday is the start of the holiday shopping season.
  
3. Where does the name Black Friday come from?
  - a. The police called this day Black Friday because there is a lot of traffic.
  - b. The stores called this day Black Friday because it is a serious shopping day.
  - c. The police called this day Black Friday to remember the victims of violence.
  - d. The stores called this day Black Friday because they make a lot of money.
  
4. Which best explains the main idea of the third paragraph?
  - a. People stand in long lines on Black Friday.
  - b. Black Friday is the best time of the year to get good deals.
  - c. Black Friday is a really disappointing time of the year.
  - d. Black Friday deals are limited and not everyone will get one.
  
5. Which country does **not** participate in Black Friday?
  - a. France
  - b. Costa Rica
  - c. Brazil
  - d. United Kingdom
  
6. Which happened first?
  - a. Stores tried to rename the day after Thanksgiving "Big Friday."
  - b. Black Friday events began happening in Australia.
  - c. Police began calling the day after Thanksgiving "Black Friday."
  - d. Black Friday became the busiest shopping day of the year.
  
7. Which title best expresses the author's purpose in writing this text?
  - a. *Black Friday: Stories from the Parking Lot*
  - b. *Black Friday: Why You Should Go This Year*
  - c. *Black Friday: The Stuff That You Should Know*
  - d. *Black Friday: How to Save Money on the Big Day*
  
8. Which best describes the overall structure of the fifth paragraph?
  - a. chronological order
  - b. problem and solution
  - c. compare and contrast
  - d. order of importance





## Carnivorous Plants

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Imagine that you're a fly. You're just zipping around the sky, looking for a place to rest, when you see nice pink leaf. *That looks like a nice place to land.* You think to yourself in your fly head. As you rest your feet on the leaf, you notice something strange. This leaf is hairy. You begin to make your move, but you trigger the plant's reflex. *Snap!* In one-tenth of a second, you are caught in the Venus flytrap. You will be digested in five to twelve days. Welcome to the world of carnivorous plants!

There are over a quarter of a millions plant species. Only 600 or so are carnivorous. We call them this because they attract, trap, and eat bugs. Like other plants, they get energy from the sun. But unlike other plants, they get their nutrients from their prey. Carnivorous plants live in bogs and places where the soil lacks nutrients. Most plants get nutrients from the soil. Carnivorous plants have turned to other sources.

The snap of the Venus flytrap is not the only way that plants eat bugs. Pitcher plants trick their prey into landing on them. They offer nectar bribes to the foolish insects that would take them. True to their name, pitcher plants have deep chambers. Their landing surface is slippery. They have inward pointing hairs, making it hard to escape. The fly lands on the pitcher plant to eat, but slips into a pit filled with digestive fluids and is eaten.

Then there're sundews. We call them sundews because they sparkle in the sun as if covered in morning dew. Of course, that sparkle is from something much more *treacherous*. It is a sweet goo called mucilage that bugs can't resist. Sundews create mucilage to attract bugs. As they fly in to eat, bugs become trapped in the very object of their desire. They soon exhaust themselves by trying to escape the mucilage. Or the sundew's tentacles, which respond to prey by curling around them, smother them. Bugs usually die in about 15 minutes. Then the plant dissolves its prey in enzymes and absorbs the nutrients.



Have you ever walked into trouble and found that you couldn't get out? So has every insect that has ever wandered into a corkscrew plant. Bugs love to investigate plants for nectar and food. Corkscrew plants have inviting stems. Curved hairs line the inside of these stems. These hairs allow insects to go up the stems, but not back. Going forward leads a chamber filled with digestive fluid, the plant's stomach. Bugs who wander into the corkscrew plant find that they are unable to escape. They must march to their own demise.

And then there are the bladderworts. They're about as nice as they sound. They live in water and float near the surface. Their traps are like small bladders hidden beneath the water. Only their flowers are visible from the surface. When bugs swim into the trigger hairs, the plant reacts. A trapdoor in the bladder opens up. The bladder sucks up the prey and the water surrounding it. A tenth of a second later, the bladder shuts again. The plant has trapped the prey. It releases digestive fluids. The prey will be digested within hours.

Carnivorous plants might sound tough, but they are difficult to keep at home. They are built to survive in places that other plants cannot. This specialization comes at a cost. They have a hard time adapting to other environments. Their strengths become weaknesses in rich soil. They depend on the harsh yet delicate environments in which they thrive. They are not so hardy after all. Still, there's something to be said about the power of life when one finds a plant that can survive in barren soil.

1. Which statement would the author most likely **agree** with?
  - a. There are too many species of carnivorous plants.
  - b. There are too few plant species in the world.
  - c. Only a small number of plants are carnivorous.
  - d. A majority of plants are carnivorous.
  
2. Which plant traps bugs in its stem and forces them to walk forward?
  - a. Corkscrew plants
  - b. Sundews
  - c. Bladderworts
  - d. Pitcher plants
  
3. Which of the following statements is **false**?
  - a. Carnivorous plants get their energy from eating bugs.
  - b. Carnivorous plants do not get nutrients from the soil.
  - c. Carnivorous plants get their energy from the sun.
  - d. Carnivorous plants get their nutrients from eating bugs.
  
4. Which event happens **last** when a sundew eats a meal?
  - a. The sundew creates mucilage.
  - b. The sundew's tentacles curl in response to the prey.
  - c. The bug is attracted to the mucilage.
  - d. The sundew releases enzymes.
  
5. Which best expresses the main idea of the **third** paragraph?
  - a. There are more types of carnivorous plants than the Venus fly trap.
  - b. The pitcher plant tricks bugs into falling into its stomach.
  - c. The Venus flytrap kills its prey in a various ways.
  - d. Some plants attract bugs by offering them nectar.
  
6. Which best defines the word *treacherous* as it is used in the **fourth** paragraph?
  - a. Something that provides nutrients.
  - b. Something that is very bright.
  - c. Something that tastes delicious.
  - d. Something that has a hidden danger.
  
7. Which best describes the overall text structure of the second paragraph?
  - a. Chronological order
  - b. Compare and contrast
  - c. Sequential order
  - d. Spatial
  
8. Which statement would the author most likely **disagree** with?
  - a. Carnivorous plants cannot thrive in rich soil.
  - b. Bladderworts react quickly when their trigger hairs are bumped.
  - c. Carnivorous plants are tough and can live in any environment.
  - d. Bladderworts hide their traps just below the surface of the water.







## Chess

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Chess is called the game of kings. It has been around for a long time. People have been playing it for over 500 years. Chess is based on an even older game from India. The chess we play today is from Europe.



White Chess Pieces

Chess is a two-player game. One player uses the white pieces. The other uses the black pieces. Each piece moves in a special way. One piece is called the king. Each player has one. The players take turns moving their pieces. If a player lands on a piece, he or she takes it. The game ends when a player loses his or her king. There are a few more rules, but those are the basics.

Some people think that chess is more than a game. They think that it makes the mind stronger. Good chess players use their brains. They take their time. They think about what will happen next. These skills are useful in life and in chess. Chess is kind of like a work out for the mind.

You don't always have lots of time to think when playing chess. There is a type of chess with short time limits. It's called blitz chess. In blitz chess, each player gets ten minutes to use for the whole game. Your clock runs during your turn. You hit the time clock after your move. This stops your clock. It also starts the other player's clock. If you run out of time, you lose. Games of blitz chess are fast-paced.

Chess is not just for people. Computers have been playing chess since the 1970s. At first they did not play well. They made mistakes. As time went on they grew stronger. In 1997, a computer beat the best player in the world for the first time. It was a computer called Deep Blue. Deep Blue was big. It took up a whole room. By 2006 a cell phone could beat the best players in the world. Chess sure has come a long way. Don't you think so?

1. What is the author's purpose in writing the second paragraph?
  - a. To explain the rules of chess
  - b. To compare different types of games
  - c. To talk about game pieces
  - d. To persuade people to play chess
  
2. Which is **not** a reason that chess is a good workout for the mind according to the text?
  - a. Good chess players think about what will happen next.
  - b. Good chess players take a lot of risks.
  - c. Good chess players take their time.
  - d. Good chess players use their brains.
  
3. How long have people been playing chess?
  - a. Over 100 years
  - b. Over 500 years
  - c. Over 1000 years
  - d. Over 5000 years
  
4. Where did the game that chess is based on come from?
  - a. Europe
  - b. America
  - c. India
  - d. All of these
  
5. Which best describes the main idea in the fourth paragraph?
  - a. This paragraph argues that players should think less.
  - b. This paragraph explains how blitz chess is played.
  - c. This paragraph explains time clocks work.
  - d. This paragraph describes many different ways to play chess.
  
6. How does a game of chess end according to the text?
  - a. One player takes all of the other player's pieces.
  - b. One player makes it to the end of the board.
  - c. One player becomes king.
  - d. One player loses his or her king.
  
7. Which happened first?
  - a. Computers did not play chess well.
  - b. Deep Blue won an important game.
  - c. Cell phones got good at playing chess.
  - d. Deep Blue took up a whole room.
  
8. How is blitz chess different from regular chess?
  - a. Each player has two kings.
  - b. Players are blindfolded.
  - c. Players only have ten minutes to play.
  - d. Players start from a random position.
  
9. If it's your turn in blitz chess, what happens when you hit the clock?
  - a. Both your clock and the other person's clock keep running.
  - b. The other person's clock stops running and yours starts.
  - c. Both clocks stop running.
  - d. Your clock stops running and the other person's clock begins.
  
10. When did a computer first beat a strong human player in chess?
  - a. 2006
  - b. 1997
  - c. 1970
  - d. 1976

**Extended Response**

How might playing chess be good for people? Refer to the text in your answer.

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Why might blitz chess be more challenging to play than regular chess? Use text to support your answer.

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How have computer chess programs changed over time? Use the text in your answer.

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## The Coliseum

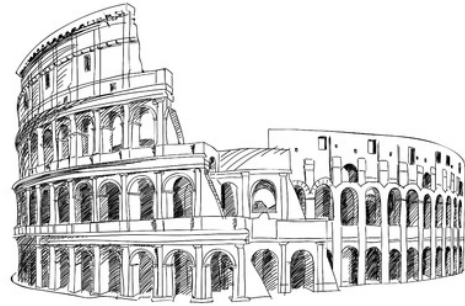
**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

The Coliseum is an ancient stadium in the center of Rome. It is the largest of its kind. It is very old. They started building it in the year 70. It took ten years to build. It is still around today.

The Coliseum has been used in many ways. In ancient Rome, men fought each other in it. They fought against lions, tigers, and bears. Oh my! It was dreadful. But most of the people loved it. As many as 80,000 Romans would pack inside to watch. These gruesome events went on until 523.

The Coliseum has been damaged many times over the years. It was struck by lightning in the year 217. This started a fire. Much of the Coliseum is made of stone. But the fire damaged the upper levels. They were made of wood. This damage took many years to repair. It was not finished until the year 240.

The worst damage happened in 1349. A mighty earthquake shook Rome and the Coliseum. The south side of the building collapsed. Pieces of the arena were all over the ground. Many people took the fallen stones. Others took stones from the seating areas. They used them to repair houses and churches.



A sketch of the Coliseum

The Romans of those days were not connected to the Coliseum. It had last been used as a castle. Before that it was a graveyard. It has been hundreds of years since the games. The damage to the Coliseum was never repaired. It's a good thing the outer wall of it still stands strong.

Today the Coliseum is one of Rome's most popular attractions. People from all over the world come to Italy to see it. The Pope leads a big march around it every Good Friday. It is a symbol that many know. It has even appeared on the back of a coin. I guess that makes it a symbol that many people want too.

1. Which happened first?
  - a. An earthquake damaged the Coliseum.
  - b. The Coliseum was struck by lightning.
  - c. The Coliseum appeared on the back of a coin.
  - d. The Coliseum was used as a castle.
  
2. When did the Romans finish building the Coliseum?
  - a. The year 70
  - b. The year 523
  - c. The year 80
  - d. The year 240
  
3. What caused the fire that damaged the upper levels of the Coliseum?
  - a. A bolt of lightning
  - b. Rowdy people who came to watch the events
  - c. An attacking army
  - d. An angry mob
  
4. For which purpose was the Coliseum **not** used?
  - a. People fought other people in it.
  - b. It was a private castle.
  - c. People fought animals in it.
  - d. It was a meeting place for the government.
  
5. Which caused the most damage to the Coliseum?
  - a. Fires
  - b. Earthquakes
  - c. Wars
  - d. Hurricanes
  
6. What did the people do with the stones that they took from the Coliseum?
  - a. They repaired buildings.
  - b. They sold them.
  - c. They used them as weapons.
  - d. They used them as tombstones.
  
7. Which best defines the word *gruesome* as it is used in the second paragraph?
  - a. Exciting
  - b. Funny
  - c. Horrifying
  - d. Boring
  
8. Which best describes the main idea in the last paragraph?
  - a. This is about all the things the Coliseum has been used for throughout history.
  - b. This is about how the Coliseum is a popular place to visit today.
  - c. This is about how the Coliseum is a symbol that many people know.
  - d. This is about how the Coliseum is used today.
  
9. Which was **not** a way in which the Coliseum was damaged over the years?
  - a. Earthquake
  - b. Tornado
  - c. Lightning
  - d. Fire
  
10. Which statement would the author most likely **agree** with?
  - a. The Coliseum should be replaced with a building that is not damaged.
  - b. The Coliseum has its place in history but it is not useful today.
  - c. The Coliseum should be used for fighting once again.
  - d. The Coliseum is very old and has been used for many purposes.

Why was the Coliseum repaired after the fire but not after the earthquake? Use the text in your answer.

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Why did the fire only damage the upper levels of the Coliseum? Refer to the text in your answer.

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Why is the Coliseum still important today? Use the text in your answer.

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## Metal Detectors

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Have you ever been to the beach? Did you see a man with a headset pointing a long pole at the ground? If so you might have seen a person using a metal detector. People use these devices to find metal.

Metal detectors make magnetic waves. These waves go through the ground. The waves change when they hit metal. Then the device beeps. This lets the person with the device know that metal is close.

The first metal detectors were meant to help miners. They were big. They cost a lot of money. They used a lot of power. And worst of all, they didn't work well. People kept trying to make them better.

Metal detectors got smaller. Now they are light and cheap. They also work better. That is why people bring them to the beach. They can look for rings in the water. They can look for phones in the sand. Metal detectors help them find these things. They usually just find junk though.

Metal detectors also protect people. They help to keep guns out of some places. They are in airports. They are in courthouses. Some schools use them. They help guards look for weapons. Guards use special wands to find metal on a person.



These devices save lives in other ways too. During wars, people plant bombs in the ground. When the war ends, they don't clean up their messes. This is unsafe for the people who live in those places. Others use metal detectors to find bombs. They remove them and help the people.

These devices also make clothes safer. It sounds funny, but it's true. Most clothes are made in big factories. There are lots of needles in these places. Needles break from time to time. They get stuck in the clothes. They would poke people trying them on. They don't though. That's because our clothes are scanned for metal. Isn't that nice? Let's hear it for metal detectors. They make the world a safer place.

1. Which was **not** one of the problems with the first metal detectors?
  - a. They were too big.
  - b. They were too expensive.
  - c. They didn't work well.
  - d. They were unsafe.
  
2. Which best describes the main idea of the second paragraph?
  - a. It describes the sounds of a metal detector.
  - b. It explains how metal detectors work.
  - c. It warns about the effects of metal detectors.
  - d. It explains how magnetic waves move.
  
3. How do metal detectors make clothing safer?
  - a. Metal detectors make sure factory machines are working the right way.
  - b. Metal detectors make sure workers don't bring weapons into factories.
  - c. Metal detectors make sure that broken needles don't get into clothing.
  - d. Metal detectors help people recover lost clothing at the beach.
  
4. Why were metal detectors first used?
  - a. To help miners
  - b. To help security guards
  - c. To help doctors
  - d. To help soldiers
  
5. According to the text, metal detectors have been used in all of the following **except** which?
  - a. schools
  - b. churches
  - c. courthouses
  - d. airports
  
6. How do metal detectors help soldiers?
  - a. They warn soldiers when bullets are coming.
  - b. They help soldiers find hidden bombs.
  - c. They find weaknesses in their armor.
  - d. They create a relaxing beeping noise.
  
7. Why do people bring metal detectors to the beach?
  - a. Metal detectors help people keep the sand clean and safe.
  - b. Metal detectors look cool.
  - c. Metal detectors help people find valuable items.
  - d. Metal detectors help guards keep weapons away from the beach.
  
8. Which happens first?
  - a. The metal detector beeps alarmingly.
  - b. The magnetic waves hit metal and change.
  - c. The magnetic waves go through the ground.
  - d. The metal detector creates magnetic waves.
  
9. How did metal detectors get better over time?
  - a. They became cheaper.
  - b. They became lighter.
  - c. They began working better
  - d. All of these
  
10. Which title would best describe the purpose of this text?
  - a. *A Day at the Beach: Using Your Metal Detector to Find Things*
  - b. *Metal Detectors: a Complete the Story of Their Invention*
  - c. *Magnetism and More: How a Metal Detector Works*
  - d. *Metal Detectors: What They Do and How We Use Them*





# Tetris

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Do you like video games? Lots of people do. There are many types of video games. Some people like action games. Other people like driving games. But the most popular game of all time is a puzzle game.

Tetris is a game about making lines. Blocks fall from the top of the screen. They fall one at a time. The player moves the blocks. Once the blocks hit the bottom, they are locked in place. Players try to make lines go across the screen with no gaps. Complete lines disappear. This gives players more room. The blocks pile up during the game. The game ends when the blocks get to the top of the screen.

A man named Alexey made Tetris in 1984. All the pieces in Tetris have four blocks. The word "tetra" means four. Alexey named his game after tetra and tennis. He made Tetris while working at a science academy in Moscow. Moscow is in Russia.

Alexey made his game on a screen that only showed letters. He could not use blocks. The blocks were made out of letters in the first game of Tetris. Still, all Alexey's friends loved his game. It was easy to learn and fun to play.



Soon the game spread across the world. It was on every computer. It was in arcades. It came with every one of Nintendo's Game Boy. More than 100 million Game Boys were sold. Tetris was all over the place. Even today Tetris comes with many phones.

Dr. Richard Haier has studied Tetris players. He ran many tests. He found that playing Tetris boosts mental activity. Dr. Haier thinks Tetris is good for the brain. I agree with this finding. Now go and play some Tetris. It's just what the doctor ordered.

1. What is this article about?
  - a. Video games
  - b. Tetris
  - c. Alexey
  - d. Blocks
  
2. What is the goal of Tetris?
  - a. To make tall piles of blocks
  - b. To match the colors of blocks
  - c. To make complete lines
  - d. To get blocks to the top of the screen
  
3. After which is Tetris named?
  - a. Fish
  - b. The number ten
  - c. Paris
  - d. Tennis
  
4. Where was Alexey when he created Tetris?
  - a. Paris
  - b. Russia
  - c. The United States of America
  - d. Germany
  
5. What is the highest selling game of all time?
  - a. A driving game
  - b. Call of Duty
  - c. Tetris
  - d. An action game
  
6. Which event happened first?
  - a. Tetris was played with letters instead of blocks
  - b. Tetris was released on the phone
  - c. Tetris was released in the arcade
  - d. Tetris was brought to the Game Boy
  
7. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
  - a. To persuade readers to play Tetris
  - b. To explain how Tetris is played
  - c. To describe different types of games
  - d. To compare Tetris to other puzzle games
  
8. According to Dr. Richard Haier, which is true about Tetris?
  - a. Tetris lowers blood pressure
  - b. Tetris increases physical strength
  - c. Tetris boosts mental activity
  - d. Tetris has no positive side effects
  
9. What happens to a block that hits the bottom and does not form a complete line in Tetris?
  - a. It disappears and reappears at the top.
  - b. It is locked in place.
  - c. The player moves the block.
  - d. It gives the player more room.
  
10. Why did the first game of Tetris use letters instead of blocks?
  - a. Alexey did not think to use blocks
  - b. Alexey thought letters were more fun
  - c. Alexey's screen could only show letters
  - d. Alexey wanted to teach people to read

How does the word "tetra" relate to the game Tetris? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

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How did being included with Nintendo's Game Boy help Tetris become successful? Refer to the text in your answer.

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Why was Tetris so popular? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

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# TV

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Televisions show sounds and pictures. They get data from cables, discs, or over-the-air signals. They turn this data into sounds and images. People watch news and shows on them. You probably call them TVs.

John Baird made the first TV in 1925. It had one color. It could only show 30 lines. This was just enough room for a face. It didn't work well, but it was a start.

The first TV station was set up in 1928. It was in New York. Few people had TVs. The broadcasts were not meant to be watched. They showed a Felix the Cat doll for two hours a day. The doll spun around on a record player. They were experimenting. It took many years to get it right.

By the end of the 1930s, TVs were working well. America got its first taste at the 1939 World's Fair. This was one of the biggest events ever. There were 200 small, black and white TVs set up around the fair. The U.S. President gave a speech over the TVs. The TVs were only five inches big but the people loved it.

They wanted TVs. But World War II was going on during this time. Factories were busy making guns and bombs. When the war was over, TV spread across the country.



By 1948 there were 4 big TV networks in America. They aired their shows from 8 to 11 each night. Local shows were aired at other times. Most of the time, nothing was shown at all. TV was not "always on" like it is now.

Color TVs came out in 1953. They cost too much money for most. Also, shows were aired in black and white. By 1965, color TVs were cheaper. TV stations started airing shows in color. People had to switch if they wanted to see the shows.

Now most TVs are high-def. This means that they have many lines on them. This makes the image clear. TVs have come a long way since Baird's 30 line set. High-def TVs have 1080 lines. There are state of the art sets called 4K TVs. These TVs have 3,840 lines. Some people watch TV in 3D. I wonder what they will come up with next. Smell-o-vision anyone?

1. When did color TVs come out?

- a. 1925
- b. 1953
- c. 1939
- d. 1965

2. Which was **not** true about the first TV?

- a. It could only show one color.
- b. It only had 30 lines.
- c. It did not have sound.
- d. It did not work well.

3. When did networks start showing programs in color?

- a. 1948
- b. 1953
- c. 1965
- d. 1939

4. Why did the first TV station only show Felix the Cat for two hours a day?

- a. They were running tests.
- b. Felix the Cat was really popular.
- c. Felix the Cat had been a big radio star.
- d. Felix the Cat was the only show that they had.

5. Which of these events slowed the spread of TVs?

- a. The World's Fair of 1939
- b. The Civil War
- c. The election of the U.S. President.
- d. World War II

6. What is the author's main purpose in writing this?

- a. He is trying to explain how a TV works.
- b. He is telling readers how TVs became popular.
- c. He is describing the history of the TV.
- d. He is trying to get people to watch more TV.

7. Why did many families switch to color TVs in 1965?

- a. Color TVs cost a lot of money.
- b. Many shows were only shown in color.
- c. Color TVs came out in 1965.
- d. World War II ended and troops returned home.

8. Why was 1939 an important year for TV?

- a. Many Americans were introduced to TV.
- b. The first color TV was released.
- c. The first TV station began broadcasting.
- d. John Baird created the first TV.

9. How many lines does a 4K TV have?

- a. 30
- b. 1,080
- c. 4,000
- d. 3,840

10. Which happened first?

- a. The 1939 World's Fair
- b. The release of high-def TVs
- c. The end of World War II
- d. The release of color TVs



## ***Redwoods and Arms Races***

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow. Refer to the text to check your answers when appropriate.

Redwoods are the tallest trees in the world. They grow to be as high as 380 feet. Compare that to an American football field, which is 300 feet long. A redwood would impress you if you stood near one. But why do they grow so tall?



It's hard to see from the ground, but the redwoods are competing. They are fighting with each other to get the most sunlight. The trees that get the most sunlight grow taller. Trees that get stuck under other trees do not get as much light. They lose the opportunity to grow taller. So redwoods must grow taller to compete or they will get trapped on the bottom.

Growing so tall is risky. The wind is more threatening to a tall tree. It is also hard to grow so much. Redwoods use all their energy to grow tall. The trees might be better off if they didn't have to grow so tall to survive. Their lives would be safer and easier. But there is no way for them to coordinate. They cannot agree to stop growing as tall as possible. So they compete their whole lives.

People face similar challenges. For example, nations spend a lot of money to protect themselves from other nations. The US spends more than half its budget on defense. Most other nations spend 10-30% of theirs on arms and armies. That's a lot of money.

We could spend that money on schools, roads, and parks. We could spend it on feeding hungry people or helping the environment. We could spend it on advancing art, philosophy, or science. So why don't we?

The problem is that if a nation has no military, then they face the risk of invasion. A nation with a mighty army may take their resources and destroy them on a whim.

Like the redwoods, which grow taller to their own *detriment*, we are locked in a harmful race. Most people agree that world peace is better than an arms race. In a peaceful world, we could use all our resources to make our lives better.

That sounds nice, but what if one nation broke the agreement? What if they built an army in secret? What if they used their secret army to destroy us? Can we afford to take that risk? Most nations decide that they cannot. Rather, they choose to spend a lot of money on defense programs.



## ***Redwoods and Arms Races (Questions)***

1. Why does the author believe that redwoods grow so tall?
  - a. They are in a life or death fight for sunlight.
  - b. They want more oxygen, which is higher in the atmosphere.
  - c. They want more rain, so they race toward the clouds.
  - d. They want more exposure to wind, so they grow high.
  
2. Which best describes the author's purpose in the FIFTH paragraph?
  - a. To propose ways that we could fix the redwoods and save the forests
  - b. To make a wish list of what he would do if he were the president
  - c. To explain how our government is corrupt and evil
  - d. To list how tax money could be better spent than on defense
  
3. Why does the author think that it'd be better for redwoods if they were shorter?
  - a. Growing wider helps the tree to get more sun.
  - b. Growing tall is dangerous and hard.
  - c. Growing tall is boring and time-consuming.
  - d. Growing wider helps the tree get more wind.
  
4. What risk do redwoods take if they stop growing taller?
  - a. They will have less access to wind and water.
  - b. The wind is more likely to knock them over.
  - c. They are more likely to be harmed in a war.
  - d. Other trees will take their sunlight.
  
5. With which statement would the author most likely AGREE?
  - a. Spending tax money on defense is wasteful and we should NOT do it.
  - b. Spending tax money on defense is the best thing we can do as a species.
  - c. Spending tax money on defense is wasteful but we should still do it.
  - d. Spending tax money on defense is good because missiles help people.

6. Which best defines the word *detriment* as used in paragraph 7? Use the context clues.
- To make things worse
  - To make things better
  - To keep things about the same
  - To come to an agreement
7. According to the text, a nation that doesn't spend on defense faces which risk?
- They will not be able to control their citizens.
  - They will not be able to invade other lands.
  - Another nation may invade and destroy them.
  - Another nation may want to trade with them.
8. According to the text, which statement is TRUE?
- Most nations spend around a quarter of their budgets on defense.
  - Most nations spend more than half of their budgets on defense.
  - Most nations spend almost none of their budgets on defense.
  - Most nations spend all of their budgets on defense.
9. With which statement would the author most likely DISAGREE?
- Redwoods use a lot of energy to grow so tall.
  - There are no downsides to maintaining a strong army.
  - Growing too tall is dangerous for a tree.
  - Defense budgets use a lot of resources.
10. Which statement best expresses the MAIN IDEA of this text?
- SOME competitions are harmful to ALL competitors.
  - ALL competitions are good for ALL competitors.
  - NO competitions are good for ANY competitors.
  - NO competitions are harmful to ANY competitors.

