

Name _____ Date _____

The Raja's Elephants

Hundreds of years ago, each of India's many provinces was ruled by a raja. The raja was a wealthy prince. Among his most prized possessions were his elephants.

The rajas used their elephants to haul great blocks of stone. The stones were used to build palaces and temples. The elephants were also used to haul trees and logs and to plow fields. Later, when machines became available, it was no longer necessary to use elephants to help with heavy lifting. However, elephants are still used to haul logs in places where there is no heavy machinery.

Elephants were used in wars. The elephants wore platforms on their backs where soldiers sat and threw spears at the enemy.

The rajas also used their elephants in royal weddings, state ceremonies, and religious processions. On special occasions, the elephants would be bathed in pure water. Then they were sprinkled with perfumes. An artist would paint designs on their heads and ears in bright colors.

The elephant's tusks would be scrubbed clean and decorated with gold paint. A fancy cloak of red, gold, purple, and yellow would be draped over each elephant's back. Then the elephant was ready to be paraded in public for all to admire. Several people rode in an elaborate wooden seat called a *howdah*. It was strapped to the elephant's back.

Elephants were usually treated very well by the rajas. The elephants helped the rajas be successful. Elephants made it easier for them to build things and to develop and protect their land. A raja with many elephants was considered to be very powerful.

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

- ❶ What is a *howdah*?
- Ⓐ a temple that elephants helped to build
 - Ⓑ the paint used to decorate an elephant's tusks
 - Ⓒ an elaborate seat that allows people to ride an elephant
 - Ⓓ the fancy cloak that is draped over the back of an elephant
- ❷ How were elephants used in war?
- Ⓕ The elephants trampled the enemy.
 - Ⓖ Soldiers rode on the elephants and threw spears.
 - Ⓗ The elephants destroyed the homes of the enemy.
 - Ⓘ The elephants charged at the enemy and scared them away.
- ❸ Read the sentence below. If *recession* means moving or going back, then what does *procession* mean?
- The rajas also used their elephants in royal weddings, state ceremonies, and religious processions.**
- Ⓐ going under
 - Ⓑ going very slowly
 - Ⓒ not moving or standing still
 - Ⓓ moving forward, as in a parade
- ❹ What is the MAIN idea of the article?
- Ⓕ Rajas were wealthy princes.
 - Ⓖ Elephants were used in royal weddings.
 - Ⓗ Elephants were used to haul stones and logs.
 - Ⓘ Elephants were among a raja's most prized possessions.
- ❺ What are two reasons the author uses to support the idea that elephants were important to the rajas? Write your response on another sheet of paper.

Name _____ Date _____

Prairie Neighbors

| | |
|--|-----|
| It's hard to believe that we've been here in Kansas over a year already. | 14 |
| This autumn will be our second harvest and Pa's amazed at how fertile the soil is. It gave us a nice crop of wheat this year. | 28 |
| I wish we had a mill near us because grinding the corn and wheat is such a chore. The land here is so flat that our little stream doesn't run fast enough to drive a mill wheel. I'll bet that eventually we'll figure out an easier way to make flour. Maybe we can make a windmill. We've certainly got enough wind! | 40 |
| | 55 |
| | 71 |
| | 85 |
| | 98 |
| | 101 |
| The people around here have big plans for the settlement. They say that all kinds of possibilities will open up if the railroads ever reach this far. | 114 |
| Mr. Armstrong says that if he could get cloth from the East, he'd take up tailoring again. If we could send our crops to be sold in the cities, we'd have money to build good roads. | 128 |
| | 143 |
| | 159 |
| | 164 |
| We're doing a lot of building as it is. We're putting up a church and a schoolhouse. Six new families have moved into the settlement since we got here. Pa takes charge at each new house-raising and my friends show the girls the local square dance steps. | 180 |
| | 192 |
| | 205 |
| | 211 |
| Last week, all the settlers went to the Hendersons for a husking bee. Each family tried to beat the others by husking the most corn. | 225 |
| | 236 |
| If we keep on making improvements, more families will come and soon we'll have enough people to make a town. People are already thinking of names for it. I like the name <i>Harmony</i> because, in spite of a few tiffs, we all get along. | 248 |
| | 261 |
| | 278 |
| | 280 |

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

- ❶ Why does the narrator wish there was a mill nearby?
- Ⓐ She could get a job working in the mill.
 - Ⓑ She likes to watch the mill wheel go around.
 - Ⓒ She thinks that grinding corn and wheat is a chore.
 - Ⓓ She likes the sound of corn being ground into flour.
- ❷ What is the meaning of the word *fertile* as used in the sentence below?
- This autumn will be our second harvest and Pa's amazed at how fertile the soil is.**
- Ⓕ hard and dry
 - Ⓖ poisonous to crops
 - Ⓗ unable to support life
 - Ⓘ capable of producing crops
- ❸ Which word BEST describes the narrator at the end of the story?
- Ⓐ angry
 - Ⓑ bored
 - Ⓒ cautious
 - Ⓓ hopeful
- ❹ What is the theme of this story?
- Ⓕ Trains can carry you away to distant lands.
 - Ⓖ There's always an easier way to do a chore.
 - Ⓗ Building a house is more important than dancing.
 - Ⓘ Creating a community takes hard work and cooperation.
- ❺ Why does the narrator like the name *Harmony* for the town? Use details from the passage to support your answer. Write your response on another sheet of paper.

Name _____ Date _____

Do Animals Talk?

| | |
|--|-----|
| Can you tell when your cat wants something to eat? Have you heard your | 14 |
| dog barking at other dogs? Some people think that animals communicate | 25 |
| through sounds such as barks, meows, or chirps. Animals may be telling | 37 |
| each other that there is trouble ahead or where to find food. They may be | 52 |
| letting each other know where they are. | 59 |
| Researchers believe that vervet monkeys make different calls depending | 68 |
| on which type of predator they spot: snakes, mammals, or birds. When a | 81 |
| vervet spots a snake, it makes a frantic scream. The other vervets cluster | 94 |
| together and stand on their hind legs, looking for the snake. They move | 107 |
| slowly away from the snake once they see it. | 116 |
| After seeing a hyena, cheetah, or leopard, a vervet gives a different | 128 |
| scream. This scream causes the other monkeys to climb trees. They move to | 141 |
| the ends of thick branches. A heavy animal won't be able to climb after them | 156 |
| without breaking the branch and falling. The monkeys can also leap from | 168 |
| treetop to treetop. | 171 |
| When a vervet monkey sees an eagle, it lets out a third kind of scream. | 186 |
| This scream causes the other monkeys to run for cover. The monkeys dive | 199 |
| into bushes or huddle near tree trunks, where the eagle won't be able to | 213 |
| see them. | 215 |
| The spotted hyena makes a noise that sounds like a human laugh. This is | 229 |
| why they are often called laughing hyenas. The sounds hyenas use include | 241 |
| snorts, grunts, and giggles. Once a hyena catches its prey, such as a vervet | 255 |
| monkey, it tells the rest of the pack about it. The hyena uses various sounds, | 270 |
| including its famous laugh! | 274 |

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

- 1 Why is the spotted hyena often called the laughing hyena?
- (A) It is so ugly that people often laugh at it.
 - (B) It makes a sound similar to a human's laugh.
 - (C) It likes to laugh at other animals to scare them away.
 - (D) It sometimes shakes and shudders, making the hyena look as if it is laughing.
- 2 What does the word *predator* mean in the sentence below?
- Researchers believe that vervet monkeys make different calls depending on which type of predator they spot: snakes, mammals, or birds.**
- (F) an animal that hunts other animals
 - (G) an animal that is hunted by other animals
 - (H) an animal that settles an area before other animals
 - (I) an animal that makes sounds to warn other animals
- 3 When a vervet monkey sees an eagle, what does its scream cause the other monkeys to do?
- (A) run up into the trees
 - (B) huddle near tree trunks
 - (C) throw rocks at the eagle
 - (D) cluster together and stand on their hind legs
- 4 What evidence does the author use to support the idea that animals communicate with each other?
- (F) When a dog sees a stranger, it whimpers.
 - (G) Cats meow in order to scare away predators.
 - (H) Eagles call to let others know where they are.
 - (I) When hyenas catch prey, they tell other hyenas.
- 5 How does a vervet monkey get away from a hyena, cheetah, or leopard once it hears a warning scream? Use details from the passage to support your answer. Write your response on another sheet of paper.

Name _____ Date _____

Prairie Dog Town

Prairie dogs are small animals that live on prairies, or grasslands. These animals are a little like squirrels, but they have shorter tails. Pioneers crossing the Great Plains in the 1850s often saw these little animals peering out of holes in the ground. Because the animals made barking sounds, the pioneers called them prairie dogs.

Prairie dogs are very social animals. Several families often share the same underground burrow. Many groups live near each other in prairie dog towns. Two prairie dogs put their front teeth together to make sure that they belong to the same group. When they do this, it looks like they are kissing.

Prairie dogs make special sounds when enemies come near. Scientists think that the prairie dogs make a different sound to identify each kind of enemy.

Prairie dogs dig safe, comfortable burrows. An entrance tunnel goes three to ten feet straight down. The entrance tunnel leads to a level main tunnel that is ten to a hundred feet long. Side tunnels, used for nesting, branch out from the main tunnel.

Prairie dogs are suited to the dry prairie weather. The insects, grasses, and flowers they eat give them all the water they need. Prairie dogs help keep the prairie ecosystem healthy. An ecosystem includes the physical parts of a place, such as hills, plains, and lakes. It also includes the plants and animals living there. Some scientists think prairie dogs fertilize the prairie soil. Prairie dogs are also food for many prairie animals.

At times, other animals hide in prairie dog burrows. In that way, the prairie dog helps other animals live on the prairie, where there are few places to hide and keep warm.

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

- 1** How did the prairie dog get its name?
- A** It is related to the dog.
 - B** It looks like a little dog.
 - C** It can be trained like a dog.
 - D** It makes barking noises that sound like a dog.
- 2** What is an ecosystem?
- F** All the people who live in a particular place.
 - G** All the hills, plains, and lakes in a particular area.
 - H** All the living things in and physical parts of a particular place.
 - I** All the different animals that live together in a particular place.
- 3** How do prairie dogs make sure they belong to the SAME group?
- A** They bark at each other.
 - B** They meet in special burrows.
 - C** They use a special greeting sound.
 - D** They put their front teeth together.
- 4** In what way are prairie dogs suited to the dry prairie weather?
- F** They do not require any water to survive.
 - G** They can dig for water in special burrows.
 - H** They get the water they need from eating insects and plants.
 - I** They can make different sounds to warn about different enemies.
- 5** List two ways that the prairie dog helps other living things in an ecosystem. Use details from the passage to support your answer. Write your response on another sheet of paper.

Name _____ Date _____

The Exodusters

In the year 1879, a fever spread throughout the land. This was not a fever that makes the head hot and the body ache. This fever was a dream that spread through a people. This fever was caught by many who longed for a life of freedom and an opportunity to own and farm the land.

African Americans were on the move. Families and friends gathered and talked about their dream. Together, they began the long march west to a place called Kansas.

In the Exodus in days of old, so the story goes, a man named Moses led his folk to the fertile land and a better life. So, too, did African Americans, known as Exodusters, march to the promised land of Kansas.

The Civil War had brought freedom at last to slaves. After years of shackles and service, these men and women deserved a new start in life. The U.S. government offered them the chance to settle some land on the wide-open plains. For African Americans, this was an opportunity to leave the shadow of someone else's fields, which was an opportunity to enjoy their own harvest.

America was proud to offer this gift to men and women new to freedom. The land was promised to any and all who agreed to homestead at least five years. All that it cost was a five-dollar fee and five long years of backbreaking toil. Toil was not new for African Americans, but to own land was a dream come true.

They came by wagon, on foot, by steamboat, and by rail. The Exodusters left the South behind and came to Kansas any way they could. In their minds, an image was taking shape—the image of the black pioneer. Yes, the African American pioneer was about to tame the wild frontier!

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the questions. You may reread parts of the passage to help you.

- 1** What was a dream come true for many African Americans?
- Ⓐ working in the fields
 - Ⓑ owning their own land
 - Ⓒ not catching a fever and getting sick
 - Ⓓ traveling by steamboat for the first time
- 2** Which event happened FIRST?
- Ⓕ Slaves toiled on land that they did not own.
 - Ⓖ African American pioneers settled in Kansas.
 - Ⓗ The Civil War ended, bringing freedom to all.
 - Ⓘ The U.S. government offered land to African Americans.
- 3** According to the article, what did you have to do to own land?
- Ⓐ pay five dollars
 - Ⓑ grow certain types of crops
 - Ⓒ promise to live on the land for five years
 - Ⓓ pay five dollars and work the land for five years
- 4** Why does the author compare the dream of owning land to a fever?
- Ⓕ to suggest that dreaming of owning land made people sick
 - Ⓖ to suggest that the dream of owning land made people act in strange ways
 - Ⓗ to suggest that the dream of owning land spread like a fever among people
 - Ⓘ to suggest that many people died while trying to achieve their dreams of owning land
- 5** Why are the black pioneers who settled in Kansas known as Exodusters?
Use details from the passage to support your answer. Write your response on another sheet of paper.