

First name: _____

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In this test you will read stories and answer questions about what you have read. First read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1

Penny is a golden retriever puppy from Texas. She is training to be an assistance dog (a dog that helps people who need help in their daily lives). Penny wants to be a guide dog for people who are visually impaired (have trouble seeing). Read about her first year in the story below.

Penny's Scrapbook

by Rebecca A. Alter

My name is Penny. When I grow up, I want to be a guide dog for someone who is blind or severely visually impaired. You might have heard of junkyard dogs, well, I'm a schoolyard dog. I was born in a second grade classroom in Austin, Texas. The students at Sam Rayburn Middle School raised the money to buy me for the **Southwest Guide Dog Foundation** by collecting pennies. (That's how I got my name!) I will be at Rayburn this school year with my "Puppy Walker," Becky Alter, who teaches art. . . .

My First Months

I joined Becky Alter in April. She will be my "Puppy Walker" until I am about 18 months old. My first weeks of school with Becky were exciting. I was exposed to the sounds in the hallway when classes changed and got

used to the daily schedule and routine. Most of the time I was with a teacher during their conference time to allow me to adjust slowly to my new home.

I had a wonderful summer. Becky took me with her almost everywhere she went. We went to church, the pet store, to visit friends, the pharmacy, and the doctor's office. I also began obedience classes. Becky and I took several trips together. One was to Iowa to meet a group of "Puppy Walkers." . . . I got to fly in a jet! I wore a scarf to show I'm with the Southwest Guide Dog Foundation. Before we boarded the planes I had to go through security like all of the other passengers. Once I was even frisked! On the planes, I traveled in the passenger compartment on the floor. In Iowa we met at a pig farm with nine "Puppy Walkers" and twelve dogs. The dogs were from different programs for assistance dogs. It was here that I met a golden retriever named Dover. He is from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is training to be an assistance dog.

Back to School

I've been very busy since school began in the middle of August. It was exciting to meet all of the new kids in my classes. While class is in session, I stay in my puppy playpen, though I get my fair share of petting and ear

scratching when the students sharpen their pencils. All of my commands are written on the blackboard, so the students can help me learn, too! When our classes are over, I can usually be found with my "Puppy Walker," Becky, as she visits other classrooms, the library, office area, and cafeteria. I've been busy after school, too! I met some new friends – a litter of boxer puppies that belong to a friend of Becky's. I also went to the vet and had my hips and elbows x-rayed. The vet said they looked good. I was also micro-chipped! If I get lost, this will help me find my way home. Many vet clinics and animal shelters scan lost animals now. Later I will get a tattoo. . . .

In mid-September, I passed the Canine Good Citizen Test and earned my jacket. Now I am able to go with Becky anywhere she goes. The jacket identifies me as a guide dog in training. When I wear it, I know I am "at work."

This month the eighth graders voted to raise money to purchase another puppy for the Southwest Guide Dog Foundation for their community service project. I'm very excited about that!

-- end of passage

1. At school, Penny's "Puppy Walker," Becky,

- raises money for guide dogs.
- teaches biology.
- teaches art.
- tattoos dogs.

2. Becky takes Penny everywhere she goes because she

- does not trust Penny to stay alone.
- wants Penny to get used to different places.
- does not like to be separated from Penny.
- promised she would never leave Penny alone.

3. Penny went on a trip with Becky to

- a junkyard in Austin, Texas.
- Grand Rapids, Michigan, to visit a dog named Dover.
- Iowa to meet with other "Puppy Walkers" and their dogs.
- the Southwest Guide Dog Foundation to give them pennies.

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4. Penny's commands are written on the blackboard so
- she can read them.
 - the teacher will remember them.
 - the students can practice them with Penny.
 - the new puppy will be able to use them too.

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5. Penny became a "guide dog in training" when she
- passed the Canine Good Citizen Test.
 - was born.
 - went to the Sam Rayburn Middle School.
 - went to Iowa.

The Box in the Barn

by Barbara Eckfeld Conner

Jason heard his mom calling him. Instead of answering her, he slipped deeper into the tall weeds behind his house. He closed his eyes, thinking of what he had done.

He had gotten up that morning in a good mood. Raspberry pancakes were on the table when he walked into the kitchen rubbing his eyes and yawning.

"After breakfast, Jason, I want you to go into town with me," Mom said quietly. "It's your sister's birthday, and we need to shop for her gifts.

Jason was eager to go, even if the gifts weren't for him. Buying presents was always fun.

As they drove to town, Jason couldn't help but ask the question that had been on his mind since yesterday when Aunt Nancy came. "What's in the big box that Dad took to the barn, Mom? Is it something Aunt Nancy bought for Megan's birthday?"

"It's a surprise, Jason, and I don't want you going near that barn today. Do you hear me?"

Jason sat staring at the road ahead. He knew that nothing would change her mind. Only now he was more curious than ever!

Back home, Megan ran out to meet Jason, her eyes wide and excited. "Jason, Jason, I'm six years old!" she

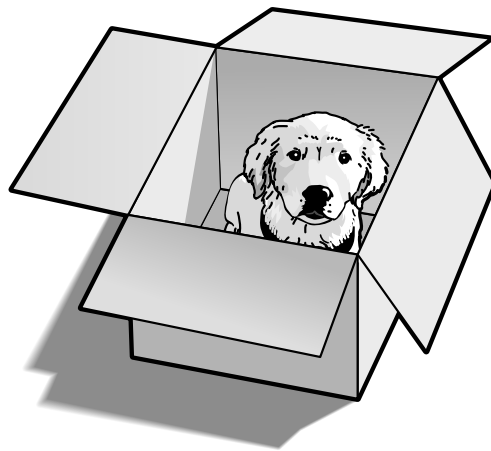
cried, jumping up and down.

"I know, I know." Jason gave her a big hug.

Soon the house was buzzing with excitement. Megan sat on the stool watching while Mom and Aunt Nancy prepared the birthday dinner. Dad wouldn't be back for at least two hours. Jason wandered outside trying to think of something to do, but his thoughts kept returning to the box in the barn.

He started walking toward the barn, not at all sure what he'd do when he got there. He was hoping for just a glimpse of the box. Instead he heard a strange noise coming from inside the barn. He wished he could just turn back to the house, but his legs carried him into the barn. Jason saw the box. It was sitting between two bales of hay. He could hear loud wailing cries. Leaning over, Jason carefully lifted the lid. There was the most cuddly puppy he had ever seen!

"You must be pretty scared, huh, fellow?" Jason said quietly as he held the wiggly dog. "Megan's going to love you!" He secretly wished the puppy was for him. After all, Mom and Dad knew that he had been wanting his own puppy.



Probably Aunt Nancy didn't know that, and anyway Megan would be happy.

Soon Jason was playing happily with the puppy, and he forgot that he wasn't supposed to be in the barn. Taffy, their big brown horse, stuck his head in the window as if to say, "What's going on?" Jason jumped, remembering that he wasn't supposed to be there. The puppy ran off as fast as it could out of the barn and into the field.

Jason stumbled out of the barn looking wildly for any trace of the puppy. "Come on, puppy! Oh, please come here!" he called, his eyes welling up with tears.

Now here he was, two hours later, hiding in the weeds. He'd looked everywhere, but the puppy was gone. He had ruined his sister's birthday.

"Jason! It's time for dinner!" Mom called even louder now. Just when he was determined to stay forever in the tall weeds, he heard his sister's voice.

"Jason! It's time for my party, Jason!" Megan yelled excitedly.

Jason rubbed his swollen eyes, trying to look normal. He couldn't ruin everything for her. "I'm here, Megan," he called.

"Are you OK?" she asked with genuine concern.

"Sure. Let's hurry." Jason grabbed her hand as they ran back.

As soon as they reached the house, the party began. Jason tried to pretend that everything was fine. When it was time to open Megan's birthday gifts, he sat in the big easy chair, hoping no one would notice him. Finally the last present was open.

"I'll be right back," Dad said.

Jason knew Dad was going to the barn. Megan would probably never forgive him for losing her birthday puppy. Everyone, even Aunt Nancy, would be angry when they found out the puppy was gone.

"Jason! Come here!" It was Dad calling from the front yard.

Jason slowly got out of the chair. It was hard to move, but Megan grabbed his hand and said, "Come on, Jason! Let's see what Dad wants."

Jason followed Megan out the door. Mom and Aunt Nancy followed close behind.

There was Dad standing with the box next to him in the grass. "Jason, I want you to open this box and see what's inside."

Jason looked up and saw that Dad was smiling. He turned and saw that Mom, Aunt Nancy, and Megan were smiling, too. What would he say to them when there was nothing in the box? But as Jason looked down, expecting to see nothing at all, he jumped back in surprise. The puppy looked up at him with sleepy eyes.

"Wow!" said Jason, bewildered.

"The puppy's for you, Son," his father said.

"I thought you'd like a gift, too, even if it isn't your birthday," said Aunt Nancy, laughing.

Megan started clapping. "Isn't he wonderful, Jason?" The puppy jumped up, ready to play. Jason and Megan spent the rest of the day with the puppy.

Later, when he was getting ready for bed, Jason turned to his father and said, "You know, Dad, I feel bad about something I did today."

Dad waited patiently as Jason explained what had happened. "And I still can't figure out how my puppy got back into his box!" he added.

"Well, Son, on my way home I saw your puppy running along the side of the road. I figured he had gotten out of his box somehow... You must have felt terrible during the party," Dad continued. "I get the feeling you've learned a lot today." He pulled back the covers on Jason's bed.

Jason looked down at his new puppy, who was sleeping soundly in a basket by the bed. "Dad, I think I'll call him Buddy."

Dad smiled and tucked the covers snugly around Jason.

-- end passage

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7. When Megan spoke to Jason in the tall weeds, she was concerned that

- she wouldn't get enough presents
- her dad wouldn't get back in time for the party
- something was wrong with Jason
- the puppy was missing from the box

8. What does Megan say in the story that shows how she felt about Jason's getting a gift on her birthday?

- "Jason, Jason, I'm six years old!"
- "Are you OK?"
- "Let's see what Dad wants."
- "Isn't he wonderful, Jason?"

9. Jason's problem could have been prevented if

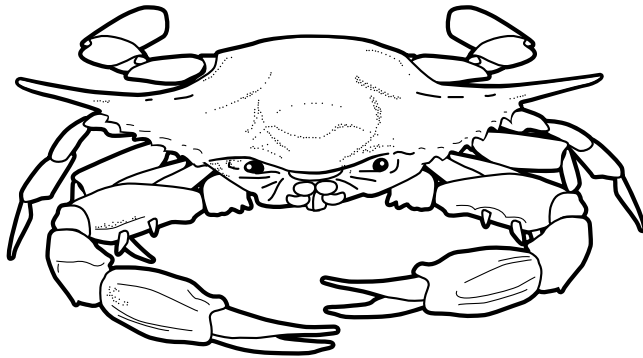
- his mother had not warned him to stay away from the barn
- he had not let the puppy play along the road
- his curiosity had not led him to open the box
- he had not wanted a puppy of his own so badly

10. Jason probably would have felt better at the birthday party if

- the box had been put in the backyard
- the puppy had not run out of the barn
- the party had lasted longer
- he had not hidden in the tall weeds

Blue Crabs

By George W.
Frame



Nearly every day last summer my nephew Keith and I went crabbing in a creek on the New Jersey coast. We used a wire trap baited with scraps of fish and meat. Each time a crab entered the trap to eat, we pulled the doors closed. We cooked and ate the crabs we caught.

Blue crabs are very strong. Their big claws can make a painful pinch. When cornered, the crabs boldly defend themselves. They wave their outstretched claws and are fast and ready to fight. Keith and I had to be very careful to avoid having our fingers pinched.

Crabs are **arthropods**, a very large group of animals that have an external skeleton and jointed legs. Other kinds of arthropods are insects, spiders, and centipedes. Blue crabs belong to a particular arthropod group called **crustaceans**. Crustaceans are abundant in the ocean, just as insects are on land.

The blue crab's hard shell is a strong armor. But the

armor must be cast off from time to time so the crab can grow bigger. Getting rid of its shell is called **molting**.

Each blue crab molts about twenty times during its life. Just before molting, a new soft shell forms under the hard outer shell. Then the outer shell splits apart, and the crab backs out. This leaves the crab with a soft, wrinkled, outer covering. The body increases in size by absorbing water, stretching the soft shell to a much larger size. The crab hides for a few hours until its new shell has hardened.

Keith and I sometimes found these soft-shell crabs clinging to pilings and hiding beneath seaweed.

Blue crabs mate when the female undergoes her last molt and still has a soft shell. The male courts her by dancing from side to side while holding his claws outstretched. He then transfers sperm to the female, where they are stored until egg laying begins several months later. The female blue crab mates only once but receives enough sperm to fertilize all the eggs that she will lay in her lifetime. Usually she lays eggs two or three times during the summer, and then she dies.

When the eggs are fertilized and laid, they become glued to long hairs on the underside of the female's abdomen. The egg mass sometimes looks like an orange-brown sponge and contains up to two million eggs until they hatch – about nine to fourteen days later. Only one of the blue crabs that we caught last summer was

carrying eggs, and we returned her to the water so her eggs could hatch. Most females with eggs stay in the deeper, saltier water at the ocean's edge rather than in the marshes.

The young blue crabs, and most other young crustaceans, hatch into larvae that look very different from their parents. The tiny blue crab babies are hardly bigger than a speck of dust. They are transparent and look like they are all head and tail. These larvae swim near the surface of the sea, and grow a new and bigger shell every few days. They soon change in shape so that they can either swim or crawl around on the bottom. Then they molt again and look like tiny adult crabs. After that their appearance does not change, but they continue to molt every twenty or thirty days as they grow.

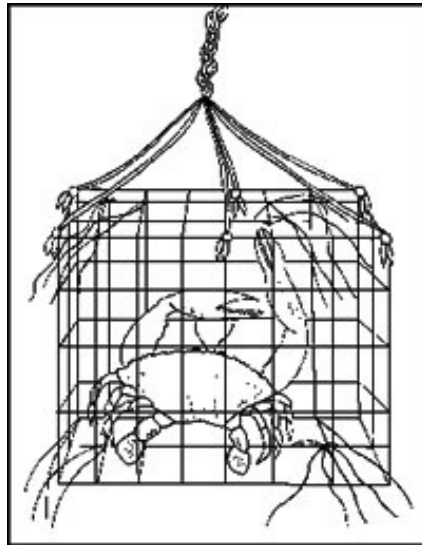
As blue crabs become older, some move into shallower waters. The males in particular go into creeks and marshes, sometimes all the way to the freshwater streams and rivers. Keith and I caught ninety-two blue crabs in the shallow creek of the tide marsh last summer. Eighty-seven of those crabs were males, and only five were females.

Gulls find and eat many blue crabs. They easily catch crabs that hide in puddles at low tide. Other predators are raccoons, alligators, and people. If caught, the crabs sometimes drop off a leg or claw to escape. Seven of the

blue crabs that Keith and I caught were missing a claw.

Crabs are able to replace their lost limbs. If a leg or claw is seriously injured, the crab drops it off. The opening that is left near the body closes to prevent the loss of blood. Soon a new limb begins growing at the break. The next time the crab molts, the tiny limb's covering is cast off, too, and the crab then has a new usable leg or claw. The new limb is smaller than the lost one. But by the time the crab molts two or three more times, the new leg or claw will be normal size.

Many fishermen catch crabs to sell. Most are caught in wire traps or with baited lines during the summer while the crabs are active. In the winter, the fishermen drag big nets through the mud for the dormant crabs. Commercial fishermen catch a lot of crabs, sometimes more than 50 million pounds in a year. And many other crabs are caught by weekend fishermen who crab for fun and food.



The blue crab has a scientific name, just like all other

living things. Its name is *Callinectes sapidus*. In the Latin language *Callinectes* means “beautiful swimmer,” and *sapidus* means “delicious.” I think that scientists gave the blue crab a very appropriate name.

-- end of passage

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14. According to the passage, what do blue crabs have in common with all other arthropods?

- They have a skeleton on the outside of their bodies.
- They hatch out of a shell-like pod.
- They live in the shallow waters of North America.
- They are delicious to eat.

15. The growth of a blue crab larva into a full-grown blue crab is most like the development of

- a human baby into a teen-ager
- an egg into a chicken
- a tadpole into a frog
- a seed into a tree

16. Just after molting, how does a blue crab increase in size?

- Its body absorbs water.
- It drops off its legs and grows new ones.
- Its shell grows the way human bones do.
- It eats large quantities of food.

17. By saying that the blue crab's shell is a strong armor, the author suggests that the shell

- contains metal similar to that worn by King Arthur's knights
- protects the blue crab from attacks by other animals
- has strong muscles like those of professional wrestlers
- consists of a number of heavy plates

18. The author of the article helps you to learn about blue crabs by

- explaining why they are an endangered species
- comparing them to other arthropods
- discussing their place in the food chain
- providing details about their unique characteristics

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Nights of the Pufflings

By Bruce McMillan

Every year, black and white birds with orange bills visit the Icelandic island of Heimaey. These birds are called puffins. They are known as “clowns of the sea” because of their bright bills and clumsy movements. Puffins are awkward fliers during takeoffs and landings because they have chunky bodies and short wings.

Halla lives on the island of Heimaey. She searches the sky every day. As she watches from high on a cliff overlooking the sea, she spots her first puffin of the season.

She whispers to herself “Lundi,” which means “puffin” in Icelandic.

Soon the sky is speckled with them – puffins, puffins everywhere. They are returning from their winter at sea, returning to Halla’s island and the nearby uninhabited islands to lay eggs and raise puffin chicks. These “clowns of the sea” return to the same burrows year after year. It’s the only time they come



ashore.



Halla and her friends climb over the cliffs to watch the birds. They see pairs tap -tap-tap their beaks together. Each pair they see will soon tend an egg deep

inside the cliffs. When the puffin eggs have hatched, the parents will bring fish home to feed their chicks. Each chick will grow into a young puffling. The nights of the pufflings will come when each puffling takes its first flight. Although the nights of the pufflings are still long weeks away, Halla thinks about getting some cardboard boxes ready.

All summer long the adult puffins fish and tend to their chicks. By August, flowers blanket the burrows. With the flowers in full bloom, Halla knows that the wait for the nights of the pufflings is over.

The hidden chicks have grown into young pufflings. Now it's time for Halla and her friends to get out their boxes and torches for the nights of the pufflings. Starting tonight, and for the next two weeks, the pufflings will be leaving for their winter at sea.

In the darkness of the night, the pufflings leave their burrows for their first flight. It's a short, wing-flapping trip from the high cliffs. Most of the birds splash-land safely in the sea below. But some get confused by the village

lights – perhaps they think the lights are moonbeams reflecting on the water. Hundreds of the pufflings crash-land in the village every night. Unable to takeoff from the flat ground, they run around and try to hide.

Halla and her friends will spend each night searching for stranded pufflings that haven't made it to the water. But the village cats and dogs will be searching, too. Even if the cats and dogs don't get them,



the pufflings might get run over by cars or trucks. The children must find the stray pufflings first. By ten o'clock the streets of Heimaey are alive with roaming children. Halla and her friends race to rescue the pufflings. Armed with torches, they wander through the village, searching dark places. Halla spots a puffling. She races after it, grabs it, and puts it safely in a cardboard box.

For two weeks all the children of Heimaey sleep late in the day so they can stay out at night. They rescue thousands of pufflings.

Every night Halla and her friends take the rescued pufflings home. The next day, with the boxes full of pufflings, Halla and her friends go down to the beach.

It's time to set the pufflings free. Halla releases one

first. She holds it up so that it will get used to flapping its wings. Then, holding the puffling snugly in her hands, she swings it up in the air and launches it out over the water beyond the surf. The puffling flutters just a short distance before splash-landing safely.



Day after day Halla's pufflings paddle away, until the nights of the pufflings are over for the year. As she watches the last of the pufflings and adult puffins leave for their winter at sea, Halla bids them farewell until next spring. She wishes them a safe journey as she calls out, "Goodbye, goodbye."

-- end of passage

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21. Where do the puffins spend the winter?

- inside the cliffs
- on the beach
- at sea
- on the ice

22. How does Halla know the pufflings are about to fly?

- Parents bring fish to the pufflings.
- Flowers are in full bloom.
- Chicks are hidden away.
- Summer has just begun.

23. What happens during the nights of the pufflings?

- Puffin pairs tap-tap-tap their beaks together.
- Pufflings take their first flight.
- Puffin eggs hatch into chicks.
- Pufflings come ashore from the sea.

24. What could the people in the village do to stop the pufflings from landing there by mistake?

- turn off the lights
- get the boxes ready
- keep the cats and dogs inside
- shine their torches in the sky

25. What do the pufflings do after Halla and her friends release them?

- walk on the beach
- fly from the cliff
- hide in the village
- swim in the sea

There are no more questions of the test. If you would like, feel free to review your answers before giving them to the test proctor.

Thank you!