



GRADE SIX

WEEK OF MARCH 14-18 READING

Below are passage sets with questions that you can use for the Problem of the Day initiative.

Day One

Read the excerpt from “**Beautiful as the Day**” by **E. Nesbit**. Answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1: Excerpt from **Beautiful as the Day** by **E. Nesbit**

- 1 “I say, let’s take our spades and dig in the gravel-pits. We can pretend it’s seaside.”
- 2 “Father says it was once,” Anthea said; “he says there are shells there thousands of years old.”
- 3 So they went. Of course they had been to the edge of the gravel-pit and looked over, but they had not gone down into it for fear father should say they mustn’t play there, and it was the same with the chalk-quarry. The gravel-pit is not really dangerous if you don’t try to climb down the edges, but go the slow safe way round by the road, as if you were a cart.
- 4 Each of the children carried its own spade, and took it in turns to carry the Lamb. He was the baby, and they called him that because “Baa” was the first thing he ever said. They called Anthea “Panther,” which seems silly when you read it, but when you say it it sounds a little like her name.
- 5 The gravel-pit is very large and wide, with grass growing round the edges at the top, and dry stringy wildflowers, purple and yellow. It is like a giant’s washbowl. And there are mounds of gravel, and holes in the sides of the bowl where gravel has been taken out, and high up in the steep sides there are the little holes that are the little front doors of the little bank-martins’¹ little houses.
- 6 The children built a castle, of course, but castle-building is rather poor fun when you have no hope of the swishing tide ever coming in to fill up the moat and wash away the drawbridge, and, at the happy last, to wet everybody up to the waist at least.

¹bank-martins: small birds that make their nests in tunnels dug in clay or sand

7 Cyril wanted to dig out a cave to play smugglers in, but the others thought it might bury them alive, so it ended in all spades going to work to dig a hole through the castle to Australia. These children, you see, believed that the world was round, and that on the other side the little Australian boys and girls were really walking wrong way up, like flies on the ceiling, with their heads hanging down into the air.

8 The children dug and they dug and they dug, and their hands got sandy and hot and red, and their faces got damp and shiny. The Lamb had tried to eat the sand, and had cried so hard when he found that it was not, as he had supposed, brown sugar, that he was now tired out, and was lying asleep in a warm fat bunch in the middle of the half-finished castle. This left his brothers and sisters free to work really hard, and the hole that was to come out in Australia soon grew so deep that Jane begged the others to stop.

9 “Suppose the bottom of the hole gave way suddenly,” said she, “and you tumbled out among the little Australians, all the sand would get in their eyes.”

10 “Yes,” said Robert; “and they would hate us, and throw stones at us, and not let us see the kangaroos, or opossums, or blue-gums², or Emu Brand birds, or anything.”

11 Cyril and Anthea knew that Australia was not quite so near as all that, but they agreed to stop using the spades and to go on with their hands. This was quite easy, because the sand at the bottom of the hole was very soft and fine and dry, like sea-sand. And there were little shells in it.

12 “Fancy it having been wet sea here once, all sloppy and shiny,” said Jane, “with fishes and conger-eels and coral and mermaids.”

13 “And masts of ships and wrecked Spanish treasure. I wish we could find a gold doubloon, or something,” Cyril said.

14 “How did the sea get carried away?” Robert asked.

15 “Not in a pail, silly,” said his brother.

16 “Father says the earth got too hot underneath, as you do in bed sometimes, so it just hunched up its shoulders, and the sea had to slip off, like the blankets do us, and the shoulder was left sticking out, and turned into dry land. Let’s go and look for shells; I think that little cave looks likely, and I see something sticking out there like a bit of wrecked ships anchor, and it’s beastly hot in the Australian hole.”

17 The others agreed, but Anthea went on digging. She always liked to finish a thing when she had once begun it. She felt it would be a disgrace to leave that hole without getting through to Australia.

2-a eucalyptus tree with blue-green aromatic leaves and smooth bark

1. Select the sentence from Passage 1 that supports the idea that the children are imaginative.

- A. “Father says it was once,’ Anthea said; ‘he says there are shells there thousands of years old.’” (paragraph 2)
- B. “Of course they had been to the edge of the gravel-pit and looked over, but they had not gone down into it for fear father should say they mustn’t play there, and it was the same with the chalk-quarry.” (paragraph 3)
- C. “The children dug and they dug and they dug, and their hands got sandy and hot and red, and their faces got damp and shiny.” (paragraph 8)
- D. “‘Fancy it having been wet sea here once, all sloppy and shiny,’ said Jane, ‘with fishes and conger-eels and coral and mermaids.’” (paragraph 12)

2. What is the effect of the personification in paragraph 16?

- A. It shows that the gravel pit is very large.
- B. It explains why the children chose to dig in the gravel pit.
- C. It explains why the children’s father wants them to avoid the gravel pit.
- D. It gives a picture of what caused the sea to disappear from the gravel pit.

3. How does the description of the setting in paragraph 5 affect the overall meaning of Passage 1?

- A. Describing the gravel pit as “like a giant’s washbowl” creates a sense of adventure.
- B. Mentioning the shape of the gravel pit explains that there used to be a beach there.
- C. Using words like “large and wide” to describe the gravel pit shows that the children must be careful.
- D. Giving the location of the gravel pit helps the reader understand how far the children walk to get there.

Day Two

Read “Pirate Story” by Robert Louis Stevenson. Using it and the Day One reading from “Beautiful as the Day” by E. Nesbit, answer the following questions.

Passage 2: Pirate Story by Robert Louis Stevenson

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,
And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we’re afloat, 5
Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here’s a squadron a-rowing on the sea— 10
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!
Quick, and we’ll escape them, they’re as mad as they can be,
The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

“Pirate Story” by Robert Louis Stevenson. In the public domain.

4. Select two lines from Passage 2 that develop the speaker’s desire for adventure.

- A. “Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,” (line 1)
- B. “Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,” (line 3)
- C. “And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.” (line 4)
- D. “Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,” (line 7)
- E. “Quick, and we’ll escape them, they’re as mad as they can be,” (line 11)

5. Part A: Which sentence states a theme that is shared by both Passage 1 and Passage 2?

- A. Creativity helps children learn.
- B. Safety is more important than having fun.
- C. Imagination makes everyday life more exciting.
- D. It is important to work at a task until it is complete.

6. Part B: Select two quotations that support the answer in Part A (#5).

- A. “The gravel-pit is not really dangerous if you don’t try to climb down the edges, but go the slow safe way round by the road, as if you were a cart.” (Passage 1, paragraph 3)
- B. “Cyril wanted to dig out a cave to play smugglers in, but the others thought it might bury them alive, so it ended in all spades going to work to dig a hole through the castle to Australia.” (Passage 1, paragraph 7)
- C. “Cyril and Anthea knew that Australia was not quite so near as all that, but they agreed to stop using the spades and to go on with their hands.” (Passage 1, paragraph 11)
- D. “Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,” (Passage 2, line 1)
- E. “Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,” (Passage 2, line 3)
- F. “Where shall we adventure, to-day that we’re afloat,” (Passage 2, line 5)

Day Three

Read the article “**Jim Bridger 1804-1881**” and answer the question that follows.

Jim Bridger 1804-1881

- 1** James Felix “Jim” Bridger’s life story is as interesting as the tall tales he used to tell. Bridger was born in Virginia in 1804. Later, his family moved to a farm near St. Louis, Missouri. At age fourteen, he went to work as a blacksmith’s apprentice. He learned how to make horseshoes and other products out of iron.
- 2** When Bridger was eighteen years old, he was the youngest member of a group that explored and mapped the Missouri River. As a part of the expedition, he was one of the first European American people to see the natural wonders of what is now Yellowstone National Park.
- 3** Yellowstone was the first in a long line of landscapes that Bridger was to encounter before others. While spending the winter of 1824–25 in what is now Cove, Utah, members of the team Bridger was with argued about which direction they thought the Bear River went. The team chose Bridger to explore the river. He ended up at the Great Salt Lake, which he mistook for an inlet of the Pacific Ocean because of the lake’s saltiness. For many years, people assumed Bridger was the first non-Native American to discover the Great Salt Lake. However, some now think that Etienne Provost, a French-Canadian trapper, may have seen it first.
- 4** Using the skills he learned while exploring the Missouri, Bridger became very good at trapping beavers for their furs, also called “pelts.” By 1830, Bridger became part owner of a company that specialized in beaver trapping. Beaver pelts were very popular for hats and clothing at the time.
- 5** Bridger’s success at trapping—as well as the growing number of people moving to the western part of America—led to the building of a trading post and fort near the Green River in Wyoming. It became known as Fort Bridger. Many people passed the fort as they traveled west on the Oregon Trail. Often, the settlers stopped to buy supplies, get their wagons fixed, and hear Jim Bridger’s stories. He became famous for telling tall tales to the people passing through.
- 6** Bridger’s stories were funny, extravagant, and often unbelievable. He would tell stories of glass mountains, “peetrified” birds singing “peetrified” songs, and talk about days when Pike’s Peak was just a hole in the ground. These outrageous stories were told both to tease new arrivals from the east and to amuse the locals who knew they weren’t true.

7 The Rocky Mountains were largely unexplored and Bridger spent many years hiking them and trapping animals. In his travels, he learned a great deal about the terrain and wildlife of the area. Because of his knowledge and skills, he became a valued guide. People often hired him to lead them across the mountains.

8 In 1850, Bridger found a short cut through the mountains of Wyoming through the Rocky Mountains. This path became known as Bridger's Pass. Because the pass shortened trips by sixty-one miles, settlers moving west frequently used it. In addition, the pass later became part of the Union Pacific Railroad. The Union Pacific was part of the Transcontinental Railroad, the first railroad to cross America from coast to coast.

9 Bridger spent twenty years working as a guide. When he retired, he went back to Missouri to live on a farm, where he died in 1881 at the age of seventy-seven. Jim Bridger is remembered for being a skilled mountain man and storyteller. Today, there are many places in the American West named in honor of Jim Bridger.

7. How does the author introduce Jim Bridger in the passage?

- A. by mentioning the tales he told
- B. by mentioning a few of the places that he discovered
- C. by describing his first career as a blacksmith's apprentice
- D. by describing the details of his first trip exploring the country

Day Four

Using the Day Three reading from “**Jim Bridger 1804-1881**,” answer the following questions.

8. Part A: What is the meaning of the word extravagant as it is used in this sentence from the passage?

**“Bridger’s stories were funny, extravagant, and often unbelievable.”
(paragraph 6)**

- A. reckless
- B. wasteful
- C. generous
- D. larger than life

9. Part B: Select (Underline) two words or phrases from the passage that help readers determine the meaning of the word in Part A (#8).

6 Bridger’s stories were funny, extravagant, and often unbelievable. He would tell stories of glass mountains, “peetrified” birds singing “peetrified” songs, and talk about days when Pike’s Peak was just a hole in the ground. These outrageous stories were told both to tease new arrivals from the east and to amuse the locals who knew they weren’t true.

10. The root of the word terrain means “earth.” Based on this information, what does the word terrain mean as it is used in the passage?

“In his travels, he learned a great deal about the terrain and wildlife of the area.” (paragraph 7)

- A. a type of soil
- B. a rugged area
- C. plants and animals
- D. features of the land

Day Five

Using the Day Three reading from “**Jim Bridger 1804-1881**,” answer the following questions.

11. Why does the author use the word “peetrified” instead of “petrified” in this sentence?

“He would tell stories of glass mountains, “peetrified” birds singing “peetrified” songs, and talk about days when Pike’s Peak was just a hole in the ground.” (paragraph 6)

Write your answer here.

12. Part A: Which statement describes Bridger’s importance as an explorer?

- A. Bridger spent many years hiking and traveling the Rocky Mountains.
- B. By the time he reached his fifties, Bridger was an experienced explorer.
- C. Bridger was the first European American to discover much of the west.
- D. Bridger had many talents besides exploring: blacksmithing, trapping, and storytelling.

13. Part B: Which statement from the passage supports the response in Part A (#12)?

- A. “At age fourteen, he went to work as a blacksmith’s apprentice.”
(paragraph 1)

- B. “Yellowstone was the first in a long line of landscapes that Bridger was to encounter before others.” (paragraph 3)

- C. “For many years, people assumed Bridger was the first non-Native American to discover the Great Salt Lake.” (paragraph 3)

- D. “Because of his knowledge and skills, he became a valued guide.”
(paragraph 7)



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ANSWERS FOR WEEK OF MARCH 14-18 READING

1. **D** (RL.6.1)
2. **D** (RL.6.4)
3. **A** (RL.6.5)
4. **D** and **E** (RL.6.1)
5. **C** (RL.6.2)
6. **B** and **F** (RL.6.2; RL.6.1)
7. **A** (RI.6.3)
8. **D** (RI.6.4; L.6.4)
9. **often unbelievable; outrageous stories** (RI.6.4; L.6.4)
10. **D** (RI.6.4; L.6.4)
11. **The answer should explain that the author uses the word “peetrified” to show how Bridger speaks. It gives the reader a sense of local color for the tall tales told by Bridger and can give insight into the dialect of the area or the lack of formal education of Bridger. It may also be showing that Bridger is able to get into character to “tease” and “amuse” his listeners.** (RI.6.1; RI.6.6)
12. **C** (RI.6.2)
13. **B** (RI.6.2; RI.6.1)