Name _____ Date _____

The Last Bus

5th Grade reading passage 1 · story

Theo had exactly three minutes to reach the bus stop. If he missed the 5:40, he'd miss his sister's first concert, and he had promised her he'd be there.

He was halfway down Elm Street when he saw it: an elderly man on the sidewalk, groceries scattered, one hand pressed to his knee. People hurried past, glancing at their phones.

Theo checked his watch. 5:38. He thought of his sister's nervous face that morning. Then he knelt down, gathered the oranges and helped the man to a bench. "Are you okay, sir?" The man nodded, smiling. "Thanks to you."

The bus roared past. Theo ran the whole two miles to the school. He slipped into the back row just as his sister walked on stage, and when she found his face in the crowd, her shoulders relaxed.

Questions

1. What choice does Theo face?

2. How does the author show that other people didn't help?

3. What is a theme? Use details to support it.

4. What can you infer from "her shoulders relaxed"?

5. Summarize the story.

Name _____ Date _____

Saving the Monarchs

5th Grade reading passage 2 · nonfiction

Each fall, millions of monarch butterflies fly up to 3,000 miles from Canada and the United States to the mountains of Mexico. It is one of the most amazing journeys in the animal world. But monarch numbers have dropped sharply over the last thirty years.

One major cause is the loss of milkweed. Monarch caterpillars can eat only milkweed, and many fields where it once grew have been plowed or paved. Without milkweed, monarchs can't lay eggs, and fewer caterpillars survive.

The good news is that people can help. Families and schools are planting milkweed in gardens, along roads and in parks. Scientists ask volunteers to count monarchs and report what they see, so they can track where the butterflies need the most help.

If enough people plant milkweed, the monarchs' great migration can continue for generations to come.

Questions

1. What is the overall text structure? Explain.

2. What is one cause of the decline, and what is its effect?

3. State two main ideas of the text.

4. Why does the author include the 3,000-mile journey?

5. Summarize the text in two sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

City Mouse, Country Mouse (a short play)

5th Grade reading passage 3 · play

CAST: COUNTRY MOUSE, CITY MOUSE. SETTING: A quiet barn, then a busy city kitchen.

Scene 1. (CITY MOUSE visits the barn.)
COUNTRY MOUSE: *(proudly)* Welcome! I saved you the best barley and corn.
CITY MOUSE: *(nibbling politely)* It's... plain. Come to the city. We feast every night!

Scene 2. (A fancy kitchen. Cake and cheese on the table.)
COUNTRY MOUSE: *(amazed)* I've never seen so much food!
(A door bangs. A cat hisses. Both mice dash into a hole.)
CITY MOUSE: *(panting)* That happens every night. You get used to it.
COUNTRY MOUSE: *(shaking)* Thank you, cousin, but I'd rather eat plain corn in peace than cake in fear. Goodbye!

Questions

1. Name two features that show this is a play.

2. How are the two settings different?

3. What do the stage directions tell you about Country Mouse in Scene 2?

4. What is the theme?

5. Whose point of view do you agree with, and why?

Answer Key

1. The Last Bus

1. Help the man and risk missing the bus, or keep going to keep his promise.
2. They hurried past, looking at their phones.
3. Doing the right thing can mean sacrificing, but it can still work out: Theo helped the man and still made it.
4. She was relieved and happy Theo came.
5. Theo was rushing to his sister's concert when he stopped to help a fallen man. He missed the bus but ran to the school and arrived just in time.

2. Saving the Monarchs

1. Problem and solution: monarchs are declining (problem) and people plant milkweed and count butterflies (solution).
2. Loss of milkweed; monarchs can't lay eggs and fewer caterpillars survive.
3. Monarchs make an amazing migration but are declining; people can help by planting milkweed.
4. To show how amazing monarchs are and make readers care.
5. Monarch butterflies are declining because milkweed is disappearing. Planting milkweed and helping scientists count monarchs can protect them.

3. City Mouse, Country Mouse (*a short play*)

1. A cast list, scenes, dialogue with names, stage directions in parentheses.
2. The barn is quiet and plain; the city kitchen is fancy but dangerous.
3. He goes from amazed to scared (shaking).
4. A simple, peaceful life is better than a rich life full of danger.
5. Answers will vary.