Pecos Bill Captures the Pacing White Mustang
by Leigh Peck

1. Pecos Bill decided to get a real cowpony, and he asked cowboys, “What’s the very best horse in these parts?”

2. They answered: “The best horse in all the world is running loose in these very hills. He runs fast as the lightning, so we call him Lightning. Others call him the Pacing White Mustang, and some even say that his real name is Pegasus. We have all tried hard to catch him, but no one has ever got close enough to him to put a rope on him or even to see him clearly. We have chased him for days, riding our very best ponies and changing horses every two hours, but he outran all our best ponies put together.”

3. But Pecos Bill told them: “I’ll not ride a cowpony when I chase this horse. I can run faster myself than any of your ponies can.”

4. So Pecos Bill threw his saddle and bridle over his shoulder and set out on foot to look for the famous wild white horse. When he got close enough to take a good look at Lightning, he saw that only the horse’s mane and tail were pure white. The beautiful animal was really a light cream or pale gold color—the color of lightning itself. The Spanish people in the Southwest call such a horse a palomino. He chased Lightning five days
and four nights, all the way from Mexico across Texas and New Mexico and Arizona and Utah and Colorado and Wyoming and Montana, clear up to Canada, and then down to Mexico again. Pecos Bill had to throw away his saddle and bridle, as they leaped across cactus-covered plains, down steep cliffs, and across canyons.

Finally Lightning got tired of running from Pecos Bill and stopped and snorted. “Very well, I’ll let you try to ride me if you think you can! Go ahead and jump on!”

Pecos Bill smiled. And he jumped on Lightning’s back, gripping the horse’s ribs with his knees and clutching the mane with his hands.

First, Lightning tried to run out from under Pecos Bill. He ran ten miles in twenty seconds! Next he jumped a mile forward and two miles backward. Then he jumped so high in the air that Pecos Bill’s head was up among the stars. Next Lightning tried to push Pecos Bill off his back by running through clumps of mesquite trees. The thorns tore poor Pecos Bill’s face.

When that failed, too, Lightning reared up on his hind legs and threw himself over backward. But Pecos Bill jumped off quickly, and before Lightning could get on his feet again, Bill sat on his shoulders and held him firmly on the ground.

“Lightning,” Pecos Bill explained, “you are the best horse in all the world, and I am the best cowboy in all the world. If you’ll let me ride you, we will become famous together, and cowboys everywhere forever and forever will praise the deeds of Pecos Bill and Lightning.”

Then Pecos Bill turned Lightning loose and told him, “You may decide. You are free to go or to stay with me.”

The beautiful horse put his nose in Pecos Bill’s hand, and said, “I want to stay with you and be your cowpony—the greatest cowpony in all the world.”

Pecos Bill and Lightning went back and found the saddle and bridle where Bill had thrown them. Lightning let Pecos Bill put the saddle on him, but he didn’t want to take the bit of the bridle into his mouth. So, Pecos Bill just put a halter on him, and guided him by pressure of the knees and by pulling on the reins of the halter.

Lightning would not let anybody but Pecos Bill ride him.
Pecos Bill most likely thinks he needs to have the very best horse because

A he wants a horse that matches his skill
B he thinks that a good horse is worth a lot of money
C he feels he has to work harder than the other cowboys
D he wants to show off in front of the other cowboys

Why does Pecos Bill take a saddle and bridle to go catch Lightning?

A He hopes they will help him find the horse.
B He believes they will get the horse to come to him.
C He wants to use them to make the horse look better.
D He thinks he will need them when he rides the horse.

Read these sentences from paragraph 7 of the story.

He ran ten miles in twenty seconds! Next he jumped a mile forward and two miles backward.

Why are these details regarding Lightning important to the theme of the story?

A They give the horse his new name.
B They show why the horse is special.
C They make the horse seem more real.
D They describe how the horse is chased.

Why is Pecos Bill's conversation with the cowboys important to the story?

A It predicts the action in paragraph 4.
B It predicts the action in paragraph 5.
C It explains the choice in paragraph 10.
D It explains the choice in paragraph 11.
Which sentence best describes the theme of this story?

A  Wild horses are meant to be free.
B  Practice is the way to improve a skill.
C  An honest person will make the most friends.
D  A great partnership requires hard work and respect.

Directions
Read this article. Then answer questions XX through XX.

When Animals Snoozzzzzzze

by Elizabeth Schleichert

1  Cat nap, anyone? Big cats are big sleepers. They may doze 12 to 20 hours a day, and in all kinds of places. Leopards sprawl out on branches. Lions and tigers doze every which way on the ground. But cats aren’t the only animals to kick back and catch some zzz’s! The animal world is filled with sleepyheads.

SNOOZING BASICS

2  But wait! What exactly is sleep? Here’s how many scientists define it: Sleep is a period of rest when an animal is less aware of its surroundings. The animal’s breathing and heartbeat slow down. And its brain waves show a pattern that is different from when the animal is awake.

3  Why do animals sleep? Many experts say sleep brings animals back to peak performance. It restores their bodies and gives them new energy to go about their normal activities. It’s kind of like recharging a cell phone.

CHILL-OUT ARTISTS

4  Bet you’re wondering if all animals sleep. Mammals and birds do, for sure. (They may also dream.) But what about other animals—reptiles, fish, amphibians, and insects, for instance? It’s not so easy to tell what’s going on with them, and experts disagree about whether they sleep.

5  Still some of these animals often look as if they’re sleeping. It’s just that their brain waves don’t show the usual sleep patterns. Who knows? Maybe they’re just having a slightly different kind of sleep.
WHATEVER WORKS!

Sleeping animals doze in different ways. Take elephants. Like you, they lie down at night. But they don’t always snooze straight through. They may rise and feed a bit, then settle back down again—averaging about five hours of sleep a night. During the day, the elephants in a herd nod off now and then. When the calves lie down to nap, the adults often gather around them in a protective circle.

Animals that are active at night often sleep during the day. Fruit bats in Africa, for example, roost (rest or sleep) in the daylight. They crowd together in trees. Here, thousands of them hang upside down by their rear feet, which automatically tighten and get a grip so the bats don’t fall.

NORTHERN NAPS

Polar bears nap when there’s nothing better to do, especially after big meals. In summer, they may flop down on ice or snow—not just to sleep, but also to cool off. With its super-warm coat, a bear can easily overheat. So it has to chill out!

Other animals living in snowy places have the opposite problem: how to stay warm while sleeping! Foxes curl up and use their tails as scarves to help keep the cold off.

FISHY TRICKS

Fish brain waves may never show sleep patterns, but many fish seem to do some serious resting. The parrotfish, for example, squeezes itself into a rocky crevice at night and puts up its very own “tent.” The tent is actually a bubble made of clear mucus. The mucus oozes from the fish’s mouth, forming a protective sac. The mucus may keep tiny pests away, as well as help hide the fish’s scent from eels and other predators. The bubble may also act as an alarm. If a predator touches it, the parrotfish “wakes up,” bursts out, and swims off.

SPLISH, SPLASH, YAWN

Water is where you’ll often find hippopotamuses sleeping, too. They loll their days away on river banks or in shallow lakes, using each other as puffy pillows. A hippo can doze nearly totally submerged but still be on the alert. That’s because its eyes, ears, and nostrils are on top of its head. But don’t be fooled by a sleeping hippo’s lazy, lumpy looks. If alarmed, it can awaken and charge a would-be attacker in an instant.

SLEEP ON THE FLY?

An albatross spends most of its life gliding on wind currents at sea. How does it find time to sleep? Experts aren’t sure. The bird may alight on the water’s surface and sleep there. Or, while flying, it may close down half of its brain—keeping the other half awake—for several seconds at a time.
PAUSE THAT REFRESHERS

Many grazing animals live out in the open. They have to be on guard, ready to run from danger. So they often snatch short naps. Horses, for instance, sleep for only a few minutes at a time, often while standing. A horse's legs can “lock” in place, so the animal can sleep without the risk of falling down!

So now you know what's up when animals settle down!

According to the article, why might an elephant rise in the middle of sleeping?

A  to get something to eat  
B  to watch over the calves  
C  to find the rest of the herd  
D  to protect itself from enemies

Read these sentences from paragraph 11 of the article.

A hippo can doze nearly totally submerged but still be on the alert. That's because its eyes, ears, and nostrils are on top of its head.

What is the meaning of “submerged” as it is used here?

A  relaxed  
B  on the shore  
C  sound asleep  
D  beneath the surface

Which detail from the article explains why grazing animals sleep for short periods of time?

A  They can sleep while standing.  
B  They only require a little sleep.  
C  They need more time for eating.  
D  They need to be ready for danger.
Which sentence supports the idea that scientists are not certain that all animals sleep?

A  “Many experts say sleep brings animals back to peak performance.” (paragraph 3)
B  “It’s just that their brain waves don’t show the usual sleep patterns.” (paragraph 5)
C  “An albatross spends most of its life gliding on wind currents at sea.” (paragraph 12)
D  “They have to be on guard, ready to run from danger.” (paragraph 13)

What do fruit bats and horses have in common?

A  Both “sleep” at night.
B  Both “sleep” near others.
C  Both “sleep” in a way that they won’t fall.
D  Both “sleep” out in the open for protection.

Which sentence best states a main idea of this article?

A  “Big cats are big sleepers.” (paragraph 1)
B  “Maybe they’re just having a slightly different kind of sleep.” (paragraph 5)
C  “Sleeping animals doze in different ways.” (paragraph 6)
D  “Animals that are active at night often sleep during the day.” (paragraph 7)
Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions XX through XX.

Excerpt from Lawn Boy

by Gary Paulsen

1 Okay. Since I was twelve, I didn’t have much experience with motors. I’ve never even had a dirt bike or four-wheeler. I’m just not machine oriented.

2 My birthday present sat there. I tried pushing it toward our garage, but it didn’t seem to want to move. Even turning around to put my back against it and push with my legs—which I thought might give me better leverage—didn’t help; it still sat there.

3 So I studied it. On the left side of the motor was a small gas tank, and I unscrewed the top and looked in. Yep, gas. On top of the tank were two levers; the first was next to pictures of a rabbit and a turtle. Even though I’m not good with machines, I figured out that was the throttle and the pictures meant fast and slow. The other lever said ON-OFF. I pushed ON.

4 Nothing happened, of course. On the very top of the motor was a starting pull-rope. What the heck, why not? I gave it a jerk and the motor sputtered a little, popped once, then died. I pulled the rope again and the motor hesitated, popped, and then roared to life. I jumped back. No muffler.

5 Once when I was little, my grandmother, in her usual logic-defying fashion, answered my request for another cookie by saying that my grandfather had been a tinkerer. “He was always puttering with things, taking them apart, putting them back together. When he was around nothing ever broke. Nothing ever dared to break.”
Loud as the mower was, it still wasn’t moving and the blade wasn’t going around. I stood looking down at it.

This strange thing happened.

It spoke to me.

Well, not really. I’m not one of those woo-woo people or a wack job. At least I don’t think I was. Maybe I am now.

Anyway, there was some message that came from the mower through the air and into my brain. A kind of warm, or maybe settled feeling. Like I was supposed to be there and so was the mower. The two of us.

Like it was a friend. So all right, I know how that sounds too: We’ll sit under a tree and talk to each other. Read poems about mowing. Totally wack.

But the feeling was there.

Next I found myself sitting on the mower, my feet on the pedals. I moved the throttle to the rabbit position—it had been on turtle—and pushed the left pedal down, and the blade started whirring. The mower seemed to give a happy leap forward off the sidewalk and I was mowing the lawn.

Or dirt. As I said, we didn’t really have much of a lawn. Dust and bits of dead grass flew everywhere and until I figured out the steering, the mailbox, my mother’s flowers near the front step and a small bush were in danger.

But in a few minutes I got control of the thing and I sheared off what little grass there was.

The front lawn didn’t take long, but before I was done the next-door neighbor came to the fence, attracted by the dust cloud. He waved me over.

I stopped in front of him, pulled the throttle back and killed the engine. The sudden silence was almost deafening. I stood up away from the mower, my ears humming, so I could hear him.

“You mow lawns?” he asked. “How much?”

And that was how it started.

What does the narrator most likely mean when he says he is “not machine oriented”? (paragraph 1)

A. He has no use for machines.
B. He is afraid to operate machines.
C. He has not seen very many machines.
D. He knows little about how machines work.
What is the most likely reason the narrator is pushing the lawn mower in paragraph 2?

A  He is afraid the mower will not start.
B  He does not want the mower to sit outside.
C  He needs more time to examine the mower.
D  He is not familiar with how to start the mower.

In paragraph 5, the narrator remembers a story his grandmother told him about his grandfather. The effect this story has on the narrator is to

A  remind him of how little he knows about machines
B  encourage him to keep trying
C  amuse him while he is doing uninteresting work
D  show him that he needs to work faster

In paragraph 8, when the narrator says that the mower spoke to him, he most likely meant that he suddenly

A  became more confident about using the mower
B  enjoyed the sound of the running motor of the mower
C  understood how the different parts of the mower work
D  became more interested in using the mower to make money

The illustration best helps the reader to understand

A  paragraph 4
B  paragraph 6
C  paragraph 15
D  paragraph 17
Which phrase best describes how the narrator changes from the beginning of the story to the end?

A. from patient to hurried
B. from uncertain to confident
C. from curious to nervous
D. from determined to grateful

Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions XX through XX.

The Cave of the Oilbird
by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim

1. I'm nine years old today, and Manueto has a surprise for me. "Happy birthday, Carla," he calls when he sees me. "I am going to take you into the rain forest today! Deeper and farther than you have ever been, because I want you to discover the cave of the oilbirds. That's my present to you." He puts a flashlight and mosquito repellent into his back pocket. "We'll need these," he explains. I can tell from his voice, he's excited. I'm excited, too.

2. I have a question. "Manuelo, you've been to the cave, and many other people have been to the cave. How can I discover something that has already been discovered?"

3. My brother squats down beside me when we talk, because he is very tall. "Every time someone sees something for the first time," he answers quietly, "it is a discovery." I think Manueto is very wise.

4. We start down the path that leads away from our house into the forest. The sun is shooting golden arrows through the canopy of thick leathery leaves. Some of them are shaped like canoe paddles. Manueto and I walk slowly. I love my rain forest. The earth is moist and red, and there is no grass or shrubs. The bulging roots prop up ancient trees with names like milk and monkeypot and incense.

5. "When will we get to the cave?" I look up at Manueto.
“Wait.” Manuelo puts a finger to his lips. I think I know what he means. In the rain forest you really should not speak. You look and you listen.

We have been walking for a very long time. The path is dropping sharply now. I hear water gurgling. I want to race ahead, but I don’t. Manuelo peers through the trees. He walks a short distance into the forest, then comes back to the path. He once told me that if you hurry in the rain forest, you could miss something very interesting and very beautiful. And he’s right.

Suddenly we are standing in front of a rock cliff with shallow water bubbling over brown and yellow stones. In the cliff is a dark opening. The bellbird clangs out. My heart is pounding, and I hold Manuelo’s hand tightly as we step from one slippery stone to another, till we are close to the mouth of the cave.

Manuelo turns on his flashlight and runs the light along the cave walls. At first I don’t see anything except sharp rocks sticking out from the sides of the cave. I open my eyes as wide as I can, till I feel wrinkles in my forehead. I peer and peer. Then! I see two red dots appear—two more and two more. And then! Around those red dots faces begin to shape. Faces with stiff whiskers pointing downward on each side of hooked beaks. The faces are still as stones, not moving even one bit, and the eyes are staring without a blink.

“The oilbirds!” My brother mouths the words. He has the same look on his face as the time when the motmot bird perched in the immortelle tree outside our house. Manuelo still moves the light up and down the walls, and I can see another pair of eyes and then another and another. And more and more heads appear around the eyes—serious heads with whiskers and hooked beaks—silent and still like statues. There must be hundreds! I feel goose bumps rising all over me. Are the oilbirds staring at me? I shiver, and Manuelo pulls me close to him. There isn’t a sound except the water gurgling over the stones.

I don’t know how long we stand in the cave of the oilbirds—but it must be a very long time. When Manuelo turns off his flashlight, we start back across the stones and up the path.

“Did you like the oilbirds, Carla? What have you been thinking?” Manuelo asks me.

I don’t answer right away. But I have been thinking.

“Oh, Manuelo, that was the best birthday present ever,” I whisper. “Will you take me here again, please, please?”

He smiles. “Of course I will. There are very few oilbirds left in the world. We must protect them so that other children can discover them.”

My brother is very wise. I don’t think I will make another discovery as special as this one for a long, long time.
Why is the setting of “The Cave of the Oilbird” important? Use two details from the story to support your response.

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What has Manueleo's gift taught Carla about discovering new things? Use two details from the story to support your response.

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Directions

Read the following passages. Answer the short and extended responses that follow. Short answer responses should be scored with the 2-point rubric. Extended responses should be scored with the 4-point rubric.

Call of the Wild

by Debra A. Bailey

1. Its body stretched flat in the water, the hunter swims toward the prey. One hop, and the hunter is out of the water, snatching its catch. Licking its lips, it prepares to devour its meal.

2. A ruthless killer? An unlucky victim? Nope. The hunter is a fluffy muskrat, looking more like a bedroom slipper than a dangerous predator. Its prey is an apple slice, hidden in an exhibit at the Museum of Life and Science in Durham, N.C.

3. The “hunt” is part of a game called enrichment. And it’s happening at zoos all over the country.

Game of Life

4. When zoo animals are put on display with nothing to do, they get bored, upset and even sick. That’s especially alarming if the animals are threatened or endangered and don’t breed because they feel uncomfortable.

5. That’s where enrichment—anything that helps animals act and feel as if they are back in the wild—comes in. Natural-looking exhibits, hidden foods, weird smells and even toys are used to promote wild behaviors such as hunting, playing, sniffing and stalking.

6. “Wild muskrats like to look for their food,” says Thea Staab, a Museum of Life and Science animal keeper. That’s why she hides apple slices on tree limbs and sweet potatoes behind fake rocks.

Dip Sticks

7. The same thing goes for the chimpanzees at the Oregon Zoo™ in Portland.

Oregon Zoo is the registered service mark of the Oregon Zoo and Metro Corporation.
In the wild, chimps poke sticks into termite mounds to catch a tasty snack. So the zoo built fake termite mounds in the chimp exhibit.

“Animals have to work for their food in nature,” says Dr. Blair Csuti, conservation coordinator for the zoo. “This presents their food the way it is in the wild.”

Of course, the zookeepers don’t use real termites—they might eat the exhibit instead of the chimps eating them! Instead, the mound is filled with tasty hot sauce and mustard, perfect for dipping.

**Tall Order**

What do you do when giraffes lick the walls because they have no leafy trees to nibble?

“We take something that looks like giant frozen Lifesavers® candy made of chunks of bananas, apples and carrots,” says conservation program assistant Cathy Dubreuil of the Calgary Zoo in Alberta, Canada. “Then we hang it from the ceiling.”

The result? Giraffes lick the ice to free the food—and forget about the walls.

And then there are smells.

“Animals just like to sniff things,” says Janine Antrim, behavior specialist for the San Diego Zoo in California. “We’ll rub the logs in the bear exhibit with fabric softener sheets, and they love it. They’ll spend hours rubbing and sniffing those spots.”

If you think fabric softener sounds strange, wait till you watch a bear roll around in perfume, aftershave . . . and elephant dung.

Whatever makes them happy!

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Lifesavers is the registered trademark of the Nabisco Brands Company.
How do the zookeepers use food to improve the lives of animals? Use two details from the article to support your response.

Elephants Don’t Wear Boots

by Lisa Hart

1. Did you ever wonder while snuggling up in your winter coat, how zoo lions keep warm? Did you ever picture when pulling on your hat and mittens, a flamingo wearing a scarf? Did you ever consider as you put on your winter boots that elephants do not wear boots?

2. The lions stretched out on the rocks at the zoo share a secret. The hot rocks they lie on are not real. Heaters hidden under the fake stones keep the big cats cozy warm. Zoos use lots of little tricks to help the animals in their care fight off the chill of winter. Keepers warm up the water in swimming pools for residents like the otters.

3. Animals such as deer and elk find outside shelter in three-sided barns with extra bedding.

4. Nature allows many animals like flamingos to adapt to some cold even if they come from a warm climate. And if the temperatures dip too low for comfort, keepers simply bring the animals inside.
All this extra time indoors presents a challenge for zoo keepers. For one thing, animals need exercise to make up for the time spent cooped up. A new toy or a small change in schedule gives a bored beast something to look forward to. Hiding some food treats lets animals do what comes naturally: hunt for their meal.

Sometimes a zoo resident’s diet needs changing during the winter too. Zoos give more food to those who build fat to keep warm or become more active. Animals that burn less energy in the winter need less food.

Forget the snow and the cold. Ice presents the real danger at zoos in winter. A frozen-over watering hole leaves an animal to go thirsty, spelling disaster. A slip on the ice in an enclosure leads to deadly, serious injuries. Some animals like elephants never see ice in the wild. Nature did not give them feet designed for walking on it.

So once you snuggle into your coat and pull on your hat, mittens, and boots, pay a visit to a local zoo in winter. You might be surprised at who you see enjoying the snow.

Why is paragraph 1 of “Elephants Don't Wear Boots” an effective introduction? Use two details from the article to support your response.
Why are there challenges to caring for zoo animals in the winter? Use two details from the article to support your response.

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(Extended Response- You may need to add lines or ask students to use loose-leaf to continue their response.)

How are the topics of “Call of the Wild” and “Elephants Don’t Wear Boots” similar? How are the topics of both articles different? Use details from both articles to support your response.

In your response, be sure to
• explain how the topics of “Call of the Wild” and “Elephants Don’t Wear Boots” are similar
• explain how the topics of both articles are different
• use details from both articles to support your response

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