

Up in the Air

by Daniel Scheffler



Kurt closed the door of his mother's car with great excitement. Today was the day he was finally going to be on a plane. For the first time in his life, he was going to actually soar through the skies and see the clouds from all the angles he had imagined since he was little.

"Are you excited my boy?" said Kurt's mother, Val, from the front of the car.

"I can't believe today's the day!" said Kurt.

"Believe it!" responded Kurt's older brother Joachim as he lifted his head from his mobile phone for just a second to speak to Kurt.

The car ride felt like forever, but that's because Kurt could not wait to get to the airport and see this adventure through. It felt like they were stuck in traffic for hours and all the cars were moving slowly just to drive Kurt crazy. But actually they arrived at the airport in just a few minutes.

Val parked their car in the underground parking lot and found a steel trolley to load the suitcases and the hatbox she always took with her on a journey. Joachim never helped with

anything, so Kurt knew he was the best man for the job. He helped his mother load the trolley neatly and pushed it towards the terminal building proudly.

It was bigger than Kurt thought it would be. It was a massive building filled with hundreds of people looking around and rushing to get to wherever they were going. He immediately felt the rush of energy as he walked towards the check-in desk.

He watched as Val took out their passports and gave them to the friendly lady on the other side of the desk. His mother asked Joachim to help lift the bags onto the scale so that they could get weighed and checked in. But he wasn't listening. Kurt gloated as he lifted the bags and put them on the designated scale. The check-in lady was overly friendly and appreciative of his help. He loved the feeling.

Val was handed some tickets and off they went to security. After what felt like a long wait in line, the security officer asked Kurt to empty his pockets and put his bag through the big X-ray scanner. Kurt had never done this before and felt a little nervous. It was such a big and scary machine that started beeping loudly as the elderly woman in front of him walked through.

Kurt started to feel more confident now as he walked through the machine. Not a beep. He waited for his family to come through security as he grabbed his bag. Suddenly, he saw the plane through the massive glass windows. It was huge! And it looked much bigger than what it looked like in his dreams.

Kurt ran down the ramp towards the gate. After a few minutes, the plane was ready for boarding. Everyone lined up and showed their tickets. Walking on a ramp down towards the plane, Kurt nearly tripped from all the excitement. And then he arrived, he was one foot away from the plane and finally feeling like a grown up who would fly all over the globe.

The air steward took his ticket and showed him down the aisle to his seat. Kurt ran ahead of his mother and brother and immediately sat down in his seat, buckling his seat belt. With his eyes firmly on the wing of the plane, he was waiting for everyone to sit down so that he could feel that weightlessness that everyone talks about at school when a plane takes off.

The plane started to move, and reversed slightly. Moving like a giant metal bird, the plane taxied towards the runway. Kurt clenched his mother's hand. The plane started to speed up, faster than Kurt has ever gone in his life in any car or boat. And then, as if by magic, the plane lifted off the ground. And Kurt knew this would be the first of many adventures that started this way.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is Kurt doing for the first time in his life?

- A. traveling
- B. driving
- C. going on a trip with his mom and brother
- D. flying on a plane

2. What critical event happens at the end of the story?

- A. Kurt walks on a ramp towards the plane and nearly trips from all the excitement.
- B. Kurt goes through security at the airport for the first time.
- C. The plane lifts off the ground and Kurt experiences flying in a plane for the first time.
- D. Kurt, Val, and Joachim drive to the airport.

3. What evidence from the text suggests that Kurt may have been looking forward to being on a plane for a while?

- A. Kurt had dreams about planes.
- B. Kurt clenches his mother's hand when the plane taxis toward the runway.
- C. Kurt ran ahead of his mother and brother towards the plane.
- D. Kurt helped to lift the bags on the designated scale at the check-in desk.

4. Which statement best describes Kurt and Joachim?

- A. Neither Kurt nor Joachim is excited and eager about the trip.
- B. Kurt is very eager and respectful. Joachim is distant and not interested.
- C. Both Kurt and Joachim are very excited about the trip.
- D. Kurt is not eager and respectful. Joachim is helpful and excited.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A. what airports are like
- B. Kurt's relationship with Joachim
- C. Kurt's experience on his first plane trip
- D. how large airplanes are

6. Read the following sentence: "The car ride felt like forever, but that's because Kurt could not wait to get to the airport and **see this adventure through.**"

What does the phrase "**see this adventure through**" most nearly mean?

- A. look at the adventure from a distance
- B. complete the adventure
- C. look at the adventure through a window
- D. cancel the adventure

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ the plane taxied towards the runway, Kurt clenched his mother's hand.

- A. Therefore
- B. However
- C. So
- D. As

8. Describe Kurt's experience and how he felt as he went through security.

9. Explain how Kurt reacted when the plane started to move and then lift off the ground.

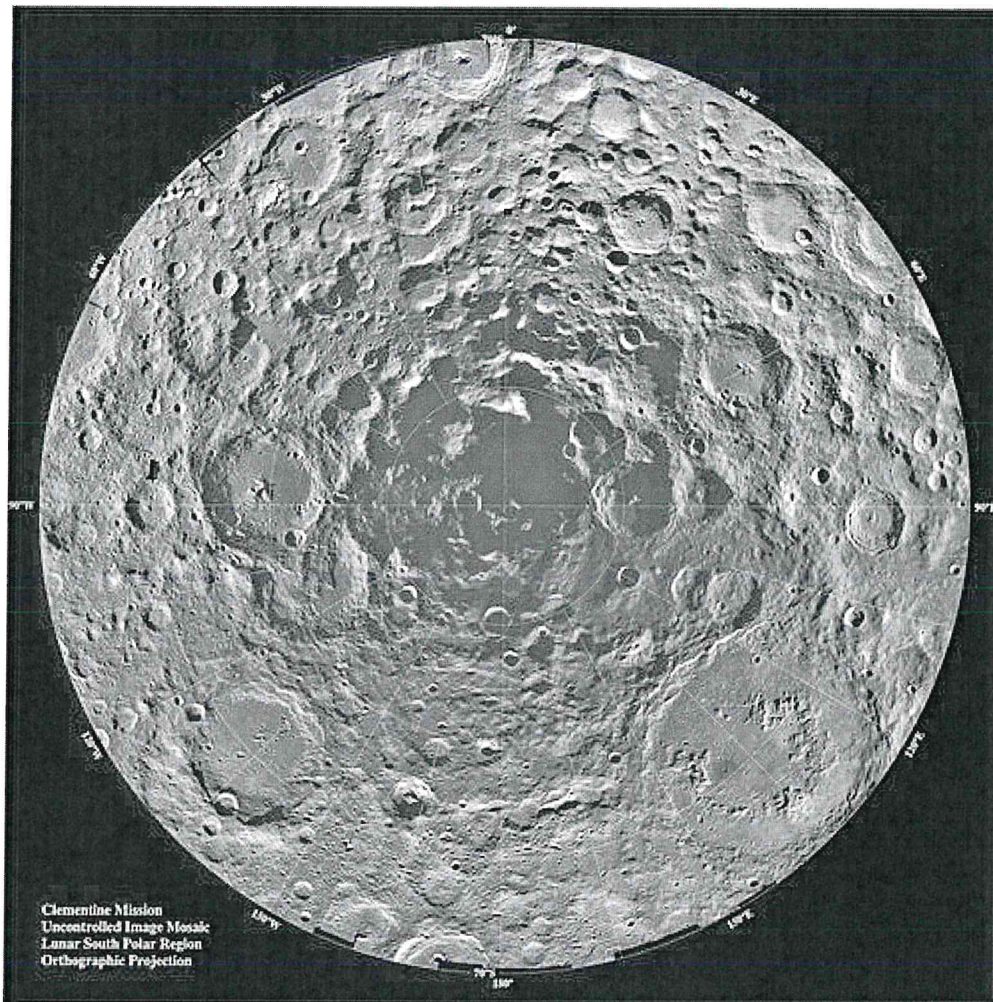
10. Explain which experience or experiences from the story most likely had the biggest impact on Kurt and his desire to go on more adventures.

Why Is the Moon So Scarred with Craters?

This text is from NASA Space Place.

An asteroid or meteor is more likely to fall toward Earth than the moon because our planet's stronger gravity attracts more space debris. But we can see many thousands of craters on the moon and we only know of about 180 on Earth! Why is that?

The truth is both the Earth and the moon have been hit many, many times throughout their long 4.5 billion year history.



NASA/JPL/USGS

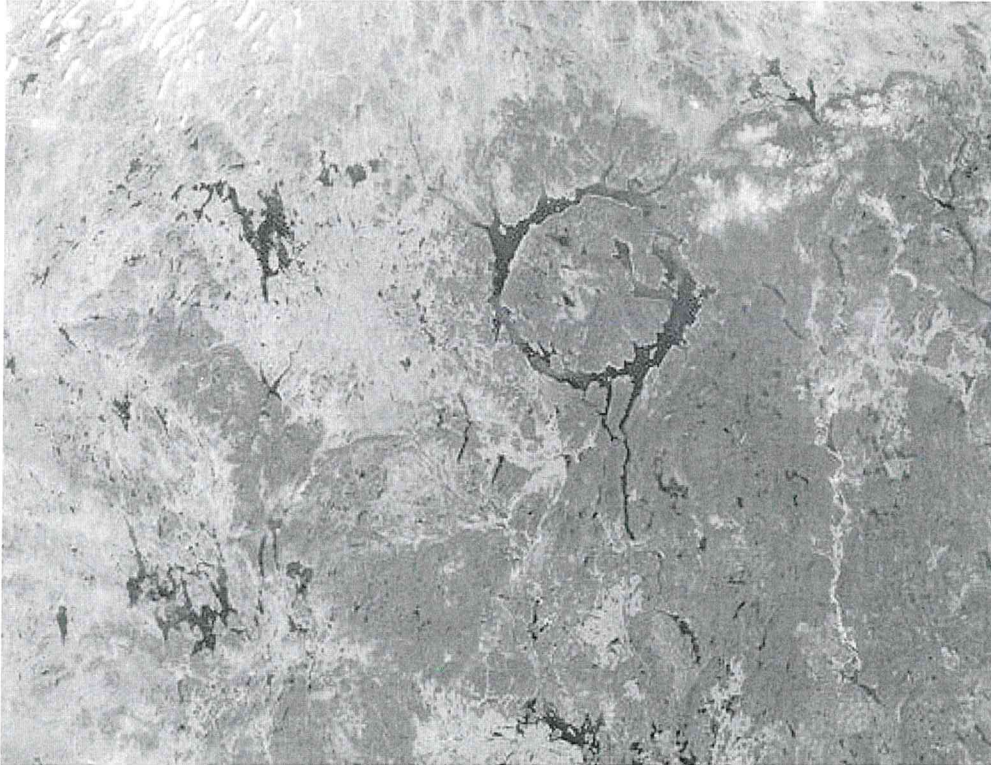
This view of the moon's cratered South Pole was seen by NASA's Clementine spacecraft in 1996.

Where did all of Earth's craters go?

The main difference between the two is that Earth has processes that can erase almost all evidence of past impacts. The moon does not. Pretty much any tiny dent made on the moon's

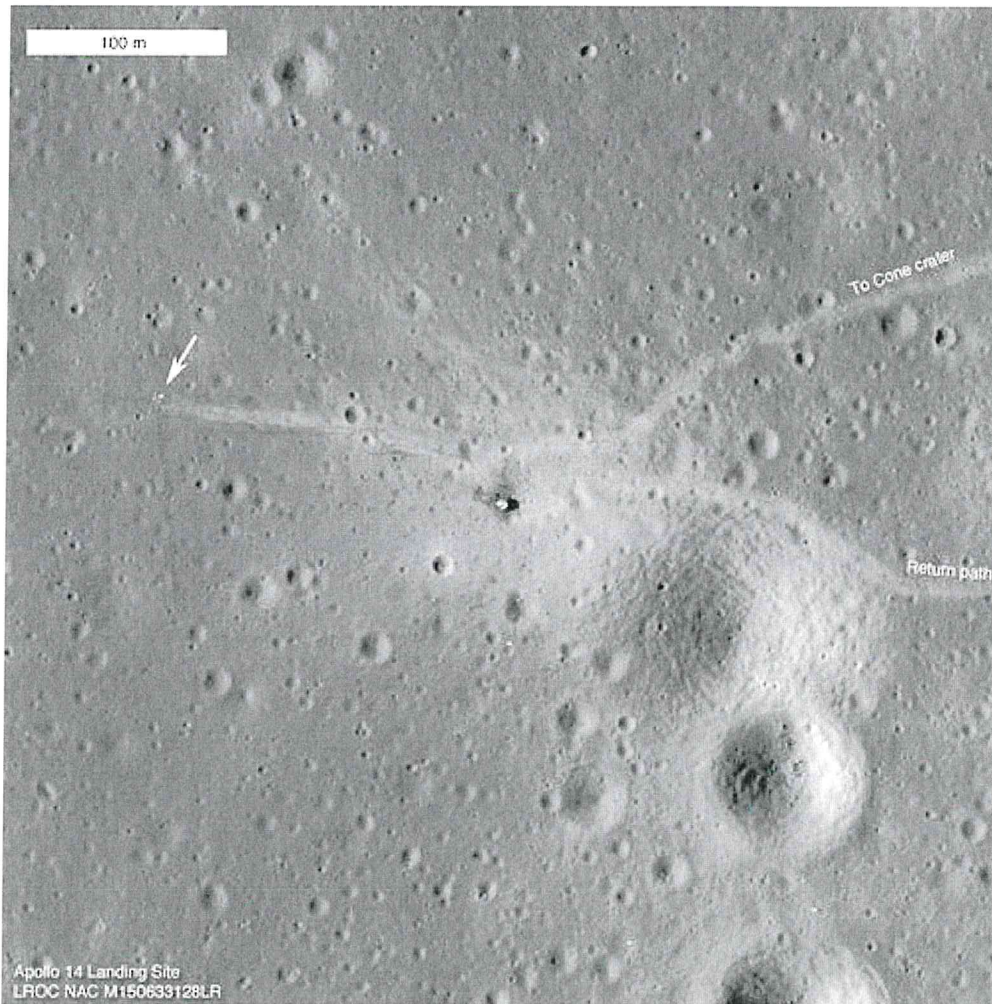
surface is going to stay there.

Three processes help Earth keep its surface crater free. The first is called erosion. Earth has weather, water, and plants. These act together to break apart and wear down the ground. Eventually erosion can break a crater down to virtually nothing.



NASA/GSFC/LaRC/JPL/MISR Team

Lake Manicouagan, a ring-shaped lake in Quebec, Canada, is all that remains of a crater from a massive impact over 200 million years ago.



NASA/LRO

Though they were made in 1971, these Apollo 14 astronauts' tracks were easily viewed from a NASA spacecraft in orbit around the moon in 2011 (tracks highlighted in yellow).

The moon has almost no erosion because it has no atmosphere. That means it has no wind, it has no weather, and it certainly has no plants. Almost nothing can remove marks on its surface once they are made. The dusty footsteps of astronauts who once walked on the moon are still there today, and they aren't going anywhere anytime soon.

The second thing is something called tectonics. Tectonics are processes that cause our planet's surface to form new rocks, get rid of old rocks, and shift around over millions of years.

Because of tectonics, the surface of Earth is recycled many times throughout its long history. As a result, very few rocks on Earth are as old as the rocks on the moon. The moon has not had tectonics for billions of years. That's a lot more time for craters to form and stay put.

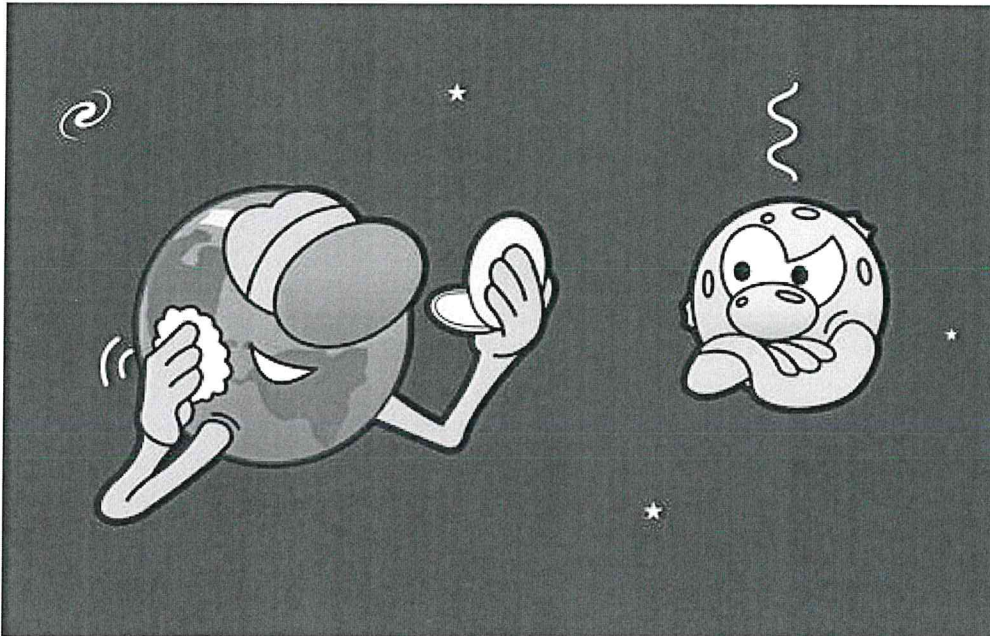
The third thing is volcanism. Volcanic flows can cover up impacts craters. This is a major way

impact craters get covered up elsewhere in our solar system, but it is less important than the recycling of crust here on Earth. The moon once had large volcanic flows way in the past that did cover up many of the bigger earlier impacts, but it has been without volcanism for around three billion years.

A powerless moon

The moon may attract fewer bits of space rock than the Earth, but the moon is powerless to do anything about it after it has been hit. Once something hits the moon, that event becomes frozen in time. Earth, on the other hand, simply brushes these impact craters off and moves on with its life.

No wonder there are so many craters on the moon compared to Earth!



NASA

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why does the Earth have fewer craters than the moon?

- A. The Earth has a stronger gravitational field and attracts more debris than the moon.
- B. The Earth is bigger than the moon.
- C. The Earth has processes that can erase almost all evidence of past impacts. The moon does not.
- D. The moon attracts fewer bits of space rock than the Earth.

2. What does this passage describe?

- A. This passage describes the three processes that help Earth keep its surface crater free.
- B. This passage describes the dusty footsteps of astronauts that you can still see on the moon today.
- C. This passage describes the 180 craters that you can still see on Earth.
- D. This passage describes the way volcanism covers up craters everywhere in our solar system.

3. Read these sentences from the text:

"Three processes help Earth keep its surface crater free. The first is called erosion. Earth has weather, water, and plants. These act together to break apart and wear down the ground. Eventually erosion can break a crater down to virtually nothing."

What can be concluded about Earth's surface based on this information?

- A. Earth's surface looks exactly the same as the moon's surface.
- B. Earth's surface is constantly changing
- C. Earth's surface has been the same for thousands of years.
- D. Earth's surface will eventually be completely smooth.

4. Based on the information in the text, what do you think would happen to Earth's surface if erosion, tectonics, and volcanism suddenly stopped occurring?

- A. Earth would continue to erase evidence of past impacts.
- B. Earth would have fewer craters.
- C. Earth would stop erasing evidence of past and future impacts.
- D. Earth would be completely smooth.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Tectonics are processes that cause our planet's surface to form new rocks, get rid of old rocks, and shift around over millions of years.
- B. The process of erosion uses weather, water, and plants to break down the ground on earth so that craters become virtually nothing.
- C. The Earth's gravity is stronger than the moon's, so it attracts more space debris than the moon does.
- D. Unlike the Earth, the moon does not have processes that remove craters from its surface.

6. Read the following sentences from the text:

"Three processes help Earth keep its surface crater free. The first is called erosion. Earth has weather, water, and plants. These act together to break apart and wear down the ground. Eventually erosion can break a crater down to virtually nothing."

As used in the passage, what does the word "process" mean?

- A. a way of thinking
- B. a set of changes that happen one after another
- C. a shield that Earth uses to protect itself from craters
- D. a way of moving forward

7. Choose the answer that best fits the sentence.

Once something hits the moon, that event becomes frozen in time. _____, Earth simply brushes these impact craters off and moves on with its life.

- A. for example
- B. therefore
- C. in contrast
- D. including

8. Why does the moon almost have no erosion?

9. Explain why the author calls the moon "powerless."

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Explain what you think the moon's surface will look like in a million years if asteroids and meteors stopped hitting its surface?

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

When Lightning Strikes

Thunder provides a wake-up call to head indoors.



World Almanac for Kids

"When thunder roars, go indoors," says meteorologist Ron Holle.

Scientists say lightning strikes the surface of Earth about 100 times each second. Thunderstorms are most frequent during the spring and summer. Experts warn people to be especially aware of the dangers of lightning during those seasons.

Forces of Nature

Lightning is the flash of light that occurs when electricity moves between clouds or between a cloud and the ground. The huge spark of electricity is like the tiny kind you get when you run a comb through your hair or scuff your feet on a carpet—only much stronger.

A lightning bolt that crackles through the air can reach a temperature of 60,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That is about five times hotter than the sun! The intense heat from lightning causes the surrounding air to expand, resulting in the loud sound known as thunder.

Thunder is nature's warning to head indoors. As meteorologist Ron Holle from Tucson, Arizona told *Weekly Reader*, "When thunder roars, go indoors." A meteorologist is a scientist who studies weather.

Holle also recommends following the 30-30 rule. If you hear thunder fewer than 30 seconds after you see lightning, head indoors—the storm is only about 6 miles away. After the storm

ends, wait 30 minutes before going outside. To determine how far away lightning is, count the seconds between the flash and the thunder. Every 10 seconds equals 2 miles.

Play It Safe

Lightning strikes the ground in the United States about 25 million times each year! Although getting hit by lightning is unlikely, it is important to stay safe. In the United States, about 60 people are killed each year by lightning.

To stay safe, follow the golden rule-head for cover. "There is no place outside that is safe from lightning," Holle said firmly. "There are two safe places-inside a [permanent] building or a metal-topped vehicle."

Lightning Safety Tips

Lightning expert Ron Holle shared the following tips with *Weekly Reader*:

- Find shelter in a building or a metal-topped vehicle (not a convertible), and close the windows.
- If you're caught outdoors, stay away from open spaces, and avoid standing near tall objects, such as trees.
- Avoid using electrical equipment, such as computers, TVs, and phones. (Cell phones are safe to use.)
- Stay away from sinks and showers. Lightning can travel through water pipes.
- Wait 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or flash of lightning before going outside.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is the golden rule of lightning safety?

- A. Don't stand under trees.
- B. Avoid using electronics.
- C. Stay away from open spaces.
- D. Head for cover.

2. What does the author describe at the end of the passage?

- A. how to stay safe from lightning
- B. how lightning is created
- C. how thunder is created
- D. what a meteorologist is

3. The time between a lightning strike and thunder indicates the distance of the storm.

What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. "Thunder is nature's warning to head indoors."
- B. "Count the seconds between the flash and the thunder. Every 10 seconds equals 2 miles."
- C. "Wait 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder or flash of lightning before going outside."
- D. "If you hear thunder fewer than 30 seconds after you see lightning, head indoors."

4. "Find shelter in a building or a metal-topped vehicle (not a convertible), and close the windows."

Based on this safety tip, what can you conclude about the safety of cars during lightning?

- A. All cars, regardless of type, will protect you from lightning.
- B. B Cars are less safe than buildings during lightning.
- C. The rubber tires of a car protect you from lightning.
- D. The metal roof of a car protects you from lightning.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. why lightning storms are dangerous
- B. the relationship between thunder and lightning
- C. facts about lightning and safety tips
- D. how meteorologists study the weather

6. Read the following sentence: "The intense heat from lightning causes the surrounding air to expand, resulting in the loud sound known as thunder."

What does the word "resulting" mean?

- A. to allow someone to do something
- B. to become smaller
- C. to make a quiet noise
- D. to cause something to happen

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

It is important to stay safe during thunderstorms, _____ it is unlikely that you will be struck by lightning during your lifetime.

- A. initially
- B. moreover
- C. in summary
- D. even though

8. Define lightning.

9. What is the 30-30 rule?

10. Explain how the timing between lightning and thunder can help you stay safe during a thunderstorm.

Growing Up Outside

by ReadWorks

Jonah stared into the trunk of his father's car, and his shoulders dropped.

"I have to carry these?" He looked at the tent poles and tarps in the back of the car with dread. "I've never set up the tent before, Dad."

"It's a rite of passage," said his father, who was taking some fishing poles from the backseat. "You're old enough to set that up now."

"I'm barely eleven," grumbled Jonah, as he struggled with the tent bag. It felt heavy and clumsy, and he dropped it after a few steps-fortunately, right where he was supposed to pitch it anyway.

After dragging the tarp and the tent poles over, too, Jonah set to work on building camp while his father cleaned up the car from their trip, occasionally glancing at his son's progress. Jonah wasn't doing too well. The tent poles were tangled, the tarps weren't spread straight, and after nearly an hour of fighting with the whole thing, Jonah lost his cool.

"DAD. HOW CAN YOU JUST SIT THERE AND WATCH ME? I NEED HELP!" Jonah yelled, frustration bringing tears to his eyes.

"Kiddo, it's always hardest the first time you do it, but then you know how to do it better," his father said. "It's a learning experience. I learned how to do this at your age, too."

To that, Jonah had no reply. His father had been camping since he was five, and setting up his own tent since he was eleven. He'd come from a family that liked taking outdoor vacations, and continued the tradition as an adult-every year, he and some of his best friends from childhood went on a fishing trip, and when they began to start families, brought their own children. Jonah had gone on his first trip in the first grade, but was never allowed on the fishing boat-that was reserved for the adults. Jonah and the other boys always just fished from the docks.

What seemed so unfair to him now was the fact that he was stuck setting up the tent alone for the first time (for all of his previous trips, he got to just have fun-he was a kid, after all!), but wasn't going to be allowed out on the lake with the grown-ups. How unfair! *I can't believe I'm doing the adult work but not getting to enjoy the perks*, he thought.

Out loud, he said, "Just because you did something when you were a kid doesn't mean I have

to do it the exact same way."

"No, that's true, Jonah," his dad replied, "but I don't see why we can't give it a try anyway."

Jonah was stubborn, and didn't want to seem like he was giving up, so he kept working on the tent. Finally, he had it set up, and while it had taken him over an hour to do so, it looked, at last, just right.

Before building a campfire, Jonah and his dad went for a short hike to the boat launch, where his father would motor out onto the lake, leaving Jonah with a line to cast off the dock. Jonah knew better than to pester his dad about joining. None of his father's friends' kids had ever been on the boat, and the adults always just said *wait till you're older*. Jonah wondered if "older" would ever come.

When they got back to the campsite, Jonah's dad sprung another task on him: building the campfire.

"You want me to do *what?*" gasped Jonah. He was partially excited, but partially angry.

"You've watched me do it a hundred times," his dad replied. "I'll help you if it doesn't get burning after a few tries, but I think you can try."

How on earth am I allowed to build the campfire but not allowed to get in the fishing boat? It's like a club, and I'm not invited, except to do chores, Jonah thought. He started building a little tepee of small bits of wood, though, and got a fire going.

"Good job, kiddo! First try!"

Jonah's dad opened up their cooler and got out some food for their dinner. Even though part of Jonah was proud of starting the fire so easily, he was still miffed that he was suddenly assuming more responsibility on the camping trip...without being invited on the fishing boat the next day. He and his father ate quietly, and Jonah, of course, had to do the dishes.

* * *

The next morning, Jonah woke up after his father had already left the tent. When he poked his head outside, there was dad, sipping a mug of coffee and fiddling with some fishing equipment.

"Morning, Jonah!"

"Hi, Dad. Are you leaving already?"

"Not quite yet. I need some help with this stuff," and he motioned for Jonah to come out of the tent.

Jonah crawled out, the tent flaps wetting his hair with dew. He felt a knot of anger start to sprout in his chest; he didn't want to have to pack up gear for a trip he was too young to go on. But when he walked to the car, his dad's bag was already full, and instead, his father tossed an empty knapsack to him.

"What's this?" Jonah asked.

"It's your empty bag," his dad replied, "and I suggest you fill it up and grab a pole, because we're leaving in five."

"Wait, what? I can go with you? Aren't I too young? Didn't you have to wait until you were a teenager to go on the fishing boat with your dad?"

"Just because I did something as a kid doesn't mean we have to do it the exact same way," his father replied, smiling.

"But..." Jonah protested, but started packing his bag anyway.

"Hey, no buts. I'm the boss, okay? In my mind, you earned it," said his dad, standing two fishing poles against the car. "Welcome to the club."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does Dad say Jonah is old enough to do at the beginning of the story?
2. How does Jonah feel about having to set up the tent but not being allowed to go on the fishing boat?
3. This camping trip is different from the other ones Jonah has experienced. What sentences from the text support this conclusion?
4. Why is Jonah initially annoyed that he is getting more responsibilities on the camping trip?
5. What is this story mostly about?
6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"What seemed so unfair to him now was the fact that he was stuck setting up the tent alone for the first time (for all of his previous trips, he got to just have fun- he was a kid, after all!), but wasn't going to be allowed out on the lake with the grown-ups. How unfair! I can't believe I'm doing the adult work but not getting to enjoy the perks, he thought."

What does the word "perks" mean as used in the text?

7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

On the camping trip, Jonah's father gives Jonah more responsibilities, _____ setting up the tent and building the campfire.

8. What does Jonah get to do at the end of the story?
9. Describe the different chores Jonah's dad wants him to complete throughout the trip.
10. Explain why Jonah's dad gives Jonah more responsibilities on this camping trip. Support your answer using evidence from the text.

The Lottery

"It's a secret. Don't tell anyone!" Maya crossed her heart. "I swear. I won't tell anyone. What's the secret?"

Tina looked around. She wanted to be sure that no one could hear her. Then she whispered into Maya's ear: "My parents won the lottery. We're rich!" Tina and Maya then talked about how different her life would be. "I guess I'll travel around the world now. And get new sneakers. These are falling apart." She looked down at her worn-out shoes. Then, she kicked them off. "I'm sure that now that we have money, my mother won't complain if I just throw these away."

It was getting late. They headed home for dinner. Tina waited for her parents to announce how much they had won. But dinner was the same old thing: rice and chicken wings. They didn't talk about their riches. Tina figured they were waiting for just the right time to tell her.

Maya met her sister on the porch. "I've got something to tell you, but you have to promise not to tell anyone." Then she said, "Tina's rich. Her parents won the lottery."

Her sister didn't understand about secrets. She burst through the door and yelled, "Tina's family won the lottery!" She was loud enough for all the neighbors to hear.

There had been talk around town for days about the lottery. Someone in their town had won. The winner had not come forward. So everyone was guessing about who it could be.

Tina's father was doing the dishes when the first neighbor arrived. Her mother opened the door. "Excuse me," Mrs. Hanly said. "But we are having some trouble with the rent. Could you lend me \$100 please?" There was soon another knock at the door. Then another. "My car is broken down. Could you maybe help me get it fixed?" asked one. "We need just \$50," said another. "Just enough for a bus ticket." Soon the house was full of people. All of them needed something.

"We would love to help," Tina's parents said. "But what makes you think we are so rich to help everyone?" One by one, they mentioned the lottery.

"I did win a lottery," Tina's mother said. "At my work. It was a drawing to see who would get next Saturday off. And I won."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a key theme of this text?

- A. Sometimes the truth is not what it may seem to be.
- B. People should work hard to become successful and wealthy.
- C. Friends can rarely be trusted with keeping secrets.
- D. Winning the lottery can have a negative effect on the winner's life.

2. How do Tina's neighbors hear the rumor that her family won the lottery?

- A. Tina's parents tell the neighbors that they won the lottery.
- B. Maya tells all of their neighbors about the rumor.
- C. Tina spreads the rumor to her classmates. Her classmates then tell their parents.
- D. Maya's sister yells "Tina's family won the lottery!" loud enough for all the neighbors to hear.

3. What is the turning point in the story?

- A. Tina told Maya her parents won the lottery.
- B. Maya tells her sister that Tina's parents won the lottery.
- C. Maya's sister shouts that Tina's parents won the lottery.
- D. The neighbors come to Tina's house to borrow money.

4. What is a main lesson of the story?

- A. Playing the lottery is a bad idea.
- B. Neighbors should support each other during difficult times.
- C. It's best to be sure that something is true before telling it to others.
- D. Parents need to be clear when communicating with their children.

5. Describe evidence from the text to support a key theme of the text.