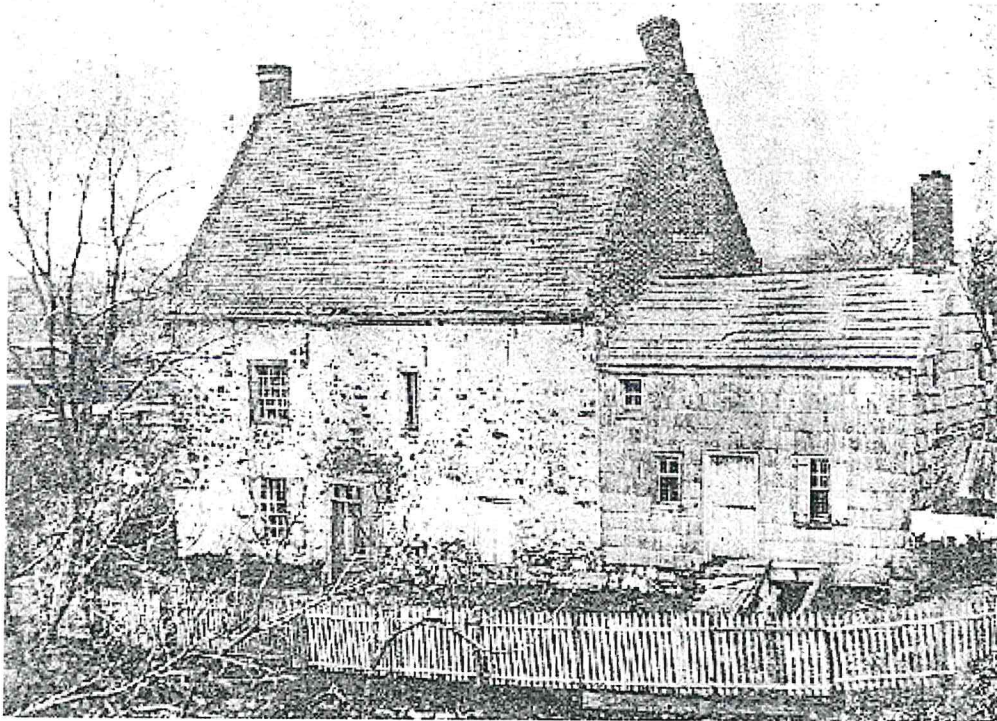


# The Old Stone House

by W.M. Akers



On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the Revolutionary War was about to begin. Seven weeks later, on August 22, 1776, the British Army invaded New York. The British chose to attack Brooklyn, a village across the East River from Manhattan. General George Washington's army was located in this village. The Patriot forces were ready to fight, but they were badly outnumbered. The British had about 20,000 soldiers. The Americans had fewer than 13,000.

The battle started on August 27, when British soldiers raided a watermelon patch, and were fired upon by American troops. The Americans retreated northward, fighting as they went. The British surrounded the Americans, who fled across the Gowanus Creek. To keep back the British, they left behind a group of soldiers from Maryland: just a few hundred Americans to hold off 2,000 Redcoats (British Army soldiers).

The British were fighting from in front of the Old Stone House—a farmhouse built in 1699. The Marylanders attacked the house six times. Nearly all of them were killed or captured. As he watched from a nearby hill, General Washington said, "Good God! What brave fellows I must this day lose." Because of the sacrifice of the Marylanders, the rest of the American army was

able to escape. Had it not been for the fighting at the Old Stone House, the war could have been lost that morning.

The Revolution survived, and so did the Old Stone House. The family home of the Vechte family was sold to the Cortelyous in 1783. In the late 19th century, it served as the clubhouse for the baseball team that would later be named the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1897, the house was destroyed and buried. Thirty years later, it was dug up and rebuilt by the New York City Parks Department.

"Eighty percent of the house," said Old Stone House Executive Director Kimberly Maier, "is original material."

On the outside, the house looks just as it did in 1699. On the inside, there is an exhibit about the Battle of Brooklyn and the men who died there. There are uniforms like the soldiers would have worn, maps of the battle, and a diorama of the fighting around the house. Six thousand children come every year to learn about the house. Maier and her staff teach them not just about the battle, but about what life was like in the 18th century.

"You couldn't just go to the grocery store," she said. "You just had one dress, because you had to weave it and cut the cloth and sew it together. The chores were so much more than just making your bed."

Maier said that school children are most surprised when they learn what playtime was like in the 18th century. To kids today, 18th century fun looks a lot like work.

"Kids would start out by helping in the garden, or helping to churn butter," Maier said.

Children would do basic weaving, or help in the kitchen. As they got better at these tasks, they would learn more advanced tasks. Eventually, they would be as good as a grown-up. When they played outside, they didn't have rubber balls. Instead, they used an inflated pig's bladder.

Outside the Old Stone House is a park. A few years ago, it was rebuilt. It has swings, fountains, and jungle gyms. Children play there every day-and they don't have to use a butter churn.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where is the Old Stone House?

- A. Maryland
- B. Britain
- C. New York
- D. Washington

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

- A. what life was like in the 18th century
- B. an exhibit about the Battle of Brooklyn
- C. how George Washington escaped from the British
- D. how the Old Stone House was destroyed and rebuilt

3. The Old Stone House played an important role in the American Revolution. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. "The British surrounded the Americans, who fled across the Gowanus Creek."
- B. "Had it not been for the fighting at the Old Stone House, the war could have been lost that morning."
- C. "The British chose to attack Brooklyn, a village across the river from Manhattan, where General George Washington had his army."
- D. "The Marylanders attacked the house six times. Nearly all of them were killed or captured."

4. The passage states, "Because of the sacrifice of the Marylanders, the American Army was able to escape."

What was the sacrifice of the Marylanders?

- A. They risked the Old Stone House to hold off 2,000 Redcoats.
- B. They risked their lives fighting with the American Army.
- C. They risked their lives to help the 2,000 Redcoats.
- D. They risked their lives to hold off 2,000 Redcoats.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. the Old Stone House
- B. the Revolutionary War
- C. the Battle of Brooklyn
- D. George Washington

6. Read the following sentences: "The Patriot forces were ready to fight, but **they were badly outnumbered**. The British had about 20,000 soldiers. The Americans had fewer than 13,000."

What does "**they were badly outnumbered**" mean?

- A. There were far more British soldiers than American soldiers.
- B. There was no way for the American soldiers to win.
- C. The Americans couldn't count the number of British soldiers.
- D. The American soldiers were better than the British soldiers.

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

George Washington left a few hundred soldiers behind to hold off the British. \_\_\_\_\_, the American army was able to escape.

- A. On the other hand
- B. As a result
- C. For example
- D. In particular

8. What is currently inside the Old Stone House?

9. What can students on field trips learn about at the Old Stone House?

10. Explain whether the Old Stone House has changed a lot since the 18th century.

# Tent Tales

by ReadWorks

Toward the end of my summer, Mom decided to spring a "vacation" on me. I say "vacation," because what she suggested as a relaxing getaway was actually the worst idea in the world for someone wanting rest and relaxation. If you wanted to take some time off and rejuvenate, wouldn't you pick a fancy spa or a nice hotel or a luxurious beach resort to go to? But when my mom gets tired of working (she's a nurse, and works a lot of early-morning shifts), she likes to go on hikes.

Not that I don't like outdoorsy things: earlier this summer I raised a butterfly, and I love planting things. But what I want to do when I'm tired is sit by a pool. Hiking is *hard!* I'd more likely take a vacation from hiking than I would go hiking on vacation.

But there Mom was, standing in the kitchen with a map in one hand and a tent pole in the other. She was poking me with the pole as I tried to eat my toast.

"Mom. Seriously? I don't want to go camping. I want to ride my bike and go to the pool," I whined.

"Anne, I already reserved a campground for us. It's not the backcountry. And it's only for three days." Mom stopped poking me with the tent pole.

"Ugh. I hate bugs and I hate sleeping on dirt." I knew I was being a pain, but I said it anyway.

"That's what bug spray and sleeping pads are for."

The case was closed. Mom said we were leaving the next day- Friday-and I went upstairs to pack a bag while she went to the grocery store. *I forgot to tell her to get marshmallows, I thought as I angrily shoved a sweatshirt into my duffel. If I'm going to be outside in the woods, I at least want to make s'mores. Figures I'd forget something like that. And Mom's such a health nut, there's no way she'd buy them on her own.*

In the morning, we wrestled the tent and a cooler into the car. It only took an hour to get to the campground, but it took two hours to set up the tent. The plot mom had reserved for us was damp with rain from earlier in the week, and I had to scrape out a mountain of ashes from the lonely grill. The picnic table was covered in ladybugs.

"This is already awful," I said, a little too loudly.

"Well, it's about to get worse, then, little lady. Put on your hiking shoes." Mom hammered the last tent stake into the ground, and disappeared under the flaps.

I wanted to ask how long that first hike was going to be, but I didn't have to. The trailhead (which was already a fifteen-minute walk from our campsite) had a signpost that read: *Oak Crest Trail: 6m loop*. Six miles, in case you were wondering, is not far when riding a bike but is really far when you are walking up rocky hills. I killed a mosquito that was sucking the blood out of my calf.

"Ugh." That's all I had time to say, and then I had to run to catch up with Mom, who had already started walking.

For the first half an hour or so of the hike, we walked in silence. Mom stayed a good few yards ahead of me, and I struggled to keep her from hiking out of my sight. I could tell she was disappointed in my attitude, but I was too out of breath to even suggest I was sorry. And I wasn't really sorry, anyway.

I just couldn't believe that Mom didn't even ask me what I wanted to do. She had just decided to go, and since I'm not old enough to be home alone, I had to go with her. I stopped on the trail and watched Mom turn around a corner. Frustrated, I almost didn't notice the deer staring at me from the woods, but when it snapped a branch, I looked up.

It was a buck, with tiny fuzzy antlers adorning its head, and it gazed at me as it took a bite out of a frothy green bush. A butterfly sank and rose and landed on one of the buck's antlers, just for a split second. And then the buck and the bug took off.

The sight managed to calm me. I ran to see Mom, and found her standing by a raspberry bush. She picked one and threw it at me. I caught it and popped it into my mouth.

"I'm sorry, Mom."

"You should be," she said, but she laughed. "I know you're not an outdoorsy gal. Just be glad I didn't pick a ten-miler, eh?"

"This isn't so bad. I saw a deer!"

The rest of the hike took two hours, mainly because it was hilly and I am slow. When we finally reached our camp, I had seven bug bites and a little sunburn, and even my mom was tired. She started the grill and I set up our picnic table, brushing away the ladybugs from one end so we could sit.

We grilled corn and my mom made jambalaya in a saucepan, and we sucked down

homemade lemonade as it got dark. I was regretting the fact that we didn't have dessert when Mom asked me to go find two thin sticks.

"What? Why?" I stacked my plate on top of hers as she pulled the jug of water from the car.

"Because," she started, "we have to roast these on something, don't we?" From under the backseat, Mom held up a bag of marshmallows. *She had gotten them after all!*

"Mom! Graham crackers too?"

"And chocolate." She almost dropped the water and the marshmallows when I ran up to hug her.

Together we set our first few marshmallows on the fire, threatening one another with the sticky remnants.

"Have you ever had peanut butter on a s'more?" Mom asked me. "Because it's the best thing ever."

\* \* \*

I went to bed wrapped up in my sleeping bag, on top of a remarkably comfortable sleeping pad that night, thinking about how camping actually might not be so bad. That, or my mom is just the coolest.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What does Anne's mom decide to do for their vacation?

2. What is the main problem Anne faces in this story?

3. Read the following sentences.

"For the first half an hour or so of the hike, we walked in silence. Mom stayed a good few yards ahead of me, and I struggled to keep her from hiking out of my sight. I could tell she was disappointed in my attitude, but I was too out of breath to even suggest I was sorry. And I wasn't really sorry, anyway."

What can be concluded about Anne's attitude at this point in the story based on this information?

4. Why is Anne pleasantly surprised when her mother holds up the bag of marshmallows at the camp?

5. What is this story mostly about?

6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"Toward the end of my summer, Mom decided to spring a 'vacation' on me. I say 'vacation,' because what she suggested as a relaxing getaway was actually the worst idea in the world for someone wanting rest and relaxation. If you wanted to take some time off and rejuvenate, wouldn't you pick a fancy spa or a nice hotel or a luxurious beach resort to go to? But when my mom gets tired of working (she's a nurse, and works a lot of early-morning shifts), she likes to go on hikes."

What does the word "rejuvenate" mean in this text?

7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

Anne doesn't like hiking or camping, \_\_\_\_ she whines and complains to her mother about it.

8. What are two things that happen on Anne's camping trip that make her feel that camping isn't so bad?

9. How does Anne's attitude towards camping change over the course of the story? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

10. How does Anne's attitude towards her mom change over the course of the story? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.



# One Piece of a Puzzle

by Jesse Kohn



Five months since I left land. Land where the people were.

Five months at sea. Sea where water is. Where nothing but water is. Where no people are.

And the wind and the storms that come rushing in from nowhere and rattle my windows and coat them with water. And sometimes a seagull. And sometimes the net whizzing off the deck and plopping overboard. And then the fish slapping the wood with wet tails, mouths gulping.

But never a voice. Never a voice. Never a voice that says, "Good afternoon, Mr. Goucher's office, how may I direct your call?" And never a voice that says, "Simon, Simon, Simon, get in here right this minute!" And never a voice that says, "But you promised, Simon, you promised you would take me with you..."

\*\*\*

The new coat of paint was drying. I checked my navigations. I reeled in a net full of flopping sardines and laid them out on the deck to dry. I refilled the water purifier with seawater and watched the horizon for land-land which, when I found it, I would steer clear of-and boats-boats I planned to avoid.

My chores were finished. There was no one to entertain, no one to ask me any favors, no one to issue a complaint. No, I was alone, with nothing urgent to do. The afternoon, the evening, the night-all were mine. Just me on my boat, with my silence and my time. Yes, this was why I'd left the land. This was why I'd left the people.

\*\*\*

I'd already separated the sky-blue jigsaw pieces from the sea-blue jigsaw pieces, and there was a smaller pile of more motley colored jigsaw pieces that would make up the sailboat. My

three neat piles of jigsaw pieces-the labor of five months. Five months of careful work, all to get to this moment, the moment I could begin fitting them all together. My puzzle.

I chose the first piece with delicious deliberation, my fingers lingering over first this pile and then the next. I touched the edge of this piece and then the edge of that one. I closed my eyes and sighed, letting my excitement bubble over.

But slowly, as I considered the pieces, I became aware of a quiet ringing, a ringing that gradually grew louder. And even though I hadn't heard such a sound for five months, I recognized it immediately.

How on earth had a phone ended up on my boat? And why, having remained silent for five months, was it now ringing? Determined to find the phone and toss it overboard, I followed the sound down the hatch and into the cabin below. But no sooner had I descended when the ringing stopped. That's when I heard Mr. Ellery-his nasal voice impossible to mistake: "Good afternoon, Mr. Goucher's office, how may I direct your call?"

And just as suddenly, there was silence. My cabin was empty.

"Alright Ellery," I heard myself shout, speaking for the first time in five months. "Where are you hiding, you rat!"

But the next noise came not from Ellery, but from somewhere else, someone shouting from the deck: "Simon, Simon, Simon, get in here right this minute!"

In a cold sweat, I rushed up the stairs and out onto the deck. But Mr. Goucher was nowhere to be seen.

I spun around and overturned my bucket of water, knocked several of the sardines into the sea, even confusing my piles of jigsaw pieces! I almost fell overboard, but then suddenly froze, terrorized by the sound of my beloved's voice, just inches from my ear: "But you promised, Simon, you promised you would take me with you, you promised that you would."

"Alberta!" I shouted. "Alberta, my love! I'm sorry!" But when I turned to see her, there was nothing but the wind. A seagull. And what looked like a thunderstorm forming on the horizon.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. When did Simon leave land?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. Read these sentences from the story.

"I refilled the water purifier with seawater and watched the horizon for land-land that, when I found it, I would steer clear of-and boats-boats I planned to avoid."

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can you make about Simon, the speaker of the story?

4. Why did Simon leave land?
5. What is this story mostly about?
6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"My chores were finished. There was no one to entertain, no one to ask me any favors, no one to issue a complaint. No, I was alone, with nothing urgent to do. The afternoon, the evening, the night-all were mine. Just me on my boat, with my silence and my time."

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

7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

Simon hears the sound of a phone ringing below the deck, \_\_\_\_\_ he goes to find where the sound is coming from.

8. Simon hears a voice say, "But you promised, Simon, you promised you would take me with you, you promised that you would." Whose voice is this, and what relationship does this person have to Simon?
9. At the end of the story, Simon shouts, "I'm sorry!" Why is Simon sorry? Support your answer using evidence from the text.
10. Why might Simon hear voices from his past? Support your answer using evidence from the story.

# Drip-Tips and Other Adaptations in the Rainforest

by Mimi Jorling



Tropical rainforests have ideal climates for plant growth. Tropical rainforests are hot, humid, and wet. They have abundant rainfall and are warm year-round. Temperatures range from about 85 degrees Fahrenheit during the day to 70 at night. Tropical rainforests get at least 80 inches of rainfall each year. (Compare that to how much your town or city gets each year.) These two factors also create challenges for the plants that live there. As a result, plants in tropical rainforests have adapted to these conditions by making adjustments in how they grow.

The perfect conditions for plant life—warm temperatures and plenty of water—cause plants to grow quickly. One consequence of rapid plant growth is the depletion of nutrients in the soil. It also creates a thick layer of leaves in the upper part of the forest (the canopy) that blocks sunlight from reaching the forest floor.

Most plants get their nutrients, water, and oxygen from soil. However, in the rainforest, where soil is not nutrient-rich, many plants don't rely on it for their source of food. Some plants called epiphytes, or air plants, have learned to get water and nutrients from the air. Some examples of epiphytes in rainforests are mosses, lichens, and orchids. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plant—they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems.

Other plants that grow on plants actually DO take nutrients from that plant. They are called

parasitic plants, and the plant they grow on is called a host plant. Instead of getting food and water from the soil, parasitic plants have developed roots to cling to a host plant, pierce through its leaves, stem, or trunk, and suck the nutrients out of the host. An example of a parasitic plant you might know is mistletoe. Parasitic plants can kill their host plant if they grow too rapidly. However, they tend to *not* kill their host plant because without a host, the parasitic plant will also die.

Another condition created by rapid plant growth is a lush canopy that shades out plants living below. Large trees grow quickly, reaching for sunlight. They create a dense shade that prevents sunlight from reaching the forest floor. In fact, only about 1 to 2% of sunlight reaches the ground in a tropical forest. Since plants depend on sunlight for growth, very few plants live on the ground. Instead, they find ways to live on other plants by climbing them, as vines do, or by growing very large, dark green leaves to absorb as much sunlight as possible.

Hot, humid, and wet conditions are also ideal for bacteria and fungi to grow. Water trapped in the crevices of a plant, in combination with warm temperatures, is a breeding ground for bacterial and fungal growth, which can harm plants. One adaptation many plants have made in the tropical forest is to develop smooth bark so that water runs off quickly. Another adjustment plants have made to shed water efficiently is to grow leaves with 'drip tips.' This shape prevents water from collecting on leaves. Look at the shape of leaves of plants around you. If possible, and after checking with an adult, gently pour water on the plant and watch where it goes. It may be channeled toward the stem of the plant or far away from it. These observations can give you clues to how a plant lives.

The environments plants and animals live in provide useful and harmful conditions for living. As a result, all living things must learn how to adapt to the challenges of where they live. The adaptations that plants in a tropical rainforest have help them survive in their particular environment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What are the climates of tropical rainforests ideal, or perfect, for?

- A. building roads
- B. raising cattle
- C. extreme sports
- D. plant growth

2. One effect of rapid plant growth is the depletion of nutrients in the soil. What is another effect of rapid plant growth?

- A. the depletion of animal life in the lower part of the rainforest
- B. the creation of a thick layer of leaves in the upper part of the rainforest
- C. an increase in temperature from 70 degrees Fahrenheit to 85 degrees Fahrenheit
- D. a decrease in rainfall from 80 inches each year to 65 inches each year

3. Read these sentences from the text:

"There are also some plants called parasitic plants. They grow on other plants, their host plants. Parasitic plants actually DO take nutrients from their host plants. Instead of getting food and water from the soil, parasitic plants have developed roots to cling to a host plant, pierce through its leaves, stem, or trunk, and suck the nutrients out of the host. An example of a parasitic plant you might know is mistletoe. Parasitic plants can kill their host plants if they grow too rapidly."

Based on this evidence, how might a rapidly growing parasitic plant kill its host plant?

- A. by sucking too many nutrients out of its host plant
- B. by sucking too few nutrients out of its host plant
- C. by preventing the host plant from taking in food and water from the soil
- D. by trying to help the host plant take in food and water from the soil

**4.** Read these sentences from the text:

"Another condition created by rapid plant growth is a lush canopy that shades out plants living below. Large trees grow quickly, reaching for sunlight. They create a dense shade that prevents sunlight from reaching the forest floor. In fact, only about 1% to 2% of sunlight reaches the ground in a tropical forest. Since plants depend on sunlight for growth, very few plants live on the ground. Instead, they find ways to live on other plants by climbing them, as vines do, or by growing very large, dark green leaves to absorb as much sunlight as possible."

Based on this information, what can you conclude about the connection between a leaf's size and the amount of sunlight it absorbs?

- A. The smaller a leaf is, the more sunlight it absorbs.
- B. The larger a leaf is, the more sunlight it absorbs.
- C. The connection between the size of a leaf and the amount of sunlight it absorbs cannot be predicted.
- D. Large leaves and small leaves absorb about the same amount of sunlight.

**5.** What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Some plants, such as mosses, lichens, and orchids, have learned to get water and nutrients from the air.
- B. Instead of getting food and water from the soil, parasitic plants have developed roots to cling to a host plant, pierce through its leaves, stem, or trunk, and suck out nutrients.
- C. Plants in tropical rainforests have adapted to their warm and wet conditions by making adjustments in how they grow.
- D. Water trapped in the crevices of a plant, in combination with warm temperatures, is a breeding ground for bacterial and fungal growth.

6. Read these sentences from the text:

"Some plants called epiphytes, or air plants, have adapted to get nutrients from the air. Some examples of epiphytes in rainforests are mosses, lichens, and orchids. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plants—they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems.

There are also some plants called parasitic plants. They grow on other plants, their host plants. Parasitic plants actually DO take nutrients from their host plants."

Why might the author have capitalized the word "DO"?

- A. to point out a similarity
- B. to make a contrast
- C. to summarize a process
- D. to make an argument

7. Read these sentences from the text:

"Some plants called epiphytes, or air plants, have adapted to get nutrients from the air. Some examples of epiphytes in rainforests are mosses, lichens, and orchids. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plants—they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems."

How could the last sentence best be broken in two?

- A. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plant. As an illustration, they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems.
- B. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plant. For example, they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems.
- C. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plant. Third, they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems.
- D. Although they often live on other plants, they don't take any nutrients from the other plant. Instead, they get what they need straight from the air with special root systems.



**8.** Describe the climate conditions of a tropical rainforest.

Include at least three pieces of information from the text.

**9.** Read these sentences from the text:

"Hot, humid, and wet conditions are also ideal for bacteria and fungi to grow. Water trapped in the crevices of a plant, in combination with warm temperatures, is a breeding ground for bacterial and fungal growth, which can harm plants. One adaptation many plants have made in the tropical forest is to develop smooth bark so that water runs off quickly."

Explain how the adaptation these plants have made might help them.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

**10.** Plants in tropical rainforests have adapted to their conditions by making adjustments in how they grow. Support this conclusion with evidence from the text.

# Conquering Fears and Phobias

Darla jumped when the "ghost" popped out of the bushes. "I can't believe I'm scared!" she thought, heart pounding. "It's Halloween! That's just someone dressed up like a ghost!"

Everyone gets scared sometimes. It's a normal reaction. You need that reaction to survive. When faced with a threat, it's useful to be afraid and get out of the way so that you won't get hurt.

You can also learn fears through experience. Greg, for example, once fell off a ladder. After that, he was afraid to climb a ladder. He finally realized all he had to do was be careful when using one.

As you get older, you may outgrow some fears. Maybe you used to be afraid of the dark or of spiders. Different people are afraid of different things over time.

## Fear or Phobia?

Fears can be mild or severe. Mild fear just makes you feel slightly nervous. But intense fear can make you sweat. Your heart may beat faster. You may even have trouble breathing.

Sometimes fear becomes extreme and unreasonable. This is known as a phobia. Phobias are fears that make people feel out of control. Sometimes people with phobias feel sick. Some of them get headaches, high blood pressure, ulcers, skin rashes, nausea, or other medical problems.

Doctors believe that most of these phobias, like Greg's, are learned. But in some cases, a phobia follows an unrelated trauma, such as a death in the family. And the tendency to develop some phobias may run in families.

## Extreme Fears

Phobias can be about things, activities, or situations. For example, people can have phobias about cats, storms, or heights. These are called specific phobias.

Other people may be afraid of going to parties or being with other people because they think they would feel judged, embarrassed, rejected, or scared of offending people. Such a phobia is known as *social anxiety disorder*, or social phobia. Tess, for instance, would not play with other kids. And she sweated, blushed, and stammered if she had to speak in school.

Still other people have a type of phobia called a *panic disorder*. They suddenly feel very frightened for no reason. They may sweat, tremble, faint, have trouble breathing, or get very sick. Worst of all, they never know when a panic attack will strike.

Phobias often have weird names. Some examples are *arachnophobia* (fear of spiders), *brontophobia* (fear of thunderstorms), *claustrophobia* (fear of enclosed spaces), *myxophobia* (fear of slime), and *arachibutyrophobia* (fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth).

## Taming the Fear

If a phobia interferes with daily life, it's time to do something about it. Psychologists have several suggestions for dealing with phobias.

- Talk about the phobia with someone you trust.
- Breathe deeply, and try to relax when you think about the thing you fear.
- Try to visualize what you fear to lessen the phobia.
- Try to think positive thoughts. Replace "I'm so scared" with "I'm going to be OK."
- Slowly count to 10. Tell yourself you will be all right when you reach 10.

If these things don't help, see your doctor. He or she may refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist. These experts can help you learn to overcome a phobia. Sometimes they use a method called *systematic desensitization* (sis-tuh-MAT-ik dee-sens-ih-tuh-ZAY-shun). This involves getting used to something one step at a time. Hannah saw a psychologist about her fear of dogs. The psychologist had her face her fear in stages. First, Hannah relaxed. Then, she imagined she was near a friendly dog. Third, she looked at pictures of dogs. Finally, she went up to a real dog and patted its head.

Another useful technique is *virtual reality exposure*. Carl overcame his fear of flying this way. He sat in a computer-controlled "virtual plane" that never left the ground. He "experienced" takeoffs, landings, and flying in all kinds of weather.

It's important to realize that phobias can be treated. "Most people who seek treatment completely overcome their fears for life," according to the American Psychiatric Association. This is true even if your fears are worse than the usual Halloween jitters.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is a phobia?

- A. a fear that is outgrown over time
- B. an extreme fear that makes a person feel out of control
- C. a fear of the dark or of spiders
- D. a type of fear that involves dogs or airplanes

2. One problem mentioned in the passage is that some people cannot get over their phobias on their own.

What is a solution to this problem?

- A. People can try to turn their phobia into a social anxiety or panic disorder.
- B. People can try new activities or situations that help them forget about their phobia.
- C. People can get help from a psychologist or psychiatrist to overcome a phobia.
- D. People can learn the names of their phobias.

3. Fear is not always a bad thing.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. Different people are afraid of different things over time.
- B. Some people have a fear of dentists, so they avoid going to see dentists.
- C. Sometimes fear becomes extreme and unreasonable. This is known as a phobia.
- D. Fear can be a normal reaction that helps us avoid harm and survive.

4. How can the treatment options for people with phobias be described?

- A. Most treatment options get rid of pain and sickness but not the phobia.
- B. Most treatment options involve getting used to friendly dogs.
- C. There are many different treatment options for people with phobias, and treatments are often effective.
- D. Some treatment options are helpful, but others can actually make phobias worse.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. Fears are most common during Halloween, but they can also occur at other times.
- B. Fears can sometimes be extreme, but they can also be treated and overcome.
- C. Everyone gets scared, so it shouldn't be embarrassing.
- D. Phobias can be about many things and have severe effects on people's health.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Doctors believe that most of these phobias, like Greg's, are learned. But in some cases, a phobia follows an unrelated trauma, such as a death in the family."

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

- A. a meeting
- B. a failure
- C. a difficult event
- D. an accident

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Some phobias have weird names, \_\_\_\_\_ arachnophobia (fear of spiders) or brontophobia (fear of thunderstorms).

- A. however
- B. otherwise
- C. finally
- D. such as

8. What is the difference between regular fears and phobias?

9. What are three possible effects of phobias?

10. Read these sentences from the text.

"Everyone gets scared sometimes. It's a normal reaction. You need that reaction to survive. When faced with a threat, it's useful to be afraid and get out of the way so you won't get hurt."

Is this statement also true for phobias? Support your answer with evidence from the text.