

Grade 6 Sample Items



In the mid-19th century, a small insect reached Europe from the United States. This insect fed on grapevines, destroying their roots. All over Europe, vines began dying. It was clear that the 1 could not withstand the attack. They had to be pulled out. Some landowners put in new vines, immune to the insects, while others changed crops. The owners of the Lascaux Estate in France replaced their grapes with pine saplings. The trees grew, and brambles and bushes sprouted among them. After many years, there were 2 where the vineyards had been.

Removing the vines at Lascaux had loosened the soil, so that when one of the pines blew over, its roots opened a deep hole. Farmers, fearing that cattle might fall in, filled the pit with branches. That way, the animals could move about safely. The farmers would not have to 3. For years they kept the pit filled, but in 1940, some youths found the hole. Removing the branches, they went down and found another opening below. They wanted to enter, but the opening was too narrow. None of them could 4.

With a knife, the youths enlarged the opening and squeezed in. They found themselves in a cave and began walking. They moved slowly, for their lamp was weak. It was hard to 5. However, when they reached a narrow corridor, their light hit the walls. They realized there were paintings of animals on the walls and wondered if the whole cave was decorated. They retraced their steps and looked, holding the lamp to the walls. There were indeed many 6.

News of the paintings spread quickly. People who studied them said they were 25,000 years old. They were the best preserved paintings from that period yet known. Reporters came to Lascaux, wrote about the cave, and photographed it. Stories were printed around the world. The cave grew 7. Today, photographs of the Lascaux Cave appear in many books.

- 1 a) sheep b) plants
c) streams d) children
e) buildings

- 2 a) lakes b) roads
c) woods d) valleys
e) villages

- 3 a) worry b) wait
c) share d) trade
e) water

- 4 a) pay b) swim
c) read d) fit
e) shoot

- 5 a) hear b) see
c) work d) refuse
e) leave

- 6 a) noises b) graves
c) drops d) maps
e) pictures

- 7 a) cold b) dry
c) famous d) dark
e) large





The ancient Romans built the world's first network of paved roads. These roads connected Rome with its conquered provinces across Europe. Roman roads were built primarily to permit the quick and safe movement of troops. However, the roads also had another 8. They were designed to facilitate trade throughout the empire.

- 8 a) purpose b) name
c) entrance d) surface
e) defense

The greatest of the Roman roads was the Appian Way. Begun in 312 B.C., the Appian Way at first ran only as far as the military center of Capua. In time, however, the road was 9. Eventually, it reached the port of Brindisi, on the Adriatic. This gave Rome a gateway to the Near East and its riches.

- 9 a) lighted b) taxed
c) crossed d) leveled
e) extended

Roman roads are famous for being straight. In many cases, it would have been easier for the Romans to build roads around mountains and swamps instead of going through them. Yet, Romans chose the latter 10. Preferring the most direct course, they scaled mountains and crossed swamps.

- 10 a) material b) route
c) date d) amount
e) market

Romans built their roads essentially by hand. This was necessary, since they had no 11. Working with picks, hammers, and shovels, they prepared roadbeds upon which they set down layers of mortar and stone. They topped their roads with paving stones of volcanic rock. The roads were usually crowned, or raised in the middle so that water would drain off. As a result, the roads were seldom 12. They were the first "all-weather" roads ever built.

- 11 a) soldiers b) laws
c) machines d) ships
e) stations

- 12 a) traveled b) flooded
c) guarded d) divided
e) fenced

Roman emperors decreed that the roads should be well constructed, so they would remain serviceable for years. The roads were supposed to 13. The roads did, in fact, prove durable. They needed no repair for many years, despite constant use. Many stretches remain today. Along them one can still see the ancient milestones erected to record the distance to Rome. These milestones also tell when the road was built and who reigned at that time. The stones are thus a source of 14. Historians have learned much from studying them.

- 13 a) turn b) meet
c) rise d) last
e) narrow

- 14 a) disease b) dust
c) shelter d) money
e) information





Capturing sharp images of moving objects has always been a challenge to photographers. In the mid-19th century, photographic plates required long exposure to light in order to register images. To be photographed clearly, people or things had to remain stationary for up to half an hour. They had to be very **15**. Any movement while the camera's shutter was open resulted in a blurred image.

- 15** a) large b) clean
c) near d) still
e) handsome

Human photographic subjects found it difficult to maintain the necessary steadiness without something to lean on. They needed **16**. Therefore, portrait photographers often posed subjects in chairs with hidden extensions that propped up the head. Subjects also had trouble trying not to blink during prolonged exposures. They would **17** their eyes for an instant. To prevent blurring, photographers sometimes had subjects shut their eyes throughout the exposure. Open eyes were later painted onto the portrait.

- 16** a) support b) beauty
c) money d) silence
e) information

- 17** a) touch b) lift
c) close d) cross
e) use

As photographic films were improved, exposures that formerly were measured in minutes could be accomplished in fractions of a second. This increased **18** solved many problems. Because the shutter could be snapped so rapidly, ordinary movements like blinking no longer caused any loss of sharpness. Nevertheless, certain living subjects remained impossible to photograph clearly; among these, the most notorious was the hummingbird. The **19** simply moved too quickly. In every photograph taken of this tiny bird, its wings were a transparent blur.

- 18** a) height b) weight
c) profit d) speed
e) temperature

- 19** a) clock b) crowd
c) sun d) machine
e) animal

In 1931, Harold Edgerton began working with a "strobe," a gas-filled tube that emitted short, intense bursts of light. Edgerton would aim the strobe at a subject, open his camera's shutter, and push a switch to activate the strobe. The tube would then **20**. Its brightness illuminated the subject for as little as a millionth of a second. When Edgerton demonstrated this technique by photographing a hummingbird, observers were startled to find that the wings were sharply defined and perfectly clear. The wings had never been **21** that way before. Edgerton's pictures of hummingbirds helped introduce the age of stop-action photography.

- 20** a) break b) flash
c) roll d) fit
e) disappear

- 21** a) seen b) felt
c) colored d) spread
e) raised

