

Reading Comprehension and Degrees of  
Reading Power Answer Keys

**State Released Items**

Sasha's family is planning a trip to Washington, D.C. Sasha wants to know more about the capital before they visit. Here is one article that she found in the library.

## Locating Our Nation's Capital

1. Washington, D.C. has not always been our nation's capital. It was chosen as the permanent home for our government over two hundred years ago. Located on 69 square miles of land perched upon the Potomac River, our capital is surrounded by the states of Maryland and Virginia. How this spot became the center of our government has an interesting history.
2. There was talk of a permanent capital for the United States during the American Revolution, but nothing came of it. Later, between 1783 and 1787, the first Congress to run the nation had no regular meeting place. Its members met in different towns. It was during these years that the nation's leaders decided that our government needed a permanent home.
3. There was great rivalry among the states to get the capital. People believed that the capital would one day become a vital commercial center, greatly benefiting its state and the inhabitants. There was also conflict over whether the new capital should be in the North or the South.
4. Over forty potential sites were suggested between 1783 and 1791: Some were recommended by individuals who would personally profit from their ideas. Others were recommended by people who wanted the political and economic advantage that the capital would bring. Some, perhaps, were suggested with the good of the nation's future in mind.
5. Two people who would have benefited greatly from their recommendations for the capital were Manasseh Cutler and Lewis Morris. Cutler advocated putting the capital on the Ohio River. His argument was that the center of population was sure to move west. Cutler's conflict of interest lay in the fact that he represented a land company in the Ohio River area.
6. Lewis Morris wanted the capital placed just above New York City. It was the commercial center and possessed the best harbor in the United States, he claimed. Morris possibly wanted to sell Congress property that he owned just north of New York City.
7. New York was the northernmost site that was suggested; Williamsburg, Virginia, the southernmost. Many contenders for the honor lay between the two.



A2

- 1 The MAIN problem with locating a permanent capital for the United States was
- a **lack of support by members of Congress.**
  - b competition among the states. ⊗
  - c finding a place near a river.
  - d explaining the need for a capital to the people.

A2

- 2 The selection of a permanent site for the government solved the problem of
- f electing delegates to Congress.
  - g fighting wars against enemies of the country.
  - h deciding where the Congress should meet. ⊗
  - j communicating with the people.

B1

- 3 The location of the capital was important because
- a **it would become the center of political power.** ⊗
  - b a war would break out between the North and the South.
  - c it would become the largest city in the country.
  - d the settlement of the West depended on having a capital.

B1

- 4 Today, our nation's capital is
- f **no longer important.**
  - g part of the state of Maryland.
  - h **full of historical sights.** ⊗
  - j larger in area than in 1790.

B2

- 5 In paragraph 4, the author
- a **gives details and states the main idea later.**
  - b states the main idea and gives examples of it. ⊗
  - c asks a question and then answers it.
  - d uses numerous descriptive details.

B3

- 6 The author includes paragraphs 5 and 6 in order to
- f **show examples of personal conflicts of interest.** ⊗
  - g explain the best suggestions for the capital's location.
  - h help the reader understand why Washington was selected.
  - j show people who cared about the nation's future.

B4

- 7 You can tell from the article that
- a **early politicians enjoyed moving around.**
  - b everyone was satisfied with the final decision.
  - c achieving political compromise took time. ⊗
  - d early newspapers were extremely powerful.

C2

- 8 The author uses words like “contenders” and “promoters” to
- f **emphasize the rivalry between the groups supporting different locations.** ⊗
  - g create suspense about the outcome of the political activities.
  - h make the reader angry with people who did not agree with the decision.
  - j support the idea that the best place for the capital was Baltimore.

C2

- 9 The author uses the word “good” many times in order to show that the nation
- a **was inhabited by excellent people.**
  - b **contained many promising locations.** ⊗
  - c was founded on religious principles.
  - d encouraged people to do their best.

C3

- 10 Which of the following is an OPINION stated in paragraph 1?
- f **Washington, D.C. has not always been our nation’s capital.**
  - g **The Potomac River is too shallow for enemy ships to use for an attack.**
  - h **How this spot became the center of our government has an interesting history.** ⊗
  - j **Maryland gave seventy square miles of land, and Virginia gave thirty square miles of land for the capital.**

C4

- 11 If the author had added another paragraph to the end of the story, it would MOST LIKELY have described
- a **what Maryland did with the \$32,500.**
  - b **how the location affected the design and building of the new city.** ⊗
  - c temporary places where Congress met before the decision was made.
  - d other properties that George Washington surveyed.

A2

- 12 Complete the chart with information from the article.

| Who Offered the Suggestion             | Location Suggested  |
|--|---------------------|
| Manasseh Cutler                        | Ohio River          |
|  | Above New York City |
| Pennsylvania and New Jersey Landowners |                     |

B1

- 13 If you could choose the location of the U. S. capital, where would you want it to be? Use information from the article and your own experience to support your answer.

B2

- 14 List **four** details the author uses to support the main idea in paragraph 9.

B3

- 15 Using information from the article, explain why you think the author included information about the return of the Virginia land in paragraph 14.

B4

- 16 If you wanted to convince someone that Manasseh Cutler and Lewis Morris were greedy, what details from the article would you write about?

B4

- 17 Was the selection of Washington D.C. a good idea? Use information from the article to explain your answer.

C2

- 18 Explain what effect the first sentence of this article has on a reader and why you think the author wrote it.

C3

- 19 Write **one** FACT and **one** OPINION in paragraph 14.

C4

- 20 Choose the information in the article that you think was MOST interesting. Use details from the article to explain why you chose that information.



A flute is a pipe whose sides are pierced with holes. When a player blows across a mouthpiece at one end of the instrument, air inside the pipe vibrates. This 1 produces sound. The longer the column of vibrating air, the lower the note sounds. The shorter the column, the higher it sounds.

With all the tone holes open, the column of air inside the flute extends only from the mouthpiece to the first hole. The instrument sounds its highest note then. If the hole nearest the mouthpiece is covered, air no longer escapes there. The air is 2. The vibrating column is lengthened at least to the second hole. When this happens, the tone 3. As the holes are covered one by one advancing toward the base, the pitch becomes lower.

Melody is produced by covering tone holes in sequence. This is usually done by pressing down on small, padded keys mounted over the tone holes. Some keys, though, are located on the instrument's underside. These keys are harder to 4. They are operated indirectly by pressing a lever which, in turn, depresses or raises them.

To produce an accurate tone, the flute must be well made. The padded keys that cover the tone holes must be neither too loose nor too tight. A good 5 is essential. The keys must cover the tone holes snugly enough to prevent air from escaping, yet be loose enough to respond to the player's touch.

Correct fingering and a well-made instrument do not ensure beautiful sound. Something else is 6. The player's lips and tongue must be correctly shaped to form the notes, and the player must apply just the right amount of pressure to the airstream. In addition, the airstream must be directed neither too low nor too high in relation to the mouthpiece. Managing the mouth and breath so precisely is difficult. A great deal of 7 is required. This comes only with practice.



- 1 a) bow            b) stroke  
c) hand            d) record  
e) motion

- 2 a) blocked        b) heated  
c) wasted          d) cleared  
e) filled

- 3 a) improves      b) matches  
c) repeats         d) changes  
e) disappears

- 4 a) count          b) scale  
c) reach            d) miss  
e) purchase

- 5 a) sheet          b) fit  
c) lesson          d) song  
e) beginning

- 6 a) heard          b) needed  
c) taught          d) written  
e) performed

- 7 a) control         b) metal  
c) standing        d) reading  
e) support



Many materials are available to the artist wishing to carve a piece of sculpture. In choosing one, the artist must take into account the intended subject matter, location, and approximate size of the finished work. There is also more to 8. For example, the sculptor's style and budget affect the decision.

In carving a piece of sculpture, the artist begins with a solid block of material and removes segments until the object has the desired shape. The mass is gradually 9. Of the materials amenable to this process, three that have traditionally been employed are stone, wood, and ivory. Each of these 10 has different characteristics. Their relative strengths and weaknesses determine where each is best used.

Stone has long been the material favored for monumental sculpture. Such pieces by definition are large, and they are frequently located outdoors. Stone tolerates rain, snow, cold, heat, and other weather conditions. Thus the 11 are not a problem. Stone's texture and hardness make it suitable for carving in large pieces. Stone has the drawback, though, of fracturing if carved too thin. Hence stone, with the possible exception of marble, is not suitable for showing fine detail.

If a detailed work is envisioned, wood may be selected. Wood can be carved thinner than stone. While individual pieces are not strong enough for works of large proportion, wood can be jointed. The desired 12 can thus be achieved. Wood is neither as tough nor as durable as stone. Changes in humidity or temperature may cause wood to split, and it is subject to attack by insects and fungus. Hence, wood must be 13. This makes it impractical for outdoor use.

Ivory, dense and hard, is an alternative for detailed work. Its physical properties invite delicate carving. Ivory, though, lacks the ready availability of stone and wood. The 14 is limited. Accordingly, ivory is expensive. Furthermore, it is neither durable enough for outdoor display nor strong enough for massive works.

- 8 a) express      b) learn  
c) see            d) purchase  
e) consider

- 9 a) reduced      b) raised  
c) covered      d) cleaned  
e) positioned

- 10 a) figures        b) schools  
c) periods        d) substances  
e) methods

- 11 a) lights        b) elements  
c) crowds        d) hands  
e) edges

- 12 a) price         b) surface  
c) color          d) copy  
e) scale

- 13 a) smoothed    b) matched  
c) sheltered     d) added  
e) supported

- 14 a) time          b) space  
c) view          d) supply  
e) effect





Supernovas are cataclysmic explosions thought to signal the death of massive stars. Throughout a star's existence, astrophysicists believe, a sequence of nuclear reactions occurs in the stellar core: hydrogen nuclei fuse to form helium, helium nuclei subsequently fuse to create carbon, and heavier elements are thereafter fused in sequence. These nuclear reactions generate sufficient internal pressure in the stellar core to offset the star's tendency to collapse under its own gravitation. Hence, 15 is maintained.

Eventually, however, nuclear fuel in the core is exhausted, heat production ceases, and the star's ability to withstand its own gravitation vanishes. The star then 16. Collapse continues until, by processes incompletely understood, the collapse or implosion is transformed to an explosion so intense it blasts most of the stellar material into space, hurtling outward at fantastic speed. The material is thus 17.

Energy output from supernovas is prodigious: a single supernova emits the light of 10 billion suns, yet light and other types of electromagnetic radiation represent a small fraction of the supernova's energy. The total 18 is far greater. Kinetic energy of the exploding matter is 10 times its electromagnetic energy, while perhaps 100 times more energy than the electromagnetic emissions dispersed is carried away in a flash of massless particles called neutrinos.

Astrophysicists have scant likelihood of actually observing a supernova in progress. Such 19 are too rare. But while supernovas themselves occur infrequently in Earth's galaxy, remnants of ancient supernovas are detectable by radio telescope, x-ray telescope, and optical telescope. Although the residual stellar core is itself virtually invisible, it emits detectable radio signals and influences the orbital pattern of nearby celestial objects. Thus, its 20 can be inferred. Stellar material blown off by the supernova expands as a bubblelike shell, heating surrounding interstellar gases to an intense luminosity. Extrapolation based on the current expansion rate of these remnants enables scientists to calculate when the supernova occurred. They can therefore 21 the explosion.



- 15 a) darkness    b) distance  
c) growth    **d) balance**  
e) motion

- 16 a) tips    b) approaches  
c) appears    d) ages  
**e) contracts**

- 17 a) protected    **b) scattered**  
c) connected    d) weighed  
e) compared

- 18 a) length    b) loss  
**c) force**    d) range  
e) area

- 19 **a) events**    b) substances  
c) bodies    d) results  
e) storms

- 20 a) rank    b) shape  
**c) presence**    d) color  
e) development

- 21 **a) date**    b) prevent  
c) change    d) witness  
e) control