

# **English Language Arts**

## **ELA - Exploring, Learning, and Achieving**

### **Innovative Teaching Strategies for Your English Language Arts Program**

This packet is designed to energize your English Language Arts (ELA) program. It includes dynamic strategies and tools to use when teaching your child(ren):

- questioning strategies that foster critical thinking
- lesson ideas that encourage discussion, problem-solving, and collaboration
- websites with additional lessons using literature and non-fiction pieces
- and more...

Much of the enclosed information & teaching strategies may not be new to you (for example: thematic teaching, project-based learning, collaborative projects, text analysis, and more).

As you expand your current ELA program, these tools and ideas will be beneficial.

## Costa's Levels of Questioning: English

### LEVEL 1

What information is given?  
Locate in the story where...  
When did the event take place?  
Point to the...  
List the...  
Name the...  
Where did...?  
What is...?  
Who was/were...?  
Illustrate the part of the story that...  
Make a map of...  
What is the origin of the word \_\_\_\_\_?  
What events led to \_\_\_\_\_?

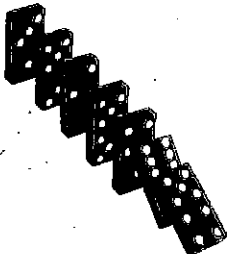
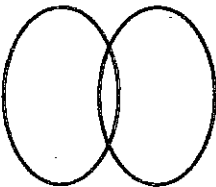
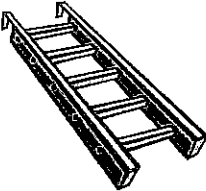
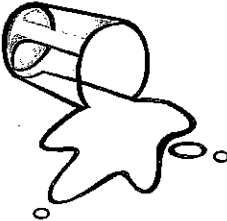
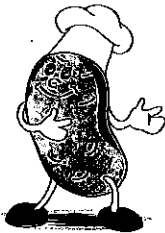
### LEVEL 2

What would happen to you if...  
Would you have done the same thing as...?  
What occurs when...?  
Compare and contrast \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.  
What other ways could \_\_\_\_\_ be interpreted?  
What is the main idea of the story (event)?  
What information supports your explanation?  
What was the message in this piece (event)?  
Give me an example of...  
Describe in your own words what \_\_\_\_\_ means.  
What does \_\_\_\_\_ suggest about \_\_\_\_\_'s character?  
What lines of the poem express the poet's feelings about \_\_\_\_\_?  
What is the author trying to prove? What evidence does he present?

### LEVEL 3

Design a \_\_\_\_\_ to show...  
Predict what will happen to \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ is changed.  
Write a new ending to the story (event)...  
Describe the events that might occur if...  
Add something new on your own that was not in the story...  
Pretend you are...  
What would the world be like if...?  
Pretend you are a character in the story. Rewrite the episode from your point of view.  
What do you think will happen to \_\_\_\_\_? Why?  
What is most compelling to you in this \_\_\_\_\_? Why?  
Could this story have really happened? Why or why not?  
If you were there, would you...?  
How would you solve this problem in your life?

## Text Structure Signal Questions & Signal Words

Cause and Effect	Compare and Contrast	Sequence	Problem and Solution	Description
				
Cause is why something happened. Effect is what happened. (Sometimes the effect is listed first.)	Shows how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different.	Describes items or events in order or tells the steps to follow to do something or make something.	Tells about a problem (and sometimes says why there is a problem) then gives one or more possible solutions.	A topic, idea, person, place, or thing is described by listing its features, characteristics, or examples.
Signal Questions				
What happened? Why did it happen? What caused it to happen?	What things are being compared? In what ways are they alike? In what ways are they different?	What items, events, or steps are listed? Do they have to happen in this order? Do they always happen in this order?	What is the problem? Why is this a problem? Is anything being done to try to solve the problem? What can be done to solve the problem?	What specific topic, person, idea, or thing is being described? How is it being described (what does it look like, how does it work, what does it do, etc.)? What is important to remember about it?
Signal Words				
So Because Since Therefore If...then This led to Reason why As a result May be due to Effect of Consequently For this reason	Same as Similar Alike As well as Not only...but also Both Instead of Either...or On the other hand Different from As opposed to	First Second Next Then Before After Finally Following Not long after Now Soon	Question is... Dilemma is... The puzzle is... To solve this... One answer is... One reason for the problem is...	For instance Such as... To begin with An example To illustrate Characteristics  *Look for the topic word (or a synonym or pronoun) to be repeated

# Hickman Community Charter District ELA Quick Guide for Parents

## Hickman Charter School English Language Arts Quick Guide

### English Language Arts/Literacy: Expectations for Students & Ideas for Parents

Goals	Student Expectations	Considerations in Choosing Lessons	Teacher Applications
<i>Read as much fiction as non-fiction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read more non-fiction</li> <li>Understand how non-fiction is written and organized</li> <li>Enjoy and discuss the details of non-fiction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan more reading assignments based on real-life events, such as biographies, articles and historical stories.</li> <li>Pair literature with topically related non-fiction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply more non-fiction texts</li> <li>Read non-fiction books aloud or with your child</li> <li>Model reading of both fiction and non-fiction for your children.</li> </ul>
<i>Learn about the world by reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn more about science and social studies through reading</li> <li>Use "primary source" documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read more fact-based books about the world. For instance, your 1<sup>st</sup> Grader or Kindergartener might read Clyde Robert Bulla's <i>A Tree is a Plant</i>, where students read and learn about science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply reading materials on topics that interest your child</li> <li>Find books that explain how things work and why</li> <li>Discuss non-fiction writings</li> </ul>
<i>Read more challenging material</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-read until they understand</li> <li>Read books both at and above their comfort level</li> <li>Handle frustration</li> <li>Keep pushing to improve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have your child complete reading and writing assignments that might ask them to retell or write about key parts of a story or book. For example, your 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grader might be asked to read aloud Faith D'Aluisio's non-fiction book titled <i>What the World Eats</i> and retell facts from the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know what is grade-level appropriate</li> <li>Provide challenging texts as well as books they can read easily</li> <li>Read challenging books with your child</li> <li>Show that challenging books are worth reading</li> </ul>
<i>Talk about reading using evidence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find evidence to support their arguments</li> <li>Form judgments and opinions</li> <li>Discuss what the author is thinking</li> <li>Make predictions about what will happen next</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for written assignments that ask your child to draw on concrete examples from the text that serve as evidence. Evidence means examples from the book that your child will use to support a response or conclusion. This is different from many opinion questions that have been used in the past.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about texts</li> <li>Demand evidence in everyday discussions and disagreements</li> <li>Read aloud or read the same book as your child and discuss</li> <li>Discuss predictions</li> </ul>
<i>Write about text using evidence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use evidence to make written arguments</li> <li>Compare multiple texts in writing</li> <li>Incorporate age-appropriate grammar, conventions, spelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for writing assignments that ask your child to make arguments in writing using evidence. For 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, this might mean reading and writing about <i>The Kids Guide to Money</i>, a non-fictional book by Steve Otfinoski.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage more writing</li> <li>Write together using evidence and details</li> <li>Review samples of exemplar student writing</li> </ul>
<i>Strengthen your child's vocabulary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continually develop vocabulary</li> <li>Investigate meanings of unfamiliar words found in reading materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for activities that stretch your child's vocabulary.</li> <li>Incorporate word games and puzzles into lessons plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read often and constantly with young children</li> <li>Read multiple books on the same topic</li> <li>Talk to your children, read to them, listen to them, sing with them, make up silly rhymes, and play word games</li> </ul>

# English Language Arts Made Simple:

## Nine Terms You Might Want to Know

### 1) Close reading

The careful, line-by-line study of an article or story to help students really understand the meaning, not just the words.

### 2) Complex text

What makes a story or article complex? Challenging words, a tricky structure, and subject matter that is new to the reader.

### 3) Domain-specific vocabulary

Words that relate to a certain subject. For example, *sauteé* is from the “domain” of cooking. These are also called “*Tier 3 words*.”

### 4) General academic vocabulary

Tricky words kids are more likely to come across in reading than in everyday conversation. For example, “melancholy” is less common but more descriptive than “sad.” These are also called “*Tier 2 words*.”

### 5) Higher-level thinking

This requires students to think deeply and more critically instead of simply recalling facts. Higher level thinking skills involve evaluation, compare/contrast, analysis, prediction, etc.

### 6) Informational texts

Nonfiction reading that gives information about the world, rather than just telling a story.

### 7) Paired texts

Stories, articles, and poems grouped together that share a theme or topic between which students can make connections.

### 8) Performance task




An activity designed so students can demonstrate or “show off” their understanding of what they’ve learned. This could be an essay, a video, a poster, etc.

### 9) Text evidence

Details from a story or article that students use to support their ideas, rather than relying on opinion.

# Internet Sources for English Language Arts Materials

There are an almost infinite number of internet sources for curriculum materials. Before you hit the searching rabbit trails, check out what these three sites have to offer. All have been reviewed and come from credible sources.

Website Summaries		Grade Levels	Worksheets	Lesson Plans	Printable	Searchable
 <p>Readworks (<a href="http://www.readworks.org/">http://www.readworks.org/</a>) Extensive collection of teaching materials; requires free registration to access printables. Excellent source of reading comprehension materials. 2014-2015 English Language Arts packets will be generated from this site. Lessons and units include complete books; reading passages are short selections. Focus on "reading passages" tab; use green search area to narrow focus.</p>	 <p>Scholastic (<a href="http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/">http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/</a>) Many materials available without registration; additional materials available for those who register. Use "teacher" tab to access extensive lesson plans. Searches are available based on general topics: weather, plants, etc., but cannot be customized for specific grades. Considerable lesson plans and classroom materials are available on the site.</p>	K-6	Yes; revisable	yes	yes	Yes (under "passages")
		PreK-8	yes	yes	yes	yes, but not customizable
 <p>Time4Kids (<a href="http://www.timeforkids.com/">http://www.timeforkids.com/</a>) This site is best for writing help and research/theme studies. Free access includes sample writings, printable organizers and online activities to assist with writing. It's a good source of theme study references and for research.</p>		K-6	minimal	writing	minimal	no

## Public Library Offerings

The Stanislaus County Library offers use of a variety of free databases (<http://www.stanisluslibrary.org/databases1.htm>) to all cardholders, including one designed for student use. Student information includes a very extensive collection of biographical information, as well as a general virtual reference library.

The San Joaquin County Library (<http://www.ssjcpl.org>) offers its cardholders access to Scholastic's "Bookflix" service: a collection of book pairs (fiction and non-fiction) for a variety of subjects, with resources that include classroom as well as parent-child activities. There are read-aloud options, and many of the titles have AR tests available. A free online trial is available. (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/bookflixfretrial/>), but for the cost of a trip to any branch of the San Joaquin County Library system to get a library card, you can have access to the entire Bookflix service for FREE!! (Exact sign-in procedure varies depending on the browser used. Specific instructions will be posted on our webpage or distributed via the newsletter.)



# Close Reading Practice



*Close Reading: a careful, line by line study of a text to help students really "get it".*

Close Reading is reading something enough times so that you can understand it, explain it to someone else, and ask and answer questions about it using evidence from the text.



It's the idea of "digging deeper" every time you read.

*The first time you dig your shovel in (read), you just scrape the surface off the ground. The second time you dig in (read the text again), you get a little more dirt (meaning). Every time you dig in (read) after that, the hole gets deeper until you get the full meaning.*

what is

## CLOSE Reading?

A strategy that allows readers to dig deeper into a text by:

1. Reading and re-reading the text to gather meaning and determine the author's purpose.
2. Highlighting important vocabulary words and using context clues to figure out the meaning of them.
3. Providing evidence and support for answers to comprehension questions by using the text itself.

### Show Me the Evidence!

- On page ..... it said...
- The author wrote...
- According to the text...
- Based on what I read...
- For instance...
- For example...
- Based on the visual clues from the illustrations...
- In the ..... paragraph on page .....
- From the reading I know that...
- I know because...
- The text explicitly states...
- I can infer from...



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Now that you know about "close reading", you will find two short, but interesting, reading passages that you can use to practice "close reading" with your children. The first story is for younger elementary and the second one is for upper elementary/middle school students. We recommend that you read the story to younger children who are not at this reading level yet



# Inventions: Then and Now

**Inventions**<sup>1</sup> solve problems and help make our lives easier. The Wright brothers invented the first airplane in 1903. The first flight traveled about half the length of a football field and lasted 12 seconds. Today's airplanes can travel long distances. Look at the ways that some inventions have changed over the years.

**Discover how some inventions have changed over time.**

## Telephone



### Then

Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone in 1876. The first phone had a trumpet-shaped part that was used to speak and to listen.



### Now

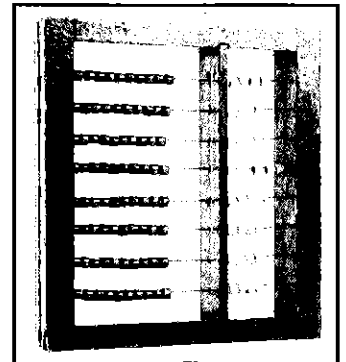
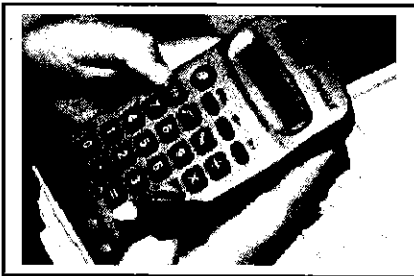
Many people carry small cell phones. They have no wires, unlike earlier phones. Cell phones let people talk all over the world.

<sup>1</sup> **invention:** something created for the first time.

## Calculator

### Then

The first calculator was invented in Asia nearly 500 years ago. People moved beads on a wooden rack to help them count.



### Now

Calculators come in many shapes and sizes. They can even be part of other inventions, including computers, watches, and cell phones.

## Television

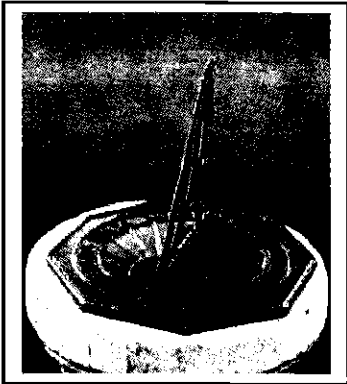
### Then

Television became popular in the 1950s. The first TVs did not have a remote control. The screens showed pictures in black and white, and the sound was poor.

### Now

Many modern TVs have flat screens. Some can be hung on a wall. Today's televisions have very clear, colored pictures, and excellent sound.

## Clock



### Then

Long ago, people kept track of time by recording the movement of the sun across the sky. The first clock was called a **sundial**<sup>2</sup>.

### Now

Clocks keep time for us. With a quick glance at a clock or watch, we know the time of day. What time is it now?



<sup>2</sup> **sundial**: a device to show the time of day by the position of the shadow cast on a marked plate or disk usually by an object with a straight edge.

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

**Directions:** Answer the following four questions based on the information in the passage.

**1.** According to the passage, what is the purpose of inventions?

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**2.** How has the telephone changed since it was invented?

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**3.** Compare and contrast the television invented in the 1950s with the televisions many people watch today. How are these two TVs similar and how are they different?

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**4.** What is the main idea of this passage?

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**Directions:** Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

*With hard work, the Wright brothers invented the first airplane in 1903.*

Who? the Wright brothers

5. (did) What?

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6. When?

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7. How?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Nowadays calculators are often found on computers and cell phones, \_\_\_\_\_ the first calculator was a wooden rack with beads.

- A but
- B because
- C so

**Directions:** Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **glance** (glance): to look at something quickly.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **glance**.
- a. I glanced at the thermometer to see how hot it was outside.
  - b. As Mr. Ferris read to us, he would glance up every now and then to see if we were still listening.
  - c. Mom glanced at my homework to make sure I had finished it.
  - d. I only needed to glance out the window to see that it was a stormy day.
  - e. Mike glanced in the classroom to see if any other students had arrived yet.
10. Which person is NOT glancing at something?



## Teacher Guide and Answer Key

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 650

**Featured Text Structure:** Compare/Contrast – the writer presents similarities and differences between two or more objects, places, events or ideas

**Passage Summary:** This passage illustrates how certain inventions, such as telephones, televisions, and clocks, have changed over time.

**To the Teacher:** Read the passage aloud to the class [TIP: while reading aloud, show the passage on a whiteboard or give each student a copy of the passage so they can follow along].

Then, use the text-dependent questions 1-8 to facilitate a whole class discussion to ensure students comprehend the key details from the passage.

Finally, use questions 9-10 to deep teach one important vocabulary word [TIP: you can use the model provided for teaching additional vocabulary].

1. According to the passage, what is the purpose of inventions? [Important Detail]

**Suggested answer:** The purpose of inventions is to solve problems and make life easier for people. [paragraph 1]

2. How has the telephone changed since it was invented? [Important Detail]

**Suggested answer:** Back in the late 1800s, the first phone had a trumpet-shaped part that was used to speak and listen to. However, now, a widely used phone is the cell phone which has no wires and lets people from all over the world talk with one another. [paragraphs 2, 3]

3. Compare and contrast the television invented in the 1950s with the televisions many people watch today. How are these two TVs similar and how are they different? [Important Detail]

**Suggested answer:** Both the TVs from the 1950s as well as the TVs today have screens. The difference is the TVs today have colored pictures while the old screens were only black and white. Another difference is that the TVs from the 1950s did not have a remote control, while TVs today do have a remote control. In

addition, there is a difference in the sound quality. Old TVs had poor sound quality, while new TVs have excellent sound quality. [paragraphs 6, 7]

4. What is the main idea of this passage? [Main Idea]

**Suggested answer:** The main idea of this passage is that inventions change over time.

**Directions:** Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

*With hard work, the Wright brothers invented the first airplane in 1903.*

Who? the Wright brothers

5. (did) What? **invented the first airplane**

6. When? **in 1903**

7. How? **with hard work**

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Nowadays calculators are often found on computers and cell phones, \_\_\_\_\_ the first calculator was a wooden rack with beads.

**A but**

**B because**

**C so**

**To the Teacher:** ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: **glance** (glance): to look at something quickly.

**Step 1:** Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (glance)



- b. Teacher says: "This word is glance. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Glance."]

**Step 2:** Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "To glance means to look at something quickly."
- b. Teacher says: "The passage states that people can tell the time now with a quick glance at a watch."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "Glance."]

**Step 3:** Practice the word

Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

**Directions:** Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

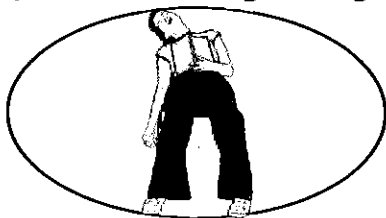
Vocabulary Word: **glance** (glance): to look at something quickly.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **glance**.
- a. I glanced at the thermometer to see how hot it was outside.
  - b. As Mr. Ferris read to us, he would glance up every now and then to see if we were still listening.
  - c. Mom glanced at my homework to make sure I had finished it.
  - d. I only needed to glance out the window to see that it was a stormy day.
  - e. Mike glanced in the classroom to see if any other students had arrived yet.

**Step 4:** Check for student understanding

**To the Teacher:** This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

**10.** Which person is NOT glancing at something?



*Suggested Additional Vocabulary: distance*

## California and Mesopotamia—Similarities and Differences



It may seem at first glance that California and the ancient land of Mesopotamia have very little in common. Mesopotamia, located in modern-day Iraq, is considered the cradle of Western civilization, and first became home to an economic power in 3100 B.C. California, on the Pacific Coast of North America, did not achieve status as an economic power until almost 5,000 years later, at the end of the 1800s. In spite of these differences of time and place, it is important to realize that both regions were able to rise to economic power because of their unique geographical landscapes.

Let's first look at Mesopotamia. It was bordered on either side by two rivers: the Tigris and the Euphrates. These rivers had many different branches, or tributaries, feeding into them, creating a vast network of streams and canals. The canals provided a built-in transportation system for the Sumerian and Akkadian peoples who first settled the place. Using the simple canoes and log rafts they built, they could communicate and trade. This ability to trade was especially important since Mesopotamia did not have its own supply of resources such as timber, metals or semi-precious stones, and had to import all of these things. Water routes allowed Mesopotamia to import the materials needed to become an economic power.

Water transport also greatly increased the speed of communication in Mesopotamia. Overland transportation at that time was painfully slow and clunky, via simple wheeled pushcarts, or pack animals such as donkeys or camels. With water transport, settlers could use downstream river currents to ship goods much faster. Raw materials arrived at the bigger towns with greater frequency, which meant that these towns and cities could grow and develop faster. Knowledge and news from other regions could also come in quicker, allowing the Mesopotamians to become savvy and cosmopolitan. So we see that the speedy input of goods and knowledge via the waterways allowed the Mesopotamians a distinct advantage over competing regions, and allowed their economic and cultural life to flourish.

Mesopotamia was also blessed with especially rich soil. Diverse elevations (there are both high hills and low-lying marshlands) and climactic variations in the region allowed for the evolution of many types of edible seeds and plants, as well as a variety of farm animals. Mesopotamia is considered the birthplace of agriculture—it is here where the first species of wheat, barley, flax, chick pea and lentil were first cultivated by man for human consumption. In looking at the development of farming in Mesopotamia, we see that it was a combination of Mesopotamia's geographical advantage (specifically, its abundance of plant and animal species) and the intelligence of its human settlers that made it all possible. With so many crops, the settlers of Mesopotamia could be well-nourished, which gave them the physical strength to thrive, and also gave them many products to trade with other regions. It is no surprise, then, that historians have dubbed Mesopotamia as "The Fertile Crescent," due to its productive soil.

While the great city of Babylon was thriving in Mesopotamia in 3100 B.C., California remained rather insignificant as a trade or cultural center. It was inhabited by nomadic tribes who lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Life in these tribes was simply a matter of day-to-day survival, and no deeper developments, such as writing or advanced technological inventions, were able to take place. Unlike tribes in other parts of North America, the California Indians never built great settlements or amassed significant wealth. This is partly because for a long time California Indians were geographically isolated—cut off by the Sierra Nevada mountains on one side, the vast Pacific Ocean on the other, and desert to the south. They could not easily communicate with tribes outside of California. Also, they could not cultivate crops because the land was for the most part too dry. When João Rodrigues Calbrilho, a Portuguese explorer, arrived with his crew in California in the early 1500s (they were the first Europeans to do so), the crew abandoned the place, thinking it was too isolated from the world's other trade points.

It was only in the mid 1800s, when American settlers from the East discovered precious gold buried under California soil that the region finally started to become an important economic center. The natural resources hidden in California land, in the form of gold and oil, motivated the Americans to somehow overcome the region's isolation. First attempts to do this were the Pony Express and the Overland Express, companies that used horses to relay communication from California to other parts of America. Then came the telegraph, and soon after that the transcontinental railroad, which ended California's isolation issue once and for all.

With the arrival of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, California's natural geographical advantages could finally be exploited, and by 1900, the area was in full economic boom. The American settlers who had built the railroads quickly replaced the nomadic native tribes. They opened up commerce along the 840 miles of Pacific shoreline, which soon became full of bustling ports that brought labor and trade goods across the Pacific Ocean from China and Japan. The American settlers also built large aqueducts to irrigate inland California, which previously had been too dry to cultivate crops. Thanks to the state's temperate, Mediterranean-like climate, a large variety of crops could flourish, now that there was sufficient water. Like Mesopotamia 5,000 years earlier, California became an agricultural giant, and today it is America's prime producer of almonds, walnuts, avocados, grapes, melons, peaches, strawberries, and wine. Hollywood, another major economic asset to California, formed around Los Angeles in the early 1900s because the area's geography was suited to filmmaking. Southern California had large natural spaces and year-round good weather, both helpful conditions for making films. California continues to be an economic powerhouse today thanks to its geographical assets—natural resources, good climate, and fertile soil. California ranks as the world's 12<sup>th</sup> largest economy.

We now see that, like Mesopotamia, California has certain geographical advantages that have made it a power player on the world stage. California did not have it as easy as Mesopotamia did—it had several geographical disadvantages to conquer before its advantages could really shine. Technology had to evolve so that communication between California and other parts of the world was not so difficult and slow. Aqueducts needed to be built to irrigate the dry inland areas, making them lush and fertile like the ancient Mesopotamian soil. But once these changes were in place, the other, significant geographical advantages of California could be enjoyed, and the state could assume its place in world history, alongside ancient Mesopotamia, as one of the great centers of economic power. The examples of California and Mesopotamia show us that no matter what time of history we are in, geography will play a key role in determining its economic promise.

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

1. Which place is considered the cradle of Western civilization?

- A California
- B Egypt
- C South Africa
- D Mesopotamia

2. How does the author compare California and Mesopotamia?

- A Both are geographically isolated.
- B Both were home to ancient advanced cultures.
- C Both rose to power because of their unique geographical landscapes.
- D Both had fertile soil to easily grow crops.

3. Water transportation was crucial for the economical development of Mesopotamia. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A "Raw materials arrived at the bigger towns with greater frequency, which meant that these towns and cities could grow and develop faster."
- B "Overland transportation at that time was painfully slow and clunky, via simple wheeled pushcarts, or pack animals such as donkeys or camels."
- C "The canals provided a built-in transportation system for the Sumerian and Akkadian peoples who first settled the place."
- D "These rivers had many different branches, or tributaries, feeding into them, creating a vast network of streams and canals."

4. Man-made constructions needed to be developed before people could enjoy the geographical benefits of the area. This statement is true about which area?

- A Mesopotamia
- B California
- C both Mesopotamia and California
- D America

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A how ancient Mesopotamians invented writing
- B the economic benefits of the California gold rush
- C similarities and differences between Mesopotamia and California
- D why California became a filmmaking superpower

6. Read the following sentence: "In looking at the development of farming in Mesopotamia, we see that it was a combination of Mesopotamia's geographical advantage (specifically, its **abundance** of plant and animal species) and the intelligence of its human settlers that made it all possible."

What does "**abundance**" mean?

- A large amount
- B small amount
- C lack of
- D affluence

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

Native American tribes in California were geographically isolated; \_\_\_\_\_, they were unable to communicate easily with other tribes outside of California.

- A moreover
- B namely
- C ultimately
- D as a result

8. Why were nomadic Native American tribes in California unable to develop advanced technological inventions at the same time as Mesopotamia?

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**9.** How did the settlers who came to California after the construction of the transcontinental railroad overcome California's geographic challenges? Give two examples from the passage.

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**10.** What are the major differences between ancient California and Mesopotamia? Use information from the text to support your answer.

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**Teacher Guide & Answers****Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 1340**1.** Which place is considered the cradle of Western civilization?

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8. Why were nomadic Native American tribes in California unable to develop advanced technological inventions at the same time as Mesopotamia?

**Suggested answer:** Nomadic Native American tribes in California were unable to develop advanced technological inventions because of their hunter-gatherer lifestyle, which allowed only for day-to-day survival.

9. How did the settlers who came to California after the construction of the transcontinental railroad overcome California's geographic challenges? Give two examples from the passage.

**Suggested answer:** The settlers created ports that brought labor and trade goods across the Pacific Ocean from China and Japan; they built aqueducts to irrigate inland California, which previously had been too dry to cultivate crops.

10. What are the major differences between ancient California and Mesopotamia? Use information from the text to support your answer.

**Suggested answer:** Answers may vary and could include: The land in Mesopotamia is fertile and rich, whereas the land in California is dry. California is geographically isolated as it is bordered by mountains and the ocean, whereas Mesopotamia is bordered by two rivers which facilitate communication and trade. Culture and technology were able to develop and thrive in Mesopotamia because of the geographical advantages of the waterways, whereas culture among Californian tribes was slow to develop as they had to worry about day-to-day survival.