

7th Grade



Spring Break Vacation Packet

Name: _____

Due: Monday, April 9, 2018

Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 8.

Country Cousin/City Cousin

by Clarke Foley

Part One: Rosa Visits the City

In July I was really excited about visiting my cousin Ernesto and his family in New York City—the Big Apple! I pictured us riding a limousine along Park Avenue, sitting in box seats at a New York Yankees baseball game, shopping on Fifth Avenue, admiring art masterpieces in the Guggenheim Museum, and eating at fancy restaurants. When I arrived, things were not exactly the way I imagined.

5 First off, my cousins don't live in Manhattan, which is the New York I've seen on television. They live in Brooklyn, which is a borough, kind of like a suburb, of the city. My cousin Ernesto did not seem interested in leaving Brooklyn.

"Ernesto!" His mom, my tía Maria, shook her head at him. "Be a good host and tour guide! Rosa didn't come all the way from Pennsylvania to sit around at the pool with your friends."

10 "Whaddya wanna do there?" he asked.

My eyes lit up. "I want to do everything!" I told him. "I want to go to the Guggenheim, and shop on Fifth Avenue, and eat at a fancy restaurant, maybe go to a Yankees game . . ." At that point I stopped because Ernesto was laughing.

Tía Maria smiled and said, "Well, Rosa, there is a lot to do in the city. It can be a bit . . . strenuous."

15 I thought they were both crazy; I couldn't wait to get started. The next morning, we set out right after breakfast.

By that evening I could understand why Ernesto might have had mixed feelings about a day filled with activities in Manhattan. Walking across the Brooklyn Bridge was the best part of the adventure because it was free and the structure was magnificent. Everything went downhill quickly after that. The streets were jammed with noisy traffic spewing exhaust fumes, people were shoving and bumping into us on the sidewalks, and there was trash everywhere. It was so different from my home in the Pennsylvania countryside.

20

We did make it to the Guggenheim Museum, which is way uptown. It took us nearly an hour to find the right subway, catch our train, and make the trip. The subway was loud and grimy. At the museum I spent two hours admiring the art, but then I was hungry, and the price of a meal in an uptown restaurant cost way more than I had imagined. We ended up enjoying a slice of that delicious New York pizza.

25

For the rest of the week we mainly played video games in the basement, where it was cool but musty, and hung out with Ernesto's neighborhood friends at the city pool, which stunk of chlorine and burned my eyes. It was OK, but I was glad when my visit ended and I got back home. It is rough living in the city!

GO ON

Part Two: Ernesto Visits the Country

30 In August I visited my cousin Rosa and her family way out in the country. I was happy because I thought the country would be restful and relaxing. When I arrived, though, Rosa had planned out my entire week.

“I want to show you a secret cave in the mountains. It’s only a two-mile hike up Mount Pine,” she said.

35 “Two miles? Up a mountain?” I wasn’t so sure. I like taking long walks in the city, but the ground is flat there and we have sidewalks.

“We can go swimming, too,” Rosa added.

“I love to swim,” I said. “Is there a pool around here?”

40 “A pool? Oh, no. We swim up at the old quarry. You’ll love it—there’s a rope swing and it’s so deep that some people say it doesn’t have a bottom at all!” Rosa said excitedly. I wasn’t sure about swimming in an old quarry. Especially one with no bottom.

Rosa was also super excited to take me horseback riding at their community stables. “My favorite horse to ride there is Lightning. I’ll make sure you get a turn with him,” she offered. But I wasn’t quite as excited as Rosa. I could tell she was being generous, but I had to shake my head seriously while I thought of an excuse.

45 “I’m allergic to most animals,” I said. It sounded ridiculous even as the words left my mouth, but it was actually true. My brother tried to keep a pet hamster in our room once and I ended up sneezing and itching until we took it back to the pet shop. I didn’t even want to think about what a horse might do to me.

50 I managed to talk Rosa out of the horseback riding, but I wasn’t as lucky with the rest of her plans. The cave Rosa was so excited about turned out to be damp and depressing. I tried to act like I was having a good time, but I didn’t win any Oscar awards for my acting performance. I swam in the quarry, but I felt creeped out the whole time.

55 When we got back to the house, I told Rosa to go riding without me. I think she would have done so, but her dad said, “Rosa, you can ride next week. Cousin Ernesto is your guest. You need to find things to do with him while he is here.” Rosa and I looked at each other. Hadn’t we done it all—except the horseback riding—already?

I’m pretty sure Rosa felt relieved when it was time for me to go back to Brooklyn. I know I did. I never realized what a rough life people live in the country.

1

Part One introduces the central idea that people are comfortable with the things they know and uncomfortable with things that are unfamiliar to them. Which of the following from Part Two **best** develops this central idea?

- A** lines 30 through 32
- B** line 33
- C** lines 34 and 35
- D** line 36

2

What do lines 1 through 4 reveal about Rosa?

- A** Rosa is an anxious person who does not like change.
- B** Rosa is full of energy and enjoys trying many different things.
- C** Rosa is upset about having to visit her cousin in the city.
- D** Rosa plans to move away from the country and live in the city.

3

Read this sentence from line 14.

Tía Maria smiled and said, “Well, Rosa, there is a lot to do in the city. It can be a bit . . . strenuous.”

The word “strenuous” **most closely** means

- A** exhausting
- B** frightening
- C** overwhelming
- D** unfamiliar

GO ON

4

The description of the quarry serves to illustrate that it is

- A** too dangerous for the cousins to swim in
- B** different from the pool Ernesto is used to
- C** not as deep as Rosa thinks it is
- D** surrounded by beautiful scenery

5

Which sentence **best** supports the idea that Rosa was disappointed by her time in the city?

- A** “When I arrived, things were not exactly the way I imagined.” (line 4)
- B** “At that point I stopped because Ernesto was laughing.” (lines 12 and 13)
- C** “It was so different from my home in the Pennsylvania countryside.” (lines 21 and 22)
- D** “We did make it to the Guggenheim Museum, which is way uptown.” (line 23)

6

Why does the author use two narrators to tell the story?

- A** The cousins provide conflicting details so that readers are surprised by the ending.
- B** The cousins take turns telling what happened so that readers get both sides of the story.
- C** Each cousin tells the other’s story so that readers get an honest view of what happened to each of them.
- D** Each cousin narrates his or her own story so that readers can see how their points of view are different.

7

What is the theme of this story?

- A** There's no place like home.
- B** The city and the country are both unpleasant.
- C** Family is the most important thing.
- D** People always want what they can't have.

8

Which is the **best** summary of this story?

- A** Rosa visited Ernesto in New York. She was excited about spending time in the big city. She had less fun than she expected she would. Ernesto thought a visit to see Rosa in the country would be relaxing, but Rosa kept him busy with activities he didn't enjoy.
- B** When Rosa visited Ernesto, his mother forced him to take Rosa sightseeing even though he did not want to go. When Ernesto visited Rosa, her father would not let her go horseback riding without Ernesto.
- C** Ernesto is a city boy and Rosa is a country girl. Ernesto thought they would have a lot in common but came to understand that their worlds were different. Rosa wanted Ernesto to join her as she hiked up a mountain, swam in a lake, and went horseback riding.
- D** Rosa came to stay with Ernesto in July. She was surprised to learn he lived in a part of New York called Brooklyn and not in Manhattan. She was also disappointed because all he wanted to do was hang out in his neighborhood.

GO ON

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 17 through 22.

P. G. Wodehouse's novels follow the adventures of Bertram "Bertie" Wooster, an English gentleman, and Jeeves, his butler. In this excerpt, Bertie receives several urgent telegrams from his aunt, Dahlia Travers, and seeks Jeeves's help to know how to respond.

from *Right Ho, Jeeves*

Excerpts from Right Ho, Jeeves by P. G. Wodehouse, published by Hebert Jenkins Ltd. (1922).

The first of the telegram¹ arrived shortly after noon, and Jeeves brought it in. . . . It was from my Aunt Dahlia, operating from Market Snodsbury, a small town of sorts a mile or two along the main road as you leave her country seat.

It ran as follows:

5 *Come at once. Travers.*

And when I say it puzzled me like the dickens, I am understating it; if anything. As mysterious a communication, I considered, as was ever flashed over the wires. . . . I read it backwards. I read it forwards. As a matter of fact, I have a sort of recollection of even smelling it. But it still baffled me.

10 Consider the facts, I mean. It was only a few hours since this aunt and I had parted, after being in constant association for nearly two months. And yet here she was. . . . pleading for another reunion. Bertram Wooster is not accustomed to this gluttonous² appetite for his society. Ask anyone who knows me, and they will tell you that after two months of my company, what the normal person feels is that that will about do for the present. Indeed, I have known people who couldn't stick it out for more than a few days.

Before sitting down to the well-cooked, therefore, I sent this reply:

15 *Perplexed. Explain. Bertie.*

To this I received an answer during the after-luncheon sleep:

What on earth is there to be perplexed about. . . ? Come at once. Travers.

. . . [A] couple of turns about the room, and I had my response ready:

How do you mean come at once? Regards. Bertie.

20 I append the comeback:

I mean come at once. . . . What did you think I meant? Come at once or expect an aunt's curse first post tomorrow. Love. Travers.

I then dispatched the following message, wishing to get everything quite clear:

25 *When you say "Come" do you mean "Come to Brinkley Court"? And when you say "At once" do you mean "At once"? Fogged. At a loss. All the best. Bertie.*

¹ **telegram:** a form of written long-distance communication, most popular before the invention of the telephone

² **gluttonous:** hungry for more

I sent this one off on my way to the Drones, where I spent a restful afternoon throwing cards into a top-hat with some of the better element. Returning in the evening hush, I found the answer waiting for me:

30 *Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. It doesn't matter whether you understand or not. You just come at once, as I tell you, and for heaven's sake stop this back-chat. Do you think I am made of money that I can afford to send you telegrams every ten minutes. Stop being a fathead and come immediately. Love. Travers.*

It was at this point that I felt the need of getting a second opinion. I pressed the bell.

"Jeeves, . . . Read these," I said, handing him the papers in the case.

He scanned them.

"What do you make of it, Jeeves?"

35 "I think Mrs. Travers wishes you to come at once, sir."

"You gather that too, do you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I put the same construction on the thing. But why, Jeeves? Dash it all, she's just had nearly two months of me."

40 "Yes, sir."

"And many people consider the medium dose for an adult two days."

"Yes, sir. I appreciate the point you raise. Nevertheless, Mrs. Travers appears very insistent. I think it would be well to acquiesce³ in her wishes."

"Pop down, you mean?"

45 "Yes, sir."

"Well, I certainly can't go at once. I've an important conference on at the Drones tonight. Pongo Twistleton's birthday party, you remember."

"Yes, sir." . . .

50 "Well, anyway, returning to the agenda⁴, I can't go down to Brinkley Court or anywhere else yet awhile. That's final. I'll tell you what, Jeeves. Give me form and pencil, and I'll wire her that I'll be with her some time next week or the week after. Dash it all, she ought to be able to hold out without me for a few days. It only requires will power."

"Yes, sir."

55 "Right ho, then. I'll wire 'Expect me tomorrow fortnight⁵ or words to some such effect. That ought to meet the case. Then if you will toddle round the corner and send it off, that will be that."

"Very good, sir."

And so the long day wore on till it was time for me to dress for Pongo's party.

³ **acquiesce:** agree

⁴ **agenda:** plan, task at hand

⁵ **fortnight:** two weeks. In this case, Bertie Wooster plans to tell Aunt Dahlia that he will come to Brinkley Court two weeks from tomorrow.

... It was well after four when I got home, and by that time I was about ready to turn in. I can just remember groping for the bed and crawling into it, and it seemed to me that the lemon had scarcely
60 touched the pillow before I was aroused by the sound of the door opening.

I was barely ticking over, but I contrived to raise an eyelid.

“Is that my tea, Jeeves?”

“No, sir. It is Mrs. Travers.”

And a moment later there was a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and the relative had crossed the
65 threshold at fifty m.p.h. under her own steam.

17 What does Bertie mean by “conference” in line 46?

- A** social gathering
- B** business meeting
- C** political meeting
- D** trade gathering

18 How might the story be different if Mrs. Travers were the narrator?

- A** Readers would know what both she and Bertie are thinking.
- B** Readers would see exactly what she wrote in her telegrams.
- C** Readers would see why Bertie is unwilling to go to her.
- D** Readers would know why she wants to see Bertie so badly.

19 Which theme is expressed in the story?

- A** Family relationships can be challenging.
- B** Work is more important than play.
- C** Friendship is worth more than money.
- D** Time is valuable and should not be wasted.

20

Which event from the story develops the idea that some people who feel important do little work?

- A** Mrs. Travers wants to see Bertie right away though she's just left him.
- B** Bertie and Mrs. Travers exchange several telegrams in one day.
- C** Bertie throws cards into a top-hat instead of going to Mrs. Travers.
- D** Bertie and Jeeves discuss the meaning of Mrs. Travers's telegrams.

21

Which words in a telegram from the story suggest that Bertie really does know what his aunt wants but doesn't want to do it?

- A** "Come at once." (line 5)
- B** "What on earth is there to be perplexed about . . .?" (line 17)
- C** "How do you mean come at once?" (line 19)
- D** "And when you say 'At once' do you mean 'At once'?" (lines 24 and 25)

22

Which character's actions contribute the **most** to the way the story progresses?

- A** Mrs. Travers has recently returned home after visiting Bertie only a few days before the story begins.
- B** Bertie repeatedly responds to Mrs. Travers's telegrams acting as if he doesn't understand what she wants.
- C** Bertie asks Jeeves whether he is correct in assuming that Mrs. Travers wants him to visit her immediately.
- D** Jeeves comes into the room and wakes Bertie a short time after Bertie returns from the Drones.

GO ON

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 through 38.

The Aqua-Lung—Bringing Ocean Exploration to New Depths

by Jess Therell

Jacques Cousteau was an adventurer and an explorer with a passion for the ocean. He wanted not only to observe what was beneath the ocean's surface, but also to protect it by making the public aware of its importance. For this reason, many people also view him as an environmentalist.

5 Cousteau accomplished many things during his distinguished career. He helped author dozens of books about the ocean. He made a number of films, and he led several expeditions aboard his ship, *Calypso*. The explorer even created an underwater camera. Along with an engineer by the name of Emile Gagnan, Cousteau also invented the Aqua-Lung. This was a device that could be used to breathe underwater. Perhaps the most important outcome of the creation of the Aqua-Lung was that it made it possible for more people to explore the ocean's depths.

The Aqua-Lung—An Overview of Its Invention

10 The inspiration for the most important part of the Aqua-Lung was a regulator designed by Emile Gagnan. It was first used for car engines. Its chief feature was that it helped supply the exact amount of fuel needed for an engine to run, reducing unnecessary usage and minimizing waste.

15 Cousteau adapted Gagnan's invention to create the "demand regulator," the defining component of the Aqua-Lung system. The regulator is the piece that fits into the diver's mouth. The other essential parts were tanks containing air that were strapped to the diver's back, as well as a hose to carry air from the tank to the regulator.

The design of the Aqua-Lung was completed in the early 1940s. It was available for purchase in France a short time later. Within a decade, the system was being sold in several countries throughout the world.

What Made the Aqua-Lung Different?

20 The Aqua-Lung differed from most underwater devices that existed at the time in two main ways. First, it allowed divers to stay underwater for a much longer period of time. Before the invention of the Aqua-Lung, divers could only remain underwater for a matter of minutes before their air ran out. With the Aqua-Lung, that time could be extended to an hour or even more.

25 Second, it addressed the issue of air pressure. Pressure rapidly increases as water depth increases. In order to breathe without risk of harm in deep water, any inhaled air must have the same pressure as the surrounding water. The Aqua-Lung regulator automatically adjusted the pressure of the air in the tank to equalize air and water pressure, which made diving safer.

Do Cousteau and Gagnan Deserve All the Credit?

30 While Cousteau and Gagnan’s self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA) known as the Aqua-Lung was an important new creation, it may not have been the revolutionary advancement many people seem to think. Cousteau and Gagnan built on the work of those who came before by modifying existing technologies and devices. This practice is common among inventors and scientists.

35 Support for the above claim can be found by looking at the history of ocean exploration and the devices that preceded the “invention” of the Aqua-Lung. First, it is important to note that people have always been intrigued by the ocean. Hundreds of years ago, people were already searching for ways to “breathe” underwater so they could stay beneath the surface longer and go deeper. They used hollow reeds as snorkels and wooden barrels as crude air tanks. Although these devices have little in common with the Aqua-Lung and other equipment currently on the market, they show that many people had aspirations and ideas that were similar to Cousteau’s.

40 Second, the Aqua-Lung emerged after very similar devices had already been invented. By far the most notable one was the apparatus that was developed by Captain Yves Le Prieur in 1925. The main difference between it and the Aqua-Lung was air flow. Le Prieur’s SCUBA released air constantly. The Cousteau/Gagnan device released it “on demand”—when the diver inhaled. Certainly, the world-famous Cousteau owed much of the credit for the creation of the Aqua-Lung to the comparatively unknown Le Prieur.

The Impact of the Aqua-Lung

45 Although Cousteau and Gagnan built on earlier technology, their invention did open the world of diving to more people. The Aqua-Lung made SCUBA diving simpler, safer, and accessible to the public. In the decades after the device became available, countless individuals adopted underwater diving as a hobby. Aqua-Lung is still a brand name that appears on many types of diving equipment, from regulators to masks to fins.

50 Cousteau’s greatest legacy as a conservationist may have been giving ordinary people the tools needed to view the wonders of the ocean firsthand. Movies and books can certainly show people the beauty of marine life and explain why it needs protection. However, seeing the splendor of the ocean and some of its marvels in person is likely to be much more convincing than anything that appears on a screen or in print.

36

What is the author's purpose in writing this article? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

37

Besides inventing the Aqua-Lung, what else did Cousteau accomplish during his career? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

38

How does the section “Do Cousteau and Gagnan Deserve All the Credit?” add to the information in the article? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

GO ON

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 39 and 40.

This excerpt is from a novel called O Pioneers! by Willa Cather. The book is set in Hanover, Nebraska, between 1883 and 1890. In this excerpt you will meet Alexandra Bergson and Carl Linstrum, two of the novel's main characters.

Excerpt from *O Pioneers!*

Excerpts from O Pioneers! by Willa Cather, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

For the first three years after John Bergson's death, the affairs of his family prospered. Then came the hard times that brought every one on the Divide to the brink of despair; three years of drought and failure, the last struggle of a wild soil against the encroaching plowshare. The first of these fruitless summers the Bergson boys bore courageously. The failure of the corn crop made labor cheap. Lou and Oscar hired two men and put in bigger crops than ever before. They lost everything they spent. The whole country was discouraged. Farmers who were already in debt had to give up their land. A few foreclosures demoralized the county. The settlers sat about on the wooden sidewalks in the little town and told each other that the country was never meant for men to live in; the thing to do was to get back to Iowa, to Illinois, to any place that had been proved habitable. The Bergson boys, certainly, would have been happier with their uncle Otto, in the bakery shop in Chicago. Like most of their neighbors, they were meant to follow in paths already marked out for them, not to break trails in a new country. A steady job, a few holidays, nothing to think about, and they would have been very happy. It was no fault of theirs that they had been dragged into the wilderness when they were little boys. A pioneer should have imagination, should be able to enjoy the idea of things more than the things themselves.

The second of these barren summers was passing. One September afternoon Alexandra had gone over to the garden across the draw to dig sweet potatoes—they had been thriving upon the weather that was fatal to everything else. But when Carl Linstrum came up the garden rows to find her, she was not working. She was standing lost in thought, leaning upon her pitchfork, her sunbonnet lying beside her on the ground. The dry garden patch smelled of drying vines and was strewn with yellow seed-cucumbers and pumpkins and citrons. At one end, next the rhubarb, grew feathery asparagus, with red berries. Down the middle of the garden was a row of gooseberry and currant bushes. A few tough zinnias and marigolds and a row of scarlet sage bore witness to the buckets of water that Mrs. Bergson had carried there after sundown, against the prohibition of her sons. Carl came quietly and slowly up the garden path, looking intently at Alexandra. She did not hear him. She was standing perfectly still, with that serious ease so characteristic of her. Her thick, reddish braids, twisted about her head, fairly burned in the sunlight. The air was cool enough to make the warm sun pleasant on one's back and shoulders, and so clear that the eye could follow a hawk up and up, into the blazing blue depths of the sky. Even Carl, never a very cheerful boy, and considerably darkened by these last two bitter years, loved the country on days like this, felt something strong and young and wild come out of it, that laughed at care.

30 “Alexandra,” he said as he approached her, “I want to talk to you. Let’s sit down by the gooseberry bushes.” He picked up her sack of potatoes and they crossed the garden. “Boys gone to town?” he asked as he sank down on the warm, sun-baked earth. “Well, we have made up our minds at last, Alexandra. We are really going away.”

She looked at him as if she were a little frightened. “Really, Carl? Is it settled?”

35 “Yes, father has heard from St. Louis, and they will give him back his old job in the cigar factory. He must be there by the first of November. They are taking on new men then. We will sell the place for whatever we can get, and auction the stock. We haven’t enough to ship. I am going to learn engraving with a German engraver there, and then try to get work in Chicago.”

Alexandra’s hands dropped in her lap. Her eyes became dreamy and filled with tears. Carl’s
40 sensitive lower lip trembled. He scratched in the soft earth beside him with a stick. “That’s all I hate about it, Alexandra,” he said slowly. “You’ve stood by us through so much and helped father out so many times, and now it seems as if we were running off and leaving you to face the worst of it. But it isn’t as if we could really ever be of any help to you. We are only one more drag, one more thing you look out for and feel responsible for. Father was never meant for a farmer, you know that. And I hate it. We’d only get
45 in deeper and deeper.”

“Yes, yes, Carl, I know. You are wasting your life here. You are able to do much better things. You are nearly nineteen now, and I wouldn’t have you stay. I’ve always hoped you would get away. But I can’t help feeling scared when I think how I will miss you—more than you will ever know.” She brushed the tears from her cheeks, not trying to hide them.

39 Based on the last two paragraphs of *O Pioneers!*, what can be inferred about the relationship between Alexandra Bergson and Carl Linstrum? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

40 How does the author of *O Pioneers!* use sensory details to establish the setting? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 41 through 43.

Women on the Lone Prairie

by Sean McCollum, Scholastic Update

So much of the popular history of the Wild West has focused on gunfighters and gunfights, cowboys and Indians, that it would be easy to think that the West was only about guys and guns. But the experiences of women paint a more accurate picture of America's westward expansion. It was ordinary settlers—equipped with little more than pluck and a plow—who helped settle a desolate land.

5 The Great Plains—extending from the Missouri River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west, and from Canada in the north to the Texas Panhandle in the south—was one of the toughest, most inhospitable regions of America yet to be settled. It had only two natural resources: grass and soil. Still, once choicer lands were gone, settlers from the eastern states and immigrants from overseas saw the prairie as a place to escape poverty or persecution—and, perhaps, to own a piece of land.

10 The settling of the prairie began in the 1850s. Then, following the upheaval of the Civil War (1861–1865), it accelerated. In 1860, for example, 28,000 white settlers lived in the Nebraska Territory. Seven years later, when Nebraska became the 37th state, the population was 100,000.

15 Pioneer families stood shoulder to shoulder to settle the harsh land, with women fighting fires, fear, and locusts right beside men. Their stories, recalled in diaries, letters, and memoirs, provide a glimpse into the social history of this unique time.

She's Leaving Home

To encourage settlement of the West, the U.S. government passed the Homestead Act in 1862. The Act offered up to 160 acres of free land to any settlers—or homesteaders, as they came to be known—who met two requirements: that they begin developing the land within six months of claiming it, and that they then live on the land for five years. After this period, the homesteader could claim
20 ownership—what was called “proving up” a land claim.

“The year was 1894. [My fiancé] was convinced that our best chance to make something of ourselves was to avail ourselves of the offer of free land,” wrote Rachel Calof, a Jewish immigrant from Russia, who was 18 when she joined her new husband in North Dakota. “[Homesteading] seemed a godsend to penniless people who otherwise could not hope to buy land.”

25 For other homesteaders, the decision to go west was not always so full of hope.

“My memory goes back . . . to a . . . library table strewn with literature extolling a new haven for immigrants—Kansas,” remembered Mrs. W. B. Caton. “To me it spelled destruction, desperadoes, and cyclones. I could not agree with my husband that any good could come out of such a country, but . . . October 1, 1879, saw us—a wagon, three horses, and our humble household necessities—bound for the
30 ‘Promised Land.’”

GO ON

Trials, Tribulations, and the Pioneer Spirit

The fierce weather of the Great Plains could break the will and hopes of a homesteader in an afternoon.

35 “The wheat grew well [in 1900],” remembered Rachel Calof, “and, at last, was ready for cutting. On a fine clear morning [my husband] . . . made . . . preparations . . . to reap the golden harvest. Our spirits soared. . . . It was not to be. . . . Shortly before noon, a dark cloud suddenly boiled up in the sky. Then suddenly the hailstorm, the scourge of the prairie farmer, was upon us. It was of such intensity that in a few minutes practically all for which we had suffered and labored was destroyed.”

During dry summers, furious prairie fires were an equal threat, as were tornadoes and plagues of locusts that ate everything in their path, even the clothing off people’s backs.

40 A homesteader’s isolated life presented dangers of its own. The nearest neighbor, doctor, or town could be dozens of miles away. In some instances, loneliness drove settlers mad. And isolation could turn common events into crises, as homesteader Annette Lecleve Botkin recalled.

“My parents settled in Kansas, in 1873. Their house was three miles from the nearest neighbor, [the] nearest trading post over sixteen miles away.

45 “It was the last of July, and my father was thinking of the long winter ahead. . . . The little house had to be kept warm, for there were a couple of little children already in the home, and another on the way. So my father rose early and started on his all-day trip . . . to get a load of wood. . . .

“He had no sooner gotten out of sight, than my mother knew . . . that it was time [to give birth]. Now that was a terrifying situation. Alone with two babies, not a neighbor nor doctor to be gotten.

50 “So my mother got the baby clothes together on a chair by the bed, water and scissors and what else was needed to take care of the baby; drew a bucket of fresh water from a sixty-foot well; made some bread-and-butter sandwiches; set out some milk for the babies. At about noon the stork left a fine baby boy. My father arrived home about dusk with a big load of wood. My mother, having fainted a number of times in her attempt to dress the baby, had succeeded at last; and when father came in he found a very uncomfortable but brave and thankful mother. . . .”

55 “It might seem a cheerless life,” said one woman, reflecting on the challenges of her pioneer days, “but there were compensations: the thrill of conquering a new country; the wonderful atmosphere; the attraction of the prairie, which simply gets into your blood and makes you dissatisfied away from it; the low-lying hills and the unobstructed view of the horizon; and the fleecy clouds driven by the never-failing winds. The pioneer spirit was continuous in our family.”

41

The author of “Women on the Lone Prairie” quotes diaries, letters, and memoirs written by women who experienced life on the prairie firsthand. What is the effect of presenting these stories from a first-person point of view? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

42

What is a central idea of “Women on the Lone Prairie”? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

GO ON

Planning Page

You may **PLAN** your writing for question 43 here if you wish, but do **NOT** write your final response on this page. Write your final response on pages 31 and 32.



43

Does the author of *O Pioneers!* provide an accurate portrayal of pioneer life? Compare and contrast the ways the author of *O Pioneers!* treats the pioneer experience with the ways the author of “Women on the Lone Prairie” treats the pioneer experience. Use details from **both** the story **and** the article to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- explain how the story and the article treat the pioneer experience in similar ways
- explain how the story and the article treat the pioneer experience in different ways
- explain why you think the author of *O Pioneers!* does or does not provide an accurate portrayal of pioneer life
- use details from both the story and the article to support your response

GO ON

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

STOP

