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Reading

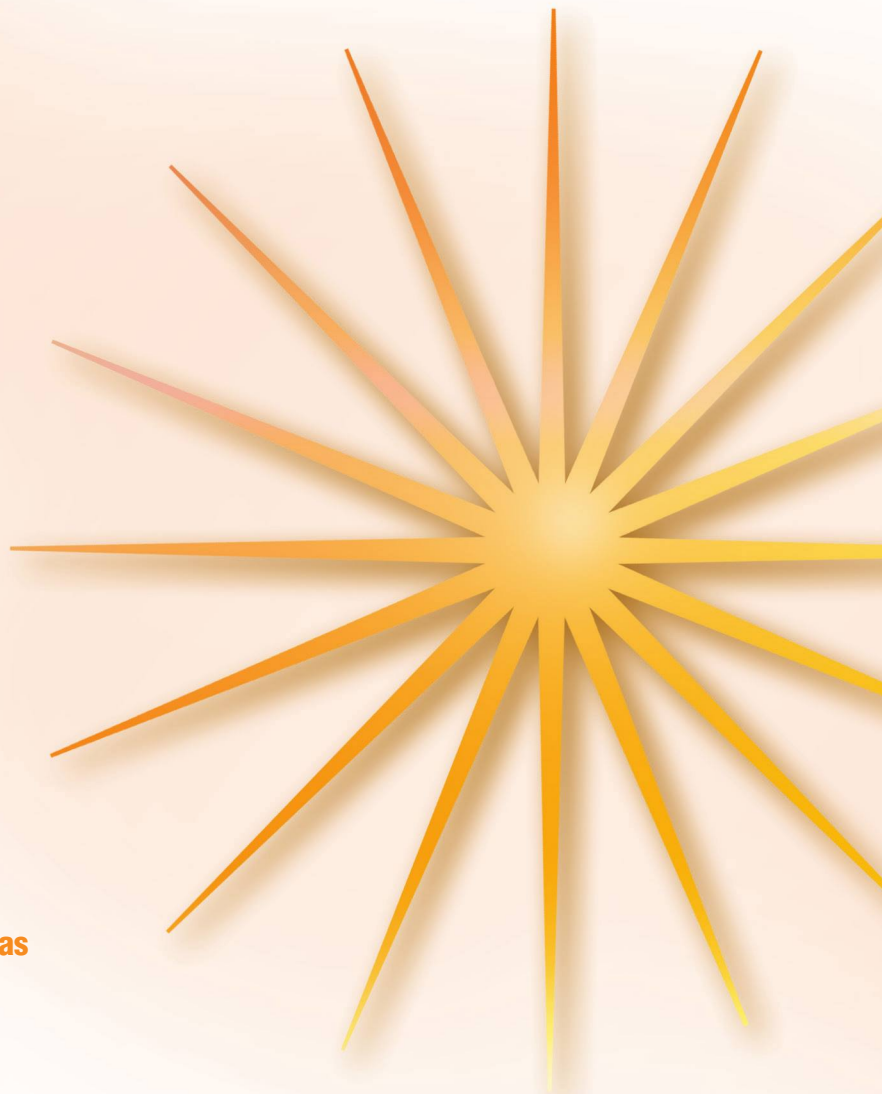
GRADE

5



Focused Practice for Reading Comprehension

- Fiction and non-fiction passages
- Theme and summarization
- Integration of knowledge and ideas
- Key ideas and details
- Answer key

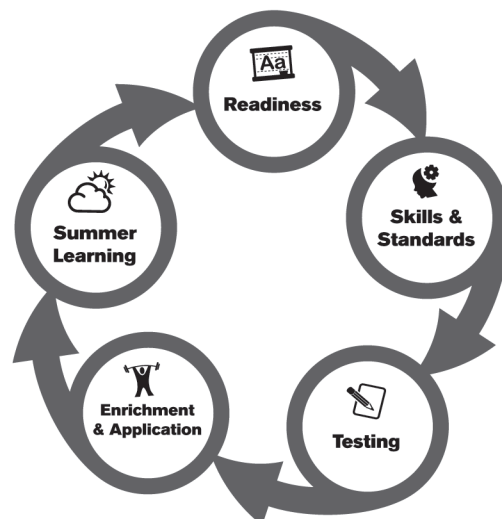


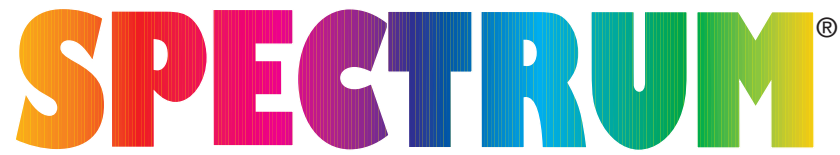
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Reading

Grade 5

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A New Mate

What would it be like to live in Australia?

¹ “I think most of you have already met our new student, Gemma,” said Ms. Dimitri to her class. “As you know, she has recently moved here from Australia. I know you all have lots of questions about Australia, and Gemma has said she’d be happy to answer them. We can also try to give her an idea of what life is like here in Massachusetts.”

² Gemma was a tall girl with thick, dark brown hair. She had pale blue eyes, and there was a dusting of freckles across her nose. She smiled shyly at the class. “I’m very happy to be here,” she said. “Everyone has been really nice to me. It feels like I’ve been here longer than a week already.”

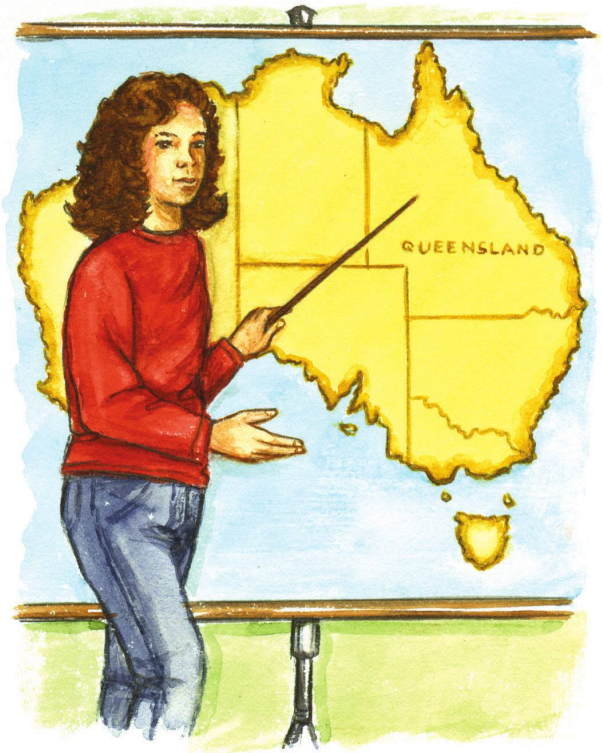
³ Ms. Dimitri smiled. “I’m glad to hear it. We’re excited to have you here, Gemma. Before we get started, why don’t you tell everyone where you lived in Australia.”

⁴ “My family lived in Queensland,” began Gemma. “It is one of Australia’s six states, and it’s located in the northeast part of the continent. Queensland is the second largest state in Australia. It’s a bit more than twice as big as Texas.”

⁵ “What is the weather like there?” asked Kayla. “Do you have cold, snowy winters like we do here?”

⁶ “Actually, because Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons are the reverse of what they are in the United States,” said Gemma. “Queensland is in a tropical part of Australia, so it doesn’t get very cold. In January, which is summertime, it is in the 80s and 90s. In July, which is wintertime, it might be in the 60s. Queensland gets a lot of rain, and I won’t miss that at all. I can’t wait until it snows here this winter! I’ve never built a snowman or gone sledding before.”

⁷ “Queensland is near Australia’s Great Barrier Reef,” Ms. Dimitri told the class. “Gemma, can you tell us a little about it?”



⁸ Gemma nodded. “The Great Barrier Reef is the largest coral reef in the world. It lies off the coast of Queensland and is more than 1,200 miles long. It is home to all kinds of animal and plant life. It is an amazing place to go scuba diving.”

⁹ Vijay raised his hand. “Can you teach us how to say some words in Australian?” he asked.

¹⁰ “Most people in Australia speak English,” said Gemma. “But we do have some different words and expressions than you do in America. For example, the word for *friend* is *mate*. *Bonza* means *very good*. *Umbrella* is *broolly*, and *honest* is *fair dinkum*.”

¹¹ “Is there another word or expression for thank you?” asked Ms. Dimitri.

¹² “Yes, *ta* means *thank you*.”

¹³ “Gemma, you have given us an excellent idea of what it is like to live in Australia. *Ta*, Gemma. We’re so glad to have you in our class!”

Write the words from the story that have the meanings below.

1. just before the present time

Par. 1

2. one half of Earth when divided by the equator

Par. 6

3. opposite

Par. 6

4. specific words or phrases

Par. 10

A **fact** is something that is known to be true. An **opinion** is what a person believes. It may or may not be true. Write **F** before the sentences that are facts. Write **O** before the sentences that are opinions.

5. ____ Gemma moved to the United States from Australia.

6. ____ Queensland is more than twice as big as Texas.

7. ____ It would be exciting to visit Australia.

8. ____ The weather in Australia is more enjoyable than it is in Massachusetts.

9. ____ Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere.

10. What is the Great Barrier Reef?

11. What does *fair dinkum* mean?

12. How are the seasons different in Australia than they are in the United States?

13. If you could ask Gemma a question about living in Australia, what would it be?

Australia's Giant Toads

How did cane toads get to Australia, and why do people see them as such a pest?

¹ Think about toads that you may have seen in the woods, on a hike, or at a zoo. How large do you think they were? Even the largest toads probably were not as big as the cane toad. This toad, native to South America and the Caribbean, can weigh as much as four pounds!

² In 1935, sugar cane farmers in Australia were having a problem with two types of beetles that were destroying their crops. About one hundred cane toads were shipped to Australia from Hawaii. People hoped the toads would be a solution to the problem. Unfortunately, things turned out very differently than they had anticipated. The cane toads quickly became a more annoying pest than the beetles had ever been.

³ There are several things that make the cane toad so unusual. First of all, the cane toad has almost no natural predators. If the cane toad feels threatened, it will secrete a poisonous liquid. This liquid can kill children and small animals. It can even blind an adult for several hours.

⁴ The cane toad is also poisonous in all stages of its life. Fish normally feed on the eggs of frogs and toads, but even the eggs of the cane toad are poisonous. Each pair of cane toads can produce more than 30,000 eggs each season. Because many of the eggs and tadpoles are able to mature, the cane toad population can grow very rapidly.

⁵ This is exactly what happened in Australia. Without any predators, there were suddenly thousands of cane toads in the Queensland area. People might have been more tolerant if the animals had been successful in getting rid of the sugar cane beetles. It turned out, however, that the cane toads did not have any effect on the beetles, which could easily fly out of harm's way.

⁶ The Australians are not quite sure how to get rid of cane toads. In fact, they continue to spread across the continent. Cane toads eat many types of Australian wildlife. They can also be dangerous to pets and children. Even so, not everyone in Australia hopes that the plans to rid the country of these animals will be successful. Some people even leave food in their backyards or adopt the giant toads as pets!



1. Do you think cane toads will continue to be a problem in Australia? Explain your answer.

2. Why were cane toads first brought to Australia?

3. Why are there so many cane toads in Australia if only one hundred or so were originally released?

4. Check the sentence that best states the main idea of the selection.

_____ Cane toads can weigh as much as four pounds.

_____ Cane toads do not have any natural predators in Australia.

_____ Cane toads were brought to Australia to eat sugar cane beetles, but they ended up becoming a dangerous pest.

5. In paragraph 3, what does the word *secrete* mean?

6. Which has been a bigger problem—cane toads or sugar cane beetles? Why?

7. What do you think is a good solution to the cane toad problem?

Aussie Animals

How are the animals in Australia different from those you might see where you live?

¹ Gemma, Kayla, and Vijay were eating lunch on the small patio behind the school's cafeteria. Kayla and Vijay were asking Gemma questions about Australian animals. They couldn't believe that Gemma didn't think it was anything special to see a kangaroo hopping along the side of a road or grazing in a field.

² "When you see something all the time," Gemma explained, "you hardly even notice it. Do you know how many times you've seen a squirrel, or a deer, or a raccoon in your life?"

³ "Of course not," said Vijay. "But seeing a kangaroo would be completely different."

⁴ Gemma laughed. "Not if you lived in Australia," she said.

⁵ "Is it true that a mother kangaroo carries her baby in her pouch?" asked Kayla.

⁶ "Sure," replied Gemma, pausing to take a bite of her sandwich. "Aussies call baby kangaroos *joeys*. They live in their mother's pouch until they grow a bit larger. Then, they can take care of themselves and keep up with the others in their group. Did you know that kangaroos can travel more than 30 miles per hour?"



⁷ "That's pretty fast!" exclaimed Vijay.

⁸ "Do any other animals carry their babies in a pouch?" wondered Kayla aloud.

⁹ "The koala and the wombat do," said Gemma. "They are marsupials like the kangaroo."

¹⁰ "I know what a koala bear is," said Vijay, "but what is a wombat?"

¹¹ "Well, a koala isn't really a bear," Gemma explained. "People just call them that because they resemble a teddy bear. Koalas spend most of their lives sleeping. There is a type of tree called a *eucalyptus* (*yoo kah LIP tuss*) that grows in Australia. It's pretty much the only thing that koalas eat. They don't get much energy from the leaves, though, which is why they spend so much time sleeping."

¹² "It sounds like they need a change in their diet," laughed Vijay. "Is the wombat similar to the koala and kangaroo?"

¹³ "The only real similarity is that it is a marsupial, too. Otherwise, the wombat looks like a beaver or a groundhog. It burrows underground and makes tunnels that are 10 to 15 feet long. Some people get wombats as babies and train them. I had a friend who had a very nice pet wombat named Gillian."

¹⁴ "Won't you miss the animals in Australia?" asked Kayla. "No one in Massachusetts has a wombat for a pet."

¹⁵ Gemma smiled. "I might miss them a little," she said, "but I've never seen snow. I never saw a real raccoon or a deer before I moved here. I also never saw a cardinal or a chickadee. I think Massachusetts is going to be a very interesting place to live."

¹⁶ "I guess it all depends on what you are used to," said Vijay. "But I'd take the animals of Australia over a deer any day of the week!"

1. What are baby kangaroos called in Australia?

2. Why do koalas spend so much of their time sleeping?

3. What kind of pet is Gillian?

4. Why do you think a baby kangaroo lives in its mother's pouch for a while after it is born?

5. Which of these words describe Gemma?

_____ knowledgeable

_____ competitive

_____ friendly

_____ stubborn

_____ irritable

6. Name one characteristic of marsupials.

7. What is the setting for this story?

8. In the story, Vijay thinks that Australian animals are more interesting than American animals. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

The First Australians

Who are the Aboriginal people of Australia?

¹ The Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Australia. Archaeologists believe that they have lived in Australia for about 50,000 to 60,000 years! Today, they make up a little more than two percent of the population of Australia.

² In the past, Aboriginal people were hunters and gatherers. This means that they survived by hunting, fishing, and gathering plants. They did not settle permanently in one place. Instead, they moved around the continent when they needed to refresh their supply of food. The Aboriginal people had, and still have, a strong respect for and connection to the land and nature. It influences almost every part of their culture, from food and shelter, to art and religion.

³ Things quickly changed for the Aboriginal people when Europeans began arriving in Australia in 1788. They brought diseases that the Aboriginal people had never been exposed to before. The Aboriginal people also had to fight for the land that was theirs. There were many years of difficult times. The Aboriginal people had to learn to live in a society that was very different from their ancestors'. They had to fight to keep their culture alive.

⁴ The situation started to improve for the Aboriginal people in the 1960s. They were finally given the right to vote. Later, the Australian government also began trying to make up for some of the unfair treatment the people had suffered. They returned some of the land to the Aboriginal people that had been taken from them more than a century before.

⁵ The contributions of Aboriginal people to Australia can be seen in many areas. For example, they created the boomerang, a curved piece of wood that has been used both as a weapon and for sport. Aboriginal rock paintings can be found in many areas of Australia. Some are believed to be 30,000 years old. The didgeridoo (*didge er ee DOO*) is a well-known Australian wind instrument. It is a straight trumpet made from a hollow piece of wood or bamboo. Some people believe it may be one of the world's oldest wind instruments.

⁶ The Aboriginal people are an important and valuable part of Australian society. Today, many still live a traditional lifestyle in the bush, or Australian wilderness. Others have become a part of modern-day Australian culture and live in cities around the country. Their influences can be found in many aspects of Australian life.



Write the words from the passage that have the meanings below.

1. people who live in a particular place

Par. 1

2. scientists who study past cultures

Par. 1

3. for a long time

Par. 2

4. has an effect on

Par. 2

5. left open to harm without protection

Par. 3

6. Why did Aboriginal people move around instead of staying in one place?

7. What influences almost every part of the Aboriginal culture?

8. Another name for Australian wilderness is _____.

9. How did life change for the better for aboriginal people in the 1960s?

10. Explain what a didgeridoo is.

Shall We Dance?

Have you ever attended a dance performance?

¹ “Gavin!” called Mr. Capshaw. “We’re ready to go. Are you coming?”

² Gavin shuffled slowly down the stairs and joined his parents at the front door. “I’m ready,” he said with a sigh.

³ “This will be fun. I know you’ll enjoy the performance,” Mrs. Capshaw told her son. “Afterward, we might even get to go backstage and meet Dad’s friend from college. Joseph has one of the lead roles in the show,” she explained.

⁴ The Capshaws walked down the street toward the subway station. “I don’t even like ballet,” Gavin complained.

⁵ “Not all dance is ballet, Gavin,” said Mr. Capshaw. “The show we’re going to see tonight is modern dance. But there are many other kinds of dance, too—tap, jazz, break dancing, square dancing, the tango, the waltz. I’d like you to keep an open mind about this.”

⁶ Gavin sighed again. “Okay, Dad. I’ll do my best.”

⁷ About 45 minutes later, the Capshaws arrived at the theater. A woman wearing a bright red vest and carrying a flashlight helped them find their seats in the mezzanine. Gavin looked around him while he waited for the performance to begin. He couldn’t believe how many people there were in the theater. Gavin looked straight up at the ornate ceiling painted in gold, midnight blue, and maroon. Suddenly, the lights dimmed, and the audience began to clap.

⁸ Once the performance began, Gavin forgot all about the usher, his parents, the rest of the audience, and the ornate ceiling. He listened to the music and watched the dancers move. The performers made the moves look so easy, but he could tell it was much more difficult than it appeared. He leaned forward in his seat and tapped his toes in time to the rhythm of the music.

⁹ “Well, what did you think?” asked Gavin’s parents when the lights came back on.

¹⁰ “That was amazing. I’m so glad we came,” he replied.

¹¹ “Come on, let’s go see if we can find Joseph,” said Mr. Capshaw, putting one arm around Gavin’s shoulders. The Capshaws made their way to a small hallway at the front of the theater. A moment later, they were shaking hands with Joseph and complimenting him on his performance.

¹² “Is it a lot of work to prepare the show?” Gavin asked Joseph.

¹³ Joseph chuckled. “I’ve never worked so hard in my life,” he said, “but I’ve also never had so much fun. Are you a performer, Gavin?”

¹⁴ Gavin shook his head.

¹⁵ “Do you think dance is something you’d like to try?” asked Joseph. “You seem very enthusiastic about tonight’s show. The performing arts center is only a few blocks from here, and they offer a beginner’s class in modern dance. I know some of the teachers there. I’d be happy to introduce you if you’re interested.”

¹⁶ Gavin grinned. “When can I start?” he asked.



1. Find one sentence that shows Gavin was not looking forward to going to the dance performance. Write it on the lines below.

2. What problem did Gavin have at the beginning of the story?

3. How did Gavin feel about the performance once it began?

Write **F** before the sentences that are facts. Write **O** before the sentences that are opinions.

4. ____ Modern dance is interesting to watch.
5. ____ Joseph has one of the lead roles in the performance.
6. ____ The Capshaws took the subway to get to the theater.
7. ____ Gavin will be a good dancer.
8. What does the word *ornate* mean in paragraph 7?

9. Do you think Gavin will try taking a dance class? Why or why not?

10. Do you think Joseph enjoys his job? How do you know?

STOMP!

What kind of everyday objects could you use to make music?

¹ You might have used pencils to tap a rhythm on your desk or noticed that the ringing sound of basketballs was almost like the beat to a song. But did you know that these sounds could be taken seriously as music and even performed onstage?

² The dance and percussion group STOMP has taken everyday objects and turned them into instruments. The performers strap oil drums to their feet and smash trash can lids together. This creates an exciting rhythmic music and dance that is a hit all over the world.

³ STOMP was formed by British musicians Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas. They met in the early 1980s when they were both working as buskers, the British term for street performers. Busking has a long tradition in England and is still a popular way for musicians and actors to share their talents. The performers have to be extra creative and enticing to be able to capture the attention of people who are walking by. Cresswell and McNicholas were part of a busking group called *Pookiesnackenburgers* that became very popular throughout Britain. Eventually, they even had their own television show.

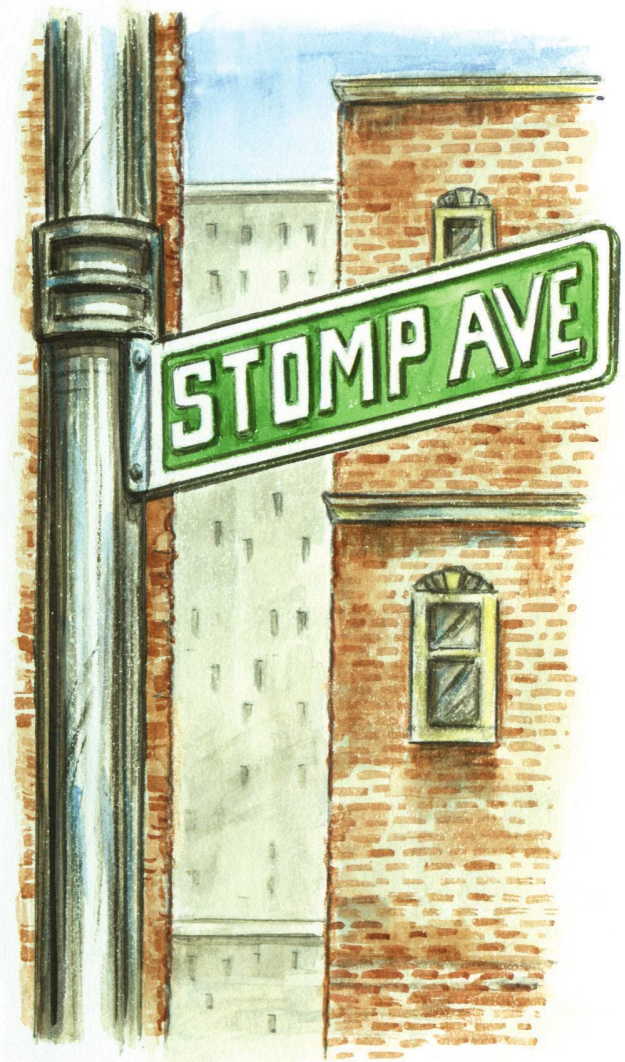
⁴ Cresswell was a drummer for the group. Because they performed on the street, he could not set up a traditional drum set. Instead, he wore one drum that hung around his shoulders. To be able to make a variety of sounds, Cresswell began beating on objects like lampposts and trash cans that were available wherever the group performed. This creative drumming formed the idea for STOMP.

⁵ STOMP made its debut at London's Bloomsbury Theatre in 1991. The performers used one-of-a-kind instruments, such as brooms, empty water jugs, basketballs, and matchboxes to bang out rhythms. Wearing overalls and T-shirts, they danced around

on a stage made to look like a closed warehouse. STOMP was an instant success, winning many theater awards and drawing huge crowds.

⁶ In 1994, STOMP came to the United States and played at the Orpheum Theater in New York City. Two decades later, it is still playing there! To honor its ten-year anniversary, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg renamed the street outside of the theater STOMP Avenue.

⁷ STOMP has now toured all over the United States and most of the world. One reason STOMP is so popular is that anyone can enjoy it. There are no words or story. People from all cultures can understand it, regardless of the language they speak.



Write **T** before the sentences that are true. Write **F** before the sentences that are false.

1. ____ The performers in STOMP use common objects and turn them into instruments.
2. ____ Luke Cresswell, one of the founders of STOMP, played the trumpet.
3. ____ There is a street called STOMP Avenue in New York City.
4. ____ STOMP's first performance was at London's Bloomsbury Theatre.
5. ____ STOMP was formed by two Latin American musicians.
6. In Britain, what does the word *busker* mean?

7. Why couldn't Luke Cresswell use a traditional drum set when he was performing?

8. Which words best describe the founders of STOMP?

____ caring

____ talented

____ creative

____ shy

____ sneaky

____ imaginative

9. Give three examples of objects that STOMP performers might use as instruments.

10. Why does STOMP appeal to people worldwide?

The Best Hooper of All

How did Savion Glover bring tap dancing into the 21st century?

¹ What comes to mind when you think of tap dancing? You might picture a black-and-white movie with a performer dressed in a tuxedo. Tap dancing might not seem like something popular and modern. If that is how you picture tap, then you have never seen Savion Glover dance! This choreographer, dancer, director, and producer has changed the way people think about tap dancing today.

² Savion Glover was born in New Jersey in 1973. He showed a talent for drumming when he was only four years old, so he began going to school at the Newark Community School of the Arts. By the time he was seven, he had begun taking rhythm tap classes at the Broadway Dance Center in New York. Rhythm tap is a special kind of dance that uses all the parts of the foot to create sounds.

³ When Savion began taking tap lessons, his family could not afford the special shoes he needed. Savion had to wear a pair of cowboy boots to his first lesson! Just a few years later, Savion landed his first role in a Broadway performance, *The Tap Dance Kid*.

⁴ Savion continued working in a variety of areas. He learned much of what he knew about tap dancing from masters like Sammy Davis, Jr. and Gregory Hines. He participated in other Broadway productions, and he even made a movie. Savion also became well-known for his recurring role on the children's television show *Sesame Street*.

⁵ In 1995, Savion choreographed and starred in a production called *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk*. The show, which followed African American history from the times of slavery through the 20th century, was extremely popular. People loved its energy. They were amazed at how the story could be expressed through dance. *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* won four Tony Awards, the highest honor a musical can receive. One of those awards was for best choreographer, Savion Glover.

⁶ The style of tap that Savion is best known for is often called *hoofing*, or street tap. It is a hard-hitting form of tap, and the movements are more acrobatic than those of traditional tap. Savion's work combines elements of jazz, funk, hip-hop, rock 'n' roll, and the blues to create something unique and exciting. People love to watch Savion's feet move. It is hard to keep up with them, but that is part of the fun in watching Savion Glover perform!



1. Check the words that describe Savion Glover.

_____ energetic

_____ motivated

_____ nosy

_____ quiet

_____ enthusiastic

2. In what show was Savion's first professional performance?

3. What story did *Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk* tell?

4. Who did Savion study to become better at tap dancing?

5. The _____ Award is the highest honor a musical can receive.

6. What is hoofing?

7. How do you think Savion Glover has made people think differently about tap dancing?

8. If you could go to a dance performance, what type of dance would you most like to see? Why?

Looking for Something Green

Will Fiona and Nora ever get used to living in the city?

¹ Fiona and Nora stared out the window of the apartment. If they looked up State Street to the right, they could see several skyscrapers with shiny windows that glittered like jewels in the midmorning sun. If they looked down the street to their left, they could see a parking garage and an impressive looking building their mother had told them was the downtown library. Straight below them was a tangle of traffic that seemed to stretch as far as they could see. They could hear the honking of horns and the shouting of street vendors.

² "It's so different here," sighed Fiona. "I miss our old farmhouse. When we looked out the window at home, all we could see were acres of green grass and trees. I don't think I can see a single green thing from this window in any direction."



³ "Well," said Nora, "that man is wearing a green jacket. And I see a green truck. Look! That woman is carrying a potted plant that has a lot of green leaves!"

⁴ Fiona gave her little sister a look. "You know that's not what I'm talking about," she said. "I just feel like everything here is made of stone and steel and glass. We don't even have a lawn or a tree that we can sit under and read. What if we wanted to have a cook-out like we used to do in our backyard? Where will Mom plant her flowers? What if we wanted to play ball?"

⁵ Mom walked into the room just in time to hear what Fiona was saying. "Okay, girls," said Mom. "I think it's time we went on a walk. We're going to go exploring. Our mission is to find ourselves a little piece of green space right here in the city."

⁶ "Mom," said Fiona, "I don't think there is any green space here. We live in the city now, not the country."

⁷ "Come on," said Mom, grabbing her daughters by the hand. "Let's see what we can find."

⁸ Fiona, Nora, and their mother walked past the vendors selling hot dogs and pretzels. They walked past the skyscrapers with shiny windows, the tangle of traffic, and the bustle of people in business suits. Suddenly, Fiona and Nora saw a bit of grass and a park bench. They turned the corner and began to grin. They saw an enormous grassy park filled with trees. There was even a pond with a fountain. A girl on a bicycle stopped to let two ducks waddle past her.

⁹ As Fiona, Nora, and Mom made their way toward the pond, Mom smiled and said, "What do you think, girls?"

¹⁰ Fiona and Nora smiled back. "We found our little piece of green in the city," said Nora.