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Warm-Up

Name _____

3

Tet

People in the United States use a calendar when the new year starts on January 1, but not every country is the same. Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia. The Vietnamese New Year is called *Tet*. *Tet* occurs in late January or February. The break between years falls between the harvesting of crops and the sowing of new crops.

The Vietnamese get ready for *Tet* well in advance. They clean their houses. They polish silverware and copper items. They pay off debts. Special foods are eaten on *Tet*. One special food is a rice pudding that contains mung beans and pork. Watermelon is eaten because its red color is thought to be lucky. On New Year's Day, children are given lucky red envelopes. The envelopes contain money.

The first visitor outside the family on New Year's Day is very important. It is believed that the first person through the door will influence the family's luck, happiness, and wealth for the coming year. For example, if a rich person enters, the family's fortune will increase. If a cheerful person enters, the family will experience joy. What do some people do to insure that the year goes well? They carefully choose their first guest!

Check Your Understanding

- If you are picking out a watermelon for *Tet*, you want the
 - biggest and ripest one.
 - the one with the least seeds.
 - the cheapest and heaviest one.
 - the one with the reddest flesh.
- Another title for the passage might be
 - "Lucky Colors."
 - "What's in the Envelope?"
 - "When the First Guest Matters."
 - "The First of January in Vietnam."
- The special pudding contains all but
 - corn.
 - rice.
 - pork.
 - beans.
- From the context of the passage, you can infer that the New Year date
 - always falls on the same day.
 - depends on what country you are in.
 - always has to do with harvesting crops.
 - depends on how happy or wealthy you are.



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Warm-Up

Name _____

3

Pop Goes the Knuckle

You may have seen (or heard) people who bend their fingers back or pull on their joints. You hear a loud *CRACK!* What exactly is that **audible** popping sound? Are they really cracking their knuckles? Believe it or not, they did not crack anything. What they did do is burst bubbles.

Your knuckles are joints. Joints are where two separate bones meet and are held together by connective tissues and ligaments. Every joint in your body is surrounded by a sac of synovial fluid. Synovial fluid is a thick, clear liquid.

When you stretch or pull on your joints, you also stretch the sac of synovial fluid. When you stretch the sac, you are making more space inside of it. You are increasing

its volume. This reduces the pressure inside it. When the pressure is decreased, gases that were dissolved in the fluid form bubbles. If the sac is stretched further, the volume increases even more, and the pressure becomes even less. When the pressure is low enough, the bubbles will burst. They will crack open with a loud, audible pop.

After cracking the knuckles once, can they be cracked again immediately after? No, they can't, at least for about thirty minutes! This is because it takes time for the gas to dissolve back into the synovial fluid.

Check Your Understanding

- When something is **audible**, it can be
 - heard.
 - opened.
 - stretched.
 - dissolved.
- Which of the following is *not* true about your knuckles?
 - They are joints.
 - They are where two bones meet.
 - They are made of a clear, thick fluid.
 - They are held together by connective tissues.
- Before* is to *after* as
 - stretch* is to *pull*.
 - dissolve* is to *melt*.
 - immediately* is to *now*.
 - increase* is to *decrease*.
- From the context of the passage, which of the following causes the bubbles?
 - gas
 - joints
 - ligaments
 - synovial fluid



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Name _____

1

The Painting That Rode in an Ambulance

The painting was at risk of being stolen. The time was the 1930s, and World War II was raging. The German Nazis were stealing precious artworks from museums and homes. One of the most famous paintings in the world needed to be saved from the looting. It had to be secreted away and kept hidden from the plundering thieves. The painting is known as the *Mona Lisa*. The *Mona Lisa* was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci. It is a portrait of Lisa del Giocondo. It was started in 1503 and finished in 1519.

The portrait was hanging in the Louvre. The Louvre is in Paris, France. Museum **curators** stripped the walls bare of the museum in order to save their art from looting. They shipped

more than 400,000 pieces out of Paris. They secreted them away to castles, caves, and salt mines.

Special care was taken with the *Mona Lisa* because of its fame and value. The *Mona Lisa* was taken out of Paris in an ambulance. This was for disguise. The ambulance was sealed up to protect the painting from air and temperature change. The painting survived its trip, but the museum curator who rode in the back of the ambulance almost didn't! He nearly ran out of oxygen!

Check Your Understanding

- What was the author's intent in writing the passage?
 - to tell how a painting was saved
 - to give a history of World War II
 - to make people want to go to museums
 - to describe what a painting looked like
- A **curator** must be a(n)
 - ambulance driver.
 - artist who paints portraits.
 - famous and valuable painting.
 - person in charge of a museum.
- From the context of the passage, you can infer that the *Mona Lisa*
 - is a portrait of Leonardo Da Vinci.
 - hangs in a museum in Germany today.
 - might have been hidden in a castle.
 - was the only piece of art that was saved.
- Disguise* is to *hide* as
 - seal* is to *open*.
 - loot* is to *steal*.
 - protect* is to *harm*.
 - start* is to *finish*.



Warm-Up

6

Name _____

Air Force One

An air traffic control officer uses the words “Air Force One.” This can mean only one thing. It means that the president of the United States is on board an aircraft. People usually think of *Air Force One* as one of two Boeing 747 jets. The call sign, though, is used for any aircraft the president is on.

When and why did the call sign “Air Force One” come about? In 1953, President Eisenhower was on *Air Force* 8160. His call sign was 8160. Eastern Airlines Flight 8160 accidentally entered into the president’s airspace. Flight 8160’s call sign was the same as the president’s! For security reasons, a call sign just for the president was developed.

Each of the two Boeing 747 jets in the president’s fleet has a large office for the president. Each has a bedroom. Each has a gym and shower room, too. There is a large conference room. There is even an operating room. There are two large **galleys**, and kitchen staff can prepare up to one hundred meals at once. Freezers are stocked with at least one week’s worth of meals. For safety reasons, the plane can refuel in the air. It has its own retractable steps so it does not have to rely on local airports. Secret Service men are hidden throughout the plane.

Check Your Understanding

- If an air traffic controller uses the call sign “Air Force One,”
 - it is before 1953.
 - the president must be on his Boeing 747.
 - a plane entered the president’s airspace.
 - the president is on an aircraft in the air.
- Which of the following animals can retract its head, just like the steps on *Air Force One*?

a. a rabbit	c. a lizard
b. a turtle	d. a giraffe
- From the context of the passage, you can infer that the president

a. can’t work while flying.	c. can stay in the air for a week.
b. has to rely on local airports.	d. will need the plane to land if he needs an operation.
- A **galley** is a plane’s

a. kitchen.	c. shower room.
b. freezer.	d. operating room.

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Warm-Up

Name _____

23

The Only Man with This Degree

When you go to college, you major in a subject. You may earn a degree in science, math, or English. It may be in art, education, or computers. There is one man who has a degree that no one else has. He is the only man in the world with this degree. What did this man major in? He majored in enigmatology. Who is this man? What in the world is enigmatology?

The man is Will Shortz. Shortz was born in 1952. He graduated from Indiana University in 1974. Shortz always liked puzzles, so he wrote his own major. An *enigma* is a puzzle, so an enigmatologist studies puzzles. Today, Shortz writes and edits puzzle books. He is also the puzzle editor for *The New York Times*

newspaper. He wrote the puzzle clues for the Riddler to leave for Batman in the movie *Batman Forever*.

What is one of Shortz's favorite crossword clues? The clue is, "It might turn into a different story." What is the answer? The answer is "spiral staircase." Shortz's favorite crossword puzzle ran on November 5, 1996. The puzzle had two correct solutions with the same set of clues. One of the clues said, "Lead story in tomorrow's newspaper." The answer was correct if you put in "Bob Dole Elected" or "Clinton Elected."

Check Your Understanding

- An **enigma** is a
 - clue.
 - major.
 - degree.
 - puzzle.
- Presidential elections take place on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November. From the context of the passage, you can infer that elections in 1996 were held on
 - November 1
 - November 3
 - November 5
 - November 7
- The passage does *not* tell you
 - when Shortz was born.
 - where Shortz was born.
 - when Shortz graduated.
 - where Shortz went to school.
- What might be the answer to the crossword clue "high home"?
 - nest
 - roof
 - bell
 - tail



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