Vidalia Onion

Imagine you pick up an onion, peel off the skin, and take a big bite. What do you think would happen next? If it were a famous Vidalia onion, you would probably smile and take another bite. Believe it or not, the Vidalia onion has as much sugar as an apple.

Sweet onions were also a surprise to their first grower, Mose Coleman. He was a farmer in Toombs County, Georgia. In 1931, Coleman noticed something was strange about his onion crop. He expected the onions would taste hot and make his eyes burn. He was surprised to find his onions tasted sweet and mild.

At first, no one wanted to buy these new onions, but Coleman didn't give up. He kept working and finally convinced people to give the new onions a try. He sold his onions for $3.50 per fifty-pound bag. That was a lot of money for onions in those days. His success made other farmers want to try to grow this new sweet onion, too.

In the 1940s, a farmer's market was built in the town of Vidalia, where the state's most traveled highways came together. Many people came to shop there, and they usually left with some of the famous sweet onions. The onions became known as "those Vidalia onions." From that time on, these onions were called Vidalias.

The Vidalia onion was not just popular in Georgia. It became known throughout the country. The Vidalia was even seen on morning television shows. In 1990, Georgia named the Vidalia onion the Official State Vegetable of Georgia. Vidalia onions are picked fresh from April until late June. Luckily, today you can buy them until late fall because farmers have found better ways to store them and keep them fresh.

So the next time you reach for a sweet Vidalia onion, consider taking a bite. You will be pleasantly surprised!

1. According to the passage, why did other farmers begin growing Vidalia onions?

A. They were having trouble selling their regular onions to customers.
B. They wanted to grow onions they could store and keep fresh longer.
C. They saw that Mose Coleman was successful at selling his onions.
D. They saw the new onions advertised on morning television shows.

2. According to the passage, which statement is a fact?

A. People should be more willing to try different flavors.
B. Vidalias taste better on sandwiches than other onions do.
C. Mose Coleman was surprised that his onions tasted sweet.
D. The official vegetable of Georgia should be the bell pepper.

3. According to this passage, what do Vidalia onions and apples have in common?

A. They sell for the same price per pound.
B. They are both good sources of vitamins.
C. They contain the same amount of sugar.
D. They are both sold at farmer's markets.

4. Based on the passage, why was Vidalia MOST LIKELY chosen as the place to build a farmer's market?

A. because the state's busiest highways met there
B. because lots of wealthy customers lived there
C. because area farmers stored their crops there
D. because the sweetest onions were grown there
5. What is the main purpose of this passage?
   A. to inform
   B. to compare
   C. to entertain
   D. to persuade

6. Which word BEST describes how Mose Coleman behaved in paragraph three?
   A. amazed
   B. uncaring
   C. determined
   D. discouraged

7. What was MOST LIKELY the author’s main purpose for writing this passage?
   A. to compare different kinds of onions
   B. to convince people to taste new things
   C. to tell the history behind the Vidalia onion
   D. to tell about farming methods in the 1930s
His eyes were a soft gray,  
Like the wool of his favorite sweater.  
He was a very honest person.

He began most of his sentences  
The same way, with a long "Well..."  
And chuckled just enough,  
To make you feel welcome beside him.

I asked him if there was anything,  
Anything at all that he wanted.  
He said he could really use a good chair.

We found him a good plaid chair.  
With a table by the side,  
To rest his puzzle or his glasses.

Then he grew more quiet,  
Less conversation day to day.  
A large building went up across the street.  
It was hard to hear people above the noise.

Soon my neighbor no longer sat up at his window,  
Greeting everyone on the street.

Smiling, humming his songs,  
Cracking his jokes,  
And laughing with the Hailey brothers.

He used to watch out for us,  
And would let us sneak a piece of candy.  
He would offer us some lemonade,  
And listen as we rattled on about school—  
He listened very carefully.

We will miss him and his kind ways.  
I wanted to give him a gift when he left.

But before I knew it he moved away.  
I hope he is happy at his new place,  
And that he will never forget us,  
All of us back here on Glenwood Street.

8. Which sentence has the same meaning as "It was hard to hear people above the noise"?

A. It was difficult hearing the people on the upper floors of the building.  
B. The people in the upper floors of the building made a lot of noise.  
C. People's voices were louder than the noise of the building going up.  
D. The noise of the building going up made it hard to hear people talking.
9. What is the overall tone of the poem?

A. factual  
B. exciting  
C. thoughtful  
D. humorous

10. Based on facts from the poem, what can you conclude about the Hailey brothers?

A. They are outcasts.  
B. They are classmates of the author.  
C. They are the author's brothers.  
D. They are friends of the neighbor.

Making Notes

Gather some notes  
Pick them off ivory keys  
Choose one that clinks  
Another that claps  
Careful not to brush  
The one that deeply groans.  
Push the left thumb  
On the black key  
Listen, a half note  
On a platter  
Where ice dropped  
And splattered.  
Lift the fingers next  
Then let go as in a free fall  
Like pointed wings on the keys  
Make them dance in a line  
Rising as they trace the flight  
Of doves and eagles  
Now, listen to your song.

11. Which of these is being described in this passage?

A. playing the piano  
B. playing the guitar  
C. playing the drums  
D. playing the trumpet

12. Based on the description in the passage, how would the song MOST LIKELY sound?

A. soft  
B. dreary  
C. angry  
D. carefree
13. Which of these BEST describes this passage?

A. poem  
B. drama  
C. folk tale  
D. short story

Hikers on a Nature Trail

Characters: Mom  
Dad  
Jorge

Scene 1: [the beginning of a nature trail]
Mom: I think this trail looks like our best choice. According to my map it includes a waterfall, a wooded grove called 
Wildlife Playground, and a challenging hill that leads to Sunset Lookout.

Jorge: Ugh! I would rather go to the arcade. They have that new adventure game I have been waiting to play. Why 
don't we go there instead?

Dad: I think this might be a more interesting adventure than that arcade game. Let's give it a try. If you disagree, you 
can spend some time in the arcade after dinner.

Jorge: Okay! I will be counting the minutes until I am standing in front of that game.

Mom: We will see.

Scene 2: [on the trail]
Dad: That waterfall was amazing! I think that was the first time I have seen one that was not on television.

Jorge: I am really surprised by how much noise the water makes when it hits the rocks. I sure did get wet from all the 
spray. Can you believe we saw four deer and a hawk in the grove? Wait until I tell my teacher!

Mom: Jorge, are you ready for the hike up to Sunset Lookout? It might be tough.

Jorge: No problem. I have plenty of energy.

Dad: Good, we wouldn't want to tire you out too much. You will need to be rested to play your adventure game.

Jorge: Ummm, I forgot about the game. I am sure I will be okay. Let's get started on that hill.

Scene 3: [on top of Sunset Lookout]
Jorge: This has to be the best view in the world. I can see for miles. I will never forget this hike.

Dad: Too bad it's not been much of an adventure though. We had better hurry back so you can get to that game.

Jorge: Are you kidding? This is the most amazing adventure I have ever had. Let's stay and watch the sunset instead!

Mom: Great!
14. Which two items does the author contrast in this drama?

A. an arcade game and a hike  
B. a waterfall and a sunset  
C. nature and people  
D. a nature trail and a lookout

15. Why does Jorge want to stay and watch the sunset?

A. He enjoys nature more than the arcade.  
B. He dislikes hiking downhill in the dark.  
C. He wants to rest before hiking some more.  
D. He knows it will be too late to go to the arcade.

16. In Scene 1, what is the meaning of the word "grove"?

A. small prairie  
B. group of trees  
C. large meadow  
D. scenic waterfall

17. What happens to Jorge throughout the drama?

A. He changes his mind about the arcade.  
B. He decides he wants to go play games.  
C. He keeps thinking he wants to go home.  
D. He becomes too tired to hike up the hill.

18. Which word BEST describes Jorge at the beginning of the drama?

A. cautious  
B. confused  
C. unfriendly  
D. unwilling

19. What is the turning point of the plot?

A. Jorge and his parents watch the sunset together.  
B. Jorge's parents leave him alone to watch the sunset.  
C. Jorge finally makes it to the arcade to play his favorite game.  
D. Jorge enjoys the hike so much he forgets about the arcade game.
Inventor of the Traffic Light

The word "invent" comes from a Latin word which means "to find." Garrett Morgan, an African-American, was one such inventor. His first job was repairing sewing machines in a factory. He tried to fix a machine so that the needle would run through fabric more quickly. Morgan discovered that the chemical he was using had other properties. By accident, he wiped his hands, sticky with the chemical, on his horsehair apron and the hairs straightened. Morgan had invented hair straightener! He sold his product, G.A. Morgan Refining Cream, to the African-American community and continued on his career as inventor.

In 1912, he invented the gas mask, a tool that allowed miners to work safely around dangerous gases. At first, no one bought his invention, because they didn't see a need for it. But after a serious accident in a tunnel, he used his new invention to rescue the tunnel workers. Soon, he received orders for his new invention.

Imagine a city street without effective traffic lights: cars, bicycles, carriages of various kinds, and pedestrians—or walkers—all competing to cross the street. Police officers operated simple "stop/go" signals in busy intersections, but cars, bicycles, carriages, and pedestrians still dashed into the intersections at different speeds and many bumped into each other. The invention of the car was wonderful, but traffic became a new problem.

Everyday, Garrett Morgan watched traffic become more dangerous. One day he witnessed a traffic accident between a car and horse-drawn carriage at a busy intersection. The problem with the traffic light, he realized, was its poor design: the police-operated traffic signal lacked a transition between "stop" and "go."

Morgan invented a new traffic signal that added a "caution" light that made traffic move more smoothly and safely. His traffic light stood on a T-shaped pole with arms that flashed a red light to stop traffic in all directions, allowing pedestrians to cross safely. After pedestrians crossed, traffic could proceed in only one direction.

Soon, cities everywhere wanted his traffic light. In 1923, Morgan acquired a patent for his invention, and a popular electric company paid him $40,000 to manufacture and sell his invention. Traffic lights today operate in the same basic manner.

The traffic light is Morgan's most famous invention. In 1963, the United States government awarded Garrett Morgan an award for his life-saving idea. Today miniature monuments to Garrett Morgan's invention stand on street corners all across the country.

20. What is the purpose of the passage?
A. to entertain  
B. to persuade  
C. to inform  
D. to question

21. According to the passage, which statement is true?
A. The invention of the traffic light ended all traffic accidents.  
B. The traffic light is Garrett Morgan's only invention.  
C. Before the invention of the traffic light, traffic was less dangerous.  
D. Garrett Morgan's traffic signal was special because it had a "caution" light.

22. Which statement expresses the main idea of the first paragraph?
A. Garrett Morgan was a famous inventor.  
B. Garrett Morgan's first invention was accidental.  
C. Garrett Morgan worked in a sewing machine factory.  
D. Garrett Morgan worked for many years to invent hair straightener.

23. What is the main idea of the passage?
A. Garrett Morgan was a famous policeman.  
B. Garrett Morgan's traffic light stood on a T-shaped pole.  
C. Garrett Morgan became wealthy from his most important invention.  
D. Garrett Morgan had an important idea that became a life saving invention.
24. Why was Garrett Morgan given an award for inventing the traffic light?
   A. because the traffic light saved many lives
   B. because the traffic light made Garrett Morgan very famous
   C. because the traffic light was the last thing Garrett Morgan invented
   D. because the traffic light was the most popular invention of the 1920s

25. Based on the passage, in this sentence, what does *received orders* mean?

   But after a serious accident in a tunnel, he used his new invention to rescue the tunnel workers. Soon, he received orders for his new invention.

   A. People sent Morgan ideas for new inventions.
   B. The public paid Morgan to produce gas masks.
   C. Someone asked Morgan to create a new traffic light.
   D. Morgan showed people how to order hair straightener.
1. C) They saw that Mose Coleman was successful at selling his onions.

2. C) Mose Coleman was surprised that his onions tasted sweet.

3. C) They contain the same amount of sugar.

4. A) because the state's busiest highways met there

5. A) to inform

6. C) determined

7. C) to tell the history behind the Vidalia onion

8. D) The noise of the building going up made it hard to hear people talking.

9. C) thoughtful

10. D) They are friends of the neighbor.

11. A) playing the piano

12. D) carefree

13. A) poem

14. A) an arcade game and a hike

15. A) He enjoys nature more than the arcade.

16. B) group of trees

17. A) He changes his mind about the arcade.

18. D) unwilling

19. D) Jorge enjoys the hike so much he forgets about the arcade game.

20. C) to inform

21. D) Garrett Morgan's traffic signal was special because it had a "caution" light.

22. B) Garrett Morgan's first invention was accidental.

23. D) Garrett Morgan had an important idea that became a life saving invention.

24. A) because the traffic light saved many lives

25. B) The public paid Morgan to produce gas masks.