Author's Purpose and Text Structure

Grade 3 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

The Saguaro Cactus

The saguaro is a giant cactus that grows in only one place in the world. It lives in the Sonoran Desert, which covers parts of Arizona, California, and Mexico. This text describes what a saguaro looks like, how it is built, and who lives on it.

A saguaro can grow taller than a four-story building. Many reach forty feet or more. Its trunk is green and thick, with tall folds that run up and down like an accordion. Sharp spines grow in neat rows along each fold. The spines shade the cactus and keep hungry animals away.

Many saguaros have arms that curve up toward the sky. Saguaros grow very slowly. After ten years, a young saguaro may be only a few inches tall. A saguaro may not grow its first arm until it is about sixty years old. Some have dozens of arms, and others never grow any at all.

Inside, a saguaro is built to store water. When it rains, its roots spread out just under the ground and soak up water fast. The folds stretch open, and the cactus swells. Its waxy skin helps it hold the water in. A large saguaro can hold more than one thousand pounds of water. Woody ribs inside hold up its heavy body.

In late spring, white flowers bloom near the top of the saguaro. Each flower opens at night and closes the next afternoon. Bats, bees, and birds visit the flowers to drink their sweet nectar. Later, the flowers become red fruit full of tiny black seeds. Birds and other desert animals eat the fruit.

A saguaro is also a home. Gila woodpeckers peck holes in the trunk to make nests. After they move out, owls and other birds move in. The cactus is like a tall apartment building in the desert.

I think the saguaro is the most amazing plant in America. If you ever visit Arizona, look for one standing tall against the blue sky.

1. What is the author's main purpose for writing this text?
   - to persuade readers to plant a cactus at home
   - to tell a made-up story about a desert owl
   - to give steps for a trip to the Sonoran Desert
   - to describe the saguaro and how it lives

2. Which text structure does the author use?
   sequence description problem and solution compare and contrast

3. Which sentence tells readers how the text is organized?
   - This text describes what a saguaro looks like, how it is built, and who lives on it.
   - The saguaro is a giant cactus that grows in only one place in the world.
   - The cactus is like a tall apartment building out in the hot, dry desert.
   - If you ever visit Arizona, look for one standing tall against the blue sky.

4. Which paragraph describes the saguaro's flowers?
   the second paragraph the fourth paragraph the fifth paragraph the sixth paragraph

5. How does a saguaro store water?
   Its flowers drink water at night.
   Its arms fill up with water first.
   Its spines catch and hold raindrops.
   Its folds stretch so it can swell.

6. What do the saguaro's spines do?
   make holes for bird nests
   help it soak up the rain
   hold up its heavy body
   shade it and keep animals away

7. Bats drink the flowers' sweet nectar. What is nectar?
   a sweet liquid inside flowers
   a red desert fruit
   a sharp, thin spine
   a tiny black seed

8. Why does the author compare the saguaro to an apartment building?
   to show that people can live inside it
   to show that many birds live in it
   to show that it has lots of windows
   to show that it is very, very old

9. Which sentence shows the author's own point of view?
   Gila woodpeckers peck holes in the trunk.
   Many reach forty feet or more.
   I think the saguaro is the most amazing plant in America.
   Bats, bees, and birds visit the flowers.

10. A reader thinks a cactus is boring because it just stands still. Which detail might change that reader's view?
   Its trunk is green and thick.
   Its spines grow in neat rows.
   It lives in the Sonoran Desert.
   Owls and other birds make homes in it.

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Answer Key - Grade 3 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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