Author's Purpose and Point of View

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

Meet the Axolotl

Imagine an animal that seems to smile all the time. It has feathery frills on each side of its head and tiny legs that look too small for its body. Meet the axolotl (AK-suh-lah-tul), one of the most unusual salamanders on Earth.

Most salamanders change as they grow. They start life in water, breathing through gills, and later move onto land. The axolotl never makes that change. It keeps its feathery gills and lives underwater its whole life. Scientists say it stays like a young salamander even as an adult, which can be about a foot long.

The axolotl has an even more amazing talent. If it loses a leg, it can grow a new one, complete with bones and toes. It can also repair parts of its heart and even its spinal cord. Scientists around the world study axolotls to learn how this works. Someday, their research might help doctors heal people. A tiny animal could teach us something very big.

You might think such a remarkable animal would be found everywhere. In fact, wild axolotls live in only one place: the canals of Xochimilco (so-chee-MEEL-ko), at the edge of Mexico City. Long ago, they lived in large lakes there, but most of that water was drained as the city grew.

Today, the axolotl's last home is in trouble. Dirty water from the city flows into the canals. Fish that people brought from other places crowd the axolotls and take over their habitat. In 1998, scientists counted about 6,000 axolotls in each square kilometer of canal. By 2014, they found only about 35.

The good news is that people are fighting back. Local farmers grow crops on small island gardens called chinampas, using old methods that keep the water clean. Some have built filters to protect their stretch of canal. Visitors can pay to tour these refuges and learn about the axolotl. Their money helps the farmers keep the canals clean.

Millions of axolotls live in aquariums and science labs. Yet a wild axolotl, smiling up from the canals of its only home, is something worth saving. When we protect the water of Xochimilco, we protect one of nature's most astonishing creatures.

1. What is the author's main purpose in this text?

   to inform readers about axolotls and why they need protection

   to teach readers how to care for a pet axolotl at home

   to tell a made-up story about an axolotl's adventure

   to explain how doctors heal people who lose a leg

2. Why does the author open with "Imagine an animal that seems to smile all the time"?

- to compare axolotls with other smiling animals
- to prove that axolotls feel happy
- to explain how axolotls breathe underwater
- to make readers curious about the animal

3. Which word from the last paragraph shows that the author admires the axolotl?

aquariums protect astonishing canals

4. Why does the author compare the axolotl with most other salamanders?

- to explain why salamanders are in danger
- to show that axolotls are not really salamanders
- to show what makes the axolotl different
- to show that all salamanders live on land

5. Why does the author include the numbers from 1998 and 2014?

- to show how quickly wild axolotls have disappeared
- to show how many axolotls live in aquariums today
- to show how large the canals of Xochimilco are
- to show how long scientists have kept axolotls in labs

6. What is the author's point of view about the farmers' work?

- It harms the axolotl's habitat.
- It is hopeful and helpful.
- It does not matter very much.
- It is too old-fashioned to work.

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

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