Cause and Effect in Texts

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Building Confidence

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

Why Bridges Have Gaps

Next time you ride across a long bridge, listen carefully. You may hear a soft thump-thump as the wheels roll over a metal strip. That strip covers a gap in the road, and the gap is there on purpose.

Bridges are made of steel and concrete. These materials seem solid and still, but they actually change size with the weather. When the sun heats a bridge, the tiny particles inside the steel and concrete move faster and spread apart. As a result, the bridge grows slightly longer. On a cold night, the particles slow down and move closer together, so the bridge shrinks.

The change is small but powerful. A steel bridge 1,000 feet long can grow about seven inches between a freezing winter night and a hot summer afternoon. If the bridge had no room to grow, it would push hard against the land at each end. The pressure could crack the concrete or bend the steel. Over time, the whole bridge could be damaged.

To solve this problem, engineers build expansion joints. An expansion joint is a gap between two sections of a bridge. Often it is covered by metal plates with teeth that fit together like the fingers of two hands. When the bridge grows in summer, the teeth slide closer together. When it shrinks in winter, they slide apart. Because of these joints, the bridge can change size safely.

Engineers use the same idea in other places. Sidewalks have lines cut into them for a similar reason. Train tracks have small gaps, too. So the next time you hear that thump, you will know that the bridge is simply making room to grow.

1. What causes a bridge to grow longer?

   heat from the sun heavy traffic on the road cold air at night

2. What happens to a bridge on a cold night?

   It grows a little. It cracks in half. It shrinks a little.

3. Which signal words show an effect in the second paragraph?

   These materials Next time As a result

4. What would happen if a bridge had no room to grow?

It could shrink until it fell apart.

It could make a loud thump-thump sound.

It could push on the land and crack.

5. Why do engineers build expansion joints?

so cars can drive across the bridge faster

so the bridge can change size safely

so the bridge stays warm in the winter

6. Which choice shows the events in the right cause-and-effect order?

The bridge grows, the sun heats the bridge, the particles spread apart.

The particles spread apart, the bridge shrinks, the sun heats the bridge.

The sun heats the bridge, the particles spread apart, the bridge grows.

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Building Confidence

Circle the answer.

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