Use Evidence in Informational Text

Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

Name _____ Date _____

Circle the answer.

READ THIS FIRST

The Day of Two Noons

Today, when it is noon in Chicago, every clock in that city agrees. That was not always true. Before the 1880s, almost every town in the United States kept its own time. Noon was the moment when the sun stood highest in the sky. Because the sun moves across the sky from east to west, noon came a little later in each town farther west. When it was noon in Chicago, it was about 12:30 in Pittsburgh.

For most of history, this local "sun time" worked well. People traveled slowly, by foot, horse, or wagon. Many towns kept a large public clock on a church or city hall, set by the sun. A few minutes' difference between towns did not matter much. A traveler could simply reset a pocket watch upon arrival.

Railroads changed that. By the 1870s, trains crossed the country at speeds never seen before. Each railroad company set its schedules by its own time, often the local time of its headquarters city. A single large station might display several clocks, each showing a different railroad's time. Travelers had to figure out which clock to trust. A person riding from Maine to California might have to reset a watch more than twenty times. Missed connections were common. Worse, two trains sharing one track could be confused about when each was supposed to pass, which put passengers at risk.

Railroad managers knew something had to change. Teachers, scientists, and engineers had suggested dividing the country into time zones. One early planner, a schoolteacher named Charles Dowd, drew maps of possible zones. In each zone, every clock would show the same time, and neighboring zones would differ by exactly one hour. The railroads finally agreed on a plan. They chose November 18, 1883, as the day to switch.

At noon that day, clocks in many cities had to be adjusted. In some eastern cities, the clocks were set back a few minutes, so noon happened twice. Newspapers called it "the day of two noons." Within a few hours, most of the nation's railroads were running on four standard time zones: Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific.

Not everyone was pleased. Some towns refused to give up sun time. A few newspapers complained that the railroads had no right to change the time. Some cities kept two clocks for years, one showing local time and one showing "railroad time." Gradually, though, most people found standard time too useful to ignore.

The United States government did not make time zones official until 1918, thirty-five years after the railroads made the switch. By then, most Americans had long been using them. The story shows how a new technology can force people to rethink something as basic as telling time.

1. Which detail best explains why sun time worked well before railroads?
   - A single large station might display several clocks.
   - A few minutes' difference between towns did not matter much.
   - The railroads finally agreed on a plan.
   - Noon was the moment when the sun stood highest in the sky.

2. Which inference is best supported by the third paragraph?
   - Large stations were built in nearly every small town.
   - Railroad companies shared one schedule across the country.
   - Pocket watches were not allowed inside large train stations at all.
   - Travelers often could not be sure when their train would leave.

3. Which words best support the claim that the old system was unsafe?
   two trains sharing one track could be confused about when each was supposed to pass
   Missed connections were common.
   Travelers had to figure out which clock to trust.
   By the 1870s, trains crossed the country at speeds never seen before.

4. According to the text, why did noon happen twice in some eastern cities?
   Two railroads chose different times for noon.
   Their clocks were moved ahead one full hour.
   The sun reached its highest point twice that day.
   Their clocks were set back a few minutes at noon.

5. Which sentence supports the inference that people relied on time zones before the law required them?
   The United States government did not make time zones official until 1918.
   By then, most Americans had long been using them.
   Some towns refused to give up sun time.
   They chose November 18, 1883, as the day to switch.

6. Which evidence shows that some people resisted the change for a long time?
   Neighboring zones would differ by one hour.
   Some cities kept two clocks for years.
   Teachers and scientists had suggested time zones.
   Newspapers called it the day of two noons.

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Answer Key - Grade 5 Reading Worksheet - Challenge Me

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