

READ

REFLECT

RESPOND

Nonfiction

Comprehension

Skill-Boosters

B

READ: *Pass the mice, please.*

DINNERS LONG AGO

Some 1,700–2,500 years ago, wealthy Romans enjoyed a variety of foods. At a dinner party, people were served three courses. The first course might include salad and eggs. Or the “starter” course might be stuffed dormice (a dormouse *is* a type of mouse!), and bread. The main course was usually meat. A boar’s head might be served, or chicken, roast peacock, lobster, or fish. Some popular items for dessert were fruit, fruit tarts, and cakes made with honey. Wine was served with water, and sometimes flavored with honey.

Roman dinner parties began in the late afternoon. They usually lasted many hours. People ate while reclining on couches where they were served by slaves. From time to time, slaves also brought bowls of water. Why? So guests could wash their hands after each course. This was a good idea, since the dinner guests ate with their fingers! Spoons were sometimes used, but as yet there was no such thing as a fork.

Well-mannered guests burped after eating, to show they’d enjoyed the meal.



In medieval times, wealthy people served their guests a wide assortment of foods. A banquet usually had three courses, plus dessert. The first course might feature a whole baby pig, eggs in cream sauce, or eel pie. The second course would be roast meat. This might be deer, ox, chicken, peacock, swan, or boar’s head. A typical third course might be liver dumplings or *frumenty* (wheat with eggs, stock, and milk). Dessert would likely be a fruit tart or cherry pudding. Wine, mead, and ale would be served as well.

Seated at long tables, guests usually shared dishes with each other. The host and the most important guests sat at a high table facing the room. These elite guests were given a spoon and napkin. Before they ate, servants tasted the guests’ food to make sure it wasn’t poisoned.

Medieval people mostly ate with their fingers and washed their hands between courses. After dining, they often threw bones and scraps of food on the floor for the host’s dogs to eat.

REFLECT: *Think about people’s eating habits today.*

1. Name three foods that wealthy people are likely to eat in the United States today. Then name three foods that poor people are likely to eat today.

WEALTHY PEOPLE:

- _____
- _____
- _____

POOR PEOPLE:

- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Name three customs that were once considered good manners but would now be very impolite.

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. List five foods mentioned in the reading that you're *not* likely to see on a restaurant menu today.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

RESPOND: Circle a letter or word, fill in the blanks, or write out the answer.

Build your vocabulary.

1. *Belching* is the same as
 - a. attaching.
 - b. squeezing.
 - c. burping.
 - d. belting.
2. A *wide assortment* also means
 - a. a variety.
 - b. spread out.
 - c. sorted.
 - d. fully occupied.
3. Someone who is *well-mannered* is said to be
 - a. rude.
 - b. polite.
 - c. phony.
 - d. sincere.
4. *Ale* is
 - a. a malt beer.
 - b. a type of bird.
 - c. honey-flavored water.
 - d. a kind of dessert.

6. What customs were *not* shared by ancient Romans and medieval diners?

Recall details.

7. At a medieval dinner, a servant might be expected to
 - a. throw bones to the dogs.
 - b. wash his or her hands.
 - c. taste the guests' food.
8. At a Roman dinner party, guests
 - a. shared dishes with other guests.
 - b. ate dinner while lying down.
 - c. sat at long tables.

Compare and contrast.

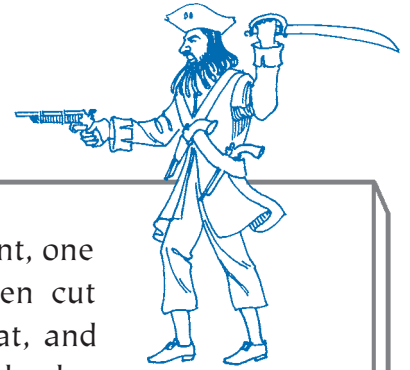
5. What customs were shared by ancient Romans and medieval diners?

Look it up in a reference source.

9. What is *mead*? _____
- _____
10. What is *stock*? _____
- _____
11. Which major food group is *not* included in the medieval banquet?
- _____

READ: *Aye, maties! No quarter given on these ships.*

TWO PIRATES



BLACKBEARD

Blackbeard was born in England in the late 1600s. His real name was Edward Teach. Teach started out as a privateer. People hired privateers to capture pirate ships. As a reward, they were given some of the pirates' loot.

Teach was an excellent privateer. He was so successful that he was made captain of a captured pirate ship. Instead of continuing as a privateer, though, he decided to become a pirate. He called himself Blackbeard.

Blackbeard was described as a wild-looking man. His eyes were fierce. His huge beard was woven into two long braids, which hung over his ears.

Blackbeard had more than 14 wives, who all lived in different ports.

Until 1717, Blackbeard attacked ships off the coast of America. Then a privateer named Lt. Robert Maynard was hired to hunt him down. Maynard accomplished his mission—and the two men finally met in a swordfight. Blackbeard nearly killed Maynard. But

at the last moment, one of Maynard's men cut the pirate's throat, and Blackbeard was dead.

CAPTAIN KIDD

William Kidd was born in Scotland in 1645. Unlike Blackbeard, Kidd never wanted to become a pirate.

In 1695, Kidd was hired as a privateer. But after a year, he'd failed to catch a single pirate ship. Although his heart wasn't in it, he let his crew attack and loot a ship. But then the crew wanted to loot *another* ship. Furious, Kidd refused. He was so angry that he hit one crewman with a bucket. The man died the next day. Now Kidd was afraid that his men would mutiny. So he let them capture and loot yet another ship.

Soon afterward, Kidd came upon a real pirate ship. But when he ordered his crew to attack, they refused! Some of them even joined the pirates. Captain Kidd gave up and sailed home. Once he reached Scotland, he went on trial for his crimes. Kidd was hanged in 1701.

REFLECT: *Think about ships and sailing long ago.*

1. What happens when there's a mutiny on a ship?

2. In what ways would it be easier to rob a ship than a bank? Explain your thinking.

RESPOND: Circle a letter or word, fill in the blanks, or write out the answer.

Identify parts of speech.

1. *Privateers were given some of the pirate's loot.*

In that sentence, the word *loot* is a (verb / noun).

2. *Finally, Kidd let his crew attack and loot a ship.*

In that sentence, the word *loot* is a (verb / noun).

Draw conclusions.

3. Allowing Teach to command his own ship was

- a. a reward.
- b. a big mistake.
- c. both a and b.

4. A good title for Kidd's story might be

- a. *The Reluctant Pirate.*
- b. *The Savage Pirate.*
- c. *The Successful Privateer.*

5. Would Blackbeard have been so effective as a pirate if he didn't look fierce?

6. Why do you think Kidd let his men attack the first ship?

Recall details.

7. Where did Blackbeard attack ships?

8. Was Teach or Kidd the best privateer?

9. Who had a poor relationship with his crew, Teach or Kidd?

10. For what crimes was Kidd hanged?

Predicting outcomes.

11. Suppose Kidd had found a pirate ship right away. What problem might he have avoided?

12. Suppose Blackbeard hadn't been killed by one of Maynard's men. Is it likely he would have lived to be an old man?

Look it up in a reference source.

13. What was Captain Kidd's treasure?

14. What did the governor of South Carolina allow Blackbeard to do?

RESPOND: Circle a letter or word, fill in the blanks, or write out the answer.

Build your vocabulary.

1. Draw a line from the *italicized* word to its definition.

<i>blockbuster</i>	questioning
<i>flawless</i>	a big hit
<i>inscription</i>	writing
<i>interrogation</i>	perfect
<i>clearly</i>	obviously

Use context clues.

2. *Continuity* means using
- the same details in every scene.
 - an incorrect weapon.
 - a continuous shot with the camera.
3. A *blooper* is
- a poorly prepared actor.
 - an embarrassing mistake.
 - spilled liquid on a movie set.

Draw conclusions.

4. After reading about *The Invisible Man*, you can conclude that
- when the invisible man wore shoes, people couldn't see them.
 - the invisible man walked around naked all the time.
 - the invisible man's bare footprints should have shown up in the snow.

5. After reading about *Ben Hur*, you can conclude that
- there were no chariots in ancient Rome.
 - there were no cars in ancient Rome.
 - cars weren't allowed in the Coliseum.
6. After reading about *Star Wars: A New Hope*, you can conclude that the needle used for interrogation
- was filled with a deadly drug.
 - contained a drug that made people talk.
 - was a blooper that wasn't supposed to be a joke.
7. After reading about *The Matrix*, which of the following would you conclude is a continuity error?
- Lord of the Rings*: Gandalf kicking an electrical wire
 - The Invisible Man*: the invisible man leaving shoe prints in the snow
 - Star Wars*: storm trooper whacking his head

Look it up in a reference source.

8. What is a *gaffer*?

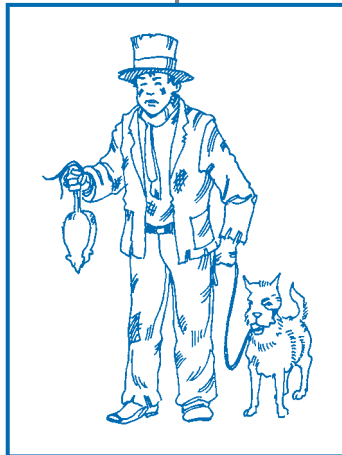
9. What does a *key grip* do?

READ: *If you had lived 200 years ago, what job would you be doing?*

JOBS IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

In the 1800s, there were many jobs that don't exist today. Here are just a few of them:

- A **cheap-jack** sold small, inexpensive hardware items and objects such as knife sharpeners. Cheap-jacks were usually good talkers. Everyone who passed by listened to their lively sales pitch. They were a common sight at fairs.
- A **costermonger** sold fruit, vegetables, and fish. He sold his wares from a stall or a cart on wheels. If his “store” was on wheels, he walked along the streets. As he walked, he called out flattering descriptions of his products.
- Most **street sellers** couldn't afford a stall or cart, so they sold only what they could carry. **Orange girls**, for example, sold oranges. Other poor people sold



bootlaces or laces for corsets. A few street sellers had stalls or carts with warmers for coffee, and hot pudding or fish.

- A **pieman** sold all sorts of pies. Some were made of fruit, such as apple, gooseberry, or currants. Some were meat or fish—often beef, mutton, or eel. Occasionally, people were suspicious about what sort of meat went into the seller's pies. Sometimes, passers-by would jeer at a pieman, calling out, “Mee-yow” and “Bow-wow.”
- A **ratcatcher** was a poor boy who earned good money by ridding a house of rats. Sometimes he used arsenic to poison rats. But usually, he would use a ferret and a terrier. The ferret would chase the rodents out of their holes, where the terrier could kill them.

REFLECT: *Think about modern life and jobs.*

1. People still worry about what might be in our food. Give an example of today's concerns about food.

2. Many of today's jobs might not exist in the future. Why?

RESPOND: Circle a letter or word, fill in the blanks, or write out the answer.

Build your vocabulary.

1. If you *jeer* at people, you
 - a. call out to them.
 - b. swear at them.
 - c. make fun of them.
2. *Mutton* is
 - a. a large, curly mustache.
 - b. the meat of an adult sheep.
 - c. a type of muffin.
3. If you have *wares*, you have
 - a. lots of hardware.
 - b. things to sell.
 - c. warmers for coffee.
4. A *terrier* is a
 - a. small, lively dog.
 - b. rat-catching tool.
 - c. clever weasel.
5. A *stall* is a
 - a. booth display of things for sale.
 - b. a small cart on wheels.
 - c. a small store in a big building.
6. A *ferret* is a
 - a. type of rat-killing poison.
 - b. long, thin animal related to a weasel.
 - c. sturdy dog with strong jaws.

Draw conclusions.

7. What sort of person would *not* make a good cheap-jack?

8. What sort of person might enjoy being a ratcatcher?

9. What were people implying when they jeered at the pieman?

10. Why did a ratcatcher need a ferret? Why not just send his dog after the rat?

Another way to say it.

11. A *common sight* is
 - a. something you see often.
 - b. something you seldom observe.
 - c. a popular view.
12. *Ridding a house of rats* means
 - a. plugging up rat holes.
 - b. feeding rats to ferrets.
 - c. eliminating rats from the house.

Look it up in a reference source.

13. The word “Victorian” refers to the reign of Queen Victoria. How long was she England’s queen?

RESPOND: Circle a letter or word, fill in the blanks, or write out the answer.

Build your vocabulary.

Recognize *antonyms* (words with opposite meanings).

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <i>hysterical</i> | 3. <i>unprovoked</i> |
| a. reasonable | a. angered |
| b. insane | b. innocent |
| c. sensational | c. annoying |
| 2. <i>ban</i> | 4. <i>aggressive</i> |
| a. forbid | a. friendly |
| b. allow | b. sweet |
| c. punish | c. gentle |

Recognize the main idea.

5. What event inspired both letters?
- The mayor said people were not allowed to own pit bulls.
 - A young person made a pit bull angry.
 - A young person was killed by a pit bull.

Compare and contrast.

6. Describe two significant differences between letter 1 and letter 2.

- _____

- _____

7. On what do both letters agree?

Another way to say it.

8. *I can't believe all the hysteria about pit bulls.*
- I can't understand why people don't like pit bulls.
 - People aren't thinking reasonably about pit bulls.
 - I can't believe what people are saying about my pits.
9. *Another young life cut short by a pit bull attack!*
- A young person has been killed by a pit bull.
 - Life is too short to be attacked by a pit bull.
 - Pit bulls attack only young people.
10. *We must not condemn all pit bulls.*
- We must not believe all pit bulls are dangerous.
 - We must not put pit bulls to death.
 - News stories about pit bulls are untrue.

Fact or opinion? Write F or O.

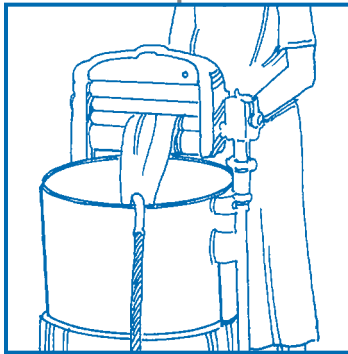
11. _____ People can get hysterical about pit bulls.
12. _____ No one should own these dangerous animals.
13. _____ My pit, Jessie, has never harmed anyone.

READ: Homes have changed a lot in 80 years.

DIFFERENT TIMES, DIFFERENT HOMES

In the 1850s, many people moved from rural to urban areas. They migrated to cities to work in factories. Most of these people lived in large buildings. Often, a whole family lived in a single, crowded room. They used coal for cooking and heating their rooms. Light came from candles or gas lamps. People got water from pumps in the street and lugged it home in buckets. Most all chores were done by hand—not machines. Clothes were washed by hand. Floors were swept with a broom. Rugs were beaten with a paddle to remove the dust.

For entertainment, most people read. Sometimes they played guessing games such as charades.



In the 1930s, middle-class people lived in houses with several rooms. These homes had water taps, electricity, and large windows to let in plenty of light and air. People also had machines that made housework easier, such as vacuum cleaners, gas and electric stoves, and small refrigerators. Electric boilers quickly heated water for washing dishes and clothes. People who could afford it even had washing machines and telephones.

There were also new sources of entertainment. Gramophones, that had to be wound up before they could operate, played records. Radios, too, had now become widely available.

REFLECT: Think about homes in today's world.

1. Name four electronic devices we use for entertainment today.

• _____
• _____

• _____
• _____

2. Think about very poor people in this country and other countries. What are some basic conveniences their homes may not have? List at least four items.

• _____
• _____

• _____
• _____

RESPOND: Circle a letter or word, fill in the blanks, or write out the answer.

Build your vocabulary.

1. They *migrated* to cities to work in factories.
 - a. wandered without direction
 - b. moved from one area to settle in another
 - c. put in a change of address with the post office
2. Sometimes they played *charades*.
 - a. telepathic card tricks
 - b. indoor version of hide and seek
 - c. game where one player acts out a word for the other players to guess
10. If you owned a refrigerator, you
 - a. could store all your food in one place.
 - b. wouldn't have to buy food every day.
 - c. wouldn't have to cook food at all.
11. In the 1850s, if you wanted to take a warm bath, you had to
 - a. heat up water on the stove.
 - b. take a bath at the pump.
 - c. wait for a warm rain.

Recall details.

3. Name one 1850s form of entertainment that still exists today.

4. In the 1850s, where did people get their drinking water?

5. What did electric boilers do?

12. Since clothes dryers hadn't yet been invented,
 - a. clothes dried out as people wore them.
 - b. people ironed their clothes to dry them.
 - c. people hung their clothes on a line.
13. In the 1850s, how could people listen to music?
 - a. They attended concerts or made their own music.
 - b. Until the gramophone was invented, they didn't listen to music.
 - c. They hummed to themselves.

Match synonyms.

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 6. ____ <i>lugged</i> | a. tasks |
| 7. ____ <i>chores</i> | b. faucet |
| 8. ____ <i>tap</i> | c. carried |

Make inferences.

9. Why were houses in the 1930s safer than those in the 1850s?
 - a. Coal was used to heat their houses.
 - b. Electricity took the place of candles.
 - c. Large windows let in daylight.

Look it up in a reference source.

14. Who was president of the United States in 1850? In 1930?
IN 1850: _____
IN 1930: _____