

Nonfiction 1



Topics Include:

Warrior Bees, Two Unusual Pirates,
Ancient Inventions, Money in History,
A President's First Speech, and More

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The Amazing Charlie Parkhurst

Charlie Parkhurst was a stagecoach driver during the Gold Rush days in California. Nearly every day for 20 years, Charlie took passengers and gold shipments along dangerous roads. Head-on collisions with other stagecoach teams were not unknown on these narrow, dirt pathways. Drivers faced hazards at every turn. Sometimes wild pigs darted out of the woods and spooked the horses!

Charlie was a “regular guy.” He smoked cigars, chewed tobacco, played cards, and drank whiskey. His voice was raspy, and his clothing was as dirty as his body. He had lost an eye while trying to shoe a horse, and there was a nasty scar on his face. Once he shot and killed two highwaymen who were trying to rob his stagecoach.

After years of hard work, Charlie retired. By then he was suffering the ravages of rheumatism. This was a



common problem among drivers exposed to years of bad weather. He moved to Santa Cruz, California, and went into the cattle business. Some years later, neighbors remarked that they hadn't seen old Charlie for a few days. On December 31, 1879, they went into his house and found that he had died.

A great surprise awaited them when they dressed the body for burial. They couldn't believe it! Charlie Parkhurst—the rough and tough veteran of the Gold Rush—was in fact a woman.

COMPREHENSION: Circle a letter.

1. The article tells the story of a real person who lived in
 - a. colonial days.
 - b. the 18th century.
 - c. the old West.
2. After retiring, Charlie Parkhurst
 - a. left California.
 - b. raised livestock.
 - c. drove a stagecoach.
3. Charlie could be described as
 - a. small and timid.
 - b. a troublemaker.
 - c. strong and hardworking.
4. The Gold Rush could be described as
 - a. polite and orderly.
 - b. lively and exciting.
 - c. boring and tedious.

The Amazing Charlie Parkhurst

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WHY OR WHY NOT?

1. Do you think Charlie's life would have been so adventurous if he'd lived as a woman? Explain your thinking.

2. Do you think Charlie Parkhurst was a good-looking person? Explain your reasoning.

SYNONYMS: Draw a line to make each match.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. ravages | a. relocated |
| 2. moved | b. dangers |
| 3. cattle | c. frightened |
| 4. hazards | d. harsh |
| 5. raspy | e. destruction |
| 6. spooked | f. livestock |

ANTONYMS: Circle a word.

- The opposite of *woman* is (*men / man*).
- An antonym of *wild* is (*tame / uncivilized*).
- An antonym of *disrobed* is (*wrapped / dressed*).
- An antonym of *regular* is (*ordinary / unusual*).
- An antonym of *suffering* is (*enjoying / enduring*).
- An antonym of *nasty* is (*attractive / repulsive*).

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

- Records show that Charlie Parkhurst was born in 1812. How old was he when he died? _____
- When stagecoach teams collided, who butted heads?

PICK A PROJECT: Work on the back of this sheet.

- Tell about a modern job that might offer plenty of adventure.
- Look up the *California Gold Rush* in an encyclopedia. Then write three facts about this exciting time.

Are You Afraid of Dogs?

Most dogs are not vicious. In fact, an old saying claims that “a dog is man’s best friend.” But remember that dogs are *animals*. So it’s always wise to be cautious. Even a well-trained dog can be dangerous if it is provoked or frightened.

Common sense can usually help you avoid trouble with strange dogs. Here are some tips from the Humane Society:

- ***Think before you act.*** Don’t disturb a dog while it is sleeping, eating, chewing on a toy, or caring for puppies. Never approach a strange dog—especially one that is confined in a car or behind a fence.
- ***Put yourself in the dog’s place.*** A dog who doesn’t know you may see you as an intruder or as a threat. As far as the dog knows, *you* may be the dangerous one! So try to see a situation as a dog might see it. And remember that it’s in a dog’s nature to defend its master and home—as well as itself.



- ***In case you are attacked:*** Never turn your back on a dog and try to run away. A dog’s natural instinct is to chase and catch you. Never scream and run. Remain motionless, hands at your sides, and avoid eye contact with the dog. Once the dog loses interest in you, slowly back away until it is out of sight.

What should you do if a dog attacks and you fall or are knocked to the ground? Curl into a ball. Put your hands over your ears and remain motionless.

COMPREHENSION: Circle a letter.

1. The article gives you tips on how to
 - a. train a dog properly.
 - b. behave with strange dogs.
 - c. make friends with any dog.
2. Don’t approach a strange dog when it’s
 - a. busy doing something.
 - b. playing with its owner.
 - c. in need of a bath.

Are You Afraid of Dogs?**(page 2)**

3. Looking an angry dog in the eye is
- a good way to control it.
 - seen by the dog as a challenge.
 - the author's recommendation.
4. The advice in this article comes from
- famous dog trainers.
 - the Humane Society.
 - the American Kennel Club.

AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

Did the author write this article to *persuade*, to *inform*, or to *inspire*? Explain your thinking.

NOTING DETAILS

What two behaviors mentioned in the article come *naturally* to a dog?

1. _____
- _____
2. _____
- _____

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE: Circle a letter.

To "put yourself in the dog's place" means

- to sit where the dog is sitting.
- to try living outdoors.
- to think about yourself from the dog's point of view.

VOCABULARY: Circle a letter.

- To be *confined* is to be
 - restricted or closed in.
 - cautioned or warned.
 - wild and untrained.
- A *natural instinct* is
 - learned.
 - inborn.
 - reversible.
- An *intruder* is the opposite of
 - a harmless cat.
 - a snarling animal.
 - an invited guest.
- A dog that has been *provoked* is
 - timid and fearful.
 - annoyed and angry.
 - calm and relaxed.
- The opposite of being *humane* is being
 - kind and compassionate.
 - cruel and brutal.
 - intelligent and clever.

PICK A PROJECT: Work on the back of this sheet.

- Tell about a time you had to deal with a dangerous dog.
- Give one more helpful tip about avoiding trouble with strange dogs.
- Explain why you agree or disagree that "a dog is man's best friend."

Have You Ever Had Hic-Hiccups?



Have you ever had a bad case of the hiccups? These sudden halts in breathing accompanied by short gulping sounds can be quite uncomfortable. Charles Osborne of Anthon, Iowa had the longest hiccupping fit ever recorded. He started hiccupping in 1922, while he was weighing a hog before slaughtering it. His hiccups went on until February of 1990! The attack ended as mysteriously as it began. Mr. Osborne led a normal life in spite of his hiccups. He married twice and fathered eight children. He did complain, however, that he had trouble keeping his false teeth in place.

No one knows exactly what gets hiccups started. But we do know that hiccups occur when a large muscle in the chest contracts in jerks. This muscle, called the diaphragm, usually moves up and down in rhythm with a person's breathing. To stop an attack of hiccups, something must happen to shock the diaphragm out of its contractions.

There are lots of so-called "cures" for hiccups. And every single one of them works—sometimes. The next time you start hiccupping, try one of these diaphragm-shockers:

- eating a spoonful of crushed ice
- swallowing a large spoonful of dried breadcrumbs
- sucking on a lemon
- standing on your head and breathing through your nose
- holding your breath
- pressing gently on your closed eyes
- gulping down a tablespoon of peanut butter
- eating a spoonful of sugar
- drinking a big glass of water in one gulp
- an extreme fright

COMPREHENSION: Write T for *true* or F for *false*.

1. _____ The longest recorded hiccupping fit lasted 68 years.
2. _____ Sweet foods often cause hiccups.
3. _____ There are no known cures for hiccup attacks.
4. _____ When your diaphragm jerks, your breathing jerks, too.

Have You Ever Had Hic-Hiccups?**(page 2)**

VOCABULARY: Complete the sentences with words from the article.

1. A person who is inhaling and exhaling is _____.
2. _____ is killing an animal for food.
3. A regular pattern of movement is called _____.
4. The word *wed* is a synonym of _____.
5. The word *stoppages* is a synonym of _____.
6. The word *abnormal* is an antonym of _____.
7. The word *expands* is an antonym of _____.

FACT OR OPINION? Write **F** for *fact* or **O** for *opinion*.

1. _____ Holding your breath is the best-known cure for hiccups.
2. _____ One day a foolproof cure for hiccups will be discovered.
3. _____ Charles Osborne lived in the Midwest.
4. _____ Constant hiccups could make it difficult to eat.

NOTING DETAILS

1. What details in the article support the author's statement that Charles Osborne led a normal life?

2. What detail in the article suggests what Mr. Osborne did for a living?

WORD ANALYSIS

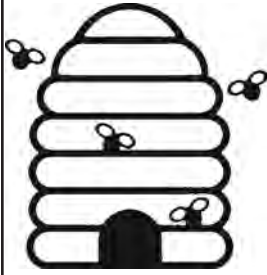
Think about the word *spoonful*. When added to the end of a word, the suffix *-ful* means _____.

Write three more words that end in *-ful*.

PICK A PROJECT: Work on the back of this sheet.

- Tell about a time you had hiccups. Explain how long the attack lasted, and what you did to stop it.
- Describe a "hiccup cure" that is *not* mentioned in the article.
- Look up the word *diaphragm* in the dictionary, and write the complete definition.

Warrior Bees



Bees are amazing. Perhaps you already know that honeybees pollinate more than 30 percent of all fruits and vegetables. But did you also know that armies in all ages have used bees in warfare?

In the first century B.C., the mighty army of Pompey the Great was advancing on Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). The people who lived there, called the Heptakometes, had to think fast. Somehow they had to outwit the Roman invaders. The plan they devised was based on two facts. They knew their bees were currently gathering pollen from rhododendron and azalea plants. That meant that the honey crop would be loaded with *alkaloids*—which are harmless to bees but toxic to humans. What did they do? They left a large

supply of poisoned honey in the path of 1,000 Roman soldiers! Naturally, the Roman soldiers seized and consumed the honey. Soon, they became deathly ill. So Pompey's mighty army was in no shape to defend itself against the clever Heptakometes!

Bees went to war in medieval times as well. At that time, ambitious invaders set out to conquer any city or castle they wanted. So builders came up with many imaginative defensive features. Often, they incorporated beehives within a castle's walls. Straw hives were also kept on the tops of high city walls—an unwelcome surprise for any wall-climber! Just before a siege, Roman legions often catapulted portable beehives at enemy positions. When the hives smashed explosively, a sudden assault of angry bees distracted the enemy. Before they knew it, the Romans were on top of them.

COMPREHENSION: Number the events to show the order in which they happened.

- _____ Heptakometes obtain honey from beehives.
- _____ Roman soldiers become sick.
- _____ Heptakometes defeat the Roman soldiers.
- _____ Bees gather pollen.
- _____ Roman soldiers eat the honey.

RECALLING DETAILS:

1. By what name is Asia Minor known today? _____
2. The pollen of what blooming plants contain *alkaloids*? _____
3. What leader led the attack on the Heptakometes? _____

Warrior Bees**(page 2)**

LOOK IT UP! Check a dictionary or encyclopedia for information.

1. The Roman Empire existed from

- a. 27 B.C. to A.D. 395.
- b. 200 B.C. to 300 B.C.
- c. A.D. 100 to A.D. 200.

2. Medieval times, also called the *Middle Ages*, lasted from about

- a. 500 B.C. to 1450 B.C.
- b. A.D. 1007 to A.D. 1500.
- c. A.D. 500 to A.D. 1450.

3. All bees are

- a. hairy insects with four wings.
- b. located in only certain parts of the world.
- c. covered with yellow and black stripes.

VOCABULARY: Complete the sentences with words from the article.

1. _____ is the yellow powder found in flowers.

2. A device called a _____ works like a slingshot.

3. Something _____ has been built in.

4. A building's _____ features protect the people inside.

5. To _____ something is to grab it or take it by force.

6. A toxic substance is _____.

7. You are _____ when your attention has been drawn away from your main task.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS: Circle a letter.

1. Using bees in warfare is an example of

- a. high technology.
- b. primitive technology.
- c. nuclear armament.

2. The soldiers in Pompey's army probably

- a. feared the Heptakometes.
- b. hadn't eaten for days.
- c. outnumbered the Heptakometes.

PICK A PROJECT: Work on the back of this sheet.

- Think of another way bees could be used in warfare. Explain your idea.
- Draw a picture to illustrate an event described in the article.

The English Language: Facts and Figures

Following are some interesting statistics (information in the form of numbers) about the English language in the world today.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are approximately 3,000 languages spoken in the world today. English is the official language in 87 countries or territories. ● There are 616,500 words listed in the Oxford English Dictionary. ● The average English-speaking person actually recognizes about 10,000 to 20,000 words. ● Every year, approximately 5,000 new words are added to the English language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● international telephone calls are made in English? 52% ● radio programs are broadcast worldwide in English? 60% ● global e-mail is exchanged in English? 68% ● global computer text is stored in English? 70% ● international organizations use English exclusively? 33% ● English words are borrowed from languages other than the original Anglo-Saxon? 75% ● English words are made from Latin word parts? 50% ● all English words used throughout history no longer exist? 85% ● the average English-speaker's conversation is made up of the 737 most frequently used words? 96% |
|--|---|
- What percentage of . . .**
- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the world's population now speaks English? 20% ● people in the European Union are fluent English-speakers? 75% ● non-native persons around the world are fluent English-speakers? 25% ● all the books in the world are printed in English? 50% | |
|---|--|

COMPREHENSION: Write T for *true* or F for *false*.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. _____ Two of every 10 people in the world today speak English.</p> <p>2. _____ New words are seldom added to the English language.</p> | <p>3. _____ There are more than one million words listed in the Oxford English Dictionary.</p> <p>4. _____ Fewer than 1,000 words are used again and again in most English-speakers' conversations.</p> |
|--|---|

The English Language: Facts and Figures (page 2)

5. _____ About three-fourths of English words come from Latin.

VOCABULARY: Write an *antonym* from the article for each word below.

6. _____ More than half of all radio programs are broadcast in English.

1. *exceptional* / _____

2. *worldwide* / _____

7. _____ Much of the vocabulary in Shakespeare's time is probably not used today.

3. *native* / _____

4. *exact* / _____

8. _____ Most English-speakers use only about one-thirtieth of all English words.

5. *boring* / _____

6. *reproduction* / _____

WORDS IN CONTEXT: Complete the sentences with words from the article.

1. The United Nations and the Red Cross are examples of _____ organizations.

2. Spanish and French are among the 3,000 _____ spoken today.

3. Two ancient languages that are *not* spoken in the world today are _____ and _____.

LOOK IT UP! Write the dictionary definitions.

fluent: _____

exclusive: _____

PICK A PROJECT: Work on the back of this sheet.

- Write three English words that include **each** of these Latin roots: *corp*, *dict*, *aud*, and *volv* (12 words in all).

- Do you think the worldwide use of English is increasing or decreasing? Explain your answer.