

CISD Grade 6 ELAR Unit 5A

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Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: A Letter from the Dust Bowl

1) *In the 1930s the Southern and Central Great Plains, plagued by many years of drought, became known as the Dust Bowl. The succession of storms traveled hundreds of miles, ruining homes, crops, the water supply, and many lives. The letter below was sent to Mrs. Roosevelt (First Lady from 1933-1945) by a child living in the Dust Bowl. It was found in her home, among her papers, in what is now the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, New York.*

July 27, 1935

2) Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I am fourteen years old. I live in Ogallala, Nebraska, or what is known these days as the Dust Bowl. I know you would never want to come here because you have probably heard stories of what it is like to live here. When the dust storms come, our normal zephyr changes into howling gales. Winds blow so hard, our house shakes as if it might collapse! The house is so filled up with dust that we can hardly breathe. With all of this destruction, we're lucky to have shelter. One time I was out planting when a storm hit. The wind and the gravel hit me so hard it felt like my body was on fire. Luckily my Pa came running out with a kerosene lamp. I couldn't see him, but I was able to follow the light into the house. You see, when the storms come, it gets blacker than night. You can't even see your hand in front of your face.

3) A lot of our neighbors and friends have left for California because life here is such a struggle. They are hoping to find a new life with a means of making money there. Sadly, we can't go. We have no car or any means of travel. Even if we did, we would not survive on the road for lack of food. We have to live off the commodities your husband sends every few weeks. My Pa is very hopeful, though. He thinks Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal plan will help the farmers get back on their feet. He's sure things will get better for us next year.

4) Well, I know you're very busy there in Washington, so I will just get right to the point. I am very sick with what they call the lung pneumonia. I've been breathing in too much of the dust here. Because my parents have no money, or even anything to trade, they can't call the doctor to tend to me. We couldn't raise any crops this year because our seeds just blew away during the storms. Any one of our friends or relatives who might have helped us has gone. My mom is very sad because my baby sister died a few weeks back. Even though we covered her baby bed in wet sheets to filter the dust out, her lungs were filled with the dirt. If I don't get any better, my mom's heart will break.

5) Mr. Roosevelt seems like a nice man who cares about people. We sure are thankful for his help. I don't want to seem ungrateful by asking for one more thing. Could you ask him to send a doctor or some medicine to help me get better? I am much obliged to you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

Sincerely,

Trudy Evans

- 1 Which of the following sentences BEST states the main idea of "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: A Letter from the Dust Bowl"?
- A The letter describes the jobs on a farm during the Dust Bowl.
 - B The letter explains how families worked together during hard times.
 - C The letter pleads for medical supplies.
 - D The letter explains how one family struggled during the Dust Bowl.
- 2 What is the author's purpose in writing the selection "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: A Letter from the Dust Bowl"?
- F to describe the conditions during dust storms
 - G to persuade Mrs. Roosevelt to send help to her in the Great Plains
 - H to entertain the reader with stories about the Dust Bowl
 - J to explain how the Dust Bowl was caused by drought

- 3 Complete the following analogy with the correct word:

_____ : dust :: cloth : shirt

- A earth
 - B crops
 - C wind
 - D storms
- 4 In Paragraph 3, what words help the reader understand the meaning of the word **commodities**?
- F *making money*
 - G *lack of food*
 - H *every few weeks*
 - J *New Deal*
- 5 In the dictionary entry below, which definition best defines the Greek word **zephyr** as it is used in Paragraph 2 of this passage?
- zeph-yr** *n.* 1. mild, gentle breeze; 2. West Wind; 3. light fabric; 4. lightweight yarn
- A Definition 1
 - B Definition 2
 - C Definition 3
 - D Definition 4

- 6 Which of the following is a generalization supported by the passage?
- F President Roosevelt knew nothing about the people affected by the Dust Bowl.
 - G The economies of many states were affected by the Dust Bowl.
 - H Neighbors and friends helped each other during the Dust Bowl.
 - J While the time was difficult, no one suffered permanent harm from the Dust Bowl.

- 7 The passage "*Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: A Letter from the Dust Bowl*" is easy to follow because it has a _____ text structure that helps you _____ what will come next.

Which words complete the sentence above?

- A chronological...support
- B cause/effect...predict
- C compare/contrast...guess
- D order of importance...solve

- 8 A newspaper wants to print Trudy's letter to Mrs. Roosevelt, but the letter is too long for the space they have. They plan to leave out some parts of the letter. Which punctuation mark should be used to indicate omitted sentences in the letter when it is printed?

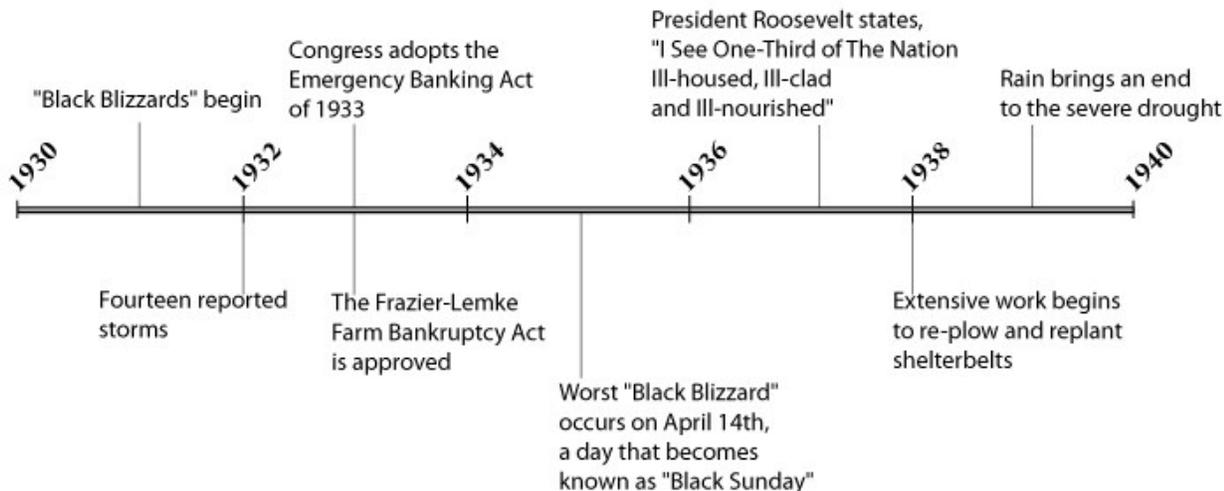
- F ellipses . . .
- G brackets []
- H parentheses ()
- J dashes -----

- 9** Who: 14-year-old and her family
What: Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt asking for medicine and help for the girl's family
Where: In Nebraska, site of the Dust Bowl
When: During the 1930s
? : ???
How: The storms have killed the crops and filled people's lungs with dust

Which of the following is needed to complete the prewriting for a summary about this article?

- A** Why: Dust storms left people without means to provide for themselves.
- B** Why: Mr. Roosevelt seems like a nice man who cares about people.
- C** What if: The storms hadn't hit in the Dust Bowl area.
- D** Which: California

Dust Bowl



10 Based on information provided on the timeline, at what point did Trudy write her letter to Mrs. Roosevelt?

- F** after rain brings an end to the severe drought
- G** when extensive work begins to re-plow and replant shelterbelts
- H** during the same year as the worst "Black Blizzard" that occurs on April 14th, a day that becomes known as "Black Sunday"
- J** before the "Black Blizzards" begin

11 Which of the following statements is TRUE based on the timeline?

- A** Virtually all of the nation was struck by the drought conditions.
- B** The worst of the Black Blizzards occurred early during the Dust Bowl.
- C** The government was able to pass legislation that ended the drought.
- D** The overall drought lasted approximately eight years.

The following is a journal entry made by Trudy Evans during the month of July, 1935. Assume you are helping Trudy to edit her entry so that it could be published. Find the errors and answer the questions that follow to help correct them.

(1) I live in West Texas between Midland and Odessa. (2) We certainly have had our share of dust storms. (3) When the dust storms come, the winds blow so hard, our house shakes as if it might collapse! (4) The house is so filled up with dust that we can hardly breathe. (5) One time I was out planting when a storm hit. (6) I was hit so hard by the wind and gravel that my body felt on fire. (7) The dust also gets inside your house and your clothing no matter what you do. (8) It's not my favorite time of the year.

- 12** Which of the following is a way to rewrite Sentence 3 correctly?
- F** When the dust storms come, the winds blow so hard. Consequently, our house shakes as if it might collapse.
- G** When the dust storms indeed come, the winds blow so hard our house shakes as if it might indeed collapse.
- H** Therefore, when the dust storms come the winds blow so hard. Our house shakes as if it might collapse.
- J** Our house shakes as if it might collapse. Therefore, the dust storms come and the winds blow so hard.

- 13** Which of the following is the BEST way to rewrite Sentence 6 so that it is written in the active voice like the other sentences in the journal entry?
- A** I was hit by the wind and gravel hard so that my body felt on fire.
- B** The wind and gravel hit me so hard that my body felt on fire.
- C** I was hit by the wind and gravel. I was hit so hard that my body felt on fire.
- D** The wind and gravel hit. It hit me so hard that my body felt on fire.

- 14** You think that Sentence 6 needs some kind of transition at the beginning so that the paragraph does not sound so choppy. Which of the revisions below is the BEST way to achieve this while maintaining meaning?
- F** As a result, I was hit so hard by the wind and gravel that my body felt on fire.
- G** On the contrary, I was hit so hard by the wind and gravel that my body felt on fire.
- H** In addition to, I was hit so hard by the wind and gravel that my body felt on fire.
- J** On the other hand, I was hit so hard by the wind and gravel that my body felt on fire.

- 15** What type of error has been made in Sentence 7?
- A** plural spelling error
- B** comma punctuation error
- C** subject verb agreement
- D** no error has been made