

**READ THE PASSAGE** Think about the main idea of each paragraph.

### Deadly in the Water

Jellyfish can be beautiful to look at as they float gracefully in the sea. But most jellyfish have a painful sting, and one variety of jellyfish is considered the most dangerous living creature in the world. This creature, the sea wasp of Australia, can kill a large fish or even a human in minutes.

Sea wasps aren't the biggest jellyfish, but they can grow as large as a basketball. They have up to 60 long tentacles. The tentacles can dangle 15 feet down into the water and are loaded with thousands of stinging cells. When the sea wasp's tentacles brush up against an animal, chemicals on the animal's skin trigger the release of the sea wasp's venom. The venom affects the nerves and heart of the prey. Usually the sea wasp uses its venom on fish, which it then eats. But sometimes humans are unlucky enough to come into contact with a sea wasp's tentacles. These victims can suffer excruciating pain, nausea, breathing problems, and occasionally even death.

Australians have developed an antivenom to treat the sea wasp's stings. Like the antivenom used for poisonous snake bites, it counteracts the poison from the sting. But there is an easier, although very unusual way to avoid stings in the first place. Australian lifeguards and surfers often wear women's pantyhose on their arms and legs! This thin layer of nylon prevents sea wasps from touching people's skin, which keeps the tentacles from releasing their venom.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- What is the passage mostly about?
  - what jellyfish are like
  - a kind of jellyfish called the sea wasp
  - how to avoid jellyfish stings
  - ways jellyfish hunt their prey
- Which of these details would be best to add to paragraph 2?
  - The sea wasp is one of several kinds of box jellyfish.
  - When swimming in Australia, watch out for tentacles!
  - You can use vinegar to make a sea wasp release its tentacles from your skin.
  - The tentacles of a sea wasp can contain up to 5,000 stinging cells.
- According to the passage, Australian lifeguards deal with the problem of sea wasps by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - wearing pantyhose to prevent stings
  - putting antivenom on their skin
  - swimming when sea wasps are less active
  - staying out of the water
- According to information in the passage, how do sea wasps attack their prey?
  - They brush up against it.
  - They chase it down.
  - They crush it with their tentacles.
  - They shoot venom at it.

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** In your own words, write a sentence for each paragraph that tells the main idea.

---



---



---

**READ THE PASSAGE** Look for good details that help you picture events from the passage.

### Rain in Space?

One of the most thrilling and dangerous jobs of an astronaut is the spacewalk—leaving a spacecraft and floating in space while connected to the craft by a tether. One astronaut, Alexander Kaleri, took a spacewalk that was even more exciting and perilous than he had planned. On February 26, 2004, Kaleri and Commander Mike Foale were at the International Space Station in orbit around Earth. They planned to leave the space station to perform a list of repairs and experiments. It was the 52nd spacewalk at the space station.

At 4:17 PM, the hatch of the docking module opened, and the men began their spacewalk. The astronauts had five hours to complete their work.

Everything proceeded normally until 7:23 PM. At that time, Kaleri reported to Mission Control that there was water inside his spacesuit, saying, “I have rain inside the helmet. I have water inside the visor.” He also reported that the water was “quite some amount, a significant amount. It felt like rain.”

Immediately, officials on the ground grew worried. They found that a cooling device in the suit was not working correctly. They ordered the astronauts to return quickly to the space station, and by 8:12, the two men were back inside. It was the first spacesuit malfunction on a spacewalk—but it ended happily, with both astronauts safe and unharmed.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- What is paragraph 3 mostly about?
  - the dangers of spacewalks
  - astronaut Alexander Kaleri
  - events during the 52nd spacewalk
  - a visit to the International Space Station
- How long did the spacewalk last?
  - about 2 hours
  - about 4 hours
  - about 5 hours
  - about 52 hours
- What happened to Kaleri’s spacesuit?
  - The cooling system malfunctioned.
  - There was a hole in the sleeve.
  - It did not fit him correctly.
  - It leaked during a storm in space.
- What would be another good title for the passage?
  - “The International Space Station”
  - “The Many Dangers of Space”
  - “Why Spacewalks Fail”
  - “A Memorable Spacewalk”

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Write details from the passage that were easy to visualize.

---



---



---

**READ THE PASSAGE** Pay attention to dates and important events described in the passage.

### Skeleton on the Ice

Zooming downhill on a sled can be incredibly thrilling. But what if you were going eighty miles an hour? That's how fast the world's best competitors go in the sport of skeleton.

Skeleton competitors wear tight, stretchy uniforms that help lower wind resistance. They also wear helmets and goggles for protection. They need this special equipment for speed and safety while zipping down an icy track with hairpin turns.

Each skeleton sled holds one person. To take off, the athlete sprints as fast as possible, pushing the sled. Then the slider dives headfirst onto the sled, lying on his or her stomach. There is no steering or brakes on a skeleton. The slider steers the skeleton by shifting his or her body weight.

Skeleton began in 1892 in St. Moritz, Switzerland. Toboggans, which are long wooden sleds, were already popular, but the early skeleton sled was made mostly of metal. It looked like a skeleton, which may be how the sport got its name. The first skeleton race occurred in 1905. In 1928, when the Olympics were held in St. Moritz, skeleton became an Olympic sport. An American, Jennison Heaton, won the gold medal. The Olympics included skeleton again in 1948.

In 2000, the sport underwent another change when women began competing at the World Championships. The sport was part of the Olympics once again at the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City, Utah, when it became a permanent part of the winter Olympics. This dangerous sport with the spooky name is now practiced on a competitive level by men and women in 30 countries.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. The first thing an athlete does to get the skeleton sled started on a run is _____.</p> <p>(A) extend his or her head and feet off the sled</p> <p>(B) dive onto the sled</p> <p>(C) sprint while pushing the sled</p> <p>(D) shift his or her body weight</p> | <p>3. When did skeleton first appear in the Olympics, and when did it reappear?</p> <p>(A) 1892, 1905</p> <p>(B) 1928, 1948</p> <p>(C) 1905, 1928</p> <p>(D) 1948, 2000</p>   |
| <p>2. Toboggans were invented _____.</p> <p>(A) before 1892</p> <p>(B) in 1905</p> <p>(C) in 1928</p> <p>(D) after 1948</p>  | <p>4. Which event happened last in skeleton?</p> <p>(A) It became a permanent Olympic sport.</p> <p>(B) Women began competing.</p> <p>(C) It made its second Olympic appearance.</p> <p>(D) Jennison Heaton won a gold medal.</p> |

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** As you read, write down notes that tell you about the history of the sport of skeleton.

---



---

**READ THE PASSAGE** Pay attention to what happens in the passage and when it happens.

### The Greedy Tiger and the Big Wind

Long ago, the rains did not fall, and there was a terrible drought. It was hard to find food, and the animals became hungry and thirsty. Only one tree had fruit. It was a big, beautiful pear tree that grew in the middle of a field. Its roots reached deep into the earth, where they drank from an underground spring. Its pears were plump and juicy. The tree, however, was guarded by a cruel and greedy tiger. Although he couldn't possibly eat all the fruit that the tree provided, Tiger wouldn't let any of the other animals touch the pears.

The desperate animals went to Rabbit and asked for help. Rabbit helped them form a plan. Then he went to Tiger and said, "Tiger, a great wind is coming. It will be so strong that it will blow everyone off the earth!" While Rabbit talked to Tiger, the birds, which were hidden in the forest, began to flap their wings wildly, creating a strong breeze. Next, other animals beat on the ground and swung through the trees, causing the trees to sway and shake. Tiger believed that the great wind had come, and he was terrified.

"I will tie you down with rope so the wind cannot blow you away," Rabbit offered. Tiger agreed, and Rabbit tied him tightly to a tree. Finally, Rabbit called the other animals, who came out of the forest and ate every delicious pear on the tree, laughing at the selfish tiger who watched helplessly.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- The animals of the forest grew very hungry after \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Tiger ate all the juicy pears
  - a drought came to the land
  - the rains came to the land
  - a great wind began to blow
- Before Rabbit tied up Tiger, the animals \_\_\_\_\_.
  - were afraid to eat the pears
  - ate all the pears
  - laughed at Tiger
  - came out of the forest
- What did Rabbit have to do before the animals could eat?
  - create a big wind
  - make Tiger angry
  - wait for the pears to ripen
  - tie Tiger to a tree
- What happened after the animals made noise in the forest?
  - Tiger ran away in fear of the wind.
  - Tiger allowed Rabbit to tie him up.
  - Rabbit formed a plan.
  - Rabbit warned Tiger about the wind.

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** List the words or phrases from the passage that helped you visualize the details.

---



---



---

**READ THE PASSAGE** Look for good details that support the main idea. Also, look at the order of important events mentioned in the passage.

### Dinosaur Buddies

Triceratops, the plant-eating dinosaur with three horns on its head, was long considered a solitary animal. Fossils for more than fifty adult triceratops have been found, and each triceratops was found with no other triceratops nearby.

Scientists revised their theory of the lone triceratops in 2005, though. In southeastern Montana, they discovered a site that contained triceratops fossils embedded in rocks that were 66 million years old. The person who found the site named it the Homer site, after Homer Simpson from the television show *The Simpsons* because the plodding dinosaurs reminded the scientist of the cartoon character.

At the Homer site, paleontologists, or scientists who study fossils, found a group of three young triceratops fossils. It was evident to the paleontologists that the fossils were not found together by chance. The scientists deduced that the bodies of the juvenile dinosaurs had been deposited by a flood and that they were part of a herd of young triceratops that lived together.

Paleontologists admit they don't know how much time the young triceratops spent together, or even why they were in a group. The scientists believe the animals might have banded together for protection. The young of other similar dinosaurs have been proven to have lived in herds. Based on this finding, the scientists concluded that young triceratops probably lived in herds as well. They expect to find still more fossils of young triceratops at the Homer site.

**SKILL PRACTICE** Read each question. Fill in the bubble next to the correct answer.

- Which detail suggests that young triceratops might have lived in herds?
  - Scientists proved that other kinds of dinosaurs lived in groups.
  - Three juvenile fossils were found together.
  - A flood deposited the fossils at the site.
  - Adult triceratops fossils were found with no other triceratops nearby.
- Before the discovery of the Homer site, paleontologists believed that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - all triceratops were solitary
  - adult triceratops lived in herds
  - juvenile triceratops lived in herds
  - all triceratops lived in groups
- The passage is mostly about \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a herd of triceratops
  - what paleontologists do
  - a new theory based on a fossil discovery
  - how triceratops protected themselves
- What do scientists think will happen next after the discovery at the Homer site?
  - They will prove juvenile triceratops were solitary.
  - They will find more juvenile triceratops fossils at the site.
  - They will prove that adult triceratops lived in herds.
  - They will discover previously unknown kinds of dinosaur fossils.

**STRATEGY PRACTICE** Write two details that support paleontologists' theory about young triceratops.

---

---