

Reading and Responding

Read the following story, and then answer the questions that follow.

The Run

by Erin Bregman

Marc had been dreaming about something, something he couldn't remember when he woke up. He looked out the window at the rising sun, and realized that the day had come. He knew that today he would see the mountain with three peaks. "It's today. Today, I run," he told himself in wonder. He didn't know how he knew.

He jumped out of bed and dressed in running clothes, grabbed a pair of socks and went into the living room where the shoes were kept. The running shoes had never been worn. His first day of high school, his dad had taken him to buy them for the Run. That was three years ago, but nobody ever knew when his Run would come. Marc's father thought it best to buy the shoes early. Everyone could tell at least one sad story, the story of a young person whose Run had come, but the person didn't have shoes or somehow wasn't ready or even was afraid to go on the Run and had stayed at home. These people were rarely seen because they didn't like to leave their homes. They might be sighted late at night, wandering the city, still in their childish clothes, still with a childlike, frightened look on their faces, a look of lost opportunity and missed chances.

The Run was more than an opportunity. The Run was the path from childhood to the mysterious realm of responsibility and power and knowledge.

Marc didn't know anyone who had missed the Run. From the time he was only a toddler and could barely walk, let alone run, he had pestered his parents: What was it like? How did you know? When? But all they ever said was, "Wait and see. You'll find your own way. Wait and see."

He opened the box, and took out the shoes, fresh with the scent of new leather, the white laces blindingly clean. Taking a deep breath, he slipped on the first shoe. He was glad his father had thought to buy the shoes with room to grow. Relieved that it still fit, he laced it tightly. As he was knotting the second set of laces, his mother appeared. She looked at the shoes and smiled. "Today?" she asked, even though she knew the answer.

"Yes." Marc was surprised by the way his voice quivered. He felt alert and more alive than ever, as if poised for something tremendous. He didn't know what was ahead, but he felt wound up like the toys he used to wind tightly before sending them spinning through the house. He was ready.

"Good luck." His mother kissed him on the cheek. "Don't worry about how long it takes. That's not what's important. Take your time. And remember, go your own way. Don't follow anyone. This is your own Run, no one else's."

Marc nodded.

"And send word when you get there," his mother said, almost as an afterthought.

Marc slipped out of the house and hit the street running.

As if propelled by an unseen force, he ran toward the park. He used to go there all the time, but he hadn't been there to play in years. As he jogged, he tried to recall his childhood memories. He remembered the immense swings on gargantuan chains that let him swing all the way to the sky, so high that he was scared to jump off in mid-flight. And the slides—gleaming aluminum metal strips that stretched all the way down what had seemed to be a mountainside. His mom would always bring waxed paper to sit on, and Marc would speed down that slide, flying, it felt, down the mountain at the speed of light.

When he arrived at the park, Marc was disappointed. The swings were not nearly as tall as he remembered. Thinking he'd swing on them anyway, he grabbed the chains. But a little boy shouted, "Stop! You can't sit there, you'll break it!"

Abashed, Marc went to the slides. Like the swings, the slides had changed. They were much shorter. What had seemed like a mountainside was not steep at all. He wanted to slide down anyway, but a little girl barred his way.

"You can't slide here," she told him. "You haven't got any waxed paper."

"Can't I just--"

"No!" She was serious.

He was no longer welcome at the park. Marc didn't know that this, too, was part of the experience of the Run. He was leaving behind his childhood. He was leaving behind the park, the swings, and the slide. He was going on.

He turned from them and ran, feeling as if he were flying. Faster and faster he ran, turning left, right, then left again. He slowed down and looked at where he was, not recognizing anything. "I'm lost," he told himself.

"Hey." Someone was behind him. Turning around he saw a boy who seemed a little older than he. "This way," the boy said, and started running. Marc figured the boy must know where he was going, and followed. After all, he was older. Their run was entirely downhill, which made it effortless. Maybe too effortless. Marc started to feel uneasy. They reached the ocean, and the boy pointed. "There." Crowds of people their age were jumping and swimming in the waves.

"Come on," the boy said, leading the way to the beach. The boy removed his shoes and dove into the water.

Marc wondered if it were possible that his Run was so short. And where were the mountains? The boy kept motioning, so Marc followed him into the crowds and the waves, but kept his shoes on.

The waves slapped happily against the shore. Marc didn't mind the cold water or his wet shoes. He had a nagging feeling that this wasn't the right way, but he was having too much fun to leave. The waves became bigger, and the sound of the pounding surf became louder. Once playful, the waves loomed dangerously. "Do you think we should get out?" he yelled to the others nearby, but they didn't respond. They were staring at something behind him. Turning, he saw what they did; an enormous wave was bearing down upon them. If they stayed where they were, it would crush them. There wasn't enough time to get back to shore, so they struggled through the water toward the wave, hoping to dive through it to safety.

Marc dove just as the wave broke and was thrown down to the sandy floor. Holding his breath, he struggled toward the surface, only to hit the ocean floor once more. He swam as hard as he could, lungs bursting. Finally, he reached the surface, gasping. He was far away from the others. Lifeguards swarmed into the tide, helping the others to shore. Marc clambered onto a dune, relieved that his shoes had stayed on, despite the force of the wave. What would he have done if he had lost one? He pictured himself back at the park, not having run, trying to swing and getting pushed away by the children.

When he stood, he remembered the mountain.

The sun rose higher. Marc had wasted time by diverging from his Run. He tried to make up time, but was soon tired. Walking into a town he didn't recognize, he saw five men, dressed in business suits, on the steps of an office building. Marc approached them.

"Excuse me," he said, "Do you know how I might get to a mountain with three peaks, and yellow trees lining its base?"

"I don't know," one of them replied. "When I was in your shoes, I wasn't looking for a mountain. Even if I could help, it's not my place." The others nodded. "We can't help you," volunteered one man. "You're on your own Run," said another. "Don't worry," the first man said reassuringly. "You'll do fine." They went on their way, and Marc was alone.

Marc sank to the curb. He knew his destination. He knew it as surely as he had awakened with the knowledge that today was his Run. But now—how to get there? Which direction did he take? He looked at the intersection, bewildered. He could go in four different directions. Each would take him somewhere. But which would take him to the mountain?

The light at the intersection turned green. "Forward," thought Marc. He recalled his mother's advice. "My own way," he reminded himself. He went with the green light and followed the street out of town and down a dirt road that wound through the countryside. By nightfall he could feel his muscles trembling from exertion, but was spurred on by the sight of a mountain in the distance, with three peaks poking through the highest clouds. It was much farther away than he had imagined, but at least he knew the way.

Lesson 1

Reading and Responding: “The Run”

1. In paragraph 6, the phrase “He felt wound up like the toys” is an example of
 - A. personification.
 - B. metaphor.
 - C. allusion.
 - D. simile.

2. In the phrase in paragraph 11 “He remembered the immense swings on gargantuan chains,” the word gargantuan means
 - A. iron.
 - B. large.
 - C. shiny.
 - D. strong.

Lesson 2

Reading and Responding: “The Run”

1. Which statement is an opinion?
 - A. “His mom would always bring waxed paper to sit on.”
 - B. “The boy removed his shoes and dove into the water.”
 - C. “When he stood, he remembered the mountain.”
 - D. “Even if I could help, it’s not my place.”

2. Excuse me,” he said, “Do you know how I might get to a mountain with three peaks?”
“I don’t know,” one of them replied.

This is an example of

- A. dialogue.
- B. foreshadowing.
- C. irony.
- D. flashback.

Reading and Responding

Read the following essay, and then answer the questions that follow.

The View from the Top

The view from the top of Antarctica is ice—miles and miles of ice. Only 800 miles from the South Pole, Mount Vinson (or Vinson Massif), is the tallest mountain on the continent of Antarctica. But to Joby Ogwyn, the view represented a remarkable achievement. Joby had never climbed in such cold weather, but he braved the cold of Antarctica for the grueling three-day climb. His efforts were rewarded: on December 9, 2000, Joby became the youngest mountaineer to have climbed all of the mountains that make up the Seven Summits. He was only twenty-six years old.

Joby grew up in the low-elevation region of Shreveport. How did a Louisiana native, such as Joby, become interested in the Seven Summits, the grand challenge of mountaineering? After all, Louisiana has much to offer, but it's not famous for its mountain peaks.

Joby once said that he had always been known as someone who liked to go his own way. With little experience as a mountaineer, Joby decided to tackle Mount Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain peak in Africa, when he was only eighteen years old. This first climb fueled Joby's imagination. He took a trip to Bolivia to learn more about the sport of mountain climbing. There he met up with other, more experienced climbers. The more he learned, the more he liked about mountain climbing, and his dream of climbing the tallest peak on each continent was born. Joby has said that he was inspired by the fact that so few people—fewer than 100—had climbed the Seven Summits.

The pinnacle of achievement and the stuff of legends to mountain climbers, the Seven Summits are a climbing circuit that include the tallest mountains on each continent in the world: Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Denali (or Mount McKinley) in Alaska, Mount Vinson in Antarctica, Elbrus in Russia, Aconcagua in Argentina, Carstensz Pyramid in Oceania, and Mount Everest in Nepal.

In 1999, at the age of twenty-four, Joby became the youngest American climber to scale the summit of Mount Everest. At its peak of more than 29,000 feet, Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world. Joby was the only climber in his expedition to reach the summit during that climb.

Climbing rocky, snowy mountains in bitter cold is not an undertaking for the faint of heart. In this dangerous sport, the consequences of a misstep could be disastrous. It's no wonder climbers take a serious and determined approach to training. Mountain climbers embark on rigorous training programs in order to build the stamina, lung capacity, and muscle strength necessary for climbs of 15,000 feet and more. Climbers need upper body strength as well as strength in their legs, because they sometimes carry packs that equal or even exceed their own body weight. A strong lung capacity is crucial in order to withstand the demands of the high altitudes endured on a climb. And a mountain climber needs a strong heart—literally and figuratively.

When training to scale the Seven Summits, Joby's regimen included daily weightlifting, running more than five miles a day, and stair climbing. In 2000, as Joby surveyed the icy vista from Vinson Massif, he felt the excitement of knowing that he had accomplished his goal. The years of intensive training and hard work had paid off.

But records are made to be broken, and Joby's record is now being challenged by Jeff Mathy, who, at twenty-three, makes it clear that his goal is to be the youngest climber to reach the peaks of the Seven Summits. Jeff is well on his way, having climbed every peak but Mount Elbrus as of the summer of 2002.

Lesson 4

Reading and Responding: “The View from the Top”

1. Joby’s quest to climb the tallest mountain on each continent began when he
 - A. climbed his first mountain at age eighteen.
 - B. recognized that he was a free-spirited person.
 - C. climbed Mt. Everest at the age of twenty-four.
 - D. traveled to Bolivia to learn about mountaineering.

2. Which statement **best** reflects the author’s overall tone in this selection?
 - A. Joby’s accomplishment is notable considering his young age.
 - B. Other climbers are likely to surpass Joby’s climbing record.
 - C. It is unusual for a Louisiana native to be interested in climbing.
 - D. Dedicated mountain climbers routinely climb the highest peaks.

Lesson 5

Reading and Responding: “The View from the Top”

1. The selection says that climbing rocky, snowy mountains is not for the faint of heart. This means that a successful climber needs to have
 - A. ability to train in cold temperatures.
 - B. courage to withstand dangerous terrain.
 - C. ability to avoid fainting.
 - D. strength to overcome any fear of heights.

2. This selection **best** reflects which common theme of contemporary American society?
 - A. Staying committed to a goal is likely to lead to success.
 - B. Youth and enthusiasm are more valued than age and experience.
 - C. Excessive strength is necessary to complete any worthwhile task.
 - D. Determination is a trait often found among young people.

Lesson 6

Reading and Responding: “The View from the Top”

1. The **main** purpose of this selection is to
 - A. motivate readers to climb mountains.
 - B. document world-record holders.
 - C. encourage readers to set high goals.
 - D. record the life experience of one person.

2. Give **two** reasons why the Seven Summits are referred to as “the pinnacle of achievement and the stuff of legends for mountain climbers.”

Reading and Responding

Read the following essay, and then answer the questions that follow.

Wish and Believe

Alexandra Kostenyuk is 18, likes poetry, and she loves sports. To keep in shape, she runs and swims, and says that she can swim 100 meters in one minute and thirty seconds. She even has her own Web site, where you can find all this information and more. So far, Alexandra sounds like a typical teen-ager. What makes Alexandra Kostenyuk really stand out from the crowd? She's the second-best female chess player in the world, or the Women's Vice World Champion, and she's written a book about it: *How I Became Grandmaster at Age 14*.

Known as the Russian Chess Queen, Alexandra is becoming famous, not only for her poise and playing skills, but for bringing a new glamour to her favorite sport. She has even done some modeling, although Alexandra dismisses the idea that she would pursue modeling as a career, saying that she sees modeling as a hobby.

Is her chess playing a gift, simply a natural talent with which she was blessed at birth? Or is playing chess a learned skill that she has to work hard to perfect? Who knows? Alexandra cannot even quite remember the first time she started playing chess, sometime around the age of 5 years old. By the time she was 14, she had become—and hence the title of her book—a grandmaster, the highest rank in the world of chess. According to Alexandra, she was trained by one of the best chess trainers in the world: her father. Alexandra was born and raised in Russia. Throughout her childhood, she played chess for several hours each day. Even now, after having achieved an impressive standing in the world of chess, Alexandra spends most of her weekends playing chess at a Moscow chess club.

In spite of her achievements in international tournaments, Alexandra notes that she needs improvement. She welcomes challenging games against stronger players, even if they are not easy to find. "It's more interesting," she says. Poised for even greater success as a chess player, Alexandra tells a journalist from a Russian magazine, "I can achieve anything if I want to."

She explains that she is highly competitive, and cannot understand why people sometimes fail to do their best. In the same interview, Alexandra tells a story about a relay race. She was in kindergarten, competing with a team of tiny students. One boy didn't try very hard, and Alexandra's team lost. She couldn't comprehend the boy's failure to step up to the plate. When her team lost, Alexandra wept.

According to Alexandra, the most important thing you need in order to win is the belief that you *can* win. What is Alexandra's advice to others who want to achieve a lofty goal? "Wish and believe."

Lesson 8

Reading and Responding: “Wish and Believe”

1. Alexandra is the Women’s Vice World Champion. In this context, the word *vice* means
 - A. grandmaster.
 - B. second-best.
 - C. female.
 - D. chess player.

2. Alexandra welcomes games against stronger players because
 - A. they are easy to find.
 - B. it will help her improve.
 - C. it is a champion’s obligation.
 - D. she can win against anyone.

Lesson 9

Reading and Responding: “Wish and Believe”

1. How does this passage differ from an autobiography?
 - A. Alexandra did not write it.
 - B. It is about Alexandra’s life.
 - C. The story is unbelievable.
 - D. It develops many characters.

2. According to this article, Alexandra can **best** be described as
 - A. poised and glamorous.
 - B. sensitive and athletic.
 - C. humble and gracious.
 - D. confident and ambitious.

Lesson 10

Reading and Responding: “Wish and Believe”

1. In paragraph 4, the phrase “step up to the plate” is an example of
 - A. exaggeration.
 - B. direct quotation.
 - C. figurative language.
 - D. sarcasm.

2. Explain why the writer mentions many of Alexandra’s other activities before her interest in chess in the first paragraph.

Reading and Responding

Read the following story, and then answer the questions that follow.

Beyond

Gold rays were just starting to slide over the water. The sky was slowly shedding the dawn. The sand looked new and clean, as if the world were newly born. Cesar sat on the beach, surveying the waves, marking spots in the map of his mind for future dives. He was waiting for his group to put on their diving gear. They wore black, shiny wetsuits, face masks, and fins—unnecessary, Cesar thought, in the warm, transparent water of the bay. When they were fully outfitted, they had the appearance of slow-moving, long-legged arachnids against the light-colored sand.

To Cesar and the people who lived on the island, the strangers who came to dive and fish were incomprehensible, and not just because they wore superfluous gear in the extravagance that comes from having the money to spend. Couldn't they fish at home? But they came from all over the world, Cesar knew: mostly from the United States, but also from other countries—from France, from Japan. They flew onto the tiny landing strip on small planes with buzzing engines that made Cesar think of the planes as swarms of flies darting into the island as if into full plates of food.

The vacationers spent vast sums of money, showering the island with American dollars. Some came every year. Some of the vacationers would fall in love with the island, with its slow daily rhythms, rhythms that followed the tides. Time passed differently on the island. Cesar would always try to explain to impatient vacationers who had hired a boat and had to wait at the dock. "I'll be there in an hour" might mean one hour or it might mean three. The fishing might have been good that day; a friend might have stopped by. There was a local expression that roughly translated to "I'll see you when I see you," and Cesar had tried to explain this expression, thinking that it would help the vacationers understand.

Some vacationers even tried to live on the island. They would buy or build a house. Some tried to start their own businesses, which were usually boat charters (unnecessary, because so many of the islanders owned boats and were happy to be hired to take sport divers and fishers out to sea), or some kind of restaurant. These businesses usually failed immediately following the advent of the rainy season, when all of the vacationers had gone home. At first, these new residents, these vacationers who wanted to be islanders, would have many guests. But time would wear on, and the guests would fade away like the evening light at the end of the day, and the transplanted vacationer would begin to get lonely. He would sit in his empty, desolate restaurant, or he would sail alone for days, fishing in order to have something to do. Finally he would leave, returning to his home country. He might return for seasonal diving or fishing the following year.

Even though he didn't understand them, Cesar liked the foreign sport fishers and divers. From them he learned enough English to serve as a translator. No matter where they came from, the vacationers usually spoke enough English to make themselves understood. Cesar could always count on earning money himself by translating and getting money for his family by offering his father's services. Cesar's father was a fisher, with his own boat.

The sport divers always came looking for Cesar, who was notorious on the island for his instinct for knowing the best spots to dive and his uncanny ability to sense when the fish would be here or there. Cesar’s diving was legendary among the sport divers, who had seen him descend gracefully, effortlessly, to depths of hundreds of feet. To Cesar, the water was as natural as the air he breathed. From the time he was a baby, Cesar had been in the ocean. He was as much at home in salt water as he was on the beach. He had been swimming as long as he could remember, and often went along with his father to fish in the deep sea. Cesar had begun diving off the boat, first, to spear fish, and later, to amuse himself, to see how deep he could go. Cesar had a profound desire to submerge beyond, beyond the depth of yesterday, beyond what he knew he could do. To Cesar, “beyond” was that stretch past the next depth, always just out of reach.

The divers were ready. One of them signaled to Cesar, who jumped up and led them out into the water. He was going to show them a favorite diving spot of many vacationers, where there were always fish among the swaying seaweed and protruding coral reef. Cesar knew the way, leaping from rock to rock, waiting for his group to catch up. He jumped gracefully, easily avoiding jagged edges. From these rocks, the ocean floor dropped suddenly, like an underwater cliff. There the water was very deep, and the sights were beautiful and unworldly: the seaweed undulating in the currents, the schools of brightly colored fish, skittish and quick-moving, the majesty of the underwater landscape. Deeper, it became darker and darker, until you could no longer see the light from the surface.

Cesar indicated the site to the divers. They adjusted their masks and fins, and down they went. Cesar breathed a few times to prepare, and then followed them, diving as deep as the sport divers, pointing out unusual fish. As always, Cesar felt at home underwater. He could stay under for minutes, only to surface briefly and slip back into the water. When they surfaced and returned to shore, one of the divers took Cesar aside to ask how he could dive so deep. Cesar shrugged. He didn’t see his diving as anything out of the ordinary. But the man went on. He explained that Cesar dove well enough to dive competitively. The man would be willing to sponsor Cesar at a diving competition.

It seemed ridiculous to Cesar that he could get paid money for jumping into the ocean and diving; it was as ridiculous as paying a bird to fly. The man went on, trying to convince him, and as the man talked, Cesar started wondering. He could leave the island—not forever, because the island was his home, but for a time. He could travel. He could see other countries, see the places he had heard about from the sport divers. He could earn money to send home to his family.

Cesar had already started fishing with his father, and then earned money translating and acting as a diving guide when sport divers came. But he had wondered what he would do next. Would he try to save money for a boat of his own? He knew he couldn’t keep fishing with his father, who was always after him to quit fooling around underwater and help pull in the fish. When the sun was high and the crested waves called Cesar, his father was always after him to get out of the water, help mend the nets, sand the boat, get ready for the next day’s fishing.

The man’s words opened a window for Cesar, and through that window, Cesar caught a glimpse of the world beyond the island, beyond the waves that buffeted the island, beyond the grand, immense oceans, beyond what he had always imagined were the borders of his world, and he caught his breath, stunned by the pure wonder of it all.

Lesson 11

Reading and Responding: “Beyond”

1. Which **best** defines the local expression “I’ll see you when I see you”?
 - A. Islanders take each moment as it comes.
 - B. Islanders are usually on time.
 - C. Islanders are sometimes in a rush.
 - D. Islanders do not think of others’ feelings.

2. What are the divers doing while the narrator presents background information for the reader?
 - A. diving by the coral reef
 - B. walking on the beach
 - C. surveying the waves
 - D. putting on diving gear

Lesson 12

Reading and Responding: “Beyond”

1. In paragraph 7, Cesar took the vacationers to a place “where there were always fish among the swaying seaweed and protruding coral reef.” The word protruding means
 - A. protective.
 - B. jutting.
 - C. jagged.
 - D. submerged.

2. Which statement is an opinion?
 - A. Cesar dove well enough to dive competitively.
 - B. Cesar’s father was a fisher, with his own boat.
 - C. Cesar could stay underwater for minutes.
 - D. Cesar knew a favorite diving spot for vacationers.

Lesson 13

Reading and Responding: “Beyond”

1. Which **best** describes the writer’s view of the island on which Cesar lives?
 - A. It makes a better vacation spot than a home.
 - B. It needs more restaurants and other businesses.
 - C. It is a place that should preserve its way of life.
 - D. It a tranquil but oftentimes boring place to be.

2. What does the description at the end of paragraph 2 tell the reader about how Cesar views the vacationers and his home?

Reading and Responding

Read the following essay, and then answer the questions that follow.

The Job of Your (American) Dreams

Here's one job that sounds almost too good to be true: The salary is \$400,000 per year, plus a non-taxable expense allowance of \$100,000. The successful candidate will also be able to travel on a 747 jet that has a gym, a conference room, two kitchens, nineteen televisions, and eighty-five telephones. Free room and board comes with the job, and the gourmet meals are planned and prepared by a personal chef. Two homes are also provided, with all bills paid by the employers; there is a primary residence that is a 132-room mansion located in the heart of a major metropolitan city, and a mountain vacation retreat, with grounds that are complete with tennis courts, a swimming pool, a private movie theater, and a golf course.

The job requirements are simple: anyone may apply who is a citizen of the United States, who is at least 35 years old, and who has lived in the United States for 14 years. You don't even have to have a college degree, and one person who had this job never attended school of any kind.

Do you think you'll be ready to apply on your 35th birthday? If so, you might want to start preparing to face your selection committee, a group of more than 162 million people, many of whom will probably have some doubts about your background and qualifications. You should also start a savings account, because you and all of your friends, relatives, and other supporters might have to spend over \$40 million in order for you to get this job, a job that you would only be able to hold for eight years—if you're lucky. Most are forced to leave after only four years on the job, although twelve stuck with it for eight years, and one person managed to keep the job for a record sixteen years.¹

By now, you've probably guessed that the job in question is that of the president of the United States, who, according to the United States Constitution, must take the following oath:

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Do you think you have what it takes to raise your right hand and swear in as the leader of the free world on Inauguration Day?

Americans love to say that anyone can be president, which is almost true. For one thing, it helps to be independently wealthy. Having political connections doesn't hurt, either. In addition, the few people who actually have had the good fortune to win the presidential election and serve as our national Commander in Chief have had some other traits in common, the most obvious being that all American presidents so far have been men of European descent.²

6 In today's media-conscious age, an attractive appearance and excellent health are important attributes. Political pundits say that President Nixon lost some of his popularity due to

¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt served four terms as president of the United States.

² Most presidents emerged from some combination of English, Irish, Welsh, German, and Dutch antecedents. Eight presidents were actually born British citizens.

his poor showing on television during the presidential debates.³ Presidential candidates have always worked to impress voters by presenting an image of youth, health, and vitality on the campaign trail.⁴ Some, like President Reagan, the oldest president at 69 years of age, may have had to work harder at this than others. President John F. Kennedy, the youngest president at 43, had the disadvantage of having been diagnosed with Addison's disease. Kennedy denied that he had the condition and won the election in spite of the reports about his poor health. Athleticism can play an important role in how the public perceives a candidate: President Eisenhower was a college football player; Ulysses S. Grant set a 25-year record for the high jump while a student at West Point; John Quincy Adams rose before dawn to swim in the Potomac at 5 a.m.; Washington took up the sport of spelunking⁵ when a teenager and was an avid fisherman; Abraham Lincoln liked wrestling; and President Reagan enjoyed horseback-riding at his ranch in California.

7 Whether muscular or not, the job of president of the United States of America takes a person who is larger than life—figuratively speaking, as in the case of James Madison who at the height of five feet, four inches weighed only one hundred pounds. Presidents who were literally men of impressive stature included President Taft, who weighed in at over three hundred pounds, requiring that a new bathtub be constructed in the presidential quarters, and Abraham Lincoln, who was the tallest president at six feet, four inches.

Although presidents have come from all walks of life and many different professions, twenty-six presidents had been lawyers, ten served as generals in the military, and twenty-five served a term in Congress. (Apparently, not all presidents were punctual in exercising their voting privileges; President Zachary Taylor cast his first vote at the age of 62.) Andrew Johnson is the only president to return to the senate after leaving the presidency. Johnson had served as a representative, governor, and senator from Tennessee before he became the 17th president of the United States. After his impeachment in 1869, Johnson went home to Tennessee, where he lost two senate races before he was elected in 1874.

The domestic lives of the president are remarkably similar. All presidents except Buchanan were married; all but six had children. Most presidents kept pets in the White House, although some pets were more exotic than others. Jefferson had two bear cubs that were gifts from the exploring team of Lewis and Clark. Buchanan had an elephant, John Quincy Adams had an alligator and Martin Van Buren had two tiger cubs. Theodore Roosevelt kept a menagerie⁶ that included a hyena, a zebra, and a lion; Coolidge was another zookeeper in the White House, with an antelope, raccoons, a bear, and a pygmy hippo roaming the grounds along with his more commonplace pets.

If you are still interested in the job and can't wait until your 35th birthday for the privilege of serving the American public in the political arena, you might consider a career in Congress. A representative only has to be twenty-five years old. The salary is still impressive at \$141,300 per year, and the job has many perks and side benefits—almost as many as those of the president.

³ Some say that Nixon's appearance on television suffered as a result of his refusal to wear the make-up commonly worn by television actors.

⁴ President Reagan had had a successful career as a Hollywood actor, and President Gerald Ford had once worked as a fashion model.

⁵ spelunking: exploring caves

⁶ menagerie: place where animals are kept

Lesson 15

Reading and Responding: “The Job of Your (American) Dreams”

1. What is the tone of the first three paragraphs?
 - A. playful
 - B. worried
 - C. serious
 - D. disillusioned

2. In paragraph 6, the writer states that “an attractive appearance and excellent health” are important attributes for today’s presidents. What does the word *attributes* mean here?
 - A. lifestyles
 - B. employment experience
 - C. life expectations
 - D. characteristics

Lesson 16

Reading and Responding: “The Job of Your (American) Dreams”

1. The information in paragraph 7 suggests that the public is more likely to vote for
 - A. intelligent candidates.
 - B. rich candidates.
 - C. married candidates.
 - D. large candidates.

2. Which **best** summarizes the author’s point of view?
 - A. Presidents have a difficult job.
 - B. Presidents have had much in common.
 - C. Becoming president is possible for many people.
 - D. Hard work has made the presidents successful.

Lesson 17

Reading and Responding: “The Job of Your (American) Dreams”

1. The author **most** likely waits until paragraph 4 to tell the reader which job is being described to
 - A. encourage the reader to continue reading.
 - B. use early paragraphs to focus on other topics.
 - C. show the benefits of becoming president.
 - D. draw attention to the weaknesses in the election process.

2. Explain the meaning of the title: “The Job of Your (American) Dreams.” Use information from the passage to support your response.

Reading and Responding

Read the following essay, and then answer the questions that follow.

Guppy Summer

by

Leslie Hall

The summer after junior year, I ended up teaching the guppies at the city pool. My assignment arrived in the mail. I was sure I would get seahorses or maybe goldfish at the least, but there it was: DAVID DELCAMBRE—GUPPIES.

Guppies were the little tiny kids, slightly older than barnacles. Barnacles were the baby classes. According to my way of thinking, teaching barnacles wasn't even teaching. Maybe it was like babysitting, except the parents stayed, too. All the parents crowded into the shallow end of the pool, taking pictures and giving their babies instructions. Some of the parents even lugged around their video cameras, and spent the whole class trying to get their kid's attention. None of the babies even looked at their parents. The babies cried when water got in their eyes and they laughed when the lifeguard towed them around the pool on an inflatable raft. This year's barnacle teacher was Lara. She was also going into her senior year at my school, and had been a lifeguard as long as I had. She should have at least gotten guppies. Maybe even goldfish, I thought generously. After all, she was on the swim team and had broken two school records, one for 100 meter butterfly and one for 50 meter backstroke.

"Too bad you got stuck with barnacles," I said when we left the teacher orientation meeting.

"No, they offered me sharks," she said. The sharks class was usually only taught by master guards. I'd never been offered the sharks class! "But I like barnacles."

"Why? They're too little to learn anything."

"They can learn to like the water," she said.

I couldn't believe that she turned down sharks. I couldn't believe that I was teaching guppies instead of sharks. I was sure that sharks was where I belonged.

The first day was something else. The weather, hot and muggy the week before, had turned suddenly and unseasonably chilly. For the first ten minutes of class, the supervisor gathered all the parents and kids into a group at the edge of the pool to go over the rules. All of us teachers—for barnacles, guppies, and goldfish—crouched in the pool at 3 ½ feet, keeping as much of our body submerged in the warm water as possible. When Dana, the aquatics supervisor, introduced us to the parents, we stood up, shivering, and the parents laughed. There's nothing new in the world, you know? We taught 5 different classes that first day, and Dana made us stand up at each parent meeting. Every single time we got a laugh. I guess it was funny to see the way our bobbing heads in the shallow pool were actually attached to bodies. As for us, we were just blue with cold.

Kids don't mind the cold. All of my guppies hopped right into the water. Lara had three barnacles on the steps and one who wouldn't even put a toe in the pool.

I realized then that I had three guppies, not the four I was supposed to have. I called the supervisor over. "Dana, I'm missing a guppy."

"There was a guppy who got bumped back down to barnacle."

Just then Lara floated one of her barnacles by on a raft.

“Hey, Lara, you stole one of my guppies.”

“She decided she was a barnacle at heart,” said Lara.

I looked over at the shallow end. The missing guppy was easy to spot: at least a foot taller than the other barnacles, she was the one who wouldn’t get into the water.

“Krista, come on back to guppy,” I called to her. I knew her name from the attendance sheet. “We need you. Come on, you’re a guppy, you need to be with other guppies.” My three guppies joined in, calling the deserter, but she shook her head and stuck with the other barnacles.

Lara laughed. Her floating barnacle laughed, too, and his mom gestured frantically across the pool for the dad to get the camera, but he was too late. By the time he got back, another barnacle was on the raft.

I looked at the sharks class in the Olympic-sized pool. The sharks swam in the real pool, cold water and all. The sharks teacher was jumping up and down in the water to keep warm. On a day like this, teaching guppies wasn’t so bad.

One of my guppies was going to be an Olympic swimmer. Her dad had it all planned out. He figured if she was a shark by the time she was six—or seven at the latest—she would have a real shot at the gold in 2018 or 2020 or something like that. She was a good guppy, but his planning seemed a little premature. The other two guppies were twins and I couldn’t tell them apart. As far as I knew, they weren’t planning on competing in the Olympics, but they both knew how to duck underwater without crying. We were off to a good start. Sometimes guppies—like Krista, the wayward guppy—won’t even get in the pool. It all depends on who their barnacle teacher was. Some barnacles get pushed to do too much in a short time, and they rebel. Then it’s no pool at all. Maybe Lara was right. If barnacles had the best teachers, they would go on to be guppies and maybe, one day, sharks. If they had bad teachers, they might never graduate from barnacles.

The next day, I saw one of my guppies talking to Krista.

“That’s right,” I told my guppy. “You tell her that her place is here with the other guppies. Guppy is where she wants to be.”

“Barnacles get to float on a raft,” said my guppy wistfully.

“Oh, this is not right. Lara! You got your barnacle over here recruiting out of my side of the pool.”

Lara swam over and held her arms out to Krista. “Come on, Krista, can you jump in? I’ll catch you.”

To the amazement of everyone who had seen Krista huddle at the edge of the pool the day before, there went Krista. She made an impressive splash and Lara triumphantly bore her off to the shallow end. “You know,” I heard Lara tell her, “I think maybe you really should be a guppy. I don’t have any barnacles who are brave enough to jump in like that.”

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“Listen, guppies,” I said. “If you can glide out to me from the wall, we’ll spend the last ten minutes of class floating on the raft.” They worked on their gliding as if they were going to get a check in the mail, and the Olympic guppy’s dad was so proud that after class he squatted down by the pool and shook my hand. “Motivation! That’s the key,” he said. “You’re a fine teacher.”

Lara walked by just then and I hoped she didn’t hear him. Then she said, “Yes, sir, he is. I wouldn’t be surprised if he’s teaching sharks next summer. Maybe even sooner.”

I was sure she was laughing at me, but I didn’t care. My guppies could glide halfway across the pool, all by themselves.

My guppies waved and hurried off to the locker room. “Walk!” I yelled, just out of habit. Last summer, I’d caught myself yelling at a little kid to walk when he was crossing the street.

The last day of the session, Krista sidled over and did a fine cannonball alongside the other guppies. “I knew you’d come back,” I told her. “This is where you belong.” The rest of the guppies bobbed underwater and glided like the good little guppies they were, and Krista was able to do almost everything they did. She’d been watching the guppies the whole time she had been masquerading as a barnacle.

After all the barnacles, guppies, and goldfish had been herded out by their towel-toting parents, I helped Lara put away the rafts.

“I heard Jeff is quitting,” she said. Jeff was the sharks teacher. “I bet you could get his sharks classes for the rest of the summer.”

“Anyone can teach kids who already know how to swim,” I said. “I was actually thinking of asking Dana if I could take barnacles and let you graduate to where all the action is. You know, just to be nice and get you out of the shallow end. I think you know how to swim, right?”

“You can’t take barnacles. Barnacles are mine.”

“So you don’t know how to swim,” I said. “Well, that’s a problem.”

“Barnacles are mine,” she said again, just to make sure I got the message. “But if I ever do want swimming lessons, I’ll keep you in mind—only because you’re such a *fine teacher*.” And then she pushed me into the pool, which is all right, because I guess I had it coming.

Lesson 18

Reading and Responding: “Guppy Summer”

1. In the beginning of the story, what does teaching the sharks represent to David?
 - A. childhood
 - B. romantic love
 - C. boredom
 - D. success

2. In paragraph 2, what word could be used in place of lugged?
 - A. used
 - B. went
 - C. held
 - D. carried

Lesson 19

Reading and Responding: “Guppy Summer”

1. In paragraph 26, the author uses the simile “gliding as if they were going to get a check in the mail” to show that the children were
 - A. tired.
 - B. appreciated.
 - C. eager.
 - D. non-swimmers.

2. Which event would **most** likely happen if the story continued the following summer?
 - A. David would ask to teach the young children.
 - B. Lara would teach the sharks.
 - C. Lara and David would disagree about swimming techniques.
 - D. David would stop teaching swimming lessons.

