



ROBERT L. MERRITT MIDDLE SCHOOL

8TH Grade Learn-At-Home Packet

Reading

Week 2

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

from “The Luck of Roaring Camp”

by Bret Harte

In the following excerpt from the short story “The Luck of Roaring Camp,” set at the height of the California Gold Rush, the prospectors of Roaring Camp await the birth of a child whose mother is the only woman for many miles around.

There was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but “Tuttle’s grocery” had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—“Cherokee Sal.”

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp, and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministrations of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned, and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex’s intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was “rough on Sal,” and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers in his sleeve.

It will be seen also that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced ab initio. Hence the excitement.

“You go in there, Stumpy,” said a prominent citizen known as “Kentuck,” addressing one of the loungers. “Go in there, and see what you kin do. You’ve had experience in them things.”

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp—a city of refuge—was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe, and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal, and all were reckless. Physically they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blonde hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term “roughs” applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay,—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that “Sal would get through with it” even that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry, a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder; but in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp, or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars, and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame, forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 1 The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Why does Stumpy agree to deliver Sal's baby?

- (A) He is a trained and skilled physician.
- (B) He has a gentle nature and kind heart.
- (C) He is afraid to defy the other men.
- (D) He has been married twice before.

Part B: Which excerpt from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- (A) "Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing."
- (B) "'You've had experience in them things.'"
- (C) "Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families . . ."
- (D) "The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority."

- 2 The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which of these inferences about Kentuck's personality is **best** supported by the text?

- (A) He is funny.
- (B) He is a leader.
- (C) He is excitable.
- (D) He is a villain.

Part B: Which detail from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- (A) The men support his suggestion that Stumpy help Cherokee Sal.
- (B) He chooses Stumpy's help because Stumpy is the best-qualified camper.
- (C) He is a reckless criminal who conceals what he thinks and feels.
- (D) The men reject his concern for Sal and her situation.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 3 Which **two** details from the text **best** support the universal theme that people usually try to help when someone is suffering?
- (A) The men pay no attention when French Pete and Kanaka Joe kill each other.
 - (B) The men send Stumpy into the cabin to look after Sal and deliver the baby.
 - (C) The men light a fire of pine boughs outside Sal's cabin for the warmth it brings.
 - (D) The men take bets on whether or not the baby and Sal will survive the birth.
 - (E) The men decide not to let off a loud explosion when they realize Sal is dying.
 - (F) The men are not much disturbed when Sal dies even though she is the only woman.

- 4 The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which theme is suggested by the story of Sal's lonely and painful death?

- (A) Self-reliance is a necessary means of survival.
- (B) Everyone is capable of achieving human love.
- (C) Jealousy is a destructive force in social structures.
- (D) People pay for their past mistakes and moral failings.

Part B: Which detail from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- (A) Sal is the only woman in Roaring Camp, a camp full of men.
- (B) Sal is described as being cursed because of her sins.
- (C) Sal can see the sky from the cabin where she lies in childbirth.
- (D) Sal does not ask any of the men of Roaring Camp for help.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 5 The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read paragraphs 1 and 3 from the text.

There was commotion in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but “Tuttle’s grocery” had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—“Cherokee Sal.”

...

It will be seen also that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from the camp effectively, finally, and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced ab initio. Hence the excitement.

What is the meaning of novel as it is used in the text?

- (A) new
- (B) quiet
- (C) hostile
- (D) sad

Part B: Which sentence or phrase from the text **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of novel?

- (A) “It was a name familiar enough in the camp,—‘Cherokee Sal.’”
- (B) “. . . French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death . . .”
- (C) “Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp . . .”
- (D) “. . . this was the first time that anybody had been introduced ab initio.”

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 6** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read the paragraph from the text.

A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal would get through with it " even that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire rose a sharp, querulous cry, a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush, and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

What does the word levity **most likely** mean as it is used in the paragraph?

- ☐ (A) anxious atmosphere
- ☐ (B) curiosity and alertness
- ☐ (C) polite and attentive behavior
- ☐ (D) lack of appropriate seriousness

Part B: Which detail from the paragraph **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of levity?

- ☐ (A) "A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering."
- ☐ (B) "Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result."
- ☐ (C) "an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen"
- ☐ (D) "rose a sharp, querulous cry, a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp"

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

from *The Republic, Book I*

by Plato

In the following biographical excerpt, the philosopher Socrates asks his father's aged friend Cephalus what he has to say about growing old.

Accordingly we went with Polemarchus to his house; and there we found his brothers Lysias and Euthydemus, and with them Thrasymachus the Chalcedonian, Charmantides the Paeanian, and Cleitophon the son of Aristonymus. There too was Cephalus the father of Polemarchus, whom I had not seen for a long time, and I thought him very much aged. He was seated on a cushioned chair, and had a garland on his head, for he had been sacrificing in the court; and there were some other chairs in the room arranged in a semicircle, upon which we sat down by him. He saluted me eagerly, and then he said:

You don't come to see me, Socrates, as often as you ought: If I were still able to go and see you I would not ask you to come to me. But at my age I can hardly get to the city, and therefore you should come oftener to the Piraeus. For let me tell you, that the more the pleasures of the body fade away, the greater to me is the pleasure and charm of conversation. Do not then deny my request, but make our house your resort and keep company with these young men; we are old friends, and you will be quite at home with us.

I replied: There is nothing which for my part I like better, Cephalus, than conversing with aged men; for I regard them as travellers who have gone a journey which I too may have to go, and of whom I ought to enquire, whether the way is smooth and easy, or rugged and difficult. And this is a question which I should like to ask of you who have arrived at that time which the poets call the 'threshold of old age' —Is life harder towards the end, or what report do you give of it?

I will tell you, Socrates, he said, what my own feeling is. Men of my age flock together; we are birds of a feather, as the old proverb says; and at our meetings the tale of my acquaintance commonly is—I cannot eat, I cannot drink; the pleasures of youth and love are fled away: there was a good time once, but now that is gone, and life is no longer life. Some complain of the slights which are put upon them by relations, and they will tell you sadly of how many evils their old age is the cause. But to me, Socrates, these complainers seem to blame that which is not really in fault. For if old age were the cause, I too being old, and every other old man, would have felt as they do. But this is not my own experience, nor that of others whom I have known. How well I remember the aged poet Sophocles, when in answer to the question, How does love suit with age, Sophocles, —are you still the man you were? Peace, he replied; most gladly have I escaped the thing of which you speak; I feel as if I had escaped from a mad and furious master. His words have often occurred to my mind since, and they seem as good to me now as at the time when he uttered them. For certainly old age has a great sense of calm and freedom; when the passions relax their hold, then, as Sophocles says, we are freed from the grasp not of one mad master only, but of many. The truth is, Socrates, that these regrets, and also the complaints about relations, are to be attributed to the same cause, which is not old age, but men's characters and tempers; for he who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition youth and age are equally a burden.

I listened in admiration, and wanting to draw him out, that he might go on—Yes, Cephalus, I said: but I rather suspect that people in general are not convinced by you when you speak thus; they think that old age sits lightly upon you, not because of your happy disposition, but because you are rich, and wealth is well known to be a great comforter.

You are right, he replied; they are not convinced: and there is something in what they say; not, however, so much as they imagine. I might answer them as Themistocles answered the Seriphian who was abusing him and saying that he was famous, not for his own merits but because he was an Athenian: 'If you had been a native of my country or I of yours, neither of us would have been famous.' And to those who are not rich and are impatient of old age, the same reply may be made; for to the good poor man old age cannot be a light burden, nor can a bad rich man ever have peace with himself.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 7** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which sentence **best** summarizes Cephalus's attitude toward growing old?

- (A) He looks wistfully back over the good times of his younger days.
- (B) He is glad to have outgrown the confusing and unhappy emotions of youth.
- (C) He resents the physical pain and weakness that comes with old age.
- (D) He fears old age as a time when he will likely be ignored and ill-treated.

Part B: Which **two** details from the text **best** support your answer in part A?

- (A) "Men of my age flock together; we are birds of a feather"
- (B) "there was a good time once, but now that is gone, and life is no longer life"
- (C) "I feel as if I had escaped from a mad and furious master"
- (D) "he who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age"
- (E) "And to those who are not rich and are impatient of old age, the same reply may be made"

- 8** The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Which statement **best** describes Socrates's view of Cephalus?

- (A) He is amused and entertained by Cephalus.
- (B) He thinks Cephalus is vain and dull.
- (C) He is awed by Cephalus's wealth and power.
- (D) He respects and admires Cephalus.

Part B: Which detail from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- (A) "I had not seen [him] for a long time, and I thought him very much aged."
- (B) "There is nothing which for my part I like better, Cephalus, than conversing with aged men"
- (C) "I rather suspect that people in general are not convinced by you when you speak thus"
- (D) "you are rich, and wealth is well known to be a great comforter"

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 9 The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read the sentences from the text.

I will tell you, Socrates, he said, what my own feeling is. Men of my age flock together; we are birds of a feather, as the old proverb says; and at our meetings the tale of my acquaintance commonly is—I cannot eat, I cannot drink; the pleasures of youth and love are fled away: there was a good time once, but now that is gone, and life is no longer life. Some complain of the slights which are put upon them by relations, and they will tell you sadly of how many evils their old age is the cause. But to me, Socrates, these complainers seem to blame that which is not really in fault. For if old age were the cause, I too being old, and every other old man, would have felt as they do.

What is the meaning of the word slights as it is used in the text?

- (A) merits
- (B) falsehoods
- (C) insults
- (D) decades

Part B: Which phrase from the sentences **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of slights?

- (A) "Men of my age"
- (B) "good time"
- (C) "many evils"
- (D) "would have felt"

Name: _____ Date: _____

10 Read the sentences from the text.

His words have often occurred to my mind since, and they seem as good to me now as at the time when he uttered them. For certainly old age has a great sense of calm and freedom; when the passions relax their hold, then, as Sophocles says, we are freed from the grasp not of one mad master only, but of many. The truth is, Socrates, that these regrets, and also the complaints about relations, are to be attributed to the same cause, which is not old age, but men's characters and tempers; for he who is of a calm and happy nature will hardly feel the pressure of age, but to him who is of an opposite disposition youth and age are equally a burden.

What is the meaning of the word passions as it is used in the text?

- ☐ (A) uncontrolled emotions
- ☐ (B) immoral statesmen
- ☐ (C) rational judgments
- ☐ (D) delightful memories

Read the texts. Then answer the questions.

Standing Up to Bullying

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. It includes making threats, spreading rumors, or attacking someone verbally or physically.

You may think that as long as you aren't the one being bullied, it's not your problem. But everyone knows what it's like to be bullied, whether it be physical or emotional bullying. Maybe you have not personally had a bully who targets you day after day, but most of us can relate to feelings of exclusion, being taken advantage of, or having things said about us that are untrue or make us feel badly about ourselves. These are all forms of bullying.

But what is the proper response to a situation in which someone is being bullied? Standing by and doing nothing may not make you the bully, but it makes you just as guilty. Continuing to spread rumors or not standing up for someone who is being bullied are ways someone might engage in bullying secondarily. People often don't step in to help because they are scared of physical harm. But standing up to a bully does not always involve a direct physical intervention. There are many ways to help put a stop to bullying. The first step when considering the best way in which to intervene is to assess the situation.

Consider if approaching the bullies themselves is a smart idea, or if you feel comfortable doing so. If one of your friends is spreading rumors or saying hurtful things about one of your peers, you might just talk directly to your friend and let them know that what he or she is doing is wrong. Some people might argue that confronting the bully directly will escalate the situation. If you think this might be the case, you should involve a teacher or someone else who is in a position to address the issue with the bully.

Many people bully others because they feel insecure. The power a bully has over another person makes the bully feel better. The person who is bullying often needs help just as much as the person who is being bullied. If you think the bully is facing personal struggles that are causing the behavior, you might offer the bully a chance to discuss his or her troubles.

If bullying is ongoing, such as teasing an individual day after day, it can have negative consequences. The victim will likely suffer from low self-esteem and might even become a bully themselves later in life, creating a cycle of negativity. Oftentimes the person being bullied does not feel capable or confident enough to stand up for himself or herself. He or she may have even tried to stand up for himself or herself in the past and not succeeded. In this circumstance, involving a teacher, parent, or figure of authority in the situation can be very helpful.

Bullying can be harmful to everyone involved, and unless some type of intervention occurs, it will often continue. If someone sees bullying happening, he or she is obligated to take action to stop it from continuing.

Natalie and the Bully

Natalie heard the things everyone at school said about Jamie, cruel things she would not dare repeat about Jamie's clothes, her hair, how she didn't listen to the right music. Her friends would make comments about Jamie sometimes, and Natalie would pretend she didn't hear, or she would laugh awkwardly. It didn't seem right for her to join in and say mean things herself, but she didn't try to stop her friends, either. Her friends would not be pleased if she tried to stand up for Jamie, and they would probably start making fun of Natalie too.

Natalie also knew that Jamie heard the gossip; sometimes the girls would say things to her face, and sometimes they would send her mean messages on the Internet. Jamie seemed like a nice girl. She sat with one or two other friends in the lunchroom, but they were not girls Natalie and her friends ever hung out with. Jamie's friends were also the target of jokes and rumors, but none of them were harassed as much as Jamie. When she walked by Jamie's table, Kristen made a remark under her breath, still loud enough for Jamie to hear.

"Can you believe what she's wearing today?" Natalie heard her friend Kristen saying. "It looks like she got dressed in the dark." All the other girls burst into giggles, and Kristen smiled, satisfied with her remark.

Natalie looked over at Jamie, who had her head down and looked like she was about to cry. Natalie felt guilty, as though she were the one who had made the cruel remark. She quickly turned away from Jamie, shuffling after her friends to sit down at their lunch table.

A few days later at school, as Natalie and her friends walked by Jamie's lunch table, Kristen announced, "I think a two-year-old gave her that haircut."

The other girls laughed, but Natalie had had enough; she knew it wasn't right to just stand by silently while her friends continued to pick on Jamie. For a moment, Natalie imagined that she was in Jamie's shoes, and she felt the sting of Kristen's joke in a different way. That sting was what gave Natalie the courage she needed to confront Kristen.

"Hey, it's not nice for you to say those things about Jamie. Can't you see it's hurting her feelings?"

Kristen turned bright red, but she rolled her eyes. "Whatever. You can go sit at another table, if that's how you feel."

Natalie sat alone at lunch that day, but she was proud of herself for speaking her mind. It was difficult to watch her friends eating without her, but she realized that Kristen was not a friend she wanted to have if she was going to treat other people badly.

The next day at lunch, Natalie began to sit down by herself again, but Kristen came over and asked to speak with her.

"About yesterday," she said, "you were right. I told you to sit somewhere else because I was embarrassed that you called me out. I'm sorry."

"Are you going to say sorry to Jamie?" Natalie wondered.

Kristen sighed. "Yeah."

Natalie smiled and walked over to sit with her friends, glad she had done the right thing.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer these questions about “Standing Up to Bullying.”

- 11** What is the author’s main claim in “Standing Up to Bullying”? Support your answer with details from the text.

- 12** How does the author respond to a conflicting viewpoint about who is responsible for stopping a bully?

- (A)** The author gives details about the different things that a person who is not the one being bullied can do to stop a bully.
- (B)** The author argues that if you are not the one who is being bullied, chances are you are most likely a bully yourself.
- (C)** The author gives details about a situation where bullying got out of hand and there was no solution for stopping it.
- (D)** The author argues that even if you are not the one being bullied, you can still relate to the feeling of being bullied.

Name: _____ Date: _____

13 How does the author respond to conflicting evidence about a reason not to stand up to a bully?

- (A)** The author offers methods to stop bullies without physical intervention.
- (B)** The author argues that victims of bullying often develop low self-esteem.
- (C)** The author explains that bullies engage in unwanted, aggressive behavior.
- (D)** The author suggests that the confronting a bully may escalate the situation.

14 Read the sentences from the text.

Standing by and doing nothing may not make you the bully, but it makes you just as guilty. Continuing to spread rumors or not standing up for someone who is being bullied are ways someone might engage in bullying secondarily.

What is the impact of the word guilty as it is used in the text?

- (A)** It implies that people who are bullies are more likely to commit crimes than non-bullies.
- (B)** It implies that people who observe bullying are probably bullies themselves.
- (C)** It implies that people who observe bullying are responsible for stopping it.
- (D)** It implies that people who are bullies were most likely once bullied themselves.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 15 Read the sentence from the text.

The victim will likely suffer from low self-esteem and might even become a bully themselves later in life, creating a cycle of negativity.

What does the author mean by the phrase cycle of negativity?

- (A) Negativity helps to stop bullies.
- (B) Negativity causes low self-esteem.
- (C) Negativity causes more negativity.
- (D) Negativity helps victims fight back

- 16 Read the paragraph from the text.

Consider if approaching the bullies themselves is a smart idea, or if you feel comfortable doing so. If one of your friends is spreading rumors or saying hurtful things about one of your peers, you might just talk directly to your friend and let them know that what he or she is doing is wrong. Some people might argue that confronting the bully directly will escalate the situation. If you think this might be the case, you should involve a teacher or someone else who is in a position to address the issue with the bully.

What is the meaning of escalate as it is used in the paragraph?

- (A) appease
- (B) resolve
- (C) intensify
- (D) threaten

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer these questions about “Natalie and the Bully.”

- 17 Which **two** statements **best** describe lessons Natalie learns?
- (A) Standing up to a bully is the right thing to do.
 - (B) You cannot count on your friends to behave well.
 - (C) A friend who treats others poorly is not worth having.
 - (D) It is important to make your friends happy.
 - (E) You should never embarrass a friend in front of others.
 - (F) Real friends can make you feel uncomfortable.
- 18 Which sentence from the text **best** supports the theme of the story?
- (A) “Her friends would make comments about Jamie sometimes, and Natalie would pretend she didn’t hear, or she would laugh awkwardly.”
 - (B) “Jamie’s friends were also the target of jokes and rumors, but none of them were harassed as much as Jamie.”
 - (C) “Natalie looked over at Jamie, who had her head down and looked like she was about to cry.”
 - (D) “Natalie sat alone at lunch that day, but she was proud of herself for speaking her mind.”
- 19 In paragraph 6, the author states, “Natalie imagined that she was in Jamie’s shoes, and felt the sting of Kristen’s joke in a different way.” How does this idea support the theme of the text? Support your answer with details from the text.

Name: _____ Date: _____

- 20** Compare and contrast the different ways the authors address the topic of bullying in “Standing Up to Bullying” and “Natalie and the Bully.” Include details from **both** texts in your explanation.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Argumentative Performance Task

Task

Your class is learning about the media. Your teacher has asked you each to write an argumentative article about whether or not the media is primarily a force of good. To prepare to write this article, you begin searching for some sources. You have found two sources involving the media and national conflicts.

Before you write your article, you will review the two sources. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then, go back and read the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and to use when you write your argumentative article. Take notes while you read.

In Part 2, you will write an argumentative article using information from these sources.

Directions for Part 1

You will now read two sources. You can re-examine both as often as you like.

Research Questions

After reading the two sources, use the remaining time in Part 1 to answer three questions about them. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the sources you have read, which should help you write your own argument.

You may refer to the sources when you think it would be helpful. You may also refer to your notes. Answer the questions in the space provided.

Source #1: In Defense of the Media

Some people have negative things to say about the media. An argument could be made that the media takes advantage of conflict by broadcasting it as entertainment in order to make money. However, media actually plays an important role in helping to resolve national problems. Through the lens of the media, we are able to see multiple perspectives in a conflict, which can encourage us to put pressure on politicians to take action. Particularly since the advent of television, Americans are able to feel more empathy for others who are being oppressed, which can help to bring about positive social change.

By 1960, ninety percent of American homes had a television. During this time, the American civil rights movement was at its peak. The media acted as a catalyst for change during the civil rights movement. People all over the country were able to see what was happening in Selma and Birmingham, Alabama, as well as in Memphis, Tennessee. Disturbing images of young people being beaten for the color of their skin were broadcast on national television. Everyone was watching, and Americans began realizing what was going on in their country. Many people were outraged by the violence they saw, which led them to take action and seek unity.

The events that took place in Selma, Alabama, sparked a nationwide outrage and call to action. Cameras were rolling on a peaceful march from Selma to Montgomery, held to protest the denial of African American citizens' right to vote. The march ended in police brutality against innocent people, an event that became known as "Bloody Sunday." Forty-eight million people across the country watched the event on their television sets in horror.

This event in Alabama became a national embarrassment to a country trying to assert that democracy is the best form of government. In his famous, nationally televised speech, former President Lyndon B. Johnson said, "and we shall overcome." This phrase became an important slogan for the civil rights movement. His speech urged Americans to "overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice," and to unite in equality. Because of television media, this speech is one of the most well-known and influential presidential speeches to date.

Through television broadcasts, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was able to appeal to religious leaders and other people of faith to unite in his cause. These people organized marches across the country in defense of people of color. Thanks to the media, the whole nation was finally able to come together to agree that everyone deserves the same rights.

Politician and Civil Rights leader John Lewis once said, “If it hadn’t been for the media—the print media and the television—the civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings, a choir without a song.” Though the movement had a powerful and urgent message to communicate, that message would not have reached and affected nearly as many people had it not been for the media. Media coverage of the events in the Civil Rights Movement gave it not only an image but a voice that could be heard clearly around the nation with one message: unite. The media played a pivotal role in helping America progress to greater equality for all citizens.

Source #2: How the Media Helped Win World War II

During World War II, the United States helped fight the most evil forces on the planet, but those efforts would not have been successful without the support of the American public. Luckily, the government did an excellent job of using the media to disseminate national propaganda to drum up support. National campaigns used posters, cartoons, radio, magazines, and newspapers. The propaganda encouraged Americans to contribute to the war effort in any way they could in order to make the war successful.

Some propaganda promoted simple sentiments such as supporting the allies and rallying against the Japanese army. These messages encouraged patriotism and unity. Other campaigns had a stronger call to action, encouraging people to buy war bonds, conserve supplies, or plant victory gardens.

You may think of conservation as a modern concept, but conservation was actually one of the main aims of wartime propaganda during WWII. Americans on the home front were encouraged to ration sugar, meat, butter, and coffee to save more for soldiers. General Mills distributed a Betty Crocker “cookbooklet” with wartime recipes aimed at conservation. Butcher shops distributed fliers asking women to save fats from cooking to be used in making explosives. Due to these posters and other conservation propaganda, the United States successfully recycled 538 million pounds of waste fats during the war!

The media convinced people to conserve other materials as well. People turned in wedding bands, buttons, and other spare metal to be melted down for military equipment. Clothing was made with less cloth in order to conserve material for soldier’s uniforms. People also carpooled, which led to less gasoline and rubber tire use.

Many of the propaganda campaigns were aimed toward women. Rosie the Riveter, one of the most iconic figures of the time, represented strong women who supported the war effort by joining the work force. The image of the “glamour girl” became popularized to assure women that they could work and still maintain their femininity. Because of these media and propaganda campaigns, women realized that they were stronger than they thought! In addition, much of the popular fiction of the time encouraged men to view working women as attractive.

Women were also encouraged to plant victory gardens. The government encouraged people to plant these vegetable gardens to help prevent food shortages during war years. They were known as victory gardens because if people were growing vegetables for themselves, then more of the American food supply could go to the troops. If the troops were well fed, they would surely lead America to victory. Because of the influence of propaganda, Americans planted 50 million victory gardens during the war years. "Eat what you can, and can what you can't" was a popular slogan promoting victory gardens. Slogans such as these were memorable and effective in promoting a message of conservation.

Media propaganda had a profound impact on American opinions about WWII. It was effective at gaining support for the war and boosting citizen moral, unifying a nation in one cause; because of this, the United States was able to lead the Allies to victory in the war and ensure that the people of the world could once again live in peace.

Name: _____ Date: _____

21 Which central idea is shared by **both** sources?

- (A)** The media helps to advance civil rights.
- (B)** The media is helpful in times of conflict.
- (C)** The media is good for conservation efforts.
- (D)** The media makes money from national conflicts.

22 Explain how **both** Source #1 and Source #2 show how the media has the power to influence people. Support your explanation using **two** pieces of evidence from the sources. Identify the source of each piece of information by title or number.

23 Explain how **each** author uses details to support his or her purpose. Give details from **both** sources to support your explanation. Identify the source of detail by title or number.

Directions for Part 2

You will now look at the two sources, take notes, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your argumentative article. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your argumentative article will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment

Write a multi-paragraph argument in which you agree or disagree with the idea that the media is primarily a force of good that brings positive change.

Make sure you establish an argumentative claim, address potential counter arguments, and support your claim from the sources you have read. Organize your article logically, and elaborate on your ideas. Develop your ideas clearly and use your own words except when quoting directly from the sources. Be sure to identify the sources by title or number when using details or facts directly from the sources.

Argumentative Article Scoring

Your article will be scored using the following:

- 1. Organization/Purpose:** How clearly did you state and maintain your claim with a logical progression of ideas from beginning to end? How logically did your ideas flow from beginning to end? How often did you use effective transitions? How effective was your introduction and your conclusion?
- 2. Evidence/Elaboration:** How well did you provide evidence from sources about your argument? How well did you elaborate with specific information?
- 3. Conventions:** How well did you follow the rules of grammar usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

Now begin work on your argumentative article. Manage your time carefully so that you can plan, write, revise, and edit the final draft of your article. Write your response on a separate piece of paper.

