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## Middle School Weekly

Emphasizing both News and Academics

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1) Into which bordering country did thousands of Palestinians from Gaza flee after part of a border fence built by Israel was blown up by militants? In biblical times, it once held the Jews captive.

**Answer: Egypt** (Israel had blockaded fuel to Gaza to halt Palestinian attacks)

2) What word completes the term *absolute* \_\_\_\_\_ naming the kind of government the country Bhutan will abandon when by order of its king, it elects a parliament and prime minister in March?

**Answer: Monarchy** (king is giving throne to his Oxford-educated son).

3) What does *agrarian* mean as used recently by militants in Brazil in calling for *agrarian reform*?

**Answer: Farmland** (Landless Workers Movement is calling for redistribution of farmland, such as that owned by an imprisoned drug lord).

4) Name the world leader whose memoir, first published in Spain, was just released in English in the U.S. even though he has not been seen in public since he fell ill in 2006.

**Answer: Fidel Castro** (book is *Fidel Castro: My Life*).

5) Name the capital city on the Danube River that is home to Europe's largest greenhouse, the Palm House, where a 170-year-old, 82-foot palm tree is soon to be cut down to prevent it from breaking through the glass ceiling.

**Answer: Vienna ("Sisi Palm," named for former Empress Elisabeth, was moved inside 44 years ago).**

6) What term beginning with *H* designates the Israeli memorial that just launched an Arabic version of its Web site to combat Arab denial of the WWII Nazi slaughter of Jews?

**Answer: Holocaust (Israel's Holocaust Memorial Web site includes photos, interviews with survivors).**

7) In which nation was a poet just arrested for a love poem secretly saying "Power crazy Senior General Than Shwe," referring to the head of its oppressive ruling military junta? Its name begins with the 1st person possessive pronoun in English.

**Answer: Myanmar (Burma; Amnesty International says it has arrested 96 dissenters since November).**

8) Which country is sending extra police to combat the clearing of the Amazon rain forest, which has greatly increased because of current high prices for corn, soy, and cattle?

**Answer: Brazil.**

9) Which state, the 48th most populous, was featured as a dying economy in the recent *National Geographic* article "The Emptied Prairie," drawing a quick rebuttal from the newspaper in Fargo and the state house in Bismarck?

**Answer: North Dakota (governor says leads US in production of 13 commodities & population is up).**

10) Identify the 3 states known as the Silver State, Palmetto State, and Sunshine State, all of which followed New Hampshire in holding early presidential caucuses or primaries.

**Answer: Nevada, South Carolina, and Florida (Republican winners: Romney, NV, McCain, SC; Romney also won in MI & WY; Democratic: Clinton, NV, Obama in SC; FL unknown at press time).**

11) What does the term *expatriate* mean, as used to designate the voters the Democratic Party is allowing to vote via fax or Internet in the 22-state Feb. 5 presidential primary?

**Answer: Americans living abroad (State Dept. says about 4 million Americans live abroad).**

12) Of the 4 Southern states participating in the 22-state Feb. 5 mega-primary, name both the one that is the U.S.'s largest east of the Mississippi and its neighbor to the west.

**Answer: Georgia and Alabama (Tennessee and Arkansas are the other 2).**

13) If, as proposed by a federal commission, gas taxes were increased 40 cents per gallon to pay for repairs of bridges and roads, how much more would it cost for 16 gallons?

**Answer: \$6.40 (proposal calls for gradual increase over 5 years to pay for updating infrastructure).**

14) What prime number in the 20s designates the limited number of pairs of Nike's Air Jordan shoes sold in this new edition in honor of the shoe's namesake's jersey number?

**Answer: 23 (Michael Jordan wore #23; 23 pairs of this 23rd edition were sold at 23 stores at \$230 each).**

15) Which nonprofit group just changed the name of its Walk America fund-raising event to Walk for Babies to clarify its mission, having been founded in the 30's to fight polio?

**Answer: March of Dimes (founded in 1938; changed its mission to serve mothers and babies in 1958).**

16) What does *desalinated* mean, as used to describe 1/3 of water used in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, which has little surface water and a yearly rainfall of 2.5 inches?

**Answer: Treated so as to remove salt.**

#### **HISTORICAL EVENTS - February 4-10 (Questions 17-24)**

17) On February 5, 1917, Congress passed an immigration law that in part required a test to show ability to read and write. What word designates the attainment of such abilities?

**Answer: Literacy (Congress passed the law over President Woodrow Wilson's veto).**

18) What is the literal English translation of *Mardi Gras*, the name of the colorful celebration on Shrove Tuesday, which this year falls on February 5?

**Answer: "Fat Tuesday" (*Mardi* is French for "Tuesday").**

19) In which decade did Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary succeed to the British throne on February 6, becoming Elizabeth II?

**Answer: 1950s (on February 6, 1952; her coronation took place on June 2, 1953).**

20) Name the 3rd Vice President of the U.S. He was born February 6, 1756, served as Vice President from 1801 to 1805, and in 1807 was tried for treason and acquitted.

**Answer: Aaron Burr.**

21) Which queen of Scotland was only a week old when she took the throne upon the death of her father? She was beheaded by her cousin, Elizabeth I, on February 8, 1587.

**Answer: Mary, Queen of Scots.**

22) A merger agreement was announced by the AFL and CIO on February 9, 1955. Give the full name of either of these 2 groups.

**Answer: American Federation of Labor or Congress of Industrial Organizations.**

23) Who was elected President of the U.S. by the House of Representatives on February 9, 1825, after no candidate received a majority during the Electoral College voting?

**Answer: John Quincy Adams (the Electoral College voted December 1, 1824).**

24) Which group departed from Nauvoo, Illinois, on February 10, 1846, heading to a new "promised land" in Utah with Brigham Young leading the way?

**Answer: Mormons.**

25) What is the smallest integer that satisfies the inequality  $16 - 3x < 0$ ?

**Answer: 6.**

26) What 3-word term is used to name 27 in reference to the numbers 81 and 135?

**Answer: Greatest common factor or Greatest common divisor.**

27) What is the distance from the point A (4,0) to the point B (0,3) in the Cartesian coordinate system?

**Answer: 5 units.**

28) What is the solution to the equation  $2x - 14 = 21 - 3x$ ?

**Answer:  $x = 7$ .**

29) What 5-letter word designates the family including pigs, hogs, and boars, as used in the Bible verse "neither cast ye your pearls before \_\_\_\_\_"?

**Answer: Swine (verse continues "lest they trample you under their feet, and turn again and rend you").**

30) What 5-letter word designates the result of removing the DNA from the nucleus of an egg from a cow or other animal and replacing it with DNA from a prized one?

**Answer: Clone (FDA just approved meat and milk from cloned cattle, goats, and swine, but not sheep).**

31) What one factor leads to classification of a tree as deciduous?

**Answer: It drops its leaves seasonally, or at the end of the growing season.**

32) Were there not already a gas of almost the same name, what should the mineral jadarite, found in Serbia last spring, be called since it has the same chemical makeup as the green glowing rock that is Superman's only weakness?

**Answer: Kryptonite (revealed to be sodium lithium boron silicate hydroxide in film *Superman Returns*).**

33) Identify the hero of the *Iliad* named to complete the following idiom meaning "weakness" used in describing water as the nuclear industry's \_\_\_\_\_ *heel* since nuclear plants need huge amounts of cooling water to operate and are threatened by drought.

**Answer: Achilles' (heel; his mother dipped him in protective waters, leaving only his heel vulnerable).**

34) What word beginning with *M* completes the title of the recently named Newbery Award winning-book *Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! Voices from a \_\_\_\_\_ Village*, which author Amy Schlitz developed while working with 5th-grade students on the Middle Ages?

**Answer: Medieval** (Brian Zelznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* won Caldecott as best picture book).

35) Name the poet born in 1849 at whose Baltimore grave a mysterious visitor left his annual gift of 3 roses and cognac on January 19, then slipped away into the darkness, in keeping with the poet's reputation as the American master of terror and suspense.

**Answer: Edgar Allan Poe** (born 1/19/1849; last year, a church historian claimed he cooked up idea).

36) Use Roman numerals to express the number of this year's Super Bowl, the 10th of which was in 1976.

**Answer: XLII.**

37) Name the state where the New England Patriots and the New York Giants will play Super Bowl XLII on February 3 in Glendale, home of the NFL's Cardinals.

**Answer: Arizona (in the University of Phoenix Stadium).**

38) Identify either the *S* word meaning "to move easily from one theme or situation to another" or the vehicle named from it that police will use to patrol at Super Bowl XLII.

**Answer: Segue, or segway (pronounced the same).**

39) Name the state where 2 mountain climbers were recently rescued after spending a night in a snow cave on its highest mountain, Mount Hood, overlooking Portland.

**Answer: Oregon.**

40) Name the state that is the setting for Stephen King's new book *Duma Key*, so named from the geographic term used to designate any of its string of low offshore islands.

**Answer: Florida (book is his first set in the state).**

### A, B, C's OF GEOGRAPHY

**Argentina** . . . . . South American country whose name is from the Latin for "silver," site of Tierra del Fuego, meaning "land of fire"

**Austin\*** . . . . . Texas city named for the American who settled the 1st colony in Texas

**Auschwitz** . . . . . Nazi forced-labor camp in Poland where over a million Jews died

**Algeria** . . . . . Country on the Mediterranean that is Africa's 2nd largest country after Sudan, controlled by France until 1962

**Akron** . . . . . Ohio city once called "Rubber Capital of the World," home of Goodyear

**Albuquerque** . . . . . City with 2 *Q*'s in its name that is New Mexico's largest

**Baghdad** . . . . . Modern-day capital near the long gone Hanging Gardens of Babylon, irrigated by slaves turning screws to lift water from the Euphrates

**Boston** . . . . . City that had the U.S.'s 1st public school, \_\_\_\_\_ *Latin School*, opened in 1635, attended by John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Ben Franklin

**Bologne** . . . . . Northern Italian city for which a popular sliced sandwich meat is named

**Barcelona** . . . . . Spanish city on the Mediterranean that hosted 1992 Summer Olympics

**Bavaria** . . . . . State in southeastern Germany known for its Alps named for it

**Biscayne** . . . . . Miami bay and national park of the same name that is the site of the northernmost living coral reef along the Atlantic

**Buffalo\*\*** . . . . . New York city at the terminus of the Erie Canal linking Albany and the Great Lakes, named indirectly for the American bison

**Belize\*\*\*** . . . . . English-speaking country on the Yucatan Peninsula bordering Guatemala

**Canterbury** . . . . . Britain's ancient religious center known for its cathedral that is the seat of the archbishop who is the Anglican Church's spiritual head

**Cascades** . . . . . Washington mountain range in which Mount St. Helens is located

**Caucasus** . . . . . Mountain range in Russia and Georgia between the Black and Caspian seas whose Mount Elbrus is Europe's highest peak

**Columbia** . . . . . Western Hemisphere's 2nd longest river flowing into the Pacific

**\*Named for Stephen Fuller Austin \*\*Named for Buffalo Creek \*\*\*Formerly called British Honduras**

