Vocabulary for Grade 10 Set A: Fitting In, Standing Out

Directions: In the first activity in this packet, you will use context clues to try and determine the meaning of each of your new vocabulary words. The example below shows you how to do this activity.

1. Begin by looking at the photo.
   Ask yourself, What do I see?
   I see birds flying in the air. They are not being controlled or told where to go.

2. Next, look at the caption.
   Ask yourself, what word could I put in place of the underlined vocabulary word?
   Here I might substitute “all” or “complete” for absolute.

3. Then, look at the example sentence.
   Ask yourself, do my substitutions from the caption — “all” and “complete” — make sense in this sentence?
   Yes, “complete” works in the example sentence as well.

4. Finally, write or type a prediction in the last box.

Example: Absolute (ab-suh-loot)

My mother’s no was absolute. Once she said it, there was no chance of changing her mind.

Birds have absolute freedom to go wherever they like.

What’s your prediction?
My Answer: complete

Let’s begin!

1. Avert

Thinking about the test stresses me out, so I avert my thoughts whenever I’m reminded of it.

When Mike started to cry, Darren averted his eyes.

What’s your prediction?
My Answer:

2. Chronological

Bella told the story chronologically, starting with the first time she saw Edward.

The files are chronological and run from 1980 to 2018.

What’s your prediction?
My Answer:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Compromise</th>
<th>4. Implant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going without sleep will compromise your immune system and make it more likely that you get sick.</td>
<td>In the novel <em>Feed</em>, teenagers get a brain implant that keeps them connected to the internet at all times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Indignant</th>
<th>6. Negligent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Markisha was indignant when the teacher only yelled at her, even though other students were talking, too.</td>
<td>Leaving the dog shut up in the car on a 90-degree day was a negligent thing to do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The earthquake *compromised* the walls and made the building unsafe.

The implant in Joe’s heart keeps it on a steady, regular beat.

The cat was *indignant* when I didn’t share my fish dinner with him.

The house was broken down from years of negligent treatment.
### 7. Relocation

I was worried that we would lose customers after the relocation because they wouldn’t know where to find us.

*We had to do a lot of work on the new house before our relocation.*

What’s your **prediction**?

My Answer:

### 8. Stabilize

Lulu’s parents put training wheels on her bike to stabilize it while she was learning to balance for herself.

*The wires stabilize the bridge so it can stay upright in high winds.*

What’s your **prediction**?

My Answer:

### 9. Unmitigated

After the huge loss in the playoffs, the coach issued a statement calling it “an unmitigated disaster.”

*The fire that destroyed the house was an unmitigated loss for us.*

What’s your **prediction**?

My Answer:

### 10. Wretched

Our organization brings medicine and food to the wretched people living in the war zone.

*Conditions were wretched in California after wildfires destroyed entire towns.*

What’s your **prediction**?

My Answer:
Let’s review the definitions of the words.

1. **Avert**: (v) turn aside (especially one’s thoughts or eyes) to avoid (something) *Related: aversion*
2. **Chronological**: (adj) related to time; in time order *Related: synchronize*
3. **Compromise**: (v) damage or make weaker
4. **Implant**: (n) an object inserted into the body, especially by surgery *Related: plant, transplant*
5. **Indignant**: (adj) annoyed or angry, believing that oneself is being treated unfairly *Related: indignity*
6. **Negligent**: (adj) failing to take proper care of (something) *Related: negligence*
7. **Relocation**: (n) a move to a new place to make one’s home or business there *Related: relocate, location, dislocation*
8. **Stabilize**: (v) make (something) less likely to turn over or fall *Related: destabilize, stable*
9. **Unmitigated**: (adj) complete, often describing something bad or unsuccessful that has no good or positive points *Related: mitigate, mitigation*
10. **Wretched**: (adj) in a very unhappy or unpleasant state *Related: wretch*
**Activity 2: Fill-in-the-Blank Sentence**

**Directions:** Fill in the blanks using the correct vocabulary word to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Avert</th>
<th>Chronological</th>
<th>Compromised</th>
<th>Destabilized</th>
<th>Implant</th>
<th>Indignant</th>
<th>Negligent</th>
<th>Relocating</th>
<th>Unmitigated</th>
<th>Wretched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. The women were ____________ when they realized their male coworkers earned 20% more than they did.

2. After Hurricane Sandy, residents of Long Island were ________________ because their power was out for weeks!

3. Many people ________________ their eyes from homeless people to avoid getting involved.

4. When word got around that Anne didn’t keep her promises, it ________________ her ability to do business in town.

5. Esteban planned for months before ________________ his family from New York to California.

6. My diabetic cousin has an ________________ in her stomach so she doesn’t have to use needles for her insulin.

7. The job interview was an ________________ disaster: Tonya arrived late, forgot her resume, and insulted the interviewer!

8. My ________________ neighbor never shovels his sidewalk after a snowstorm. One day someone will slip and get hurt!

9. Julia accidentally ________________ the bookshelf by loading far more books on one side than on the other.

10. Most history courses are ________________ because the events of one era have a powerful influence on the next.
**Activity 3: Fill-in-the-Blank Scenario**

*Fill in the blanks using the correct vocabulary word to complete each scenario. Then, explain why that vocabulary word fits best based on context clues provided in the scenario. You may have to change the form of the word (ex: go, going, gone).*

**For Example:**

Every single day, Bryan wakes up at 5 o’clock in the morning to take a 10-mile jog. Then, he goes to the gym to lift weights. Afterwards, he does 20 laps in the pool. And this is before he goes to practice with the team every afternoon! Bryan is ____________ about training because ______________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relentless</td>
<td>He is extremely dedicated and exercises all the time. He runs 10 miles, lifts weights, swims, and attends practice every day.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Averts</th>
<th>Chronologically</th>
<th>Compromised</th>
<th>Implant</th>
<th>Indignant</th>
<th>Negligent</th>
<th>Relocate</th>
<th>Stabilized</th>
<th>Unmitigated</th>
<th>Wretched</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Carolina has been ill for so long that she is just miserable. She’s in physical pain and she’s also just really tired. It’s sad to see her suffering so much.

   Carolina is ________________ because ___________________________________________________________________

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<th>My Answer</th>
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</table>

2. The people in Yemen don’t have enough food. When the 6 o’clock news was showing pictures of starving Yemeni children, Kendra had to look away. The pictures were so upsetting that she didn’t want to see them.

   Kendra ________________ her eyes because ___________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>

3. After Ibrahim was in a terrible car accident, his cheekbone was shattered on one side and he needed surgery to rebuild his face. The doctors placed a plastic insert where his cheekbone had been so that the two sides of his face were even again.

   Ibrahim needed a(n) ________________ because ___________________________________________________________________

<table>
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<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>
4. Yu Yan was so upset that she couldn’t tell us clearly what had happened to her. We asked her to start over and tell the story from the beginning so we could follow it.

Yu Yan needs to tell her story ______________ because _________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>

5. Although the problems with the show were clear in early rehearsals, Kendra was such a big star that everyone was afraid to tell her the show was bad. On opening night, dancers missed their entrances, the band sounded awful, and Kendra’s costumes were just plain ugly. The audience booed and then left early!

The show’s problems were ______________ because _________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
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</table>

6. The good news is: Mr. Brown’s cancer is gone! Unfortunately, the cancer treatment really weakened his whole system. He’ll have to be very careful to avoid germs and sick people while his body continues to recover.

Mr. Brown’s system has been ______________ because _________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>

7. Stef really hates his landlord. There was a leak in the roof of the apartment and, even though Stef called right away to tell him about it, the landlord did nothing for weeks! Of course, the damage got much worse during that time.

The landlord is ______________ because _________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>

8. After Hurricane Katrina, people from New Orleans ended up scattered all over the country. Their homes and businesses had been so badly damaged during the storm that they had nothing to go back to, so they started new lives in other places.

The people had to ______________ because _________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>
9. My kids demand that I treat them fairly. If I give one child $15 for the movies, I have to give the other the same amount. Otherwise, they get so angry!

The kids can get_____________ because __________________________________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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10. Marta has a beautiful old tree by her house that’s at least 50 feet tall. She loves it, but she’s worried that it might blow over in a storm. Marta had wires strung from the tree to metal anchors in the ground so the tree would be less likely to fall.

Marta _______________ the tree because ______________________________________________________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Answer</th>
<th>My Reason</th>
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</table>
**Activity 4: Matching**

Match the following vocabulary words to their synonyms from the box. Write your answer in the column next to the word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonyms:</th>
<th>Weaken</th>
<th>Irresponsible</th>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>In order</th>
<th>Move</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Steady</th>
<th>Miserable</th>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Insert</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Words</th>
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<td>1. Avert</td>
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<td>3. Compromise</td>
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<td>4. Implant</td>
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<td>5. Indignant</td>
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<td>6. Negligent</td>
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<td>7. Relocation</td>
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<td>8. Stabilize</td>
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<td>9. Unmitigated</td>
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<td>10. Wretched</td>
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Activity 5: Application of Vocabulary

Answer each question in 1-2 complete sentences. Make sure that you use the underlined vocabulary word in your answer.

1. Some people avert their minds from the troubles of others and just focus on their own lives. Others get involved and try to help suffering people. Which type of person are you? Why?

2. Which do you enjoy more: a story told chronologically or one with flashbacks and foreshadowing? Why?

3. Do you think things that compromise a user’s health — like cigarettes and alcohol — should be illegal? Why or why not?

4. Would you want a brain implant that connects your thoughts directly to social media? Why or why not?

5. People say, “Life isn’t fair,” but we still feel indignant when we witness unfairness. Why do you think that is?

6. While social media can be a positive element in a person’s life, there is also a lot of bullying and unkindness on social media platforms. What do you think can be done to mitigate the situation?

7. Some people think it is negligent to let middle school students walk or bike to school alone, while others think it’s an appropriate level of freedom for children that age. What do you think?

8. Do you think our government should pay for people to relocate to safety during a natural disaster like a wildfire or hurricane? Why or why not?

9. Would you describe yourself as having stable emotions, or would you say your emotions are easily destabilized? Explain.

10. On the Statue of Liberty is a poem that says, “Give me your tired, your poor,... The wretched... Send these, the homeless... to me.” What do you think the poet, Emma Lazarus, was trying to say about the United States?
Grade 10 Set A: Fitting In, Standing Out
FINAL ASSESSMENT: Cross-textual Thematic Essay

Essay Question: What is the price of following the crowd?

In this packet, you will find:

- a graphic organizer to help you prepare for your essay,
- a page of helpful hints to help you organize your essay, and
- the essay prompt with space to write.
Prewriting: Graphic Organizer

At the end of this distance learning text set, you will write a multi-paragraph essay answering the essential question: **What is the price of following the crowd?** After you have completed each reading assignment, use the chart below to help you remember how that text answered the essential question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>How does this text answer the essential question?</th>
<th>Text Evidence (include paragraph number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Cooking Time”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Wretched and the Beautiful”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“A Tense Calm on Brazil-Venezuelan Border after Anti-Immigrant Riot”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Why Do People Follow the Crowd?”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Helpful Hints for Writing your Essay

Multi-Paragraph Essays include:
- A **CLAIM** that answers the essay question
- **REASONS** that the claim is true
- **EVIDENCE** that supports the reasons
- **EXPLANATIONS** that describe how the evidence supports the reason and the claim

### MULTI-PARAGRAPH ESSAY STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Body Paragraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ● Claim / Thesis | ● Reason 1  
  ○ Evidence 1  
    ■ Explanation 1  
  ○ Evidence 2  
    ■ Explanation 2  
  ● Reason 2  
    ○ Evidence 1  
      ■ Explanation 1  
    ○ Evidence 2  
      ■ Explanation 2 |  |
| Conclusion | ● Summary statement |

### TRANSITION WORDS TO START A BODY PARAGRAPH:
- First (second, etc.),
- In addition,
- Another
- Similarly,

### SENTENCE PROMPTS FOR INTRODUCING EVIDENCE:
- For example,  
- For instance,  
- To demonstrate,  
- To illustrate,  
- In the text, / In the story ...  
- In [paragraph X], ...  
- When [X happens] / When [character Y does / says] ...  
- The author illustrates this when ...

### SENTENCE PROMPTS FOR EXPLAINING EVIDENCE:
- This means ...
- This illustrates ...
- This reveals ...
- This highlights ...
Essay Prompt: You have read four texts: “Cooking Time,” “The Wretched and the Beautiful,” “A Tense Calm on Brazil-Venezuelan Border after Anti-Immigrant Riot,” and “Why Do People Follow the Crowd?” Write a multi-paragraph essay in which you answer the essential question for this text set: What is the price of following the crowd? Be sure to include specific details from more than one text in your essay.

Directions: Answer the essay prompt in a complete, multi-paragraph essay. Use your graphic organizer to help you, and write your essay in the space below. Use complete sentences. Cite evidence when appropriate.
Why Do People Follow The Crowd?
By ABC News
2006

Dr. Gregory Berns, a professor of behavioral science, conducted several experiments for the purpose of answering an age-old question: Why do people follow the crowd? ABC’s Primetime recreated two of these experiments using several unsuspecting people. Skill Focus: In this lesson, you’ll practice identifying an author’s central idea and how they support it. This means paying attention to the evidence and reasons they give for their idea. As you read, take note of the details that support the author’s central idea.

It was a classic episode on the old Candid Camera show — people getting on an elevator and turning backward just because everyone else did, and we all laughed. We laughed again during the movie Mean Girls, when an act of teenage revenge — cutting nasty Queen Bee Regina’s T-shirt during gym class (an act meant to insult her) — became a school fashion trend instead.

It turns out the joke is on us. These two examples illustrate something that we humans don’t like to admit about ourselves: We follow the pack. Like birds in a flock or sheep in a pasture, we follow — sometimes at our own peril.¹

But why are people so conformist?² That is the question that Dr. Gregory Berns, an associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Atlanta’s Emory University, tried to answer in a recent groundbreaking experiment and paper.

Primetime set up its own demonstration recreating Berns’ work.

Failing a Test

We gathered a group of people together for a test of “visual perception.” The actual test was simple — to mentally rotate some 3-D shapes and compare them to see whether they were the same or different.

First, the volunteers wrote down their answers to 10 questions privately. But then they had to give the next series of answers out loud for everyone to hear.

¹. Peril (noun): great danger
². Conformist (adjective): behaving or thinking like everyone else rather than doing things that are original
But this test came with a twist. One of the participants, Jocelyn, was in on the experiment, with the answers in her hand. Everyone else had been told to follow her lead, except for one participant, Tony. He’s the only person in the room not in the know. He was being set up to see whether he would follow the pack.

When the group gave the right answer, Tony agreed. And when everyone gave the wrong answer — Tony still agreed.

Unwittingly, Tony had demonstrated Berns’ point precisely. The group’s influence on Tony profoundly altered the results: He went from 90 percent on his written test to 10 percent when he heard the others’ answers.

“You know, five people are seeing it and I’m not. … I just went along with the answers,” Tony said.

Tony wasn’t alone. Primetime put seven other unsuspecting test subjects on the hot seat. Barbara, for example, got 70 percent on the written test, but her score fell to 30 percent when she listened to others’ answers.

“I think I tend to do that, doubt myself when everyone else has their own opinion,” Barbara said.

David and Graham, unlike the others, gave the right answers, even when the group didn’t.

“I wanted to go with what I felt was the correct answer, and trust myself, and that’s what I did,” Graham said.

Social Graces

Primetime tried out another scenario, this time in a more social, relaxed setting. We invited a group of strangers to Jean George’s Asian restaurant in lower Manhattan for a fabulous dinner — and a surprise.

Party planner Colin Cowie and his friend, Donna D’Cruz, were in on the experiment. Their role was to exhibit outlandish behavior most people wouldn’t dream of while out at dinner with a group of strangers.

Cowie and D’Cruz licked their fingers, a dinner table no-no. Cowie picked his teeth. The guests initially seemed not to take the bait — until dessert rolled around.

D’Cruz told everyone they should pick up pieces of mango face first, using their mouth. Eventually, people who were total strangers at the beginning of the evening were passing fruit back and forth, mouth to mouth.

Only Harold and Maria, a Canadian couple, passed on the gustatory familiarity. Finally, Harold was the only one who dared to ask, what is the point of the dinner?

3. Unwittingly (adverb): without realizing; without being aware
Cowie explained the experiment to the group. "I think because we broke the rules, and we made things possible at the table, several of you followed suit with it."

One woman at the table said: "I think the majority of people will look to see what others are doing and follow their example."

**Conforming Can Have Dangerous Consequences**

Both of these tests are examples of our human need to conform. In fact, Berns' experiment is a variation of one done many years ago by another scientist trying to decipher an extremely vicious instance of conformity — why so many Germans followed Adolf Hitler down the path to death and destruction. Berns says there are two ways to explain conformist behavior.

“One is that they know what their eyes are telling them, and yet they choose to ignore it, and go along with the group to belong to the group,” he said.

The second explanation is that hearing other opinions — even if they are wrong — can actually change what we see, distorting our own perceptions.

Berns wanted to see what was happening in the brain during his experiment. Using an fMRI, Berns found that, during the moment of decision, his subjects' brains lit up not in the area where thinking takes place, but in the back of the brain, where vision is interpreted.

Essentially, their brains were scrambling messages — people actually believed what others told them they were seeing, not what they saw with their own eyes.

“What that suggests is that what people tell you — if enough people are telling you — can actually get mixed in with what your own eyes are telling you," Berns said.

And for those who went against the group, there was another intriguing result: Their brains lit up in a place called the amygdala, which Berns calls “the fear center of the brain.”

“And what we are seeing here, we think, is the fear of standing alone,” Berns said.

So why do people follow the pack no matter how ridiculous it seems? Perhaps it's not so much about good and evil, right and wrong, smart or stupid. It might be, as Berns' experiment suggests, that our brains get confused between what it sees and what others tell us.

Just knowing that might help us guard against it.

"Why Do People Follow the Crowd?" from www.abcnews.com, © ABC News. Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.

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4. **Decipher (verb):** to figure out the meaning of something that is unclear or difficult to understand
5. **Distort (verb):** to pull or twist out of shape; to give a misleading or false account or impression of
6. Functional magnetic resonance imaging or functional MRI (fMRI) is a procedure that measures brain activity.
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. Which of the following best describes a central idea of the text?
   A. The desire to fit in makes people display bizarre behavior at restaurants.
   B. People become embarrassed when it is revealed that they copy others’ behaviors.
   C. Experiments reveal that human behavior is greatly influenced by humans’ desire to fit in.
   D. The Nazis used behavioral experiments to trick German citizens into following immoral laws.

2. What is meant by the word “gustatory” as it is used in paragraph 19?
   A. acting strangely
   B. related to eating
   C. being reserved and polite
   D. following what others do

3. What is the relationship between the people who participated in the Primetime experiments and the Germans who followed Adolf Hitler?
   A. Both groups illustrate how following the crowd can benefit society.
   B. Both groups show that people’s actions are controlled by their need to fit in.
   C. Both groups reveal that people cannot be held responsible for following the crowd.
   D. Both groups demonstrate that some people will resist and do what they think is right.

4. Which piece of evidence supports the idea that some people can resist “the fear of standing alone”?
   A. “When the group gave the right answer, Tony agreed. And when everyone gave the wrong answer — Tony still agreed.” (Paragraph 8)
   B. “I wanted to go with what I felt was the correct answer, and trust myself, and that’s what I did,’ Graham said.” (Paragraph 14)
   C. “One woman at the table said: ‘I think the majority of people will look to see what others are doing and follow their example.’” (Paragraph 21)
   D. “Their brains lit up in a place called the amygdala, which Berns calls ‘the fear center of the brain.’” (Paragraph 28)
5. Summarize the article in 5-10 sentences.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. The author suggests that we don’t like to admit to ourselves that we will readily follow the crowd. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

2. The author suggests that the desire to belong is a very powerful — if not the most powerful — human emotion. Do you agree or disagree with this assertion? Explain your answer.

3. Why do people follow the crowd? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other art, media, literature, or history in your answer.

4. When is following the crowd helpful? When is it harmful? Explain your answer.
Anita Roy is a writer, editor, publisher, and storyteller whose work has appeared in numerous magazines and story collections. In “Cooking Time,” Roy invites readers to consider a world without some of the simple pleasures we take for granted. Skill Focus: In this lesson, you’ll practice analyzing theme. This means paying attention to topics or big ideas that come up in a text. As you read, take notes on how life is different without real food and consider what message the author is expressing in the story.

The minute the doorbell rang, I knew that something was wrong. The sound set my nerves jangling, as if it was plugged into my brain. My thoughts flew to the box in the basement, but before I could move, Marra had leaped up. “That will be Mandy,” she said. “About time, too.” She opened the door. Two men stood in the street. They had AgroGlobal written all over them: dark suits, short hair, clean shoes, mirrored shades.

“We’re looking for Miss Stella Jordan?” the first one said.

Marra looked back at me, worry in her dark eyes.

“You need to come with us,” he said.

I got up. “Can I just...”

“Now.”

There was no use protesting. I grabbed my bag and headed out.

There was a silver van standing outside. It looked so out of place in our street; like platinum dentures in a vagrant’s ruind mouth. “Nice wheels,” I said. Suit One gave a small, tight smile as he held open the door.

“Where are you taking me?” I asked as we pulled out. We drove past crumbling buildings and old iron staircases, bumping over potholes.

“Nothing to worry about,” he said.

That wasn't an answer, but it didn't matter. I knew anyway. There was nowhere in sector 87 to go, except for AgroGlobal.

1. Vagrant (noun): a person without a settled home who wanders from place to place
At that moment, all I felt was angry. I’d always known that Mandy’s obsession would get us into trouble. But would she listen? Never. She would just get that look on her face, biting her lip, her eyebrows drawn together in a line.

“I’m going to win, Stella,” she would say to me. “I know I can cook.”

The weird thing is, she could, you know? She really knew how to cook. Nobody from the Sectors had even seen real food in their lifetime. It was fifty years since the Dying Out, thirty since the last great food wars, and twenty since AgroGlobal crushed the last aquaculture smallholdings, and established itself as the world’s largest — only — manufacturer of artificial food. “Newtrition” they called it, which quickly got shortened to “Newtri.” “Newtri: Fueling the Future,” the ads say. “With over 70 great flavors to choose from, just squeeze and go!” No mess, no fuss, and, although I’d like to say no hunger, at least people no longer starved to death. We owed everything to AgroGlobal — and they owned everything. Governments, armies, energy production, manufacturing, media, health care, communications, travel — temporal and spatial — you name it, they owned it. Everything people needed, and people needed fuel, and we all needed Newtri. That’s not to say everyone was happy about it — I mean, look around you, right? But what choice did we have?

We all grew up on Newtri. Marra said us younglings were always clamoring for our tubes, but Mandy? She’d have just faded away if Marra hadn’t practically injected it into her. She was always the littlest of us; still is. We used to call her “2D” — turn her sideways and she’d vanish. I always had to remind her to fuel up. “Yum, roast chicken and beans, and apple crumble. Your favorite,” I’d say. She’d suck up a bit of her Newtri and then hand the rest to me while Marra wasn’t looking. I wasn’t complaining.

The driver took a right turn out of the Sector and onto the highway. I looked out at the dusty, ravaged land that stretched away on either side till it merged with the horizon, and thought back to that day two years ago when AgroGlobal TV had announced that the online Temporal Relocation Portal had gone live, and that the biggest show on the planet was about to be broadcast: MasterChef of All Time.

That was the day everything stopped. Schools closed, offices shut down, factories were silent — the skyways were empty, there wasn’t a single auto on the streets. Everyone was home watching.

It was the reality show to end all reality shows. Twelve specially selected contestants were sent back in time to battle it out every week for the ultimate prize: the Master Chef Golden Apron. In the words of Judge Cheng, “We’re not just talking real food, we’re talking about real cooking — you gotta work for it. You want to make fish? You got to catch the bugger first. You want to roast potatoes? You got to dig ‘em up. You gotta chop your logs and stoke up that fire before you even think about baking. You get me?”

It was a seriously great show. We all loved it; everyone did! But Mandy? She didn’t just love it, she was obsessed — she was addicted. She’d stare at the screen as if she was eating it with her eyes. She used to record every episode, and play it back in slo-mo, freeze-framing, and all the time scribbling away. There were stacks of notebooks and scraps of paper in her room. “Recipes?” I said to her. “I mean recipes? Seriously? What’s the point of recipes if you got no fragging ingredients.” And she’d give me that look again. It was like talking to a wall.

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2. raising animals and plants that live in the water for food
3. Temporal (adjective): relating to time
4. Spatial (adjective): relating to space
5. a doorway, gate, or other entrance
One day, we were sitting on the bed waiting for the show to start. I always got that fluttery feeling in my tummy when the music came on, and they showed those clips of contestants in past episodes cooking away all over the place: quail consommé in Victorian England,⁶ ragi paranthas in Harappa,⁸ an entire medieval⁹ banquet with roast suckling pig and sweet potatoes, and those langues de chat and petit fours¹⁰ in a Parisian salon. It was that episode when they went back to ancient Crete¹¹ and had a pressure test for calamari dolmas¹² on a bed of rocket and cilantro salad, and at the end of it, Mandy turned to me and said — and I remember this clearly, ’cause it was just the weirdest sentence I’d ever heard — “I would have caramelized¹³ squid ink for the vinaigrette.”¹⁴ I just looked at her. “What? It would totally bring out the feta,”¹⁵ she said, as if I was the idiot.

When the show was over, Mandy took me by the hand and stood up. “There’s something I want to show you,” she said. I followed her out of the room and down the stairs to the basement. She moved a pile of broken-down crates, and reached behind the pipes to bring out a battered old box. It had a long wooden handle, and the flaps on top hinged open showing neat drawers stacked on top of each other. Inside were an assortment of knives, metal spoons, a long, cylindrical thing made of wood, a pair of what looked like pliers with wire mesh at the ends, and all sorts of other stuff. “My tools,” she whispered. Then she took my hand and held it really hard. “Stella, I’ve put my name in for the tryouts.”

I really thought she’d lost it. Okay, so she had somehow — God alone knows how — managed to collect all these bits and pieces of junk, and she’d read just about everything she could lay her hands on about cooking, but was all just theory. All the other contestants, in the whole history of MasterChef, had been from the Elites. People who had money and resources — some of them even (so people said) had kitchens, not that they had much to do in them but play around with different blends of Newtri, but still. They came from a different world. She didn’t stand a chance.

I was so wrong.

She aced the tryouts. At fifteen, Mandira became not only the youngest contestant to compete on MasterChef, but the only one ever who wasn’t an Elite. Imagine, one of us, a girl from humble old Sector 87 up there on screen for all the world to see. Everyone went crazy. “Mandira the Marvell!” the headlines screamed. “Teen Cooks Her Way Into History!” Mandy became a star overnight.

She came back after a month, and she was glowing. Seriously! She literally couldn’t stop talking about all the food that she’d eaten: “Oh my God, Stella,” she’d say, “the peas. You pick them like this” — she pinched her fingers together and twisted — “and then pop the pods” — she flicked her thumb and index finger together — “and just eat them straight, and... oh... they were sooo...” And she’d put her fingers on her lips like she was remembering the sweetest kiss, and she’d be lost for words.

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6. a clear soup made from quail, a wild forest bird  
7. the time period (1837-1901) when the English empire was ruled by Queen Victoria  
8. Ragi paranthas are a breakfast pancake eaten in India and Pakistan; Harappa is a village in Pakistan.  
9. the time period in Europe between the fall of the Roman empire and the Renaissance — about 500 C.E. to 1300 C.E.  
10. Langues de chat (cat's tongues) and petit fours are French cookies.  
11. an island in Greece  
12. a dish made of octopus and served wrapped in grape leaves  
13. to add flavor by cooking or heating  
14. a dressing or sauce  
15. a type of salty cheese from Greece
A month later, the day the first round was broadcast, practically the whole block came over to watch. You should have seen her prep that halibut! Most people haven't even seen a fish — not outside Planet Ocean Aquarium anyway — but she had that fish deboned and on the slab as if she was born with a — what did she call it? — a lithium-ion fillet knife in her hand. What a party we had that night! And the week after, and the week after that, until all the contestants had been eliminated, one by one, and it was down to the final three: Jerome with the floppy hair, Sherna the big-boned girl from Sector 47, and our Mandira.

When she left early this morning for the shoot, she seemed a little distracted, I guess. I put it down to nerves — I mean, even Mandy has got nerves — but now I'm not so sure. Before she left, she took me to one side. “Stella, I'm going to beat them all. I'm going to win,” she said. It wasn't even a question. “Sure you are, Mandy. You're the best,” I said. And although I meant it, not just that she was the best cook, but that she was The Best, my best friend, it came out sounding pretty lame even to me.

But now as the silver van approached the shining steel gates of AgroGlobal headquarters, I wondered if she had meant something else altogether. A security guard scanned our ID chips and the gates slid open. The van drove up to the main gate, and my guys, the suits, got out with me. They walked me to the entrance, one on either side. A gray-haired man was waiting for us. He introduced himself as Professor Gulati, head of nutritional research, and shook my hand gravely. “Thank you for coming,” he said politely, like I had any choice. “We need your help.”

“Sure,” I said. “What's this?”

“I'm Mandira. She's a friend of yours, I believe. The thing is” — he coughed slightly — “she's disappeared.”

I felt like my brain had just fused.

“What do you mean? That's not possible, is it? I mean, isn't that supposed to be impossible? You mean... you've lost my friend?”

“Calm down, Miss Jordan.”

“I AM CALM!” I shouted. What about the tracker — the implants they had put in all the contestants before they entered the Portal? What about the safeguards and rules and scanning and regulations? There had been a ton of them, all ratified by international treaty. Nothing was allowed in or out of the Portal except the contestants. They were stripped and scanned before each episode. We'd had it drummed into our heads forever: messing with time was a serious business, and nothing, nothing could be allowed to destabilize the Chronologic. One little mistake and our whole present could disappear, vhooop, up its own wormhole.

“I was too busy freaking out to notice my surroundings, barely registering the long, gleaming corridors and glass archways. Professor Gulati finally stopped at a door and then held it open for me. “We'd like you to take a look at the footage,” he said. “Maybe you can spot something we've missed. You knew Mandira...”
I seriously didn’t like the way he was talking about her in the past tense.

“We think she may have been planning this.”

“She wouldn’t!” But as I yelled, a vivid picture flashed in my mind of Mandy, that stubborn, crazy look she had in her eyes and I knew: she would. She totally would. *Mandy, you idiot, what have you done?* I groaned inwardly. *You are in an insane amount of trouble.*

Inside the screening room, there were five or six other men and women already sitting around, waiting for me, it seemed. There were desks and a large screen. Professor Gulati ushered me into a chair, and then turned to a guy wearing headphones sitting at one of the consoles. “Roll the film,” he said, and then, as the lights went down he leaned across to me. “Rural Punjab, 2014,” he whispered. “All this is unedited footage. Shot this morning.”

Jerome looked a bit awkward in his long shirt, and he kept tripping on his baggy trousers, but Mandy looked really good on screen. She and Sherna were wearing long tunics and loose trousers gathered in folds around the ankles. Mandy’s top had little spangly mirrors and embroidery on it. It was really colorful against her cocoa-colored skin and she looked — well, I have to admit that skinny old 2D looked quite beautiful as she stood there listening to Judge Kumar explain the challenge. “Makki ki roti” and sarson ka saag lunch for fourteen. Forty-five minutes to prep, cook, and plate up,” he said. The presentation was what Judge Dingle called “fast an’ dirty,” but it still had to be spot on: the steel plates shiny, the tumblers filled to the brim with frothy jeera-spiced lassi, and the ghee had to be made from scratch. It was tough, but it was supposed to be.

Each contestant was at their cook station in a different section of the screen, shot at different camera angles. The clock was ticking, and my heart seemed to beat a shade faster as I noticed that Sherna was falling behind. Jerome was already dry-roasting spices to season his sarson ka saag, which lay in the bowl in a smooth, bottle-green swirl. Mandy was rolling a wooden spindle expertly between the palms of her hands to whip the curd for frothy lassi, but Sherna was still struggling to get the right consistency for her roti dough. I heard one of the judges mumbling off-screen, then out loud: “You might want to add a bit more flour, love. Thirteen minutes to plate.” She looked up, smearing one hand across her forehead and streaking her hair with dough.

“C’mon, c’mon,” I found myself muttering under my breath. Of course I wanted Mandy to win, but — well, it was impossible not to want them all to make it. I glanced back to Mandy’s corner of the screen — and it was empty.

There was a lot of commotion on-screen, people shouting and running, the camera careening around all over the place. And then the screen went blank.

When the lights came on, Professor Gulati turned to me. “Well, did you see anything? Anything at all? Something we might have missed?”

“I... I don’t understand.” I shook my head. “She can’t have just disappeared... what about the tracker?”

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18. a state in northern India
19. Indian flatbread made from corn flour
20. Indian dish made with mustard greens and spices
21. Indian beverage made with yogurt, ice, sugar, and spices
“We... ah... found the tracker...”

I winced.

“... but no sign of Mandira.” Professor Gulati stood up. “What about before she left? Did she say anything to you? Did you notice anything different in her behavior?”

I shrugged. “No.”

"Miss Jordan, you do realize the seriousness of what has happened? The Chronologic may have been compromised. We no longer know what might happen."

“Well, surely if something had happened, then, well — I mean, shouldn't we already know about it by now? Everything feels about the same to me. You're still here. I'm still here.”

They asked me all kinds of questions about Mandy, and I answered them all. Well, most of them anyway. But all I really wanted to do was get home, get back to somewhere dark and quiet where I could think.

It was late at night when they finally dropped me back. Marra and the others were relieved to see me, but I just couldn't face any more questions. I had a Newtri and then slumped off to bed. I lay there for hours, it seemed like, until the house was still and silent. Then I crept downstairs and opened the door to the basement. I moved the crates and reached behind the pipe. I pulled out the toolbox and opened it. Right on top lay a piece of paper. I unfolded it carefully and smoothed it out.

Dearest Stella,

I guess by now you know I've gone off-grid. I don't know if you'll ever forgive me, but I owe you an explanation. It's the least I can do. When I go to MasterChef today, I'm not coming back. I've decided I can't live like this anymore. You remember in school they taught us all about the Dying Out? Years before it happened, this guy called Einstein said that if the bees disappeared, mankind would only last another four years. Well, he was wrong about that. Maybe we would have died out if it hadn't been for Newtri, but we're still here — you're still here. I know all about the Chronologic. I know it can't be changed, but I asked myself why? Why can't we change history? I've been in the past, Stella, I've eaten fresh strawberries, I've bitten apples, I've tasted freshly baked bread with a hunk of creamy brie, I've licked tandoori chicken masala off my fingers and drunk peppermint sherbet.

Maybe I can't change anything — but I know I've got to try. Perhaps if people know what life will be like without the bees, they'll be able to do something about it. I don't know. All I do know is that I want to live my life — and if I can't cook real food, I might survive, but I think I'll die.

Look after yourself my darling Stella-bella. And know that I will always be

Your best friend forever,

Mandy xxx
I couldn't believe I would never see her again. That my friend — who I saw this morning — was not just dead, but that she must have died a hundred years ago. I tried to cry, but the tears wouldn't come. Instead, I found myself filled with this strange, insane, bubbling, uplifting feeling. The Chronologic was broken. Or if not broken, then at least cracked. And through that little crack, the light came in. Fragging hell, Mandy, what on earth have you started? And then I started to laugh, because I know that even though everything was exactly the same, nothing ever would be, ever again.
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. How does the character of Mandy contribute to the theme of the story?
   A. Mandy's decision to travel back in time shows the dangers of technology.
   B. Mandy's longing for real food shows that scientific advancement comes at a price.
   C. Mandy's escape from MasterChef shows that scientific advancements are useful to most people.
   D. Mandy's love of cooking illustrates that people should follow their dreams in spite of any obstacles.

2. Which detail shows the downside of technological advancement?
   A. “She aced the tryouts. At fifteen, Mandira became not only the youngest contestant to compete on MasterChef, but the only one ever who wasn't an Elite.” (Paragraph 24)
   B. “She totally would. Mandy, you idiot, what have you done? I groaned inwardly. You are in an insane amount of trouble.” (Paragraph 38)
   C. “They asked me all kinds of questions about Mandy, and I answered them all. Well, most of them anyway.” (Paragraph 52)
   D. “If I can't cook real food, I might survive, but I think I'll die” (Paragraph 56)

3. Which event on Earth led to the invention of Newtri?
   A. People didn't have time to cook a full meal.
   B. After the bees died, people started starving.
   C. After the forest fires, nothing grew on the land.
   D. People didn't appreciate real food and wanted something different.

4. Which detail best supports how Mandy's disappearance affected AgroGlobal?
   A. “What do you mean? That's not possible, is it? I mean, isn't that supposed to be impossible? You mean... you’ve lost my friend?” (Paragraph 32)
   B. “messing with time was a serious business, and nothing, nothing could be allowed to destabilize the Chronologic. One little mistake and our whole present could disappear, vroom, up its own wormhole.” (Paragraph 34)
   C. “Inside the screening room, there were five or six other men and women already sitting around, waiting for me, it seemed. There were desks and a large screen.” (Paragraph 39)
   D. “She and Sherna were wearing long tunics and loose trousers gathered in folds around the ankles. Mandy's top had little spangly mirrors and embroidery on it. It was really colorful against her cocoa-colored skin and she looked —” (Paragraph 40)
5. What is the theme or message about scientific advancements?
The Wretched and the Beautiful
By E. Lily Yu
2017

Award-winning author E. Lily Yu's short fiction has appeared in many international publications. This story, which was selected for The Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy 2017, asks readers what it truly means to be human. **Skill Focus:** In this lesson, you’ll practice analyzing theme. This means paying attention to topics or big ideas that come up in a text. As you read, take notes on how the people are reacting to the visitors, and consider what message the author reveals about society.

The aliens arrived unexpectedly at 6:42 on a hot August evening, dropping with a shriek of metal strained past its limits onto the white sands of one of the last pristine beaches on Earth. The black hulk of the saucer ground into the sand and stopped, steaming. Those of us who had been splashing in the surf or stamping rows of sandcastles fled up the slope, clutching our towels.

Once our initial fright dissipated, curiosity set in, and we stayed with the policemen and emergency technicians who pulled up in wailing, flashing trucks. It was all quite exciting, since nothing out of the ordinary seemed to happen anymore. Gone were the days when acting on conviction could change the world, when good came of good and evil to evil.

One of the policemen fired an experimental shot or two, but the bullets ricocheted off the black metal and lodged in a palm tree.

“Don't shoot,” one man said. “You might make them angry. You might hit one of us.”

The guns remained cocked, but no more bullets zinged off the ship. We waited.

At sunset, a pounding began inside the ship. No hatches sprang open; no rayguns or periscopes protruded. There was only the pounding, growing ever more frantic and erratic.

“What if they're trapped?” one of us said.

We looked at one another. Some of us had left and returned with the pistols that did not fit in our swimming trunks. A whole armory was pointed at the black disk of metal half buried in the beach.

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1. **Dissipate (verb):** to lessen or reduce
2. **Conviction (noun):** a strong belief
3. **Ricochet (verb):** to bounce off
4. A place where guns and ammunition are stored
The pounding ceased.

We conferred, then conscripted\(^5\) a machinist, who with our assistance hauled her ponderous cutters and blowtorches over the soft sand and set to work on the saucer.

We stood back.

While the machinist worked, any sounds from the saucer were drowned out by her tools. With precise and deliberate motions, she cut a thin line around the disk's circumference. Sparks flew up where the blade met the strange metal, which howled in unfamiliar tones.

When her work was done, she packed her equipment and departed. The aliens had failed to vaporize\(^6\) her. We let out the collective breath we had been holding.

Minutes crawled past.

At last, with a peculiar clang, the top half of the saucer seesawed upward. In the deepening dusk we could barely distinguish the dark limbs straining to raise it. Many monsters or one, we wondered.

“Drop your weapons,” one policeman barked. The upper part of the saucer sagged for a moment, concealing whatever was within.

From within the ship, a voice said in perfectly comprehensible French, “We do not have weapons. We do not have anything.”

“Come out where we can see you,” the policeman said. The rest of us were glad that someone confident and capable, someone who was not us, was handling the matter.

It was too dark to see clearly, and so at the policeman's command, and at the other end of his semiautomatic, the occupants of the ship — the aliens, our first real aliens — were marched up the beach to the neon strip of casinos, while we followed, gaping, gawking, knowing nothing with certainty except that we were witnessing history, and perhaps would even play a role in it.

The lurid glow of marquees\(^7\) and brothels revealed to us a shivering, shambling crowd, some slumped like apes, some clutching their young. Some had five limbs, some four, and some three. Their joints were crablike, and their movement both resembled ours and differed to such a degree that it sickened us to watch. There were sixty-four of them, including the juveniles.\(^8\) Although we were unacquainted with their biology, it was plain that none were in good health.

“Is there a place we can stay?” the aliens said.

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5. forced to help
6. **Vaporize** *(verb)*: to kill by turning into gas or steam
7. an illuminated sign
8. **Juvenile** *(noun)*: a child
Hotels were sought. Throughout the city, hoteliers\(^9\) protested, citing unknown risk profiles, inadequate equipment, fearful and unprepared staff, an **indignant** clientele,\(^10\) and stains from space filth impervious to detergent. Who was going to pay, anyway? They had businesses to run and families to feed.

One woman from among us offered to book a single room for the aliens for two nights, that being all she could afford on her teacher's salary. She said this with undisguised hope, as if she thought her offer would inspire others. But silence followed her remark, and we avoided her eyes. We were here on holiday, and holidays were expensive.

The impasse was broken at three in the morning, when in helicopters, in charter buses, and in taxis, the journalists arrived.

It was clear now that our guests were the responsibility of national if not international organizations, and that they would be cared for by people who were paid more than we were. Reassured that something would be done, and not by us, we dispersed to our hotel rooms and immaculate\(^11\) beds.

When we awoke late, to trays of poached eggs on toast and orange juice, headlines on our phones declared that first contact had been made, that the Fermi paradox\(^12\) was no more, that science and engineering were poised to make breakthroughs not only with the new metal that the spaceship was composed of but also the various exotic molecules that had bombarded the ship and become embedded in the hull during its long flight.

The flight had indeed been long. One African Francophone\(^13\) newspaper had thought to interview the aliens, who explained in deteriorating French how their universal translator worked, how they had fled a cleansing operation\(^14\) in their star system, how they had watched their home planet heated to sterility\(^15\) and stripped of its atmosphere, how they had set course for a likely-looking planet in the Gould Belt,\(^16\) how they wanted nothing but peace, and please, they were exhausted, could they have a place to sleep and a power source for their translator?

When we slid on our sandals and stepped onto the dazzling beach, which long ago, before the garbage tides, was what many beaches looked like, we saw the crashed ship again, substantiation\(^17\) of the previous night's fever dream. It leached rainbow fluids onto the sand.

Dark shapes huddled under its sawn-off lid.

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9. a hotel owner or manager
10. **Clientele** *(noun)*: customers
11. **Immaculate** *(adjective)*: perfectly clean
12. the idea that aliens are very likely to exist but have never been seen
13. French-speaking
14. an attack in which all people of one kind are killed
15. **Sterile** *(adjective)*: free from all living organisms
16. a part of the Milky Way galaxy where Earth is located
17. proof
Most of us averted our eyes from that picture of unmitigated misery and admired instead the gemlike sky, the seabirds squalling over the creamy surf, the parasols propped like mushrooms along the shore. One or two of us edged close to the wreck and dropped small somethings — a beach towel, a bucket hat, a bag of chips, a half-full margarita in its salted glass — then scuttled away. This was no longer our problem; it belonged to our governors, our senators, our heads of state. Surely they and their moneyed friends would assist these wretched creatures.

So it was with consternation that we turned on our televisions that night, in the hotel bar and in our hotel rooms, to hear a spokesman explain, as our heads of state shook hands, that the countries in their interregional coalition would resettle a quota of the aliens in inverse proportion to national wealth. This was ratified over the protests of the poorest members, in fact over the protests of the aliens themselves, who did not wish to be separated and had only one translation device among them. The couple of countries still recovering from Russian depredations were assigned six aliens each, while the countries of high fashion and cold beer received two or three, to be installed in middle-class neighborhoods. In this way the burden of these aliens, as well as any attendant medical or technological advances, would be shared.

The cost would be high, as these aliens had stated their need for an environment with a specific mixture of helium and neon, as well as a particular collection of nutrients most abundant in shrimp and crab. The latter, in our overfished and polluted times, were not easy to obtain.

This was appalling news. We who had stitched, skimped, and pinched all year for one luxurious day on a clean beach would have our wallets rifled to feed and house the very creatures whose presence denied us a section of our beach and the vistas we had paid for. Now we would find these horrors waiting for us at home, in the nicer house next to ours, or at the community pool, eating crab while we sweated to put chicken on the table and pay off our mortgages. Who were they to land on our dwindling planet and reduce our scarce resources further? They could go back to their star system. Their own government could care for them. We could loan them a rocket or two, if they liked. We could be generous.

Indeed, in the days that followed, our legislators took our calls, then took this tack. If they meant to stay, shouldn't our visitors earn their daily bread like the rest of us? And if biological limitations made this impossible, shouldn't they depart to find a more hospitable clime? We repeated these speeches over the dinner table. Our performances grew louder and more vehement after a news report about one of the aliens eating its neighbor's cat; the distraught woman pointed her finger at the camera, at all of us watching, and accused us of forcing a monster upon her because we had no desire to live beside it ourselves. There was enough truth in her words to bite.

18. Avert (verb): to look away
19. Wretched (adjective): very unhappy or unfortunate
20. Consternation (noun): feeling anxiety or upset
21. This means that the richer a country is, the fewer aliens it would take.
22. to sign into law
23. Burden (noun): a difficult responsibility
24. Appalling (adjective): very bad; awful
25. Rifle (verb): to look through something with the intent to steal
26. Scarce (adjective): limited
27. direction
28. a climate that is suitable or comfortable
It did not matter that six days later the furry little Lothario was found at a gas station ten miles from home, having scrapped and loved his way across the countryside. By then we had stories of these aliens raiding chicken coops and sucking the blood from dogs and unsuspecting infants.

A solid number of these politicians campaigned for office on a platform of alien repatriation, and many of them won.

Shortly afterwards, one of two aliens resettled in Huntingdon, England was set upon and beaten to death with bricks by a gang of teenaged girls and boys. Then, in Houston, a juvenile alien was doused in gasoline and set on fire. We picked at our dinners without appetite, worrying about these promising youths, who had been headed for sports scholarships and elite universities. The aliens jeopardized all our futures and clouded all our dreams. We wrote letters, signed petitions, and prayed to the heavens for salvation.

It came. From out of a silent sky, rockets shaped like needles and polished to a high gloss descended upon six of the major capitols of the world. About an hour after landing, giving the television crews time to jostle for position, and at precisely the same instant, six slim doors whispered open, and the most gorgeous beings we had ever seen strode down extruded silver steps and planted themselves before the houses of power, waiting to be invited in.

And they were.

“Forgive us for imposing on your valuable time,” these ambassadors said simultaneously in the official languages of the six legislatures. Cameras panned over them, and excitement crackled through us, for this was the kind of history we wanted to be a part of.

When they emerged from their needle ships, their bodies were fluid and reflective, like columns of quicksilver, but with every minute among us, they lost more and more of their formless brilliance, dimming and thickening, acquiring eyes, foreheads, chins, and hands. Within half an hour, they resembled us perfectly. Or rather, they resembled what we dreamed of being, the better versions of ourselves who turned heads, drove fast cars, and recognized the six most expensive whiskies by smell alone; whose names topped the donor rolls of operas, orchestras, and houses of worship; who were admired, respected, adored.

We looked at these beautiful creatures, whom we no longer thought of as aliens, and saw ourselves as we could be, if the lottery, or the bank, or our birthplace — if our genes, or a lucky break — if only—

We listened raptly as they spoke in rich and melodious voices, voices we trusted implicitly, that called to mind loved ones and sympathetic teachers.

“A terrible mistake has been made,” they said. “Because of our negligence, a gang of war criminals, guilty of unspeakable things, namely — ”
Here their translators failed, and the recitation of crimes came as a series of clicks, coughs, and trills that nevertheless retained the enchantment of their voices.

“— escaped their confinement and infiltrated your solar system. We are deeply sorry for the trouble our carelessness has caused you. We admire your patience and generosity in dealing with them, though they have grossly abused your trust. Now we have come to set things right. Remit\textsuperscript{34} the sixty-four aliens to us, and we will bring them back to their home system. They will never disturb you again.”

The six beautiful beings clasped their hands and stepped back. Silence fell throughout the legislative chambers of the world.

Here was our solution. Here was our freedom. We had trusted and been fooled, we had suffered unjustly, we were good people with clean consciences sorely tried by circumstances outside our control. But here was justice, as bright and shining as we imagined justice to be.

We sighed with relief.

In Berlin, a woman stood.

“Even the little ones?” she said. “Even the children are guilty of the crimes you allege?”

“Their development is not comparable to yours,” the beautiful one in Berlin said, while his compatriots in their respective statehouses stood silent, with inscrutable\textsuperscript{35} smiles. “The small ones you see are not children as you know them, innocent and helpless. Think of them as beetle larvae. They are destructive and voracious, sometimes more so than the mature adults.”

“Still,” she said, this lone woman, “I think of them as children. I have seen the grown ones feeding and caring for them. I do not know what crimes they have committed, since our languages cannot describe your concepts. But they have sought refuge here, and I am especially unwilling to return the children to you — ”

The whispers of the assembly became murmurs, then exclamations.

“Throw her out!”

“She does not speak for us!”

“You are misled,” the beautiful one said, and for a moment its smile vanished, and a breath of the icy void between stars blew over us.

Then everything was as it had been.

“We must ask the aliens themselves what they want,” the woman said, but now her colleagues were standing too, and shouting, and phone lines were ringing as we called in support of the beautiful ones, and her voice was drowned out.

\textsuperscript{34} Remit (verb): to return

\textsuperscript{35} Inscrutable (adjective): mysterious
“We have an understanding, then,” the beautiful ones said, to clamorous agreement and wild applause.

The cameras stopped there, at that glorious scene, and all of us, warm and satisfied with our participation in history, turned off our televisions and went to work, or to pick up our children from soccer, or to bed, or to the liquor store to gaze at top-shelf whisky.

A few of us, the unfortunate few who lived beside the aliens, saw the long silver needles descend point-first onto our neighbors’ lawns and the silver shapes emerge with chains and glowing rods. We twitched the kitchen curtains closed and dialed up our music. Three hours later there was no sign of any of the aliens, the wretched or the beautiful, except for a few blackened patches of grass and wisps of smoke that curled and died.

All was well.
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. How do the people’s reactions to the aliens in paragraphs 33-34 contribute to the theme of the story?
   A. Their reactions show that people resolve their differences through debate.
   B. Their reactions show that people attempt to help those who are trying to do what's right.
   C. Their reactions show that people do not help others if it means they have to sacrifice something.
   D. Their reactions show that the government, not private citizens, is responsible for caring for the needy.

2. Which detail from paragraphs 34-35 best supports the idea that people are annoyed by the aliens?
   A. “Now we would find these horrors waiting for us at home” (Paragraph 34)
   B. “Who were they to land on our dwindling planet and reduce our scarce resources further?” (Paragraph 34)
   C. “We could loan them a rocket or two, if they liked. We could be generous.” (Paragraph 34)
   D. “the distraught woman pointed her finger at the camera, at all of us watching” (Paragraph 35)

3. What do paragraphs 62-64 suggest about the humans’ response to the suffering of the aliens?
   A. They care more about their comfort and ease than the pain of others.
   B. They care more about easing the pain of others than their own comfort.
   C. They ignore the pain of others, especially when others have done bad things.
   D. They ignore the pain of others, especially when others are richer than they are.

4. What does the humans’ reaction to the “beautiful aliens” communicate about the humans?
   A. It is easy to believe someone or something that is mysterious.
   B. People are quick to believe in someone or something that feels familiar.
   C. People are quick to believe in someone or something that makes them sad.
   D. It is difficult to believe in someone or something that is similar to our enemies.
5. What is the theme of the story “The Wretched and the Beautiful”?
A Tense Calm on Brazil-Venezuelan Border after Anti-Immigrant Riot
By Inacio Doce Villamar
2018

In August 2018, Reuters news agency published this article about the Venezuelan refugee crisis. At the time, thousands of Venezuelans were seeking refuge in Brazil because of economic and political problems in Venezuela. The events in the article take place in Pacaraima, which is where Venezuelans were crossing the border into Brazil. Skill Focus: In this lesson, you’ll practice identifying an author’s central idea and how they support it. This means paying attention to the evidence they use to support their central idea, as well as the details they provide to clarify it. As you read, make note of the details about how the Venezuelans and Brazilians see the situation and how those viewpoints support the author’s central idea.

Pacaraima, Brazil (Reuters) — Fearful Venezuelan immigrants lined up in smaller numbers to enter Brazil on Sunday at the only border crossing between the two countries one day after violent protests by Brazilian residents drove hundreds back across the frontier.1

The Brazilian army, which reinforces security at the Pacaraima border post, said 1,200 Venezuelans, including women and children, fled back into Venezuela on Saturday when residents went on a rampage after the stabbing and beating of a local shop owner.

The angry demonstrators destroyed tents used by Venezuelans to camp out in the street near the bus station and set fire to belongings the immigrants left behind.

“The Brazilians came running with sticks and bottles. They burnt all our things, even the children’s clothes,” said Joana Perez, a 24-year-old mother holding a 6-month-old baby. “I’m scared. I don’t know where to sleep tonight or if there will be another attack. We lost everything. All I have is my ID card.”

The outburst was triggered by the severe beating of a shop owner by four alleged2 Venezuelan immigrants on Friday, the state government said. But police declined to comment and had still not found the suspects on Sunday.

Tens of thousands of Venezuelans have poured over the border into Roraima state3 over the last few years, fleeing economic and political turmoil4 in their country. The influx has overwhelmed the state’s social services5 and brought a rise in crime, prostitution and disease, and has sparked incidents of xenophobia,6 Brazilian government officials say.

1. Frontier (noun): border
2. Allege (verb): to claim that someone has committed a crime, usually without proof
3. the location in Brazil of the Pacaraima border crossing
4. Turmoil (noun): a situation with extreme confusion and lack of order
“About 1,200 Venezuelans went back to their country yesterday. The flow has restarted today but evidently there are less people coming,” Colonel Hilel Zanatta, commander of the army operation at the border post, told Reuters.

A Reuters photographer who crossed into Venezuela on Sunday morning to the border town of Santa Helena de Uairen said the streets were crowded with thousands of people seeking to leave the country but fearful of a hostile reception in Brazil.

Venezuela's government said the attacks on its citizens were fueled by xenophobia and called on Brazil to protect the immigrants and their belongings.

The Brazilian border state of Roraima repeated a call to close the border, which the federal government has refused to do for humanitarian reasons.

Instead, President Michel Temer announced after meeting with cabinet members on Sunday an increase from 31 to 151 in the contingent of soldiers helping keep order at the border and will speed up moving Venezuelan immigrants to other Brazilian states.

5. Social services are often provided by the government and include education, health care, police, and food.
6. Xenophobia (noun): dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries
7. Hostile (adjective): unfriendly
8. Human welfare
9. Contingent (noun): a group of people
Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. What is the central idea of the passage?
   A. The Brazilian government needs to add more soldiers to the states that border Venezuela.
   B. The Venezuelan government is blaming the Brazilian government for not protecting its own citizens.
   C. Tensions between Venezuelan immigrants and Brazilian residents increase as more immigrants cross the border.
   D. Tensions among Brazilian residents and the Venezuelan government increase as immigrants begin violent protests.

2. Why were Venezuelans crossing the border into Brazil?
   A. They were looking for better jobs in Brazil.
   B. They were looking for family members in Brazil.
   C. They were fleeing because of a lack of diversity in their country.
   D. They were fleeing economic and political problems in their country.

3. What was the effect of the Brazilian protest?
   A. The Brazilian government set up fewer soldiers and less humanitarian aid.
   B. Fewer Venezuelans went back to their country and fewer crossed the border.
   C. Fewer Venezuelans needed support and learned how to take care of themselves.
   D. The Brazilian government set up more aid on the border and provided resources for the immigrants.

4. Which piece of evidence from the text details what may have caused the riots to occur?
   A. “The angry demonstrators destroyed tents used by Venezuelans to camp out in the streets near the bus station and set fire to belongings the immigrants left behind.” (Paragraph 3)
   B. “The outburst was triggered by the severe beating of a shop owner by four alleged Venezuelan immigrants on Friday.” (Paragraph 5)
   C. “Venezuela’s government said the attacks on its citizens were fueled by xenophobia and called on Brazil to protect the immigrants and their belongings.” (Paragraph 9)
   D. “Instead, President Michel Temer announced... an increase from 31 to 151 in the contingent of soldiers helping keep order at the border” (Paragraph 11)
5. Summarize the article in 5-10 sentences.

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