**Read the passage and answer the questions below.**

Castor and Pollux

Retold by Alice Low

 Castor and Pollux were inseparable twin brothers. Their father was Zeus, and their mother was a mortal, Leda of Sparta.

 They were strong, athletic young men. Castor was renowned as a soldier and tamer of horses, and Pollux was an outstanding boxer. Both worshipped as gods by athletes, soldiers, and sailors.

 Castor and Pollux were among the Argonauts, who aided Jason in his quest for the Golden Fleece. But after their return, they had a dispute with two young men. A terrible battle followed, and Castor, who was mortal, was killed. Pollux, who was immortal, wept over the body of his twin. He cried to his father, Zeus, “Please let me follow my brother to the underworld. I feel that half of myself is gone, and the half that remains is but a shadow.”

 Zeus took pity on Pollux and said, “Though I cannot enable you to die, for you are immortal, I shall allow you and Castor to be together always. Together you shall spend alternate days in the underworld and on Olympus. And because of your great love for your brother, I shall raise your images into the sky. There you shall shine next to each other forever.”

 And Castor and Pollux became the twin stars, forming the constellation Gemini.

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. The passage attempts to –

1. explain a natural event
2. determine a solution
3. exaggerate a tale
4. solve a mystery

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which details in the passage support a problem/solution text structure?

1. became a shadow/aided Jason
2. Argonauts fought/brothers were worshipped
3. dispute with men/cried to Zeus
4. Castor died/Gemini formed

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Use your knowledge of prefixes and context clues to determine the meaning of the word “inseparable” in line 1.

1. unrelated
2. very close
3. not apart
4. disjoined

**Read the following passage and answer the question.**

The Ant and the Chrysalis

 An Ant nimbly running about in the sunshine in search of food came across a Chrysalis that was very near its time of change. The Chrysalis moved its tail, and thus attracted the attention of the Ant, who then saw for the first time that it was alive. "Poor, pitiable

animal!" cried the Ant disdainfully. "What a sad fate is yours! While I can run hither and thither, at my pleasure, and, if I wish, ascend the tallest tree, you lie imprisoned here in your shell, with power only to move a joint or two of your scaly tail." The Chrysalis

heard all this, but did not try to make any reply. A few days after, when the Ant passed that way again, nothing but the shell remained. Wondering what had become of its contents, he felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful Butterfly. "Behold in me," said the Butterfly, "your much-pitied friend! Boast

now of your powers to run and climb as long as you can get me to listen." So saying, the Butterfly rose in the air, and, borne along and aloft on the summer breeze, was soon lost to the sight of the Ant forever.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. The events in the passage are organized in—

1. chronological order
2. a process structure
3. a descriptive way
4. cause/effect

**Short Answer Response**

**Write the answer the question on a separate piece of paper.**

5. Name the genre and describe why the author made that choice. Use information from the passage in your description.

**Read the article and answer the questions below.**

**A New Basketball Gets Slick**

**By Emily Sohn**

Basketball players need more than strength, speed, and skills to be on top of their game. Technology, too, can make the difference between a slam-dunk and a stolen ball.

Now, technology and basketball seem to have collided, and some players are calling foul. At the center of the debate is a new type of ball introduced over the summer by the National Basketball Association. The NBA season began last week.

Basketballs used in NBA games have long had a leather cover. The new balls, however, are covered with a special kind of plastic. Spalding, the company that makes the new balls, insists that thorough tests during development showed that the synthetic covering performs better than leather does.

Experiments by scientists in Texas, however, seem to show otherwise. The researchers suggest that the plastic balls are less bouncy, more likely to bounce off course, and more slippery when moistened with sweat. These early experimental results suggest that this change in ball design could have a big effect on the quality of game play.

To compare friction, or the ball’s ability to stick to surfaces (such as hands), the scientists took measurements as they slid both old and new balls against sheets of silicon. Silicon is similar to the palms of our hands in its degree of stickiness.

When dry, the old leather balls slid more easily than did the new plastic balls. When moistened with just one drop of a sweat-like liquid, however, the plastic balls became a lot more slippery than when they were dry.

Leather balls actually became stickier with sweat. And they absorbed moisture about eight times more quickly than the plastic balls did.

“When the balls are dry, the synthetic ball is easier to grip, and when they’re wet, the leather one is much easier to grip,” says physicist James L. Horwitz of the University of Texas-Arlington.

To keep professional players from dropping the ball, it may be necessary to change and clean balls throughout a game.

Some scientists are urging the NBA to reconsider the switch until scientists finish further testing.

John J. Fontanella, a former college basketball player and now a physicist at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., belongs to that group. “The NBA,” he says, “should stick with the leather basketball for another year.”

Update: In December, in response to player complaints, the NBA decided to return to the original leather ball, starting on Jan. 1, 2007.—*E. Sohn*

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. The article compares--

1. players
2. plastics
3. scientists
4. basketballs

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Use your knowledge of prefixes and context clues in order to determine the meaning of “reconsider” in paragraph 10.

1. think further
2. experiment
3. look ahead
4. not use

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Which graphic organizer best reflects the structure of the text?

 **Read the passage and answer the question below.**

 My name is Andrea. Lately I have been working in a veterinary clinic with one of my best friends from high school. From the very beginning, we both knew we wanted to work with animals. I guess we just didn’t realize that it would take us so long to own our own clinic. Eight years of college is a long time, especially when you have a young girl at home to take care of. I suppose that if I weren’t married, everything would be even harder though. At least I am lucky enough to work at a place where I am content. It feels good to be able to help save an animal’s life. It was only an hour ago that a woman walked in with a bloody cat. She told me an automobile had hit it. I have worked with many injured cats before, and I knew exactly what to do. I remember when…

 My seventh grade year of junior high was very enlightening for me. I knew that ever since I was young, that when I got into junior high and high school, I wanted to take classes so I could be a vet. Back then, I didn’t know that these classes would be so vastly different. We were preparing to dissect frogs. I was a little afraid of what I might see. What if I didn’t know what to do? Would I have to change my career now? I was worried about numerous things. I guess I was just concerned that I was going to find out I couldn’t do what I had been dreaming of for many years.

 I walked into science class and sat at the table. The teacher brought out the frogs and distributed them. The room had an awful aroma. We pinned down our frog. Jessica and I decided to split the tasks. I let her start by taking the scalpel and cutting the poor amphibian straight down its belly.

 My thoughts were interrupted when the cat gave out a loud moan. I realized this feline was bleeding intensively. As it looked at me with those eyes of a helpless animal whose life was in my hands, I knew I would never forget the first time I looked at that frog. I knew that someday I would be saving creatures. The very first step of my occupation started in seventh grade. It was hard to believe everything I do everyday, all the lives that I save, and all the people that thank me for saving their beloved pets, all started out in my seventh grade science class.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. The flashback is evident when she is at—

1. the clinic
2. her home
3. junior high
4. veterinary school

**Read the chart and answer the question.**

 Britain wants to raise money and collect taxes

 British impose taxes

 Colonists protest taxes

 Boston Tea Party arouses anger

American Revolution

  U.S. gains large territory

 George Washington becomes a national leader

 Continental Army and Navy are formed

 A Democratic Nation is born

\_\_\_\_ 10. Which of the following contributed to the American Revolution?

 a. Colonists were upset.

 b. Britain went broke.

 c. U.S. wanted more land.

 d. The Navy attacked Britain.