

SPECTRUM[®]

Reading

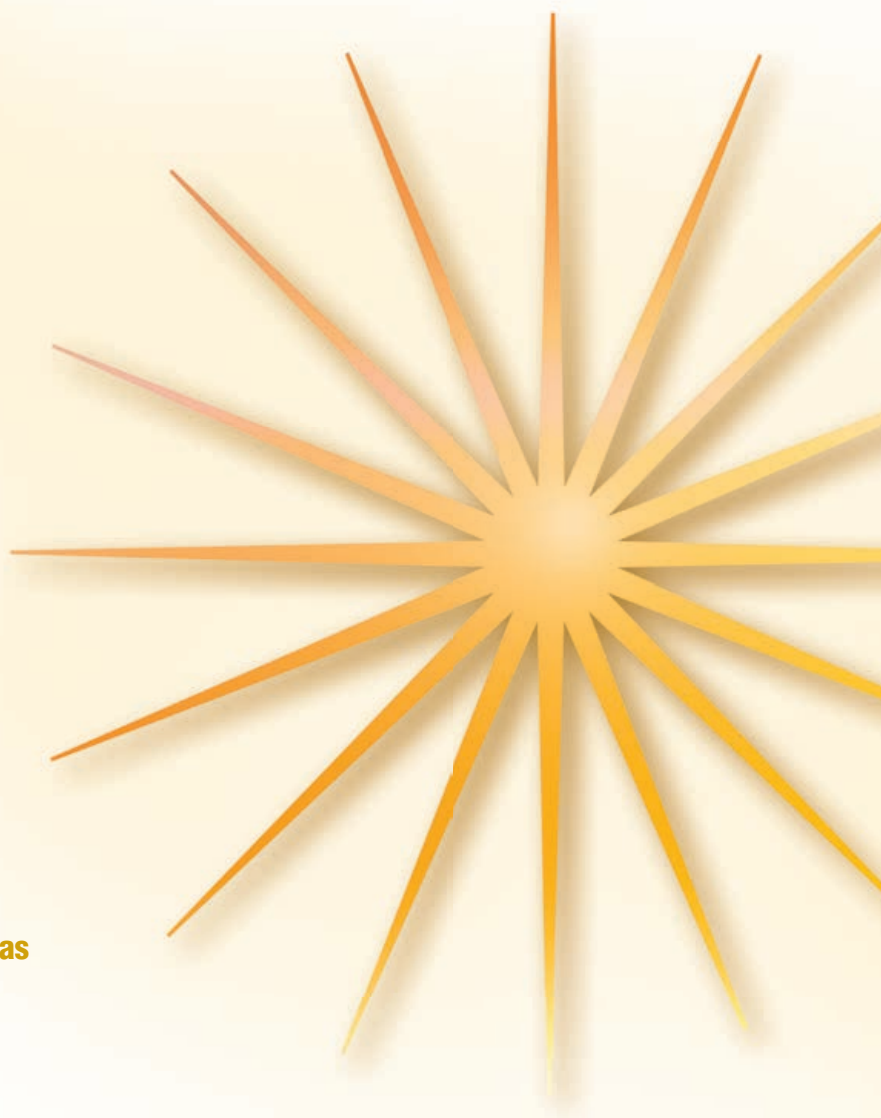
GRADE

4



Focused Practice for Reading Comprehension

- Fiction and non-fiction passages
- Theme and summarization
- Integration of knowledge and ideas
- Key ideas and details
- Answer key



A Morning in Maine

What would you like to see if you traveled to Maine?

1 “Cameron!” called Grandpa. “Are you awake yet? It’s almost eight o’clock. We’re wasting the day!” Grandpa stood in the doorway. He wore faded blue jeans, a checkered shirt, and a big grin.

2 “Grandpa,” groaned Cameron, “it’s the first day of my vacation. I never get up this early when I’m on vacation.”

3 “That’s because you don’t live in Maine,” replied Grandpa, opening the shutters and letting the sun spill across the bed. “There is so much to do here that you won’t want to miss a thing. Besides, I’m making blueberry pancakes. If you don’t get up soon, they may not last.”

4 “Okay. The pancakes convinced me, Grandpa,” said Cameron, swinging his legs out of bed.

5 “I had a feeling they might,” Grandpa chuckled.

6 Over blueberry pancakes with warm maple syrup, Cameron and Grandpa discussed their plans for the day. “I’d like to do some exploring this morning,” said Cameron, taking a gulp of milk. “Does that path next to the cabin go straight down to the beach? And how do you get to that little island with the pine trees? Do you think we could catch some fish for dinner?”

7 Grandpa laughed. “I thought there were a few things you might want to do today instead of sleep. Why don’t we go for a walk on the beach after breakfast? Later, we can go fishing on the island.”

8 “Sounds good to me,” said Cameron excitedly.

9 Cameron and Grandpa did the dishes. Then, they put on some old sneakers and followed the sandy path to the beach. The air felt crisp and warm. There was not a cloud in the sky.

10 Cameron was a few steps ahead of his grandfather. He stopped to look at a pool of water that had formed between some rocks. “Look at this, Grandpa!” shouted Cameron. “It’s like a miniature ocean.”

11 Cameron crouched down to get a better look. Grandpa peered over his shoulder. “There are so many little creatures in there,” Cameron said. “How did they get there?”

12 “It’s a tide pool, Cameron,” said Grandpa. “You’ll see them all along this beach. They are my favorite thing to look for on my morning walks. You see, when the tide goes out, water gets caught in shallow pools. It’s a pretty neat way to see a little slice of ocean life.”

13 Cameron nodded. “This is very cool,” he said. “If we had stuff like this at home, I might actually want to get up early. I have a feeling this is going to be a great vacation!”



Write **T** before the sentences that are true. Write **F** before the sentences that are false.

1. ____ Cameron is visiting his grandpa in Massachusetts.
2. ____ Cameron wakes up before Grandpa does.
3. ____ Grandpa makes blueberry pancakes for breakfast.
4. ____ Cameron and Grandpa plan to go fishing in the afternoon.
5. ____ Cameron and Grandpa have to drive to get to the beach.
6. ____ Grandpa finds the tide pool before Cameron does.
7. Name one thing Cameron wants to do when he goes exploring.

Write the words from the story that have the meanings below.

8. changed someone's mind

_____ Par. 4

9. talked about

_____ Par. 6

10. very small

_____ Par. 10

11. ocean water that moves in and out several times a day

_____ Par. 12

12. not deep

_____ Par. 12

13. This story is told in the (first-person, third-person) point of view.

14. Do you think Cameron lives near a beach? Why or why not?

A Slice of Ocean Life

What do you think you might see in a tide pool?

¹ You might think that the ocean is the only place in nature to find sea creatures. But if you visit the beaches of the northeast United States, you might get to see all kinds of ocean life in the miniature worlds of tide pools.

² Tide pools form when the tide goes out and ocean water is trapped in rocky hollows near the shore. Many different types of plants and animals live in these pools. The one thing they have in common is that they must be strong. It is not easy to survive in an environment that changes often.

³ High-level pools are shallow. They are the most difficult types of pools for animals to live in. The sun causes some of the water in these shallow pools to evaporate, or dry up. That makes the water even saltier than the ocean. On the other hand, when there is a lot of rain, high-level pools lose much of their saltiness. This can also be hard for sea creatures to survive.

⁴ Some animals have shells that keep them from drying out in the sun. A barnacle has a soft, slippery body that is covered with a hard shell made of tiny plates. Barnacles attach themselves to rocks. When sea water washes over them, barnacles open up their plates.

They use their legs to trap small bits of food from the water.

⁵ It is a bit easier for sea creatures to live in mid-level tide pools. The water is deeper there. The tide washes over them several times a day, so they do not become too dry. Creatures like the starfish and the sea urchin live in mid-level pools. Their sticky tube feet help them cling to rocks. This keeps them from being pulled out to sea by big waves.

⁶ Sea anemones, which look like seaweed, also live in mid-level tide pools. An animal that gets stung by the tentacles of a sea anemone finds out very quickly that it is not a plant.

⁷ Low-level tide pools often contain forests of kelp, a type of brown seaweed. The kelp provides a home or serves as food for many types of sea animals, such as small fish, worms, crabs, sponges, and sea urchins. Ocean animals are not the only ones who find a good use for kelp. People use it as an ingredient in ice cream.

⁸ The next time you have a chance to stroll along the ocean shore, be sure to keep your eyes open. You just might get to peek through a window into the world of underwater animals.



Circle the word that best completes each sentence and write it on the line.

1. Plants and animals must be _____ to survive in a tide pool.

weak large strong

2. When water dries up, it _____.

evaporates dies melts

3. Starfish and sea urchins have sticky _____.

backs eyes feet

4. Which type of tide pool is most difficult for animals to live in?

5. What is one way humans use kelp?

6. Check the reason the author probably wrote this story.

_____ to entertain the reader

_____ to give some facts about tide pools

_____ to teach people about ocean tides

7. What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

8. A barnacle is a _____.

9. Why are mid-level tide pools easier for animals to live in?

10. Have you ever seen a tide pool? If so, describe it. If not, tell what you would hope to find in it.

Grandpa's Light Show

What would you think if you saw colored lights moving across the night sky?

¹ Cameron and Grandpa were preparing for Cameron's parents to arrive for the weekend. First, they opened all the windows so the cabin would smell like the fresh ocean air. Grandpa did three loads of laundry, and Cameron helped him hang the sheets to dry on the clothesline. Then, they picked two buckets of blueberries. "Enough to turn our fingers and our tongues blue!" said Grandpa.

² It was just before dinnertime when Cameron's parents arrived. They were exhausted from their long drive and ready to relax.

³ "Wait until you see what we have planned for dinner," said Cameron, hugging his parents. He gave them only a few minutes to change their clothes and unpack before he led them down the path to the beach. Grandpa had already started a small fire in the fire pit.

⁴ "I had no idea you two were such good fishermen and cooks!" said Mom when she sampled the fish and the roasted corn. "This tastes wonderful! It reminds me of summers in Maine when I was a girl," she said, smiling and patting Grandpa on the knee.

⁵ "It gets even better, I hear," said Dad. "When's dessert?"

⁶ Mom, Dad, Grandpa, and Cameron were eating their blueberry sundaes on the porch when streaks of green, yellow, and purple shot across the sky.

⁷ "Did you see that?" shouted Cameron, jumping out of his chair. "What do you think that was? It looked like it could have been a spaceship or something!"

⁸ Mom began to laugh. "That," she said, "was the perfect ending to a perfect day."

⁹ "Those are the northern lights, Cameron," said Grandpa. "I'm so glad you got a chance to see them. Spring and fall are usually a much better time than summer to see them in Maine."

¹⁰ "Look, there they go again," said Dad, pointing to a flickering of pink and pale green light over the water.

¹¹ "But what are they?" asked Cameron.

¹² "I guess you could call them a colored light show in the night sky," said Grandpa. "You can only see them in the parts of the world that have high latitudes, which means the areas are closer to the poles. Tonight is a perfect night to see the northern lights because it is clear and moonless."

¹³ Cameron sat back down in his chair and picked up his bowl of ice cream. "Grandpa, I think I just might have to move to Maine. There is definitely too much to see here on just one vacation!"



Write **C** before the groups of words that describe Cameron and **G** before the groups of words that describe Grandpa.

1. _____ said that spring and fall are better times for seeing the northern lights
2. _____ thought the northern lights were a spaceship
3. _____ started a fire in the fire pit on the beach
4. _____ wants to move to Maine
5. _____ said blueberries would turn their fingers blue

Write **T** before the sentences that are true. Write **F** before the sentences that are false.

6. _____ Cameron and Grandpa bought some blueberries at the store.
7. _____ Grandpa picked up Cameron's parents at the airport.
8. _____ Dinner reminds Mom of summers in Maine when she was little.
9. _____ Grandpa has never seen the northern lights before.
10. _____ The northern lights are usually seen only in places with high latitudes.
11. Name one thing Cameron and Grandpa do to prepare for Cameron's parents.

Check the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence.

12. Cameron and Grandpa picked two buckets of blueberries.
_____ chose
_____ gathered
13. Cameron thought the northern lights looked like a spaceship in the sky.
_____ appeared
_____ stared
14. You can see the northern lights in parts of the world that are closer to the poles.
_____ long, thin sticks
_____ the most northern and southern ends of Earth

Mysterious Lights

What do you think causes the northern lights?

¹ Many years ago, people who saw waves of color dance across the sky at night were frightened. Some groups of people made up legends to explain what today is known as the northern lights, or *aurora borealis* (uh-ROAR-uh bore-ee-A-LUSS). Aurora was the Roman goddess of dawn, or early morning. The word *boreal* means *north* in Latin, so *aurora borealis* means *northern lights*.

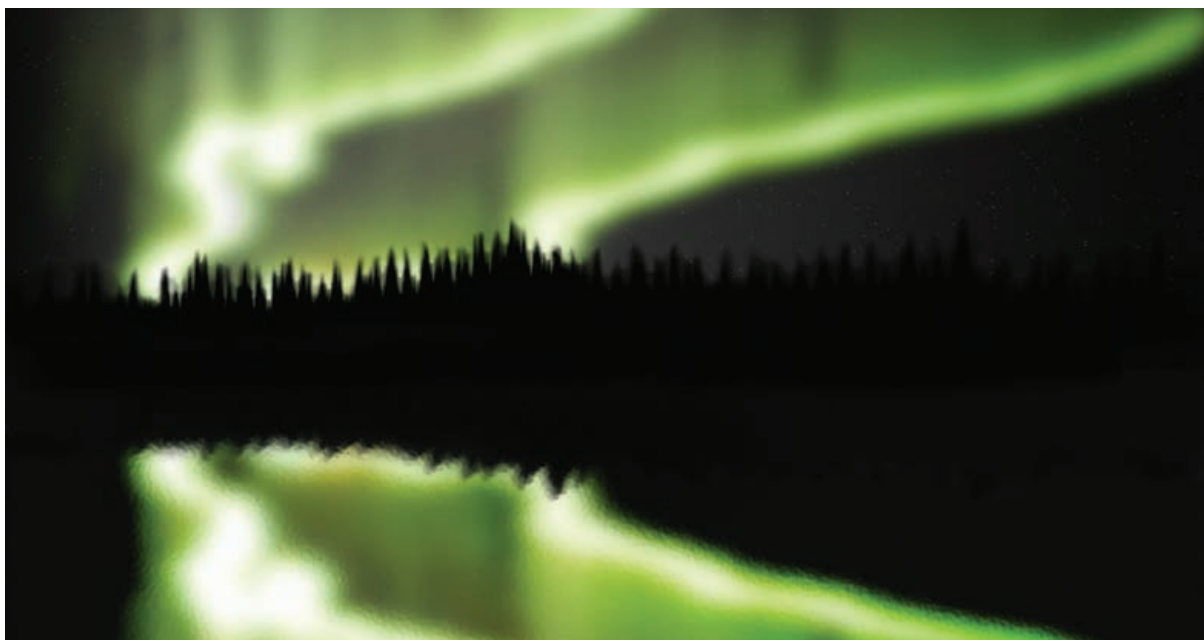
² The sun gives off particles that are filled with energy. Large groups of these particles travel together. They are called *solar wind*. The particles travel through space at hundreds of miles per second. Even traveling that fast, it still takes several days for the particles to reach Earth. When the solar wind gets close to Earth, it moves toward the two magnetic poles, the North Pole and the South Pole.

³ When the solar particles get close to Earth, they become trapped in Earth's atmosphere. They collide, or run into, gases in the atmosphere. The energy that is made in that collision creates light.

When lots of these collisions happen at the same time, northern lights can be seen from Earth. The northern lights are harmless, but it can be frightening to see the sky fill with flashing colored lights if you do not know what they are.

⁴ As far as scientists can tell, the northern lights do not make any sounds that people on Earth can hear. Even so, if you live in a place where the northern lights can be seen, you might notice problems with your television, radio, or cell phone every once in a while. The energy created by solar wind in the Earth's atmosphere can get in the way of sound waves and pictures that travel through the air to your TV or radio.

⁵ The northern lights are truly amazing, especially the first time you see them. Even in the highest latitudes, the lowest section of the lights are still 40 miles above Earth. The northern lights stretch up about six hundred miles into the atmosphere. Imagine what a light show you would see if you were an astronaut looking down on the northern lights from space.



Circle the word that best completes each sentence and write it on the line.

1. Some people made up _____ to explain the lights they saw in the sky.
paintings legends experiments

2. Solar particles and _____ collide in Earth's atmosphere to create the northern lights.
gases light ice

3. Scientists do not think the northern lights make any _____.
explosions steam sounds

4. In Roman myths, who was Aurora?

5. Toward which two areas of Earth does solar wind move?

6. About how far away from Earth is the lowest section of the northern lights?

7. Check the sentence that best states the main idea of the selection.

_____ The northern lights are amazing the first time you see them.

_____ Collisions of solar particles create lights in the night sky.

_____ The northern lights are also called *aurora borealis*.

8. Why do you think the northern lights can be frightening?

9. Why do the northern lights sometimes interfere with TV or cell phone reception?

The Land of the Northern Lights

What legends have you heard that explain something in nature?

¹ Many years ago, there lived a Wabanaki chief. He had only one child, a son. The chief often worried about his son. He did not see the boy run and play with other children in the village. Still, the boy would disappear for hours at a time. His parents were never quite sure where he would go.

² One day, the chief saw his son follow a milky white path up into the sky. The chief followed his son on the path but lost sight of him when he arrived in strange and unfamiliar country.

³ "Where am I?" the chief wondered aloud, as he stood looking around the strange land where everything was lit by a dim white light.

⁴ An old man with wrinkled skin and kind eyes heard the chief. "You are in the Land of the Northern Lights," replied the old man.

⁵ "But how did I get here?" asked the chief. "Where has my son gone?"

⁶ The old man placed his hand on the chief's shoulder. "You came here the same way I did," he said. "You followed the trail of the Milky Way. Your son comes often to play with our children."

⁷ "Please take me to him," said the chief.

⁸ The two men walked along until they came to a group of braves playing ball. The chief had never seen children playing ball before. He watched excitedly as they ran and laughed and tossed the ball through the air. Each brave wore a belt made of a rainbow. As they leaped and ran after the ball, lights in the colors of the rainbow swirled around them.

⁹ For a few moments, the chief could only watch as the children chased the ball and threw it in the air. Shimmering lights in blue, green, red, gold, and purple danced across the milky white sky. The brightest lights came from the chief's son, who moved quickly and easily among the other braves.

¹⁰ When the game had ended, the boy noticed his father watching him. "You are not angry with me, are you?" he asked the chief.

¹¹ "No, I am not angry," answered the chief, putting one arm around the boy's shoulder. "But it is time to go back to our village now. Perhaps you can teach the children to play the games you have played here."

¹² The old man sent two large birds to carry the chief and his son along the path of the Milky Way to their village. From that day on, whenever the chief and his son saw the northern lights, they thought of the children laughing and playing ball in the sky, the colors from their rainbow belts swirling around them.



1. Number the events below from **1** to **5** to show the order in which they happened in the story.

_____ Whenever the chief and his son saw the northern lights, they thought of the children playing ball.

_____ The chief and the old man watched the braves play ball.

_____ The boy's parents were worried about him.

_____ The boy asked the chief if he was angry.

_____ The boy followed the trail of the Milky Way.

2. The boy's parents were worried about him because _____

3. How did the boy and the chief get to the Land of the Northern Lights?

4. What were the belts the braves wore made of?

5. What do you think the boy taught the children in the Wabanaki village when he got home?

6. This story is a legend. What elements make a legend different from a regular story?

7. What natural event does this legend explain?

8. What does the word *brave* mean in paragraph 8? Use the context of the story to help you answer.
