

**SPECTRUM**<sup>®</sup>

# Reading

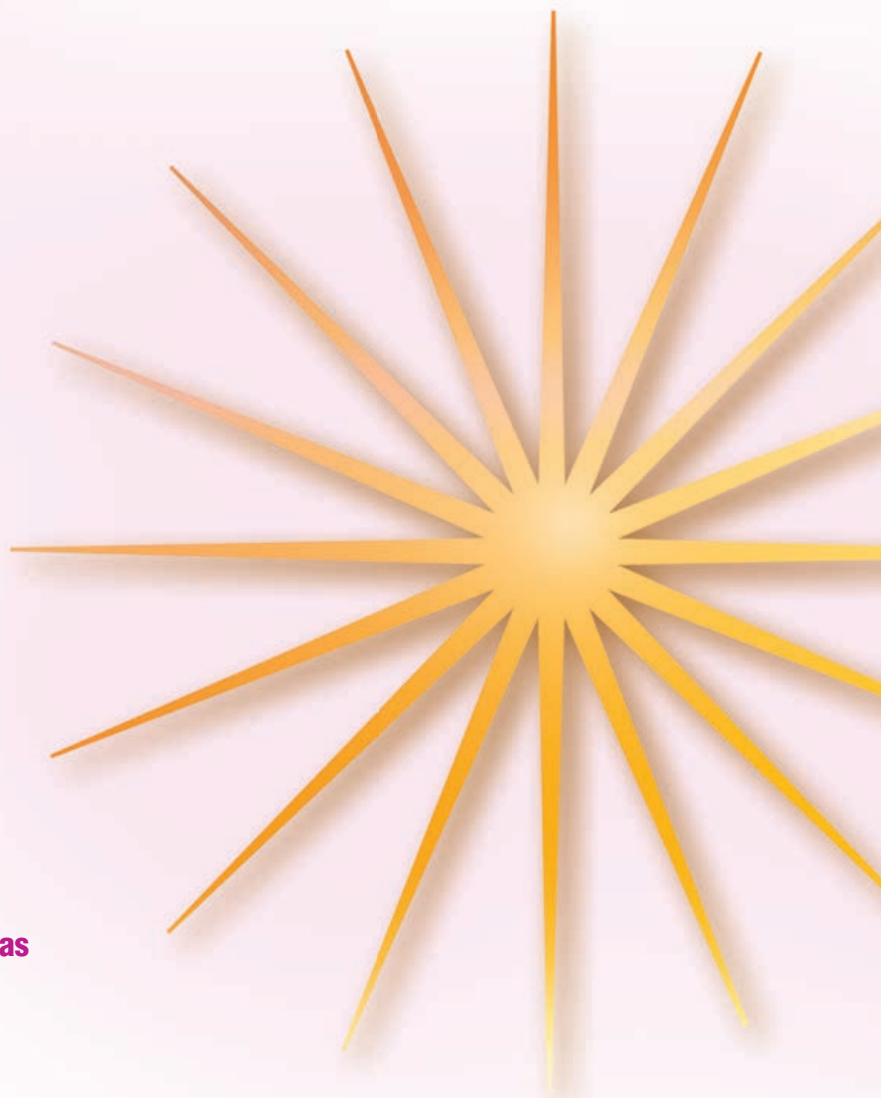
GRADE

**7**



## Focused Practice for Reading Comprehension

- Fiction and non-fiction passages
- Story structure
- Integration of knowledge and ideas
- Key ideas and details
- Answer key



# Cooking 101

*What is Kevin cooking up in class?*

<sup>1</sup> Kevin felt as if he had stepped onto the set of *The Super Cookie Bake-Off* or one of the other dozen or so cooking competitions he loved watching so much. Two long, stainless steel tables sat in the middle of the kitchen, and a variety of ovens, sinks, refrigerators, and cupboards lined the walls. He expected a host to walk in, introduce everybody, and announce: "Today, our chefs must create a meal using only shiitake mushrooms, grape jelly, taco shells, and capers. You have 30 minutes, starting . . . now!"

<sup>2</sup> Kevin smiled to himself, imagining the scene, and then looked around at the six other students in the class. Everyone was dressed in matching white chef's coats. Kevin began introducing himself to the student standing next to him, when Chef Mario suddenly burst through the door.

<sup>3</sup> "Hello! Hello!" he greeted the class. "Welcome to Cooking 101. As I'm sure you read in the description, we'll be concentrating on a couple of simple dishes today. Once you've mastered those, we'll move onto something a bit more complex. So, who do we have with us for this session?"

<sup>4</sup> One by one, each student shared his or her name, grade, and school. Then, Chef Mario passed out an egg to each student, along with some vegetables: green and red peppers, mushrooms, scallions, and black olives.

<sup>5</sup> "We'll start with a basic omelet," explained Chef Mario. Kevin felt a bit disappointed. He had imagined whipping up a complicated meal, something that had a sauce and meat and a couple of side dishes. An omelet seemed too easy.

<sup>6</sup> But then Chef Mario demonstrated his lightning-fast chopping skills. Next, he beat the egg into a frothy liquid with just a fork and some elbow grease. Then, he dumped the egg and vegetable mixture into a pan, added a few seasonings, and a few minutes later, the students were tasting a perfectly fluffy omelet.

<sup>7</sup> When Kevin tried to imitate what the chef had done, he was surprised at how long the whole process took compared to how quickly the chef had worked. In the end, the omelets he and the others students made were flatter and less flavorful than Chef Mario's creation. Kevin had to admit it: his omelet had a lot of room for improvement.

<sup>8</sup> Chef Mario explained why his omelet was fluffier, and he worked with the students as they attempted another omelet. With the chef's help, everyone's omelets were better the second time around, including Kevin's.

<sup>9</sup> "Great work, everybody!" said the chef. "We've done breakfast, so let's try lunch now."

<sup>10</sup> Chef Mario next showed the class how to make a turkey Reuben sandwich with coleslaw, Swiss cheese, Thousand Island dressing, and rye bread. He explained a couple of tricks that helped keep the coleslaw crispy and cool, while the turkey, cheese, and bread were piping hot.

<sup>11</sup> "That contrast in temperature makes the sandwich extra special," he pointed out.

<sup>12</sup> As with his omelet, Kevin's attempt at the Reuben was less than perfect, but he knew practice would make him better.

<sup>13</sup> At the end of class, Chef Mario thanked everyone for coming. As he told the students that he looked forward to the next session, Kevin pictured himself at home on Saturday afternoon. He saw himself standing at the stove in his own kitchen, dressed in an apron, with his parents waiting at the table.

<sup>14</sup> "Order up!" he would shout, and he'd set his culinary creations in front them. Perhaps the sandwiches wouldn't be perfect enough to win on a cooking show, but they would be perfectly delicious just the same.



1. Is this story fiction or nonfiction? Explain how you know.

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2. What two dishes were taught in the cooking class?

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3. How many students were in the class altogether? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7

\_\_\_\_\_ 11

\_\_\_\_\_ 9

\_\_\_\_\_ This information is not in the story.

4. Which sentence below is a direct quote by Chef Mario from story? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ We'll start with a basic omelet.

\_\_\_\_\_ My omelet was fluffier because I whipped it longer with a fork.

\_\_\_\_\_ It's important to keep the coleslaw crisp and cool.

\_\_\_\_\_ Thanks for coming!

5. Why do you think Kevin signed up for a cooking class? Cite evidence from the story to support your answer.

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6. The author states that Kevin "... knew practice would make him better." Describe an experience of your own in which practice made you better at a particular skill.

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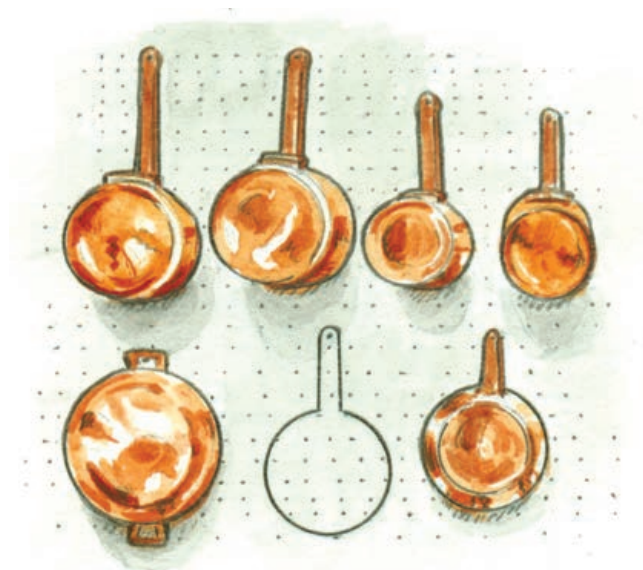
# Julia Child

*How did an American-born woman become the French Chef?*

<sup>1</sup> Julia McWilliams, who would later in life be known around the world as the French Chef Julia Child, was born in Pasadena, California, in 1912. She was an active, athletic young woman who played tennis, golf, and basketball, but cooking was not yet on her mind. She mostly aspired to be a writer, and so, when she graduated from Smith College in 1934, it was with a degree in English. Julia headed to New York City and began a career in advertising as a copywriter.

<sup>2</sup> The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 brought the United States into World War II. Like many other Americans, Julia wanted to serve her country. She attempted to enlist in either the Army or the Navy, but her height of six feet two inches was deemed too tall for either service. Instead, Julia found a job with the Office of Strategic Services, or the OSS, known today as the CIA. She began as a typist, but she quickly rose in the ranks due to her intelligence and drive. Soon Julia was working as a top researcher, answering to General Donovan, head of the OSS.

<sup>3</sup> Julia's assignments took her to China and other Asian nations. While stationed in Ceylon (now called *Sri Lanka*), she met another OSS employee, the man who would become her life-long best friend and husband: Paul Child. The two were married in 1946. Two years later, they moved to Paris, France, and Julia Child's culinary life began.



<sup>4</sup> After eating at France's oldest restaurant, La Couronne, Julia had a revelation. She described the experience as "an opening up of the soul and spirit for me." She knew food and cooking were her passions, and she pursued her passion by enrolling in the world-famous Le Cordon Bleu cooking school. She also worked privately with master chefs and joined a women's cooking club.

<sup>5</sup> Through the cooking club, Julia met two French women who were working to compile a master volume of French recipes. They hoped that Julia would be able to work with them to make the book appealing to Americans. With her experiences as a cook, an English major, and an American citizen, she seemed to be the perfect candidate.

<sup>6</sup> The women worked together on the book for 10 years. Several times it was rejected for being too big or too much like an encyclopedia. But finally, in 1961, the massive, 726-page *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was published in the United States. It seemed an unlikely candidate for popular success. However, the cookbook was critically acclaimed and topped the bestseller lists. French cooking swept the nation.

<sup>7</sup> By then, Julia and Paul lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Based on the popularity of her book, Julia was invited to cook live on the air as a guest on a public television show in Boston. Her segment was so popular, the station decided to invite her back to host her own cooking show. Today, entire TV networks are dedicated to airing cooking and food-related programming. But in 1963, this idea was brand new. *The French Chef* debuted to immediate success, and the era of cooking shows was born.

<sup>8</sup> Julia's show ran for the next 10 years. She continued writing, making public appearances, and, of course, cooking for the rest of her life. When Julia Child died in 2004, a couple of days shy of her 92nd birthday, she was arguably the most famous chef—French or otherwise—in the entire world.

1. Which genre of nonfiction best describes the text? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ autobiography

\_\_\_\_\_ biography

\_\_\_\_\_ historical nonfiction

\_\_\_\_\_ essay

2. How did the author organize the information in the text? Do you think this was a good choice? Why or why not?

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3. Reread the focus question below the title. Write a few sentences that answer the question, based on information from the text.

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4. Why did Julia Child and her co-writers have trouble publishing *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*?

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5. Which of the following statements is true? Place a checkmark on the line of the true statement.

\_\_\_\_\_ From the time she was young, Julia Child always dreamed of being a famous chef.

\_\_\_\_\_ Julia Child worked as a spy for the CIA during World War II.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was the book that inspired Julia Child to become a chef.

\_\_\_\_\_ Julia Child's first television show was called *The French Chef*.

6. What are you passionate about? How do you pursue your passions?

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# Julia's Famous French Bread

*What steps will lead you to a delicious baguette?*

Equipment needed:

electric mixer with bowl, baking sheet, linen towel, baking stone, oven

Ingredients:

- 1 packet of instant yeast
- $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups all-purpose flour
- $2\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups warm water (approximately 125°)

Preparation time: approximately 10 hours

Directions:



1. In a mixing bowl, combine the yeast,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups of flour, and the salt. Using a flat beater in the electric mixer, mix the ingredients on low for about half a minute.
2. Continue mixing on low as you pour in the water.
3. After the dough has just begun to thicken, clean off the flat beater, and replace it with a dough hook. Mix in the remaining cup of flour, adding a little at a time until you have a soft, smooth dough that is a bit sticky. It should take about 5 minutes, and you may not need all the flour.
4. Remove the dough from the bowl and set it aside while you clean and dry the bowl.
5. Place the dough back in the bowl, and allow it to rise at room temperature for about 3 hours. When it has finished rising, the dough should be about 3-4 times its original size.
6. Using your fist, push down the dough into the bowl several times to deflate it. Then, reform the dough into a ball and place it back into the bowl. Let the dough rise again at room temperature for a couple of hours. When the dough is ready, it will be about  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 times the original size.
7. While the dough is rising, place a linen towel onto a baking sheet, and rub flour into the towel's fabric.
8. Once the dough has finished rising for the second time, divide it into several equal pieces, depending on how large you want your finished loaves to be. Shape each loaf, and place all of them on the towel-covered baking sheet. Loosely cover the loaves and let them rise for a third time, for approximately 2 hours.
9. Preheat your oven to 450°. Place a baking stone on the center rack and allow it to heat with the oven.
10. Once the loaves have finished rising for the last time, slash each loaf diagonally across the top 2 or 3 times. Spray the loaves with water. Then, place the loaves onto the preheated baking stone.
11. Bake the loaves for about 25 minutes, or until they are golden brown. While they are baking, spray the loaves lightly with water 3 times at approximately 5-minute intervals.
12. Allow the loaves to cool for a couple of hours before you try to cut them.
13. Enjoy your delicious baguettes!

1. Identify the author's main purpose for writing the text. Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ entertain                      \_\_\_\_\_ inform

\_\_\_\_\_ convince                      \_\_\_\_\_ explain

2. How does the text's organizational structure support the author's purpose?

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3. Why do you think the ingredients list is placed near the beginning of the text rather than near the end?

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4. Approximately how much time does the dough need to rise in total? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 hours                      \_\_\_\_\_ 7 hours

\_\_\_\_\_ 5 hours                      \_\_\_\_\_ 10 hours

5. Which step occurs immediately after the third and final rising of the dough? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ Shape the dough into loaves.                      \_\_\_\_\_ Place the loaves into the oven.

\_\_\_\_\_ Slash the loaves diagonally.                      \_\_\_\_\_ Spray the loaves with water.

6. Describe a time when you followed steps to complete a process. Were the steps clearly described? Was the end result a success?

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# Take a Hike, Allergies!

*What food allergies are most common and what happens when people consume food they are allergic to?*

<sup>1</sup> As Georgia's scout troop gathers to plan their meals for the upcoming hike through Pennsylvania, Jessica yells excitedly, "Of course we'll need trail mix!"

<sup>2</sup> The other girls laugh, but Georgia groans inwardly. She knows she has to once again educate her friends about her peanut allergy. Having a severe allergic reaction on the trail—in the middle of nowhere—would be a catastrophe.

<sup>3</sup> Luckily, their scout leader, Michelle, is prepared to negotiate the issue. "Trail mix sounds like a great idea, but we'll have to be careful to keep everyone in mind as we're planning our meals. Georgia is allergic to peanuts, and Angela is allergic to eggs."

<sup>4</sup> Georgia's head snaps up to look at Angela. She didn't know another girl in their troop had allergies.

<sup>5</sup> "Yeah, sorry," says Angela. "I don't mean to cause problems, but when I eat eggs, I have serious physical reactions. My mouth and lips swell right away. I can actually go into anaphylaxis, which means I have trouble breathing because my throat swells up, my blood pressure drops, and I might even pass out. Eggs make me feel really sick to my stomach, too."

<sup>6</sup> Michelle adds, "We'll definitely leave eggs and peanuts off the menu, but we'll have to be very careful about the ingredients in all the foods we take with us. Sometimes foods have eggs or peanuts listed as ingredients, and you never would have guessed they would be in there."

<sup>7</sup> "For me," explains Georgia, "it's always best if a product notes right on the packaging that it was made in a peanut-free facility. Even the tiniest trace of peanuts immediately stuffs up my nose and makes it hard for me to breathe, and I start wheezing. My body also swells, and I get covered with big raised bumps called *hives*. I *really* don't want this to happen to me when we are a day's hike away from the nearest town."

<sup>8</sup> "So, this will be a challenge," Jessica says thoughtfully, "but we can do it. Let's get started on our menus! I wish I knew more about food allergies now, though."

<sup>9</sup> "I've been reading about allergies," replies Michelle. "An allergic reaction happens because the body thinks certain foods are trying to harm it. The most common allergens are eggs, fish, milk, tree nuts, peanuts, shellfish, soy, and wheat. Most allergens are proteins. Let's get our menu finished, and then we can talk some more about food allergies. This is an important conversation, because we have to be prepared to handle any emergency we encounter on the trail. Allergic reactions are definitely among these emergencies that could come up."

<sup>10</sup> Jessica whips out a pen. Poised to write, she asks the girls, "What would you like in your trail mix, then?"

<sup>11</sup> "Definitely not peanuts. Or hard-boiled eggs," Rachel declares and giggles at the thought of hard-boiled eggs in their trail mix. Georgia breathes a huge sigh of relief, because her friends are happily embracing the challenge to make sure everyone stays healthy on their hike. Now that she doesn't have to worry about annoying everyone in her troop, her mind turns to wondering if her friends might like cranberries in their trail mix, like she does.

<sup>12</sup> After the menus are finally completed, Erin, who is usually the quietest in the group, begins bouncing excitedly in her seat. "You know," she says, "we came up with a much better menu than we would have if you guys didn't have allergies. We are going to have an amazing time and eat some amazing food, too!"

<sup>13</sup> Everyone smiles as they nod their heads in agreement.





1. Sometimes authors have more than one purpose for writing a text. Did this text have more than one purpose? Explain your answer.

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2. What was Georgia allergic to? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ cranberries      \_\_\_\_\_ peanuts  
\_\_\_\_\_ eggs              \_\_\_\_\_ milk

3. What is *anaphylaxis*? Use context clues from the text for your answer.

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4. What is the conflict in this story? How is it resolved?

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5. Who is Michelle? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ Georgia's best friend                      \_\_\_\_\_ scout leader  
\_\_\_\_\_ the girl who is allergic to eggs                      \_\_\_\_\_ Angela's mother

6. What steps could you take to help a friend or classmate with a severe food allergy stay healthy and safe?

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# Let's Move

*How does the First Lady's fitness and nutrition plan encourage children to take responsibility for their own good health?*

<sup>1</sup> What were you doing at 4:30 or 5:00 this morning? As most people slept, Michelle Obama was probably starting her daily workout and waiting for her husband, President Barack Obama, to join her. Michelle Obama prefers to begin each day with exercise. Many First Ladies over the years picked a particular cause or two to promote while in the White House. Lady Bird Johnson led beautification campaigns, saying that "where flowers bloom, so does hope." Barbara Bush led a push for literacy, encouraging families to read to their children. In 2010, Michelle Obama launched a campaign that fit well with her interests in a healthy lifestyle: Let's Move!

<sup>2</sup> The goal of Let's Move is "solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation." In the United States, one in five children of school age is obese. One child in three is overweight. Contributors to this epidemic include sugary snacks, larger portions, and time spent sitting in front of electronic devices. At an event in Miami, Florida, Mrs. Obama noted, "Everybody here knows that kids who eat well and stay active tend to have better grades. They have better attendance. They have fewer disciplinary problems at school."

<sup>3</sup> The program encourages children to take five actions steps. They are:

1. Move every day
2. Try new fruits and vegetables
3. Drink lots of water
4. Do jumping jacks to break up TV time
5. Help make dinner.

<sup>4</sup> The campaign requires children to be active for 60 minutes each day. This can happen on playgrounds, in parks, in school, and at home with their families. The 60 minutes of activity doesn't have to happen all at one time. If children are watching TV or playing a computer game, they should take breaks. During these breaks, they can do some jumping jacks, push-ups, or run up and down stairs. They can walk around the block after supper with their families. Some families even assign activities during ads. For example, everyone must do ten sit-ups, ten

push-ups, and ten jumping jacks before sitting down to watch the end of a program. Young people can earn achievement awards for being active, such as the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Obama has worked with families, schools, and community leaders to encourage children to pursue outside activities. She has also encouraged the development of recreational areas. As part of Let's Move, the First Lady made appearances on TV comedy shows and news programs. She posted videos online and asked Americans to show how they are being active. She shared healthy recipes on social media sites. Many people used the hash tag #LetsMove, including the President and Vice President!

<sup>6</sup> Let's Move helps children learn to think about what they eat. It helps them actively plan meals and budget for shopping. They buy food that is healthier than what they might normally choose. And some children even grow their own food! They plant their own gardens to ensure that they have fresh vegetables ready right at home. Instead of salty or sugary high-calorie foods, they are urged to have a fruit or vegetable with every snack or meal. They learn to add variety by trying new foods and new combinations of foods, such as smoothies. Children are most likely to be successful if they plan meals with their families, choose their own ingredients, and discover exciting new recipes. As they make their own choices, they become more likely to be successful.



1. Who started the Let's Move campaign? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following is NOT one the five action steps for Let's Move? Place a checkmark on the line of the correct answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ Drink lots of water.

\_\_\_\_\_ Try new fruits and vegetables.

\_\_\_\_\_ Plant a garden.

\_\_\_\_\_ Help make dinner.

3. List three ways Michelle Obama promoted the Let's Move campaign.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Write a sentence describing the main idea of the selection.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does the author have a positive or negative point of view about the Let's Move campaign? How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What evidence does the author cite to support the idea that the Let's Move campaign is important?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you think the Let's Move campaign is having a positive affect on American children? Why or why not?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_