Grade 5 – English Language Arts

This task asks students to read a paragraph in a passage, determine the meaning of a key word, and identify evidence in the text that supports their answer.

Read the passage below – "Life in the Limbs" by Heather Kaufman-Peters.

Then answer these questions. (Answers to questions follow text.)

QUESTION:

Part A: What is the purpose of the braces described in paragraph 6 of the article?

A. They fix broken tree limbs, so a tree house will not fall down.

B. They lock several trees together, so almost any kind of tree can be used.

C. They join two trees into one unit, so a tree house looks secure.

D. They help trees hold up a tree house, so the trees will not break.

Part B: Which <u>two</u> details from the article help support the answer to Part A?

A. "Designing unique tree houses may sound tough, but Jonathan says it's no sweat."

B. "'Hardwoods such as oak, maple, or hickory make the best trees for houses – but I did once build a wonderful tree house in a crabapple tree.'"

C. "'My tree house is in two trees – an oak and a fir – and has three posts to support the weight.'"

D. "As a certified arborist, Jonathan tries to never harm the trees."

E. "The tree's center of gravity is at the top and the ends of its branches, so I build a house down at the center of the tree…"

F. "The tree grows over the artificial limbs, and they become part of the tree,…"

Life in the Limbs

By Heather Kaufman-Peters

1. Imagine stepping out your front door to find yourself 40 feet above the ground overlooking a dense forest and a winding stream. Instead of hopping on your bike, you grab the handles of your very own zipline and fly 1000 yards over a pond, landing safely on the far bank.

2. Sound crazy? Not to Jonathan Fairoaks, who lives in a four-story tree house that he designed and built! In fact, as a tree house architect, Jonathan has built more than 380 custom tree houses across the United States.

3. Jonathan's love of tree-house living began when he was a kid. He started climbing trees when he was 10 years old, and he became an arborist (a person who cares for trees) in high school. He built his first tree house and lived in it while he was in college.

4. "It was delightful—like being on a ship because it moved with the wind," Jonathan says. "It was the most fun I ever had."

5. Designing unique tree houses may sound tough, but Jonathan says it's no sweat. "I let the trees decide the designs," he says. "Hardwoods such as oak, maple, or hickory make the best trees for houses—but I did once build a wonderful tree house in a crabapple tree."

6. "If you want a bigger tree house than the tree can support," he adds, "you can use braces. My tree house is in two trees—an oak and a fir—and has three posts to support the weight."

7. As a certified arborist, Jonathan tries to never harm the trees.

8. "I build a tree house so it helps the tree," he says. "The tree's center of gravity is at the top and the ends of its branches, so I build a house down at the center of the tree, which shifts the center of gravity and makes the tree more balanced."

9. Using a special drill bit, he attaches artificial limbs to the tree to support the tree house.

10. "The tree grows over the artificial limbs, and they become part of the tree," Jonathan says. "I suspend the house on the artificial limbs so it actually floats."

11. The tree house is not the only thing suspended in Jonathan's designs. His tree houses always have swings. "Swings are a great way to enjoy the tree," he explains. For live-in tree houses he installs porch swings, and for kids' tree houses he puts up monkey swings (a rope with a round seat).

12. Jonathan also likes tree houses that overlook streams or rivers and include stained-glass windows to catch the sun's rays. But the most fun tree house designs he ever constructed were inspired by a galaxy far, far away.

13. "I've done several Ewok Villages," he says, "with ziplines and bridges to other trees and rope swings. Those were fun to build!"

14. When designing a tree house, the sky's the limit according to Jonathan.

15. “Let your imagination run wild," he says. "Walk in the woods and learn the different trees. Spend time climbing and learn how to do it safely."

16. Jonathan also encourages his clients to give their tree houses names. One of his favorite names is "Ups and Downs."

Here’s some more about living in the limbs! Read this interview with tree house expert Pete Nelson.

WELCOME TO TREE-HOUSE SCHOOL

17. Hey, kids! Jack here. Feeling inspired to design your own tree house? Here's some advice from Pete Nelson, who runs TreeHouse Workshop, a treehouse-building school. He's built tree houses across the United States—and in far-away countries such as Japan and Morocco, too!

18. *Jack*: What would you include in your dream tree house?

19. *Pete*: It would have windows everywhere but enough wall space for a favorite painting or two and a shelf for books. It would have a comfortable bed with lots of pillows, a writing desk, and a comfortable reading chair with a good light. Maybe a coffee maker and a tiny sink. And maybe a tiny bathroom, too!

20. *Jack*: Do books or movies ever give your customers ideas?

21. *Pete*: We often get asked to recreate the tree house from *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

22. *Jack*: How do you determine the shape of a tree house?

23. *Pete*: The trees will **dictate** how a floor plan lays out. Often these are unusual shapes. My tree houses tend to be square because it is less expensive to build square. If someone has all the time in the world to design a tree house, then I would make it wacky and fun!

24. *Jack*: Any crazy extras to include?

25. *Pete*: I have added fun stuff like water balloon launchers!

26. *Jack*: Do you name your tree houses?

27. *Pete*: We name them all the time: "Babylon," "The Temple of the Blue Moon," "Trillium," "Solace," "Uppermost," and many more.

28. Now get busy and draw up plans for your own tree house!

ANSWERS:

Part A Answer Choice Rationales: Option A is incorrect because the article indicates that braces support tree houses by carrying some of their weight, not by fixing broken limbs. Option B is incorrect because the article indicates that the reason almost any kind of tree can be used is because braces can support weight, not because braces lock trees together. Option C is incorrect because the article indicates that the tree house looks and is secure because of support from the ground, not because two trees are joined. Option D is the correct response: Braces are posts that support the weight of the house to prevent harm to the tree.

Part B Answer Choice Rationales: Options A, B, E, and F in Part B may appear to support some of the incorrect choices in Part A, but they do not provide evidence for the function of braces in building tree houses. Options C and D provide the correct responses because they both give details showing that the braces help keep the tree from breaking as a result of the weight imposed by the treehouse.