

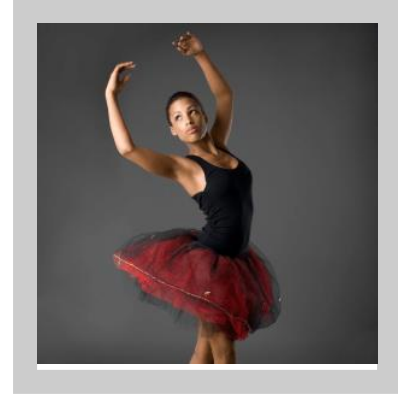
Name _____

Date _____

Ursula Pugh

At an earlier time in her life, Ursula Pugh was—before injuries, before a disastrous marriage, before the death of her beloved sister—a glorious dancer. But according to the grapevine, that fall from grace had left its mark. It was rumored that Ms. Pugh had become nothing more than an angry has-been and an exceptionally strict teacher.

I was not cognizant of these details as I made my way through the doors of The Ursula Children’s Theater with my three rambunctious boys in tow. And if I had known such information, it would not have biased my decision in the least.



I was looking for a safe haven in the neighborhood – someplace free from the drugs and gangs that made their way around the community after hours – for the boys to spend time after school. Staying at home by themselves was not an option. They definitely needed adult supervision if I expected my home to still be standing when I got home from work. The children’s theater, much to my boys’ chagrin, was more convenient for me to get to than the karate studio.

"No, Mama, we want karate," the boys had implored pitifully. I’m glad I wasn’t swayed though I would not realize until much later what a fortuitous decision this was.

Ms. Pugh looked up over her glasses as we arrived at the studio. "Boys!" she exclaimed before I could even introduce myself. "Wonderful."

It turned out that Ms. Pugh’s program was woefully short of boys and mine were immediately thrown into every production possible at the theater.

As for the rumors? Well, Ms. Pugh could certainly be brusque and rude with her charges and did not tolerate any deviation from the program. But my boys flourished in this environment. My wild, rough boys, who were often so rude that they embarrassed me in public, gradually became a different species. They will certainly never be world-class dancers, but Ms. Pugh’s strict ways taught them to be respectful and on time. Moreover, it taught them to follow directions and always strive to do their best.

1) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for **cognizant**?

- A. doubtful
- B. forgetful
- C. unaware
- D. mindful
- E. resentful

2) As used in paragraph 3, which is the best synonym for **chagrin**?

- A. disappointment
- B. fortune
- C. confusion
- D. disgust
- E. anger

3) In the final paragraph, the author writes, "My wild, rough boys, who were often so rude they embarrassed me in public, gradually became a different species." Which of the following literary Devices are used in this quotation?

A. Literal expression, characterized by the use of a word or phrase in accordance with, involving, or being its primary or strict meaning.

B. Figurative expression characterized by the use of a word or phrase that deviates in from its primary or strict meaning. Figurative expression is used in order to give meaning to a word or phrase that goes beyond its literal meaning.

C. Anagram, characterized by the jumbling of the syllables of a phrase or the individual letters of a word to create a new word. Anagram is a form of wordplay that allows the writer to infuse mystery and a fun into the writing so that the reader can decipher the actual word on his or her own and discover enhanced depth of meaning.

D. Aphorism, characterized by the use of a concise statement that is made in a matter of fact tone to state a principle or an opinion that is generally understood to be a universal truth. Aphorisms are often adages, wise sayings and maxims aimed at imparting sense and wisdom.

E. Defamiliarization, characterized by the deliberate attempt to get the reader to see a common thing from a new perspective.

4) Based on information in the passage, it can be understood that the rumors about Ursula Pugh were

- A. wildly inaccurate
- B. fairly inaccurate
- C. moderately accurate
- D. fairly accurate
- E. perfectly accurate

5) Write a short story from Ursula's point of view. Be sure to incorporate information from the passage in your story.

Answers and Explanations

1) C

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

Cognizant (*adjective*): aware; having knowledge.

In paragraph 1, we are provided some background information about Ursula Pugh. In paragraph 2, the narrator refers back to this information. The narrator says, “I was not cognizant of these details as I made my way through the doors of The Ursula Children’s Theater with my three rambunctious boys in tow. And if I had known such information, it would not have biased my decision in the least.” In the first sentence, the narrator states that she was not cognizant of the details provided about Ursula Pugh in paragraph 1. In the second sentence, the narrator adds that if she had known such information about Ursula Pugh, it would not have biased her decision to take her boys to the theater. Given the parallel structure of the first clauses of the first sentence and the second, we can understand that the narrator is admitting to not being aware of such information. A good antonym for aware is *unaware*. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Doubtful means questioning or disbelieving. Disbelieving is different from being unaware. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

Forgetful is tending not to remember. Not remembering is different from being unaware. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

Since *cognizant* means aware, *mindful* is a synonym, not an antonym. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

Resentful means harboring bad feelings about. Harboring bad feelings about is different from being unaware. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

2) A

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

Chagrin (*noun*): a feeling of annoyance, disappointment or mortification.

In paragraph 3, the narrator says, “The children’s theater, much to my boys’ chagrin, was more convenient for me to get to than the karate studio.” Then, in paragraph 4, the boys beg, “No, Mama, we want karate.” We can infer from these statements that the boys did not want to go to the children’s theater because they wanted to go to the karate studio. This means that they felt *disappointment* about going to the theater instead of to the karate studio. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

The boys did not want to go to the children’s theater, so it was not *fortune*, or luck, for them that the theater was more convenient than the karate studio. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

The boys understood where they were going, so they did not feel *confusion*. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

The boys wanted to go to the karate studio instead of the theater, but the word *disgust* suggests horror or disdain, not a simple preference. They implored their mother pitifully, which suggests disappointment rather than disgust. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

The boys do not appear to feel *anger* about going to the theater instead of the karate studio. There is no information in this passage that their emotion is as strong as anger. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

3) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In this passage, the narrator tells us that she placed her boys into a children's theater program which made the boys more polite, respectful, and focused. When the narrator says that the boys "became a different species," he or she means to communicate how the boys have changed, in that they act very different than before. The boys have not actually become a different species. So the meaning is figurative. It is not intended to be interpreted in its literal, or factual, sense. Therefore **(B)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(C)**, **(D)**, and **(E)**. Therefore they are incorrect.

4) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 1, the author explains that "It was rumored that Ms. Pugh had become nothing more than an angry has-been and an exceptionally strict teacher." In paragraph 7, the author states, "As for the rumors? Well, Ms. Pugh could certainly be brusque and rude with her charges and did not tolerate any deviation from the program." Although the author does not comment on the allegation that Ms. Pugh is an angry has-been, the author does confirm that she is indeed an exceptionally strict teacher in her claim that she did not tolerate any deviation from the program. This could be related to the fact that she is an angry has-been, but this idea is never confirmed. Because the rumors about Ursula Pugh were more than moderately accurate but not perfectly accurate, we can understand that they were fairly accurate. Choice **(D)** is correct.

The passage does not provide information to support choices **(A)**, **(B)**, **(C)**, and **(E)**. Therefore they are incorrect.