

Name _____

Date _____

Wild

I was 16 when my father unequivocally decided that he would send me to wilderness camp for several months. He had threatened to do it many times before, but my mother had always managed to prevent him from actually packing me up and shipping me off. This time he was dead set on it.

My latest transgression was viewed as the last straw. In a fit of unbridled rage, I had shoved my math teacher down a flight of steps at school. He broke his arm in two places and dislocated his shoulder.

Anyway, Mr. Ford, my math teacher, had agreed not to press charges as a favor to my dad. They were friends from way back. Mr. Ford knew what was at stake. We all did.

Dad was in the middle of a tight race for sheriff in our town. This latest "Danny Thing," as my reckless behavior was now called, had all my dad's closest advisors talking.

"John, he's your son and he's a kid, but he is dragging you down," I heard Jake Hutch tell my dad through his closed office door the night after I pushed Mr. Ford. "If it appears you can't set the course for enforcement in your own home, how can you set the course for this town?"

So, off to Pisgah National Forest I went. I knew in my heart that "Wilderness Camp" was surely just a euphemism for "Torture Center." I imagined hours of untold abuse at the hands of some lumberjack-sized drill sergeant. I resolved not to be broken and to emerge from the program unchanged. I was who I was.

Nearly every day for six months, a small group of other troubled teens and I lugged our 30-pound backpacks on a trek that covered about 10 miles. We hiked in a rugged wilderness that seemed untouched by civilization. The grandeur of the sky, rock, and wilderness instilled me with a sense of deep reverence.

Our counselors were firm but kind, not the ogres I had imagined. We learned how to make a fire without matches and create a shelter with twigs, branches, and grass. We learned which plants were safe to eat out in the wild. Late into the night, we talked about our fears and hopes.

We were devoid of radios, televisions, and cell phones. I felt myself change. I was calm and often reflective, and my old, impulsive self was gone.

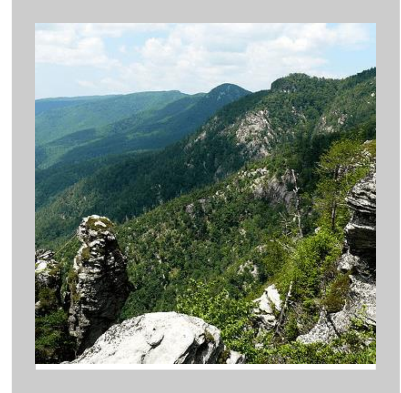
One morning, six months later, my dad came to pick me up. I ran to hug him and saw relief and love in his eyes.

"So what's it like being sheriff?" I asked on the ride home.

"I lost the race, Danny," he said.

I immediately knew my behavior had a lot to do with his defeat.

Dad squeezed my shoulder and brought me close. "But it doesn't matter. As long as I don't ever lose you, I'll be okay."



- 1) Which of the following statements best explains the double meaning of the title "Wild"?
- A. Danny goes to wilderness camp; it is in a national forest.
 - B. Danny is out of control; he is sent into the wilderness.
 - C. Danny changes at wilderness camp; his father loses a tight race for sheriff.
 - D. Danny hikes in the rugged wilderness; he becomes respectful of nature and others.
 - E. Danny is having trouble at school; he pushes his math teacher down the stairs.
- 2) As used in paragraph 2, which is the best antonym for **unbridled**?
- A. amusing
 - B. peaceful
 - C. restrained
 - D. understandable
 - E. scarce
- 3) Mr. Ford can best be described as
- A. fragile
 - B. reckless
 - C. intelligent
 - D. understanding
 - E. irritating
- 4) Using information in paragraph 6 as a guide, it can be inferred that which of the following expressions contains a **euphemism**?
- I. Due to budgetary restraints, the company was forced to downsize personnel.
 - II. After killing the leader of the resistance movement, the platoon commander reported that the target had been eliminated.
 - III. Although Barry mentioned that the house had a cozy interior, he declared that the exterior was absolutely hideous.
- A. I only
 - B. II only
 - C. I and II only
 - D. II and III only
 - E. I, II, and III

Answers and Explanations

1) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

wild (*adjective*): 1. not tamed or domesticated. 2. uncultivated, uninhabited.

The word "wild" can refer to a human or animal whose behavior is out of control. This word can also be used to describe a piece of land that has been left in its natural state. Since the passage describes a person who is out of control and then sent to a place in its natural state (the wilderness), the statement in **(B)** best explains the double meaning of the title. Therefore it is correct.

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

2) C

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

unbridled (*adjective*): unrestrained; out-of-control; runaway.

In paragraph 2, Danny, in a "fit of unbridled rage," pushes his math teacher down the steps. The word *unbridled* literally means without a bridle, as in a horse that is not controlled by a bridle. *Unbridled* also describes a person who lacks discipline or restraint. We can understand that Danny lacked restraint because he loses control in a fit of rage, and later says he did not know why he had done it. *Restrained* is the opposite of lacking discipline or restraint. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Amusing means providing laughter or entertainment. Providing laughter is not the opposite of lacking restraint. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

Peaceful means devoid of violence or force. Although a person who lacks restraint may use violence or force, this is not always the case. Peaceful is not the opposite of unbridled. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

Understandable means to be comprehended or expected. This is not the opposite of lacking restraint. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

Scarce means insufficient or uncommon. This is not the opposite of lacking restraint. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.

3) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 2, we learn that the narrator threw Mr. Ford, the math teacher, down the stairs, causing him serious injury. In paragraph 3, the author says that after the incident, Mr. Ford "had agreed not to press charges as a favor to my dad. He was a friend of my dad's from way back. Mr. Ford knew what was at stake. We all did." Although the narrator inflicted serious harm upon Mr. Ford, Mr. Ford decides not to press charges against the narrator. He does this not only because he is friends with the narrator's father (and therefore wants to do him a favor), but also because he "knew what was at stake." This means Mr. Ford understood the grave consequences the narrator would face if he decided to press charges against him. Using this information, we can understand that the narrator can best be described as understanding. Choice **(D)** is correct.

Although Mr. Ford "broke his arm in two places and dislocated his shoulder," this is not an unexpected effect of being pushed down the stairs. Therefore, we can understand that Mr. Ford is not uncommonly fragile or weak. Choice **(A)** is incorrect.

Although Mr. Ford "broke his arm in two places and dislocated his shoulder," this is not because he was acting reckless. We are led to believe that there was no real reason why Mr. Ford got pushed. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

Although Mr. Ford is a math teacher, this does not necessarily mean he is smart. Moreover, the passage does not focus on this aspect about him. This allows us to rule out choice **(C)**.

Although Mr. Ford "broke his arm in two places and dislocated his shoulder," this is not because he was being irritating. This means **(E)** is incorrect.

4) C

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

euphemism (*noun*): an inoffensive or mild word substituted for an offensive or harsh one.

In the statement, *Due to budgetary restraints, the company was forced to downsize personnel*, the idea that the company fired people is communicated. In place of the offensive term "fired," the less harsh term "downsize personnel" is used. Using this information, we can understand that this statement contains a euphemism. This supports **option (I)**.

In the statement, *After killing the leader of the resistance movement, the platoon commander reported that the target had been eliminated*, the idea that someone is killed is communicated. In place of the offensive term "killed," the less harsh term "target had been eliminated" is used. Using this information, we can understand that this statement contains a euphemism. This supports **option (II)**.

There are no mild or inoffensive substitutions for harsh or offensive words in the sentence, *Although Barry mentioned that the house had a cozy interior, he declared that the exterior was absolutely hideous*. In fact, by declaring that the exterior was absolutely hideous, Barry fails to censor his feelings at all. This eliminates **option (III)**.

Therefore **(C)** is correct.

5) D

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 5, Jake Hutch tells Danny's father that his son is "dragging him down." Jake's only function in the passage is to warn Danny's father. We do not get any sense of his motivations or personality. He simply exists to fulfill one particular narrative role: telling Danny's father that his son is causing a problem. Therefore **(D)** is correct.

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

6) C

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

Danny's parents, although they love him, cannot succeed in getting him to behave properly; their *nurturing* ultimately fails to reach him. Yet his time in the wilderness, or *nature*, teaches him how to calm down and respect himself and others. This demonstrates the power of nature over nurture. The lesson "Nature exceeds nurture" best embraces this idea. Therefore **(C)** is correct.

Fight fire with fire means to respond to an attack with a similar method. In this passage, Danny does not respond to an attack. Therefore **(A)** is incorrect.

Faith will move mountains means faith is immensely powerful. This passage is not concerned with anyone's faith. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

A reed before the wind lives on, while might oaks do fall means it is better to be flexible than rigid in turbulent times. Danny does not learn a lesson about being flexible in this passage. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks means that people almost never change their ways. However, Danny does change his ways in this passage, so this proverb is the opposite of what the passage teaches. Therefore **(E)** is incorrect.