

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

# The Raven and the Star Fruit Tree

*A retelling of a tale from Vietnam*

1 In the days before boats were used for exploring the seas or trading, there lived two brothers. The older brother was very greedy, but the younger brother was content to live humbly. When their father died, he left behind an enormous inheritance that he wanted to be divided in an extremely uneven way. He left his entire estate—his home and his vast wealth—to his older son but only a small plot in the country, containing a small shack and a single star fruit tree, to his other son.

2 The older son was overjoyed with this arrangement and quickly began living an extravagant lifestyle, eating expensive foods and spending money freely. He despised his brother, who was content living in the simple shack his father had given him.

3 When the season for star fruit came, the tree produced abundantly, and the younger brother cheered himself with the prospect of selling star fruit to support his family. However, an enormous raven visited the tree each morning and ate the fruit. The younger brother saw that his income was quickly disappearing into the belly of the raven, so one morning he waited beneath the tree. When the raven arrived, the younger brother called to him. "Oh, raven, please don't eat my star fruit. They are all I have, and I cannot support my family if you eat them up."

4 "Don't be afraid," said the raven. "I'll pay you in gold for your star fruit, as I did your father. Make a bag one foot deep to put the gold in."

5 "I believe you, raven," the younger brother said. "Please eat as much as you like." That night he had his wife make the bag just as the raven instructed.

6 The next day the raven came as usual to eat star fruit. When he was done eating, he flew down into the yard, spread his wings, and said, "Climb on my back, and bring your bag."

7 The younger brother complied, and the raven took off, flying over the sea. He landed on a strange uninhabited island with no trees or other plants of any kind. The dirt, however, was made of pure gold, and the raven told the younger brother to fill his sack with it. The younger brother took only what he could easily carry. After returning home, the younger brother spent some of his newfound wealth on his family and shared some of it with others who were in need.

- 8 One day the younger brother invited the older brother to dinner, but the other refused to come. Again and again the younger brother pleaded, until finally the older brother agreed and visited his brother's house. The older brother was not expecting what he found. Instead of a simple shack, the younger brother had a comfortable home with fine things inside.
- 9 "Where did you get all these things?" the older brother asked.
- 10 The younger brother told his brother of the raven. Upon hearing the whole story, the older brother offered to trade his entire inheritance for the star fruit tree. The younger brother replied that he was content with what he had and refused to trade.
- 11 The next day, however, the older brother went to the star fruit tree and found the raven. "Oh, raven," he said, "I have traded with my brother for this tree. Will you take me to the island of gold?"
- 12 "Of course," the raven replied. The bird landed in the yard, spread out his wings, and flew the older brother to the island. The older brother, remembering his brother's explanation, had taken with him the largest bag he could find. He filled it with gold and then climbed back onto the raven, but the bird couldn't fly because the bag was too heavy.
- 13 "You must pour out some of your gold," the raven said, but the brother refused. "Very well," said the raven. The bird flew back to the village, leaving the older brother and all his gold on the island.
- 14 The season for star fruit passed, and the raven no longer visited the star fruit tree. The younger brother wondered what had become of the older brother.
- 15 The next year, when the star fruit came again, so did the raven.
- 16 "Raven," said the younger brother, "you fly all around the world. Have you seen my brother?"
- 17 "I have," said the raven, and explained what had happened. "Your brother now has all the gold he wants."

1. What is the primary theme of the story?

- A Sharing with others helps develop strong relationships.
  - B Focusing on work can produce great rewards.
  - C Role models often have faults.
  - D Greed can have harmful consequences.
- 

2. Read these sentences from paragraph 4.

*"Don't be afraid," said the raven. "I'll pay you in gold for your star fruit, as I did your father."*

The raven's words in these sentences can best be described as —

- F comforting
  - G mocking
  - H insincere
  - J joyful
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3. The actions of the younger brother in paragraph 7 are significant because they show that —

- A he is more interested in flying than in growing star fruit
- B his relationship with the raven is beneficial only to him
- C his attitude toward wealth protects him from harm
- D he depends on the raven to show him the best way to help his brother

4. What is the main problem in the story?
- F One brother is left an unusually small inheritance.
  - G One brother is never satisfied with what he has.
  - H One brother does not know how to spend money wisely.
  - J One brother shares his wealth with others who are in need.
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5. Which of the following is the best summary of paragraphs 8 through 10?
- A The younger brother invites the older brother to dinner several times. The older brother finally agrees and is surprised when he sees the younger one's house. After being told the story of the raven, the older brother wants to trade his inheritance for what his brother has. The younger brother refuses.
  - B One day the older brother goes to the younger brother's house for dinner and is surprised by what he sees. He likes his brother's house so much that he offers to trade his inheritance for it. The younger brother does not want to trade, however, and refuses the other's offer.
  - C The younger brother repeatedly pleads with the older brother to come over for dinner. When the older brother finally comes over, he asks the younger brother where he got all the fine things in his house. The younger brother then tells his brother about the raven.
  - D The younger brother repeatedly invites the older brother to dinner. The older brother finally comes over after refusing this request many times. The younger brother tells him about the raven that came to the star fruit tree. The older brother wants to own the tree so that he can meet the raven.

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## Venezuela's Lightning Storms

- 1 For most people, a lightning storm is a good reason to sit up and take notice—and probably take shelter. But imagine if you lived in a place where lightning storms raged almost every night of the year. There is an area in Venezuela that has this type of lightning. Large storms with frequent lightning provide an amazing light show for up to 300 nights out of every year. This natural phenomenon is called the *Relámpago del Catatumbo*, or the Catatumbo Lightning.

### Natural Fireworks

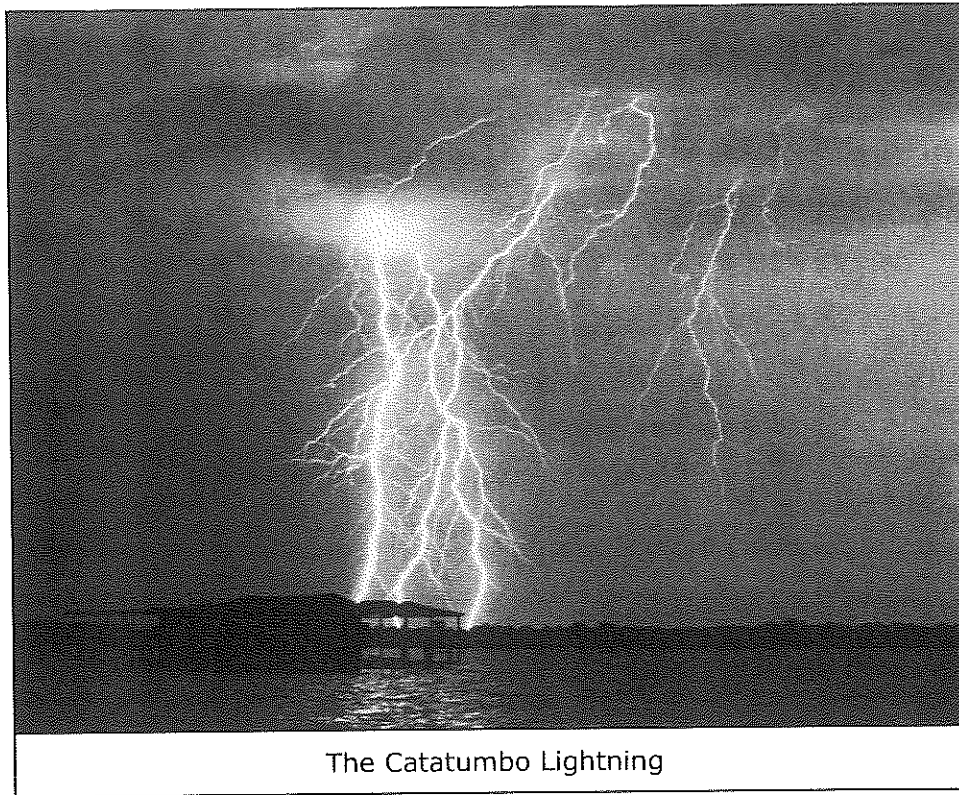
- 2 The Catatumbo Lightning happens in the state of Zulia, located in the northwestern part of Venezuela where the Catatumbo River meets Lake Maracaibo. The lightning is unusual for several reasons. For one thing, its predictability is remarkable. Although there have been rare periods when the lightning storms did not occur, for the most part they have been forming over the same area above Lake Maracaibo nightly for centuries.
- 3 The lightning storms are also amazing because of the frequency of the strikes. The storms can produce between 18 and 60 strikes per minute. That adds up to an average of 1,680 strikes per hour, and storms can last up to 10 hours. This means that the skies are lit with roughly 2.5 million lightning strikes per year.
- 4 Finally, the Catatumbo Lightning is exceptional because of its beautiful colors. It causes the sky to glow different shades of white, red, and purple. The color of the lightning changes depending on the presence of dust, water, and various gases in the air.



### A Bright History

- 5 The Catatumbo Lightning has become an important part of the history and culture of the area where it occurs. The native people call the lightning *rib a-ba*, or "river of fire in the sky," and it has always been a part of their daily life. The lightning is mentioned in poetry and songs; the state of Zulia even has a lightning bolt on its flag.
- 6 The lightning is also credited with ruining a surprise attack on the city of Maracaibo by the English sea captain Sir Francis Drake in 1595. The lightning flashes illuminated Drake's ships, alerting the Spanish forces to their presence.

- 7 For all these reasons, the lightning is a source of pride for the people of the area, including environmentalist Erick Quiroga, who has been studying the lightning for more than 15 years. "I saw my first lightning at eight years old," he said. "I thought it was a smile from the night sky."



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The Catatumbo Lightning

### A Scientific Mystery

- 8 No one knows for sure what causes the Catatumbo Lightning. Some scientists think it's caused by increased amounts of methane gas around the area. Others believe the lightning occurs because of the area's unique location—the very hot, humid air from the Catatumbo River and Lake Maracaibo meets cool air that comes down from the Andes mountains.
- 9 The mystery of what causes the lightning deepened when, beginning in January 2010, the lightning did not appear for a period of several months. During this time Venezuela, like many other parts of the world, was experiencing abnormal weather patterns, and the country was suffering from a severe drought. Some scientists speculate that this may have caused the Catatumbo Lightning to stop, but the answer remains unclear. Whatever the cause, the lightning resumed that April.

### Record-Breaking Lightning

- 10 Even though the exact cause of the Catatumbo Lightning is still unknown, it is a welcome mystery. Quiroga recently asked the Guinness Book of World Records to grant the area around Lake Maracaibo the record for being the place on Earth with the most lightning. This honor had been held by a town in central Africa. In 2014, Guinness agreed to the request, presenting the vice president of

Venezuela with a special certificate. Today people from all over the world come to see the brilliant display. And if history is any indication, the Catatumbo Lightning will be impressing visitors and locals alike for many years to come.

*Third party trademark Guinness World Records® was used in these testing materials.*

6. Read the dictionary entry for the word credit.

**credit** \ˈkre-dit\ v  
1. to believe something such as a report 2. to assign responsibility to someone or something 3. to add money to an account 4. to award a passing mark or grade in school

Which definition best matches the way the word credited is used in paragraph 6?

- F Definition 1
- G Definition 2
- H Definition 3
- J Definition 4

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7. The map next to paragraph 2 helps the reader better understand the information in the selection because it —

- A illustrates how wide Lake Maracaibo is
- B provides the names of other countries in South America
- C helps the reader understand the causes of the lightning in Venezuela
- D shows the reader where the lightning occurs in Venezuela

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8. By stating a main idea and supporting it with specific details in paragraphs 2 through 4, the author is able to —

- F offer a vivid picture of what the Catatumbo Lightning looks like to observers
- G give a thorough explanation of why the Catatumbo Lightning is unique
- H add a sense of drama and suspense regarding the Catatumbo Lightning strikes
- J provide scientific reasons for the colorful display during a Catatumbo Lightning storm



9. The main idea of paragraphs 8 and 9 is that —
- A an increase in methane gas in the area may be responsible for the lightning
  - B there are some theories about what causes the lightning but no definite answer
  - C the lightning may be caused by warm air from a river and a lake meeting cool mountain air
  - D when lightning strikes stopped during a drought, scientists studied how weather affects the lightning
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10. Which of these facts from the selection supports the idea that the local people embrace the Catatumbo Lightning?
- F *This natural phenomenon is called the Relámpago del Catatumbo, or the Catatumbo Lightning.*
  - G *The color of the lightning changes depending on the presence of dust, water, and various gases in the air.*
  - H *The lightning is mentioned in poetry and songs; the state of Zulia even has a lightning bolt on its flag.*
  - J *The mystery of what causes the lightning deepened when, beginning in January 2010, the lightning did not appear for a period of several months.*

Based on the information throughout the selection, how do the native people of Zulia feel about the Catatumbo Lightning?

- A They are indifferent to it.
  - B They fear it as a powerful force of nature.
  - C They believe it is problematic for their community.
  - D They appreciate it as a special feature of their area.
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12 The author's main purpose for writing this selection is to —

- F warn readers about the dangers of lightning
- G discuss the mysterious lightning found in a region
- H compare and contrast lightning storms around the world
- J explain the weather conditions that cause lightning

*Put your answers in Classroom.*

