

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading**

# Weekly Test Lesson 16

**Read the passage. Then answer the questions.**

## Going to California

“Mama, we got a letter from Uncle George!” Jonah Meacham yelled as he rushed into the house. A gust of wintry wind followed him, and Jonah struggled to pull the door closed against the grasping fingers of the wind. The Meacham home was small and cozy, and the warmth of the cooking fire drew Jonah to the hearth as he pulled off his heavy coat and scarf. Then, feeling curious and excited, he handed Mama the letter and sat down with her and his sister Rebecca.

Mama smiled. “Oh, good,” she said. “I’ve been wondering how he’s been since he left for California last spring.” She quickly tore open the envelope and scanned the letter inside. Jonah was surprised to see her forehead crinkle up with displeasure. “Uncle George says that there is such an abundance of gold in California that people are picking it up out of the streams. I’ve never heard of such a thing,” Mama said, shaking her head.

Jonah nodded. He knew that the California Gold Rush was big news because he had seen articles about it in the local newspaper all through the year of 1849. It was just those articles that prompted Uncle George to sell his farm and head west, looking for adventure.

Mr. Meacham came home a few minutes later and the family sat down to supper. Papa was eager to read the letter from Uncle George. Mama passed it to him, and he read it in silence. Suddenly, he smiled widely, saying, “Trust George to come up with such a fine idea.” Jonah and Rebecca looked at him, puzzled. “George says we should come to California and join him. He says there is more than enough gold there for everyone, and we can get rich just panning for gold in the streams. He wants us to sell our home and go west, just as he did.”

“That’s a crazy idea,” Mama said, the frown once more appearing on her face.

Jonah agreed. “I know we’re not rich, but we have everything we need here, and I don’t want to move away.”

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“I do!” Rebecca shouted. “At school, my teacher told us stories about traveling west. You get to ride in a covered wagon and see mountains and big rivers and everything.” Her eyes shone like silver dollars. “Think of how much fun it would be!”

“Your mother and I will talk about it tonight,” Papa said. “I confess, I would like to make a new start, and this seems like a fine opportunity to better our lives. We’ll let you children know our decision in the morning.”

Jonah could hardly sleep that night, and Rebecca felt the same way. They met at the breakfast table, bright and early. “So, what did you decide?” Rebecca asked after finishing a mouthful of honey biscuits.

“We will give Uncle George’s idea a try,” Papa said. “We’ll leave in the spring. In the meantime, we have a lot to do to prepare.”

For the rest of the winter, the family prepared for their trip. Papa talked to a man about buying their house. Mama and Rebecca sewed blankets and clothes for the journey, while Jonah helped his father fix up their covered wagon so it would be a comfortable home for them on the road. Every night, Rebecca counted the days until the family would head west, and Jonah thought about how much he would miss his friends and the only life he had ever known.

At last, the snow stopped falling and the ground began to thaw. Rebecca was chatting happily about how much fun the wagon trip would be when Papa came in with a letter in his hand. “Here’s another note from Uncle George. Looks like he sent this over two months ago,” he said. “Dear Family, it seems as though everyone in the country has gotten gold fever. There are so many people here that there is hardly any more gold to be found. Men are fighting over claims and they’re angry and disappointed. I think it is best for you all to stay home and keep the riches you already have.”

Papa folded the letter slowly. “This news changes everything—we will stay home after all.”

“Oh, I’m glad we won’t be moving!” Jonah said. Mama nodded in agreement, but Rebecca’s eyes filled with tears.

“Don’t cry over spilled milk,” Mama said, giving her daughter a big hug. “We don’t need gold to be happy because we have our happiness right here.”

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**Reading**

- 1 Read the sentence from the passage.

A gust of wintry wind followed him, and Jonah struggled to pull the door closed against the grasping fingers of the wind.

What is the **most likely** meaning of the underlined phrase?

- (A) The wind was very cold.
  - (B) The wind was very strong.
  - (C) The wind looked like fingers.
  - (D) The wind was trying to grab him.
- 2 Compare and contrast Mama's and Papa's reactions to Uncle George's first letter. How are they the same and how are they different? Use details from the passage to support your answer.
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- 3 This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

How do Jonah and Rebecca feel about having to leave home?

- (A) Both characters want to stay home.
- (B) Both characters want to move to California.
- (C) Jonah does not want to leave, but Rebecca does.
- (D) Jonah wants to go to California, but Rebecca does not.

**Part B**

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer to part A?

- (A) Jonah thinks it is a crazy idea, and Rebecca will miss her friends.
- (B) Jonah helps fix the covered wagon, and Rebecca helps sew blankets.
- (C) Jonah says they already have everything they need, but Rebecca thinks traveling west would be fun.
- (D) Jonah is excited to get a letter from Uncle George, but Rebecca is concerned about riding in a covered wagon.

- 4 Read the sentences from the passage.

“Don’t cry over spilled milk,” Mama said, giving her daughter a big hug. “We don’t need gold to be happy because we have our happiness right here.”

What is the **most likely** meaning of the underlined phrase?

- (A) Don’t waste food.
- (B) Don’t worry about causing an accident.
- (C) Don’t complain about having to clean up a mess.
- (D) Don’t be sad about something that happened in the past.

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**Reading**

- 5 Which of the following best explains why this story is historical fiction?
- (A) It takes place in the past and is about realistic people and events.
- (B) It is about realistic events and takes place across the country.
- (C) It takes place in the winter and the people want to go west.
- (D) It is about realistic people and about moving to California.
- 6 Mark the boxes to show which events from the passage could only have happened in the 1800s and which could still happen today.

	<b>Only in the 1800s</b>	<b>In the 1800s and Today</b>
Letters normally take months to deliver.		
People live on farms.		
People often travel in covered wagons.		
The Gold Rush draws people to California.		
Families need to plan big moves.		

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**Writing**

- 7 Which sentence contains a spelling error?
- (A) It was a beautiful day for a picnic in the park.
  - (B) We have an emergency plan in case of an earthquake.
  - (C) The monkey at the zoo was swinging through the trees.
  - (D) There were an ekwal number of boys and girls in the class.

- 8 Read the sentence.

He put a blue, pretty, big box on the floor.

Which choice **best** revises the sentence?

- (A) He put a blue, big, pretty box on the floor.
- (B) He put a big, blue, pretty box on the floor.
- (C) He put a pretty, big, blue box on the floor.
- (D) He put a pretty, blue, big box on the floor.

- 9 Read the sentences.

The trucks sped down the road. There were two red trucks.

Which revision **best** combines these sentences?

- (A) Two red trucks were speeding.
- (B) The two red trucks sped down the road.
- (C) Fast, red trucks sped down the two roads.
- (D) There were two trucks speeding down the red road.

- 10 Read the paragraph. Underline the sentence that contains an error in grammar usage.

Shari saw ten, little kittens in the basket. She wanted to take home all of the cute, little things, but she knew she could not. Just then, to Shari's surprise, her mother said she could choose two! Shari chose the orange, big kitten and the little, pretty, white kitten for her own.