Table of Contents

Introduction 4
Meeting Standards 7
Answer Sheet 9
Paired Passages
Unit 1 *Nonfiction:* The Rescue Dogs 10
Fiction: Why I Don't Like Chocolate Cake. 11
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 12–15
Unit 2 *Nonfiction:* A Swimming Founding Father. 16
Fiction: Lina and the Sea Snakes 17
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 18–21
Unit 3 *Nonfiction:* A Useful Hat 22
Fiction: How Ty's Horse Got Water. 23
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 24–27
Unit 4 *Nonfiction:* A String of Holes 28
Fiction: Up in the Air 29
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 30–33
Unit 5 *Nonfiction:* Why George Slept on the Floor 34
Fiction: A Camping Journal. 35
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 36–39
Unit 6 *Nonfiction:* Not Potato Chips! 40
Fiction: Joe and the Dolly 41
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 42–45
Unit 7 *Nonfiction:* A True Story About a Smart Crow 46
Fiction: When the Lion Was in Trouble 47
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 48–51
Unit 8 *Nonfiction:* Why a Gull Is Utah's Bird 52
Fiction: The Cloud on the Ground. 53
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 54–57
Unit 9 *Nonfiction:* The World's First Ice-Cream Cone 58
Fiction: Invisible Ink. 59
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 60–63
Unit 10 *Nonfiction:* Grizzlies at the White House. 64
Fiction: What Meg Had to Do 65
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 66–69
Unit 11 *Nonfiction:* A Stinky Flower 70
Fiction: The Flower Amy Would Not Get. 71
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 72–75
Unit 12 *Nonfiction:* Walking First 76
Fiction: The Tortoise and the Hare 77
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 78–81

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Table of Contents *(cont.)*

Unit 13 *Nonfiction:* A Strange but True Story 82
Fiction: A Story That Can't Be True 83
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 84–87
Unit 14 *Nonfiction:* Paper Money. 88
Fiction: Why the Money Was Not Real 89
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 90–93
Unit 15 *Nonfiction:* When A.J. Knew 94
Fiction: Slow Down, Earl! 95
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 96–99
Unit 16 *Nonfiction:* The Milky Way 100
Fiction: Seeing More in the Dark. 101
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 102–105
Unit 17 *Nonfiction:* The Lost Base. 106
Fiction: Where to Find Rocks from Outer Space 107
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 108–111
Unit 18 *Nonfiction:* Desert Roots. 112
Fiction: The Mystery Plant 113
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 114–117
Unit 19 *Nonfiction:* How Animals Cross the Road. 118
Fiction: The Bridge That Was the Wrong Color 119
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 120–123
Unit 20 *Nonfiction:* A True Story About Al Ringling 124
Fiction: Part of the Family Act. 125
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 126–129
Unit 21 *Nonfiction:* The Pyramids 130
Fiction: A Visit to Egypt. 131
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 132–135
Unit 22 *Nonfiction:* A Special Kind of Joke 136
Fiction: Riddle Day 137
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 138–141
Unit 23 *Nonfiction:* The Smallest Birds in the World 142
Fiction: How Hungry Was Bea? 143
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 144–147
Unit 24 *Nonfiction:* The Crocodile's Babysitter 148
Fiction: The Cat That Hissed and Scratched 149
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 150–153
Unit 25 *Nonfiction:* Honest Abe. 154
Fiction: The Money Trade. 155
Show What You Know (*Questions and Answers*) 156–159
Notes 160

Introduction

Red rain fell in England.

*****

Matt saw a purple creature with five feet, three eyes, and a straw for a mouth.

If a student read either one of these statements out of context, it is likely that the student would have a difficult time knowing which statement was fiction and which was nonfiction. In addition, the student would have no idea how the two statements could be tied together or used to support an argument or idea.

If, on the other hand, the student read these statements in context and understood how they fit into an entire passage, the student would be able to answer with confidence that as strange as it may seem, red rain really did fall in England. The student would then be able to compare, contrast, or tie this fact to the passage about Matt seeing a purple creature with five feet, three eyes, and a straw for a mouth. (Both passages deal with unbelievable and strange sightings.)

Many state tests now contain assessment sections that contain paired passages. After reading two passages, students are expected to differentiate between fiction and nonfiction passages. They are expected to see how the two are connected and understand the underlying connection, as well as how they are dissimilar. They are asked to demonstrate their understanding of the passages by answering multiple-choice questions as well as provide written responses.

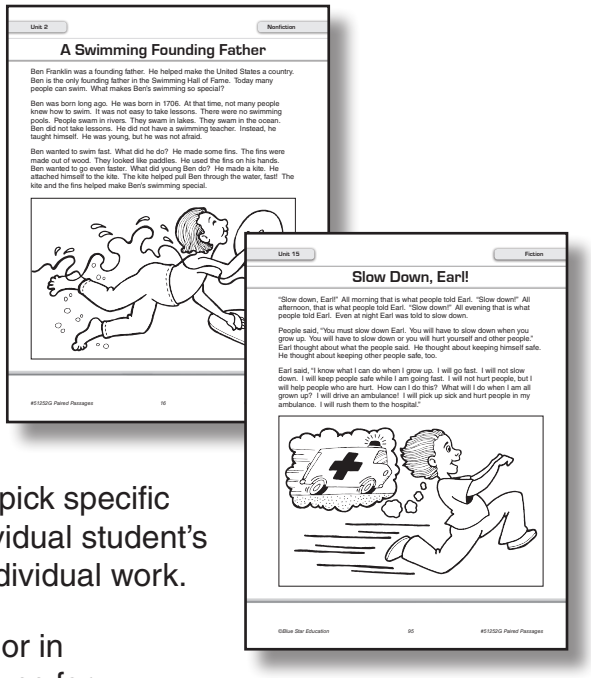
This multileveled task draws on many aspects of the reading and writing process. The *Paired Passages: Comprehension & Critical Thinking Skills* kit was created to provide practice with this type of exercise and assessment, including:

- Exercises that build reading comprehension
- Exercises that develop the skills needed to break down and analyze story elements
- Exercises that provide practice in keeping sequence and details from two sources separate
- Exercises that provide practice in proper letter formation, spacing, and spelling
- Practice with multiple-choice questions
- Practice with written-response questions on individual passage themes
- Practice with written-response questions that utilize information from two contrasting passages

Using the *Paired Passages* Kit

The Kit Contains:

The Passages


Unit 2 Nonfiction

A Swimming Founding Father

Ben Franklin was a founding father. He helped make the United States a country. Ben is the only founding father in the Swimming Hall of Fame. Today many people can swim. What makes Ben's swimming so special?

Ben was born long ago. He was born in 1706. At that time, not many people knew how to swim. It was not easy to take lessons. There were no swimming pools. People swam in rivers. They swam in lakes. They swam in the ocean. Ben did not take lessons. He did not have a swimming teacher. Instead, he taught himself. He was young, but he was not afraid.

Ben wanted to swim fast. What did he do? He made some fins. The fins were made out of wood. They looked like paddles. He used the fins on his hands. Ben wanted to go even faster. What did young Ben do? He made a kite. He attached himself to the kite. The kite helped pull Ben through the water, fast! The kite and the fins helped make Ben's swimming special.

#51252G Paired Passages 16

Unit 15 Fiction

Slow Down, Earl!

"Slow down, Earl!" All morning that is what people told Earl. "Slow down!" All afternoon, that is what people told Earl. "Slow down!" All evening that is what people told Earl. Even at night Earl was told to slow down.

People said, "You must slow down Earl. You will have to slow down when you grow up. You will have to slow down or you will hurt yourself and other people." Earl thought about what the people said. He thought about keeping himself safe. He thought about keeping other people safe, too.

Earl said, "I know what I can do when I grow up. I will go fast. I will not slow down. I will keep people safe while I am going fast. I will not hurt people, but I will help people who are hurt. How can I do this? What will I do when I am all grown up? I will drive an ambulance! I will pick up sick and hurt people in my ambulance. I will rush them to the hospital."

©Blue Star Education 95 #51252G Paired Passages

There are 25 units in *Paired Passages: Comprehension & Critical Thinking Skills.* Each individual unit contains two high-interest passages. The first passage is nonfiction. The second is fiction. Each passage is written at grade level with appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure. The passages are tied together with a common theme. Unit subjects run the gamut from founding fathers to speeding drivers.

The units may be done sequentially, but they do not have to be. A teacher may choose to go out of order or pick specific units at different times because of class interest or individual student's needs. Units may be done as a class or assigned as individual work.

The passages can be found on the cards, in the guide, or in the enhanced e-book. They can be used with small groups for guided reading, pair-share activities, at centers, or independently by students. The option of reproducing the passages for each student gives teachers other opportunities, including meaningful homework activities for students.

The Multiple-Choice Questions

For each set of passages there are multiple-choice questions. These are found directly following each set of passages. The answers are conveniently located after each set of questions.

The first question focuses on the nonfiction passage. The second question focuses on the fiction passage. Answer choices for these questions come only from the passage the question stems refer to.

The third multiple-choice question asks what both passages have in common.

The fourth question requires the student to differentiate between the passages and understand what topic is covered in each one, as the answer choices are drawn from both passages.

Students can answer multiple-choice questions on the page by filling in the circle of the correct answer. Students can also answer multiple-choice questions by filling in the answer sheet located on page 9 of this book. Using this answer sheet provides practice responding in a standardized-test format.

Written Responses

A page requiring written responses is part of each unit. The first written response asks the student to write a new word from one of the passages. This task may appear deceptively simple, but it provides valuable practice and reinforcement of proper letter formation, spacing, and spelling. It is a task that even lower-level or mainstreamed students can engage in.

The following two written responses vary depending on the unit. They may require sequencing of events by filling in boxes, making lists, or even drawing a picture. Each response deals with only one of the passages. They are written to provide students with a foundation of sorting and organizing information. They provide an exercise in referring back to and keeping two different pieces of literary prose separate in the reader's mind.

The last three written responses require higher-level thinking. First, the students are asked to write out a brief summary of each passage with complete sentences. Lastly, they are asked to respond to a question that requires thinking about or using information from both passages to answer.

A teacher's expectations of what is a satisfactory response on these last questions may change over the year, or it may vary depending on the level of the student. For example, at the beginning of the year or with some students, a teacher may accept phonetic spelling and lack of punctuation. As specific topics are covered in class and students become more mature, a teacher may begin to check spelling, capitalization, ending punctuation, etc. Enough variation allows that all students, even those struggling in grade-level writing skills or those with advanced writing skills, can participate.

The Teacher's Resource Book

This guide provides:

1. copies of all the stories and questions.
2. correlations to Common Core State Standards.
3. practice answer sheets.
4. individual answer keys for each set of passages.

Use this guide to make copies of the questions for students. The questions can help assess students' understanding of what they are reading. The enhanced e-book version of this guide can be used on an interactive whiteboard with an entire class, on individual computers, or to make copies directly from a computer.

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Meeting Standards

Each passage and question in *Paired Passages: Comprehension & Critical Thinking Skills* meets one or more of the following Common Core State Standards © Copyright 2010. National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers. All rights reserved. For more information about the Common Core State Standards, go to *http://www.corestandards.org/.*

Literature Standards	**Passage Title**	**Pages**
Key Ideas and Details		
Standard 1: RL.2.1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	all passages	
Standard 2: RL.2.2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.	all passages	
Standard 3: RL.2.3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.	all passages	
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
Standard 7: RL.2.7. Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.	all passages	
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity		
Standard 10: RL.2.10. By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	all passages	
Informational Text Standards	**Passage Title**	**Pages**
Key Ideas and Details		
Standard 1: RI.2.1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	all passages	
Standard 2: RI.2.2. Identify the main topic of a multiparagraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.	all passages	

Meeting Standards (cont.)

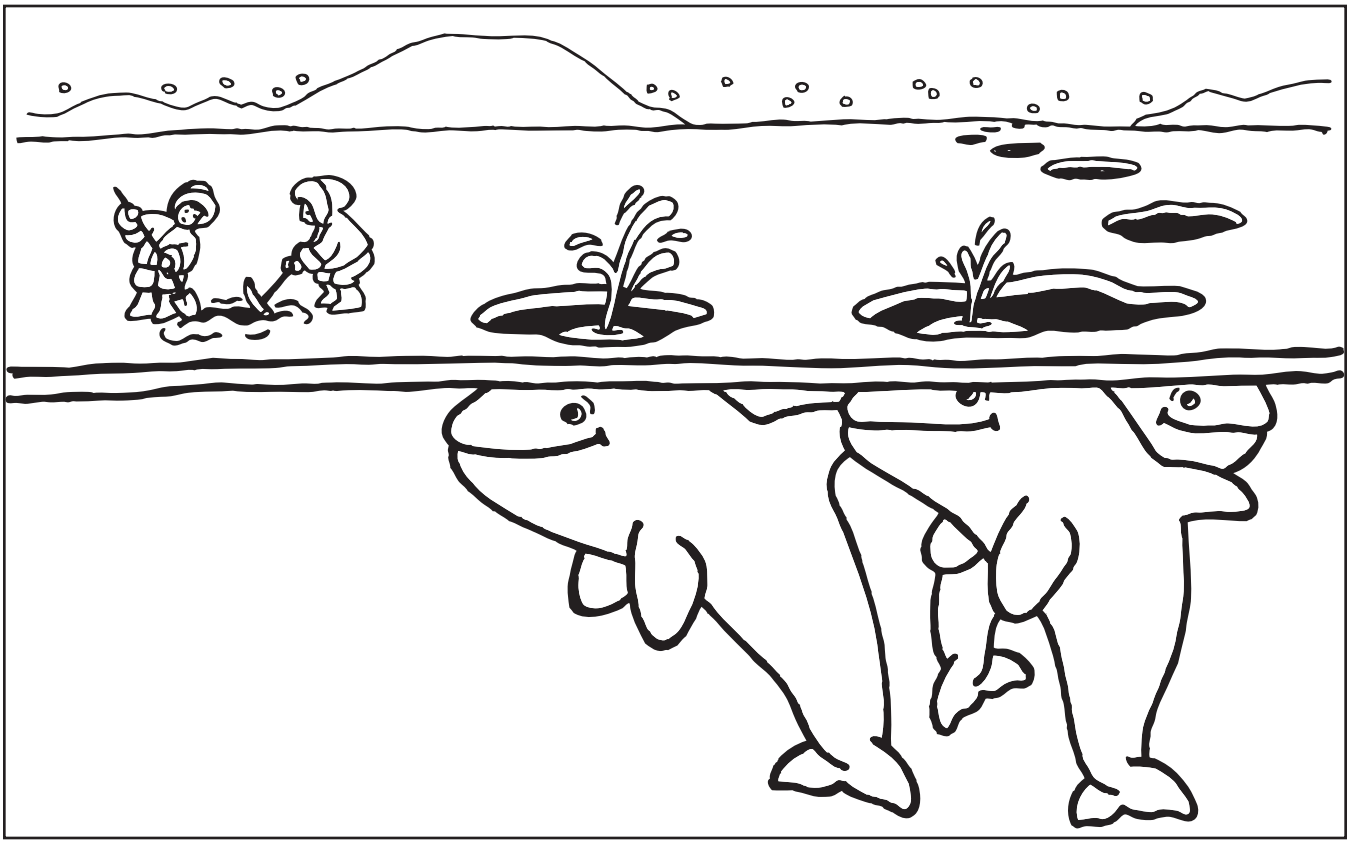
Standard 3: RI.2.3. Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.	A String of Holes Why a Gull Is Utah's Bird The World's First Ice-Cream Cone Grizzlies at the White House A Stinky Flower A Strange but True Story Paper Money The Milky Way The Lost Base Desert Roots The Crocodile's Babysitter Honest Abe	28–33 52–57 58–63 64–69 70–75 82–87 88–93 100–105 106–111 112–117 148–153 154–159
Craft and Structure		
Standard 4: RI.2.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.	all passages	
Standard 6: RI.2.6. Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.	all passages	
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas		
Standard 7: RI.2.7. Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.	all passages	
Standard 8: RI.2.8. Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.	The Rescue Dogs A Swimming Founding Father A Useful Hat A String of Holes Why George Slept on the Floor Why a Gull Is Utah's Bird The World's First Ice-Cream Cone Grizzlies at the White House A Stinky Flower Walking First A Strange but True Story Paper Money When A.J. Knew The Milky Way The Lost Base Desert Roots How Animals Cross the Road A True Story About Al Ringling The Pyramids The Smallest Birds in the World The Crocodile's Babysitter Honest Abe	10–15 16–21 22–27 28–33 34–39 52–57 58–63 64–69 70–75 76–81 82–87 88–93 94–99 100–105 106–111 112–117 118–123 124–129 130–135 142–147 148–153 154–159
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity		
Standard 10: RI.2.10. By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	all passages	

A String of Holes

Whales live in the ocean. Whales are big mammals. Mammals need air. When whales need air, they swim to the ocean's surface. They breathe in air. In the summer, many whales migrate. They swim north. They swim to Alaska. They find lots to eat. When the summer is over, the whales migrate south. They leave Alaska before winter sets in. They leave before the ocean freezes over.

One year, three whales waited too long. They waited too long to go south. The cold winter set in. The ocean began to freeze over. All around the whales, the ocean had frozen. The whales were trapped. They could not swim away. They could not leave their breathing hole. Soon, the whales' breathing hole would freeze too.

People came to help. The people walked out on the frozen ocean. The people cut a string of big holes. The string of holes stretched a long way. It led to open water. The trapped whales used the holes to breathe. They used the holes as they swam to open water.



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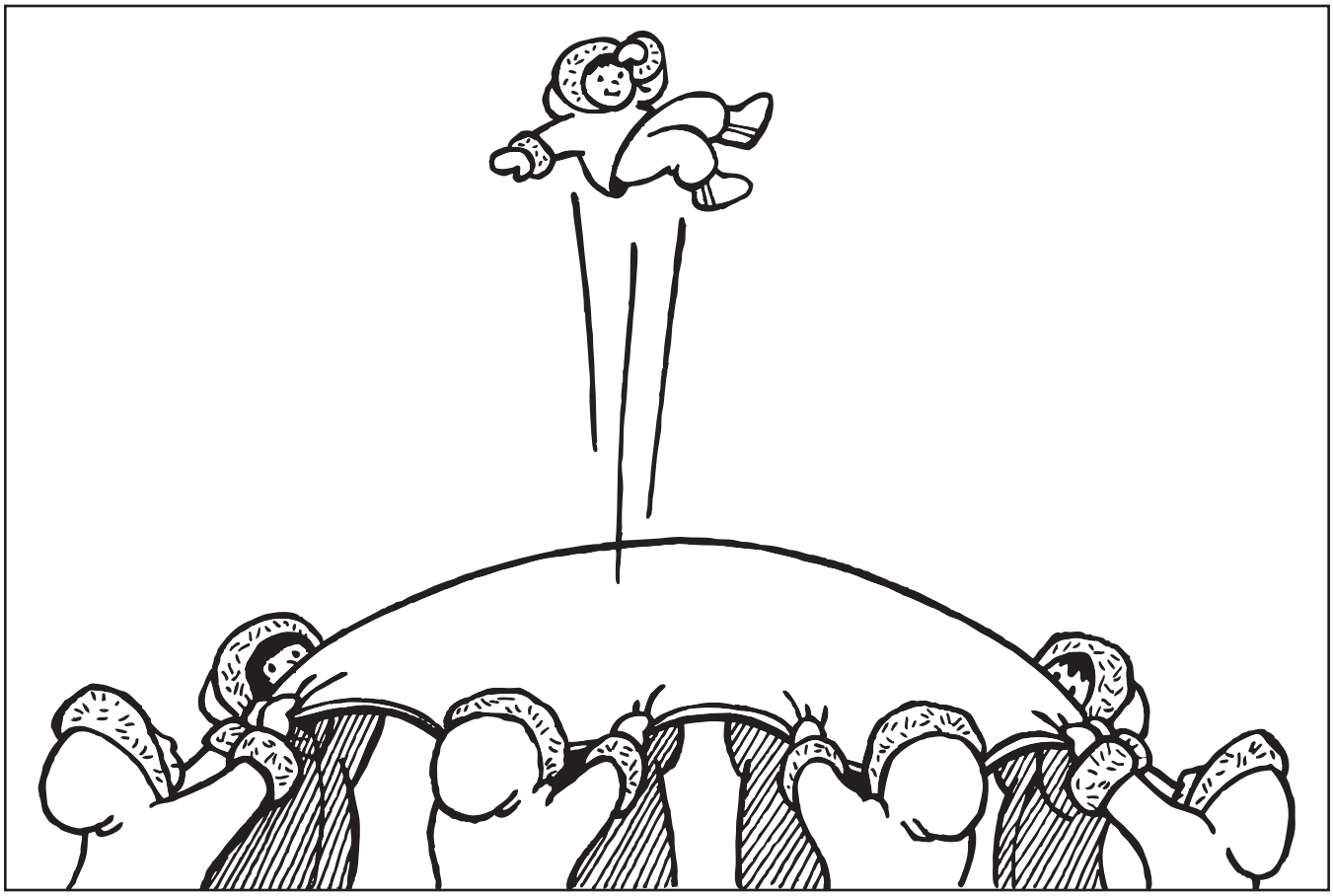
Up in the Air

Sal was high. Sal was going higher! Higher and higher Sal went. People cried out. Would Sal go higher than everyone else? Sal was being tossed. She was being tossed up in a blanket. People were holding the edges of the blanket. They were using the blanket to throw Sal high into the air. Sal went higher than everyone else! Sal had won the "Blanket Toss" game. The "Blanket Toss" is a very old game. It is played every year in Alaska.

Sal's grandfather said, "When I was little, I was tossed high, too. I was tossed on a walrus skin. People would hold the edges of the walrus skin. They would toss me high. High in the air, I would look around. I would look for whales. I would look for other animals. We would hunt the animals I saw. We would eat the animals. We would not waste any part. Today you went high. You went higher than I ever did. You showed me that long ago you could have helped people find food."



Show What You Know

Answer the questions based on "A String of Holes" and "Up in the Air." You may look back at what you have read if you need to.

1. When whales need air they

Ⓐ migrate south.
Ⓑ swim to the ocean's surface.
Ⓒ wait until the ocean freezes over.
Ⓓ leave Alaska before winter sets in.

2. When Sal's grandfather was tossed in the air, he

Ⓐ was on a blanket.
Ⓑ looked for animals.
Ⓒ went higher than Sal.
Ⓓ held on to the edges of a walrus skin.

3. What do both stories have in common?

Ⓐ They both are about finding food.
Ⓑ They both are about helping whales.
Ⓒ They both are about what people did in Alaska.
Ⓓ They both are about games played on the frozen ocean.

4. From the stories, one can tell that

Ⓐ people wanted to eat the whales.
Ⓑ the trapped whales were too small to hunt.
Ⓒ people only hunted whales when they needed food.
Ⓓ people first saw the trapped whales when they were tossed on a blanket.

5. "Up in the Air" is fiction. It is a made-up story. It is not real, but it is based on a real game. The game might have started because it helped hunters

Ⓐ get ready to play.
Ⓑ get ready to throw.
Ⓒ get ready to migrate.
Ⓓ get ready to find food.

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