Final Reading Progress Test

Student name _____

Group/Class _____

Date _____ Score _____

READING

The Supreme Court

The United States government is composed of three main bodies: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The Supreme Court is the highest federal court in the country, and is the head of the judicial branch that interprets federal laws. Established by the U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Court has the ultimate jurisdiction over all laws within the United States. If necessary, the court will check the actions of the other two branches of government—the executive branch of the president and the legislative branch of Congress—to ensure an equal balance of power.

Supreme Court cases

In its more than 200-year history, the Supreme Court has passed judgment on many important cases, which have had lasting impacts on the nation, for better or worse.

Some decisions may seem surprising to us now. For example, the court denied citizenship to African American slaves in 1857, upheld state segregation laws in 1896, and defended World War II internment camps for Japanese Americans in 1944. However, a major social change would come when, in 1954, the court ruled that separating black and white students in public schools was unconstitutional.

Then in 1962, the Supreme Court ruled that prayer initiated by and within public schools violates the First Amendment, and in 1963, it found that criminal defendants have a right to an attorney even if they cannot afford one.

Over the years, these rulings have set the stage for progress as people have challenged the courts in the name of human rights and brought about social change.

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1 Read the text and think about the meaning of the underlined words. Then match them with the definitions.

established	the branch of the U.S. government that makes laws
jurisdiction	not following the U.S. law
court	a place where trials take place and legal cases are decided
Congress	set up
unconstitutional	the official power to make legal decisions and judgments

Score: / 5

2 Complete the summary with the correct words. Use no more than three words for each answer.

The Supreme Court is the **(1)** _____ in the United States, and it presides over all the laws within the country. The court has the power to check the actions of the **(2)** _____ branch (the president) and the **(3)** _____ branch (Congress) to ensure that there is an **(4)** _____ balance among all three **(5)** _____ .

Score: / 5

READING 2

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The spring and summer of 1910 in the western U.S. were extremely hot and dry. As a result, that year saw one of the largest wildfires in U.S. history, which burned about three million acres in Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

As wildfires continued to ravage vast areas of land throughout the U.S., early fire detection became a priority within the Forest Service. Fire towers were built high up on mountaintops or other vantage points as homes for fire "lookouts," whose job was to scan the area for smoke. If smoke was seen, the lookout would communicate the news and call for help.

But with new technology in the second half of the century, the fire towers were abandoned for newer methods of watching for fires. Helicopters and airplanes became more affordable, and improvements in radio made long-distance communication easier. Later, with satellite technology and cell phones, most fire towers fell into disrepair.

Today, however, many states are returning to the old way of watching for fires. There are many plans to replace existing towers and to build new ones. The towers will be staffed by volunteers during the height of fire season, which runs from March through May. State park officials say towers are as reliable and as practical now as when they were first built, at the beginning of the 20th century.

3 Read the text. Then choose the correct word or phrase that paraphrases each underlined word.

1 As wildfires continued to ravage vast areas of land throughout the U.S. ...

A destroy

B exist in

C create

2 ... early fire detection became a priority within the Forest Service.

A discovery

B extinguishing

C starting

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3 These towers were built high up on mountaintops or other vantage points ...

A place with bare rock

B natural landmark

C position with a good view

4 ... whose job was to scan the area for smoke.

A look from left to right

B communicate with others

C draw maps to show details

5 But with new technology in the second half of the century, the fire towers were abandoned ...

A destroyed

B no longer used

C transformed

6 ... for newer methods of watching for fires.

A ways

B jobs

C forests

7 Helicopters and airplanes became more affordable ...

A taken to new areas

B able to be bought

C interesting for the public

8 ... most fire towers fell into disrepair.

A became interesting for history

B were in bad condition

C dropped to the ground

9 There are many plans to replace existing towers and to build new ones.

A standing

B living

C new

10 State park officials say towers are as reliable and as practical now as when they were first built ...

A providing good results every time

B easy to fix

C clean and tidy

Score: / 10

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4 Complete the summary with words from the text.

One of the **(1)** _____ in U.S. history burned in the western states in 1910. Huge areas of land were destroyed, and soon after, officials in the Forest Service made early **(2)** _____ a priority. **(3)** _____ were built on **(4)** _____ tops or other high points for people to live in. Their job was to constantly watch the area for **(5)** _____ and call for help if necessary.

Score: / 5

Most people have heard of Alexander Graham Bell, the man who is credited with inventing the telephone. On March 10, 1876, Bell was successful in hearing his colleague Watson's voice through a wire, thereby receiving the first telephone call in history.

Humans have always found ways to communicate messages, whether it be by trail runners, carrier pigeons, or mail ponies. But when Bell was a child, it would have been impossible to imagine every city having an instant way to send a message in the guise of a telephone. Fast forward to today, where every home has a computer and every person has a smartphone. How times have changed!

In today's world, communication is instantaneous. We use email to send a message in the blink of an eye. We can be reached 24/7 on our phones, which we are plugged into constantly. A note can be sent from a remote island in the Pacific Ocean to Alaska in seconds, and you can easily pick up the phone in New York and speak to a friend in Tokyo.

Many people have been responsible throughout history for pioneering the technology necessary to make these huge leaps forward in communication. Bell helped set the stage almost a century and a half ago, and when he died in 1922, the entire telephone system was shut down for one minute in tribute to his life. Little did they know back then what was yet to come! And little do we know now what's to come next.

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5 Complete the summary with no more than three words from the text.

Throughout history, people have had to find ways to communicate **(1)** _____ . **(2)** _____ is credited with having **(3)** _____ , which changed the way people **(4)** _____ at the time. Today, however, **(5)** _____ has progressed so much that we can send messages across the world in an instant. Many people have helped push the technology forward in the past century, but we had to start somewhere. Alexander Graham Bell's contribution to society was the first step forward to a new kind of technology that was set to change the world.

Score: / 5

6 Choose *T* (True) or *F* (False) for each sentence.

1	Bell and Watson worked together on the first telephone.	T / F
2	The first telephone call was received at the end of the 1800s.	T / F
3	The first telephone call was transmitted through a wire.	T / F
4	Bell imagined a time when every town would have a telephone.	T / F
5	Communication in the past was able to happen quickly, using trail runners or mail ponies.	T / F
6	Bell and Watson's invention is the sole reason we are able to communicate so quickly today.	T / F
7	The author thinks the invention of the telephone was an insignificant step in history.	T / F
8	The author thinks we should recognize that many people are responsible for the advancements in technology.	T / F
9	The author thinks technology will continue to advance over time.	T / F
10	The author compares the leap in technology in the past to the leap we should expect in the future.	T / F

Score: / 10

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