Name _____ Date _____

Summarizing, Main Idea and Key Details in an Informational Text: The Journey of a Recycled Can

Directions: Read about the trip a used can takes. Go back to the passage to check each answer.

The Journey of a Recycled Can

You finish a drink. You drop the empty aluminum can into a recycling bin. For that can, a trip has just begun.

In many towns, a truck takes the can to a sorting center. There the can rides along moving belts, often next to paper, plastic and glass at first. At many centers, a machine with fast-spinning magnets pushes the cans off a belt farther along the line. Then the cans are crushed into big blocks called bales. One bale can hold thousands of cans.

Next the bales go to a plant that melts them down. First the cans are cut into small chips. Heat burns off the paint. Then the chips are melted in a furnace. The liquid metal is poured into molds. There it cools into huge solid blocks.

Rollers press each block thinner and thinner. In the end, it is a long sheet. A can maker cuts the sheet and shapes the pieces into new cans. The cans are filled, sealed and sent to stores.

How long does it take to turn an old can into a new one? Researchers used interviews and data to study the trip in the United States. In a study released in 2025, they estimated about 54 days on average from the recycling bin to a new, empty can body for cans picked up at the curb. Making aluminum from ore dug out of the ground takes a lot of energy. Making it from old cans takes about 95 percent less. The same metal can be melted and used again and again.

1. Which statement gives the main idea supported by the middle and the end of the passage?
   A. Recycling turns used cans into new cans in several steps and saves energy.
   B. For a recycled can, the trip to an empty can body is shorter than the full trip back to a store shelf.
   C. As old cans become new cans, their metal changes from a solid to a liquid and back to a solid.
   D. Recycling aluminum saves energy when people use the metal to make many kinds of products.

2. A piece of aluminum can still be useful after someone is done with it. Which choice uses a detail from the passage to explain why?

A. At a mill, metal from old cans is often mixed with new aluminum. That means the mill needs less new metal.

B. The same metal can be melted and used again and again. That means an empty can can still provide useful metal.

C. Aluminum from old airplane parts can be made into car parts. That shows the metal can do a different job.

D. Aluminum from old window frames can be used to make new frames. That shows an old frame can provide metal for a new one.

3. Recycling cans helps save resources. Which detail from the passage supports this idea?

A. Scraps left after pieces are cut from can sheets go back to the aluminum mill.

B. Making aluminum from old cans takes about 95 percent less energy than making it from ore.

C. In 2021, The Aluminum Association estimated that recycling twelve aluminum cans could save enough energy for a typical car to travel more than three miles.

D. Recycling the aluminum cans that Americans throw away in a year could save enough energy to run about two million homes for a year.

4. Think about the plant that melts the cans. Which two details does the passage give about what happens there? Select two.

☐ A. Air jets push out bits of glass and plastic.

☐ B. Heat burns off the paint.

☐ C. The furnace is hotter than 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit.

☐ D. A solid block can weigh about 27 tons.

☐ E. The liquid metal is poured into molds.

5. Cans ride a moving belt at a sorting center. In the passage, how do many centers get them off?

A. The cans stick to a magnet above the belt.

B. A strong fan blows them into a bin.

C. Workers pick them out by hand.

D. A machine with spinning magnets pushes them off.

6. What number of days does the passage give as the study's average from the curbside recycling bin to a new, empty can body?

A. 51 days B. 54 days C. 114 days D. 60 days

7. Which choice gives an accurate summary of how a used can becomes a new one?

A. At a plant, used cans are cut into chips and melted. The liquid metal cools into huge solid blocks.

B. A truck takes a used can to a sorting center. The can rides a moving belt with other things from the recycling bins.

C. After sorting, used cans travel to a plant as separate cans. Their metal is melted, rolled into sheets and shaped into new cans. The new cans are filled, sealed and sent to stores.

D. After sorting, used cans travel to a plant in big blocks. Their metal is melted, rolled into sheets and shaped into new cans. The new cans are filled, sealed and sent to stores.