Name _____ Date _____

# Writing an Objective Summary of a Story: The Ferry

**Directions:** Read the story carefully, keeping track of the main events and the order in which they happen. Then answer each question, checking every summary and every sentence against what the story actually says.

## The Ferry

For two years, Jonah had taken the 7:10 ferry across Carver Bay to school and the 4:30 ferry home, and for two years he had complained about it to anyone who would listen. The crossing took forty minutes, the cabin smelled of diesel and wet wool, the benches were bolted at angles that suited no one, and on windy days the spray came over the rail and soaked one side of his jeans. When the new bridge opened on Monday, the same trip would take ten minutes by bus, which meant that Friday's 4:30 crossing would be the ferry's last.

Jonah boarded it that afternoon with his headphones already on, planning to spend the trip the way he spent every trip, eyes closed, counting down. But before the ferry had even cleared the harbor, the captain leaned out of the wheelhouse door and pointed straight at him. "You. Headphones. Up here."

He climbed the narrow stairs because it did not sound like a question.

The wheelhouse was warm and smelled of coffee, and the captain, whose name turned out to be Ruth Abara, did not say much at first. She pointed out a heron standing on a broken piling, then the roof of the yellow house where she had grown up, then the channel marker where, she said, Jonah's mother had once dropped a whole bag of oranges overboard on a school trip. Jonah had not known that his mother had ever ridden this ferry.

When he asked how long she had been the captain, Ruth said, "Twenty-six years." Then she stepped back from the wheel and told him, "Go on, keep the bow pointed at the red marker." For a little over a minute, the whole ferry went where Jonah aimed it, and he forgot to be bored.

As they neared the town dock, Jonah saw that a crowd had gathered: neighbors, two of his teachers, and a man holding a cardboard sign that said THANK YOU, RUTH. Ruth nodded toward a cord that hung from the ceiling and said, "Three long ones, because that's how a ferry says goodbye." Jonah pulled the cord three times, and the horn rolled out across the water, so deep that he felt it in his ribs, and the people on the dock cheered.

On Monday morning, the bus carried him across the new bridge in ten minutes. Jonah sat by the window and watched the bay slide past far below, flat and gray, with no heron that he could see. When he got to school, he had half an hour to spare, and he could not think of a single thing to do with it.

**1.** Which of the following is the best objective summary of "The Ferry," one that keeps the main events in order without adding opinions or details that the story never gives?

A. Jonah, who has complained for two years about the slow ferry to school, rides its last trip before a new bridge opens. As the ferry nears the dock, Jonah sounds the horn to say goodbye. Then the captain calls him up to the wheelhouse and lets him steer. On Monday, after the bus crosses the new bridge, he cannot think of anything to do with his extra time.

B. Jonah, who has complained for two years about the slow ferry to school, rides its last trip before a new bridge opens. The captain calls him up to the wheelhouse and lets him steer, which is the best part of the story. As the ferry nears the dock, Jonah sounds the horn to say goodbye. On Monday, after the bus crosses the new bridge, he cannot think of anything to do with his extra time.

C. Jonah, who has complained for two years about the slow ferry to school, rides its last trip before a new bridge opens. The captain calls him up to the wheelhouse and lets him steer. As the ferry nears the dock, Jonah sounds the horn, and the captain gives him her cap to keep. On Monday, after the bus crosses the new bridge, he cannot think of anything to do with his extra time.

D. Jonah, who has complained for two years about the slow ferry to school, rides its last trip before a new bridge opens. The captain calls him up to the wheelhouse and lets him steer. As the ferry nears the dock, Jonah sounds the horn to say goodbye. On Monday, after the bus crosses the new bridge, he cannot think of anything to do with his extra time.

**2.** A student wrote the following summary of "The Ferry": *Jonah, who has complained for two years about the slow ferry to school, rides its last trip before a new bridge opens. The captain calls him up to the wheelhouse, tells him a story about his mother and lets him steer. As the ferry nears the dock, where a crowd has gathered, Jonah sounds the horn to say goodbye.* What is the main problem with this summary?

A. It adds a detail that the story never actually gives.

B. It includes the student's own opinion of the story.

C. It leaves out the ending, when Jonah rides the bus across the new bridge on Monday.

D. It tells the events of the story in the wrong order.

**3.** Which of the following sentences from a student's summary of "The Ferry" includes the student's own opinion instead of reporting what actually happens in the story?

A. Jonah's complaints about the ferry were childish, and he should have been grateful.

B. The captain calls Jonah up to the wheelhouse.

C. After the bridge opens, the trip takes ten minutes by bus.

D. Jonah has ridden the ferry to school and back for two years.

**4.** Which of the following sentences from a student's summary of the story adds a detail that the story itself never gives?

A. A crowd has gathered at the town dock by the time the ferry nears it.

B. Ruth lets Jonah steer the ferry for a little over a minute.

C. Ruth Abara has been the ferry's captain for twenty-six years.

D. Jonah's mother is waiting for him in the crowd at the dock.

**5.** A student's summary includes this sentence: *In the best scene of the story, the kind captain finally lets lazy Jonah steer the ferry.* Which revision removes every judgment from the sentence and keeps only what actually happens?

A. The kind captain lets Jonah steer the ferry.

B. In the best scene of the story, the captain lets Jonah steer the ferry.

C. The captain lets Jonah steer the ferry.

D. The captain lets lazy Jonah steer the ferry.

**6.** Which two items from "The Ferry" belong in an objective summary because they are main events rather than minor details? Select two.

☐ A. The captain calls Jonah up to the wheelhouse and lets him steer.

☐ B. The cabin smells of diesel and wet wool.

☐ C. The benches in the cabin are bolted at angles that suit no one.

☐ D. A heron stands on a broken piling.

☐ E. The ferry makes its last trip before a new bridge opens.

**7.** A strong summary of "The Ferry" mentions that for two years Jonah complained about the ferry "to anyone who would listen." Why is this detail worth including in a summary of the story?

A. It is the funniest part of the story, and a summary should keep the jokes.

B. It shows where Jonah starts, so readers of the summary can see how much he has changed by the end.

C. It shows that Jonah was the only passenger who disliked the ferry.

D. It explains why the town decided to build the new bridge.

**8.** Which statement expresses a theme of "The Ferry," a general idea about life, rather than summarizing the specific events of the story?

A. A new bridge cuts the trip across Carver Bay from forty minutes to ten.

B. Ruth Abara has been the captain of the ferry for twenty-six years.

C. Something that seems like a waste of time can turn out to matter once a person pays attention to it.

D. Jonah rides the ferry's last trip and sounds its horn as it nears the dock.

**9.** During the crossing, which sentence from the story best shows that Jonah's attitude toward the ferry is starting to change?

A. "For a little over a minute, the whole ferry went where Jonah aimed it, and he forgot to be bored."

B. "He climbed the narrow stairs because it did not sound like a question."

C. "Jonah boarded it that afternoon with his headphones already on"

D. "The wheelhouse was warm and smelled of coffee"

**10.** In the final paragraph, Jonah reaches school with "half an hour to spare," and he "could not think of a single thing to do with it." How does this ending develop the story's theme?

A. It shows that the time he once wanted to save now feels empty, which suggests that the slow crossing held more value than he had realized.

B. It shows that Jonah plans to ride the ferry again the following week.

C. It shows that Jonah is glad the new bridge saves him so much time every morning.

D. It shows that Jonah has started arriving late for school since the bridge opened.