Quoting Text to Support Inferences in Nonfiction

Name: _____	Date: _____	Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

When a question asks what the text shows, find the EXACT sentence that proves it. A good quotation does two things: it matches the idea you are trying to support, AND it would be hard to argue with anyone using just that sentence.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The Underwater Forests of the Pacific

Off the rocky western coast of North America, a tall green forest sways in the current. It is not made of trees. It is made of giant kelp, a kind of seaweed that can grow more than one hundred feet from the ocean floor to the surface. A single kelp can lengthen by almost two feet in a single day, making it one of the fastest-growing organisms on the planet. Unlike a forest of trees, the kelp forest is held in place not by deep roots but by a small, claw-like structure called a holdfast that grips the rocks below.

Hundreds of species depend on this underwater forest. Sea otters wrap themselves in the long blades of kelp at night so the current will not carry them away while they sleep. Schools of small fish hide from larger predators in the swaying canopy. On the cold, rocky bottom, prickly purple sea urchins crawl along, scraping algae from the rocks. The kelp itself feeds tiny shrimp-like creatures that, in turn, feed nearly every other animal in the forest.

When sea otters were hunted nearly to extinction in the 1800s, scientists later noticed something strange. Without otters to eat them, sea urchins multiplied without limit. The hungry urchins chewed through the holdfasts of the kelp, and entire forests collapsed into bare patches scientists now call "urchin barrens." Today, otters are protected by law, and in places where their populations have recovered, the kelp forests have begun to grow back as well. The story of the kelp forest is a reminder that even a small change to one species can change an entire underwater world.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Read the article. Then choose the sentence that BEST supports each idea.

1. Which sentence from paragraph 1 BEST supports the idea that giant kelp grows very quickly?

A. "Off the rocky western coast of North America, a tall green forest sways in the current."

B. "It is made of giant kelp, a kind of seaweed that can grow more than one hundred feet from the ocean floor to the surface."

C. "A single kelp can lengthen by almost two feet in a single day, making it one of the fastest-growing organisms on the planet."

D. "Unlike a forest of trees, the kelp forest is held in place not by deep roots but by a small, claw-like structure called a holdfast."

2. A reader concludes that the holdfast does NOT work the same way a tree's roots do. Which sentence BEST supports this inference?

A. "Unlike a forest of trees, the kelp forest is held in place not by deep roots but by a small, claw-like structure called a holdfast that grips the rocks below."

B. "It is made of giant kelp, a kind of seaweed that can grow more than one hundred feet from the ocean floor to the surface."

C. "Sea otters wrap themselves in the long blades of kelp at night so the current will not carry them away while they sleep."

D. "The kelp itself feeds tiny shrimp-like creatures that, in turn, feed nearly every other animal in the forest."

3. Which sentence BEST supports the idea that sea otters do MORE for the kelp forest than just live in it?

A. "Sea otters wrap themselves in the long blades of kelp at night so the current will not carry them away while they sleep."

B. "On the cold, rocky bottom, prickly purple sea urchins crawl along, scraping algae from the rocks."

C. "The kelp itself feeds tiny shrimp-like creatures that, in turn, feed nearly every other animal in the forest."

D. "Without otters to eat them, sea urchins multiplied without limit."

4. What can the reader infer about "urchin barrens"?

A. They are places where otters have built homes.

B. They are places where the kelp forest has been destroyed by too many urchins.

C. They are areas of the forest where urchins are protected.

D. They are deep, hidden parts of the kelp forest where urchins lay eggs.

5. Which sentence BEST supports the inference in question 4?

A. "The hungry urchins chewed through the holdfasts of the kelp, and entire forests collapsed into bare patches scientists now call 'urchin barrens.'"

B. "Today, otters are protected by law, and in places where their populations have recovered, the kelp forests have begun to grow back as well."

C. "On the cold, rocky bottom, prickly purple sea urchins crawl along, scraping algae from the rocks."

D. "The story of the kelp forest is a reminder that even a small change to one species can change an entire underwater world."

6. A reader claims, "The kelp forest is recovering in some areas." Which sentence BEST supports this claim?

A. "When sea otters were hunted nearly to extinction in the 1800s, scientists later noticed something strange."

B. "The hungry urchins chewed through the holdfasts of the kelp, and entire forests collapsed into bare patches."

C. "Schools of small fish hide from larger predators in the swaying canopy."

D. "Today, otters are protected by law, and in places where their populations have recovered, the kelp forests have begun to grow back as well."

7. Which sentence from the article BEST supports the inference that giant kelp is the FOUNDATION of the whole food web in the forest?

A. "It is not made of trees."

B. "The kelp itself feeds tiny shrimp-like creatures that, in turn, feed nearly every other animal in the forest."

C. "Without otters to eat them, sea urchins multiplied without limit."

D. "A single kelp can lengthen by almost two feet in a single day."

8. A student says the article suggests that PROTECTING ONE species can help MANY others. Which quote BEST supports that idea?

A. "It is made of giant kelp, a kind of seaweed that can grow more than one hundred feet."

B. "Schools of small fish hide from larger predators in the swaying canopy."

C. "On the cold, rocky bottom, prickly purple sea urchins crawl along."

D. "Today, otters are protected by law, and in places where their populations have recovered, the kelp forests have begun to grow back as well."

9. Write an inference about WHY the loss of sea otters in the 1800s eventually hurt the kelp forest. Then quote one sentence from the article that BEST supports your inference.

_____

_____

10. Which sentence BEST supports the inference that scientists DID NOT understand the link between otters and kelp until AFTER the otters were almost gone?

A. "Off the rocky western coast of North America, a tall green forest sways in the current."

B. When sea otters were hunted nearly to extinction in the 1800s, scientists later noticed something strange.

C. Hundreds of species depend on this underwater forest.

D. It is made of giant kelp, a kind of seaweed that can grow more than one hundred feet.

Answer Keys

1	A	B	**C**	D	6	A	B	C	**D**
2	**A**	B	C	D	7	A	**B**	C	D
3	A	B	C	**D**	8	A	B	C	**D**
4	A	**B**	C	D	9	See below			
5	**A**	B	C	D	10	A	**B**	C	D

Explanations

1. C	C is the only sentence that names a SPEED of growth. A describes location. B describes total height — a tall plant is not necessarily a fast one (a misconception that confuses size with growth rate). D describes how kelp is anchored, not how fast it grows.
2. A	A directly contrasts the holdfast with deep roots — exactly the inference. B is about height, not anchoring (size-vs-anchor confusion). C is about otters, not anchoring. D is about food, not anchoring.
3. D	D shows otters affect the whole forest by controlling urchins. A only shows otters USE the kelp (using-vs-protecting confusion). B describes urchins, not otters. C is about kelp's role, not otters'.
4. B	Paragraph 3 shows urchins chewing through holdfasts and forests collapsing — a destruction inference. A confuses otters with urchins. C contradicts the text (otters, not urchins, are the protected species). D adds a plausible-sounding biology fact never stated.
5. A	A directly defines the term in context. B is about RECOVERY, not what a barren is. C describes normal urchin behavior, not destruction. D is the article's broad lesson, not a definition.
6. D	D names recovery directly. A describes the original problem in the past. B describes COLLAPSE, the opposite of recovery. C describes a normal scene with no recovery information.
7. B	B traces a food chain from kelp upward to nearly every animal — that is what "foundation" means here. A is a comparison to land plants. C is about predator–prey balance, not the bottom of the food web. D is about growth rate, not feeding.
8. D	D shows a one-species protection (otters) helping a whole ecosystem (the forest). A is about size. B describes a hiding behavior, not protection of a species. C describes urchin behavior, with no link to protection.
9.	**Answer:** Sample answer: Inference — Without otters to eat the urchins, the urchin population exploded and the urchins destroyed the kelp. Quote — "Without otters to eat them, sea urchins multiplied without limit" OR "The hungry urchins chewed through the holdfasts of the kelp, and entire forests collapsed into bare patches scientists now call 'urchin barrens.'" NOT acceptable: inferences with no quotation, quotations from paragraph 1 or 2 (which do not mention urchin damage), or quotations that contradict the inference. A 2-point answer needs (1) a clear cause-and-effect inference linking otter loss → urchin growth → kelp damage AND (2) a sentence from paragraph 3 that proves it. Reject answers without a direct quotation.
10. B	The word "later" in B shows the link was discovered AFTER the otters were nearly gone — exactly the inference. A and D describe the forest's appearance, not scientific discovery. C states a general fact without timing.

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