



“Cacti”

Reading Comprehension – Informational Passages

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer questions about the passage below.

The cactus is a plant which grows in very hot, dry places. They do not have leaves. Instead, they have spiny needles which stick out of their stems. There are many shapes of the cactus. Some are small and round. Others are tall like columns or **pillars**. Some are shaped like tubes or bells. Some are shaped like wheels. Some grow as trees or shrubs. Others grow as ground cover. Cactus flowers are big, and some of them **bloom** at night. Their flowers come out at night because they are **pollinated** by insects or small animals that come out at night. Insects and small animals carry pollen from one cactus to another.

Most cacti live in North and South America. Others live in Africa, Madagascar, and Sri Lanka.

Cacti do not have very large leaves because large leaves would allow the water to **evaporate**. When water evaporates, it changes from a liquid to a gas. When it becomes a gas, it is light enough to move through the air. That would be bad for the cactus because the cactus needs the water to live.

Some cacti have waxy coatings on their stems, so that water will run down the stem to the roots. Cacti can **absorb** water from fog in the air, since it does not rain very much in the desert. Most cacti have long roots which can spread out close to the surface so they can absorb a lot of water on the occasions when it rains.

Questions:

1) What do cacti have instead of leaves?

- A. Stems
- B. Tubes
- C. Pillars
- D. Needles



2) How are cacti shaped?

- A. Like balls
- B. Like tubes
- C. Like wheels
- D. All of the above

3) Where do most cacti grow?

- A. North and South America
- B. Southern Europe
- C. Antarctica
- D. Asia

4) Cacti prevent evaporation of water by...

- A. growing small leaves.
- B. growing small stems.
- C. growing large leaves.
- D. growing deep roots.

5) Some cacti...

- A. bloom at night.
- B. grow as vines.
- C. grow as shrubs.
- D. Both A and C are correct.

Vocabulary:

1) **Pillars** are...

- A. small balls.
- B. long tubes.
- C. tall columns.
- D. Both A and C



2) When cacti **bloom**...

- A. their flowers fall off.
- B. their flowers come out.
- C. they are eaten by insects.
- D. they are eaten by small animals.

3) When cacti are **pollinated**, their pollen...

- A. is carried from one cactus to another.
- B. is eaten by small animals.
- C. is eaten by insects.
- D. Both B and C are correct.

4) When water **evaporates**, it...

- A. changes from gas to liquid.
- B. changes from liquid to gas.
- C. changes from liquid to solid.
- D. is absorbed by the stem of the cactus.

5) A synonym for “**absorb**” is...

- A. soak up.
- B. drink in.
- C. consume.
- D. All of the above