

# CRCT Prep



## Grade 7 Reading Comprehension

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# from “A LITTLE PRINCESS” - Part I

*by Frances Hodgson Burnett*

1 Once on a dark winter’s day, when the yellow fog hung so thick and heavy in the streets of London that the lamps were lighted and the shop windows blazed with gas as they do at night, an odd-looking little girl sat in a cab with her father and was driven rather slowly through the big thoroughfares.

She sat with her feet tucked under her, and leaned against her father, who held her in his arm, as she stared out of the window at the passing people with a queer old-fashioned thoughtfulness in her big eyes.

She was such a little girl that one did not expect to see such a look on her small face. It would have been an old look for a child of twelve, and Sara Crewe was only seven. The fact was, however, that she was always dreaming and thinking odd things and could not herself remember any time when she had not been thinking things about grown-up people and the world they belonged to. She felt as if she had lived a long, long time.

At this moment she was remembering the voyage she had just made from Bombay with her father, Captain Crewe. She was thinking of the big ship, of the Lascars passing silently to and fro on it, of the children playing about on the hot deck, and of some young officers’ wives who used to try to make her talk to them and laugh at the things she said.

Principally, she was thinking of what a queer thing it was that at one time one was in India in the blazing sun, and then in the middle of the ocean, and then driving in a strange vehicle through strange streets where the day was as dark as the night. She found this so puzzling that she moved closer to her father.

“Papa,” she said in a low, mysterious little voice which was almost a whisper, “papa.”

“What is it, darling?” Captain Crewe answered, holding her closer and looking down into her face. “What is Sara thinking of?”

“Is this the place?” Sara whispered, cuddling still closer to him. “Is it, papa?”

“Yes, little Sara, it is. We have reached it at last.” And though she was only seven years old, she knew that he felt sad when he said it.

[**Note:** The “Lascars” mentioned in paragraph 4 are native East Indian seamen.]

1. Sara most likely moved close to her father because she
  - A. was overwhelmed by the things she was seeing.
  - B. feared that the people would attack her.
  - C. was cold from the damp London air.
  - D. wanted him to tell her where they were going.
  
2. In paragraph 1, the word *thoroughfares* means
  - A. cabs.
  - B. cities.
  - C. streets.
  - D. lamps.
  
3. Which of the following BEST describes how Sara felt at the end of the passage?
  - A. weary
  - B. worried
  - C. confused
  - D. excited
  
4. Why do you think Captain Crewe was sad?

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# THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has regional and thematic programs on four continents. Five of its programs are in New York City.

The Bronx Zoo, the first program, was founded in 1899. It has been a leader in wildlife conservation education since it opened. The Bronx Zoo is more than a zoo. It offers a variety of courses. The Bronx Zoo's Education Department also produces a full life sciences curriculum. It is used in all fifty states. It is even used overseas.

The second program, the New York Aquarium is situated on fourteen acres by the sea. It is in Coney Island, Brooklyn. It is home to thousands of fish and a multitude of marine creatures. These include beluga whales, sharks, walruses, and dolphins.

The third program invites you to discover the whole world of wildlife at the Central Park Wildlife Center. Trek through a tropical rain forest or cool down with the penguins, all in the middle of Manhattan.

Visit the Queens Wildlife Center in Flushing Meadows Park, the fourth program. You will experience an American wildlife adventure. You will see spectacled bears and come face-to-face with a mountain lion. You will stroll through the open aviary. Come discover majestic Roosevelt elk, American bison, and more.

- 6 The new Prospect Park Wildlife Center, the fifth program, invites children to use all their senses to discover an incredible world of wildlife. Tunnel through a prairie dog town. Master the language of baboons. Create animal art, using meerkats as your models.

The Wildlife Conservation Society's programs extend to other regions of the world as well. In South America, WCS works extensively in Amazonian Brazil. It boasts one of the most extraordinary, yet least studied, ecosystems in the world. This ecosystem is the seasonally flooded forest known as the "varzea." In Asia, WCS works in the thick, wet forests just south of the extinct Crater Mountain Volcano in Papua, New Guinea. In Africa, the WCS works with all three gorilla subspecies: mountain gorillas, Grauer's gorillas, and western lowland gorillas.

1. *Multitude* means
  - A. structure.
  - B. dome.
  - C. percent.
  - D. mass.

2. According to the passage, what is one thing that visitors to the Central Park Wildlife Center might see?
- A. penguins
  - B. gorillas
  - C. mountain lions
  - D. beluga whales
3. What is the main idea of paragraph 6?
- A. Baboons have a secret language that humans don't know about.
  - B. The Prospect Park Center allows kids to experience wildlife
  - C. Kids can see a prairie dog town in the Prospect Park Center.
  - D. Meerkats create their own art, as do many animals at the Prospect Park Center.
4. Which information in the passage BEST supports the idea that the Bronx Zoo is a leader in wildlife conservation education?
- A. The Bronx Zoo was founded in 1899.
  - B. The Bronx Zoo is more than a zoo.
  - C. The Bronx Zoo offers classes in the life-sciences.
  - D. The Bronx Zoo plans lessons used internationally.



# DE SOTO'S EXPEDITION

In 1539, Spaniard Hernando de Soto landed on the Florida coast with a fleet of vessels. On the vessels were over 600 men, 300 horses, a herd of pigs, some mules, bloodhounds, many weapons, and a large store of supplies. His goal was to conquer and settle the territory of the Gulf States. The army spent the winter near Tallahassee, Florida. Then they set off on a journey which, for him, ended at the Mississippi River. This expedition marked the first entry of Europeans into the interior of the southeastern United States.

Four accounts were written during and after the expedition by Ranjel, Garcilaso de la Vega, Biedma, and the "Gentleman of Elvas." They provide the first sketches of the countryside and shed the earliest historic light on the native people of the interior southeast.

## The First "Pocahontas" Story

Upon arriving in La Florida, the expedition was without an interpreter and guide. De Soto sent two groups of heavily armed men to capture Native Americans to serve this purpose. One of these forces came upon ten or eleven Native Americans in an open field. To their surprise, they found that one of them was actually a Spaniard. He was almost naked and sunburned. His arms were tattooed after the manner of the Native Americans.

With great rejoicing, the horsemen took the man back to camp. They learned that his name was Juan Ortiz. He was a native of Savilla and of noble parentage. He had first gone into the country with Panphilo de Narvaez. He then returned at the request of the governor of Cuba's wife. He and his men made port in sight of a Native American town. No sooner had he and a few men got ashore when many native people came out of the houses and captured them. Those remaining on the ship returned to Cuba without him.

The other men were killed. He was taken before a chief named Ucita. By command, he was bound hand and foot to four stakes. He was laid upon scaffolding, beneath which a fire was kindled, that he might be burned. A daughter of the chief entreated that he might be spared. The father agreed, directing that his injuries be healed.

When Ortiz got well, he was, according to the Gentleman of Elvas, "put to watching a temple, that the wolves, in the night-time, might not carry off the dead there." Ortiz had lived among the Native Americans for twelve years before he was found and joined the expedition. When de Soto and his army approached the town of Cofitachequi, somewhere in the Georgia/South Carolina area, they were officially welcomed by a woman. This chieftainness was carried to the river on a litter covered with delicate, white cloth. She was taken across to the Spaniards in a large, ornate dugout canoe.

Biedma gave this description:



An awning was spread over the stern, and in the bottom lay extended a mat where were two cushions, one above the other, upon which she sat; and she was accompanied by her chief men, in other canoes, in other canoes, with Indians. One of the Indians carried a special stool for her to sit on as she talked with de Soto.

A Spaniard of the expedition romantically compared her to Cleopatra, noting that she was “brown but well proportioned.”

“Drawing from over her head a necklace of five or six strings of pearls,” Biedma said, she placed them around de Soto’s neck. In an ossuary in the same town they found many bodies. The breasts, bellies, necks, arms, and legs were covered with pearls. They took away a quantity estimated by different chroniclers to weigh from 165 pounds to 350 pounds. According to Elvas, there were figures of babies and birds made of them, perhaps as ornaments for leather or textiles.

Also in the storehouses at Cofitachequi were “feather mantles (white, gray, vermilion, and yellow), made according to their custom, elegant and suitable for winter.” Garcilaso indicated that feathers were used as a sign of rank. Feather cloaks were worn for ornamentation as much as for warmth, and the commonest type of headband was decorated with feathers.

As the expedition moved north through what is now Georgia, Biedma noted “a change in the habitations which were now in the earth like caves. Heretofore they were covered with palm leaves and with grass.”

Elvas recorded, “They have barbacoas in which they keep their maize. These are houses raised up on four posts, timbered like a loft, and the floor of canes.” Near the town of Cofitachequi

. . . were large vacant towns, grown up in grass, that appeared as if no people had lived in them for a long time. The Indians said that, two years before, there had been a pest in the land. The inhabitants had moved away to other towns. In the barbacoas were large quantities of clothing, shawls of thread, made from the bark of trees, and others of feathers, white, gray, vermilion, and yellow, rich and proper for winter. There were also many well-dressed deer-skins, of colors drawn over with designs, of which had been made shoes, stockings, and hose.

Three or four miles from the town of Cofitachequi was a town that may have been the religious and, perhaps, political center of the province. The town, called Talomico, was also deserted, possibly because of depopulation caused by the epidemic described to them by the Lady of Cofitachequi. The town was said to contain five hundred houses built on a bluff overlooking a river gorge. The buildings were large and carefully constructed.

Many encounters along the expedition’s route were marked by violence, even when the natives treated its members with courtesy and consideration. The “Lady of Cofitachequi,” for instance, was taken prisoner and forced to accompany the expedition.

The Gentleman of Elvas wrote the following:

. . . the Governor (de Soto) ordered that she should be placed under guard, and took her with him. This treatment, which was not a proper return for the hospitable welcome he had received, makes true the adage, *For well doing . . .*; and thus was she carried away on foot, with her female servants. She managed to escape after a few days and, hopefully, returned to her people. Scores of other people were not so fortunate.

In the expedition's aftermath, many southeastern towns were left with little, if any, food. Old World diseases, such as smallpox and influenza, decimated their populations. Contact with a foreign culture caused social disruption which altered the Native Americans' way of life forever. Narratives written by survivors of de Soto's *entrada* are the earliest precious snapshots of southeastern Native American culture.

1. *Entreated* means
  - A. sensed.
  - B. related.
  - C. begged.
  - D. chanted.
  
2. Which of the following did de Soto NOT bring on his expedition?
  - A. pigs
  - B. horses
  - C. mules
  - D. cows
  
3. Who of the following was the Native American princess who greeted de Soto?
  - A. the daughter of Ucita
  - B. Cofitachequi
  - C. Cleopatra
  - D. the Lady of Cofitachequi
  
4. *Barbacoas* were
  - A. storehouses.
  - B. feather mantles.
  - C. strings of pearls.
  - D. white cloths.

