

## “Wild”

### Reading Comprehension – Short Stories

Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions below.



I was 16 when my father **unequivocally** decided that he would send me to wilderness camp for several months. He had threatened many times before, but my mother had always managed to persuade him from actually packing me up and shipping me off.

My latest transgression was viewed as *the last straw*. In a fit of **unbridled** rage, I had shoved my math teacher down a flight of steps at school. He broke his arm in two places and severely dislocated his shoulder. The man hadn't done a thing to me. I am hard pressed to remember why I was so irritated at him.

Anyway, Mr. Ford, my math teacher, had agreed not to press charges as favor to my dad. He was a friend of my dad's from way back. Mr. Ford knew what was at stake. We all did.

Dad was in the middle of a tight race for sheriff in our town. This latest “Danny Thing,” as all of my reckless behavior was now called, had all my dad's closest advisors talking.

“John, he's your son and he's a kid, but he is dragging you down,” I heard Jake Hutch tell my dad through his closed office door the night after I pushed Mr. Ford. “If it appears you can't set the course for enforcement in your own home, how can you set the course for this town?”

So, off to the Pisgah National Forest I went. I knew in my heart that “Wilderness Camp” was surely just a **euphemism** for “Torture Center.” I imagined hours of untold abuse at the hands of some lumberjack-sized drill sergeant. I resolved not to be broken and to emerge from the program unchanged. I was who I was.

Nearly every day for six months, a small group of other troubled teens and I lugged our 30-pound backpacks on a trek that covered about 10 miles. We hiked in a rugged wilderness that seemed untouched by civilization. The **grandeur** of the sky, rock and wilderness made me **reverent**.

Our counselors, were firm, but gentle, not the **ogres** I had imagined. We learned how to make a fire without matches and create a shelter with twigs, branches and grass. We learned which plants were safe to eat out in the wild. Late into the night, we talked about our fears and hopes.

We were devoid of radios, televisions and cell phones. I felt myself change. I was calm and often reflective. My old, impulsive self was gone.

One morning, six months later, my dad came to pick me up. I ran to hug him and saw relief and love in his eyes.

“So what’s it like being sheriff?” I asked on the ride home.

“I lost the race, Danny,” he said.

“I’m sorry, Dad.” I knew my behavior probably had a lot to do with his defeat.

Dad squeezed my shoulder and brought me close. “As long as I don’t ever lose you, I’m okay.”

---

### Questions:

---

1) Which best describes the double-meaning of the title?

- A. Danny goes to wilderness camp; it is in a national forest.
- B. Danny is out of control; he is sent into the wilderness.
- C. Danny changes at wilderness camp; his father loses a tight race for sheriff.
- D. Danny hikes in the rugged wilderness; he becomes respectful of nature and others.

2) "I was 16 when my father **unequivocally** decided that he would send me to wilderness camp for several months."

▼ Choose the best way to rewrite the above sentence.

- A. I was 16 when my father angrily decided that he would send me to wilderness camp for several months.
- B. I was 16 when, over the course of several months, my father decided he would send me to wilderness camp.
- C. I was 16 when my father finally decided that he would send me to wilderness camp for several months.
- D. I was 16 when my father decided without question that he would send me to wilderness camp for several months.

3) What does the idiomatic expression, "*the last straw*," suggest?

- A. the biggest problem of all
- B. the worst thing someone could have done
- C. the last in a line of unacceptable occurrences
- D. the deed someone wishes he or she could take back

4) Which is the best antonym for **unbridled**?

- A. amusing
  - B. peaceful
  - C. restrained
  - D. understandable
-

---

## Questions (continued):

---

5) What lesson did Danny seem to learn in this passage?

- A. Fight fire with fire.
- B. Faith will move mountains.
- C. Nature exceeds nurture.
- D. A reed before the wind lives on, while mighty oaks do fall.

6) What is a **euphemism**?

- A. a code word
- B. a nickname
- C. a detailed description
- D. a less offensive term

7) What kind of character is Jake Hutch in this passage?

- A. round, meaning fully developed
- B. protagonist, meaning the main character
- C. antihero, meaning he lacks heroic traits
- D. flat, meaning only having enough traits to fulfill his function in the passage

8) "*The **grandeur** of the sky, rock and wilderness made me **reverent**.*"

▼ Choose the best way to rewrite the above sentence.

- A. I was humbled by the vastness of the sky, rock and wilderness.
- B. I felt small in comparison to the sheer size of the sky, rock and wilderness.
- C. The power of the sky, rock and wilderness made me regret my past behavior.
- D. The inherent danger of the sky, rock and wilderness made me nervous.

9) What is evident by the end of this passage?

▼ Check all that are correct.

- A.  how much John loves his son
- B.  how much Danny has changed
- C.  that Danny has made lasting friendships
- D.  that John has given up running for office

10) If the counselors at the wilderness camp had been **ogres**, how might they have behaved?

- A. by giving teenagers water only when they were thirsty
  - B. by making the teenagers figure out how to build a fort in the rain
  - C. by refusing to treat the teenagers wounds when they got injured
  - D. by encouraging the teens to socialize with one another even if they didn't want to
-