Name: _____ Date: _____

Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

Circle group

Long ago, trains carried most of the mail. Some trains had a car just for letters. Clerks worked inside while the train rolled down the track.

The car was full of small wooden boxes called slots. Each slot stood for a town. A clerk picked up a letter and read the address. Then he tossed it into the right slot. He had to work fast. The floor swayed and shook.

When the train reached a town, the letters for that place were already sorted. They were tied in a bundle. That saved time.

Small towns got mail in a clever way. The train did not always stop. A bag of mail hung on a post by the track. A hook on the train snatched the bag as it raced by. At the same time, a clerk tossed out a bag for the town.

Questions

1. What were the small wooden boxes called?

_____

_____

2. What did a clerk do with each letter?

_____

_____

3. Why was the work hard in a mail car?

_____

_____

4. How did a small town get mail if the train did not stop?

_____

_____

5. Why did sorting on the train save time?

_____

_____

6. Why did clerks have to work fast?

_____

_____

Words to know

clerks: workers who do jobs like sorting and keeping records
slots: narrow openings or small boxes for holding things
address: the place where a person lives or gets mail
bundle: a group of things tied together

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

Triangle group

Before airplanes and big trucks carried most of the mail, trains did the job. Some trains had a special car just for letters. Inside, clerks worked while the train rolled down the track.

The mail car was full of small wooden boxes, called slots. Each slot stood for a town or a region. A clerk picked up a letter, read the address, and tossed it into the right slot. The work was fast, and the floor swayed and shook the whole time.

By the time the train reached a town, the letters for that place were already sorted and tied in a bundle. That saved a lot of time.

Small towns got their mail in a clever way. The train did not always stop. A bag of mail hung on a tall post beside the track. A hook on the train snatched the bag as it raced by. At the same moment, a clerk tossed out a bag for the town.

Questions

1. What were the small wooden boxes in the mail car called?

_____

_____

2. What did a clerk do with each letter?

_____

_____

3. Why was the work hard in a mail car?

_____

_____

4. How did a small town get its mail if the train did not stop?

_____

_____

5. Why did sorting letters on the train save time?

_____

_____

6. Why did clerks have to work fast?

_____

_____

Words to know

clerks: workers who do jobs like sorting and keeping records
slots: narrow openings or small boxes for holding things
address: the place where a person lives or gets mail
region: a large area of land
bundle: a group of things tied together

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

Square group

Before airplanes and large trucks carried most of the mail, trains were responsible for delivering it. Some trains included a special car reserved just for letters, and inside it, clerks worked busily while the train rumbled along the track.

The mail car was lined with small wooden boxes called slots, and each slot represented a particular town or region. A clerk would pick up a letter, read the address, and toss it into the correct slot. The work had to be done quickly, even though the floor swayed and shook the entire time.

By the time the train pulled into a town, the letters for that place had already been sorted and tied into a bundle, which saved a great deal of time.

Small towns received their mail in an especially clever way. The train often did not stop at all. Instead, a bag of mail hung from a tall post beside the track, and a hook on the train snatched the bag as it raced past. At that very moment, a clerk tossed out a bag meant for the town.

Questions

1. What were the small wooden boxes in the mail car called?

_____

_____

2. What did a clerk do with each letter he picked up?

_____

_____

3. What made the work difficult inside the mail car?

_____

_____

4. How did a small town receive its mail if the train did not stop?

_____

_____

5. Why did sorting letters during the trip save so much time?

_____

_____

6. Why did the clerks have to work so quickly?

_____

_____

Words to know

clerks: workers who do jobs like sorting and keeping records
slots: narrow openings or small boxes for holding things
address: the place where a person lives or gets mail
region: a large area of land
bundle: a group of things tied together

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

Easier · 143 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.8

1. Slots.
2. Read the address and tossed it into the right slot.
3. The floor swayed and shook while the train rolled.
4. A bag hung on a post, and a hook on the train snatched it as it went by.
5. The letters for each town were already sorted when the train arrived.
6. The train kept moving toward the next town, and the letters had to be ready.

Triangle: Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

This passage · 161 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.5

1. Slots.
2. Read the address and tossed it into the right slot.
3. The floor swayed and shook while the train rolled.
4. A bag hung on a post, and a hook on the train snatched it as it passed.
5. The letters for each town were already sorted when the train arrived.
6. The train kept moving toward the next town, and the letters had to be ready.

Square: Sorting Letters on a Moving Train

Harder · 181 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.8

1. Slots.
2. Read the address and tossed it into the correct slot.
3. The floor swayed and shook the entire time.
4. A bag hung from a post, and a hook on the train snatched it as it raced past.
5. The letters for each town were already sorted when the train arrived.
6. The train kept moving toward the next town, and the letters had to be ready.