Name: _____ Date: _____

Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

Circle group

Rue had practiced with a compass for three weeks. When the whistle blew at her first orienteering meet, she felt ready. Her map of the park showed purple circles. Each circle marked a flag to find and punch with a small clipper. The first flag was about four hundred steps away. Between her and the flag lay a green patch. The map said it was thick undergrowth.

"Go around," her coach had said that morning. Rue forgot it. A straight line is the shortest line, she thought, and she had a compass. She ran into the thicket. Brambles caught her sleeves. The ground was muddy. Ten minutes later she did not know which way was north. The clearing she wanted was not there.

She stopped and looked at the map again. A thin blue line ran beside the thicket. It was a creek. Coach Dalton called a feature like this a handrail. You can follow it to stay on course. Rue turned around and pushed back through the brambles. In two minutes she found the creek. She followed the water until a bend matched the map. Then she turned left at a boulder.

The flag hung from a branch. It was orange and white. Rue punched her card and laughed.

She finished last, forty minutes behind the winner. Her arms were scratched. Her card was full of punches. Coach Dalton shook her hand. "You found every flag," he said. "Next time you will be faster. And you will know why the map shows the creek."

Questions

1. What did Rue need to find at each purple circle?

_____

_____

2. What did Rue do after forgetting her coach's advice?

_____

_____

3. What did Coach Dalton call a feature like the creek?

_____

_____

4. Where did Rue finish in the race?

_____

_____

5. Why did Rue turn around and go back?

_____

_____

6. Why did the coach shake her hand when she was last?

_____

_____

Words to know

thicket: a thick patch of bushes and small trees growing close together
undergrowth: low plants and bushes that grow beneath tall trees
brambles: prickly bushes that catch on clothes and skin

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: _____

Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

Triangle group

Rue had practiced with a compass for three weeks, so when the whistle blew at her first orienteering meet, she felt completely prepared for whatever the course might demand. The county park map showed a dozen purple circles, each marking a flag that she had to find and punch with a small clipper. The first flag sat about four hundred steps away, beyond a green smudge that the legend identified as dense undergrowth.

Her coach had advised her that morning to go around anything that looked difficult. But Rue dismissed the memory immediately, reasoning that a straight line was the shortest line and that her compass would keep her on it. She plunged into the thicket. Brambles snagged her sleeves. The ground sank into muddy hollows. Ten minutes later she had no idea whether she was still facing north, because the clearing she expected had never appeared.

She stopped, breathing hard, and studied the map again until she noticed a thin blue line running beside the thicket, which represented a creek. Coach Dalton called such features handrails, since a runner could follow them the way a person follows a railing along a staircase. Rue turned around, forced her way back through the brambles, and reached the creek bank within two minutes. She followed the water until a bend matched the map, then turned left at a boulder. There the flag hung from a branch, orange and white and wonderfully ordinary.

She finished the course in last place, forty minutes behind the winner, with scratched arms and a card full of punches. Coach Dalton shook her hand anyway. He remarked that she had found every flag and that next time she would find them faster, because she now understood why the map bothers to draw a creek.

Questions

1. What was Rue trying to find at each purple circle on her map?

_____

_____

2. What did Rue do after ignoring her coach's advice?

_____

_____

3. What did Coach Dalton call features like the creek?

_____

_____

4. Where did Rue place in the race?

_____

_____

5. Why did Rue turn around and go back through the brambles?

_____

_____

6. Why did the coach shake her hand even though she finished last?

_____

_____

Words to know

thicket: a thick patch of bushes and small trees growing close together
undergrowth: low plants and bushes that grow beneath tall trees
brambles: prickly bushes that catch on clothes and skin
legend: the key on a map that explains what the symbols mean
handrails: long features, like a creek, that you can follow to stay on course

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: _____

Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

Square group

Rue had practiced with a compass for three weeks, so when the whistle blew at her first orienteering meet, she felt completely prepared for whatever the course might demand. The county park map showed a dozen purple circles, each marking a flag that she had to find and punch with a modest clipper. The first flag sat about four hundred steps away, beyond a green smudge that the legend identified as dense undergrowth.

Her coach had advised her that morning to go around anything that looked difficult. But Rue brushed aside the memory immediately, reasoning that a straight line was the shortest line and that her compass would keep her on it, and she plunged into the thicket. Brambles snagged her sleeves. The ground sank into muddy hollows. Ten minutes later she had no idea whether she was still facing north, because the clearing she expected had never appeared.

She stopped, breathing hard, and studied the map again until she noticed a thin blue line running beside the thicket, which represented a creek. Coach Dalton called such features handrails, since a runner could follow them the way a person follows a railing along a staircase, and Rue turned around, forced her way back through the brambles, and reached the creek bank within two minutes. She followed the water until a bend matched the map, then turned left at a boulder. There the flag hung from a branch, orange and white and wonderfully ordinary.

She finished the course in last place, forty minutes behind the winner, with scratched arms and a card full of punches, and Coach Dalton shook her hand anyway. He remarked that she had found every flag and that next time she would find them faster, because she now understood why the map bothers to draw a creek.

Questions

1. What was Rue required to find at each purple circle on her map?

_____

_____

2. How did Rue respond to her coach's advice at the start?

_____

_____

3. What term did Coach Dalton use for features such as the creek?

_____

_____

4. How did Rue place in the race?

_____

_____

5. What made Rue decide to retreat through the brambles?

_____

_____

6. Why would the coach still congratulate a last-place runner?

_____

_____

Words to know

thicket: a thick patch of bushes and small trees growing close together
undergrowth: low plants and bushes that grow beneath tall trees
brambles: prickly bushes that catch on clothes and skin
legend: the key on a map that explains what the symbols mean
handrails: long features, like a creek, that you can follow to stay on course

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: Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

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

Circle: Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

Easier · 255 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.6

1. A flag to punch with a small clipper.
2. She ran straight into the thicket.
3. A handrail.
4. Last, about forty minutes behind the winner.
5. She saw that the creek on the map could lead her to the flag.
6. She found every flag and learned something useful.

Triangle: Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

This passage · 296 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.6

1. A flag that she had to punch with a small clipper.
2. She plunged straight into the thicket.
3. Handrails.
4. She finished last, about forty minutes behind the winner.
5. She realized the creek on the map could guide her to the flag.
6. She had found every flag and had learned a useful lesson.

Square: Rue Takes the Straight Line Through the Thicket

Harder · 300 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.2

1. A flag that she had to punch with a small clipper.
2. She dismissed it and plunged straight into the thicket.
3. Handrails.
4. She finished last, about forty minutes behind the winner.
5. She recognized that the creek on the map could guide her to the flag.
6. She had found every flag and had gained a valuable lesson.