Name: _____ Date: _____

The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

Circle group

Hollow Creek was a quiet town. Then, one Tuesday, Hector Abernathy sneezed. Hector was a kind farmer with a big nose. Goldenrod pollen tickled it. He took a breath so huge that the laundry on three clotheslines leaned toward him. Then he let it go. The sneeze rolled over the valley like thunder in a coat. It turned the weathervanes backward. It flipped every pancake in the diner at once. It threw all the street signs into the branches of the old maple tree.

By lunch, Hollow Creek was lost. Delivery drivers went in circles. The mail carrier went to the library when he wanted the bank. A man looking for the hardware store ended up in a bakery. He stayed because the muffins were so good. The mayor called a meeting, but half the town could not find the hall.

The children solved it. The signs were in a jumble. So they painted new signs with easy directions. One said "Left of the Bakery." One said "Past the Very Big Dog." One said "Where the Pancake Landed." The names were so friendly that the town voted to keep them. Hector felt awful. He promised to wear a handkerchief over his nose all season. The old signs still hang in the maple tree. Visitors ask if the tree is famous. Locals smile and say, "Ask Hector."

Questions

1. What made Hector sneeze?

_____

_____

2. What happened to the street signs?

_____

_____

3. Who solved the town's problem?

_____

_____

4. What did the new signs say?

_____

_____

5. Why did the town keep the new street names?

_____

_____

6. How can you tell this is a tall tale?

_____

_____

Words to know

pollen: a fine powder made by flowers and plants
jumble: a messy mix of things in no order

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: _____

The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

Triangle group

Hollow Creek was a quiet town where nothing much happened until the morning that Hector Abernathy sneezed. Hector was a gentle farmer with a large nose and a small tolerance for goldenrod pollen, and when it tickled him that Tuesday, he drew in a breath so enormous that the laundry on three clotheslines leaned toward him. Then he let it go. The sneeze rolled across the valley like thunder wearing a coat. It blew the weathervanes around backward, flipped every pancake in the diner at once, and scattered all the street signs in town into the branches of the old maple tree.

By lunchtime, Hollow Creek was hopelessly lost. Delivery drivers wandered in circles, the mail carrier arrived at the library when he meant to visit the bank, and a man looking for the hardware store found himself in a bakery, where he stayed because the muffins were excellent. The mayor called an emergency meeting, but half the town could not find the meeting hall.

It was a group of children who solved the problem. Since the signs had landed in a jumble, they decided to skip the hard work of putting them back in order. Instead, they painted new signs with directions anyone could follow, such as "Left of the Bakery," "Past the Very Big Dog," and "Where the Pancake Landed." The new names were so friendly and so easy to remember that the town voted to keep them. Hector, who felt dreadful, volunteered to wear a handkerchief over his nose all through the goldenrod season. The old signs now decorate the maple tree, and visitors often ask whether the tree is a famous landmark. Locals just smile and say, "Ask Hector."

Questions

1. What caused Hector to sneeze?

_____

_____

2. What did the sneeze do to the street signs?

_____

_____

3. Who solved the town's problem?

_____

_____

4. What did the children paint on the new signs?

_____

_____

5. Why did the town vote to keep the new street names?

_____

_____

6. How can you tell this is a tall tale?

_____

_____

Words to know

tolerance: how much of something a person can put up with
pollen: a fine powder made by flowers and plants
jumble: a messy mix of things in no order
landmark: a well-known place or object that people use to find their way
volunteered: offered to do something without being asked

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: _____

The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

Square group

Hollow Creek was a placid little town where nothing of note occurred until the morning that Hector Abernathy sneezed. Hector was a gentle farmer with a generous nose and a very small tolerance for goldenrod pollen, and when it tickled him that Tuesday, he drew in a breath so tremendous that the laundry on three separate clotheslines leaned in his direction. Then he released it. The sneeze rolled across the valley like thunder wearing an overcoat. It spun every weathervane around backward, flipped every pancake in the diner simultaneously, and flung all of the street signs in town into the branches of the ancient maple tree.

By lunchtime, Hollow Creek was hopelessly disoriented. Delivery drivers wandered in circles, the mail carrier arrived at the library when he had intended to visit the bank, and a man searching for the hardware store found himself in a bakery, where he remained because the muffins were so excellent. The mayor summoned an emergency meeting, but half the town could not locate the meeting hall.

It was a band of children who found the answer. Because the signs had landed in such a hopeless jumble, they decided against the tedious task of sorting them back into order. Instead, they painted brand new signs bearing directions that anyone could follow, such as "Left of the Bakery," "Past the Very Big Dog," and "Where the Pancake Landed." The new names were so cheerful and so easy to remember that the town voted to keep them. Hector, who felt dreadful, volunteered to wear a handkerchief over his nose throughout the entire goldenrod season. The old signs still decorate the maple tree, and visitors often wonder whether the tree is some famous landmark. Locals merely smile and say, "Ask Hector."

Questions

1. What provoked Hector's sneeze?

_____

_____

2. What did the sneeze do to the street signs?

_____

_____

3. Who found the answer to the town's problem?

_____

_____

4. What directions did the children paint on the new signs?

_____

_____

5. Why did the town choose to keep the new street names?

_____

_____

6. What makes this story a tall tale?

_____

_____

Words to know

tolerance: how much of something a person can put up with
pollen: a fine powder made by flowers and plants
jumble: a messy mix of things in no order
landmark: a well-known place or object that people use to find their way
volunteered: offered to do something without being asked

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: The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

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

Circle: The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

Easier · 226 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.2

1. Goldenrod pollen tickled his big nose.
2. They were thrown into the branches of the old maple tree.
3. The children solved it.
4. Friendly things like "Left of the Bakery" and "Past the Very Big Dog."
5. They were friendly and easy to remember.
6. One sneeze flips every pancake and moves all the signs, which is a huge stretch.

Triangle: The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

This passage · 283 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.5

1. Goldenrod pollen tickled his large nose.
2. It scattered them into the branches of the old maple tree.
3. A group of children solved it.
4. Friendly directions such as "Left of the Bakery" and "Past the Very Big Dog."
5. The names were friendly and easy to remember.
6. A single sneeze flips every pancake in town and scatters all the signs, which is wildly exaggerated.

Square: The Great Sneeze of Hollow Creek

Harder · 292 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 10

1. Goldenrod pollen tickled his generous nose.
2. It flung them into the branches of the ancient maple tree.
3. A band of children found the answer.
4. Cheerful ones such as "Left of the Bakery" and "Past the Very Big Dog."
5. The names were cheerful and easy to remember.
6. A single sneeze flips every pancake and scatters every sign, which is wildly exaggerated.