

7th Grade Passages

End of Year (EOY) Student Packet

Passage 1 *Underground Town*

Passage 2 *Coral Reefs*

Passage 3 *My Invisible Summer*

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Underground Town

16
34
50
67

How would you like to live underground? Many families in the town of Coober Pedy, Australia, do just that. Their houses, called dugouts, are carved out of the earth. They are similar to regular houses. They have kitchens, bedrooms, and living rooms, but they have few windows. Most of the light in the houses is artificial. It comes from lamps and overhead lights instead of direct sunlight. The roofs of the homes are made of layers and layers of dirt.

80
98
114
132

People in the town build dugouts because of where they live. Coober Pedy is in a desert in southern Australia. Temperatures can climb as high as 120 degrees in the summer. They can plunge as low as 32 degrees in the winter. Dust storms and swarms of flies can make life miserable. Underground, though, it is always a comfortable 75 degrees. People don't even need fans.

146
165

Why would people want to live in such a place? Coober Pedy is an opal-mining town. Opals are colorful stones used for jewelry. The mines in Coober Pedy produce most of the world's opals.

181
196
212
226
229

Early settlers in Coober Pedy realized that they could avoid the harsh temperatures by building their homes underground. Today almost half of the 3,500 people in the town live in dugouts. Restaurants, schools, and other buildings are also underground. People in Coober Pedy enjoy their lives "down under."

Coral Reefs

20
34
49

A coral reef is an interesting structure located in a warm, shallow part of the ocean. It is a beautiful world of shape and motion. Sunshine pours in through the ocean's surface, brightly illuminating the colorful scene. Many amazing plants and animals live in this underwater world. Fish swim through colorful rocky shapes, and crabs move in and out of caves.

61
78
93
108
128

A coral reef is made by tiny animals called polyps. They discharge a substance from their bodies that hardens into limestone and forms their outside covering. Each polyp attaches itself to other polyps, adding other layers to the structure. The structure continues to grow upward until it becomes the base of a new coral reef. The three main types of coral reefs are the fringing reef, the barrier reef, and the atoll.

133
154
174
192

A fringing reef is either connected to the shore or very close to it. It has a flat surface that appears at or below sea level. As it extends outward from the shore, it drops off into deeper water. It is usually divided into sections by channels of water, and it has a raised rim. There are many fringing reefs in the Hawaiian Islands.

197
215
234
250

Reefs that are farther out from shore are called barrier reefs. The water that lies between a barrier reef and the shore is a shallow pond called a lagoon. The Great Barrier Reef is located off the northeast coast of Australia and is about 1,250 miles long. Its distance from the shoreline ranges from 10 to 150 miles.

255
275
294
312
327
343
350

The third kind of reef is called an atoll. This kind of reef forms islands in places where it rises above the ocean's surface. An atoll has a horseshoe or circular shape. Its lagoon is in the center and always has at least one place where it is connected to the open ocean. Ocean water flows through this space, keeping the lagoon's water fresh. The Marshall Islands, in the South Pacific Ocean, consist of many atolls. All coral reefs are important parts of our environment that continue to provide homes for many plants and animals.

My Invisible Summer

17
33
55

When my application for an internship at the local hard-rock radio station was accepted, I was overjoyed. My friends would be flipping burgers at fast-food restaurants all summer, but I was going to be a disc jockey, a real DJ. I would use my best DJ voice, and I would be admired by millions of fans. In no time I would be on my way to fame and fortune.

71
92
107
124
143
159

It didn't take me long to learn that working in radio was not exactly the way I had pictured it. In the movies, radio stations are always situated in gigantic impressive structures in the middle of bustling cities. The radio station where I worked was located in a lonely-looking building on the edge of town. Only the 361-foot antenna made it look at all unusual. The boss explained that the large antenna was necessary for broadcasting at 680,000 megahertz. I tried to look interested as she explained frequency and other electrical terms, but all I really wanted to do was meet the DJs.

176
195
215
234
252

When I was finally introduced to the DJs I had idolized for years, I was shocked. For some reason I had pictured DJ Kirk Krimson as the kind of person who might star in an action movie, but he didn't look much like a motion-picture star. He told me that when he began in radio, disc jockeys played music on vinyl records, not on compact discs; that really made him seem old. I didn't have much chance to be disappointed in my DJ heroes, though, because I almost never saw him.

268
288
305
320
342
357
371

My job was to run the station from midnight to 6:00 A.M., and all the DJs worked during the day. They recorded their shows, and I just played tapes of their voices and song choices. Between tapes I plugged in recorded commercials. My favorite commercial was one about a new video game. Three times a night I got to talk on the air for five seconds—but only to read the call letters, the four-letter name that the Federal Communications Commission had assigned to the station. I never even got to say my own name! Maybe I'll try flipping burgers next summer.