

7th Grade Passages

End of Year (EOY) Student Packet

Passage 1 *Underground Town*

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Underground Town

How would you like to live underground? Many

8 families in the town of Coober Pedy, Australia, do
17 just that. Their houses, called dugouts, are carved
25 out of the earth. They are similar to regular houses.
35 They have kitchens, bedrooms, and living rooms,
42 but they have few windows. Most of the light in
52 the houses is artificial. It comes from lamps and
61 overhead lights instead of direct sunlight. The roofs
69 of the homes are made of layers and layers of dirt.

80 People in the town build dugouts because of where
89 they live. Coober Pedy is in a desert in southern
99 Australia. Temperatures can climb as high as 120
107 degrees in the summer. They can plunge as low as
117 32 degrees in the winter. Dust storms and swarms
126 of flies can make life miserable. Underground,

133 though, it is always a comfortable 75 degrees.

141 People don't even need fans.

146 Why would people want to live in such a place?

156 Coober Pedy is an opal-mining town. Opals are

165 colorful stones used for jewelry. The mines in

173 Coober Pedy produce most of the world's opals.

181 Early settlers in Coober Pedy realized that they

189 could avoid the harsh temperatures by building

196 their homes underground. Today almost half of

203 the 3,500 people in the town live in dugouts.

212 Restaurants, schools, and other buildings are also

219 underground. People in Coober Pedy enjoy their

226 lives "down under."

229

Coral Reefs

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

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

122 reefs are the fringing reef, the barrier reef, and the
132 atoll.

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

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

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

350

My Invisible Summer

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

71 It didn't take me long to learn that working in
81 radio was not exactly the way I had pictured it.
91 In the movies, radio stations are always situated
99 in gigantic impressive structures in the middle of
107 bustling cities. The radio station where I worked
115 was located in a lonely-looking building on the
124 edge of town. Only the 361-foot antenna made it

134 look at all unusual. The boss explained that the
143 large antenna was necessary for broadcasting at
150 680,000 megahertz. I tried to look interested as
158 she explained frequency and other electrical terms,
165 but all I really wanted to do was meet the DJs.

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

268 My job was to run the station from midnight to
278 6:00 A.M., and all the DJs worked during the day.
288 They recorded their shows, and I just played tapes

297 of their voices and song choices. Between tapes
305 I plugged in recorded commercials. My favorite
312 commercial was one about a new video game.
320 Three times a night I got to talk on the air for
332 five seconds—but only to read the call letters, the
342 four-letter name that the Federal Communications
349 Commission had assigned to the station. I never
357 even got to say my own name! Maybe I'll try
367 flipping burgers next summer.
371