

Name: _____

Date: _____

The Spectator

The spectator thrived on the sights and sounds of this magical place. On the edge of his seat, he waited for contact to be made. Then, it happened! Like a rocket, the ball scorched the wind, traveling past the mound and above the outstretched gloves of the outfielders. It soared over the fence and beyond the scoreboard. At that moment, the conversations melted into a single roar. Time stood still, as the baseball was catapulted into another world.

1. In the last line of the paragraph, the word *catapulted* means

- A. burnt.
- B. thrown.
- C. destroyed.
- D. changed.

2.

Like a rocket, the ball scorched the wind . . .

What literary technique is being used in this description from the passage?

- A. simile
- B. metaphor
- C. hyperbole
- D. alliteration

3. Which of the following words most clearly describes the mood the author establishes in this passage?

- A. bored
- B. excited
- C. frustrated
- D. confused

4. What is the setting of this passage?

- A. a tennis court
- B. a football field
- C. a baseball field
- D. a basketball court

5. In the passage, the phrase "the conversations melted into a single roar" means

- A. the spectator stopped listening to other people.
- B. everyone began to cheer when the ball was hit.
- C. only one person was cheering as the ball was hit.
- D. everyone in the crowd was speaking about the same subject.

6. Which quotation from the passage is an example of hyperbole?

- A. "The spectator thrived on the sights and sounds . . ."
 - B. "At that moment, the conversations melted into a single roar."
 - C. "It soared over the fence and beyond the scoreboard."
 - D. "Time stood still, as the baseball was catapulted into another world."
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Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
By: Amanda Thornton

The title of the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," which is sung by schoolchildren across the country, may in fact be rooted in science. Stars called Cepheids, first discovered in 1784, have been studied by astronomers for years. Cepheids are stars that brighten and dim, changing their luminosity at regular, measurable intervals. Because of this, scientists can use Cepheids as "cosmic yardsticks" to measure huge distances in space.

To be classed as a Cepheid, a star must have certain explicit functions. The first is regularity, meaning its pattern of bright and dark periods does not change over time, and the second is uniformity, meaning there is a definite relation between the patterns of brightness and darkness, which, once the period of brightness is known, can be inferred. Because of this, astronomers can watch Cepheids and map the pattern of brightness and darkness, which helps them extract the stellar distance from Earth. Because Cepheids are so bright, we can even see the ones in galaxies besides our own. The farthest Cepheids from Earth have been found in the constellation Virgo, in a galaxy called M100. These stars twinkle an astronomical 56 million light-years away from Earth!

So the next time you sing the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," remember that those glittering lights actually DO twinkle. Science proves it.

7.

A *constellation* is most likely

- A. a cosmic yardstick.
 - B. a measurement of distance.
 - C. a pattern of brightness and darkness.
 - D. a cluster of stars that can be seen from Earth.
-

8.

As used in this passage, the word *luminosity* means

- A. dimness.
 - B. brightness.
 - C. reflection.
 - D. wavelength.
-

9.

In this passage, we learn that *Cepheids* are

- A. galaxies.
 - B. light years.
 - C. constellations.
 - D. twinkling stars.
-

10.

The purpose of this passage is to

- A. explain why some stars twinkle.
- B. encourage people to become astronomers.
- C. define the role of Cepheids in the universe.
- D. entertain people with the story behind the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

Answer Key

1. B) thrown.
2. A) simile
3. B) excited
4. C) a baseball field
5. B) everyone began to cheer when the ball was hit.
6. D) "Time stood still, as the baseball was catapulted into another world."
7. D) a cluster of stars that can be seen from Earth.
8. B) brightness.
9. D) twinkling stars.
10. A) explain why some stars twinkle.