

Mark Twain Middle School

4700 Franconia Road

Alexandria, VA 22310

Dear Parents:

This summer, Twain Middle School will continue a summer reading requirement in order to encourage reading. Follow-up activities have been developed by the teachers at our school, and these will be implemented in the fall.

This year, rising 8th grade students will be reading a short story fiction selection and a nonfiction article as part of their assignment. Aside from this reading assignment, Middle School Language Arts has a new *Middle School Reads* site highlighting great young adult books. It's a good way for our middle schoolers to explore current titles. **Please see the next page** for more detailed information about the summer reading requirement at Twain.

Reading is crucial to academic achievement, and I urge you to encourage your child to read many books, magazines, and newspaper articles over the summer months. I appreciate your help as we all work together to support the academic program at Mark Twain Middle School.

Sincerely,

Chuck Miller, Principal

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Chuck Miller', is written over the printed name of the principal.

8th Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Reading Requirements

Attached are two reading selections for the summer reading assignment. Students will be reading a fictional short story called “Raymond’s Run” as well as a nonfiction article entitled “Conner and Cayden Long.” Along with these two reading selections, student must complete the attached assignment and turn it in to their English teacher on the first day of school. All of your work must be your own and not copied from any other source.

A digital copy of this assignment is available on the Mark Twain MS website (<http://www.fcps.edu/TwainMS/>). Please contact Ms. Holly Winer at hawiner@fcps.edu, Ms. Kenyetta McNeil at kmcneil@fcps.edu with any questions about this assignment.

This assignment, for all 8th grade students, is due on **August 29, 2019**.

Please complete ALL parts of the assignment. We encourage you to write your written response on a separate piece of lined paper OR type it on the computer. *Students are encouraged to use the RACE Method when writing responses. Paragraphs should include simple, compound and complex sentences.*

Part I: Read the short story “Raymond’s Run” (attached) and choose ONE of the prompts provided to write a written response to the story.

Part II: Read and annotate the article “Conner and Cayden Long” (attached). Use the annotation symbols provided in these instructions. **Annotations need to be done directly on the article.**

Part III: Complete the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the short story “Raymond’s Run” to the article “Conner and Cayden Long.”

Summer Reading Assignment

Part I: Read the short story “Raymond’s Run” (attached) and choose ONE of the prompts below to write a written response to the story. Your response should be at least ONE paragraph. Be sure to use specific details and examples from the story to support your response.

1. Think of some goals you want to work to achieve. Choose one and write about what motivates you to achieve that goal. Then, compare how you are working to achieve your goal with how Squeaky is working to achieve her goal. Use specific details and examples from the text to support your ideas.

2. Define the word empathy and write a paragraph about how Squeaky learns about empathy in “Raymond’s Run.” Use specific details and examples from the text to support your ideas.

3. By the end of the story, Gretchen gains Squeaky’s respect. Write about a time when someone, whom you did not like, earned your respect by exhibiting certain behaviors, talents or abilities. Then, compare your experience with Squeaky’s and Gretchen’s. Be sure to use specific details and examples from the text to support your ideas.

EXTENSION Activity (optional):

Write a scene from “Raymond’s Run” from Gretchen’s perspective. Then draw an illustration related to the scene you chose. Your written response should be at least one paragraph.

RAYMOND'S RUN

Toni Cade Bambara

I don't have much work to do around the house like some girls. My mother does that. And I don't have to earn my pocket money by hustling; George runs errands for the big boys and sells Christmas cards. And anything else that's got to get done, my father does. All I have to do in life is mind my brother Raymond, which is enough.

Sometimes I slip and say my little brother Raymond. But as any fool can see he's much bigger and he's older too. But a lot of people call him my little brother cause he needs looking after cause he's not quite right. And a lot of smart mouths got lots to say about that too, especially when George was
10 minding him. But now, if anybody has anything to say to Raymond, anything to say about his big head,¹ they have to come by me. And I don't play the dozens² or believe in standing around with somebody in my face doing a lot of talking. I much rather just knock you down and take my chances even if I am a little girl with skinny arms and a squeaky voice, which is how I got the name Squeaky. And if things get too rough, I run. And as anybody can tell you, I'm the fastest thing on two feet. **A**

There is no track meet that I don't win the first place medal. I used to win the twenty-yard dash when I was a little kid in kindergarten. Nowadays, it's the fifty-yard dash. And tomorrow I'm subject to run the quarter-meter
20 **relay** all by myself and come in first, second, and third. The big kids call me Mercury³ cause I'm the swiftest thing in the neighborhood. Everybody knows that—except two people who know better, my father and me. He can beat me to Amsterdam Avenue with me having a two fire hydrant headstart and him running with his hands in his pockets and whistling. But that's private information. Cause can you imagine some thirty-five-year-old man stuffing himself into PAL shorts to race little kids? So as far as everyone's concerned, I'm

Analyze Visuals ►

From her posture and her expression, what can you **infer** about the girl in this photograph?

A PLOT: EXPOSITION

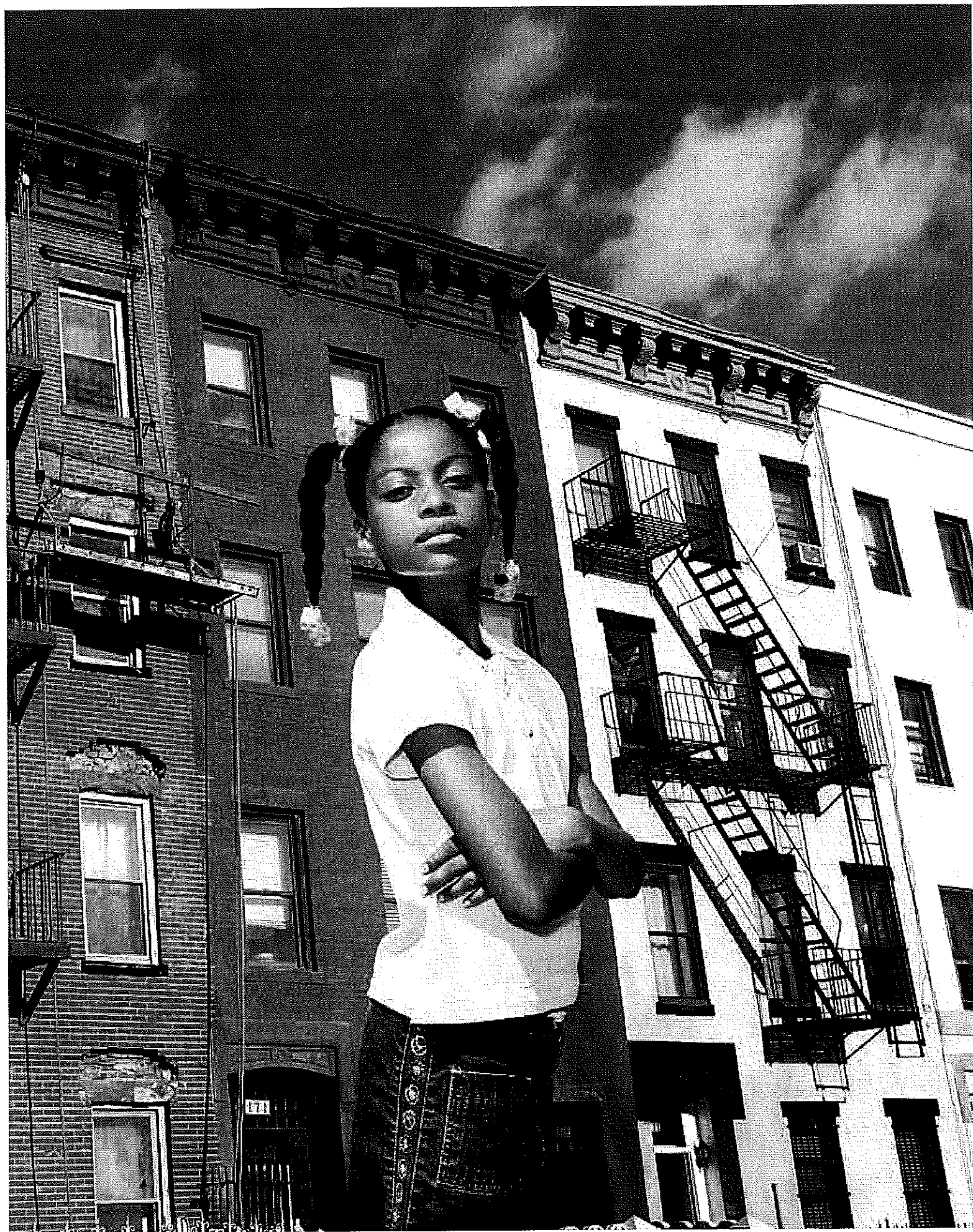
What have you learned about Squeaky so far?

relay (rē'lā) *n.* a race in which several team members take turns running to complete the race

1. **big head:** a result of hydrocephalus, or fluid in parts of the brain, that causes enlargement of the skull.

2. **play the dozens:** exchange rhyming insults.

3. **Mercury:** in Roman mythology, the swift messenger of the gods.



the fastest and that goes for Gretchen, too, who has put out the tale that she is going to win the first-place medal this year. Ridiculous. In the second place, she's got short legs. In the third place, she's got freckles. In the first place, no one can
30 beat me and that's all there is to it.

I'm standing on the corner admiring the weather and about to take a stroll down Broadway so I can practice my breathing exercises, and I've got Raymond walking on the inside close to the buildings, cause he's subject to fits of fantasy and starts thinking he's a circus performer and that the curb is a tightrope strung high in the air. And sometimes after a rain he likes to step down off his tightrope right into the gutter and slosh around getting his shoes and cuffs wet. Then I get hit when I get home. Or sometimes if you don't watch him he'll dash across traffic to the island in the middle of Broadway and give the pigeons a fit. Then I have to go behind him apologizing to all
40 the old people sitting around trying to get some sun and getting all upset with the pigeons fluttering around them, scattering their newspapers and upsetting the waxpaper lunches⁴ in their laps. So I keep Raymond on the inside of me, and he plays like he's driving a stage coach which is O.K. by me so long as he doesn't run me over or interrupt my breathing exercises, which I have to do on account of I'm serious about my running, and I don't care who knows it. **B**

Now some people like to act like things come easy to them, won't let on that they practice. Not me. I'll high-prance down 34th Street like a rodeo pony to keep my knees strong even if it does get my mother upright so that she walks ahead like she's not with me, don't know me, is all by herself on a
50 shopping trip, and I am somebody else's crazy child. Now you take Cynthia Procter for instance. She's just the opposite. If there's a test tomorrow, she'll say something like, "Oh, I guess I'll play handball this afternoon and watch television tonight," just to let you know she ain't thinking about the test. Or like last week when she won the spelling bee for the millionth time, "A good thing you got 'receive,' Squeaky, cause I would have got it wrong. I completely forgot about the spelling bee." And she'll **clutch** the lace on her blouse like it was a narrow escape. Oh, brother. But of course when I pass her house on my early morning trots around the block, she is practicing the scales on the piano over and over and over and over. Then in music class she always lets herself get
60 bumped around so she falls accidentally on purpose onto the piano stool and is so surprised to find herself sitting there that she decides just for fun to try out the ole keys. And what do you know—Chopin's waltzes⁵ just spring out of her fingertips and she's the most surprised thing in the world. A regular **prodigy**. I could kill people like that. I stay up all night studying the words for the spelling bee. And you can see me any time of day practicing running. I never walk if I can trot, and shame on Raymond if he can't keep up. But of course he does, cause if he hangs back someone's **liable** to walk up to him and get

B MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 31–45. How do you think Squeaky feels about taking care of her brother? Use an equation to note your inference.

clutch (klŭch) *v.* to grasp and hold tightly

prodigy (prŏd'ə-jē) *n.* a person with an exceptional talent

liable (lī'ə-bəl) *adj.* likely to

4. **waxpaper lunches:** sandwiches wrapped in wax paper.

5. **Chopin's** (shŏ'pănz') **waltzes:** music by composer Frédéric Chopin.

smart, or take his allowance from him, or ask him where he got that great big pumpkin head. People are so stupid sometimes.

70 So I'm strolling down Broadway breathing out and breathing in on counts of seven, which is my lucky number, and here comes Gretchen and her **sidekicks**: Mary Louise, who used to be a friend of mine when she first moved to Harlem from Baltimore and got beat up by everybody till I took up for her on account of her mother and my mother used to sing in the same choir when they were young girls, but people ain't grateful, so now she hangs out with the new girl Gretchen and talks about me like a dog; and Rosie, who is as fat as I am skinny and has a big mouth where Raymond is concerned and is too stupid to know that there is not a big deal of difference between herself and Raymond and that she can't afford to throw stones. So they are steady coming up
80 Broadway and I see right away that it's going to be one of those Dodge City⁶ scenes cause the street ain't that big and they're close to the buildings just as we are. First I think I'll step into the candy store and look over the new comics and let them pass. But that's chicken and I've got a reputation to consider. So then I think I'll just walk straight on through them or even over them if necessary. But as they get to me, they slow down. I'm ready to fight, cause like I said I don't feature a whole lot of chit-chat, I much prefer to just knock you down right from the jump and save everybody a lotta precious time. ©

"You signing up for the May Day races?" smiles Mary Louise, only it's not a smile at all. A dumb question like that doesn't deserve an answer. Besides,
90 there's just me and Gretchen standing there really, so no use wasting my breath talking to shadows.

"I don't think you're going to win this time," says Rosie, trying to signify with her hands on her hips all salty, completely forgetting that I have whupped her behind many times for less salt than that.

"I always win cause I'm the best," I say straight at Gretchen who is, as far as I'm concerned, the only one talking in this **ventriloquist-dummy** routine. Gretchen smiles, but it's not a smile, and I'm thinking that girls never really smile at each other because they don't know how and don't want to know how and there's probably no one to teach us how, cause grown-up girls don't know
100 either. Then they all look at Raymond who has just brought his mule team to a standstill. And they're about to see what trouble they can get into through him.

"What grade you in now, Raymond?"

"You got anything to say to my brother, you say it to me, Mary Louise Williams of Raggedy Town, Baltimore."

"What are you, his mother?" sasses Rosie.

"That's right, Fatso. And the next word out of anybody and I'll be *their* mother too." So they just stand there and Gretchen shifts from one leg to the other and so do they. Then Gretchen puts her hands on her hips and is about to say something with her freckle-face self but doesn't. Then she walks

sidekick (sīd'kīk') *n.*
a close friend

© **PLOT: RISING ACTION**
What is the conflict between Gretchen and Squeaky?

VISUAL VOCABULARY



ventriloquist-dummy *n.*
A ventriloquist controls his or her voice and moves the mouth of a puppet, or dummy, to make it appear to be talking.

6. **Dodge City**: an Old West town, famous for showdowns between outlaws and lawmen.

110 around me looking me up and down but keeps walking up Broadway, and her sidekicks follow her. So me and Raymond smile at each other and he says, “Gidyap” to his team and I continue with my breathing exercises, strolling down Broadway toward the ice man on 145th with not a care in the world cause I am Miss Quicksilver⁷ herself.

I take my time getting to the park on May Day because the track meet is the last thing on the program. The biggest thing on the program is the May Pole dancing, which I can do without, thank you, even if my mother thinks it’s a shame I don’t take part and act like a girl for a change. You’d think my mother’d be grateful not to have to make me a white organdy dress with a big
120 satin sash and buy me new white baby-doll shoes that can’t be taken out of the box till the big day. You’d think she’d be glad her daughter ain’t out there prancing around a May Pole getting the new clothes all dirty and sweaty and trying to act like a fairy or a flower or whatever you’re supposed to be when you should be trying to be yourself, whatever that is, which is, as far as I am concerned, a poor Black girl who really can’t afford to buy shoes and a new dress you only wear once a lifetime cause it won’t fit next year. **D**

I was once a strawberry in a Hansel and Gretel pageant when I was in nursery school and didn’t have no better sense than to dance on tiptoe with my arms in a circle over my head doing umbrella steps and being a perfect fool just
130 so my mother and father could come dressed up and clap. You’d think they’d know better than to encourage that kind of nonsense. I am not a strawberry. I do not dance on my toes. I run. That is what I am all about. So I always come late to the May Day program, just in time to get my number pinned on and lay in the grass till they announce the fifty-yard dash.

I put Raymond in the little swings, which is a tight squeeze this year and will be impossible next year. Then I look around for Mr. Pearson, who pins the numbers on. I’m really looking for Gretchen, if you want to know the truth, but she’s not around. The park is jam-packed. Parents in hats and corsages and breast-pocket handkerchiefs peeking up. Kids in white dresses
140 and light-blue suits. The parkees⁸ unfolding chairs and chasing the rowdy kids from Lenox⁹ as if they had no right to be there. The big guys with their caps on backwards, leaning against the fence swirling the basketballs on the tips of their fingers, waiting for all these crazy people to clear out the park so they can play. Most of the kids in my class are carrying bass drums and glockenspiels¹⁰ and flutes. You’d think they’d put in a few bongos or something for real like that. **E**

Then here comes Mr. Pearson with his clipboard and his cards and pencils and whistles and safety pins and 50 million other things he’s always dropping all over the place with his clumsy self. He sticks out in a crowd because he’s

D MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 115–126.

What do you think Squeaky’s relationship with her mother is like?

E MAKE INFERENCES

Reread lines 135–136.

How is Squeaky’s life affected by having to take care of Raymond? Think about how she might deal with Raymond next year.

7. **Miss Quicksilver**: a reference to how fast quicksilver (mercury) flows.

8. **parkees**: people who regularly gather in the park.

9. **Lenox**: street in Harlem in New York City.

10. **glockenspiels** (glöck’ən-spēlz’): musical instruments with tuned metal bars played with light hammers.

150 on stilts. We used to call him Jack and the Beanstalk to get him mad. But I'm the only one that can outrun him and get away, and I'm too grown for that silliness now.

"Well, Squeaky," he says, checking my name off the list and handing me number seven and two pins. And I'm thinking he's got no right to call me Squeaky, if I can't call him Beanstalk.

"Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker," I correct him and tell him to write it down on his board.

"Well, Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker, going to give someone else a break this year?" I squint at him real hard to see if he is seriously thinking I should
160 lose the race on purpose just to give someone else a break. "Only six girls running this time," he continues, shaking his head sadly like it's my fault all

▼ Analyze Visuals

How does the boy in this picture **compare** with the way you imagine Raymond?



of New York didn't turn out in sneakers. "That new girl should give you a run for your money." He looks around the park for Gretchen like a periscope¹¹ in a submarine movie. "Wouldn't it be a nice gesture if you were . . . to ahhh . . ."

I give him such a look he couldn't finish putting that idea into words.

Grownups got a lot of nerve sometimes. I pin number seven to myself and stomp away, I'm so burnt. And I go straight for the track and stretch out on the grass while the band winds up with "Oh, the Monkey Wrapped His Tail Around the Flag Pole," which my teacher calls by some other name. The man
170 on the loudspeaker is calling everyone over to the track and I'm on my back looking at the sky, trying to pretend I'm in the country, but I can't, because even grass in the city feels hard as sidewalk, and there's just no pretending you are anywhere but in a "concrete jungle" as my grandfather says. ♦

The twenty-yard dash takes all of two minutes cause most of the little kids don't know no better than to run off the track or run the wrong way or run smack into the fence and fall down and cry. One little kid, though, has got the good sense to run straight for the white ribbon up ahead so he wins. Then the second-graders line up for the thirty-yard dash and I don't even bother to turn my head to watch cause Raphael Perez always wins. He wins before he
180 even begins by psyching the runners, telling them they're going to trip on their shoelaces and fall on their faces or lose their shorts or something, which he doesn't really have to do since he is very fast, almost as fast as I am. After that is the forty-yard dash which I used to run when I was in first grade. Raymond is hollering from the swings cause he knows I'm about to do my thing cause the man on the loudspeaker has just announced the fifty-yard dash, although he might just as well be giving a recipe for angel food cake cause you can hardly make out what he's sayin for the static. I get up and slip off my sweat pants and then I see Gretchen standing at the starting line, kicking her legs out like a pro. Then as I get into place I see that ole Raymond is on line on
190 the other side of the fence, bending down with his fingers on the ground just like he knew what he was doing. I was going to yell at him but then I didn't. It burns up your energy to holler. **F**

Every time, just before I take off in a race, I always feel like I'm in a dream, the kind of dream you have when you're sick with fever and feel all hot and weightless. I dream I'm flying over a sandy beach in the early morning sun, kissing the leaves of the trees as I fly by. And there's always the smell of apples, just like in the country when I was little and used to think I was a choo-choo train, running through the fields of corn and chugging up the hill to the orchard. And all the time I'm dreaming this, I get lighter and lighter until I'm
200 flying over the beach again, getting blown through the sky like a feather that weighs nothing at all. But once I spread my fingers in the dirt and **crouch** over the Get on Your Mark, the dream goes and I am solid again and am telling

◆ **GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT**

Line 165 is a complete sentence because it contains both a subject and a predicate. A **sentence fragment** would be missing one of these two elements.

◆ **PLOT: RISING ACTION**

What details in this paragraph increase the excitement and tension?

crouch v. to stoop with bent knees

11. **periscope**: a tube with mirrors or prisms inside through which a person can see the reflection of an object at the other end.

myself, Squeaky you must win, you must win, you are the fastest thing in the world, you can even beat your father up Amsterdam if you really try. **G** And then I feel my weight coming back just behind my knees then down to my feet then into the earth and the pistol shot explodes in my blood and I am off and weightless again, flying past the other runners, my arms pumping up and down and the whole world is quiet except for the crunch as I zoom over the gravel in the track. I glance to my left and there is no one. To the right, a blurred Gretchen, who's got her chin jutting out as if it would win the race all by itself. And on the other side of the fence is Raymond with his arms down to his side and the palms tucked up behind him, running in his very own style, and it's the first time I ever saw that and I almost stop to watch my brother Raymond on his first run. But the white ribbon is bouncing toward me and I tear past it, racing into the distance till my feet with a mind of their own start digging up footfuls of dirt and brake me short. Then all the kids standing on the side pile on me, banging me on the back and slapping my head with their May Day programs, for I have won again and everybody on 151st Street can walk tall for another year.

220 "In first place . . ." the man on the loudspeaker is clear as a bell now. But then he pauses and the loudspeaker starts to whine. Then static. And I lean down to catch my breath and here comes Gretchen walking back, for she's overshot the finish line too, huffing and puffing with her hands on her hips taking it slow, breathing in steady time like a real pro and I sort of like her a little for the first time. "In first place . . ." and then three or four voices get all mixed up on the loudspeaker and I dig my sneaker into the grass and stare at Gretchen who's staring back, we both wondering just who did win. I can hear old Beanstalk arguing with the man on the loudspeaker and then a few others running their mouths about what the stopwatches say. Then I hear Raymond 230 yanking at the fence to call me and I wave to shush him, but he keeps rattling the fence like a gorilla in a cage like in them gorilla movies, but then like a dancer or something he starts climbing up nice and easy but very fast. And it occurs to me, watching how smoothly he climbs hand over hand and remembering how he looked running with his arms down to his side and with the wind pulling his mouth back and his teeth showing and all, it occurred to me that Raymond would make a very fine runner. Doesn't he always keep up with me on my trots? And he surely knows how to breathe in counts of seven cause he's always doing it at the dinner table, which drives my brother George up the wall. And I'm smiling to beat the band cause if I've lost this race, or if 240 me and Gretchen tied, or even if I've won, I can always retire as a runner and begin a whole new career as a coach with Raymond as my champion. After all, with a little more study I can beat Cynthia and her phony self at the spelling bee. And if I bugged my mother, I could get piano lessons and become a star. And I have a big rep as the baddest thing around. And I've got a roomful of ribbons and medals and awards. But what has Raymond got to call his own? **H**

G MAKE INFERENCES

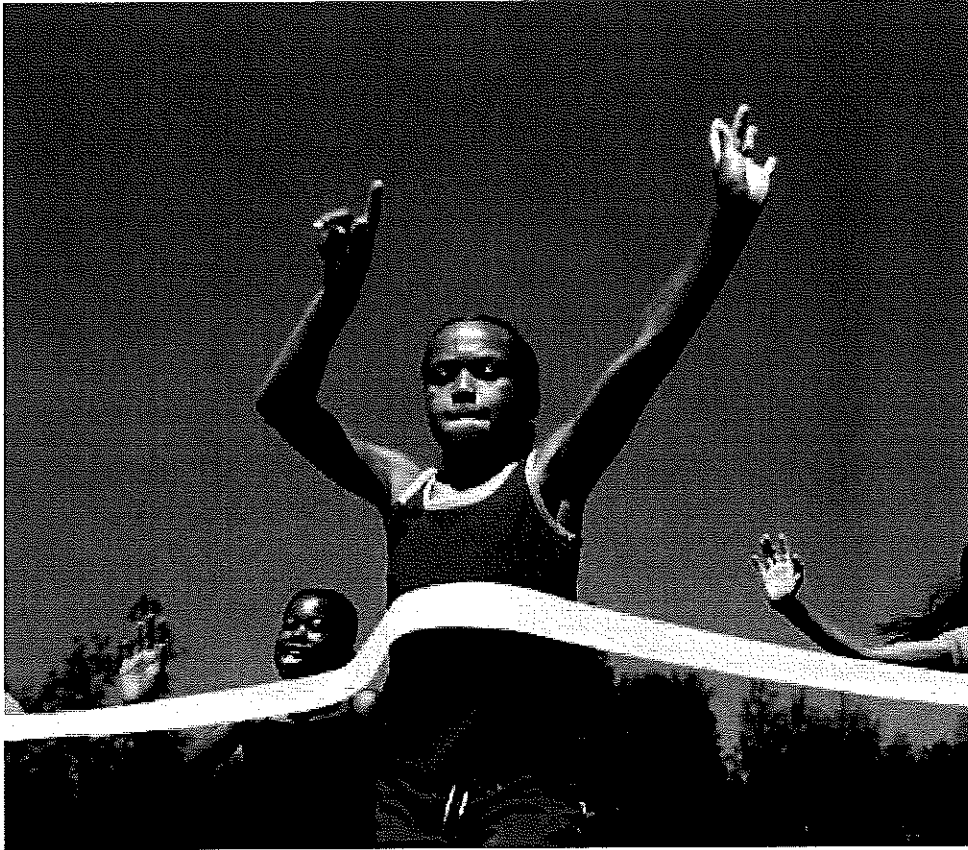
Why do you think Squeaky always feels this way before a race?

Language Coach

Similes A simile is a comparison using the words *like* or *as*. Reread line 220. A simile compares the voice on the loudspeaker to the sound of a bell. Would it be easy or hard to hear a voice that is "clear as a bell"?

H PLOT: CLIMAX

What decision does Squeaky make as she waits for the announcement? Note what incidents influence this decision.



◀ Analyze Visuals

What can you infer about how the girl in red feels about herself? Tell what clues you used to make your inference.


So I stand there with my new plans, laughing out loud by this time as Raymond jumps down from the fence and runs over with his teeth showing and his arms down to the side, which no one before him has quite mastered as a running style. And by the time he comes over I'm jumping up and down so
 250 glad to see him—my brother Raymond, a great runner in the family tradition. But of course everyone thinks I'm jumping up and down because the men on the loudspeaker have finally gotten themselves together and compared notes and are announcing, "In first place—Miss Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker." (Dig that.) "In second place—Miss Gretchen P. Lewis." And I look over at Gretchen wondering what the "P" stands for. And I smile. Cause she's good, no doubt about it. Maybe she'd like to help me coach Raymond; she obviously is serious about running, as any fool can see. And she nods to congratulate me and then she smiles. And I smile. We stand there with this big smile of respect
 260 between us. It's about as real a smile as girls can do for each other, considering we don't practice real smiling every day, you know, cause maybe we too busy being flowers or fairies or strawberries instead of something honest and worthy of respect . . . you know . . . like being people. ☞ ①

① PLOT: FALLING ACTION AND RESOLUTION

How does Squeaky react to the announcement that she won the race?

Part II: Using the annotations guide below, annotate a *hard/printed copy* of the article “Conner and Cayden Long.” A minimum of 8 annotations is required, however, students may do more. Annotations should show that students are showing understanding of and interacting with the content of the text.

English 8 Annotations Guide

Annotation Symbol	Meaning and What to Write
?	I have a question or I am confused **write your question or why you are confused in the margin**
!	This is surprising to me or interesting info **write why the text surprised you or why it is interesting in the margin**
(TS, TT, TW)	Connections: Text to Self, Text to Text, Text to World **Write the connection in the margin **TT (Text to Text)=connection between text you are reading and Fiction (book, short story, poem, tv show, movie) **TW (Text to World)=connection between text you are reading and nonfiction (history, documentary, news article, current event in your community/world/country) *TS (Text to Self)=connection between YOU and the text (things you know, experience, see, etc)
	Unknown or New Word **Look up the word in dictionary.com and write the definition of the correct context in the margin**
*	Key information important to the text or the reader **write why the information is important in the margin**
A/D	Agree or Disagree **Write why you agree or disagree with the passage in the margin**

****Some of these annotation symbols taken from MTMS Literacy Team in 2015 as a school wide initiative for annotations. Modifications made by Marla Duncan in 2017.****

Conner and Cayden Long



Conner and Cayden Long Triathletes For Conner and Cayden Long, a children's triathlon was just the beginning of a bonding experience, not to mention, big dreams for the future – together.

Children's athletics bring out brotherly love for Long siblings

The parents of sons that are close in age know what an exhilarating, but exhausting experience two little boys can be. Sons – more so than daughters – seem to

thrive with a partner in crime; the number of activities they perform together that can lead to mischief and robust physical activity can be endless, and unpredictable.

Conner Long, 9, Cayden, 7, and Cooper, 3, living with parents, Jeff and Jenny Long in White House, Tenn., are no exception. Conner has a high energy level and is constantly looking for opportunities to play with his brothers, especially Cayden, who has spastic Cerebral Palsy. Cayden non-verbal and limited in mobility.

"We're a really close-knit family, and we spend a lot of time together," said Jenny. "The boys are really close to us and to each other, but I could tell that Conner wanted to do a lot of things with Cayden. And Cayden can't just get up and go outside."

But a unique opportunity would present itself to the Long brothers with the potential to be a lifelong bonding experience. In the spring of 2011, Conner saw an ad in a Nashville Parent's Magazine that advertised a kids' triathlon, which is essentially a scaled-down version of the adult triathlon event with running, swimming and cycling. Conner's first

thought was that this event would be an ideal undertaking for himself, and his brother. Something they both could participate in, together.



"I really wanted to go to the triathlon, and my parents said 'Yes'," said Conner, who is in the fourth grade.

"They have found their love together, their passion. Ever since that first race they bonded on a different level and I can't even explain it."

– Jenny Long, mother

And with the turn of that magazine page, Team Long Brothers was born. Jenny consulted with Mandy Gildersleeve, a youth triathlon coach from Florida, for assistance in acquiring equipment and for a better understanding of race demands.

At that triathlon – the Nashville Kids Triathlon – on June 5, 2011, Conner tugged his brother in a raft for the 100-yard swim. He then biked alone during the hilly portion of a three-mile cycling trek while Gildersleeve pulled Cayden's trailer alongside her bike, against Conner's wish. After the last hill, Cayden's trailer was transferred to Conner's bike so they could complete the three-mile cycling requirements together. Then Conner

pushed his brother's stroller for the remaining half-mile run to finish their first race in an impressive 43 minutes and 10 seconds.

Jenny explained, it was the first time they finished anything, together.

"They have found their love together, their passion," said Jenny, describing that the boys completed the race with an excited, but determined, expression on Conner's face while Cayden was laughing. "Ever since that first race they bonded on a different level and I can't even explain it."

The Nashville event became the first of several triathlons and marathons for the brothers.

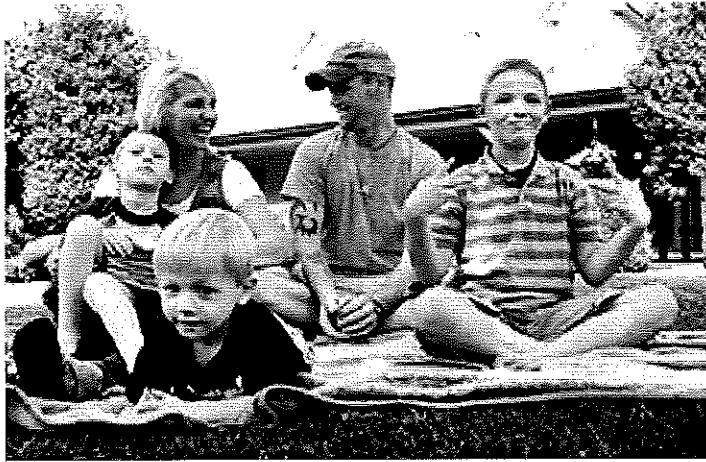
"As we attended more events, there were none – or very few – children with special needs that were taking part," said Jeff. "That's something we'd like to see change – I can't say how much this has done for Conner and Cayden, and our family."

In the beginning

It was when Cayden turned about two months old that Jenny felt her new baby wasn't meeting his developmental milestones in the same way her first born had. She noticed that Cayden's eyes were crossing and that his head seemed small. After a trip to a pediatrician and a neurologist, the baby underwent a series of tests, and the new parents received a diagnosis: Cayden had Cerebral Palsy, and microcephaly, a condition that results in a smaller head circumference.

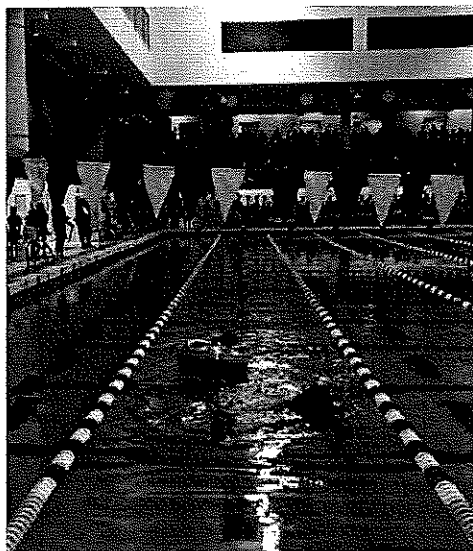
After the diagnosis, Jenny wondered how Cayden's condition – he is non-verbal yet communicative, and uses a wheelchair yet mobile – would affect her growing family. But amid a laundry list of uncertainties, one aspect that was apparent was that her sons

were close. And little by little, Cayden's condition was treated as a surmountable challenge within the family unit.



"There are some challenges," she said. "But Cayden is always included; if they go to the roller rink, Cayden rolls along. As much as Conner can go, Cayden will go. They both like to fish with their father. For Cayden, it's not about the actual fishing – he likes to be outside in a social situation with his father and his brother."

Cayden is now in the first grade and attends public school. He takes part in special education and mainstreams with other first graders for gym, art, library and recess. In addition, he attends physical, speech and occupation therapies outside of school.



Jenny said Cayden is somewhat mobile, enjoys crawling, and can get in and out of his chair. However, because of weakness in his legs and the amount of assistance he needs, Cayden is more independent at this time when he uses his chair. He is learning sign language.

Cayden's relationship with Conner has flourished despite differences in ability.

"We're teaching our children that every child is different," Jenny said. "We tell him that it's important to appreciate who a person is on the inside stride."

That's how the Long family approaches each day, she added.

"It's a day-to-day thing. We're thankful for the day," she said. "Perspective is about the smile on Cayden's face."

When my boys tell me that they have nothing to do, I tell them they have a lot to do. It teaches you to be grateful. And at the end of the day, Cayden still has a smile on his face."

Recognition

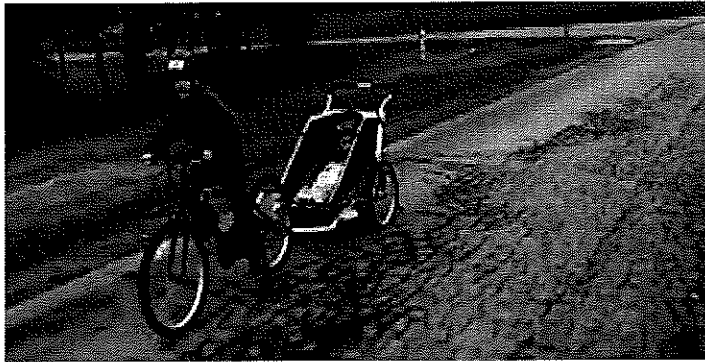


"What I like best about it is that we're together, and I don't have to do it by myself. Without Cayden it wouldn't be a team," said Conner. "I didn't want Cayden left on the sidelines because it isn't fair towards him."

"I don't know what I would do without Cayden. I just want him to finish," said Conner who wants everyone to know it is not about winning, but having fun.

In several media interviews about their athletic endeavors, Conner takes the opportunity to create awareness of his brother's impairment.

"He still has regular feelings like we do and he understands what you say about him," Conner said when asked about his brother's physical impairment and inability to verbalize. "When I see him smiling and laughing that means he's having a good time."



His love for Cayden extends to his younger brother, as well. Maybe when Cooper is bigger he will join the brothers, Conner added.

Their team spirit and brotherly bond have not gone unnoticed. Last December, Team Long Brothers was awarded the 2012 Sports Illustrated Kids SportsKid of the Year award.

"Each kid has an individual story that on its own maximizes the most out of what sports should be," said Bob Der, managing editor of Sports Illustrated Kids magazine. The award is given to individuals that achieve in school, make a difference with their athletic success, and use sports as a vehicle to draw attention to an opportunity.

Pushing forward



Since the Nashville Kids Triathlon, Conner and Cayden have participated in over fourteen athletic events, including the New England Kids Triathlon in Cambridge, Mass.; the Holland Elementary 5K in Holland, Mass.; the Kids Triathlon, Inc. in Jacksonville, Fla.; and the 2011 IronKids Alpharetta Triathlon, Alpharetta, Geo.

At the Holland Elementary 5K in May 2012, the Longs had an opportunity to meet Rick and Dick Hoyt, the father-son team that has taken part in athletic events together for more than 30 years. Rick, the son, has spastic quadriplegia with Cerebral Palsy. The two teams were joined by Team Rossiter Sisters (Briley, 10, and Ainsley, 7) to cross the finish line, together.

"It was really inspiring to us to see that they (Team Hoyt) had been doing this so long," said Jenny.

Giving back

In addition to raising their young sons, the Longs hope to launch their nonprofit to help remove barriers that children with disabilities often encounter soon.

"We would like to start raising money for children with disabilities to participate in triathlons and marathons," Jeff said. "At the event in Jacksonville, we met a young girl that was an amputee, but that was it. I want to see involvement, but equipment for children with disabilities is expensive.

"We'd like to provide carts and equipment wherever we go so that everyone can participate," he said. "We're by no means rich. When kids with special needs are included, it's fun, it's therapeutic, [and] it's a double win. Families shouldn't be limited by income."

The sky's the limit – literally



Today, Cayden is taking part in other athletic outings with his family. He is enrolled to play modified T-ball for the first time, and he's taking horseback riding lessons. He also joined his family on a hiking trip; he followed along in a small wagon. He enjoys swimming, and his family is exploring what opportunities are available for modified snow skiing.

For Conner's part, he enjoys running, watching television, reading, and going to church with his family and friends. He said he can't wait until the day he can take part in track

meets because he genuinely enjoys the running portion of the triathlons he's taken part in.

The duo has big plans for the future, as well.

"Ten years from now, the perfect place for me and Cayden would be – you know, how people have the American flag on the moon," Conner said. "We would have a Team Long Brothers flag on the moon."

Conner said that as long as he chooses to participate in athletic events, he hopes Cayden will join him.

"I can't wait to do the Ironman with Cayden," said Conner. "And, I want to do a full marathon – all 26.2 miles." The IRONMAN World Championship race that Cayden refers is widely considered a premiere endurance race that combines the three toughest endurance races in Hawaii; the 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile marathon. Befitting to Team Long is the IRONMAN's well known mantra "ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE."

Student Name: _____

Directions: Using the venn diagram below, compare and contrast the short story, "Raymond's Run" to the article "Conner and Cayden Long." You must have a minimum of three items for each section of the Venn Diagram.

