

## Extended Reading Comprehension:

# THE BOATBUILDERS OF FIJI Sample Answers

Answer the questions about "The Boatbuilders of Fiji."

1. "The Boatbuilders of Fiji" is a myth that explains how the people of Fiji learned to make boats. Like many myths, it is also intended to share a message about morals and values. What is the central theme of this myth?

The central theme of "The Boatbuilders of Fiji" is that becoming too proud may lead to disaster.

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

"Her gurgling, 'kru, kru, kru' would nudge the great god awake each morning, and the daylight would softly slide across the islands."

**Part A.** Name three types of figurative language the author uses in this sentence.

onomatopoeia, alliteration, and personification

**Part B.** What effect do these examples of figurative language have on the tone of the paragraph?

The figurative language in this sentence gives the rest of the paragraph a peaceful, gentle, and magical tone.

3. Reread paragraphs 6 and 7. How does the author convey the change in Degei's attitude toward the Matai?

The author uses dialogue and vivid language to show Degei now feels angry and vengeful toward the Matai. Degei bellows a warning across the valleys to the Matai.

4. Why is the setting important to the story?

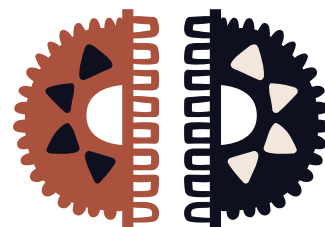
The setting of islands separated by water means that boatbuilding is a very important skill. Because the Matai have this powerful skill, they become arrogant. This arrogance leads to the events that cause Degei's anger and eventually scatter the Matai across the other islands.

5. **Part A.** The author uses the word **prodigious** twice in the story, once in paragraph 3 and again in paragraph 10. What is the meaning of **prodigious** as it is used in the text?

- a. strange and unusual
- b. mysterious and secretive
- c. unbelievable and preposterous
- d. immense and impressive

**Part B.** What does the repeated use of this word imply about the connection between Degei and the scattered Matai?

- a. They both wanted more power than they had to start with.
- b. They both had powerful talents to be shared with others.
- c. The Matai wanted to gain more power from Degei than they did.
- d. The Matai were newly afraid of Degei's impressive power.



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6. **Part A.** What can the reader infer about Kusamnaria and Rokola?

- a. They are fearful and ungrateful.
- b. They are disobedient and thoughtless.
- c. They are scheming and arrogant.**
- d. They are jealous and lazy.

**Part B.** Provide **two** quotations from the story that support your answer to Part A.

1. **"One leader, Rokola, and his brother, Kusamnaria, observed their world and slowly hatched a plan."**
2. **"Come let us fight! Our walls are high, wide, and strong! We are many, and you are but one!"**

7. Many stories in mythology feature conflicts between humans and gods. Give an example of one such story, and describe how the plot is similar to and/or different from "The Boatbuilders of Fiji," including the treatment of characters, settings, and themes.

**Answers will vary.**

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8. The author repeats the word *great* throughout the story. Which **two** words best match the meaning of *great* as it is used in the passage?

- a. powerful**
- b. enjoyable
- c. high-quality
- d. large**

9. What do Degei's actions in paragraph 9 reveal about his character? Cite specific examples from the text to support your answer.

**"Degei gave a mighty laugh even as he grieved," shows that he is vengeful because he's laughing about punishing the Matai for their role in killing Turukawa. Later, he "remembered his kindness," which shows that he still cares about the people of Fiji despite his anger.**

10. **Part A.** What aspect of Fijian culture does this myth attempt to explain?

- a. how Fijians first learned to build canoes**
- b. why there are no serpents in Fiji
- c. how the islands of Fiji came to be separated
- d. why the word *matai* is no longer used in Fiji

**Part B.** Cite one or more pieces of evidence from the text that support your answer in Part A.

**Degei "saw the Fijians struggle and decided it was time to teach one chosen group the important art of canoe building." and "Thus, in the end, all Fijians gained the skill of boatbuilding."**