

READING COMPREHENSION: FICTION

Read the story, and then answer the questions that follow.

FIRST FLIGHT

- 1 Cody gazed out over the sand dunes of North Carolina's Outer Banks, the Atlantic Ocean shimmering in the distance. The warm ocean breeze swept across his face as he gripped the harness of the hang glider. He closed his eyes and took a deep breath, inhaling the familiar salty air.
- 2 "How are you feeling? Ready?" Briana asked with a grin. Cody glanced at his stepsister, who looked far more relaxed than he felt. When Cody's mom had remarried, Cody hadn't known how to interact with Briana, who was eight years older than him. But every time Briana visited from college, she sought him out. She tagged along to Cody's tennis lessons and watched him do tricks at the skatepark. She taught him how to make dumplings and took him hiking along the ridge. After dinner some nights, she joined the rest of the family for games like charades and teamed up with Cody, and they roared with laughter over their exaggerated and hilarious impersonations.
- 3 But Briana had never taken him hang gliding. He knew she loved it—she had finally become a certified instructor last month. So when she offered to take him, Cody had leapt at the chance.
- 4 Now though, strapped onto what was essentially just a big kite and standing near the edge of a giant dune, Cody was second-guessing everything. With shoulders and teeth clenched, knuckles white on the metal frame, Cody's brain was sounding the alarm. The confidence Cody had felt back at the training facility had all but vanished in the wind that was blowing over the endless stretch of sand before him.
- 5 Briana looked over at him knowingly. "Before my first flight, I almost backed out more times than I can count," she said. "You just have to believe in yourself. Ready?"
- 6 Cody took another deep breath and nodded. "Ok, into position!" Briana said. Cody put one foot ahead of the other. "Hold the bar, nice and loose," she reminded him. Cody loosened his grip on the bar in front of his torso



- and took a deep breath. "Now start walking toward the edge," directed Briana. Heart pounding like a drum, Cody pushed himself forward. "Walk, walk, walk...now run, run, run, RUN!" Briana coached.
- 7 Cody ran. He ran right off the edge of the tall dune, until his legs were pedaling in the air. He was airborne! What an amazing feeling! Cody gently pushed the bar forward to increase his speed, just as Briana had shown him how to do. He **savored** the feeling of the warm wind on his face as he soared through the air like a bird. Then Cody saw that he was rapidly approaching the ground! He remembered to pull the bar back at the end to slow himself down, but it was too late for a smooth, on-foot landing. He landed on his knees, and the pointy tip of the kite thunked forward into the sand, leaving Cody face down.
 - 8 "You okay?" Briana said, as she tipped back the kite, pulling Cody upright in his harness. "I'm impressed! That was a great first flight!"
 - 9 Cody was *definitely* okay. Grinning ear to ear, he said, "Let's go again!" He was already looking forward to his future in flight, with his stepsister by his side.

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Answer the following questions about “First Flight.”

1. Part A: Which of the following best describes the main theme of the story?

- A. You shouldn't be so overly cautious that you ruin an adventure.
- B. You have to try and fail many times before you can be successful.
- C. It is worth overcoming fears to try something new and exciting.
- D. The best way to learn is through failure and more instruction.

Part B: Cite two specific parts of the text that support the theme of the story.

2. Based on the information in paragraph 2, which two conclusions can be drawn about Briana?

- A. She is too busy with her college classes to spend much time with her stepbrother.
- B. She enjoys her independence and being away from home.
- C. She wants to be involved in her stepbrother's life.
- D. She makes time to focus on Cody and his interests.
- E. She would rather spend time on her own hobbies.

3. What does the phrase “leapt at the chance” in paragraph 3 tell you about Cody's reaction to Briana's invitation to go hang gliding?

4. How does Cody feel in paragraph 4? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.

5. How does paragraph 5 help the development of the plot?

6. Describe how Briana helps Cody have a successful first flight. Use details from the text to support your answer.

7. Read the following excerpt from paragraph 7.

He savored the feeling of the warm wind on his face as he soared through the air like a bird.

Without changing the meaning of the sentence, which word can be used to replace the underlined part?

- A. disliked B. enjoyed C. escaped D. ignored

8. What does Cody's reaction at the end suggest about his attitude towards the experience?

- A. He is nervous about flying again.
- B. He is thrilled with the experience.
- C. He is upset that he didn't land on his feet.
- D. He is proud of himself for learning a new skill.

9. Based on evidence in the text, what does Cody likely see as his “future in flight”?
