



# **BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUMMER READING PACKET**

Directions: Read each passage using your close reading strategies. You may need to read it more than once. Then answer the matching question completely. Check for good grammar and spelling.

## **Grade 5 going into 6**

## News Debate: Tough Cell - Should cell phones be allowed in schools?

As students head back to school, many are focused more on ringtones than on blackboards. Nearly 44 percent of 10- to 18-year-olds in the United States own cell phones, according to a recent technology survey. Now some schools are telling students to leave their mobile phones at home.

New York City recently banned cell phones from its school system. Within a month, school officials confiscated, or took away, 3,000 phones from students. Schools across the country are asking this question: Should cell phones be allowed in school?

Cell phones are often misused, say some education officials. Students have been caught making calls in class and text messaging test answers to their friends. Plus, cell phones are among the most frequently stolen objects in schools. Many teachers think getting rid of cell phones would prevent students from being distracted during class.

Cell phones may not even be very useful in a school emergency, according to Kenneth Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services. He told WR News that too many cell phone calls in an emergency would "overload phone systems and 911 operators."

Cell phones provide a convenient way for families to stay in touch. Parents like knowing they can get in touch with their kids, especially at dismissal time. That's why some schools allow cell phones, but only if students keep them turned off and out of sight during class.

"I don't see a reason to ban cell phones," Leland Dishman, a school official from Boaz, Alabama, told WR News. "Our kids are very responsible, and I do not expect much of a problem."

"Cell phones are OK as long as the school doesn't object," William Scharffe of the Michigan Association of School Boards told WR News. He says that if phones are allowed, however, students need to use them responsibly and at the proper time.

1. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of cell phones being allowed in schools?

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2. Identify the text structure of Paragraph 4:

- a. Cause and effect
- b. Compare and contrast
- c. Problem and solution
- d. Sequence

2b. Explain what evidence from the text supports your answer to number two.

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## An African American Poet

Gwendolyn Elizabeth Brooks was an American poet. Her grandfather was a slave who escaped from slavery. That grandfather fought in the Civil War. He was part of an important era in American history.

His son married a teacher, and they lived in Kansas. The family moved to Chicago when she was a baby. Gwendolyn Brooks went to Chicago public schools. She grew up in Chicago and stayed here for the rest of her life. She traveled many places but always came back to Chicago.

Gwendolyn Brooks enjoyed reading and writing. She wrote about her experiences. She wrote about Chicago. When she was just thirteen, a poem she wrote was published in a magazine. In time, she was published in books and then had books published that were only her poems. She became a noted poet, well known in the United States and in other countries. She won awards for her poetry.

It was not easy to get a job in writing. Gwendolyn Brooks worked for a while as a typist. She would type other people's words. But she continued to write her own words. She wrote poems that are important to many people around the world. Her poems inspired them.

In addition to being a poet, she also was a teacher. She taught college students in the Chicago area. She taught them about poetry. She taught them how important it is to make your ideas clear when you write a poem. There are hundreds of people who learned from her in those classes. Probably some of them are writing poems. And most of them also read poems better because of learning from her how to look for the ideas they communicate.

Illinois has a special role called Poet Laureate. Gwendolyn Brooks was named Illinois Poet Laureate in 1968. But that was one year after she was poet laureate for the whole country. She was very clear that what is important is the ideas a poet communicates— more than the prizes a poet may earn. But she earned many prizes. She is recognized today as a great poet and an important African American who influenced many people.

When she was 83, she became ill with cancer. In just a short time, she died. Her death in Chicago in 2000 affected people all over the world. She had accomplished much in her life. Her legacy is part of your heritage.

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CCSSR2—clarify the main/central idea of a passage.

**What do you think is the most important legacy of this African American? Use information from this biography to answer.**

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# SCHOOL UNIFORMS? Think Again!

At Tuesday's meeting of the school committee, Superintendent Russell made his position clear. He wants the children in our city's public schools to wear uniforms. "Uniforms make life easier for families," he said. Parents do not have to decide what kind of clothes to buy for school. And, it's easier to get ready for school each day.

"Uniforms help children feel better about themselves," he added. Children from families in need wear the same clothes as children from rich families. Uniforms make it easier for children of different backgrounds to make friends.

His suggestion sparked a lively debate. Two committee members, Stan Oakley and Mae Stokes, said they thought it was a good idea. Mr. Oakley suggested that the schools would look much neater. Children's behavior might even improve.

Others were not so sure. "Is there a problem now?" asked Gary Washington. "I wasn't aware that this was an issue."

Indeed, what is the issue? What problem is our superintendent trying to solve? Would children really feel better about themselves if they had to wear clothes that someone else picket out? Americans like to express through their clothes. Uniforms can crush creativity. Paying for uniforms might be hard for some families. They would have to pay for the uniform no matter what it costs. Then they would need to buy other clothes for children to wear outside of school.

Mr. Russell has asked the school committee to vote for his plan. Clearly, this city is not ready to make a decision yet. We need more information. The school committee should interview students, parents, and teachers in towns that have school uniforms. They should do research to find out the cost of uniforms. Then they should hold public meetings to discuss their findings. It would be foolish to rush into a vote on this question.

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Priestly, Michael "24 Nonfiction Passages for Test Practice: Grades 4-5." New York, 2002.

What is the writer's opinion of school uniforms? What evidence from the text supports this?

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# Pitcher Perfect

Katie Brownell is in a league of her own. Not only is Katie the only girl in the Oakfield-Alabama, N.Y., Little League, but she is believed to be the only female Little League pitcher to throw a perfect game.

In a game on May 14, 2005, she shut down the opposing team, giving up no hits, walks, or runs. In fact, Katie won the game in a style that would make Pedro Martinez, the ace pitcher for the New York Mets, cheer. She struck out all 18 batters she faced in the six-inning shutout victory.

That **feat**<sup>1</sup> caught the attention of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. In July, officials put Katie's jersey on display in the same building that houses items that once belonged to legends "Babe" Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, and Hank Aaron.

"This has been a great time," said Katie. "I'd like to thank God, my parents, Little League, and all my fans. It's a real honor. It's really cool."

Katie's mother, Denise Bischoff, says her daughter has been playing baseball since she was six. "She had older brothers and we were always outside, so the minute she could pick up a ball, she was [playing]," she told *The Daily News* of Batavia, N.Y.

Katie's accomplishments caught the attention of sportswriters around the country. There were so many requests for interviews that her mom refused most of them.

Katie, who is in sixth grade at Oakfield-Alabama Middle/High School, also pitched a one-hitter in the first game of the season. She struck out 14 batters in the five innings she pitched. Then she fielded a **ground**<sup>2</sup> for the 15th out.

"She's been pitching for three years, but she's really come on and excelled this year," Jeff Sage, the team manager, told reporters. "She bats really well. She's a solid, all-around ballplayer."

<sup>1</sup> **feat**: a deed notable especially for courage

<sup>2</sup> **ground**: a ground ball--a batted baseball that rolls or bounces along the ground

What is the central message? Cite evidence to prove it.

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# Eyewitness to History: Children of War

Will Johannsson, Grade 5, Sewanee Elementary School, Sewanee, Tennessee

*For many children, living in Nazi Germany during World War II (1939-1945) was difficult. The Nazi party, ruled by Adolf Hitler, rounded up millions of Jews and others and murdered them. The Nazis also wanted children to spy on their families and report back to the government. Will interviewed his godfather, Hans Ohrt, who described what life was like under Hitler's **brutal**<sup>1</sup> dictatorship.<sup>2</sup>*

**Q:** How old were you when World War II started and ended?

**A:** I was 4 years old at the beginning of the war and 9 at its end. At the beginning of the war, I lived in Berlin in a huge apartment. At the end of the war, I lived with my sister, parents, and grandmother in one room with one bed in a farmhouse by the Swiss border.

**Q:** What were your feelings regarding the Nazi party?

**A:** This is a tough one to answer. Imagine that you live in a place like Seattle, where it rains almost every day. You go outside and you come back home every day wet. But your government tells you that the sun shines every day. If you are caught telling anybody that it rains, the government will put you in jail and you are never heard from again.

**Q:** Did you have any friends who were Jewish or who were Nazis?

**A:** Yes, I had a friend, Peter, who was Jewish. One day he was gone. I had another friend, Volker, whose father was a Nazi. My parents always made sure that I understood that in his presence I could never forget the sun was always shining even though it was raining. Can you imagine parents teaching their young children that they have to lie in order to survive?

**Q:** How old did boys and girls have to be to join the Nazis?

**A:** You had to be an adult to join the Nazi party. But one did not have to join the party; it was an "honor" to be "invited" to join the party. Once you were invited, it was next to impossible to refuse the invitation. The system was very **complex**.<sup>3</sup> If you were a teacher, you belonged to the teacher's organization, for example. The members of these organizations, in turn, had to join the Nazi party.

On their tenth birthday, children automatically became members of the [Nazi] youth organization. The Nazis would teach you all kinds of cool things, [but they would] **indoctrinate**<sup>4</sup> you and **brainwash**<sup>5</sup> you to believe in the goals of the party.

**Q:** Was your sister a Nazi?

**A:** My sister was 16. She had to join the youth organization. She had a wonderful time and was brainwashed into believing that it was sunny every day. She was also instructed to spy at home and to tell the authorities [what was said], which she did not do.

**Q:** When did children first start spying?

**A:** The members of the youth organization had to attend political indoctrination meetings and were told that it was their patriotic duty to report anybody who made negative remarks about the party.

All of this happened 60 years ago. You should learn from all that has happened and make sure similar things don't happen again.

Read the newspapers...and watch out if [the country's leaders] tell you it is sunny every day. Try to discover lies and speak up for what you think is the truth.

<sup>1</sup>**brutal:** cruel and inhuman

<sup>2</sup>**dictatorship:** rule, control, or leadership by one person with total power

<sup>3</sup>**complex:** having many parts, details, or functions, often related in a complicated way; the opposite of simple

<sup>4</sup>**indoctrinate:** to teach the ideas, opinions, or beliefs of only one particular group

<sup>5</sup>**brainwash:** to try to influence someone's beliefs or habits through force or sly persuading

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PROVEN TOOLS FOR TEACHING COMPREHENSION

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What message was the author trying to share? Cite specific examples from the text to support your thinking.

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What can you infer about Hans's sister? Cite evidence to support your thinking.

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