

Directions: Read the report and answer the questions that follow. The following is a draft of a report written by a tenth-grade student for his geography class.

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World Geography
16 April 2009

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The Mysterious Creature of Lake Champlain

1 When we think of lake monsters, most of us think of Nessie, the long-necked serpent that allegedly resides in the waters of Scotland's Loch Ness; however, we might have our own lake serpent right here in North America! Over hundreds of years, numerous recorded sightings of monsters have occurred at Lake Champlain.

2 Lake Champlain, located between New York's Adirondack Mountains and Vermont's Green Mountains, empties into the St. Lawrence River in Canada. According to reports, a prehistoric monster named Champ, strikingly reminiscent of Nessie, may live in this lake. In 1609 the French adventurer Samuel de Champlain explored the lake and reportedly saw the monster (Stephenson 30). Before him, however, the native people in the area had long been familiar with the lake's unusual inhabitant. "The mythology of the Iroquois Indians, who lived on the western shores of Lake Champlain, included a belief in giant underwater serpents" (Tiburion 49). One of these storied creatures, the "Great Horned Serpent" (50), has similarities to some of the later eyewitness descriptions of Champ. Both were reported to have long necks and ears or horns at the tops of their heads.

3 During the 1800s trying to catch a glimpse of Lake Champlain's monster was a popular pastime. The famous showman P. T. Barnum wanted "to display the creature in his museum, [and] offered a \$50,000 reward to anyone who could capture the creature and deliver it to him" (Bernelli 51). Needless to say, the reward was never paid. However, the offer attracted many monster hunters to the lake.

4 Interest in Champ during the twentieth century was primarily limited to these devoted monster pursuers and the people who lived near the lake or visited it for recreational purposes. On July 5, 1977, though, an event occurred that would increase the scope of Champ's notoriety. Standing at the edge of Lake Champlain near St. Albans, Vermont, a young woman named Sandra Mansi noticed a disturbance in the water. "I was scared to death," Mrs. Mansi said later, but at the time she managed to gather her wits about her and snap a picture of what she saw (Stephenson 30). The developed photograph showed a long-necked creature emerging from the water.

5 Concerned that people would consider her either crazy or dishonest, Mrs. Mansi chose to keep the photograph a secret. As more and more sightings continued to be reported during the early 1980s, Mrs. Mansi finally decided to reveal her amazing photograph. It appeared in The New York Times in June of 1981.

6 Photographs of Champ are rare; the Mansi photograph is considered the classic. An expert who examined the photograph could find no evidence of tampering, so it appears to be legitimate. "The image is in color, and it is fairly clear; however, because it was taken with an Instamatic camera, it is too small to reveal any details" (Drummond 10). There are two additional factors preventing any in-depth investigation of the photograph. First, Mrs. Mansi cannot

recall with certitude exactly where she was standing when she took the picture. Second, the negative has, unfortunately, been lost.

7 Are the Champ sightings all part of a perpetrated hoax? This is highly unlikely because "it would have required collusion among pranksters, seemingly otherwise unrelated, scheming together secretly across several generations" (Drummond 17). This leaves two other possibilities. The first possibility is that the monster is a fantasy or an illusion—what anthropologist Aaron Drummond prefers to call an "honest misinterpretation" (17). One might say that the idea that a wide variety of people, over several hundred years, would experience the same illusion or fantasy is as unlikely as the idea that a wide variety of people worked together to create a grand hoax. The only remaining theory—perhaps the only possibility that warrants serious consideration—is that some sort of mysterious creature actually does live in the cold, deep waters of beautiful Lake Champlain.

Works Cited

Bernelli, Gwendolyn. In Search of Monsters. Atlanta: Simms, 1997.

Drummond, Aaron. "Is Champ Illusion or Reality?" Quest for Truth. July 1996: 7+.

Stephenson, Mark. "Lake Monsters." Mysteries and Wonders. Nov. 1996: 27-35.

Tiburon, Charlotte. Iroquois Legends. New York: Fremont, 1995.

Because of testing constraints, some of the specifications of the style manual used (such as double-spacing and a separate page for citing works) have not been followed in this report.

1. The writer of this report uses the sources in paragraph 2 to —

- A provide statistics
- B summarize information
- C show historical background
- D compare and contrast ideas

2. The first quotation in paragraph 2 refers to —

- F a belief held by Tiburon
- G a time-honored Iroquois legend
- H the attraction in P. T. Barnum's circus
- J the founder of Lake Champlain

3 Which question is answered in paragraph 3?

- F When did P. T. Barnum withdraw his reward?
- G Why did P. T. Barnum offer a reward for Champ?
- H Why did P. T. Barnum become famous as a showman?
- J How did P. T. Barnum plan to display Champ?

4. Which of the following would be the best heading for paragraph 4?

- A Woman Scared to Death

- B Famous Lake Champlain
- C A Photograph of Champ
- D Twentieth-Century Sightings

5. From information found in paragraphs 4 through 6, the reader may best infer that —

- F Sandra Mansi wanted to become famous
- G Lake Champlain is not open to the public
- H Vermont advertises many sights that attract tourists to the state
- J Instamatic cameras cannot capture specific features from a distance

6. From the context of this report, the reader can determine that collusion in paragraph 7 means —

- A urgency
- B conspiracy
- C efficiency
- D accuracy

7. The writer includes enough information in this report to show that —

- F Mrs. Mansi was proud of her photograph of Champ and showed it to everyone
- G Champ became an overnight attraction after Mrs. Mansi's 1977 photograph of him
- H Champ is real because of Mrs. Mansi's ability to recall exact descriptions of him
- J Mrs. Mansi's photograph might be questionable evidence of Champ's existence

8. What is the most likely reason that the writer of this report cites Drummond more often than the other three authors?

- A Drummond is more famous than other noted researchers.
- B Drummond's article is specifically about the topic.
- C Drummond is published more than the other authors.
- D Drummond's work is more general than the other authors' works.

9. After reading this report, the reader may best conclude that people —

- F go to great lengths to catch sight of a lake monster
- G invent stories of strange events to entertain others
- H have feared lake monsters throughout history
- J are curious about occurrences they cannot explain

10. Which sentence from this report is most likely an opinion rather than a fact?

- A Lake Champlain, located between New York's Adirondack Mountains and Vermont's Green Mountains, empties into the St. Lawrence River in Canada.
- B In 1609 the French adventurer Samuel de Champlain explored the lake and reportedly saw the monster.
- C It appeared in The New York Times in June of 1981.
- D Photographs of Champ are rare; the Mansi photograph is considered the classic.