Name: Date: Score: / 6

The Transcontinental Railroad: Comprehension

Nonfiction: History · about 190 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

The Transcontinental Railroad

Before 1869, traveling from the East Coast to California was long and dangerous. People could spend four to six months crossing the country by wagon, or they could sail all the way around South America. The United States needed a faster way to connect the nation.

In 1863, two companies began building a railroad. The Central Pacific Railroad started in Sacramento, California, and built east. The Union Pacific Railroad started in Omaha, Nebraska, and built west. Their goal was to meet in the middle.

The work was extremely hard. The Central Pacific had to blast tunnels through the granite of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Thousands of Chinese immigrants did much of this dangerous work. The Union Pacific crossed the Great Plains, and many of its workers were Irish immigrants and Civil War veterans.

On May 10, 1869, the two railroads met at Promontory Summit in Utah. Leaders drove a ceremonial golden spike into the final railroad tie. A telegraph message sent one word across the country: "DONE."

Now a trip across the country took about a week. The railroad helped towns grow, moved goods quickly, and changed the nation forever.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?
   A. how the transcontinental railroad was built and why it mattered B. how trains work
   C. the history of telegraphs D. life in Utah

2. **Detail:** How long did crossing the country by wagon take before 1869?
   A. one week B. two days C. four to six months D. two years

3. **Detail:** Where did the Central Pacific start?
   A. Sacramento, California B. New York City C. Omaha, Nebraska D. Promontory Summit, Utah

4. **Detail:** Who did much of the dangerous work in the Sierra Nevada?
   A. soldiers from England B. farmers from Utah C. Chinese immigrants D. robots

5. **Detail:** Where did the two railroads meet?
   A. St. Louis, Missouri B. Denver, Colorado C. Chicago, Illinois D. Promontory Summit, Utah

6. **Inference:** How did the railroad change travel?

ANSWER KEY

The Transcontinental Railroad: Comprehension (answers)

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6. **Inference:** How did the railroad change travel?
   A trip across the country took about a week instead of months.