Name: Date: Score: / 6

The Great Lakes: Reading Comprehension

Nonfiction: Places · about 255 words

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

The Great Lakes

The five Great Lakes, Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, form the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth. Together, they hold about one fifth of all the fresh surface water in the world. If you could spread their water evenly across the lower 48 states, it would cover the land almost ten feet deep.

The lakes were carved by glaciers. During the last Ice Age, enormous sheets of ice up to two miles thick scraped across the land, gouging out deep basins. When the glaciers melted about 10,000 years ago, the meltwater filled those basins.

Each lake is unique. Lake Superior is the largest by surface area of any freshwater lake in the world and also the deepest and coldest of the five. Lake Michigan is the only Great Lake entirely within the United States. Lake Erie is the shallowest and warmest. Water flows from lake to lake, eventually pouring over Niagara Falls into Lake Ontario and then out through the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean.

More than 30 million people in the United States and Canada live in the Great Lakes region. The lakes provide drinking water, support fishing, and serve as a shipping highway for huge cargo ships carrying iron ore, grain, and coal.

The lakes face challenges, too. Invasive species such as zebra mussels, which arrived in the ballast water of ships, have spread quickly and crowded out native species. Pollution from farms and cities can cause harmful algae blooms. Many groups are working to keep the Great Lakes healthy.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?

   A. how to catch fish in a lake B. the history of Canada

   C. the Great Lakes: how they formed, what they are like, and their challenges D. how ships carry cargo

2. **Detail:** How did the Great Lakes form?

   A. Glaciers carved basins that filled with meltwater. B. People dug them.

   C. Rivers dug them over a few years. D. A volcano created them.

3. **Detail:** Which Great Lake is entirely within the United States?

   A. Lake Ontario B. Lake Superior C. Lake Erie D. Lake Michigan

4. **Detail:** Which lake is the shallowest and warmest?

   A. Lake Michigan B. Lake Huron C. Lake Erie D. Lake Superior

5. **Vocabulary:** An invasive species is...

   A. a kind of ship B. a type of algae that helps lakes C. a fish that lives only in the Great Lakes

   D. a living thing that spreads into a new place and harms native species

6. **Inference:** How did zebra mussels get into the Great Lakes?

ANSWER KEY

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