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Newspapers In Education

FIFTH GRADE READING

Read the following article that tells about teams from around the world competing to become crowned the fastest texters. Then answer questions 1-12. Questions will ask you about information in the article.

SOUTH KOREANS HAVE THUMB FUN WINNING GLOBAL TEXTING CONTEST

2 teens awarded \$100,000 prize

By Verena Dobnik, Associated Press, January 15, 2010

NEW YORK — Two South Korean teenagers have been crowned fastest texters in the world.

The team of 17-year-old Bae Yeong Ho and 18-year-old Ha Mok Min went thumb-to-thumb against competitors from a dozen countries to win the title in a competition Thursday in New York City.

The LG Mobile World Cup challenged nimble-fingered youths on both speed and accuracy. The winning team took home a \$100,000 prize.

Second place and \$20,000 went to the U.S. contestants — 16-year-old Kate Moore of Des Moines, Iowa, who is the 2009 U.S. National Texting Champion, and 14-year-old Morgan Dynda, of Pooler, Ga., the 2009 runner-up. An Argentine team came in third and the Brazilians took fourth.

With many languages at play, English was the texting language of the U.S. competitors and those from Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Other nations represented were Indonesia, Portugal, Russia, Mexico and Spain. Interpreters were hired for nontexting communication.

"My thumbs are up for the challenge," Moore announced hours before the afternoon start time.

But inside Manhattan's Gotham Hall, with the pressure on to text for about two intense minutes at a stretch, she and Dynda fell behind the Koreans by 20 seconds after a good hour of competition dubbed "Race of Death."

"New York sure is an active, lively city!" said Bae, the Korean national champion for 2008 and 2009, basking with his teammate in a crush of admirers.

He has a beautiful bass voice and is saving his \$50,000 share of the prize to study to become an opera singer. And Ha said she's saving for studies to become an engineer.

The drill of the third annual Mobile World Cup was simple: Copying words and phrases in one's native language off a monitor correctly, with no typos or abbreviations, and as fast as possible with the required capitalization and punctuation. Some words were intentionally misspelled to test alertness.

Privately, Moore averages 12,000 texts per month, entering up to 3.5 characters per second.

As in mainstream sports, the event drew vocal fans who offered fever-pitch cheers for their favorites — amid peals of laughter.

"USA, USA!" yelled a front-row crowd.

The winners were showered with confetti as they held up mammoth checks representing their earnings.

The event is sponsored by LG Electronics Inc.'s mobile-phone division, a company based in Seoul, South Korea, that supplies its latest handsets for the contest.

Moore said that although she's almost always "carrying on a conversation with someone, texting, "the habit doesn't detract from face-to-face social life. "I can talk and text at the same time, without looking at the phone."

Her friends all do it, too; anyone who doesn't is socially ostracized. "When you see someone who doesn't have unlimited texting, it's like, 'What's wrong with you?'"

But there's one thing the teen stopped doing: texting in class. A teacher took her phone away, and her parents were asked to accompany her to the vice principal's office to retrieve it.

The 26 finalists who made it to the World Cup were chosen from more than 200,000 wannabes in a global text-off that began in May. Before they even got to New York, female texters had the advantage — hands down, Moore said.

"Girls are faster 'cause their hands are smaller," she said, adding, "I have perfect hands for texting — thin, long fingers. And fast, of course." ■

This article was originally published in the Pioneer Press on January 15, 2010. It has been revised in places to better suit the reading level.

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Please note: These questions are based on information from the article.

Article Questions

SOUTH KOREANS HAVE THUMB FUN WINNING GLOBAL TEXTING CONTEST

- 1. What did teams at the LG Mobile World Cup competition have to demonstrate?**
 - a. fast texting
 - b. opera singing
 - c. vigorous cheering
 - d. thumb wrestling
- 2. What does the word detract mean?**
 - a. donate something
 - b. give something
 - c. provide something
 - d. take something away
- 3. What will the winners do with their prize money?**
 - a. The winners will buy fancy cars.
 - b. The winners will use their money to pay for their studies.
 - c. The winners will pay to sightsee in the United States.
 - d. The winners did not get any money
- 4. Why did Kate Moore stop texting in class?**
 - a. Kate Moore had nothing left to type.
 - b. Kate Moore broke her hand and couldn't text.
 - c. The teacher took her phone away.
 - d. She did not have unlimited texting.
- 5. Why did people from around the world participate in a text off?**
 - a. to get a new phone
 - b. to get a chance to compete in the World Cup
 - c. to make new friends
 - d. to win a trip to South Korea
- 6. What does basking mean?**
 - a. enjoying something
 - b. creating something
 - c. selling something
 - d. breaking something
- 7. What place did the U.S. team take in the 2010 texting competition?**
 - a. The U.S. team was the National Texting Champion.
 - b. Second place went to the U.S. contestants.
 - c. The U. S. came in third place.
 - d. Fourth place went to the U.S. team.
- 8. Why might a mobile-phone division hold a texting competition?**
 - a. So people learn about their latest handset
 - b. to teach people how to text 12,000 messages
 - c. to prove girls are better at texting
 - d. to send messages around the world
- 9. What prize did the winning team take home?**
 - a. \$20,000
 - b. \$50,000
 - c. \$100,000
 - d. \$200,000
- 10. Where did the LG Mobile texting competition take place?**
 - a. Mexico
 - b. South Korea
 - c. Brazil
 - d. New York City
- 11. All of the following texting features were important except**
 - a. punctuation.
 - b. capitalization.
 - c. abbreviations.
 - d. singing.
- 12. How many texts does Kate Moore send each month?**
 - a. about 12
 - b. about 12,000
 - c. about 100,000
 - d. about 200,000

FIFTH GRADE READING

Read the following article that tells about an ice road that has been plowed across the St. Croix River. Then answer questions 13-24. Questions will ask you about information in the article.

CAUTION: CARS CROSSING ON THE ST. CROIX RIVER

By Mary Divine, Pioneer Press, January 12, 2010



Photo: Pioneer Press, John Doman

Neighbors aren't pleased with the Ice Road crossing the St. Croix River from North Hudson, Wis., to Bayport, Minn. The original easement for ice-fishing access onto the St. Croix River in winter, Bayport Mayor Jon Nowaczek said, will be under city council scrutiny in March. "I hope that we can come up with a solution that balances everyone's needs—one that will continue to allow public access, but also address the legitimate concerns of some of the property owners," Nowaczek said.

Commuters cheer, neighbors grumble as the popular "Ice Road" reappears across the St. Croix River. Dave "Swanee" Swanson's favorite river road doesn't run alongside the St. Croix River — it crosses it.

Swanson, who lives in North Hudson, Wis., regularly plows the popular "Ice Road" across the river, a route commuters use to save time and cuts a 25-minute drive to about seven minutes. "When you take the shortcut across the river to get to work, and you get to this side of the river, you don't have the stress, for one thing," Swanson said. "There's no stoplights. There's no speed limits. You don't have any road rage. It's just fun."

While some commuters are jubilant when it's cold enough for the quick crossing, residents nearby aren't so pleased. They're complaining about the traffic and about headlights beaming into their bedrooms at 5 a.m. as Andersen

employees head to work. Mondry, of Bayport, said she once counted "18 pickups and six or seven different cars" crossing the frozen river during a 10-minute period.

Swanson said he hopes the road, which he has plowed voluntarily and at his own expense for the past two decades, remains open.

"People have been using it forever, and it is part of recreation on the river," he said. "I go back and forth. I go to the bank. I come over and get gas. I come over and see a few people who live over here."

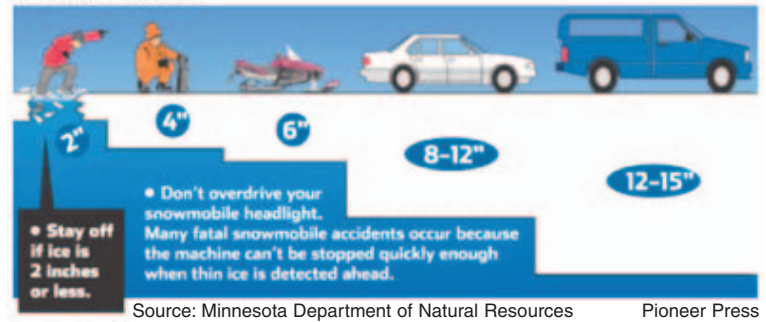
Swanson said the road is usually safe from the beginning of January to mid-March. His first trip out was Wednesday.

"The ice is good," he said, as he navigated his plow along the north side of the road. "I've got a couple of people that I know who have punched a couple of holes for me and it's 20 inches or so. It's good, solid ice."

He said he plows the roadway wide enough to accommodate three vehicles so if friends meet coming across the river and stop to chat, another driver could get around them.

When people see Swanson out on the river, they know it's safe to cross, he said. "I've got the extra weight of the plow

What's safe?



hanging out front — they pretty much figure it's safe if I'm coming across," he said.

Alex Getty, 21, of Hudson, hopped on the plowed road Monday morning in his silver Audi to meet a friend and go ice fishing. "It's four-wheel drive," he said. "I love driving in the snow."

But law-enforcement officials caution drivers to be careful, especially because there is open water just north and south of the crossing — the water discharge area at Xcel's King Plant just upriver and the open channel to the south at the Hudson railroad and freeway bridges. River ice can be unpredictable and treacherous, said St. Croix County Sheriff Dennis Hillstead. ■

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Article Questions

CAUTION: CARS CROSSING ON THE ST. CROIX RIVER

13. According to the table, "What's Safe," how many inches of ice are needed for a car to drive on the ice?
- 12-15"
 - 2"
 - 6"
 - 8-12"
14. What could happen if the ice is less than 2 inches thick?
- A person could fall into the water.
 - It is safe for trucks to drive across the ice.
 - Fish can swim on the ice.
 - People could use the ice road.
15. What river does the ice road go across?
- The Mississippi River
 - The Minnesota River
 - The St. Croix River
 - The Amazon River
16. According to the map, what two states does the ice road connect?
- Wisconsin and Iowa
 - Iowa and Minnesota
 - Minnesota and Wisconsin
 - Wisconsin and Michigan
17. In this article, what does the word jubilant mean?
- saddened
 - disappointed
 - frustrated
 - thrilled
18. Why would people use the ice road?
- All people like to drive on the ice.
 - It cuts time off the commute.
 - People like to ice fish on their way to work.
 - People can't find the bridge in the wintertime.
19. In this article the word accommodate means
- prohibit.
 - forbid.
 - allow.
 - stop.
20. According to this article, during which season might you be able to use the ice road?
- spring
 - summer
 - fall
 - winter
21. How long has Dave Swanson plowed this ice road?
- since 5 a.m.
 - since March
 - two decades
 - twenty-five minutes
22. Why do a couple of people drill holes in the ice for Swanson?
- to see if the ice is thick enough to drive on
 - to look for fish
 - to put in stop signs
 - to make more ice
23. What was Swanson referring to when he said, "People have been using it forever, and it is part of recreation on the river?"
- Xcel's King Plant
 - the ice road
 - bridges
 - North Hudson
24. Why do law-enforcement officials caution drivers to be careful?
- There is open water just north and south of the crossing.
 - The ice is never thick enough for driving trucks on the ice.
 - Only four-wheel drive cars can drive in the snow.
 - Friends meet coming across the river and stop to chat.