

# **Reading Comprehension**

## **State Released Items**

Sasha's family is planning a trip to Washington, D.C. Sasha wants to know more about the capital before they visit. Here is one article that she found in the library.

## Locating Our Nation's Capital

1. Washington, D.C. has not always been our nation's capital. It was chosen as the permanent home for our government over two hundred years ago. Located on 69 square miles of land perched upon the Potomac River, our capital is surrounded by the states of Maryland and Virginia. How this spot became the center of our government has an interesting history.
2. There was talk of a permanent capital for the United States during the American Revolution, but nothing came of it. Later, between 1783 and 1787, the first Congress to run the nation had no regular meeting place. Its members met in different towns. It was during these years that the nation's leaders decided that our government needed a permanent home.
3. There was great rivalry among the states to get the capital. People believed that the capital would one day become a vital commercial center, greatly benefiting its state and the inhabitants. There was also conflict over whether the new capital should be in the North or the South.
4. Over forty potential sites were suggested between 1783 and 1791: Some were recommended by individuals who would personally profit from their ideas. Others were recommended by people who wanted the political and economic advantage that the capital would bring. Some, perhaps, were suggested with the good of the nation's future in mind.
5. Two people who would have benefited greatly from their recommendations for the capital were Manasseh Cutler and Lewis Morris. Cutler advocated putting the capital on the Ohio River. His argument was that the center of population was sure to move west. Cutler's conflict of interest lay in the fact that he represented a land company in the Ohio River area.
6. Lewis Morris wanted the capital placed just above New York City. It was the commercial center and possessed the best harbor in the United States, he claimed. Morris possibly wanted to sell Congress property that he owned just north of New York City.
7. New York was the northernmost site that was suggested; Williamsburg, Virginia, the southernmost. Many contenders for the honor lay between the two.



A2

- 1 The MAIN problem with locating a permanent capital for the United States was
- a **lack of support by members of Congress.**
  - b competition among the states
  - c finding a place near a river.
  - d explaining the need for a capital to the people.

A2

- 2 The selection of a permanent site for the government solved the problem of
- f electing delegates to Congress.
  - g fighting wars against enemies of the country.
  - h deciding where the Congress should meet.
  - j communicating with the people.

B1

- 3 The location of the capital was important because
- a **it would become the center of political power.**
  - b a war would break out between the North and the South.
  - c it would become the largest city in the country.
  - d the settlement of the West depended on having a capital.

B1

- 4 Today, our nation's capital is
- f **no longer important.**
  - g part of the state of Maryland.
  - h full of historical sights.
  - j larger in area than in 1790.

B2

- 5 In paragraph 4, the author
- a **gives details and states the main idea later.**
  - b states the main idea and gives examples of it.
  - c asks a question and then answers it.
  - d uses numerous descriptive details.

B3

- 6 The author includes paragraphs 5 and 6 in order to
- f **show examples of personal conflicts of interest.**
  - g explain the best suggestions for the capital's location.
  - h help the reader understand why Washington was selected.
  - j show people who cared about the nation's future.

B4

- 7 You can tell from the article that
- a **early politicians enjoyed moving around.**
  - b everyone was satisfied with the final decision.
  - c achieving political compromise took time
  - d early newspapers were extremely powerful.

C2

- 8 The author uses words like “contenders” and “promoters” to
- f **emphasize the rivalry between the groups supporting different locations.**
  - g create suspense about the outcome of the political activities.
  - h make the reader angry with people who did not agree with the decision.
  - j support the idea that the best place for the capital was Baltimore.

C2

- 9 The author uses the word “good” many times in order to show that the nation
- a **was inhabited by excellent people.**
  - b contained many promising locations.
  - c was founded on religious principles.
  - d encouraged people to do their best.

C3

- 10 Which of the following is an OPINION stated in paragraph 1?
- f **Washington, D.C. has not always been our nation’s capital.**
  - g The Potomac River is too shallow for enemy ships to use for an attack.
  - h How this spot became the center of our government has an interesting history.
  - j Maryland gave seventy square miles of land, and Virginia gave thirty square miles of land for the capital.

C4

- 11 If the author had added another paragraph to the end of the story, it would MOST LIKELY have described
- a **what Maryland did with the \$32,500.**
  - b how the location affected the design and building of the new city.
  - c temporary places where Congress met before the decision was made.
  - d other properties that George Washington surveyed.