

DIRECTIONS

Read each of the passages. Then read the questions that follow and decide on the BEST answer. There are a lot of different kinds of questions, so read each question carefully before marking an answer on your answer sheet.

PUPPY LOVE

Read this true story about a dog who did some amazing things to help a friend.

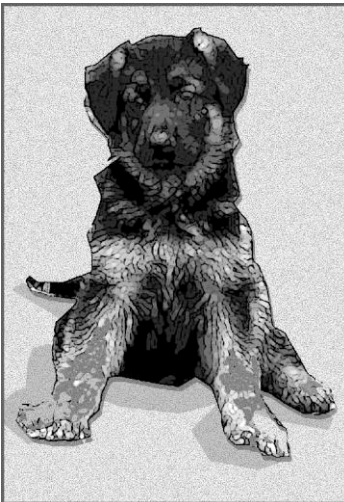
ERIC SEAL THOUGHT THE scrawny puppy at his feet was perhaps five weeks old. Sometime during the night, the little mixed-breed female had been dumped at the Seals' front gate.

"Before you ask," he told Jeffrey, his wife, "the answer is an absolute no! We are not going to keep it. We don't need another dog. When and if we do, we'll get a purebred."

As though she hadn't heard him, his wife sweetly asked, "What kind do you think it is?"

Eric shook his head. "It's hard to tell. From her color markings and the way she holds her ears in a half-lop, I'd say she's part German shepherd."

"We can't just turn her away," Jeffrey pleaded. "I'll feed her and get her cleaned up. Then we'll find a home for her."



Standing between them, the puppy seemed to sense that her fate was being decided. Her tail wagged tentatively and she looked from one to the other. Eric noticed that although her ribs showed through a dull coat, her eyes were bright and animated.

Finally, he shrugged his shoulders. "Okay, if you want to fool with her, go ahead. But let's get one thing straight: We don't need a Heinz-57 mongrel."

The puppy nestled comfortably in Jeffrey's arms as they walked toward the house. "One other thing," Eric continued. "Let's wait a few days to put her in the pen with Tex. We don't want Tex exposed to anything. He has

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all the troubles he can handle.”

Tex, the six-year-old cattle dog the Seals had raised from a puppy, was unusually amiable for a blue-heeler, a breed established by ranchers in Australia. So, although he already shared his doghouse with a yellow cat, soon Tex happily moved over and made room for the new puppy the Seals called Heinz.

Not long before Heinz showed up, the Seals had noticed that Tex appeared to be losing his eyesight. Their veterinarian said he thought the dog had cataracts that might be surgically removed.

But when they brought Tex to a specialist in Dallas, he determined that the dog’s poor eyesight was only partially due to cataracts. He made an appointment for Tex at the local college’s veterinary laboratory.

Doctors there determined that Tex was already blind. They explained that no medical or surgical procedure could have halted or delayed Tex’s progressive loss of vision.

As they talked on their way home, the Seals realized that over the last few months, they had watched Tex cope with his blindness. Now they understood why Tex sometimes missed a gate opening or bumped his nose on the chain-link fence. And why he usually stayed on the gravel walkways traveling to and from the house. If he wandered off, he quartered back and forth until he was on the gravel again.

While the couple had been preoccupied with Tex’s troubles, Heinz had grown plump and frisky, and her dark brown-and-black coat glowed with health.

It was soon obvious that the little German shepherd crossbreed would be a large dog—too large to continue sharing a doghouse with Tex and the yellow cat. One weekend, the Seals built another doghouse next to the one the dogs had shared.

It was then they recognized that what they had assumed was puppy playfulness—Heinz’s pushing and tugging at Tex while romping with him—actually had a purpose. Without any training or coaching, Heinz had become Tex’s “seeing eye” dog.

Each evening when the dogs settled in for the night, Heinz gently took Tex’s nose in her mouth and led him into his house. In

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the morning, she got him up and guided him out of the house again.

When the two dogs approached a gate, Heinz used her shoulder to guide Tex through. When they ran along the fence surrounding their pen, Heinz placed herself between Tex and the wire.

“On sunny days, Tex sleeps stretched out on the driveway asphalt,” says Jeffrey. If a car approaches, Heinz will nudge him awake and guide him out of danger.

“Any number of times we’ve seen Heinz push Tex aside to get him out of the horses’ way. What we didn’t understand at first was how the two could run side by side, dashing full speed across the pasture. Then one day, the dogs accompanied me while I exercised my horse, and I heard Heinz ‘talking’ – she was making a series of soft grunts to keep Tex on course beside her.”

The Seals were awed. Without any training, the young dog had devised whatever means were necessary to help, guide and protect her blind companion. It was clear that Heinz shared more than her eyes with Tex; she shared her heart.

1

What does the word progressive mean as it is used in the story?

- A. Modern
- B. Complete
- C. Increasing
- D. Encouraging

2

The two themes most strongly associated with this story would be

- A. loyalty and friendship.
- B. loss and loneliness.
- C. bravery and loss.
- D. friendship and ownership.

3

When the two dogs ran along the fence, Heinz placed herself between Tex and the wire to

- A. make sure Eric saw her.
- B. keep Tex from bumping it.
- C. hide Tex's blindness from others.
- D. show how fast they could run.

4

The image of Heinz guiding Tex in and out of his house is included to show how

- A. rough Heinz often is with Tex.
- B. understanding Heinz is with Tex.
- C. much Tex likes to be in his house.
- D. Tex has no idea what his house is for.

5

Eric Seal wanted to wait a few days to put Heinz in the pen with Tex because he

- A. didn't want the strange dogs to fight.
- B. wasn't sure if they would fit.
- C. didn't think it was fair to the yellow cat.
- D. didn't want Tex exposed to anything.

NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT

In this article, a veteran backpacker gives advice on how to deal with allergies on the trail.



DONNA GRIFFITHS MADE ALLERGY HISTORY when she was 12 years old. Starting in 1981, the British girl sneezed every few minutes for 977 consecutive days. Doctors estimate Griffiths ah-chooed 1 million times the first year; she eventually slowed to a sneeze every 5 minutes.

Fortunately for most of us, battling allergies is a mercifully short springtime affair. Still, there are few things as frustrating as finally getting on the trail only to have your vistas blurred by watery eyes and the smell of evergreens lost in your sniffles. And there's plenty of it going around: Researchers at the American Academy of Allergies, Asthma, and Immunology estimate that allergic rhinitis, or hay fever, affects at least 36 million Americans each year. But

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don't despair. Doctors agree there's no reason seasonal allergies should keep you from enjoying your favorite backcountry haunts. With the right mix of preparation, knowledge of when plants pollinate, and treatment options, you'll be able to stop and smell the grasses without giving Griffiths a run for her record.

"The first thing you should do is find out what you're allergic to," advises Adela Taylor, M.D., a physician at the North Carolina-based Mountain Allergy Clinic. Although culprits differ regionally, the most common backcountry allergens include mold spores and pollens from grasses, ragweed, and trees, especially birch and oak. Contrary to popular belief, wildflowers probably won't make you sneeze. Their pollen is too sticky and heavy, says Dr. Taylor, to float up your nose.

If you're not sure what's causing your reaction, a simple skin test by your doctor can pinpoint it. "Then you can determine what time of year you should or shouldn't go camping," Dr. Taylor says. Use this timeline as a rough guide.

- In the lower 48, grasses start to pollinate in May and June, but can continue through the summer at higher elevations.
- Sagebrush, ragweed, and tumbleweed pollinate in the fall.
- Trees release billions of pollen cells in early spring, often before leaves appear.
- Molds can release spores for much of the year if their habitat remains moist.

Short of searching the trail for pollen, specific grasses, or those wispy feathers from pollinating cottonwood trees, there's not much you can do to assess allergen levels on your chosen route. You can check daily pollen counts at the National Pollen Network (www.allernet.com/DAILY), but "your eyes and nose will probably tell you first," says Dr. Taylor.

If you get caught hiking in the wrong season, try one of these trail-proven tricks to mitigate your allergy symptoms.

- **Time hikes for mornings**, when plant pollens are heavy with dew.
- **Sit tight when the wind blows.** "Breezy days are going to be worse," says Richard Honsinger, Ph.D., a clinical

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professor at the University of New Mexico, “because pollens can drift in the wind for hundreds of miles.”

- **Pick trails and tent sites above treeline.** You’ll find the fewest irritants on rocky terrain.
- **Find a lake and pitch camp on the downwind side.** The water may collect allergens as the wind blows them across, says Kim Spence, M.D., a family physician and backpacker based in Carbondale, CO.
- **Avoid the irritants completely.** If you’re allergic to juniper, head east into forests of oak and elm. Does hickory make you sneeze? Hike in Washington’s Olympic National Park.
- **Load up on antihistamines.** Nondrowsy drugs such as Allegra, Claritin, and even the asthma medication Singulair can work wonders in stopping allergy symptoms. Ask your doctor.
- **Try saltwater.** Caught in the woods without your meds? Flushing your eyes and nose with saline removes the allergens and can dramatically improve your symptoms, says Dr. Spence.

6

Which of the following statements from the article is an opinion, rather than a fact?

- A. “Their pollen is too sticky and heavy, says Dr. Taylor, to float up your nose.”
- B. “Still, there are few things as frustrating as finally getting on the trail only to have your vistas blurred by watery eyes...”
- C. “Starting in 1981, the British girl sneezed every few minutes for 977 consecutive days.”
- D. “Researchers at the American Academy of Allergies, Asthma, and Immunology estimate that allergic rhinitis...affects at least 36 million Americans each year.”

7

As used in this selection, the word mitigate means

- A. agitate.
- B. intensify.
- C. lessen.
- D. remove.

8

Each of the following is identified by the author as a way to avoid serious allergy problems EXCEPT

- A. preparation, or finding out what you're allergic to.
- B. knowledge of when plants pollinate.
- C. remaining indoors during hot, humid weather.
- D. using one or more treatment options.

9

Information in the "timeline" provided as a guide for when you should and shouldn't go camping leads to the conclusion that people with allergies should camp

- A. in areas free of sagebrush and ragweed in the fall.
- B. in high elevations in the summer.
- C. before leaves appear in the spring.
- D. at places and times based on their specific allergy.

10

The author probably wrote this article so readers

- A. will be more aware of allergies caused by plants.
- B. will find out what they're allergic to.
- C. know what specific plants cause allergies.
- D. know how to deal with allergies while hiking.

11

Which "trail-proven trick" suggests flushing your eyes with saline?

- A. Try saltwater
- B. Load up on antihistamines
- C. Time hikes for mornings
- D. Avoid irritants completely

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