

Midewin means healing. Openlands and other organizations are healing this land. Whose land is it? First, the Native Americans lived here. They did not believe in ownership of land. Then in 1850 settlers came, homesteaders who set up farms. A Native American wrote the following statement about the changes that followed.

Once, only Indians lived in this land. Then came strangers from across the Great Water. No land had they; we gave them of our land. No food had they; we gave them of our corn. The strangers are become many and they fill all the country. They dig gold—from my mountains; they build houses—of the trees of my forest; they rear cities—of my stones and rocks; they make fine garments—from the hides and wood of animals that eat my grass. None of the things that make their riches did they bring with them from beyond the Great Water; all comes from my land; the land the Great Mystery gave unto the Indian.

In 1939, just when the rest of this prairie might have been turned into farmland, the army came and protected this land. The army did not mean to save the prairie. The army used about 25,000 acres of prairie land to protect the nation, not the prairie. The army built a plant to make explosives for use in World War II. They built railroad tracks to carry the explosives away from the plant. They built thick-walled buildings called bunkers to store the explosives. They needed many acres of land around the explosives to protect the people who lived in the area.

Because of the army, the land was safe from a lot of settlement and farming. Long after the war ended, the area was kept by the army. Then in 1982, naturalists pointed out that this prairie could be restored. It had not been broken up as other prairies had. It could be turned back into the natural environment. By 1992, a plan was made for that change. Then, in 1993, the plan began to happen. The government declared the land “excess.” That means extra. It really wasn’t extra. Every acre was important to re-making the prairie.

In 1997, the army turned 15,000 acres over to the Department of Agriculture for use in the prairie restoration. By 1998, 19,000 acres had been set aside for native prairie. The restoration of the prairie had begun. Today, United State Department of Agriculture is working with volunteers from Openlands and other organizations to restore the prairie.

The restoration includes education. Each year, students visit Midewin to see what was and imagine what will be. If you have 20-20 vision you can see what Midewin will look like in the future. By the year 2020, it will look a lot like the Tallgrass prairie that the bison roamed. In fact, bison will live here again, too. That will just be the beginning, though. We will need more decades to bring back this natural system.

Summarize Nonfiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2010.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What information would you include in a summary of this passage?

- a. There are many prairies today.
- b. The army took over this land in 1939.
- c. Thousands of settlers moved in.
- d. Many bison live here today.

3. What kinds of information do you include in a summary of a nonfiction passage?

- a. all the facts
- b. facts you learned from other passages
- c. facts that help make the ideas clear
- d. any facts you like

2. What is an important idea in the passage?

- a. Excess means extra.
- b. Farmers need more and more land.
- c. Explosives are dangerous.
- d. Native Americans valued the natural environment.

4. How do you figure out what is most important in a passage?

- a. You read it quickly.
- b. You look at the first sentence.
- c. You think about it as you read.
- d. You read other books.

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

List one important idea you would include in a summary of this passage.

List one important fact you would include in a summary of this passage.

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	d	c	c

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

Ideas may include the importance of restoring a natural environment; facts should be important to understanding the changes made.