Amerie stared at the giant cardboard heart at the front of the classroom. Mr. Mickelson had a new project in mind, and from the looks of it, it had to do with Valentine’s Day.

“Can someone tell me what this heart is?” Mr. Mickelson asked.

“A woman started the tradition?” Jason asked from the back of the room.

“That’s right,” Mr. Mickelson said. “Were you thinking it was someone named Valentine?”

Most of the class nodded.

“Well,” Mr. Mickelson continued, “the holiday actually began in other countries before coming to America. Valentine’s Day was a day to celebrate St. Valentine, a symbol for love. At that time, most people in the United States had never heard of Valentine’s Day. Esther Howland received a valentine card from one of her father’s business partners in England. She loved the idea, and at nineteen years old, she began a business here in the United States. She called her company, ‘The New England Valentine Company.’ People in America loved the idea of sending valentines to loved ones, so the idea caught on.”

“That’s really cool, Mr. Mickelson, but why are you telling us this?” Amerie asked.
Mr. Mickelson’s eyes lit up. “Because for your next class project, you’ll be coming up with a new Valentine’s Day tradition. You’ll have to think of something that will show the spirit of the holiday in a creative way.”

Amerie’s mind was already working. If Esther Howland could create the valentine card business at nineteen, Amerie could think of something for this project. Her classmates were volunteering ideas, everything from cupcakes with messages written in icing to paper airplane hearts. But Amerie wanted something different. Something that could really catch on.

She thought about it all night and on the way to school the next morning. When she entered the classroom,

Mr. Mickelson nodded. “I think it’s unanimous. We have a song to write.”

Amerie smiled. Maybe she hadn’t started her own business, but she’d come up with a really fun project that just might become a tradition in her school.
Valentine’s Tradition
By Kelly Hashway

1. Esther Howland...
   a. was the first person to send Valentines to loved ones
   b. received many Valentines from England
   c. started a company that made Valentine cards
   d. wrote a song about Valentine’s Day

2. Before he assigned a Valentine’s Day class project, Mr. Mickelson
   a. taught his students about the history of St. Valentine
   b. taught his students why Valentine’s Day is an important holiday
   c. taught his students how to make a Valentine card
   d. taught his students how the tradition of sending Valentine cards began

3. When Amerie first mentioned her idea to write a song, how did she feel?
   (circle one)
   - proud
   - embarrassed
   - excited
   - disappointed

4. Did Amerie’s classmates like her idea? How do you know?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

5. People have been sending Valentines in America for about...
   a. 75 years   b. 100 years   c. 175 years   d. 275 years

6. This story probably takes place in....
   a. early-January   b. mid-February   c. late-February   d. early-March
Valentine’s Tradition
By Kelly Hashway

Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

_____ 1. cardboard   a. small cakes
_____ 5. unanimous   e. business started in hopes of earning money
_____ 6. cupcakes   f. two people who run a business together
_____ 7. tradition   g. pulled
_____ 8. England   h. a custom that continues on a regular basis

Now try this: Write a sentence using each of the vocabulary words above.
1. Esther Howland...
   a. was the first person to send Valentines to loved ones
   b. received many Valentines from England
   c. started a company that made Valentine cards
   d. wrote a song about Valentine’s Day

2. Before he assigned a Valentine’s Day class project, Mr. Mickelson...
   a. taught his students about the history of St. Valentine
   b. taught his students why Valentine’s Day is an important holiday
   c. taught his students how to make a Valentine card
   d. taught his students how the tradition of sending Valentine cards began

3. When Amerie first mentioned her idea to write a song, how did she feel? (circle one)
   - proud
   - embarrassed
   - excited
   - disappointed

4. Did Amerie’s classmates like her idea? How do you know?
   Yes they did like her idea because the class unanimously voted for it.

5. People have been sending Valentines in America for about...
   a. 75 years   b. 100 years   d. 275 years
   c. 175 years

6. This story probably takes place in....
   a. early-January   c. late-February
   b. mid-February   d. early-March
**Valentine’s Tradition**

By Kelly Hashway

Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

___ 1. cardboard  
   a. small cakes

___ 2. tugged  
   b. island country in Europe

___ 3. business venture  
   c. everyone agreeing

___ 4. business partners  
   d. thick type of paper used to make boxes

___ 5. unanimous  
   e. business started in hopes of earning money

___ 6. cupcakes  
   f. two people who run a business together

___ 7. tradition  
   g. pulled

___ 8. England  
   h. a custom that continues on a regular basis

**Now try this:** Write a sentence using each of the vocabulary words above.