Name: _____

Grasslands

By Anita Kim Venegas

Did you know the only continent on Earth without grasslands is Antarctica? Grasslands are areas of land that are covered mostly in grass rather than bushes or trees. They cover about one-fourth of Earth's surface. Temperate grasslands include the prairies of North America, the Pampas of South America, and the steppes of Eurasia. These grasslands grow at about 30 degrees north and south of the equator. Tropical grasslands, called savannas, lie closer to the equator where temperatures are warmer.

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prey on guanacos, a relative of the llama. On the Eurasian steppes, the tiny jerboa scurries in a zigzag pattern to avoid becoming a meal for a coyote or lynx. Anteaters dig their noses deep into anthills. Armadillos dine on small frogs, lizards, and rodents. In the tropical sub-Saharan savanna, elephants, cheetahs, zebras, and lions compete for limited water. Over two-thirds of the world's marsupials, or pouch animals, live on the Australian savanna.

Grasslands do best in a climate with lots of sunshine and some rainfall. Precipitation can change from one year to the next. Where rainfall is plentiful, grasses grow 3 feet (1 m) high. An area with less rain will have shorter grasses. Willow and cottonwood trees grow near streams where underground water is plentiful. Bright flowering plants such as orange butterfly weed, purple lupines, and pink coneflowers bloom from early spring through the middle of autumn.

Billions of acres of the world's grasslands have become grazing lands for cattle, sheep, horses, and other domestic animals. Biologists work with ranchers to manage plant and animal habitats and prevent soil destruction. Together, cowboys and scientists can work to preserve the grasslands.

Name: _____

Grasslands

By Anita Kim Venegas

1. Which of the following is *not true* of tropical grasslands?

a. They are only found in sub-Saharan Africa.
b. They are warmer than temperate grasslands.
c. They contain two-thirds of the world's marsupials.
d. They are located within 30 degrees of the equator.

2. Complete the table by filling in a specific type of tropical or temperate grassland found in each area.

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Eurasia	

3. Which of the following threats to the world's grasslands is *not* mentioned in the article?

a. overgrazing by cattle
b. clearing land for building
c. climate change
d. toxic overuse of fertilizers

4. Reread the following sentence from the article.

> *These grasslands grow at about 30 degrees north and south of the equator.*

In the sentence above, which of the following definitions of degree is being used?

a. the amount or level of something
b. a unit used to measure temperature
c. a rank given to show you have studied a specific thing
d. a unit used to measure distance around a circle or sphere

Name: _____

Grasslands

By Anita Kim Venegas

The following terms are vocabulary words from the article. Match the vocabulary word with its correct definition by writing the corresponding letter on the line.

1. _____ marsupial

a. great amounts; a lot of something

b. located south of the Sahara Desert

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5. _____ steppes

e. tropical grasslands with higher temperatures and limited water

6. _____ sub-Saharan

f. having mild temperatures without extremes

7. _____ precipitation

g. temperate grasslands found in southeastern Europe or Asia

8. _____ preserve

h. to protect from harm or destruction; to maintain

9. _____ savannas

i. kept in or around homes; not wild

Name: _____

Grasslands

By Anita Kim Venegas

In the article, "Grasslands," you learned about types of grasslands. These are different biomes, or large areas characterized by the types of plants, wildlife, soil, and climate that are found within them. They can be general, like grasslands, or more specific, like sub-Saharan savannas. Other examples of biomes include freshwater rivers, tropical rainforests, and cold deserts.

Use the internet to find which biome you live in. If you live in a grassland, pick a different biome. Research the biome. On the lines below, explain the biome's major characteristics. Make sure to include information on the climate as well as the kinds of

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ANSWER KEY

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By Anita Kim Venegas

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