

Session 1, Reading Selection #1

Bottles are used for many purposes. Read this selection about messages sent in bottles. Use information from the selection to answer the questions that follow.

A Message from the Sea

from *Drift Bottles in History and Folklore*
by Dorothy B. Francis

1 For ages people have tossed message bottles into the sea. Sometimes

these bottles are called drift bottles. They also are called *drogues*. A *drogue* is another name for a container used at sea.

2 Ancient Greeks learned about water currents by using drift bottles. One Greek writer wrote of using *drogues* in 300 B.C. He stood on a seawall in Athens. From there, he dropped drift bottles into the water. Each bottle carried a message. The message asked the finder to contact the writer. These bottles helped him learn about the flow of sea currents.

3 Sometimes people on a sinking ship toss a message into the sea. Their *drogue* may be a cry for help. Or it may just be an account of the disaster. The victim may want people to know exactly what happened. His message may concern himself, his friends, and his ship.

4 One man aboard the British transport ship *Kent* wrote of its disaster. Major Duncan MacGregor knew his ship was in big trouble. It was going down. Nothing short of a miracle could save it. He doubted that anyone would survive to tell the tale.

5 He wrote an account of the wreck. Hoping someone would find it, he launched his story sealed in a bottle. Luckily, rescuers reached Major MacGregor. Once he was saved, his message bottle seemed less important. He was able to tell his story in person.

6 Major MacGregor lived in Barbados. He seldom thought of the bottle he had cast into the waves. But nine years after the *Kent* disaster, a servant approached him. The servant carried a bottle. Inside it was the message the major had tossed into the sea.

7 Believe it or not, the bottle had traveled more than 5,000 miles. It had washed ashore close to the major's doorstep. The sea takes. And the sea returns.



"A Message from the Sea" by Dorothy B. Francis from DRIFT BOTTLES IN HISTORY AND FOLKLORE © 1990 by Ballhoob Books.

English Language Arts, Grade 4

Session 1, Multiple-Choice Questions

- 1 What did the ancient Greeks learn from the use of drift bottles?
- A. the height of the tide
 - B. the way the sea level changes
 - C. the times of the tides
 - D. the way the currents flow

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 1: Literature/Learning Standard 8

- 2 Major MacGregor threw a bottle into the sea because he wanted
- A. a miracle to happen.
 - B. his story to be told.
 - C. to check the sea's currents.
 - D. to mark the disaster's location.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 2: Literature/Learning Standard 13

- 3 What is the MAIN reason that it took nine years for Major MacGregor's bottle to be found by his servant?
- A. It had sunk in the water.
 - B. It had traveled 5,000 miles.
 - C. It went down with the ship.
 - D. It was not seen by anyone.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 3: Literature/Learning Standard 13

- 4 What was so surprising about Major MacGregor's servant finding his bottle?
- A. The bottle was full of sand and water.
 - B. The bottle was found near Major MacGregor's home.
 - C. The message was written in a foreign language.
 - D. The message was missing from the bottle.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 4: Literature/Learning Standard 13

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- 5 Why was the message in Major MacGregor's bottle no longer important?
- A. He lived to tell his own story.
 - B. The bottle was lost at sea.
 - C. His servant found the bottle.
 - D. He forgot about writing the message.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 5: Literature/Learning Standard 13

- 6 The word *Kent* is italicized (slanted print) in this selection to show that it is the name of
- A. a book.
 - B. a bottle.
 - C. a captain.
 - D. a ship.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 6: Language/Learning Standard 5

English Language Arts, Grade 4

Session 1, Open-Response Question

- 7 According to the selection, drogues have two important uses. Describe ONE use and give information from the selection to support your answer.

*Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 7: **Literature/Learning Standard 8***