

Name: _____ Date: _____

Central Ideas and Details

A central idea of a text is one of the main points the author is making.

(Sometimes a central idea is called a main idea.)

A central idea can always be supported with details from the text.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to explore the central ideas and supporting details in "The Children's Blizzard."

1. Reread the section "An Arctic Blast." Which statement below BEST expresses the central idea of the second paragraph of this section?

- Ⓐ People used to get their weather reports from newspapers.
- Ⓑ Weather forecasting was in its infancy in the 1880s.
- Ⓒ Weather forecasters in the Northern Plains lied about the storm.
- Ⓓ People in the Northern Plains did not know that the blizzard was coming.

2. Read the central idea of the section "Houses Made of Dirt" stated in the box below. Then read the lines from the article listed under it. Which detail does NOT support the central idea?

Central Idea:
Life was tough for most settlers on the Northern Plains.

- Ⓐ "Few places on Earth have a more extreme climate, with frigid winters and boiling summers and spring thunderstorms that unleash tornadoes and hail." (p. 7)
- Ⓑ "These tiny dwellings were dark and smelly. A hard rain could turn the dirt floor to mud. One never knew when a snake might pop out of a dirt wall." (p. 8)
- Ⓒ "Few were prepared for the weather, for the endless work, for the loneliness of life on a tiny farm, miles from another living soul." (p. 7)
- Ⓓ "[Walter's] family lived in a four-room wooden house with a proper roof, glass windows, and even a piano." (p. 8)

I chose _____ because _____

3. Read the details from the section "Rescue Mission" listed below. In the box, write a central idea that these details support.

Central Idea:

Detail 1: "Will had always watched over his little brother, and he refused to stay behind." (p. 9)

Detail 2: "[Will] could not see or hear, and the wind made it difficult to breathe. But he kept searching." (p. 9)

Detail 3: "It was as though the storm's fury had entered Will's veins, giving him the strength to walk against the wind, to rise up when he fell, to hold his little brother tight in his arms." (p. 9)

4. Consider the central idea of the whole article that is written below. We wrote one detail from the article that supports this idea. Write two more supporting details in the spaces provided.

Central Idea:

The Children's Blizzard of 1888 was extremely powerful and dangerous.

Supporting detail 1:

"Temperatures would plummet rapidly—in some places, to as cold as 40 degrees below zero with wind chill." (p. 6)

Supporting detail 2:

Supporting detail 3:

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A central idea can always be supported with details from the text.

Directions: Follow the prompts below to explore the central ideas and supporting details in "The Children's Blizzard."

1. Read the central idea of the section "Houses Made of Dirt" stated in the box below. Then check the boxes next to the THREE details that best support the central idea.

Central Idea:

Life was tough for most settlers on the Northern Plains.

- ☐ "Few places on Earth have a more extreme climate, with frigid winters and boiling summers and spring thunderstorms that unleash tornadoes and hail." (p. 7)
- ☐ "[Walter's] family lived in a four-room wooden house with a proper roof, glass windows, and even a piano." (p. 8)
- ☐ "Few were prepared for the weather, for the endless work, for the loneliness of life on a tiny farm, miles from another living soul." (p. 7)
- ☐ "These tiny dwellings were dark and smelly. A hard rain could turn the dirt floor to mud. One never knew when a snake might pop out of a dirt wall." (p. 8)
- ☐ "Most people came west to build farms . . ." (p. 7)

2. Read the details from the article listed below. In the box, complete the central idea that these details support.

Central Idea:

The Children's Blizzard of 1888 was _____

Detail 1: "He stood up, took two steps, and again the wind swatted him down. Up and down, up and down." (p. 7)

Detail 2: "Temperatures would plummet rapidly—in some places, to as cold as 40 degrees below zero with wind chill." (p. 6)

Detail 3: "It arrived suddenly, a gigantic wave of wind, ice, and snow that crashed over the prairie with virtually no warning." (p. 8)

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Summarizing

An objective summary is a short statement or paragraph that tells what an article or a story is about.
It does not include irrelevant details or the opinions of the person writing it.

Directions: Answer the questions below to help you write an objective summary of “The Children’s Blizzard.”

1. Who is the article mainly about? (It can be about an individual or a group of people.)

2. What significant event does the article describe?

3. What caused this event?

4. How did this event affect the main person(s) in the article?

5. What happened to the main person(s) afterward?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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Summarizing

An objective summary is a short statement or paragraph that tells what an article or a story is about.
It does not include unimportant details or the opinions of the person writing it.

Directions: Follow the prompts in the margins to complete the summary of “The Children’s Blizzard.”

Eight-year-old Walter Allen was one of thousands of children who endured a dangerous blizzard that hit America’s Northern Plains on January 12, 1888. At the time of the storm, the science of weather forecasting was just beginning. It was not yet possible _____

1. What could weather forecasters not do at the time of the blizzard?

This made the storm even more dangerous for those living on the prairie because _____

2. How did the lack of accurate weather predictions make the storm more dangerous?

On the morning of the storm, Walter, along with thousands of other children across the prairie, was _____

3. Where was Walter when the storm hit?

When the storm hit, several horse-drawn sleds were sent to retrieve Walter and his classmates, but instead of taking the sled home, Walter _____

4. What did Walter do and why?

Unable to make it home on his own in the ferocious storm, Walter eventually collapsed in the snow. Fortunately, _____

5. What ended up happening to Walter?

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Exploring Text Features

Authors use text features to bring attention to important details. In a nonfiction article, text features include titles, subheadings, photos, captions, charts, and maps.

Directions: Answer the questions below to help you explore the text features in “The Children’s Blizzard.”

1. Read the **headline** and subheading and study the image on pages 4-5. What mood do these features create? Explain.

2. What does the map on page 6 help you understand about the Northern Plains?

3. How does the sidebar “Tough Life” contribute to the article?

4. Read the subheadings throughout the article. Describe how the tone of the subheadings changes throughout the article.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Read, Think, Explain

Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity sheet with “The Children’s Blizzard.” See *Scope’s* “Glossary of Nonfiction Terms” and “Glossary of Literary Terms” for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

Before Reading Text Features, Mood, Inference

1. Read the **headline** and subtitle, and study the image on pages 4-5. What **mood** do these features create?

2. Read the sidebar “Tough Life” and study its images. What does this feature tell you about life on the Northern Plains in the 1800s?

3. Study the photo of Minnie Freeman and her students on page 8. From this photo and its caption, what can you infer about what school was like on the prairie in the late 1800s?

4. Read the **subheadings** in the article. Based on your preview of the article, write one sentence predicting what the article will mainly be about.

During Reading
Mood, Text Structure, Tone

5. In the section “An Explosion,” the author creates drama through a sudden shift in mood. Describe how the mood changes.

6. A. Check (✓) the statement that BEST describes the **text structure** (the way the author organizes information) in the section “Rescue Mission.”

The author compares the search for Walter with other rescue efforts during the storm.

The author gives a chronological account of the search for Walter.

The author explains the effects of being caught in the blizzard.

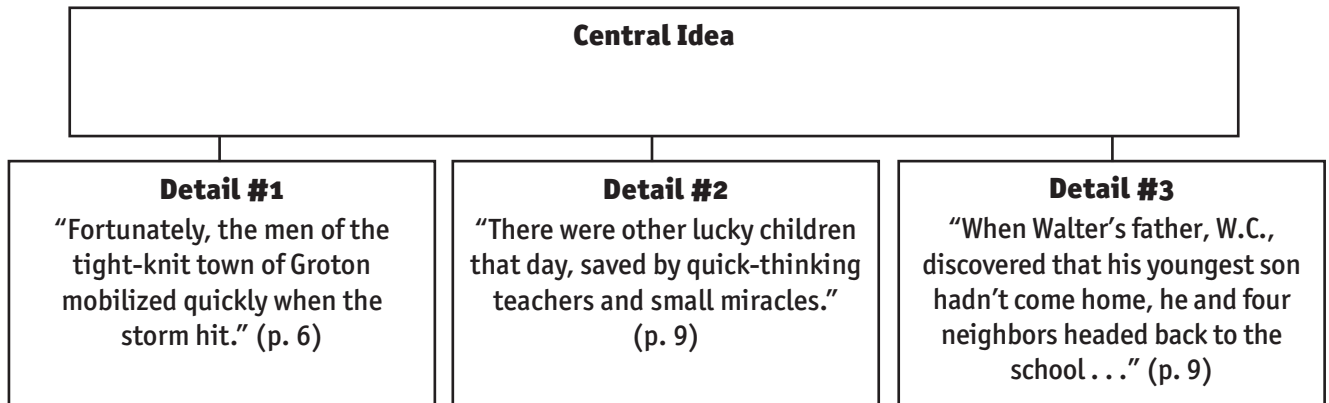
- B. Explain how you know.

7. Reread the section “Rescue Mission.” What is the author’s **tone** as she writes about Walter’s brother Will? Explain your answer.

After Reading

Central Idea/Details and Objective Summary

- 8.** Below are three **supporting details** for a central idea of the article. In the space provided, write a **central idea** that these details support.



9. Write an **objective summary** of “The Children’s Blizzard.” (Hint: Think about what you would say to a friend who asks, “What is this article about?”)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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Read, Think, Explain

Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Use this activity sheet with “The Children’s Blizzard.” See *Scope*’s “Glossary of Nonfiction Terms” and “Glossary of Literary Terms” for definitions of the words that appear in bold.

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1. Read the **headline** and subtitle, and study the image on pages 4-5. What **mood** do these features create?

2. Read the sidebar “Tough Life” and study its images. What does this feature tell you about life on the Northern Plains in the 1800s?

3. Study the photo of Minnie Freeman and her students on page 8. From this photo and its caption, what can you infer about what school was like on the prairie in the late 1800s?

4. Read the **subheadings** in the article. Based on your preview of the article, write one sentence predicting what the article will mainly be about.

During Reading

Mood, Text Structure, Tone

5. In the section “An Explosion,” the author describes Walter’s morning at school. She then writes, “Walter was just finishing his problems when a roaring sound rumbled through the school.”

Mood is the feeling the reader gets from a piece of writing. The sentence above changes the mood of the section from

- Ⓐ restless to hopeful.
- Ⓑ excited to depressed.
- Ⓒ calm to tense.

6. **Text structure** is the term for how an author organizes information. Information in the section “Rescue Mission” is structured as a sequence of events.

Which words and phrases in the section help you identify this text structure?

- Ⓐ *And then; now; for the next few hours*
- Ⓑ *frozen ground; covered with snow; quieting his shivering*
- Ⓒ *inch by inch; entered Will’s veins; on his hands and knees*

7. **A. Tone** is the author’s attitude toward the subject matter or toward the reader or audience. Circle the word that best describes the tone the author uses when talking about Walters’s older brother, Will, in the section “Rescue Mission.”

neutral

admiring

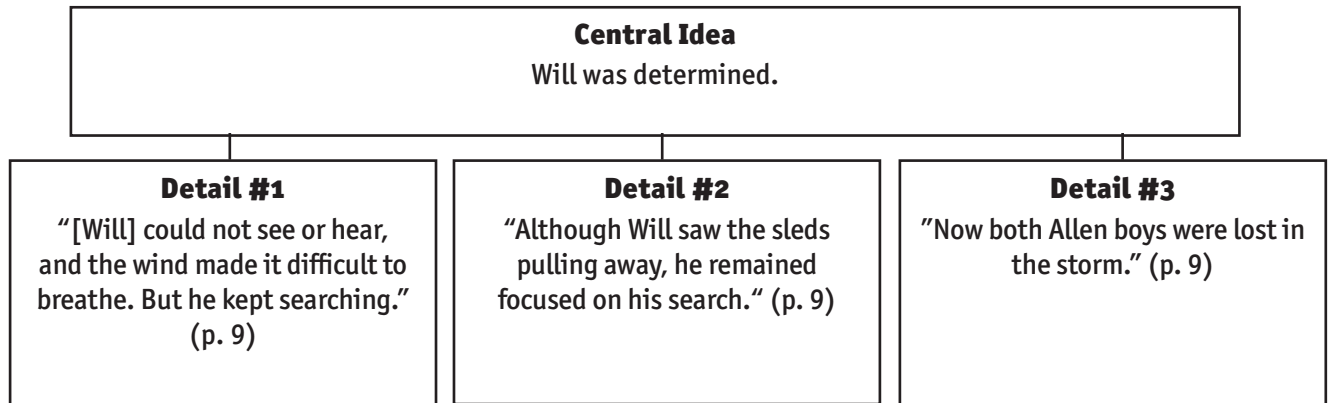
harsh

B. Briefly explain how you know:

After Reading

Central Idea/Details and Objective Summary

8. A. Below is a **central idea** of the section “Rescue Mission” and three **supporting details**. Two details DO support the central idea. Cross out the detail that DOES NOT.



B. Briefly explain why the detail that you crossed out does NOT support the central idea above.

9. An **objective summary** is a short statement or paragraph that tells what an article is about. Draw a line through the three sentences below that should definitely NOT be included in an objective summary of “The Children’s Blizzard.”

- a. The diet of the Northern Plains settlers included a lot of corn.
- b. On January 12, 1888, a powerful and violent blizzard struck the Northern Plains of the U.S.
- c. I would have been terrified if I found myself stranded in a blizzard like Walter.
- d. Because the science of weather forecasting was not yet reliable, few people on the prairie knew the blizzard was coming.
- e. Walter Allen and thousands of other children were at school when the blizzard hit.
- f. Minnie Freeman saved 13 students during the storm.

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Analyzing Setting

The writing prompt on page 9 says:

Why was the blizzard of 1888 so dangerous? How did the time and place of the blizzard contribute to the danger? Answer both questions in a well-organized essay. Use text evidence.

Follow the directions below to help you organize the ideas you will use in your response.

Why was the blizzard of 1888 so dangerous?

1. Reread the first paragraph of the section "An Arctic Blast." Based on the information in this paragraph, why was the blizzard of 1888 especially powerful?

How did the time and place of the blizzard contribute to the danger?

2. Reread the second paragraph of the section "An Arctic Blast." What does the author say about weather forecasting at the time of the storm? How might this have made the blizzard even more dangerous for those living on the prairie?

3. Reread the section "Houses Made of Dirt." What kind of houses did most settlers live in? How might this have made the blizzard more dangerous for them?

4. Reread the section "An Explosion." What kind of transportation was used to get children home from school? Why would this kind of transportation have made the storm more dangerous?

5. Consider the time period of the blizzard: the late 1800s. At that time, there were no telephones or cell phones. How would this lack of modern technology have contributed to the danger of the storm?

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“The Children’s Blizzard” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Children’s Blizzard,” then answer the questions below.

1. On page 5, author Lauren Tarshis writes that Walter “wolfed down a bowl of steaming porridge.” Without changing the meaning of the line, Tarshis could alternatively have written that Walter
 - Ⓐ “forced himself to eat a bowl of steaming porridge.”
 - Ⓑ “scarfed down a bowl of steaming porridge.”
 - Ⓒ “slowly ate a bowl of steaming porridge.”
 - Ⓓ “greatly enjoyed a bowl of steaming porridge.”
2. On page 6, Tarshis writes, “The science of weather forecasting was in its infancy . . .” She means that
 - Ⓐ the science of weather forecasting was new.
 - Ⓑ the science of weather forecasting had been around for a long time.
 - Ⓒ weather forecasting was not considered a serious science.
 - Ⓓ weather forecasting made people nervous.
3. Information about illnesses suffered by settlers on the prairie would best fit into which section of the article?
 - Ⓐ the introduction
 - Ⓑ “An Explosion”
 - Ⓒ “Houses Made of Dirt”
 - Ⓓ “An Arctic Blast”
4. Consider this line: “It arrived suddenly, a gigantic wave of wind, ice, and snow that crashed over the prairie . . .” (p. 8). This line contains . . .

Choose TWO correct answers.

 - Ⓐ a metaphor that helps the reader understand the strength of the blizzard.
 - Ⓑ a simile emphasizing the power of the storm.
 - Ⓒ a metaphor comparing the arrival of the blizzard to being hit by an ocean wave.
 - Ⓓ a metaphor revealing that the ocean was nearby.
5. On page 6, Tarshis writes, “The bottle was Walter’s prized possession.” She likely includes this detail
 - Ⓐ to portray Walter as materialistic.
 - Ⓑ to show that Walter had very few possessions.
 - Ⓒ to help the reader understand why Walter would later risk his safety to retrieve the perfume bottle.
 - Ⓓ to show that Walter enjoyed collecting bottles.
6. Which of the following details should NOT be included in a summary of the article?
 - Ⓐ The settlers did not know the storm was coming.
 - Ⓑ Walter Allen was caught in the storm but later brought to safety.
 - Ⓒ A blizzard hit the Northern Plains in 1888.
 - Ⓓ Minnie Freeman saved 13 children.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. How does the author characterize Walter’s older brother Will? Support your answer with details from the article.
8. Describe the shift in mood in the article’s introduction and explain how the author creates this shift in mood.

Name: _____ Date: _____

“The Children’s Blizzard” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Children’s Blizzard,” then answer the questions below.

1. On page 5, author Lauren Tarshis writes that Walter “wolfed down a bowl of steaming porridge.” The word *wolfed* tells you that Walter
 - (A) threw his bowl of porridge on the floor.
 - (B) ate his porridge very quickly.
 - (C) ate his porridge slowly.
 - (D) did not like porridge.
2. On page 6, Tarshis writes, “The science of weather forecasting was in its infancy . . .” She means that
 - (A) the science of weather forecasting was new.
 - (B) the science of weather forecasting had been around for a long time.
 - (C) weather forecasting was not considered a serious science.
 - (D) weather forecasting made people nervous.
3. Which statement best describes the section “Houses Made of Dirt”?
 - (A) The author compares life on the prairie to life in other parts of the country.
 - (B) The author lists problems that settlers faced and then explains how these problems were solved.
 - (C) The author describes challenges that settlers on the prairie faced.
 - (D) The author describes Walter’s home.
4. Consider this line: “It arrived suddenly, a gigantic wave of wind, ice, and snow that crashed over the prairie . . .” (p. 8). The metaphor in this line . . . Choose TWO correct answers.
 - (A) helps the reader understand the strength of the blizzard.
 - (B) explains that it was both raining and snowing.
 - (C) compares the arrival of the blizzard to being hit by an ocean wave.
 - (D) reveals that the ocean was nearby.
5. On page 6, Tarshis writes, “The bottle was Walter’s prized possession.” This line
 - (A) portrays Walter as greedy.
 - (B) shows that Walter was poor.
 - (C) helps the reader understand how important the bottle was to Walter.
 - (D) reveals that Walter enjoyed collecting bottles.
6. Which of the following details should definitely be included in a summary of the article?
 - (A) Walter was working on math problems when the storm hit.
 - (B) Minnie Freeman saved 13 children.
 - (C) Walter’s father’s name was W.C.
 - (D) A violent blizzard hit America’s Northern Plains in 1888.

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers to the questions below on the back of this paper or type them up on a computer.

7. Based on the article, what kind of person was Walter’s older brother Will? Support your answer using text evidence.
8. In the article’s introduction, the mood starts off as upbeat and cheerful. What details does the author use to create this mood?

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Close-Reading Questions

"The Children's Blizzard"

1. Consider the last line of the introduction: "'There's something in the air,' he told her with a worried glance toward the heavens." What literary device is the author using by including this line? What purpose does it serve? (literary devices, author's craft)
2. According to information in the section "An Arctic Blast," what made the blizzard of 1888 so powerful? (summarizing)
3. On page 6, Lauren Tarshis writes that at the time of the blizzard, "The science of weather forecasting was in its infancy, and there was no technology that could accurately predict a storm's strength or path." Why is this information important to the story? (key ideas)
4. Why do you think Walter jumped out of the sled to retrieve his perfume bottle? (inference)

5. On page 7, Tarshis writes, "Meanwhile, snow and ice swarmed around his body like attacking bees." What figurative language is the author using here? What does it help you understand about the storm? (figurative language)
6. What is the purpose of the section "Houses Made of Dirt"? (text structure)
7. What does the sidebar "Tough Life" add to the article? Why do you think it was included? (text features, author's purpose)
8. On page 9, Tarshis writes, "Although Will saw the sleds pulling away, he remained focused on his search." What does this detail tell you about Will? (inference)

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Critical-Thinking Question

"The Children's Blizzard"

1. What can be gained from learning about the Children's Blizzard of 1888 and other survival stories from history? Explain.

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Go to Scope
Online to listen
to the words
and definitions
read aloud.

Vocabulary:

"The Children's Blizzard"

1. **bearings (BAIR-ings)** *noun*; Your bearings are your familiarity with a location or situation. If you lose your bearings in the woods, you are lost. If you switch to a new school, it might take you a few weeks to get your bearings—that is, to feel comfortable and understand how things work.
2. **brew (broo)** *verb*; As it is used in the article, *brew* means "to start to form." *Brew* is often used in this way to describe an unpleasant or difficult situation that is developing. If dark clouds are forming and the wind is picking up, a storm is brewing.
3. **encrusted (en-KRUHST-id)** *adjective*; To encrust (en-KRUHST) something is to cover its surface with a layer of something hard, the way a crust covers a pie. An object that is encrusted has a layer of something on its surface. An old jar that you find in the basement might be encrusted with dirt.
4. **ferry (FEHR-ee)** *noun or verb*; A ferry is a boat that transports people, cars, or cargo back and forth across a body of water on a regular schedule. To visit the Statue of Liberty, you need to take a ferry across New York Harbor to Liberty Island.

As a verb, *ferry* means "to carry or move someone or something on a vehicle, usually for a short distance between two places." After a soccer game, your mom might ferry your soccer team to a pizza place in her minivan.
5. **jubilation (joo-buh-LEY-shuhn)** *noun*; Jubilation is a feeling of extreme joy or the act of rejoicing and being noisily happy. Basketball fans might go wild with jubilation after a buzzer-beating three-pointer wins the game.
6. **mobilize (MOH-buh-layz)** *verb*; To mobilize something is to make it mobile—that is, able to be moved. *Mobilize* is often used to describe bringing people or things together, organizing them, and preparing them for action. A government might mobilize troops for war. You might mobilize your classmates to donate canned food to a food bank.

Directions: On the back of this page, list any other words from the article whose definitions you are not sure about. For each word, use context clues to try to figure out the meaning. Then look up the word in a few different dictionaries. Discuss the primary meaning of the word with your teacher or another adult. Then write a definition for the word and one example sentence using the word.

Vocabulary Practice

"The Children's Blizzard"

Directions: Rewrite each sentence using a form of one of the words in the box. There is one word you will not use.

brew

encrusted

jubilant

ferry

mobilized

1. As the rover touched down on Mars, the NASA control room celebrated.

2. Small airplanes carry tourists back and forth between the many islands of the Caribbean.

3. The princess's tiara was completely covered in diamonds.

4. After the earthquake, volunteers immediately got ready for action, preparing to provide hot meals and help with repairs.

Directions: Underline the boldfaced word in each pair that best completes the sentence.

5. It might take you a moment to get your **jubilant/bearings** after you walk into a dark movie theater.

6. When my little brother and his mischievous friends suddenly got quiet, I knew trouble was **brewing/ferrying**.

7. Weddings are usually full of **jubilant/bearings** and high spirits.

8. We drove our car onto a **ferry/jubilant** that took us from the mainland to a nearby island.

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

Blizzard Contest

Why was the blizzard of 1888 so dangerous? How did the time and place of the blizzard contribute to the danger? Answer both questions in a well-organized essay. Use text evidence. Five winners will get *Blizzard!* by Jim Murphy.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ use of supporting text evidence
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name: _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this form with your written entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
or mail them to: Blizzard Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 15, 2019!