



# "The Perfects"

Respond to each statement by checking "agree" or "disagree." Be prepared to justify your responses.

	Agree	Disagree
1. Some people seem to have perfect lives.		
2. Change is difficult.		
3. Every family has a story to tell.		
4. Pretending to be something we are not is risky.		
5. People often deal with stress or fear by hiding it.		
6. Having a family member in the military is challenging.		
7. Life doesn't have to be perfect to be great.		
8. Constantly moving to a new place would be exciting.		

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Close-Reading Questions

## "The Perfects"

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1. What does it mean for an object to "have character" (figurative language, page 23)

2. Describe the shift in time that has taken place. (text structure, page 23)

3. How does the weather contribute to the mood of this section? (setting, page 23)

4. These lines describe an imaginary family called the Perfects. But what do they *really* describe? (inference, page 25)
5. Why might Lindy share a dinosaur fact at this moment? (character, page 25)
6. Why is Mom's smile "the realest one" Max has ever seen? (character, page 25)

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Close-Reading Question

## "My Life As a Military Kid"

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1. According to "My Life As a Military Kid," what are some of the challenges of having a parent in the military? What are some of the rewards? (key ideas and details)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Critical-Thinking Question

## "My Life As a Military Kid"

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1. How can kids help kids with a parent in the military cope with some of the challenges they face?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of a passage from “The Perfects” by Sarah McCarry. Here is the passage, which is from page 23 of the story.

By the time they realized “fixer-upper” meant “absolute disaster,” it was too late. They’d already packed their things, gotten in the car, and driven west and north.

Lindy spent all of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Oregon reciting dinosaur facts.

“Dinosaur comes from the Greek words *deinos*, meaning ‘terrible,’ and *sauros*, meaning ‘lizard.’

“Most dinosaurs were herbivores.

“The stegosaurus could be 30 feet long and weigh 6,000 pounds. It had a brain the size of a golden retriever’s.”

When they got to Washington, the rain started, and then even Lindy got quiet. Mom clutched the wheel as water came down in sheets around them. It was raining even harder when they drove past the city limits sign for their new town. By the time they pulled up to the new house, the storm was so bad that Max thought the car might float away.

“It rains a lot in Washington,” Mom said. She didn’t sound excited anymore.

“That’s an understatement,” Max said under his breath.

They stared out the rain-blurred car windows at the place that was supposed to be home. It was only four in the afternoon, but the sky was almost black. The house didn’t look like something that would unite them as a family. It looked like something out of a horror movie.

“Is that a hole in the roof?” Max asked quietly.

“I’m sure it’s nothing.” But Mom didn’t look like it was nothing.

“Why does the front porch look like that?” Lindy asked.

“It just needs a few repairs, sweetie,” Mom said. “Nothing we can’t fix.”

A flash of lightning split the sky open. Thunder boomed. And in that second of illumination, Max realized that the garage that was supposed to become Dad’s workshop was missing a wall.

1. In the box below, write one or two words that describe the mood of this excerpt:

Now let’s look at what creates this mood.

## 2. Plot

Briefly explain how what is happening in this passage helps create the mood you identified.

## 3. Setting

Think about where this passage takes place and the details of the setting. How does the setting contribute to the mood?

## 4. Dialogue

What the characters say and how they say it help create the mood.

**UNDERLINE three lines of dialogue in the passage (or narration about the dialogue) that help create the mood you identified.**

## 5. Figurative Language

Look at the vivid figurative language the author uses. This language helps create the mood.

**CIRCLE at least one example of figurative language in the passage that helps create the mood you identified.**

## 6. Imagery

The imagery the author uses also helps create the mood. (Imagery is description that appeals to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch—also known as sensory details.)

**PLACE A STAR NEXT TO at least three sensory details in the scene that help create the mood you identified.**

## 7. The Movie Version

Imagine you are making a movie of "The Perfects." In the movie, Max turns on the car radio in this scene. What song should come on the radio? Why?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Exploring Mood

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You'll find out what the marks are for when you read the next page.

In this activity, you will consider the mood of a passage from "The Perfects" by Sarah McCarry. Here is the passage, which is from page 23 of the story.

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Lindy spent all of Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and Oregon reciting dinosaur facts.

"Dinosaur comes from the Greek words *deinos*, meaning 'terrible,' and *sauros*, meaning 'lizard.'

"Most dinosaurs were herbivores.

"The stegosaurus could be 30 feet long and weigh 6,000 pounds. It had a brain the size of a golden retriever's."

When they got to Washington, the rain started, and then even Lindy got quiet. Mom clutched the wheel as water came down in sheets around them. It was raining even harder when they drove past the city limits sign for their new town. By the time they pulled up to the new house, the storm was so bad that Max thought the car might float away.

"It rains a lot in Washington," Mom said. She didn't sound excited anymore.

"That's an understatement," Max said under his breath.

They stared out the rain-blurred car windows <sup>\*</sup>at the place that was supposed to be home. It was only four in the afternoon, but the sky was almost black. The house didn't look like something that would unite them as a family. It looked like something out of a horror movie.

"Is that a hole in the roof?" Max asked quietly.

"I'm sure it's nothing." But Mom didn't look like it was nothing.

"Why does the front porch look like that?" Lindy asked.

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A flash of lightning split the sky open. Thunder boomed. And in that second of illumination, Max realized that the garage that was supposed to become Dad's workshop was missing a wall.

Here are two words that could be used to describe the mood of the scene:

depressed, foreboding

*Depressed* means "sad, gloomy, or in low spirits." *Foreboding* means "giving the impression that something bad or unpleasant is in your future."

Now let's look at what creates this mood.

### 1. Plot

Complete the sentences below to explain how what is happening in this passage helps create the mood you identified.

In this passage, Max is moving to a new house in a new state. For some people, this might be exciting. But for Max, \_\_\_\_\_.

Plus, when Max and his mom and sister arrive at the house, they discover \_\_\_\_\_.

### 2. Setting

Complete the sentences below to explain how the details about place help create the mood.

The weather in this passage is \_\_\_\_\_.

This setting adds to the depressed and foreboding mood because \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3. Dialogue

What the characters say and how they say it help create the mood.

We underlined one line of dialogue that helps create the depressed and foreboding mood. **UNDERLINE two more lines of dialogue (or narration about the dialogue) that do this.**

### 4. Descriptive Language

Look at the vivid figurative language the author uses. This language helps create the mood.

We circled one example that helps create the depressed and foreboding mood.

**CIRCLE one more. Hint: Look for a simile—a comparison that uses "like" or "as."**

### 5. Imagery

The imagery the author uses also helps create the mood. (Imagery is description that appeals to the reader's sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell, or touch—also known as sensory details.)

We placed a star by one sensory detail that helps create the depressed and foreboding mood. **Place a STAR by at least two more sensory details.**

### 6. The Movie Version

Imagine you are making a movie of "The Perfects." In the movie, Max turns on the car radio in this scene. What song should come on the radio? Why?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## "The Perfects" Quiz

**Directions:** Read "The Perfects" and "My Life As a Military Kid." Then answer the questions below.

**1. Which detail would be LEAST important to include in a summary of the story?**

- (A) Max and Lindy's dad is in the military.
- (B) Jenny is mowing her lawn when Max runs over.
- (C) The family always video chats with Dad in front of the "Perfects' Wall."
- (D) The family's new house is in terrible condition.

**2. Which word best describes how Max feels when he thinks about his dad's return?**

- (A) anxious
- (B) indifferent
- (C) relaxed
- (D) overjoyed

**3. Which TWO lines best support your answer to Question 2?**

- (A) "Dad had been in the military since way before Max was born."
- (B) "Today is an extremely bad day."
- (C) "What happened when Dad realized the truth was something Max tried not to think about."
- (D) "Max hadn't said what he was thinking—that they hadn't done anything as a family for so long he didn't know if they would remember how."

**4. On page 24, the narrator says, "So when they talked to Dad, they made sure smiles were stuck on their faces like masks." This line contains**

- (A) a simile that shows how excited the family is.
- (B) a metaphor that illustrates how dressed up the family gets for their weekly video chats.
- (C) hyperbole that shows how frequently the family connects with Dad.
- (D) a simile that suggests the family members hide their true feelings from Dad.

**5. On page 26, Jessica Press writes, "But moving so often can also be painful—and isolating."**

**Isolate most closely means**

- (A) to lack something that is essential.
- (B) to be linked or related.
- (C) to cause to be alone or apart from others.
- (D) to feel pressure or tension.

**6. Which idea could NOT be supported with information from the story and the article?**

- (A) Technology helps military families stay connected.
- (B) Having a family member in the military can be hard.
- (C) Fewer people serve in the military today than in the past.
- (D) Military kids switch schools often.

## Constructed-Response Questions

**Directions:** Write your answer in a well-organized response.

**7.** How does the author develop the idea that Max is worried about his dad's safety? Use text evidence to support your answer.

**8.** What challenges do Max and Marie Nash both face as a result of having a parent in the military? Use details from the story and the article to support your answer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## “The Perfects” Quiz

**Directions:** Read “The Perfects” and “My Life As a Military Kid.” Then answer the questions below.

1. Which detail would be **MOST** important to include in a summary of the story?
  - (A) Jenny is mowing her lawn when Max runs over.
  - (B) Max and Lindy’s dad is in the military.
  - (C) The family’s new house overlooks the ocean.
  - (D) It rains often in Washington State.
  
2. Which word best describes how Max feels when he thinks about his dad’s return?
  - (A) worried
  - (B) uncaring
  - (C) angry
  - (D) thrilled
  
3. Which **TWO** lines best support your answer to Question 2?
  - (A) “Dad had been in the military since way before Max was born.”
  - (B) “Today is an extremely bad day.”
  - (C) “What happened when Dad realized the truth was something Max tried not to think about.”
  - (D) “Max hadn’t said what he was thinking—that they hadn’t done anything as a family for so long he didn’t know if they would remember how.”
  
4. On page 24, the narrator says, “So when they talked to Dad, they made sure smiles were stuck on their faces like masks.” This line contains a **simile** that
  - (A) shows how excited the family is to talk to Dad.
  - (B) tells you the family wears costumes for video chats.
  - (C) stresses how often the family talks to Dad.
  - (D) suggests that the family members hide their true feelings from Dad.
  
5. On page 26, Jessica Press writes, “But moving so often can also be painful—and isolating.” Something that is isolating makes you feel
  - (A) needed.
  - (B) connected.
  - (C) alone.
  - (D) content.
  
6. Which **idea** could **NOT** be supported with information from the story and the article?
  - (A) Technology helps military families stay connected.
  - (B) Having a family member in the military can be hard.
  - (C) Fewer people serve in the military today than in the past.
  - (D) Military kids switch schools often.

### Constructed-Response Questions

**Directions:** Write your answer in a well-organized response.

7. What are two details that author Sarah McCarry provides to help the reader understand that Max worries about his dad?
8. What is one challenge Max and Marie Nash both face as a result of having a parent in the military? Use details from the story and the article to support your answer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Compare and Contrast: Military Kids

Read "The Perfects" and "My Life As a Military Kid." Then fill in the boxes below to help you prepare to answer the writing prompt on page 27.

This should be a brief description of the challenge in your own words.

List one to three details from the story that show that Max faces the challenge you wrote above. Explain how or why each detail shows that Max faces the challenge you named.

If the challenge Marie faces is similar but not exactly the same, explain what the difference is. If this challenge is not mentioned in the article, say so.

**List three challenges that Max faces as a kid with a parent in the military. After each challenge, provide text evidence with commentary.**

**Challenge 1:**

**Text evidence and commentary:**

**Does Marie face a similar challenge? Explain, using text evidence and commentary to support your answer.**

**Challenge 2:**

**Text evidence and commentary:**

**Does Marie face a similar challenge? Explain, using text evidence and commentary to support your answer.**

**Challenge 3:**

**Text evidence and commentary:**

**Does Marie face a similar challenge? Explain, using text evidence and commentary to support your answer.**

**Are there any challenges Marie faces as a military kid that Max does not face or that are at least not mentioned in "The Perfects"? Explain.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **"The Perfects"**

## **Character Thinking Tool**

The questions in this activity are about the characters of  
**Max, Mom, and Lindy**

1. What do the first two sections of the story (page 22 to the top of page 23) reveal about how having a parent in the military affects Max?

2. What does the interaction in the kitchen at night between Max and his mom reveal about each of them?



**3.** Explain who the Perfects are and what their relationship to Max's family is.

**4.** How does Lindy handle her dad's deployment?

**5.** Does Max seem like a good brother? Explain.

**6.** You are Max. Write a letter to your dad about the ways in which your life is changing and how you feel about these changes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Vocabulary:

## "My Life as a Military Kid"

1. **deploy (dih-PL0I)** *verb*; To deploy people or things is to send them out for a particular purpose. Volunteers might be deployed to help people after a natural disaster. A car airbag might deploy during a collision. *Deploy* is often used in a military context. If someone in the military has been deployed, he or she has been sent to a specific destination for a mission.
2. **military base (MIL-i-ter-ee beys)** *noun*; A military base is a place that is owned and operated by the military. A military base might house equipment, soldiers, and sometimes their families. It can also serve as a training ground or command center.
3. **relate (rih-LEYT)** *verb*; As it is used in the article, *relate* means "to understand or have empathy for someone or something." If you can relate to the main character in the novel you're reading, you share some of the same thoughts or feelings as that character. You may have had similar experiences to those of that character.
4. **service member (SUR-vis MEHM-ber)** *noun*; Generally, *service member* refers to a person who serves in one of the five armed forces of the United States: the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard.
5. **station (STEY-shuhn)** *noun or verb*; The noun *station* can refer to a regular stopping place, like a gas station or a bus station. *Station* can also mean "a place where someone stands or does a job." There are several research stations in Antarctica.  
  
As a verb, *station* means "to assign someone to a station or position." Stores often station someone near the door to greet customers. A member of the Air Force might be stationed at a base in Colorado.

**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

## "My Life as a Military Kid"

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**Directions:** Complete each unfinished sentence in a way that makes the meaning of the boldfaced word clear.

1. Last Saturday our town held a parade to honor **service members**. People \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The troops prepared themselves to **deploy** at dawn by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. On field day, student council members were **stationed** next to orange cones. They \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Ken found it hard to **relate** to the kids at his new school. He \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. During a recent road trip, I spotted a **military base** out the window. I saw \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Choose the word or phrase that is most similar in meaning to each word in bold.

**6. station**

Ⓐ assign

Ⓑ remove

**7. relate**

Ⓐ divide

Ⓑ connect

**8. deploy**

Ⓐ move into position

Ⓑ reduce in size

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**Directions:** Write a sentence that includes a word or words from the list of vocabulary words on page 1 of this activity (including any words you added).

9. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

## The Perfects Contest

Think about the challenges that Max from the short story and Marie Nash from this article face as kids in military families. How are they similar? How are they different? Answer in an essay.

Five winners will get *Operation Yes* by Sara Lewis Holmes.

### Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ use of supporting text evidence
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ 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](mailto:scopemag@scholastic.com)  
or mail them to: The Perfects Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

**ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 15, 2019!**