

NAME:_____

MARK:_____

Reading Comprehension

Henry II (5 March 1133 – 6 July 1189) ruled as Count of Anjou, Count of Maine, Duke of Normandy, Duke of Aquitaine, Count of Nantes, King of England (1154–89) and Lord of Ireland; at various times, he also controlled Wales, Scotland and Brittany. Henry was the son of Geoffrey of Anjou and Matilda, who was the daughter of King Henry I and took the title of Empress from her first marriage. He became actively involved by the age of 14 in his mother's efforts to claim the throne of England, and was made the Duke of Normandy at 17. He inherited Anjou in 1151 and shortly afterwards married Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose marriage to the French king Louis VII had recently been annulled. King Stephen agreed to a peace treaty after Henry's military expedition to England in 1153, and Henry inherited the kingdom on Stephen's death a year later. Still quite young, he now controlled what would later be called the Angevin Empire, stretching across much of western Europe.

Henry was an energetic and sometimes ruthless ruler, driven by a desire to restore the lands and privileges of his royal grandfather, Henry I. During the early years of the younger Henry's reign he restored the royal administration in England, re-established hegemony over Wales and gained full control over his lands in Anjou, Maine and Touraine. Henry soon came into conflict with Louis VII and the two rulers fought what has been termed a "cold war" over several decades. Henry expanded his empire, often at Louis's expense, taking Brittany and pushing east into central France and south into Toulouse; despite numerous peace conferences and treaties no lasting agreement was reached. Although Henry usually worked well with the local hierarchies of the Church, his desire to reform England's relationship with the Church led to conflict with his former friend Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. This controversy lasted for much of the 1160s and resulted in Becket's death in 1170.

As Henry's reign progressed he had many children with Eleanor, and tensions over the future inheritance of the empire began to emerge, encouraged first by Louis VII and then Louis's son and successor Philip Augustus. In 1173 Henry's heir apparent, "Young Henry", rebelled in protest against his father; he was joined by his brothers Richard and Geoffrey and by their mother, Eleanor. France, Scotland, Flanders and Boulogne allied with the rebels against Henry. The Great Revolt spread across Henry's lands and was only defeated by his vigorous military action and talented local commanders, many of them "new men" appointed for their loyalty and administrative skills. Henry was mostly generous in victory and appeared for the moment to be at the height of his powers, but Young Henry and Geoffrey revolted again in 1183, resulting in Young Henry's death. Despite invading Ireland to provide lands for his youngest son John, Henry struggled to find ways to satisfy all his sons' desires for land and immediate power. Philip successfully played on Richard's fears that Henry would make John king, and a final rebellion broke out in 1189. Decisively defeated by Philip and Richard and suffering from a bleeding ulcer, Henry retreated to Chinon in Anjou, where he died.

Henry's empire quickly collapsed during the reign of his youngest son John. Many of the changes Henry introduced during his long rule, however, had long-term consequences. Henry's legal changes are generally considered to have laid the basis for the English Common Law, while his intervention in Brittany, Wales and Scotland shaped the development of their societies and governmental systems. Historical interpretations of Henry's reign have changed considerably over time. In the 18th century, scholars argued that Henry was a driving force in the creation of a genuinely English monarchy and, ultimately, a unified Britain. During the Victorian expansion of the British Empire, historians were keenly interested in the formation of Henry's own empire, but they also expressed concern over his private life and treatment of Becket. Late-20th-century historians have combined British and French historical accounts of Henry, challenging earlier Anglocentric interpretations of his reign.

1. What is the main idea of the passage? _____

2. What inferences (educated guesses) can be made based on this passage about Henry, his children, and wife? _____

3. What is the author's tone (what adjectives would you use to describe the author) ? _____

4. What type of passage is this (e.g. news article, novel, textbook, biography, autobiography, poem)? _____

5. What type of style is in this passage? (Come up with adjectives to describe how its written) _____

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6. What will the author describe next? _____
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7. What is the purpose of this passage? _____
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8. The word “anglocentric “ in the final line means _____
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Years pass. Many animals age and die, and few recall the days before the Rebellion. The animals complete a new windmill, which is used not for generating electricity but for milling corn, a far more profitable endeavor. The farm seems to have grown richer, but only the many pigs and dogs live comfortable lives. Squealer explains that the pigs and dogs do very important work—filling out forms and such. The other animals largely accept this explanation, and their lives go on very much as before. They never lose their sense of pride in Animal Farm or their feeling that they have differentiated themselves from animals on other farms. The inhabitants of Animal Farm still fervently believe in the goals of the Rebellion—a world free from humans, with equality for all animals.

One day, Squealer takes the sheep off to a remote spot to teach them a new chant. Not long afterward, the animals have just finished their day’s work when they hear the terrified neighing of a horse. It is Clover, and she summons the others hastily to the yard. There, the animals gaze in amazement at Squealer walking toward them on his hind legs. Napoleon soon appears as well, walking upright; worse, he carries a whip. Before the other animals have a chance to react to the change, the sheep begin to chant, as if on cue: “Four legs good, two legs better!” Clover, whose eyes are failing in her old age, asks Benjamin to read the writing on the barn wall where the Seven Commandments were originally inscribed. Only the last commandment remains: “all animals are equal.”

From George Orwell’s “Animal Farm”

9. What do you think is the meaning or significance of the phrase “four legs good, two legs better?” _____

10. What inferences (educated guesses) can be made about what life was like for the animals before the rebellion? _____

11. Why does it mean when the author states that, “The farm seems to have grown richer, but only the many pigs and dogs live comfortable lives?” _____

12. What type of passage is this (e.g. news article, an essay, novel, textbook, biography, autobiography, poem)? _____

13. What type of style is in this passage? (Come up with adjectives to describe how its written) _____

14. What will the author discuss next? _____
