

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 9 AND 10 WRITING/HOMEWORK 1

NAME (FIRST AND LAST): _____ **GRADE:** _____

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

1. Fill up the space below by describing your favourite song. If you do not have a favourite song, make it up! The song can be in any language. Use at least eight words from the box below.

lyrics	genre	style	appeals to	tone	accompaniment
vocal range		instruments	austere	cold	
epic		paranoid	angst-ridden		atmospheric
eerie		melancholy	provocative		tense/anxious
theatrical		wintry	wistful		detached

[illegible]

2. Fill up the space below by describing an imaginary trip to the future! Make use of the words and phrases from the box below:

mutants	androids	humanoid robots	ray guns	humanoid computers
wormholes	mind control	telekinesis	invasion	apocalypse

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the following short story and answer the questions below.

“They're Made out of Meat” by Terry Bisson

"They're made out of meat."

"Meat?"

"Meat. They're made out of meat."

"Meat?"

"There's no doubt about it. We picked up several from different parts of the planet, took them aboard our recon vessels, and probed them all the way through. They're completely meat."

"That's impossible. What about the radio signals? The messages to the stars?"

"They use the radio waves to talk, but the signals don't come from them. The signals come from machines."

"So who made the machines? That's who we want to contact."

"They made the machines. That's what I'm trying to tell you. Meat made the machines."

"That's ridiculous. How can meat make a machine? You're asking me to believe in **sentient** meat."

"I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. These creatures are the only sentient race in that sector and they're made out of meat."

"Maybe they're like the orfolei. You know, a carbon-based intelligence that goes through a meat stage."

"Nope. They're born meat and they die meat. We studied them for several of their life spans, which didn't take long. Do you have any idea what's the life span of meat?"

"Spare me. Okay, maybe they're only part meat. You know, like the weddilei. A meat head with an electron plasma brain inside."

"Nope. We thought of that, since they do have meat heads, like the weddilei. But I told you, we probed them. They're meat all the way through."

"No brain?"

"Oh, there's a brain all right. It's just that the brain is made out of meat! That's what I've been trying to tell you."

"So ... what does the thinking?"

"You're not understanding, are you? You're refusing to deal with what I'm telling you. The brain does the thinking. The meat."

"Thinking meat! You're asking me to believe in thinking meat!"

"Yes, thinking meat! **Conscious** meat! Loving meat. Dreaming meat. The meat is the whole deal! Are you beginning to get the picture or do I have to start all over?"

"Omigod. You're serious then. They're made out of meat."

"Thank you. Finally. Yes. They are indeed made out of meat. And they've been trying to get in touch with us for almost a hundred of their years."

"Omigod. So what does this meat have in mind?"

"First it wants to talk to us. Then I imagine it wants to explore the Universe, contact other sentiences, swap ideas and information. The usual."

"We're supposed to talk to meat."

"That's the idea. That's the message they're sending out by radio. 'Hello. Anyone out there. Anybody home.' That sort of thing."

"They actually do talk, then. They use words, ideas, concepts?"

"Oh, yes. Except they do it with meat."

"I thought you just told me they used radio."

"They do, but what do you think is on the radio? Meat sounds. You know how when you slap or flap meat, it makes a noise? They talk by flapping their meat at each other. They can even sing by squirting air through their meat."

"Omigod. Singing meat. This is altogether too much. So what do you advise?"

"Officially or unofficially?"

"Both."

"Officially, we are required to contact, welcome and log in any and all sentient races or multibeings in this quadrant of the Universe, without prejudice, fear or favor. Unofficially, I advise that we erase the records and forget the whole thing."

"I was hoping you would say that."

"It seems harsh, but there is a limit. Do we really want to make contact with meat?"

"I agree one hundred percent. What's there to say? 'Hello, meat. How's it going?' But will this work? How many planets are we dealing with here?"

"Just one. They can travel to other planets in special meat containers, but they can't live on them. And being meat, they can only travel through C space. Which limits them to the speed of light and makes the possibility of their ever making contact pretty slim. **Infinitesimal**, in fact."

"So we just pretend there's no one home in the Universe."

"That's it."

"Cruel. But you said it yourself, who wants to meet meat? And the ones who have been aboard our vessels, the ones you **probed**? You're sure they won't remember?"

"They'll be considered crackpots if they do. We went into their heads and smoothed out their meat so that we're just a dream to them."

"A dream to meat! How strangely appropriate, that we should be meat's dream."

"And we marked the entire sector **unoccupied**."

"Good. Agreed, officially and unofficially. Case closed. Any others? Anyone interesting on that side of the galaxy?"

"Yes, a rather shy but sweet hydrogen core cluster intelligence in a class nine star in G445 zone. Was in contact two galactic rotations ago, wants to be friendly again."

"They always come around."

"And why not? Imagine how unbearably, how unutterably cold the Universe would be if one were all alone ..."

This story originally appeared in Omni April 1991 and was nominated for the Nebula Award. It is taken from the collection 'Bears Discover Fire', available [here](#). You can find out more about Terry Bisson on his [website](#).

VOCABULARY

The following sentences can be found in the short story, "They're Made out of Meat." Fill in the blanks with words/phrases that match the bracketed words/phrases in meaning. Ensure that your choice of words fits into the context.

1. "That's ridiculous. How can meat make a machine? You're asking me to believe in _____ **(sentient)** meat."
2. "Yes, thinking meat! _____ **(Conscious)** meat! Loving meat. Dreaming meat. The meat is the whole deal! Are you beginning to get the picture or do I have to start all over?"
3. "Just one. They can travel to other planets in special meat containers, but they can't live on them. And being meat, they can only travel through C space. Which limits them to the speed of light and makes the possibility of their ever making contact pretty slim. _____ **(Infinitesimal)**, in fact."
4. "Cruel. But you said it yourself, who wants to meet meat? And the ones who have been aboard our vessels, the ones you _____ **(probed)**? You're sure they won't remember?"
5. "And we marked the entire sector _____ **(unoccupied)**."

REFLECTION

Did you enjoy the science fiction short story, "They're Made out of Meat"? Why, or why not?

GRAMMAR

NOUNS

Key Information

A **noun** names a person, place, thing, or idea.

A **concrete noun** names an object that can be recognized by any of the senses; an **abstract noun** names an idea, a quality, or a characteristic.

A **proper noun** names a particular person, place, thing, or idea; a **common noun** is the general name of a person, place, thing, or idea.

A **collective noun** names a group and can be regarded as either singular or plural.

■ A. Identifying Nouns

Underline the nouns in the following sentences.

1. During the early years of the United States, thousands of settlers traveled west to build new homes.
2. Women and men worked together to clear the land, plant crops, and build homes.
3. Besides this work, women tended the children and did housekeeping chores.
4. They prepared food to use during the winter.
5. They made clothes for the whole family and used homemade soap to wash the laundry.
6. A frontier mother was often the only teacher her children had.
7. Because there were few doctors, women had to take care of the medical needs of their families.
8. Settlers usually lived so far apart that isolation was a common problem.
9. Sometimes pioneer families became friends with Native Americans who lived nearby.
10. To help fight loneliness, many women wrote journals and diaries about their lives and experiences.

INTERROGATIVE AND RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Key Information

Questions are formed with **interrogative pronouns**.

who whom whose which what

Who is coming to dinner?

Whose keys are these?

A **relative pronoun** is used at the beginning of a special group of words that contains its own subject and verb and is called a *subordinate clause*.

who whoever whose

whom whomever that

which whichever

what whatever

The woman **who** won the marathon is 35.

Whoever works hardest will get promoted.

■ **A. Distinguishing Between Interrogative and Relative Pronouns**

Underline the pronoun in each of the following sentences. Then write whether the pronoun is *interrogative* or *relative*.

1. Who finally auditioned for the lead role? _____
2. The explosion that shook the town was caused by an error at the factory.

3. The barn, which was painted red, stood in a field of daisies. _____
4. What have you done to make Angela so angry? _____
5. Ben is trying to decide whom to ask for help with his biology. _____

THE END