Worksheet 1. Reading: Lara’s Blog

This reading comes from a blog on the internet.

BY LARA WESSEL

I returned to New Orleans on a hot, humid Wednesday night in late August from a summer job. I had been teaching drama at a camp in Switzerland. By Friday night the weather news was all about an approaching hurricane.

The mayor came on TV and urged everybody to evacuate the city! Nobody wanted to leave, but we were scared. My family and I decided to heed the warnings and escape the danger. On Sunday morning we got into my father’s car and headed out of the city, to Houston. It’s normally a five-hour drive to Houston, but the roads were so crowded that it took us 12 hours. Traffic moved at a snail’s pace. We traveled at less than 5 miles an hour for a long time.

We had made a hotel reservation in Houston, and finally arrived there in the middle of the night. On Monday morning, we saw the news reports of the terrible devastation of our beautiful city from the hurricane that had hit during the night. We were hearing that people were lost, and there was no means of communication because even the cell phones didn’t work. It was horrible. We didn’t know yet that the worst was yet to come that day: the levees broke, and the Mississippi River flooded most of New Orleans.

The city had no electricity, no refrigeration, no water. People ran out of supplies. Stores could not open. Some hospital facilities didn’t work, and patients and staff had to be evacuated. Some people who had not left the city were rescued by boats and helicopters, but thousands of people were stranded for days at the Superdome (the huge sports center) with little help.

Those like us who had left the city could not get back in. Nothing would be functioning “until further notice.” Schools were going to be closed for the fall semester, and maybe longer. I was supposed to start a new job teaching drama at a city high school. Now I was not able to return to my beloved city, but I didn’t have a job there anyway.

Our friends were scattered all over in many different places. Nobody knew what they were going to do next. I decided I would go to Florida to stay with my brother who lived there, in Miami. Miraculously, I got a job teaching in a high school right away.
My parents were able to move back into their home after a few weeks. They were lucky. They had roof damage, but not much damage from flooding. I did not go back to visit during that first year. Now I am not sure what I am going to do in the future, or where I am going to live. I do know more than ever how much I love my city and its people.

It’s like the song by Louis Armstrong, “Do you Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?”

Do you know what it means to miss New Orleans
And miss it each night and day
I know I’m not wrong -- this feeling's gettin' stronger
The longer I stay away.
Worksheet 1, page 3. Vocabulary practice: Lara’s Blog

Circle the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the bolded words. The line number refers to the lines in Lara’s Blog.

1. In line 1, humid means _____.
   a. dry    b. damp

2. In line 4, approaching means _____.
   a. coming near   b. very strong

3. In line 5, urged means _____.
   a. made a strong suggestion b. made a weak suggestion

4. In line 5, evacuate means that everybody _____.
   a. leaves a place to be safer b. stays inside their homes

5. In line 6, scared means _____.
   a. very tired   b. afraid

6. In line 7, heed means _____.
   a. leave in a hurry  b. pay attention to advice

7. In line 7, warnings means _____.
   a. fears about a danger   b. notices about a danger

8. In line 10, the phrase moved at a snail’s pace means ___.
   a. moved very slowly   b. moved without being comfortable

9. In line 17, the phrase the worst was yet to come means ______.
   a. the worst thing happened    b. the worst thing was about to happen

10. In line 22, rescued means ________.
    a. injured   b. saved

11. In line 23, stranded means _____.
    a. stuck    b. taken care of

12. In line 26, until further notice means ______.
    a. forever   b. when you learn something new

13. In line 30, scattered means ______.
    a. spread out    b. stuck
14. In line 32, **miraculously** means _____.
   a. as expected  
   b. very surprisingly