

## GUIDED PRACTICE

**PRACTICE** Read the following passage from beginning to end. Then, read and answer the questions in the strategies column.

### STRATEGIES

### Excerpt from "Silverspot: The Story of a Crow" by Ernest Thompson Seton

1. Which does the author think? (Check ✓ one.)  
☐ All animals are alike.  
☐ Some animals are special.  
Which details tell you so?  
Underline them.
  2. Which details in this paragraph suggest that crows are intelligent?  
Underline them.
  3. How do the other crows feel about Silverspot? (Check ✓ one.)  
☐ They resent him.  
☐ They trust him.  
Which details tell you so?  
Underline them.
- 1 How many of us have ever got to know a wild animal? I do not mean merely to meet with one once or twice, or to have one in a cage, but to really know it for a long time while it is wild, and to get an insight into its life and history. The trouble usually is to know one creature from his fellow. One fox or crow is so much like another that we cannot be sure that it really is the same next time we meet. But once in awhile there arises an animal who is stronger or wiser than his fellow, who becomes a great leader, who is, as we would say, a genius . . . and has some mark by which men can know him. Of this class . . . was Silverspot, whose history, as far as I could learn it, I shall now briefly tell.
  - 2 Silverspot was simply a wise old crow; his name was given because of the silvery white spot that was like a nickel, stuck on his right side, between the eye and the bill, and it was owing to this spot that I was able to know him from the other crows. . . . Old Silverspot was the leader of a large band of crows. . . . Little by little, [I] opened my eyes to the fact that crows [are] a race of birds with a language and a social system that is wonderfully human. . . .
  - 3 One windy day I stood on the high bridge across the ravine, as the old crow, heading his long, straggling troop, came flying down homeward. Half a mile away I could hear the contented "*All's well, come right along!*" . . . as [Silverspot] put it. . . . They were flying very low to be out of the wind, and would have to rise a little to clear the bridge on which I was. Silverspot saw me standing there, and as I was closely watching him, he didn't like it. He checked his flight, called out, "*Be on your guard,*" and rose much higher in the air. Then seeing that I was not armed he flew over my head about twenty feet, and his followers in turn did the same, dipping again to the old level when past the bridge.



- 4 Next day I was at the same place, and as the crows came near I raised my walking stick and pointed it at them. The old fellow at once cried out "*Danger*," and rose fifty feet higher than before. Seeing that it was not a gun, he ventured to fly over. But on the third day I took with me a gun, and at once he cried out, "*Great danger—a gun*." His lieutenant repeated the cry, and every crow in the troop began to tower and scatter from the rest, till they were far above gun shot, and so passed safely over. . . . Another time, . . . a red-tailed hawk alighted on a tree close by their intended route. The leader cried out, "*Hawk, hawk*," and stayed his flight, as did each crow on nearing him, until all were massed in a solid body. Then, no longer fearing the hawk, they passed on. But a quarter of a mile farther on a man with a gun appeared below, and the cry, "*Great danger—a gun, a gun; scatter for your lives*," at once caused them to scatter widely and tower till far beyond range.

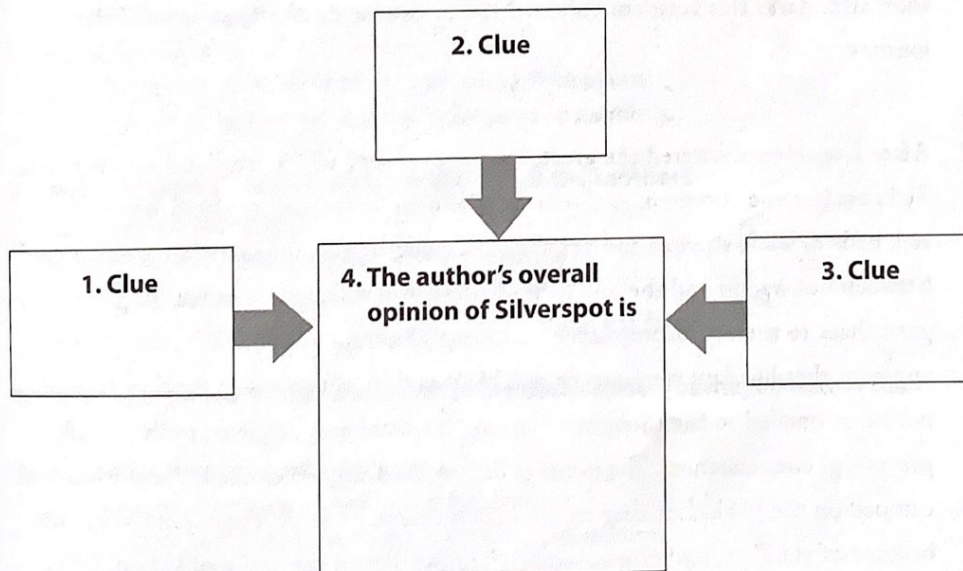


**GED PRACTICE** From the list of words below, choose the three words that best describe Silverspot as he is portrayed in the passage. Write the words in the small boxes. Then, use those clues to draw a conclusion. In the middle box, describe the author's overall opinion of Silverspot.

- annoying
- smart

- fascinating
- dirty

- noisy
- extraordinary



4. What is Silverspot like?  
(Check ✓ one.)

- ☐ careful and cautious  
☐ reckless and daring

Which details tell you so?  
Underline them.

Answers and explanations start on page 74.

# GED APPLICATION

**PRACTICE** Read the passage. Answer the questions that follow.

## Excerpt from *Across the Plains in 1844* by Catherine Sager Pringle

- 1 We decided to start for Oregon . . . and in April, 1844, we started across the plains. The first encampments were a great pleasure to us children. We were five girls and two boys, ranging from the girl baby to be born on the way to the oldest boy, hardly old enough to be any help. . . .
- 2 August 1st we nooned in a beautiful grove on the north side of the Platte. We had by this time got used to climbing in and out of the wagon when in motion. When performing this feat that afternoon my dress caught on an axle helve and I was thrown under the wagon wheel, which passed over and badly crushed my limb before father could stop the team. He picked me up and saw the extent of the injury when the injured limb hung dangling in the air.
- 3 In a broken voice he exclaimed: "My dear child, your leg is broken all to pieces!" The news soon spread along the train and a halt was called. A surgeon was found and the limb set; then we pushed on the same night to Laramie, where we arrived soon after dark. This accident confined me to the wagon the remainder of the long journey.
- 4 After Laramie we entered the great American desert, which was hard on the teams. Sickness became common. . . . Some of [the men] often had to rise from their sick beds to wade streams and get the oxen safely across. One day four buffalo ran between our wagon and the one behind. Though feeble, father seized his gun and gave chase to them. This imprudent act prostrated him again, and it soon became apparent that his days were numbered. He was fully conscious of the fact, but could not be reconciled to the thought of leaving his large and helpless family in such precarious circumstances. The evening before his death we crossed Green River and camped on the bank. Looking where I lay helpless, he said: "Poor child! What will become of you?" . . . Father was buried the next day on the banks of Green River. . . .



- 5 Mother planned to get to Whitman's and winter there, but she was rapidly failing under her sorrows. The nights and mornings were very cold, and she took cold from the exposure unavoidably. With camp fever and a sore mouth, she fought bravely against fate for the sake of her children, but she was taken delirious soon after reaching Fort Bridger, and was bed-fast. Travelling in this condition over a road clouded with dust, she suffered intensely. . . . Her babe was cared for by the women of the train. Those kind-hearted women would also come in at night and wash the dust from the mother's face and otherwise make her comfortable. We travelled a rough road the day she died, and she moaned fearfully all the time. At night one of the women came in as usual, but she made no reply to questions, so she thought her asleep, and washed her face, then took her hand and discovered the pulse was nearly gone. She lived but a few moments, and her last words were, "Oh, Henry! If you only knew how we have suffered."
- 6 Her name was cut on a headboard, and that was all that could be done. So in twenty-six days we became orphans.



**GED PRACTICE** Circle the letter of the option that correctly answers each question.

1. **What can the reader infer about the author?**
  - A. She disliked camping outdoors.
  - B. She made most of the journey on foot.
  - C. She was a young child when she crossed the plains.
  - D. She was embarrassed that her father was so cautious.
2. **What inference can the reader make about the mother?**
  - A. She died giving birth.
  - B. She feared her children would be orphaned.
  - C. She dreaded crossing the plains in the winter.
  - D. She was angry with her husband for deserting the family.
3. **What can the reader conclude about the people who journeyed across the plains?**
  - A. Many of them lost the will to live.
  - B. Many of them went without food and water.
  - C. They refused to stop the wagon train for any reason.
  - D. They grew close as they faced hardships together.

**Answers and explanations start on page 74.**