Name: _____ Date: _____

Mostly Blue

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 405 words

Effie tipped a puzzle onto the rug. It was a map of the world. "Why are so many pieces blue?" she asked.

"Blue is the ocean," said Mom. "Water covers most of the Earth." If Earth had four parts, about three would be sea.

Effie made a big pile of blue. Then she sorted the land pieces. They were green, brown and white.

She snapped the land pieces together into huge shapes. "Those are continents," said Mom. "Many kids learn there are seven."

The biggest shape was Asia. It took Effie ages. More than half of all people live there.

In Asia, Effie found a white, pointy spot. "That is Mount Everest," said Mom. It is the highest place on Earth.

Next came Africa and its huge, hot Sahara desert. Effie traced the Nile with her finger. Many say it is the longest river.

North America had a giant white island at the top. "Greenland," Effie read. It has a green name, but it is mostly ice!

South America has a very tall waterfall, Angel Falls. Most of its water never reaches the ground. It turns to mist and blows away.

The piece at the very bottom was all white. That was Antarctica. It is the iciest, windiest, driest place.

In some spots, its ice is two miles thick. Nobody lives there all the time. Scientists, pilots and cooks go there to work.

Penguins and seals live on its icy edges. They swim in the cold sea. That is where they find food.

Then Effie found Australia. It is the smallest, flattest continent. Koalas live there, and nowhere else in the wild.

Last came Europe, and it clicked right onto Asia. There was no blue between them at all. "Is this one piece or two?" asked Effie.

"Good question," said Mom. "Europe and Asia are joined. People drew a pretend line along some mountains."

"So is it really seven?" asked Effie. "In some places, kids learn six," said Mom. "People count

in different ways."

"Here is a secret," said Mom. "The continents are moving right now." They move as fast as your fingernails grow.

Effie looked hard at her nails. Long ago, almost all the land was one big piece.

Effie slid Africa next to South America. They fit together like puzzle pieces!

Her map was mostly blue, with seven big shapes. Get a map of your own. Can you find two continents that fit?

Questions

1. Why were so many puzzle pieces blue?

A. The puzzle was broken
B. Water covers most of the Earth
C. Effie liked blue

2. Which continent is the biggest?

A. Asia
B. Australia
C. Europe

3. Why did Effie ask if Europe was one piece or two?

A. It had no blue water between it and Asia
B. It was the biggest piece
C. It was lost under the rug

4. What does "mist" mean in this book?

A. A loud noise
B. A kind of rock
C. Tiny drops of water in the air

5. What might Mom say if Effie asked how many continents there are?

A. Always six
B. Many kids learn seven, but people count in different ways
C. Nobody knows at all

Words to know

ocean: big salty sea
continents: huge land pieces
desert: very dry land
island: land in water
mist: tiny water drops

Answer key: Mostly Blue

1. B. Water covers most of the Earth
2. A. Asia
3. A. It had no blue water between it and Asia
4. C. Tiny drops of water in the air
5. B. Many kids learn seven, but people count in different ways