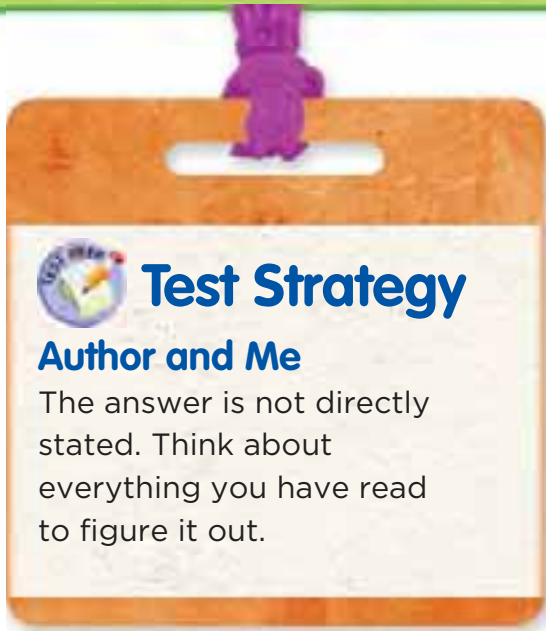



Answer Questions



 **Test Strategy**
Author and Me
The answer is not directly stated. Think about everything you have read to figure it out.

Diamonds for the Taking

by Lin Chen



Join the fun!
Come to Herkimer, NY, and prospect for diamonds!
Just a few taps of a hammer and hundreds of sparkling diamonds are yours for the taking
 **Don't miss out! No one goes home empty-handed.**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a prospector? What would it be like to tap rock with a hammer, hour after hour, in the hopes of discovering a glittering diamond?

Each year hundreds of people do just that in upper New York State. Herkimer County, New York, is the only place in the world where Herkimer diamonds can be found. Actually, they aren't real diamonds. They are natural quartz crystals with points at both ends.

When true diamonds are taken from the earth, they need to be cut and polished to make them sparkle and shine. Herkimer diamonds come out of their rocky homes already shaped and polished by nature!



How Herkimers Began

Some 500 million years ago, a shallow sea covered parts of what is now New York State. Particles of rock and earth settled to the bottom of the water. Over millions of years, this sediment built up. The weight of the sediment on top pressed down on the bottom layers. Gradually, the layers of sediment turned into rock. Water seeped through pores in the rock and eventually became trapped in pockets in the rock. Over time, crystals formed in the pockets.

Long ago, the sea dried up. Glaciers and storms wore away the top layers of rock. This weathering exposed hidden crystals, and the first Herkimer diamonds came to light!

Native Americans in the area took their name from the gems. The local Mohawks were known as “The People of the Crystals.”

Prospecting for Diamonds

There are no deep shafts in these “diamond mines.” The mines are rocky, open pits. Safety comes first when prospecting for diamonds. The ground is rough and uneven. Prospectors are told to wear shoes or hiking boots, not sandals. Goggles are recommended as well. A rock chip in your eye can cause a serious problem!



Answer Questions

Some collectors just wander around, hoping to spot a diamond. Some sift through the dirt. Serious prospectors use crowbars, rock hammers, and heavy chisels. Most miners use hammers that weigh two or three pounds. Whatever the tool, the method is the same. They pound the rock until it breaks apart. If they're lucky, a crystal will be there.

The luckiest prospectors find pockets of crystals, rather than a single stone. These pockets can be as much as six feet wide and can contain thousands of crystals. Most pockets contain crystals in a wide range of sizes, up to eight or more inches long. Sometimes a crystal has a water bubble inside it. Even more unusual is a crystal with ancient plants floating in the water bubble. Twin crystals, double crystals, and smoky crystals are all possible as well.

Shouts of "I found one!" encourage other prospectors to keep working. If they keep at it, they may be lucky, too. If not, they can always buy a Herkimer diamond in the gift shop.



Tip

You have to think about the entire passage to choose the best answer.

Directions: Answer the questions.**1. How does the author feel about prospecting for diamonds?**

- A It is too hard to be worthwhile.
- B It can be both fun and exciting.
- C It is a waste of time and effort.
- D It is dangerous and scary.

2. What is the author's purpose in writing this selection?

- A to provide information about Herkimer diamonds
- B to explain how to prospect for true diamonds
- C to persuade people to visit New York State
- D to compare true diamonds with Herkimer diamonds

3. Why would someone want to hunt for a Herkimer diamond?

- A to pretend it's a real diamond
- B to sell it for a lot of money
- C for the challenge of finding one
- D to give one as a birthday gift

4. What is one message the author wants to get across to readers?**5. Look back at the advertisement on page 784 of the selection. What is the purpose of this ad? Use details from the selection to support your response.****Writing Prompt**

Imagine that you have been to Herkimer County to prospect for diamonds. Write a one-paragraph news story for the school newspaper about your visit and the discoveries you made there.

