Speaking of Stinky

The paired text articles “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future” include many words having to do with waste and sanitation. You’ll learn about them here.

**Directions:** Read the definitions below, then complete each sentence in a way that makes sense.

1. **intricate:** having many complicated or connected parts
   
   Sentence: Jamal made intricate drawings of the castle, carefully including details of ____________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

2. **fertilizer:** a natural or chemical material that is added to soil to make it better for growing plants
   
   Sentence: My dad put fertilizer on our garden so that ______________________________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

3. **scorching:** extremely hot
   
   Sentence: It was a scorching day, so Chandra decided to ______________________________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

4. **putrid:** strongly unpleasant or foul
   
   Sentence: The meat smelled putrid because ____________________________________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

5. **epidemics:** widespread outbreaks of disease that spread quickly
   
   Sentence: Luis studied epidemics of the Middle Ages because he was interested in ____________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

6. **microscopic:** too small to be seen without a microscope
   
   Sentence: Because bacteria are microscopic, scientists ______________________________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________________

**Continued on next page >**
Speaking of Stinky, p. 2

7. sewage: waste carried away in sewers
   Sentence: The sewage flowed down the pipe and _________________________________.

8. sanitation: ways of getting rid of waste and trash to keep places free of dirt and disease
   Sentence: Scientists recommend using good sanitation to _________________________________.

9. poverty: the condition of being very poor
   Sentence: The writer spent his childhood in poverty, but he grew up to _________________________________.

10. organic: coming from living things
    Sentence: In her compost pile, Maddie put organic materials such as _________________________________.

Think About It!

Close-Reading Questions: After reading the articles “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future,” go back and reread sections to answer the questions below.

1. Based on the first article, what was the Great Stink? Where and when did the Great Stink occur?

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2. According to the section “The Problem of Poop,” why did the cesspool system of dealing with poop stop working? What did people begin to do with the waste from their cesspools?

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3. Reread “A Whiff on the Wind.” What details does the author use to help you understand how bad the smell was?

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4. According to “A Whiff on the Wind,” why was the Thames water deadly?
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5. Reread “The Problem of Poop” and “Something Had to Be Done.” Compare and contrast the new sewers with the old sewers.
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6. According to “A New Crisis,” what pressures have caused the original sewers in many cities to leak, break, clog, and overflow?
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7. The first paragraph of “Toilets of the Future” includes a series of questions: “But what if your home didn’t have a toilet? What if no homes in your town had one? Where would all that waste go?” Why do you think the author chose include these questions?
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8. Why might the waterless toilets described in the article be a better solution to getting rid of human waste than building more regular toilets and sewers?
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Critical-Thinking Questions: After answering the close-reading questions, answer the critical-thinking questions below, thinking about the meaning of both articles.

9. Why is it important to safely get rid of human waste? Answer using details from both articles.

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10. How did the Great Stink and the world’s current sanitation challenges described in the second article inspire important changes?

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Think About It!

**Directions:** After reading the articles “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future,” go back and reread sections to answer the questions below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

**Close-Reading Questions:**

1. Based on the first article, what was the Great Stink? Where and when did the Great Stink occur?

2. According to the section “The Problem of Poop,” why did the cesspool system of dealing with poop stop working? What did people begin to do with the waste from their cesspools?

3. Reread “A Whiff on the Wind.” What details does the author use to help you understand how bad the smell was?

4. According to “A Whiff on the Wind,” why was the Thames water deadly?

5. Reread “The Problem of Poop” and “Something Had to Be Done.” Compare and contrast the new sewers with the old sewers.

6. According to “A New Crisis,” what pressures have caused the original sewers in many cities to leak, break, clog, and overflow?

7. The first paragraph of “Toilets of the Future” includes a series of questions: “But what if your home didn’t have a toilet? What if no homes in your town had one? Where would all that waste go?” Why do you think the author chose to include these questions?

8. Why might the waterless toilets described in the article be a better solution to getting rid of human waste than building more regular toilets and sewers?

**Critical-Thinking Questions:**

9. Why is it important to safely get rid of human waste? Answer using details from both articles.

10. How did the Great Stink and the world’s current sanitation challenges described in the second article inspire important changes?
Think About It!

Close-Reading Questions: Read “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future.” Then go back and reread sections of the articles to answer the questions below. We’ve started the first one for you.

1. Reread the first section of “The Great Stink.” What problem did people in London face in 1858?

In 1858, people in London faced

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2. In the section “The Problem of Poop,” what caused the river to become smelly and polluted?

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Continued on next page >
Think About It!, p. 2

3. In the section “A Whiff on the Wind,” how did the stink affect people? Why were they scared?

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4. In the section “Something Had to Be Done,” how did London solve the stinky problem?

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5. In “Toilets of the Future,” what happens when people can’t get rid of waste in a clean way?

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6. Describe how one of the waterless toilets in “Toilets of the Future” works.

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Critical-Thinking Question (a big question about both stories):

7. What do these two articles tell you about people’s abilities to solve big problems that come up? Support your answer with details from the texts.

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Exploring Text Features

Directions: Answer the questions below to help you explore the photos, illustrations, captions, and other text features in the articles “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future.”

1. Find the title of the article at the top of page 10. Does the way the letters are drawn help you get interested in reading the article? Why or why not?

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2. Read the section headers on pages 10, 11, and 12. How do they keep you interested in reading the article?

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3. Based on the illustration and caption at the top of page 11, what can you infer about the emotions people felt during the Great Stink?

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4. Study the sewer image and captions at the bottom of page 11. How do the photo and captions help you better understand the task of building a new sewer system in London?

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5. Look at the image and captions at the bottom of page 12. Based on information in the captions and the expression on the woman’s face, what do you think fatbergs are like?

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6. Study the three photographs in the center of page 13. Do they help you understand how the waterless toilets work? Why or why not?

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**Storyworks S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** What additional photo, illustration, map, or other visual feature would be a good addition to the article “The Great Stink”? How would it help you better understand the sewage problem people faced in London at the time?

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Writing a Summary

A summary is a short retelling of the most important parts of a story. It should include the information that someone would need to know to understand the story, without minor details or your own opinion.

Directions: Complete the summary below, using the prompts in the margins to help you.

Summary of “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future”

1. Begin with a topic sentence that tells what the article is mainly about.

“The Great Stink” is about _____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

In the 1800s, people in London began ________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

The summer of 1858 was ____________________________________________,
and the Thames became ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

The river was not only stinky. It was also dangerous because _____________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Government leaders _________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

“Toilets of the Future” is about _________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Both articles warn that ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

2. What did the people of London begin doing with their waste?

3. What was the weather like that summer?

4. What was the condition of the river?

5. What was in the waste? How did that affect people?

6. What action did leaders take? How did it solve the sewage problem?

7. How do some new toilets solve sewage problems?

8. What do experts worry will happen if we don’t update our sewers?
Quick, Tell Me What Happened!

Your friend Marco was absent from school and didn’t get to read the paired texts “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future.” You call him to tell him about the articles, but he has only one minute before he has to eat supper. Quick, give him a short summary!

**Directions:** Follow the prompts below to write a one-paragraph summary. Remember, a summary is a brief retelling of the most important parts of the story, without minor details or your own opinion.

1. Decide what the first article, “The Great Stink,” is mainly about. Think about:
   - What do the headline and subhead on page 10 suggest the article is about?
   - What appears in the picture on page 10?
   - What main problem does the article tell you about?

   Use your answers to create a topic sentence for your summary.

2. Decide what the most important information in the first article is. Go through each section and jot down notes about what you think is necessary to know to explain what you wrote in your topic sentence. Your notes don’t have to be complete sentences. We’ve given you some examples (and crossed out what doesn’t belong).

   **Opening Section**
   - Horse-drawn carriages clip-clopped through the streets
   - In the summer of 1858, stink from the River Thames overwhelmed London
   - Thousands of people died from drinking water from the polluted river

   **“The Problem of Poop”**

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Continued on next page >
Quick, Tell Me What Happened! p. 2

“A Whiff on the Wind”

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“Something Had to Be Done”

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“A New Crisis”

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Quick, Tell Me What Happened! p. 3

3. Now go to page 13 and decide what the second article, “Toilets of the Future,” is mainly about. Ask yourself:
   What do the title and photos suggest it’s about? _________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

   What do the subheadings help you understand? _________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

   How does this article relate to the first article? _________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Look at your notes. Cross out anything you wrote that is not necessary. Add anything that’s missing.
   • Did I include information about what happened? Where and when it happened? Why it happened?
     Who was involved? How it ended?
   • Is there a detail or two describing the main topic?
   • Did I write details that aren’t essential for understanding the main topic? Get rid of those! (See
     example on page 1.)

5. Number your notes above so you can retell them in an order that makes sense.

6. Use your topic sentence and your notes to write your one-paragraph summary on
   a separate sheet of paper, retelling what happened in your own words. Reread it
   to make sure it’s clear and that it sums up what’s important in the article. Then
   you can share your summary with your friend Marco!

Tip!
Use your notes to summarize the article out loud with a partner. This will help you decide if you need to add or take out any information.
Find the Evidence

Directions: Read each question below carefully. Some will ask you to select text evidence—or details in the story—to support a statement. Others will ask you to respond in your own words, supporting your ideas with text evidence.

1. Circle the letter of the piece of text evidence that best shows that the Great Stink in London in 1858 was not only smelly but also harmful.
   a. “All you can think about is the overpowering, stomach-turning, eye-watering smell of poop.”
   b. “The steaming heat is cooking the filthy river into a bubbling, foul-smelling stew.”
   c. “Over the past 50 years, tens of thousands of people have died from drinking the polluted water of the Thames River.”
   d. “People did their business on a wooden box with a hole that sat above an underground pit called a cesspool.”

2. In your own words, describe how cesspools worked in London until the early 1800s. Use text evidence from “The Great Stink” to support your answer.

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3. Circle the letter of the piece of text evidence that best shows how London’s increased population contributed to the Great Stink.
   a. “By the middle of the century, London was the biggest city in the world, with 2 million people.”
   b. “Soon, there was too much night soil to collect and not enough farmers to buy it.”
   c. “Over time, the smell became a stench, and the stench became unbearable.”
   d. “And then, in the scorching summer of 1858, it became a crisis.”

4. In your own words, explain how not being able to get rid of human waste can spread germs. Use text evidence from both articles to support your answer.

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Continued on next page >
5. Circle the letter of the piece of text evidence that best shows how the new sewer system solved the problems of the Great Stink.

a. “What few people in 1858 understood was that it wasn’t the smell of the river that was deadly . . .”

b. “Even if government leaders didn’t understand exactly why the Great Stink was dangerous, they knew something had to be done—fast.”

c. “With handkerchiefs pressed to their noses, they quickly passed a law ordering the construction of a new sewer system.”

d. “The new sewers would run underground alongside the river rather than into it, carrying waste out past the city . . .”

6. In your own words, explain the problems developing countries often have trying to find safe ways to get rid of human waste. Use text evidence from “Toilets of the Future” to support your answer.

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7. Circle the letter of the piece of text evidence that best explains a way waterless toilets can help the environment.


b. “From there, liquid waste—aka urine—is filtered into clean water that can be used for watering plants . . .”

c. “Beneath the toilet, and out of view from users, lives a cluster of tiger worms.”

d. “Human waste is kept in a container attached to the toilet.”

8. In your own words, explain what fatbergs are and how we can prevent them from forming.

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Find the Evidence

Directions: Read each question below carefully. Some will ask you to select text evidence—or details in the story—to support a statement. Others will ask you to respond in your own words, supporting your ideas with text evidence.

1. Circle the letters of TWO pieces of text evidence that best show that human waste in the Thames River in 1858 was not only smelly, but also harmful:
   a. “All you can think about is the overpowering, stomach-turning, eye-watering smell of poop.”
   b. “As you will soon discover, the entire city is caught in the grip of a stinky crisis.”
   c. “The steaming heat is cooking the filthy river into a bubbling, foul-smelling stew.”
   d. “Over the past 50 years, tens of thousands of people have died from drinking the polluted water of the Thames River.”
   e. “People did their business on a wooden box with a hole that sat above an underground pit called a cesspool.”
   f. “Poop is crawling with microscopic germs that can cause dozens of diseases, including cholera.”

2. In your own words, explain how not being able to get rid of human waste can spread germs. Use text evidence from both articles to support your answer.
   __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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3. Circle the letters of the TWO pieces of text evidence that best show how London’s increased population contributed to the Great Stink:
   a. “But in the 19th-century, London—and all of England—was changing.”
   b. “By the middle of the century, London was the biggest city in the world, with 2 million people.”
   c. “Soon, there was too much night soil to collect and not enough farmers to buy it.”
   d. “More and more people were forced to empty their cesspools into the city’s creaky old sewers.”
   e. “Over time, the smell became a stench, and the stench became unbearable.”
   f. “And then, in the scorching summer of 1858, it became a crisis.”

Continued on next page >
4. In your own words, explain the problems developing countries can face trying to find safe ways to get rid of human waste. Use text evidence from “Toilets of the Future” to support your answer.

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5. Circle the letters of THREE pieces of text evidence that best explain how waterless toilets can help the environment.
   a. “. . . liquid waste—aka urine—is filtered into clean water that can be used for watering plants . . .”
   b. “The whole process produces enough electricity to power the toilet, as well as other, small devices . . .”
   c. “Beneath the toilet, and out of view from users, lives a cluster of tiger worms.”
   d. “. . . Human waste is kept in a container attached to the toilet.”
   e. “The temperature inside the container is very high.”
   f. “Eventually, what’s left can be used as fertilizer in gardens and backyards.”

6. In your own words, explain what fatbergs are and how we can prevent them from forming.

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### Directions:
To synthesize means to combine parts from different sources. Answer the questions below to synthesize information from the articles “The Great Stink” (TGS) and “Toilets of the Future” (TOTF). We’ve indicated where you can find each answer.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Where is the city of London? What was London like in 1858? (TGS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Why did the population of London increase in the early 1800s? (TGS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How did a popular new invention increase human waste in the Thames River in the 1850s? (TGS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Why is human waste harmful when people don’t have a safe way to get rid of it? (both texts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What problems do developing countries face when trying to build and operate sewers? (TOTF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Why have people begun inventing new toilets, such as the self-powering, worm, and composting toilets? (TOTF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What do experts worry may happen to older sewer systems in cities around the world? (both texts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Write Now!** Use your answers above to help you respond to the writing prompt at the bottom of page 13.
“The Great Stink” Quiz

Directions: Read the paired texts “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future” in the May/June 2020 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. What caused the Great Stink in London, England, in 1858?
   - A horse dung
   - B human poop
   - C garbage
   - D soot from factories

2. Why was the Great Stink dangerous?
   - A The smell traveled on the wind.
   - B The river flooded the streets.
   - C The sewage system fell apart.
   - D The water made people sick.

3. Which line BEST supports your answer to question 2?
   - A “Still, the Great Stink of 1858 was an odor more putrid than the city had ever experienced.”
   - B “The poop-filled Thames was London's main source of drinking water.”
   - C “People did their business on a wooden box with a hole that sat above an underground pit called a cesspool.”
   - D “Londoners back then were no strangers to filth.”

4. What is the meaning of the word intricate?
   - A simple
   - B complex
   - C natural
   - D diseased

5. What is most likely the purpose of “Toilets of the Future”?
   - A to describe possible solutions for dealing with human waste
   - B to persuade readers to start using a new kind of toilet
   - C to predict how future toilets will change people’s lives
   - D to compare past, present, and future toilets

6. Both “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future” tell why it is important to . . .
   - A stop climate change.
   - B build sewer systems everywhere.
   - C keep toilets unclogged.
   - D manage waste safely.

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with information and details from the articles.

7. Compare and contrast toilets in early London with the worm toilet described in “Toilets of the Future.” Use details from both texts to support your answer.

8. If you were installing one of the “toilets of the future” in your home, which one would you choose? Why?
"The Great Stink" Quiz

Directions: Read the paired texts “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future” in the May/June 2020 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. What caused the Great Stink in London, England, in 1858?
   A streets filled with horse dung
   B a river flooded with human waste
   C garbage left outside of homes
   D soot released into the air

2. Why was the Great Stink dangerous?
   A The smell traveled on the wind.
   B The river flooded the streets.
   C The sewage system fell apart.
   D The water made people sick.

3. Sewage systems require many workers and a lot of money because they are ______.
   A intricate
   B putrid
   C microscopic
   D organic

4. Which line BEST supports the answer to question 3?
   A “. . . the smell became a stench, and the stench became unbearable.”
   B “It took thousands of workers, 318 million bricks, 670,000 cubic meters of concrete . . .”
   C “. . . inspired similar building projects in cities around the world, including cities in the U.S., like New York.”
   D “Grown men and women fainted in the streets.”

5. What is most likely the purpose of “Toilets of the Future”?
   A to describe possible solutions for dealing with human waste
   B to persuade readers to use a new kind of toilet
   C to predict how future toilets will change people’s lives
   D to compare past, present, and future toilets

6. What does organic mean in the sentence “These critters eat organic waste”?
   A delicious
   B disgusting
   C recycled
   D made from living things

7. The section “A New Crisis” relates to “Toilets of the Future” because it . . .
   A tells how many countries have functioning sewage systems.
   B argues that sewage systems are ineffective.
   C explains that current sewage systems may need to be replaced.
   D questions why the Great Stink occurred.

8. Both “The Great Stink” and “Toilets of the Future” describe why it is important to . . .
   A reduce climate change.
   B build sewage systems.
   C keep toilets unclogged.
   D manage waste safely.

9. Compare and contrast toilets in early London with the worm toilet described in “Toilets of the Future.” Use details from both texts to support your answer.

10. If you were installing one of the “toilets of the future” in your home, which one would you choose? Why?
"The Great Stink"

To the teacher: We suggest using these questions with the lower-Lexile version of the texts, supported by the lower-Lexile audio version. Select the ones that are best for your students, depending on where they are in their acquisition of English. Ask them orally or choose questions to create your own written assignment. If students are ready, prompt them to follow up their answers with more details.

Yes/No Questions
These questions allow students who are new to English to show their understanding with a simple answer.
1. Was the Great Stink a bad smell of poop in the Thames River? (Yes, it was.)
2. Did many people die from drinking dirty river water? (Yes, they did.)
3. Are sewer systems cheap to build? (No, they aren’t.)
4. Do all people in the world today have toilets? (No, they don’t.)
5. Is it important to get rid of human waste? (Yes, it is.)

Either/Or Questions
These questions allow slightly more-advanced students to use language from the question in their answer.
1. Did the Great Stink happen because many people moved to London or out of London? (It happened because many people moved to London.)
2. Did cold weather or hot weather make the smell worse? (Hot weather made it worse.)
3. Is climate change good or bad for sewer systems? (It’s bad for sewer systems.)
4. Did the Great Stink cause people to invent new sewers or new toilets? (It caused people to invent new sewers.)

Short Answer Questions
1. Describe what you see in each picture in the article in your own words. (Answers will vary.)
2. Why do you think toilets have changed so much over time but sewers haven’t? (Students might say, for example, that new sewers are more expensive and complicated to build than toilets, or sewers are harder to work on.)