

7— Upside Down and Backwards

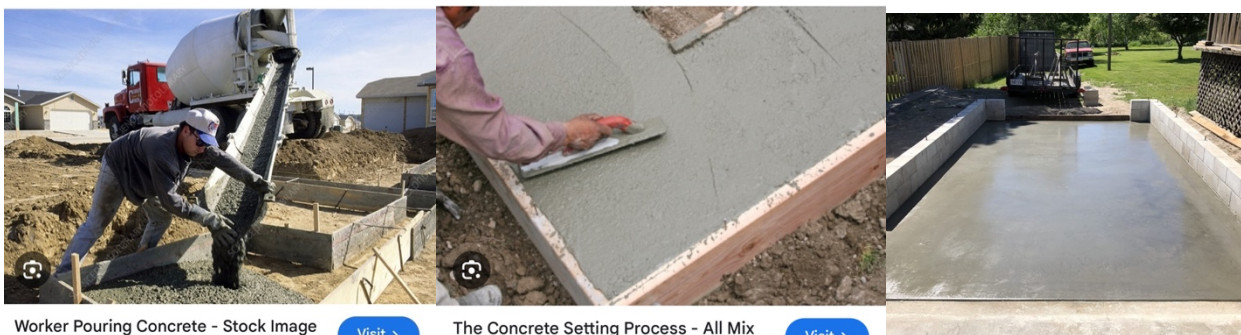
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One Native Life NAME _____

(1) Richard says writing is for him like the early morning sun. The first light makes the visible world come together again, fills it out, brings it back into existence. Things hidden in darkness or shadow become evident. In writing, Richard's words reveal things and make mysterious things evident. TRUE or FALSE. (Circle)

(2) Writing poetry and stories meets Richard's need for c_____n (the sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings on a mental and spiritual level). A man given to wonder, Richard in writing finds communion with The _____. (In Church, "communion" with the bread and wine is about the same thing with the Christian God.)

(3) Learning to write has always been a great desire of Richard's, but has it been easy? YES or NO. (Circle)



(4) Where Richard began life in northern Ontario, beliefs about Indians were "set like concrete in a parochial, working-class ...

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sawmill town.” In the 1960’s Kenora was isolated with limited connection to the outside world. Not many people were there because it was their first choice. More than most places, in a stinky sawmill town, there were few “professional” people, that is, doctors, lawyers, teachers, ministers, certainly no sophisticated university professors. Most people were “working class” with limited education working hard jobs. Their tastes were simple. They felt taken advantage of by rich and privileged people. Prone to prejudices, feeling powerless, they took it out on minorities like Native people.

(5) What does Google give you as the meaning of “parochial”?

(Don’t pick the religious meaning (to do with parish) from which the word comes.) _____

_____.

(6) The world may be so much more interconnected now—the Internet, good highways, telecommunications—but some places might still be thought “parochial” compared to sophisticated, “cosmopolitan,” multicultural places like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Do you think a Northern or southern rural community might still be “parochial”? (It would have been classed as such in the 1960’s). Why or why not? _____

_____.

_____.

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(7) If you were to be ignored in Richard’s school, where did they make you sit? _____.

(8) Back then, if you struggled in school, you were said to be _____, someone with learning difficulties. This usually meant you were considered “not smart” at best, and more likely, _____. (Either the “s” word or the “d” word.) Nobody then imagined that students with “normal” abilities might have “learning disabilities” like dyslexia (big problems reading).

They said Richard was “far too quiet” and lethargic (lacking energy, lazy). Yet Richard says he went to school every day eager to learn. Do you think he believed they wanted him to participate in class? Do you think the teacher made a point of asking him questions and including him? Why do you think Richard said little, asked no questions, and was listless?

_____.

(9) If you were a “behavior problem” where did they make you sit? _____.

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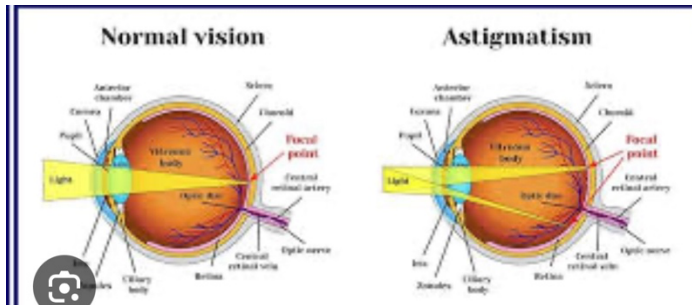
(10) Richard's real problem: He "couldn't _____."

(11) Even when he sat at the front, could he see the board? YES or NO. (Circle)

(12) In his old school, no one had shown enough interest in Richard to notice that his handwriting was upside down and backwards. TRUE or FALSE. (CIRCLE)

(13) If he couldn't see the board, how did Richard learn? _____
_____ (

(No wonder he was quiet, He was listening so hard.)



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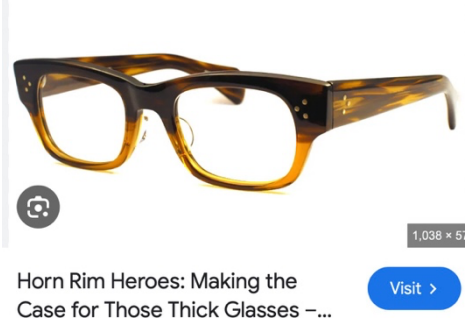
For our eyes to see properly, light must come in the lens at the front of the eyeball and focus on one place in the retina at the back. With astigmatism, the light lands on different places and our eyes and brain cannot make one clear image.

(13) When Richard describes the incredible way he learned to write—not many could have figured this out—it becomes clear he was exceptionally intelligent. TRUE or FALSE. (CIRCLE)

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Richard got thick, horn-rimmed glasses. (There was little selection or choice in glasses back then.) They were awkward and rather ugly. (Circle)

(13) Do you think he cared? YES or NO

(14) Do you think Richard's Grade 3 teacher saw him as a PERSON or as JUST ANOTHER INDIAN BOY? (CIRCLE)

(15) Did Richard conclude that UNLEARNING something or LEARNING it was the hardest? (Circle)

(16) Did Richard's teacher make a big difference in his life? YES or NO. (Circle)

(17) What letters does Richard still get wrong? _____.
(Some people with dyslexia have the same problem, especially with "p's" and "b's" too.)

(18) When life turns us "upside down and backwards"—when we get really messed up—does it make the difference when someone knowledgeable cares enough to find out why and help us? And when we truly care and want to get set right again like little Richard did with reading and writing? YES or NO (Circle)