

States & Capitals
Spotty's Travel Journal
Entry 1 – New York: The Empire State

Mom always packs way too much. I'm usually left with only a teeny tiny space in the car I can stretch out in. This time was even worse because we were moving to a new home. Luckily, I had the **atlas**¹ to look at while Mom tried to cram all her essentials into the car. It took hours.

Atlases are really cool. They have maps in them with roads, highways, national parks, cities, towns and other neat areas marked on them. The atlas we have is of the fifty states. Each state has its own big page. Even tiny Rhode Island has its own page.

Since we were starting in New York, I thought I would check out that state map first. The first thing I looked for was my home, *The Big Apple, The City That Never Sleeps, The Capital of the World!* I expected to see a star **symbol**² by this **magnificent**³ city. The symbol is the one that used on maps to show a state's capital. But no star was there. It meant New York City is *not* the capital of New York State. I scanned the five boroughs. No star, nothing. Long Island? No star there, either. Finally, I found the star I was looking for upstate, only 200 miles from Canada. The capital of New York State is Albany. What else might I learn as I traveled west?

¹ **atlas** – a book of maps

² **symbol** – a design or object that represent something else

³ **magnificent** – very impressive or beautiful

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Spotty's space in the car was

- a. spacious.
- b. smelly.
- c. covered in clothes.
- d. small.

2. What would you NOT find in an atlas?

- a. a map
- b. highway numbers
- c. pictures
- d. city names

3. According to the passage, *scanned* means

- a. read quickly.
- b. ran quickly.
- c. read slowly.
- d. jumped around.

4. The author makes Albany sound

- a. far away.
- b. close.
- c. boring.
- d. foreign.

5. Spotty's mom always packs too much, what effect does this have on the trip?

- a. They are too late.
- b. Spotty has a very small space in the car.
- c. Spotty can't fit in the car.
- d. Spotty becomes very tired.

6. Why do you think Spotty assumed New York City should be the capital of New York State?

7. Why does Spotty like atlases?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Spotty thinks New York City is more interesting ____ Albany.

- a. from
- b. than
- c. to
- d. but

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

While his mom spent hours packing, Spotty looked at the atlas.

Who? Spotty

(did) What? _____

Where? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** borough: a small town or district within a larger city.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____

Teacher Guide and Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 630

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: This passage describes the beginning of Spotty's journey and explores the geography and history of New York State.

1. Spotty's space in the car was
 - a. spacious.
 - b. smelly.
 - c. covered in clothes.
 - d. **small.**

2. What would you NOT find in an atlas?
 - a. a map
 - b. highway numbers
 - c. **pictures**
 - d. city names

3. According to the passage, *scanned* means
 - a. **read quickly.**
 - b. ran quickly.
 - c. read slowly.
 - d. jumped around.

4. The author makes Albany sound
 - a. **far away.**
 - b. close.
 - c. boring.
 - d. foreign.

5. Spotty's mom always packs too much, what effect does this have on the trip?
 - a. They are too late.
 - b. **Spotty has a very small space in the car.**
 - c. Spotty can't fit in the car.
 - d. Spotty becomes very tired.

6. Why do you think Spotty assumed New York City should be the capital of New York State?

Suggested answer: Spotty thought New York City was the capital because Spotty believes New York City is a very special city, perhaps the most famous in the world. He assumes a city celebrated by so many slogans must be the capital of New York.

7. Why does Spotty like atlases?

Suggested answer: He likes atlases because of all of the information they include, such as highways, national parks, and tourist attractions. He also likes that every state, even the smallest, has its own page in the atlas.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Spotty thinks New York City is more interesting _____ Albany.

- a. from
- b. than**
- c. to
- d. but

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

While his mom spent hours packing, Spotty looked at the atlas on the desk.

Who? Spotty

(did) What? **looked at the atlas**

Where? **on the desk**

When? **while his mom spent hours packing**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** borough: a small town or district within a larger city.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.