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## Introduction

*That night, David's mother served the snake for dinner. She served it creamed on toast.  
There was a guest for dinner the night the rattlesnake was served.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*"We've come for dinosaur! Alan said we could eat some dinosaur on his birthday!" Alan's mother started to explain that dinosaurs were extinct, but then Thomas came in. He was carrying a dinosaur!*

If a student read either one of these statements out of context, the student might have a difficult time knowing which statement is fiction and which one is nonfiction. In addition, the student would have no idea how the two statements could be tied together or used to support an argument or idea.

If, on the other hand, the student read these statements in context and understood how they fit into an entire passage, the student would be able to answer with confidence that, as strange as it may seem, David grew up in a time and a place where poisonous snakes were a valuable food source. The student would then be able to compare, contrast or tie this fact to the passage about a fictitious child who has insisted that he be served dinosaur or nothing at all for his birthday, and whose brother has found a solution to this unreasonable request by making a dinosaur-shaped cake. (Both passages deal with eating something one would not expect to eat.)

# National Curriculum Standards

The activities in *Paired Passages: Year 5* correlate to the following elements of the Year 5 Achievement Standard for English in the Australian National Curriculum, which state that by the end of the year students should be able to:

- make links between information and ideas from a number of different sources to understand experiences, ideas and information beyond their immediate experience
- accurately identify key ideas and details
- summarise these ideas clearly for others
- discuss the connections between particular structures, language features, simple literary devices and the purposes of texts
- identify literal and implied information in texts
- develop and clearly express ideas and opinions about texts
- select relevant textual evidence to support opinions about texts
- select specific vocabulary to express and develop ideas, to engage and persuade readers and to convey emotions
- write clear, well-structured sentences and paragraphs and use punctuation to provide structure and meaning in writing

Activities also correlate with the following specific Year 5 Content Descriptions:

- *Identify and explain characteristic text structures and language features used in imaginative, informative and persuasive texts to meet the purpose of the text (ACELY1701)*
- *Navigate and read texts for specific purposes applying appropriate text processing strategies, for example predicting and confirming, monitoring meaning, skimming and scanning (ACELY1702)*
- *Use comprehension strategies to interpret and analyse information, integrating and linking ideas from a variety of print and digital sources (ACELY1703)*
- *Develop a handwriting style that is becoming legible, fluent and automatic (ACELY1706)*
- *Recognise that ideas in literary texts can be conveyed from different viewpoints, which can lead to different kinds of interpretations and responses (ACELT1610)*

For more information on the National Curriculum visit the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) website at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>

# Rattlesnake for Dinner

David Love was a geologist who studied rocks and fossils. He studied the Earth's crust and the way in which its layers were formed. David grew up on a cattle station, or ranch, in the early 1900s. When David was born, he and his brother were the only children in 2590 square kilometres!

Once, when David and his brother were young, they killed a rattlesnake that measured 1.5-metres long. To David's family, the snake was more than a dangerous and poisonous viper: it was food. That night, David's mother served the snake for dinner. She served it creamed on toast.

There was a guest for dinner the night the rattlesnake was served. David's father told David and his brother that they were not to use the word "rattlesnake" at the table. Instead, the boys were to use the word "chicken". This was, their father said, because the guest might not be too happy about eating a poisonous viper.

During the meal, David and his brother started talking about rattlesnakes and other poisonous vipers. They talked about how often they encountered snakes and where the vipers' dens could be found. They also said how very good rattlesnakes were to eat.

How did their guest respond? He said, "If anybody ever gave me rattlesnake meat, I'd kill them."

David and his brother became deathly quiet, but their mother simply asked the guest if he wanted more chicken.

"Don't mind if I do," their guest replied.



**geologist David Love**

# A Dinosaur to Eat

Alan said, "You said I could have what I wanted. I told you that I don't want to eat anything but a dinosaur on my birthday!"

Alan's mother sighed. She said, "Alan, be reasonable. How can I get you a dinosaur to eat? Dinosaurs are extinct. They died out a long time ago."

Angrily, Alan said, "Then I won't be eating anything on my birthday!"

As Alan's birthday got closer and closer, everyone began to tease him. They said things like, "Better fill up now, because you won't be eating anything on your birthday!"

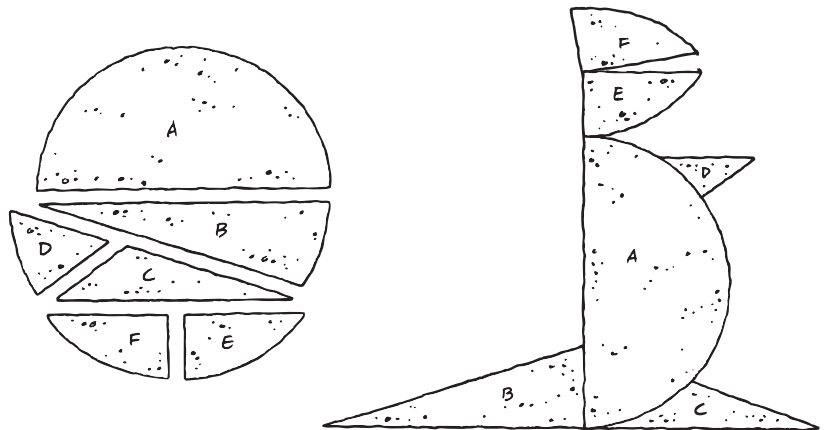
Alan's big brother Thomas told his mother he would find a dinosaur for Alan to eat. "You know dinosaurs are extinct," his mother replied tiredly. "Don't be unreasonable like your brother."

All of Alan's friends came over on his birthday. They cried, "We've come for dinosaur! Alan said we could eat some dinosaur on his birthday!"

Alan's mother started to explain that dinosaurs were extinct, but then Thomas came in. He was carrying a dinosaur! The dinosaur had big brown spikes down its back. It had pink and white teeth, and its skin was covered with green and black spots.

Grinning, Thomas said, "I just made a cake in the shape of a circle. Then I cut it up and arranged it into the shape of a dinosaur. I decorated it with chocolate, marshmallow and gumdrops."

What did Alan and his friends think? They thought Thomas's cake was the best-tasting dinosaur they had ever had!



# Show What You Know

The following are questions based on the passages “Rattlesnake for Dinner” and “A Dinosaur to Eat”. If needed, you may look back at the passages to answer the questions.

**1. David and his brother killed the rattlesnake**

- (A) when David was a geologist.
- (B) because David was a geologist.
- (C) after David became a geologist.
- (D) before David became a geologist.

**2. When a type of living creature is no longer living, it is**

- (A) extinct.
- (B) arranged.
- (C) decorated.
- (D) reasonable.

**3. What do both stories have in common?**

- (A) animals that have become extinct
- (B) sharing food with birthday guests
- (C) encountering vipers and other snakes
- (D) eating something one would not expect to

**4. From the stories, one can tell that most likely**

- (A) some snakes taste like cake.
- (B) some dinosaurs taste like cake.
- (C) some snakes taste like chicken.
- (D) some dinosaurs taste like chicken.

**5. Most likely, Alan’s friends**

- (A) thought they were eating cake.
- (B) thought Thomas had killed the dinosaur.
- (C) thought all dinosaurs were made with lollies.
- (D) thought they were eating an extinct dinosaur.

# The Slow-Mail Puzzle

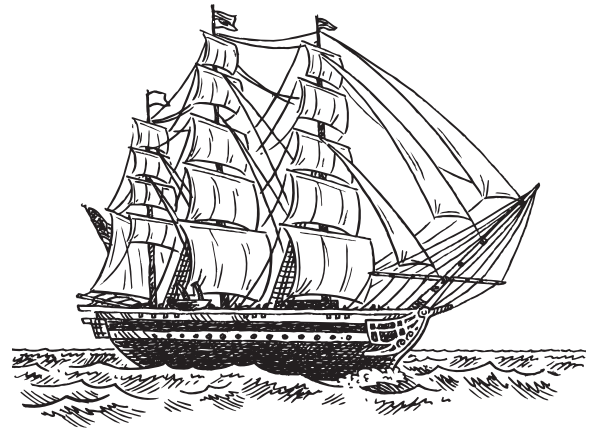
Ben was puzzled. Ben was deputy postmaster general of the American colonies. He was deputy postmaster general from 1764 to 1775. Ben wanted to get mail fast. What puzzled Ben was mail from England.

Ships carrying mail took two weeks longer than merchant ships to cross the Atlantic. Ben knew merchant ships were heavier than mail ships. Heavier ships should move slower. Ben knew merchant ships had to sail down a river before leaving England. Mail ships sailed directly from the coast. Sailing a shorter distance should mean a faster crossing. Why was the mail two weeks behind?

Ben asked his cousin. Ben's cousin was a whaling-ship captain. Ben's cousin said merchant and whaling captains knew something. They knew about a current. The current was like a river. It was a river of water moving in the ocean. Today we know this current as the Gulf Stream.

Merchant ships knew to avoid this current when sailing to the colonies. Going against the current slowed them down. Merchants kept what they knew about the current a secret. After all, the fastest ships could do the most trading. Whaling captains knew about the current because whales often fed at its edges.

Ben's cousin said that whaling-ship captains had told mail-ship captains to avoid the current. The mail-ship captains had not listened. Why not? Ben's cousin said it was because the mail-ship captains felt that "they were too wise" to be given advice by "simple American fishermen".



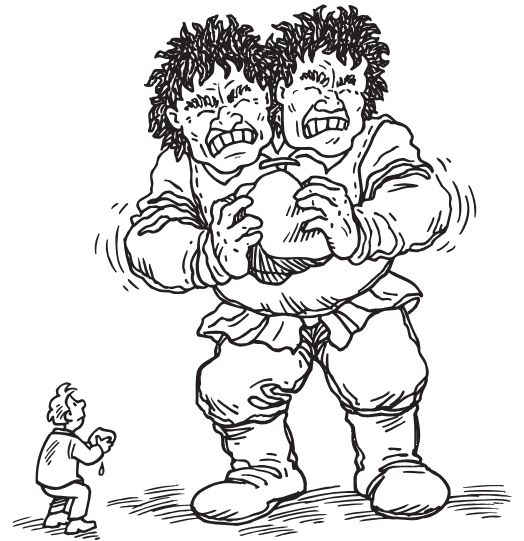
# What Hasn't Been Seen

"There is nothing we can do," the Elders said sadly. "Our village is going to be destroyed." Everyone began to cry except for one boy named Murry. People thought Murry was simple-minded. They did not think he was very smart because Murry did not care for fancy clothes or fancy things. Instead, Murry liked to be outside. He liked to spend time in the mountains looking at the wild animals he saw there.

Murry asked, "Why is the village going to be destroyed?"

"An evil two-headed giant said that our village would be destroyed unless we could show him something that hasn't been seen," answered one of the Elders. "And that is impossible, as we have to see something in order to find it and give it to him! Now, stop pestering us with your stupid questions and start packing."

Murry turned around and ran. "What a useless boy," muttered the Elder as he watched Murry begin to climb a tree. "Only a simpleton would climb trees at a time like this. Any advice he has for us wise men is useless."



Murry returned minutes later and carefully handed a tiny object to the Elder. As the confused Elder looked at it, Murry explained. "I've followed two robins as they built their nest and laid their eggs. I know this egg is about to hatch. Give this egg to the giant. He can see something no one has ever seen before. He can see the hatchling as it comes out of the egg."

