

The Appalachian Trail

by Bruce Eason

Today she tells me that it is her ambition to walk the Appalachian Trail, from Maine to Georgia. I ask how far it is. She says, "Some two thousand miles."

"No, no," I reply, "you must mean two hundred, not two thousand."

"I mean two thousand," she says, "more or less, two thousand miles long. I've done some reading too, about people who've completed the journey. It's amazing."

"Well, you've read the wrong stuff," I say. "You should've read about the ones that didn't make it. Those stories are more important. Why they gave up is probably why you shouldn't be going."

"I don't care about that, I'm going," she says with a determined look. "My mind is made up."

⑥ "Listen," I say, reaching for words to crush her dream. "Figure it out, figure out the time. How long will it take to walk two thousand miles?" I leap up to get a pen and paper. Her eyes follow me, like a cat that is ready to pounce.

"Here now," I say, pen working, setting numbers deep into the paper. "Let's say you walk, on average, some twenty miles a day. That's twenty into two thousand, right? It goes one hundred times. And so, one hundred equals exactly one hundred years. It'll take you one hundred years!"

"Don't be stupid," she says. "One hundred *days*, not years."

"Oh, yeah, okay, days," I mumble. I was never good at math. I feel as if someone

has suddenly twisted an elastic band around my forehead. I crumple the paper, turn to her and say, "So if it's one hundred days, what is that? How many months?"

"A little over three." She calculates so fast that I agree without thinking. "Fine, but call it four months," I say, "because there's bound to be some delay: weather, shopping for supplies, maybe first-aid treatments. You never know, you have to make allowances."

"All right, I make allowances, four months."

⑫ What have I done? It sounds as if all of this nonsense is still in full swing. *Say more about the time.* "Okay," I say, "so where do we get the time to go? What about my job? What about my responsibilities, *your* responsibilities too? What about—?"

"What about I send you a postcard when I finish the trip," she says, leaving the room.

I sit there mouthing my pen. I hear her going down the basement steps. Pouting now, I think. Sulking. She knows she's wrong about this one.

"Seen my backpack?" she calls from below. . . . "Next to mine," I say. "On the shelf beside the freezer."

I am angry with myself. She has had her way, won without even trying. "Take mine down too," I blurt out. "You can't expect to walk the Appalachian Trail all alone." I stare at my feet. "Sorry," I say to them both, "I'm really sorry about all of this."

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1. Which word **best** describes the narrator's tone in this selection?
- A angry
 - B bitter
 - C reluctant
 - D sincere
2. Which word **best** describes the woman in the selection?
- A argumentative
 - B determined
 - C reckless
 - D unrealistic
3. In paragraph 6, what does the sentence "Her eyes follow me, like a cat that is ready to pounce" suggest about the woman?
- A She is grateful that the narrator is concerned.
 - B She is fascinated by the narrator's opinion.
 - C She is deliberately tormenting the narrator.
 - D She is in control of the situation.
4. In paragraph 12, the selection reads, "*Say more about the time.*" What do the italics indicate?
- A The narrator whispers these words to the woman.
 - B These words are only in the narrator's mind.
 - C These words are being spoken by the woman.
 - D The narrator shouts these words at the woman.
5. What is the narrator apologizing for in the last sentence of the selection?
- A the pain his feet will endure when hiking the trail
 - B his mistake in calculating the time the hike will take
 - C arguing with the woman about hiking the trail
 - D telling the woman where she can find her backpack

6. Which word **best** describes how the narrator feels in the last paragraph of the selection?
- A hopeful
 - B jealous
 - C relieved
 - D resigned
7. The author uses dialogue between the characters to create what?
- A dramatic irony
 - B extended metaphor
 - C confrontational yet playful mood
 - D vivid imagery of their home in contrast to the Appalachian Trail
8. Which **best** describes the narrator's arguments against hiking the Appalachian Trail?
- A convincing
 - B ineffective
 - C informed
 - D protective
9. Which is the **main** conflict in this selection?
- A person vs. nature
 - B person vs. society
 - C person vs. himself
 - D person vs. person

End of Sample Items

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EOC English I Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
The Appalachian Trail	1	C	Analyzing	5.01
The Appalachian Trail	2	B	Analyzing	5.01
The Appalachian Trail	3	D	Analyzing	5.01
The Appalachian Trail	4	B	Analyzing	5.03
The Appalachian Trail	5	A	Analyzing	5.03
The Appalachian Trail	6	D	Analyzing	5.03
The Appalachian Trail	7	C	Analyzing	4.02
The Appalachian Trail	8	B	Analyzing	5.01
The Appalachian Trail	9	D	Analyzing	5.03