7TH GRADE
SBA REVIEW

APRIL MORNING

CHARACTERIZATION
USE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS TO REFINE UNDERSTANDING
It is the eve of the American Revolution. Adam Cooper lives in colonial Lexington. As the British army approaches, the men of Lexington gather to form a militia to fight them. Adam wants to join but is not sure if his father will allow him. To learn what happens, read the excerpt from the novel April Morning and answer the questions that follow.

from April Morning

by Howard Fast

1 I found myself in the entrance to the guest room, or hostel room, as we sometimes called it, of Buckman's. All around me were friends and neighbors, some of the men grinning when they caught my eye, but everyone warm and nervous and bound together by a thousand invisible threads, the way people become facing a great danger or excitement in common. It sometimes seems to me that we live inside of invisible shells, but just as much shells as the fat Maine lobsters inhabit; and only at a time like this do the shells melt away and the real people emerge.
2 Cousin Simmons saw me, pushed over, squeezed my elbow, and said softly, "A boy went to bed and a man awakened, hey, Adam?"
3 "I do hope so."
4 "Do me a favor, Adam?"
5 "Anything you say, Cousin Simmons."
6 "Your Cousin Ruth is out in all this commotion, and I don't blame the girl with everything stood topsy-turvy. Do find her and bring her home after you sign the muster book."
7 "I'll be pleased to, Cousin Simmons, but sure as the sunrise, I don't know whether I'll be signing that muster book. I just have my hopes and prayers."
8 "He's all bark and no bite. You should have learned that, Adam."
9 It's slow learning about your own father, I thought, and I said a prayer like this: Oh, don't let him do it to me in front of everyone standing here! Don't let him look at me the way he does, like I was nothing but a chicken thief caught in the act, and tell me that I'm no account and not fit to stand in with the men! I couldn't bear it now! I simply couldn't!
10 I was in the room now. There were at least six candles on the table where Father sat, with Jonas Parker on one side of him and Samuel Hodley on the other. Jonas Parker had the muster book out in front of him, and when someone came to sign it, he would push it toward him and make a serious and almost ceremonial thing of the entry. Father had the minutes book of the Committee, and when someone signed the muster book, Father entered the name and the salient\(^2\) facts in the records of the committee. It appeared

\(^1\text{muster book} — \text{an official roll of persons in a militia}\)
\(^2\text{salient} — \text{important}\)
pointless to me for two separate sets of records to be kept like that, yet I knew that most of the men agreed that the civil and military aspects of the matter should be cleanly separated. Samuel Hodley was the emergency storekeeper, and it was up to him to determine whether the militiaman had enough powder and shot, and if not, to see that it was issued. When a man had signed in, Jonas Parker would tell him:

"You are now on call and assignment until you are officially released from duty with a release signed by one of us three. In other words, you are now a member in good standing, under orders and in discipline in this Committee of Defense and Correspondence. Go home and get your gun and powder and shot, a pound of bread and a water bottle. Muster on the common at four o'clock in the morning."

I don't mean that he said that over and over, but enough times so that no one would fail to hear it. Even though I myself held to Samuel Hodley's opinion, that this was all a great bother and disturbance over nothing at all, his words made me feel cold and desolate for a moment.

I was in front of the table almost before I realized. "Name?" my father said briskly, in the official tone he used for Committee business—and then he looked up and saw me as I replied:

"Adam Cooper."

His eyes fixed on me, and I felt that they were boring inside of me and reading every thought. For myself, I had the feeling that I was looking at my father for the very first time, not seeing him as I had always seen him in the vague wholeness of age and distance, but looking at the face of a surprisingly young man, his wide, brown face serious and intent upon me, his dark eyes shadowed in their inquiry, his broad full-lipped mouth tight and thoughtful. How was it, I wondered, that I had never noticed before what a strikingly handsome man he was? How was it that I had seen in him only the strength of his overbearance and not the thewed strength of those massive brown arms spread on the desk with the white shirt sleeves rolled high and carelessly? It was no wonder that men listened to him and heeded his words.

The room was full of silence, and it stretched and stretched, and all the while my father never turned his eyes away from mine. What went through his mind I will never know, but I do know that time there became an eternity. At last, Father looked at Jonas Parker and nodded silently, and Parker pushed the muster book toward me. I bent over the table and signed my name, my hand trembling, the letters all blurred and wiggly.

"Powder and shot?" Hodley was asking me.

"Yes, sir."

Then I pushed my way out of the room, having no other desire than to be away from everyone else and for a while alone.

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3 powder and shot — gunpowder and lead ball
4 thewed — muscular

QUESTIONS

1. Based on the excerpt, what does Adam hope will happen at Buckman's?
   
   A. He will not be too afraid to sign the muster book.
   B. His father will allow him to sign the muster book.
   C. His father will not notice him at the meeting.
   D. He will get respect from the committee.

2. Read the sentence from paragraph 2 in the box below.

   Cousin Simmons saw me, pushed over, squeezed my elbow, and said softly, "A boy went to bed and a man awakened, hey, Adam?"

   What does the sentence suggest about Cousin Simmons?
   
   A. that he supports Adam's wish to join the militia
   B. that he wants Adam to return to his home
   C. that he likes joking with Adam about Adam's father
   D. that he thinks Adam is young and immature

3. In paragraph 9, what does Adam fear the most about his father?
   
   A. that his father will embarrass him publicly
   B. that his father will arrest him for stealing chickens
   C. that his father will punish him for his disobedience
   D. that his father will give him a lesser job to perform
4. Which of the following best describes what occurs between Adam and his father at the sign-in table in paragraph 15?

A. Adam sees his father in a different way.
B. Adam becomes more fearful of his father.
C. Adam attempts to impress his father.
D. Adam tries to read signs of emotion in his father's face.

5. In paragraph 16, Adam's father allows him to enlist. What does this most likely indicate about Adam's father?

A. He realizes the militia needs men.
B. He understands the seriousness of the colonies' situation.
C. He recognizes Adam as an adult.
D. He knows that Adam will look cowardly if he does not sign.

6. In paragraph 19, Adam says he wants to be alone. What is the most likely reason he says this?

A. He is disturbed by his father's lack of emotion.
B. He is overwhelmed by what has just happened.
C. He is embarrassed at being the center of attention.
D. He is filled with fear about signing the book.

7. Based on the excerpt, explain what signing the muster book means to Adam. Use relevant and specific examples from the excerpt to support your answer.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
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__________________________________________________________________________
ANSWERS

1. B
2. A
3. A
4. A
5. C
6. B