

Reading Practice

Read this selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Eternal Frontier

by Louis L'Amour

My notes about
what I am reading

Louis L'Amour wrote many books set in the Old West. His novels evoke images of the time when the western region of the country was still considered the frontier.

- 1 The question I am most often asked is, "Where is the frontier now?"
- 2 The answer should be obvious. Our frontier lies in outer space.
- 3 The moon, the asteroids, the planets, these are mere stepping stones, where we will test ourselves, learn needful lessons, and grow in knowledge before we attempt those frontiers beyond our solar system. Outer space is a frontier without end, the eternal frontier, an everlasting challenge to explorers not alone of other planets and other solar systems but also of the mind of man.
- 4 All that has gone before was preliminary. We have been preparing ourselves mentally for what lies ahead. Many problems remain, but if we can avoid a devastating war we shall move with a rapidity scarcely to be believed. In the past seventy years we have developed the automobile, radio, television, transcontinental and transoceanic flight, and the electrification of the country, among a multitude of other such developments. In 1900 there were 144 miles of surfaced road in the United States. Now there are over 3,000,000. Paved roads and the development of the automobile have gone hand in hand, the automobile being civilized man's antidote to overpopulation.
- 5 What is needed now is leaders with perspective; we need leadership on a thousand fronts, but they must be men and women who can take the long view and help to shape the

"The Eternal Frontier" from *Frontier* by Louis L'Amour. Text copyright © 1984 by Louis L'Amour Enterprises, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Bantam Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

outlines of our future. There will always be the nay-sayers,¹ those who cling to our lovely green planet as a baby clings to its mother, but there will be others like those who have taken us this far along the path to a limitless future.

My notes about
what I am reading

- 6 We are a people born to the frontier. It has been a part of our thinking, waking, and sleeping since men first landed on this continent. The frontier is the line that separates the known from the unknown wherever it may be, and we have a driving need to see what lies beyond. It was this that brought people to America, no matter what excuses they may have given themselves or others.
- 7 Freedom of religion, some said, and the need for land, a better future for their children, the lust for gold, or the desire to escape class restrictions—all these reasons were given. The fact remains that many, suffering from the same needs and restrictions, did not come.
- 8 Why then did some cross the ocean to America and not others? Of course, all who felt that urge did not come to America; some went to India, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, or elsewhere. Those who did come to America began almost at once to push inland, challenging the unknown, daring to go beyond the thin line that divides the known and the unknown. Many had, after landing from the old country, developed good farms or successful businesses; they had become people of standing in their communities. Why then did they move on, leaving all behind?
- 9 I believe it to be something buried in their genes, some inherited trait,² perhaps something essential to the survival of the species.
- 10 They went to the edge of the mountains; then they crossed the mountains and found their way through impassable forests to the Mississippi. After that the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and on to Oregon and California. They trapped fur, traded with Indians, hunted buffalo, ranched with cattle or sheep, built towns, and farmed. Yet the genes lay buried within them, and after a few months, a few years, they moved on.

1. **nay-sayers**: people who disagree or have negative attitudes.

2. **inherited trait**: a characteristic passed on from ancestors, such as eye color or height.

- 11 Each science has its own frontiers, and the future of our nation and the world lies in research and development, in probing what lies beyond.
- 12 A few years ago we moved into outer space. We landed men on the moon; we sent a vehicle beyond the limits of the solar system, a vehicle still moving farther and farther into that limitless distance. If our world were to die tomorrow, that tiny vehicle would go on and on forever, carrying its mighty message to the stars. Out there, someone, sometime, would know that once we existed, that we had the vision and we made the effort. Mankind is not bound by its atmospheric envelope or by its gravitational field, nor is the mind of man bound by any limits at all.
- 13 One might ask—why outer space, when so much remains to be done here? If that had been the spirit of man we would still be hunters and food gatherers, growling over the bones of carrion³ in a cave somewhere. It is our destiny to move out, to accept the challenge, to dare the unknown. It is our destiny to achieve.
- 14 Yet we must not forget that along the way to outer space whole industries are springing into being that did not exist before. The computer age has arisen in part from the space effort, which gave great impetus to the development of computing devices. Transistors, chips, integrated circuits, Teflon, new medicines, new ways of treating diseases, new ways of performing operations, all these and a multitude of other developments that enable man to live and to live better are linked to the space effort. Most of these developments have been so incorporated into our day-to-day life that they are taken for granted, their origin not considered.
- 15 If we are content to live in the past, we have no future. And today is the past.

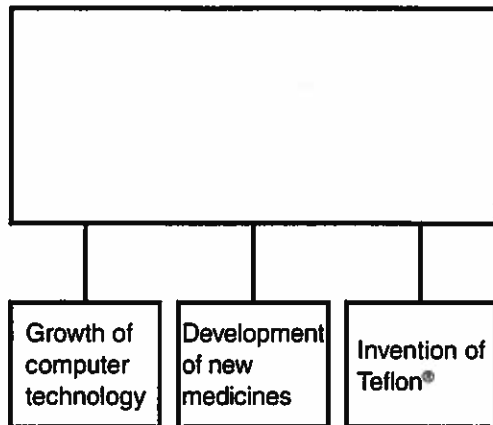
My notes about
what I am reading

3. **carrion**: the flesh of dead animals.

Use "The Eternal Frontier" (pp. 84–86) to answer questions 1–7.

- 1 Which statement summarizes L'Amour's central argument?
- A The country needs strong leaders to move us into the future.
 - B Some people are born to explore; some are not.
 - C Problems preventing space exploration can be overcome.
 - D Exploration leads to progress and growth.
- 2 In paragraph 5, L'Amour uses the phrase "those who cling to our lovely green planet as a baby clings to its mother" to suggest that —
- F there are valid reasons to postpone space exploration
 - G we must hang on to what we have
 - H those who oppose his view are weak and timid
 - J space exploration will not threaten our planet
- 3 In paragraph 6, L'Amour appeals to readers' —
- A pride in a national character
 - B love of rural traditions
 - C fear of the unknown
 - D desire to seem sophisticated
- 4 In paragraphs 6 and 7, L'Amour argues that the real reason Europeans came to America was to explore a new frontier. What evidence does he provide to support this claim?
- F People have a natural urge to explore the unknown, which means pushing the boundaries of new frontiers.
 - G People often prefer to make excuses rather than admit to the real reasons behind their behavior.
 - H Some Europeans who suffered from religious persecution and other problems did not emigrate to America, so these reasons were not sufficient.
 - J Many Europeans who had not suffered from religious persecution and poverty emigrated to America.
- 5 What rhetorical device does L'Amour use in the last two sentences of paragraph 13?
- A Rhetorical questions
 - B Loaded language
 - C Analogy
 - D Parallelism
- 6 The word impetus in paragraph 14 comes from the Latin word *impetere*, which means "to attack." In this context, *impetus* means —
- F a forward push
 - G an unplanned approach
 - H a renewal of objections
 - J a reversal of direction

7 Read the chart below.



Which main idea statement belongs in the empty box, supported by the details in the chart?

- A Space exploration is just one of the many ways that humans show their ingenuity.
- B Some advances affect people's lives more than others.
- C Demands for innovations in other areas detract from the space program.
- D Space exploration has contributed to advances that benefit everyone.

Name _____ Date _____

Answer the following question in the space provided.

- 8** What does the frontier represent to Louis L'Amour? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.

