

Sample Pages

Informational Texts Pack

Feet and Shoes

by Margaret Whisnant

(CCSS Aligned)



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Arguments for Feet Appreciation

by Margaret Whisnant

Human feet are remarkable structures. During an average lifetime, each pair of them will carry their person approximately 115,000 miles. That's more than four times around the earth! By the end of a typical day, this dutiful duo has executed anywhere from 6,000 to 10,000 steps and withstood the force of several tons of pressure—about what you would feel if a friendly hippopotamus decided to sit on your lap.



While we are pampering, perfuming, and coloring other parts of our bodies, our feet get the silent treatment. We write poems and sing songs about sparkling eyes, rosy cheeks, and golden hair, but we rarely praise feet. They don't fare any better in the world of art. Think of the Mona Lisa, for instance. There she sits—alluring smile, delicate hands, perfect hair, no feet. Furthermore, some podiatrists say that as many as 8 out of 10 of us insult our feet daily by stuffing them into shoes that don't fit.

How inconsiderate of us! There are so many reasons why we should celebrate and appreciate our feet.

A pair of them, for example, contains one-fourth of the human body's bones—52, to be exact. Each time we lift a heel off the ground and take a step, 14 small bones in five toes are forced to carry half of our body weight. Encase them in an ill-fitting shoe, and they bear an even heavier burden. Add a stylish 2 ½ -inch heel, and the load pressure on the forefoot can be increased by 75%. All 33 joints and 100+ muscles, tendons, and ligaments in each foot feel the pinch.

Obviously, choosing the right shoe in the right size is an important first step toward proper feet appreciation. The American Podiatry Medical Association says we are likely to get a better fit if we go shoe shopping in the afternoon when our feet are a little swollen from the day's activities. Most people also have one foot larger than the other, so we should go for a comfortable fit for the bigger one. That's right. Fit your bigfoot!

Feet, like the rest of our bodies, change as we grow. Perhaps you have noticed recently that your feet are sometimes smelly. This wasn't a problem last

Arguments for Feet Appreciation Questions

- _____ 1. The main idea of this informational text is
- (A) we should take care of and appreciate our feet.
 - (B) feet change as people grow from childhood to adulthood.
 - (C) feet are our most important body part.
 - (D) feet need exercise.
- _____ 2. The author wrote that some podiatrist think as many as 8 out of 10 people are *stuffing* their feet into shoes that don't fit. What is implied by the word *stuffing*?
- (A) Most people wear shoes that are too big.
 - (B) The majority of people wear shoes that are too small.
 - (C) People tend to buy shoes that are too wide.
 - (D) Stylish shoes are seldom good fits.
3. Using the given information, compare an adult's foot and an infant's foot.
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- _____ 4. What percentage of the total number of bones in the human body are located in the feet?
- (A) 5%
 - (B) 10%
 - (C) 15%
 - (D) 25%
5. Explain how the full text proves, or fails to prove, that *human feet are remarkable structures* as stated in the opening sentence.
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Extraordinary Feet

by Margaret Whisnant

Feet do ordinary things like walking, running, and dancing, but they can also be quite extraordinary. They achieve the unachievable, entertain us, make us wonder, and take us to far-away places.

Pheidippides, a soldier of ancient Greece certainly had remarkable feet. It was his job to run from place to place carrying messages for the Greek army. In 490 BC, Persians invaded the Greek city of Marathon, and the generals of nearby Athens sent Pheidippides on a 150 mile run to Sparta to ask for reinforcements. He ran for 36 hours, but he isn't remembered for this feat. His subsequent shorter dash—somewhere between 24 to 26 miles—from Marathon back to Athens to let the townspeople know that the Persian army had been squashed made the history books. The ancient story of Pheidippides's victory run is the inspiration for the familiar Marathon races that take place as part of the Olympic games and as local events all over the world.

Flash forward a couple thousand years to Englishman Roger Bannister's amazing feet. They had already won him a track scholarship to study medicine at Oxford University when he competed in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. He came in a disappointing fourth and, for a while, he seriously considered giving up running. Instead he set a new goal. He would be the first man to do what many thought was impossible in 1952—run a mile in under four minutes. On May 6, 1954, at a collegiate track meet in Oxford, 3,000 people watched as Bannister clocked a mile in 3 minutes 59.4 seconds. Sir Roger and his famous feet were knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1975. At the 2012 London Olympics, Bannister carried the Olympic flame at the site of his historic run in the stadium bearing his name.



Feet just naturally seem to want to dance. Some are so good at it they change the rules. Bill "Bojangles" Robinson's exceptionally talented feet did just that. Born in 1878, he was dancing for a living at the age of seven, and by the time he started working in movies in the 1930s, he had invented and perfected a new style of tap dancing. His complicated, exacting footwork left the old flat-footed style in the dust and set a new standard of excellence for all future dancers. In 1989 Congress passed a resolution designating May 25, Robinson's birthday, as National Tap Dance Day.

The Nicholas Brothers, widely regarded as the two greatest tap dancers ever, watched and learned from Bill Robinson during his Vaudeville days. His influence is obvious in their performance of mind-boggling leaps and landings

Answer Keys

Arguments for Feet Appreciation (Text 1)

1. A (RI. 6.2, 7.2, 8.2)
2. B (RI. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1 RI. 6.4, 7.4, 8.4)
3. *Sample Response:* Obviously, a baby's foot is much smaller. It also has a rounder appearance because of the presence of a layer of fat in the spot where adults have arches. The author also states that baby feet are cuter than adult feet, but this is a matter of opinion, not fact. (RI. 6.3, 7.3, 8.3)
4. D (RI. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1)
5. *Sample Response:* The text includes numerous facts to support the statement. In the first paragraph the reader is told that a pair of feet will travel more than four times around the earth in a lifetime and withstand several tons of force each day. Later foot structure is featured, including the fact that the feet contain one fourth of the body's bones. The reader learns that 14 small bones in the toes of one foot holds half a person's body weight and that when the load pressure is increased by ill-fitting or high-heeled shoes, the feet still bear the burden. The fact that feet grow thick skin on the bottom as a protective layer also adds to their "remarkable structures" status.
6. A (RI. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1)
7. C (RI. 6.5, 7.5, 8.5)
8. *Sample Response:* Though the author does not specifically state that wearing shoes that are too small or stylish shoes that put more pressure on the foot and toes are causes of discomfort, this connection is clearly implied. The solution is to make good choices in buying shoes. Shopping in the afternoon when feet are slightly swollen and fitting the larger foot are techniques for purchasing good-fitting shoes. (RI. 6.5, 7.5, 8.5)
9. B (RI. 6.4, 7.4, 8.4)
10. *Sample Response:* *Explode* is used figuratively in this sentence because sweat glands don't actually blow up like a bomb or a volcano. However, the word is appropriate because it gives the reader a sense of the sudden and dramatic changes (like an explosion) that take place in puberty. The statement would still be factually correct if *explode* were removed and replaced by *go*, *move*, or *progress*, but neither word would carry the nuance of speed and surprise that the author wants to convey. The author also uses the word *spit* figuratively when she writes that sweat glands can *spit out as much as half a pint of moisture each day*. Sweat glands don't actually spit. RI. 6.4, 7.4, 8.4 L. 6.5, 7.5, 8.5)