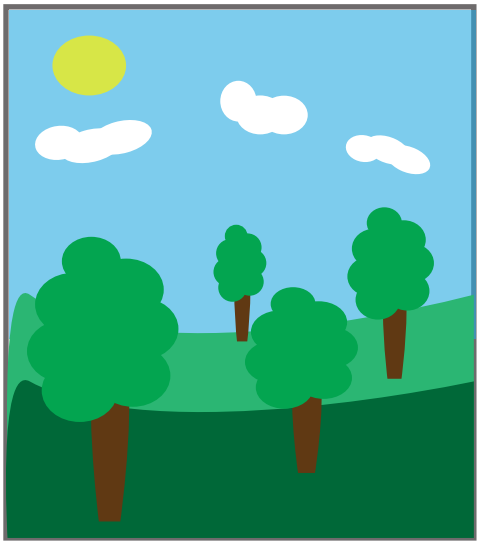
Trees of Time

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.



1 In the mountains of western North Carolina, there is a forest where time seems to slow down. It is called Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest. Some of its tulip poplar trees are more than 400 years old. These giants were already growing tall before North Carolina became a state.

2 The trees grow in the Appalachian Mountains, one of the oldest mountain ranges on Earth. Scientists believe these mountains were once much taller and sharper. Over millions of years, wind, rain, and ice slowly wore them down into the soft, rounded peaks we see today.

3 How do scientists know how old a tree is? They study its rings. Each year, a tree adds a new layer of wood under its bark. Inside the trunk, these layers look like circles. Wide rings show years with plenty of rain, and thin rings show dry years. Scientists can use a special tool to pull out a thin sample of wood, so the tree does not have to be cut down.

4 Old forests like this one are rare. Long ago, many of North Carolina's forests were cut down for lumber. Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest was never logged, so its trees kept growing. Today, people work to protect the old trees that remain. When you stand among them, you are standing beside living history.

Questions

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

A. Tree rings show which years were rainy.
B. Old trees in North Carolina's mountains hold clues about the past and are worth protecting.
C. The Appalachian Mountains are taller than other mountains.
D. Tulip poplars are the only trees in North Carolina.

2. According to paragraph 3, what does a thin tree ring show?

A. a rainy year
B. a dry year
C. a year the tree was cut
D. a year the tree was planted

3. In paragraph 4, the word *rare* means:

A. very old
B. not found often
C. very large
D. easy to see

4. Why are the Appalachian Mountains rounded today? Use details from paragraph 2.

_____

_____

_____

5. The author says the old trees are "living history." What does this mean? Use details from the passage to explain.

_____

_____

_____

Sources: U.S. Forest Service, "Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest" (fs.usda.gov); National Park Service, Blue Ridge Parkway, "Mountains" (nps.gov/blri); NOAA Global Monitoring Laboratory, "Reading Between the Rings" (gml.noaa.gov).

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Trees of Time

Answer Key

1. B
2. B
3. B
4. Wind, rain, and ice wore the mountains down over millions of years.
5. The trees are alive today but have been growing for hundreds of years, since before North Carolina was a state, so they connect us to the past. Their rings also record what past years were like.

Sources:

U.S. Forest Service – Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest brochure - www.fs.usda.gov.

National Park Service – Blue Ridge Parkway: Mountains -
https://www.nps.gov/blri/learn/nature/mountains.htm

NOAA – Reading Between the Rings (PDF) -
https://gml.noaa.gov/education/info_activities/pdfs/PSA_tree_rings.pdf

PBS – What Makes a Forest Old Growth? -
https://video.tpt.org/video/what-makes-a-forest-old-growth-yqc0rw/