

BRaille READING PASSAGE: WORKSHOP 16

Dot 46 Final Letter Contractions

County and State Fairs

Have you ever been to a county or state fair? You may recount stories of going to the fair as a child, eating cotton candy and fried foods, or the romance of the music of the merry-go-round. Maybe you entered a lamb or calf that you raised into a show, hoping to win a prize or earn bragging rights for a blue-ribbon pie or cake that you baked.

The importance of fairs in the 18th century was for families to share the bounty of their farms, exhibit livestock, and have a chance to enjoy the conclusion of a farming season blessed with favorable crops. In days gone by, youngsters were found running around with limited supervision while young men and women enjoyed the romance of dancing under the stars. Older folks might be swap stories, recipes, and tips on crops and livestock with people they didn't get to socialize with very often.

The earliest state fair was held in Syracuse, New York in 1841. As society changed from dependance on agriculture, to industry, and later to a reliance on service industries, the state fair evolved as well. The timeless animal shows and dances continue, but the appearance of carnival rides, countless games of chance, and music concerts stretched one week into two or three in a few states. Counties and states even built extensive fairgrounds with endless space for food vendors and concert stages.

County and state fairgrounds still serve as an occasion for fun, but now account for large economic profits for states. For instance, Minnesota and Texas host over 2 million people at their state fairs each fall. Fairs now have admission fees for the public, and entrance fees for food and other vendors who have made the fair a battleground for consumer monies.

Families still turn the state fair into a family excursion, still driving long distances and camping at nearby campgrounds to leave the tensions of daily life for a while. Heedless of changes from local family groups to larger businesses, the fair is still an occasion

for families to spend countless hours with each other. And, best of all, the sound of laughter can still be heard in the background far past the fairgrounds as priceless memories are still being made nearly two centuries later.

THE FAIRGROUNDS

It is a day in the month of June, and the fairgrounds are bustling with people. The air is filled with the sound of laughter and the smell of food. The children are running and playing, and the adults are talking and laughing. The fairgrounds are a place of joy and happiness, and everyone is enjoying it.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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