

Read the selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Race

The children lined up in the middle of the dirt road. Jesse, the oldest, stood on the far side, leaning forward. Beside him, Thomas stuffed a paperback book into the pocket of his pants. Next came Mary, tall and relaxed, only an inch or two shorter than Jesse. Ruthie was on the end. She studied the row of bare feet in the dust. They were all bigger than hers, all fidgety and itching to run.

Ruthie counted, “One, two, three, go!” A spatter of gravel and dust flew out behind Jesse as he took off running, leaving the others behind. Mary’s muscular legs carried her away too, and even Thomas showed Ruthie his back. She didn’t mind. She was glad to be racing with her older cousins—there was never any thought that she would win.

Thomas soon slowed to a walk, holding his side with one hand. Ruthie caught up and walked with him. Jesse reached the pine tree at the bend in the road, touched its trunk, and started back. Seconds later, Mary did the same. They sprinted toward Thomas and Ruthie, who stopped to watch.

Ruthie remembered that Mary had insisted the race must be to the tree and back. “That’s a long way to run,” Jesse had said.

Mary had replied, “Maybe you can run faster, but I can run farther.”

Thomas had laughed, not really believing her.

As Ruthie and Thomas watched, Mary proved it. Barely ahead of Mary, Jesse struggled up to the younger cousins. In that moment, Mary lowered her chin and smiled. Her feet pounded the dusty road, making a soft sound: *slap, slap, slap, slap*.

She ran by with a wink for Ruthie and passed Jesse without even breathing hard.

Turn the page.

Answer the questions below.

1 What clue words in the second paragraph tell the reader who started running first?

- A** Ruthie counted
- B** leaving the others behind
- C** carried her away
- D** never any thought

2 Who reached the pine tree first?

- F** Ruthie
- G** Thomas
- H** Mary
- J** Jesse

3 What did Ruthie and Thomas do as Jesse and Mary turned and ran toward them?

- A** They slowed down.
- B** They ran as fast as they could.
- C** They stopped.
- D** They lined up across the road.

4 When did Mary say she could run farther than Jesse?

- F** before the race
- G** when they started running
- H** when she passed Jesse
- J** after the race was over

5 Why did Mary smile at Ruthie and Thomas just before she passed Jesse?

Mary had confidence in herself, and she liked to win.
