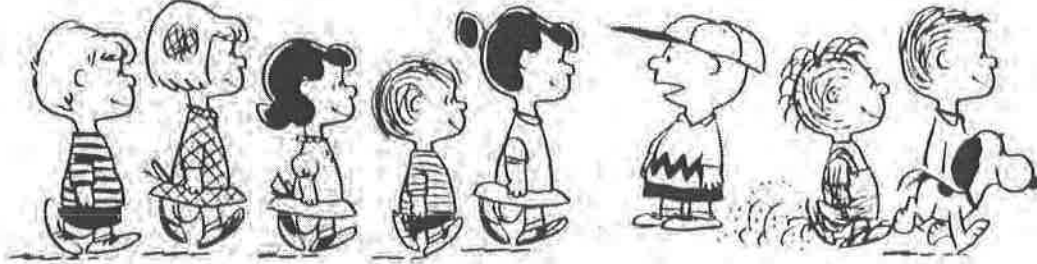




Charles Schulz: A Cartoonist With Character

A Popular Comic Strip

- 1 Have you ever seen a cartoon boy named Charlie Brown? Or Snoopy, the dog who sleeps on top of his doghouse? Or Lucy, the little girl who gives advice for five cents from a sidewalk stand? If you have, then you know *Peanuts*, one of the most popular comic strips of all time. Comic strips are funny cartoons. For a long time, they were mainly found in newspapers. Now, people can read them online or in books.



A Struggling Young Artist

- 2 Charles Schulz, the creator of *Peanuts*, was born in 1922 in Minnesota. From a young age, he knew what he wanted to be: a cartoonist.
- 3 Charles and his father loved to read the comics from the Sunday newspaper together. Charles dreamed of one day seeing his own art in a newspaper or magazine. When Charles was 15, he entered a funny sketch of his dog, Spike, into a newspaper contest. He was thrilled when the newspaper published it.
- 4 Other papers, however, did not feel the same way about Charles's work. When Charles was 17, he began attending art school. He continued to send his comic strip ideas to newspapers, but he only received rejection letters for his hard work.
- 5 At age 20, Charles was drafted to fight in World War II. Still, he never stopped pursuing his dream. Even while in the Army, he kept drawing, using his fellow soldiers as subjects. He drew them as they went about their duties and even added cheery cartoons to their letters home.

The Big Break

- 6 When Charles came home from the war in 1945, he resumed sending drawings to newspapers and magazines. At long last, a small paper in St. Paul, Minnesota, agreed to publish one of his comic strips about a group of young children.



- 7 Five years later, a large corporation wanted to print Charles's comic strip in newspapers sold across the United States. The only problem was the comic strip's title. Charles had called his strip "Li'l Folks" ("Little Folks"). However, another comic strip was already using that title. *Peanuts*, an informal term that meant "little children," was suggested as a new title. Charles agreed, but he never liked the new name.

The Boy Who Changed Comics

- 8 *Peanuts* was about the life of a boy named Charlie Brown and the everyday things he did with his friends. Charles drew his characters going to school, playing baseball, and writing letters. *Peanuts* seemed very simple at first, but the concept of showing a range of events from everyday life was new.
- 9 At this time, people called comic strips "funnies" because they included jokes. *Peanuts* was unusual because it was not always funny. Charles transformed the idea of what comic strips could be about. For instance, Charlie Brown suffered constant failure and disappointment. Also, the characters discussed serious life issues. Charles showed that comic strips could be about real-life challenges and feelings, not only jokes.
- 10 Something else made *Peanuts* unique: all of its characters were children. Charles hinted at the presence of adults, but did not show them. For example, Charles drew children in class listening to an unseen adult teacher. Sometimes, Charlie Brown talked about his father, an adult who never actually appeared in the comic strip.

Real Life in *Peanuts*

- 11 Charles Schulz drew upon experiences from his own childhood for some of his story lines and characters in *Peanuts*. For example, in elementary school, Charles did so well that he skipped two grades. Doing so, however, made him the smallest boy in his class. His bigger classmates often teased him.
- 12 Even though Charles grew up to be almost six feet tall, he never forgot the pain of feeling small and powerless. He also remembered rejection by his critics. These memories helped him express the hurt feelings of the comic strip's main character, Charlie Brown.
- 13 Yet, Charles included many happy memories from his life in the *Peanuts* comic strip as well. Charles's father, a barber, had always supported his son's artistic ambitions. So Charles made Charlie Brown's father a barber. Charles also made Spike, the family dog, into Charlie Brown's dog, Snoopy. Last, the qualities of Charlie Brown represented Charles himself. Charles included additional *aspects* of his personality in the other characters of his comic strip too.



- 14 *Peanuts* began in 1950. Over the next 50 years, the comic strip would change in some ways. New characters, such as Charlie Brown's younger sister Sally, were added. Charlie Brown's dog, Snoopy, changed the most. At first, Snoopy acted like any ordinary dog. Later, however, Snoopy took on some human qualities such as walking and dancing on his hind legs and even writing novels on a typewriter. Snoopy even imagined his doghouse as an imaginary World War I airplane!

Winning the Country and the World

- 15 *Peanuts* quickly spread beyond the United States. In 1950, the comic strip appeared in only seven newspapers. Eight years later, the comic strip could be seen in nearly 400 American newspapers and 40 international ones.
- 16 Charles's success won him the approval of other cartoonists as well as the public. In 1955 and again in 1964, Charles was presented with the Reuben Award, comic art's highest honor. In 1978, Charles won the International Cartoonist of the Year Award. Then, in 1990, the government of France honored him for artistic excellence.
- 17 Charles Schulz retired in 1999. By then, *Peanuts* was published in over 2,600 newspapers worldwide and in 21 languages. Not bad for someone who had collected countless rejection letters!
- 18 Charles Schulz died on Saturday, February 12, 2000. His characters live on in reprints and in numerous toys, books, TV specials, and greeting cards. Generations of people all over the world love *Peanuts*. This success, however, was only possible because Charles Schulz never gave up on his dream.

1

What is the *main* purpose of "Charles Schulz: A Cartoonist With Character"?

- A To explain why comic strips became popular with readers
- B To explain why Charles Schulz wanted to become a cartoonist
- C To provide the history of comic strips and explain their popularity
- D To provide details about the life and accomplishments of Charles Schulz

2

How was Charles Schulz's comic strip different than other comic strips written around the same time?

- A It included a dog with human qualities.
- B It often included serious life issues.
- C It was initially rejected by major newspapers.
- D It was created by one artist.



3

Which paragraph *best* supports the idea that people loved *Peanuts*?

- A Paragraph 7
- B Paragraph 8
- C Paragraph 12
- D Paragraph 15

4

Which sentence from paragraph 10 expresses the main idea of the paragraph?

- A Sometimes, Charlie Brown talked about his father, an adult who never actually appeared in the comic strip.
- B For example, Charles drew children in class listening to an unseen adult teacher.
- C Something else made *Peanuts* unique: all of its characters were children.
- D Charles hinted at the presence of adults, but did not show them.

5

Read this sentence from "Charles Schulz: A Cartoonist With Character."

"Charles included additional *aspects* of his personality in the other characters of his comic strip too."

Which word best defines *aspects* as used in this sentence?

- A Ideas
- B Periods
- C Methods
- D Qualities



6

Read these sentences from
"Charles Schulz: A Cartoonist
With Character."

"In 1950, the comic strip
appeared in only seven
newspapers. Eight years later,
the comic strip could be seen
in nearly 400 American
newspapers and
40 international ones."

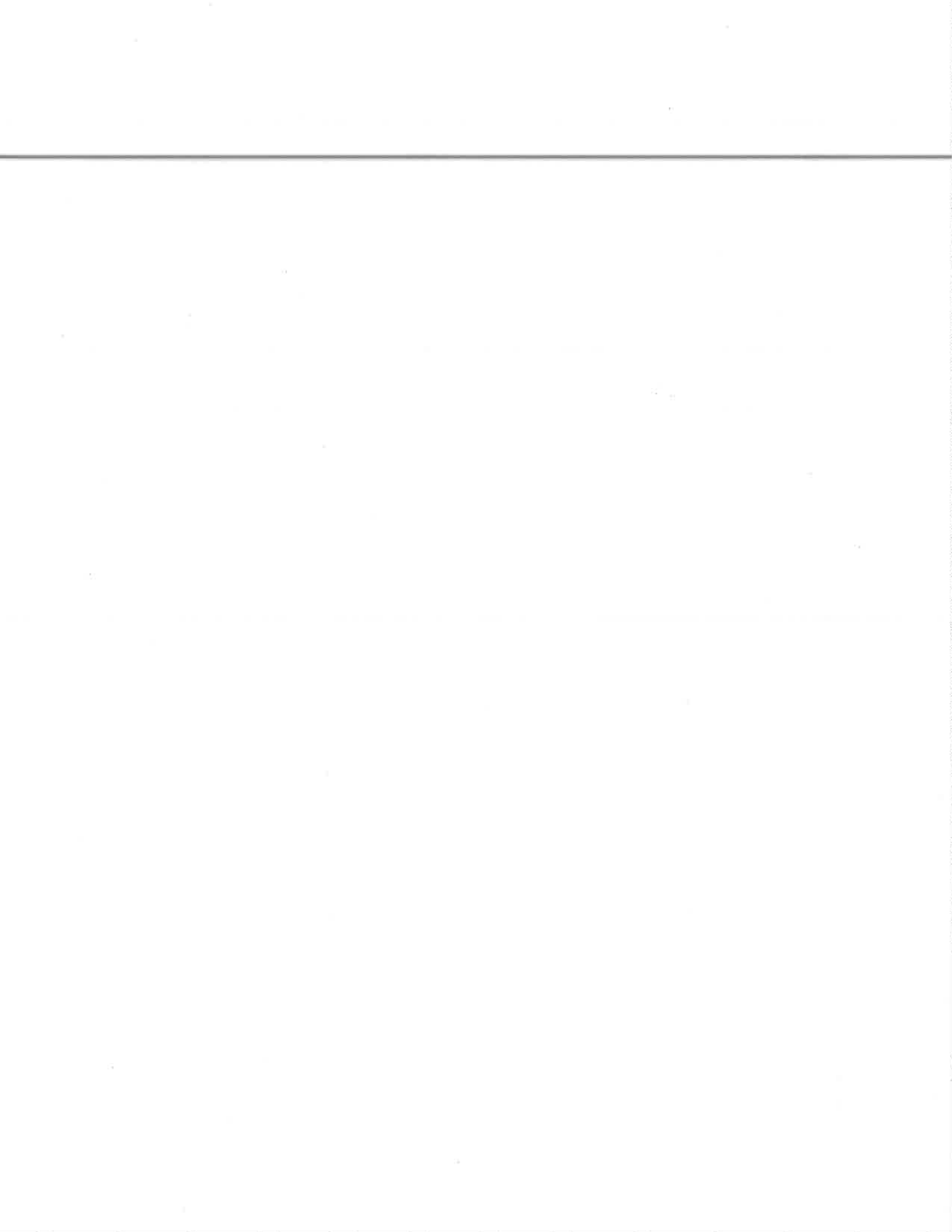
Why does the author include
these details?

- A** To show that *Peanuts* was becoming the funniest comic strip
- B** To show that Charles was writing for a different newspaper
- C** To show that *Peanuts* was growing in popularity
- D** To show that Charles was planning to move to another country

7

How does the author support
the idea that Charles Schulz
became a respected cartoonist?

- A** By providing examples of the honors he received
- B** By including information about his artistic challenges
- C** By describing readers who enjoyed his work
- D** By including details about his characters





Assessment Objective: 1.6.19 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.

1

Explain what the reader can learn from Charles Schulz's life. Use information from the passage and your own ideas and conclusions to support your answer.

Extended-Response Scoring Rubric



A Candlelit Holiday

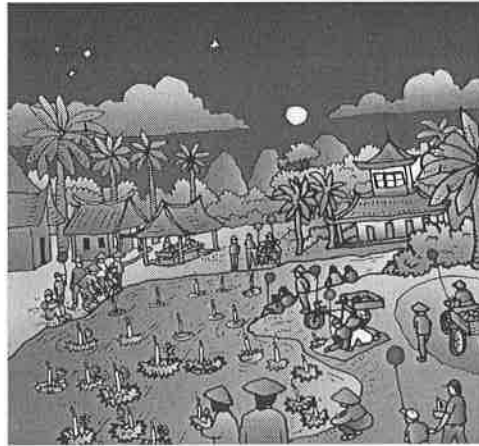
by
Elaine Masters

On one full-moon night every fall, the rivers and lakes of Thailand are dotted with twinkling candles. The Thais are celebrating "Loi Krathong," or "Floating Leaf Cup Day."

No one knows for sure how this lovely custom got started. Some say it was started 700 years ago by a wife of a king who wanted to surprise and please her husband. Others say it started even longer ago as a special religious ceremony. But however it began, it is delightful.

Families always used to make their floats, or little boats, from banana leaves torn into strips and woven into the shape of a bowl. Then they beautifully decorated them with flowers. Now, while many families still make their own floats, others simply buy them. Modern floats may be made of banana leaves or plastic. All of them still hold a lighted candle, a flower, a stick or two of sweet-smelling incense, and a coin.

On the holiday evening, families gather at parks near lakes, rivers, or



canals for outdoor dinners. Adults sit on mats and visit with their neighbors while children play tag or hide-and-seek. In some cities, blazing fireworks and dancers in shining silk costumes entertain the crowd.

Many men and women sell things. People sell floats to those who have not made them at home. Other people sell balloons in various shapes and colors or clever toys made of bamboo. Food sellers offer noodle soup, dried fish, candy, little cakes, roasted chicken, and bamboo tubes filled with sticky rice cooked in coconut milk. They pour soft drinks into small plastic bags, whirl a rubber band around the top, and stick in a short straw.

Then, when the full moon rises, families light the candles and set their little boats afloat. The waterway soon twinkles like a fairyland with candles bobbing in their floats and fireworks reflecting in the water.

**1**

Paragraph 2 of this selection is mainly about —

- A** how this holiday might have begun
- B** what the floats are made of
- C** when the holiday takes place
- D** what people eat during the holiday

3

After reading the title, what should you expect to learn from this selection?

- A** How to make your own candles
- B** Ideas for new recipes
- C** Why we celebrate the Fourth of July
- D** Where a candlelit holiday is celebrated

2

To understand more about the meaning of the floating leaf cups, the reader should ask —

- A** how the floats are kept from being burned by the flame
- B** why a coin is placed in the float
- C** what happens to all the floats when the holiday is over
- D** how much store-bought floats cost

4

Which detail in the selection shows that this is a relaxing holiday?

- A** Families spend the evening eating, playing, and visiting.
- B** People spend hours making floats.
- C** There are many different kinds of food to buy.
- D** It is held in autumn.