The Plow King

1   If you've ever visited a farm, you've probably seen the name John Deere. It's found on tractors and farm machinery all over the world. But those letters are more than just the name of a famous tractor company. There is a real man with a real story behind those letters.

2   The real John Deere was born in Rutland, Vermont on February 7, 1804. He was a blacksmith, and by all accounts, a talented one. A blacksmith was an important member of any farm town. Deere made everything from pots and pans to horseshoes to wagon wheels. His iron farm tools were prized by Vermont's farmers.

3   However, by the 1830s, Vermont was changing. More and more farmers had trouble paying their bills. They were moving to the West to start over in places like Illinois and Ohio, where good farmland was cheap. With less demand for his iron tools, Deere faced financial troubles, too. By 1835, he owed so much money he was in danger of going to jail. So he joined the steady stream of Vermont farmers and headed west. He would have to send for his wife and four children later.

"I will never put my name on a product that does not have in it the best that is in me."

4   Deere arrived in Illinois in December, 1836. He built a blacksmith shop and a house for his family in the town of Grand Detour. As he fashioned iron tools for the newly arrived farmers, his business thrived. The farmers, though, weren't so lucky. The prairie soil was fruitful enough, but it was also horribly sticky. It stuck to the iron plows the farmers used. In his shop, Deere heard farmers grumbling that they were ready to return to Vermont.

5   One day, during a visit to a sawmill, Deere spied a broken steel saw blade <u>discarded</u> in a corner. He took the long blade to his shop and cut the teeth off of it. Heating one section of the steel at a time, he hammered and pounded it into a curved shape. He polished the steel until it shone. Finally, he dug up a sapling and fashioned two crude plow handles. When he was finished, he placed his new plow in front of his shop as an advertisement. With that, John Deere's steel plow business began. As he made more money, he was able to send for his family.

GO ON

5.7C (Response—Text Evidence) H

4. Based on the passage, the author would most likely agree that John Deere—

   A created the greatest machines of his time

   B felt a responsibility to make good products

   C achieved success mainly through good luck

   D worked hard because he wanted to be wealthy

5.10D (Author's Purpose—Describe Literary Devices) H

5. In which sentence from the passage does the author use imagery to create a picture for the reader?

   A *He polished the steel until it shone.*

   B *John Deere had definitely become the "Plow King"!*

   C *Within ten years, Deere's factory was producing 1,000 plows a year.*

   D *Before long, farmers everywhere were asking for Deere's "singing plow."*

5.7C (Response—Text Evidence) M

6. Read paragraph 6. Which sentence best shows why John Deere's steel plow was so popular among farmers in Illinois?

Fill in the check box with your selection.

6   ☐ Deere hadn't been the first to invent a plow from steel, but his plow proved especially popular. It was so light that a farmer needed only half as many animals to pull it. ☐ It sliced easily through heavy sod. ☐ Best of all, that troublesome prairie soil didn't stick to the steel. Farmers did notice one oddity: the steel made a whining sound as it cut through the soil. ☐ Before long, farmers everywhere were asking for Deere's "singing plow."

GO ON

5.11D.iii (Conventions) M

31. What changes should be made in paragraph 4 (sentences 17–20)?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

☐ Delete the comma after *games* in sentence 17

☐ Change *group* to **groups** in sentence 17

☐ Insert a comma after *others* sentence 18

☐ Change *peoples* to **people** in sentence 19

☐ Change *friends* to **friend's** in sentence 20

5.2B.iv (Word Structure) M

32. What change, if any, should be made in sentence 21?

A Change *you* to **I**

B Change *eqipment* to **equipment**

C Change *are* to **is**

D No change is needed.

GO ON