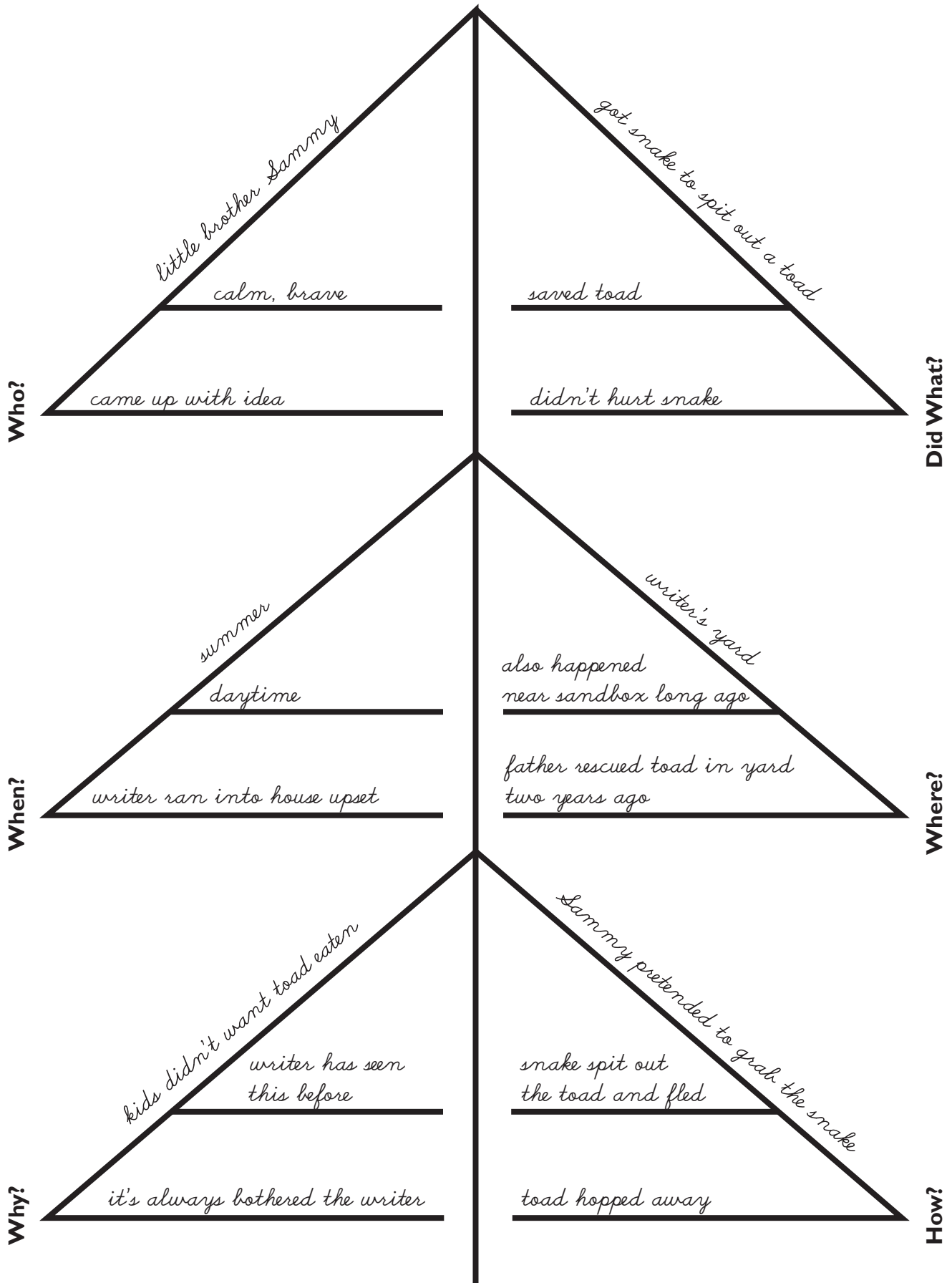


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Reading

Reading

Qatar

Capital: Doha

Official language: Arabic

Area: 4,247 square miles

Population: 600,000 (estimated 2004)

State religion: Islam

Money: Qatar riyal (basic unit)

Chief products: petroleum and petroleum products

Money: Qatar riyal (basic unit)



Qatar is a small nation located on a peninsula in the Persian Gulf. It is surrounded on three sides by water, and Saudi Arabia borders it to the south. This nation has hot summers with daytime temperatures that often reach 110° F. Although it is cooler in the winter, the coldest it ever gets is 50° F.

Qatar is covered with sand and gravel and gets less than four inches of rain per year. Therefore, dust storms and sandstorms are more common than rainstorms. Less than one percent of Qatar is arable land, so almost all of the nation's food is imported. There is so little fresh water that all drinking water is distilled from seawater. But this nation has other important natural resources below its surface, including the third-largest natural-gas reservoir on Earth. It has oil, too, 90 percent of which it sells to other nations. All exports move by sea, since there are no railroads.

The discovery of oil and natural gas caused big changes in Qatar. Until 1950, most people earned their livings by taking care of camels, diving for pearls, or fishing. Now most work in the petroleum industry, which has made Qatar one of the wealthiest nations in the world. It has a high average income per person. The government owns the oil industry. For more than 50 years, this has provided it with the money to provide free housing for the poor, free health care, and a free education for children ages 6 to 16. However, not everyone takes advantage of this schooling. The nation's literacy rate is 83 percent, which means that 17 percent of the people cannot read and write.

Qatar's government is a monarchy, and the nation's leader is always a male member of the al-Thani family, which has ruled Qatar since the mid 1800s. Qatar's national sport is camel racing. Young boys are the jockeys, and they stay in the saddle by wearing pants with Velcro™ bottoms! The camels' saddles have Velcro™ on them, too.

History of Numbers

18,000 BCE

Someone uses a "I" to count (Ishango bone in Congo).

520 BCE

Pythagorus in Greece names odd and even numbers. Romans have numerals that they spread for centuries.



500 BCE

Indians use the numerals 0-9.

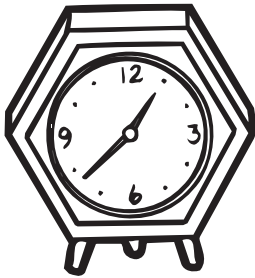


500 CE

Muslims rename Indian numbers "Arabic" and spread their use.

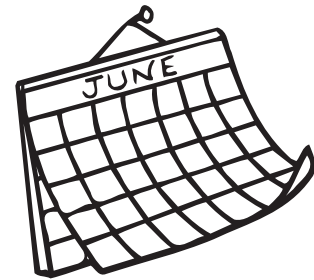
1180 CE

Italian Leonardo Fibonacci sees Arabic numerals.



1202 CE

Fibonacci shows how to easily do calculations with Arabic numerals.



1600 CE

Most Europeans switch to Arabic numerals.



1679 CE

German Gottfried Leibniz invents the binary system.

1944 CE

The English build Colossus, the first binary computer.

Climax

