

Directions Read the passage. Then read each question about the passage. Decide which is the best answer to each question. Circle the letter for the answer you have chosen.

New Bedford, Massachusetts

New Bedford is located off the southwestern coast of Massachusetts. In 1690 Joseph Russell purchased, or bought, a piece of land. This land later became the center of New Bedford's waterfront district. In 1765 Joseph Rotch, owner of a Nantucket whaling company, bought land in New Bedford from Joseph Russell. He started a whaling business. From the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s, the whaling industry became the center of New Bedford's economy.

Whales provided Americans with an important product, whale oil. Before the discovery of petroleum, or fuel oil, Americans used whale oil to light their lamps and make candles. Baleen, a bonelike material from whales, was used to make products such as umbrellas and fishing rods. Whale fishermen sailed to such faraway places as the Arctic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and Hawaii to hunt for whales. A whaling trip could last from nine months to five years.

By 1857 the New Bedford whaling industry employed over 10,000 men on 327 ships. Profits from whaling topped \$12 million for New Bedford in the mid-1800s. The town became known as the "richest city in the world." The whaling industry also helped expand the town's population. In 1790, 790 people lived in New Bedford. That number reached 7,592 in 1830, and by 1855 it rose even higher, to 20,389. The author Herman Melville, who lived in New Bedford, wrote his famous whale story *Moby-Dick* in 1851. *Moby-Dick* is based on Melville's voyages on a whaling ship out of New Bedford.

The kerosene lamp was invented in the 1850s, and the electric lamp in 1879. Whale oil became less important. The whale industry began to decline. By the 1880s, New Bedford's economy was moving away from the whaling industry and toward the textile industry.

1

Who started a whaling business in New Bedford?

- A** Herman Melville
- B** Joseph Russell
- C** Joseph Rotch
- D** Moby Dick

2

From 1790 to 1855, the population of New Bedford increased by approximately—

- A** 19,000
- B** 7,592
- C** 8,000
- D** 10,000

3

Which statement BEST summarizes the second paragraph?

- A** Whalers traveled to many places to hunt whales.
- B** Whales contained a substance called baleen.
- C** Whales were used to make many different products.
- D** Whalers could be away hunting whales for five years.

4

Baleen was used to make—

- A** kerosene and candles
- B** umbrellas and fishing rods
- C** combs and brushes
- D** curtains and rugs

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Why was whaling important to New Bedford in the nineteenth century?

- A** It created New Bedford's waterfront district.
- B** It led to the invention of the kerosene lamp.
- C** It led to the rise of the textile industry.
- D** It created over 10,000 jobs in New Bedford.

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Which statement is FALSE?

- A** Americans used whale oil to light lamps.
- B** New Bedford is located off the southeastern coast of Massachusetts.
- C** New Bedford became known as the richest city in the world.
- D** Herman Melville wrote *Moby-Dick*.

7

Analyze the impact that the whaling industry had on New Bedford's economy.

8

Why do you think that Herman Melville's novel was important to New Bedford?
