Climb to the Sky!

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There was one tree in Doug’s backyard. Only one tree, but it was enough. It was the biggest tree Doug had ever seen. His dad called it a magnolia. Doug thought that was a pretty good word. It sounded strong. It sounded old. This tree was strong. This tree was old. Doug was young. He was not very strong. But he knew he could climb that tree.

He waited until the weather was perfect: early autumn—crisp, but not cold. He wore a blue sweater and beat-up old shoes. His gloves were thick, to protect him from the bark. He was ready.

“Wait here,” he told his dog, Harvey. “I’ll be back later.”

As Harvey watched, Doug leapt for the lowest branch. He nearly slipped, but held on. Using all his strength, he pulled himself up. He could not do a pull-up in gym class, but when it counted, he could lift himself.

He continued slowly. Doug was careful. He did not want to fall and embarrass himself in front of his dog. He looked for a good handhold before letting go of the one he had. He watched his feet as they moved. He was in no hurry. He had all day.

Halfway up the tree, Doug took a break. He did not feel tired but wanted to rest before he got exhausted. This is what mountain climbers did. Doug was not a mountain climber, but he wanted to be one someday.

“Hello,” he said to a passing ladybug. “Any advice for my final ascent?”

The ladybug said nothing. Doug did not need her help. It was time to continue. He was just a few branches from the top when something terrible happened.

He lifted his left leg and placed it onto the next branch. The wood was old but not strong. It split down the side and fell to the earth with a horrible crack. Doug was watching. He was prepared. As his left foot slipped, he squeezed tight with his arms. For a terrifying moment, he dangled in air. Breathing slowly, he swung his legs forward and found a foothold. He was secure again.

“That’s far enough for today,” he said. “The summit can wait.”

He wrapped his legs around the strongest branch he could see and leaned against the trunk. His heart slowed as he reached into his pocket and took out a book. It was time to do some reading. Doug had all afternoon.
1. What does Doug climb?

   A  a tree at a park
   B  a tree in a schoolyard
   C  a tree in his backyard
   D  a tree in his neighbor's backyard

2. The most exciting part of a story is the climax. What is the climax of this story?

   A  Doug pulls himself up onto the lowest branch of the tree.
   B  Doug asks a ladybug whether it has any advice for him as he climbs.
   C  A branch near the top of the tree splits and falls when Doug steps on it.
   D  Doug takes out a book and starts to read in the tree.

3. Doug is careful as he climbs the tree. What evidence from the story supports this statement?

   A  Doug climbs the tree wearing a blue sweater and beat-up old shoes.
   B  Doug cannot do a pull-up in gym class, but he is able to pull himself up onto the lowest branch of the tree.
   C  A branch near the top of the tree breaks when Doug places his left leg on it.
   D  Doug climbs slowly and looks for a good handhold before letting go of the one he has.

4. Doug is patient as he climbs the tree. What evidence from the story supports this statement?

   A  Doug nearly slips after leaping for the lowest branch of the tree.
   B  Doug takes a break halfway up the tree even though he does not feel tired.
   C  Doug does not want to fall and embarrass himself in front of his dog.
   D  After a branch cracks and falls, Doug dangles in the air for a moment.

5. What is a theme of this story?

   A  No one should start something that he or she is not able to finish.
   B  People should put more trust in animals and less trust in themselves.
   C  Being careless and impatient can help someone deal with danger.
   D  Being careful and patient can help someone deal with danger.
6. Read these sentences from the text.

“He waited until the weather was perfect: early autumn—crisp, but not cold. He wore a blue sweater and beat-up old shoes.”

What does the word "crisp" mean here?

A  pleasant and cool
B  sunny and hot
C  firm but easy to break
D  dry and crunchy

7. Read these sentences from the text.

“He was not very strong. But he knew he could climb that tree.”

How could the author connect these two sentences?

A  He was not very strong but he knew he could climb that tree.
B  He was not very strong, but he knew he could climb that tree.
C  He was not very strong; but he knew he could climb that tree.
D  He was not very strong: but he knew he could climb that tree.

8. "Something terrible" happens to Doug when he is a few branches from the top of the tree. Support this statement with evidence from the text.
9. Describe what Doug does to make himself secure after a branch breaks under his left leg. Include at least two details from the story in your answer.

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10. Doug is careful and patient as he climbs up the tree. Explain whether he remains careful and patient when a branch breaks under his left leg. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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