

Name _____

Skill: Reading Comprehension

Read the story and answer the questions.

Lighthouses

Lighthouses have stood on or near the shores of coastal areas for thousands of years. They help ship captains to know the position of their ships both day and night. A lighthouse also warns ship captains if they are too close to land or of dangerous rocks and reefs in the water. In the daytime, a lighthouse can be recognized by its simple tower-like structure. At night, flashes from a powerful light inside the lighthouse go out across the ocean to show its location.

Sometimes fog rolls in thick over the ocean and neither the lighthouse nor the flashing light can be seen. If this happens, the lighthouse keeper may sound a foghorn. The foghorn's sound spreads far out over the waters. It lets the people navigating great steamships and smaller boats know which way to go to get through the fog.

Inside a lighthouse tower, there is a long stairway leading up to the light at the top. There is also a walkway around the outside of the light. From there, the keeper can be a watchman looking out far over the sea. It is also from the walkway that giant glass windows are kept clean on the outside so that the light shines at its brightest.

Although lighthouses have been around for a long time, their use has diminished since the 1940's. This is due to increased usage of electronic navigational aids. In the 1900's, there were about 1,500 lighthouses in use, but today, only about 350 are used for navigational purposes.

1. What is the purpose of a lighthouse?

2. When is a foghorn sounded? What is a foghorn's purpose?

3. Where are lighthouses located?

4. Why is it important to keep a lighthouse's windows clean?
