Comprehension: Folktale

Read the following story, then answer the questions that follow:

How the Monkeys saved the Fish
(Traditional Tanzanian Folktale)

The rainy season that year had been the strongest ever and the river had broken its banks. There were floods everywhere and the animals were all running up into the hills. The floods came so fast that many drowned, except the lucky monkeys who climbed up into the treetops. They looked down on the water where the fish were swimming and jumping out of the water as if they were the only ones enjoying the flood.

One of the monkeys saw the fish and shouted: "Look down, my friend, look at those poor creatures. They are going to drown. Do you see how they struggle in the water?"

"Yes," said the other monkey. "They could probably not escape the floods, because they seem to have no legs. How can we save them?" "I think we must do something. Let's go close to the edge of the flood where the water is not deep enough to cover us, and we can help them to get out."

So the monkeys did just that. They started catching the fish, but not without difficulty. One by one, they brought them out of the water and put them carefully on the dry land. After a short time there was a pile of fish lying on the grass motionless. One of the monkeys said, "Do you see? They were tired, but now they are just sleeping and resting. Had it not been for us, my friend, all these poor animals without legs would have drowned."

The other monkey said: "They will be very grateful because we have saved their lives."

Question 1: Fill in the missing word:
1. The rainy season was the ____________________________ they have ever had.
2. The fish could not ____________________________ the floods.
3. Many animals __________________________ in the flood.

4. The river had broken its __________________________.

Question 2: Answer the following questions:

1. Why did all the animals run up the hill? (2)
   ___________________________________________________________

2. Where did the monkeys hide from the floods? (1)
   ___________________________________________________________

3. Who did the monkeys try to save? (1)
   ___________________________________________________________

4. What did the monkeys do with the fish? (2)
   ___________________________________________________________

5. Why do you think the fish lay ‘motionless’ (without moving) on dry land? (1)
   ___________________________________________________________

6. What did the monkeys think the fish were doing? (2)
   ___________________________________________________________

7. Why did the monkeys think the fish will not be able to swim? (1)
   ___________________________________________________________

8. What do you think is the moral of the story or the lesson that we can learn from the folktale? (2)
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________

Language in context

Question 1: Find synonyms (words with the same meaning) from the passage for the following words:

1. quickly (par 1) __________________________

2. trouble (par 3) __________________________

3. unlucky (par 3) __________________________
Question 2:  *Find antonyms* (words with opposite meaning) for the following words from the passage:
1. careful ______________________
2. lucky ______________________
3. strongest ____________________
4. moving _____________________

Question 3:  *Rewrite the following sentences in the past tense*:
1. The monkeys climb the tree.
   ___________________________________________________
2. The fish is swimming in the water.
   ___________________________________________________
3. Do you see the fish in the water?
   ___________________________________________________
4. There are floods everywhere.
   ___________________________________________________
5. The fish cannot escape the floods.
   ___________________________________________________

Question 4:  *Identify the sentence type and add the correct punctuation*:
*Example:*  Where did the monkeys hide from the flood?  
1. Look out for the tree coming down the river __
  _____________________________________________
2. The monkeys thought the fish couldn’t swim __
  _____________________________________________
3. How many fish were taken out of the water __
  _____________________________________________
4. Finally, we have saved all the fish __
  _____________________________________________
5. Don’t go too close to the river __
  _____________________________________________
6. Why did all the animals run up the hill __
  _____________________________________________

First underline the verb, then change the verb to the past tense:
The fish *swim* in the river.
*swim* – *swam*
The fish *swam* in the river.
**MEMO:**

**Question 1:** *Complete the following by filling in words from the story:*

1. The rainy season was the **strongest** they have ever had.
2. The fish could not **escape** the floods.
3. Many animals **drowned** in the flood.
4. The river had broken its **banks**.

**Question 2:** *Answer the following questions:*

1. Why did all the animals run up the hill?  
   They tried to escape the floods.
2. Where did the monkeys hide from the floods?  
   The monkeys climbed into the trees.
3. Who did the monkeys try to save?  
   The monkeys tried to save the fish in the river.
4. What did the monkeys do with the fish?  
   They took them out of the water and put them on dry land.
5. Why do you think the fish lay ‘motionless’ (without moving) on dry land?  
   I think they were dead.
6. What did the monkeys think the fish were doing?  
   The monkeys thought the fish were just tired and were sleeping.
7. Why did the monkeys think the fish will not be able to swim?  
   They thought the fish will not be able to swim, because they had no legs.
8. What do you think is the moral of the story or the lesson that we can learn from the folktale?  
   Own work, example given:  
   I think this story teaches us that we should not judge others without knowing who they are and why they act as they do. Sometimes we think people need to be rescued from their situation without knowing that they are actually happy just where they are. By trying to ‘rescue’ these fish, the monkeys actually killed them.

**Language in context**

**Question 1:** *Find synonyms (words with the same meaning) from the passage for the following words:*

1. quickly (par 1)  
   fast
2. trouble (par 3)  
   difficulty
3. unlucky (par 3)  
   poor
Question 2: Find **antonyms** (words with opposite meaning) for the following words from the passage:

1. careful — careless (suffix changed –ful to –less)
2. lucky — unlucky (prefix added – un)
3. strongest — weakest
4. moving — motionless

Question 3: Rewrite the following sentences in the past tense:

1. The monkeys **climb** the tree.
   The monkeys **climbed** the tree.
2. The fish **is swimming** in the water.
   The fish **was swimming** in the water.
3. Do you **see** the fish in the water?
   **Did** you see the fish in the water?
4. There **are** floods everywhere.
   There **were** floods everywhere.
5. The fish **cannot escape** the floods.
   The fish **could not/couldn’t escape** the floods.

Question 4: Identify the **sentence type** and add the correct **punctuation**:

Example: Where did the monkeys hide from the flood?

1. Look out for the tree coming down the river!
2. The monkeys thought the fish couldn’t swim.
3. How many fish were taken out of the water?
4. Finally, we have saved all the fish!
5. Don’t go too close to the river!
6. Why did all the animals run up the hill?