INTERMEDIATE GROUP

Class:_________ Name:________________________
Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Down and out in Paris and London

1 George Orwell is one of Britain’s best-known authors of the 20th century, responsible for such famous works as *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. However, there was a period in his life when things didn’t go so well for him. *Down and Out in Paris and London* is Orwell’s semi-autobiographical account of living in poverty in both. The narrative begins in Paris, where Orwell lived for two years, attempting to make a living by giving English lessons and writing reviews and articles for magazines. Regrettably, this work dried up after some time. While he tried to search for more work, he had to start selling his possessions. After days without food, he finally found a hotel job with his Russian friend, Boris. There he ended up working long hours as a dishwasher and kitchen assistant in a hotel, where he earned barely enough to survive.

2 He describes his routine life as one of the working poor in Paris as: slaving then sleeping, slaving then sleeping, then drinking on a Saturday night until Sunday morning, which briefly made his life seem bearable. He explains how his exhausting life had a severe effect on his humanity. He recounts a murder which happened just outside his window, and says “the thing that strikes me in looking back is that I was in bed and asleep within three minutes of the murder… We were working people, and sleeping was more important than anything.”

3 In the hope of a better job and more money, Orwell moves to working in a restaurant, but the owner doesn’t pay him for ten days. Therefore, he starts sleeping on a park bench rather than facing his landlady over non-payment of rent. He finds himself working seventeen and a half hours a day in the restaurant, almost without a break. He blames the dreadful existence of his fellow workers for turning them all into zombies: “They have been trapped by a routine which makes thought impossible. They do not think, because they have no time for it; their life has made slaves of them.”

4 Orwell travels to London as he has been promised that a job is waiting for him. However, he can’t start work because his new employer has gone on holiday, and he doesn’t receive any money for a while. Until his boss returns, he finds himself sleeping on the streets of the city with the other poor and unemployed. At the end of the book, Orwell wrapped up what he had learned from his experience of living in poverty: “At present I do not feel that I have seen more than the fringe of poverty. Still I can point to one or two things I have definitely learned by being hard up. I shall never again think that all beggars are alcoholics, nor be surprised if men out of work lack energy.”

5 These experiences led Orwell to strengthen his socialist beliefs. He blamed wealthy people for being ignorant of the reality of poverty. He said that the rich were afraid of the poor: they didn’t want to give them freedom from poverty, because they thought that the poor would then threaten their own way of life. Orwell completely disagreed with this belief. However, Orwell was also completely against totalitarianism in any form. His subsequent novels, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, depict worlds where people in authority have gone horribly out of control. He showed us how difficult it is to make a fair and just society, but he didn’t want the human race to stop trying.
A. What do the following refer to?

1. both  (para. 1)  : ________________________________________________
2. which (para. 2)  : ________________________________________________
3. their life (para. 3)  : the life of ____________________________________
4. them (para. 5)  : ________________________________________________

B. Find the word in the text which means the following. DO NOT change the form of the word and write ONE WORD ONLY.

1. just, only (adv) (para. 1)  : _________________________________
2. remembers (v) (para. 2)  : _________________________________
3. summed (v) (para. 4)  : _________________________________
4. following (adj) (para. 5)  : _________________________________

C. Mark the following statements True (T) or False (F).

1. Orwell sold his possessions because he needed money to set up a new business.
   T F
2. Orwell couldn’t go to his house as he had an argument with his landlady.
   T F
3. Orwell’s experience made him a stronger socialist.
   T F
4. Orwell is hopeless about forming a better society.
   T F

D. Answer the following questions according to the information in the text. Give SHORT answers where possible.

1. Why does Orwell give the example of a murder in P2?
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. What did living in poverty teach Orwell?
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. How does Orwell describe people in authority in Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four? What message does he give to people? Explain in your own words.
   ___________________________________________________________________
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ANSWER KEY

A.

1. Paris and London
2. drinking on a Saturday night (until Sunday morning)
3. (his fellow) workers
4. (the) poor

B.

1. barely
2. recounts
3. wrapped
4. subsequent

C.

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. F

D.

1. To show how his exhausting life had a severe effect on his humanity

2. (That) not all beggars are alcoholics and men out of work lack energy.

3. People in authority / They have gone (horribly) out of control. Orwell wants people not to stop trying for a fair and just society. / Orwell wants people to continue trying to make a fair and just society.