

Unit 7

1. Picture some old roller-skate wheels attached to some wood scraps. This would be very similar to the original skateboards of the 1950s. Surfers invented skateboards as a way to try to “surf” the streets. Alan “Ollie” Gelfand is given credit for creating the first skateboard trick. The Ollie is a way of popping a skateboard up into the air by slamming your back foot down on the tail. Even today, the Ollie is one of the first skateboard maneuvers kids learn. It is the basis for many other skateboarding tricks.

2. The poinsettia is a popular holiday flower. The classic colors are red and white. In recent years breeders have produced plants in many shades of pink as well. These brilliant colors do not come from the plant’s flowers, which are tiny yellow structures that look like large seeds. It is the plant’s bracts, or leaves at the base of the flowers, that give the plant its beauty. The poinsettia was named for Dr. Joel Robert Poinsett, who, in addition to being the U.S. ambassador to the newly independent Republic of Mexico from 1825 to 1829, was an avid botanist.

3. Believe it or not, there is no lead in a pencil. Calling the substance in pencils **lead** was the result of mistaken identity. A huge deposit of what people thought was lead was discovered in England. It wasn’t lead but an entirely new substance that scientists called **graphite**. Although using graphite for writing was new to Europeans, it had been used by the Aztecs for centuries. At first Europeans just sharpened the graphite to a point and wrote with it, but the problem was that it got all over everything. They began wrapping string around the graphite, and later it was encased in wood.

4. The Lost Colony is one of the great American mysteries. In 1587 about 100 British colonists arrived on the coast of what we now call North Carolina. The group was made up of men, women, and children. By 1590 all of them had disappeared. No one knows where they went or what happened to them. For more than 400 years, people have been trying to solve the mystery. This mystery has made the area popular with scientists and tourists alike. No one has uncovered any remnants from this Lost Colony. One new idea is that the original settlement is now underwater. Since the sixteenth century, one-quarter mile of coastal land has sunk.

5. When the manuscript for *The Hobbit* arrived at a publishing house in 1936, the publisher wasn’t sure it would sell. He asked his son to read the manuscript. His son loved it, and as a result, it was published. Sixteen years later that child was an editor working at his father’s publishing company. A 1,000-page manuscript arrived from the author of *The Hobbit*. No one wanted to publish it, but the young editor came up with the idea of breaking up the manuscript into three volumes. It was published as *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and has been a massive success.

Unit 7

1. Ollie Gelfand had what effect on skateboarding?
 - (A) He introduced protective pads.
 - (B) He originated skateboarding tricks.
 - (C) He invented the first skateboard.
 - (D) Surfers created skateboards.
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2. The poinsettia's brilliant color is caused by its
 - (A) flowers.
 - (B) name.
 - (C) bracts.
 - (D) seeds.
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3. Pencils are called **lead pencils** because
 - (A) people mistook graphite for lead.
 - (B) writing with pencils was new to them.
 - (C) Aztecs had been using graphite for centuries.
 - (D) lead is the substance in pencils.
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4. One effect of the Lost Colony has been
 - (A) a lot of curious visitors going to North Carolina.
 - (B) by 1590 all the settlers had disappeared.
 - (C) no one knows what happened to them.
 - (D) men, women, and children were colonists.
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5. *The Hobbit* was published because
 - (A) many people read it and liked it.
 - (B) the publisher's son liked it.
 - (C) it was a long book.
 - (D) it was divided into three books.