The Pony Express Delivers the Mail
Before the trans-continental railroad traveled from coast to coast,
it took a long time for the mail to arrive at San Francisco’s post.
It took even longer when the mail came by ship or boat.
People got tired of waiting so long to receive a simple note.
The mail also came by wagon routes as well as stagecoach lines. Mail wagons traveled through hot deserts and through the lonely pines. It took at least three weeks for mail to travel from coast to coast. “We can do it faster,” said three enterprising men, to make a boast.
The three men, Waddell, Russell, and Majors, thought it would be wise to find a faster way to bring the mail, so a plan they did devise.

The Pony Express was begun in 1860 to help transport the mail. They rode from Missouri to California along a stagecoach trail.
The Pony Express riders were about one hundred strong.

There were riders, too, on standby in case something should go wrong.

These Pony Express riders weighed less than 125 pounds,
and they had to have fast horses to make their appointed rounds.
Riders changed horses every fifteen miles, and they rode for seventy-five. They averaged ten miles per hour. It took eight hours to arrive.

They rode the trail both day and night, through summer heat and winter snow. They covered nearly two thousand miles, and they rode fast, not slow.
They started in Missouri, and rode through Kansas and Nebraska. (It’s a good thing they didn’t have to ride all the way up to Alaska.) They rode through Colorado and Wyoming. They rode through Utah, too. They rode through Nevada to California. The U.S. mail got through.
Although it worked quite well and it speeded up the mail, it was often very hazardous riding out there on the trail.
The Pony Express ended its deliveries in 1861 when telegraph lines were completed. It had been quite a run.
There were 183 riders all together that rode for the Pony Express. The Pony Express closed in 1861. They thought it was not a success.

Our mail is still delivered, no matter rain or sleet or snow.

If you posted a letter today, it should arrive in a day or so.
1. Before the Pony Express came along, how long did it take to deliver a letter across the U.S.?
   a. a day
   b. a week
   c. three weeks
   d. six weeks
   Answer: ________

2. How was mail delivered before the pony express?
   a. stagecoach line
   b. freight train
   c. pack mules
   d. passenger pigeon
   Answer: ________

3. In what year was the Pony Express begun?
   a. 1888
   b. 1860
   c. 1845
   d. 1960
   Answer: ________

4. How far did each Pony Express rider travel?
   a. 200 miles
   b. 75 miles
   c. 50 miles
   d. 25 miles
   Answer: ________
5. How fast did the Pony Express riders go?
   a. 50 mph
   b. 25 mph
   c. 10 mph
   d. 5 mph

Answer: _______

6. In what year did the Pony Express quit deliveries?
   a. 1861
   b. 1865
   c. 1867
   d. 1961

Answer: _______