The swarm of crazed people was rushing toward them. Mac turned the keys in the truck's ignition. The engine sputtered but refused to turn on. "Try again," said Dennis. Mac turned the keys again. Again the engine coughed, and the emergency lights flickered before it cut out. Mac tried to stay calm, but he felt a wave of cold panic.

"Keep trying the engine," said Dennis. "I'll hop out and try to push the truck to start."

Dennis jumped out of the truck and ran to the back. He shoved the truck's bumper, pushing all of his weight against the vehicle. Inside the truck, Mac kept turning the key in the ignition. Dennis could hear the angry roar of the mob as they grew closer. Dennis gave one final push and felt the truck move. He scrambled into the truck's bed. "Go, go, go!" he screamed at Mac.

Mac turned the truck into a U-turn. The wheels screeched as the back of the truck swung around. In the truck's bed, Dennis directly faced the people running at them. He no longer needed binoculars to see their wild eyes. The crowd was only twenty feet away.

"Go!" Dennis screamed again, and Mac slammed on the gas. The truck sped forward and Dennis clung to the sides of it to keep from falling off the back. He was drenched in sweat, and his hands were still shaking.

Mac and Dennis drove back the way they had come, away from the city and the hordes. Once they had driven far enough that they thought it was safe to stop, Mac pulled over to the side of the road. He paused the truck just long enough for Dennis to jump back into the passenger seat.

"Were those zombies?" asked Mac.

"I don't know," said Dennis. "Whatever they were, they didn't seem completely human. That must be what the plague does to people."

The young men talked over their next move as they drove. Big cities seemed dangerous but the small towns were abandoned. Should they head back to the ranch? Go deeper into the wilderness? Or try to find other survivors who were also on the run? There was no easy answer. No matter what decision they
made, it would be risky.

"Let's stop at the next gas station and fill up some extra containers," said Mac. "We need to get more gas. I don't want to be low on fuel the next time we come across a group like that." Dennis stared out the window silently. He was hoping they would never come across a group like that again.

They passed a gas station a few miles down the road. They approached the gas station slowly, checking for signs of life, but there were none. Dennis hopped out and opened the gas cap. The gas pump seemed to be working so he filled up the truck's tank. Once the tank was full, Dennis began filling up extra containers and putting them in the truck's bed.

Mac decided that he would go inside the gas station to look for additional food and supplies. They still had some cornbread and apples from the ranch, but he didn't know when they would be able to stop again. Mac was beginning to realize that life as he knew it was over. They needed to be ready to survive.

"I'm going to head inside to find extra food," Mac said to Dennis. "Here are the keys to the truck. Be ready to get in and drive away quickly if we have to make a fast escape."

Dennis nodded and took the keys. "Be careful, Mac," he said. "Who knows what you'll find in there."

Mac opened the door to the gas station slowly. The inside was dark and silent. "Hello?" he called, "Anybody there?" Mac flipped a switch on the wall and fluorescent lights flickered on. He looked around at the empty store. There were signs of a struggle. Bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor. One of the glass refrigerator doors had been torn off its hinges. Mac stood, holding his breath, listening. All he heard was the hum of the refrigerators and the sound of Dennis filling up outside.

Mac grabbed a few plastic bags from the counter. He filled them with enough supplies for a few more weeks: trail mix, bottled water, medicine, granola bars, and jars of peanut butter. Mac wondered if he should pay for these things. He wasn't sure if the owner of the gas station was even alive, and Mac and Dennis might need the money later. Then, Mac remembered Ann Greerson's goodbye back at the ranch. She had told them to remember their manners. Mac didn't want to let her down. He reached into his wallet and found a twenty-dollar bill. He had just placed it on the counter, when he heard a sound behind him. Mac froze. He wasn't alone in the store.

Outside, Dennis had filled up six containers with gasoline. He climbed into the front seat and put the keys in the ignition. He turned on the radio, but all he could find was static. Dennis kept moving the dial and searching for a station. Suddenly, the static cleared and he heard a voice.

"Is anyone out there?" the voice said. It was a girl's voice. "My name is Anna Johnson. This is my father's radio kit. He's gone now. The plague arrived in Sunnydale one week ago." The girl's voice shook with sobs. "I just want to know if there's anyone else out there. Anyone who's still human." Dennis felt horrible for her. He and Mac had each other, but Anna was all alone. Dennis looked at the clock. It had been fifteen minutes. He felt uneasy; it shouldn't have taken Mac this long to grab a few supplies.

Suddenly he heard his name. "Dennis! Dennis!" Mac was crying out for him from inside the store. Dennis jumped out of the car and ran toward the entrance.

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Ed.: The tale continues in Part 3, "Searching for Survivors".
**horde**  horde

**Advanced Definition**

**noun**

1. a large number, group, or crowd; throng; multitude.

   *hordes of flies*

2. a wandering group or tribe, as of Asian nomads.

**intransitive verb**

1. to assemble in a horde.

**Spanish cognate**

*horda*: The Spanish word *horda* means horde.

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**These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:**

1. If he could devise a new and improved mining tool to sell to the *hordes* of prospectors, he could easily become a millionaire. These people would buy anything if it could help them discover their prized metal.

2. Mac and Dennis drove back the way they had come, away from the city and the *hordes*. Once they had driven far enough that they thought it was safe to stop, Mac pulled over to the side of the road.
ReadWorks Vocabulary - plague

**plague**  plague

**Advanced Definition**

**noun**

1. any disaster that affects a large population, esp. a disease epidemic or the sudden influx of harmful insects.

   *The crops were destroyed by a plague of locusts.*

   *How many plagues has this region suffered throughout the centuries?*

2. a highly contagious and usually fatal disease caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* in which victims suffer high fever, chills, and severe exhaustion. Plague is commonly transmitted to humans through bites from fleas on infected rats and manifests itself in bubonic, pneumonic, and septicemic forms.

   *The plague killed approximately half the population of Europe.*

3. (prec. by the) an epidemic of bubonic plague that ravaged much of the world in the fourteenth century; the Black Death.

   *

4. a cause of harm, annoyance, or irritation.

   *There has been a plague of vandalism in the city recently.*

**transitive verb**

1. to annoy or harass; vex; torment.

   *The reporters plagued the star with questions.*

2. to cause to suffer from or as if from a dreadful disease.

   *In his later years, he was plagued by arthritis.*

   *Battles between warlords plagued the country for a decade.*

**Spanish cognate**

*plaga*: The Spanish word *plaga* means plague.

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These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. The war in Sudan is just one of the many problems that **plague** Africa.
2. When the **plague** hit, they had volunteered to help nurse the first victims.

3. Just as places with earthquakes have special building codes, places **plagued** by tornadoes often have building codes designed to protect buildings from strong winds. People can also build extra-strong safe rooms to weather the storm in.

4. He studied it in the late 1980s, when the problem was **plaguing** Audis, not Toyotas. "What's happening now in Toyota cars is the same thing that happened with Audi 20 years ago," Schmidt told Current Science.

5. Work on the Duomo cathedral, in Florence, Italy, actually started before the Renaissance, in 1296. But the building took 140 years to complete. The **plague** and many wars prevented construction from continuing on the building as planned.

6. People were so angry that they blamed plays for everything that went wrong at the time: "The cause of **plagues** is sin: and the cause of sin is plays: therefore the causes of plagues are plays," declared one, Mr. T.W.

7. It appeared that Sophia had been **plagued** by indecision, something with which Kylie could definitely sympathize. Sophia had clearly tried to draw a landscape scene, botched the river, then tried to turn it into a boat sitting upside down in a meadow.

8. They had hoped the **plague** would be over soon, that the world would return to the way it was, that it had all been a strange hallucination. Now that they had the option to venture out into the world, to see how bad things really were, they weren't sure they wanted to know.
supply  sup·ply

Definition

verb
1. to provide what is wanted or needed.

The teacher supplied the students with pens and paper.

noun
1. (plural) materials that you keep available and use whenever you need them.

We keep cleaning supplies in a separate closet.

Advanced Definition

transitive verb
1. to provide (what is wanted or required).

The Red Cross supplied medicine to the homeless after the hurricane.

The bank supplied the information we needed to process your application.

You need to supply more details in this paragraph.

The nourishing food supplied strength to his ailing body.

2. to provide (a person, group, or entity) with what is wanted or required (usu. fol. by with).

The state supplied the earthquake victims with food.

His sister supplied him with the answer to the question.

3. to compensate for a lack or deficiency of.

intransitive verb
1. to fill a position as a substitute or replacement for another.

I understand the job pretty well; perhaps I could supply?

noun
1. the act of providing or supplying.

Our department is in charge of supply.
2. something that is provided or supplied.

   *The Red Cross distributed the food supplies.*

3. an amount of something available for use; stock.

   *Our supply of water was running low.*

4. (pl.) provisions or materials kept in reserve to be used as needed.

   *Office supplies are kept in this closet.*

5. in economics, the amount of a commodity available for purchase at a particular price.

   *The supply did not meet demand, so production had to be stepped up.*

**Spanish cognate**

*suplir*: The Spanish word *suplir* means supply.

**These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:**

1. Roosevelt promised to put people back to work. People wanted jobs and he promised to *supply* them. His plan was called the New Deal.

2. Kevin Hackett, the national program leader for the bee and pollination program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), called the massive honeybee disappearance "the biggest general threat to our food *supply.*"

3. There are three components needed for a fire to successfully burn: fuel, oxygen and a heat source. The matches were the heat source and the logs were the fuel. The oxygen *supply* came from the air around the fireplace.

4. Archaeologists also found granaries on cliff ledges. They suspect the Fremont put the granaries there to protect the food *supply* from rodents and raiders. Scientists say the granaries are evidence that the Fremont moved from place to place, leaving stashes of food at each stop.

5. While it might be said that these precautions lessened the total damage wrought, in the end, Hurricane Sandy was still the second costliest storm in U.S. history. It destroyed thousands of homes, cut off millions from electrical service, disrupted *supply* lines for gasoline and food, and severely interrupted the course of life for countless Americans.

6. With bullying such a big issue in schools around the country, experts are looking more closely at empathy. Many schools are teaching teens how to tune in to others' feelings. Often, kids who bully others come from homes where empathy is in short *supply*, says Watson. Teaching
them empathy skills can help squash their aggressive behavior.

7. The men there had very little left to eat. South Carolina would not even allow food to be brought to the Fort because South Carolina believed that Fort Sumter no longer belonged to the U.S. Lincoln knew he could not let this fort collapse. It was one of the last strongholds of Northern power in the South. He had to send a supply ship.

8. "You stay put, kitten!" I told him. "I'm going to get you food!" I bet his last owners never gave him food. They probably didn't love him at all! I made sure he had plenty of water and shut the bedroom door. I put on my coat and grabbed my keys. I headed out to Whiskers Organic Pet Supply up the street from my house in Astoria, Queens.

9. On the fateful afternoon in question, I was on something of a cleaning spree. Franco had asked me to clean the staff toilets, which were tucked away in a damp corner of the basement, out of the customers' sight, and for good reason. The situation called for a wagon full of cleaning supplies. I went to the supply closet only to find cleaning supplies so grimy and full of spider webs that they couldn't even be used without a good scour and scrub.

10. There were many reasons for Imperialism. The biggest one was economic. Industrialized nations, like Great Britain, took control of other countries for their natural resources. They needed colonies to supply trees and other raw materials to their factories.
1. Who is rushing toward Mac and Dennis at the beginning of the story?

   A. a swarm of crazed people
   B. a woman named Ann Greerson
   C. a girl named Anna Johnson
   D. the owner of a gas station

2. Where does the second half of this story take place?

   A. two miles outside a big city
   B. in and around a gas station
   C. at a ranch
   D. deep in the wilderness

3. Read these sentences from the text.

   Were those zombies?' asked Mac.

   'I don't know,' said Dennis. 'Whatever they were, they didn't seem completely human.'

   What evidence from the story supports the idea that the people Mac and Dennis saw were not "completely human"?

   A. There were a lot of them.
   B. They were "only twenty feet away" from Mac and Dennis.
   C. They were "crazed" and had "wild eyes."
   D. They were running toward Mac and Dennis.
4. Read these sentences from the text.

The young men talked over their next move as they drove. Big cities seemed dangerous, but the small towns were abandoned. Should they head back to the ranch? Go deeper into the wilderness? Or try to find other survivors who were also on the run? There was no easy answer. No matter what decision they made, it would be risky.

Based on the information in the story, why might any decision the young men make be risky?

A. They do not have much experience driving long distances at night.
B. They do not know whether they can trust the girl who says her name is Anna Johnson.
C. They have no map and do not know how to get back to the ranch.
D. Wherever they go, there is a chance they will come across more "crazed people."

5. What is the main idea of this story?

A. A girl named Anna Johnson uses her father's radio kit to ask whether anyone "who's still human" is out there.
B. Two young men barely escape a crowd of people rushing toward them.
C. Mac enters a gas station and fills plastic bags with trail mix, bottled water, medicine, granola bars, and jars of peanut butter.
D. Two young men are trying to survive in a world where almost everyone seems to have gone crazy.
6. Read these sentences from the text.

The young men talked over their next move as they drove. Big cities seemed dangerous, but the small towns were abandoned. Should they head back to the ranch? Go deeper into the wilderness? Or try to find other survivors who were also on the run? There was no easy answer. No matter what decision they made, it would be risky.

Based on these sentences, what does the phrase "on the run" mean?

A. trying to help people
B. trying to win a race
C. trying to hurry up
D. trying to escape or hide

7. Read these sentences from the text.

Mac flipped a switch on the wall, and fluorescent lights flickered on. He looked around at the empty store. There were signs of a struggle. Bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.

How could the last two sentences here be rewritten to show the relationship between them?

A. There were signs of a struggle. Meanwhile, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
B. There were signs of a struggle. For example, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
C. There were signs of a struggle. On the other hand, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
D. There were signs of a struggle. Ultimately, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
8. Read these sentences from the text.

Mac didn't want to let her down. He reached into his wallet and found a twenty-dollar bill. He had just placed it on the counter when he heard a sound behind him. Mac froze. He wasn't alone in the store.

What evidence supports the statement that Mac "wasn't alone in the store"?

9. Why does Dennis jump out of the truck and run toward the gas station at the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Who or what might be inside the store with Mac? Support your answer with evidence from the text.
1. Who is rushing toward Mac and Dennis at the beginning of the story?
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D. There were signs of a struggle. Ultimately, bags of chips and candy were trampled on the floor.
8. Read these sentences from the text.

Mac didn't want to let her down. He reached into his wallet and found a twenty-dollar bill. He had just placed it on the counter when he heard a sound behind him. Mac froze. He wasn't alone in the store.

What evidence supports the statement that Mac "wasn't alone in the store"?

The sound Mac hears behind him supports the statement that he "wasn't alone in the store."

9. Why does Dennis jump out of the truck and run toward the gas station at the end of the story? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Answers may vary, but students should recognize that Dennis's actions are triggered by Mac's calls of "Dennis! Dennis!" from inside the gas station. Students may infer that Dennis runs toward the station to help Mac.

10. Who or what might be inside the store with Mac? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by the text. For example, students may infer that someone or something dangerous is inside the store with Mac. That would explain why he yells Dennis's name -- he needs help. Students may go further and infer that whoever or whatever is inside the store is another one of the "crazed people" Mac and Dennis saw at the beginning of the story.