



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **9th Grade | Unit 7**

BIBLE 907

Biblical Literature: Job and Suffering

INTRODUCTION | **3**

1. THE BOOK OF JOB **5**

OPENING SCENES | **6**

GREAT DEBATE | **11**

CLOSING SCENES | **14**

SELF TEST 1 | **17**

2. THE ATTITUDES TOWARD SUFFERING **21**

THE TERM *SUFFER* | **21**

THE WORLD'S ATTITUDES | **25**

THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTITUDE | **28**

SELF TEST 2 | **32**

3. THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST **35**

HIS LIFE AND MINISTRY | **36**

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION | **38**

HIS INTERCESSION AND CONSOLATION | **41**

SELF TEST 3 | **45**



LIFEPAC Test is located in the center of the booklet. Please remove before starting the unit.

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Biblical Literature: Job and Suffering

Introduction

Ever since Adam sinned and was expelled from the garden of Eden, mankind has experienced pain and suffering. The growth of the human race upon the earth only compounded the problems of suffering. Each new generation has questioned why men, women, and children suffer unjustly or without purpose. Man's ability to comprehend the purpose behind his suffering is very limited. Those people who lived before the Scriptures were recorded had to rely upon their own perceptions when drawing conclusions about man's life on the earth.

The book of Job offers a splendid example of the human mind trying to perceive and discern divine events in the affairs of men. The suffering that Job was required to endure, both from his physical condition and from his friends, provides the basis for a greater understanding of this subject and its further revelation in the New Testament. Studying this LIFEPAAC®, you will become acquainted with the topic of suffering as Job understood it in his day, and you will learn how suffering was revealed more fully in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will also examine the world's attitudes toward suffering in contrast to the attitude of the Christian. Although no one likes the idea of suffering, only the Christian has the answer to why man suffers. We can look to God for the reason and for the comfort we need when we are in the midst of personal suffering.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAAC. When you have finished this LIFEPAAC, you should be able to:

1. Tell about the tragedies that befell Job.
2. Relate the wrong concepts Job's friends had concerning the causes for suffering.
3. State the correct views concerning suffering as it is related to God and Satan.
4. Describe how God blessed Job at the end of his suffering.
5. Explain the various meanings of the word suffer.
6. List the areas in which suffering can originate.
7. Describe the extent to which suffering may occur.
8. Define the world's attitudes toward suffering.
9. Describe the Christian's attitude toward suffering.
10. Describe aspects of suffering seen in Jesus' early life and ministry.
11. Tell how Jesus suffered prior to and during His Crucifixion.
12. List possible purposes for suffering in the Christian's life.
13. State the outcome and purpose of suffering.

1. THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job centers upon the person of Job, who was a patriarch living in the period before Moses. The word *Patriarch* comes from two words. The first word means father and the second means *ruler*. A patriarch, therefore, was a *father-ruler*. The date of the writing of this book is uncertain, but it is generally accepted as being one of the earliest books of the Bible. The book deals with the problem of suffering and was written in a unique manner and style. The opening and concluding portions were written in prose, but the majority of the debate in the body is in poetic form.

The rich spiritual ideas contained within the book of Job have caused the greatest

theologians and philosophers to study this text with interest. The vocabulary used in the writing is extensive. The content of the book reveals a vast resource of knowledge, a superbly forceful and expressive Hebrew writing style, a profound depth of thought, and an excellent command of the language. Some of the noblest ideas of high ethical and spiritual standards are expressed within its pages, and a deep recognition for God's creation is revealed in its contents.

In your study of this LIFEPAC, remember that a small percentage of the activities in Bible LIFEPACs comes directly from the reading assignments.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Tell about the tragedies that befell Job.
2. Relate the wrong concepts Job's friends had concerning the causes for suffering.
3. State the correct views concerning suffering as it is related to God and Satan.
4. Describe how God blessed Job at the end of his suffering.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

confound (kon found'). To perplex with surprise, astonishment, or amazement.

dialogue (dī' u lôg). Interchange and discussion of ideas in a frank and open way.

dumbfounded (dum foun' dud). Made speechless with amazement.

ironically (ī ron' u kul lē). In a manner directly opposite to what is or might be expected.

lament (lu ment'). To mourn or grieve for; to feel or express deep sorrow.

profanity (pru fan' u tē). Language that is irreverent, full of contempt, or blasphemous.

providence (prov' u duns). Care or benevolent guidance of God.

reconsecrated (rē kon' su krā tud). Set apart or rededicated as holy again.

restitution (res tu tü' shun). The act of restoring to the rightful owner that which is lost or has been taken away.

revile (ri vīl'). To be reproachful or abusive in speech.

sovereign (sov' run). Above or superior to all others; supreme in authority.

vindication (vin du kā' shun). A clearing from criticism, censure, or suspicion.

vulgarity (vul gar' u tē). Coarse or crude language.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, īce; hot, ōpen, ōrder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rüle; child; long; thin; /ʒh/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

OPENING SCENES

To fully appreciate the great sorrow and suffering that befell God's servant, Job, let us first look at him in all his godliness and prosperity. Then we shall turn our attention to the terrible tragedies that came upon him.

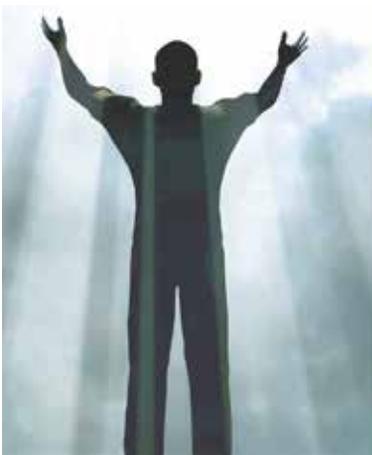
Job's prosperity. Job lived in the land of Uz, which was a region located at the south of Edom and west of the great Arabian Desert. To understand Job, we must observe what the Scriptures have to say about the character of this truly great man of God, whose life has been a comfort to many who have found themselves in similar circumstances. Job was a good and upright man who feared, or revered, God and shunned evil. His righteousness made his life pleasing to the Lord, as he showed great respect for his Creator. Unknown to Job, the

Read Job 1-21 and Ecclesiastes 12:13 and 14.



Lord Himself declared Job to be His servant, a godly man, and one of the finest men in all the earth. As the result of God's blessing, Job was one of the wealthiest cattlemen of his day. He had a family of seven sons and three daughters and owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and many servants (Job 1:3). During Old Testament times, the accumulation of material goods, such as Job possessed, was often associated with God's approval or favoritism. Abraham and Joseph, for example, were viewed by their neighbors as blessed of God because of their prosperity (Genesis 39:1-6).

Job was a righteous man who acted as the patriarch and priest of his household. When his sons and daughters celebrated birthdays, Job



| Job Sacrifices to God



| First Tragedy Befalls Job



| Job Sorrows Before God

afterwards **reconsecrated** them by offering a burnt offering to the Lord on behalf of each of them. He made the offering in case his children had foolishly sinned and cursed God in their hearts (Job 1:5). Job was both faithful and regular in his priestly duties on behalf of his family and interceded for them continually.

First tragedy. Unknown to Job an important event was taking place in heaven. At an appointed time the angels, sometimes called the *sons of God* in the Old Testament (Job 1:6), were summoned to appear before the Lord God. Satan was also required to appear and give account of his actions on such occasions. The **dialogue** between God and Satan is very important to the understanding of Job's suffering and trials (Job 1:6-22). God spoke to Satan, the accuser, of Job's goodness, because the Lord knew the gracious work He had done in Job's heart. God was going to use Job to exhibit the divine characteristics that can be found in every believer who trusts completely in the mercy and providence of God. Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of one of the greatest world empires, Babylon, expressed God's **sovereign** right to order all events, without question, among both the angels in heaven and the kings of the earth (Daniel 4:28-37). The Apostle Paul stated (Ephesians 3:1-11) that the intent of God's dealings with the church is to demonstrate His wisdom to principalities and powers in heavenly places. In 1 Corinthians 1:27-31 Paul wrote that God delights in using the foolish, weak, base, and despised things of the world to **confound** the wise and mighty. God would use His servant Job to confound the wisest and mightiest leader of the satanic principalities.

Satan accused Job of following the Lord only for materialistic gain. Satan stated that if these things were removed, Job would curse God. Although Satan attempted to have God tempt Job personally, the Lord placed Job in Satan's hands with specified limitations. The accuser immediately caused Job to lose not only all of his cattle and servants but also all of his sons

and daughters in one evil blow. Satan was given the permission by God (Job 1:12) to work his way in the hearts of the Sabeans and Chaldeans. Satan was also granted the power to kill the sheep and herdsmen with lightning and Job's children with a cyclone. The book of Job should be seen not only from the point of view of human suffering but also from the perspective of God's eternal purposes, which will bring glory to Himself and eternal rewards to His children.

Second tragedy. Satan failed to destroy Job's faith in God in the first tragedy. In his following appearance before the Lord, the accuser tried to discredit Job's righteousness by stating that material losses were not as effective as would be touching Job's health. Satan attempted to get God to afflict Job with sickness, but the Lord placed him in Satan's hands instead, warning the enemy (Job 2:6) not to take his life. Satan was given the power to afflict Job with horrible boils from his head to his feet. The boils were so severe that he was almost unrecognizable when his friends saw him. Job's wife added to his sufferings by accusing God directly for her husband's condition. She then urged him to curse God and die.

So great was Job's agony that his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, sat **dumbfounded**



| Second Tragedy Befalls Job

with Job for seven days before they dared speak to him. Yet in all his sufferings Job did not sin or **revile** God with his voice, but instead he blessed the name of the Lord. In these tragedies, Job was completely unaware of the prior events in heaven, of Satan's role

in his suffering, and of the divine purpose God planned for His servant after all his trials. The specific purposes of our suffering today may not be fully understood until God reveals them to us here or in eternity.



Complete these statements.

- 1.1 Job lived in the land of a. _____, a region at the south of
b. _____ and west of the great c. _____ Desert.
- 1.2 Job was a a. _____ or b. _____
who acted as a c. _____ for his household.
- 1.3 Job had a family of a. _____ sons and b. _____ daughters.
- 1.4 Job was a wealthy cattleman, owning a. _____ sheep,
b. _____ camels, c. _____ teams of oxen,
d. _____ female donkeys, and many servants.
- 1.5 Job was concerned that his children might have _____ God in their hearts.

Answer true or false.

- 1.6 _____ The book of Job is one of the earliest Bible books written.
- 1.7 _____ The majority of the debate section in the book of Job is in prose form.
- 1.8 _____ The vocabulary in the book of Job is very limited.
- 1.9 _____ A genuine love for God's creation is revealed in the content of Job.
- 1.10 _____ The content of Job reveals a vast resource of knowledge.

**Complete these activities.**

1.11 List four factors concerning the style revealed in the content of Job.

- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____ d. _____

1.12 List three aspects of God's appraisal of His servant Job.

- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____

1.13 List three things guarded by God's "hedge of protection," according to Satan's accusation.

- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____

1.14 List two ways in which God's favor was bestowed on Job.

- a. _____ b. _____

1.15 Describe briefly the four calamities that came upon Job's family and possessions as a result of Satan's first attack.

- a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

1.16 List five things Job did when he heard the disastrous news.

- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____ d. _____
e. _____

Complete these statements.

1.17 Of Job's servant only _____ escaped to tell him about the tragic events of one day.

1.18 Satan accused Job before God of following the Lord only for _____ gain.

1.19 In the midst of all this trouble, Job did not a. _____ , nor charge God foolishly, but rather b. _____ the name of the Lord.

1.20 The book of Job should be viewed not only from the aspect of human
a. _____ , but from the perspective of God's eternal
b. _____ , which will bring c. _____ to Himself and eternal d. _____ to His children.

Complete these activities.

1.21 State the additional aspect of God's appraisal of Job after the first tragedy had struck.

1.22 Give the names of Job's three friends who visited him in his grief.
a. _____ b. _____
c. _____

1.23 List four things they did to show their concern for Job.
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____

Write the correct letter and answer in each line.

- 1.24 Satan was instructed by God to save Job's _____ .
a. family b. wife c. life d. flesh
- 1.25 Job was smitten with sore _____ from head to foot.
a. cuts b. bruises c. scrapes d. boils
- 1.26 Job's wife caused him further suffering by telling him to _____ God and die.
a. renounce b. curse c. reject d. bless
- 1.27 Job's friends came to mourn with him and to _____ him.
a. satisfy b. pray c. encourage d. comfort
- 1.28 Job's friends did not say a word to him, sitting in silence for _____ days and nights, because his grief was very great.
a. seven b. ten c. twelve d. fourteen

TEACHER CHECK _____
 initials _____ date _____

GREAT DEBATE

After a week of sorrowing before his friends, Job began to speak and **lament** his condition. Upon hearing the patriarch's complaint, his friends, who had come to mourn with him and comfort him, gave their reasons, which amounted to accusations, for his situation. Finally, God intervened to speak to Job, who desired to plead his own case before the Almighty.

Job's complaint. Job's first words before his friends were to curse the day of his birth. The cursing of Job 3:2-10 does not include **profanity** or **vulgarity** which is commonly associated with cursing today. This cursing implied a denouncement against Job's birth, or his own desire that his birth had never happened. We see a similar situation in Jeremiah 20:14-18 where the prophet desired that he had not been born. Job asked why he was allowed to be born, or to even see daylight, if his life was merely to end in misery and suffering. His question implied that his existence was without reason or purpose. In Job 3:25-26 Job admitted that in reverential fear he had worshiped God, but even his diligence in worship had not saved him from the calamity that had come upon him. He complained that, although he was innocent and righteous in his life and actions, he had suddenly suffered tragedy as though he had been a sinner.

Friends' accusations. Job's *friends* have **ironically** been called Job's *comforters*. These men were anything but comforters to him. They could not answer his initial question, and they constantly pursued the thought that he was suffering justifiably because of some sin God had uncovered in him. The debate Job had with his friends took place in three cycles with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar each speaking once during each cycle. Elihu, a younger friend, held his words until the very end.

Read Job 22-42 and
1 John 4:16-18.



Eliphaz tried to prove to Job that he was suffering for some secret sin and that Job would be arrogant and foolish to plead his innocence. Bildad tried to prove to Job that God does not reject the innocent, but punishes only guilty and wicked people. Bildad believed that Job should repent, since Job was surely being punished. Zophar rebuked Job for saying he was righteous and also advised him to repent. Zophar further stated that the prosperity of the wicked was brief and that eventually they had to suffer and die. To their vain reasoning Job replied that they misunderstood the cause of his suffering as well as God's ways. Job's suffering was so intense that he often desired to be allowed to die so that he could be removed from the pain. Job contended that God does whatever He pleases; he felt that he was apparently being buffeted through God's indifference to his pain and grief. Throughout, however, Job continued to assert his innocence and to proclaim that eventually his faith and even heaven itself would vindicate him. Job also proclaimed the fact that God's ways were unknown and beyond man's reasoning.

Elihu contended that God, as Creator of all, did not have to answer to His creatures for His acts



| Job Accused by His Friends

and that Job had sinned in demanding such an explanation from God. He rebuked Job's three friends for showing less wisdom than Job concerning the manner of life enjoyed by both the evil and the good during their existence on earth. With the closing remarks by Elihu, Jehovah intervened and spoke directly to Job out of a whirlwind.

God's reply. Job had desired to plead his case before God and to defend the injustice of his suffering before the Almighty. He had gained no sympathy from his friends, but was assured within himself that God would hear his case and defend his cause. God, however, demanded (Job 38:3) that Job stand up before Him as a man. Job's wisdom and keen insights into the ways of life were of no help to him in answering the unending questions the Creator required of him. Job was awestruck with the magnitude of God's works both in providing for His creation and in executing His justice in the earth. God paused in His discussion with Job to see if Job dared still contend with Him (Job 40:1-5), but Job confessed his sinfulness as a

creature and covered his mouth lest his own words condemn him further.

Jehovah continued to demand of Job answers concerning His ways in the earth. Job could only profess (Job 42:3) that previously he had spoken as a foolish man with very limited understanding. After hearing God, the patriarch despised himself and repented in dust and ashes, symbolic of deep humility. Job, like Nebuchadnezzar, was brought to the realization that God (Daniel 4:35) "...doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Elihu's contention with Job was justified in this aspect, and his declaration of God's acts among men was true to God's character. Note that God never answered Job's initial question concerning the divine cause or purpose behind his suffering. God merely allowed Job to meet Him in all His power and magnificence, knowing that that would be a sufficient answer for His servant Job (Romans 8:28).



Answer true or false.

- 1.29 _____ Job cursed God and the day of his birth.
- 1.30 _____ Job's cursing involved vulgarity and profanity against God.
- 1.31 _____ Jeremiah had a similar complaint to Job's.
- 1.32 _____ Job maintained his innocence and righteousness throughout the debate.
- 1.33 _____ Job's three friends answered his initial question.

Complete these sentences.

- 1.34 The debate between Job and his three friends took place in _____ cycles.
- 1.35 Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar each spoke a _____ during each cycle, for a total of b. _____ times.
- 1.36 Jehovah finally intervened in the debate and spoke directly to Job out of a _____.

- 1.37** Job was awestruck with the magnitude of God's works in a. _____
for His creation and in the execution of His b. _____ in the earth.
- 1.38** The patriarch finally professed that he had spoken as a a. _____
man from a b. _____.

Complete these activities.

- 1.39** State briefly each argument of Job's three accuser-comforters.

a. Eliphaz _____

b. Bildad _____

c. Zophar _____

- 1.40** State briefly Elihu's argument to Job concerning God. _____

- 1.41** State Job's desire with respect to his intense suffering. _____

- 1.42** List the different animals and birds spoken of as being cared for by God, in Job 38:39-39:30.

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____ d. _____

e. _____ f. _____

g. _____ h. _____

i. _____ j. _____

- 1.43** List the names given to two gigantic creations of God mentioned in Job, chapters 40 and 41.

a. _____ b. _____

TEACHER CHECK

_____ initials

_____ date

- 1.64** Writing from the point of view of a newspaper reporter of Job's time, give a 300-word report of the closing scenes of the patriarch's life from Job 42:1-11. This assignment is to be done on a separate sheet of paper and will be checked by your teacher.

TEACHER CHECK

_____ initials

_____ date



Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test. The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.

SELF TEST 1

Match these items (each answer, 2 points).

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1.01 _____ dialogue | a. one of the earliest books of the Bible written |
| 1.02 _____ Elihu | b. large sea creature that man cannot tame |
| 1.03 _____ Jeremiah | c. interchange and discussion of ideas in a frank and open way |
| 1.04 _____ sovereign | d. one of Job's three friends who came to comfort |
| 1.05 _____ James | e. number of servants who escaped and informed Job |
| 1.06 _____ leviathan | f. wrote of the patience of Job |
| 1.07 _____ three | g. had a complaint similar to Job's |
| 1.08 _____ boils | h. supreme in authority; superior to all others |
| 1.09 _____ four | i. young man who spoke after Job's three friends |
| 1.010 _____ Job | j. number of sons Job had |
| | k. disease with which Job's body was smitten by Satan |
| | l. number of cycles in the debate section of Job |

Write the correct letter and answer on each line (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.011** Job was a _____, or father-ruler, who acted as a priest for his household.
a. prophet b. patriarch c. monarch d. husband
- 1.012** The majority of the debate section of the book of Job is in the form of _____.
a. prose b. narrative c. soliloquy d. poetry
- 1.013** Job's three friends sat in silence for _____ days and nights when they first saw his great grief.
a. ten b. twelve c. seven d. three
- 1.014** Job's suffering took place over a period of approximately _____ months.
a. six b. three c. fifteen d. nine
- 1.015** Job lived _____ years after his great trial of faith.
a. 540 b. 360 c. 140 d. 50

Write true or false (each answer, 1 point).

- 1.016** _____ Job lived in the land of Uz, a region at the south of Edom and west of the great Arabian desert.
- 1.017** _____ The Lord blessed Job with a family of seven sons and three daughters.
- 1.018** _____ In the midst of his suffering, Job cursed God.
- 1.019** _____ When Jehovah finally intervened in the debate, He spoke to Job in a dream.
- 1.020** _____ First Samuel 15:22 teaches that to obey is better than sacrifice.
- 1.021** _____ When Job was willing to forgive his friends and pray for them, God was able to restore and bless Job because of his obedience.

Complete these activities (each answer, 3 points).

- 1.022** List the names of Job's three friends who came to comfort him.
a. _____ b. _____
c. _____
- 1.023** List two types of animals Job had in abundance at the beginning.
a. _____ b. _____

1.024 List four factors concerning the style and content of the book of Job.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

1.025 List three good things that the Lord worked together in Job's sufferings, which He will do for every believer.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

1.026 List two ways in which Job's three friends had to make restitution.

- a. _____
- b. _____

1.027 Describe briefly the four tragedies that Satan brought upon Job in one day.

- a. _____

- b. _____

- c. _____

- d. _____

Answer this question (this answer, 5 points).

1.028 What was Elihu's argument to Job concerning God? _____

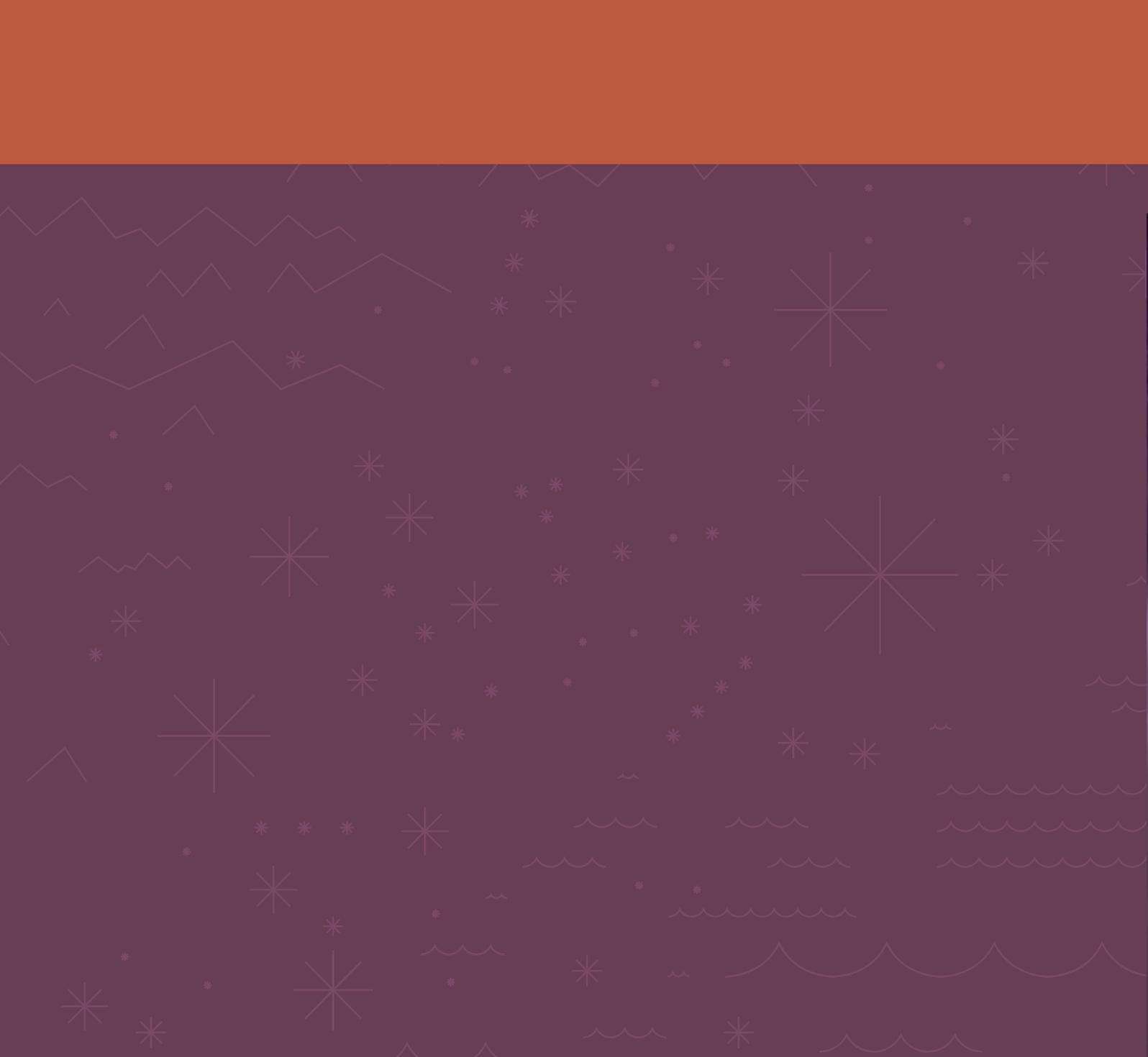
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SCORE _____

TEACHER _____

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