The Art of Navigation

Boats big enough to carry goods for trade first appeared around 3500 B.C., and this was when the art of navigation was born. Early mariners stayed close to shore and navigated by landmarks or geographical formations that they could see. They typically travelled by day, and looked for calm harbors, or else put down their anchor at night. They didn’t carry charts like ships do today, but they did have lists of directions. If they were unable to see land, mariners could determine latitude by observing the height of the sun during the day and of the North Star at night. Though early mariners did use the positions of major constellations to plot their courses, this was not an exact science, and it was impossible to accurately determine longitude. Once out of the sight of land, a sailor could not accurately determine how far his ship was to the east or to the west.

DIRECTIONS: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below. Consult a dictionary or thesaurus if you need help.

1. Which of the following do you think is the definition of navigation?

   A. Carrying goods for trade by sea
   B. Finding your way from one place to another by sea

2. Based on the passage, which of the words below do you think is a synonym for mariner?

   A. captain
   B. sailor
   C. driver

3. The word geographical contains two Greek root word. Geo means land. Graph means write. What do you think the phrase geographical formations means?

4. Circle the correct answer: If you are trying to determine where you are in the north/south orientation, you are drying to determine your latitude / longitude.

5. Circle the correct answer: If you are trying to determine where you are in the east/west orientation, you are drying to determine your latitude / longitude.