On May 24, 1869, 10 men left Green River Station, Wyoming Territory, for uncharted waters. The men were a tough bunch. They considered themselves adventurers, fighters, hunters, and guides. Most of them had served in the Civil War.

Their leader was a natural historian named John Wesley Powell. Powell had also served in the army. (His right arm was amputated after taking a musket shot at the Battle of Shiloh.) After the war he taught geology at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Powell was an explorer and a scientist. He wanted to understand the natural conditions that formed the landscape of the American West. Powell had recruited nine other men, four of whom had explored the Rocky Mountains with him the year before. He needed the men to help him with an important expedition. He was leading the first exploration of the Colorado River by white men. The Colorado River is the largest and most important river of the American West. It starts in the Rocky Mountains and flows south and west across Colorado, Utah, and Arizona, and along the edges of Nevada and California. In the 19th century it regularly flooded and jumped its banks.

On the day of their departure, the 10 men piled their four boats with ammunition, traps, food,
and scientific instruments. Getting to the Colorado River would take time. They started on the Green River and spent over a month exploring the river and its tributaries. They named a canyon Gray Canyon after its gray sandstone walls. Later they entered an area called "Land of the Standing Rock" by Native Americans. This area was marked by red rock and many distinctive buttes.

On July 16, Powell's team arrived at the start of the Colorado River. A few days later, they began their journey down the Colorado. On August 5, the men came into a canyon with very high walls. Powell named it Marble Canyon. The rock was hard, and Powell expected to encounter rough rapids. For three days the canyon walls got higher and higher.

Powell's party had entered the Grand Canyon. No one had ever mapped the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. For three days Powell's expedition floated through the Marble Canyon. On August 8, the team camped in Redwall Cavern. The cavern was a rock overhang that had been cut by the river. Powell wrote in his diary that the cavern could seat 50,000 people.

The men pushed on. For weeks they traveled downriver. They rowed when the river became narrow and shallow. They clung for their lives when the river fell into steep rapids. Some days they had no trouble; the river was wide and calm. On those days they climbed the canyon walls to survey the area and collect specimens or supplies. The wind swept across the arid landscape. Sandstone rocks appeared in the shapes of anvils, arches, and steeples.

On August 29, they arrived at the Grand Wash. The Powell Geographic Expedition had traveled 277 miles of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Along the way they lost one boat and much of their food. Four of the men had abandoned the expedition.
1. What did Powell's team set out to explore?
   A. the Colorado River
   B. the Green River
   C. Redwall Cavern
   D. Marble Canyon

2. The passage describes a sequence of events in John Wesley Powell's exploration of the Colorado River. What did Powell and his men do after they entered the Grand Canyon?
   A. They entered "Land of the Standing Rock."
   B. They explored the Green River.
   C. They explored a canyon they named Gray Canyon.
   D. They camped in Redwall Cavern.

3. Exploring the Colorado River was sometimes dangerous for Powell and his men. What evidence from the passage supports this statement?
   A. "Sandstone rocks appeared in the shapes of anvils, arches and steeples."
   B. "They clung for their lives when the river fell into steep rapids."
   C. "The cavern was a rock overhang that had been cut by the river."
   D. "For three days the canyon walls got higher and higher."

4. Why may four men have abandoned the expedition?
   A. The men were bored of exploring rocky landscapes.
   B. The men on the expedition ran out of money.
   C. Exploring the Colorado River was often difficult.
   D. The weather during the expedition was too hot.

5. What is this passage mostly about?
   A. Powell's expedition to explore and map the Colorado River
   B. the four men who abandoned Powell's expedition
   C. how the Grand Canyon got its name
   D. the dangerous whitewater rapids along the Colorado River
6. Read the following sentences: "Some days they had no trouble; the river was wide and calm. On those days they climbed the canyon walls to **survey** the area and collect specimens or supplies. The wind swept across the arid landscape. Sandstone rocks appeared in the shapes of anvils, arches and steeples."

What does the word "**survey**" mean as used in this sentence?

- A. to damage or destroy something
- B. to move far away from something
- C. to ignore or pay no attention to something
- D. to look at or study something closely

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Powell's team of explorers had to pack many things in their boats, _________ ammunition, traps, food, and scientific instruments.

- A. on the other hand
- B. including
- C. finally
- D. in closing

8. What was one main canyon that Powell's expedition explored?

9. What did Powell hope to learn during his explorations?

10. Why was the exploration of the Colorado River an important expedition for Powell?