Directions: This passage is about a courageous First Lady. Read the passage. Then answer Numbers 1 through 8.

Guardian of the Nation’s Treasures
by Jeremy Morecambe

“Dolley, I must go join the troops. Will you be afraid to stay here in the White House while I’m gone?” President Madison asked.

Dolley didn’t hear her husband’s words. She was lost in thought—contemplating what would happen to this beautiful building and the treasures it housed if it fell to the British Army. That couldn’t be allowed to happen, she told herself—not if she had anything to say about it.

“Dolley, will you be afraid?”

With a start, she realized that her husband, James, was speaking to her. “No, dear, you go ahead. I’m sure everything will be fine. I promise you that I’ll take care of all of your official archives. The British will not take them,” she replied firmly.

“I’ll send word to tell you if the Redcoats get through our lines at Bladensburg. If you hear that the British are approaching Washington, you must leave at once. Promise me that,” Madison urged. “Then we can meet in Virginia, where it is safe.”

Dolley nodded and gave him a quick farewell kiss. Grabbing a pair of pistols for protection, the president hurried out of the White House and headed toward the headquarters of the United States Army.

It was early morning, August 24, 1814. The war that had begun in 1812 was not going well for the Americans. The British army, under the command of General Robert Ross, threatened at any moment to invade the capital of the young nation. If it did, Dolley knew that the city would be burned to the ground. The White House and everything in it was in peril.

It was almost inconceivable to this 46-year-old woman that she could be the sole guardian of the nation’s treasures. But if that was the way it was to be, then so be it. Dolley had been born in a small North Carolina town nearly ten years before the Declaration of Independence had been signed. This nation was her beloved home, and her husband was its commander-in-chief. She would do what she had to. Her country could count on her.
Dolley waited all morning for word from James. Lunchtime came and went. Still nothing. Then, in the distance, Dolley heard the sound of cannon fire. The British had arrived in the capital city. There would be no way to divert them from the White House. The First Lady ran into the street, where she saw a wagon passing by. She ordered the driver to draw the wagon up in front of the White House. It might be too late to save the house, she thought, but she could still save some of its precious contents. She hastened in and out, carrying armloads of the most important books, papers, silver, china, and paintings from the White House to the wagon. Time and again, the few remaining staff members warned her of the Redcoats' approach and urged her to leave. But Dolley was disinclined to heed their warnings. Instead, she convinced them to help her load the wagon. She was determined to protect as much of the country's heritage as she could.

At last, Dolley knew it was futile to try to save more. The British would surely arrive at any moment. Most of Washington, D.C., was already deserted. “Get out now, Mrs. Madison! You must leave directly!” shouted a young lieutenant, galloping toward her. “The president's wife must not be taken captive!”

Dolley agreed. It was dangerous for her to remain any longer, but this knowledge did not lessen her courage. There was still one important piece of history she had to save. With the officer at her heels, she raced back into the White House. The famous portrait of George Washington was still adhered to the wall. Dolley could not leave this great man's likeness behind for the British troops to destroy. George Washington had not only been the first president of the United States, he had been a trusted friend. In fact, it had been with George's encouragement that Dolley had agreed to marry James Madison so many years before.

Dolley borrowed the army officer's knife. Quickly but carefully, she sliced around the inner edge of the frame and peeled the portrait out. Hurriedly, she rolled the canvas and packed it securely in the wagon. With one of her friends beside her and the officer riding behind, Dolley Madison drove away from the White House and left Washington, D.C., behind.
The First Lady had heard no news of her husband all day. Was he still alive? Would she ever see him again? She’d had little time for such considerations while loading the wagon. But now the exhausted woman’s thoughts would not leave her in peace. As the wagon rumbled into the Virginia night, a glow lit up the sky behind her. Just as she feared, the British had set fire to the White House. Dolley Madison stared over her shoulder at the ravaged city. She wondered whether she would ever be able to return home again.

1. Read the following sentence from the passage.
   “She was lost in thought—contemplating what would happen to this beautiful building and the treasures it housed if it fell to the British army.”
   What does the word contemplating most likely mean in this sentence?
   A. considering
   B. pretending
   C. concealing
   D. expressing

2. Read the following sentence from the passage.
   “With a start, she realized that her husband, James, was speaking to her.”
   Now read the dictionary entry below.
   \textbf{start} \textit{n.} 1. a beginning. 2. an advantage. 3. an initial stage in a process. 4. a sudden movement or reaction.

   Which definition is closest to the meaning of start as it is used in the sentence from the passage?
   A. definition 1
   B. definition 2
   C. definition 3
   D. definition 4
Unit 1 – *Reading*

3. Read the following sentences from the passage.
   “The British had arrived in the capital city. There would be no way to divert them from the White House.”

   What does the word *divert* most likely mean?
   A. to bring together
   B. to turn away
   C. to capture
   D. to protect

4. Read the following sentence from the passage.
   “But Dolley was disinclined to heed their warnings.”

   The word *disinclined* means about the same as
   A. careful.
   B. likely.
   C. eager.
   D. unwilling.

5. Read the following sentences from the passage.
   “Get out now, Mrs. Madison! You must leave directly!”

   Now read the dictionary entry below.

   **directly** *adv.* 1. in a straight line. 2. at once; instantly. 3. totally or exactly. 4. sincerely; straightforward.

   Which definition is closest to the meaning of *directly* as it is used in the sentence from the passage?
   A. definition 1
   B. definition 2
   C. definition 3
   D. definition 4
Lesson 1: Vocabulary

6. Read the following sentences from the passage.

“At last, Dolley knew it was futile to try to save more. The British would surely arrive at any moment.”

The word futile most likely means
A. sensible.
B. effective.
C. useless.
D. simple.

7. Read this sentence from the passage.

“It was dangerous for her to remain any longer, but this knowledge did not lessen her courage.”

What does the word lessen most likely mean in this sentence?
A. decrease
B. inspire
C. require
D. increase

8. Read these sentences from the passage.

“Just as she feared, the British had set fire to the White House. Dolley Madison stared over her shoulder at the ravaged city.”

Which word means about the same as ravaged?
A. modern
B. rebuilt
C. destroyed
D. unchanging