Read the selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

Melampus and the Snakes

Melampus was a boy who lived in ancient Greece. One day, a snake was killed near his home. Melampus felt sorry for the snake’s two babies, so he took care of them and made them his pets. The little snakes did something for Melampus in return. They taught him to understand the languages of all the animals. And later, when Melampus grew up, that knowledge saved his life.

Some enemies captured Melampus and put him in jail. There were mice in the cell, and Melampus heard them talking. They told him that worms had eaten through the heavy beam in the ceiling, and it would soon crash down. Melampus asked his enemies to move him to another cell, which they did. The beam soon fell. Melampus’s enemies were in awe of his wisdom, so they set him free.
Answer the questions below.

1. What is the theme of the story?
   A. Snakes make good pets.
   B. Kindness is often repaid.
   C. Wise men make the best leaders.
   D. Never trust your enemies.

2. Which time period could be the setting for the story?
   F. 2,500 years ago
   G. 250 years ago
   H. 25 years ago
   J. The present

3. From the setting of this story, you know that it is
   A. an Indian legend.
   B. a Norse myth.
   C. a Greek myth.
   D. a French folk tale.

4. Which part of the story is an event told out of order, and how does that add to the plot of the story?

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Common Core State Standards

Questions 1, 4: Literature 2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text. Questions 2, 3: Literature 1. Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says and when drawing inferences from the text.