YEAR 8 · READING COMPREHENSION

Non-Fiction Article with Fact Retrieval

Name _____ **Date** _____

Read the article carefully. Then answer each question using details from the text.

INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Protecting London: the Thames Barrier

At Woolwich Reach in east London, the Thames Barrier stretches across the River Thames. It was built to help protect London from tidal flooding, especially storm surges pushed up the river from the North Sea. A storm surge can happen when strong winds and low air pressure push seawater towards the coast. If it arrives at the same time as a high tide, water levels can rise dangerously.

The barrier is 520 metres wide and has ten steel gates. In normal conditions, ships pass through the open gates, which rest flat on the river bed. When a surge is forecast, the gates turn upwards to form a wall across the river. The largest gates are about 20 metres high when raised. Once the danger has passed, the gates are lowered again so river traffic can continue.

Work on the barrier began in 1974, and it became operational in 1982. It was officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1984. Its machinery is checked and maintained so that the gates can work when needed.

The barrier is one part of London's flood defences. Raised river walls and embankments help protect areas along the Thames, while warnings give people time to prepare. Engineers monitor changing sea levels and review how flood risks may change over time.

Find the facts

Look back at the article to retrieve each detail.

1. Where is the Thames Barrier located?

2. What type of flooding was the barrier built to help protect London from?

3. How wide is the Thames Barrier?

4. How many gates does the barrier have, and what are they made of?

5. Name the two weather conditions that can help create a storm surge.

6. Where do the open gates rest in normal conditions?

7. When are the gates turned upwards?

8. In which year did the barrier become operational, and in which year was it officially opened?