**The Barbaric Huns and the Roman Empire**

In the fourth and fifth centuries an invasion of **nomadic** tribes exploded out of the steppes of Central Asia into Europe throwing the Roman Empire into disarray and eventually destroying it. The Huns arrived in Europe around 370 and settled in modern-day Hungary.

*Fierce fighters and superb horseman, the Huns struck fear into… the Romans. Writing at the end of the fourth century, the Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus described the Huns as the most barbarous of Rome's enemies:*

"And though they do just bear the likeness of men (of a very ugly pattern), they are so little advanced in civilization that they make no use of fire, nor any kind of relish, in the preparation of their food, but feed upon the roots which they find in the fields, and the half-raw flesh of any sort of animal.

When attacked, they will sometimes engage in regular battle. Then, going into the fight in order of columns, they fill the air with varied and **discordant** cries. More often, however, they fight in no regular order of battle, but by being extremely swift and sudden in their movements, they disperse, and then rapidly come together again in loose array, spread havoc over vast plains, and flying over the **rampart**, they **pillage** the camp of their enemy almost before he has become aware of their approach.

When in close combat with swords, they fight without regard to their own safety, and while their enemy is intent upon parrying the thrust of the swords, they throw a net over him and so entangle his limbs that he loses all power of walking or riding." (Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire)

"Dining With Attila the Hun, 448," EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2003).

**Vocabulary: *nomadic*:** wandering, ***discordant:*** harsh, ***rampart:*** wall of protection,   
 ***pillage:*** to take goods or property by force

1. The word ***bear*** on line 8 has multiple meanings. What is the meaning of the word in the context of this  
 document?  
 a. animal b. support  
 c. have d. tolerate

2. The word ***array*** on line 14 has multiple meanings. What is the meaning of the word in the context of this  
 document?  
 a. display b. order  
 c. dress d. distribute

3. While annotating the evidence in the text, find the words and phrases in lines 12-14 help you to understand   
 the meaning of the word ***disperse***.

4. Using lines 11-15, what do the words *when*, *sometimes*, *then*, and *more often, however* tell us about the   
 author’s structure of this text? Why is this important to notice? Explain your thinking using evidence from the  
 text. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   
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5. How do the words *swords*, *combat,* *fight*, and *thrust* help you to better understand the meaning of the   
 word ***parrying*** on line 17? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. **The Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus described the Huns as the most barbarous of Rome's enemies.** Find and annotate at least six pieces of evidence in the text to support the claim.