

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The Twine Rollers

(1) Four men got the same idea—to wind the world’s biggest balls of twine. In the end, each claimed a different title.

(2) In 1950, Francis A. Johnson began rolling twine in the basement of his farmhouse in Darwin, Minnesota. It started when he began wrapping a small piece of twine around two fingers. Francis spent four hours a day wrapping twine. Soon he had to move the whopper outside. He raised it up on railroad ties to make sure the ball stayed round. When the ball grew very large, Francis moved it to a shed that was open on all sides. He worked on his ball of twine for 29 years. When he finally stopped adding to the ball, it was 11 feet high, about 40 feet around, and weighed 17,400 pounds. In 1991, it was in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the biggest ball of twine hand-wrapped by one man.

(3) In 1989, Francis died and his ball of twine was rolled from his farm to the town. It is now enclosed in a

wooden gazebo with Plexiglas sides that protect it from the weather. This ball of twine became so famous that a song was written about it. “Weird Al” Yankovic wrote “The Biggest Ball of Twine in Minnesota.” The town even has a “Twine Ball Days” festival every year in its honor.

(4) Frank Stoeber began winding twine in 1953. After four years, his ball of twine weighed 5,000 pounds and was 8 feet high. In 1961, he donated his ball of twine to Cawker City, Kansas. By then, the ball of twine was 11 feet in diameter. It is on display in a pavilion on Main Street in Cawker City.

(5) When Frank died in 1974, his creation was still not as large as Francis Johnson’s. So Frank’s town continued winding. Every August, the town holds a Twinathon and people add to the ball. The town even has an official “Keeper of the Twine” who gives twine to tourists. She encourages them to add it to the ball. Unfortunately, the ball is no longer round. It has become flat on the bottom, but people still continue to add to it.

(6) Many of the buildings on Main Street in Cawker City have reproductions of famous paintings in their windows. A ball of twine appears in each picture. A stripe of

twine painted on the sidewalks guides people from the ball of twine to each of the paintings. In 2003, the ball became the biggest built by a town, and it keeps on growing.

(7) James Frank Kotera began his egg-shaped creation in Wisconsin in 1979. He had seen an article in the newspaper about someone else who had made a large ball of twine and decided to start one of his own. His neighbor gives James twine from his hay bales. His twine ball is multicolored because he uses red, green, and hay-colored twine. Before he wraps any twine on the ball, James places it in a plastic bag and weighs it. He keeps a record of the weight of each bag so he knows how much the ball weighs. As of 2014, James's ball weighed 20,545 pounds. It became the heaviest ball—by over a ton—wound by one person. It weighs much more than Francis's ball. James plans on adding to the ball to make it as big as he can.

(8) In 1987, a Texan named J.C. Payne began winding twine after he heard about a man in Minnesota who had built a giant ball of twine. J.C. used colored nylon baling twine that he collected from neighboring ranches.

He worked on it for four hours a day. Within four years, he made a ball that is 41.5 feet around. He named it *Clovia Crew*. In 1993, he sold his ball of twine to a museum in Branson, Missouri. It's rumored that J.C. received \$25,000 for it. The museum purchased his twine ball because it was newer, rounder, and more colorful than any of the other balls of twine. The ball is still on display in the museum. It is the biggest so far, but due to the plastic twine it is made of, it is lighter than the others.

(9) With some string, time, and patience, maybe you could be the next twine record breaker!

7. What is the **best** meaning of the word *reproductions* as it is used in Paragraph 6?

- A. portraits
- B. originals
- C. signs
- D. imitations

Teacher feedback:
Score:

8. Answer the questions about the passage.

(a) Which statements tell the main ideas of "The Twine Rollers"?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A. Each man's ball of twine has been recognized for its size or weight.
- B. A song was written about Francis Johnson's ball of twine.
- C. J.C. Payne uses different colored baling twine on his ball of twine.
- D. Four different men have wound large balls of twine.

Teacher feedback:

(b) Which sentences from the text support the answer in Part (a)?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A. A stripe of twine painted on the sidewalks guides people from the ball of twine to each of the paintings. (Paragraph 6)
- B. Four men got the same idea—to wind the world's biggest balls of twine. (Paragraph 1)
- C. When the ball grew very large, Francis moved it to a shed that was open on all sides. (Paragraph 2)
- D. In the end, each claimed a different title. (Paragraph 1)

Teacher feedback:
Score: