



Name _____

Date _____

Life As A Lighthouse Keeper

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4 If you are sick, you stay home from school. If there is a big snowstorm or hurricane, you
5 usually get the day off, too. But if you had a job as a lighthouse keeper, there were no days off.
6 You had to work all the time. In bad weather, you usually had to work even harder! Most of the
7 time, though, your work could be boring. There were no days off for a lighthouse keeper. Read
8 on to learn more about life as a lighthouse keeper.

9 Lighthouses help ships stay away from dangerous shorelines or rocky cliffs. This means
10 that lighthouse keepers often lived in the most dangerous spots in a body of water. When
11 storms blew in, high winds, pounding waves and driving rain brought danger. Of course, ships
12 leave waters when storms are coming. Lighthouse keepers had to stay and be sure the lights
13 were kept burning. Because the lights were at the top of the lighthouse, winding stairs had to
14 be climbed in terrible weather so the lights would continue to warn anyone still out in the storm.
15 In very early days of lighthouses, some of them did not even have a roof. It must have been
16 very difficult to do your job during a storm in those days! Often, the lighthouse keeper's family
17 and animals lived with him. Famous stories tell how keepers and their families had to save
18 themselves and pets during fierce storms.

19 While storms brought danger and maybe even excitement to a lighthouse keeper, daily
20 life could be boring. Lighthouse keepers kept logbooks. These journals are full of "tales" of
21 dusting the lighthouse, cleaning the lens, and filling the oil lamps. These kinds of boring jobs
22 had to be done everyday. Some tasks brought danger. Painting the lighthouse tower was a
23 difficult task. Keepers had to climb high with brushes and paint buckets to keep the lighthouse
24 sparkling. Often lighthouse keepers had a sad morning chore. They had to sweep dead birds
25 from the deck. The birds were attracted to the light and crashed into the lighthouse.

26 The lighthouses were often placed in the water or along a rocky shore so getting to
27 them was not easy. This meant that lighthouse keepers had a lonely life. Sometimes family
28 members could take a trip to a store for supplies. Sometimes a boat would arrive with food or
29 mail. When a family or keeper could talk with other people, this was exciting! It helped break
30 up the lonely days and nights.

31 You may wonder why anyone would want to be a lighthouse keeper. Many people love
32 the water. They say that being a part of life on the sea is exciting. Some liked being away from
33 other people. They enjoyed the loneliness. Being a lighthouse keeper meant you had a place
34 to live and you were paid for staying at your house.

35 Today, electricity means that most lighthouses do not need keepers. Lights are run
36 automatically. Workers check the lights every so often but they are not required to be at the
37 lighthouse twenty-four hours a day. Improved navigation instruments on ships means fewer
38 lighthouses are needed. But some people still long for the days of lighthouse keepers. If you
39 are one of those people, you can take a vacation at a lighthouse! You can polish lamps, dust
40 the lens, or even paint stairs. And...YOU have to pay for the privilege of doing this!

Reading in the Content Areas: Literal

Read these questions about the passage. They can be answered by looking back in the text. You do NOT have to write the answer. Just write the line number where the answer is found.

1. What did lighthouse keepers have to sweep from the deck? _____
2. What does electricity mean for most lighthouses today? _____
3. What do lighthouses do? _____
4. What do ships do when storms are coming? _____
5. What are three daily jobs of a lighthouse keeper? _____
6. What do famous stories about lighthouse keepers tell of? _____
7. Where are the lights on a lighthouse found? _____

Reading in the Content Areas: Critical Thinking

Apply what you learned. Use the facts and your ideas to answer each question.

1. Why do you think lighthouse keepers were often tired?

2. Describe the kind of person who likely took a job as a lighthouse keeper.

3. Would you like to read the journal of a lighthouse keeper? Why or why not?

4. Would you pay for a vacation at a lighthouse? Why or why not?
