Capitol Hill is the seat of the American government. This is where the Senate and the House of Representatives meet. It is where you can find the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court. There are many historic monuments in the area. Visitors come from all over the country to visit.

Capitol Hill is in Washington D.C. This is the American capital. The land was chosen by George Washington when he became the first president. It was ceded by Maryland, and construction started right away.

The first project to begin was the U.S. Capitol building. The leaders knew the Congress would need a place to meet. But what type of building would be the best? How could they house everyone at the same time?

Thomas Jefferson suggested they hold a contest. Whoever could make the best plan would win five hundred dollars. Many people entered the contest, but President Washington did not like any of these designs. At last, a man named William Thornton sent in his design. By the time he sent his contest entry it was too late. The contest had ended.

When the leaders saw his plans, though, they chose his design as the winner. He suggested a central building with a dome. There would be two wings off the central building. One wing would hold the Senate. The other wing would hold the House of Representatives.
Construction started right away, but the builders had many problems. They had trouble getting enough money for supplies. It took many years to complete a small part of the building. In the year 1800, the Congress was able to meet in the Capitol building for the first time.

The Library of Congress and the Supreme Court also began meeting in the Capitol building by 1801. Many changes were made to the building over the years. Updates were made to make it more modern. Running water, gas lighting, elevators, and electricity were added. The building was expanded, or made bigger, as more congressmen joined the government. New states joined the union at a fast pace. Capitol Hill had to grow too, so it could fit all the state leaders.

Today the Capitol building is over 280 feet tall, 751 feet long, and 350 feet wide. The Capitol Dome on top of the building can be seen for miles. The building is made mostly of sandstone, limestone, marble, and iron. It has cost millions of dollars to build, update, and restore over the years.

Inside the Capitol building you can find the chambers for the House and the Senate. You can also find Emancipation Hall and the Capitol Rotunda. The Rotunda has lots of historic paintings. These include the Discovery of the Mississippi and the Declaration of Independence.

The Capitol building isn’t the only major attraction on Capitol Hill. The Library of Congress and Supreme Court buildings are also located there. They did meet inside the Capitol building at first, but they were moved to their own homes as the country grew.

John Adams founded the Library of Congress in 1800. The books were meant to
help the congressmen as they made and upheld laws. After the Civil War in 1861, the leaders realized the library could help all American people. After that, the library collection grew quickly.

A new building was built for the books. It opened in 1898. Today, the Library of Congress is made up of three separate buildings. The Thomas Jefferson Building is the most popular. There are over sixteen million books there today. There are also millions of other written items.

The Supreme Court didn't have their own building for many more years. They met in the Capitol building until 1935. When President William Howard Taft finished his term, he became a Supreme Court Justice. It was during this time that he suggested the Supreme Court should have their own home.

The other leaders agreed. They built a splendid building that was modeled after classic Corinthian structures. There are columns and stately marble. It is located across the street from the U.S. Capitol building.

Other important places in the Capitol Hill neighborhood include the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. The Smithsonian Museum and the Folgers Shakespeare Museum are also popular.

Today, Capitol Hill remains a proud mix of history and modern politics. It is used by the United States legislative and judicial branches. It is visited by millions of guests each year who come to tour the capital city. Guests can even secure passes that grant them entry into an active session of Congress. This allows them to see their United States Senators or Representatives in action.
1) Why did the leaders decide to accept William Thornton’s design for U.S. Capitol Building, even though he had submitted it after the deadline?

2) What was the biggest problem the builders had to deal with when they started the construction?

3) What upgrades were made to the building to make it more modern?

4) What was the change made in 1861 regarding the access to the Library of Congress?

5) How does the author conclude the passage?
Capitol Hill

1) Why did the leaders decide to accept William Thornton’s design for U.S. Capitol Building, even though he had submitted it after the deadline?

_The leaders really liked his design plan for U.S. Capitol Building as it had a fresh and interesting concept._

2) What was the biggest problem the builders had to deal with when they started the construction?

_The main problem the builders were faced with was the money, as they had serious troubles getting funds for supplies._

3) What upgrades were made to the building to make it more modern?

_Running water, gas lighting, elevators, and electricity were added, in order to make the building more modern._

4) What was the change made in 1861 regarding the access to the Library of Congress?

_The library was made open to the American public, as the leaders thought they would benefit from it._

5) How does the author conclude the passage?

_The author says that today Capitol Hill is a place where history meets modern politics._

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Name: __________________________