

Grade Four Sample Test Item—Reading

Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded

What a Yawn from Ask Magazine

Want to know who is looking at you in a crowd? Try this: Pretend to yawn. Open your mouth really wide, and scrunch up your eyes. For added drama, you might stretch. Then look around. Anyone else yawning? If they are, they were probably watching you. Yawning is so contagious that one person yawning will make others do the same.

Yawning is really a six-second mystery, from the opening to the closing of your mouth. Humans and all other mammals do it, and so do some fish and reptiles. Birds do it. Eleven-week-old unborn human babies do it. But no one really knows why.

Pay Attention When I Yawn at You

Most people believe that we yawn because we are tired, which is partly true. But scientists have other theories too.

In apes and monkeys, yawning by the leader of the group may signal that it's time for a change in the group's activity: "YAWN ... It's time for us all to go to sleep," or "YAWN ... It's time to hunt." Once the leader yawns, everyone else in the pack yawns back, signaling that they understand. (A big yawn also gives the leader a chance to show off his long, sharp teeth and remind young upstarts not to bother him while he is sleeping.)

Perhaps yawning is your body's way of telling you it's time for a change. Think about when you yawn. As you wake up, you might stretch and yawn. Your body is ready to do something besides sleep. You might yawn at bedtime, preparing yourself for dreamland. Sometimes, if you've had a long day at school, you yawn during class. Your body is really ready for a change then.

Some scientists believe that yawning is also a way of keeping the brain alert. If you are bored or drowsy, but you know you have to read one more chapter, yawning increases blood flow to the brain to stimulate it. Prior to big competitions, athletes yawn a lot, and dogs under pressure to perform will yawn over and over. Even Siamese fighting fish yawn before they attack. When it's time to be alert, the brain sends out chemical signals, and before you know it, you are yawning.

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Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)**Catching the Yawns**

And yes, yawning is contagious, though experts are not certain why. It may have something to do with those monkeys who yawn at each other to coordinate activities. Humans don't yawn for that reason, but yawning still has the same effect. When someone in the room yawns, nearly everyone else will, too.

Even just thinking about it can trigger a yawn. We won't take it personally if you yawned several times while reading this article. Perhaps your body needs a change.

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Select the **three** sentences that should be included in a summary of the passage.

- A. Yawning in class is a common occurrence.
- B. Even reading about yawning can cause a person to yawn.
- C. Scientists are unsure why people yawn, but have developed a few theories.
- D. Both animals and humans yawn when they are preparing to switch activities.
- E. Yawns often occur when people or animals are preparing for an event which requires alertness.
- F. When an ape leader yawns, it gives him a chance to frighten the younger apes by showing his long, pointed teeth.

Area**Reading**

Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts

Standard(s)

Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Answer

C; D; E