

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

Read the text and answer the questions.

**Perusal**  
from *Tower of the Five Orders*  
by Deron R. Hicks  
*Perusal*—Reading or examining, typically with great care

**Hay-on-Wye**  
**Wales, United Kingdom**  
**Friday, June 1**  
**2:52 p.m.**

Two small hazy windows and a narrow wooden door adorned the first story of the building that stood unimpressively at the bottom of Castle Street. The sign hanging above the door read simply BOOKS.

It would have been easy to pass by the store with little notice, and several months ago Julian had almost done just that. Hay-on-Wye, after all, was filled with any number of large and impressive bookstores, with rooms and rooms of ancient books and manuscripts. And it was those very bookstores that had drawn Julian to this small Welsh town on the border with England. The town boasted more than forty bookstores—almost one for every fifty residents.

He was looking for a book that might help him uncover the secret to the symbol he was researching—the symbol that he believed held the key to the real Letterford family treasure. But what book? Julian wasn't entirely sure. He had searched high and low in bookstores and libraries throughout the United Kingdom. He just knew the answer was out there somewhere. And this little bookstore on Castle Street? It hardly seemed worth the effort.

And then he hesitated.

It might be worth a few minutes of his time to look around inside.

And so three months ago Julian had walked into the little bookstore at the bottom of Castle Street.

The simple little bookstore, it turned out, occupied two stories, a full basement and a deep subbasement—all filled from floor to ceiling with books. The store itself occupied almost the entire block. It was cavernous,

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dark, dusty, and dim. It did not offer coffee, lattes, scones, Wi-Fi, comfy chairs, magazines, or any other amenity. It simply had books—and a lot of them.

As Julian quickly learned, however, the proprietor of this particular bookstore—a small hunched woman by the name of Adda Craddock—was far more adept at acquiring books than she was at maintaining them in any semblance of order. Although she had shelved the books under general categories such as history, religion, and travel, the sheer volume on any particular subject rendered those categories useless. History books occupied an entire floor and were not otherwise divided into themes, periods, or subcategories. As far as Ms. Craddock was concerned, history was simply history.

She roamed among her books constantly, claiming to have some notion as to where certain books might or might not be. In his first trip to the bookstore, Julian had requested her assistance in locating books on symbols, particularly volumes from the sixteenth or seventeenth century. He had explained that he was looking for anything that might help him understand the significance of the symbol for the Greek letter sigma— $\Sigma$ .

Julian had been obsessing over the subject of symbols ever since the discovery of the Shakespeare manuscripts the previous Christmas. In particular, he obsessed over the symbol for sigma engraved on the box in which the manuscripts had been found. No one else—not even Colophon—had seemed to notice the symbol. Others had simply taken it for granted. The family had been far too excited about the manuscripts. But the symbol concerned Julian. It was clear that it represented more than just ownership of the family business.

The manuscripts, he was convinced, were not the true treasure. They were simply another step in the quest. The symbol, he hoped, would provide the answer.

Ms. Craddock had assured Julian that she had at least three books on symbology and, true to her word, located them within a few minutes. He was impressed. Unfortunately, the books did not contain the information he was seeking. Ms. Craddock, however, promised to keep an eye out for any more books and to let Julian know if she found anything.

And find books she had.

Three times over the course of the next three months, Julian had traveled to Ms. Craddock's shop to review large stacks of dusty books that were related in some way to symbols. However, notwithstanding the bookstore proprietor's diligent efforts, this had proven to be a time-consuming approach. Hay-on-Wye was not the easiest place to reach. And the volumes had failed to provide any new insights into the

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symbol on the box. Julian had given up hope of finding anything of value in Ms. Craddock's store—when he received a letter from her informing him that she had located another book in which he might be interested. It was not a book on symbols, she warned. But the trip, she assured him, would be worth the effort.

And so there Julian stood—one last time—at the front of the store, as Ms. Craddock pulled a small brown book from beneath her counter and handed it to him.

"It was part of a large estate my late husband purchased many, many years ago," she explained. "A French family, I believe."

Julian looked at the book and gasped.

On the cover—directly beneath the book's title—was the Greek letter sigma— $\Sigma$ .

He carefully opened the book.

On the frontispiece—the page opposite the title page—was an engraving of a hawk holding a spear.

He thumbed quickly through the rest of the book until he reached the last page. There, at the bottom of the page and following the last line of the text, was the printer's mark—the stamp used to identify the book's publisher. Julian recognized it instantly: a crescent moon over crossed quills. It was the Letterford family crest.

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The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A

Select the statement that **best** describes how the author develops the idea that Julian is trying to solve a mystery.

- A. by describing the unusual appearance of the bookstore
- B. by presenting detailed dialogue between Julian and Ms. Craddock
- C. by revealing Julian’s thoughts through the use of third-person point of view
- D. by showing the advancing action that reveals the final answer to the mystery

Part B

Which evidence from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- A. “It was cavernous, dark, dusty, and dim. It did not offer coffee, lattes, scones, Wi-Fi, comfy chairs, magazines, or any other amenity.”
- B. “The manuscripts, he was convinced, were not the true treasure. They were simply another step in the quest. The symbol, he hoped, would provide the answer.”
- C. “Ms. Craddock, however, promised to keep an eye out for any more books and to let Julian know if she found anything.”
- D. “It was not a book on symbols, she warned. But the trip, she assured him, would be worth the effort.”
- E. “And so there Julian stood—one last time—at the front of the store, as Ms. Craddock pulled a small brown book from beneath her counter and handed it to him.”
- F. “There, at the bottom of the page and following the last line of the text, was the printer’s mark—the stamp used to identify the book’s publisher.”

Area	Reading  Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts
Standard(s)	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
Answer	Part A: Answer C Part B: Answer B  Note: Students must correctly answer both Part A and Part B in order to receive the point. There is no partial credit for answering just one part correctly.