

GRADE 8

Reading

Administered May 2022

RELEASED

READING

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Need for High-Speed Trains

- 1 Urban planners believe high-speed trains are the best way to improve urban transportation in the United States. Promoters of high-speed transportation in the United States say that high-speed-train travel provides several benefits that will revolutionize our transportation system. In 2018 Florida opened the Brightline Express. This intercity rail system is a success with passengers. But should all U.S. cities embrace high-speed trains? There are good reasons to answer “yes” to the high-speed-train revolution!



Bloomberg / Contributor

Efficiency Equals Better Air Quality

- 2 Many researchers say the U.S. transportation system is not very efficient or environmentally friendly. Commuters drive single-occupant cars hundreds of miles a day. This creates a lot of exhaust. A recent study showed that high-speed trains produce five times less carbon dioxide than cars. That’s because high-speed trains mostly use electricity for power. By encouraging millions of people to use high-speed trains, air quality in a city could be improved.
- 3 High-speed railways are the world’s “greenest” form of transportation. When Californians developed the vision for their high-speed rail system, they considered the environment. They decided they wanted “a high-speed rail system that will deliver fast, direct travel between the state’s major regions while providing environmental benefits.” California has some of the most congested

urban areas in the nation. As a result, the state's air quality is poor. The California High-Speed Rail Authority believes these issues could be relieved with implementation of a high-speed rail system.

Time, Stress, and Safety

- 4 Using high-speed trains has other benefits too. High-speed trains move much faster than cars. In a car it can take up to five hours to drive round-trip from West Palm Beach, Florida, to Miami. This is similar to the round-trip distance between the Texas cities of San Antonio and Corpus Christi. A high-speed train takes only about 60 minutes each way. That is less than half the time it takes to get there by car! High-speed trains provide a method of reaching far distances in a short amount of time. Therefore, people who work far from where they live would be able to cut their travel time significantly. Travelers using a high-speed rail system can save valuable time in their day.
- 5 Traveling on busy roads can also be stressful. Have you ever been stuck in a car during a traffic jam at rush hour? Often, urban car travel means dealing with stopped traffic, major delays, and accidents. However, on a train you can read, nap, or watch the scenery whizzing by. There's no need to concentrate on the road ahead.
- 6 Not only is train travel faster and more relaxing, it is also safer. In fact, high-speed trains are considered to be one of the world's safest forms of transportation, according to international studies. Japan's high-speed trains have transported 10 billion passengers since they were introduced in 1964 without a single accident! France also has a record of safe train travel over the course of many years.

Cheap and Convenient

- 7 High-speed trains can help address the affordability of urban transportation. Trains save consumers the expense of owning a car. Cars come with many maintenance costs. People in urban settings typically have to pay for parking as well. A person using a high-speed train for daily travel could save thousands of dollars over time. That person would also avoid the hassle of finding and paying for a parking space in a crowded city. Additionally, those who are used to driving by car would be able to spend less money on gas if they took a high-speed train instead.
- 8 Even though high-speed trains would curtail car use, cars would still be needed. Some people will have to depend on a car to get them to and from the train station. Regardless, the amount of time saved by

not driving to other destinations would still help people save money and put less wear on their cars.

Local Economy Boosts

- 9 According to urban planners, high-speed rail systems promise to add major real-estate development around its stations. This includes housing as well as stores and restaurants for the many local residents and commuters. The real-estate development will in turn support local manufacturing and construction jobs.
- 10 High-speed rail systems also provide a variety of jobs. The new technology involved in high-speed trains means more jobs in building components of the system. There is also the job of managing the trains and tracks. In addition, more jobs will be available for operating the stations as well as running new surrounding businesses.

Embracing the Change

- 11 Encouraging an entire nation to embrace “train culture” will definitely be a challenge. Many people prefer having their own method of transportation and the freedom it provides. Others are unfamiliar with trains, and they do not know how to plan a trip or read a train schedule. Navigating a train station can be chaotic. However, saving time, energy, and money may help convince people to give high-speed trains a chance.
- 12 Urban cities across the United States should consider a high-speed train system. High-speed-train travel offers many benefits that cars cannot provide. People everywhere should be “all aboard” for this efficient and safe mode of transportation.

- 1** Read the dictionary entry.

hassle \'ha-səl\ *n*

- 1.** a prolonged argument **2.** a state of confusion
3. a debate or controversy **4.** an inconvenient problem

Which definition of the word hassle is used in paragraph 7?

- A** Definition 1
 - B** Definition 2
 - C** Definition 3
 - D** Definition 4
-

- 2** How does the information in paragraph 6 support the author's argument?
- F** By telling how long high-speed trains have been used in other countries
 - G** By detailing the safety records of Japanese and French high-speed trains
 - H** By telling how many passengers have been transported on high-speed trains
 - J** By explaining the results of international studies analyzing high-speed trains

- 3** Who is likely the intended audience for this selection?
- A** Readers who have not considered the benefits of high-speed trains in U.S. cities
 - B** Workers who believe diversity in urban transportation will create more jobs
 - C** Readers who are not convinced that air quality in U.S. cities is a concern
 - D** Commuters who think the development of high-speed trains will relieve traffic
-
- 4** The details in paragraphs 9 and 10 support the key idea that the development of high-speed trains will —
- F** increase people's interest in using alternate forms of transportation in the United States
 - G** encourage people to support the use of high-speed trains in cities throughout Florida
 - H** cause the real-estate market to improve in cities that commit to improving urban transportation
 - J** lead to numerous new construction and employment opportunities

- 5** In paragraph 11, the author presents a counter argument most likely to —
- A** show that the benefits of high-speed trains are outweighed by the disadvantages
 - B** suggest that many travelers would likely be unable to plan a trip by train
 - C** acknowledge that widespread acceptance of high-speed trains will not happen easily
 - D** establish that commuters will choose the method of travel that is least disruptive
-

- 6** Based on paragraphs 4 and 5, what can the reader infer about how high-speed trains would affect the way people live?
- F** People would be able to enjoy more leisure time.
 - G** People would be motivated to establish a daily schedule.
 - H** People would choose to look for jobs farther from home.
 - J** People would visit cities they have never seen before.

- 7 Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

There are good reasons to answer “yes” to the high-speed-train revolution!

What is the most likely reason the author uses loaded language in this sentence?

- A To urge the U.S. to join the international movement toward safer travel
- B To show that high-speed trains will replace all other forms of transportation
- C To suggest that high-speed trains will have a huge impact on the way people travel
- D To emphasize that people in the U.S. should reject our current transportation system

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.
Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

from
Travel Team

by Mike Lupica

- 1 He knew he was small.
- 2 He just didn't *think* he was small.
- 3 *Big* difference.
- 4 Danny had known his whole life how small he was compared to everybody in his grade, from the first grade on. How he had been put in the front row, front and center, of every class picture taken. Been in the front of every line marching into every school assembly, first one through the door. Sat in the front of every classroom. Hey, little man. Hey, little guy. He was used to it by now. They'd been studying DNA in science lately; being small was in his DNA. He'd show up for soccer, or Little League baseball tryouts, or basketball, when he'd first started going to basketball tryouts at the Y, and there'd always be one of those clipboard dads who didn't know him, or his mom. Or his dad.
- 5 Asking him: "Are you sure you're with the right group, little guy?"
- 6 Meaning the right *age* group.
- 7 It happened the first time when he was eight, back when he still had to put the ball up on his shoulder and give it a heave just to get it up to a ten-foot rim. When he'd already taught himself how to lean into the bigger kid guarding him, just because there was always a bigger kid guarding him, and then step back so he could get his dopey shot off.
- 8 This was way back before he'd even tried any fancy stuff, including the crossover.
- 9 He just told the clipboard dad that he was eight, that he was little, that this was his right group, and could he have his number, please? When he told his mom about it later, she just smiled and said, "You know what you should hear when people start talking about your size? Blah blah blah."

- 10 He smiled back at her and said that he was pretty sure he would be able to remember that.
- 11 "How did you play?" she said that day, when she couldn't wait any longer for him to tell.
- 12 "I did okay."
- 13 "I have a feeling you did more than that," she said, hugging him to her. "My streak of light."
- 14 But here was the deal, when he added it all up: His height had always been much more of a stinking issue for other people, including his mom, than it was for him.
- 15 He tried not to sweat the small stuff, basically, the way grown-ups always told you.
- 16 He knew he was faster than everybody else at St. Patrick's School. And at Springs School, for that matter. Nobody on either side of town could get in front of him. He was the best passer his age, even better than Ty Ross, who was better at everything in sports than just about anybody. He knew that when it was just kids—which is the way kids always liked it in sports—and the parents were out of the gym or off the playground and you got to just play without a whistle blowing every ten seconds or somebody yelling out more instructions, he was always one of the first picked, because the other guys on his team, the shooters especially, knew he'd get them the ball.
- 17 Most kids, his dad told him one time, know something about basketball that even most grown-ups never figure out.
- 18 One good passer changes everything.
- 19 Danny could pass, which is why he'd always made the team.
- 20 Almost always.
- 21 But no matter what was happening with any team he'd ever played on, no matter how tired he would be after practice, no matter how much homework he still had left, this driveway was still his special place. Like a special club with a membership of one, the place where he could come out at this time of night and imagine it up good, imagine it big and bright, even with just the one floodlight over the backboard and the other light, smaller, over the back door. His mother had done everything she could to make the driveway wider

back here, even cutting into what little backyard they had the summer before last. "I told them you needed more room in the corners," she said. "The men from the paving company. They just nodded at me, like corners were some sort of crucial thing."

- 22 He had just enough room in the corners now, mostly for shooting. He didn't feel as if he was trying to make a drive to the basket in his closet. Or an elevator car. He had room to *maneuver*, pretend he really *was* at the real Garden¹, that he was one of the small fast guys who'd made it all the way there. Like Muggsy Bogues, somebody he'd read up on when one of his coaches told him to, who was only 5-3 and made it to the NBA. Like Tiny Archibald and Bobby Hurley and Earl Boykins, a 5-5 guy who came out of the basketball minor leagues, another streak of light who showed everybody that more than size mattered, even in hoops.

Excerpt(s) from *Travel Team* by Mike Lupica. Copyright © 2004 by Mike Lupica. Used by permission of Philomel, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.
Third party trademark NBA® was used in these testing materials.

¹Garden—The Garden is a famous basketball arena in Boston, Massachusetts.

- 8** How does the author's use of language in paragraph 16 of the selection contribute to its tone?
- F** It conveys a sentimental feeling.
- G** It relays an element of sarcasm.
- H** It creates a sense of confidence.
- J** It communicates a disrespectful attitude.
-
- 9** What does the use of flashback in the excerpt help the reader understand?
- A** Danny has been dealing with the issue of his height for many years.
- B** Danny has needed help from his mother to deal with issues regarding his height.
- C** Danny has worked with many different clipboard dads to develop his skills.
- D** Danny has learned basketball tricks that most kids his age cannot do.

10 What is the best summary of the excerpt?

- F** Because Danny has been the smallest student in his class since first grade, he has been in the front of every line or row in his classroom. During basketball tryouts Danny was asked if he was in the right group because he was small for his age. However, Danny is the best passer his age, and he is faster than everyone at St. Patrick's School.
- G** Although Danny has always been smaller than others in his class, he works hard at basketball and is an excellent passer for his age. At night he practices on the driveway, where he imagines himself being successful. Danny has read about short professional basketball players and hopes to play with the NBA himself someday.
- H** Danny has learned about DNA in science class and thinks that being small is in his DNA. He has taught himself how to lean into bigger kids who guard him in basketball. Danny's mom tells him not to let his small size bother him.
- J** Danny has tried out for soccer, Little League, and basketball, but he likes basketball best. He practices in his driveway and is the best passer his age, even better than Ty Ross—the best athlete in every sport. He wants to be like Muggsy Bogues someday.

11 Based on Danny's mom's comment in paragraph 9, the reader can conclude that Danny's mom —

- A** does not want Danny to concern himself with what other people think
- B** does not have time to listen to how Danny's tryout went
- C** feels overwhelmed by the many remarks she has heard about Danny's small size
- D** thinks Danny overreacts when he gets feedback from other people

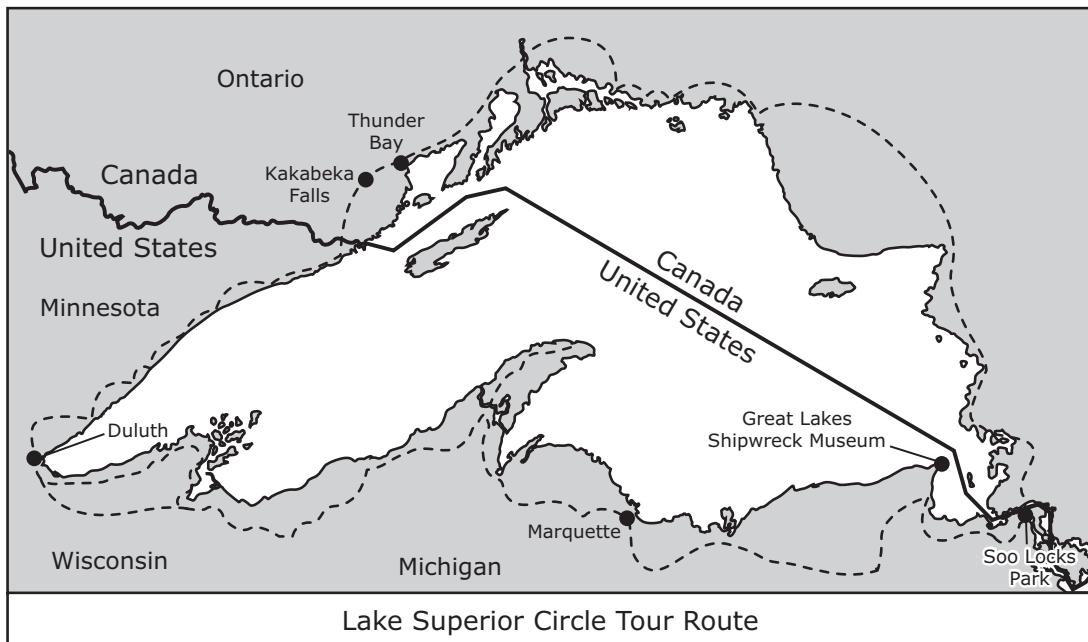
- 12** How does Danny's early motivation to succeed at basketball influence the events in the excerpt?
- F** By allowing him to be placed on teams with players that are older than he is
 - G** By causing him to develop strategies for dealing with larger opponents
 - H** By convincing him to prove to his teammates that he is faster than they are
 - J** By inspiring him to be more patient when talking with clipboard dads
-

- 13** What is revealed through the author's use of third-person limited point of view?
- A** Danny's assessment of his own abilities and limitations
 - B** The clipboard dad's opinion about Danny's placement on certain teams
 - C** Why Danny's mom waited to question him about his performance
 - D** How Danny's dad knew that kids understand basketball differently than adults

Read the next two selections and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Biking for Boots

- 1 "Emily, did you hear the terrible news about the Forest Animal Shelter?" my cousin Shelby asked as we rode along the bike trail. "It has to close because the building needs major repairs, but the shelter has no funds."
- 2 "Oh no—we should do something!" I exclaimed. I had adopted my collie, Boots, from the shelter, and I instantly wanted to help.
- 3 "Maybe we could raise some money," I proposed as our bikes rolled to a stop.
- 4 Shelby groaned, eyeing me apprehensively. "I wanted to spend my summer biking."
- 5 "Surely there's something we could do to support the shelter and still have time for biking . . . a bake sale, maybe? Or a fun run!" Suddenly I had the perfect idea.
- 6 "Wait! I've got it!" I shouted. "We could raise funds by biking around Lake Superior—it's the world's largest freshwater lake! We could ask people to pledge money for each mile we ride."
- 7 "We'd have to ride over a thousand miles to bike around the lake," Shelby interrupted, overwhelmed, but her eyes glimmered with anticipation too. "Let's go ask our parents," she agreed.
- 8 A month later Shelby and I left from Duluth, Minnesota, on the first leg of our lengthy Lake Superior bicycle tour. Shelby's mom was going to be our support team on the road. Already we had a list of over a hundred pledges from family and friends. We were determined to pedal every one of the 1,300 challenging miles.
- 9 For the next month, our enthusiasm ebbed and flowed along with the demands of our bicycling experiences. Once pelting rain forced us to escape into a smelly rest stop where we waited for two hours; another time we witnessed a bald eagle capturing a trout in the great lake. We had flat tires to repair after riding miles of roadways. Our energy often waned during the day, and at night our aching muscles and insect bites kept us from sleeping peacefully at the local motel. Yet, throughout the journey, we met many friendly people who cheered us on and kept us motivated.



- 10 Each evening I posted a log of our adventures on the animal shelter's website. We saw the Soo Locks, where freighters traveled from Lake Superior to Lake Huron; we heard the thundering Kakabeka Falls and stopped to visit the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum. After ten days of biking, we whooped with amazement when we realized over 2,000 people had "liked" our posts on social media.
- 11 "We've accumulated quite the fan club, and they've all donated to the shelter," Shelby exclaimed. "The two of us are nearly single-handedly raising enough funds to make it possible for the animal shelter to rebuild. That's amazing!"
- 12 "Yes!" I cheered, pumping the air with my fist. I knew that despite the challenges, the Forest Animal Shelter was a cause worth biking for, especially if the animals there were all as sweet as Boots!

The Ride of a Lifetime!

- 1 People have crossed the country by bicycle, motorcycle, and even on foot. However, one of the most astonishing treks of all time was accomplished on horseback in 1910. It's not the horses that made the trip so unique, though. It's that the horseback riders were two tough young boys from the South. They were only nine and six years old!
- 2 Bud and Temple Abernathy were born with adventure in their blood. Their father was U.S. Marshall Jack Abernathy. His speed and skills on horseback were phenomenal enough to catch the attention of President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt and Abernathy spent time together in Frederick, Oklahoma, in April of 1905. It was during this visit that Roosevelt saw firsthand the outstanding horsemanship of Jack Abernathy.



Public Domain

- 3 Jack Abernathy helped his sons plan the trip. They were to travel no more than 50 miles a day and to carry no more than five dollars with them at a time. They were allowed to cross creeks and rivers but only when the water was clear enough that they could see the bottom. They were not allowed to travel at all on Sundays.
- 4 Bud's horse was named Sam Bass, and Temple rode a pony named Geronimo. Even with a pony, six-year-old Temple was so small that

he had to mount his horse using a tree stump or stool. The boys took off on their 2,000-mile trip departing from Frederick, Oklahoma. They traveled with some extra clothes, oats for their horses, and food for themselves. They were headed to New York City, where they would join a parade to welcome Theodore Roosevelt home from his international travels.

- 5 The boys faced snowstorms, treacherous river crossings, snakes, and scorpions on their journey. They crossed American Indian Territory, even stopping to rest at some Indian camps. As news of their feat spread across the countryside, families would welcome them into their homes for a home-cooked meal and a welcome bit of repose.



The Abernathy Brothers Heading East

Public Domain

- 6 As Bud and Temple continued east, newspaper reporters would congregate to meet them. The press was eager to write about their adventure, and Americans were eager to read about it. After about two months the boys arrived in New York City. There they joined one million people in the welcoming parade, riding proudly down Fifth Avenue alongside the Rough Riders, Roosevelt's group of 1,000 volunteer soldiers, and their proud father.

14 Use “Biking for Boots” to answer the following question.

Based on the end of the story “Biking for Boots,” the reader can predict that Emily and Shelby will —

- F** plan additional fund-raisers to help other worthy causes in their community
 - G** assist in the rebuilding of the animal shelter
 - H** complete the Circle Tour and donate their earnings to the animal shelter
 - J** encourage their friends to participate in the Circle Tour
-

15 Use “Biking for Boots” to answer the following question.

Which sentence from the story “Biking for Boots” shows that the girls have mixed feelings throughout their Lake Superior tour?

- A** *Shelby's mom was going to be our support team on the road.* (paragraph 8)
- B** *For the next month, our enthusiasm ebbed and flowed along with the demands of our bicycling experiences.* (paragraph 9)
- C** *We had flat tires to repair after riding miles of roadways.* (paragraph 9)
- D** *Each evening I posted a log of our adventures on the animal shelter's website.* (paragraph 10)

16 Use “Biking for Boots” to answer the following question.

Based on events in the story “Biking for Boots,” which sentence best expresses its theme?

- F** *A month later Shelby and I left from Duluth, Minnesota, on the first leg of our lengthy Lake Superior bicycle tour.* (paragraph 8)
 - G** *Already we had a list of over a hundred pledges from family and friends.* (paragraph 8)
 - H** *Yet, throughout the journey, we met many friendly people who cheered us on and kept us motivated.* (paragraph 9)
 - J** *I knew that despite the challenges, the Forest Animal Shelter was a cause worth biking for, especially if the animals there were all as sweet as Boots!* (paragraph 12)
-

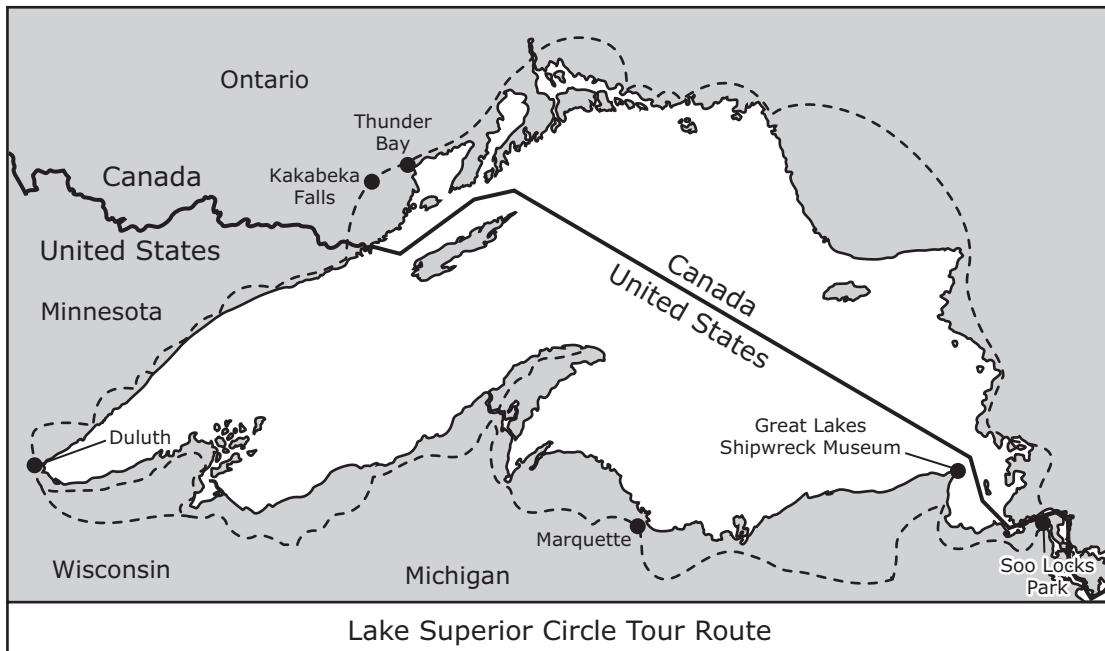
17 Use “Biking for Boots” to answer the following question.

In paragraph 9 of the story “Biking for Boots,” what does the word waned mean?

- A** Encouraged
- B** Combined
- C** Decreased
- D** Calculated

18 Use “Biking for Boots” to answer the following question.

Look at the map from the story “Biking for Boots.”



What is the most likely reason the author includes the map?

- F** To help the reader see which places around Lake Superior Emily most enjoyed
- G** To demonstrate that certain areas of Lake Superior are easier to bike than others
- H** To show the size of Lake Superior compared to smaller freshwater lakes
- J** To help the reader understand why it takes weeks to ride around Lake Superior

19 Use “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

In paragraph 5 of the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!” what does the word repose mean?

- A** Refinement
 - B** Revenue
 - C** Rest
 - D** Reform
-

20 Use “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

Which sentence from the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!” best supports the idea that Bud and Temple expected to have to take care of their own needs?

- F** *They were not allowed to travel at all on Sundays.* (paragraph 3)
- G** *The boys took off on their 2,000-mile trip departing from Frederick, Oklahoma.* (paragraph 4)
- H** *They traveled with some extra clothes, oats for their horses, and food for themselves.* (paragraph 4)
- J** *They crossed American Indian Territory, even stopping to rest at some Indian camps.* (paragraph 5)

21 Use “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

What is the most likely reason the author includes paragraph 2 in the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!”?

- A** To suggest that the Abernathy boys acquired their determination and skills from their father
 - B** To show how much President Theodore Roosevelt meant to all of the members of the Abernathy family
 - C** To explain how Bud and Temple got the idea to ride 2,000 miles on horseback
 - D** To emphasize that good horsemanship was essential to people living in the early 1900s
-

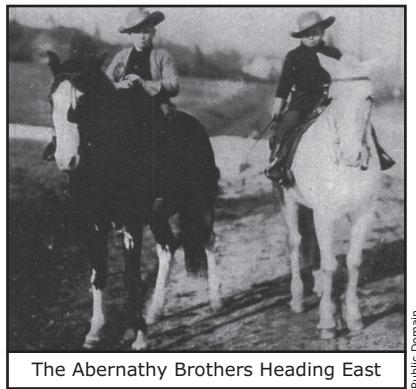
22 Use “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

What is the controlling idea of the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!”?

- F** Bud and Temple Abernathy were young boys who enjoyed adventure just like their father did.
- G** A 1910 parade for Theodore Roosevelt included two young boys who had ridden cross country.
- H** Riding across America on horseback in the early 1900s was a difficult and dangerous task.
- J** Young Bud and Temple Abernathy made an impressive cross-country journey on their own.

23 Use “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

Look at the photographs from the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!”.



The author includes these photographs most likely to emphasize the —

- A** unique relationship between Jack Abernathy and his sons
- B** different time period in which the Abernathy boys lived
- C** impressive skill the Abernathy boys had with horses
- D** sights the Abernathy boys encountered on their ride

- 24** Use “Biking for Boots” and “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

Read this sentence from paragraph 10 of the story “Biking for Boots.”

After ten days of biking, we whooped with amazement when we realized over 2,000 people had “liked” our posts on social media.

Which sentence from the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!” best conveys a **SIMILAR** idea?

- F** *People have crossed the country by bicycle, motorcycle, and even on foot.* (paragraph 1)
- G** *Jack Abernathy helped his sons plan the trip.* (paragraph 3)
- H** *They were allowed to cross creeks and rivers but only when the water was clear enough that they could see the bottom.* (paragraph 3)
- J** *The press was eager to write about their adventure, and Americans were eager to read about it.* (paragraph 6)

-
- 25** Use “Biking for Boots” and “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

Which idea is suggested in **BOTH** the story “Biking for Boots” and the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!”?

- A** A long trip is likely to include both difficult and wonderful moments.
- B** A great deal of preparation is needed in order to make a successful trip.
- C** Taking a long trip is a good way to see important historical places.
- D** People going on trips should travel in large groups in case there is trouble.

- 26** Use “Biking for Boots” and “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

What is a key **DIFFERENCE** between the girls in the story “Biking for Boots” and the boys in the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!”?

- F** Only the girls had to deal with unpredictable weather.
 - G** Only the girls used their trip to raise money for a good cause.
 - H** Only the girls knew exactly where their trip would end.
 - J** Only the girls received support from people they did not know.
-

- 27** Use “Biking for Boots” and “The Ride of a Lifetime!” to answer the following question.

How does the presentation of information in the story “Biking for Boots” and the selection “The Ride of a Lifetime!” **DIFFER**?

- A** “Biking for Boots” emphasizes some of the enjoyment the girls get from their ride.
“The Ride of a Lifetime!” does not discuss how the boys felt during their ride.
- B** “Biking for Boots” compares the girls’ ride to other people’s trips around the lake.
“The Ride of a Lifetime!” does not make a comparison about the boys’ ride.
- C** “Biking for Boots” focuses mainly on the girls’ experience at the end of their bike ride.
“The Ride of a Lifetime!” focuses mainly on the beginning of the boys’ horseback ride.
- D** “Biking for Boots” describes a similar routine that the girls followed each day.
“The Ride of a Lifetime!” shows that every day was different for the boys.

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.
Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

Don't Give Up on Broccoli!



© iStock.com/pinstock

- 1 Ever have a food that you tasted and you immediately disliked? Maybe it was broccoli, dark chocolate, or cottage cheese. Maybe you were “encouraged” to try the food again (and again!), and then one of those times you actually liked it. Many people have had this experience. While tastes are developed at a young age, they can be altered. All it takes is a person’s desire to try something new or unknown.
- 2 In 2014, researchers at the University of Birmingham released a study that showed people have a flavor window. The flavor window is open when an infant is four to six months old. During this time it is easier to get babies to try a food they have not previously tasted. The flavor window slowly closes, leaving most young children dubious of new foods.
- 3 A later study, which was published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, also found that a willingness to try new foods can be learned by infants. The researchers determined that habitually giving a baby new foods when the flavor window is open makes the child more likely to enjoy those foods. In addition, liking those foods makes the infant more willing to try other new foods. This information suggests that parents should introduce new foods to babies during this stage. By doing so they will tend to appreciate new types of foods throughout their lives.

- 4 Just because the flavor window closes at a young age doesn't mean it can't be reopened. The keys to expanding the type of foods one enjoys are persistence and exposure. A study published in *Food Quality and Preference* found that if toddlers are introduced to a new food five to 10 times, they can grow to like it. That amount goes up as children grow older. Ultimately, the study came to the conclusion that the flavor window may never be completely shut.
- 5 We learn to like or dislike flavors in three main ways. The first is called *flavor-nutrient learning*. A person can form a positive association with a flavor of a particular food and what it does for his or her body. For example, a child eats chocolate-chip cookies, and the sugar provides a burst of energy. The taste, combined with the results, leads the child to enjoy the cookie and foods with similar flavors.
- 6 The second way is called *taste-flavor learning*. This is when a person connects a particular flavor with one they already enjoy. For example, if you like peanut butter, spread it on a new type of bread you are tasting for the first time. It might make all the difference in your opinion of the bread.
- 7 Last, there's *social learning*, meaning that people enjoy what their families and friends enjoy. This is a lifelong learning process (it actually starts before birth!). If, for example, a mother drinks carrot juice while pregnant, the baby will probably enjoy carrot-flavored cereal more than babies whose mothers did not drink carrot juice. As children grow, this third type of learning takes place while talking about food in social situations and tasting new foods with friends and family.
- 8 People's tastes evolve over time in similar ways. For example, adults tend to enjoy sweets less than when they were children. They typically enjoy vegetables more. The reasons for these are biological. A child's love of sugar could be related to the need to give fuel to a growing body. Adults' greater appreciation for vegetables, despite bitter tastes and people's natural aversion to bitterness, comes from persistence. Children copy what they see adults eating and often learn to like vegetables.



www.CartoonStock.com

- 9 Being willing to try a new food repeatedly is necessary to pry a person's flavor window open again. Each attempt will lessen the natural suspicion of something new. Eventually, "not bad" can turn into "pretty good." One method for inspiring courage to try new foods multiple times is testing different preparations. Adding an ingredient—sugar or salt, perhaps—that one enjoys, might make an unappealing food more appealing. Once the person has trained him or herself to like the food, the added ingredient may not be necessary.
- 10 Overcoming a dislike of a particular food requires tasting a food in different ways and at different times. In spite of strange smells, odd textures, or distinctive flavors, a person has the ability to acquire a true liking for even the most unique and unusual foods. So don't give up—you never know when you might surprise yourself and discover that broccoli is your new favorite food!

28 The author begins the selection with a leading question most likely to —

- F** identify for the reader what problem will be answered in the selection
 - G** help the reader relate a personal experience to the ideas presented in the selection
 - H** force the reader to examine his or her own eating habits
 - J** highlight a similarity between the opinions of the reader and the author
-

29 In what way does the organizational pattern used in paragraphs 5 through 7 help to develop the thesis?

- A** The classification of three learning styles shows that people can come to appreciate foods in a variety of ways.
- B** Different types of food are listed in order of importance to suggest what should be eaten at specific stages in a person's life.
- C** Methods of preparing simple foods in different ways are described to show that diversity in one's diet is important.
- D** The advantages of trying new foods in social situations are presented to suggest that people should seek out such opportunities.

- 30** What important idea about babies is emphasized through the details in paragraph 3?
- F** Babies are naturally resistant to trying new foods.
- G** Babies develop a favorite food if they eat that food multiple times.
- H** Babies are most accepting of new foods when the flavor window is open.
- J** Babies who are not exposed to new foods will experience a shortened flavor window.
-

- 31** In paragraph 2, what does the word dubious mean?
- A** Greedy
- B** Bored
- C** Impatient
- D** Uncertain
-

- 32** What is the most likely reason the author includes paragraph 9 in the selection?
- F** To explain how adding sugar or salt improves the taste of foods
- G** To highlight that there is a natural reason people resist new foods
- H** To warn that people may have difficulty preparing new foods properly
- J** To suggest that expanding one's flavor preferences takes time and effort

- 33** Which sentence from the selection best expresses the controlling idea?
- A** *While tastes are developed at a young age, they can be altered.* (paragraph 1)
 - B** *This information suggests that parents should introduce new foods to babies during this stage.* (paragraph 3)
 - C** *We learn to like or dislike flavors in three main ways.* (paragraph 5)
 - D** *Children copy what they see adults eating and often learn to like vegetables.* (paragraph 8)
-

- 34** Which key idea is supported by details in paragraph 7?
- F** Babies should eat carrot-flavored cereal because it is a healthful food.
 - G** People's food preferences can be influenced by other people in their lives.
 - H** People will like a new food after they have had a conversation about it.
 - J** Babies will dislike foods that their mothers did not eat while pregnant with them.

35 Based on the information in paragraph 4, which inference can the reader make about flavor preferences?

- A** Parents of toddlers are more likely to try new foods than people with older children are.
- B** Toddlers tend to like more foods than older children do.
- C** People can begin to enjoy new foods after trying them just once.
- D** People can learn to like new foods at different times in their lives.

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.
Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

Millicent Min, also known as Millie, is a genius who has skipped many grades, which makes it difficult to make friends at school. When Millie's parents sign her up for volleyball at Rancho Rosetta, she does not expect to make friends there either.

from
Millicent Min, Girl Genius

by Lisa Yee

- 1 Maybe I ought to just live in my tree—when I am up here, I can just be myself, by myself. Here, I don't have to contend with Mom saying, "Cheer up, Millie. I'm sure you'll make new friends. You just have to try a little harder."
- 2 If they are really so concerned about me, then they would get me out of volleyball and out of tutoring Stanford Wong.
- 3 Despite my compelling arguments, my mother does not agree with the fresh new direction I suggested my summer activities take. In fact, she even threatened that if I did not stop complaining ("whining" was the term she used), she would also enroll me in synchronized swimming. Thus, it was with great reluctance that I showed up for volleyball again. Luckily, I was already on a team and did not have to suffer the indignity of being chosen last—there's enough of that at school.
- 4 The game began auspiciously enough with the ball flying back and forth, unless, of course, it came anywhere in my vicinity. When it was my turn to serve, I somehow managed to make the ball go behind me. This produced a great deal of tittering from both sides of the net. Embarrassed, I moved forward and prayed that the gym would catch fire or that the ball would explode.
- 5 A rather tall, scary girl from the other team took her place to serve. She looked like she could squish me like a bug. Grinning, the girl tossed the ball up in the air with ease. Then she smashed it in the desired direction.
- 6 I squeezed my eyes shut as the ball came barreling down at me in what seemed like slow motion.

- 7 Suddenly, *BANG!* Contact. To everyone's amazement, I sent the ball flying back to enemy territory. It landed at the feet of the server and then bounced away.
- 8 There was a stunned silence as jaws dropped in unison.
- 9 Then, at once, laughter erupted. It echoed in the gym and I am sure could be heard throughout Rancho Rosetta.
- 10 "She kicked the ball!" someone howled.
- 11 I could have just died.
- 12 Somehow I managed to struggle through the rest of the game. Not making eye contact with anyone helped, although I am sure my teammates were miffed that I kept bumping into them.
- 13 When at last the game was over, I plopped down against the bleachers, rummaged through my briefcase, and fished out a bag of Cheetos and a Gatorade. After I tried in vain to twist the cap off my drink, the girl sitting next to me took the bottle from me and opened it on the first try. Of course, I'm sure I had loosened it quite a bit.
- 14 I studied the bottle opener and recognized her as one of the few who did not laugh at me.
- 15 "Hi," the girl said.
- 16 "How do you do?" I answered with some trepidation.
- 17 "I'm Emily and I just moved here. Don't you hate volleyball? Isn't Coach Gowin just awful? Wouldn't you just love to get your hands on whoever gave her that whistle?"
- 18 She paused for a breath, and I seized the chance to get a word in. "I'm Millicent L. Min. Yes. Yes. Ha! Yes," I replied, as I wiped my palm in anticipation of a more formal introduction and a handshake.
- 19 You can tell a lot about a person by the way they shake hands. Some people try to crush your bones to prove that they're in control; others barely move their hands and make you do all the work. Then there's the firm, friendly "hello-there-sincerely-glad-to-meet-you" handshake that I strive to achieve. My mother and I practiced for weeks until I got it right.
- 20 The girl tossed formalities aside and continued chatting. I smiled and waited patiently to find out why she thought we were friends. To

my delight, I was surprisingly at ease with Emily. We found ourselves finishing each other's sentences. It was so liberating to talk with someone my own age without the topic of my being a genius coming up and getting in the way.

- 21 "My mom thinks volleyball will be good for me . . . you know, get coordinated and meet new people, blah, blah, blah," she confided as she let down her ponytail and shook it out.
- 22 "So tell me, why are you here? No offense, but you didn't look like you enjoyed yourself at all—in fact, a couple of times I thought you were going to cry."
- 23 I could have explained that because I went through school at an accelerated rate, I was never expected to fully participate in physical education. Yet if Emily knew I was a genius she might weird out on me like the rest of them. In a nanosecond I had to decide whether to tell the truth and risk losing a potential friend, or lie and live with the consequences.

From *Millicent Min, Girl Genius* by Lisa Yee. Copyright © 2003 by Lisa Yee. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc. Third party trademarks Cheetos™ and Gatorade™ were used in these testing materials.

36 Read this sentence from paragraph 23.

In a nanosecond I had to decide whether to tell the truth and risk losing a potential friend, or lie and live with the consequences.

Which characteristic of realistic fiction is most evident in this sentence?

- F** The setting is in a real or true-to-life location.
 - G** The story occurs in a contemporary or near-present time period.
 - H** The events raise questions that a reader could possibly face in everyday life.
 - J** The narrative structure is presented with a definite beginning, middle, and end.
-

37 Emily's willingness to talk to Millie affects the falling action because Millie —

- A** understands that she needs to be more physically active
- B** becomes certain that she and Emily will be best friends
- C** decides that making friends is more important than academic achievements
- D** realizes that a new friendship depends on a decision she must make

38 How are the events that occur at the volleyball game an example of irony?

- F** Getting the ball across the net should have been a success for Millie, but instead, it is a failure because she kicks it.
 - G** Hearing people laugh at her should have made Millie upset, but instead, it makes her more determined to succeed.
 - H** Avoiding eye contact should have caused Millie's teammates to feel sorry for her, but instead, it causes them to blame her for the outcome of the game.
 - J** Hearing silence in the gym should have made Millie worried, but instead, it allows Millie to momentarily believe she is a successful player.
-

39 Based on the interaction between Emily and Millie, what theme does the author develop?

- A** True friends may have different interests.
- B** Anger will ruin a friendship unless friends can forgive one another.
- C** People can become friends despite age differences.
- D** Friends offer support and understanding when it is needed.

40 The first-person point of view of this excerpt helps the reader understand how —

- F** Millie’s attitude affects her teammates
 - G** Millie behaves in the classroom
 - H** Millie’s thoughts are focused on wanting to fit in
 - J** Millie is viewed by other characters
-

41 In paragraph 5, what is the most likely reason the author uses figurative language to describe the girl from the opposing team?

- A** To emphasize that Millie feels weak and helpless on the court
- B** To show that Millie is smaller than the other girls on the court
- C** To suggest that the girl has been planning to embarrass Millie since the game started
- D** To hint that the girl will make a mistake because she is being overconfident

42 Which sentence best hints that the volleyball game will not end well for Millie?

- F** *If they are really so concerned about me, then they would get me out of volleyball and out of tutoring Stanford Wong.*
(paragraph 2)
- G** *The game began auspiciously enough with the ball flying back and forth, unless, of course, it came anywhere in my vicinity.*
(paragraph 4)
- H** *To everyone's amazement, I sent the ball flying back to enemy territory.* (paragraph 7)
- J** *It landed at the feet of the server and then bounced away.*
(paragraph 7)
-

43 How does Millie's behavior during the volleyball game influence the development of the plot?

- A** It convinces Millie's mother that Millie should avoid playing sports.
- B** It leads the other players on the team to ignore Millie after the game.
- C** It inspires Emily to want to teach Millie how to be a better player.
- D** It causes Emily to notice Millie and recognize her discomfort.

- 44** What key idea does the author convey through the details in paragraph 23?
- F** Emily is suspicious of people who seem smarter than she is.
- G** Millie understands that she needs to participate more in physical education.
- H** Millie worries that her intelligence will cause people to dislike her.
- J** Emily is the first friend Millie has made who is the same age as she is.



**STAAR
GRADE 8
Reading
May 2022**

