



# **Grade 8 English Language Arts**

## ***Practice Test***

**Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.**

## **I Like the Bus**

by Julie Beck

1       As a traveler, my competitive advantage is laziness. I truly do not mind sitting still in one spot for hours on end with nothing to do but read or listen to music. In fact those are three of my favorite things—music, reading, sitting. And I cherish when circumstances give me an excuse to spend my time that way, rather than worrying that I could be being more active, or productive. Because I am doing something productive—I’m going somewhere.

2       This sort of me-time can be achieved on many forms of transportation—planes, trains, and automobiles (ones I’m not driving anyway) but the one I most enjoy is the bus. Earlier this week, at The Billfold, Ester Bloom wrote that she enjoys the bus (Megabus, to be exact) the least of all methods of transportation, ranking it below “being dragged by the hair.” That’s okay. Life, and travel preferences, are a beautiful potpourri of differences.

3       But I like the bus. I like the city bus—especially as opposed to the subway, how it takes you through the streets instead of below them—and I like the long-distance bus. The Megabus and its ilk. The bus to me is a meditative space, a safe place, a bubble out of time and away from life that moves me gently from one place to another.

4       Maybe it’s because I used to live much closer to my childhood home, so the bus was the most logical and economical option. Most of my trips during college and a couple years after were shuttling between my old home and my new on that blue and yellow bus, stopping at the Love’s rest stop in Marshall, Michigan, with its odd assortment of snacks, clothing, and holographic religious posters for sale. I have to fly to visit my family now. The bus is better.

5       It’s cheaper. You can bring liquids. There’s no security. You just get on, and get off. The cost is more one of time (though depending where you’re going, if you factor in the time you spend getting to the airport and going through security, you

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may end up breaking even). And it's time, I think, worth spending.

- 6 I don't want to be all "modern conveniences have alienated us from the process of living" about it, but there is something about travel as a process that a wheels-up, wheels-down airplane ride dilutes somewhat. We can't teleport, not yet, but if you think about it, a plane is the closest the average plebe is going to get right now. Get in a contraption, and move from one place to another much faster than you'd otherwise be able to.
- 7 Though we're usually seated on our butts for it, going somewhere is still an act. And there's a pace at which I can fully take in the act of going somewhere and it's not 500 miles per hour. I guess walking would be the natural, ideal pace for that. (It just clicked with me that maybe this is why people like hiking.) But a driving pace seems a good compromise. The scenery might blur around you, but you're still touching the ground.
- 8 There is an economic concept called Jevons Paradox that basically says: The more efficiently you are able to use a resource, the higher the demand for it will be, so more of the resource ends up being consumed, rather than saved. William Stanley Jevons was talking about natural resources—coal, specifically—but I feel like a similar paradox exists for time. The more efficiently we use our time, the more demands are placed on our time. There's something to be said for a forced slowdown. That's what the bus does for me.
- 9 Far be it from me to eschew convenience—I'm hardly advocating we all spend three weeks on a ship dry heaving into the sea just to go to London. But it's nice to take your time when it's reasonable to do so. Because travel, to me, always feels significant. You're leaving something behind, you're going toward something else, but at the moment of actual traveling, you are neither where you came from nor where you are going, and on the way, you're not where you are either, not for long.
- 10 So the vehicle feels a little outside of reality, especially if you're traveling alone. It isolates and insulates you from the churn and entropy of life, for a little bit. (This is amplified by the Megabus wi-fi, which is like Bigfoot—much discussed,

rarely seen, probably not real. People complain about this, but I think of it as just another way the bus is protecting me from the stressors of the real world.) It facilitates quiet reflection by trapping you alone with your thoughts. . . .

- 11        I can see how the upsides of the bus I appreciate, like having nothing to do for a really long time, could be downsides to other people. But what can I say? I like subsisting on beef jerky and Dr. Pepper every once in a while. And my personal worst travel woes have been plane and train-based—nights spent stuck on the tarmac with screaming infants or waiting for an interminable train full of coal to pass by, or being pulled off a flight with no help and no apologies because of “weight issues.” They stick out like flashbulbs of horror in my memory, while all my bus rides blend together in a soothing blur of books and snacks and resting my head on a rumbling window while raindrops race by.



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## **Session 1**

- 1.** In paragraph 2, what does the phrase “a beautiful potpourri of differences” indicate about the author’s point of view?
- Ⓐ The author believes traveling is miserable.
  - Ⓑ The author believes everyone has different opinions.
  - Ⓒ The author believes bus travel is superior to train travel.
  - Ⓓ The author believes her attitude toward travel is correct.

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

**Part A**

Read the sentence from paragraph 6.

**. . . there is something about travel as a process that a wheels-up, wheels-down airplane ride dilutes somewhat.**

What does the word dilutes mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ appeases
- Ⓑ devalues
- Ⓒ enhances
- Ⓓ stresses

**Part B**

Which quotation from paragraph 6 supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "I don't want to be all 'modern conveniences have alienated us from the process of living' about it, . . ."
- Ⓑ "We can't teleport, not yet, . . ."
- Ⓒ ". . . a plane is the closest the average plebe is going to get right now."
- Ⓓ ". . . move from one place to another much faster than you'd otherwise be able to."

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3. In paragraph 6, the author says that “a plane is the closest the average plebe is going to get” to teleporting.

What does the word plebe mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ location
  - Ⓑ pace
  - Ⓒ person
  - Ⓓ vehicle
4. What does the comparison in paragraph 8 reveal about the author?
- Ⓐ It shows the author believes riding a bus is efficient.
  - Ⓑ It shows the author believes riding a bus is economical.
  - Ⓒ It shows the author believes slowing down is beneficial.
  - Ⓓ It shows the author believes natural resources are necessary.

- 5.** How does paragraph 10 contribute to the development of a central idea?
- Ⓐ It shows the author's belief in folklore.
  - Ⓑ It shows the author's appreciation for relaxation.
  - Ⓒ It shows the author's use of the Internet while traveling.
  - Ⓓ It shows the author's concern about being trapped in a vehicle.
- 6.** In paragraph 11, how does the author acknowledge and respond to a conflicting viewpoint?
- Ⓐ by providing the details of train travel
  - Ⓑ by explaining the benefits of plane travel
  - Ⓒ by sharing that some people would not enjoy bus travel
  - Ⓓ by describing the negatives of eating snacks while traveling



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**7.** Which quotation supports the author's claim that riding a bus can be just as efficient as flying?

- Ⓐ "... if you factor in the time you spend getting to the airport and going through security, you may end up breaking even." (paragraph 5)
- Ⓑ "I don't want to be all 'modern conveniences have alienated us from the process of living' about it, but there is something about travel as a process. . . ." (paragraph 6)
- Ⓒ "So the vehicle feels a little outside of reality, especially if you're traveling alone. It isolates and insulates you. . . ." (paragraph 10)
- Ⓓ "And my personal worst travel woes have been plane and train-based— . . ." (paragraph 11)

- 8.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What is a central idea of the passage?

- Ⓐ The narrator does not enjoy traveling because of crying babies.
- Ⓑ The narrator enjoys traveling because she gets to visit new places.
- Ⓒ The narrator does not enjoy traveling because she gets motion sickness.
- Ⓓ The narrator enjoys traveling because it provides her time to do things she likes.

**Part B**

Which quotation from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "This sort of me-time can be achieved on many forms of transportation— . . ." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ "The scenery might blur around you, but you're still touching the ground." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓒ ". . . I'm hardly advocating we all spend three weeks on a ship dry heaving into the sea just to go to London." (paragraph 9)
- Ⓓ "And my personal worst travel woes have been plane and train-based— . . ." (paragraph 11)

**Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.**

## Excerpt from ***The Jungle Book***

by Rudyard Kipling

*Mowgli is a young boy who has been raised by wolves. In this scene, he has left the jungle to live in the village of man.*

### **Ch. 5 "Tiger! Tiger!"**

- 1 Mowgli was uneasy, because he had never been under a roof before. But as he looked at the thatch, he saw that he could tear it out any time if he wanted to get away, and that the window had no fastenings. "What is the good of a man," he said to himself at last, "if he does not understand man's talk? Now I am as silly and dumb as a man would be with us in the jungle. I must speak their talk."
- 2 It was not for fun that he had learned while he was with the wolves to imitate the challenge of bucks in the jungle and the grunt of the little wild pig. So, as soon as Messua pronounced a word Mowgli would imitate it almost perfectly, and before dark he had learned the names of many things in the hut.
- 3 There was a difficulty at bedtime, because Mowgli would not sleep under anything that looked so like a panther trap as that hut, and when they shut the door he went through the window. "Give him his will," said Messua's husband. "Remember he can never till now have slept on a bed. If he is indeed sent in the place of our son he will not run away."
- 4 So Mowgli stretched himself in some long, clean grass at the edge of the field, but before he had closed his eyes a soft gray nose poked him under the chin. . . .
- 5 For three months after that night Mowgli hardly ever left the village gate, he was so busy learning the ways and customs of men. First he had to wear a cloth round him, which annoyed him horribly; and then he had to learn about money, which he did not in the least understand, and about plowing, of which he did not see the use. Then the little children in the village made him very angry. Luckily, the Law

of the Jungle had taught him to keep his temper, for in the jungle life and food depend on keeping your temper; but when they made fun of him because he would not play games or fly kites, or because he mispronounced some word, only the knowledge that it was unsportsmanlike to kill little naked cubs kept him from picking them up and breaking them in two.

6        He did not know his own strength in the least. In the jungle he knew he was weak compared with the beasts, but in the village people said that he was as strong as a bull.

7        And Mowgli had not the faintest idea of the difference that caste makes between man and man. When the potter's donkey slipped in the clay pit, Mowgli hauled it out by the tail, and helped to stack the pots for their journey to the market at Khanhiwara. That was very shocking, too, for the potter is a low-caste man, and his donkey is worse. When the priest scolded him, Mowgli threatened to put him on the donkey too, and the priest told Messua's husband that Mowgli had better be set to work as soon as possible; and the village head-man told Mowgli that he would have to go out with the buffaloes next day, and herd them while they grazed. No one was more pleased than Mowgli; and that night, because he had been appointed a servant of the village, as it were, he went off to a circle that met every evening on a masonry platform under a great fig-tree. It was the village club, and the head-man and the watchman and the barber, who knew all the gossip of the village, and old Buldeo, the village hunter, who had a Tower musket, met and smoked. The monkeys sat and talked in the upper branches, and there was a hole under the platform where a cobra lived, and he had his little platter of milk every night because he was sacred; and the old men sat around the tree and talked, and pulled at the big huqas (the water-pipes) till far into the night. They told wonderful tales of gods and men and ghosts; and Buldeo told even more wonderful ones of the ways of beasts in the jungle, till the eyes of the children sitting outside the circle bulged out of their heads. Most of the tales were about animals, for the jungle was always at their door. The deer and the wild pig grubbed up their crops, and now and again the tiger carried off a man at twilight, within sight of the village gates.

8        Mowgli, who naturally knew something about what they were talking of, had to cover his face not to show that he was

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laughing, while Buldeo, the Tower musket across his knees, climbed on from one wonderful story to another, and Mowgli's shoulders shook.

9        Buldeo was explaining how the tiger that had carried away Messua's son was a ghost-tiger, and his body was inhabited by the ghost of a wicked, old money-lender, who had died some years ago. "And I know that this is true," he said, "because Purun Dass always limped from the blow that he got in a riot when his account books were burned, and the tiger that I speak of he limps, too, for the tracks of his pads are unequal."

10       "True, true, that must be the truth," said the gray-beards, nodding together.

11       "Are all these tales such cobwebs and moon talk?" said Mowgli. "That tiger limps because he was born lame, as everyone knows. To talk of the soul of a money-lender in a beast that never had the courage of a jackal is child's talk."

12       Buldeo was speechless with surprise for a moment, and the head-man stared.

13       "Oho! It is the jungle brat, is it?" said Buldeo. "If thou art so wise, better bring his hide to Khanhiwara, for the Government has set a hundred rupees on his life. Better still, talk not when thy elders speak."

14       Mowgli rose to go. "All the evening I have lain here listening," he called back over his shoulder, "and, except once or twice, Buldeo has not said one word of truth concerning the jungle, which is at his very doors. How, then, shall I believe the tales of ghosts and gods and goblins which he says he has seen?"



Excerpt from *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling. Originally published in 1894.

9. How does the figurative language in paragraph 11 impact the passage as a whole?

- Ⓐ It explains Mowgli's anger with the children.
- Ⓑ It reveals Mowgli does not believe in superstitions.
- Ⓒ It illustrates that Mowgli is fearful of living indoors.
- Ⓓ It shows the loneliness Mowgli feels living in the village.

10. Read the sentences from paragraph 1.

**"What is the good of a man . . . if he does not understand man's talk? Now I am as silly and dumb as a man would be with us in the jungle. I must speak their talk."**

What do the sentences reveal about Mowgli?

- Ⓐ Mowgli feels unhappy, but he is determined to succeed in the village of man.
- Ⓑ Mowgli feels helpless living in the village of man and wants to return to the jungle.
- Ⓒ Mowgli feels happy living in the village of man and wants to learn man's language.
- Ⓓ Mowgli feels angry, but he tries to learn their language to prove the villagers wrong.

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- 11.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the meaning of the phrase Law of the Jungle as it is used in paragraph 5?

- Ⓐ the leader of the jungle
- Ⓑ the jungle where laws are kept
- Ⓒ the customs of the jungle animals
- Ⓓ a rule book for animals in the jungle

### Part B

Which quotation supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "It was not for fun that he had learned while he was with the wolves to imitate the challenge of bucks. . . ." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ ". . . Mowgli hauled it out by the tail, and helped to stack the pots for their journey to the market. . . ." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓒ ". . . the village head-man told Mowgli that he would have to go out with the buffaloes next day, . . ." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓓ "Mowgli, who naturally knew something about what they were talking of, . . ." (paragraph 8)

12. Read the sentences from paragraph 5.

**Then the little children in the village made him very angry. . . . only the knowledge that it was unsportsmanlike to kill little naked cubs kept him from picking them up and breaking them in two.**

What does the author's metaphor reveal about Mowgli's feelings toward the little children?

- Ⓐ Mowgli feels that the little children are acting immature.
- Ⓑ Mowgli feels that the little children are small and unprotected.
- Ⓒ Mowgli feels that the little children are angry and a waste of his time.
- Ⓓ Mowgli feels that the little children are not playing fairly and are acting like bears.



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13. Read paragraph 6.

**He did not know his own strength in the least. In the jungle he knew he was weak compared with the beasts, but in the village people said that he was as strong as a bull.**

How does the author's use of figurative language impact the meaning of the passage?

- Ⓐ by showing that Mowgli acts like an animal because he was raised by wolves
  - Ⓑ by showing that the people in the village think Mowgli is very powerful for someone so young
  - Ⓒ by suggesting that the people in the village think that Mowgli is forceful and respect what he has to offer
  - Ⓓ by suggesting that Mowgli left the jungle because the beasts felt he was weak and lacked respect for him
14. Which quotation from paragraph 7 explains why Mowgli is chosen over the other villagers to herd the buffalo?
- Ⓐ "When the potter's donkey slipped in the clay pit, Mowgli hauled it out by the tail, . . ."
  - Ⓑ ". . . Mowgli . . . helped to stack the pots for their journey to the market at Khanhiwara."
  - Ⓒ "When the priest scolded him, Mowgli threatened to put him on the donkey too, . . ."
  - Ⓓ ". . . he went off to a circle that met every evening on a masonry platform. . . ."

15. Read the sentence from paragraph 9.

**. . . his body was inhabited by the ghost of a wicked, old money-lender, who had died some years ago.**

Which word could replace inhabited as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ birthed
  - Ⓑ created
  - Ⓒ demanded
  - Ⓓ occupied
16. Which quotation supports the idea that Mowgli works hard to be successful in the village of man?
- Ⓐ "It was not for fun that he had learned while he was with the wolves to imitate the challenge of bucks in the jungle and the grunt of the little wild pig." (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓑ "Remember he can never till now have slept on a bed. If he is indeed sent in the place of our son he will not run away." (paragraph 3)
  - Ⓒ "For three months after that night Mowgli hardly ever left the village gate, he was so busy learning the ways and customs of men." (paragraph 5)
  - Ⓓ "In the jungle he knew he was weak compared with the beasts, but in the village people said that he was as strong as a bull." (paragraph 6)

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- 17.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What does Mowgli know that Buldeo does not?

- Ⓐ He knows the beast was a money-lender.
- Ⓑ He knows the truth about the tale of the tiger.
- Ⓒ He knows the cobweb was created by a spider.
- Ⓓ He knows the tiger limped because it was injured.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "Luckily, the Law of the Jungle had taught him to keep his temper, for in the jungle life and food depend on keeping your temper; . . ." (paragraph 5)
- Ⓑ "It was the village club, and the head-man and the watchman and the barber, who knew all the gossip of the village, and old Buldeo, the village hunter, who had a Tower musket, met and smoked." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓒ "Mowgli . . . had to cover his face not to show that he was laughing, . . ." (paragraph 8)
- Ⓓ "Buldeo was speechless with surprise for a moment, and the head-man stared." (paragraph 12)

- 18.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which statement represents a theme of the passage?

- Ⓐ Nature is superior to civilization.
- Ⓑ Respect should be shown to elders.
- Ⓒ Life is an adventure that should be enjoyed.
- Ⓓ Conformity to a new situation can be difficult.

**Part B**

Which quotation supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ ““What is the good of a man,’ he said to himself at last, ‘if he does not understand man’s talk?’” (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ “It was not for fun that he had learned while he was with the wolves to imitate the challenge of bucks in the jungle. . . .” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ “Luckily, the Law of the Jungle had taught him to keep his temper, . . .” (paragraph 5)
- Ⓓ “He did not know his own strength in the least.” (paragraph 6)

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19. Read the sentences from paragraph 7.

**And Mowgli had not the faintest idea of the difference that caste makes between man and man. When the potter's donkey slipped in the clay pit, Mowgli hauled it out by the tail, and helped to stack the pots for their journey to the market at Khanhiwara. That was very shocking, too, for the potter is a low-caste man, and his donkey is worse.**

Which two descriptions mean the same as caste as it is used in the sentences?

- Ⓐ an occupation as a potter
- Ⓑ an occupation as a farmer
- Ⓒ a social ranking of animals and people
- Ⓓ a physical ranking of animals and people
- Ⓔ a group of people that share common cultural features

**You will read two passages, “A Scratch Tells All” and “Hard Facts.” Answer the questions about each passage as well as questions about both passages.**

## **A Scratch Tells All**

by Vaughn M. Bryant

1       Scientist Jared Diamond shocked the world with his article “The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race.” Diamond said that the invention of agriculture, supposedly our most important step toward a better life, was actually a catastrophe from which humans have never recovered.

2       How is this possible? Didn’t farming end starvation and famine? Didn’t it free us from having to wander the land looking for our next meal? Didn’t a dependable food source give us time to build cities, invent new technologies, and put astronauts on the moon? What about TV, cell phones, computers, and DVDs? If we still lived in caves, would they even exist?

3       Diamond is exaggerating, but he is right about one thing: Humans have paid a high price for the change to farming. The early farmers traded their good health, nutritious diets, and longer life span for shorter lives plagued by disease and for daily meals made from farm foods that provided calories but lacked many vital minerals and vitamins. Instead of eating such healthy natural foods as nuts, berries, roots, and fruit, early farmers ate the same boring starches and sugars that came from their crops of corn, barley, wheat, or rice. The change in lifestyle and diet from pre-farming to farming is recorded in the archaeological record. At each site, buried skeletons tell the same story.

### **Deadly Sugars**

4       “Teeth reflect the health status and lifestyle” of human cultures, reports Dr. Boyd Eaton and his colleagues at Emory University Medical School. This is evident in the burials at the Dickson Mounds in west-central Illinois, where people lived for thousands of years before switching to farming around AD 150. Compared with their ancestors, the first farmers had teeth with much more tooth decay and 50 percent more defects in the protective layers of tooth enamel. These new problems were caused by diets high in starch and sugar and

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poor in nutrition. Emory University's George Armelagos, who studied the Dickson Mounds skeletons, also found that the life expectancy of those early farmers dropped to 19 years of age. This is one-third less than it had been among their non-farming ancestors.

- 5 The same story is repeated around the world. Research on skeletal remains reveals that before farming Europeans had few problems with their teeth. Pre-farming hunting and gathering societies in Europe had less than two percent tooth decay, tooth abscesses, or tooth loss caused by infections. By the early farming period, however, that percentage had risen to three and one-half percent. By Roman times, tooth decay was more than six percent. By the early 1800s, it had doubled to more than 12 percent. After the widespread use of inexpensive, refined sugar in the early 1900s, the rate of tooth decay among factory workers in England reached 70 percent.
- 6 Why are teeth a useful guide to health and diet? Wear patterns, scratch marks, and dental decay all tell a story about the foods we eat and how they were prepared. Many of the teeth of pre-farming peoples have high numbers of fine scratches on the enamel, probably caused by eating natural plant foods. In the teeth of early farmers, the tops of most molars are worn smooth and their enamel surfaces have coarse scratches. Most likely this was the result of chewing on bits of sand and grit in the stone-ground flour early farmers made from their crops of barley, wheat, or corn.

### **A Terrible Mistake**

- 7 The most significant change in the teeth of early farming communities is the number and types of cavities. Plaque is the thick film that covers exposed tooth surfaces and forms an ideal home for acid-producing bacteria that ruin tooth enamel. Chewing natural plant foods that are coarse and high in fiber removes much of the plaque as does good brushing. Eating meat and fat does not produce any food for the enamel-eating bacteria. Sugars, on the other hand, and finely ground starch grains made from the plants grown by farmers have molecules that easily dissolve in the mouth. These molecules are then quickly absorbed into the plaque layer, where they feed millions of acid-producing bacteria. What's more, the finely ground starch grains are easily trapped in between

teeth, where they continue to feed more acid-producing bacteria. So, it is not surprising that the most common type of tooth decay among early farmers is found in between teeth. This type of decay is very rare in diets containing mostly coarse, unprocessed foods.

- 8        While the change from hunters and gatherers to city folks may not have been humans' "worst" mistake, humans have paid a very high price for that change. For 99 percent of the time we humans have lived on Earth, we have been constantly on the move and enjoyed good health and little tooth decay. Certainly, we cannot go back to being nomads, but we can learn to eat nutritious diets and save our teeth. As a common dentist's office sign says, "You don't have to brush all your teeth, only the ones you want to keep!"



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**Answer the following questions for “A Scratch Tells All.”**

- 20.** How does the author’s inclusion of the hyperbole “shocked the world” impact the tone of paragraph 1 of “A Scratch Tells All”?
- Ⓐ It creates a serious tone.
  - Ⓑ It creates a regretful tone.
  - Ⓒ It creates an amazed tone.
  - Ⓓ It creates an energetic tone.

- 21.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What inference can be made based on paragraph 4 of “A Scratch Tells All”?

- Ⓐ People with tooth decay generally live shorter lives.
- Ⓑ People of the farming era were not aware of tooth decay.
- Ⓒ People with a poor diet may also have a shorter life span.
- Ⓓ People of the non-farming era were concerned with dental hygiene.

**Part B**

Which quotation supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “The early farmers traded their good health, nutritious diets, and longer life span for shorter lives plagued by disease. . . .” (paragraph 3)
- Ⓑ “. . . early farmers ate the same boring starches and sugars that came from their crops of corn, barley, wheat, or rice.” (paragraph 3)
- Ⓒ “The change in lifestyle and diet from pre-farming to farming is recorded in the archaeological record.” (paragraph 3)
- Ⓓ “Research on skeletal remains reveals that before farming Europeans had few problems with their teeth.” (paragraph 5)

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**22.** Which quotation supports the claim that humans have paid a high price for the change in lifestyles in "A Scratch Tells All"?

- Ⓐ "Didn't farming end starvation and famine?"  
(paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ "The change in lifestyle and diet from pre-farming to farming is recorded in the archaeological record."  
(paragraph 3)
- Ⓒ "Wear patterns, scratch marks, and dental decay all tell a story about the foods we eat and how they were prepared." (paragraph 6)
- Ⓓ "The most significant change in the teeth of early farming communities is the number and types of cavities."  
(paragraph 7)

**23.** What is the author's purpose for writing "A Scratch Tells All"?

- Ⓐ to encourage readers to take better care of their teeth by making it a daily priority
- Ⓑ to inform readers about the effect tooth decay has on the overall health of an individual
- Ⓒ to explain that the diet that resulted from farming has contributed to an increase in tooth decay
- Ⓓ to explain the harmful effects of sugar on the human body, as well as its role in increasing tooth decay

- 24.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which sentence summarizes a central idea in “A Scratch Tells All”?

- Ⓐ The benefits of farming outweigh any possible negative effects.
- Ⓑ Science and history reveal that diet strongly affects tooth decay.
- Ⓒ The creation of refined sugar created worldwide health problems.
- Ⓓ Tooth decay has decreased significantly since the pre-farming era.

**Part B**

Which quotation supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “Didn’t farming end starvation and famine? Didn’t it free us from having to wander the land looking for our next meal?” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ “Wear patterns, scratch marks, and dental decay all tell a story about the foods we eat and how they were prepared.” (paragraph 6)
- Ⓒ “The most significant change in the teeth of early farming communities is the number and types of cavities.” (paragraph 7)
- Ⓓ “Certainly, we cannot go back to being nomads, but we can learn to eat nutritious diets and save our teeth.” (paragraph 8)

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- 25.** Which three statements should be included in an accurate summary of “A Scratch Tells All”?
- Ⓐ Finely ground bits of starches cause most cavities because they are trapped between teeth.
  - Ⓑ Consuming large amounts of meat and fat does not contribute to the decaying of tooth enamel.
  - Ⓒ People from the farming era had 50 percent more dental defects than people of the pre-farming era.
  - Ⓓ While farming has benefited society in many ways, its products have increased the rate of tooth decay.
  - Ⓔ Humans have made a costly mistake by consuming too much starch, leading to an increase in tooth decay.
  - Ⓕ Foods like nuts, berries, roots, and fruit are what pre-farmers ate; farmers ate corn, barley, wheat, and rice.
  - Ⓖ Research shows that across the world, the increase of farming also increased the percentage of tooth decay.

## Hard Facts

by Joe J. Simmons III

- 1       What's more destructive to teeth than fire, extreme cold, or desert heat? Read on to find the answer.
- 2       Teeth are the hardest substance in your body. They can withstand freezing, submersion in water, extremely dry conditions, accidents that destroy the rest of the body, and temperatures below 1600° degrees F for periods at a time. As a result, they are usually well preserved in archaeological and paleontological sites, even if other skeletal remains are not. Modern-day police often use teeth to help identify victims of accidents and foul play.
- 3       Teeth, however, are not indestructible. All are susceptible to decay. Also known as dental caries or cavities, tooth decay is the most common infectious disease in the world. It is caused by acids produced by certain types of bacteria that are passed from mother to child shortly after birth. These bacteria feed on exactly what humans feed on, in particular, sugars and other carbohydrates. Even the smallest traces of food in a person's mouth can serve as a source of food for the decay-producing bacteria.

### Why Brushing Counts

- 4       Dentists call the accumulations of bacteria on teeth plaque, and it is in the plaque that the acidic attack and resulting cavities occur. The acids dissolve the hard, strong enamel of the tooth's crown, and decay penetrates the tooth structure. Once into the softer inner layer, called dentine, a cavity's development can be rapid and painful. If a cavity is left untreated, the tooth will eventually die. Abscesses—severe infections in the bone and soft tissues surrounding teeth—can also occur, and these can be life-threatening.
- 5       The risk of dental decay and other infections is greatly reduced with good oral hygiene—regular brushing and flossing. Interestingly, tooth enamel can be made acid resistant if the element fluoride is incorporated into its structure. Fluoride occurs naturally in some areas with "hard" water, but is added to toothpastes and often to drinking water. Its use in modern societies has reduced dramatically the

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number of cavities in people who were exposed to fluoride during the formation of the enamel crowns of their teeth. This time period begins shortly after conception, when primary (baby) teeth are forming. It continues through a person's teenage years with the complete formation of secondary, or permanent teeth.



Excerpt from "Hard Facts" by Joe J. Simmons III, *Dig*, July 1, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by Cricket Media. Used with permission of Carus Publishing Company via Copyright Clearance Center.

**Answer the following questions for “Hard Facts.”**

- 26.** Read paragraph 1 from “Hard Facts.”

**What’s more destructive to teeth than fire, extreme cold, or desert heat? Read on to find the answer.**

How does the structure of the introduction relate to a central idea in the passage?

- Ⓐ Description demonstrates the problems of tooth decay.
- Ⓑ Comparison and contrast states the topic of tooth decay.
- Ⓒ Question and answer helps lead in to the topic of tooth decay.
- Ⓓ Statement of a problem suggests a solution to decrease tooth decay.



## Session 1

- 27.** Read the sentence from paragraph 2 of “Hard Facts.”

**Modern-day police often use teeth to help identify victims of accidents and foul play.**

What does foul mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ wrongful
- Ⓑ unpleasant
- Ⓒ make certain
- Ⓓ out-of-bounds

- 28.** Read the sentences from paragraph 3 of “Hard Facts.”

**Teeth, however, are not indestructible. All are susceptible to decay.**

What does susceptible mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ exposed
- Ⓑ immune
- Ⓒ numb
- Ⓓ resistant

**Answer the following questions for “A Scratch Tells All” and “Hard Facts.”**

**29.** Which statement supports **both** authors’ claims about how teeth are damaged?

- Ⓐ Both Bryant and Simmons believe that fluoride helps prevent tooth decay.
- Ⓑ Both Bryant and Simmons claim that sugars and carbohydrates support the formation of plaque.
- Ⓒ Bryant believes buried skeletons reveal reasons for tooth decay, while Simmons believes teeth found in archaeological sites show reasons.
- Ⓓ Bryant states that teeth are a useful guide to health and diet, while Simmons states that the police use teeth to help identify victims of accidents.

**30.** How is the concept of tooth decay treated differently in the two passages?

- Ⓐ In “A Scratch Tells All,” the author details the importance of taking care of one’s teeth; in “Hard Facts,” the author emphasizes the history of dental care.
- Ⓑ In “A Scratch Tells All,” the author reveals the benefits of farming on oral hygiene; in “Hard Facts,” the author shows the importance of good oral hygiene.
- Ⓒ In “A Scratch Tells All,” the author describes the need for early awareness of dental problems; in “Hard Facts,” the author describes the need for changes in dental practices.
- Ⓓ In “A Scratch Tells All,” the author concentrates on the changes in agriculture and how they affect tooth decay; in “Hard Facts,” the author concentrates on the importance of good oral hygiene.

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Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

### Excerpt from ***The Water-Babies***

by Charles Kingsley

*Published in 1863, this fantasy story tells of Tom, a small boy who is transformed into a "water baby" and then goes on an adventure in the ocean.*

- 1 . . . Tom thought nothing about what the river was like. All his fancy was, to get down to the wide wide sea.
- 2 And after a while he came to a place where the river spread out into broad still shallow reaches, so wide that little Tom, as he put his head out of the water, could hardly see across.
- 3 And there he stopped. He got a little frightened. "This must be the sea," he thought. "What a wide place it is! If I go on into it I shall surely lose my way, or some strange thing will bite me. I will stop here and look out for the otter, or the eels, or some one to tell me where I shall go."
- 4 So he went back a little way, and crept into a crack of the rock, just where the river opened out into the wide shallows, and watched for some one to tell him his way: but the otter and the eels were gone on miles and miles down the stream.
- 5 There he waited, and slept too, for he was quite tired with his night's journey; and, when he woke, the stream was clearing to a beautiful amber hue, though it was still very high. And after a while he saw a sight which made him jump up; for he knew in a moment it was one of the things which he had come to look for.
- 6 Such a fish! ten times as big as the biggest trout, and a hundred times as big as Tom, sculling up the stream past him, as easily as Tom had sculled down.
- 7 Such a fish! shining silver from head to tail, and here and there a crimson dot; with a grand hooked nose and grand curling lip, and a grand bright eye, looking round him as proudly as a king, and surveying the water right and left as if

all belonged to him. Surely he must be the salmon, the king of all the fish.

8        Tom was so frightened that he longed to creep into a hole; but he need not have been; for salmon are all true gentlemen, and, like true gentlemen, they look noble and proud enough, and yet, like true gentlemen, they never harm or quarrel with any one, but go about their own business, and leave rude fellows to themselves.

9        The salmon looked at him full in the face, and then went on without minding him, with a swish or two of his tail which made the stream boil again. And in a few minutes came another, and then four or five, and so on; and all passed Tom, rushing and plunging up the cataract with strong strokes of their silver tails, now and then leaping clean out of water and up over a rock, shining gloriously for a moment in the bright sun; while Tom was so delighted that he could have watched them all day long.

10       And at last one came up bigger than all the rest; but he came slowly, and stopped, and looked back, and seemed very anxious and busy. And Tom saw that he was helping another salmon, an especially handsome one, who had not a single spot upon it, but was clothed in pure silver from nose to tail.

11       “My dear,” said the great fish to his companion, “you really look dreadfully tired, and you must not over-exert yourself at first. Do rest yourself behind this rock;” and he shoved her gently with his nose, to the rock where Tom sat. . . .

12       Then he saw Tom, and looked at him very fiercely one moment, as if he was going to bite him.

13       “What do you want here?” he said, very fiercely.

14       “Oh, don’t hurt me!” cried Tom. “I only want to look at you; you are so handsome.”

15       “Ah?” said the salmon, very stately but very civilly. “I really beg your pardon; I see what you are, my little dear. I have met one or two creatures like you before, and found them very agreeable and well-behaved. Indeed, one of them showed me a great kindness lately, which I hope to be able to

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repay. I hope we shall not be in your way here. As soon as this lady is rested, we shall proceed on our journey."

16           What a well-bred old salmon he was!

17           "So you have seen things like me before?" asked Tom.

18           "Several times, my dear. Indeed, it was only last night that one at the river's mouth came and warned me and my wife of some new stake-nets which had got into the stream, I cannot tell how, since last winter, and showed us the way round them, in the most charmingly obliging way."

19           "So there are babies in the sea?" cried Tom, and clapped his little hands. "Then I shall have some one to play with there? How delightful!"

20           "Were there no babies up this stream?" asked the lady salmon.

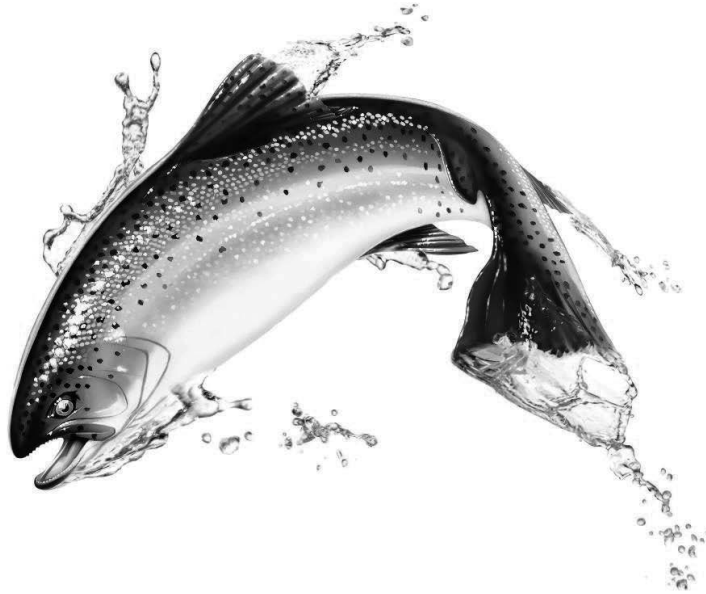
21           "No! and I grew so lonely. I thought I saw three last night; but they were gone in an instant, down to the sea. So I went too; for I had nothing to play with but caddises and dragon-flies and trout."

22           "Ugh!" cried the lady, "what low company!"

23           "My dear, if he has been in low company, he has certainly not learnt their low manners," said the salmon. . . .

24           "Why do you dislike the trout so?" asked Tom.

25           "My dear, we do not even mention them, if we can help it; for I am sorry to say they are relations of ours who do us no credit. A great many years ago they were just like us: but they were so lazy, and cowardly, and greedy, that instead of going down to the sea every year to see the world and grow strong and fat, they chose to stay and poke about in the little streams and eat worms and grubs; and they are very properly punished for it; for they have grown ugly and brown and spotted and small; and are actually so degraded in their tastes, that they will eat our children."



**Salmon**



**Trout**



Excerpt from *The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* by the Reverend Charles Kingsley. First serialized in Macmillan's Magazine in 1862-63.

Illustration of a pink salmon jumping out of the water, courtesy of Superstock, Stocktrek Images/4239R-9501.

Photograph of endangered steelhead trout, courtesy of Superstock, Mint Images/4450-4094.

## Session 1

- 31.** How does the author create suspense in the beginning of the passage?
- Ⓐ by allowing the reader to know Tom's thoughts and actions
  - Ⓑ by allowing the reader to observe the salmon's civility toward Tom
  - Ⓒ by allowing the reader to observe Tom's interactions with the salmon
  - Ⓓ by allowing the reader to know some of the salmon's feelings about Tom
- 32.** Which quotation from paragraph 7 is figurative language showing Tom's respect for the salmon?
- Ⓐ "Such a fish!"
  - Ⓑ ". . . shining silver from head to tail, . . ."
  - Ⓒ ". . . with a grand hooked nose and grand curling lip, and a grand bright eye, . . ."
  - Ⓓ "Surely he must be the salmon, the king of all the fish."

- 33.** Read the sentence from paragraph 9.

**The salmon looked at him full in the face, and then went on without minding him, with a swish or two of his tail which made the stream boil again.**

What is the meaning of boil as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ being vibrant
  - Ⓑ being turbulent
  - Ⓒ causing intense heat
  - Ⓓ causing small bubbles
- 34.** Which two quotations from paragraph 25 show how the author creates suspense?
- Ⓐ “ . . . they are relations of ours. . . .”
  - Ⓑ “ . . . they were just like us: . . .”
  - Ⓒ “ . . . they were so lazy, and cowardly, and greedy, . . .”
  - Ⓓ “ . . . they are very properly punished for it; . . .”
  - Ⓔ “ . . . they will eat our children.”



## Session 1

**35.** Which quotation supports the idea that Tom should not be afraid of the salmon?

Ⓐ “. . . I shall surely lose my way, or some strange thing will bite me. I will stop here and look out for the otter, or the eels, or some one to tell me where I shall go.”  
(paragraph 3)

Ⓑ “. . . silver from head to tail, and here and there a crimson dot; with a grand hooked nose and grand curling lip, and a grand bright eye, looking round him as proudly as a king, . . .” (paragraph 7)

Ⓒ “. . . for salmon are all true gentlemen, and, like true gentlemen, they look noble and proud enough, and yet, like true gentlemen, they never harm or quarrel with any one, . . .” (paragraph 8)

Ⓓ “. . . I see what you are, my little dear. I have met one or two creatures like you before, and found them very agreeable and well-behaved.” (paragraph 15)

**36.** Which quotation reveals the salmon’s attitude toward trout?

Ⓐ “‘Ah?’ said the salmon, very stately but very civilly. ‘I really beg your pardon; I see what you are, my little dear.’” (paragraph 15)

Ⓑ “‘Indeed, it was only last night that one at the river’s mouth came and warned me and my wife of some new stake-nets which had got into the stream, . . .’” (paragraph 18)

Ⓒ “‘Were there no babies up this stream?’ asked the lady salmon.” (paragraph 20)

Ⓓ “‘My dear, we do not even mention them, if we can help it; . . .’” (paragraph 25)

**37.** How does the phrase “what low company!” in paragraph 22 affect the reader’s view of the trout?

- Ⓐ The phrase indicates that trout are plain and ordinary.
- Ⓑ The phrase characterizes the trout as an unacceptable associate.
- Ⓒ The phrase highlights the connection between the trout and the salmon.
- Ⓓ The phrase illustrates the trout as dull in contrast to the grandeur of the salmon.

**38.** Which paragraphs do the pictures help the reader better understand?

- Ⓐ paragraphs 6 and 14
- Ⓑ paragraphs 7 and 25
- Ⓒ paragraphs 8 and 9
- Ⓓ paragraphs 16 and 17

## Session 1

**39.** How do the pictures contribute to the passage?

- Ⓐ They show how the trout got its name.
- Ⓑ They show why Tom becomes a water baby.
- Ⓒ They show how the salmon helped the trout.
- Ⓓ They show the difference between the trout and the salmon.

**40.** Read the incomplete summary of *The Water-Babies*.

**Tom, a little boy who becomes a “water baby,” swims down the river to the sea. Tom meets some salmon, and they tell him they have met others like him in the sea. They also tell Tom that the trout are poorly mannered relatives of the salmon.**

Which sentence should be added to make a complete and accurate summary?

- Ⓐ Tom meets the largest salmon, whose companion is too tired to continue swimming upstream.
- Ⓑ Tom finds a crack in a rock and waits for someone to tell him his way but eventually falls asleep.
- Ⓒ Tom becomes frightened when he reaches the sea and decides to wait and ask someone what he should do.
- Ⓓ Tom sees a proud salmon with a curling lip and bright eye that acts as if he is a king and tries to speak with him.

**Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.**

## **Boston's Great Molasses Flood**

by Beth Wagner Brust

- 1        On a mild January day in 1919 in Boston, Massachusetts, nine-year-old Anthony Distasio and his sister, Maria, were gathering firewood in the city's North End. Out of school for the lunch hour, they were walking by a giant steel storage tank in the dockyard when they heard the strangest sound. Rat-a-tat-a-tat-a-tat-tat!
- 2        It was louder than hundreds of firecrackers going off, followed by a rumbling roar, like thunder. Suddenly, a huge sheet of steel flew past them and a wave of brown goo as tall as a three-story house swallowed Maria and lifted up Anthony. Both were swept away by a sea of molasses that sped down the street faster than a galloping horse.
- 3        In just minutes, the Great Molasses Flood, as it became known, drowned an entire neighborhood in thick, dark, bittersweet syrup.
- 4        At the base of Copp's Hill, a huge steel tank as high as a five-story clock tower and as wide as two school buses put end to end stood next to Boston Harbor. Two days earlier, it was filled to the top with molasses shipped in from the Caribbean. Its 2.3 million gallons were a record load, the most the tank had ever held. On January 15, 1919, a disaster occurred when the extreme weight of 26 million pounds, or 13,000 tons, proved too much to hold for the tank's steel plates and bolts.
- 5        At 12:30 that afternoon, the tank rumbled and groaned and then popped its rivets, sending metal bolts zinging past Anthony and Maria. From the open gash, a tsunami of molasses gushed out at 35 miles an hour, overtaking trucks and wagons in its way.
- 6        Schoolchildren were not the only ones caught by surprise. Mrs. Bridget Clougherty, a widow who lived a block away from the tank, was standing in her doorway, soaking up the sun, when the giant wave slammed into her house. She died instantly as the flood scraped the building off of its foundation

## Session 1

and shoved it into the support beams for the elevated trains nearby, where the house broke apart.

7 Mrs. Clougherty's adult son, Martin, was on the third floor at the time. Fast asleep when the house split in two, he woke up to find himself swimming in molasses. Luckily, Martin was able to grab his younger sister, Teresa, as well as a bedstead, and the two of them floated on the makeshift raft to safety.

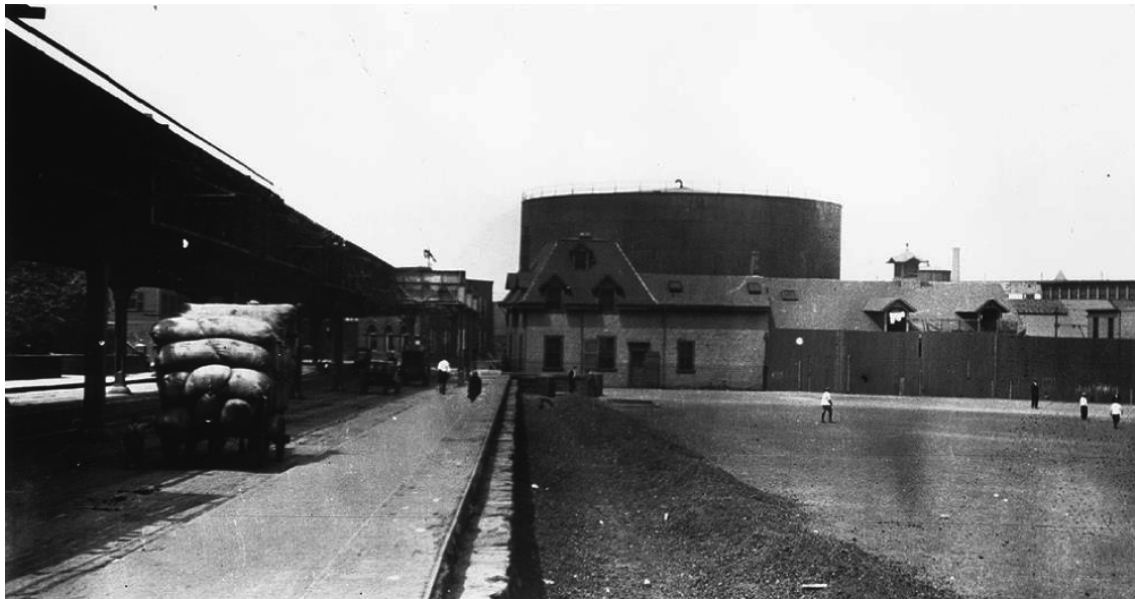
8 Both a steel plate and the Clougherty's house hit the support beams of the overhead train, knocking a gap in the tracks. Before the tank broke open, a train had just passed by. The next train was lucky to have a brakeman who spotted the drop-off in time. He threw the train into reverse, coming to a screeching halt only a few feet before the gap.

9 Although rescue crews were quick to show up with their vehicles and equipment, they had a terrible time making their way to trapped or injured people and animals. The molasses in some places was knee-high and much thicker and stickier than honey, acting like human flypaper. As firefighters, police officers, soldiers, and sailors waded through the muck, it sucked off their boots and drenched their pants. Dozens of female Red Cross volunteers who also arrived quickly saw their crisp gray-and-white uniforms turn a copper shade of brown. Soon the Red Cross workers themselves had to be rescued because they got stuck and couldn't move.

10 When Antonio Distasio was tossed and tumbled by the molasses wave, it threw him into a lamppost and knocked him out. Fortunately, a firefighter yanked the boy out of the molasses before he could drown. Antonio suffered a fractured skull but survived. Sadly, his sister, Maria, was one of the 21 people who lost their lives in the flood.

11 One report mentioned that a schoolboy had been swept up by the wave and was carried all the way to the harbor and dumped into the salty water. The Coast Guard fished him out and discovered he was surprisingly clean of the sticky molasses. It didn't take long for folks to realize that salt water was the only thing that dissolved the gooey substance. The fresh water sprayed by fire hoses shoved the goop around, but it didn't clean the molasses off the streets or off the sides of houses.

- 12        However, once the fireboats arrived and pumped salt water from the harbor onto the mess, some progress was made. The brine dissolved the syrup and made the molasses thin enough to flush down the sewers.
- 13        But the fireboats' spray could only reach the streets and buildings closest to the harbor. To clean the rest of the neighborhood, people had to spend months steaming, scrubbing, scouring, and scraping the molasses off their homes, shops, and cobblestone streets. Residents in other areas of Boston had to clean the syrup off their clothes, shoes, and hands because it had spread to trolleys and buses, and traces were left on public benches and sidewalks.
- 14        In the North End of Boston, molasses flooded basements up to the ceiling and seeped into the bricks and mortar, making it very hard to remove. It took a few weeks to pump out the syrup, and still, a bittersweet aroma lingered.
- 15        For decades afterward, on very hot summer days, the air in Boston had an unusual, tangy-sweet scent. People were still smelling the Great Molasses Flood long after it had coated the city.



**Photograph of a peaceful scene before the flood. The huge molasses tank was taller than the surrounding buildings.**



**Damage caused by the destructive wave of molasses.**



Excerpt from "Boston's Great Molasses Flood" by Beth Wagner Brust, *Spider*, January 1, 2010. Copyright © 2010 by Cricket Media. Used with permission of Carus Publishing Company via Copyright Clearance Center.

Photograph of the molasses tank, courtesy of The Bostonian Society.

Photograph of the molasses damage, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

- 41.** In paragraphs 1 and 2, how does the author reveal the magnitude of the Great Molasses Flood in Boston?
- Ⓐ by using problem and solution to show why molasses enveloped part of Boston
  - Ⓑ by using descriptive language to show how molasses enveloped part of Boston
  - Ⓒ by using cause and effect to show how molasses enveloped part of Boston
  - Ⓓ by using sequential order to show why molasses enveloped part of Boston
- 42.** How does the structure of paragraph 2 support the author's purpose for including the paragraph in the passage?
- Ⓐ The description details the initial problem in the passage.
  - Ⓑ The description determines how the plot of the passage was resolved.
  - Ⓒ The description explains the characters' solution to the problem in the passage.
  - Ⓓ The description shows how different characters react to the same situation in the passage.



## Session 1

43. Read the sentence from paragraph 5.

**From the open gash, a tsunami of molasses gushed out at 35 miles an hour, overtaking trucks and wagons in its way.**

What is the meaning of tsunami as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ a useful amount
  - Ⓑ a measured amount
  - Ⓒ an unknown amount
  - Ⓓ an overwhelming amount
44. What is the author attempting to emphasize in the passage when she uses the phrase “sending metal bolts zinging” in paragraph 5?
- Ⓐ sounds
  - Ⓑ emotions
  - Ⓒ exaggerations
  - Ⓓ contradictions

- 45.** What is the meaning of brine as it is used in paragraph 12?
- Ⓐ a sticky syrup solution
  - Ⓑ a salt and water solution
  - Ⓒ a gooey molasses solution
  - Ⓓ a molasses and water solution
- 46.** How does the author develop the idea that the molasses flood had long-lasting effects?
- Ⓐ by illustrating the historical context
  - Ⓑ by providing accounts of the cleanup
  - Ⓒ by including the data about the disaster
  - Ⓓ by explaining the reasons for the disaster

## **Session 1**

**47.** What idea is reinforced by the photographs?

- Ⓐ The city of Boston was very isolated.
- Ⓑ The Boston people worked together to clean up the molasses.
- Ⓒ The Boston area had extensive devastation from the molasses flood.
- Ⓓ The city of Boston had a booming industry before the molasses flood.

**48.** How do the photographs contribute to the reader's understanding of the passage?

- Ⓐ They inform the reader about molasses.
- Ⓑ They supply information about railroad tracks.
- Ⓒ They give additional information about Boston.
- Ⓓ They provide historical context about the event.

- 49.** The author of the passage implies that the molasses flood devastated the city of Boston.

How does the author develop this central idea over the course of the passage?

- Ⓐ by describing the initial event in detail
- Ⓑ by explaining the recovery efforts of the authorities
- Ⓒ by explaining the effects of the flood on the citizens
- Ⓓ by describing the problems the flood caused for merchants

- 50.** Which statement should be included in an accurate summary of the passage?

- Ⓐ The tank held 2.3 million gallons of molasses.
- Ⓑ The salt water cleaned up the molasses most effectively.
- Ⓒ Mrs. Bridget Clougherty was killed by the great wave of molasses.
- Ⓓ It was hard to rescue people due to the difficulty navigating through the molasses.

**STOP**

**Writing Prompt**

**Read the following passage. Write a response to the prompt that follows the passage.**

**Noah Count and the Arkansas Ark**

by Gary Blackwood

1       As best as I can recall, it all started when the cat sneezed.

2       “Rain a-comin’,” said Granny.

3       Now, that summer of nineteen-aught-eight was one of the driest in memory—even in Granny’s memory, and she was likely eighty years old. (I say likely because she never would admit to it.)

4       “Rain?” I said. “There’s nary a cloud in the sky!”

5       “Don’t matter,” says Granny. “A cat sneezin’ always means rain. My rheumatiz is worse’n usual, too.”

6       “Yesterday,” said Daddy, “I seen one of the sows a-carryin’ a stick in her mouth.” Mama looked up from the bowl of peas she was shelling. “This mornin’ the coffee pot boiled over. Another sure sign of rain.”

7       I sighed. “Them things got no basis at all in science.” I’d been going to school for a while, you see, and thought I knew just about everything. . . .

8       One day me and Daddy took a walk along the levee; that big ole dirt bank was all that lay between our farm and the mighty Mississippi.

9       “Wisht they’d a-built her a foot or three higher,” said Daddy. “If’n we get a real gully-washer, I don’t know that she’ll hold.”

10       He must’ve been even more worried than he sounded, because that very night he commenced to build the Ark. Daddy didn’t call it the Ark.

11       He just called it a raft, and that’s all it was, just logs tied together. It was sure enough a big one, though—big enough to carry us Appletons and most of our belongings, plus all the

hens and pigs and cows and horses. The Ark was the name given to it by the neighbors when they drove by our place and saw what he was up to.

12        As you might expect, it wasn't long before Daddy got him a new name, too. Folks took to calling him Noah, or sometimes Noah Count—like No Account, you see? I guess they thought they were being funny. I didn't see the humor. To me it was just downright embarrassing. When we were in town buying nails, I overheard one feller say, "He's a-tryin' to be the whole Old Testament when he ain't nothin' but a plain, common Arkansas farmer."

13        Lucky for me school was out, or I'd've had my hands full, fighting all the boys that would've called my Daddy crazy.

14        All that joshing didn't seem to bother Daddy much. "When that big rain comes," he said, "they'll be laughing out the other side of their mouths." . . .

15        In the middle of the night, I woke up to the sound of thunder and the feel of rain blowing in through the open window.

16        It kept on pouring rain all the next day, and the next, and the day after that. The Mississippi rose up between its banks, all muddy and full of tree limbs and such, until it was most of the way to the top of the levee. Finally a section of the levee just gave way, and the river came rushing across our fields.

17        "Get the animals onto the Ark—I mean the raft!" shouted Daddy.

18        The cows and horses and hens were spooked by the sight of all that water, but finally we got them on board. And then we fetched food and water and valuables, including my schoolbooks. By that time, the Ark was commencing to float.

19        "Pole her out into the river!" said Daddy.

20        "Cain't we just stay here?" said Granny.

21        "This whole place'll be underwater for days and days," said Daddy. "We got to find us some high ground."

22        We had a hard go of it, keeping that raft steady in the raging river, but we were a sight better off than the folks on land. Some were rowing around in jon boats, trying to rescue their bedraggled livestock. Some were sitting up on the roofs of their houses. We waved to them. It was about all we could do. . . .

23        The river swept us along so fast, we must've floated twenty miles or more before Daddy said, "There's a good spot." He steered us in toward the bank, and Mama tossed out a line with a grappling hook that cotched on a tree.

24        We squatted on that high ground for more than a week before the water finally went down. Then, since we were a little bit famous, a steamboat captain offered to tow us back up the river to our farm. Some of the crops had got drowned, and the floor of the house was covered in mud, but all us Appletons and our animals were safe.

25        Come September, I went back to school, but never again did I think poorly of my folks for not being educated. I guess there's more than one kind of education.



Excerpt from "Noah Count and the Arkansas Ark" by Gary Blackwood, *Cricket*, March 1, 2016. Copyright © 2016 by Cricket Media. Used with permission of Carus Publishing Company via Copyright Clearance Center.

- 1. Read the following prompt and write your complete response in the space provided.**

You have read “Noah Count and the Arkansas Ark,” a passage about a young man who learns a valuable lesson from his family members. Write an essay explaining how the author demonstrates the value of education and how the narrator’s point of view regarding his family’s lack of education changes over the course of the story. Use specific examples and details from the passage to support your response.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas, organization of writing, and language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

**Write your response for the prompt on the lines below.**

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

**STOP**



## ELA Grade 8 Practice Test Paper-Pencil Answer Key Document

Passage	DRP Range	Sequence	Standard	DOK	Key	Max Points
I Like the Bus	57-67	1	RI.8.6	2	B	1
I Like the Bus	57-67	2	L.8.4	2	B, A	2
I Like the Bus	57-67	3	L.8.6	2	C	1
I Like the Bus	57-67	4	RI.8.3	2	C	1
I Like the Bus	57-67	5	RI.8.5	2	B	1
I Like the Bus	57-67	6	RI.8.6	2	C	1
I Like the Bus	57-67	7	RI.8.8	3	A	1
I Like the Bus	57-67	8	RI.8.2	2	D, A	2
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	9	L.8.5	2	B	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	10	RL.8.3	2	A	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	11	L.8.6	2	C, A	2
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	12	RL.8.4	2	A	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	13	RL.8.4	2	B	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	14	RL.8.3	2	C	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	15	RL.8.4	2	D	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	16	RL.8.1	2	C	1
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	17	RL.8.6	2	B, C	2
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	18	RL.8.2	2	D, A	2
Excerpt from The Jungle Book	57-67	19	RL.8.4	2	C, E	2
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	20	RI.8.4	3	A	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	21	RI.8.1	2	C, A	2
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	22	RI.8.8	2	D	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	23	RI.8.6	2	C	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	24	RI.8.2	2	B, D	2
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	25	RI.8.2	2	D, E, G	2
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	26	RI.8.5	3	C	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	27	RI.8.4	2	A	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	28	RI.8.4	2	A	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	29	RI.8.9	3	B	1
A Scratch Tells All, Hard Facts	57-67	30	RI.8.9	3	D	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57-67	31	RL.8.6	2	A	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57-67	32	L.8.5	2	D	1

Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	33	RL.8.4	2	B	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	34	RL.8.6	2	C, E	2
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	35	RL.8.1	2	C	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	36	RL.8.3	1	D	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	37	RL.8.6	2	B	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	38	RL.8.7	2	B	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	39	RL.8.7	2	D	1
Excerpt from The Water Babies	57–67	40	RL.8.2	2	C	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	41	RI.8.5	2	B	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	42	RI.8.5	2	A	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	43	RI.8.4	2	D	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	44	RI.8.4	2	A	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	45	L.8.4	2	B	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	46	RI.8.3	2	B	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	47	RI.8.7	2	C	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	48	RI.8.7	2	D	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	49	RI.8.2	2	C	1
Boston’s Great Molasses Flood	57–67	50	RI.8.2	2	D	1
Noah and the Flood	42–54	1	W.8.2	3	rubric	12