

# **GRADE 6**

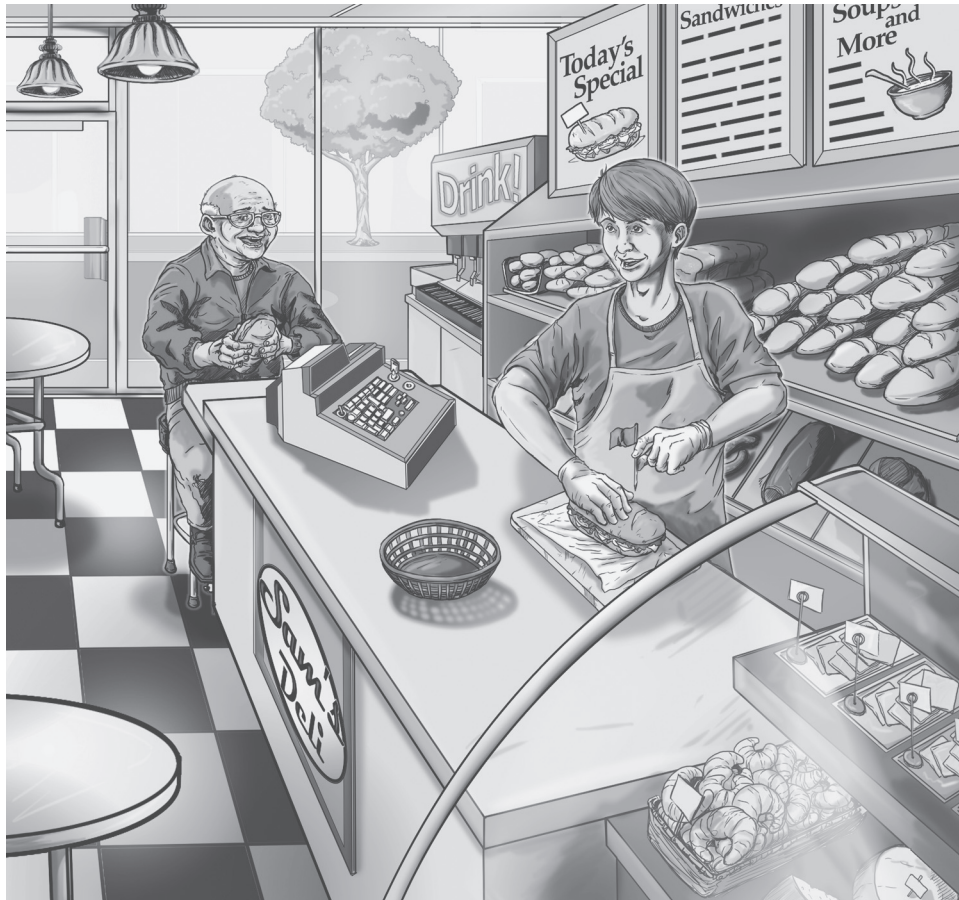
## **Reading**

**Administered May 2018**

**RELEASED**

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

## The Regulars



- 1 "Turkey Melt," "Corned Beef on Rye," and "Ham and Cheese" waved good-bye. They were three of the regulars at my parents' deli. Every day Mr. and Mrs. Sandlin shared a turkey-melt sandwich, Mr. Augsburger had a corned beef on rye bread, and Mr. Bates ordered ham and cheese on whole wheat from his perch on the stool beside the cash register. I didn't even know their real names until one very eventful day at the deli.
- 2 It was the day of the Twin Rivers Summer Festival, and I had just been told that I had to help at the deli that afternoon instead of enjoying the event with my friends Lisa and Carlos.
- 3 "Can't we hire extra help?" I complained.
- 4 "There's not enough time to train someone else," Mom responded. "Plus, they wouldn't know our customers. We have to take care of our regulars because they're part of what makes Sam's Deli a special place."

- 5 I had to admit that Sam’s Deli served good sandwiches, but I didn’t think our sandwiches were *that* special. And I wouldn’t exactly consider Sam’s Deli an exciting place to hang out. A TV in the corner and people strolling past the deli’s windows were about the only sources of entertainment. Sometimes people chatted with one another about the local news, but overall our days at the deli were quiet.
- 6 I know Mom and Dad appreciated our regular customers’ business. I just couldn’t understand why they fussed over them so much. Personally, I didn’t think it would hurt for some of our regulars to try a new restaurant every now and then—or at least consider ordering a different type of sandwich.
- 7 “Where is Dad?” I thought to myself as I wiped off plastic menus. He had left more than an hour ago to drop off a delivery for the fire department, which was running a booth at the festival.
- 8 My friends and I had been excited to hear that the fire department was planning to spray children at the festival with water to keep them cool. “Lisa and Carlos are probably soaked by now,” I thought glumly.
- 9 “Thanks for cleaning the menus,” said Mom as she gathered her items for the festival’s pie-judging contest. “Your dad and I appreciate your help.”
- 10 Mom glanced at her watch. “I need to leave now, Eric. But your dad should be here soon. When I get back, you can meet up with your friends for the concert and the fireworks tonight,” Mom promised.
- 11 By this time the deli had no customers except the regulars.
- 12 “Everyone else is enjoying the festival,” I thought to myself as I wistfully watched excited festival attendees walk by the deli window en route to the parade.
- 13 Soon, though, the parade was over, and Dad was still not back. A solid wall of hungry people entered the deli’s door.
- 14 “What’s today’s lunch special?” one customer called out.
- 15 “Why don’t they have more people working here?” I heard another complain.
- 16 I methodically took care of one order after another. I thought I was doing all right considering the crowd, but I had no time for all the other details of running a restaurant, like cleaning tables. Plus, I was running low on ice. It seemed that the machine wasn’t working as usual.
- 17 Then, the next moment I had a chance to look up, Ham and Cheese handed me two large bags of ice.
- 18 “Your parents get ice from down the street when your ice maker doesn’t keep up,” he informed me. “I’m Mr. Bates, by the way. The Sandlins and Mr. Augsburger and I will help you out till your folks get back.”

- 19 As I thanked him, I noticed that the Turkey Melts were making room for new customers by cleaning tables as quickly as they were vacated.
- 20 Together the regulars and I managed the crowd. I took orders and made sandwiches while they kept the restaurant clean and visited with customers.
- 21 "Remember the time Sam's car broke down?" Ham and Cheese asked.
- 22 "We delivered sandwiches by bicycle!" Corned Beef on Rye replied.
- 23 As the tidal wave of customers trickled to a stream, Mom and Dad rushed into the deli.
- 24 "I couldn't get through because of traffic," explained Dad.
- 25 "And I just got finished with the contest," Mom said, looking anxious.
- 26 "It's all right," I replied with a smile. "I had good help."
- 27 "Eric, why don't you take a break and go find your friends?" Dad suggested.
- 28 It was an enticing thought, but I had another idea.
- 29 "Maybe later," I said. "I have a few more orders to fill."
- 30 "We can take care of them," Mom said. "Especially after what you've been through."
- 31 "That's O.K.," I said. "These are special orders, the most important ones of the day. After all, you have to take care of your regulars."
- 32 Carefully, I began making a turkey melt, a corned beef on rye, and a ham-and-cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread.

1 What is the meaning of wistfully in paragraph 12?

- A With sadness
  - B With relief
  - C With anxiety
  - D With curiosity
- 

2 Read paragraph 23 from the story.

*As the tidal wave of customers trickled to a stream, Mom and Dad rushed into the deli.*

The author includes this figurative language to show that the —

- F customers come in and out of the deli at a steady pace
  - G new customers got wet from the firefighters' hoses at the festival
  - H number of customers at the deli has become manageable
  - J customers are upset at first but calm by the time they leave
- 

3 Eric's actions at the end of the story are significant because they reveal that he —

- A has learned that working in the deli is more fun than being with friends
- B understands that his parents deserve to rest before they return to work
- C is ready to accept more responsibilities at the deli
- D realizes the importance of loyal customers

- 4 Which of the following best describes Eric’s main conflict in the story?
- F He does not know the names of the customers who frequently eat at his parents’ deli.
  - G He thinks his parents need to offer a better variety of sandwiches at the deli.
  - H He has to help his parents on a day that he has plans with his friends.
  - J He is bothered by the lack of excitement in his parents’ deli.
- 

- 5 The first-person point of view of the story allows the reader to understand the —
- A actions of only the regulars at the deli
  - B narrator’s changing perspective on the busy deli
  - C reasons the narrator’s parents are not at the deli
  - D inner thoughts of the customers at the deli
- 

- 6 Which sentence from the story best expresses its theme?
- F *"We have to take care of our regulars because they’re part of what makes Sam’s Deli a special place."*
  - G *Personally, I didn’t think it would hurt for some of our regulars to try a new restaurant every now and then—or at least consider ordering a different type of sandwich.*
  - H *"Your dad and I appreciate your help."*
  - J *I took orders and made sandwiches while they kept the restaurant clean and visited with customers.*

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

## Hidden in Abuelita's Soft Arms

*by Daniel A. Olivas*

Wrinkled and brown like an old paper bag,  
Abuelita<sup>1</sup> smiles with her too-perfect white teeth,  
And she calls out as I run from Papa's old, gray station wagon,  
"Mi cielo, come here! I need a big abrazo from you!"

- 5 And I bury myself deep, hidden in Abuelita's soft arms,  
Smelling like perfume and frijoles and coffee and candy.

A whole weekend with Abuelita!  
I shout, "Bye, Papa!"

- Papa smiles and drives off in a puff of white smoke.  
10 I bury my face deeper into her,  
Just me and Abuelita,  
For the whole weekend.

- We march happily into her house  
Painted yellow-white like a forgotten Easter egg,  
15 And cracked here and there like that same egg.  
But it is her home,  
Near the freeway and St. Agnes Church.

- On the wall there are pictures of Mama and my two aunts.  
And there's one of Abuelita, so young and beautiful,  
20 Standing close to Abuelito on their wedding day.

"Mi cielo," Abuelita says holding my sweaty cheeks in her  
Cool, smooth hands.  
"You are so big! My big boy!"  
And I laugh and stand on my toes to be even bigger.

- 25 And I bury myself deep, hidden in Abuelita's soft arms,  
Smelling like perfume and frijoles and coffee and candy.

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<sup>1</sup>Abuelita is the Spanish word for "grandmother."

**7** In lines 5 and 25, the words “bury myself” and “hidden” highlight that the speaker —

- A** wishes he could live permanently with Abuelita
  - B** fears being seen by others when he hugs Abuelita
  - C** feels safe and content with Abuelita
  - D** is able to forget where he is when he is with Abuelita
- 

**8** What is the most likely reason the poet uses exclamation points in the third stanza?

- F** To emphasize how much respect the speaker has for Abuelita
  - G** To show the speaker’s excitement about his long visit with Abuelita
  - H** To convey Papa’s hesitation about leaving the speaker with Abuelita
  - J** To highlight how long it has been since the speaker last saw Abuelita
- 

**9** Read lines 14 and 15 from the poem.

Painted yellow-white like a forgotten Easter egg,  
And cracked here and there like that same egg.

The poet includes these similes most likely to —

- A** suggest that the speaker has not visited Abuelita in a long time
- B** help the reader visualize Abuelita’s house
- C** identify the speaker’s favorite holiday to spend with Abuelita
- D** help the reader imagine a specific place in Abuelita’s house



- 10** Read lines 23 and 24 of the poem.

"You are so big! My big boy!"  
And I laugh and stand on my toes to be even bigger.

These lines are included to suggest that the speaker —

- F** wishes he could be taller than he is
  - G** is embarrassed by the name Abuelita calls him
  - H** thinks Abuelita is very amusing
  - J** enjoys making Abuelita feel proud of him
- 

- 11** From the speaker's experience, the reader can learn that —

- A** parents are to be appreciated
- B** happiness can be found in trying new things
- C** time spent with family should be cherished
- D** relationships can strengthen with time

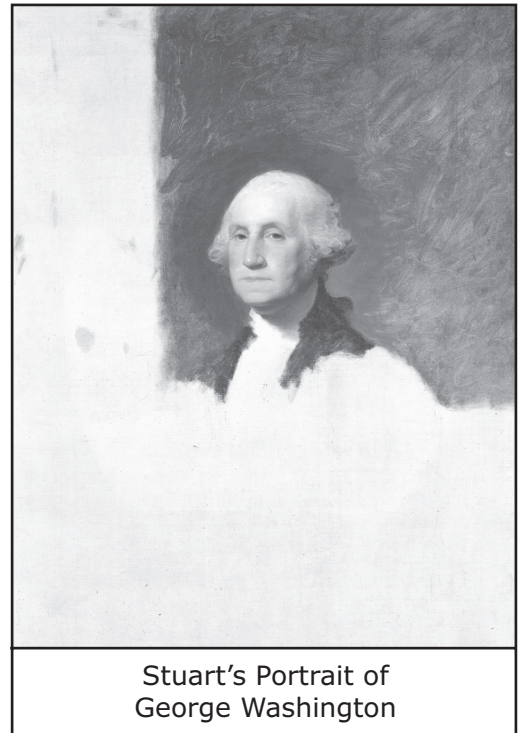
- 12** By including Abuelita's dialogue in the poem, the poet is able to —
- F** tell the qualities Abuelita likes about the speaker
  - G** indicate what Abuelita and the speaker enjoy doing together
  - H** reveal how Abuelita feels about the speaker
  - J** suggest that Abuelita enjoys speaking Spanish with the speaker
- 

- 13** How does the poet develop the theme of this poem?
- A** By comparing the actions of Papa and Abuelita
  - B** By explaining the reasons the speaker visits Abuelita
  - C** By telling about the photographs in Abuelita's house
  - D** By describing the speaker's interaction with Abuelita

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

## George Washington's Portrait

- 1 Many artists have hopes that their creations will become well known. But sometimes a work of art achieves greater recognition than the artist might have ever imagined. And in the case of Gilbert Stuart and George Washington, a work of art may not even be completed but still inspire people long afterward.
- 2 Stuart was a painter who lived from 1755 to 1828. He was known for both his talent as a painter and his charm as a person. He painted the portraits of approximately 1,000 people during his lifetime. Many distinguished and famous people sat for a portrait with him. But instead of making his subjects sit perfectly still, as was commonly practiced at the time, Stuart engaged them in interesting conversation. He wanted his subjects to feel at ease in order to capture their most natural expression and pose. Only then would Stuart paint the person.
- 3 One of Stuart's aspirations was to paint George Washington. Their meeting was not easy to arrange, but Stuart eventually got the opportunity in 1796. Stuart had a difficult time getting Washington to be comfortable. The president finally relaxed when Stuart began to talk about horses. This was one of Washington's favorite topics. The men chatted while Stuart painted the then 64-year-old president. Their time together was limited, however.
- 4 The result was a portrait of just Washington's head and shoulders. The reasons why Stuart never finished the rest of the portrait are uncertain. What is known is that the bottom and left parts of the canvas remained bare, and Stuart persuaded Washington to let him keep the original. Stuart made and sold multiple copies of the portrait in his lifetime—a common practice in the days before cameras.
- 5 Even unfinished, Stuart's original portrait is considered the definitive representation of George Washington. People have always believed that the portrait truly captures this great man's presence. The image was used on the dollar bill beginning in 1869 and has been featured there ever since. This means just about everyone in the United States has seen this work of art. While it is an amazing portrait, surely even Stuart would be amazed by its lasting popularity.



Stuart's Portrait of  
George Washington

© Gilbert Stuart/CORBIS

# The Story Behind *The Silmarillion*

- 1 J. R. R. Tolkien is best known for the world of fantasy he created in the novel *The Hobbit* and the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. Yet for Tolkien, one important work remained unfinished at his death in 1973. This book was *The Silmarillion*.
- 2 Tolkien's novels are based in a fictional world. In that world creatures such as elves and dwarves coexist with ordinary human beings. *The Silmarillion* can be thought of as a prequel to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. It is an account of the history of this fantasy world before *The Hobbit* takes place. This history tells about when the villain of that world battled heroes to claim possession of jewels called Silmarilli.
- 3 But the story of how *The Silmarillion* was created may be just as interesting as the story told on its pages. It was Tolkien's first and last work. He began working on it in 1917 and continued adding to it and revising it for about 56 years. Tolkien was unable to complete the work before he died, so his son Christopher took on the challenge of finishing it. Tolkien had amassed many writings he wished to include in the book. Christopher thought, however, that presenting all the material would lead only to confusion for the reader, so he decided to select and arrange the pieces that together would create the most complete and understandable history of this fantasy world.
- 4 To accomplish this task, Christopher enlisted the aid of a friend. Guy Gavriel Kay had always been interested in writing, particularly fantasy. He worked on *The Silmarillion* with Christopher for approximately a year. This assignment changed Kay's life, and he eventually became a best-selling fantasy writer himself. Kay's work on *The Silmarillion* undoubtedly provided training and valuable experience on his journey to become an author.
- 5 The published version of *The Silmarillion* has five parts, which was what Tolkien wanted. But the parts had not been put together as a whole when Christopher took on the work after his father died. Some stories required organizing, and some parts were still incomplete and needed finishing.
- 6 *The Silmarillion* was published in 1977 to mixed reviews. Some people believed it was too different from what they had come to expect from Tolkien's writing. It had a grim mood and a complicated plot. Others were impressed with the masterful editing Tolkien's son had done. They knew that Christopher had started the task with many incomplete pieces. After *The Silmarillion*, Christopher published more of his father's unfinished writings, including a children's story and a poem about King Arthur. Their publication allowed still more of J. R. R. Tolkien's fantasies to be shared with devoted readers around the world.

*Third party trademarks The Hobbit®, The Lord of the Rings® and The Silmarillion® were used in these testing materials.*

**Use “George Washington’s Portrait” (p. 11) to answer questions 14–18.  
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

**14** Which words from paragraph 2 help the reader understand the meaning of engaged?

- F** *charm as a person*
  - G** *sat for a portrait*
  - H** *practiced at the time*
  - J** *interesting conversation*
- 

**15** Paragraph 2 is mainly about the —

- A** method Stuart used when he was painting portraits
  - B** number of portraits Stuart painted during his lifetime
  - C** reason Stuart wanted to paint portraits of famous people
  - D** popularity of the portraits Stuart painted during his lifetime
- 

**16** The reader can conclude from the information in paragraph 3 that Stuart —

- F** worried that his portrait would not please Washington
- G** was determined to create a portrait of Washington
- H** was nervous in the presence of Washington
- J** shared similar interests with Washington

**17** The author includes the details in paragraph 5 most likely to —

- A** explain why this particular portrait of Washington is so well known
  - B** express regret that the painting of Washington became famous only after Stuart's death
  - C** demonstrate that Washington was an important figure in history
  - D** emphasize that most of Washington's portraits were left unfinished
- 

**18** What is the best summary of the selection?

- F** In 1796 painter Gilbert Stuart had the opportunity to paint a portrait of George Washington. It had been difficult to arrange time for the two men to get together. While Stuart painted Washington, the two men talked about horses.
- G** The most famous portrait of George Washington was painted by Gilbert Stuart, who lived from 1755 to 1828. Stuart painted portraits of other famous people as well. He never finished his portrait of Washington, but Stuart kept the original and sold copies of it anyway.
- H** An accomplished painter who completed hundreds of portraits, Gilbert Stuart lived from 1755 to 1828. Stuart wanted the subjects of his portraits to feel relaxed so that he could create a portrait of them that looked natural. One of Stuart's most famous paintings is a portrait of President George Washington.
- J** During his career Gilbert Stuart painted portraits of many famous people, including George Washington. Although Stuart was unable to complete a portrait of Washington during the time they had together in 1796, the work became the most popular portrait of Washington ever painted.

Use “The Story Behind *The Silmarillion*” (p. 12) to answer questions 19–24.  
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

- 19** Read this information about the origin of the word amass.

from the Latin *a-* + *massare*, meaning “to form a lump”

This information helps the reader understand that amassed in paragraph 3 means —

- A** searched for
  - B** shared with a group
  - C** gathered together
  - D** stored in a safe place
- 
- 20** By using a problem-and-solution organizational pattern in paragraphs 3 through 5, the author of the selection is able to —
- F** demonstrate that Tolkien needed help completing his book and describe how only certain parts of his story were used
  - G** show that Christopher needed to work with another author and tell how he was able to persuade his friend to work with him
  - H** highlight that Christopher had trouble deciding which of his father’s writings to include in the book and identify how he made his choices
  - J** emphasize that Tolkien could not finish his book and explain how Christopher’s efforts led to the completion and publication of the work

**21** Based on the information in paragraph 5, the reader can conclude that Christopher —

- A** had little prior experience writing books
  - B** tried to include alternate endings in the book
  - C** encountered many challenges while organizing the book
  - D** planned to publish more than one book of his father's work
- 

**22** According to the selection, why did Christopher decide not to include all his father's writings in *The Silmarillion*?

- F** He believed they would cause the reader to become very confused.
- G** He worried that some of the ideas would be unfamiliar to the reader.
- H** He planned to create a different ending for the story.
- J** He wanted the final book to have only five parts.



- 23** Which sentence best shows the author of the selection's attitude toward the writing of *The Silmarillion*?
- A** The *Silmarillion* *can be thought of as a prequel to The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings*.
  - B** *But the story of how The Silmarillion was created may be just as interesting as the story told on its pages*.
  - C** *Kay's work on The Silmarillion undoubtedly provided training and valuable experience on his journey to become an author*.
  - D** The *Silmarillion* *was published in 1977 to mixed reviews*.
- 

- 24** What makes *The Silmarillion* unique among Tolkien's writings?
- F** The story takes place in an imaginary land.
  - G** It was the only piece of writing published after his death.
  - H** The story includes fictional creatures and humans.
  - J** It was both the first and last book he ever worked on.

Use “George Washington’s Portrait” and “The Story Behind *The Silmarillion*” to answer questions 25–28. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

- 25 Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of “George Washington’s Portrait.”

*People have always believed that the portrait truly captures this great man’s presence.*

Which sentence from the second selection shows that Tolkien’s *The Silmarillion* was **not** as well received?

- A *It is an account of the history of this fantasy world before The Hobbit takes place.*
- B *Some stories required organizing, and some parts were still incomplete and needed finishing.*
- C *Some people believed it was too different from what they had come to expect from Tolkien’s writing.*
- D *They knew that Christopher had started the task with many incomplete pieces.*

- 
- 26 One **similarity** between painter Gilbert Stuart and author J. R. R. Tolkien is that both men —
- F were accomplished in their field of creative art
  - G spent several decades working on a single project
  - H needed the assistance of another person to complete their work
  - J were known for their interest in having conversations with others

**27** One **difference** between the portrait and the book discussed in the selections is that —

- A** copies of the incomplete portrait were sold, but the book was sold only after it was completed
  - B** few people saw the portrait while Stuart was alive, but many saw the book manuscript while Tolkien was alive
  - C** Stuart did not prepare before he painted his portrait, but Tolkien spent time preparing to write his book
  - D** the portrait was not considered Stuart's best work, but the book was considered Tolkien's masterpiece
- 

**28** In what way are the portrait of George Washington and the book *The Silmarillion* **similar**?

- F** Each earned a great amount of money for its creator.
- G** Each remained incomplete at the time of its creator's death.
- H** Each was included in a larger body of work that its creator had made.
- J** Each required that people other than its creator work on it.

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

# The Raven and the Star Fruit Tree

*A retelling of a tale from Vietnam*

- 1 In the days before boats were used for exploring the seas or trading, there lived two brothers. The older brother was very greedy, but the younger brother was content to live humbly. When their father died, he left behind an enormous inheritance that he wanted to be divided in an extremely uneven way. He left his entire estate—his home and his vast wealth—to his older son but only a small plot in the country, containing a small shack and a single star fruit tree, to his other son.
- 2 The older son was overjoyed with this arrangement and quickly began living an extravagant lifestyle, eating expensive foods and spending money freely. He despised his brother, who was content living in the simple shack his father had given him.
- 3 When the season for star fruit came, the tree produced abundantly, and the younger brother cheered himself with the prospect of selling star fruit to support his family. However, an enormous raven visited the tree each morning and ate the fruit. The younger brother saw that his income was quickly disappearing into the belly of the raven, so one morning he waited beneath the tree. When the raven arrived, the younger brother called to him. "Oh, raven, please don't eat my star fruit. They are all I have, and I cannot support my family if you eat them up."
- 4 "Don't be afraid," said the raven. "I'll pay you in gold for your star fruit, as I did your father. Make a bag one foot deep to put the gold in."
- 5 "I believe you, raven," the younger brother said. "Please eat as much as you like." That night he had his wife make the bag just as the raven instructed.
- 6 The next day the raven came as usual to eat star fruit. When he was done eating, he flew down into the yard, spread his wings, and said, "Climb on my back, and bring your bag."
- 7 The younger brother complied, and the raven took off, flying over the sea. He landed on a strange uninhabited island with no trees or other plants of any kind. The dirt, however, was made of pure gold, and the raven told the younger brother to fill his sack with it. The younger brother took only what he could easily carry. After returning home, the younger brother spent some of his newfound wealth on his family and shared some of it with others who were in need.

- 8 One day the younger brother invited the older brother to dinner, but the other refused to come. Again and again the younger brother pleaded, until finally the older brother agreed and visited his brother's house. The older brother was not expecting what he found. Instead of a simple shack, the younger brother had a comfortable home with fine things inside.
- 9 "Where did you get all these things?" the older brother asked.
- 10 The younger brother told his brother of the raven. Upon hearing the whole story, the older brother offered to trade his entire inheritance for the star fruit tree. The younger brother replied that he was content with what he had and refused to trade.
- 11 The next day, however, the older brother went to the star fruit tree and found the raven. "Oh, raven," he said, "I have traded with my brother for this tree. Will you take me to the island of gold?"
- 12 "Of course," the raven replied. The bird landed in the yard, spread out his wings, and flew the older brother to the island. The older brother, remembering his brother's explanation, had taken with him the largest bag he could find. He filled it with gold and then climbed back onto the raven, but the bird couldn't fly because the bag was too heavy.
- 13 "You must pour out some of your gold," the raven said, but the brother refused. "Very well," said the raven. The bird flew back to the village, leaving the older brother and all his gold on the island.
- 14 The season for star fruit passed, and the raven no longer visited the star fruit tree. The younger brother wondered what had become of the older brother.
- 15 The next year, when the star fruit came again, so did the raven.
- 16 "Raven," said the younger brother, "you fly all around the world. Have you seen my brother?"
- 17 "I have," said the raven, and explained what had happened. "Your brother now has all the gold he wants."

**29** What is the primary theme of the story?

- A** Sharing with others helps develop strong relationships.
  - B** Focusing on work can produce great rewards.
  - C** Role models often have faults.
  - D** Greed can have harmful consequences.
- 

**30** Read these sentences from paragraph 4.

*"Don't be afraid," said the raven. "I'll pay you in gold for your star fruit, as I did your father."*

The raven's words in these sentences can best be described as —

- F** comforting
  - G** mocking
  - H** insincere
  - J** joyful
- 

**31** The actions of the younger brother in paragraph 7 are significant because they show that —

- A** he is more interested in flying than in growing star fruit
- B** his relationship with the raven is beneficial only to him
- C** his attitude toward wealth protects him from harm
- D** he depends on the raven to show him the best way to help his brother

**32** What is the main problem in the story?

- F** One brother is left an unusually small inheritance.
  - G** One brother is never satisfied with what he has.
  - H** One brother does not know how to spend money wisely.
  - J** One brother shares his wealth with others who are in need.
- 

**33** Which of the following is the best summary of paragraphs 8 through 10?

- A** The younger brother invites the older brother to dinner several times. The older brother finally agrees and is surprised when he sees the younger one's house. After being told the story of the raven, the older brother wants to trade his inheritance for what his brother has. The younger brother refuses.
- B** One day the older brother goes to the younger brother's house for dinner and is surprised by what he sees. He likes his brother's house so much that he offers to trade his inheritance for it. The younger brother does not want to trade, however, and refuses the other's offer.
- C** The younger brother repeatedly pleads with the older brother to come over for dinner. When the older brother finally comes over, he asks the younger brother where he got all the fine things in his house. The younger brother then tells his brother about the raven.
- D** The younger brother repeatedly invites the older brother to dinner. The older brother finally comes over after refusing this request many times. The younger brother tells him about the raven that came to the star fruit tree. The older brother wants to own the tree so that he can meet the raven.

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

## Venezuela's Lightning Storms

- 1 For most people, a lightning storm is a good reason to sit up and take notice—and probably take shelter. But imagine if you lived in a place where lightning storms raged almost every night of the year. There is an area in Venezuela that has this type of lightning. Large storms with frequent lightning provide an amazing light show for up to 300 nights out of every year. This natural phenomenon is called the *Relámpago del Catatumbo*, or the Catatumbo Lightning.

### Natural Fireworks

- 2 The Catatumbo Lightning happens in the state of Zulia, located in the northwestern part of Venezuela where the Catatumbo River meets Lake Maracaibo. The lightning is unusual for several reasons. For one thing, its predictability is remarkable. Although there have been rare periods when the lightning storms did not occur, for the most part they have been forming over the same area above Lake Maracaibo nightly for centuries.
- 3 The lightning storms are also amazing because of the frequency of the strikes. The storms can produce between 18 and 60 strikes per minute. That adds up to an average of 1,680 strikes per hour, and storms can last up to 10 hours. This means that the skies are lit with roughly 2.5 million lightning strikes per year.
- 4 Finally, the Catatumbo Lightning is exceptional because of its beautiful colors. It causes the sky to glow different shades of white, red, and purple. The color of the lightning changes depending on the presence of dust, water, and various gases in the air.



### A Bright History

- 5 The Catatumbo Lightning has become an important part of the history and culture of the area where it occurs. The native people call the lightning *rib a-ba*, or "river of fire in the sky," and it has always been a part of their daily life. The lightning is mentioned in poetry and songs; the state of Zulia even has a lightning bolt on its flag.
- 6 The lightning is also credited with ruining a surprise attack on the city of Maracaibo by the English sea captain Sir Francis Drake in 1595. The lightning flashes illuminated Drake's ships, alerting the Spanish forces to their presence.



- 7 For all these reasons, the lightning is a source of pride for the people of the area, including environmentalist Erick Quiroga, who has been studying the lightning for more than 15 years. "I saw my first lightning at eight years old," he said. "I thought it was a smile from the night sky."



The Catatumbo Lightning

© Kenneth William Alan Highton

### **A Scientific Mystery**

- 8 No one knows for sure what causes the Catatumbo Lightning. Some scientists think it's caused by increased amounts of methane gas around the area. Others believe the lightning occurs because of the area's unique location—the very hot, humid air from the Catatumbo River and Lake Maracaibo meets cool air that comes down from the Andes mountains.
- 9 The mystery of what causes the lightning deepened when, beginning in January 2010, the lightning did not appear for a period of several months. During this time Venezuela, like many other parts of the world, was experiencing abnormal weather patterns, and the country was suffering from a severe drought. Some scientists speculate that this may have caused the Catatumbo Lightning to stop, but the answer remains unclear. Whatever the cause, the lightning resumed that April.

### **Record-Breaking Lightning**

- 10 Even though the exact cause of the Catatumbo Lightning is still unknown, it is a welcome mystery. Quiroga recently asked the Guinness Book of World Records to grant the area around Lake Maracaibo the record for being the place on Earth with the most lightning. This honor had been held by a town in central Africa. In 2014, Guinness agreed to the request, presenting the vice president of

Venezuela with a special certificate. Today people from all over the world come to see the brilliant display. And if history is any indication, the Catatumbo Lightning will be impressing visitors and locals alike for many years to come.

*Third party trademark Guinness World Records® was used in these testing materials.*

**34** Read the dictionary entry for the word credit.

**credit** \ˈkre-dit\ v  
**1.** to believe something such as a report **2.** to assign responsibility to someone or something **3.** to add money to an account **4.** to award a passing mark or grade in school

Which definition best matches the way the word credited is used in paragraph 6?

- F** Definition 1
  - G** Definition 2
  - H** Definition 3
  - J** Definition 4
- 

**35** The map next to paragraph 2 helps the reader better understand the information in the selection because it —

- A** illustrates how wide Lake Maracaibo is
  - B** provides the names of other countries in South America
  - C** helps the reader understand the causes of the lightning in Venezuela
  - D** shows the reader where the lightning occurs in Venezuela
- 

**36** By stating a main idea and supporting it with specific details in paragraphs 2 through 4, the author is able to —

- F** offer a vivid picture of what the Catatumbo Lightning looks like to observers
- G** give a thorough explanation of why the Catatumbo Lightning is unique
- H** add a sense of drama and suspense regarding the Catatumbo Lightning strikes
- J** provide scientific reasons for the colorful display during a Catatumbo Lightning storm

**37** The main idea of paragraphs 8 and 9 is that —

- A** an increase in methane gas in the area may be responsible for the lightning
  - B** there are some theories about what causes the lightning but no definite answer
  - C** the lightning may be caused by warm air from a river and a lake meeting cool mountain air
  - D** when lightning strikes stopped during a drought, scientists studied how weather affects the lightning
- 

**38** Which of these facts from the selection supports the idea that the local people embrace the Catatumbo Lightning?

- F** *This natural phenomenon is called the Relámpago del Catatumbo, or the Catatumbo Lightning.*
- G** *The color of the lightning changes depending on the presence of dust, water, and various gases in the air.*
- H** *The lightning is mentioned in poetry and songs; the state of Zulia even has a lightning bolt on its flag.*
- J** *The mystery of what causes the lightning deepened when, beginning in January 2010, the lightning did not appear for a period of several months.*

**39** Based on the information throughout the selection, how do the native people of Zulia feel about the Catatumbo Lightning?

- A** They are indifferent to it.
  - B** They fear it as a powerful force of nature.
  - C** They believe it is problematic for their community.
  - D** They appreciate it as a special feature of their area.
- 

**40** The author's main purpose for writing this selection is to —

- F** warn readers about the dangers of lightning
- G** discuss the mysterious lightning found in a region
- H** compare and contrast lightning storms around the world
- J** explain the weather conditions that cause lightning



Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
1	1	Readiness	6.2(B)	A
2	2	Readiness	6.8(A)	H
3	2	Readiness	6.6 Fig. 19(D)	D
4	2	Readiness	6.6(A)	H
5	2	Supporting	6.6(C)	B
6	2	Supporting	6.3(A)	F
7	2	Supporting	6.8 Fig. 19(D)	C
8	2	Supporting	6.4 Fig. 19(D)	G
9	2	Supporting	6.4(A)	B
10	2	Supporting	6.4 Fig. 19(D)	J
11	2	Supporting	6.3 Fig. 19(D)	C
12	2	Supporting	6.4 Fig. 19(D)	H
13	2	Supporting	6.3 Fig. 19(D)	D
14	1	Readiness	6.2(B)	J
15	3	Readiness	6.10(A)	A
16	3	Readiness	6.10 Fig. 19(D)	G
17	3	Readiness	6.9 Fig. 19(D)	A
18	3	Readiness	6.10 Fig. 19(E)	J
19	1	Readiness	6.2(A)	C
20	3	Readiness	6.10(C)	J
21	3	Readiness	6.10 Fig. 19(D)	C
22	3	Readiness	6.10(A)	F
23	3	Readiness	6.10 Fig. 19(D)	B
24	3	Readiness	6.10(A)	J
25	1	Readiness	6.19(F)	C
26	1	Readiness	6.19(F)	F
27	1	Readiness	6.19(F)	A
28	1	Readiness	6.19(F)	G
29	2	Supporting	6.3(A)	D
30	2	Supporting	6.6(B)	F
31	2	Readiness	6.6 Fig. 19(D)	C
32	2	Readiness	6.6(A)	G
33	2	Readiness	6.6 Fig. 19(E)	A
34	1	Readiness	6.2(E)	G
35	3	Supporting	6.12(B)	D
36	3	Readiness	6.10(C)	G
37	3	Readiness	6.10(A)	B
38	3	Readiness	6.10 Fig. 19(D)	H
39	3	Readiness	6.10(D)	D
40	3	Readiness	6.9 Fig. 19(D)	G

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
1	Option A is correct	In paragraph 12, Eric thinks about how “everyone else is enjoying the festival” and wistfully watches people pass by while he is stuck at work. This context is included to suggest that Eric is feeling sad about his circumstances.
	Option B is incorrect	Eric’s friends are going to the festival, and Eric clearly wants to join them, so he is not feeling “relief” as he watches people pass by Sam’s Deli on the way to the parade.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Eric is unhappy about working rather than attending the festival, there is no evidence that he feels anxious.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 12, Eric watches people walk by the window of the deli, and he knows where the “festival attendees” are going. Therefore, the idea that Eric is curious about what people are doing is not supported by context in the paragraph.
2	Option H is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different than their literal interpretation. The author uses the verb “trickled” and the comparison of a tidal wave with a stream to suggest that the number of customers at the deli decreases to a manageable flow.
	Option F is incorrect	The author uses the figurative phrase “the tidal wave of customers trickled to a stream” to suggest a contrast in the number of customers from one period of time to another; therefore, that number was not steady but varied.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no evidence that the customers at the deli got wet from the hoses.
	Option J is incorrect	The author uses the figurative language in paragraph 23 to refer to the number of people coming into the deli, not the customers’ feelings.
3	Option D is correct	Eric declines his parents’ offer to stop working and find his friends, he refers to “special orders” that are the “most important ones of the day,” and then he carefully makes the orders for the deli’s “regulars.” These actions are included to reveal that Eric realizes the importance of loyal customers.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraphs 31 and 32, Eric stays at the deli because he wants to “take care of” the deli’s “regulars,” not because he thinks working is more fun than being with friends.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no evidence that Eric thinks his parents should rest.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Eric does run the deli while his parents are absent, there is no evidence that he will be taking on more responsibilities.
4	Option H is correct	The conflict is established in paragraph 2: Eric has to help his parents at the deli instead of enjoying the day at the Twin Rivers Summer Festival with his friends as he had planned.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Eric at first does not know the names of the regular deli customers, this is not the main conflict of the story.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no evidence to support that Eric thinks that his parents need to offer a better variety of sandwiches.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 5, Eric refers to the days at the deli as “quiet,” but his main conflict is not the lack of excitement at Sam’s Deli.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
5	Option B is correct	The term point of view refers to the person telling or narrating a piece of writing. First-person point of view is used to allow the reader to understand Eric's changing point of view regarding the deli. At first Eric doesn't understand why his mom and dad cater to the regular customers so much. By the end of the story, however, Eric realizes that these customers' "special orders" are "the most important ones of the day."
	Option A is incorrect	Eric does describe the actions of the "regulars" at the deli, but the actions of other characters are described as well.
	Option C is incorrect	Dialogue is used in paragraphs 24 and 25 to reveal why Eric's father and mother are late returning to the deli; the reader does not understand this as a result of the point of view used in the story.
	Option D is incorrect	Eric is telling the story, so the reader can only know Eric's inner thoughts, not the thoughts of the customers at the deli.
6	Option F is correct	The author develops the story's theme, or central message, by revealing Eric's changing perspective regarding the "regulars" at Sam's Deli. When Eric is overwhelmed by the crowd at the deli, the "regulars" all pitch in to help out. When Eric's parents return and offer Eric the opportunity to take a break, Eric opts to stay to help with the "most important" orders of the day, as he finally realizes how the "regulars" are key to making Sam's Deli a "special place."
	Option G is incorrect	This sentence is included to show Eric's initial resentment toward the deli's loyal customers; it is not used to express the theme of the story.
	Option H is incorrect	Eric's parents do appreciate Eric's help, but the theme of the story is not expressed in this sentence.
	Option J is incorrect	This sentence is included to support, but not express, the story's theme.
7	Option C is correct	In this poem, the speaker feels safe and content with Abuelita. These feelings are emphasized by the speaker's description of how he buries himself "deep, hidden in Abuelita's soft arms" in both lines 5 and 25. The image of their embrace is one of affection, love, and contentment.
	Option A is incorrect	In line 7, the speaker indicates that he is excited to spend the weekend with Abuelita, not that he wishes to live permanently with her.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker runs from Papa's car to his grandmother for an embrace. There is no evidence in the poem that the speaker fears being seen when hugging Abuelita.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that the embrace makes the speaker forget where he is.



## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
8	Option G is correct	In line 7, the speaker is clearly excited about “A whole weekend with Abuelita!” This excitement is emphasized by the goodbye shout to Papa in line 8, which the poet punctuates with an exclamation point.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the reader can infer that the speaker respects Abuelita, the poet’s use of exclamation points in the third stanza (verse) emphasizes the speaker’s excitement regarding the visit.
	Option H is incorrect	Papa is smiling as he “drives off in a puff of white smoke,” suggesting that he is not hesitant about leaving the speaker with Abuelita.
	Option J is incorrect	It cannot be determined from the poem how much time has passed since the speaker last visited Abuelita.
9	Option B is correct	A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word “like” or “as.” In lines 14 and 15, the poet describes Abuelita’s house as “yellow-white like a forgotten Easter egg” and “cracked here and there.” These similes are included to help the reader visualize Abuelita’s house.
	Option A is incorrect	It cannot be determined from the poem how much time has passed since the speaker last visited Abuelita.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that Easter is the speaker’s favorite holiday to spend with his grandmother.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet includes the similes in lines 14 and 15 to convey the general appearance and condition of Abuelita’s house, not any specific place in her home.
10	Option J is correct	The poet includes the lines “You are so big! My big boy!” to show that Abuelita is proud of the speaker. The speaker’s reaction—laughing and standing on his toes—is included to show how the speaker encourages and enjoys Abuelita’s feeling of pride.
	Option F is incorrect	Although standing on his toes would make the speaker appear taller than he is, the speaker is encouraging Abuelita’s feeling of pride, not wishing to be taller.
	Option G is incorrect	The speaker laughs and stands on his toes, which clearly shows that he is not embarrassed by Abuelita calling him “big boy.”
	Option H is incorrect	Although the speaker may be amused by Abuelita’s words and actions, it is more likely that the speaker laughs with pleasure because he knows Abuelita is proud of him.
11	Option C is correct	Based on the speaker’s excitement upon arriving for a weekend visit with Abuelita, the feeling of safety and contentment the speaker experiences in “Abuelita’s soft arms,” and the obvious joy Abuelita feels regarding her grandson, the reader can learn that time spent with family should be cherished.
	Option A is incorrect	The poet does not focus on the appreciation of parents in this poem.
	Option B is incorrect	The experience related in the poem seems like one familiar to both the speaker and Abuelita, so the poet is not suggesting that happiness can be found in trying new things.
	Option D is incorrect	Abuelita and the speaker clearly have a strong relationship, but the poet does not provide evidence that their relationship has strengthened over time.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
12	Option H is correct	Dialogue refers to the lines spoken by a character in a story, poem, or play. Abuelita tells her “cielo” (the speaker) that she needs “a big abrazo” from him, she calls the speaker her “big boy,” and she tells him that he is “so big.” The poet includes these words of simple dialogue to emphasize Abuelita’s feeling of affection for the speaker.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Abuelita does describe the speaker as “big,” she is demonstrating her affection for him, not emphasizing that she likes certain qualities about him.
	Option G is incorrect	The poet does not indicate what Abuelita and the speaker enjoy doing together by including her dialogue.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Abuelita does use some Spanish words while talking to the speaker, the speaker does not respond in Spanish.
13	Option D is correct	The interaction between the speaker and Abuelita throughout the poem is included to develop a theme, or central message, of familial affection and pride. Abuelita smiles and calls out to the speaker as he enthusiastically runs into her arms. The speaker expresses his joy at having Abuelita to himself for the “whole weekend,” and Abuelita is happy to see her “big boy.”
	Option A is incorrect	Papa is only briefly mentioned in the poem, and the poet does not compare him to Abuelita. This is a minor detail that is only minimally used to develop the theme.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet does not explain why the visit takes place.
	Option C is incorrect	The photographs are less important to the theme of the poem than the interactions between the speaker and Abuelita.
14	Option J is correct	The words “interesting conversation” are included to provide context to help the reader understand the meaning of <u>engaged</u> by suggesting that Stuart and his subjects were involved in the shared activity of conversation.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Stuart’s “charm as a person” may have contributed to the conversations he <u>engaged</u> in with his subjects, these words are not used to indicate that the subjects were actively involved.
	Option G is incorrect	The words “sat for a portrait” are not used to indicate what the subjects did while sitting, so this definition is incorrect.
	Option H is incorrect	The words “practiced at the time” are not used to provide context for the meaning of <u>engaged</u> .
15	Option A is correct	In paragraph 2, the author focuses on Stuart’s method of engaging his subjects in conversation while painting them so that his subjects would be at ease and Stuart could “capture their most natural expression and pose.”
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author states in paragraph 2 that Stuart “painted the portraits of approximately 1,000 people during his lifetime,” this is a detail, not the main idea of the paragraph.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author mainly focuses on Stuart’s unique method of interacting with his subjects, not on Stuart’s reasons for wanting to paint their portraits.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author does not focus on the popularity of the portraits Stuart painted during his lifetime. That information is presented later in the selection.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
16	Option G is correct	In paragraph 3, the author states that “one of Stuart’s aspirations was to paint George Washington” and then explains how Stuart overcame the challenges of arranging a meeting with Washington to “eventually [have] the opportunity” to paint the president.
	Option F is incorrect	There is no evidence in paragraph 3 that Stuart was worried his portrait would not please Washington.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no evidence in paragraph 3 that Stuart was nervous in the presence of Washington.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Stuart and Washington did discuss horses, the author is stating that this was one of the president’s “favorite topics,” not that Stuart shared the president’s interests.
17	Option A is correct	The author gives details in paragraph 5 to explain that Stuart’s portrait of Washington is so well known because it has appeared on the dollar bill since 1869; anyone who has ever seen a dollar bill has seen the portrait.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author states that Stuart “made and sold multiple copies of the portrait” of Washington, which suggests that the portrait was well known while Stuart was alive.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author focuses on the portrait of Washington rather than on Washington as an important figure in history.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author discusses Stuart’s unfinished portrait of Washington, but the author does not suggest that most of Washington’s portraits were left unfinished.
18	Option J is correct	The central idea and key details from the selection are included in this summary. Information about Gilbert Stuart and why he is an important figure is included in the first sentence. In the second sentence, the incomplete portrait of Washington is addressed, and the central idea that this portrait became the most popular portrait of Washington ever painted is conveyed.
	Option F is incorrect	Key information about the significance of Stuart’s portrait of Washington is not included in this summary.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the central idea that the most famous portrait of George Washington was painted by Gilbert Stuart is included in this summary, additional details regarding why Stuart was an important figure are not included. Unnecessary information, such as when Stuart lived, is included in the summary.
	Option H is incorrect	The key detail that Stuart’s famous portrait of George Washington was left unfinished is omitted from this summary, while less important details are included.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
19	Option C is correct	Based on paragraph 3, Tolkien had “many writings” that his son “gathered together.” The reader can use the information in the box to understand the meaning of <u>amassed</u> because gathering Tolkien’s writings most likely meant that the pieces had to be brought together to become one, or “to form a lump.”
	Option A is incorrect	Based on the origin information provided in the box, the reader cannot infer that <u>amassed</u> means “searched for.”
	Option B is incorrect	Although Christopher shared the writings Tolkien had <u>amassed</u> by publishing them in a book, Tolkien himself did not share these writings with a group.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no evidence that Tolkien’s writings were “stored in a safe place,” nor does the origin of <u>amassed</u> support this meaning.
20	Option J is correct	The author structures paragraphs 3 through 5 to emphasize the problem of Tolkien being unable to finish <i>The Silmarillion</i> before he died and to explain how the problem was solved: Tolkien’s son Christopher completed the work.
	Option F is incorrect	The problem is that Tolkien died before finishing <i>The Silmarillion</i> , not that he needed help finishing the book, and the author’s description of the solution goes beyond an explanation of how only certain parts of the story were used.
	Option G is incorrect	The problem introduced in paragraph 3 is that Tolkien died before finishing <i>The Silmarillion</i> . Christopher Tolkien persuading a friend to help him finish the book was only part of the solution.
	Option H is incorrect	Christopher Tolkien deciding which of his father’s writings to include in <i>The Silmarillion</i> was part of the solution, not the problem, and the author does not identify how Christopher decided what to include in the final version of <i>The Silmarillion</i> .
21	Option C is correct	In paragraph 5, the author suggests that completing <i>The Silmarillion</i> provided Christopher with challenges—from organizing the pieces into five different parts to finishing incomplete sections.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author does not imply that the challenge of completing the book resulted from Christopher’s lack of experience as an author.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no evidence in paragraph 5 that Christopher tried to include alternate endings in the book.
	Option D is incorrect	The conclusion that this was Christopher’s intention when he published <i>The Silmarillion</i> is not supported by information in paragraph 5.
22	Option F is correct	Christopher believed that including everything his father wrote for <i>The Silmarillion</i> “would lead only to confusion for the reader,” so Christopher decided to omit some of the material.
	Option G is incorrect	Christopher was more concerned about the reader being confused than about the reader being exposed to unfamiliar ideas.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no evidence that Christopher planned to create a different ending for the story.
	Option J is incorrect	Tolkien originally intended for the book to have five parts, so this was not a factor in Christopher’s decision to omit certain material.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
23	Option B is correct	In this sentence, the author reveals an attitude of curiosity about how the book <i>The Silmarillion</i> was put together, suggesting that its creation “may be just as interesting as the story told on its pages.”
	Option A is incorrect	This is a statement of fact about <i>The Silmarillion</i> . The author’s attitude toward the writing of <i>The Silmarillion</i> is not revealed in this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence, the author states an opinion regarding Guy Gavriel Kay’s work; the author’s attitude toward the writing of <i>The Silmarillion</i> is not revealed.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence, the author suggests that readers had varying opinions about <i>The Silmarillion</i> when it was published; how the author feels about the writing of the book is not revealed in the sentence.
24	Option J is correct	Based on paragraph 3, <i>The Silmarillion</i> was “Tolkien’s first and last work,” making it unique.
	Option F is incorrect	Although <i>The Silmarillion</i> does take place in a fantasy world, this is true of many of Tolkien’s other works as well.
	Option G is incorrect	The author explains in paragraph 6 that “Christopher published more of his father’s unfinished writings” after <i>The Silmarillion</i> .
	Option H is incorrect	Both fictional creatures and humans are included in <i>The Silmarillion</i> , but this is also true of <i>The Hobbit</i> and <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> , as the author states in paragraph 2.
25	Option C is correct	In paragraph 6, the author suggests that some of Tolkien’s fans were disappointed with <i>The Silmarillion</i> because “it was too different from what they had come to expect from Tolkien’s writing.”
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence, the author does not suggest that <i>The Silmarillion</i> was not well received.
	Option B is incorrect	In this sentence, the author does not suggest that <i>The Silmarillion</i> was not well received.
	Option D is incorrect	Christopher did have to work with incomplete materials while compiling his father’s writing for <i>The Silmarillion</i> . However, the author does not suggest in this sentence that the book was not well received.
26	Option F is correct	Both Stuart and Tolkien were accomplished in their field of creative art. Gilbert Stuart, known for “his talent as a painter,” painted the portraits of many distinguished and famous people. Stuart also created “the definitive representation of George Washington.” Tolkien created a “world of fantasy” through his many books and has “devoted readers around the world.”
	Option G is incorrect	Tolkien did spend several decades working on <i>The Silmarillion</i> . However, the time Stuart spent painting Washington “was limited.”
	Option H is incorrect	Although Tolkien’s son Christopher did finish <i>The Silmarillion</i> on behalf of his father, Stuart’s portrait of Washington remained unfinished, so this is not a similarity between the two men.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Stuart engaged his subjects in “interesting conversation,” there is no evidence in the second selection that Tolkien was known for his interest in having conversations with others.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
27	Option A is correct	Based on the first selection, “Stuart made and sold multiple copies of the portrait” of George Washington, despite the fact that it was unfinished. Unlike Stuart’s portrait, <i>The Silmarillion</i> was completed before it was published and sold.
	Option B is incorrect	Stuart sold copies of his portrait of Washington during his lifetime, but there is no evidence presented in the second selection that anyone saw Tolkien’s manuscript for <i>The Silmarillion</i> while the author was still alive.
	Option C is incorrect	Stuart prepared for his portrait by learning of Washington’s interest in horses and then engaging the president in conversation. Information about how much time Tolkien spent preparing to write <i>The Silmarillion</i> is not included in the second selection.
	Option D is incorrect	Stuart’s portrait of Washington is highly regarded. It has appeared on the dollar bill since 1869 and is described by the author of the first selection as “amazing.” In contrast, Tolkien’s <i>The Silmarillion</i> , with its “grim mood” and “complicated plot,” was not as well received as some of Tolkien’s other works.
28	Option G is correct	For unknown reasons Stuart never completed his portrait of George Washington. Tolkien worked on <i>The Silmarillion</i> off and on for decades but “was unable to complete the work before he died.”
	Option F is incorrect	Neither selection includes information regarding how much money the creators earned for their works.
	Option H is incorrect	Neither Stuart’s portrait of Washington nor Tolkien’s book was included in a larger body of work that its creators had made.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the completion of <i>The Silmarillion</i> required the efforts of Tolkien’s son Christopher, Stuart’s portrait of Washington was, based on the selection, the work of Stuart alone.
29	Option D is correct	Throughout the story the author portrays the older brother as greedy, “living an extravagant lifestyle” and “spending money freely.” The older brother ultimately suffers negative consequences when his greed for gold leaves him stranded alone on an island.
	Option A is incorrect	There are no strong relationships between characters in the story.
	Option B is incorrect	The younger brother is rewarded with gold because he shares his star fruit with the raven, not because he works hard. Therefore, this is not the primary theme, or central message, of the story.
	Option C is incorrect	The older brother in the story clearly has faults. However, there is no evidence to suggest that he is a role model for his younger brother, so this is not a theme that is developed in the story.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
30	Option F is correct	The younger brother is concerned when his star fruit, which he sold to support his family, starts “disappearing into the belly of the raven.” However, the raven comforts the younger brother by telling him “Don’t be afraid” and explaining how he will pay the younger brother for the star fruit in gold.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that the raven is “mocking” the owner of the star fruit tree.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the raven’s claim may initially seem hard to believe, he is sincere and follows through on his promise to provide the younger brother with gold.
	Option J is incorrect	The raven’s promise to pay for star fruit in gold is welcome news to the younger brother. However, the raven’s tone in these sentences is “comforting” rather than “joyful.”
31	Option C is correct	Unlike the older brother, whose greed for gold ultimately leaves him stranded on an island, the younger brother takes only the amount of gold that he can “easily carry,” allowing him to return home with his wealth unharmed.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the younger brother flies with the raven because the raven wants to reward him, not because the younger brother is more interested in flying than in growing star fruit.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the younger brother shares his wealth with his family and others in need, so he is not the only one who benefits from the relationship.
	Option D is incorrect	The actions of the younger brother in paragraph 7 are not included to indicate that he depends on the raven to assist him in helping his older brother.
32	Option G is correct	Despite receiving an “enormous inheritance” from his father, the older brother is not satisfied with what he has. The older brother is stranded on an island because of this greedy attitude when he refuses to give up any of the gold he has collected.
	Option F is incorrect	The younger brother is left with a small inheritance; however, this is not the main problem in the story.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the older brother does spend his inheritance on “an extravagant lifestyle,” which suggests he is spending his money unwisely, his main problem is never being satisfied with what he has.
	Option J is incorrect	The younger brother does share his wealth with others who are in need. However, this does not cause him problems.
33	Option A is correct	Key events from paragraphs 8 through 10 are included in this summary. The scene is set in the first two sentences of the summary: the older brother arrives at the younger brother’s house after receiving multiple invitations to dinner. Information about the conflict is included in the third and fourth sentences: the older brother wants the star fruit tree, and the younger brother refuses to give it to him.
	Option B is incorrect	Information about the raven is not included in this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option C is incorrect	The story’s conflict is not included in this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option D is incorrect	The younger brother’s refusal to trade the star fruit tree is not included in this summary. In addition, it is not true that the older brother’s motive for owning the tree is to meet the raven.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
34	Option G is correct	As the author explains in paragraph 6, lightning flashes illuminated Sir Francis Drake's ships and ruined a surprise attack on the city of Maracaibo in 1595. Definition 2, "to assign responsibility to someone or something," is supported by this information in paragraph 6 as the best match for the way <u>credited</u> is used in the paragraph.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the events in paragraph 6 are presented as facts, Definition 1 does not match the way <u>credited</u> is used in paragraph 6.
	Option H is incorrect	The meaning of <u>credited</u> in paragraph 6 relates to giving responsibility; the events have no connection to money or accounts.
	Option J is incorrect	The use of <u>credited</u> in paragraph 6 does not relate to grades or school.
35	Option D is correct	The author includes the map to illustrate the area in Venezuela around Lake Maracaibo, helping the reader to better understand where the lightning strikes occur.
	Option A is incorrect	There is no scale included on the map, so the reader cannot determine the width of the lake.
	Option B is incorrect	The names of other countries in South America are not listed, nor is that the purpose of the map.
	Option C is incorrect	The author does not include the map to help the reader understand the causes of the lightning. That explanation is provided in the text of the selection.
36	Option G is correct	In paragraphs 2 through 4, the author provides a thorough explanation of why the Catatumbo Lightning is unique. The lightning's "predictability is remarkable," and it has been occurring in the same area for centuries. Also the lightning storms are "exceptional" because they produce "an average of 1,680 strikes per hour."
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 4, although the author does describe the appearance of the lightning, this is only a detail included to support the main idea that the Catatumbo Lightning is unique.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the appearance of the Catatumbo Lightning is most likely dramatic, the author does not state a main idea and support it with details in order to add a sense of drama and suspense.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author does provide scientific reasons behind the colorful display during a Catatumbo Lightning storm. However, this only relates to one reason why the storms are unique.



## 2018 STAAR Grade 6 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
37	Option B is correct	In paragraphs 8 and 9, the author offers theories behind the Catatumbo Lightning—"increased amounts of methane gas around the area" or "very hot, humid air from the Catatumbo River and Lake Maracaibo [meeting] cool air from the Andes mountains"—while also emphasizing that no one really knows what causes the lightning. The actual cause is still "a scientific mystery."
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author does refer to the theory that "increased amounts of methane gas around the area" may cause the Catatumbo Lightning, but this is just a supporting detail.
	Option C is incorrect	Some scientists believe that the lightning is caused by hot air from the Catatumbo River and Lake Maracaibo meeting cool air from the Andes mountains. However, this is not the main idea of paragraphs 8 and 9.
	Option D is incorrect	Scientists did speculate that weather patterns may affect the occurrence of the lightning. However, this is just a supporting detail.
38	Option H is correct	This author supports the idea that local people embrace the Catatumbo Lightning by including the fact that "the lightning is mentioned in poetry and songs" and that "the state of Zulia even has a lightning bolt on its flag."
	Option F is incorrect	In this sentence, the author does not support the idea that the local people embrace the lightning.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not include this fact to show the affection the local people feel for the lightning.
	Option J is incorrect	In this sentence, the author states a fact about the lightning but does not indicate the high regard the local people have for the lightning.
39	Option D is correct	The people of Zulia appreciate the Catatumbo Lightning as a special feature of their area. They demonstrate this appreciation by composing songs and poems about the lightning and featuring a lightning bolt on their flag.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the people of Zulia may not know what causes the Catatumbo Lightning, they are not indifferent to this natural phenomenon.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the lightning is certainly a powerful force of nature, there is no evidence that the people of Zulia are afraid of it.
	Option C is incorrect	The lightning is not problematic for the Zulian community but rather a source of pride, as evidenced by its mention in poems and songs and its inclusion on the state flag.
40	Option G is correct	The author's purpose for writing this selection is to discuss the mysterious lightning in a region of Venezuela. The author introduces the topic of the Catatumbo Lightning and provides a variety of facts, including where the lightning takes place, why the lightning is unusual, how many strikes the storms produce, what the sky looks like during a lightning storm, and why the lightning is important to the region where it occurs.
	Option F is incorrect	The author wrote the selection to discuss the Catatumbo Lightning, not to warn the reader about the dangers of lightning.
	Option H is incorrect	Comparing and contrasting lightning storms around the world is not the author's main purpose for writing the selection.
	Option J is incorrect	Explaining the weather conditions that cause the lightning in general is not the author's main purpose for writing the selection.