



Grade 4 English Language Arts

Sample Test Items

You will read two passages, “Mortimer the Miserable” and “My Winter Hat.” Answer the questions about each passage as well as questions about both passages.

Mortimer the Miserable

by Rebecca Sutton

- 1 Mortimer the Magic Hat could make almost anything appear. When he heard a magic spell, he could turn bits of air into squawking chickens, slithering snakes, and chittering, chattering chipmunks. The depths of his crown swirled and twirled with so much magic that he could produce dragons and mice, unicorns and house cats. Once, he even conjured up a saber-toothed tiger. But no matter how hard he tried, and no matter what magic words were spoken, Mortimer could not make a white rabbit appear.
- 2 “No white rabbits? Preposterous!” said Wanda the Wonderful when she came to Mr. Quigglemire’s Magic Hat Shop. “A magician can’t be a magician without a white rabbit. It’s every child’s favorite trick! Please, Mr. Quigglemire, show me the next hat.”
- 3 “No rabbits?” said Francis the Fantastic. “Don’t waste my time, Quigglemire. Next hat, please.”
- 4 “Absurd,” said Edwina the Enchanted.
- 5 “Rubbish,” said Marvin the Marvelous.
- 6 “No, thank you,” said Magic Milt. “I’ll take that hat over there, if you please.” (Magic Milt was known as the most polite magician in the business.)
- 7 And so it went, week after week, month after month. No one wanted to buy a magic hat that couldn’t perform the world’s most popular trick. Eventually, Mortimer stopped bothering to dust himself off in the morning, or to straighten his red, polka-dot sash. Why bother? His future looked nothing but bleary dreary. Perhaps he would be stuck on a shelf forever, his magic locked inside and wasted. Or maybe he would become so tattered and torn that he himself would disappear, just as the chickens, snakes, dragons, and tigers

vanished when a magic spell was reversed. He began to think of himself as Mortimer, the World's Most Miserable Magic Hat.

- 8 One morning, Mr. Quigglemire's shop bell tinkled and a young boy walked inside. He was wearing a cape that said, "Barry the Boy Wonder." His hair was mostly neat, his fingernails were mostly clean, and his soft brown eyes twinkled with kindness and glee.
- 9 When Barry the Boy Wonder pointed to the musty dusty hat on the corner shelf, Mr. Quigglemire sighed. "Don't bother with that one. He can't make rabbits, no matter what spell you use."
- 10 Mortimer waited for Barry to try on another hat. Instead, he heard words he had never dreamed were possible.
- 11 "Oh, that's OK," said Barry the Boy Wonder. "I'm allergic to rabbits."
- 12 And with that, Barry dusted Mortimer off and placed him gingerly on his head. Mortimer was a little too big, and his brim had become slightly crooked from his constant frown. But Barry didn't seem to notice.
- 13 "It's perfect," he said, admiring Mortimer in the mirror. "I'll take it."
- 14 Mortimer puffed up with such pride that he looked even taller and grander on Barry's head.
- 15 Together, Barry and Mortimer traveled the world and became famous for the extraordinary things Barry pulled from Mortimer's depths. At every show, children watched in wide-eyed amazement and dreamed of the fantastic creatures they would summon if Mortimer were their very own. The world's most astounding magicians came to see the pair as well, and every single one wished for a hat as magical and magnificent as Mortimer.



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Answer the following questions for “Mortimer the Miserable.”

1. What does conjured mean as it is used in paragraph 1?

- Ⓐ He could produce something.
- Ⓑ He played a trick on someone.
- Ⓒ He wanted to build something.
- Ⓓ He could understand someone.

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

Part A

Which statement shows the reader that Mortimer thinks he is forgotten?

- Ⓐ Mortimer is unable to create rabbits.
- Ⓑ Mortimer does not fit heads correctly.
- Ⓒ Mortimer is for sale in a magic hat shop.
- Ⓓ Mortimer stops caring about his appearance.

Part B

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

- Ⓐ "But no matter how hard he tried, and no matter what magic words were spoken, Mortimer could not make a white rabbit appear." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ "No one wanted to buy a magic hat that couldn't perform the world's most popular trick." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓒ "Eventually, Mortimer stopped bothering to dust himself off in the morning, or to straighten his red, polka-dot sash." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓓ "Mortimer was a little too big, and his brim had become slightly crooked from his constant frown." (paragraph 12)

3. Select three sentences that should be included in a summary of the story.

	Include in Summary
Mortimer is placed on a shelf.	<input type="radio"/>
Mortimer is chosen by a young boy.	<input type="radio"/>
Mortimer is unwanted and gives up.	<input type="radio"/>
Mortimer is famous for his tricks.	<input type="radio"/>
Mortimer is too big for the boy.	<input type="radio"/>

4. Read paragraph 14 of the story.

Mortimer puffed up with such pride that he looked even taller and grander on Barry's head.

What does the phrase puffed up mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ to be filled with wonder
- Ⓑ to feel larger than usual
- Ⓒ to feel good about oneself
- Ⓓ to be recognized for something

5. Which feature is found in “Mortimer the Miserable” that would not be found in a poem?

- Ⓐ setting
- Ⓑ dialogue
- Ⓒ characters
- Ⓓ paragraphs

My Winter Hat

by Julia Durango

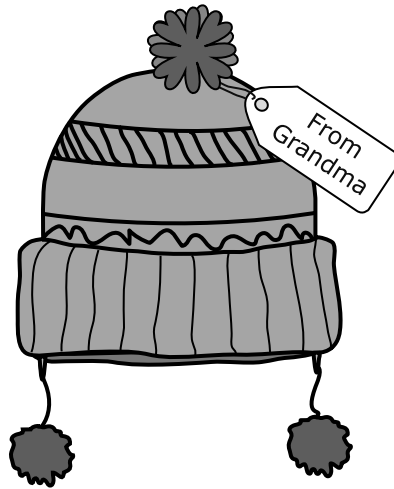
“Don’t forget your hat!” Mom called,
as I ran out to play.
(She says the same old silly thing
each nippy, wintry day.)

5 But when I put my hat on,
it makes my poor head swelter.
And when I take it off, you see,
my hair goes helter-skelter.¹

In snowball fights I always lose
10 because my hat’s so bright.
A sitting duck is what I am,
a blaze amidst the white.

“Oh, Mom, my hat is itchy,
and it catches on my ear!
15 Sometimes it falls below my eyes—
it’s much too large, I fear.”

Then Mom said, “Don’t you worry, dear,
I have a grand surprise.
Grandma’s sent a brand-new hat,
20 and look, it’s just your size!”



¹helter-skelter: disorderly, wild, messy



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Answer the following questions for “My Winter Hat.”

- 6.** Select two quotations that support the inference that the speaker dislikes the winter hat.

- Ⓐ ““Don’t forget your hat!’ Mom called, / as I ran out to play.”
(lines 1–2)
- Ⓑ “(She says the same old silly thing / each nippy, wintry day.)” (lines 3–4)
- Ⓒ “But when I put my hat on, / it makes my poor head swelter.”
(lines 5–6)
- Ⓓ “In snowball fights I always lose / because my hat’s so bright.” (lines 9–10)
- Ⓔ ““Grandma’s sent a brand-new hat, / and look, it’s just your size!”” (lines 19–20)

- 7.** What is the meaning of nippy as it is used in line 4 of the poem?

- Ⓐ chilly
- Ⓑ crazy
- Ⓒ happy
- Ⓓ windy

8. What feature helps the reader determine that "My Winter Hat" is a poem?

- Ⓐ It has a problem and solution.
- Ⓑ There are characters and a setting.
- Ⓒ It has dialogue between characters.
- Ⓓ It has stanzas rather than paragraphs.

Answer the following questions for "Mortimer the Miserable" and "My Winter Hat."

9. Select whether each statement describes "Mortimer the Miserable," "My Winter Hat," or both.

	"Mortimer the Miserable"	"My Winter Hat"	Both
A hat is unwanted.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A hat is used for magic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A hat is too large.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A hat is used for warmth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Select one character from "My Winter Hat" and one from "Mortimer the Miserable" that share a point of view about the value of a hat.

- Ⓐ Barry
- Ⓑ the mom
- Ⓒ the animals
- Ⓓ Mr. Quigglemire
- Ⓔ Francis the Fantastic

You will read two passages, “When I Reach the Promised Land . . .” and “The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom.” Answer the questions about each passage as well as questions about both passages.

“When I Reach the Promised Land . . .”

by Susan Buckley

- 1 On a summer night in 1849, Harriet Tubman turned north and left slavery behind her. When she stole away from Brodas Plantation on Maryland’s eastern shore, she made her way to freedom on the Underground Railroad.
- 2 The slaves on Brodas Plantation were uneasy that summer, for the new owner needed money, and the easiest way for him to get it was to sell slaves. First, two of Harriet Tubman’s sisters were sold. Chained with other slaves, they were sent further south.
- 3 When Harriet Tubman heard that she and her brothers had also been sold, she knew that she had to flee. And she had to leave right away. When night fell, she set out. In the dark, through the woods, she made her way to the nearby house of a white woman who had offered help. It was this woman who first put Harriet Tubman on the Underground Railroad.
- 4 Giving Harriet Tubman directions, she explained that at each place, someone would help her. Each of these stops was a “station” on the road north to freedom. At a station—on someone’s farm or in a house, a church, or a store—brave people who hated slavery hid escaping slaves like Harriet Tubman. When it was safe, they sent them toward the next station on the way toward freedom.
- 5 Harriet Tubman later became the bravest “conductor” of the Underground Railroad, conducting hundreds to freedom. But this time, she traveled alone. She was hidden under a blanket in a wagon going to market and rowed across the Choptank River. She hid at Underground Railroad stations in a free black’s cabin, a Quaker attic, and a German farm.

- 6 Finally, 90 miles from Brodas Plantation, Harriet Tubman set foot on free soil at daybreak. She had reached the free state of Pennsylvania, where slavery was outlawed. As the sun came up, Harriet Tubman said, "I looked at my hands to see if I was the same person now I was free. There was such a glory over everything, the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I felt like I was in heaven."



"When I Reach the Promised Land" by Susan Buckley, from Appleseeds Magazine, March 1, 2004, copyright 2004, Cricket Media. Used by permission.

Answer the following questions for “When I Reach the Promised Land . . .”

- 11.** Which word could replace uneasy as it is used in paragraph 2 of “When I Reach the Promised Land . . .”?
- Ⓐ brave
 - Ⓑ calm
 - Ⓒ nervous
 - Ⓓ weakened

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

Part A

What can the reader infer about the phrase “promised land”?

- Ⓐ It is a location where slaves can be sold.
- Ⓑ It is a location on the Brodas Plantation.
- Ⓒ It is a location where slaves can find freedom.
- Ⓓ It is a location along the Underground Railroad.

Part B

Which quotation supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “. . . she stole away from Brodas Plantation on Maryland’s eastern shore, . . .” (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ “Chained with other slaves, they were sent further south.” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ “Each of these stops was a ‘station’ on the road north to freedom.” (paragraph 4)
- Ⓓ “She had reached the free state of Pennsylvania, where slavery was outlawed.” (paragraph 6)

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

Part A

What does the phrase “. . . and I felt like I was in heaven” in paragraph 6 help the reader understand about Harriet Tubman?

- Ⓐ She was in hiding.
- Ⓑ She outlawed slavery.
- Ⓒ She was running away.
- Ⓓ She escaped from slavery.

Part B

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

Finally, 90 miles from Brodas Plantation, Harriet Tubman set foot ○ on free soil at daybreak. She had reached the free state of Pennsylvania, where slavery was outlawed. As the sun came up, Harriet Tubman said “I looked at my hands to see if I was ○ the same person now I was free. There was such a glory over everything, the sun came ○ like gold through the trees, and ○ over the fields, and I felt like I was in heaven.”

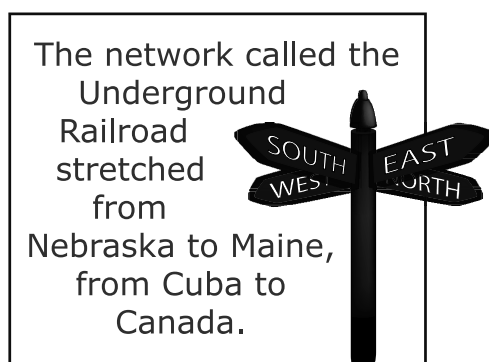
14. Select the statement that describes how Harriet Tubman’s life changed from the beginning to the end of the passage.

- Ⓐ Harriet Tubman helped many people become free from slavery.
- Ⓑ Harriet Tubman made many stops before finally reaching freedom from slavery.
- Ⓒ Harriet Tubman was a slave in the south and eventually became free from slavery.
- Ⓓ Harriet Tubman hid under a blanket to travel before finally reaching freedom from slavery.

The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom

by Ross Rosenfeld

- 1 The Underground Railroad was not a railroad, and it wasn't underground. It was a journey taken by slaves escaping to freedom. One story says that the name came from a slave owner who chased his escaping slave down the Ohio River, only to find that the slave had disappeared. "He must have gone on an underground railroad!" the man said.
- 2 Every journey was a little bit different. Remember, there were no tracks on this "railroad." But there were "conductors" and "stationmasters" who helped the fugitives find their way to freedom.
- 3 The path to freedom was dangerous, scary, and often sad. Many escaping slaves were leaving their families behind. Some went with conductors—such as Harriet Tubman—who led escaping slaves through woods and swamps and across rivers north, to places where slavery was against the law. (Some conductors were former slaves. Others were free blacks and whites.) Many slaves fled on their own. Slave catchers followed close behind, often with dogs called bloodhounds, who sniffed out the trail. Getting caught was terrible. If conductors or fugitives were caught, they were enslaved again or even killed.

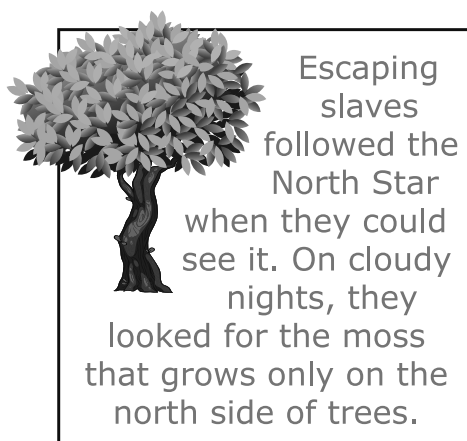


- 4 Along the way to freedom, the fugitive slaves stopped at different "stations." These stations were usually houses or barns where a stationmaster—the home owner or barn owner

—hid the escaping slaves. Often, stationmasters hung a lantern outside as a signal that the house or barn was safe.

- 5 The stationmasters were abolitionists. Because of the laws against helping escaped slaves, it was almost as dangerous to be a stationmaster as it was to be a conductor or a fugitive. One stationmaster who helped many slaves escape was William Still, a free black man from Pennsylvania.

- 6 Another stationmaster, named Thomas Garrett, was a shoemaker. When Tubman and others came with escaping slaves, he gave them food, shelter, and shoes. Even after Garrett was fined \$5,400 for his “crime” (an enormous amount of money for the time), he continued his work as a stationmaster. Over a period of about 40 years, Garrett may have helped as many as 2,700 slaves escape.



- 7 One of the most famous abolitionists was Frederick Douglass. An escaped slave, he ran a newspaper in Rochester, New York. His paper, called the *North Star*, spoke out against slavery. Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass were friends, and she often asked for his help. Another famous person who helped fugitive slaves was William H. Seward, a New York senator. Seward hated slavery. He gave Harriet Tubman money whenever he could to help her work on the Underground Railroad.
- 8 The Underground Railroad existed because many people believed slavery was unacceptable. No one knows exactly how many slaves found freedom along it, but some say as many

as 100,000 people escaped in just 30 years, between 1830 and 1860.



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Answer the following questions for “The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom.”

- 15.** Which two statements should be included in a summary of the passage?
- Ⓐ No one knows how many slaves escaped on the Underground Railroad.
 - Ⓑ Newspaper articles spoke against slavery and helped slaves get to freedom.
 - Ⓒ The Underground Railroad was a tool for helping slaves escape from slavery.
 - Ⓓ When slaves tried to escape, they would be chased by slave owners and bloodhound dogs through the woods.
 - Ⓔ Many slaves went with conductors who led the slaves through woods, swamps, and rivers on the journey to freedom.
- 16.** What structure does the author use in paragraph 3 of “The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom”?
- Ⓐ cause and effect
 - Ⓑ chronological order
 - Ⓒ description
 - Ⓓ problem and solution

17. Select two statements that describe abolitionists.

- Ⓐ worked toward freeing slaves
- Ⓑ believed slaves should be free
- Ⓒ worked for money to free slaves
- Ⓓ worked with slaves to create newspapers
- Ⓔ believed slaves should be returned to owners

18. Read the sentence from paragraph 6.

Even after Garrett was fined \$5,400 for his “crime” (an enormous amount of money for the time), he continued his work as a stationmaster.

How does the author show the difficulties stationmasters had to face?

- Ⓐ by sharing information about stationmasters’ jobs
- Ⓑ by sharing how the stationmaster ran the newspaper
- Ⓒ by sharing the consequence of a stationmaster’s actions
- Ⓓ by sharing the amount of money the stationmaster made for work

Answer the following questions for “When I Reach the Promised Land . . .” and “The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom.”

- 19.** What information about Harriet Tubman is the same in **both** passages?
- Ⓐ Harriet Tubman rode the train to freedom.
 - Ⓑ Harriet Tubman helped people escape to freedom.
 - Ⓒ Harriet Tubman made money for the stationmasters.
 - Ⓓ Harriet Tubman hid under a blanket when on the train.

- 20.** Select the boxes to choose if the detail appears in “The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom” or “When I Reached the Promised Land . . .”

	“When I Reached the Promised Land . . .”	“The Underground Railroad: A Path to Freedom”
Harriet Tubman conducted hundreds to freedom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harriet Tubman led escaping slaves through woods, swamps, and rivers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conductors were enslaved or killed if they were caught.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harriet Tubman is considered the bravest conductor of the Underground Railroad.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some conductors were whites or free blacks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Grade 4 ELA Sample Test Items

Paper-Pencil Answer Key Document

Passage	Sequence	Key	Standard	Possible Points
Mortimer the Miserable	1	A	RL.4.4	1
Mortimer the Miserable	2	D C	RL.4.3	2
Mortimer the Miserable	3	2/1, 3/1, 4/1	RL.4.2	2
Mortimer the Miserable	4	C	L.4.5	1
Mortimer the Miserable	5	D	RL.4.5	1
My Winter Hat	6	C, D	RL.4.1	2
My Winter Hat	7	A	L.4.4	1
My Winter Hat	8	D	RL.4.5	1
Mortimer the Miserable My Winter Hat	9	3, 4, 9, 11	RL.4.9	2
Mortimer the Miserable My Winter Hat	10	A, B	RL.4.6	2
"When I Reach the Promised Land"	11	C	L.4.4	1
"When I Reach the Promised Land"	12	C D	RI.4.1	2
"When I Reach the Promised Land"	13	D A	L.4.5	2
"When I Reach the Promised Land"	14	C	RI.4.3	1
The Underground Railroad	15	C, E	RI.4.2	2
The Underground Railroad	16	C	RI.4.5	1
The Underground Railroad	17	A, B	RI.4.4	2
The Underground Railroad	18	C	RI.4.8	1
"When I Reach the Promised Land" The Underground Railroad	19	B	RI.4.9	1
"When I Reach the Promised Land" The Underground Railroad	20	1, 4, 6, 7, 10	RI.4.9	2