

# Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program

# TCAP

## English Language Arts Grade 6 Item Release



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

## **Excerpt from *Case Closed: Nine Mysteries Unlocked By Science***

by Susan Hughes

*Over 2,000 years ago, a Chinese explorer, Hsu Fu, traveled across the sea to find a special plant and never returned. Some legends say he traveled as far as Japan and others claim he made it to America. In 1993, Tim Severin set sail using ancient methods and modern technology to see if these legends could be true.*

- 1 Tim Severin decided to make the journey himself. If he could cross from Asia to America on an ancient-style vessel, he could argue that the Chinese may have traveled to the Americas long before Columbus.
- 2 First, Severin had to figure out what type of boat Hsu Fu would have used for such an ambitious journey. Severin met with marine historians. He traveled to Taiwan and then Vietnam to take a look at some traditional boats. He decided that Hsu Fu's boat was probably a sailing raft made of bamboo. These workhorse vessels had been used for centuries by local fishermen along the coast. They were sturdy and reliable — for short distances, anyway.
- 3 Hsu Fu would have needed something larger than a fishing boat to tackle the ocean. But what would it have looked like? Severin asked British naval engineer Colin Mudie to design a vessel based on Severin's research. Mudie's final sketch showed a boat that would be 18 m (60 ft.) long. Three layers of bamboo would keep it stable in high waves. And two thatched "cabins" would give the crew some protection from the elements.
- 4 When it was time to build the real thing, Severin hired Vietnamese village women who were experts in harvesting bamboo. In the middle of the jungle, they found a species of bamboo with stalks 9 m (30 ft.) tall and 15 cm (6 in.) wide. They harvested two-year-old stalks, which are still flexible, and they harvested them in autumn, when the stalks produce little sap. (Bamboo sap attracts the bamboo beetle, whose larvae eat plant matter.)
- 5 In the Vietnamese fishing village of Sam Son, forty raft builders used machetes to shave away the hard outer layer of the bamboo stalks. They curved the stalks at the bow by heating them just so with flames. Then they coated the 350 stalks with a natural repellent to keep away the insects and a natural lacquer to protect them from shipworm infection. The stalks were lashed together with rattan, a type of jungle vine. They used 46 km (29 mi.) of it, tying more than 3,000 knots. The raft builders fitted the rafts with three cedar masts, red sails of cotton and silk, and several very long oars.

- 6        Severin named the craft *Hsu Fu* in honor of the great explorer. Finally, the finished raft was shipped to Hong Kong. It was ready for its 12,000 km (7,400 mi.) sea journey from Hong Kong to Japan to America. . . .
- 7        Severin decided to navigate as the ancient Chinese would have done. He tried to follow the general route he believed Hsu Fu would have taken. "But this was no more than trying to head in an easterly direction. We were riding wind and current," he said. . . .
- 8        The journey began well, but within a few days, Severin saw signs that the bamboo beetle was chewing away the cabin roofs. He desperately hoped the beetles would not make their way into the raft itself.
- 9        In the meantime, the crew worked hard. The waves caused great twisting and straining of the raft. At various points in the journey, this caused parts of the boat, including the rattan and ropes, to wear. In fact, off Japan's Ryukyu Islands, the foremast snapped off. The crew replaced it with a shaved-down telegraph pole, which, although not traditional, was "the only long straight timber on the island," explained Severin.
- 10       Fifty-six days and 2,900 km (1,800 mi.) later, the raft arrived at its first destination — Shingu, Japan. One mystery had now been answered: Hsu Fu certainly could have made it to Japan by raft 2,200 years ago.
- 11       The local people of Shingu had long been certain he had. They showed Severin a shrine to Hsu Fu at the site of his supposed grave. Some people believe Hsu Fu brought new farming techniques to Japan, including rice cultivation. Some Japanese worship him as an ancestor . . .
- 12       In early August, Severin and his crew prepared to tease out the answer to the next part of the puzzle: Could Hsu Fu have continued on across the Pacific to America? Could he have made it on a bamboo vessel? The expedition set sail from Japan. The real test — open water as far as the eye could see — began.

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**00.** What does the word repellent mean as it is used in paragraph 5?

- A.** a substance that pests dislike
- B.** a brush for spreading liquids on a surface
- C.** a medicine that prevents sickness
- D.** a glue used to tie two items together

**00. Read the sentence from paragraph 9.**

**In fact, off Japan's Ryukyu Islands, the foremast snapped off.**

What is the purpose of this sentence in the paragraph?

- A.** It implies that Severin was attempting to travel too far.
- B.** It suggests that the boat was not built as strongly as predicted.
- C.** It reveals that Severin did not bring enough replacement supplies.
- D.** It demonstrates that the journey to Japan had unexpected challenges.

- 00.** The following item has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

**Part A**

What is the author's primary point of view about Tim Severin?

- A.** She believes Severin should be satisfied with his success in reaching Japan.
- B.** She doubts Severin will prove his theory about the Chinese reaching America first.
- C.** She thinks Severin will succeed if he receives additional help with the navigation.
- D.** She respects how Severin paid close attention to details in recreating Hsu Fu's journey.

**Part B**

Which detail from the passage **best** reveals this point of view?

- A.** Severin decides to navigate by "trying to head in an easterly direction" which he felt was the route Hsu Fu would have taken.
- B.** After researching traditional building materials, Severin hires "forty raft builders" to build a vessel modeled after Hsu Fu's.
- C.** After encountering many problems in two months, Severin arrives in Japan solving the riddle that Hsu Fu "certainly could have made it."
- D.** Severin believed that if he could make the journey, he could argue that the Chinese may have reached "the Americas long before Columbus."

## Metadata- English

### Passage

Passage UIN	Grade	Passage Title	Lexile Level	Flesch-Kincaid	Word Count
TN595840	06	Excerpt from Case Closed	970L	7.4	706

### Metadata Definitions:

<b>Passage UIN</b>	Unique letter/number code used to identify the passage(s) that go with this item.
<b>Grade</b>	Grade level or Course.
<b>Passage Title</b>	Title of the passage(s) associated with this item.
<b>Lexile Level</b>	Readability level for passage.
<b>Flesch-Kincaid</b>	Readability level for passage.
<b>Word Count</b>	Count of words in the passage.

### Items

Page Number	UIN	Grade	Item Type	Key	DOK	TN Standards
6	TN0025560	06	MC	A	2	6.RI.CS.4
7	TN0025568	06	MC	D	3	6.RI.CS.5
8	TN0025570	06	MC; MC	D; B	3	6.RI.CS.6

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<b>UIN</b>	Unique letter/number code used to identify the item.
<b>Grade</b>	Grade level or Course.
<b>Item Type</b>	Indicates the type of item. MC= Multiple Choice
<b>Key</b>	Correct answer. This may be blank for constructed response items where students write or type their responses.
<b>DOK</b>	Depth of Knowledge (cognitive complexity) is measured on a three-point scale. 1 = Recall or simple reproduction of information; 2 = Skills and concepts: comprehension and processing of text; 3 = Strategic thinking, prediction, elaboration.
<b>TN Standards</b>	Primary educational standard assessed.