



**FSA**  
ELA & Mathematics  
Assessments

**Grade 3**  
FSA ELA Reading  
Practice Test Questions

The purpose of these practice test materials is to orient teachers and students to the types of questions on paper-based FSA ELA Reading tests. By using these materials, students will become familiar with the types of items and response formats they may see on a paper-based test. The practice questions and answers are not intended to demonstrate the length of the actual test, nor should student responses be used as an indicator of student performance on the actual test. The practice test is not intended to guide classroom instruction.

**Directions for Answering the  
ELA Reading Practice Test Questions**

If you don't understand a question, ask your teacher to explain it to you. Your teacher has the answers to the practice test questions.

Read the passages “The Kettle That Would Not Walk” and “The Cheeses That Ran Away” and then answer Numbers 1 through 4.

## Passage 1: The Kettle That Would Not Walk

by Clifton Johnson

- 1        ONE day a man was getting ready to go to market, and his wife said to him, “Husband, we need a new iron kettle for the fireplace. Don’t fail to buy one.”
- 2        So the man bought a kettle at Nottingham and started for home. But the kettle was heavy, and his arm grew tired with carrying it and he set it down. While he was resting, he noticed that the kettle had three legs. “What a pity I did not see those legs before!” cried the man. “Here you have three legs and I have but two, and yet I have been carrying you. ’Twere fairer [It seems more fair] that you had carried me. Well, you shall take me the rest of the way, at least.”
- 3        Then he seated himself in the kettle and said, “Now, go on,” but the kettle stood still and would not move.
- 4        “Ah!” said the man, “you are stubborn, are you? You want me to keep on carrying you, but I shall not. I will tell you the way and you can stay where you are until you get ready to follow me.”
- 5        So he told the kettle where he lived and how to get there, and off the man went. When he reached home, his wife asked him where the kettle was.
- 6        “Oh, it will be along,” he replied.
- 7        “What do you mean by that?” said she.
- 8        “Why,” said he, “the kettle I bought has three legs and was better able to walk here than I who have but two legs. Yet I never noticed it had legs until I was nearly here. Then I told it to walk the rest of the way itself, for I would carry it no farther.”
- 9        “Where did you leave it?” asked the wife.
- 10       “You need not be anxious,” responded the man. “I told it the way, and it will be along in good time, as I said before.”
- 11       “And where did you leave it?” again asked the wife.
- 12       “At Gotham bridge,” he replied.

- 13 She was not as sure as he was about its coming, and she hurried off to get it. When she brought it home, the man said, "I am glad you have it safe, Wife. I have been thinking while you were gone that it might have taken a notion to walk back to Nottingham if we had left it alone there in the road much longer."

"The Kettle That Would Not Walk" by Clifton Johnson. In the public domain.

## Passage 2: The Cheeses That Ran Away

by Clifton Johnson

- 14 THERE was a man of Gotham who filled a sack with cheeses and started off for Nottingham market to sell them. He carried the sack on his back, and when he became tired he sat down by the wayside to rest. Thus he went on until he reached the summit of the last hill he had to climb before he came to Nottingham bridge.
- 15 There he rested, and when he rose to continue his journey a cheese slipped out of the sack and rolled down the hill toward the bridge.
- 16 "Ah! Mr. Cheese," said the man, "so you can run to market alone, can you? I wish I had known that before. It would have saved me the trouble of carrying you. Well, then, if you can go to market alone, so can the other cheeses, and I will send them along after you."
- 17 So he laid down his sack, took out the cheeses, and one by one rolled them down the hill. As the last one spun down the road he shouted, "I charge you all to meet me at the market-place."
- 18 Some of the cheeses went into one bush, and some went into another bush, but the man did not notice that, and he trudged on cheerfully to the market expecting the cheeses would meet him there. All day long he loitered about the market, and as evening approached he began to inquire among his friends and neighbors and other men if they had seen his cheeses come to the market.
- 19 "Who should bring them?" asked one of the market-men.
- 20 "Nobody," replied the man of Gotham. "They would bring themselves. They know the way well enough."

"The Cheeses That Ran Away" by Clifton Johnson. In the public domain.

**Now answer Numbers 1 through 4. Base your answers on the passages “The Kettle That Would Not Walk” and “The Cheeses That Ran Away.”**

**1.** What is the meaning of anxious as it is used in Passage 1?

10 “You need not be anxious,” responded the man. “I told it the way, and it will be along in good time, as I said before.”

- Ⓐ angry
- Ⓑ excited
- Ⓒ sad
- Ⓓ worried

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2. Fill in the bubble **before one** sentence from Passage 2 that shows why the man believes that his cheeses can bring themselves to the market.

14    Ⓐ THERE was a man of Gotham who filled a sack with cheeses and started off for Nottingham market to sell them. Ⓑ He carried the sack on his back, and when he became tired he sat down by the wayside to rest. Ⓒ Thus he went on until he reached the summit of the last hill he had to climb before he came to Nottingham bridge.

15    Ⓓ There he rested, and when he rose to continue his journey a cheese slipped out of the sack and rolled down the hill toward the bridge.

3. What does paragraph 16 add to Passage 2?

- Ⓐ It tells where the story takes place.
- Ⓑ It tells information about the main character's past.
- Ⓒ It shows the lesson that can be learned from the story.
- Ⓓ It shows the beginning of the main character's problem.

4. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which sentence describes the man's feelings at the end of Passage 2?

- Ⓐ He is pleased with his decision.
- Ⓑ He is excited to be traveling for his work.
- Ⓒ He is angry that he has to go to the market.
- Ⓓ He is unhappy about his choices in the story.

**Part B**

What happens in the passage because of the man's feelings in Part A?

- Ⓐ The man has nothing to sell at the market.
- Ⓑ The man arrives at the market well-rested.
- Ⓒ The man's cheeses get to the market on time.
- Ⓓ The man's cheeses become famous in the town.

**Read the passage and then answer Numbers 5 through 7. There are three underlined words or phrases in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect.**

Tomorrow was the spelling bee. Sam was nervous, so he asked his mom to help him practice. If he worked hard, he knew he could learn all of the words.

After school, Sam and his mom began to practice spelling. Sam frowning when he heard the first word: "muscle." He tried to sound it out. He carefully wrote down "mussel." His mom smiled but shook her head. Sam had gotten it wrong.

His mom explained the error, but Sam was upset. He didn't want to practice anymore. But then his mom did something strange. She made a silly, funny face. Sam was surprised, and we started to laugh.

**Now answer Numbers 5 through 7. Choose the correct word or phrase for each of the following.**

- 5.** If he worked hard, he knew he could learn all of the words.

Ⓐ word's  
Ⓑ words'  
Ⓒ wordes  
Ⓓ correct as is

- 6.** Sam frowning when he heard the first word: "muscle."

Ⓐ frown  
Ⓑ frowned  
Ⓒ frowns  
Ⓓ correct as is

- 7.** Sam was surprised, and we started to laugh.

Ⓐ she  
Ⓑ he  
Ⓒ I  
Ⓓ correct as is



Read the passages “A Raft of Ants” and “Insect Farmers” and then answer Numbers 8 through 15.

## Passage 1: A Raft of Ants

by Dan Risch

- 1 Fire ants live deep underground. But what happens when heavy rains flood their cozy homes? The fiery red insects go marching out of the nest and onto the water. There, they make a raft of their own bodies.
- 2 Floating on the surface, the first ants that come out build the raft. A layer of ants spreads across the water. They hold on to one another, using their claws and jaws and sticky feet.
- 3 What a tangle of ants! But it’s just what the ants need to save their colony from drowning. As the ants weave themselves together, they don’t even get their antennae wet.
- 4 Once the raft is in place, one by one and two by two, more ants march out of the nest and onto the ant raft. They carry ant eggs, ant babies, and, of course, the queen. (Some ants may even pack a bit of food for the trip.)
- 5 Up and out the ants march until the entire nest of ants is on the raft. An average-sized nest is made up of 100,000 fire ants.
- 6 The floodwaters carry the raft away. Every once in a while, the bottom ants change places with the ants on top. Finally, the raft touches higher ground, where the colony can make a new nest. The ants have survived by sharing all of the work. Now that’s teamwork!
- 7 One ant uses its jaws to hold on to another ant’s leg.
- 8 They use claws and jaws and sticky feet!



Excerpt from "A Raft of Ants" by Dan Risch. Copyright © 2013 Highlights for Children, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Photograph copyright © David Hu and Nathan J. Mlot, Georgia Institute of Technology.

## Passage 2: Insect Farmers

by Paula Cushing

- 9        The farmer stepped back and surveyed her garden. It looked fine and healthy. A little more fertilizer here and there and her day's work would be done.
- 10       Her sisters were busy in another part of the garden gathering some of the crop to feed to the youngsters. Yes, nothing beats a good garden of young mushrooms.
- 11       You see, this is no ordinary farmer. She is a leaf-cutting ant.
- 12       I first saw leaf-cutting ants on a six-month visit to Panama. I had plenty of time to watch the ants because I lived and worked at a tropical research station on Barro Colorado Island in the Panama Canal area.
- 13       Barro Colorado became a biological reserve in 1923. Since then scientists from all over the world have gone there to study tropical plants and animals.

**Jungle Walks**

- 14 There are no roads on the island, just nature trails cutting through the jungle. Nearly every time I walked out on the trails, I had to step over a marching column of leaf-cutting ants—they seemed to be everywhere!
- 15 At first, the marching columns looked like little pieces of leaves moving by themselves. But when I looked more closely, I saw that each piece of leaf was being carried by a reddish ant many times smaller than the leaf. The ants had cut the leaves with their scissorlike jaws and were carrying them back to their nests.
- 16 Leaf cutters don't eat the leaves. Rather, they use the leaves to raise their most important food, which is a particular kind of fungus. The ants take the leaves to special rooms in their underground nests. They cut the leaves into smaller pieces, chew the pieces until they are wet and spongy, and deposit them in their garden.
- 17 Then the ants transplant some fungus onto their fresh "leaf-soil." Sometimes they add fertilizer that they excrete from their abdomens.
- 18 Adult ants feed on this fungus as well as on sap. The fungus is also eaten by the larvae, which are the baby ants.
- 19 The fungus they grow is a type of mushroom. But the ants have been farming it for so long that it doesn't grow into anything that looks like regular mushrooms. Instead, it looks more like a mass of tiny double-headed lollipops.

**Ants, Big and Small**

- 20 A leaf-cutter colony is made up of ants of different sizes. Large ants go out and gather the leaves. Smaller ants guard the big ants, cut up the leaves, tend the garden, and care for the eggs and larvae.
- 21 The biggest ant is the queen. Her main job is to lay eggs. All of the other ants in the colony are her daughters. They have many jobs, which they do by instinct, communicating with one another and their queen when necessary.
- 22 Of course, ants can't talk the way we can. Instead, the ants communicate through a chemical language. They pass around their chemical messages when they feed one another. Workers pass droplets of food to other workers (their sisters). They also feed larvae. Larvae sometimes feed their nurses. The queen feeds her daughters. And

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workers feed their mom, the queen. An ant colony's chemical communication network is more complicated than our telephone lines.

"Insect Farmers" by Paula Cushing. Copyright © 1998 Highlights for Children, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

**Now answer Numbers 8 through 15. Base your answers on the passages “A Raft of Ants” and “Insect Farmers.”**

- 8.** What does the word weave mean as it is used in this sentence from Passage 1?

“As the ants weave themselves together, they don’t even get their antennae wet.” (paragraph 3)

- Ⓐ crowd
- Ⓑ float
- Ⓒ gather
- Ⓓ join

- 9.** Fill in **one** bubble in each row to show the order of steps ants take to leave their homes during a flood in Passage 1.

	First	Next	Finally
<b>They build a new nest.</b>	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	Ⓒ
<b>They move food and each other.</b>	Ⓓ	Ⓔ	Ⓕ
<b>They stick their bodies together.</b>	Ⓖ	Ⓗ	Ⓘ

**10.** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Based on the information in Passage 1, with which statement would the author agree?

- Ⓐ Rafts are too small to fit all of the ants from a colony.
- Ⓑ Smaller colonies may not live through a flood.
- Ⓒ The ants may not survive the journey without food.
- Ⓓ Building a raft is a clever way for the ants to survive.

**Part B**

Which piece of evidence from Passage 1 supports your answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "What a tangle of ants! But it's just what the ants need to save their colony from drowning." (paragraph 3)
- Ⓑ "Once the raft is in place, one by one and two by two, more ants march out of the nest and onto the ant raft." (paragraph 4)
- Ⓒ "They carry ant eggs, ant babies, and, of course, the queen. (Some ants may even pack a bit of food for the trip.)" (paragraph 4)
- Ⓓ "An average-sized nest is made up of 100,000 fire ants." (paragraph 5)

**11.** What does the reader understand using the information from Passage 1 and the illustration?

- Ⓐ how large an ant raft can be
- Ⓑ how many eggs can fit on the raft
- Ⓒ how the ant raft floats on top of the water
- Ⓓ how many ants are needed to make a raft

**12.** What is the main idea of Passage 2?

- Ⓐ Leaf-cutting ants grow mushrooms using leaves as soil.
- Ⓑ Leaf-cutting ants work together to grow food for the entire colony.
- Ⓒ Leaf-cutting ants have scissorlike jaws that are used to cut leaves.
- Ⓓ Leaf-cutting ants have a queen who is the biggest ant in the colony.

**13.** Which information can be found under the heading **Jungle Walks** in Passage 2?

- Ⓐ why the ants gather leaves
- Ⓑ when the author first visited Panama
- Ⓒ how the ants communicate with the queen
- Ⓓ where the Barro Colorado reserve can be found

**14.** Select **two** reasons the author included paragraph 11 in Passage 2.

- Ⓐ to compare leaf-cutting ants to human farmers
- Ⓑ to describe how leaf-cutting ants grow their food
- Ⓒ to explain how leaf-cutting ants solve farming problems
- Ⓓ to show that the topic of the passage is leaf-cutting ants
- Ⓔ to describe the effect that leaf-cutting ants have on ordinary farms



**15.** How are Passages 1 and 2 alike?

- Ⓐ They describe how ants communicate.
- Ⓑ They describe how ants work as a team.
- Ⓒ They describe why ants have sticky feet.
- Ⓓ They describe why ants carry large leaves.

**Read the passage and then answer Numbers 16 through 18. There are three underlined words or phrases in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect.**

- 16 Picture a bear in a fuzzy, warm sweater. Imagine a squirrel that worn a pair of thick socks. Silly, right? How do animals live in very cold places?

Some animals have thick fur coats to keep them warm. Others bury themselves in cozy little holes. What scientists don't know is whether

- 17 animals feel cold in the same way that humans do. They were curios to learn more.

- 18 One scientist made a test. She set up two paths for squirrels to choose between. The first path was warm than the second path. In fact, the second path was freezing cold! She found that the squirrels moved along both paths but seemed to like the first path best. The scientist believes that animals do feel the cold, but they may not feel it as much as humans do.

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**Now answer Numbers 16 through 18. Choose the correct word or phrase for each of the following.**

**16.** Choose the correct verb.

- Ⓐ wear
- Ⓑ wears
- Ⓒ wearing
- Ⓓ correct as is

**18.** Choose the correct adjective.

- Ⓐ warmer
- Ⓑ warmest
- Ⓒ most warm
- Ⓓ correct as is

**17.** Choose the correct spelling.

- Ⓐ curius
- Ⓑ curous
- Ⓒ curious
- Ⓓ correct as is



**FSA**  
ELA & Mathematics  
Assessments

**Grade 3**  
FSA ELA Reading  
Practice Test Answer Key

The Grade 3 FSA ELA Reading Practice Test Answer Key provides the correct response(s) for each item on the practice test. The practice questions and answers are not intended to demonstrate the length of the actual test, nor should student responses be used as an indicator of student performance on the actual test.

## Passage 1: The Kettle That Would Not Walk

by Clifton Johnson

- 1        ONE day a man was getting ready to go to market, and his wife said to him, "Husband, we need a new iron kettle for the fireplace. Don't fail to buy one."
- 2        So the man bought a kettle at Nottingham and started for home. But the kettle was heavy, and his arm grew tired with carrying it and he set it down. While he was resting, he noticed that the kettle had three legs. "What a pity I did not see those legs before!" cried the man. "Here you have three legs and I have but two, and yet I have been carrying you. 'Twere fairer [It seems more fair] that you had carried me. Well, you shall take me the rest of the way, at least."
- 3        Then he seated himself in the kettle and said, "Now, go on," but the kettle stood still and would not move.
- 4        "Ah!" said the man, "you are stubborn, are you? You want me to keep on carrying you, but I shall not. I will tell you the way and you can stay where you are until you get ready to follow me."
- 5        So he told the kettle where he lived and how to get there, and off the man went. When he reached home, his wife asked him where the kettle was.
- 6        "Oh, it will be along," he replied.
- 7        "What do you mean by that?" said she.
- 8        "Why," said he, "the kettle I bought has three legs and was better able to walk here than I who have but two legs. Yet I never noticed it had legs until I was nearly here. Then I told it to walk the rest of the way itself, for I would carry it no farther."
- 9        "Where did you leave it?" asked the wife.
- 10       "You need not be anxious," responded the man. "I told it the way, and it will be along in good time, as I said before."
- 11       "And where did you leave it?" again asked the wife.
- 12       "At Gotham bridge," he replied.

- 13 She was not as sure as he was about its coming, and she hurried off to get it. When she brought it home, the man said, "I am glad you have it safe, Wife. I have been thinking while you were gone that it might have taken a notion to walk back to Nottingham if we had left it alone there in the road much longer."

"The Kettle That Would Not Walk" by Clifton Johnson. In the public domain.

## Passage 2: The Cheeses That Ran Away

by Clifton Johnson

- 14 THERE was a man of Gotham who filled a sack with cheeses and started off for Nottingham market to sell them. He carried the sack on his back, and when he became tired he sat down by the wayside to rest. Thus he went on until he reached the summit of the last hill he had to climb before he came to Nottingham bridge.
- 15 There he rested, and when he rose to continue his journey a cheese slipped out of the sack and rolled down the hill toward the bridge.
- 16 "Ah! Mr. Cheese," said the man, "so you can run to market alone, can you? I wish I had known that before. It would have saved me the trouble of carrying you. Well, then, if you can go to market alone, so can the other cheeses, and I will send them along after you."
- 17 So he laid down his sack, took out the cheeses, and one by one rolled them down the hill. As the last one spun down the road he shouted, "I charge you all to meet me at the market-place."
- 18 Some of the cheeses went into one bush, and some went into another bush, but the man did not notice that, and he trudged on cheerfully to the market expecting the cheeses would meet him there. All day long he loitered about the market, and as evening approached he began to inquire among his friends and neighbors and other men if they had seen his cheeses come to the market.
- 19 "Who should bring them?" asked one of the market-men.
- 20 "Nobody," replied the man of Gotham. "They would bring themselves. They know the way well enough."

"The Cheeses That Ran Away" by Clifton Johnson. In the public domain.

## FSA ELA Reading Practice Test Answer Key

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1. What is the meaning of anxious as it is used in Passage 1?

10 “You need not be anxious,” responded the man. “I told it the way, and it will be along in good time, as I said before.”

- Ⓐ angry
- Ⓑ excited
- Ⓒ sad
- ☒ D worried

Option D: **This answer is correct.** *The man’s wife is feeling nervous because he left the kettle on the roadside where anyone could take it.*

## FSA ELA Reading Practice Test Answer Key

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2. Fill in the bubble **before one** sentence from Passage 2 that shows why the man believes that his cheeses can bring themselves to the market.

14    Ⓐ THERE was a man of Gotham who filled a sack with cheeses and started off for Nottingham market to sell them. Ⓑ He carried the sack on his back, and when he became tired he sat down by the wayside to rest. Ⓒ Thus he went on until he reached the summit of the last hill he had to climb before he came to Nottingham bridge.

15    ● There he rested, and when he rose to continue his journey a cheese slipped out of the sack and rolled down the hill toward the bridge.

Option D: **This answer is correct.** *This sentence suggests how the tired man can use the hill to his advantage to help roll the cheese toward the market.*



3. What does paragraph 16 add to Passage 2?

- Ⓐ It tells where the story takes place.
- Ⓑ It tells information about the main character's past.
- Ⓒ It shows the lesson that can be learned from the story.
- It shows the beginning of the main character's problem.

Option D: **This answer is correct.** Paragraph 16 is the first indication that the man does not understand what is happening with his cheese, and that is what leads to the problem he faces in the passage.

4. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which sentence describes the man's feelings at the end of Passage 2?

- ☒ He is pleased with his decision.
- ☐ He is excited to be traveling for his work.
- ☐ He is angry that he has to go to the market.
- ☐ He is unhappy about his choices in the story.

**Part B**

What happens in the passage because of the man's feelings in Part A?

- ☒ The man has nothing to sell at the market.
- ☐ The man arrives at the market well-rested.
- ☐ The man's cheeses get to the market on time.
- ☐ The man's cheeses become famous in the town.

**Part A**

Option A: **This answer is correct.** *The man is pleased with his cleverness and does not realize he has made a foolish mistake.*

**Part B**

Option A: **This answer is correct.** *Since the man does not realize he has made a mistake, he has nothing to sell at the market.*

**Read the passage and then answer Numbers 5 through 7. There are three underlined words or phrases in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect.**

Tomorrow was the spelling bee. Sam was nervous, so he asked his mom to help him practice. If he worked hard, he knew he could learn all of the words.

After school, Sam and his mom began to practice spelling. Sam frowning when he heard the first word: "muscle." He tried to sound it out. He carefully wrote down "mussel." His mom smiled but shook her head. Sam had gotten it wrong.

His mom explained the error, but Sam was upset. He didn't want to practice anymore. But then his mom did something strange. She made a silly, funny face. Sam was surprised, and we started to laugh.

**Now answer Numbers 5 through 7. Choose the correct word or phrase for each of the following.**

- 5.** If he worked hard, he knew he could learn all of the words.

☐ (A) word's  
☐ (B) words'  
☐ (C) wordes  
☒ (D) correct as is

Option D: **This answer is correct.**  
*This option acknowledges the correct spelling of the underlined word "words."*

- 6.** Sam frowning when he heard the first word: "muscle."

☐ (A) frown  
☒ (B) frowned  
☐ (C) frowns  
☐ (D) correct as is

Option B: **This answer is correct.**  
*This option indicates the correct verb tense "frowned" in context.*

- 7.** Sam was surprised, and we started to laugh.

☐ (A) she  
☒ (B) he  
☐ (C) I  
☐ (D) correct as is

Option B: **This answer is correct.**  
*This option identifies the correct pronoun "he" to use in the sentence.*

## Passage 1: A Raft of Ants

by Dan Risch

- 1        Fire ants live deep underground. But what happens when heavy rains flood their cozy homes? The fiery red insects go marching out of the nest and onto the water. There, they make a raft of their own bodies.
- 2        Floating on the surface, the first ants that come out build the raft. A layer of ants spreads across the water. They hold on to one another, using their claws and jaws and sticky feet.
- 3        What a tangle of ants! But it's just what the ants need to save their colony from drowning. As the ants weave themselves together, they don't even get their antennae wet.
- 4        Once the raft is in place, one by one and two by two, more ants march out of the nest and onto the ant raft. They carry ant eggs, ant babies, and, of course, the queen. (Some ants may even pack a bit of food for the trip.)
- 5        Up and out the ants march until the entire nest of ants is on the raft. An average-sized nest is made up of 100,000 fire ants.
- 6        The floodwaters carry the raft away. Every once in a while, the bottom ants change places with the ants on top. Finally, the raft touches higher ground, where the colony can make a new nest. The ants have survived by sharing all of the work. Now that's teamwork!
- 7        One ant uses its jaws to hold on to another ant's leg.
- 8        They use claws and jaws and sticky feet!



Excerpt from "A Raft of Ants" by Dan Risch. Copyright © 2013 Highlights for Children, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Photograph copyright © David Hu and Nathan J. Mlot, Georgia Institute of Technology.

## Passage 2: Insect Farmers

by Paula Cushing

- 9        The farmer stepped back and surveyed her garden. It looked fine and healthy. A little more fertilizer here and there and her day's work would be done.
- 10       Her sisters were busy in another part of the garden gathering some of the crop to feed to the youngsters. Yes, nothing beats a good garden of young mushrooms.
- 11       You see, this is no ordinary farmer. She is a leaf-cutting ant.
- 12       I first saw leaf-cutting ants on a six-month visit to Panama. I had plenty of time to watch the ants because I lived and worked at a tropical research station on Barro Colorado Island in the Panama Canal area.
- 13       Barro Colorado became a biological reserve in 1923. Since then scientists from all over the world have gone there to study tropical plants and animals.

## **Jungle Walks**

- 14        There are no roads on the island, just nature trails cutting through the jungle. Nearly every time I walked out on the trails, I had to step over a marching column of leaf-cutting ants—they seemed to be everywhere!
- 15        At first, the marching columns looked like little pieces of leaves moving by themselves. But when I looked more closely, I saw that each piece of leaf was being carried by a reddish ant many times smaller than the leaf. The ants had cut the leaves with their scissorlike jaws and were carrying them back to their nests.
- 16        Leaf cutters don't eat the leaves. Rather, they use the leaves to raise their most important food, which is a particular kind of fungus. The ants take the leaves to special rooms in their underground nests. They cut the leaves into smaller pieces, chew the pieces until they are wet and spongy, and deposit them in their garden.
- 17        Then the ants transplant some fungus onto their fresh "leaf-soil." Sometimes they add fertilizer that they excrete from their abdomens.
- 18        Adult ants feed on this fungus as well as on sap. The fungus is also eaten by the larvae, which are the baby ants.
- 19        The fungus they grow is a type of mushroom. But the ants have been farming it for so long that it doesn't grow into anything that looks like regular mushrooms. Instead, it looks more like a mass of tiny double-headed lollipops.

## **Ants, Big and Small**

- 20        A leaf-cutter colony is made up of ants of different sizes. Large ants go out and gather the leaves. Smaller ants guard the big ants, cut up the leaves, tend the garden, and care for the eggs and larvae.
- 21        The biggest ant is the queen. Her main job is to lay eggs. All of the other ants in the colony are her daughters. They have many jobs, which they do by instinct, communicating with one another and their queen when necessary.
- 22        Of course, ants can't talk the way we can. Instead, the ants communicate through a chemical language. They pass around their chemical messages when they feed one another. Workers pass droplets of food to other workers (their sisters). They also feed larvae. Larvae sometimes feed their nurses. The queen feeds her daughters. And

## **FSA ELA Reading Practice Test Answer Key**

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workers feed their mom, the queen. An ant colony's chemical communication network is more complicated than our telephone lines.

"Insect Farmers" by Paula Cushing. Copyright © 1998 Highlights for Children, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



8. What does the word weave mean as it is used in this sentence from Passage 1?

“As the ants weave themselves together, they don’t even get their antennae wet.” (paragraph 3)

- Ⓐ crowd  
Ⓑ float  
Ⓒ gather  
● join

Option D: **This answer is correct.** The ants knit, or join, their bodies together to form a raft.

9. Fill in **one** bubble in each row to show the order of steps ants take to leave their homes during a flood in Passage 1.

	First	Next	Finally
<b>They build a new nest.</b>	Ⓐ	Ⓑ	●
<b>They move food and each other.</b>	Ⓓ	●	Ⓕ
<b>They stick their bodies together.</b>	●	Ⓗ	Ⓘ

Option C: **This answer is correct.** This is the third and final action in a series of steps that ants take to leave their homes during a flood.

Option E: **This answer is correct.** This is the second action in a series of steps that ants take to leave their homes during a flood.

Option G: **This answer is correct.** This is the first action in a series of steps that ants take to leave their homes during a flood.

**10.** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Based on the information in Passage 1, with which statement would the author agree?

- Ⓐ Rafts are too small to fit all of the ants from a colony.
- Ⓑ Smaller colonies may not live through a flood.
- Ⓒ The ants may not survive the journey without food.
- Building a raft is a clever way for the ants to survive.

**Part B**

Which piece of evidence from Passage 1 supports your answer in Part A?

- "What a tangle of ants! But it's just what the ants need to save their colony from drowning." (paragraph 3)
- Ⓑ "Once the raft is in place, one by one and two by two, more ants march out of the nest and onto the ant raft." (paragraph 4)
- Ⓒ "They carry ant eggs, ant babies, and, of course, the queen. (Some ants may even pack a bit of food for the trip.)" (paragraph 4)
- Ⓓ "An average-sized nest is made up of 100,000 fire ants." (paragraph 5)

**Part A**

Option D: **This answer is correct.** The author uses exclamations when writing about how impressive and clever the ants are for forming a raft.

**Part B**

Option A: **This answer is correct.** This statement shows the author's excitement about the ants' clever actions.

**11.** What does the reader understand using the information from Passage 1 and the illustration?

- Ⓐ how large an ant raft can be
- Ⓑ how many eggs can fit on the raft
- how the ant raft floats on top of the water
- Ⓓ how many ants are needed to make a raft

Option C: **This answer is correct.** *The illustration and passage suggest that the ants create a layered pyramid in order to create a raft that floats above the waters.*

**12.** What is the main idea of Passage 2?

- Ⓐ Leaf-cutting ants grow mushrooms using leaves as soil.
- Leaf-cutting ants work together to grow food for the entire colony.
- Ⓒ Leaf-cutting ants have scissorlike jaws that are used to cut leaves.
- Ⓓ Leaf-cutting ants have a queen who is the biggest ant in the colony.

Option B: **This answer is correct.** *This is the main idea of Passage 2. The other options are details that support this main idea.*

**13.** Which information can be found under the heading **Jungle Walks** in Passage 2?

- ☒ why the ants gather leaves
- ☐ when the author first visited Panama
- ☐ how the ants communicate with the queen
- ☐ where the Barro Colorado reserve can be found

Option A: **This answer is correct.** *This information is found under the Jungle Walks heading.*

**14.** Select **two** reasons the author included paragraph 11 in Passage 2.

- ☒ to compare leaf-cutting ants to human farmers
- ☐ (B) to describe how leaf-cutting ants grow their food
- ☐ (C) to explain how leaf-cutting ants solve farming problems
- ☒ to show that the topic of the passage is leaf-cutting ants
- ☐ (E) to describe the effect that leaf-cutting ants have on ordinary farms

Option A: **This answer is correct.** In paragraphs 9 and 10, the author describes what seems like an "ordinary farmer," but in paragraph 11, the author makes it clear that this is a comparison showing how leaf-cutting ants are similar to human farmers.

Option D: **This answer is correct.** Paragraphs 9 and 10 describe a farmer, but paragraph 11 is when the reader learns that this is an ant farmer.

**15.** How are Passages 1 and 2 alike?

- ☐ Ⓐ They describe how ants communicate.
- ☒ Ⓑ They describe how ants work as a team.
- ☐ Ⓒ They describe why ants have sticky feet.
- ☐ Ⓓ They describe why ants carry large leaves.

Option B: **This answer is correct.** Both passages describe how ants work together to accomplish tasks and survive.

**Read the passage and then answer Numbers 16 through 18. There are three underlined words or phrases in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect.**

- 16 Picture a bear in a fuzzy, warm sweater. Imagine a squirrel that worn a pair of thick socks. Silly, right? How do animals live in very cold places?

Some animals have thick fur coats to keep them warm. Others bury themselves in cozy little holes. What scientists don't know is whether

- 17 animals feel cold in the same way that humans do. They were curios to learn more.

- 18 One scientist made a test. She set up two paths for squirrels to choose between. The first path was warm than the second path. In fact, the second path was freezing cold! She found that the squirrels moved along both paths but seemed to like the first path best. The scientist believes that animals do feel the cold, but they may not feel it as much as humans do.

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**Now answer Numbers 16 through 18. Choose the correct word or phrase for each of the following.**

**16.** Choose the correct verb.

- ☐ Ⓐ wear
- ☒ Ⓑ wears
- ☐ Ⓒ wearing
- ☐ Ⓓ correct as is

Option B: **This answer is correct.**  
*The verb agrees with the subject.*

**18.** Choose the correct adjective.

- ☒ Ⓐ warmer
- ☐ Ⓑ warmest
- ☐ Ⓒ most warm
- ☐ Ⓓ correct as is

Option A: **This answer is correct.**  
*This is the correct comparative adjective.*

**17.** Choose the correct spelling.

- ☐ Ⓐ curius
- ☐ Ⓑ curous
- ☒ Ⓒ curious
- ☐ Ⓓ correct as is

Option C: **This answer is correct.**  
*This is the correct spelling of "curious."*