

English Language Arts Sample Items (Grades 3-8)

Grade 3

Kids Can Cook (Table of Contents) – 5 items

“Spider” (Poem) – 8 items

Grade 4

“Milk Carton Birdhouse” (Informational Text) – 5 items

“A Good Imagination” (Literary Nonfiction) – 6 items

Grade 5

“The Promise” (Literary Fiction) – 5 items

“Good Earth Fruit Company” (Order Form) – 4 items

Grade 6

“Reptile Petting Zoo” (Advertisement) – 6 items

“Lou Gehrig” (Literary Nonfiction) – 8 items

Grade 7

“The Ash Can School” (Informational Text) – 5 items

“Why I Never Shoot Bears” (Literary Fiction) – 8 items

“My Carolina Quilt” (Poem) – 4 items

Grade 8

“Catherine’s Clash” (Literary Fiction) – 6 items

“The Long Hill” (Poem) – 5 items

“The National Museum of Natural History” (Informational Text) – 6 items

Grade 3

Read this table of contents from the cookbook *Kids Can Cook*. Then answer questions 1–5.

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By Bonnie Appetit	
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(Kids Can Cook)

1. How are the recipes in *Kids Can Cook* **mainly** organized?

- A. by types of foods
- B. by meals of the day
- C. by difficulty of preparation
- D. by foods of different countries

Answer: B
Indicator: 3–6.3

2. Which section would tell where to find a recipe that uses corn as an ingredient?

- A. Introduction
- B. Stuff You'll Need
- C. Glossary
- D. Index

Answer: D
Indicator: 3–2.7

(Kids Can Cook)

3. Which section would **most likely** include information about healthy eating habits?

- A. Safety First
- B. Basics
- C. Begin with Breakfast
- D. Nutritional Tips

Answer: D
Indicator: 3–2.5

4. Which search words would be **best** to use when looking for easy recipes on the Internet?

- A. holiday cooking tips
- B. best-selling cookbooks
- C. cooking for beginners
- D. meals for entertaining

Answer: C
Indicator: 3–6.5

5. Which heading is the **best** example of an opinion?

- A. Cooking is Cool!
- B. Smoothies and Fruit Drinks
- C. Three Simple Sandwiches
- D. Let Them Eat Cake!

Answer: A
Indicator: 3–2.3

Grade 3

Read the poem. Then answer questions 1–8.

Spider

- 1** Always
I leave behind
a little bit
of myself.
- 5** An artist
with thread,
a lace maker of sorts,
I can **fashion** a snowflake,
or a big, round
- 10** puzzle trap.
My web hides
between the trees.
If you destroy it
I repair it again
- 15** in an hour
with invisible lines
the raindrops rest upon.
And always
I leave a little
- 20** of myself behind.



("Spider")

1. Read these lines from the poem.

"I leave behind
a little bit
of myself."

What do these lines refer to or describe?

- A. a snowflake
- B. a spider's web
- C. artist's thread
- D. falling raindrops

Answer: B
Indicator: 3-1.2

2. Which word indicates that the poem is written from the first person point of view?

- A. I
- B. it
- C. you
- D. artist

Answer: A
Indicator: 3-1.3

("Spider")

3. Read the dictionary entry.

fashion: **1.** *n.* manner or way. "The girl acted in a carefree fashion." **2.** *n.* style or dress. "I shop to find the latest fashion." **3.** *v.* to make or form. "He can fashion a boot out of leather." **4.** *v.* to imagine or think about. "He fashions himself a genius."

Which definition of the word **fashion** is used in this line from the poem?

"I can **fashion** a snowflake,"

- A. definition 1
- B. definition 2
- C. definition 3
- D. definition 4

Answer: C
Indicator: 3–6.2

4. What does the speaker in the poem **most likely** think about spiders?

- A. They are ugly and scary.
- B. They are beautiful and colorful.
- C. They are dangerous and poisonous.
- D. They are hardworking and creative.

Answer: D
Indicator: 3–1.2

("Spider")

5. Why does the poet compare the spider to an "artist with thread"?

- A. to tell how artists paint spiders
- B. to tell how artists repair paintings
- C. to show the beauty of a spider web
- D. to show that spider webs are traps

Answer: C
Indicator: 3-1.6

6. Read this line from the poem.

"My web hides"

Which type of figurative language is used in this line?

- A. simile
- B. metaphor
- C. hyperbole
- D. personification

Answer: D
Indicator: 3-1.4

("Spider")

7. Which question would lead to the **most** information about the spider's role in the environment?
- A. Why are spiders a gardener's friend?
 - B. What gets caught in a spider web?
 - C. What are spider webs made of?
 - D. How do spiders spin webs?

Answer: A
Indicator: 3–6.1

8. Which source would provide the **best** information about different kinds of spiders in the United States?
- A. *Charlotte's Web*
 - B. *A Guide to Spiders of North America*
 - C. *Spiders in Our Backyard: Nature Poems*
 - D. *Someone Saw a Spider: Spider Folktales*

Answer: B
Indicator: 3–6.2

Grade 4

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–5.

Milk Carton Birdhouse

Milk cartons are great for holding more than just milk. You can turn one into a "bird carton" that gives birds a place to live.

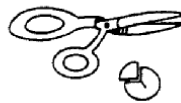
Here are eight things you'll need:

- a 2-quart waxed cardboard milk carton
- scissors
- 20 inches of strong, bendable wire
- 2 nails
- a hammer
- waterproof packing tape
- dried grasses
- ruler or tape measure

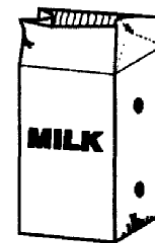
Here are eight steps that will turn the carton into a birdhouse:

Step 1 Open the top of the carton and wash it out well with warm water and a brush.

Step 2 On one side of the carton, cut out a circle 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Cut the circle about 2 inches below the bend in the top of the carton.



Step 3 On the opposite side of the carton, poke two holes with a nail. The top hole should be 1/3 of the way down from the bend. The second hole should be about 2/3 of the way down.



Step 4 Thread the wire into the top hole, down the carton on the inside, and out the bottom hole.

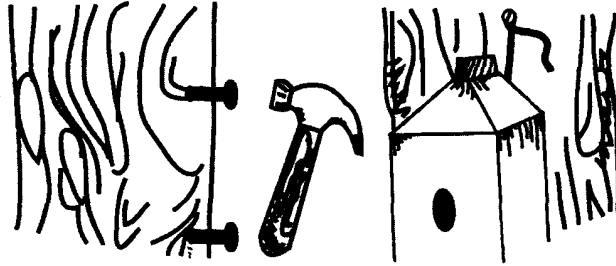


Step 5 Place a bit of dried grass in the bottom of the carton.

Step 6 Fold the top of the carton closed again, and seal it with packing tape.

Step 7 Now put your birdhouse up so birds can move in! Choose a pole or tree in an open area and hammer your nails in. Space them about 2 inches apart.

Step 8 Wrap one end of the wire around each nail so the birdhouse is firmly attached to the pole or tree.



1. What would happen if you left out Step 3?
 - A. The birdhouse could not be hung.
 - B. The birdhouse could no be cleaned.
 - C. Only small birds could get into the birdhouse.
 - D. Birds would not be able to get into the birdhouse.

Answer: A
Indicators: 4-2.2
4-2.6

2. What is the **most** logical reason for the action described in Step 6?
 - A. to help birds enter the birdhouse
 - B. to fasten the birdhouse tightly to the tree
 - C. to help protect the birdhouse from the weather
 - D. to make it easier to put birdseed in the birdhouse

Answer: C
Indicator: 4-2.2

("Milk Carton Birdhouse")

3. According to the passage, which materials are part of the birdhouse?
- A. scissors and hammer
 - B. grasses and tape
 - C. milk and water
 - D. wire and ruler

Answer: B
Indicator: 4–2.6

4. What do the illustrations **best** help explain?
- A. how to wash out the milk carton
 - B. how to tape the top of the carton
 - C. how to arrange dried grass in the carton
 - D. how to make and use the holes in the carton

Answer: D
Indicator: 4–2.6

5. What would be the **best** resource to use to find out which birds might nest in a birdhouse?
- A. a thesaurus entry for bird
 - B. an encyclopedia of birds
 - C. a dictionary entry for birdhouse
 - D. a book of poems about birds

Answer: B
Indicator: 4–6.2

Grade 4

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–6.

A Good Imagination

Having a good imagination can make life more exciting. It certainly did for Robert Louis Stevenson. He was a famous writer of books like *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Louis, as he was called, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1850. He was often sick during his childhood. Because of this, many times he could not go out and play with other children. Instead, he listened to stories and made up stories of his own. He played with toy soldiers and imagined adventures for them. He made up plays for his cardboard toy theater.

When Louis was able to go outside and play, he was often left out of games because of his poor health. However, he found that the other children liked the amazing stories he told them. He also could make up games and adventures for them. His imagination helped him find friends.

Louis's father was a lighthouse engineer. He wanted Louis to become one, too, but telling stories had become too important to Louis. When Louis grew up, he became a writer. Louis traveled to many places, and he listened to stories wherever he went. He also kept making up stories.

One cold, rainy afternoon, Louis was amusing himself with a box of paints. He painted an island and immediately thought of a story that could happen on an island. He used this story for his book *Treasure Island*.

When Louis got older, he took his family on a ship to the Samoan Islands in the South Seas. There they sailed from island to island. They met the kings of the islands and feasted with them and their people. Of course, they shared stories with each other.

Louis liked the warm weather, so he and his family settled on one of the islands. They cleared the land and built a home there. Louis loved living on Samoa. He continued to write his stories, and people from all around the world read them. The people of Samoa loved him, and they were proud of him. They called him Tusitala, which means "the storyteller."

Louis's imagination helped him all his life. Because of it, he was able to make friends and to earn a living. He also gave the world stories that are still read today. Robert Louis Stevenson's life shows that having a good imagination can have many **benefits**.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
 - A. Louis suffered from poor health.
 - B. Louis could have been a great painter.
 - C. Louis used his talents throughout his life.
 - D. Louis wrote books that many children enjoy.

Answer: C
Indicator: 4-1.1

2. How did Louis's poor health affect his childhood?
 - A. He did not have any friends.
 - B. He could not play with toys.
 - C. He traveled to many places.
 - D. He developed his imagination.

Answer: D
Indicator: 4-1.10

("A Good Imagination")

3. How did the people of Samoa show Louis they were proud of him?

- A. They had a feast to honor him.
- B. They called him by a special name.
- C. They made him a king of the island.
- D. They let him settle on one of the islands.

Answer: B
Indicator: 4–1.2

4. Why is this passage an example of nonfiction?

- A. It tells about a real person.
- B. It tells about an exciting life.
- C. It tells about a time in the past.
- D. It tells about an interesting person.

Answer: A
Indicator: 4–1.8

5. Based on the passage, what does the word **benefits** mean?

- A. rewards
- B. accidents
- C. problems
- D. adventures

Answer: A
Indicator: 4–3.1

("A Good Imagination")

6. Which research question would lead to the **most** information on Robert Louis Stevenson as a writer?
- A. Why did Robert Louis Stevenson go to an island?
 - B. Where did Robert Louis Stevenson get his ideas?
 - C. How did Robert Louis Stevenson spend his free time?
 - D. What type of illness did Robert Louis Stevenson have?

Answer: B
Indicator: 4–6.1

Grade 5

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–5.

The Promise

"Serena, don't forget your promise to me that you will mow Mrs. Martin's yard this weekend," said Dad, throwing a jacket over his shoulder. "I'll be back on Monday when I'm finished working in Atlanta. Don't let me down."

Serena slumped down in her chair and scrunched up her face. She had forgotten about the promise. Her father leaned down and kissed her cheek. "Bye, sweetheart," he whispered. "Be good."

"Bye, Dad," Serena replied.

Serena was the oldest child in the family, and one of her chores was to mow and trim their yard. Mrs. Martin, their elderly neighbor, was unable to take care of her yard, so Serena's dad had volunteered Serena for this job. Since Mrs. Martin's yard was not very big, Serena knew the job would go quickly. However, she still **resented** her dad's promise.

"Why didn't you ask me first?" Serena had complained.

"Did you ask me first when you volunteered me to be in the school carnival dunking booth last fall?" asked Serena's father. "Did you ask me before you said I would be able to take your troop on the spring campout last April?"

"Well, no, I didn't ask you first, but you would have done those things anyway," Serena said in her defense. "You're always willing to help."

"I try when I can," Dad answered. "Serena, we have known Mrs. Martin for a very long time. She has often helped our family. Now we can do something for her. Besides, the feeling you get from helping someone makes you wonder who is really helping whom."

"I don't know, Dad," moaned Serena. "The only feeling I get from mowing our yard is tired."

"Just you wait and see," said Dad.

After breakfast, Serena got the lawn mower ready and gathered the yard tools she needed. Slowly, she made her way over to Mrs. Martin's yard. Serena pulled the lawn mower's power cord, and the machine roared to life. As Serena wheeled it toward a strip of grass between the sidewalk and the street, she noticed Mrs. Martin peering at her through a living room window. Mrs. Martin smiled and waved. Serena waved in return.

Serena was good at her job and soon had Mrs. Martin's yard looking neat and trim. Serena was raking grass clippings when Mrs. Martin came outside with a big glass of lemonade and offered it to her. Serena stopped her work and gratefully accepted the refreshing drink. While Serena sipped the lemonade, Mrs. Martin talked to her about all of the flowers in her yard. Seeing the joy in Mrs. Martin's eyes as she spoke, Serena began to understand how much the yard meant to Mrs. Martin.

After finishing her drink, Serena returned to work with a new attitude. A warm feeling began to spread through her body. Her dad was right. It was hard to tell who was helping whom!

1. The **main** conflict in the story is between _____.
- A. Dad and himself
- B. Serena and herself
- C. Serena and Mrs. Martin
- D. Serena and the lawn mower

Answer: B
Indicator: 5-1.1

("The Promise")

2. Which point of view does the author use to tell the story?

- A. first person
- B. second person
- C. omniscient
- D. limited-omniscient

Answer: D
Indicator: 5-1.2

3. Which word **best** describes Serena's attitude after mowing Mrs. Martin's yard?

- A. dismayed
- B. pleased
- C. annoyed
- D. confused

Answer: B
Indicator: 5-1.1

4. How does the reader know that Dad is considerate?

- A. through Dad's words
- B. through Serena's actions
- C. through Mrs. Martin's behavior
- D. through the author's statement

Answer: A
Indicator: 5-1.4

("The Promise")

5. Based on the passage, what does the word **resented** mean?
- A. understood
 - B. welcomed
 - C. disliked
 - D. broke

Answer: C

Indicator: 5-3.1

Grade 5

Read the order form. Then answer questions 1–4.

Good Earth Fruit Company

Order Form

Directions for Ordering

Order by Phone

Just dial 1-800-555-3333, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., to order by phone and pay by credit card. Telephone orders can be placed until November 20. But if you place your order by phone by November 15, we will include a free jar of orange marmalade with your order!

Order by Mail

Complete and return the form below. Mail the form to the following address by November 10. Please include a check or money order. If we receive your mail order by November 5, we will ship you a free package of raisins!

Good Earth Fruit Company
Sunny Gardens
21 River Road
Miami, Florida 33156

Complete the form below to order by mail.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Boxes of Oranges Ordered: _____

Price per Box: _____

Total Cost: _____

Extra! If you order three or more boxes of Good Earth oranges, we'll include a free package of dried apricots!

For Office Use Only:

Send free package of raisins. _____

Send free jar of orange marmalade. _____

Send free package of dried apricots. _____

("Good Earth Fruit" Order Form)

1. What is the **most likely** reason that the Good Earth Fruit Company offers free packages of dried apricots?
- A. to encourage people to eat healthy foods
 - B. so that people will think the company is generous
 - C. so that people will place their orders by November 15
 - D. to encourage people to buy at least three boxes of oranges

Answer: D
Indicator: 5-2.2

2. According to the order form, what is the **best** way to place an order after November 12?
- A. by phone
 - B. by mail
 - C. by taking it to the school office
 - D. by taking it to the fruit company

Answer: A
Indicator: 5-2.2

3. What is the **main** purpose of the bold headings on the order form?
- E. to describe different kinds of fruit
 - F. to tell how much fruit should be ordered
 - G. to show free things that can be ordered
 - H. to show each of the ways to order fruit

Answer: D
Indicator: 5-2.5

("Good Earth Fruit" Order Form)

4. What is the purpose of the broken lines in the middle of the order form?
- I. to make the form easier to read
 - J. to indicate the portion to be mailed back
 - K. to separate the products that can be ordered
 - L. to determine how the office will use the form

Answer: B
Indicator: 5-2.5

Grade 6

Read the advertisement. Then answer questions 1–6.

ALL NEW!
REPTILE PETTING ZOO
at the Oak Park Nature Center

Kids! Are you tired of Mom or Dad dragging you to the same old petting zoos, where (if you're lucky) you might get to touch a little bunny or goat?

Mom or Dad! Are you tired of hearing your kids whine about how animals in petting zoos are uninteresting, **monotonous**, and dull?

Consider This:

The fact is that most mammals are boringly warm, fuzzy, and come in a limited range of dull hues. Reptiles, on the other hand, are captivatingly cold-blooded and covered with scales of tempting textures and **hues**, from emerald to scarlet to plum. Some, like the chameleon, can even **CHANGE** colors. Did you ever see a rabbit with scales and a purple tongue almost as long as its body? **NO!** Yet the blue-tongued skink is all this and more! In our zoo, you can pet skinks, snakes, geckos, bearded dragons, and other fascinating creatures! Learn what these reptiles eat and how they care for their babies, which ones live in the desert and which live in swamps, which ones are meat-eaters and which are vegetarians, which ones are deadly poisonous and which are not.

So Remember:

If you're bored with bunnies, if you've had it with hamsters, if you're fed up with ferrets . . .

Then the place for **YOU** is the **Reptile Petting Zoo!**

Bring the **WHOLE** family - Grandpa, Grandma, Cousin Irene, even baby Joe!
There's something for **EVERYONE!**

("Reptile Petting Zoo")

1. In the advertisement, what does the word **monotonous** mean?

- A. active
- B. boring
- C. furry
- D. unusual

Answer: B
Indicator: 6-3.1

2. According to the advertisement, why will people like a reptile petting zoo?

- A. The animals are warm and fuzzy.
- B. The animals are cute and friendly.
- C. The animals are unusual and interesting.
- D. The animals are frightening and dangerous.

Answer: C
Indicator: 6-2.2

3. In the advertisement, what does the word **hues** mean?

- A. colors
- B. forms
- C. kinds
- D. sizes

Answer: A
Indicator: 6-3.1

("Reptile Petting Zoo")

4. In the advertisement, why is the word CHANGE written in all capitals?
- A. to define the word
 - B. to emphasize the word
 - C. to give a vivid description
 - D. to provide a different format

Answer: B
Indicator: 6–2.5

5. In the section called **Consider This**, what is the purpose of the last sentence?
- A. to show that reptiles come in many colors
 - B. to tell how reptiles are different from mammals
 - C. to name the different kinds of reptiles to see at the zoo
 - D. to describe what visitors to the reptile petting zoo will learn

Answer: D
Indicator: 6–2.6

6. What is the **main** purpose of this advertisement?
- A. to encourage people to visit the Reptile Petting Zoo
 - B. to tell people when the Reptile Petting Zoo is open
 - C. to tell people how to care for skinks and other reptiles
 - D. to show people that many different types of reptiles exist

Answer: A
Indicator: 6–2.1

Grade 6

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–8.

Lou Gehrig

Lou Gehrig played baseball for the New York Yankees from 1925 to 1939. For many years, Lou batted just after Babe Ruth in the Yankee lineup, but he was grateful that Babe attracted so much of the public’s attention. Lou loved playing baseball, and he just wanted to do his job. Nicknamed “The Iron Horse,” Lou Gehrig played in 2,130 straight games. That’s over 13 seasons of baseball—without taking breaks for sprains, cuts, aches, or pains! Lou would have continued to add to that total if things had been different.

In 1939, Lou was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), an incurable disease that was hindering his mobility. It would be impossible for Lou to continue his career as a baseball player. Surrounded by his fellow players, Lou Gehrig announced his retirement on July 4, 1939, in front of 60,000 fans at Yankee Stadium. Here is what he said:

“Fans, for the past two weeks you have been reading about the bad break I got. Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

“I have been in ballparks for seventeen years and have never received anything but kindness and encouragement from you fans. Look at these grand men. Which of you wouldn’t consider it the highlight of his career just to associate with them for even one day?

“Sure I’m lucky. Who wouldn’t consider it an honor to have known Jacob Ruppert*? Also, the builder of baseball’s greatest empire, Ed Barrow? To have spent six years with that wonderful little fellow, Miller Huggins**? Then to have spent the next nine years with that outstanding leader, that smart student of psychology, the best manager in baseball today, Joe McCarthy?

“Sure I’m lucky. When the New York Giants, a team you would give your right arm to beat, and vice versa, sends you a gift—that’s something. When everybody down to the groundskeepers and those boys in white coats remember you with trophies—that’s something. When you have a wonderful mother-in-law who takes sides with you in squabbles with her own daughter—that’s something. When you have a father and a mother who work all their lives so you can have an education and build your body—it’s a blessing. When you have a wife who has been a tower of strength and shown more courage than you dreamed existed—that’s the finest I know.”

“So I close in saying that I may have had a tough break, but I’ve got an awful lot to live for.”

Two years later, Lou lost his battle with ALS and was mourned by baseball fans everywhere. His #4 jersey would later be the first professional jersey retired in American sports, and his record of consecutive games played would not be broken until 1995.

*Jacob Ruppert—owner of the New York Yankees

**Miller Huggins—manager of the New York Yankees

("Lou Gehrig")

1. What type of nonfiction is represented by the boxed portion of this passage?
 - A. speech
 - B. memoir
 - C. personal essay
 - D. character sketch

Answer: A
Indicator: 6–1.9

2. Based on the root **mobil**, what does the word **mobility** mean?
 - A. able to live
 - B. able to send
 - C. able to move
 - D. able to stretch

Answer: C
Indicator: 6–3.2

3. What is the point of view of the boxed portion of the passage?
 - A. first person
 - B. second person
 - C. omniscient
 - D. limited-omniscient

Answer: A
Indicator: 6–1.2

("Lou Gehrig")

4. What tone does Gehrig establish by repeating the words "that's something"?
- A. joyful
 - B. grateful
 - C. annoyed
 - D. ignorant

Answer: B
Indicator: 6-1.5

5. Which sentence from the passage contains a euphemism?
- A. Lou loved playing baseball, and he just wanted to do his job.
 - B. It would be impossible for Lou to continue his career as a baseball player.
 - C. Surrounded by his fellow players, Lou announced his retirement on July 4, 1939, in front of 60,000 fans at Yankee Stadium.
 - D. Two years later, Lou lost his battle with ALS and was mourned by baseball fans everywhere.

Answer: D
Indicator: 6-3.3

6. Based on the passage, which statement is **most likely** true?
- A. Lou Gehrig regretted playing baseball for the New York Yankees.
 - B. Lou Gehrig wished that someone else had contracted ALS.
 - C. Lou Gehrig kept his distance from his friends and family.
 - D. Lou Gehrig thought he had lived a life others would envy.

Answer: D
Indicator: 6-1.1

("Lou Gehrig")

7. Read Lou Gehrig's statement.

"Yet today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

Why did he **most likely** feel lucky?

- A. because he played baseball for seventeen years
- B. because he had received the best medical attention
- C. because he was surrounded by so many caring people
- D. because he set many records during his baseball career

Answer: C
Indicator: 6–1.10

8. Which source would contain the **most** information about ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease?

- A. a medical encyclopedia
- B. a science textbook
- C. a baseball anthology
- D. a hospital journal

Answer: A
Indicator: 6–6.8

Grade 7

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–5.

The Ash Can School

“Art for art’s sake” was the guiding philosophy of most late nineteenth-century painters. They tended to paint **genteel** landscapes and formal, somewhat stuffy portraits. By 1900, however, a few young painters from the United States began to rebel against this refined style. “Art for life’s sake,” was their artistic rallying cry.

These young artists sought to paint “real life,” ordinary scenes of urban life. Their paintings often featured subjects such as run-down city tenements and ash cans, which are receptacles used for cigarette remains. The art establishment hated the less-than-decorous subject matter of these rebels. They mocked the new style of painting as the “Ash Can School.” The rebels, however, took this insult as a mark of honor, and the name stuck.

The founder and leader of the Ash Can School was Robert Henri. While studying art in Paris, Henri became unhappy with the formal styles advocated by French artists. He returned to the United States and began to teach art in Philadelphia and later New York City. His view that art was a way to express life especially appealed to four of his students. Their names were George Luks, John Sloan, William Glackens, and Everett Shinn. These men, who had worked as newspaper illustrators, gathered around Henri and formed the core of the Ash Can School.

The artists of the Ash Can School were influenced by their newspaper experience. At the time, pen-and-ink illustrations were more common than photographs in newspapers. These sketch artists were sent out to record accidents and other newsworthy events. They had to work fast to finish their pictures before the newspapers went to press. Therefore, paintings of the Ash Can School have a loose and **spontaneous** style. The artists applied paint thickly, in a rapid, almost careless way. Rough, individual brushstrokes were left on the painted canvas. The palettes, or colors, used by the artists tended to be dark and subdued. The finished works have titles such as “Shoppers,” “Hairdressers’ Window,” and “Sixth Avenue,” which have an everyday sound to them.

By 1908, three more artists had joined the movement. They were Arthur B. Davies, Ernest Lawson, and Maurice Prendergast. Together, the Ash Can artists now called themselves the "Eight." At first, the Eight were unable to exhibit their paintings. Art critics tightly controlled art galleries and museums, making sure that only artists who held certain views could show their work. These critics were unwilling to do anything to promote the Ash Can style of painting.

As a protest, the Eight organized a history-making show of their work. Customarily, a jury judges the work on exhibit, but this exhibition was the first in the nation to have no jury or prizes. This exhibit of the Eight became a symbol of rebellion in the art world. Later, it was the model for the famous 1914 Armory Show, which introduced modern art to audiences in the United States.

The artists of the Eight were at the forefront of art in the United States for only a few years. More experimental modern artists from Europe soon overshadowed them. Nevertheless, the Ash Can School was the first important United States art movement in the twentieth century. American painting owes a great debt to these daring painters.

1. According to the passage, which subject would a painter of the Ash Can School choose?
 - A. seascapes with grand sailing ships
 - B. housing projects in poor condition
 - C. flower gardens blooming wildly
 - D. portraits of war heroes

Answer: B
Indicator: 7-2.2

2. Based on the passage, what does the word **genteel** mean?
 - A. broad
 - B. offensive
 - C. proper
 - D. rugged

Answer: C
Indicator: 7-3.1

("The Ash Can School")

3. Which word **best** describes Robert Henri's painting style?

- A. experimental
- B. formal
- C. ordinary
- D. traditional

Answer: A
Indicator: 7-2.2

4. Based on the passage, what does the word **spontaneous** mean?

- A. restrained
- B. structured
- C. trained
- D. unplanned

Answer: D
Indicator: 7-3.1

5. Which sentence from the passage is an example of author bias?

- A. They mocked the new style of painting as the "Ash Can School."
- B. The founder and leader of the Ash Can School was Robert Henri.
- C. Rough, individual brushstrokes were left on the painted canvas.
- D. American painting owes a great debt to these daring painters.

Answer: D
Indicator: 7-2.3

Grade 7

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–8.

Why I Never Shoot Bears

by Charles E. Goodspeed

Fred Jennes, veteran woods guide of Greenville, Maine, tells this tall tale.

Do you know why I don't kill bears? No? Well, it's this way. Three years ago this June, I was on a fishing trip up to Grand Lake. I had been out on the water pretty nearly all of one day and, getting tired, paddled back to camp. I hauled the canoe up on the sandy beach and started for the shack.

When I got within about 100 feet of the place, I saw the front door was open. I peeked in. There stood a big black bear just pulling the cork out of my molasses jug with his teeth. Out came the sticky syrup all over the floor. Bruin lapped up some of it and licked his chops. Then he rubbed his right paw into the rest—smearred it all over.

So I crept around behind the camp, stuck my head in the window, and yelled. He shot through the door like a bullet and headed for the lake. I never saw such an odd gait on a bear before – sort of a mixture of running and galloping. And all on three legs. He was holding up the paw daubed with molasses.

From where I stood, it looked as if the critter had sat down on the shore and was holding his sweetened paw up to the air. It was June and the air was full of flies, mosquitoes, and black midges. I could see that they were swarming around that molasses foot. Soon it was covered with flies feasting on that stuff.

Suddenly, he waded out in the water and stood up. He was in to his shoulders. He placed the sweetened paw down close to the surface, and the next thing I saw a fine trout jump clear of the water at those flies.

Every time a fish leaped clear of the water, Bruin would give it a cuff that sent it ashore and far up the beach. Finally, as he saw the pile of trout on the sand, he seemed to think he had enough. As I watched him wade ashore, I recalled that all I had caught that day was two small fish.

I expected he would sit down and **devour** every fish. Well, sir, when he had eaten half a dozen fine big trout, he paused, looked over at the bushes where I was, and actually laid the remaining fish in a row. Then he ambled off up the shore, and oddly enough, kept looking back over his shoulder.

I walked down to the beach, and true enough, there were half a dozen wonderful trout. At the edge of the woods, the bear stopped and was standing up. As loud as I could, I yelled, "Thanks, my man!" Do you know he actually waved a paw at me and dove into the thicket. I honestly think he left me those fish to pay for my spilled molasses.

This gives credence to what I have heard about bears – they can be a friend to humans. No, sir, I never shoot bears.

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- A. The bear is trying to imitate the narrator.
- B. The bear accidentally discovers how to fish.
- C. The bear is carrying out a clever plan to get food.
- D. The bear is trying to persuade the narrator not to shoot him.

Answer: C
Indicator: 7–1.1

2. Why did Fred **most likely** call the bear "my man," when he yelled his thanks?

- A. Fred wanted the bear to belong to him.
- B. Fred had seen a man instead of a bear.
- C. Fred had begun to think of the bear as a friend.
- D. Fred thought the bear resembled a man when he walked.

Answer: C
Indicator: 7–1.1

("Why I Never Shoot Bears")

3. When the bear ran out of the cabin, why did he **most likely** hold his paw in the air?
- A. He was trying to wave to Fred.
 - B. He wanted to protect the molasses.
 - C. His paw had been hurt in an accident.
 - D. His paw was too sticky to put on the ground.

Answer: B
Indicator: 7-1.1

4. What makes the passage a good example of a tall tale?
- A. The story is told in the first person.
 - B. The narrator says that the story is true.
 - C. The story includes a character who is an animal.
 - D. The story describes things that are exaggerated.

Answer: D
Indicator: 7-1.8

5. Which sentence from the passage contains an idiom?
- A. Bruin lapped up some of it and licked his chops.
 - B. He was holding up the paw daubed with molasses.
 - C. Soon it was covered with flies feasting on that stuff.
 - D. As loud as I could, I yelled, "Thanks, my man!"

Answer: A
Indicator: 7-3.3

("Why I Never Shoot Bears")

6. Based on the passage, what does the word **devour** mean?

- A. clean
- B. consume
- C. smack
- D. string

Answer: B
Indicator: 7-3.1

7. Based on the root **cred**, what does the word **credence** mean?

- A. belief
- B. confusion
- C. contradiction
- D. movement

Answer: A
Indicator: 7-3.2

8. Based on the passage, which reason **best** explains why Fred won't shoot bears?

- A. He is worried that black bears will become extinct.
- B. He enjoys fishing much more than hunting bears.
- C. He is afraid that other bears will punish him.
- D. He wants to repay the bear for his kindness.

Answer: D
Indicator: 7-1.1

Grade 7

Read the poem. Then answer questions 1–4.

My Carolina Quilt

Down near my feet
is the salty breeze of the sea island
fringe and the sweet perfume
of the Carolina peach.
Peering over the peak of my toes
are the Catawbas, French
Huguenots, Africans, and English
who traveled through
the tangle of honeysuckle
and gray moss dangling
from the old oak trees.
Across my belly, catbirds,
wild turkeys and white-tailed deer
scatter
in forests of tupelo, gum, and bay.
Sewn with blue yarn and stamped
with striped bass—Catawba,
Combahee, Congaree;
Savannah, Saluda, Santee.
Up north, Mt. Sassafras settles
under my chin as I sleep
on the Blue Ridge border.

("My Carolina Quilt")

1. What is the **main** subject of the quilt?
 - A. various parts of the human body
 - B. mountain ranges of the Southeast
 - C. Native American tribes and settlers
 - D. geographical features of a Southern state

Answer: D
Indicator: 7-1.1

2. What is in the middle of the quilt?
 - A. rivers
 - B. islands
 - C. forests
 - D. mountains

Answer: C
Indicator: 7-1.1

3. What is the speaker in this poem **most likely** doing?
 - A. lying in bed
 - B. sewing a quilt
 - C. drawing a map
 - D. visiting the beach

Answer: A
Indicator: 7-1.1

("My Carolina Quilt")

4. Read these lines from the poem.

"Sewn with blue yarn and stamped
with striped bass—Catawba,
Combahee, Congaree;
Savannah, Saluda, Santee."

What figurative language is used in these lines?

- A. oxymoron
- B. alliteration
- C. personification
- D. onomatopoeia

Answer: B
Indicator: 7-1.3

Grade 8

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–6.

Catherine's Clash

In Medieval times, there was a young girl named Catherine who lived with her parents and two brothers at the Castle Gurmon in England. Catherine's deepest desire was to become a knight, but, unfortunately, being a knight was not an option for a girl. Her father, Sir Marcus, was one of the bravest knights in the region, and her brothers, Luke and Lionel, were training to follow in his footsteps. Catherine watched with **rapt** attention as her brothers practiced and became skilled in using swords, shields, lances, and maces. Deep down, she wished she could join them in preparation for knighthood.

Catherine loved helping Luke and Lionel get ready for practice. First, she fed, saddled, and brushed their horses. Then she helped her brothers put on the heavy armor they had to wear for protection. Catherine carefully observed her brothers' every move as they practiced.

The longer Catherine watched her brothers practice, the more confident she was that she could mimic their moves. Catherine decided she could learn to battle as well as her brothers. She studied their footwork and never took her eyes off their maneuvers. Tired after days of **grueling** practice, Catherine's brothers always fell asleep before she did. This gave her a chance to go down to the stables and secretly practice.

When Sir Marcus felt his sons were ready, he entered them in a tournament. Luke and Lionel both did well in the jousting round, placing first and second. Unfortunately in the next round, the mace battle, Luke injured his ankle.

Sir Marcus was distraught and sent Catherine to tell the judges that Luke would be unable to finish the competition. Catherine left, but instead of going to tell the judges, she went to her brother's dressing tent, put on Luke's armor, and grabbed his sword and shield. She would enter the next round, the sword fight, as Luke!

When the round started, Catherine's family was shocked to hear Luke's name announced. They were even more shocked to see SOMEONE wearing Luke's armor and carrying his sword and shield. Sir Marcus started to jump up to tell the judges to stop the battle when he noticed Catherine's hair hanging out from under Luke's helmet. He sat stunned as he watched his daughter do what he thought only males were capable of doing.

Sir Marcus knew he should be furious with Catherine; however, seeing how skilled his daughter was, he could not help but be proud of her. She moved with better skill and precision than many young knights he had seen. Sir Marcus remained silent as he watched Catherine, posing as Luke, win first place in the competition.

Before leaving the tournament, Sir Marcus made Catherine reveal her identity to the judges. He knew that the tournament rules must be followed. Catherine would have to wait and see if the judges would decide to let her keep the prize she had won. Catherine was happy with her victory, but she also felt cheated. She had earned her prize—why did she have to wait for the judges' decision just because she was a girl? Catherine knew that in the future she would have more than sword fights to win. After what had happened today, though, she was confident she could face anything!

1. From what point of view is the passage written?
 - A. first person
 - B. second person
 - C. omniscient
 - D. limited-omniscient

Answer: C
Indicator: 8–1.2

(“Catherine’s Clash”)

2. Which word **best** characterizes Catherine’s father?

- A. angry
- B. flexible
- C. stubborn
- D. traditional

Answer: B
Indicator: 8–1.1

3. Which event has the **strongest** impact on the plot of the passage?

- A. Catherine helps her brothers practice.
- B. The family attends the tournament.
- C. Luke is injured and cannot compete.
- D. Catherine reveals her identity to the judges.

Answer: C
Indicator: 8–1.1

4. Read this sentence from the passage.

“Catherine watched with **rapt** attention as her brothers practiced and became skilled in using swords, shields, lances, and maces.”

What does the word **rapt** mean?

- A. contented
- B. disinterested
- C. grateful
- D. intense

Answer: D
Indicator: 8–3.1

(“Catherine’s Clash”)

5. The major conflict in the passage is between _____.
- A. Catherine and her brothers
 - B. Catherine and her culture
 - C. Catherine and her father
 - D. Catherine and herself

Answer: B
Indicator: 8–1.1

6. Read this sentence from the passage.

“Tired after days of **grueling** practice, Catherine’s brothers always fell asleep before she did.”

What does the word **grueling** mean?

- A. exhausting
- B. exciting
- C. relaxing
- D. boring

Answer: A
Indicator: 8–3.1

Grade 8

Read the poem. Then answer questions 1–5.

The Long Hill by Sara Teasdale

I must have passed a **crest** a while ago
And now I am going down.
Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know—
But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

All the morning I thought how proud it would be
To stand there straight as a queen—
Wrapped in the wind and the sun, with the world under me.
But the air was dull, there was little I could have seen.

It was nearly level along the beaten track
And the brambles caught my gown
But it's no use now to think of turning back,
The rest of the way will be only going down.

1. In "The Long Hill," what problem does the speaker have?
 - A. She keeps getting caught in the underbrush.
 - B. She wishes she were someone else.
 - C. She gets tired when she climbs uphill.
 - D. She is cold and uncomfortable.

Answer: A
Indicator: 8–1.1

("The Long Hill")

2. In the first line of "The Long Hill," what does the word **crest** mean?

- A. trail
- B. peak
- C. sign
- D. turn

Answer: B
Indicator: 8-3.1

3. What does the speaker in "The Long Hill" want to do during the morning?

- A. return home
- B. find a clear path
- C. reach the crest
- D. meet new people

Answer: C
Indicator: 8-1.1

4. Which word **best** describes the tone of "The Long Hill"?

- A. disappointment
- B. encouragement
- C. fearfulness
- D. wishfulness

Answer: A
Indicator: 8-1.5

("The Long Hill")

5. The extended metaphor in "The Long Hill" compares climbing a hill to which of the following?
- A. a person feeling like a queen
 - B. someone who refuses to give up
 - C. someone striving to achieve a goal
 - D. a person who regrets what he's done

Answer: D
Indicator: 8-1.3

Grade 8

Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–6.

The National Museum of American History

In most families, there's someone who detests throwing anything out. Magazines, newspaper clippings, letters, used toys or **antiquated** clothes are often packed away in the basement, garage, or attic. Most kids love to poke around in old family treasures finding their old toys, their father's football jacket, or the letters Grandma wrote to Grandpa when he was overseas in the war.

The National Museum of American History, located in Washington, D.C., is like the "saver" in your family, but on a grand scale. It saves things for the whole country. The National Museum of American History is a part of the Smithsonian Institution, a number of museums located in the National Mall in our nation's capital.

The museum collects and preserves more than three million artifacts. This collection is dedicated to inspiring a broader understanding of our nation and its peoples. If Americans have used it, worn it, ridden on it, played with it, laughed or cried over it, it's probably in this museum. Visitors find housed in the National Museum everything from the original Star-Spangled Banner to Dorothy's ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz*.

The museum hosts a full roster of public programs for both young and mature audiences—from informative lectures to entertaining festivals. More than four million visitors pass through the museum's doors each year. Millions more make virtual visits to the museum's Web site.

As millions of people have done before you, plan a visit to the museum. Make sure your family joins the many well-informed citizens of our country who have taken this journey through time in the National Museum of American History.

("The National Museum of American History")

1. What is the **most likely** reason the author includes paragraph 1 in the passage?
- A. to describe a typical home
 - B. to summarize the main idea
 - C. to introduce important facts
 - D. to generate the reader's interest

Answer: D
Indicator: 8–2.2

2. Which word in paragraph 4 is a euphemism?
- A. full
 - B. mature
 - C. informative
 - D. virtual

Answer: B
Indicator: 8–3.3

3. Based on the passage, what conclusion can be made about the National Museum of American History?
- A. It appeals to a limited range of ages.
 - B. It houses artifacts from all parts of the world.
 - C. It provides various ways to view its collection.
 - D. It is the most popular museum in the National Mall.

Answer: C
Indicator: 8–2.2

("The National Museum of American History")

4. What type of propaganda technique is used in the last paragraph?
- A. testimonial
 - B. bandwagon
 - C. name calling
 - D. glittering generalities

Answer: B
Indicator: 8–2.7

5. Why does the author **most likely** underline the term well-informed in the last paragraph?
- A. to identify a hyphenated term
 - B. to show that it is a popular term
 - C. to indicate that it is a foreign term
 - D. to emphasize the meaning of the term

Answer: D
Indicator: 8–2.5

6. If you were researching field trips to the National Museum of American History, what would be the **best** question to ask?
- A. When was the museum first opened to the public?
 - B. What type of guided tours does the museum provide?
 - C. How are the artifacts housed in the museum preserved?
 - D. Where in the museum are Dorothy's ruby slippers located?

Answer: A
Indicator: 8–6.1