

Student Name _____

P

Grade 6
English Language Arts/Literacy
Test Booklet

Practice Test

TEST BOOKLET SECURITY BARCODE



Unit 1

Directions:

Today, you will take Unit 1 of the Grade 6 English Language Arts/Literacy Practice Test.

Read each passage and question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Mark your answers by circling the answer in your test booklet. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

One of the questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided.

If you do not know the answer to a question, you may go on to the next question. If you finish early, you may review your answers and any questions you did not answer.

Today you will read and think about the passage from the novel from *Boy's Life* and the fable "Emancipation: A Life Fable." As you read these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about comparing themes and topics so you can write an essay.

Read the passage from the novel titled *Boy's Life*. Then answer questions 1 through 3.

from *Boy's Life*

by Robert McCammon

- 1 TICK . . . TICK . . . TICK.
- 2 In spite of what the calendar says, I have always counted the last day of school as the first day of summer. The sun had grown steadily hotter and hung longer in the sky, the earth had greened and the sky had cleared of all but the fleeci-est of clouds, the heat panted for attention like a dog who knows his day is coming, the baseball field had been mowed and white-lined and the swimming pool newly painted and filled, and as our homeroom teacher, Mrs. Selma Neville, intoned about what a good year this had been and how much we'd learned, we students who had passed through the ordeal of final exams sat with one eye fixed to the clock.
- 3 *Tick . . . tick . . . tick.*
- 4 Have mercy.
- 5 The world was out there, waiting beyond the square metal-rimmed windows. What adventures my friends and I would find this summer of 1964, I had no way of knowing, but I did know that summer's days were long and lazy, and when the sun finally gave up its hold on the sky the cicadas sang and the lightning bugs whirled their dance and there was no homework to be done and oh, it was a wonderful time. I had passed my math exam, and escaped—with a C-minus average, if truth must be known—the snarling trap of summer school. . . .
- 6 *Tick . . . tick . . . tick.*
- 7 Time, the king of cruelty.
- 8 From the hallway we heard a stirring and rustling, followed by laughter and shouts of pure, bubbling joy. Some other teacher had decided to let her class

go early. My insides quaked at the injustice of it. Still, Mrs. Neville, who wore a hearing aid and had orange hair though she was at least sixty years old, talked on, as if there were no noise of escape beyond the door at all. It hit me, then; she didn't want to let us go. She wanted to hold us as long as she possibly could, not out of sheer teacher spite but maybe because she didn't have anybody to go home to, and summer alone is no summer at all.

- 9 "I hope you boys and girls remember to use the library during recess." Mrs. Neville was speaking in her kindly voice right now, but when she was upset she could spit sparks. . . . "You mustn't stop reading just because school is out. Your minds are made to be used. So don't forget how to think by the time September comes around a—"
- 10 *RINGGGGGGG!*
- 11 We all jumped up, like parts of the same squirming insect.
- 12 "One moment," Mrs. Neville said. "One moment. You're not excused yet."
- 13 Oh, this was torture! Mrs. Neville, I thought at that instant, must have had a secret life in which she tore the wings off flies.
- 14 "You will leave my room," she announced, "like young ladies and gentlemen. In single file, by rows. Mr. Alcott, you may lead the way."
- 15 Well, at least we were moving. But then, as the classroom emptied and I could hear the wild hollering echoing along the hallway, Mrs. Neville said, "Cory Mackenson? Step to my desk, please."
- 16 I did, under silent protest. Mrs. Neville offered me a smile from a mouth that looked like a red-rimmed string bag. "Now, aren't you glad you decided to apply yourself to your math?" she asked.
- 17 "Yes ma'am." . . .
- 18 The classroom was empty. I could hear the echoes fading. I smelled chalk dust, lunchroom chili, and pencil-sharpener shavings; the ghosts were already beginning to gather.
- 19 "You enjoy writing, don't you?" Mrs. Neville asked me, peering over her bifocals.
- 20 "I guess."
- 21 "You wrote the best essays in class and you made the highest grade in spelling. I was wondering if you were going to enter the contest this year."
- 22 "The contest?"

- 23 “The writing contest,” she said. “You know. The Arts Council sponsors it every August.”
- 24 I hadn’t thought about it. The Arts Council, headed by Mr. Grover Dean and Mrs. Evelyn Prathmore, sponsored an essay and story-writing contest. The winners got a plaque and were expected to read their entries during a luncheon at the library. I shrugged. Stories about ghosts, cowboys, detectives, and monsters from outer space didn’t seem much like contest-winning material; it was just something I did for me.
- 25 “You should consider it,” Mrs. Neville continued. “You have a way with words.”
- 26 I shrugged again. Having your teacher talk to you like a regular person is a disconcerting feeling.
- 27 “Have a good summer,” Mrs. Neville said, and I realized suddenly that I was free.
- 28 My heart was a frog leaping out of murky water into clear sunlight. I said, “Thanks!” and I ran for the door. Before I got out, though, I looked back at Mrs. Neville. She sat at a desk with no papers on it that needed grading, no books holding lessons that needed to be taught. . . . Mrs. Neville stared out at the room of empty desks, carved with the initials of generations who had passed through this place like a tide rolling into the future. Mrs. Neville suddenly looked awfully old.
- 29 “Have a good summer, Mrs. Neville!” I told her from the doorway.
- 30 “Good-bye,” she said, and she smiled.
- 31 I ran out along the corridor, my arms unencumbered by books, my mind unencumbered by facts and figures, quotations and dates. I ran out into the golden sunlight, and my summer had begun. . . .

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1. Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 31 in the passage from *Boy's Life*.

I ran out along the corridor, my arms unencumbered by books, my mind unencumbered by facts and figures, quotations and dates.

What does the word **unencumbered** mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. not burdened
- B. not excited
- C. not hurried
- D. not aged

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "Have a good summer,' Mrs. Neville said, and I realized suddenly that I was free."
- B. "Before I got out, though, I looked back at Mrs. Neville."
- C. "Mrs. Neville suddenly looked awfully old."
- D. "Have a good summer, Mrs. Neville!' I told her from the doorway."

2. Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 5 in the passage from *Boy's Life*.

The world was out there, waiting beyond the square metal-rimmed windows.

How does the sentence help develop the plot of the passage?

- A.** It presents the climax.
- B.** It represents the conflict.
- C.** It indicates how the action changes.
- D.** It establishes how the speaker learns a lesson.

Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** "The sun had grown steadily hotter"
- B.** ". . . the baseball field had been mowed"
- C.** ". . . and how much we'd learned"
- D.** ". . . sat with one eye fixed to the clock."

3. Part A

In the passage from *Boy's Life*, how does the narrator's attitude toward Mrs. Neville gradually change?

- A. from confused to angry
- B. from worried to comforted
- C. from pitying to discouraged
- D. from impatient to understanding

Part B

Which **two** sentences from the passage **best** support the gradual change in the answer to Part A?

- A. "In spite of what the calendar says, I have always counted the last day of school as the first day of summer."
- B. "From the hallway we heard a stirring and rustling, followed by laughter and shouts of pure, bubbling joy."
- C. "My insides quaked at the injustice of it."
- D. "She wanted to hold us as long as she possibly could, not out of sheer teacher spite but maybe because she didn't have anybody to go home to, and summer alone is no summer at all."
- E. "Having your teacher talk to you like a regular person is a disconcerting feeling."
- F. "She sat at a desk with no papers on it that needed grading, no books holding lessons that needed to be taught."

Read the fable titled “Emancipation: A Life Fable.” Then answer questions 4 through 6.

Emancipation: A Life Fable

by Kate Chopin

- 1 There was once an animal born into this world, and opening his eyes upon Life, he saw above and about him confining walls, and before him were bars of iron through which came air and light from without; this animal was born in a cage.
- 2 Here he grew, and throve¹ in strength and beauty under care of an invisible protecting hand. Hungering, food was ever at hand. When he thirsted water was brought, and when he felt the need of rest, there was provided a bed of straw upon which to lie: and here he found it good, licking his handsome flanks, to bask in the sun beam that he thought existed but to lighten his home.
- 3 Awaking one day from his slothful rest, lo! the door of his cage stood open: accident had opened it. In the corner he crouched, wondering and fearfully. Then slowly did he approach the door, dreading the unaccustomed, and would have closed it, but for such a task his limbs were purposeless. So out the opening he thrust his head, to see the canopy of the sky grow broader, and the world waxing wider.
- 4 Back to his corner but not to rest, for the spell of the Unknown was over him, and again and again he goes to the open door, seeing each time more Light.
- 5 Then one time standing in the flood of it; a deep in-drawn breath—a bracing of strong limbs, and with a bound he was gone.
- 6 On he rushes, in his mad flight, heedless that he is wounding and tearing his sleek sides—seeing, smelling, touching of all things; even stopping to put his lips to the noxious² pool, thinking it may be sweet.
- 7 Hungering there is no food but such as he must seek and oftentimes fight for; and his limbs are weighted before he reaches the water that is good to his thirsting throat.

¹throve—grew up well

²noxious—harmful

8 So does he live, seeking, finding, joying and suffering. The door which accident had opened is open still, but the cage remains forever empty!

“Emancipation: A Life Fable” by Kate Chopin—Public Domain

4. Part A

As used in paragraph 1, what does the word **confining** suggest about the walls?

- A.** The walls are small.
- B.** The walls are limiting.
- C.** The walls are helpful.
- D.** The walls are reassuring.

Part B

Which detail from the fable **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** "There was once an animal born into this world"
- B.** ". . . opening his eyes upon Life"
- C.** ". . . through which came air and light"
- D.** ". . . this animal was born in a cage."

5. Part A

Read this sentence from the passage.

Back to his corner but not to rest, for the spell of the Unknown was over him, and again and again he goes to the open door, seeing each time more Light.

Which statement **best** describes how this sentence contributes to the development of the plot?

- A.** The sentence introduces new details about the setting that allow the reader to predict what will happen in the future.
- B.** The sentence reflects the change in the animal's awareness that eventually leads to action.
- C.** The sentence reveals background information that makes the problem clearer to the reader.
- D.** The sentence provides an example of the many challenges that the animal faces in his changing surroundings.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage contributes to the plot in a similar way?

- A.** "Here he grew, and throve in strength and beauty under care of an invisible protecting hand." (paragraph 2)
- B.** "In the corner he crouched, wondering and fearingly." (paragraph 3)
- C.** "Then slowly did he approach the door, dreading the unaccustomed, and would have closed it, but for such a task his limbs were purposeless." (paragraph 3)
- D.** "So out the opening he thrust his head, to see the canopy of the sky grow broader, and the world waxing wider." (paragraph 3)

6. Part A

Which statement expresses a theme in “Emancipation: A Life Fable”?

- A.** Independence is worth the possible hardships.
- B.** Security is necessary for happiness.
- C.** Confusion can lead to bad decisions.
- D.** Nature can shelter and comfort wounded animals.

Part B

Which sentence from the fable **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** “Here he grew, and throve in strength and beauty under care of an invisible protecting hand.”
- B.** “Awaking one day from his slothful rest, lo! the door of his cage stood open: accident had opened it.”
- C.** “Then one time standing in the flood of it; a deep in-drawn breath—a bracing of strong limbs, and with a bound he was gone.”
- D.** “So does he live, seeking, finding, joying and suffering.”

Refer to the passage from the novel titled *Boy's Life* and the fable titled "Emancipation: A Life Fable." Then answer question 7.

7. You have read the passage from *Boy's Life* and "Emancipation: A Life Fable." Write an essay that identifies a similar theme in each text and compares and contrasts the approaches each text uses to develop this theme. Be sure to support your response with evidence from **both** texts.

Blank writing area with horizontal lines.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

Series of 27 small circles for marking.

SERIAL #



Read the article "The Alligator's Super Sense." Then answer questions 8 through 11.

The Alligator's Super Sense

by Ana Marie Rodriguez



- 1 Dr. Daphne Soares was sitting on the back of an alligator tied up in the bed of a pickup truck.
- 2 The gator had moved into an area where a lot of people live. Dr. Soares and her co-workers had caught the gator and were taking it away. Why would she sit on an alligator? "I had no other place to sit!" she said.
- 3 Dr. Soares is a scientist. Naturally curious, she spent the ride looking at the reptile beneath her. She noticed many small black bumps on the animal's face, especially along the jaws. "What are those little spots for?" she wondered.
- 4 She asked other researchers about the black bumps. No one knew what they were.

5 Dr. Soares began to study them herself. Through her experiments, she learned what the bumps do, and much more. In fact, she discovered one of the alligator’s secrets of survival.

The Alligator Hunts

6 The alligator is a master hunter. It lies just under the water with its eyes, nose, and mouth at the surface. When a bird, mammal, or fish passes by, the reptile turns and snaps its huge jaws. It has taken another meal.

7 Dr. Soares thought the black bumps might help the alligator sense its prey . . . but how?

8 To find out, she collected about 30 alligator eggs and took them to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. After the eggs hatched, she set up experiments to find out what type of sensors the black bumps were. Did they respond to light or electrical currents or even stinky things?

9 Dr. Soares knew how to find the answer. Humans and other animals have many kinds of sensors, such as the ones in the tongue for tasting, in the eye for seeing, and in the skin for feeling. When a sensor is activated, nerves carry electrical signals from the sensor to the brain. For instance, when you put a piece of chocolate into your mouth, sensors in your tongue (taste buds) send signals to the brain. Then you know how sweet the chocolate is.

10 Dr. Soares wanted to watch the electrical activity of the sensors’ nerves to see what triggered a signal.

11 She prepared the baby alligators one by one. First, she gave an alligator a drug to make it sleep. Second, she connected tiny electrodes¹ to the sensor nerves. Third, she connected the electrodes to a computer that would show any nerve activity. Then she placed the sleeping gator into a water tank. She was ready to start the experiment.

No Response!

12 Dr. Soares shone a light on the little black bumps. The computer showed no nerve activity. Next, she exposed the bumps to small electrical currents and then to smelly odors. None of these things activated the nerves.

13 The bumps did not sense light or electricity or odors. What could they detect?

14 Dr. Soares found the answer by chance. She accidentally created ripples in the water. At this moment, the computer buzzed, showing signals from the nerves. The sensors had detected the ripples!

¹electrodes—wires that conduct electricity

15 At first, Dr. Soares didn't believe what she had discovered. But after many experiments, she was convinced that the bumps were pressure sensors that detected small changes in pressure as ripples hit them.

Chomping in the Dark

16 Dr. Soares wanted to know how well the alligator could use its pressure sensors. To find out, she blocked the reptile's other senses. She used petroleum jelly to block the ears, and she turned off the lights. (She used special equipment that let her watch the alligator in the dark.)

17 Finally, she dropped a single drop of water in the tank. The reptile snapped at the water drop!

18 Since those experiments, Dr. Soares has also found pressure sensors in crocodiles, which are relatives of the alligator. She also looked for clues to the sensors in fossils of extinct crocodiles. In fossilized jaw bones, she found little holes where nerves once carried signals from pressure sensors to the brain. The holes are just like the ones in modern alligator jaws.

19 The modern alligator's little black bumps were once a mystery. Now we know that they tell the alligator and its relatives just where and when to chomp. And those little pressure sensors have played that role for a long, long time.

"The Alligator's Super Sense" by Ana Marie Soler-Rodriguez from Highlights for Children Magazine's November 2011 issue, copyright © 2011 by Highlights for Children, Inc., Ohio. Used by permission.

Photo: Photograph of American Alligator, Everglades National Park, Florida (Image No. AD7552), copyright © by Stephen Frink Collection/Almay. Used by permission.

8. Part A

How do paragraphs 1 through 5 contribute to the development of ideas in the article?

- A.** They show how dangerous alligators can be in an area with a high population.
- B.** They suggest that Dr. Soares often behaves in an unexpected manner.
- C.** They explain the circumstances that led to Dr. Soares’s curiosity about black bumps on alligators.
- D.** They provide reasons why Dr. Soares was highly qualified to conduct an experiment.

Part B

Which piece of evidence **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** “The gator had moved into an area where a lot of people live.” (paragraph 2)
- B.** “Why would she sit on an alligator?” (paragraph 2)
- C.** “Dr. Soares is a scientist.” (paragraph 3)
- D.** “‘What are those little spots for?’ she wondered.” (paragraph 3)

9. Part A

Which information from the article does the author intend to support by including the photograph?

- A.** the difference in appearance between alligators and crocodiles
- B.** the size and pattern of the bumps on an alligator’s jaw
- C.** how an uneven jaw makes an alligator a more effective hunter
- D.** how the bumps are affected by the size and shape of an alligator’s jaw

Part B

Which sentence from the article **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** “She noticed many small black bumps on the animal’s face, especially along the jaws.” (paragraph 3)
- B.** “When a bird, mammal, or fish passes by, the reptile turns and snaps its huge jaws.” (paragraph 6)
- C.** “After the eggs hatched, she set up experiments to find out what type of sensors the black bumps were.” (paragraph 8)
- D.** “The reptile snapped at the water drop!” (paragraph 17)

10. Part A

What is the meaning of **sensor** as it is used in paragraph 9 of the article?

- A.** a collection of nerves that sends signals to other animals
- B.** a device that detects changes in the body
- C.** a specialized body part that detects conditions outside of the body
- D.** a large black bump that aids in hunting

Part B

How do the alligators' sensors function according to the article?

- A.** They detect the depth of the water.
- B.** They help the alligator swim straight.
- C.** They help the alligator see in the dark.
- D.** They detect changes in water.

11. Part A

Which statement **best** summarizes the process Dr. Soares follows in her laboratory experiment?

- A.** She began with an idea and conducted experiments until she found data that supported her idea.
- B.** She began with a test subject and conducted experiments until she discovered a special ability.
- C.** She began with a question and conducted experiments until she discovered evidence that provided an answer.
- D.** She began with data that offered an explanation and conducted experiments until she confirmed the data.

Part B

Which two paragraphs from the article **best** support the answer to Part A?

- A.** paragraphs 3 and 15
- B.** paragraphs 4 and 9
- C.** paragraphs 5 and 14
- D.** paragraphs 6 and 17





You have come to the end of Unit 1 of the test.

- **Review your answers.**
- **Then, close your test booklet and answer document and raise your hand to turn in your test materials.**



6 - ELA

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