

# OCCT PREPARATION AND PRACTICE WORKBOOK



**Aligned with the Oklahoma  
Reading Standards and Objectives**

## **GLENCOE LANGUAGE ARTS**

**GRADE 6**

**This helpful workbook provides**

- Test-taking strategies and tips
- Preparation and practice lessons
- A full-length practice reading test

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# INTRODUCTION

The **Grade 6 Oklahoma Core Curriculum Test (OCCT)** assesses your vocabulary skills, your reading comprehension skills, your knowledge of literary forms, and your ability to conduct research and organize information.

The purpose of this book is to help you prepare for the Reading OCCT. There are two main sections in this book—the lessons and the Practice Test.

## THE LESSONS

This workbook contains fifteen lessons. These lessons review skills and knowledge that may be tested on the Grade 6 Reading OCCT, including skills and knowledge related to vocabulary, reading comprehension, literary forms and elements, and research. Each lesson also includes opportunities to learn and practice the skill reviewed in that lesson.

## THE PRACTICE TEST

The Practice Test is similar to the Reading OCCT. Taking it gives you an opportunity to try out everything that you learned as you worked through the lessons.

Completing the lessons and the Practice Test in this workbook will help you develop strategies and skills that any student needs to do well in the testing program.

# TEST-TAKING TECHNIQUES

## GENERAL TIPS FOR TEST TAKING

Here are some general tips for taking standardized tests:

- Stay positive. Thinking positively will help you achieve better results!
- Read every question carefully. Some questions are tricky; make sure you know what you are being asked.
- Fill in answer bubbles completely on the answer sheet.

## READ THE QUESTIONS FIRST

On the OCCT you will read a variety of passages from stories, essays, articles, and poems, and you might need to examine maps, charts, and other graphics. You will then answer questions that test your understanding of these passages.

You might think the best approach is to first read each passage slowly to absorb every detail and then read the questions. But that is usually not the best way to take a test. You will make better use of your time by reading the questions first to find out what to look for and then reading the passage.

Read each question carefully and scan the answer choices. Then read the passage. Knowing what the questions ask and how the answers are worded will free you from trying to remember every detail of the passage and allow you to focus on the passage's main idea and on what the questions require.

## USE THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

When you are not sure of an answer on a multiple-choice question, the best thing to do is to use the *process of elimination* to select an answer. Most multiple-choice questions on tests give you four answer choices, but only one of the choices is the right answer. Figuring out which three answer choices are incorrect is just as good as figuring out which one answer choice is correct. This is where the process of elimination can help. Here is an easy example:

Imagine that you are a contestant on a game show. The host asks you the following question: “What is the capital of the country of Nepal?” If you answer correctly, you will win one million dollars. You are given the following four possible answers:

- Tokyo
- Cairo
- Beijing
- Kathmandu

Do you know the capital of Nepal? Even if you don’t, you can still win the money! Use the process of elimination by completing the following steps:

**Step 1**

Read the question carefully, then read the passage. Look for clues in the passage.

**Step 2**

Eliminate the answer choices that you THINK are probably wrong.

**Step 3**

Choose from the remaining answer choices. The fewer answer choices you have to pick from, the better chance you have of choosing the correct answer.

Let’s see how it works with this question. Which cities above do you know are NOT the capital of Nepal? You may know that Tokyo is the capital of Japan, so it’s probably not also the capital of Nepal. Cairo is the capital of Egypt and Beijing is the capital of China, so neither of those is likely to be the correct answer. That leaves you with only Kathmandu. Kathmandu is probably the capital of Nepal. Even if you don’t know the capital of Nepal, the *process of elimination* makes you a millionaire!

Now let's see how the process of elimination can help on a question you might see on a test such as the Reading OCCT. Use the example and the steps below to learn how to apply this test-taking technique.

Laura stormed up the stairs and through the front door. She slammed the door behind her and threw her backpack onto the living room sofa. Her mother put down her newspaper and looked up in surprise. "That Roberta is so irksome!" Laura proclaimed in a loud voice.

**1▶ In the passage, the word irksome means**

- A** kind.
- B** bright.
- C** annoying.
- D** friendly.

**Step  
1**

Read the question and answer choices carefully, then read the passage. The question asks you to look for the word irksome in the passage. In the passage, Laura is obviously upset. You read that she "stormed up the stairs" and "slammed the door." Obviously Roberta has done something that Laura doesn't like.

**Step  
2**

Review the answer choices. From your work in Step 1, you know that Laura would probably not describe Roberta as kind or friendly. Answer choices A and D must be wrong. Eliminate them.

**Step  
3**

The process of elimination has helped, because you now have only two answer choices instead of four. Even if you don't know what irksome means, you have a much better chance of picking the correct answer. Of the remaining answer choices, which one seems like the best answer, B or C? Reread the passage and think about what Laura is feeling. Because she seems upset with Roberta, answer choice C, annoying, is probably the best answer.

Remember to use the process of elimination on every multiple-choice question that you can't answer right away. Even if you can eliminate only one answer choice, you have increased your chances of choosing the correct answer.



## FIND THE MAIN IDEA

Whenever you read a passage in a standardized test, make sure you focus on understanding the *main idea* of the passage. The main idea is the most important idea or opinion that the author expresses in the passage. Understanding the main idea can help you answer questions about the passage as a whole and about the meaning and importance of specific details.

When determining the main idea of a passage, pay close attention to titles, headings (if there are any), and the first and last sentences of paragraphs.

Let's see how finding the main idea can help on a question you might see on the OCCT. Look at the following example and the steps below to learn how to apply this test-taking strategy.

Although most people think of an “ice age” as a period thousands of years ago when glaciers covered much of North America, some scientists think of “ice ages” in a different way. To them, a major ice age is a period in which there are large ice sheets near Earth’s poles and on mountains. As a matter of fact, we’re still living in a major ice age that started millions of years ago.

Scientists still debate about the causes of ice ages. One popular theory points to the stars. Our solar system consists of the sun, several planets, and millions of smaller objects. Our sun is one of about 400 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, all of which rotate around the center of the galaxy. Our sun makes one complete orbit around the galaxy in about 240 million years. As it does so, it passes through four great “arms” of the galaxy—areas that are especially crowded with stars. Some scientists believe that the periods when our sun’s path moves through these galactic arms correspond to the periods of the great ice ages on Earth.

### 1► What is one possible cause of ice ages?

- A a change in the number of objects in the solar system
- B a change in Earth’s rotation
- C the sun’s path through the arms of the Milky Way
- D a change in the distance between Earth and the Milky Way

#### Step 1

Read the question first. From reading the question, you can determine that the passage will discuss causes of ice ages and refer to at least one possible cause. From reading the answer choices, you can reasonably guess that either *change* or *arms* will be an important word in the answer to the question.

#### Step 2

Identify the main ideas of the passage. A look at the first sentence of each paragraph tells you that the second paragraph probably contains the information you need to answer a question about the causes of ice ages.

The first sentence of that paragraph presents the main idea that there is a debate over the causes of ice ages. Looking more closely at the paragraph, you will notice that the last sentence contains the key word *arms*. You’ll also notice that the last sentence refers to the ice ages on Earth. So choice C—the sun’s path through the arms of the Milky Way—is most likely the best answer.

# TIPS FOR TESTING TIME

Knowing the format of the OCCT and being familiar with the types of questions you will likely find on this test will help you do better on the test. There are several other things you can do before and during the test that will help improve your results.

## BEFORE THE TEST

Here are a few things you can do before taking the OCCT to help you prepare for the test and avoid anxiety:

- Know the test date. Ask your teacher to provide you with the date for the OCCT. Record the date in a personal calendar.
- Know why you are taking the test. Ask your teacher to explain the purpose of the OCCT.
- Get a good rest the night before each test. Being tired on test day will slow you down and make it harder for you to concentrate.
- Eat a normal breakfast and lunch on test day. Eating too little or too much may make you feel sluggish during the test.

## DURING THE TEST

Here are a few things you can do during the test to help you improve your performance:

- Focus on the test. You will be taking the OCCT in a room full of other students. Try not to be distracted by them.
- Read the test instructions carefully. Look at the sample questions provided in the instructions. They will inform you what the questions will be like and how to mark your answers.
- Keep track of time. This is a timed test. Pace yourself to be sure you will complete each section of the test within the specified time.
- Use all the time you have. If you finish a section of the test early, reread the last items in that section and check your answers.



# Lessons

## Lesson

## 1

**Words in Context**

*Molly was distressed to see that the dog had eaten her homework.*

In this sentence, what does the word distressed tell you about how Molly feels? If you don't know the meaning of distressed, you can look at the words in the rest of the sentence for clues to figure it out. If a dog ate *your* homework, you'd probably be very unhappy or upset. This clue tells you that distressed most likely means "very unhappy or upset."

When you figure out a word's meaning by thinking of the words around it, you're looking at the **context** of the word. Now put on your detective's cap and use the example below to learn how to answer more questions about words in context.

**1 ► Which word is closest in meaning to the word murky in the sentence below?**

The water was so murky that Albert could not see the bottom of the pond.

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| <b>A</b> clear  | <b>B</b> shallow   |
| <b>C</b> cloudy | <b>D</b> beautiful |

**Step 1**

Think about what the sentence means as a whole and then decide which answer choice makes the most sense in the context. You can use the process of elimination to figure out the correct answer. First, plug each answer choice into the sentence in place of murky. Then eliminate choices that do not make sense in the context of the sentence. Let's try the first answer choice:

(A) The water was so clear that Albert could not see the bottom of the pond.

Now ask yourself, "Does this sentence make sense?" The sentence tells you that Albert could not see the bottom of the pond. But if the water in the pond were clear, then Albert would be able to see the bottom of the pond. So **A** is incorrect. Now look at the remaining answer choices. If the water were **B**, shallow, then Albert could easily see the bottom of the pond. If the water were **D**, beautiful, well, that doesn't really tell you whether Albert could see the bottom of the pond. But if the water were **C**, cloudy, then Albert would not be able to see the bottom of the pond.

**Step 2**

Since **A**, **B**, and **D** are wrong, the correct answer to the question is **C**.

## Now you try it.

Choose the answer choice that has most nearly the same meaning as the underlined word in each sentence below.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1</b> My grandparents are on an <u>extended</u> vacation, so I will not see them for a long time.</p> <p><b>A</b> enjoyable</p> <p><b>B</b> shortened</p> <p><b>C</b> lengthened</p> <p><b>D</b> relaxing</p> | <p><b>5</b> The students looked up in awe at the <u>mammoth</u> skyscraper.</p> <p><b>A</b> giant</p> <p><b>B</b> ugly</p> <p><b>C</b> paper</p> <p><b>D</b> model</p>  |
| <p><b>2</b> The book about sharks was so <u>fascinating</u> that I could not put it down.</p> <p><b>A</b> interesting</p> <p><b>B</b> heavy</p> <p><b>C</b> difficult</p> <p><b>D</b> boring</p>                    | <p><b>6</b> After Lashawn studied harder, she noticed a <u>significant</u> improvement in her grades.</p> <p><b>A</b> respectful</p> <p><b>B</b> slight</p> <p><b>C</b> unimportant</p> <p><b>D</b> major</p> |
| <p><b>3</b> After having the flu for a week, I felt so <u>frail</u> that I couldn't get out of bed.</p> <p><b>A</b> loud</p> <p><b>B</b> energized</p> <p><b>C</b> wealthy</p> <p><b>D</b> weak</p>                 | <p><b>7</b> The <u>inquisitive</u> child asked her father why the sky is blue.</p> <p><b>A</b> bored</p> <p><b>B</b> curious</p> <p><b>C</b> sneaky</p> <p><b>D</b> polite</p>                                |
| <p><b>4</b> Javier shivered as the <u>frigid</u> air blew through the window.</p> <p><b>A</b> thick</p> <p><b>B</b> cold</p> <p><b>C</b> mild</p> <p><b>D</b> dirty</p>   |   |

## Lesson

## 2

## Purpose for Reading

Before you read, you'll want to determine your **purpose for reading**. Are you looking for facts, advice, or just something frightening or funny? People read for many reasons, such as for information, instruction, or entertainment. Knowing your purpose for reading is the first step in finding what's right for you. Use the example below to learn how to answer questions about the purpose for reading a selection.

### State Park Facilities and Features

	Camping	Hiking Trails	Boat Rental	Swimming	Fishing	Bike Trails	Horseback Riding	Skiing	Restaurant/Food	Lodging
Timber River		+	+		+	+		+	+	
Deep Valley		+		+				+	+	+
Marshall	+	+		+		+				
Kings Forest	+	+		+	+	+			+	+
High Ridge		+		+		+		+	+	+

1 ► You would **most likely** read this selection to

- A learn how to ride a horse.
- B find out the best time of day to go fishing.
- C pass the time in an enjoyable way.
- D find out where to go bike riding.

**Step 1**

How might you use the information in the table above?

---

**Step 2**

Now look at the answer choices. Which answer choices are not supported by what you wrote in Step 1?

---

**Step 3**

Which remaining answer choice is the best purpose for reading this selection? If you chose **D**, you are correct. This table shows a list of parks and the features found in each one, so you could read it to find out where to go bike riding.

## Now you try it.

Read the newspaper article below and answer the questions that follow.

### **Kids from Chicago’s Cabrini Green Learn Urban Farming in Arkansas**

by PAISLEY DODDS—Associated Press, Tuesday, August 19, 1997

PERRYVILLE, Ark.—No overalls or straw hats in this crowd.

Fresh from Chicago’s Cabrini Green housing complex and another development in Milwaukee, a dozen kids are visiting Arkansas to learn how to become inner-city farmers.

Growing cucumbers may keep 16-year-old Helen Marshbanks from joining a gang. Raising catfish under an apartment window sill may put more food on the table for the family of 14-year-old Darius Moore.

For 19-year-old Eric Brown, urban farming is a “cool” complement to playing basketball and watching television. “I want to be a writer when I grow up,” Brown said. “But this thing, yeah, it’s been real cool.”

“For me, doing these kinds of projects has kept me out of trouble and out of gangs that are in my neighborhood,” Marshbanks said Monday.

All are at a four-day, inner-city farming seminar at the Heifer International Project, an international grassroots organization.

The seminar, held on Heifer’s 1,100-acre ranch in central Arkansas, provides some of the budding farmers their first time out of the city. They stay at the “Heifer Hilton”—a barn that sleeps about two dozen.

The seminar aims to show how to boost inner-city crops and expand into rooftop beekeeping, catfish harvesting, worm composting, goat-cheese making, and organic farming.

“We feel really good about doing this,” Moore said. “There are a lot of people who can’t afford things in our neighborhood. I think when people see what we’re doing, they’ll want to get involved too.”

Learning professional techniques could help the gardening projects already running and encourage donors to keep them afloat, Marshbanks said.

“We can see what a difference it’s made in our neighborhood,” she said. “It makes people happy.”

**1 The purpose for reading this selection would most likely be to learn**

- A** how to grow cucumbers.
- B** how to stay out of trouble.
- C** about a farming seminar for city kids.
- D** about differences between Chicago and Arkansas.

**2 Who would benefit most from reading this selection?**

- A** a farmer who raises goats and catfish
- B** a student who is planning a gardening project
- C** a student who wants to take a relaxing vacation
- D** a tourist who is unsure what to wear in Arkansas



Lesson  
**3**

# Predictions

It's the fourth quarter of the basketball game, with only two minutes to go. The score is 77 to 44. Which team is going to win?

When you make an educated guess about what's likely to happen in the future, you're making a **prediction**. To make predictions when you read, pay attention to the writer's clues about characters' feelings, thoughts, and actions. Based on what happens in the passage, you can guess what a character will do. Use the passage below to learn how to answer questions about making predictions.

"Look at this," Anna said. She had \$15 in her hand.

Anna glanced toward the store. "I should've gotten only \$5 back."

Kim smiled. "It's your lucky day."

Anna looked worried. "My mom worked in a store. The cash register had to match the money in the drawer. If it didn't, the cashier had to pay the difference."

Kim shrugged. "Come on. They'll never know."

## 1 ► Based on this passage, Anna will most likely

- A** leave without returning the money.
- B** buy more items from the store.
- C** return the extra \$10 to the cashier.
- D** return the item she bought to get her money back.

### Step 1

Think about the clues the writer gives you about Anna's feelings and actions. "Anna looked worried." This tells you that Anna is concerned that the cashier will have to pay for the mistake.

### Step 2

If Anna cares about what might happen to the cashier, she probably wouldn't just leave without returning the money, so **A** is not correct. Which remaining answer choice is most likely to happen? Anna's concern shows she is taking the situation seriously, so she probably wouldn't try to return the item (**D**) or buy more items (**B**). That leaves **C**, return the extra \$10 to the cashier. **C** is correct.

## Now you try it.

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

### adapted from **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**

by MARK TWAIN

He took up his brush and went tranquilly to work. Ben Rogers hove in sight presently. . . . Ben said: "Hello, old chap, you got to work, hey?"

Tom wheeled suddenly and said: "Why, it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing."

"Say—I'm going in a-swimming, *I am*. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther *work*—wouldn't you? Course you would!"

Tom contemplated the boy a bit, and said: "What do you call work?"

"Why, ain't *that* work?"

Tom resumed his whitewashing, and answered carelessly: "Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer."

"Oh come, now, you don't mean to let on that you *like* it?"

The brush continued to move.

"Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?"

That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed.

**1 From the way Ben's behavior changes at the end of the passage, the reader might predict that he will**

- A** rush off to go swimming.
- B** criticize Tom's painting.
- C** offer to help Tom paint.
- D** give Tom the rest of his apple.

**2 Based on Tom's behavior, we can predict that later in the book he will**

- A** paint Ben's fence.
- B** trick people into helping him paint.
- C** go swimming with Ben.
- D** start a fence-painting business.

# Drawing Conclusions

Authors don't always tell us everything. Sometimes they expect us to make our own connections between ideas and events in a story. For example, in the sentence, "Angela left the stadium proudly, trophy in hand," you can conclude that Angela won a game or sporting event and was awarded a trophy. Active readers **draw conclusions**—they use different pieces of information in a selection to make general statements about characters, situations, and ideas.

Read the passage below and use the steps that follow to learn how to answer questions about drawing conclusions.

## Partners

- 1 Ms. Coffee's social studies students settled down to discuss the new assignment with their partners. Few voices but many busy hands showed that discussions had begun. Corinne looked at Max, who had been assigned to be her partner. He had just transferred into the school, so she didn't know him at all. He was frowning! What if they couldn't work well together?
- 2 Max looked up from the book and sighed.
- 3 "This is going to be hard," he signed. "I hope you studied this chapter on maps because we can't explain it to the class unless we really understand it ourselves."
- 4 Corinne's hopes fell. If Max didn't think she had enough sense to read the assignment, he must think she was really stupid. Working with him would be impossible if he didn't know she loved geography. Well, she'd try to make this work.
- 5 "Sure, I read it," she signed back as she smiled. "I have some books from the library in my locker. They show different kinds of maps, and Dad said I could bring in his software from work when we have time to do some computer work. He's a geographer for the state, and he thinks the project we're doing is great. I think so too."
- 6 Max's face lit up.

7 “Great! I don’t know many kids here yet. Sorry if I acted crabby. I’m glad we’re partners. I like working with somebody who gets excited about geography.”

**I What conclusion might you draw about the students in Max and Corinne’s class?**

- A** The students like geography.
- B** The students are hearing impaired.
- C** The students know their partners well.
- D** The students don’t like noisy rooms.

**Step  
1**

Think about what happens in the first paragraph. Is there anything about the students’ discussion that might give you a clue to the answer? Well, the story says that, while the students discuss the assignment, there are “few voices but many busy hands.” What might this suggest to you? Now look for other clues in the remainder of the story.

---

---

**Step  
2**

Now review the answer choices again. Which choice seems to explain the clues you found in step 1? If you chose **B**, then you are correct! There are few voices, and the students are signing to each other because the students have hearing impairments.

## Now you try it.

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

### The First Day of Basketball

- 1 Chris slowly walked out onto the court. He stared at the floor, imagining that the other kids wouldn't notice him as long as he pretended not to notice them.
- 2 Today was the first day of basketball in gym class. Chris could picture himself falling flat on his face as he attempted to run and dribble at the same time. Mr. Henson, the gym teacher, divided the last group of boys into two teams and told them to take their positions on the court. Four other boys were on Chris's team, so maybe he wouldn't even have to touch the ball.
- 3 As soon as Mr. Henson blew his whistle, the gymnasium was alive with the sounds of yelling and the squeaking of gym shoes on the hardwood floor. Chris stood stiffly on the court as the other boys dashed around him. Chris watched his teammates nervously, afraid that someone might pass him the ball.
- 4 Although Gary Parker could see that Chris looked anxious, he decided to pass Chris the ball. Chris caught the ball with an unconscious reflex.
- 5 For a moment, Chris just stood in the middle of the court holding the ball. "Go! Go!" his teammates shouted from all sides.
- 6 Before Chris realized what he was doing, he was racing down the court, effortlessly dribbling the ball at his side. "Shoot! Shoot!" his teammates were now shouting. Chris tossed the ball up into the air. His eyes widened and his mouth hung open as the ball swished through the basket.

Choose the **best** answer for each multiple-choice question.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b>    <b>The passage shows that Chris</b></p> <p><b>A</b>    is on the varsity basketball team.</p> <p><b>B</b>    is failing gym class.</p> <p><b>C</b>    has been looking forward to playing basketball all year.</p> <p><b>D</b>    does not think he is a very good basketball player.</p> | <p><b>2</b>    <b>At the end of the story, Chris's eyes widen and his mouth hangs open because</b></p> <p><b>A</b>    he is getting sick.</p> <p><b>B</b>    he has trouble seeing the ball.</p> <p><b>C</b>    he cannot believe he made a basket.</p> <p><b>D</b>    he is worried about what his teammates think of him.</p> |
|--|---|

**3 Mr. Henson blows his whistle**

- A** to divide the class into teams.
- B** because Chris got a basket.
- C** to get the game started.
- D** to stop the game.

**4 Gary concludes that Chris looks anxious because Chris**

- A** stands stiffly on the court as the other boys dash around him.
- B** stares at the floor.
- C** falls as he attempts to run and dribble at the same time.
- D** is afraid to leave the court.

**5 Chris's teammates probably tell him to shoot the ball because**

- A** they want him to give up the ball.
- B** he is just holding the ball and standing still.
- C** he is about to fall on his face.
- D** he is approaching the basket.

## Main Idea

Whenever someone tells you the plot of a TV show or movie, he or she probably starts with the **main idea**. This is the key or most important idea—the heart of the story.

One way to figure out the main idea when you read a passage is to ask yourself, “What point is the author trying to make? What does the author want me to understand, do, or believe?” Then sum it up in a few words. That’s the main idea.

Use the example and steps below to learn how to answer questions about main idea.

## Weathering

Weathering is a process by which rocks are broken down into smaller and smaller pieces, which finally break down into soil. Over millions of years, weathering has helped change Earth’s surface. The process continues today. Weathering wears mountains down to hills and creates shallow caves in some types of rock. It can cause potholes in streets and smooth out the carved writing on tombstones and on the cornerstones of buildings. Weathering is a powerful, but slow, force.

### 1 ► What is the main idea of this paragraph?

- A** Mountains are made of rock.
- B** Weathering ruins buildings and streets.
- C** Weathering causes changes in rock and other surfaces.
- D** Some tombstones show signs of weathering.

#### Step 1

As you read, pay special attention to words and phrases that may help you summarize the main idea of a passage, such as *weathering* and *breaks down*. Then in your own words, summarize the passage.

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#### Step 2

Now look again at the answer choices. Which choice is most like the summary you wrote in Step 1? If you chose **C**, then you are correct! The other choices are facts and details from the paragraph that can help you determine the main idea.

## Now you try it.

**Read the passages below and answer the questions that follow.**

Soil is a mixture of weathered rock, organic matter, mineral fragments, water, and air. You know that weathering breaks rocks into smaller and smaller pieces. Then plants take root in these small pieces of rock, and worms, insects, and fungi come to live there. These living things add organic matter (such as leaves, twigs, and the remains of dead worms and insects) to the rock fragments. Rock fragments are not soil until plants and animals live in them.

**1 What is the main idea of this paragraph?**

- A** Soil needs air and water to produce plants.
- B** Worms and insects are part of the soil.
- C** Fungi live in rocks.
- D** Soil is made up of rock, organic materials, water, and air.

[1] Mechanical weathering breaks up rocks but does not change them in other ways. [2] An example of mechanical weathering is the freezing and thawing of water in the cracks of rocks, a process that causes rocks to break apart. [3] Chemical weathering, on the other hand, changes the mineral composition of the rocks and may even dissolve the rocks. [4] An example of chemical weathering is the color change that occurs when certain types of rock come in contact with the oxygen in the air. [5] Both of these weathering processes help create soil.

**2 Which sentence states the main idea of this paragraph?**

- A** sentence 1
- B** sentence 3
- C** sentence 4
- D** sentence 5

**3 Which of the following titles best summarizes the main idea of this paragraph?**

- A** *Chemical Weathering*
- B** *Mechanical Weathering*
- C** *Two Kinds of Weathering*
- D** *Mineral Composition*



## Supporting Details

“You won’t find a better cereal than Spiffy-Os.” If an advertisement told you that, you’d naturally wonder, “Why are Spiffy-Os better than other cereals?” You’d want evidence to back that claim; you’d want **supporting details**—facts and other information that support a statement that has been made. To find supporting details in a selection, look for key words and phrases. Jotting down key words can help you locate information more easily when you are answering questions.

Use the example below to learn how to answer questions about supporting details.

Diamonds, the hardest natural minerals known to humankind, are made of pure carbon. A diamond is formed when the carbon, buried deep underground, is compressed by the weight of the earth above it. The carbon turns into a solid crystal that can cut glass, rocks, and metal. The word *diamond* comes from the Greek word that means “unbeatable.”

According to many ancient beliefs, wearing a diamond makes a person unbeatable in war. The great military leader Napoleon had a famous stone, called the Regent diamond, set into his sword.

### I Which detail in the passage supports the idea that diamonds are the hardest natural mineral?

- A Diamonds form when pure carbon is compressed.
- B A famous diamond was set in Napoleon’s sword.
- C Diamonds can cut glass, rocks, and metal.
- D The word *diamond* comes from a Greek word.

#### Step 1

Look for key words and phrases in the passage that will help you recognize details about the hardness of diamonds. For example, *solid* and *cut glass, rocks, and metal* are words that will probably lead you to the correct answer.

#### Step 2

Which answer choice most closely contains the correct details? Answer **C**, Diamonds can cut glass, rocks, and metal. The other choices are also details from the selection, but they do not provide information that supports the idea that diamonds are the hardest natural mineral.

## Now you try it.

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

### A Ship of Gold

The sinking of the ship *SS Central America* was among the worst sea disasters in the history of U.S. shipping. The *Central America* sailed from Panama in 1857 with 477 passengers, 101 crew members, and twenty-one tons of gold on board. The passengers were returning to the East Coast from the California gold rush. The ship's cargo—thousands of gold coins and hundreds of gold bars—was headed to the nation's banking capital, New York City.

Off the coast of South Carolina, the ship encountered a huge storm that approached quickly. The ship's sails were shredded. Gigantic waves washed aboard for two days. Water leaking into the boiler put out the boiler fire. The pumps failed, and although everyone helped bail water from the ship, the *Central America* began to sink.

Although two ships came to the aid of the *Central America*, 425 people died when the ship sank.

The loss of human life was the worst part of the tragedy, but the lost gold increased worries about having enough gold in the nation's banks. This caused a crisis in which many people lost money.

- 1 **How did the sinking of the *Central America* become a banking crisis?**
  - A Many bankers died when the ship sank.
  - B People lost their savings, and panic broke out on board.
  - C Leaving passengers behind when the ship sank caused anger.
  - D People were worried that there wasn't enough gold in the nation's banks.
  
- 2 **Why did the ship start to sink during the storm?**
  - A The boiler fire went out, and the pumps failed.
  - B The wind turned the ship on its side.
  - C The sails were shredded in the wind.
  - D Water began leaking into the cabins.

# Fact and Opinion

“My school’s basketball team won the state championship last year.”

“Mrs. Pimmerman is the best science teacher in the school.”

How do these two statements differ? The first one is a **fact**—you can prove whether it’s true; the second statement is an **opinion**—it’s what someone believes to be true. It’s important to understand the difference between fact and opinion. If you mistake opinion for fact, you might make poor choices and reach the wrong conclusions.

In judging information, always ask, “Is that just someone’s opinion, or do we know it to be true?” Use the example and the steps below to learn how to answer questions about fact and opinion.

[1] Watching the television program that Mr. Stevens assigned to our class was a good way to learn history. [2] The show had actors reading from the Constitution of the United States. [3] Each actor read a section of the Constitution, and then the program showed a scene from the news or from a movie that was an example of how the Constitution fits situations today. [4] Every scene in the program was interesting. [5] Our next assignment will be to read the same material in our history book.

**1 Which pair of sentences gives the writer’s opinion of the television program?**

**A** sentences 1 and 4

**B** sentences 1 and 5

**C** sentences 2 and 3

**D** sentences 3 and 4

**Step  
1**

Pay special attention to words that may help you decide which sentences are opinions. Remember, opinions usually tell us what someone thinks or feels about something. On the lines below, write the numbers of the sentences that are facts and that are opinions.

Facts: \_\_\_\_\_

Opinions: \_\_\_\_\_

**Step  
2**

Look again at the answer choices. Which pair of sentences matches the numbers you wrote in Step 1? If you chose **A**, then you are correct! The writer may have enjoyed learning from the program and found it interesting, but those are his or her opinions about the experience. Sentences 2, 3, and 5 are facts that can be proved.

## Now you try it.

Read the passages below and answer the questions that follow.

When it comes to shopping malls, everybody thinks that big is best! A mall in Minnesota, called the Mall of America, is one of the largest. It covers more than four million square feet. It has a big roller coaster and a Ferris wheel that's seventy-four feet high. Busloads of tourists visit this mall every day. You'd love it!

1. Which of the following statements from the paragraph above is **not** a fact?
- A Many tourists visit the Mall of America.
  - B The Mall of America has a roller coaster.
  - C A mall in Minnesota is one of the largest malls.
  - D You'd love it.

[1] Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the most fascinating reef in the world. [2] It is the largest structure made up of living organisms on Earth. [3] Three hundred sixty species of coral can be found there. [4] In the entire world, there are only about 2,300 coral species. [5] This means that more than 15 percent of all coral species can be seen in this one place off the coast of Australia.

2. Which sentence from the paragraph above is **not** a fact?
- A sentence 1
  - B sentence 2
  - C sentence 3
  - D sentence 4
3. If someone were describing a building, which of the following descriptions would be an opinion?
- A It is one of the smallest buildings on the block.
  - B It is 67 feet high.
  - C It is the least interesting building on the block.
  - D It has six floors.

Lesson  
8

# Bias and Accuracy of Text

Whenever you read an ad, an article, or an editorial, ask yourself, “How reliable is this?” Is the information **biased** (showing only one side of an issue)? Is it **accurate**? It is important to check whether the writer is using proof to support his or her position, considering both sides of the story, and being honest and accurate.

Use the example and steps below to learn how to answer questions about bias and accuracy of text.

“Unlike my opponent, I believe in focusing on the positive. We’ve heard enough talk about rampant crime, stores closing, and the litter issue. You’d think that only bad things happen in our neighborhood. Well, I’ve seen plenty to be proud of. I’ve seen people mowing their lawns. I’ve seen people painting their houses. I’ve seen people walking after dark. We need to build on what’s good in our community. If elected, I will remove all parking meters and offer free popcorn in our parks. That’s free popcorn *with* butter.”

## I What is this candidate’s bias?

- A that only bad things happen in the neighborhood
- B that many positive activities occur in the community
- C that more discussion about crime and litter issues is needed
- D that popcorn should always be served with butter

### Step 1

Read the speech. What does the candidate spend most of her time discussing?

---

### Step 2

Now look at the answer choices. Which answer choice is correct? If you said **B**, you’re right! Remember, **bias** is showing only one side of an issue. The candidate states that there has been enough talk about negative issues, so **A** and **C** are not correct. Answer **D** can’t be supported by the information in the passage. The candidate mentions several positive things that she has seen occurring in the community. This shows that her bias is to focus on the positive.

## Now you try it.

Read the paragraph below and answer the questions that follow it.

### Advertisement from 1881: Use Green Mountain Cathartic Pills

This pill is a standard liver regulator, an infallible remedy for malarial fevers, jaundice, restlessness, sick headache, biliousness, dyspepsia, etc. That this pill has been used in private practice for 35 years is the greatest recommendation that can be given it. Try one box. Only 25 cents.

- 1 The reader should question the pill's effectiveness because**
  - A** it costs only 25 cents.
  - B** it has been on the market for only 35 years.
  - C** it doesn't address the reader's specific medical condition.
  - D** there is no explanation of how and why the pill works.
  
- 2 What words are used to win the reader's trust?**
  - A** cathartic, regulator, remedy
  - B** standard, infallible, recommendation
  - C** jaundice, restlessness, sick headache
  - D** use, try, only

# Patterns of Organization

**Patterns of organization** are the ways information is organized in a selection. As you read, look for key words and phrases that give you clues as to what pattern was used.

Pattern	Key Words and Phrases
<b>Time Order</b> — <i>X happened first, then Y</i>	<i>First, next, last</i>
<b>Cause and Effect</b> — <i>X caused Y to happen</i>	<i>therefore, so, because, as a result</i>
<b>Problem and Solution</b> — <i>X was the problem, so Y was done to fix it</i>	
<b>Comparison and Contrast</b> — <i>how X and Y are alike or different</i>	<i>similar to, like, different than, however, but, unlike, although,</i>

Use the example and the steps below to learn how to answer questions about patterns of organization.

The family’s first move away from the rural South was difficult for Ben, but now—well into a Wisconsin winter—he is used to the voices and activities of his classmates in the North. Just a month ago his aunt teased him about the amount of time he spends on the outdoor hockey rink in the park near school. She told him he was even beginning to sound like a northerner. “Y’all never say *y’all* any more,” she had said, laughing at him.

The next change will be when his dad’s temporary work in Wisconsin ends in June. Back to the South! Or maybe to Southern California! Ben isn’t sure how he feels about that, but he is sure he won’t be playing hockey outdoors!

**1** Which best describes the pattern of organization of the passage?

- A** time order
- B** problem and solution
- C** comparison and contrast
- D** cause and effect

**Step 1**

What key words in the passage signal how the ideas are organized?

---

**Step 2**

Review the answer choices. Which answer choice applies to the entire passage? If you chose **A**, you are correct.

## Now you try it.

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

When Frank Zamboni and his brother worked together as ice makers, refrigeration was rare. It was the 1930s, and railroad and trucking firms needed ice to keep food cold while it was being shipped. Ice makers such as the Zambonis solved that problem by providing ice.

Also at that time, interest in ice skating was growing. Unfortunately, few cities or towns could build outdoor rinks that would be usable for skating more than one or two months a year, and many areas (such as Southern California, where the Zambonis lived) never had weather that remained cold enough to keep ice frozen. Californians wanted their chance to skate! Because of this problem, the ice-making Zambonis developed a way to create an outdoor rink in Southern California. This rink, called Iceland, was later enclosed. It became one of the first large rinks in the United States.

The next problem was to maintain smooth, clean ice for the skaters. At the time, the process of resurfacing ice involved tractors, squeegees, hoses, scrapers, a team of workers, and long waits. By 1949 Frank Zamboni had solved the problem. His machine is simple, quick, and—even today—fun to watch. A new era in skating was born when the Zambonis hit the ice!

- 1 What term best describes the pattern of organization of the passage?**
  - A** time order
  - B** cause and effect
  - C** comparison and contrast
  - D** problem and solution
  
- 2 Which problem did Frank Zamboni tackle first?**
  - A** Too many railroad cars were being used for passengers.
  - B** There were not enough skating rinks in Southern California.
  - C** Refrigerators did not need ice.
  - D** Frank wanted to fire his brother.



# Genres

Different categories of literature are called **genres**. Each genre has its own rules, styles, characteristics, and structure. Here are some genres you already know:

- *Nonfiction*—literature based on fact; includes biographies, essays, and informational text such as articles and instructions, which are written to convey knowledge about real people and experiences
- *Fiction*—literature based on situations and characters invented by the writer; includes short stories and novels; popular types include folktales, historical fiction, and science fiction
- *Poetry*—literature that combines figurative language, imagery, and sound devices to create an emotional effect; in poetry, the chief emphasis is on the *line*, rather than the sentence, as a unit of meaning
- *Drama*—literature intended to be performed for an audience; plays are the most common form of drama

When you can identify the genre of a piece of literature, you can use the rules of that genre to better evaluate and appreciate what you're reading. Use the example and steps below to learn how to answer questions about genres.

## from **Midnight**

*[It is midnight and the sky is clear. The stage is dark except for a little moonlight that falls on the graves.]*

**Brian:** Hey! Zoe! Where are you?

**Zoe:** [Stumbles and falls] Umm, over here. . . .

**Brian:** Well, where is that?

**Zoe:** Well, I'm not really sure . . . But, ya know, Brian, if you'd just turn the stupid flashlight on, maybe you'd be able to figure it out.

**Brian:** Oh. Right. [Turns on flashlight] So where are you again?

**Zoe:** [Looks over the gravestone she is leaning on] Looks like I'm over by EMERSON.

**I This passage is a type of**

- A** poem.
- B** drama.
- C** fiction.
- D** nonfiction.

**Step  
1**

Look for clues in the passage to help you determine its genre. For example, there are character labels. What other clues can you find?

---

**Step  
2**

Review the answer choices. Which choice best identifies the literary form of the passage? If you said **B**, you're correct! The character labels, dialogue, and stage directions are all clues that this is a play or television show; plays and TV shows are a form of drama.

## Now you try it.

Read the passages and answer the questions.

### from **The Adventure of the Gimli Glider**

What if you were on a plane and it ran out of fuel halfway through the flight? On July 23, 1983, that's exactly what happened to the 61 passengers on Air Canada Flight 143. Halfway between Montreal and Edmonton, Canada, the Boeing 767 they were on ran out of fuel when it was 12,497 meters (41,000 feet) over Red Lake, Ontario.

What caused the problem? The Boeing 767 didn't have enough fuel because of an error in converting between the metric system, which uses kilograms and liters, and the older English system that measures fuel in gallons and pounds.

- 1 What type of writing is this passage?**
  - A** short story
  - B** drama
  - C** nonfiction
  - D** legend
  
- 2 Which of the following clues best describes this genre?**
  - A** It is a narrative.
  - B** It has stage directions.
  - C** Its tone is fanciful and imaginative.
  - D** It shares the writer's ideas about real people and events.

## The Snake

On a dusty road  
a snake slips into my view,  
a sleek green creature!

- 3 This is an example of a**
- A** poem.
  - B** drama.
  - C** myth.
  - D** essay.
- 4 Which of the following is not a form of fiction?**
- A** short stories
  - B** instructions
  - C** myths
  - D** novels

# Author's Purpose and Point of View

Whether a selection is an article, a story, or a play, the author has a distinct **purpose**, or reason for writing it, and **point of view**, or opinion about the subject. When reading a selection, think about the author's goal. What is he or she trying to tell you? What is his or her opinion or position? Ask yourself, "Are the author's words meant to persuade, entertain, or inform?" The answer to this question will help reveal the author's purpose.

Use the example below to learn how to answer questions about author's purpose and point of view.

Raccoons are nocturnal, which means they are usually active only at night. Throughout the night, they search for food such as fish, frogs, and plant material. Raccoons are also scavengers, which means they eat garbage or whatever else they can find that is edible. Raccoons often wash their food before they eat it. During the day, these creatures sleep in rocky areas or in hollowed-out tree trunks.

- I** The author wrote this passage mainly to
- A** inform the reader about raccoons.
  - B** describe where raccoons sleep.
  - C** give the definition of *nocturnal*.
  - D** explain why raccoons eat garbage.

## Step 1

Think about the kinds of details the author provides in this paragraph. Then summarize in a single sentence what the paragraph tells you.

---

## Step 2

Now look at the answer choices. Which one seems to be the best match to what you wrote? If you chose answer **A**, you are correct! Answer **A** summarizes the author's purpose. The other choices are details from the passage that inform readers about the habits of raccoons.

## Now you try it.

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

Dear Grandma and Grandpa,

Dad said it's all right to e-mail you about the present you said you want to send me. Here's my idea.

While I was waiting for Mom in the mall yesterday, I saw a poster that I like more than any other picture I've ever seen. I think it's a photograph. There's nothing in the photo except the pond in front, a tree way off in the distance on the right-hand side of the picture, and two beautiful, beautiful giraffes!

The giraffes are drinking from the pond. One has its head down to the water, while the other one keeps his head up. I suppose he's like a lookout. The giraffes are just silhouettes. I think the sun just set because the sky behind them is still bright.

That picture is so calm and beautiful. When I told Dad what it cost, he said it was okay for me to ask you for it as a birthday present. Next time I go to the mall, I'll look at the photographer's name in the bottom corner. Maybe you can track it down at a mall near you.

Thanks for thinking of me and promising me a present. Mom says we're coming to see you this summer. I love to come there and visit you.

Love,

Manny

- 1 What is Manny's purpose for writing the e-mail?**
- A** to persuade his grandparents to give him a poster that he likes
  - B** to describe a poster he had seen
  - C** to explain where giraffes live
  - D** to make plans to visit his grandparents next summer

- 2 How does the poster make Manny feel?**
- A** excited
  - B** curious
  - C** calm
  - D** determined

# Conflict

**Conflict** is the struggle between opposing forces in a story. There are many different types of conflict. An **external conflict** exists when a character struggles against some outside force, like nature, society, fate, or another person. An **internal conflict** exists within the mind of a character who is torn between opposing feelings or goals.

When you are reading about a conflict, examine both sides of the conflict carefully to be sure you understand why one side is a threat to the other. Keep in mind that there are many types of conflicts and not all of them involve hostile behavior.

Use the example below to learn how to answer questions about literary elements and story structure.

## from “Last Cover”

by PAUL ANNIXTER

It was late February, and I remember the bleak, dead cold that had set in, cold that was a rare thing for our Carolina hills. Flocks of sparrows and snowbirds had appeared to peck hungrily at all that the pigs and chickens didn't eat.

“This one's a killer,” Father would say of a morning, looking out at the whitened barn roof. “This one will make the shoats [pigs] squeal.”

A fire snapped all day in our cookstove and another in the stone fireplace in the living room, but still the farmhouse was never warm. The leafless woods were bleak and empty, and I spoke of that to Father when I came back from my search.

“It's always a sad time in the woods when the seven sleepers are under cover,” he said.

“What sleepers are they?” I asked. Father was full of woods lore.

“Why, all the animals that have got sense enough to hole up and stay hid in weather like this.”

**I One conflict in this story is between**

- A** a man and his son.
- B** living creatures and the cold.
- C** people and animals.
- D** all of these.

**Step  
1**

As you read the passage, ask yourself, “Who are the characters in this story?” Are the characters just people, or animals too? Then ask yourself, “With whom or what do the characters clash?” Do they struggle with each other or with an outside force?

**Step  
2**

In your own words, describe the conflict in this passage.

---

**Step  
3**

Look again at the answer choices. Which answer is most like the conflict you described in Step 2? If you said **B**, you are right! All of the characters mentioned in the passage—the people and the animals—are struggling to survive the cold.



## Now you try it.

**Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.**  
**Note that there may be more than one conflict in a story.**

### Atalanta and the Race

According to Greek myth, a young woman named Atalanta was warned by a seer—a person who sees the future—that she should never marry. If she were to do so, the seer said, she would suffer and bring disaster upon others. This was to be her fate. Yet her father, the king, insisted that she marry.

The seer's warning frightened Atalanta, and she set out to avoid her fate while still following her father's wishes. She put forth the word that she would marry only a man who could beat her—a powerful and swift runner—in a footrace. However, any man who lost the race to her would have to give up his life. She was certain that no man would accept such terms.

However, many men tried, lost the race, and were put to death.

Then Hippomenes tried to win Atalanta. First he turned to Venus, the goddess of love. He asked Venus to help him find a way to win the race. Venus heard his plea and gave him three golden apples. She told Hippomenes that if he would throw an apple at the right time, a spell would make Atalanta stop to pick up the apple that he had thrown.

The race began. When Atalanta ran past Hippomenes, he tossed one of the apples so that it landed a short distance away. The famous runner stopped long enough to pick up the beautiful apple, and Hippomenes passed her by.

Three times this happened, and at the last moment, Hippomenes won the race. Thus he could marry Atalanta. But Hippomenes forgot to give thanks to Venus, to whom he owed his triumph. Venus, a terrible and powerful goddess, came to the couple and turned them into lions. Atalanta's fate was fulfilled.

**1 Which choice represents two sides of a conflict in the story?**

- A** Atalanta and Venus
- B** Hippomenes and the king
- C** Atalanta and her fate
- D** Venus and the king

**2 What causes Venus to become angry?**

- A** Atalanta's failure to obey her father
- B** the king's demand that his daughter marry
- C** Venus's dislike of the seer
- D** Hippomenes's failure to thank Venus

**3 Which does not represent a conflict in the story?**

- A** Atalanta against Hippomenes
- B** Atalanta against her father
- C** Venus against Hippomenes
- D** Hippomenes against the lions

# Character

Every story has **characters**. Often these are people, but sometimes they can be animals or even objects that speak and behave like people. Without characters, there is no story, no action, and no conflict. The best characters are those we can relate to—who are, in some way, like us.

When you read, pay attention to how the characters think, look, and act. Sometimes you can learn more about characters from what they do than from what they say. Notice details about characters that will help you draw conclusions about them.

Use the example below to learn how to answer questions about characters.

Nell raced out her front door when she heard the desperate meowing coming from the tree on the front lawn. Her cat, Daisy, had climbed higher than she ever had before, and she didn't seem able to get down. Nell didn't know how strong the branches were or how well they would support her weight if she climbed the tree. There was no time to make a mistake. Nell ran inside and hunted until she found Daisy's favorite toy, a rubber mouse that squeaked. The minute Daisy heard the squeak she forgot her fear and started down.

**I Nell can best be described as**

- A** careless.
- B** quick thinking.
- C** desperate.
- D** miserable.

**Step  
1**

Think about how Nell reacts to the problem. Write a few descriptive phrases about Nell's problem-solving ability on the lines below.

---



---

**Step  
2**

Now review the answer choices. Which one best describes Nell? If you chose **B**, you are correct. Nell wasn't careless by attempting to climb the tree, and although she may have felt miserable that her cat was unsafe, and desperate to get her down, Nell used quick thinking to coax Daisy out of the tree.

## Now you try it.

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

### Fallen Friendship

Allison and Karen had been good friends since they were seven years old. They played together on the school's field hockey team. But one accident on the hockey field changed their friendship forever.

In a game near the end of the season, Karen tripped Allison. Karen was not watching where she was running, and her stick caught Allison's leg. Allison tripped and twisted her leg badly. Her knee swelled up like a cantaloupe, and the doctor said she would not be able to play for the rest of the season.

Allison angrily accused Karen of tripping her on purpose. She said Karen was jealous that she was a better player. Karen insisted it had just been an accident. But Allison did not believe her, and they stopped speaking to each other.

One day a few years later Karen saw Allison going to the library. After so many years of separation, they now were just a few feet from each other. Karen smiled at Allison and said hello.

Allison just walked by her as if she did not even see her old friend. But as Allison opened the door of the library, a tear fell down her cheek.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>1 Allison can <u>best</u> be described as</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A</b> kind.</li><li><b>B</b> stubborn.</li><li><b>C</b> lazy.</li><li><b>D</b> happy.</li></ul> <p><b>2 When Karen smiles and greets Allison, she shows that she is</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A</b> forgiving.</li><li><b>B</b> phony.</li><li><b>C</b> worried.</li><li><b>D</b> jealous.</li></ul> | <p><b>3 The passage provides evidence that both Allison and Karen have an interest in</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A</b> reading.</li><li><b>B</b> athletics.</li><li><b>C</b> movies.</li><li><b>D</b> fighting.</li></ul> <p><b>4 In the second paragraph, Karen can <u>best</u> be described as</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>A</b> cruel.</li><li><b>B</b> funny.</li><li><b>C</b> superior.</li><li><b>D</b> careless.</li></ul> |
|--|--|

## Figurative Language

“The snow clung to the trees like cotton balls.” “When my brother gets angry, he’s as loud as thunder.” “The science test was a piece of cake.”

All of these are examples of **figurative language**—language that sets a mood and makes literature come alive. Figurative language includes:

- *Idioms*—commonly used phrases: *Nothing upsets Jerry, he’s so thick-skinned.*
- *Metaphor*—a comparison of two unlike things: *Melanie’s smile was a bit of sunshine.*
- *Simile*—a comparison using *like* or *as*: *My cat runs as fast as the wind.*
- *Personification*—giving human characteristics to an animal, an object, or a concept: *The moon danced across the night sky.*

When you read, think about how the author creates an image or picture of what he or she is describing.

### Wind at the Camp Ground

Last night its warm breath blew against the canvas walls,  
then howled around the entrance to my tent,  
and whistled an invitation  
that faded as it climbed the hill.

At dawn it calls to me again. “Come climb with me.”  
I follow its soft breath to the growing light.  
High on the hill, we meet the sun  
and greet a morning, cool and bright.

**1 The speaker says “its warm breath blew against the canvas walls.” This is an example of**

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>A</b> an idiom. | <b>C</b> a metaphor.      |
| <b>B</b> a simile. | <b>D</b> personification. |

**Step  
1**

What word gives a clue that this is an example of figurative language?

**Step  
2**

Now choose the answer choice that correctly describes the figurative language used in this line. If you said **D**, you are right! The writer describes the wind in such a way that it sounds alive.

## Now you try it.

For each item, choose the phrase that has the same meaning as the underlined words.

- 1 Davy's face lit up when we told him we were going to the cabin for an entire week.
- A smiled broadly
  - B laughed out loud
  - C pretended to be happy
  - D looked displeased
- 2 I think I'll like the elderly man in the cabin near ours. Dad says he's like an old shoe.
- A odd looking
  - B comfortable to be with
  - C wrinkled
  - D cross and unfriendly
- 3 Grandma said she's a duck out of water at the cabin because she doesn't have to cook or clean like she does at home.
- A not able to swim
  - B looking forward to swimming
  - C feeling strange and out of place
  - D feeling comfortable
- 4 Davy was shivering when he came in from swimming. "It's like an icebox out there," he reported.
- A snowing
  - B extremely cold
  - C surrounded by dogs
  - D too quiet

# Sources and Organization

You can't write a good report without solid **sources** and strong **organization**. You need to know the best places to search for the most accurate and up-to-date information on a topic. You also need to know how to arrange and summarize the information you find in a clear and logical way. Use the examples below to learn how to answer questions about sources and organization.

- I** Read the following item and choose the best answer to the question that follows it.

**Keisha wants to write a report on modern high-speed trains. Which of the following books would she find useful?**

- A** *Early American Railroads*
- B** *Civil War Trains*
- C** *Bullet Trains: A 21st Century Solution*
- D** *The Underground Railroad*

**Step  
1**

Think about the key words in the question: modern high-speed trains. Then, for each answer choice, decide whether the subject matter would be useful for Keisha's report.

**Step  
2**

Review the answer choices again. Which is the correct answer? If you said **C**, you're right! **A** deals with early American railroads, not modern trains. **B** is similar to **A**, so it is also incorrect, and **D** focuses on the secret network used by enslaved people escaping to freedom before the Civil War. But **C** is about modern high-speed trains, so **C** is the correct answer.

- 2 Read the following item and choose the **best** answer to the question that follows it.

Here is an outline for part of Chinera’s report on the Lewis and Clark Expedition:

- I. Goals of the expedition
  - A. Finding a route to the Pacific Ocean
  - B. Mapping the Louisiana Purchase
  - C. Meeting with native peoples
  - D. Describing new plants and animals

In which section should she include information on the subject of learning about new cultures?

- A I. A
- B I. B
- C I. C
- D I. D

**Step  
1**

Think about what each section of Chinera’s report will cover. Then, for each answer choice, decide whether information about new cultures belongs in that section of the outline.

**Step  
2**

So which answer choice is best? Learning about new cultures does not seem to relate to the route to the Pacific Ocean, so **A** is probably not correct. **B**, mapping, and **D**, describing plants and animals, have no direct connection to learning about new cultures either. But learning about new cultures could be a reason for meeting with native peoples. Therefore, answer **C** is the best place for Chinera to include the information she finds about learning about new cultures.



## Now you try it.

Choose the **best** answer for each multiple-choice question.

- 1 Antonio is planning a report on skateboarding. Where would he be able to find the most up-to-date information about skateboarding contests?**

  - A** an encyclopedia
  - B** an almanac
  - C** the Internet
  - D** the card catalog in the library
- 2 Camille has been asked to write a biographical study of William Shakespeare. What source should she use to get an accurate overview of her subject's life?**

  - A** the library
  - B** the Internet
  - C** an almanac
  - D** an encyclopedia
- 3 For a report on the early history of his neighborhood, Isaac has consulted old newspapers in the library. How else might Isaac get information on what it was like to live in his neighborhood sixty years ago?**

  - A** interview an elderly resident
  - B** look in an almanac
  - C** browse the Internet
  - D** read current magazines
- 4 Students have been asked to write a report about activities at their favorite vacation spot. Each student already has general information about the place he or she has selected. Where might each student find additional interesting information?**

  - A** an atlas
  - B** an encyclopedia
  - C** brochures from the area's office of tourism
  - D** an almanac
- 5 Manuel's assignment is to write a paper on a person who has made an important contribution to science in the past twenty-five years. Manuel needs help finding an appropriate topic. Who might be most able to help him find general and specific information?**

  - A** his best friend
  - B** an older resident of his neighborhood
  - C** the owner of a bookstore
  - D** the reference librarian in his neighborhood library

**6** Eva plans to write a report on recycling. Besides logging on to appropriate sites on the Internet, where might she find recent magazine articles on her subject?

- A** an encyclopedia
- B** the *Farmers' Almanac*
- C** the card catalog
- D** the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*

**7** Jason is writing a paper on the California gold rush. Where should he look first for basic facts about the history of the gold rush?

- A** a dictionary
- B** an encyclopedia
- C** a periodical index
- D** the Internet

**8** Sarah is planning a report on digital cameras. Besides the Internet, where should she look to find up-to-date information on her subject?

- A** library books
- B** old newspapers
- C** a periodical index
- D** an encyclopedia



# **Grade 6 Reading OCCT Practice Test**

## Directions

Read each selection and the questions that follow it. Mark your answers on the Answer Sheet provided by your teacher. Make sure that you find the question number on the Answer Sheet that matches the question number in the Practice Test. Use a pencil to fill in the bubbles for your answer choices.

### The Artist

- 1 Marie's father worked as a chef in the house of the great painter Pablo Perez. One day Marie went into the pantry to get some flour that her father needed. To her surprise, she found that she could hear everything Mr. Perez was saying through the thin wall. His words were as clear as a bell. He was teaching an art class in his studio, and Marie was fascinated by what she heard. She took the flour to her father and quickly returned to the pantry to listen.
- 2 Mr. Perez described how to use oil paints to create light and shadow, how to make objects appear closer or farther away, and how to make people seem cruel or pleasant. That night Marie lay awake thinking about all that Mr. Perez had said. She wanted to try painting too.
- 3 "Dad, may I get some oil paints?" Marie asked at breakfast the next morning.
- 4 Her father hesitated. "We can afford a few colors," he said, "but very few. And one brush. And some inexpensive canvas."
- 5 "But I want to really *paint*," said Marie. "How can I do that with just a few colors?"
- 6 Marie's father smiled. "You can make colors by mixing other colors," he said. "Wait and see."
- 7 That afternoon Marie's father purchased a few tubes of oil paint—blue, yellow, red, black, and white. Marie was amazed by the various shades she could create with just these paints. The following day she began "attending" art classes in Mr. Perez's kitchen pantry. It wasn't easy to work in the small, poorly lit space, but she was determined. By late winter, she had a large collection of work. She might have continued her secret education through the spring had it not been for a moment's carelessness.
- 8 One day, as she listened through the wall, Marie heard a student grouse about not having the right shade of green to paint new spring grass. "Add some yellow," she heard herself say, right out loud. She clapped her hand over her mouth, but it was too late.

9 Immediately Mr. Perez was standing at the pantry door. “Why, Marie,” he asked in surprise, “what are you doing in here?”

10 “I’m having my art class,” she replied shyly. She then explained how she had mixed her paints and listened in the pantry each afternoon.

11 Mr. Perez gazed around the pantry. “Come with me at once!” he ordered. He marched her into his studio. “Take a look at this magnificent use of color,” he said to the startled students as he held up the painting Marie had been working on. “This young lady has mixed all of these shades from just five tubes. She is an artist.”

12 Marie was amazed. The great Mr. Perez was not punishing her; he was praising her!

13 From that day on, Marie attended art class in the studio. She was allowed to use a glorious number of paints. But she still mixed her own colors when she needed an unusual shade. After all, she was an artist.

1 **Which detail from the story best supports the idea that Marie is talented?**

- A Marie mixes paints to create colors.
- B Marie hides in the kitchen pantry.
- C Marie listens to Mr. Perez through the wall.
- D Marie lies awake thinking of painting.

2 **From the information in the story, which generalization can you make about Marie’s family?**

- A They are great artists.
- B They are rather poor.
- C They are well educated.
- D They are quite wealthy.

3 **Read this sentence from the story.**

“His words were as clear as a bell.”

**Which type of figurative language does the author use in this sentence?**

- A simile
- B metaphor
- C personification
- D symbolism

**4 How do Marie’s feelings about painting the green grass contrast with those of the student in the class?**

- A** Unlike the student, Marie does not think she has the paints she needs to complete the task.
- B** Unlike the student, Marie is confident about her ability to create the right shade of green.
- C** Unlike the student, Marie thinks she lacks the skills to complete the task.
- D** Unlike the student, Marie knows the assignment is too hard for new painters.

**5 Read this sentence from the story.**

“By late winter, she had a large collection of work.”

**Which sentence uses the word work the same way it is used in the sentence above?**

- A** I cannot go to the movies because I have too much work to do around the house.
- B** The city museum is displaying the work of local artists.
- C** My math tutor helped me work out the answer to the hardest problem.
- D** My father was late for work because he missed the bus.

**6 Read this sentence from the story.**

“She clapped her hand over her mouth, but it was too late.”

**What can be inferred about Marie’s reaction?**

- A** She is disappointed because she can’t mix the color.
- B** She is sorry for being rude to the teacher.
- C** She is worried that she will get caught hiding in the pantry.
- D** She is saddened by losing her chance to attend the art class.

**7 Which sentence best describes the climax of the story?**

- A** Mr. Perez discovers Marie in the pantry.
- B** Marie’s father buys her painting supplies.
- C** Marie hides in the pantry.
- D** Marie attends art class in the studio.

**8 What is the main idea of the story?**

- A** A man does his best to help his daughter.
- B** A famous painter teaches oil painting in his studio.
- C** A girl gets free art classes.
- D** A girl learns to paint by making the most of what is available.

## Marie Curie: Scientist

- 1 Marie Sklodowska was born in 1867 in Poland. Her father was a mathematics and physics professor, and her mother was a pianist. When Marie was young, her mother died of tuberculosis, and her scientist father became her main role model.
- 2 Marie was an excellent student in school, and she finished high school before she was sixteen years old. Afterward, she worked as a tutor and saved her money to help pay for more education. In 1891, at the age of twenty-four, Marie moved to France to study at the University of Paris. She graduated from the university in 1893, and a year later she finished an advanced degree in mathematics. Shortly after she graduated, she started working with Pierre Curie, who was already a respected physics professor in Paris.
- 3 Marie and Pierre discovered they had many things in common, and, before long, they were married. As Marie and Pierre started a family, Marie continued her work in the laboratory. She discovered that uranium, unlike other elements, gives off unusual rays. She called these rays “radioactivity.” Marie soon found other substances that were radioactive and began to search for the cause of the radioactivity.
- 4 Marie’s search led her to make many important discoveries. In 1903, she was the first woman in Europe to earn a doctorate degree (the highest degree available). That same year, she and her husband won the Nobel Prize in physics.
- 5 Marie Curie spent her entire adult life studying radioactive material. During World War I, she used her knowledge of radioactivity to build X-ray machines. Because X-ray machines could see bones beneath flesh, they could show doctors the injuries that soldiers had suffered. Marie tried hard to use her knowledge to help people. Her contributions to science earned her two Nobel Prizes. She is remembered as one of the most important women in the history of science.

- 9 What question is **most important to ask after reading the title of the selection**?
- A When was Marie Curie born?
  - B What did Marie Curie achieve?
  - C Where did Marie Curie live?
  - D Who were Marie Curie's parents?
- 10 Which detail **best supports the author's idea that "Marie tried hard to use her knowledge to help people"**?
- A "... she was the first woman in Europe to earn a doctorate degree ..."
  - B "She discovered that uranium, unlike other elements, gives off unusual rays ..."
  - C "... a year later she finished an advanced degree in mathematics."
  - D "During World War I, she used her knowledge of radioactivity to build X-ray machines."
- 11 The words *science* and *scientist* come from the Greek root *sci*, which means
- A say.
  - B hear.
  - C know.
  - D write.
- 12 "Marie Curie: Scientist" is an example of
- A historical fiction.
  - B science fiction.
  - C autobiography.
  - D biography.
- 13 Which graphic would be **most helpful to the reader**?
- A a time line of major events in Marie Curie's life
  - B a map of Poland
  - C a photograph of Pierre Curie
  - D an illustration of the University of Paris
- 14 To find more information about Marie Curie, you should look in
- A an atlas.
  - B a thesaurus.
  - C an encyclopedia.
  - D a dictionary.



## A Dolphin's Life

- 1 Dolphins are fascinating creatures. Like human beings, they are mammals, which means they are warm-blooded. Most of what we know about dolphins comes from studying them up close in holding tanks and aquariums. We are lucky that we can view them so closely.

### Bringing Up Baby

- 2 In the ocean, baby dolphins depend on their mothers for everything, but sometimes they wander off to explore alone. Mother dolphins must search and find their stray offspring to protect them from danger. Sometimes the baby thinks its mother is playing a “chase” game and does not understand that the mother is trying to protect it.
- 3 Of course, a baby dolphin is not in danger when it is in a holding tank. But since the mother dolphin does not know this, she will not allow her baby to stray far from her side. A mother dolphin may even physically hold down her baby to discourage its desire to wander. After this, the baby will usually stay close to its mother for hours.
- 4 Besides the mother, another female dolphin often helps take care of the baby. This “auntie” is a female who has no baby of her own. The mother dolphin seems happy to see her baby explore a bit as long as “auntie” is close by.

### Dolphins at Play

- 5 Like many young animals, young dolphins enjoy playing games. When in captivity, they may play “keep-away” with things such as dead fish or other objects by pushing these objects with their snouts along the water's surface. They also play by chasing each other and getting the adults to join in the fun. Single dolphins have been seen tossing bits of fish around playfully or jumping up into the air to chase butterflies.
- 6 In their natural environment, dolphins enjoy riding waves to shore. This is very much like surfing. In order to get bigger waves, dolphins will swim back and forth in front of waves until the waves become so irritated that they surge forward.

## Communication

- 7 Every dolphin makes a unique whistling sound. Just as each bird's call is different from every other bird's, each dolphin's whistle sounds slightly different from every other dolphin's. The uniqueness of the whistle makes it easily recognizable to other dolphins. Scientists did an experiment with a dolphin to see if it could identify other dolphins' whistles. It identified each whistle without any errors. When scientists repeated this test eight months later, the dolphin scored perfectly again. Scientists believe that each dolphin's whistle contains a lot of meaning. For example, they speculate that the loudness and pitch of a whistle can communicate a dolphin's emotional state to nearby dolphins.
- 8 In addition to whistling, dolphins have other ways of communicating. For example, dolphins make a sharp, clicking sound. Scientists believe that this sound might be an expression of fear. Scientists also think that a dolphin might snap its jaws together when it feels threatened, or it may slap its tail on the water to warn other dolphins of danger.
- 9 Dolphins exhibit great intelligence and awareness. They are both beautiful and fascinating, and they adapt well to being around humans. From studying dolphins up close, we have learned a lot about their abilities and their behaviors.

**15 Which idea from the selection is a fact?**

- A** Young dolphins sometimes wander away from their mothers.
- B** Dolphins are more interesting than whales.
- C** Dolphins in a tank are fun to watch.
- D** Dolphins are fascinating creatures.

**16 Which idea from the selection is an opinion?**

- A** Dolphins communicate with both whistles and clicks.
- B** Dolphins are mammals.
- C** Dolphins are studied in captivity.
- D** We are lucky to study such fascinating creatures as dolphins.

- 17 **What is most likely the author’s purpose for “A Dolphin’s Life”?**
- A** to convince the reader to study dolphins in aquariums
  - B** to instruct the reader on how to communicate with dolphins
  - C** to describe some of the common behaviors of dolphins
  - D** to provide a thorough description of the different kinds of mammals
- 18 **It can be inferred that the dolphin in the experiment could identify other dolphins’ whistles because**
- A** dolphins recognize only their parents’ whistles.
  - B** dolphins like to communicate with each other.
  - C** dolphins have a poor sense of hearing.
  - D** dolphins have unique whistles.
- 19 **According to the selection, why might a dolphin slap the water with its tail?**
- A** It senses danger.
  - B** It feels peaceful.
  - C** It is hungry.
  - D** It wants to play.
- 20 **What could be another title for this selection?**
- A** *How Dolphins Protect Themselves*
  - B** *Games Dolphins Play*
  - C** *The Behavior of Dolphins*
  - D** *Dolphins: Quiet Creatures of the Sea*

## Jellyfish

- 1 Jellyfish live, swim, and eat throughout Earth's oceans and seas. Despite the fact that they are somewhat common marine animals, many people are uninformed about jellyfish and view them as mysterious.
- 2 Jellyfish have existed for more than 650 million years. They lived on Earth even before dinosaurs and sharks. Today more than two hundred types of jellyfish live on Earth. Some are as small as a quarter, whereas others are more than one hundred feet long and eight feet wide. Smaller jellyfish often float together in large groups.
- 3 Despite its name, a jellyfish is not a fish. It is an invertebrate, which means it has no backbone. In fact, a jellyfish has no bones, heart, blood, brain, or gills, and most varieties have no eyes. A jellyfish breathes with its entire body. Because the jellyfish is made up almost entirely of water, it is easily harmed by water pollution.
- 4 Jellyfish feed on very small plants and shrimp. They use their long, thin tentacles to trap prey. Jellyfish also use their tentacles to swim. By pressing water away from their bodies, they propel themselves backward. Most jellyfish prefer to stay just below the surface of the water.
- 5 Most kinds of jellyfish are harmless to human beings, and some people keep jellyfish as pets. But some types of jellyfish produce dangerous stings when they try to capture prey or need to defend themselves. Swimmers should always be careful to avoid jellyfish in the water. Beachgoers should always check with lifeguards before picking up any jellyfish that they might find on the sand.
- 6 Some animals, such as the leatherback turtle and the ocean sunfish, eat jellyfish as the main part of their diets. Many people around the world eat jellyfish too. Jellyfish are low in fat, calories, and sodium.
- 7 In recent years, scientists have found cures for many diseases and other human health problems by studying animals and plants. It has been discovered that several types of jellyfish can be used to treat heart disease. Some varieties of jellyfish can also be used to treat certain cancers.
- 8 In addition, some jellyfish offer benefits to other marine life. Often small fish find safety under the central body of a jellyfish or between its tentacles. Furthermore, the sea nettle jellyfish helps oyster populations by eating one of the oyster's main predators: the comb jellyfish.
- 9 Jellyfish enrich our world. Their delicate white, blue, pink, or clear bodies are beautiful. They provide shelter in open waters to certain fish. They are nutritious and offer cures for a variety of illnesses. For these reasons and many more, care should be taken to preserve our jellyfish population.

- 21 From the information in the selection, it can be concluded that the jellyfish is not really a fish because
- A it does not have eyes.
  - B it does not have a backbone.
  - C it is made mostly of water.
  - D it has a stinger.
- 22 Read this sentence from paragraph 9.
- “Jellyfish enrich our world.”
- As it is used in the selection, the word enrich means
- A make dangerous.
  - B improve.
  - C do not affect.
  - D feed.
- 23 Which detail best supports the idea that jellyfish are a healthy food for humans?
- A The leatherback turtle and the ocean sunfish eat jellyfish.
  - B Scientists have found cures for diseases by studying jellyfish.
  - C Some types of jellyfish eat other jellyfish.
  - D Jellyfish are low in fat, calories, and sodium.
- 24 From the selection, which conclusion can be drawn about a jellyfish’s tentacles?
- A They are pretty but useless.
  - B They can either harm or help other sea life.
  - C They help jellyfish with eating but not with swimming.
  - D They cannot hurt humans.
- 25 Read this sentence from the selection.
- “Furthermore, the sea nettle jellyfish helps oyster populations by eating one of the oyster’s main predators: the comb jellyfish.”
- The word predators means about the same as
- A attackers.
  - B victims.
  - C problems.
  - D prey.
- 26 The facts in the selection best support the generalization that jellyfish
- A will soon be extinct.
  - B are often misunderstood but useful.
  - C make good pets for children.
  - D do not really pose a risk to swimmers.

27 “Jellyfish” contrasts with “A Dolphin’s Life” in that “Jellyfish” does **not** provide information about the animal’s

- A interactions with humans.
- B habitat and diet.
- C babies and families.
- D usefulness to researchers.

28 **Both** “A Dolphin’s Life” and “Jellyfish” would be **most** useful as sources for a research report titled

- A “Danger Down Below: Hidden Hazards in the Ocean Depths”
- B “Marine Medical Miracles: How Ocean Animals May Help Humans Stay Healthy”
- C “The Sounds of the Sea: How Marine Mammals Communicate with One Another”
- D “Sea Scientists: Fascinating Facts About Common Ocean Creatures”

29 Which **best** describes the tone of **both** “Jellyfish” and “A Dolphin’s Life”?

- A enthusiastic
- B pleading
- C humorous
- D exaggerated

## Casey at the Bat

by ERNEST L. THAYER

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;  
The score stood four to two with but one inning more to play.  
And then when Cooney died at first and Barrows did the same,  
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

5 A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest  
Clung to the hope which springs eternal in the human breast;  
They thought if only Casey could but get a whack at that—  
We'd put up even money now with Casey at the bat.

10 But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,  
And the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake,  
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,  
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

15 But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,  
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;  
And when the dust had lifted, and men saw what had occurred,  
There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

20 Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;  
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;  
It knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,  
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;  
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.  
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,  
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

25 Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;  
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.  
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,  
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

30 And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,  
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—  
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.

35 From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,  
Like the beating of the storm waves on a stern and distant shore.  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;  
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
 He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
 He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;  
 40 But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two!"  
 "Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered, "Fraud!"  
 But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.  
 They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,  
 And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.  
 45 The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;  
 He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.  
 And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go  
 And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.  
 Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;  
 50 The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,  
 And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout,  
 But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.

**30 What is the rhyme scheme of "Casey at the Bat"?**

- A *abab*
- B *aabb*
- C *abcb*
- D *abca*

**31 Phrases such as "deep despair" and "sickly silence" are examples of**

- A alliteration.
- B onomatopoeia.
- C simile.
- D rhyme.

**32 Which of the following helps the reader determine that "Casey at the Bat" is a poem?**

- A It tells a story.
- B It has a narrator.
- C It has a main character.
- D It contains stanzas.

**33 In the fifth stanza (lines 17 to 20), which literary device does the author use to describe the yell of the crowd?**

- A simile
- B personification
- C onomatopoeia
- D idiom



- 34 In the poem, “there went up a muffled roar, / Like the beating of the storm waves on a stern and distant shore” is an example of
- A simile.
  - B metaphor.
  - C personification.
  - D alliteration.
- 35 What is the theme of the poem?
- A Treat others as you wish to be treated.
  - B With confidence, one can succeed.
  - C Even the greatest hero can fail.
  - D Slow and steady wins the race.

## Saving the Tiger

1 Tigers are famous throughout the world for their grace and beauty. However, tigers are quickly disappearing from the wilderness, where they were once plentiful. The day may soon come when the only places tigers can be found will be in circuses and zoos.

### Fading Fast

- 2 Tigers are found on the continent of Asia, primarily in India, Burma, and Nepal. Fifty years ago, there were eight subspecies, or types, of tigers. Today, there are only five. Hunting, along with habitat destruction, has caused three subspecies of tigers to become extinct. It has also placed all the other subspecies of tigers on the endangered species list. Although most countries now have laws to protect tigers, poachers still hunt them for sport and financial gain.
- 3 India is home to about 60 percent of the world’s remaining wild tiger population. Because of overcrowding and land development, the Indian tigers are now in more danger than ever. Although India has twenty-two tiger preserves, only 2,000 to 3,000 wild tigers are left in that country. Since so few tigers are left, a disaster could mean the end for Indian tigers.
- 4 In even more peril is the Siberian tiger. This tiger is the largest of all living cats. It once roamed the wilderness of northern Mongolia and Siberia, but now only about 450 Siberian tigers are left in the wild. Unless there is a concerted effort to save this beautiful cat, it will soon follow the Caspian, Balinese, and Javan tigers into extinction.

## Still Hope

- 5 Unlike many other endangered animals, tigers cannot be bred in captivity and then released into the wild. Tiger cubs learn all of their hunting and survival skills by watching their mothers. Cubs raised in captivity, even those that are very rarely exposed to human influence, do not have the skills needed to survive as wild tigers.
- 6 Many groups are devoting time to saving wild tigers from extinction. These groups hope that one day many tigers will be in the wild, where they belong. Otherwise, the tiger could become just a circus act or a zoo exhibit.

**36** According to the selection, most of the world's remaining wild tigers

- A** are in zoos.
- B** cannot have cubs.
- C** live in Siberia.
- D** are found in India.

**37** Tiger cubs that are raised in captivity do not know how to hunt for food in the wild because

- A** they cannot learn from their mothers how to hunt for food.
- B** tigers cannot hunt for food if humans are watching.
- C** captive tigers are not fed the same kinds of food as wild ones.
- D** they are not familiar with other animals.

**38** Which sentence does the author include mainly to persuade the reader?

- A** "Many groups are devoting time to saving wild tigers from extinction."
- B** "Although most countries now have laws to protect tigers, poachers still hunt them for sport and financial gain."
- C** "This tiger is the largest of all living cats."
- D** "The day may soon come when the only places tigers can be found will be in circuses and zoos."

- 39 **What is most likely the author’s purpose in “Saving the Tiger”?**
- A to sell people tickets to tiger exhibits in zoos
  - B to explain to readers the dangers that tigers face
  - C to tell readers about India’s wildlife preserves
  - D to teach people how to care for tigers
- 40 **Read this sentence from paragraph 4.**
- “In even more peril is the Siberian tiger.”
- Which is the best definition of peril as it is used in the selection?**
- A illness
  - B fright
  - C danger
  - D shame
- 41 **Which of the following best summarizes the selection?**
- A Tigers are near extinction because humans have hunted them and destroyed their environments.
  - B The Siberian tiger from northern Mongolia and Siberia is the largest of all living cats.
  - C Three types of wild tigers can no longer be found in certain parts of Asia because they are extinct.
  - D Wild tigers cannot be bred in captivity and then let loose into the wild because they will not know how to hunt for food.
- 42 **What can the reader conclude from the author’s details about tigers?**
- A There are more than enough tiger preserves in India right now.
  - B More work needs to be done before wild tigers are out of danger.
  - C Circuses and zoos represent the greatest danger to wild tigers.
  - D Siberian tigers are not in any danger of becoming extinct.

# How Grandmother Spider Stole the Sun

retold by JOSEPH BRUCHAC

- 1 When the Earth was first made, there was no light.
- 2 It was very hard for the animals and the people in the darkness. Finally, the animals decided to do something about it.
- 3 “I have heard there is something called the Sun,” said the Bear. “It is kept on the other side of the world, but the people there will not share it. Perhaps we can steal a piece of it.”
- 4 All the animals agreed that it was a good idea. But who would be the one to steal the Sun?
- 5 The Fox was the first to try. He sneaked to the place where the Sun was kept. He waited until no one was looking. Then he grabbed a piece of it in his mouth and ran. But the Sun was so hot it burned his mouth and he dropped it. To this day all foxes have black mouths because that first fox burned his carrying the Sun.
- 6 The Possum tried next. In those days, Possum had a very bushy tail. She crept up to the place where the Sun was kept, broke off a piece and hid it in her tail. Then she began to run, bringing the Sun back to the animals and the people. But the Sun was so hot it burned off all the hair on her tail and she lost hold of it. To this day all possums have bare tails because the Sun burned away the hair on that first possum.
- 7 Then Grandmother Spider tried. Instead of trying to hold the Sun herself, she wove a bag out of her webbing. She put the pieces of the Sun into her bag and carried it back with her. Now the question was where to put the Sun.
- 8 Grandmother Spider told them, “The Sun should be up high in the sky. Then everyone will be able to see it and benefit from its light.”
- 9 All the animals agreed, but none of them could reach up high enough. Even if they carried it to the top of the tallest tree, that would not be high enough for everyone on the Earth to see the Sun. Then they decided to have one of the birds carry the Sun up to the top of the sky. Everyone knew the Buzzard could fly the highest, so he was chosen.
- 10 The Buzzard placed the Sun on top of his head, where his feathers were the thickest, for the Sun was still very hot, even inside Grandmother Spider’s bag. He began to fly, up and up toward the top of the sky. As he flew the Sun grew hotter. Up and up he went, higher and higher, and the Sun grew hotter and hotter still. Now the Sun was burning through Grandmother Spider’s bag, but the Buzzard still kept flying up toward the top of the sky. Up and

up he went, and the Sun grew hotter. Now it was burning away the feathers on top of his head, but he continued on. Now all of his feathers were gone, but he flew higher. Now it was turning the bare skin of his head all red, but he continued to fly. He flew until he reached the top of the sky, and there he placed the Sun where it would give light to everyone.

- 43 Which **best** describes how the details in the **last** paragraph of the story are organized?
- A by sequence of events
  - B by cause and effect
  - C by problem and solution
  - D by comparison and contrast
- 44 Which of Grandmother Spider's characteristics is **most** helpful in solving the problem in the story?
- A her small size
  - B her climbing skills
  - C her weaving ability
  - D her fast speed
- 45 This story is **mainly** about how
- A buzzards became bald.
  - B possum tails lost their fur.
  - C spiders learned to spin webs.
  - D the sun got into the sky.
- 46 What is most likely the author's purpose in "How Grandmother Spider Stole the Sun"?
- A to persuade the reader that stealing is wrong
  - B to tell a story about how something in nature came to be
  - C to inform the reader about spiders
  - D to entertain readers with a story about animals
- 47 Why did the animals want to steal the sun?
- A to give light to everyone
  - B to make the world dark
  - C to try to get warm
  - D to have it for themselves
- 48 What is a theme of this story?
- A Hard work makes you strong.
  - B Stealing never pays.
  - C Teamwork can bring success.
  - D Sharing is important.

## A Summer Job

- 1 On a Monday afternoon in late May, Kate was chatting with her friends Jamaica and Sandy at lunch. Jamaica said she planned to spend the summer planting flowers at her father’s greenhouse business. Sandy said she had gotten a job as an assistant arts counselor at the local park. Kate wished she could find a summer job too.
- 2 After lunch, the girls went to their science class. Ms. Fan, the science teacher, said to the class, “Soon you will be leaving for summer vacation. But the animals in the science yard will still need care. I’d like to hire a student to come in during the summer and help me look after the animals. Is anyone interested?”
- 3 Kate’s hand shot up. She loved the animals in the science yard, especially the baby rabbits. When one of them had gotten sick during the winter, Kate had spent every recess patiently coaxing him to eat.
- 4 But Kate was far from the only student to raise her hand. Ms. Fan said, “I can pick only one of you. If you want the job, bring me a permission note from your parents and a paragraph about why you would be the best person to care for the animals. I need the permission notes and the paragraphs by tomorrow morning.”
- 5 As the class got started, Kate tried to focus on her work. But she kept thinking about the new summer job opening. She knew she would love to help care for the animals in the science yard. She loved *all* animals.
- 6 However, Ms. Fan would probably pick Theo as her assistant. He had straight A’s in science. Besides, every week he handed in an extra-credit report on a different animal.
- 7 That evening at home, Kate’s mom asked her why she looked unhappy. So Kate told her about the summer job in the science yard and why Theo would probably get it.
- 8 “Getting A’s and writing reports aren’t enough to make someone a good caretaker,” said Kate’s mom. “Baby animals need a lot of love and attention. Why don’t you write a paragraph showing why *you’d* be the best person for the job, and then read it to me?”
- 9 After supper, Kate worked hard on her paragraph. Finally, she read her mom what she had written. “I would like to help take care of the animals in the science yard this summer because I believe I will be a responsible caretaker. I already have pets, and I take good care of them. For instance, I walk my dog every morning, and I change my turtle’s water when it gets dirty. Also, I am thinking about being an animal doctor when I grow up.

I promise to take the best possible care of the animals in the science yard during the summer.”

- 10 Kate’s mom smiled and said, “That’s very convincing.” She wrote a permission note for Kate to bring to school.
- 11 The next day, the interested students gave Ms. Fan their permission notes and their paragraphs. Later, Ms. Fan was ready to make her announcement.
- 12 “All of the students who requested the summer job in the science yard wrote very good paragraphs. But I can hire only one person. Since her paragraph left me with such a good impression, I have picked Kate. Prior experience and determination make the best candidate!”
- 13 After class, Kate thanked Ms. Fan for choosing her. “I thought you would pick Theo,” she admitted.
- 14 “Theo didn’t even apply for the job,” said Ms. Fan. “He’ll be helping his uncle at the city zoo all summer.”

49 **What type of fiction is this story?**

- A historical fiction
- B realistic fiction
- C science fiction
- D mystery

50 **Which word best describes Kate?**

- A giggly
- B daring
- C worried
- D reliable

51 **Which is the best summary of the story?**

- A Kate’s paragraph helped show her teacher that she would take good care of the animals in the science yard.
- B Kate wished she could get a summer job.
- C Ms. Fan required that her students write a paragraph and bring in a permission note.
- D Several students in the class wanted to help Ms. Fan in the science yard during the summer.

**52** Kate did not think she would get the job in the science yard because

- A** she had often forgotten her homework.
- B** she already had a job as an assistant arts counselor.
- C** Theo was a straight-A student in science.
- D** Sandy already had a job as an assistant arts counselor.

**53** Which sentence **best** represents the conflict of the story?

- A** “The animals in the science yard will still need care.”
- B** “Ms. Fan would probably pick Theo as her assistant.”
- C** “All of the students who requested the summer job in the science yard wrote very good paragraphs.”
- D** “Theo didn’t even apply for the job.”

**54** Which resource would **most likely** provide reliable information about taking care of baby rabbits?

- A** a Web page: *Cute Pictures of My Pet Rabbit!*
- B** a manual: *Some Bunny Needs Care! A Veterinarian’s Guide to Caring for Your Pet Rabbit*
- C** a magazine article: “Bunny Blues? Friendly Ways to Keep Rabbits from Eating Your Garden!”
- D** a field guide: *Identifying Rabbits and Other Hares*



## ***Rosa's Science Camp***

*Rosa was thrilled. She had been accepted to a special summer day camp for science. On Sunday, the day before registration, it was time for Rosa to choose which classes she would take. Rosa and her parents reviewed the camp's brochure. Rosa told her mother and father that she wanted to take the astronomy class. Her mom had many astronomy books and had gotten Rosa interested in the subject. Here's what the brochure looked like:*

Welcome to Henderson Science Camp, the only science day camp in the Jefferson County area for students entering grades six through eight.

Henderson Science camp offers a fine curriculum in many science subjects, and each student can select his or her own classes.

### **Stargazer's Astronomy class: A fascinating look into the skies and beyond**

- Hands-on experience with high-tech telescopes
- A field trip to the Henderson Planetarium
- Special lecture by a NASA scientist

#### **Class schedule:**

**Grade 6:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 A.M. to 2:20 P.M., June 15 through August 15

**Grade 7:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 A.M. to 2:30 P.M., June 16 through August 16

**Grade 8:** Thursdays, 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M., and Fridays, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., June 18 through August 17

### **Fun with Physics class: Learn more about invisible forces of energy**

- Fun experiments using planes
- Activities such as making your own battery
- In-class films, experiments, and more

#### **Class schedule:**

**Grade 6:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M., June 16 through August 16

**Grade 7:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M., June 15 through August 15

**Grade 8:** Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., June 17 through August 16

**Chemistry Carnival class: A true hands-on learning experience**

- A new experiment in every class
- Make sure to wear old clothes or a smock
- Extra one-time fee of \$15 must be paid in the first class for goggles and other materials

**Class schedule:**

**Grade 6:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 A.M. to 2:20 P.M., June 16 through August 18

**Grade 7:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 A.M. to 2:20 P.M., June 15 through August 15

**Grade 8:** Mondays, 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M., and Tuesdays, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., June 15 through August 14

In addition to classes, a weekly discussion group—“Science in the News”—will be held for all students every Thursday from 9 A.M. to 9:50 A.M., June 18 through August 16.

Each week, “Science in the News” will focus on a current scientific topic in the news and how it affects our lives.

- 55 In the camp brochure, bullet points are used mostly to**
- A** inform parents of the camp’s cost and payment deadline.
  - B** make safety warnings stand out so campers remember them.
  - C** point out highlights of each class and important reminders.
  - D** list the dates and times of each class.

- 56 Which detail from the camp brochure is an opinion?**
- A** “the only science day camp in the Jefferson County area for students entering grades six through eight”
  - B** “Extra one-time fee of \$15 must be paid in the first class”
  - C** “a weekly discussion group—‘Science in the News’—will be held for all students”
  - D** “Henderson Science camp offers a fine curriculum”

- 57 Which detail from the camp brochure **best** supports the idea that “Chemistry Carnival” class is “a true hands-on learning experience”?
- A Students must wear goggles and old clothes or a smock.
  - B The class has a fun and exciting name.
  - C Students will build their own batteries.
  - D Students will go on a field trip to the Henderson Planetarium.
- 58 When is the astronomy class offered for grade 6 students?
- A Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.
  - B Wednesday and Thursdays, 2:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.
  - C Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 A.M. to 2:20 P.M.
  - D Thursdays and Fridays, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- 59 In the word *invisible*, what is the **most likely** meaning of the prefix *in-*?
- A before
  - B not
  - C after
  - D above
- 60 Based on Rosa’s interests, in which activity will she **most likely** want to participate at science camp?
- A “fun experiments using planes”
  - B “Science in the News”
  - C “hands-on experience with high-tech telescopes”
  - D “making your own battery”