



# ***New York State Testing Program***

**English**

**Language Arts Test**

**Book 1**

Grade

**4**

**January 12–16, 2009**

## TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read carefully all the directions in the test book.
- Plan your time.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before choosing your response.

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**Reading*****D*irections**

In this part of the test, you are going to do some reading. Then you will answer questions about what you have read.

***Go On***

## Directions

Here is a passage from a book about comets. Read the passage. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

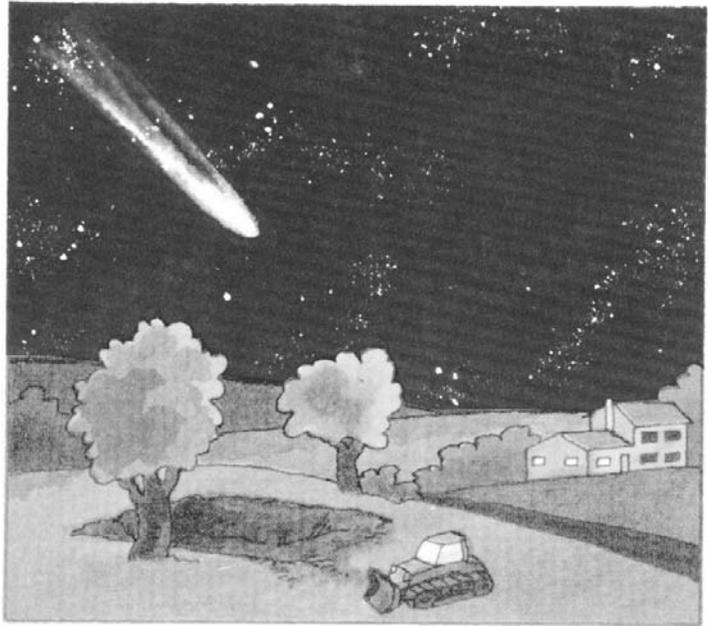
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# Comets

*by Franklyn M. Branley*

*illustrated by Giulio Maestro*

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Comets are parts of our solar system. Like the planets, they go around the sun.

But comets are not made of solid rock like planets. A comet is a ball of dust, stones, and ice. Many people call comets dirty snowballs.

The “snowball” may be only a few miles across. But when the sun heats the “snowball,” much of it is changed to gases. The gases expand and form the comet’s head, which may be thousands of miles across.

\* \* \*

A comet moves fast in its trip around the sun. But when we see it, the comet does not seem to move. That’s because it is so far away. The moon moves fast, but when you look at it, you can’t see any motion. That’s because the moon is far away.

So comets do not streak across the sky. You cannot see any motion. But if you look night after night, you can see that a comet changes position among the stars. If you watch the moon night after night, you’ll see that it also changes position.

Each year astronomers discover new comets. Some of them are seen only once. They make one trip around the sun and then go way out into space. The sun's gravity cannot hold them.

Other comets, like Halley, keep returning. They have been captured by the sun. Halley's earliest visit was probably 3,000 years ago. It may keep returning for another 3,000 years.

But every time a comet goes around the sun, the comet loses part of itself. Gases and dust are pulled out of the comet. That's why Halley is now dimmer than it used to be. Next time it visits us, in 2062, it may be even dimmer. Each visit it may get dimmer and dimmer, until it finally disappears.

- 1** What is this passage **mostly** about?
- A** comets and the sun
  - B** why comets are like snowballs
  - C** who discovered the first comet
  - D** facts about comets

- 2** According to the passage, what does a comet travel around?
- A** the sun
  - B** the moon
  - C** other comets
  - D** other planets

- 3** Why do comets look as if they are motionless when we see them?
- A** They are very small.
  - B** They are very far away.
  - C** They move very slowly.
  - D** They move only at night.

- 4** According to the passage, some comets have been "captured by the sun." What does this phrase mean?
- A** The comets are crashing into the sun.
  - B** The comets have been brightened by the sun.
  - C** The comets are stuck in the sun's gravity.
  - D** The comets have been burned by the sun's heat.

***Go On***

**5** How does the author help the reader understand what a comet looks like?

- A** by telling about a famous one
- B** by explaining how far away it is
- C** by describing how fast it moves
- D** by describing it as a dirty snowball

**6** What could the reader conclude after reading this passage?

- A** Most astronomers think comets are easy to study.
- B** Most comets have been captured by the sun.
- C** Comets can be seen if they stay in one place.
- D** Comets are an interesting part of our solar system.

**7** What is the **most likely** reason the author wrote this passage?

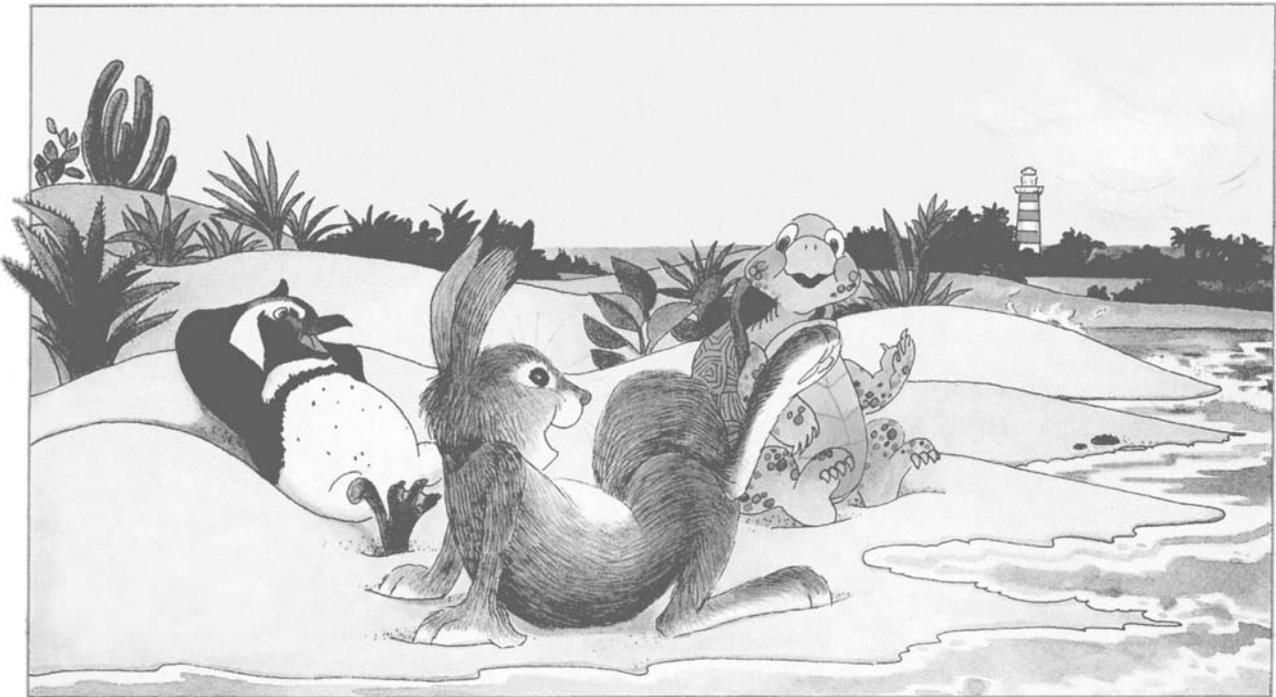
- A** to give information about comets
- B** to tell readers about famous comets
- C** to explain the importance of comets
- D** to convince readers to look for comets

# *Directions*

Read this story. Then answer questions 8 through 12.

# The Tortoise, the Hare, and the Penguin

by Tom Keating  
illustrated by Linda Weller



One warm afternoon, a tortoise, a hare, and a penguin sat on the sandy beach of Dassen Island. On the other side of the island stood a lighthouse.

“Let’s have a race to the lighthouse,” said the hare.

“Sounds like fun!” brayed the penguin.

“A tortoise, a hare, and a penguin—it’s almost like the race in that famous story by Aesop,” declared the tortoise.

At the count of “One, two, three, GO!” the hare bounded ahead. The penguin walked as fast as she could, and the tortoise crept slowly but steadily. Soon they came to a large pond. Neither the hare nor the tortoise had any idea how to get across the water, and going around the pond would take them far out of their way.

***Go On***

The penguin decided to help her friends. She told the tortoise to latch onto her stubby tail so he would not sink. The hare climbed onto the floating shell of the tortoise. The penguin paddled across the pond with her head straight up like a duck's.

After crossing the water, all three animals looked gratefully at one another. Then they set off again toward the distant lighthouse.

Soon the tortoise, the hare, and the penguin came to a wall. The tortoise could not imagine how he would get over. Even the penguin was too short to hop over the wall. But the hare got up on her hind legs and stretched her full length so that she made an animal ramp. The penguin and tortoise climbed carefully up her back to the top of the wall.

Then the hare hopped to the upper ledge and bounded down to the ground on the other side. She propped herself against the wall like a sliding board, and the tortoise and penguin skidded right down.

All three animals shook one another's paws, wished one another well, and started off again toward the lighthouse.

Before long they came to a dense thicket of bushes and thorny vines. The penguin and the hare could not even walk sideways without being caught by the prickly shrubs.

So the tortoise began to snap at the vines with his strong jaws. Soon he had pruned a narrow path through the thorny thicket. Then he moved backward so that his hard-shelled back spread the branches even more. The hare and the penguin walked behind the tortoise as if they were following a miniature tractor.

When they finally reached the other side of the thicket, the tortoise, the hare, and the penguin hugged one another. Then they began walking toward the lighthouse side by side.

They came to the end of the race together, each waiting for the other animal to cross the finish line.

"After you," said the hare.

"You first," offered the tortoise.

"Be my guest," urged the penguin.

They all reached the goal together. Each understood that it isn't always the fastest or even the slow and steady who wins the race. By helping one another, all three were winners.

**8** The penguin **most likely** wants to race because she

- A** thinks it will be fun
- B** needs to get to the pond
- C** wants to leave the beach
- D** wants to see who is strongest

**9** Why does the penguin **most likely** help the tortoise and the hare?

- A** She secretly wants to lose the race.
- B** She hopes they will pay her for her help.
- C** She is afraid to cross the pond alone.
- D** She wants them to continue the race.

**10** Read the chart below.



Which event **best** completes the chart?

- A** The hare challenges her friends to a race.
- B** The hare helps her friends over the wall.
- C** The animals walk toward the lighthouse side by side.
- D** The animals wait for each other to cross the finish line.

**Go On**

**11** The tortoise is able to help his friends get to the lighthouse because he

- A** has strong jaws
- B** has four short legs
- C** moves slowly but steadily
- D** can put his head inside his shell

**12** Which part of the story tells something that could **really** happen?

- A** A hare helps animals climb over a wall.
- B** A penguin paddles across water.
- C** A hare challenges a tortoise and a penguin to a race.
- D** A tortoise, a hare, and a penguin hug each other.

## **D**irections

Read this article. Then answer questions 13 through 18.

# Your Nose Knows

If I were to ask you to shut your eyes and I gave you a piece of apple to eat, would you be able to tell me what it is just by tasting it? Of course, you could. Your tongue is covered with tiny “taste buds” which help you know what different foods taste like. Do you know that foods would taste different if you did not have a nose?

This experiment shows how important your nose is when you taste things.

### **What You Need:**

- a friend to help
- small pieces of any food like carrot, orange, banana—whatever you have handy
- small pieces of apple, raw potato, and (if you are brave) onion

### **What You Do:**

There are actually three different experiments. You and your friend should take turns trying them on each other.

### **Experiment 1:**

Have your friend close her eyes and open her mouth. Give her a piece of the food and ask her to taste it. Then, ask her what she thinks it is. She will probably guess correctly.



**Go On**

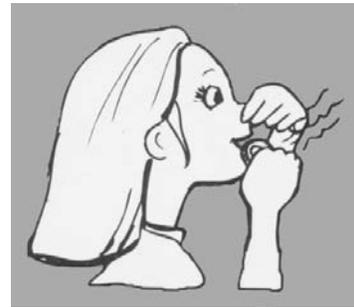
## Experiment 2:

While your friend has her eyes closed, give her a piece of the raw potato. At the same time, hold a piece of apple right under her nose. Ask her to eat the potato (but don't call it by name) and tell you what she thinks it is. She will say it is a piece of apple! You can even do it the other way around: Have her eat a piece of apple while smelling a piece of potato, and she will think she is eating a raw potato, or, perhaps, she won't be able to name what she is eating.



## Experiment 3: (for the brave)

Take a piece of raw onion. You don't have to close your eyes this time. Squeeze your nose closed with your other hand so that no smells can get into your nose. Now take a nibble of the onion. Surprise! As long as you hold your nose, you will not be able to taste the onion.



## The Science Secret

You already know the science secret. Your nose and your tongue work together to make food taste the way it does. Your tongue, however, can taste only certain flavors like salty, bitter, sour, and sweet. All of the other “tastes” are actually “smells,” and you need your nose to “taste” them.

Oh, and you might use this science secret the next time you are told to eat something you don't like the taste of. If you hold your nose while you eat it, you won't “taste” it at all.

- 13** What is this article **mostly** about?
- A** why different foods can smell the same
  - B** how smell changes the way people see
  - C** how smell affects the way food tastes
  - D** why some things smell better than others

- 14** In Experiment 1, what should you do **before** giving your friend a piece of food?
- A** Ask her to taste the food.
  - B** Have her close her eyes.
  - C** See if her guess is correct.
  - D** Ask her to name the food.

- 15** According to the article, which of these foods is needed for Experiment 2?
- A** a potato
  - B** an orange
  - C** an onion
  - D** a banana

- 16** In Experiment 2, what should you do **right after** holding the piece of apple under your friend's nose?
- A** Hand her a piece of potato.
  - B** Ask her to close her eyes.
  - C** Have her guess what the food is.
  - D** Ask her to eat the piece of potato.

- 17** What is the **most likely** reason Experiment 3 is called "for the brave"?
- A** You keep your eyes open.
  - B** You have to bite a raw onion.
  - C** You have to squeeze your nose.
  - D** You do the experiment alone.

- 18** According to this article, what could a reader conclude about food?
- A** People hold their noses to eat onions.
  - B** If you can smell potatoes, you will taste apples.
  - C** People need a sense of smell to taste some food.
  - D** If you close your eyes, food will taste better.

***Go On***

# Directions

Read this poem. Then answer questions 19 through 23.

## The Missing Homework

by Cynthia Porter

Miss Prindel always asks me,  
“Where can your homework be?”  
I never know the answer;  
It’s a mystery to me.  
Was it flattened by a freight train  
And then battened by a hatch?  
Was it carried off by cyclone?  
Was it burned up by a match?  
Was it squashed by giant bullfrogs  
On a boggy, soggy log?  
Was it bitten by a kitten?  
Was it gnawed on by a dog?  
Was it lifted by a pigeon  
Of a highly homing breed?  
Wait! I’ve found it in my pocket,  
And I’m very glad indeed.  
Now it’s obvious to anyone—  
Miss Prindel, please agree  
That an A + + for effort  
Is the only grade for me!

battened = fastened

homing = finding  
the way home

**19** According to the poem, what do you know about the speaker?

- A** She has big pockets.
- B** She likes her teacher.
- C** She has lost her homework before.
- D** She likes to write mystery stories.

**20** Why does the speaker think she deserves an “A++ for effort”?

- A** She finds her homework.
- B** She has helped her teacher.
- C** She likes to write creative stories.
- D** She has done well on her homework.

**21** Read these lines from the poem.

**Was it bitten by a kitten?  
Was it gnawed on by a dog?**

What does the word “gnawed” **most likely** mean?

- A** chewed
- B** jumped
- C** played
- D** stood

***Go On***

- 22** Which detail from the poem **best** shows that the speaker is forgetful?
- A** She asks her teacher many questions.
  - B** She says she never knows where her homework is.
  - C** She tells many stories to explain her missing homework.
  - D** She asks her teacher to give her a good grade on her assignment.

- 23** Why does the poet **most likely** include so many different reasons for the missing homework?
- A** to tell how difficult homework can be
  - B** to explain interesting things about animals
  - C** to describe how smart the speaker is
  - D** to give the speaker more time to find the homework

# Directions

Read this passage. Then answer questions 24 through 28.

## Geneva

by Barbara Ann Porte  
illustrated by Yossi Abolafia

In this passage from *Taxicab Tales*, the narrator, her brother Sam, her mother Rita, and her father invite their friend, Geneva, who cannot hear, to dinner on the night before an art show. Benton is the family dog.

Mom’s art show was on Sunday. Daddy was off from work, and all of us helped. Mom’s best friend, Geneva Hawkes, lent us her truck for the day to transport the paintings. Geneva is a painter, too. She paints houses for a living and portraits for herself. Once she painted a portrait of Benton and gave it to us for a Thanksgiving Day present. It hangs on the wall in our dining room.

Geneva drove her truck to our house Saturday evening and parked it in front. She gave Mom the keys. “I’ll be out of town until Monday,” she said. Mom invited her to stay for dinner, and she did.

Geneva is hearing-impaired. She speaks and reads lips pretty well, but she says sign language is much easier. “Saying words out loud you’ve never heard is hard,” Geneva has told us. “So is reading lips. You have to know all the words and watch every minute. Even then, a person can miss a lot.” Sam and I know that’s true because we’ve tried.

Our mother knows how to sign pretty well. Daddy, Sam, and I are learning. Geneva is an expert. When she speaks in sign, her fingers fly. Her eyes shine, then, and her whole body seems in motion. I feel happy just watching her.

During dinner Geneva and Mom conversed in sign language. Daddy, Sam, and I took turns admiring the portrait of Benton.

**Go On**

Afterward our mother showed Geneva her newest paintings. When Geneva was ready to leave, Mom thanked her for the use of her truck. “Thank you,” she said. She touched the fingertips of one hand to her lips, then held them out toward Geneva. It looked, almost, as if she were throwing a kiss. That is the sign for “Thank you.”

Geneva smiled. “You’re welcome,” she said, and also signed it. Then she kissed us all good-bye, and Daddy drove her home in his cab.



- 24** This passage is **mostly** about a girl who
- A** goes to an event with friends
  - B** appreciates a friend’s special skills
  - C** teaches a new language to a friend
  - D** listens to a friend give a speech

- 25** According to the passage, what do the narrator’s mother and Geneva have in common?
- A** They are both painters.
  - B** They both own trucks.
  - C** They are both hearing-impaired.
  - D** They both know how to read lips.

- 26** The narrator feels happy when she watches Geneva use sign language. Which sentence **best** supports why she likes watching Geneva sign?
- A** “She speaks and reads lips pretty well, but she says sign language is much easier.”
  - B** “Her eyes shine, then, and her whole body seems in motion.”
  - C** “During dinner Geneva and Mom conversed in sign language.”
  - D** “She touched the fingertips of one hand to her lips, then held them out toward Geneva.”

- 27** What is the **most likely** reason the narrator’s mother has learned sign language?
- A** so she can speak to her friend
  - B** so her family can understand her
  - C** to have more interesting conversations
  - D** to avoid having to understand lip reading

- 28** If she spends more time with Geneva, the narrator will **most likely**
- A** learn to drive a truck
  - B** go to more art shows
  - C** decide to be a painter herself
  - D** improve her sign language skills

**STOP**



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