



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

## **English Language Arts Book 3**

Grade 6

**Sample Test 2005**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## TIPS FOR TAKING THE SAMPLE 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 writing your response.

This test asks you to write about what you have listened to or read.

Your writing will NOT be scored on your personal opinions. It WILL be scored on:

- how clearly you organize and express your ideas
- how accurately and completely you answer the questions
- how well you support your ideas with examples
- how interesting and enjoyable your writing is
- how correctly you use grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraphs



*Whenever you see this symbol, be sure to plan and check your writing.*

**Acknowledgments** CTB/McGraw-Hill LLC is indebted to the following for permission to use material in this book:

“Flights of Fancy” by Joan Brix Banks, copyright © 2004 by CTB/McGraw-Hill LLC.

“A Fish with Whiskers” by Clare Mishica, copyright © 2004 by CTB/McGraw-Hill LLC.

# **Book 3**

## ***Reading and Writing***

### **D**irections

In this part of the test, you are going to read an article about birds called “Flights of Fancy” and an article about catfish called “A Fish with Whiskers.” You will answer questions and write about what you have read. You may look back at the articles as often as you like.

***Go On***



# *Flights of Fancy*

*by Joan Brix Banks*

Pretend you are a bird, sitting on a limb. How about joining some other birds soaring above the treetops? Get ready for your takeoff. Push off with your legs, open your wings, and go!

Strong chest muscles pull your wings down with the feathers together. No air can pass through. As the wings start up, the feathers spread. As if by magic you dip and dive.

But it is not magic. A bird is made for flying. Many of its bones are hollow to make it lightweight. Feathers streamline its body. Not even ears stick out to cause drag, a force that slows things down.

For years, people tried to figure out why birds could fly and humans could not. They attached wings to their arms, flapped them, and tried to take off. No luck! They soon learned that a human cannot hold up wings big enough to get off the ground.

But humans do not give up easily. They turn to machines.

Inventors used birds as models for the first successful airplanes. When a bird flies, the air moves over and under its wings. Because the top of the wing is curved and is longer than the bottom surface, the air moves faster over the upper side of the wing. This faster movement reduces the air pressure above the wing. The greater pressure below the wing pushes it upward, giving the bird its lift. Inventors copied this design and put curved wings on their airplanes.

Birds use their tails for steering and braking. Airplane designers added rudders and elevators on the airplane tail to help balance and steer.

Birds use feathers at their wingtips to keep from rolling as they fly. Airplanes have ailerons on their wings to control rolling in much the same way.

So here you are now, flying with the other birds, getting a bird's-eye view of the world. If you are a pheasant, your wings are broad and short. When you are threatened by an enemy, you can fly almost straight up, like a jet airplane taking off from an aircraft carrier.

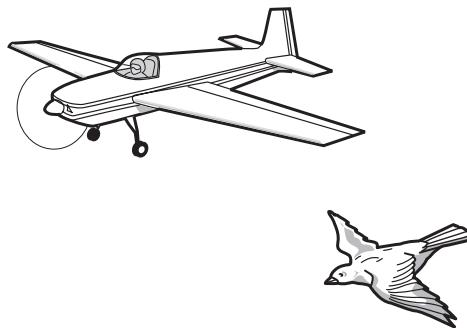
Maybe you are a swift, named for your speed. Your long, pointed wings let you do acrobatics in the air like a stunt pilot. Your wings are tapered like those on a fighter plane.

Maybe you are an albatross with the longest of all bird wings. They measure nearly eleven feet from tip to tip and let you soar like a glider. You can stay aloft for months at a time, far from land.

***Go On***

Or perhaps you are a hummingbird. You have a short wingspan in relation to your weight, so you must beat your wings sixty to seventy times a second just to stay in the air. You are the helicopter of the bird world, able to hover and fly backwards.

Look at the birds around you. How are they similar to airplanes? If you could be a bird, what bird would you be?



**31**

The author of “Flights of Fancy” describes several different traits of birds. Complete the chart below by identifying one bird discussed in the article and a specific trait that helps protect it from enemies. Then explain how this trait helps to provide protection. Use details from the article in your answer.

Type of Bird	Protective Trait	How the Trait Protects

**32**

Using details from “Flights of Fancy,” explain how airplane designers have been influenced by the study of birds in flight.

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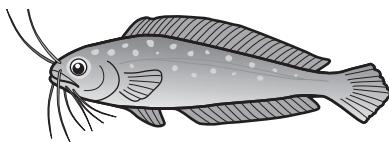
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***Go On***



# A Fish with Whiskers

by Clare Mishica

It is not hard to guess how the catfish got its name after you see a picture of this whiskery fellow. But its whiskers are very different from a cat's hairy ones. In fact, a catfish's whiskers are really made of flesh. They are also covered with taste buds that help it locate food. Scientists call these catfish whiskers "barbels."

Whiskers are not the only way that catfish are different from most other fish. Catfish do not have scales. Instead, they have a smooth, slippery skin. They have sharp, bony spines on their side and back fins, too. These spines can wound a person or creature that tries to grab this fish the wrong way.

There are over 2,000 different kinds of catfish. One of the tiniest catfish is called a madtom. The madtom has bright patterns and is only two inches long. It lives in the cool streams of the Ozark Mountains. The largest catfish is the European catfish. This fish can grow over ten feet long and weigh up to 400 pounds!

Some catfish have strange habits. The upside-down catfish swims upside down. Because of this, it has a white back and a dark belly, which help it hide in the water.

The electric catfish can give the unlucky person or animal that touches it quite a shock—up to 450 volts. It uses this shocking ability to defend itself and to capture prey.

Some catfish even walk! In Asia, the walking catfish uses the strong fins behind its gills to help hold up its body. Then it uses its tail to push it over the ground. This trick helps the catfish move from one pond to another. It may also come on shore at night to find some food. How does this fish stay alive out of the water? It has special air-breathing organs along with its gills.

In Africa, one kind of catfish has another trick that helps it live through dry seasons. This catfish burrows deep into the muddy bottom of a pond or stream. Its heart and body slow down, and it falls into a deep sleep. It can sleep for several years while it waits for the rains to come and fill the ponds with water again.

In caves beneath San Antonio, Texas, lives another catfish that has adapted to its unusual home. The dark caves have no light, so this fish has no eyes. It doesn't need any. It is also white because it does not need a dark color to help it hide since its home is in total darkness.

Many more kinds of catfish live in the rivers, ponds, and lakes of North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. They have adapted to their homes in many different ways. As a result, catfish can live in many kinds of climates and conditions.

- 33** Using information from “A Fish with Whiskers,” compare the coloring of the catfish that live in the Texas caves with the coloring of the upside-down catfish. Explain how the environment around them has affected their coloring. Use details from the article to support your answer.

## ***Planning Page***

You may PLAN your writing for question 34 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Your writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 9 and 10.

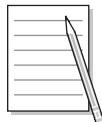


34

If you were an animal, would you rather be a catfish or a bird? Write an essay in which you explain your choice. Use details from **both** “Flights of Fancy” and “A Fish with Whiskers” to support your explanation.

In your answer, be sure to

- describe which animal you would be
  - explain your choice
  - use details from both articles as support



Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Go On

**STOP**





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