



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Listening Selection

Grade

8

January 20–23, 2009

This listening selection is to be used in administering Book 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

Remember: This is a secure test. You are not to discuss this test, show it to anyone, or photocopy these materials, as the security of the test could be breached.

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Listening Selection***Music to His Ears****by Joli Allen*

What do you do when a silverback mountain gorilla grabs you and hurls you into a clump of stinging nettle bushes? If you are Bernie Krause, you get up, brush yourself off, and continue tape recording gorillas and all the other jungle sounds you love.

Bernie Krause is a naturalist who records sounds for research and pleasure. He has scrambled down ice crevices in Alaska to record ice masses moving. He's sloshed through slithering leeches and mud in the rain forest. He's stood among crocodiles to record the sounds on earth that are disappearing. His collection of sounds includes green ants singing in the high desert, a curious jaguar growling into his microphone, and snapping shrimp. Bernie says every living creature has a "sound signature"—from the smallest microorganism to the largest animal. Even plants make sounds! He caught the sound of corn growing after sitting for two nights in an Iowa cornfield.

The science of listening to and understanding what the sounds in nature mean is an ancient skill that few people know how to do anymore. Jivaro tribesmen in the Amazon still have this skill. They use animal sounds to guide them as they creep through the rain forest at night in total darkness. When Bernie was invited to hunt with them one night, they found their way through the jungle by listening to the nighttime symphony of frogs, insects, and birds as their only guide.

Bernie makes the science of listening a wild experience. After he has recorded his sounds, he creates "sound sculptures." Like an artist, he creates an image—for our ears to hear. It takes many hours of recorded sounds to blend into a one-hour recording. "One 60-minute sound sculpture (our CD *Whales, Wolves, and Eagles of Glacier*), for example, took 15 years to record and three or four months to get just right in the studio mix," he says. His sound sculptures are heard in museums,

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aquariums, and zoos all over the world. When you listen to one, the wild choruses of orangutans, birds, frogs, and insects surround you, and for a moment, you are in their habitat.

When he is not recording sea urchins burping or insects humming, Bernie teaches people how to listen to and respect their environment. Not all sounds we listen to are beneficial. In his latest book, he describes how elk and wolves get stressed from snowmobile noise. Desert kit foxes lose their ability to hear prey when noises like overhead jets distract their attention. A study in England found that some birds can't nest or find a mate because the songs they use to communicate with each other can't be heard over traffic noise. Their population is declining, and they may soon be extinct. Bernie is working to teach people how to keep our sound environment healthy by taking care of it so that we don't lose it. That sounds like sound advice to me!

STOP



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