Name: _____

New York State Testing Program

English Language Arts Test Session 1

Grade 7

Spring 2026

RELEASED QUESTIONS

Developed and published under contract with the New York State Education Department by NWEA, a division of HMH, 125 High St., Boston, MA 02110.

Session 1

TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some ideas to help you do your best:

- Read the whole passage before you answer the questions. Most questions will only make sense after you read the whole passage.
- You might need to read the passage more than once to answer a question.
- Read each question carefully. Take your time.
- A question may include a quote from a passage. You might need to review both the quote and the whole passage to answer the question.

When you write your answers

- make sure to answer the whole question;
- use examples or details from the text;
- write in complete sentences; and
- use correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

Excerpt from *Grandmother Five Baskets*

by Lisa Larrabee

1 "Yes, little one. We begin today," Grandmother Five Baskets had answered twenty years ago to my insistent questions.

2 I ran to gather her shawl and basket as she pulled herself from the rocking chair. Though nearly eighty, she moved gracefully as she stepped from the porch.

3 She told me what I should look for, as we walked along the rutted red road toward the stand of loblolly pine trees where she always collected the pine needles for her baskets.

4 "Anna, this is a good time to gather the pine straw, since there was a heavy rain several nights ago. The freshest straw will be lying on top of the old, and we need only to pick it up," she said.

5 As we entered the cool darkness, the sunlight filtered through the pine trees. The light showed ferns and flowers pressing up through layers of leaves and pine straw. . . .

6 Grandmother Five Baskets moved slowly through the woods, stopping now and again, each time calling me back to look at one plant or another, and telling me its name and use. My favorite was a small bed of spearmint. The smell of the leaves was sweet and clean when crushed between my fingers. Grandmother Five Baskets said she would use the leaves to make a tea to soothe upset stomachs or in a salve[1] to cool irritated skin. The afternoon passed for a pleasant hour or so, until we had gathered enough pine straw for several baskets.

7 Our shadows showed the way, as we walked back to her house. While the sun began its nightly journey, Grandmother Five Baskets told me that to learn the lessons of the five baskets would require much from me.

8 "Little one, you will find yourself tested now that you have decided to learn these lessons. And you will be learning more than just basketmaking. What your lessons will be, I cannot say. Some lessons are special to the person doing the learning. You will share problems others before you have had, but one or two of the problems you will discover are yours alone. While I will help as much as I am able, you will be the one who must finally help yourself," she said. . . .

9 Grandmother Five Baskets was not my actual grandmother. In fact, she was no one's grandmother, as she had never married nor had children. She was my great-aunt, my grandmother's sister. Her name was Sarah McGhee. Yet, in our small Creek Indian community of Hog Fork, Alabama, there were few people old enough to remember her by any name but Grandmother Five Baskets. . . .

10 Her name, Grandmother Five Baskets, was not earned for her helping ways. It was for her skill in basketmaking and the lessons of the five baskets. These were seen, by those not having studied with her, as simple lessons in basketmaking. Yet, as any woman who completed her baskets learned, the lessons were much more. It was with deep love and respect that these women called her Grandmother Five Baskets.

11 Of the lessons in basketmaking, not every girl in the community wanted to learn them nor finished once they had begun. Girls were most often 12 or 13 years old when they began to study with Grandmother Five Baskets. Yet, from time to time, women as old as 20 or more studied with her.

12 Listening to all the talk among my womenfolk from the time I was small made me eager for my chance to begin the lessons. Yet, it wasn't the stories I heard that made the lessons appear special. It was the way the girls changed when they had completed their five baskets. It was as if they gained a maturity or an inward serenity.[2] I wasn't sure anyone else noticed, but I had. Whatever they received during those lessons, I wanted it, too. Now, in the summer of my twelfth year, my chance was finally here.

13 During the next few days, Grandmother Five Baskets showed me how to clean the pine straw we had collected in warm, soapy water. I learned to rinse it well, and dry it carefully on old window screens laid on rocks in the sun. The screens allowed air to circulate completely around the pine straw and keep it from molding. I found reasons every day to stop by her house and check on its progress. After several days of drying in the warm sun, the pine straw was pronounced ready to use by Grandmother Five Baskets. . . .

14 I gathered my first small bundle of straw and my needle with straw binder, and I began to coil and sew. I struggled to keep my coils even as I worked. My tongue pinched between my teeth was as hard to handle as the needle and pine straw between my fingers.

15 Finally, there stood a completed basket, a little lopsided, but mine. Though it was only a few hours since I had begun the basket, it felt like years. I was tired and very pleased with myself. I had made my first basket. I could see that basketmaking wasn't going to be hard at all!

16 "You have done well for your first basket, little one. When you come again, we will go gather the materials for your second. Do not judge this first basket too harshly, for your skills will improve with each one you complete."

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[1]**salve:** a creamy mixture to help the skin

[2]**serenity:** sense of calm

1 How do paragraphs 1 and 2 develop the character of the narrator?

A They emphasize the narrator's enthusiasm for learning from Grandmother Five Baskets.

B They highlight how much the narrator's life has changed since her time with Grandmother Five Baskets.

C They suggest that the narrator and Grandmother Five Baskets rely on each other.

D They reveal how similar the narrator and Grandmother Five Baskets are.

2 What is the importance of paragraph 8 in the story?

A It describes the steps of basketmaking.

B It reveals the traits that make a good basketmaker.

C It gives information about the lessons that Grandmother Five Baskets wants the narrator to learn.

D It provides details about the history between Grandmother Five Baskets and the narrator.

3 Which important idea does the author develop in paragraph 11?

A Basketmaking can be a useful skill to have.

B People choose to learn new things at different ages.

C It is a good idea to accept help when it is offered.

D Young people should show respect to those who are older.

4 Some people say that the best way to gain a skill is by participating rather than simply hearing about it or watching someone else. Which detail from the story **best** shows how this idea is represented?

A "She told me what I should look for, as we walked along the rutted red road toward the stand of loblolly pine trees . . ." (paragraph 3)

B "Anna, this is a good time to gather the pine straw, since there was a heavy rain several nights ago." (paragraph 4)

C "Listening to all the talk among my womenfolk from the time I was small made me eager for my chance to begin . . ." (paragraph 12)

D "I learned to rinse it well, and dry it carefully on old window screens laid on rocks in the sun." (paragraph 13)

5 In paragraph 15, what does the phrase "a little lopsided, but mine" suggest about the narrator?

A She is proud of what she has created.

B She is concerned about her basket's appearance.

C She understands the lessons Grandmother Five Baskets teaches.

D She questions Grandmother Five Baskets' basketmaking process.

6 Which detail **most** clearly shows that Grandmother Five Baskets is confident in the narrator's abilities?

A "Grandmother Five Baskets moved slowly through the woods, stopping now and again, each time calling me back to look at one plant or another . . ." (paragraph 6)

B "Little one, you will find yourself tested now that you have decided to learn these lessons." (paragraph 8)

C "During the next few days, Grandmother Five Baskets showed me how to clean the pine straw we had collected . . ." (paragraph 13)

D "Do not judge this first basket too harshly, for your skills will improve with each one you complete." (paragraph 16)

7 The author develops the character of Grandmother Five Baskets by showing

A the steps of her basketmaking process

B what she thinks about how the narrator makes a basket

C how she guides the narrator

D how she feels about her role in the community

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 15 through 21.

Excerpt from "Miraculous Mauve"

by Nick D'Alto

1 It transformed the way people in the West dressed. It helped to advance the science of chemistry. It simplified the process of serious medical research. And it was discovered by a teenager completely by accident. Welcome to the unlikely and colorful story of mauve.

Young Science, Young Scientist

2 In the mid-19th century, the science of chemistry was hitting its stride in the Western world. Scientists had mastered some of its basic ideas, but understanding how different chemicals could be combined to form new ones was still somewhat confusing.

3 In England, a teenager named William Henry Perkin found himself captivated by this fascinating science. At the Royal Academy of Chemistry in London, he studied under a prominent chemist named August Wilhelm von Hofmann, who believed chemistry could solve a significant medical problem: malaria.[1] . . .

4 The only medicine available at the time to treat malaria was quinine. Quinine could only be produced from the bark of the cinchona tree, which grows only in the Andes mountains of South America. So it was difficult and expensive to make. Hofmann told his student Perkin that he believed it was possible to make artificial quinine in the laboratory, and then produce as much as required.

A Happy Accident

5 By 1856, Perkin had embarked on a quest to fulfill Hofmann's prediction. He even worked on the project at home over Easter break. But everything he tried failed completely. He made several new chemicals, but none of them appeared to have any medical value at all. Not only that, one of the new chemicals he made from a compound called aniline turned out so messy that it stained his clothing and everything it touched a bright purple.

6 But this final failure became a moment of triumph: Young Perkin realized that this chemical would make a great dye for fabrics. In fact, he'd accidentally invented the first artificial dye.

7 In those days, dyes used to color fabrics all relied on natural materials derived from plants or animals. These dyes could vary in shade (so you wouldn't always know what exact color they would turn cloth), and they could fade or rub off. Making them was often difficult and time-consuming. . . .

8 Perkin worked with one of his brothers to perfect the technique for making his new dye. The dye's unusual shade of purple—somewhere between lilac and violet—reminded some in France who saw it of the mallow flower, whose name in French is *mauve* (rhymes with the first syllable in "lava"). So the dye was called Perkin's Mauve.

Mad for Mauve

9 In 1857, Empress Eugénie of France, the wife of Emperor Napoleon III, sported a gown dyed with mauve, as she thought it matched her eyes. Then Queen Victoria of England wore a mauve velvet gown to her daughter's wedding. These events helped set off what became known as mauve mania. Perkin convinced his family to help him build a factory to manufacture the dye in Greenford, outside of London. This plant opened in 1859.

10 Magazines and newspapers shared stories about the hot new color of European fashion. Women wore mauve-colored dresses and hats, while men donned mauve-colored bowties. Perkin's dye made it possible, for the first time, to produce colorful garments that everyone could afford, not just the rich. As for William Henry Perkin? He became a millionaire at just 21 years old.

11 But Perkin wasn't done. He helped introduce an early version of the research and development lab, where experts worked and studied to make scientific breakthroughs. His labs contributed to the emergence of an entirely new science: chemical engineering—the study of how chemicals are made. Perkin himself kept inventing, making more new colors, including Britannia Violet and Perkin's Green, and he co-discovered the synthetic[2] version of a brilliant red dye called alizarin.

12 The demand for new, long-lasting chemical dyes (called aniline dyes after the compounds they were made from) was so strong that other industrialists began making them as well. With the Industrial Revolution in full swing, textile, or fabric, factories sprang up across Europe.

The Color of Science

13 Perkin—and Hofmann—never did find a way to synthesize[3] quinine. It wasn't until World War II that researchers found an artificial way to make the medicine. But although Perkin failed at his original quest to cure malaria, his dye did contribute to the field of medicine after all. Biologists discovered that they could use aniline dyes to stain microscope slides, a process that made the samples mounted on the slides easier to see. This technique allowed scientists to focus on their research.

14 Today, the Perkin Medal, named in his honor, is presented each year to a scientist in the United States who uses chemistry to advance industry. William Henry Perkin himself was its first recipient in 1906, on the 50th anniversary of his invention of mauve.

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[1]**malaria:** serious disease passed through mosquitoes
[2]**synthetic:** made by combining different substances
[3]**synthesize:** chemically make

15 How do the events in the section "A Happy Accident" contribute to the development of a central idea of the article?

A by describing what made Perkin want to aim for a higher income

B by showing how Perkin began focusing on a new use for his discovery

C by telling how Perkin learned about the importance of fashion to the public

D by detailing when Perkin realized he was more a businessman than a scientist

16 Read this sentence from paragraph 7.

> **These dyes could vary in shade (so you wouldn't always know what exact color they would turn cloth), and they could fade or rub off.**

How does this sentence **best** help the reader understand Perkin's actions?

A It shows that Perkin began to notice and follow cultural trends.

B It shows that Perkin saw an opportunity to work with his family.

C It shows that Perkin identified a problem that needed a solution.

D It shows that Perkin recognized a way to impress the royal class.

17 Which part of the article **best** reflects the author's opinion of the topic?

A the title "Miraculous Mauve"

B the heading "Young Science, Young Scientist"

C the details about quinine in paragraph 4

D the information about using natural materials as dyes in paragraph 7

18 As used in paragraph 9, what does the phrase "mauve mania" suggest?

A People became obsessed with wearing the color.

B The dye required an investment of a large sum of money.

C The dye caused illness because of its chemical content.

D People became angry that only royalty could wear the color.

19 Prominent or famous people often influence the culture in which they live. How do the details in paragraphs 9 and 10 develop this idea?

A by describing the details of the royal fashions

B by mentioning the building of a new factory

C by suggesting that dye-making quickly became very profitable

D by illustrating why people from all classes wanted to use the new color

20 Which detail would be **most** important to include in a summary of the article?

A ". . . a teenager named William Henry Perkin found himself captivated by this fascinating science." (paragraph 3)

B ". . . Young Perkin realized that this chemical would make a great dye for fabrics." (paragraph 6)

C "Perkin himself kept inventing, making more new colors, including Britannia Violet and Perkin's Green . . ." (paragraph 11)

D "Today, the Perkin Medal, named in his honor, is presented each year to a scientist in the United States . . ." (paragraph 14)

21 How does the author develop the discovery of a purple dye in the article?

A by telling stories about moments in Perkin's life

B by describing the many benefits of the color mauve

C by sharing the series of steps that led to a new color

D by naming people who helped Perkin's efforts along the way

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 22 through 28.

Alice, an experienced beekeeper, and her two younger brothers, Carl and Bob, have recently bought an apiary. An apiary is a place where beehives are kept and managed. Alice, Carl, and Bob are moving the bees from the winter hives to the summer hives.

Excerpt from *Wilderness Honey*

by Frank Lillie Pollock

1 It was hard work. The cases were made of heavy lumber, and the boys had to carry them away and stack them up neatly. Even when the hives were out, the cases, with their sawdust packing, were as much as they cared to handle.

2 And this juggling with their homes naturally irritated the bees greatly. The summer hives, different in shape and color from the cases that they had been used to, did not look homelike to them. They failed to recognize them. They hung about uncertainly in the air; they tried to enter cases that had not yet been unpacked; and this caused fighting with the guards. Some of them followed the big red cases and tried to enter them again. They grew vicious and stung, so that the apiarists[1] had to put on their gloves. But by degrees a few began to recognize the odor of their old homes, and set up the peculiar whirr that acts as a call to the whole colony. They flocked down on the entrances in clouds, and stood with heads down and wings vibrating fast in the air—fanning, as beekeepers call it—which is their invariable way of expressing great joy. . . .

3 Both the boys had stiff muscles that morning, but they had planned to inspect the bees thoroughly that day, and determined to go through with it. It promised to be a fine day, and the bees were getting enough honey to make them good-tempered; so they could be handled easily.

4 "I'm going to show you whether I can't handle these black bees as painlessly as Italian bees," said Alice when they went out, and she stopped before the first hive in the row. She was wearing the usual black-fronted veil, but no gloves, and she pulled her sleeves high up on her wrists.

5 The colony was a strong one, with scores[2] of bees coming and going. Alice gently blew a little smoke across the entrance, driving in the guards; then she blew a stronger puff. A frightened roar arose within. Panic spread through the hive instantly, for smoke is the only thing that bees fear. Alice waited half a minute and then removed the cover and pulled off the canvas quilt.

6 A flood of bees surged up between the frames, but she drove them down with a puff of smoke before they could take wing. Another strong puff, and she set down the smoker, and with a screw-driver pried loose the outside frame, next to the hive wall. . . .

7 Alice set down the frame, after looking to see that the queen was not upon it, and took out another. This was similarly full of brood,[3] with a narrow rim of honey along the top. All the rest of the ten frames showed much the same condition, except the one next to the other wall of the hive, half of which was filled with fresh pollen, and half with newly gathered honey. . . .

8 Carl had no need of gloves for the first colony he opened. Instead of a crowded mass of bees, only a little cluster showed between the two center combs. Lifting one of them out, he spied the queen at once, walking over a small patch of brood about three inches in diameter. There were bees enough to cover only one comb well, and they were all huddled in this central space, trying desperately to build up their colony. These were yellow bees, at least half-bred Italians. . . .

9 A moment later Alice uttered an exclamation from the hive she had just opened.

10 "Here's something wrong!". . .

11 And, indeed, when the combs were taken out one by one there was no sign of either eggs or brood. The queen must have perished in the winter. These bees were all old ones from the last season, and they had no possibility of rearing any young. In a little while longer they would all have died, and they were well aware of their desperate state. They were intensely nervous and fierce-tempered, yet their indomitable[4] instinct for work had led them to keep gathering honey. As they had no brood to feed it to, and adult bees eat little, they had accumulated almost two combs full of fresh honey from the willows and maples.

12 "Unite them with that weak colony I found just now," Carl proposed.

13 "Just what I was going to do," Alice returned.

14 Carl uncovered the weak colony again, while Bob pried off the bottom from the queenless one. Alice blew a little smoke on both colonies, then Bob carefully lifted the queenless hive and set it on top of the other, making a hive in two stories, with two sets of combs.

15 At first there was a little disturbance as the bees from the two colonies mixed. Several bees rolled out at the entrance, fighting furiously. Then all was quiet; a contented hum arose within. Lifting a corner of the quilt cautiously, Carl saw the queenless bees standing head downward on their combs, fanning with joy at finding themselves attached to a normal family.

16 "Now those two together should build up and do something, and neither of them would have been any good alone," said Alice, with satisfaction.

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[1]**apiarists:** people who work with bees
[2]**scores:** large amounts
[3]**brood:** young, offspring
[4]**indomitable:** strong, determined

22 As used in paragraph 2, what does the word "irritated" mean?

A injured

B distracted

C annoyed

D offended

23 Which idea **best** expresses a theme of paragraph 2?

A Animals react negatively when they encounter humans.

B Familiar surroundings can bring calm to living creatures.

C Humans have a positive influence when they enter nature.

D People can have a negative effect on animal happiness.

24 What is the definition of "good-tempered" as used in paragraph 3?

A having a pleasant nature

B being organized and ready

C experiencing strong emotions

D showing anger through actions

25 How do Alice's actions in paragraphs 12 through 14 affect the resolution of the story?

A She shares her opinion about the situation with Carl and Bob.

B She works with Carl and Bob to execute a plan for the two colonies.

C She allows Carl and Bob the opportunity to learn from the experience.

D She ensures that the bees are unable to sting Carl and Bob.

26 Which sentence shows a change in the direction of the story?

A "They failed to recognize them." (paragraph 2)

B "Alice gently blew a little smoke across the entrance, driving in the guards; then she blew a stronger puff." (paragraph 5)

C "Here's something wrong!" (paragraph 10)

D "Carl uncovered the weak colony again, while Bob pried off the bottom from the queenless one." (paragraph 14)

27 Which detail **best** supports Alice's claim in paragraph 16?

A "Instead of a crowded mass of bees, only a little cluster showed . . ." (paragraph 8)

B "The queen must have perished in the winter." (paragraph 11)

C ". . . a little disturbance as the bees from the two colonies mixed." (paragraph 15)

D "Then all was quiet; a contented hum arose within." (paragraph 15)

28 **This question is worth 2 credits.**

What does the narrator show about Alice's personality? Include your claim and use **two** details from the story to support your response.

STOP

Grade 7
English Language Arts Test
Session 1
Spring 2026

Name: _____

New York State Testing Program

English Language Arts Test Session 2

Grade 7

Spring 2026

RELEASED QUESTIONS

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Session 2

TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some ideas to help you do your best:

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- You might need to read the passage more than once to answer a question.
- Read each question carefully. Take your time.
- A question may include a quote from a passage. You might need to review both the quote and the whole passage to answer the question.

When you write your answers

- make sure to answer the whole question;
- use examples or details from the text;
- write in complete sentences; and
-

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 29 through 35.

The year is 630 CE. Chengli, who lives in Chang'an, a city in China, has joined a trading caravan, which consists of many people traveling with animals and goods for sale. They are traveling northward on the Silk Road, which was a network of routes that traders used to transport goods and ideas between the East and the West.

Excerpt from *Chengli and the Silk Road Caravan*

by Hildi Kang

1 "Three weeks already," Chengli muttered. "Three weeks on the road. Sore feet, sore arms—all just as Master Fong said!" Chengli shuffled along beside the camels, trudging north toward the great Huang He, the Yellow River just beyond the city of Lanzhou. Hour after hour, it was all the same. They passed small villages surrounded by patchworks of vegetable gardens and tiny paddies where barefoot farmers bent low planting rice seedlings. In the larger fields, sometimes a farmer could be seen walking behind his ox as they turned over the soil, preparing to plant some new crop. The caravan did not stop at these villages but moved forward at the slow speed of plodding camels. . . .

2 Indeed, the work was harder than he'd imagined: taking the loads off the camels at night, loading them up again every morning, tightening ropes, and—the worst part—the walking, walking, walking. He hadn't thought about the endless walking!

3 And now this.

4 "Rain, rain, and more rain," he complained to himself as he sloshed along the muddy road beside El Kalid, his lead camel. . . .

5 The rain fell steadily, yellow with grit and heavy with dust blown from the northern deserts. Chengli pulled his hat down farther.

6 His legs ached from trudging through the mud, his arms ached from pulling on the rope to keep the camels moving, and his hands burned from constantly tightening the rain-slackened ropes to keep the heavy loads in place. He moved back along the line of camels assigned to his care, checking each load until he came to Fourth Brother, who was checking on his own assigned animals, the donkeys.

7 "I hate these donkeys!" Fourth Brother growled. "Master Fong promised me I could be a guard, but now he has shoved me back with animals. 'That's where you're needed,' he says. I'll show him I can do more than watch over a bunch of lazy donkeys!" . . .

8 As the day wore on, however, the rain slackened and finally stopped. Master chose a resting spot on well-drained land, and the call came down the line to settle for the night. Each group drew together, cooks set up their tents, and all across the soggy field, campfires sent up a friendly glow.

9 Chengli turned his attention to the animals. He liked keeping them healthy and making them comfortable, but he'd had a hard time learning to deal with the camels. The warmth of early spring made their thick, wooly fur begin to loosen and fall out, but when Chengli first tried to brush it, the camel turned and aimed a mouthful of stinking spit at him. Within the first week, however, he'd learned how to keep the animals calm. Now, one by one, he hobbled[1] the camels so they could not run away during the night, and then he released their packs and examined each one for scratches or sores on its body or thickly padded toes. Next he checked each sack, harness, and rope, and if damaged, he repaired it. Only then, when all his animals had been cared for, could he join the circle in front of the food tent.

10 He looked around at the men who now shared his life. Tough men, they'd been hardened by endless walking along endless trails. They all wore the same tan hemp tunics and trousers and boots made of pounded wool with the toes and heels reinforced with leather. Chengli's favorite among the workers was the one everyone called Uncle Tao, a grandfatherly man with unruly hair tied in an equally unruly topknot. The hair on his head was black, but his beard was pure white—a curious sight, thought Chengli. Uncle Tao worked as second in command with Master Fong. Together, these two kept their eyes on the entire caravan, checking both men and animals. Uncle Tao often made his way to the end of the line to see that Chengli was learning the finer points of caring for the camels, quietly teaching the boy whatever he needed to understand. From him Chengli learned that their first true rest stop would be at the bustling city of Lanzhou, some five hundred miles northwest of Chang'an. At the slow pace of the heavily loaded camels—twelve or fifteen miles a day—that five hundred miles would take them about eight weeks of walking.

11 On most nights, when the men gathered for supper, Master Fong and Uncle Tao, as the two highest-ranking men in the group, sat together off to the side, nearly hidden in the shadows, watching, listening, and missing nothing. Chengli sat between the two camel drivers, Bori the Wolf and Abdul, who both came from the far mountains. Abdul was the quiet one, rarely talking but always listening and ready to help. Bori, on the other hand, talked all the time—to people, to the animals, to himself.

12 It was from Bori that Chengli heard about the three huge waterwheels. "You'll recognize Lanzhou long before we get there," Bori told him, "because you can see the wooden waterwheels, as high as ten stacked camels! They're famous. The buckets lift water out of the Yellow River and dump it into irrigation ditches high up on the cliff. They are so old that nobody knows who built them, but everybody calls them 'Mr. Zuo's waterwheels'." Chengli thought he must be joking, but it did give him something to watch for.

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[1]**hobbled:** secured an animal to keep it in one area

29 Which detail from paragraph 1 **best** develops Chengli's claim that the journey is long and dull?

A "Three weeks on the road."

B "Hour after hour, it was all the same."

C ". . . sometimes a farmer could be seen walking behind his ox . . ."

D "The caravan did not stop at these villages . . ."

30 What effect does the phrase "and now this" in paragraph 3 have on the tone of the story?

A It creates a fearful tone.

B It creates a surprised tone.

C It develops a determined tone.

D It develops a hopeless tone.

31 Which theme is developed in paragraphs 1 through 6?

A It is difficult to be patient.

B Hard work is sometimes a test of endurance.

C Nature is beautiful.

D People can find joy in bad situations.

32 What do the details in paragraph 9 reveal about Chengli?

A He desires better working conditions.

B He prefers the company of animals over people.

C He cares about the well-being of the animals.

D He is eager to impress the people with whom he works.

33 What are the different ways Chengli and Fourth Brother view their roles in the caravan in paragraphs 6 through 10?

A Chengli feels ignored, while Fourth Brother feels undervalued.

B Chengli is assigned to the animals he prefers, while Fourth Brother is assigned to creatures he dislikes.

C Chengli believes he has been rewarded, while Fourth Brother feels he has been punished.

D Chengli shows care for the animals, while Fourth Brother shows disregard for them.

34 What character trait is **best** illustrated by Chengli's thoughts and actions in paragraphs 9 and 10?

A an ability to adapt

B shyness

C playfulness

D a desire for freedom

35 President Barack Obama said in his farewell address in 2017, "If you're walking down the right path, and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress." Which detail **best** shows how this idea is represented in the story?

A "He moved back along the line of camels assigned to his care, checking each load until he came to Fourth Brother, who was checking on his own assigned animals, the donkeys." (paragraph 6)

B "As the day wore on, however, the rain slackened and finally stopped. Master chose a resting spot on well-drained land, and the call came down the line to settle for the night." (paragraph 8)

C "The warmth of early spring made their thick, wooly fur begin to loosen and fall out, but when Chengli first tried to brush it, the camel turned and aimed a mouthful of stinking spit at him. Within the first week, however, he'd learned how to keep the animals calm." (paragraph 9)

D "Uncle Tao often made his way to the end of the line to see that Chengli was learning the finer points of caring for the camels, quietly teaching the boy whatever he needed to understand." (paragraph 10)

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 through 42.

A Change in Leaf Color

by Emily Sohn

1 Every autumn, traffic creeps along New England's roads as visitors look everywhere but at the road. These tourists flock to the region as soon as leaves begin to change color from a summery green to spectacular shades of red, orange, yellow, and purple.

2 "Being in the Northeast during autumn is just about as good as it gets in this country," says David Lee. He's a botanist at Florida International University in Miami.

3 Lee studies leaf color, so he's biased. But plenty of other people share his admiration. Areas of the United States with especially colorful fall displays attract thousands of leaf peepers.

4 Even as they "ooh" and "aah," few people know what makes many plants blush in the autumn. Research has shown that leaves change color when their food-making processes shut off. The chemical chlorophyll, which gives leaves their green color, breaks down. This allows other leaf pigments—yellow and orange—to become visible.

5 But "there's still a lot we don't know about this," Lee says.

6 It isn't clear, for example, why different species of plants turn different colors. Or why some trees become redder than others, even when they're standing right next to each other. And no one knows exactly how global warming will alter forests and affect leaf-peeping season.

Food factory

7 In summer, when a plant is green, its leaves contain the pigment chlorophyll, which absorbs all colors of sunlight except green. We see the reflected green light.

8 The plant uses the energy it absorbs from the sun to turn carbon dioxide and water into sugars (food) and oxygen (waste). The process is called photosynthesis.

9 As days get shorter and colder in the autumn, chlorophyll molecules break down. Leaves quickly lose their green color. Some leaves begin to look yellow or orange because they still contain pigments called carotenoids. One such pigment, carotene, gives carrots their bright-orange color.

10 But red is special. This brilliant color appears only because the leaves of some plants, including maples, actually produce new pigments, called anthocyanins.

11 That's a strange thing for a plant to do without a reason, says Bill Hoch of the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Why? Because it takes a lot of energy to make anthocyanins.

Why red?

12 To figure out the purpose of the red pigment, Hoch and his coworkers bred mutant plants that can't make anthocyanins and compared them with plants that do make anthocyanins. They found that plants that can make red pigments continue to absorb nutrients from their leaves long after the mutant plants have stopped.

13 This study and others suggest that anthocyanins work like a sunscreen. When chlorophyll breaks down, a plant's leaves become vulnerable to the sun's harsh rays. By turning red, plants protect themselves from sun damage. They can continue to take nutrients out of their dying leaves. These reserves help the plants stay healthy through the winter.

14 The more anthocyanins a plant produces, the redder its leaves become. This explains why colors vary from year to year, and even from tree to tree. Stressful conditions, such as drought and disease, often make a season redder.

15 Now, Hoch is breeding plants for a new set of experiments. He wants to find out whether turning red helps plants survive cold weather.

16 "There's a clear correlation between environments that get colder in the fall and the amount of red produced," he says. "Red maples turn bright red in Wisconsin. In Florida, they don't turn nearly as bright."

More protection

17 Elsewhere, scientists are looking at anthocyanins in other ways. A recent study in Greece, for instance, found that as leaves grow redder, insects eat them less. On the basis of this observation, some scientists argue that red pigments defend a plant against bugs.

18 Hoch rejects that theory, but Lee thinks that it might make sense. He points out that red leaves contain less nitrogen than green ones do. "It may actually be that insects avoid red leaves because they're less nutritious," Lee says.

19 However, "it's pretty confusing at this point," Lee admits. "People debate back and forth."

20 To settle the debate, scientists will need to look at more species under more conditions, Lee says. So, he's now researching leafy plants rather than trees. He's especially interested in tropical plants, whose leaves turn red when they're young rather than old.

21 You can do your own leafy experiments. Observe the trees in your neighborhood and keep track of weather conditions. When autumn begins, write down when the leaves change, which species change first, and how rich the colors are. You can even see anthocyanins under a simple microscope. After several years, you might start to notice some patterns.

36 Read this sentence from paragraph 3.

> **Areas of the United States with especially colorful fall displays attract thousands of leaf peepers.**

Which phrase helps the reader to understand the meaning of "leaf peepers" as used in the sentence?

A "These tourists flock to the region . . ." (paragraph 1)

B "Being in the Northeast during autumn . . ." (paragraph 2)

C "Lee studies leaf color . . ." (paragraph 3)

D "The chemical chlorophyll, which gives leaves their green color . . ." (paragraph 4)

37 Which statement **best** expresses the author's belief in paragraph 6?

A What people enjoy now will change over time.

B Scientists should avoid trying to make predictions.

C There is much for scientists to learn now and in the future.

D The behavior of trees is too complex for people to fully comprehend.

38 How does the section "Food factory" contribute to the article's organization?

A It explains the cause of leaf color change in some plants.

B It provides a counterargument in the debate as to why leaves change color.

C It introduces the idea that color change may be harmful to trees.

D It presents a problem that scientists are attempting to solve through experimentation.

39 What does the phrase "work like a sunscreen" mean as it is used in paragraph 13?

A Certain chemicals cause tree leaves to change color when the seasons change.

B The same chemical can be used by people and plants for sun protection.

C Leaves are drying up from the heat of the sun when they turn red.

D The color red may shield plants from environmental damage.

40 What is the relationship between the author's ideas in paragraphs 20 and 21?

A The author cites ongoing studies, then proposes reader action.

B The author details current research, then challenges its results.

C The author introduces new ideas, then summarizes the supporting evidence.

D The author recalls old disagreements, then invites the reader to make a judgment.

41 Which claim is **most** strongly supported with evidence in the article?

A People enjoy viewing the changes in leaf color in the fall.

B Red leaf color may have different benefits for plants.

C Red leaf color discourages insects from eating the leaves.

D Humans may affect how leaf color changes in the future.

42 How do the references to scientists David Lee and Bill Hoch support a central idea of the article?

A Both scientists agree that leaf color change is a beautiful sight.

B Each scientist rejects the other's ideas about leaf color change.

C These scientists contribute different ideas to the study of leaf color change.

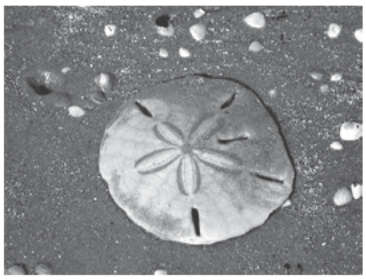
D These scientists want to create new species of plants to study leaf color change.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer question 43.

Excerpt from "Digging for Dollars"

by Natalie Zaman



This is a sand dollar that would commonly be found on the beach.

These are sand dollars that would be found in the ocean.

1 Seabirds cry in the salty air as you stroll along the shore, seeking shells. What's that? You stoop down to have a closer look, shading your eyes from the sun. Right under the surface of the water is a small round disk with a flower pattern in the middle—a sand dollar!

2 If you've ever been lucky enough to find one of these beauties on a shell hunt, what you've picked up is not the sand dollar itself, but its "test," or skeleton.

3 Why is it so hard to find sand dollars? Well, besides the fact that they are wily[1] creatures that like to hide, their skeletons break very easily, so it's rare to find a sand dollar all in one piece.

4 Sand dollars are echinoids, a word that means "porcupine-like." A live sand dollar's delicate spines feel like velvet when picked up. On the muddy, sandy seafloor where the sand dollar lives, its coat helps it move around, keep clean, and collect food. The spines filter out sand particles and act as little shovels that dig into the sand, propelling the sand dollar over and under the seabed. They also help collect plankton and other tiny organic matter, the sand dollar's favorite meal.

5 This creature moves, eats, and breathes with its feet—and it has lots of them! The "petaloid," the flower pattern on top of the sand dollar, has a border that looks like it's made of tiny lines, but these are really holes through which feet come out. These feet serve as the sand dollar's gills, to help it breathe.

6 The lines on the underside of the sand dollar are grooves where more feet come out. These, along with the spines, help the sand dollar move around and push food to the center of its body where its mouth is. If you break open a sand dollar test, several small hard pieces will fall out. These are teeth! When a test dries out, the teeth become detached and loose inside. If you shake a test, those loose teeth will make a rattling sound.

7 On the seafloor, a sand dollar will stand on end, partially buried in the sand. Sand dollars are often found crowded together in "beds" because it's easier for them to reproduce this way—hundreds might live together in only one square yard of space. There are male and female sand dollars (although you can't tell them apart by sight), and they reproduce by expelling eggs and seed into the water to germinate.

8 Even when it's alive, a sand dollar probably won't look appetizing to you, and many sea creatures don't consider it worthy of being on a menu either. To get away from those that do consider it dinner—snails, a kind of fish called skate, the occasional eel, and especially the starfish (who happens to be a cousin)—an adult sand dollar uses its spines and feet to burrow under the sand.

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[1]**wily:** sneaky

43 **This question is worth 2 credits.**

How does the author of "Digging for Dollars" support the claim that the sand dollar's feet are useful to the creature? Include your claim and use **two** details from the article to support your response.

Directions
Read this article. Then answer questions 44 through 46.

Excerpt from "Floating Gold, Dragon Spittle, Whale's Pearls"

by Gail Skroback Hennessey

1 A couple walking along a beach in western South Australia in 2006 spotted something unusual. A huge, solid, grayish glob was lying in the sand. At first they thought it was a tree stump or a rock, but the crusty, waxy lump was something much better: whale vomit.

2 Think you'd be unhappy to stumble across a big pile of desiccated[1] whale puke? The couple who found it was thrilled—not because they're big vomit fans, but because such a find can actually be quite valuable.

Sweet Ambergris

3 The nicer-sounding name for whale vomit is ambergris. It comes from the French term *ambre gris,* meaning "gray amber." Specifically, it is vomit from a sperm whale. Ambergris is made of all the things that sperm whales can't digest, including the beaks of squid and cuttlefish, a sperm whale's favorite foods. . . .

4 Nicknamed "floating gold," ambergris has long been used in the making of perfume—and some of the most expensive perfumes, at that. That's because ambergris is used as a fixative, a chemical that absorbs the scents and helps keep them from changing or evaporating. Today, because it is so rare and expensive, many companies use synthetic chemicals, instead of ambergris, in their perfumes. But real ambergris often still works the best.

5 Back in 1972, the U.S. Congress passed the Marine Mammals Protection Act to safeguard marine mammals, including sea otters, walruses, and manatees. With this law, the use of ambergris in perfumes was banned. The Marine Mammals Protection Act placed the whale on the endangered species list, meaning whales, and what they vomited, were protected. Today, many countries (including the United States, as of 2001) are allowing the sale and purchase of ambergris, because vomit isn't a living organism and no whale is typically harmed in obtaining the material. Prime collecting areas for ambergris include the shores of China, Japan, Africa, North and South America, and the Bahamas and other tropical islands. . . .

6 As for that couple walking the beach of South Australia who came across the ambergris? Well, it was a 32-pound (14.5-kg) wad of the stuff, and it reportedly sold for a whopping $750,000!

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[1]**desiccated:** dried up

44 **This question is worth 2 credits.**

What is an important lesson of "Floating Gold, Dragon Spittle, Whale's Pearls"? Include your claim and use **two** details from the article to support your response.

45 **This question is worth 2 credits.**

What is the **most likely** reason the author includes paragraphs 3 and 4 in "Floating Gold, Dragon Spittle, Whale's Pearls"? Include your claim and use **two** details from the article to support your response.

DO NOT WRITE
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Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 46 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 21 and 22.

46 **This question is worth 4 credits.**

What is a central idea shared by "Digging for Dollars" and "Floating Gold, Dragon Spittle, Whale's Pearls"? How is this central idea developed differently in each article? Use details from **both** articles to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- identify a central idea shared by the articles
- explain how the central idea is developed differently in each article
- use details from **both** articles to support your response

STOP

Grade 7
English Language Arts Test
Session 2
Spring 2026

2026 Grade 7 ELA Test Text Complexity Metrics for Released Questions

During the test development process, NYS educators approve all passages for use on the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests. Selecting high-quality, grade-appropriate texts requires both objective text complexity metrics and educator judgment. For English Language Arts Tests, both quantitative and qualitative measures are used to determine the complexity of the texts.

Quantitative measures of text complexity are used to measure aspects of text complexity that are difficult for a human reader to evaluate when examining a text. These aspects include word frequency, word length, sentence length, and text cohesion. These aspects are efficiently measured by computer programs. While quantitative text complexity metrics are a helpful start, they are not definitive.

Qualitative measures are a crucial complement to quantitative measures. To qualitatively determine the complexity of a text, NYS educators use a rubric composed of meaning, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands.

New York State 2026 Quantitative Text Complexity Chart for Assessment and Curriculum

To determine if a text's quantitative complexity is at the appropriate grade level, New York State uses the table below. In cases where a text is excerpted from a large work, only the complexity of the excerpt that students see on the test is measured, not the large work.

Grade Band	ATOS	Degrees of Reading Power	Flesch-Kincaid	The Lexile Framework	Reading Maturity	SourceRater
2nd–3rd	2.75 – 5.14	42 – 54	1.98 – 5.34	420 – 820	3.53 – 6.13	0.05 – 2.48
4th–5th	4.97 – 7.03	52 – 60	4.51 – 7.73	740 – 1010	5.42 – 7.92	0.84 – 5.75
6th–8th	7.00 – 9.98	57 – 67	6.51 – 10.34	925 – 1185	7.04 – 9.57	4.11 – 10.66
9th–10th	9.67 – 12.01	62 – 72	8.32 – 12.12	1050 – 1335	8.41 – 10.81	9.02 – 13.93
11th–12th	11.20 – 14.10	67 – 74	10.34 – 14.20	1185 – 1385	9.57 – 12.00	12.30 – 14.50

Source: Student Achievement Partners

Text Complexity Metrics for 2026 Grade 7 Passages

Passage Title	Word Count	Lexile	Flesch-Kincaid	ATOS	Qualitative Review
Excerpt from *Grandmother Five Baskets*	911	950L	6.35	6.16	Appropriate
Excerpt from "Miraculous Mauve"	808	1070L	9.52	9.27	Appropriate
Excerpt from *Wilderness Honey*	884	1040L	7.43	7.49	Appropriate
Excerpt from *Chengli and the Silk Road Caravan*	908	1120L	7.3	6.96	Appropriate
"A Change in Leaf Color"	773	940L	7.04	6.87	Appropriate
PAIR: Excerpt from "Digging for Dollars"	490	1110L	7.76	7.28	Appropriate
PAIR: Excerpt from "Floating Gold, Dragon Spittle, Whale's Pearls"	366	1140L	8.89	9.89	Appropriate

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

2026 English Language Arts Tests Map to the Standards

Grade 7

Question	Type	Key	Points	Standard	Strand	Subscore	Secondary Standard(s)
Session 1							
1	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
2	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R5	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
3	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
4	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R9	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
5	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R4	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
6	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R6	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
7	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
15	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
16	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
17	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R6	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
18	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R4	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
19	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R9	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
20	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
21	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
22	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7L4	Language Standards	Reading	
23	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
24	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R4	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
25	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
26	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
27	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R8	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
28	Constructed Response		2	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Writing to Sources	
Session 2							
29	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R8	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
30	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R4	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
31	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
32	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
33	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R6	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
34	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
35	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R9	Reading Standards for Literature	Reading	
36	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7L4	Language Standards	Reading	
37	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R6	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
38	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R5	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
39	Multiple Choice	D	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R4	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
40	Multiple Choice	A	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R3	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
41	Multiple Choice	B	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R8	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
42	Multiple Choice	C	1	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Reading	
43	Constructed Response		2	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R8	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Writing to Sources	
44	Constructed Response		2	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Writing to Sources	
45	Constructed Response		2	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R5	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Writing to Sources	
46	Constructed Response		4	NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-7R2	Reading Standards for Informational Text	Writing to Sources	

*This item map is intended to identify the primary analytic skills necessary to successfully answer each question on the 2026 operational ELA test. However, each constructed-response question measures proficiencies described in multiple standards, including writing and additional reading and language standards. For example, two-point and four-point constructed-response questions require students to first conduct the analyses described in the mapped standard and then produce written responses that are rated based on writing standards. To gain greater insight into the measurement focus for constructed-response questions, please refer to the rubrics shown in the Educator Guides.