



New York State Testing Program

**English
Language Arts
Book 1**

Grade **8**

January 17–20, 2006

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 will do some reading and answer questions about what you have read.

Go On

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 5.

Equal Inheritance

by Leo Tolstoy

A certain merchant had two sons. The elder son was his favorite, and he intended to leave all his wealth to this son when the merchant died. The mother felt sorry for her younger son, and she asked her husband not to tell the boys of his intention. She hoped to find some way of making her sons equal. The merchant heeded her wish and did not make known his decision.

One day the mother was sitting at the window weeping. A traveler approached the window and asked her why she was weeping.

“How can I help weeping?” she said. “There is no difference between my two sons, but their father wishes to leave everything to one and nothing to the other. I have asked him not to tell them of his decision until I have thought of some way of helping the younger. But I have no money of my own, and I do not know what to do in my misery.”

Then the traveler said to her, “There is help for your trouble. Tell your sons that the elder will receive the entire inheritance, and that the younger will receive nothing. Then they will be equal.”

The younger son, on learning that he would inherit nothing, went to another land, where he served his apprenticeship and learned a trade. The elder son lived at home and learned nothing, knowing that someday he would be rich.

When the father died, the elder son who did not know how to do anything spent all his inheritance. However, the younger son, who had learned how to make money in a foreign country, became rich.

1 The merchant believes that compared to his elder son, his younger son is

- A** less important
- B** irresponsible
- C** untrustworthy
- D** less intelligent

2 Which word **best** describes how the mother feels after hearing her husband's decision?

- F** cautious
- G** helpless
- H** shocked
- J** uncertain

3 Which statement **best** describes the theme of the story?

- A** Inheriting money brings bad luck.
- B** Siblings should learn to get along with one another.
- C** Learning how to earn money is better than having money given to you.
- D** Some people have to work hard for success; others have success handed to them.

4 Which quotation from the story foreshadows, or predicts, the conclusion of the story?

- F** “The elder son was his favorite, and he intended to leave all his wealth to this son when the merchant died.”
- G** “She hoped to find some way of making her sons equal. The merchant heeded her wish and did not make known his decision.”
- H** “Tell your sons that the elder will receive the entire inheritance, and that the younger will receive nothing. Then they will be equal.”
- J** “The elder son lived at home and learned nothing, knowing that someday he would be rich.”

5 Read this sentence from the story.

The mother felt sorry for her younger son, and she asked her husband not to tell the boys of his intention.

Which word means about the same as “intention”?

- A** hope
- B** plan
- C** reason
- D** regret

Go On

Directions

Read this article about the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Then answer questions 6 through 11.

The ASPCA: A Brief History

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is the oldest humane organization in America. It was founded in 1866 by Henry Bergh, a wealthy resident of New York City. Bergh was horrified by the cruelty toward animals that he observed daily on city streets, particularly with respect to the large number of working horses in New York City, as well as its many stray cats and dogs.

Bergh decided to act. He enlisted the support of some of New York City's wealthiest and most elite citizens. Together they wrote and signed the charter that stated their mission: to alleviate pain, fear, and suffering among all animals. The newly founded ASPCA realized they needed more than kind words to confront what they saw as a growing problem. Therefore, the organization, through its founding members, persuaded the New York State legislature to pass the country's first effective animal anti-cruelty law.

From a small organization of a few concerned citizens, the ASPCA has developed into a nationally-recognized force in protecting animals. In New York City, the ASPCA continues to rescue and shelter animals and to educate school children and the general public about animals and their care. It now runs a full-service veterinary hospital in the city as well. Beyond New York City and State, the ASPCA has led many national movements to help animals by informing the public about animal welfare issues and asking for changes in federal laws.

And what of Henry Bergh? His vision lives on today at the ASPCA. For over 135 years, the ASPCA has taken a leading role in promoting the humane treatment of animals. In carrying on the work started by Bergh, the ASPCA promotes both the spirit and the letter of the law. Henry Bergh would be amazed.

- 6** The author **most likely** wrote this passage to
- F** persuade readers to propose new state laws
 - G** ask readers to support veterinary hospitals
 - H** show readers how to found a national organization
 - J** inform readers about an organization and its history

- 7** The mission of the ASPCA is “to alleviate pain, fear, and suffering among all animals.” The word “alleviate” means about the same as
- A** advertise
 - B** identify
 - C** reduce
 - D** study

- 8** According to the passage, the ASPCA was most likely created to
- F** find new homes for animals
 - G** start a hospital for animals
 - H** protect animals from mistreatment
 - J** educate the public about animal diseases

- 9** Read this sentence from the passage.

The ASPCA promotes both the spirit and the letter of the law.

“Spirit” as it is used in this sentence means about the same as

- A** ideas and attitude
- B** a feeling of anger
- C** rules and procedures
- D** a sense of power

- 10** Read this excerpt from the passage.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is the oldest humane organization in America.

“Humane organization” in this context **most likely** means that the organization

- F** was founded by individuals
- G** has been accepted by most people
- H** is run on kindhearted principles
- J** has existed for a long time

- 11** The last line of the passage says, “Henry Bergh would be amazed.” What probably would amaze Bergh most?

- A** the mission of the ASPCA
- B** the growth and spread of the ASPCA
- C** the passage of the first effective animal anti-cruelty law
- D** the creation of a veterinary hospital for animals

Go On

Directions

Read this poem. Then answer questions 12 through 16.

The Horseman

by Gretchen Schol

My grandfather owned
The last livery stable
In Long Prairie, Minnesota.
He kept the workhorses,
The Shires and Clydesdales
That they used to use
For logging, until the last
Farmer got a Ford truck
And waved at my grandfather
As he stood by his stable.
He sold the horses; the
Barn went for lumber.
And the old man went
Home from the livery stable
For the last time. He bought
A Ford and learned to drive it.
But he would never start it
Without flicking invisible reins,
And when he braked, he always
Closed his eyes and whispered, "Whoa."

reins = narrow
straps used to
guide a horse



- 12** This poem is written from the point of view of a
- F** character in the poem who plays a major role
 - G** character in the poem who is not involved in the events
 - H** narrator who has a personal connection to the poem
 - J** narrator who discusses the events from an impersonal position

- 13** Read these lines from the poem.

**. . . He bought
A Ford and learned to drive it.
But he would never start it
Without flicking invisible reins,**

What do these lines imply about the main character in the poem?

- A** He is unwilling to let go of the past.
 - B** He is frustrated by the steering wheel.
 - C** He is annoyed that he cannot change old habits.
 - D** He is worried that he will forget how to drive a wagon.
- 14** Which statement suggests that the main character in the poem has begun to accept the changes in his life?
- F** He learns to drive.
 - G** He owns a livery stable.
 - H** He keeps his workhorses for a while.
 - J** He pretends he is driving a wagon.

Go On

15 Which lines from the poem does the poet use to imply a time period that has since passed away?

- A** “The last livery stable
In Long Prairie, Minnesota.”
- B** “He kept the workhorses,
The Shires and Clydesdales”
- C** “. . . waved at my grandfather
As he stood by his stable.”
- D** “. . . He bought
A Ford and learned to drive it.”

16 Which technique is used throughout the poem?

- F** rhyme
- G** repetition
- H** free verse
- J** common rhythm

Directions

During the 1800s, many people opposed to slavery helped runaway slaves escape to free states and territories. The method they used was called the “Underground Railroad.” It was not a train, but a series of safe houses where runaways could find food, shelter, and encouragement on their journey. Read the excerpt about Ann, a runaway slave staying in the home of Mr. Bigelow. Then answer questions 17 through 20.

Stealing Freedom

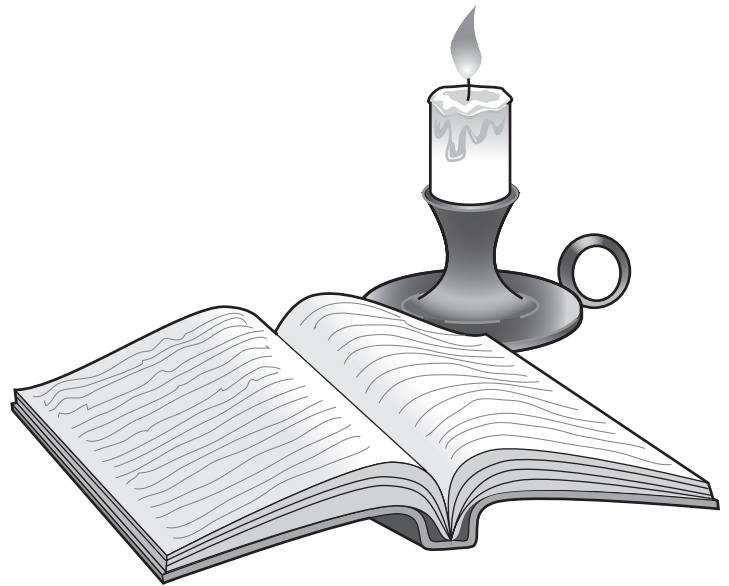
by Elisa Carbone

The days seemed to go on forever. She ate each meal slowly, alone in the stuffy room, trying to make it last as long as possible. And she took a long time dressing, changing into her nightgown each night and into the beautiful yellow dress each morning. It seemed a shame to wear the best clothes she’d ever owned with no one to see her in them except the spiders hanging in the corners.

The rest of her time she spent looking through the peephole, watching the street outside with its lazy procession of people, horses and carriages, sheep, goats, chickens, and cows. They were near the corner of Seventh and E streets, Mr. Bigelow said, just a few blocks away from Pennsylvania Avenue, where President Pierce lived in the White House.

How strange, she thought, to be free and yet to be a prisoner. She would gladly have made herself busy with washing and cooking and sweeping. Anything would be better than this boredom.

One evening, during a talk with Mr. Bigelow, while he stood on the second rung of the ladder and she rested her chin on her hands at the edge of the trapdoor, she looked into the living room at the walls lined with bookshelves. The books were fat and black, some with gold lettering on their spines.



“What are all of those books about?” she asked.

“Ah. Those are my law books. They are there to give off a musty odor and convince all my visitors that I am, indeed, a very educated man.”

“There must be a lot of laws to fill so many books,” she said.

Mr. Bigelow gazed at his library and scratched a sideburn. “Strange, isn’t it? I am a man of the law, and yet, by the law, I am a criminal and deserve to be thrown in prison.”

They were both silent for a time.

“Well, enough lamenting for me. It’s time for bed,” said Mr. Bigelow, and turned to step off the ladder.

Go On

“Wait,” said Ann urgently. She didn’t think she could stand another day of staring alternately at the ceiling and out the peephole. “Your books—might I borrow one to read?”

“Why, my dear child, I had no idea you could read!” he said, astonished. “But those books . . .” He looked at the long black rows. “They’re no more interesting than watching ice melt.” He gave a perplexed sigh, then suddenly brightened. He marched over to a low corner shelf and pulled out a small red book. He blew dust off of it and brought it back to her. “I saved this from when I was a boy, in case I ever had a son of my own.”

Ann held the book and read the title embossed in silver on the front cover: *Robinson Crusoe*.

“It’s really a story for boys, but it’s the best I can offer,” said Mr. Bigelow.

Ann turned the book over in her hands, feeling the smoothness and coolness of it. Mr. Bigelow must have seen the look of

excitement and longing on her face, because he said, “I suppose now you’ll want a candle.”

“Oh, could I?” She could scarcely believe her good fortune.

He gave her a very short, stubby candle. “This is to make sure you get some sleep tonight,” he explained.

She thanked him profusely, and gladly retired to her bed. There, by the light of the candle, she opened the book. She ran her hands over the silky pages, then turned to the text and began: “Chapter 1. I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family. . . .”

She was carried away to the world of a young man’s decision to seek adventure on the high seas, a terrible storm, and his narrow escape from a sinking ship. She read until the candle flickered, sputtered, and died. But even in the dark, images of grand ships and raging storms lasted in her mind until they mixed with her dreams.

17 The sentence “They’re no more interesting than watching ice melt” is an example of

- A** foreshadowing a future event
- B** personifying an object
- C** a comparison for dramatic effect
- D** a flashback to a previous time

18 Based on information in the passage, what can you conclude about Mr. Bigelow?

- F** He earns a living by helping former slaves.
- G** He works in an office outside his home.
- H** He does not like to read or study.
- J** He has no children and lives alone.

19 Which statement best explains why Mr. Bigelow gives Ann a short candle?

- A** She is a fast reader and will not need light for long.
- B** He is worried that someone outside will see the candlelight.
- C** He wants to be sure that she does not stay up too late reading.
- D** She might start a fire if she falls asleep while the candle burns.

20 Why would the book *Robinson Crusoe* **most likely** be of particular interest to Ann?

- F** It belonged to someone's son, and she misses her family.
- G** It is about someone who is having an adventure.
- H** It was the largest book on the shelf.
- J** It is about the law, and she hopes to pursue law as a career.

Go On

Directions

Read this article about an ancient form of poetry. Then answer questions 21 through 26.



Haiku A Song of the Earth

by Hazel Root Cassey

Have you ever listened to the plop of a raindrop before it snakes its way down your windowpane or caught the hum of a locust on a steamy summer's eve or tuned in to the crispy rattle of dry leaves chasing each other as the first winter wind cracks his frosty whip? You might call these small, subtle sounds earth songs. Is it possible to capture earth songs, to put them into words?

Long ago, poets in Japan listened, watched, and did capture the beauty of the earth's songs much as the fragile threads of a spider's web catch and reflect the gold of the morning sun. They did this with the tiniest poems in the world, called *haiku*. A haiku is a poem that is just three lines and seventeen syllables long.

In their haiku, the early Japanese poets caught the colors, sounds, and fragrances of the seasons of the year. They sang of their islands' beauties, from the stately Buddha to the delicate fragrance of lotus and cherry blossoms to the iridescence of the dragonfly's wing. Their miniature poems were not meant to fully describe a scene or to explain it but rather were a flash, split-second impression.

The old poets are not the only writers of haiku. Today Japanese farmers, shopkeepers, grandparents, and students write it, and because of its strong appeal, haiku is written in many other countries throughout the world.

Interestingly enough, Japanese poetry has had a long and colorful history. In the prehaiku period in the early eighth century, Japanese poets wrote *katauta*, poems in a question-and-answer form, using two people. Each three-line verse contained about seventeen syllables that could be delivered easily and spontaneously in one breath—just as one would naturally ask or answer a question. This has remained the basic pattern for traditional Japanese poetry throughout the centuries.

Another form that emerged was the *tanka*, which contained five lines and thirty-one syllables (5-7-5-7-7), written by either one or two persons. From that evolved the *renga*, which contained more than one verse, or link. Composed by three or more people, it could have as many as 100 links! The first verse of the *renga* introduced a subject or theme. It had three lines and was called the *hokku*, or starting verse. *Renga* parties became a favorite pastime.

Around 1450, *haikai no renga* became popular. This style of linked verse contained puns and was humorous and amusing. The opening three lines were still called a *hokku*, and from *haikai* and *hokku* the term *haiku* evolved.

Here is an example of a haiku:

*The best I have to
offer you is the small size
of the mosquitoes.*

21 What is the **most likely** reason the author uses imagery in the question that begins the article?

- A** to provide some examples of earth songs
- B** to establish a dramatic tone for the passage
- C** to express an appreciation of natural events
- D** to explain how haiku differs from other poetry

22 According to the article, what was the **main** activity at a *renga* party?

- F** creating a group poem
- G** changing haiku into *tanka*
- H** studying the history of haiku
- J** competing to write earth songs

Go On

23 How does the author support the idea that haiku is an important part of Japanese culture?

- A** by describing how haiku has evolved and remained popular for centuries
- B** by making comparisons between modern haiku and other types of poetry
- C** by emphasizing that most Japanese people share an appreciation of nature
- D** by explaining that the Japanese people still prefer reading short poetry today

24 Read the partial outline below.

I. Types of Haiku

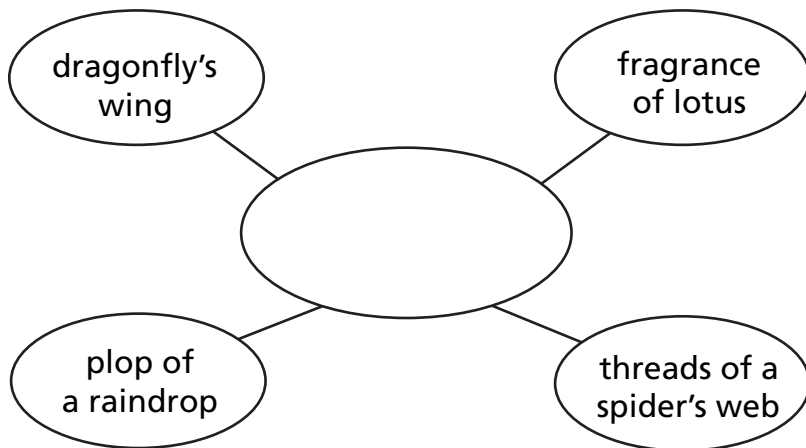
- A. Katauta:** _____
- B. Tanka:** (5-7-5-7-7) written by 1 or 2 persons
- C. Renga:** contains more than one verse or link

Which detail belongs in the blank space in the outline?

- F** contains thirty-one syllables
- G** question-and-answer poem
- H** humorous and amusing poem
- J** could have as many as 100 links

25

Look at the graphic organizer below.



According to the article, what word or phrase should go in the blank space in the center of the graphic organizer?

- A tanka
- B katauta
- C tiny poems
- D haiku subjects

26

Information in this article would be of **most** value to a reader who wants to

- F teach how to write haiku
- G research the history of haiku
- H compare Japanese and American poetry
- J find suggestions about hosting a renga party

STOP



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