



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Book 1

Grade

8

January 20–23, 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 will do some reading and answer questions about what you have read.

Go On

Directions

Read this passage. Then answer questions 1 through 5.

Old Champ

by Maureen Crane Wartski

illustrated by Ezra Tucker

Brady is a recently retired search and rescue dog. He is not happy and misses his owner Al because Al has gone out on a rescue mission without him. Al's nephew Steve decides to take Brady along when he and his friend Zach go on an overnight hike. In this part of the story, Steve and Zach have just realized that lightning has set the woods on fire.

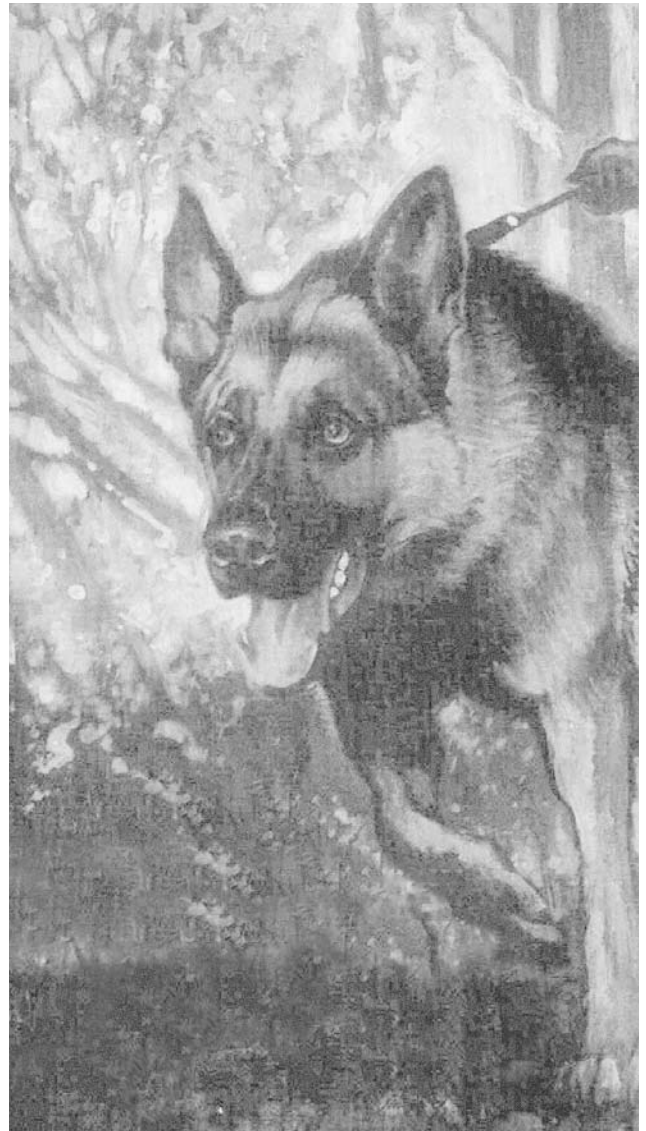
In the short time they'd been inside their tent packing their gear, wind-blown flame had leaped from the top of one tree to another. The long dry summer had turned the forest into a tinderbox, and the thunderstorm wasn't helping much. It had more wind and lightning than rain.

Zach tugged at Steve's arm. "Let's go! We can make it back to the river we crossed today."

Steve snapped Brady's leash to his collar, and their heads down against the gusting fire-wind, they hurried down the trail they had followed earlier. The air was full of smoke and fiery cinders, and pine branches snapped from burning trees with a cannon-like sound. Steve kept his eyes fixed on the trail. All they had to do was to make it down to the river. . . .

Brady barked a sharp warning. Ahead of them lay a dense curtain of smoke across the trail. They'd never make it through that—they'd have to find another escape route.

The dog was tugging at his leash trying to draw them away from the smoke. This was what Brady was trained to do, and yet Steve was uneasy. It seemed to him they were moving away from the river.



Go On

Suddenly, Zach yelled. Steve whipped around, but his friend had disappeared. “Zach!” Steve shouted. “Are you O.K.? Where are you?”

Zach’s answer was lost in the fire-noises around them, but Brady tugged Steve down a sharp incline. At the base of the slope Zach was sitting and rubbing his ankle.

“I’ve sprained it,” he groaned. “I tried to get up, but I can’t put any pressure on it.”

“We can’t stop moving. Lean on me, and we’ll go slow.”

As Steve helped his friend to his feet, Brady lifted his head and snuffed the smoke-laden wind. Next moment, the dog bounded away and disappeared. The boys yelled and shouted for him, but he didn’t come back.

They had no choice but to leave him behind. Heartsick, Steve helped Zach up the slope. He couldn’t blame Brady for panicking and bolting. He himself wanted to run even though he didn’t have a clue which way.

They hadn’t gone far when there was a familiar bark, and Brady came bounding toward them. “Where’ve you been?” Steve cried.

For an answer Brady stopped directly in front of him. “What’s gotten into him?” Zach demanded as the big dog butted Steve with his head, pushing him back toward the slope they’d just climbed. Then, when Steve still didn’t get it, Brady grabbed the boy’s jeans and started tugging.

The message was clear, but Steve hesitated. Of course he remembered what his uncle had

said about Brady saving his life, but that had been a long time ago when the dog was much younger. Was he still sharp enough to get them through this?

Nearby, a pine went up in a whoosh of smoke. Brady tugged again, urgently. “O.K., big guy,” Steve gritted. After all, what choice did they have?

Brady led them back down the incline and into the trees. Not far from them fire was licking at underbrush and old logs before rearing up into the trees. Zach stared as if hypnotized, but Steve focused on Brady. “You can do it,” he kept muttering.

Could he? Steve didn’t know, and he wasn’t sure whether Brady knew, either. Several times the big dog stopped as if to get his bearings. Often he changed direction. Once Zach stumbled, taking Steve with him, and they both went sprawling.

Steve was so tired that he just wanted to lie there and rest, but Brady wouldn’t have it. Growling and nudging, the dog bullied both boys to their feet. Then they started to move again.

How long they’d walked Steve had no idea. He just held onto Brady’s leash with one hand, hung onto Zach with the other, and kept putting one foot in front of the other. He was almost numb when he heard it—the wonderful sound of rushing water.

The river! With a hoarse yell the boys stumbled forward until they splashed thigh-deep in cool, running water. “Brady, you did it!” Zach yelled. “Yee-ha! You got us through!”

- 1** This passage is told by
- A** Brady
 - B** Steve
 - C** a fire fighter
 - D** an outside narrator

- 2** Brady tugs on Steve’s jeans because he
- A** wants Steve to follow him
 - B** cannot see where he is going
 - C** is trying to pull Steve up the hill
 - D** does not want to be left behind

- 3** Where does Brady lead Steve and Zach?
- A** to the river
 - B** to the tent
 - C** to the woods
 - D** to the trail

- 4** What is the **most likely** reason the author writes that the pine branches “snapped from burning trees with a cannon-like sound”?
- A** to give objects human-like qualities
 - B** to provide hints about a future event
 - C** to make a comparison for dramatic effect
 - D** to explain how the characters are feeling

- 5** Read this sentence from the passage.

Not far from them fire was licking at underbrush and old logs before rearing up into the trees.

With this sentence, the author creates a feeling of

- A** anticipation
- B** disappointment
- C** surprise
- D** urgency

Go On

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 6 through 10.

Why We Play

Why play games? Because they are fun, of course, and a lot more besides. Following the rules . . . planning your next move . . . acting as a team member . . . these are all “game” ideas that you will run into throughout your life.

Think about some of the games you played as a young child, such as hopscotch and hide-and-go-seek. These games are more than a hundred years old, and children all over the world play some variation of them.

The games of children’s cultures are entertaining and fun. But perhaps more importantly, they translate life into exciting dramas that teach children some of the basic rules they will be expected to follow the rest of their lives, such as taking turns and cooperating.

Many children’s games have a practical side. Children around the world play games that prepare them for work they will do as grown-ups. For instance, some Saudi Arabian children live in the desert interior. They play a game called bones, which sharpens the hand-eye coordination needed in hunting.

Many sports encourage national or local pride. The most famous games of all, the Olympic Games, bring athletes from around the world together to engage in friendly competition. Spectators wave flags, knowing that a gold medal is a win for an entire country, not just the athlete who earned it.

One of the most poignant images of the games is watching a gold medal-winning athlete stand on the podium as his or her national anthem is played. For countries experiencing turmoil either in the form of natural disasters or war, an Olympic win can mean so much.

Sports are also a unifying event. Soccer is the most popular sport in the world. People on all continents play the game—some for fun and some for a living. Nicolette Iribarne, a soccer player from California, has discovered a way to spread hope through soccer. Iribarne created Fútbol 4 Refugees after participating in an international soccer tournament. The mission of the group is to provide children living in refugee camps with soccer balls. Other groups such as Playing for Peace and Right to Play provide opportunities for children who otherwise might never play soccer or throw a Frisbee.

The next time you play your favorite game or sport, think about why you enjoy it. What skills are needed to excel in your favorite game or sport? Do you think these skills will help you in other aspects of your life? But most importantly, the next time you play, have fun!

6 Which of these important game-playing skills is **not** mentioned in the article?

- A** following rules
- B** planning a move
- C** acting as a team member
- D** learning to lose with dignity

7 According to the article, winning in the Olympics can be inspiring especially to countries that are

- A** wealthy
- B** industrialized
- C** electing new leaders
- D** experiencing turmoil

8 The author states that games “translate life into exciting dramas.” This **most likely** means that games

- A** allow people to become someone else
- B** can make learning life skills more interesting
- C** can change people’s views of sporting events
- D** teach children to be more serious about their lives

9 Read this sentence from the article.

One of the most poignant images of the games is watching a gold medal-winning athlete stand on the podium as his or her national anthem is played.

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

- A** common
- B** emotional
- C** humorous
- D** sorrowful

10 Based on information in the article, the reader can predict that

- A** games will continue to help children acquire important skills
- B** fewer countries will participate in the Olympic Games because of conflict
- C** groups like Fútbol 4 Refugees will begin to move into wealthier countries
- D** outdoor games will become less popular as computers become more common

Go On

Directions

Read this excerpt from *Hello, America*. Then answer questions 11 through 16.

Mother Has a Job

by Livia Bitton-Jackson

The book *Hello, America* chronicles the experiences of a young woman and her mother who have emigrated from Hungary to America in the early 1950s. In this passage, the two reveal the fun they have working together to adapt to their new life in America.

In the morning Mother and I travel together to work. Rising at the crack of dawn, I love the adventure of tiptoeing around in the dark living room where we sleep, whispering to each other so as not to wake Aunt Celia and Uncle Martin in the bedroom, then leaving the house soundlessly and making our way to the subway station in semidarkness. By the time we reach Kings Highway, the rising day splatters an eerie light on the deserted avenue ordinarily swarming with human traffic, and on the shuttered storefronts and fruit stands now cozily wrapped in layers of canvas. There is a sense of mystery—a sense of power—in being here before the rest of the world awakens . . . as if witnessing the beginning of time.

We love traveling together on the subway, Mother and I. It’s fun to observe our fellow subway riders, exchange jokes and asides¹ in Hungarian, play guessing games as to their identities, their ages, and their jobs and make bets as to where they’d be getting off.

In a couple of weeks Mother becomes familiar with the train route, and she no longer allows me to accompany her.

“But I’ll miss the fun of traveling together in the morning,” I protest.

“So will I. But it comes at a sacrifice. In order to accompany me, you must rise an hour earlier, losing an hour’s sleep. You need that extra hour of sleep.” Mother is firm, and I have no choice but to comply and regretfully give up on our morning fun.

“I hope you’ll have time to teach me English. Now that I have a job and travel alone on the subway, I’ll need to improve my vocabulary. I don’t want to depend on you every time I need to make a phone call in English, or want to take public transport.”

“Okay, madam,” I agree in a happy, jocular tone. “How about today? Let’s have our first lesson this evening!”

Every evening I grill Mother in vocabulary and grammar, and indeed in a couple of weeks she learns enough English to do marketing on her own and travel freely by subway.

¹asides: remarks made in private

11 According to information in the passage, it is **most** important to the mother that she

- A** tells jokes in Hungarian
- B** rises early in the morning
- C** learns to speak in English
- D** travels daily on the subway

12 The narrator says the avenue is ordinarily “swarming with human traffic.” This means that usually

- A** the street is crowded with people
- B** the street is clogged with vehicles
- C** people are raising their voices on the street
- D** drivers are honking their horns on the street

13 Read this sentence from the passage.

Mother is firm, and I have no choice but to comply and regretfully give up on our morning fun.

The word “comply” means about the same as

- A** disappear
- B** hesitate
- C** obey
- D** relax

14 Which detail from the passage **best** shows that the narrator is excited about her life in America?

- A** her resistance to the growing independence of her mother
- B** her acceptance of why she can no longer accompany her mother
- C** her discipline to work on language lessons every day with her mother
- D** her description of rising early to ride the subway with her mother

15 Read this sentence from the passage.

“Okay, madam,” I agree in a happy, jocular tone. “How about today? Let’s have our first lesson this evening!”

The word “jocular” **most likely** means that the narrator is being

- A** careless
- B** humorous
- C** impatient
- D** soothing

16 Which word **best** describes the narrator’s behavior toward her mother?

- A** disrespectful
- B** resentful
- C** supportive
- D** sympathetic

Go On

Directions

Read this poem by Lilian Moore. Then answer questions 17 through 20.

Winter Dark

by Lilian Moore

Winter dark comes early
mixing afternoon
and night.
Soon
there's a comma of a moon,

and each streetlight
along the
way
puts its period
to the end of day.

Now
a neon sign
punctuates the dark
with a bright
blinking
breathless
exclamation mark!

17 The poet probably compares the moon to a comma because of its

- A** shape
- B** location
- C** purpose
- D** importance

18 The poet probably associates streetlights with periods to suggest that streetlights

- A** are too dim to be exclamation points
- B** signal that something has ended
- C** are smaller than the moon
- D** represent a change in activity

19 The poet compares various sources of light to

- A** punctuation marks
- B** neon signs
- C** the end of day
- D** the darkness of winter

20 The poet's **main** purpose in writing this poem is probably to make the reader

- A** feel the cold of winter
- B** imagine the fading of the light
- C** visualize how lights appear on winter nights
- D** understand the difference between natural and artificial light

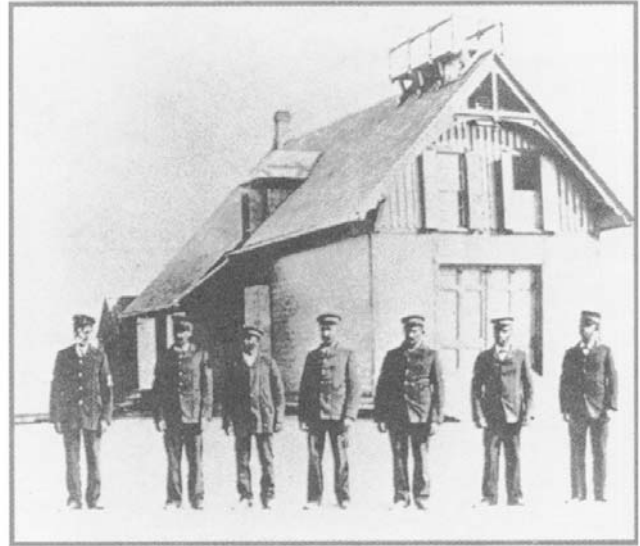
Go On

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 21 through 26.

Rescue at Pea Island

by Tracey E. Fern



Etheridge (far left) and his crew stand in front of Pea Island station in North Carolina.

Station Keeper Richard Etheridge peered from the lookout tower of the Pea Island life-saving station. Fog swirled around his face, and it was pitch-dark. Huge waves crashed onto the beach, and hurricane-force winds hurled sand and sea spray into the air.

On that night back in October 1896, the worst storm in almost fifty years was battering the North Carolina coast. Moments earlier, one of Etheridge's surfmen, Theodore Meekins, had spotted a faint red glimmer in the distance. Could it have been a flare from a ship in distress?

Etheridge quickly lit a flare and held it high over his head until the flame died out. Then he saw it—a dull red light flickered to the south. That could mean only one thing: shipwreck.

The Keeper of the Station

Rescuing ships in distress was nothing new for Etheridge. He had been keeper of this life-saving station since 1880. Etheridge had grown up swimming, fishing, and boating on nearby Roanoke Island. He eventually became known as one of the best surfmen and lifesavers in North Carolina. But Etheridge was also known for something else: he was the Life-Saving Service's first African American station chief.

White surfmen refused to work under Etheridge. So Etheridge and the Life-Saving Service recruited a crew of African American rescuers to work with him.

Etheridge’s men trained for ten hours a day, seven days a week. They swam in the rough surf and patrolled the beach. They performed life-saving drills and tugged their 1,500-pound surfboat and equipment for miles through the sand. But the wreck on the night of October 1896 put all of the crew’s practice to the test.

Rescuing the Wreck

As soon as Etheridge and Meekins spotted the red flare, they woke up the other five surfmen on duty. The crew quickly hitched up a team of mules. Then they pushed and pulled their surfboat and equipment cart down the beach for two miles.

“The storm was raging fearfully,” Etheridge later wrote, “and . . . the team was often brought to a standstill by the sweeping current.” But the crew kept trudging through the knee-deep sand and icy water. Finally, they spotted the wreck.

The schooner *E.S. Newman* had blown aground 30 yards offshore. The storm had ripped off the ship’s sails and demolished her deck. Now the battered ship was rolling and tossing in the surf. All nine of the passengers and crew, including the captain’s wife and three-year-old child, were trapped onboard.

“It seemed impossible under such circumstances to render any assistance,” Etheridge later wrote.

But unless someone did something soon, the passengers would probably be swept out to sea, die from exposure, or be crushed when the *Newman* broke apart in the surf. So Etheridge came up with a daring plan.

His men would try to swim to the ship. Meekins and another surfman volunteered for the first attempt. They lashed themselves together with a rope. Then they grabbed one end of a life-saving line while the rest of the crew held the other end of the line securely to the beach.

Meekins and the other surfman slowly waded farther out into the chilly water. They struggled through the currents and against the undertow in total darkness.

Onboard the *Newman*, the captain lowered a ladder over the side of the broken ship. Finally the surfmen reached the ship.

“The voice of gladden[ed] hearts greeted the arrival of the station crew,” Etheridge later wrote.

One passenger climbed carefully down the ladder. Meekins knotted the end of the rope around him. Slowly they carried him through the churning water to safety. Then two other surfmen headed back to the *Newman*.

Next, they carried the child to shore. Then they returned to rescue the captain’s wife. Again and again, the surfmen took turns swimming in pairs through the sea to the wreck. After six grueling hours, the *Newman* was destroyed, but all nine passengers were safely onshore.

Life After the Rescue

The captain of the *Newman* was so grateful that he gave Etheridge and his crew the ship's name board. But for many years, this was the only award that the surfmen received. Pea Island Station was closed in 1947, and everyone seemed to forget the courageous crew.

Finally, in 1996 Etheridge and his men were awarded the Coast Guard's highest honor, the Gold Lifesaving Medal, for their "extreme and heroic daring." One hundred years after the *Newman* rescue, the men of the Pea Island Station were recognized for what they were—heroes.

Coming to the Crew's Rescue

Kate Burkart, an eighth-grader from North Carolina, helped to "rescue" the Pea Island crew. She wrote letters to her senator and President Clinton. With Coast Guard officer Stephen Rochon and graduate students David Wright and David Zoby, Burkart submitted a report to the Coast Guard about the crew. Their hard work paid off. Burkart was at the Navy Memorial when the Gold Lifesaving Medal was awarded to the Pea Island crew.

21

According to the article, what is the **main** reason the rescue of the *Newman* was considered extraordinary?

- A It was recorded in detail in the journals of Richard Etheridge.
- B It was conducted during the night when the fog was very dense.
- C The crew had to drag their equipment two miles along the beach.
- D The crew saved all of the passengers in spite of extreme conditions.

22

The author **most likely** provides the description of the crew's training experiences to

- A prove how well the surfmen followed orders
- B explain how much the crew respected their chief
- C illustrate why some surfmen refused to work there
- D show the crew was prepared to act in an emergency

23

The partial outline below contains information about the Pea Island Station.

- A. **Responding to the *Newman***
 - 1. **Observed red light**
 - 2. **Moved equipment to beach**
 - 3.
 - 4. **Tied themselves together with rope**
- B. **Recognition of the crew**

Based on information in the article, which detail best completes this outline?

- A Woke up sleeping surfmen
- B Heard voices from the ship
- C Decided on a rescue plan
- D Practiced life-saving drills

Go On

24

Which sentence from the article **best** supports the author’s claim that the men of the Pea Island Station were heroes?

- A “Etheridge’s men trained for ten hours a day, seven days a week.”
- B “They performed life-saving drills and tugged their 1,500-pound surfboat and equipment for miles through the sand.”
- C “After six grueling hours, the *Newman* was destroyed, but all nine passengers were safely onshore.”
- D “The captain of the *Newman* was so grateful that he gave Etheridge and his crew the ship’s name board.”

25

This account of the Life-Saving Service’s efforts is historically significant because it tells about

- A the first entirely African American station chief and crew
- B a crew presented with a souvenir from the ship of a grateful captain
- C the surfmen who received recognition a hundred years after a rescue
- D a sea rescue off the North Carolina coastline during a storm

26

This article would be **most** helpful to a student researching

- A the storm patterns along the North Carolina coastline
- B the techniques used to save passengers from the *Newman*
- C the guidelines for winning the Coast Guard’s highest honor
- D the number of surfmen working for the Life-Saving Service

STOP



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