



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts

Book 1

Grade **8**

Sample Test 2005

TIPS FOR TAKING THE SAMPLE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read carefully all the directions in the test book.
- Plan your time.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before choosing your response.

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Reading

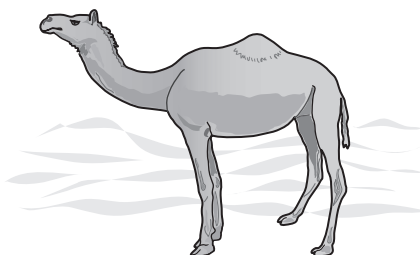
Directions

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 about a young girl's experiences on her family's camel caravan. Then answer questions 1 through 7.



Sandstorm

by Sydney Donahoe

Abir and her father had been traveling for weeks across the endless desert. They were taking ten of their best camels to sell in Palmyra, a bustling center of trade in the ancient East. Abir couldn't wait to get to Palmyra and sample the spicy bread, roasted goat meat, and juicy pomegranates. But first they had to cross the desert with ten cranky camels, not to mention the two they rode, plus a baby camel that had been born on the trip.

Little Imad always trailed at the edge of the herd. He had to work hard to keep all four of his big feet going in the same direction. Imad definitely slowed down the caravan, but Abir and her father were patient with the little one. Abir's father knew the handsome young camel would add to his mother's sale price. But Abir had other plans. She wanted to bring Imad back from Palmyra to raise and train for herself. Abir turned in her saddle high atop her proud camel Mahir to look for Imad. But what she saw instantly chased the daydreams from her mind.

"Papa! Look!" Abir called, pointing to the sky behind the caravan. "It's a sandstorm!" Abir's father took one look, then barked orders to Abir as he swung down from Toroc, the lead camel. "Quick, Abir! Set up the tent!"

Abir unleashed poles that rolled down from Mahir, along with the heavy rugs that made up the tent walls. She drove tent poles into the sand and quickly tied the tent's side flaps together. While she worked, her father tied ropes between each camel's front legs so the herd wouldn't wander too far in the storm.

A tremendous roar filled the air as Abir and her father dashed into the tent and quickly tied the top to the sides. As Abir tied down the last flap, she peeked outside to see the camels turn to face the oncoming storm. They swiveled their ears back, closed their eyes, and clamped their nostrils, relying on their tough hide to protect them from the stinging sand that could skin a person alive.

Inside the tent, Abir and her father pounded stakes through the side flaps to drive them into the sand, but suffocating dust and sand shot in through every crack and seam. Abir's father gestured—no use trying to shout—for Abir to come closer. They huddled together, pulling their head coverings and sleeves tight to keep as much skin covered as they could. Crouching, they let their backs take the worst of the blast.

For nearly two hours—it seemed like forever—they huddled in choking darkness. Finally the tent began to brighten, but the howling roared on. When the sound died down at last, Abir tried to open her eyes.

“Keep your eyes closed, Abir,” said her father. Soon she felt a few drops of water trickling on her face. “We must wash the sand from your eyes. Keep them closed until I wash the grit away.” More water splashed over Abir’s eyes, cooling the scratches that the raging sand had gouged into her tender skin.

When Abir could finally open her eyes, she asked, “How are the camels, Papa?” “The camels are all there,” he answered. “They are fine.” “Even Imad?” asked Abir.

“Imad,” repeated Abir’s father. “No, I did not see the little calf,” he said, shaking his head. Abir burst outside, desperate to find the little one.

As her father had said, the camels seemed fine, standing calmly where they’d been tethered hours ago. But where was Imad? Abir stopped and listened for his bleat.

Nothing. She started running in ever-increasing circles around the tent, frantically looking for some sign of the calf.

Abir almost ran past a large drift in the sand, but a tiny movement caught her eye. She stopped and frantically dug Imad out of his sandy grave. Was he alive? Abir lifted Imad’s head and gently blew sand from his eyes and nostrils. She was rewarded with an enormous camel sneeze as Imad righted himself and gave a mighty shake of his head. Abir helped the calf get to his feet.

Leading Imad back to his mother, Abir surveyed the damage. It was going to be a long, hungry trip to Palmyra now. The sandstorm had ripped apart their baskets of food. Flour, cereal, and dried fruit lay scattered and ruined in the sand.

Abir’s father smiled at her grimly. She knew what he was thinking. *The storm took our food, but not our lives nor the camels that are our wealth.*

Abir smiled back, also glad the camels were safe. Especially Imad.

1 What is Abir’s **main** reason for taking such good care of the calf?

- A** She worries that the sand will hurt its eyes.
- B** She knows it has not been in a sandstorm before.
- C** She is hoping she will be allowed to keep it for herself.
- D** She knows her father needs the money from selling the calf.

2 Read this sentence from the second paragraph of the story.

But what she saw instantly chased the daydreams from her mind.

What kind of mood does the author create with this sentence?

- F** critical
- G** comical
- H** peaceful
- J** suspenseful

Go On

3 If the sandstorm were a character in the story, what type of character would it be?

- A** a protector
- B** a villain
- C** a traitor
- D** a hero

4 Read this sentence from the story.

She started running in ever-increasing circles around the tent, frantically looking for some sign of the calf.

With this description, the author creates a feeling of

- F** annoyance
- G** anxiety
- H** confusion
- J** frustration

5 Which statement from the story **best** shows what the people of the ancient East valued?

- A** “Abir and her father had been traveling for weeks across the endless desert.”
- B** “But first they had to cross the desert with ten cranky camels.”
- C** “Imad definitely slowed down the caravan, but Abir and her father were patient with the little one.”
- D** “Abir unleashed poles that rolled down from Mahir, along with the heavy rugs that made up the tent walls.”

- 6** The central conflict of this story is **best** described as the struggle Abir and her father have with
- F** the forces of nature
 - G** a difficult herd of camels
 - H** a challenge from other traders
 - J** the time needed to put up a tent

- 7** Read this sentence from the story.

They swiveled their ears back, closed their eyes, and clamped their nostrils, relying on their tough hide to protect them from the stinging sand that could skin a person alive.

The word “swiveled” means about the same as

- A** tied
- B** rotated
- C** pried
- D** loosened

Go On

Directions

Read this article about an ancient tool used by sailors in the past. Then answer questions 8 through 10.

Navigation Stones

by Daniel Wayne Reed

Have you ever heard of navigation stones? In the days before Christopher Columbus, sailors did not use compasses to help them follow ocean routes. They found the direction to sail by using very simple tools—rocks. These black rocks were first found on the continent of Asia. Unlike most rocks, they displayed a unique characteristic that people had never seen. People learned that they were natural magnets that would stick to metal. Because the amazing rocks helped lead explorers to faraway places and back home again, they became known as lodestones (“lode” means “lead”).

Some sailors would hang lodestones from strings to serve as compasses. Others would carve the stones into spoon shapes. These indicators had handles that pointed south when laid flat on smooth surfaces. With these lodestones, sailors could now reliably determine all four major directions: north, east, south, and west.

Lodestones point north because the Earth itself is a giant magnet. One end of the lodestone is attracted to Earth’s North Pole. This end is then referred to as the lodestone’s north pole. The other end of the lodestone aligns with Earth’s South Pole. This end becomes known as its south pole. Early explorers would first follow familiar routes and watch the direction their lodestones moved. This allowed them to correctly mark the lodestones’ poles. Having done this, they could then reliably use the lodestones to guide them through unfamiliar ocean routes and back home again.

Lodestones are made up mainly of a mineral called magnetite. You can buy magnetite in a science museum if you cannot find it lying around outside. If you do get one of these rocks, tie it to a string. Take a walk and see if the rock swings when you change directions. Map out the directions to your school or house. Now, imagine being out in the open sea with no land in sight. There are no maps to guide you to the new lands far across the ocean. The lodestone would be your most reliable source of direction, especially when the sun was not shining. Could you find your way using this natural magnet as your only navigational tool?

8 The **difference** between a piece of lodestone and a compass is that the lodestone

- F** is a natural material
- G** is small and compact
- H** uses Earth's magnetic pull
- J** can be used to determine all four directions

9 When magnetite was discovered, it was considered “amazing” **mainly** because of its

- A** weight
- B** abundance
- C** unusual color
- D** scientific properties

10 Who would **most likely** need a lodestone?

- F** a golfer looking for a lost golf ball
- G** a young student walking to school
- H** a hiker walking through an unfamiliar forest
- J** a competitive swimmer racing across a lake

Go On

Directions

Read this story about the relationship between two mice. Then answer questions 11 through 18.

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

A Town Mouse and a Country Mouse were acquaintances. One day, the Country Mouse invited his friend to come and see him at his home in the fields. The Town Mouse came, and they sat down to a dinner of barleycorns and roots, the latter of which had a distinctly earthy flavor. The fare was not much to the taste of the guest, and presently he broke out with “My poor dear friend, you live here no better than the ants. Now, you should just see how I fare! My larder is a regular horn of plenty. You must come and stay with me, and I promise you that you shall live on the fat of the land.” So when the Town Mouse returned home, he took the Country Mouse with him and showed him into a larder containing flour and oatmeal and figs and honey and dates. The Country Mouse had never seen anything like it and sat down to enjoy the luxuries his friend provided. But before they had well begun, the door of the larder opened and someone came in. The two mice scampered off and hid themselves in a narrow and exceedingly uncomfortable hole. Presently, when all was quiet, they ventured out again. But someone else came in, and off they scuttled again. This was too much for the visitor. “Good-bye,” said he, “I’m off. You live in the lap of luxury, I can see, but you are surrounded by dangers. Whereas at home I can enjoy my simple dinner of roots and corn in peace.”

larder = a place
where food is
stored



11 By describing the Country Mouse’s food as having a “distinctly earthy flavor,” the narrator is

- A** suggesting that life in the country is unsafe
- B** emphasizing the fun of eating unusual foods
- C** suggesting that the two mice are eating unhealthy food
- D** emphasizing the difference in the lifestyles of the two mice

12 The Town Mouse reacts to the food served by the Country Mouse with

- F** anger
- G** dislike
- H** hostility
- J** sadness

13 When the Town Mouse tells the Country Mouse that his larder is “a regular horn of plenty,” he means that he

- A** has access to exotic foods
- B** stocks the same foods all the time
- C** has more than enough food to eat
- D** shares his food with anyone who asks

14 Which emotion does the Town Mouse **most likely** feel that prompts him to invite the Country Mouse to his home?

- F** pity
- G** gratitude
- H** excitement
- J** envy

15 Why does the Country Mouse want to return home?

- A** He misses the taste of his usual foods.
- B** He does not like the rich food in the larder.
- C** He is uncomfortable hiding in the small hole.
- D** He does not enjoy eating under constant fear.

- 16** This story is told from the point of view of
- F** the Town Mouse
 - G** the Country Mouse
 - H** a narrator who knows the thoughts of all the characters
 - J** a narrator who knows the thoughts of only one character

- 17** Why does the Country Mouse consider the larder a dangerous place?
- A** The hiding place is too cramped.
 - B** The rich food is unhealthy for mice.
 - C** Humans often come in unexpectedly.
 - D** It is difficult to digest food on the run.

- 18** According to the story, eating luxurious foods is most important to the Town Mouse. What is most important to the Country Mouse?
- F** visiting a good, old friend
 - G** living in a safe, secure home
 - H** eating simple, natural foods
 - J** exploring new, exciting places

Directions

Read this article about an ancient volcano. Then answer questions 19 through 22.

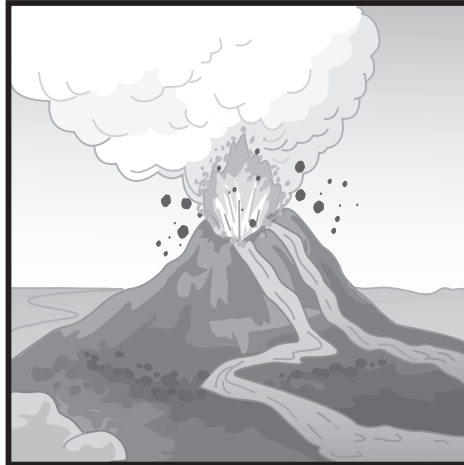
Pompeii

by Felicia Silcox

For four days, Gaius Pliny, known as “Pliny the Elder,” had felt the earth rumble and watched huge waves pound the coast along the Bay of Naples, but the Roman naval commander banished worry from his mind. Escaping summer’s heat with family members at a beach-front villa near the Sarno River, Pliny was surrounded by sunny vineyards and orchards. His fleet of oar-powered warships quietly rode anchor nearby. Twenty miles across the bay, Mount Vesuvius towered majestically above the towns of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae.

Relaxing with Pliny on that 24th day of August, A.D. 79, was his 17-year-old nephew, also named Gaius Pliny or “Pliny the Younger.” After spending the morning sunbathing, taking a refreshing cold bath, and then enjoying lunch, the elder Pliny lay down to read. A learned writer as well as a naval commander, he also gave his nephew a writing assignment for the day.

Early in the afternoon, the commander noticed an ominous cloud of white smoke, shaped like a tree trunk with spreading branches, rising over Pompeii. Intent on investigating what looked like an explosion, he ordered a boat prepared and invited his



nephew to join him. Young Pliny declined, wanting to finish his studies.

As the commander hurried to leave, he met a messenger arriving from Pompeii with a frantic letter from a friend’s wife. The frightened woman was trapped in her villa, and begged Pliny to help her escape. Peaceful Mount Vesuvius was erupting.

A rescue fleet was immediately launched, with hopes of crossing the bay in time. As the ships sailed closer to the volcano, the air became dark, thick with falling ash. Pliny’s uneasy helmsman urged him to turn back. He refused, putting the lives of his fellow Roman citizens ahead of his own. But when he found chunks of lava and debris blocking Pompeii’s shore, Pliny was forced to head for Stabiae.

In Stabiae, the layers of ash and rock rose quickly, threatening Pliny and his companions. At daybreak, they tried to escape by sea. Covering their heads with pillows as protection against the shower of burning stones, they carried torches to light their way through the dark cloud of ashes. Although the group reached the safety of the shoreline, Pliny was overcome by fumes and died.

Go On

That same day, Pliny the Younger—still at the resort—watched in amazement as the sea retreated, leaving many sea creatures gasping on dry land. His mother begged him to run for his life, but Pliny refused to leave without her. Holding hands, they joined a fleeing crowd when darkness suddenly overtook them.

Through the gloom of ash, they saw a strange wall of light following them. Pliny realized to his horror that the shimmering glare shone from flames. Fortunately, the fire stopped in the distance, leaving the terrified fugitives again in the dark, struggling to shake off the weight of the thick, falling ash.

At last, the blackness thinned, pierced by the sun’s eerie glow. A stunned Pliny saw the once-familiar landscape buried in ash. With other exhausted survivors, he and his mother struggled back to their villas to rebuild their lives.

The eruption of Vesuvius and the earthquakes that accompanied it buried both Pompeii and Herculaneum. The shoreline of Pompeii moved a mile out to sea. The Sarno River changed its course. Countless farm animals, fish, and birds died. Wind-blown volcanic ash dusted towns over a hundred miles away.

How do we know all this? Pliny the Younger wrote two letters describing the catastrophe to a Roman historian named Tacitus. Thus was preserved the memory of what caused these cities to lie entombed for nearly 1,600 years beneath thirty feet of hardened ash and lava. After Pompeii and Herculaneum were rediscovered in 1748, excavations revealed the stunning Roman architecture still visible in abandoned streets, villas, baths, temples, and theaters. These findings offer a priceless historical glimpse of two towns, frozen in time on that fateful day.

19 What caused the “wall of light” that followed Pliny the Younger and the fleeing crowd?

- A** dust caused by ash
- B** falling debris
- C** flames caused by lava
- D** white smoke

20 Why was Pliny the Elder determined to reach Pompeii despite the warnings of his companions?

- F** He wanted a better view of the eruption and ash cloud.
- G** He was concerned about others who were in greater danger.
- H** He knew the lava and chunks of debris might soon block the shore.
- J** He thought the situation was less dangerous than it had first appeared.

21 What was the **main** benefit of excavating the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii?

- A** Historians could learn more about the life and culture of ancient Romans.
- B** The letter from Pliny the Younger could be examined.
- C** Archaeologists could analyze the damage caused by a tidal wave.
- D** The landscape could be restored to its original condition.

22 Which statement from the article **best** shows the importance of Pliny the Younger’s place in history?

- F** “That same day, Pliny the Younger—still at the resort—watched in amazement as the sea retreated.”
- G** “His mother begged him to run for his life, but Pliny refused to leave without her.”
- H** “With other exhausted survivors, he and his mother struggled back to their villas to rebuild their lives.”
- J** “Pliny the Younger wrote two letters describing the catastrophe to a Roman historian named Tacitus.”

Go On

Directions

Read this article about some unusual puppets. Then answer questions 23 through 26.

Indonesian Shadow Puppets

by Patricia West

Do you think that puppet shows are just for children? In some parts of the world, like Indonesia, a puppet show is an interactive activity enjoyed by people of all ages.

At most puppet shows, the audience sits on one side of the screen and the puppeteer sits on the other. However, at an Indonesian shadow puppet show, the audience can choose which side to sit on. From out front, audience members see shadows of puppets acting out exciting scenes of romance or battle. These people retain the fantasy that “real” events are taking place.

Behind the scenes, the magic is somewhat diluted, but it can be fascinating to see a *dalang*, or puppeteer, in action. The *dalang* manipulates puppets made of buffalo hide by moving attached rods of buffalo horn or bamboo. Each of a puppet’s arms and the main part of its body have their own rods, but its legs are rarely moved on their own. Besides moving the puppets, the *dalang* also provides their voices, which may mean memorizing hours of dialog, some in different languages. The orchestra and singers who provide the accompanying music are directed by the *dalang*, too. During a performance, which might last for many hours, a *dalang* sits cross-legged on a mat behind a cotton screen about the size of a large television set. A strong electric lamp or a coconut-oil lamp shines light from behind the *dalang*, casting the puppets’ shadows on the screen.

Wayang kulit—leather shadow puppets—may represent noble humans or evil monsters. Each puppet has its own voice and its own way of moving. The “good” puppets usually speak calmly and move gracefully; the “bad” ones have rough voices and move in a funny, jerky way. The stories acted out by the puppets are often based on ancient myths or legends. A specially written puppet show might also celebrate a birth, wedding, or harvest. Sometimes a *dalang* chooses an old story that he thinks is appropriate for the village where the performance will take place. Before the show, he may ask local people about current events in the village and then use the puppet show to illustrate possible solutions to local problems.

The audience of a shadow puppet show expects to settle in for a long evening. A show may start in the late afternoon and not end until four o'clock the next morning! Children and adults alike may doze off in the middle of a show and wake up hours later to find it still going on. Of course, the dalang must remain alert throughout the show. One dalang remarked, "I have no real sense of time until it's all over."



23 This article would be of **most** interest to readers looking for information about

- A** forms of entertainment in other cultures
- B** how to create their own puppet show
- C** how to make their own puppets
- D** everyday life in Indonesia

24 Which idea from the article **best** demonstrates that the dalang attempts to personalize the puppet show for the audience?

- F** The dalang uses puppets that represent both good and evil.
- G** The dalang often takes a long time to complete a puppet show.
- H** The dalang asks local people about current events in the village.
- J** The dalang uses a lamp to project shadows of puppets on the screen.

Go On

25 Study the index from a book about puppets and puppetry.

Puppetry	48–56
Puppetry—Types of	48–52
Traditional	48–49
Nontraditional	50–52
Puppeteers	53–56
Roles	53–54
Training	55–56

Which pages would **most likely** offer information about how to become a dalang?

- A** 48–52
- B** 50–52
- C** 53–54
- D** 55–56

26 Read this sentence from the article.

The dalang manipulates puppets made of buffalo hide by moving attached rods of buffalo horn or bamboo.

Which word means about the same as “manipulates”?

- F** builds
- G** chooses
- H** controls
- J** watches

STOP



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Book 1
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