

Poetry & Questions 1

Multiple Choice

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

Vocabulary Skills

This test asks you to use the skills and strategies you have learned in this collection. Read “Learning to Read,” and then answer the questions that follow it.

Learning to Read by Frances Harper

Very soon the Yankee teachers
 Came down and set up school;
But, oh! how the Rebs did hate it—
 It was agin’ their rule.

Our masters always tried to hide
 Book learning from our eyes;
Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery—
 ‘Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal
 A little from the book,
And put the words together,
 And learn by hook or crook

I remember Uncle Caldwell,
 Who took pot liquor fat
And greased the pages of his book,
 And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
 The leaves upon his head,
He’d have thought them greasy papers,
 But nothing to be read.

And there was Mrs. Turner’s Ben,
 Who heard the children spell,
And picked the words right up by heart,
 And learned to read ’em well.

Well, the Northern folks kept sending
 The Yankee teachers down;
And they stood right up and helped us,
 Though the Rebs did sneer and frown.

And I longed to read my Bible,
 For precious words it said;
But when I begun to learn it,
 Folks just shook their heads.

And said there is no use trying,
 Oh! Chloe, you’re too late;

But I was rising sixty,
I had no time to wait.

So I got a pair of glasses,
And straight to work I went,
And never stopped till I could read
The hymns and Testament.

Then I got a little cabin,
A place to call my own—
And I felt as independent
As the queen upon her throne.

Each of the underlined words below has also been underlined in the selection. Re-read those passages in which the underlined words appear, and then use context clues and your prior knowledge to help you select an answer.

- _____ 1. The idiom by hook or crook means —
a. using tools to help you achieve your purpose
b. resorting to dishonest means to achieve your aims
c. you need outside help
d. by any means possible
- _____ 2. When people sneer, their faces show looks of —
a. nervousness
b. contempt
c. peacefulness
d. contentment
- _____ 3. Something that is precious has —
a. much potential
b. open doors
c. great value
d. many uses
- _____ 4. Hymns are song that —
a. praise something
b. condemn something
c. cannot be sung
d. have no rhythm
- _____ 5. People who are independent are —
a. free from control
b. easily misled
c. difficult to get along with
d. extremely wealthy

Comprehension

This test asks you to use the skills and strategies you have learned in this collection. Read “Learning to Read,” and then answer the questions that follow it.

Learning to Read by Frances Harper

Very soon the Yankee teachers
Came down and set up school;
But, oh! how the Rebs did hate it—
It was agin’ their rule.

Our masters always tried to hide
Book learning from our eyes;
Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery—
‘Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal
 A little from the book,
 And put the words together,
 And learn by hook or crook

I remember Uncle Caldwell,
 Who took pot liquor fat
 And greased the pages of his book,
 And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
 The leaves upon his head,
 He'd have thought them greasy papers,
 But nothing to be read.

And there was Mrs. Turner's Ben,
 Who heard the children spell,
 And picked the words right up by heart,
 And learned to read 'em well.

Well, the Northern folks kept sending
 The Yankee teachers down;
 And they stood right up and helped us,
 Though the Rebs did sneer and frown.

And I longed to read my Bible,
 For precious words it said;
 But when I begun to learn it,
 Folks just shook their heads.

And said there is no use trying,
 Oh! Chloe, you're too late;
 But I was rising sixty,
 I had no time to wait.

So I got a pair of glasses,
 And straight to work I went,
 And never stopped till I could read
 The hymns and Testament.

Then I got a little cabin,
 A place to call my own—
 And I felt as independent
 As the queen upon her throne.

- _____ 6. Who is the speaker in the poem "Learning to Read"?
- A Yankee teacher
 - The poet, Frances Harper
 - Chloe, a sixty-year-old African American
 - Chloe's Uncle Caldwell
- _____ 7. Which of the following statements *best* explains why masters did not want enslaved African Americans to learn to read?
- Reading would give power to enslaved people.
 - Reading would keep enslaved people from their work.
 - The masters did not want to build schools.

- d. The masters did not know how to read.
- _____ 8. Which of the following statements *best* describes how Uncle Caldwell and Ben react to the rule that enslaved people must not learn to read?
- They do not care one way or the other.
 - They are happy to be spared the effort.
 - They complain to the government.
 - They find clever ways to learn.
- _____ 9. When Chloe learns to read, other people —
- help her as much as they can
 - actively encourage her
 - try to discourage her
 - are amused by her attempts
- _____ 10. “Learning to Read” is —
- a sonnet
 - free verse
 - an ode
 - an elegy for a time long past

Short Answer

Reading Skills and Strategies: Constructed Response

This test asks you to use the skills and strategies you have learned in this collection. Read “Learning to Read,” and then answer the questions that follow it.

Learning to Read by Frances Harper

Very soon the Yankee teachers
 Came down and set up school;
 But, oh! how the Rebs did hate it—
 It was agin’ their rule.

Our masters always tried to hide
 Book learning from our eyes;
 Knowledge didn’t agree with slavery—
 ‘Twould make us all too wise.

But some of us would try to steal
 A little from the book,
 And put the words together,
 And learn by hook or crook

I remember Uncle Caldwell,
 Who took pot liquor fat
 And greased the pages of his book,
 And hid it in his hat.

And had his master ever seen
 The leaves upon his head,
 He’d have thought them greasy papers,
 But nothing to be read.

And there was Mrs. Turner’s Ben,
 Who heard the children spell,
 And picked the words right up by heart,
 And learned to read ’em well.

Well, the Northern folks kept sending
The Yankee teachers down;
And they stood right up and helped us,
Though the Rebs did sneer and frown.

And I longed to read my Bible,
For precious words it said;
But when I begun to learn it,
Folks just shook their heads.

And said there is no use trying,
Oh! Chloe, you're too late;
But I was rising sixty,
I had no time to wait.

So I got a pair of glasses,
And straight to work I went,
And never stopped till I could read
The hymns and Testament.

Then I got a little cabin,
A place to call my own—
And I felt as independent
As the queen upon her throne.

11. **Reading a Poem**

In "Learning to Read," the speaker describes how she learned to read. How do *you* read a poem? Explain at least three techniques that you would use. Why is each technique helpful?

12. **Using Forms to Find Meaning**

Knowing the form of a poem can help you figure out its meaning. Poems can be lyrics, sonnets, odes, elegies, or free verse, for example. Identify the form of "Learning to Read," and explain how knowing the form helps you understand the poem more fully.

Poetry & Questions 1

Answer Section

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. ANS: D PTS: 1
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
2. ANS: B PTS: 1
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
3. ANS: C PTS: 1
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
4. ANS: A PTS: 1
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
5. ANS: A PTS: 1
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
6. ANS: C PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.1.7.18 (speaker)
7. ANS: A PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.2.1.9 (drawing conclusions)
8. ANS: D PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.2.1.9 (drawing conclusions)
9. ANS: C PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.2.1.21 (monitoring your reading or comprehension)
10. ANS: B PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.1.9.6 (free verse)

SHORT ANSWER

11. ANS:
Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:
When you read a poem, you should pay close attention to the punctuation. This helps you find complete units of thought so you understand the poet's point. For example, the following two lines run together as the lack of end punctuation on the first line shows: "Our masters always tried to hide / Book learning from our eyes . . ." Second, you should look for figures of speech. They help you make connections that the poet only implies. Third, listen to the sound of the poem. Linking sound and sense reinforces both.

PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.2.1.26 (reading a poem: oral interpretation)
12. ANS:
Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:
"Learning to Read" is free verse, which means that it does not follow a regular rhyme or meter. Instead, the poet use imagery and rhythm to tie ideas together. For example, the image of Uncle Caldwell, "Who took pot liquor fat / And greased the pages of his book, / And hid it in his hat" appeals to the senses of sight, smell, and touch. It helps create a vivid picture of the former slave's desire to learn. The strong beat or rhythm also helps tie the ideas together.

PTS: 1 OBJ: 8.1.9.6 (free verse)