

## Reading Skills

### 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 this passage from "Sounder," and then answer the questions that follow it.

from **Sounder**

by **William Armstrong**

In his many journeyings among strangers the boy had learned to sniff out danger and spot orneriness quickly. Now, for the first time in his life away from home, he wasn't feared. The lean elderly man with snow-white hair, wearing Sunday clothes, came down the steps. "This pipe is always falling," he said as he picked it up and put it back in place. "I need to wire it up."

"I just wanted to wash my hand. It's got dried blood on it where I hurt my fingers."

"You should have run home."

"I don't live in these parts."

"Here, I'll hold your book, and I'll pump for you." And the mellow eyes of the man began to search the boy for answers, answers that could be found without asking questions.

"We need warm, soapy water," the teacher said. "I live right close. Wait 'til I get my papers and lock the door, and I'll take you home and fix it."

The boy wanted to follow the man into the schoolhouse and see what it was like inside, but by the time he got to the steps, the man was back again, locking the door. "I usually put the school in order after the children leave," he said, "but I'll do it in the morning before they get here."

At the edge of the school lot the man took the road that led away from the town. They walked without much talk, and the boy began to wish the man would ask him a lot of questions. When they had passed several cabins, each farther from the other as they went, the man turned off the road and said, "We're home. I live here alone. Have lived alone for a long time." Fingering the small wire hook on the neatly whitewashed gate which led into a yard that was green, the teacher stopped talking.

A cabin with a gate and green grass in the yard is almost a big house, the boy thought as he followed the man.

Inside the gate the man went along the fence, studying some plants tied up to stakes. He began to talk again, not to the boy, but to a plant that was smaller than the others. "You'll make it, little one, but it'll take time to get your roots set again."

The boy looked at the white-haired old man leaning over like he was listening for the plant to answer him. "He's conjured," the boy whispered to himself. "Lots of old folks is conjured or addled." He moved backward to the gate, thinking he'd better run away. "Conjured folks can conjure you," the boy's mother always said, "if you get yourself plain carried off by their soft spell-talk."

But before the boy could trouble his mind anymore, the man straightened up and began talking to him. "Some animal dug under the roots and tore them loose from the earth. It was wilted badly and might have died. But I reset it, and I water it every day. It's hard to reset a plant if it's wilted too much; the life has gone out of it. But this one will be all right. I see new leaves startin'."

"What grows on it?" the boy asked, thinking it must be something good to eat if somebody cared that much about a plant.

"It's only a flower," the man said. "I'll water it when the earth has cooled a little. If you water a plant when the earth is too warm, it shocks the roots."

Inside the cabin the man started a fire in the cookstove and heated water. As he washed the boy's hand with a soft white rag, he said, "You musta slammed these fingers in a awful heavy door or gate." Before the boy could answer, the teacher began to talk about the plant he must remember to water.



- \_\_\_ 3. With his mellow eyes, the teacher gazes at the boy.
- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| a. old      | c. soft     |
| b. wrinkled | d. superior |
- \_\_\_ 4. The boy is afraid that the teacher is conjured.
- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| a. bewitched   | c. magic     |
| b. calling him | d. dangerous |
- \_\_\_ 5. Cyrus asks the soldier if he will exchange his horse for a kingdom.
- |              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| a. give back | c. substitute |
| b. sacrifice | d. trade      |

### Comprehension

*This test asks you to use the skills and strategies you have learned in this collection. Read this passage from "Sounder," and then answer the questions that follow it.*

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**by William Armstrong**

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"I just wanted to wash my hand. It's got dried blood on it where I hurt my fingers."

"You should have run home."

"I don't live in these parts."

"Here, I'll hold your book, and I'll pump for you." And the mellow eyes of the man began to search the boy for answers, answers that could be found without asking questions.

"We need warm, soapy water," the teacher said. "I live right close. Wait 'til I get my papers and lock the door, and I'll take you home and fix it."

The boy wanted to follow the man into the schoolhouse and see what it was like inside, but by the time he got to the steps, the man was back again, locking the door. "I usually put the school in order after the children leave," he said, "but I'll do it in the morning before they get here."

At the edge of the school lot the man took the road that led away from the town. They walked without much talk, and the boy began to wish the man would ask him a lot of questions. When they had passed several cabins, each farther from the other as they went, the man turned off the road and said, "We're home. I live here alone. Have lived alone for a long time." Fingering the small wire hook on the neatly whitewashed gate which led into a yard that was green, the teacher stopped talking.

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Inside the gate the man went along the fence, studying some plants tied up to stakes. He began to talk again, not to the boy, but to a plant that was smaller than the others. "You'll make it, little one, but it'll take time to get your roots set again."

The boy looked at the white-haired old man leaning over like he was listening for the plant to answer him. "He's conjured," the boy whispered to himself. "Lots of old folks is conjured or addled." He moved backward to the gate, thinking he'd better run away. "Conjured folks can conjure you," the boy's mother always said, "if you get yourself plain carried off by their soft spell-talk."

But before the boy could trouble his mind anymore, the man straightened up and began talking to him. "Some animal dug under the roots and tore them loose from the earth. It was wilted badly and might have died. But I reset it, and I water it every day. It's hard to reset a plant if it's wilted too much; the life has gone out of it. But this one will be all right. I see new leaves startin'."

"What grows on it?" the boy asked, thinking it must be something good to eat if somebody cared that much about a plant.

"It's only a flower," the man said. "I'll water it when the earth has cooled a little. If you water a plant when the earth is too warm, it shocks the roots."

Inside the cabin the man started a fire in the cookstove and heated water. As he washed the boy's hand with a soft white rag, he said, "You musta slammed these fingers in a awful heavy door or gate." Before the boy could answer, the teacher began to talk about the plant he must remember to water.

He don't wanta know nothin' about me, the boy thought.

"When I saw your book, I thought you were coming to enroll for school. But you don't live in these parts, you say."

"I found the book in a trash barrel. It has words like I ain't used to readin'. I can read store-sign words and some newspaper words."

"This is a wonderful book," said the teacher. "It was written by a man named Montaigne, who was a soldier. But he grew tired of being a soldier and spent his time studying and writing. He also liked to walk on country roads."

The teacher lit two lamps. The boy had never seen two lamps burning in the same room. They made the room as bright as daylight.

"People should read his writings," the man continued. "But few do. He is all but forgotten." But the boy did not hear. He was thinking of a cabin that had two lamps, both lit at the same time, and two stoves, one to cook on and one to warm by.

The man sat in a chair between two tables that held the lamps. There were books on the tables too, and there were shelves filled not with pans and dishes, but with books. The mellow eyes of the man followed the boy's puzzled glances as they studied the strange warm world in which he had suddenly found himself.

"I will read you a little story from your book." The boy watched as the fingers of the man turned the pages one way and then the other until he found what he wanted to read.

"This is a very short story about a king named Cyrus, who wanted to buy the prize horse that belonged to one of his soldiers. Cyrus asked him how much he would sell the horse for, or whether he would exchange him for a kingdom. The soldier said he would not sell his prize horse and he would not exchange him for a kingdom, but that he would willingly give up his horse to gain a friend. . . .But now I have told you the whole story so there's no use for me to read it."

"You've been a powerful good friend to take me in like this," the boy said at last. "My fingers don't hurt no more."

"I am your friend," said the man. "So while I heat some water to soak your hand and make your cot for the night, you tell me all about yourself."

"I had a father and a dog named Sounder," the boy began. . . .

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Why do you think the boy goes with the teacher?
- The boy wants to learn to read.
  - He realizes the teacher lives in a nice cabin.
  - The teacher talks to him and helps him wash his finger.
  - He knows that older people like him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Why does the boy begin to worry about the teacher?
- The teacher insists on cleaning the boy's hand with soap.
  - The teacher says that the boy should have gone home.
  - The teacher talks to his plants.
  - The teacher wants to tell the boy a story.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. At first, what does the teacher think the boy wants to do?
- Enroll in school
  - Get someone to help him bandage his finger

- c. Get directions to where the boy was going
  - d. Ask for a job
- \_\_\_ 9. How does the boy react to the teacher's home?
- a. The boy is very uncomfortable and nervous.
  - b. The boy is amazed to see two lamps burning at once.
  - c. He is surprised that the teacher lives in a cabin.
  - d. He thinks it is dirty and strange.
- \_\_\_ 10. What is similar about the story the teacher reads and what happens to the two characters?
- a. The teacher and King Cyrus both own horses.
  - b. Cyrus and the soldier don't trust each other at first.
  - c. The teacher and the boy are the same ages as King Cyrus and the soldier.
  - d. The men in the story become friends, and the teacher and the boy become friends.

### Comprehension

#### Legacies by Nikki Giovanni

her grandmother called her from the playground  
 "yes, ma'am"  
 "i want chu to learn how to make rolls" said the old  
 woman proudly

5 but the little girl didn't want  
 to learn how because she knew  
 even if she couldn't say it that  
 that would mean when the old one died she would be less  
dependent on her spirit so

10 she said  
 "i don't want to know how to make no rolls"  
 with her lips poked out  
 and the old woman wiped her hands on  
 her apron saying "lord

15 these children"  
 and neither of them ever  
 said what they meant  
 and i guess nobody ever does

"Legacies" from *My House* by Nikki Giovanni. Copyright © 1972 by Nikki Giovanni.  
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- \_\_\_ 11. Where is the little girl when her grandmother calls her?
- a. In the kitchen
  - b. In the yard
  - c. In the playground
  - d. In the attic
- \_\_\_ 12. The grandmother calls the little girl because she wants —
- a. the little girl to go to the store
  - b. her help in the kitchen
  - c. the little girl to read her a recipe
  - d. to teach the girl how to make rolls
- \_\_\_ 13. What is the little girl's internal conflict?
- a. She loves her grandmother, but she doesn't want to bake.
  - b. She knows her grandmother is dying, but the girl doesn't like rolls.
  - c. She is afraid that if she knows how to make rolls, she will need her grandmother less.
  - d. She doesn't know how to say what she means.
- \_\_\_ 14. How does the little girl react to her grandmother's request?

- a. She ignores her.
- b. She pokes out her lips and says she doesn't want to learn to make rolls.
- c. She leaves the house.
- d. She talks back to her grandmother and insults her.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. How does the grandmother respond to the little girl's refusal?
- a. She feels insulted.
  - b. She makes a comment about children in general.
  - c. She feels sad and hurt.
  - d. She is angry with the girl.

## 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 this passage from "Sunder," and then answer the questions that follow it.*

*from Sunder*

**by William Armstrong**

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"I just wanted to wash my hand. It's got dried blood on it where I hurt my fingers."

"You should have run home."

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“I am your friend,” said the man. “So while I heat some water to soak your hand and make your cot for the night, you tell me all about yourself.”

“I had a father and a dog named Sounder,” the boy began. . . .

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16. **Summarizing**

Write a paragraph summarizing the plot of the selection. In your summary, include some of the thoughts and concerns the boy has. Include at least one example from the selection to support your response.

17. **Using Context Clues**

On the line provided, write the word that *best* completes each sentence. Use context clues to help you.

**whitewashed      addled      gain      orneriness      wilted**

The boy had learned how to spot crankiness and (a) \_\_\_\_\_ quickly. Since the man seemed nice, the boy followed him willingly to the (b) \_\_\_\_\_ gate. At first, he thought the teacher might be (c) \_\_\_\_\_ because he talked to his plants. Then, the man explained that the flowers would become (d) \_\_\_\_\_ and fall over if they didn't get enough water. Just like the soldier in the story, the boy was about to (e) \_\_\_\_\_ a friend.

18. **Predicting**

Do you predict that the boy will stay at the teacher's house, or do you predict that he will leave right away? Write a paragraph explaining your prediction. Use details from the selection to support your response.

**Reading Skills and Strategies: Constructed Response**

*This test asks you to use the skills and strategies you have learned in this collection. Read the poem "Legacies," and then answer the questions that follow it.*

**Legacies**  
by Nikki Giovanni

her grandmother called her from the playground  
"yes, ma'am"  
"i want chu to learn how to make rolls" said the old  
woman proudly  
5 but the little girl didn't want  
to learn how because she knew  
even if she couldn't say it that  
that would mean when the old one died she would be less  
dependent on her spirit so  
10 she said  
"i don't want to know how to make no rolls"  
with her lips poked out  
and the old woman wiped her hands on  
her apron saying "lord  
15 these children"  
and neither of them ever  
said what they meant  
and i guess nobody ever does

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19. **Making Inferences**

What inferences can you make about the relationship between the grandmother and the little girl?

20. **Paraphrasing**

In your own words, paraphrase the ideas in lines 5–10 of the poem.

21. **Summarizing**

Which of the following paragraphs is the better summary of the poem? From the following options, choose the one you think is the *better* response to this question. Write the letter of the answer you chose, and briefly defend your choice. Use at least one example from the poem to support your ideas.

- A A little girl's grandmother calls her in from the playground. The girl replies "Yes, ma'am" and comes in. The grandmother says she wants to teach the girl how to make rolls. The little girl doesn't want to because she thinks that if she did, she would be less dependent on her grandmother's spirit when she died. The girl pokes

out her lips and says she doesn't want to make rolls. The grandmother is exasperated but not angry.

The author says that no one ever says what he or she means.

- B** A grandmother wants to teach her granddaughter to make rolls, but the little girl says she doesn't want to learn. The thought of knowing how to make rolls makes the girl think of her grandmother dying, which is too painful for her. The grandmother seems to shrug her granddaughter's refusal off as typical of children's behavior.

22. **Identifying the Main Idea**

What is the *main idea*, or insight, of the poem? Write your response. Support your response with details from the poem.

## Reading Skills Answer Section

### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. ANS: B                      PTS: 1  
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.5 (derivation / etymology / word origins) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
2. ANS: C                      PTS: 1  
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.5 (derivation / etymology / word origins) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
3. ANS: C                      PTS: 1  
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.5 (derivation / etymology / word origins) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
4. ANS: A                      PTS: 1  
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.5 (derivation / etymology / word origins) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
5. ANS: D                      PTS: 1  
OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.5 (derivation / etymology / word origins) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)
6. ANS: C                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.1.4.2 (character interactions)
7. ANS: C                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.1.4.2 (character interactions)
8. ANS: A                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.2.1.21 (monitoring your reading or comprehension)
9. ANS: B                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.1.4.2 (character interactions)
10. ANS: D                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.2.1.6 (comparing and contrasting)
11. ANS: C                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.2.1.21 (monitoring your reading or comprehension)
12. ANS: D                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.1.4.2 (character interactions)
13. ANS: C                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.1.4.2 (character interactions)
14. ANS: B                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.2.1.21 (monitoring your reading or comprehension)
15. ANS: B                      PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.2.1.21 (monitoring your reading or comprehension)

### SHORT ANSWER

16. ANS:  
*Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:*  
A young boy who has been traveling alone stops at the pump outside a school. He meets a teacher who understands that the boy needs some help and takes him home. At first, the boy wonders why the teacher doesn't ask him questions and then worries that the teacher may be a conjurer. Finally, the boy understands that the teacher will be a friend who is happy to listen to his story.  
  
PTS: 1                      OBJ: 8.1.1 (plot) | 8.2.1.28 (summarizing)
17. ANS:  
A orneriness  
B whitewashed  
C addled  
D wilted  
E gain

PTS: 1                    OBJ: 8.3.3 (context clues) | 8.3.9 (literal meanings of words and their usage)

18. ANS:

*Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:*

The boy may stay for a while. The teacher originally thought that the boy wanted to enroll in school and now knows that the boy wants to learn to read. Since he is so generous, he may ask the boy to stay with him and attend school. Even though the teacher says he is going to fix the boy a cot "for the night," the boy's story may convince him to ask the boy to stay. In addition, the boy is very happy to have found someone kind and learned; consequently, the boy is eager to tell his story to someone who will listen.

PTS: 1                    OBJ: 8.2.1.20 (making predictions)

19. ANS:

*Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:*

The grandmother and little girl are very close. The grandmother wants to teach her things and isn't angry when the girl refuses and pouts. The little girl is respectful when she comes in from the playground, even though she refuses to learn what her grandmother asks. The girl inwardly worries about losing her grandmother and depends on her.

PTS: 1                    OBJ: 8.2.1.19 (making inferences)

20. ANS:

*Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:*

The little girl doesn't want to learn how to make rolls. In her eyes, it is something that only her grandmother does. If she learns how to do it, she won't need her grandmother as much as she does. The girl will be connected with her grandmother through her spirit when her grandmother dies. The girl will intuitively know how to make rolls, guided by her grandmother's spirit.

PTS: 1                    OBJ: 8.2.1.22 (paraphrasing)

21. ANS:

*Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:*

**B.** This paragraph summarizes the poem best because it is a short restatement of the character's problems and the main events in the poem. The first summary is too long and tells everything that happened in the poem.

PTS: 1                    OBJ: 8.2.1.28 (summarizing)

22. ANS:

*Students' responses will vary. A sample response follows:*

The main idea is directly stated by the writer in the lines "and neither of them ever / said what they meant / and i guess nobody ever does." The girl can't say that she doesn't want to learn to make rolls because she knows her grandmother may die. The grandmother responds to the girl by saying, "lord / these children." Since the author says neither of them says what she means, we can infer that the grandmother may be worried about her granddaughter. It's possible the grandmother is ill, and both of them are thinking about her death.

PTS: 1                    OBJ: 8.1.6 (theme)