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# Language Arts–Reading

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# Language Arts – Reading

## Directions

Time – 35 minutes

20 Questions

This is a test of some of the skills involved in understanding what you read. The passages in this test come from a variety of works, both literary and informational. Each passage is followed by a number of questions.

The passages begin with an introduction presenting information that may be helpful as you read the selection. After you have read a passage, go on to the questions that follow. For each question, choose the best answer, and mark your choice on the answer sheet. You may refer to a passage as often as necessary.

Work as quickly as you can without becoming careless. Do not spend too much time on any question that is difficult for you to answer. Instead, skip it and return to it later if you have time. Try to answer every question even if you have to guess.

Mark all your answers on the answer sheet. Give only one answer to each question.

If you decide to change one of your answers, be sure to erase the first mark completely.

Be sure that the number of the question you are answering matches the number of the row of answer choices you are marking on your answer sheet. The answer sheet may contain more rows than you need.

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Questions 1 through 6 refer to the following passage.

In the following literary essay, the narrator tells about a special time spent with her younger sister, Margaret.

### Dandelions

Line  
5 There is a field of dandelions to the east of my home. Their buttery yellow heads peek through green blades of grass, and they grow tall against the earth. I have watched children pluck them, squeeze them midway down the stem and pull, then tuck them behind their ears, the ears of their parents, and in the collars of their golden retrievers and poodles. My sister, though, who will be four this fall, patiently waits until they're white, fluffy, and prepared to succumb to her soft breath.

Margaret will do as she did last year, come to me in the morning, because she investigates every morning to determine if the dandelions are "done," like the kolaches Grandma bakes us for breakfast. Then grasps my hand and announces, "It's time, Katie! They're ready."

10 I cherish this ritual with Margaret. She ushers me to the field, where we first recline on our backs and examine the sky to decipher traces of our lives in the clouds. Margaret points to three conjoined clouds and designates it as our family. We detect our friends, our favorite foods, and ourselves in the clouds. We laugh, roll over, and discover we've gotten some of the dandelion dust in our loose hair. Although I'm much older than she is, I do not find this absurd. Instead, Margaret, in moments like these, embodies a certain wisdom and genuine benevolence I hope to never lose with age.

15 Unlike the others who pinch and yank at the stalks, Margaret sends the seeds off with kisses. She scoots, in a military crawl, to the first dandelion whose dust is ready. "All set?" she asks.

"Yes," I say. And with our cheeks nearly touching, our lips puckered toward the dandelion, we blow a kiss. White dandelion fuzz drifts through the air and disappears over the field as we blow more kisses and watch the seeds float, like bubbles, before gravity intervenes.

20 "It's like they're racing, Katie," she says.

"Where's the finish line?" I ask.

"Everywhere!" she exclaims.

25 Margaret will remember this, I know, when she is my age. Just as I will remember her autumn kisses to the dandelions, which she refused to pluck because they were too beautiful, she'd once said. And I will remember the snowmen we created together on early winter nights, the gaping mud puddles we dashed through in the spring, and, when summer approaches, it will be the sprinklers on college campuses that will remind me of her. She laughs and twirls as she leaps in and out of the sprinklers, with wet blades of grass clinging to her wrinkled soles. She loves to dash, with her arms flung wide and her head thrown back toward the sun, as though every glistening arc of water is a finish line to be crossed.

1

The comparison of the dandelions to Grandma's kolaches emphasizes

- A. the manner in which the dandelions grow.
- B. the appearance and scent of the dandelions.
- C. the anticipation associated with the dandelions.
- D. the time of day in which the dandelions flower.

2

As it is used in line 9, the word "ritual" means

- A. a serious event.
- B. a repeated activity.
- C. a stage of life.
- D. a conventional habit.

3

When the narrator and Margaret "decipher traces" of their lives in the clouds, they are

- A. finding similarities.
- B. predicting futures.
- C. educating themselves.
- D. ridiculing themselves.

4

All of these excerpts use language that supports the idea that youth is fleeting EXCEPT

- A. ". . . [dandelions] prepared to succumb to her soft breath."
- B. ". . . our lips puckered toward the dandelion . . ."
- C. ". . . fuzz drifts through the air and disappears over the field . . ."
- D. ". . . seeds float, like bubbles, before gravity intervenes."

5

How is the last paragraph organized?

- A. It shows how Margaret has changed over time.
- B. It connects each season with a memory of Margaret.
- C. It lists memories of Margaret in order of importance.
- D. It describes what Margaret does while her sister is in college.

6

Which phrase best describes the relationship between the narrator and Margaret?

- A. Envious rivalry
  - B. Kind consideration
  - C. Devoted attachment
  - D. Awkward friendship
-

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The next two passages are related. Questions 7 through 10 refer to the following passage.

The following nonfiction passage explains the history of women’s basketball in the United States.

### Women’s Basketball

Today basketball is one of the most popular women’s sports, both among athletes and fans. Basketball was invented by Dr. James Naismith and introduced to male athletes in 1891. Less than a year later, Senda Berenson, a physical education instructor at a small women’s college, decided the game would be a good alternative to the physical fitness activities offered to young women at the time.

Line 5 The rules Berenson established for her female players differed from men’s rules. The rectangular playing floor was divided into three equal zones. Each team had nine players: three forwards, three centers, and three guards. A player was restricted to her own zone on the court, could hold the ball for only three seconds, and could dribble only three times before passing. No stealing was allowed.

10 As women’s basketball spread, the sport faced some opposition, including the criticism that too much physical exertion could be harmful to young women. Nonetheless, women’s teams formed in high schools, colleges, businesses, recreation centers, and neighborhoods across the United States. By the 1940s, basketball had become the women’s sport most frequently played at the high school level.

15 Rules changed over the years. Some versions of the high school game had a few “rover” players, who were allowed to move freely between the different zones on the court. However, in many states, high school women played six-on-six basketball. This game had a two-section court with players restricted to their side of the court. All players were limited to two dribbles, and each team had three guards and three forwards. Only forwards were allowed to shoot the ball.

20 In 1958, the Office of Civil Rights began to consider banning six-on-six high school basketball. It was believed that six-on-six players were at a disadvantage when competing for college athletic scholarships. The six-on-six game was viewed as not being sufficiently compatible with the women’s college game, which by then had teams of five players, with centers, forwards, and guards all eligible to shoot the ball and run the entire length of the two-section court.

25 The 1970s were pivotal for women’s basketball. The five-on-five format at the high school level gained broader acceptance. Also, Title IX passed in 1972. One consequence of this law requiring equal opportunity for women in all programs at public high schools and universities was that basketball eventually became the most frequently offered women’s sport at the college level. Another highlight of the decade was that women’s basketball became an official Olympic sport in 1976.

30 Women’s basketball continued to grow in the following decades. During the 1981 – 1982 season, thirty-two teams took part in the first National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) championship tournament for women. Current tournaments have twice as many teams. The Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA), a professional league, debuted with eight teams in 1996 – 1997 and now has twelve. With women’s basketball continuing to garner so much attention and support both from potential players and from fans, the sport seems destined to thrive for years to come.

7

What is the first paragraph mostly about?

- A. Early basketball coaches
- B. The origin of women's basketball
- C. The popularity of women's basketball today
- D. Health benefits of basketball

8

Which sentence best describes women's basketball in the 1940s?

- A. College players were recruited and drafted by professional teams.
- B. Restrictive rules kept the sport from growing.
- C. College players began competing in end-of-season tournaments.
- D. Many women played on organized and informally assembled teams.

9

How was six-on-six basketball different from five-on-five basketball?

- A. The six-on-six game was played on a two-section court.
- B. Positions for the six-on-six game included guards and forwards.
- C. Six-on-six players remained in their own zone.
- D. Six-on-six players dribbled more.

10

How is the passage "Women's Basketball" organized?

- A. It describes an event and several changes that resulted from it.
- B. It recounts events in the order they occurred.
- C. It states a problem and offers a solution.
- D. It compares two ideas.

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Questions 11 and 12 refer to the following passage.

The following nonfiction passage explains some of the rules imposed by Title IX, part of a federal law.

### Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments, part of a federal law enacted by Congress on June 23, 1972, states: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

*Line*  
5 In general, Title IX requires colleges and high schools to offer equal opportunities, benefits, and services to females and males in sports, including scholarships, practice facilities, locker rooms, uniforms, publicity, and coaching. Schools are not required to offer identical sports for each sex or identical pay for coaches, but schools must offer equal sport and club opportunities for each sex. If a school offers the same sport to both sexes (has both a boys’ and a girls’ track team, for example) the school is not required to allow a student to  
10 join the team of the opposite sex.

Although probably best known for its application to sports, Title IX also covers employment practices, admissions, participation in school bands and clubs, and admittance to academic programs at covered institutions. However, Title IX regulations do not apply to organizations that have traditionally been limited to members of one sex, such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) or the Girl Scouts. Title IX  
15 also does not apply to private schools, provided they do not receive any money directly or indirectly from the federal government.

**11**

Which groups are EXCLUDED from the regulations of Title IX?

- A. Certain organizations that exist for males or females only
- B. Private schools that receive federal funding
- C. Public high schools that enroll more males than females
- D. Academic clubs at colleges that receive federal funding

**12**

Which action by a public school covered by Title IX would be a violation?

- A. Offering no sports or clubs to any student, boy or girl
- B. Purchasing separate uniforms for the girls’ and boys’ soccer teams
- C. Offering unequal sports opportunities to boys and girls
- D. Employing the same person as coach for a girls’ sport and as advisor for a boys’ club



**13**

Use both “Women’s Basketball” and “Title IX” to answer this question.

What problem in U.S. education was Title IX apparently intended to address?

- A. Females and males attended separate schools.
- B. Females and males had few opportunities to play high school sports.
- C. Females were not playing the same sports as males.
- D. Females and males were not given the same rights and privileges in schools.

**14**

Use both “Women’s Basketball” and “Title IX” to answer this question.

What do the passages “Women’s Basketball” and “Title IX” suggest about opportunities for students in education today?

- A. Women’s opportunities are now better than they were in the past.
  - B. Men’s opportunities in sports are lacking, while women’s opportunities in sports are expanding.
  - C. Women have achieved many new high school opportunities but still struggle with limited college opportunities.
  - D. Men are taking advantage of fewer academic opportunities than they did in past decades.
-

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Questions 15 through 20 refer to the following poem.

This poem was written by Jack Driscoll.

*Arm Wrestling with My Father*

We lean across the kitchen table,  
so late  
the moon outside grips the clear ice  
hardening on the pond.  
Line 5 My father's strength is in his eyes.  
He stares at me  
and I know I can never win by pinning his thin arm,  
that he squeezes my schoolteacher hand as if to explain  
how little my visit each winter  
10 relieves his sadness working all year  
alone on this farm.  
He whispers, "GO,"  
and the full weight of our bodies heaves  
in opposite directions,  
15 the thermometer at the window holding  
exactly at zero.  
Now his wrist bends and  
as if suddenly dancing, our foreheads touch.  
For that moment we let go of the distance between us  
20 like two men who have just shaken hands  
in a small room  
and have turned slowly away to watch the stars  
without counting losses.

Courtesy of Jack Driscoll

15

Which of the following states the basic situation represented in this poem?

- A. A man and his father are stargazing on a cold winter night.
- B. A man is visiting his father on the family farm in winter.
- C. A man and his father are refusing to speak to each other after an argument.
- D. A man is recalling childhood games he played with his father.

16

Why does the son know he "can never win" (line 7)?

- A. He sees that if he wins he will only anger his father.
- B. He sees that his father has a greater will to win than he does.
- C. In a contest of physical strength, a schoolteacher does not have a chance against a farmer.
- D. Even if he beats his father at arm wrestling, he cannot resolve the differences between them.

17

The placement of the detail “the thermometer...holding / exactly at zero” (lines 15-16) has the effect of

- A. emphasizing the severity of the weather that night.
- B. emphasizing the idea that the match is at a stand-off.
- C. showing how little esteem the men hold for each other at that moment.
- D. indicating that the son is not giving the match his full attention.

18

Lines 19-23 seem most strongly to imply that, for a moment, the father and son

- A. were calling their wrestling match a tie.
- B. were not keeping track of who won their wrestling matches.
- C. forgot their hurts and disappointments with each other.
- D. realized they had each suffered more than they could express.

19

Which of the following does the poem suggest is one of the father’s important “losses” (line 23)?

- A. His son has not been as successful as the father had hoped.
- B. He and his son are never playful anymore.
- C. His son did not choose to stay and farm with him.
- D. His growing season was brought to an end by early frost.

20

The narrator’s tone in this poem is primarily one of

- A. quiet acceptance.
  - B. bitter self-pity.
  - C. angry resentment.
  - D. pleased satisfaction.
- 



## HiSET Answer Key and Rationales

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
1	C	B. Inference and Interpretation	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option C is correct</b> because, like the narrator and Margaret waited for kolaches to bake, Margaret anxiously awaited the day the dandelion seeds would be ready to be blown.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
2	B	A. Comprehension	Easy
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because the narrator suggests she and Margaret have done this before (“Margaret will do as she did last year”). Also, in the third paragraph the narrator suggests she already knows the exact events that will occur as if they have done them many times before.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
3	A	B. Inference and Interpretation	Easy
Rationale			
<p><b>Option A is correct</b> because the narrator and Margaret find shapes in the clouds that are related to what they have in common; in the third paragraph the narrator states, “We detect our friends, our favorite foods, and ourselves in the clouds.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
4	B	C. Analysis	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because the phrase “. . . our lips puckered toward the dandelion . . .” simply describes the manner in which the girls blew the dandelion seeds and does not symbolize any ideas related to youth or aging.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
5	B	C. Analysis	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because, in the last paragraph, the narrator relates an experience from each season that reminds her of Margaret, such as “her autumn kisses to the dandelions,” “the snowmen we created together on early winter nights,” “the gaping mud puddles we dashed through in the spring,” and “when summer approaches, it will be the sprinklers on college campuses.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
6	C	B. Inference and Interpretation	Easy
Rationale			
<p><b>Option C is correct</b> because throughout the passage the narrator describes her bond with Margaret in close, affectionate terms: “grasps my hand,” “[w]e laugh,” “cheeks nearly touching,” and “I will remember.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
7	B	C. Analysis	Easy
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because the first paragraph describes that “[b]asketball was invented by Dr. James Naismith and introduced to male athletes in 1891” and that “[l]ess than a year later, Senda Berenson...offered [basketball] to young women.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
8	D	B. Inference and Interpretation	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option D is correct</b> because the third paragraph states that “women’s teams formed in high schools, colleges, businesses, recreation centers, and neighborhoods across the United States.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
9	C	A. Comprehension	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option C is correct</b> because the fourth paragraph explains that “six-on-six basketball...had a two-section court with players restricted to their side of the court,” while the fifth paragraph explains that players could “run the entire length of the two-section court” in five-on-five basketball.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
10	B	C. Analysis	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because the passage traces the evolution of women’s basketball in chronological order from basketball’s invention by Naismith to its popularity with women in the 1940s to the Title IX legislation of the 1970s to the creation of a professional women’s basketball league in the 1990s.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
11	A	A. Comprehension	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option A is correct</b> because the passage states, “Title IX regulations do not apply to organizations that have traditionally been limited to members of one sex, such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) or the Girl Scouts.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
12	C	D. Synthesis and Generalization	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option C is correct</b> because the passage states, “Title IX requires colleges and high schools to offer equal opportunities, benefits, and services to females and males in sports...”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
13	D	D. Synthesis and Generalization	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option D is correct</b> because the first passage states that women’s basketball “faced some opposition” and that Title IX was passed to require “equal opportunity for women in all programs”; the second passage quotes Title IX as stating the following: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
14	A	D. Synthesis and Generalization	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option A is correct</b> because the first passage states that, in regard to sports, “women’s basketball continu[es] to garner so much attention and support” that “the sport seems destined to thrive for years to come.” In addition, the second passage states that Title IX today “requires colleges and high schools to offer equal opportunities” for women in all areas, not just sports.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
15	B	C. Analysis	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because in lines 9-11, the speaker states “how little my visit each winter / relieves his sadness working all year / alone on this farm.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
16	D	B. Inference and Interpretation	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option D is correct</b> because in lines 8-11, the speaker states that his father’s actions “explain how little my visit each winter relieves his sadness.”</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
17	B	C. Analysis	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option B is correct</b> because the detail of the thermometer “holding exactly at zero” during the arm wrestling match mirrors the image of the two men struggling to win, with each being unable to make progress or overcome the other.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
18	C	B. Inference and Interpretation	Medium
Rationale			
<p><b>Option C is correct</b> because the speaker’s statement in lines 19-20 that “For that moment we let go of the distance between us / like two men who have just shaken hands” suggests that the men come together both physically and emotionally, briefly disregarding the sources of tension between them.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
19	C	B. Inference and Interpretation	Medium
Rationale			
<b>Option C is correct</b> because the speaker suggests in lines 10-11 that his father feels “sadness working all year / alone on this farm.”			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Process Category	Question Difficulty
20	A	C. Analysis	Medium
Rationale			
<b>Option A is correct</b> because the speaker does not speak to his father; instead, he silently reflects on their relationship and seems to accept that it will not change with the admission “I know I can never win” in line 7.			



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