



acadience® reading 7–8

Silent Reading

Grade 8 | Benchmark 1

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PACKET OR OPEN THE BOOKLET
PLEASE WAIT AND LISTEN FOR DIRECTIONS

Sample: Multiple Choice Question

1. Most weeks of the school year, the first day of the school week is:

- A) Friday
- B) Monday
- C) Wednesday
- D) Sunday

Silent Reading

Student Response Sheet

Sample: (A) (B) (C) (D)

Passage 1	Passage 2	Passage 3
1. (A) (B) (C) (D)	1. (A) (B) (C) (D)	1. (A) (B) (C) (D)
2. (A) (B) (C) (D)	2. (A) (B) (C) (D)	2. (A) (B) (C) (D)
3. (A) (B) (C) (D)	3. (A) (B) (C) (D)	3. (A) (B) (C) (D)
4. (A) (B) (C) (D)	4. (A) (B) (C) (D)	4. (A) (B) (C) (D)

STOP

Basketball Hopes

► It was the day after tryouts for the basketball teams, and Elliot was feeling relaxed and confident. True, he'd missed a few free throws and hadn't passed the ball that effectively, but otherwise, he'd performed relatively well. Elliot was certain he'd be following in the steps of his older brother Christopher, who was generally recognized as a star and had even made varsity as a sophomore. Christopher had an excellent jump shot and a natural instinct for the game. He was scouted throughout high school and offered several college scholarships. Elliot couldn't match Christopher's abilities, but he wasn't completely talentless, either. With Christopher paving the way, Elliot figured his chances were excellent for earning A-Team placement his freshman year.

After school, Elliot sauntered casually to the gym, where Coach Robinson had posted the team rosters. A crowd of hopefuls was already clustered by the lists affixed to the door and Elliot heard whoops of glee as some of them spotted their names. Groans of disappointment escaped from several who hadn't made either team. Elliot elbowed his way to the front and skimmed the

A-Team list, but didn't notice his name. It was difficult to read the list while getting jostled by those around him. Elliot started at the top again, reading more carefully this time, and that's when he realized his name wasn't there. He stared uncomprehendingly for a moment until reality sank in; he didn't make the A team. He wrangled his way to the B-Team list and scanned it a couple of times before finally spotting his name. Elliot hurried away, disappointment welling up inside of him. He decided to walk home instead of taking the bus.

As Elliot walked, the hollow pit of unhappiness in his stomach heated up and he felt like a free-floating ball of fury. Then he began to reflect on each day of the tryouts and how he wished he had enrolled in those autumn clinics his brother had suggested. By the time he reached his family's apartment, Elliot realized that earning a place on the A Team next year or varsity later would mean more effort. He vowed to himself that every day he would bring an A-game level performance, even if it was to the B Team.

Comprehension Questions: Basketball Hopes

Mark the correct answer on your answer sheet. DO NOT write on this form.

1. Walking in a slow manner without hurry is called:
A) disappointing.
B) sauntering.
C) scouting.
D) scampering.
2. When you are pushed or elbowed in a crowd, you are being:
A) jumped.
B) scanned.
C) clustered.
D) jostled.
3. When something is *skimmed*, it means to:
A) read something quickly.
B) run quickly on a basketball court.
C) read something very carefully.
D) stare at something for a long time.
4. What was Elliot's performance like during tryouts?
A) He started out playing poorly but improved.
B) Overall, he performed poorly.
C) Overall, he performed relatively well.
D) He matched his brother's abilities.
5. Elliot's brother, Christopher, had been:
A) a basketball team captain.
B) a basketball star in college.
C) a basketball star in high school.
D) on the varsity team his freshman year.
6. After Elliot found out he didn't make A Team, he began to wish he had:
A) played better during tryouts.
B) taken the autumn clinics.
C) practiced with his brother.
D) gone to basketball summer camp.
7. Why did Elliot think he had an extra advantage over the other boys who tried out?
A) He could build off the success of his brother.
B) His older brother had been scouted by colleges.
C) Elliot had received help from Coach Robinson.
D) He could use his brother for help during the season.
8. According to this passage, what is one effect of feeling over-confident about something?
A) You may not give it your all.
B) You will get what you want.
C) You won't be disappointed.
D) You will make a big effort.
9. What would be another good title for this passage?
A) Always Bring Your A Game
B) Don't Take Things for Granted
C) Don't Let Disappointment Get You Down
D) Rely On the Reputation of Others
10. We can predict that in the future, Elliot will:
A) make varsity team at his school.
B) put more effort into his performance.
C) lose interest in basketball.
D) skip practices between seasons.

Biodiversity in Forests

► Forest biodiversity refers to the range, or variety, of all living things within a forest. Biodiversity is an important measure of the overall health of a forest habitat. All of the different trees, plants, animals, and even the microbes around them contribute to the biodiversity and health of a forest. Unfortunately we are losing this biodiversity, and this is a trend that can affect us all.

Healthy forests with great biodiversity provide many environmental and economic benefits. When a forest has good diversity, the impact of crop disease is reduced and the effects of climate change are minimized. For example, when there is low diversity, a single disease may destroy the entire food source of a community. With high diversity, a single disease would affect only one part of a community's food source. All people, not just those who inhabit forest ecosystems, are dependent on good forest biodiversity.

At a global level, forests help control climate change by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. As trees grow, they take in carbon from the air and lock it in the wood, leaves, and soil. Forests, like oceans, are known as carbon sinks, as they can absorb and store carbon for a long period

of time. It is estimated that more carbon is stored in the earth's forests than all that exists in the entire atmosphere. Keeping forest life varied will help sustain forests as carbon sinks, which, in turn, will help reduce climate change.

Threats to forests and the life forms that dwell in them also affect forest biodiversity. Cutting down large areas of trees reduces the total forest acreage and increases the loss of forest biodiversity. Forest fires, insects and diseases, and climate events like drought can also lead to a decrease in forests, and these factors are often related. Drought, for example, can weaken a forest system, making it more open to attack by insects and more likely to lose some of its biodiversity.

Setting aside forests as protected areas is one of the ways we can protect forest biodiversity. Controlling invasive plants and animals that harm forest systems can also help maintain good biodiversity. Harvesting only certain trees or planting only one species of tree reduces biodiversity and are practices that should be avoided. Scientists and conservation groups are working together to maintain the biodiversity of our forests.

Comprehension Questions: Biodiversity in Forests

Mark the correct answer on your answer sheet. DO NOT write on this form.

1. When large amounts of carbon are locked into wood, leaves, and soil, it is called:
 - A) a carbon sink.
 - B) a forest.
 - C) biodiversity.
 - D) climate change.
2. According to the passage the word *sustain* refers to:
 - A) giving support or relief.
 - B) stop providing sustenance.
 - C) giving positive compensation.
 - D) withholding assistance.
3. According to the passage, the word *biodiversity* refers to:
 - A) environmental and economic benefits of a forest.
 - B) richly varied carbon sinks.
 - C) a range or variety of living things within a forest.
 - D) a healthy forest community food source.
4. An environmental benefit from a healthy forest is:
 - A) a greater capacity to harvest its many resources.
 - B) more opportunity to enjoy the forests.
 - C) a greater capacity to harvest rare animals.
 - D) minimized effects of climate change.
5. An important sign of a healthy forest is:
 - A) the height of forest trees.
 - B) a variety of plant, animal, and microbial life forms.
 - C) the amount of sunshine captured by its canopy.
 - D) an increased number of decomposers of the forest floor.
6. One benefit from a healthy forest is:
 - A) an increase in deforestation.
 - B) an increase in foreign plants.
 - C) a reduced impact from carbon sinks.
 - D) a reduced impact from crop disease.
7. A reduction in forest size:
 - A) increases the likelihood of new plant diversity.
 - B) increases the land for farming.
 - C) weakens the forest system.
 - D) weakens the effect that humans have on the forest.
8. According to the passage, what is the effect of harvesting or planting only one species of tree?
 - A) It reduces the overall biodiversity of the forest.
 - B) It brings on too much rain, making it prone to insect attacks.
 - C) It reduces the threat of the other species becoming extinct.
 - D) It helps control plants that invade that particular tree.
9. An important theme from this passage is that:
 - A) all creatures are dependent on the health of a forest's biodiversity.
 - B) climate events help forests become self-sustaining.
 - C) forests and the life forms that dwell in them are self-sustaining.
 - D) balanced forest habitats are likely to lose biodiversity.
10. We could predict that a forest with high diversity:
 - A) threatens to be overloaded with too many life forms.
 - B) causes varied life forms to compete for reduced food sources.
 - C) would benefit from selective deforestation.
 - D) might not suffer as much from a single catastrophic event.

Europe “Reborn”

► In European history, the period between the 1300s and the 1600s is called the Renaissance, which is a French word meaning “rebirth.” In this case, the Renaissance refers to a resurgence of interest in learning, the arts, and the sciences that would change the course of Western civilization.

The Renaissance began in Italy, when ancient writings from Greece and Rome were discovered. The ideas in these texts led to a movement known as Humanism. Humanism is a way of thinking with a focus on people and human nature: what people do, why they do it, and what they are able to do. It is rooted in the belief that, by using reason, people can and should shape the world around them. Humanism led to different goals in education with a focus on producing responsible, thoughtful citizens. In the past, education was largely religious; in the Renaissance, it was expanded to include philosophy, grammar, and oration, or public speaking.

Along with this new interest in the human mind came a burst of creativity. In literature, writers such as Dante produced works that captured the full range of human experience. In

fine arts, painters like da Vinci found new ways to paint beautiful works. One of these methods was the use of perspective, or looking at objects from different points of view. This method was important because art that focused on people was seen as one way to record knowledge. Paintings such as the “Mona Lisa” called attention to the beauty of the human form and invited people to respond with both their mind and their heart.

During the Renaissance, changes in learning and the arts brought advances at all levels of society. Inventions such as the printing press made books more available, and more people learned to read. Businesses grew and travel to new places increased. With the help of better maps and new tools such as the compass, sailors pushed farther across the oceans. Eventually, they reached new lands, which in turn led to the founding of new nations, including the United States.

The Renaissance was a time of amazing activity in the arts, the sciences, and the world. It was not only the rediscovery of old ideas, but also the birth of new ideas and a new world, the effects of which are still felt today.

Comprehension Questions: Europe “Reborn”

Mark the correct answer on your answer sheet. DO NOT write on this form.

1. A way of thinking with a focus on people and human nature is called:
 - A) Western perspective.
 - B) human philosophy.
 - C) Humanism.
 - D) rediscovery.
2. The word *Renaissance* refers to the rebirth of interest in:
 - A) ancient writings from Greece and Rome.
 - B) learning, the arts, and the human form.
 - C) religious teachings, the arts, and philosophy.
 - D) learning, the arts, and the sciences.
3. When something has renewed public interest or attention there is said to be a/an:
 - A) resurgence.
 - B) confluence.
 - C) public debate.
 - D) oration.
4. According to the passage, the Renaissance changed the course of:
 - A) Western civilization.
 - B) Western religion.
 - C) Italian government.
 - D) Greek education.
5. Compared to the era before, education during the Renaissance focused on:
 - A) the experience of people in nature.
 - B) mainly on the arts, specifically the use of perspective.
 - C) supporting the process of producing thoughtful and responsible citizens.
 - D) mainly religion, but also philosophy.
6. The Renaissance first began in:
 - A) Italy.
 - B) Greece.
 - C) Rome.
 - D) Europe.
7. The movement known as Humanism resulted from:
 - A) new goals in education that focused on human nature.
 - B) the ideas in ancient writings from Greece and Rome.
 - C) the ideas in ancient scientific writings from Italy.
 - D) a burst of creativity in the arts and sciences.
8. According to this passage, what was the effect of Humanism on literature and the arts?
 - A) It helped lead to a burst in creativity.
 - B) It helped lead to a burst in productivity.
 - C) It led to many new, useful inventions.
 - D) It encouraged the use of traditional methods.
9. The main idea of this passage is that the Renaissance was a period of:
 - A) decreased focus on human experience and human nature that did not influence Western civilization.
 - B) economical expansion in Northern Europe that did not influence Western civilization.
 - C) renewed focus on religion, tradition, and the sciences that greatly influenced Western civilization.
 - D) renewed focus on learning, the arts, and the sciences that greatly influenced Western civilization.
10. Based on this passage, what can be predicted about a civilization that focuses on learning, the arts, and the sciences?
 - A) The civilization will grow smaller, while experiencing cultural development.
 - B) The civilization will experience economic development and cultural activity.
 - C) The civilization won't likely experience any changes or economic development.
 - D) The civilization won't grow quickly due to new technological inventions.