

ATLAS Grade 8 Reading Comprehension

Student Review Guide

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***Based on 2023 Arkansas ELA Standards tested by
the ATLAS End-of-Year Summative Assessment***

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Preface

The *ATLAS Grade 8 Reading Comprehension Student Review Guide* is written to help students learn and master 8th grade English Language Arts skills. The material in this title is aligned specifically with Arkansas's State Academic Content standards for Grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA) to cover **Reading Comprehension** and **Vocabulary**. These standards will be tested by the ATLAS ELA end-of-year summative assessment that is required to be taken by all 8th grade students. (The ATLAS ELA end-of-year summative assessment also tests Language and Writing standards. See the companion title *ATLAS Grade 8 Language and Writing Student Review Guide* for instruction on the Language and Writing standards, which includes grammar, usage, and mechanic skills, as well as essay-writing skills.)

The goal of this book is to provide teachers with high quality instructional material (HQIM) that facilitates student learning. The material in this book should serve several purposes. First, it gives classroom-level instruction to help students build ELA skills that are specific to Arkansas standards; second, it provides formative assessments to gauge student learning; and third, it gives practice for summative end-of-year assessment.

How To Use This Book

Students:

In the 8th grade, you will learn and practice reading comprehension skills and build vocabulary. At the end of 8th grade, you will be given an end-of-grade test to assess what you have learned. This book will help you to learn, practice, and master the skills you are expected to know by the end of your 8th grade year. It should also help you do well on the reading comprehension portion of the end-of-grade test.

- Read the instructional material in this review book, do the practice exercises, and take the section review tests at the end of each section.
- After reviewing the material, take the two practice tests (provided as separate booklets). Although these practice tests are given on paper, the test questions are written to look similar to the computerized end-of-grade test. Therefore, these practice tests will give you practice answering the types of questions you may see on the end-of-year test.
- Using the practice test evaluation charts, circle the questions that you answered incorrectly. The evaluation charts will show you where to find the instructional material in the book that corresponds to each question. For each question that you missed on the practice tests, review the corresponding sections in the book to further develop mastery of needed skills.

Teachers:

This review book is also intended to save you, the teacher, time in the classroom. It can be used for classroom instruction or for individual student review. This book offers review for ALL of the Arkansas Reading Comprehension (Reading Fundamentals, Reading Literature, and Reading Information) and Vocabulary standards that are tested on the end-of-year summative assessment.

- When teaching or tutoring individual students, use the strategy outlined above for students.
- For classroom study, use this book to supplement lesson plans and to aid in formative assessments. Purchase a class set of books for use in the classroom or assign books to students for out-of-classroom work.
- Give one of the practice tests (provided separately) as a pre-assessment or to act as a benchmark assessment. The second practice test can then be used to gauge progress.
- Assign the practice tests (provided separately) as comprehensive review tests before students take the end-of-year summative assessment. Use the practice test evaluation chart found after the test to identify areas needing further review.
- Please **DO NOT** photocopy materials from this book or the practice test booklets. These materials are intended to be used as a student workbook, and individual pages should not be duplicated by any means without permission from the copyright holder. To purchase additional or specialized copies of sections in this book, please contact the publisher at 1-800-745-4706.

Vocabulary Skills

Section 1.4 Context Clues in a Paragraph, Passage, or Poem



When you encounter an unfamiliar word or phrase in your reading, the best clues to its meaning may not appear in the same sentence. Often, the sentences before and/or after a difficult word or phrase will give you clues to what it means. These will be the same types of clues that you’ve already seen. Let’s look at some examples, but this time, let’s also identify the word(s) or phrase(s) that give the best context clue.

When looking for context clues in a paragraph or passage, remember the different types of clues: *definitions/descriptions, examples, synonyms/antonyms, causes and effects, comparisons/contrasts, and inferences.* You may find several of these used within a paragraph or passage that can help you to understand an unfamiliar word or phrase.

Example 1: Read the following paragraph.

The infantile comments of the singer disappointed her fans. She had been on the island during the tsunami and was interviewed by different media. Her fans were hoping for meaningful reactions to the tragedy but heard only silly, extremely childish, and self-absorbed answers to the questions asked.

Part A

What is the meaning of the word infantile in this paragraph?

- A. having to do with babyish actions
- B. having to do with not caring
- C. having to do with being harsh or unloving
- D. having to do with not making logical sense

Part B

Select word(s) or phrase(s) from the paragraph that are the **best** clues for its meaning?

If you recognize that the base root of infantile is infant, you can easily determine that the word has something to do with a baby. The answer to Part A is A, having to do with babyish actions.

For Part B, what words or phrases describe what it looked like for the singer to give infantile comments? The best context clues are found in the phrase “silly, extremely childish, and self-absorbed.” All of these words help to describe what *infantile* looks like.

This question is an example of using description as a context clue. Notice that the description doesn’t appear in the same sentence as the word. Instead, it is found at the end of the paragraph.

Section 1.4, continued

Context Clues in a Paragraph or Passage



Example 2: Read the following paragraph.

In the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, the town of Hamelin, Germany, is overrun by rats. One day, a man dressed in a colorful outfit comes to the town. Referred to in the story as the Piper, the man offers to get rid of the rats for a fee. The town agrees. The Piper plays his flute, and the rats in the town tag behind him en masse. The great multitude of rats follow him out of town, and the Piper leads them as a unified unit into a river to drown. When the Piper goes to collect his fee, the town refuses to pay him. He returns to the town, but this time, playing his flute, he lures all the children to follow him out of town and never to be seen again.

Read the following sentence from the paragraph.

“The Piper plays his flute, and the rats in the town follow him en masse.”

Part A

What is the meaning of the phrase en masse as it is used in the sentence?

- A. in a straight line
- B. with great enthusiasm
- C. in a trance
- D. together as a large group

Part B

Which of the following **two** phrases from the paragraph support the answer in Part A?

- A. “for a fee”
- B. “plays his flute”
- C. “tag behind”
- D. “great multitude”
- E. “unified unit”
- F. “into a river”

This paragraph should paint a picture in your mind. The Piper plays his flute, and all the rats in the town come out and begin to follow him. Any of the answer choices in Part A may make sense, but the context clues in the paragraph seems to indicate a large group of rats. The correct answer for Part A is D, “together as a group.”

For Part B, consider the specific context clues given in the paragraph. Which phrases tell you that *en mass* means “together as a group?” The best context clues are answer choices D and E, “great multitude” and “unified unit.” These two phrases describe what it looked like for the rats to follow the Piper *en mass*.

Context clues are not always limited to a single paragraph. The clues may be found in a paragraph before or after, especially when there is a conversation. If you are unsure of a word’s meaning, it may be helpful to reread the paragraph before and the paragraph after.

Section 1.4, continued

Context Clues in a Paragraph or Passage

Practice

Read each paragraph or passage and then answer the questions that follow. Darken the circle or circles that correspond to your answer choice(s).

On the edge of Habershaw County, a monastery was located in the woods about 30 minutes from the nearest town. It was home to a small group of monks, most of whom had lived there for decades. The monks were a quiet community of men who served the surrounding towns by selling the vegetables they grew in their gardens. These gardens were situated in a clearing at the edge of the woods just beyond multiple buildings that included a temple, a school, a library, and a brewery.

1. What is the meaning of the word monastery as used in this paragraph?
- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (A) a gathering of farmers | (C) a place to sell vegetables |
| (B) a residence for monks | (D) a wooded area that is inhabited |

It was playoff season, and the Knights had made it to the first round. Before the game, nerves ran high. The coach gathered the team in the locker room. "Listen up, team," he said in his distinct gravelly voice, "you cannot bank on any one player as being the hero. You must rely on one another as a team to execute our game plan. We can do this!" With renewed confidence, the players huddled up believing that the coach's words were true.

2. What does the phrase bank on mean in this passage?
- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (A) to solely depend upon | (C) to build a barrier against |
| (B) to place a monetary bet | (D) to play timidly |

from "The Black Cat" (adapted)
by Edgar Allen Poe

1. From my infancy I was noted for the meekness and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the jest of my companions. I was especially fond of animals and was given by my parents a great variety of pets.
2. I married early, and was happy to find in my wife a disposition not disagreeable with my own. Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of indulging me with those of the most agreeable kind. We had birds, goldfish, a fine dog, rabbits, a small monkey, and a *cat*.
3. What is the meaning of the word conspicuous as used in paragraph 1?
- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (A) hidden or secretive | (C) rude or offensive |
| (B) easily noticeable | (D) in a way that is charming |
4. What is the meaning of the word indulging as used in paragraph 2?
- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| (A) breaking a bad habit | (C) satisfying a desire |
| (B) denying a need | (D) offering a substitute |



Section 1.4, continued

Context Clues in a Paragraph or Passage

5. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Read the following sentence from paragraph 2.

“Observing my partiality for domestic pets, she lost no opportunity of indulging me with those of the most agreeable kind.”

Select the meaning of the word domestic as it is used in this sentence.

- (A) being tame to live with people
- (B) coming from the wild
- (C) working in the home
- (D) coming from a parent

Part B

How does the passage provide a context clue to support your answer in Part A?

- (A) It gives reasons for why the animals would need to perform chores.
- (B) It implies that the animals are not tame.
- (C) It refers to parents in the first paragraph.
- (D) It gives a list of animals that are often house pets.

-
- 1 Nathan certainly had a unique way to express himself. He often dressed in plaids and stripes of different colors, most of the time competing rather than working together. Sophie overheard some kids laughing at him in the lunchroom. The group, dressed in their stylish clothes, acted as if they were somehow better than Nathan, treating him as inferior.
- 2 Sophie’s anger rose as she continued to hear the abuse. She intruded into their conversation saying, “You may think you have style, but you have no right to patronize someone!” Nathan grinned at Sophie’s courage to confront. Having her as an ally, he walked away feeling that maybe someone understood his intentional fashion choices.

6. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Select the meaning of the word patronize in paragraph 2.

- (A) to forcefully push
- (B) to treat as a customer
- (C) to show respect
- (D) to act superior to someone

Part B

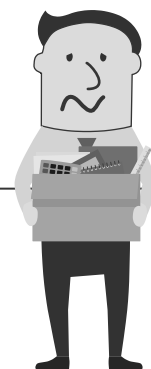
Select **two** phrases from paragraph 1 that support your answer in Part A.

- (A) “a unique way to express himself”
- (B) “most of the time competing rather than working together”
- (C) “overheard some kids laughing at him”
- (D) “dressed in their stylish clothes”
- (E) “acted as if they were somehow better”
- (F) “treating him as inferior”

Author's Word Choice

Section 2.3

The Effect of Word Choice on Tone



Key Terms 2.3

- **Audience** – the people who read a particular text
- **Narrator** – the person speaking in a story or poem
- **Tone** – the author's feelings or attitude toward a subject, the readers, characters, etc.

Every author has a unique style of writing. An author's style is seen in how he or she communicates a message. Style is often influenced by the **audience**, which is simply the people who are the intended readers of the text.

An important feature of an author's style is his or her **tone**, which is defined as the author's feelings or attitude toward a subject, the readers, characters, etc. An author may communicate a tone through a **narrator**, which is a person other than the author who is speaking in a story or poem.

What are some examples of tone? Pretty much any emotion or attitude can be communicated as a tone. Below are just a few examples.

Examples of Tone

| | | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| angry | humorous | matter-of-fact | regretful |
| critical | ironic | mocking | sarcastic |
| depressing | joyful | negative | serious |
| excited | judgmental | optimistic | sympathetic |
| hopeful | loving | outraged | worried |

Example 1: The following three sentences describe the same event but with different tones. How would you describe the tone of each?

Sentence 1: The principal entered the classroom and announced Mr. Alexander's resignation and introduced the class's new teacher.

Sentence 2: Barely containing her excitement, Amanda gleefully announced to her parents that her most dreaded teacher resigned.

Sentence 3: Struggling to accept the news and fighting back tears, Marc questioned, "What do you mean Mr. Alexander resigned?"

Can you see how word choice affects the tone in each one of these sentences? Sentence 1 gives the facts without expressing much emotion. The tone could be described as matter-of-fact. In sentence 2, the tone is joyful or excited. The tone in sentence 3 is one of disbelief or despair.

Any type of writing will have tone no matter if it is fiction, nonfiction, a drama, or poetry. Read the following examples taken from different sources. Can you identify the tone in each? Keep in mind that tone can often be described by more than one single word.

Section 2.3, continued

The Effect of Word Choice on Tone

Example 2: Read the following sentences taken from a nonfiction text.

from “Sacred Obligations”
by Daniel Webster

. . . Our proper business is improvement. Let our age be the age of improvement. In a day of peace, let us advance the acts of peace and the works of peace. Let us develop the resources of our land, call forth its power, build up its institutions, promote all its great interests, and see whether we also, in our day and generation, may not perform something worthy to be remembered. Let us cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony.

How does the author communicate tone? How would you describe the tone of these sentences?

In these sentences, Daniel Webster describes his hopes for the future of the country. He attempts to create a sense of unity by using first person pronouns such as “our,” “us,” and “we.” His words encourage the reader to embrace his optimism, and he expresses hope that peace and harmony will be cultivated. Words that could describe his tone could be hopeful, encouraging, or optimistic. Can you think of others?

Example 3: Read the following sentences from a fiction novel.

from *Silas Marner*, Chapter XII
by George Eliot

. . . There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year’s Eve, she knew; her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure; she would go in her dingy rags, and her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father’s hair and eyes, and reveal herself to the Squire as his eldest son’s wife.

Part A

Which of the following **best** describes the tone of this paragraph?

- A. hopeful but cautious
- B. angry but forgiving
- C. resentful and revengeful
- D. excited and loving

Part B

Which **two** phrases **best** support your answer?

- A. “There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year’s Eve,”
- B. “her husband would be smiling and smiled upon”
- C. “hiding *her* existence in the darkest corner of his heart”
- D. “But she would mar his pleasure; she would go in her dingy rags, and her faded face,”
- E. “with her little child that had its father’s hair and eyes”

Author's Word Choice

Section 2 Review

Read each selection of text and then answer the questions that follow. Darken the circle or circles that correspond to your answer choice(s).

from "Chicago"
by Carl Sandburg

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads, and the
Nations' Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders;

...
... I give them back the sneer and say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted
Head singing so proud to be alive and
coarse and strong and cunning.

1. Read the following line from the poem.

Stormy, husky, brawling

Synonyms for brawling are *rowdy*, *loud*, *riotous*, *unruly*.

What is the author trying to communicate by using the word brawling in this poem?

- (A) that the city of Chicago is usually peaceful but sometimes filled with fighting
(B) that the city of Chicago might be unruly but is strong and capable
(C) that the city of Chicago might be the biggest fans of boxing in the state
(D) that the city of Chicago is full of clean-living citizens
2. What is the tone of these lines of poetry?
- (A) proud (C) excited
(B) critical (D) humorous
-

from Abraham Lincoln's Address in Independence Hall in Philadelphia in 1861

Now in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed and war. There is no necessity for it. I am not in favor of such a course; and I may say in advance that there will be no bloodshed unless it is forced upon the government. The government will not use force, unless force is used against it.

3. What is the tone of Lincoln's message as given in these sentences?

- (A) joyful (C) diplomatic
(B) mocking (D) sarcastic



Central Idea

Section 5.4

Developing the Central Idea



An author develops the central idea of a passage through paragraphs. Each paragraph often gives a main or controlling idea that supports the central idea. In other words, the main ideas of each paragraph work together to develop the overall central idea of the passage.

An author further develops the central idea within each paragraph. If you look carefully at each paragraph within a passage, you will often see specific text structures that the author has used to develop the central idea.

Example: Read the following passage.

Tea Time

- 1 A tasty way to prevent cancer may now include drinking tea. The National Cancer Institute (NCI), as well as other world health organizations, have conducted various scientific studies to investigate the use of tea to prevent cancer. Cells are at risk to cancer when they are damaged by unstable molecules called oxidants. Antioxidants are substances that neutralize these oxidant molecules.
- 2 Tea contains antioxidants called catechins. In laboratory studies, tea catechins have been shown to fight cancer in three ways. First, they neutralize oxidants before they damage cells. Second, they reduce the number of tumors and the size of tumors. Third, they hinder the growth of tumor cells. In the laboratory, liver, skin, and stomach cancers that were chemically created in mice were shown to decrease when the mice were fed either green or black tea.
- 3 Laboratory studies are promising, but evidence from human studies has been weak. The most supportive human studies show benefits of using green tea rather than black. One human study in China shows that a decrease in breast cancer is weakly associated with regular consumption of green tea. A study in Japan shows that people who drink large amounts of green tea per day have a lower incidence of all cancers, especially women. Of all the different types of cancer, limited evidence from human studies shows increased tea consumption, especially green tea, may prevent bladder cancer. Overall, however, human studies are inconclusive on the effects of tea consumption on cancer prevention.
- 4 Although additional studies are needed to determine the effectiveness of tea in preventing cancer, one thing is certain: tea is a tasty way to include antioxidants into a daily diet. Tea enthusiasts recommend that people experiment with different types and brands of tea. They are sure to find one they will enjoy. For tea lovers, the extra dose of antioxidants is a pleasant added bonus.

Question 1:

How does the author develop the idea that drinking tea may prevent cancer?

- A. by describing different types of teas and their effects on cancer cells
- B. by contrasting anti-cancer effect of green tea versus black tea
- C. by explaining the health effects of drinking tea every day
- D. by giving results from scientific studies

Section 5.4, continued

Developing the Central Idea

When you consider each paragraph in this passage, you will notice that every paragraph mentions the effect of drinking tea on preventing cancer. Do you see that the central idea of this passage is that drinking tea may prevent cancer? This question is asking how the author develops this central idea.

You should also notice that every paragraph mentions scientific studies, which include laboratory studies and human studies. The author develops the central idea by mentioning scientific studies and giving some of the general results found by these studies. The best answer choice is D, “by giving results from scientific studies.” This question should have been easy to answer. If you read and understood the passage, you should recognize that none of the other answer choices are true about the information given.

Question 2:

How does the information given in paragraph 2 support the central idea of this passage?

- A. by explaining how cells can become cancerous
- B. by showing how human studies verify the results of laboratory studies
- C. by listing the ways that antioxidants in tea fight cancer
- D. by defining the important scientific terms of “oxidants” and “antioxidants”

This question asks about a specific paragraph in the passage, paragraph 2. Paragraph 2 lists three ways that tea catechins, which are the antioxidants found in tea, fight cancer. Therefore, the answer to this question is C, “by listing the ways that antioxidants in tea fight cancer.”

Notice that answer choices A and D are true of paragraph 1. Answer choice B, on the other hand, is an incorrect interpretation of the information given in paragraph 3. If you are asked this type of question, be sure to reread the correct paragraph.

Practice

Read each passage and answer the questions that follow. Darken the circle that corresponds to your answer choice.

Birth Order, Does It *Really* Matter?

- 1 The effects of birth order is a topic of much interest. As early as 1874, a researcher found that a large number of scientists were first born. Another researcher in the early 1900s investigated how birth order affects personality. Soon, a theory began to develop on how birth order impacts certain traits. Ever since, the effect of birth order on several characteristics have been the subject of research.
- 2 One area of research is the impact of birth order on intellect. Intellect, in this case, is simply the measure of tested intelligence (IQ). Multiple studies have connected birth order to IQ. The first born often has the highest IQ of the children in the family. The middle child will have an IQ lower than the oldest, and the youngest child will have a lower score than the middle child. However, IQ does not translate automatically into how well an individual functions in a job or career. For example, working well with other people is a trait often required for success, but this trait can be lacking in some with high IQs.
- 3 How does birth order affect success in life and a career? Older studies suggested that the first born is most likely to be a leader and the middle child more likely to be a follower. They also suggest the youngest falls into

continue

Elements of Literature

Section 7.2 Characterization



Key Terms 7.2

- **Character traits** – a person’s or a character’s personality or unique attributes
- **Characterization** – the way an author reveals a character’s personality or nature
- **Dialogue** – conversation among characters in a story; shown by using quotation marks around what each character says
- **Direct characterization** – a method used by an author to develop a character by specifically describing the character or making statements about the character
- **Indirect characterization** – a method used by an author to develop characters by showing their attributes through their own words, thoughts, or actions or those of other characters

Now that you have reviewed the basics of plot, let’s look at other elements of literature that are unique to stories. An important element in any story is the people or characters.

Character Traits

Character traits are a person’s or a character’s personality or unique attributes. All people, including characters in a story, have their own set of character traits. These traits can be positive, negative, or neutral. Positive traits might be described by words like *kind*, *considerate*, and *honest*. Negative traits might be described as *greedy*, *violent*, or *stubborn*. Other possible character traits are given in the chart below. Do you know what each of these traits means? These are eighth grade level vocabulary words that you should know, so look up any that you are unsure of.

Character Trait Vocabulary Words

| | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| admirable | corrupt | evasive | juvenile | prosperous |
| aloof | disciplined | fanatical | logical | respectable |
| amiable | disrespectful | genial | offensive | ruthless |
| attentive | emotional | haughty | persistent | sinister |
| brave | energetic | indifferent | pious | spiritual |
| competent | envious | jovial | prim | steadfast |

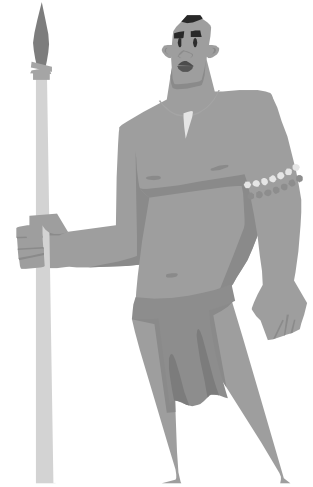
Characterization

Characterization is the way an author reveals a character’s personality or nature. Authors can use specific descriptive words, or they can use a character’s own action, words, or thoughts.

An author uses **direct characterization** when describing a character or making statements about him or her. The author may use specific words like the ones included in the chart above to characterize a person in a story.

Elements of Literature

Section 7.3 Development of Plot



Now that you've reviewed the basic elements of plot, characterization, and dialogue, let's consider how the author develops the plot using the characters, their dialogue, and incidents within the story. Read the following passage taken from a short story. We will use this portion of a story to analyze different elements of plot development.

from "A Great Kingdom In The Congo"
by William Henry Sheppard

- 1 The trail lay northeast by north with a gradual ascent. The country was well wooded and watered. No stones could be seen anywhere, and the soil was sandy. There were many extensive plains with magnificent palm trees, hundreds and thousands of them ranging from a foot high, which the elephants fed upon, to those fifty and sixty feet high. The forest everywhere was ever green. Trees blossomed and bloomed, sending out upon the gentle breeze their fragrance, so acceptable to the traveler. Festoons of moss and running vines made the forest look like a beautifully painted theatre or an enormous swinging garden.
- 2 In the meantime word had come to the king of Lukenga of our presence and, as we neared his kingdom, we were met by a party of fighting men. My caravan had been resting in the village of a chief named Kueta, who had repeatedly urged me to turn back, and, as the fighting men of King Lukenga appeared, the chief's men fled to the forest. I sat quietly, however, in my seat in front of my tent and my people began to gather around my chair, the youngest of the caravan nestling on his knees very close to me. The king's people drew near and the leading man, spear in hand, called to Chief Kueta in a voice that rang through the village:
- 3 "Now hear the words of King Lukenga: Because you have entertained a foreigner in your village, we have come to take you to the capital for trial."
- 4 I knew things were now serious, so rising from my seat I called to the head man to meet me half way. He paid no attention. I called a second time and walked up to him and began to plead for Chief Kueta.
- 5 "I understand you are sent by your king to arrest these people."
- 6 "It is the word of the king," said he.
- 7 I continued, "The chief of this village is not guilty; he gave me warning and told me to go away, to return the way I had come, and I did not. It is my fault and not Kueta's."
- 8 The leader, leaning on his spear, replied, "You speak our language?"
- 9 "I do," was my quick answer.
- 10 "That is strange," said he.
- 11 The leader and his men moved off some distance and talked between themselves. In a little while he came back to me saying, "I will return to the capital and report these things to the king."
- 12 I said to him, "Tell your king I am not a bad man; I do not steal or kill; I have a message for him. Wait a moment," said I. Taking from one of my boxes a very large cowrie shell, near the size of one's fist, and holding it up, I said, "This we call the father of cowries; present it to the king as a token of friendship."
- 13 The men were soon off for the capital and we settled down, hoping and praying for the best. Kueta told me that the head man was King Lukenga's son and his name was N'Toinzide.

Section 7.3, continued

Development of Plot

Propelling the Plot

In an interesting story, the author keeps a reader interested by moving from one element of plot to the next. An author uses several tools to move the plot forward. One tool is using events with action. Another is the use of dialogue among the characters. Look at a couple of examples of how an author uses action and dialogue to propel the plot of a story.

Example 1: Read carefully the passage taken from “A Great Kingdom In The Congo” on the previous page and answer the following question.

How does the arrival of King Lukenga’s fighting men affect the men of Chief Kueta?

- A. Chief Kueta’s men arm themselves for battle.
- B. Chief Kueta’s men pray to their gods for rescue.
- C. Chief Kueta’s men escape for their safety.
- D. Chief Kueta’s men welcome the men of King Lukenga.

This question addresses how the plot moves forward through a specific event, the arrival of King Lukenga’s fighting men in Chief Kueta’s village. As you read the passage carefully, you should see that **C** is the correct answer. Chief Kueta’s men flee to the forest.

Contrast the actions of Chief Kueta’s men to the actions of the narrator. How does the narrator respond to the news? He sits and waits for the visitors and then he approaches them. Can you see how the author is advancing the plot of the story through this event and, more specifically, how the different characters respond to what is happening?

Example 2: Reread a portion of the passage taken from paragraphs 2 through 7:

- 2 . . . The king’s people drew near and the leading man, spear in hand, called to Chief Kueta in a voice that rang through the village:
- 3 “Now hear the words of King Lukenga: Because you have entertained a foreigner in your village, we have come to take you to the capital for trial.”
- 4 I knew things were now serious, so rising from my seat I called to the head man to meet me half way. He paid no attention. I called a second time and walked up to him and began to plead for Chief Kueta.
- 5 “I understand you are sent by your king to arrest these people.”
- 6 “It is the word of the king,” said he.
- 7 I continued, “The chief of this village is not guilty; he gave me warning and told me to go away, to return the way I had come, and I did not. It is my fault and not Kueta’s.”

How does this conversation between the leading man and the narrator propel the action of this story?

- A. It shows that there will be no communication between the king and the foreigners.
- B. It opens the door to the possibility to save Chief Kueta from harm.
- C. It invites Chief Kueta and his village for a celebration at the capital.
- D. It portrays the leading man and his men as worshiping the foreigners as gods.

Section 7.3, continued

Development of Plot

- 11 The leader and his men moved off some distance and talked between themselves. In a little while he came back to me saying, “I will return to the capital and report these things to the king.”
- 12 I said to him, “Tell your king I am not a bad man; I do not steal or kill; I have a message for him. Wait a moment,” said I. Taking from one of my boxes a very large cowrie shell, near the size of one’s fist, and holding it up, I said, “This we call the father of cowries; present it to the king as a token of friendship.”

What does the conversation between the narrator and the leader of King Lukenga’s men reveal about the narrator?

- A. The narrator is sneaky and is trying to bribe the leader with wealth.
- B. The narrator is afraid to speak truth, so he lies to the leader.
- C. The narrator is intimidated by the power of the leader.
- D. The narrator is respectful, wishing only to bring a peaceful resolution to all.

What does this conversation tell you about the narrator’s character? Look carefully at the answer choices. Did you detect him being sneaky and trying to bribe the leader of King Lukenga’s men? Did you detect lies in anything he said? Did you sense that the narrator was intimidated? Finally, did you feel like the narrator was being respectful in his words to the leader? Hopefully you see that **D** is the correct answer. The narrator’s conversation with the leader of King Lukenga’s men demonstrates that the narrator sought to honor the king.

Provoking a Character’s Decision

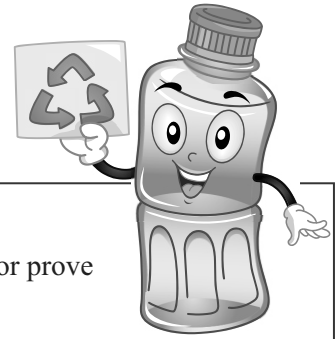
The words and actions of one character often affects the actions or decisions of another character. This interaction between characters also moves the story along. Let’s further analyze the passage from “A Great Kingdom In The Congo.”

Example 5: Reread part of the passage, paragraphs 2 through 8:

- 2 In the meantime word had come to the king of Lukenga of our presence and, as we neared his kingdom, we were met by a party of fighting men. My caravan had been resting in the village of a chief named Kueta, who had repeatedly urged me to turn back, and, as the fighting men of King Lukenga appeared, the chief’s men fled to the forest. I sat quietly, however, in my seat in front of my tent and my people began to gather around my chair, the youngest of the caravan nestling on his knees very close to me. The king’s people drew near and the leading man, spear in hand, called to Chief Kueta in a voice that rang through the village:
- 3 “Now hear the words of King Lukenga: Because you have entertained a foreigner in your village, we have come to take you to the capital for trial.”
- 4 I knew things were now serious, so rising from my seat I called to the head man to meet me half way. He paid no attention. I called a second time and walked up to him and began to plead for Chief Kueta.
- 5 “I understand you are sent by your king to arrest these people.”
- 6 “It is the word of the king,” said he.

Argumentative Texts

Section 9.1 Identifying an Author's Position



Key Terms 9.1

- **Argumentative text** – a type of writing that presents evidence or facts to support or prove an author's claim
- **Claim** – an author's position on a debatable topic
- **Fact** – a statement that can be proven
- **Opinion** – a personal belief or judgment that cannot be proven

A specific type of informational texts that you need to understand is called argumentative. Argumentative texts are often in the form of either an essay or an article. In an **argumentative text**, the author presents evidence or facts, not opinions, to support a position on a debatable subject. Remember that a **fact** is a statement that can be proven as either true or false, but an opinion is a personal belief or judgment that cannot be proven. ("The mountains are 14,000 feet high" states a fact; "The mountains are majestic" states an opinion.) The author's position is also called a **claim**.

In discussing argumentative texts, it is important to see the differences in this type of argument as compared to the heated discussion you had yesterday with your parent. An author's purpose for an argumentative text is to inform the reader about what is true about a debatable topic, not to persuade or win an argument about it. A reader can then take the information presented and decide whether to agree with the author's position or not.

Let's begin analyzing an argumentative text by first determining the claim that the author is making. Determining the claim, or the author's position on a topic, is similar to determining the central idea of a text. That position should be supported by the information given in the text. You have already practiced a similar skill in Section 5.3, but now you can apply what you've learned to argumentative texts. In addition to determining an author's position, you should also be able to make inferences about the text.

Read the following argumentative article that continues on the next page, and then consider how you would answer the example questions.

Plastic: A "Tiny" Problem

- 1 What particles can be found on dry land, in water, and in the air, are present on every continent, including Antarctica, and have even been discovered in the cells of living organisms, including plankton, fish, mammals, and humans? The answer to that question is microplastics — and they can literally be found almost anywhere!
- 2 What exactly are microplastics? They are simply tiny particles of plastic that measure 5 millimeters or less in size, many of which are so small that they are microscopic. They form when plastics break down. Instead of breaking down into natural substances, plastics simply break down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic.

A Brief History of Plastics

- 3 In 1907 a chemist named Leo Baekeland discovered plastic. He was looking for a shellac substitute. Very quickly manufacturers recognized the potential for this new material. By the 1930s and 1940s, it was used for everything from radios to appliances. Many new forms were useful for multiple industries. In 1955 a popular magazine called *Life* published an article titled "Throwaway Living." One time use plastics changed life for the average housewife, and America had discovered a new disposable way of life.

Section 9.1, continued

Identifying an Author's Position

Example 1: Now see if you can answer the following two part question.

Part A

What is the overall position of the author regarding the presence of microplastics?

- A. Water filtration systems are inadequate in getting rid of microplastics.
- B. Microplastics are a manmade substance that do not break down into natural substances.
- C. Microplastics pose multiple problems that are not being solved with recycling efforts.
- D. Manufacturers need to be more aggressive in dealing with microplastics.

Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports your answer in Part A?

- A. "What particles can be found on dry land, in water, and in the air, are present on every continent, including Antarctica, and have even been discovered in the cells of living organisms, including plankton, fish, mammals, and humans?" (paragraph 1)
- B. "What began in America soon became a worldwide phenomenon. Every culture adopted the convenience of single-use plastics. From restaurant takeouts to food packaging to medical use in hospitals, everything was thrown away after one use." (paragraph 3)
- C. "Focusing on water bottles, the recycling process involves shredding them multiple times and washing the remains repeatedly. The shredding and washing process releases the smallest microplastics back into the atmosphere and the discharged water." (paragraph 6)
- D. "Cardboard is made from wood pulp, and when it degrades, it breaks down into natural substances. Ultimately, it is no longer cardboard." (paragraph 7)

First, let's answer Part A:

In answering this question, you will need to do a similar analysis to finding the central idea. As you reread this passage, note the ideas of each paragraph and identify the underlying idea within. Review those ideas and ask yourself, "What is the author's overall position regarding microplastics?" You should see that the author's claim involves the ideas that microplastics are a problem but recycling has not been an effective answer. Therefore, answer choice **C** best states the author's claim in this passage.

Consider reasons that the other answer choices are incorrect. Answer choice A introduces the idea of water filtration that isn't mentioned in the passage, so it cannot be the author's claim. Answer choice B gives a reason for why microplastics are a problem, but the author's overall claim is broader than this one statement. Answer choice D introduces a solution that isn't discussed in the passage.

Now consider Part B.

This question is asking you to cite evidence from the text itself that supports the author's position. Remember to look through that lens of the author's position and narrow down the choices. Which sentences from the article best show that microplastics are a problem that isn't being solved by recycling? Answer choice **C** is clearly the best detail to support the claim. It supports the idea that recycling water bottles, a major source of plastics, isn't a good solution and that recycling efforts contribute to the microplastics problem.

Answer choice A is simply the opening question. It doesn't directly address microplastics as being a problem or have anything to do with recycling. Answer choice B gives a problem with single-use plastics, but it doesn't address microplastics or recycling efforts. Answer choice D is a detail about cardboard and obviously doesn't address the author's position on microplastics.

Reading Comprehension/ Vocabulary Practice Test 1

Overview

Introduction

The Practice Test that follows is designed to give you practice taking the reading comprehension and vocabulary portion of the ATLAS Grade 8 ELA end-of-year summative assessment. This Practice Test has 33 questions in either a multiple choice or a multiple select format. The reading passages and questions in this Practice Test may be similar to the ones you will see on the actual end-of-year test. (Practices for the Language Structures and Conventions editing tasks and the essay prompt as given on the actual end-of-year summative assessment are given in the companion title *ATLAS Grade 8 Language and Writing Student Review Guide* that covers those skills.)

The ATLAS Grade 8 ELA End-of-Year Summative Assessment

The actual ATLAS Grade 8 ELA end-of-year summative assessment will be given online. In addition to testing Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary, the actual test will also include Language Structures and Conventions editing tasks as well as an essay prompt.

General Directions

This Practice Test is a paper-based version of what you may see on the actual end-of-year test. Read each passage or pair of passages. Then read each question that follows the passage(s). Some questions will require multiple correct answers, so consider each of the answer choices when making multiple selections. On this paper-based test, darken each circle that corresponds to your answer choice.

After Taking the Practice Test

Once you have completed this practice test, circle the questions that you answered incorrectly on the practice test evaluation chart on page PT1-30. Any practice test question answered incorrectly may identify a skill needing improvement or mastery. For each question that you missed on the practice test, review the corresponding sections in the book. Read the instructional material, do the practice exercises, and take the section review test at the end of each section. Completing these steps will help you to improve mastery of the material to be tested on the actual ATLAS Grade 8 ELA end-of-year summative assessment and may potentially increase the score you receive on that test.



Directions:

Read each passage or pair of passages. Then read each question that follows the passage(s). Darken the circle or circles that correspond to your answer choice(s).

The Pine-Tree Shillings by Nathaniel Hawthorne

- 1 Captain John Hull was the mint-master of Massachusetts and coined all the money that was made there. In the earlier days of the colony, the current coinage consisted of gold and silver money of England, Portugal, and Spain. These coins being scarce, the people were often forced to barter their commodities, instead of selling them.
- 2 For instance, if a man wanted to buy a coat, he perhaps exchanged a bear-skin for it. If he wished for a barrel of molasses, he might purchase it with a pile of pine boards. Bank-bills had never been heard of.
- 3 As the people grew more numerous, and their trade one with another increased, the want of current money was felt. To supply the demand, the general court passed a law for establishing a coinage of shillings, sixpences, and threepences. Captain John Hull was appointed to manufacture this money and was to have about one shilling out of every twenty to pay him for the trouble of making them.
- 4 Hereupon, all the old silver in the colony was handed over to Captain John Hull. The battered silver cans and tankards and silver buckles, and broken spoons, and silver buttons of worn-out coats, and silver hilts of swords, all such curious old articles were doubtless thrown into the melting-pot together. But by far the greater part of the silver consisted of bullion from the mines of South America.
- 5 All this old and new silver being melted down and coined, the result was an immense amount of splendid shillings, sixpences, and threepences. Each had the date, 1652, on the one side, and the figure of a pine-tree on the other. Hence, they were called pine-tree shillings.
- 6 Captain Hull was perfectly satisfied with the shilling for so diligently did he labor, that, in a few years, his strong box was overflowing with pine-tree shillings.
- 7 When the mint-master had grown very rich, a young man, Samuel Sewell, came a courting to his only daughter. His daughter was a fine hearty damsel, by no means so slender as some young ladies of our own days. On the contrary, she was as round and plump as a pudding herself. With this round, rosy Miss Betsey, did Samuel Sewell fall in love. As he was a young man of good character, industrious in his business, and a member of the church, the mint-master very readily gave his consent.



8 The mint-master also was pleased with his new son-in-law; especially as he had courted Miss Betsey out of pure love and had said nothing at all about her portion¹. So when the marriage ceremony was over, Captain Hull whispered a word to two of his men-servants, who immediately went out, and soon returned, lugging in a large pair of scales. They were such a pair as wholesale merchants use, for weighing bulky commodities; and quite a bulky commodity was now to be weighed in them.

9 “Daughter Betsey,” said the mint-master, “get into one side of these scales.”

10 Miss Betsey did as she was bid, like a dutiful child, without any question.

11 “And now,” said honest John Hull to the servants, “bring that box hither.”

12 The box, to which the mint-master pointed, was a huge, square, iron bound, oaken chest; it was big enough for four children to play at hide-and-seek in. The servants tugged with might and main, but could not lift this enormous receptacle, and were finally obliged to drag it across the floor. Captain Hull then took a key, unlocked the chest, and lifted its heavy lid. It was full to the brim of bright pine-tree shillings, fresh from the mint. It was the mint-master’s honest share of the coinage.

13 Then the servants, at Captain Hull’s command, heaped double handfuls of shillings into one side of the scales, while Betsey remained in the other. Handful after handful was thrown in, till, plump and ponderous as she was, they fairly weighed the young lady from the floor.

14 “There, son Sewell!” cried the honest mint-master. “Take these shillings for my daughter’s portion¹. Treat her kindly and thank Heaven for her. It is not every wife that’s worth her weight in silver!”

¹portion: money given to a groom by a bride’s father (if the father was wealthy) to ensure a bride’s well-being; similar to a dowry but less formal

“The Pine-Tree Shillings,” by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

In the public domain. For the purposes of this test, this story has been shortened, language simplified, and punctuation modernized.



This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 1.

“These coins being scarce, the people were often forced to barter their commodities, instead of selling them.”

What does the phrase barter their commodities mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ to use gold or silver to buy a product
- Ⓑ to argue over the cost of a product
- Ⓒ to steal a product from someone else
- Ⓓ to trade one product for another product

Part B

Select **two** sentences from the passage that support the answer in Part A.

- Ⓐ “In the earlier days of the colony, the current coinage consisted of gold and silver money of England, Portugal, and Spain.” (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ “For instance, if a man wanted to buy a coat, he perhaps exchanged a bear-skin for it.” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ “If he wished for a barrel of molasses, he might purchase it with a pile of pine boards.” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓓ “Bank-bills had never been heard of.” (paragraph 2)
- Ⓔ “As the people grew more numerous, and their trade one with another increased, the want of current money was felt.” (paragraph 3)

A rectangular button with the text "GO ON" inside, followed by a right-pointing arrow.

Reading Comprehension/ Vocabulary Practice Test 1 Evaluation Chart

Circle the questions you answered incorrectly on the chart below, and review the corresponding sections in the book. Read the instructional material, do the practice exercises, and take the Section Review tests at the end of each section.

| If you missed question #: | Go to section(s): | If you missed question #: | Go to section(s): |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 1.3, 1.4 | 18 | 8.1, 8.3 |
| 2 | 3.1, 3.4 | 19 | 4.2, 5.1, 8.1 |
| 3 | 7.2, 7.3 | 20 | 7.2, 7.3 |
| 4 | 5.3, 8.1, 8.3 | 21 | 2.3 |
| 5 | 2.3, 7.4 | 22 | 8.1 |
| 6 | 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 | 23 | 7.4, 7.5 |
| 7 | 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 5.4 | 24 | 8.2 |
| 8 | 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 5.4 | 25 | 5.2, 5.4, 9.2 |
| 9 | 3.3 | 26 | 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 |
| 10 | 5.2, 5.4, 9.2 | 27 | 4.1, 5.2, 5.4 |
| 11 | 5.3 | 28 | 5.3 |
| 12 | 5.3 | 29 | 9.3 |
| 13 | 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 | 30 | 9.2 |
| 14 | 7.1, 7.3 | 31 | 4.1, 5.4 |
| 15 | 5.1, 7.3 | 32 | 5.3 |
| 16 | 7.2, 7.3 | 33 | 9.4 |
| 17 | 2.3, 7.4, 7.5 | | |

Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards Correlation Chart (Teacher's Edition)

The chart below correlates each 2023 Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standard to the student guide. The Text Section(s) column gives the section numbers in the text where each standard is reviewed. The Practice Test columns give the question number(s) in each Practice Test that correlates to each standard. *(Note: Only the Reading Fundamentals & Vocabulary, Reading Literary Text, and Reading Informational Text standards are covered in the student guide and listed in the following chart. For Writing & Language Standards, see companion title ATLAS Grade 8 Language and Writing Student Review Guide.)*

| Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards | Text Section(s) | Practice Test 1 | Practice Test 2 |
|--|--|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Reading Fundamentals | | | |
| 8.RC.1.RF Provide an objective summary of a text. | Section 6 | 13 | 21 |
| 8.RC.2.RF Determine how a central idea and/or theme is developed over the course of a text, including its relationship to supporting details. | Section 5, Subsection 8.1, Subsections 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 | 7, 22, 31 | 2 |
| 8.RC.3.RF Cite text evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what a text states, using background knowledge to justify inferences drawn from the text. | Subsection 2.3, Subsection 4.2, Section 5, Subsection 8.1, Subsections 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 | 19, 28B, 32B | 5B, 11B, 15, 22B, 28B, 32 |
| Reading Literature | | | |
| 8.RC.5.RL Examine how specific lines of dialogue propel the plot, reveal aspects of a character, or inform a character's decision. | Subsections 7.2, 7.3 | 3, 15, 16, 20 | 1, 7, 10, 13, 17 |
| 8.RC.6.RL Distinguish how the structure of a text contributes to its overall meaning and style. | Subsection 2.1, Section 7 | 14 | 4 |
| 8.RC.7.RL Describe how differing points of view (POV) and/or perspectives of the characters in a text affect the audience and/or readers, creating suspense, mystery, and/or humor. | Section 7 | 5, 17, 23 | 6, 9, 16 |

Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards Correlation Chart, continued

| Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards | Text Section(s) | Practice Test 1 | Practice Test 2 |
|--|---|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Reading Literature, continued | | | |
| 8.RC.9.RL Describe how an author of a contemporary work of fiction adapts the themes, events, and/or character types from myths, traditional stories, and/or religious works. | Subsection 8.2 | 24 | 18 |
| 8.RC.10.RL Identify the theme in an original, adapted, and/or modernized drama, poem, folktale, or story from American literature (1850-1930), explaining its historical and/or contemporary significance. | Subsections 8.1, 8.3, 8.4 | 4, 18 | 5A, 11A |
| Reading Information, continued | | | |
| 8.RC.11.RI Explain how an author connects and/or distinguishes individuals, ideas, or events through comparisons, analogies, and categories. | Section 4 | 6 | 26 |
| 8.RC.12.RI Examine the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including how the sentences clarify the central idea. | Subsections 4.1, 4.2 Section 5, Subsections 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 | 8, 27 | 25, 30 |
| 8.RC.13.RI Describe how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. | Subsection 9.3 | 29 | 23, 28 |
| 8.RC.15.RI Evaluate the argument and supporting claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is logical, if the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims, and when irrelevant evidence is introduced. | Subsections 9.1, 9.2, 9.3 | 10, 25, 30 | 19, 22A, 24, 27A, 29, 31 |

Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards Correlation Chart, continued

| Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards | Text Section(s) | Practice Test 1 | Practice Test 2 |
|---|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Reading Information continued | | | |
| 8.RC.16.RI Analyze two or more texts that present conflicting information on the same topic, identifying where the texts diverge on matters of fact or interpretation. | Subsection 9.4 | 33 | 33 |
| 8.RC.17.RI Identify the central idea in a non-fiction work from or about American literature (1850-1930), explaining its historical and/or contemporary significance. | Subsection 5.3 | 11, 12, 28A, 32A | |
| Vocabulary | | | |
| 8.V.1 Use general academic and content-specific words and phrases accurately. | Throughout the text | | |
| 8.V.2 Decode and encode words, using knowledge of Greek combining forms and Latin prefixes, bases, and suffixes and connectives as needed. | Subsections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 | | |
| 8.V.3 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases, choosing from a range of effective techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots (i.e., morphology), • Trace the origins of words (i.e., etymology), • Use context, • Consult reference materials to clarify pronunciation and/or parts of speech, and/or • Use word relationships such as cause and effect, part to whole, and item into category to clarify the meaning of each word. | Section 1 | 1, 26 | 8, 14, 20 |

Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards Correlation Chart, continued

| Arkansas Grade 8 ELA Standards | | Text Section(s) | Practice Test 1 | Practice Test 2 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Vocabulary, continued | | | | |
| 8.V.4 | Examine words with similar denotations, considering how their connotations and nuances impact the words' meanings. | Subsection 2.2 | | 12 |
| 8.V.5 | Determine how word and phrase choice, including analogies or allusions to other texts, contributes to the meaning, style, and/or tone of a text. | Subsection 2.3, Subsections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 | 9, 21 | 3 |
| 8.V.6 | Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language in context, including verbal irony and puns. | Section 3 | 2 | |

Item Code:
AR8R0725TE