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Grade 6 English Language Arts

Sample Test Items

You will read two passages, “Excerpt from *Heidi*” and “Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street.” Answer the questions about each passage as well as questions about both passages.

Excerpt from *Heidi*

by Johanna Spyri

A young girl has just moved in with her grandfather, who is a goat herder in the mountains of Switzerland.

1 “I want to see what you have inside the house.”

2 “Come then!” and the grandfather rose and went before her towards the hut.

3 “Bring your bundle of clothes in with you,” he bid her as she was following.

4 “I shan’t want them any more,” was her prompt answer.

5 The old man turned and looked searchingly at the child, whose dark eyes were sparkling in delighted anticipation of what she was going to see inside. “She is certainly not wanting in intelligence,” he murmured to himself. “And why shall you not want them any more?” he asked aloud.

6 “Because I want to go about like the goats with their thin light legs.”

7 “Well, you can do so if you like” said her grandfather, “but bring the things in, we must put them in the cupboard.”

8 Heidi did as she was told. The old man now opened the door and Heidi stepped inside after him; she found herself in a good-sized room, which covered the whole ground floor of the hut. A table and a chair were the only furniture; in one corner stood the grandfather’s bed, in another was the hearth¹ with a large kettle hanging above it; and on the further side was a large door in the wall—this was the cupboard. The grandfather opened it; inside were his clothes. . . . Heidi thrust in her bundle of clothes, as far back behind her grandfather’s things as possible, so that they might not easily be found again. She then looked carefully

round the room, and asked, "Where am I to sleep, Grandfather?"

9 "Wherever you like," he answered.

10 Heidi was delighted, and began at once to examine all the nooks and corners to find out where it would be pleasantest to sleep. In the corner near her grandfather's bed she saw a short ladder against the wall; up she climbed and found herself in the hay-loft. There lay a large heap of fresh, sweet-smelling hay, while through a round window in the wall she could see right down the valley.

11 "I shall sleep up here, Grandfather," she called down to him, "it's lovely, up here. Come up and see how lovely it is!"

12 "Oh, I know all about it," he called up in answer.

13 "I am getting the bed ready now," she called down again, as she went busily to and fro at her work, "but I shall want you to bring me up a sheet; you can't have a bed without a sheet; you want it to lie upon."

14 "All right," said the grandfather, and presently he went to the cupboard, and after rummaging about inside for a few minutes he drew out a long, coarse piece of stuff, which was all he had to do duty for a sheet. He carried it up to the loft, where he found Heidi had already made quite a nice bed. . . .

15 "That is capital,"² said her grandfather; "now we must put on the sheet."

16 They spread it over the bed, and where it was too long or too broad, Heidi quickly tucked it in under the hay. It looked as tidy and comfortable a bed as you could wish for, and Heidi stood gazing thoughtfully at her handiwork.

¹**hearth:** an area in front of a fireplace

²**capital:** an expression of approval or delight



Excerpt from *Heidi* by Johanna Spyri. Published in 1881.

Answer the following questions for “Excerpt from *Heidi*.”

- 1.** Which quotation from the passage shows Heidi’s perspective on the place where she has decided to sleep?
- Ⓐ “Heidi thrust in her bundle of clothes, as far back behind her grandfather’s things as possible, . . .” (paragraph 8)
 - Ⓑ “. . . near her grandfather’s bed she saw a short ladder against the wall; up she climbed and found herself in the hay-loft.” (paragraph 10)
 - Ⓒ “. . . she called down to him, ‘it’s lovely, up here. Come up and see how lovely it is!’” (paragraph 11)
 - Ⓓ “‘That is capital,’ said her grandfather; ‘now we must put on the sheet.’” (paragraph 15)
- 2.** Which paragraph from the passage uses figurative language to develop Heidi’s character?
- Ⓐ paragraph 3
 - Ⓑ paragraph 5
 - Ⓒ paragraph 7
 - Ⓓ paragraph 11

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

Part A

Which statement describes a theme of the excerpt from *Heidi*?

- Ⓐ Hard work brings great rewards.
- Ⓑ Always make the best of a situation.
- Ⓒ A great imagination can bring happiness.
- Ⓓ Listening to your elders is the right thing to do.

Part B

Which quotation from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “The old man turned and looked searchingly at the child, whose dark eyes were sparkling in delighted anticipation of what she was going to see inside.” (paragraph 5)
- Ⓑ “Heidi did as she was told. The old man now opened the door and Heidi stepped inside after him; she found herself in a good-sized room, which covered the whole ground floor of the hut.” (paragraph 8)
- Ⓒ “There lay a large heap of fresh, sweet-smelling hay, while through a round window in the wall she could see right down the valley.” (paragraph 10)
- Ⓓ “It looked as tidy and comfortable a bed as you could wish for, and Heidi stood gazing thoughtfully at her handiwork.” (paragraph 16)

4. When Heidi’s grandfather tells her she may sleep wherever she likes, she begins her search for a place. What can the reader infer about Heidi based on her reaction?

- Ⓐ Heidi is happy because she enjoys sleeping in unfamiliar places.
- Ⓑ Heidi is enthusiastic about the possibilities of her sleeping choices.
- Ⓒ Heidi is tired from her journey and wants to go find somewhere to sleep quickly.
- Ⓓ Heidi is resentful toward her grandfather because she does not have a bed to sleep in.

5. Read the sentence from paragraph 14.

“All right,” said the grandfather, and presently he went to the cupboard, and after rummaging about inside for a few minutes he drew out a long, coarse piece of stuff, which was all he had to do duty for a sheet.

What is the meaning of rummaging as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ organizing
- Ⓑ reaching
- Ⓒ searching
- Ⓓ wandering

Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street

by Horatio Alger

Rick is employed to polish boots and shoes. With the money he has made, he seeks to rent a room from Mrs. Mooney.

1 "I aint very partic'lar about accommodations," said our hero. "I guess I'll look at it."

2 Rick followed the landlady up two narrow stair-cases, uncarpeted and dirty, to the third landing, where he was ushered into a room about ten feet square. It could not be considered a very desirable apartment. It had once been covered with an oilcloth carpet, but this was now very ragged, and looked worse than none. There was a single bed in the corner, covered with an indiscriminate heap of bed-clothing, rumpled and not over-clean. There was a bureau,¹ with the veneering² scratched and in some parts stripped off, and a small glass, eight inches by ten, cracked across the middle; also two chairs in rather a disjointed condition. Judging from Rick's appearance, Mrs. Mooney thought he would turn from it in disdain.

3 But it must be remembered that Rick's past experience had not been of a character to make him fastidious.³ In comparison with a box, or an empty wagon, even this little room seemed comfortable. He decided to hire it if the rent proved reasonable.

4 "Well, what's the tax?" asked Rick.

5 "I ought to have a dollar a week," said Mrs. Mooney, hesitatingly.

6 "Say seventy-five cents, and I'll take it," said Rick.

7 "Every week in advance?"

8 "Yes."

9 "Well, as times is hard, and I can't afford to keep it empty, you may have it. When will you come?"

10 "To-night," said Rick.

11 "It aint lookin' very neat. I don't know as I can fix it up to-night."

12 "Well, I'll sleep here to-night, and you can fix it up to-morrow."

13 "I hope you'll excuse the looks. I'm a lone woman, and my help is so shiftless, I have to look after everything myself; so I can't keep things as straight as I want to."

14 "All right!" said Rick.

15 "Can you pay me the first week in advance?" asked the landlady, cautiously.

16 Rick responded by drawing seventy-five cents from his pocket, and placing it in her hand.

17 "What's your business, sir, if I may inquire?" said Mrs. Mooney.

18 "Oh, I'm professional!" said Rick.

19 "Indeed!" said the landlady, who did not feel much enlightened by this answer.

20 "How's Tom?" asked Rick.

21 "Do you know my Tom?" said Mrs. Mooney in surprise. "He's gone to sea,—to Californy. He went last week."

22 "Did he?" said Rick. "Yes, I knew him."

23 Mrs. Mooney looked upon her new lodger with increased favor, on finding that he was acquainted with her son, who, by the way, was one of the worst young scamps in Mott Street, which is saying considerable.

24 "I'll bring over my baggage from the Astor House this evening," said Rick in a tone of importance.

25 “From the Astor House!” repeated Mrs. Mooney, in fresh amazement.

26 “Yes, I’ve been stoppin’ there a short time with some friends,” said Rick.

27 Mrs. Mooney might be excused for a little amazement at finding that a guest from the Astor House was about to become one of her lodgers—such transfers not being common.

¹**bureau:** a dresser

²**veneering:** a thin layer of wood, often used as a decorative layer on furniture

³**fastidious:** attentive to cleanliness or details



Excerpt adapted from a story by Horatio Alger originally published in 1867.

Answer the following questions for “Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street.”

- 6.** Which sentence should be included in an accurate summary of “Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street”?
- Ⓐ Rick has slept in boxes and wagons before.
 - Ⓑ Rick arrives at Mrs. Mooney’s to talk to her about renting a room.
 - Ⓒ Mrs. Mooney informs Rick that she will not be able to fix up the room until tomorrow.
 - Ⓓ Mrs. Mooney and Rick decide that he will pay her 75 cents at the beginning of each week for rent.

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

Part A

What is a theme of the passage?

- Ⓐ Hard work will pay off in getting things desired.
- Ⓑ People can improve themselves through learning.
- Ⓒ Well dressed people are treated better than others.
- Ⓓ People should try to do the best with what they have.

Part B

Which quotation helps develop the theme?

- Ⓐ "It had once been covered with an oilcloth carpet, but this was now very ragged, and looked worse than none."
(paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ "In comparison with a box, or an empty wagon, even this little room seemed comfortable." (paragraph 3)
- Ⓒ "'Well, as times is hard, and I can't afford to keep it empty, you may have it. When will you come?'" (paragraph 9)
- Ⓓ "'Oh, I'm professional!' said Rick." (paragraph 18)

8. What does the phrase “increased favor” in paragraph 23 suggest about Mrs. Mooney’s reaction to Rick’s claim that he knows her son?
- Ⓐ She is upset about the claim, so she views Rick poorly.
 - Ⓑ She is glad that he knows her son, so she views him positively.
 - Ⓒ She is suspicious about the claim, so she is unsure about Rick.
 - Ⓓ She is surprised that he knows her son, so she wants to know more.

Answer the following questions for “Excerpt from *Heidi*” and “Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street.”

9. How do paragraph 8 from the excerpt from *Heidi* and paragraph 2 from “Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street” contribute to the overall development of each passage?
- Ⓐ by including dialogue that propels the action
 - Ⓑ by showing how the setting will cause conflict in the passage
 - Ⓒ by introducing where the action from the passage will take place to establish the setting
 - Ⓓ by demonstrating the characters’ problematic character traits that contribute to the theme

- 10.** Select two statements that show how Heidi’s new home situation in the excerpt from *Heidi* is different from Rick’s in “Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street.”
- Ⓐ Heidi is homeless prior to moving and Rick is not.
 - Ⓑ Heidi has her own room while Rick must share a room.
 - Ⓒ Heidi is initially upset about her new residence while Rick is happy.
 - Ⓓ Heidi is sent to live with family while Rick chooses where he will live.
 - Ⓔ Heidi shows a more positive attitude while Rick is more reserved about how he feels.

Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

Lights, Camera, Bark!

by Kathiann M. Kowalski

1 Ever wonder how they get dogs to perform daring rescue scenes or bark on cue in your favorite movies and television shows? Not just any old dog can show up on a set and become a star. Lots of hard work goes on behind the scenes!

2 “We’re looking for animals that are outgoing and people-friendly,” says trainer Mathilde de Cagny at Birds & Animals Unlimited in California. She has trained dozens of star canines, including Moose (Eddie on *Frasier*), Enzo (*My Dog Skip*), Shadow (*Homeward Bound*), and Clyde (*Marley & Me*).

3 “About 80 percent of the dogs and cats that are used in film are shelter rescues or shelter placements,” notes Marie Belew Wheatley, president and CEO of the American Humane Association (AHA). “These are animals that have been saved and go on to be actors.” Even if prior owners had trouble handling them, trainers can work with most problem behaviors except biting.

4 At first, Shadow was anxious and insecure. De Cagny built up his confidence, little by little.

5 In contrast, Moose was extremely hyper, rebellious, and mischievous. With his huge ego, he actually enjoyed battles.

6 “Since I could see that he wanted to fight, I decided I wasn’t going to do any of that with him,” de Cagny says. Instead, she let him fight with a sandbag. “He would get frustrated and eventually give up.” When Moose heeded her, however, he got positive attention in return.

7 Many dogs love treats as a reward. Others work for praise, petting, or other attention. Still other dogs have favorite toys or stuffed animals.

8 “You need to be able to read your animal’s mind,” says de Cagny. That means first thinking like a dog in general, and then putting yourself in the position of the unique animal

you're working with. Ideally, trainers build from dogs' natural instincts and guide them into learning things so that the dogs don't realize they're working. "Because that way they stay really happy, and it's not a job," de Cagny adds. "It's a game."

9 "It takes about four months, if you spend every day, to get a good trained dog," says de Cagny. Acting dogs learn lots of behaviors to look like they belong in a story. They also learn to behave professionally so that they don't disrupt others on the set. After reviewing scene details with trainers, many productions rehearse with a stuffed animal. That way, the lighting and other technical details can be checked. Next comes rehearsal with the animal. Finally, they shoot the scene. Optimally, the animal gets it right in one or two takes.

10 On screen, it may look like the dog comes when an actor calls his character's name. In reality, the trainer is about 15 feet away, standing behind the camera and using hand gestures or other signals to cue the dog.

Do Animals Do Their Own Stunts?

11 If a dog whimpers on screen, the animal seems hurt or sad. But that's all right if the trainer taught the behavior and the animal wasn't really hurt, either physically or psychologically. Likewise, computer-assisted technology can make it look as though an animal went flying through the air when he didn't. What counts is how productions treat acting animals in real life.

12 To reassure viewers, many film productions invite safety representatives of the AHA to visit their sets. Following detailed guidelines, representatives check to make sure that animals have adequate food and water. Are they comfortable — not too hot or too cold? Representatives also make sure that no cruel means are used to get the response seen on screen.

13 If the production passes muster, the AHA awards an end credit, stating that no animals were harmed in the making of the film. "By and large, producers want to do the right thing," notes Wheatley. After all, viewers care that acting animals

receive humane treatment. That means a happy ending for everyone.



“Lights, Camera, Bark!” by Kathiann M. Kowalski, *Faces*, July 2011. Copyright © 2011 by Cricket Media. Used with permission of Carus Publishing Company.

11. Read the sentence from paragraph 3.

“About 80 percent of the dogs and cats that are used in film are shelter rescues or shelter placements,” notes Marie Belew Wheatley, president and CEO of the American Humane Association (AHA).

What idea does the author introduce with the sentence?

- Ⓐ Dogs and cats that live with people are too lazy to learn anything.
- Ⓑ Production companies can return animals if they do not perform well.
- Ⓒ Animals that make good actors are difficult for regular people to handle.
- Ⓓ Dogs and cats with a variety of issues and experiences can be trained into actors.

12. What is the author’s purpose in the passage?

- Ⓐ to explain the process of choosing and training film dogs
- Ⓑ to inform readers that film dogs are mostly rescue dogs
- Ⓒ to persuade readers to adopt dogs from rescue shelters
- Ⓓ to contrast dogs that require training and those that do not

13. Read the claim made by Marie Belew Wheatley in paragraph 3.

Even if prior owners had trouble handling them, trainers can work with most problem behaviors except biting.

Which two quotations support Wheatley's claim?

- Ⓐ "At first, Shadow was anxious and insecure. De Cagny built up his confidence, little by little." (paragraph 4)
- Ⓑ "In contrast, Moose was extremely hyper, rebellious, and mischievous." (paragraph 5)
- Ⓒ "Many dogs love treats as a reward. Others work for praise, petting, or other attention." (paragraph 7)
- Ⓓ "Acting dogs learn lots of behaviors to look like they belong in a story." (paragraph 9)
- Ⓔ "What counts is how productions treat acting animals in real life." (paragraph 11)

- 14.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which word means the same as the word rebellious in paragraph 5?

- Ⓐ disloyal
- Ⓑ disobedient
- Ⓒ disorderly
- Ⓓ dissatisfied

Part B

Which quotation from paragraphs 6–7 supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “. . . I could see that he wanted to fight, . . .” (paragraph 6)
- Ⓑ “He would get frustrated and eventually give up.” (paragraph 6)
- Ⓒ “Many dogs love treats. . . .” (paragraph 7)
- Ⓓ “. . . other dogs have favorite toys or stuffed animals.” (paragraph 7)

- 15.** Which sentence states a central idea of the passage?
- Ⓐ Rescue dogs are as intelligent as any specific breed.
 - Ⓑ Dogs receive excellent care while they are working on a set.
 - Ⓒ Production companies should be applauded for saving dogs.
 - Ⓓ Special trainers are required to train dogs for on-screen acting.
- 16.** How does paragraph 8 contribute to the development of ideas in the passage?
- Ⓐ It shows a problem and solution for acting dogs and their behaviors on set.
 - Ⓑ It supports a cause and effect relationship between the trainer’s methods and the dog’s behavior on set.
 - Ⓒ It describes the consequences for acting dogs not following commands on set.
 - Ⓓ It compares and contrasts the two acting dogs discussed by Mathilde de Cagny.

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

Part A

Which states an idea supported by the author in the passage?

- Ⓐ Acting dogs require too much maintenance.
- Ⓑ Acting dogs are difficult to train on set.
- Ⓒ Acting dogs respond well to their trainers.
- Ⓓ Acting dogs create fear for viewers.

Part B

Which quotation supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "Not just any old dog can show up on a set and become a star." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ "It takes about four months, if you spend every day, to get a good trained dog, . . ." (paragraph 9)
- Ⓒ "After reviewing scene details with trainers, many productions rehearse with a stuffed animal." (paragraph 9)
- Ⓓ "To reassure viewers, many film productions invite safety representatives of the AHA to visit their sets." (paragraph 12)

18. Read the sentence from paragraph 12.

Following detailed guidelines, representatives check to make sure that animals have adequate food and water.

What is the meaning of the word adequate as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ appropriate
- Ⓑ particular
- Ⓒ special
- Ⓓ sufficient

19. Which is an accurate summary of the passage?

Ⓐ Most dogs used in film are rescue dogs. Trainers make the job feel like a game to the dogs. The dogs learn a variety of behaviors for their roles. Sometimes a representative from the AHA monitors the care of the dogs.

Ⓑ It takes four months for dogs to become actors. Trainers can work with most problem behaviors except biting. Trainers make the job feel like a game to the dogs. AHA representatives will not let the dogs do anything dangerous.

Ⓒ Most dogs used in film are rescue dogs. Trainers can work with most problem behaviors except biting. It is helpful to think like a dog. It takes four months to train a film dog. Sometimes a representative from the AHA monitors the care of the dogs.

Ⓓ It takes four months for dogs to become actors. Most dogs used in film are rescue dogs. Many dogs love treats as rewards. If a dog whimpers on screen, the animal seems hurt or sad. AHA representatives ensure that the dogs are not too hot or too cold.

20. What is the meaning of the phrase passes muster as it is used in paragraph 13?

- Ⓐ uses animals
- Ⓑ gets approved
- Ⓒ employs trainers
- Ⓓ possesses guidelines

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**Grade 6 ELA Sample Test Items
Paper-Pencil Answer Key Document**

Passage	Sequence	Key	Standard	Possible Points
Excerpt from Heidi	1	C	RL.6.6	1
Excerpt from Heidi	2	B	L.6.5	1
Excerpt from Heidi	3	B, D	RL.6.2	2
Excerpt from Heidi	4	B	RL.6.1	1
Excerpt from Heidi	5	C	L.6.4	1
Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street	6	B	RL.6.2	1
Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street	7	D, B	RL.6.5	2
Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street	8	B	RL.6.4	1
Excerpt from Heidi Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street	9	C	RL.6.9	1
Excerpt from Heidi Rick Hires a Room on Mott Street	10	D, E	RL.6.9	2
Lights, Camera, Bark!	11	D	RI.6.3	1
Lights, Camera, Bark!	12	A	RI.6.6	1
Lights, Camera, Bark!	13	A, B	RI.6.8	2
Lights, Camera, Bark!	14	B, A	L.6.4	2
Lights, Camera, Bark!	15	D	RI.6.2	1
Lights, Camera, Bark!	16	B	RI.6.5	1
Lights, Camera, Bark!	17	C, B	RI.6.6	2
Lights, Camera, Bark!	18	D	RI.6.4	1
Lights, Camera, Bark!	19	A	RI.6.2	1
Lights, Camera, Bark!	20	B	L.6.5	1