

SAMPLE TEST

Reading/Literature

HIGH SCHOOL

2009-2011

Vocabulary

Read to Perform a Task

Demonstrate General Understanding

Develop an Interpretation

Examine Content and Structure: Informational Text

Examine Content and Structure: Literary Text

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**Office of Assessment and Information Services
Oregon Department of Education**

255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97310-0203
(503) 947-5600



A product of the Oregon Statewide Assessment Program, Oregon Department of Education

Susan Castillo
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Ken Hermens
Language Arts Assessment Specialist

Doug Kosty
Assistant Superintendent

Leslie Phillips
Science and Social Sciences Assessment Specialist

Tony Alpert
Director, Assessment and Evaluation

James Leigh
Mathematics Assessment Specialist

Steve Slater
Manager, Scoring, Psychometrics and Validity

Guillaume Gendre
Education Program Specialist

Kathleen Vanderwall
Manager, Test Design and Administration

Sheila Somerville
Electronic Publishing Specialist

Holly Carter
Assessment Operations and Policy Analyst

Kathy Busby
Project Manager

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INTRODUCTION TO READING AND LITERATURE

SAMPLE TESTS

The Oregon Department of Education provides sample tests to demonstrate the types of reading selections and questions students at grades 3 through 8 and grade 10 might encounter on the Oregon Statewide Assessment administered each year. Passages on the test represent literary, informative and practical reading selections students might see both in school and other daily reading activities. These sample questions were taken from previous years' tests. They were designed to assess students' abilities to:

- ▶ understand vocabulary meaning within the context of a selection;
- ▶ locate information in common resources (Read to Perform a Task);
- ▶ understand information that is directly stated (Demonstrate General Understanding);
- ▶ understand ideas which are not directly stated but are implied (Develop an Interpretation);
- ▶ analyze informative reading selections and form conclusions about the information (Examine Content and Structure of Informational Text)
- ▶ analyze literary selections and form conclusions about them (Examine Content and Structure of Literary Text).

WHY PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH A SAMPLE TEST?

Most students feel some anxiety when they approach a test. The more confident students feel about their knowledge of the topic, the less anxious they will feel. It also may help students feel less anxious if they are familiar with the types of reading selections and questions they will encounter on the test. It is important that students feel comfortable with the test format and have some test-taking strategies to help them achieve the best possible score.

HOW TO USE THE SAMPLE TEST

The Oregon Department of Education has provided sample tests periodically beginning in 1997. The latest—Sample Test 2009-2011—appears in the student test booklet here. Students may take this sample test as a practice activity to prepare for the actual test.

A list of test-taking strategies and tips follows this introduction. Teachers may use the tips to:

- ▶ generate individual and class discussion;
- ▶ call attention to helpful strategies students can use to prepare for and take the test; and
- ▶ share ideas with parents of ways to help reduce test anxiety and promote good study habits at home.

In addition to gaining practice in reading and answering test questions in a paper and pencil format, students also may benefit from taking an online practice test. An online practice test is available on the OAKS online system. For this paper opportunity, an answer sheet for students to mark is provided at the end of each student test booklet.

An answer key for each test is provided at the end of each of the sample tests. In addition to the correct answer, the key also identifies which reporting category each question is designed to assess (Vocabulary, Read to Perform a Task, Demonstrate General Understanding, Develop an Interpretation, and Examine Content and Structure: Informational and Literary Text).

A table below the answer key converts the number of items correct on the sample test to a score similar to the scores students will receive on the Oregon Statewide Assessment (called a RIT score). **However, this test is only a practice test. Scores on this sample test may not be substituted for the actual Oregon Statewide Assessment.**

In using the sample test, teachers may wish to have students take the entire sample test, or complete a passage and its questions and then discuss it in class before proceeding to the next selection. Students may benefit from re-reading the passages and analyzing both the correct and incorrect answers.

Sample tests also may be shared with parents to help them understand the types of questions their child will encounter on the test and to practice with their child.

Sample questions may be reprinted in newsletters or shared at community meetings to help constituents better understand the state assessment system. Although the sample tests are not as comprehensive as the actual tests, they do provide examples of the subject area content and difficulty level students will encounter as part of Oregon's high academic standards.

Test-Taking Tips

Students: Use these tips to help you prepare for the test.

Before the test

- ▶ Develop a positive attitude. Tell yourself, “I will do my best on this test.”
- ▶ Get a good night’s sleep the night before the test.
- ▶ Get up early enough to avoid hurrying to get ready for school.
- ▶ Eat a good breakfast (and lunch, if your test is in the afternoon).

During the test

- ▶ Stay calm.
- ▶ Listen carefully to the directions the teacher gives.
- ▶ Ask questions if you don’t understand what to do.
- ▶ Before you read a selection on the test, preview the questions that follow it to help focus your reading.
- ▶ After reading a selection, read the entire question and all the answer choices. Stop and think of an answer. Look to see if your answer is similar to one of the choices given.
- ▶ Read each test question carefully. Try to analyze what the question is really asking.
- ▶ Slow down and check your answers.
- ▶ Pace yourself. If you come to a difficult passage or set of questions, it may be better to skip it and go on, then come back and really focus on the difficult section.
- ▶ This is *not* a timed test. If you need more time to finish the test, notify your teacher.

- ▶ If you are not sure of an answer to a question try these tips:
 - Get rid of the answers that you know are not correct and choose among the rest.
 - Read through all the answers very carefully, and then go back to the question. Sometimes you can pick up clues just by thinking about the different answers you have been given to choose from.
 - Go back and skim the story or article to see if you can find information to answer the question. (Sometimes a word or sentence will be underlined to help you.)
 - If you get stuck on a question, skip it and come back later.
 - It is OK to guess on this test. Try to make your best guess, but make sure you answer all questions.

After the test

- ▶ Before you turn your test in, check it over. Change an answer only if you have a good reason. Generally it is better to stick with your first choice.
- ▶ Make sure you have marked an answer for every question, even if you had to guess.
- ▶ Make sure your answer sheet is clearly marked with dark pencil. Erase any stray marks.
- ▶ Don’t worry about the test once it is finished. Go on to do your best work on your other school assignments.

DIRECTIONS

Read each of the passages. Then read the questions that follow and decide on the BEST answer. There are a lot of different kinds of questions, so read each question carefully before marking an answer on your answer sheet.

THE UNEXPECTED STORM

The following selection is an excerpt from John Upton Terrell's *BUNKHOUSE PAPERS*. In this chapter, a young cowhand is assigned an ordinary task that has extraordinary results.



THERE WAS THAT EARLY SUMMER when I went to work on the ranch on Shields River, above Willsal. It was a beautiful country with the Crazy Mountains standing up against the east, their feet wrapped in the folds of dark green forests.

The bunkhouse was worse than some in which I had lived. The foreman didn't like anybody who was born east of the Mississippi River, and he let me know it. But the food was good, and I decided to stay long enough to get a little money in my pocket.

He drove me out in a truck that morning, and he told me to patrol an irrigation ditch, to remove rocks and weeds and dirt that might have fallen into it.

He handed me a twenty-two rifle and a box of cartridges, and he said, "Shoot any jacks or prairie dogs or badgers, anything like that you see. There's gettin' to be too many pests up here, an' they dig burrows, an' then the water breaks into them, an' wastes. I'm bringin' out some poison grain soon, but we'll have to shoot 'em until it gets here."

He drove away. I felt the heaviness of the silence. It was as if the big mountains were pressing down on the country, crushing all sounds. But some sounds survived, little sounds and beautiful sounds, like a lark's song and the rustling of the tall grass and the whir of a blue grouse's wings.

I walked slowly along the ditch with my shovel and my pitchfork and the gun. The water was seldom interrupted. It ran

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smoothly and steadily toward its appointed destination ... wherever that was.

Great white thunderheads gathered over the peaks. To the west a storm mounted in blue-black clouds. I heard the hail long before it reached me. I heard it first as a low ominous rumbling. Then I saw it coming up the valley, an immense dark blue broom swung from the sky and sweeping the earth. The rumble became a roar. I ran toward a headgate which stood at the end of a branch ditch, and crawled under it on the dry side.

The hail had almost reached me when I saw suddenly that I had company. An immense jack rabbit scurried into the headgate and sat beside me. His bloodshot eyes fastened on my face. But it was not an unfriendly look. One of his ears had been torn, and there were scars on his head and his haunches. I thought he must have been in a lot of battles.

We sat there together while the hail roared over us. It made the earth tremble, and it sounded like bullets striking the planks of the headgate. Some of the hailstones were as large as eggs. Both of us might have been killed had it not been for that shelter.

It ended as abruptly as it had come, sweeping on to destroy itself against the walls of the benchlands and the mountains.

Just before he leaped away the big rabbit glanced at me. There could be no mistaking the gratefulness in his eyes.

And I was just as grateful to him . . . for the trust he had placed in me.

1

When the author says the storm mounted, he means the storm was

- A. decreasing in intensity.
- B. gathering in force.
- C. going around him.
- D. already upon him.

2

How did the author feel about working on this particular ranch?

- A. He stayed mostly to prove himself to the foreman.
- B. He liked the area enough to consider a permanent stay.
- C. He considered the jobs he was given beneath his abilities.
- D. He was content enough to stay there temporarily.

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3

In the end, why doesn't the author carry out the farmer's instructions?

- A. He has a soft spot in his heart for pests.
- B. He has an intense dislike for the foreman.
- C. He realizes the jack rabbit has saved his life.
- D. He views the jack rabbit differently due to a shared experience.

4

The end of the passage suggests that in the future the narrator will most likely

- A. renew efforts to do as he is instructed.
- B. refuse to kill other living creatures.
- C. continue to respect other living creatures.
- D. leave this farm without collecting his wages.

5

When the author says, "I felt the heaviness of the silence. It was as if the big mountains were pressing down on the country, crushing all sounds," he uses figurative language in order to

- A. identify the conflict between the narrator and the foreman.
- B. describe how carefree the narrator was feeling at the time.
- C. create a mood of peacefulness and suspense.
- D. show how scared the narrator was in this setting.

6

Why does the foreman want to be rid of the "pests"?

- A. They are eating the crops.
- B. They are destroying the range land.
- C. They are burrowing in the ditches.
- D. They are polluting the irrigation water.

7

When the author says, "...the Crazy Mountains standing up against the east, their feet wrapped in the folds of dark green forests," he is using the literary device of

- A. dialect.
- B. personification.
- C. hyperbole.
- D. simile.

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THE SCIENCE OF ELECTIONS

Motivated by the controversy created by the closeness of the 2000 U.S. presidential election, Steven J. Brams and Dudley R. Herschbach write about alternative voting systems in this selection, "The Science of Elections."

IT COMES AS A SURPRISE TO SOME that there is a science of elections. Its provenance can be traced back to the Marquis de Condorcet in 18th-century France, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) in 19th-century England, and Kenneth Arrow in 20th-century America. Since Arrow published his seminal book *Social Choice and Individual Values* 50 years ago—for which in large part he received the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics in 1972—there have been thousands of articles and hundreds of books published on everything from the mathematical properties of voting systems to empirical tests of the propensity of different systems to elect centrist candidates.

The 2000 U.S. presidential election highlighted, among other things, the frailties of voting machines and the apparent arbitrariness of such venerable institutions as the U.S. Electoral College and Supreme Court. Political commentary has focused on these aspects, but it has paid very little attention to alternative voting systems, about which the science of elections has much to say.

Several alternative systems for electing a single winner have been shown to be far superior to plurality voting, our current system. Plurality voting, which allows citizens to vote for only one candidate, suffers from a dismaying flaw. In any race with more than two candidates, plurality voting may elect the candidate least acceptable to the majority of voters. This frequently happens in a three-way contest, when the majority splits its votes between two centrist candidates. Plurality voting also forces minor-party candidates into the role of spoilers, as we saw in 2000, which can be decisive in a close contest between two major-party candidates.

Of the alternatives to plurality voting, we recommend approval voting on both practical and theoretical grounds. Approval voting allows voters to vote for as many candidates as they find acceptable. For

instance, one can approve of a minor-party favorite and at the same



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time vote for an acceptable major-party candidate. There is no ranking; the candidate with the most approval votes wins, ensuring that the winning candidate is acceptable to the largest fraction of the electorate.

Systems that involve ranking candidates may appear, at first blush, more appealing than approval voting. One, the Borda count, awards points to candidates according to their ranking. Another is the Hare system (sometimes called “instant runoff”), in which candidates receiving the fewest first-choice votes are progressively eliminated and their votes transferred to second choices (and lower choices if necessary), until one candidate emerges with a majority. Compared with approval voting, these systems have serious drawbacks. The Borda count fosters “insincere voting” (for example, ranking a second choice at the bottom if that candidate is considered the strongest threat to one’s top choice) and is vulnerable to “irrelevant candidates” who cannot win but can affect the outcome. The Hare system may eliminate a centrist candidate early on and thereby elect one less acceptable to the majority. It also suffers from nonmonotonicity, in which voters, by raising the ranking of a candidate, may actually cause that candidate to lose.

Because approval voting empowers voters to express their political judgments more fully, it should induce more citizens to go to the polls, particularly in those early primary elections that determine the serious contenders. It allows minor-party candidates to receive their proper due, without distorting the verdict that voters render on the major-party candidates. Approval voting should also reduce negative campaigning, encouraging candidates to make more positive appeals to gain support from voters with primary commitments to other candidates. Unlike the Borda and Hare systems, approval voting can be implemented on existing voting machines and is relatively easy for voters to understand.

Is the prospect of approval voting just an academic pipe dream? Not really. It has already been used by professional science and engineering societies totaling over 600,000 members and to elect a secretary-general of the United Nations. It is now being considered by the Task Force on Election Administration of the U.S. National Commission on Electoral Reform. Perhaps best of all, it could be adopted in the United States without any constitutional amendment; any state legislature could enact the enabling statute. Isn’t there a state that would like to make itself the pioneer in electoral reform?

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8

Which of the following identifies a difference between the Borda count and the Hare system as identified in the article?

- A. Only one involves an elimination process based on rankings.
- B. One limits the number of candidates running while the other doesn't.
- C. Only one allows voters to rank candidates in order of approval.
- D. One is easy for voters to understand while the other one isn't.

9

Based on the information in the second paragraph of this article, what is the authors' opinion of the Electoral College?

- A. It is an important tradition that can be maintained with some minor updating.
- B. Although a long-standing system, it is ineffective at choosing a president.
- C. Similar to the Supreme Court, it should not be changed without a constitutional amendment.
- D. It is only as efficient as those representatives who are entrusted to oversee it.

10

What is the authors' purpose in using a question as the final sentence of the article?

- A. It is expressing the authors' hopelessness that states will ever change.
- B. It is asking readers to investigate their state's history of election reform.
- C. It is a rhetorical question, since the authors know a state can't answer.
- D. It is meant to challenge a state to try this particular option.

11

Why might centrist candidates be eliminated early in a Hare system vote?

- A. Their strong opinions would scare off certain factions of voters.
- B. They would have less name familiarity in this type of election.
- C. They are less likely to be given the top ranking by large numbers of voters.
- D. They would no longer have a major-party endorsement to give them an edge.

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The allusions contained in the first paragraph of this selection are included to

- A. show historical examples of cases where ineffective elections have produced bad results.
- B. provide examples of individuals who have applied scientific principles to elections.
- C. contrast the methods used by different countries to elect officials.
- D. reveal that the study of elections has produced award-winning results.

13

The authors ask if approval voting is just an academic pipe dream. They are asking if this process is

- A. workable only in the perfect school setting.
- B. fine in theory but not at all likely to happen.
- C. a diversion that sounds good used to dull public awareness.
- D. a simple way to look at an imaginary problem.

14

The author most likely calls the choices made by voters a “verdict” to imply that voting is

- A. overwhelmed by the burden of legal requirements.
- B. sometimes changed when more evidence is discovered.
- C. limited in that it is controlled by a select few.
- D. an important decision that should be taken seriously.

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THE CHILLY TRUTH ABOUT FROZEN DESSERTS

A helpful explanation about frozen desserts, in all their different forms, gives you the real “skinny” on how to know one from the other. You can be sure about when a frozen dessert is a healthful snack or a decadent delight after reading this excerpt from CONSUMER REPORTS ON HEALTH.

A DELICIOUS, DRIPPY ICE-CREAM CONE may seem the essence of summer fun, but it takes some careful shopping to find one that’s as kind to your waistline as it is to your taste buds. A serving of *Häagen-Dazs* chocolate ice cream, for example, has 18 grams of fat, 270 calories, and the equivalent of 5 teaspoons of sugar, and that’s for a half-cup portion – a mere fraction of what most ice-cream shops dish out.

Fortunately, there are healthier ways to satisfy your urge for something chilly and sweet. Here’s how to choose, and indulge, wisely.

What’s in the Freezer?

Frozen desserts vary in both ingredients and calorie counts, even before the addition of such extras as nuts or chocolate chips. **Ice cream**, made from milk and other dairy ingredients, must contain at least 10 percent milk fat by federal law. **Frozen custard** is essentially ice cream with egg yolks added. **Gelato** has ingredients similar to those in ice cream but it’s more intensely flavored and has a dense, gummy texture. **Sherbets** have less milk fat than ice cream – between 1 and 2 percent – but often contain more sweeteners. Sherbets tend to be fruit-flavored. **Frozen yogurt** is made from cultured (bacteria added) dairy ingredients. There’s no federal milk fat standard for frozen yogurt, though state regulations converge around a 3.25 percent minimum – significantly lower than that for ice cream.

For those seeking nondairy indulgence, there are sorbets and ices, which look similar to sherbets but have no milk ingredients. Other alternatives include frozen desserts made from soy (*Soy Delicious*, *Soy Dream*) or rice (*Rice Dream*). Both have less fat overall than ice cream, and the fat they do have is mostly unsaturated, the healthy kind.

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Lighter Products

Both ice cream and frozen yogurt come in various lower-fat or lower-sugar versions. As defined by government standards, here's what the labels mean:

- **Reduced fat:** at least 25 percent less fat than a typical product (ice cream only).
- **Light:** at least 50 percent less fat or one-third fewer calories (ice cream only).
- **Low fat:** for ice cream, 3 grams or less total fat per serving; for frozen yogurt, generally 0.5 to 2 percent milk fat.
- **Nonfat or fat-free:** for ice cream, 0.5 fat grams or less; for frozen yogurt, generally less than 0.5 percent milk fat.
- **No sugar added:** has no added sugar or sugar-containing products (product may contain natural sugars from milk or other ingredients). May be sweetened with a sugar substitute.

 Frozen Desserts: Brand by Brand 		
BRAND	CALORIES per 1/2 cup	FAT (grams) per 1/2 cup
<i>Baskin-Robbins</i>	250	16
<i>Baskin-Robbins</i> nonfat frozen yogurt	90	0
<i>Baskin-Robbins Truly Free</i> frozen yogurt (soft-serve, no sugar added)	80	0
<i>Ben & Jerry's Vanilla for a Change</i>	240	16
<i>Ben & Jerry's</i> low-fat frozen yogurt	130	1.5
<i>Breyer's Natural</i>	150	9
<i>Breyer's Light</i>	110	3
<i>Dreyer's/Edy's Homemade</i>	130	7
<i>Dreyer's/Edy's Grand Light</i>	100	3.5
<i>Dreyer's/Edy's</i> (no sugar added)	90	3
<i>Häagen-Dazs</i>	270	18
<i>Häagen-Dazs</i> frozen yogurt	200	4.5
<i>Healthy Choice</i>	110	2
<i>Healthy Choice No Sugar Added</i>	100	2

* Unless otherwise noted, all figures are for a one-half-cup serving of vanilla frozen desserts. Note that chocolate and other flavors are likely to contain more calories and fat than their vanilla counterparts.

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Using the chart, select the frozen dessert that contains between 4 and 8 fat grams with the least amount of calories.

- A. *Healthy Choice No Sugar Added*
- B. *Dreyer's/Edy's Homemade*
- C. *Breyer's Light*
- D. *Dreyer's/Edy's No Sugar Added*

16

The author uses shading in certain parts of this chart to

- A. highlight the best buy in ice cream and frozen yogurt.
- B. label the chart title and categories of comparison clearly.
- C. identify the differences between ice cream and frozen yogurt.
- D. encourage the selection of low calorie and low fat frozen desserts.

17

Which two frozen desserts are most similar in both calorie and fat content?

- A. *Breyer's Natural* and *Healthy Choice*
- B. *Ben & Jerry's* low-fat yogurt and *Dreyer's/Edy's Homemade*
- C. *Breyer's Natural* and *Breyer's Light*
- D. *Baskin-Robbins* and *Ben & Jerry's Vanilla for a Change*

18

Sorbets are similar to sherbets EXCEPT for

- A. milk ingredients.
- B. fruit flavors.
- C. artificial sweeteners.
- D. soy or rice versions.

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THE LONG WALK

In this selection, the narrator of John Knowles' classic novel A SEPARATE PEACE revisits a scene from his past – Devon, a school he once attended – and experiences some startling revelations



DEVON WAS BOTH SCHOLARLY AND VERY ATHLETIC, so the playing fields were vast and, except at such a time of year, constantly in use. Now they reached soggyly and emptily away from me, forlorn tennis courts on the left, enormous football and soccer and lacrosse fields in the center, woods on the right, and at the far end a small river detectable from this distance by the few bare trees along its banks. It was such a gray and misty day that I could not see the other side of the river, where there was a small stadium.

I started the long trudge across the fields and had gone some distance before I paid any attention to the soft and muddy ground, which was dooming my city shoes. I didn't stop. Near the center of the fields there were thin lakes of muddy water which I had to make my way around, my unrecognizable shoes making obscene noises as I lifted them out of the mire. With nothing to block it the wind flung wet gusts at me; at any other time I would have felt like a fool slogging through mud and rain, only to look at a tree.

A little fog hung over the river so that as I neared it I felt myself becoming isolated from everything except the river and the few trees beside it. The wind was blowing more steadily here, and I was beginning to feel cold. I never wore a hat, and had forgotten gloves. There were several trees bleakly reaching into the fog. Any one of them might have been the one I was looking for. Unbelievable that there were other trees which looked like it here. It had loomed in my memory as a huge lone spike dominating the river bank, forbidding as an artillery piece, high as the beanstalk. Yet here was a scattered grove of trees, none of them of any particular grandeur.

Moving through the soaked, coarse grass I began to examine each one closely, and finally identified the tree I was looking for by means of certain small scars rising along its trunk, and by a limb extending over the river, and another thinner limb growing near it. This was the tree, and it seemed to me standing there to resemble those men, the giants of

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your childhood, whom you encounter years later and find that they are not merely smaller in relation to your growth, but that they are absolutely smaller, shrunken by age. In this double demotion the old giants have become pygmies while you were looking the other way.

The tree was not only stripped by the cold season, it seemed weary from age, enfeebled, dry. I was thankful, very thankful that I had seen it. So the more things remain the same the more they change after all-- *plus c'est la meme chose, plus ca change*. Nothing endures . . .

Changed, I headed back through the mud. I was drenched; anybody could see it was time to come in out of the rain.

19

What is the double demotion the narrator talks about near the end of this passage?

- A. The tree seems smaller due to its age and the relative size of the narrator.
- B. The tree seems less intimidating because of the time of year and the amount of time that has passed.
- C. The narrator is less impressed by the tree because it is like the others and the memories have faded.
- D. The narrator feels frightened by the tree because it looks like an old giant and he has lost the courage of his youth.

20

Besides the scars on the trunk, what allows the narrator to identify the specific tree he is looking for?

- A. The tree's size compared to the surrounding trees
- B. The tree's age and condition compared to the other trees
- C. The position of two branches relative to the river
- D. The tree's dominating position on the riverbank

21

Which statement signifies the narrator's FIRST realization that his childhood memories may not have been completely accurate?

- A. "The wind was blowing more steadily here, and I was beginning to feel cold."
- B. "Unbelievable that there were other trees which looked like it here."
- C. "I began to examine each one closely, and finally identified the tree I was looking for . . ."
- D. "In this double demotion the old giants have become pygmies while you were looking the other way."

22

In the complete novel, there is a break that follows the short excerpt you see here and the next new paragraph starts with the line, “The tree was tremendous, an irate, steely black steeple beside the river. . . ” Based on the information included here, what most likely has occurred in the story?

- A. The narrator has changed his mind about the tree’s appearance.
- B. A different character is speaking from the other side of the tree.
- C. The narrator sees the real tree he is looking for further down the river.
- D. The scene has shifted to an earlier time in the narrator’s memory.

23

Which of the following literary devices is used most to provide insight into the narrator’s emotional reaction to the tree?

- A. Similes
- B. Hyperbole
- C. Allusion
- D. Personification

24

The author uses the word trudge rather than walk in this passage to indicate that his crossing is

- A. more like a dream than like reality.
- B. accelerated by his desire to know the truth.
- C. more strenuous because of his increased age.
- D. both physically and emotionally difficult.

FIVE PARAGRAPHS AND FAIRY TALES

In these excerpts from a longer selection, Deborah M. Dear, a high school teacher, shares her thoughts about a controversial and widely-used essay form.

THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS by Robert Munsch is a charming children’s picture book. Part of its charm lies in its ability to anticipate the conventions of the fairy tale genre, creating expectations for readers, then pushing the boundaries of the genre in novel ways. As the story moves outside traditional expectations with its unexpected reversals (the princess fights the dragon to save the prince, and the fight is more mental trickery than physical battle), the boundaries of the genre are muddied, making my secondary students smile when I read to them. But it

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is the ending that surprises them most. In fairy tales, the happily-ever-after ending is so strongly expected that it becomes a cliché. The students expect it, even as they don't want it, which is why they are so tickled at the nontraditional ending. The story not only doesn't end the way they expect, but the ending is so totally like their lives, tiptoeing as it does over the appearance-versus-reality conflict they see all around them, but they laugh out loud. "You look like a real prince, but you are a bum." The ending truly delights them.

For many of our students, writing for school is a dry, formulaic process. *The Paper Bag Princess* demonstrates a strategy we can teach students to help them engage in academic writing more personally and inventively.

Genre Theory

It has been suggested that one way to make writing interesting is to create the expectations of the genre in the mind of the reader and then tweak one or two of these aspects or boundaries a little, just enough to surprise and delight. Genre theory provides a way to do that, even with genres as tired as the five-paragraph essay. Underlying the theory is the concept that types of writing develop in response to particular social context, "that genres are basically social actions and only incidentally textual forms" (Cooper 26). This theory itself is controversial; it could, if applied without thought, mean a return to a focus on forms and product over process. Opponents say it is a return to the traditional methods and interests of writing, a movement away from empowering the individual. Supporters claim it is just the opposite – a more logical way to empower our students, to give them the ability to write in ways that will help them be successful in the social situations in which they'll find themselves. The application of genre theory is a process because it asks students to analyze the social context and the needs that must be addressed by writing within that social context. I'm proposing a way to approach with a new eye that we often must do as teachers, a way to bridge the present and the future needs of our students through mixing genres.

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The Five Paragraph Essay

The five paragraph essay form has an unsavory reputation in some corners of the profession, but, quite frankly, it still lives on in classrooms – and probably for good reasons – one being that, in some states, students need to know this form to score well on state writing assessments. Additionally, teachers in other content areas expect our students to understand and use the five paragraph format when they write for their courses. Why does the form persist in so many areas? Because it is easy to teach – it’s a formula. And it’s easy to grade. It’s fast. It’s predictable. The problem is that it’s also often boring, both to write and to read. Enter genre theory. Enter the lessons of *The Paper Bag Princess*.

My students understand the concept of dressing to fit the occasion. They wouldn’t consider wearing pajamas or a yellow rain slicker to the prom. Neither would they wear a formal dress or a tuxedo to play soccer. In a similar way, I teach them, they will encounter academic situations where five paragraph essays are the expected form. Hopefully, they’ll also encounter situations where other forms are possible – and I try to expose them to those forms as well so the students are prepared to make the appropriate choice for each situation. Understanding various contexts and how to write within them really gives our students more options, as Devitt points out: “Only when we understand genres as both constraint and choice, both regularity and chaos, both inhibiting and enabling will we be able to help students use the power of genres critically and effectively. In such power is individual freedom” (54). Those of us who are obliged to teach five paragraph essays (for whatever reasons) can learn to see beyond the limitations of the form to what else it could be.

Muddying Boundaries

To begin, students must be familiar with the characteristics of the five paragraph essay, just as they must know the characteristics of a fairy tale in order to be intrigued by the interesting ways Munsch plays with those characteristics in his book. They need to comprehend the inverted triangle introduction with the thesis statement at the end. They need to understand body paragraphs, with topic sentences linking the idea of the paragraph to the theses, followed by (at least) three objective examples/facts/quotes and their explanatory

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commentary. Finally, they need to know the summary conclusion.

Once students know how to create the expectations of a genre, how can they play with those expectations a little to create lively writing that reveals more individual voice? One way is to start off with mixed genres, keeping the form generally intact. For instance, we often suggest an anecdote as a possible beginning to the introductory paragraph. Why not make it a personal narrative? Does it have to be short? Can students begin the paper with a poem? How about a news brief or memo? What about supporting evidence? Does it always have to be objective? Can it be creative? Can it be another genre altogether? Tobin says, “Essays should reflect the way we think and experience the world. And the fact is, we often think and experience the world in a multidimensional, multivoiced way” (47). Using one of my student’s five paragraph essays, I showed how students could mix genres, stretching the boundaries of what is expected.

This mixing of genres can help our students push the boundaries of what is expected of them in five-paragraph essays. Who says we can’t have creative writing mixed in, that we can’t mix in other genres like lists, want ads, dialogues, short stories, or diaries as evidence of the point we are trying to make? We are seeing more and more of this mixing of genres.

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If you have the “ability to anticipate the conventions of the fairy tale genre,” you can

- A. expand the length and quality of the writing.
- B. expect the usual attributes of the form.
- C. create ways to make the tale more real.
- D. find symbolic connections between the writing and ordinary situations.

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The author believes all of the following about the five paragraph essay EXCEPT

- A. it is a very original form of writing.
- B. it is often expected by teachers.
- C. it can be effective.
- D. it is efficient.

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Which statement **BEST** describes the author's thoughts on the five paragraph essay?

- A. It is a preferred form for school writing and should be taught exclusively.
- B. It is so boring and dry that teachers and students would do well to avoid it as much as possible.
- C. It is a form that works well unless writers need to blend it with other genres.
- D. It is a useful form with pitfalls which can be overcome.

28

The author uses a quotation from Devitt to

- A. provide a rationale for overemphasis of the five paragraph essay in writing instruction.
- B. create a counter view which she can then refute.
- C. define the parameters of five paragraph writing.
- D. lend support for her own thesis about her writing curriculum.

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Near the end of the selection, the author poses a series of questions. She does this

- A. in order to set up a contrast with Tobin's views.
- B. to make suggestions and to engage readers.
- C. so that readers will realize that while she is very knowledgeable, she does not have all the answers.
- D. to cause readers to go back and reread portions of the essay to reinforce their own knowledge.

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Based in the information in this selection, which statement is **NOT** true about the genre theory controversy?

- A. The improper application of the theory could put too much emphasis on following forms.
- B. The opponents believe the theory is too complex and confusing to be useful to students.
- C. The theory empowers students by giving them options in approaching particular awareness and purposes.
- D. Some fear the theory moves away from the benefits of the writing process which empowers the individual.

**High School Reading/Literature
SAMPLE TEST KEY 2009-1011**

Item	Key	Score Reporting Category
1	B	Vocabulary
2	D	Demonstrate General Understanding
3	D	Develop an Interpretation
4	C	Develop an Interpretation
5	C	Examine Content/Structure Literary Text
6	C	Demonstrate General Understanding
7	B	Examine Content/Structure Literary Text
8	A	Demonstrate General Understanding
9	B	Develop an Interpretation
10	D	Develop an Interpretation
11	C	Develop an Interpretation
12	B	Examine Content/Structure Informational Text
13	B	Vocabulary
14	D	Vocabulary
15	B	Read to Perform a Task
16	B	Read to Perform a Task
17	D	Vocabulary
18	A	Demonstrate General Understanding
19	A	Vocabulary
20	C	Demonstrate General Understanding
21	B	Demonstrate General Understanding
22	D	Develop an Interpretation
23	D	Examine Content/Structure Literary Text
24	D	Vocabulary
25	B	Vocabulary
26	A	Demonstrate General Understanding
27	D	Develop an Interpretation
28	D	Examine Content/Structure Informational Text
29	B	Examine Content/Structure Informational Text
30	B	Develop an Interpretation

CONVERTING TO A RIT SCORE			
Number correct	RIT Score	Number Correct	RIT Score
1	198.1	16	235.3
2	205.5	17	236.8*
3	210.1	18	238.3
4	213.5	19	239.9
5	216.2	20	241.5
6	218.6	21	243.2
7	220.7	22	245.0
8	222.6	23	247.0
9	224.4	24	249.1**
10	226.1	25	251.6
11	227.7	26	254.4
12	229.3	27	257.8
13	230.8	28	262.5
14	232.3	29	270.0
15	233.8	30	277.2
*Likely to meet the high school standard		**Likely to exceed the high school standard	

Oregon Reading/Literature Sample Test

Use number 2 pencil.
Do NOT use ink or ball point pen.
Make heavy dark marks that completely fill the circle.
Erase completely any marks you wish to change.

Name of Student _____

Name of Teacher _____

Name of School _____

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 11 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 21 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 2 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 12 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 22 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 3 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 13 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 23 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 4 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 14 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 24 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 5 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 15 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 25 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 6 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 16 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 26 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 7 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 17 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 27 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 8 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 18 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 28 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 9 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 19 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 29 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |
| 10 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 20 | (A) (B) (C) (D) | 30 | (A) (B) (C) (D) |

Oregon Department of Education

255 Capitol St NE, Salem, Oregon 97310 (503) 947-5600