Recommended
Achievement Standards

Reading

• Grades 3, 5, 8, 10

Oregon Department of Education
Office of Assessment and Information Services
January 2007
Reading/Literature Achievement Standards

This booklet provides sample test items for the newly recommended Achievement Standards in Reading/Literature. They represent the types of items students would need to be able to answer correctly in order to reach the “cut score” for meeting the standard at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10. Similar items may be found on sample tests for the other grade levels at http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=226

The State Board of Education will receive public input on the recommended Achievement Standards prior to making a decision to adopt them at the March State Board Meeting.

Recommendations for Reading are as follows:

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You can view a video about the process for developing the Recommended Achievement Standards, get more information about other subject areas, and fill out a survey with your comments for the State Board of Education by going to http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?id=849
In this story you will meet a little boy named Zinkoff who loves to play soccer...whether his teammates like it or not!

SOCCER IS Zinkoff’s kind of game.
Baseball has too much waiting and too many straight lines.
Shooting a basketball demands precision. Football is fun only for the ball carrier.

But soccer is free-for-all, as haphazard and slapdash as Zinkoff himself. He plays in the Peewee League in the autumn of his seventh year. His team is the Titans. Every Saturday morning he’s the first one there, kicking pinecones around the field until the coaches show up.

Once the game begins, Zinkoff never stops running. He zigs and zags after the checkered ball like a fox after a field mouse— except he hardly ever catches up to it. Someone else always seems to reach it first. Zinkoff is forever swinging his foot at the ball a half second after it goes past him. He winds up kicking the shins, ankles and rear ends of the other players. Twice he’s kicked the referee. Once, somehow, he kicked himself. His teammates rub their bruises and call him “Wild Foot.”

To Zinkoff a net is a net. He doesn’t much care which team the net belongs to. Several times during the season he kicks the ball at the wrong goal. Fortunately, he always misses.

The first game is against the Ramblers. When it’s over, Zinkoff jumps up and down and pumps his fists as he has seen athletes do and yells “Yahoo!” He does not notice that he is the only Titan cheering. “What are you so happy for?” says Robert, one of his teammates. “We lost.”
1
Zinkoff is “forever swinging his foot at the ball a half second after it goes past him.”
When used in this context, forever means
   A. energetically.
   B. happily.
   C. always.*
   D. sometimes.

2
Which sport does Zinkoff think has “too much waiting”?  
   A. Basketball
   B. Baseball*
   C. Football
   D. Soccer

3
What does Zinkoff do before each game?  
   A. Kicks pinecones around the field*
   B. Warms up by stretching and running laps
   C. Practices scoring goals
   D. Kicks the ball back and forth with his teammates

4
Why do you think Zinkoff jumps up and down and cheers at the end of the game?  
   A. He is happy that he doesn’t have to play anymore.
   B. He is happy because he just had a lot of fun.*
   C. He is cheering for the other team.
   D. He is happy because he scored a goal.
ONE SUMMER EVENING, my family and I were sprawled on the living room couch reading, when my daughter Molly looked up and yelped in surprise. A six-inch-long tan critter with many legs—a centipede—rushed across the carpet toward us. I ran to the kitchen, grabbed a glass, and quickly put it over our visitor. Under the glass, the centipede raced in a circle, its 40 or so legs rippling in perfect rhythm.

The centipede’s name means “one hundred feet” in Latin. Actually, centipedes can sport as many as 364 feet or as few as 30.

Centipedes are often confused with millipedes, but the two are quite different. Both are arthropods—critters with externally jointed skeletons like insects, crabs, and shrimp, but centipedes’ long, many-segmented bodies are flattened, while millipedes’ bodies are rounded and wormlike. Centipedes sprout one pair of legs per body segment; millipedes have two pairs. Even their diets differ. Millipedes graze on decaying plant stems and leaves; centipedes eat meat.

If you live in the United States, Mexico, or southern Canada, you probably share your house and neighborhood with centipedes. Look in damp, dark habitats such as in basements or cellar corners, around drainpipes, or under rocks and rotting logs. Search at night with a flashlight. Centipedes don’t like light, so they may be hard to find, but they’re all around. Keep your eyes peeled for scurrying movements.

The kind you’ll most likely find are house centipedes, two inch-long critters with 30 or so long, slender legs. Their slim bodies are brown with black stripes running from end to end. Even their legs sport black “armbands.” North American centipedes are drably colored and blend into the darkness. In the tropics, centipedes shout their presence in vivid shades of red, orange, green, and violet.

1
The story states that centipedes are
A. round and short.
B. round and long.
C. flat and short.
D. flat and long.*
2
A centipede would most likely eat a piece of
   A. chicken.*
   B. carrot.
   C. lettuce.
   D. bread.

3
Why did the author most likely write this passage?
   A. To warn people about centipedes
   B. To educate people about centipedes*
   C. To show how to catch centipedes
   D. To compare centipedes with other insects

4
In the first paragraph, the author tells a true story. She does this to
   A. explain that she has a daughter.
   B. show you how to catch a centipede.
   C. teach the reader about bugs.
   D. grab the reader’s attention.*

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**AFTER CONVERSATION**

“After Conversation” is adapted by Paula Fox from her book *One-Eyed Cat*.

NED WENT IN TO SEE HIS MOTHER ALMOST EVERY DAY, even if it was only for a minute or two. At first he would have a conversation with her that was not so different from the ones he had with other grownups—his teacher, Miss Jefferson, or members of his father’s congregation. If he could spend a good long time with her, the conversation would change. He would get a little stool and take it next to the wheelchair and sit down on it. He would tell her what he had done that day, what he had seen, and even what he had thought. That was what she seemed most interested in.
When he brought her wildflowers in the spring and summer, she told him the names of each one. If he found an odd stone, she could name what minerals were in it. If he described a bird, she could sometimes tell him its name. When that was done, and the flowers had been put aside with the stone, she would ask him what he thought about.

“What’s outside of everything?” he asked her once.

“Outside the earth?”

“I mean the sky. What’s outside of the sky and the stars?”

“No one knows,” she said.

“There must be something,” he said. “There can’t be nothing, can there?”

“The thought of it is too strange to fit inside my brain,” she said. “Maybe it is like the set of wooden dolls your uncle brought you back from Hungary when you were little. Do you remember? There must have been ten of them, each fitting inside another until the smallest one, which was no bigger than your fingernail. In the universe, perhaps the dolls go on forever, getting larger and larger.”

Ned always knew when his mother was getting tired. He would see a slight tightening of a muscle in her cheek that was as soft as the flannel of his oldest pajamas. There was something clothlike about her skin. It made him sad for a moment, though he didn’t know why.

He didn’t often think of his mother as an invalid. But when he went to visit a school friend or to spend an afternoon with a boy from Sunday school, he was surprised at the great noise and thundering in the house, at his friend’s shouting, “Mom!” and banging doors and slamming windows and thumping up and down stairs. It was so different at home. Ned couldn’t remember when he had learned to walk softly. He was pretty sure no one could make less noise than he did. If he brought someone home to play with—that did not happen often—they stayed outside or, if it was raining, on the porch.

“When did you get sick?” Ned asked his mother once when the conversation part was finished and they were really talking. He had just touched the skirt of her dress; she always wore bright, pretty dresses.

“When you were about five years old,” she had answered. “But I think the sickness had been coming on for a long while.”

“Before that could you run fast?”

“Yes, I could run and run. And I rode my horse, Cosmo. I could pick you up and swing you in the air.”

“Then—” he began.

His mother opened her eyes and turned to look at him.

“Then the ax fell,” she said.

The ax fell. He repeated the words to himself now. She had been like a tree, he thought, and then was cut down.
1
The author most likely includes details like “cheeks . . . as soft as flannel,” “touched the skirt of her dress” and “learned to walk softly” to show
   A. her use of literary devices.
   B. how sad his life had become.
   C. the way Ned’s mother looked.
   D. the boy’s deep feelings for his mother.*

2
According to this passage, how does Ned’s life differ most from that of his friends?
   A. He never has friends over.
   B. He has to be quiet at home.*
   C. He has discussions with his mother.
   D. His mother knows the names of wildflowers.

3
Ned most likely repeats “the ax fell” to himself because
   A. their talk is over.
   B. he’d never heard this before.
   C. of the way his mother says it.
   D. it makes him understand something.*

4
The author most likely gave this selection the title After Conversation because it
   A. tells what Ned does after he’s finished talking to his mother.
   B. shows the characters’ thoughts after they have finished talking.
   C. focuses on true communication after less important matters are discussed.*
   D. takes place after a particular conversation between the main characters.
Today’s media is often accused of “playing with the facts” to lure viewers and readers to watch programs or read magazines. This article, which appeared in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN magazine, gives author Michael Shermer’s view of a program shown on a Fox television broadcast.

The price of liberty is, in addition to eternal vigilance, eternal patience with the vacuous blather occasionally expressed from behind the shield of free speech. It is a cost worth bearing, but it does become exasperating, as when the Fox Broadcasting Company aired its highly advertised special “Conspiracy Theory: Did We Land on the Moon?” NASA, viewers were told, faked the Apollo missions on a movie set.

Such flummery should not warrant a response, but in a free society, skeptics are the watchdogs against irrationalism—the consumer advocates of ideas.

Debunking is not simply the divestment of bunk; its utility is in offering a better alternative, along with a lesson on how thinking goes wrong. The Fox show is a case study, starting with its disclaimer: “The following program deals with a controversial subject. The theories expressed are not the only possible explanation. Viewers are invited to make a judgment based on all available information.” That information, of course, was not provided, so let’s refute Fox’s argument point by point in case the statistic at the top of the show—that 20 percent of Americans believe we never went to the moon—is accurate.

Claim: Shadows in the photographs taken on the moon reveal two sources of light. Given that the sun is the only source of light in the sky, the extra “fill” light must come from studio spotlights. Answer: Setting aside the inane assumption that NASA and its co-conspirators were too incogitant to have thought of this, there are actually three sources of light: the sun, the Earth (reflecting the sun) and the moon itself, which acts as a powerful reflector, particularly when you are standing on it.

Claim: The American flag was observed “waving” in the airless environment of the moon. Answer: The flag waved only while the astronaut fiddled with it.

Claim: No blast crater is evident underneath the Lunar Excursion Module (LEM). Answer: The moon is covered by only a couple of inches of dust, beneath which is a solid surface that would not be affected by the blast of the engine.

Claim: When the top half of the LEM took off from the moon, there was no visible rocket exhaust. The LEM instead leaped off its base as though yanked up by cables. Answer: First, the footage clearly shows that there was quite a blast, as dust and other
particles go flying. Second, without an oxygen-rich atmosphere, there is no fuel to generate a rocket-nozzle flame tail.

Claim: The LEM simulator used by astronauts for practice was obviously unstable—Neil Armstrong barely escaped with his life when his simulator crashed. The real LEM was much larger and heavier and thus impossible to land. Answer: Practice makes perfect, and these guys practiced. A bicycle is inherently unstable, too, until you learn to ride it. Also, the moon’s gravity is only one sixth that of the Earth’s, so the LEM’s weight was less destabilizing.

Claim: No stars show in the sky in the photographs and films from the moon. Answer: Stars don’t routinely appear in photography shot on the earth, either. They are simply too faint. To shoot stars in the night sky, even on the moon, you need to use long exposures.

The no-moonie mongers go on and on in this vein, weaving narratives that include the “murder” of astronauts and pilots in accidents, including Gus Grissom in the Apollo I fire before he was about to go public with the hoax. Like most people with conspiracy theories, the leading naysayers have no positive supporting evidence, only allegations of cover-ups. I once asked G. Gordon Liddy (who should know) about conspiracies. He quoted Poor Richard’s Almanack: “Three people can keep a secret if two of them are dead.” To think that thousands of NASA scientists would keep their mouths shut for years is risible rubbish.

1

Based on the information in the article, what does the word Flapdoodle in the title most likely mean?

A. Mistake  
B. Controversy  
C. Information  
D. Nonsense*

2

“Flummery” is a type of sweet dessert or soft jelly. Its use in the passage is an example of

A. irony to emphasize the arguments in opposition to Fox’s claims.  
B. personification of a substance not usually given human characteristics.  
C. a metaphor for the appeal and lack of substance of Fox’s program.*  
D. a simile comparing the Fox program to other conspiracy shows.
According to the author, Michael Shermer, the role of skeptics is

A. “...offering a better alternative, along with a lesson on how thinking goes wrong.”
B. to have “patience with the vacuous blather occasionally expressed from behind the shield of free speech.”
C. to be “the watchdogs against irrationalism—the consumer advocates of ideas.”*
D. to “make a judgment based on all available information.”

What is the author’s main issue with the claims made by the Fox program?

A. They violate the Constitutional right to free speech.
B. They fail to take into account alternate explanations.*
C. They make too many claims to explore each one fully.
D. They did not allow NASA to respond during the program.