

# HSA

Maryland High School  
Assessment



# English

Public Release 2005

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*Session* **1**

### Sample A

Read these sentences from the story.

But when I returned to class, I slipped the jacket on and shivered until I was warm. I sat on my hands, heating them up, while my teeth chattered like a cup of crooked dice.

Which of these words is used as a modifier in these sentences?

- A slipped
- B shivered
- C chattered
- D crooked

### Sample B

Read the following sentences from a student summary of "The Tree."

1. The tree is old and has a scar.
2. Father wants to move the tree.
3. The tree is planted in sandy soil.

Which of these most effectively combines the ideas into one sentence?

- F Planted in sandy soil, Father wants to move the old, scarred tree.
- G The old, scarred tree is planted in sandy soil, which Father wants to move.
- H Father wants to move the old, scarred tree, which is planted in sandy soil.
- J The old tree has a scar and is planted in sandy soil so Father wants to move it.



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# Directions

For Number 1, read the prompt below. Follow the directions in the prompt for writing your essay.

**1**  
**ECR**

Write a well-organized essay about one personal quality you most admire in a parent or another adult you know. Develop your ideas with appropriate details about the person you select and how he or she demonstrates the quality you admire. Be sure that your essay is fully developed, that it is logically organized, and that your choice of words clearly describes your thoughts.

Use the space on page \_\_\_ in your Answer Book for planning your response. Then write your essay on the lines on pages \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.



## Directions

Yuri is writing an article for the school paper about science in the classroom. The draft of Yuri's article requires revisions and edits. Read the draft. Then answer Numbers 2 through 6.

### The JASON Project

**1** The movie *Titanic* and the expeditions to explore the ship's remains took thousands of viewers into the depths of the ocean. **2** After seeing the high-tech equipment used to recover treasures from the sunken ship, students from around the world wrote letters to expedition leader Dr. Robert Ballard, asking to accompany him on an adventure. **3** He couldn't take the students on his ship, but he did the next best thing: he created the JASON Project to bring the thrill of discovery to millions of students worldwide. **4** The project offers students in grades 4 through 9 opportunities to explore the world through videos, interactive Internet programming, and live satellite broadcasts.

**5** The JASON Project named after the Greek hero Jason. **6** The seas were first sailed by Jason, the first great explorer, according to ancient myths. **7** Dr. Ballard chose the name Jason because he sees his project as one that will also make great explorations. **8** The JASON Project is training a new generation of explorers by developing their skills in science, technology, math, geography, and language arts.

**9** Using the curriculum and materials of the JASON Project, students can complete many activities during the school year. **10** For example, they can use really great equipment, send e-mail to lots of researchers, and conduct all sorts of investigations. **11** At the end of a school year, one student said, "I like science now, its not just about studying fungi with teachers in white coats." **12** The sunken ships of the JASON Project have raised students' curiosity. **13** They now want to know about the bottom of the sea plus the world above it.

**2** Which of these is the clearest and most effective way to revise Sentence 6?

- F According to ancient myths, Jason was the first great explorer to sail the seas.
- G The first great explorer to sail the seas was the subject of ancient myths, and his name was Jason.
- H Being the first great explorer, Jason, he sailed the seas according to ancient myths.
- J Jason, according to ancient myths, was the first great explorer to sail the seas and explore them too.

**3** Read Sentence 11 from Yuri's draft.

At the end of a school year, one student said, "I like science now, its not just about studying fungi with teachers in white coats."

What is the correct way to edit the underlined part of Sentence 11.

- A now; it's
- B now, it's
- C now; its
- D Best as it is

**4** Which of these most effectively combines the ideas in Sentences 12 and 13 into one sentence?

- F The sunken ships of the JASON Project have raised students' curiosity about the world above and the bottom of the sea.
- G The sunken ships of the JASON Project have raised students' curiosity about the bottom of the sea, as well as the world above it.
- H The sunken ships of the JASON Project have raised students' curiosity, and now they are curious about the bottom of the sea in addition to the world above it.
- J The sunken ships of the JASON Project have raised students' curiosity, and it is the bottom of the sea, as well as the world above it, that they want to know more about now.

**5** Yuri found the information below in a language handbook.

Avoid vague words and phrases that are not exact enough to be effective in writing.

**According to this information, which sentence should be revised?**

- A Sentence 3
- B Sentence 4
- C Sentence 7
- D Sentence 10



**6** Which of these should be revised to correct an incomplete sentence?

- F The movie *Titanic* and the expeditions to explore the ship's remains took thousands of viewers into depths of the ocean.
- G The JASON Project named after the Greek hero Jason.
- H The JASON Project is training a new generation of explorers by developing their skills in science, technology, math, geography, and language arts.
- J Using the curriculum and materials of the JASON Project, students can complete many activities during the school year.

## Directions

Read the essay "Starwalking with Sarah." Then answer Numbers 7 through 13.



*One of the worst mistakes we can make in life is not to be alive enough, aware enough, of the magic in simple things. My daughter, Sarah, now a teenager, reminded me of that lesson a few years ago and I hope I'll never forget.*

*by Steve Pollick*

It is a midwinter's Sunday night, sometime after supper, and I find myself walking slowly on a country lane near home, pondering this mighty question:

"Daddy, is there really a sheriff's star?"

The question comes from a soft, eight-year-old voice connected invisibly to a small, bemitted hand that grasps my big, bare hand. I have to listen closely to catch all the words, some of which are directed at boot-tops.

Sarah Katherine is starwalking with her Dad.

Her voice is barely audible over the shuffling and padding of our footsteps in the rural quiet, a chill westerly breeze behind us. "The kids at school all draw

their stars like a sheriff's star, and they say there's a real one in the sky," she says.

Now I cannot say for sure that there is no sheriff's star in the sky. An answer to that question is not listed in my Dad's Book of Astronomy for Kids. And I certainly don't know everything, despite what Sarah Katherine may think. But I tell her that I don't think there is such a so-named star.

You have to be prepared for that sort of inquiry when you dare to say, "I'm going for a nightwalk; anyone want to come with me?"

The instant race of light footsteps across the kitchen floor above my head told me that someone was eager to

go. Sarah. After a few minutes spent wrestling with her leggings, coat, stocking cap, mittens, and scarf, we set out.

“Daddy, this is funner than sittin’ around the house,” Sarah says, talking faster than we are walking.

“I hear the wind,” she adds quickly. It is moaning softly through the high-voltage lines well overhead. The lines march across the neighbors’ farms and tower over the local country lanes on tall, gangly steel skeletons and mighty wooden poles.

We also hear the buzzing of supercharged electricity as it bolts through the power lines. We crane our necks far back to see the crossarms and the insulators—way, way up there, almost to the stars.

“Daddy, are we going as far as Spooky Tree?” Yes, to Spooky Tree and beyond.

Spooky Tree, so named by Sarah, is a gnarly old black walnut. It is the sole survivor of its kind along this otherwise barren stretch of farm lane. Its twisted, weather-beaten limbs stand out starkly in the night light. I’ve told Halloween stories around its trunk.

It is a perfect night, the starry pinpoint sparkles of diamonds dotting a velvet sky. The air is cold—crisply, not uncomfortably, so. Sarah is well bundled. Her rubber bootheels drag on the macadam of the lane—clop, clop, clop.

Two small mittens surround my cold hand. “I’ll keep your hands warm, Daddy.”

Presently I begin a primer lesson on celestial navigation. I point out the Big Dipper.

“See?” I say, dropping to one knee and using my favorite walking stick, a wrinkly old piece of tree root from Pennsylvania, as a pointer. “Those stars there. It’s like a big pot with a long crooked handle. See how they go?” More pointing and gesturing. Our eyes by now are well attuned to the starlit dark.

“And those two stars at the front edge of the pot,” I say, “they point right up at the North Star—right there! That’s North. And the North Star is the last star in the handle of the Little Dipper. It’s like a small pot. See how it pours into the big pot?”

“Uh-huh, Daddy. I see it.” We walk on.

“Can we keep walking longer, Daddy?”

“Daddy, I like to make things out of the stars by connecting them.” So have adults, I tell her.

We see Orion, the Hunter, right overhead in the southern sky. Orion’s great Belt is easy to pick out, as is the tip of his sword and his hunting bow. Below and left is Sirius, the Dog Star. Sirius is Orion’s dog.

“Like Blondie is our dog, Daddy?” Yes, sort of.

We see the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades, and I talk about the lost sister in the myth. Sarah doesn't understand myths, but she feels bad for the lost "girl."

We head for the bridge over Muskellunge Creek by Longanbach Farm. We call it the "crick," not "creek."

The creekwater twinkles in the waxing, three-quarter moon and chuckles as it pours over the rocks. Its animation is inspirational: "Moonsparkles on the water, Daddy. See them?"

We check the water on both sides of the bridge. A mild spell has thawed the water and the creek flows in good health.

Presently, a light haze drifts in under the moon, forming a big ring in the moonlight.

I point out Jupiter and Mars, and how they follow about the same path as the sun across the sky. The two planets are both inside the ring around the moon. I tell how the ring means wet weather is coming. My prediction is accepted as if gospel. Weather forecasters should have it so good.

We retrace our way back toward home, but Sarah, vowing she's not cold, asks to continue. "Just a little more, Daddy."

We head down toward "our bridge," which crosses the Muskellunge. The haze has slipped away on the wind and the moonlight again is sharply bright. Our shadows, cast down from bridge

to water, stand out starkly. We see more moonsparkles.

As we turn for home, I see—make that feel—a shadow cross our path. I look up and back quickly.

"Sarah, look!" I whisper hoarsely. She turns and sees the dark form of a great bird gliding silently down the creek-bottom, guided as precisely along the meanders of the creek as if it were on rails.

It is a great horned owl, a flying tiger, out on a night hunt.

I tell Sarah how the big owl has specially designed feathers, which allow it to glide in perfect silence and catch stuff, like mice, to eat. My pupil drinks it in, her mitten tightening its grip.

The talk winds down. There is much for each of us to absorb. I find myself thinking of other starwalks, especially one when I took Sarah's older brothers, Andy and Aaron, out another winter night years ago.

Aaron must have been about 37 three then. He was too small to negotiate the deep-plowed furrows on the Dickman Farm, so I ended up carrying him on my shoulders. This was a cross-country starwalk to a special place, another "spooky tree"—a big old cottonwood, another lone sentinel of the farmland.

I especially remember telling the boys to keep the flashlight turned off, to let them learn how well their eyes can see at night if given the chance. I remember,



too, taking them right up to the old tree, letting them finger the rough bark and search and probe its texture with their fingers.

The next spring, a man with a bulldozer pushed the old tree to the ground. Then he cut it up and burned it to ashes, its history gone up in so much smoke. I hope that tree will live in the boys' memories as it has in mine.

My reverie is broken with Blondie's barking. Her incredible dog ears have caught the clapping of our feet on the road, and she lets Sarah and me know she's unhappy that she wasn't asked along.

Too soon, our walk is over. But I'll come to find out later that a starfire was

lit this night in a little girl. She talked for days about our starwalk, and now regularly asks to go again.

By chance, after my young starwalker was asleep, I happened on a passage from Antoine de Saint Exupery's classic, *The Little Prince*. For me, it was a wonderful coincidence, a perfect ending to a perfect evening.

"All men have the stars," the passage went, "but they are not the same things for different people. For some, who are travelers, the stars are guides. For others they are no more than little lights in the sky. For others, who are scholars, they are problems . . . You—you alone—have the stars as no one else has them."

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**7** After reading this essay, a reader would most likely conclude that parents should

- A take walks to teach their children about night animals
- B take an active role in preserving nature for their children's enjoyment
- C encourage their children to have a sense of wonder about the world
- D make sure their children know the names of the stars and constellations

**8** Which word best describes the tone of this essay?

- F mischievous
- G mysterious
- H scientific
- J tender

**9** Read this sentence from paragraph 37 of the essay.

He was too small to negotiate the deep-plowed furrows on the Dickman Farm, so I ended up carrying him on my shoulders.

In this sentence, *to negotiate* means

- A to plant
- B to arrange
- C to move through
- D to bargain with

**10** Which word best describes the father in “Starwalking with Sarah”?

- F cautious
- G detached
- H humorous
- J instructive

**11** Which description from the essay best gives life-like qualities to what the father and daughter see?

- A It is a midwinter’s Sunday night, sometime after supper, and I find myself walking slowly on a country lane near home. . .
- B It is a perfect night, the starry pinpoint sparkles of diamonds dotting a velvet sky.
- C The creekwater twinkles in the waxing, three-quarter moon and chuckles as it pours over the rocks.
- D Presently, a light haze drifts in under the moon, forming a big ring in the moonlight.



**12** Which of these statements best expresses a theme of “Starwalking with Sarah”?

- F Learning about nature requires risk.
- G Modern life limits our interaction with nature.
- H Experiencing nature provides personal fulfillment.
- J Scientific knowledge is needed to understand nature.

**13** Read these sentences from a student’s summary of the essay.

1. A father takes a walk through the countryside.
2. His daughter walks with him.
3. The winter evening is cold and crisp.
4. The stars overhead shine brilliantly.

Which pair of sentences most effectively combines the ideas of the four sentences?

- A Coldly and crisply on a winter evening, a father and daughter walk through the countryside. Overhead, stars shine brilliantly.
- B On a cold, crisp winter evening, a father and daughter take a walk through the countryside. The stars shine brilliantly overhead.
- C The countryside on a winter evening is cold and crisp with the stars overhead shining brilliantly. A father and his daughter take a walk.
- D A father and daughter walk through the countryside. On a winter evening that is cold and crisp, the stars are overhead and shining brilliantly.

**D**irections

Read the poem "Mussels in April." Then answer Numbers 14 and 15.



# MUSSELS<sup>1</sup> IN APRIL

by Peter Neumeyer

"All months with R,"<sup>2</sup> my father said

So

—come April, wearing slip-proof Keds

we'd leap the rocks,

start up the squawking gulls,

crouch, wrench, twist the bearded blueblack treasures  
streaked with silver. 5

Once home, we'd turn the pail, discard the open,

simmer in seaweed and their own salt tears

those sealed mysteries till they gapped

and through the smallest slit, their golden eyes  
would squint. 10

These family moments—cold outings, simmering pots,

scraped fingers, salty steam, the clickclack shells—

these rituals to my children I'll pass on;

and they'll do likewise when I'm gone. 15

<sup>1</sup> **Mussels:** soft-bodied water animal that is protected by its shell; saltwater mussels live in shallow coastal waters, where they attach themselves to rocks

<sup>2</sup> **"All months with R":** a saying that means it is safe to eat shellfish during the cooler months with names containing an "R" (September through April)

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- 14** In line 10, the speaker most likely refers to the mussels as “sealed mysteries” to
- F convey a sense of wonder about the experience
  - G express regret that rituals of childhood are over
  - H suggest that collecting the mussels is tiring work
  - J emphasize how well the mussels are hidden in the rocks

- 15** In line 7, the phrase “streaked with silver” modifies
- A Keds
  - B rocks
  - C gulls
  - D treasures



# Directions

Read the story "Mama's Pie." Then answer Numbers 16 and 17.

# Mama's Pie



by Pamela Kennedy

I was nine the summer Mama taught me how to bake a pie. It was an occasion, a rite of passage, a journey back into family history. The lesson was full of truth, pungent as our wild berries, liberally dusted with flour, and punctuated with the wooden rolling pin.

I stood next to the cutting board, my dress covered with a folded dishtowel, cinched around my middle and tied at the back.

"You take this much flour," Mama said, dumping an undisclosed amount in a large bowl, "then you add shortening—about this much." She dropped a glob of the sticky white stuff into the flour. "Now a pinch of salt. Take this pastry cutter and cut through the flour and shortening until it looks like cornmeal. Here now, you do it."

I had no idea what cornmeal looked like, but I kept cutting through the

mixture, certain Mama would give me a hint when it got to the right stage. After a bit, the flour and shortening were crumbly and coarse. Mama looked at it, nodded, and announced it was time to add the water.

"You never dump water into pie dough," Mama warned. "You sprinkle it on, a tiny bit at a time. Use your hand like this."

She dipped her fingers into a cup of water and shook the drops over the mixture, tossing it now and then with a fork. When the dough could be pressed together into a crumbly ball, she stopped, took about half of the mixture out of the bowl, and pressed it together into an oval on the floured board.

"Now you roll it out," she said, "but only roll it once. Pie crust is like

people—you treat them gently and they turn out tender, but if you keep pushing and pressing them, they’ll turn out tough and tasteless every time.”

I rolled—center to edge—all around the circle.

“Don’t worry if it crumbles around the edges,” Mama said, noting my frustration. “That’s the best sign of a good batch!” Gently we transferred the flattened dough into the pie plate.

“Now the berries.” The tart wild blackberries, frosted with sugar and flour and seeping with purple juice, tumbled into the waiting pie shell. We had picked them the day before, hunting through the burned-off growth in the woods behind the cemetery. I still bore scars from the adventure: hairline scratches laced my hands and purple stains outlined my fingernails. These berries were earned with sweat and blood and would taste all the better for our efforts.

- 11 After I rolled the top crust, Mama cut a curved line across its center. “Just like my Mama used to do,” she murmured. She crimped the edges with her finger and thumb, deftly creating a scalloped border around the pie. After brushing the top crust with cream, we slipped the pie into the oven, and Mama put on the teakettle—a sign we were to have a talk.

When the china cups were filled and steaming, Mama pulled two chairs up to the table and we sat. For the first time, I sensed that Mama and I were somehow

equals and I felt special, privy to some feminine world I’d never known before. Mama stirred her tea and started to talk, introducing me to her past, the time before she was Mama.

“We were poor kids,” she said, “but we never knew it. Daddy and Mama raised ten of us on a small farm where we had a little garden, a pasture, and an orchard, all surrounded by woods. We always had fresh or canned vegetables, milk from a cow, and plenty of eggs, even during the Depression. And Mama always made pies. There were green apple pies and pumpkin pies, even mince meat when one of the neighbors had good luck hunting and got a deer. But the favorite was always wild blackberry pie. We kids called them ‘little creepy crawlers’ because in the woods behind our house, the vines crept along the forest floor, tangling themselves around stumps and over stones. We’d clamber through the prickly vines, searching for the sweet, dark berries and plopping them into our tin lard buckets. The smell of the berries, warm from the sun, was heavenly; and we ate as many as we saved, staining our fingers and lips with the purple juice.

“My mother baked the pies as soon as we returned with the fruit. She always hummed while she baked, flour dust rising about her like a cloud and settling on her hair and faded cotton dress.”

“Is that when you learned how to bake pies, Mama?” I asked, trying to

imagine my mother as a young girl, scratched and stained with berry juice and filled with the same insecurities and sense of wonder as I.

“Yes,” Mama said, and her lips curved in a smile, soft with remembrance. “I was just about your age, and I remember I had to stand on an apple crate to reach the counter top.”

The fragrance of the baking pie wound around us, casting a spell of homey intimacy as we sipped our tea, sharing our heritage until the timer interrupted us with a rude buzz. As

we removed the steaming pie from the oven, Mama sighed with satisfaction and said, “There, now that’s a job well done.” And somehow I know she meant more than just the baking of the pie.

The summer afternoon of my first pie was more than thirty years ago, and yet its memories are as sweet and real as the berries in the bowl before me. I think it’s time to call my daughter in from play and show her how to bake a pie. Perhaps we’ll sit and share a cup of tea while it bakes, and I will tell her how her great-grandma used to bake a pie.

“Mama’s Pie” by Pamela Kennedy, copyright © 1987 by Pamela Kennedy. Reprinted by permission of Pamela Kennedy.

**16** Which word would the narrator most likely use to describe Mama?

- F courageous
- G playful
- H protective
- J wise

**17** Which of these words is most closely related to a theme of the story?

- A ambition
- B connection
- C hope
- D peace



# Directions

Use the poem "Mussels in April" and the story "Mama's Pie" to answer Numbers 18 and 19.

**18** Which statement best expresses a main idea of both the poem "Mussels in April" and the story "Mama's Pie"?

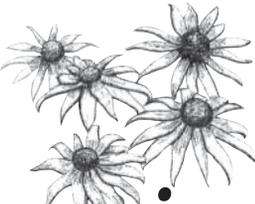
- F As children grow older, they view their parents differently.
- G Parents are the best people to teach basic skills to children.
- H Simple experiences provide opportunities for developing family relationships.
- J Families rely on special traditions to give them strength during difficult times.

**19**  
**BCR** Write a response that compares the speaker in the poem "Mussels in April" and the narrator of the story "Mama's Pie." In your response, support your conclusion with appropriate details from both the poem and the story.

Use the space on page \_\_\_ in your Answer Book for planning your response. Then write your response on the lines on page \_\_\_.



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*Session* **2**

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**D**irections

For Number 20, read the prompt below. Follow the directions in the prompt for writing your essay.

**20**  
**ECR**

Consider the following statement by humorist and educator Stephen Leacock:

“I am a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work, the more I have of it.”

Write a well-organized essay in which you agree or disagree with Leacock’s ideas about the connection between luck and hard work. Support your position with specific examples from your experiences and observations. Be sure that your essay is fully developed, that it is logically organized, and that your choice of words clearly expresses your ideas.

Use the space on page \_\_\_ in your Answer Book for planning your essay. Then write your essay on the lines on pages \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.



## Directions

Read the poems "My People" and "I, Too" by Langston Hughes. Then answer Numbers 21 through 24.

*Langston Hughes was an African American novelist and poet who wrote many works from the 1920s through the 1960s.*

### *My People*

The night is beautiful,  
So the faces of my people.

The stars are beautiful,  
So the eyes of my people.

Beautiful, also, is the sun.  
Beautiful, also, are the souls of  
my people.

### *I, Too*

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.  
They send me to eat in the kitchen  
When company comes,  
But I laugh,  
And eat well,  
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.  
Nobody'll dare  
Say to me,  
"Eat in the kitchen,"  
Then.

Besides,  
They'll see how beautiful I am  
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

—Langston Hughes



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**21** In "My People," the speaker compares the souls of his people to

- A their eyes
- B their faces
- C the stars
- D the sun

**22** Which word best describes the tone of the poem "I, Too"?

- F apologetic
- G confident
- H playful
- J respectful

**23** Read these lines from the poem "I, Too."

Tomorrow,  
I'll be at the table  
When company comes.

The poet most likely includes these lines to

- A predict social change in the future
- B tell where he will eat the next day
- C express anger for past treatment
- D warn uninvited guests to stay away

**24** Which of these best states the main idea of both "My People" and "I, Too"?

- F People should learn to be patient.
- G People should be proud of who they are.
- H People learn to appreciate beauty in nature.
- J People who are unhappy will grow stronger.

## Directions

The student paragraph below requires revisions and edits. Read the paragraph. Then answer Numbers 25 through 27.

### Plants Used as Medicine

<sup>1</sup> Plants throughout the world are used to create medicines.

<sup>2</sup> Pain, infections, burns, and ailments are treated by native people with certain tropical plants found in rain forests. <sup>3</sup> For example, the Madagascar rosy periwinkle is used to make several different medicines.

<sup>4</sup> Also, the leaves of foxgloves to make heart medications. <sup>5</sup> In fact, many plants that grow only in Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa, are known to have medicinal qualities. <sup>6</sup> It is important to discover what healthful benefits plants may have before we destroy them and their habitats.

**25** Which of these is the best way to revise Sentence 2 to make it a clear and effective sentence?

- A Native people use certain tropical plants found in rain forests to treat pain, infections, burns, and ailments.
- B Treating pain, infections, burns, and ailments with certain tropical plants, native people are found in rain forests.
- C Certain tropical plants are used by native people to treat pain, infections, burns, and ailments, which are found in rain forests.
- D Found in rain forests are certain tropical plants used for treating pain, infections, burns, and ailments by native people.

**26** What is the correct way to punctuate the underlined part of Sentence 5?

- F Madagascar an island off the coast of Africa are
- G Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa are
- H Madagascar an island off the coast of Africa, are
- J Best as it is

**27** Which of these should be revised to correct an incomplete sentence?

- A Plants throughout the world are used to create medicines.
- B For example, the Madagascar rosy periwinkle is used to make several different medicines.
- C Also, the leaves of foxgloves to make heart medications.
- D It is important to discover what healthful benefits plants have before we destroy them and their habitats.

## Directions

Read the essay “Silencing the Sound of Music.” Then answer Numbers 28 through 31.

# Silencing the Sound of Music

by Dan Rather

As recently as a century or so ago, if you wanted to hear music, you had better play or sing for yourself. If you wanted to hear more than that, you’d better have friends. If you wanted to hear an opera or symphony any time you wanted to, you’d better be a king.

Today, of course, all we need to do is plug in the radio or stereo. One hundred, 200 musicians at our command, any time of the day or night. In the car, at the gym, in the supermarket, anywhere we go, even places we don’t want music. We can listen to musicians who aren’t even alive anymore, from Patsy Cline to Elvis Presley to Maria Callas.

I have begun to wonder if our easy access to music has made it too easy for us to take music for granted.

Example: School districts feeling the pinch tend to cut music classes first, according to many experts. The reasoning apparently goes like this: Music seems like a frivolity when you compare it to chemistry labs; instruments cost a lot of money (either to the school or to the parents); and, after all, why do you think they call it an “elective”?

Well, this happens to be a subject I know something about. You see, I took music classes in public schools—the Houston Independent School District in Texas. Even then, I was no musical prodigy.<sup>1</sup> They put me in the rhythm band and gave me a wood block to play. I wore it on a cord around my neck and hit it with a little stick.

- 6 Other children might have been expected to hit each other with the little stick. Not me. (Well, not often.) I was extremely respectful of my instrument. Scholars believe the wood block was invented *before* music. And if you needed proof of that, you had only to listen to the way I played.

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<sup>1</sup>prodigy: person with exceptional talents



About the best you could say for my performance was this: I very seldom played off-key.

I was also—don't ask how or why—assistant conductor of the Alexander Hamilton Elementary School band. To this day I can still conduct about three songs, just in case I'm at the concert hall one night and there's an emergency and somebody shouts: "Is there a conductor in the house?"

In all honesty, those little music classes didn't turn me into a musician—you'd need a *magician* to do that. But those classes did give me an appreciation of music.

- Music is difficult. It requires work and thought and sweat and inspiration. I haven't taken it for granted since.
- Music is exciting. It is truly thrilling to be sitting in a group of musicians when you are all playing (more or less) the same piece of music. You are part of a great, powerful, vibrant entity.<sup>2</sup> And nothing beats the feeling you get when you've practiced a difficult section over and over, and finally get it right (Yes, even on the wood block.)

And you think *you're* excited when you get that song right. Imagine how your *mother* feels. You can see it in her face: relief and pride. Big pride.

- Music is important. It says things your heart can't say any other way, and in a language everyone speaks. Music crosses borders, turns smiles to frowns, and vice versa.

These observations are shared with a hope: that, when schools cut back on music classes, they really think about what they're doing—and don't take music for granted.

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<sup>2</sup>**entity:** something that exists as a particular and separate unit

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**28** Which conclusion about the author is most supported by information in the essay?

- F He uses music as a way of solving problems.
- G He has a great deal of knowledge about music history.
- H He enjoys music even though he has little musical talent.
- J He likes classical music more than he likes popular music.

**29** Which of these statements best explains how the author attempts to persuade his readers?

- A He quotes statistics related to his topic.
- B He uses the names of famous singers.
- C He connects his own experiences to those of the readers.
- D He ignores the ideas of people that might oppose him.

**30** Read these sentences from paragraph 6.

Scholars believe the wood block was invented *before* music. And if you needed proof of that, you had only to listen to the way I played.

Which word best describes the tone of the author's words in these sentences?

- F admiring
- G instructive
- H self-confident
- J self-mocking



**31** Read these sentences related to the essay.

1. The wood block is a musical instrument.
2. It is used to create rhythm.
3. It has been used as an instrument for thousands of years.

Which of these most effectively combines these ideas into one sentence?

- A The wood block is a musical instrument that has been used for thousands of years to create rhythm.
- B Creating rhythm as a musical instrument, the wood block has been used as an instrument for thousands of years.
- C Having been used for creating rhythm for thousands of years, the wood block has been a musical instrument.
- D The wood block, which has been used for thousands of years to create rhythm, has been a musical instrument for thousands of years, too.



## Directions

The student paragraph below requires revisions and edits. Read the paragraph. Then answer Numbers 32 and 33.

### Mountain Biking

<sup>1</sup> Just about everybody knows how to ride a bike. <sup>2</sup> Mountain biking, however, requires advanced skills and even some courage. <sup>3</sup> When you first try it take it easy. <sup>4</sup> Learn how to keep control when riding on dirt or loose gravel. <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>6</sup> You should understand that you'll probably fall sometimes, but that's part of the sport. <sup>7</sup> With practice, you'll be a better biker.

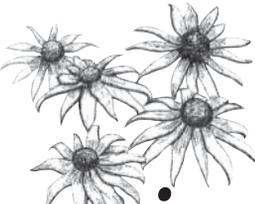
**32** What is the correct way to edit the underlined part of Sentence 3?

- F try it; take
- G try it, take
- H try it. Take
- J Best as it is

**33** Which sentence best fills the blank and connects the ideas in Sentences 4 and 6?

- A Then you are ready to compete with many other mountain bikers.
- B Also, lack of water can be a problem when riding on an isolated bike trail.
- C Then try jumping your bike off small mounds or over obstacles.
- D Also, there are two types of mountain biking—downhill and cross-country.





*Session* **3**

# Directions

Read the essay "In the Country of Grasses." Then answer Numbers 34 through 40.

## IN THE COUNTRY OF GRASSES



by Terry Tempest Williams

When traveling to new country, it is a gift to have a guide. They know the nuances<sup>1</sup> of the world they live in. Samuel smells rain the night before it falls. I trust his instincts and borrow them until I uncover my own. But there is danger here. One can become lazy in the reliance on a guide. The burden of a newcomer is to pay attention.

The Land Rover slips into the savannah like a bird dog entering a marsh. We are fully present. I watch Samuel's eyes scan the horizon. He points south.

"Zebra," he says. "They are migrating north from Tanzania. Thousands more are on their way."

Hundreds of zebras walk the skyline. They become animated heat waves.

We drive closer. I have never seen such concentrations of animals. At one point I think I hear thunder. It is the hooves of wildebeests. Suddenly, the herd of zebra expands to include impalas, gazelles, and animals I do not recognize.

"Topi," Samuel says.

I flip through my field guide of African mammals and find it. An extraordinary creature, it is the color of mahogany with blue patches on its flanks and ocher<sup>2</sup> legs. I look at the topi again, this time through binoculars. Its black linear face with spiraling horns creates the illusion of a primitive mask. The topi I watch stands motionless on a termite mound. Binoculars down, I look at Samuel. He says the topi resemble hartebeests. A small herd of topi

<sup>1</sup>nuances: degrees of difference in meaning

<sup>2</sup>ocher: color having shades of yellow, orange, and brown

runs in front of the vehicle in a rocking-horse gait<sup>3</sup> and vanishes.

- 8 Samuel gives away his knowledge sparingly—in gentle, quiet doses. He is respectful of his teachers and those he is teaching. In this way he is generous. He gives me the pleasure of discovery. Slowly, African riddles unravel themselves like a piece of cut linen.

The sweet hissing of grasses accompanies us as we move ahead. We pass the swishing tails of wildebeests. We are looking for lions.

- 10 Anticipation is another gift for travelers in unfamiliar territory. It quickens the spirit. The contemplation of the unseen world; imagination piqued<sup>4</sup> in consideration of animals.

We stop. Samuel points. I see nothing. I look at Samuel for clues. He points again. I still see nothing but tall, tawny grasses around the base of a lone tree. He smiles and says, “Lions.”

I look. I look so hard it becomes an embarrassment—and then I see eyes. Lion eyes. Two amber beads with a brown matrix. Circles of contentment until I stand; the lion’s eyes change, and I am flushed with fear.

“Quiet,” Samuel whispers. “We will watch for a while.”

As my eyes become acquainted with lion, I begin to distinguish fur from grass. I realize there are two lions, a male and a female lying together under the stingy shade of a thorn tree. I can hear them breathe. The male is breathing hard and fast, his black mane in rhythm with the breeze. He puts his right paw on the female’s shoulder. Ears twitch. We are no more than ten feet away. He yawns. His yellow canines are as long as my index finger. His jowls look like well-worn leather. He stands. The grasses brush his belly. Veins protrude from his leg muscles. This lion is lean and strong. No wonder that in the Masai mind every aspect of a lion is imbued<sup>5</sup> with magic.

<sup>3</sup>**gait:** way of moving by lifting the feet in a different order or rhythm such as a trot, gallop, or run

<sup>4</sup>**piqued:** excited one’s interest or curiosity

<sup>5</sup>**imbued:** filled; saturated



**34** Skimming which of these books would best prepare a reader to understand what the author describes in the essay?

- F *Large Prey Animals Around the World*
- G *Lions and Tigers and Bears: Fear of the Wild*
- H *Africa in the Nineteenth Century: The Colonial Experience*
- J *An Illustrated Guide to the Wildlife of Africa*

**35** Which of these ideas is most closely related to a theme of the essay?

- A anxiety about encountering danger
- B thrill of exploring the natural world
- C enjoyment from making new friends
- D concern about seeing a habitat destroyed

**36** Which phrase best describes Samuel?

- F helpful but quiet in manner
- G witty and clever with words
- H polite but uncertain of himself
- J sad and mysterious to strangers

**37** Read these sentences from paragraph 10.

Anticipation is another gift for travelers in unfamiliar territory. It quickens the spirit.

The word *quickens* most nearly means

- A angers
- B excites
- C hurries
- D lightens

**38** Read this sentence from the essay.

Its black linear face with spiraling horns creates the illusion of a primitive mask.

What is the subject of the verb *creates*?

- F face
- G horns
- H illusion
- J mask



**39** Read this sentence from the last paragraph of the essay.

As my eyes become acquainted with lion, I begin to distinguish fur from grass.

Which of these statements best explains the meaning of this sentence?

- A At first, all lions look alike to the author, but once she gets a better look, she can tell individual lions apart.
- B The lions are camouflaged in the tall grass, but the longer the author looks, the better she can make them out.
- C Though fearful of the lions as they hide in the tall grass, the author soon begins to make friends with the animals.
- D Having never seen lions, the author has no idea what they look like, but little by little, she begins to identify their features.

**40** Carefully examine the details of the photograph below.

**BCR**



© Elizabeth Opalenik/Corbis

Write a response that explains whether the photograph communicates ideas that are similar to the ideas found in the essay "In the Country of Grasses." In your response, support your conclusion with appropriate details from both the essay and the photograph.

Use the space on page \_\_\_ in your Answer Book for planning your response. Then write your response on the lines on page \_\_\_.

## Directions

Read the excerpt from “On Safari with the Experts,” an article about a safari outfitting camp in Kenya, East Africa. Then answer Numbers 41 through 43 about both “In the Country of Grasses” and “On Safari with the Experts.”

# ON SAFARI WITH THE EXPERTS



- 1 A new generation of Masai safari guides is growing up in Kenya, and their expertise can lead to memorable encounters with cheetah and other big game.
- 2 At the airstrip, in the heart of the Masai Mara game reserve in Kenya, a fleet of safari vehicles is lined up, waiting to take incoming visitors to their camps and lodges. The driver-guides are dressed for the part in faded khaki—all except one, who sits at the wheel of his Toyota Land Cruiser wearing the blood-red robes of a Masai elder. Jackson ole Looseyia is an Il Dorobo Masai, a clan of hunter-gatherers who live in the hills just outside the reserve.
- 3 On the way to Rekeru, the tented camp where Jackson is both a guide and a shareholder, we pause to watch a herd of buffalo. “Did you know a buffalo can produce 20 litres of saliva a day?” he says. This, I discover, is Jackson’s style. He dispenses his knowledge in handy sound-bytes.
- 4 Rekeru is owned by Ron Beaton, a third-generation Kenyan who also runs a lodge on the reserve’s northern fringes. It is an idyllic campsite—the loveliest I have ever seen—in a secluded part of the reserve where other vehicles seldom venture. Blue flycatchers and golden orioles flit among the leaves. By day, herds of zebra come down to drink at the Talek River. There are no fences; and at night, elephant, buffalo, hippo, and lion regularly wander between the tents.
- 5 Next morning Jackson has planned a full-day game drive to the Mara Triangle, a remote and beautiful area bordering the Serengeti National Park.

“On Safari with the Experts” by Brian Jackman, copyright © Brian Jackman, from [www.aardvarksafaris.com](http://www.aardvarksafaris.com). Used by permission.

**41** Read these sentences about Samuel from paragraph 8 of “In the Country of Grasses.”

He is respectful of his teachers and those he is teaching. In this way he is generous. He gives the pleasure of discovery. Slowly, African riddles unravel themselves like a piece of cut linen.

**Which paragraph from the article “On Safari with the Experts” best expresses a similar idea about Jackson?**

- A paragraph 1
- B paragraph 2
- C paragraph 3
- D paragraph 5

**42** Which pair of words best completes the following statement?

While the essay “In the Country of Grasses” is mostly written in a \_\_\_\_\_ style, the article “On Safari with the Experts” is mostly written in a \_\_\_\_\_ style.

- F poetic . . . creative
- G formal . . . scholarly
- H descriptive . . . factual
- J journalistic . . . conversational



**43** Read these sentences about the wildebeest, an animal found in the Masai Mara game reserve in Kenya.

1. The wildebeest is always on the move.
2. It is searching for green grass.
3. It is searching for water.

Which of these most effectively combines the ideas into one sentence?

- A Always moving, the green grass and water is what the wildebeest searches for.
- B Searching for water and green grass, it is the wildebeest that is always on the move.
- C The wildebeest, always moving, is in search of green grass as well as water.
- D Always on the move, the wildebeest searches for green grass and water.



**D**irections

For Numbers 44 and 45, read the sentence in bold print. Then choose the clearest and most effective revision of the sentence.

**44** **I was excited when I saw myself on the six o'clock news, and I called all my friends, and they turned on their televisions.**

- F Excited, I called my friends, and when I saw myself on the six o'clock news, they turned on their televisions.
- G Excited, I saw myself on the six o'clock news, and I called my friends, and they turned on their televisions.
- H Excited, I called my friends to tell them to turn on their televisions when I saw myself on the six o'clock news.
- J Excited, I saw myself, and I called my friends to tell them to turn on their televisions when I was on the six o'clock news.

**45** **The humpback whale population of the Pacific Ocean, as a result of protective measures, has increased, even though it remains an endangered species.**

- A As a result of increasing protective measures, the humpback whale population of the Pacific Ocean remains an endangered species.
- B As a result of remaining an endangered species, protective measures have increased the population of the humpback whale in the Pacific Ocean.
- C As a result of the humpback whale population increasing through protective measures, it remains an endangered species of the Pacific Ocean.
- D As a result of protective measures, the humpback whale population of the Pacific Ocean has increased, yet the humpback remains an endangered species.

## Directions

Mariah is interested in carrier pigeons and decides to write an essay about them. The draft of Mariah's essay requires revisions and edits. Read the draft. Then answer Numbers 46 through 50.

### Carry On, Pigeons!

1 You have probably seen pigeons pecking for peanuts in the park and thought they were very ordinary. 2 The ancient Greeks used these carrier pigeons to send news about the Olympic games. 3 For centuries, armies have used pigeons to send news to and from the front lines where the battles were taking place. 4 Now, a hospital on the Northwest coast of France uses a flock of forty pigeons to carry tiny samples of human blood to larger testing facilities. 5 There is also a police department in Orissa, India, that still uses the birds.

6 In Orissa there are 27 police pigeon cages, called lofts, where the officers care for the birds. 7 When the pigeons are about six weeks old, they are taken a short distance from their lofts and allowed to find their way home. 8 This is how their training begins. 9 The officers gradually increase the distance, and eventually the pigeons can fly as far as 310 miles, stop for a meal of wheat and millet, and then returned to their homes. 10 In good weather conditions, the pigeons fly as fast as fifty-five miles per hour. 11 The message a pigeon carries is in a tiny plastic capsule that is attached to its leg.

**46** Where does the sentence below best fit in Mariah’s essay?

Long before telephones, faxes, and e-mail, however, cousins of these very pigeons were used to carry messages all over the world.

- F between Sentences 1 and 2
- G between Sentences 3 and 4
- H between Sentences 8 and 9
- J between Sentences 10 and 11

**47** Read Sentence 4 from Mariah’s essay.

Now, a hospital on the Northwest coast of france uses a flock of forty pigeons to carry tiny samples of human blood to larger testing facilities.

What is the correct way to edit the underlined part of the sentence?

- A the northwest coast of france
- B the Northwest Coast of France
- C the northwest coast of France
- D Best as it is

**48** Which of these sentences most clearly and effectively adds supporting details to Sentence 5?

- F There are also remote outposts where birds still carry messages in Orissa, India, to and from a police station there.
- G Also, in Orissa, India, a police station still uses the birds to carry messages to remote outposts.
- H Still using the birds as well, is also a police department in Orissa, India, sending messages to outposts that are remote.
- J The birds also carry messages from a police department in Orissa, India, to outposts that are still remote.

**49** All of these sentences include information that should be documented on a works-cited page EXCEPT

- A Sentence 1
- B Sentence 2
- C Sentence 4
- D Sentence 10



**50** Read this rule from a language handbook.

Do not change verbs unnecessarily from one tense to another.

Read this sentence from Mariah's essay.

The officers gradually increase the distance, and eventually the pigeons can fly as far as 310 miles, stop for a meal of wheat and millet, and then returned to their homes.

What is the correct way to write the underlined verbs?

- F fly . . . stop . . . return
- G fly . . . stopped . . . return
- H fly . . . stopped . . . returned
- J Best as it is





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