



These new public release items for MSA Reading are practice items only. These items do not represent a full MSA Reading test. In addition, these items do not cover all of the eligible VSC objectives, nor do they reflect all possible types of items for any one particular objective.

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MSA

MARYLAND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

GRADE

7



READING PUBLIC RELEASE

Release Date: March 2009

PEARSON



DIRECTIONS

Read the sentence in the box. Then choose the answer in which the underlined word is used in the same way. Mark the space for the answer you have chosen.

1

As soon as I saw the painting in the museum, I knew it had been done by a master artist.

In which sentence does the word master mean the same as in the sentence above?

- (A) Although he practiced, Don struggled to master the violin.
- (B) A master switch controls all the electricity in the building.
- (C) Mr. Johnson hired a master carpenter to work in his house.
- (D) Bea's swimming coach helped her master her fear of water.

2

Matt knew it would shake his mother's belief in his honesty if he lied about the broken window.

In which sentence does the word shake mean the same as in the sentence above?

- (A) I was worried that my voice would shake when I stood up to give my campaign speech.
- (B) Another loss could shake the team's confidence in their ability to win the championship.
- (C) Yvette watched her father shake his head in approval as she made her bow at the concert.
- (D) The directions on the can of whipped topping said to shake it well before breaking the seal.

3

Until the funding committee raises more money, the new library will be leaning on the city for support.

In which sentence does the word leaning mean the same as in the sentence above?

- (A) The ladder was leaning against the storage shed right where I had left it.
- (B) Anthony told me he is leaning toward voting for Sara as class president.
- (C) My brother is leaning on his counselor for advice on college scholarships.
- (D) The old barn was leaning, so it was in danger of collapsing to the ground.

DIRECTIONS ▶ As you read each sentence, use the other words in the sentence to help you figure out what the underlined word means. Then mark the space for the answer you have chosen.

4

There was some discord when the students began work on their project; however, once they worked out their differences, the rest of the assignment went smoothly.

Discord means —

- (A) anxiety
- (B) carelessness
- (C) conflict
- (D) noise

6

The forest fire ravaged the mountainside, leaving nothing behind but burned trees and blackened rock.

What does ravaged mean?

- (A) climbed
- (B) covered
- (C) destroyed
- (D) occupied

5

When she was sure her mother was not looking, Becky slipped into the kitchen and pilfered a freshly baked cookie.

What does pilfered mean?

- (A) took without permission
- (B) followed a family recipe
- (C) asked for a parent's help
- (D) gave something to someone

7

The cold rain did not stop, so the crowd in the football stadium dwindled as people headed for the warmth of their cars.

What does dwindled mean?

- (A) stood around
- (B) waited calmly
- (C) cheered loudly
- (D) became smaller





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DIRECTIONS Read this article titled "The Fosbury Flop." Then answer Numbers 8 through 15.

The Fosbury Flop

by Rich Wallace

- 1 Dick Fosbury raced across the infield, planted his foot, and leaped into the air, straining with every muscle to propel himself over the high-jump bar. But as he soared into the air, his knee hit the bar, and it fell to the ground with a clang.
- 2 The tall, lean high-school kid from Medford, Oregon, sat up in the pit and looked at the bar in frustration. There had to be a better way to do this.
- 3 Fosbury had been trying to succeed with the straddle-and-roll style, in which a jumper rolled over the bar foot-first and face-down. But the highest jump he'd

ever cleared was 5 feet, 4 inches. That wasn't good enough to place in most track-and-field meets.

"The roll is so complicated," Fosbury said years later. "I just never had the coordination for jumping that way."

He began to experiment during practice sessions, bending various ways as he jumped. He discovered that by turning his back to the bar as he leaped, he could flatten his body more and could thrust his legs higher into the air. The first time he tried the backward style in competition, he cleared 5 feet, 10 inches!



His coach had never seen such an odd style, and he tried to convince Fosbury to go back to the standard way of jumping. But the coach soon realized that the new style was working, so he decided to let Fosbury stay with it.

After high school, Fosbury entered Oregon State University, where Coach Berny Wagner also tried to get him to return to the traditional jumping style. He even tried to convince him to switch to a different event—the triple jump.

But Fosbury worked hard at his high jumping and began to lift weights to increase his strength. In his first meet during his sophomore year of college, he cleared 6 feet, 10 inches.

“I showed great coaching genius by realizing right then and there that suddenly I didn’t need another triple jumper,” Coach Wagner joked later.

Within a year, Fosbury’s unique style of jumping had been dubbed “The Fosbury Flop,” and his string of successes brought great excitement to the sport of track and field. He cleared 7 feet for the first time early in the 1968 season, then won the league championship and the National Collegiate Athletic Association title.

That summer he competed in the trials to select the United States team for the Summer Olympic Games. He soared over the bar at 7 feet, 3 inches to qualify for the team.

- 12 Fosbury was a smashing success in the United States, but he would be facing

much better competition at the Olympics in Mexico City. Fourteen entrants had cleared 7 feet or higher, and the pressure of the Olympic Games was an added factor.

But Fosbury easily made the qualifying jumps to advance to the next day’s final round. Then, with 80,000 spectators gathered to watch the final, he cleared the opening height of 6 feet, 8 inches.

The long competition wore on, and Fosbury cleared each height as the bar rose higher. Soon only three jumpers remained.

Fosbury studied the bar at 7 feet, $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches. He concentrated as he never had before, raced across the field, and leaped over the bar on his first attempt. A jumper from the Soviet Union missed on all three of his tries, so just Fosbury and teammate Ed Carruthers remained to compete for the gold medal.

The bar was raised to 7 feet, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches. It was higher than Fosbury had ever jumped, and it would be a new Olympic record. Both jumpers missed on their first two attempts. With the gold medal on the line, Fosbury got ready for his final try. He shut his eyes for a moment, rocked back and forth, then sprinted toward the bar.

“I just thought about floating over the bar,” he said later. And with a great surge of strength, he did it. The Fosbury Flop was more than an oddity now. It had earned him an Olympic gold medal!

Reading Comprehension

8

A reader would *most likely* find this article in a book about —

- (A) the National Collegiate Athletic Association
- (B) Olympic gold medal winners
- (C) athletes of the Soviet Union
- (D) famous American coaches



9

Explain how the Fosbury Flop changed the sport of high jumping. In your response, use information from the article that supports your explanation. Write your answer in the box below.



10

The photograph is *most likely* included in this article to —

- (A) show the height of the high-jump bar
- (B) illustrate the equipment used in the high jump
- (C) persuade a reader that the high jump is difficult
- (D) help a reader better understand a high jump method

11

The purpose of paragraphs 1 through 3 of this article is to —

- (A) explain Fosbury's problem
- (B) describe Fosbury's appearance
- (C) describe where Fosbury grew up
- (D) explain why Fosbury liked sports



12

What does Fosbury's experience suggest for anyone facing a challenge? In your response, use information from the article that supports your answer. Write your answer in the box below.



Reading Comprehension

13

The author suggests that Fosbury is *best* remembered for —

- (A) an outstanding performance
- (B) inventing a new technique
- (C) a long, successful career
- (D) starting a new sport



14

Explain how the author helps a reader feel the excitement of Fosbury's experience in the 1968 Olympics. In your response, use information from the article that supports your explanation. Write your answer in the box below.



Reading Comprehension

15

Read this sentence from paragraph 12 of the article.

Fourteen entrants had cleared 7 feet or higher, and the pressure of the Olympic Games was an added factor.

In this sentence, the word *entrants* refers to —

- (A) tall men
- (B) high jumpers
- (C) record holders
- (D) young athletes





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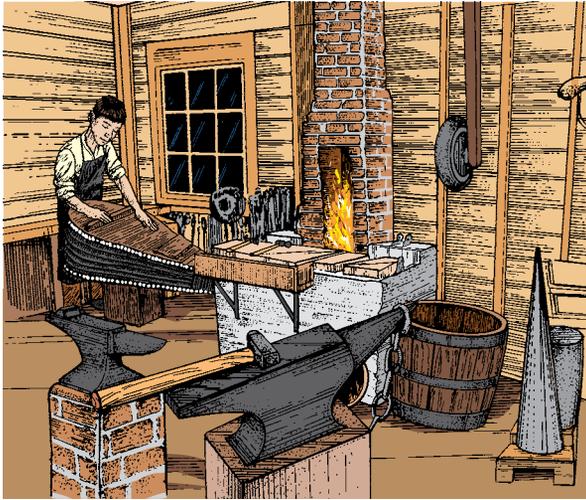


DIRECTIONS

Read this story titled "Nathan's Choice." Then answer Numbers 16 through 24.

Nathan's Choice

by Sharon Hart Addy



Nathan shouldered his bundle and studied the blacksmith shop across the rutted dirt road.

Jeremy, the fellow he'd met at the edge of the village, stood beside him. "Orrin Gunderson's a hard man," Jeremy said. "You'll be sorry you took up with him."

"He's my uncle," Nathan answered. "My mother's kin. I'm here to learn enough ironworking to make repairs. I aim to be a frontiersman."

Jeremy chuckled. "A trapper and explorer like Daniel Boone? You think a lot of yourself."

"Other men make a life in the wilderness. I will, too."

"So you consider yourself a man! You're no older than me."

"I'll be a man when I finish here," Nathan said confidently.

Jeremy laughed. "Gunderson will pound you to size. When you've had enough, let me know. We'll go to sea together." Jeremy tipped his tricorn hat and sauntered off.

Nathan crossed the road. He paused under the maple tree beside the shop's open doors.

10 Inside the shop, his uncle used long-handled tongs to heft a hunk of glowing iron from the red-hot coals of the hearth. He positioned the iron against an anvil and picked up his hammer. The air rang with his strikes. When he finished, he grunted his satisfaction and thrust the ax head into a water trough.

Through the sizzling steam, Nathan saw his uncle's brown eyes on him.

"You must be my sister's boy," the blacksmith growled. "If you are, you're here to work. Pump the bellows."

At noon, Nathan collapsed beneath the maple tree. He ached from bending and stretching at the bellows and turning the grindstone as his uncle sharpened the ax head. Uncle Orrin dropped bread and cheese into Nathan's lap. Nathan gulped the food and drank from the bucket of creek water.

All afternoon Uncle Orrin barked orders. When he tossed bread and cheese to his nephew for supper, Nathan was too tired to lift it to his mouth.

"Eat!" Uncle Orrin roared. "There's work to do."

As the sun set, Uncle Orrin took off his leather apron. "Another bucket of water, boy."

Nathan stumbled down to the creek, then trudged up the hill, sloshing half the water from the bucket.

Uncle Orrin took the half-empty bucket and pointed to a pile of straw he'd had Nathan dump in a corner. "You sleep there."

Nathan fell onto the straw, thinking of home and the cornhusk bed he shared with his two younger brothers. He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and concentrated on the creek's gurgling. His dreams filled with sailing ships and clean, clear air.

Nathan woke to the rhythm of the hammer. Uncle Orrin pounded the glowing midsection of a long, narrow shaft. Turning it as his hammer struck, he created spirals. At one end, he shaped a loop. At the other, a point.

21 "See, boy," Uncle Orrin held the fireplace poker high, "you could do this someday. But you must be strong and know how to work iron. This afternoon I'll set you to making nails."

22 As shadows lengthened, Uncle Orrin beckoned Nathan from the bellows to the hearth. He turned the two-foot nail rod he was heating. "Watch the color," Uncle Orrin ordered. "Deep red means the iron's ready." He moved the rod to the anvil. With four blows he produced a sharp, four-sided tip. He cut the nail to length and bent the blunt end as a head.

Nathan took the rod Uncle Orrin handed him and held it in the coals. His uncle grunted as Nathan judged the heat correctly and moved the rod to the anvil. Nathan slammed the heavy hammer against the rod, angling one side. He turned the rod and struck again. Too hard. The rod flattened.

One morning Nathan found Jeremy waiting at the creek. "So, Daniel Boone," Jeremy taunted, "have you had enough? Are you ready for the sea?"

Nathan had no answer.

At noon Nathan slumped under the maple. Uncle Orrin towered over him. "Blacksmithing's hard work," he said. "So is sailing. On a ship the captain gives orders. No captain worth his salt puts up with slackers."

Uncle Orrin's words stuck to Nathan like a thistle bur. He was no slacker and he'd prove it. He flew to his tasks. He raced each time Uncle Orrin shouted for him to pump the bellows, turn the grindstone, or dip a bucket of water. Nathan found that meeting his uncle's needs cut the insults short. He continued the frantic pace.

Between stepping to his uncle's tune, Nathan made nails. His blows grew surer, the nails straighter, the points cleaner, but still Uncle Orrin scoffed and refined them with graceful ease. Nathan watched, noting his uncle's grip on the hammer, the angle of the iron, the slant of the blow. Duplicating them, his own nails grew truer, and his uncle's grunts came less frequently.

Nathan grinned when he showed Uncle Orrin a handful of perfect nails.

Uncle Orrin examined them and snarled, "They're only nails."

Nathan's pride vanished like steam above the water trough. He'd never please his uncle.

At dusk a few days later, Nathan found Jeremy at the creek. Jeremy asked, "Are you waiting for him to break your back? You'll never make a frontiersman. Think of the sea, man! The splashing waves and billowing sails! We'll see sights no man here has ever seen."

Nathan agreed. "The sea seems a better choice."

Uncle Orrin glared at Nathan when he entered the shop. He swung a beefy hand towards Jeremy's retreating back. "He talks as if sailing's all adventure. It's not!" His bushy brows met over hard eyes. "Forget the sea. You're bound to me by an agreement between your mother and me."

"She doesn't know my misery." Nathan answered. Drooping, he turned away.

His uncle's voice caught him again. "Your mother sent you to follow your dream. Leave if you want to. I won't hold it against her. Decide at the end of the week."

When Nathan met Jeremy at the creek, they worked out their plans. The days passed quickly. Nathan applied himself to making nails and produced a pile that pleased him. Pride surged through him when he discovered he could correct his bungles as easily as his uncle did. Uncle Orrin then set him to making larger nails used for rafters.

The night before the week was up, Nathan announced his decision. "The *Henrietta* sails in a week. Jeremy and I leave at midday tomorrow."

Uncle Orrin turned away. "It's your choice."

In the morning, Nathan woke to the clang of the hammer. He followed the familiar pattern of pumping the bellows and pounding out nails, sometimes working side by side with his uncle, at

other times working alone, always jumping to Uncle Orrin's sharp orders.

At noon, Jeremy called to Nathan. "Hurry! I found us a ride."

Nathan picked up his bundle. He scanned the hearth, the bellows, his straw bed, and his uncle at the anvil repairing a harness ring. Nathan watched, noting the angle of the iron, anticipating the strike, figuring the result. Smiling to himself, he knew that with training he could do as well. He didn't need Uncle Orrin to tell him so.

Jeremy asked, "Are you coming?"

Nathan followed him to the road where a farm wagon waited. Jeremy climbed aboard.

Nathan hesitated. "I'm staying."

"I wish you luck," Jeremy said. "Gunderson's a hard man."

"You're right. He is," Nathan replied, "but I need the skills he can teach me. I wish you luck, too."

Nathan shook Jeremy's hand, then returned to the blacksmith shop. Throwing his bundle to a corner, he grabbed the handle of the bellows.

The steady ringing of Uncle Orrin's hammer stopped as he glanced at Nathan. "So you're staying?" he asked.

Nathan answered, "Yes."

Uncle Orrin rubbed a hand across his face, but Nathan saw the smile in his eyes.

"Then pump the bellows, boy. We have work to do!"



16

Uncle Orrin is *best* described as —

- (A) shy but generous
- (B) confused but honest
- (C) focused but easygoing
- (D) tough but understanding



17

Compare Nathan’s education with the education of young people today. In your response, use details from the story that support your comparison. Write your answer in the box below.

18

In paragraphs 21 and 22, why does the author describe the making of nails in such great detail?

- (A) to explain why many employers are strict
- (B) to teach a reader how to use tools properly
- (C) to help a reader understand a blacksmith's work
- (D) to compare daily life of long ago with daily life today

19

Which of these phrases *best* describes how Nathan changes from the beginning to the end of this story?

- (A) from insecure to confident
- (B) from confused to relieved
- (C) from reckless to cautious
- (D) from fearful to brave

20

Explain why Nathan decides to stay at the blacksmith shop. In your response, use details from the story that support your explanation. Write your answer in the box below.

21

At the end of the story, the smile in Uncle Orrin's eyes suggests that he —

- (A) is amused by Nathan's small mistakes
- (B) approves of how Nathan pumps the bellows
- (C) is pleased that Nathan wants to be a blacksmith
- (D) appreciates Nathan's thoughtfulness to his friends

22

Read this sentence from paragraph 10 of the story.

Inside the shop, his uncle used long-handled tongs to *heft* a hunk of glowing iron from the red-hot coals of the hearth.

In this sentence, the word *heft* means —

- (A) lift
- (B) replace
- (C) throw
- (D) weigh

23

Compare Jeremy's and Nathan's attitudes toward hard work. In your response, use details from the story that support your comparison. Write your answer in the box below.



24

Which of these sentences *best* states a theme of this story?

- (A) People should have the same goals their friends have.
- (B) People should be willing to work hard to reach their goals.
- (C) People should let their families make decisions about their goals.
- (D) People should wait until they are older to set goals for themselves.





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