



TEXAS

READING

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

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1 2 3 4 5 6 PP 16 15 14 13 12 11

PP/Logan, Iowa, USA
 8/11

31172

ISBN-10: 0-7891-8204-1

ISBN-13: 978-0-7891-8204-3

Printed in the United States of America

To the Student

Soon you will be taking the assessments of academic readiness. This *Better Test Scores* book will give you the practice and confidence you need to do well on this important test. Here are the steps to follow to use this book.

1. Take Tryout Test 1 and check your answers. Use the chart at the bottom of this page to find your strengths and weaknesses in the areas covered on the reading portion of the assessments. Don't be discouraged if you don't answer all the questions correctly or if you don't understand some questions. Remember these questions you struggled with; they will be the types of questions you need to work on the most.
2. Work through the lessons that follow Tryout Test 1. These lessons will help you with the kinds of questions you will be asked on the reading portion of the assessments. Each lesson ends with a short practice test to reinforce the skills from that lesson. Fill in the Keeping Score chart on page 96 as you complete each practice test.
3. After completing all seven lessons, take Tryout Test 2. Your score on this test will show how much your test-taking skills have improved.

By following the steps outlined above, you will learn many of the skills you need to do well on the assessments of academic readiness.

Lesson	Tryout Test 1	Tryout Test 2
1 Vocabulary Skills	3, 9, 17, 34	3, 7, 13, 34, 37
2 Literary Elements	1, 4, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 45	1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 33, 35
3 Analyzing Figurative Language	2, 14, 15, 16, 18	2, 8, 12, 14, 27, 32, 36
4 Comparing and Contrasting Literature	5, 6, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30, 48	4, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42
5 Analyzing Nonfiction	13, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 47	17, 19, 22, 23, 25, 44, 46, 47
6 Text Structures and Features	31, 35, 40, 44	18, 20, 21, 24, 43, 45, 48
7 Persuasive Text	7, 8, 10, 11, 12	26, 28, 29, 30

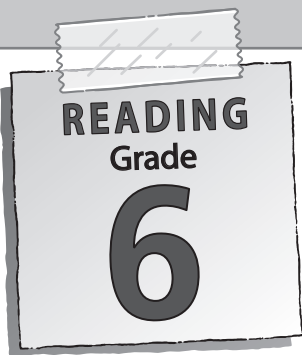


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Keeping Score 96

Finding Percent Inside Back Cover

READING
Lesson

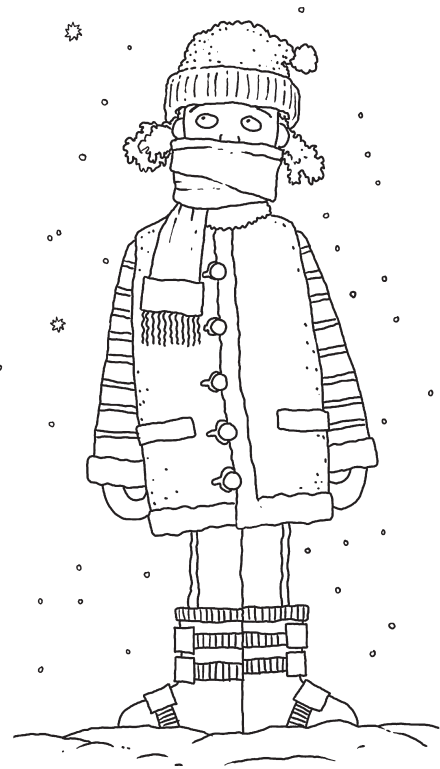
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Analyzing Figurative Language

This lesson covers . . . understanding how figurative language and stylistic elements create meaning in fiction and poetry.

Directions: Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

- 1 **M**y little brother BAWLS,
The dog HOWLS at neighborhood cats,
The TV BLARES loudly from the den.
I grab my coat and a scarf and rush
5 Outside, to the winter night.
The street is empty, quiet,
Except for the sound of snow
Crunching beneath my feet
And wind whispering in my ear.
10 I hear nothing but the night's mysterious music.
Around me bare branches hunch over like old men.
Cozy fires glow inside tiny houses.
As snow falls, everything becomes quiet and still,
like a prayer.
Little snowflakes dance around the streetlights,
15 Twisting and pirouetting slowly to the ground.
I circle back to my front door,
Determined to take the quiet of the night inside
with me.



- 1 Which phrase from the poem is an example of personification?
- A *My little brother BAWLS,*
B *. . . the sound of snow / Crunching beneath my feet,*
C *Around me bare branches hunch over like old men.*
D *Little snowflakes dance around the streetlights,*
- 2 The line “Except for the sound of snow” is an example of—
- F alliteration.
G onomatopoeia.
H simile.
J metaphor.

- 3 The poet most likely uses capital letters for some words to—
- A show that someone is talking.
 - B show the loudness of certain sounds.
 - C emphasize the quiet.
 - D indicate the most important ideas in the poem.

Some questions will test your understanding of **poetic language**. Poetic language includes things such as figurative language and the use of sound and print to communicate ideas and emotions. Figurative language suggests something other than the literal meanings of the words. Writers use figurative language to convey meaning, create mood, and paint pictures in the minds of readers. To answer questions about figurative language, you need to think about what ideas or emotions the author is trying to communicate.

The chart below lists common types of figurative language you may encounter in your reading.

Figurative Language	Definition	Example
Simile	comparison using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>	Tony ran like the wind.
Metaphor	comparison that says something <i>is</i> something else	The river was a ribbon of ice.
Personification	giving human qualities to something that is not human	Flowers danced in the wind.
Idiom	group of words with a meaning that is different from the literal meanings of the individual words	The boys thought they were so cool!
Hyperbole	exaggeration used for effect	I could eat a horse!

To answer **Example 1**, you must think about a specific type of figurative language—**personification**. Personification means giving human qualities to something that is not human. You can eliminate choice A immediately because it relates to a human. Choice B describes the sound the snow makes but does not give it any human qualities. Choice C compares the trees to old men. However, this line uses the word *like* to make a comparison, so it is a simile, not personification. Choice D is correct. In this line, the poet gives snowflakes the human ability to dance.

Another element of poetic language is a writer's use of sound. Two sound techniques often used in poetry are **alliteration** and **onomatopoeia**. Alliteration is the repetition of beginning sounds. For example, in the line *The long, lonely lane stretched out before her*, three words begin with the letter *l*: *long*, *lonely*, and *lane*. Onomatopoeia is the use of words that sound like what they are describing. Examples include *clank*, *plop*, *screech*, and *thud*. In **Example 2**, the correct answer is choice F, *alliteration*. The words *sound* and *snow* both start with the same sound.

Writers also use **special type treatments** to emphasize ideas or emotions. **Example 3** asks you to consider why the poet uses capital letters for some words. The poem is about the narrator's search for quiet in a noisy house. All the words that are in capital letters



describe noisy sounds. The poet most likely wanted to emphasize the loud sounds the narrator is trying to escape. Choice B, *show the loudness of certain sounds*, is correct.

Other type treatments you may encounter include the use of **bold** or *italic* type to emphasize the importance of certain words or to show that they should be stressed.

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

This passage is an excerpt from a book about two boys named Cecil and Carlos who are new to their school. Two other boys named Hendry and Reno have been picking on them. Carlos finally loses his temper.

from **The Gotcha Plot**

1 **T**hen, before Cecil could stop him, Carlos shoved Hendry into the lockers. Hendry looked really surprised. He hadn't thought Carlos would cross him. But Carlos was much stronger than he looked. He was a wrestler, and he lifted weights.

2 Hendry made a thud against the lockers that echoed down the hall. Kids stopped. They began to form a little circle around the four boys.

3 "Hey, Hendry," one voice taunted from the group surrounding them. "You gonna let him talk to you like that? A big dude like you?"

4 "Yeah!" another voice sneered. "Lookit the little guy get Hendry!"

5 Laughter followed.

6 Hendry rebounded off the lockers. His fists were doubled and his face was red with anger. Cecil's heart pounded. Quickly, he looked for an escape route. He and Carlos had to get out of there. And fast!

7 But students blocked every way out. Everyone was whispering and muttering to each other. They were waiting to see the fight. There was no way to escape. He and Carlos were doomed . . .

8 Reno hung back behind Hendry. He was hiding again. What a fraud Reno was.

9 Hendry walked toward Carlos. He grinned evilly. He flexed his fingers. This was the chance he had been waiting for.

10 "I think you guys need a lesson," he sneered. "You gotta be more polite. Come on, you puny little runt," Hendry taunted. He began circling Carlos . . .

11 Carlos drew back his arm. Just as he was ready to throw a punch, Mrs. Harvey broke into the circle. Reno quickly jumped back into the crowd. He tried to hide.

12 Mrs. Harvey planted herself between Carlos and Cecil and Hendry. Her voice was like ice.

13 "I know what you're up to, Hendry," Mrs. Harvey said. "I know your style. Unless you want to get suspended, I suggest you hightail it out of here." Mrs. Harvey put her hands on her hips. She waited.

14 The group of students broke up. They began to move away slowly.

15 "Yeah, okay," Hendry said sullenly. He squinted his eyes at Cecil and Carlos. He mouthed some words at them.

16 Cecil couldn't tell what he was saying, but he bet it wasn't "Have a good day."

- 4 The idiom cross him means—
- F walk across his path.
 - G go against him.
 - H get angry with him.
 - J reach for him.
- 5 The simile her voice was like ice means—
- A her throat was cold.
 - B she spoke in a hard, cold manner.
 - C her voice cracked.
 - D she sounded like an icicle dripping.
- 6 The phrase He and Carlos were doomed is an example of—
- F a simile.
 - G a metaphor.
 - H an idiom.
 - J hyperbole.

Poetic language is not limited to poetry. Writers also use these techniques in prose. **Example 4** asks about the meaning of an **idiom** in a prose passage. An idiom is a phrase that has a different meaning than the individual words within the phrase. The idiom “cross someone” means to disagree with or confront someone. Choice G, *go against him*, is correct.

To answer **Example 5**, you must think about the meaning of a **simile**. You know that a simile is a comparison that uses the words *like* or *as*. In this example, the writer compares a voice to ice, which is cold and hard. Choice B, *she spoke in a hard, cold manner*, is correct.

Example 6 tests your understanding of figurative language. To answer the question, first think about the literal meaning of the words. “To be doomed” means to be facing death or complete destruction. While the boys have a problem, they are not facing either death or destruction. The words are an exaggeration. Choice J, *hyperbole*, is correct.

Test-Taking Tip

When interpreting figurative language, go beyond the literal meaning of the words and ask yourself, “What is the writer trying to say here?”

Go for it!

Test Practice 3: Analyzing Figurative Language

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

- 1 **T**he Wind and the Sun were arguing about who was the strongest. The Sun declared, “Nothing is stronger than me.”
- 2 “Except for me!” said the Wind. “I am stronger than the force of a thousand volcanoes.”
- 3 The Wind and the Sun argued this way for many days, until the Sun came up with a way to settle the argument. “See that man walking along the path?” he said. “Whoever can make him take off his coat will be declared the strongest.”
- 4 “This will be a breeze,” laughed the Wind. Whoosh! The Wind blew, and the man pulled on the hood of his coat. The Wind whistled, and the man shivered. The Wind roared like a lion and blasted the man with gales of cold air. But the harder the Wind blew, the tighter the man wrapped his coat around himself.
- 5 “My turn!” said the Sun, coming out from behind a cloud. The Sun began to shine gently. As the Sun’s warm rays touched the man’s face, he grew warmer and warmer. Then he unbuttoned his coat. As the Sun’s rays shined more and more, the man got even warmer. Finally the man took off his coat and found a place in the shade to cool off. The Sun smiled at the Wind. “When force fails, gentleness often succeeds,” he said.

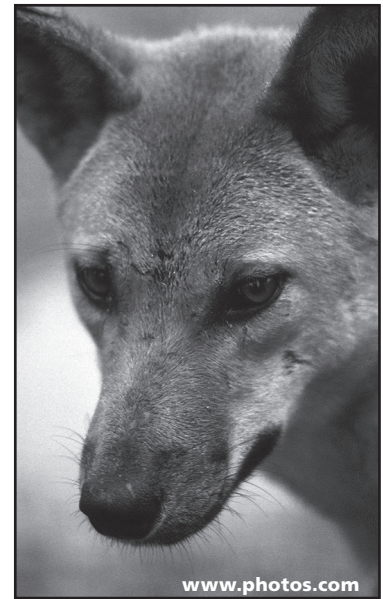
- 1 Reread this sentence from the passage.
 “I am stronger than the force of a thousand volcanoes.”
 This sentence is an example of—
 A onomatopoeia.
 B hyperbole.
 C an idiom.
 D personification.
- 2 The word whoosh is an example of—
 F a simile.
 G hyperbole.
 H alliteration.
 J onomatopoeia.
- 3 Which phrase from the passage is a simile?
 A “*This will be a breeze . . .*”
 B *The Wind whistled . . .*
 C *The Wind roared like a lion . . .*
 D “*When force fails, gentleness often succeeds . . .*”

Directions: Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

Lone Dog

by Irene Rutherford McLeod

- 1 I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;
I'm a rough dog, a tough dog, hunting on my own;
I'm a bad dog, a mad dog, teasing silly sheep;
I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.
- 5 I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,
A sleek dog, a meek dog, cringing for my meat,
Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,
But shut door, and sharp stone, and cuff and kick, and hate.
Not for me the other dogs, running by my side,
- 10 Some have run a short while, but none of them would bide*.
O mine is still the lone trail, the hard trail, the best,
Wide wind, and wild stars, and hunger of the quest!



*stay

- 4 Read the following phrase from the poem.

Wide wind, and wild stars

This phrase is an example of—

- F** alliteration.
G rhythm.
H repetition.
J onomatopoeia.
- 5 In which line does the author use repetition?
- A** *I'm a lean dog, a keen dog, a wild dog, and lone;*
B *I love to sit and bay the moon, to keep fat souls from sleep.*
C *I'll never be a lap dog, licking dirty feet,*
D *Not for me the fireside, the well-filled plate,*

- 6 Read the following phrase from the poem.

I'm a lean dog, a keen dog

The words *lean* and *keen* are an example of what element of poetry?

- F** rhyme
G onomatopoeia
H repetition
J alliteration



Points Earned/Total = ____/6