New England Common Assessment Program

Student Practice Test Booklet

Grade 6

Reading

Student Name: _____

School Name: _____

Reading—Session 1

Answer questions 1 and 2 on page 2.

1. A word that means "a type of tool" **and** "to twist and turn" is

   A. hammer.
   B. wrench.
   C. nail.
   D. saw.

2. An antonym for the word solemn is

   A. joyful.
   B. content.
   C. serious.
   D. gloomy.

GO ON

"In the Fast Lane" reveals some fascinating information about life. Read the article and then answer the questions that follow.

In the Fast Lane

Mary Beckman

Early in the quest for the secrets of aging, scientists noticed that larger animals, such as humans and whales, outlive smaller ones, such as dogs, cats, birds, and mice. The bigger the body, or so it seemed, the longer the life span. To explain this observation, scientists proposed the "rate of living" theory. All animals, they argued, have the potential to live the same amount of time, but those with higher metabolisms and faster heart rates—the smaller ones like birds—run through their allotment more quickly than we humans, with a heart rate of 70 beats per minute, or, say, a massive elephant, whose heart thumps at a ponderously slow 28 beats per minute. Some even thought that every creature might be allocated the same number of heartbeats.

2 Over time, though, the rate of living idea fell out of favor, and according to Steve Austad, a scientist who studies aging at the University of Idaho, it is now officially dead. The hypothesis was mortally wounded when it couldn't account for some of nature's dramatic exceptions. For example, hummingbirds have a heart rate so fast you can't count it, yet they live up to 14 years in the wild. At the same time, shrews—little insect-eating mammals that have a hummingbird's high-powered metabolism—survive only a couple of years.

Answer questions 3 through 6 on page 2.

3. In paragraph 2, what is meant by "fell out of favor"?
   A. was no longer believed
   B. was broken
   C. suffered a fall
   D. changed positions

4. According to the article, a hummingbird and a shrew have similar heart rates but different
   A. life spans.
   B. habitats.
   C. enemies.
   D. diets.

5. This article is **mostly** about
   A. Steve Austad.
   B. an elephant.
   C. the "rate of living" theory.
   D. different sizes of animals.

6. Another good title for this article is
   A. "Steve Austad Makes a Discovery."
   B. "Hummingbirds, Beware!"
   C. "Theory of Aging Dies of Natural Causes."
   D. "Our Friend, the Elephant."

Answer question 7 on page 2.

7. Explain the "rate of living" theory. Use information from the article to support your answer.

On many of the Caribbean islands, Anansi the spider is portrayed as a trickster. Read this story about Anansi and the turtle. Then answer the questions that follow.

Anansi and Turtle

retold by Mary Furlough

One day Anansi was just sitting down to the table in his house to eat some baked yams. Now, Turtle had been crawling all day, traveling from one place to another, and just as he came to Anansi's house he smelled the most delicious food he had ever smelled. Since he had been traveling all day he was hungry, so he went up to Anansi's house and knocked.

Anansi came to the doorway looking real mean, hoping that whoever had knocked would go away. He pretended not to see Turtle, and gazed up high as he looked out the door.

"Down here," said Turtle, who is very low to the ground.

"Oh, it's you, Turtle," said Anansi. "What do you want?"

"Well, I have been traveling all day," said Turtle, "and I was wondering if you would share your meal with me."

Now, Anansi looked down at Turtle and said, "Oh, all right. Come on in here." For, you see, it was the polite custom in Anansi's country to share your meal with anyone who came to your door at mealtime. Anansi brought Turtle in and said, "Sit down. Have a seat." Turtle crawled up to the table and sat in a chair. "Help yourself," said Anansi.

Turtle was just about to help himself to the baked yams on the table when Anansi hollered out, "Turtle, don't you know better than to come to the table with dirty hands?" Turtle looked down at his hands, and sure enough, they were dirty because he'd been crawling all day. So Turtle got up and went outside to the creek. He washed his hands, and for good measure, he washed his face, too. By the time he got back to the house and crawled up on the chair, Anansi had already started to eat.

But as Turtle started to help himself, Anansi said again, "Turtle, I told you, you can't come to the table and help yourself with dirty hands." Turtle looked down and, sure enough, his hands were dusty again because he had crawled back up the trail from the creek, and the trail was dusty. So Turtle got down from his place and started down the trail again. In the meantime, Anansi was eating as fast as he could, stuffing his face, trying to eat everything so he wouldn't have to share.

Turtle got down to the creek and washed his hands again, but this time, when he came out of the creek he made sure he crawled back on the grass. He got back to the house, back up to his place at the table, and started to help himself. But Anansi was just stuffing the last bite of yams into his mouth!

Turtle looked at Anansi and said slowly, "Thank you for sharing your meal with me, Anansi. If you're ever in my part of the country, why don't you come by and share a meal with me?" Turtle crawled down and went on his way.

Anansi thought about it and thought about it, and wanted to enjoy that free meal at Turtle's house. Finally, after a few weeks, he couldn't stand it any longer, so he set out to find where Turtle lived. Anansi got up early one morning and began to travel. He crept from one bush to another, all day long, just taking his time, until he finally came to the place where Turtle lived. Now Turtle lived at the bottom of the creek, but as Anansi walked up, Turtle was sitting on the bank sunning himself. It was just about the supper hour!

Turtle looked at Anansi and said, "Welcome, Anansi. Did you come to share a meal with me?"

"Yes, yes," said Anansi.

"All right, Anansi," said Turtle. "You sit here on the bank and wait while I go set the table." Turtle dived down under the creek to his house. Anansi was up on the bank, dancing around on all his legs. He couldn't wait. Finally, Turtle came up and said, "Come down, Anansi. The table is all ready."

Turtle dived down under the water and sat at his table. Anansi jumped in the water to dive like Turtle did, but he went just under the surface of the water and then popped back up and floated on the top. He tried to dive again, and went just below the surface

of the water, then popped back up and floated on the top. He stuck his head under the water and he could see Turtle down there, under the creek, slowly eating his meal. There was a plate set for Anansi, but he couldn't get to it. Anansi swam to the edge of the creek and climbed a tree. He jumped off, he dived off, he climbed up and did a belly-flop—but every time he hit the water, he would go just under the surface a little bit and then pop right back up and float. Anansi just could not get himself to sink!

But Anansi was not about to miss his chance for a free meal. He swam to the shore and danced about on all his legs, trying to think of a way to get down to Turtle's table. "I know," he said out loud. "I've got pockets!" So he started picking up pebbles and putting them in his jacket pockets. Then he jumped back in the water, sank right down, and landed in the chair Turtle had set out for him.

There was the most beautiful banquet Anansi had ever seen on that table! Turtle had clams, he had eel, he had lily pads, he even had watercress sandwiches. He had everything Anansi could think of. And Turtle was sitting there, helping himself to that fine meal, very slowly.

Anansi filled his bowl with some of each delicious kind of food and was just about to start eating when Turtle looked at Anansi and said, "In my country, one must always take off his jacket before sitting at the table." It was true; Turtle had taken off his own jacket before sitting down to eat.

Anansi looked at the food, looked at Turtle, and slowly took off his jacket with the pebbles in the pockets. The jacket sank to the bottom and Anansi popped back up to the surface and floated on top. Below him, he could see Turtle slowly finishing his meal.

When you set out to outsmart someone, there's usually someone out there who can outsmart *you*.

Answer questions 8 through 11 on page 3.

8 Why does Anansi come to the doorway looking mean?

A. He has been talking on the telephone.
B. He has little food.
C. He does not feel well.
D. He does not want to share his food.

9 Why does Anansi invite Turtle into his house?

A. to be generous
B. to repay Turtle
C. to help Turtle
D. to be polite

10 Why does Turtle **most likely** invite Anansi into his home?

A. to be polite
B. to share Turtle's food
C. to enjoy Turtle's company
D. to get even

11 To be polite at Turtle's house, Anansi must

A. wash his hands.
B. take off his jacket.
C. put his napkin in his lap.
D. wear his necktie.

Answer question 12 on page 3.

12 Explain how Anansi tricks Turtle. Use information from the story to support your answer.

Answer questions 13 through 16 on page 4.

13. When Turtle invites Anansi to his table, what is Anansi's problem?
    A. He floats.
    B. He cannot swim.
    C. He has dirty hands.
    D. He is very thirsty.

14. Anansi thinks that the food Turtle has on his table is
    A. limited and ordinary.
    B. the most beautiful Anansi has ever seen.
    C. very similar to what Anansi had served.
    D. too spicy and strong.

15. At the end of the story, Turtle can **best** be described as
    A. disloyal.
    B. clever.
    C. greedy.
    D. caring.

16. What is the theme of this story?
    A. Charity is important.
    B. Crime does not pay.
    C. Short visits make long friends.
    D. Treat people fairly.

Answer question 17 on page 4.

17. Did Turtle treat Anansi fairly? Explain your answer by using information from the story as support.

Acknowledgments

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Measured Progress