

Grades 9-11
English Language Arts
Reading, Language, and Listening
Answer Key

June 2014



Reading Passage

Questions #1-9

What Comes Next

1 “You need to get your mind off things,” my friend Cassie announced. “And whenever I need to get *my* mind off things, this is where I go.”

2 “Have I ever told you that the ocean kind of creeps me out?”

3 “I believe you may have mentioned it once or twice, yes.”

4 We were halfway to the edge of the water, burdened down with piles of snorkeling equipment that Cassie accumulated in startling quantities. During the entire trip to the beach, I had been replaying the conversation I’d had with my father that morning about what I was going to do after graduation. That event was over a year away, but my father had a tendency to plan for everything eons in advance, and he expected the rest of his family to do the same. If we didn’t, he was more than happy to step in and offer plans of his own.

5 “I think it would do you good to get away from home,” he had said. “Out of your comfort zone. Maybe go to college out of state, or even travel overseas for a while. A lot of young people do that before deciding what they want to do, you know.”

6 “I have friends here.”

7 “You’d make new friends there. And think of the experiences you’d have!”

8 My father wants me to see the world, immerse myself in foreign cultures, broaden my horizons, that kind of thing. My question to him was why I would leave a place where I was happy, to risk unhappiness somewhere far away.

9 “Here we are,” Cassie said. “My absolute favorite spot in the world.”

10 “*You* don’t want me to go, do you? Away, I mean.”

11 “Oh no, you’re not getting me involved in that debate. Now get your gear on. This is going to blow your mind.”

12 “So tell me, oh Queen of the Sea, what happens if we see a shark?”

13 “Try to make yourself look as unappetizing as possible.”

14 Cassie laughed, as if congratulating herself on the funniest thing ever said. Truthfully, it was not really the prospect of sharks—which, as far as I knew, didn’t inhabit this region anyway—that made me apprehensive about the ocean. I wasn’t one of those people who refused to take a bath for a month after seeing the movie *Jaws*. It had more to do, I think, with the utter vastness of the ocean itself, the way the expanse of water stretched out so far into the distance that it seemed to go on forever. Who knew what lay beneath it all?

15 I was just a little girl the last time I’d gone snorkeling, on a weekend excursion to the beach with my parents. My father was going through a short-lived marine biology phase, and was determined to teach my mother and me about what he called “the inexplicable wonders” of the ocean. I recalled the sensation of moving slowly through the liquid landscape as I looked through my mask at the cloudy terrain below, imagining that behind every rock lurked a community of strange, menacing creatures. I had recently seen a nature show about the kinds of fish—if you could even call them fish—that inhabited the greatest depths of the oceans: grotesque, insect-like things with translucent bodies, huge eyes, and feelers that sprouted from their heads like some kind of alien appendages. Although of course I knew these monstrous things existed so far down that no human ever encountered them, the thought that they even existed down there gave me the shivers.

16 At one point during that snorkeling expedition, as I was paddling around through the murk, it suddenly seemed as if the bottom fell out of the ocean floor. I could feel a corresponding drop in the pit of my stomach as the water around me turned colder, and deepened to where I could no longer see the bottom at all. The fact that both my parents were only yards away didn’t help: I was certain that I had passed some boundary and entered a world where I did not belong.

17 “How did I let you talk me into this?” I said to Cassie, but she was already yards ahead, slapping her fins, penguin-like, through the shallow water.

18 I put on my mask and adjusted the snorkel along the side of my head as carefully as I could, knowing that I’d probably suck vast quantities of sea water through it just the same. (“Hey,” my father used to gently mock, “save some for the fish!”) Gazing off into the distance, I thought about the people inhabiting the houses that lined the coast, and those aboard the ship that was passing by just off shore—living mysteries, all of them. I glanced back at Cassie, who was gently gliding through the water near an outcrop of rocks, her face down, her snorkel jutting into the air like some kind of weird antenna.

We had been friends since we were kids, and though our personalities could not have been more different, we understood each other on some basic level that I couldn't have put into words if someone demanded it. She was, needless to say, one of the people I could not stand the prospect of leaving behind, a source of comfort who made the prospect of "new experiences" pale in comparison.

19 "C'mon, slowpoke," she called, now treading water out by the reef. "You won't believe how beautiful it is down there."

20 Beauty was not a concept I'd ever associated with the ocean before. But watching Cassie then, perceiving the look of utter joy on her face, it struck me just how differently the two of us viewed the world, and how the depths that so spooked me on occasion were to her a source of never-ending wonder and promise.

21 I took a deep breath as I moved out farther, past the gentle waves breaking against my thighs, and gave one last adjustment to my mask and snorkel before stretching out into a swim, resolved to try and let her show me whatever might be out there, whatever might come next.

Question #1

Grade 9-10

1



What effect does the narrator's use of the phrase "eons in advance" have on her description of her father in paragraph 4?

- (A) The loaded phrase shows that the narrator believes her father's planning is funny.
- (B) The inaccuracy leads the reader to think that the narrator misinterprets her father.
- (C) The exaggeration reinforces the idea that the father makes a lot of advanced plans.
- (D) The emotion in the phrase illustrates that the narrator expects her father to say something else.

Option A: This answer is incorrect. The phrase is loaded, but the narrator obviously uses it with deliberate purpose to describe her father's planning, not to show he is funny.

Option B: This answer is incorrect. The narrator may or may not misunderstand her father, but the phrase is an exaggeration or hyperbole rather than an inaccuracy.

Option C: **This answer is correct.** The phrase "eons in advance" is clearly a conscious exaggeration that reinforces the idea that the father is a super planner which seems to clash with the way the rest of the family works.

Option D: This answer is incorrect. The phrase expresses a strong emotion toward her father, but it is one of affectionate exasperation, not expectation.

Question #2

Grade 9-10

2



Part A

Which is a central idea of the passage?

- A) The sea is a place of danger.
- B) Adolescence is a difficult transition into a new life.
- C) Parents usually know what is best for their children.
- D) It is better to trust your own feeling than to trust friends.

Part B

Select the detail from the passage that supports the central idea.

- 16 At one point during that snorkeling expedition, as I was paddling around through the murk, it suddenly seemed as if the bottom fell out of the ocean floor. I could feel a corresponding drop in the pit of my stomach as the water around me turned colder, and deepened to where I could no longer see the bottom at all. The fact that both my parents were only yards away didn't help: I was certain that I had passed some boundary and entered a world where I did not belong.

Question #3

Grade 9-10

3



Select two phrases from the passage that support the idea that the narrator fears the future that lies before her.

14 Cassie laughed, as if congratulating herself on the funniest thing ever said. Truthfully, it was not really the prospect of sharks—which, as far as I knew, didn't inhabit this region anyway—that made me apprehensive about the ocean. I wasn't one of those people who refused to take a bath for a month after seeing the movie *Jaws*. It had more to do, I think, with the utter vastness of the ocean itself, the way the expanse of water stretched out so far into the distance that it seemed to go on forever. Who knew what lay beneath it all?

Other Correct Responses:

- “Who knew what lay beneath it all?” and “with the utter vastness of the ocean itself,”
- “Who knew what lay beneath it all?” and “the way the expanse of water stretched out so far into the distance that it seemed to go on forever.”

Question #4
Grade 9-10

4



What connotation does apprehensive have in paragraph 14 of the passage?

- (A) It indicates neutral feelings.
- (B) It shows that the narrator is somewhat worried.
- (C) It implies that the narrator is tense but hopeful.
- (D) It conveys that the narrator is afraid, even terrified.

Option A: This answer is incorrect. "Apprehensive" is somewhat negative rather than neutral, and the context bears that out.

Option B: This answer is correct. "Apprehensive" indicates a slight to moderate degree of anxiety.

Option C: This option is incorrect. "Apprehensive" does indicate a moderate degree of tension, but not necessarily hopefulness.

Option D: This option is incorrect. "Apprehensive" connotes a milder degree of anxiety than outright fear or terror.

Question #5

Grade 9-10

5



Part A

Why does the author mention the horror movie *Jaws* and a nature show about sea creatures?

- A To show why the narrator is intimidated by the unknown.
- B To show that snorkeling in the ocean can be dangerous.
- C To reinforce the idea that the unknown can be challenging.
- D To help describe what the narrator sees while snorkeling.

Part B

Select the detail from the passage that supports the answer to Part A.

- A "I wasn't one of those people who refused to take a bath for a month after seeing the movie *Jaws*."
- B "Who knew what lay beneath it all?"
- C "I had recently seen a nature show about the kinds of fish—if you could call even call them fish—that inhabited the greatest depths of the oceans: grotesque, insect-like things with translucent bodies, huge eyes, and feelers that sprouted from their heads like some kind of alien appendages."
- D "I put on my mask and adjusted the snorkel along the side of my head as carefully as I could, knowing that I'd probably suck vast quantities of sea water through it just the same."

Part A

Option A: This answer is correct. The author uses these fearsome references to show how the narrator feels about swimming in the ocean, but also as part of the larger allegory that she fears the unknown of her future.

Option B: This answer is incorrect. Though the narrator mentions these creatures, she is not actually afraid of the dangers. She states that there are no sharks in this area, and that it wasn't the prospect of sharks, but the vast unknown that was daunting.

Option C: *This answer is incorrect. The student may choose this answer because the narrator is challenged by her unknown future, but the sharks and sea creatures are not the challenge.*

Option D: *This answer is incorrect. The narrator flashes back to a time when she went snorkeling with her family, but she did not see sharks or the strange sea creatures from the nature programs during that experience.*

Part B

Option A: *This answer is incorrect. This detail shows that the narrator is not afraid of the film Jaws, but uses the reference as a metaphor for her fear of the unknown.*

Option B: **This answer is correct.** *The mystery of what lies under the water, the unknown, represents the narrator's apprehension of the unknown in her adult life.*

Option C: *This answer is incorrect. This description might seem to support the incorrect answer of what the narrator sees while snorkeling, but this describes creatures deep in the ocean she had seen on a nature show. She admits later that it is the fact that they are down there, not the way they look that makes her apprehensive.*

Option D: *This answer is incorrect. This detail supports option B in part A, which is incorrect.*

Question #6

Grade 9-10

6



Select two ways that the interactions with other characters support the development of the narrator's character.

- Cassie encourages her to hurry, and that eases the narrator's fears.
- Cassie expresses her feeling that the ocean is beautiful, and the narrator realizes she is right.
- The narrator's father encourages her to go beyond her comfort zone, and at the end she does.
- Going to the ocean with her family as a child makes the narrator feel assured about exploring new places.

Option A: *This answer is incorrect. When Cassie calls the narrator a 'slowpoke,' it reminds her of her fears instead of easing them.*

Option B: **This answer is correct.** *This interaction in paragraphs 19–21 shows how Cassie's adventurousness inspires the narrator to change.*

Option C: **This answer is correct.** *Her father recommends this approach in paragraph 5, and although the narrator initially resists, by the end she has successfully gone beyond her comfort zone.*

Option D: *This answer is incorrect. Though the narrator does visit the ocean as a child, the experience is frightening rather than comforting.*

Question #7
Grade 9-10

7



What does the reader learn about the narrator in the last paragraph?

Type your answer in the space provided.

She is ready to try new things.

Other Correct Responses:

- The narrator is determined/ resolved/ willing to take chances.
- She is ready to try new things/ face challenges/ face her fears.

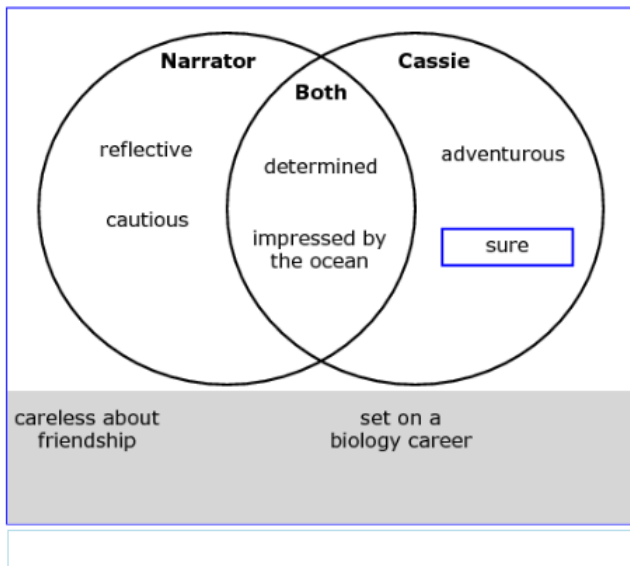
Question #8

Grade 9-10

8



Place the characteristics that describe the narrator, Cassie, or both in the diagram in the correct locations.



Question #9

Grade 11-12

9



Select four sentences to create an objective summary of the passage. Order the sentences so the summary reflects the arrangement of ideas in the passage. Place only one sentence next to each number.

1. A high school student goes snorkeling with her friend.
2. The narrator is concerned about the prospect of leaving for college.
3. The narrator is hesitant to snorkel because she has not enjoyed it in the past.
4. The narrator decides to trust her friend and go snorkeling even though she is afraid.

The narrator's father wants her to take more risks.
The narrator's friend likes to snorkel when she wants to relax.
Two high school students are one year away from graduation.
The narrator was scared to snorkel before because of the depth of the ocean.

Editing Task

Questions #10-12

10 - 12

There are five highlights in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect. For each highlight, type in the correction.

Have you ever wondered how a relatively thin sleeping bag, jacket, or ~~if you have a comforter~~ **comforter** filled with down can be so warm? Down feathers are the light, soft feathers ~~that they find~~ **found** beneath the tougher exterior feathers of birds. Their loose structure allows them to trap air, and this insulation keeps the bird warm. In the same way, humans use down as insulation in many everyday products that keep us warm.

People have been using down feathers in this way ~~since~~ **for** centuries. Though feathers from a variety of species of birds were used in the ~~past;~~ **past**, the most common source today is the domestic goose. Most of the supply comes from China, while the rest mostly originates in Europe and Canada.

How do you know whether your jacket or pillow is actually lined with down? The Federal Trade Commission, which promotes consumer protection, mandates that products labeled "100% Down" must contain nothing but down feathers. ~~If you just see "Down" on the label, this indicates there is a mixture of both fiber and feathers;~~ **feathers;** a label of "Goose Down" signifies a composition of at least 90% goose feathers.

Question #10

Grade 9-10

Have you ever wondered how a relatively thin sleeping bag, jacket, or ~~if you have a comforter~~ comforter filled with down can be so warm? Down feathers are the light, soft feathers ~~that they find~~ found beneath the tougher exterior feathers of birds. Their loose structure allows them to trap air, and this insulation keeps the bird warm. In the same way, humans use down as insulation in many everyday products that keep us warm.

Question #11

Grade 9-10

People have been using down feathers in this way ~~since~~ for centuries. Though feathers from a variety of species of birds were used in the ~~past~~, past, the most common source today is the domestic goose. Most of the supply comes from China, while the rest mostly originates in Europe and Canada.

Question #12

Grade 9-10

How do you know whether your jacket or pillow is actually lined with down? The Federal Trade Commission, which promotes consumer protection, mandates that products labeled "100% Down" must contain nothing but down feathers. If you just see "Down" on the label, this indicates there is a mixture of both fiber and ~~feathers;~~ feathers; a label of "Goose Down" signifies a composition of at least 90% goose feathers.

Editing Task

Questions #13-15

13 - 15



There are five highlights in the passage to show which word or phrase may be incorrect. For each highlight, click the word or phrase that is correct.

In 1895, a man named William G. Morgan invented a game he called Mintonette. He modeled it on two other sports, tennis, and handball. This game soon became known as volleyball, the name comes from the volleys exchanged between the two teams.

Volleyball can be played either indoors or outdoors—for example, on the beach or grass. Today there are many different variations, such as footvolley and Hooverball. In footvolley (played with a soccer ball), which is from Brazil. Players use everything but their hands. Hooverball is played with a heavy medicine ball, which is caught and thrown back rather than hit across the net.

Volleyball is popular in many countries around the world, which has been an Olympic sport in 1964. Brazil, the United States, and Russia are frequent finalists in the competition. In 2008 the U.S. men's team beat Brazil for the gold medal.

Question #13

Grade 9-10

In 1895, a man named William G. Morgan invented a game he called Mintonette. He modeled it on two other ~~sports, tennis,~~ ~~sports: tennis~~ and handball. This game soon became known as ~~volleyball, the name~~ ~~volleyball; the name~~ comes from the volleys exchanged between the two teams.

Question #14
Grade 9-10

Volleyball can be played either indoors or outdoors—for example, on the beach or grass. Today there are many different variations, such as footvolley and Hooverball. In footvolley (played with a soccer ball), which is from Brazil. Players Brazil, players use everything but their hands. Hooverball is played with a heavy medicine ball, which is caught and thrown back rather than hit across the net.

Question #15

Grade 9-10

Volleyball is popular in many countries around the world, which world, and it has been an Olympic sport ~~in 1964~~ since 1964. Brazil, the United States, and Russia are frequent finalists in the competition. In 2008 the U.S. men's team beat Brazil for the gold medal.

Listening Passage

Questions #16-18

Audio Script:

[Orientation Statement:] Listen to classmates Samantha and Orlando prepare for a project.

SAMANTHA: I did some research online, and I found rules for how to market to kids. I think they are a good starting point for our project, even though we can't do all of them.

ORLANDO: Okay, what did you find?

SAMANTHA: So, one website said you need to use bright, distinctive colors and make the package "refer back to the brand." Which is making the package an extension of the toy, I think? He says another way to do it is to put some kind of character on the package.

ORLANDO: A lot of kids' cereals do that.

SAMANTHA: Yeah, there are a lot of cartoons that seem to like cereal. [VA: deliver previous somewhat sarcastically] Then, including imagery and graphics with a lot of colors again, and special fonts that reinforce something about the product. I think that's used on a lot of packaging for dolls.

ORLANDO: You mean all the pink and the frilly writing?

SAMANTHA: Mmm-hmm. Apparently stores actually call it the "pink aisle!" The next step is to communicate to both kid and parents, but in a way that is geared toward each of them. So, know your audience.

ORLANDO: What do you mean, "geared toward each of them"?

SAMANTHA: Oh—like parents want to know that a toy is educational or a cereal is healthy, but kids want the toy to be fun or the cereal to taste good.

ORLANDO: That makes sense. So, really, it's marketing to two totally different sets of people.

SAMANTHA: Exactly. Marketing calls those "demographics."

ORLANDO: So, the kid demographic and the parent demographic.

SAMANTHA: Right. The last thing is an interactive element, like something you can scan with a phone or the name of a website to go to.

ORLANDO: I think we could include a website, at least.

Question #16
Grade 11-12

16

What point is Samantha making when she mentions “demographics”?

- that advertisers market to specific types of people
- that marketing tries to reach all parts of the population equally
- that advertisers make decisions based on what aisle their product will be in
- that marketing considers the interests of children and adults when creating advertisements

Option A: This answer is correct. Demographics are specific groups of people who are targeted in advertising/marketing and she defines demographics in order to make this point.

Option B: This answer is incorrect. Samantha's point is that marketers target a specific portion of the population, not all of them.

Option C: This answer is incorrect. Though the "pink aisle" is mentioned in the discussion, it's not specifically in terms of demographics or where the item to be sold will be placed in the store.

Option D: This answer is incorrect. Though marketing may well do this in some instances, Samantha is making the point that advertisers are making specific decisions in the marketing of toys/cereals to children vs. adults.

Question #17

Grade 9-10

17



Based on the discussion, what two projects could the students be working on?

- a presentation on marketing
- getting ready for a yard sale
- designing a package for an invented product
- learning about what makes up demographics
- writing a mock public service announcement

Option A: This answer is correct. Students should choose this answer because the audio discusses marketing tactics.

Option B: This answer is incorrect. Some students may choose this answer because a yard sale could require marketing, but a yard sale is unlikely to focus in depth on how to package its products to most appeal to children.

Option C: This answer is correct. Students should choose this answer because the audio discusses strategies for packaging a product so that it will appeal to children.

Option D: This answer is incorrect. Some students may choose this answer because the audio mentions demographics, but demographics are clearly not the focus of the conversation.

Option E: This answer is incorrect. Some students may choose this answer because writing a mock public service announcement could involve using marketing strategies; however, the audio clearly talks about packaging, which would not be a part of a mock PSA.

Question #18

Grade 11-12

18



Based on the discussion, how does Samantha feel about cartoon characters on cereals?

- A They are specifically targeted at adults.
- B They are an interesting subject to research.
- C They manipulate kids into wanting the cereal.
- D They are a useful tool to engage children in healthy eating.

*Option A: This answer is incorrect. Samantha mentions marketing to both children and adults, but she does so in terms of the “next step.” She brings this point up **after** her comment about cartoons on cereal boxes. She was replying directly to Orlando’s mention of kids’ cereals when she talks about the cartoons. Therefore, Samantha’s concern for marketing to adults is not part of her opinion about cartoon characters on cereal boxes.*

Option B: This answer is incorrect. This may appeal as the speakers are conducting research and the use of cartoons on cereals is mentioned, but Samantha mentions cartoons to underline the absurdity of animals eating cereal, not as a point of research.

*Option C: **This answer is correct.** Considering the way Samantha delivers her opinion and the discussion prior and after, Samantha is asserting that the advertisers are manipulating children by appealing to them with cartoons.*

Option D: This answer is incorrect. Some students may choose this option because Samantha mentions that parents want to know that a cereal is healthy, but the actual reason for cartoons on cereals is to appeal to children, and not for health reasons.