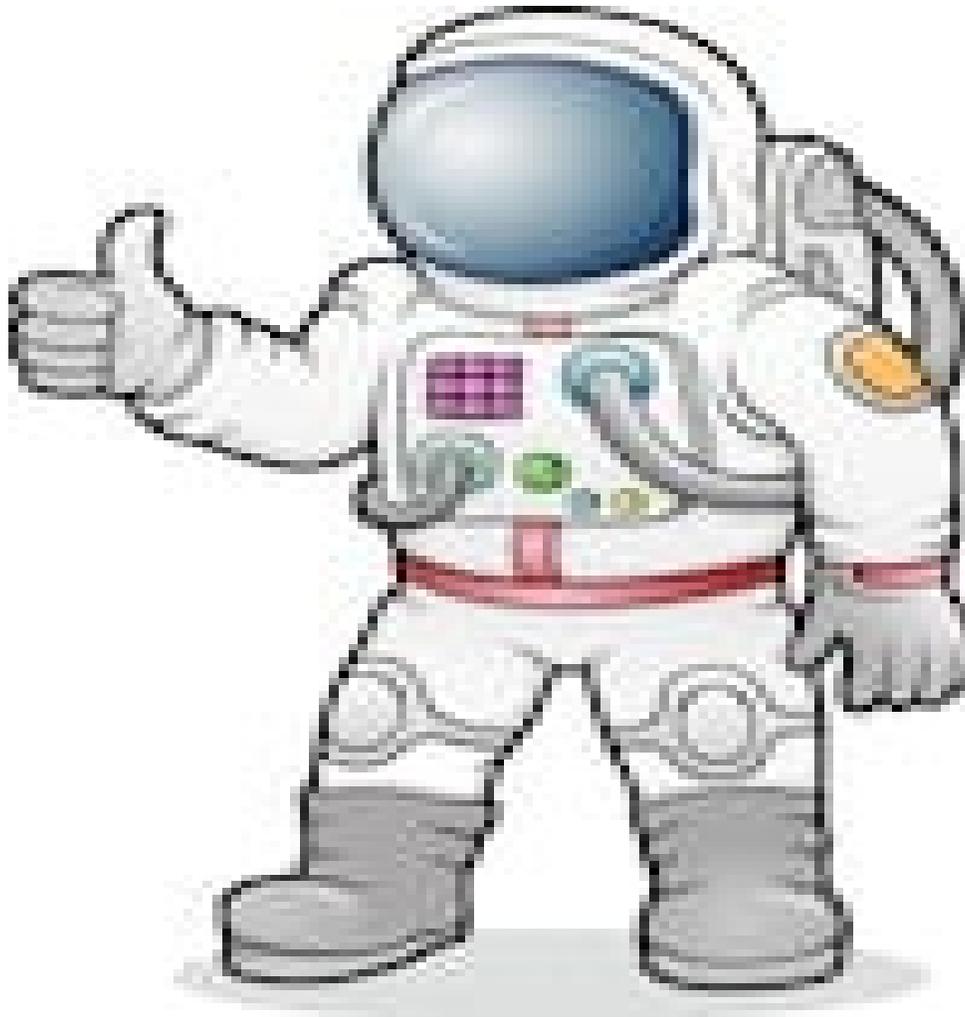


6th Grade ELA



To Proficiency and
Beyond!

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Glossary of Academic Terms

accurate – correct, precise, exact

alliteration – repetition of consonant sounds

alternate – different; another (example: Alternate Ending)

analogy – a comparison between two things; relationships between words to clarify meaning

analysis – a detailed examination of the structure or elements of a text or piece of text

analyze – to examine in detail the structure or elements of a text

anecdotes – short/engaging stories

annotate – add notes to text to clarify understanding

antonym – a word opposite in meaning to another

archetypes – a recurring character-type, theme, or idea in literature

argument – a set of reasons to persuade that something is a correct or right choice

attributes - characteristics

author's point of view – the perspective or feeling of the author about characters, ideas, details

author's purpose – the author's reason for writing/creating text or features in text

author's style – the way an author uses words in a text

central idea – the message the author is trying to convey throughout the text; the author's main point; the author's claim

characterization – the construction of literary characters; the description of characters

cite – to quote text

claim – a statement of truth which can be backed up by reasons and evidence

ineffective claims - claims that are not supported by reasons and evidence

effective claims - claims that are supported by reasons and evidence

classifications – groups or categories

climax – the highest point of action/tension in a literary/fiction text

coherent – makes sense from start to finish; logical

compare – state similarities between things/ideas

concluding statement/ section – conclusion, final section

conflict- a struggle between two ideas/forces/characters in literature

connotation – what comes to the reader's mind when a word, phrase, story is heard (connotative meaning)

context clues – hints the author gives to help with a difficult word or phrase

contrast – state differences between things/ideas

contributes - adds to, makes stronger

convey – to communicate

counterclaim – an opposing claim

definition- meaning of a word/term

describe- to give details about an event, character, or idea

descriptive words/phrases – words used to give details about a character, event, or idea

details – a particular item of information about a character, event, or idea in a text

determine – to discover

development of ideas – how the claim, central idea, or prompt answer in a piece of writing is created through evidence and support

dialogue – conversation between characters in a text

distinct – clear, specific

distinguish – to point out, to spot

domain-specific vocabulary – words specific to a certain type of writing (informational, argumentative, narrative)

drama – literary text written in the form of a play for the theater

drama elements – all of the important parts of a play, such as the actors, script, stage directions, etc.

evaluate – judge or analyze

exaggeration/hyperbole – a statement making something seem much greater/larger than it really is

explain – describe in detail, giving important facts and ideas

explanatory – type of writing that describes, gives details, and provides information

explicit – word for word, clear

exposition - explanation

fact – a statement that can be proven true, a piece of evidence

falling action – the point in a story between the climax and the resolution

figurative – not literal, metaphorical

figurative language – the use of words or phrases outside of their literal, everyday meanings

figures of speech – a word or phrase used in a non-literal way

formal style – a style of writing in which the writer refrains from personal pronouns, contractions, slang, or informal language.

generalizations – stereotypes or statements made without knowing more than just basic information; a broad statement

genre – type of writing, category of art

graphics – features in informational text which provide additional information

imagery – the use of descriptive language to paint a picture for the reader

implicit – inferred meaning

infer – to draw a conclusion based upon what is read and what is already

known

inference – a conclusion reached by using what is read (evidence) and what is known (reasons)

influence – an effect on the creation of something

informative – writing that provides information, facts, details

interpret – to explain the meaning of something

item – a MAAP question

key idea – the most important idea within a paragraph

literal – word for word, when words mean exactly what they say; explicit

literary devices – a technique the author/writer uses to

literary text – a fictional book, story, or poem

live version – a version of a story performed in the theater or on stage

logically – in a way that shows sound reasoning and makes sense

major theme – the most important lesson or moral in a piece of literature, repeated most often

manipulate – to control (an author manipulates text or literary devices)

metaphor – a comparison of unlike things which is not directly stated, it is implied

minor theme – a lesson or moral mentioned in a small part of a text, briefly mentioned

mood – how the text makes the reader feel

narrative techniques – different methods an author uses to tell a story, such as the plot, theme, setting, narrator, etc.

narrator – the character or voice who tells the events/story in a literary text.

nonliteral – figurative; inferred

opinion – how a writer feels about a certain topic, situation, or statement

organizational structure – how writing/text is put together

pacing – the timing of the text; how an author spreads out events or action

over time

personification – when an author gives human characteristics to a nonhuman thing

play – a piece of literature written (with parts and stage directions)

plot – the series of events in the text, the action in the text

plot structure – how the plot is organized, paced, and ordered

poem – a piece of writing, written in specific form or verses, which uses figurative language to achieve its purpose

point of view – how the author, a character, or the reader sees something or feels about something within the text

precise language – specific words chosen by the author to make things clear to the reader

quote – a specific line or group of lines from text

reasons – the writer's justification of his argument. Reasons are backed up by evidence from text.

relationships – connections between elements, ideas, or characters within a text.

relevant evidence – evidence that is directly connected to the argument, claim, or idea.

repeated lines – lines of poetry that appear more than once in a poem to create effect

resolution – how the story ends, specifically how the conflict is solved.

rhymes – repeated sounds within poetry, usually at the end of a line.

rising action – all action leading up to the climax which builds suspense or tension in a story

sensory details – details which help the reader picture text

setting – the location where the story or part of the story takes place

similes – comparisons of unlike things by using the words like, as, or than to compare

solution – the answer to problems in the text

speaker – the narrator of a poem

specific claims – reasons a writer gives for his/her argument

stanza – a group of lines in poetry which are set apart (like a paragraph in prose).

story elements – parts of a story, specifically devices or techniques used to tell the story (plot, setting, characters, structure, etc.)

structure – how a text is set up, ordered, and organized

stylistic devices – figures of speech, using words to create meaning and effect (irony, oxymoron, personification, comparison, etc.)

summary – a brief statement, set of statements which go over the main points of a story, including the theme and/or central idea.

support – evidence which helps hold up the claim

synonym – a word with the exact meaning as another word.

technical language – language specific to a certain field or area

text – a book, story, article, or other printed work

textual evidence – facts and details found in a text which support a claim or statement

theme – the lesson or moral within the story, either major or minor

tone – the attitude of the writer

topic – a subject in a text

trace – to uncover, find, or outline

transitional words – words which signal a change from one idea to another

turning point – the turning point leads the rising action into the falling action; a change in the action of a story

unfold – reveal or make clear

visualize – to picture events or ideas from text

word choice – the specific selection of words by an author to achieve an effect

6th Grade Vocabulary Practice Items

1. Read the sentence from paragraph 3.

Streams, stream banks, and the low lands around them provide important habitat for animals and plants that share the urban/suburban landscape with us.

What does the word habitat mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. area
- B. environment
- C. shelter
- D. territory

2. Read the sentence from paragraph 5.

Instead it hits impervious surfaces like hard pavement and rooftops and has no chance to infiltrate the soil.

What is the meaning of the word impervious as it is used in the sentence?

- A. affected
- B. cracked
- C. exposed
- D. resistant

3. Read the sentence from paragraph 7.

If all this extra water is diverted directly into a stream channel, several important changes will occur.

What is the meaning of the word diverted as it is used in the sentence?

- A. pushed
- B. sped forward
- C. brought together
- D. redirected

4. Read the sentence from paragraph 1.

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice, snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust.

What does the word remote mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. bothered
- B. delayed
- C. isolated
- D. reserved

5. Read the sentence from paragraph 12.

Then he held up his fore-paw as the Mole stepped gingerly down.

What does the word gingerly mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. angrily
- B. carefully
- C. clumsily
- D. quickly

6. Read the sentence from paragraph 3.

Workers carved sandstone from the hillside for walls and salvaged floor tiles from the ruins of an old Spanish fort.

What does the word salvaged mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. abandoned
- B. harmed
- C. increased
- D. recovered

7. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 1.

He rode through the streets demurely enough, but on reaching the open country roads his spirits broke forth into wild jubilation, and, urging the butcher’s horse to full gallop, he dashed away in true cowboy fashion.

What does the word **jubilation** mean in the sentence?

- A. boldness
- B. joyfulness
- C. playfulness
- D. sadness

Part B

Which quotation from the passage is another example of jubilation as it is defined in Part A?

- A. “. . . urging the butcher’s horse to full gallop, he dashed away. . . .” (paragraph 1)
- B. “Then he wanted still more liberty. . . .” (paragraph 2)
- C. “. . . he yelled and whooped to his heart’s content.” (paragraph 2)
- D. “This was unexpected.” (paragraph 4)

8. Read the sentence from paragraph 2 in “Changing Attitudes.”

At first, Colonial men did not intend to launch a full-scale rebellion against Great Britain.

What does the word rebellion mean as it is used in the sentence?

- A. activity
- B. change
- C. opposition
- D. retreat

9. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Paragraph 2: At first, Colonial men did not intend to launch a full-scale rebellion against Great Britain. Forming Sons of Liberty groups, they tried to bring about change through organized protests and acts of resistance to British policies. In 1768, they decided to boycott British-made products, such as cloth and tea, to force Parliament to repeal certain taxes. The men knew that the only way to get their boycott to work was to enlist their wives, sisters, and mothers. After all, women were the ones who shopped for and used the products.

Part A

What is the meaning of **boycott** as used in paragraph 2 of “Changing Attitudes”?

- A. blame
- B. deny
- C. dismiss
- D. reject

Part B

Which quotation from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “. . . to enlist their wives, sisters, and mothers.” (paragraph 2)
- B. “. . . the ones who shopped for and used the products.” (paragraph 2)
- C. “. . . female members started weaving their own cloth. . . .” (paragraph 3)
- D. “. . . they discussed the issues of the day with one another.” (paragraph 4)

10. Read the sentence from paragraph 3.

From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer, running manlike on two legs, but unlike any man that I had ever seen, stooping almost double as it ran.

What does the phrase flitted like a deer mean?

- A. glided smoothly and gracefully
- B. moved in short, quick bounds
- C. blended into the background
- D. dashed away in alarm

11. Read the excerpt from paragraphs 5–8.

. . . as soon as I began to move in his direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated, drew back, came forward again, and at last, to my wonder and confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in supplication.

At that I once more stopped. "Who are you?" I asked.

"Ben Gunn," he answered, and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward, like a rusty lock. "I'm poor Ben Gunn, I am; and I haven't spoke with a soul these three years."

Which two phrases from these paragraphs help you understand the meaning of **in supplication**?

- A. "took a step to meet me"
- B. "hesitated, drew back, came forward again"
- C. "threw himself on his knees"
- D. "held out his clasped hands"
- E. "sounded hoarse and awkward"

12. Paragraph 2: I was now, it seemed, cut off upon both sides; behind me the pirates, before me this lurking nondescript. And immediately I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not. Silver himself appeared less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods, and I turned on my heel, and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boats.

Paragraph 15: All this time he had been feeling the stuff of my jacket, smoothing my hands, looking at my boots, and generally, in the intervals of his speech, showing a childish pleasure in the presence of a fellow creature. But at my last words he perked up into a kind of startled slyness.

Which two meanings of the word creature are used in this passage (paragraphs 2 and 15)?

- A. one controlled by another person or organization
- B. living being that seems strange or frightening
- C. imaginary or fantastic being
- D. something created
- E. human being

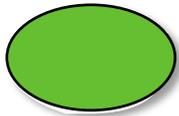
13. Paragraph 4: Perhaps the most well-known characteristic of this time period is the large, pyramidal earthen mounds, such as Emerald Mound in Adams County. These large mounds served as temples, mortuaries, chiefs' houses and other important buildings (Hudson, 1976). The mounds were built using baskets to carry loads of dirt to the desired location. The dirt was dumped out, and then stamped down to pack it in place. The sides of the mounds were usually very steep and an earthen ramp was added to the mound for easier access to the summit.

What does the word earthen mean as it is used in paragraph 4?

- A. made from cement
- B. made from packed dirt
- C. made from plastic
- D. made from tree bark

MAAP Annotation Marks for Success

During the Reading/Multiple Choice Section of Your Upcoming MAAP Assessment, be sure to ANNOTATE for SUCCESS. Use the following marks to ensure focus during the reading passages!



CIRCLE - ALL unknown words!

UNDERLINE -

Any context clues to help you define those words!

HIGHLIGHT -

Skim the questions and **HIGHLIGHT (in your text)** the words/phrases you are asked about!



STAR-

Put a star by the **MAIN/CENTRAL** idea of each paragraph!

Use these marks to help you answer your questions!

KEY: 6th Grade Vocabulary Practice Items

| Question | Answer | Standard |
|----------|--------|----------|
| 1 | B | RI 6.4 |
| 2 | D | L 6.4 |
| 3 | D | RI 6.4 |
| 4 | C | L 6.4 |
| 5 | B | L 6.6 |
| 6 | D | L 6.4 |
| 7 | B, C | RL 6.4 |
| 8 | C | RI 6.4 |
| 9 | D, C | L 6.6 |
| 10 | B | RL 6.4 |
| 11 | C, D | RL 6.4 |
| 12 | B, E | L 6.4 |
| 13 | B | RI 6.4 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage I

Excerpt from ***Addison Cooke and the Treasure of the Incas***

by Jonathan W. Stokes

1 Aunt Delia dropped Addison and Molly off in front of the New York Museum of Archaeology. It was a sprawling marble building, backlit by lightning strikes in the glowering night sky. Trees bent under the lash of a whipping wind. Addison and Molly dashed through the heavy raindrops of the growing storm, splashing their way through puddles to the basement entrance.

2 Aunt Delia and Uncle Nigel were museum curators,¹ so Addison and Molly knew the wooded grounds by heart. They cut through a maze of hedges and ducked under an arched portico. Skimming rainwater from his face, Addison found the basement key hidden in a crack of loose mortar. He unlocked the creaking iron door and hauled it open with all his strength. He and Molly slipped inside from the howling rainstorm, the great door booming shut behind them.

3 The New York Museum of Archaeology was Addison's favorite place in the world. Great echoing halls filled with Egyptian mummies, Mongolian battle armor, a Viking warship, and the eastern wing of an Aztec temple. Deep down in the musty, snaking passageways of the basement archives was a secret underground world the public never saw. A labyrinth of vaults where millions of specimens were filed and stored. This was their uncle's workplace.

4 Addison and Molly trotted through the dark corridors by feel, listening to the rising thunder rattling the cement walls above. They passed a long hallway crammed with crates of Ice Age bones for the Hall of Paleontology: saber-toothed tiger skulls with teeth curved like Arabian sickle swords, giant

sloth femurs heavy as tree limbs, dire wolf claws sharp as switchblades. At last they spotted a light glowing from an office at the end of a dark passage.

5 “Uncle Nigel, we’re here!” Molly called. . . .

6 “Your aunt has a lot to worry about right now,” explained Uncle Nigel. “People don’t visit museums as often as they used to. So your aunt and I have to work incessantly,2 like Slinkies on an escalator. If we don’t find a great exhibit that will draw visitors back to the museum, our funding will be slashed and . . .” Uncle Nigel trailed off. Then, looking hard at Addison and Molly, he seemed to decide that honesty was the best policy. “Well, we could lose our jobs.”

7 Addison and Molly weren’t sure how to respond. Molly busied herself picking bits of turf from her cleats. Addison drew in his notebook, sketching the Cherokee headdress he saw draped over the filing cabinet.

8 “The point is,” continued Uncle Nigel, “your aunt is on a short fuse. And you’d be wise to be model children for her until we sail through this rough patch.” . . .

9 “Well, that’s enough serious talk,” said Uncle Nigel. “I just returned from a dig in the jungles of Bolivia and found the most improbable relic. An artifact that’s not even supposed to exist! I don’t suppose you’d like to see it?”

10 “I don’t see why not,” said Addison, who could think of nothing better than a strange relic from a distant country.

11 As Uncle Nigel talked, Addison’s eyes darted to the shadowy corners of the office, containing relics from every era of history. Ancient maps, papyrus scrolls, and decaying mummies. Blood-encrusted samurai swords from feudal Japan. Maasai spears decorated in ostrich feathers. The fossil skeleton of an extinct dodo bird. Even the ten foot tusk of a narwhal, spiraled like a unicorn’s horn...

12 Uncle Nigel nodded and wound up his tale. "The Incas never delivered their treasure. Instead, they locked it away in a secret chamber and hid three keys across the Incan Empire. Each key contains a clue leading to the next. Locals believe Atahualpa's treasure is cursed . . . Fortune hunters have searched for it over the centuries, and none have returned alive. Legends say the treasure vault will open only for someone who has learned from King Atahualpa's mistakes." . . .

13 "So what did you find on your dig in Bolivia?" Addison asked quietly.

14 "Oh, only this," replied Uncle Nigel, unlocking the safe behind his desk and removing a fragile wooden box. He pried open the mildewed lid and tilted it to the light.

15 Addison's jaw dropped in amazement. Molly's followed suit. Inside the box lay an intricately carved stone, roughly the size of a large chess piece.

16 "One of the three keys!" cried Addison.

17 More thunder broke outside the museum. It shook the walls, as if giants upstairs were rearranging their furniture, and repeatedly changing their minds on where to set the couch. The wind howled so fiercely it could be heard even in the basement.

18 Molly shivered. "Is it real?" Uncle Nigel allowed himself a smile. "I'm pretty sure it is Atahualpa's first key," he replied, his precise Oxford accent elegantly slicing the words into perfect squares. "Though the key is made of stone, so we can't carbon-date it."

1. Which important idea is developed in paragraph 6?
 - A Uncle Nigel has been at the museum a long time.
 - B Uncle Nigel is afraid he may lose his job.
 - C Uncle Nigel has a plan to attract visitors to the museum.
 - D Uncle Nigel is hoping to start a new job soon.

2. What does the phrase “on a short fuse” mean as used in paragraph 8?
 - A hard to please
 - B hard to find
 - C easy to upset
 - D easy to frighten

3. How does paragraph 9 contribute to the structure of the story?
 - A It changes the setting of the story.
 - B It establishes the conflict in the story.
 - C It states the theme of the story.
 - D It foreshadows events in the story

4. How does the language in paragraph 12 contribute to the overall tone of the story?
 - A It introduces a threatening tone.
 - B It highlights the sorrowful tone.
 - C It stresses the mysterious tone.
 - D It creates a worried tone.

5. What do paragraphs 10 and 13 indicate about Addison?
 - A He is uncertain whether his uncle’s story is true.
 - B He is curious to see what his uncle has found.
 - C He knows that his uncle’s discovery will save the museum.

D He wishes he had gone with his uncle on the dig.

6. Which sentence from the story signals a turning point?

A "Addison and Molly weren't sure how to respond." (paragraph 7)

B "I just returned from a dig in the jungles of Bolivia and found the most improbable relic." (paragraph 9)

C "Instead, they locked it away in a secret chamber and hid three keys across the Incan Empire." (paragraph 12)

D "The wind howled so fiercely it could be heard even in the basement." (paragraph 17)

7. Which quotation is most important to include in a summary of the story?

A ". . . Addison and Molly knew the wooded grounds by heart." (paragraph 2)

B "'Uncle Nigel, we're here!' Molly called." (paragraph 5)

C "As Uncle Nigel talked, Addison's eyes darted to the shadowy corners of the office . . ." (paragraph 11)

D "I'm pretty sure it is Atahualpa's first key." (paragraph 19)

6th Grade Comprehension Passage I

Excerpt from ***Addison Cooke and the Treasure of the Incas***

by Jonathan W. Stokes

| Item Type | Correct Answer | | Standard |
|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 6.2 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.4 |
| 3 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 6.5 |
| 4 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy .RL 6.4 |
| 5 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 6.3 |
| 6 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL 6.3 |
| 7 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.2 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage II

Finding Sacagawea

by Eileen Charbonneau

1 Were we related? I had to find out.

2 I grew up in a house without books. Our family owned only an encyclopedia and a well-used dictionary. The only other books we had were those we borrowed from the library.

3 The day I was able to write the seventeen letters of my name and receive my library card was one I can remember as if it were yesterday, right down to the big desk that smelled of paper and paste and ink. I was so afraid that I'd made a mistake and would be banished from this wondrous place where the books lived. But I succeeded. The card was mine. My life as a reader had begun!

4 When I was ten, I found a book at the library about celebrated women. The book said that the American woman with the most statues in her honor was a Shoshone Indian named Sacagawea. She had been an interpreter on Lewis and Clark's great voyage from 1804 to 1806, joining them in the spring of 1805.

5 President Jefferson had hired Lewis and Clark and their band of adventurers to map and explore the United States, including the vast new territory just acquired from France in the Louisiana Purchase. Sacagawea was the only woman to go with them. She made the perilous journey across half our continent with her baby on her back. The presence of a mother and child was a sign that the expedition was a peaceful one and helped keep it safe from Indian attack.

6 Sacagawea provided a woman's laughter, strength, and endurance on the journey. During a boat mishap, she remained calm and saved

instruments and documents from floating down the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark needed Shoshone horses and guidance over the Rocky Mountains, so Sacagawea's help translating was crucial to the expedition's success.

7 When I discovered that Sacagawea and I had the same last name—Charbonneau—I jumped up from my place at my father's feet and announced my discovery to him.

8 My father put down his newspaper. Yes, he knew about the woman and her brave trek across the territory that was to become part of the United States. Yes, this woman had been married to a French Canadian named Charbonneau. Daddy's father was also a French Canadian. I asked if we could possibly be related.

9 My father said he didn't know, but he'd wondered himself if we had a common ancestor.

10 From that day on, it became our project. We used the resources of the Library of Congress, which began its collection with President Jefferson's books. We explored tiny libraries on American Indian reservations. We visited libraries in Canada, France, and Ireland, and we also entered the ever-expanding web of cyberspace. In search of our family, we made friends with the world.

11 After hours spent in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., poring over passenger lists of great ocean liners, I recognized the name of a girl from Ireland. I knew she had seen the Statue of Liberty for the first time on her nineteenth birthday in 1894. She had traveled across the Atlantic with one suitcase and the dream of a better life. Like Sacagawea, she was to marry a man named Charbonneau. "Dad!" I yelled. "Look! It's grandma!"

12 My father and I located family members galore on our search. One ran an ice-cream stand in the beautiful Laurentian Mountains of Quebec, Canada. Three brothers changed their name to Cole before traveling south to fight in the American Civil War. Two centuries before them, another set of

Charbonneau brothers had been traders with the Indians of the American West. One of these brothers fathered our line. The other's descendants led to the fur trader Toussaint, husband of Sacagawea, always facing west in her statues.

13 So now we know how we're related. We're cousins of the Shoshone woman with the baby on her back who explored America by canoe, horseback, and on foot to map it for the first time. Her baby, Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau, also called Pomp, was educated by Captain William Clark and became a guide, too. He traveled through Europe as the guest of a prince and could understand five languages. Once he helped the United States govern an Indian mission in California, but lost his position for being "too fair" to the Indians. I think I would have liked that cousin.

14 Now I'm a storyteller. I travel through the past to find stories for my own books. In search of stories I spend lots of time in libraries, for that's still where the books live. In books and in life, the words of a Lakota Indian saying ring true for me: Mitakuye oysain, "We are all related."

1. In paragraph 4, what does the phrase “woman with the most statues in her honor” show about Sacagawea?
 - A that she was a charming person
 - B that she had been fearless
 - C that she is a famous person
 - D that she died long ago

2. How is the author’s pride in her ability to read introduced in the article?
 - A through a story from her childhood
 - B by contrasting her family with other families
 - C through examples of the books she finished
 - D by comparing herself with other readers

3. How do the details about Sacagawea in paragraphs 5 and 6 contribute to the development of the article?
 - A by helping readers see the difficulties in Sacagawea’s life
 - B by explaining the mystery surrounding Sacagawea’s life
 - C by creating curiosity for readers about where Sacagawea traveled
 - D by describing how Sacagawea played an important role in history

4. Which is the best definition of “crucial” as it is used in paragraph 6?
 - A heroic
 - B fantastic
 - C important
 - D urgent

5. Based on the article, the author's relationship to Sacagawea is developed through:

- A a comparison of the author's life to that of Sacagawea
- B explanations that show how the author is similar to Sacagawea
- C examples of the research that the author did on the life of Sacagawea
- D a chronological sequence of events that explained Sacagawea's life to the author

6. Read this sentence from paragraph 13.

We're cousins of the Shoshone woman with the baby on her back who explored America by canoe, horseback, and on foot to map it for the first time.

What does this sentence suggest about Sacagawea?

- A how long she participated in the expedition
- B how remarkable her accomplishment was
- C how familiar she was with the areas being explored
- D how she felt about her leadership abilities

7. Which sentence best expresses a central idea of the article?

- A "Our family owned only an encyclopedia and a well-used dictionary." (paragraph 2)
- B "The presence of a mother and child was a sign that the expedition was a peaceful one and helped keep it safe from Indian attack." (paragraph 5)
- C "My father said he didn't know, but he'd wondered himself if we had a common ancestor." (paragraph 9)
- D "We explored tiny libraries on American Indian reservations." (paragraph 10)

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage II

Finding Sacagawea

by Eileen Charbonneau

| Item Type | Correct Answer | | Standard |
|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI 6.4 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | A | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 3 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI 6.5 |
| 4 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L 6.4 |
| 5 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 6 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.4 |
| 7 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.2 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage III

Drawing Horses

by Cerelle Woods

1 I'd give anything to draw horses the way Euphemia Tucker does. She draws them in the margins of spelling tests and on the back of her math homework. They're always running wild and free, their manes swirling over the paper like clouds across the sky.

2 Euphemia's horses look so real you can almost feel their breath on your face.

3 Luke Anderson, who sits next to me, says he can't decide whether my horses look more like Great Danes or kitchen tables. He also calls me Messy. I prefer Marisa, which is my real name, to Missy, which is what everyone—except Luke—calls me. If I could draw like Euphemia, I'd sign all my pictures Marisa. Nobody messes with Euphemia's name, not even Luke Anderson.

4 Today I sharpened my pencil and took a clean sheet of paper out of my desk. Then I closed my eyes and pictured one of Euphemia's perfect horses rearing up and pawing the air with its sharp hooves. I could see it so clearly I was sure I'd be able to draw it this time.

5 I started with what I do best: a big, billowing mane. Next I roughed in most of the body and drew a long tail streaming out behind. It really wasn't turning out half bad until I got to the front-legs-pawing-the-air part, which looked more like two macaroni noodles with tiny marshmallows for hooves.

6 I tried again, but the hooves still didn't seem right, and rather than doing them over and over, I erased them and went on to the head. That was when I really ran into trouble.

7 First I drew some great donkey ears, followed by sheep ears, pig ears, kangaroo ears . . . everything except horse ears. I erased again and again

until I had rubbed a hole in the paper. That was when Luke Anderson poked his nose over my shoulder.

8 I scratched a big X through my earless, macaroni-legged horse, wadded it up into a little ball, and stuffed it under the lid of my desk.

9 I was still upset when I got off the school bus this afternoon. I walked past the neighbors' horses standing in the field next to our house. They've been in that field for as long as I can remember. Their stringy manes never float into the sky. Their ragged old tails hang straight down to the ground, and I've never seen them run.

10 I brooded about it all through dinner. After I'd helped clear the dishes, I sat down with a stack of typing paper and a freshly sharpened pencil. Without Luke Anderson there to pester me, I hoped I'd have better luck. I practiced a few horses' heads, trying to get the 35 ears right. Nothing worked.

11 I tossed all the sketches into the trash and walked outside. The sun had just sunk below the horizon, feathering the whole sky with pink and orange wisps. Everything looked special in that light, even the scraggly horses next door.

12 I dragged a lawn chair over to the fence and sat down to take a better look at them. They'd never be free spirits like Euphemia's horses, but they did seem patient and strong. I noticed the curves of their muscles, the shadows on their faces, the shine along their backs. Their colors reminded me of dessert—rich chocolate, deep cinnamon, creamy caramel.

13 I was just sitting there, feeling kind of dazzled by the unexpected beauty of it all, when I remembered the big box of pastels my grandmother had sent.

14 An idea began to take shape in my mind, and just then the cinnamon horse turned its head toward me and nodded three times. It was like a sign.

15 I hurried into the house, grabbed the pastels and some paper, and raced for the door.

16 I choose a deep brown, pulling it across my paper in the shape of the chocolate horse. It comes out right the first time, even the legs and ears! Drawing horses is easier when they're right in front of you, and I'll say this for the ones next door—they hold their poses.

17 The sky is turning out just as I'd hoped, too; all the pinks and reds blending together like a strawberry parfait, and I love the way the caramel horse's mane is blowing, just barely, in the wind.

18 It doesn't look exactly like one of Euphemia's horses, of course. But I already know that when this drawing is finished, I'll be signing it Marisa.

1. In paragraph 1, what does the simile “like clouds across the sky” help the reader understand about the horses in Euphemia’s sketches?

- A They are drawn sloppily.
- B They look like they are in motion.
- C They are getting tangled up with each other.
- D They look like they are trotting through fog.

2. How does paragraph 4 contribute to the development of the plot?

- A They establish Marisa’s problem.
- B They emphasize Marisa’s hopefulness.
- C They contrast Marisa’s artistic abilities with Euphemia’s.
- D They illustrate Marisa’s determination to not let Luke bother her.

3. Which phrase best conveys the tone in paragraphs 1-8?

- A “They’re always running wild and free. . .” (Paragraph 1)
- B “He also calls me Messy.” (Paragraph 3)
- C “Next I roughed in most of the body. . .” (Paragraph 5)
- D “I scratched a big X through my earless, macaroni-legged horse, . . .” (Paragraph 8)

4. Read this sentence from Paragraph 10.

I brooded about it all through dinner.

What effect does the word “brooded” have in the story?

- A It shows Marisa’s anxiety about her abilities.
- B It reveals Marisa’s motives for drawing.
- C It emphasizes how Marisa is growing as a character.
- D It indicates Marisa has a major decision to make.

5. How does paragraph 11 help convey the theme of the story?
- A They show that some situations take time to change.
 - B They prove that practice can help natural talents to develop.
 - C They suggest that inspiration may come in unexpected ways.
 - D They demonstrate that new ideas will eventually be accepted.
6. Which sentence best explains why Marisa's final horse drawing was different than her 13 first tries?
- A "Everything looked special in that light, even the scraggly horses next door." (Paragraph 11)
 - B "I noticed the curves of their muscles, the shadows on their faces, the shine along their backs." (Paragraph 12)
 - C "An idea began to take shape in my mind, and just then the cinnamon horse turned its head toward me and nodded three times." (Paragraph 14)
 - D "I choose a deep brown, pulling it across my paper in the shape of the chocolate horse." (Paragraph 16)
7. How does Marisa change while watching her neighbors' horses?
- A She realizes that Euphemia's horses do not look realistic, so she decides to try to draw better pictures than her friend.
 - B She decides to try a different way of drawing and is proud of her work.
 - C She realizes she can never be an artist like Euphemia but wants to draw like her anyway.
 - D She finally learns that drawing horses is easier with proper lighting and art supplies.

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage III

Drawing Horses

by Cerelle Woods

| Item Type | Correct Answer | | Standard |
|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. L 6.5 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.5 |
| 3 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.4 |
| 4 Multiple Choice | A | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.4 |
| 5 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.2 |
| 6 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.1 |
| 7 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 6.3 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage IV

Excerpt from *The Black Pearl*

by Scott O'Dell

1 I had put the seventh pearl on the scales and was carefully setting the small copper weights to make them come to a proper balance when I heard my father's steps outside the office. My hand shook at the sound and one of the weights slipped from my fingers. A moment later the heavy iron door swung open.

2 My father was a tall man with skin turned a deep bronze color from the glare of the sea. He was very strong. Once I saw him take two men who were fighting and grasp them by the backs of their necks and lift them off the ground and bump their heads together.

3 He came across the room to where I sat at the desk on my high stool and glanced at the ledger.

4 "You work with much rapidity," he said. "Six pearls weighed and valued since I left this morning." He wiped his hands on the tail of his shirt and took a pearl from the tray. "For this one," he said, "what is your notation?"

5 "Round. Fair. Weight 3.5 carats," I answered.

6 He rolled the pearl around in the palm of his hand and then held it to the light.

7 "You call this one only fair?" he asked. "It is a gem for the king."

8 "For a poor king," I said. After four months of working with my father I had learned to speak my mind. "If you hold it closer to the light, you will see that it has a flaw, a muddy streak, about midway through."

9 He turned the pearl in his hand. "With a little care the flaw can be peeled away," he said.

10 "That, sir, I doubt."

11 My father smiled and placed the pearl back in the tray. "I doubt it also," he said and gave me a heavy pat on the back. "You are learning fast, Ramón. Soon you will know more than I do."

12 I took a long breath. This was not a good beginning for the request I wanted to make. It was not good at all, yet I must speak now, before my father left. In less than an hour the tide would turn and the fleet sail from the harbor.

13 "Sir," I began, "for a long time you have promised me that when I was sixteen I could go with you and learn how to dive for pearls. I would like to go today

14 My father did not reply. He strode to the slit in the wall and peered out. From a shelf he took a spyglass and held it to one eye. He then put the spyglass down and cupped his hands and shouted through the slit.

15 "You, Ovando, leaning against the cask, send word to Martin, who leans against the tiller of the Santa Teresa, that there is much work to do and little time in which to do it."

16 My father waited, watching through the slit, until his message was sent forward by Ovando.

17 "If you go with the fleet," he said, "then all the male members of the Salazar family will be on the sea at once. What happens if a storm comes up and drowns the both of us? I will tell you. It is the end of Salazar and Son. It is the end of everything I have worked for."

18 "The sea is calm, sir," I answered.

19 "These words prove you a true landsman. The sea is calm today, but what of tomorrow? Tomorrow it may stand on end under the lash of a chubasco.¹"

20 "It is still a week or two before the big wind comes."

¹ Chubasco: a storm

21 “What of the sharks? What of the devilfish that can wring your neck as if it were the neck of a chicken? And the giant mantas by the dozens, all of them the size of one of our boats and twice as heavy? Tell me, what do you do with these?”

22 “I have the knife that grandfather gave me.”

23 My father laughed and the sound bounded through the room like the roar of a bull.

24 “Is it a very sharp knife?” he asked scornfully.

25 “Yes, sir.”

26 “Then with much luck you might cut off one of the eight arms of the devilfish, just before the other seven wrap around you and squeeze out your tongue and your life.”

27 I took another breath and brought forth my best argument.

28 “If you allow me to go, sir, I shall stay on deck while the others dive. I shall be the one who pulls up the basket and minds the ropes.”

29 I watched my father’s face and saw that it had begun to soften.

30 “I can take the place of Goleta,” I said quickly, to follow up the advantage I had gained. “There is an apology to make, sir. At noon Goleta’s wife came to say that her husband is sick and cannot sail. I forgot to tell you.”

31 My father walked to the iron door and opened it. He looked at the sky and at the glossy leaves of the laurel trees that hung quiet on their branches. He closed the door and put the tray of pearls in the safe and turned the bolt.

32 “Come,” he said.

1. Read this line from paragraph 7.

"You call this one only fair?" he asked. "It is a gem for the king."

What does this line suggest about the father?

- A He has not looked at the pearl as closely as Ramón has.
- B He does not think that Ramón is correct about the pearl.
- C He is testing Ramón's confidence in judging the pearl's value.
- D He is teaching Ramón about the pearl's quality.

2. Which detail from the story best supports the idea that Ramón is becoming an expert at judging pearls?

- A " 'For this one,' he said, 'what is your notation?' " (paragraph 4)
- B " 'For a poor king,' I said." (Paragraph 8)
- C " 'With a little care the flaw can be peeled away,' he said." (Paragraph 9)
- D "I would like to go today." (Paragraph 13)

3. Why is the father reluctant to bring Ramón on a pearl-diving trip?

- A He is concerned for Ramón's safety.
- B He needs Ramón to evaluate more pearls.
- C He thinks Ramón is still too young to sail.
- D He is unsure Ramón is ready to dive.

4. In paragraph 28, why does Ramón suggest that he will "stay on deck while the others dive"?

- A His father needs him to help with other jobs on the boat.
- B He realizes that his father will never actually let him go.
- C His father has convinced him that it is too dangerous.
- D He is trying to gradually change his father's mind.

5. How does paragraph 29 best contribute to the development of the story?
- A by signaling a turning point
 - B by providing a solution to the problem
 - C by comparing the characters' actions
 - D by introducing a new conflict
6. How does the father change during the story?
- A He becomes concerned about a diver's health.
 - B He begins to acknowledge Ramón's maturity.
 - C He becomes frustrated by Ramón's persistence.
 - D He stops worrying about his family business.
7. The author develops Ramón's point of view in the story mostly by:
- A describing Ramón's fear of pearl diving
 - B including Ramón's analysis of the pearl
 - C describing how Ramón feels about his father
 - D including dialogue between Ramón and his father

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage IV

Excerpt from ***The Black Pearl***

by Scott O'Dell

| | Item Type | Correct Answer | | Standard |
|---|-----------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 6.1 |
| 2 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.1 |
| 3 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.1 |
| 4 | Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.3 |
| 5 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.5 |
| 6 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.3 |
| 7 | Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 6.6 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage V

Move Over, Spider-Man— Here's Spider-Goat!

by Joli Allen

1 Making silk threads isn't just for spiders anymore. A special type of goat is doing it, too. Nubian goats look and act like any other playful, floppy-eared goats. But when they aren't playing, these goats are busy making spider silk.

2 Spider silk is absolutely amazing. It's five times stronger than steel, but it's also very light and flexible. Because of this, scientists plan to use it to make some totally cool things! Imagine clothing that's as light as a cobweb, yet won't tear, or fishing line and tennis racket strings that won't break. Doctors might be able to use spider silk for making tiny stitches in delicate eye surgery, but it could also be strong and flexible enough to replace some worn-out parts of the human body. The silk also could be used to build airplanes, buildings, and bridges, as well as create a tough coating for space stations. Because of all these possibilities, scientists have been searching for ways to make spider silk in huge quantities, and they have finally found the answer: Nubian goats!

3 Scientists have studied spider silk for years. They tried to raise spiders on spider farms to collect silk from them, but the spiders didn't enjoy living so close to one another. Spiders like their own space, and when they don't get it . . . well . . . they make space by eating their neighbors!

4 Goats, the scientists discovered, are much friendlier than spiders and are also easier to work with. Because they're bigger, a few goats can produce more silk than a roomful of spiders. The scientists chose Nubian goats for this job because they make milk at a younger age than many other

goats. So, the Nubian goats will make spider silk sooner and for longer periods of time.

5 But how do the goats actually make the spider silk? That's what scientist Jeffrey Turner wanted to figure out when he taught animal science at McGill University in Montreal. He noticed that the body parts of spiders that make silk and the parts of goats that make milk are very much alike. Because of this, he figured that goats might be able to make spider silk. The idea excited him, and he started his own company in 1993 to do more research on how goats could do what spiders have been doing for years.

6 Eventually, Turner and his fellow scientists found a way to place spider genes in goats so that the genes fit nicely, like a guest in a comfortable hotel. Every living animal, including humans, has a set of genes inside of it that tells its body what to do. These genes are very, very tiny, but they hold lots of information on how to build parts of the body. A spider's genes contain instructions for making spider silk, and a goat's genes contain instructions for making milk. So by putting spider genes into goats, the goats then have the genes that tell their bodies how to make spider silk proteins.

7 Proteins are the body's basic building blocks. Just as people have proteins in their bodies that make their hair, skin, and muscles, the goats now have special proteins for making spider silk. When the goats produce milk, the spider silk proteins are in it, but it looks just like regular milk. Scientists separate the proteins out of the milk by skimming off the fat and then sprinkling salt on it. The salt makes the spider silk proteins curdle into small clumps. These clumps are scooped out, and water is added until the mixture has the thickness of maple syrup. This is spider silk, and it's ready to be spun!

8 Next, the silk is taken to a spinning machine that copies the way spiders spin their silk. The secret to extra strong silk is in how the spiders

spin it: they stretch the silk over and over again. The stretching makes all the protein building blocks line up, lock together, and form a strong but flexible band. When the giant spinning machine is finished, the silk threads are stronger than steel and as flexible as rubber . . . but they're also thinner than a human hair.

9 Producing milk with spider proteins in it doesn't hurt the goats. Scientists did years of research to make sure the goats would be safe and healthy. The milk that's left after the spider proteins are removed can still be used—as fertilizer on fields that grow feed for the goats.

10 In 1998, Dr. Turner bought a farm in Canada for raising his spider-silk goats, and they still live there today. The one thousand goats that make spider silk are raised in a normal environment and are healthy, curious, and energetic—just like any other Nubian goats. Their owner gives them lots of space to roam and play. The goats particularly enjoy rolling down the farm's grassy hills, and they love listening to country music. Other music, such as rock music, has strange rhythms that make the goats jittery, but the steady beat of country music keeps them calm and happy. H'm . . . I wonder if they'd like the "Itsy Bitsy Spider" song.

1. In paragraph 2, the author explains why scientists are trying to find a way to produce spider silk using goats by showing:

- A possible uses for spider silk
- B the popularity of spider silk
- C how easy spider silk is to use
- D how quickly spider silk can be developed

2. Which statement best explains an advantage of using goats rather than spiders for the production of silk?

A Goats produce stronger silk than spiders do.

B Scientists can insert genes into goats but not into spiders.

C Spider proteins in goat milk can be spun into silk.

D Goats are bigger than spiders and are much easier to raise.

3. What did Jeffrey Turner discover about using Nubian goats for possible silk production?

A Nubian goats already make a similar substance.

B Nubian goats have high amounts of protein in their milk.

C Nubian goats and spiders both prefer living in large groups.

D Nubian goats and spiders have body parts that are similar.

4. In the process described in paragraph 7, which step allows the threads to become strong enough for surgical procedures?

A The silk proteins are turned into clumps.

B The silk is stretched repeatedly.

C Salt is added to the goat's milk.

D Water is added to thin the clumps.

5 Read the following lines from the final paragraph:

“Their owner gives them lots of space to roam and play. The goats particularly enjoy rolling down the farm’s grassy hills, and they love listening to country music. Other music, such as rock music, has strange rhythms that make the goats hither, but the steady beat of country music keeps them calm and happy. Hmmm.... I wonder if they’d like the ‘Itsy Bitsy Spider’ song.”

Why are these lines important to the article?

- A They suggest that the goats are unusual.
- B They explain how the goats are kept busy.
- C They explain that the goats are treated well.
- D They suggest that the goats are like humans.

6. Which statement best expresses a central idea of the article?

- A Nubian goats produce better quality silk than spiders.
- B Spider silk is a complex substance that takes effort to make.
- C Nubian goats have been genetically altered to produce spider silk.
- D Spider silk contains proteins that are similar to proteins in other living things.

7. Which detail is most important to include in a summary of the article?

A Scientists have made an attempt to gather silk from spiders living on farms.

B Spider silk has qualities that can be used in many products.

C A scientist started a company to research goat silk.

D Machines spin spider silk into thin threads.

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage V

Move Over, Spider-Man— Here’s Spider-Goat!

by Joli Allen

| Item Type | Correct Answer | | Standard |
|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Multiple Choice | A | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.3 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.1 |
| 3 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 4 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 5 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.5 |
| 6 Multiple Choice | C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.2 |
| 7 Multiple Choice | B | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.2 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage VI

Excerpt from **Interference Powder**

by Jean Hanff Korelitz

1 The art studio was at the end of the corridor. Its walls were splotted by years of flung paint, and pockmarked from thousands of thumbtacks. All sorts of stuff was pinned up, from kindergarten smudges to our own collage self-portraits, with papier-mâché objects dropping down from the ceilings to sway over our heads. One of my own paintings hung on the wall between two of the windows, and I smiled when I saw it. It was a picture I was kind of proud of: a study of Isobel's face, up close, her thin smile stretching across her face and her skin very white against a purple background. Isobel called this her vampiress portrait, which wasn't exactly a compliment. Still, I knew she liked the picture and felt proud to see it up on the wall.

2 When we got to the art room, I was surprised that Mrs. Smith, our teacher, was absent and in her place stood a tall woman with long hair in hundreds of little braids, some of them with beads and shells woven into their ends. The hair was mostly gray, but the woman's face wasn't really old. In fact, she looked around the same age as my mom. She grinned at us from the center of the room, with her hands thrust deep into the pockets of her big, faded apron, which she wore over jeans so worn they looked buttery-soft. In one ear she wore a long, dangly earring with a feather that brushed her shoulder. Nothing was in her other ear. Her fingers were bare, but her wrists clattered with little bracelets, silver and gold and every color. I stared at those bracelets. I had never seen anything like them.

3 Our class was bunched up at the door, uncertain about whether or not to enter, given that our art teacher wasn't there; but this different person

motioned us inside, grinning all the while. "Come on!" she said gleefully. "Mrs. Smith is sick today, so I was called in. My name is Charlemagne."

4 Charlemagne! Isobel and I exchanged a look. Only the week before, Isobel's father had shown us a print of an old painting with a man in a chair. Four priests were standing over him, waving something that looked like palm fronds¹.

5 "Is he a saint?" Isobel had asked.

6 Her dad had laughed. "He thought he was. But no. He's King Charlemagne of France. Charles the Great! He made war on absolutely everybody."

7 And now, here we were, only a week later, confronted with one of Charles the Great's actual descendants, since what else could Ms. Charlemagne be? Imagine being descended from a medieval French king! How totally thrilling! Mom always told me that her great-great-great-uncle had invented the glue they use on the back of postage stamps, but that was nothing compared to being connected to ancient royalty.

8 Ms. Charlemagne began passing out paper as we drifted to the art tables. "I don't have 35 any special plan today," she said. "I think we'll just see where our creativity takes us. Let's see what happens on the page. After all, that's what artists do, isn't it?"

9 Was it? I'd always thought they planned their paintings beforehand and then tried to make the picture on the canvas match the picture in their mind. That's what I always did, anyway.

10 The kids around me were picking through the pencil and crayon bins, looking at one another with uncertain expressions. They were used to being told by Mrs. Smith what the day's subject was or how they were supposed to make their pictures.

¹ Fronds – palm leaves

11 “Let’s let the colors pick themselves!” Ms. Charlemagne chirped. “Let’s let the pictures tell us what they should look like! Let’s see what’s on your mind today!”

12 I looked down at my blank white sheet. I knew what was on my mind. My low 62 grade, my never-to-be-had singing lessons, my mom’s expression when she sees my test score tonight. I sighed and reached for a pencil. I began to draw my mother in our kitchen at home, her face pinched up in a frown. I drew her thin eyebrows and her eyes, with their pretty, curling eyelashes, looking down. I drew her hair falling forward a bit and one hand, the one that still wore my father’s wedding ring, on the table before her. Next to that hand I drew my test; and just to make myself feel even worse, I drew my ugly score—62—right there on the paper. For a long moment I glared at it, as if willing it to change.

13 Then it struck me! I *could* change that number, at least here if not in real life. I could 55 turn my pencil over and rub those terrible numbers away, then write new numbers in their place. I was the lord of my own picture, wasn’t I? I could give myself a 63 on my social studies test, or a 61, or . . . why not even a perfect 100?

1. How does Nina's attitude toward Ms. Charlemagne change?

A Nina becomes less interested after noticing Ms. Charlemagne's bracelets.

B Nina becomes more fascinated after learning Ms. Charlemagne's name.

C Nina becomes less surprised after hearing Ms. Charlemagne's viewpoints. D Nina becomes more suspicious after hearing Ms. Charlemagne's assignment.

2. How does paragraph 7 contribute to the development of the story?

A by suggesting that Ms. Charlemagne is not qualified to teach art

B by introducing Nina to a new way to think about art

C by showing that Ms. Charlemagne does not understand how artists work

D by describing the way Nina usually completes art assignments

3. Why does the author use the word "chirped" in paragraph 11 of the story?

A to reveal that Ms. Charlemagne has creative ideas

B to imply that Ms. Charlemagne is new at teaching art

C to demonstrate that Ms. Charlemagne has a cheerful outlook

D to show that Ms. Charlemagne easily relates to the art students

4. Read this sentence from line paragraph 13:

I could change that number, at least here if not in real life.

How does this sentence best contribute to the development of the story?

- A by signaling a change in Nina's thinking
- B by emphasizing the importance of the setting
- C by revealing Nina's strong feelings
- D by suggesting a new plot development

5. Which quotation best supports a theme of the story?

- A "Still, I knew she liked the picture and felt proud to see it up on the wall." (paragraph 1)
- B "I had never seen anything like them." (paragraph 2)
- C "Imagine being descended from a medieval French king!" (paragraph 7)
- D "I was the lord of my own picture, wasn't I?" (paragraph 13)

6. Based on details in the story, what can readers conclude about Ms. Charlemagne?

- A She is a respected artist.
- B She has a famous relative.
- C She has a unique personality.
- D She is a popular substitute teacher.

7. How do the details in the story help develop a theme?

A Nina's thoughts about her mother help develop the theme that being honest will make you feel better.

B Nina's interaction with Isobel helps develop the theme that experiencing a new situation is easier with a friend.

C Nina's drawing helps develop the theme that expressing yourself can help you work through your struggles.

D Nina's description of Ms. Charlemagne helps develop the theme that judging others by their appearance is not a good idea.

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage VI

Excerpt from *Interference Powder*

by Jean Hanff Korelitz

| Item Type | Correct Answer | Standard |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Multiple Choice | B | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 6.3 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | B | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.5 |
| 3 Multiple Choice | C | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.4 |
| 4 Multiple Choice | A | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.5 |
| 5 Multiple Choice | D | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.2 |
| 6 Multiple Choice | C | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RL 6.1 |
| 7 Multiple Choice | C | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 6.2 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage VII

Excerpt from *The Great Fire* by Jim Murphy

The Great Fire of Chicago is considered the largest disaster of the 1800s. It is rumored to have started in the barn of Patrick and Catherine O'Leary.

(1) A shed attached to the barn was already engulfed by flames. It contained two tons of coal for the winter and a large supply of kindling wood. Fire ran along the dry grass and leaves, and took hold of a neighbor's fence. The heat from the burning barn, shed, and fence was so hot that the O'Learys' house, forty feet away, began to smolder. Neighbors rushed from their homes, many carrying buckets or pots of water. The sound of music and merrymaking stopped abruptly, replaced by the shout of "FIRE!" It would be a warning cry heard thousands of times during the next thirty-one hours.

(2) Chicago in 1871 was a city ready to burn. The city boasted having 59,500 buildings, many of them—such as the Courthouse and the Tribune Building—large and ornately decorated. The trouble was that about two-thirds of all these structures were made entirely of wood. Many of the remaining buildings (even the ones proclaimed to be "fireproof") looked solid, but were actually jerrybuilt¹ affairs; the stone or brick exteriors hid wooden frames and floors, all topped with highly flammable tar or shingle roofs. It was also a common practice to disguise wood as another kind of building material. The fancy exterior decorations on just about every building were carved from wood, then painted to look like stone or marble. Most churches had steeples that appeared to be solid from the street, but a closer inspection would reveal a wooden framework covered with cleverly painted copper or tin.

(3) The situation was worst in the middle-class and poorer districts. Lot sizes were small, and owners usually filled them up with cottages, barns, sheds, and outhouses—all made of fast-burning wood, naturally. Because both Patrick and Catherine O’Leary worked, they were able to put a large addition on their cottage despite a lot size of just 25 by 100 feet.

Interspersed in these residential areas were a variety of

(4) Wealthier districts were by no means free of fire hazards. Stately stone and brick homes had wood interiors and stood side by side with smaller wood-frame houses. Wooden stables and other storage buildings were common, and trees lined the streets and filled the yards.

(5) The links between richer and poorer sections went beyond the materials used for construction or the way buildings were crammed together. Chicago had been built largely on soggy marshland that flooded every time it rained. As the years passed and the town developed, a quick solution to the water and mud problem was needed. The answer was to make the roads and sidewalks out of wood and elevate them above the waterline, in some places by several feet. On the day the fire started, over 55 miles of pine-block streets and 600 miles of wooden sidewalks bound the 23,000 acres of the city in a highly combustible knot.

(6) Fires were common in all cities back then, and Chicago was no exception. In 1863 there had been 186 reported fires in Chicago; the number had risen to 515 by 1868. Records for 1870 indicate that fire-fighting companies responded to nearly 600 alarms. The next year saw even more fires spring up, mainly because the summer had been unusually dry. Between July and October only a few scattered showers had taken place and these did not produce much water at all. Trees drooped in the unrelenting summer sun; grass and leaves dried out. By October, as many as six fires were breaking out every day. On Saturday the seventh, the night before the

Source: AchievetheCore.org, 6th Grade Practice Tests

Great Fire, a blaze destroyed four blocks and took over sixteen hours to control. What made Sunday the eighth different and particularly dangerous was the steady wind blowing in from the southwest.

(7) It was this gusting, swirling wind that drove the flames from the O'Learys' barn into neighboring yards. To the east, a fence and shed of James Dalton's went up in flames; to the west, a barn smoldered for a few minutes, then flared up into a thousand yellow-orange fingers.

1. Reread this sentence from paragraph 5 of the passage:

The answer was to make the roads and sidewalks out of wood and elevate them above the waterline, in some places by several feet.

Which two phrases in the sentence best help the reader determine the meaning of the word “elevate”?

- A. “The answer was”
- B. “to make the roads and sidewalks”
- C. “out of wood”
- D. “above the waterline”
- E. “in some places”
- F. “by several feet”

2. What was the main reason that the middle class and poorer districts in Chicago burned down more easily than other districts in the city did?

- A. The buildings in these districts had wooden decorations painted to look like marble or stone.
- B. The roofs of the buildings in these districts were made of materials that burned easily.
- C. These districts contained many wooden buildings that were built closely together.

D. These districts were crossed by miles of pine-block streets and wooden sidewalks.

3. According to the passage, how did the location of the businesses affect the Great Fire?

A. The location of the businesses was one reason “the situation was worst in the middle-class and poorer districts.”

B. The location of the businesses provided some of “the links between richer and poorer sections” of the city.

C. The location of the businesses meant that the “wealthier districts were by no means free of fire hazards.”

D. The location of the businesses helped bind “the 23,000 acres of the city in a highly combustible knot.”

4. How do the details in paragraphs 3 and 4 about the poor, middle-class, and wealthier neighborhoods contribute to the development of the central ideas of the passage?

A. The paragraphs support the idea that the fire spread widely because of the amount of wood in all three areas.

B. The paragraphs support the idea that wood was the most readily available resource because of the number of trees in the area.

C. The paragraphs support the idea that long ago people were unaware of the importance of well-constructed buildings.

D. The paragraphs support the idea that Chicago was different from other large cities during that time.

5. This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Which statement below best summarizes the central idea of this passage?

- A. The Great Fire of Chicago was one of the most damaging fires in American history.
- B. The Great Fire of Chicago quickly got out of control in some neighborhoods but not others.
- C. Chicago firefighters could not put out the fire even though many people tried to help.
- D. Chicago provided almost perfect conditions for a widespread and damaging fire.

Part B: Which sentence from the passage provides the best support for the correct answer in Part A?

- A. "Neighbors rushed from their homes, many carrying buckets or pots of water."
- B. "Chicago in 1871 was a city ready to burn."
- C. "The situation was worst in the middle-class and poorer districts."
- D. "Fires were common in all cities back then, and Chicago was no exception."

6. Choose two details that show why Chicago burned when it did, and copy each detail into one of the empty boxes.

A. Neighbors rushed from their homes, many carrying buckets or pots of water.

B. What made Sunday the eighth different and particularly dangerous was the steady wind blowing in from the southwest.

C. Lot sizes were small, and owners usually filled them up with cottages, barns, sheds, and outhouses—all made of fast-burning wood, naturally.

D. Chicago had been built largely on soggy marshland that flooded every time it rained.

E. Between July and October only a few scattered showers had taken place and these did not produce much water at all.

F. The sound of music and merrymaking stopped abruptly, replaced by the shout of "FIRE!" It would be a warning cry heard thousands of times during the next thirty-one hours.

7. This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: Based on The Great Fire, which statement is true about conditions in Chicago in 1870-1871?

- A. Land for building homes was abundant in Chicago.
- B. Firefighters in Chicago were inexperienced.
- C. The growth of Chicago was being carefully planned.
- D. A fire was likely to occur almost every day in Chicago.

Part B: Which sentence from the passage provides the best support for the correct answer in Part A?

- A. "Lot sizes were small, and owners usually filled them up with cottages, barns, sheds, and outhouses—all made of fast-burning wood, naturally."
- B. "As the years passed and the town developed, a quick solution to the water and mud problem was needed."
- C. "Records for 1870 indicate that fire-fighting companies responded to nearly 600 alarms."
- D. "On Saturday the seventh, the night before the Great Fire, a blaze destroyed four blocks and took over sixteen hours to control."

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage VII

Excerpt from *The Great Fire* by Jim Murphy

| Item Type | Correct Answer | Standard |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Multiple Select | D, F | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.4 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | C | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.8 |
| 3 Multiple Choice | A | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 4 Multiple Choice | A | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.5 |
| 5 Part A, B | Part A: D Part B: B | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.2 |
| 6 Multiple Select | B, E | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 7 Part A, B | Part A: D Part B: C | 1 CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.2 |

6th Grade Comprehension Passage VIII

“The Making of a Scientist” by Richard Feynman

Raised in an era when expectations for boys were different than those of girls, Dr. Feynman explains his original interest in science.

1 Before I was born, my father told my mother, “If it’s a boy, he’s going to be a scientist.” When I was just a little kid, very small in a highchair, my father brought home a lot of little bathroom tiles—seconds—of different colors. We played with them, my father setting them up vertically on my highchair like dominoes, and I would push one end so they would all go down.

2 Then after a while, I’d help set them up. Pretty soon, we’re setting them up in a more complicated way: two white tiles and a blue tile, two white tiles and a blue tile, and so on. When my mother saw that she said, “Leave the poor child alone. If he wants to put a blue tile, let him put a blue tile.”

3 But my father said, “No, I want to show him what patterns are like and how interesting they are. It’s a kind of elementary mathematics.” So he started very early to tell me about the world and how interesting it is.

4 We had the Encyclopaedia Britannica at home. When I was a small boy he used to sit me on his lap and read to me from the Britannica. We would be reading, say, about dinosaurs. It would be talking about the Tyrannosaurus rex, and it would say something like, “This dinosaur is twenty-five feet high and its head is six feet across.”

5 My father would stop reading and say, "Now, let's see what that means. That would mean that if he stood in our front yard, he would be tall enough to put his head through our window up here." (We were on the second floor.) "But his head would be too wide to fit in the window." Everything he read to me he would translate as best he could into some reality.

6 It was very exciting and very, very interesting to think there were animals of such magnitude—and that they all died out, and that nobody knew why. I wasn't frightened that there would be one coming in my window as a consequence of this. But I learned from my father to translate: everything I read I try to figure out what it really means, what it's really saying.

7 We used to go to the Catskill Mountains, a place where people from New York City would go in the summer. The fathers would all return to New York to work during the week and come back only for the weekend. On weekends, my father would take me for walks in the woods and he'd tell me about interesting things that were going on in the woods. When the other mothers saw this, they thought it was wonderful and that the other fathers should take their sons for walks. They tried to work on them but they didn't get anywhere at first. They wanted my father to take all the kids, but he didn't want to because he had a special relationship with me. So it ended up that the other fathers had to take their children for walks the next weekend.

8 The next Monday, when the fathers were all back at work, we kids were playing in a field. One kid says to me, "See that bird? What kind of bird is that?"

9 I said, "I haven't the slightest idea what kind of a bird it is."

10 He says, "It's a brown-throated thrush. Your father doesn't teach you anything!"

11 But it was the opposite. He had already taught me: "See that bird?" he says. "It's a Spencer's warbler." (I knew he didn't know the real name.) "Well, in Italian, it's a Chutto Lapittida. In Portuguese it's a Bom da Peida. In Chinese, it's a Chung-long-tah, and in Japanese, it's a Katano Tekeda. You can know the name of the bird in all the languages of the world, but when you're finished, you'll know absolutely nothing whatever about the bird. You'll only know about humans in different places, and what they call the bird. So let's look at the bird and see what it's doing—that's what counts." (I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something.)

12 He said, "For example, look: the bird pecks at its feathers all the time. See it walking around, pecking at its feathers?"

13 "Yeah."

14 He says, "Why do you think birds peck at their feathers?"

15 I said, "Well, maybe they mess up their feathers when they fly, so they're pecking them in order to straighten them out."

16 "All right," he says. "If that were the case, then they would peck a lot just after they've been flying. Then, after they've been on the ground a while, they wouldn't peck so much anymore—you know what I mean?"

17 "Yeah."

18 He says, "Let's look and see if they peck more just after they land."

19 It wasn't hard to tell: there was not much difference between the birds that had been walking around a bit and those that had just landed. So I said, "I give up. Why does a bird peck at its feathers?"

20 "Because there are lice bothering it," he says. "The lice eat flakes of protein that come off its feathers."

21 He continued, "Each louse has some waxy stuff on its legs, and little mites eat that. The mites don't digest it perfectly, so they emit from their rear ends a sugarlike material, in which bacteria grow."

22 Finally he says, "So you see, everywhere there's a source of food, there's some form of life that finds it."

23 Now, I knew that it may not have been exactly a louse, that it might not be exactly true that the louse's legs have mites. That story was probably incorrect in detail, but what he was telling me was right in principle.

24 Not having experience with many fathers, I didn't realize how remarkable he was. How did he learn the deep principles of science and the love of it, what's behind it, and why it's worth doing? I never really asked him, because I just assumed that those were things that fathers knew.

25 My father taught me to notice things. One day, I was playing with an "express wagon," a little wagon with a railing around it. It had a ball in it, and when I pulled the wagon, I noticed something about the way the ball moved. I went to my father and said, "Say, Pop, I noticed something. When I pull the wagon, the ball rolls to the back of the wagon. And when I'm pulling it along and I suddenly stop, the ball rolls to the front of the wagon. Why is that?"

26 "That, nobody knows," he said. "The general principle is that things which are moving tend to keep on moving, and things which are standing still tend to stand still, unless you push them hard. This tendency is called 'inertia,' but nobody knows why it's true." Now, that's a deep understanding. He didn't just give me the name.

27 He went on to say, "If you look from the side, you'll see that it's the back of the wagon that you're pulling against the ball, and the ball stands still. As a matter of fact, from the friction it starts to move forward a little bit in relation to the ground. It doesn't move back."

28 I ran back to the little wagon and set the ball up again and pulled the wagon. Looking sideways, I saw that indeed he was right. Relative to the sidewalk, it moved forward a little bit.

29 That's the way I was educated by my father, with those kinds of examples and discussions: no pressure—just lovely, interesting discussions. It has motivated me for the rest of my life, and makes me interested in all the sciences. (It just happens I do physics better.)

30 I've been caught, so to speak—like someone who was given something wonderful when he was a child, and he's always looking for it again. I'm always looking, like a child, for the wonders I know I'm going to find—maybe not every time, but every once in a while.

1. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: How do paragraphs 1–3 of this passage help the reader understand the rest of the passage?

- A. by explaining why Feynman’s father loved science
- B. by describing how Feynman’s father preferred to play games with his son rather than teach him
- C. by introducing how Feynman’s father taught him through observation
- D. by showing that Feynman’s father disagreed with his mother on how to raise children

Part B: Which sentence provides the best evidence for the answer to Part A?

- A. “Before I was born, my father told my mother, ‘If it’s a boy, he’s going to be a scientist.’”
- B. “We played with them, my father setting them up vertically on my highchair like dominoes, and I would push one end so they would all go down.”
- C. “If he wants to put a blue tile, let him put a blue tile.”
- D. “So he started very early to tell me about the world and how interesting it is.”

2. In paragraphs 8–10 of the text, Feynman recalls a conversation he and another boy had about a bird. How do these paragraphs contribute to the development of the central idea of the text?

A. The paragraphs present important information Feynman learned about the bird.

B. The paragraphs explain why all the fathers took their sons on walks in the woods.

C. The paragraphs show that the other boy knew more about the bird than Feynman did.

D. The paragraphs highlight the differences in what the fathers thought was important to know.

3. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: In paragraph 23 of the text, what is the meaning of the word principle?

A. a kind manner

B. a general rule

C. a confusing idea

D. an entertaining story

Part B: Which other incident in the passage best shows Feynman's father talking about a principle?

- A. Feynman's father bringing home colored tiles
 - B. Feynman's father reading to his son from an encyclopedia
 - C. Feynman's father telling him some foreign names for the bird they see
 - D. Feynman's father explaining inertia based on the movement of the ball in the wagon
4. Which two details from the passage best explain the methods Feynman's father used to encourage his son to be interested in science?

- A. "Before I was born, my father told my mother, 'If it's a boy, he's going to be a scientist.'"
- B. "I never really asked him, because I just assumed that those were things fathers knew."
- C. "My father taught me to notice things."
- D. "'This tendency is called inertia.'"
- E. "He didn't just give me the name."
- F. "Looking sideways, I saw that indeed he was right."

5. The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A: With which statement would Feynman most likely agree?

- A. Books are necessary to learn about science.
- B. Parents should allow children to study what they want.
- C. There is a difference between knowing about something and truly understanding it.
- D. Talking to someone about science makes it more interesting.

Part B: Which sentence provides the best evidence for the answer to Part A?

- A. "When my mother saw that she said, 'Leave the poor child alone.'"
- B. "When I was a small boy he used to sit me on his lap and read to me from the Britannica."
- C. "My father would stop reading and say, 'Now, let's see what that means.'"
- D. "When the other mothers saw this, they thought it was wonderful and that the other fathers should take their sons for walks."

6. How does the story of the bathroom tiles fit into the overall structure of the passage?

A. It introduces a chronological account of the main events in the author's childhood.

B. It introduces a cause and effect structure by providing the primary reason for the events that follow.

C. It introduces a structure of comparison and contrast by showing an early event that is different from later events.

D. It introduces one of the four main examples that the author uses to illustrate his central ideas.

7. The title of this passage is "The Making of a Scientist." Although the passage explains some of the science lessons Feynman's father taught him, it could be argued that the life lessons Feynman learned are more valuable. Chooses two pieces of evidence that display life lessons his father taught him about life.

A. "I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something." (Paragraph 11)

B. "The next Monday, when the fathers were all back at work, we kids were playing in a field." (Paragraph 8)

C. "Before I was born, my father told my mother, 'If it's a boy, he's going to be a scientist.'" (Paragraph 1)

D. "But I learned from my father to translate. Everything I read I try to figure out what it really means, what it is really saying." (Paragraph 6)

E. "I've been caught, so to speak—like someone who was given something wonderful when he was a child, and he's always looking for it again." (Paragraph 30).

KEY: 6th Grade Comprehension Passage VIII

“The Making of a Scientist” by Richard Feynman

| Item Type | Correct Answer | | Standard |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 Part A/Part B | Part A: C Part B: D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.5 |
| 2 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.5 |
| 3 Part A/Part B | Part A: B Part B: D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.4 |
| 4 Multiple Select | C, E | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.8 |
| 5 Part A, B | Part A: C Part B: C | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.6 |
| 6 Multiple Choice | D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy. RI 6.3 |
| 7 Multiple Select | A, D | 1 | CCSS.ELA-Literacy RI 6.8 |