



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts

Listening Selection

Grade **4**

Sample Test 2005

This listening selection is to be used in administering Book 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

Listening Selection**Shadowtail***by Sue Thomas*

The falling leaf was a sign that winter was coming. The leaf zigzagged slowly down, landing on Shadowtail's bushy gray tail. It would be his first winter. Mother knew it was time he learned to bury acorns. But every time she tried to teach him, Shadowtail ran away to play.

Shadowtail loved to play games. He also loved to wrestle. But he never took time to ask the other squirrels if they wanted to play. He would just sneak up behind them, knock them to the ground, and then pin them down until they struggled free or he had counted to three.

Mother thought to herself, "This has got to stop!" She watched Shadowtail spin around laughing, and while he laughed, she thought and thought.

Another one of Shadowtail's games was kicking acorns. He practiced trying to make each acorn go farther than the last. Sometimes, he kicked his acorn right into the path of a passing squirrel who would loudly complain to Mother.

Once again, Mother thought to herself, "This has got to stop!" She watched Shadowtail spin around laughing, and while he laughed, she thought and thought.

Mother had an idea! She said to Shadowtail, "Since you like to spin around so much, I've thought of a new game. Do you want to learn how to play? It's called 'Spinning Acorns.' There's only one rule. You must keep the acorn spinning until you've buried it in a hole. Watch me, Shadowtail, watch me!"

Mother snatched up an acorn and stood up tall. She whisked her tail once. That was the signal to start. She started to spin the acorn and then carefully dropped it on the ground with the pointed end down. The acorn twirled and twirled, spinning around and around like a top.

Quickly, she dug a hole three inches deep. She pushed the spinning acorn into the hole and covered it with dirt. She raked up the grass and turned to

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Shadowtail, asking, “Shadowtail, can you keep the acorn spinning and bury it as fast as I did?”

Shadowtail stood tall, just like his mother had. He whisked his tail once and played Spinning Acorn exactly as Mother taught him. The acorn spun like a top until he covered it with dirt. Raking up the grass, he turned to Mother and asked, “Did I bury it as fast as you did?”

Mother smiled. “I think you were even faster than I was,” she said.

Other squirrels challenged Shadowtail to see if they could spin the acorn and bury it faster than he did. But, Shadowtail almost always won! He buried more acorns in a day than any of the other squirrels.

Soon, the days and nights grew colder. Most of the leaves had fallen to the ground. One cloudy morning, Shadowtail left his nest at dawn and came running back crying, “Mother, Mother, there isn’t an acorn to be found because there’s something white and wet covering the ground.”

Mother said, “I’ve saved a new game especially for today. It’s called ‘Find the Acorn.’ You will find the acorn by sniffing. When you are hungry this winter, Shadowtail, you will find it’s the very best game to play.”

STOP



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