



# ***New York State Testing Program***

**English**

**Language Arts**

**Book 1**

Grade

**6**

**Sample Test 2005**

## TIPS FOR TAKING THE SAMPLE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read carefully all the directions in the test book.
- Plan your time.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before choosing your response.

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# **Book 1**

## **Reading**

### ***D*irections**

In this part of the test, you will do some reading and answer questions about what you have read.

***Go On***

## Directions

Read this article about a train from France. Then answer questions 1 through 5.

# The Merci Train

by Rita J. Markel

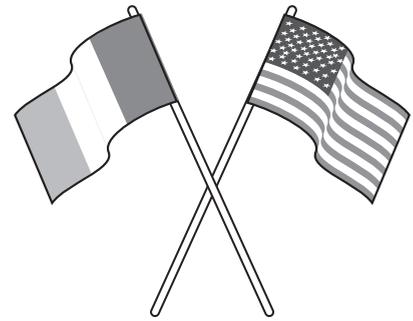
On February 3, 1949, New York Harbor was an exciting place to be. Airplanes flew overhead. Whistles blew, and bells sounded. Small boats circled in the water. Crowds cheered from the docks. They were there to greet a ship that carried a very special cargo. Onboard were 49 railroad boxcars filled with gifts from the people of France to the people of America. There was one boxcar for each of the existing 48 states, and one to be shared by the District of Columbia and the Territory of Hawaii. These boxcars became known as the *Merci Train*.

Following the end of World War II (1939–1945), France was almost in ruin. Factories, roads, bridges, and farms had been destroyed by bombings. Many French people were without jobs or money. They had little to wear and little to eat.

In the winter of 1947, Americans set out to help. A train was sent across the United States, stopping in cities and towns along the way. At every stop, people gave whatever they could. Factories gave goods, clothing, and medicines. Grocers and farmers gave food. Families gave money. Even school children donated their pennies. The train's contents were then shipped to France.

By 1949, the French had begun to recover from the war's destruction. The Merci Train was their way of saying "thank you" to America for the help they had needed so badly. French citizens had filled the boxcars with gifts. They sent tapestries, china, statues—even Napoleon's sword. But most of the gifts were personal, like hand-made dolls, toys, children's drawings, postcards, scrapbooks, even wedding dresses. In short, the people sent the things they treasured most that had not been lost in the war.

But the boxcars themselves were perhaps the most meaningful of the gifts. On each, the French people had painted the coats of arm of all their 40 provinces. They added red, white, and blue stripes, the colors of both the French and American flags. Each car had an American eagle painted on its front. These boxcars, which had once been used to move troops into battle, would never again be used for war.



Merci = a French word meaning thank you

From New York, the boxcars were delivered by rail to each state. Both children and adults waited eagerly for the Merci Train to arrive. Everyone wondered what their state's boxcar would contain. When the boxcars arrived and the contents displayed, there were celebrations everywhere. Speeches were given, parades were held, and the news of the event was broadcast on the radio and reported in newspapers.

A number of the states kept their wonderful boxcars. Some have been carefully maintained or restored and can still be visited. Gifts sent by the French people can still be seen at certain state museums and historical societies. The Merci Train came out of the ruins of war, but it is a reminder that nations can also work together in peace and goodwill.

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**1** Which statement **best** describes the way the author attracts the reader's interest in the first paragraph?

- A** She includes the names of specific places.
- B** She uses descriptive language to set the scene.
- C** She uses italic print for the name of the boxcars.
- D** She makes it longer than other paragraphs in the article.

**2** According to the article, the purpose of the train stopping in cities across America in 1947 was to

- F** collect donations
- G** gather troops for battle
- H** show museum items and exhibits
- J** display factory clothing and food

**3** The arrival of the Merci Train in America signaled that France was

- A** competing with the Americans
- B** fascinated by the railway system
- C** interested in learning about America
- D** recovering from the effects of the war

**4** Which statement is supported by information in the article?

- F** The Merci Train was an example of friendship and goodwill between two countries.
- G** The donations from the Americans to the French came mostly from wealthy people.
- H** The excitement surrounding the arrival of the Merci Train was limited to the New York Harbor.
- J** The exchange of goods between the two countries solved most of the problems caused by war.

**5** Which sentence reflects an **opinion** expressed by the author of the article?

- A** The boxcars would never again be used for war.
- B** The boxcars were wonderful and exciting to see.
- C** The American people donated to the people of France.
- D** Many French people sent personal items to the Americans.

## *Directions*

Read this story about a young girl's experience during the Civil War. Then answer questions 6 through 12.

# A Noise in the Night

*by Felicia Silcox*

Wide awake in Aunt Bet's Southern mansion, Annie Van Lew shivered at the rumble of distant cannons. It was bad enough America was at war, but the young Virginia girl was not used to battles being fought this close. Suddenly a floorboard creaked. Annie sat up in bed and listened. Someone was sneaking around in the dead of night.

Had a stranger broken in? Earlier, the family had heard that captured Yankee officers recently escaped from a prison nearby. In spite of her anxiety, Annie smiled. She had no fear of Yankees. Long before the Civil War, her family had taken a stand against slavery. Besides, Aunt Bet helped feed and care for Yankee prisoners.

Quietly opening her bedroom door, Annie peeked out. A slender figure in a black gown glided down the hall. It was Aunt Bet, carrying a candle in one hand and a plate of fried chicken in the other. Where was she going at this hour?

Tiptoeing, Annie followed her aunt to a steep stairway at the far end of the house. Aunt Bet climbed to the top, opened a door leading to the attic, and disappeared. Close behind, Annie crept up the stairs, crouched in the doorway, and peered into the darkness.

Aunt Bet's flickering candle cast ghostly shadows on the walls as she picked her way among dusty boxes and covered furniture. She stopped at a chest of drawers, moved it aside, and felt along the wall behind it. Slowly a door sprung open, revealing a hidden room.

Annie stifled a scream as a thin, unshaven man stepped out of the opening. He wore tattered, dark-blue pants and shirt—the uniform of a Yankee officer. As Aunt Bet handed him the plate of food, the young man saw Annie in the doorway and froze.

Desperately shaking her head “no,” the girl raised one finger to her lips. The officer understood and shifted his gaze. Quickly Annie slipped back downstairs and hid, waiting until after Aunt Bet left to return.

Back inside the attic, Annie dragged the chest away from the wall and pressed against several panels. Nothing happened. Undaunted, she called softly to the man inside, who told her where to find the hidden spring.

***Go On***

Soon the young officer stood in the open doorway. A small candle burned on a table behind him and, in its soft light, Annie studied his face. Clear eyes reflected the calm of one who faced death unafraid.

Smiling, he teased. “What trouble you would have gotten into if your aunt had turned around!”

That night, Annie learned Aunt Bet was one of many daring Southerners whose hatred of slavery drove them to risk their lives by spying for the North. The girl chatted as long as she dared, wishing her new friend luck when he said he would leave at dawn.

Back in her room, Annie glowed with pride, determined to guard her family’s secret to the end.



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**6** Why does the officer look away when Annie puts her finger to her lips?

- F** so he can look Aunt Bet in the eye
- G** so Aunt Bet will not know she is there
- H** because the candle is shining in his eyes
- J** because he does not want to appear unfriendly

**7** Read these sentences from the story.

**A small candle burned on a table behind him and, in its soft light, Annie studied his face. Clear eyes reflected the calm of one who faced death unafraid.**

The author uses this description to reveal

- A** Annie's curiosity
- B** Aunt Bet's absence
- C** the dimness of the room
- D** the character of the officer

**8** The **main** reason the author withholds information about whom Aunt Bet is visiting in the attic is to make the

- F** plot more exciting
- G** setting more realistic
- H** story more believable
- J** characters more interesting

**9** How do Annie's feelings change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story?

- A** In the beginning she is afraid; in the end she feels proud.
- B** In the beginning she is angry; in the end she becomes fearful.
- C** In the beginning she feels relaxed; in the end she feels anxious.
- D** In the beginning she feels happy; in the end she becomes confused.

***Go On***

**10** Read this sentence from the story.

**Suddenly a floorboard creaked.**

The author **most likely** uses this description to

- F** show how old the house is
- G** describe how loud a noise is
- H** indicate that the fighting is close
- J** suggest that something is about to happen

**11** Which of these words indicates the story takes place over time?

- A** disappeared
- B** earlier
- C** nearby
- D** several

**12** The story “A Noise in the Night” is described as realistic fiction because it includes

- F** a lighthearted story line with many exaggerated events
- G** a strange setting, peculiar characters, and twists in the plot
- H** a reason for convincing readers to accept a particular point of view
- J** a plot, a setting, and characters that create a story that could actually happen

## Directions

Read this article about two American heroes. Then answer questions 13 through 17.

# Lucky Byrd Instead of Lucky Lindy

by Carla Lee Suson

Charles Lindbergh became a hero in 1927 by being the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. However, he would not have succeeded except for the help of another great hero, Richard E. Byrd.

Lindbergh and many other pilots were competing for the Orteig Prize, given to the first man to fly nonstop between New York and Paris. Byrd was not interested in the prize. He simply wanted to prove that transatlantic cargo flights were possible.

Byrd first applied for permission from the Navy to fly military planes across the ocean in 1918. The Navy turned him down, but Byrd kept planning. During this time, he developed two important flight instruments: the bubble sextant and the drift indicator. The bubble sextant indicates a pilot's position without reference to land; the drift indicator helps pilots know how far off they have moved from their original path. These tools are so valuable that similar designs are used in all ocean-going aircraft today.

Byrd's transatlantic dream came true in 1927. With money from his supporter, Rodman Wanamaker, Byrd rented Roosevelt Field in Hempstead, Long Island, and bought the Ford tri-motor airplane, *America*. Roosevelt Field was only a one-mile, lumpy meadow. Byrd had the ground leveled and at one end built a small 30-foot hill and launch ramp to give the planes extra speed.

His flight was set for late April 1927. But during a practice run, the plane crashed, injuring all four men. Several weeks passed while the plane was rebuilt and the crew mended.

Meanwhile, several pilots, including Lindbergh, flocked to the little airstrip to join the competition. Although pressured by public opinion, Byrd did not hurry his test flights because his effort was for scientific knowledge, not to win a race. He conducted classes in navigation for the young pilots and allowed them the use of his rented airfield.

When Lindbergh started his famous flight on May 20, 1927, Byrd drove to the strip to wish him luck. Thirty-three and a half hours later, news of Lindbergh's

**Go On**

landing in Paris was announced during the *America's* naming ceremony speeches. Byrd tossed his speech away and changed the ceremony into a celebration.

Although Lindbergh proved transatlantic flights were possible, Byrd still felt someone needed to prove that such ocean flights were not daredevil stunts but practical cargo routes. Lindbergh and others used small, single-engine planes because the pilots knew how they performed in the air. Byrd's tri-motor plane was larger and heavier, but it could handle a large cargo. However, very little was known about how the larger machine performed in the air.

When *America* took off at 3 A.M. on June 29, it carried four men and 800 pounds of mail. Whereas Lindbergh had fairly clear weather, Byrd flew through almost constant storms and fog. After forty-four hours, they arrived in Paris, but the plane could not land because fog covered the city. They circled for a half hour before turning back to the coast. They crash landed in the water to avoid hitting any buildings. All four men and the mailbags made it to shore at Ver-sur-Mer on rubber rafts.

Although Byrd is not known as the first to cross the Atlantic, his flight definitely proved that cargo planes could go between the two continents even in bad weather. However, it is important to note that Lindbergh may not have been successful without the airstrip improvements, equipment, lessons, and support provided by Byrd. In the spirit of cooperation, these two great men worked together to overcome enormous difficulties to each earn his place in history.

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- 13** Why did Byrd change the date for his first transatlantic flight?
- A** His plane crashed, and his crew was injured.
  - B** His request for a military plane was turned down.
  - C** He had to wait for an improvement in the weather.
  - D** He ran out of funds and needed to raise more money.

- 14** One way that Byrd's flight was **different** from Lindbergh's flight is that Byrd's flight
- F** was made in a cargo plane
  - G** used navigation instruments
  - H** began and ended on schedule
  - J** took place during clear weather

**15** According to information in the article, Richard E. Byrd can be **best** described as

- A** anxious
- B** cheerful
- C** determined
- D** quiet

**16** Read this sentence from the article.

**The bubble sextant indicates a pilot’s position without reference to land; the drift indicator helps pilots know how far off they have moved from their original path.**

Which meaning of “position” is used in this sentence?

- F** job
- G** location
- H** a way of standing
- J** where something is placed

**17** Which of these statements **best** identifies how the information in this article is organized?

- A** A problem is presented, and a solution is given.
- B** Several answers are given to frequently asked questions.
- C** Events are described in the order in which they happened.
- D** A few important events are listed first followed by details.

***Go On***

# *Directions*

Read this poem about a giant pipe on a playground. Then answer questions 18 through 22.

## The Giant Pipe

To me, this giant pipe  
is the secret brain center of the world,  
the biggest spaceship, the deepest cave,  
the longest tunnel, a haunted house,  
a submarine, the home of the queen.

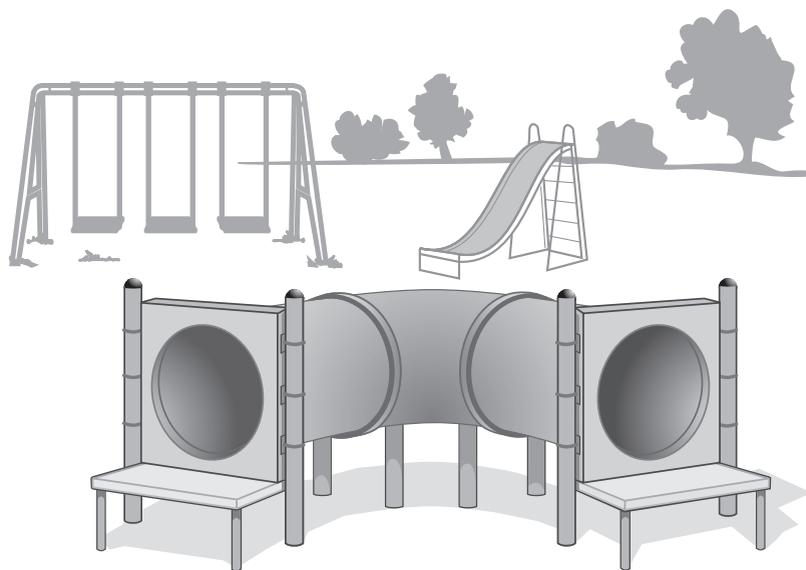
Like a lizard that changes colors,

I can live in different worlds.

Like treasures in a pirate chest,

my secrets are hidden

inside this giant pipe.



**18** What is **one** thing the pipe represents to the speaker?

- F** a lizard in disguise
- G** a royal home
- H** a buried treasure
- J** a color that is changing

**19** On which literary device does the poet rely on **most** in the first five lines of “The Giant Pipe”?

- A** personification
- B** metaphor
- C** onomatopoeia
- D** repetition

**20** When inside the giant pipe, what does the speaker **most likely** do?

- F** daydream
- G** draw
- H** read
- J** remember

**21** Read these lines from the poem.

**my secrets are hidden  
inside this giant pipe.**

What does the speaker mean by “secrets”?

- A** valuable books
- B** hidden treasures
- C** personal thoughts
- D** family possessions

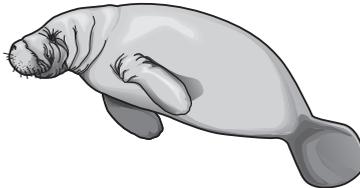
**22** This poem is **mostly** about the

- F** wonders of nature
- G** power of imagination
- H** joy of playing games
- J** advantages of being alone

## *Directions*

Read this article about a water animal. Then answer questions 23 through 26.

# The Manatee



Shaped like a one-person submarine, the thousand-pound, ten-foot-long manatee may be the gentlest creature on earth. Divers in the southeastern waters of the United States have observed the playful manatee hugging other manatees with its flippers. It also bestows kisses on its companions. (These must be bristly kisses, for the manatee has sharp whiskers!)

Believed to be a relative of the elephant, the manatee has a long upper lip. This is used to propel food into its mouth. Its teeth, all molars, are used for grinding its food. Its two front flippers are used for swimming, scratching, and holding its young. The flippers also are used to remove grass from between its teeth. Its tail is broad and flat, resembling a small paddle.

The manatee, a mammal with a brain and nervous system much like our own, has an excellent sense of hearing and of taste. In fact, its ability to taste changes in the water probably aids its navigation. The manatee “talks” to its companions with squealing, chirping sounds. Sometimes it screams with alarm if a calf is threatened.

Always in search of warm water, the manatee travels from coastal bays up river mouths along the Florida coast. Seemingly independent, with no herding or leadership instincts, the manatee develops no lasting relationships. Its main concern is grazing on underwater grasses. After feeding, it usually naps, rising sleepily to the surface every few minutes to breathe. The manatee leads a simple, peaceful, and playful life which humans might, at times, envy.

**23** The **main** purpose of the opening paragraph of the article is to describe the manatee's

- A** behavior
- B** environment
- C** intelligence
- D** size

**24** According to the article, how are manatees and humans **similar**?

- F** Both lead simple lives.
- G** Both prefer to live in groups.
- H** They have similar eating patterns.
- J** They have similar nervous systems.

**25** According to the article, which trait probably helps the manatee find its way in the water?

- A** its flat tail
- B** its sense of taste
- C** its sense of hearing
- D** its coarse whiskers

**26** After reading this article, a student wants to know if manatees are found only in Florida. Which section of a website about manatees would have the **most** information on this topic?

- F** The Diet and Behavior of the Manatee
- G** The Habitat and Range of the Manatee
- H** The Endangered Status of the Manatee
- J** The Physical Characteristics of the Manatee

**STOP**



**Grade 6**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Book 1**  
**Sample Test 2005**

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