



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts

Listening Selection

Grade

6

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*.

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Listening Selection**Lydia's Lasso**

by Lesli Favor

"This is how you tie a lasso," said Mike. He took Lydia's rope and made a large loop in one end. Then he tied the loop to the main part of the rope with a special knot. When Mike slid the knot up or down the rope, the loop of the lasso got smaller or larger.

Lydia's eyes sparkled. "Thank you, Mike!" she said. Mike was Lydia's cousin, and he was nearly sixteen years old. "Now I can help you and Uncle Carlos round up the cattle."

"I don't think so, Lydia," said Mike. "This is hard work, and it can be dangerous. It's best if you go over by the pond and watch from there."

Lydia looked over at the pond. It was a good quarter of a mile away from all the action. From there she would hardly be able to see anything. She certainly would not be able to help.

"But Mike!" she pleaded. "You might need me."

"Lydia, go on to the pond." Mike walked off to join Uncle Carlos, and Lydia was left alone, as usual.

Lydia dragged her feet all the way to the pond. She lassoed a bush, and then she lassoed a fence post. It just wasn't the same. She wanted to lasso cattle from high atop a horse. She could do it, if only they would give her a chance.

The pond was still frozen from the winter temperatures, but Lydia could see that the edges were beginning to melt. She lassoed a log that had been frozen upright in the ice. This was boring.

Suddenly Lydia heard a sharp crack. CRRRAACCKK! She whirled around, for the sound could mean only one thing. The ice on the pond was cracking. But why?

Then she heard the soft moo. A calf! Lydia ran around the pond, her lasso trailing behind her on the snow like a friendly snake. As soon as she scrambled down the bank of the pond, she saw the calf. It was one of the first tiny calves of spring. Somehow, in the excitement of the day, it had gotten separated from its mother. It must have walked out onto the thin ice and fallen through. Now, only its head showed above the icy water and chunks of broken ice.

The calf turned large, frightened eyes to Lydia. "Moooo!" it said again, and Lydia knew she must save it.

She grasped her lasso tightly. Then she told herself to relax. This was simple. She could lasso anything she put her mind to.

Go On

Taking a big breath, she threw the lasso at the calf's head. It fell short. She glanced over her shoulder at the men herding the cattle, but none of them were paying attention to Lydia. As usual.

She gathered her lasso in her hands and threw it again. It bounced off the tip of the calf's soft pink nose.

Again Lydia threw the lasso. There! The loop draped perfectly around the calf's neck! She tugged on the rope, pulling the calf toward her like a tugboat pulling a ship through icy waters.

Finally, the calf was at the bank. Lydia's heart pounded as she reached down to remove the lasso and pull the calf from the water. She had saved its life!

As she turned around to guide the calf up the bank, she broke into a wide smile. At the top stood Mike and Uncle Carlos. They threw their hats up into the air and let out a loud, happy cheer. They had needed her help after all.

STOP



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