



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

**English**

**Language Arts Test**

**Book 1**

Grade

**7**

**January 14–18, 2008**

**Name \_\_\_\_\_**

## TIPS FOR TAKING THE 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 or writing your response.

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**Reading*****D***irections

In this part of the test, you will do some reading and answer questions about what you have read. For the multiple-choice questions, you will mark your answers on the answer sheet. For questions 27 and 28, you will write your answers directly in the test book.

***Go On***

# Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 1 through 4.

## Conversations with Apes

by Aline Alexander Newman



Raring to go! Panbanisha, a female bonobo (buh-NO-bo), often hitches a ride—but she’d probably rather drive. One day, while out in the woods of Georgia, Panbanisha suddenly leaped into a parked golf cart. By pushing the accelerator with her foot, she started the engine. Gripping the steering wheel with both hands, she looked over her shoulder and backed up. Next she shifted gears and zoomed ahead. The only reason she stopped was because she rammed the cart into a tree! (She wasn’t hurt.)

“We never taught her to drive,” says Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, the primatologist in charge of the Georgia State University Language Research Center in Atlanta. But that didn’t prevent this smart ape from teaching herself.

Of the great apes—bonobos, gorillas, orangutans, and chimpanzees—bonobos are the most like humans. Savage-Rumbaugh decided to study them to see whether they could pick up language on their own, as humans do. It turns out that they can. In fact, Savage-Rumbaugh has discovered that bonobos can learn to do lots of things on their own.

Growing up in the language center lab, Panbanisha and her brother, Kanzi, had human caretakers, watched TV, and played with toys. Both drink from a glass, brush their teeth, and use the toilet. They also communicate. At first, the apes simply listened—picking up the meanings of words by hearing people talk. Later they learned to say things by pressing symbols on a portable computer.

One day, a young female bonobo named Tamuli stole Savage-Rumbaugh’s keys. The researcher begged and pleaded and even offered food in exchange. But the mischievous ape laughed and refused to give them back. Finally Savage-Rumbaugh asked Kanzi to tell Tamuli to return the keys. “Kanzi turned, made a series of sounds to her, and she came right over and handed them to me,” says the scientist.

Did Kanzi actually “speak” to Tamuli? Savage-Rumbaugh thinks he did. She knows they communicate in many ways. She wasn’t surprised when Panbanisha took a piece of chalk and drew a long line on the floor leading to the door. “She wanted to go outside,” the researcher says.

But on another occasion, Panbanisha’s behavior astonished even Savage-Rumbaugh. The ape hadn’t been allowed outside for days and was staring longingly out a window. Suddenly she hopped down and drew on the floor. Savage-Rumbaugh looked at her sketch and gasped. Panbanisha had written an upside-down V—the symbol from the portable keyboard that stands for a hut in the forest. Clearly, Panbanisha was telling Savage-Rumbaugh she wanted to go there!

Savage-Rumbaugh frequently takes the apes hiking in the forest. “Kanzi likes to make fires,”

she says. He learned by watching her make them. Kanzi walks around picking up sticks, which he snaps with his foot and piles in a heap. Then he borrows a lighter to ignite the blaze. The apes use the fires for roasting marshmallows! When it’s time to leave, Kanzi douses the flames with a bucket of water.

Savage-Rumbaugh hopes that as people learn more about bonobos, they’ll grow to respect them and feel as strongly as she does about protecting them in the wild.

**1** According to the article, which of the great apes are the **most** like humans?

- A** bonobos
- B** chimpanzees
- C** gorillas
- D** orangutans

**2** Which detail **best** supports the main idea of the article?

- A** Bonobos sometimes live in language labs.
- B** Bonobos can take hikes through the forest.
- C** Bonobos can learn language on their own.
- D** Bonobos sometimes take objects from humans.

**3** What will **most likely** happen to Panbanisha and Kanzi next?

- A** They will speak just like humans.
- B** They will teach each other to drive.
- C** They will begin to live by themselves.
- D** They will learn more human behaviors.

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

**When it’s time to leave, Kanzi douses the flames with a bucket of water.**

The word “douses” means about the same as

- A** contains
- B** influences
- C** seizes
- D** soaks

**Go On**

# Directions

Read this passage from the book *No Small Thing*. Then answer questions 5 through 10.

## The Ride Home

by Natale Ghent

In this passage, Nathaniel and his sisters, Cid and Queenie, cannot believe their luck when they are the first to answer an advertisement for a free pony. They waste no time in claiming Smokey as their very own. Since Smokey has never been ridden, they need to tame him enough to ride him.

I take the reins and walk Smokey through the gate and down the lane. Queenie is skipping along next to me. We haven't even hit the road when Cid starts in about how she wants to ride him.

"You have to wait. I don't want them to see us riding him in case Smokey kicks up and one of us falls off."

"You're not the boss of everything," Cid says.

At this point I want to hit her with the reins, because I know it would hurt a lot. "Just wait until they can't see us," I hiss at her, my eyes squinting. She can see that I'm serious and backs off.

Queenie is walking with one hand on Smokey's neck. She hasn't said a thing, but her eyes are as wide as saucers. I run my hand along the pony's neck. I can feel his muscles moving in an easy rhythm as he walks. His eyes are dark and kind, and his nostrils are bright pink and dewy on the inside.

When we can't see the farm anymore, I tell Cid she can ride him. "I'll hold the reins while you get on."

She hands me the bag of brushes, then swings her leg up. Smokey quickly steps to one side. Cid hops on one foot like a pogo stick, her other leg still slung halfway over Smokey's back.

"Hold him still!" she says angrily.

"Just hurry up and get on!" I tell her, and then I talk to Smokey the way cowboys do in the movies. "Whoa now, easy, boy." I stroke his muzzle for extra assurance. He snorts and tosses his head. He doesn't know what to think. I rub his forelock and talk softly in his ear until Cid slings herself up. Smokey's back legs buckle slightly as he considers her weight. I hold the reins near the bit and hand the rest over Smokey's head to Cid. When I let go, Smokey lays his ears flat. I can tell he doesn't like the idea. Cid taps his sides with her heels—and the ride is on!

Smokey springs forward, then steps quickly to one side. His back legs compress, and then he prances like a Lipizzaner.<sup>1</sup> Queenie watches with her big eyes. Cid holds the reins tightly with one hand and clutches a handful of Smokey’s mane with the other. She keeps her legs pressed to Smokey’s sides. Her teeth are clenched and her face is serious. I have to admit I’m impressed with her guts—really impressed—but I would never tell her that.

### Horse Terms in the Story

- **reins:** narrow straps used to guide a horse
- **muzzle:** the part of a horse that includes the nose, jaws, and mouth
- **bit:** a bar connected to the reins that goes into a horse’s mouth
- **withers:** the part of a horse between its neck and back

“Give him another little kick,” I say, when Smokey stops. Cid kicks him, and he lunges forward again.

Despite all the snorting and stamping, Smokey never goes really wild. I can tell by his eyes that he feels obliged to put up a bit of a fuss—for dignity’s sake—but that his heart isn’t mean at all. He soon settles and gets used to the idea of the weight on his back. He walks quickly, blowing through flared nostrils and swinging his head from side to side. His mane dances up and down and his tail streams out behind him like a comet. Queenie trots beside him, her hand against his neck like she’s afraid to let go in case he disappears into the summer air like a mirage.<sup>2</sup>

By the time Cid lets me on him, Smokey is pretty much broke.<sup>3</sup> He doesn’t try to step away when I get on, but stands and waits for me to gather the reins. He whinnies loudly while he waits, and I can feel the air pushing through him, his sides quivering against my legs. His coat is soft and warm, and I fit comfortably behind his withers like he was made for me. I give him a nudge with my heels, and he lurches forward, picking along the gravel road with quick, even steps.

The sunlight is fading now. We move in and out of the shadows, the trees casting long, dark bands across the road. I am so happy, I feel like I could ride forever.

<sup>1</sup>**Lipizzaner:** a breed of horse trained for jumping

<sup>2</sup>**mirage:** something unreal

<sup>3</sup>**broke:** tamed

- 5** This passage is told from the point of view of
- A** Cid
  - B** Smokey
  - C** Queenie
  - D** Nathaniel
- 6** At the beginning of the passage, why is Nathaniel irritated with Cid?
- A** She refuses to take the reins from him.
  - B** He realizes she is a stronger rider than he is.
  - C** She pesters him to let her ride Smokey.
  - D** He thinks he should ride Smokey before she does.
- 7** Overall, Nathaniel's behavior is **best** described as
- A** friendly
  - B** selfish
  - C** responsible
  - D** uninterested
- 8** Which statement is **most likely** true of the characters in this passage?
- A** Nathaniel is older than Queenie and Cid.
  - B** Nathaniel likes to tease Queenie and Cid.
  - C** Cid and Queenie have fallen off Smokey before.
  - D** Cid and Queenie have always wanted to own Smokey.

**9** The author helps the reader understand Smokey’s nature **mostly** through the use of

- A** Cid’s behavior toward Smokey
- B** Nathaniel’s descriptions of Smokey
- C** Nathaniel and Cid’s dialogue about Smokey
- D** Nathaniel and Queenie’s dialogue about Smokey

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

**Smokey’s back legs buckle slightly as he considers her weight.**

Now read the dictionary entry below.

**buckle** *v.* **1.** Become fastened. **2.** Surrender to authority. **3.** Prepare with vigor.  
**4.** Bend under pressure.

Which definition is closest to the meaning of “buckle” as it is used in the sentence above?

- A** definition 1
- B** definition 2
- C** definition 3
- D** definition 4

***Go On***

## Directions

Read this article about clocks. Then answer questions 11 through 15.

# Once Upon a Time

by Beverly Patt

Imagine three of your closest friends are late for school. When the teacher asks them, “Why are you late?”:

Friend #1 says, “Sorry, but the wind blew out my alarm clock.”

Friend #2 says, “My dog drank up my alarm clock.”

Friend #3 says, “I have a cold and couldn’t *smell* what time it was.”

As weird as it sounds, all three of your friends are telling the truth. They’re just a little *behind the times*.

If you go back in history far enough, you’ll come to a time where there *were* no clocks, watches, or VCRs blinking 12:00. But people still needed a way to keep track of how long they worked, how long to leave the bread over the fire, and when their favorite TV show was on (just kidding!). Shadow clocks, such as sundials, were a “hot” item around 1500 B.C. But these were only useful during the daytime—and only on sunny days! Soon better ways to mark time were invented.

### In the “Wick” of Time

Ever set your clock on fire? Many cultures did! The Chinese took a dampened rope, knotted it in equal intervals, and set it aflame. As fire passed each knot, a period of time was counted off. (They dampened the rope to make it burn more slowly.) Later, they spaced weights evenly along the rope and placed something like a bell beneath it. As the rope burned, the weights would drop and “chime” the time! Other cultures did the same thing with evenly spaced pins in a candle. When the candle burned down low enough, the pin would drop and strike the pan below. (It must have been “quiet enough to hear a pin drop!”) There were also *calibrated*<sup>1</sup> candles—they had numbered lines along one side where the time could be read as the candle burned down. Oil lamps had lines on their reservoirs, marking the time as the oil level dropped.

The award for the most unusual burning clock goes to the Chinese. They could actually *smell* time passing! Incense was laid in a maze-like tray, with different types of incense used for different hours. As the incense burned, *sniff, sniff*, they knew it was time to get up!

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<sup>1</sup>**calibrated:** marked for measurement

## Filling Time

From time to time you may play a board game that uses an ancient clock. Can you guess what it is?

Time's up! It's called a sandglass—or *hourglass* (although in your game it probably measures minutes or seconds instead of hours). And can you guess what these ancient *sandglasses* were filled with?

Time's up! If you said, "Duh, sand," you are wrong! In most cases, the available sand was too coarse to trickle smoothly, so powdered eggshells were used instead. Ancient Greeks used the sandglass to measure cooking time, and in medieval Europe sandglasses were employed to time church sermons! Contrary to what their name implies, hourglasses can measure anywhere from two minutes to four hours, depending on the amount of sand, er, eggshell in them!

Clocks using flowing water were popular, too. A *clepsydra* came in two styles, both using two bowls, one with a hole in the bottom. One clepsydra measured water dripping from the "holy" bowl into the other. In the second style, the holy bowl floated (and slowly filled) in a bigger, water-filled tub. These bowls had markings on the inside to tell the "time" indicated by the rising or sinking water level.



And if your baby sister spilled the bowls and made you late for class? You had to convince your teacher you had a good excuse for being tardy. That's a *timeless* fact!

**11** What does the author mean by the phrase "behind the times"?

- A** imperfect
- B** outdated
- C** overlooked
- D** unusual

**12** Read this excuse for being late to school.

**"My dog drank up my alarm clock."**

According to the article, which type of clock is this student most likely using?

- A** a sandglass
- B** a calibrated candle
- C** a clepsydra
- D** a shadow clock

**Go On**

- 13** Which sentence from the article **best** supports the main idea of “Once Upon a Time”?
- A** “But people still needed a way to keep track of how long they worked, how long to leave the bread over the fire, and when their favorite TV show was on (just kidding!).”
  - B** “Later, they spaced weights evenly along the rope and placed something like a bell beneath it.”
  - C** “Oil lamps had lines on their reservoirs, marking the time as the oil level dropped.”
  - D** “Contrary to what their name implies, hourglasses can measure anywhere from two minutes to four hours, depending on the amount of sand, er, eggshell in them!”

- 14** The information in this article would be **most** useful for someone who wants to
- A** find an ancient clock
  - B** measure time exactly
  - C** learn about the background of clocks
  - D** arrive at school on time in the morning

- 15** Read this sentence from the article.

**Ancient Greeks used the sandglass to measure cooking time, and in medieval Europe sandglasses were employed to time church sermons!**

What does the word “employed” **most likely** mean in this sentence?

- A** applied
- B** filled
- C** suited
- D** used

# Directions

Read this article about a man with an interesting hobby. Then answer questions 16 through 19.

## Freaky Farm

by Teresa Milanese

**In the 1930s, an Ohio farmer had the creepiest pumpkin patch in town.**

David Pethtel walked through the overgrown grass and weeds on a farm he bought in 1986 in Madison, Ohio. Most of the fields had been neglected for years. Suddenly, he stumbled upon a pile of metal objects shaped like human heads.

Aged and covered in grime, the heads would reveal an interesting story about the farm's previous owner, John Cz.

Cz, a pumpkin farmer, was determined to grow pumpkins that looked like humans. The hobby brought Cz international fame.

### Molding His Craft

During the 1930s, Cz shaped human heads in plaster and had metal molds made from these forms.

He used each mold to encase a young pumpkin while it was still on the vine. During the initial growth phase, the pumpkin took on the shape of the mold.

When the mold was removed, the pumpkin grew to full size, retaining its form.

### Grow Somebody You Know

Local legend says Cz's pumpkin patch was a scary place at night. Moonlight shone on the grinning heads in the field. Sharp explosions periodically sounded when an iron mold burst open under the pressure of a growing pumpkin and a human-like head popped out.

Later, Cz patented several kinds of aluminum molds, which held up better than iron. Many were made to look like celebrities of his day.

He gave his pumpkins a life-like appearance by painting in eyes and other features. Some of his creations sold for \$10 to \$50—a substantial amount of money in the 1930s.

### Getting a Head

Cz and his pumpkins made national and international headlines. A German magazine ran a feature story on his pumpkin-growing methods.

Curious people from all over the United States sent him letters asking about his molds. In 1938, he received a round-trip railroad ticket and an invitation to appear on Dave Elman's "Hobby Lobby" radio program in New York City.

**Go On**

After more than a decade of growing unique pumpkins, the duties of operating a large farm left Cz little time to pursue his hobby. He packed away his molds, along with an idea he was developing for a new plastic mold.

Cz died in 1984. But his pumpkin molds have become collector's items in Madison and surrounding communities.



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**16** According to information in the article, John Cz could **best** be described as

- A** hesitant
- B** flexible
- C** stubborn
- D** imaginative

**17** Which statement **best** summarizes the information in the section titled “Getting a Head”?

- A** Cz decided to create a new plastic mold.
- B** Cz had an unusual hobby that people found interesting.
- C** Cz grew pumpkin heads that resembled famous people.
- D** Cz made molds and planted pumpkins in them.

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

**Sharp explosions periodically sounded when an iron mold burst open under the pressure of a growing pumpkin and a human-like head popped out.**

The author **most likely** included this sentence to show

- A** that the pumpkin field was a dangerous place
- B** the dramatic way in which some pumpkins appeared
- C** that the pumpkins looked like celebrities
- D** the inappropriate size of the pumpkin molds

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

**After more than a decade of growing unique pumpkins, the duties of operating a large farm left Cz little time to pursue his hobby.**

Which word means about the same as “pursue”?

- A** change
- B** discuss
- C** follow
- D** start

***Go On***

# Directions

Read this excerpt from *The Island*. Then answer questions 20 through 28.

## The Island

by Gary Paulsen



Wil Neuton had just gotten used to city life in Madison, Wisconsin, when his family moved again—this time to a small house in the woods, far away from the nearest town. At this point in the story, Wil has gone for a bike ride and has discovered a lake with an abandoned rowboat pulled up on its shore.

It took him only a minute to jump in, push off with an oar, and get settled on the old dry seat in the middle. As heavy as it was, water-soaked for years, the boat still moved easily to the oars, and in ten more minutes he was bumping against the small rocks at the south edge of the island.

He hopped out, standing in the water in his tennis shoes, and skinned<sup>1</sup> the boat up onto the rocks. Then he turned it on its side and stuck the oars up inside and turned and looked around.

“See,” he said aloud. “See what I have found—an island all for myself.” He felt only a little strange talking to himself, and he smiled and walked along the shore wondering why he had taken the boat out to the island in the first place; what pull had brought him? He had seen other islands, yet there was something about this one. It . . . fit him, somehow. Seemed to fit him.

He went to the right and soon was up on the north end of the right side of the U, where he turned left, started around the corner, and came to the large, square table rock that jutted out into the bay. Two mallards<sup>2</sup> lifted off the bay—a male, all green-headed

<sup>1</sup>skinned: scraped

<sup>2</sup>mallards: a kind of duck

with white wing flecks, and a dappled gray-brown female—and Wil jumped when they took off. There were birds singing, and some insect sound, but the sun was keeping the mosquitoes down and the quiet was very peaceful.

He walked onto the rock and sat on the outer edge, letting his feet dangle over the side. His heels almost touched the water, and when he rocked his toes forward they just broke the surface; some small sunfish came to investigate the disturbance, which might be a meal. They hovered in the shade of the rock, darted in and out with each ripple, flashed their sides in the sun, golden blinks that came up through the water into Wil's eyes and into his mind.

He sat for some time, watching the fish, looking across the bay, listening to the birds, and the place felt, in a way, like home. It felt like he was supposed to be there, and when he stood and brushed the rock dust off his pants and walked back to the boat, some of the day was gone.

But the newness filled him, and he did not think of Madison or feel lonely as he rowed back to the main shore, left the boat upside down in the brush, found his bike, and got out on the road. He did not think of Madison or his friends there; he thought only of the island, the sunfish coming to his toes, the mallards jumping into the sky the way they did, the sun, the birds.

And he knew he would come back. He knew it with a kind of basic, fundamental knowledge; he would breathe in and out—and he would come back to the island.

- 20** What is this passage **mostly** about?
- A** a boy watching wildlife on an island
  - B** a boy learning how to use an old rowboat he finds
  - C** a boy easing his loneliness when he explores a nearby island
  - D** a boy realizing how much he misses his old home and friends

- 21** This passage is told from the point of view of
- A** Wil's family
  - B** Wil's friends
  - C** an outside narrator
  - D** the main character

**Go On**

**22** What does the island **most likely** represent to Wil?

- A** the past
- B** a hardship
- C** old friends
- D** new freedom

**23** Which statement from the passage **best** shows how important the island is to Wil?

- A** “He hopped out, standing in the water in his tennis shoes, and skinned the boat up onto the rocks.”
- B** “He went to the right and soon was up on the north end of the right side of the U, where he turned left.”
- C** “He walked onto the rock and sat on the outer edge, letting his feet dangle over the side.”
- D** “He sat for some time, watching the fish, looking across the bay, listening to the birds, and the place felt, in a way, like home.”

**24** The author’s description of the wildlife on the island helps to create a sense of

- A** calmness
- B** pride
- C** sadness
- D** tension

**25** Read this sentence from the passage.

**Two mallards lifted off the bay—a male, all green-headed with white wing flecks, and a dappled gray-brown female—and Wil jumped when they took off.**

In the sentence, the author creates an image in which Wil is

- A** chasing the ducks
- B** surprised by the ducks
- C** pleased to see the ducks
- D** pretending to fly like the ducks

**26** The next time Wil feels lonely, he will **most likely**

- A** row out to the island
- B** search for a new island
- C** bring his parents to the island
- D** call his friends from the island

**27** At the end of the passage, the author says that “the newness filled” Wil. Explain what this newness is and how it affects Wil. Use details from the passage to support your answer.

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***Go On***

**28**

How does the author help the reader understand that the island feels like home to Wil?  
Use details from the passage to support your answer.

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**STOP**



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**English Language Arts Test**  
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