



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Listening Selection

Grade

7

January 20–23, 2009

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**Introduction:**

Shaquille O’Neal, a superstar in the National Basketball Association, grew up in a military family. Moving to new places and attending new schools was a part of his childhood. In this excerpt from the book *On the Court . . . with Shaquille O’Neal*, the family has moved from their home in Germany to the United States.

Growing Up . . . and Up

by Glenn Stout

When Shaquille walked into Cole High School in San Antonio, Texas, for his first day of school, everyone looked up to him—but only because of his size. Shaquille was determined that before long, they’d look up to him because he was a leader.

Although it was too late in the year for Shaquille to join the basketball team, Coach Dave Madura heard about him just moments after he stepped into the school for the first time. Cole was a small school, and most athletes were far more interested in playing football than basketball. Those students who preferred basketball were nowhere near as big as Shaquille.

Many students at Cole were from military families and transferred in and out of the school midyear. Madura rarely knew which players he would have from one year to the next. But because Shaquille was already in tenth grade, he knew there was a good chance that Shaquille would stay at Cole until he graduated, but there was no guarantee.

Even after Madura learned that Shaquille had been an emerging star in Germany, he was still a little skeptical. He had coached many players from military families who had played in Germany, but few of them had managed to adjust to the much more competitive game played in American high schools. He reserved judgment until he had a chance to see the new tenth-grader play.

Go On

When he did, he was pleasantly surprised. Although Shaquille was still sort of clumsy and slow, he was huge. More important, however, Madura also noticed that Shaquille was eager to learn and worked very hard. He knew that if Shaquille worked hard enough, he had the potential to be a star. Coach Madura kept a close eye on him for the rest of the year and during the summer. The more he saw, the better he felt about Shaquille's prospects.

Shaquille, meanwhile, was adjusting well to life in Texas. Before school started the following fall, he told the Cole football coach he wanted to try out for the football team. To his surprise, the coach replied, "Absolutely not." It turned out that Coach Madura had already spoken to the football coach about Shaquille's potential, and the two men agreed that Shaquille's athletic future was in basketball. There was simply too much risk of an injury if he played football. As the football coach recalled later, "We all knew he'd be an NBA player."

STOP



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