

Tests for Higher Standards

READING/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



GRADE LEVEL TEST
FOR THE MARYLAND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Grade 8

Part II

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from **Treasure Island**
by Robert Louis Stevenson

Editor's Note: *Treasure Island* is Stevensons' most popular novel. Written in the 1880s, it is the story of young Jim Hawkins, the son of an inn owner. As the story opens, Jim meets a mysterious man of the sea. Soon after this, a band of pirates shows up looking for the mysterious man and a treasure map. Jim manages to escape with the treasure map before the pirates can get it. Then he departs on an adventure to discover the hidden and much-wanted treasure.

Chapter 1

1. I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow—a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

2. "This is a handy cove," says he at length; "and a pleasant sittiated grog-shop. Much company, mate?"
3. My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.
4. "Well, then," said he, "this is the berth for me. Here you, matey," he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; "bring up alongside and help up my chest. I'll stay here a bit," he continued. "I'm a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I see what you're at—there"; and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. "You can tell me when I've worked through that," says he, looking as fierce as a commander.
5. And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the Royal George, that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

6. He was a very silent man by custom. All day he hung round the cove or upon the cliffs with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the parlour next the fire and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to, only look up sudden and fierce and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day when he came back from his stroll he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road. At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question, but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman did put up at the Admiral Benbow (as now and then some did, making by the coast road for Bristol) he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter, for I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms. He had taken me aside one day and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my "weather-eye open for a seafaring man with one leg" and let him know the moment he appeared. Often enough when the first of the month came round and I applied to him for my wage, he would only blow through his nose at me and stare me down, but before the week was out he was sure to think better of it, bring me my four-penny piece, and repeat his orders to look out for "the seafaring man with one leg."

8-3.A.3.a

1. **Treasure Island** is best classified as

- A a memoir.
- B an adventure novel.
- C science fiction.
- D a folk tale.

8-3.A.3.d

2. **When the Captain arrives at the Admiral Benbow Inn, he asks, "Much company, mate?" Why does he want to know how busy the Inn is? Use details from the passage to support your answer.**

8-3.A.3.d

3. What is the most important element of the selection?

- A plot
- B setting
- C climax
- D characterization

8-3.A.3.f

4. Based on the actions of the Captain and Jim Hawkins near the end of the passage, what will most likely happen in the story?

- A The Captain will finish his vacation at the Admiral Benbow and return home.
- B Pirates will come to the Admiral Benbow in search of the Captain.
- C The Captain and Jim will decide to go into business together.
- D Jim's father will ask the Captain to leave because he scares Jim.

8-3.A.3.i

5. Which point-of-view does the author use in this story?

- A First person, the captain
- B First person, Jim Hawkins
- C Third person, limited
- D Third person, omniscient

8-3.A.7.a

6. In paragraph 1, the author achieves most of his effect through

- A extensive description.
- B imaginative narration.
- C philosophical insights.
- D amusing side stories.

8-3.A.7.a

7. Read this excerpt from *Treasure Island*.

"This is a handy cove," says he at length; "and a pleasant sittyated grog-shop. Much company, mate?"

What is this type of writing called?

- A explanation
- B dialect
- C imagery
- D hyperbole

8-3.A.7.b

8. What is this the tone of this passage?

- A sad
- B humorous
- C mysterious
- D frightening

8-3.A.7.d

9. What type of writing is the phrase “blow through his nose like a fog-horn” in paragraph 6?

- A personification
- B hyperbole
- C metaphor
- D simile

8-1.D.2.b

10. Which word is an antonym for often?

- A frequently
- B never
- C rarely
- D repeatedly

8-1.D.2.b

11. The word berth appears in paragraph 4.**What is the correct meaning of the word berth?**

- A when a baby is a born
- B a place to sleep or sit
- C the place where a ship lies when at anchor
- D safe distance

The Ballad of William Jennings Bryan

by Jocelyn Pickford

- 1 There once was a man named Bryan.
 He was honest, hard-working, and true
 But no matter how hard he kept trying,
 There were some things he just couldn't do.
- 2 Three times he tried to lead this land
 By campaigning and making his speech.
 Three times he tried, three times he lost
 And the people he just couldn't reach.
- 3 He fought for what he thought was right
 At the site of the Scopes-Monkey Trial.
 He fought for what he thought was right
 And never gave up all the while.
- 4 He thought that he might never win,
 Like a man with a heart-piercing arrow.
 But the one who finally did him in
 Was none other than Clarence Darrow.
- 5 The year was 1925,
 The place Dayton, Tennessee.
 The argument was quite alive
 And the crowd as curious as can be.
- 6 For evolution Darrow took the stand
 And against it Bryan stood strong.
 The outcome would affect the land
 And Bryan was sure he couldn't be wrong.
- 7 But Darrow made a fool of him
 And this Bryan just couldn't handle.
 His pride had been destroyed within
 And he died like the flame on a candle.

8-3.A.4.a

12. A ballad is a poem that

- A uses free verse to tell a story.
- B doesn't use rhythm or rhyme.
- C is a song-like way of telling a person's story.
- D always uses the third person narrative.

8-3.A.4.b

13. The poet describes Bryan as “a man with a heart-piercing arrow” in the fourth stanza to show that

- A Bryan had fought in several wars.
- B Bryan seemed doomed.
- C Bryan became injured.
- D Bryan was always in pain.

8-3.A.4.b

14. Read these lines from the poem.

Three times he tried to lead this land
By campaigning and making his speech.

What should readers infer from these lines?

- A Bryan ran unsuccessfully for president.
- B Bryan tried to overthrow the government but failed.
- C Bryan was a poet who liked to tour the country and educate people.
- D Bryan was a quitter.

8-3.A.4.c

15. The rhyme scheme for stanzas 3-5 can be labeled

- A ABAB CBCB DBDB.
- B AABB CCDD EEFF.
- C ABCD ABCD ABCD.
- D ABAB CDCD EFEF.

8-3.A.4.c

16. The stanzas in this poem are known as

- A couplets.
- B quatrains.
- C cinquains.
- D octaves.

8-3.A.4.c

17. Read this line from the poem.

And the crowd as curious as can be.

Which word best describes the poetic device used in this line?

- A alliteration
- B assonance
- C rhythm
- D rhyme

8-3.A.4.d

18. Which of the following exemplifies personification in the poem?

- A like a man with a heart-piercing arrow
- B the argument was quite alive
- C for evolution Darrow took the stand
- D and he died like the flame on a candle

8-3.A.4.d

19. What is the tone of this poem?

- A complimentary
- B amused
- C sympathetic
- D disgusted

8-3.A.4.d

20. Read these lines from the poem.

His pride had been destroyed within
And he died like the flame on a candle.

What is the mood created by these lines?

- A joy
- B disgust
- C sadness
- D relief

“The Last Skipjack”
by Jerald Ames

Stepping aboard the *Elizabeth S. Riley*, the last of a special class of sailboats known as “skipjacks,” is like stepping back in time. The boat is just a hair over 53 feet long with a center beam 17 feet tall that carries a tall, triangular main sail. Built in 1886, the *Elizabeth S. Riley* was put to sea during the height of the Oyster Rush of the last half of the nineteenth century. Local nautical historian, Steven Cooper, tells us, “When the *Elizabeth S. Riley* was built, the oyster trade was a lot like the California Gold Rush of 1849. It was the heyday of commercial sailing in the U.S.”

At the turn of the twentieth century, the oyster dredging industry was dominated by skipjacks like the *Elizabeth S. Riley*, carrying men looking to make a living in oysters. Oyster dredging crews were made up of sturdy men who loved being out in rough winter conditions under sail, searching for oysters and trying to make a living. But as technology improved and became cheaper, the need to suffer through harsh winter conditions lessened. Motorized oyster boats gave crews more ability to dredge in high-wind, or low-wind conditions, whereas sailboats are bound to the dictates of wind and weather. In the long run, motorized dredgers are more efficient, more predictable, and more profitable than skipjacks.

As a result, the skipjacks were eventually phased out in lieu of newer technology. Today, the only oyster dredging skipjack still in commercial operation is the *Elizabeth S. Riley*. Helmed by Captain William H. Meyre, Jr. the *Elizabeth S. Riley* is a throwback to the oyster crews of old. During oyster season (November to March), Captain Meyre and his crew brave the wind, ice, rain, and cold rough waters as they dredge for oysters along the Maryland coast.

Captain Meyre is a colorful third-generation captain who enjoys his work, and he believes dredging under sail is a better means of dredging than using motorized boats. “The problem with the motorized dredgers,” he says, “is that they tend to damage things. They aren’t good for the oyster beds, and they aren’t good for keeping the water clean.” Pollution and damage are two of the drawbacks to using motorized dredgers, and Captain Meyre would love to see the dredging industry return to using skipjacks like the *Elizabeth S. Riley*. “There’s more to dredging than making money. We can’t go destroying all of the oyster beds because then we’ll be out of work. Dredgers can make a living using skipjacks, and they can preserve the oyster beds, too.” Captain Meyre points to himself and his crew as an example of successful sailboat dredging. “We’re making a good living out there,” he laughs.

During the off-season (March to November), Captain Meyre charts the *Elizabeth S. Riley* for educational two-hour sails. While aboard the old-fashioned skipjack, you will receive a firsthand look at the work of oyster dredgers both historically and today. Captain Meyre encourages questions and discussions about all aspects of sailing and oyster dredging. He loves meeting people and sharing the history of oyster dredging as well as his own rich experience, but he really lives for the beginning of oyster season. “There’s nothing prettier than dredging under sail, when the wind is in your face, there’s oysters to catch and you have a good crew,” Captain Meyre says with a bright smile and a wink.

8-2.A.1.a

21. What makes this passage a work of nonfiction? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

8-2.A.1.a

22. This passage would most likely be found in

- A a modern magazine.
- B an anthology titled, *Great Sea Voyages*.
- C a history textbook about American history.
- D a collection of short stories titled, *Great American Classics*.

8-2.A.3.a

23. Which answer best describes how the passage is organized?

- A categorically based on the different eras of American history
- B chronologically
- C from most important to least important
- D categorically based on the different types of sailboats

8-2.A.4.a

24. The author's main purpose in writing this passage is to

- A entertain readers with a story about an old sea captain.
- B persuade readers to stand up against motorized oyster dredgers.
- C inform readers about sailing.
- D educate readers about a type of sailboat.

8-2.A.4.b

25. How does the author feel about skipjacks? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

8-2.A.4.d

26. Which answer choice best summarizes the information in the passage?

- A** Skipjacks make great sailboats, and they are becoming popular again.
- B** Captain William Meyre is trying to prevent people from oyster dredging unless they use old-fashioned skipjacks.
- C** The *Elizabeth S. Riley*, run by Captain William Meyre, is the last commercial skipjack still in operation.
- D** The *Elizabeth S. Riley* is open all summer long for educational charter trips to learn about oyster dredging.

8-2.A.4.f

27. Based on what you have read, Captain Meyre's father

- A** was an environmentalist.
- B** was a sailboat captain.
- C** worked on a motorized oyster dredger.
- D** never had an interest in sailing.

8-2.A.4.f

28. What role does technology play in this passage? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

8-2.A.4.i

29. After this interview is published, the United States Environmental Protection Agency begins investigations on the damaging effects of motorboats on underwater life.

Which excerpt from the passage would most likely lead investigators to ask for Captain Meyre's input?

- A** Oyster dredging crews were made up of sturdy men who loved being out in rough winter conditions under sail, searching for oysters and trying to make a living.
- B** Motorized oyster boats gave crews more ability to dredge in high-wind, or low-wind conditions, whereas sailboats are bound to the dictates of wind and weather.
- C** During oyster season (November to March), Captain Meyre and his crew brave the wind, ice, rain, and cold rough waters as they dredge for oysters along the Maryland coast.
- D** "The problem with the motorized dredgers," he says, "is that they tend to damage things. They aren't good for the oyster beds, and they aren't good for keeping the water clean."

8-1.D.3.a

30. Read this excerpt from the passage.

Motorized oyster boats gave crews more ability to dredge in high-wind, or low-wind conditions, whereas sailboats are bound to the dictates of wind and weather.

As it is used in this passage, what does the word dictates most likely mean?

- A another word for dredging
- B commands given by an authority figure
- C no wind
- D passing a message on from one person to another

8-1.D.3.a

31. Which sentence from the passage contains an idiom?

- A Pollution and damage are two of the drawbacks to using motorized dredgers . . .
- B During the off-season (March to November), Captain Meyre charts the *Elizabeth S. Riley* for educational two-hour sails.
- C The boat is just a hair over 53 feet long with a center beam 17 feet tall that carries a tall, triangular main sail.
- D He loves meeting people and sharing the history of oyster dredging as well as his own rich experience . . .

from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
by Mark Twain

Editor's Note: Mark Twain wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1876. The story takes place in the American frontier during the 1840's. It follows Tom Sawyer, an imaginative boy who always seems to get himself into trouble, through a series of comic adventures.

Chapter I

- 1 "TOM!"
- 2 No answer.
- 3 "TOM!"
- 4 No answer.
- 5 "What's gone with that boy, I wonder? You TOM!"
- 6 No answer.
- 7 The old lady pulled her spectacles down and looked over them about the room; then she put them up and looked out under them. She seldom or never looked THROUGH them for so small a thing as a boy; they were her state pair, the pride of her heart, and were built for "style," not service—she could have seen through a pair of stove-lids just as well. She looked perplexed for a moment, and then said, not fiercely, but still loud enough for the furniture to hear:
- 8 "Well, I lay if I get hold of you I'll—"
- 9 She did not finish, for by this time she was bending down and punching under the bed with the broom, and so she needed breath to punctuate the punches with. She resurrected nothing but the cat.
- 10 "I never did see the beat of that boy!"
- 11 She went to the open door and stood in it and looked out among the tomato vines and "jimson" weeds that constituted the garden. No Tom. So she lifted up her voice at an angle calculated for distance and shouted:
- 12 "Y-o-u-u TOM!"
- 13 There was a slight noise behind her and she turned just in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight.

- 14 "There! I might 'a' thought of that closet. What you been doing in there?"
- 15 "Nothing."
- 16 "Nothing! Look at your hands. And look at your mouth. What IS that truck?"
- 17 "I don't know, aunt."
- 18 "Well, I know. It's jam—that's what it is. Forty times I've said if you didn't let that jam alone I'd skin you. Hand me that switch."
- 19 The switch hovered in the air—the peril was desperate—
- 20 "My! Look behind you, aunt!"
- 21 The old lady whirled round, and snatched her skirts out of danger. The lad fled on the instant, scrambled up the high board-fence, and disappeared over it.
- 22 His aunt Polly stood surprised a moment, and then broke into a gentle laugh.
- 23 "Hang the boy, can't I never learn anything? Ain't he played me tricks enough like that for me to be looking out for him by this time? But old fools is the biggest fools there is. Can't learn an old dog new tricks, as the saying is. But my goodness, he never plays them alike, two days, and how is a body to know what's coming? He 'pears to know just how long he can torment me before I get my dander up."



TOM SAWYER AND AUNT POLLY.

8-3.A.3.a

32. This passage is a work of fiction because

- A it tells the story of a young boy and his aunt.
- B it includes specific details about life on the prairie.
- C it contains dialogue and description.
- D the characters are not real people.

8-3.A.3.b

33. What is the main conflict in this passage?

- A person vs. nature : Aunt Polly wants Tom inside before the storm starts.
- B person vs. self : Tom is trying to overcome getting himself in trouble.
- C person vs. person : Aunt Polly wants to punish Tom
- D person vs. society : Aunt Polly is struggling to raise Tom in the community.

8-3.A.3.b

34. In this passage, Mark Twain uses conflict to

- A move the story forward.
- B reveal character traits of Tom and Aunt Polly.
- C entertain readers.
- D all of these.

8-3.A.3.d

35. Which line from the passage contributes to the reader's perception that aunt Polly will forgive Tom?

- A "His aunt Polly stood surprised a moment, and then broke into a gentle laugh."
- B "The switch hovered in the air—the peril was desperate—"
- C "Forty times I've said if you didn't let that jam alone I'd skin you."
- D "... she turned just in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight."

8-3.A.3.e

36. Which sentence from the selection best reveals that Tom tricks aunt Polly often?

- A "Ain't he played me tricks enough like that for me to be looking out for him by this time?"
- B "The lad fled on the instant . . ."
- C "... she turned just in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight."
- D "So she lifted up her voice at an angle calculated for distance and shouted:"

8-3.A.3.i

37. What point-of-view does Mark Twain use in this passage?

- A first person
- B second person
- C third person-limited
- D third-person-omniscient

8-3.A.6.a

38. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A Tom and aunt Polly are playing a game of hide-and-seek.
- B Aunt Polly wants to give Tom a treat, but she cannot find him.
- C Tom is trying to find aunt Polly so he can tell her where the jam is hidden.
- D Aunt Polly wants to punish Tom, but he continually outsmarts her.

8-3.A.7.d

39. Which kind of figurative language is Aunt Polly using when she says, “Can’t learn an old dog new tricks...” in paragraph 23?

- A alliteration
- B simile
- C idiom
- D hyperbole

8-3.A.8.c

40. Based on the passage, we can conclude that in 1876

- A kids ran away from home at a young age.
- B people stole food from their neighbors.
- C people punished children by hitting them with a switch.
- D people ate jam anytime they wanted.

8-3.A.8.d

41. The author’s main purpose in writing this passage is to

- A introduce the characters of aunt Polly and Tom.
- B describe the community where the novel takes place.
- C build up the plot.
- D give readers information about things that happened before the novel started.

8-1.D.3.b, 8-1.D.3.c

42. Which dictionary entry best defines the word torment as it is used in paragraph 23?

- A the infliction of torture (especially by some special device designed for torture)
- B to cause severe usually persistent or recurrent distress of body or mind
- C extreme pain or agony
- D to distort or twist

8-1.D.3.b

43. Read this excerpt from a word origin dictionary.

Peril: the word peril is closely akin to the word fear. Peril comes from the Latin word *periculum* meaning “attempt,” which evolved from the Greek *peiran* meaning “to attempt.” Fear comes from the Middle English *fer*, which is an evolution of the previous Greek and Latin roots, and means “sudden danger.”

Based on this information, what does peril (paragraph 19) mean?

- A exposed to the risk of danger
- B attempting to cause harm
- C being afraid for no reason
- D feeling safe and comfortable

8-1.D.3.b, 8-1.D.3.c

44. Which dictionary entry best defines the word perplexed as it is used in paragraph 7?

- A** full of difficulty
- B** intricate and involved
- C** excessively frightened
- D** filled with uncertainty; puzzled

1-SAMPLE