



# **GRADE 7**

## **Reading**

### **Modified**

**Administered April 2014**

**RELEASED\***

\*This is a partial release of the STAAR Modified assessment administered in spring 2014. Selected passages and test items have been removed in order to support future test administrations within the STAAR program.

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# READING





## Sister of the Groom

This story is about a 12-year-old girl named Kate. Her big brother Paul is going to marry Lauren, and Kate has been asked to be a bridesmaid in their wedding. Read the story to find out how Kate feels about Paul getting married and moving across town.

# Sister of the Groom

- 1 "Oh, my goodness, Lauren!" one of the bridesmaids gushed. "You make such a beautiful bride!"
- 2 Lauren's bedroom was serving as the bridal room for the bridesmaids. Kate had never been surrounded by so many squealing women. She had the urge to cover her ears with her hands. She watched as the other five bridesmaids gathered around Lauren, the young woman her older brother Paul would be marrying in about an hour. It had been kind of Lauren to ask Kate to be one of her bridesmaids. But even though Kate's dress matched the other bridesmaids' dresses, Kate knew she wasn't like them. The other bridesmaids were Lauren's friends from high school or college. Kate was only 12 years old and didn't feel like she belonged.
- 3 Kate had been pleased when Lauren asked her to be in the wedding, but she knew it was Paul's idea. He was a thoughtful and caring brother. Paul was really more like a parent than a brother, since both their parents had spent time away from home for military service. Kate knew how happy Paul was to be marrying Lauren, and she was glad for him. But Kate also had other, less positive feelings. She wondered what would happen to her relationship with Paul now that he was getting married and moving across town.

- 1** Paul makes sure that Kate is one of Lauren's bridesmaids most likely because he —
- A** wants Kate to feel included in the wedding
  - B** thinks that Kate would like to wear a fancy dress
  - C** wants Kate to act more like the other bridesmaids

- 4 Paul and Lauren had promised Kate that she could visit them at their new apartment whenever she wanted. But Kate knew that things would never be the same. No more listening to Paul strumming his guitar, no more help with homework at a moment's notice, and no more staying up late with him and making fun of whatever lame movie was on TV.
- 5 Paul always tried to include Kate in his activities, even when she was skeptical about being able to keep up with her brother. In the past couple of years, Paul had gotten interested in rock climbing. Kate remembered the day about a year ago when she and Paul had taken a rock-climbing lesson.
- 6 "I'm not strong enough to pull myself up," Kate had complained.
- 7 "You don't have to be super strong," Paul had told her. "Rock climbing is more about finding places to grip with your fingers and toes and knowing how to balance your weight. Stop being so negative and give it a try!"
- 8 She had enjoyed the day more than she thought possible. First the class tried an indoor climbing wall. Then they drove to a park and climbed on big rocks that were low to the ground. Kate learned to look for holds, the places to grip while looking for the next place to grab above her. She continued little by little until she reached the top of the rocks.





**2** Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

*No more listening to Paul strumming his guitar, no more help with homework at a moment's notice, and no more staying up late with him and making fun of whatever lame movie was on TV.*

The author repeats the words “no more” to create a feeling of —

- F** loss
  - G** guilt
  - H** anger
- 

**3** Read this sentence from paragraph 7.

*“Stop being so negative and give it a try!”*

Paul’s words encourage Kate to —

- A** put on her safety equipment correctly
- B** successfully complete the climb
- C** examine the big rocks on the ground

- 9 Then it was time for Kate to try real climbing. She and the other students put on a safety harness and clipped on a rope with the other end attached to the top of a 70-foot rock.
- 10 At first Kate just stared at the rock wall. It seemed to go straight up with no holds at all. Paul helped her start climbing. Though her heart was beating fast as she climbed higher and higher, Kate found that there were plenty of good holds once she knew what to look for. After making it to the top of the rock, she had to slide down the rope a little bit at a time. When Kate's feet were on the ground again, she felt a rush of joy she had never felt before. She had defeated the rock. Paul was quite proud and had taken many photos to remember the day.
- 11 Afterward Kate and Paul stopped at a restaurant. While they were enjoying their dinner, Paul told Kate that he was going to ask Lauren to marry him. Kate kept eating, but suddenly she didn't feel hungry anymore.

**4** In paragraph 10, the word defeated helps the reader understand Kate's feeling of —

- F** confusion
- G** hopelessness
- H** achievement

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**5** What is the most likely reason that Kate stops feeling hungry at the restaurant?

- A** She is tired from the rock climbing and does not feel well.
- B** She does not like Lauren and is worried about Paul's future.
- C** She has mixed feelings about Paul's upcoming marriage.

- 12 The next twelve months were a blur of wedding plans. Paul and Lauren tried to include Kate in the planning, but it was their wedding, not hers. Paul had become so busy that he never even mentioned the pictures he had taken on that day of rock climbing.
- 13 Hearing her name made Kate snap back to what was happening in the bridal room. Lauren was handing her a gift. "I almost forgot, Kate. Paul asked me to give this to you today."
- 14 Kate took the gift, wondering what it could be. "What a great brother you have," one of the other bridesmaids said. "Go on, open it."
- 15 The gift was a small photo album filled with pictures of Kate and Paul on their rock-climbing adventure. Inside the front cover Paul had written, "Can't wait for our next adventure. Love you, Sis."
- 16 Suddenly Lauren cried, "My necklace just broke, and it's almost time for the wedding! What am I going to do?"
- 17 Kate took off her own necklace. "Here, take mine," she said.
- 18 "Thanks, Kate," Lauren said. "I'm so glad you're going to be my sister, too." Lauren reached for the necklace. Kate smiled as she picked up her flowers. She was ready.

**6** At the end of the story, Kate is ready for the wedding because she —

- F** understands that she will still be an important part of Paul's life
- G** knows that Paul and Lauren's decision to marry is final
- H** has decided that Lauren and Paul will be happy together

**Use the whole story “Sister of the Groom”  
on pages 6–12 to answer questions 7 and 8.**

**flashback**—when the author interrupts the normal order of events by presenting an earlier moment in time, usually through a character’s memories

**7** Why does the author include the **flashback** in paragraphs 5 through 12?

- A** To show how quickly Kate learned how to rock climb
- B** To illustrate the influence Paul has had on Kate
- C** To show Kate and Paul during their childhood

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**8** What is the best summary of the story?

- F** Kate is a bridesmaid in her brother Paul’s wedding. In some ways she is like the other bridesmaids, but she does not feel comfortable spending time with them. She thinks about her life before Paul was engaged to Lauren and remembers a special day she spent rock climbing with him.
- G** Kate is waiting for her brother Paul’s wedding to begin. She is happy for her brother, but she worries about how her own life will change. Kate recalls a rock-climbing lesson they took together. Kate opens a gift from Paul and finds a photo album of their adventure. She is reassured that they will remain close.
- H** Kate is with Lauren and the other bridesmaids. Kate’s brother Paul is going to marry Lauren. Kate is happy for him, but Lauren’s friends make her uncomfortable. Kate is pleased to get a photo album as a present from her brother before the wedding. When Lauren’s necklace breaks, Kate offers Lauren her own to wear for the wedding.







## Seeing the World

Read this poem to find out about a special activity that the speaker's family shares.

# Seeing the World

by Steven Herrick

Every month or so,  
when my brother and I  
are bored with backyard games  
and television, Dad says  
5 "It's time to see the world."  
So we climb the ladder to our attic,  
push the window open,  
and carefully, carefully,  
scramble onto the roof.  
10 We hang on tight as we scale the heights  
to the very top.  
We sit with our backs to the chimney  
and see the world.  
The birds flying  
15 below us.  
The trees swaying in the wind  
below us.  
Our cubbyhouse, meters  
below us.  
20 The distant city  
below us.  
And then Dad, my brother, and I lie back  
look up and watch  
the clouds and sky  
25 and dream  
we're flying  
we're flying.  
In summer  
with the sun and a gentle breeze  
30 and not a sound anywhere  
I'm sure I never want to land.

"Seeing the World" from *My Life, My Love, My Lasagne* by Steven Herrick. Copyright © 2002 by Steven Herrick. Used by permission of University of Queensland Press.



9 What can the reader conclude about the speaker's family members?

- A They just moved to a new house.
- B They enjoy spending time together.
- C They like traveling to new places.

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10 Read the following dictionary entry for the word scale.

**scale** \ˈskāl\ *verb*

- 1. to reach the highest point of
- 2. to estimate according to a standard
- 3. to take off in thin layers

What is the definition of scale as it is used in line 10?

- F Definition 1
- G Definition 2
- H Definition 3

**mood**—when the author makes the reader feel a certain way through words or details

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

In summer  
with the sun and a gentle breeze  
and not a sound anywhere

The poet uses these lines to create a **mood** that is best described as —

- A** playful
- B** confident
- C** peaceful

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**12** In line 5, what does the speaker’s father mean when he says that it is time to “see the world”?

- F** He wants his children to experience their surroundings in a special way.
- G** He wishes his children were able to think more creatively.
- H** He disapproves of his children watching television.

**13** Which of these lines suggests that the speaker enjoys his rooftop adventures?

- A** when my brother and I
- B** look up and watch
- C** I'm sure I never want to land.

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**theme**—the central idea, message, or moral  
of a story, poem, or play

**14** Which of these is the primary **theme** of the poem?

- F** A new perspective can spark the imagination.
- G** Summer is the best time for making connections with family.
- H** Climbing to great heights offers an opportunity for fun.







## **Why Junk Food Shouldn't Make the Grade in Schools**

This is a letter written by Olivia Jones, a student at Sunset Hill Junior High School. Olivia writes a letter to Principal Patterson about the unhealthy foods included on the school lunch menu. Read the letter to learn about the arguments Olivia uses to support her case.

# Why Junk Food Shouldn't Make the Grade in Schools

Dear Principal Patterson,

- 1 My name is Olivia Jones. I am a student here at Sunset Hill Junior High. I was wondering when you last ate lunch in the school cafeteria. I have not seen you walk through the cafeteria line in quite a while. And I think I know why.
- 2 Let me describe what's on the menu for today's lunch. The main choice is a fried corn dog. The two sides are fried tater tots that are glistening with enough grease to soak a napkin and a tiny salad swimming in high-fat dressing. And for dessert there is a double-chocolate brownie! Finally, there are 12 different sodas in the vending machines to drink.
- 3 I don't blame you for not wanting to eat high-fat, high-calorie lunches. Just thinking about cafeteria food is what makes me pack my lunch every day. Because I play sports at school, I need to eat foods like grilled fish, apples, and yogurt to give me energy. Unfortunately, junk food is served all the time at school, but nutritious food is hard to find on the menu. That's why I'm asking you to ban junk food and offer healthful food choices to the students at this school.

- 15** How does Olivia think the principal will react to her description of the lunch menu in paragraph 2?
- A** By agreeing to visit the cafeteria more often
  - B** By agreeing that the foods offered are unacceptable
  - C** By arguing that the menu is designed to serve the students' favorite foods

4 Good food is vital for keeping a body healthy and strong. Nutritious food also gives a person energy and helps a person stay focused. Junk foods and sugary drinks like those that are served in our cafeteria are heavily processed. Most of the vitamins and minerals have been removed. Instead, a lot of salt, sugar, fat, and chemicals have been added.

5 No wonder my friends fall asleep in class after eating a fatty burger and drinking a soda. Their energy level drops, and they become too sluggish to focus. Without the necessary vitamins and minerals, their brains and bodies do not function at optimal levels. There's just no denying that junk food is bad.

6 Take a look at this cartoon. It shows that the problem of poor cafeteria food is so common that it is considered a joke! Thankfully, changes are being made in some places. School districts across the United States are removing junk food from their lunch menus. French fries and other deep-fried foods have been banned by schools in one state. Schools in another state no longer sell fatty or sugary snacks.



**16** What does the word vital mean in paragraph 4?

- F** Necessary
- G** Changeable
- H** Harmless



**17** What is the main message of the cartoon?

- A** Cafeteria workers think students prefer to pack a lunch.
- B** Cafeteria food is not appealing to students.
- C** Cafeteria food is supposed to taste good.

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**18** What is one way the author argues her position in paragraph 6?

- F** She describes the benefits of eating healthful foods.
- G** She explains why some junk foods have been banned from schools.
- H** She gives examples of schools in other states that have banned certain junk foods.

- 7 It has been proved that students will make better drink choices if given the chance. In some schools sugary drinks in vending machines have been supplanted by low-fat milk, fruit juices, and bottled water. When one school offered milk and fruit juices in vending machines, soda sales dropped. The school's cafeteria manager said, "It blew my mind. Students bought twice as much milk as they did soda."
- 8 Some schools are encouraging students to eat more healthfully by serving foods like vegetarian pizza, raisins, and nuts. Other schools are serving fresh fruits and vegetables. If our school served foods like these, students would begin to choose them more often.
- 9 Making wise food choices doesn't just help students become healthier now. Healthier kids become healthier adults. One doctor from a children's hospital agrees. "Children spend most of their day in school. People's food choices and healthy behaviors are formed in childhood, so starting early and starting young is the only way to really have healthy adults." Students who eat junk food every day are more likely to have long-term health problems.
- 10 Clearly, eating healthful food is important for many reasons. Please take action so that students can have access to these foods and grow into healthy adults. Help us make the switch to nutritious lunches and snacks. Junk foods should not make the grade in our school.

Thank you for your consideration,

Olivia Jones

**19** What does the word supplanted mean in paragraph 7?

- A** Adapted
- B** Replaced
- C** Overwhelmed

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**20** Paragraphs 7 and 8 provide evidence that —

- F** school officials believe they are not responsible for students' food choices
- G** students choose healthful foods when these foods are offered
- H** school officials are surprised when students select healthful foods

**Use the whole letter “Why Junk Food Shouldn’t Make  
the Grade in Schools” on pages 22–26  
to answer questions 21–24.**

**21** What does Olivia assume about her school principal?

- A** The principal is concerned about the cost of making a change to the lunch program.
- B** The principal can fix the problem by hiring more cafeteria workers.
- C** The principal cares about the students’ health and their education.

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**22** Which sentence explains Olivia’s main purpose in writing the letter?

- F** *That’s why I’m asking you to ban junk food and offer healthful food choices to the students at this school.*
- G** *Most of the vitamins and minerals have been removed.*
- H** *Healthier kids become healthier adults.*

**23** The reader can conclude from the letter that Olivia is —

- A** open to different opinions
- B** cautious about trying new things
- C** passionate about her beliefs

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**24** How does Olivia emphasize the seriousness of the issue?

- F** She suggests that the students often complain about the cafeteria's food.
- G** She states that she has to pack her lunch for school every day.
- H** She argues that making bad food choices when young can lead to long-term health problems.







## Crash Course in Survival

This is a story about a group of girls and their counselor at a wilderness camp. The girls—Rachel, Karlie, and Mary—and their counselor Denise experience a disaster while riding down a river in a canoe. Read this story to find out how the girls survive in the wilderness.

# Crash Course in Survival

- 1 Denise dragged herself out of the river and fell onto the bank, grabbing her ankle. She was our wilderness counselor and camping expert. She was also the only one who seemed to be seriously injured. She was lying next to me, shivering and moaning in pain. The other campers, Karlie and Rachel, did not seem to be hurt. They were climbing over the rocks, looking for supplies. Rachel was able to recover one of our waterproof bags from the raging river. But the canoe floated away, and the rest of our equipment made its way down the rapids without us.
- 2 I could not believe we were in this situation. Karlie, Rachel, and I were here because we had won a contest. We had each written an essay on the importance of protecting wilderness areas. Now we had to protect ourselves from the wilderness. Karlie and Rachel were pretty experienced campers. But the closest I had ever come to nature was the smell of wood when I sharpened my pencil.
- 3 If we followed the river, we would eventually get to the rendezvous point. We were supposed to be back at base camp in two days to join the other groups. We would need at least five days to get there on foot. But Denise could not walk, and she was our guide. Now even five days did not seem possible.



**25** What does the word rendezvous mean in paragraph 3?

- A** Meeting
- B** Resting
- C** Vanishing

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**26** Why is it a problem that Denise is injured?

- F** She is the most experienced at camping.
- G** She knows how to contact base camp for help.
- H** She has been involved in a camping accident before.

- 4 Rachel opened the bag of supplies she had saved from the river. She laid the contents on a rock. "Five cans of tuna, six chocolate bars, Karlie's dry clothes, two sleeping bags, and a bag of peanuts," she said, shaking her head.
- 5 Karlie was leaning over Denise. "We have to make a fire, Mary," Karlie told me. "Denise's ankle might be broken. Her skin is cold and clammy. Her lips are blue, and she doesn't seem to be thinking clearly. I think Denise is in shock. We need to prop up her ankle and keep her warm. We need a fire," Karlie repeated.
- 6 "Does anyone have matches?" I asked.
- 7 Rachel gave me an irritated look. She was planning to make a bow drill. The very thought of it made me tired. It can take forever to make one, and your hands start to hurt.
- 8 None of us had made a flame using a bow drill without Denise's help. Rachel had come close once. And she seemed determined now, looking in the forest for the materials she needed.

**27** Why does the author list the contents of the waterproof bag in paragraph 4?

- A** To tell how carefully Denise has planned the trip
- B** To show how little the campers have to survive on
- C** To describe supplies that campers should carry in a bag

- 9 While Rachel was looking for sticks to make a bow drill, I saw an old soda can close by. I had just read about making fire with a soda can and a piece of chocolate. If done right, the bottom of the can will reflect sunlight and create a hot beam of light.
- 10 "Hey, girls, check it out!" I yelled, holding up the can. Rachel came out from behind a tree. Karlie looked up from taking care of Denise. They were not impressed.
- 11 "I think we could make a fire with this old soda can, but we'll have to use one of our chocolate bars to polish the can first. And we can't eat the chocolate afterward, because a newly polished can is poisonous," I added.
- 12 "Don't waste a chocolate bar, Mary. We need all our food," said Rachel.
- 13 "But I think it will work," I said.
- 14 Rachel shrugged her shoulders. "Then we'll divide the chocolate evenly," she said. "You can do what you want with yours, Mary. I suggest eating it." Then Rachel went back into the trees.

**28** Why is Rachel concerned about Mary using the chocolate bar?

- F** Rachel knows they will need enough food to last for a few days.
- G** Rachel does not like the other foods that they have.
- H** Rachel thinks that Mary plans to eat all the chocolate.

- 15 I grabbed a chocolate bar. Rachel's comment about my plan to start a fire made me more determined than ever. I wanted to make a fire before she did. I found one of Karlie's extra socks and used it to smear chocolate onto the bottom of the can. I didn't know that it would take more than an hour to polish the can. The sun seemed to be hurrying away from us, as if it feared nightfall like we did. I rubbed the can as hard as I could. My arm began to hurt. My fingers felt like brittle icicles.
- 16 After a while I could see my reflection in the bottom of the can. I began tearing some tree bark into thin strips, and then I mixed the strips with dried grass. I piled this conglomeration together until it looked something like a bird's nest. This was where I would drop my first burning ember.
- 17 I could hear Denise moaning and shivering. She kept repeating one word: "C-C-Cold."
- 18 I added some small, dry branches to the pile, hoping to create enough heat to catch a log on fire. But the wind was beginning to blow. And if the sun set, all my work would be for nothing.
- 19 I turned my soda can toward the sun and slowly moved the tree bark over the can. I looked for a spot of light. When I saw a tiny speck of light on the bark, I held the bark still. Seconds later it began to smoke.



**29** What does the word conglomeration mean in paragraph 16?

- A** Center of activities
- B** Collection of items
- C** Special place

- 20 I was so excited when I saw the bark begin to smoke that I forgot all about trying to compete with Rachel. I forgot everything.
- 21 “Drop it in the nest, Mary!” I jumped when I heard Rachel’s voice. Immediately I dropped the burning bark into the pile of bark strips and began blowing on it. At first there was a ton of smoke.
- 22 “Keep blowing!” Rachel yelled.
- 23 The next thing I saw was a tiny, growing flame. Then the branches caught on fire. I looked up at Rachel and Karlie. They were staring at my fire, looking as excited as I felt. I looked over at Denise. She smiled weakly and whispered, “Looks like we’re going to make it.”
- 24 I believed her. For the first time since I had escaped from the river, I felt relaxed. And all of a sudden, I wanted chocolate.



**30** Why does Rachel finally encourage Mary's efforts to start a fire?

- F** Rachel sees that Mary's idea is working.
- G** Rachel does not think that Mary can succeed without help.
- H** Mary is not comfortable being in the wilderness.

**Use the whole story “Crash Course in Survival”  
on pages 32–40 to answer question 31.**

**31** Why is the time of day important to the story?

- A** The warmth of the sun is helping keep Denise from going into shock.
- B** The campers need the sunlight in order to set up an emergency camp.
- C** The sun is needed in order for Mary’s plan to succeed.

BE SURE YOU HAVE RECORDED ALL OF YOUR  
ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.





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