

GRADE 8
Reading

Administered March 2017

RELEASED

READING

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Dark Water Rising is a story about 17-year-old Seth and his family's move to Galveston, Texas, in the summer of 1900. After a devastating storm in Galveston, Papa leaves the family to help repair a railroad bridge. In the excerpt below, Papa returns home from weeks of working on the bridge.

from
Dark Water Rising

by Marian Hale

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- 1 Which words from paragraph 9 help the reader understand the meaning of instinctive?
- A Text from paragraph 9 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
 - B Text from paragraph 9 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
 - C Text from paragraph 9 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
 - D Text from paragraph 9 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
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- 2 The description of the father's return in paragraphs 1 through 4 is important to the excerpt because it —
- F reveals the role each family member has in the household
 - G demonstrates that the family has been unable to manage without him
 - H shows how reassured the family feels by his presence
 - J explains why the family was upset that he had to work on the bridge
-

- 3 Which sentence best illustrates the narrator's conflict?
- A Text from paragraph 8 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
 - B Text from paragraph 10 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
 - C Text from paragraph 5 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.
 - D Text from paragraph 6 of *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this answer option. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.

- 4 Through the narrator’s experience, the author explores the idea of —
- F wanting to feel a close connection to a family member
 - G feeling pressure to serve as a role model for younger siblings
 - H working hard to complete projects that seem overwhelming at first
 - J understanding that there can be different approaches to solving a problem
-

- 5 The narrator’s keen awareness of his father’s behavior leads him to —
- A think that his father already knows about his thoughts of college
 - B recognize how his father has changed since returning home
 - C be concerned about his father checking over the repair work he has done
 - D worry that his father is unable to work as efficiently as he used to
-

- 6 The last two paragraphs of the excerpt convey that the narrator is —
- F having difficulty achieving his father’s expectations
 - G planning to prioritize his family’s needs over his own
 - H feeling uneasy about discussing his future with his father
 - J working hard to make sure his family is comfortable

7 What is the best summary of paragraphs 5 through 9?

- A The narrator and Josiah are reconstructing the roof of a neighboring house. When the narrator notices his father watching, he begins to question the quality of his work. When the narrator drops a board, he is glad to see that his father did not witness the mistake.
- B The narrator is working on reconstructing the roof of a neighboring house with Josiah. He notices that his father has come out to watch him work. The narrator begins to wonder about the work he is doing on the house.
- C The narrator notices that his father is sleeping while he and Josiah are reconstructing the roof of a neighboring house. He sees his father watching them later in the day, but his father does not offer to help the boys. The narrator wonders if his father will criticize his work.
- D The narrator notices that his father is watching him reconstruct the roof of a house with Josiah. The narrator becomes anxious and drops a board Josiah is passing to him. The board almost hits Josiah, who is not pleased with his brother's carelessness.

8 Read this sentence from paragraph 16.

Text from *Dark Water Rising* appeared in this text box. Copyright restrictions prevent that text from being displayed in this format.

What does the imagery in this sentence suggest about the narrator?

- F He knows that his father will support his decision if he has good reasons.
- G He believes that it is unlikely he will ever be able to escape his father's judgment.
- H He wants his father to act the way he did before he left to work on the bridge.
- J He feels a new tension building between his father and him.

9 The historical context of this excerpt emphasizes the idea that people in the early 1900s often relied on —

- A donations from volunteers
- B help from community members
- C income from well-paying jobs
- D resources from the government

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Dog-Walk

by Mary Balazs

Over the years, my dog has worn a path
edging a vacant field.
Experience has taught her to avoid thistles and stinging
nettle.

5 From thousands of walks, she's learned where plantain
are soft—
to expect from pokeweed and piled stones,
from certain crevices,
exhilarating scents.

10 Leaving the house, she pulls hard on her leash—
her head into the wind, her nose and ears working.
At the pasture's high fence
she thrusts head and neck past chains
linking the paired gates,

15 wedging her wide shoulders farther,
farther toward the pasture's air—

until hinges, closed locks, stop her, still straining,
here, in this narrow place,
her front quarters extending as far as they can go

20 toward those regions she yearns for:
fenceless acreage, the lots of desire
she is denied.

She trudges slowly returning home,
her walk shambling,

25 her leash slack.

Courtesy of the Estate of Mary W. Balazs

10 Which words from the poem show that the speaker is unsympathetic to the dog's wish?

- F** linking the paired gates
 - G** pasture's high fence
 - H** the lots of desire
 - J** she is denied
-

11 In the first stanza, the poet uses the words "Over the years" and "From thousands of walks" to —

- A** show that the dog still finds the walk exciting
 - B** suggest that each walk follows the same sequence of events
 - C** illustrate what the dog enjoys about going on a walk
 - D** describe the reasons why the pasture is off-limits
-

12 The imagery in line 11 helps the reader —

- F** visualize the dog's enthusiasm at the beginning of the walk
- G** understand why the speaker keeps the dog out of the open pasture
- H** focus on the parts of the walk that the dog finds most appealing
- J** appreciate the close relationship between the dog and the speaker

13 In contrast to line 10, the last line of the poem shows that the dog now feels —

- A** confident
 - B** defeated
 - C** relaxed
 - D** lonely
-

14 In lines 20 through 22, the speaker observes that the dog wants to —

- F** return to the comfort of her home
- G** explore new areas beyond the fence
- H** follow the familiar path around the field
- J** take breaks during the walk with the speaker

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Power of Young People to Change the World

by T. A. Barron

- 1 If I could give today's young people three wishes, they would be:
- 2 More hugs.
- 3 More time outside in nature.
- 4 More belief in their own power to change the world.
- 5 While most people understand the importance of the first two wishes, the third one leaves some folks scratching their heads, wondering why young people's belief in their own power is so essential.
- 6 Let's start with the notion that all of us—especially young people—need heroes. We need them to be our guides on the twisting, sometimes difficult trail we call life. To show us just how far we can go, to help us know just how high we can climb.
- 7 And we need heroes today more than ever. Our modern society is terribly confused about the *difference between a hero and a celebrity*. And the difference is crucial.
- 8 A celebrity is all about fame—temporary, superficial fame, usually for qualities that are easy to see: a pretty face, a good hook shot, a great dance move. A hero, by contrast, is about character—qualities beneath the surface that aren't visible until they prompt action. Qualities like courage, hope, compassion, and perseverance.
- 9 Heroes, real heroes, are all around us. They truly hold our world together, through their unselfish devotion to helping others, supporting families, teaching children, protecting the environment. They don't want fame, or glory, or even credit; they just want to help. In so many ways, these unsung heroes steer the boat in which all of us sail.
- 10 Yet . . . young people hear a lot more about celebrities than about heroes, in every form of media. Worse yet, young people are treated too often as just another target market by advertisers. The underlying message they get from all this is that their self-worth comes from what they buy—which drink, which shoes, which cell phone—not *who they are down inside*.
- 11 What gets lost in this? Young people's sense of their own potential for heroic qualities—their own power to make a positive difference in the world.

- 12 Truth is, there is a potential hero, a future difference maker, in every young person. Each of them, from whatever background, is a bundle of untapped energy—a positive force who can do something to steer that communal boat that carries us all.
- 13 All it takes for that to be true . . . is belief. For if young people believe in their own power, they will use it. And they will discover that any person—regardless of gender, age, race, cultural background, or economic circumstance—can make a genuine, lasting impact.
- 14 How do we help skeptical young people believe in their own power? The best way by far is simply to share examples of other young people who have made a difference.
- 15 To turn the spotlight on such amazing young people—to share their stories—I founded a national award, the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. Named after my mom, who was a quiet hero in my own life, this award, now in its tenth year, honors 25 young people each year. They come from every background, and they are as diverse as the youth of America. The one thing they all have in common is a belief in their own power to make a difference—and the dedication to make it happen.
- 16 This prize is really just a small thing, but its winners are shining examples of what young people can achieve.
- 17 Here are a few of the winners from recent years:
- 18 Katie, age 10, has rallied hundreds of people in her town in South Carolina to help her create vegetable gardens to feed the hungry. How did she begin? As a third grader, she raised a tiny seedling into a huge 40-pound cabbage. When she saw how many people that cabbage fed at a local soup kitchen, she decided that she could do more. So far, she has donated more than 1,000 pounds of fresh produce to people in need.
- 19 Ryan, age 11, has worked tirelessly to raise money to provide clean drinking water to African villages. When he first heard about the plight of African children who died from impure water, Ryan was only six years old. He decided to do something about it. In the next five years, he raised over \$500,000—enough to build over 70 water wells.
- 20 Barbara, age 17, grew up on a farm in Texas. When she realized that local farmers were pouring their used motor oil into rivers and on the ground, causing pollution, she organized the creation of a recycling center for crude oil. Her project, called “Don’t Be Crude,” has grown to include 18 recycling centers in Texas.
- 21 The list could go on and on. These are but a few examples of young people who have discovered that they can build on their own energy and ideals to do something truly great.

T. A. BARRON author of The Lost Years of Merlin and other books. www.tabarron.com

- 15** The author wrote this selection most likely to —
- A** explain to the reader why more heroes are needed in the world
 - B** demonstrate why celebrity has become confused with heroism
 - C** urge young people to believe in their ability to make a difference
 - D** suggest that adults need to be better role models for young people
-

- 16** Read the origin of the word superficial.

from the Latin *super-* ("on top of") and *-facies* ("face")

Based on this information, what is the meaning of the word superficial in paragraph 8?

- F** Not known
 - G** Unexpected
 - H** Undervalued
 - J** Without depth
-
- 17** The author organizes paragraph 8 by —
- A** providing definitions of the words *celebrity* and *hero*
 - B** giving examples of celebrities and heroes
 - C** discussing the differences between celebrities and heroes
 - D** explaining the origins of the words *celebrity* and *hero*

- 18** How does the author support his claim that every young person has the potential to be a hero?
- F** By defining the qualities that make a young person a hero
 - G** By providing examples of qualities that have made people famous
 - H** By including examples of young people who exhibit the qualities of a hero
 - J** By contrasting society's definition of a hero with the word's real meaning
-

- 19** Read this sentence about heroes from paragraph 9.

They truly hold our world together, through their unselfish devotion to helping others, supporting families, teaching children, protecting the environment.

The author includes this sentence most likely to emphasize that —

- A** heroes affect many people
 - B** everyone is a hero in some way
 - C** heroes must believe in themselves
 - D** most heroes focus on working with children
-
- 20** The author included the information in paragraphs 8 through 11 probably to —
- F** explain why becoming a hero is important
 - G** show that heroes and celebrities are both valued
 - H** demonstrate that society does not support the development of heroes
 - J** describe how society turns ordinary celebrities into real heroes

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Breaking Out of the Box

- 1 Shipping containers are used to haul cargo on ships, trains, and trucks. Because these trips can be rough, the containers are used for only about five to ten years. Then they usually end up in a junkyard or landfill. However, these containers are durable, lightweight, and of relatively low cost, so entrepreneurs and artists are finding ways to repurpose them.



- 2 One trend that has gained popularity is creating houses from retired shipping containers. The containers already have the basic elements we think of when we imagine shelter: four walls, a ceiling, a floor, and a door. It is truly amazing what interior designers and architects can do to maximize the layout of these containers in order to add comfort to the cold metal interiors. Some modular designs include connecting several containers to increase the amount of living space. With features like solar panels and sliding glass walls, the repurposed homes are an environmentally smart practice.
- 3 Like building blocks, shipping containers can be safely stacked to create multilevel structures. By cutting out hallways and creatively stacking the containers, engineers are maximizing the use of the boxes. Offices and even hotels are being built from these recycled containers. Urban areas and colleges that struggle to provide affordable housing have also begun to explore building container housing and work spaces. In London a container “city” was created in 2001 in just five months using more than 80 percent recycled materials from shipping containers. It was so successful that the following year, the city of London created another multipurpose structure that was five stories high!

- 4 Housing uses for shipping containers are not limited to cities. Shipping container accommodations are available in rural areas as well. From hideaway cabins to campground rentals, these versatile accommodations can be found in the city and in remote areas.
- 5 Sculpture artists from all over the world have also found value in repurposing shipping containers. Artists rework the shell of the containers by reshaping the corrugated metal. Whether welding the panels into new shapes or using them as metal canvases, artists have found that the possibilities are endless. The Container Art Project was established by innovative artists to help museums share artistic collections around the world. In addition to using the retired containers to move art pieces, the project has also used the interior of the containers as the setting for the galleries themselves.



A Building Constructed from Shipping Containers

Urban Space Management (Container City) Ltd.



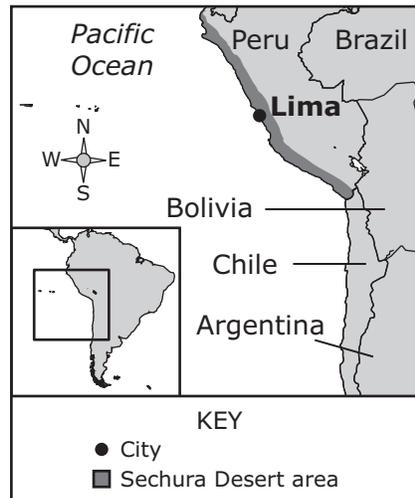
A Shipping Container Shell Twisted into a Sculpture

Design: Allard Roeterink

- 6 With all these options and new purposes, fewer shipping containers will be headed to the junkyard. They have been broken out of their traditional boxes and are having their utility extended with new forms and function.

A Bountiful Billboard

- 1 Lima, the capital city of the South American country of Peru, is located near the Pacific Ocean in the Sechura Desert. This desert region is one of the driest in the world and receives almost no rainfall. Yet more than eight million people live in Lima. Because of the scarcity of water, one out of every 10 residents has no access to running water. Some people depend on private companies to deliver water to their homes and businesses.



- 2 The engineers at the University of Engineering and Technology of Peru (UTEC) thought about how Lima's extreme water shortage problem could be solved. They noticed that even though the rainfall in Lima was scant, the humidity was high. Due to the city's coastal location, humidity can be higher than 90 percent on summer days. The engineers wondered whether they could harness the moisture in the air.
- 3 The staff at the university realized that this project, while helping the residents of Lima, could also showcase UTEC's engineering program. Thus they formed a partnership with the advertising agency Mayo DraftFCB. The two groups created an advertisement to demonstrate the university's engineering projects. They made a billboard that extracted moisture from the air and converted it into drinkable water. The water was then made available to the public.
- 4 The engineers used the city's power lines to provide electricity to five condensers that operate within the billboard. The condensers are cooler than the outside air. When air comes in contact with the condensers, it cools. The water vapor in the air condenses, becoming liquid water. The water then flows through pipes into a storage tank at the foot of the billboard. People can access the water through a faucet.



UTEC's Water-Producing Billboard

© AFP/Stringer/Getty Images

- 5 The billboard produces 96 liters (about 25 gallons) of water a day. This can supply hundreds of families with water each month. The partnership of UTEC and Mayo DraftFCB has not yet decided whether to build more billboards, and if so, where to locate them. But the citizens of Lima and other cities in arid regions around the world are hopeful.
- 6 Additionally, UTEC recorded a 28 percent increase in enrollment since the installation of the billboard. The problem-solving billboard has inspired more young people to pursue engineering careers. They want to be part of productive, ingenious solutions to unresolved problems.



A woman retrieves water from a faucet at the base of the billboard.

© AFP/Getty Images

**Use “Breaking Out of the Box” (pp. 15–16) to answer questions 21–23.
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 21** The title of the selection highlights the idea that shipping containers —
- A** are not as sturdy as people assume
 - B** can function in ways that are not commonly considered
 - C** are useful for creating large pieces of art
 - D** should be deconstructed before they are used for projects
-
- 22** What is the main idea of paragraph 5?
- F** Artists must reshape the shell of the shipping container to make sculptures.
 - G** Storing and moving art pieces in shipping containers are simple processes.
 - H** Artists see the potential of incorporating shipping containers into their art.
 - J** Museums are using shipping containers as galleries to share their collections.
-
- 23** Which sentence from the selection supports the idea that creating structures from shipping containers is cost-efficient?
- A** *Shipping containers are used to haul cargo on ships, trains, and trucks.*
 - B** *One trend that has gained popularity is creating houses from retired shipping containers.*
 - C** *With all these options and new purposes, fewer shipping containers will be headed to the junkyard.*
 - D** *Urban areas and colleges that struggle to provide affordable housing have also begun to explore building container housing and work spaces.*

Use "A Bountiful Billboard" (pp. 17–18) to answer questions 24–27. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

24 Which words from paragraph 2 help the reader understand what scant means?

- F** *coastal location*
- G** *extreme water shortage*
- H** *even though the rainfall*
- J** *problem could be solved*

25 Which sentence from the selection explains why the water produced by the billboard is significant?

- A** *Lima, the capital city of the South American country of Peru, is located near the Pacific Ocean in the Sechura Desert.*
- B** *The water then flows through pipes into a storage tank at the foot of the billboard.*
- C** *Because of the scarcity of water, one out of every 10 residents has no access to running water.*
- D** *The water vapor in the air condenses, becoming liquid water.*

- 26** The organizational pattern of the selection allows the author to —
- F** explain how a problem became worse over time
 - G** highlight the steps taken to address a specific need
 - H** compare different companies' approaches to solving a problem
 - J** describe how the lack of a necessary resource affects the local people
-

- 27** The author wrote this selection most likely to —
- A** reveal that water scarcity is a major issue in Peru
 - B** suggest that billboards are an effective way to advertise products
 - C** describe the process of turning moisture in the air into drinkable water
 - D** highlight a partnership that created an interesting solution to a problem

Use “Breaking Out of the Box” and “A Bountiful Billboard” to answer questions 28–31. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

- 28** One **difference** between the selections “Breaking Out of the Box” and “A Bountiful Billboard” is that “A Bountiful Billboard” —
- F** focuses on a project specific to a location
 - G** discusses the future potential of an idea
 - H** compares various uses for the same material
 - J** expresses concerns about a new idea
-
- 29** What is one important benefit of shipping container apartment buildings and the billboard in Lima?
- A** Both inform people about an opportunity.
 - B** Both prevent landfills from overflowing.
 - C** Both provide a resource to a community.
 - D** Both are found in urban and rural areas.

30 Read this sentence from “Breaking Out of the Box.”

By cutting out hallways and creatively stacking the containers, engineers are maximizing the use of the boxes.

Which sentence from “A Bountiful Billboard” is related to this idea?

- F** *This can supply hundreds of families with water each month.*
- G** *They made a billboard that extracted moisture from the air and converted it into drinkable water.*
- H** *But the citizens of Lima and other cities in arid regions around the world are hopeful.*
- J** *Additionally, UTEC recorded a 28 percent increase in enrollment since the installation of the billboard.*

31 Both selections explore ideas that involve —

- A** using technology to keep the environment clean
- B** collaborating to solve an urban problem
- C** redesigning an object to serve a new purpose
- D** recycling materials that are typically considered trash

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Photograph

by N. Scott Momaday

- 1 When I first lived on the Navajo reservation there were no cars, except those that were government property or that belonged to the Indian Service employees. The Navajos went about in wagons and on horseback, everywhere. My father worked for the Roads Department on the Navajo reservation. I lived for those trips, for he would often take me with him. I got a sense of the country then; it was wild and unending. In rainy weather the roads became channels of running water, and sometimes a flash flood would simply wash them away altogether, and we would have to dig ourselves out of the mud or wait for the ground to freeze. And then the wagons would pass us by or, if we were lucky, some old man would unhitch his team and pull us out to firm ground.
- 2 "Ya'at'eeh," the old man would say.
- 3 "Ya'at'eeh, shicheii," my father would reply.
- 4 "Hagosha' diniya?"
- 5 "Nowhere," my father would say, "we are going nowhere."
- 6 "Aoo', atiin ayoo hastlish." Yes, the road is very muddy, the old man would answer, laughing, and we knew then that we were at his mercy, held fast in the groove of his humor and goodwill. My father learned to speak the Navajo language in connection with his work, and I learned something of it, too—a little. Later, after I had been away from the Navajo country for many years, I returned and studied the language formally in order to understand not only the meaning but the formation of it as well. It is a beautiful language, intricate and full of subtlety, and very difficult to learn.
- 7 There were sheep camps in the remote canyons and mountains. When we ventured out into those areas, we saw a lot of people, but they were always off by themselves, it seemed, living a life of their own, each one having an individual existence in that huge landscape. Later, when I was learning to fly an airplane, I saw the land as a hawk or an eagle sees it, immense and wild and all of a piece. Once I flew with a friend to the trading post at Low Mountain where we landed on a dirt road in the very middle of the reservation. It was like going backward in time, for Low Mountain has remained virtually undiscovered in the course of years, and there you can still see the old people coming in their wagons to get water and to trade. It is like Kayenta¹ was in my earliest time on the reservation, so remote as to be almost legendary in the mind.
- 8 My father had a little box camera with which he liked to take photographs now and then. One day an old Navajo crone came to our house and asked to have her picture taken. She was a gnarled old woman with gray hair and fine

¹Kayenta is a town within the Navajo reservation in Arizona.

pronounced features. She made a wonderful subject, and I have always thought very well of the photograph that my father made of her. Every day thereafter she would come to the house and ask to see the print, and every day my father had to tell her that it had not yet come back in the mail. Having photographs processed was a slow business then in that part of the world. At last the day came when the print arrived. And when the old woman came, my father presented it to her proudly. But when she took a look at it, she was deeply disturbed, and she would have nothing to do with it. She set up such a jabber, indeed, that no one could understand her, and she left in a great huff. I have often wondered that she objected so to her likeness, for it was a true likeness, as far as I could tell. It is quite possible, I think, that she had never seen her likeness before, not even in a mirror, and that the photograph was a far cry from what she imagined herself to be. Or perhaps she saw, in a way that we could not, that the photograph misrepresented her in some crucial respect, that in its dim, mechanical eye it had failed to see into her real being.

"The Photograph" from *The Man Made of Words* by N. Scott Momaday, copyright © 1997 by N. Scott Momaday. Used by permission.

32 Through his experiences at the Navajo reservation, the author gained —

- F** respect from the elders
 - G** acceptance into a small community
 - H** an appreciation for another culture
 - J** the ability to rely on nature for survival
-

33 Read this sentence from the selection.

It is like Kayenta was in my earliest time on the reservation, so remote as to be almost legendary in the mind.

This comparison helps the reader understand that the author thinks the location —

- A** seems to have a profound effect on the lives of the residents
- B** has a mystical quality because of its isolation from society
- C** has a tendency to be remembered more vividly than others
- D** is so beautiful it can exist only in the imagination

34 Read this sentence from the selection.

Or perhaps she saw, in a way that we could not, that the photograph misrepresented her in some crucial respect, that in its dim, mechanical eye it had failed to see into her real being.

Which of these is the author suggesting in this sentence?

- F** The woman saw herself as something more than could be captured in a photograph.
 - G** Something may have gone wrong when the photograph was developed.
 - H** Many people are dissatisfied with their appearance in photographs.
 - J** The woman will eventually decide that she likes the photograph.
-

35 Which sentence best demonstrates that the author and his father depended on the people of the reservation?

- A** *It is a beautiful language, intricate and full of subtlety, and very difficult to learn.*
- B** *When we ventured out into those areas, we saw a lot of people, but they were always off by themselves, it seemed, living a life of their own, each one having an individual existence in that huge landscape.*
- C** *She made a wonderful subject, and I have always thought very well of the photograph that my father made of her.*
- D** *Yes, the road is very muddy, the old man would answer, laughing, and we knew then that we were at his mercy, held fast in the groove of his humor and goodwill.*

- 36** The organization of the selection allows the author to —
- F** reflect upon several meaningful experiences from his time at the reservation
 - G** compare the landscape of the reservation with the landscape of other places he has lived
 - H** explain how his experiences as a child affected his way of life as an adult
 - J** describe how he solved personal problems in the past
-

- 37** Why does the author compare his experience to that of “a hawk or an eagle” in paragraph 7?
- A** To emphasize that a person’s view of the landscape is incomplete
 - B** To demonstrate that he is confident in his abilities as a pilot
 - C** To reveal his desire to spend more time in nature
 - D** To show that he feels more comfortable in the air than on the ground

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

A Winning Culture

- 1 When basketball coach Kevin Cook accepted the head coach position for Gallaudet University's women's basketball team in 2007, he knew he was facing a huge challenge. The team had experienced several losing seasons in a row, culminating in a record of 3 wins and 23 losses the previous year. Additionally, the students at Gallaudet University were either deaf or hard of hearing, which made communication a major obstacle because Cook didn't know a single word of sign language.
- 2 Gallaudet, founded in 1864 in Washington, D.C., is the world's leading university in programs designed for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The Gallaudet University women's basketball team, the Bison, started in 1896. It hadn't had a championship-filled history, so it was Cook's mission at Gallaudet to change the team's record from a losing one to a winning one.
- 3 A main factor leading to the team's consecutive losing seasons was the way the team communicated on the basketball court. Unable to communicate through spoken words, the women had to look at one another to "read" plays. The players typically used small facial movements, lipreading, or sign language. When they looked at one another to communicate a play, they took their eyes off the ball. Cook figured that the team lost an average of six points a game as a result.
- 4 The first two seasons of Cook's coaching career with the Bison were neither easy nor immediately successful. The team's record for the 2007–2008 season was 3 wins and 21 losses, followed by 6 wins and 19 losses in the 2008–2009 season. Cook, who had coached professional teams, high-ranked college teams, and even the Nigerian national team, was discouraged, and the players could tell. Some of the players thought Cook was unable to connect with Deaf culture. As one star player recalls, "We were trying to get on the same page as him, and he was frustrated."
- 5 Then Cook began to learn sign language, and he used an interpreter on the sidelines to convey messages to players on the court. He soon realized that what he had thought was an obvious disadvantage—players lipreading on the court—had the possibility to be a strength as well. Though players looking away from the game in order to communicate would continue to cost the team some points, it would also give the players a competitive advantage. Teams with nondeaf players depended on hearing one another on noisy courts in loud arenas. The Bison, on the other hand, had only to briefly glance at one another to know the next play. The other team's players would also not be able to overhear the upcoming plays, often communicated through signlike gestures and mouth movements. And when the opposing team's coach called a play, sometimes Cook could communicate that message to his team. In contrast, few opposing coaches understood sign language and were therefore not privy to the Bison playbook.

- 6 The team's efforts began to show positive results. In the 2009–2010 season, the Bison finally achieved a winning season of 14 wins and 12 losses, the team's best record in 10 years. Although it was an impressive turnaround, Cook knew the team could play better.
- 7 At the beginning of the next season, Cook wanted the Bison to be more enthusiastic about practice and playing well, but some players still felt that Cook did not understand the Deaf world. Cook was very upset about this perception. He told the team they were confusing Deaf culture with a culture of losing. He said they needed to build "a winning culture."
- 8 To that end Cook scheduled a scrimmage, a game that would not count toward the team's record, between the Bison and a highly ranked team. Although Gallaudet lost the scrimmage by 53 points, the players noticed that they played well and were able to focus on the positive aspects of the game. "We always remember how we played that day, and it's lifted our level of play in general," star center Nukeitra Hayes commented through an interpreter.
- 9 After that the Bison won their next 20 games. They finished the regular season with only two losses. They were identified as one of the top teams in the North Eastern Athletic Conference (NEAC). The team was invited to play in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament, a widely watched and publicized event, but they were eliminated in the first round. They finished with an impressive record of 24 wins and 4 losses for the year. One star player stated it succinctly: "Everything came together this year."



Coach Cook (right) gives instructions to the Gallaudet women's basketball team with the help of a sign language interpreter.

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- 10 Cook was named the NEAC Coach of the Year. For him, however, earning honors was a secondary reward. He said that the biggest lesson he had learned was to be grateful, and he also noted that he learned patience—both on and off the court.

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- 38** The author suggests that Cook had frustrating moments while coaching at Gallaudet largely because he —
- F** believed that his players lacked the skills necessary for success
 - G** knew he was not communicating well with his team
 - H** thought the university expected too much of its team
 - J** knew that his team could not overcome their disadvantage
-

- 39** In paragraph 5, the phrase privy to means —
- A** knowledgeable of
 - B** amused by
 - C** happy with
 - D** worried about
-

- 40** Which of these best describes why some of the Gallaudet players lacked confidence in Cook when he first became coach of the team?
- F** They thought the standards he set for the team were too high.
 - G** He had previously been the coach of a professional team.
 - H** They thought he could not understand what the world was like for the deaf.
 - J** He thought that winning games was more important than the players did.

- 41** The author presents the events that led to the team’s winning record in chronological order to emphasize that —
- A** the university was very supportive of the women’s basketball team
 - B** deaf basketball teams have an advantage over hearing basketball teams
 - C** the university gained recognition because of the team’s improvement
 - D** changing the team’s perspective on winning did not happen quickly
-

- 42** The title of the selection emphasizes the idea that Cook —
- F** wanted his team to focus on playing to their greatest potential
 - G** knew that his team would learn more from winning than from losing
 - H** thought that coaching the team would help him understand Deaf culture
 - J** believed that his players could play better if they practiced more

43 What is the best summary of the selection?

- A** One of the reasons Gallaudet University had suffered many losing seasons was that the players were unable to communicate with spoken words. When Kevin Cook took over the team, he brought a history of successful coaching of professional, college, and foreign basketball teams. He worked hard to understand his players.
- B** Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., was founded in 1864. All the students there are either deaf or hard of hearing. Players on the women’s basketball team communicated using facial movements, lipreading, or sign language. Their coach Kevin Cook noticed that this caused them to take their eyes off the ball and lose games.
- C** When Kevin Cook took over the head coaching job at Gallaudet University, he experienced many challenges. The team of hearing-impaired players had not been playing well for many years. Cook worked to understand the players and eventually built a successful team.
- D** Kevin Cook became the coach of the women’s basketball team at Gallaudet University. He organized an important scrimmage against a highly ranked team, and it had a big effect on his players. Although the team lost the scrimmage, it was invited to play in an NCAA tournament.

44 Which sentence suggests that Cook benefited from his experience as a coach?

- F** *He said that the biggest lesson he had learned was to be grateful, and he also noted that he learned patience—both on and off the court.*
- G** *And when the opposing team’s coach called a play, sometimes Cook could communicate that message to his team.*
- H** *It hadn’t had a championship-filled history, so it was Cook’s mission at Gallaudet to change the team’s record from a losing one to a winning one.*
- J** *Although it was an impressive turnaround, Cook knew the team could play better.*



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