



Reading Fiction Passages

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Excerpt from *Mockingjay* Chapter 1

by Suzanne Collins

- 1 What does the word seam mean in paragraph 2?
- A A line in which two lines of fabric are sewn together
 - B An underground layer of coal
 - C The shops in the town
 - D The house where the characters live

- 2 From what point of view is the story above told?

- A First person
- B Second Person
- C Third Person limited
- D Third Person Omniscient

- 3 According to the excerpt above, what happened to the narrator's home?

- A It was knocked down
- B It was bombed and lay in rubble
- C It was still there and she came back to see it
- D It was burned

1 I stare down at my shoes, watching as a fine layer of ash settles on the worn leather. This is where the bed I shared with my sister, Prim, stood. Over there was the kitchen table. The bricks of the chimney, which collapsed in a charred heap, provide a point of reference for the rest of the house. How else could I orient myself in this sea of gray?

2 Almost nothing remains of District 12. A month ago, the Capitol's firebombs obliterated the poor coal miner's house in the seam, the shops in the town, even the Justice Building. The only area that escaped incineration was the Victor's Village. I don't know why exactly. Perhaps so anyone forced to come here on capital business would have somewhere decent to stay. The odd reporter. A committee assessing the condition of the coal mines. A squad of peacekeepers checking for returning refugees.

3 But no one is returning except me. And that's only for a brief visit. The authorities in District 13 were against my coming back. They viewed it as a costly and pointless venture given that at least a dozen hovercrafts are circling overhead for my protection and there's no intelligence to be gained. I had to see it, though. So much so that I made it a condition of my cooperating with any of their plans.

4 Finally, Plutarch Heavensbee, the Head Gamemaker who had organized the rebels in the Capitol, threw up his hands. "Let her go. Better to waste a day than another month. Maybe a little tour of Twelve is just what she needs to convince her we're on the same side."

5 The same side. A pain stabs my left temple and I press my hand against it. Right on the spot where Johanna Mason hit me with a coil of wire. The memories swirl as I try to sort out what is true and what is false. What series of events led me to be standing in the ruins of my city? This is hard because the effects of the concussion she gave me haven't completely subsided and my thoughts still have a tendency to jumble together. Also, the drugs used to control my pain and mood sometimes make me see things. I guess. I'm still not entirely convinced that I was hallucinating the night the floor of my hospital room transformed into a carpet of writhing snakes.

6 I use a technique one of the doctors suggested. I start with the simplest things I know to be true and work toward the more complicated. The list begins to roll in my head....

7 My name is Katniss Everdeen. I am seventeen years old. My home is District 12. I was in the Hunger Games. I escaped. The Capitol hates me. Peeta was taken prisoner.

Practice Test

TEKS ALIGNED

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SET # 1

The following reading practice includes:

- 5 reading passages
- 38 Total Multiple choice questions
- Answer Key

The five reading passages are short excerpts
from the following popular novels:

Mockingjay by Suzanne Collins – 10 Questions

The Giver by Lois Lowry – Comparing two excerpts with 14 questions

The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan – 7 questions

Divergent by Veronica Roth – 7 questions

STAAR Concepts included:

The passages are aligned with STAAR Test questions
seen across 4-8th grade.

1. Inference
2. Central message
3. Analyzing Text events, setting, and characters
4. Meaning of words
5. Point of view
6. Integrated ideas and topics
7. Author's claim
8. Compare and contrast
9. Tone and mood
10. Making connections

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Excerpt from Mockingjay Chapter 1

by Suzanne Collins

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- 3 But no one is returning except me. And that's only for a brief visit. The authorities in District 13 were against my coming back. They viewed it as a costly and pointless venture given that at least a dozen hovercrafts are circling overhead for my protection and there's no intelligence to be gained. I had to see it, though. So much so that I made it a condition of my cooperating with any of their plans.
- 4 Finally, Plutarch Heavensbee, the Head Gamemaker who had organized the rebels in the Capital, threw up his hands. "Let her go. Better to waste a day than another month. Maybe a little tour of Twelve is just what she needs to convince her we're on the same side."
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- 6 I use a technique one of the doctors suggested. I start with the simplest things I know to be true and work toward the more complicated. The list begins to roll in my head....
- 7 *My name is Katniss Everdeen. I am seventeen years old. My home is District 12. I was in the Hunger Games. I escaped. The Capital hates me. Peeta was taken prisoner.*

Excerpted from MOCKINGJAY © Copyright 2010 by Suzanne Collins

1 What does the word seam mean in paragraph 2?

- A** A line in which two lines of fabric are sewn together
 - B** An underground layer of coal
 - C** The shops in the town
 - D** The house where the characters live
-

2 From what point of view is the story above told?

- A** First person
 - B** Second Person
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 - D** Third Person Omniscient
-

3 According to the excerpt above, what happened to the narrator's home?

- A** It was knocked down
 - B** It was bombed and lay in rubble
 - C** It was still there and she came back to see it
 - D** It was burned
-

4 In paragraph 5, which words does the author use to show the narrator's confusion?

- A** concussion, hallucinating
 - B** pain, ruin
 - C** events, control
 - D** memories, hospital
-

5 Which best expresses the importance of the memory flashback in this story?

- A It shows the reader that she is in present time
 - B It suggests that the narrator is looking for the family she loves
 - C It explains the narrator's own confusion as she pieces together what has happened
 - D It tells what the narrator is going to do about the bombing
-

6 Which of these best describes Katniss' internal conflict in the excerpt?

- A She is unhappy about the bombing of her home
 - B She is not prepared for the sight of District 12
 - C Her choice of how to handle the present situation
 - D Her struggle to piece together what is true and what is false
-

7 How does the setting influence the plot of the story?

- A The hospital introduces where Katniss came from.
 - B The ruins of District 12, her home, contribute to the conflict Katniss is experiencing.
 - C The Capitol provides the explanation of what is happening.
 - D The Victor's Village introduces the supporting characters.
-

8 In paragraph 2, the word obliterated means -

- A Destroyed Utterly
 - B Washed away
 - C Got rid of all
 - D Changed
-

9 Which of these is the best summary of the story?

- A** Katniss is trying to remember what happened, as she looks over District 12, and the destruction of her home.
 - B** Katniss remembers the pain of getting hit in the head by the wire. This concussion was causing her to jumble the memories in her head. She was not sure she really was hallucinating the night her hospital room floor turned into writhing snakes. All she could do was hold onto what she knew to be true and then work from there.
 - C** Katniss stood in District 12, her home, looking around at what was left of her house after the bombing. She was the only one returning. District 13 let her return since it meant so much to her. As she reflects back on all that had happened over the last few weeks, she tries to piece together what happened after she was hit in the head and taken to the hospital. Katniss is not sure what is true or false. All she has to hold on to was what was known to be true; who she really is.
 - D** Katniss looks down at her shoes and watches the ash settle in District 12. She could see where the bed she shared with her sister use to be, the kitchen table, and the bricks that were once the chimney. Almost nothing of District 12 was left. Only the Victor's Village remained.
-

10 A theme expressed in the story centers on -

- A** helping those who are in need
 - B** making the best of a bad situation
 - C** hiding your anger from others
 - D** forgetting the past and moving on
-

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

Excerpt from The Giver Chapter 1

By Lois Lowry

- 1 It was almost December, and Jonas was beginning to be frightened. No. Wrong word, Jonas thought. Frightened meant that deep, sickening feeling of something terrible about to happen. Frightened was the way he had felt a year ago when an unidentified air craft had overflown the community twice. He had seen it both times. Squinting toward the sky, he had seen the sleet jet, almost a blur at its high speed, go past, and a second later heard the blast of sound that followed. Then one more time, a moment later, from the opposite direction, the same plane.
- 2 At first, he had been only fascinated. He had never seen an aircraft so close, for it was against the rules for Pilots to fly over the community. Occasionally, when supplies were delivered by cargo planes to the landing field across the river, the children rode their bicycles to the riverbank and watched, intrigued, the unloading and then the takeoff directed to the west, always away from the community.
- 3 But the aircraft a year ago had been different. It was not a squat, fat-bellied cargo plane but a needle-nosed single-pilot jet. Jonas, looking around anxiously, had seen other-adults as well as children- stop what they were doing and wait, confused, for an explanation of the frightening event.
- 4 Then all of the citizens had been ordered to go into the nearest building and stay there. IMMEDIATELY, the rasping voice through the speakers had said. LEAVE YOUR BICYCLES WHERE THEY ARE.
- 5 Instantly, obediently, Jonas had dropped his bike on its side on the path behind his family's dwelling. He had run indoors and stayed there, alone. His parents were both at work, and his sister Lily, was at the childcare center where she spend her after-school hours.
- 6 Looking through the front window, he had seen no people: none of the busy afternoon crew of street cleaners, Landscape Workers, and Food Delivery people who usually populated the community at that time of day. He saw only the abandoned bikes here and there on their sides; an upturned wheel, one was still revolving slowly.
- 7 He had been frightened then. The sense of his own community silent, waiting, had made his stomach churn. He had trembled.
- 8 But it had been nothing. Within minutes the speakers had crackled again, and the voice reassuring now and less urgent, had explained that a Pilot-in-Training had misread his navigational instructions and made a wrong turn. Desperately the Pilot had been trying to make his way back before his error was noticed.

Excerpt from The Giver Chapter 7

By Lois Lowry

- 1 The assignments continued, and Jonas watched and listened, relieved now by the wonderful Assignment his best friend had been given. But he was more and more apprehensive as his own approached. Now the new Twelves in the row ahead had all received their badges. They were fingering them as they sat, and Jonas knew that each one was thinking about the training that lay ahead. For some – one studious male had been selected as Doctor, a female as Engineer, and another for Law and Justice – it would be years of hard work and study. Others, like Laborers, would have a much shorter training period.
- 2 Eighteen, Fiona, on his left, was called. Jonas knew she must be nervous, but Fiona was a calm female. She had been sitting quietly, serenely, throughout the Ceremony.
- 3 Even the applause, though enthusiastic, seemed serene when Fiona was given the important Assignment of Caretaker of the Old. It was perfect for such a sensitive, gentle girl, and her smile was satisfied and pleased when she took her seat beside him again.
- 4 Jonas prepared himself to walk to the stage when the applause ended and the Chief Elder picked up the next folder and looked down to the group to call forward the next new Twelve. He was calm now that his turn had come. He took a deep breath and smoothed his hair with his hand.
- 5 “Twenty,” he heard her voice say clearly. “Pierre.”
- 6 *She skipped me*, Jonas thought, stunned. Had he heard wrong? No. There was a sudden hush in the crowd, and he knew that the entire community realized that the Chief Elder had moved from Eighteen to Twenty, leaving a gap. On his right, Pierre, with a startled look, rose from his seat and moved to the stage.
- 7 A mistake. She made a mistake. But Jonas knew, even as he had the thought, she hadn’t. The Chief Elder made no mistakes. Not at the ceremony of Twelve.
- 8 He felt dizzy, and couldn’t focus his attention. He didn’t hear what assignment Pierre received, and was only dimly aware of the applause as the boy returned wearing his new badge.

Use the excerpt from “The Giver Chapter 1” to answer questions 1-5.

1 Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

“No. Wrong word, Jonas thought. Frightened meant that deep,
sickening feeling of something terrible about to happen.”

The author uses this sentence to explain how Jonas -

- A** became interested in the plane
- B** is feeling
- C** is detailed with his words
- D** made the day better

2 Which of these is the best summary of the selection?

- A** Jonas was frightened. No, that was not the best way to describe it. It was not the deep, sickening feeling of something terrible about to happen. That was how he felt when the unidentified aircraft had flown over the community twice. He had seen both of those times. He had heard the blast that followed. That truly was a feeling of fright. What he was feeling now was not as strong; not so deep.
- B** Jonas had been frightened once. A needle-nosed single-pilot jet had flown across the sky. Everyone was confused and waiting for an explanation. All citizens were ordered to go inside immediately. They were to drop everything and go inside. That was truly frightening.
- C** Jonas was frightened for what was to come in December.
- D** It was almost December and Jonas was frightened. Well not exactly that feeling. Not like when he saw the airplane in the sky. That was unusually for it was against the rules. He was only use to seeing cargo planes drop off supplies and then leave the community. When this plane flew through the sky there was an announcement to drop everything and go inside. He was all alone. His parents at work and his sister at childcare. That was truly frightening. Though it turned out to be nothing; just a mistake made by the pilot.

3 Read the sentence from paragraph 4. What does the word IMMEDIATELY mean?

Then all of the citizens had been ordered to go into the nearest building and stay there.

IMMEDIATELY, the rasping voice through the speakers had said.

LEAVE YOUR BICYCLES WHERE THEY ARE.

- A** straight away
 - B** with delay
 - C** after prompting
 - D** when told
-

4 What can the author infer about the community the narrator lives in?

- A** The community is in a far off country and different from ours.
 - B** The community has a speaker system that makes important announcements.
 - C** The community fears flying.
 - D** The community is usually safe and predictable.
-

5 In paragraph 2, the word intrigued means -

- A** watching closing
 - B** curious or interested in
 - C** seen clearly
 - D** make secret plans
-

Use the excerpt from “The Giver Chapter 7” to answer questions 6-9.

6 What do you think the Assignments are?

- A assigning a place as a Caretaker of the Old
 - B assigning a job
 - C assigning badges
 - D assigning seats
-

7 Which best describes the mood of the excerpt?

- A uncomfortable
 - B mournful
 - C mad
 - D worried
-

8 Which keyword let Jonas know they skipped him in the Assignments?

- A applause
 - B Chief Elder
 - C Twenty
 - D turn
-

9 In paragraph 2, the word serenely means -

- A secretly
 - B in a calm manner
 - C watching closely
 - D comprehending
-

Use the excerpt from “The Giver Chapter 1” and “The Giver Chapter 7” to answer questions 10-14.

10 Which of these best describes what Jonas is feeling in both the excerpts?

- A** concern
 - B** fear
 - C** grown-up
 - D** sad
-

11 How is the feeling of fear presented differently in the two parts?

- A** Chapter 1 is a fear of the unknown and chapter 7 is a fear of the unexpected.
 - B** Chapter 1 is a fear of planes and chapter 7 is a fear of crowds.
 - C** Chapter 1 is a fear of broken rules and chapter 7 is a fear of job assignments.
 - D** Chapter 1 is a fear of flying and chapter 7 is a fear of the community.
-

12 Which statement below best fits the mood in both excerpts?

- A** concerned about family
 - B** nervous about the assignment
 - C** fear of planes
 - D** afraid of the unknown
-

13 After both experiences we can infer that Jonas -

- A** will get the job he wants
 - B** always is afraid
 - C** handles difficult situations calmly
 - D** tends to worry more about others
-

14 A theme expressed in both story parts is –

- A** desire to escape
 - B** change vs. tradition
 - C** overcoming fear
 - D** self-awareness
-

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Excerpt from CHAPTER ONE: I Accidentally Vaporize My Pre-Algebra Teacher

By: Rick Riordan

- 1 Look, I didn't want to be a half-blood.
- 2 If you're reading this because you think you might be one, my advice is: close this book right now. Believe whatever lie your mom or dad told you about your birth, and try to lead a normal life.
- 3 Being a half-blood is dangerous. It's scary. Most of the time, it gets you killed in painful, nasty ways.
- 4 If you're a normal kid, reading this because you think it's fiction, great. Read on. I envy you for being able to believe that none of this ever happened.
- 5 But if you recognize yourself in these pages-if you feel something stirring inside-stop reading immediately. You might be one of us. And once you know that, it's only a matter of time before they sense it too, and they'll come for you.
- 6 Don't say I didn't warn you.
- 7 My name is Percy Jackson.
- 8 I'm twelve years old. Until a few months ago, I was a boarding student at Yancy Academy, a private school for troubled kids in upstate New York.
- 9 Am I a troubled kid?
- 10 Yeah. You could say that.
- 11 I could start at any point in my short miserable life to prove it, but things really started going bad last May, when our sixth-grade class took a field trip to Manhattan-twenty-eight mental-case kids and two teachers on a yellow school bus, heading to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to look at ancient Greek and Roman stuff.
- 12 I know-it sounds like torture. Most Yancy field trips were.
- 13 But Mr. Brunner, our Latin teacher, was leading this trip, so I had hopes.
- 14 Mr. Brunner was this middle-aged guy in a motorized wheelchair. He had thinning hair and a scruffy beard and a frayed tweed jacket, which always smelled like coffee. You wouldn't think he'd be cool, but he told stories and jokes and let us play games in class. He also had this awesome collection of Roman armor and weapons, so he was the only teacher whose class didn't put me to sleep.
- 15 I hoped the trip would be okay. At least, I hoped that for once I wouldn't get in trouble.
- 16 Boy, was I wrong.

1 Paragraph 1-6 is mainly about –

- A** a kid who is not so normal and all the trouble he goes through to be normal
 - B** being half-blood is dangerous and you could get killed in painful, nasty ways
 - C** a kid giving advice about being a half-blood
 - D** a not so normal kid who realized many of the troubles he was having were due to being a half-blood
-

2 According to the passage when does the main character get into the most trouble?

- A** boarding school
 - B** a field trip
 - C** in the classroom
 - D** at home
-

3 Which of these conclusions is best supported in the excerpt?

- A** Percy will get in trouble on his field trip.
 - B** Percy will discover he is a half-blood on his next field trip.
 - C** Percy will learn more about his teacher Mr. Brunner.
 - D** Percy will leave his boarding school.
-

4 Which best matches the feeling the narrator is **trying** to express in paragraph 15-16?

- A** Mad
 - B** Optimistic
 - C** Excited
 - D** Worried
-

5 In paragraph 14, the word motorized means -

- A how to operate
 - B being on wheels
 - C with a motor to operate
 - D being pushed
-

6 What does the narrator mean when he says, “if you feel something stirring inside,” in paragraph 5.

- A If you do not feel threatened by the actions.
 - B If you understand what’s happening in the story.
 - C If you enjoy the events and happenings of the story.
 - D If you feel something familiar about the story.
-

7 Paragraph 11 is important to the story because it -

- A tells where Percy is when he’s telling the story
 - B sets the stage for where it all begins for Percy
 - C has important details about Percy’s life
 - D shows how Percy feels about field trips
-

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Excerpt from CHAPTER ONE, DIVERGENT

By: Veronica Roth

- 1 THERE IS ONE mirror in my house. It is behind a sliding panel in the hallway upstairs. Our faction allows me to stand in front of it on the second day of every third month, the day my mother cuts my hair. I sit on the stool and my mother stands behind me with the scissors, trimming. The strands fall on the floor in a dull, blond ring. When she finishes, she pulls my hair away from my face and twists it into a knot. I note how calm she looks and how focused she is. She is well-practiced in the art of losing herself. I can't say the same of myself. I sneak a look at my reflection when she isn't paying attention—not for the sake of vanity, but out of curiosity. A lot can happen to a person's appearance in three months. In my reflection, I see a narrow face, wide, round eyes, and a long, thin nose—I still look like a little girl, though sometime in the last few months I turned sixteen. The other factions celebrate birthdays, but we don't. It would be self-indulgent. "There," she says when she pins the knot in place. Her eyes catch mine in the mirror. It is too late to look away, but instead of scolding me, she smiles at our reflection.

- 2 I frown a little. Why doesn't she reprimand me for staring at myself? "So today is the day," she says. "Yes," I reply. "Are you nervous?" I stare into my own eyes for a moment. Today is the day of the aptitude test that will show me which of the five factions I belong in. And tomorrow, at the Choosing Ceremony, I will decide on a faction; I will decide the rest of my life; I will decide to stay with my family or abandon them. "No," I say. "The tests don't have to change our choices." "Right." She smiles. "Let's go eat breakfast." "Thank you. For cutting my hair." She kisses my cheek and slides the panel over the mirror. I think my mother could be beautiful, in a different world. Her body is thin beneath the gray robe. She has high cheekbones and long eyelashes, and when she lets her hair down at night, it hangs in waves over her shoulders. But she must hide that beauty in Abnegation. We walk together to the kitchen. On these mornings when my brother makes breakfast, and my father's hand skims my hair as he reads the newspaper, and my mother hums as she clears the table—it is on these mornings that I feel guiltiest for wanting to leave them.

Excerpted from DIVERGENT © Copyright 2011 by Veronica Roth.

1 In paragraph 1, the word vanity means -

- A** surprised by what you see
 - B** looking at yourself in a reflection
 - C** the mirror on a dresser
 - D** admiration of your own appearance
-

2 Which idea does paragraph 1 emphasize?

- A** the narrator is getting her hair cut by her mother
 - B** how you look is not as important as other qualities
 - C** your appearance shows how old you are
 - D** it is important to be self-indulgent
-

3 What is the narrator nervous about in paragraph 2?

- A** she feels guilty about looking into the mirror
 - B** she does not know what to expect
 - C** she will have to decide the rest of her life
 - D** she will be required to leave her family
-

4 The point of view from which the story is told gives the reader insight into -

- A** the mother's thoughts about vanity
 - B** the narrator's feelings about leaving her family
 - C** how the Choosing Ceremony will be organized
 - D** feelings of the character's optimistic attitude
-

5 Which of these is the best summary of the excerpt?

A The narrator is sitting for her mother to cut her hair, as usual. She sneaks a look at her reflection, not for her beauty but to see if she looks older after her birthday. Her mother catches her looking, but only smiles. Instead, her mother asks her if she is worried about the ceremony tomorrow where she will decide her future. She says no and goes into breakfast with her family. This was a time when she felt guilty for wanting to leave them.

B After getting her hair cut, the narrator discusses with her mother her worries about the Choosing Ceremony that was coming the following day. This was when she would have to decide the rest of her life; if she would stay with her family or leave. Deep down, she felt guilty. She felt bad about wanting to leave them.

C The narrator sat in front of the only mirror in the house, behind a sliding panel. Her faction only allowed it when her mother cut her hair. She sat on the stool watching the strands fall on the floor. When her mother finishes she pulls her hair into a knot calmly. She sneaks a look at her reflection out of curiosity, for a few months ago she turned sixteen.

D The narrator is nervous about the coming ceremony.

6 In paragraph 14, the word self-indulgent means -

A to give in to others

B to be aware of yourself

C to do what you want

D to choose to do the right thing

7 Read the following sentence from paragraph 1.

“On these mornings when my brother makes breakfast, and my father’s hand skims my hair as he reads the newspaper, and my mother hums as she clears the table—it is on these mornings that I feel guiltiest for wanting to leave them.”

In this sentence the speaker-

A describes how she feels about the Choosing Ceremony

B makes light of the upcoming situation

C explains why she needs to leave

D shares her fear of not belonging with her family

Answer Key:

Mockingjay

1. C
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. C
6. D
7. B
8. A
9. C
10. B

10. B
11. A
12. D
13. C
14. C

The Lightning Thief

1. D
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. C
6. D
7. B

Divergent

1. D
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. D

The Giver

1. B
2. D
3. A
4. D
5. B
6. B
7. D
8. C
9. B

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