

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

GRADE 3
READING

2024 English Standards of Learning

Practice Item Set

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Directions: Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

Speedy and Spotty



- 1 Imagine you are in Africa. Suddenly, a group of spots streaks past you. What was it? It may have been a cheetah, the fastest animal on land. It can run up to 70 miles per hour, which is faster than most cars travel on the highway!

A Fast Cat

- 2 In many ways, the cheetah is built for speed. Even though this animal is a cat, its paws are much more like a dog's paws. The paws allow the cheetah to grip the ground when it makes quick turns. A cheetah also has long legs that help it take big steps. It can jump as far as 20 feet in one leap! Even the cheetah's backbone helps it move quickly. Its backbone twists and turns, letting the cheetah zigzag across the ground easily. The backbone acts as a spring, moving the cheetah forward with sudden bursts of energy. Although the cheetah can run fast, it cannot run for long distances. It uses its energy quickly and becomes tired. If the cheetah cannot catch its dinner in a hurry, it will have to rest awhile before trying again.

Made to Hunt

- 3 A cheetah is also made to be a great hunter. It has sharp eyesight. A cheetah can see other animals up to three miles away. Good

eyesight helps the cheetah find its prey so it can plan an attack. A cheetah's coat is also very useful. The coat is tan with black spots. This coloring allows a cheetah to blend in with the tall, brown grass in Africa. Other animals do not see it hiding, so a cheetah can sneak up on rabbits, birds, and other animals.

Saving the Cheetah

- 4 Today there are many threats to the cheetah. Parts of Africa are being turned into farms and ranches. This change forces the cheetah and other animals to find new places to live, which is not always easy. Cheetahs are also being hunted by other animals such as lions and hyenas. However, zookeepers and wildlife experts are trying to save the cheetah. Maybe with their help, cheetahs will grow larger in number.

1 The photograph in the article helps the reader understand —

- A** what makes a cheetah a great hunter
- B** why a cheetah has spots on its fur
- C** how cheetahs are able to make quick turns
- D** how cheetahs are different from other cats

2 The cheetah's coat is most useful because it —

- F** keeps the cheetah cool after a long run
- G** lets the cheetah move with great speed
- H** helps the cheetah hide in the grass
- J** protects the cheetah from the sun

Directions: Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

Ready for the Race

- 1 “Do you want to come with me?” Kelly asked her brother as she rolled her bike out of the garage. “I’m going to meet some friends at the Oak Park Trails. We’re going to practice for the race next week.”
- 2 “No thanks,” Marcus replied as he bounced a ball in the driveway. “Sam’s coming over to play basketball.”
- 3 Kelly rode off on her bike while Marcus waited for his friend. Marcus was fast, and he usually did well in most sports. He didn’t think it would help if he practiced the course. It could be hilly or sandy, and Marcus knew he would still speed along.
- 4 When race day finally arrived, Marcus and Kelly put on their helmets and rode their bikes to the Oak Park Trails with their parents.
- 5 “My stomach feels like I swallowed some butterflies,” Kelly told Marcus when they saw the crowd of kids. They joined the other bike riders behind some bright orange cones.
- 6 *Kelly is always nervous,* Marcus thought. “Don’t worry. You’ll do fine,” he said as he focused on the road ahead.
- 7 As soon as the starter yelled “Go!” Marcus’s legs pumped up and down like two machines. He quickly zoomed to the front of the pack of riders.
- 8 A few minutes later he was zipping down the trail, and there wasn’t anyone ahead of him! Marcus raced along the trail. He bumped over tree roots and rode past some pine trees. Then the path looped around a pond. Marcus was surprised that the course was so long.
- 9 His tired legs felt like they weighed a hundred pounds. All at once, a flash of color caught his eye. There was a line of bike riders on the trail ahead of him! “How could this be?” Marcus groaned to himself

as he pushed forward. *I must have taken a wrong turn and made an extra loop in the course,* he thought.

- 10 Marcus gritted his teeth and pushed his achy muscles harder. He realized his speed alone wouldn't be enough this time; knowing the course was just as important. He edged past a couple of bike riders, but he couldn't reach the riders who were in the lead.
- 11 After the race Marcus saw his sister at the finish line, and he rode over to her. "Wow, you must have done a good job in the race. What place did you get?" Marcus asked Kelly.
- 12 "I came in third place. Mom and Dad said I would even receive a medal!" Kelly answered excitedly.
- 13 "That's great! I went in a different direction from the other riders, so I came in ninth place," Marcus replied. "I'd like to go over this course again to practice with you, Kelly. That way I know we'll both do better next year!" he said.

3 One reason Kelly finishes in third place is because she —

- A** knows the course well
- B** is more confident than Marcus
- C** has a better bicycle than Marcus
- D** pays attention to the other riders

4 Who is telling this story?

- F** Kelly
- G** Sam
- H** Marcus
- J** Narrator

5 Which sentence best states the theme of the story?

- A** It is important to admit mistakes.
- B** It is better to join in with friends than to do an activity alone.
- C** It is helpful to encourage others when trying something for the first time.
- D** It is a good idea to prepare before doing something new.

Directions: Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

The American Bald Eagle

- 1 After winning the Revolutionary War with England, the United States became a free country. At that time, Americans wanted a symbol for their country's freedom. The members of Congress had a bitter argument over what the national symbol should be. Many people wanted the bald eagle to represent their country.
- 2 One of the new nation's Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, thought the turkey was a better symbol. In a letter to his daughter, Franklin wrote that the turkey, unlike the eagle, is a respectable bird that would stand strong when challenged. He noted that the eagle was lazy because it took food from other animals that hunted honestly. Others saw the bald eagle as a symbol of strength, courage, and freedom. A flying eagle represented the freedom that the Americans had fought for and gained. They also felt the bald eagle would be the best symbol for their country because it was the only eagle originally found in North America. Finally, after six years of arguing, the bald eagle was chosen by Congress to represent the United States.
- 3 Early in American history, each state had its own form of money. The bald eagle first appeared as a symbol of America on a Massachusetts copper coin in 1776. Later, as the government began using one form of money, the eagle was used on coins and paper bills. Today, the eagle is printed on the back of the one dollar bill.



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- 4 The bald eagle is a central part of the Great Seal designed in 1782 by Charles Thomson. The Great Seal shows a bald eagle spreading its wings and holding a banner in its beak. The words on the banner mean “Out of many, one,” to remind people that many states joined to form one country. The eagle carries an olive branch in one claw and arrows in the other claw. The olive branch means peace, and the arrows show that the United States is ready to defend itself. The Great Seal is printed on important government documents 2,000 to 3,000 times a year. It can be seen on flags, uniforms, and buildings.
- 5 The American bald eagle is used as a symbol in a variety of ways. It appears on the President’s flag and military symbols. Today Americans think of their country when they see a bald eagle. It reminds them that their country is strong and free.

6 Which sentence best states the main idea of paragraph 1?

- F** The bald eagle was a popular choice for a symbol.
- G** People in America wanted a symbol for their new country.
- H** Congress disagreed about which symbol to select.
- J** The symbol would remind people that they were a free country.

7 Which heading best belongs above paragraph 2?

- A** Writing Letters
- B** Eagles and Turkeys
- C** Freedom for America
- D** The Founding Fathers

8 Which question is answered in paragraph 2?

- F** Who were the Founding Fathers of the United States?
- G** Why was Benjamin Franklin against choosing the bald eagle?
- H** How many types of birds can be found in North America?
- J** Why did Americans want a symbol for their country?

9 Which word is an antonym for joined as used in paragraph 4?

- A** prepared
- B** changed
- C** completed
- D** separated

10 What does defend mean in paragraph 4?

- F** lead the way
- G** find help
- H** protect from harm
- J** break away

11 The author wrote this article most likely to —

- A** explain why Americans need a symbol
- B** show ways to honor the bald eagle
- C** share a part of American history
- D** describe the bald eagle

Directions: Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

The Search

1 I've emptied my sports bag,
2 Checked in the car,
3 Reached under the sofa,
4 And searched near and far.

5 But hunt as I may,
6 I've got only one shoe—
7 And where its mate is,
8 I haven't a clue.

9 "When was your last game?"
10 Dad asks thoughtfully.
11 "And after the game,
12 Whom did you see?"

13 I pause in my tracks—
14 Dad's smart, it is true,
15 But his questions don't lead
16 To my runaway shoe.

17 It's surely gone missing.
18 There's clearly no hope.
19 I have to give up,
20 Find somewhere to mope.

21 So I sit on the steps
22 And stare into the yard,
23 Where Otis the dog
24 Serves as guard—

25 Then I notice that Otis
26 Has a new chew,
27 With laces and treads—
28 Oh, no! It's my shoe!

12 Which lines show the conflict in the poem?

- F** Lines 1–4
- G** Lines 5–8
- H** Lines 9–12
- J** Lines 21–24

13 The resolution in the poem happens as soon as the speaker —

- A** stops searching
- B** looks out into the yard
- C** hears Dad ask questions
- D** sits on the steps

14 Which word best describes the speaker throughout the poem?

- F** Patient
- G** Tired
- H** Lazy
- J** Worried

Directions: Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

Sea Otters



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- 1 The sea otter is an animal that spends most of its life in the water. This animal eats, sleeps, and hunts in the ocean. In fact, it spends much of the day floating on its back or swimming in the shallow parts of the ocean.

Fit for the Sea

- 2 A sea otter grows to be about four feet long. Webbed feet help it swim. While the sea otter swims, its eyes stay open while its nostrils and ears close to keep out water. This is helpful when a sea otter hunts for food. Some otters can swim as deep as 200 feet to find a meal!

Time to Eat

- 3 Diving deep into the water, a sea otter gathers food from the bottom of the ocean. Some favorite meals include crabs, snails, and clams. The sea otter may also grab a small rock in its paws to use as a tool. On the surface of the water, the sea otter floats on its back with the shellfish on its chest. Using its chest as a table, the sea otter hits the shellfish using the rock like a hammer. The shell opens, and the sea otter eats a tasty meal.

Thick Fur

- 4 Oceans are cold, and the sea otter does not have blubber, or fat, to keep it warm like other sea mammals. Instead, the sea otter has very thick fur. The fur is made of two layers. Between each layer

there are pockets of air, which keep the animal warm. The fur is very important because it helps keep the sea otter warm in the water.

Nap Time

- 5 A sea otter likes to float on its back in a sea of kelp, or large seaweed. The animal wraps strands of the kelp around itself while resting or sleeping. The kelp stops the sea otter from floating away. Whole groups of sea otters may be seen floating together. Living in the ocean is just right for the sea otter!

15 Which question is answered in paragraph 2?

- A** How often do sea otters hunt?
- B** How do sea otters keep their ears closed?
- C** When are sea otters fully grown?
- D** What do sea otters do when they hunt?

16 What is the main idea of paragraph 4?

- F** Most sea animals have fur.
- G** Sea animals are often cold.
- H** A sea otter has fur to keep it warm.
- J** A sea otter is a type of mammal.

17 Read this sentence from paragraph 5.

Whole groups of sea otters may be seen floating together.

Which word is a homophone for seen?

- A** seed
- B** scene
- C** sing
- D** seem

18 Based on the article, the ocean is a perfect home for the sea otter because the —

- F** ocean has everything that the sea otter needs
- G** sea otter has few enemies in the ocean
- H** ocean is deep enough for the sea otter to float
- J** sea otter can easily find kelp in the ocean

19 Based on the article, sea otters can swim well mainly because their —

- A** feet are webbed
- B** eyes are large
- C** backs are flat
- D** paws are strong

20 Based on the article, a sea otter finds its favorite foods —

- F** within the kelp
- G** on top of the water
- H** underneath small rocks
- J** on the ocean floor

21 One purpose of the sea otter's chest is to help the animal —

- A** protect itself
- B** dive
- C** break shells
- D** float

22 The author uses headings in the article most likely to —

- F** list interesting facts about sea otters
- G** tell what can be learned from each section
- H** share answers to common questions
- J** put information about sea otters in order

23 Based on the article, what may happen if a sea otter rests far from seaweed?

- A** It may become colder more quickly.
- B** It may wake up in another area.
- C** It may have trouble falling asleep.
- D** It may find another group.

Directions: Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

Cherry Lemonade

- 1 "Lemonade for sale!" called Bonnie
- 2 As a boy walked past.
- 3 "I just bought some cherry juice!"
- 4 He said. "Go try a glass!"

- 5 Bonnie looked across the street
- 6 To where Steve sold that drink.
- 7 "My lemonade's the best," she yelled.
- 8 Steve yelled, "That's what you think!"

- 9 Some people bought from Bonnie.
- 10 A few more bought from Steve,
- 11 Until finally Bonnie said to him,
- 12 "Here's what I now believe."

- 13 "There is a way to reach them all,
- 14 Another way to sell—
- 15 Let's mix our drinks together!"
- 16 Steve said, "Yeah! That would work well!"

- 17 They mixed their drinks and shared a stand.
- 18 Steve said, "We have it made!"
- 19 A line of people waited now
- 20 For cherry lemonade.

24 Bonnie and Steve are proud in the beginning of the poem because they each —

- F** used a special fruit to make their drinks
- G** believe their drinks are the best
- H** learned how to make new drinks
- J** set up a stand to sell drinks

25 Based on the poem, how does Bonnie first find out Steve is selling cherry juice?

- A** A boy tells her he bought some.
- B** Steve sets up his stand across the street.
- C** More people are waiting in line at the other stand.
- D** Bonnie looks across the street.

26 Which question is answered in the poem?

- F** How do Steve and Bonnie decide to sell cherry lemonade?
- G** How many people bought cherry juice?
- H** Why do Steve and Bonnie decide to have drink stands?
- J** Why is selling drinks a good idea?

27 Which line from the poem is where the reader understands how the problem is solved?

- A** 8
- B** 12
- C** 15
- D** 16

28 How is Bonnie different from Steve?

- F** She sells a fruity drink.
- G** She is better at selling drinks.
- H** She thinks of an idea.
- J** She is excited about working with someone.

29 Bonnie and Steve end up sharing a stand because they —

- A** are tired of shouting at each other
- B** think they should help each other
- C** become friends after spending time together
- D** want to sell to as many people as possible

**Grade 3 Reading
Practice Item Set Spring 2025
Answer Key**

Sequence Number	Correct Answer	Reporting Category	Reporting Category Description
1	D	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
2	H	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
3	A	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
4	J	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
5	D	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
6	G	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
7	B	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
8	G	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
9	D	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
10	H	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
11	C	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
12	G	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
13	B	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
14	J	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
15	D	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
16	H	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
17	B	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
18	F	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies

**Grade 3 Reading
Practice Item Set Spring 2025
Answer Key**

Sequence Number	Correct Answer	Reporting Category	Reporting Category Description
19	A	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
20	J	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
21	C	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
22	G	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
23	B	002	Demonstrate comprehension of informational texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
24	G	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
25	A	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
26	F	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
27	C	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
28	H	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies
29	D	001	Demonstrate comprehension of literary texts and use vocabulary development and word analysis strategies

