

English Language Arts - Test Preparation

ELA 8

English 8

X-treme

Review

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N&N Publishing Company, Inc.

18 Montgomery Street, Middletown, New York 10940-5116

For Ordering and Information

1-800-NN 4 TEXT

Internet: [www.nn4text.com](http://www.nn4text.com)

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## Dedication by Jon

Once again, for Megan and Harleigh  
To Kayleigh – thanks for being Harleigh’s best friend  
To my in-laws – thanks for letting me be myself  
And to all those who are no longer in this world – Mima, Papa, Pop, and Mom  
– your ghosts haunt me still...

## Dedication by Maureen

For Howard and Brooke, thank you for your love and endless patience.  
And for Ma, Tah Dah, Ed, and Ann.

*“The art of teaching is the art of assisted discovery.”* – Anonymous  
Thanks to all of my teachers who helped me discover.



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Internet: [www.nn4text.com](http://www.nn4text.com) phone: 1-800-NN 4 TEXT email: [nn4text@nandnpublishing.com](mailto:nn4text@nandnpublishing.com)

SAN # - 216-4221

ISBN # - **978-0-935487-88-6** (formerly: 0935487 88 3)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 BookMart Press 2015 2014 2013 2012 2011 2010 2009 2008

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**READ**

# **INTRODUCTION**



## **Preface**

### **For the Student, Parent, and Teacher**

There are many kinds of tests: blood tests, driving tests, tests of the Emergency Broadcast System (you know, the annoying high pitched sound on the radio), and especially standardized tests. As a student, part of your job is to take tests and do well on them. You owe it to yourself to do the best you can in every aspect of your life, including tests.

The folks in the New York State Education Department have decided that all 8th grade students will take the English Language Arts Exam to show competence in the four Language Arts Standards. You will need to practice reading, listening, writing, and editing to achieve mastery in these areas. That is the purpose of this book, to provide an opportunity for you to meet (and hopefully exceed) the state's standards. Think of this book as a series of exercises to get you in shape for taking the 8th Grade ELA exam.

We hope that the articles and illustrations make practice interesting, entertaining, and enjoyable; maybe something will even make you laugh. If something does make you smile, please let us know.

We wish you success in your test taking endeavor.

The test is comprised of three sections or "Books:"

- **Book 1 – Reading Comprehension**
- **Book 2 – Listening and Writing**
- **Book 3 – Reading and Writing**



This review book breaks each instructional chapter into four parts:

- **Introduction – Hints and Reminders** – In this section your teacher will guide you through some of the reminders and test taking skills.
- **Observe to Learn** – In this section your teacher will model appropriate strategies.
- **Train and Practice** – In this section, the teacher will assist and guide you as your practice.
- **On Your Own** – In this section you are provided with a chance to work independently to practice the skills you've learned.

There are two practice tests to help you prepare for the ELA test. Each test is split into three sessions:

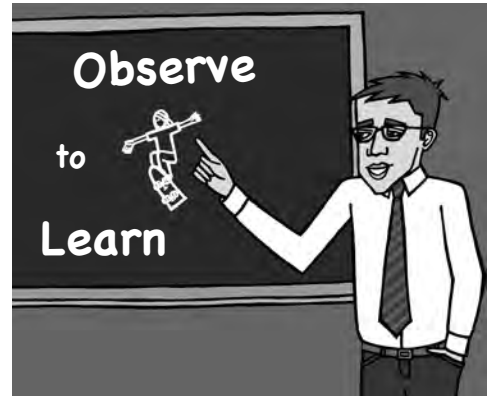
- 1st Day: **Book 1 – Reading Comprehension**
- 2nd Day: **Book 2 – Listening and Writing**
- 3rd Day: **Book 3 – Reading and Writing**

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# Section Parts

Keep your eyes open for the following icons in this review book.

**Observe to Learn** – This is where you will follow along as the teacher demonstrates a reading, listening, or writing strategy or demonstrates a skill. Pay close attention for hints and tips.



**Train and Practice** – This is where you will practice the skills and strategies taught by the teacher in Observe to Learn. The teacher will help where needed.

**On Your Own** – This is where you have a chance to use skills and strategies without direct assistance or direction. It is time to show your individual expertise.



## Learning Standards

The New York State Department of Education has developed the intermediate assessment of English Language Arts (ELA) based on four standards.

### Standard 1

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

### Standard 2

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

### Standard 3

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

### Standard 4

Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

# For the Teacher

We suggest that the book be used in the following manner.

## REVIEWING FOR BOOK 1: READING COMPREHENSION TRAINING

- Day One: Reading Comprehension Introduction/Hints and Reminders  
Reading Comprehension Observe to Learn
- Day Two: Reading Comprehension Train and Practice\*
- Day Three: Reading Comprehension Solo/On Your Own\*

## REVIEWING FOR BOOK 2: LISTENING AND WRITING TRAINING

- Day Four: Listening and Writing Introduction/Hints and Reminders  
Listening and Writing Observe to Learn
- Day Five: Listening and Writing Train and Practice
- Day Six: Listening and Writing Solo/On Your Own

## REVIEWING FOR BOOK 3: READING AND WRITING TRAINING

- Day Seven: Reading and Writing Introduction/Hints and Reminders  
Reading and Writing Observe to Learn
- Day Eight: Reading and Writing Train and Practice\*  
Reading and Writing Solo/On Your Own\*

## TRAINING WITH PRACTICE TESTS

- Day Nine: Practice Test One BOOK 1\*
- Day Ten: Practice Test One BOOK 2
- Day Eleven: Practice Test One BOOK 3\*
- 
- Day Twelve: Practice Test Two BOOK 1\*
- Day Thirteen: Practice Test Two BOOK 2
- Day Fourteen: Practice Test Two BOOK 3\*

\*Note: These segments can also be given as homework assignments and discussed in class the following day.

We understand that your time constraints (such as the length of periods) will dictate how you implement these lessons. The schedule above is provided merely as a conjectural template. Feel free to adapt and change it as necessary.

---

## Test Blueprint

(Authors' note: the New York State Education Department changed the test given in 2007. This text is based on the 2007 format.)

### Day 1: Book 1 Reading Comprehension

- Reading selections
- 26 multiple choice questions
- (Students fill in circles on answer sheet.)

### Day 2: Book 2 Listening and Writing

- Students listen to an article that is read aloud twice and take notes
- Three short-response questions
- One extended-response
- (Students record all answers directly in the test booklet.)

### Day 3: Book 3 Reading and Writing

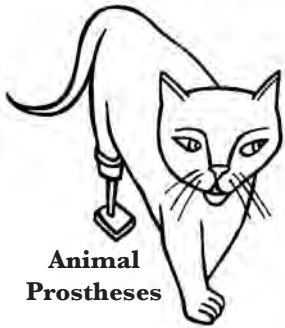
- Two reading selections
- Three short-responses
- One extended-response
- (Students record all answers directly in the test booklet.)

# Book 1

# READING COMPREHENSION



Carlos received a brand new MP3 player for his birthday. He had heard from his friends that it would be easy to operate. So, Carlos eagerly tore into the box and threw aside the instructions. After trying to figure out the procedure for over an hour, he gave up out of frustration. His friend Charlie picked up the instruction manual and began to read. Within a few moments, Charlie had successfully programmed the device and downloaded a play list.



**Animal  
Prostheses**

Understanding what you read may be the difference between joy or frustration in using your new MP3 player. You must also practice skills learned from books to develop proficiency and expertise in English.

The fact is, no single test can evaluate every English skill. To help you prepare for the test, the authors surveyed all the intermediate sample tests provided by the state.

The authors found that for every passage on the test, a student must do the following:

- Find the main idea.
- Understand the author's purpose.
- Know the main character(s).
- Recall details that support the main idea.
- Make inferences (based on clues and reasoning) and draw a conclusion.
- Identify vocabulary words using context clues.



These basic skills are the best place to begin your review and test study. However, it is always best to go beyond the simple skills to a more in depth test preparation. You will apply more involved techniques as you use various literary genres (categories, such as the short story, journal, poetry, non-fiction, and drama).

**Skills** – defining, classifying, and inferring

**Elements of Literature** – identifying the plot, setting, characters, theme, point of view, mood, and tone

**Literary Devices** – recognizing flashbacks, foreshadowing, imagery, and symbolism

**Poetic Literary Devices** – identifying a metaphor, simile, personification, rhyme, and rhythm



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# Reading Comprehension

## Introduction – Reminders and Hints

The reading comprehension section addresses your ability to meet the following standards and performance indicators:

### **Standard 1: Students will read for understanding and information.**

- Interpret data, facts, and ideas from informational texts by applying thinking skills such as **define**, **classify**, and **infer**.

### **Define**

You will read fiction and nonfiction passages. You will have to define words you may not know. On the test, you will not have access to a dictionary to look up the words that you do not know. Instead, you will rely on the *context* of the word to determine the definition. Words that surround the unknown word will give you clues as to what the unfamiliar word actually means. Therefore, it is crucial for you to read each passage carefully and re-read it if necessary for better understanding.

Types of questions that address this performance indicator may look like:

- *In this sentence the word \_\_\_\_\_ means about the same as ...*
- *Another word for \_\_\_\_\_ is ...*
- *The author uses the word \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate ...*

### **Classify**

When reading, sometimes you need to group ideas or organize things based on their qualities or characteristics.

Types of questions that address this performance indicator may look like:

- *From a group of ideas, create a graphic organizer that shows ...*
- *Which graphic organizer best fits the passage?*

### **Infer**

Often, you need to make judgments based on information that you read in a passage. Generally, you are asked to make an inference from the information provided by the author or narrator. An inference is a reasoned conclusion or judgement reached on the basis of understanding details and evidence.

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may look like:

- *With which statement would the author most likely agree?*
- *This sentence from the paragraph suggests that the narrator is ...*
- *Based on this sentence the narrator will most likely ...*

**Standard 2: Students will read for literary response and expression.**

- **Interpret** characters, plots, setting, and theme **using evidence** from the text.
- **Identify** the **author’s point of view**, such as first person narrator.
- **Recognize** how an **author’s use of language** creates images or feelings.
- **Determine** how the use and meaning of **literary devices** (e.g. symbolism, metaphor and simile, alliteration, personification, flashback, and foreshadowing) convey the **author’s message and intent**.
- **Identify poetic elements**, such as repetition, rhythm, and rhyming patterns in order to interpret poetry.

### **Interpret Using Evidence**

Take time with a passage. Based on what you have read in the passage, try to get to know the characters as if they represent real people. Try to determine what the story is. Try to determine where and when the story is taking place. Try to determine the author’s (not your) attitude about the subject. Try to separate fact from fiction. To what conclusions does the author come?

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may look like:

- *Based on the passage, the main character is most likely to ...*
- *Which statement best expresses the theme?*
- *This story takes place ...*
- *In this description the author suggest the characters feel ...*
- *The main character reacted this way because ...*
- *The mood the author creates in the first sentence can be described as ...*

### **Identify the Author’s Point of View**

When you read the passage, try to determine if the narrator is inside the story (first person), or outside the story (third person).

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may look like:

- *The story is told from the point of view of the ...*
- *Based on the information in the passage, the narrator is most likely to ...*
- *The information in the passage suggests that the narrator mainly views ...*

## Recognize Language Usage

Some questions test whether or not you understand what the author is saying about his/her subject. State education authorities are looking for you to describe how the author is feeling. Make sure you look back to see what types of words the author is using. Are they positive words or negative words? You need to figure out how strongly the author is feeling from the words he/she chooses. Types of questions that test this performance indicator may look like:

- *The author's attitude towards ...*
- *The tone of the passage is ...*
- *The passage suggests that the author ...*
- *The author's purpose in this passage is to ...*
- *The narrator expresses feelings of ...*

## Determine Literary Devices

This means that you should be looking for literary devices such as:

**Symbolism** – The use of an image or thing to represent theoretical ideas. (Example: Seeing the *Statue of Liberty* made me think of America's *promise of freedom*.)

**Metaphor** – One thing is substituted for another. (Example: Grandma has a *heart of gold*.)

**Simile** – One thing is similar to another. (Example: My skin is as *dry as the desert*.)

**Alliteration** – The first consonant sounds in a word are repeated in following words. (Example: *sipping seven sweet sodas*.)

**Personification** – This gives human qualities to ideas or inanimate objects. (Example: The tree *reached skyward*.)

**Flashback** – The author gives you background into a character by telling you a story from the past. (Example: The man *acted wisely* only after *remembering his experience* as a young boy.)

**Foreshadowing** – The author gives a hint as to what might happen further on in the story. (Example: *If it continues* to rain like this, *we'll have to evacuate* before the flooding comes.)

**Irony** – An event or situation conveys the opposite meaning of what might be expected, often humorous. (Example: Isn't it ironic that the fastest runner finished last?)

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may look like:

- *Line one of the poem contains which poetic device?*
- *The main character is compared to ...*
- *Which is an example of personification?*
- *Which technique does the author use in this sentence?*

## Identify Poetic Elements

This means that you should be looking for poetic elements which include the following:

**Repetition** – The author repeats a word or phrase for emphasis.

**Rhythm** – The author develops a particular pace or beat of the poem.

**Rhyming pattern** – The author uses rhyming words in a regular pattern.

There are a few different types of poems you may see in the test.

**Limerick** – a humorous five line poem usually with an AABBA rhyme pattern

**Haiku** – a Japanese three line poem usually with seventeen syllables

**Sonnet** – a fourteen line poem with a specific rhyme pattern

**Free verse** – a poem with no specific rhyming pattern

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may include:

- *What is the rhyme pattern of the poem?*
- *What type of poem is this?*
- *What does the repeated word in the poem emphasize?*

**Standard 3: Students will read for critical analysis and evaluation.**

- identify differing **points of view** in texts
- identify multiple **levels of meaning**

### Identifying Viewpoints

Are you able to read something that is the exact opposite of what you think? Can you read and understand someone else’s opinion?

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may include:

- *The author’s opinion of \_\_\_\_\_ is ...*
- *What is the author’s purpose in writing this passage?*

### Meanings

You may be reading fables or allegories (stories that usually have symbols to represent a concept). You need to “read between the lines.” What is the author trying to tell you without coming right out and explaining it?

Types of questions that test this performance indicator may look like:

- *What is the author’s purpose in writing this passage?*
- *Who or what does the main character represent?*
- *What does the event represent?*

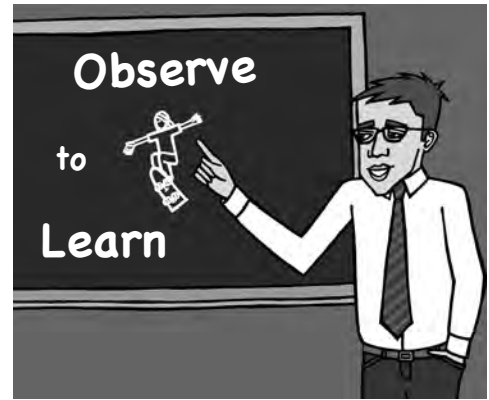
### Information Questions

There is another type of question you may encounter while taking the test. Information questions test your ability to gather information from the passage you read. These questions ask you about specific details from the passage. The key thing here is that you actually refer back to the passage. It is there – use it!

## Directions

In this part of the test, you will read articles and answer questions about what you have read. Mark your answers directly in the book.

Read the following article. Remember, you CAN write in the test booklet on the actual test – so do it! Underline main ideas, circle supporting details, put stars ★ next to words that you think set the tone for the passage.



## The Article:

### *Animal Prostheses*

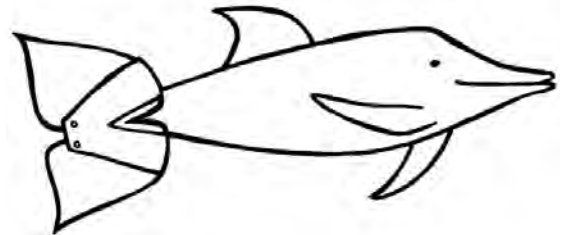
Artificial limbs for human beings date back thousands of years. In 500 B.C., an Egyptian prisoner cut off his foot to escape from his chains. It was replaced by a wooden substitute. For animals, however, prosthetic devices are relatively new.



Take the pet cat George Bailey, for example. He was born without part of his hind legs. George was forced to drag his body along the floor to get around the house. Thanks to engineers and surgeons at North Carolina State University, George received an artificial leg. But creating the prosthetic limb was not an easy task and it required a great amount of ingenuity.

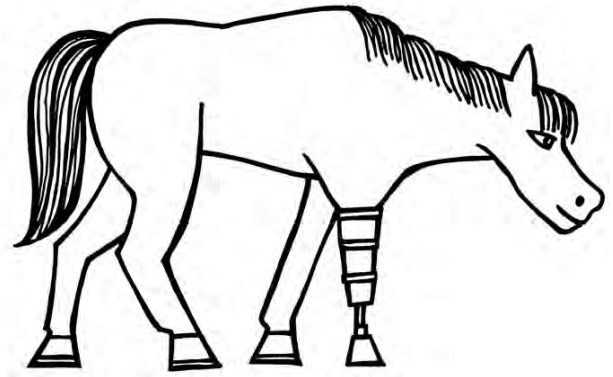
Cats are not fond of having anything attached to their bodies. Anyone who has ever tried to dress a cat in doll's clothes, or put paper bags on their feet, can attest to this fact. So, the engineers were forced to find another solution. To solve the problem, a prosthetic limb was created that could be permanently attached to the bones in George's leg. A specially designed anchor was inserted into the bone that would allow bone tissue to grow into the attachment. Soon after the surgery, George was running around like any other active cat.

A dolphin named Winter may be the next candidate for a prosthetic limb, in this case, an artificial tail. Winter was entangled in the buoy line of a crab trap, which cut off the blood supply to her tail. Shortly after being rescued, the tail fell off, and Winter was left with only a round stump. Thankfully, she was nursed back to health over the course of several months. In that time, she learned to swim without a tail by moving her body side to side like an alligator or shark and by using her flippers to get in motion. But she will never swim like a true dolphin unless her tail is replaced.



Dana Zucker, of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, has formed a team to give Winter a new tail. Zucker is currently consulting with the U.S. Navy, a diving equipment manufacturer, and a tire company to see if this is even possible. It will be a difficult task: the amount of pressure generated by a dolphin's tail while swimming is immense. It will take a marvel of modern engineering to manufacture such a prosthesis, but Zucker is hopeful that it will be possible.

Horses may also benefit from artificial limbs. During Hurricane Katrina, Kaye Harris found her pony, Molly, being attacked by a Pit Bull. Molly was seriously injured, but most of her wounds eventually healed. But, her leg was too badly damaged to be saved. Most horses with wounded legs are put to death humanely, but not in this case. Molly had the will and the spirit to survive. Veterinary surgeons amputated her front right leg and replaced it with a temporary prosthetic limb.



Now, Molly has a permanent prosthesis and can jog or canter like an ordinary pony. The artificial leg has given her a whole new life. Molly serves as a role model to children who have lost limbs. She regularly visits children’s hospitals with her owner to provide hope and inspiration for those around her. Louisiana State University has followed Molly’s positive example by starting a “Molly Fund” to encourage and develop state of the art technologies, like animal prosthetics.



### Analysis – Animal Prostheses

Below is the same article, but it has been marked with notations to identify those important items needed to understand its meaning. Note that key words for detail are circled and vocabulary words are underlined. Be sure to examine the summary notes that follow the marked up version of the article.

*key word* → Artificial limbs for human beings date back thousands of years. In 500 B.C., an Egyptian prisoner cut off his foot to escape from his chains. It was replaced by a wooden substitute. *synonym for prostetic devices* → prosthetic devices are relatively new. *Main Idea* → For animals, however, prosthetic devices are relatively new. ← *This passage is all about animal prostheses.*

Take the pet cat George Bailey for example. He was born without part of his hind legs. George was forced to drag his body along the floor to get around the house. Thanks to engineers and surgeons at North Carolina State University, George received an artificial leg. But creating the prosthetic limb was not an easy task and it required great amounts of ingenuity. ★  
*tone: Positive*

Cats are not fond of having anything attached to their bodies. Anyone who has ever tried to dress a cat in doll’s clothes, or put paper bags on their feet, can attest to this fact. So the engineers were forced to find another solution. To solve the problem, a prosthetic limb was created that could be permanently attached to the bones in George’s leg. A specially designed anchor was inserted into the bone that would allow bone tissue to grow into the attachment. Soon after the surgery, George was running around like a normal cat.

*important character* → George Bailey ← *Supporting detail: Ties in to main idea.*

A dolphin named Winter may be the next candidate for a prosthetic limb, in this case, an artificial tail. Winter was entangled in the buoy line of a crab trap, which cut off the blood supply to her tail. Shortly after being rescued, the tail fell off, and Winter was left with only a round stump. Thankfully, she was nursed back to health over the course of several months. In that time, she learned to swim without a tail by moving her body like an alligator or shark and by using her flippers to get in motion. But she will never swim like a true dolphin unless her tail is replaced.

← *Shows importance of animal prostheses.*

Dana Zucker, of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, has formed a team to give Winter a new tail. Zucker is currently consulting with the U.S. Navy, a diving equipment manufacturer, and a tire company to see if this is even possible. It will be a difficult task: the amount of pressure generated by a dolphin's tail while swimming is immense. It will take a marvel of modern engineering to manufacture such a prosthesis, but Zucker is hopeful that it is possible.

*important character*

Horses may also benefit from artificial limbs. During Hurricane Katrina, Kaye Harris found her pony, Molly, being attacked by a Pit Bull. Molly was seriously injured, but most of her wounds eventually healed. Her leg was too badly damaged to be saved, however. Most horses with wounded legs are put to death humanely, but not in this case. Molly had the will and the spirit to survive. Veterinary surgeons amputated her front right leg and replaced it with a temporary prosthetic limb.

*Supports theme.*

*conclusion*

Now, Molly has a permanent prosthesis and can jog or canter like an ordinary pony. The artificial leg has given her a whole new life. Molly serves as a role model to children who have lost limbs. She regularly visits children's hospitals with her owner to provide hope and inspiration for those around her. Louisiana State University has followed Molly's positive example by starting a "Molly Fund" to encourage and develop state of the art technologies, like animal prosthetics.



*tone: Positive*

*Theme*



## Summary Notes of Article Analysis

**Main idea?** Prosthetic devices for animals are relatively new, but they may provide a new life for injured animals.

**Author's purpose?** The author's purpose is to interest the reader in the emerging science of animal prosthetics.

**Main character(s) and Importance?**

1. George Bailey – a pet cat who received an artificial leg
2. Winter – an injured dolphin that may get a new tail
3. Molly – an injured horse with a permanent prosthesis

**Theme and supporting details?** It is important to encourage and develop state of the art technologies, like animal prosthetics.

- Thanks to artificial limbs, Molly and George Bailey can lead relatively normal lives.
- If Winter receives a new tail, she may behave like an ordinary dolphin.

**Conclusion?** Louisiana State University has followed Molly's positive example by starting a "Molly Fund" to encourage and develop state of the art technologies, like animal prosthetics.

**Key words** (vocabulary) mentioned.

- Prosthetic device – artificial limb
- Substitute – a replacement
- Artificial – not occurring naturally; made by people
- Ingenuity – creative problem solving
- Amputate – severe (cut off a limb)



## Additional Items to Note

When you analyze a passage, also remember to keep the perspective of the author/narrator in mind. What is his/her point of view and what does the author/narrator mean? Examples:

- *What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?*
- *What is the mood that the author creates?*
- *What is the author's tone in the passage?*
- *What is the author's attitude towards his/her theme?*
- *Who or what does the main character represent?*
- *What does the event represent?*
- *From whose point of view is the story written?*
- *What message is the author trying to convey?*
- *What is the author's conclusion?*
- *Do the author's details support his/her conclusion?*

## Question Analysis – Animal Prostheses

- 1 Read the sentences from the article below and answer the question that follows:

*Artificial limbs for human beings date back thousands of years...  
For animals, however, prosthetic devices are relatively new.*

Based on these sentences, what is the meaning of **prosthetic devices**?

- A** human beings
- B** artificial limbs
- C** newly discovered animals
- D** one thousand years

**The correct answer is [B] artificial limbs.** The article provides the context clue through restatement (repeating a reference in different ways throughout a passage).

[A] Human beings is incorrect because this phrase cannot be substituted for artificial limbs.

[C] Newly discovered animals are not mentioned in this article.

[D] One thousand years does not make sense because the article does not make a direct link between a device (apparatus) and time.

- 2 How did each animal lose a limb?

- A** George, Winter, and Molly were born with birth defects.
- B** George, Winter, and Molly were injured through human error.
- C** George, Winter, and Molly were harmed by mother nature.
- D** George had a birth defect, Winter was injured, and Molly was attacked.

**The correct answer is [D]** George had a birth defect, Winter was injured by human error, and Molly was attacked by another animal. Paragraph two states that George was born without part of his hind legs. Winter was entangled in a fisherman's buoy line. A Pit Bull attacked Molly.

[A, B, C] The other answers are incorrect the article clearly distinguishes how because each animal lost a limb.

- 3** Which of the following statements is an opinion?
- A** Molly and George have been given new lives through prosthetics.
  - B** Winter will live forever without a tail.
  - C** Animals do not deserve to have artificial limbs.
  - D** Science has provided help for disabled animals.

**The correct answer is [C]** animals do not deserve to have artificial limbs. Whether animals deserve artificial limbs or not is clearly an opinion. This “opinion” cannot be supported by facts from the article.

[A] Molly and George have been given new lives through prosthetics is incorrect because this is a fact detailed in the article.

[B] Winter will live forever without a tail is incorrect because Winter’s fate is uncertain.

[D] Science has provided help for Molly, Winter, and George is incorrect because this is supported by facts from the article.

- 4** Read the sentence from the article below and answer the question that follows:

*Anyone who has ever tried to dress a cat in doll’s clothes, or put paper bags on their feet, can attest to this fact.*

The author includes this information in the third paragraph to

- A** illustrate the problem faced in creating a prosthetic limb for cats
- B** establish background information and provide a historical context
- C** provide an irrelevant detail
- D** mislead the reader

**The correct answer is [A]** illustrate the problem faced in creating a prosthetic limb for cats. Many pet owners have, at one time or another, attempted to dress up their pets. The author is probably hoping that the reader has had this experience.

[B] Establish background information and provide a historical context is incorrect because the sentence simply illustrates the problem.

[C] Provide an irrelevant detail is incorrect because the sentence is directly related to the topic.

[D] Mislead the reader is inaccurate because the sentence is relevant to the article.

- 5** The author provides details about the first human artificial limb to
- A** establish background information and provide a historical context
  - B** mislead the reader into thinking the article will be about humans
  - C** compare and contrast Dolphins with human beings
  - D** provide an irrelevant detail

**The correct answer is [A]** establish background information and provide a historical context.

[B] Mislead the reader into thinking the article will be about humans is incorrect because a careful reader will not make this mistake.

[C] Compare and contrast Dolphins with human beings is incorrect because there is no connection mentioned between humans and dolphins.

[D] Provide an irrelevant detail is incorrect because the detail is relevant to the article.

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## **D**irections

Read this article about “Fantasy Football.” Then answer questions 6 through 10 that follow.



### ***Fantasy Football***

One of the fastest growing internet activities is the “sport” of fantasy football. What was once a simple hobby has evolved into a multi-billion dollar industry. It has recently surpassed fantasy baseball and is now the most popular fantasy sport in America.

The game’s origin dates back to 1962, when employees and fans of the Oakland Raiders created the first league, GOPPPL (Greater Oakland Professional Pigskin Prognosticators League). Due to the internet, the game’s popularity has exploded. Hundreds of websites, magazines, and leagues are being formed each year to support this pastime.

In fantasy football, the game players – called owners – form leagues and draft real life football players from the National Football League or National Collegiate Athletic Association. Fantasy football teams are comprised of many athletes from different teams in a single league (either the NFL or NCAA). The owners score points based on the actual statistics and performance of the real-life players in their weekly games.

Before an owner can score points, he or she must choose the starting roster for each game. Usually, this consists of a quarterback, running backs, wide receivers, tight end, place-kicker, and defense / special teams. This must be done before a predetermined deadline. Once the starting lineup is chosen, the game commences and points are scored.



Common scoring systems award points for passing / rushing yards, touchdowns, field goals, and defensive plays. Bonuses are often given for exceptional player performance, such as when a quarterback throws for 300 yards in a single game. At the end of the week’s games, fantasy football owners with the most points win their respective games.

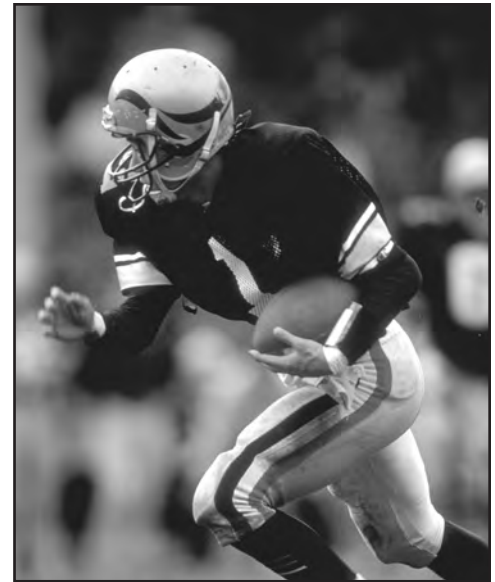
One of the negative consequences of fantasy sports is the erratic and incoherent behavior of football fans that “own” a fantasy football team. For example, an owner may be watching a game with friends in their own home,

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and find him/herself rooting for different players on both teams! In the past, people had their own favorite team and would root exclusively for that team. Now it is a common sight to see a single person cheering when their favorite team and the opposing team scores.

There are legal problems as well. The NFL and NCAA argue that many millions of people are now making money on league owned teams and players. The counter argument is that the NFL and NCAA can not own statistics, as they are historical facts, not private commodities. It is also a commonly held belief that fantasy football is a form of gambling. Many people feel that it is an addiction that takes great amount of one's time and money.

Nevertheless, fantasy sports are here to stay. Anything that is enjoyed by more than 15 million people is sure to remain as part of American culture for many years to come.



## Question Analysis – *Fantasy Football*

Try these Multiple Choice questions. Remember to refer back to the article.

6 NFL and NCAA are known as

- A antonyms
- B acronyms
- C synonyms
- D metaphors

7 Read the sentence from the article that follows and answer the question that follows:

*Due to the internet, the game's popularity has **exploded**.*

The word **exploded** is meant to be read

- A figuratively
- B literally
- C anecdotally
- D fantastically

- 8** Although it is not stated in the article, one can infer that fantasy
- A** sports are soon to be illegal
  - B** baseball faces the same problems as fantasy football
  - C** football is a form of gambling
  - D** soccer is based on the NFL and NCAA
- 9** Common scoring systems are based on
- A** a quarterback, running backs, wide receivers, tight end, and a place-kicker
  - B** passing / rushing yards, touchdowns, field goals, and defensive plays
  - C** bonuses given for exceptional player performance
  - D** players' statistics from the NFL and NCAA
- 10** Starting rosters may be comprised of
- A** a quarterback, running backs, wide receivers, tight ends, and a place-kicker
  - B** pitcher, catcher, first baseman, shortstop, and left fielder
  - C** forward, halfback, fullback, and goalie
  - D** right wing, left wing, center, and goalie



## Check Your Answers

- 6** **The correct answer is [B]** acronyms. Acronyms are abbreviations made from the initial letter of each word in a name or phrase.
- 7** **The correct answer is [A]** figuratively. Exploded is an example of hyperbole. It is a figure of speech that is an exaggeration. The internet does not literally cause things to explode.
- 8** **The correct answer is [B]** fantasy baseball faces the same problems as fantasy football. We can make an educated guess – an inference – that the sport of fantasy baseball is similar to fantasy football and therefore shares the same problems.
- 9** **The correct answer is [B]** passing / rushing yards, touchdowns, field goals, and defensive plays. This is stated in the fifth paragraph.
- 10** **The correct answer is [A]** a quarterback, running backs, wide receivers, tight end, and a place-kicker. This is stated in the fourth paragraph.

Now that you have had some guided training, it is time to try a reading comprehension exercise on your own. Mark the answers directly in the book. Ask your teacher for the correct answers.

## Directions

Questions 11 through 16: Read the propaganda messages below and identify the kind of propaganda illustrated in each message.

### A Propaganda Primer

Propaganda is a type of message aimed at influencing the opinions or behavior of people. [from *Wikipedia – the free encyclopedia* [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)]

Read the definitions below of the different kinds of propaganda and answer the questions that follow.



Name Calling – connects a negative word to a person or thing

Bandwagon – attempts to persuade an audience to do something because “everyone else is doing it”

Plain Folks – appeals to the audience by claiming that someone is a regular person, or “average Joe”; it is easy to like someone who is just like you and shares your beliefs and values

Appeal to Fear – an attempt to influence the audience by building anxiety and panic

Flag Waving – attempts to persuade the audience that participating in a certain action will make one more patriotic

Stereotype – portrays individuals or entire groups of people as having false characteristics

Scapegoat – places blame on an individual or group to draw attention away from those who are truly responsible

Testimonial – uses a celebrity to influence the audience



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**11** All the cool kids are wearing Abercromble brand clothes. Why aren't you?

- A** Name Calling
- B** Bandwagon
- C** Plain Folks
- D** Appeal to Fear

**12** The terrorists could attack at any time. Take action now!

- A** Name Calling
- B** Bandwagon
- C** Plain Folks
- D** Appeal to Fear

**13** The candidate for city mayor is a crook! Don't vote for her.

- A** Name Calling
- B** Bandwagon
- C** Plain Folks
- D** Appeal to Fear

**14** If you don't support the war, you are just as bad as the enemy!

- A** Flag Waving
- B** Stereotype
- C** Scapegoat
- D** Testimonial

**15** All politicians are money hungry opportunists!

- A** Flag Waving
- B** Stereotype
- C** Scapegoat
- D** Testimonial

**16** Hi, I'm Tiger Woodlands, the world's best golfer, and I wear Nike shoes.

- A** Flag Waving
- B** Stereotype
- C** Scapegoat
- D** Testimonial

**STOP**