



English III Reading

2011 Released Selections and Test Questions

These released questions represent selected TEKS student expectations for each reporting category. These questions are samples only and do not represent all the student expectations eligible for assessment.

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

Maybe Your Inner Child Is Comfy in Middle Ages

by Burt Constable

- 1 What age are you?
- 2 No, that's how old you are. What age are you?
- 3 I believe everyone is born with some ideal age that fits them. Have you ever looked at a tyke in diapers and seen something in his expression that instantly makes you picture the lad as a wizened old man? Have you ever looked in the face of an old woman and seen a twinkle in her eye that reminds you of an impish teenage girl? Looking at footage of George Burns in his 40s, you can tell he wasn't going to feel comfortable with himself until he hit 80. A 16-year-old Andy Rooney surely dreamed of reaching an age when his grumpiness would be considered endearing, almost expected, and not just a character flaw. Conversely, Paul McCartney is always going to be 20, no matter how wrinkly he gets.
- 4 Since I can find no esoteric journal or touchy-feely college professor to lend credence to my ideal age theory, I bounce the idea off my columning buddy, Jack Mabley. Jack nods in agreement and fixes his age at 50.
- 5 Ah, the middle-aged man. I know lots of middle-aged men. Some are 50, some are 23 and some are 82. Early in his career, Jack became aware of the pressures of rearing a family and the chaos of a newspaper job and knew he could look forward to a more serene life at 50. ("Didn't know—hoped," Jack counters.) His longing for 50 had nothing to do with the fact his boss usually was a 50-year-old man.
- 6 "Maybe I'd like to have his office, but I wouldn't want to be like him," Jack remembers.
- 7 No, he just had a gut feeling 50 would look right on him. Jack was right. Fifty fit him when he was 35, it fit him when he was 50, and it still fits him.
- 8 Other people are hopelessly trapped at age 16, no matter how many marriages, jobs, kids and responsibilities they gather. Then there is the 16-year-old who plays the high school clique game, buys the hippest CD and engages in sophomoric stunts merely to fit in—while in his soul, he longs to wear a cardigan sweater, listen to talk radio and gripe about teens.

9 Every class has a girl who emerges as the “mom” of the group—curbing unruly behavior, taking confessions from the masses and generally holding civilization together. A friend of mine was a 40-year-old woman in high school, is now a 40-year-old woman in reality and someday will die as a 40-year-old woman.

10 Those of you whose ideal age is yet to come should look forward to it.

11 Me? My age is 12. That is the period of my life when I truly felt as if I had a grip on things. (Blissfully ignorant, as opposed to painfully aware ignorant.) That doesn’t mean I was happier then. I’m darn happy today, but back when I was 12, I couldn’t even fathom these higher levels of happiness.

What Is the Ideal Age to Be?

If you could live forever at one particular age, what age would you choose? When the Harris Poll asked this question of a cross-section of 2,306 adults nationwide, the average age chosen was 41.

But that number is deceiving. There was absolutely no consensus of one ideal age with responses ranging from younger than 21 to older than 90. “Forty-one” is just an average of the answers. When broken down by gender, women chose 43 as the ideal age, while men chose 39.

There was a distinct pattern, though. Most people chose an ideal age that was fairly close to their current age. The exception is that once folks hit 50, the age they chose was younger. A small, but not insignificant, number of people choose remarkably old ages as the ideal. Fully one in 12, or 8 percent of the total sample, see 90 or older as the ideal age if you are healthy.

If you could stop time and live forever in good health at a particular age, at what age would you like to live? The median ages they chose:

- People 18 to 24 years chose 27
- People 25 to 29 years chose 31
- People 30 to 39 years chose 37
- People 40 to 49 years chose 40
- People 50 to 64 years chose 44
- People over 65 years chose 59

The age people chose as the ideal only seemed to be influenced by their current age and not whether they were rich or poor, African American, white, Hispanic, Republican, Democrat or independent, highly educated or not.

- 12 My body already feels like 80 but my spirit will be 12 forever. Whenever I walk through a doorway, I must resist that urge to hop up and touch the top of the door frame. Many a night my wife has humored me as I, in the guise of picking up the kids' toys, will spend 15 minutes trying to lob a Beanie Baby into the toy box from the other side of the room. (Sometimes she even rebounds my misses for me.) When I finally "swish" my shot, I go so far as to verbalize that crowd noise guys generally make only in our heads.
- 13 My wife's ideal age is 30. She was just 24 when I met her, but had the maturity and common sense of someone 30. Now that she is closer to 40 than 30, she still has that spunk and sense of adventure that goes well with a 30-year-old.
- 14 "So this would make me a 30-year-old woman living with a 12-year-old boy?" my wife asks.
- 15 I interrupt my juggling of dirty sock balls to nod in agreement.
- 16 "Yep," my wife concludes. "That sounds about right."

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1 Why does the author begin the selection with a question?

- A He plans to conclude the selection with an answer.
 - B He believes his question is one that all people ask themselves.
 - C He is playing a trick with words to introduce his main point.
 - D He wants the reader to reflect on what it means to be old.
-

2 Which of these lines best expresses the author's main point?

- A *My wife's ideal age is 30.*
 - B *Fifty fit him when he was 35, it fit him when he was 50, and it still fits him.*
 - C *That is the period of my life when I truly felt as if I had a grip on things.*
 - D *A 16-year-old Andy Rooney surely dreamed of reaching an age when his grumpiness would be considered endearing, almost expected, and not just a character flaw.*
-

3 Read the following line from paragraph 8.

In his soul, he longs to wear a cardigan sweater, listen to talk radio and gripe about teens.

Which of the following best represents the type of person the author is describing?

- A Someone who wants to act like a 16-year-old forever
- B A person who has always felt out of step with others
- C A person who doesn't understand the concept of an ideal age
- D Someone who wishes he could act older than he does

- 4 Which of the following lines would the author most likely have difficulty supporting with solid evidence?
- A *Every class has a girl who emerges as the "mom" of the group. . . .*
 - B *I know lots of middle-aged men.*
 - C *Many a night my wife has humored me as I, in the guise of picking up the kids' toys, will spend 15 minutes trying to lob a Beanie Baby into the toy box from the other side of the room.*
 - D *Then there is the 16-year-old who plays the high school clique game, buys the hippest CD and engages in sophomoric stunts merely to fit in. . . .*
-

- 5 Read this line from paragraph 11.

(Blissfully ignorant, as opposed to painfully aware ignorant.)

This line suggests that at age 12 the author was —

- A unaware of how much happiness he was missing
 - B aware of how difficult being an adult can be
 - C too young to be aware of his lack of knowledge
 - D happy not to know too much
-
- 6 The primary support for the author's argument comes from —
- A academic research
 - B other journalists
 - C statistical data
 - D personal observation

- 7 Why does the author use parenthetical asides in this selection?
- A To support his arguments with evidence
 - B To elaborate on the origins of his theory
 - C To organize his ideas effectively
 - D To lend a playful tone to his writing
-
- 8 What is the primary purpose of the boxed information titled "What Is the Ideal Age to Be?"
- A To show the variety of answers to the question about ideal age
 - B To indicate that people constantly want to change their ideal age
 - C To illustrate widespread agreement about ideal age
 - D To disprove the author's main argument about ideal age

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

Clasp

by Tai Dong Huai

- 1 My adoptive mom hands me the small, white cardboard box and says, "This is yours."
- 2 It's a Sunday afternoon in early August, the thirteenth anniversary of my adoption—*Gotcha Day* as some families call it. We're sitting at the dining room table having just finished a late breakfast. I can see my father outside the window pushing a lawn mower back and forth, and I know tonight when we go out for our customary Chinese dinner at the Ginger Dragon, his knees will be killing him.
- 3 "Should I call Dad in?" I ask.
- 4 "Not for this," my mom says. "This is between girls." I'm surprised to hear her use the word *girls*. With my mom, a product of the seventies, it's usually *women* and *young women*.
- 5 "Open it," she says.
- 6 I lift the lid, unwrap the red tissue paper, stare at it. *This is a joke*, I think to myself. *Or maybe a clue. Perhaps this cheap piece of junk somehow leads to my real present.*
- 7 "It's a hair clasp," my mother says. I weigh it in my hand. It's as light as a shelled peanut. I study the thing—a mesh butterfly with red and blue plastic inserts on the wings, with a hooked pin, its silver plating flaking badly, curled around the back. My mom tells me, "I know we usually give you a gift, but I thought it was time you got this."
- 8 "Was it your mother's?" I ask.
- 9 "No," she says, "it was *your* mother's."
- 10 The story—and it's little more than that—goes like this: My Chinese mother—my "bio-mom"—was wrapping me up shortly before abandoning me in front of the Lucky 8 Supermarket in Taizhou. This hair clasp either fell, or was placed, in the blanket with me. This is what my adoptive mom wants me to believe.

- 11 But what I actually believe is that this cheesy trinket was placed by someone at the orphanage. A sob story to pass on to whatever fool-hearted white person was naive enough to believe it. A trick. Like turning back the mileage on a car nobody wants.
- 12 I leave it on the dresser next to my bed along with my ceramic moose from Canada and my crystal dolphin from Sea World. Then one Saturday, right before school is getting ready to start, I clean my room. The hair clasp, along with whatever other junk has accumulated, is raked into my wastebasket.
- 13 The next day, my mom takes me shopping for supplies at Office Max. When we get back into the car, she begins digging through her tote bag.
- 14 "Did I ever show you this?" she asks as she takes something from a small, brown velveteen sack. I glance over at the hand she holds out and see a small gold band on a thin gold chain.
- 15 "It's a baby's ring," she says. "Your grandma bought it right after I was born."
- 16 "You wore this?" I ask as I study the minute ring.
- 17 My mom shakes her head. "Grandma wore it. Right up until the time I was your age. Then she gave it to me. 'Wear this,' she said, 'and I'll be able to pick you out in heaven.'"
- 18 "So why don't you wear it?" I ask.
- 19 "Probably because I'm not planning on dying any time soon."
- 20 "Can I have it?"
- 21 "Uh-uh," she says as she takes it back and returns it to its pouch. She reaches forward and starts the car. "This one's mine."
- 22 When we get home, I take my new spiral notebooks, my pack of ten Bic pens, my four different colored Hi-Liters, up to my room. I drop them on my desk, reach under, pull out my wastebasket. It's empty. *The garage*, I think to myself. *I'll find it if I have to go through every can.*
- 23 Except then I see it. The hair clasp. Back in its place on the dresser as if it had never been touched. Placed there, or so it seems, by the hand of one mother or another.

FROM "Clasp" © by B. Bozzone (Tai Dong Huai). First published in 2009 in *The Rose & Thorn* e-zine, spring 2009.

- 1 Paragraph 17 suggests that this story explores the theme of the —
- A fear of the unknown
 - B bond between parent and child
 - C ingratitude of children
 - D high price of ignorance
-
- 2 From paragraphs 10 and 11, the reader can infer that —
- A the narrator thinks she is more perceptive than other people
 - B China has laws against child abandonment
 - C Chinese orphanages were sometimes poorly run
 - D the narrator believes that Westerners often don't respect Chinese customs
-
- 3 How can the narrator's adoptive family be best characterized?
- A An immigrant family living in an inner-city neighborhood
 - B A large tight-knit family that lives on a farm
 - C An unhappy family that quarrels a lot
 - D A typical middle-class suburban family

- 4 Which sentence hints at the narrator’s later change of heart?
- A *We’re sitting at the dining room table having just finished a late breakfast.*
 - B *My adoptive mom hands me the small, white cardboard box and says, “This is yours.”*
 - C *I lift the lid, unwrap the red tissue paper, stare at it.*
 - D *Perhaps this cheap piece of junk somehow leads to my real present.*
-
- 5 The dialogue in paragraphs 3 through 5 suggests that the narrator’s mother considers the gift very —
- A strange
 - B practical
 - C impressive
 - D personal
-
- 6 Read this sentence from the selection.

But what I actually believe is that this cheesy trinket was placed by someone at the orphanage.

The tone of this sentence can best be described as —

- A conversational
- B threatening
- C contemptuous
- D unemotional

7 By telling the story from the point of view of the adopted girl, the author can —

- A relate the events of the story objectively
- B emphasize the girl's change in attitude
- C inform the reader of facts the protagonist has no way of knowing
- D describe in detail what all the characters are thinking and feeling

8 The simile in paragraph 11 suggests that the narrator —

- A wishes she had stayed in China
- B is very trusting of others
- C feels resentful about her past
- D is proud of her heritage

- 9 In "Clasp," what does the hair clasp symbolize? Explain your answer and support it with evidence from the selection.

Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
Reading Selection 1				
1	3	Readiness	F.8(A)	C
2	3	Supporting	F.10(A)	B
3	3	Supporting	F.10 Fig. 19(B)	D
4	3	Supporting	F.10 Fig. 19(B)	A
5	3	Supporting	F.10(A)	C
6	3	Supporting	F.10 Fig. 19(B)	D
7	3	Supporting	F.10 Fig. 19(B)	D
8	3	Supporting	F.11 Fig. 19(B)	A
Reading Selection 2				
1	2	Readiness	F.2(A)	B
2	2	Readiness	F.5(B)	A
3	2	Readiness	F.5(B)	D
4	2	Readiness	F.5(A)	D
5	2	Readiness	F.5(A)	D
6	2	Readiness	F.5 Fig. 19(B)	C
7	2	Readiness	F.5 Fig. 19(B)	B
8	2	Readiness	F.7 Fig. 19(B)	C
9	1	Readiness	Fig. 19(B)	Short Answer

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