

**GRADE 8**  
**Reading**

**Administered March 2016**

**RELEASED**



# READING

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

*In 1944, Byrd Thompson, having secretly earned her pilot's license, is traveling to Sweetwater, Texas, to become an air force pilot.*

## ***from*** **Skies Over Sweetwater**

*by Julia Moberg*

- 1 The train pulls up to the station, right on time. The conductor helps lug my trunk up the stairs and into my compartment. I sit down on the gorgeous plush red velvet bench where I will be spending the next 12 hours. I run my fingers over it, realizing how long it has been since I felt anything so wonderful.
- 2 Outside the window the Iowa sun is starting to come up all purple and orange over the horizon. I think about Mom and my sister, Charlotte, and I wonder if they are awake yet and if they've noticed I'm gone. And then I think about Pa, and it hurts, so I open my trunk and find my favorite and only book I own, *West with the Night*, by Beryl Markham. I get lost reading about her adventures flying her plane across the Atlantic.
- 3 For a moment I am disoriented and forget where I am until the grumbling clatter of the engine jogs my memory, reminding me that I'm on the train. My stomach is growling and sore with hunger, so I pull out the apple I pocketed. I am about to take a bite when I look up and become aware of a set of eyes watching me attentively.
- 4 A girl is sitting across from me. She is around eighteen, the same age as me. Her hair is a bright shade of auburn-red and her eyes are the color of ginger. She's wearing a crisp white blouse tucked into a pair of blue pants and freshly polished black and white saddle shoes. I stare at her, realizing I had never seen a girl wearing pants before. Mom would be appalled.
- 5 "Got any more food on you?" she suddenly asks, her eyes fixated on the apple in my hand.
- 6 Takes me a moment to remember that I also brought a banana. I rummage through my bag and hand it to her. She peels it open and then looks down at my book, which has fallen onto the floor between us. She reaches and picks it up.
- 7 "Beryl Markham sure is fearless isn't she? Imagine, being the first to fly across the Atlantic. I've probably read this book at least twenty times myself," she says, turning the book over in her hands. Gently, she presses her finger on a large brown smudge on the book's spine.

- 8 "Looks like you've read this a few times, too."
- 9 The smudge was actually from our oven. I had saved all my money for a month to be able to afford the book. I had to hide it safely away from Mom and Charlotte because it was about flying. One day I was sitting in the kitchen, engrossed as Beryl is about to leave her native land of Africa for her flight across the Atlantic, when the front door opened. I was so involved in my reading, I didn't hear it. And then Mom came into the room. She had gotten off work early from her shift at the Red Cross because they ran out of bandages for her to roll.
- 10 "You're reading about flying again?" she asked, quickly grabbing it away from me. "You know how I feel about this. Why you keep insisting on defying my rules, Bernadette, is beyond me." She opened the oven door and tossed my book inside. When I snuck back into the kitchen a few hours later to retrieve it, the heat from the gaslight had cooked the spine, leaving a smoldering black mark.
- 11 Thinking about it all, I am ready to burst into tears. If the auburn-haired girl wasn't sitting in my compartment I would be able to close the door and have a nice cry. But instead, I choke back the tears.
- 12 "What's your name?" she asks abruptly.
- 13 I hate this question, because I always feel the need to offer an explanation after I answer. "Bernadette Thompson. But nobody calls me that, except my Mom. I hate it, actually. She gave me a rich sounding name, hoping it would help me get a rich husband. Everyone calls me Byrd. It's better that way."
- 14 "Byrd. I like that. So where you headed, Byrd?"
- 15 "Texas."
- 16 She laughs. "Well, that I figured. We're already in Texas, by the way. You must have slept all through Oklahoma. That's when I got on. You ain't going to Sweetwater, are you?"
- 17 I slowly nod. I didn't even know we were outside of Iowa yet.
- 18 "Me too," she says, and our eyes meet. And before I know it, the tears start streaming down my face, and for a moment I feel like I'm watching myself from outside of my body.
- 19 She sits down next to me. "What's the matter? Are you nervous about going to Sweetwater?" she asks. And then I know why I am crying.
- 20 I shake my head. "It's just that I've never met another woman pilot before," I tell her, the honesty surprising even myself. "I was convinced I was the only one, except for Amelia Earhart and Beryl Markham. That's why I'm going to Sweetwater. To find the others. To belong somewhere."

21 The girl nods, and when our eyes meet, I know she understands.

22 We sit together in silence as the train rattles on, taking us closer to our future.

Courtesy of Julia Moberg

**1** Which event from the excerpt suggests that Byrd will resolve her conflict?

- A** Byrd remembers that she has food she can share with the girl on the train.
  - B** Byrd discusses her book with the girl on the train.
  - C** Byrd explains why she dislikes her full name to the girl on the train.
  - D** Byrd discovers that the girl on the train is also a pilot.
- 

**2** What does Byrd's explanation in paragraph 13 reveal to the reader?

- F** Byrd and her mother have different expectations about how Byrd should live her life.
  - G** Byrd is puzzled by her mother's motivation for giving her an elaborate name.
  - H** Byrd's mother thinks Byrd should spend more time helping support the family.
  - J** Byrd's mother disapproves of the nickname Byrd has given herself.
- 

**3** The author builds tension at the beginning of the excerpt by —

- A** suggesting that Byrd is uncomfortable talking to people she does not know
  - B** hinting that the train trip will be lengthy
  - C** indicating that Byrd does not have the resources to live on her own
  - D** implying that Byrd has run away from home
- 

**4** Which event initiates the rising action of the excerpt?

- F** The girl on the train tells Byrd that they have reached Texas.
- G** The girl on the train notices the book Byrd is reading.
- H** Byrd is assisted by the conductor at the start of the trip.
- J** Byrd falls asleep while reading her favorite book.

5 Read this sentence from paragraph 10.

*When I snuck back into the kitchen a few hours later to retrieve it, the heat from the gaslight had cooked the spine, leaving a smoldering black mark.*

Byrd's actions in this sentence best demonstrate her —

- A determination to make her mother respect her personal choices
  - B persistence in pursuing her own interests despite the opinions of others
  - C ability to have a positive outlook while encountering challenging circumstances
  - D decisiveness about taking action to do what is best for her family
- 

6 Read this dictionary entry.

**nice** \ˈnīs\ *adj*  
1. kind and friendly 2. appealing or attractive 3. pleasing or satisfying 4. showing accuracy or skill

Which definition most closely matches the way the word nice is used in paragraph 11?

- F Definition 1
- G Definition 2
- H Definition 3
- J Definition 4



7 The sensory language in paragraph 1 helps the reader understand that Byrd —

- A believes that she is prepared for her journey
  - B wishes she could use a different form of transportation
  - C thinks that she will not enjoy such a long train ride
  - D is impressed by the fine features of the train's interior
- 

8 For Byrd, going to Sweetwater most likely represents —

- F the opportunity to be a valued member of a group
  - G her willingness to accept more responsibilities
  - H her desire to learn from past experiences
  - J the chance for her to use her imagination
- 

9 What is the best summary of the excerpt?

- A Byrd is riding on a train to Sweetwater, Texas. She meets a young woman who is traveling to the same place. Byrd shares food with the young woman, and they talk about a book they both have read.
- B As Byrd rides on a train to Texas, she remembers how her mother once took away her favorite book about a female pilot. Byrd meets a young woman who notices that Byrd's book is in bad condition. They soon realize that they are both traveling to Sweetwater.
- C Byrd dreams of flying, but her mother does not understand and forbids Byrd from even reading about a female pilot. Byrd decides to travel to Sweetwater, Texas, to train as an air force pilot. While riding the train, she meets a young woman who understands how she feels and shares her dream.
- D Byrd is traveling to Sweetwater, Texas, by train. She falls asleep while reading her book, and when she awakens, a young woman explains that the train has already reached Texas. Byrd finds out that the young woman is also going to Sweetwater and is delighted to make the acquaintance of another female pilot.

**10** The final sentence of the excerpt suggests that Byrd most likely feels —

- F** frustrated
  - G** insincere
  - H** accomplished
  - J** hopeful
- 

**11** Read this sentence from paragraph 18.

*And before I know it, the tears start streaming down my face, and for a moment I feel like I'm watching myself from outside of my body.*

What does the figurative language in this sentence convey about Byrd?

- A** She wishes she did not have to share her compartment with another passenger.
- B** She doubts her decision to abandon her comfortable life in Iowa.
- C** She feels overwhelmed when she meets someone who shares her interests.
- D** She does not want to appear weak in front of a fellow pilot.

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

## Harmony Reclaimed

- 1 In 2006 ecologist and musician Favio Chávez was working on a recycling project in Cateura, Paraguay. This small village, outside the capital city of Asunción, is built on a landfill. Residents work as *gancheros*, or recyclers, searching the trash for items to recycle. Chávez worked with an organization that taught these workers how to be safe while digging through the landfill. While he was there, he noticed how few creative resources teens living in the area had, so he decided to do something about it. He created the Recycled Orchestra.
- 2 Chávez began by teaching music lessons. But he had only five instruments, so students had to share. As more children wanted to participate, Chávez knew that more instruments were needed. He had a very unusual idea. He found a carpenter, Nicolás Gómez, and asked him to create instruments using recycled materials. Gómez started first by repairing a drum and creating a simple guitar. "If the community wasn't next to a dumpster, it would've never occurred to us to create instruments out of trash," Chávez remembered. "This was just a natural solution based on our surroundings."
- 3 Over time Gómez's work became more intricate. Cellos are made from oil cans and wood. A guitar is made from two large jelly cans. The skins of a drum set are created from used x-ray film. The keys of a saxophone are bottle caps. Gómez was a natural for the job. "If you give me the precise instructions, tomorrow I'll make you a helicopter!" Gómez says about his work.
- 4 Chávez and Gómez experimented with materials and discovered which ones were the strongest and made the best sound. Gómez travels to the landfill several times a week to find materials. Orchestra member Ada Ríos said, "I don't care that my violin is made out of recycled parts. To me, it's a treasure." The project achieved success only because the instruments were created from recycled materials found in the community. The cost of a traditional violin is far out of the reach of many residents of Cateura.
- 5 Transforming trash into musical instruments is one thing; transforming lives is quite another. Yet that is Chávez's ultimate goal in establishing the orchestra. For some students, Chávez's plan is working. Brandon Cabone, a 16-year-old bass player, said, "Before the orchestra, there was nothing to do. It's been a big change in my life. Favio has taught me many things about life and education."
- 6 Chávez acknowledges that mastering an instrument can be quite an enterprise. "Learning music means you have to plan," he says. Since many of the orchestra members have to work, they have to make time to practice their instruments. Both persistence and a structured routine have led to players' success.

- 7 When the students became proficient in playing their instruments, they began performing locally, and in time the orchestra's fame grew. The group has performed in Brazil, Panama, and Colombia. In 2013 it performed overseas for the first time, in the Netherlands. Soon after, the Recycled Orchestra had invitations to play in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Israel, Norway, and Japan.
- 8 The U.S. performance took place at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. The museum honored the orchestra with an exhibit showcasing its instruments. The orchestra's unique instruments were displayed alongside the musical treasures of prominent musicians, such as Eric Clapton's guitars and John Lennon's piano.
- 9 Inspired by the orchestra, Paraguayan filmmaker Alejandra Amarilla Nash made a documentary about the group. In 2012 a preview for *Landfill Harmonic* was posted on YouTube and Vimeo. Within weeks it had more than one million views.
- 10 The orchestra's fame continues to increase. Daniel Piper, curator of the Musical Instrument Museum, said, "It's a beautiful story and also fits very well with this theme of ingenuity of humans around the world using what they have at their disposal to create music." The Recycled Orchestra has shown the world that with a love of music and a sense of belonging, people can change their lives for the better.



The Recycled Orchestra plays in Madrid, Spain.

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**12** Which sentence supports the idea that the instruments are part of what makes the Recycled Orchestra special?

- F** *The group has performed in Brazil, Panama, and Colombia.*
  - G** *As more children wanted to participate, Chávez knew that more instruments were needed.*
  - H** *The cost of a traditional violin is far out of the reach of many residents of Cateura.*
  - J** *The museum honored the orchestra with an exhibit showcasing its instruments.*
- 

**13** Which idea about the Recycled Orchestra does the author highlight throughout the selection?

- A** The goal of the orchestra is to support the children of Cateura.
  - B** The orchestra is successful because of Chávez’s skill as a leader.
  - C** The orchestra members plan to become professional musicians.
  - D** The people of Cateura support the orchestra by working as recyclers.
- 

**14** In order to be successful in the orchestra, members most likely had to —

- F** show that they had natural talent for playing music
- G** work together to locate materials for their instruments
- H** make a commitment to devote time to practicing their skills
- J** develop an interest for the style of music they would be playing

- 15** Gómez travels to the landfill several times a week to search for materials most likely because he —
- A** knows which items would be best suited for crafting the instruments
  - B** wants to create a new style of instrument
  - C** hopes to find an instrument that is intact
  - D** believes that items from the landfill create unique sounds
- 

- 16** The initial success of Chávez’s project depended primarily on —
- F** inspiring the local children to participate in the orchestra
  - G** spreading awareness of the benefits of reusing materials
  - H** obtaining invitations to perform in foreign countries
  - J** finding resources within the community

**17** What is the best summary of the selection?

- A** The small village of Cateura, Paraguay, is built on a landfill. Most of the residents search the trash for items to recycle. Favio Chávez had an idea to use trash to make musical instruments. He asked a carpenter, Nicolás Gómez, to make guitars, drums, and other instruments.
- B** Ecologist and musician Favio Chávez wanted to help the children living in Cateura, Paraguay. He started an orchestra with instruments created from materials found in the local landfills. The Recycled Orchestra has performed around the world and has had a positive impact on the lives of its members.
- C** Children in Cateura, Paraguay, had few resources when Favio Chávez went there to work on a recycling project. Chávez asked Nicolás Gómez to help him make instruments from items in the landfill. The members of the orchestra appreciate the uniqueness of their instruments.
- D** Favio Chávez provided the children of Cateura, Paraguay, with instruments made from recycled materials. When the children’s musical skills improved, he created an orchestra and the group began performing locally. Soon they had invitations to perform in Europe and the United States. A documentary film was made about the orchestra’s success.

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**18** Which sentence from the selection expresses an opinion?

- F** *Chávez began by teaching music lessons.*
- G** *The U.S. performance took place at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.*
- H** *The Recycled Orchestra has shown the world that with a love of music and a sense of belonging, people can change their lives for the better.*
- J** *Inspired by the orchestra, Paraguayan filmmaker Alejandra Amarilla Nash made a documentary about the group.*

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

## *from* **The View from Saturday**

*by E. L. Konigsburg*

### **Noah Writes a B & B Letter**

- 1 My mother insisted that I write a B & B letter to my grandparents. I told her that I could not write a B & B letter, and she asked me why, and I told her that I did not know what a B & B letter was. She explained—not too patiently—that a B & B letter is a *bread and butter letter* you write to people to thank them for having you as their houseguest. I told her that I was taught never to use the word you are defining in its definition and that she ought to think of a substitute word for *letter* if she is defining it. Mother then made a remark about how Western Civilization was in a decline because people of my generation knew how to nitpick but not how to write a B & B letter.
- 2 I told her that, with all due respect, I did not think I owed Grandma and Grandpa a B & B. And then I stated my case. Fact: I was not just a houseguest, I was family; and fact: I had not been their houseguest by choice because fact: She had sent me to them because she had won a cruise for selling more houses in Epiphany than anyone else in the world and if she had shared her cruise with Joey and me instead of with her husband, my father, I would not have been sent to Florida in the first place and fact: She, not me, owed them thanks; and further fact: I had been such a wonderful help while I was there that Grandma and Grandpa would probably want to write me a B & B.
- 3 My brother Joey had been sent to my other set of grandparents, who live in a normal suburb in Connecticut. “Is Joey writing a B & B to Grandma and Grandpa Eberle?”
- 4 “Even as we speak,” Mother replied.
- 5 “Well, maybe he has something to be thankful for,” I said.
- 6 Mother drew in her breath as if she were about to say something else about what children of my generation were doing to Western Civilization, but instead, she said, “Write,” and closed my bedroom door behind her. I opened the door and called out to her, “Can I use the computer?”
- 7 She said, “I know you can use the computer, Noah, but you *may* not.” I was about to make a remark about who was nitpicking now, but Mother gave me such a negative look that I knew any thoughts I had had better be about bread and butter and not nitpicking.



8 I gazed at my closed bedroom door and then out the window. Door.  
Window. Door. Window. There was no escape.

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# What's on Your Mind?

Jefferson County News

November 2013

## A Little Common Courtesy, Please

- 1 A few weeks ago I found a box of my great-grandmother's things in the attic, and in it was Emily Post's 1922 book *Etiquette*. As I flipped through the yellowing pages, I couldn't help but chuckle at some of the advice—such as serving both hot and cold tea at an afternoon tea party. But the book did cause me to wonder about what should matter today when it comes to etiquette and manners. I think that common courtesy is no less important today than it was in the past.
- 2 It's true that we live in a fast-paced world now, and technology has contributed to the "instantness" of our society. People have less patience with everything and everyone around them. But managing our digital lives does not justify our being rude to people in the real world.
- 3 Case in point: I was at the grocery store a few days ago, and a guy on his cell phone blocked the aisle with his cart while vigorously typing out a book-length text message. Finally another shopper said, "Excuse me!" and tried to squeeze by, but even when the guy noticed her, he refused to move until he was finished tapping out his message. To him, sending that text was more important than helping the people around him have an enjoyable shopping experience.
- 4 Later in the checkout lane, I heard a mother ask her child to say "thank you" to the teenager who bagged their groceries. So adults want their kids to have good manners, clearly. They tell their children not to interrupt when others are talking. Children are taught to apologize when they've been disrespectful to a schoolmate. We teach these manners to children so that they can use them throughout their lives. Apparently some adults, like the novelist in the aisle, need a refresher course. Imagine the confusion children feel when adults refuse to practice the simple courtesies they themselves preach.
- 5 Emily Post defined *manners* as "a sensitive awareness of the feelings of others." And that's still a pretty good way to go about conducting ourselves. Everyone should try being more courteous. It makes you feel good. And the person to whom you extend the courtesy will feel good too.



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Use “The View from Saturday” (pp. 14–15) to answer questions 19–23.  
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

- 19 Based on Noah’s conversation with his mother in paragraphs 3 through 7, the reader can conclude that —
- A Noah will not be able to avoid fulfilling his mother’s request
  - B his mother knows that writing the letter may take a long time
  - C Noah thinks his grandparents will not appreciate receiving the letter
  - D his mother believes that Joey’s letter will be more sincere than Noah’s letter
- 

- 20 Read this dictionary entry.

**due** \ˈdū\ *adj*  
1. expected to occur at a specific time  
2. able to meet an obligation 3. accepted as appropriate 4. being a cause of

Which definition best matches the way the word due is used in paragraph 2?

- F Definition 1
- G Definition 2
- H Definition 3
- J Definition 4

- 21** Noah's response to his mother's demand adds to the conflict by —
- A** increasing the tension between Noah and his mother
  - B** forcing his mother to take away his privilege of using the computer
  - C** leading his mother to doubt what she has taught him about respect
  - D** causing Noah to have to listen to his mother lecture about letter writing
- 

- 22** The first-person point of view allows the author to —
- F** emphasize the mother's struggle to understand Noah's feelings
  - G** show the mother's opinion about B & B letters
  - H** highlight the contrast between the two brothers' experiences
  - J** share Noah's feelings about his situation
- 

- 23** Which sentence from the excerpt best illustrates Noah's conflict?
- A** *My mother insisted that I write a B & B letter to my grandparents.*
  - B** *"Is Joey writing a B & B to Grandma and Grandpa Eberle?"*
  - C** *She explained—not too patiently—that a B & B letter is a bread and butter letter you write to people to thank them for having you as their houseguest.*
  - D** *My brother Joey had been sent to my other set of grandparents, who live in a normal suburb in Connecticut.*

**Use “A Little Common Courtesy, Please” (pp. 16–17) to answer questions 24–29. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 24** By referring to the man in the grocery store as a “novelist,” the author —
- F** depicts writers as being self-absorbed in their work
  - G** illustrates why grocery stores are interesting places to observe people
  - H** suggests that technology has increased our ability to stay in touch with friends
  - J** emphasizes the man’s rudeness by exaggerating how long he took to write a text message
- 

- 25** In which sentence does the author attempt to stir emotions in the reader?
- A** *They tell their children not to interrupt when others are talking.*
  - B** *Children are taught to apologize when they’ve been disrespectful to a schoolmate.*
  - C** *Imagine the confusion children feel when adults refuse to practice the simple courtesies they themselves preach.*
  - D** *It’s true that we live in a fast-paced world now, and technology has contributed to the “instantness” of our society.*
- 

- 26** The examples in paragraphs 3 and 4 reinforce the author’s point that being courteous —
- F** guarantees that others will show their appreciation by being kind in return
  - G** is not something that should be practiced only at a young age
  - H** requires time and energy but is still worthwhile
  - J** is less important for adults than for children

**27** The word justify in paragraph 2 means to —

- A** provide an opportunity
  - B** give up on a task
  - C** make acceptable
  - D** explain in detail
- 

**28** The author supports the central argument of the article mainly by —

- F** describing personal observations
  - G** referring to facts on the subject
  - H** sharing quotations from experts on the subject
  - J** comparing rules from the past with rules from the present
- 

**29** By referring to Emily Post in both the beginning and ending of the article, the author —

- A** implies that etiquette focuses too much on others' feelings and not enough on a person's own actions
- B** suggests that traditional ideas about etiquette do not apply to the digital etiquette needed today
- C** implies that hosting a party based on the information from Emily Post's book would be difficult today
- D** communicates that even though some etiquette rules may be outdated, the need to have manners is still important today

**Use “The View from Saturday” and “A Little Common Courtesy, Please” to answer questions 30–34. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 30** What is one difference between Noah’s mother in the excerpt and the author of the article?
- F** Noah’s mother thinks that computers are not useful tools, while the author understands the value of technology.
  - G** Noah’s mother believes it is young people who are not courteous, while the author believes that some adults also lack courtesy.
  - H** Noah’s mother applauds the behavior of others, while the author criticizes the behavior of others.
  - J** Noah’s mother encourages her sons to appreciate their elders, while the author explains how adults need to demonstrate more respect for young people.



**31** Read this sentence from paragraph 4 of "A Little Common Courtesy, Please."

*We teach these manners to children so that they can use them throughout their lives.*

Which event from "The View from Saturday" best demonstrates this message?

- A** Noah's mother insists that he write a thank-you letter to his grandparents.
  - B** Noah's mother expresses concern about the youth of her sons' generation.
  - C** Noah explains why he believes he should receive a thank-you letter.
  - D** Noah points out that his brother has something to be thankful for.
- 

**32** How are Noah's mother in the excerpt and the mother of the child in the article similar?

- F** They show respect for the ideas presented by Emily Post.
- G** They are ashamed about how their child has behaved.
- H** They point out how their child can be courteous to someone.
- J** They believe that children today do not know how to act in public.

**33** How does Noah in the excerpt act like the texting grocery shopper in the article?

- A** Both are confused about what to do in a particular situation.
  - B** Both think that what they are being asked to do is unfair.
  - C** Both refuse to take responsibility for their actions.
  - D** Both would prefer to disregard the requests of others.
- 

**34** Read this sentence from "A Little Common Courtesy, Please."

*I think that common courtesy is no less important today than it was in the past.*

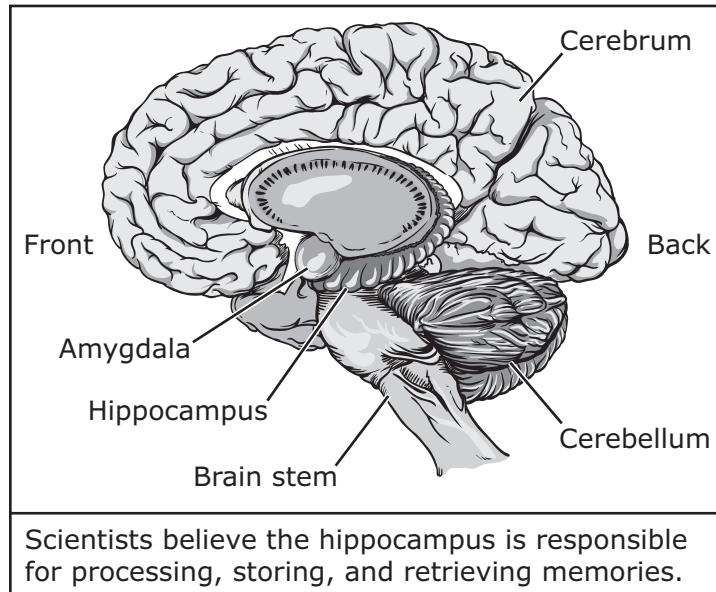
Which character from "The View from Saturday" holds a similar belief?

- F** Joey
- G** Noah
- H** The mother
- J** The grandparents

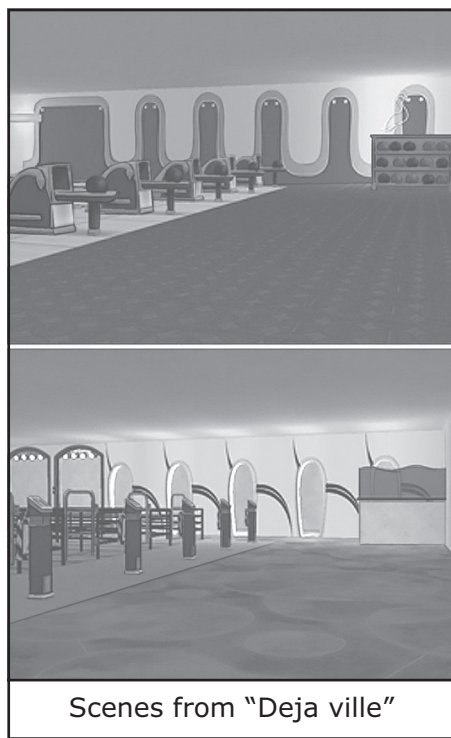
Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

## Have I Been Here Before?

- 1 Have you ever walked into a place that you know you have never been before but felt an overwhelming sensation that you *have* been there before? This eerie feeling, known as *déjà vu*, has defied explanation for centuries. Meaning “already seen” in French, *déjà vu* is an occurrence that was documented as early as 1888. Research about the phenomenon is difficult to conduct because scientists suspect that the cause is hidden deep in the brain. Recent developments in brain research, though, have enabled scientists to begin to understand what causes this feeling of familiarity.
- 2 Anne Cleary, a cognitive psychologist at Colorado State University, has researched *déjà vu* extensively. “One reason for the jarring sense that accompanies *déjà vu* may be the contrast between the sense of newness and the simultaneous sense of oldness—something unfamiliar should not also feel familiar.” *Déjà vu* experiences typically happen at random, not when people are hooked up to machines that monitor brain activity. This makes collecting authentic data about a *déjà vu* experience challenging.
- 3 One early explanation of *déjà vu* suggested that the eyes were sending messages to the brain at different speeds. Scientists thought that images seen by one eye were delayed, arriving to the brain microseconds after images from the other eye did. Thus it seemed as if someone were seeing something they had seen before. But this was proved untrue when a 2006 experiment at the University of Leeds, a world leader in *déjà vu* research, demonstrated that the blind also experience *déjà vu*. Some scientists then concluded that *déjà vu* is related to miscommunication or disruption in brain activity and memory, not sight.
- 4 In 2007, neuroscientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) researched the hippocampus, the part of the brain thought to be responsible for learning and memory. MIT researchers conducted an experiment that showed that certain brain cells create a blueprint for any new place a person encounters. When a person enters the new place, the neurons processing it may misfire and retrieve details that overlap a previous experience. When there is enough overlap, people may feel an erroneous familiarity with a situation but cannot recall a specific memory. The person is experiencing *déjà vu*.

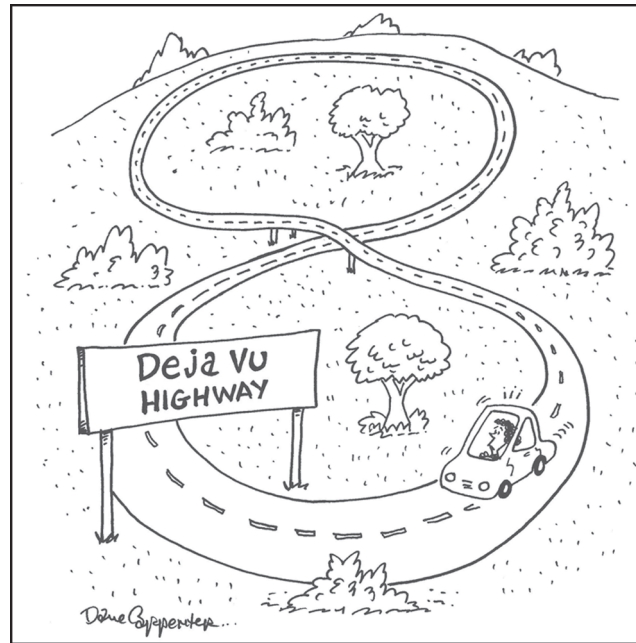


- 5 Cleary and her colleagues triggered déjà vu in a controlled environment by having participants navigate a virtual world they call “Deja ville.” Cleary’s experiments support the MIT researchers’ findings that déjà vu may be connected to humans’ ability to remember the layout of surroundings. In Cleary’s experiment the program showed participants two rooms that were either filled with different items or were different types of locations but had the same general layout. She found there to be a brain overlap. She concluded that “people do have an increased sense of déjà vu when a scene has a similar layout, but they’re failing to recall the source of that familiarity.”



Courtesy of Anne Cleary

- 6 Many questions and theories about déjà vu remain. However, because researchers now have a better understanding of how the brain captures and stores memories, the why and how of déjà vu are more clearly understood. Still, researchers aspire to study a true déjà vu experience in progress. Until then researchers will continue to use other ways to try to understand the brain.



**35** Which idea about déjà vu does the title of the selection support?

- A** Déjà vu usually happens spontaneously.
  - B** Researchers are eager to learn more about déjà vu.
  - C** A person experiencing déjà vu may feel momentarily confused.
  - D** People who experience déjà vu ask many questions.
- 

**36** The organization of the information in paragraphs 3 through 5 allows the author to —

- F** explain how scientists have tried to understand déjà vu but have yet to come to a definite conclusion
  - G** describe in detail how researchers conduct experiments on participants by overlapping experiences
  - H** identify the part of the brain that is responsible for learning and memory and how it affects déjà vu
  - J** emphasize that determining the cause of déjà vu is critical to the scientific community
- 

**37** The author's primary purpose for writing this selection is to —

- A** explain how research related to the brain depends on understanding more about déjà vu
- B** provide a firsthand account of what it feels like to experience déjà vu
- C** describe the circumstances under which a feeling of déjà vu may occur
- D** share theories and unanswered questions concerning how déjà vu happens

**38** The result of Cleary's experiment supports which idea about déjà vu?

- F** *But this was proved untrue when a 2006 experiment at the University of Leeds, a world leader in déjà vu research, demonstrated that the blind also experience déjà vu.*
  - G** *One early explanation of déjà vu suggested that the eyes were sending messages to the brain at different speeds.*
  - H** *When a person enters the new place, the neurons processing it may misfire and retrieve details that overlap a previous experience.*
  - J** *In 2007, neuroscientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) researched the hippocampus, the part of the brain thought to be responsible for learning and memory.*
- 

**39** What does the word erroneous mean in paragraph 4?

- A** Expected
  - B** Incorrect
  - C** Frequent
  - D** Unacceptable
- 

**40** Based on the information in the selection, the reader can conclude that a main problem researchers studying déjà vu encounter is that —

- F** past research studies about déjà vu are unreliable
- G** most people do not remember when they have experienced déjà vu
- H** data collected in déjà vu experiments can be interpreted in different ways
- J** it is nearly impossible to gather data about a true déjà vu experience

**41** What is paragraph 3 mainly about?

- A** The process of how the eyes send messages to the brain
  - B** What happens when images from the eyes reach the brain at different times
  - C** A hypothesis about déjà vu that was later proved wrong
  - D** How researchers determined that blind people can experience déjà vu
- 

**42** The scenes from “Deja ville” pictured after paragraph 5 are important because they —

- F** help the reader understand the circumstances under which déjà vu may occur
  - G** encourage the reader to be aware of the arrangement of items in a location
  - H** show the reader that déjà vu can happen when it is least expected
  - J** illustrate how the brain processes and stores details about a location
- 

**43** Why does the author include the quotation in paragraph 2?

- A** To tell the reader how to avoid experiencing déjà vu
- B** To convince the reader that déjà vu can be unhealthy
- C** To establish that déjà vu can be caused by many factors
- D** To explain why a person experiencing déjà vu feels a certain way



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

# *from* The Election

*by Don Zolidis*

## Characters

**KARL**

**MARK**

**CHRISTY**

**VOICEOVER**

**KYLI**

**FEMALE STUDENT**

**MALE STUDENT**

- 1 **KARL:** Well—we got three weeks to the election, now we just make a few posters and coast to victory.
- 2 **MARK:** Sounds good.
- 3 [*They get out markers and poster board to start making posters.*]
- 4 **KARL:** Let’s think of a slogan: We need three adjectives to describe you.
- 5 **MARK:** How about awesome, awesome, and awesome?
- 6 **KARL:** Um . . .
- 7 **MARK:** Okay, fine. Hardworking.
- 8 **KARL:** You’re a B student.
- 9 **MARK:** Which requires me to work hard.
- 10 **KARL:** Okay.
- 11 **MARK:** Responsible.
- 12 **KARL:** Isn’t that the same as hardworking?
- 13 **MARK:** No. And um . . . Awesome.
- 14 **KARL:** So your slogan is: Mark. Hardworking. Responsible. Awesome.
- 15 **MARK:** I like it. It’s catchy. Time to watch some TV.
- 16 [*To the audience.*]

- 17 **MARK:** And that’s when I saw it:
- 18 [*Lights up elsewhere on stage. Stirring, emotional campaign music. Two students enter and hold up an American flag. Christy enters.*]
- 19 **CHRISTY:** America. Land of opportunity. Land of freedom. At least it was. Now, I don’t know that I even recognize it anymore. But I say: America’s best days aren’t behind her. I say we will build a nation, and build a school that is still the greatest in the world. I’m Christy Martin. Stand with me, and we will stand tall once again. Vote for me for Presley Student Body President.
- 20 [*She looks wistfully off into the distance. A breeze blows her hair.*]
- 21 **VOICEOVER:** Paid for by the committee to elect Christy Martin.
- 22 [*Mark and Karl sit there for a second.*]
- 23 **MARK:** What was that?
- 24 **KARL:** Just—all right—you’ll crush her in the debate, right? Just crush her in the debate.
- 25 **MARK:** Sure.
- 26 [*Kyli enters as the debate is set up.*]
- 27 **KYLI:** And welcome to our first presidential debate! The future of our school hangs in the balance. Tonight will feature the two candidates for president: Mark Davenport and mysterious newcomer Christy Martin, who has surged in recent polls and could be considered the front-runner. We will be featuring a town hall style tonight, in which the moderator, that’s me, will solicit questions from our town hall audience, that’s you. Each candidate will be given one minute to speak, and their opponent will be given a thirty-second rebuttal. All right?
- 28 [*Christy enters. She walks toward Mark and gives him a hug.*]
- 29 **CHRISTY:** I will crush you like a bug.
- 30 [*She waves and smiles and heads back to her podium. Mark retreats to his.*]
- 31 **KYLI:** Okay, question number one.
- 32 [*A female student steps forward.*]
- 33 **FEMALE STUDENT:** Yes—my question is for both candidates: What are your qualifications to be president?
- 34 **MARK:** Um . . . Well uh . . . I think I’m qualified because I have good ideas—and um . . . I’m hardworking, and responsible . . . and awesome.
- 35 **KYLI:** You have forty-five more seconds.
- 36 [*Pause.*]

- 37 **MARK:** Oh. Um . . . and also . . . because um . . . I have good ideas. And I like sports.
- 38 [*He stops.*]
- 39 **KYLI:** You have thirty-five seconds left.
- 40 **MARK:** Oh come on! That was more than ten seconds. How much time do I have left now?
- 41 **KYLI:** I'm not counting arguing time against you. You still have thirty-five seconds.
- 42 **MARK:** Can I cede the rest of my time to my opponent?
- 43 **KYLI:** Sure.
- 44 **CHRISTY:** I'm glad you asked this question. And thank you, Mark, for the opportunity to expound on my qualifications. When my family came to this country, they had nothing. My grandfather had a fourth-grade education—and still, he managed to open his own hair salon with just a pair of rusty scissors and a dream. A dream that someday he could provide for his children. That's what America is about, my friends. Thank you.
- 45 [*Applause.*]
- 46 **KYLI:** Great answer. And now we'll take another question.
- 47 **MALE STUDENT:** How would you change things here at Presley High School?
- 48 **MARK:** Well—I have a three point plan. One—student evaluations for teachers. Two—increased funding for the arts. Three—soda and candy machines. And Three point five—fast food in the cafeteria.
- 49 [*Pause.*]
- 50 **KYLI:** You have forty seconds left.
- 51 **MARK:** I cede the rest of my time to let my opponent lay out her crazy plans.
- 52 **CHRISTY:** What we need in this school is change. Change of culture at the very top, and through all levels of the school. And when someone is negative, that creates a negative culture that filters down through all levels. And that's what I aim to change. Thank you.
- 53 **MARK:** You didn't actually say anything there.
- 54 **CHRISTY:** I'm not going to sink to your level of negativity, Mark.
- 55 **MARK:** But you didn't actually say what you're going to do. You didn't answer the question.
- 56 **KYLI:** All right, all right.

57 **CHRISTY:** The frustration you're feeling is understandable because you're losing, but you don't need to get hostile. I'm not getting hostile towards you.

58 [*Applause from the audience.*]

59 **KYLI:** And that's all the time we have! Thank you for being in the debates!

60 [*Lights change. Christy and everyone leave the stage. Karl and Mark sit on the side.*]

61 **KARL:** Wow.

62 **MARK:** I don't get it. I was actually talking about issues. She said nothing the whole time.

63 **KARL:** She destroyed you.

64 **MARK:** But she didn't say anything. She has no plan.

65 **KARL:** We've still got two and a half weeks to turn this thing around. It'll be all right.

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44 Which event during the debate does the playwright include to create humor?

- F Kyli explaining the format of the debate
  - G Mark struggling to fill his allotted time
  - H The female student asking a question to both candidates
  - J Christy suggesting that Mark is being negative
- 

45 Read this line of dialogue from the play.

**CHRISTY:** I will crush you like a bug.

Christy says this to Mark because she —

- A plans to work hard during her campaign
  - B thinks her ideas are better than Mark's
  - C knows she has more supporters than Mark does
  - D is trying to intimidate Mark before the debate
- 

46 What do paragraphs 27 and 46 suggest about Kyli?

- F She is inexperienced at moderating debates.
- G She favors Christy to win the election.
- H She thinks she can ask better questions than the audience members.
- J She was elected as student body president in the past.

**47** The stage directions in paragraph 30 indicate that Mark is —

- A** nervous about debating Christy
  - B** surprised to see Christy at the debate
  - C** prepared to share his plans for the school
  - D** upset that another candidate is running in the election
- 

**48** What is the central message presented in the play?

- F** Keeping promises requires commitment.
- G** It is unwise to underestimate an opponent.
- H** Making the right decision can be difficult.
- J** Competition can bring out the best in people.

49 Read paragraph 51.

**MARK:** I cede the rest of my time to let my opponent lay out her crazy plans.

What does the dialogue convey about Mark's attitude toward Christy?

- A He believes that Christy is more aware of the issues affecting the school.
  - B He thinks no one will agree with Christy's opinion on the issues.
  - C He suspects that Christy had more opportunities to prepare for the debate.
  - D He predicts that Christy will end up forfeiting the election.
- 

50 Originating from the word *exponere*, meaning "to explain," the word expound in paragraph 44 means to —

- F understand
- G take action
- H depend
- J provide details

**51** Which line from paragraph 27 helps portray Kyli as dramatic?

- A** The future of our school hangs in the balance.
  - B** And welcome to our first presidential debate!
  - C** We will be featuring a town hall style tonight. . . .
  - D** Tonight will feature the two candidates for president. . . .
- 

**52** Karl's dialogue in the play shows that his feelings about the election change from —

- F** uninterested to passionate
- G** arrogant to humble
- H** confident to unsure
- J** eager to indifferent





**STAAR  
GRADE 8  
Reading  
March 2016**

