

Test Booklet

Subject: , Grade:

English II EOC 2013 Benchmark Reading Day
2

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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.

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- 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

Read the poem "The Gift." Then answer four questions.

The Gift



by Li-Young Lee

To pull the metal splinter from my palm
my father recited a story in a low voice.
I watched his lovely face and not the blade.
Before the story ended, he'd removed
5 the iron sliver I thought I'd die from.
I can't remember the tale,
but hear his voice still, a well
of dark water, a prayer.
And I recall his hands,
10 two measures of tenderness
he laid against my face,
the flames of discipline
he raised above my head.
Had you entered that afternoon
15 you would have thought you saw a man
planting something in a boy's palm,
a silver tear, a tiny flame.
Had you followed that boy
you would have arrived here,
20 where I bend over my wife's right hand.
Look how I shave her thumbnail down
so carefully she feels no pain.
Watch as I lift the splinter out.
I was seven when my father
25 took my hand like this,
and I did not hold that shard
between my fingers and think,
Metal that will bury me,
christen it Little Assassin,
30 Ore Going Deep for My Heart.
And I did not lift up my wound and cry,
Death visited here!
I did what a child does
when he's given something to keep.
35 I kissed my father.

“The Gift” by Li-Young Lee, from *Rose*. Copyright © 1986 by Li-Young Lee. Used with the permission of BOA Editions, LTD.

10 Read lines 6 through 8 from the poem.

I can't remember the tale,
but hear his voice still,
a well of dark water, a prayer.

The images in these lines **mostly** suggest that

- A** the speaker's father did not often tell stories
- B** the speaker was once soothed by the words of his father
- C** the speaker was confused about his father's behavior
- D** the speaker's father scolded him when removing the splinter

11 In lines 20 through 23, the speaker **most likely** mentions the splinter in his wife's hand to show

- A** his wife's appreciation of his kindness
- B** the foolishness of his childhood fears
- C** the connection between his past and present
- D** his concern that the splinter would cause his wife pain

12 Read the following lines from the poem.

And I recall his hands,
two measures of tenderness
he laid against my face,

In these lines, the word *measures* is used as a

- A** noun
- B** verb
- C** modifier
- D** conjunction

13 Which statement is **most closely** related to a theme of the poem?

- A** Children exaggerate the pain of small injuries.
- B** Parents distract children by telling them stories.
- C** The wisdom of children helps to put things in focus.
- D** Childhood memories gain added meaning over time.

Read the poem "Hope." Then answer ten questions.

Hope

by Karen Hesse

The following poem "Hope" is one chapter from Karen Hesse's historical novel *Out of the Dust*, which is written as a series of poems. In the novel, Billie Jo, a teenage girl, describes her family's struggle to survive hardships and drought during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

It started out as snow,
oh,
big flakes
floating
5 softly,
catching on my sweater,
lacy on the edges of my sleeves.

Snow covered the dust,
softened the
10 fences,
soothed the parched lips
of the land.

And then it changed,
halfway between snow and rain,
15 sleet,
glazing the earth.

Until at last
it slipped into rain,
light as mist.

20 It was the kindest
kind of rain
that fell.

Soft and then a little heavier,
helping along

25 what had already fallen
into the
hard-pan
earth

until it
30 rained,
steady as a good friend
who walks beside you,
not getting in your way,
staying with you through a hard time.

35 And because the rain came
so patient and slow at first,
and built up strength as the earth
remembered how to yield,
instead of washing off,
40 the water slid in,
into the dying ground
and softened its stubborn pride,
and eased it back toward life.

And then,
45 just when we thought it would end,
after three such gentle days,
the rain
came
slamming down,
50 tons of it,
soaking into the ready earth
to the primed and greedy earth,
and soaking deep.

It kept coming,
55 thunder booming,
lightning
kicking,
dancing from the heavens
down to the prairie,
60 and my father
dancing with it,
dancing outside in the drenching night
with the gutters racing,
with the earth puddled and pleased,
65 with my father's near-finished pond filling.

When the rain stopped,
my father splashed out to the barn,
and spent
two days and two nights
70 cleaning dust out of his tractor,
until he got it running again.
In the dark, headlights shining,
he idled toward the freshened fields,
certain the grass would grow again,
75 certain the weeds would grow again,
certain the wheat would grow again too.

May 1935

“Hope” from *Out of the Dust* by *Karen Hesse*. Copyright © 1997 by *Karen Hesse*. Used by permission of *Scholastic Inc.*

- 14** Which of these lines from the poem **best** shows the importance of the rain?
- A** it slipped into rain,
light as mist. (lines 18—19)
 - B** It was the kindest
kind of rain
that fell. (lines 20—22)
 - C** tons of it,
soaking into the ready earth
to the primed and greedy earth,
and soaking deep. (lines 50—53)
 - D** It kept coming,
thunder booming,
lightning
kicking, (lines 54—57)
- 15** The repetition of the word *certain* at the end of the poem emphasizes the father’s
- A** positive outlook
 - B** skill at farming
 - C** confusing behavior
 - D** knowledge of machinery

16 In the poem, the rain is a force that is **mostly**

- A playful
- B destructive
- C mysterious
- D renewing

17 Which topic is **mostly** developed as a theme of the poem “Hope”?

- A people’s connection to nature
- B unexplainable events in nature
- C parent and child relationships
- D lack of attention to people’s needs

18 Read lines 8 through 12 from the poem.

Snow covered the dust,
softened the
fences,
soothed the parched lips
of the land.

In these lines *soothed* means

- A cushioned
- B lightened
- C quieted
- D relieved

19 Read lines 35 through 43.

And because the rain came
so patient and slow at first,
and built up strength as the earth
remembered how to yield,
instead of washing off,
the water slid in,
into the dying ground
and softened its stubborn pride,
and eased it back toward life.

In line 43, the pronoun *it* refers to

- A the rain
- B strength
- C the ground
- D pride

20 Read these sentences about the poet Karen Hesse.

1. Karen Hesse was born in Baltimore in 1952.
2. She researched the lives of people who lived in Oklahoma in the 1930s.
3. Those people lived through the Depression.
4. Hesse did not experience the Great Depression directly.

Which pair of sentences **most effectively** combines the ideas of the four sentences?

- A Karen Hesse, born in Baltimore in 1952, researched the lives of people who had lived in Oklahoma in the 1930s. The people lived through the Great Depression even though she did not experience it directly.
- B Born in Baltimore in 1952, Karen Hesse did not experience the Great Depression directly. However, she researched the lives of people who lived through the Depression in Oklahoma in the 1930s.
- C Because Karen Hesse did not experience the Great Depression directly, she researched the lives of people from Oklahoma who lived in the 1930s. She was born in Baltimore in 1952 while those people lived through the Depression.
- D Before Karen Hesse researched the lives of people who had lived in Oklahoma in the 1930s, they lived through the Great Depression. She did not experience it directly, being born in Baltimore in 1952.

21 The events in the poem are presented from the point of view of someone who is

- A** an amused participant
- B** an uninterested observer
- C** personally affected by them
- D** physically defeated by them

22 Read the following excerpt from an interview with Karen Hesse, author of *Out of the Dust*, from which “Hope” was taken.

Question

Is there any discovery or experience you particularly hope readers will take away from *Out of the Dust*?

Answer

¹I have determined from the letters I receive from young readers that many of them believe they could never endure the hardships that so many of my fictional characters endure. ²I portray Billie Jo as an ordinary girl, a girl readers can relate to, who is thrust into extraordinary circumstances from which her first instincts are to turn tail and run. ³Readers watch Billie Jo struggle with her problems and reach an honest, empowering resolution. ⁴If readers come away believing in the ability of Billie Jo to confront, survive, and rise above her life challenges, perhaps they will also glimpse within themselves the strength of character to confront, survive, and rise above the life challenges facing them.

“An Interview with Karen Hesse” from Out of the Dust, Exclusive Teacher’s Edition by Karen Hesse. Copyright © 2001 by Scholastic Inc. Used by permission.

Which sentence from Hesse’s answer best explains the meaning of the title of her poem “Hope”?

- A Sentence 1
- B Sentence 2
- C Sentence 3
- D Sentence 4

23 The speaker’s attitude toward the rain is **best** revealed by

- A naming its forms
- B explaining its causes
- C comparing it to snow
- D giving it human qualities

THE JUMP-OFF CREEK, a novel by native Oregonian Molly Gloss, portrays a pioneer woman enduring hardships in Oregon's Blue Mountains. The following passage presents one such hardship, which may have been faced by one of Gloss's own pioneer ancestors.

LYDIA'S CHALLENGE

Molly Gloss



THERE WAS A SPRING that made a reddish bog in a low corner of the Owl Meadow but no clear water in it. She had to bring water half a mile from another spring, hauling it in pails. By the time there were fifteen steers on the meadow, she was going down and back for the water six times a day, or seven. It was the worst of the work. There was a saucer formed among the stones of the old chimney where the cabin had fallen down, and she let the pails of water into it. But it leaked out slowly onto the ground and often when she came onto the meadow in the afternoon the steers would be standing muddy-legged around the empty basin of the chimney, or snuffling the mud of the spring.

On one of the last days, a steer was stuck up to its belly in the quickmud in that bog. From half a mile off, coming in tiredly after a second gainless day, she heard it lowing dully and steadily with an unpitiful sound of complaint. She rode to the edge of the drying-up pond and looked at the steer unhappily. She was loath to get out in the mud herself. But the stupid steer kept up its crying, and made no effort to get clear of the bog on its own. Its eyes were glazed, blank.

She stood down beside the mule and dispiritedly bunched her skirt, pulling it up under the belt so her long shins in black stockings were bared above the boot tops. She stepped her boots unwillingly into the sucking mud and pitched a noose of rope around the steer's big horns. He kept up his steady complaining. She backed out of the mud and tied off the rope to the saddle horn of the mule, backed him up slowly until it was taut. The mule squatted back hard until the saddle tried to stand up on its pommel, but the big steer stood sullenly in the wallow, eyes bulging, neck twisted over by the pull on its horns. Lydia put all her own weight on the rope too, planting her feet and yelling at the mule, but the steer stood where it was. Finally she went into the trees and got a stick. She slogged out into the mud again and hit the steer hard across the nose. It bellowed in surprise and eyed her, white-edged. She yelled at the mule and the rope twanged tight a couple of times, but by then the steer's eyes had glazed again and it stood glumly in the mud, unmoving.

“Dang you!” Lydia said suddenly, harsh and loud.

She hit the steer’s head again, swinging the long stick in flat and hard between the eyes, a cracking blow. The steer rocked once, silently—for a wild moment she thought she might have killed it— then it lurched ahead suddenly in the mud, bellowing and slinging its horns, hurling mud and slobber in a short, spattering flurry.

Lydia staggered quick out of the mud herself, grabbing along the rope for Rollin. She flung a leg up over the mule’s back and held on to the saddle, hanging half off it while the mule sprang out of the way of the steer’s short, mad lunge. The mule had never been inclined to buck, but the rope pulled around under his tail when the steer staggered past him, and he snorted wildly, put his head down and bucked up his back. She would have stayed on him if she’d had both stirrups, a solid seat. But she was hanging off the saddle clumsily and his one stiff-legged bounce shook her off. She hit on her back and got up quick, scrabbling around to watch the steer. He kept bellowing and hooking his horns, trying to get loose of the rope, but he stood in one place, cross-legged and swaying, as if he hadn’t figured out yet that he was unstuck from the mud.

Lydia got shakily on the mule again, setting her boots well in the stirrups. Then she sidled up along the steer’s shoulder. Rollin was set stubbornly on keeping away from the slung horns, she had to pull his head up hard, twisting the reins, kicking him, to get him in close enough, and then she leaned out, grabbing warily for the rope. She tried five or six times, reaching in and out, before she got the rope loose of the steer.

By then her mouth was aching and full of blood—she had bit her cheek, jarred her teeth, when Rollin had bucked her off. She sat on the mule, rocking and keening a little, while she watched the steer staggering off irritably across the grass. She had a piteous impulse to go home. She would have liked to leave the big dumb steers standing around the chimney basin and ride Rollin away now, with her handkerchief inside her mouth stopping the blood. She did put the handkerchief in her mouth. But then she got the pails and walked slowly, bitterly, down to the other spring. After a while she walked with the bloody handkerchief wadded up in the pocket of her sweater, but the taste of blood stayed in her mouth, a sourness, from that moment standing scared and frozen facing the mad steer.

- 24** Which of the following literary devices does the author use primarily in this passage to increase its effectiveness?
- A** Figurative language
 - B** Hyperbole; purposeful exaggeration
 - C** Visual and sound imagery
 - D** A shift in point of view
- 25** Which of the following quotes provides the best evidence of the theme of this passage?
- A** “She had to bring water half a mile from another spring, hauling it in pails.”
 - B** “But the steer. . . made no effort to get clear of the bog on its own.”
 - C** “She hit on her back and got up quick, scrabbling around to watch the steer.”
 - D** “She would have liked to leave the big dumb steers. . . But then she got the pails.”
- 26** Considering especially the first and last paragraphs of the selection, the main idea is that
- A** the steers were more work than they were worth.
 - B** the steers might be better off without Lydia’s help.
 - C** the work was wearing Lydia down.
 - D** the work was necessary despite Lydia’s feelings.
- 27** The long sentence beginning “Rollin was set stubbornly” is a run-on sentence with six commas. The effect of this construction is to
- A** make the writing seem ungrammatical.
 - B** purposely create a calming rhythm.
 - C** emphasize Lydia’s difficult, off-balance maneuver.
 - D** imply that Lydia is not capable of controlling Rollin.
- 28** The word loath in the second paragraph means
- A** anticipating, foreseeing.
 - B** unwilling, reluctant.
 - C** seeing the necessity of.
 - D** anxious, fearful.

“Choice Lesson” is a poem by child author Mattie J. T. Stepanek. It is paired with Barrie Baker’s version of “The Village of a Hundred Smiles,” a traditional Japanese story about a wealthy merchant and a group of villagers. Read both the poem and the story and answer the questions that follow.

A Poem and a Story

Choice Lesson

by Mattie J. T. Stepanek

Growth brings change.
 Unpredictable change,
 Which can bring
 Hesitancy to optimism.
 5 It is essential that we cope
 With the realities of the past
 And the uncertainties of the future
 With a pure and chosen hope.
 Not a blind faith,
 10 But a strengthened choice.
 Then, we can have the
 Fortitude and wisdom necessary
 To integrate life’s many lessons
 That collect beyond points in time.
 15 Growing like this will help
 Build a good future,
 For individuals,
 For communities,
 And for the world.

The Village of a Hundred Smiles

by Barrie Baker

A RICH MERCHANT was being carried through the Village of a Hundred Smiles when he became very hungry. He thought, “I must have food soon, or I will be ill.”

As his sedan chair moved through the street, his eyes searched the buildings until he spotted a noodle shop. “Ah, just what I need,” he said. “Noodles steamed, fried, or in soup, but noodles it must be.”

He ordered his bearers to stop walking and daintily stepped out onto the rice-straw mats his footman provided to keep his silk slippers spotless.

“Do you have fresh noodles?” demanded the merchant as he entered the steamy noodle shop.

“Oh, yes sir, very fine noodles,” replied the noodle-maker. “What kind would you like? Steamed, fried, boiled, in soup? How, sir?”

“Well, let me think.” The merchant couldn’t make up his mind, so he said, “I’ll have plenty of each.”

“Yes, sir. While you are waiting, please have a nice cup of tea and some cookies.” With that the noodle vendor began to prepare noodles. His wife, his two sons and his three daughters prepared noodles. His aunt prepared noodles.

The merchant waited patiently, sipping green tea from a china bowl and eating almond cookies. As he sat, he began to smell the fragrance of something he liked even better than noodles. Rice with bean curd and vegetables! He suddenly craved rice with bean curd and vegetables more than anything. He clapped his hands. His servants gathered around him. He was soon back in his sedan chair and moving down the street, following the smell of rice, bean curd and vegetables.

The noodle-maker, his wife, two sons and three daughters all ran out onto the road, calling, “But what shall we do with all these noodles?”

10 “Do as you will. I’m sure you’ll put them to good use,” answered the merchant.

Around the corner was the rice shop of the Lily family. It was from here that the delicious smell of rice with bean curd and vegetables was coming. The merchant called, “Stop!”

He jumped from the sedan chair as his footman scrambled to put down the rice-straw mats to save his beautiful slippers.

13 “Quick, rice with bean curd and vegetables. Bring me plenty, I’m famished!”

“O rich and exalted one,” began the surprised cook. “We have just cleared away the last of the rice and vegetables from our meal. Please, sit and drink some nice hot tea and have a few of these almond cookies. I promise you won’t have long to wait.”

The merchant sat on the rice-straw mats by the table and began to sip his steaming bowl of tea and nibble on a cookie.

Mr. Lily’s wife, his four daughters, his aged mother and father, and his venerable grandmother, the second-oldest person in the village, set to work. They steamed rice, cleaned and chopped onions, cabbages, carrots, radishes and peppers. They fried the bean curd.

As their guest sat sipping his tea and nibbling almond cookies, he began to smell something better than noodles, even better than rice with bean curd and vegetables. “What delicacy do I smell now? I believe it is carp with peaches and red sauce! That is truly my favorite!” He clapped his hands and all of his servants rushed up to him. “Find me carp with peaches and red sauce!” he demanded. Within seconds his sedan chair was jogging down the street, following the aroma of carp, peaches and red sauce. Mr. Lily ran from his shop. “But sir, what about this great pot of rice and this wok of vegetables, to say nothing of the bean curd? What shall I do with it?” Down the winding street trotted the servants. A hand waved airily. “Do as you will. I’m sure you’ll put them to good use!” came the reply. The chair bounced. The merchant bounced, but he did not complain. His mind was on carp with peaches and red sauce. He saw the shop with the fish sign outside.

“Stop!” he shouted, and before his footman could get the rice-straw mats, the merchant had splashed through the mud and ducked through the low doorway into the shop.

“Is that carp with peaches and red sauce I smell?”

“Yes, O honorable sir. May I offer you some? We can have it ready shortly if you wish.”

“Oh, yes, yes, I must have carp with peaches and red sauce, that is my favorite dish in all the world. Carp, carp, carp, bring me lots and lots of carp!”

The cook, his wife, his son, his daughter, his aunt and his wife’s aunt began to prepare carp with peaches and red sauce.

Meanwhile, the hungry merchant drank more tea and ate more cookies. He began to feel less hungry. In fact, eight almond cookies and four bowls of tea had quite taken his appetite away. Just as the meal was about to be served, he clapped his hands.

“Make haste. We are late. We must be in the city by Tuesday, or I shall lose much business. Why are we wasting time in this shop?”

The servants hurried to put the small rice-straw mats down; then, with their master settled in, they picked up the chair and began to trot down the street.

The distraught family called after them, “But sir, what about the lovely carp and the peaches and this red sauce?”

“Do as you will. I’m sure you will put them to good use.”

The three shopkeepers were all standing in the street, watching as the sedan chair disappeared over the bridge and down the road. They all had the same problem: what to do with all the food? There was too much for their families to eat, and it was much too good for the geese and pigs.

They were silent for some time. Then the first one spoke: “That man made me so excited that I prepared enough noodles, fried, boiled and in soup, to feed at least thirty people. What shall I do with all of these fine noodles? They will spoil if they are not eaten soon.”

The others nodded in agreement. “Yes, I know,” said the fish cook. “We have cooked twelve fish and have added at least eighteen golden, juicy peaches, and the sauce, well, it’s perfect. This is the best carp with peaches and red sauce ever cooked. Why, the Emperor himself would smack his lips if he were to try it. But it too will be ruined if it’s not eaten, and eaten soon.”

Mr. Lily looked very sad and sighed, “The best rice with bean curd and vegetables I have ever made is getting cold in my shop. What shall I do with it all?”

The youngest child had been listening to her father and his friends, and she had a suggestion. “Why don’t we have a party for Grandfather? He is seventy-two years old this year. We could eat outside, right in that meadow.” She pointed to a lovely field where the hay had been cut just one week earlier.

The three men looked at each other and then began to smile. “Go get the rest of the families. We will call the neighbors to the meadow for a celebration.”

What a party they had!

Since it was a village, nearly everyone came and everyone brought some food of their own. They ate and drank and visited until well after the moon rose. When they finally got their children home and in bed, they had all agreed that they had had the best time of their lives.

29 Read the sentence from paragraph 13.

“Quick, rice with bean curd and vegetables.
Bring me plenty, I’m famished!”

What does famished mean in this sentence?

- A greedy
- B hungry
- C angry
- D hasty

30 In paragraph 10, the merchant tells the shopkeepers to do what they want with the food because he

- A is full from the cookies and tea.
- B wants to pacify them so they will not make him pay.
- C wants to leave quickly with no concern for other people’s needs.
- D is determined not to let their food be wasted.

31 Which statement summarizes how the story “The Village of a Hundred Smiles” is told?

- A It begins and stays with a young girl.
- B It begins and stays distant from all of the characters.
- C It begins with the merchant but changes to the villagers.
- D It begins with the shopkeepers but changes to the merchant.

32 Which quote from the story “The Village of a Hundred Smiles” best illustrates a central idea in the poem “Choice Lesson”?

- A “While you are waiting, please have a nice cup of tea and some cookies.”
- B “But what shall we do with all these noodles?”
- C “I believe it is carp with peaches and red sauce! That is truly my favorite!”
- D “We will call the neighbors to the meadow for a celebration.”

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.

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.

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.

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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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Daily Herald, Arlington Heights, Ill.*

34 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

35 The primary support for the author's argument comes from —

- A academic research
- B other journalists
- C statistical data
- D personal observation

36 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

37 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

38 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.

39 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.*

40 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
- 41 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*