Grade 5

Texas

Reading

Essential Knowledge and Skills

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To the Student

Soon you will be taking the assessments of academic readiness. This *Better Test Scores* book will give you the practice and confidence you need to do well on this important test. Here are the steps to follow to use this book.

1. Take Tryout Test 1 and check your answers. Use the chart at the bottom of this page to find your strengths and weaknesses in the areas covered on the reading portion of the test. Don't be discouraged if you don't answer all the questions correctly or if you don't understand some questions. Remember these questions you struggled with; they will be the types of questions you need to work on the most.
2. Work through the lessons that follow Tryout Test 1. These lessons will help you with the kinds of questions you will be asked on the reading portion of the test. Each lesson ends with a short practice test to reinforce the skills from that lesson. Fill in the Keeping Score chart on page 84 as you complete each practice test.
3. After completing all seven lessons, take Tryout Test 2. Your score on this test will show how much your test-taking skills have improved.

By following the steps outlined above, you will learn many of the skills you need to do well on the assessments of academic readiness.

Lesson	Tryout Test 1	Tryout Test 2
1 Vocabulary Skills	**6, 8, 18, 36**	**12, 22, 23, 28**
2 Analyzing Literature	**1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, 7, **29**, 33, **34**, **35**, **37**, **38**, 39, 40, **41**, **42**, 43, **44**, **45**, **46**	**13**, **14**, **15**, **17**, **18**, 19, 20, 21, **24**, **36**, **37**, **38**, **39**, **41**, **42**, **43**, **44**, **45**, **46**
3 Figurative Language	**5**, **11**, **28**, 30, 31, **32**	**16**, **32**, 33, **34**, **35**, 40
4 Evaluating What You Read	14, 21, 26, 27	11, 25, 30
5 Analyzing Nonfiction	**12**, **13**, **23**	**1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, **6**, **31**
6 Text Structures and Features	9, **10**, **15**, **16**, **17**, **19**, **20**	**5**, 7, 8, 9, 10, **29**
7 Procedural Text	22, 24, 25	26, 27

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Finding Percent . . . . . Inside Back Cover

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Analyzing Nonfiction

This lesson covers . . . summarizing main idea and details, distinguishing facts from opinions, drawing conclusions, and making logical connections.

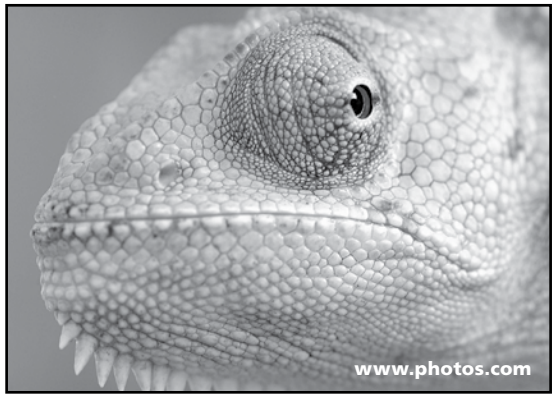
Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

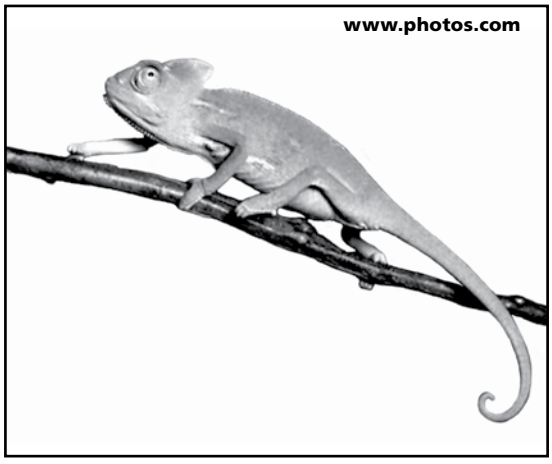
The Old World Chameleon

1 The Old World chameleon is a lizard found mainly in Africa. At first glance, this creature looks like a small, fierce dragon. But this first appearance can be deceiving. For instance, if you watch this chameleon long enough, you'll notice its eyeballs can rotate. Upon spotting an insect, both of the chameleon's eyes focus inward on the bug. This can give the lizard a foolish, cross-eyed look.

2 The chameleon's tongue is extremely long and odd-looking. Chameleons use their tongues to pluck insects from the air, then reel them back into their mouths like eager fishermen pulling in their lines.

3 Chameleons spend most of their time in trees, sometimes jumping down when frightened. Instead of landing gracefully, they fall like a sack of potatoes. When they move on land, the lizards walk on the tips of their claws with a clumsy, wobbling gait.





1 What is the main idea of this passage?

A The Old World chameleon is a lizard found mainly in Africa.

B The Old World chameleon looks like a fierce dragon but has strange characteristics.

C The lizards walk on the tips of their claws with a clumsy, wobbling gait.

D The Old World chameleon lives in trees and eats insects.

GO ON

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2 Based on the passage, which statement is an opinion?

F The Old World chameleon is a lizard.
G The Old World chameleon's eyeballs can rotate.
H The chameleons pluck insects from the air.
J The chameleon's tongue is odd-looking.

3 Based on details in the passage, the reader can conclude that the Old World chameleon—

A moves slowly on land.
B sometimes eats fruit.
C cannot see very well.
D sometimes hangs from its tail.

Example 1 asks you to identify the **main idea** of the entire passage. The passage is mainly about the strange behavior of the Old World chameleon. Choice B, *The Old World chameleon looks like a fierce dragon but has strange characteristics*, is correct. The other answer choices are **supporting details** from the passage.

In **Example 2**, you must distinguish between **fact** and **opinion**. A fact is something that can be proven true. An opinion is someone's belief, idea, or judgment. The only answer choice that is someone's belief is *The chameleon's tongue is odd-looking.* Choice J is correct.

In **Example 3**, you must use details in the passage along with your own knowledge to **draw a conclusion**. The passage states that the chameleons "walk on the tips of their claws" in a "wobbling" fashion. Using these details, you can conclude that they probably *move slowly on land.* Choice A is correct. Details in the passage do not support the other answer choices.

Test-Taking Tips

1 When asked to identify the main idea of an entire passage, ask yourself, *What is the passage mostly about?* Don't be fooled by answer choices that state what only one paragraph is about.

2 To identify the main idea of a paragraph, look for the topic sentence. The topic sentence states the main idea of the paragraph. You can also ask yourself, *What is this paragraph mostly about?*

3 To distinguish a fact from an opinion, ask yourself if the statement can be proven true.

Go for it!

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Test Practice 5: Analyzing Nonfiction

Estimated time: 10 minutes

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

1 Did you know that with a little chopping, one plant can become two? Certain plants can simply be divided in half to create new plants. Usually those with dense roots that clump together can be divided successfully. Many plants actually benefit from this procedure. Hostas, for example, are one kind of outdoor plant that thrives after division.

2 Hostas are a very common low-growing garden plant. There are dozens of varieties of these plants. Their broad, flat leaves come in every imaginable shade of green. The leaves of some varieties are boldly striped, as though with a paintbrush. In the summer, a few long stems emerge from the center of the plant and produce purple or white flowers.

3 Hostas tend to grow wider and wider every year. Thinning them out is often recommended. Since they have dense, clumpy roots, they are perfect candidates for dividing.

4 Usually, it's easiest to do this in the spring when the hosta is not yet blooming and its leaves are not too big and thick. Make sure you have a sharp hoe or trowel. Chop right through the middle of the plant. Don't be shy; it's hard to hurt a hosta! Then carefully dig one of the halves out of the ground, making sure it has several pieces of healthy root on it. Next, dig a hole where you want the "new" hosta to grow. Make sure the hole has some room to spare, so the roots can spread out. Plop the clump right into it. Since hostas are very hardy, before long you'll have a beautiful new plant.

1 If you do not leave a healthy root section on the divided hosta, it will most likely—

A grow wider and wider every year.
B develop stripes on the leaves.
C wither and die.
D grow new, dense roots.

2 Based on the passage, which of these is a fact?

F Hostas are beautiful.
G Hostas are easy to grow.
H Hostas are a fine addition to any garden.
J Hostas have broad green leaves.

GO ON

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Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

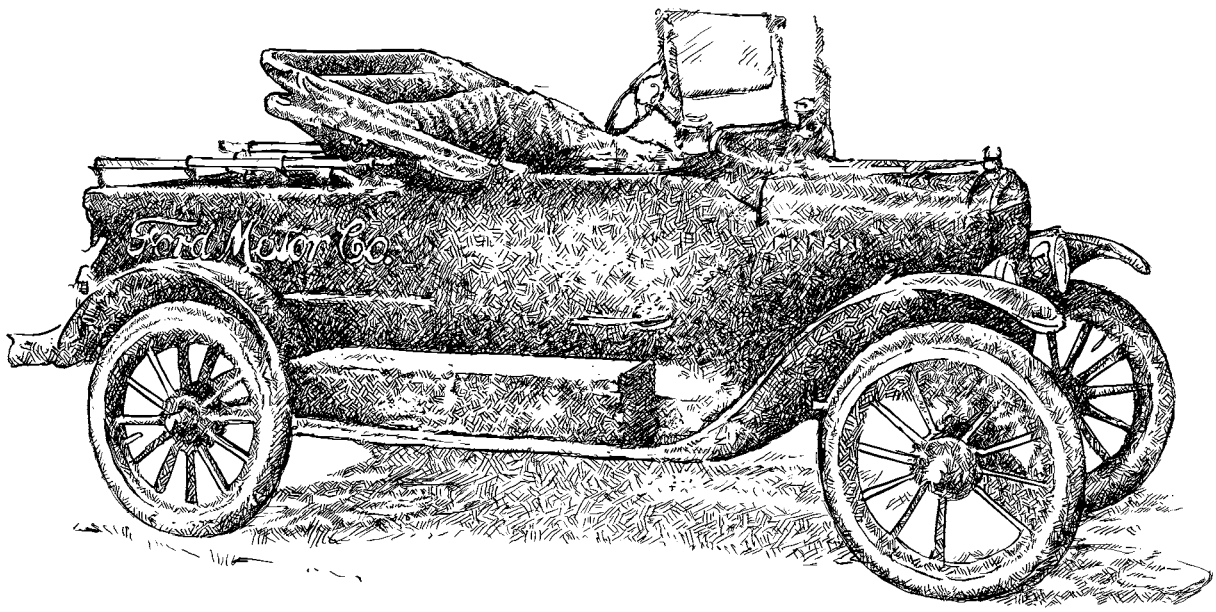
Steam-Powered Cars

1 If history had worked out a little differently, people might be driving steam-powered cars today. In 1897, Francis E. and Freelan O. Stanley built the first practical steam-engine car. Known as the Stanley Steamer, it was a perfect automobile in many ways. Unlike modern gas-powered cars, it was quiet and caused little pollution. Its engine was so simple that it had only fifteen moving parts. The Stanley Steamer was as fast as, if not faster than, most modern cars.

2 The Stanleys' idea of a steam-engine car wasn't a new one. In 1769, a Frenchman named Nicolas Cugnot built a steam-powered vehicle. This huge machine had three wheels and moved at a speed of three miles per hour. Many other inventors tried to improve on Cugnot's design. One such car was displayed at a fair that the Stanleys visited in 1896. After looking at the car, the twin brothers decided they could build a much better one.

3 The Stanley brothers' car was indeed well-designed. For one thing, it was easier to start than other cars of that time period. The driver of a Stanley Steamer simply lit a fire in the car's boiler. Then he or she waited for the water to steam. This took awhile—as much as twenty minutes. But after that, all the driver had to do was open a few valves, and the car was ready to go. And go it did! In 1906, it broke the land speed record at just over 127 miles per hour.

4 So what happened to the steam-powered car? One reason it never became widely popular is that the Stanley brothers were not interested in trying to make very many of them. They were happy to continue carefully making them at a slow pace. Since it took so long to produce each one, the price was very high. Only the wealthiest Americans could buy them.



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5 Meanwhile, others were busy making gasoline-powered cars. In 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T Ford. These cars were also well-made, but Ford was able to produce and sell more than 10,000 of them in the first year alone. The number grew every year. Ford's success was mostly the result of his assembly-line system. He worked every year to improve it. By 1913, a car that once took 17 hours to produce could now be assembled in about 90 minutes. In 1914, Ford was making twice the cars in a day that the Stanleys could make in a year. And the short production time meant Ford could sell his cars for a very low price.

6 The Stanleys and other fans of steam-powered cars criticized the early gasoline-powered cars. They pointed out the complicated engines with more than 100 moving parts. They said the exhaust smelled, and the ignition was "fussy." They also tried to give people the idea that gasoline engines were dangerous and could explode. In their view, these cars were no match for the simple, reliable, and powerful steam cars.

7 The gasoline-powered cars improved over time. The addition of the electric starter gave them yet another advantage over the steamers. These new starters worked almost instantly. The 20-minute wait for a steamer to heat up now seemed ridiculous. Meanwhile, Model Ts kept rolling off the assembly line. They soon sold for one-quarter the price of Stanley Steamers. Americans eagerly bought the inexpensive and dependable Model Ts. Other manufacturers also began to produce affordable gas-powered cars.

8 As people stopped buying the expensive steamers, the steam automobile companies began to close. The Stanley brothers sold their company in 1917. When it finally closed eight years later, the short era of the steamer was over.

3 Paragraph 5 is mainly about—

A Ford's gasoline-powered cars.
B the assembly-line system.
C the design of the steam-powered car.
D the Model T Ford.

4 Which of these became the most popular with buyers?

F Henry Ford's gasoline-powered car
G the Stanley brothers' steam-powered car
H Nicolas Cugnot's three-wheeled vehicle
J the car displayed at the 1896 fair

5 Based on the passage, which of these is an opinion?

A The Stanley brothers built a steam-powered car.
B Henry Ford introduced the Model T in 1908.
C The steam-powered car was easy to operate.
D The Stanley Steamer's engine had 15 moving parts.

Points Earned/Total = _____ /5

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