

GED Connection™



LANGUAGE ARTS • PROGRAM 13
Reading • Fiction

Sample pages from the Workbook
Lesson & Teacher's Guide





Dedication

GED Connection is the product of PBS LiteracyLink®, a service of PBS initiated by a five-year grant from the United States Department of Education Star Schools program. This generous grant has made it possible to reach more adult basic education learners than ever before through the power of public television and the Internet. We offer our thanks and appreciation to the Department of Education for its support of this project and the adult learners who benefit from it.

Many people worked very hard to create these GED Connection workbooks, videos, and online lessons. They brought skills, knowledge and, most of all, a deep spirit of dedication to their task: creating instructional tools to help adult learners find their way to lifelong learning and the benefits of full participation in our society.

We dedicate these GED Connection materials to the hundreds of thousands of GED learners, past, present, and to come, and to those who serve them.

Components of the PBS LiteracyLink® GED Connection System:

WORKBOOKS - Three workbooks – Language Arts, Writing and Reading; Social Studies and Science; and Mathematics – can be used in conjunction with the videos and online activities.



TEACHER'S GUIDE

- This valuable resource provides lesson plans and other teaching materials.

VIDEOS - Thirty-nine, half-hour programs cover the five major subject areas of the GED 2002 exam. The series includes one orientation program and thirty-eight instructional programs. A complete list of programs follows the Teacher's Guide pages in this print preview.



ONLINE ACTIVITIES -

Free learning activities on the web provide learners with practice tests, learning modules for each of the five test areas, and skill-building opportunities.



ONLINE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - Via the Internet, instructors can review and give feedback on students' online work and get reports on student data.

Inside This Preview Guide

Reading/Writing Teacher's Guide pages for Program 13: Fiction

For each of the thirty-nine GED Connection lessons you'll find two pages in the LiteracyLink Teacher's Guide. Each lesson plan is loaded with practical information to help you prepare students to get the most out of every lesson using a multi-media combination of videos, workbooks, and online activities.

Reading/Writing Workbook pages 271-294 for Program 13: Fiction

The GED Connection workbooks are designed to provide a foundation from which to build new skills; that's why we recommend you start each lesson with a look at the workbook and have students return to the book as they watch segments of the video and work through the online lessons.

Each workbook chapter corresponds to a video program and a set of Internet lessons and activities. Look for these workbook sections to guide students through the lesson:

The Before You Watch section orients students to the video program.

- Objectives form the focus for each lesson.
- Sneak Preview provides a short chapter pre-test, answers, and feedback.
- Vocabulary defines key content area terms.
- Program Summary explains what students are about to see in the video.

The After You Watch section provides direct instruction and skill practice.

- Key Points to Think About and GED Tips relate the lesson to the GED exam.
- Skill Practice exercises and instruction expand on concepts presented in the video program
- Links relate skills to family life, the community, and the workplace.
- Interdisciplinary Connection bridges the lesson to other GED subject areas.
- GED Practice is a chapter post-test with items and formats similar to those on the new GED Test.

Each workbook also contains a GED Pretest and a GED Practice Test to help students evaluate their GED readiness in that subject area; an Answer Key, complete with explanations; a Reference Handbook, with additional resources for GED preparation; a Glossary; and an Index.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how an author develops the plot and characters in a story.
2. Interpret a piece for conflict, point of view, and theme.
3. Identify and analyze how a writer's style creates a mood.

PROGRAM 13

Fiction



VIDEO OVERVIEW

Major Ideas in the Video Program

- **Elements of Fiction** – Fiction is a story that is invented by a writer. The key elements of fiction are character (the individuals), plot (the story), and setting (where and when the story takes place).
- **Conflict** – The conflicts in fiction are within a person (internal) or between a person and others (another person, society, nature, etc.)
- **Theme** – The theme of a story is the idea about life that the story conveys.
- **Point of View** – Point of view is the perspective that a story is told from—a person in the story (first person narrator) or a person outside the story (third person narrator).
- **Mood and Tone** – The mood is the feeling of a piece, often conveyed through the details of the setting. The tone is the overall attitude that the piece conveys—happiness, fear, etc.
- **Style and Word Choice** – The personality of the story is created through the author's sentence structure and word choice.

People and Ideas to Watch For

- Edwidge Danticat, author of *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, talks about how she used writing to understand her life as an immigrant. This segment introduces the elements of fiction—character, plot, and setting.
- Kenneth McClane uses James Baldwin's story, *Sonny's Blues* to introduce the concepts of conflict and theme. The themes of *Sonny's Blues* deal with communication and relationships.
- George Ella Lyon discusses *A Good Man is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Connor. She focuses on how the author uses dialogue, description, and pacing to create an emotional feeling for the piece.
- Finally, Martha Womack discusses Edgar Allen Poe's *Tell-Tale Heart*, bringing together some of the major points about mood and point of view—emphasizing the power of the first person point of view and Poe's choice of words to create a mood of suspense.

FYI – Students will have sixty-five minutes to answer forty multiple-choice questions.



WORKBOOK LESSON

Language Arts: Writing and Reading Lesson 13: Fiction pp. 271 - 293

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Before You Watch pp. 271 - 274</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sneak Preview (Pretest), pp. 272 - 273 • Vocabulary p. 274 <p>After You Watch pp. 275 - 294</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Points to Think About, p. 275 • Understanding Character pp. 276 - 279
<i>Character Development</i>
<i>Narrator Point of View</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Conflict and Setting, pp. 280 - 283
<i>Kinds of Conflict</i>
<i>Setting and Mood</i> • Understanding Theme pp. 284 - 287
<i>Defining Theme</i>
<i>Common Themes</i> • Analyzing a Writer's Style pp. 288 - 291
<i>Words and Sentences</i>
<i>Tone</i> • GED Practice Questions (Posttest) pp. 292 - 294 |
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INTERNET CONNECTION



at www.pbs.org/literacy

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|--|---|
| <p>Student Activities</p> <p>Online learning module
Interactive course on reading skills and strategies</p> <p>Internet-based activity
Including GED-style practice questions</p> | <p>Peer Reviewed Internet Sites</p> <p>Internet sites relevant to the GED Language Arts Reading Test can be found in the PeerLit section of LiteracyLink.</p> <p>Suggested search: <i>Learning Theme: Culture and Society</i>; <i>GED Content Area: Language Arts: Reading</i></p> |
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SAMPLE TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGES

ACTIVITIES

Set Up the Video Program



1. Before showing Program 13, explain that it focuses on fiction—stories that are invented by a writer. Explain that on the GED Language Arts Reading Test, students will read seven pieces of literature, including three pieces of fiction.
2. Ask *What is a favorite story that you have read? Why did you like it so much?*
3. Have learners do the *Sneak Preview* activity on workbook pages 272 - 273. Tell learners that the exercise is designed to introduce the topics that will be covered in the video program and the corresponding workbook lesson. After the activity, you may wish to discuss the questions and answers using the feedback on page 273.
4. Discuss the *Vocabulary* on page 274.
5. Tell students that the video will contain excerpts from four pieces of fiction. Say, *As you watch the program, think about which piece of fiction you liked the best and why. We will be discussing these pieces after the program.*



Show Program 13

Follow Up the Video Program



1. Ask students, *Which piece of literature did you like the best? Why?* Draw out references to specific characters, moods, themes, etc.
2. The first piece about the immigrant girl from Haiti and the last piece, from *The Tell-Tale Heart*, were both written from the first person point of view. The video program says that stories written in the first person (*the narrator of the story is a person in the story*) tend to be emotionally powerful. Using these two pieces as reference, have the students discuss what this means. Encourage them to use examples from the video.
3. Ask students to describe the grandmother and the mother from *A Good Man is Hard to Find*. They can describe physical or personality characteristics. Ask, *What in the selection allowed you to form these impressions?*
4. The theme of *Sonny's Blues* is about the relationship between the brothers. Ask, *How did the author use the development of the music to express this theme?*

Use Workbook Instructions and Practices



1. Discuss the *Key Points* summary on page 275.
2. Assign instruction and practice pages on 276 – 291.
3. After learners have finished the lesson, have them work through the *GED Practice* questions on pages 292 – 294. Explain that these are similar to the questions that they will see on the GED. You may go over the questions with the class, discussing both the correct answer and any incorrect answer choices that the students found attractive

Have Students Use the Internet



1. Have students go to the PBS LiteracyLink website at www.pbs.org/literacy. Students should login to their Home Space and follow the links to the GED Reading online learning module, where they will be able to take an extended, interactive course related to reading fiction. Students can also use Internet activities to practice taking GED type questions that focus on reading skills and strategies.
2. A teacher may view the GED online learning modules from the LitTeacher Home Space. Use your own username, and password to log in to the PBS LiteracyLink website at www.pbs.org/literacy. Then follow the link to the GED Connections online curriculum.

Lead Group Activities

Activity 1: In Your Life



- Explain that fiction helps us go to places or times beyond our lives. Ask students, *What place or time would you like to visit?* List each idea on the board and ask students to give their reasons. If you know of any novels or short stories that fit these settings, share the information with the students.

Activity 2: The Reading/Writing Connection

Have students choose (or you choose) a selection from the workbook lesson, (for example, *Thank You Ma'am* by Langston Hughes on page 277.). Have students write three to five paragraphs about what they think will happen next.

Activity 3: The Pre-GED Connection

For students who are at the pre-GED level, focus on comprehension of basic fiction concepts. Use a selection from the video or the workbook to discuss: *Who is (are) the main character(s)? Where or when does this take place? Is there a conflict described? What is it?*

GED Connection

Video Programs/Workbook Chapters

The preceding pages from the Teacher's Guide and the workbook pages which follow refer to one of thirty-nine GED Connection lessons.

The list to the right shows how this lesson fits in the comprehensive curriculum you'll find in GED Connection.

1. GED Connection Orientation

■ LANGUAGE ARTS: WRITING

2. Passing the GED Writing Test
3. Getting Ideas on Paper
4. The Writing Process
5. Organized Writing
6. Writing Style and Word Choice
7. Effective Sentences
8. Grammar and Usage
9. Spelling, Punctuation, and Capitalization
10. The GED Essay

■ LANGUAGE ARTS: READING

11. Passing the GED Reading Test
12. Nonfiction
13. Fiction
14. Poetry
15. Drama

■ SOCIAL STUDIES

16. Passing the GED Social Studies Test
17. Themes in U.S. History
18. Themes in World History
19. Economics
20. Civics and Government
21. Geography

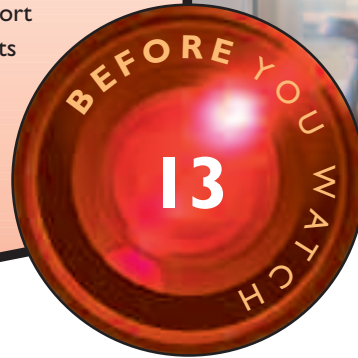
■ SCIENCE

22. Passing the GED Science Test
23. Life Science
24. Earth and Space Science
25. Chemistry
26. Physics

■ MATHEMATICS

27. Passing the GED Math Test
28. Number Sense
29. Problem Solving
30. Decimals
31. Fractions
32. Ratio, Proportion, and Percent
33. Measurement
34. Formulas
35. Geometry
36. Data Analysis
37. Statistics and Probability
38. Introduction to Algebra
39. Special Topics in Algebra and Geometry

In this program introducing prose fiction, you will meet a Haitian girl, a Blues pianist, a Southern grandmother, and a man with a “tell-tale heart.” You’ll also read passages from short stories and novels, as well as listen to authors and students discuss characterization, theme, conflict, point-of-view, and style.



Fiction

OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how characters are developed in fiction and how the narrative point of view affects the way a story is told.
2. Understand various kinds of literary conflict and how details of setting help create mood.
3. Understand how theme emerges from a piece of prose fiction.
4. Identify and analyze a writer’s style.

Stephen King’s novels are often best-sellers, and they inspire many popular films. They’re examples of **prose fiction**—stories that come from a writer’s imagination. The most common forms of prose fiction are short stories and novels.

A **short story** is a brief piece of prose fiction that involves a limited number of characters and settings and one conflict. A **novel** is longer and is usually written in chapters, with many characters, conflicts, and themes. Here you’ll read excerpts from both. Classic prose fiction has been widely read for a long time. Popular prose fiction is written by writers living today. The GED Reading Test—and this lesson—include both.

The ability to read and understand fiction is important to your success on the GED Reading Test. Most important will be your ability to understand the characters in fiction, to identify a story’s point of view, to appreciate the contribution of conflict and the setting to a story, and to identify themes and writing styles.

On the following pages, you will find a brief exercise called *Sneak Preview*. It is designed to introduce you to the topics that will be featured in the video program and the corresponding lesson. After you complete the exercise and check your answers, turn to the vocabulary page. There you will find terms that will help you better understand the video and the lesson that follow. After reviewing page 274, you will be ready to watch Program 13.

For additional practice, visit *LiteracyLink* online at <http://www.pbs.org/literacy>.

Sneak Preview

This exercise previews some of the concepts from Program 13. After you read the selection and answer the questions, use the chart on page 273 to help set your learning goals.



FAMILY LINK: Eric is visiting his grandparents. He's bored. He pulls a leather bound collection of short stories off the shelf and opens it to "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall." "Strange title," Eric thinks, and begins to read.

IS GRANNY WEATHERALL A GOOD PATIENT?

Doctor Harry spread a warm paw like a cushion on her forehead where the forked green vein danced and made her eyelids twitch. "Now, now, be a good girl, and we'll have you up in no time."

"That's no way to speak to a woman nearly eighty years old just because she's down. I'd have you respect your elders, young man."

"Well, Missy, excuse me." Doctor Harry patted her cheek. "But I've got to warn you, haven't I? You're a marvel, but you must be careful or you're going to be good and sorry."

"Don't tell me what I'm going to be. I'm on my feet now, morally speaking. It's Cornelia. I had to go to bed to get rid of her."

Her bones felt loose, and floated around in her skin, and Doctor Harry floated like a balloon around the foot of the bed. He floated and pulled down his waistcoat and swung his glasses on a cord. "Well, stay where you are, it certainly can't hurt you."

"Get along and doctor your sick," said Granny Weatherall. "Leave a well woman alone. I'll call for you when I want you . . . Where were you forty years ago when I pulled through milk-leg and double pneumonia? You weren't even born. Don't let Cornelia lead you on," she shouted, because Doctor Harry appeared to float up to the ceiling and out. "I pay my own bills, and I don't throw my money away on nonsense."

Katherine Ann Porter, "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall"

Answer these questions based on the prose fiction passage above.

1. Who is telling the story?
 - (1) Doctor Harry
 - (2) an unidentified narrator
 - (3) Granny Weatherall
 - (4) Cornelia
 - (5) Doctor Harry's nurse

2. How does Granny feel about Doctor Harry?
- (1) She wants him to stay and help her.
 - (2) She feels sorry for him.
 - (3) She wishes he would go away.
 - (4) She is afraid of him.
 - (5) She respects him.
3. Which general idea about life does this passage show?
- (1) Death is an inevitable part of life.
 - (2) Love can sprout in the most unlikely places.
 - (3) The spirit can be strong even when the body is weak.
 - (4) Personal freedom is more precious than life itself.
 - (5) Nothing is stronger than a mother's love.
4. Which of the following is part of this writer's style?
- (1) realistic dialogue
 - (2) sentence fragments and slang
 - (3) formal and technical word choices
 - (4) long descriptions of nature
 - (5) a sarcastic tone

Feedback

- If you got all of the answers right... you have the basic skills needed to read and understand prose fiction.
- If you missed question 1... you need to practice identifying the narrator of a story.
- If you missed question 2... you need to practice identifying and understanding conflict in a story.
- If you missed question 3... you need to learn to understand what is meant by a story's theme.
- If you missed question 4... you need to practice analyzing a writer's style.

Vocabulary for Fiction

character	a person in a piece of prose fiction whom we learn about through what the person says or does
conflict	a struggle or clash; the struggle can be within a character (internal), between characters, or between a character and an outside force (external)
dialogue	conversation between characters; spoken words
diction	word choice; part of a writer's style
first-person narrator	the storyteller who is a character in the story; uses "I" to tell the story
mood	the feeling of a story; often created by details of setting
novel	a full-length piece of prose fiction, usually written in chapters, with many characters, conflicts, and themes
plot	the events or storyline of a work of fiction
point of view	the perspective from which a story is told
prose fiction	stories that are invented; consists of short stories and novels
protagonist	the main character of a story in prose fiction
setting	the time and place in which a story occurs
short story	a brief piece of prose fiction that usually involves a small number of characters, limited settings, and one conflict
style	the way in which a story is written, including word choice, sentence structure, and tone
theme	the meaning, or main point, of a work of prose fiction
third-person narrator	the storyteller who is not a character in the story
tone	the attitude or feeling conveyed by a writer and/or narrator

➔ NOW WATCH PROGRAM 13:

As you read each passage, think about who is telling the story. What is the conflict or problem that is introduced? Does the passage convey a particular mood and why? These are some of the concepts you'll explore further in the workbook lesson. The variety of fiction in the program—*Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticat; *Sonny's Blues* by James Baldwin; *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Connor; and *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe—can be a starting point for further reading on your own.

After you watch the program, work on:

- pages 275 – 294 in this workbook
- Internet activities at <http://www.pbs.org/literacy>





Fiction

On the following pages, you will learn more about the ideas discussed in the video program and have an opportunity to develop and practice your GED reading skills.

GED TIPS

When taking the GED Reading Test, you should:

- Read every passage carefully before you answer the questions.
- Look for specific details that will help you answer questions about characters, plot, conflicts, setting, mood, point of view, and theme.
- Note important words such as characters' names, place names, dates, and key words and images that seem critical to the meaning of the selection.

Key Points to Think About

In the video program, you explored:

- How characters are developed in prose fiction and how to identify narrative point of view.
- The difference between **plot** (or storyline) and theme, the underlying message.
- The importance of conflict in a work of fiction.
- How setting, mood, and language contribute to a writer's style.

On the GED Language Arts, Reading Test:

- You may be expected to answer questions about characters based on their actions, descriptions, and dialogue.
- You may be asked questions about narrative point of view.
- You may be asked questions about a story's conflicts, setting, and mood.
- You may have to identify the theme of a piece of prose fiction.
- You may have to identify a writer's style.

As you work through the lesson for Program 13:

- Concentrate on the details of what you read. Notice plot events, characters' names and descriptions, clues about conflict, and details of time and place.
- Remember that themes are seldom stated outright. To understand theme, you must think carefully about what you have read.
- Be aware of how you can use these reading skills to enhance your reading of prose fiction in your daily life, not just on the GED Reading Test.

Understanding Character



COMMUNITY LINK: Tonya wants to try a book-on-tape. She stops at the local library and chooses a mystery novel. The back of the box says that the novel offers “colorful characters in a wild urban setting.”

Understanding Character Development

Stories involve people. The people in prose fiction such as those in Tonya’s book-on-tape are not real; they are invented by writers’ imaginations. We learn about them through description, **dialogue** (spoken words), and action.

Characters are the people we learn about in prose fiction. The main character is the **protagonist**.

As you read this, ask yourself, “What do I learn about this character—and how do I learn it?”

Every morning, Frank rises at 5:00 A.M. After showering and dressing, he goes downstairs. He feeds his dog, Brutus, and pours himself a bowl of whole wheat cereal with skim milk and fresh blueberries. While he eats, he reads the paper and summarizes the articles for Brutus. “They’re talking about raising taxes again,” he tells the poodle, “and they’re going to widen Briggs Street.” Brutus wags his tail when Frank speaks, appearing to listen carefully to every word.

► Based on the paragraph, check the statements that are true of Frank.

- He cares about his health.
- He likes to be informed.
- He is a person of habit.
- He cares for his dog.
- He is five years old.

If you checked all but the last sentence, you’re right. Notice that you learned all about this fictional character based on his routine (getting up at 5:00 A.M. every day, getting ready, feeding the dog, reading the newspaper), what he eats (a healthy breakfast), and how he treats his dog.

Identifying the Narrator

When you read prose fiction, you “hear” a voice telling the story. Fiction writers create particular voices to tell stories. The voice can be a character in the story or a voice that does not take part in the story.

The person—or voice—who tells a prose fiction story is the narrator.

For example, look what happens when a different narrator tells Frank’s story.

Sure, I get up every day at 5:00. How else can I make it to work in time if I don't have a car? Every morning I eat the same thing—cereal and fruit. Believe me, I'd prefer ham and eggs, but the doctor says I've got to eat this high-fiber garbage. Brutus keeps me company while I eat my breakfast and read the newspaper. No one else listens to me with the respect and interest that Brutus does.

- ▶▶ Who is telling the story this time? What impression do you have of Frank now?

If you wrote that **Frank** is telling the story and that he seems **down-to-earth** and **grumpy**, you're right. Notice that you learn different things depending on who is telling the story.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read the selection below. Think about the characters and the narrator.

WHAT FEELINGS MIGHT THIS BOY HAVE?

She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but hammer and nails. It had a long strap and she carried it slung across her shoulder. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke with the single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight, and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance so, instead of taking off full blast as he had hoped, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up. The large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue jeaned sitter. Then she reached down, picked the boy up by his shirt front, and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that, the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here."

She still held him. But she bent down enough to permit him to stoop and pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."

Langston Hughes, "Thank You, M'am"

1. Who are the characters in the story? _____

2. Who is telling the story?

- (1) one of the characters (2) a narrator who is not part of the story

3. List three of the woman's actions that would cause a reader to think of her as powerful.

Answers and explanations start on page 369.



WORKPLACE LINK: When he was involved in an accident at the factory, John and his co-workers were all called into the boss's office to describe what had happened. The trouble was, everyone told the story differently.

Identifying Narrative Point of View

How will John's boss know what really happened? People tell the same story differently, depending on their point of view. It's true in real life and in fiction.

Point of view is the narrator's perspective—or how he or she tells the story.

Look back at the excerpt from “Thank You, M'am” on page 277. Langston Hughes uses a narrator who is *not* a character in the story. His narrator is outside the story, looking at the action as if he or she is a camera.

A **third-person narrator** is not a character in the story.

Third-person narrators may look closely at one character in a story. They can also be “all seeing,” that is, they can report on the thoughts, feelings, and actions of several characters.

In other stories, the narrator may be a character in the story. In this case, the narrator uses “I.” Every detail of the story is filtered through this one character. We see and hear everything through this character's eyes and ears. This character speaks to us directly.

A **first-person narrator** uses “I” to tell his or her own story.

HOW DOES THIS PERSON CHANGE?

When I was younger, I used to think that the occult, religion, New Age, Kitaro, channeling, and all that kind of stuff was really stupid. I mean, when I'd hear people talking about it on television, it really turned me off. Totally. But then you couldn't get away from it. Every newspaper I picked up, gossip on the streets—enough is enough.

But I don't feel that way now. I guess that I feel more comfortable hearing about spirituality. Sometimes I even take it for granted, kind of like I'm not constantly aware of blood circulating through my body. Just like I don't dwell on my nose, which I think is really ugly. I've learned to live with it.

Banana Yoshimoto, *Lizard*

- ▶▶ The writer uses first-person narration in this passage to reveal the character's—
- (1) physical appearance
 - (2) thoughts and feelings about spirituality

If you chose (2) **thoughts and feelings about spirituality**, you're right. In this instance, first-person narration lets us into the main character's mind. It also lets us see this character's youthful, informal attitude.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read the selection below and think about the narrative point of view.

WHAT DOES MACON DEAD WANT?

When Mrs. Bains closed the door, Macon Dead went back to the pages of his accounts book, running his fingertips over the figures and thinking with the unoccupied part of his mind about the first time he called on Ruth Foster's father. He had only two keys in his pocket then, and if he had let people like the woman who just left have their way, he wouldn't have had any keys at all. It was because of those keys that he could dare to walk over to that part of Not Doctor Street (it was still Doctor Street then) and approach the most important Negro in the city. To lift the lion's paw knocker, to entertain thoughts of marrying the doctor's daughter was possible because each key represented a house which he owned at the time. Without those keys he would have floated away at the doctor's first word: "Yes?" Or he would have melted like new wax under the heat of that pale eye. Instead he was able to say that he had been introduced to his daughter, Miss Ruth Foster, and would appreciate having the doctor's permission to keep her company now and then. That his intentions were honorable and that he himself was certainly worthy of the doctor's consideration as a gentleman friend for Miss Foster since, at twenty-five, he was already a colored man of property.

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*

1. The narrator shows us that keys are important to Macon Dead. What does this detail reveal about this character?
 - (1) He is concerned with status and property.
 - (2) He is an angry person.
 - (3) He is kind and giving.
 - (4) He is an honest person.

2. Is the narrator a character in the passage? How do you know?

3. Where does the narrator of this passage take the reader?
 - (1) inside the doctor's house
 - (2) inside the mind of Macon Dead
 - (3) inside the mind of Ruth Foster

WRITING Connection

Look back at the excerpt from "Thank You, M'am" on page 277. First, rewrite it from the point of view of the woman as first-person narrator. After you finish that retelling, write the story again—this time from the boy's point of view as a first-person narrator. See how different you can make the two versions.

Understanding Conflict and Setting



WORKPLACE LINK: Tina works as an illustrator for a book publisher. Her next assignment is to design a cover for a children’s book that shows the Green Knight and the Toxic Avenger battling on Zipton in the year 2100.

Identifying Kinds of Conflict

Like the Green Knight and the Toxic Avenger, characters struggle and clash. They struggle within themselves or against other characters or forces. These struggles are called **conflicts**. Their conflicts can be **internal**, that is, within the character’s own heart or mind. Their conflicts can also be **external**, against a person or thing outside. In most stories, characters experience both.

As you read the following paragraph, ask yourself what the character’s conflict is.

The red box sat on the coffee table, where it had been for all the years she could remember. Smooth glass, edged with fancy metalwork. This was the one piece of Aunt Lillian’s she really wanted. She held it, pressed its cool surface against her cheek. Then she placed it back on the table, lifted the lid, and saw the note. “Save for Jimmy.” Jimmy couldn’t care less about this piece, and no one would ever know if she wrapped it in her sweater, slid it into her bag.

A. This character’s conflict involves

- (1) whether to take the red box (2) whether she likes Jimmy

B. Is this an internal or external conflict? _____

You’re right if you chose (1) and said that this passage involves an **internal conflict**. While the passage mentions Jimmy, the main focus is the internal conflict the woman feels over wanting the red box and the fact that the notes leaves it to Jimmy.

Now read the following passage from a short story.

WHAT MAKES THE WOMAN IN THIS STORY SO MAD?

“There is a joy like fire that consumes a man’s heart when he first sets eyes on his beloved,” I said. “This I felt when I first saw you.” My voice trembled under a mighty passion. “I swear before God from this moment that I love you.”

She stared shocked out of her deep dark eyes and, beside her, old prune-face staggered as if she had been kicked. Then my beloved did something which proved indisputably that her passion was as intense as mine.

She doubled up her fist and struck me in the eye! A stout blow for a woman that brought a haze to my vision, but I shook my head and moved a step closer.

“I would not care,” I said, “if you struck out both my eyes. I would cherish the memory of your beauty forever.”

By this time the music had stopped, and the dancers formed a circle of idiot faces about us. I paid them no attention and ignored Vasili, who kept whining and pulling at my sleeve.

"You are crazy!" she said. "You must be mad! Remove yourself from my presence or I will tear out both your eyes and your tongue besides!"

Harry M. Petrakis, "The Wooing of Ariadne"

C. Who or what does the conflict in this passage involve?

- (1) the narrator and Ariadne (2) the narrator's doubts about Ariadne and his love for her

If you chose (1), you're right. An external conflict is described. If the passage focused on the narrator's doubts, that would present an internal conflict. This narrator doesn't appear to have any doubts about Ariadne or his feelings.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read the selection below and think about conflict.

WHAT DOES THIS MAN WANT ABOVE ALL ELSE?

He ran like a blind man. Two or three times he fell down. Once he knocked his shoulder so heavily against a tree that he went headlong.

Since he had turned his back upon the fight his fears had been wondrously magnified. Death about to thrust him between the shoulder blades was far more dreadful than death about to smite him between the eyes. When he thought of it later, he conceived the impression that it is better to view the appalling than to be merely within hearing. The noises of the battle were like stones; he believed himself liable to be crushed.

As he ran on he mingled with others. He dimly saw men on his right and on his left, and he heard footsteps behind him. He thought that all the regiment was fleeing, pursued by these ominous crashes.

In his flight the sound of these following footsteps gave him his one meager relief. He felt vaguely that death must make a first choice of the men who were nearest; the initial morsels for the dragons would be then those who were following him. So he displayed the zeal of an insane sprinter in his purpose to keep them in the rear. There was a race.

Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

1. Circle three words in the passage that show you that the protagonist is a soldier.
2. With whom or what *outside himself* is this character in conflict?
 - (1) enemy soldiers during a battle
 - (2) the noises that sound like stones
 - (3) the fear someone will stab him between the shoulders
3. Which of the following describes the *internal* conflict of the passage?
 - (1) A soldier attempts to stay out of the way of other soldiers.
 - (2) A soldier faces his terror of death.



FAMILY LINK: When Marco proposed marriage to Vanessa, he chose her favorite restaurant. Her favorite time was sunset, so he made a reservation for 7:00. He arranged for her favorite music, her favorite wine, roses on the table—all to create the perfect mood.

Identifying Setting and Mood

Marco knows how important time and place can be. He also knows how to create the perfect feeling by choosing the perfect details. Fiction writers do this, too. They choose times, places, and details carefully.

Setting is the time and place in which a piece of prose fiction occurs. Details of setting help create the story's **mood**, or feeling.

WHAT MAKES THIS PERSON HAPPY?

I sat down in the middle of the garden, where snakes could scarcely approach unseen, and leaned my back against a warm yellow pumpkin. There were some ground-cherry bushes growing along the furrows, full of fruit. I turned back the papery triangle sheath that protected the berries and ate a few. All about me giant grasshoppers, twice as big as any I had ever seen, were doing acrobatic feats among the dried vines. The gophers scurried up and down the ploughed ground. There in the sheltered draw-bottom the wind did not blow very hard, but I could hear it singing its humming tune up on the level, and I could see the tall grasses wave. The earth was warm under me, and warm as I crumbled it through my fingers. Queer little red bugs came out and moved in slow squadrons around me. Their backs were polished vermilion, with black spots. I kept as still as I could. Nothing happened. I did not expect anything to happen. I was something that lay under the sun and felt it, like the pumpkins, and I did not want to be anything more. I was entirely happy. Perhaps we feel like that when we die and become part of something entire, whether it is sun and air, or goodness and knowledge. At any rate, that is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great.

Willa Cather, *My Antonia*

A. Where is the character?

_____ in a kitchen _____ in a greenhouse _____ in a garden

B. When does this scene occur?

_____ in late summer _____ in the winter _____ in the spring

If you identified the setting as a **garden in late summer**, you're right. The place is explicitly stated, but the time of year must be inferred from the details: the yellow pumpkin, the full cherry bushes, and the warm earth.

C. What word best describes the mood of the excerpt? _____

If you chose something like **peaceful**, you're right. Details of setting—the warmth, the fullness, the shelter, the calm singing wind, the slow bugs—create this mood.

SKILL PRACTICE

In this excerpt, the narrator has just left her native country and come to the United States to work.

WHY DOES THIS PERSON FEEL LET DOWN?

It was my first day. I had come the night before, a gray-black and cold night before—as it was expected to be in the middle of January, though I didn't know that at the time—and I could not see anything clearly on the way in from the airport, even though there were lights everywhere. As we drove along, someone would single out to me a famous building, an important street, a park, a bridge that when built was thought to be a spectacle. In a daydream I used to have, all these places were points of happiness to me; all these places were lifeboats to my small drowning soul, for I would imagine myself entering and leaving them, and just that—entering and leaving over and over again—would see me through a bad feeling I did not have a name for. I only knew it felt a little like sadness but heavier than that. Now that I saw these places, they looked ordinary, dirty, worn down by so many people entering and leaving them in real life, and it occurred to me that I could not be the only person in the world for whom they were a fixture of fantasy. It was not my first bout with the disappointment of reality and it would not be the last.

Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

1. Which of these phrases best describes the setting of the passage?

- (1) a tropical island in summer
- (2) an airport on a windy spring day
- (3) a big city in winter

2. Which phrase best describes the mood of the passage?

- (1) sad and gloomy
- (2) joyful and excited
- (3) peace and contentment
- (4) suspenseful and scary

3. List three phrases that reveal the mood of the passage.

HISTORY Connection



Apply the ideas of characters, setting, and conflict to a famous battle in history by researching the following questions:

- Where and when did the battle take place?
- Who was fighting and why?
- Who won?

If you were to write a short story or a novel based on the historical facts, who might your protagonist be? What would be his or her external conflict? Internal conflict?

Understanding Theme



FAMILY LINK: When Maura’s aunt was diagnosed with cancer, Maura remembered a story she’d read months before. She couldn’t remember the characters or exactly what had happened—but she did remember the hope the story gave her. She remembered that the family in the story supported each other and how that made a difference.

Defining Theme

Like Maura, after you read a good story, its meaning takes shape in your mind. As you read prose fiction, you “add up” the elements of plot, character, and setting. Then, as you think about the whole story—and even discuss it with someone else—the *idea* begins to emerge.

The **theme** of a work of prose fiction is the idea about life it conveys.

Another way to think about theme is to consider what characters learn. Usually in prose fiction, characters achieve knowledge or wisdom because of what they experience. What the characters learn is what the reader “learns,” too; it is the theme.

WHAT DOES ELISHA LEARN?

Elisha picked up a tiny bear from the dusty shelf. It was just a worthless trinket, made of cheap ceramic, poorly painted, the tongue a gaudy pink blotch at the end of the snout. It had belonged to her great-grandmother, a woman she had only met once, when she was a child. She remembered the old woman picking tomatoes in her garden and handing her a small one. It had tasted sweet as it ran over her chin and fingers. Her great-grandmother’s last name, Durso, meant “bear.” Elisha ran her fingers over the tiny bear’s smooth surface as she remembered. She slipped the thing into her pocket.

▶▶ Check the sentence that best expresses the theme of the passage above.

- Animals can be better friends than people.
- Simple things can become treasures.
- Most people fear what they do not understand.
- We don’t appreciate people until they are gone.

If you checked **Simple things can become treasures**, you’re right. The writer never writes this sentence, but a good reader will “add up” the details to understand this general idea. In this story, the simple thing is the ceramic bear. Because it triggers memories of her great-grandmother, the statue changes from “worthless” at the beginning of the paragraph to something Elisha will keep and value. On the literal level of plot, the story is about a girl and a trinket. On the more abstract level of theme, it is about memories and value.

SKILL PRACTICE

As you read the following excerpt from a short story, think about what theme is being expressed.

DOES THIS CLOSET HOLD MORE THAN CLOTHING?

Standing in the closet, I can smell mother, all of her, forty-eight years old in her flowered bathrobes and suits of gradually increasing girth. It is the soft, pungent woman smell of a fading mother of three girls, one of them the daughter of the unfortunate Juan Luz.

In the darkness there is the smell of my mother's loneliness. Next to me the portrait of my mother and Juan Luz is hidden behind piles of clothes which are crowded into the house's largest closet. All those memories are now suffocated in cloth. So whoever comes, whatever man comes, and only *one* could, he would not feel alarm. But would my father come, being gone so long?

Denise Chávez, "The Closet"

1. Check all statements that are true of the passage. More than one may be correct.
 - a. The narrator is loud and pushy.
 - b. The narrator lets us see inside her mind.
 - c. The closet is a frightening place.
 - d. The closet reveals family secrets and memories to the narrator.
 - e. The narrator has not seen Juan Luz for many years, if ever.

2. Read the following sentences. Circle the one that you think is a possible theme of the passage above.
 - When life is sad, laughter can be the best friend.
 - If we look carefully, we can understand our parents' struggles.
 - Children and parents are doomed to disagree.
 - Forgiveness is essential in life.
 - We keep our prayers closed up inside us, as in a closet.

3. List three phrases or sentences that led you to understand this theme. Here's an example to get you started: "*I can smell mother, all of her.*"
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Answers and explanations start on page 370.

Reviewing Common Themes

When you see a question about theme on the GED Reading Test, start thinking about abstract ideas and general beliefs about life. Here are some examples:

friendship	love	greed	prejudice	poverty
death	justice	ambition	honesty	aging
memory	adventure	truth	time	revenge
peace	family	work	tradition	passion
freedom	evil	education	addiction	violence

These abstract words are not themes, however. What a writer has to say—and what a reader understands—*about* these kinds of topics is the theme. One writer might suggest that “Love conquers all,” and another might express that “Love always ends in heartbreak.”

Fables may end with a moral. Remember the boy who cried wolf? The moral of that simple story was “No one believes a liar—even if he tells the truth.” The moral appears explicitly at the end of the tale. Most prose fiction, however, relies on readers to *infer* the themes expressed within. Readers must “add up” what they’ve learned about characters, events, settings, and conflicts.

HOW DO KEVIN AND EMILIA FEEL ABOUT EACH OTHER?

Kevin is seventeen. He wears a black leather jacket with metal studs. He drives a beat-up Camaro and smokes a pack a day. He dropped out of school last year and works at Bud’s Auto. Emilia is an eighty-nine-year-old grandmother. She taught for fifty years. She lives at Maple View Nursing Home and wears flowered house dresses that button up the front. She enjoys bingo and watches talk shows.

Every Tuesday evening, from seven until ten o’clock, Kevin and Emilia play chess. On one particular Tuesday, Emilia greets Kevin with alarm: “I was afraid you weren’t coming. It’s so late.”

“Sorry, Em’,” he smiles. “I had to work late. I shoulda called.”

She smiles, too. “It’s just that I look forward to this so much. It’s the only date I have all week.”

- A. List three words from the list at the top of this page that apply to this passage.**

- B. Use one of the words to write a one-sentence theme that this passage suggests.**

Perhaps you listed **friendship**, **aging**, and **tradition**. Perhaps the writer is expressing the idea that friendship can occur between the most unlikely people, or that friendship and traditions can give meaning to lives, or that age and style differences don’t have to bar friendship.

SKILL PRACTICE

As you read this excerpt, think about theme.

CAN JANIE TAKE CARE OF HERSELF?

Janie found out very soon that her widowhood and property was a great challenge in South Florida. Before Jody had been dead a month, she noticed how often men who had never been intimates of Joe, drove considerable distances to ask after her welfare and offer their services as advisor.

“Uh woman by herself is uh pitiful thing,” she was told over and over again. “Dey needs aid and assistance. God never meant ‘em tuh try tuh stand by theirselves. You ain’t been used tuh knockin’ round and doin’ fuh yo’self, Mis’ Starks. You been well taken keer of, you needs uh man.”

Janie laughed at all these well-wishers because she knew that they knew plenty of women alone; that she was not the first one they had ever seen. But most of the others were poor. Besides she liked being lonesome for a change. This freedom feeling was fine.

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

1. How do we learn about the characters who visit Janie? Circle all that apply.

The words they use	The way they look
The things they say to her	Janie’s impressions of them
Where they live	How they dress

2. Write *True* if the statement is true, *False* if it is false.

_____ a. Janie is the narrator of this passage.
_____ b. Janie is a lively, intelligent character.
_____ c. Janie does not see how she will go on without her husband.
_____ d. This passage has a dark and gloomy mood.

3. Look at the list of abstract words under the heading *Reviewing Common Themes* on page 286. Write three or four that might be addressed in this novel, based on the passage above.

4. What is the theme of the passage?

HISTORY Connection



Use a dictionary of quotations to find a few famous one-liners about one of the abstract ideas listed on page 286. Choose one you especially like. When was the quotation spoken or written? To whom is it credited? What is its context?

Answers and explanations start on page 370.

Analyzing a Writer's Style



COMMUNITY LINK: A candidate for governor begins a speech by telling a story. “When I was a little girl,” she says, “my father lost his job and could barely support his family. We almost lost our house.” The story is easy for everyone to understand—young people, parents, grandparents. The words are simple; the sentences are short and clear.

Looking at Words and Sentences

This politician knows what she’s doing. She knows that her style is part of the message she conveys. It determines how the voters respond. For example, she uses the word *job* instead of *employment*, *house* instead of *domicile*, and *family* instead of *dependents*. These words make her audience feel comfortable—which increases her chances of success.

Style is the way in which a piece of prose fiction is written. **Diction** is word choice. A writer’s diction is part of his or her style.

Does a writer use slang? Dialogue? Scientific terms? Big words? Contractions? Observing a writer’s word choices is key to understanding the writer’s style.

Beyond words, writers choose how to write their sentences. For example, sentences can be long, full of clauses and phrases that build and build, one after another, much like the sentence you are reading right now. Or they can be short. Simple. Each states one idea.

Observe the writer’s style in this excerpt.

WHAT DOES MR. REILLY THINK OF HIS COMPANION?

Her eyes were slate-gray, and had almost no expression when they looked at me. She came over near me and smiled with her mouth and she had little sharp predatory teeth, as white as fresh orange pith and as shiny as porcelain. They glistened between her thin too taut lips. Her face lacked color and didn’t look too healthy.

“Tall, aren’t you?” she said.

“I didn’t mean to be.”

Her eyes rounded. She was puzzled. She was thinking. I could see, even on that short acquaintance, that thinking was always going to be a bother to her.

“Handsome, too,” she said. “And I bet you know it.”

I grunted.

“What’s your name?”

“Reilly,” I said. “Doghouse Reilly.”

“That’s a funny name.” She bit her lip and turned her head a little and looked at me along her eyes. Then she lowered her lashes until they almost cuddled her cheeks and slowly raised them again, like a theater curtain. I was to get to know that trick. That was supposed to make me roll over on my back with all four paws in the air.

“Are you a prizefighter?” she asked, when I didn’t.
 “Not exactly. I’m a sleuth.”
 “A—a—” She tossed her head angrily, and the rich color of it glistened in the rather dim light of the big hall. “You’re making fun of me.”
 “Uh-huh.”

Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*

▶▶ In this passage, what is the author’s style?

- (1) scientific and technical (2) formal and complex (3) casual and simple

If you answered (3) **casual and simple**, you are right. Raymond Chandler wrote popular fiction. The story is told from the point of view of a straightforward guy: nothing fancy, nothing frilly, and nothing surprises him.

SKILL PRACTICE

Read the following excerpt from a famous novel by Mark Twain.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A STORM LIKE THIS ONE?

It was one of those regular summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside, and lovely; and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale underside of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest—*fst!* it was as bright as glory and you’d have a little glimpse of tree-tops a-plunging about, away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you’d hear the thunder let go with an awful crash and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels down stairs, where it’s long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know.

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

1. List several words or phrases that make Twain’s style distinctive. An example is given to get you started.

 a perfect ripper of a gust _____

2. Which of the following gives this passage an informal style?

- (1) He writes about nature.
 (2) He ends the passage with “you know.”
 (3) He describes a storm.

3. The sentences in this passage can be described as

- (1) short, simple; one idea per sentence. (2) long, complex; building in energy.



FAMILY LINK: “Josh, it’s your turn to do the dishes,” his mother said. “I did them last night!” Josh answered harshly. His mother shot him a scolding look. “What did I say?” Josh asked. “It’s not *what* you said; it’s *how* you said it,” his mother frowned. “I didn’t like your tone.”

Understanding Tone

In speaking and in writing, we have attitudes toward our subjects and our audiences. Just as Josh’s tone affected his mother, writers express tones that affect their readers. Tone is an important part of a writer’s style. A writer’s attitude about a subject may be serious or light-hearted, angry or joyful, sarcastic or straightforward, formal or casual.

Tone is the attitude or feeling that a writer and/or narrator conveys.

What feeling or attitude is conveyed by this short story excerpt?

Gerald hit the ball—*whack!*—he stood there for a moment like a statue—couldn’t believe he hit it. “Run!” yelled the coach, “Run!” Gerald ran—didn’t look back—didn’t look for the ball—just ran to first base as fast as his legs could go—run—run—don’t look—the first baseman’s glove was open and ready but no ball—no ball—not yet—run!—his right cleat hit the bag—*thunk!*—the ball hit the glove—*smack!*—he was safe!

A. How would you describe the writer’s tone in this selection?

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| (1) sarcastic | (3) formal |
| (2) thoughtful | (4) excited |

You’re right if you chose (4) **excited**. The dashes and sentence fragments create a feeling of breathless excitement and the way we “hear” what Gerald is thinking creates suspense. We wonder, too, whether he’ll make it.

Like theme, tone is never explicitly stated in a work of prose fiction. The reader must infer it. Now read the following excerpt and consider the tone.

Arlene is a fabulous neighbor. First, she always leaves the lid off her garbage can so that I can admire her trash when it floats into my yard. She also lets her dog run free, and he decorates my yard very nicely, too. Best of all, she shares her taste in music—blasting it out the windows at 3 A.M. so that everyone on the block can join the party.

B. What is the writer’s attitude about her neighbor? What tone comes through?

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| (1) serious | (2) sarcastic | (3) mysterious | (4) suspenseful |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|

You’re right if you chose (2) **sarcastic**. Few people would consider Arlene “a fabulous neighbor.” The writer’s words say one thing, but her tone, revealed through her examples (*trash, dog, music*), mocks Arlene’s behavior. Irony is closely related to sarcasm. It is also a tone that aims to cut, sting, or criticize its subject.

SKILL PRACTICE

As you read this excerpt from a short story, think about tone.

ARE SOME “TRUTHS” MORE IMPORTANT THAN OTHERS?

Truth, Sekhar reflected, is like the sun. I suppose no human being can ever look it straight in the face without blinking or being dazed. He realized that, morning till night, the essence of human relationships consisted in tempering truth so that it might not shock. This day he set apart as a unique day—at least one day in the year we must give and take absolute Truth whatever may happen. Otherwise life is not worth living. The day ahead seemed to him full of possibilities. He told no one of his experiment. It was a quiet resolve, a secret pact between him and eternity.

The very first test came while his wife served him his morning meal. He showed hesitation over a titbit, which she had thought was her culinary masterpiece. She asked, “Why, isn’t it good?” At other times he would have said, considering her feelings in the matter, “I feel full-up, that’s all.” But today he said, “It isn’t good. I’m unable to swallow it.” He saw her wince and said to himself, Can’t be helped. Truth is like the sun.

R.K. Narayan, “Like the Sun”

1. Circle one of these words to describe the tone of the selection above.

suspenseful friendly angry thoughtful

2. Explain why you chose this tone. Give examples of words or phrases that led you to your answer.



Some linguists calculate the difficulty of reading passages, one function of style. For example, it’s helpful to look at the average number of words per sentence. “Standard readability” is considered less than nineteen words per sentence. Try it. Count the number of words in a selection and divide it by the number of sentences in the same selection. For example, in the selection by R.K. Narayan above, the average can be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Number of words}}{\text{Number of sentences}} = \frac{186}{16} = 11.6 = \text{average words per sentence}$$

Calculate this average for the selection by Denise Chávez on page 285 and the one by Mark Twain on page 289. Do you agree that the averages reflect the “easiness” of the passages? What other variables may affect reading difficulty?

Answers and explanations start on page 370.

GED PRACTICE

DIRECTIONS: Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following excerpt.

WHAT IS MISSING FROM DELORES'S LIFE?

At twenty-seven, Delores was still an attractive woman. But in attending selflessly to Nestor and the family, she'd acquired a puzzled harshness around the eyes. A photograph of her with five other Cubans, the brothers and musician friends of the family, shows a woman of intelligence and beauty literally trapped inside a crush of men. (And in this photograph, taken in front of a statue of Abraham Lincoln on 116th Street, they huddled close. In the crush of machos, she seems to be waiting with annoyance to be lifted out of there.) She had never lost sight of that sad but handsome man she had met years back at the bus stop, and she loved him and the children very much. But there were days when she thought of another life outside of cooking and cleaning and taking care of the family. She sometimes went wandering around Columbia University with the children and would peer into classrooms or stand outside a window, listening to the summer-session lecture. She'd sigh, thinking about all the college people in that neighborhood. For reasons that she was unable to understand, she derived a deep satisfaction from all this learning, but would she ever act upon this?

Oscar Hijuelos, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*

1. What do we learn about Delores?
 - (1) She looks forward to retiring.
 - (2) She is single.
 - (3) She graduated from Columbia University.
 - (4) She is Cuban.
 - (5) She has been married three times.
2. What does the writer show with the photograph?
 - (1) Delores is overwhelmed by her children.
 - (2) Delores wishes that she had sisters as well as brothers.
 - (3) Delores feels "trapped" in her life.
 - (4) Delores is happy with her life.
 - (5) Delores wishes she could be a musician.
3. Why does Delores sigh (lines 25-28)?
 - (1) She wishes she could go to college.
 - (2) She has had a fight with her husband.
 - (3) She is satisfied with her education.
 - (4) She is happy to be at Columbia University.
 - (5) She loves her family.
4. In this passage, what is the narrator's main concern about Delores?
 - (1) her marriage
 - (2) her thoughts and feelings
 - (3) her relationship with college students
 - (4) her memories of Cuba
 - (5) her physical appearance
5. A page later in this book, Delores asks her husband how he would feel if she registered for college classes. He says, "Go ahead and humiliate me before the others." With this comment, what new light does the author throw on Delores's situation?
 - (1) She could go to college if she really wanted to; she's just not qualified.
 - (2) Her responsibilities at home are too burdensome to allow her to go to college.
 - (3) The family doesn't have enough money for her to go to college.
 - (4) She has humiliated her husband in many other ways already.
 - (5) Her husband does not approve of a woman trying to better herself.

Questions 6 through 10 refer to the following excerpt.

**COULD A MEDICINE MAN HELP
AYAH NOW?**

5 If Jimmie had been there he could have read those papers and explained to her what they said. Ayah would have known, then, never to sign them. The doctors came back the next day and they brought a BIA policeman with them. 10 They told Chato they had her signature and that was all they needed. Except for the kids. She listened to Chato sullenly; she hated him when he told her it was the old woman who died in the winter, spitting blood; it was her old grandma 15 who had given the children this disease. "They don't spit blood," she said coldly, "The whites lie." She held Ella and Danny close to her, ready to run to the hills again. "I want a medicine man 20 first," she said to Chato, not looking at him. He shook his head. "It's too late now. The policeman is with them. You signed the paper." His voice was gentle. 25 It was worse than if they had died: to lose the children and to know that somewhere, in a place called Colorado, in a place full of sick and dying strangers, her children were without her. Leslie M. Silko, "Lullaby"

6. What conflict is shown in this selection?
- (1) A woman fighting her own illness.
 - (2) A mother deciding whether to move her children to Colorado.
 - (3) A grandmother arguing with her children.
 - (4) A policeman arresting a man named Chato.
 - (5) Doctors and police trying to take a woman's children.

7. Which sentence shows how Ayah feels about Danny and Ella?
- (1) She signs the papers willingly.
 - (2) She holds them close, ready to run to the hills.
 - (3) She listens to Chato sullenly.
 - (4) It was her old grandma who had given the children this disease.
 - (5) She lets them go to Colorado.
8. What mood is conveyed in this passage?
- (1) happiness and satisfaction
 - (2) sadness and loss
 - (3) surprise and delight
 - (4) peace and quiet
 - (5) excitement and joy
9. The author of this passage is Native American, as are the characters. Which line in the passage is clarified by this additional information?
- (1) "They told Chato they had her signature."
 - (2) "They don't spit blood."
 - (3) "It's too late now."
 - (4) "The whites lie."
 - (5) "The policeman is with them."
10. Which of these statements expresses the most important theme of the passage?
- (1) Parents must do what is best for their children.
 - (2) Children are the greatest joy of a person's life.
 - (3) Policemen cannot be trusted.
 - (4) White people tell lies to non-whites.
 - (5) It's heart-wrenching to have children taken away.

Questions 11 through 15 refer to the following excerpt.

WHAT MIGHT THE FUTURE HOLD?

The year was 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal
 5 before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th
 10 Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.

Some things about living still weren't quite right, though. April, for instance,
 15 still drove people crazy by not being springtime. And it was in that clammy month that the H-G men took George and Hazel Bergeron's fourteen-year-old son, Harrison, away.

It was tragic, all right, but George and Hazel couldn't think about it very hard. Hazel had a perfectly average intelligence, which meant she couldn't think about anything except in short bursts. And
 25 George, while his intelligence was way above normal, had a little mental handicap radio in his ear. He was required by law to wear it at all times. It was tuned to a government transmitter. Every
 30 twenty seconds or so, the transmitter would send out some sharp noise to keep people like George from taking unfair advantage of their brains.

Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron"

11. What is the setting of this short story?
- (1) a town called Harrison in modern times
 - (2) somewhere in the United States in the year 2081
 - (3) New York City in the 1950s
 - (4) Washington, D.C.
 - (5) April in 2001
12. Which of the following best describes the conflict in the selection?
- (1) Internal: whether or not George will wear his transmitter.
 - (2) External: George and his wife argue.
 - (3) Internal: whether George should let Harrison go with the H-G men.
 - (4) External: the government controls the thinking of the people.
 - (5) External: whether the people will let the government amend the Constitution again.
13. The author of this passage is well known for his concerns about the destructive capabilities of technology. Which detail integrates this theme into the selection?
- (1) the year—2081
 - (2) the new amendments to the Constitution
 - (3) the mental handicap radio
 - (4) the fact that everyone is equal
 - (5) the son being taken away
14. What would you expect the writer of this piece to be opposed to?
- (1) amending the U.S. Constitution
 - (2) mind-control experiments
 - (3) intelligence testing
 - (4) equality under the law
 - (5) brain surgery
15. Based on this excerpt, what would you expect the theme of this story to be?
- (1) the impact of poverty
 - (2) constitutional government
 - (3) sexual attraction
 - (4) the unrestrained power of government
 - (5) springtime and rebirth

Answers and explanations start on page 370.

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