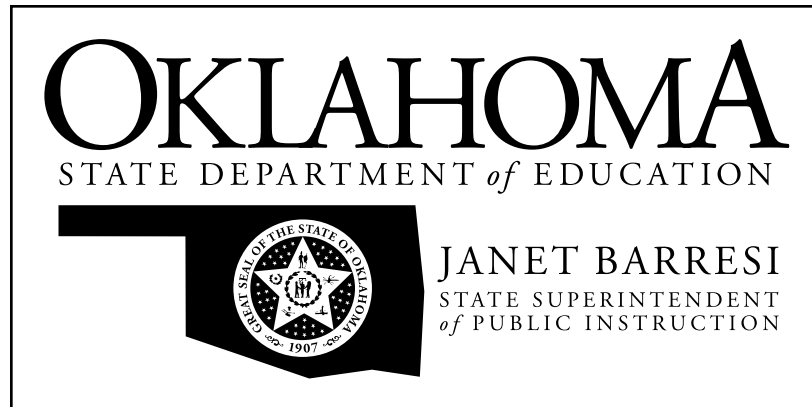


Oklahoma School Testing Program



Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests

2011–2012 Released Items

Grade 8
Reading

Oklahoma State Department of Education
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Acknowledgments

Reading

"Seventh Grade" by Gary Soto. Excerpt from "Seventh Grade" from *BASEBALL IN APRIL AND OTHER STORIES* by Gary Soto. Copyright © 1990 by Gary Soto. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Children's Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

"Vaqueros: The First Cowboys" by Sylvia Whitman. From Cobblestone issue: *Hispanic Americans*, © 1989 Carus Publishing Company, published by Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove Street, Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission of the publisher.

"Get Out of Here, Cat" by Susan Kirby. Reprinted from *Scholastic Scope*, February 12, 1988. Copyright © 1988 by Scholastic, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

"A Whole New Ball Game" by Peter Roop. From Cobblestone issue: *Takes You Out to the Ball Game*, © 1985 Carus Publishing Company, published by Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove Street, Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission of the publisher.

PEARSON

Reading



Directions

Read the selection below and the questions that follow it. Choose the best answer for each question.

100631

Seventh Grade

by Gary Soto

- 1 Then he saw her. She was sitting with a girlfriend under a plum tree. Victor moved to a table near her and daydreamed about taking her to a movie. When the bell sounded, Teresa looked up, and their eyes met. She smiled sweetly and gathered her books. Her next class was French, same as Victor's.
- 2 They were among the last students to arrive in class, so all the good desks in the back had already been taken. Victor was forced to sit near the front, a few desks away from Teresa, while Mr. Bueller wrote French words on the chalkboard. The bell rang, and Mr. Bueller wiped his hands, turned to the class, and said, "*Bonjour.*"
- 3 "*Bonjour,*" braved a few students.
- 4 "*Bonjour,*" Victor whispered. He wondered if Teresa heard him.
- 5 Mr. Bueller said that if the students studied hard, at the end of the year they could go to France and be understood by the populace.
- 6 One kid raised his hand and asked, "What's 'populace'?"
- 7 "The people, the people of France."
- 8 Mr. Bueller asked if anyone knew French. Victor raised his hand, wanting to impress Teresa. The teacher beamed and said, "*Trés bien. Parlez-vous français?*"
- 9 Victor didn't know what to say. The teacher wet his lips and asked something else in French. The room grew silent. Victor felt all eyes staring at him. He tried to bluff his way out by making noises that sounded French.
- 10 "*La me vave me con le grandma,*" he said uncertainly.
- 11 Mr. Bueller, wrinkling his face in curiosity, asked him to speak up.
- 12 Great rosebushes of red bloomed on Victor's cheeks. A river of nervous sweat ran down his palms. He felt awful. Teresa sat a few desks away, no doubt thinking he was a fool. Without looking at Mr. Bueller, Victor mumbled, "*Frenchie oh wewe gee in September.*"
- 13 Mr. Bueller asked Victor to repeat what he said.
- 14 "*Frenchie oh wewe gee in September,*" Victor repeated.

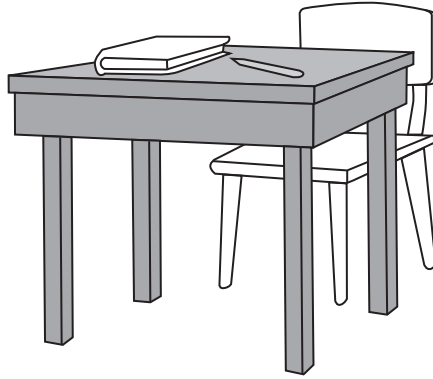


- 15 Mr. Bueller understood that the boy didn't know French and turned away. He walked to the blackboard and pointed to the words on the board with his steel-edged ruler.
- 16 "*Le bateau,*" he sang.
- 17 "*Le bateau,*" the students repeated.
- 18 "*Le bateau est sur l'eau,*" he sang.
- 19 "*Le bateau est sur l'eau.*"
- 20 Victor was too weak from failure to join the class. He stared at the board and wished he had taken Spanish, not French. Better yet, he wished he could start his life over. He had never been so embarrassed. He bit his thumb until he tore off a sliver of skin.
- 21 The bell sounded for fifth period, and Victor shot out of the room, avoiding the stares of the other kids, but had to return for his math book. He looked sheepishly at the teacher, who was erasing the board, then widened his eyes in terror at Teresa who stood in front of him. "I didn't know you knew French," she said. "That was good."
- 22 Mr. Bueller looked at Victor, and Victor looked back. Oh please, don't say anything, Victor pleaded with his eyes. I'll wash your car, mow your lawn, walk your dog—anything! I'll be your best student, and I'll clean your erasers after school.
- 23 Mr. Bueller shuffled through the papers on his desk. He smiled and hummed as he sat down to work. He remembered his college years when he dated a girlfriend in borrowed cars. She thought he was rich because each time he picked her up he had a different car. It was fun until he had spent all his money on her and had to write home to his parents because he was broke.
- 24 Victor couldn't stand to look at Teresa. He was sweaty with shame. "Yeah, well, I picked up a few things from movies and books and stuff like that." They left the class together. Teresa asked him if he would help her with her French.
- 25 "Sure, anytime," Victor said.
- 26 "I won't be bothering you, will I?"
- 27 "Oh no, I like being bothered."
- 28 "*Bonjour,*" Teresa said, leaving him outside her next class. She smiled and pushed wisps of hair from her face.
- 29 "Yeah, right, *Bonjour,*" Victor said. He turned and headed to his class. The rosebushes of shame on his face became bouquets of love. Teresa is a great girl, he thought. And Mr. Bueller is a good guy.



30 He raced to metal shop. After metal shop there was biology, and after biology a long sprint to the public library, where he checked out three French textbooks.

31 He was going to like seventh grade.



1 In the first paragraph, the author established the mood of

533949_3

- A discontent.
- B desperation.
- C anticipation.
- D bewilderment.

2 In paragraph 9, the word bluff means to

533952_4

- A have a rough manner.
- B challenge or intimidate.
- C make a serious mistake.
- D give a false display of confidence.



3 Why did Victor's eyes widen in terror when he returned to Mr. Bueller's classroom to pick up his math book?

533951_1

- A Teresa was still in the room.
- B The math book was missing.
- C The other kids were staring at him.
- D He thought that he would be punished.

4 The phrase "pleaded with his eyes" is used in this selection to mean Victor

533946_3

- A wanted a job.
- B was unable to speak.
- C was begging for mercy.
- D didn't understand Mr. Bueller.

5 Why didn't Mr. Bueller give Victor's secret away?

533947_1

- A Mr. Bueller had a similar experience in college.
- B He knew Teresa would figure it out by herself.
- C He could tell Victor would be a good student.
- D Mr. Bueller felt sorry for Teresa.



6 What word best tells how Victor felt at the end of the selection?

533420_1

- A Elated
- B Anxious
- C Indebted
- D Sentimental

7 When summarizing this selection, which of these ideas would be least important to include?

533942_1

- A Victor sat a few desks away from Teresa's desk.
- B Victor tried to make noises that sounded French.
- C Teresa asked Victor to help her with French class.
- D Mr. Bueller realized that Victor couldn't speak French.



Vaqueros: The First Cowboys

by Sylvia Whitman

- 1 Thanks to paperback novels and Hollywood movies, the word “cowboy” stirs up a rich soup of images related to the Wild West. Sometimes the cowboy trots his faithful horse across the wide-open prairie at sunset—proud, soulful, in touch with nature. Sometimes he gallops right into a thundering herd of cattle—tough, cool, in control. Over the years, he has become a symbol of independence and of America.
- 2 But the first cowboys did not come from the United States. They were vaqueros, Mexicans and Mexican Americans with extraordinary skills in horsemanship and livestock care. They introduced Anglo-Americans to the cattle business, and although most books and films have overlooked their contribution, vaqueros helped to shape cowboy culture.
- 3 Before Europeans began building colonies in this country, Spanish missionaries and pioneers settled the area that is today Texas, New Mexico, California, and northern Mexico. Small ranches and large haciendas sprang up all over this vast territory, and owners hired vaqueros to manage the day-to-day operations.
- 4 When Texas won independence from Mexico in 1836, many Hispanic landholders abandoned their property, driven out by Anglo pioneers. New to the beef business, Anglos hired the out-of-work Hispanic vaqueros and learned their techniques. By the 1870s and 1880s, the heyday of the open range and cattle drives, Anglo cowboys outnumbered the Hispanic vaqueros almost nine to one.
- 5 The influence of the vaqueros was far-reaching, however. For example, they modified the standard horse saddle to make roping a bull easier. Their technique, *de la vuelta*, involved throwing a loop of cord over the horns of a bull and then twirling the other end around the pommel rising out of the front of the saddle. Although an inexperienced roper could lose a finger if it got caught in the line, this way of bringing down a bull usually prevented injury to both the steer and the roper’s horse. When the Anglos adopted this method, they called it dally roping, and they used the vaquero saddle, which eventually became known as the western saddle.
- 6 Most traditional cowboy clothing also originated with the vaqueros. They wore chaps, heavy leather aprons worn over pants to protect a rider’s legs, and *poblanos*, low, wide-brimmed hats, and they carried a quirt, a tightly woven leather whip. To prevent their feet from sliding through the stirrups, they wore boots with high heels.



- 7 The Hispanic cowboys developed a special vocabulary for their trade. Vaqueton, “thick-skinned,” referred to a vaquero whose boss was always scolding him. When a horse carried its head high, the ranch hands called it estrello, “stargazer.” If a horse bucked, a vaquero might yell, “Agarrarse del sauce!” (“Take hold of the willow!”), referring to the saddle horn, which was carved out of willow wood. Sometimes Anglo cowboys changed the terminology—and certainly mispronounced it—but a great many Spanish words entered the English language through the cattle business. Among these are lasso, bronco, corral, and rodeo.
- 8 The myth of the American West celebrates the cowboy, but it also misrepresents him. Anglo-Americans did not tame the frontier single-handedly. The real strength of our western heritage lies in the lives of everyday heroes like the able, innovative vaqueros.

8 In paragraph 1, the phrase “a rich soup of images” refers to

533218_4

- A the people who became cowboys.
- B a special soup created for cowboys.
- C the many scenes a director must create.
- D the variety of pictures created in our minds.

9 According to the author, the words “vaqueton,” “estrello,” “lasso,” and “corral” came from

533221_2

- A Spanish missionaries.
- B the cattle business.
- C Wild West books.
- D films.



10 Which of these is the author's opinion?

533213_4

- A Texas won independence from Mexico in 1836.
- B Most cowboy clothing originated with vaqueros.
- C The vaqueros modified the standard horse saddle.
- D Vaqueros were the real strength of western heritage.

11 The author probably wrote this selection in order to

533212_3

- A teach the reader cowboy terminology.
- B show the reader who settled the West.
- C change the reader's ideas about cowboys.
- D introduce the reader to symbols of the West.

12 This selection can best be described as

533219_1

- A a historical account.
- B an adventure story.
- C a fictional account.
- D realistic fiction.

13 Which sentence is the best summary of this selection?

533215_2

- A Western life was hard for cowboys and vaqueros.
- B The vaquero left a lasting imprint on the West.
- C Cowboys had to learn the vaqueros' language.
- D The cowboy symbolizes the Old West.



Get Out of Here, Cat

by Susan Kirby

- 1 Myra had left a full bag of dry cat food on the porch. Dan took the sack and walked across the alley to the back of the lumberyard. At the sound of his footsteps, cats of many colors scattered. He poured food into the dish. Then he backed away. Cats ran out of metal sheds, broken-down buildings, and stacks of weathered lumber. They were nervous, stealthy, hungry cats.
- 2 One orange tom kept away from the others. He was young and sleek, with golden eyes and a bold manner. When he tired of watching Dan, he made his way to the food dish and growled. The other cats backed away.
- 3 "You're a tough one," Dan said softly. The cat ignored him and ate until he had had his fill. When he moved away from the dish, the other cats crowded in. Dan watched the orange tomcat walk off to sun himself on a warm concrete slab. It reminded him of his mother's words. He wasn't going to find a job if he lounged around with his feet propped up.
- 4 But what else could he do? Mr. Miller had been his last hope. He had run out of places to look.
- 5 "Dan, did you encourage that orange cat to come home with you?"
- 6 Dan awoke to see his mother standing over him. She smelled of second-hand smoke, fried chicken, and grease. Dan rubbed his eyes.
- 7 "You know that we can't have a cat."
- 8 "I know it."
- 9 "Then why is there a cat sitting on our step?" She frowned.
- 10 Dan shrugged. He turned over and buried his head under the pillow.
- 11 In the morning, the orange cat was sitting on the milk box. Dan brushed past him on the way out the door: "Get out of here, cat. Go on. Shoo!" The cat meowed for food. "No way, cat. Myra feeds you once a day. That's all. Now get out of here." Dan stomped his feet, and the cat ran.
- 12 But that afternoon when Dan came home from school, the cat was waiting. The following afternoon, and the afternoon after that, the cat was waiting. Dan's mother fumed and fretted. She chased the cat away. It did no good. The cat kept coming back.
- 13 A week passed. Myra came home. But the cat refused to return to the lumberyard.



- 14 One morning, Dan said, "He's a nice cat." He watched the cat sharpen his claws on a tree.
- 15 The next day, his mother remarked, "He's persistent." She watched the cat sit beneath the front window.
- 16 "All he wants is a good home," Dan said to himself.
- 17 Dan's mother stared at him. He felt as if he was being accused. "I'm not feeding him, honest."
- 18 But his mother was. Dan caught her in the act. One night, she arrived home from work. Dan opened the front door. He was just in time to see her toss something beneath the peony bush where the cat slept.
- 19 "It's just a few scraps from the restaurant," she said. She sounded cross.
- 20 Dan shut the door. But he couldn't shut off his smile.
- 21 "What are you grinning at?"
- 22 "Nothing," he said. He went back to bed. The orange lumberyard cat had no lucky coin. Persistence, Dan thought, growing sleepy. He closed his eyes to float on a dream sea of bruised apples and golden-eyed cats.
- 23 His mother snapped on the light. "I just want you to know that we're not spending one thin dime on that cat. Do you hear me, Dan?"
- 24 He blinked against the bright glare.
- 25 "The cat can stay, just as long as he doesn't cost me anything," she said.
- 26 Bruised apples? Golden-eyed cats? What a crazy dream. Or was it? He sat up and yawned. "Mom, if he costs us anything, I'll pay."
- 27 "You?"
- 28 He nodded. "The sign is still in Mr. Miller's window. I'm getting that job."
- 29 "Dan . . ." She sounded too tired for words.
- 30 "I'm going back to see Mr. Miller. I forgot to tell him that I'm a good worker. I forgot to tell him that I'd never be late."
- 31 "And if he still doesn't hire you?"
- 32 "Then I'll go back the next day, and the next, until he hires me. If he doesn't, someone else will. I'll keep trying."
- 33 She snapped off the light. She said gently, "You're still just a kid, Danny, but you're a smart kid."
- 34 "I'm learning." He smiled into his pillow.



14 Dan got the idea to apply again for the job from

533924_3

- A talking with Mr. Miller.
- B listening to his mother.
- C watching the orange cat.
- D feeding the cats for Myra.

15 Paragraphs 2 and 3 are important to the selection because they

533380_2

- A introduce the alley cats.
- B illustrate self-confidence.
- C show Dan is irresponsible.
- D describe how tomcats act.

16 This selection is mainly about

533922_4

- A meeting new friends.
- B adopting stray animals.
- C respecting your parents.
- D learning from experience.



17 The author used the phrase “fumed and fretted” to show Dan’s mother was

533925_2

- A nervous.
- B frustrated.
- C persistent.
- D temperamental.

18 What lesson did Dan learn at the end of the selection?

533926_4

- A Always feed cats on time.
- B Always tell the truth.
- C Mothers know best.
- D Never give up.

19 This selection would most likely be found in

533382_4

- A an encyclopedia.
- B a biology book.
- C a newspaper.
- D a periodical.



A Whole New Ball Game

by Peter Roop

- 1 The earliest games of “baseball,” also known as rounders, were played on village greens with wooden posts or stones for bases, sticks for bats, and balls of different sizes. No gloves, mitts, masks, or uniforms were used. Baseball then was considered just an enjoyable children’s game.
- 2 Over the years, as baseball developed and changed and people of all ages began playing, the equipment used in the game also evolved. Today, baseball players are equipped with well-padded gloves, wooden and aluminum bats, standard-size balls, helmets, catcher’s masks, and shin guards. This equipment contributes to the safety and enjoyment of one of America’s more popular sports.
- 3 The establishment of a regulation-size baseball diamond was a major change in how baseball was played. The diamond shape was used early in baseball, but the distance between bases varied. In the 1840s, the Knickerbocker Baseball Club adopted a code of rules that set the distance between bases at ninety feet (this figure is in dispute). Home plate was made of iron until 1872, then of stone until 1887, when the rubber plate was introduced.
- 4 Early baseball players wore no gloves, fielding hard-hit balls with their bare hands. Arthur Irwin, a shortstop, is credited with designing and bringing padded gloves into baseball.* In 1883, Irwin broke two fingers on his left hand. To protect his injured fingers, Irwin went to a glove maker and ordered a large, buckskin driving glove with extra padding. At first, wearing such gloves was considered “unmanly,” but soon other players began wearing them to protect their hands.
- 5 The size and shape of baseball gloves have changed to fit the needs of different playing positions. Fielders now use webbed gloves with “pockets,” while catchers wear thick “mitts” to catch fastballs. Over the years, webs have gotten bigger and pockets deeper. Today’s gloves are so good that some people have suggested redesigning them to give hitters a better chance!

*Although not a general practice, some gloves were used in the 1870s, but they were not designed for baseball. Irwin was the first to adapt one for baseball.



- 6 The size of the baseball was established in 1860. The ball was to weigh five to five and a half ounces and be nine to nine and a quarter inches around. Early balls were made of horsehide, but today cowhide covers the balls. In 1910, cork-center baseballs were introduced, and hitters found themselves able to hit the ball much farther. The era of the "live ball" has continued with the rubber-core balls used today.
- 7 Baseball bats have also changed over the years, from big sticks to carefully crafted ash and shiny aluminum bats. The first baseball bats could be any length or thickness, and many were strangely shaped or curved. Today's bats vary depending on each player's wishes, but they must conform to basic shape and thickness specifications. Many professional baseball players have bats made especially for them.
- 8 Fred Thayer invented the catcher's mask in 1875. He took a fencer's mask, had holes cut in the wire mesh, and urged his teammate James Tyng to use this "birdcage." The mask provided much-needed protection for the catcher's face and caught on quickly. It has been modified and reinforced to become today's familiar mask. Chest pads and shin guards also increased the catcher's safety.
- 9 The first baseball uniforms were blue-and-white outfits identical to those worn by British cricket players. At the end of the nineteenth century, ballplayers wore padded pants and neat bow ties. Today's knit uniforms were introduced in the 1960s and were soon followed by other colorful uniform fashions.
- 10 Branch Rickey is considered to be the father of the batting helmet, which he invented to protect batters from being "beaned" (hit in the head) by the ball. Made of fiberglass and polyester resin, the early helmets were slow to catch on. As players realized the protection such helmets offered, however, more and more began wearing them. Batting helmets are now required in both major leagues.
- 11 Sweatbands, batting gloves, artificial turf, computerized rosters, and instant-replay score boards are recent additions to baseball. To early players, baseball today would certainly seem like a whole new ball game!



20 The title "A Whole New Ball Game" means

533077_1

- A baseball today is very different from in the past.
- B the ball used in baseball has been transformed.
- C a new version of baseball is being created.
- D baseball has led to other games.

21 According to this selection, the result of one baseball injury was that

533084_3

- A long socks were introduced.
- B the thickness of the bats changed.
- C a glove was made with extra padding.
- D a player was removed from the game.

22 Which one of the following experiences would help you most in understanding this selection?

533081_4

- A Purchasing a custom-made bat
- B Playing football with your friends
- C Breaking in a new baseball glove
- D Visiting the Baseball Hall of Fame



23 This selection would most likely be found in

533076_2

- A** an almanac.
- B** a sports magazine.
- C** a history textbook.
- D** a science textbook.

24 What is the main purpose of the asterisk and footnote?

533079_2

- A** to give us some background about how Irwin became a player
- B** to explain that Irwin was first to adapt a glove for baseball
- C** to inform us that Irwin broke two fingers on his left hand
- D** to tell us that Irwin played the position of shortstop

25 The author probably wrote this selection in order to

533087_3

- A** show how sports are invented.
- B** entertain us with baseball stories.
- C** inform us about the history of baseball.
- D** share a personal experience with baseball.



