

GRADE 8 ENG

ELA Grade 8 CCS Practice

Yonkers City School District

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Read the following and answer Question 1 through Question 7:

This excerpt is from a book about the history of the Hudson River.

Excerpt from *River of Dreams*

by Hudson Talbott

- 1 By the twentieth century, New York City had long since reached its destiny of becoming the most powerful city in America. In less than 300 years it had grown from a tiny Dutch outpost in the wilderness to the business capital of the world. It was a city built on dreams.
- 2 But it was made out of bricks and cement that had come from the banks of the Hudson. The river which had fed all those dreams was now fading into the background. New York didn't seem to need the river anymore, except as a sewer. And that's what it became.
- 3 Industry on the river had made some New Yorkers filthy rich. But it had just made the river filthy. Garbage, factory waste, plant chemicals and the raw sewage of the cities and towns along its banks were dumped directly into the river. The water turned greenish brown, except by the GM plant, where it turned red or yellow or whatever color they were painting the cars that day.
- 4 The fishing industry collapsed. The few fish that survived were too poisonous to eat. Smog from the factory smoke and dust from the cement plants blanketed the valley. And it was all legal.
- 5 Most people don't start out with dreams of polluting a river. But it was often the result of people chasing their dreams of wealth with little care of how they reached it. The Hudson Valley had always drawn them.
- 6 But now there were other dreamers in the valley, with their own dreams of wealth. They dreamed of the wealth of wildlife in a healthy forest, the abundance of fish in oxygen-rich water, and the great fortune of living in a beautiful river valley.
- 7 So perhaps it was a matter of time before the two types of dreamers would meet each other—in court.
- 8 In 1963, Con Edison, New York City's power company, proposed a plan for constructing the largest hydroelectric pumping station ever built. The plan called for carving out a gigantic hole in the side of majestic Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River.
- 9 But then they met Franny Reese. Franny was a longtime valley resident with a simple point to make: the mountain could not speak for itself. If she didn't speak for it, who would?

- 10 Franny and a group of like-minded people founded Scenic Hudson and took on the power company in a landmark court case. Con Ed challenged the right of private citizens to participate, but the court sided with the citizens, in the ruling now known as the Scenic Hudson Decision.
- 11 After dragging out the case for seventeen years, Con Ed finally gave up and Storm King survived unblemished. It was the beginning of the environmental movement in this country, and once again, the Hudson Valley was the birthplace.
- 12 More and more people joined the movement as they realized how much difference each of us can make.
- 13 The love of their land was still alive in the hearts of Americans, and now that it was aroused again, things began to change.
- 14 Many new laws and new citizens' groups have been inspired by those early heroes of the environment, and their work has begun to bring the Hudson back to life.
- 15 The Mahicans called it "The River That Flows Both Ways." Slowly we are learning that taking care of the river is the only way that the river can take care of us.
- 16 Fifty years have passed since I dreamed of going to New York to see the river that shares my name, and thirty-five years since that dream came true. I live in the Hudson Valley now, grateful to all those who came before me, following their dreams to this river, building this nation, sharing its beauty, securing its future.
- 17 It's now my turn to help in keeping the river of dreams flowing, for all those dreamers yet to come.

1 As used in paragraph 2, what does the phrase "fading into the background" mean?

- A disappearing from view
- B losing its importance in people's minds
- C moving farther and farther from the city
- D remaining important only to those who value nature

2 Which claim from the article is **least** supported?

- A “New York didn’t seem to need the river anymore, except as a sewer. And that’s what it became.” (paragraph 2)
- B “Industry on the river had made some New Yorkers filthy rich.” (paragraph 3)
- C “But it had just made the river filthy.” (paragraph 3)
- D “But now there were other dreamers in the valley, with their own dreams of wealth.” (paragraph 6)

3 What is the role of paragraph 7 in the organization of the article?

- A It compares the two groups of dreamers.
- B It concludes the part of the article about industry.
- C It introduces the part of the article about activists.
- D It transitions to the part of the article where change occurs.

4 What does “unblemished” mean as used in paragraph 11?

- A unaware
- B unknown
- C unharmed
- D unstable

5 How does the idea expressed in paragraph 15 relate to the article?

- A There are two main ways that the river can be fixed.
- B The river is able to move in two different directions.
- C People who benefit from the river must also protect it.
- D Opposing groups can each get what they want from the river.

6 Which sentence is **most** important to include in a summary of the article?

- A One company colored the river red and yellow with excess car paint.
- B The Hudson River became polluted in the effort to gain wealth.
- C The Mahicans have a saying about taking care of the river.

D The author has dreamed of returning to the Hudson River for fifty years.

7 Which quotation **best** expresses the author's point of view in the article?

A "In less than 300 years it had grown from a tiny Dutch outpost in the wilderness to the business capital of the world." (paragraph 1)

B "In 1963, Con Edison, New York City's power company, proposed a plan for constructing the largest hydroelectric pumping station ever built." (paragraph 8)

C "More and more people joined the movement as they realized how much difference each of us can make." (paragraph 12)

D "It's now my turn to help in keeping the river of dreams flowing, for all those dreamers yet to come." (paragraph 17)

Read the following and answer Question 8 through Question 14:

Excerpt from *A la Carte*

by Tanita S. Davis

- 1 “Homework?” My mother mouths the word exaggeratedly, eyebrows raised, and I roll my eyes. Frowning, she points with her chin to the side door that leads to the stairs. I roll my eyes again, mouthing, Okay, okay, not needing her to pantomime further what she wants me to do. I hate the thought of leaving the clattering nerve center of the restaurant to wrestle with my trigonometry homework in my mother’s quiet office downstairs.
- 2 “Order!”
- 3 The bright lights and swirl of noise and motion are muffled as the kitchen door swings closed behind me.
- 4 It’s hard to remember a time when the restaurant hasn’t been the center of our lives. Mom used to be a copy editor and wrote food features for our local paper, the Clarion, and she met Pia when she did a write-up on the culinary school Pia attended. Pia thinks it was fate that Mom wanted to invest in a restaurant at the same time Pia wanted to buy the old bank building.
- 5 La Salle Rouge doesn’t serve much in the way of “kid” food, since the menu doesn’t cater to people my age on a cheap date, but I’ve loved everything about it from the first. I started experimenting with being a vegetarian when I turned fourteen, but Pia still found things to feed me and taught me to be creative with vegetables and tofu. I like to think I’m the best-fed vegetarian in the state of California.
- 6 Pia’s been really good about teaching what she knows, and I decided early on that this is the work I want to do—get out of school and get into the kitchen for good. Mom and Pia have created a popular French-Asian-Californian fusion restaurant that has gotten great reviews from food critics. They took the best of each other’s tastes— Mom’s traditional Southern flavors and Pia’s French training combined with her vegetable- and spice-savvy Cambodian tastes—and pulled off what one food critic called “stylized food with unique flavor combinations in an intimate setting.”
- 7 Whatever that means.
- 8 Three years ago, when I started high school thirty pounds heavier than everyone in my class, Mom and I came up with a light menu for La Salle Rouge, and it’s been such a popular idea that Mom lets me come up with tasty, low-calorie desserts, which is one of my favorite things to do. It hardly seems fair that I have to walk away from all of that just to do trigonometry,

but my mom says I have to finish school before I concentrate on cooking. She says it's smarter to have a "backup plan," and she's made me apply to plenty of colleges and check out business majors just in case I ever want to do anything else with my life. I guess that makes sense if you're anybody other than me. When I turn eighteen, I already know what I'm going to do.

- 9 First, I'm going to buy a plane ticket to D.C. and go to Julia Child's kitchen at the Smithsonian and leave roses. They don't let you walk through it, but somewhere—I don't know where—I'm going to leave a bouquet and a little note for her. Julia Child is my patron saint¹. She's the queen of all reasons people can do anything they want in life. Saint Julia didn't start cooking until she was practically forty, and she went on to do TV shows and make cookbooks and be this huge part of culinary history. She never got too fancy, she never freaked out, and she was never afraid to try new things. I want to be just like her—except maybe get famous faster.
- 10 The second thing I'm going to do is buy myself a set of knives. Pia swears by this set of German steel knives she got when she graduated, but I've seen the TV chef Kylie Kwong use a phenomenal-looking ceramic knife on her show on the Discovery Channel. Either way, knives are what the best chefs have of their very own.
- 11 The third thing I'm going to do, after I get back from Washington and get my knives, is . . . get discovered. Somehow. I know I'm going to have to pay my dues, but I'm so ready for my real life to start. It's not something I admit to a lot, but my real dream is to be a celebrity chef. Do you know how many African American female chefs there aren't? And how many vegetarian chefs have their own shows? The field is wide open for stardom. Every time I watch old episodes of Saint Julia, I imagine that I have my own cooking show. The way celebrity chefs do it now, I could also have a line of cooking gear, cookbooks, aprons, the works. People would know my name, ask for my autograph, and try my recipes. All I have to do is finish my trig homework and get back into the kitchen.

¹**patron saint:** an inspiring person admired for his or her work

- 8 In paragraph 1, what does the phrase "clattering nerve center of the restaurant" suggest?
- A messiness, chaos
 - B energy, core
 - C tension, anxiety
 - D greatness, stability

- 9 Which quotation **best** expresses a central idea of the story?
- A “I started experimenting with being a vegetarian when I turned fourteen . . .” (paragraph 5)
 - B “. . . I decided early on that this is the work I want to do . . .” (paragraph 6)
 - C “It hardly seems fair that I have to walk away from all of that . . .” (paragraph 8)
 - D “. . . just in case I ever want to do anything else with my life.” (paragraph 8)

- 10 Read this sentence from paragraph 9.

Shes's the queen of all reasons people can do anything they want in life.

What does this sentence suggest about Julia Child?

- A Her famous kitchen became part of a cooking museum.
 - B She was successful in a career that interested her.
 - C She always remained calm in the kitchen.
 - D Her cooking style created unique flavor combinations.
- 11 In paragraph 11, what does the one-word statement “Somehow” reveal?
- A It illustrates the narrator’s enthusiasm about her future plans.
 - B It shows the narrator has some questions about whether she will succeed or not.
 - C It shows the narrator does not have every detail of her future plans figured out just yet.
 - D It demonstrates the narrator’s lack of knowledge about how difficult her goals are to achieve.
- 12 What does the statement “I know I’m going to have to pay my dues” (paragraph 11) show about the narrator’s attitude toward her plans?
- A She thinks the price of fame might be too high.
 - B She realizes success depends on more than setting a goal.
 - C She is highly motivated by the idea of becoming famous.
 - D She thinks becoming a celebrity chef requires only money.

- 13 Which sentence would be **most** important to include in a summary of the story?
- A When the narrator's mother makes her do homework, the narrator rolls her eyes.
 - B When the narrator's mother wanted to invest in a restaurant, Pia wanted to buy the old bank building.
 - C The narrator admires celebrity chefs.
 - D The narrator lives in California.
- 14 The author develops the narrator's point of view mainly through the use of
- A internal monologue
 - B conflict between characters
 - C limited dialogue
 - D flashback

Read the following and answer Question 15 through Question 17:

So Much Happiness

by Naomi Shihab Nye

It is difficult to know what to do with so much happiness.
With sadness there is something to rub against,
a wound to tend with lotion and cloth.
When the world falls in around you, you have pieces to pick up,
5 something to hold in your hands, like ticket stubs or change.

But happiness floats.
It doesn't need you to hold it down.
It doesn't need anything.
Happiness lands on the roof of the next house, singing,
10 and disappears when it wants to.
You are happy either way.
Even the fact that you once lived in a peaceful tree house
and now live over a quarry of noise and dust
cannot make you unhappy.
15 Everything has a life of its own,
it too could wake up filled with possibilities
of coffee cake and ripe peaches,
and love even the floor which needs to be swept,
the soiled linens and scratched records . . .

15 In "So Much Happiness," what does the comparison in lines 1 through 8 show about happiness? Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

16 In “So Much Happiness,” what do lines 15 through 19 say about how happiness affects the speaker? Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

17 What is a theme of “So Much Happiness?” Use **two** details from the poem to support your response.

Read the following and answer Question 18 through Question 19:

This article is about a proposed Swedish law to lower the cost of repairing appliances. The article asks whether repairs are the best solution to appliance problems.

Don't Fix Your Fridge, Just Buy a New One

by Michael Le Page

- 1 In general, if running a machine uses a lot more energy over the years than it takes to manufacture it, replacing it regularly may reduce energy consumption. Fridges, air conditioners, televisions and, yes, washing machines typically take far more energy to run than to make.
- 2 Why is it better to replace these machines rather than repair them? Two reasons. Firstly, stricter regulations and improving technology mean newer appliances are usually more energy efficient than older ones.
- 3 The second, less appreciated reason is that as components wear out, energy consumption can rise by 50 percent or more. That means even replacing a fridge, say, with an identical but brand new model can be better than hanging on to the old one.
- 4 In other words, after a certain number of years replacing a machine will mean lower emissions¹ than continuing to use it. How long is too long? A 2006 study concluded that the “optimum replacement cycle” for a fridge ranged from 11 years to as little as two years. Two years!
- 5 Of course, much depends on the make of machine, how you use it and what you replace it with. Clearly, replacing a 20-inch television with a 40-inch one won't reduce emissions even if the new one is far more efficient. Whether your appliance ends up in a landfill or is recycled also matters. And to complicate matters further, the low energy consumption levels claimed by some manufacturers may be misleading.
- 6 People are also inclined to replace non-power tools such as rakes and hand saws with leaf blowers and power saws. That's obviously going to increase emissions. I've tried to go in the opposite direction, swapping an electric lawnmower for a muscle-powered push mower, and found it far more convenient—plus I get a free workout.
- 7 It should also be stressed that many machines, from bicycles to kitchen mixers and power drills, are indeed worth repairing, because it takes far more energy to make them than to run them. So if Sweden does manage to boost repair rates, it's hard to predict the overall impact on emissions.

8 What is clear is that instead of the proposed blanket reduction on taxes on repairs, it would be better to exclude certain appliances like fridges. Yes, this would make the legislation more complex and harder to explain to the public. But that’s just how it is.

¹**emissions:** gases that machines send into the air

18 How do paragraphs 1 through 4 develop a central idea in “Don’t Fix Your Fridge, Just Buy a New One”? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

19 Why does the author of “Don’t Fix Your Fridge, Just Buy a New One” discuss many different types of machines? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.
