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TIME  
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# Practicing for Today's Tests

Level

5

Language  
Arts



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# Today's Next Generation Tests

“To be college and career ready, students must now read across a broad range of high-quality texts from diverse cultures and times in history.”

—Delia E. Racines, Ph.D.

Education is currently undergoing a dramatic shift when it comes to the ways we measure and assess for learning. Educational standards across the nation are designed to provide clear and meaningful goals for our students. These standards serve as a frame of reference for educators, parents, and students and are most critical when decisions must be made about curriculum, textbooks, assessments, and other aspects of instructional programs (Conley 2014). Part of the disconnect with standards in the recent past has been the vast differences and lack of consistency in expectations that became a major concern for the quality of education students were receiving across the country (Conley 2014; Wiley and Wright 2004).

Standards in education in the United States are not a new concept. However, the role of educational standards has recently shifted to not only ensure that all students have access to equitable education no matter where they live, but also to ensure a more consistent national expectation for what all students should know to be successful in a rapidly changing economy and society (Kornhaber, Griffith, and Tyler 2014).

Scales, scores, and assessments are absolutely necessary to ascertain the current status of students. This kind of data is vital for teachers to understand what is missing and what the next steps should be. The real question about assessment isn't whether we should assess but rather what kinds of assessments should be used. Along with the current shift to more consistent and rigorous standards, states now measure student progress with assessments that require higher-order thinking skills necessary for preparation for college and/or careers.

So, what is this new yardstick that is being used? How is it better than yardsticks of the past? And how do we best prepare students to be measured with this yardstick in a way that tells the whole story? The next generation tests intend to provide results that are comparable across all states and will use more performance-based tasks as well as technology-enhanced items. This is very different in comparison to the standardized testing that teachers, students, and parents are used to (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2010; Rothman 2013).

The following descriptions serve as explanations of how the three most prominent next-generation tests are different from assessments of the past.

# Categories of Questions

In order for students today to be better prepared for college and/or careers, they must be able to read widely and deeply across a range of informational and literary texts (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2010). In today's standards, there are often three categories of reading standards. On assessments, these categories are represented by three categories of questions. The questions include new terminology that defines specific skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. **Note:** See *Appendix B* (pages 100–103) for how these categories are represented in each practice exercise in this book.

Overall, today's college and career readiness reading standards depict the picture of what students should be able to exhibit with increasing proficiency and on a regular basis. To be college and career ready, students must now read across a broad range of high-quality texts from diverse cultures and times in history. The reading standards emphasize the skills necessary to critically read and continuously make connections among ideas and texts. Students also learn to distinguish poor reasoning as well as ambiguities in texts. The following explanation of the terms related to each of the three reading categories will better prepare educators and parents for today's tests.

## Key Ideas and Details

This category stresses the importance of understanding specific information in various texts. Overall, students must be able to identify specific details and then gain deeper meaning from what is read. Specifically, this category requires students to be able to do the following things.

Students should be able to . . .	To show how they know this, students must . . .
read text closely to really understand what it says.	identify specific details from the text.
make conclusions based on what they identify from a text.	say or write specific details to support their conclusions.
determine the main idea or theme from a text and analyze its development.	identify and summarize key supporting details that support the theme or main idea.
figure out how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	explain details about how characters and/or the story develop at different times throughout the text from the beginning to the end.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Frog Who Became an Emperor

by Stephanie Herweck Paris

**Directions:** Read this script and respond to the questions on pages 84–86.

*Long ago a very poor couple lived near the Imperial Palace in China. The man leaves to find work. While he's gone, the wife gives birth to a frog! Upon the father's return, the couple learns that their frog son can tell the future. He tells them to take him to see the emperor.*

- 1 Narrator: The couple and their frog son arrived at the capital. They found everyone in the courtyard listening to the emperor speak, while his nervous daughter stood by, clutching her hands together.
- Emperor: I will give my daughter's hand in marriage to the one who can defeat our enemy!
- Narrator: The emperor went inside the castle, and the princess followed him.
- Princess: You will give me to whoever can defeat the enemy?
- 5 Emperor: My daughter, I have no intention of marrying you to some lowly general. I will find an excuse to pay him in some other way and marry you to a rich prince who can bring me more land and power.
- Narrator: Just then, a servant ushered in the talking frog and his parents.
- Emperor: Frog, as you can see, I am rather busy right now. Our nation is being invaded!
- Frog: But I guarantee that I can defeat the enemy. Order a servant to bring me a pile of burning coal.
- Emperor: Very well. Burning embers are an insignificant price to pay for a chance to save the country.
- 10 Narrator: For the next three days, the frog proceeded to eat his way through the pile of glowing coals. His stomach got larger and larger.
- Frog: Since the enemy is almost at the capital gate, show me the way up onto the battlement.

# The Frog Who Became an Emperor *(cont.)*

- Narrator: The frog leaped up onto the city wall and began to spit burning embers at each of the enemy soldiers.
- Princess: Look! They are running away! Oh, Frog, you are so brave!
- Emperor: Oh, most noble frog, the Great Empire of China thanks you for your service and offers you this bag of gold.
- 15 Frog's Father: You promised that he could marry the princess.
- Emperor: Well, Frog, it is not as if you fought the enemy with great deeds of leadership or heroic acts. After all, you only spit at the soldiers.
- Narrator: At that moment, the princess rushed happily from the room to dress in wedding attire. The emperor follows the princess into her room and stops her.
- Emperor: Today, I announced to the kingdom that we will use the tradition of the embroidered ball to pick your husband. Go to the balcony and throw the ball. Whoever catches it will be your husband and heir to my throne, so take care with your aim!
- Princess: I want to marry the frog!
- 20 Emperor: Be silent, you foolish girl! Go now, Princess, and throw the ball!
- Narrator: The emperor had secretly arranged for several rich princes of his choosing to be in the crowd that day. Those princes were standing on boxes that made them taller than the other suitors to ensure that one of them would surely catch the ball. The princess resigned herself to her fate.
- Man: Who caught it? Who caught the ball?

# The Frog Who Became an Emperor *(cont.)*

- Woman: A man I have never seen before! He leaped out of the crowd like a creature of some sort—a rabbit, maybe, or a grasshopper? In any case, he snatched it before anyone else had a chance.
- Narrator: The emperor was shocked, but he could not find any way around it. The stranger and the princess were married that day. When they got back to her chamber, a familiar voice spoke to her.
- 25 Frog: Princess, please do not be alarmed. I hope you were truthful when you said you wanted to marry me, because now we are husband and wife!
- Princess: Frog! Oh yes, I am so happy to be your wife! But, how is this possible, and why do you look human?
- Frog: Well, let me show you.
- Narrator: With that, the young man did a neat flip and landed in his frog skin. Instantly, the skin closed around him, and he was a frog once more.
- Frog: Whenever we are alone together, I will stay in my human form. But, whenever we go out, I will wear the frog skin.
- 30 Princess: I will love you whatever form you take, but why do you want to lead a double life?
- Narrator: The frog whispered to the princess, and she nodded. The next time she saw the emperor, she told him about her husband's strange secret. He asked to see the frog.
- Princess: Turn around, Father. My husband has just arrived!
- Emperor: Tell me, why on Earth do you wear that horrible, slippery frog skin all day?
- Frog: Sir, my frog skin is magical! With it on, I can accomplish anything.
- 35 Emperor: In that case, you must let me try it on!



# The Frog Who Became an Emperor *(cont.)*

- Narrator:** With that, the frog took off his skin. The emperor took off his imperial robes and slipped into the frog skin. But, once he had put on the skin, he could not take it off!
- Princess:** Here, my dear husband, put on the imperial robes. With my father unavailable, you are the successor to the throne. You now rule the empire!
- Narrator:** So, the princess lived happily with the frog, who was now an emperor, and the couple lived happily with the emperor, who was now a frog. I think things worked out pretty well, don't you?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Frog Who Became an Emperor *(cont.)*

**Directions:** Fill in the bubble of each correct answer choice.

1. Why does the author include the introduction?

- Ⓐ to entertain the reader with information about the frog boy
- Ⓑ to inform the reader about what happened before the script started
- Ⓒ to persuade the reader that the emperor was a greedy man
- Ⓓ to educate the reader on the traditions of marriage in Ancient China

2. What can the reader conclude about the princess's feelings toward her father? There is more than one correct response.

- Ⓐ She is ashamed of him and how he behaves.
- Ⓑ She is happy to marry whomever her father chooses for her.
- Ⓒ She hates him and tries several times to run away.
- Ⓓ She doesn't know him that well because he ignores her.
- Ⓔ She is obedient and always does as her father asks.
- Ⓕ She cares about him but wants to teach him a lesson.

3. Read this sentence from line 5: "Emperor: My daughter, I have no intention of marrying you to some lowly general. I will find an excuse to pay him in some other way and marry you to a rich prince who can bring me more land and power." This quotation shows that the emperor . . .

- Ⓐ is kind and thoughtful.
- Ⓑ knows what his daughter wants.
- Ⓒ is greedy and deceitful.
- Ⓓ doesn't want his daughter to marry.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Frog Who Became an Emperor *(cont.)*

**Directions:** Fill in the bubble of each correct answer choice.

4. What can the reader infer about the man who caught the ball thrown by the princess?

- Ⓐ He's a really good athlete.
- Ⓑ He is taller than the others.
- Ⓒ He works for the Emperor.
- Ⓓ He is the frog prince.

5. Which sentence from the script supports the answer to number 4?

- Ⓔ "He leaped out of the crowd like a creature of some sort!"
- Ⓕ "He snatched it before anyone else had a chance."
- Ⓖ "Those princes were standing on boxes that made them taller."
- Ⓗ "The emperor was shocked, but he could not find any way around it."

6. What sentence from the script best shows the turning point in this story?

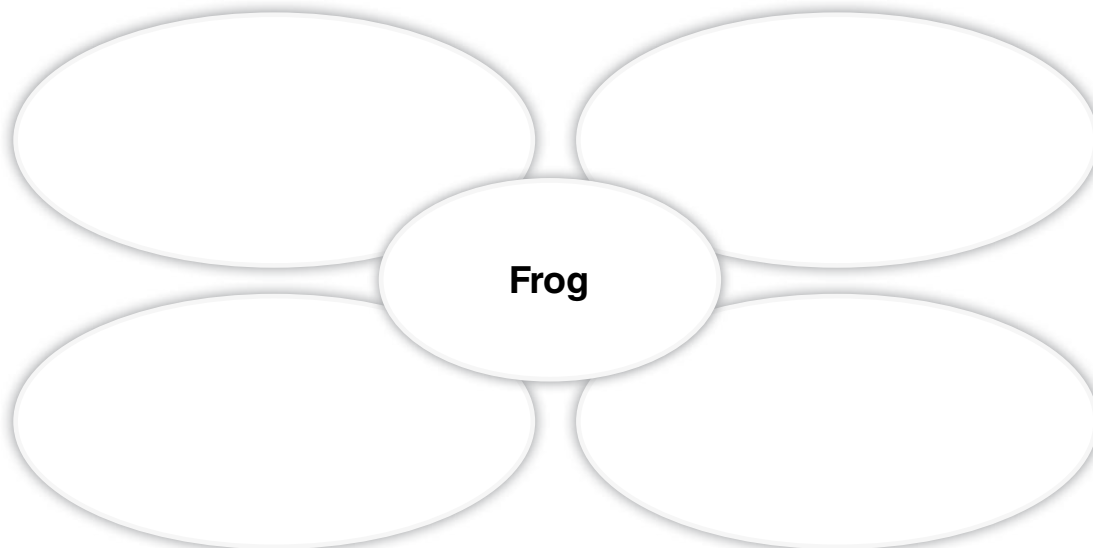
- Ⓐ "Turn around, Father. My husband has just arrived!"
- Ⓑ "The emperor was shocked, but he could not find any way around it."
- Ⓒ "But, once he had put on the skin, he could not take it off!"
- Ⓓ "The couple lived happily with the emperor, who was now a frog."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# The Frog Who Became an Emperor *(cont.)*

**Directions:** Answer the questions.

7. Think about the Frog. Complete the graphic organizer below by listing four adjectives to describe him.



8. Why do you think the emperor does not want the princess to marry the frog? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

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