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STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Books

FREE Teacher Guide (a $15.00 value) included with each pack. For School Packs, an extra Teacher Guide will be included free for each additional 30 copies ordered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Grade 3</td>
<td>Reading, Grade 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Grade 4</td>
<td>Reading, Grade 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Grade 5</td>
<td>Reading, Grade 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading, Grade 6</td>
<td>Reading, Grade 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading, Grade 7</td>
<td>Reading, Grade 7</td>
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<td>Reading, Grade 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math, Grade 3</td>
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<td>Math, Grade 8</td>
<td>Math, Grade 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing, Grade 4</td>
<td>Writing, Grade 4</td>
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<td>Writing, Grade 7</td>
<td>Writing, Grade 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Grade 5</td>
<td>Science, Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science, Grade 8</td>
<td>Science, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies, Grade 8</td>
<td>Social Studies, Grade 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What's Inside the Student Practice Book?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions of <em>STAAR MASTER™</em> Complexity Levels</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Use This Book</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Suggestions for Instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Skills List</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Chart</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer Key</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s Inside the Student Practice Book?

The STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book provides practice and review material for the Grade 4 Reading portion of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR™).

- The reading passages reflect the kinds of passages students might encounter on the actual STAAR. These include the following types of selections: fictional literary texts (stories, poems, and dramas), nonfiction literary texts (biographies and autobiographies), informational texts (procedural and expository passages), and media literacy texts (newspapers, advertisements, blogs, and Web pages).
- The reading passages (single and paired) cover a broad range of topics and ideas of interest to fourth-grade students.
- Several readability formulas were used to ensure that the texts are appropriate for fourth grade.
- The questions that follow a passage focus on the 2009–2010 STAAR-eligible ELA-R Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Texas Education Agency, 2010c) reading standards.
- Each question is labeled for easy identification of the TEKS-based standard and expectation addressed in the question.
- Several questions throughout the book address the same standard/expectation, providing repeated practice for students in a variety of contexts.

The following types of selections appear in the STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book.

Fictional literary texts include stories, poems, and dramas. These selections present an obvious progression of ideas. For example, a story would have a clear beginning, middle, and end.

Nonfiction literary texts include biographies and autobiographies. These selections relate true events from individuals’ lives and present a specific point of view.

Informational texts include procedural and expository passages. Procedural selections give multi-step or detailed directions, and expository selections give information about topics in science, social studies, art, or other curricular areas.

Media literacy texts include text from various forms of media, such as newspapers, advertisements, blogs, and Web pages. These selections present information through words, images, and graphics and relate information for specific audiences and purposes. All elements of a text work together to communicate a message.

Practice-Item Skills Tags
Each practice item is labeled with a “skills tag” (see Figure 1, below) for easy identification of the TEKS-based standard and expectation addressed in the question. The tag also notes the complexity level of the item. (For more information about complexity levels, refer to Box 1, “Descriptions of STAAR MASTER™ Complexity Levels,” page 5).

This Teacher Guide includes—
- an overview of the Student Practice Book and key characteristics of the STAAR
- descriptions of STAAR MASTER complexity levels
- strategies for test preparation and reading instruction
- a master list of STAAR-eligible standards and expectations addressed in the ELA-R TEKS
- a correlation chart
- a complete answer key (with corresponding complexity levels for the items in each passage)
Readiness vs. Supporting Standards
The eligible, or tested, TEKS are divided into “readiness standards” and “supporting standards,” with greater emphasis on the former. Readiness standards address broader, deeper ideas and are deemed more critical for students to know. Supporting standards address more narrowly defined ideas and will still be assessed, although not emphasized. The STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book mirrors this balance of readiness and supporting standards to provide meaningful, authentic student practice for the STAAR™.

Figure 19
The standards listed under TEKS “Figure 19” are important metacognitive reading skills that students will continue to apply (in greater depth and using increasingly complex texts) as they advance in grade level (Texas Education Agency, 2010b). Figure 19 standards are meant to be used with all text types and during both assigned and independent reading (see Figure 2, below).

Increased Rigor
The STAAR is described as “significantly more rigorous” (Texas Education Agency, 2010a) than the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). But what does rigor mean in assessment? For the STAAR, it means the cognitive complexity of items will increase to assess skills at a greater depth. The STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book provides items written at varying levels of complexity to accommodate this increase in rigor. (Refer to the “Depth of Knowledge” section on this page and Box 1 on page 5 for more information about the levels of complexity in practice items.)

In addition, the STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book includes more rigorous reading passages. Various genres are represented throughout the book, and each reading passage is enhanced by its authentic layout. The passages address fresh, relevant topics, while also including classic literature selections (e.g., fictional adaptations and poems).

Alignment
According to the mandate of No Child Left Behind (2001), states are required to develop assessments that tightly align to their content standards. To ensure that this requirement is met, states and districts often conduct alignment studies. In such a study, an assessment is compared to the state’s content standards. If an assessment is rigorous, the study will not yield large disparities between the cognitive demands of the expectations and that of the assessment.

Depth of Knowledge
Norman Webb’s (2002) “depth of knowledge” model is currently one of the most influential alignment models in the field of education. “Depth of knowledge” describes the degree of complexity of knowledge a curricular item requires. Webb identifies four levels of depth of knowledge: recall (Level 1), skill or concept (Level 2), strategic thinking (Level 3), and extended thinking (Level 4). Distinct cognitive demands occur during each activity, or thinking process, level.

The items in the STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book were aligned to the TEKS using a modified version of the “depth-of-knowledge” model (see Box 1, “Descriptions of STAAR MASTER™ Complexity Levels,” page 5). During the alignment process, the complexity level of each item (designated “Low,” “Moderate,” or “High”) was determined. The level can be found in the skills tag of each practice item and in the Answer Key.

Figure 2: Practice Item for Reading Comprehension Skills (Figure 19)

1. The title of this story, “A Merry Match,” refers to—
   A. Robin Hood and his men
   B. Robin Hood and the archery contest
   C. Sherwood Forest and the archery contest
   D. Adam of Tamworth and Gilbert of the Red Cap
The following descriptions provide an overview of the three complexity levels used to align the STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book items to the eligible ELAR TEKS. Each explanation details the kinds of activities that occur within each level. However, they do not represent all of the possible thought processes for each level.

**Low Complexity (L)**
Low-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 1 of the Webb (2002) model. Items of low complexity may involve recalling—but not analyzing—story events and students to recognize or reproduce—but not interpret—figurative language. Items of this complexity may require identifying the meaning of a word through language structure or word relationships. At this cognitive level, students will need to identify similarities and differences. Some items also require students to apply low-complexity skills and concepts.

**Moderate Complexity (M)**
Moderate-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 2 of the Webb model. Items of moderate complexity involve both comprehension and the subsequent processing of text. Students are asked to make inferences and identify cause-and-effect relationships. However, students are not required to go beyond the text. Major concepts, such as main idea, are considered in a literal, rather than abstract, manner. Students are asked to compare word meanings, which they determine through context clues. At this cognitive level, students will need to identify similarities and differences. Items may involve determining information in a text feature, such as a chart, graph, or diagram. Items of this complexity may ask students to predict, organize, classify, compare, interpret, distinguish, relate, or summarize. Some items also require students to apply low-complexity skills and concepts.

**High Complexity (H)**
High-complexity items align with the TEKS at Level 3 and/or Level 4 of the Webb model. Items of high complexity require students to use strategic, multi-step thinking; develop a deeper understanding of the text; and extend thinking beyond the text. Major concepts, such as theme and figurative language, are now identified and demonstrated in a literal, rather than abstract, manner. Students are asked to compare, interpret, distinguish, relate, or summarize. Items may involve relating information in a text feature, such as a chart, graph, or diagram, to the text. A high-complexity item may ask students to plan, reason, explain, hypothesize, compare, differentiate, draw conclusions, cite evidence, analyze, synthesize, apply, or prove. Some items also require students to apply low- and/or moderate-complexity skills and concepts.

*Note: Although state standards may include expectations that require extended thinking, many large-scale assessment activities are not classified as Level 4. Performance and open-ended assessment may require activities at Level 4.*

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**Box 1: Descriptions of STAAR MASTER™ Complexity Levels**

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How to Use This Book

Effective Test Preparation
What is the most effective way to prepare students for any reading competency test? Experienced educators know that the best test preparation includes three critical components—

- a strong curriculum that is aligned with the content and skills to be assessed
- effective, relevant, and varied instructional methods that allow students to learn content and skills in many different ways
- targeted practice that familiarizes students with the specific content and format of the test

Obviously, a strong curriculum and effective, relevant, and varied instructional methods provide the foundation for all appropriate test preparation. Contrary to what some might believe, merely "teaching the test" performs a great disservice to students. Students must acquire knowledge, practice skills, and have specific educational experiences that can never be included on tests limited by time and in scope. For this reason, resources like the STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book should never become the heart of the curriculum or replace strong instructional methods.

Targeted Practice
The STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book does, however, address the final element of effective test preparation (targeted test practice). This book familiarizes students with—

- the specific content of Texas’ competency test
- the general format of competency tests

When students become familiar with both the content and the format of a test, they know what to expect on the actual test. This, in turn, improves their chances for success.

Using STAAR MASTER™ Products
Used as part of the regular curriculum, the STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book allows teachers to—

- pretest skills students need for the actual test
- determine students’ areas of strength and/or weakness
- provide meaningful test-taking practice for students
- ease students’ test anxiety
- communicate test expectations and content to parents

Other Suggestions for Instruction

The STAAR MASTER Student Practice Book can serve as a springboard for other effective instructional activities that help with test preparation.

Group Work
Teachers and students work through selected practice exercises together, noting the kinds of questions and the range of answer choices. They discuss common errors for each kind of question and strategies for avoiding these errors.

Predicting Answers
Students predict the correct answer before reading the given answer choices. This encourages students to think through the question rather than focus on finding the right answer. Students then read the given answer choices and determine which one, if any, matches the answer they have given.

Developing Test Questions
Once students become familiar with the format of test questions, they develop “test-type” questions for other assigned reading (e.g., science, social studies).

Vocabulary Development
Teachers and students foster vocabulary development in all subject areas through the use of word walls, word webs, word games, synonym/antonym charts, analogies, word categories, “word-of-the-day” activities, etc.

Two-Sentence Recaps
Students regularly summarize what they have read in one or two sentences. For fiction, students use the basic elements (setting, characters, problem, solution) to guide their summaries. For nonfiction, students use the journalist’s questions (who, what, where, when, why) for the same purpose. The teacher may also list three to five key words from a reading selection and direct students to write a one- to two-sentence summary that includes the given words.

Generalizations
After students read a selection, the teacher states a generalization based on the reading, and students provide specific facts and details to support the generalization; or the teacher provides specifics from the selection, and students state the generalization.
| Standard 2: Vocabulary | The Ghost of Blue Mud Gulch | Be a Food Artist | Spider Skills | Broadcast from the Past | A Large Lady in the Secret Agent’s Return | Nature’s Mission | A Vacation for One | A Mary Match | The 1-2-3-4 Cats | Only in the Movie | Little Women of the Westward March | The Art Show | The Land of Counterpane | Grow Your Own Salad | Toe-Tally Serious | Don’t Dance and Mystic Train | Calling the Violet | The Mystery of the Breathing Room |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Root/Affix (R)         | 2                           | 1               | 6            | 1                     | 7                                           | 3             | 2             | 1            | 2               | 3             | 1                            | 5             | 3                        | 5                | 3                | 3                            | 3               |
| Content Quizzes (R)    | 1.2                         | 3.6             | 2.4          | 1.7                   | 3                                           | 2             | 1             | 2            | 3               | 1             | 5                            | 5             | 3                        | 3                | 3                | 3                            | 3               |
| Dictionary/Glossary (R)| 4                           | 3               |              |                       |                                             | 1             | 2             | 4            | 4               |               |                              |               |                          |                   |                  |                               |                  |
| Standard 3: Literary Text/Theme and Genre |
| Theme (S)              | 5.8                         | 8               | 7            | 6                     | 9                                           | 7             | 6             | 9            | 7               | 11            | 9                            |               |                          |                   |                  |                               |                  |
| Compare/Contrast Characters (S) |                   | 8.12            |              |                       |                                             |               |                          |                   |                  |                               |                  |
| Standard 4: Literary Text/Poetry |
| Structure/Form (S)     | 9                           |                | 2,4          | 8                     | 1,6                                         |               |                          |                   |                  |                               |                  |
| Standard 5: Literary Text/Drama |
| Drama (S)              | 2,7,10                      |                |              |                       |                                             |               |                          |                   |                  |                               |                  |
| Standard 6: Literary Text/Fiction |
| Plot’s Main Events (R) | 4                           | 1.38           | 1            | 3.4                   | 8                                           | 4.9           | 5             | 1,6          |                              |                 |                              |               |                          |                   |                  |
| Character Relations/Changes (R) |                     | 3.6            | 7            | 7                     | 6                                           | 7             | 1             | 2            |                              |                 |                              |               |                          |                   |                  |
| Point of View (S)      | 7                           | 5               | 5            | 5                     | 5                                           | 8             | 5             | 8            |                              |                 |                              |               |                          |                   |                  |
| Standard 7: Literary Text/Nonfiction |
| Biography/Autobiography (S) |                     | 9.11           |              |                       |                                             |               |                          |                   |                  |                               |                  |

(R) = Readiness Standard  (S) = Supporting Standard
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</tbody>
</table>

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STAAR MASTER™ Student Practice Book, Teacher Guide—Reading, Grade 4
Answer Key

Note: Complexity levels appear in parentheses. L = Low, M = Moderate, H = High

The Ghost of Blue Mud Gulch

1. D (M)  2. D (M)  3. C (M)  4. C (M)
5. B (H)  6. C (M)  7. C (M)  8. D (H)
9. D (M)

A Vacation for One

1. B (M)  2. A (M)  3. A (H)  4. C (M)
5. A (M)  6. A (M)  7. C (H)  8. B (H)
9. B (M)

Be a Food Artist

1. B (L)  2. B (L)  3. D (L)  4. A (L)
5. D (M)  6. B (M)  7. B (H)

A Merry Match

1. B (H)  2. A (M)  3. A (M)  4. C (L)
5. D (M)  6. D (H)  7. D (H)  8. D (L)
9. D (H) 10. D (M)

Spider Skills
**STAAR MASTER™ Reading References**

*All Web sites listed were active at time of publication.*


Table of Contents

The Ghost of Blue Mud Gulch (Literary Text/Fiction)  3
Be a Food Artist (Informational Text/Procedural)  9
Spider Skills (Informational Text/Expository)  13
Broadcast from the Past (Literary Text/Fiction)  18
A Leading Lady and Sacagawea's Return (Literary Text/Nonfiction)  23
Nature's Musicians (Informational Text/Expository)  30
A Vacation for One (Literary Text/Poetry)  35
A Merry Match (Literary Text/Fiction)  39
The 1-2-3-4 Cake (Informational Text/Procedural)  45
Only in the Movies (Informational Text/Expository)  49
Little Monster of Madagascar (Informational Text/Expository)  55
The Art Show (Literary Text/Drama)  60
The Land of Counterpane (Literary Text/Poetry)  67
Grow Your Own Salad (Informational Text/Procedural)  71
Toe-tally Serious! (Informational Text/Expository)  77
Dora's Dilemma and Mysterious Box (Literary Text/Fiction)  82
Calling the Violet (Literary Text/Poetry)  90
The Mystery of the Breathing Bush (Literary Text/Fiction)  93
A Leading Lady

Sacagawea was with explorers Lewis and Clark on their famous journey from the Missouri River all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In fact, Sacagawea was an important part of the team and earned a place in history. And she did it all while she was still a teenager.

Sacagawea, a Shoshone Indian, was born around 1789. She grew up on the slopes of the great Rocky Mountains. The Shoshone moved often, so Sacagawea came to know the mountains, valleys, and rivers that were her home.

Once, when she was about 11 years old, the Shoshone camped at a place where three rivers came together. Men from the Hidatsa tribe came and attacked the Shoshone. Sacagawea tried to escape across the river. Before she made it halfway, a warrior plucked her from the water and carried her off.

Sacagawea was taken 500 miles away. Her old life in the mountains was gone. Now she lived in a Hidatsa village. She learned to speak the Hidatsa language, but she never forgot her mountain home or her Shoshone language.

Sometimes people from other tribes came to the village. White men came, too. These were the first white men that Sacagawea had ever seen. One was a fur trapper who lived in the village from time to time. His name was Toussaint Charbonneau. When Sacagawea was about 15 years old, she and Charbonneau were married.

One winter other white men came. Captains Lewis and Clark were on an important journey. They were leading explorers west to the Pacific Ocean. They stopped to rest for the winter in the village. The captains knew they would have to cross the mountains on their way. They would need horses to do that. They hoped to trade with the Shoshone, and they would need someone to translate for them. They were delighted to learn that Sacagawea spoke the Shoshone language. They invited her and her husband to join them.

Figure 1

Mural showing Lewis and Clark, Sacagawea, and others, by Frank H. Schwarz, 1937
So, Sacagawea became an explorer. That winter she also became a mother. Her baby boy, nicknamed Pomp, was born. Sacagawea would have to care for him on the journey.

In April 1805, the explorers were ready. Sacagawea strapped little Pomp to her back and set out with the men. From the start, Sacagawea was a great help. Once, a gust of wind tipped a boat she was riding in. The boat filled with water, and the captains’ important papers and packages of medicine began to float away. But Sacagawea calmly scooped everything up. The captains did not forget her help. They even named a river in her honor.

As the days went by, the group got closer to the mountains. Sacagawea began to recognize her old home. She pointed to places she remembered. Here was the river where she had camped with her family. There was the place where she had dug white earth for face paint. She showed the captains the place where three rivers came together. It was the spot where she had been captured.

At last the explorers reached the mountains. One day, Sacagawea looked up to see people approaching. They were Shoshone! For the first time in many years, she saw friends and family. She hugged her brother, now the chief of the Shoshone.

Sacagawea translated for the captains. She helped them trade for Shoshone horses. She helped them hire guides to lead them through the mountains. The captains knew that without guides and horses, they might never make it through the mountain passes.

All too soon it was time to leave. Sacagawea continued westward with the explorers. Sometimes they saw people from other tribes. Some of them were
Sacagawea’s Return
» An Autobiographical Account «

Something about this day was not quite right. I rose quickly, dressed, and inhaled the sweet air of the Rocky Mountains around me. I traveled quickly to the river to wash. But I was tense. I felt that something might happen today. I could not tell if it was a good or bad feeling.

My family was moving to a new location today. We did that often so we could hunt and trade with different tribes. Today we traded furs, while tomorrow we might trade weapons. It all depended on what my tribe needed.

I helped the other women prepare our tribe’s belongings. Though I was only 11 years old, they knew I was useful. They treated me like an adult Shoshone woman because I carried more responsibility than a child. The other women and I quickly packed our bedding, food, and other useful materials. We were ready to move at first light.

We traveled lightly that day, as we had eaten our “heavy” food at our camp and intended to hunt this morning. We found some nearby game, and everyone stopped for a meal. We continued on until the sun, that beautiful, hot-orange dancer, was low in the sky. When we came to a place where three rivers came together, we decided this would be a good place to stop and rest.
to camp for the night. Bedding was unraveled and shelters set up. Leftover food was passed around, and water jugs were filled for the night. We slept.

I awoke terrified by the chaos around me. What was happening? People were running, weapons were being fired, and worst of all, I did not see my family anywhere. I jumped to my feet and looked around me. The best way to escape seemed to be the river. I plunged in and quickly began swimming. Suddenly, I felt myself being lifted. I looked up in disbelief. I had been captured! The man lifting me from the water was a member of the Hidatsa, another tribe. I did not understand his language, so I was not sure if he meant me harm.

The Hidatsa took me far away from my home. I was saddened by the loss of my family. I wished I could return to the land that I knew. But I soon began learning things in the Hidatsa village that kept my mind off of my sadness. I learned to speak the Hidatsa language, although I vowed to never forget my Shoshone language.

I learned many things in my new village. I had never before seen a white man, but many of them came to trade with Hidatsas. One of the white men, Toussaint Charbonneau, began courting me. When he asked me to marry him, I consented.

Soon two important white explorers, Captains Lewis and Clark, arrived in our village. To my surprise, they invited me and my husband to join them as their guides. The many languages I spoke would help me translate for them. That winter, I also became a mother. My dear baby boy, Pomp, traveled with us. What a tough little boy he was!

One day, as we traveled through the high mountains, we saw people. I blinked. Did my eyes deceive me? The people were Shoshone! We greeted each other warmly in my people's language. Our group followed the Shoshones down to my old village. As I approached, I gasped. A smile spread across my face as I approached my brother, the new chief, in his beautiful, handmade attire. I was home.

Figure 4

Eugene L. Daub's monument to Lewis and Clark, located on Quality Hill in Kansas City, Missouri
Standard 2 (Context Clues) M

1. Read the sentences from the passage.
   Sacagawea tried to escape across the river. Before she made it halfway, a warrior plucked her from the water and carried her off.
   The word plucked means—
   A attacked
   B blocked
   C drove
   D pulled

Standard 11 (Main Idea/Supporting Details) M

2. Which sentence shows that Sacagawea’s Shoshone home changed while she was away?
   A She hugged her brother, now the chief of the Shoshone.
   B Here was the river where she had camped with her family.
   C There was the place where she had dug white earth for face paint.
   D She showed the captains the place where three rivers came together.

4.RC.D (Inferences) H

3. When people saw Lewis and Clark’s group traveling westward, they probably saw Sacagawea and Pomp as signs of—
   A change
   B peace
   C trickery
   D violence

Standard 10 (Author’s Purpose) H

4. The purpose of this passage is to—
   A tell readers an interesting story about a mother and her baby
   B show the differences between the Shoshone and Hidatsa tribes
   C describe to readers the life of a brave and special young woman
   D persuade readers to become explorers like Lewis and Clark when they grow up
Use “Sacagawea’s Return” to answer questions 5–8.

Standard 8 (Sensory Language) H

5. When Sacagawea mentions “the sun, that beautiful, hot-orange dancer,” it suggests that the Shoshone—
   A have a close connection with nature
   B wish they lived in a warmer climate
   C believe in spirits that live in the sky
   D think dancing is an important custom

Standard 11 (Text Organization) M

6. What happens just after Sacagawea jumps into the river?
   A She fills her water jug.
   B She sees people running.
   C She hears weapons being fired.
   D She is captured by a strange man.

Standard 2 (Context Clues) M

7. Read the sentence from the passage.
   When [Charbonneau] asked me to marry him, I consented.
   The word consented means—
   A agreed
   B considered
   C hesitated
   D understood

Standard 11 (Fact/Opinion) M

8. Which sentence from the passage states an opinion?
   A What a tough little boy [Pomp] was!
   B The Hidatsa took me far away from my home.
   C I learned many things in my new [Hidatsa] village.
   D I helped the other women prepare our tribe’s belongings.
Use both “A Leading Lady” and “Sacagawea’s Return” to answer questions 9–12.

Standard 7 (Biography/Autobiography) H

9. Unlike “A Leading Lady,” “Sacagawea’s Return” includes—
   A details about an important event in history
   B descriptions of Sacagawea’s thoughts and feelings
   C information about Lewis and Clark’s famous journey
   D an account of Sacagawea’s kidnapping by a Hidatsa man

4.RC.F (Make Connections) H

10. In both passages, Sacagawea is shown to be a(n)—
    A fur trapper
    B guide
    C Indian chief
    D warrior

Standard 7 (Biography/Autobiography) H

11. Which fact is given only in “A Leading Lady”?
    A Sacagawea had a son named Pomp.
    B Sacagawea married Toussaint Charbonneau.
    C Sacagawea and the two captains reached the ocean.
    D Sacagawea discovered her brother was chief of the Shoshone.

Standard 14 (Media Literacy) H

12. Figure 4 is most likely included with “Sacagawea’s Return” to support the idea that Sacagawea—
    A was a great help to Lewis and Clark
    B knew a great deal about the American West
    C earned an important place in American history
    D led Lewis and Clark through the mountain passes
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