

Grade 10

Fiction Passage for Selected and Constructed Response Questions

Priority and Supporting Standards:

By the end of grade 10, students will read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently (10.R.L.10), according to Unit 3.

Students will acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; students will demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression (10.L.6), according to Unit 4.

This assessment fits two units of study:

Shaping, Developing, and Supporting Meaning by Understanding Others (Unit 3)

Shaping, Developing, and Supporting Meaning by Understanding Our World (Unit 4)

The Gift of The Probable Places

By Eleanor Hallowell Abbott

My Mother says that everybody in the world has got some special Gift. Some people have one kind and some have another.

I got my skates and dictionary-book last Spring when I was nine. I've always had my freckles.

My brother Carol's Gift is Being Dumb. No matter what anybody says to him he doesn't have to answer 'em.

There was an old man in our town named Old Man Smith.

Old Man Smith had a wonderful Gift.

It wasn't a Christmas Gift like toys and games. It wasn't a Birthday Gift all stockings and handkerchiefs.

It was the Gift of Finding Things!

He called it "The Gift of the Probable Places."

Most any time when you lost anything he could find it for you. He didn't find it by floating a few tea-leaves in a cup. Or by trying to match cards. Or by fooling with silly things like ghosts. He didn't even find it with his legs. He found it with his head. He found it by thinking very hard with his head.

People came from miles around to borrow his head. He always charged everybody just the same no matter what it was that they'd lost. One dollar was what he charged. It was just as much trouble to him he said to think about a thimble that was lost as it was to think about an elephant that was lost.--I never knew anybody who lost an elephant.

When the Post Master's Wife lost her diamond ring she hunted more than a hundred places for it! She was most distracted! She thought somebody had stolen it from her! She hunted it in all the Newspapers! She hunted it in all the stores! She hunted it all up and down the Village streets!

She hunted it in the Depot carriage! She hunted it in the Hired Girl's trunk! Miles and miles and miles she must have hunted it with her hands and with her feet!

But Old Man Smith found it for her without budging an inch from his wheel-chair! Just with his head alone he found it! Just by asking her a question that made her mad he found it! The question that made her mad was about her Baptismal name.--Her Baptismal name was Mehetabelle Euphemia.

"However in the world," said Old Man Smith, "did you get such a perfectly hideous name as Mehetabelle Euphemia?"

The Post Master's wife was madder than Scat! She wrung her hands. She snapped her thumbs! She crackled her finger-joints!

"Never--Never," she said had she been "so insulted!"

"U-m-m-m--exactly what I thought," said Old Man Smith. "Now just when--if you can remember, was the last time that you felt you'd never been so insulted before?"

"Insulted?" screamed the Post Master's Wife. "Why, I haven't been so insulted as this since two weeks ago last Saturday when I was out in my back yard under the Mulberry Tree dyeing my old white dress peach-pink! And the Druggist's Wife came along and asked me if I didn't think I was just a little bit too old to be wearing peach-pink?--Me--Too Old? Me?" screamed the Post Master's Wife.

"U-m-m," said Old Man Smith. "Pink, you say? Pink?--A little powdered Cochineal, I suppose? And a bit of Cream o' Tartar? And more than a bit of Alum? It's a pretty likely combination to make the fingers slippery.--And a lady what crackles her finger-joints so every time she's mad,--and snaps her thumbs--and?--Yes! Under the Mulberry Tree is a very Probable Place!--One dollar, please!" said Old Man Smith.

And when the Grocer's Nephew got suspended from college for sitting up too late at night and getting headaches, and came to spend a month with his Uncle and couldn't find his green plaid overcoat when it was time to go home he was perfectly positive that somebody had borrowed it from the store! Or that he'd dropped it out of the delivery wagon working over-time! Or that he'd left it at the High School Social!

But Old Man Smith found it for him just by glancing at his purple socks! And his plaid necktie. And his plush waistcoat.

"Oh, yes, of course, it's perfectly possible," said Old Man Smith, "that you dropped it from the basket of a balloon on your way to a Missionary Meeting.--But have you looked in the Young Widow Gayette's back hall? 'Bout three pegs from the door?--Where the shadows are fairly private?--One dollar, please!" said Old Man Smith.

And when the Old Preacher lost the Hymn Book that George Washington had given his grandfather, everybody started to take up the floor of the church to see if it had fallen down through a crack in the pulpit!

But Old Man Smith sent a boy running to beg 'em not to tear down the church till they'd looked in the Old Lawyer's pantry,--'bout the second shelf between the ice chest and the cheese crock. Sunday evening after meeting was rather a lean time with Old Preachers he said he'd always noticed.--And Old Lawyers was noted for their fat larders.--And there were certain things about cheese somehow that seemed to be soothin' to the memory.

"Why, how perfectly extraordinary!" said everybody.

"One dollar, please!" said Old Man Smith again.

And when Little Tommy Bent ran away to the city his Mother hunted all the hospitals for him! And made 'em drag the river! And wore a long black veil all the time! And howled!

But Old Man Smith said, "Oh Shucks! It ain't at all probable, is it, that he was aimin' at hospitals or rivers when he went away?--What's the use of worryin' over the things he _weren't_ aimin' at till you've investigated the things he was?"

"Aimin' at?" sobbed Mrs. Bent. "Aimin' at?--Who in the world could ever tell what any little boy was aimin' at?"

"And there's something in that, too!" said Old Man Smith. "What did he look like?"

"Like his father," said Mrs. Bent.

"U-m-m. Plain, you mean?" said Old Man Smith.

"He was only nine years old," sobbed Mrs. Bent. "But he did love Meetings so! No matter what they was about he was always hunting for some new Meetings to go to! He just seemed naturally to dote hisself on any crowd of people that was all facing the other way looking at somebody else! He had a little cowlick at the back of his neck!" sobbed Mrs. Bent. "It was a comical little cowlick! People used to laugh at it! He never liked to sit any place where there was anybody sitting behind him!"

"Now you're talking!" said Old Man Smith. "Will he answer to the name of 'Little Tommy Bent?'"

"He will not!" said Mrs. Bent "He's that stubborn! He's exactly like his Father!"

Old Man Smith wrote an entirely new advertisement to put in the papers. It didn't say anything about Rivers! Or Hospitals! Or 'Dead or Alive!' It just said:

LOST: In the back seat of Most Any Meeting,
a Very Plain Little Boy. Will not
answer to the name of "Little Tommy
Bent." Stubborn, like his Father.

"We'll put that in about being 'stubborn,'" said Old Man Smith, "because it sounds quaint and will interest people."

"It won't interest Mr. Bent!" sobbed Mrs. Bent. "And it seems awful cruel to make it so public about the child's being plain!"

Old Man Smith spoke coldly to her.

"Would you rather lose him--handsome," he said. "Or find him--plain?"

Mrs. Bent seemed to think that she'd rather find him plain.

She found him within two days! He was awful plain. His shoes were all worn out. And his stomach was flat. He was at a meeting of men who sell bicycles to China. The men were feeling pretty sick. They'd sent hundreds and hundreds of he-bicycles to China and the Chinamen couldn't ride 'em on account of their skirts!--It was the smell of an apple in a man's pocket that

made Tommy Bent follow the man to the meeting.--And he answered to every name except 'Tommy Bent' so they knew it was he!

"Mercy! What this experience has cost me!" sobbed Mrs. Bent.

"One dollar, please!" said Old Man Smith.

"It's a perfect miracle!" said everybody.

"It 'tain't neither!" said Old Man Smith. "It's plain Hoss Sense! There's laws about findin' things same as there is about losin' 'em! Things has got regular habits and haunts same as Folks! And Folks has got regular haunts and habits same as birds and beasts! It ain't the Possible Places that I'm arguin' about!--The world is full of 'em! But the Probable Places can be reckoned most any time on the fingers of one hand!--That's the trouble with folks! They're always wearin' themselves out on the Possible Places and never gettin' round at all to the Probable ones!--Now, it's perfectly possible, of course," said Old Man Smith, "that you might find a trout in a dust-pan or a hummin' bird in an Aquarium--or meet a panther in your Mother's parlor!--But the chances are," said Old Man Smith, "that if you really set out to organize a troutin' expedition or a hummin' bird collection or a panther hunt--you wouldn't look in the dust pan or the Aquarium or your Mother's parlor first!--When you lose something that ain't got no Probable Place--then I sure am stumped!" said Old Man Smith.

But when Annie Halliway lost her mind, everybody in the village was stumped about it. And everything was all mixed up. It was Annie Halliway's mother and Annie Halliway's father and Annie Halliway's uncles and aunts and cousins and friends who did all the worrying about it! While Annie Halliway herself didn't seem to care at all! But just sat braiding things into her hair!

Some people said it was a railroad accident that she lost her mind in. Some said it was because she'd studied too hard in Europe. Some said it was an earthquake. Everybody said something.

Annie Halliway's father and mother were awful rich. They brought her home in a great big ship! And gave her twelve new dresses and the front parlor and a brown piano! But she wouldn't stay in any of them! All she'd stay in was a little old blue silk dress she'd had before she went away!

Carol and I got excused from school one day because we were afraid our heads might ache, and went to see what it was all about.

It seemed to be about a great many things.

But after we'd walked all around Annie Halliway twice and looked at her all we could and asked how old she was and found out that she was nineteen, we felt suddenly very glad about something.--We felt suddenly very glad that if she really was obliged to lose anything out of her face, it was her mind that she lost! Instead of her eyes! Or her nose! Or her red, red mouth! Or her cunning little ears! She was so pretty!

She seemed to like us very much too. She asked us to come again.

We said we would.

We did.

We went every Saturday afternoon.

They let us take her to walk if we were careful. We didn't walk her in the village because her hair looked so funny. We walked her in the pleasant fields. We gathered flowers. We gathered ferns. We explored birds. We built little gurgling harbors in the corners of the brook. Sometimes we climbed hills and looked off. Annie Halliway seemed to like to climb hills and look off.

It was the day we climbed the Sumac Hill that we got our Idea!

It was a nice day!

Annie Halliway wore her blue dress! And her blue scarf! Her hair hung down like two long, loose black ropes across her shoulders! Blue Larkspur was braided into her hair! And a little tin trumpet tied with blue ribbon! And a blue Japanese fan! And a blue lead pencil! And a blue silk stocking! And a blue-handled basket! She looked like a Summer Christmas Tree. It was pretty.

There were lots of clouds in the sky. They seemed very near. It sort of puckered your nose.

"Smell the clouds!" said Annie Halliway.

Somebody had cut down a tree that used to be there. It made a lonely hole in the edge of the hill and the sky. Through the lonely hole in the edge of the hill and the sky you could see miles and miles. Way down in the valley a bright light glinted. It was as though the whole sun was trying to bore a hole in a tiny bit of glass and couldn't do it.

Annie Halliway stretched out her arms towards the glint. And started for it.

I looked at Carol. Carol looked at me. We knew where the glint was. It was Old Man Smith's house. Old Man Smith's house was built of tea cups! And broken tumblers! And bits of plates! First of all, of course, it was built of clay or mud or something soft and loose like that! And while it was still soft he had stuck it all full of people's broken dishes! So that wherever you went most all day long the sun was trying to bore a hole in it!--And couldn't do it!

It seemed to be the glint that Annie Halliway wanted. She thought it was something new to braid in her hair, I guess. She kept right on walking towards it with her arms stretched out.

Carol kept right on looking at me. His mouth was all turned white. Sometimes when people talk to me I can't understand at all what they mean. But when Carol looks at me with his mouth all turned white, I always know just exactly what he means! It made my own mouth feel pretty white!

"We shall be punished!" I said. "We'll surely be punished if we do it!"

My brother Carol smiled. It was quite a white smile. He put out his hand. I took it. We ran down the hill after young Annie Halliway! And led her to the glint!

Old Man Smith was pretty surprised to see us. He was riding round the door-yard in his wheel chair. He rolled his chair to the gate to meet us. The chair squeaked a good deal. But even if he'd wanted to walk he couldn't. The reason why he couldn't is because he's dumb in his legs.

"What in the world do you want?" he asked.

I looked at Carol. Carol looked at me. He kicked me in the shins. My thoughts came very quickly.

"We've brought you a young lady that's lost her mind!" I said. "What can you do about it?"

Something happened all at once that made our legs feel queer. What happened was that Old Man Smith didn't seem pleased at all about it. He snatched his long white beard in his hands.

"Lost her mind?" he said. "Her mind? Her mind? How dar'st you mock me?" he cried.

"We darsn't at all!" I explained. "On account of the bears! We've read all about the mocking bears in a book!"

He seemed to feel better.

"You mean in the good book?" he said. "The Elijah bears, you mean?"

"Well, it was quite a good book," I admitted. "Though my Father's got lots of books on Tulips that have heap prettier covers!"

"U--m--m--m," said Old Man Smith. "U--m--m--m----. U--m----m----m."

And all the time that he was saying "U--m----m----m--U--m----m----m," young Annie Halliway was knocking down his house. With a big chunk of rock she was chipping it off. It was a piece of blue china cup with the handle still on it that she chipped off first.

When Old Man Smith saw it he screamed.

"Woman! What are you doing?" he screamed.

"Her name is Young Annie Halliway," I explained.

"Young Annie Halliway--Come Here!" screamed Old Man Smith.

Young Annie Halliway came here. She was perfectly gentle about it. All her ways were gentle. She sat down on the ground at Old Man Smith's feet. She lifted her eyes to Old Man Smith's eyes. She looked holy. But all the time that she looked so holy she kept right on braiding the handle of the blue china cup into her hair. It cranked against the tin trumpet. It sounded a little like the 4th of July.

Old Man Smith reached down and took her chin in his hands.

"Oh my Lord--what a beautiful face!" he said. "What a beautiful face!--And you say she's lost her mind?" he said. "You say she's lost her mind?" He turned to Carol. "And what do you say?" he asked.

"Oh, please, Sir, Carol doesn't say anything!" I explained. "He can't! He's dumb!"

"Dumb?" cried Old Man Smith. "So this is the Dumb Child, is it?" He looked at Carol. He looked at himself. He looked at my freckles. He rocked his hands on his stomach. "Merciful God!" he said. "How are we all afflicted!"

"Oh, please, Sir," I said, "my brother Carol isn't afflicted at all!--It's a great gift my Mother says to be born with the Gift of Silence instead of the Gift of Speech!"

He made a little chuckle in his throat. He began to look at Young Annie Halliway all over again.

"And what does your Mother say about her?" he pointed.

"My Mother says," I explained, "that she only hopes that the person who finds her mind will be honest enough to return it!"

"What?" said Old Man Smith. "To return it?--Honest enough to return it?"

He began to do everything all over again!--To chuckle! To rock! To take Young Annie Halliway's chin in his hand!

"And what did you say your name was, my pretty darling?" he asked.

Young Annie Halliway looked a little surprised.

"My name is Robin," she said. "Dearest--Robin--I think."

"You think wrong!" said Old Man Smith. He frowned with ferocity.

It made us pretty nervous all of a sudden.

Carol went off to look at the bee-hive to calm himself. Young Annie Halliway picked up the end of one of her long braids and looked at that. There was still about a foot of it that didn't have anything braided into it. I didn't know where to look so I looked at the house. It was very glistening. Blue it glistened. And green it glistened! And red it glistened! And pink! And purple! And yellow!

"Oh, see!" I pointed. "There's old Mrs. Beckett's rose-vase with the gold edge!--She dropped it on the brick garden-walk the day her son who'd been lost at sea for eleven years walked through the gate all alive and perfectly dry!--And that chunky white nozzle with the blue stripe on it?--I

know what that is!--It's the nose of Deacon Perry's first wife's best tea pot!--I've seen it there! In a glass cupboard! On the top shelf!--She never used it 'cept when the Preacher came!"

"The Deacon's second wife broke it--feeding chickens out of it," said Old Man Smith.

"And that little scrap of saucer," I cried, "with the pansy petal on it?--Why--Why that's little Hallie Bent's doll-dishes!--We played with 'em down in the orchard! She died!" I cried. "She had the whooping-measles!"

"That little scrap of saucer," said Old Man Smith, "was the only thing they found in Mr. Bent's bank box.--What the widow was lookin' for was gold!"

"And that green glass stopper!" I cried. "Oh, Goodie----Goodie----Goodie!--Why, that----"

"Hush your noise!" said Old Man Smith. "History is solemn!--The whole history of the village is written on the outer walls of my house!--When the Sun strikes here,--strikes there,--on that bit of glass,--on this bit of crockles--the edge of a plate,--the rim of a tumbler,--I read about folk's minds!--What they loved!--What they hated!--What they was thinking of instead when it broke!--" He snatched his long white beard in his hands. He wagged his head at me. "There's a law about breakin' things," he said, "same as there's a law about losin' them! My house is a sample-book," he said. "On them there walls--all stuck up like that--I've got a sample of most every mind in the village!--People give 'em to me themselves," he said. "They let me rake out their trash barrels every now and then. They don't know what they're givin'!--Now, that little pewter rosette there----"

"It would be nice--wouldn't it," I said, "if you could find a sample of Young Annie Halliway's mind? Then maybe you could match it!"

"Eh?" said Old Man Smith. "A sample of her mind?" He looked jerky. He growled in his throat. "A--hem----A--hem," he said. He closed his eyes. I thought he'd decided to die. I screamed for Carol. He came running. He'd only been bee-stung twice. Old Man Smith opened his eyes. His voice sounded queer. "Where do they think she lost her mind?" he whispered.

"In Europe," I said. "Maybe in a train! Maybe on a boat! They don't know! She can't remember anything about it."

"U--m--m," said Old Man Smith. He looked at Young Annie Halliway. "And where do you think you lost it?" he said.

Young Annie Halliway seemed very much pleased to be asked. She laughed right out.

"In a March wind!" she said.

"Eh?" said Old Man Smith. He turned to me again. "What did you say her name was?" he asked.

I felt a little cross.

"Halliway!" I said. "Halliway--Halliway--Halliway! They live in the big house out by the Chestnut Trees! They only come here in the Summers! Except now! The Doctors say it's Mysteria!"

"The Doctors say what is Mysteria?" said Old Man Smith.

"What Annie's got!" I explained. "What made her lose her mind! Mysteria is what they call it."

"U--m--m," said Old Man Smith. He reached way down into his pocket. He pulled out a box. He opened the box. It was full of pieces of colored glass! And of china! He juggled them in his hands. They looked gay. Red they were! And green! And white! And yellow! And blue! He snatched out all the blue ones and hid 'em quick in his pocket. "She seems sort of partial to blue," he said.

There was one funny big piece of glass that was awful shiny. When he held it up to the light it glinted and glowed all sorts of colors. It made your eyes feel very calm.

Annie Halliway reached out her hand for it. She didn't say a word. She just stared at it with her hand all reached out.

But Old Man Smith didn't give it to her. He just sat and stared at her eyes.

Her eyes never moved from the shining bit of glass. They looked awful funny. Bigger and bigger they got! And rounder and rounder! And stiller and stiller!

It was like a puppy-dog pointing a little bird in the grass. It made you feel queer. It made you feel all sort of hollow inside. It made your legs wobble.

Carol's mouth was wide open.

So was Old Man Smith's.

Old Man Smith reached out suddenly and put the shining bit of glass right into Annie Halliway's hand. It fell through her fingers. But her hand stayed just where it was, reaching out into the air.

"Put down your arm!" said Old Man Smith.

Annie Halliway put it down. Her eyes were still staring very wide.

"Look!" said Old Man Smith. "Look!" He dropped several pieces of colored glass china into her lap.

She chose the handle of a red tea cup and a little chunk of yellow crockery. She stared and stared at them. But all the time it was as though her eyes didn't see them. All the time it was as though she was looking at something very far away. Then all of a sudden she began to jingle them together in her hand,--the little piece of red china and the chunk of yellow bowl! And swing her shoulders! And stamp her foot! It looked like dancing. It sounded like clappers.

"Oh, Ho! This is Spain!" she laughed.

Old Man Smith snatched all the blue pieces of china and glass out of his pocket again and tossed them into her lap. He looked sort of mad.

"Spain?" he said. "Spain? What in the Old Harry has a handful of glass and china got to do with Spain?"

"Harry?" said Annie Halliway. "Old--Harry?" Her eyes looked wider and blinder every minute. It was as though everything in her was wide awake except the thing she was thinking about. "Harry?" she puzzled. "Harry?" she dropped the red and yellow china from her hand and picked up a piece of blue glass and offered it to Old Man Smith. "Why, that is Harry!" she said. She reached for the pig-tail that had the blue Larkspur braided into it. She pointed to the pig-tail that had the blue fan braided into it. "Why, that is Harry!" she said. She made a little sob in her throat.

Old Man Smith jingled his hands at her.

"There--There--There, my Pretty!" he said. "Never mind--Never mind!"

He opened his hands. There were some little teeny-tiny pieces of plain glass in his hands. Little round knobs like beads they were. Very shining. They made a nice jingle.

When Annie Halliway saw them she screamed! And snatched them in her hand! And threw them away just as far as she could! All over the grass she threw them!

"I will not!" she screamed. "I will not! I will not!" Her tears were awful.

When she got through screaming her face looked like a wet cloth that had everything else wrung out of it except shadows.

"Where--is--Harry?" said Old Man Smith. He said it very slowly. And then all over again.

"Where--is--Harry?--You wouldn't have dar'st not tell him if you'd known."

Annie Halliway started to pick up some blue glass again. Then she stopped and looked all around her. It was a jerky stop. Her jaw sort of dropped.

"Harry--is--in--prison!" she said. Even though she'd said it herself she seemed to be awfully surprised at the news. She shook and shook her head as though she was trying to wake up the idea that was asleep. Her eyes were all scrunched up now with trying to remember about it. She dragged the back of her hands across her forehead. First one hand and then the other. She opened her eyes very wide again and looked at Old Man Smith.

"Where--is--Harry?" said Old Man Smith.

Annie Halliway never took her eyes from Old Man Smith's face.

"It--It was the night we crossed the border from France to Spain," she said. Her voice sounded very funny and far away. It sounded like reciting a lesson too. "There were seven of us and a teacher from the Paris art school," she recited. "It--It was the March holiday.----There--There--was a woman----a strange woman in the next compartment who made friends with me.--She seemed to be crazy over my hair.--She asked if she might braid it for the night."

Without any tears at all Annie Halliway began to sob again.

"When they waked us up at the Customs," she sobbed, "Harry came running! His face was awful! 'She's braided diamonds in your hair!' he cried. 'I heard her talking with her accomplice!'"

A hundred thousand dollars' worth of diamonds! Smugglers and murderers both they are!--Everybody will be searched!--He tore at my braids! I tore at my braids! The diamonds rattled out! Harry tried to catch them!--He pushed me back into the train! I saw soldiers running!--I thought they were going to shoot him! He thought they were going to shoot him!--I saw his eyes!--He looked so--so surprised!--I'd never noticed before how blue his eyes were!--I tell you I saw his eyes!--I couldn't speak!--There wasn't anybody to explain just why he had his hands full of diamonds!--I saw his eyes! I tell you I couldn't speak!--I tell you I never spoke!--My tongue went dead in my mouth! For months I never spoke!--I've only just begun to speak again!--I've only just----

She started to jump up from the ground where she was sitting! She couldn't!--She had braided Old Man Smith and his wheel chair into her hair! When she saw what she had done she toppled right over on her face! And fainted all out!

Over behind the lilac bush somebody screamed.

It was Annie Halliway's Mother! With her was a strange gentleman who had come all the way from New York to try and cure Annie Halliway. The strange gentleman was some special kind of a doctor.

"Hush--Hush!" the Special Doctor kept saying to everybody. "This is a very crucial moment! Can't you see that this a very crucial moment?" He pointed to Annie Halliway on the grass. Her Mother knelt beside her trying very hard to comb Old Man Smith and his wheel-chair out of her pig-tail. "Speak to her!" said the Doctor. "Speak to her very gently!"

"Annie?" cried her Mother. "Annie?--Annie--Annie?"

Annie Halliway opened her eyes very slowly and looked up. It was a brand new kind of a look. It had a bottom to it instead of being just through and through and through. There was a little smile in it too. It was a pretty look.

"Why, Mother," said Annie Halliway. "Where am I?"

The Special Man from New York made a queer little sound in his throat.

"Thank God!" he said. "She's all right now!"

It seemed pretty quick to me.

"You mean--" I said, "that her Mysteria is all cured--now?"

"Not Mys teria," said the Special Man from New York, "Hys teria!"

"No!--_Her steria!" corrected Old Man Smith.

The Special Man from New York began to laugh.

But Annie Halliway's Mother began to cry.

"Oh, just suppose we'd never found her?" she cried. She looked at Carol. She looked at me. She glared a little. But not so awfully much. "When you naughty children ran away with her?" she cried. "And we couldn't find her anywhere?--And the Doctor came? And there was only an hour to spare?--And we got a horse and drove round anywhere? And--And----"

"I wouldn't have missed it for anything!" said the Special Man from New York.

"And all your appointments waiting?" cried Annie Halliway's Mother.

"Darn the appointments!" said the Special Man from New York. He slanted his head and looked at Old Man Smith. "We arrived," he said, "just at the moment when the young lady was gazing so--so intently at the piece of shiny glass." He made a funny grunt in his throat. "Let me congratulate you, Mr.--Mr. Smith!" he said. "Your treatment was most efficient!--Your hypnosis was perfect! Your----"

"Hip nothing!" said Old Man Smith.

"Of course, in a case like this," said the Special Man from New York, "the Power of Suggestion is always----"

"All young folks," said Old Man Smith, "are cases of one kind or another--and the most powerful suggestion that I can make is that somebody find 'Harry!'"

"'Harry?'" said Annie Halliway's Mother. "'Harry?'"--Why, I've got four letters at home for Annie in my desk now--from some im--impetuous young man who signs himself 'Harry!'--He seems to be in an Architect's office in Paris! 'Robin' is what he calls Annie!--'Dearest Robin'----"

"Eh?" said Annie Halliway. "What? Where?" She sat bolt upright! She scrambled to her feet! She started for the carriage!

Her Mother had to run to catch her.

The Special Man from New York followed them just as fast as he could.

Old Man Smith wheeled his chair to the gate to say "Good-bye."

Everything seemed all mixed up.

Annie Halliway's Mother never stopped talking a single second.

"Oh, my Pet!" she cried. "My Precious. My Treasure!"

With one foot on the carriage step the Special Man from New York turned round and looked at Old Man Smith. He smiled a funny little smile.

"Seek--and ye shall find!" he said. "That is--if you only know How and Where to seek."

Old Man Smith began to chuckle in his beard.

"Yes, I admit that's quite a help," he said, "the knowing How and Where!--But before you set out seekin' very hard for anything that's lost it's a pretty good idea to find out first just exactly what it is that you're seekin' for!--When a young lady's lost her mind, for instance, that's one thing!--But if it's her heart that's lost, why, that, of course, is quite another!"

Annie Halliway's face wasn't white any more. It was as red as roses. She had it in her Mother's shoulder.

The horses began to prance. The carriage began to creak.

Annie Halliway's Mother looked all around.

"Oh, dear--oh, dear--oh, dear, Mr.--Mr. Smith," she said. "How shall I ever repay you?"

Old Man Smith reached out his hand across the fence. There was sort of a twinkle in his eye.

"One dollar, please," said Old Man Smith.

Grade 10

Selected Response Questions - Fiction

The Gift of The Probable Places

By Eleanor Hallowell Abbott

1. What does the word ‘Dumb’ mean as used repeatedly in the short story?
 - a. unintelligent
 - b. lost
 - c. silent
 - d. confused
2. Based on information in the short story, what inference can be made about Old Man Smith?
 - a. He is a magician
 - b. His technique brings results
 - c. He interviews people well
 - d. He finds objects only
3. What characteristic of the short story best indicates that it is fiction rather than nonfiction?
 - a. The use of first person point of view
 - b. The use of dynamic characters
 - c. The incorporation of a resolution and climax
 - d. The use of flat characters
4. Based on information in the short story, what conclusion can be made about Annie?
 - a. Witnessing a traumatic incident affected her
 - b. Going on the train was the worst decision she made
 - c. Studying too hard in Europe affected her
 - d. Leaving home at an early age was the worst decision she made
5. What relationship does the title have with the plot?
 - a. It describes Annie’s illness
 - b. It alludes to Carol and the narrator’s discovery
 - c. It describes the Village’s propensity to lose things
 - d. It alludes to a solution to the Village people losing things

6. What effect does the first person point of view have on the story?
 - a. It provides a firsthand account of Old Man Smith's Gift
 - b. It makes the text more fictional versus a nonfiction account
 - c. It offers a reliable narrator
 - d. It provides insight to the Village events
7. What diction or syntax best describes the story's time period?
 - a. "horses began to prance. The carriage began to creak"
 - b. "The Special Man from New York followed them just as fast as he could."
 - c. "you dropped it from the basket of a balloon on your way to a Missionary Meeting"
 - d. "She hunted it all up and down the Village streets! She hunted it in the Depot carriage"
8. What does the word "Probable" from the title mean, as reflected in the story's plot?
 - a. unusual
 - b. a possibility
 - c. most likely
 - d. the expected

Grade 10

Constructed Response Question - Fiction

9. Analyze what the narrator's thoughts throughout the short story reveal about the plot. Use information from the short story to support your analysis.