

English Language Arts 8

Quarter 1 Benchmark Assessment

Name:

Date:

Class:

Read "The Ant and the Chrysalis," a fable by Aesop.

An Ant nimbly running about in the sunshine in search of food came across a Chrysalis that was very near its time of change. The Chrysalis moved its tail, and thus attracted the attention of the Ant, who then saw for the first time that it was alive. "Poor, pitiable animal!" cried the Ant disdainfully. "What a sad fate is yours! While I can run hither and thither, at my pleasure, and, if I wish, ascend the tallest tree, you lie imprisoned here in your shell, with power only to move a joint or two of your scaly tail." The Chrysalis heard all this, but did not try to make any reply. A few days after, when the Ant passed that way again, nothing but the shell remained. Wondering what had become of its contents, he felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful Butterfly.

"Behold in me," said the Butterfly, "your much-pitied friend! Boast now of your powers to run and climb as long as you can get me to listen." So saying, the Butterfly rose in the air, and, borne along and aloft on the summer breeze, was soon lost to the sight of the ant forever.

1. Which of these best explains the irony in this passage?
 - (a) The ant's original belief about the chrysalis is far from the truth.
 - (b) The ant's original belief about the chrysalis is accurate.
 - (c) The ant cannot fly.
 - (d) The ant sees the chrysalis lying still in the beginning.

2. "Poor, pitiable animal!" cried the Ant disdainfully.

What does *disdainfully* mean in this context?

- (a) praise
- (b) disrespect
- (c) conquer
- (d) respect

Read *The Model Millionaire* by O. Henry and answer questions 3, 4, 5.

Unless one is wealthy there is no use in being a charming fellow. Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed. The poor should be practical and prosaic. It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating. These are the great truths of modern life which Hughie Erskine never realised. Poor Hughie! Intellectually, we must admit, he was not of much importance. He never said a brilliant or even an ill-natured thing in his life.

But then he was wonderfully good-looking, with his crisp brown hair, his clear-cut profile, and his grey eyes. He was as popular with men as he was with women, and he had every accomplishment except that of making money. His father had bequeathed him his cavalry sword, and a *History of the Peninsular War* in fifteen volumes. Hughie hung the first over his looking-glass, put the second on a shelf between Ruff's Guide and Bailey's *Magazine*, and lived on two hundred a year that an old aunt allowed him. He had tried everything. He had gone on the Stock Exchange for six months; but what was a butterfly to do among bulls and bears? He had been a tea-merchant for a little longer, but had soon tired of pekoe and souchong. Then he had tried selling dry sherry. That did not answer; the sherry was a little too dry. Ultimately he became nothing, a delightful, ineffectual young man with a perfect profile and no profession.

To make matters worse, he was in love. The girl he loved was Laura Merton, the daughter of a retired Colonel who had lost his temper and his digestion in India, and had never found either of them again. Laura adored him, and he was ready to kiss her shoe-strings. They were the handsomest couple in London, and had not a penny-piece between them. The Colonel was very fond of Hughie, but would not hear of any engagement.

"Come to me, my boy, when you have got ten thousand pounds of your own, and we will see about it," he used to say; and Hughie looked very glum on those days, and had to go to Laura for consolation...

3. What conclusion is the reader likely to draw from the condition presented by the colonel?

"Come to me, my boy, when you have got ten thousand pounds of your own, and we will see about it, . . ."

- (a) The Colonel has no plans of letting his daughter marry Hughie.
- (b) The Colonel is concerned about his daughter having to live her life with a man of low character.
- (c) The Colonel thinks that Hughie will probably take up the challenge and start working hard.
- (d) The Colonel maintains conventional standards for his daughter's marriage.

4. Which line from the passage suggests that Hughie Erskine will never have a serious direction in life?

- (a) ... but what was a butterfly to do among bulls and bears?
- (b) He never said a brilliant or even an ill-natured thing in his life.
- (c) ... young man with a perfect profile and no profession.
- (d) He was as popular with men as he was with women,

5. These are the great truths of modern life which Hughie Erskine never *realised*.
What is the correct spelling of *realised*?

- (a) relised
- (b) relized
- (c) realized
- (d) correct as it is

Read this passage to answer question 6.

In a tiny village in Trinidad an old woman who made the most delicious sweets stubbed her toe on a stone and dropped her coconut cakes everywhere while walking to market. She shook her head, mumbling about her trouble, and returned home to make more.

Monkey was sitting in a tree and saw and heard everything. Curious about her trouble, he scurried down and tasted one of the coconut cakes and exclaimed, "This trouble is most delicious! I shall go buy some more for myself!" Monkey marched right into town and went to the nearest merchant. "I'd like to buy some trouble," he said. The merchant shook his head with a little smile and soon brought out a large bag. Monkey paid for it and left.

He carried the bag not too far off and, licking his lips, he loosened the top of the bag. Suddenly three fierce dogs burst from the bag, barking and flashing their sharp teeth. Poor Monkey ran up the nearest tree and sat on a high branch, shaking with fear as the dogs below barked and yapped at him. He grew hungrier and thirstier, waiting until the dogs left the tree. Eventually they did leave and to this day Monkey stays high up in the treetops, far away from trouble.

6. Which of these best explains the irony in this passage?

- (a) The dogs trick the monkey.
- (b) The monkey's belief about what trouble is accurate.
- (c) The merchant is cleverer than the monkey.
- (d) The monkey expects trouble to be something other than what it is.

Read *Home Alone* to answer questions 7 and 8.

I'll never forget the winter night I tried to prove to my parents that I could watch the house on my own. I had been waiting for the opportunity for ages. My parents often left town for their window-repair business. Normally I went to my uncle's house whenever they went away. But one Friday night I convinced them to let me stay home alone. "Don't worry about me," I told them confidently, "because I'll be fine here on my own." My parents exchanged slightly worried looks for an instant but agreed to let me stay behind for a change. I was psyched for my night alone, eager to show my parents that I could act responsibly.

"Have a good trip," I told my parents that evening as they put on their overcoats, hats, and gloves. Of course, they had to tell me to be careful, and they made sure I had the numbers for their cell phones—"just in case anything goes wrong." I felt insulted by their suggestion that something might go wrong. But I dutifully jotted down their numbers and promised to call "in case." But what could possibly go wrong under my careful watch?

As my parents' car rumbled off toward the airport, I turned up the stereo and went straight for the kitchen. Within minutes the whole house smelled like buttery microwave popcorn. As I walked back into the living room, I couldn't believe how different the house seemed already. Cool music was playing instead of the oldies my parents always listened to. The volume was cranked up—not ear-splittingly loud but louder than my parents could handle. And the popcorn smelled great—so different from the usual scent of steamed vegetables. I plopped down on the couch and, in between my munching, sang along to my favorite songs at the top of my lungs.

After I had eaten the last kernel of popcorn, I decided to watch some basketball on TV. Glenn Robinson of the Milwaukee Bucks was dominating the game, and I was having a blast. I ran upstairs to my room and grabbed my basketball, which I like to have around during games. As I walked back downstairs, I tried to spin the ball on my right index finger, just like the Harlem Globetrotters. But the ball spun away from me, sailed down the stairs, bounced off the hardwood floor, and broke the living-room window! It was the biggest window in the house, and now it had a huge, jagged hole in the middle that looked like a shark opening its jaws. My jaw dropped in disbelief, and I just stood there on the stairs thinking, *This is bad—very bad.*

I went outside and retrieved the ball from the snow, careful not to touch the shards of glass lying everywhere. To add insult to injury, the basketball—a new one I had paid \$40 for—had deflated. At least no neighbors seemed to have heard the awful shattering. Back inside, I glanced at the TV and noticed that Robinson had fouled out of the game and was walking slowly to the bench. "I know how you feel," I told the big guy as I returned my attention to the broken window.

The note with my parents' cell-phone numbers on it stared up at me from the coffee table. I thought about my options. I cringed to think of how stupid I would feel telling my parents about the window so soon after they'd left. I just wanted to plop down on the couch, watch the rest of the game, and pray that somehow things would work out. But a little voice inside me said, *Don't be a coward—just suffer the consequences.* So as difficult and painful as it was, I picked up the phone, took a deep breath, and dialed. To my surprise, neither of my parents yelled at me or called me irresponsible. In fact, my dad said he would call an assistant to come right over to replace the window. Then, to my astonishment, he said, "By the way, thanks for acting like an adult about this. The next time we go away, I'm sure everything will go just fine." Somehow I felt that, even though I'd made a mistake that night, I did act responsibly.

7. One theme from the story is that it is always important to admit your errors.

Which sentence from the story best supports this theme?

- (a) I plopped down on the couch and, in between my munching, sang along to my favorite songs at the top of my lungs.
- (b) After I had eaten the last kernel of popcorn, I decided to watch some basketball on TV.
- (c) I just wanted to plop down on the couch, watch the rest of the game, and pray that somehow things would workout.
- (d) Somehow I felt that, even though I'd made a mistake that night, I did act responsibly.

8. Read this sentence from the passage:

But a little voice inside me said, Don't be a coward—just suffer the consequences.

The word *consequences* is derived from the Latin prefix com-, meaning “with,” and the Latin root **sequi**, meaning “**to follow**.” Which word means about the same as consequences?

- (a) anger
- (b) fear
- (c) shame
- (d) results

Read *A New Attitude* by Marta Rivera and answer questions 9, 10, 11.

"I should just give up since I'm never going to win," Alberto muttered as he watched the other bikers pedal ahead of him. He struggled to catch his breath, and his legs felt like jelly. This was Alberto's third bike race, and he had expected to be one of the top cyclists to finish, not just another mediocre rider. He had also expected to be in better shape after a couple of weeks of training. Disappointed and frustrated, Alberto finished the race 20 minutes later, among the last riders to complete the 10 miles. Meeting him at the finish line were his coach and teammates. Surprisingly, they all looked excited to see him, not disappointed that he had performed so terribly.

"You beat your time by two minutes!" Coach Ramirez congratulated Alberto with an encouraging smile and friendly pat on the back. His teammates also congratulated him, but Alberto was in no mood for a joyful celebration.

"Yeah, but I almost came in last," Alberto complained, feeling abominable. He couldn't understand how his miserable performance was anything special.

"Don't be so terribly hard on yourself; you joined the team just a couple of weeks ago, so all you can do is your very best," Coach Ramirez explained, trying to get Alberto to start thinking differently. "Besides, I wouldn't have put you on the team if I didn't think you had considerable talent. Right now you should just concentrate on getting better and believing that you **can** get better."

"I don't know, Coach, I just feel like I'm the worst rider in history," Alberto lamented, feeling like victory would always elude him. Alberto's coach tried once again to encourage Alberto, but Alberto wasn't interested in listening. He wanted to focus on the negative points of his race instead of considering the fact that he had improved his time.

At home after the race, Alberto plopped down on the couch to watch his favorite sports channel. He was ready to waste the rest of the day by trying to keep his mind off his terrible performance, but, after only a few minutes, Alberto sat up straight when he saw that a reporter was interviewing his favorite cyclist, Juan Garcia. Alberto could identify with Juan Garcia because their family histories were similar. Juan's and Alberto's parents had immigrated to the United States from Mexico, and they wanted their children to have everything they did not have. This commonality made Alberto feel as if Juan were his friend and a person who could be trusted. The reporter had just asked Juan when his career in cycling started, so Alberto turned up the volume to hear his answer.

"I joined a team, and my first few races weren't memorable at all since I performed terribly. I thought I would be the best as soon as I started racing, and I got so disappointed when I didn't do well that I even thought about quitting. Luckily, I had a great coach who just kept encouraging me, and, after I changed my attitude and started doing the best I could do, I got much better."

Alberto listened carefully to Juan's response and was shocked to hear that he hadn't always been a great cyclist. He had never imagined that his favorite cyclist had once struggled, too. He was also surprised to hear that Juan had reacted in the same manner as he had to his first few races. Alberto kept thinking that he was more like Juan Garcia than he ever would have imagined.

Alberto turned off the TV and started evaluating his situation. In his first race he had finished last, and in his second race he had been at the bottom of the pack. In today's race, he had still been close to finishing last, but he had improved his time by a couple of minutes. "I guess I am getting better, even if I'm not winning," Alberto thought to himself.

On the day of his next race, Alberto found a new self-assurance that he had been lacking in his prior races. He looked in his mirror and thought, "Just remember what Juan Garcia said and do your best today. Don't worry about winning; there's plenty of time for that!"

With added confidence, Alberto hurried to the race site, where he met up with Coach Ramirez and his teammates. He replayed the words of Juan Garcia over and over in his head as he did his warm-ups and checked to make sure his bike was in good condition.

Just as the race was about to start, Coach Ramirez encouraged Alberto, "Now, Alberto, put your last race out of your mind and just concentrate on what lies ahead of you. And remember, don't worry about winning, because that's not what being an athlete is all about."

Alberto smiled broadly at the encouraging words of his coach. "No problem, Coach, I'm just going to do my best!" Alberto shouted happily as he pedaled off to start his first race with a new attitude.

9. Which sentence states a theme in the story?

- (a) Never give in to peer pressure.
- (b) Always try your best.
- (c) Think before you act.
- (d) Losing always feels bad.

10. How does watching the interview of his favorite cyclist affect Alberto?

- (a) It encourages him to watch Juan Garcia in an important bike race.
- (b) It allows him to rest after his disappointing race.
- (c) It enables him to learn from Juan Garcia's experiences.
- (d) It gives him the courage to give up cycling.

11. Read this sentence below.

"I don't know, Coach, I just feel like I'm the worst rider in history," Alberto lamented, feeling like victory would always *elude* him.

What does the word *elude* mean?

- (a) find
- (b) empower
- (c) escape
- (d) succeed

Read passage and answer question 12.

Golfers Link Up for a Round That's a Higher Calling

Their swings mostly wouldn't be mistaken for works of art, and the resulting shots wouldn't make anyone forget Tiger Woods. Yet, this round of golf was a thing of beauty.

The golfers at Oasis Sports Park in Chesterfield County were Special Olympics athletes—kids and adults with [developmental] disabilities—and their partners, who are sometimes parents but usually just volunteers with big hearts and time to spare. These twosomes play the game with pleasure and purpose, aiming for birdies and something more.

Every week, at a number of Richmond area golf courses that donate their facilities as well as the time of their golf pros, Special Olympics athletes—kids and adults—receive instruction in the game of golf and encouragement in the game of life.

They are taught how to grip the club and keep their eyes on the ball, but they also are taught how to think for themselves, to practice sportsmanship and to listen to their teachers. And to have a good time.

12. What is the intent of this feature article?

- (a) to show that Special Olympics athletes are good at golfing
- (b) to argue that children should not be forced to participate in sports
- (c) to give free publicity to the Oasis Sports Park in Chesterfield County
- (d) to inform the public about an important activity involving Special Olympic athletes

13. Read this speech that is being given to a group of dentists.

Hey, everybody, how's it going? Today I'm here to tell you all about a new toothpaste that I think you should do some research on. It's totally cool. It tastes awesome! It's like a blast of spearmint and peppermint, and it beats all that other stuff on the market today. Plus, it's so cool that you only have to brush once a day with it! Awesome!

How should the speaker adjust his language to suit his audience?

- (a) The speaker should use more casual and simple language.
- (b) The speaker should use more formal and technical language.
- (c) The speaker should use less aggressive and abrasive language.
- (d) The speaker should use more emotional and heartfelt language

Read *After Twenty Years* by O. Henry and then answer questions 14 and 15.

"I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?"

"I should say not!" said the other. "I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he'll be here by that time. So long, officer."

"Good-night, sir," said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

"Is that you, Bob?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Is that you, Jimmy Wells?" cried the man in the door.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other's hands with his own. "It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well!—twenty years is a long time. The old gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?"

"Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches."

"Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty."

"Doing well in New York, Jimmy?"

"Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times."

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face.

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.

"You're not Jimmy Wells," he snapped. "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug."...

14. What does this description from the passage say about the two men?

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

- (a) The man from the West is boastful while the other is trying to hide his identity.
- (b) The man from the West seems less interested in the meeting than the other man.
- (c) The man from the West is not as eager to talk as the other man.
- (d) The man from the West seems to have been less successful than the other man.

15. What are readers likely to infer from this statement from the passage?

"You're not Jimmy Wells," he snapped. "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug."

- (a) The man posing as Jimmy Wells is an impostor.
- (b) Jimmy Wells looks different after twenty years.
- (c) The other man is unable to identify Jimmy Wells.
- (d) The other man cannot recall how Jimmy looked.

Read *The Selfish Giant* by Osacar Wilde and answer questions 16 and 17.

“My own garden is my own garden,” said the Giant; “any one can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.” So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board.

**TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED**

He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside. “How happy we were there,” they said to each other.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. “Spring has forgotten this garden,” they cried, “so we will live here all the year round.”

16. In this fairy tale, what does the snow-covered garden signify?
- (a) The garden was decreed to be covered in snow and frost forever.
 - (b) The season of spring was whimsical in its visits to gardens.
 - (c) The snow-covered garden reflects the giant’s cold-hearted behavior.
 - (d) The garden was not maintained; therefore spring did not visit it.

17. What does *prosecuted* most likely mean in ‘trespassers will be prosecuted?’
- (a) warned
 - (b) institute legal action
 - (c) to intrude
 - (d) invade privacy

Read the letter and answer questions 18, 19, 20.

1913 Oak Place
Athens, GA 30601

September 16, 2011

Director of Volunteers
Georgia museum of Art
2800 Pine Street
Athens, GA 30601

Dear Sir or Madam:

a) I am a high school student in Athens, Georgia, and I admire your museum. My interest in fine arts has prompted me to visit the Georgia Museum of Art numerous times on both personal and school-related trips. I am interested in any volunteer work at the museum.

b) By selecting me as a volunteer, the Georgia Museum will gain knowledgeable, reliable, and enthusiastic assistance. I am available immediately, and I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your consideration.

c) My high school has recently adopted a community service program, and all students are encouraged to volunteer in their communities. I would appreciate the opportunity to volunteer at the Georgia Museum of Art in any capacity. For example, I am willing to answer phones, assist in your gift shop, or conduct tours.

d) I have studied modern American art in school and at a summer institute in Savannah, and I could help with this fall's John Whalley exhibit. Further, if the museum is planning any art education programs for children, my experience as an art aide at Shady Brook Summer Camp has prepared me to plan, organize, and develop a presentation of art materials.

Sincerely,

Suki Lee

18. Which of these salutations could be used as an alternative to the one used in the letter?

- (a) Hello, Sir,
- (b) Dear Director of Volunteers,
- (c) Hi! Mr. Director,
- (d) Dear Director:

19. Which paragraph is suitable as the **concluding paragraph** in the body of the letter?

- (a) a
- (b) b
- (c) c
- (d) d

20. How should the mailing address below be completed that is in the letter above?

Georgia museum of Art
2800 Pine Street
Athens, GA 30601

(a) Georgia Museum of Art
2800 Pine Street
Athens, GA 30601

(b) Georgia Museum of art
2800 Pine Street
Athens, GA, 30601

(c) Georgia Museum of Art
2800 Pine Street Athens
GA 30601

(d) correct the way it is

English Language Arts 8
Quarter 1 Benchmark Assessment
Answer Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

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English Language Arts 8
Quarter 1 Benchmark Assessment
CCSS Correlation based on Plato and DOE

1. 8.RL.4 - 8.RL.9
2. 8.L.4.A - 8.L.6
3. 8.RL.4 - 8.RL.9
4. 8.RL.1 - 8.RL.3
5. 8.L.1 – 8.L.3
6. 8.RL.4 - 8.RL.9
7. 8.RL.1 - 8.RL.3
8. 8.L.4.A - 8.L.6
9. 8.RL.1 - 8.RL.3
10. 8.RL.1 - 8.RL.3
11. 8.L.4.A - 8.L.6
12. 8.W.7 - 8.W.9.B
13. 8.W.1.A - 8.W.3.E
14. 8.RI.1 - 8.RI.3
15. 8.RL.4 - 8.RL.9
16. 8.RL.4 - 8.RL.9
17. 8.L.4.A - 8.L.6
18. 8.W.1.A - 8.W.3.E
19. 8.W.1.A - 8.W.3.E
20. 8.L.1 – 8.L.3