

Tests for Higher Standards

READING/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



GRADE LEVEL TEST
FOR THE MARYLAND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Grade 8

Part I

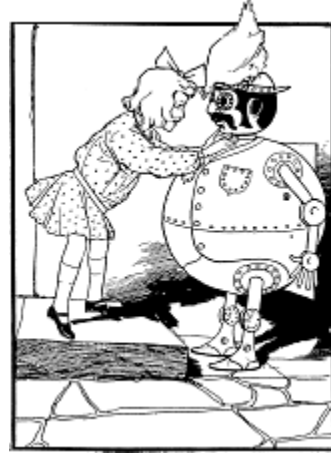
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from ***Ozma of Oz***
by L. Frank Baum
"Tiktok the Machine Man"

- 1 Dorothy walked back up the path, and followed it until she came to the very top of the hill, where a solitary round rock stood that was bigger than any of the others surrounding it. The path came to an end just beside this great rock, and for a moment it puzzled the girl to know why the path had been made at all. But the hen, who had been gravely following her around and was now perched upon a point of rock behind Dorothy, suddenly remarked:
- 2 "It looks something like a door, doesn't it?"
- 3 "What looks like a door?" enquired the child.
- 4 "Why, that crack in the rock, just facing you," replied Billina, whose little round eyes were very sharp and seemed to see everything. "It runs up one side and down the other, and across the top and the bottom."
- 5 "What does?"
- 6 "Why, the crack. So I think it must be a door of rock, although I do not see any hinges."
- 7 "Oh, yes," said Dorothy, now observing for the first time the crack in the rock. "And isn't this a key-hole, Billina?" pointing to a round, deep hole at one side of the door.
- 8 "Of course. If we only had the key, now, we could unlock it and see what is there," replied the yellow hen. "May be it's a treasure chamber full of diamonds and rubies, or heaps of shining gold, or—"
- 9 "That reminds me," said Dorothy, "of the golden key I picked up on the shore. Do you think that it would fit this key-hole, Billina?"
- 10 "Try it and see," suggested the hen.
- 11 So Dorothy searched in the pocket of her dress and found the golden key. And when she had put it into the hole of the rock, and turned it, a sudden sharp snap was heard; then, with a solemn creak that made the shivers run down the child's back, the face of the rock fell outward, like a door on hinges, and revealed a small dark chamber just inside.
- 12 "Good gracious!" cried Dorothy, shrinking back as far as the narrow path would let her.
- 13 For, standing within the narrow chamber of rock, was the form of a man—or, at least, it seemed like a man, in the dim light. He was only about as tall as Dorothy herself, and his body was round as a ball and made out of burnished copper. Also his head and limbs were copper, and these were jointed or hinged

to his body in a peculiar way, with metal caps over the joints, like the armor worn by knights in days of old. He stood perfectly still, and where the light struck upon his form it glittered as if made of pure gold.

- 14 "Don't be frightened," called Billina, from her perch. "It isn't alive."
- 15 "I see it isn't," replied the girl, drawing a long breath.
- 16 "It is only made out of copper, like the old kettle in the barn-yard at home," continued the hen, turning her head first to one side and then to the other, so that both her little round eyes could examine the object.



- 17 "Once," said Dorothy, "I knew a man made out of tin, who was a woodman named Nick Chopper. But he was as alive as we are, 'cause he was born a real man, and got his tin body a little at a time—first a leg and then a finger and then an ear—for the reason that he had so many accidents with his axe, and cut himself up in a very careless manner."

8-3.A.3.a

1. What best describes the genre of this passage?

- A science fiction
- B fantasy
- C folklore
- D realistic fiction

8-3.A.3.b

2. In this passage, we see a conflict occur within Dorothy as she discovers Tiktok, the Machine Man in a cave.

How does this conflict advance the plot?

- A It casts an air of suspense and mystery around Tiktok.
- B It enables Dorothy to forget the trouble she's already having.
- C It puts an end to the conflict between Dorothy and Billina.
- D It gives Dorothy and Billina a reason to push on in their journey.

8-3.A.3.c

3. Which word best describes the mood of this passage?

- A boring
- B mysterious
- C joyous
- D excited

8-3.A.3.d

4. Which statement best describes Dorothy, as she is depicted in this passage?

- A She is a traveller.
- B She is a lazy person.
- C She is not very smart.
- D She is mean.

8-3.A.3.e

5. How is Dorothy's past important to the events in this passage? Use examples from the passage to support your answer.

8-3.A.3.f

6. Based on what you have read here, what will most likely happen as a result of Dorothy finding the copper man?

- A She will befriend the copper man like she did Nick Chopper.
- B The copper man will come to life and try to destroy Dorothy.
- C Dorothy will get scared and leave the copper man right where he is.
- D The copper man will wake up and ask Dorothy and Billina to leave his home.

8-3.A.3.i

7. What is the point-of-view of this passage?

- A first person
- B second person
- C third person-limited
- D third person-omniscient

8-3.A.6.a

8. Based on this passage, what is most likely a theme of the book, *Ozma of Oz*?

- A** Dorothy's deep desire for wealth
- B** friendship can be found in the strangest places
- C** Billina's jealousy over Dorothy's ability to make friends easily
- D** forgiveness of an old friend after many years of separation

8-3.A.6.c

9. In a few sentences, summarize the events of this passage from *Ozma of Oz*.

8-3.A.7.d

10. Read this excerpt from the passage.

his body was round as a ball

What type of figurative language is this?

- A** personification
- B** symbolism
- C** metaphor
- D** simile

8-3.A.8.c

11. The *Wizard of Oz* books were written around the time of World War I.

How did the events of the World War I era most likely influence the writing of these books?

- A** The fantastic characters and events gave children an escape from the horrors of real life.
- B** The non-human characters, like the copper man, represented the evil war machines of Europe, while the human characters represented the people of the world learning to cope with difficult times.
- C** The realistic nature of the writing, and the allusions to everyday life, helped children understand the larger problems of the world.
- D** Dorothy's adventures gave kids a reason to be adventurous themselves.

8-3.A.8.d

12. What is the author's main purpose in writing this passage?

- A** to inform readers
- B** to entertain readers
- C** to frighten readers
- D** to educate readers

8-1.D.3.a

13. What is the best meaning of the word drawing as it is used in paragraph 15?

- A** inhaling
- B** accumulating
- C** pulling
- D** sketching

8-1.D.3.b

14. You may or may not know what the word burnished means, but the suffix “-ed” helps you identify it as

- A** an adverb.
- B** a noun.
- C** a verb.
- D** an adjective.

“What’s in a Name?”

by Joe Allende

How important is a name? Your name is your identity. It’s who you are. It’s how people know you. Everything you represent is summed up by your name, whether it be Peter, Dikembe, Maria, or Jian-min. In the vast universe of puzzles and conundrums, a name represents something solid and real. It represents you. So why would anyone want to change their name?

Just ask Submarine Carrot, an eighteen year old young lady who attends Long Beach High School in Miami, Florida. “I changed my name so I could change who I am,” Submarine told me. “I just got tired of my name, so I changed it. Before, I was boring old Karen Walters, but now I’m exciting and curious Submarine Carrot.”

Growing up with the name Karen Walters was hard for Submarine. “I was always the shy kid, the kid who stood around on the playground feeling afraid to play with any of the other kids,” she said. “Then one day when I was fourteen I asked my mom if I could change my name. She was hesitant, but she finally gave in,” Submarine laughs. Submarine’s mom, Mary Walters, was trepidatious about the whole thing, but when Mary saw how much her daughter changed, she was overjoyed. Mary explained, “She changed her name, and she was like this whole new person. She was suddenly so full of life and energy.” Submarine feels that the name Karen Walters just never “fit” for her. “It was like putting on the same pair of pants that just wouldn’t quite fit right,” she told me, adding, “so I threw those pants out and got a new pair.”

You might think this is an odd thing to do, but name changing is on the rise in this country. Approximately ten percent of Americans legally change their name each year, and now, thanks to Submarine Carrot, even more are being encouraged to shed their old names and develop new ones. “It’s time to stop being someone else, and be yourself,” is Submarine’s motto, and it’s the slogan of her non-profit organization, the Submarine Carrot Center for Freedom.

“To be yourself is to be free,” Submarine said. She added, “My parents gave me someone else’s name, someone who wasn’t me.” As soon as she changed her name, Submarine became outgoing and playful. She made friends and she was no longer afraid to get out and enjoy her life. “Life’s too short to be anything but happy,” she told me.

Does changing your name make you a happier person? I wanted to know, so I asked Submarine. “Sure,” she said positively. “For example, we’ve helped several people change their names in the last month. An old man named John Anderson recently changed his name to Starship Excellence, and he’s never been happier. He told us that he feels 30 years younger just in the name change. And there was this other guy who changed his name from Scott Reynolds to Jumpkick Australia. A month later, he started writing a novel, and he met the girl of his dreams. I’m not kidding.”

As I write this article I wonder, “Am I really Joe Allende, or am I perhaps Sunslip Dictionary. Or Pierre Buttonblast. Or maybe even just plain old Glass Bottle.” For now, however, I’m going to stick with Joe Allende. It seems to fit, and I kind of like it. It’s just who I am.

8-2.A.3.a

15. How is this passage organized?

- A chronologically
- B from most important to least important
- C into the issues surrounding name-changing
- D from least important to most important

8-2.A.4.a

16. Who is the author's intended audience?

- A parents
- B anyone who has changed his or her name
- C senior citizens
- D anyone who feels out of place

8-2.A.4.b

17. How does the author feel about name-changing after meeting and talking with Submarine Carrot? Use specific examples from the passage to support your answer.

8-2.A.4.c

18. What is the main idea of the passage?

- A Changing your name is the coolest thing to do.
- B Many people find that changing their name makes them happier and more free.
- C Submarine Carrot runs the Submarine Carrot Center for Freedom.
- D Most people change their name because they want attention.

8-2.A.4.c

19. What does the author use to support his article?

- A He cites many recent studies and surveys.
- B He uses many secondary sources.
- C He uses two primary sources.
- D He doesn't use anything to support his main idea.

8-2.A.4.i

20. How does the author get readers interested in the topic?

- A He gives readers his honest opinion about Submarine Carrot.
- B He provides a long history of name-changing throughout America.
- C He compares name-changing to other things that readers may be interested in.
- D He asks some important questions about the power of names.

8-2.A.5.a

21. Read this excerpt from the passage.

“It was like putting on the same pair of pants that just wouldn’t quite fit right,” she told me, adding, “so I threw those pants out and got a new pair.”

What type of language is Submarine using?

- A literal
- B idiom
- C figurative
- D persuasive

8-1.D.3.a

22. Read this excerpt from the passage.

In the vast universe of puzzles and conundrums, a name represents something solid and real.

What does the word conundrums most likely mean?

- A mysteries
- B concrete reality
- C names
- D people

8-1.D.3.b

23. The suffix “-ier” on the word happier helps you identify it as

- A a noun.
- B an adjective.
- C a verb.
- D an adverb.

Stirring the Chesapeake Bay

Have you ever tried She Crab Soup, a creamy soup made from fresh crab meat and roe? If not, you better hurry up because if the present-day rate of pollution continues, the Chesapeake Bay blue crab population may die off. Many scientists have compared the current state of the Chesapeake Bay to a big kettle of soup. As you know, soup is made up of many ingredients that make it taste wonderful, but if you add a little too much salt or too much pepper or too many carrots, the whole kettle of soup can be ruined. The Chesapeake Bay is no different than a bowl of soup, and it is currently in danger of being spoiled by an ingredient called nutrients.

The two main nutrients in the Chesapeake Bay are nitrogen and phosphorus, which are widely used in the fertilizers used by farmers. They are also found in the pollution from power plants, and water from sewage plants. Over time these products find their way into ground water which winds up in the creeks and rivers that feed the Chesapeake Bay.

Once the nutrients are in the Bay, they become food for plants. However, too many nutrients cause plants to grow at an abnormal rate, especially algae (microscopic floating plants). When there is too much algae, the water becomes cloudy and blocks the light needed by underwater plants, causing them to die. These underwater plants are very important because they provide food, shelter, and nursery areas to the Chesapeake Bay's blue crab population. Research has shown that the population of young crabs is ten times greater in areas where there are plenty of underwater plants.

Too much algae can also cause other problems. When the algae die, they settle to the bottom where they are naturally decomposed by bacteria. During this normal process, the bacteria use oxygen from the Bay's bottom waters. When bacteria decompose large amounts of algae, the removal of oxygen from the water increases. Blue crabs and other organisms living on and near the bottom need this oxygen in order to live. When the oxygen is taken away, the crabs and the other organisms have to move somewhere else to find oxygen. Basically, this means that the blue crabs living on the bottom need to find a new place to live. A chain reaction begins as the blue crabs move out of their old homes and into new homes, which were once the homes to other organisms. As more and more organisms are forced into new homes, the ecosystem's¹ balance is upset.

Today, many people are working on reducing the nutrients that enter the Chesapeake Bay. Activities and programs that improve the Bay's conditions include improving wastewater treatment facilities, educating farmers on the negative effects of fertilizers, cutting back on the amount of fertilizers used at homes and businesses, and planting trees in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to help absorb nutrients before they get to the Bay.

1. **ecosystem:** a system formed by a community of organisms

8-2.A.1.a

24. This passage is an example of

- A fiction.
- B narrative poetry.
- C nonfiction.
- D biography.

8-2.A.4.a

25. Why did the author write this passage?

- A to encourage crab farming
- B to inform readers of a problem
- C to promote tourism to the Chesapeake Bay
- D to teach people about different types of soup made with ingredients from the Chesapeake Bay

8-2.A.4.d

26. What is the best summary of the passage?

- A The Chesapeake Bay is being polluted and the organisms living in the Bay are being endangered.
- B The pollution in the Chesapeake Bay is no longer a problem because of human efforts.
- C The blue crab population in the Chesapeake is rising and living in more areas of the Bay.
- D Scientists are mapping the Chesapeake Bay's floor and tracking the movements of the blue crabs.

8-2.A.4.f

27. According to the passage, what happens when too much algae gets into the water?

- A It blocks the light that the underwater plants need.
- B It provides plenty of food for the blue crabs.
- C People are unable to swim in the water.
- D It attracts unwelcome organisms to the surface of the water.

8-2.A.5.a

28. What does the phrase chain reaction mean?

- A Chemicals are used to fix the problem.
- B Organisms move to find a place to live.
- C Chains are used to pull an object.
- D One action causes another action.

8-1.D.3.b

29. The word abnormal is made up of the word “normal” and the prefix “ab-”.

What does the prefix “ab-” mean?

- A between
- B before
- C extra
- D not

8-1.D.3.b

30. The suffix “-ly” helps you identify the word naturally as

- A a noun.
- B an adverb.
- C a verb.
- D an adjective.

“Jane”
by Robert Graves

- 1 As Jane walked out below the hill,
She saw an old man standing still,
His eyes in tranced sorrow bound
On the broad stretch of barren ground.
- 2 His limbs were gnarled like aged trees,
His thin beard wrapt about his knees,
His visage broad and parchment white,
Aglint with pale reflected light.
- 3 He seemed a creature fall'n afar
From some dim planet or faint star.
Jane scanned him very close, and soon
Cried, "'Tis the old man from the moon."
- 4 He raised his voice, a grating creak,
But only to himself would speak.
Groaning with tears in piteous pain,
"O! O! would I were home again."
- 5 Then Jane ran off, quick as she could,
To cheer his heart with drink and food.
But ah, too late came ale and bread,
She found the poor soul stretched stone-dead.
And a new moon rode overhead.



8-3.A.4.a

31. What feature defines this passage as a poem?

- A It includes vivid description.
- B It is about fictional characters.
- C It is written in stanzas, with rhyming lines.
- D It contains dialogue.

8-3.A.4.a

32. What type of poem is “Jane”?

- A lyric
- B ballad
- C narrative
- D elegy

8-3.A.4.b

33. How is the old man’s appearance important to the plot, or story, of “Jane”? Support your answer with details from the poem.

8-3.A.4.c

34. Read this short excerpt from the poem.

From some dim . . .

The repetition of the final sounds in these words is called

- A** assonance.
- B** consonance.
- C** alliteration.
- D** rhyme.

8-3.A.4.c

35. What is the rhyme scheme of stanzas 1 - 4?

- A** ABAB
- B** AABB
- C** ABBA
- D** ABBB

8-3.A.4.d

36. What is the setting of this passage?

- A** the moon
- B** a plain below a hill
- C** a park in the city
- D** a forest

8-3.A.4.d

37. The phrase like aged trees is called

- A a simile.
- B a metaphor.
- C alliteration.
- D personification.

8-3.A.4.d

38. What is the primary mood established in this poem?

- A mysterious
- B frightening
- C suspicious
- D lighthearted

FOR SALE: Your Secrets!!!

adapted from various media feeds

Nobody's Business?

You probably think that it's nobody's business but your own how much money you have. And if you've watched a lot of crime shows on television, you probably think it's not easy to find out, either. Think again.

Anything for a Price

On the Internet, as well as in other places, companies are selling a hot new service: snooping. For a fee, they will snoop into people's bank accounts and pass along information about accounts, stocks, and other financial matters to lawyers, business rivals, and anybody else who may not have your best interests at heart. For example, RT Enterprises in Atlanta says it will take orders for such information 24 hours a day. A group in Falls Church, VA, says it can have a report ready for you in four days or less. They charge \$325 for their "Enhanced Bank Balance Search," a favorite of lawyers and law enforcement agencies.

While this seems bad enough, the ability of companies to get confidential information easily makes other people worry about the security of all financial dealings that occur over the telephone or on the Internet. These companies get information, simply by asking for it—and pretending to be you, or someone else with legal access to your accounts.

Paid to Steal

One woman who formerly worked for one of the information-producing companies told investigators that her company made her call a bank again and again until she found someone who was willing to help. Then she would pretend to be the customer and, using the customer's Social Security number and saying she had "lost" her account number, persuade the bank worker to give her private information. She was almost always successful, she says, "Because banks train their people to be helpful."

One problem is that authorities can't decide whether this whole thing is legal or illegal. In most states, there are still no laws against such snooping, although it's difficult to see how lying to get private information can be legal. Massachusetts did fine several snooping companies, under the consumer protection laws. Many lawyers, however, feel that these fines are not legal.

Legal Crookery

Rep. James Smurch (D – South Carolina) thinks there should be clear-cut law. "I'm very uncomfortable with the things that are going on," he said recently on the TV show *Meet the Press*. "Congress will take a good look at these crooks, and we'll take steps, if necessary." An opinion poll conducted this week by *Media Inquiry* found that 63% of those responding who had watched Mr. Smurch on television were in favor of new federal legislation.

In the meantime, you'll never know who knows how much you're worth.

8-2.A.4.a

39. What is the main purpose of this article?

- A to warn consumers
- B to alert law enforcement authorities
- C to teach readers to snoop
- D to entertain readers

8-2.A.3.a

40. In this article, the headings are written to

- A incite the reader to action.
- B give the main fact of each paragraph.
- C answer all the reader's questions.
- D synthesize the results of research.

8-2.A.4.c

41. The information in paragraph 4 about the woman who worked for one of the investigative companies

- A had little to do with the point of the article.
- B proved that what the writer was saying is true.
- C shows how at least one of these companies works.
- D can't be believed because she's a liar.

8-2.A.4.c

42. Why do these "snooping" companies prefer to call banks over other businesses that possess a person's private information? Use information from the article to support your answer.

8-2.A.4.b

43. "Congress will take a good look at these crooks, and we'll take steps, if necessary." This statement is

- A a fact supported by paragraph 5.
- B the opinion of someone who is quoted in the article.
- C a fact supported by paragraph 6.
- D the writer's opinion.

8-2.A.4.f

44. In paragraph 6, the people who want new laws passed probably

- A** studied the problem carefully.
- B** were influenced by Mr. Smurch's statement.
- C** work for banks.
- D** are police or FBI agents.

8-2.A.5.a

45. If we said that the employees of the companies that find and sell information are like ferrets, we would be using

- A** an analogy.
- B** a simile.
- C** a fact.
- D** our knowledge of word origins.