

Everett Public Schools Assessment of Student Learning

Student Packet



Benchmark Reading Assessment Grade 6 Trimester 3

“Snowboarding”
“Emperors of the Antarctic”
“The Border Collie”

Student: _____

Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Period: _____

Literary Passage: Memoir

Directions: Read the following selection and then answer the questions.

Snowboarding



- 1 The winter I was twelve was an unusual one. My family moved from Bennington, Vermont to Lake Tahoe, California. Mom went off on a three-week trip to visit her mother in Michigan. My Uncle Lee moved in with us because he was between jobs. And I got a dog.
- 2 Dad let me pick her out at the neighborhood animal shelter. She was the smallest of the litter, but I thought the most beautiful.
- 3 “I hope you’re not intending to use her for a watchdog,” the animal technician said as we were filling out the paperwork.
- 4 “No, not really. Why do you ask?” Dad wanted to know.
- 5 “Of all the dogs here, I have never heard her make a sound. No yelps, no barks, nothing. Kind of like the cat got her tongue,” and he laughed at his own joke.
- 6 I thought about this for a moment. Had I picked a defective animal? What if I needed protection at my new school? But when she looked up at me with soft blue eyes, I knew I had made the right choice.
- 7 Going to a new school *was* difficult. I liked my teacher Ms. Samuels well enough, but had a hard time making friends. I was shy and self-conscious. Every day I ate lunch alone, dreaming of spending time with my new dog, Coda, or playing chess with my uncle, or accompanying Dad to the restaurant he now owned.
- 8 After he had been with us a month, my uncle announced that he was going to teach me to snowboard. Growing up in Vermont it was hard to avoid learning how to ski, but I had been dying to learn snowboarding. It was an exceptionally snowy winter, with plenty of opportunities. “Let’s get out there and play,” my eager uncle bellowed. A man of few words, he had never mentioned that he knew how to snowboard.
- 9 Uncle Lee and I started going out just about every day after school and Coda tagged along. She was a real snow dog, a malamute with a thick, beautiful black and white coat. While my uncle and I practiced our snowboarding techniques, she would play in the snow. She would roll in it, eat it, pick it up with her nose, and dig in it until she almost became part of the snowy mountain.

- 10 One particularly snowy day, I got separated from my uncle. I'm not sure how it happened, but suddenly I was snowboarding without him. I looked beside me expecting to see him, but all I saw was whiteness. I would have been frightened except that I knew Coda was close by, and I assumed she knew her way home – that dog seemed to know everything else about being in the snow.
- 11 I figured the best thing to do would be to call for my uncle, so I did. I called until I became hoarse. Then I realized that Coda was making no attempt to blaze a trail anywhere. She was playing like she always did. When I called to her she seemed to think it was a game because she would look at me for a minute, run around in a circle, bury her head in the snow and come up with snow stuck to her nose and mouth, looking at me and wagging her tail.
- 12 The dog's silliness relaxed me, and I found myself snowboarding effortlessly. I had no doubt that my uncle would find me, so I just kept going. Unfortunately, my Olympic performance didn't last long. I had always wondered why my uncle had cautioned me to stay on the trails and away from the area around trees. Now I wondered no more as I lay in a hole some ten feet deep, snow just about covering every part of me. The fall hadn't been painful, but it had shocked me. My feet were still attached to the snowboard, which was stuck in debris near the top of the hole. I was face down, and my hands were wedged up against my body. I had no idea how I was going to get out!
- 13 Without the use of my hands, I couldn't really dig. I tried to turn around, but there wasn't enough room to get right side up. I was stuck! I was almost ready to cry when suddenly I felt a tug on my jacket. At first I thought it might be a bear, but then I could hear the sound of Coda's breathing. I knew that I was too heavy for her to pull me entirely out, but if she could just help me to free a hand, maybe I could find something to hold onto or twist myself around.
- 14 Was Coda reading my mind? She yanked and pulled until I could move my arm again. With slightly more range of motion, I tried to dig out my other arm and pull myself around, but I wasn't making any real progress. Even from where I was, I could feel Coda beside me, motionless as the landscape around us. It was some comfort to know she was there.
- 15 It was then that I heard my uncle's voice calling. I knew my voice would be too muffled down in the hole with a bunch of snow on top of me, so I didn't even try to shout. Suddenly Coda began to bark. She barked and barked and barked.
- 16 Within minutes, Uncle Lee was helping me out. I don't know how long I was down in that hole, but it was too long. I was shivering and exhausted. All I could think of was that if it hadn't been for Coda, my uncle would have never found me. Too tired to talk, I shivered some more. My uncle didn't scold me. He just gave me his jacket to put on over my own, said "Good dog, Coda," and we headed for home.

Selection from -Alaska practice test, 2001

Benchmark Reading Assessment

Grade 6 – Trimester 3

“Snowboarding”

Fill in the bubble next to the letter of the best answer.

1. How are Uncle Lee and Coda similar? [LA06]
 - ☐ A. They both are shivering and exhausted at the end of the day.
 - ☐ B. They both play an important part in saving the boy.
 - ☐ C. They both were trained to rescue snowboarders from danger.
 - ☐ D. They both moved from Bennington, Vermont to Lake Tahoe, California.

2. According to the selection, what happens when Coda finds the boy stuck in a hole? [LA07]
 - ☐ A. Coda pulls the boy out of the hole and begins to bark.
 - ☐ B. Coda digs in the snow with her nose and frees the boy.
 - ☐ C. Coda pulls on the boy's coat and runs to alert the uncle.
 - ☐ D. Coda tries to get the boy out of the hole and barks to get the uncle's attention.

3. In paragraph 7 of the selection, why does the author put the word *was* in italics? [LT08]
 - ☐ A. To emphasize its importance
 - ☐ B. To let the reader know it is a title
 - ☐ C. To show the word should be whispered
 - ☐ D. To show that it is an important vocabulary word

4. What is wrong with the boy's reasoning in the selection? [LT09]
 - ☐ A. The boy chooses a dog that doesn't bark.
 - ☐ B. The boy yells for his uncle until he is hoarse.
 - ☐ C. The boy climbs into a 10 foot hole near a tree.
 - ☐ D. The boy decides to continue snowboarding without his uncle.

5. Based on the information in the selection, what generalization can the reader make about the value of a pet? [LT10]
 - ☐ A. A pet's value may not be obvious at first meeting.
 - ☐ B. A pet's value can be determined by how much they love the snow.
 - ☐ C. Pets that are shy do not have as much value as those who are outgoing.
 - ☐ D. Pets found in an animal shelter make more valuable pets than pure-bred pets.

6. **Short Answer- 2 pts**

What is the author's purpose for writing the selection? Provide **one** detail from the selection to support your answer. [LT08]

Informational Passage

Directions: Read the following selection and then answer the questions.



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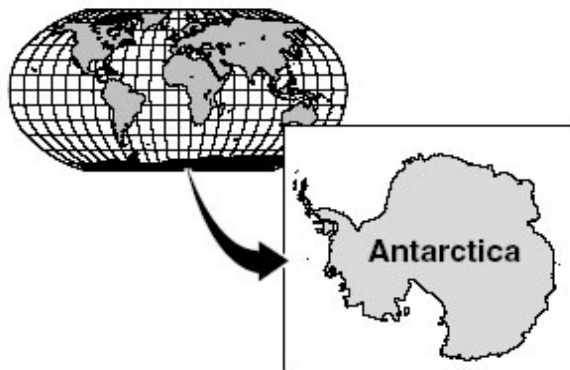
Emperors of the Antarctic

by Lynda Norwood

- 1 A large male emperor penguin waddles slowly across the ice to the water. He dives deep into the chilly salt water and then springs back onto the ice. Nearby a female penguin sleeps as her baby rests on the tops of her feet. A group of smaller, younger penguins gather together in a circle to keep warm. The penguins are enjoying another beautiful day of sunshine and freezing temperatures in the Penguin Encounter, a special home built just for them in sunny California.
- 2 The Penguin Encounter is located at Sea World in San Diego, California. It is the home of several hundred penguins. The Penguin Encounter was built to help study the emperor penguin, the largest of all penguins. The emperor penguin's natural home is in the Antarctic, near the South Pole. Because of changes in the environment, scientists are concerned about the future of the emperor's home. Increases in Earth's temperatures, called global warming, could cause large amounts of



A baby penguin rests on its mother's feet.



ice to break up and float into the ocean. Scientists fear that this drastic change in the environment could destroy many of the emperor's nesting areas. This would cause the number of emperor penguins to greatly decrease. A new home for them seemed to be the perfect answer.

Photograph courtesy of © Wolfgang Kaehler/CORBIS.

- 3 Scientists wanted to make the Penguin Encounter a comfortable home for the black-and-white feathered birds. A team of scientists was sent to the Antarctic to learn more about the emperor penguin. Scientist Frank Todd led the team. Todd is an expert on birds, especially penguins. He has spent more than 25 years studying them.
- 4 Getting close enough to the emperor penguins in the Antarctic wasn't difficult for the group of scientists. The penguins were quite curious. Sometimes they would waddle close to Todd and his team. The scientists deduced that this behavior could be the result of poor eyesight. Penguins are nearsighted, which allows them to see better in the water than on land. Another possible reason for their behavior was that they had little to fear on the ice. Their enemies, such as leopard seals and killer whales, hunt mainly in the water.
- 5 Todd and his team spent many months studying the diet and social habits of the emperor penguins. It was easy to get close to the penguins, but it wasn't easy to study them in the Antarctic. The temperature rarely rises above zero degrees—perfect weather for penguins but not for scientists. Once Todd and his team had finally gathered enough information, they made plans for a new home in California for a number of emperor penguins. Scientists hoped to study the birds in conditions that were more scientist-friendly.
- 6 To make this new home fit the needs of the penguins, scientists had to make a world much like the real Antarctic. First it had to be cold—very cold—just like the Antarctic. The



Emperor penguins play on the ice.

penguins' home was built inside a giant room that was kept as cold as a freezer. The room was filled with thousands of pounds of ice. Two saltwater pools were also included. Special lights were made to mimic the light conditions in the Antarctic. The lights were put on timers so that they grew brighter and then dimmer over the course of a day, just like the natural light in the Antarctic.

- 7 When the "new Antarctic" was complete, Todd and his team brought several hundred emperor penguins to California from the Antarctic. To keep the penguins comfortable during the trip, the temperature in the plane's cargo bay was kept below zero. Once in California, the penguins quickly adjusted to their new environment. It took no time at all before they were sliding headfirst across the ice into the pools of water.

- 8 The penguins' new home is now open to the public. Visitors can see the emperors in a setting much like their natural home. The Penguin Encounter is a great place to get a close look at some cool birds.

Photograph courtesy of © Wolfgang Kaehler/CORBIS.

Selection from- Texas released test, 2004

Benchmark Reading Assessment

Grade 6 – Trimester 3

“Emperors of the Antarctic”

Fill in the bubble next to the letter of the best answer.

7. What is the main similarity between the Penguin Encounter in San Diego and the Antarctic? [IA16]
- ☐ A. Both contain the right amount of penguins so they can survive.
 - ☐ B. Both contain the right combination of leopard seals and killer whales.
 - ☐ C. Both contain the right number of scientists to accurately study the penguins.
 - ☐ D. Both contain the right combination of sunlight, salt water, and temperature for penguins.
8. Which sentence best explains why the scientists could easily approach the penguins in the Antarctic? [IA17]
- ☐ A. The penguins are nearsighted and had few enemies to fear on the land.
 - ☐ B. Due to global warming, the penguins eagerly approached the scientists for food.
 - ☐ C. The scientists were there so often that the penguins were used to their presence.
 - ☐ D. Due to the difficulty in finding food and avoiding enemies, the penguins were looking for a new home.
9. Which opinion can be supported with information from the selection? [IT18]
- ☐ A. Scientists who study emperor penguins enjoy working in the cold.
 - ☐ B. The penguins enjoy their carefree life at Sea World more than their life in the Antarctic.
 - ☐ C. Scientists should not interfere with penguins as they study them in their natural environment.
 - ☐ D. People need to prevent global warming in order to save the environment and its inhabitants.
10. Which statement is the most important conclusion the reader may draw from the selection? [IT19]
- ☐ A. Animals in captivity have a better life than those living in the wild.
 - ☐ B. While scientists study and interact with animals, they can harm them.
 - ☐ C. Humans should not interfere with wildlife and let nature take its course.
 - ☐ D. Concerned humans can see a problem in nature, study it, and take actions to solve it.
11. Based on the information in the selection, which conclusion can the reader draw about scientists? [IT20]
- ☐ A. They care enough about living things to study and protect them.
 - ☐ B. They do more harm to animals in their natural habitat than good.
 - ☐ C. They want to be famous by creating habitats for threatened animals.
 - ☐ D. They are people who prefer studying animals in a man-made environment.

12. Short Answer- 2 pts

Explain why scientists created the Penguin Encounter. Include **two** details from the selection in your answer. [IA17]

13. **Extended Response- 4 pts**

What are **two** ways the scientists in “Emperors of the Antarctic” are like the boy in “Snowboarding?” Include information from **both** the selections in your answer. [IA16]

What are **two** ways the scientists are different than the boy? Include information from **both** the selections in your answer.

Literary Passage: Poem

Directions: Read the following selection and then answer the questions.

The Border Collie

by Melissa Elford

Black and white with a flowing tail,
Tongue hanging out she raced down the trail,
Down to the paddock to the sheep where they lay,
Ready to chase them, ready to play.
Dodging and darting she herded them up,
Into the back of the master's old truck,
Sitting up proudly, satisfied with her work,
She followed the truck home, kicking up dirt.
She rounded the sheep up back into the pen,
Then she happily bounded back home once again.
Gently stroked then fed the most scrumptious tea,
She sat down by the fire to scratch at a flea,
The warmth was so soothing her eyes finally shut,
She dreamt of that day and all her good luck.

Selection from- VoicesNet Poetry



Benchmark Reading Assessment

Grade 6 – Trimester 3

“The Border Collie”

Fill in the bubble next to the letter of the best answer.

14. How are the dog in the poem “The Border Collie” and the dog in “Snowboarding” different?
[LA06]

- ☐ A. One has a specific job, while the other has few responsibilities.
- ☐ B. One was used as a watchdog, while the other was used for herding animals.
- ☐ C. One had a beautiful black and white coat of fur, while the other had a rich brown coat of fur.
- ☐ D. One was picked up at the neighborhood animal shelter, while the other was found in an old truck.

15. Why does the collie happily bound back home again? [LA07]

- ☐ A. She is ready to go home and play.
- ☐ B. She is satisfied with her scrumptious tea.
- ☐ C. She is satisfied with a day’s work well done.
- ☐ D. She is ready to herd the sheep into the truck.

16. Which opinion can be supported with information from the poem? [LT08]

- ☐ A. She is too old to do her job well.
- ☐ B. She is too young to do her job well.
- ☐ C. She is well cared for and loved by her owner.
- ☐ D. She is not well cared for or loved by her owner.

17. Which statement is the most important conclusion the reader can draw from the poem? [LT09]

- ☐ A. A dog needs to be well-mannered to live indoors.
- ☐ B. A dog needs to be trained in order to be valued.
- ☐ C. A dog should not have any responsibilities in life.
- ☐ D. A dog that has a purpose in life is a happy dog.

18. Based on the information in the poem, which generalization can the reader draw about pet owners?
[LT10]

- ☐ A. Caring owners make sure their dogs are fit and healthy.
- ☐ B. Potential owners should research dog breeds before bringing one home.
- ☐ C. Owners of the working breeds can expect the dogs to be highly trained.
- ☐ D. Owners should expect that their dogs will obey them.