

# Everett Public Schools

## Assessment of Student Learning

### Student Packet



## Benchmark Reading Assessment

### Grade 9

### Grading Period 1

“Hilda Conkling: Child Poet”

“The Ox Cart Man”

“The True History of the Tortoise and the Hare”

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_

## Informational Passage

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

### Hilda Conkling: Child Poet

- 1 In 1914, four-year-old Hilda Conkling began “talking” poems to her mother, Grace Hazard Conkling. Mrs. Conkling was a widely published poet and lecturer. She listened to Hilda’s poems and realized that “her words made music.” Mrs. Conkling said nothing, but copied the poems just as Hilda told them to her.
- 2 When Hilda was eight, Mrs. Conkling secretly sent groups of Hilda’s poems to various publications. Beginning in 1919, they appeared in *Poetry*, *Nation*, *Good Housekeeping*, and many other journals. Mrs. Conkling hid the magazines from Hilda. She did not want her daughter to lose her spontaneity or creativity.
- 3 Hilda’s mother then secretly sent more than one hundred of Hilda’s poems to Frederick A. Stokes, a book publisher in New York. In 1920, when Hilda was ten, the poems were published in *Poems by a Little Girl*. American poet and critic Amy Lowell wrote the preface to the book. Lowell called Hilda a genius with a “rare and accurate power of observation” and declared that Hilda’s nature poems were filled with exquisite images. Lowell wrote of Hilda, “I know of no other instance in which such really beautiful poetry has been written by a child.”
- 4 *Poems by a Little Girl* got good reviews in many well-known newspapers and journals, including the *New York Times Book Review*, *Booklist*, and the *Boston Transcript*. Critics hailed Hilda as an “unusually gifted little girl.” Interviewers called to find out about Hilda. A movie producer asked to film a newsreel on her. That same year, *Touchstone*, another prestigious literary magazine, awarded her its first poetry prize. More than one hundred poets competed for the prize, including many of the country’s finest.
- 5 Yet Hilda did not know about her achievements. She learned about her book at a surprise party. Even then, she was confused and thought that only one copy had been printed.
- 6 Hilda’s second book of poems, *Shoes of the Wind*, was published in 1922. These poems, written when Hilda was ten and eleven, also received great praise. The book was widely reviewed. Hilda was labeled “a poet to be noticed and an original writer on the contemporary scene.”
- 7 When Hilda was fourteen, more than one hundred of her best poems from the first two books were published in *Silverhorn*. The *New York Times Book Review* called Hilda a “poet by instinct” with a “true and fine poetic imagination.”
- 8 Hilda wrote fewer poems in her teens. As an adult, she wrote only an occasional poem. Hilda told a writer in 1972 that hers was a “life in reverse,” as she gained fame when she was young and lived a less remarkable adult life.

- 9 Hilda Conkling's work lives on today. In *Children and Books*, a text about the best children's literature, Hilda's verses are discussed among the greatest adult authors of children's poetry. As recently as the mid-1980s, editors at several publishing companies have included Hilda's poems in anthologies.

*Selection from- released items -Ohio State Grade 9 Reading Test 2004*



**Benchmark Reading Assessment**  
**Grade 9 – Grading Period 1**  
“Hilda Conkling: Child Poet”

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

1. What is the main idea in the selection? [IC11]

- ☐ A. Hilda Conkling’s talent made her a famous poet in her childhood.
- ☐ B. Hilda Conkling’s mother helped her daughter learn to write poetry.
- ☐ C. Hilda Conkling learned she was famous at a surprise party.
- ☐ D. Hilda Conkling’s poems were published in the *Silverhorn*.

2. What is the meaning of the word *prestigious* in paragraph 4 of the selection? [IC14]

- ☐ A. Historical
- ☐ B. Extremely expensive
- ☐ C. Ordinary
- ☐ D. Highly regarded

3. **Short Answer- 2 pts**

In your own words, write a summary of the selection. Include a summarizing statement and **three** important events from the selection in your summary. [IC12]

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4. What does Hilda’s mother mean when she says “[Hilda’s] words made music” in paragraph 1 of the selection? [IC13]
- ☐ A. Hilda’s voice was soft and sweet.
  - ☐ B. Hilda’s talking was naturally poetic.
  - ☐ C. Hilda’s writing was about music.
  - ☐ D. Hilda’s poetry was sensible.
5. Which sentence summarizes Hilda’s relationship with the process of writing poetry? [IC12]
- ☐ A. She wrote poems as a child and continued to do so as an adult.
  - ☐ B. Hilda got ideas for her poetry from the nature around her.
  - ☐ C. She wrote many poems as a child and wrote fewer as an adult.
  - ☐ D. Hilda learned to write poetry by copying from her mother, a gifted writer.
6. According to the selection, which word best describes Hilda’s mother? [LA05]
- ☐ A. Bossy
  - ☐ B. Jealous
  - ☐ C. Funny
  - ☐ D. Involved

7. **Short Answer- 2 pts**

What experiences most likely influenced Hilda’s success? Include **two** details from the selection in your answer? [IC13]

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## Literary Passage: Poem

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

### Ox Cart Man

by Donald Hall

5 In October of the year,  
he counts potatoes dug from the brown field,  
counting the seed, counting  
the **cellar's**\* portion out,  
and bags the rest on the cart's floor.

10 He packs wool sheared in April, honey  
in combs, linen, leather  
tanned from deer hide,  
and vinegar in a barrel  
hooped by hand at the forge's fire.

15 He walks by his ox's head, ten days  
to Portsmouth Market, and sells potatoes,  
and the bag that carried potatoes,  
flaxseed, birch brooms, maple sugar, goose  
feathers, yarn.

20 When the cart is empty he sells the cart.  
When the cart is sold he sells the ox,  
harness and **yoke**\*, and walks  
home, his pockets heavy  
with the year's coin for salt and taxes,  
and at home by fire's light in November cold  
stitches new harness  
for next year's ox in the barn,  
and carves the yoke, and saws planks  
25 building the cart again.



\* **cellar** — a room used for storage, usually beneath the ground or under a building

\* **yoke** — wooden bar with two U-shaped pieces that fit around the neck of an ox

Selection from -[www.webenglishteacher.com](http://www.webenglishteacher.com)

**Benchmark Reading Assessment**  
**Grade 9 – Grading Period 1**  
“Ox Cart Man”

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

8. What is the main idea of the poem? [LC01]
- ☐ A. The Ox Cart Man has thoughtfully chosen his solitary life.
  - ☐ B. The Ox Cart Man’s life is difficult and without happiness.
  - ☐ C. The Ox Cart Man lives a cyclical life according to the seasons.
  - ☐ D. The Ox Cart Man cares deeply about the crops and seasons.
9. Which sentence best summarizes the poem? [LC02]
- ☐ A. The Ox Cart Man takes ten days to go to Portsmouth Market.
  - ☐ B. The Ox Cart Man sells his cart and ox and walks home with his pockets full.
  - ☐ C. The Ox Cart Man produces goods every month, sells them, and starts again.
  - ☐ D. The Ox Cart Man is a highly skilled farmer, builder, and salesman.
10. Based on the information in the poem, what do you predict the Ox Cart Man will do once he has built the cart again? [LC03]
- ☐ A. He will prepare products for market.
  - ☐ B. He will pay the taxes on his cart.
  - ☐ C. He will stitch a new harness for his ox.
  - ☐ D. He will travel to Portsmouth Market.
11. According to the poem, which word best describes the Ox Cart Man? [LA05]
- ☐ A. Lonely
  - ☐ B. Hardworking
  - ☐ C. Careless
  - ☐ D. Well-known

12. What is the meaning of the word *planks* in line 24 of the poem? [LC04]

- ☐ A. Barrels
- ☐ B. Brooms
- ☐ C. Pieces of wood
- ☐ D. Sacks of potatoes



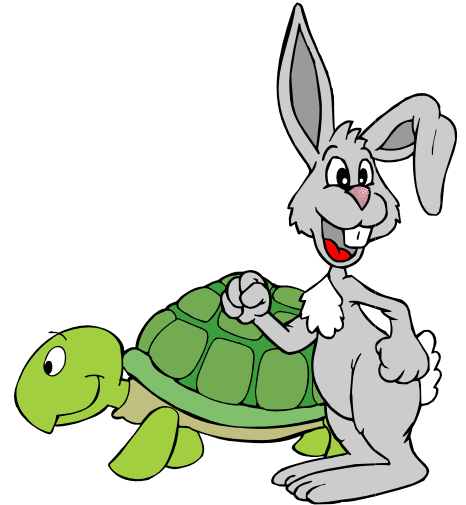
## Literary Passage

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

### The True History of the Tortoise and the Hare

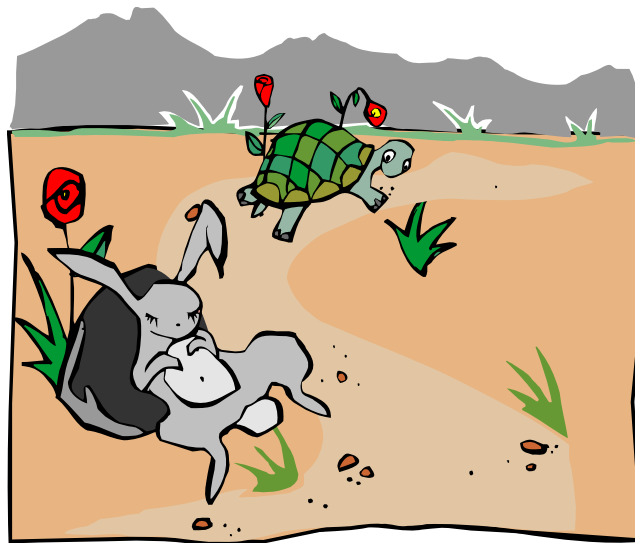
by Lord Dunsany

- 1 For a long time, there was ill will and doubt among the beasts as to whether the Hare or the Tortoise could run the swifter. Some said the Hare was the swifter of the two because he had such long ears. Others said the Tortoise was the swifter because anyone who had such a hard shell as that should be able to "run hard" as well. And lo, the forces of estrangement and disorder continually postponed a decisive contest.
- 2 But when there was nearly war among the beasts, at last an arrangement was arranged and it was decided that the Hare and the Tortoise should run a race of five hundred yards so that all should see who was right. "Ridiculous nonsense!" said the Hare, and it was all his constituents could do to get him to run. "The contest is most welcome to me," said the Tortoise, "I shall not shirk it."
- 3 Oh, how his backers cheered. The animal's feelings ran high on the day of the race; the goose rushed at the fox and nearly pecked him. Both sides spoke loudly of the approaching victory up to the very moment of the race. "I am absolutely confident of my success," said the Tortoise. But the Hare said nothing, he looked bored and cross. Some of his supporters deserted him then and went to the other side, who were loudly cheering the Tortoise's inspiring words. But many remained with the Hare. "We shall not be disappointed in him," they said. "A beast with such long ears is bound to win."
- 4 "Run hard," said the supporters of the Tortoise. "Run hard" became a kind of catch-phrase which everybody repeated to one another. "Hard shell and hard living. That's what the country wants. Run hard," they said. And these words were never uttered, but multitudes cheered from their hearts.
- 5 Then they were off, and suddenly there was a hush over the crowd. The Hare sprinted off for about a hundred yards, then he looked about to see where his rival was. "It's rather absurd," he said loftily, "to race with an animal as slow as a Tortoise." And he sat down, yawned, and lazily began to scratch himself. "Run hard! Run hard!" shouted some of the crowd. "Let him rest," shouted others in the crowd. And "let him rest" became a catch-phrase too. And after a while his rival drew near to him. "There comes that ill-fated Tortoise," said the Hare, and he got up and ran as hard as could be so that he should not let the Tortoise beat him.
- 6 "Those ears will win," said Hare's friends. "Those ears will win; and establish upon an incontestable footing the truth of what we have said." And some of them turned to the backers of the Tortoise and said, "What about your beast now?"



- 7 "Run hard," they replied. "Run hard." The Hare ran on for nearly three hundred yards, nearly in fact as far as the winning-post, when it suddenly struck him what a fool he looked running a race with a Tortoise who was nowhere in sight, and he sat down again and scratched lazily. "Run hard. Run hard," said his supporters in the crowd, and "Let him rest, let him rest," cried others. "Whatever is the use of it?" said the Hare, and this time he stopped for good. He yawned and stretched himself upon the grass. Some say he slept.
- 8 There was desperate excitement for an hour or two, and then the Tortoise won. Tortoise's backers cheered enthusiastically. "Hard shell and hard living: that's what has done it."

*Selection from –Public Domain*



**Benchmark Reading Assessment**  
**Grade 9 – Grading Period 1**  
“The True History of the Tortoise and the Hare”

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

13. What is the theme of the story? [LC01]

- ☐ A. Hard shell and hard living will not bring success.
- ☐ B. Encouragement from the crowd will ensure a win.
- ☐ C. Winning does not always go to the swiftest.
- ☐ D. Competition brings out the best in the competitors.

14. Which sentence best summarizes this story? [LC02]

- ☐ A. While the Tortoise and Hare race to determine who is fastest, the Hare becomes bored and stops but the tortoise continues and finishes first.
- ☐ B. The animals of the forest devise a race to determine which animal is fastest.
- ☐ C. While racing the Hare, the Tortoise gets huge support and encouragement from the crowd which leads him to increase his speed.
- ☐ D. The animals of the forest watch intently while the goose and fox fight during a race.

15. What word could the author have used in paragraph 4 instead of *catch-phrase*? [LC04]

- ☐ A. Comment
- ☐ B. Victory
- ☐ C. Poem
- ☐ D. Slogan

16. What is the main conflict in the story? [LA05]

- ☐ A. The animals argued that long ears made a faster runner.
- ☐ B. The animals argued over how to settle the fight between the goose and the fox.
- ☐ C. The animals argued over whether the Hare or the Tortoise was faster.
- ☐ D. The animals argued that hard living makes one fast.

17. What does the author mean when he says, “Hard shell and hard living: that’s what has done it” in paragraph 8 of the story? [LC03]

- ☐ A. Success comes from being fast.
- ☐ B. The Tortoise has lived a tough life.
- ☐ C. Success comes from facing difficulties.
- ☐ D. The Tortoise is fast because of his hard shell.

**18. Extended Response- 4 pts**

According to the story, describe how the Hare feels about racing the Tortoise? Provide **three** details from the story to support your answer. [LA05]

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