Student Team Literature
Standardized Reading Practice Test

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry
(Puffin Books, 1997)

Reading Vocabulary

DIRECTIONS
Choose the word that means the same, or about the same, as the underlined word. Circle the letter for the answer you have chosen.

SAMPLE A
An emblem is a
A sign
B motto
C eagle
D mascot

1. A person who is dismayed is
A dignified
B disappointed
C discreet
D distinct

2. To relent means to
F resent
G repeat
H give in
J go on

3. Something inaccessible is
A impossible to hear
B impossible to believe
C impossible to imagine
D impossible to reach

4. A subtle hint is
F obvious
G not obvious
H sneaky
J sincere

5. Ominously means the same as
A powerfully
B threateningly
C morosely
D monotonously

6. Boycott means the opposite of
F retaliate
G immobilize
H patronize.
J condescend.

7. Candidly means
A adamantly
B truthfully
C interminably
D briefly

8. To denote is to
F mean
G deny
H condone
J condemn

9. The phenomenal news is
A untrue
B amazing
C ordinary
D uninteresting

10. To give affirmation is to give
F condemnation
G argument
H recitation
J agreement
DIRECTIONS
Read the sentence in the box, then choose the answer in which the underlined word is used in the same way. Circle the letter for the answer you have chosen.

SAMPLE B
Papa had gone west too, into Louisiana. It was there he found work laying track for the railroad.

In which sentence does the word track mean the same thing as in the sentence above?
A Sean’s favorite varsity sport is track; he excels in running and jumping.
B When the freight train jumped the track, the explosion and fire were visible for many miles.
C The hunter could easily track the bear in the new-fallen snow.
D The troop has so many members that the scoutmaster cannot keep track of them all.

11. Neither boy had on shoes, and their Sunday clothing, patched and worn, hung loosely on their frail frames.

In which sentence does the word frames mean the same thing as in the sentence above?
A While the carpenter frames the new house, the owners watch with excitement.
B When Pete gets into trouble, he frames his little brother to avoid punishment.
C The men in the Morris family are tall with big frames and broad shoulders.
D The gold frames made the paintings appear rich and beautiful.

12. Suddenly, Stacy turned. “Quick!” he cried. “Off the road!” Without another word, all of us but Little Man scrambled up the steep right bank into the forest.

In which sentence does the word bank mean the same thing as in the sentence above?
F The savings bank offers special gifts to customers who open new accounts.
G With the grass gone, nothing could hold the soil on the bank of the road in the heavy rainstorm.
H The scouts learned how to bank a campfire so that it would smolder all night.
J It is wiser to bank your hopes on hard work than to depend on good luck.

13. Papa always meant what he said – and he swung a mean switch.

In which sentence does the word switch mean the same thing as in the sentence above?
A The hickory tree in the backyard supplied many nuts and the rare switch for punishment.
B Although no one had touched the switch, the lights flashed on.
C The cow acknowledged the pesky flies with an occasional switch of her tail.
D Jamal wants to switch to another team in the middle of the soccer season.

14. “David, something the matter, son?” “The bank called up the note. I’m going to Strawberry.”

In which sentence does the word note mean the same thing as in the sentence above?
F A document that records a debt is called a promissory note.
G When Jacob read the note from Sally, he broke into a wide grin.
H The violin sounded a note for the rest of the orchestra to tune their instruments.
J The football scout took note of each player’s performance from the sideline.
DIRECTIONS
As you read each sentence, use the other words in the sentence to help you figure out what the underlined word means. Circle the letter for the answer you have chosen.

SAMPLE C
“It seemed to me that showing up at school at all on a bright August-like October morning made for running the cool forest trails and wading barefoot in the pond was concession enough; Sunday clothing was asking too much.”

Concession means--
A compromise  
B conspiracy  
C consolation  
D condemnation

15. “Don’t worry, little ones, there are plenty of readers for you too. See there on Miss Davis’ desk.” Wide eyes turned to the covered teacher’s platform directly in front of them and an audible sigh of relief swelled in the room.

Audible means--
A able to be seen  
B able to be felt  
C able to be heard  
D unable to be heard

16. ...Little Man and Christopher John scooped bucketfuls of the red earth from the road’s center. And for once in his life, Little Man was happily oblivious to the mud spattering upon him.

Oblivious to means--
F bothered by  
G unconcerned with  
H resigned to  
J surprised by

17. Little Man, Christopher John, and I, with the others, circled the fighters, chanting loudly as they rolled back and forth punching at each other. All of us were so engrossed in the battle that no one saw a mule wagon halt on the road and a giant man step out.

Engrossed means--
A interested  
B uninvolved  
C suffocated  
D delighted

18. T.J., however, was surprisingly subdued when he settled into the wagon; I suppose at three-thirty in the morning even T.J.’s mouth was tired.

Subdued means--
F quiet  
G frenzied  
H snide  
J haughty

19. Big Ma looked around at Papa and Uncle Hammer, but neither of them acknowledged her glance; their eyes were pinned on Mr. Jamison.

Acknowledged means--
A balked at  
B responded to  
C penetrated  
D recoiled from

20. As Mr. Morrison climbed the stairs, we could see that Papa’s left leg stuck straight out, immobilized by his shotgun strapped to it with a rope.

Immobilized means--
F made short  
G bent crooked  
H held still  
J disfigured
SAMPLE

3

If we had been faced only with the prospect of the rain soaking through our clothing each morning and evening, we could have more easily endured the journey between home and school. But as it was, we also had to worry about the Jefferson Davis school bus zooming from behind and splashing us with the murky waters of the road. Knowing that the bus driver liked to entertain his passengers by sending us slipping along the road to the almost inaccessible forest banks washed to a smooth baldness by the constant rains, we continuously looked over our shoulders when we were between the two crossroads so that we could reach the bank before the bus was upon us. But sometimes the rain pounded so heavily that it was all we could do to stay upright, and we did not look back as often nor listen as carefully as we should; we consequently found ourselves comical objects to cruel eyes that gave no thought to our misery.

No one was more angered by this humiliation than Little Man. Although he had asked Mama after the first day of school why Jefferson Davis had two buses and Great Faith had none, he had never been totally satisfied by her answer. She had explained to him, as she had explained to Christopher-John the year before and to me two years before that, that the county did not provide buses for its black students. In fact, she said, the county provided very little and much of the money which supported the black schools came from the black churches. Great Faith just could not afford a bus, so therefore we had to walk.

1. Which of the following items is an opinion?
   A We continuously looked over our shoulders when we were between the two crossroads.
   B The county did not provide buses for its black students.
   C Mama’s answer was not a satisfying one.
   D The forest banks were washed to smooth baldness by the constant rains.

2. The phrase “cruel eyes that gave no thought to our misery” refers to
   F students at Great Faith.
   G Stacey and T.J.
   H Christopher-John and Little Man.
   J students on the Jefferson Davis bus.
The blue-black shine that had so nicely encircled T.J.’s left eye for over a week had almost completely faded by the morning T.J. hopped into the back of the wagon beside Stacey and snuggled in a corner not occupied by the butter, milk, and eggs Big Ma was taking to sell at the market in Strawberry. I sat up front beside Big Ma, still sandy-eyed and not believing that I was actually going.

The second Saturday of every month was market day in Strawberry, and for as far back as I could remember, the boys and I had been begging Big Ma to take us to it. Stacey had actually gone once, but Christopher-John, Little Man, and I had always been flatly denied the experience. We had, in fact, been denied so often that our pestering now occurred more out of habit than from any real belief that we would be allowed to go. But this morning, while the world lay black, Big Ma called: “Cassie, get up child, if you gonna go to town with me, and be quiet ‘bout it. You wake up Christopher-John or Little Man and I’ll leave you here. I don’t want them cryin’ all over the place ‘cause they can’t go.”

As Jack swept the wagon into the gray road, Big Ma pulled tightly on the reins and grumbled, “Hold on! You Jack, hold on! I ain’t got no time to be putting up with both you and T.J.’s foolishness.”

“T.J.!” Stacey and I exclaimed together. “He going?”

Big Ma didn’t answer immediately; she was occupied in a test of wills with Jack. When hers had prevailed and Jack had settled into a moderate trot, she replied moodily, “Mr. Avery come by after y’all was asleep last night wanting T.J. to go to Strawberry to do some shopping for a few things he couldn’t get at the Wallace store. Lord, that’s all I need with all the trouble about is for that child to talk me to death for twenty-two miles.”

Big Ma didn’t need to say any more and she didn’t. T.J. was far from her favorite person and it was quite obvious that Stacey and I owed our good fortune entirely to T.J.’s obnoxious personality.

T.J., however, was surprisingly subdued when he settled into the wagon; I suppose that at three-thirty in the morning even T.J.’s mouth was tired. But by dawn, when the December sun was creeping warily upward shooting pale streams of buff-colored light through the forest, he was fully awake and chattering like a cockatoo. His endless talk made me wish that he had not managed to wheedle his way so speedily back into Stacey’s good graces, but Big Ma, her face furrowed in distant thoughts, did not hush him. He talked the rest of the way into Strawberry, announcing as we arrived, “Well children, open your eyes and take in Strawberry, Mississippi.”

1. The narrator in this passage is
   A Big Ma.
   B Cassie.
   C Stacey.
   D T.J.

2. Big Ma allowed Stacey and Cassie to go with her to Strawberry because
   F She did not want T.J. to talk her to death for twenty-two miles.
   G Mr. Avery had asked her to take them.
   H They had begged her to take them so many times.
   J She needed their help to sell her butter, milk, and eggs in Strawberry.

3. Which of the following items does not contribute to the characterization of T.J.?
   A “He was fully awake and chattering like a cockatoo.”
   B “Stacey and I owed our good fortune entirely to T.J.’s obnoxious personality.”
   C “His endless talk made me wish that he had not managed to wheedle his way back into Stacey’s good graces.”
   D “T.J. hopped into the back of the wagon beside Stacey.”

4. Big Ma’s words, “I ain’t got no time to be putting up with both you and T.J.’s foolishness,” are an example of
   F debate.
   G dialect.
   H detail.
   J discussion.
5. Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, and 5 are an example of
   A conflict.
   B foreshadowing.
   C flashback.
   D climax.

6. The sequence chart below shows events described in the passage in the order in which they actually happened. Which item belongs in the box numbered 1?
   F Big Ma did not pay attention to T.J.
   G Big Ma warned Cassie not to wake up Christopher-John and Little Man.
   H Cassie sat beside Big Ma on the wagon, not believing that she was actually going to Strawberry.
   J The children had fallen into the habit of pestering Big Ma to go to Strawberry without believing they would ever be allowed to go.

7. Which item belongs in the box numbered 5 in the sequence chart?
   A T.J. jumped into the wagon and curled up in an empty spot.
   B Mr. Avery came during the night and asked Big Ma to take T.J. to Strawberry to do some shopping.
   C Jack pulled the wagon onto the road.
   D Christopher-John, Little Man, and Cassie were never allowed to go to Strawberry.
... Mr. Jamison put his briefcase back on the floor, indicating that he was not leaving, and looked first at Big Ma and Mama, then across at Papa and Uncle Hammer.

“There’s talk that some of the people around here are looking to shop in Vicksburg,” he said.

Big Ma looked around at Papa and Uncle Hammer, but neither of them acknowledged her glance; their eyes were pinned on Mr. Jamison.

“There’s talk too why folks are looking to shop there.” He paused, met Papa’s eyes and then Uncle Hammer’s, and went on. “As you know, my family has roots in Vicksburg – we’ve a number of friends there still. I got a call from one of them this morning. Said you were looking to find credit for about thirty families.”

Papa and Uncle Hammer neither affirmed nor denied this. “You know as well as I do that credit doesn’t come easy these days,” continued Mr. Jamison. “You expect to get any, you’ll need something to back it.”

“I reckon we know that,” said Uncle Hammer.

Mr. Jamison glanced at Uncle Hammer and nodded. “I reckoned you did. But as far as I can see, the only thing any of you got to back that credit with is this land... and I’d hate to see you put it up.”

“Why’s that?” asked Uncle Hammer, wary of his interest.

“Because you’d lose it.”

The fire popped and the room grew silent. Then Papa said, “What you getting at?’

“I’ll back the credit.”

Again, silence. Mr. Jamison allowed Papa and Uncle Hammer several moments to search for a motive behind his masklike face. “I’m a Southerner, born and bred, but that doesn’t mean I approve of all that goes on here, and there are a lot of other white people who feel the same.”

“If you and so many others feel that way,” said Uncle Hammer with a wry sneer, “then how come them Wallaces ain’t in jail?”

“Hammer – “ Big Ma started.

“Because,” answered Mr. Jamison candidly, “there aren’t enough of these same white people who would admit how they feel, or even if they did, would hang a white man for killing a black one. It’s as simple as that.”

Uncle Hammer smiled slightly and shook his head, but his eyes showed a grudging respect for Mr. Jamison.

8. Which of the following would be the best title for this passage?
   - F “Big Ma’s Fears”
   - G “An Unexpected Offer”
   - H “The Boycott Plan”
   - J “A Call From Vicksburg”

9. Which pair of words best describe Uncle Hammer’s attitude toward Mr. Jamison?
   - A haughty and aloof
   - B bewildered and sullen
   - C distrustful and restrained
   - D frenzied and agitated

10. Mr. Jamison offers to back the credit for the thirty families because
   - F he wants to see the Wallaces in jail.
   - G he wants to get the Logan’s land.
   - H he does not approve of what goes on.
   - J he is a Southerner born and bred.

11. The conflict in this passage is between
   - A Big Ma and her sons, Papa and Uncle Hammer.
   - B black people’s distrust of white people and the temptation to trust Mr. Jamison.
   - C Mr. Jamison and his friends and family in Vicksburg.
   - D what white people think and what they admit.
Mr. Morrison nodded and followed Papa onto the porch, a rifle in his hand. Like a cat, Mama sprang after them and grabbed Papa again. “David, don’t . . . don’t use the gun.”

Papa stared out as a bolt of lightning splintered the night into a dazzling brilliance. The wind was blowing softly, gently toward the east. “Perhaps . . .” he started, then was quiet.

“David?”

Papa touched Mama’s face tenderly with the tips of his fingers and said, “I’ll do what I have to do, Mary . . . and so will you.” Then he turned from her, and with Mr. Morrison disappeared into the night.

Mama pushed us back into her room, where Big Ma fell upon her knees and prayed a powerful prayer. Afterward both Mama and Big Ma changed their clothes, then we sat, very quiet, as the heat crept sticky and wet through our clothing and the thunder banged menacingly overhead. Mama, her knuckles tight against her skin as she gripped the arms of her chair, looked down upon Christopher-John, Little Man, and me, our eyes wide awake with fear. “I don’t suppose it would do any good to put you to bed,” she said quietly. We looked up at her. She did not mean to have an answer; we gave none, and nothing else was said as the night minutes crept past and the waiting pressed as heavily upon us as the heat.

The Mama stiffened. She sniffed the air and got up.

“What is it, child?” Big Ma asked.

“You smell smoke?” Mama said, going to the front door and opening it. Little Man, Christopher-John, and I followed, peeping around her in the doorway. From deep in the field where the land sloped upward toward the Granger forest, a fire billowed, carried eastward by the wind.

12. The mood of this passage is
F apprehensive.
G placid.
H jovial.
J hopeless.

13. From this passage you can infer that
A Mama is afraid of thunder and lightning.
B Mama is angry with the children
C Mama is afraid that the house will burn down.
D Mama is afraid of what will happen to Papa and Mr. Morrison.

14. The phrase in paragraph 2, “a bolt of lightning splintered the night into dazzling brilliance,” foreshadows
F the sticky heat mentioned in paragraph 5.
G the thunder mentioned in paragraph 5.
H the fire mentioned in paragraph 8.
J the eastward wind mentioned in paragraph 8.

15. Mama does not send the children to bed because
A the night is too hot for sleeping.
B the thunder would keep them awake.
C she needs their help.
D she knows they would not sleep.