Student Team Literature
Standardized Reading Practice Test

The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963
(Bantam Doubleday Dell, Yearling Edition, 1997)

Reading Vocabulary

DIRECTIONS
Choose the word or group of words that means the same, or about the same, as the underlined word. Then circle the letter for the answer you have chosen.

SAMPLE A
To be **curious** is to be --
A nervous
B interested
C tired
D smart

1. To **assure** someone is to --
A scare
B look at
C promise
D ignore

2. **Staggered** means --
F walked shakily
G cut
H cried
J fell

3. Someone who is **punctual** is --
A late
B fast
C wrong
D on time

4. **Haphazardly** means --
F quickly
G not carefully
H carefully
J terribly

5. To **influence** people is to --
A help them
B have an effect on them
C bother them
D like them

6. Something that is the **ultimate** is the --
F greatest
G worst
H tallest
J smartest

7. To **generate** is the same as to --
A move
B thankful
C create
D belong

8. To **intimidate** is to --
F show
G anger
H hug
J scare

9. Accurate is the same as --
A tough
B exact
C sloppy
D serious

10. Accustomed means --
F interested
G similar
H familiar
J crazy
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

I looked in the direction that the warning sign was pointing and started to get a little nervous.

In which sentence does the word direction mean the same thing as in the sentence above?

A  The band was playing under the direction of the conductor.
B  The teacher insisted that we follow her direction in completing the assignment.
C  Although we were lost, we knew we would find help if we just walked in the direction of the sun.
D  Under Coach Samson’s direction, we will win the soccer game.

11

Momma lit a match and threatened to burn Byron’s entire hand.

In which sentence does the word match mean the same thing as in the sentence above?

A  The tennis match between the two ladies was shown on television.
B  Carmine made sure to match the color of his tie with his date’s dress.
C  The rookie was no match for the veteran player.
D  We used a match to start the campfire.

12

I hoped that Dad was going to say that I helped him by keeping him company.

In which sentence does the word company mean the same thing as in the sentence above?

F  The company of soldiers, led by Captain Dorsey, protected the base from invasion.
G  The dance company traveled all over the country performing.
H  Bella kept me company in the hospital’s waiting room.
J  My grandfather built this company with his own hard work.

13

“Grandma Sands can’t handle that much noise this early, sweetheart.”

In which sentence does the word handle mean the same thing as in the sentence above?

A  Mr. West was able to handle the disruption in his class without much trouble.
B  We all tried to grab the handle of the dish before it hit the floor.
C  The children were instructed to not handle any of the fragile art works.
D  Cherise pushed the shovel farther into the hard ground using the handle.

14

Byron figured he didn’t have anything to lose so when we got about halfway down the steps he popped me square in the ear.

In which sentence does the word square mean the same thing as in the sentence above?

F  Mina moved her game piece to the next square on the checkerboard.
G  The students received three square meals at camp.
H  Officer Jones said that my story did not square with the facts.
J  The picture was placed square on the wall for anyone passing by to see.
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

“Instead of teasing, Byron should emulate his brother Kenny, and perhaps they both would pass to the next grade.”  Emulate means –
A intimidate
B make fearful
C imitate
D behave

15 “We’ve done all we can and it seems the temptations are just too much for Byron here in Flint.”  Temptations means –
A fights
B attractions; influences
C delinquents; criminals
D voices

16 You talk about some pathetic, tortured looking little faces; eighteen hours in a car can age a kid forty years.
Pathetic means –
F pitiful; miserable
G effective
H unable to stand straight
J humorous

17 “I’ve been looking in the rearview mirror and wondering where my babies were and where these three bad-dispositioned, sour-faced, middle-age midgets came from. “  Dispositioned means –
A tempered
B untrustworthy
C admired
D accustomed

18 In the Northern, Eastern and Western states, African Americans often faced discrimination, but it was not as extreme and pervasive as in the South.
Pervasive means –
F surprising
G widespread
H contained; controlled
J strange; unusual

19 The goal was to create pressure and provoke confrontations that would force the federal government to step in and enforce the laws.  Provoke means –
A to keep for a long period of time
B to observe
C to maintain order
D to stir up

20 Often, the tension exploded into gunshots, fires and bombings directed against the people who so bravely fought for change.
Tension means –
F barely controlled bad feelings
G complete agreement
H similarity
J easy-to-spot differences
DIRECTIONS
Read each passage. Then read each question about the passage. Decide which is the best answer to the question. Circle the letter for the answer you have chosen.

SAMPLE
Larry wasn’t like other bullies; he wasn’t happy taking a handful of snow and smashing it in your face and running off. Larry gave what he called Maytag Washes. With a Maytag Wash you had to go through all of the different cycles that a washing machine did, and the wash wasn’t done until you went through the final spin and had snow in every part of your face.

Ever since Larry got these new leather gloves he was giving Super Maytag Washes because he could grind a whole lot more snow in your face for a whole lot longer since his hands weren’t getting as cold.

Larry was tearing me up, I was crying even before the first rinse cycle was done and he finally let me go. After he washed Rufus we started walking home and Rufus said, “Man, he stole your gloves.”

“Oh-uh, mine were brown.”

Rufus dug a chunk of snow out of his jacket and said, “Look!”

The snow was covered with black, so was all of the snow I pulled out of my outer coat. Larry Dunn had stolen my gloves, then painted them black with shoe polish!

1. Larry Dunn --
   A. owned a new Maytag washing machine.
   B. was a bully.
   C. bought a new pair of leather gloves.
   D. was Rufus’ friend.

2. A good title for this passage is --
   F. “Rufus Fights Back”
   G. “Snowball Fight”
   H. “It’s Snowing”
   J. “A Bully and a Thief”
And You Wonder Why We Get Called the Weird Watsons

It was one of those super-duper-cold Saturdays. One of those days that when you breathed out your breath kind of hung frozen in the air like a hunk of smoke and you could walk along and look exactly like a train blowing out big, fat, white puffs of smoke.

It was so cold that if you were stupid enough to go outside your eyes would automatically blink a thousand times all by themselves, probably so the juice inside of them wouldn’t freeze up. It was so cold that if you spit, the slob would be an ice cube before it hit the ground. It was about a zillion degrees below zero.

It was even cold inside our house. We put sweaters and hats and scarves and three pairs of socks on and still were cold. The thermostat was turned all the way up and the furnace was banging and sounding like it was about to blow up but it still felt like Jack Frost had moved in with us.

All of my family sat real close together on the couch under a blanket. Dad said this would generate a little heat but he didn’t have to tell us this, it seemed like the cold automatically made us want to get together and huddle up. My little sister, Joetta, sat in the middle and all you could see were her eyes because she had a scarf wrapped around her head. I was next to her, and on the outside was my mother.

Momma was the only one who wasn’t born in Flint so the cold was coldest to her. All you could see were her eyes too, and they were shooting bad looks at Dad. She always blamed him for bringing her all the way from Alabama to Michigan, a state she called a giant icebox. Dad was bundled up on the other side of Joey, trying to look at anything but Momma. Next to Dad, sitting with a little space between them was my older brother, Byron.

1 The speaker is probably
   A an old man.
   B Joetta.
   C a child.
   D the author.

2 Paragraph two contains examples of
   F flashback.
   G exaggeration.
   H characterization.
   J foreshadowing.

3 The information in the passage could lead a reader to believe that the speaker’s family is
   A rich.
   B large.
   C southern.
   D poor.

4 The speaker seems to believe that
   F people born in Flint are more used to the cold than others.
   G Saturdays are the coldest days of the week.
   H to go outside any time is stupid.
   J a man named Jack Frost was moving into the family’s home.

5 Dad
   A was trying to get the furnace started.
   B knew that Momma was angry with him.
   C liked the cold.
   D is the speaker.
Give My Regards to Clark, Poindexter

Two years ago Miss Henry took me to Mr. Alums’s fifth-grade class. Mr. Alums was the toughest teacher in the school and just being in front of him was kind of scary. He looked down at me and said, “Good morning, Mr. Watson, I hope you are in good form today.” I just nodded at him because I wasn’t sure what that meant.

“Don’t be nervous, Kenny,” Miss Henry said. “Mr. Alums would like you to read a few passages from Langston Hughes.”

Man! Some of the time I wished I was as smart as these teachers thought I was because if I had been I would have dropped that book and run all the way home. If I’d been smart enough to figure out what was going to happen next I would have never gone into that room.

I stood in the hall looking at the stuff they wanted me to read while Mr. Alums told his class, “All right, I have a special treat for you today. I want you to carefully note how advanced this second-grade student is, and I particularly want you to be aware of the effect his skills have upon you. I want you to be aware that some of our kids read at miraculous levels.”

I saw Mr. Alums point the yardstick at someone somewhere in the class and say, “Perhaps you’d like to finish the introduction, I think you know our guest quite well.”

Whoever he pointed at said, “What? I didn’t do nothin’.”

Miss Henry waved for me to come in and stand in front of the class. I guess I was too nervous about Mr. Alums to have recognized the voice before, but as soon as I walked into the room I froze. There in the two seats closest to the teacher’s desk in the very first row sat Buphead and Byron! The Langston Hughes book jumped from my hand and the whole class laughed, everyone but Byron. His eyes locked on mine and I felt things start melting inside of me.

I read through the Langston Hughes stuff real quick but that was a mistake. Miss Henry said, “Slow down some, Kenneth,” and then she took the book from me and handed it back upside down. She had a great big smile when she told Mr. Alums, “When he goes too fast, this slows him down a bit.” I read some more with the book upside down and got some real strange looks from the fifth-graders.

Finally they let me quit. Byron never looked at me the whole time but Buphead was giving me enough dirty looks for both of them. All I could do was try to figure out how to get home alive.

I didn’t even get out of the schoolyard before Byron and Buphead caught up to me. A little crowd bunched up around us, and everyone was real excited because they knew I was about to get jacked up.

Buphead said, “Here that little egghead punk is.”

“Leave the little clown alone,” Byron said.

I couldn’t believe it. I think Byron was proud of me! When everybody saw Byron wasn’t going to do anything to me for being smart they all decided that they better not do anything either. I still got called Egghead or Poindexter or Professor some of the time but that wasn’t bad compared to what could have happened to me.
The sequence chain below shows some events mentioned in the reading selection.

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kenny was introduced to the class.</td>
<td>Kenny realized it was his brother's class.</td>
<td>Byron and Buphead caught up with Kenny.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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6 Which of these belongs in Box 3?
   - F Kenny dropped the books and ran home.
   - G Kenny read to the class.
   - H Byron finished Kenny's introduction.
   - J Kenny realized his brother was proud of him.

7 As soon as Kenny walked into the room he froze because
   - A he was afraid of Mr. Alums.
   - B he didn’t think he could read well enough.
   - C he dropped the Langston Hughes book.
   - D he realized that his brother was in the class.

8 Kenny could read upside down, which shows he is
   - F a very good reader.
   - G a very fast reader.
   - H a better reader than Mr. Alums.
   - J the smartest student in his school.

9 In what grade is Kenny when he tells about his experience reading to the fifth-grade class?
   - A Second grade
   - B Third grade
   - C Fourth grade
   - D Fifth grade

10 Mr. Alums wanted Kenny to read to the class because
   - F he wanted his students to know that Kenny was smarter than they were.
   - G his students were not behaving well and he wanted to punish them.
   - H he wanted to make his students want to be good readers.
   - J he wanted his students to know that Kenny was as smart as the teachers.
About the Civil Rights Movement

Racial segregation is the separation of people of different races. Racial discrimination is the mistreatment of people because of their race. At the time of the Watson family’s trip, a number of organizations and individuals were working tirelessly to end segregation and discrimination in the U.S. South. This struggle for basic human rights became known as the civil rights movement.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), as well as Thurgood Marshall, John Lewis, Ralph Abernathy, Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., along with many other people whose names have been forgotten, strove to change the laws that allowed racial segregation and discrimination to exist, especially in the South where it was at its worst.

Civil rights workers carried out programs for voter education and registration. They participated in sit-ins and boycotts of stores and public transportation. They did not use violence, but they were often the victims of violent attacks. Even though the characters and events in The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963 are fictional, the church bombing that killed four girls actually happened.

The individuals who supported the civil rights movement took great risks to force America to change. It was a people’s movement, inspired by the courageous acts of ordinary citizens like Rosa Parks, the seamstress from Montgomery, Alabama, who began the first great effort of the movement – the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56 – when she refused to give up her seat to a white man.

Many heroic people died in the struggle for civil rights. Many others were injured or arrested or lost their homes or businesses. It is almost impossible to imagine the courage of the first African American children who walked into segregated schools or the strength of the parents who permitted them to face the hatred and violence that awaited them. They did it in the name of the movement, in the quest for freedom. These people are the true American heroes.

11 The web below shows some important ideas in the reading selection.

Which of these belongs in the empty box?
A Ralph Abernathy
B The Montgomery Bus Boycott
C SCLC
D The South
12 Which of the following is an opinion?
   F A church bombing like the one that occurred in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* actually happened.
   G The people who participated in the civil rights movement are the true American heroes.
   H Racial segregation is the separation of people of different races.
   J Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man.

13 This reading selection is an example of
   A non-fiction.
   B poetry.
   C a novel.
   D fiction.

14 Racial segregation and discrimination were at their worst in
   F Birmingham, Alabama.
   G the northern United States.
   H Montgomery, Alabama.
   J the southern United States.

15 The author probably included this selection in *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* because
   A he wants his readers to know the connection his novel has to real events.
   B he was a part of the civil rights movement.
   C he wants his readers to join the civil rights movement.
   D he wants his readers to know that *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* is a story of events that actually happened.