



James S. Rickards High School Summer Reading

Attention: Parents and Students!
Rising 10th Graders

WHO: ALL James S. Rickards High School Students

WHAT: The following information outlines the assignments we have given to our students for the 2025 James S. Rickards School-Wide Summer Reading Program. While specific courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) may have additional summer assignments that will need to be completed before the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year, we want to develop a program that encourages a culture of reading and an expectation of academic dedication for all students. Therefore, we are asking you to read the attached information and participate in our summer reading activity. The assignment composed for this year focuses on having students fine-tune their reading skills by answering text-based questions on grade-level, themed texts. Students are expected to complete each assignment by themselves, only using the power of their brains. If a student is caught plagiarizing, they will receive a 0%.

- Students are to use the active reading skills/strategies they have learned throughout the year to navigate the text.
- Students are to answer each text-based question based on their reading.

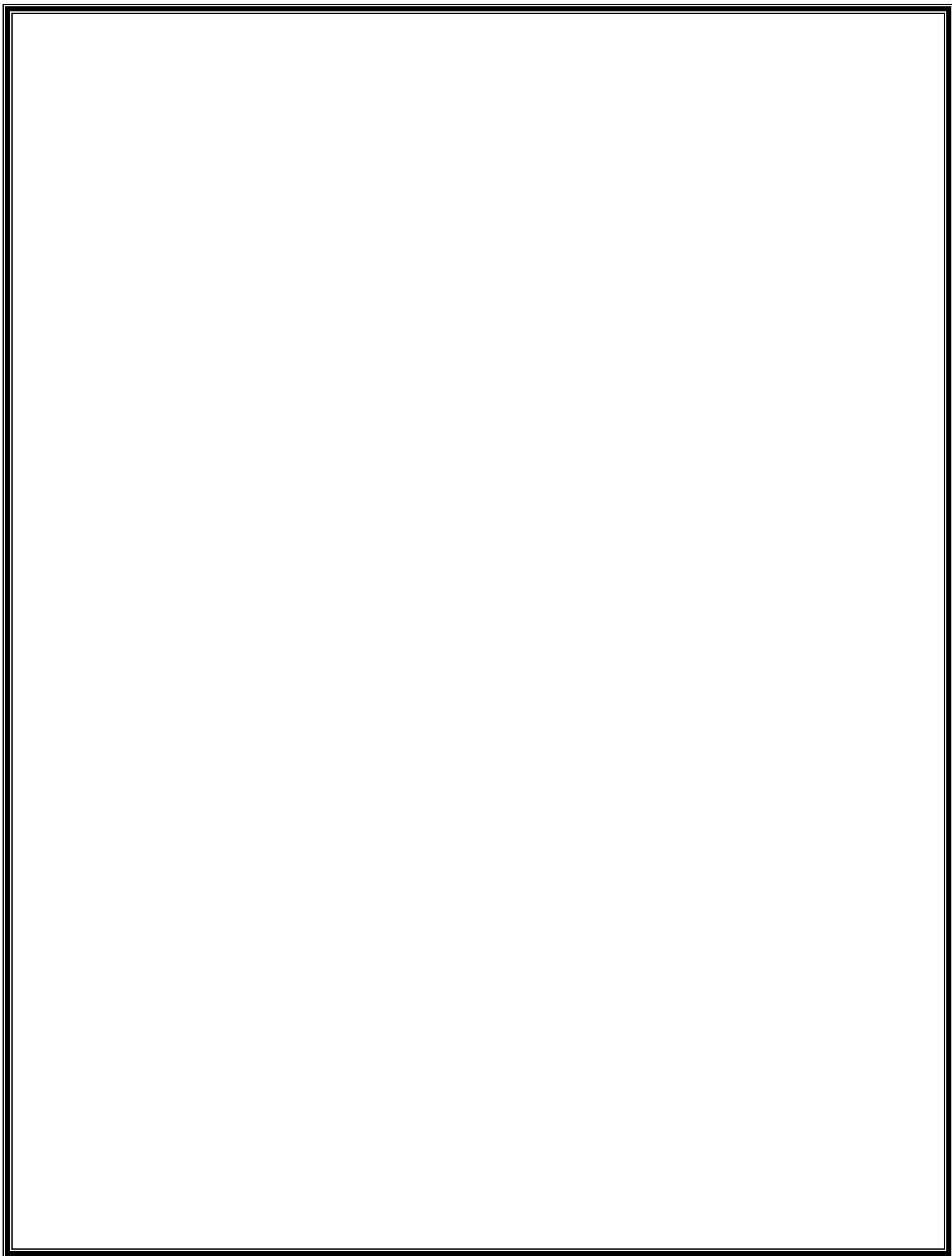
Students can use PDF Candy (found in ClassLink) to annotate, highlight the text and correct answers, and insert text boxes to complete responses.

If that option is not viable, students can create a new Word document that includes the answers for each text. Be sure to include the title of the text and then proceed with typing your answers to ensure proper labeling and therefore, grading.

WHEN: While the expectation is that students will select the best choice for each question, write original answers to the short responses, and submit them as a course requirement by the end of the first week of school following our return, we also want to encourage parents and groups of students to use the text and suggested novel readings as a point of discussion with each other so that we can all share in the experience of these texts. Activities centered upon the reading skills within these texts will take place within the first few weeks of Language Arts instruction in the fall.

This assignment is DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025 to your ELA teacher.

CONTACT INFO: If you have any questions regarding our JSRHS Summer Reading Program, please feel free to contact Mrs. G. Cooper, JSRHS ELA Department Chair (cooperg2@leonschools.net)



The Girl Who Can

As you read, monitor your comprehension by:

- Using context clues to make predictions about the boldface vocabulary words.
- Generating questions before, during, and after reading to deepen your understanding of the text. Use sentence frames such as the following to ask open-ended, higher-level-thinking questions about the text:
 - **Before reading:** What might this text suggest about?
 - **During reading:** Why is important?
 - **After reading:** What are the implications of?

Read

They say that I was born in Hasodzi; and it is a very big village in the central region of our country, Ghana. They also say that when all of Africa is not choking under a drought, Hasodzi lies in a very **fertile** lowland in a district known for its good soil. Maybe that is why any time I don't finish eating my food, Nana says, "You Adjoa, you don't know what life is about ...you don't know what problems there are in this life ..."

As far as I could see, there was only one problem. And it had nothing to do with what I knew Nana considered as "problems," or what Maami thinks of as "the problem." Maami is my mother. Nana is my mother's mother. And they say I am seven years old. And my problem is that at this seven years of age, there are things I can think in my head, but which, maybe, I do not have the proper language to speak them out with. And that, I think, is a very **serious** problem because it is always difficult to decide whether to keep quiet and not say any of the things that come into my head, or say them and get laughed at. Not that it is easy to get any grownup to listen to you, even when you decide to take the risk and say something serious to them.

Take Nana. First, I have to struggle to catch her attention. Then I tell her something I had taken a long time to figure out. And then you know what always happens? She would at once stop whatever she is doing and, mouth open, stare at me for a very long time. Then, bending and turning her head slightly, so that one ear comes down towards me, she'll say in that voice: "Adjoa, you say what?" After I have repeated whatever I had said, she would either, still in that voice, ask me "never, never, but NEVER to repeat THAT," or she would immediately burst

out laughing. She would laugh and laugh and laugh, until tears run down her cheeks and she would stop whatever she is doing and wipe away the tears with the hanging edges of her cloth. And she would continue laughing until she is completely tired. But then, as soon as another person comes by, just to make sure she doesn't forget whatever it was I had said, she would repeat it to her. And then, of course, there would be two old people laughing and screaming with tears running down their faces. Sometimes this show continues until there are three, four or even more of such laughing and screaming tear-faced grownups. And all that performance for whatever I'd said? I find something quite confusing in all this. That is, no one ever explains to me why sometimes I shouldn't repeat some things I say; while at other times, some other things I say would not only be all right, but would be considered so funny they would be repeated so many times for so many people's enjoyment. You see how neither way of hearing me out can encourage me to express my thoughts too often?

Like all this business to do with my legs. I have always wanted to tell them not to worry. I mean Nana and my mother. It did not have to be an issue for my two favorite people to fight over. I didn't want to be told not to repeat it or for it to be considered so funny that anyone would laugh at me until they cried. After all, they were my legs ...When I think back on it now, those two, Nana and my mother must have been discussing my legs from the day I was born. What I am sure of is that when I came out of the land of sweet, soft silence into the world of noise and **comprehension**, the first topic I met was my legs.

That discussion was repeated very regularly.

Nana: "Ah, ah, you know, Kaya, I thank my God that your very first child is female . But Kaya, I am not sure about her legs. Hm ...hm ...hm ..."

And Nana would shake her head.

Maami: "Mother, why are you always complaining about Adjoa's legs? If you ask me ..."

Nana: "They are too thin. And I am not asking you!"

Nana has many voices. There is a special one she uses to shut everyone up.

"Some people have no legs at all," my mother would try again with all her small courage.

“But Adjoa has legs,” Nana would insist; “except that they are too thin. And also too long for a woman. Kaya, listen. Once in a while, but only once in a very long while, somebody decides—nature, a child’s spirit mother, an accident happens, and somebody gets born without arms, or legs, or both sets of limbs. And then let me touch wood; it is a sad business. And you know, such things are not for talking about every day. But if any female child decides to come into this world with legs, then they might as well be legs.”

“What kind of legs?” And always at that point, I knew from her voice that my mother was weeping inside. Nana never heard such inside weeping. Not that it would have stopped Nana even if she had heard it. Which always surprised me. Because, about almost everything else apart from my legs, Nana is such a good grown-up. In any case, what do I know about good grown-ups and bad grown-ups? How could Nana be a good grown-up when she carried on so about my leg? All I want to say is that I really liked Nana except for that.

Nana: “As I keep saying, if any woman decides to come into this world with her two legs, then she should select legs that have meat on them: with good calves. Because you are sure such legs would support solid hips. And a woman must have solid hips to be able to have children.”

“Oh, Mother.” That’s how my mother would answer. Very, very quietly. And the discussion would end or they would move on to something else.

Sometimes, Nana would pull in something about my father:

How, “Looking at such a man, we have to be humble and admit that after all, God’s children are many ...”

How, “After one’s only daughter had insisted on marrying a man like that, you still have to thank your God that the biggest problem you got later was having a granddaughter with spindly legs that are too long for a woman, and too thin to be of any use.”

The way she always added that bit about my father under her breath, she probably thought I didn’t hear it. But I always heard it. Plus, that is what always

shut my mother up for good, so that even if I had not actually heard the words, once my mother looked like even her little courage was finished, I could always guess what Nana had added to the argument.

“Legs that have meat on them with good calves to support solid hips ...to be able to have children.”

So I wished that one day I would see, for myself, the legs of any woman who had had children. But in our village, that is not easy. The older women wear long wrap-

arounds all the time. Perhaps if they let me go bathe in the river in the evening, I could have checked. But I never had the chance. It took a lot of begging just to get my mother and Nana to let me go splash around in the shallow end of the river with my friends, who were other little girls like me. For proper baths, we used the small bathhouse behind our hut. Therefore, the only naked female legs I have ever really seen are those of other little girls like me, or older girls in the school. And those of my mother and Nana: two pairs of legs which must surely belong to the approved kind; because Nana gave birth to my mother and my mother gave birth to me. In my eyes, all my friends have got legs that look like legs, but whether the legs have got meat on them to support the kind of hips that ...that I don't know.

According to the older boys and girls, the distance between our little village and the small town is about five kilometers. I don't know what five kilometers mean. They always complain about how long it is to walk to school and back. But to me, we live in our village, and walking those kilometers didn't matter. School is nice. School is another thing Nana and my mother discussed often and appeared to have different ideas about. Nana thought it would be a waste of time. I never understood what she meant. My mother seemed to know—and disagreed. She kept telling Nana that she—that is, my mother—felt she was locked into some kind of darkness because she didn't go to school. So that if I, her daughter, could learn to write and read my own name and a little besides—perhaps be able to calculate some things on paper—that would be good. I could always marry later and maybe ...

Nana would just laugh. “Ah, maybe with legs like hers, she might as well go to school.”

Running with our classmates on our small sports field and winning first place each time never seemed to me to be anything about which to tell anyone at

home. This time it was different. I don't know how the teachers decided to let me run for the junior section of our school in the district games. But they did.

When I went home to tell my mother and Nana, they had not believed it at first. So Nana had taken it upon herself to go and "ask into it properly." She came home to tell my mother that it was really true. I was one of my school's runners.

"Is that so?" exclaimed my mother. I know her. Her mouth moved as though she was going to tell Nana, that, after all, there was a secret about me she couldn't be expected to share with anyone. But then Nana herself looked so pleased, out of surprise, my mother shut her mouth up. In any case, since the first time they heard the news, I have often caught Nana staring at my legs with a strange look on her face, but still pretending like she was not looking. All this week, she has been washing my school uniform herself. That is a big surprise. And she didn't stop at that, she even went to Mr. Mensah's house and borrowed his charcoal pressing iron. Each time she came back home with it and ironed and ironed and ironed the uniform, until, if I had been the uniform, I would have said aloud that I had had enough.

Wearing my school uniform this week has been very nice. At the parade, on the first afternoon, its **sheen** caught the rays of the sun and shone brighter than anybody else's uniform. I'm sure Nana saw that too, and must have liked it. Yes, she has been coming into town with us every afternoon of this district sports week. Each afternoon, she has pulled one set of fresh old cloth from the big brass bowl to wear. And those old clothes are always so stiffly starched, you can hear the cloth creak when she passes by. But she walks way behind us schoolchildren. As though she was on her own way to some place else.

Yes, I have won every race I ran for my school, and I have won the cup for the best all-round junior athlete. Yes, Nana said that she didn't care if such things are not done. She would do it. You know what she did? She carried the gleaming cup on her back. Like they do with babies, and other very precious things. And this time, not taking the trouble to walk by herself.

When we arrived in our village, she entered our **compound** to show the cup to my mother before going to give it back to the headmaster.

Oh, grown-ups are so strange. Nana is right now carrying me on her knee, and crying softly.

Muttering, muttering, muttering that: “saa, thin legs can also be useful ...thin legs can also be useful ...” that “even though some legs don’t have much meat on the m, to carry hips ...they can run. Thin legs can run ...then who knows? ...”

I don’t know too much about such things. But that’s how I was feeling and thinking all along. That surely, one should be able to do other things with legs as well as have them because they can support hips that make babies. Except that I was afraid of saying that sort of thing aloud. Because someone would have told me never, never, but NEVER to repeat such words. Or else, they would have laughed so much at what I’d said, they would have cried.

It’s much better this way. To have acted it out to show them, although I could not have planned it.

As for my mother, she has been speechless as usual.

The Girl Who Can Reading Quiz

Instructions for Students

Read the questions carefully and select the best answer.

Question 1

Which of these **bests** describes the story's narrative point of view?

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. The narrator is a hyper-intelligent alien from another planet.
- ☐ B. The story is narrated by an adult who writes more clearly than the child she is describing.
- ☐ C. The story takes place in the thoughts of the little girl who narrates it.
- ☐ D. The narrator is an adult trapped in a child's body.

Question 2

The narrator's grandmother criticizes the little girl's thin legs **most likely** because _____.

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. she has read too many fashion magazines and has an impossible standard of beauty
- ☐ B. she is an old-fashioned woman concerned with work and child-bearing
- ☐ C. she dislikes her granddaughter and wants to pick on her
- ☐ D. she is trying to start a fight between the little girl and her mother

Question 3

What is **most likely** the reason Adjoa took so long to mention her athletic achievements at school to her mother and grandmother?

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. She was ashamed of them.
- ☐ B. She was waiting to surprise them.
- ☐ C. She didn't think they were important.
- ☐ D. She was sworn to a vow of silence by her teacher.

Question 4

Which of these **bests** describes the condition of Adjoa's home village?

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. It is a wealthy regional market town in a thriving country.
- ☐ B. It is a poor and wretched town in a wealthy country.
- ☐ C. It is a dangerous city surrounded by high mountains.
- ☐ D. It is a village fortunately situated to avoid most of the droughts affecting the country.

Question 5

The following passage (paragraphs 14–15) adds to the development of the story **mainly** by _____ .

Nana: "As I keep saying, if any woman decides to come into this world with her two legs, then she should select legs that have meat on them: with good calves. Because you are sure such legs would support solid hips. And a woman must have solid hips to be able to have children."

"Oh, Mother." That's how my mother would answer. Very, very quietly. And the discussion would end or they would move on to something else.

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. showing that Nana worries that Adjoa's spindly legs will prevent her from bearing children

- ☐ B. showing that Adjoa's mother is a naturally quiet person
- ☐ C. demonstrating that Nana and Adjoa's mother are related
- ☐ D. introducing an important new character into the narrative

Question 6

Which passage from the text **best** supports the answer to Question 5?
Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. "As I keep saying, if any woman decides to come into this world with her two legs, then she should select legs that have meat on them: with good calves."
- ☐ B. "Because you are sure such legs would support solid hips."
- ☐ C. "And a woman must have solid hips to be able to have children."
- ☐ D. "And the discussion would end or they would move on to something else."

Question 7

What can readers **most likely** infer from the following passage (paragraphs 29–30)?

When we arrived in our village, she entered our compound to show the cup to my mother before going to give it back to the headmaster.

Oh, grown-ups are so strange. Nana is right now carrying me on her knee, and crying softly. Muttering, muttering, muttering that: "saa, thin legs can also be useful . . . thin legs can also be useful . . ." that "even though some legs don't have much meat on them, to carry hips . . . they can run. Thin legs can run . . . then who knows? . . ."

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. Nana is angry with Adjoa for proving her wrong.

- ☐ B. Nana is planning to steal the cup from the headmaster.
- ☐ C. Nana now sees Adjoa's legs in a different, more positive light.
- ☐ D. From the beginning, Nana only cared about the race.

Question 8

Which passage from the text **best** supports the correct answer to Question 7?
Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. "When we arrived in our village, she entered our compound to show the cup to my mother before going to give it back to the headmaster."
- ☐ B. "Oh, grown-ups are so strange."
- ☐ C. "Nana is right now carrying me on her knee, and crying softly."
- ☐ D. "Muttering, muttering, muttering that: 'saa, thin legs can also be useful . . . thin legs can also be useful . . .'"

Question 9

Which synonym of the word sheen **best** replaces it in the passage below (paragraph 27)?

Wearing my school uniform this week has been very nice. At the parade, on the first afternoon, its sheen caught the rays of the sun and shone brighter than anybody else's uniform. I'm sure Nana saw that too, and must have liked it. Yes, she has been coming into town with us every afternoon of this district sports week. Each afternoon, she has pulled one set of fresh old cloth from the big brass bowl to wear. And those old clothes are always so stiffly starched, you can hear the cloth creak when she passes by. But she walks way behind us schoolchildren. As though she was on her own way to someplace else.

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. polish

- ☐ B. wax
- ☐ C. gleam
- ☐ D. patina

Question 10

Place the elements in the order in which they happen.

Adjoa doesn't realize how lucky she is to have enough to eat.	Nana get emotional over Adjoa's victory.
Adjoa mentions her success as a runner to her family. Nana gets emotional over Adjoa's victory.	Adjoa's Nana criticizes her legs.

First	Second	Third	Fourth

Written Response: The Girl Who Can

Narrative

In this text, Adjoa's mother, Maami, is often silenced by Nana (Maami's mother and Adjoa's grandmother). Consider if Maami, for once, gathered the courage to fully challenge Nana's views. Based on inferences made from details in the text, what do you think Maami would say? How would she advocate for her daughter? Write an alternative conversation between Maami and Nana in which Maami is permitted a full voice to argue for her daughter's welfare.

Graphic Organizer

Directions: Use the Sequencing Chart to plan what will happen in the beginning, middle, and end of your alternative conversations between Maami and Nana.

Beginning
Add Thoughts



Middle
Add Thoughts



End
Add Thoughts

Lift Every Voice and Sing

As you read, monitor your comprehension by:

- Using context clues to make predictions about the boldface vocabulary words.
- Making connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society. You may use the following questions:
 - **To make connections to personal experiences:**
 - How does this relate to my life?
 - What were my thoughts and feelings when I read this?
 - **To make connections to ideas in other texts:**
 - How is this similar to other texts I have read?
 - How is this different from other texts I have read?
 - **To make connections to society:**
 - How does this relate to issues in society?
 - How is this similar to or different from things that happen in the real world?

Read

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty,
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it **resound** loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we **trod**
Bitter the **chast'ning** rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered

We have come, treading our path thro' the blood of the **slaughtered**,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might,
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we meet Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our **native** land.

Lift Every Voice and Sing: Reading Quiz

Instructions for Student

Read the question carefully and select the best answer.

Question 1

Which of the following **most closely** identifies the focus of the speaker?

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. The speaker is focused on a group of people and their history.
- ☐ B. The speaker is focused solely on himself and a particular event.
- ☐ C. The speaker is focused on his immediate family and a gathering.
- ☐ D. The speaker is focused on a close friend and a shared experience.

Question 2

In the first stanza, the phrase dark past **most likely** refers to .

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. a period of time that no longer exists
- ☐ B. a period of time before the printing of stories
- ☐ C. a period of time marked by traumatic suffering
- ☐ D. a period of time with an obvious absence of light

Question 3

Which of the following **best** expresses the theme of the entire poem?

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. In order to maintain a healthy body and outlook, people should gather to walk and to sing as a way to encourage one another.
- ☐ B. A group of people who have a shared and difficult experience can move forward collectively toward a better future.
- ☐ C. It is necessary to enlist the help of people in power in order to achieve goals in a timely manner.
- ☐ D. Knowing what has occurred in the past can influence a group of people in developing better plans and goals.

Question 4

Which pair of lines from the poem **best** supports the answer to Question 3?

Answer choices for the above question

- ☐ A. "Lift every voice and sing, / Till earth and heaven ring,"
- ☐ B. "Have not our weary feet / Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?"
- ☐ C. "Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last / Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast."
- ☐ D. "Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand / True to our God, true to our native land."

Question 5

Move the lines around so that each box has two lines that make the **best** rhyme. All eight lines should be paired to rhyme.

Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.	Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,	Led us into the light, Keep us forever in the path, we pray.	Ring with harmonies of Liberty,
Yet with a steady beat	Let us march on till victory is won.	Have not our weary feet	Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;

First Pair	Second Pair	Third Pair	Fourth Pair

Essay Writing Prompt

Writing Situation

Many high school students have part-time jobs after school and on the weekends. Some students think that the money they earn should be entirely theirs to spend. Others think that they should contribute all or part of their earnings to their families. Decide what you believe working teens should do with their earnings.

Directions for Writing

Write a letter to younger teens who are about to begin working. Your letter should offer advice about how the teens should use their earnings. Support your advice with reasons, examples, or evidence.

Students must show their planning process. Attach your planning sheet, rough draft, and final draft to the packet when you submit it to your teachers.