Niagara Falls City School District

English Language Arts
Packet 4:

Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression & Standard 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Grade 5

This pdf file contains items aligned to the CCLS that can be used for both test prep and to assess student proficiency in the major clusters/standards that are going to appear on the New York State assessments. The use of these items is totally up to the discretion of individual teachers, and therefore is optional. Tasks are bundled by standard and the level of rigor is indicated on each. The intent is not to create a “mock assessment” but rather to provide resources from the item banks so that teachers will have easily accessible items to use for instructional purposes.
One Fall, the people started a big fire to burn off the underbrush. A tall poplar tree caught fire and burned long after the people had gone. It burned the branches and the trunk and when there was nothing left, the fire settled in roots and burned a hole in the ground.

The next day men passed pots of water from the river to the hole. The women threw in dirt and rocks. But still the fire burned until the small hole in the ground became a huge hole.

The people peered deep into the hole. “Will this fire eat up the whole world?” they asked fearfully.

Then one of the elders spoke. “Far north lives fierce Ice Man, who sends our frozen season. Maybe cold will put out the fire.” Some of the people marched the long way north to ask for Ice Man’s help. Creeping cautiously to his ice house, they found a small man with white hair hanging to the ground.

“Can this little man help us with such a big fire?” they wondered.

“Yes, yes! I can help you.” He exclaimed, quickly unbraiding his long hair. Then he took his hair in one hand and whipped it across the other. At once a cold wind began to blow. He struck his hand with his hair a second time and light rain fell.

“A little rain won’t put out that fire,” cried the people. So Ice Man shook his hair fiercely and raindrops turned to sleet. With another shake, hailstones pelted the ground, bouncing around the people’s feet.

“Go back now,” Ice Man commanded. “When you are home, I will take care of your fire.”
So the people returned home and found the others still watching helplessly.

The next morning as everyone stood before the glowing pit, a cold wind swept down from the north. The people shivered and shook, but the wind only made the flames blaze higher. Then a light rain began to fall. But the fire laughed and hissed and threw up clouds of smoky steam.

Now Ice Man was angry. He mixed sleet with the heavy rain and shook down snow. But the fire hissed louder. When the flames had eaten up the snow, Ice Man whipped his hair and threw cold winds at the flames until hail covered the fire and filled the hole. The people shivered and cried in their lodges as that wind became a whirlwind, driving rain and sleet into the ground and finally putting out the last of the burning embers.

When it was over the people crept back to the place where fire had been burning up the world and found instead a deep and beautiful lake.

Ice Man blows down from the north from time to time to make sure greedy Fire is really gone. But some of the people say that on quiet days, from deep in the lake, comes the faint sound of embers still crackling.


1. Based on the information in Paragraph 4, you can tell that an “elder” is
   A) funny.
   B) wise.
   C) fearless.
   D) curious.

2. Which sentence tells how Ice Man puts out the fire?
   A) He yells and screams.
   B) He creates a huge storm.
   C) He digs and fills a deep hole in the ground.
   D) He throws down a great cloud of smoke.

3. What causes the wind to first begin to blow?
   A) Ice Man dries his hair.
   B) Ice Man unbraids his hair.
   C) Ice Man shakes his hair free.
   D) Ice Man uses his hair as a whip.

4. Explain what the Ice Man did to try to put out the fire. Use details and information from the story to support your answer.

5. What is the main conflict in this story?
   A) the people against the fire
   B) the people against the lake
   C) the people against the elders
   D) the people against other people
6. What is the most positive result of the fire in the passage?
   A) It got rid of all the underbrush.
   B) It left a beautiful lake in its place.
   C) It kept the people warm while it was burning.
   D) It helped the people become friends with one another.

Granny’s Apron
by Norma T. Balding

1 The afternoon was cold, dark, and rainy. My mom and I were looking through her cedar chest. On this particular afternoon, we were just talking and looking at old photo albums and scrapbooks. Then I found a piece of clothing I’d never seen before.

2 “What’s this?” I asked and held up a faded, printed something-or-other with two long ties on it.

3 “That was my grandma’s apron!” Mom said.

4 “It looks more like an old rag,” I observed. “Would she have been my great-grandma?”

5 “That’s right,” Mom replied. “This apron came up over her shoulders and tied in the back. Would you like to try it on?”

6 “OK,” I said. Mom slipped it over my head and tied a bow in the back. The apron reached all the way to the floor and covered my shoes. I shoved my hands into the two big pockets.

7 “Did she always wear an apron like this?” I wanted to know.

8 “Every time I visited her on the farm when I was a little girl, Granny was wearing one. The first thing in the morning, she’d take her apron from its hook beside the kitchen door and slip it on. Then she’d be ready to tackle a day’s work. Her apron protected her housedress from flour as she baked bread or from spatters when she cooked chicken—things like that.”
“Just like Dad’s coveralls protect his clothes when he works on the car,” I said. I tried to imagine my great-grandma mixing up bread wearing this faded cotton apron.

“Those weren’t the only reasons Granny wore an apron,” Mom told me. “I can remember a lot of things her apron did.”

“I sat down on the carpet and spread the old apron around me in a semicircle.

“Sometimes she would take me along to the henhouse to gather eggs. She would make a basket out of her apron front, then carry the eggs—very carefully—to the egg bucket at the corner of the henhouse. She would carry a dozen or more eggs easily, and not break a single one!”

“In the fall,” Mom continued, “Granny and I would go out to the orchard and pick an apron full of apples, just enough for two pies. ‘Pies are better when the apples are fresh from the tree,’ she’d say. I can almost taste her juicy, spicy apple pie now.”

“What else did she carry in her apron?” I prompted my mom.

“One spring, Miranda, Granny’s calico cat, had a litter of kittens. They were born under the front porch, and Granny said, ‘That’s no place for your family, Miranda. It’s cold and drafty here. Come along.’ Granny picked up those five tiny kittens and oh, so carefully—just like eggs—carried them to the barn. Miranda walked along beside us, not quite trusting us with her babies. Soon they were nestled in some hay in an empty stall. The things Granny could do with her apron!” Mom said, smiling.

“Was this the only apron Great-Grandma had?” I asked.

“Oh, my—no!” Mom assured me. “She had lots of them. Two or three were her best ones—the ones she would take to covered-dish dinners. Those ‘dress up’ aprons would be starched and ironed to perfection.

“Each of her granddaughters got one of Granny’s aprons as a keepsake after she was gone,” Mom told me, and I thought I saw a tear shining in her eye.

I sighed, took off the faded, patched apron, and folded it neatly.

“Someday I’d like to tell my little girl about this apron, Mom,” I said. “She would be amazed at how many things it’s done!”

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7. Which paragraph reveals that the narrator does not know what the apron is when she first sees it?
   A) Paragraph 1
   B) Paragraph 2
   C) Paragraph 3
   D) Paragraph 4

8. When Granny carries the newborn kittens as if they are eggs, the reader knows that
   A) Granny is a very strong woman.
   B) Granny handles the kittens with care.
   C) The kittens are comfortable with Granny.
   D) People admire Granny for her kindness.

9. Based on the information in the story, which statement about aprons is generally true?
   A) They have big pockets.
   B) They are very long.
   C) They have many uses.
   D) They are very colorful.

10. Why does the mother talk to her daughter about the apron she finds?
    A) to teach her daughter how to make an apron
    B) to show her daughter why people wear aprons
    C) to tell her daughter stories about the life of her grandmother
    D) to tell her daughter about the lives of women on a farm

11. In this story, the narrator’s need to have her mother explain what an apron is shows
    A) that the narrator does not like to cook or bake.
    B) how remarkable the mother’s memory is.
    C) how experiences differ between generations.
    D) that the item has worn out to the point of being unrecognizable.

12. Why did the narrator ask her mother about the apron?
    A) She thought it looked like an old rag.
    B) She thought it reminded her of something.
    C) She found it and did not know what it was.
    D) She saw it in an old picture and was curious.
Every year, Donald’s town held a pie-baking contest. A special category for people below twelve years old drew many students from Donald’s school. This year was the last year for Donald to enter in this age group. Donald expected to win with his grandmother’s recipe for shepherd’s pie. Donald was sure that his pie would win in the contest.

At noon, Donald strolled into the town hall with his special pie. He carried the white box to his place on the pie table. Only Donald could smell the delicious aroma coming from his pie. His name card, which said Donald Price, sat on the very end of the display. Therefore, Donald was able to see all of the other entries as they arrived.

There were many kinds of tasty-looking pies in the contest. Donald saw apple pies with golden brown crusts. His mouth watered. There were juicy cherries and creamy puddings. He saw thick chocolate pies and key lime pies with mounds of whipping cream, too. Every one of the pies looked equally sweet. Still, Donald felt confident about his chances for winning. His shepherd’s pie was different from all of the other pies.

At last, Donald stepped up to his name card. Three judges stood waiting for him to untie the string around his box. He gently opened his and pulled out a list of ingredients. Every contestant was required to write a paragraph describing his or her pie. Carefully, Donald lifted the shepherd’s pie from the box and set it on the table. The judges looked at the pie. Then they sniffed it. Mr. Estes picked up Donald’s paragraph and read it aloud:

This shepherd’s pie contains stew made from leg of lamb, butter, turnips, carrots, celery, onion, thyme, flour, water, and black pepper. Its topping is a potato mixture made from potatoes, butter, egg, salt, and white pepper.

The second judge, Mrs. Kim, asked, “Donald, why did you choose to make this pie?”

Donald replied, “I chose this pie because it is a family tradition. A long time ago, my ancestors herded sheep in Great Britain. This recipe has been passed down several generations in my family. Also, shepherd’s pie tastes great!”

Next, the judges gathered all of the pies onto a cart. Then they rolled the cart into the mayor’s office for the tasting. When the judges returned, they looked pleased. The contestants waited anxiously as the judges gathered together at the front of the town hall.
Mrs. Kim said, “I will announce the winner of the contest. First, I would like to ask Donald Price to please come to the front.”

Donald grinned. He skipped up to stand next to Mrs. Kim. He expected to win the contest, but the judges gave an award Donald liked even better. Instead of a first-place ribbon, Mrs. Kim presented Donald with the first-ever award for Most Original Pie.

13. Based on the passage, the reader can tell that Donald is
   A) excited about tasting the other pies.
   B) ready to enter next year’s competition.
   C) polite to all of the other people in the contest.
   D) proud of his grandmother’s recipe.

14. Which sentence from the passage explains why Donald’s pie wins a special award?
   A) This year was the last year for Donald to enter in this age group.
   B) There were many kinds of tasty-looking pies in the contest.
   C) His shepherd’s pie was different from all of the other pies.
   D) When the judges returned, they looked pleased.

15. What is the message presented in the passage?
   A) Continue to work hard, even when you want to quit.
   B) Be cautious of those who will judge you.
   C) Be creative and have fun in all you do.
   D) Winning is not everything.

16. How does Donald’s pie differ from the other entries?
   A) It is the best pie.
   B) It is the biggest pie.
   C) It is not homemade.
   D) It is not made of sweets.

17. Which statement best explains the conflict of the passage?
   A) The judges think Donald is too old to enter the contest.
   B) Donald’s pie is different than the other pies in the contest.
   C) The recipe for shepherd’s pie contains too many ingredients.
   D) Donald uses his grandmother’s recipe instead of his own.

18. What is a positive result of Donald’s unusual pie choice in the story?
   A) It encourages the judges to try new foods.
   B) It helps the contestants understand new ideas.
   C) It shows that developing confidence takes time.
   D) It shows that being different can be appreciated.
Comparing Apples and Apples

My grandmother peels an apple in one long, curly strand.

She follows the fruit’s contours
cressing,
5the bright,
red, 
crunchy, 
outside.

My neighbor never peels an apple, 
10Instead she bites right through.

Her mouth is a crushing, destroying machine 
Crrrrunch! Munnnnch! Chommmp!

My father always slices an apple into precise, even wedges.

15He arranges them on a plate before eating them 
neatly stacked and neatly arrayed.

My teacher brings two apple halves every day to have for lunch.

She carefully unwraps the plastic 
20opens a nearby jar and then s…m…e…a…r…s peanut butter on each half.
When I have an apple,  
I like to experiment.

25 I am the Apple Scientist.  
Try the peel; discard the peel;  
eat a wedge; eat a half.  
peanut butter on top, cheddar on the side,  
which is easy, what is tasty,  
30 write the hypothesis, chart the outcome.

Grandmothers, neighbors,  
Fathers, friends  
All of them eat apples  
(though no one eats the core)  
35 All of them have ways  
(though generally quite different)  
I’ve eaten apple in nearly every possible, potential state  
And what always blows my mind  
Is that apple, no matter the form, still tastes great!
Fruit Salad

I’m sick of mushy bananas
With despairing dirt-like dots.
Their stringy, slimy texture
And coin-like rounds in clots.

No, I want to have a berry,
A ripe, round, red treasure.
I’ll search through all the fruit bits
For the scrumptious scarlet pleasure.

Don’t give me chunks of pineapple
Which don’t quite smush or crunch.
Too soaked in sugary syrup,
They’re not fit for a day-old lunch.

No, I want to have a berry,
The ruby of the salad.
No fruit is more valued
Only berries inspire ballads.

I won’t take tired apple slices
No longer appealing to bite.
The limp and brown flesh
Is an ugly sight.

No, I want to have a berry,
And I will never settle for less.
I’ll overturn every single bowl
To achieve berry success.
25 Rounds of melon won’t distract me.  
No, they won’t suffice.  
Those green and yellow orbs  
Aren’t worth half the price.

No, I want to have a berry,  
30 The ripe, round, red fruit queen.  
I would do ’most anything  
To have the fruit supreme.

But I’ll never taste that flavor burst  
Because my sister ate them first.

19. **What do the speakers in both poems describe?**  
A) healthy eating habits  
B) thoughts about a particular fruit  
C) how something smells  
D) feelings about family members

20. **The poets use all of the following in both poems except**  
A) metaphors.  
B) rhyming words.  
C) description of sights and sounds.  
D) opinions.

21. **The speaker uses all of the following in “Fruit Salad” except**  
A) metaphors.  
B) alliteration.  
C) sensory language.  
D) rhyme.