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# Language Arts–Reading

*HiSET*® Exam Free Practice Test FPT2

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### **Directions**

This is a test of some of the skills involved in understanding what you read. The passages in this test come from a variety of works, both literary and informational. Each passage is followed by a number of questions.

The passages begin with an introduction presenting information that may be helpful as you read the selection. After you have read a passage, go on to the questions that follow. For each question, choose the best answer, and mark your choice on the answer sheet. You may refer to a passage as often as necessary.

Work as quickly as you can without becoming careless. Do not spend too much time on any question that is difficult for you to answer. Instead, skip it and return to it later if you have time. Try to answer every question even if you have to guess.

Mark all your answers on the answer sheet. Give only one answer to each question.

If you decide to change one of your answers, be sure to erase the first mark completely.

Be sure that the number of the question you are answering matches the number of the row of answer choices you are marking on your answer sheet. The answer sheet contains enough rows for 25 questions and this test contains only 20 questions, so do not use rows 21 through 25 on the answer sheet.

Language Arts - Reading

Time—35 minutes

20 Questions

Questions 1 to 8 refer to the passage below.

**Writer Richard Nelson lived for many years among native peoples in Alaska. In the passage below he describes an encounter with a male bald eagle. Bald eagle feathers are regarded with special reverence by many Native Americans, who are among the few people allowed by law to possess them.**

Line  
5 A bald eagle in dark, youthful plumage sails down to a fish carcass on the beach just ahead. He seems careless or unafraid—quite different from the timid, sharp-eyed elders—so I drop my pack and try to sneak in for a closer look. Using a driftwood pile as a screen, I stalk within fifty feet of the bird, but he spots me peering out between the logs. He flaps out over the water, turns for another look, and then lands forty feet up in a beachside spruce.

There's nothing to lose now, so I walk very slowly toward the eagle, looking away and acting uninterested. He seems content to watch me, or perhaps doesn't care now that he's beyond my reach. Foolish bird: nearly all dead or wounded eagles found in this part of the world have bullets in them. Finally, I stand almost beneath him, gazing up at the eagle as he looks back down at me.

10 A gray skeleton of a tree leans beneath his perch, making a ramp I can climb to get closer. His eyes fix on me as I ease to the leaning trunk's base; but he holds fast to the branch. I've never been this close to a wild, free eagle.

15 I inch slowly . . . slowly up the bare trunk, twist myself around the stubs of broken limbs, until I'm twenty feet from the bird and can't come closer. Nothing is left except to be here—two intense, predatory animals, given to great suddenness. Perhaps neither of us will ever be so near another of our respective kinds again. I don't need to believe that we communicate anything more than a shared interest and regard, as we blink across the distances that separate our minds.

Two loose, downy feathers hang incongruously from his breast, out-of-place feathers that quiver in the gentle current of air.

20 The bird cranes his head down to watch me, so the plumage on his neck fluffs out. His head is narrow, pinched, tightly feathered; his eyes are silver-gold, astringent, and stare forward along the curved scythe of his beak. Burned into each eye is a constricted black pupil, like the tightly strung arrow of a crossbow aimed straight toward me. What does the eagle see when he looks at me, this bird who can spot a herring's flash in the water a quarter-mile away? I suppose every stub of whisker on my face, every mole and  
25 freckle, every eyelash, the pink flesh on the edge of my eyelid, the red network of vessels on the white of my eye, the radiating colors of my iris, his own reflection on my pupil, or beneath the reflection, his inverted image on my retina. I see only the eagle's eye, but wonder if he sees down inside mine. Or inside me, perhaps.

30 I take a few more steps, until I stand directly beneath him, where for the first time he can't see me. This is too much. He leans forward, opens his wings and leaps out over my head, still staring down. He strains heavily, like a swimmer stroking up for air. One of the loose feathers shakes free and floats down toward the thicket. I've always told [a young friend] Ethan that a falling eagle's feather, caught before it reaches the ground, might have special power. I wish I could run and catch this one; but the bird has shared power enough already.

1. What prompts the narrator to call the young eagle a “foolish bird” (line 8) ?
  - A. The eagle lands on the beach instead of staying out over the water.
  - B. The eagle does not notice the narrator until he is within fifty feet.
  - C. The eagle settles for the remains of a dead fish rather than hunting for a fresh one.
  - D. The eagle does not seem to know that even at a distance humans pose a threat.
2. Which of the following best explains why the narrator climbs the leaning trunk?
  - A. He wants to experience what it is like to be near a bald eagle.
  - B. He wants to enable the eagle to become more comfortable near humans.
  - C. He wants to see if the eagle is wounded.
  - D. He wants to obtain an eagle feather.
3. Overall, which of the following does the narrator seem most interested in thinking about?
  - A. Why the eagle behaves as it does
  - B. How the eagle and he view one another
  - C. What hunters must feel about eagles
  - D. Why bald eagles need to be wary
4. The descriptions comparing the eagle’s beak to a “scythe” and its eye to the “arrow of a crossbow” seem most intended to emphasize that the bird
  - A. represents a once-endangered species.
  - B. intends to harm the narrator.
  - C. has a need for self-defense.
  - D. is a powerful hunter.
5. In the last paragraph, the narrator indicates that the eagle flies off because it
  - A. detects prey in the water.
  - B. suddenly hears the narrator approaching.
  - C. can no longer keep its eye on the narrator.
  - D. has lost interest in watching the narrator.
6. In the description of the eagle taking flight, “He strains heavily, like a swimmer stroking up for air,” (lines 30–31) the author is calling attention to
  - A. the presence of the water nearby.
  - B. the basic similarities between eagles and fish.
  - C. the survival instinct that prompted the eagle to fly away.
  - D. the eagle’s lack of interest in the man.
7. Which of the following best describes the narrator’s overall tone in speaking of the eagle?
  - A. Respectful and admiring
  - B. Worried and apprehensive
  - C. Impatient and condescending
  - D. Detached and scientific
8. The author’s primary intent in the passage is apparently to
  - A. describe a rare and meaningful personal experience.
  - B. focus attention on irresponsible hunting practices.
  - C. convince readers to help protect bald eagle populations.
  - D. inform readers about little-known aspects of eagle behavior.

Questions 9 to 17 refer to the passage below.

**Long after frame houses were available to them, many of the Arapaho, an American Indian group of the Southwest, preferred the advantages of the tipi, which suited a lifestyle that valued mobility. The passage below is excerpted from an account of Arapaho life in Oklahoma in the late 1800s.**

Line The woman of the family built the lodge, and when we went to a new location she was the one that  
5 moved it. Raising or striking a tipi was not such heavy work as people who have never seen it done  
suppose it to be, but it was work that needed training and skill. It was women's work, as it always had  
been, and they took great pride in it. The important thing, besides the know-how, was the lodge poles.  
These must be long and straight and slender, and for a good family lodge there must be from sixteen to  
twenty of them. They must be of a wood like cedar that would not rot when exposed to rain and snow.  
Such poles were not easy to find on the Plains, and the women took great care of them.

10 An Arapaho woman, in putting up a tipi, started with three poles that she bound together about three  
feet from the small end. These she set up on the ground like a big tripod. Then she propped more poles on  
the ground and rested them above in the fork of the first three. These were spaced evenly in a circle and  
formed the framework of the tipi. Many buffalo skins sewed together had once made the cover for this  
frame, but the old lodge skins soon wore out after the buffalo were gone, and then a heavy cloth called a  
lodge cloth or strouding was used. This cloth was cut and sewed in such a way that it formed a kind of  
cone stretched over the poles. Two flaps, or ears, were left open at the top, with two more poles thrust  
15 through them in such a way that they made the smoke hole above the center of the lodge large or small,  
depending on how they were braced on the ground.

20 The opening that made the entrance was covered with a skin or a length of canvas held down by a strip  
of wood that weighted the bottom. This was the only kind of door we knew, long ago. In fine weather it  
was raised on poles to make a kind of awning over the opening. This door could not be locked, of course,  
like a wooden door on hinges; but the Cheyenne and the Arapaho, like most other Indians, had always  
respected other people's houses. When they were away from the tipi for any length of time, they placed a  
stick across the entrance to say that they were not at home. Our sense of honor protected our property.

25 There was room for everything in our lodge, and to us it never seemed crowded. Bags of meat and fruit  
that my mother had dried hung from the lodge poles; and around the outer circle of the room, in the space  
where the beds were and underneath them, folded robes and clothing, our toys, and our mother's tools and  
materials for handwork were kept. Except in bad weather, most of our work and play went on outside our  
tipi. When we came inside, it seemed dim and cool in summer, and rosy and warm in winter. A kettle of  
food was usually on the fire, ready for us and any visitors who might come in.

9. According to the narrator, the most important factor in setting up a tipi was
- A. using lodge poles of the right length and quality.
  - B. stretching the lodge cloth tightly over the poles.
  - C. making the smoke hole the right size.
  - D. fastening the lodge cloth securely.
10. Which of the following personal qualities does the narrator view as most essential for someone who is putting up a tipi?
- A. Imagination and creativity
  - B. Speed and accuracy
  - C. Knowledge and expertise
  - D. Size and strength
11. In setting up a tipi, which of the following tasks was done before the other three?
- A. Standing up three poles
  - B. Tying three poles together
  - C. Resting poles against the others
  - D. Positioning the poles that controlled the smoke hole flaps
12. The passage suggests that cloth replaced buffalo skins as tipi covers because
- A. cloth was much cheaper.
  - B. cloth was sturdier and lasted longer.
  - C. buffalo skins were harder to handle.
  - D. buffaloes had become scarce.
13. A stick placed across the entrance to a tipi served as
- A. a lock for the entrance flap.
  - B. a warning to potential intruders.
  - C. a sign that the inhabitants were out.
  - D. a notice that the inhabitants did not want to be disturbed.
14. Basic information about erecting a tipi is provided primarily in which paragraph?
- A. The first paragraph (“The woman . . .”)
  - B. The second paragraph (“An Arapaho . . .”)
  - C. The third paragraph (“The opening . . .”)
  - D. The fourth paragraph (“There was room . . .”)
15. The narrator’s pride in Arapaho culture is most evident in telling about
- A. the fact that they did not need doors that locked.
  - B. their skill in hunting the buffalo.
  - C. the switch from buffalo skins to lodge cloth.
  - D. the strength required to put up a tipi.
16. What is the main idea the narrator conveys in the last paragraph?
- A. A tipi served mainly as a temporary shelter.
  - B. The Arapaho were always prepared to welcome guests.
  - C. Bad weather could make life in the tipi seem crowded and chaotic.
  - D. The tipi was a convenient, comfortable, and inviting dwelling.
17. The main intent of the passage seems to be
- A. to demonstrate how easy it was to transport tipis.
  - B. to show that putting up a tipi is easier than most people think.
  - C. to describe how tipis were constructed and used by the Arapaho.
  - D. to illustrate how Arapaho men and women shared the family workload.

Questions 18 to 20 refer to the poem below.

For chicken eggs to hatch—whether they are brown or white—two conditions are necessary: they must be fertile, and they must be kept at a constant temperature of 99.5°F for about three weeks, beginning at the time the egg is laid. In this poem by Demetria Martínez, a young girl understands some—but not all—of these conditions.

**Elena at Five Years**

Elena warms a brown egg  
Between her palms, close to her lips,  
Cold from a carton,  
Chosen from the dozen.

*Line*

5 It is the center now of a sphere  
Of kitchen towels in a drawer  
Next to an Amish cookbook,  
Next to the oven's white side.

For three weeks at 3:15  
10 Elena will breathe on that egg  
Held between her lifelines  
Against her grape-stained lips,  
She anticipates the birth  
Although brown eggs, her mother says,  
15 Can't hatch.

But at 5, Elena  
Has a good ear for heartbeats.  
Sidewalk cracks cry  
When her tennis shoe touches them,  
20 The lava chips that embroider  
The yard have names,  
And a brown egg is throbbing  
In the cup of her hand.



18. The description in lines 5–6 suggests that Elena has tried to

- A. prepare the egg for cooking.
- B. clean the egg but has forgotten it.
- C. hide the egg so it will not be used for cooking.
- D. warm the egg by creating a nest.

19. What does the fact that Elena breathes on the egg “For three weeks at 3:15” (line 9) most suggest?

- A. She remembers the egg only occasionally.
- B. She is seriously dedicated to this project.
- C. She has limited interest in hatching the egg.
- D. Her mother reminds her to care for the egg after school.

20. The poem ends with a sense of the speaker’s

- A. dismay over Elena’s misinformation.
- B. understanding of Elena’s way of looking at the world.
- C. confusion over whether the egg will hatch after all.
- D. excitement at the prospect of the new life Elena is nurturing.



# Reading Practice Test

## Answer Key

Question Number	Correct Answer	Question Difficulty	Question Type
1	D	Easy	Inference and Interpretation
2	A	Easy	Inference and Interpretation
3	B	Medium	Analysis
4	D	Easy	Analysis
5	C	Medium	Comprehension
6	C	Difficult	Analysis
7	A	Easy	Analysis
8	A	Medium	Analysis
9	A	Easy	Comprehension
10	C	Medium	Comprehension
11	B	Difficult	Comprehension
12	D	Medium	Comprehension
13	C	Medium	Comprehension
14	B	Easy	Analysis
15	A	Medium	Analysis
16	D	Medium	Analysis
17	C	Easy	Analysis
18	D	Medium	Inference and Interpretation
19	B	Medium	Inference and Interpretation
20	B	Medium	Analysis



