

SIRIUS

SAMPLER
*Use with Your
Students!*

GRADE
6

READING ZINGERS

Answering the Most Common STAAR® Test Items

**New
TEKS**

- STAAR skill instruction
- Scaffolded STAAR practice
- STAAR test tips and strategies

To the Teacher

Grade 6 Reading Zingers helps prepare all students for the STAAR test by focusing on how to **read**, **analyze**, and **answer** STAAR test items by:

1. looking for academic vocabulary or key terms in the items to help focus their thinking
2. applying test-taking strategies that show how to decode test items and avoid traps
3. practicing the most common tested skills with four levels of scaffolded practice (A, B, C, and Mixed Review)

This workbook can be used in many ways, including:

- **Transition Activities** that can be used with partners or small groups.
- **Spaced Review**, such as one day a week, to review content in the format of the test.
- **Intense Review/Preparation** in the weeks before the STAAR test.

Mixed Practice is intended to add another rung to the scaffolding ladder by having students practice with a longer selection and with two skills in tandem. This then facilitates further independent practice, which can be found in our Grade 6 reading workbook, and separate Practice Tests.



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Sampler

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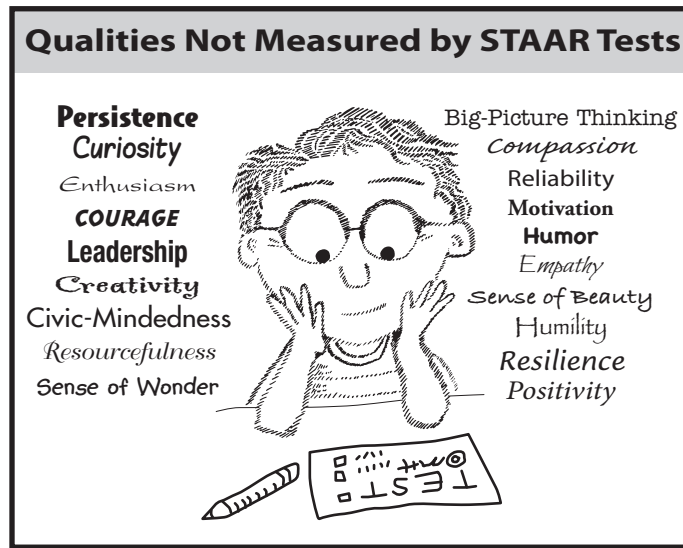
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Dear Students,

There are many important qualities of character and intelligence that the STAAR tests are **not** designed to measure—as this cartoon shows.



What the STAAR Grade 6 Reading test does measure is your ability to answer specific kinds of multiple-choice test questions. The lessons in this workbook will teach you how to approach and successfully answer these STAAR test questions.

Zingers—Answering the Most Common Test Items

Zingers challenge and support **all** students to **think** in ways that help them answer STAAR test questions. Each Zinger lesson presents one of the most commonly tested skills on the STAAR test and guides you to understand the intent of the question and a strategy for how to answer it. The lesson presents several questions, with increasing complexity, to help prepare you for the STAAR test.

Practicing Smart Is the Secret to STAAR Success

There is a secret to success on the STAAR tests—practice, practice, and more practice. However, not all practice is the same . . . so you want to practice smart.

First, practice with test questions that are likely to appear on the actual STAAR test. That’s easy, since this workbook is full of them! Next, focus on your weaknesses—the types of questions that you most need to improve. Think of it like this: if your basketball shot needs improvement, you don’t practice dribbling. Instead, you practice shooting.

Focusing on your weaknesses also means analyzing each test question you get wrong. Why did you get it wrong? If your basketball shot is off, you identify what you are doing wrong (aiming too far left) and correct it with your next shot (aim further right).

When you practice, give each question your full attention. (Take a short break *after* you answer the question.) Your attention is like a muscle that you can build by using it, one practice test question at a time. Do you believe unfocused, sloppy practice of your basketball shot will help you perform during a big game? Your attention is your greatest power. You develop it with practice.

Preparing for the STAAR test can actually be a fun challenge. And when you practice smart, you are building life skills at the same time you prepare for the STAAR test!

Your partners in STAAR success,
The Sirius Education Team

Using This Book for STAAR Success

Skill Instruction with Scaffolded Practice

Each lesson teaches **how to read, analyze, and answer** the STAAR questions for one of the most commonly tested TEKS. Scaffolded **practice A, B, and C** increases in complexity by modifying the number of answer choices.

ZINGER 1 Analyzing Plot

STAAR skill instruction

A plot is the series of events in a fictional story. A plot has different parts. **Conflict** is a struggle between characters or within a character. The **climax** is the turning point of the story when the conflict is at its most intense. Finally, **resolution** happens after the conflict is resolved.

• STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about plot.

• Asking you to identify or explain a specific plot element

Which event contributes most to the narrator's inner conflict?

• Asking you to identify events and character details from the reading

The end of the story reveals that Lucy —

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 contribute to the rising action of the story by showing —

identify or explain a plot element identify events/details

Practice A Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

I used to stay at my grandparents' farm every summer. One day when I was five, I noticed that my grandmother's old car had rusty spots. I thought, "Grandmother shouldn't drive such an ugly vehicle!" I found a gallon of house paint in the garage and covered the car in messy splashes of thick green paint. When my grandmother came outside, her eyes got as big as dinner plates. She asked, "What are you doing?" Suddenly realizing I'd made a mistake, I explained that I thought a beautiful lady like her should drive a beautiful car. "Melissa," she said with a laugh, "that's a better thing to hear than to see." You can say that I learned a lot about patience from my grandmother.

1 The conversation between the narrator and her grandmother leads to the story's resolution because it —

A causes the narrator to understand that she is in a lot of trouble

B reveals to the narrator that her grandmother is understanding

STAAR Tip
Label elements in the selection:
1 – introduction
2 – climax
3 – resolution

2 The end of the story reveals that the grandmother —

F doesn't care about her car

G is compassionate

STAAR Tip
Find evidence that shows the grandmother being kind.

2 Grade 6 Reading Zingers Answering the Most Common STAAR Test Items

Short selection with focused practice

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

adapted from Aesop's Fables

1 A father had a family of sons who were forever fighting among themselves. Nothing he said made them stop fighting; but then, he had an idea.

2 One day when the fighting had been much more violent than usual, he decided to try a novel approach. He asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. He then handed the bundle to each of his quarrelsome sons and asked each son to try to break it in half. Each son tried, but none was able to do so—the bundle refused to snap.

3 The father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his sons to break one by one. They were each able to break a single stick.

4 "My sons," said the father, "do you not see that if you agree with each other and help each other it will be impossible for your enemies to injure

Fewer answer choices

6 "Fine, Mom." Then a pause. Then Omar looked up and said, sort of quietly, "How was your day?"

7 Her eyes suddenly filled with tears. "One of the very best," she said. I feel like something might have been caught in my eye, too.

5 Paragraphs 1 through 3 contribute to the plot by —

A providing the reason for the narrator's inner conflict

B hinting at how the narrator will solve her problem

C describing a conflict between Omar and his mother

D establishing Omar's discomfort in school settings

STAAR Tip
Circle words or phrases in the passage that support your answer.

6 In paragraph 3, the mother's advice to the narrator —

F shows that her mother is not worried about Omar

G demonstrates that her mother is not angry at Omar

H reveals the mother's work with other children with autism

J is for the narrator to be nicer to her brother

STAAR Tip
Underline evidence that supports your answer.

STAAR Think! Carey chose answer A for question 5. Explain why his answer is correct or not.

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on level practice

Question analysis

Mixed Practice

Practice two Zinger skills using longer selections and mixed question types.

Mixed Practice Zingers 1–2

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

checklist

Remember to...

Read the questions first.

Use a dictionary.

Annotate the selection based on the questions.

How the Moon Became Beautiful

Anonymous folktale from Chinese Fables and Folk Stories

1 The Moon is very beautiful with his round, bright face that shines with soft and gentle light on all the world. But once there was a time when he was not as beautiful as he is now. Six thousand years ago, the face of the Moon became changed in a single night. Before that time, his face had been so dark and gloomy that no one liked to look at him, and for this reason he was always very sad.

2 One day he complained to the flowers and to the stars—for they were the only things that would ever look in his face.

He said, "I do not like to be the Moon. I wish I were a star or a flower. If I were a star, even the smallest one, children would make wishes when they saw me; but alas! I am only the Moon and no one likes me. If I could only be a flower and grow in a garden where the people come, they would place me in their hair and praise my fragrance and beauty. Or, if I could ever grow in the wilderness where no one could see, the birds would surely come and sing sweet songs for me. But I am only the Moon, and no one honors me."

4 The stars answered and said, "We cannot help you. We were born here and we cannot leave our places. We never had anyone to help us. We do our duty. We work all the day and twinkle in the dark night to make the skies more beautiful, but that is all we can do." They smiled coldly at the sorrowful Moon.

5 Then the flowers smiled sweetly and said, "We do not know how we can help you. We live always in one place—in a garden near the most beautiful person in all the world. As she is kind to everyone in trouble, we will tell her about you. We love her very much and she loves us. Her name is Tseh-N'io."

6 Still the Moon was sad. So one evening he went to see Tseh-N'io. And when he saw her, he said, "Your face is very kind and beautiful. I wish that you would come to me, and that my face would be as your face."

8 Grade 6 Reading Zingers Answering the Most Common STAAR Test Items

Longer selections

1 Why does Tseh-N'io agree to go with the Moon?

A Tseh-N'io wants to escape from her mother.

B The Moon promises Tseh-N'io will be happier with him.

C Tseh-N'io's friends encourage her to go with the Moon.

D The Moon demonstrates inner beauty and gentleness.

2 How does Tseh-N'io's mother respond when Tseh-N'io says she wants to go with the Moon?

F She gets angry at her daughter and forbids her to go.

G She asks Tseh-N'io's friends for their opinions.

H She encourages her daughter to stay at home.

J She does not take her daughter's question seriously.

STAAR Tip
Underline the moment in the passage when the mother responds.

3 Based on paragraph 4, what can the reader infer about the stars?

A They are not interested in the problems of others.

B They wish for the Moon to succeed in his quest.

C They also think of themselves as ugly.

D They do not get along with the flowers.

4 Which sentence from the story shows that others share the Moon's belief about his appearance?

F And so the Moon went every night to see Tseh-N'io.

G Come with me and we will be as one—and perfect.

H One day he complained to the flowers and to the stars—for they were the only things that would ever look in his face.

J And one of Tseh-N'io's friends said, "She has gone with the Moon, for he asked her many times."

TEKS designation

Test tips

Authentic STAAR test questions

10 Grade 6 Reading Zingers Answering the Most Common STAAR Test Items

The **plot** is the series of events in a fictional story. A plot has different parts. The **conflict** is a struggle between characters or within a character. The **climax** is the turning point of the story when the conflict is at its most intense. Finally, **resolution** happens after the conflict is resolved.

The STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about plot.

- **Asking you to identify or explain a specific plot element**

Which event contributes most to the narrator’s inner **conflict**?

- **Asking you to identify events and character details from the reading**

The end of the story reveals that Lucy —

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 contribute to the rising action of the story by showing —
identify or explain a plot element **identify events/details**

Practice A

Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

I used to stay at my grandparents’ farm every summer. One day when I was five, I noticed that my grandmother’s old car had rusty spots. I thought, “Grandmother shouldn’t drive such an ugly vehicle!” I found a gallon of house paint in the garage and covered the car in messy splotches of thick green paint. When my grandmother came outside, her eyes got as big as dinner plates. She asked, “What are you doing?” Suddenly realizing I’d made a mistake, I explained that I thought a beautiful lady like her should drive a beautiful car. “Melissa,” she said with a laugh, “that’s a better thing to hear than to see.” You can say that I learned a lot about patience from my grandmother.

- 1** The conversation between the narrator and her grandmother leads to the story’s resolution because it —
- A** causes the narrator to understand that she is in a lot of trouble
 - B** reveals to the narrator that her grandmother is understanding

STAAR Tip

Label elements in the selection:
 1 – introduction
 2 – climax
 3 – resolution

- 2** The end of the story reveals that the grandmother —
- F** doesn’t care about her car
 - G** is compassionate

STAAR Tip

Find evidence that shows the grandmother being kind.

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

adapted from Aesop's Fables

1 A father had a family of sons who were forever fighting among themselves. Nothing he said made them stop fighting; but then, he had an idea.

2 One day when the fighting had been much more violent than usual, he decided to try a novel approach. He asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. He then handed the bundle to each of his quarrelsome¹ sons and asked each son to try to break it in half. Each son tried, but none was able to do so—the bundle refused to snap.

3 The father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his sons to break one by one. They were each able to break a single stick.

4 “My sons,” said the father, “do you not see that if you agree with each other and help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you? But, if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick from that bundle.” Thus did the father demonstrate that discord leads to misfortune, but in unity there is strength.

¹ quarrelsome: inclined to argue or fight; aggressive

3 Paragraphs 1 and 2 contribute to the rising action in the story by showing that the father —

- A has difficulty relating to his sons
- B no longer believes words alone will be effective
- C understands why his sons fight so often

STAAR Tip

Circle the word “novel” in paragraph 2. In the passage, it means “new or unexpected.”

4 Which sentence best expresses the turning point of the story?

- F *He then handed the bundle to each of his quarrelsome sons and asked each son to try to break it in half.*
- G *“But, if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick from that bundle.”*
- H *They were each able to break a single stick.*

STAAR Tip

Label elements in the excerpt:
1 – introduction
2 – climax
3 – resolution

STAAR Think! Alan chose answer G for question 4. Explain to Alan why his answer is correct or not.

Practice C Read questions 5–6 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

- 1 "How was your day, sweetheart?" Mom asked. As always.
- 2 "Fine, Mom," said Omar. No eye contact. No smile. No details.
- 3 Mom has picked up my brother Omar and me from the same bus stop for years, and this was their standard after-school conversation. Mom says Omar is handsome and brilliant, but his autism can make it difficult for him to reach out to others. Even her. Me, I could tell you a zillion stories about even the most mundane school day, but Omar was always just, "Fine, Mom," then right back into whichever library book he was absorbed in that day. I know she understands, but I can tell it's hard on her. I love my brother, but his condition makes me feel helpless. Mom says not to take it personally.
- 4 Last Thursday seemed like any old Thursday, except it was raining. When Mom pulled up, I dashed from under the bus stop shelter and shot into the back seat like a female torpedo. Omar, library book cradled safely against his chest, walked to the car tentatively. He really doesn't like the rain.
- 5 I tensed up instinctively as Mom asked the usual question: "How was your day, sweetheart?"
- 6 "Fine, Mom." Then a pause. Then Omar looked up and said, sort of quietly, "How was your day?"
- 7 Her eyes suddenly filled with tears. "One of the very best," she said. I feel like something might have been caught in my eye, too.

- 5 Paragraphs 1 through 3 contribute to the plot by —
- A providing the reason for the narrator's inner conflict
 - B hinting at how the narrator will solve her problem
 - C describing a conflict between Omar and his mother
 - D establishing Omar's discomfort in school settings

STAAR Tip

Circle words or phrases in the passage that support your answer.

- 6 In paragraph 3, the mother's advice to the narrator —
- F shows that her mother is not worried about Omar
 - G demonstrates that her mother is not angry at Omar
 - H reveals the mother's work with other children with autism
 - J is for the narrator to be nicer to her brother

STAAR Tip

Underline evidence that supports your answer.

STAAR Think! Carey chose answer A for question 5. Explain why his answer is correct or not.

Making Inferences in Literary Texts

Writers don't always explain exactly what they mean. Readers can make reasonable guesses or judgments about plot, characters, or situations based on clues given in the story, as well as what the reader already knows about the world. These assumptions are called **inferences**. Information that is not explicit (that is, not written directly) must be **inferred**.

The STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about inferences.

- **Asking you to make your own inference based on evidence**

Based on Mr. Wilson's advice to the narrator, the reader can infer that he —

- **Asking you to identify text evidence that supports a given inference**

In paragraph 2, how does the author show that Rebecca's friends are unhappy?

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

Why is Jenny's father most likely in favor of her going on the trip?

identify evidence supporting an inference infer based on evidence

Practice A Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

Moving from Oaxaca to Dallas is one of the hardest things I've ever done. My mom and dad said that I would grow to love the opportunities and lifestyle in the United States. But at first, it meant saying goodbye to friends, family, and familiar comforts, not to mention how my grades dropped from high As to low Cs basically overnight. Things have gotten easier for me over time—I'm making good grades again, and thanks to my school's robotics club, I've met some cool new friends (and even one cool teacher). I know life is better for us here. Still, my heart aches just a bit whenever Mom cooks her *mole negro*. The smell instantly transports me back to a place I once called my boyhood home.

- 1** How can the reader infer that the narrator enjoyed growing up in Oaxaca?
- A** His heart aches when his mom cooks a traditional recipe.
B He eventually meets new friends in the robotics club.

STAAR Tip

Circle context clues that support your answer.

- 2** Based on information in the paragraph, what can the reader infer about the narrator?
- F** He prefers life in Oaxaca to life in the United States.
G He takes great pride in academic success.

STAAR Tip

Underline context clues in the passage that support your answer.

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

- 1 Jennifer and I burst into Mrs. Wao’s room. Usually, Jennifer and I aren’t the type to get particularly riled up about history class, but today was different. At lunch, Molly from third period had told us that we were watching a movie in class. Sure enough, the lights were turned off and the projector was running.
- 2 “Do compose yourselves, ladies,” Mrs. Wao said. “Don’t act like barbarians just because we are departing from routines today.” Mrs. Wao always talks to students like we’re 45-year-old accountants.
- 3 “We heard what we’re doing today!” Jennifer squealed. Jennifer tends to forget to breathe when she is excited. “Mrs. Wao! What movie is it? Do we have to take notes? What’s it about? Who is in it? Are they cute? Is it GOOD?”
- 4 “Why, of course!” Mrs. Wao said. “Do you think I would subject my students to something that is not entertaining? This is nothing short of the finest documentary ever produced about the American Civil War! And it was made in 1990, so it doesn’t seem like history. The entire film is 10 hours long, but I fear we have time only for some highlights.”
- 5 Jennifer deflated into her seat as our classmates filtered in, unaware of the fate awaiting them. Mrs. Wao’s definition of *entertaining* was certainly different from Jennifer’s!

3 Based on paragraphs 4 and 5, the reader can conclude that the narrator thinks Mrs. Wao —

- A is her favorite teacher
- B has found a way to make classwork more fun
- C shows films that are educational and challenging

STAAR Tip

Circle evidence in the passage that supports this inference.

4 Which sentence best explains why the narrator and her friend are excited?

- F *Do you think I would subject my students to something that is not entertaining?*
- G *Jennifer deflated into her seat as our classmates filtered in, unaware of the fate awaiting them.*
- H *At lunch, Molly from third period had told us that we were watching a movie in class.*

STAAR Tip

Label the sentences in the passage.

STAAR Think! Maribel chose answer G for question 4. Explain to Maribel why this answer is correct or not.

Practice C

Read questions 5–6 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

from Science Fiction Stories

by Richard M. Elam

- 1 Beth Harrison and her father had driven into the desert to look for dead branches of “jumping cactus,” which were used in making lamps. They were gazing up a slope of bristly cacti.
- 2 “This looks like a good place,” Beth said. They started up the sandy slope carrying straw market bags.
- 3 “Maybe we’ll see some flying saucers,” Beth said half-jokingly. “Someone thought he saw one out here the other day.”
- 4 Her father grinned. “Flying saucers, indeed! You and that lively imagination of yours, Beth!”
- 5 They set to work searching for dead branches. They found a few good specimens. But they were not enough to suit Beth, and she decided to broaden the search. She went over the slope and up and down another, and before long her roaming carried her out of sight of her father.
- 6 Amidst the stunning colors of the sunset, Beth could make out a lone star—Sirius—the brightest true star in all the sky. It reminded her of a pearl glowing in the heavens.

5 Based on paragraphs 3 and 6, the reader can infer that Beth —

- A has had similar experiences with her father in the past
- B thinks her father doesn’t take her seriously
- C is concerned about her and her father’s safety
- D is interested in space and astronomy

STAAR Tip

Circle the things Beth is looking for or at.

6 Why did Beth’s father most likely take her on the trip?

- F He values her company and assistance.
- G He needs her to learn the family trade.
- H He hopes she will become more independent.
- J He is worried about leaving her at home alone.

STAAR Tip

Underline context clues that support your inference.

STAAR Think! Michelle chose answer B for question 5. Explain to Michelle why this answer is correct or not.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Remember to...

- Read the questions first.
- Use a dictionary.
- Annotate the selection based on the questions.

How the Moon Became Beautiful

Anonymous folktale from Chinese Fables and Folk Stories

- 1 The Moon is very beautiful with his round, bright face that shines with soft and gentle light on all the world. But once there was a time when he was not as beautiful as he is now. Six thousand years ago, the face of the Moon became changed in a single night. Before that time, his face had been so dark and gloomy that no one liked to look at him, and for this reason he was always very sad.
- 2 One day he complained to the flowers and to the stars—for they were the only things that would ever look in his face.
- 3 He said, “I do not like to be the Moon. I wish I were a star or a flower. If I were a star, even the smallest one, children would make wishes when they saw me; but alas! I am only the Moon and no one likes me. If I could only be a flower and grow in a garden where the people come, they would place me in their hair and praise my fragrance and beauty. Or, if I could even grow in the wilderness where no one could see, the birds would surely come and sing sweet songs for me. But I am only the Moon, and no one honors me.”
- 4 The stars answered and said, “We cannot help you. We were born here and we cannot leave our places. We never had anyone to help us. We do our duty. We work all the day and twinkle in the dark night to make the skies more beautiful, but that is all we can do.” They smiled coldly at the sorrowful Moon.
- 5 Then the flowers smiled sweetly and said, “We do not know how we can help you. We live always in one place—in a garden near the most beautiful person in all the world. As she is kind to everyone in trouble, we will tell her about you. We love her very much and she loves us. Her name is Tseh-N’io.”
- 6 Still the Moon was sad. So one evening he went to see Tseh-N’io. And when he saw her, he said, “Your face is very kind and beautiful. I wish that you would come to me, and that my face would be as your face.”

Come with me and we will be as one—and perfect. I know that even the worst people in all the world would have only to look at you and they would love you. Tell me, how did you come to be as you are?”

- 7 “I have always lived with those who were gentle and happy, and I believe that is the cause of beauty and goodness,” answered Tseh-N’io.
- 8 And so the Moon went every night to see Tseh-N’io. He knocked on her window, and she came. And when he saw how gentle and beautiful she was, his love grew stronger, and he wished more and more to be with her always.
- 9 One day Tseh-N’io said to her mother, “I should like to go to the Moon and live always with him. Will you allow me to go?”
- 10 Her mother thought so little of the question that she made no reply, and Tseh-N’io told her friends that she was going to be the Moon’s bride.
- 11 In a few days she was gone. Her mother searched everywhere but could not find her. And one of Tseh-N’io’s friends said, “She has gone with the Moon, for he asked her many times.”
- 12 Two years passed by and Tseh-N’io, the gentle and beautiful earth maiden, did not return. Then the people said, “She has gone forever. She is with the Moon.”

- 1 Why does Tseh-N'io agree to go with the Moon?
- A Tseh-N'io wants to escape from her mother.
 - B The Moon promises Tseh-N'io will be happier with him.
 - C Tseh-N'io's friends encourage her to go with the Moon.
 - D The Moon demonstrates inner beauty and gentleness.

-
- 2 How does Tseh-N'io's mother respond when Tseh-N'io says she wants to go with the Moon?

- F She gets angry at her daughter and forbids her to go.
- G She asks Tseh-N'io's friends for their opinions.
- H She encourages her daughter to stay at home.
- J She does not take her daughter's question seriously.

STAAR Tip

Underline the moment in the passage when the mother responds.

-
- 3 Based on paragraph 4, what can the reader infer about the stars?

- A They are not interested in the problems of others.
- B They wish for the Moon to succeed in his quest.
- C They also think of themselves as ugly.
- D They do not get along with the flowers.

-
- 4 Which sentence from the story shows that others share the Moon's belief about his appearance?

- F *And so the Moon went every night to see Tseh-N'io.*
- G *Come with me and we will be as one—and perfect.*
- H *One day he complained to the flowers and to the stars—for they were the only things that would ever look in his face.*
- J *And one of Tseh-N'io's friends said, "She has gone with the Moon, for he asked her many times."*

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Remember to...

- Read the questions first.
- Use a dictionary.
- Annotate the selection based on the questions.

The Kicker

- 1 “You can’t just cancel a soccer team!” I yelled. Then I said a word no kid should ever say in school. I regretted it, but maybe not as much as I should have.
- 2 It was the last day of my junior year, and up to that point, the day hadn’t been that bad. Everybody was being emotional and exchanging gifts, and our freedom was only minutes away.
- 3 It all fell apart at the end of the day, when Coach K said over the intercom, “Last year’s girls’ soccer team needs to report to the locker room IMMEDIATELY.” I could tell from her tone that this wasn’t a request.
- 4 On the way, a few of us decided it must be about fundraising or summer drills or maybe just the usual “don’t do something stupid” speech. Bread and butter stuff for coaches. I wasn’t worried about any of that—I train every day, which doesn’t leave me much energy for getting into trouble.
- 5 After my outburst, Coach K gave me an icy look. She said stiffly, “I’m going to assume I’m hearing things because there’s no way a player on my team would use language like that during school hours. Especially not Angela Rodriguez, a team captain who definitely knows better.” For a moment, an arctic chill descended upon the room. The rest of the girls sat on edge, breathless.
- 6 Coach K continued. “Ladies, I know this seems unfair, and frankly, I agree. I just found out about it myself. The district has decided we just don’t have the money to compete next year.”
- 7 I interrupted. I couldn’t help it. “But what about the boys’ teams? Do they get to play?”
- 8 I could always tell whenever Coach K was really frustrated. She’d close her eyes, take a deep breath, remove her visor, and run her hand through her short brown hair. I’d seen her do it a thousand times before going to have a talk with a referee. I suspected this was an anger management skill she’d picked up; I suspect that if you are a high school PE teacher, anger management is a fairly important skill.

- 9 "Angela," she explained, "the law says we have to provide equal opportunities to boys and girls, not that we have to provide specific sports. Boys soccer is also cancelled. Most of the boys are already participating in football. We're keeping other girls' sports. That's all the information I can give you at this time."
- 10 I looked around the room. Some of the girls were crying. I was too angry. Too flabbergasted. Too proud. Slowly, my now-former teammates started to leave the locker room. I sat there, fuming, with my arms crossed, until I was alone with Coach.
- 11 She sat down next to me on the rigid metal bench. "Angela," she said, with a softness I had never heard from her. "I know this seems unfair."
- 12 "Only because it totally is."
- 13 "Well," she said, "do you think you could learn to kick field goals?"
- 14 It took a second to process. "You mean . . . football?" It's hard to grow up in my town and not learn about football, but I had never considered the idea of me, in pads, playing alongside the boys. I'd never considered the idea of any girl doing that.
- 15 "I mean, I'm a great kicker, and a fast learner. But that would never happen."
- 16 "Oh, don't be so sure," Coach K said. "I already talked to Coach Roberts. He knows how talented you are. And between you and me, none of those boys can hit the broad side of a barn. No promises, but he said he'd be happy to give you a fair shot."
- 17 "So I'd be the first girl on the school football team?"
- 18 "Angela, you'd be the first girl in the state to play boys' football."
- 19 It wasn't what I wanted, but it might've been what I needed.

- 5** The end of the story reveals that Angela —
- A** is considering Coach K’s idea
 - B** wants an apology from her coach
 - C** loves football
 - D** does not think she will be allowed to play football
-
- 6** Based on paragraphs 11 and 12, the reader can conclude that Coach K thinks Angela —
- F** takes the news in an understandable way
 - G** will not think playing football is a good idea
 - H** does not understand her explanation of the circumstances
 - J** is overreacting to the situation
-
- 7** Which sentence expresses the turning point in the story?
- A** *I just found out about it myself.*
 - B** *I sat there, fuming, with my arms crossed, until I was alone with Coach.*
 - C** *"Well," she said, "do you think you could learn to kick field goals?"*
 - D** *"Angela," she explained, "the law says we have to provide equal opportunities to boys and girls, not that we have to provide specific sports."*
-
- 8** What does the conversation between Angela and her coach in paragraphs 13 through 19 suggest?
- F** Coach K wants Angela to play football but is worried about her safety.
 - G** Coach K believes Angela will easily make the team, but Angela doubts her abilities.
 - H** Coach K and Angela agree that Angela should try out for the football team.
 - J** Coach K thinks it is not a big deal for a girl to try out for a boys’ team.

STAAR Tip

*Conversation refers to dialogue.
Re-read the dialogue.*

ZINGER 1 Analyzing Plot

The plot is the series of events in a fictional story. A plot has different parts. The **conflict** is a struggle between characters or within a character. The **climax** is the turning point of the story when the conflict is at its most intense. Finally, **resolution** happens after the conflict is resolved.

The STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about plot.

- Asking you to identify or explain a specific plot element
Which event contributes most to the narrator's inner conflict?
- Asking you to identify events and character details from the reading
The end of the story reveals that Lucy —

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

Paragraphs 6 and 7 contribute to the rising action of the story by showing —
identify or explain a plot element identify events/details

Practice A Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

I used to stay at my grandparents' farm every summer.¹ One day when I was five, I noticed that my grandmother's old car had rusty spots. I thought, "Grandmother shouldn't drive such an ugly vehicle!" I found a gallon of house paint in the garage and covered the car in messy splotches of thick green paint.² When my grandmother came outside, her eyes got as big as dinner plates. She asked, "What are you doing?" Suddenly realizing I'd made a mistake, I explained that I thought a beautiful lady like her should drive a beautiful car. "Melissa," she said with a laugh, "that's a better thing to hear than to see."³ You can say that I learned a lot about patience from my grandmother.

- 1 The conversation between the narrator and her grandmother leads to the story's resolution because it —
- A** causes the narrator to understand that she is in a lot of trouble

B reveals to the narrator that her grandmother is understanding

- 2 The end of the story reveals that the grandmother —

F doesn't care about her car

G is compassionate

STAAR Tip

Label elements in the selection:
1 – introduction
2 – climax
3 – resolution

STAAR Tip

Find evidence that shows the grandmother being kind.

2 **Grade 6 Reading Zingers** Answering the Most Common STAAR Test Items

Academic Vocabulary

These words appear in STAAR items about plot. Challenge students to identify and define these words in the practice questions. For more help with Academic Vocabulary, see p. vii.

climax: the turning point in the plot of a story; sometimes described as the most exciting or emotionally tense part of a story

conflict: a struggle or problem that sets a story in motion; conflict can be internal or external.

resolution: the ultimate resolution of conflict in a story

rising action: events in the plot that build conflict, leading up to the climax of the story

Practice A Answer Choice Explanations

Ask students to identify the question types. Question 1 asks readers to make an inference. Question 2 directly references a specific element of plot.

1 **A** The conversation establishes that the grandmother is not especially angry.

B Correct. The grandmother's response suggests she is forgiving.

2 **F** Clues regarding her first reaction ("her eyes got as big as dinner plates") suggest that she is initially shocked; her last spoken line suggests she's unhappy about the paint.

G Correct. Her reaction and what she says show compassion for a child who has made a mistake.

Answer choice explanations help teachers give students meaningful feedback.

Help students decode STAAR questions.

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

adapted from Aesop's Fables

1 A father had a family of sons who were forever fighting among themselves. Nothing he said made them stop fighting; but then, he had an idea.

2 One day when the fighting had been much more violent than usual, he decided to try a **(novel)** approach. He asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. He then handed the bundle to each of his quarrelsome¹ sons and asked each son to try to break it in half. Each son tried, but none was able to do so—the bundle refused to snap.

3 The father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his sons to break one by one.² They were each able to break a single stick.

4 "My sons," said the father, "do you not see that if you agree with each other and help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you? But, if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick from that bundle."³ Thus did the father demonstrate that discord leads to misfortune, but in unity there is strength.

¹ quarrelsome: inclined to argue or fight; aggressive

3 Paragraphs 1 and 2 contribute to the rising action in the story by showing that the father —

- A has difficulty relating to his sons
- B no longer believes words alone will be effective
- C understands why his sons fight so often

STAAR Tip

Circle the word "novel" in paragraph 2. In the passage, it means "new or unexpected."

4 Which sentence best expresses the turning point of the story?

- F He then handed the bundle to each of his quarrelsome sons and asked each son to try to break it in half.
- G "But, if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick from that bundle."
- H They were each able to break a single stick.

STAAR Tip

Label elements in the excerpt:
1 – introduction
2 – climax
3 – resolution

STAAR Think! Alan chose answer G for question 4. Explain to Alan why his answer is correct or not.

Incorrect. This is said after the sons are able to break the single sticks, which is the turning point.

Practice B Answer Choice Explanations

Ask students to identify the question types. Both question 3 and question 4 ask readers to make an inference based on text from the passage.

- 3 **A** The father's words have not worked, but he is able to find a way to relate important lessons to his sons.
- B Correct.** The suggestion that the boys were more violent than ever in their last fight implies that the father has reached a breaking point and needs to try something new.
- C** This is not suggested by the information in the paragraphs.
- 4 F** This is part of the rising action, building toward a climax in which the sons' minds are changed.
- G** This is part of the falling action, showing the fallout of the moment when the sons learn a lesson.
- H Correct.** This action most directly alters the central conflict (the sons' fighting and the father's desire to end it) of the story.

To obtain a copy of the remaining answers to this Sampler, email:

Teachers@SiriusEducationSolutions.com

Zinger Correlations to Sirius Grade 6 Reading Workbook

Title	Instruction	Practice	TEKS Covered
Zinger 1	Analyzing Plot Analyzing Character, Setting, and Point of View	Practice 7, 9, 12	6.7C, 6.5F
Zinger 2	Analyzing Plot Analyzing Character, Setting, and Point of View Analyzing Poetry Analyzing Drama Analyzing Theme	Practice 2, 7, 10, 12, 16	6.5F, 6.5G
Zinger 3	Analyzing Poetry Analyzing Mood, Voice, and Tone	Practice 2, 10, 11	6.5F, 6.8B, 6.9A, 6.7A
Zinger 4	Analyzing Figurative Language	Practice 1, 2, 10, 11	6.9D, 6.5F, 6.9A
Zinger 5	Using Context Clues	Practice 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 16	6.2B
Zinger 6	Analyzing Argumentative Texts	Practice 8, 15	6.8E
Zinger 7	Summarizing Texts	Practice 3, 5, 9, 12, 13, 14	6.6D, 6.5G
Zinger 8	Analyzing Organizational Patterns Understanding Author's Purpose	Practice 3, 4, 6, 14	6.9B
Zinger 9	Analyzing Informational Texts Analyzing Argumentative Texts	Practice 4, 6, 8	6.5F, 6.5G
Zinger 10	Understanding Author's Purpose	Practice 6, 8, 14, 15	6.9A
Zinger 11	Analyzing Multiple Texts	Practice 4/5, 7/8	6.5E

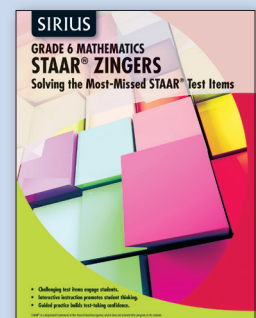
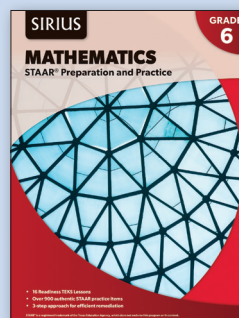
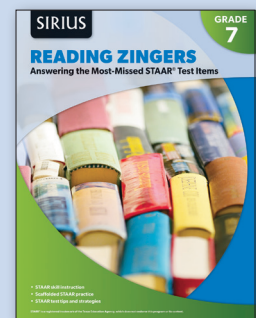
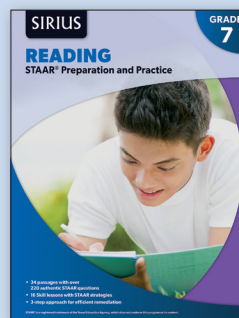
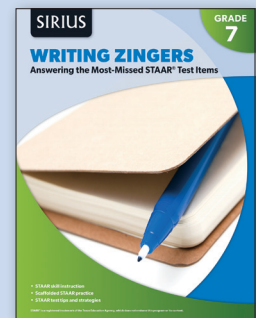
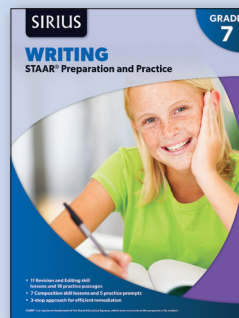
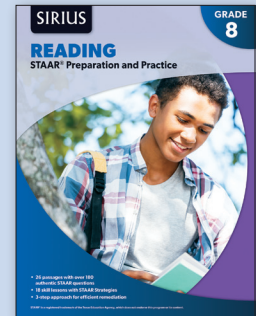
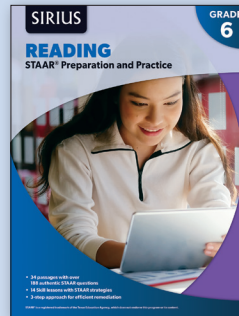
SAMPLER

GRADE 6 READING ZINGERS CONTENTS

- Zinger 1** Analyzing Plot
- Zinger 2** Making Inferences in Literary Texts
- Mixed Practice 1-2**
- Zinger 3** Analyzing Poetry
- Zinger 4** Understanding Figurative Language
- Mixed Practice 3-4**
- Zinger 5** Understanding Vocabulary in Context
- Zinger 6** Analyzing Argumentative Texts
- Mixed Practice 5-6**
- Zinger 7** Summarizing Texts
- Zinger 8** Organizing Ideas
- Mixed Practice 7-8**
- Zinger 9** Making Inferences in Informational Texts
- Zinger 10** Understanding Author's Purpose
- Mixed Practice 9-10**
- Zinger 11** Making Connections Across Texts
- Mixed Practice 11**

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4 Read this sentence from paragraph 9. (6.6B)

See, in seventh grade, I signed up for band.

Why does the author use the word see to begin this sentence?

F To encourage the reader to imagine the band orientation day
G To make readers feel as if Matthew is talking directly to them
H To give an example of how Matthew speaks to his father
J To explain the band instrument selection process

Test tips

STAAR Tip
Authors use words to convey ideas and also to convey a tone or mood or how a character sounds when he or she talks.

5 How does paragraph 13 express the turning point in the selection? (6.6A)

A By explaining why Matthew doesn't like being in high school marching band
B By showing the contrast between Matthew's experience and the drummers' experiences
C By announcing the new idea that occurred to Matthew about how to play the drums
D By describing what it is like to be in a marching band drum line at school

6 In paragraph 13, the word epiphany, which is based on an ancient Greek root, means — (6.2A)

F sudden realization
G great idea
H supernatural being
J shocking discovery

Red boxes show correct answers.

16 Grade 6 Reading • Literary Texts

Answer Choice Explanations

4 **F** The context makes clear that “see” is not meant literally; it’s a figure of speech that establishes a conversational tone.
G **Correct.** Matthew narrates the story in the first person, and the author uses several techniques to create the sense that Matthew is talking directly to the reader, including beginning this sentence with “see.”
H In this sentence, Matthew is addressing the reader, not his father.
J Matthew’s language is conversational, and his intent is not to explain the process of choosing a band instrument, but to share about his mistaken choice.

5 **A** Matthew’s explanation of why he doesn’t like being in the marching band is not the turning point of the story.
B Although that contrast is made in the paragraph, the contrast itself is not the turning point of the story.
C **Correct.** Paragraph 13 shows that Matthew has an idea about how to turn himself into a drummer in a different kind of band.
D Paragraph 13 does not describe the experience of being in a drum line at school.

6 **F** **Correct.** The context makes clear that Matthew suddenly realizes that the school band is not the only venue for playing drums.
G The great idea Matthew has is to buy his own drum kit and practice; his epiphany is realizing that school band is not the only place to play drums.
H Nothing in the story suggests that supernatural beings have anything to do with Matthew’s life or decisions.
J Paragraph 13 makes clear that Matthew’s epiphany is not a shocking discovery but a happy realization.

Explanations are provided for EACH answer choice. This helps teachers give students actionable feedback.