

April 2009

BOOKLET

1

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

SESSION 1

**RELEASED SELECTIONS
AND TEST QUESTIONS**

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Session 1

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

Who ate pasta first?

The October 2005 issue of *Nature* magazine reported that archaeologists found a 4000-year-old bowl of noodles at a site in western China. This discovery may be proof that China invented pasta.

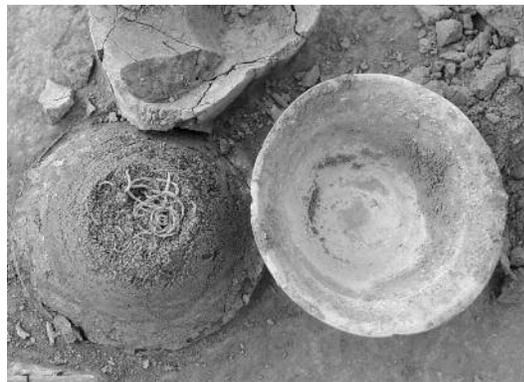
“These are definitely the earliest noodles ever found,” said Houyuan Lu, a researcher in Beijing who studied the ingredients of the perfectly preserved pasta.

The fist-sized clump of noodles was found inside an overturned bowl, which had protected the noodles from three metres of sediment. The delicate yellow noodle dough had been made from a local variety of millet instead of the usual wheat or rice grains. The dough had been pulled into 50-centimetre-long strands before being boiled. Archaeologists think that the noodles were buried during a flood that wiped out the Qijia culture in the late neolithic era.

Are noodles another Chinese invention along with paper and gunpowder? This has been a hotly debated question. Some historians say the 13th century Italian explorer Marco Polo brought noodles from China back to his homeland.

Another historical interpretation is that Italians had noodles before that time. Prior to the recent archaeological discovery, researchers only had information from written documents, personal accounts and menus: they had not been able to find any actual food to prove either hypothesis. This discovery may support the theory that noodles were first eaten in China.

The people who live where the ancient noodles were found still eat millet noodles today.



Adapted from “China finds Neolithic noodle dish,” published in the *Toronto Star*, October 13, 2005, Associated Press. Used with permission of the Associated Press. Copyright © 2005. All rights reserved.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** A “hotly debated question” (paragraph 4) is a question that is
- a easy to answer.
 - b rarely considered.
 - c boring to think about.
 - d passionately argued about.
- 2** Why is Marco Polo mentioned in this news report?
- a He is credited with inventing pasta.
 - b He visited China in the 13th century.
 - c He claimed the Italians invented pasta.
 - d He brought noodles from Italy to China.
- 3** The information in paragraph 4 is organized to
- a compare and contrast ideas.
 - b describe the steps in a process.
 - c present events in chronological order.
 - d provide details in order of importance.
- 4** What evidence do researchers consider most convincing in answering the question of the origin of noodles?
- a ancient menus
 - b preserved food
 - c personal accounts
 - d written documents
- 5** The archeologists described in this selection
- a wrote a news report.
 - b dug up an ancient object.
 - c restored a prehistoric site.
 - d discovered ways to preserve food.

Written Answer

- 6** Explain whether this archaeological find settles the historical question about who invented pasta. Use specific details from the selection and your own ideas to support your answer.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section I. Continue to Section II. 

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1 Which of the following is written correctly?

- a Is the amusement park in Ontario!
- b Hooray! I won a free trip to the amusement park!
- c Last March we planned a trip to the amusement park!!!
- d Can you believe! that I won a free trip to the amusement park?

2 In which sentence of the following paragraph does the verb need to change to make the sentence correct?

(1) Darren went to the store and bought a loaf of bread. (2) On his way home, he runs into his best friend. (3) He forgot he had to take the bread home. (4) Instead, he played games with his friend until dinnertime. (5) When he finally got home, his mother was very annoyed with him.

- a sentence 1
- b sentence 2
- c sentence 3
- d sentence 5

3 Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The high school team won the championship _____ the captain's injury.

- a despite
- b besides
- c because
- d although

4 Choose the best opening sentence for the following paragraph.

In 1999, at least six billion people lived on earth, and predictions indicate that another billion will be born by 2020. Scientists estimate that the world's population will increase to nine billion by 2054 and ten billion by the end of the 21st century. Humans need to find a way to sustain a booming population and continue to provide everyone with the necessary resources.

- a Population growth is an increasing concern.
- b People predict the world's population growth.
- c There are enough resources on earth for everyone.
- d Scientists believe that too many people live on earth.

End of Section II. Continue to Section III. 

Short Writing Task (Answer in full and correctly written sentences.)

1 Explain why it is important to learn about other cultures. Use specific details to support your answer.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section III. Continue to Section IV. 

Writing a News Report

1 Task: Write a **news report** based on the headline and picture on the next page.

- You will have to make up the facts and information, answering some or all of the following questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
- You must relate your newspaper report to **both** the headline **and** the picture.

Purpose and Audience: to report on an event for the readers of a newspaper

Length: The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.



Write your report on the lines provided on the following page.

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

In 2006, the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) celebrated its 150th birthday as an important centre for the preservation and presentation of Canadian heritage. It is one of the most visited museums in the world. Nearly 1.4 million visitors a year marvel at its collection and also at the building itself. Architect Douglas Cardinal designed the curving shape of the building to emulate the way Canada's rocky landscape was carved by glaciers and rivers. The Grand Hall, which is shaped like a canoe, displays the world's largest collection of totem poles as well as six Pacific coast Aboriginal houses. The forest backdrop, stretching the full length of the hall, is the world's largest colour photograph. The museum's first exhibits in 1856 were a few glass cases containing rocks, minerals and Aboriginal artifacts such as stone tools, pipes and pottery collected by geologists and explorers. Over the years, the collection developed along with the country, becoming more diverse and modern. Today, the CMC's collection includes items from the ancient past to the present day, from gigantic Haida canoes to a guitar used by rock star Randy Bachman (of the group the Guess Who). Only a portion of the museum's acquisitions is on display at once, but over 50 000 artifacts can be seen online. About 10 million people around the world log on to the museum's Web site each year. Real and virtual visitors to the CMC have found a rewarding way to explore Canada's rich and varied history and culture.

5

10

15



Canadian Museum of Civilization
Gatineau, Quebec



Grand Hall

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** The Grand Hall is shaped like a canoe because it
- a honours the architect.
 - b accommodates more visitors.
 - c represents Aboriginal heritage.
 - d permits more artifacts to be displayed.
- 2** Which word is closest in meaning to “emulate” as used in line 5 of this selection?
- a imitate
 - b disguise
 - c advertise
 - d designate
- 3** In the sentence “The forest backdrop, stretching the full length of the hall, is the world’s largest colour photograph” (lines 7–8), the commas are used to
- a set off a detail.
 - b separate items in a list.
 - c indicate missing words.
 - d highlight contrasting information.
- 4** According to this selection, the Canadian Museum of Civilization’s Aboriginal artifacts include
- a glass cases.
 - b rocks and minerals.
 - c musical instruments.
 - d stone tools and pottery.
- 5** Which of the following items are contrasted in this selection?
- a past and present visitors
 - b rocky and flat landscapes
 - c early and modern artifacts
 - d Aboriginal and present-day houses
- 6** Which word in the opening sentence best captures the meaning of the words “history and culture” in the final sentence?
- a heritage
 - b birthday
 - c important
 - d preservation

Written Answer

7 Summarize this selection. Include a main idea and one detail that supports it.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

**Education Quality and
Accountability Office**



The information in this booklet is being collected under authority of clause 4 (1) (b) and subsection 9 (6) of the *Education Quality and Accountability Office Act*, 1996, for the purposes of administering and scoring tests of pupils in secondary schools and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of secondary education, in accordance with section 3 of the Act. Inquiries regarding this collection should be directed to the Senior Policy Analyst, EQAO, 2 Carlton Street, Suite 1200, Toronto, ON M5B 2M9 • 1-888-327-7377.

BOOKLET

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April 2009

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

SESSION 2

**RELEASED SELECTIONS
AND TEST QUESTIONS**

Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Session 2

Writing a Series of Paragraphs

1 **Task:** Write a **minimum of three paragraphs** expressing an **opinion** on the topic below. Develop your main idea with supporting details (proof, facts, examples, etc.).

Purpose and

Audience: an adult who is interested in your opinion

Length: The lined space provided for your written work indicates the approximate length of the writing expected.

Topic: **Is it a good idea for high school students to have a part-time job?**

Write your series of paragraphs on the lines provided on the following two pages.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

1 Choose the sentence that correctly shows possession.

- a There's land here.
- b Their land is here.
- c There is land here.
- d They're landing here.

2 Choose the sentence that is written correctly.

- a The mayor of Vancouver declared, The 2010 Winter Olympics will attract thousands of tourists.
- b The mayor of Vancouver declared, "The 2010 Winter Olympics will attract thousands of tourists."
- c The mayor of Vancouver declared that "the 2010 Winter Olympics," would attract thousands of tourists.
- d The mayor of Vancouver, declared "that the 2010 Winter Olympics would attract thousands of tourists."

3 Choose the option that best combines all the information in the following sentences.

**The work is featured in the gallery.
The artist's paintings are impressive.
Many people can view the paintings in the gallery.**

- a The artist's impressive paintings are featured in the gallery, where many people can view them.
- b Although the artist's paintings are impressive, the work is featured in the gallery and many people can view them.
- c Many people can view the paintings in the gallery because the work is featured, so the artist's paintings are impressive.
- d The paintings are featured in the gallery and the artist's paintings are impressive when many people can view them.

4 Which sentence does **not** belong in the paragraph?

(1) Extracurricular activities can be an important part of school life. (2) Joining clubs can help students make friends and develop their skills and interests. (3) Good sportsmanship can be developed on school teams. (4) Learning skills are usually emphasized in school courses. (5) Students who participate in extracurricular activities enjoy many benefits.

- a Sentence 2
- b Sentence 3
- c Sentence 4
- d Sentence 5

End of Section VII. Continue to Section VIII. 

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.

Simon Jackson: Saving the Spirit Bear



Simon Jackson is one of the few people to have seen the white Kermode or spirit bear. There are fewer than 400 spirit bears in existence. All of them live in a coastal area of British Columbia. Most of these live in a temperate rainforest area about 500 kilometres north of Vancouver. Their habitat is being reduced by human activity. In 2000, when Simon was 17 years old, he was honoured in *Time* magazine as one of 60 “Heroes of the Planet” for his efforts to save this endangered bear.

1

When he was seven, the Vancouver student’s parents took him to Yellowstone National Park. Soon after, he set up a lemonade stand and raised \$60 to protect grizzly bears. A few years later, Simon learned of the plight of the spirit bear in British Columbia. He contacted everyone he could think of who might have an insight into this issue. The more he learned, the more determined he was to save the wilderness that the spirit bear needs in order to survive.

2

During his Grade 9 year, he encouraged students and teachers to participate in a letter-writing campaign. As a result, the government of British Columbia received more than 700 letters on this issue.

3

As a university student, Jackson divided his time between school and his campaign—between going to class and meeting with government officials, community leaders and others involved in making decisions about the forests of British Columbia.

4

Later, Simon made it his mission to engage as many young people as possible. He started the Spirit Bear Youth Coalition, which is now the largest youth-led environmental network in the world. It has more than five million members in more than fifty countries. The coalition is dedicated to promoting awareness of the spirit bear and the issues threatening its survival.

5

Although about half of the spirit bear’s habitat has been protected thanks to the work of the coalition, more needs to be done. However, the coalition also recognizes that it is important to take into account the needs of forestry workers and the rights of the area’s First Nations.

6

Many people have asked Simon why he chose to campaign for the future of the spirit bear rather than another endangered animal, such as the panda or the elephant. Simon has explained that, as he sees it, the spirit bear is as important to the world as the panda bear. Because the spirit bear is unique to his home province, he feels that he has a personal obligation to do whatever he can to improve the bear’s chances of survival.

7

Simon believes that his work is important, not just for the future of the spirit bear, but also because it reminds the youth of the world that they have an important voice that must be listened to, and that they are the future caretakers of this planet. As Simon sees it, “By becoming active citizens in our world, we will open doors, broaden horizons and, indirectly, change lives. Youth can provide hope for our world in all of the challenges that lie ahead.”

8

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

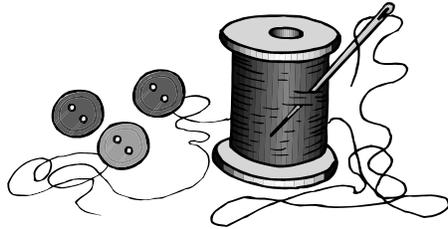
- 1** The first endangered animal that Simon worked to protect was the
- a panda.
 - b elephant.
 - c grizzly bear.
 - d Kermode bear.
- 2** The list of 60 “Heroes of the Planet” (paragraph 1) was most likely designed to honour outstanding
- a achievement of personal goals.
 - b efforts in promoting youth issues.
 - c success in educating youth about animal life.
 - d contributions to environmental protection.
- 3** “The more he learned” (paragraph 2) refers to what Simon Jackson discovered about
- a the way to protect grizzly bears.
 - b the preservation of national parks.
 - c the destruction of wilderness habitat.
 - d the need for an insight into this issue.
- 4** Simon’s first response to hearing about the spirit bear suggests he thought that
- a there was little time to waste on talking.
 - b the best course of action was to raise funds.
 - c he should first gather information from a variety of sources.
 - d he should go to observe the Kermode bears in their coastal habitat.
- 5** The effect of repeating the word “between” in paragraph 4 is to
- a emphasize Simon’s decision.
 - b highlight the demands of Simon’s busy life.
 - c show that Simon was uncertain about what he should do.
 - d indicate that the work of saving the bear was sometimes repetitive.
- 6** What evidence shows that the work of the Spirit Bear Youth Coalition was effective?
- a Simon joined the coalition while in high school.
 - b Almost half the habitat of the bears was protected.
 - c Decision-makers invited Simon to their meetings about forests.
 - d Over 700 letters of support were sent to the British Columbia government.
- 7** What word would best replace the word “caretakers” as used in paragraph 8?
- a parents
 - b citizens
 - c cleaners
 - d guardians

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 8** Simon chose to campaign for the spirit bear rather than another endangered animal because of
- a the way it looks.
 - b where it is found.
 - c the support he received from the Youth Coalition.
 - d its importance as a symbol of youth around the world.
- 9** What is the purpose of the quotation at the end of this selection?
- a to add more description to the paragraph
 - b to emphasize Simon Jackson's viewpoint
 - c to provide an example of Simon Jackson's work
 - d to show the importance of saving the spirit bear

End of Section VIII. Continue to Section IX. 

Read the selection below and answer the questions that follow it.



Mrs. Baker glanced in the rear-view mirror at her two teenagers in the back seat. “How’s the button sewing going?” She laughed at her rhyme but neither head bent over the flowered fabric looked up.

“Why did I choose to make this style? This dress has too many buttons up the front,” whined Pamela.

“It’s not the dress style—it’s *you* that’s the problem. You always leave too much to the last minute,” said James.

“Okay, okay. Now is not the time for the big-brother lecture. Just help me plea—Ouch! My finger!” wailed Pamela.

“Maybe you should slow down before you do something *really* disastrous,” said James.

“But we’re almost at the school fashion show. I have only a few minutes to sew on another five buttons.”

“At least you could have saved time by wearing your dress in the car,” laughed James. He held up a blue button. “Stop fussing. Between us, we’ll get it done even if I’ve never done this before. You just keep sewing buttons from the top and I’ll keep sewing from the bottom.”

The car swung into the parking spot just as James clipped the last thread. “OK, kid. Just call me the next hotshot designer!”

Pamela grinned as she draped the dress over her arm and reached for her car door handle. “Thanks for your help, James.” But as she opened the door to jump out, she felt a little tug—once, twice. “Hey, let go, James. I have to hurry.”

“Wha...?” James’ eyes glanced down then zoomed up to Pamela’s face. Pamela’s eyes widened in horror.

Mrs. Baker snorted with laughter. “James, you really *are* an innovative designer! It looks like you’ll be joining your sister on the catwalk. You’ve sewn one of Pamela’s buttons to your own shirt!”

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** Why does Pamela yell “Ouch”?
- a James clips her by mistake.
 - b She is upset with her brother.
 - c She pokes herself while sewing.
 - d Her mother has stopped suddenly.
- 2** What is the purpose of the dash in paragraph 4 of this selection?
- a to introduce a list
 - b to show an interrupted thought
 - c to present a contrasting viewpoint
 - d to develop an idea with more details
- 3** James says “Just call me the next hotshot designer!” (paragraph 8) because he
- a designed Pamela’s dress.
 - b enjoys lecturing his sister.
 - c is inspired to become a designer.
 - d is making fun of his sewing skills.
- 4** When Mrs. Baker calls James an “innovative designer” (paragraph 11), she means he has done something
- a skillful.
 - b helpful.
 - c beneficial.
 - d unexpected.
- 5** Which of the following occurred before the events in this selection?
- a Mrs. Baker parked the car.
 - b James learned how to sew.
 - c Pamela chose a dress style.
 - d Pamela modelled her dress.

Written Answers

6 What do Pamela’s words and actions reveal about her character? Use specific details from the selection to support your answer.

7 Provide a title for this selection. Explain why your title is appropriate by using specific details from the selection and your own ideas to support your answer.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section IX. Continue to Section X. 

Short Writing Task (Answer in full and correctly written sentences.)

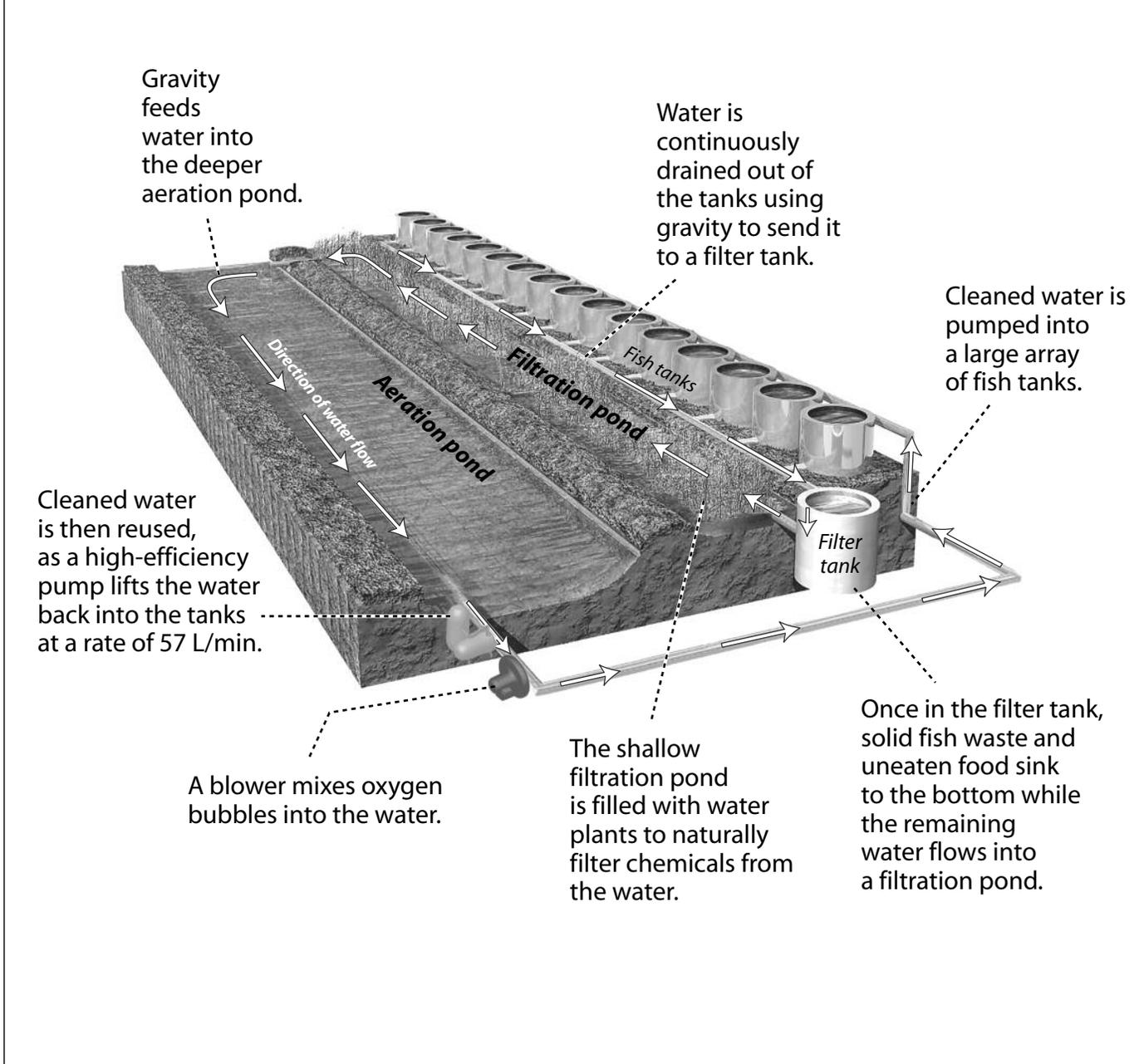
1 What is an effective way advertisers persuade teenagers to buy a product? Explain why this method is effective.

Rough Notes

Use the space below for rough notes. Nothing you write in this space will be scored.

End of Section X. Continue to Section XI. 

How an Eco-Friendly Fish Farm Operates



Staff graphic/Pete Smith. Copyright © 2006, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*. Reprinted by express permission of the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*.

Multiple-Choice (Record the best or most correct answer on the Student Answer Sheet.)

- 1** The arrows in this selection show that the water flows
- a through the ponds and out into the river.
 - b in a complete, closed loop throughout the farm.
 - c from the fish tanks directly into the aeration pond.
 - d from the filter tank directly back into the fish tanks.
- 2** Two separate ponds are needed on this fish farm, so that
- a fish have two areas in which to swim.
 - b there are two sources of fresh intake water.
 - c each pond can perform a different function.
 - d there are different habitats in which plants can grow.
- 3** The purpose of the “shallow filtration pond” is to
- a grow water plants.
 - b mix oxygen into the water.
 - c drain solid waste from the water.
 - d remove chemicals from the water.
- 4** A pump is necessary in the fish farm to make the
- a clean water flow faster.
 - b fish move from tank to tank.
 - c oxygen bubbles move around.
 - d water move up into the fish tanks.
- 5** The effective operation of all components of the fish farm ensures that
- a solid waste is used to feed plants.
 - b water in the filtration pond has sufficient oxygen.
 - c new water is added to the system at several points.
 - d the fish have a continuous supply of aerated water.
- 6** The fish farm in this selection is “eco-friendly” because
- a the farm reuses cleaned water.
 - b the farm uses organic fish food.
 - c gravity is the only source of power.
 - d a blower mixes oxygen into the water.

Background Information (Record your answers on the Student Answer Sheet.)

We need to know about your background, so we can see how students with different experiences do on the test. All responses will be summarized and reported at the school, board and provincial levels.

Read each question carefully. If no answer seems exactly right, fill in the circle on the Student Answer Sheet with the response closest to what you want to say.

Language Background

- 1** a) Is English the first language you learned at home?
Y Yes N No
- b) What languages do you speak at home (choose one only)?
- a Only or mostly English
 - b Another language (or languages) as often as English
 - c Only or mostly another language (or other languages)

Home Computer Use

- 2** Indicate how often you use a computer at home for homework (choose one only).
- a I don't have a computer at home.
 - b I never or hardly ever use the computer for homework.
 - c I use the computer once or twice a month for homework.
 - d I use the computer once or twice a week for homework.
 - e I use the computer almost every day for homework.

Reading

- 3** Indicate the types of materials you read in English outside school most weeks.
- a) Non-fiction books, e.g., biographies
Y Yes N No
 - b) Comics
Y Yes N No
 - c) Web sites, e-mail, chat messages
Y Yes N No
 - d) Letters
Y Yes N No
 - e) Magazines
Y Yes N No
 - f) Manuals, instructions
Y Yes N No
 - g) Newspapers
Y Yes N No
 - h) Novels, fiction, short stories
Y Yes N No
 - i) Song lyrics, poems
Y Yes N No
 - j) Religious or spiritual writings
Y Yes N No
- 4** Indicate the number of hours a week you read materials written in English outside school, not including your homework (choose one only).
- a One hour or less
 - b More than one hour but less than three hours
 - c More than three hours but less than five hours
 - d Five hours or more

5 Indicate what English-language materials you have at home.

- a) Dictionaries, encyclopedias (print or electronic)
Y Yes N No
- b) Books
Y Yes N No
- c) Newspapers
Y Yes N No
- d) Magazines
Y Yes N No

Writing

6 Indicate the types of writing you do in English outside school most weeks.

- a) E-mail, chat messages
Y Yes N No
- b) Letters, journals, diaries
Y Yes N No
- c) Notes, directions, instructions
Y Yes N No
- d) Song lyrics, poems
Y Yes N No
- e) Stories, fiction
Y Yes N No
- f) Work-related writing
Y Yes N No

7 Indicate the number of hours a week you write in English outside school, not including your homework (choose one only).

- a) One hour or less
- b) More than one hour but less than three hours
- c) More than three hours but less than five hours
- d) Five hours or more

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