

TEST NAME: **Pre-Test English I**  
TEST ID: **1165870**  
GRADE: **09 - Ninth Grade**  
SUBJECT: **English Language and Literature**  
TEST CATEGORY: **District Benchmark**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:

excerpt from Lights in the Windows

*excerpt from “Lights in the Windows”*

by Naomi Shihab Nye

- 1        Years ago a girl handed me a note as I was leaving her proud town of Albany, Texas, a tiny, lovely place far in the west of my big state. “I’m glad to know there is another poet in the world,” the note said. “I always knew we would find one another someday and our lights would cross.”
- 2        *Our lights would cross.* That girl had not stood out to me, I realized, among the other upturned, interested faces in the classroom. How many other lights had I missed? I carried her smudged note for thousands of miles.
- 3        I was fascinated with the earliest poems I read and heard that gave insight into all the secret territories of the human spirit, our relationships with one another. Somehow those glimpses felt comforting, like looking through the lit windows of other people’s homes at dusk, before they closed the curtains. How did other people live their lives? Just a sense of so many other worlds out there, beginning with the next house on my own street, gave me a great energy. How could anyone ever feel lonely? One of the first books I loved in my life was a thick, gray anthology edited by Helen Ferris, called *Favorite Poems Old and New*. I still have my early edition, though it is coming a little loose at the spine. Rich, intelligent voices spoke to me each time I opened its covers. I found Rabindranath Tagore, Carl Sandburg, Emily Dickinson, living side-by-side. I imagined I was part of a much larger family.
- 4        To me the world of poetry is a house with thousands of glittering windows. Our words and images, land to land, era to era, shed light on one another. Our words dissolve the shadows we imagine fall between. “One night I dreamt of spring,” writes Syrian poet Muhammad al-Maghut, “and when I awoke/flowers covered my pillow.” Isn’t this where empathy begins? Other countries stop seeming quite so “foreign,” or inanimate, or strange, when we listen to the intimate voices of their citizens. I can never understand it when teachers claim they are “uncomfortable” with poetry— as if poetry demands they be anything other than responsive, curious human beings. If poetry comes out of the deepest places in the human soul and experience, shouldn’t it be as important to learn about one another’s poetry, country to country, as one another’s weather or gross national products? It seems critical to me. It’s another way to study geography!
- 5        For this reason I was always carrying poems I found from other countries into classrooms where I worked as a visiting writer. If American students are provincial about the literary histories of other places, imagining themselves to be the primary readers and writers on the planet, it is up to us to help enlighten them. When I first traveled to India and Bangladesh as a visiting writer for the Arts America program of the U.S. Information

Agency, friends commented helpfully upon our departure, “Why do you suppose people over there will care about poetry? They can barely get enough to eat!” Stereotyping ran rampant among even my educated community. In India, poems were shared with us which were 7,000 years old. In Bangladesh, an impromptu poetry reading was called one evening and 2,000 enthusiastic listeners showed up. Could either of those things happen in the United States?

6     Anyone who feels poetry is an alien or ominous form should consider the style in which human beings think. “How do *you* think?” I ask my students. “Do you think in complete, elaborate sentences? In fully developed paragraphs with careful footnotes? Or in flashes and bursts of images, snatches of lines leaping one to the next, descriptive fragments, sensory details?” We *think* in poetry. But some people pretend poetry is far away.

7     Probably some of us were taught so long and hard that poetry was a thing to *analyze* that we lost our ability to find it delicious, to appreciate its taste, sometimes even when we couldn’t completely apprehend its *meaning*. I love to offer students a poem now and then that I don’t really understand. It presents them with the immediate opportunity of being smarter than I am. Believe me, they always take it. They always find an interesting way to look through its window. It presents us all with a renewed appetite for interpretation, one of the most vibrant and energetic parts of the poetry experience.

8     I’m reminded of a dear teacher I had in high school who refused to go on to the next poem in our antiquated textbook until we had all agreed on the same interpretive vision of each poem, *her* vision . . . If we can offer each other a cognizance<sup>1</sup> of *mystery* through the poems we share, isn’t that a greater gift? Won’t a sense of inevitable mystery underpinning our intricate lives serve us better than the notion that we will each be given a neat set of blanks to fill in—always?

9     Poems offer that mystery. Poems respect our ability to interpret and translate images and signs. Poems link seemingly disparate<sup>2</sup> parts of experience—this seems particularly critical at the frenzied end of the 20th century. I have yet to meet one person in all my travels who doesn’t say they are too busy, they wish they had a little more time. If most of us have lost, as some poets suggest, our meaningful, deep relationships with the world of nature, poems help us to see and feel that world again, beyond our cities and double-locked doors . . . .

<sup>1</sup> **cognizance:** awareness, recognition

<sup>2</sup> **disparate:** distinct, different

“Lights in the Windows” by Naomi Shihab Nye, originally from *The ALAN Review*, copyright © 1995 by Naomi Shihab Nye. Used by permission of the author.

1.

**Read the sentence from Paragraph 4 of the passage.**

To me the world of poetry is a house with thousands of glittering windows.

**How does the use of imagery in this sentence enhance the passage?**

- A It reveals what the author envisions when she reads poetry.
  - B It introduces descriptive words that are commonly used in other poems.
  - C It creates a metaphor for how the author feels about poetry.
  - D It demonstrates the sense of mystery that comes from poems.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

2.

**Read the sentence from Paragraph 6 of the passage.**

Anyone who feels poetry is an alien or ominous form should consider the style in which human beings think.

**Which claim below is contained in that sentence?**

- A Poetry reflects the ideas and beliefs of most people.
  - B Poetry is not as strange or threatening as some people believe.
  - C Poetry imported from foreign countries has much to offer.
  - D Poetry that is difficult to read presents a richer learning experience.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

3.

**The author of "Lights in the Windows" would most likely agree with which statement?**

- A Teachers who are not comfortable teaching poetry should ask an expert to come into the classroom.
  - B Most poems have only one correct interpretation, which can be found through careful analysis.
  - C People who feel overwhelmed in a busy world can restore their sense of balance through poetry.
  - D People who are worried about meeting their basic needs do not seem to care much about poetry.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

4.

**How does the author support their claim that poetry should not be feared?**

- A. She gives examples of poetry through history.
  - B. She shares how a young girl came to love poetry.
  - C. She gives anecdotes as strategies for teaching poetry.
  - D. She compares poetry to the natural human thought processes.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

5. **What is the main theme of the passage?**

- A. Each poem has an intended message that readers can interpret only with effort.
  - B. The mystery of poetry is its ability to connect people to each other and the world.
  - C. The message of a poem is intended only for people familiar with the poet's culture.
  - D. Poetry can touch emotions even when the poem's message is beyond understanding.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

6. **According to the author, what is lost when people focus only on analyzing poetry?**

- A. fortune and adventure
  - B. insight and understanding
  - C. humor and lightheartedness
  - D. enjoyment and appreciation
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

7.

**Read the sentence.**

If American students are provincial about the literary histories of other places, imagining themselves to be the primary readers and writers on the planet, it is up to us to help enlighten them.

**What is the meaning of the word provincial?**

- A. hopeful
  - B. creative
  - C. narrow-minded
  - D. self-disciplined
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

8.

**Read the sentence.**

In Bangladesh, an impromptu poetry reading was called one evening and 2,000 enthusiastic listeners showed up.

**Based on the passage, what is most likely the meaning of the word impromptu?**

- A. boring
  - B. disappointing
  - C. expensive
  - D. unplanned
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

9. **According to the author, how is reading poetry like looking through a lit window of a home at dusk?**

- A. They are both reminders to help others.
  - B. They both inspire people to be creative.
  - C. They are both done at the same time of day.
  - D. They both offer a glimpse of how people live.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

10.

**In paragraph 6 how does the author support their claim?**

- A. She states if impromptu poetry readings in the United States would draw large crowds of listeners.
  - B. She goes to other countries to represent the Arts America program of the U.S. Information Agency.
  - C. She compares poetic form to the way we naturally think.
  - D. She is an experienced and accomplished poet.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

11. **In Paragraph 2, when the author asks, "How many other lights had I missed?" she means**

- A. there are many poems she has yet to read.
  - B. there are many things she did not get to say to her class.
  - C. she may have overlooked other students who love poetry.
  - D. she does not want to bypass another chance to meet poets.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

12. **Read the sentence.**

I always knew we would find one another someday and our lights would cross.

**What does the narrator mean by this statement?**

- A. There would be opportunities to meet other poemists.
  - B. People with common interests are difficult to find.
  - C. Poetry can unite people from other cultures.
  - D. Sometimes people in crowds are unnoticed.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

13. **Why does the author most likely begin the passage with a story?**

- A. to suggest that people of all ages can write poetry
  - B. to support her idea that poetry brings people together
  - C. to include a comment by a student who writes poetry
  - D. to show that she has been teaching poetry for many years
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

14. **Which sentence best states the main idea of Paragraph 6?**

- A. Poetry can be difficult to comprehend.
  - B. Most people choose to ignore poetry.
  - C. Lines of poetry are like paragraphs with footnotes.
  - D. People's thoughts are like the images in poetry.
- 

**Read the passage - 'excerpt from Lights in the Windows' - and answer the question below:**

15. **Which statement best supports the author's conclusion that poems offer a sense of mystery?**

- A. Some poets will always remain anonymous.
  - B. Poems lend themselves to different interpretations.
  - C. Poetry can develop a relationship with nature.
  - D. Sometimes we read poems without understanding them.
- 

**Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:**

**A White Heron**

**A White Heron**  
by Sarah Orne Jewett



*A little girl, named Sylvia, lives with her grandmother, Mrs. Tilly, in a house by the woods. A young sportsman is staying with them to help with chores. He knows that the white heron is a valuable bird and capturing it can bring a large sum of money to them. Sylvia has spotted the bird and wants to find its nest. But, will she reveal her discovery to the sportsman after all?*

- 1      Half a mile from home, at the farther edge of the woods, where the land was highest, a great pine-tree stood, the last of its generation. Whether it was left for a boundary mark, or for what reason, no one could say; the woodchoppers who had felled its mates were dead and gone long ago, and a whole forest of sturdy trees, pines and oaks and maples, had grown again. But the stately head of this old pine towered above them all and made a landmark for sea and shore miles and miles away. Sylvia knew it well. She had always believed that whoever climbed to the top of it could see the ocean; and the little girl had often laid her hand on the great rough trunk and looked up wistfully at those dark boughs that the wind always stirred, no matter how hot and still the air might be below. Now she thought of the tree with a new excitement, for why, if one climbed it at break of day, could not one see all the world, and easily discover whence the white heron flew, and mark the place, and find the hidden nest?
- 2      What a spirit of adventure, what wild ambition! What fancied triumph and delight and glory for the later morning when she could make known the secret! It was almost too real and too great for the childish heart to bear.
- 3      All night the door of the little house stood open, and the whippoorwills came and sang upon the very step. The young sportsman and his old hostess were sound asleep, but Sylvia's great design kept her broad awake and watching. She forgot to think of sleep. The short summer night seemed as long as the winter darkness, and at last when the whippoorwills ceased, and she was afraid the morning would after all come too soon, she stole out of the house and followed the pasture path through the woods, hastening toward the open ground beyond, listening with a sense of comfort and companionship to the drowsy twitter of a half-awakened bird, whose perch she had jarred in passing. Alas, if the great wave of human interest which flooded for the first time this dull little life should sweep away the satisfaction of an existence heart to heart with nature and the dumb life of the forest!



- 4 There was the huge tree asleep yet in the paling moonlight, and small and hopeful Sylvia began with utmost bravery to mount to the top of it, with tingling, eager blood coursing the channels of her whole frame, with her bare feet and fingers, that pinched and held like bird's claws to the monstrous ladder reaching up, up, almost to the sky itself. First she must mount the white oak tree that grew alongside, where she was almost lost among the dark branches and the green leaves heavy and wet with dew; a bird fluttered off its nest, and a red squirrel ran to and fro and scolded pettishly at the harmless housebreaker. Sylvia felt her way easily. She had often climbed there, and knew that higher still one of the oak's upper branches chafed against the pine trunk, just where its lower boughs were set close together. There, when she made the dangerous pass from one tree to the other, the great enterprise would really begin.
- 5 She crept out along the swaying oak limb at last, and took the daring step across into the old pine-tree. The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast, the sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons, the pitch made her thin little fingers clumsy and stiff as she went round and round the tree's great stem, higher and higher upward. The sparrows and robins in the woods below were beginning to wake and twitter to the dawn, yet it seemed much lighter there aloft in the pine-tree, and the child knew that she must hurry if her project were to be of any use.
- 6 The tree seemed to lengthen itself out as she went up, and to reach farther and farther upward. It was like a great main-mast to the voyaging earth; it must truly have been amazed that morning through all its ponderous frame as it felt this determined spark of human spirit creeping and climbing from higher branch to branch. Who knows how steadily the least twigs held themselves to advantage this light, weak creature on her way! The old pine must have loved his new dependent. More than all the hawks, and bats, and moths, and even the sweet-voiced thrushes, was the brave, beating heart of the solitary gray-eyed child. And the tree stood still and held away the winds that June morning while the dawn grew bright in the east.
- 7 Sylvia's face was like a pale star, if one had seen it from the ground, when the last thorny bough was past, and she stood trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top. Yes, there was the sea with the dawning sun making a golden dazzle over it, and toward that glorious east flew two hawks with slow-moving pinions. How low they looked in the air from that height when before one had only seen them far up, and dark against the blue sky. Their gay feathers were as soft as moths; they seemed only a little way from the tree, and Sylvia felt as if she too could go flying away among the clouds. Westward, the woodlands and farms reached miles and miles into the distance; here and there were church steeples, and white villages; truly it was a vast and awesome world.
- 8 The birds sang louder and louder. At last the sun came up bewilderingly bright. Sylvia could see the white sails of ships out at sea, and the clouds that were purple and rose-colored and yellow at first began to fade away. Where was the white heron's nest in the sea of green branches, and was this wonderful sight and pageant of the world the only reward for having climbed to such a giddy height? Now look down again, Sylvia, where the green marsh is set among the shining birches and dark hemlocks; there where you saw the white heron once you will see him again; look, look! a white spot of him like a single floating feather comes up from the dead hemlock and grows larger, and rises, and comes close at last, and goes by the landmark pine with steady sweep of wing and outstretched slender neck and crested head. And wait! wait! do not move a foot or a

finger, little girl, do not send an arrow of light and consciousness from your two eager eyes, for the heron has perched on a pine bough not far beyond yours, and cries back to his mate on the nest, and plumes his feathers for the new day!

- 9 The child gives a long sigh a minute later when a company of shouting cat-birds comes also to the tree, and annoyed by their fluttering and lawlessness the solemn heron goes away. She knows his secret now, the wild, light, slender bird that floats and wavers, and goes back like an arrow presently to his home in the green world beneath. Then Sylvia, well satisfied, makes her perilous way down again. Wondering over and over again what the stranger would say to her, and what he would think when she told him how to find his way straight to the heron's nest.
- 10 "Sylvy, Sylvy!" called the busy old grandmother again and again, but nobody answered, and the small husk bed was empty, and Sylvia had disappeared.
- 11 The guest waked from a dream, and remembering his day's pleasure hurried to dress himself that it might sooner begin. He was sure from the way the shy little girl looked once or twice yesterday that she had at least seen the white heron, and now she must really be persuaded to tell. Here she comes now, paler than ever, and her worn old frock is torn and tattered, and smeared with pine pitch. The grandmother and the sportsman stand in the door together and question her, and the splendid moment has come to speak of the dead hemlock-tree by the green marsh.
- 12 But Sylvia does not speak after all, though the old grandmother fretfully scolds her, and the young man's kind appealing eyes are looking straight into her own. He can make them rich with money; he has promised it, and they are poor now. He is so well worth making happy, and he waits to hear the story she can tell.
- 13 No, she must keep silence! What is it that suddenly forbids her and makes her mute? Has she been nine years growing, and now, when the great world for the first time puts out a hand to her, must she thrust it aside for a bird's sake? The murmur of the pine's green branches is in her ears, she remembers how the white heron came flying through the golden air and how they watched the sea and the morning together, and Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away.

Public Domain

**16. Read the sentence from Paragraph 8 of the passage.**

Now look down again, Sylvia, where the green marsh is set among the shining birches and dark hemlocks; there where you saw the white heron once you will see him again; look, look . . .

**What emotion is the author trying to evoke from the reader?**

- A. to foster support for the grandmother's viewpoint
- B. to create a sympathetic response to Sylvia
- C. to increase fondness for the sportsman
- D. to develop affection for Sylvia

---

**Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:**

17. **What is the primary setting of the passage?**

- A. the bedroom in the morning
  - B. the green marsh at dusk
  - C. the woods at daybreak
  - D. the ocean at night
- 

**Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:**

18.

**What tone does the author use when discussing Sylvia?**

- A. approving
  - B. mocking
  - C. serious
  - D. humorous
- 

**Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:**

19. **Which is the main conflict in the passage?**

- A. Sylvia against the pine tree
  - B. Sylvia against the sportsman
  - C. Sylvia against the white heron
  - D. Sylvia against the woodchoppers
- 

**Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:**

20.

**Which excerpt from the passage best describes the story's conflict?**

- A. The way was harder than she thought; she must reach far and hold fast ...
  - B. ... the child knew that she must hurry if her project were to be of any use.
  - C. He can make them rich with money; he has promised it, and they are poor now.
  - D. ... Sylvia cannot speak; she cannot tell the heron's secret and give its life away.
- 

**Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:**

21. **How does Sylvia feel about the great pine tree at the beginning of the story?**

- A. She treats the tree with respect and awe.
  - B. She takes the tree and its branches for granted.
  - C. She fears the tree and is afraid to climb its boughs.
  - D. She believes the tree is bothersome and should be chopped down.
-

Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:

22. What causes Sylvia to withhold information?

- A. love of her grandmother
- B. respect for the sportsman
- C. loyalty to the bird
- D. appreciation for the pine tree

---

Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:

23.

How is Sylvia's attitude toward the white heron different from the sportsman's attitude toward the white heron?

- A. Sylvia wants to protect the white heron, but the sportsman wants to capture it.
- B. Sylvia thinks that the white heron flies crookedly, but the sportsman does not.
- C. Sylvia sees the white heron as a menace, but the sportsman sees it as valuable.
- D. Sylvia believes that the white heron will make them rich, but the sportsman does not.

---

Read the passage - 'A White Heron' - and answer the question below:

24. How does Sylvia feel about the young sportsman?

- A. appreciative
- B. disappointed
- C. careful
- D. uneasy

---

Read the passage - 'Solitude' - and answer the question below:

Solitude

# Solitude

*by Alexei Fyodorovich Merzlyakov*

Upon a hill, which rears itself midst plains extending wide,  
Fair flourishes a lofty oak in beauty's blooming pride;  
This lofty oak in solitude its branches wide expands,  
All lonesome on the cheerless height like sentinel<sup>1</sup> it stands.

- 5 Whom can it lend its friendly shade, should Sol with fervor glow?  
And who can shelter it from harm, should tempests rudely blow?  
No bushes green, entwining close, here deck the neighboring ground,  
No tufted pines beside it grow, no osiers<sup>2</sup> thrive around.

- Sad even to trees their cheerless fate in solitude if grown,  
10 And bitter, bitter is the lot for youth to live alone!  
Though gold and silver much is his, how vain the selfish pride!  
Though crowned with glory's laureled wreath, with whom that crown divide?  
When I with an acquaintance meet he scarce a bow affords,  
And beauties, half saluting me, but grant some transient words.  
15 On some I look myself with dread, whilst others from me fly,  
But sadder still the uncherished soul when Fate's dark hour draws nigh;  
Oh! where my aching heart relieve when griefs assail me sore?  
My friend, who sleeps in the cold earth, comes to my aid no more!  
No relatives, alas! of mine in this strange clime appear,  
20 No wife imparts love's fond caress, sweet smile, or pitying tear;  
No father feels joy's thrilling throb, as he our transport sees;  
No gay and sportive little ones come clambering on my knees;--  
Take back all honors, wealth, and fame, the heart they cannot move,  
And give instead the smiles of friends, the tender look of love!

<sup>1</sup>**sentinel**: the guard or watchers

<sup>2</sup>**osiers**: willow trees

Project Gutenberg, 2005. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8192/old/bakch10h.htm>  
(02/25/2013).

25.

Which line from the poem represents the theme?

- A. "Fair flourishes a lofty oak in beauty's blooming pride"
- B. "No tufted pines beside it grow, no osiers thrive around."
- C. "No gay and sportive little ones come clambering on my knees"
- D. "And give instead the smiles of friends, the tender look of love!"

---

Read the passage - 'Solitude' - and answer the question below:

26. How does the poet develop a feeling of isolation in lines 1–4?

- A. by using repetition to emphasize the tree's unusual height
- B. by stating that the tree grows "upon a hill"
- C. by indicating the tree's sickly appearance
- D. by including the word "solitude"

---

Read the passage - 'Solitude' - and answer the question below:

27. In lines 15–17, how does the speaker introduce additional tension for the reader?
- A. by indicating how long he has been alone
  - B. by explaining how others ignore him
  - C. by showing his anxiety about death
  - D. by describing his emotional pain
- 

Read the passage - 'Solitude' - and answer the question below:

28. How do lines 9–12 develop the theme of the poem?
- A. They show the consequences of the speaker's selfishness.
  - B. They indicate the speaker's attention to environmental issues.
  - C. They transition from the example of the tree to the speaker's own life.
  - D. They contrast the fate of the natural world with that of human beings.
- 

Read the passage - 'Solitude' - and answer the question below:

29. How does the author show that his perspective is informed by experience?
- A. an extended metaphor to nature
  - B. specific examples about life at different stages of life
  - C. a detailed description of an oak tree
  - D. emotional lines about friends he has lost
- 

Read the passage - 'Solitude' - and answer the question below:

30. Which statement summarizes the poem?
- A. The speaker is willing to sacrifice everything to avoid being alone.
  - B. The speaker is reveling in the beauty he observes in nature.
  - C. The speaker is lamenting his lack of a romantic partner.
  - D. The speaker is feeling elated by his wealth and power.