



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2006**

**Grade 7
Reading**

Reading

There was a minor change to the rules that did not affect the outcome of the game.

- 1 Which sentence uses the word minor as it is used in the box?
- A. A minor was not permitted to attend the meeting without an adult.
 - B. Many professional baseball players started out in the minor leagues.
 - C. In music class, they discussed major and minor notes.
 - D. The traffic jam was minor, and we were able to get to school on time.

- 2 The time of departure is the time you will _____ your trip.
- A. prepare for
 - B. return from
 - C. leave for
 - D. recover from

Running Crane, a Native American youth, faces a challenge when looking for water. Read this passage and then answer the questions that follow.

Standoff

Ned Ackerman

Running Crane followed the ravine into the hills looking for water. Here and there, a cottonwood had taken root, but the hills did not connect to the mountains. Melt from the high snowfields that fed the prairie rivers during the summer did not reach here. Water ran on the surface only during rainy periods or in early spring when the snows first melted in the low country. Half a day's walk to the north, a line of dark green marked where a small river snaked across the prairie—too far away to go for a drink.

2 When he returned to the ravine, he found the stallion cropping scattered clumps of grass. He had already devoured most of them.

3 “We make a fine pair, horse,” said Running Crane. He looked thirstily toward the spring. Then he looked at the prairie. “You have all the water you can drink, but little grass to eat. I have all I can eat, but little water to drink. If you could talk, we could make a trade, I and you.”

The idea of a trade grew stronger, and Running Crane gathered an armload of grass. He crawled under the trunk of the cottonwood, and peeked around the bend. The stallion stood at the far end of the ravine. Running Crane walked forward twenty paces, dropped the grass he had gathered, then retreated to the spring. He thought perhaps the stallion would eat long enough to allow him to drink.

The stallion shrilled and charged, ears laid back, teeth bared, hooves flashing, filling the ravine with his screams. Running Crane sprinted for the barrier. Sand sucked at his feet, and the dead cottonweed seemed to slide away from him. His breath came in ragged gasps. His thighs burned. Hoofbeats closed rapidly. He dove for the log and rolled under before the stallion could trample him.

The stallion shrilled in defiance and trotted off, satisfied with having driven the human away. When he reached the pile of grass, he stopped to eat. Running Crane tried again to trade his way to the spring with armloads of grass, with the same result. The stallion charged, intent on killing him.

Running Crane doubted the stallion understood the connection between the human he had chased and the grass. This spirit being was, after all, a horse. He gave up and returned to lie beside his seep. When the depression filled, he drank, but satisfying his thirst took a long time. In the morning, he hunted and ate, then returned to gaze at the stallion. The stallion glared back.

When Running Crane finally noticed Wolf Eagle's ropes under the brush he had piled over the game trail, he felt foolish for not remembering them sooner. He pulled one free and began to coil it. Seeing the rope, the stallion tossed its head and raced back to the spring, snorting. Running Crane pondered the stallion's reaction. And he remembered how the big horse stopped when he first blocked the trail. The stallion could have run him down easily. Then Running Crane realized the stallion did not fear him. The creature feared the ropes. But how much?

Running Crane crawled beneath the cottonwood and edged forward, ready to dive for cover. The stallion shrilled and charged. Running Crane waved the ropes over his head, and the stallion skidded to a halt, throwing up a shower of sand. Running Crane took another step, waving the ropes. The horse spun away and raced around the bend. His heart soaring in triumph, Running Crane hurried to the spring and drank his fill.

Now the youth knew he could drink and eat, but what about feeding the stallion? Leaving piles of grass would not tame a horse. He rubbed his lean belly thoughtfully. Food means much, he told himself, but water means more. He could stand by the spring and keep the stallion away, but he would need to sleep. Then he had an idea.

First, he gathered all of the brush, saplings, and dead branches he could find and threw them into the ravine. These he dragged to the narrow bend. The stallion charged again and again, but Running Crane waved the ropes to drive him back until he could build another barricade, this one between the stallion and the spring. Now if the stallion wanted to drink, he would have to drink from Running Crane's hand. If the stallion wanted to eat, Running Crane would have to feed him.

At first, the stallion refused to come near the barricade and stood at the far end of the ravine. Late in the afternoon, thirst drove the stallion to approach the barrier. Only then did Running Crane realize he had no way to give the horse water. Feeling foolish, he dumped the contents of his quiver on the ground and dipped it into the spring. Streams of water

sprang through the stitching. The stallion sniffed suspiciously. He could smell the water and see it and hear it, but he snorted and galloped away.

Running Crane examined his leaking quiver. Even if the stallion had tried to drink, his muzzle would not fit within the opening. After a while, Running Crane thought of his shirt. He took his awl and sinew and patched the cuts that the spirit bull's hooves had made. Then he sewed up the armholes and the neck. He stretched the shirt over a forked branch and dipped it into the spring. The shirt dripped, but it would hold water long enough for the stallion to drink.

Thirsty, the stallion approached several times, but when Running Crane scooped up water, the horse snorted and fled. Remembering what Beaver-Slaps-Tail-Twice had told him, Running Crane peeled the bark off a young cottonwood and rubbed the sap over his hands and body. He daubed his shirt with cottonwood sap, too. The smell helped calm the stallion. When the big horse approached again, still snorting distrustfully, he extended his muzzle and drank a few mouthfuls before shying away.

3 In paragraph 2, the word cropping means

- A. eating.
- B. tossing.
- C. drinking.
- D. catching.

4 In paragraph 3, what did Running Crane mean when he said, “We make a fine pair, horse”?

- A. They worked well as a team.
- B. Each needed something the other had.
- C. Each depended on the other for support.
- D. They looked good together as horse and rider.

5 Running Crane gives the stallion grass to eat because he

- A. feels sorry for the stallion.
- B. wants to befriend the stallion.
- C. knows the stallion is afraid.
- D. hopes to distract the stallion.

6 A synonym for the word barrier is

- A. wall.
- B. stream.
- C. barn.
- D. branch.

7 How does the stallion’s behavior change from the beginning of the passage to the end? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

- 8 Running Crane could not get a drink from the spring because the
- A. water was unsafe to drink.
 - B. stallion drank all the water.
 - C. spring was too far away.
 - D. stallion blocked the way.

- 9 Running Crane uses the cottonwood tree to
- A. find the location of the water.
 - B. protect himself from the stallion.
 - C. provide food for the stallion.
 - D. hide the ropes from Wolf Eagle.

- 10 Which word **best** describes the relationship between Running Crane and the stallion at first?
- A. supportive
 - B. clashing
 - C. gentle
 - D. uninterested

- 11 The **main** conflict in this passage is between
- A. Running Crane and the stallion.
 - B. Running Crane and himself.
 - C. the stallion and the ropes.
 - D. the stallion and the ravine.

- 12 What does the reader learn about Running Crane from this passage? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Acknowledgments

The New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island Departments of Education wish to acknowledge and credit the following authors and publishers for use of their work in the reading portion of the *New England Common Assessment Program—2006*.

“Standoff” (pp. 2–3) from *Spirit Horse* by Ned Ackerman. Published by Scholastic, Inc. Copyright © 1998 by Edward A. Ackerman.

Grade 7 Reading Released Item Information

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Content Strand¹	WV	WV	WV	LA	LI	WV	LI	LI	LI	LA	LA	LA
GLE Code	6-3	6-3	6-3	6-5	6-4	6-3	6-4	6-4	6-4	6-5	6-5	6-5
Depth of Knowledge Code	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
Item Type²	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR
Answer Key	D	C	A	B	D	A		D	B	B	A	
Total Possible Points	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4

¹Content Strand: WV = Word ID/Vocabulary, LI = Literary/Initial Understanding, LA = Literary/Analysis & Interpretation,
 II = Informational/Initial Understanding, IA = Informational/Analysis & Interpretation

²Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, SA = Short Answer, CR = Constructed Response