



**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
2007**

**Grade 7  
Reading**

# Reading

1 A synonym for the word postpone is

- A. prepare.
- B. cancel.
- C. delay.
- D. continue.

The evidence against the suspect was strong enough for the investigation to progress.

2 What does the word progress mean as it is used in the box?

- A. to create
- B. to fail
- C. to prove
- D. to continue

*Dacey Tillerman has had many jobs working with boats. Read this passage and then answer the questions that follow.*

## **Dacey's Dream**

*Cynthia Voigt*

“Dacey?”

**2** She heard him, but didn't hear him. His voice entered her consciousness the way the first sounds of morning enter a dream and become part of it, before you wake up into the real day. The smell of paint lingered, although she had cocked open the high windows and raised the wide metal door. The paint had a penetrating odor that hung on in the air. The curved sides of the dinghy shone with fresh color. She'd scraped and sanded the bottom before painting the sides. When this paint dried she'd put the boat up on the storage rack for the rest of the winter; and the job would be done because the bottom paint wouldn't go on until spring. Bottom paint was still wet when the boat went into the water. Green stains had splotched her jeans, her sneakers, her arms, hands, and face. Probably her hair, too, if she had a mirror to see it. She looked at her hands, the nails ringed with green, even after the scrubbing she'd given them in the shop's dank little bathroom. The hands she watched went right on with their work—as if she didn't exist—stroking the whetstone against the blade of the adze.

She was reviewing her plans. Dacey Tillerman always had things planned out so she could get to where she wanted. Where she wanted to get to was being a boatbuilder. Sailboats, she wanted to build sailboats. Not fancy yachts, but a boat a person could sail alone, or two people could sail.

**4** Dacey knew you didn't get what you wanted just by wanting it. She'd worked the last two summers, over in Annapolis, to learn things she needed to know. She'd learned some carpentry, she'd cut and sewn sails, and this fall she'd hired herself out to a boatyard in Crisfield, never mind the rotten pay, to learn what you were contracting for when you offered winter storage and maintenance for boats.

The boats she wanted to build were wooden ones. She wanted to build a boat with a carved rudder to guide it by and the long, varnished tiller under your hand. Not plywood, either. Dacey Tillerman had an idea about a slender, soft-bellied boat built out of planks of wood fitted together so close it was as if they'd grown that way, sturdy enough for heavy winds but light enough so the slightest breeze would fill the sails and move it across the water.

“Dacey?”

For now, however, the shop came first, and the shop work—repair, maintenance, storage. She knew that nobody hired you to build a sailboat right away, first thing. She also had an idea for a dinghy, one that could be powered either by a motor or by oars. Her plan was to get herself a name for building dinghies, save up the profits, and then—when she was ready—start taking orders for sailboats.

3 In paragraph 2, the word splotched means

- A. smeared.
- B. scraped.
- C. scrubbed.
- D. split.

4 The **main** purpose of paragraph 4 is to show that Dicey

- A. has traveled often.
- B. has had too many jobs.
- C. is determined to learn about boats.
- D. is not making much money.

5 Which word **best** describes Dicey?

- A. sloppy
- B. ambitious
- C. tricky
- D. helpful

6 What is the setting for this passage?

- A. a shop
- B. a dock
- C. a sailboat
- D. a depot

7 According to the passage, what will Dicey **most likely** do to make her dream come true? Use details from the passage to support your answer.

*Life on the Great Plains was different from what newcomers were used to experiencing. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.*

## **Home on the Plains**

*Brandon Marie Miller*

- 1** For women living on the Great Plains, the first shock was learning what sort of house they'd now be calling home. One girl recalled:

*When our covered wagon drew up beside the door of the one-roomed sod house that father had provided, he helped mother down and I remember how her face looked as she gazed about that barren farm, then threw her arms about his neck and gave way to the only fit of weeping I ever remember seeing her indulge in.*

Earth was the only real building material available in many parts of the plains. Sod bricks, cut into strips about one foot wide, two feet long, and four inches thick, were stacked grassy side down to form a one-room house. Each brick weighed about 50 pounds. Boards laid over door and window openings supported more sod piled on top. Loose dirt and mud filled in between the bricks. Overhead, a frame of poles covered with brush and more sod made a roof, while underfoot was a floor of packed-down earth.

The “soddie” offered protection and insulation against heat and cold. It wouldn't burn during a

deadly prairie fire. But the house was also damp, musty, and impossible to keep clean. Women tacked up yards of muslin to catch sprinklings of dirt from the walls and ceilings. In rainstorms, the soddie dripped and ran with mud. Mice, bugs, and snakes felt perfectly at home in a house made of dirt. One girl remembered from her pioneering childhood:

*Sometimes the bull snakes would get in the roof and now and then one would lose his hold and fall down on the bed, and then off on the floor. Mother would grab the hoe and there was something doing and after the fight was over Mr. Bull Snake was dragged outside.*

- 4** From North Dakota down to Texas, the western plains often wore a desolate and lonely face—open, arid, scoured by the wind. But the land early pioneers avoided grew more attractive with the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862. The act allowed the head of a household to pay a small filing fee on a 160-acre claim at a government land office. If the family lived on the claim and farmed it for five years, the land was theirs. Usually men, but also some single and widowed women took up the challenge.

8 In the first paragraph, the word barren means

- A. lush.
- B. productive.
- C. rocky.
- D. empty.

9 From whose point of view are the italicized paragraphs told?

- A. “soddie” builders
- B. Native Americans
- C. pioneer girls
- D. sod busters

10 In paragraph 4, the word desolate means

- A. deserted.
- B. dusty.
- C. cold.
- D. fertile.

11 What is the **main** idea of this passage?

- A. Give me a home on the plains.
- B. Life on the plains was tough.
- C. Life on the plains was easy.
- D. There is no place like home.

12 A “soddie” had both positive and negative features. Describe these features by using details from the passage.

# Acknowledgments

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## Grade 7 Reading Released Item Information

| Released Item Number              | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Content Strand<sup>1</sup></b> | WV  | WV  | WV  | LI  | LA  | LI  | LA  | WV  | II  | WV  | II  | II  |
| <b>GLE Code</b>                   | 6-3 | 6-3 | 6-2 | 6-4 | 6-5 | 6-4 | 6-5 | 6-2 | 6-7 | 6-2 | 6-7 | 6-7 |
| <b>Depth of Knowledge Code</b>    | 1   | 2   | 2   | 2   | 2   | 1   | 2   | 2   | 1   | 2   | 2   | 3   |
| <b>Item Type<sup>2</sup></b>      | MC  | MC  | MC  | MC  | MC  | MC  | CR  | MC  | MC  | MC  | MC  | CR  |
| <b>Answer Key</b>                 | C   | D   | A   | C   | B   | A   |     | D   | C   | A   | B   |     |
| <b>Total Possible Points</b>      | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 4   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 4   |

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

<sup>2</sup>Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, CR = Constructed Response