



**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
2009**

**Grade 6  
Reading**

# Reading

1 The words aquarium and aquatic are **alike** in meaning because both words relate to

- A. earth.
- B. wind.
- C. water.
- D. sky.

I have six keys on my key ring.

- 2 Which sentence uses the word ring as it is used in the box?
- A. The ring of the doorbell awakened the baby.
  - B. There was a beautiful, shiny ring at the jewelry store.
  - C. The boxer stepped into the ring.
  - D. The ring around the moon predicted rain.

*Read this article about the job of an ice-cream taster. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## **One Cool Job**

*Danielle S. Hammelef*

**What do you want to be when you grow up? A teacher? A doctor? An astronaut? How about an ice-cream taster?**

**1** Yes, there really is a job that pays you to taste ice cream. Just ask John Harrison, an “Official Taste Tester” at Dreyers/Edy’s Ice Cream for the past 21 years. Testing helps manufacturers to be sure of a product’s quality. During his career Harrison has approved over 200 million gallons of the creamy dessert—as well as developing more than 75 flavors, including cookies and cream.

Harrison jokes that ice cream is so much a part of his life that his blood “runs sixteen percent butterfat.” Four generations of Harrisons have been “in” ice cream, including his great-grandfather, who owned two ice-cream parlors in New York City; his father, who owned a dairy-ingredients factory in Georgia; and his uncle, who owned an ice-cream factory in Tennessee. At his uncle’s factory, Harrison “tasted and ate” his way through high school and college as he learned to make ice cream.

### **A Day in Dessert**

Despite what you might think, there’s more to the job than just liking ice cream, says Harrison, who has a degree in chemistry. He points out that a dairy or food-science degree would be useful to someone wanting a career in this “cool” field.

In a typical morning on the job, Harrison tastes and evaluates 60 ice-cream samples—3 each from the 20 flavor batches produced the previous day. Starting with vanilla and working up to stronger flavors like mint chocolate-chip, he slices open each container.

Then he lets the ice cream warm up to about 12 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature in the storage freezer is -20 degrees. Most people eat ice cream at between 0 and 5 degrees. But cold ice cream can numb the taste buds, Harrison explains, so “You get more flavor from warmer ice cream, which is why some kids like to stir it, creating ice-cream soup.”

### **Tasting with Your Eyes**

**6** While the ice cream warms up, Harrison looks over the samples and grades each one on appearance. “Tasting begins with the eyes,” he explains. He checks to see if the ice cream is attractive and asks himself, “Does the product have the color expected from that flavor?” If there are added goodies, such as fruit, chocolate chips, nuts, or fudge ribbons, he makes sure that they are evenly spread throughout.

Next it’s time to taste! With his gold-plated spoon, which he uses to avoid the aftertaste plastic or wood can give, Harrison skims the top of the sample, where it’s warmest. Then he turns the spoon upside down and plops the spoonful onto his tongue.

### **Swirl, Smack and . . .**

“I’ve developed a way of tasting called the Three S’s,” he says. “First, I *swirl* the ice cream very quickly around in my mouth, completely coating my taste buds. Then I *smack* my mouth several times very fast to warm up the ice cream even more and to add air, to release the maximum flavor.” While swirling and smacking, he tastes for balance between the cream, the natural flavors, and the sweeteners. He also makes sure that the texture is smooth and creamy, not icy or gummy.

You might expect *swallow* to be the taster’s third *S*. But after three to five seconds of swirling and smacking, Harrison *spits* the sample into a bucket. “That’s the worst part of my job,” he sighs, “spitting out the ice cream.”

### **The Taste of Success**

But that doesn’t mean that Harrison never eats ice cream. To test the aftertaste, he swallows one bite of each new flavor. And when he’s “off-duty,” he eats whatever flavors he chooses—and more than just one bite! Vanilla is his favorite. At home he enjoys making ice cream and swirling goodies into it. “We’re all kids when it comes to ice cream,” he says.

Thinking up new ideas, trying out new flavors, and taste-testing ice-cream samples each day keeps Harrison busy but happy—working at one cool job.

3 In the first paragraph, the word approved means

- A. invented.
- B. accepted.
- C. corrected.
- D. delivered.

4 According to the article, why do companies test their ice cream?

- A. to see how long it takes to freeze ice cream
- B. to find out what kind of ice cream people like
- C. to make sure they have the best kind of ice cream
- D. to compete against other ice-cream manufacturers

5 Harrison's early interest in working with ice cream **most likely** came from his

- A. wanting to create new flavors.
- B. earning a degree in chemistry.
- C. spending time with family members.
- D. thinking about different kinds of fun jobs.

6 Based on the article, eating very cold ice cream causes someone to

- A. add other flavors.
- B. use a stronger spoon.
- C. lose some of the flavor.
- D. take smaller bites.

*Read the sentence below and then answer the question that follows.*

Despite what you might think, there's more to the job than just liking ice cream.

7 Explain how Harrison shows that this statement is true. Use information from the article to support your answer.

8 In paragraph 6, the word attractive means

- A. simple.
- B. familiar.
- C. pleasing.
- D. original.

9 According to the article, what happens right after Harrison **first** tastes the ice cream?

- A. He swallows the ice cream.
- B. He spits out the ice cream.
- C. He adds another flavor of ice cream to his mouth.
- D. He moves the ice cream around in his mouth.

10 According to the article, which part of Harrison's job does he dislike the **most**?

- A. swirling the ice cream
- B. eating cold ice cream
- C. spitting out the ice cream
- D. testing the ice cream's aftertaste

11 Which section includes information about Harrison's life away from work?

- A. **A Day in Dessert**
- B. **Tasting with Your Eyes**
- C. **Swirl, Smack and. . .**
- D. **The Taste of Success**

12 Explain what makes Harrison a successful ice-cream taster. Use information from the article to support your answer.

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