

Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools

**Copy of 2017–2018 Grade 6 ELA Interim Assessment
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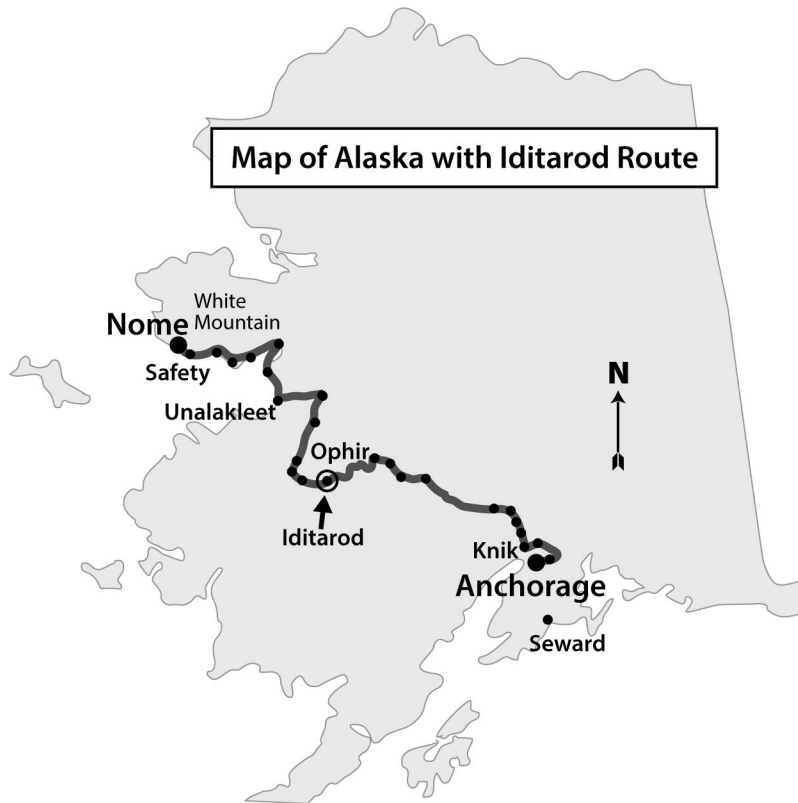
Directions: Answer all the questions on the test. When you are finished with a question, go on to the next question.

Read the following text and answer questions 1 through 13.

The Last Great Race
The Story of the Real Iditarod

- 1 The Iditarod bills itself as the “Last Great Race on Earth.” It is, without a doubt, one of the most incredible athletic competitions in the world today. The Iditarod is a sled dog race that winds each winter from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. For over one thousand miles, human drivers (called “mushers”) lead teams of 12 to 16 sled dogs across the frozen tundra of America’s forty-ninth state. On the trek, the dogs and their mushers struggle against freezing temperatures and through blinding blizzards. They fight fatigue and have to keep their eyes peeled for the dangerous wildlife that roams the remote wilderness. At times they cross the ice-choked Bering Sea, its surface creaking under the weight of the sleds.
- 2 The first full-length Iditarod took twenty days to complete. Today, most of the competitors finish in as few as ten days. The fastest time ever recorded was under nine. Those who choose to enter the race are undoubtedly motivated by the challenge. Completing the race—or even competing in it—is an amazing feat of endurance. However, many competitors are probably even more inspired by the instant acclaim and large cash prize given to the winner.
- 3 The modern Iditarod pales in comparison to the race that inspired it: the famous 1925 “serum run.” At that time, Nome, Alaska, was no more than a ramshackle village with a tiny population, mostly of gold prospectors. That winter, an outbreak of diphtheria threatened the health of nearly all of the town’s residents. Unfortunately, Nome was short of the serum (liquid medicine) needed to treat its sick. The town’s only doctor sent out a desperate plea across Alaska, asking for whatever serum could be found. The good news was that a sufficient amount of the medicine was found in Anchorage; the bad news was that it was a thousand miles away.
- 4 Even worse was that Nome was virtually unreachable because of the brutal winter weather. Ships couldn’t get through the frozen sea. Train tracks hadn’t even been laid that far. And the few planes that existed at the time had open cockpits, making winter flight impossible. The only way Nome would survive was if teams of sled dogs delivered the serum across the harsh Alaskan wilderness. It was a trip that normally took thirty days, but Nome’s ailing residents didn’t have that much time. Neither did the serum, which would become useless after roughly six days of Alaska’s extreme cold.
- 5 A relay of sled dog teams was set up to race the serum to Nome. The first musher, “Wild Bill” Shannon, picked up the precious cargo at the railroad depot at Nenana and raced off into the dark night. It was 674 miles to Nome. When Shannon left at 11 p.m., the temperature was forty degrees below zero Fahrenheit. It would get colder as the night progressed.
- 6 In six hours, “Wild Bill” traveled more than fifty miles to the checkpoint where he met the next musher. His face was frostbitten and his hands were frozen to his sled, but he delivered the medicine. In that way the serum sped across Alaska, from sled dog team to sled dog team, always edging closer to Nome. One musher flipped his sled and the medicine was temporarily lost in a snowdrift. Many other teams became lost in whiteouts (snowstorms so that intense visibility becomes impossible). But none stopped; all made it to the next checkpoint.

- 7 Less than six days later, with the serum good for only twelve hours more, the medicine arrived in Nome. Twenty mushers, and their teams of one hundred and fifty dogs, had delivered it just in time to save the town.
- 8 While completing the modern Iditarod is an amazing feat, it's also a voluntary contest of competitors chasing fame and fortune. The original was something else indeed: people risking their own health and safety to help others. Talk about "the last great race"!



GLOSSARY

cargo: something that is carried from one place to another
diphtheria: a serious and contagious disease that makes breathing difficult
frostbitten: damaged by being in freezing conditions for too long
pales in comparison: is not as impressive or important as something else
snowdrift: a hill of snow piled up by the wind

1 Which sentence from the text states the central idea?

- A. The first full-length Iditarod took twenty days to complete.
- B. The modern Iditarod pales in comparison to the race that inspired it: the famous 1925 “serum run.”
- C. A relay of sled dog teams was set up to race the serum to Nome.
- D. While completing the modern Iditarod is an amazing feat, it’s also a voluntary contest of competitors chasing fame and fortune.

2 Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

They fight fatigue and have to keep their eyes peeled for the dangerous wildlife that roams the remote wilderness.

What is the BEST definition for the underlined phrase?

- A. focus only on the trail
- B. be alert and watchful
- C. shield their eyes from harsh weather
- D. sleep with their eyes open

3 Read the sentences from paragraph 2.

Completing the race—or even competing in it—is an amazing feat of endurance. However, many competitors are probably even more inspired by the instant acclaim and large cash prize given to the winner.

What does the word acclaim mean in the sentences?

- A. money
- B. victory
- C. fame
- D. relief

4 How does the information in paragraphs 3 and 4 help develop the central ideas of the text?

- A. It gives historical background about the setting and conflict.
- B. It compares the modern race with the events that inspired the race.
- C. It praises the courage and determination of the original mushers.
- D. It describes problems the mushers faced on the trails.

- 5** Read the sentences from paragraph 4.

Even worse was that Nome was virtually unreachable because of the brutal winter weather. Ships couldn't get through the frozen sea. Train tracks hadn't even been laid that far.

According to the sentences, what was true of Nome?

- A.** It was colder than other towns in Alaska.
- B.** It wanted to expand its transportation system.
- C.** It had an important sea port.
- D.** It was separated from the rest of Alaska.

- 6** Select the **TWO** sentences in paragraph 4 that develop the idea of speed being essential during the 1925 “serum run.”

This question must be answered online.

- 7** Which sentence accurately describes the author's point of view?
- A. The author wanted to be a participant in the 1925 "serum run."
 - B. The author thinks the current Iditarod should be more dangerous.
 - C. The author feels the current Iditarod should be discontinued.
 - D. The author appreciates the challenges of the 1925 "serum run."

- 8** Which sentence from the text supports the idea that the serum-run mushers took a great risk to help others?
- A. For over one thousand miles, human drivers (called "mushers") lead teams of 12 to 16 sled dogs across the frozen tundra of America's forty-ninth state.
 - B. Those who choose to enter the race are undoubtedly motivated by the challenge.
 - C. The only way Nome would survive was if teams of sled dogs delivered the serum across the harsh Alaskan wilderness.
 - D. Less than six days later, with the serum good for only twelve hours more, the medicine arrived in Nome.

- 9** Which paragraph of the text is BEST illustrated by the map?
- A. paragraph 1
 - B. paragraph 2
 - C. paragraph 3
 - D. paragraph 4

Which information on the map BEST supports your answer?

- A. some of the dangerous conditions for the mushers
- B. where the beginning and end of the race is
- C. the miles traveled in the race
- D. the location of the city of Iditarod

- 10** Based on the information in the text and map, what does the reader know about the Iditarod race?

- A. The number of miles the first musher "Wild Bill" traveled to get the serum to the next musher was lengthy.
- B. The harsh conditions the mushers face as they run the Iditarod is considered an incredible athletic competition.
- C. The route of the lengthy 1,000 mile race crosses the width of Alaska.
- D. The serum race was run in 1925 and was the initial race that inspired the last great race.

- 11** Select **THREE** sentences from the summary of the race that show the author’s own opinion about the Iditarod and its racers.

This question must be answered online.

12 Which sentence from the passage supports the claim that Nome was "virtually unreachable"?

- A.** The Iditarod bills itself as the "Last Great Race on Earth."
- B.** Train tracks hadn't even been laid that far.
- C.** Neither did the serum, which would become useless after roughly six days of Alaska's extreme cold.
- D.** In six hours, "Wild Bill" traveled more than fifty miles to the checkpoint where he would meet the next musher.

Complete question 13 in the space shown.

13 The author claims that dangerous weather conditions made sled dog teams the only option for transporting the serum in 1925. Describe TWO pieces of evidence that the author uses to support this claim.

Read the following text and answer questions 14 through 21.

Too Close to the Sun
Adapted from Bulfinch's "Age of Fables"

- 1 Dædalus, a well-known artist and builder, built a maze for Minos, king of the island of Crete. After he labored long and finished building the maze, Dædalus lost the favor of the king. As a result, he and his young son, Icarus, were imprisoned in a tall tower. He plotted his escape from his prison but could not leave the island by sea because the king had ordered that every ship be searched before it sailed.
- 2 “Minos may control the land and sea,” Dædalus uttered to himself, “but not the regions of the air. I will try to escape that way.”
- 3 So Dædalus set to work to make wings for himself and his son. He wove feathers together, beginning with the smallest and then adding the larger. The larger feathers he secured with thread, the smaller with wax, and he shaped the whole to match the graceful curve of a bird’s wing. Icarus hovered near his father and looked on, sometimes running to gather up the feathers that had blown away with the wind. He sometimes played with the wax, which slowed down the pace of his father’s work.
- 4 When at last the work was done, Dædalus donned the wings and flapped them like he had seen birds do. He found himself lifted upward by the motion of his wings beating against the air. He next equipped his son in the same manner. He taught Icarus how to fly, as a bird tempts its young ones from the nest into the empty air.
- 5 When all was prepared for flight he said, “Icarus, my son, I charge you to fly at a moderate height. If you fly too low, the fog will make your wings wet and heavy. If you fly too high, the heat will melt them. Keep near me, and you will be safe.”
- 6 While he gave his son these instructions, the face of the father was wet with tears and his hands trembled. He kissed the boy, not knowing that it was for the last time. Then rising on his wings, Dædalus took flight. He looked back, glimpsed his son flying behind him, and felt sure of their success. As they flew, a farmer stopped his work to gaze and a shepherd leaned on his staff and watched them, astonished at the sight, and thinking they were gods who could fly like birds.
- 7 They flew out over the sea. The boy, excited by his flight, began to stray away from his father. He recalled his father’s warning, but in his exhilaration, he ignored it and soared upward as if to reach heaven. The nearness of the blazing sun softened the wax, which held the feathers together, and they came off. Icarus fluttered with his arms to no avail; no feathers remained to hold the air. Icarus cried out to his father as he plunged downward and was submerged into the blue waters of the sea.
- 8 His father cried out, “Icarus, Icarus, where are you?”
- 9 At last, Dædalus saw the feathers floating on the water and bitterly lamented his own invention. He buried Icarus and called the land Icaria, in memory of his child.

14 Which sentence from the passage BEST demonstrates that Dædalus is concerned about the upcoming flight?

- A. So Dædalus set to work to make wings for himself and his son.
- B. He next equipped his son in the same manner.
- C. He taught Icarus how to fly, as a bird tempts its young ones from the nest into the empty air.
- D. While he gave his son these instructions, the face of the father was wet with tears and his hands trembled.

15 Read the fourth sentence from paragraph 3. What is the impact of the author's use of the word hovered in this sentence?

- A. It implies that Daedalus perceives Icarus as a pest.
- B. It suggests that Icarus has a patient personality.
- C. It suggests that Icarus is already like a bird.
- D. It implies that Icarus is nervous about flying.

16 Read paragraph 7. By using the word fluttered, what does the author suggest about Icarus?

- A. He is helpless.
- B. He is hesitant.
- C. He is angry.
- D. He is confused.

17 In "Too Close to the Sun," what is the main reason for Icarus's fate?

- A. Icarus does not practice flying before they leave.
- B. Daedalus leads his son over the sea.
- C. Icarus decides to ignore his father's warning.
- D. Daedalus fails to explain the dangers they will encounter.

18 From which point of view and whose perspective is this story told?

- A. first-person point of view from the perspective of Minos
- B. third-person point of view from the perspective of a narrator
- C. third-person point of view from the perspective of a farmer
- D. first-person point of view from the perspective of Dædalus

19 How might the story be different if it were told from the point of view of Minos?

- A. The reader would learn exactly why Dædalus and Icarus were imprisoned.
- B. The reader would understand what it was like for Dædalus and Icarus to build the maze.
- C. The reader would feel the thrill that Icarus felt when he put on the wings.
- D. The reader would know how nervous Dædalus was when he taught his son to fly.

20 What happens in the final paragraph of the myth?

- A. The father wishes he had never invented the wings.
- B. The father knows he could have made a stronger set of wings.
- C. The father believes their problems happened due to the maze he built.
- D. The father blames Minos for all their troubles.

21 Which sentence is a central idea of this text?

- A. People who are free often take their freedom for granted.
- B. The past often helps people understand the present.
- C. Courage requires difficulty.
- D. Ignoring instructions can have negative consequences.

