

PRACTICE EXAM 14: EQAO GRADE 6 LANGUAGE SIMULATION (47 QUESTIONS)

READING SESSION A

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Passage 1: "Compass"

A short story by Devereaux Mendes

The compass had belonged to Sami's grandfather.

It was small and round, made of polished brass, with a glass face and a needle that always — always — pointed north. Sami had carried it in his backpack since the day his grandfather had given it to him, two summers ago, on the back porch of the cottage. His grandfather had pressed it into his hand and said, This will always know where it is going. Even when you do not.

Sami had been ten then. He was twelve now.

On the Saturday in question, Sami and his cousin Lin were spending the long weekend at the same cottage with their grandparents. It was late September, and the leaves were just starting to turn. After breakfast, Lin had suggested they walk to the old fire lookout — a wooden tower about two kilometres into the woods behind the cottage, on a trail their grandfather had shown them many times.

Sami had been to the fire lookout at least a dozen times in his life.

He left his backpack on the porch.

He did not bring the compass.

The two cousins walked into the woods. The trail was clear at first — packed earth, the brown ribbon of dirt that anyone could see. They talked as they walked. They saw a chipmunk. They stopped to look at a small toad on a stone. After about half an hour, they reached the spot where the trail divided in two — one path leading uphill toward the lookout, one path leading down toward the lake.

They took the uphill path.

Then, half an hour later, they had not yet reached the lookout.

Sami stopped walking.

"This is taking longer than usual," he said.

Lin nodded. She did not look worried yet. But she was looking around carefully.

The trail had become less clear. The packed earth had given way to a thinner path, half-overgrown, that wound between trees Sami did not recognize. The trees in this part of the forest were tall and dark. The light was different. Sami had the distinct sense — though he could not have explained it — that they had drifted off the trail somewhere behind them without noticing.

"We took the wrong fork," he said.

Lin looked at him. "Did we?"

"I think so."

"Which way back?"

Sami turned around.

The path behind them looked exactly like the path in front of them. He looked left, then right. He looked up at the sky — but the trees were so thick overhead that he could only see small patches of grey. He thought about the compass on the porch of the cottage, almost two kilometres behind them, sitting useless in the side pocket of his backpack.

He felt his stomach tighten.

"Sami?" Lin said.

He took a slow breath. He looked again — not in panic now, but more carefully.

He noticed something he had missed.

The moss on the trees was thicker on one side of each trunk than the other. He remembered, distantly, something his grandfather had once said about moss — moss usually grows thicker on the side that gets less sun. In this part of the country, that side was the north side. Which meant that the south — the direction back toward the cottage, which sat on the south end of the lake — was the opposite side.

Sami turned and looked along the trail. The moss had been on his right as they walked uphill.

Which meant the cottage was behind them and to his left.

He looked at Lin.

"Trust me," he said.

The two of them turned around and walked back along the path. Sami kept checking the moss on the trees as they went. He kept the direction in his mind — moss right means north, so cottage left means south. After about ten minutes, the path widened. He recognized a fallen log they had stepped over earlier. After fifteen minutes, they reached the fork in the trail.

Sami felt something loosen in his chest.

Twenty minutes later, the two of them walked into the clearing behind the cottage. Their grandfather was sitting on the porch with the newspaper.

"Find the lookout?" he asked.

Sami glanced at Lin. Lin glanced at Sami.

"Not today," Sami said. "We turned around."

His grandfather raised an eyebrow. He did not say anything for a moment. Then he set down the newspaper.

"Sit," he said.

Sami sat down on the porch step beside him. Lin sat down on the other side. Their grandfather did not look at them. He looked out at the woods.

"Tell me what happened," he said.

Sami told him.

His grandfather listened. He did not interrupt. When Sami was finished, the old man was quiet for a long moment. Then he reached into the breast pocket of his shirt and pulled out — Sami had not known he carried it — a second compass, smaller than the brass one, on a leather cord.

He set it on the porch step beside Sami.

"You did not have your compass with you," he said. "So your brain became the compass. That is the lesson. The compass is not the brass thing in your hand. The compass is what you know to do when the brass thing is not there."

Sami looked at the small compass on the porch step.

"Keep this one in your pocket," his grandfather said. "Not your backpack. Always your pocket."

Sami nodded.

That night, after dinner, Sami took the brass compass out of his backpack and set it carefully in the bottom drawer of the cottage desk. He clipped the new compass onto the inside of his jacket pocket, where he could feel it whenever he moved.

He did not say much at dinner.

But before he fell asleep that night, in the small upstairs bedroom of the cottage, he thought about the moss on the trees. He thought about turning around at the wrong fork. He thought about how his grandfather had said your brain became the compass.

Sami did not know yet what that meant for the rest of his life.

But he was beginning to.

1. Why does the author MOST LIKELY include the detail that Sami had been to the fire lookout "at least a dozen times in his life"?

- A. To explain why the path to the lookout had become well-known to the whole family
- B. To suggest that the lookout was the most popular destination near the cottage
- C. To prove that the cousins had received careful training from their grandfather
- D. To set up the surprise that even familiar paths can become unfamiliar quickly

2. Read this sentence from the passage:

"He left his backpack on the porch. He did not bring the compass."

What does the author MOST LIKELY communicate through these two short sentences?

- A. Sami did not believe the compass worked properly because it was so old
- B. The author is calling attention to a small choice that will matter later in the story
- C. Sami was too tired to carry his backpack on the long walk through the woods
- D. The author is suggesting that compasses are not useful tools for hiking

3. What does the dividing of the trail "in two — one path leading uphill toward the lookout, one path leading down toward the lake" set up in the story?

- A. The cousins will eventually choose to walk to the lake instead of the lookout
- B. The grandfather will arrive on the trail to guide the cousins to their destination
- C. The cousins are about to make a choice that affects the rest of their walk
- D. The cousins have already memorized which path leads to which destination

4. Read this sentence from the passage:

"Sami had the distinct sense — though he could not have explained it — that they had drifted off the trail somewhere behind them without noticing."

What does this sentence MOST LIKELY suggest about Sami?

- A. Sami is starting to notice changes in the woods even before he can put them into words
- B. Sami is making up an excuse to turn around because he is tired from the walk
- C. Sami has been to this exact part of the woods many times and recognizes it
- D. Sami is trying to convince Lin to go back to the cottage as soon as possible

5. What is the FIRST thing Sami does when he realizes he and Lin are off the trail?
- A. He runs back along the path to look for the spot where they made a wrong turn
 - B. He takes a slow breath and looks more carefully at the woods around him
 - C. He calls out to his grandfather hoping that his grandfather will be able to hear
 - D. He sits down on a fallen log and tries to remember the trail in his memory
6. How does Sami figure out which direction leads back to the cottage?
- A. He follows the sound of the wind blowing from a familiar direction in the woods
 - B. He listens for the sound of his grandfather calling from the cottage porch
 - C. He remembers that his grandfather had marked the trees along the trail in red
 - D. He remembers that moss usually grows thicker on the side of trees that gets less sun
7. When the grandfather says, "Your brain became the compass," what is he MOST LIKELY teaching Sami?
- A. The real tool is the knowledge a person carries inside themselves
 - B. The brass compass should always be left at home when walking in the woods
 - C. Children should not be allowed to use a compass without supervision
 - D. The cottage should be equipped with several compasses for safety
8. Why does Sami put the brass compass in the bottom drawer of the cottage desk that night?
- A. He no longer trusts the brass compass to point in the correct direction
 - B. He has been told by his grandfather to keep the compass safely indoors
 - C. He has learned that the compass he relies on most should be a different one
 - D. He is angry at himself for having forgotten the brass compass that morning
9. (Open-Response)

How does Sami change between the beginning of the story and the end? Use at least TWO specific details from the passage to support your answer.

Passage 2: "The Long Way Down" — A Free-Verse Poem

By Helene Tortorelli

(A free-verse poem — no fixed rhyme or meter. The poet uses short fragmented lines to control pace.)

I take

the long way down

to the river.

There is

a short way.

I know it.

The short way

is loud.

The short way is full

of bicycles

and shouting and

the sound of someone's

phone playing music

out loud.

The long way

is slow.

The long way

takes me past

the small wooden bench

where my grandmother

used to sit

with her thermos.

The long way
takes me past
the cracked place
in the sidewalk
where I learned, at six,
that I could keep going
after I fell.

The long way
takes me past
the tree that drops
yellow leaves first.

The long way
adds twelve minutes
to my walk.

The long way
is mine.

The river
will be there.

It is in
no hurry.

And neither
am I.

11. What is the MAIN message of this poem?

- A. Children should always take the shortest route between two places to save time
- B. The slower path through a familiar place can hold meaning that a fast route cannot
- C. Rivers are the most peaceful destination for a quiet afternoon walk in the city

D. Older relatives, like grandmothers, are the most important part of a person's day

12. Why does the poet MOST LIKELY use SHORT, FRAGMENTED lines instead of long sentences?

A. The poet was unsure how to write longer lines in a free-verse style

B. Short lines made it easier to fit the poem onto a single printed page

C. Short lines emphasize the rhyming words at the end of each phrase

D. Short lines slow the reader down, matching the slow pace of the speaker's walk

13. Read these lines from the poem:

"The long way / takes me past / the cracked place / in the sidewalk / where I learned, at six, / that I could keep going / after I fell."

What does this part of the poem MOST LIKELY mean?

A. The sidewalk crack was the reason the speaker fell and hurt herself badly

B. The speaker is worried that other children might trip in the same place

C. The speaker associates the cracked sidewalk with an important childhood lesson

D. The speaker is asking the city to repair the cracked sidewalk in her neighbourhood

14. What does the final stanza — "The river / will be there. / It is in / no hurry. / And neither / am I" — MOST LIKELY communicate?

A. The speaker has come to value taking her time over moving as quickly as possible

B. The speaker is worried that she will arrive at the river too late in the day

C. The speaker has finally decided to stop walking to the river so often this year

D. The speaker is trying to convince her family that the river is worth visiting

15. (Open-Response)

The short story "Compass" and the poem "The Long Way Down" both involve a character choosing to slow down and pay attention to something around them. Choose ONE specific way these two pieces are SIMILAR. Use details from BOTH pieces to support your answer.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Passage 3: "From Tree to Table: How Maple Syrup Is Made"

An explanatory article

Every spring, in forests across eastern Canada, something quietly remarkable happens. Sap begins to flow inside the trunks of millions of maple trees. Within a few weeks, that sap will have become one of Canada's most well-known products: pure maple syrup. The process of turning that sap into syrup is older than Canada itself — Indigenous peoples have been doing it for centuries — and it remains, even today, more art than industry. This article explains, step by step, how it is done.

Step 1: Wait for the Right Weather

Maple syrup season begins when winter is ending but has not yet ended completely. The ideal conditions are very specific: nights below freezing, days above freezing. This freeze-thaw cycle is what makes the sap move inside the tree. In most of Ontario and Quebec, this happens in late February through April, depending on the year. Producers cannot rush the season. They must wait for the trees to be ready.

Step 2: Tap the Tree

When the weather is right, producers drill a small hole — about one centimetre wide and five centimetres deep — into the trunk of a sugar maple tree. The hole is drilled at a slight upward angle so that the sap will flow downward and outward. A small metal or plastic spout, called a spile, is then carefully tapped into the hole. The spile guides the sap out of the tree.

It is important to know that this does not harm the tree. A healthy mature sugar maple — at least about thirty centimetres in diameter — can be tapped every year for over a hundred years without serious damage. The tree heals the small hole within a year, and producers move the tap to a different spot the next season.

Step 3: Collect the Sap

In traditional syrup operations, a small metal bucket is hung from the spile to catch the sap as it drips out. In modern operations, hundreds or thousands of trees are connected to each other by a network of thin plastic tubing that carries the sap directly to a central storage tank. Both methods work. Both produce the same result.

The sap that comes out of a healthy sugar maple is almost clear, very slightly sweet, and watery. It looks more like water than like syrup. There is a reason for that.

Step 4: Boil — and Boil, and Boil

Sap is about 97% water and 3% sugar.

To turn it into syrup, almost all of that water must be removed. This is done by boiling the sap in a large open pan called an evaporator. As the sap boils, steam rises and the water content slowly decreases. The remaining liquid becomes more and more concentrated, and the colour shifts from clear to amber to deep golden brown.

To produce one litre of maple syrup, producers must boil down approximately 40 litres of sap. This ratio — 40 to 1 — is the central reason that maple syrup is more valuable than most other sweeteners. A small jar of syrup represents many buckets of sap, many hours of boiling, and many days of waiting for the right weather.

The boiling continues until the sap reaches a precise temperature — about 104 degrees Celsius — at which point it is officially syrup. Producers use careful thermometers and density tests to know when this moment has arrived.

Step 5: Filter and Bottle

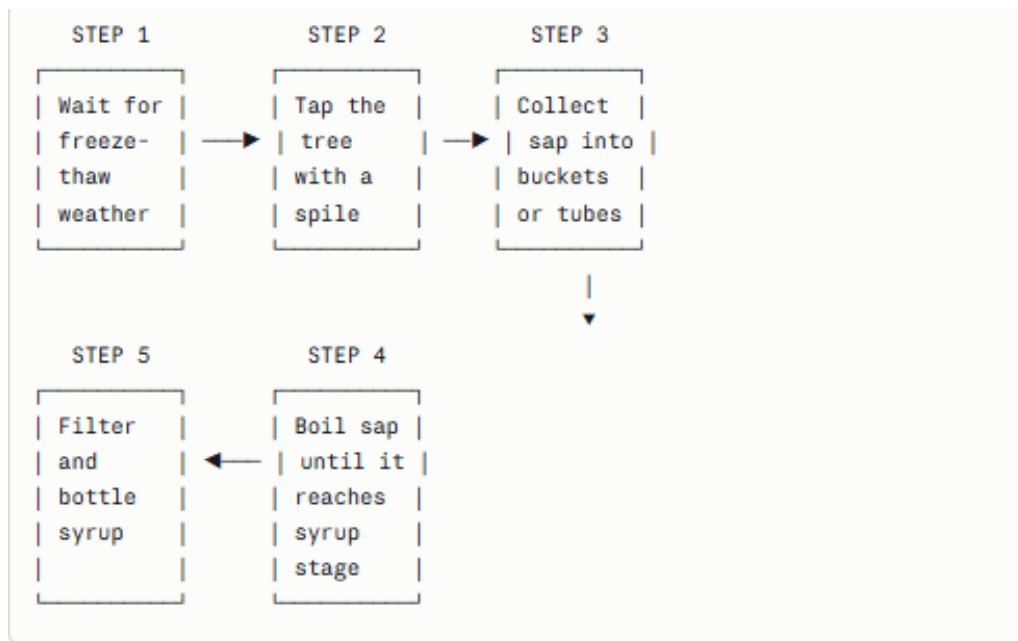
Fresh syrup is filtered to remove any small particles. It is then poured into bottles or cans while still very hot, which seals the bottles naturally. Properly bottled maple syrup can last for years without going bad — though, in most Canadian households, it disappears long before that becomes an issue.

A Living Tradition

Maple syrup is more than a food. It is a sign of spring, a reason for festivals, and a centuries-old craft passed down across many generations. Indigenous peoples — particularly the Algonquin, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee nations — developed the original methods for producing maple sugar long before European arrival. Today, Canada produces more than 70% of the world's maple syrup, with Quebec alone accounting for the majority. Small producers and large producers, family operations and commercial ones, all share the same basic five-step process explained here.

The trees, the cold nights, the boiling pans, the patient waiting — these have not changed. The forests, every spring, continue to do what they have always done. And every spring, Canadians wait, with their tools ready, for the moment the sap begins to move.

Graphic Text 1: The Five Steps of Maple Syrup Production



Graphic Text 2: Sap-to-Syrup Ratio at a Glance

Quantity	Approximate Amount
Sap collected from one tap, per season	About 30-50 litres
Sap needed to make 1 litre of syrup	About 40 litres
Sugar content of fresh sap	About 3%
Sugar content of finished syrup	About 66%
Temperature at which sap becomes syrup	About 104 °C
Years a healthy maple can be tapped	Over 100 years
Canada's share of world maple syrup	More than 70%

16. What is the MAIN purpose of this article?

- A. To convince Canadians to purchase only locally produced maple syrup from small farms
- B. To compare Canadian maple syrup to syrup produced in other countries around the world
- C. To explain step by step how maple syrup is produced from tree sap each spring
- D. To argue that maple syrup production should be more carefully regulated by the government

17. Why does the author MOST LIKELY say that maple syrup production is "more art than industry"?

- A. Maple syrup producers are usually trained as professional artists in their early careers
- B. The process depends on careful attention, experience, and patience that machines cannot replace
- C. Maple syrup is more often purchased as a decorative item than as an everyday food product
- D. Most maple syrup producers in Canada also sell paintings of their forests to tourists

18. According to the article, why do producers tap trees in late February through April?

- A. Trees are dormant during winter and need time to wake up before tapping begins
- B. Provincial regulations only allow producers to tap trees during certain months
- C. The forests are too dangerous to enter during the heavier snowfalls of mid-winter
- D. The freeze-thaw cycle between cold nights and warmer days makes the sap move

19. What does the article say about the IMPACT of tapping on the tree?

- A. A healthy mature sugar maple can be tapped every year for over a hundred years
- B. Tapping eventually weakens the tree and shortens its overall life by several decades
- C. Tapped trees must be allowed to rest for five full years between syrup seasons
- D. The drilled hole permanently damages the trunk and never heals after tapping

20. Read this sentence from the article:

"Sap is about 97% water and 3% sugar."

Why is this an important piece of information for understanding maple syrup production?

- A. The water inside the sap is what gives maple syrup its distinctive sweet flavour
- B. The water inside the sap is what determines the bottling temperature for syrup

23. According to Graphic Text 2, approximately how much sap is needed to produce ONE litre of maple syrup?

- A. About 40 litres of sap, which must be boiled down in an evaporator
- B. About 4 litres of sap, which is the amount one tap produces per season
- C. About 104 litres of sap, the same number as the syrup temperature
- D. About 70 litres of sap, the same percentage as Canada's world share

24. What does Graphic Text 2 reveal about the SUGAR CONTENT of sap compared to syrup?

- A. The sugar content of sap is higher than the sugar content of syrup
- B. The sugar content of sap and syrup is exactly the same amount
- C. The sugar content of sap is about half the sugar content of syrup
- D. The sugar content rises sharply during boiling, from about 3% to about 66%

25. (Open-Response)

D. although

30. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?

- A. The set of cooking tools on the shelf were used by my mother every weekend
- B. The set of cooking tools on the shelf are used by my mother every weekend
- C. The set of cooking tools on the shelf have been used by my mother every weekend
- D. The set of cooking tools on the shelf is used by my mother every weekend

31. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. Although the path was muddy we still walked, to the bakery the post office and the library
- B. Although the path was muddy, we still walked to the bakery, the post office, and the library
- C. Although, the path was muddy we still walked to the bakery the post office, and the library
- D. Although the path was muddy we still walked, to the bakery the post office, and the library

32. Which sentence uses an apostrophe correctly?

- A. The oxen yokes were stored carefully in the wooden barn near the back of the farm
- B. The oxens yokes were stored carefully in the wooden barn near the back of the farm
- C. The oxen's yokes were stored carefully in the wooden barn near the back of the farm
- D. The oxens' yokes were stored carefully in the wooden barn near the back of the farm

Part 2: Short Writing Responses (Questions 33-35)

33. (Open-Response)

Read the paragraph below. It contains THREE errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Rewrite the paragraph correctly.

WRITING SESSION B

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Part 1: Language Conventions (Questions 37-40)

37. Which sentence is a complete sentence (not a fragment or run-on)?

- A. The carpenter measured the wood twice before making the careful first cut
- B. Walking slowly through the empty marketplace toward the river that morning
- C. Although the assignment had been due on Monday afternoon at the latest
- D. The kettle whistled the cat jumped down the children ran into the kitchen

38. Read the sentence:

By the time the bus arrived at the station, the passengers ____ in the rain for nearly an hour.

Which phrase BEST completes the sentence?

- A. is waiting
- B. waits
- C. will wait
- D. had been waiting

39. Which sentence contains a spelling error?

- A. The students worked carefully on their projects throughout the entire afternoon
- B. The chef prepared a delicious meal for the special anniversary celebration tonight
- C. The community gathered to celebrate the opening of the beautiful new library
- D. The athletes practised every morning to prepare for the upcoming track meet

40. Read the sentence:

The students worked hard on their group project, ____ they finished it well before the deadline arrived.

42. (Open-Response)

Read the sentence below. Rewrite it as TWO complete sentences without changing the meaning.

The river was calm in the early morning the canoeists paddled quietly past the small island and watched a great blue heron lift slowly into the air.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

- B. who
- C. whom
- D. whose

45. Which sentence uses quotation marks correctly?
- A. Where did you put my hat "asked Eli from the front hallway carefully"
 - B. "Where did you put my hat asked Eli from the front hallway carefully"
 - C. "Where did you put my hat, asked Eli from the front hallway carefully"
 - D. "Where did you put my hat?" asked Eli from the front hallway carefully.

Part 4: Extended Writing Prompts (Questions 46-47)

46. (Extended Writing — Opinion)

Some people believe that students in Grade 6 should spend more time learning outdoor skills — such as map reading, canoeing, identifying plants, or building a fire safely — as part of their education. Other people believe that outdoor skills should be left to families and to summer camps, not to schools.

What do you think?

Write a response in which you:

- Clearly state your opinion
- Give at least TWO reasons that support your opinion
- Explain each reason with specific examples or details
- Briefly acknowledge an opposing view
- End with a strong concluding thought

(Aim for approximately four paragraphs.)

Practice Exam 14: Answer Key and Explanations

1. D — The detail that Sami had been to the lookout "at least a dozen times" sets up the surprise that follows — even a familiar path can become unfamiliar when you wander off it. The author uses the familiarity to make Sami's later confusion more striking. The other options misread the detail as family lore, popularity, or training.

2. B — The author breaks two small actions into two short sentences to deliberately call attention to a choice that will matter later — Sami leaves the compass behind, and that choice drives the story's conflict. Short sentences signal importance. The other options misread the detail as distrust, fatigue, or commentary on compasses.

3. C — The trail dividing in two is a classic story device for setting up a choice. The cousins are about to pick a path, and that choice — combined with their later wrong turn — leads to the events of the story. The other options misread the fork as a predetermined destination, a rescue setup, or established knowledge.

4. A — Sami's "distinct sense" that something is wrong, even before he can explain why, shows that he is starting to notice changes in the woods at a level deeper than words. This characterizes him as observant and attuned to his environment. The other options misread the line as excuse-making, familiarity, or persuasion.

5. B — The passage shows Sami taking "a slow breath" and looking "again — not in panic now, but more carefully." This deliberate, careful response is the first thing he does. The other options describe actions Sami does not take (running, calling out, sitting down).

6. D — Sami remembers his grandfather's lesson that "moss usually grows thicker on the side that gets less sun" — the north side in this part of Canada. He uses that knowledge to figure out which direction leads back to the cottage. The other options invent methods (wind, calling, marked trees) not supported by the passage.

7. A — The grandfather is teaching that the most important tool a person carries is knowledge — what you know to do. The brass compass was just an object; the lesson Sami applied (moss on trees) was the real compass. The other options misread the lesson as a rule about leaving compasses behind, a supervision rule, or an equipment requirement.

8. C — Sami puts the brass compass in the drawer and clips the new, smaller compass to his jacket pocket because he has learned that the compass he relies on most should be the one he keeps closest — not the heirloom in his backpack. His grandfather's instruction ("Not your backpack. Always your pocket") makes this explicit. The other options misread the action as distrust, indoor storage, or anger.

9. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *At the beginning of the story, Sami leaves his compass behind in his backpack on the porch and walks confidently into the woods without thinking carefully about preparation. After getting lost, he becomes more thoughtful — taking "a slow breath" and looking carefully at the moss on the trees to figure out which way leads home. By the end, Sami quietly clips a new compass into the inside pocket of his jacket, where he can feel it whenever he moves, and stores the old*

brass compass in a drawer. He has moved from being a boy who carries a compass to being a boy who has begun to carry knowledge and care with him at all times. (Strong: clear before/after change + two specific details.)

10. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *The ending suggests that Sami's experience in the woods has taught him something he will continue to understand more deeply as he grows up. His grandfather told him "your brain became the compass" — meaning the real tool is what you know and what you choose to notice. Sami does not yet understand everything that lesson will mean for the rest of his life, but he is beginning to see that being prepared, paying attention, and trusting what he knows will matter in many situations beyond a walk in the woods. (Strong: clear interpretation + text evidence.)*

11. B — The poem's central message is that the slower path through a familiar place can hold meaning — memories, observations, small moments — that a fast route cannot. The closing stanzas confirm this: the speaker is in "no hurry." The other options misread the message as speed advice, a river description, or a comment on family relationships.

12. D — Short, fragmented lines force the reader to slow down — taking the eye line by line, beat by beat — which matches the slow pace of the speaker's walk to the river. The form mirrors the content. The other options misread the choice as inexperience, space-saving, or rhyme.

13. C — The cracked sidewalk reminds the speaker of a childhood moment when she learned, at six, "that I could keep going after I fell." She associates this small place with an important early lesson about resilience. The other options misread the lines as cause of injury, public concern, or city repair.

14. A — The closing stanza is the speaker's quiet acceptance of slowness — the river will be there, it is in no hurry, and neither is she. This is the resolution of the poem's central choice. The other options misread the lines as timing worry, withdrawal, or family persuasion.

15. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Both pieces involve a character choosing to slow down and notice things around them. In "Compass," Sami stops walking when something feels off, takes "a slow breath," and looks carefully at the moss on the trees — a small detail he might have missed if he had been moving quickly. In "The Long Way Down," the speaker chooses the long, slow path to the river so she can pass by her grandmother's old bench, the cracked sidewalk where she learned to keep going, and the tree that drops yellow leaves first. Both pieces show that important things can be found by people who take their time and pay attention. (Strong: clear similarity + evidence from both texts.)*

16. C — The article's central purpose is to explain, step by step, how maple syrup is produced from tree sap. Every section follows a numbered step in the process. The other options misread the article as a sales pitch, an international comparison, or a regulatory argument.

17. B — The article calls maple syrup production "more art than industry" because the process depends on patience, experience, careful temperature judgement, and waiting for the right weather — things that cannot be fully automated or rushed. The other options take the phrase too literally as painting careers, decorative use, or a tourism claim.

18. D — The article explains directly: "the ideal conditions are very specific: nights below freezing, days above freezing. This freeze-thaw cycle is what makes the sap move inside the tree." This is the reason tapping happens in late February through April. The other options invent reasons (tree dormancy, regulations, danger).

19. A — The article states that "a healthy mature sugar maple — at least about thirty centimetres in diameter — can be tapped every year for over a hundred years without serious damage." This is the article's clear statement about tapping impact. The other options contradict the article by claiming damage, mandatory rest, or permanent harm.

20. C — Knowing that sap is 97% water is essential to understanding why producers must boil for so long — they must evaporate nearly all of that water to concentrate the small amount of sugar. The 40-to-1 sap-to-syrup ratio depends on this fact. The other options misread the importance of the water content as flavour, bottling, or harvest timing.

21. B — The article states that "the boiling continues until the sap reaches a precise temperature — about 104 degrees Celsius — at which point it is officially syrup." This is the specific marker producers use. The other options invent methods (colour chart, steam stopping, volume) not in the article.

22. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Maple syrup is made through a careful, multi-step process. According to the diagram and the article, producers first wait for freeze-thaw weather when nights are below freezing and days are above freezing, because this cycle makes the sap move inside the tree. Then they tap the tree by drilling a small hole and inserting a spile to collect the sap, which is gathered in buckets or carried through tubes to a central tank. Finally, the sap is boiled in an evaporator until almost all of its water has steamed away and the remaining liquid reaches about 104 degrees Celsius — at which point it has become syrup.* (Strong: claim + multiple specific steps from both sources.)

23. A — Graphic Text 2 states clearly that "sap needed to make 1 litre of syrup" is "about 40 litres." This is the central ratio the article also emphasizes. The other options misread the chart as a per-tap figure, confuse the temperature with the ratio, or confuse Canada's world share with sap volume.

24. D — The table shows sap at about 3% sugar and finished syrup at about 66% sugar. This is a sharp rise that happens because boiling removes water and concentrates the sugar. The other options invert the comparison, misread the percentages, or claim equal sugar content.

25. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *The 40-to-1 ratio makes maple syrup valuable because it takes a great deal of sap and labour to produce a small amount of syrup. The article explains that almost all the water in the sap must be boiled away in an evaporator, which takes many hours of careful work. Graphic Text 2 shows that one tap produces only about 30 to 50 litres of sap in a season — barely enough to make one or two litres of syrup. A single jar of syrup, in other words, represents many buckets of sap, hours of boiling, and the careful judgement of an experienced producer.* (Strong: claim + two specific details from both sources.)

26. C — The author includes this information to make sure readers understand that Indigenous peoples — specifically the Algonquin, Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee — originated the craft of maple sugar production "long before European arrival." The credit is direct and intentional. The other options misread

the inclusion as a process-comparison claim, an international history, or an explanation for Quebec's modern share.

27. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Maple syrup is a "living tradition" because the craft has been passed down across generations for centuries and continues to be practised today in much the same way. The article explains that Indigenous peoples developed the original methods long before European arrival, and that small family producers and large commercial operations still share the same basic five-step process. The trees, the cold nights, the boiling pans, and the patient waiting "have not changed." The word "living" captures the idea that this is not just a historical practice — it is something Canadians continue to do every spring.* (Strong: clear justification + two specific details.)

28. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Maple syrup is made through a five-step process: producers wait for freeze-thaw weather, tap sugar maple trees with spiles, collect the sap, boil it in an evaporator until it reaches about 104 degrees Celsius, and then filter and bottle the finished syrup. It takes about 40 litres of sap to make just 1 litre of syrup, which is why maple syrup is more valuable than most other sweeteners. Today, Canada produces more than 70% of the world's maple syrup.* (Strong: captures main process + specific detail + own words.)

29. A — "Because" introduces a cause-and-effect relationship — the campers gathered firewood *because* they expected cold. This is the only conjunction that fits the meaning. "Unless" signals condition, "however" signals contrast, and "although" signals concession — none of which match the cause-and-effect relationship.

30. D — The subject is "set" (singular), not "tools" (which is part of the prepositional phrase "of cooking tools"). The singular verb "is used" is correct. Options A, B, and C use plural verbs that incorrectly agree with the closer noun rather than the actual subject. This is the classic subject-verb agreement trap.

31. B — Option B correctly uses a comma after the introductory dependent clause ("Although the path was muddy,") and commas to separate three items in a list ("the bakery, the post office, and the library"). Options A, C, and D either omit needed commas or scatter them incorrectly throughout the sentence.

32. C — "Oxen" is already plural without an "s," so the possessive form is "oxen's" — adding 's after the irregular plural. Option A omits the apostrophe entirely. Option B incorrectly adds an "s" to "oxen." Option D incorrectly places the apostrophe after "oxens." This follows the same rule as "children's," "women's," and "men's" — irregular plurals form possessives by adding 's.

33. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Last winter, my older brother and I went snowshoeing for the first time in our lives. We were surprised at how difficult it was to keep our balance on the deep snow. Eventually, we figured it out and had a wonderful afternoon in the woods near our cottage in Muskoka.* (Three errors fixed: "my older brother and me" → "my older brother and I"; "diffucult" → "difficult"; "muskoka" → "Muskoka.")

34. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *As the sun rose slowly over the horizon and the lake began to shimmer with gold, the first canoeists pushed off from the dock.* (Strong: combines all three ideas using subordination, flows smoothly, paints a coherent scene.)

35. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Last summer, I had to walk home from my piano lesson alone for the first time after my mother's car broke down on the highway. The lesson was only six blocks from our house, but in the rain, with the streetlights flickering on, the route felt completely different from when I had walked it with her. I remembered her always saying to "turn left at the big white maple," and once I found that tree, the rest of the way home felt simple again.* (Strong: specific situation, sensory detail, clear sense of finding the way.)

36. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong narrative response builds around a specific moment when something the writer already knew — a fact, a habit, an observation, a story from a family member — turned out to matter in an unexpected way. Strong responses describe the situation in sensory detail, build toward the moment of realization, and show the surprise of knowing something without having known you knew it. Length: approximately three to five paragraphs. The strongest responses pick a small, specific piece of knowledge rather than a dramatic skill, and let the meaning emerge from the moment itself.

37. A — Option A has a clear subject ("The carpenter"), a verb ("measured"), and a complete thought. Option B is a fragment (no main subject/verb). Option C is a fragment (a dependent clause alone). Option D is a run-on (three independent clauses fused without proper punctuation).

38. D — The sentence describes an action that had been ongoing before another past event ("By the time the bus arrived"). This requires the past perfect continuous tense, "had been waiting." Options A, B, and C use present, simple present, or future tenses that do not match the past-before-past time relationship signalled by the sentence.

39. B — "Delicious" is misspelled; the correct spelling is "delicious" with an "i" between the "c" and the "o." The other three sentences contain no spelling errors. This is one of the more commonly misspelled words at the Grade 6 level because the silent "i" is easy to drop.

40. C — The two clauses describe a positive cause-and-result: the students worked hard, *and* they finished early. "And" correctly joins the related ideas. "Unless" signals condition, "although" signals concession, and "however" signals contrast — none of which fit the simple additive relationship.

41. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Each of the hikers was responsible for carrying their own water and snacks on the long trail.* (Two corrections: "were" → "was" because the indefinite pronoun "each" is always singular; "they're" (the contraction "they are") → "their" (the possessive). Both are common errors from Chapter 7.)

42. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *The river was calm in the early morning. The canoeists paddled quietly past the small island and watched a great blue heron lift slowly into the air.* (Strong: run-on split cleanly into two complete sentences while preserving the full meaning.)

43. A — Option A correctly capitalizes "March" (month), "Quebec City" (proper city name), and leaves "family" and "winter carnival" lowercase (common nouns when used generally). Option B fails to capitalize "March" and "Quebec City" and incorrectly capitalizes "Family." Options C and D miss "Quebec City" or incorrectly capitalize "Winter Carnival" or "Carnival" as common nouns.

44. B — "Who" is used to refer to people doing an action — the runner *who* won the marathon. "Which" refers to things, "whom" is the object form (incorrect because the pronoun is the subject of "won"), and "whose" indicates possession. "Who" is the only correct relative pronoun here.

45. D — Option D correctly punctuates dialogue: opening quotation marks, the question mark inside the closing quotation marks before the speaker tag, and a period at the end of the sentence. Options A, B, and C either omit quotation marks, misplace them, or fail to handle the question mark and the speaker tag correctly.

46. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong opinion response takes a clear stand (outdoor skills should be taught in school OR should be left to families and camps OR a balanced position) in the opening paragraph, develops at least two well-reasoned arguments in body paragraphs with specific examples (safety, real-world skills, equity of access, time pressure, academic priorities, weather), briefly acknowledges an opposing view, and closes with a thoughtful concluding sentence. Length: approximately four paragraphs. Wandering between both sides without committing loses marks on Ideas.

47. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong series-of-paragraphs response introduces a specific Canadian food, tradition, or seasonal activity in the opening paragraph and explains how it connects to the writer's life, develops at least two meaningful aspects in separate body paragraphs with concrete sensory detail, and closes with a reflection on what the topic helps the writer understand about family, community, or Canada. Length: approximately four paragraphs. The strongest responses pick a focused, specific topic (one tradition, one food, one activity) rather than a sweeping subject, and let personal connection drive the writing.