

PRACTICE EXAM 19: EQAO GRADE 6 LANGUAGE SIMULATION (47 QUESTIONS)

READING SESSION A

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Passage 1: "The Bowl"

A short story by Konstantin Aldeguer

The bowl had been in the family for almost ninety years.

It was made of brown clay, with a thin white stripe around the rim and a chip on one edge that everyone in the family had known about for as long as anyone could remember. Mateo's great-grandmother had made it. She had been a pottery teacher in a small town outside Lisbon. She had passed the bowl down to Mateo's grandmother, who had brought it across the ocean to Toronto, and who had used it almost every day to mix bread dough for the family's Sunday meals.

Two weeks ago, the bowl had broken.

Mateo's younger sister, Vitória — six years old — had not meant to drop it. She had been carrying it from the kitchen counter to the sink, the way Grandma had asked her to, and her small hands had not been quite big enough. The bowl had hit the floor and split in three large pieces. Vitória had cried for almost an hour. Grandma had held her on the couch and told her, gently, that the bowl was only a bowl. That what mattered was that no one was hurt.

But the bowl had been part of every Sunday meal for as long as Mateo could remember.

On Saturday morning, Mateo found Grandma in the small workshop she kept at the back of the house. She was sitting at the wooden table where she sometimes mended things — old picture frames, broken cups, the lamp Mateo's grandfather had built before he passed away. The three pieces of the brown clay bowl were laid out in front of her. Beside them was a small can of gold paint, a thin brush, and a tube of a kind of strong glue Mateo had never seen before.

"What are you doing?" Mateo asked.

Grandma looked up. She did not seem surprised that he had come in. She just smiled — the kind of small, careful smile she wore when she was about to begin something that mattered to her.

"There is an old way of repairing broken pottery," she said. "It is from Japan. It is called kintsugi. The artist does not hide the cracks. The artist fills the cracks with gold paint, so that the broken places become

part of the story of the bowl. The bowl is not less because it was broken. The bowl is more, because of how it has been mended."

Mateo looked at the three pieces.

"You are going to mend Great-Grandma's bowl?" he asked.

"I am going to try," Grandma said.

Mateo sat down across from her at the wooden table. He did not say anything. He just watched.

Grandma worked very slowly.

She held each of the three pieces up to the light, examining the edges where the clay had broken. She used a small brush to clean the dust off the edges. She mixed a small amount of the strong glue with a drop of the gold paint in a small dish. She used a thin tool to apply the mixture along one of the broken edges. She fitted two of the pieces back together. She held them in place. She did not move them for almost three minutes.

Mateo had never seen anyone work this slowly at anything.

"Grandma," he said quietly. "Is this hard to do?"

"It is not very hard," Grandma said. "But it requires being patient. The glue will not work if you do not give it time to set. And the gold lines will not look right if you rush them. Most of this is just waiting."

Mateo nodded. He kept watching.

After almost twenty minutes, the first two pieces had been joined. A thin gold line ran along the seam where the clay had once been broken. Grandma examined the joined pieces in the light. She nodded, satisfied. She set them down carefully.

Then she looked up at Mateo.

"Would you like to help me with the last piece?" she asked.

Mateo's eyes widened. "Me?"

"You," she said. "I will guide you. But I want you to do part of this."

Mateo hesitated.

He was almost twelve years old. He had never done anything like this. He had never worked with gold paint or a thin brush or a kind of glue that mattered. He did not want to make the bowl worse than it already was.

But Grandma was looking at him in a quiet, patient way. She was not pushing him. She was waiting.

Mateo nodded.

Grandma showed him how to mix the glue and the paint. She showed him how to hold the thin tool. She showed him how to apply the mixture carefully along the broken edge — too much, and it will spill over;

too little, and the seam will not hold. Mateo applied the mixture. His hand was not as steady as Grandma's. The line he made was not as clean as hers.

But it was there.

Together — Grandma's hands gently guiding his — they fit the last piece into place. They held it for three minutes without moving. They set the bowl down. Grandma examined the seam.

She smiled.

"You did well," she said.

Mateo looked at the bowl. It was whole again. The three gold lines — one of them slightly less clean than the others — ran across the brown clay, catching the light from the workshop window. The bowl was different from how it had been before. But it was also, in a way Mateo could not yet quite explain, the same bowl. Maybe even more itself than it had been before.

Grandma covered the bowl with a clean cloth. She told Mateo that they would need to leave it alone for the rest of the day so the glue could fully set.

That evening at dinner, Vitória sat quietly at the table, still a little ashamed of what she had done two weeks ago.

Mateo sat down beside her. He did not say anything for a moment.

Then he said: "Grandma is fixing the bowl. I helped her with one of the cracks. It is going to be okay."

Vitória looked at him.

"Really?" she said.

"Really," Mateo said.

The next Sunday, the brown clay bowl came back to the table.

The thin gold lines caught the light from the kitchen window. Grandma served the bread dough she had mixed in it that morning. Vitória stared at the bowl through the whole meal. So did Mateo.

It was not a new bowl.

But it was, in some way, a better one.

1. Why does the author MOST LIKELY include the history of the bowl — from a great-grandmother in Portugal to Mateo's grandmother in Toronto — at the beginning of the story?

- A. To show that the bowl is the most valuable item in the entire family's house
- B. To establish how meaningful the bowl is, so its breaking feels like a real loss
- C. To suggest that the family will eventually move back to Portugal one day

D. To explain why Mateo's great-grandmother chose to become a pottery teacher

2. Read this sentence from the passage:

"Grandma had held her on the couch and told her, gently, that the bowl was only a bowl. That what mattered was that no one was hurt."

What does this sentence MOST LIKELY reveal about Grandma?

- A. Grandma did not really care about the bowl that Vitória broke that afternoon
- B. Grandma had been hoping to throw the bowl away for many years already
- C. Grandma was secretly angry but was trying not to show it to Vitória
- D. Grandma cared more about Vitória's feelings than about the broken bowl

3. What is the MAIN idea of the kintsugi method that Grandma explains to Mateo?

- A. Old pottery can be repaired only if it is broken into exactly three pieces
- B. Cracks in pottery should be hidden so that the bowl looks new again
- C. Broken places can be mended in a way that becomes part of the object's story
- D. Gold paint is the strongest material available for repairing damaged pottery

4. Read this sentence from the passage:

"Mateo had never seen anyone work this slowly at anything."

What does this sentence MOST LIKELY suggest?

- A. The careful patience Grandma is showing is something new and important for Mateo to see
- B. Grandma is moving slowly because she is too old to work at her normal speed any longer
- C. Mateo is impatient and is hoping that Grandma will finish the repair more quickly
- D. Mateo is bored watching the repair and is hoping to find something else to do

5. Why does Grandma MOST LIKELY say that "most of this is just waiting"?

- A. The mending process takes longer than most people are usually able to wait for
- B. Patience is at the centre of the craft — the glue and the gold lines both need time
- C. Grandma wants Mateo to leave the workshop so she can finish the repair alone

D. The bowl has been sitting in pieces for two weeks, and Grandma is tired of waiting

6. When Grandma asks Mateo to help with the last piece, what is she MOST LIKELY doing?

- A. She is checking whether Mateo is old enough to take care of the bowl in the future
- B. She is testing Mateo's ability to follow careful instructions in a difficult task
- C. She is asking him to help because her own hands are not as steady as they used to be
- D. She is including him in the craft so that the repair becomes part of his story too

7. Read this part of the passage:

"The line he made was not as clean as hers. But it was there."

What does this part of the passage MOST LIKELY suggest?

- A. Mateo's part of the repair was completed badly and will have to be done again later
- B. Grandma is disappointed in Mateo for not doing the work as well as she would have
- C. What matters is that Mateo participated, even if his work is not perfect on the first try
- D. Mateo will need many more years of practice before he is able to mend pottery alone

8. What is the central THEME of this story?

- A. Broken things — and the people connected to them — can sometimes be made stronger by careful, patient repair
- B. Children should not be allowed to carry valuable family items from one room to another
- C. Pottery is the most important craft for families to pass down through the generations
- D. The most valuable objects in a family's home are the ones that have travelled the farthest

9. (Open-Response)

What does Mateo learn from watching and helping Grandma repair the bowl? Use at least TWO specific details from the passage to support your answer.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

the one with the wobbly second drawer
that I am pretty sure you still have
wherever you are.

I want to tell you a few things
before I forget them.

You are good at fixing what is broken.
Remember the bicycle chain in third grade.
Remember the lamp.
Remember the bowl, when we were eleven.
You are patient when it matters.
Other people will not always notice this.
But I noticed.

I wanted you to know.
You are allowed to be afraid.
Being afraid does not mean
you have to stop.

The fear and the trying
can happen at the same time.
You do not have to be loud
to be heard.

The quietest people in our family
have always been the ones
who knew the most.

If you are reading this someday,
and you have forgotten any of these things,
I am writing them down
so you can find them again.

I love you.

— Me, age 11

11. What kind of poem is this called, based on its structure?

- A. A ballad — a song-like poem that tells a long story with regular rhymes
- B. An acrostic poem — a poem in which the first letters spell a hidden word
- C. An epistolary poem — a poem written in the form of a letter
- D. A haiku sequence — three connected poems built from a 5-7-5 syllable pattern

12. What is the MAIN purpose of writing a letter to a future self?

- A. To send a real letter through the mail to an actual relative who lives far away
- B. To pass important reminders or values forward in time to a future version of yourself
- C. To convince a future version of yourself to make different choices than you are making
- D. To collect a list of facts that a future version of yourself can use in a school assignment

13. Read these lines from the poem:

"You are good at fixing what is broken. / Remember the bicycle chain in third grade. / Remember the lamp. / Remember the bowl, when we were eleven."

What do these lines MOST LIKELY suggest about the speaker?

- A. The speaker has been criticized many times for breaking things at home and at school
- B. The speaker is asking the future self to find a job repairing bicycles when she is older
- C. The speaker is worried that the future self will not be able to fix things any longer
- D. The speaker takes pride in a small skill she does not want her future self to forget

14. What is the MOST LIKELY meaning of the lines:

"You are allowed to be afraid. / Being afraid does not mean / you have to stop."?

- A. Being afraid and choosing to keep going can happen at the same time
- B. The speaker is hoping that her future self will not be afraid of anything important
- C. Adults are usually less afraid than children and have nothing left to fear
- D. The speaker is afraid of a specific thing and wants her future self to know about it

READING SESSION B

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Passage 3: "The Otter Returns: A Pacific Coast Comeback"

An informational article

For most of the twentieth century, the sea otters that had once lived in great numbers along the Pacific coast of Canada were gone. They had been hunted to near-extinction in the 1700s and 1800s for their thick, valuable fur. By 1929, the year the last known sea otter was seen along the British Columbia coastline, the species had been completely wiped out from Canadian waters. Where thousands of otters had once floated in kelp forests just off the coast, there were none at all.

By the 1970s, scientists had begun to understand something serious about that disappearance.

The sea otters had not just been a single species lost from the coast. They had been one of the most important species in the entire Pacific coastal ecosystem. Without them, the ocean along the British Columbia coast had begun to change in ways scientists had not predicted.

This article tells the story of how the sea otters returned, and what their return reveals about how nature works.

What a Keystone Species Does

In ecology, scientists use the term keystone species to describe an animal whose presence holds an entire ecosystem together. A keystone species is not necessarily the largest animal in its habitat, or the most numerous. But its activity in the ecosystem has effects that go far beyond what its small numbers might suggest.

The sea otter is a classic example of a keystone species.

Sea otters live in coastal waters off the Pacific coast. They eat — among other things — large numbers of sea urchins. Sea urchins, in turn, eat kelp — the tall underwater plants that grow in dense forests along the coast. Kelp forests provide shelter for many fish species, food for many marine animals, and even oxygen for the surrounding water.

When sea otters are present, they control the population of sea urchins. The kelp forests remain healthy. Many other species benefit.

When sea otters are absent — as they were in British Columbia for most of the twentieth century — the sea urchin population grows rapidly. The urchins eat away at the kelp forests. The kelp forests shrink or disappear entirely, leaving bare seafloor where rich underwater forests once stood. Fish populations decline. Other species disappear.

This is what had happened along the British Columbia coast.

The Recovery Begins

In 1969, conservationists began carefully transplanting sea otters from Alaska — where small populations had survived — back into British Columbia waters. Eighty-nine otters were released over several years. The hope was that, given time, a population might re-establish itself.

It worked.

By the 1980s, biologists were tracking small but growing groups of otters along the central British Columbia coast. By the early 2000s, the population had grown into the thousands. As of recent counts, more than eight thousand sea otters now live in British Columbia waters. The species was officially downlisted from endangered to special concern in 2009.

But the return of the otters did more than restore a single species. It restored the kelp forests.

A Coast Transformed

Where otters returned, sea urchin populations began to drop. Kelp forests began to grow back. Fish species began to return. Areas that had been bare seafloor for decades became, once again, dense underwater forests filled with life.

Scientists watching the recovery in the Pacific coast region have documented a remarkable pattern: the changes brought by the otters' return have been measurable not in years but in decades — and the cascading effects have benefited many species at once. In some study areas, kelp cover has increased by more than five hundred percent since otters returned.

A single small animal — about the size of a medium dog — had been doing something no human team could have replicated. Just by living and eating, the sea otter had been holding an entire ecosystem in balance.

A Story Not Yet Finished

The recovery is not without complications. Sea otters compete with some Indigenous and commercial fisheries for shellfish, particularly sea urchins and clams. Many First Nations along the Pacific coast — particularly the Heiltsuk, the Nuu-chah-nulth, and others — have long-standing relationships with both sea otters and with marine harvests that depend on shellfish. The return of the otters has created real and sometimes difficult conversations about how to manage a coastline where both ancient and recovering populations need to share resources.

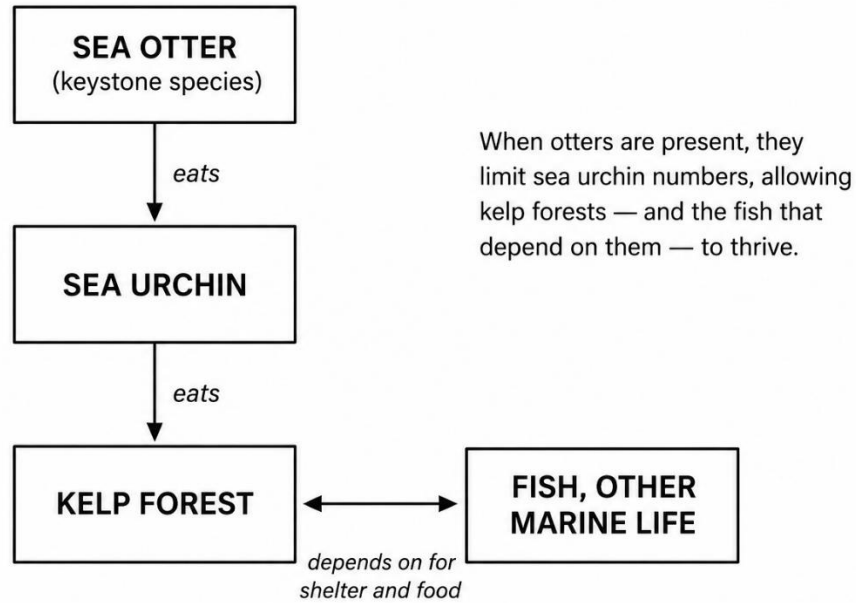
The recovery is not finished.

But what is clear, after fifty years of observation, is that the return of the sea otters has fundamentally reshaped the Pacific coast of British Columbia. The kelp forests are back. The fish are back. The seafloor has come alive again in ways that scientists had thought might be permanently lost.

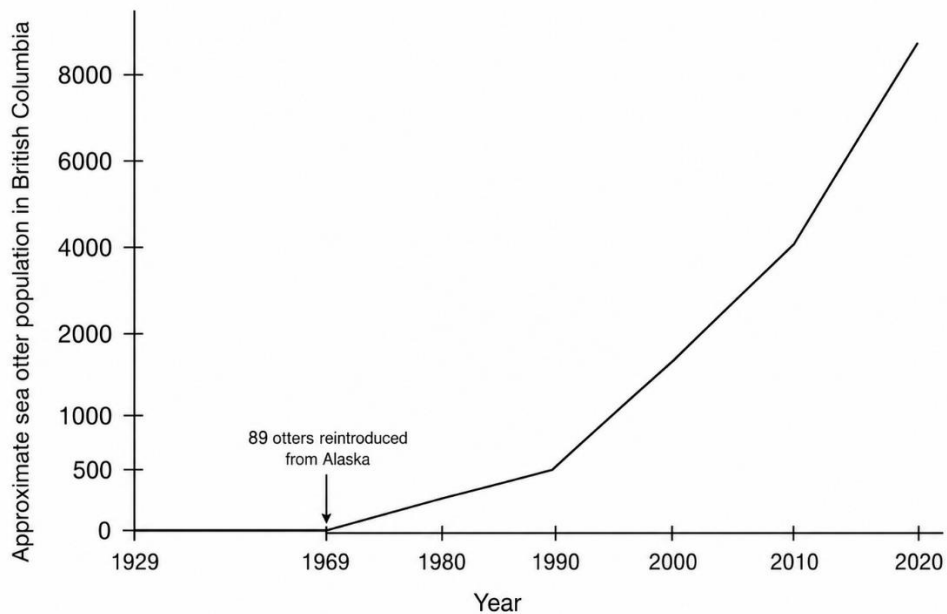
A small floating animal, brought back to a coast where it had been absent for almost a century, did this — not by being large, or numerous, or powerful, but simply by being there, by eating sea urchins, and by letting the rest of the ecosystem follow.

Graphic Text 1: Simplified Food Web — Pacific Coast Kelp Ecosystem

Figure PQ-1:



Graphic Text 2: Sea Otter Population in British Columbia, 1929–2020



Population estimates based on biologist surveys along the British Columbia coast.

16. What is the MAIN purpose of this article?

- A. To convince Canadians to take a vacation to the Pacific coast to see the sea otters
- B. To compare the sea otter's recovery with the recoveries of other endangered species
- C. To explain how the sea otter's return has restored the entire Pacific coast ecosystem
- D. To argue that all hunting along the Pacific coast should be permanently banned by law

17. Why does the author MOST LIKELY begin the article by describing how the sea otters were "gone" from British Columbia for most of the twentieth century?

- A. To establish the loss before the recovery, so the comeback feels more meaningful
- B. To suggest that hunters in the 1700s and 1800s acted illegally under the laws of their time
- C. To prove that scientists did not understand the sea otter's role until very recently
- D. To explain why the federal government still bans the hunting of sea otters today

18. What does the article say a KEYSTONE species is?

- A. The most numerous or largest animal that lives in a particular ocean habitat
- B. An animal that is more important than every other species in its ecosystem
- C. A species that scientists have decided to protect with special legal status
- D. An animal whose presence holds an entire ecosystem together despite small numbers

19. According to the article, what happens to kelp forests when sea otters are ABSENT?

- A. The kelp forests grow taller and denser because no animal is disturbing them
- B. The sea urchin population grows rapidly and eats away at the kelp forests
- C. The kelp forests are unaffected because they depend on sunlight, not animals
- D. The kelp forests change colour from green to brown along the coastline

20. What was the FIRST step taken to bring sea otters back to British Columbia?

- A. Canadian scientists captured sea otters from California and released them on the coast
- B. Conservationists waited for sea otters from Alaska to swim south on their own
- C. Conservationists transplanted eighty-nine sea otters from Alaska in 1969

28. (Open-Response)

In two or three sentences, summarize the MAIN ideas of this article in your own words. Use at least ONE specific detail from the article or graphic texts in your summary.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

30. Which sentence has correct subject-verb agreement?
- A. The bouquet of fresh flowers on the table is arranged carefully by my grandmother
 - B. The bouquet of fresh flowers on the table are arranged carefully by my grandmother
 - C. The bouquet of fresh flowers on the table were arranged carefully by my grandmother
 - D. The bouquet of fresh flowers on the table have been arranged carefully by my grandmother

31. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Although the day was warm we still packed, our raincoats umbrellas and warm sweaters
 - B. Although, the day was warm we still packed, our raincoats umbrellas and warm sweaters
 - C. Although the day was warm, we still packed our raincoats, umbrellas, and warm sweaters
 - D. Although the day was warm we still packed our raincoats umbrellas and warm sweaters

32. Which sentence uses an apostrophe correctly?
- A. The mens choir performed at the community centre last Sunday afternoon at three o'clock
 - B. The men's choir performed at the community centre last Sunday afternoon at three o'clock
 - C. The mens' choir performed at the community centre last Sunday afternoon at three o'clock
 - D. The men's' choir performed at the community centre last Sunday afternoon at three o'clock

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.

Last summer, my best friend and me visited the pacific rim national park along the british columbia coast. We spent hours watching the waves crash against the rocks and looking for sea otters in the kelp. It was one of the most memorable trips we have taken together.

(Write your response in the space provided.)

Part 3: Extended Writing Prompt (Question 36)

36. (Extended Writing — Narrative)

Write a story about a time when you (or someone in your life) repaired something that had broken — a small object, a friendship, a routine, a small disagreement, or anything else that needed mending.

The break and the repair can be real or imagined. The repair should be a **SMALL** one — not a dramatic rescue or a major life event.

Your story should:

- Include a clear beginning, middle, and end
- Have at least one main character
- Describe what was broken in specific detail
- Show the careful, patient act of repair
- End with a reflection on what was different after the repair
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation

(Aim for approximately three to five paragraphs.)

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

- A. The biologist carefully recorded the sea otter population along the rocky coastline
- B. Walking slowly along the path beside the kelp forest that early morning before sunrise
- C. Although the field trip had been scheduled for several weeks in advance now
- D. The waves crashed the seagulls scattered the fishermen pulled in their nets

38. Read the sentence:

By the time the biologists reached the cove, the sea otter ___ on its back at the surface for nearly an hour.

Which phrase BEST completes the sentence?

- A. is floating
- B. floats
- C. will float
- D. had been floating

39. Which sentence contains a spelling error?

- A. The community gathered to celebrate the opening of the brand-new aquatic centre
- B. The students worked diligently on their reports about Canadian marine wildlife
- C. The chef carefully prepared a delicious meal for the visiting government officials
- D. The athletes practised every morning to prepare for the upcoming swim meet

40. Read the sentence:

The biologists studied the kelp forest carefully, ___ they wanted to record every change in the ecosystem.

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

- A. unless
- B. although
- C. because
- D. however

Part 3: Conventions Continued (Questions 43-45)

43. Which sentence uses capitalization correctly?

- A. Last August, my family visited the Pacific Rim National Park along the British Columbia coast
- B. Last august, my Family visited the pacific rim national park along the British Columbia coast
- C. Last August, my family visited the pacific rim national park along the british columbia coast
- D. Last August, my Family visited the Pacific Rim National Park along the british columbia coast

44. Read the sentence:

The bowl ___ my grandmother repaired last weekend has been in our family for almost ninety years.

Which word BEST completes the sentence?

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

45. Which sentence uses quotation marks correctly?

- A. Where did you put my notebook "asked Mom from the kitchen doorway carefully"
- B. "Where did you put my notebook?" asked Mom from the kitchen doorway.
- C. "Where did you put my notebook asked Mom from the kitchen doorway"
- D. "Where did you put my notebook, asked Mom from the kitchen doorway"

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

46. (Extended Writing — Opinion)

Some people believe that protecting endangered animals — such as the sea otter — should be one of Canada's top environmental priorities. Other people believe that money and effort spent on saving single species could be better spent solving larger environmental problems like climate change or pollution.

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 19: Answer Key and Explanations

- 1. B** — The opening detail about the bowl's ninety-year journey — great-grandmother in Portugal, grandmother across the ocean to Toronto, Sunday meals for generations — establishes the bowl's deep meaning to the family. When the bowl breaks, the reader feels a real loss because the history has already been built up. The other options misread the detail as monetary value, future relocation, or a career explanation.
- 2. D** — Grandma's gentle words to Vitória — "the bowl was only a bowl" and "what mattered was that no one was hurt" — show that her granddaughter's feelings matter more to her than the broken object. This sets up Grandma's later careful repair, which honours the bowl without holding Vitória responsible. The other options misread her response as indifference, hidden anger, or a wish to discard.
- 3. C** — The article's *kintsugi* explanation states directly that the artist "does not hide the cracks" but "fills the cracks with gold paint, so that the broken places become part of the story of the bowl." This is the philosophy of the method. The other options take the description too literally as a number rule, a hiding goal, or a comment on material strength.
- 4. A** — Mateo's surprise at the slow pace highlights that careful patience is something new for him to see modelled by an adult. The line characterizes Grandma's craft as deliberate rather than rushed. The other options misread the line as age-related slowness, impatience, or boredom.
- 5. B** — Grandma's words frame patience as the centre of the craft — "the glue will not work if you do not give it time to set" and "the gold lines will not look right if you rush them." Most of the work is just waiting. The other options misread the line as a comment on impatient people, a dismissal of Mateo, or a complaint about delay.
- 6. D** — By including Mateo in the repair, Grandma is making him part of the bowl's story — so that when the bowl returns to the Sunday table, his hands have helped to mend it. The other options misread her invitation as a test of future caretaking, a skill assessment, or a request for help due to weakness.
- 7. C** — The line "But it was there" affirms that what matters is Mateo's participation in the repair, not the perfection of his line. His seam is slightly less clean than Grandma's, but it is real, and that is what counts. The other options misread the line as failure, disappointment, or a need for further training.
- 8. A** — The story's emotional core turns on the idea that broken things — and the people connected to them — can be made stronger by careful, patient repair. The bowl is whole again, but it is also more itself than before, because of how it has been mended. The other options misread the message as a rule against children carrying things, an artistic ranking, or a comment on travelled objects.
- 9. Open-Response** — **Sample strong answer:** *Mateo learns about patience and about the value of careful, slow work. When he watches Grandma examine each broken edge, clean off the dust, and mix the glue and gold paint slowly, he realizes he has "never seen anyone work this slowly at anything." Grandma teaches him directly that "most of this is just waiting" — that the glue must set and the gold lines must be applied without rushing. By the end of the morning, when Mateo helps with the last piece himself, he has*

begun to understand that some things — including objects and the relationships connected to them — can be made stronger by careful, patient repair. (Strong: clear lesson + two specific details.)

10. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Mateo means that the bowl is now meaningful in a new way — not just as an object passed down from his great-grandmother, but as an object he himself has helped to mend. The three gold lines running across the brown clay show where the bowl was broken and where it has been carefully repaired. One of those lines is slightly less clean than the others, because Mateo applied it himself. The bowl has become part of his own story, not just his grandmother's and his great-grandmother's — and the kintsugi method has made the bowl, as Grandma said, "more, because of how it has been mended."* (Strong: clear interpretation + text evidence.)

11. C — An epistolary poem is written in the form of a letter — addressed to a specific recipient, with a salutation ("Dear Future Me,") and a closing sign-off ("— Me, age 11"). The poem's structure makes the form explicit. The other options describe poetic forms that do not match (no ballad story, no hidden acrostic word, no 5-7-5 haiku pattern).

12. B — A letter to a future self is a way of passing important reminders, values, or observations forward in time — so that the older version of the writer can find them again later. The other options misread the purpose as actual mail, decision-changing, or a school assignment.

13. D — The lines characterize the speaker as someone who takes pride in a small skill she does not want her future self to forget — fixing a bicycle chain, mending a lamp, helping with the bowl. The skill is small, but the speaker wants it remembered. The other options misread the lines as criticism, a career suggestion, or a worry about losing the skill.

14. A — The lines explicitly state that being afraid and choosing to keep going can happen at the same time: "The fear and the trying / can happen at the same time." This is the speaker's reassurance to her future self. The other options misread the lines as fearlessness, an age claim about adults, or a specific fear.

15. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Both pieces honour quiet, often unnoticed qualities in the speaker or main character. In "The Bowl," Mateo is praised by his grandmother for being patient enough to learn the careful work of kintsugi repair — even though no one outside the workshop would necessarily notice the difference between his gold line and hers. In "Letter to My Future Self," the speaker writes that she is "patient when it matters" and that "other people will not always notice this. But I noticed." Both pieces honour the kind of quiet patience that other people often miss, and the kind of small skill that matters more than it looks like it does. (Strong: clear similarity + evidence from both texts.)*

16. C — The article's central purpose is to explain how the sea otter's return has restored the entire Pacific coast ecosystem — not just the otter population, but the kelp forests, fish populations, and the marine life that depend on them. Every section supports this. The other options misread the purpose as a tourism pitch, a recovery comparison, or a hunting argument.

17. A — Opening with the loss — that sea otters were "gone" from British Columbia for most of the twentieth century — establishes the depth of the loss before the recovery story. This makes the comeback

feel more meaningful. The other options misread the opening as historical legality, scientific delay, or current law.

18. D — The article states directly that a keystone species is "an animal whose presence holds an entire ecosystem together. A keystone species is not necessarily the largest animal in its habitat, or the most numerous. But its activity in the ecosystem has effects that go far beyond what its small numbers might suggest." This is the definition. The other options invert or distort the definition.

19. B — The article explains that when sea otters are absent, "the sea urchin population grows rapidly. The urchins eat away at the kelp forests." This is the cause-and-effect chain the article describes. The other options invent unrelated effects on the kelp.

20. C — The article states that "in 1969, conservationists began carefully transplanting sea otters from Alaska — where small populations had survived — back into British Columbia waters. Eighty-nine otters were released over several years." This is the article's specific first step. The other options invent alternative origins or actions.

21. A — The sentence emphasizes that the sea otter's effect comes from its everyday activities — simply living and eating sea urchins — not from any special effort. This is the central point about how keystone species work. The other options misread the sentence as exclusivity, management requirement, or size.

22. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *The sea otter helps the kelp forest by keeping sea urchin populations under control. According to the article, sea otters eat large numbers of sea urchins, and sea urchins eat the kelp that grows in dense underwater forests along the coast. The food-web diagram shows the same chain — an arrow points from "SEA OTTER" to "SEA URCHIN" labelled "eats," and another arrow points from "SEA URCHIN" to "KELP FOREST" also labelled "eats." When otters are present, urchin numbers stay low, allowing the kelp forests — and the many fish and marine animals that depend on them — to thrive. (Strong: claim + two specific details from both sources.)*

23. D — Graphic Text 2 shows the plotted line rising to more than 8,000 by the year 2020. This matches the article's recent population estimate. The other options misread the chart by confusing 2020 with reintroduction (89), early recovery (500), or mid-recovery (2,000).

24. B — The graph shows the population at zero from 1929 to 1969 — forty years of total absence — then rising slowly through the 1970s and 1980s before accelerating through the 1990s and 2000s to reach over 8,000 by 2020. The pattern is slow at first, then faster. The other options misread the pace as quick recovery, steady decline, or peak followed by decline.

25. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *The sea otter population took several decades to recover after the 1969 reintroduction. According to the article, eighty-nine otters were released into British Columbia waters from Alaska beginning in 1969. The line graph shows that the population stayed very low through the 1970s and 1980s, reaching only about 500 otters by 1990 — more than twenty years after the reintroduction. The population then grew more quickly, reaching about 2,000 by 2000 and more than 8,000 by 2020. The species was officially downlisted from endangered to special concern in 2009. (Strong: claim + multiple specific details from both sources.)*

26. C — The article mentions First Nations communities' long-standing relationships with both sea otters and shellfish to acknowledge that the recovery affects communities with their own histories and needs — and that there are real, sometimes difficult conversations about sharing the coast. The other options misread the mention as blame, government cooperation, or funding policy.

27. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *This description matters because it captures what is unusual about a keystone species. The sea otter is not large — only about the size of a medium dog — and it does not have any unusual strength or special tools. According to the article, the otter restores the entire ecosystem "not by being large, or numerous, or powerful, but simply by being there, by eating sea urchins, and by letting the rest of the ecosystem follow." This reframes how readers usually think about influence in nature — sometimes the most important species is simply the one that quietly does what it has always done.* (Strong: clear interpretation + text evidence.)

28. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Sea otters were hunted to near-extinction along the Pacific coast of Canada by 1929, and their absence allowed sea urchin populations to grow and destroy the kelp forests that many other marine species depended on. Beginning in 1969, conservationists transplanted eighty-nine sea otters from Alaska back into British Columbia waters, and the population has grown to more than 8,000 today. The return of the otters has restored not just a single species but the entire kelp forest ecosystem — showing how a small keystone species can hold an entire coast in balance.* (Strong: captures main ideas + uses specific detail + own words.)

29. D — "Because" introduces a cause-and-effect relationship — the students gathered quietly *because* the principal had asked them to wait without making noise. 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. A — The subject is "bouquet" (singular), not "flowers" (which is part of the prepositional phrase "of fresh flowers"). The singular verb "is arranged" is correct. Options B, C, and D use plural verbs that incorrectly agree with the closer noun rather than the actual subject. This is the classic subject-verb agreement trap.

31. C — Option C correctly uses a comma after the introductory dependent clause ("Although the day was warm,") and commas to separate three items in a list ("our raincoats, umbrellas, and warm sweaters"). Options A, B, and D either omit needed commas, misplace them, or scatter them incorrectly throughout the sentence.

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

33. Open-Response — **Sample strong answer:** *Last summer, my best friend and I visited the Pacific Rim National Park along the British Columbia coast. We spent hours watching the waves crash against the rocks and looking for sea otters in the kelp. It was one of the most memorable trips we have taken together.* (Three errors fixed: "my best friend and me" → "my best friend and I"; "pacific rim national park along

the british columbia coast" → "Pacific Rim National Park along the British Columbia coast"; "memorable" → "memorable.")

34. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *As the kelp forest swayed gently in the current and the small fish darted between the tall stalks, a single sea otter floated on its back at the surface.* (Strong: combines all three ideas using subordination, flows smoothly, paints a coherent underwater scene.)

35. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *My grandfather taught me how to braid bread dough during the summer I turned ten. We would stand together at the kitchen counter in his small apartment, his hands guiding mine until I could make three even strands and weave them over and under without breaking the rhythm. He had been a baker in his small town in Italy for almost forty years, and he never once told me my braid was wrong — only that I would get better. I still make the same braid every time I bake bread with my mother.* (Strong: specific skill, specific person, sensory detail, personal connection.)

36. Extended Writing — Sample Level 3 response benchmark: A strong narrative response builds around one small, specific thing that was broken — an object, a friendship, a small routine, a small disagreement — and develops a careful, patient act of repair. Strong responses describe both the break and the repair in sensory detail and close with a quiet reflection on what was different afterward. Length: approximately three to five paragraphs. The strongest responses earn the word "repair" through patient, specific action rather than dramatic gesture.

37. A — Option A has a clear subject ("The biologist"), a verb ("recorded"), 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 biologists reached the cove"). This requires the past perfect continuous tense, "had been floating." 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. C — "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 a commonly misspelled word at the Grade 6 level because the silent "i" is easy to drop.

40. C — "Because" introduces a cause-and-effect relationship — the biologists studied the kelp forest carefully *because* they wanted to record every change. This is the only conjunction that fits the meaning. "Unless" signals condition, "although" signals concession, and "however" signals contrast — none of which match the cause-and-effect relationship.

41. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *Neither the biologist nor the volunteers were prepared for the unexpected change in the otter population that summer.* (Two corrections: "or" → "nor" (the correct pairing with "neither"); "was" → "were" (in "neither/nor" constructions, the verb agrees with the subject closer to it; "volunteers" is closer to the verb and is plural, so the verb must be plural).)

42. Open-Response — Sample strong answer: *The tide had begun to come in just after sunrise. The small fishing boats turned toward the harbour, and the seabirds rose all at once into the cool morning air*

above the water. (Strong: run-on split cleanly into two complete sentences while preserving the full meaning.)

43. A — Option A correctly capitalizes "August" (month), "Pacific Rim National Park" (proper park name), and "British Columbia" (proper province name), while leaving "family" and "coast" lowercase (common nouns). Option B fails to capitalize "August," fails to capitalize "Pacific Rim National Park," and incorrectly capitalizes "Family." Options C and D miss "Pacific Rim National Park" or "British Columbia" or incorrectly capitalize "Family."

44. D — "That" is the correct relative pronoun for referring to things — the bowl *that* my grandmother repaired. "Who" and "whom" refer to people, and "whose" indicates possession. "That" is the only correct choice when referring to a non-human noun like a bowl.

45. B — Option B 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, C, and D 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 (single-species protection OR broader environmental priorities OR a balanced position) in the opening paragraph, develops at least two well-reasoned arguments in body paragraphs with specific examples (keystone effects, broader impact of climate change, ethical obligation, resource allocation, success stories like the sea otter), 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 skill, tradition, or piece of knowledge passed down by a specific older person in the opening paragraph, develops at least two specific teaching moments in separate body paragraphs with concrete sensory detail, and closes with a reflection on why the skill, tradition, or knowledge matters. Length: approximately four paragraphs. The strongest responses pick a focused, specific subject and let genuine connection to the older person drive the writing.