ALBERTA ENGLISH 20-1 · FULL COURSE

Reading Comprehension — Practice Test

Alberta English 20-1 • 50 questions

This practice test was made by AI and there may be mistakes. If a question or answer looks wrong, use the Flag a mistake button to let Brett know so he can fix it.

Reading I — What the River Keeps

Use this reading for questions 1 to 10.

Daniel had meant to be gone before dark. The farmhouse stood at the end of the gravel road with its curtains drawn, and his brother had already texted twice about the papers that needed signing. All Daniel had to do was walk through each room, list anything worth keeping, and lock the door for the last time. It should have taken an hour. Instead, he stood in the kitchen doorway, unable to begin, because the room still smelled of cinnamon and woodsmoke, as if his grandmother had only stepped out to the garden.

He had not visited in three years. University, then a job in the city, then the comfortable excuse that there was always next month. When the call came in February, he had told himself that grief was simpler at a distance. Standing here, he understood that distance had only stored the grief, not reduced it. On the table lay her green watering can, still half full, and beside it a note in her careful handwriting: Water the tomatoes on Tuesday. It was Tuesday.

The greenhouse leaned against the south wall, its panes fogged and one door hanging loose. Inside, the tomato plants had gone leggy and pale, but they were alive, reaching in a disorderly row toward the light. Daniel filled the can at the outdoor tap and worked slowly down the row. The task gave his hands something honest to do. With each plant, some memory returned uninvited: his grandmother teaching him to pinch out side shoots, her patience when he pulled up a seedling thinking it was a weed.

His phone rang as he reached the last plant. His brother wanted a decision by Friday. A buyer had offered a fair price, and holding on, his brother said, was sentiment, not sense. Daniel heard the fairness of it and resented it anyway. He looked at the empty house, then back at the green rows. Selling was sensible. It was also final in a way that signing a form could not explain. He said he needed the weekend, surprised at the firmness in his own voice.

That evening he lit the wood stove, swept the kitchen floor, and set the watering can by the door where she had always kept it. He did not know yet what he would decide about the farm. But the house no longer felt like a task to be finished. It felt like a place that had waited for him, and for one more night, at least, he would wait with it.

1 **In Reading I the main internal conflict facing Daniel is his**

A Guilt about staying away while he must decide about the farm

B Fear that a storm will trap him at the farmhouse

C Anger at his grandmother for leaving him the property

D Desire to give up his city job and become a farmer

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

2 **In the phrase about distance having stored the grief the word stored suggests the grief was**

A Slowly reduced until it almost disappeared

B Kept out of sight without becoming any smaller

C Forgotten completely during his years in the city

D Shared with his brother until it felt lighter

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

3 **The note beside the watering can is important mainly because it**

- **A** Proves the house legally belongs to Daniel now
- **B** Explains why his brother wants to sell the farm
- **C** Turns an errand into an act of connection with his grandmother
- **D** Shows his grandmother expected visitors every Tuesday

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

4 **Daniel waters the tomato plants mainly because the task**

- **A** Will raise the selling price of the property
- **B** Was promised to his brother on the telephone
- **C** Keeps him from having to enter the house
- **D** Gives his hands honest work while memories return

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

5 **The tomato plants still alive in the greenhouse most clearly symbolize**

- **A** Love and memory surviving even after neglect
- **B** The profit a working farm can still produce
- **C** The danger of leaving a house unattended
- **D** Daniel having inherited a talent for gardening

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

6 **The brother argues for selling the farm mainly on the grounds that**

- **A** The house is unsafe and beyond repair
- **B** The offer is fair and holding on is sentiment not sense
- **C** Their grandmother asked them to sell it quickly
- **D** Daniel has promised the buyer an answer already

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

7 **By the end of Reading I Daniel has changed in that he has moved from**

- **A** Refusing to sell to signing the papers at once
- **B** Grief for his grandmother to anger at his brother
- **C** Wanting to finish quickly to choosing to stay the weekend
- **D** Living in the city to planning a permanent move

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8 **The third person limited point of view is effective mainly because it**

- **A** Reveals the private thoughts of every character
- **B** Keeps the reader from learning how Daniel feels
- **C** Presents the farm exactly as a buyer would see it
- **D** Gives the reader access to Daniel and his inner life

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

9 **The tone of the final paragraph of Reading I is best described as**

- **A** Quiet and reflective rather than triumphant
- **B** Bitter and accusing toward his brother
- **C** Cheerful and carefree about the future
- **D** Urgent and fearful about the coming night

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

10 **A central theme of Reading I is that**

- **A** Sensible decisions should never be delayed by feeling
- **B** Facing a place tied to loss can begin a kind of healing
- **C** Family property always causes conflict between brothers
- **D** City life offers more honest work than farm life

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Reading II — The Barn in March

Use this reading for questions 11 to 20.

The barn stands open to the March wind,

its stalls swept clean, its harness gathering dust.

No hooves shift in the straw at dawn,

no breath warms the cold and iron air.

My father walks the aisle with empty hands,

counting what the years have taken away.

He touches each gate as if in greeting,

then lets his palm rest on the weathered wood.

Above him, swallows have not yet returned,

and the yard beyond is grey with meltwater.

Then, near noon, a single note breaks the quiet,

thin as wire, bright as a struck match.

He looks up. In the rafters, one swallow turns,

shaking the long road from its wings.

My father smiles for the first time in weeks.

He fetches nails, a hammer, the good cedar boards,

and sets to mending the broken nest ledge.

Work, he says, is how hope gets its hands dirty.

Outside, the meltwater finds its way to the creek,

and the whole yard shines as if forgiven.

11 **In Reading II the tone of the first ten lines is best described as**

- **A** Angry and defiant
- **B** Light and playful
- **C** Desolate and mournful
- **D** Proud and celebratory

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

12 **The tone of the poem shifts when**

- **A** The father walks the aisle with empty hands
- **B** The stalls are described as swept clean
- **C** The yard is described as grey with meltwater
- **D** A single note from a swallow breaks the quiet

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

13 **The images of clean stalls and dust on the harness suggest mainly**

A Absence and a long period of disuse

B A farm being prepared for new animals

C The wealth of the family that owns the barn

D A recent and hurried spring cleaning

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

14 **The father touching each gate as if in greeting shows his**

A Fear that the barn will collapse soon

B Continuing attachment to what the barn once held

C Plan to sell the gates and boards for lumber

D Habit of checking that every gate is locked

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

15 **In the poem the returning swallow most clearly symbolizes**

- A The arrival of strangers in a small community
- B The danger that spring weather can bring
- C Renewal and the return of hope after loss
- D The father wishing he could leave the farm

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

16 **The comparison of the bird call to a struck match suggests a sound that is**

- A Loud enough to frighten everyone in the yard
- B Steady and comforting like a burning lamp
- C Harsh and unwelcome in the morning quiet
- D Small and sudden yet bright against the silence

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

17 **The father fetching nails and boards after seeing the swallow shows that his hope**

A Expresses itself in practical work rather than words

B Depends entirely on the weather improving

C Was present unchanged throughout the whole poem

D Concerns buying new animals for the empty stalls

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

18 **The line about hope getting its hands dirty means that hope becomes real when it**

A Is discussed openly with the whole family

B Is acted on instead of merely felt

C Is hidden away from disappointment

D Is rewarded with good fortune at once

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

19 **The final image of the yard shining as if forgiven suggests a feeling of**

A Guilt finally being punished

B Confusion about the changing season

C Regret that nothing can be repaired

D Release and renewal after a hard season

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

20 **A central theme of Reading II is that**

A Old buildings should be left exactly as they are

B Spring always removes every trace of sorrow

C Hope can return quietly even after real loss

D Work matters more than family memory

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Reading III — In Praise of Repair

Use this reading for questions 21 to 27.

When my toaster stopped working last spring, my first instinct was to throw it away and order a new one before breakfast. Instead, on a whim, I turned it over, removed four screws, and found the problem in less than a minute: a crumb had jammed the lever, and one wire had come loose. The repair cost me a five dollar part and twenty minutes. The toaster is still on my counter, and I think about that morning more often than I expected to.

We live surrounded by objects designed to be disposable. Phones are sealed shut so their batteries cannot be changed. Shoes are glued rather than stitched. When something breaks, replacement feels normal and repair feels eccentric, even though replacement is usually the more expensive choice. The cost is not only financial. Every discarded object carries away the materials and energy that made it, and fills a growing stream of waste that someone else, somewhere else, must deal with.

Repair teaches something replacement cannot: close attention. To fix a bicycle, you must watch how the chain actually moves and listen for the link that complains. To mend a shirt, you must slow down to the pace of the needle. This attention is a kind of patience, and it changes the person doing the repairing. A fixed object is no longer just a product. It carries a small history, part of which you wrote yourself, and people keep such objects longer and treat them better.

None of this means everything should be repaired. Some machines are unsafe when damaged, and some repairs cost more in time and parts than a replacement honestly would. The point is not to fix everything. The point is to make repair a question we ask before we discard, rather than a thought that never occurs to us. A community repair night at our local library now meets monthly, and its busiest table is always the one where neighbours teach neighbours.

Start with one broken thing. Look up how it works. Borrow a tool. The worst outcome is that the object stays broken, which is where it was headed anyway. The best outcome is larger than a working toaster. It is the discovery that your hands, given patience, know more than the throwaway habit ever allowed them to learn.

21 **The main purpose of Reading III is to**

- A Explain how toasters and bicycles are manufactured
- B Persuade readers to value repairing over replacing
- C Describe the history of the local library repair night
- D Warn readers never to open household appliances

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

22 **The main idea of the essay is that a throwaway culture causes people to lose**

- A Money and materials as well as skill and satisfaction
- B Interest in buying anything new ever again
- C Access to libraries and community programs
- D Respect for the people who design products

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

23 **In the essay the word disposable most nearly means**

- A Expensive and difficult to obtain
- B Made by machines rather than by hand
- C Recycled into something entirely new
- D Meant to be thrown away after a short use

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

24 **The opening story about the toaster is effective mainly because it**

- A Proves that all repairs take less than a minute
- B Warns readers about a dangerous electrical fault
- C Makes the argument concrete and personal before it widens
- D Shows the writer is a trained appliance technician

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

25 **According to the essay repairing a bicycle or a shirt requires the repairer to**

A Buy the newest tools available in stores

B Watch closely and slow down to the work

C Memorize the manual before beginning

D Work faster than a factory assembly line

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

26 **The writer answers the opposing view by admitting that some repairs are**

A Unsafe or honestly not worth their cost in time and parts

B Impossible for anyone without professional training

C Always cheaper than buying a replacement item

D Better left to neighbours at a repair night

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

27 **The tone of Reading III is best described as**

A Angry and mocking toward modern shoppers

B Detached and purely technical in its focus

C Fearful about the future of the environment

D Reasoned and encouraging rather than scolding

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

28 **When the writer says repair changes the person doing it the change is mainly in**

A Income earned from fixing things for others

B Status among neighbours and friends

C Patience and the habit of paying close attention

D Skill at arguing with product manufacturers

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29 **The essay is organized mainly by moving from**

- **A** A personal example to reasons to a limit and a call to act
- **B** A list of statistics to a summary of expert opinion
- **C** A description of a place to a history of that place
- **D** Two opposing experts to a final vote between them

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30 **In the final paragraph the writer invites the reader above all to**

- **A** Organize a repair night in every community
- **B** Try repairing one broken object before discarding it
- **C** Stop buying sealed phones and glued shoes
- **D** Learn a trade from a professional repairer

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Reading IV — The Platform

Use this reading for questions 31 to 40.

A small-town train station, night. CLARA, nineteen, sits on a suitcase with a broken clasp. TOM, her father, kneels beside it with a screwdriver.

TOM: Hold it steady. One more turn and it will outlast the train.

CLARA: You have fixed that clasp three times this week.

TOM: And it has held three times. There is a lesson in that, if anyone asks.

CLARA: Dad. The train is in twenty minutes. You can stop fixing things now.

TOM (turning the clasp over and over in his hands): I know the times. I drove you here, did I not? A man likes to be useful at a departure.

CLARA: You could just say it, you know. Whatever it is. People do. Fathers on platforms in plays always manage a speech.

TOM: Plays. (a laugh) In plays the fathers have writers. (He tightens the last screw.) There. It will hold all the way to the city, and your nursing books will not scatter on the platform.

CLARA: And if it breaks there?

TOM: Then you will fix it. You have watched me often enough. Or you will call, and I will describe the screwdriver in great detail.

CLARA (quietly): That is almost a speech.

TOM: It is a clasp, Clara. Take care of it. (The train whistle sounds, far off. He stands, wipes his hands, and goes toward the vending machine to buy her tea for the journey.)

TOM (alone, watching the train approach): I had a speech. I wrote it on a parts list and rehearsed it in the truck. It said I am proud of her. It said this door is hers whenever the city is unkind. Forty years I have fixed what was put in front of me, and I could not say one page of it aloud. So the letter is in her book, on the page she will reach by Thursday, in my best handwriting. Let paper be brave for me. She will know. She has always known.

31 **In Reading IV the main conflict between Clara and Tom is that**

- **A** Clara wants to leave and Tom forbids her to go
- **B** Tom wants to sell the suitcase and Clara refuses
- **C** They disagree about which train Clara should take
- **D** Clara wants feelings spoken aloud while Tom shows his through actions

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

32 **Tom fixing the clasp three times in one week most clearly shows that he**

- **A** Distrusts every product sold in modern stores
- **B** Hopes the repair will delay the train departure
- **C** Expresses his love through practical help rather than speeches
- **D** Wants Clara to become a mechanic in the city

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33 **Clara is leaving the town in order to**

- A Work in her father and his repair shop
- B Study nursing in the city
- C Visit a friend for a single weekend
- D Escape a disagreement with her father

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34 **The stage direction showing Tom turning the clasp over and over suggests his**

- A Unease and difficulty in saying what he feels
- B Anger at the quality of the suitcase
- C Confusion about how the clasp works
- D Impatience for the train to arrive

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

35 **The monologue reveals something the dialogue hides which is that Tom**

A Has secretly decided to move to the city

B Regrets teaching Clara to repair things

C Plans to stop her boarding the train

D Wrote a speech he could not say and hid a letter in her book

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36 **According to the monologue the letter Tom leaves tells Clara that**

A She should return home within the month

B The house has been sold in her absence

C He is proud of her and his door is always hers

D He wishes she had chosen a different program

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37 **The scene contains irony mainly in the fact that Tom**

A Owns a station but cannot read a timetable

B Can repair a suitcase but cannot mend the pain of parting

C Teaches repair but buys a new suitcase weekly

D Rehearsed a speech but forgot the way home

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

38 **When Clara calls his words about the clasp almost a speech she shows that she**

A Understands the love carried in his practical words

B Is mocking his poor skill with the screwdriver

C Believes he has finally delivered his full speech

D Wants him to write speeches for other fathers

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

39 **Tom saying that in plays fathers have writers is his way of**

- **A** Criticizing modern theatre and its scripts
- **B** Asking Clara to write his speech for him
- **C** Admitting with humour that speaking his feelings is hard for him
- **D** Explaining why he never attends school plays

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

40 **A central theme of Reading IV is that**

- **A** Departures are easier when nothing is said at all
- **B** Practical skills matter more than education
- **C** Fathers should always rehearse formal speeches
- **D** Love is not always spoken directly but can still be clearly shown

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Reading V — The Keeper of the Hives

Use this reading for questions 41 to 47.

Miriam Chen learned to listen to bees with the side of her face. A fever at the age of twelve had left the hearing in her left ear reduced, and while other children heard the apiary behind her school as a single roar, Miriam pressed her cheek to the wooden hive wall and felt the colony as a pattern of vibrations, busy or sluggish, calm or preparing to swarm. Teachers thought she was daydreaming. She was, in fact, taking her first notes, in a blue field notebook she would keep, in one form or another, for the rest of her life.

She studied entomology when few programs expected women in the field, and returned home with two hives of her own and a scientist habit of recording everything. The blue notebook filled with dates, weather, flowering times, and the strength of each colony hum, which she judged by resting two fingers on the hive entrance at dawn. Where neighbours guessed, Miriam had twenty years of mornings written down. Her records, shared freely, became the memory of every beekeeper in the district.

In the drought summer when the river fell low and the clover failed, colonies across the district began to starve. Miriam read her notebooks, found the pattern of an earlier dry year, and moved her hives at night to the river flats where late flowers still held nectar. She then spent a week driving from farm to farm, helping anyone who asked to do the same. Most of the colonies she helped move survived. Hers did too, and she credited not luck but attention, written down.

In her seventies she founded a community apiary behind the library, where beginners could borrow a hive the way they borrowed a book. She taught children to move slowly, to watch before opening a hive, and to write down what they saw before trusting what they remembered. The blue notebook, by then a shelf of notebooks, stayed in the apiary shed for anyone to consult.

Miriam died at ninety one, in spring, which the district agreed was fitting. That April her granddaughter opened the current notebook to its last entry, written in a hand grown shaky but still exact: Hive four, strong hum at dawn, queen well, first willow bloom. Below it, in fresher ink, the granddaughter added the next line, and the record continued.

41 **In Reading V Miriam first learned to judge a colony by vibration because**

A A childhood fever had reduced the hearing in one ear

B Her teachers forbade students to open any hive

C The bees at her school made no sound at all

D Her family had kept bees for many generations

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42 **The blue notebooks mainly record**

A Prices paid for honey at district markets

B Dates weather flowering times and the strength of each colony

C Stories Miriam invented about her childhood

D Names of students who borrowed library books

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43 **During the drought summer Miriam responded by**

- **A** Selling her hives before the colonies starved
- **B** Waiting beside the river for the rain to return
- **C** Moving hives at night to river flats where flowers still bloomed
- **D** Feeding every colony in the district with sugar

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44 **Miriam credited the survival of the colonies she moved not to luck but to**

- **A** The wealth she had saved from selling honey
- **B** The strength of the newest wooden hives
- **C** A sudden week of rain in the dry summer
- **D** Attention patiently recorded over many years

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45 **The community apiary Miriam founded allowed beginners to**

- **A** Buy honey at half the usual market price
- **B** Borrow a hive much as they borrowed a book
- **C** Study for a university degree in entomology
- **D** Enter their colonies in a district competition

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46 **The blue notebook in Reading V most clearly symbolizes**

- **A** A lifetime of careful attention passed on to others
- **B** The secrecy with which scientists guard their work
- **C** Wealth accumulated through decades of beekeeping
- **D** A childhood wish to become a famous author

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47 **The biography in Reading V is organized mainly**

A By comparing beekeeping in several countries

B As a list of unrelated facts about insects

C Around a single argument about drought policy

D Chronologically through the turning points of a life

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48 **Both Reading II and Reading V use the sound of a living creature as a sign of**

A Danger approaching a quiet community

B Weather that is about to turn to storm

C Life and health returning or continuing

D A character deciding to leave home

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

49 **Both Reading III and Reading V present close patient attention as**

- **A** A talent that only trained experts can develop
- **B** A worthwhile answer to a hurried and wasteful habit
- **C** A pleasant hobby with no practical results
- **D** A duty owed mainly to members of the family

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50 **Both Reading I and Reading V use an everyday object the watering can and the notebook to**

- **A** Carry memory and continuity between generations
- **B** Create suspense about a hidden inheritance
- **C** Show that objects matter more than people
- **D** Prove the exact year in which each story is set

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ANSWER KEY

1.	A	**10.**	B	**19.**	D	**28.**	C	**37.**	B	**46.**	A
2.	B	**11.**	C	**20.**	C	**29.**	A	**38.**	A	**47.**	D
3.	C	**12.**	D	**21.**	B	**30.**	B	**39.**	C	**48.**	C
4.	D	**13.**	A	**22.**	A	**31.**	D	**40.**	D	**49.**	B
5.	A	**14.**	B	**23.**	D	**32.**	C	**41.**	A	**50.**	A
6.	B	**15.**	C	**24.**	C	**33.**	B	**42.**	B		
7.	C	**16.**	D	**25.**	B	**34.**	A	**43.**	C		
8.	D	**17.**	A	**26.**	A	**35.**	D	**44.**	D		
9.	A	**18.**	B	**27.**	D	**36.**	C	**45.**	B		

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