ILLINOIS ENGLISH 10 · UNIT 1 · 25 QUESTIONS

Reading Literature — Practice Test

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.

Source I - The Last Train Home

Use this reading for questions 1 to 6.

Elena stood on the cold platform and watched the last train pull in twenty minutes late. The wind pushed at her coat, and the station lights buzzed overhead. She had planned to read on the ride home, but the delay gave her time to notice the people around her.

An old man in a gray coat searched his pockets again and again, his face growing worried. Elena saw a small paper ticket lying under the bench where he had been sitting. She picked it up, walked over, and held it out to him. His face relaxed at once, and he thanked her three times.

On the train, the man told Elena he was traveling to see his granddaughter for the first time in a year. He said the ticket had been a gift from his daughter. Elena listened, and by the time the train reached her stop, the cold wait no longer felt like wasted time.

1 **According to Source I, what is the main idea of the passage?**

- **A** Elena travels to visit her granddaughter for the first time in a year
- **B** Elena misses her train because she stops to read a book on the platform
- **C** Elena buys a ticket for an old man who cannot afford the train fare
- **D** Elena helps a stranger find his lost ticket and learns that a small act of kindness can change a day

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

2 **According to Source I, which word best describes Elena?**

A observant and kind, because she notices the ticket and returns it

B impatient, because she complains about the late train

C careless, because she leaves her book on the platform

D fearful, because she avoids talking to strangers

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

3 **According to Source I, why does the author describe the cold wind and the late train?**

A to show that Elena should have stayed home that evening

B to explain why the train station has bright lights

C to prove that winter trains always run late

D to show that the long wait gives Elena time to notice the man

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

4 **According to Source I, what can the reader infer about the old man?**

- A he lost his ticket on purpose, because he wanted help
- B he works at the train station, because he knows the schedule
- C he dislikes talking to strangers, because he stays silent
- D he values family, because he is traveling to see his granddaughter

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

5 **According to Source I, what theme does the story suggest?**

- A small acts of kindness can matter more than we expect
- B traveling by train is always faster than traveling by car
- C old people should not travel alone at night
- D reading on a train is the best way to pass time

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

6 **According to Source I, from which point of view is the story told?**

A first person, by Elena telling the story in her own words

B second person, by a narrator speaking directly to the reader

C third person limited, by a narrator who follows Elena and her thoughts

D third person omniscient, by a narrator who knows every character equally well

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

Source II - October Rain

Use this reading for questions 7 to 11.

Rain taps the roof like fingers on a drum.

Gray clouds gather over the quiet street.

A lone oak bends but does not break.

Puddles hold the sky in trembling glass.

I watch from the window, warm and dry.

The storm passes, and the wet leaves shine.

7 **According to Source II, the line about rain tapping like fingers on a drum is an example of**

- **A** a metaphor, because it says rain is fingers
- **B** a hyperbole, because it greatly exaggerates the rain
- **C** personification, because it gives the rain a human voice
- **D** a simile, because it compares rain to fingers using like

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

8 **According to Source II, which word best describes the mood of the poem?**

A frightened, with a sense of danger from the storm

B angry, with a sense of frustration at the rain

C peaceful and reflective, with a sense of quiet watching

D lonely, with a sense of sadness about being indoors

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

9 **According to Source II, the line about puddles holding the sky is mainly an example of**

A imagery, because it creates a picture of sky reflected in water

B a warning, because it tells readers to avoid puddles

C a fact, because it explains how rain forms

D dialogue, because the puddles speak to the reader

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

10 **According to Source II, from which point of view does the speaker describe the storm?**

A first person, because the speaker uses **I** and watches from a window

B second person, because the speaker addresses the reader as you

C third person, because the speaker follows the oak tree

D third person, because the speaker never appears in the poem

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

11 **According to Source II, what happens at the end of the poem?**

A the storm grows stronger and breaks the oak tree

B the speaker goes outside and gets soaked by rain

C the storm passes and the wet leaves shine

D the clouds gather and night falls on the street

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

Source III - The Empty Seat

Use this reading for questions 12 to 17.

On his first day at a new school, Marcus carried his lunch tray through a crowded cafeteria and looked for a place to sit. Every table seemed full, and every seat seemed already claimed by a group of friends.

Near the window, one seat was empty beside a quiet boy who was sketching in a notebook. Marcus took a breath, walked over, and asked if the seat was free. The boy looked up, smiled, and slid his notebook aside.

The boy, Sam, showed Marcus a drawing of a hero with a cape made of lightning. Marcus laughed and asked how Sam thought of such ideas. By the end of lunch, they were planning a comic together, and Marcus no longer felt like a stranger.

12 **According to Source III, what is the main idea of the passage?**

- **A** Marcus finds a seat and starts a friendship by talking to Sam
- **B** Marcus eats lunch alone because no one will speak to him
- **C** Sam refuses to share his table with a new student
- **D** Marcus decides to leave the school after one day

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

13 **According to Source III, what is the main conflict Marcus faces?**

A he argues with Sam about whose comic idea is better

B he cannot find his classroom after lunch

C he worries about fitting in and finding a place to sit

D he loses his lunch tray in the crowded cafeteria

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

14 **According to Source III, what can the reader infer about Sam?**

A he is unfriendly, because he sketches alone

B he is welcoming, because he smiles and shares his notebook

C he is angry, because he hides his drawings

D he is new to the school, because he sits by the window

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

15 **According to Source III, what does the empty seat most likely symbolize?**

A a punishment for students who arrive late

B a chance for a new friendship

C a rule that new students must sit alone

D a sign that the cafeteria is too crowded

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

16 **According to Source III, why does the author include the detail about the sketchbook?**

A to show that Sam is failing his art class

B to prove that Marcus likes to draw better than Sam

C to give Marcus and Sam something to talk about and share

D to explain why the cafeteria is near the window

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

17 **According to Source III, what theme does the story suggest?**

- **A** it takes courage to reach out, and one small step can start a friendship
- **B** new students should always eat lunch alone
- **C** drawing comics is more important than making friends
- **D** crowded places are never good places to meet people

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

18 **Which statement best explains the difference between a topic and a theme?**

- **A** a topic names a subject, while a theme states a message about that subject
- **B** a topic is always stated directly, while a theme is never important
- **C** a topic is the main character, while a theme is the setting
- **D** a topic and a theme mean exactly the same thing in literature

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

19 **A story mentions dark clouds and a cold wind in the morning, and later a storm ruins a picnic. The early mention of clouds is an example of**

- A a flashback, because it shows an earlier event
- B foreshadowing, because it hints at the later storm
- C a symbol, because clouds always mean sadness
- D irony, because the picnic was planned indoors

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

20 **A fire station burns down while its firefighters are away at training. This situation is an example of**

- A a flashback, because it recalls an earlier fire
- B a metaphor, because it compares fire to training
- C situational irony, because the opposite of what is expected happens
- D a theme, because it states a message about fire

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

21 **A story suddenly shows a scene from the main character early life five years earlier. This technique is called**

A foreshadowing, because it hints at the future

B a flashback, because it returns to an earlier time

C a symbol, because it stands for childhood

D a climax, because it is the most exciting part

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

22 **In a story, the moment of greatest tension when the main character must make a final choice is called the**

A exposition, because it introduces the characters

B resolution, because it ends the conflict

C rising action, because it builds toward trouble

D climax, because it is the turning point of the story

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

23 **A character quietly returns a lost wallet without telling anyone. This is an example of indirect characterization because**

A the narrator directly calls the character honest

B another character describes the character as honest

C the character actions show honesty without the narrator stating it

D the setting shows that the character is honest

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

24 **How can setting most affect a story?**

A it can only tell the reader the time of day

B it can create mood and tension, such as an isolated cabin creating unease

C it can replace the need for characters

D it can only describe what characters wear

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

25 **What is the main purpose of dialogue in a story?**

A to fill space between descriptions of the setting

B to reveal character and advance the plot through speech

C to list every fact the reader needs to know

D to repeat the theme in every scene

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

ANSWER KEY

1. D
2. A
3. D
4. D
5. A
6. C
7. D
8. C
9. A
10. A
11. C
12. A
13. C
14. B
15. B
16. C
17. A
18. A
19. B
20. C
21. B
22. D
23. C
24. B
25. B

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.