



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Grade 10

2010 Sample Items



Finding My Own Way

In this selection, the author, Adrian Rogers, remembers how a childhood baseball game affected his future. He liked to play baseball, but he wasn't very good at it. Later, in high school, his teacher Ms. Garcia helped him discover his real talent. Read the selection to find out what happens to the author.

Finding My Own Way

by Adrian Rogers

- 1 Ever since I was a little kid, I have loved baseball. For years I dreamed of playing in the major leagues. Watching professional baseball on TV fueled my desire even more. I imagined myself as a star player, with thousands of fans cheering for me. I wanted to be the best baseball player ever.
- 2 Of course, the more I watched, the more I wanted to play. Each summer I begged my older brother Keith and his friends to let me play baseball with them in the field near our house. Most of the time I was allowed to play only as a replacement. One day they let me play when someone had to leave early. That was the day my dream of a baseball career came to an end.
- 3 That summer afternoon, about 20 kids were warming up for a game. Richard, the biggest and strongest of the group, was hitting balls to kids in the outfield so that they could practice catching. I implored my brother to please let me join in. "O.K., Adrian," he finally said. "But you better not do anything stupid."

- 1 Read the following dictionary entry.

fuel \ˈfyü(-ə)l\ *v*

1. to use something that produces energy
2. to take in food
3. to stimulate something

Which definition best matches the meaning of the word fueled as it is used in paragraph 1?

- A Definition 1
- B Definition 2
- C Definition 3

Objective 1

- 2 As a child, what did Adrian hope to do when he grew up?

- A Become a professional baseball player
- B Go to baseball games
- C Coach youth baseball

Objective 1

- 3** Which word from paragraph 3 best helps the reader understand the meaning of the word implored?
- A** *outfield*
 - B** *please*
 - C** *strongest*

Objective 1

- 4 I raced to the outfield with the other kids. Then it happened. Richard yelled, "Hey, kid! This one's coming your way!" He hit a ball high into the air in my direction. I looked up, but I couldn't see it. The ball blended in perfectly with the clouds in the sky. In a panic, I kept looking up and running around, gloved hand held high in the air. "I don't see it!" I yelled. "Where is it?"
- 5 My answer came a few seconds later. The ball bounced off the top of my head. I yelled out in pain and fear. Worst of all, I started crying. My brother walked over, pretending to be concerned about me. I could see through my tears that he was trying not to laugh. When he was sure that I was not hurt, he started to howl. So did everyone else. A few of the kids threw off their gloves and dropped to the ground in fits of laughter.
- 6 I guess I had looked pretty funny. I was so embarrassed that I ran home as fast as I could. I heard the kids' laughter all the way down the street.

- 4** What is paragraph 4 mostly about?
- A** Adrian runs around with his gloved hand in the air.
 - B** There are clouds in the sky.
 - C** Adrian cannot see the ball that he is trying to catch.

Objective 1

- 7 After the awful experience that summer, I knew that I would never become a professional ballplayer. I remember spending hours in my room that summer, writing about my disappointment in my journal. I came back to the same question again and again. What was I good at? I did not know it at the time, but the answer was right there on the pages in front of me.
- 8 All through middle school, I had been told that I could write well. But I had never thought much of it. It was just something that I could do. It didn't mean much to me. People didn't notice writers; they noticed ballplayers.
- 9 During my second year of high school, I was fortunate to have Ms. Garcia for English. She told me I was a talented writer, and she even showed me some of her published writing. Her words and ideas inspired me. I began composing my own short stories. As I wrote, I began to find my own style.
- 10 With Ms. Garcia's encouragement, I entered an essay contest sponsored by the high school newspaper. To my surprise, I won first place. A few days later the principal called me into his office. He invited me to read my winning essay at the school sports banquet. I was nervous, but I was proud that I was finally being recognized for my talent. I read my essay about the importance of athletics to the banquet audience, and they clapped enthusiastically.

- 5** When does Adrian first realize that he might be a good writer?
- A** When he writes in his journal during the summer
 - B** When he is in Ms. Garcia’s class
 - C** When he recognizes that he is not a skilled baseball player

Objective 2

- 6** Which sentence best supports the idea that Adrian enjoys writing down his thoughts?
- A** *I remember spending hours in my room that summer, writing about my disappointment in my journal.*
 - B** *All through middle school, I had been told that I could write well.*
 - C** *To my surprise, I won first place.*

Objective 3

- 11 The day after the sports banquet, I felt like a celebrity. Students I barely knew stopped me in the hall to tell me how much they had liked my essay. I loved the attention.
- 12 A few weeks later I got an unexpected writing opportunity. Ms. Garcia asked me to stop by her classroom after school. I had no idea what she wanted. I actually thought I might be in trouble.
- 13 After school Ms. Garcia was waiting for me. She was smiling about something. "Adrian, I have some good news," she said. "One of the yearbook writers is moving, and we need someone to take her place. Would you be interested?"
- 14 Her question shocked me. I had never written for something as important as the yearbook. "Do you think I'm good enough?" I whispered.
- 15 "Don't be silly, Adrian," said Ms. Garcia, laughing. "You're one of the best writers in my class. You're perfect for this position."
- 16 "Wow!" I exclaimed. "I've always wanted to be a member of the yearbook staff. The answer is yes!"
- 17 "I'd like you to work on the sports section," Ms. Garcia said. "I think you would enjoy that."
- 18 For the next several months, I spent long hours designing the sports section of the yearbook. During this time my writing continued to improve, and I earned the respect of the other students working on the yearbook.
- 19 Still, I missed baseball. Since that day when the ball bounced off my head, I hadn't played much. I still watched my favorite teams whenever they were on TV, but that was about it.

- 7** At this point in the selection, what is Adrian's only link to his childhood dream?
- A** Watching baseball on TV
 - B** Designing the yearbook
 - C** Attending the banquet

Objective 2

- 20 That spring Ms. Garcia asked me to write about the varsity baseball team at our school. I had to go to the first game and take pictures. The weather that day was perfect for watching a game outside. It felt good to be back at a baseball field, even if I was just watching from the bleachers.
- 21 At the end of the game, one of the team's best players walked over to me. I thought I recognized him but wasn't sure. "Hey," he said, "aren't you the kid who got conked on the head by a baseball?"
- 22 "Yeah," I said, embarrassed. "I was the one who missed that ball years ago. I didn't think anyone would still remember that."
- 23 "Aren't you also the one who read that essay at the sports banquet?" he asked.
- 24 "Yeah, that was me, too," I said. "Have we met? You look familiar."
- 25 "I'm Richard," he responded. "You know, I hit that ball that knocked you on the head. I just wanted to tell you that I liked your essay. You're a terrific writer."
- 26 "Wow, thanks," I replied. I couldn't believe someone who had just hit three home runs was complimenting me! "Of course, it's not quite the same as being a great slugger like you, but it's better than nothing."
- 27 "Better than nothing?" said Richard. "I'd give anything to write like you." Shaking his head, Richard turned back toward the field.
- 28 To this day I can still see him walking away. Richard's words echo in my head: "I'd give anything to write like you." The impact of those words has lasted a lifetime. Through high school. Through college. Through jobs. Through good times and bad. Sometimes we don't appreciate our own talents until they are recognized by people we admire.

- 8 Based on paragraphs 25 through 28, how are Richard and Adrian alike?
- A They are both good writers.
 - B They each admire skills that the other person has.
 - C They are not recognized by other students at their school.

Objective 2

**Use the whole story “Finding My Own Way”
on pages 3–12 to answer questions 9 and 10.**

internal conflict—a struggle that takes place inside
a character

- 9 How does Adrian resolve his **internal conflict**?
- A He takes a special writing class.
 - B He asks for advice from others.
 - C He discovers what he is good at.

Objective 2

- 10 Which word best describes Ms. Garcia?
- A Supportive
 - B Brave
 - C Strict

Objective 3



Mars, Earth's Neighbor

Julia wrote this report about an incident where the planet Mars drifted closer to Earth than it had in 60,000 years. The unique event caused excitement among astronomers and average citizens. Many people used telescopes to look at the planet's environment. They saw different kinds of landscapes, evidence of extreme temperatures, and changing seasons. Read Julia's paper and think about the improvements she should make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Mars, Earth's Neighbor

(1) In 2003 the planet Mars drifted within 35 million miles of Earth. (2) That distance may sound enormous, but just six months earlier Mars had been more than 160 million miles away. (3) About every 26 months Mars and Earth pass each other as they orbit the sun. (4) In 2003 this passing occurred at the same time that Mars was at it's closest point to the sun. (5) This brought the planets closer together than they had been for 60,000 years.

- 1 What change should be made in sentence 4?
- A Change ***occurred*** to **occurs**
 - B Change ***it's*** to **its**
 - C Change ***the sun*** to **it**

(6) As astronomers peered at Mars through their telescopes. (7) Some must have wondered what a visit to this planet would be like. (8) The planet's red coloring makes it look warm, but the temperatures on Mars usually stay well below freezing. (9) Temperatures can dip to 225 degrees Fahrenheit below zero and can change more than 200 degrees in a single day.

- 2** What revision is needed in sentences 6 and 7?
- A** As astronomers peered at Mars through their telescopes, some must have wondered what a visit to this planet would be like.
 - B** As astronomers peered at Mars through their telescopes, some must have wondered. What a visit to this planet would be like.
 - C** As astronomers peered at Mars through their telescopes must have wondering what a visit to this planet would be like.
- 3** What transition word or phrase could be added to the beginning of sentence 9?
- A** Meanwhile
 - B** Obviously
 - C** In fact

(10) Even with these extreme temperature changes a visitor to Mars would still experience seasons. (11) The winter there is extremely cold, and it lasts for almost five months. (12) During this time much of the planet is covered with a sheet of dry ice, or frozen Carbon Dioxide. (13) In the summer the planet's red soil is blown by winds of more than 300 miles per hour.

- 4 What change should be made in sentence 10?
- A Change ***extreme*** to ***extremely***
 - B Insert a comma after ***changes***
 - C Change ***experience*** to ***expereince***
- 5 What change should be made in sentence 12?
- A Insert ***it*** after ***planet***
 - B Insert a comma after ***covered***
 - C Change ***Carbon Dioxide*** to ***carbon dioxide***
- 6 What sentence could follow and support sentence 13?
- A Wind speed can change during a tornado.
 - B This results in huge dust storms.
 - C Most of the Earth's soil is brown.

(14) A visitor to Mars would notice more than just the weather. (15) He or she would also see different kinds of landscapes. (16) The planet's surface has been changed by violent volcanoes and massive meteors. (17) Some areas indicate that great flood's of water may have once flowed into rivers and lakes. (18) In addition, windstorms have created giant sand dunes and huge canyons that make the Earth's Grand Canyon seem small.

- 7 What change should be made in sentence 17?
- A Change *indicate* to **indicates**
 - B Change *flood's* to **floods**
 - C Insert a comma after *water*

(19) Scientists have been studying and observing Mars for years. (20) Average citizens became more interested in the planet as they came closer and closer to Earth in 2003. (21) People began to ask questions. (22) What is Mars like? (23) How does the environment on Mars compare with the environment on Earth? (24) Could life have ever existed on Mars? (25) Scientists will continue to try to find answers to these questions, and interested citizens will, too.

- 8 What change should be made in sentence 20?
- A Change *citizens* to *citizen's*
 - B Change *became* to *become*
 - C Change *they* to *it*
- 9 What is the best way to revise sentence 25?
- A Because scientists and interested citizens will continue to try to find answers to these questions.
 - B Scientists will continue to try to find answers to these questions if interested citizens will try to find answers to these questions, too.
 - C Both scientists and interested citizens will continue to try to find answers to these questions.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Write an essay about a time when you did something on your own.

The information in the box below will help you remember what you should think about when you write your composition.

REMEMBER—YOU SHOULD

- write about a time when you did something on your own
- make your writing thoughtful and interesting
- make sure that each sentence you write contributes to your composition as a whole
- make sure that your ideas are clear and easy for the reader to follow
- write about your ideas in depth so that the reader is able to develop a good understanding of what you are saying
- proofread your writing to correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure

Item Number	Objective	Student Expectation	Correct Answer
LITERARY SELECTION			
1	1	1E	C
2	1	6	A
3	1	1B	B
4	1	6	C
5	2	Fig. 19B	B
6	3	Fig. 19B	A
7	2	6	A
8	2	Fig. 19B	B
9	2	Fig. 19B	C
10	3	Fig. 19B	A

Item Number	Student Expectation	Correct Answer
REVISING AND EDITING PASSAGE		
OBJECTIVE 6		
1	13D	B
2	17C	A
3	15A	C
4	18B	B
5	18A	C
6	15A	B
7	13D	B
8	13D	C
9	13C	C
WRITING PROMPT		
	13B	