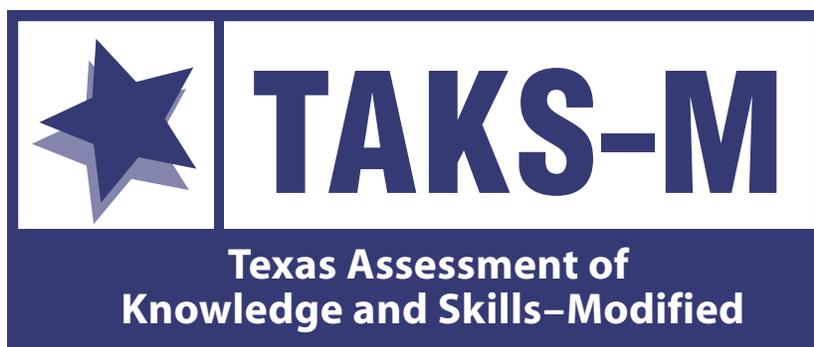


STUDENT NAME _____



**GRADE 10
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Administered March 2009

READING



Locusts on My Windshield

One day while traveling through farm country in Colorado, the narrator drives into a swarm of locusts. Locusts are a type of grasshopper that roam the countryside in large groups looking for food. The locusts get into the engine of the narrator's car, and she must stop in a small town to get help. Read to find out what happens to the narrator and what she learns. Then answer the questions that follow.

Locusts on My Windshield

by Jennifer Owings Dewey

- 1 One summer day I was driving alone in Colorado. I was on a highway that went through farm country. Corn and wheat fields were on both sides of the road.
- 2 A truck came up behind me and sped by. A few seconds later a fat brown insect smacked against my windshield. It hit so hard that it left a greasy smear.
- 3 Before long the windshield was filled with spots. They were casualties, all the same size, shape, and color.
- 4 I slowed the car down. It was a hot day, so I had all the windows down. Insects began to blow into the car. They started to pile up on the seats and dashboard. Then I saw that the insects were locusts, a type of grasshopper.
- 5 Something that looked like a cloud of brown smoke rose up from under the truck ahead of me. It was not smoke; it was locusts.

- 1 Read the following dictionary entry.

casualty \ 'ka-zhəl-tē\ *n*

1. a thing subject to chance
2. a charge or payment
3. something injured or killed in an accident

Which definition best matches the use of the word casualties in paragraph 3?

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

- 6 My car began to run roughly and make odd noises. I brought the car to a stop and climbed out.
- 7 In a second the insects were all around me. They hung on my clothes and got caught in my hair. They flew all around my car and under it. I looked for the truck. It was gone. I wanted to be the driver in the big rig. It had passed right through the swarm of locusts.
- 8 The hissing, choking clamor of the locusts filled my head. The insects were noisy. They were a throbbing brown river of life covering the entire highway. Hundreds rose into the air, while others hopped, crept, and crawled on the ground. In some places the layers of locusts were ten inches deep.

2 In paragraph 7, why does the narrator say she wants to be the truck driver?

- F The truck does not seem to be damaged by the locusts.
- G The big rig gives him a better view of the countryside.
- H The truck is moving faster than she is.

3 What does the word clamor mean in paragraph 8?

- A Loud noise
- B Danger
- C Smell

9 I jumped back into the car. I had locusts all over my body. I rolled up the windows, trying to ignore the locusts that filled my car. I could not even latch my seat belt without pushing locusts off the buckle.

10 I drove forward and listened to the locusts crunch under the tires. I tried to stay calm, but it was very hard. I pictured being eaten by the insects. Then I remembered that locusts eat wheat and corn, not people.

11 Five miles later I came to a small town and pulled into a gas station. My car was making a funny noise, and I wanted to get rid of all the locusts.

12 "You have locusts in your engine," a man at the station told me. "It will take me an hour to clean up this mess."

13 I crossed the road to wait in a coffee shop.

4 Why does the car start to make a funny noise?

- F The car is out of gas.
- G The car is overheated.
- H There are locusts in the engine.

5 What is most likely to be true about the man at the gas station?

- A He has worked on cars damaged by locusts before.
- B He is concerned that the narrator's car cannot be repaired.
- C He has owned the gas station for only a few years.

- 14 "Did you come through all those locusts?" the waitress asked.
- 15 "Yes," I said. "It was horrible. My engine is covered with locusts."
- 16 "You're lucky," said a man at a nearby table. "Those bugs are eating all our crops. They've come through some of the best farmland in the valley. They've eaten everything in sight."
- 17 "Amazing," I said. "I had never seen a swarm of locusts before. Do you know why they move in big groups like that?"
- 18 "They're hungry," said another man. "When a lot of eggs hatch at once, the locusts eat up all the food nearby. Then they have to march across the land to find more food."
- 19 The first man added, "Last year was very wet. The more rain we get, the more locusts we have."

- 6 In paragraph 18, the word "march" is used to suggest that the locusts are —
- F not a serious threat
 - G like an army
 - H moving without a plan

20 "This makes me feel creepy," I said. "But sometimes we forget what nature is about. We get comfortable and think everything will be the same way forever. Then look what happens."

21 It took two hours for the man at the gas station to clean my car. I ordered a hamburger and listened to the people in the coffee shop. They talked about swarms of insects in other years.

22 I was paying my bill when I heard a wise comment. It came from an old farmer. He had a white beard, and he wore overalls. His cotton shirt was so faded that I knew it had been washed a hundred times.

23 "You plant in the spring," he said. "You feed your family, and maybe a few others. Some years you feed those grasshoppers. That is the way it has always been. Some parts of the world have earthquakes; others have floods. We have locusts."

7 Where does the narrator discuss the locusts with the townspeople?

- A** In a wheat field
- B** At the gas station
- C** In a coffee shop

8 What is the narrator's role in the conversations with the townspeople?

- F** She is a rude questioner.
- G** She is a curious participant.
- H** She is a bored observer.

- 24 I drove out of town and thought about the old man's words. I stopped once more to get another look at the insects.
- 25 The last of the swarm was twitching, hopping, and chewing. I bent down and touched one of the bugs.
- 26 The insect did not even notice me. But I felt less afraid. I knew what the old man meant when he said that we just have to accept things. The locusts had cast a spell on me at first. But now the spell was broken.

- 9 What has the narrator developed by the end of the selection?
- A A sense of confusion
 - B A sense of understanding
 - C A sense of humor

Use the whole story "Locusts on My Windshield" on pages 6–11 to answer question 10.

- 10 How can the narrator's attitude toward the townspeople best be described?
- F Respectful
 - G Unconcerned
 - H Rude





The Runaway

This is a story about a girl named Marcie. She thinks that her parents control her too much. Marcie wants to be independent, but she also wants to please her parents. Sometimes Marcie feels that life at home is unbearable. She feels trapped by her parents' loving care. She imagines running away from home to live with her friend Hilda's family. One day something happens that causes her to actually leave home for Hilda's house. Now read the story to find out more about what happens when Marcie runs away. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Runaway

by Felice Holman

1 Sometimes I thought my parents' loving care was smothering me. I even wrote a poem about it. I didn't show it to my mother because it would have hurt her feelings. She would have been nice and said, "It's wonderful, Marcie, just wonderful! I don't know how you do it, Marcie!" But it was *not* wonderful. It wasn't perfect. My parents always said everything was wonderful.

2 "Loving care
Too much to bear
Leave me alone! . . ." That's how it started.

3 But I didn't really want to be all alone. I just didn't want to be controlled so tightly. Sometimes I wanted more freedom. Then my mother and father would say, "Why don't you do this?" "Why don't you do that?" "Be like this." "Be like that." But I didn't want to be like that. And then, sometimes, I might want to be like that, but I just could *not* be. What did they WANT!

11 Why does the author include Marcie's poem in paragraph 2?

- A** To show her creativity as a poet
- B** To introduce the reader to Marcie's family
- C** To show how upset she is with her parents

4 And then sometimes I would plan to run away. I would lie awake looking at my wall. I made plans, but most of them were silly. I liked one plan where I dressed up to look much older and got a job helping a rich family. I thought of that plan over and over. But the plan that I liked the most was the one that was the most possible. I thought about going to live with Aunt Bea.

5 Aunt Bea wasn't my real aunt, but she was even better than my real aunt. She was the mother of my best friend Hilda. Their house was so different from ours. When I came by each morning to pick up Hilda for school, they were all in a wild scramble. It was nothing like our quiet, whispered mornings. Hilda was always grabbing cold milk from the refrigerator with one hand and books with the other. Her mother never made her eat hot oatmeal before going out into the cold mornings. She never told her to wear a coat. And Aunt Bea loved Hilda. I knew that. She loved Hilda's brothers and sisters. She loved me too. She loved everyone. And that's why I felt that Aunt Bea would give me a home if I ever needed it. Their family was fun. It was a really comfortable plan, and it just might have worked.

12 Why does the author use descriptive language in paragraph 5?

- F** To show that Marcie wishes she had a larger family
- G** To show that Marcie's family is very different from Hilda's family
- H** To show that Hilda is more mature than Marcie is

13 Why does life at Hilda's house look good to Marcie?

- A** Hilda doesn't have brothers or sisters.
- B** The activities seem less planned.
- C** Hilda's house is large and has a lot of space.

- 6 I planned moving to Aunt Bea’s lots of times. I thought about how she would welcome me and how I would be at home there. But I skipped quickly over the part where my parents suffered and missed me. Sometimes, I came back home. And that was wonderful.
- 7 And then one day when the world closed in on me tighter than ever, I did it. I came home from school, and there was a new dress on my bed. Mother wasn’t home, but there was a note on the dress in Mother’s lovely handwriting. “To wear to Julie’s party. Love, Mother.” But I had told her and told her I did not want to go to Julie’s party. I didn’t want to go. I was *not* going to go.
- 8 I did it all in a rush and cried the whole time. I packed a few things—my brush, my diary, a picture of Mother and Daddy and me, and a change of clothes. I rushed out of the house crying even harder. But by the time I had run three blocks, I was out of breath. When I got to Aunt Bea’s, I was weak. I felt as if I had walked fifty miles.

mood—when the author makes the reader feel a certain way through words or details in the story

14 What is the **mood** of paragraph 8?

- F** Distress
- G** Indifference
- H** Fear

15 What does Marcie do after she finds the new dress?

- A** She calls her parents.
- B** She begins to pack.
- C** She goes to school.

- 9 My friend Hilda opened the door. "Shhhhh!" she said. "My parents are listening to an opera."
- 10 "Listen, Hilda . . . ," I started.
- 11 "Be quiet. They'll be very mad if we make another sound."
- 12 "But I want to talk to your mother," I said. "I *have* to talk to your mother."
- 13 "Well, you can't talk to her now no matter how you're feeling," Hilda whispered. "Come on in and play checkers."
- 14 "I don't feel like playing a game," I said. But Hilda got the board out anyway. She got to go first, as usual. I moved a checker but wasn't really interested in the game. Then I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my leg. I cried out and grabbed my leg. At the same time, Hilda's little brother rolled out from under the table. He had bitten my leg!
- 15 "I told you to be quiet in there!" yelled Aunt Bea in an angry voice.
- 16 "It wasn't me. It was Marcie!" my friend Hilda yelled. She kicked her brother, and that settled that.
- 17 "I don't care who it was!" screamed Aunt Bea.
- 18 "Your turn," said Hilda. "Wait a minute! You *moved*," she said.
- 19 "I did not," I argued. "I've just been sitting here, rubbing my leg."
- 20 "I don't believe you!" said Hilda. "You *moved*. It's my turn."
- 21 "But it's my turn," I said with some heat. I was so angry.

16 Why does Hilda tell Marcie to be quiet?

- F** She is tired of fighting over whose turn it is.
- G** The girls are hiding from Hilda's brother.
- H** Hilda's parents are listening to an opera.

- 22 "Cheater!" cried Hilda. "Cheater! Cheater!"
- 23 "I'm not going to play," I said, getting up.
- 24 "Spoil sport!" yelled Hilda.
- 25 "Quiet!" shouted Aunt Bea. "I said be quiet!"
- 26 My eyes burned from crying, my leg hurt, and now a chill ran over me. It took me a long time to stand up. But finally I was on my feet. Then I went out into the hall and looked for my pack. It was over in a corner where Hilda had kicked it. I opened the front door. I walked down the red brick stairs and down the red brick walk. My feet seemed to sink into the walk as if it were made of heavy extra-soft pillows. And I walked twelve blocks back to unbearable love.

17 Which of these sentences shows that Marcie feels bad about having to go home?

- A** *"I'm not going to play," I said, getting up.*
- B** *Then I went out into the hall and looked for my pack.*
- C** *My feet seemed to sink into the walk as if it were made of heavy extra-soft pillows.*

**Use the whole story "The Runaway"
on pages 14–19 to answer questions 18–22.**

18 How can Aunt Bea best be described?

- F** Tired and overworked
- G** Caring but quick-tempered
- H** Cautious but disorganized

19 Which of these is the best plot summary of the story?

- A** A young girl named Marcie wants to have the same life as her friend Hilda. Marcie thinks Hilda's mother is the best mother alive, and she imagines living with Hilda's family. She wants to run away from her overprotective parents, so she spends hours planning out her possible escapes.
- B** Marcie wishes that her parents were less controlling. She thinks up various plans for her escape. She finally runs away to her friend Hilda's house. Then she returns home despite the long walk back.
- C** Marcie thinks that her parents don't give her enough freedom. This is different from the parenting of Aunt Bea, her friend Hilda's mother. Marcie runs away, thinking things will be better at Hilda's house. She discovers that Hilda's family is not perfect, so Marcie returns home.

20 What is the author able to show by setting the second half of the story at Hilda’s house?

- F** Hilda and Aunt Bea behave differently than Marcie thought they would.
- G** Marcie’s dreams of living with another family have come true.
- H** Aunt Bea’s love for the opera is more important than her love for her children.

21 What can the reader conclude that Marcie learns?

- A** She should be patient and wait for good things to happen.
- B** She should appreciate what she has even though things aren’t perfect.
- C** She should congratulate herself for her achievements.

point of view—whether the story is told by one of the characters or by someone who is not in the story

22 What does the author’s use of the first-person **point of view** help the reader understand?

- F** Why Marcie and Hilda are such good friends
- G** Why Marcie’s mother treats her the way she does
- H** Why Marcie is frustrated about her life

BE SURE ALL OF YOUR ANSWERS ARE RECORDED
ON THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.



REVISING AND EDITING





The American Red Cross

Lydia wrote this report for her U.S. history class. She would like you to read the report and suggest ways that she might correct and improve it. When you finish reading the report, answer the questions that follow.

The American Red Cross

(1) The American Red Cross is a group that helps people all around the world. (2) It started as a result of the work of a great woman. (3) That woman was named Clara Barton. (4) It was during the Civil War that Barton began the work that lead to the beginning of the American Red Cross. (5) She took care of injured soldiers and helped move supplies on the battlefield. (6) Later the Government of the United States chose her to serve as the head of nurses for the army.

S-1 What is the best way to combine sentences 2 and 3?

- A** It started as a result of the work of a great woman, that woman was named Clara Barton.
- B** It started as a result of the work of a great woman named Clara Barton.
- C** It started as a result of the work of a great woman she was named Clara Barton.

S-2 What change should be made in sentence 4?

F Change ***was*** to **is**

G Insert a comma after ***Civil War***

H Change ***lead*** to **led**

S-3 What change should be made in sentence 6?

A Change ***Government*** to **government**

B Change ***chose*** to **chos**

C Change ***her*** to **herself**





A Surprisingly Happy Time

Brad wrote this paper for his English class. He wrote about his grandmother's childhood during the Great Depression. He would like you to read his paper and suggest ways that he might correct and improve it. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.

A Surprisingly Happy Time

(1) Sometimes I visit my grandmother, who lives in the country. (2) Grandma knits and tells us stories. (3) She wants us to know when she was a little girl what life was like. (4) She remembers a time when people did not always have food, shelter, or work.

(5) Grandma was 10 years old in 1929 when the Great Depression began. (6) All the money that her family had saved was suddenly gone. (7) They were not able to earn any more money. (8) Life became very difficult.

23 What is the best way to revise sentence 3?

- A** She wants us to know about her life. And what it was like when she was a little girl.
- B** She wants us to know what life was like when she was a little girl.
- C** She wants us to know. What life was like when she was a little girl.

24 Which transition word or phrase could best be added to the beginning of sentence 8?

- F** Before that
- G** However
- H** As a result

(9) Even though life was hard. (10) Grandma’s family learned something. (11) They found out that they didn’t need money to be happy. (12) Grandma’s dad thought of ways for the family to have fun without spending no money. (13) They played games, built snow forts, and had parties with neighbors. (14) Family members traded handmade gifts, including a scarf Grandma still wore today.

25 What is the best way to revise sentences 9 and 10?

- A** Even though life was hard, Grandma’s family learned something.
- B** Even though life was hard and Grandma’s family learning something.
- C** Even though life was hard and Grandma’s family learned something.

26 What change should be made in sentence 12?

- F** Change *dad* to **Dad**
- G** Change *thought* to **thought**
- H** Delete *no*

27 What change should be made in sentence 14?

- A** Change *traded* to **tradded**
- B** Change *gifts* to **Gifts**
- C** Change *wore* to **wears**

(15) During those years other families had hard times, too. (16) Grandma's family tryed to help whenever they could. (17) Sometimes the family would sneak over to a neighbor's farm and leave a loaf of homemade bread. (18) Other times they would leave a basket of vegetables from the garden. (19) The neighbors never knew who was responsible for these little acts of kindness. (20) However, Grandma and the rest of her family felt great joy in being able to help others. (21) This joy is what helped them get through some of the hardest times in our nations history.

28 What change should be made in sentence 16?

- F** Put **they** after **family**
- G** Change **tryed** to **tried**
- H** Change the period to a question mark

29 What change should be made in sentence 21?

- A** Change *is* to **are**
- B** Change *them* to **they**
- C** Change *nations* to **nation's**





Write or Ride?

Keisha wrote this story about interviewing Mr. Cohen, who rides a unicycle. A unicycle is like a bicycle, but it has one wheel and no handlebars. It is steered by balancing the body while pedaling. Read Keisha's story and think about the corrections and improvements she should make. Then answer the questions that follow.



Write or Ride?

(1) Keisha was nervous. (2) This was her first big interview for the school newspaper. (3) She hoped to work for a city newspaper someday. (4) She looked over all her questions carefully. (5) The man from the unicycle club would be here in a minute.

(6) "Are you Keisha," a voice suddenly asked.

(7) Mr. Cohen had come into the room. (8) Keisha shook his hand, they both sat down. (9) Keisha started the interview.

30 What change should be made in sentence 6?

- F** Change the comma to a question mark
- G** Change ***voice*** to **voise**
- H** Change ***asked*** to **asking**

31 What is the best way to revise sentence 8?

- A** Keisha shook his hand, and they both sat down.
- B** Keisha shook his hand when they both sat down.
- C** Keisha shook his hand because they both sat down.

(10) "I am so glad to meet you, Mr. Cohen" she began.

(11) "How long have you been riding unicycles?"

(12) "I learned to ride a unicycle when I was nine years old," he replied.

(13) Keisha then asked Mr. Cohen how he learned to ride a unicycle. (14) "Riding a unicycle is not easy. (15) It takes time to learn. (16) Some people need a friend on either side of the cycle to help them find there balance."

32 What change should be made in sentence 10?

F Change *meet* to **hang out with**

G Put a comma after *Mr. Cohen*

H Change *began* to **begann**

33 What change should be made in sentence 16?

- A** Change *need* to **needs**
- B** Change *friend* to **freind**
- C** Change *there* to **their**

(17) Keisha wrote quickly as Mr. Cohen told her about stores and told her about websites that sell unicycles.

(18) Then Mr. Cohen told Keisha that only four people in the entire world could do the hardest unicycle tricks.

(19) At the end of the interview, Mr. Cohen performed some of his hardest tricks. (20) Keisha took several photos as he rode around. (21) She knew she was going to have a great article, but she was left with one question.

(22) Did she really want to work for a newspaper or rather to become a unicycle rider?

34 What is the best way to revise sentence 17?

- F** Keisha wrote quickly as Mr. Cohen told her about stores. And about websites that sell unicycles.
- G** Keisha wrote quickly about stores and about websites that sell unicycles that Mr. Cohen told her about.
- H** Keisha wrote quickly as Mr. Cohen told her about stores and websites that sell unicycles.

35 What change should be made in sentence 19?

- A** Change *the interview* to **it**
- B** Change *performmed* to **performed**
- C** Change *hardest* to **more harder**

36 What is the best way to revise sentence 22?

- F** Did she really want to work for a newspaper? Or rather become a unicycle rider?
- G** Did she really want to work for a newspaper that would rather become a unicycle rider?
- H** Did she really want to work for a newspaper, or would she rather become a unicycle rider?



WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Write an essay about a time when you learned something.

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 learned something
- 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

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOUR COMPOSITION IS WRITTEN ON
THE TWO LINED PAGES IN THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

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**TAKS-M GRADE 10
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
MARCH 2009**