

# English Language Arts Vacation Packet



Mr. Zindman and Mrs. Herron's Class

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 8 through 14.

## Yasmeen's Turn

by Carol Fraser Hagen

1 Yasmeen squirmed at her desk. She felt sweat beads forming along her neck.

2 Mrs. Cross, Yasmeen's third grade teacher, announced, "Boys and girls, you have been learning about world customs. Be ready to share one of your family's customs, tomorrow."

3 After school, Yasmeen dragged her backpack along, thinking about the day's assignment. "I'm the only Indian student in my class," she thought, "what will everyone think about my family's customs?"

4 At home, Yasmeen moped through the kitchen door. Her heart fluttered when she saw her *amma*, her mother, busily crushing henna leaves.

5 "How was school today?" her *amma* asked, in her soft Indian accent.

6 "Fine," Yasmeen said. She dropped her backpack and slid into a kitchen chair.

7 "Ready for *Eid-ul-Fitr* tonight?" *Amma* smiled.

8 Yasmeen shrugged. Normally, she'd be tickled with excitement inside when her aunts, uncles and cousins came to celebrate the end of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. This holy month is observed with prayers and fasting during daylight hours.

9 Yasmeen slid down further in her seat. She twirled a strand of her long hair around her finger, while *Amma* crushed more leaves into a powder. "What am I going to share tomorrow?" Yasmeen wondered.

10 Later, Yasmeen explored the house, trying to find an idea for her assignment. She found her *abba's* Koran. She flipped through the worn pages of her father's leather-bound book. Maybe I'll take this to school, she thought.

11 But then she shook her head. The Koran isn't a custom. She carefully laid down the holy book. Anyway, *Abba* would never let me take it to school.

12 A beautiful *salwar kameez* hung on *Amma's* bedroom door. *Salwar kameez* is a long-sleeved shirt and baggy pants, with a thin, silky shawl. All three are ornately decorated with sparkling beads, sequins and colorful embroidery, in a variety of colors. The colorful sequins and beads on *Amma's* dress and shawl glistened. Tonight, *Amma* would wear her new dress to the party.

13 *Maybe I'll wear my salwar kameez to school. Wrong! Everybody might laugh at me.* Tears filled Yasmeen's deep brown eyes as she tried to figure out what to share.

14 Yasmeen walked into the kitchen. Leaning in the doorway, she wiped a tear from her cheek.

**GO ON**

She watched *Amma* stir henna powder into a smooth paste, adding lemon juice and tamarind water. *Amma* then filled cones with the henna paste, to be used at the party.

15 Yasmeeen coiled her hair around her pinkie. *I'll ask Tahira. She'll know what I can share*, she thought.

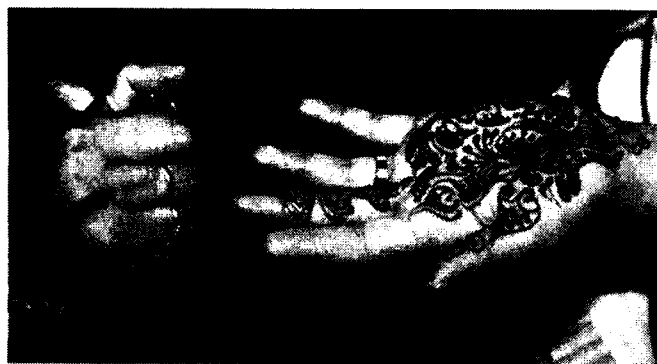
16 "I have to share a family custom tomorrow," Yasmeeen said, peeking into her older sister's bedroom. Her eyes explored the top of Tahira's dresser. It overflowed with sparkling earrings and necklaces. Mixed among the other jewelry, golden bangles shimmered.

17 "Show some jewelry," Tahira suggested, jangling several shiny bangles on her wrist.

18 "I guess," Yasmeeen said, tugging at strands of her hair. "Except, everybody wears jewelry."

19 That night at the party the aroma of herbs from the henna filled the living room. All the girls and ladies in their glittering dresses gathered around the sofa to visit and have their hands painted with *mehndi* (henna paste).

20 It was Yasmeeen's turn. With a cone of henna paste, *Amma* painted tiny flowers, paisley designs, and intricate patterns on Yasmeeen's hands.



21 Seconds later, Yasmeeen sat straight up. "That's it," she blurted out, "*Mehndi!*"

22 At school the next day, Yasmeeen waited for her turn to share. Her face didn't blush. She didn't even feel hot. *I'm not nervous anymore*, she thought. With a wide smile, Yasmeeen stood before the class.

23 "On special Muslim holidays," Yasmeeen explained, "it's an Indian tradition to paint women's hands with intricate *mehndi* designs. Last night, my mother painted my hands." Yasmeeen proudly displayed the delicate curly cues, tiny flowers, and paisley patterns on her hands. Yasmeeen also held up a bowl of crushed henna leaves and a henna-filled cone, for the class to see. Yasmeeen then described how her mother prepared henna paste.

24 "Could you paint a *mehndi* design on my hand?" Mrs. Cross asked.

25 Yasmeeen felt herself gasp at Mrs. Cross's question. Her mouth opened and stayed open as classmates held out their hands. "Me, too! Will you draw on my hands, too?"

26 "And mine!"

27 "Mine, too!"

28 Yasmeeen's feet danced her home, her hands waving in the air to lead the way. The spicy scent of tamarind and henna filled her nose. "*Amma! Amma!* You will never believe what happened today."

- 1 In paragraph 3, what does the phrase “dragged her backpack along” suggest about Yasmeen?
- A She is nervous about the upcoming holiday.
  - B She treats her possessions carelessly.
  - C She is in an unhappy mood.
  - D She carries heavy books.
- 2 As her family prepares for the holiday *Eid-ul-Fitr*, how is Yasmeen’s experience this year different from other years?
- A She feels proud of her family this year.
  - B She feels worried about school this year.
  - C She thinks about getting dressed up this year.
  - D She wants to spend time with the other ladies this year.
- 3 Based on paragraphs 10 and 11, what does Yasmeen understand about her father?
- A He prefers old books over new books.
  - B The Koran is very precious to him.
  - C Reading is one of his favorite activities.
  - D He thinks the Koran is too delicate to take to school.
- 4 What is the most important way that paragraphs 13 and 14 develop the story?
- A They show the process of making henna paste.
  - B They provide additional details about the setting.
  - C They present a hint about how the problem will be solved.
  - D They provide information about the characters’ appearance.

**GO ON**

5 In paragraphs 12 and 19, what does the reader learn about how Yasmeen's family celebrates *Eid-ul-Fitr*?

- A Jewelry is exchanged at the celebration.
- B Hand painting is done first at the celebration.
- C Herbs are used for cooking during the celebration.
- D Dressing in fine clothing is part of the celebration.

6 In paragraph 25, the narrator explains that Yasmeen "felt herself gasp" to show that Yasmeen feels

- A surprised by the teacher's response
- B nervous about what will happen next
- C confused by her classmates' requests
- D afraid to tell her parents about what happened

7 What is the most important lesson that Yasmeen learns in the story?

- A Family belongings should be treated with respect.
- B Sharing family traditions can be rewarding.
- C Sharing holidays with family is important.
- D Family traditions change over time.

# Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 through 42.

## Two Days With No Phone

by Sarah Jane Brian

Experts worry that teen texting is out of control. Could *you* give up your phone for 48 hours? Our brave volunteers did.

1 Instead of sleeping, Kenny Alarcon, 16, often texts with his friends through the night. “You get an urge,” explains the teen, who lives in the Bronx in New York City. “When I get a text, I’m itching to respond to it even if I want to sleep.”

2 Franchesca Garcia, a high school senior from Providence, Rhode Island, has also felt the need to stay constantly connected. We asked how many texts she sent and received each day. “I don’t know . . . maybe 1,000?” she answered. “It’s too many to count.”

3 It probably won’t surprise you that teens are texting more than ever before. Some experts are worried about how all that texting is affecting teenagers’ lives.

### Teens in Trouble?

4 One concern is that students might not learn correct grammar and spelling if most of the writing they do is made up of text messages. Some people also worry that because teens text so much, they don’t spend enough time talking with others face-to-face. That could be hurting their relationships with friends and family.

5 Plus, all that texting (and time on social media) takes away from hours that could be spent studying, exercising, pursuing a hobby, or just relaxing.

6 Dr. Elizabeth Dowdell is a professor at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. She says that many people expect to be able to access anyone or to *be* accessed by anyone at any time. “It’s very appealing, especially to a middle or high school student,” she explains. “The problem is, there’s no downtime.” And people need downtime—especially when it comes to sleep.

### Sleep Texting

7 Both Franchesca and Kenny told us that they wake up several times during the night to text. Kenny even sleeps with his phone beneath his pillow.

8 Dr. Dowdell says that it’s common for teens’ sleep to be interrupted by texts. Sometimes teens even send texts filled with nonsense words when they don’t wake up all the way. She has been studying this trend, which she calls “sleep texting.”

**GO ON**

9 Why is sleep texting a problem? “Adolescents need a solid 8, 10, even 11 hours of sleep to really function and to think clearly,” reports Dr. Dowdell. If they regularly lose sleep, she adds, teens may start having trouble in school. They may become grumpy, angry, or depressed. A lack of sleep can lead to weight gain and even obesity. That’s because many people turn to junk food for quick energy when they are tired.

### The 48-Hour Challenge

10 According to Dr. Dowdell, teens need to learn that they can—and should—turn off their phones sometimes. So we decided to have Kenny and Franchesca do an experiment.

11 These were the rules: No phone for 48 hours. No computer or Internet either, unless it was for schoolwork. No Twitter, no Instagram.

12 Would these two teenagers be able to do it?

13 “I think I’m going to feel really isolated,” Kenny worried. Franchesca was nervous but brave. “I’m excited for the challenge,” she said. “I don’t know what’s going to happen.”

14 Kenny and Franchesca handed their phones to their mothers for safekeeping. The challenge was on.

### The Results

15 We caught up with Kenny and Franchesca after 48 phone-free hours. “Wow, it was pure torture,” Kenny joked. But though life with no phone wasn’t easy, he admitted “it had benefits.”

16 Sure, Kenny missed his friends, and he was sad at times. But he also felt relief from the constant texting. “Sometimes it’s teenager drama, people gossiping,” he explained. “I felt less stressed because I didn’t have to be involved.”

17 Instead of texting, Kenny went to the gym and caught up on schoolwork. The first night, he told us, “I slept for 18 hours!” He also spent time sitting with his family and talking. Kenny’s mom helped him with homework for the first time in two years. Said Kenny, “I felt closer to my parents.”

18 Franchesca had an even happier result when she put away her phone. “I loved it!” she said. “I was going to the gym and hanging out with friends and playing basketball. I had a wonderful experience.” She slept better too.

19 Franchesca decided to continue the experiment for a while. “I think I’ll be so much smarter and healthier,” she explained. “Everybody in the world should try it.”

20 Kenny doesn’t plan to give up his phone again. But he now knows that he *can* live without it. Said the teen, “It was a reality check.”

8 Which evidence best supports the claims the author makes in paragraph 4?

- A "They may become grumpy, angry, or depressed." (paragraph 9)
- B "Sure, Kenny missed his friends, and he was sad at times." (paragraph 16)
- C "Kenny's mom helped him with homework for the first time in two years." (paragraph 17)
- D "I had a wonderful experience." (paragraph 18)

9 What does Dr. Elizabeth Dowdell suggest when she says "people expect to be able to access anyone or to *be* accessed by anyone at any time"? (paragraph 6)

- A Teens need to stay available by phone at all times.
- B Many teens want to own a phone that receives texts.
- C Constant phone use is a behavior of teens that cannot be changed.
- D Teens are so used to having phones that nonstop texting has become a habit.

10 How does the author organize paragraphs 15 through 20?

- A by describing the events of the experiment in the order that they happened
- B by explaining the goals and directions of the experiment
- C by showing the reasons for doing the experiment with the two teens
- D by comparing the effects that the experiment had on the two teens

11 What can the reader infer from paragraphs 17 through 20?

- A Asking teens to live without their phones will help them become smarter.
- B Teens may not realize how different their lives can be without their phones.
- C Teens around the world will enjoy experimenting with their phone use.
- D Expecting teens to give up their phones is not realistic.

**GO ON**



12 How were Kenny's and Franchesca's reactions to the 48-hour challenge different?

- A Only Franchesca benefitted from better sleep with no texting interruptions.
- B Only Franchesca fully appreciated the freedom of having no phone.
- C Only Kenny participated in physical activities instead of constant texting.
- D Only Kenny spent time talking with people after giving up the phone.

13 Which statement best expresses a main idea of the article?

- A "Some experts are worried about how all that texting is affecting teenagers' lives." (paragraph 3)
- B "If they regularly lose sleep, she adds, teens may start having trouble in school." (paragraph 9)
- C "Kenny and Franchesca handed their phones to their mothers for safekeeping." (paragraph 14)
- D "Franchesca decided to continue the experiment for a while." (paragraph 19)

14 Which detail would be most important to include in a summary of the article?

- A Kenny admits to sleeping with his phone under his pillow.
- B Franchesca claims to exchange a thousand texts per day.
- C The teens engage in gossip and drama without their phones.
- D The teens have more free time when they give up texting.

## **D**irections

Read this story. Then answer questions 48 and 49.

*Seven-year-old Juan lives in San Pablo, Guatemala, with his grandmother. Many children in the region do not attend school, but Juan has started first grade.*

# Excerpt from *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*

by Ann Cameron

1 When I'd been in school two months, Doña Irene sent me home with a note to my grandmother. I showed it to her after supper, and she got my aunt Tina to read it to her, even though I told her I could read it myself.

2 "No, Juan," my grandmother said. "It's about you, so you're not the one to read it."

3 The note said that, with my grandmother's permission, the teachers wanted to move me into the second grade. Doña Irene said that they had never had a student who had learned to read like I did, by myself, before ever starting school. She said that it would be a tragedy if such a good student had to leave school, and that if my grandmother ever could not keep me in school, the teachers would help to keep me there.

4 When Aunt Tina stopped reading, she looked at me as if she had never really seen me before, and was looking to see what was so special about me, and still couldn't see it, and gave up.

5 "Well, congratulations!" she said.

6 And I thought my grandmother would congratulate me too. But she didn't, she started to cry, and threw her arms around me.

7 She said, "When I was seven, the teachers went from house to house, looking for children to enroll in school, but when they got to my house, my parents hid me in the woodshed. I watched between cracks in the boards, and listened. They told the teachers that they didn't have any school-age children, not one. They did it because they were afraid if I went to school, I wouldn't learn to work. They did it for my good, and I didn't say anything or complain, but I always knew it was a mistake."

8 She dried her eyes, and she told me she would help me study even all the way to university in the capital. As long as she lived she would help me, she said, if I did my best.

9 And she looked at me as if I were a man already, and said that maybe by studying I could find out why some people were rich, and some were poor, and some countries were rich, and some were poor, because she had thought about it a lot, but she could never figure it out.

**GO ON**

- 10 And I felt very proud, but also scared, because just more or less by accident I had taught myself to read, but that didn't mean I was so smart.
- 11 I said to my grandmother, "I might not always do everything special."
- 12 "You don't have to do everything special," my grandmother said. "Just your best. That's all."
- 13 I was proud, but I wasn't so sure I wanted to do my best all the time. I thought it could get pretty inconvenient. If people started expecting a lot of me, I would have to do more and more.
- 14 "You ask more from me than Doña Irene and all the teachers," I said. "They don't expect so much."
- 15 My grandmother glared at me. "They don't love you the way I do either," she said.
- 16 Then she said, "Come on, let's go for a walk."
- 17 She put on her best shawl, and she and I went down the street together, and she walked the way she always walks, taller and straighter than anybody else. And I walked with my arm around her.
- 18 We walked all the way to the Tourist Office. Then we stopped a minute and looked at the photo of San Pablo with all the houses of our town, pink and turquoise and pale green, and behind them the blue lake and volcanoes and the high, rocky cliffs.
- 19 My grandmother looked at the writing under the picture. She touched it with her hand.
- 20 "What does it say?" she asked.
- 21 I read it to her. "'The Most Beautiful Place in the World.'"
- 22 My grandmother looked surprised.
- 23 I started to wonder if San Pablo really was the most beautiful place in the world. I wasn't sure my grandmother had ever been anyplace else, but I still thought she'd know.
- 24 "Grandma," I said, "is it?"
- 25 "Is it what?" she said.
- 26 "Is San Pablo the most beautiful place in the world?"
- 27 My grandmother made a little face.
- 28 "The most beautiful place in the world," she said, "is anyplace?"
- 29 "Anyplace?" I repeated.
- 30 "Anyplace you can hold your head up. Anyplace you can be proud of who you are."
- 31 "Yes," I said.
- 32 But I thought, where you love somebody a whole lot, and you know that person loves you, that's the most beautiful place in the world.

15

In "Excerpt from *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*," why does Juan's grandmother react differently than Aunt Tina to the note from Juan's school? Use two details from the story to support your response.

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**GO ON**

16

Why is the title phrase “the most beautiful place in the world” important to the story? Use two details from the story to support your response.

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# Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 50 and 51.

*In this science-fiction excerpt, the Nom is a private community located on an island. The Noble Warriors who live there are called the Noma.*

## Excerpt from *Seeker*

by William Nicholson

1 Seeker woke earlier than usual, long before dawn, and lay in the darkness thinking about the day ahead. It was high summer, with less than a week to go before the longest day of the year. In school it was the day of the monthly test.

2 And it was his sixteenth birthday.

3 Unable to sleep, he rose and dressed quietly so as not to wake his parents, and went out into the silent street. By the light of the stars, he made his way to the steps that zigzagged up the steep hillside, and began to climb. As he did so he watched the eastern sky, and saw there the first pale silver gleams on the horizon that heralded the coming dawn.

4 He had decided to watch the sun rise.

5 At the top of the steps the path flattened out and led into the stone-flagged Nom square. To his right rose the great dark mass of the Nom, the castle-monastery that dominated the island; to his left, the avenue of old storm-blasted pine trees that led to the overlook. He knew these trees well; they were his friends. He came to this place often, to be alone and to look out over the boundless ocean to the very farthest edges of the world.

6 There was a wooden railing at the far end of the avenue, to warn those who walked here to go no further. Beyond the railing the land fell away, at first at a steep slope, and then in a sheer vertical cliff. Hundreds of feet below, past nesting falcons and the circling flight of gulls, the waves broke against dark rocks. This was the most southerly face of the island. From here there was nothing but sea and sky.

7 Seeker stood by the railing and watched the light trickle into the sky and shivered. The band of gold now glowing on the horizon seemed to promise change: a future in which everything would be different. With this dawn he was sixteen years old, a child no longer. His real life, the life for which he had been waiting so long, was about to begin.

8 The gold light was now turning red. All across the eastern sky the stars were fading into the light, and the feathery bands of cloud were rimmed with scarlet. Any moment now the sun itself would break the line of the horizon.

9 How can a new day begin like this, he thought, and nothing change?

**GO ON**

10 Then there it was, a blazing crimson ball bursting the band of sea and sky, hurling beams of brilliance across the water. He looked away, dazzled, and saw the red light on the trunks of the pine trees and on the high stone walls of the Nom. His own hand too, held up before him, was bathed in the rays of the rising sun, familiar but transformed. Moving slowly, he raised both his arms above his head and pointed his forefingers skyward, and touched them together. This was the Nomana salute.

11 Those who wished to become Noble Warriors entered the Nom at the age of sixteen.

12 He heard a soft sound behind him. Turning, startled, he saw a figure standing in the avenue. He flushed and lowered his arms. Then he gave a respectful bow of his head, because the watcher was a Noma.

13 "You're up early."

14 A woman. Her voice sounded warm and friendly.

15 "I wanted to see the dawn."

16 Seeker was embarrassed that she had seen him making the salute to which he was not entitled; but she did not reprimand him. He bowed again, and headed down the avenue, now flooded by the brilliant light of the rising sun. As he passed the Noma, she said, "It's not necessary to be unhappy."

17 He stopped and turned back to look at her. Like all the Nomana, she wore a badan over her head, which shadowed her face. But he sensed that she was half smiling as she met his gaze.

18 "I am unhappy."

19 The Noma went on gazing at him with her gentle smile.

20 "Who are you?"

21 He gave his full name, the name his father had chosen for him, the name he hated. "Seeker after Truth."

22 "Ah, yes. The schoolteacher's son."

23 His father was the headmaster of the island's only school. He was raising Seeker to be a teacher like him.

24 "Your life is your own," said the Noma. "If it's not the life you want, only you can change it."

25 Seeker made his way slowly back to the steps, and down the steps home, his mind filled by the Noma's words. All his life he had done what his father had asked of him. He had always been top of his class, and was now top of the school. He knew his father was proud of him. But he did not want to live his father's life.

26 Seeker wanted to be a Noble Warrior.

17

In "Excerpt from *Seeker*," what theme is supported by paragraphs 20 through 26? Use two details from the story to support your response.

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**GO ON**



In "Excerpt from *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*" and "Excerpt from *Seeker*," what personality trait do Juan and Seeker share? How do both the characters show this personality trait? Use details from both stories to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- identify a personality trait that Juan and Seeker share
- explain how both characters show this personality trait
- use details from both stories to support your response

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