6th grade Reading: 1st 6-Weeks Common Assessment Review

Name: ____________________________
Period: ______
Date: ______________
Many years ago a man named Spiros lived on an island in Greece with his wife and their two grown sons. The family raised goats and grew olives in a lush grove behind their house. Spiros was also a cabinet maker, a skill he was teaching his sons. Life was good for the family—or it would have been, except for one problem: the sons could not get along with each other. Over the years Spiros tried everything. He scolded, punished, and pleaded with them, but nothing worked. Their quarrels raged on.

As young children the boys competed for toys, friends, and their parents’ affections. Even when they grew older, they couldn’t seem to agree on anything. The household was in constant turmoil as fights erupted at a moment’s notice over issues large and small: whether the harvest would be good this year, who was better looking, or whose turn it was to milk the goats.

One day, Spiros received a letter from Uncle Vasilios, the oldest and most esteemed uncle in the family. It was Spiros’s turn to receive a visit from the valued family elder. Spiros readily agreed and then began thinking about what they would need for their houseguest. They had plenty of room for him, but he would need some place to store his clothes. A new cabinet with large drawers would be perfect, and Spiros wanted his sons to build it. He gave them a deadline of one month.

The trouble began immediately. How many drawers should the cabinet have? Who would cut the wood? What color should the piece be stained? Spiros stood by helplessly, watching his sons waste time in endless bickering. At one point, the combatants became so enraged that they began breaking up the wood they were supposed to use for the project.

That was the last straw for Spiros. Infuriated by their behavior, he decided to teach them a lesson. He gathered up some twigs from nearby trees and tied them together into a tight bundle. He called his sons over and handed the bundle to the older one, ordering him to break it in half. The elder son tried until he was red-faced with exertion and finally gave up. The younger brother jeered at his
weakness and then took his turn. But he could not break the bundle either, no matter how hard he tried.

After their futile attempts, Spiros untied the bundle and gave each son one stick. “Now try again,” he told them. When they did, each stick broke easily with a sharp snap.

“There is a lesson for you in these sticks,” Spiros said. “When you work together, no one can defeat you, but when you quarrel and go your separate ways, you become weak and vulnerable. There is strength in unity.”

The sons were embarrassed by their behavior. They shook hands and began to work together on the cabinet. They agreed upon a design, helped each other measure and cut the wood, and took turns hammering the pieces in place. Within a week—well ahead of schedule—they had produced a cabinet of well-made and handsome enough to please their uncle and make their father proud.


1 The conflict in the story begins when—

A the brothers decide to work together
B the brothers are asked to make a cabinet
C the brothers try to break the bundle of sticks on their own
D the brothers take turns breaking the sticks

2 The characters reveal the story’s theme when the brothers—

F quarrel about who is better looking
G become so angry that they break up the wood for the cabinet
H think they can break the bundle of sticks on their own
J put aside their differences and work as a team
3 What can the reader understand about Spiros’ character when he says ‘Now try again’? (Paragraph 6)

A He wants his sons to learn a lesson
B He is angry his sons can’t do it
C He does not have a lot of patience
D He wants his sons to continue arguing

4 Which of the following shows that the sons feel ashamed of their actions?

F They shook hands and began to work together on the cabinet.
G When they did, each stick broke easily with a sharp snap.
H Their quarrels raged on.
J But he could not break the bundle either, no matter how hard he tried.

5 What is the point of view of this story?

A 1st person
B 2nd person
C 3rd person
D 4th person
6 Which of the following shows the theme of the story?

F Many years ago a man named Spiros lived on an island in Greece with his wife and their two grown sons.

G The sons were embarrassed by their behavior.

H The trouble began immediately.

J There is strength in unity.

7 When the younger brother jeered at the elder brother’s weakness in paragraph 5, the reader can conclude that he—

A felt sorry for his older brother

B was excited to take his turn with the sticks

C was laughing at his older brother’s struggle

D didn’t think he was as strong as his older brother

8 After reading this story, the reader can infer that in the future the brothers will—

F listen to each other’s ideas

G ask their father for help before they build something

H continue to argue over simple tasks

J decide to work alone when building a cabinet
9 Which of the following events happens first in the rising action of this story?
   A. The sons compete for toys, friends, and their parents’ affection.
   B. The sons try to break the bundle of sticks.
   C. The sons break the wood that was supposed to be used for the project.
   D. The sons bicker about how the cabinet should be made.

10 In paragraph 4 of this story, what does the word *combatants* mean?
   F. army soldiers
   G. brothers
   H. rivals
   J. sons

11 Why are paragraphs 7 and 8 important to the story?
   A. The paragraphs reveal the brother’s conflict in the story.
   B. The paragraphs reveal the turning point for the brothers in the story.
   C. The paragraphs reveal the moral of the story.
   D. The paragraphs reveal the father’s wisdom in the story.
The Fish Story
Mary Lou Brooks

I know what I’m going to be when I grow up—unemployed. “Face it, Ernie,” my dad always says. “The way you mess up every job, you have a great future—as a bum.”

He’s probably right. My first summer job was cutting the neighbor’s lawn. The mower got away from me and ate ten tomato plants. Another time, I forgot to close the windows when I washed Mr. Hammer’s car. The weeds I pulled out of Mrs. Miller’s garden turned out to be flowers.

So I was really surprised when the Bensons asked me to look after their house while they were away on vacation. The Bensons are new on the block. I guess they hadn’t heard about me yet.

“We’re leaving on Monday,” explained Mrs. Benson. “You’ll start on Tuesday. Just bring in the newspaper and the mail.” That didn’t sound too hard. Even I could probably handle this job.

“And feed Jaws once a day,” Mrs. Benson added.

“Jaws?” I gulped. Did they have a pet shark or something?

Mrs. Benson laughed. “That’s what the twins named their goldfish.”

On Tuesday, I had baseball practice. So I was late getting to the Bensons’. I put the mail and the newspaper on the hall table. Then I headed for the fishbowl. Jaws was floating on top of the water.

I moaned. My first day on the job, and I killed the dumb fish! Not even the Army would want me now. That’s what my dad would say—after he stopped yelling.

Now wait a minute, Ernie, I said to myself. This little fellow could still be alive. His eyes are open. He could be in a coma. I bent down very close to the water.

“Jaws!” I yelled. “It’s me, Ernie, your babysitter. If you can hear me, blink once.” He didn’t.
I touched him with my finger. He was cold, stiff, and very slimy. “Face it, Ernie,” I said out loud. “This is one dead fish you have here.”

That night, I lay awake a long time trying to figure out why that dumb fish died. I didn’t overfeed him. I never had a chance to feed him at all.

When I finally fell asleep, I had a nightmare. The shark from Jaws was chasing me. He was wearing a six-shooter. “You bumped off my kinfolk,” he yelled. “Draw!”

I didn’t tell my parents about Jaws. Every day, I went over to the Bensons’ as though nothing was wrong. I had until Sunday. That’s when the Bensons’ were coming home. Why rush things?

On Saturday, I remembered that Jaws was still in the fishbowl. I was about to toss him into the garbage. Suddenly, I had a great idea. I slipped Jaws into a baggie and ran to the nearest pet store.

“I’d like another goldfish exactly like this one,” I told the owner. Then I held up the baggie.

The owner glared at me. Half an hour later, he was still glaring. That’s how long it took to find a perfect match. I paid the owner and headed back to the Bensons’ house.

When I got there, I cleaned the fishbowl and added fresh water. Soon, Jaws II was in his new home. But instead of swimming around, he just stared at me.

“What you did was wrong,” those tiny black eyes seemed to say.

The Bensons arrived home at 1:55 Sunday afternoon. I watched from my bedroom window as they piled out of their car. At 2:13, my mom called up the stairs.

“Ernie,” she said, “Mrs. Benson is here.” Caught! I trudged down the stairs to face the music.

Mrs. Benson was sitting at the kitchen table with my parents. “Here’s the boy behind the Great Goldfish Switch,” she said.
I felt like running. But Mrs. Benson put her arm around my shoulder.

“That was very thoughtful, Ernie,” she said. “Monday was so crazy I didn’t have time to pick up another fish. I’ve been dreading telling the twins that Jaws died. Thanks to you, I won’t have to.”

She handed me money in an envelope. “This is for the house-sitting,” she said. “There’s something extra for the new Jaws. You hear so many wild stories about kids these days. It’s nice to know one who is responsible.”

Mom looked so proud I thought she might cry. But Dad had a funny look on his face. I think he was trying not to laugh.

The conflict, or problem, begins when Ernie –

F forgets to feed Jaws
G mows over ten tomato plants
H finds Jaws floating on top of the water
J meets the Bensons when they return from vacation

Which of the following events happens first in the rising action of this story?

A Ernie has a nightmare about the shark from the movie Jaws.
B Ernie runs to the pet store to buy a new fish.
C Ernie touches the fish with his finger.
D Mrs. Benson hands Ernie money in an envelope.
In the climax, or turning point, of the story—

F Ernie goes downstairs to see Mrs. Benson and “face the music”
G the new fish stares at Ernie
H Ernie dreams about the shark from *Jaws*
J the weeds Ernie pulled up turned out to be flowers

Why did Mrs. Benson put something extra in the envelope?

A As a tip for mowing the yard
B Because she felt generous
C To pay for the new *Jaws*
D To pay for gas

Ernie’s conflicts are resolved when---

F he buys a new fish
G Mrs. Benson thanks him for replacing the fish
H the Bensons offer him a job
J he accepts the death of the fish
17 Based on Ernie’s nightmare about the shark from the movie, Jaws, you can infer that---

A He was having an internal conflict about what to do with the dead goldfish  
B He shouldn’t have watched the movie right before going to bed  
C He is having an external conflict between himself and the kids that own the goldfish  
D He is struggling with the full responsibility of looking after another person’s house

18 What can the reader understand about Ernie’s character when he asks himself Why rush things? (Paragraph 15)

F He is a slow learner  
G He doesn’t like to be rushed  
H He dreads telling his parents the bad news  
J He doesn’t want to have another nightmare

19 What theme is the author trying to convey to the reader?

A Anyone can learn responsibility  
B Sometimes it’s ok not to tell your parents everything  
C It’s good to have many jobs in life  
D There are many wild stories about kids these days
Ernie’s point of view helps the reader understand –

**F** Why Ernie accidentally killed Jaws.
**G** Why Ernie’s dad believes his son is irresponsible.
**H** Why Mrs. Benson gives Ernie extra money.
**J** Why Ernie worries about his house-sitting role.