



# NEVADA INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

FOR THE  
NEVADA ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS FOR ELA

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# Grade 3

## STUDENT WORKBOOK

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## **Introduction**

This document represents the Phase III release of Nevada Instructional Materials. These released materials were developed in collaboration with Nevada educators, the Nevada Department of Education, and WestEd (a nonprofit research development and service agency).

These materials are intended for use in various guided instructional activities to support deep understanding of the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) for English Language Arts and mathematics based on Common Core. The Nevada Instructional Materials provide educators opportunities to investigate and explore the standards and tasks that are aligned to the standards. The Nevada educators involved in the development of these materials also developed “Teacher Tips” to assist in using these materials as an instructional resource. The Nevada Instructional Materials also provide educators opportunities to investigate and explore the standards and tasks that are aligned to the standards.

While these materials can provide students with practice in responding to a variety of assessment items, it is more important that they are used to help students deepen their understanding of the expectations embedded in the standards. If these instructional materials are used solely as an assessment practice activity, we highly recommend that educators go over each item with their students and evaluate each answer choice so that students can better understand the knowledge required to successfully complete each task.

Through rich classroom discussion around each item and the various answer choices or potential responses, educators can actively engage students in critical thinking, reasoning, and application of knowledge and skills, helping to ensure all students are ready for success in the 21st century.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Language and Reading

## Grade 3

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This booklet contains language and reading questions for you to work with. Your teacher may have you work on them alone or in a group. Some of the kinds of items may be new to you. They include:

Kind of item	What it's like
Sentence revising	Rewriting sentences to correct or improve them
Multiple-choice	Four answer choices, one correct answer
Multiple-choice (choose two)	Four answer choices, two correct answers
Highlighting	Finding and circling or highlighting ideas in the passage
Graphic organizers	Filling in charts and graphs; these are like questions you might see in a computer-based test

There are also short-answer questions worth 2 points and constructed-response items worth 3 points. The rubrics below and on the following page shows what the different scores mean. Think about what these rubrics say when you write your responses.

### Two-Point Short-Answer Rubric

Score	Description
2	My response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Answers the question completely</li><li>• Uses ideas from the passage that I carefully chose</li></ul>
1	My response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mostly answers the question</li><li>• Uses some ideas from the passage</li></ul>
0	My response is not correct or I did not answer the question

### Three-Point Constructed-Response Rubric

Score	Description
3	My response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Answers the question completely</li><li>• Shows I understood the passage</li><li>• Includes enough information from the passage as support for the reader to understand my ideas</li></ul>
2	My response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Answers the question</li><li>• Shows I mostly understood the passage</li><li>• Includes some information from the passage as support, but the reader may not entirely understand my ideas</li></ul>
1	My response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tries to answer the question</li><li>• Shows I understood the passage a little</li><li>• Does not include much information to support my ideas</li></ul>
0	My response is not correct or I did not answer the question

# Directions

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**Your teacher will tell you which questions you should work with. There is space in this workbook for you to answer them.**

**You should circle the letter of the correct answer or answers for the multiple-choice questions.**

**Some questions will ask you to highlight or underline information in the passage.**

**Answer all other questions in the space provided immediately after the question.**



# Stand-Alone and Passage-Based Language Items

**Grade 3**  
**Student Workbook**

**1** Read the sentences below.

**I walked down the hall. It was dark. I heard a whisper. I stopped.**

On the lines below, combine the four sentences into one sentence. Choose words that will make the sentence scary.

Blank writing area with seven horizontal lines for combining sentences.

**2**

Read the sentences below.

**Naomi asked if we wanna come to her party. She lives at 32 Sagebrush Lane Reno Nevada.**

On the lines below, rewrite the sentences to correct any errors.

Blank writing area with six horizontal lines for student response.

**3**

Read the sentences below.

**Jeremy was way surprised when he got his test back. He ain't missed a single question.**

On the lines below, rewrite the sentences to correct any errors in writing style or grammar.

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*Option A*

If your teacher tells you to use Option A for the passage-based items, read this passage and answer questions 4 through 9. If not, turn to Option B on page 9.

**The desert Tortoise**

(1) The desert tortoise is the state reptile of Nevada. (2) It is also a threatened species. (3) It is important to understand the desert tortoise so that we can help to keep it safe.

**How long do desert tortoises live?**

(4) Baby tortoises are born from eggs. (5) Only about 3 percent of the babies that hatch will make it to adulthood. (6) The rest will fall prey to predators such as Gila monsters, ravens, foxes, badgers, and fire ants. (7) But adult tortoises can live long lives. (8) They can live to be more than 70 years old.

**Where do they live?**

(9) The desert tortoise lives in the Mojave Desert. (10) Because the tortoise is a reptile, it cannot control its temperature. (11) When the temperature is very hot, the tortoise gets very hot. (12) When the temperature drops, the tortoise's temperature drops, too. (13) Or the tortoise must find somewhere to get out of the heat and cold. (14) It uses its long claws to dig a hole. (15) In the summer it spends a lot of time in this burrow. (16) In the winter, it hibernates. (17) The tortoise goes into a deep sleep and does not wake up again until spring.

**What do they eat?**

(18) The desert tortoise is an herbivore. (19) It eats grass, cactus, and other plants. (20) The tortoise even eat rocks and dirt! (21) Scientists don't know why. (22) One idea is that the stones may help the tortoise digest the plants it eats. (23) The tortoise gets most of its water from the plants it eats. (24) But it can live for more than a year without any water at all.

(25) Next time you see a desert tortoise in the wild, take a moment to admire this ancient creature. (26) But don't touch it. (27) Remember: It is illegal to capture and keep a wild desert tortoise as a pet.

**4** Which is the correct way to write the title of the passage?

- A the desert tortoise
- B the Desert Tortoise
- C The Desert Tortoise
- D Leave as is.

**5** Which is the correct form of the underlined word in sentence 7?

- A lives
- B livs
- C life
- D Leave as is.

**6** Which is the correct way to rewrite sentence 13?

- A But the tortoise must find somewhere to get out of the heat and the cold.
- B So the tortoise must find somewhere to get out of the heat and the cold.
- C And the tortoise must find somewhere to get out of the heat and the cold.
- D Yet the tortoise must find somewhere to get out of the heat and the cold.

**7** Which word in sentence 17 is misspelled?

- A does
- B wake
- C again
- D untill

**8** Which is the correct way to rewrite sentence 20?

- A The tortoise even ate rocks and dirt!
- B The tortoise even is eating rocks and dirt!
- C The tortoise even eats rocks and dirt!
- D Leave as is.

**9** Which sentence from the passage has an error?

- A It is important to understand the desert tortoise so that we can help to keep it safe.
- B It uses it's long claws to dig a hole.
- C Scientists don't know why.
- D But it can live for more than a year without any water at all.

*Option B*

*Edit the passage below. You should correct errors in usage and conventions. You should also edit any sentences that are awkward, have errors, or use language that is inappropriate for an academic assignment.*

## **The desert Tortoise**

The desert tortoise is the state reptile of Nevada. It is also a threatened species. It is important to understand the desert tortoise so that we can help to keep it safe.

### **How long do desert tortoises live?**

Baby tortoises are born from eggs. Only about 3 percent of the babies that hatch will make it to adulthood. The rest will fall prey to predators such as Gila monsters, ravens, foxes, badgers, and fire ants. But adult tortoises can live long lives. They can live to be more than 70 years old.

### **Where do they live?**

The desert tortoise lives in the Mojave Desert. Because the tortoise is a reptile, it cannot control its temperature. When the temperature is very hot, the tortoise gets very hot. When the temperature drops, the tortoise's temperature drops, too. Or the tortoise must find somewhere to get out of the heat and cold. It uses its long claws to dig a hole. In the summer it spends a lot of time in this burrow. In the winter, it hibernates. The tortoise goes into a deep sleep and does not wake up again until spring.

### **What do they eat?**

The desert tortoise is an herbivore. It eats grass, cactus, and other plants. The tortoise even eat rocks and dirt! Scientists don't know why. One idea is that the stones may help the tortoise digest the plants it eats. The tortoise gets most of its water from the plants it eats. But it can live for more than a year without any water at all.

Next time you see a desert tortoise in the wild, take a moment to admire this ancient creature. But don't touch it. Remember: It is illegal to capture and keep a wild desert tortoise as a pet.

*Option A*

If your teacher tells you to use Option A for the passage-based items, read this passage and answer questions 10 through 15. If not, turn to Option B on page 12.

**The Hoover Dam**

(1) In 1900, the Colorado was a harmful river. (2) It could flood without warning. (3) Floods turned thousands of acres of farmland into a vast sea.

(4) The river was an enemy, and only in short periods of time could you look at it as a useful river, says government expert Blaine Hamann.

(5) To make the land productive, the river had to be tamed. (6) The U.S. government decided to tame the river by building what would be the larger dam in the world. (7) Topping 700 feet, it would be more than twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty.

(8) The government chose a spot on the Nevada-Arizona border. (9) The first task was to change the route of the river. (10) Workers drilled four tunnels through the canyon walls. (11) Then they piled rocks in the middle of the river. (12) The rocks caused the river to flow into the tunnels and around the area where people were working. (13) Now the workers could begin to build the dam.

(14) Workers on the project worked every day of the week, every week of the year. (15) They only got two days off all year. (16) They worked in heat, noise, dust, and danger. (17) They worked without shade and without enough water to drink. (18) They finish the dam two years ahead of schedule.

(19) People had said it couldn't be done. (20) In the end, the Hoover Dam was like one of the coolest things that humans have ever built.

**10** Which is the **best** way to rewrite sentence 1 with stronger adjectives?

- A In 1900, the Colorado was a bad river.
- B In 1900, the Colorado was not a great river.
- C In 1900, the Colorado was an awful and scary river.
- D In 1900, the Colorado was a wild and dangerous river.

**11** Which is the correct way to punctuate sentence 4?

- A “The river was an enemy, and only in short periods of time could you look at it as a useful river, says government expert Blaine Hamann.”
- B “The river was an enemy, and only in short periods of time could you look at it as a useful river,” says government expert Blaine Hamann.
- C “The river was an enemy, and only in short periods of time could you look at it as a useful river”, says government expert Blaine Hamann.
- D Leave as is.

**12** Which is the correct form of the underlined word in sentence 8?

- A choose
- B choosed
- C has chosen
- D Leave as is.

**13** Which is the correct form of the underlined word in sentence 18?

- A were finishing
- B finished
- C will finish
- D Leave as is.

**14** Which is the **best** way to rewrite sentence 20 using standard written English?

- A In the end, the Hoover Dam was a really cool thing that humans built.
- B In the end, the Hoover Dam was like an amazing thing that humans built.
- C In the end, the Hoover Dam was one of the most amazing things that humans have ever built.
- D Leave as is.

**15** Which sentence from the passage has an error?

- A The U.S. government decided to tame the river by building what would be the larger dam in the world.
- B Topping 700 feet, it would be more than twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty.
- C The rocks caused the river to flow into the tunnels and around the area where people were working.
- D They worked in heat, noise, dust, and danger.

*Option B*

*Edit the passage below. You should correct errors in usage and conventions. You should also edit any sentences that are awkward, have errors, or use language that is inappropriate for an academic assignment.*

## **The Hoover Dam**

In 1900, the Colorado was a harmful river. It could flood without warning. Floods turned thousands of acres of farmland into a vast sea.

The river was an enemy, and only in short periods of time could you look at it as a useful river, says government expert Blaine Hamann.

To make the land productive, the river had to be tamed. The U.S. government decided to tame the river by building what would be the larger dam in the world. Topping 700 feet, it would be more than twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty.

The government chose a spot on the Nevada-Arizona border. The first task was to change the route of the river. Workers drilled four tunnels through the canyon walls. Then they piled rocks in the middle of the river. The rocks caused the river to flow into the tunnels and around the area where people were working. Now the workers could begin to build the dam.

Workers on the project worked every day of the week, every week of the year. They only got two days off all year. They worked in heat, noise, dust, and danger. They worked without shade and without enough water to drink. They finish the dam two years ahead of schedule.

People had said it couldn't be done. In the end, the Hoover Dam was like one of the coolest things that humans have ever built.

**STOP**



# Literary Passage-Based Reading Items

**Grade 3**  
**Student Workbook**

This passage is about a boy who gets a kitten. Read the passage. Then answer questions 16 through 23.

## A Million and One Names for a Cat

by Iva Pavlakovic

- 1 Nick couldn't wait to bring his new kitten home from the animal shelter. He held it snugly inside his jacket as his dad drove them home.

"So, what are you going to name him?" asked Dad.

"I'm not really sure yet," Nick answered, looking at the tiny kitten. It was mostly black with some white on its paws, face, and belly.

Nick started going through some names in his head. Max? Chester? No, those seemed too boring. What about Scooter? Or maybe Catnip? No, those were way too silly. Maybe something down-to-earth and friendly, like Murphy. The more he thought about it, the more he liked it.

- 5 "Dad, do you think he looks like a Murphy?"

"H'm, I don't know. What about Oreo or Boots?" Nick could tell his dad really liked those names. "Well, don't worry," his dad said. "Everyone will want to help name the kitty when we get home."

Nick's dad was right. The minute they walked through the door, Nick's older twin brothers, Jake and Austin, and little sister, Carrie, swarmed around him like bees. Nick opened up his jacket to let them watch as the little black-and-white face peeked out. The kitten was shaking, its eyes wide open. Nick could tell how scared it was of its new surroundings.

"Can I hold him?" Jake asked, reaching out his arms. "He looks so scared. We should name him Scaredy Cat!"

"Or maybe something tough like Rocky, or T-Rex!" added Austin.

- 10 "All right, boys, let's give the kitty a little space," said Mom. "We can all help Nick name him later."

That evening, Grandpa came over for dinner.

"I think a nice name from history would suit this little fellow," said Grandpa in his loud voice at the dinner table. "Something memorable, like Napoleon, or Caesar!"

"I was thinking of something more cute," said Mom. "How about Mr. Whiskers?" They all shook their heads except for Grandpa, who continued to eat his soup as if he had not heard.

"I think Princess Peaches or Daisy would be nice," said Carrie, smiling at everyone. "Or maybe even Sunshine!"

- 15 The entire family began to talk at once. Everyone seemed to have a million suggestions for a name. Nick wanted to say that he liked "Murphy," but he didn't think anyone would hear him over all the noise.

The next day, Nick took the kitten outside to play in the grass. He lay down in the hammock where he could keep an eye on the kitten. But he soon fell asleep.

When Nick woke up, the kitten was nowhere to be found. It wasn't in the grass or behind the bushes. He knew the kitten was too small to have climbed over the fence. Suddenly, he heard tiny meows from somewhere close by. The kitten was under the porch! It had crawled all the way to the back, behind a cluster of cobwebs, and it looked absolutely terrified.

"Mom! Dad! Come help!" shouted Nick. Soon his parents, brothers, and sister were outside, peering under the porch.

"Let's try to coax him out," said Dad. "Come here, kitty, kitty! Come, Oreo!"

20 "Here, Rocky!"

"Here, Princess Peaches!"

"Come, Mr. Whiskers!"

The poor kitten was more confused than ever. It started to move backwards, further into the darkness.

"Wait!" Nick exclaimed. "I think I can get him out, but I need everyone to be quiet for a minute."

25 Nick crawled under the porch as far as he could go. "Hey, Murphy, don't worry," he said softly. "I'll get you out safely." The kitten looked at Nick and gave a small, frightened cry.

"Here, Murphy," he said again, this time extending his hand. The kitten continued meowing, but started to inch closer. Pretty soon Nick was able to reach him with one hand, and placed him close to his chest.

"Well, it seems our search for the perfect name has come to an end, thanks to Nick," said Dad.

"Welcome home, Murphy!" everyone cheered.

"A Million and One Names for a Cat" by Iva Pavlakovic. From *Ladybug Magazine*, September 2010 issue. Copyright © 2010 by Carus Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of Carus Publishing Company.

**16** Which sentence from the passage **best** explains why Nick’s dad wants to name the kitten “Boots”?

- A “It was mostly black with some white on its paws, face, and belly.”
- B “Maybe something down-to-earth and friendly . . .”
- C “Nick opened his jacket to let them watch as the little black-and-white face peeked out.”
- D “The kitten was shaking, its eyes wide open.”

**17** Read the sentence below from the passage.

**“All right, boys, let’s give the kitty a little space,” said Mom.**

What does Mom want when she says, “give the kitty a little space”?

- A She wants the kitten to feel more comfortable.
- B She wants everyone to play with the kitten.
- C She wants to find a special place for the kitten.
- D She wants the children to put the kitten outside.

**18** What does the word suggestions mean in paragraph 15?

- A answers
- B ideas
- C reasons
- D tries

**19** Which sentence states the main idea of the passage?

- A A boy makes up funny names for his new kitten.
- B A boy likes to call his new kitten different names.
- C A boy decides on the best name for his new kitten.
- D A boy announces that his new kitten needs a good name.

**20** Which words **best** describe Nick? Select **two** answers.

- A caring
- B curious
- C foolish
- D gentle

**21**

Write the words and phrases from the list below in the correct places in the table. Not all words and phrases will be used. The first one has been completed for you.

### Characters' Kitten Name Ideas

Character	Name for Kitten	Reason for Name
Nick	<b>Murphy</b>	<b>sounds friendly</b>
Jake		
Grandpa		
Carrie		
Mom		

Mr. Whiskers	sounds strong
Oreo	from the past
Caesar	looks afraid
Daisy	sounds silly
Scaredy Cat	sounds nice
	sounds cute

**22**

Explain what readers know about Nick but his family doesn't know. Write your response on the lines below.

Blank writing area with six horizontal lines for student response.





The Newmans are looking for a new house. What will they find? Read the passage. Then answer questions 24 through 30.

## The Newmans' New House

by Kelly Musselman

The Newman family lived in a little blue house on the end of a lane on the edge of a small town.

The Newmans liked their little house. They had lived there as long as anyone could remember. But now it was time for the Newmans to move.

“Look at this house,” said Mrs. Newman. “The paint is all peeling. And the fence is falling down.”

“Yes, and the front porch sags, and the yard is overgrown,” agreed Grandmother Newman.

“And it’s too small!” said the Newman twins, Nora and Nate. “There isn’t enough room for all of our things in this house.”

“Yes, too small and too old. We need a new house, a big house,” said Mr. Newman.

Everyone nodded their heads. “Tomorrow, Nora and Nate and Grandmother and I will go to look for a new house,” said Mrs. Newman.

“And while you are gone, I will sell this one,” said Mr. Newman. “And then we will move.”

The next day, the Newman family left on their search for a nice new house.

The first thing Mr. Newman did after they left was go to the store and buy some paint and some wood to make a sign that said House for Sale.

When he had finished, he put the sign in the yard. “There is quite a bit of paint left,” he said to himself. “I might as well paint the garage.”

The newly painted garage looked so nice that Mr. Newman went back and got more paint for the house. Then the house looked so nice that Mr. Newman decided to replace the fence that went around it.

“Now I have leftover wood,” said Mr. Newman. “I suppose I could fix the front porch.” So he did. The front porch looked so good that Mr. Newman went around to the back and built a porch there, too.

Now the house looked very nice, but the yard did not. So Mr. Newman weeded and watered and planted pretty flowers. He trimmed the bushes and mowed the grass.



Then he built a shed to put the lawnmower in. “I’ll make it big, so there will be room for the new family to store other things,” said Mr. Newman.

Mr. Newman went inside to get a drink of water. Just then, a car pulled up. Two women and a boy and a girl got out.

“Oh, look,” said the older woman. “What a lovely house! What a lovely yard! Look at the beautiful flowers!”

“So pretty,” agreed the younger woman. “They match the color of the house and fence so nicely.”

“And look how much room this house has!” cried the children. “There is a fine back porch, and a nice, big shed. You know, there will be plenty of room to store our things.”

“Just wait until your father sees it,” said the younger woman. “It looks like we have found the perfect new house for the Newman family to move into!”

“The Newmans’ New House” by Kelly Musselman. From *Jack and Jill*, April 1999 issue. Copyright © 1999 by SEPS. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Licensing. Illustration © WestEd.

**24**

Read the sentence below from the passage.

“Yes, and the front porch sags, and the yard is overgrown,” agreed Grandmother Newman.

What does the word overgrown mean in the sentence?

- A too small for the building that is on it
- B larger than one would have thought possible
- C decorated with plants that grow there naturally
- D covered with plants that have been allowed to grow wild

**25**

In your own words, explain how Mr. Newman’s plans for the day change as he completes each task. Write your response on the lines below.

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**26** Read the sentences below from the passage.

**Just then, a car pulled up. Two women and a boy and a girl got out.**

Why does the author use the words “two women and a boy and a girl” instead of naming the characters?

- A to hint that a new story is starting
- B to make the ending of the passage a surprise
- C to show that the characters are new to the passage
- D to suggest that the characters are strangers to one another

**27** Which sentences from the passage show that Mr. Newman is a hard worker? Select **two** answers.

- A “‘Yes, too small and too old. We need a new house, a big house,’ said Mr. Newman.”
- B “‘There is quite a bit of paint left,’ he said to himself. ‘I might as well paint the garage.’”
- C “‘So Mr. Newman weeded and watered and planted pretty flowers.’”
- D “‘Mr. Newman went inside to get a drink of water.’”

**28** In the beginning, the Newman family believes it is time to move to a new house. Underline or highlight **three** sentences in the passage that support and explain this statement.

**29**

Some of the main events of the passage are listed in order below. Select events from the box below and use them to complete the list.

1. Mrs. Newman, Grandmother Newman, Nora, and Nate left to look for a new house.
- 2.
3. Mr. Newman painted the garage and replaced the fence.
- 4.
5. Mr. Newman cleaned up the yard and built a shed.
- 6.

### Information from the Passage

Mr. Newman put the lawnmower away.  
Mrs. Newman, Grandmother Newman, and the twins returned to their house.  
The Newmans had lived in the house for a long time.  
Mr. Newman fixed the front porch and built a back porch.  
The Newmans lived in a small town.  
Mr. Newman made a sign that said House for Sale.

**30**

Explain why the family believes it has found the “perfect new house.” Use details from the passage to support your response. Write your response on the lines below.

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# Literary Pairing Passage-Based Reading Items

**Grade 3**  
**Student Workbook**

You will now read two excerpts from books about a young boy named Akimbo. In the first, Akimbo is visiting his uncle, who runs a snake park. They are looking for a dangerous snake that someone reported. In the second, Akimbo is with his father, who is a ranger at an African wild animal park. They are trying to capture a lion. Read the excerpts. Then answer questions 31 through 40.

## An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Snakes*

by Alexander McCall Smith

1 The sun moved slowly overhead, making the shadows shorter and then lengthening them again. In the bush around the two watching figures, nothing moved, although in the trees around them now and then a bird fluttered from branch to branch. Akimbo wondered whether it was worth waiting. The snake could be anywhere—it could even have moved from the hole and established a refuge elsewhere. If this had happened, they would spend hours and hours beside an empty hole in the ground, waiting for a snake that would never come.

Then something caught Akimbo’s eye. At first he thought he was imagining it, but then he realized he was not. There was a movement just within the hole. Yes, something was there.

Uncle Peter saw it, too. “That’s it,” he whispered to Akimbo. “Now watch.”

Slowly a head moved out of the hole, followed by a section of lithe, thin snake’s body. Akimbo felt Uncle Peter stiffen beside him.

5 “Mamba,” his uncle whispered, almost under his breath. “They were right.”

Akimbo hardly dared breathe. The snake, as it emerged from the hole, showed itself to be immensely long, at least twice his own height. He glanced at his uncle, wondering what he intended to do. Would he really try to chase that? Uncle Peter gestured to Akimbo to stay where he was. Then, rising to his feet, he began to move slowly toward the snake.

The mamba seemed unaware of Uncle Peter’s approach, lying seemingly inert on the ground in front of the hole. Akimbo saw a large fly land on one of the snake’s coils, and this made it twitch, but only slightly. Uncle Peter had the extended pole held out before him. He was now sufficiently close to the snake for the jaws of the pole to be hovering almost around the snake’s body.

“Now,” thought Akimbo. “Now’s your chance.”

It may have been the shadow thrown by the pole, or it may have been some tremor in the ground that alerted the snake. Whatever it was, the head of the snake suddenly whipped around to confront the danger. For a moment, the deadly reptile and its pursuer faced one another, but then in a sudden flash, the snake shot away, flying up the bank like an arrow released from a bow.

10 Uncle Peter gave a cry and began to follow the snake, holding the pole up against his chest. Akimbo sprang to his feet and followed his uncle.

“Watch him!” called out Uncle Peter. “See where he goes!”

Akimbo knew how easy it was to lose sight of a fleeing snake, so he was not surprised when the snake seemed to vanish completely into a dense clump of trees.

Uncle Peter stopped and waited for Akimbo to catch up with him. “Did you see where it went?” he asked, the disappointment clearly showing in his voice.

Akimbo pointed to the place where he had last seen the snake. “I think it was in there,” he said.

- 15 Uncle Peter nodded. “I suspect it’s gone,” he said. “But there’s no harm in our just checking up on those trees to see if it’s gone up one of them.”

They approached the clump of trees gingerly. At any moment, the snake could reappear. Mambas were aggressive—Akimbo had read that time and time again. They could stand their ground and attack when other snakes would think only of seeking out safety. Now they were entering the mamba’s territory. It was the one that knew the trees, not them. They were the ones who were weak and vulnerable in such terrain.

## An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Lions*

by Alexander McCall Smith

1 They watched the truck bouncing away in the distance over the rutted farm road. Soon it was only a cloud of dust, and then that too disappeared, and they were alone.

“There’s a clump of trees over there,” said Akimbo’s father, pointing to a place a little way away from the stockade. “We can go in there. That should give us a good bit of cover.”

They made their way over to the trees and found a place where they could sit and be reasonably well concealed from view. Akimbo’s father picked up a stick, took out his penknife, and began to whittle away at the wood. As he did so, he whistled a song that Akimbo had always enjoyed when he was younger, and which made him smile now.

“You like that tune, don’t you?” said his father. “Did I ever tell you the words?”

5 Akimbo shook his head.

“Well, it’s about a lion hunt,” explained his father. “It’s an old, old song about the days when our fathers and grandfathers hunted lions.”

Akimbo laughed.

“Would you sing it now?” he asked. “I’m sure it will make me feel braver.”

Akimbo’s father smiled at the thought, and, as the sun went burning down, a great, friendly red ball, he sang the old song to his son. Soon it was dark, and above them thousands and thousands of stars appeared in the African night.

10 “Sleep if you wish,” said Akimbo’s father quietly. “I shall keep watch. Don’t worry.”

Akimbo was not sure how long he had been asleep. He awoke, feeling sore from lying on the hard ground, and he rubbed vigorously at his legs to make them feel better.

“Has anything happened?” he whispered to his father, who was sitting beside him, his rifle laid across his lap.

“No,” said his father, his voice low. “Nothing yet. You can go back to sleep if you like.”

Akimbo lay down again, but he was far from sleep.

15 “I could try counting the stars,” he said to himself, looking at the silver fields above him, “but I’d run out of numbers.”

He thought of the goat, and wondered whether it would be sleeping. Would it be frightened, being out here in this strange place, far from all the other goats? Or would it accept the change naturally, as animals so often seemed to do?

It was then that he heard it, and the sound made him sit bolt upright. The goat was bleating—a clear, sharp sound rising above the insect sounds of the night.

Akimbo turned to his father, who had also heard the sound and who had laid a hand on his son's arm.

"It's sensed something," his father whispered. "We must be very quiet now."

20 Akimbo peered in the direction of the trap, but it was only a dim shape in the darkness. In the stockade, one or two of the cattle moved, and then there was a bleating again. It was louder now, with a note of panic.

Suddenly there was more movement. The cattle moved from one side of the stockade to the other and bellowed in fright. Akimbo strained his eyes against the darkness. He looked up at the sky: the moon was behind a cloud, and it was difficult to see, but then, slowly, the cloud passed by and the moonlight flooded back.

There was a thud, and then, loud and unmistakable, a roar. A lion was in the cage, and it had struck out at the wooden bars that separated it from the terrified goat. Akimbo's father rose to his feet.

"He's in the trap," he said. "That's it."

"What are you going to do?" asked Akimbo urgently.

25 "I'm going to take a look," his father replied. "You stay right here, understand?"

There was a tone in his father's voice that made Akimbo realize it was no use trying to argue. He crouched where he was as his father crept forward toward the trap. The noise had died down now, and Akimbo wondered what the lion was doing. Surely it would not have accepted its captivity so quickly? Yet he was sure now he could see it in the trap—a large, dark shape, half-lying, half-standing.

"An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Snakes*" by Alexander McCall Smith. Copyright © 2006 by Alexander McCall Smith. Reprinted by permission of Bloomsbury Children's Books. "An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Lions*" by Alexander McCall Smith. Copyright © 1992 by Alexander McCall Smith. Reprinted by permission of Bloomsbury Children's Books.

**31** In “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Snakes*,” how does Uncle Peter plan to catch the snake?

- A by chasing it up a tree
- B by grabbing it with a tool
- C by shooting it with an arrow
- D by trapping it inside of a hole

**32** Read the sentence below from “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Snakes*.”

**For a moment, the deadly reptile and its pursuer faced one another, but then in a sudden flash, the snake shot away, flying up the bank like an arrow released from a bow.**

What do the underlined words suggest about the snake? Select **two** answers.

- A It disappears.
- B It travels quickly.
- C It floats in the air.
- D It moves powerfully.

**33** At the end of “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Snakes*,” how does Akimbo **most** likely feel?

- A lost
- B proud
- C scared
- D wise

**34** Read the statement below.

**The mamba snake is a fierce and dangerous creature.**

Underline or highlight **two** sentences from “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Snakes*” that support this idea.

**35** Read the sentence below from “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Lions*.”

**They made their way over to the trees and found a place where they could sit and be reasonably well concealed from view.**

Which phrase from the sentence **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of the word concealed?

- A made their way
- B found a place
- C where they could sit
- D from view

**36**

In “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Lions*,” Akimbo and his father know that the lion is near. Explain how they know this. Write your response on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**37**

In “An Excerpt from *Akimbo and the Lions*,” Akimbo’s father helps Akimbo to feel better while they are waiting for the lion. Describe how he does this. Write your response on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**38**

In both passages, Akimbo must follow directions. Choose a sentence from **each** passage that shows when it is **most** important for Akimbo to follow directions. Draw a line connecting **each** sentence you choose to the box that says “Akimbo Follows Directions.”

Akimbo Follows Directions

“Akimbo hardly dared breathe.”  
*(Akimbo and the Snakes)*

“Uncle Peter gestured to Akimbo to stay where he was.”  
*(Akimbo and the Snakes)*

“‘Sleep if you wish,’ said Akimbo’s father quietly.” *(Akimbo and the Lions)*

“There was a tone in his father’s voice that made Akimbo realize it was no use trying to argue.”  
*(Akimbo and the Lions)*

**39**

Explain how the characters of Uncle Peter and Akimbo’s father are alike. Use details from **both** passages to support your response. Write your response on the lines below.

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# Informational Passage-Based Reading Items

**Grade 3**  
**Student Workbook**

Read the passage about lighthouses. Then answer questions 41 through 47.

## A Beacon of Light

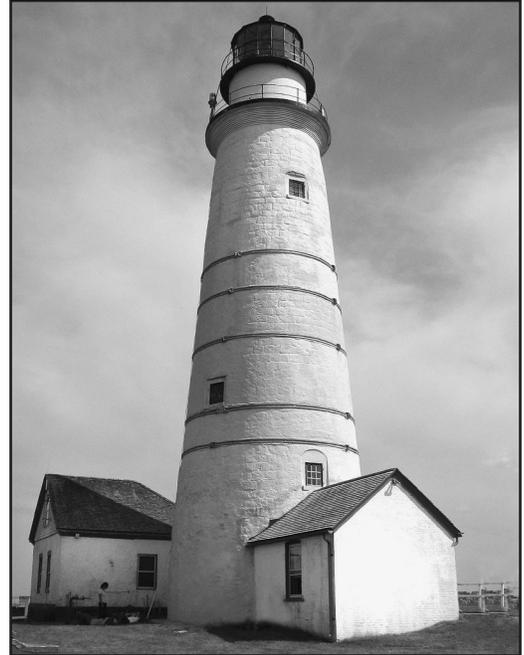
- 1 Imagine you are the captain of a ship on a vast stormy sea. You stand in the gloomy rain and wind, steering toward home. It is your job to find the way back to the safe harbor. The sky is pitch black and you are worried. Fog rises all around you like the breath of a sea monster. Soon everything disappears. Waves crash into the boat, making it creak and pop. You hope the sea will spare your life. Then you see it through the fog and darkness. A light shining. It is the lighthouse leading you home.

### Early Lighthouses

- 2 No one really knows when the first lighthouse was built. It was likely around the time humans left the safety of land to explore the sea. Lighthouses started as large bonfires built on seaside hills. Early sailors followed the light to find their way home. One of the earliest and most famous lighthouses was built in Alexandria, Egypt. It was built around 285 B.C. and stood 450 feet tall. It would be a skyscraper even by today's standards.
- 3 As people became more dependent on ships to carry cargo, many lighthouses were built all over the world. Lighthouses were still used to help sailors find their way to port, but they were also used to warn sailors about dangerous rocks or shallow water. The first lighthouse in the United States was built on a small island close to Boston in 1716. It is still in use today.

### Lighthouse Keepers

- 4 In the early days of lighthouse keeping, keepers were extremely busy while on duty. They had to keep the light burning between sunset and sunrise. Before electric lights were invented, keepers kept the lights burning using oils. This meant they had to walk up and down the long staircase two to three times a night carrying the oil for the light. They also had to trim the wick on the light. This would enable it to burn brightly without smoking too much. During the daytime, keepers would take care of the lighthouse and living quarters. Lighthouse keeping was often very isolated and lonely work. Sometimes keepers were called to do heroic things like save shipwrecked sailors.
- 5 Today, lighthouses are mostly automated. The lights are electric and a keeper is not needed to trim the wick or provide oil to keep them glowing. It is a career that is an artifact from an earlier time. However, many people find lighthouses to be beautiful and volunteer to keep them in good shape. They also keep many lighthouse traditions alive.



*The Boston Light on Little Brewster Island was built in 1716.*

“A Beacon of Light” © WestEd. *Lighthouse* reprinted under Creative Commons license.

**41** Underline or highlight **three** sentences from paragraph 1 that create a feeling of hope.

**42** What is the **most** likely reason the author includes details about the lighthouse in Alexandria?

- A to show how tall lighthouses can be
- B to show the long history of lighthouses
- C to show that early Egyptian lighthouses still are working today
- D to show that early Egyptian lighthouses were built like lighthouses today

**43** Which word from paragraph 4 helps the reader understand the word isolated?

- A busy
- B lonely
- C heroic
- D shipwrecked

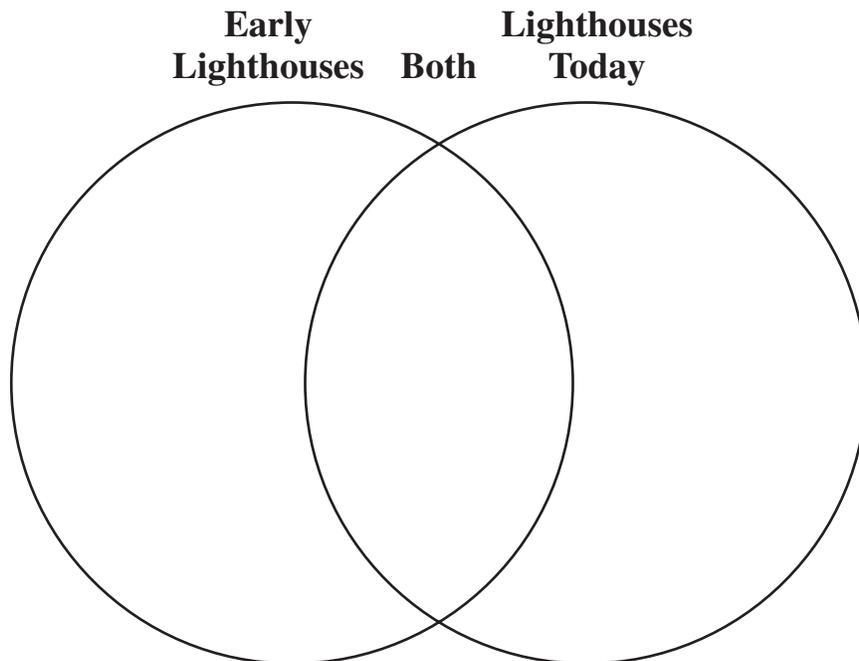
**44**

Use the Venn diagram below to show how lighthouse keeping has changed.

Write the number of each sentence from the textbox into its proper category in the Venn diagram.

### Information from the Passage

1. Lighthouses bring sailors home.
2. Electric bulbs make the light.
3. Most keepers live at the lighthouses.
4. Oil lamps make the light.
5. Volunteers repair lighthouses.
6. Lighthouses mark rocks.



**45**

Which sentences from the passage support the idea that lighthouses were built high above the water? Select **two** answers.

- A “Lighthouses started as large bonfires built on seaside hills.”
- B “Early sailors followed the light to find their way home.”
- C “It would be a skyscraper even by today’s standards.”
- D “However, many people find lighthouses to be beautiful and volunteer to keep them in good shape.”

**46**

Explain **one** way that lighthouses help people. Write your response on the lines below.

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This passage is about forest food webs. Read the passage. Then answer questions 48 through 54.

## An Excerpt from *Forest Food Webs*

by Paul Fleisher

- 1 Tall trees tower above you. Fallen leaves cover the ground. Small plants grow in the shade beneath the trees. You are in a forest. Forests are also called woodlands, or woods.

Forests have many trees. They also have bushes, ferns, and mushrooms. Insects and mice live here. So do deer and raccoons. Tiny bacteria (bak-TEER-ee-uh) live in the soil. Bacteria are much too small for us to see.

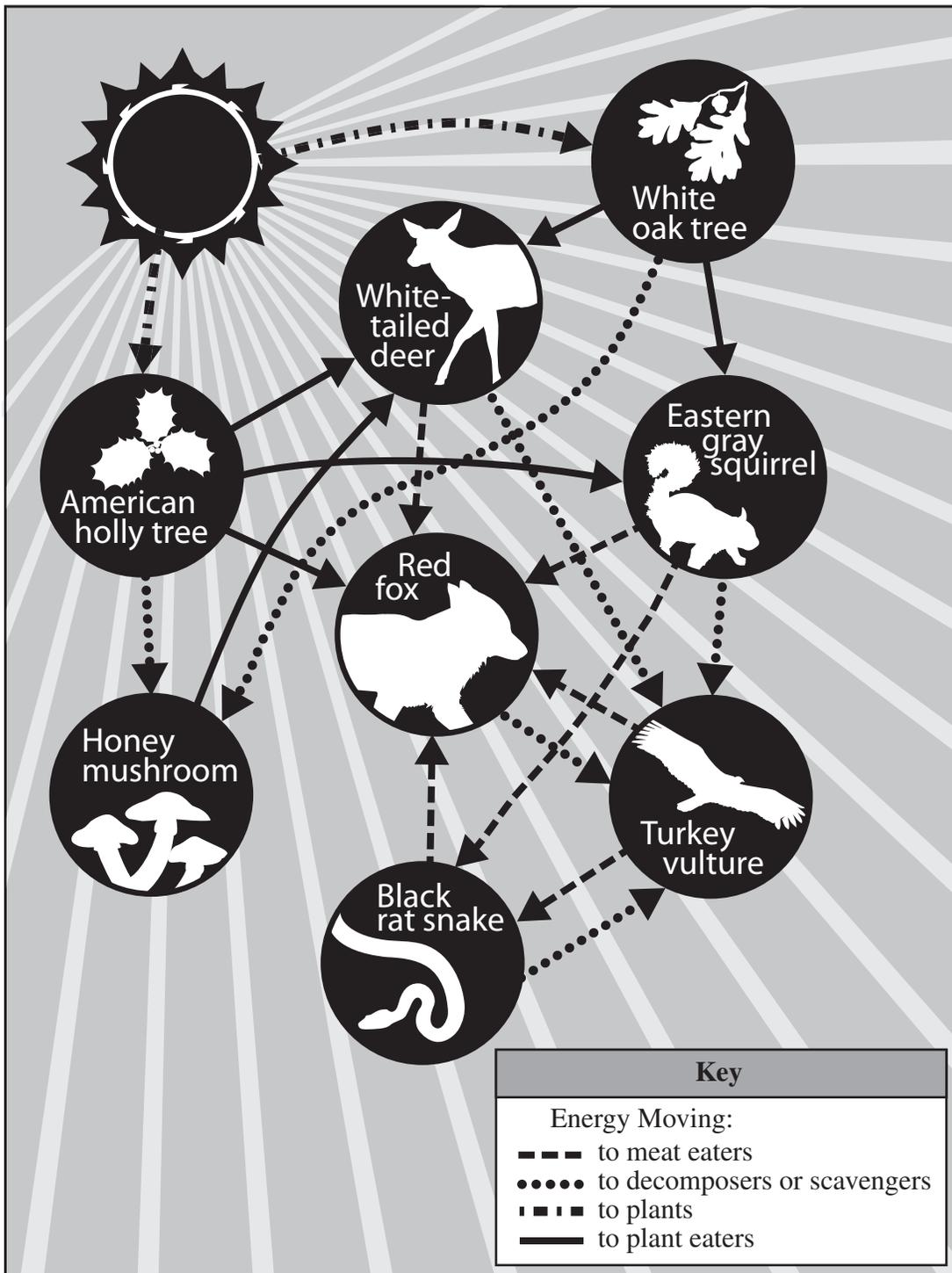
Forests are some of Earth's most important environments. An environment is the place where any creature lives. The environment includes the air, soil, weather, and other plants and animals.

Plants and animals in the forest depend on one another. Some animals eat living plants. Some creatures eat dead wood and leaves. Other animals are meat eaters. They eat other animals. When plants and animals die, they break down into chemicals (KEH-muh-kuhlz). The chemicals become part of the soil. Some of these chemicals help plants grow.

- 5 Energy moves from one living thing to another. A food chain shows how the energy moves. The energy for life comes from the sun. Plants store the sun's energy in their leaves, stems, and roots. When an animal eats a plant, the animal gets some of the sun's energy from the plant. The energy moves farther along the food chain each time one living thing eats another.

A forest has many food chains. Imagine that a caterpillar eats a leaf. Then a bird eats the caterpillar. A bobcat eats the bird. When the bobcat dies, a vulture eats its body. The sun's energy passes from the leaf to the caterpillar. Then it passes to the bird. Then it goes to the bobcat. Then it goes to the vulture.

But birds don't eat only caterpillars. They also eat seeds, beetles, and worms. Bobcats eat other things besides birds. Bobcats also eat rabbits, squirrels, and mice. And vultures eat all kinds of dead animals. An environment's food web is made up of many food chains. A food web shows how all living things depend on one another for food.



“An Excerpt from *Forest Food Webs*” by Paul Fleisher. Copyright © 2008 by Lerner Publishing Group, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Lerner Publishing Group, Inc. *Food web chart* © WestEd.

**48** Which paragraph **best** explains the idea that forests support many kinds of life?

- A paragraph 1
- B paragraph 2
- C paragraph 3
- D paragraph 4

**49** Read the sentence below from the passage.

**A forest has many food chains.**

Underline or highlight **two** parts of the passage that support this statement.

**50** Based on paragraph 6, a vulture is a kind of

- A energy.
- B chemical.
- C animal.
- D plant.

**51** According to the diagram, which of the following are decomposers or scavengers? Select **two** answers.

- A turkey vultures
- B black rat snakes
- C honey mushrooms
- D American holly trees

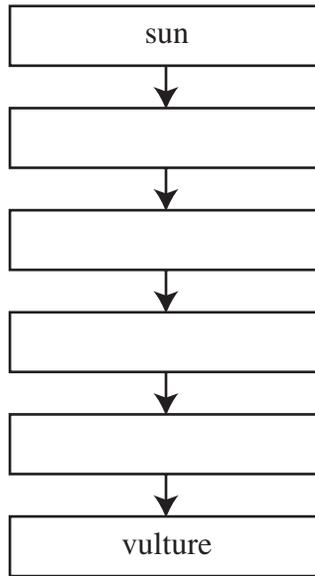
**52**

All energy for life comes from the sun. In your own words, explain how animals get this energy. Write your response on the lines below.

Blank writing area with six horizontal lines for response.

**53**

Below is a diagram of a forest food chain. Write each word from the word box below in its correct place in the forest food chain diagram.



bird      caterpillar      leaf      bobcat

**54**

Explain why the red fox in the diagram is important to the food web. Use details from the diagram and the passage to support your response. Write your response on the lines below.

Four horizontal lines for writing a response.





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# NVACS • Student Workbook Grade 3