

## READING TEST

35 Minutes—40 Questions

**DIRECTIONS:** There are four passages in this test. Each passage is followed by several questions. After reading a passage, choose the best answer to each question and fill in the corresponding oval on your answer document. You may refer to the passages as often as necessary.

## Passage I

**PROSE FICTION:** This passage is adapted from the novel *Toning the Sweep* by Angela Johnson (©1993 by Angela Johnson).

The narrator is visiting her grandmother, Ola, to help her prepare to move. Martha is Ola's friend and neighbor.

I think about how everybody Ola knows here has a story. Daddy says that everybody has one and their stories are all a part of us. If Ola loves these people, then they must be a part of me too. It must be true about all of us being a part of one another like Daddy says.

Ola hums on the porch while Mama eats an apple and labels boxes. I go over to the phone by the refrigerator and call Martha. When she picks up, her voice rings out and is so familiar. I tell her Ola's idea about making a movie.

Martha Jackson's hair is the color of coal and she must be about my grandmama's age. She cuts her hair short, and sometimes it sticks straight up, but she doesn't care.

She's probably one of the tallest people I know, and walks like she's swimming. Martha looks at you for a long time before she decides to speak.

She's leaning on a Joshua tree in Ola's front yard, saying, "It's like poetry and eating to me now. You let the camera become part of you. Like your head and your eyes. If the camera were to fall out of your hands, it should be like your head falling off in the middle of a conversation."

"I don't know if the camera can ever be that special to me, Martha," I say. "I just got used to the camera my dad gave me four years ago. I can remember to take off the lens cap sometimes."

Martha smiles. "This is a thing to get used to—that's all. No magic, no special real training. Turn the camera on and shoot."

I take the camera and start taping a crow that's landed on the back porch. I figure it's a start. The crow gets real interested in me filming him and stops pecking

at the old apple core he's found near the garbage cans. He hops off the porch and checks me and the camera out till he sees something else off over by some brush.

Martha's watching me with a smirk when I turn back to her with the camera. "I guess you'll do okay by yourself now." She looks at me for a long time, then says, "Let's talk about Ola."

I start shooting and say to myself, "A part of me," and hope that the thing is going and the lens cap hasn't been on the whole time I've been taping the crow. I zoom in on Martha leaning against the Joshua tree. She stares into the camera.

"I met Ola in the late summer of 1964 'cause there was no other way around it."

A pot falls in the kitchen, and we can hear Ola laughing—then she stops. I keep the camera running.

"Like I was saying," Martha starts to whisper, but changes her mind and speaks even louder. "I couldn't help but meet her. There's about five hundred people that live out here, and she happens to be my closest neighbor. She was playing her music loud one night, and I was sitting out in my yard."

Ola comes out the screen door and sits down by Martha Jackson. Two people couldn't be more different in looks. I have them both in the frame.

Ola's short and delicate—like she'd break if you held her arm too tight. She wouldn't break, though. She hands Martha a glass of iced tea and sits cross-legged on the ground.

I press the pause button, then change my mind. I sit down on a lawn chair and ask, "What did you two think of each other when you first met?" It's easier to ask what I'd usually think of as a nosy question from behind a camera.

Martha whispers, "I thought she had the worst accent of anybody that I'd ever heard. It grew on me, though, and I got used to it. I liked her car and the way the fool painted the house yellow the day after she and Diane moved in."

Ola spills a little iced tea and says, “No, you didn’t. You yelled from the road that this shade of yellow didn’t look good from where you stood, and what was it called?” Ola looks at the camera and tells me, “Your mama was so embarrassed, Emmie, she begged me to stop painting it yellow and just make it gray or something. Your mama always took things so much to heart.”

“What did you say to Martha then?”

“I told her I didn’t know who she was, but if she had enough energy to yell from the road at a perfect stranger, she probably had enough strength to pick up a brush.”

Martha tilts her head back and laughs. “So I did.”

Ola gets up and goes into the house without making a sound. I don’t think that Martha even knows she’s gone, ’cause her eyes are closed.

I want to make this movie on my own. Martha makes me want to know all of Ola’s friends. I want to know who they are and what they’ve done. I’ll put them all in front of the camera, and when the movie’s done, it can be my gift to Ola. The other gifts I’ve given her are things she could put on the wall or wear. I figure this will be better than all that. I’ll give her memories of her people.

1. Based on the passage, Ola and Martha can reasonably be said to share all of the following traits EXCEPT a:
  - A. sense of humor.
  - B. capacity for brutal honesty.
  - C. great vitality and liveliness.
  - D. tendency to pause before speaking.
2. Which of the following statements does the passage support regarding the idea for the movie?
  - F. Though the original idea was Ola’s, the narrator and Martha embraced it.
  - G. Although the narrator came up with the idea, she needed Martha’s encouragement to continue.
  - H. Ola proposed the idea to Martha, who recruited the narrator to make the movie.
  - J. The narrator suggested the idea to Ola, who had to be talked into it by Martha.
3. The narrator’s two references to a camera’s lens cap (lines 27 and 42) primarily serve to suggest her:
  - A. expanding knowledge of camera terminology.
  - B. continuing desire to uncover her artistic vision.
  - C. ongoing insecurity about her skill with a camera.
  - D. growing eagerness to use a camera to tell stories.
4. Viewed in the context of the passage, Martha’s smirk (line 37) most likely reflects a feeling of:
  - F. mild weariness.
  - G. sharp condescension.
  - H. profound relief.
  - J. slight amusement.
5. As presented by the participants, the initial meeting between Ola and Martha can best be described as:
  - A. a misunderstanding that escalates into harsh words until the two agree to keep their distance from each other.
  - B. a potentially bitter confrontation that, because of the personalities of the two people, turns into a cooperative effort.
  - C. a friendly, relaxed get-together between two families made even more enjoyable by music and a shared task.
  - D. an accidental encounter that slowly turns unpleasant due to a dispute that Ola’s daughter helps resolve.
6. Martha clearly recommends that the narrator use a camera in which of the following ways?
  - F. Scientifically
  - G. Cautiously
  - H. Intuitively
  - J. Secretly
7. It can most reasonably be inferred that Diane is the name of:
  - A. the narrator.
  - B. the narrator’s mother.
  - C. one of Ola’s neighbors.
  - D. one of Martha’s best friends.
8. In terms of the development of the narrator as a character, the last paragraph primarily serves to:
  - F. establish motivation for her actions.
  - G. provide background details about her past.
  - H. elaborate on her relationship with Martha.
  - J. undermine the reliability of her account.
9. In the first paragraph, the main conclusion the narrator reaches is that:
  - A. Daddy is usually right in his assessments of people.
  - B. Ola is a wonderful storyteller who entertains everyone she knows.
  - C. Ola shares a close bond with her neighbors.
  - D. people everywhere are connected to each other by stories and love.
10. The narrator’s statement “She wouldn’t break, though” (line 60) most nearly means that in the narrator’s opinion, Ola is:
  - F. too stubborn to change her opinions very often.
  - G. too guarded to show her feelings.
  - H. stronger than she appears to be.
  - J. more active than many people half her age.