

## Threads & Themes Grade 7, Unit 3, Investigation 1 Summative Assessment (Teacher Edition)

Focus Standards: RL.7.1, RL.7.2, RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.5, RL.7.6, RL.7.7, L.7.4.a, L.7.4.b, L.7.5, L.7.5.a, L.7.2

### PASSAGE 1

**What We Carry** — Lexile: 1020L | Literary (Drama)

(1) [A narrow practice room tucked into a community center on the east side of the city, late afternoon in November 1999. The room is worn and quiet, with an old upright piano leaning against one wall and a chair near the door. MARCO VARGAS, age seventeen, sits at the piano, a folded letter resting on the instrument’s lid. He plays the opening measures of a Beethoven sonata, stops abruptly, and stares at his hands as if they belong to someone else.]

(2) **MARCO:** (to himself) Third time. Every time, the fourth bar.

(3) [He begins the sonata once more, leaning forward with each measure, as though pushing the piano through mud. He breaks off mid-phrase, and for several seconds the only sound in the room is his own breathing. In the silence that follows, he unfolds the letter slowly and reads the first line aloud, quietly, as though testing whether the words are real.]

(4) **MARCO:** “The Committee is pleased to offer you a full-tuition fellowship for the Summer Intensive at the New England Conservatory.”

(5) [He refolds the letter carefully, pressing each crease. The door opens without any knock, and ELENA VARGAS, age twenty-four, steps in carrying a paper grocery bag. She is still wearing the stained apron from her shift at their uncle’s auto-body shop, and her hands are still gray with engine grease. Her eyes find the letter on the piano almost at once.]

(6) **ELENA:** Tío Roberto said you’d be here.

(7) **MARCO:** Practice room closes at six.

(8) **ELENA:** It’s six-twenty.

(9) [A beat. She sets the grocery bag down on the folding chair and waits for him to turn around, but MARCO keeps his back to the door, his fingers resting on the cool surface of the keys as if the piano itself were steadier than anything he might say.]

(10) **ELENA:** Papá asked where you were.

(11) **MARCO:** How is he?

(12) **ELENA:** He ate half the soup. Which is more than yesterday. The doctor says four months before he can hold a wrench again. Maybe six.

**(13)** [He plays a slow, deliberate chord. He holds it until the sound thins and hollows out into the room, and even after his hands lift from the keys the silence that remains seems to keep the chord's shape.]

**(14) MARCO:** Elena—

**(15) ELENA:** Don't.

**(16) MARCO:** You don't even know what I was going to—

**(17) ELENA:** Yes, I do. That letter has been sitting on the kitchen table for a week, Marco. You think I didn't look?

**(18)** [He turns on the bench to face her for the first time, his hands slipping from the keys into his lap.]

**(19) MARCO:** Then you know it's a full ride. They cover the tuition and the housing, too.

**(20) ELENA:** They don't cover Papá. They don't cover the shop. You think Tío Roberto can run the business by himself for three months, while a kid who has been there every summer since he was twelve is up in Boston?

**(21)** [MARCO's hands tremble. He lowers them into his lap where she cannot see.]

**(22) MARCO:** He could hire somebody.

**(23) ELENA:** With what money? The insurance company hasn't paid a dime. The lawyer says it might be another year.

**(24) MARCO:** (quieter) I've worked for that scholarship since I was ten.

**(25) ELENA:** I know. Mamá knows. Papá knows. That's why nobody wanted to tell you.

**(26)** [A long silence settles into the room. MARCO looks at the piano the way a person looks at a door that has just closed on something important, his gaze steady yet unfocused.]

**(27) MARCO:** What if I go to Boston, and I come home, and I never get another chance like this?

**(28) ELENA:** What if you don't go, Marco, and you find out you are bigger than the conservatory anyway?

**(29)** [She steps toward him, and for a moment it looks as if she will put a hand on his shoulder. She balks. Her hand is dirty; she does not want to leave a mark on his sweatshirt. She crosses her arms instead.]

**(30) ELENA:** I am not telling you not to go. I am telling you don't decide tonight. Eat with us first.

**(31)** [MARCO nods once without speaking. ELENA picks up the grocery bag and moves toward the door, stopping in the frame as though one more thing needs to be said before she can leave.]

**(32) ELENA:** He is proud of you, Marco. Even on the days he cannot find the words to say so.

(33) [She leaves. The door closes behind her. MARCO sits in silence for a long time. At last he places his hands back on the keys and begins the sonata again, very softly, from the beginning. As he reaches the fourth bar, the stage lights dim. This time he does not stop.]

## ITEMS — PASSAGE 1

**Item 1** — L.7.5 | Figurative language meaning | DOK 2 | MC

Read this stage direction from paragraph 3 of “What We Carry.”

He begins the sonata once more, leaning forward with each measure, as though pushing the piano through mud.

**Why does the playwright compare Marco’s playing to “pushing the piano through mud”?**

- A) to show that Marco is playing an old and broken piano
- B) to show that Marco is tired from practicing for too long
- C) to show that Marco’s feelings make the music feel heavy
- D) to show that Marco is learning to play a difficult new piece

**Item 2** — RL.7.4 | Word meaning and tone | DOK 2 | MC

Read this sentence from paragraph 13 of “What We Carry.”

He plays a slow, deliberate chord. He holds it until the sound thins and hollows out into the room.

**What does the phrase hollows out suggest about Marco’s emotional state at this moment?**

- A) He feels increasingly frustrated that he cannot play the piece correctly.
- B) He feels empty and uncertain as he faces a difficult decision.
- C) He feels focused and determined to improve his playing.
- D) He feels hesitant and unsure about what to do next.

**Item 3** — RL.7.1 | Cite textual evidence | DOK 2 | MC

**Select the TWO details from “What We Carry” that BEST show what Elena is most concerned about regarding the scholarship.**

- A) “They don’t cover Papá. They don’t cover the shop.”
- B) “Mamá knows. Papá knows. That’s why nobody wanted to tell you.”
- C) “That letter has been sitting on the kitchen table for a week, Marco.”
- D) “I am not telling you not to go. I am telling you don’t decide tonight.”
- E) “You think Tío Roberto can run the business by himself for three months . . . ?”

**Item 4** — RL.7.3 | Character and action analysis | DOK 2 | MC

Read this stage direction from paragraph 21 of “What We Carry.”

MARCO's hands tremble. He lowers them into his lap where she cannot see.

**What does Marco's action in this stage direction MOST reveal about his response to the situation with Elena?**

- A) He is trying to end the conversation with Elena.
- B) He is hiding his emotions about the decision from Elena.
- C) He is trying to stay focused on the conversation with Elena.
- D) He is pausing to think carefully about how to respond to Elena.

**Item 5** — RL.7.6 | Analyze character perspective | DOK 3 | Multi-Select

**Select the TWO details from "What We Carry" that BEST show how Elena's perspective on the scholarship DIFFERS from Marco's.**

- A) Elena knows that the scholarship letter has been on the kitchen table for a week, while Marco has kept the news to himself.
- B) Elena acknowledges that the scholarship is important, while Marco emphasizes how much work he put in to earn it.
- C) Elena reminds Marco that the insurance has not paid, while Marco focuses on the details of what the scholarship covers.
- D) Elena refers to the family and the shop when she speaks, while Marco refers to the scholarship and his own years of work.
- E) Elena asks Marco what he plans to do about the scholarship, while Marco says he is still thinking about his decision.

**Item 6** — L.7.4.a | Context clues | DOK 2 | MC

Read this passage from "What We Carry."

She steps toward him, and for a moment it looks as if she will put a hand on his shoulder. She balks. Her hand is dirty; she does not want to leave a mark on his sweatshirt. She crosses her arms instead.

**Which context clues BEST help the reader determine the meaning of balks?**

- A) "She steps toward him" and "Her hand is dirty"
- B) "she does not want to leave a mark" and "on his sweatshirt"
- C) "it looks as if she will put a hand on his shoulder" and "She crosses her arms instead"
- D) "for a moment it looks as if" and "she does not want to leave a mark on his sweatshirt"

**Item 7** — RL.7.5 | Analyze text structure (dramatic form) | DOK 3 | MC

**How does the combination of dialogue and stage directions in "What We Carry" shape the reader's understanding of Marco's situation?**

- A) The stage directions show Marco's nervous movements at the piano, while the dialogue explains Elena's view of the family problem.

- B)** The stage directions reveal Marco’s emotional strain, while the dialogue shows how he responds to that strain and expresses his thinking aloud.
- C)** The stage directions show Marco’s repeated struggle with the piano, while the dialogue shows Elena urging him to think about his family’s needs.
- D)** The stage directions provide background details about the setting, while the dialogue focuses on telling the reader what will happen next in the story.

**Item 8** — RL.7.7 | Compare text to live version | DOK 2 | MC

Read this stage direction from paragraph 33 of “What We Carry.”

[She leaves. The door closes behind her. MARCO sits in silence for a long time. At last he places his hands back on the keys and begins the sonata again, very softly, from the beginning. As he reaches the fourth bar, the stage lights dim. This time he does not stop.]

**What would watching a live, acted version of “What We Carry” help the viewer understand about Marco’s emotional state that reading the written stage directions does less directly?**

- A)** how Marco’s facial expressions and body language show his hesitation and renewed focus at the piano
- B)** how the stage lighting appears and changes as Marco continues playing through the scene
- C)** how long of a time Marco remains seated in silence at the piano before he begins playing the sonata again
- D)** how Marco begins playing the sonata again after Elena leaves the room and continues the piece

## PASSAGE 2

***The Road Between*** — Lexile: 1130L | Literary (Prose Fiction)

**(1)** From the passenger seat of her mother’s truck, Tamika watched the white fence of the Wiley farm slide past the window for the last time. The sun was almost down, and the sycamore near the barn stood alone against the sky. Somebody had nailed a square of fresh plywood to the gate. The real estate sign had been anchored in the ditch for four months already, but the plywood was new.

**(2)** “You all right?” her mother asked.

**(3)** Tamika did not answer because she did not entirely trust her voice to stay level if she used it. She was fourteen, and at the breakfast table that morning, while her mother stood washing the last of their dishes, she had made a private promise to herself that she would not cry until the truck had carried them across the county line.

**(4)** The truck took the curve past the milk barn. The paint on the barn was peeling in long strips. Her grandmother, who had died in April, used to say that a peeling barn was just molting, the

way a bird molts—shedding what had been worn out because something new was due. It was nothing to grieve, she would say. Tamika tried to hold that idea steady in her head, the way her grandmother herself had once held ideas, but it slid away from her like water cupped in a hand.

**(5)** She closed her eyes.

**(6)** She was six years old, and her grandmother was standing in the pasture in her barn coat, holding a bottle to feed a calf that had been refused by its mother. The calf was two days old, and Grandma was teaching Tamika how to offer it the bottle without startling it. *You hold it steady*, her grandmother said. *Not tight. Steady. A scared thing knows the difference.* Tamika felt afraid and also proud, the two feelings braided together in a way she did not yet have words for.

**(7)** *Some work*, her grandmother said, without looking up from the calf, *you don't do because it pays. You do it because it is yours to do.*

**(8)** Tamika opened her eyes, and for a moment the memory and the moving road seemed to overlap. The farm was behind them now, slipping past in pieces the way something does when it refuses to stay whole in the mind. The road narrowed into a curve lined with goldenrod and she caught her last sight of the sycamore in the side mirror—smaller, smaller, and then not there.

**(9)** Her mother switched on the headlights and the dim gold of the dashboard came up between them. “Your granddaddy’s granddaddy bought that land in 1911,” she said, as though Tamika had not heard the story a hundred times. “Paid cash. Five generations, counting you.”

**(10)** “Four,” Tamika said. “I didn’t farm it.”

**(11)** Her mother glanced at her and squeezed Tamika’s shoulder before returning her hand to the wheel.

**(12)** They passed a billboard for a dairy company Tamika had never heard of. The price on a gallon of milk at the supermarket was lower than what it cost her family to produce one. Tamika had heard her mother explain this at the kitchen table, to the lawyer, to the man from the co-op, to Aunt Cora, and each time her mother had used the same tired, level voice, the voice of someone who had already finished crying about a thing and needed to keep walking.

**(13)** “Where are we going to live?” Tamika asked.

**(14)** “Aunt Cora’s, through the school year. Then we’ll see.”

**(15)** Tamika nodded without answering, trying not to think about the boxes stacked in the bed of the truck behind her. Most of their furniture had been sold to pay bills that never seemed to stop arriving. The quilts her grandmother had pieced together were folded into a plastic tub in the back. Tamika’s science project on soil erosion was resting on top of the tub, wrapped in one of her mother’s clean dish towels to keep the poster board from bending. She was grateful for that, at least—that her mother had thought of it.

**(16)** The truck crossed the county line, and Tamika counted to ten inside her head. Then she counted to ten again. Then, because the promise had held as long as it was meant to hold, she pressed her forehead against the cold window and let herself cry without making a

sound—because the farm was gone, but the lesson in the pasture wasn't, and somewhere in the difference between those two things was a person she still had to become.

(17) Outside, the road ran on, a gray ribbon unspooling between the hills. Her mother drove without speaking. Tamika watched the dark come down over the fields behind them and the fields still ahead.

## ITEMS — PASSAGE 2

**Item 9** — RL.7.4 | Figurative comparison meaning | DOK 2 | MC

Read these sentences from paragraph 4 of “The Road Between.”

The paint on the barn was peeling in long strips. Her grandmother, who had died in April, used to say that a peeling barn was just molting, the way a bird molts—shedding what had been worn out because something new was due. It was nothing to grieve, she would say.

**In this passage, the barn is compared to a molting bird. What does this comparison reveal about Tamika’s grandmother’s perspective?**

- A) She believed that grief should be avoided whenever possible.
- B) She believed that farm life is more important than human sadness.
- C) She believed that loss is a natural part of growing into something new.
- D) She believed that old buildings should be torn down before they fall apart.

**Item 10** — RL.7.2 | Central idea development | DOK 3 | MC

**In “The Road Between,” how does the memory of Tamika feeding the calf with her grandmother (paragraphs 5–7) contribute to the development of the central idea of the passage?**

- A) It explains the financial problems that led the family to sell the farm.
- B) It shows a moment when Tamika felt both unsure and proud as she learned from her grandmother.
- C) It highlights the skills Tamika will need if she continues working on a farm.
- D) It shows how Tamika’s experience with her grandmother continues to shape her thinking as she leaves the farm.

**Item 11** — RL.7.4 - Contribution of imagery to meaning - DOK 2 - MC

Read these sentences from paragraphs 4 and 8 of “The Road Between.”

Tamika tried to hold that idea steady in her head, the way her grandmother herself had once held ideas, but it slid away from her like water cupped in a hand.

The farm was behind them now, slipping past in pieces the way something does when it refuses to stay whole in the mind.

**How do these images contribute to the meaning of the passage?**

- A) They show that Tamika is struggling to hold on to her understanding and memories as she leaves the farm.
- B) They show that Tamika is confused about why her family is moving away from the farm.
- C) They show that Tamika is beginning to see the farm differently as she leaves it behind.
- D) They show that Tamika is trying to forget the farm as quickly as possible.

**Item 12** — RL.7.3 | Analyze character development | DOK 3 | MC

**How does Tamika’s thinking change across the course of “The Road Between”?**

- A) She moves from feeling angry at her mother to accepting her mother’s decision.
- B) She moves from wanting to forget the farm to wanting to remember every part of it.
- C) She moves from trying not to cry about leaving the farm to accepting its loss and what it taught her.
- D) She moves from remembering her grandmother’s guidance to questioning whether those lessons still matter.

**Item 13** — L.7.4.a | Context clues | DOK 2 | MC

Read this sentence from “The Road Between.”

Tamika had heard her mother explain this at the kitchen table, to the lawyer, to the man from the co-op, to Aunt Cora, and each time her mother had used the same tired, level voice, the voice of someone who had already finished crying about a thing and needed to keep walking.

**Which phrases from this sentence BEST help the reader determine the meaning of level as it is used here?**

- A) “Tamika had her her mother explain” and “the voice of someone”
- B) “tired” and “someone who had already finished crying”
- C) “the same” and “each time her mother”
- D) “explain this” and “keep walking”

**Item 14** — RL.7.1 - Cite text evidence to support inferences - DOK 2 - Multiple Select

**Select the TWO details from “The Road Between” that BEST show why Tamika’s family is leaving the farm.**

- A) “Tamika had heard her mother explain this at the kitchen table, to the lawyer, to the man from the co-op, to Aunt Cora . . .”
- B) “The price on a gallon of milk at the supermarket was lower than what it cost her family to produce one.”
- C) “Most of their furniture had been sold to pay bills that never seemed to stop arriving.”
- D) “Your granddaddy’s granddaddy bought that land in 1911.”

E) “The paint on the barn was peeling in long strips.”

**Item 15** — L.7.4.b | Greek/Latin roots and affixes | DOK 2 | MC

Read this sentence from “The Road Between.”

She was grateful for that, at least—that her mother had thought of it.

**Based on your knowledge of the root grat-, what does grateful mean as it is used in this sentence?**

- A) full of regret
- B) full of sadness
- C) full of surprise
- D) full of thankfulness

**Item 16** — RL.7.6 | Analyze character perspective | DOK 3 | Multiple Select

**Select the TWO details from “The Road Between” that BEST show how Tamika’s emotional response to leaving the farm differs from her mother’s.**

- A) Tamika promises herself she will not cry until they cross the county line, while her mother speaks in a calm, steady voice about the situation.
- B) Tamika remembers feeding the calf with her grandmother, while her mother talks about how long the land has been in the family.
- C) Tamika presses her forehead against the window and cries silently, while her mother continues driving without speaking.
- D) Tamika says, “I didn’t farm it,” while her mother explains that the land has been in the family for generations.
- E) Tamika asks where they will live, while her mother answers briefly and focuses on practical plans.

**Item 17** — RL.7.2 | Determine theme | DOK 3 | MC

**Which statement BEST expresses a central theme of “The Road Between”?**

- A) Growing up on a farm teaches lessons that are difficult to understand until later in life.
- B) Economic challenges can force families to give up traditions they have kept for generations.
- C) Remembering the past is important, but building a future depends on being able to let go of it.
- D) What we learn from the people who raised us can stay with us even when the places we learned it are gone.

## SPELLING

*Administrator note: Read the word, then read the sentence, then repeat the word clearly, and pause for students to write.*

### Item 18

**doggedly**

The injured runner raced **doggedly** toward the finish line, refusing to stop despite the pain.

**doggedly**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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### Item 19

**conclusion**

After looking at all the evidence, the class came to the **conclusion** that the experiment had been done correctly.

**conclusion**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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### Item 20

**scrutinize**

The detective paused to **scrutinize** the letter on the table.

**scrutinize**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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### Item 21

**independence**

The young musician valued her **independence** more than any award.

**independence**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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### Item 22

**stinging**

His **stinging** words stayed with her long after the argument ended.

**stinging**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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### ANSWER KEY

#	Answer	Standard	Skill	DOK	Type
1	<b>C</b>	L.7.5	Figurative language meaning	2	MC
2	<b>B</b>	RL.7.4	Word meaning and tone	2	MC
3	<b>A and E</b>	RL.7.1	Cite textual evidence	2	TEI – Multi-Select
4	<b>B</b>	RL.7.3	Character and action analysis	2	MC
5	<b>C, D</b>	RL.7.6	Analyze character perspective	3	TEI – Multi-Select
6	<b>C</b>	L.7.4.a	Context clues	2	MC
7	<b>B</b>	RL.7.5	Analyze text structure (dramatic form)	3	MC
8	<b>A</b>	RL.7.7	Compare text to live version	2	MC
9	<b>C</b>	RL.7.4	Figurative comparison meaning	2	MC
10	<b>D</b>	RL.7.2	Analyze text structure (flashback)	3	MC
11	<b>A</b>	RL.7.4	Contribution of imagery to meaning	2	MC
12	<b>C</b>	RL.7.3	Analyze character development	3	MC
13	<b>B</b>	L.7.4.a	Context clues	2	MC

14	<b>B and C</b>	RL.7.1	Cite text evidence to support inferences	2	TEI – Multi-Select
15	<b>D</b>	L.7.4.b	Greek/Latin roots and affixes	2	MC
16	<b>A and C</b>	RL.7.6	Analyze character perspective	3	TEI – Multi-Select
17	<b>D</b>	RL.7.2	Determine theme	3	MC
18	<b>doggedly</b>	L.7.2	Spelling	1	FITB
19	<b>conclusion</b>	L.7.2	Spelling	1	FITB
20	<b>scrutinize</b>	L.7.2	Spelling	1	FITB
21	<b>independence</b>	L.7.2	Spelling	1	FITB
22	<b>stinging</b>	L.7.2	Spelling	1	FITB

## RATIONALE APPENDIX

### Passage 1

#### Item 1 — L.7.5

**✗ Incorrect: A)** The passage mentions the piano’s scratched finish in paragraph 1 but never suggests it is broken; broken pianos cannot be played as Marco plays here.

**✗ Incorrect: B)** The scene is a single afternoon practice session, not a description of long practicing; the simile refers to difficulty, not exhaustion from duration.

**✓ Correct: C)** The simile compares the physical act of playing to pushing through mud—a comparison that works only if something other than the instrument is making the music feel heavy. The scene’s context (the scholarship, the family pressure) supplies that something, so the simile conveys Marco’s emotional weight.

**✗ Incorrect: D)** The passage shows Marco struggling with the piece but does not indicate that the piece itself is new; in paragraph 2 he has already attempted the fourth bar three times.

#### Item 2 — RL.7.4

**✗ Incorrect: A)** Marco was frustrated earlier, but this moment focuses on the sound fading into emptiness, not on anger or frustration, so this does not best match the phrase.

✓ **Correct: B)** The phrase “thins and hollows out” suggests the sound fades and feels empty, which reflects Marco’s emotional state—he is drained and unsure about what to do next.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** The slow, fading sound does not suggest focus or determination. Instead, it creates a quiet, heavy mood, not a productive or energized one.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** This captures uncertainty, but it misses the idea of emptiness or emotional heaviness shown by “hollows out,” so it is only partially correct.

### Item 3 — RL.7.1

✓ **Correct: A)** This clearly shows Elena is thinking about her father and the family business. She is worried about what will happen to them if Marco leaves, which shows her concern about the impact on the family.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** This shows that Marco’s family already knows about the scholarship and avoided telling him, but it does not explain what Elena is worried might happen if he accepts it.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** This shows that Marco waited to share the news, but it does not show Elena’s concern about how his decision will affect the family.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** This shows Elena wants Marco to take time before deciding, but it does not directly show that she is worried about the family’s situation.

✓ **Correct: E)** This shows Elena is worried about how the shop will function without Marco. She is thinking about the family’s responsibilities and whether they can manage, which supports the idea that she is concerned about the family.

### Item 4 — RL.7.3

✗ **Incorrect: A)** There is no evidence that Marco is trying to stop the conversation. The stage direction focuses on his hands, not on him leaving or shutting down the discussion.

✓ **Correct: B)** Marco’s hands “tremble,” which shows he is feeling strong emotions, and he lowers them “where she cannot see,” which shows he is trying to hide those feelings from Elena.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** This suggests concentration, but the trembling hands show he is emotionally affected. Lowering his hands suggests hiding feelings, not focusing more carefully.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** This would suggest a thoughtful pause, but trembling hands show nervousness or emotion, not careful planning. The detail about hiding his hands points more to concealment than thinking.

### Item 5 — RL.7.6

✗ **Incorrect: A)** This shows a difference in what they know and when, but it does not show how their perspectives on the scholarship differ.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** This shows that both characters value the scholarship, but it does not clearly show a difference in their perspectives or priorities.

✓ **Correct: C)** This shows a clear difference in perspective: Elena is focused on the family’s financial needs, while Marco is focused on the opportunity and what the scholarship offers.

✓ **Correct: D)** This also shows a contrast: Elena is thinking about the family and their responsibilities, while Marco is thinking about his personal effort and future.

✗ **Incorrect: E)** This shows that Marco is unsure, but it does not show a clear contrast in how Elena and Marco view the scholarship.

**Item 6 — L.7.4**

**✗ Incorrect: A)** “She steps toward him” and “Her hand is dirty” describe the motion and a separate physical detail, but neither clue shows what balks means.

**✗ Incorrect: B)** These clues explain why she might hesitate, but they don’t show the action of stopping or pulling back, so they don’t best define balks.

**✓ Correct: C)** The clue “it looks as if she will put a hand on his shoulder” sets up an intended action, and “She crosses her arms instead” shows that action is not completed—this contrast reveals that balks means to stop short of an intended action.

**✗ Incorrect: D)** “For a moment it looks as if” signals timing; “she does not want to leave a mark on his sweatshirt” explains cause but does not define the action itself.

**Item 7 — RL.7.5**

**✗ Incorrect: A)** This is only partly correct. It focuses on Marco’s actions and Elena’s ideas, but it misses how Marco’s own response and thinking are revealed, so it doesn’t fully explain how the structure builds meaning.

**✓ Correct: B)** This answer explains how both parts work together: the stage directions show what Marco is feeling through his actions, and the dialogue shows how he reacts and what he says about the situation. Together, they help the reader understand his pressure and conflict.

**✗ Incorrect: C)** This describes what happens, but it stays at a surface level. It does not explain how those details work together to show Marco’s emotional strain and internal conflict, which is the deeper meaning.

**✗ Incorrect: D)** Stage directions in a drama do more than describe the setting, and dialogue does not show what will happen next. Instead, both help show what characters are feeling and responding to in the moment.

**Item 8 — RL.7.7**

**✓ Correct: A)** A live performance lets the audience actually see Marco’s face and movements. These details help show his emotions—like hesitation and determination—in a way the written stage directions only suggest.

**✗ Incorrect: B)** The stage directions already tell the reader that the lights dim. Seeing the lighting might add visual detail, but it does not explain Marco’s emotions more clearly.

**✗ Incorrect: C)** This information is already clearly stated in the stage directions, so watching it does not add a deeper understanding of his emotional state.

**✗ Incorrect: D)** The stage directions already describe that Marco sits in silence for a long time, so watching it does not add new insight into his emotional state.

**Passage 2****Item 9 — RL.7.4**

**✗ Incorrect: A)** The passage does not weigh Tamika’s love for the grandmother against her love for her mother.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** The grandmother does not advise avoiding grief in general; she specifically names this change as “nothing to grieve” because of its natural pattern.

✓ **Correct: C)** The molting comparison frames loss as a natural stage that precedes growth—the barn is “shedding what had been worn out because something new was due.”

✗ **Incorrect: D)** The grandmother’s comparison does not advocate for tearing down buildings; she says the barn’s condition is “nothing to grieve.”

#### Item 10 — RL.7.2

✗ **Incorrect: A)** The memory focuses on Tamika learning to care for a calf with her grandmother. It does not include any information about money or why the family had to sell the farm.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** This is true about the memory itself, but it does not explain how the memory contributes to the passage as a whole. The question asks how the memory connects to Tamika’s situation in the present.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** The memory does show Tamika learning a skill, but the passage does not suggest she will continue working on a farm. The focus is on what the experience means to her now, not on her future plans.

✓ **Correct: D)** The memory helps explain why Tamika thinks about her grandmother’s lesson as she leaves. It shows that even though the farm is gone, what she learned there still affects how she understands the situation

#### Item 11 — RL.7.4

✓ **Correct: A)** Both images show something slipping away—water that cannot be held and a memory that will not stay whole. This suggests that Tamika is having trouble holding on to her thoughts and memories as she leaves the farm.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** The images show that Tamika is struggling to hold on to ideas and memories, not that she does not understand the reason for leaving. The passage explains the financial reasons elsewhere.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** This choice suggests a change in perspective, but the images focus on losing clarity or not being able to hold on to thoughts, not on seeing the farm in a new way.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** The images do not show Tamika trying to forget. Instead, they show that she cannot fully hold on to her thoughts and memories, even though she is not trying to let them go.

#### Item 12 — RL.7.3

✗ **Incorrect: A)** Tamika does not express anger at her mother in the passage; her mother’s hand on her shoulder in paragraph 11 is received without resistance.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** The passage does not show Tamika trying to forget the farm; it shows her actively remembering it from the start.

✓ **Correct: C)** Paragraph 3 establishes Tamika’s promise not to cry “until the truck had carried them across the county line,” and paragraph 16 shows her crossing that line and still finding something in the grandmother’s lesson that survives the farm’s sale.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** While Tamika does remember her grandmother’s advice, she does not end up questioning it. Instead, she seems to accept and carry those lessons forward, especially in the final paragraph.

**Item 13 — L.7.4**

✗ **Incorrect: A)** These phrases are too general and do not describe what the voice sounds like. They do not provide enough detail to determine the meaning of level.

✓ **Correct: B)** These phrases describe the mother’s emotional state. They suggest she is worn out and no longer expressing strong emotion, which helps show that her voice is calm and steady.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** These phrases suggest repetition or consistency, but they do not explain the emotional quality of the voice, which is needed to understand the meaning of level.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** These phrases relate to the situation and what the mother is doing, but they do not clearly describe the tone or quality of her voice.

**Item 14 — RL.7.1**

✗ **Incorrect: A)** This detail shows that the mother has been discussing a problem with different people, which suggests something is wrong. However, it does not clearly explain why the family is leaving the farm.

✓ **Correct: B)** This detail shows a clear financial problem. If the family cannot make money from selling milk, they cannot afford to keep the farm, which explains why they are leaving.

✓ **Correct: C)** This detail shows that the family is struggling with money and debt. Selling their belongings to pay bills is strong evidence that they cannot afford to stay on the farm.

✗ **Incorrect: D)** This detail shows the history of the farm and how long it has been in the family. It makes leaving feel more important, but it does not explain the reason they have to leave.

✗ **Incorrect: E)** This detail describes the condition of the barn. It may suggest that things are worn or aging, but it does not clearly show the financial problems that caused the family to leave.

**Item 15 — L.7.4**

✗ **Incorrect: A)** Tamika is sad about leaving the farm, but regret has no connection to the root grat- or the suffix -ful.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** The overall mood of the passage is sad, but sadness is unrelated to the meaning of the word parts supplied.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** Tamika’s mother’s action might seem unexpected, but surprise is unrelated to the meaning of grat- (thankful) or -ful (full of).

✓ **Correct: D)** Combining the Latin root grat- (thankful) with the suffix -ful (full of) yields “full of thankfulness.”

**Item 16 — RL.7.6**

✓ **Correct: A)** This shows a difference in emotional response. Tamika is holding back strong feelings, while her mother sounds calm and controlled, suggesting she has already dealt with her emotions.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** These details both relate to memories of the farm, but they don’t clearly show how Tamika and her mother feel emotionally about leaving. They focus more on the past than on their reactions.

✓ **Correct: C)** This clearly shows the difference in emotional response. Tamika expresses her sadness by crying, while her mother stays quiet and composed, showing she handles her emotions differently

✗ **Incorrect: D)** This shows a difference in how they think about the farm, but not their emotional response. It focuses on responsibility and history, not feelings about leaving.

✗ **Incorrect: E)** This shows a difference in focus (Tamika is wondering about the future, while her mother is practical), but it does not clearly show their emotional reactions to leaving the farm.

#### Item 17 — RL.7.2

✗ **Incorrect: A)** The story does include lessons from Tamika’s grandmother, but it does not show that Tamika only understands them much later. Instead, she is already beginning to understand their importance as she leaves the farm.

✗ **Incorrect: B)** Financial problems are part of the story, but this idea is too narrow. It focuses only on the cause of leaving the farm, not on the deeper meaning about what stays with Tamika after she leaves.

✗ **Incorrect: C)** This sounds like a strong theme, but it does not match the passage. Tamika does not let go of the past—she keeps the lessons and memories with her as she moves forward.

✓ **Correct: D)** By the end of the passage, Tamika realizes that even though the farm is gone, her grandmother’s lessons are still part of who she is. This shows that important values and experiences stay with us even when our circumstances change

## SPELLING ANSWER KEY

### Item 18: doggedly

Common errors: double-consonant dropping (“dogedly”); -ly ending confusion (“doggedley”)

### Item 19: conclusion

Common errors: -sion misspelled as -tion (“conclution”); missing second “c” (“conclusion”); vowel confusion in the middle (“conclusian”)

### Item 20: scrutinize

Common errors: silent-e insertion (“scrutenize”); British spelling (“scrutinise”)

### Item 21: independence

Common errors: -ence/-ance confusion (“independance”); prefix doubling (“independence”)

### Item 22: stinging

Common errors: -ing omission (“stining”); double consonant (“stinnging”)