

Threads & Themes Grade 6, Unit 1, Investigation 2 Summative Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

DIRECTIONS

Read both passages carefully. Then answer the questions that follow. For multiple-choice items, choose the best answer. For multi-select items, choose the number of answers specified. For spelling items, listen to each word and write it on the line provided.

PASSAGE 1

The Other Poem

(1) The library’s back hallway was narrow and smelled of the sweet, yellowing pages of books that sat in the stacks on the floors above. Amara waited on a folding chair with her backpack on her knees, two sheets of paper folded inside—two poems, both of them hers, only one of them real.

(2) The real one was about her father’s hands. She had written it three weeks ago at the kitchen table, after watching him sort through a seed catalog, his fingers moving across the page the way they moved across everything—delicately and deliberately, as though each thing deserved to be looked at fully before being marked complete. The poem had come out in one sitting, which surprised her. She had not planned to write about his hands, or about him at all, and yet the words had arrived certain and specific, like something she had been carrying without knowing it.

(3) The other poem was about the seasons. It was well-written—she knew it was well-written—with a clean structure and the kind of imagery her English teacher called “vivid.” Its language was restrained, precise, and blameless. It sounded like a poem that belonged in a showcase. It did not, however, sound like her.

(4) Through the door, she could hear Ms. Fontaine introducing the next reader in the warm, measured voice she used for official occasions. “Our next young poet is a seventh-grade student at Clatsop Middle School, who has been writing since the age of nine . . .” Amara listened and felt something tighten in her chest that was not quite dread and not quite anticipation but some word she did not yet have. She would be up next.

(5) She unfolded the poem about her father and read it again. In the third stanza, she had written: *His hands move over the pages like a question that already knows its answer.* She had not been entirely sure what she meant when she wrote it, but she had been certain it was true. Certainty without understanding—that was the feeling the poem had given her, and she had not

been able to explain it to anyone, which was partly why the poem had sat in her bag like a letter she had addressed but never sent.

(6) “Next up is a sixth-grade student and Young Voices participant, who will share . . .”

(7) Ms. Fontaine’s introduction was formal, measured, and described a version of Amara that she recognized the way one recognizes a photograph from several years ago—technically accurate, but only a small aspect of who she was. Amara saw herself walking through the reading room door, past the rows of chairs, to the small podium with its adjustable microphone.

(8) Both poems sat on the podium. The seasons poem was on top. She looked at the audience—parents, a few neighbors, three kids from her class who had come to support the readers—and then she looked back down at the two sheets of paper.

(9) “I’m Amara,” she said, not quite into the microphone but close enough. “I wrote two poems for tonight. I’m going to read the one I almost didn’t bring.”

(10) She moved the seasons poem to the side.

(11) Reading the poem out loud was different from anything she had expected. The words she had chosen in private—at the kitchen table, with only the sound of her father nearby, turning pages—now existed in a room, in the air, in the specific attention of people she did not know well and some she did not know at all. The line about his hands landed differently than it did on paper. She heard, for the first time, what she had meant by it.

(12) Afterward, the applause was the kind that follows something people are not certain they have fully understood but know they want to hold onto. Amara folded the poem more carefully than she had folded anything in recent memory and made her way back to her seat. Ms. Fontaine, leaning close as she passed, said quietly, “That was not the poem you showed me last week.” Amara met her eyes and nodded once. “I know,” she said. “It wasn’t.”

ITEMS — PASSAGE 1: “The Other Poem”

Item 1

Read this paragraph from “The Other Poem.”

The other poem was about the seasons. It was well-written—she knew it was well-written—with a clean structure and the kind of imagery her English teacher called “vivid.” Its language was restrained, precise, and blameless. It sounded like a poem that belonged in a showcase. It did not, however, sound like her.

What does the word *restrained* suggest about the seasons poem as Amara understands it?

- A) The poem describes a predictable topic that makes it less memorable to the audience.
- B) The poem uses formal, conventional language that follows expectations for a school poem.
- C) The poem focuses on descriptive, polished language rather than revealing personal meaning.
- D) The poem is written in a polished style, and it is advanced for a sixth-grade reading showcase.

Item 2

Read this sentence from "The Other Poem."

Certainty without understanding—that was the feeling the poem had given her, and she had not been able to explain it to anyone, which was partly why the poem had sat in her bag like a letter she had addressed but never sent.

What does this simile reveal about the real poem?

- A) Amara wrote the poem to give to her father but changed her mind at the last minute.
- B) Amara has kept the poem private because it expresses something she has not been ready to share.
- C) Amara believes the poem still needs more revision before it is ready for an audience.
- D) Amara is concerned the poem is too personal to be understood by people who do not know her father.

Item 3

How does the author use point of view in "The Other Poem" to help readers develop empathy for Amara?

- A) The narrator focuses on describing Amara's actions, allowing readers to interpret her feelings without direct explanation.
- B) The narrator explains the structure and quality of Amara's poems, helping readers see why they are meaningful to Amara.
- C) The narrator shifts between Amara's perspective and other characters' perspectives to show different reactions to the poem.
- D) The narrator shares Amara's thoughts and feelings, helping readers understand her uncertainty and personal connection to the poem.

Item 4

Select TWO things Amara's decision in paragraphs 8 through 10 shows about her character.

- A) She is willing to take a risk in order to share something true to herself.
- B) She values the audience's approval more than her own comfort.
- C) She values authenticity over a safer, more polished choice.
- D) She follows instructions well and performs as expected in formal settings.
- E) She prefers performances she has rehearsed many times before.

Item 5

Which detail from "The Other Poem" BEST shows what Amara gained from choosing to read the real poem?

- A) "Amara listened and felt something tighten in her chest."
- B) "She heard, for the first time, what she had meant by it."
- C) "The line about his hands landed differently than it did on paper."
- D) "Reading the poem out loud was different from anything she had expected."

Item 6

How does the narrator’s perspective toward Amara change from the beginning to the end of “The Other Poem”?

- A) The narrator changes from describing Amara’s doubts to explaining why those doubts were unnecessary.
- B) The narrator first presents Amara as nervous and uncertain and by the end presents her as confident and proud.
- C) The narrator becomes more focused on the audience’s reactions than on Amara’s thoughts as the story continues.
- D) The narrator shifts from focusing on Amara’s uncertainty to showing how her decision leads to a meaningful experience.

Item 7

How does the structure of “The Other Poem” contribute to its meaning?

- A) The story moves from Amara’s struggle to her decision to what happens after, showing that being true to yourself can be difficult at first.
- B) The story contrasts Amara’s two poems throughout to show that honest personal writing is always more powerful than formal writing.
- C) The story moves from Amara’s earlier memories to her present situation, showing how past experiences can impact later choices.
- D) The story switches between narration and dialogue to show how Amara’s performance affects both herself and those watching her.

PASSAGE 2

Three Rows Down

(1) Declan arrived at the garden forty minutes before anyone else, which was not unusual. He often came early on project days, but this Saturday he had a reason that had nothing to do with enthusiasm.

(2) The garden occupied three raised beds on a reclaimed lot between a laundromat and a former auto parts store, its frame built by a previous class two years ago and maintained since then by whoever happened to care. Declan’s class had claimed the far end of the longest bed: six rows of seedlings they had started from seed in late March, carefully labeled with tongue depressors, each plant representing a vegetable they had researched and chosen themselves. When he showed up that morning, three of those rows were dead.

(3) He stood at the edge of the bed looking at them—wilted stems bent against the soil, leaves gone papery and pale, the whole section carrying the particular stillness of something that has waited too long for something that is not coming. He had been assigned to water the garden on Thursday. He had forgotten; he had been in a rush to get to his cousin’s basketball game, and he had told himself he would do it later that evening. He had not.

(4) Standing there now, Declan rehearsed the sentence he had been building since Friday night: *The soil in that section drains faster than the others, and with the temperature change last week, it would have been difficult to predict.* He had said it to himself in the mirror that morning, and it had sounded reasonable. The garden was complicated, weather was complicated, plant health was genuinely difficult to predict—all of that was true, but none of it was the reason.

(5) His classmates arrived in pairs and small groups, carrying the tools they had been assigned, their voices crossing over each other in the comfortable disorder of a Saturday morning with nowhere else to be. Simone, who had been the project coordinator since January, walked the length of the bed the way she always did at the start of a session: methodically, pausing at each row, reading the tongue depressors. She reached the far section and was quiet for a moment.

(6) “Declan,” she said, not as a question.

(7) Everyone looked. He had expected this, and still the attention landed on him with a weight he had underestimated; he felt himself begin to speak the prepared sentence, felt the first words assembling in the back of his throat—*The soil in that section*—and then stopped.

(8) “I forgot to water them on Thursday,” he said. “I had somewhere to be, and I told myself I would do it later, and I didn’t.”

(9) Simone looked at him for a moment longer than comfortable, then looked back at the wilted rows. “Can we replant?” she asked, not accusingly but with the directness of someone who had already moved to the next problem.

(10) The conversation that followed was practical, specific, and not about blame. They assessed which seedlings in the healthy rows could be divided to fill the gaps; they calculated whether the growing season still left enough time; they reassigned the watering schedule, this time with a shared calendar in a group text. Declan wrote his name next to Thursday and Saturday and, after a brief pause, Sunday as well.

(11) He did not feel relieved exactly, nor absolved; the seedlings were still dead, and that had not changed. But working alongside his classmates in the particular quiet of people solving a problem together, his hands deliberate in the soil, Declan understood something about the distance between the sentence he had prepared and the one he had said—how only one of them had allowed for the comfort he now felt as they all moved forward together.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 2: “Three Rows Down”

Item 8

Read this sentence from paragraph 3 of “Three Rows Down.”

He stood at the edge of the bed looking at them—wilted stems bent against the soil, leaves gone papery and pale, the whole section carrying the particular stillness of something that has waited too long for something that is not coming.

What does the underlined description suggest about the dead seedlings?

- A) The dead seedlings went too long without water, and it was too late to save them.
- B) The seedlings were too delicate to wait for the warmer weather of late spring to arrive.
- C) The dead seedlings had already been noticed by the other students before Declan arrived.
- D) The seedlings died because the soil retained too much moisture from the previous week’s rain.

Item 9

What does the narrator suggest about Declan as he is practicing his sentence in paragraph 4?

- A) The narrator suggests that Declan carefully thought about every possible explanation before choosing the one that made the most sense.
- B) The narrator suggests that Declan’s sentence, while incomplete, represents a genuine attempt to explain what happened.
- C) The narrator suggests that Declan is more worried about being left out of the group than about being caught in a lie.
- D) The narrator suggests that Declan knows his prepared sentence is dishonest, even as he practices it.

Item 10

Read these two passages from paragraphs 4 and 8 of “Three Rows Down.”

The soil in that section drains faster than the others, and with the temperature change last week, it would have been difficult to predict.

“I forgot to water them on Thursday,” he said. “I had somewhere to be, and I told myself I would do it later, and I didn’t.”

How does the language of Declan’s prepared sentence differ from the words he actually speaks?

- A) The prepared sentence uses vivid language to make the problem seem dramatic; his actual words make it seem less serious.
- B) The prepared sentence is longer and more detailed; his actual words leave out important information about what went wrong.
- C) The prepared sentence uses scientific words to show that Declan has expertise in gardening; his actual words show that he does not.
- D) The prepared sentence uses careful, indirect words to avoid blame; his actual words are simple and direct to take full responsibility.

Item 11

Which detail from “Three Rows Down” BEST shows that Declan purposely decided to tell the truth?

- A) “He did not feel relieved exactly, nor absolved.”
- B) “All of that was true, but none of it was the reason.”
- C) “He felt himself begin to speak the prepared sentence . . . and then stopped.”
- D) “He had expected this, and still the attention landed on him with a weight he had underestimated.”

Item 12

What do paragraphs 9 through 11 show about Declan’s character?

- A) They show that Declan stops caring about the problem once he tells the truth.
- B) They show that Declan becomes the leader of the group after admitting his mistake.
- C) They show that Declan is responsible and wants to fix his mistake by helping the group.
- D) They show that Declan is mostly focused on avoiding getting in trouble with his classmates.

Item 13

Read this sentence from the story:

He did not feel relieved exactly, nor absolved; the seedlings were still dead, and that had not changed.

Which of the following phrases from the story BEST helps clarify the meaning of absolved?

- A) “not about blame”
- B) “it had sounded reasonable”
- C) “the seedlings were still dead”
- D) “I forgot to water them on Thursday”

Item 14

How does the structure of “Three Rows Down” contribute to the story’s meaning?

- A) The story moves between Declan’s inner thoughts and actions to show how he feels about what happened.
- B) The story begins with Declan realizing his mistake and then explains how he had gone to the basketball game to show why he had forgotten to water the garden.

- C) The story focuses on the group fixing the garden to show how they solve the problem together.
- D) The story begins with Declan alone with his mistake and ends with him working with his classmates to show how honesty helps the group move forward.

Item 15

Which statement BEST summarizes “Three Rows Down”?

- A) A student considers lying about forgetting to water the class garden but decides to tell his classmates the truth about his mistake and works with them to fix it.
- B) A student considers hiding the truth about a mistake but finally admits what happened after being directly questioned by the project coordinator.
- C) A student discovers that the plants in the class garden have died and tries to prove that bad weather is the reason the garden failed.
- D) A student comes up with an explanation for why part of the garden died and then changes it to make it sound more believable.

Item 16

What theme does “Three Rows Down” develop through Declan’s experience?

- A) Honesty, even when difficult, helps people work together better.
- B) Good leaders focus on fixing problems rather than blaming others.
- C) Taking on extra work is the best way to repair trust after making a mistake.
- D) People learn more from making honest mistakes than from following instructions without question.

CROSS-TEXT QUESTIONS

Use both passages to answer the following questions.

Item 17

Both “The Other Poem” and “Three Rows Down” show how a character reacts to being in front of others during an important moment.

Match the detail that BEST shows how each character feels when others are watching.

- 1) “The Other Poem,” Amara
- 2) “Three Rows Down,” Declan
- A) “The line about his hands landed differently than it did on paper.” (The Other Poem, paragraph 11)
- B) “Amara listened and felt something tighten in her chest that was not quite dread and not quite anticipation but some word she did not yet have.” (The Other Poem, paragraph 4)
- C) “She looked at the audience—parents, a few neighbors, three kids from her class who had come to support the readers — and then she looked back down at the two sheets of paper.” (The Other Poem, paragraph 8)
- D) “He had expected this, and still the attention landed on him with a weight he had underestimated . . .” (Three Rows Down, paragraph 7)

E) “Simone looked at him for a moment longer than comfortable, then looked back at the wilted rows.” (Three Rows Down, paragraph 9)

Item 18

How do both “The Other Poem” and “Three Rows Down” develop the same theme?

- A) Both stories suggest that carefully planning ahead leads to better results than acting without a plan.
- B) Both stories show that staying calm and thinking clearly is the most important thing in a difficult moment.
- C) Both stories show that choosing to be honest and real, even when it’s hard, helps people connect with others.
- D) Both stories show that young people can make good choices in difficult moments without needing the guidance of adults.

MEDIA LITERACY

Answer the following question about finding, evaluating and using information.

Item 19

A student is beginning to research community gardens in cities for a school report.

Which question is the MOST focused and researchable?

- A) How are community gardens important for people in cities?
- B) How do community gardens affect people who live in cities?
- C) How do community gardens affect access to fresh food in cities?
- D) How do community gardens make cities better places for people to live?

Item 20

The student finds two sources online for their research on community gardens in cities:

Source 1: A blog post written by an amateur gardener, published in 2019

Source 2: An article written by researchers at a university who study urban food systems, published in 2023

Which source is MORE reliable for the student’s research, and why?

- A) Source 1, because it is easier to understand and use in a school report
- B) Source 2, because it was written by experts at a university and is more recent
- C) Source 1, because personal experience often provides more honest information than research studies
- D) Source 2, because articles published by researchers are never biased and always completely correct

SPELLING

Item 21

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 22

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 23

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 24

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 25

Write the spelling word you heard: _____