

Threads & Themes Grade 7, Unit 1, Investigation 2 Summative Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PASSAGE 1

The Way You Play It

(1) The music room at Carver Middle School stayed cool even in late October, and Mira preferred it that way. She had reserved the space from three to five, her name written in Mrs. Okonkwo’s careful hand on the sign-up sheet, and she intended to use every minute of it. The Mendelssohn concerto did not forgive imprecision. She had played the piece three hundred times in the past month and could hear each phrase in her mind exactly as it should sound, but somewhere in the second movement, something still slipped between what she heard and what she produced. The regional audition was six weeks away.

(2) She had nearly found the trouble spot when the door swung open and a boy she recognized from the hallway walked in with a guitar case over one shoulder and two friends behind him. She knew his face from the group that gathered at the round table near the vending machines every lunch, but not his name. He crossed to the piano, flipped the sign-up clipboard toward himself, and held it out to her. Below Mira’s own entry, in the same blue ink, a second line read: *Jax M. / 4–5*. The room had two slots. She had read only her own.

(3) Mira did not usually make this kind of mistake, and it irritated her more than it should have. She returned to the piano bench without apologizing. The boy she now knew was named Jax opened his guitar case and began turning the tuning pegs with a slow, deliberate care that surprised her. She had expected someone who treated music casually: the looping chord progressions she had overheard through these walls before, the lyrics that reached toward something without quite getting there. Everything she had ever heard from this room when his group used it seemed to her juvenile: technically undemanding, the sound of people who had not yet understood what the work required.

(4) “You’re practicing for the Mendelssohn regionals,” he said, without looking up from the strings. It wasn’t a question; his tone had the flat certainty of someone stating something already confirmed.

(5) “How do you know that?”

(6) “You’ve been in here every afternoon this week.” He adjusted a peg, played a chord, listened, adjusted again. He still wasn’t looking at her. “You perform more than you play.”

(7) Before she could respond, he moved up the neck and played a line of notes from the guitar that moved through the room the way a sentence moves when it has been building toward a single word—tentative at first, each note arriving with slightly more weight than the last, until the phrase landed somewhere Mira had not anticipated. The chord that followed did not resolve where she expected. It settled into something unfinished and more complicated than a resolution, and the silence afterward held the shape of the sound rather than releasing it. It was unmistakably beautiful.

(8) “Those aren’t the same thing,” she said at last, though with less certainty than she had intended.

(9) “Not exactly.” He played the phrase once more, shifting one note at the end, and that single change made the whole sequence mean something different. “When you perform, you’re thinking about what it sounds like to someone listening. When you play, you’re thinking about the music.”

(10) Mira sat with her bow resting across her knees. She had put every free hour this month into the Mendelssohn—had performed it until the notes no longer sounded like discovery, had performed it until precision was what she had instead of feeling. She had assumed this was what seriousness looked like. But Jax had not said anything about repetition or hours or technique. He had named a difference she had never thought to draw, and it stayed with her now in the quiet after the last chord faded: present, and not quite resolved, in exactly the way the chord had been.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 1

Item 1

How do Mira’s expectations about Jax affect her reaction to sharing the music room?

- A) They make her feel nervous that Jax might be better than she is.
- B) They make her feel curious about Jax and interested in his music.
- C) They make her feel annoyed and judge Jax before hearing him play.
- D) They make her feel excited that Jax takes music as seriously as she does.

Item 2

Read this line from paragraph 6 of “The Way You Play It.”

“You perform more than you play.”

What is the difference between the words perform and play as Jax uses them in the story?

- A) Perform refers to following classical rules strictly, while play refers to breaking the rules.
- B) Perform refers to music played for an audience, while play refers to music practiced in private.
- C) Perform suggests playing like a professional musician, while play suggests playing like a beginner who is still learning.
- D) Perform suggests thinking about how the music sounds to a listener, while play suggests thinking about the music itself.

Item 3

How do Mira’s and Jax’s perspectives on what it means to be serious about music differ?

- A) Mira thinks being serious means performing for an audience, while Jax thinks it means playing only for yourself.

- B) Mira thinks being serious means practicing and playing correctly, while Jax thinks it means playing with real feeling.
- C) Mira thinks being serious means playing difficult pieces, while Jax thinks playing simple music can also be meaningful.
- D) Mira thinks being serious means following the written music exactly, while Jax thinks it's okay to change the music freely.

Item 4

Read this sentence from paragraph 7 of “The Way You Play It.”

Before she could respond, he moved up the neck and played a line of notes from the guitar that moved through the room the way a sentence moves when it has been building toward a single word—tentative at first, each note arriving with slightly more weight than the last, until the phrase landed somewhere Mira had not anticipated.

What does the comparison in this sentence suggest about the effect of Jax’s music?

- A) It suggests that Jax’s playing is very organized and follows a clear, predictable pattern.
- B) It suggests that Jax plays in a way that shows off skill for people who really know music.
- C) It suggests that Jax repeats parts of the song to share a simple message anyone can understand.
- D) It suggests that Jax’s music slowly builds up and then surprises the listener with an important moment.

Item 5

How does Jax playing the same phrase in two different ways illustrate his ideas about playing versus performing?

- A) It shows that changing how a phrase is played can give it a different meaning and feeling.
- B) It shows that repeating a phrase in different ways can help a musician remember it better.
- C) It shows that playing a phrase in different ways can make it sound more impressive to listeners.
- D) It shows that trying different versions of a phrase can make the notes easier for the audience to hear.

Item 6

Read this line from paragraph 8 of “The Way You Play It.”

“Those aren’t the same thing,” she said at last, though with less certainty than she had intended.

What does this detail MOST clearly show about Mira?

- A) She recognizes that Jax is actually better at playing guitar than she first thought.
- B) She is trying to end the conversation before Jax can say anything else to challenge her.
- C) She is beginning to wonder whether her own ideas about performing and playing are correct.
- D) She realizes that Jax doesn’t understand how serious she is about the Mendelssohn concerto.

Item 7

Which statement BEST expresses a theme developed across the story in “The Way You Play It”?

- A) The rules for fitting in are often based on what people in the group already believe.
- B) Becoming a skilled musician takes many years of practice before others begin to notice.
- C) Students from different backgrounds can connect with one another through music or art.
- D) Forming opinions about someone too quickly can keep you from seeing what they can really do.

Item 8

In paragraph 7, Jax plays a musical phrase that Mira finds “unmistakably beautiful,” followed by a chord that does not resolve as expected.

In a filmed version of the story, which choice would BEST help the audience understand the importance of this moment?

- A) having Jax explain out loud to Mira why he chose to play the phrase in that way
- B) including background music throughout the scene to make the moment feel more dramatic
- C) showing Mira’s reaction as the music changes, along with the sound of the unexpected chord
- D) showing a close-up of Jax’s hands on the guitar while the camera remains focused only on his playing

Item 9

Imagine there is a filmed version of “The Way You Play It.” Which change would MOST affect how the audience understands the meaning of the story compared to reading it?

- A) Viewers could directly experience just how difficult the Mendelssohn piece is by hearing it played.
- B) Viewers could hear how Mira and Jax play to better understand their different approaches to music.
- C) Viewers could rely less on imagination because the story would be shown visually and through sound.
- D) Viewers could better understand the story because the characters’ thoughts would be explained directly.

PASSAGE 2

(1) People form groups all the time, often without thinking about it. At school, in neighborhoods, and on teams, people naturally come together with those who seem similar and who share their habits. Just as naturally, they start to see those outside that circle as different in ways that feel important. Psychologists call the group a person belongs to their “in-group.” This is the group of people who feel, in some important way, like us. Everyone outside that line becomes part of the “out-group.” Research keeps finding that members of one group see people outside it as more

alike than they really are. And they often stick negative labels on those out-groups with a confidence that is rarely correct.

(2) These patterns drew attention in the years after World War II. That was when social scientists began studying how different communities could better understand each other. Psychologist Gordon Allport argued in his 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice* that simply putting two groups near each other produced little lasting change. The quality and conditions of contact mattered far more than just being close. When people from two groups came together as equals, worked toward a shared goal that needed both groups to help, and did so with support from the institutions around them, something different happened: people who had seen each other mostly as members of opposing groups began, slowly, to see individuals instead.

(3) Allport's idea, which became known as the contact hypothesis, sparked decades of research in real settings. In the early 1970s, psychologist Elliot Aronson worked with schools in Texas where students from different backgrounds still struggled to connect socially. Aronson designed a cooperative learning method in which students from different groups were each given different pieces of information needed to finish a shared project. This method made real teamwork necessary. Schools that used this approach showed notable drops in conflict, but not because students had been told to see each other differently. It was because the task forced them to actually depend on one another.

(4) Similar patterns have shown up across cultures. Studies of international sports teams found that athletes who trained and competed alongside people from different national backgrounds showed less in-group favoritism. But this only happened when coaches actively supported equal participation rather than allowing social hierarchies from outside the team repeat themselves. Without that support built into the team, being close produced little change. With it, the contact led to something closer to real connection, one interaction at a time.

(5) Researchers use the word *interaction* to describe the kind of contact that actually produces change. Sitting near someone does not count as interaction. People can share a space for months and remain strangers if the structure of that space never requires them to depend on each other. What creates change is needing each other: a shared goal that cannot be reached unless both sides bring something the other does not already have.

(6) The labels a group assigns to those outside it—words like delinquent or outsider, applied to people who fall beyond a group's norms—collapse a person's complexity into a single, manageable category. What the research clearly shows is that real interaction undoes that flattening, not by asking people to ignore difference, but by giving them an experience full enough that no single label still fits. Belonging across difference does not just happen on its own. It is something built: through shared work, equal standing, and the particular kind of attention that comes from needing someone.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 2

Item 10

Which TWO statements BEST express central ideas developed in “What Holds Groups Together—and Apart”?

- A) Researchers use specific terms like in-group and out-group to describe how groups are formed.
- B) Most conflicts between groups are caused by differences in culture, language, and background.
- C) People naturally form groups and may judge those outside their group in unfair or inaccurate ways.
- D) Meaningful interaction, especially when people depend on each other, can improve group relationships.
- E) Simply placing people from different groups near each other is enough to reduce conflict between them.

Item 11

Based on paragraphs 2 and 3, how does Aronson’s work relate to Allport’s contact hypothesis?

- A) Aronson applied Allport’s hypothesis in a school setting, showing that it could work in real life.
- B) Aronson confirmed Allport’s hypothesis that bringing different groups together can reduce conflict.
- C) Aronson showed Allport’s hypothesis worked because students were told to see each other differently.
- D) Aronson revised Allport’s hypothesis by showing that groups do not need equal status to work together.

Item 12

Read this sentence from paragraph 4:

Studies of international sports teams found that athletes who trained and competed alongside people from different national backgrounds showed less in-group favoritism. But this only happened when coaches actively supported equal participation rather than allowing social *hierarchies* from outside the team repeat themselves.

Based on the context of the sentence, what does the word *hierarchies* MOST nearly mean?

- A) arrangements in which people are divided by different interests
- B) situations in which people follow the same rules and expectations
- C) groups in which people work together toward a shared goal as equals
- D) systems in which some people have more power or status than others

Item 13

Based on how the words interaction and interdependence are used in paragraph 5, what does the prefix inter- MOST nearly mean?

- A) near or close
- B) between or among

- C) needing or relying on
- D) working or cooperating

Item 14

Read this sentence from paragraph 6 of “What Holds Groups Together—and Apart.”

The labels a group assigns to those outside it—words like *delinquent* or *outsider*, applied to people who fall beyond a group’s norms—collapse a person’s complexity into a single, manageable category.

Which option BEST describes the connotation of the word *delinquent* in this sentence?

- A) a positive term for someone who stands out and thinks independently
- B) a negative term for someone who is seen as behaving badly or breaking rules
- C) a negative term for someone who prefers to be separate from others
- D) a positive term for someone who does not fall under society’s normal labels

Item 15

How does the author develop the idea in paragraph 6 about labels?

- A) by explaining how groups assign labels to outsiders and showing how those labels make people easier to categorize and describe
- B) by describing how labels reduce individuals to a single category and explaining how meaningful interaction reveals greater complexity
- C) by describing how labels are commonly used in groups and explaining how they reflect shared norms and expectations
- D) by explaining that labels are applied to people outside a group and showing how those labels influence interactions between groups

Item 16 — RI.7.3 | Interactions: how multiple elements build the argument | DOK 3 | TEI – Sorting

Sort each study from “What Holds Groups Together—and Apart” into the role it plays in developing the author’s argument about contact hypothesis.

Category 1: Sets the framework

Category 2: Tests the framework

Studies:

- A) Allport’s contact hypothesis (1954) — names the conditions under which contact between groups can reduce prejudice.
- B) Aronson’s jigsaw classroom study (early 1970s) — measures whether structured cooperative learning reduces hostility between students.
- C) International sports team studies — measure whether teams that include players from different backgrounds show reduced in-group favoritism.

Item 17

Read this sentence.

The contact hypothesis is a framework developed by Allport that identifies conditions that are necessary and required for contact to reduce prejudice.

Which revision BEST improves this sentence by making it more precise and concise?

- A) The contact hypothesis is a framework developed by Allport that identifies the conditions needed for contact to reduce prejudice.
- B) The contact hypothesis is a framework developed by Allport that identifies conditions that are necessary, required, and essential for contact to reduce prejudice.
- C) The contact hypothesis, which was developed by Allport, identifies conditions that were both necessary and required in order for contact to effectively reduce prejudice between groups.
- D) The contact hypothesis is Allport’s well-known framework, and it identifies conditions that are necessary and required for effective contact to reduce prejudice.

Item 18

Read these sentences from paragraph 5 of “What Holds Groups Together—and Apart.”

Sitting near someone does not count as interaction. People can share a space for months and remain strangers if the structure of that space never requires them to depend on each other.

Which sentence CORRECTLY combines these two ideas?

- A) Sitting near someone does not count as interaction, but people can share a space for months and remain strangers if they do not depend on each other.
- B) Sitting near someone does not count as interaction, because people can share a space for months and remain strangers if they do not depend on each other.
- C) Sitting near someone does not count as interaction, and people can share a space for months and remain strangers if they do not depend on each other.
- D) Sitting near someone does not count as interaction, although people can share a space for months and remain strangers if they do not depend on each other.

Item 19

Read this sentence. It contains an error with a misplaced phrase.

Working together in groups, the classroom hostility began to decrease.

Which revision CORRECTLY fixes the error in this sentence?

- A) Working together in groups, the decrease in hostility was noticeable.
- B) Working together in groups, the noticeable decrease in hostility was clear to students.
- C) Working together in groups, students began to notice a decrease in classroom hostility.
- D) Working together in groups, classroom hostility began decreasing as the students took notice.

SPELLING ITEMS

Read each item’s Word / Sentence / Repeat script aloud and pause after “Repeat” for students to write their response.

Item 20

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 21

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 22

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 23

Write the spelling word you heard: _____