

Threads & Themes Grade 6, Unit 1,

Investigation 2 Summative Assessment (Teacher Edition)

Focus Standards: RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, RL.6.5, RL.6.6 | L.6.1.e, L.6.5.a, L.6.5.b | MSLS 2.2, MSLS 3.1

PASSAGE 1

The Other Poem — Lexile: 1080L | Literary narrative — third-person close narrator

(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 — RL.6.4 | Vocabulary in context | DOK 2 | MC

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 — L.6.5.a | Figurative language — simile | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.6 | Point of view — narrator stance | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.3 | Character development | DOK 3 | TEI – Multi-Select

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 — RL.6.1 | Textual evidence | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.6 | Point of view — narrator shift | DOK 3 | MC

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 — RL.6.5 | Story structure | DOK 3 | MC

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 — Lexile: 1090L | Literary narrative — third-person omniscient

(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 — L.6.5.a | Figurative language — metaphorical description | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.6 | Point of view — narrator stance | DOK 2 | MC

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 — L.6.1.e | Formal and informal language in context | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.1 | Textual evidence | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.3 | Character development | DOK 2 | MC

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 — L.6.5.b | Cause and Effect Relationships | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.5 | Story structure | DOK 3 | MC

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 — RL.6.2 | Summary | DOK 2 | MC

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 — RL.6.2 | Theme | DOK 3 | MC

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 — RL.6.1 and RL.6.9 | Textual evidence — cross-text | DOK 3 | TEI: Matching

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 — RL.6.9 | Theme — cross-text comparison | DOK 3 | MC

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 — MSLS 1.2/W.6.7 | Generating research questions | DOK 2 | MC

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 — MSLS 2.2/W.6.1.b | Evaluating source credibility, authority and currency | DOK 2 | MC

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

Administrator note: In digital administration, the platform delivers the word and sentence automatically for each item. In print administration, read the Word, Sentence and Repeat script aloud for each item before students write their response.

Item 21 — Spelling | Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary | DOK 1 | FITB

Word: symbolism

Sentence: The broken clock in the story is an example of **symbolism**, representing how time felt stuck for the main character.

Repeat: symbolism

Write the spelling word you hear: _____

Item 22 — Spelling | Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary | DOK 1 | FITB

Word: implicit

Sentence: The character’s feelings are **implicit**, so the reader has to infer them from small details.

Repeat: implicit

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 23 — Spelling | Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary | DOK 1 | FITB

Word: colloquial

Sentence: He used **colloquial** language when talking to his friends since the atmosphere was relaxed and informal.

Repeat: colloquial

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 24 — Spelling | Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary | DOK 1 | FITB

Word: connotation

Sentence: The author’s use of the word “crowded” gives the scene a negative **connotation**, even though it could have been described in a more neutral way.

Repeat: connotation

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

Item 25 — Spelling | Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary | DOK 1 | FITB

Word: vignette

Sentence: The author included a short **vignette** about a childhood memory to add depth to the story.

Repeat: vignette

Write the spelling word you heard: _____

ANSWER KEY

#	Key	Standard	Skill	DOK	Type
1	C	RL.6.4	Vocabulary in context	DOK 2	MC
2	B	L.6.5.a	Figurative language — simile	DOK 2	MC
3	D	RL.6.6	Point of view — narrator stance	DOK 2	MC
4	A, C	RL.6.3	Character development	DOK 2	TEI — Multi-Select
5	B	RL.6.1	Textual evidence	DOK 2	MC
6	D	RL.6.6	Point of view — narrator shift	DOK 3	MC
7	A	RL.6.5	Story structure	DOK 3	MC
8	A	L.6.5.a	Figurative language — metaphorical description	DOK 2	MC
9	D	RL.6.6	Point of view — narrator stance	DOK 2	MC
10	D	L.6.1.e	Formal and informal language in context	DOK 2	MC
11	C	RL.6.1	Textual evidence	DOK 2	MC
12	C	RL.6.3	Character development	DOK 2	MC
13	A	L.6.5.b	Cause and effect relationships	DOK 2	MC
14	D	RL.6.5	Story	DOK 3	MC

			structure		
15	A	RL.6.2	Summary	DOK 2	MC
16	A	RL.6.2	Theme	DOK 3	MC
17	1: B, 2: D	RL.6.1	Textual evidence — cross-text	DOK 3	TEI – Matching
18	C	RL.6.9	Theme — cross-text comparison	DOK 3	MC
19	C	MSLS 1.2/W.6.7	Generating research questions	DOK 2	MC
20	B	MSLS 2.2/W.6.1.b	Evaluating source credibility, authority, and currency	DOK 2	MC
21	symbolism	Spelling	Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary	—	FITB
22	implicit	Spelling	Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary	—	FITB
23	colloquial	Spelling	Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary	—	FITB
24	connotation	Spelling	Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary	—	FITB
25	vignette	Spelling	Spelling — Literacy Lab vocabulary	—	FITB

ANSWER KEY — RATIONALE APPENDIX

Passage 1

Item 1 — RL.6.4

✗ Incorrect: A) Although the topic (seasons) might be common, the passage does not suggest the poem is forgettable or predictable. In fact, it emphasizes that the poem is “well-written” and “vivid.” “Restrained” refers to tone and emotional expression, not topic originality.

✗ Incorrect: B) While the poem may sound like it “belonged in a showcase,” the passage does not suggest it is overly conventional or typical. “Restrained” refers to emotional limitation, not that the poem simply follows standard or expected patterns.

✓ Correct: C) “Restrained” carries connotations of controlled, held-back language; combined with “precise and blameless” and “did not sound like her” (paragraph 3), the word signals that the poem’s language is controlled at the expense of personal authenticity.

✗ Incorrect: D) While the poem *is* polished and seems appropriate for a showcase, this choice focuses on its quality and level, not what “restrained” implies. The word points to emotional limitation, not difficulty level or audience appropriateness.

Item 2 — L.6.5.a

✗ Incorrect: A) The passage does not indicate Amara planned to give the poem to her father; the poem was written privately with no stated intention to share it.

✓ Correct: B) The simile compares the poem to a letter prepared and addressed but withheld, directly mirroring paragraph 5’s statement that she “had not been able to explain it to anyone”—signaling something genuine but unshared.

✗ Incorrect: C) The passage states the poem came out in one sitting and was certain; there is no suggestion it needs revision.

✗ Incorrect: D) The passage never suggests Amara’s concern is audience comprehension; her hesitation is about vulnerability, not intelligibility.

Item 3 — RL.6.6

✗ Incorrect: A) The narrator does more than describe actions; it directly reveals Amara’s thoughts and feelings. Because readers are given insight into her thinking, they do not have to infer everything on their own.

✗ Incorrect: B) While the narrator describes the poems’ qualities, this is not what builds empathy. Readers develop empathy by understanding Amara’s inner experience, not by analyzing the poems’ structure or quality.

✗ Incorrect: C) The story stays closely focused on Amara’s perspective. It does not shift into other characters’ thoughts, so empathy is built through her point of view alone.

✓ Correct: D) The narrator uses a third-person close point of view, giving readers access to Amara’s inner thoughts and feelings. This helps readers understand her uncertainty, her emotional connection to the “real” poem, and why it is difficult for her to share—building empathy.

Item 4 — RL.6.3

✓ Correct: A) Amara sets aside the safer poem to share the personal one — taking a risk to share something true to herself is exactly what her decision demonstrates.

✗ Incorrect: B) The text shows the opposite: Amara chooses the harder, more vulnerable option even though the safer poem would have earned easier approval.

✓ Correct: C) Setting aside the polished, conventional poem and reading the personal one shows Amara choosing authenticity over a safer choice.

✗ Incorrect: D) Amara explicitly departs from what was expected. Following instructions well does not describe what her decision shows.

✗ Incorrect: E) The text does not present rehearsal or repetition as the basis for her choice; her decision is about which poem is honest, not which is well-practiced.

Item 5 — RL.6.1

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) This detail shows Amara’s nervousness or anticipation *before* she reads, not what she gains from choosing the real poem. It reflects emotion, but not growth or realization.
- ✓ **Correct:** B) This detail directly shows what Amara gains: a new understanding of her own poem. By reading it aloud, she finally understands the meaning she had felt but couldn’t explain before—this is her key moment of insight.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) This suggests that the poem changes when spoken aloud, but it is more general. It does not clearly show what Amara gains; it only hints that the experience is different, not that she reaches a deeper understanding.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) This shows surprise, but it is vague. It does not specify *how* the experience changed her or what she gained from it, unlike choice B, which shows a clear realization.

Item 6 — RL.6.6

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) The narrator does not explain away Amara’s doubts; those doubts are presented as genuine, and the narrator does not retrospectively dismiss them.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) The passage does not present Amara as confident or proud at the end; the final paragraphs emphasize quiet care and a brief exchange, not triumph.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) The narrator remains focused on Amara’s thoughts throughout the story. While the audience is mentioned, their reactions do not replace the focus on her perspective.
- ✓ **Correct:** D) At the beginning, the narrator highlights Amara’s hesitation and uncertainty about which poem to read. By the end, the narrator shows how her choice leads to a meaningful realization, helping readers understand her growth and experience.

Item 7 — RL.6.5

- ✓ **Correct:** A) The story is organized around Amara’s internal struggle, her choice of which poem to read, and what happens afterward. This structure helps show that sharing something real can feel difficult but meaningful.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) The story does compare the two poems, but it does not say that one type of writing is always better. Instead, it shows how Amara connects more deeply to one poem.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) The story does include a memory about writing the poem, but it does not mainly focus on how past events shape her choices. The structure is more about her decision in the present moment.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) While there is some dialogue, the story is mostly narration. The structure is not mainly about switching between dialogue and narration, but about Amara’s decision and experience.

Passage 2

Item 8 — L.6.5.a

- ✓ **Correct:** A) The phrase personifies the dead seedlings as something that “waited too long for something that is not coming,” figuratively representing a need (water, care) that went unmet until it was too late.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) Temperature is mentioned in Declan’s prepared excuse but is identified as not the real reason; the description does not point to temperature as the cause of death.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) The passage indicates Declan arrived early specifically to see the problem before others; the stillness does not suggest prior awareness by classmates.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) The passage states Declan forgot to water the seedlings; soil moisture is not the cause, and the description does not suggest overwatering.

Item 9 — RL.6.6

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) The narrator presents Declan as selecting a convenient explanation, not as someone who carefully evaluated all possibilities.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) The narrator does not treat Declan’s reasoning charitably; the final clause (“none of it was the reason”) directly undercuts the attempt.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) The passage does not indicate Declan fears social exclusion; his concern is about accountability for a specific mistake, not group membership.
- ✓ **Correct:** D) After presenting Declan’s rationalizations as individually plausible, the narrator concludes “all of that was true, but none of it was the reason,” showing the narrator can see through the prepared explanation to the simple truth Declan is avoiding.

Item 10 — L.6.1.e

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) The prepared sentence hedges and deflects rather than dramatizing; Declan’s actual words are plain and direct, not minimizing.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) Declan’s actual words are concise and complete; they do not leave out information—they provide the essential facts plainly.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) The prepared sentence does not use scientific vocabulary; it uses hedging phrases. Declan’s actual words do not indicate a lack of gardening knowledge.
- ✓ **Correct:** D) The prepared sentence uses passive-adjacent construction (“it would have been difficult to predict”), hedging language, and displaced cause to avoid accountability; Declan’s actual words use first-person direct construction (“I forgot,” “I had,” “I didn’t”) that plainly accept responsibility.

Item 11 — RL.6.1

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) This happens after Declan tells the truth. It shows how he feels afterward, not how he made the decision. It does not prove that he chose to be honest.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) This shows that Declan knows his excuse is not the real reason, but it does not show him deciding to tell the truth. It shows awareness, not the actual moment of choice.
- ✓ **Correct:** C) The moment when Declan begins to speak the prepared sentence and then stops is the clearest textual evidence of a deliberate choice—the physical act of starting one path and consciously choosing another.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) This shows how Declan feels nervous and uncomfortable, but it does not show him making a decision. It focuses on his emotions, not his choice to be honest.

Item 12 — RL.6.3

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) This is not correct because Declan does not become the leader. Simone is still leading the group, and Declan is just one member helping out.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) Declan keeps working with the group. He helps fix the problem and even signs up to do more work, which shows he still cares.
- ✓ **Correct:** C) Declan continues to work with his classmates and helps solve the problem. His actions show he is taking responsibility and trying to make things right.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) Declan is not trying to avoid trouble. Instead, he is focused on helping the group and fixing what went wrong.

Item 13 — L.6.5.b

- ✓ **Correct:** A) This phrase directly connects to the idea of blame, which is central to the meaning of *absolved*. By showing that the situation is “not about blame,” the text helps clarify that *absolved* means being freed from blame or responsibility.

✗ Incorrect: B) This phrase refers to Declan’s prepared explanation. Students may connect this to the idea of being excused. However, it reflects an attempt to justify his actions, not the meaning of *absolved*. It does not show whether he is freed from blame.

✗ Incorrect: C) This choice is tempting because it appears in the same sentence and explains why Declan does not feel absolved. However, it focuses on the unchanged outcome, not on the meaning of *absolved*. It does not clarify what *absolved* means—only why he does not feel that way.

✗ Incorrect: D) This detail explains Declan’s mistake (cause), which is important to the situation. However, it does not help define *absolved*. Instead, it shows why he might feel responsible, not what it means to be freed from that responsibility.

Item 14 — RL.6.5

✗ Incorrect: A) While the story does show Declan’s thoughts and actions, this answer focuses only on his feelings. It does not explain how the overall structure helps show the bigger idea of the story.

✗ Incorrect: B) This focuses on a small part of the story’s order (cause and effect). It does not explain how the whole structure, from beginning to end, connects to the story’s meaning.

✗ Incorrect: C) This focuses mostly on the ending. It leaves out the important beginning, where Declan is alone and dealing with his mistake, which is key to the story’s structure.

✓ Correct: D) This explains how the sequence of events—from Declan being alone with the problem to working with others—helps show the story’s meaning about honesty and moving forward together. (DOK 3 structural analysis).

Item 15 — RL.6.2

✓ Correct: A) This summary includes the most important parts of the story: Declan thinks about lying, chooses to tell the truth, and then helps his classmates fix the problem.

✗ Incorrect: B) This suggests Declan only tells the truth because he is questioned. In the story, he chooses to be honest on his own, even though he could have given his prepared excuse.

✗ Incorrect: C) Declan does not try to prove the weather caused the problem. He knows the real reason is that he forgot to water the plants.

✗ Incorrect: D) Declan does think of an explanation, but he does not change it or use it. Instead, he decides not to say it and tells the truth.

Item 16 — RL.6.2

✓ Correct: A) The passage develops this theme through paragraph 11: “how only one of them had allowed for the comfort he now felt as they all moved forward together”—the “one” being his honest admission, which specifically enabled the collaborative recovery.

✗ Incorrect: B) Simone’s practical leadership is a supporting detail, not the theme the passage develops through Declan’s arc.

✗ Incorrect: C) Declan adds days to his watering schedule voluntarily, but the passage does not frame extra responsibility as the mechanism of trust repair—honest admission is.

✗ Incorrect: D) The passage does not develop a comparison between mistake-making and instruction-following; the focus is specifically on the honest admission and what it enables.

Cross-Text

Item 17 — RL.6.1 (cross-text)

✗ Incorrect: A) This shows how Amara understands her poem better when she reads it out loud. It does not show how she feels about being watched by others.

- ✓ **Correct:** B) This directly shows Amara’s feelings as she waits to go in front of others. The description shows her nervous and unsure emotions in that moment.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) This shows what Amara does, not how she feels. It describes her actions, but not her emotions about being watched.
- ✓ **Correct:** D) This shows how Declan feels when everyone is looking at him. The word “weight” suggests that the attention feels heavy and uncomfortable.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** E) This shows Simone’s actions, not Declan’s feelings. It does not describe how Declan feels about being watched.

Item 18 — RL.6.2 (cross-text)

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) Both passages feature prepared responses (a safer poem; a prepared excuse) that the characters ultimately set aside—preparation leads to a worse outcome in both cases.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) Neither passage emphasizes calmness or clear thinking as the key quality; both emphasize choosing authenticity or honesty over a safer, prepared alternative.
- ✓ **Correct:** C) Amara’s choice to read the real poem creates authentic connection with an audience that wants to hold the experience (paragraph 12); Declan’s honest admission creates the conditions for genuine collaborative recovery (paragraph 11). Both passages develop the same theme through different contexts.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) While the characters do make their own choices, that is not the main idea of either story. Both passages focus more on the characters choosing to be honest in a difficult moment, not on whether they needed adults to guide them.

Media Literacy

Item 19 — MSLS 1.2

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) This question is too broad and could lead to general or opinion-based answers instead of a clear research path.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** B) This question is related but still too general. It does not name a specific group, outcome, or way to measure the effect.
- ✓ **Correct:** C) This question is focused, identifies a clear topic (access to fresh food), and can be answered using research and evidence.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) This question is somewhat related but is too subjective and opinion-based, making it difficult to answer with clear evidence.

Item 20 — MSLS 2.2

- ✗ **Incorrect:** A) Ease of incorporation in a report is not a criterion for source reliability; the question asks which source is more reliable, not which is easier to use.
- ✓ **Correct:** B) Source 2 demonstrates greater authority (researchers with documented expertise in the relevant field), greater currency (2023 vs. 2019) and greater credibility (university research center vs. personal blog with no credentials)—three factors in MSLS 2.2 evaluation.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** C) Personal experience does not make a source more reliable for academic research; authority, currency, and credibility are the relevant evaluation criteria.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** D) “Never biased” is an absolute claim that does not apply to any source, including university publications; credibility must be evaluated specifically, not assumed by institution type.

SPELLING ANSWER KEY

Item 21: symbolism

Common Errors: symbolizm, symbalism, symbolism (with double L: symbolism),symbolisim

Item 22: implicit

Common Errors: implicet, impliccit, implisit, emPLICIT

Item 23: colloquial

Common Errors: colloqial (missing u), coloquial (single l), colloquail, coloquail

Item 24: connotation

Common Errors: conotation (single n), connatation, connetation, connotaion, conotashun

Item 25: vignette

Common Errors: vignete (single t), vinette (missing g), vignett, vinyette