

Threads & Themes Grade 7, Unit 4, Investigation 2 Summative Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PASSAGE 1

Keeping the Thread: How Oral Family Histories Carry Belonging Forward

(1) A grandmother and her grandchild sit at the kitchen table after dinner, peeling oranges. The grandmother works slowly, her thumbnail sliding under the skin, and as she works she begins to talk. “Your name,” she says, “belonged to my aunt before you. She planted the orange tree in front of our old house when she moved here from Cebu. She said orange trees are symbols of good fortune. When I eat oranges, I always think of her. And now I think of you, too. You are my good fortune.” The child will not remember every word. But the story, said out loud across a pile of peels, has already traveled across an ocean and sixty years to land here, in this kitchen, on a Tuesday night. Researchers who study how families pass belonging from one generation to the next call moments like this oral family histories—and they argue that the telling itself is the inheritance.

(2) Every culture has written ways to keep track of who belongs to whom. Birth certificates, baptism records, and family Bibles list names and dates. But sociologists who study belonging point out that a document can only tell you that someone existed—it cannot explain what mattered about them or why a family keeps repeating their name. An oral family history does that work. It travels by voice, and it survives only when someone decides to tell it again.

(3) In Yoruba communities in Nigeria and around the world across the Yoruba diaspora, new babies are often welcomed with *oriki*—spoken praise poems that weave together the names, deeds, and nicknames of ancestors. A child’s *oriki* might recall a great-grandfather’s patience, a great-great-aunt’s sharp tongue, and the exact road a family once walked. The poem belongs to the child; the child belongs to the poem. Elders recite it at births, birthdays, and funerals, re-stitching the living to those who came before.

(4) Many Ashkenazi Jewish families follow a naming tradition as well. When a close relative dies, a new baby in the family is often given that relative’s name or a name that starts with the same letter. A grandchild might carry the Hebrew name of a great-aunt she never met. Every time someone says the child’s name, the memory moves forward another day.

(5) In some Korean families, siblings and cousins born in the same generation share one character in their names—sometimes called a generational character. A family tree, encoded right inside the names themselves, shows at a glance who belongs to which branch and which generation. A great-grandparent’s choice of character can shape names for a hundred years.

(6) The Māori of Aotearoa—what English speakers call New Zealand—practice *whakapapa*, the careful reciting of genealogy. Elders teach children to recite their line going back many

generations, naming the mountain, river, canoe, and ancestors each family traces. To know your *whakapapa* is to know where you stand in a living web. A person who cannot yet recite it is still part of the line; they are simply studying it.

(7) Researchers have begun asking what happens when the thread is not passed on. In interviews with teenagers who cannot name a grandparent’s story, social psychologists have noticed a pattern. These young people often have a harder time explaining who they come from and where they belong, perhaps exhibiting a thinner sense of self. Researchers are careful to frame the pattern as an observation about what stories do in families, and they note that many of the teens in these interviews are still early in the work of gathering their own line. Belonging feels heavier, in the best way, when someone tells us out loud that we are part of it.

(8) The thread, researchers repeat, is only alive when it is spoken. A story told in a kitchen does something a document in a drawer cannot do: it moves. Across the pile of orange peels, a grandmother hands her grandchild a memory—and a memory, once told again, is already on its way to the next generation.

ITEMS — Based on “Keeping the Thread”

Item 1

Which statement BEST expresses a central idea of “Keeping the Thread”?

- A) Written records are the most reliable way to preserve family history for future generations.
- B) Every culture has developed the same basic ways of passing family stories from one generation to the next.
- C) The act of telling stories is an effective way to share memories and connect people to their family history.
- D) The research on family stories shows that teenagers who can name their grandparents are happier than those who cannot.

Item 2

Select the TWO sentences from the passage that MOST STRONGLY support its central idea.

- A) “Birth certificates, baptism records, and family Bibles list names and dates.” (paragraph 2)
- B) “It travels by voice, and it survives only when someone decides to tell it again.” (paragraph 2)
- C) “When a close relative dies, a new baby in the family is often given that relative’s name or a name that starts with the same letter.” (paragraph 4)
- C) “A family tree, encoded right inside the names themselves, shows at a glance who belongs to which branch and which generation.” (paragraph 5)

E) “A story told in a kitchen does something a document in a drawer cannot do: it moves.”
(paragraph 8)

Item 3

How do the examples in paragraphs 3–6 MOST contribute to the passage as a whole?

- A) They prove that a particular culture’s tradition is more effective at passing belonging than others.
- B) They show that while forms of telling vary across cultures, the act of telling a family’s story aloud is a shared human practice.
- C) They explain why writing poetry has replaced oral traditions in many parts of the world.
- D) They describe why it is challenging for elders to try to teach younger generations about their ancestors.

Item 4

Read this sentence from paragraph 7 of “Keeping the Thread.”

These young people often have a harder time explaining who they come from and where they belong, perhaps exhibiting a thinner sense of self.

What does the word thinner mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A) less developed
- B) more narrow in shape
- C) less healthy in body
- D) quieter in voice

Item 5

Read this sentence from paragraph 3 of “Keeping the Thread.”

In Yoruba communities in Nigeria and around the world across the Yoruba diaspora, new babies are often welcomed with *oriki*—spoken praise poems that weave together the names, deeds, and nicknames of ancestors.

Based on the sentence, what does diaspora MOST likely mean?

- A) the smallest villages inside Nigeria where Yoruba families live
- B) a type of speech delivered at family celebrations
- C) the elders who lead welcoming ceremonies for new babies
- D) Yoruba communities living in countries outside Nigeria

Item 6

Read this sentence from paragraph 3 “Keeping the Thread.”

Elders recite it at births, birthdays, and funerals, re-stitching the living to those who came before.

Based on the prefix re- and the root word stitch, what does re-stitching MOST nearly mean in this sentence?

- A) taking apart again
- B) connecting for the first time
- C) placing carefully
- D) sewing together again

Item 7

Read this sentence from paragraph 6 of “Keeping the Thread.”

To know your *whakapapa* is to know where you stand in a living web.

A student consulted a dictionary and found these entries for *web*.

web (*noun*)

1. a net-like structure spun by a spider to catch insects
2. something having an intricate design suggesting such a net
3. a series of connected people, things, or events
4. a thin sheet of fabric attached to the spar of a sail

Which definition BEST fits the use of web in this sentence?

- A) definition 1
- B) definition 2
- C) definition 3
- D) definition 4

PASSAGE 2 — LITERARY (POEM)

The 7:42 — Free verse | Literary

I

The bus pulls up at 7:42,
breathing a long gray breath
onto the curb.

I step on, earbuds in,
music turned low enough
that the city can still leak through.

The window fogs,

and I draw a small circle in it
with one fingertip—
a porthole the size of my face,
where the world outside
is only a blur of coats
and my own reflection
trying to decide who it is today.

//

A woman shifts her bag
to make room for a stranger.

A man with a cane
takes one careful step,
and the line of us
folds back like a ribbon

so he can pass.

Near the door, a glove
slips from someone's pocket—
then flies, hand to hand,
back to its owner
like a small, black bird

returning to a branch.

Nobody says anything.

The bus hums its old song.

///

At every stop, the line reshapes itself.

Three kids board in a loud, loose knot
of laughter,
and I slip one earbud out,
just to hear it.

The glass shares our breath;
we share the same cloud,
and for once, I don't mind
that I'm part of the blur.

IV

Then I look up.

Across the aisle, a kid my age
is watching me—
not staring, not glaring,
just looking
the way you look at a neighbor

you haven't met yet.

I try to look away.

Our eyes meet.

They lift their chin, small.

I lift mine back.

And though I have been the one
noticing all morning,
it is only now,
in the breath before my stop,
that I understand
what it means

to be the stranger who is seen.

ITEMS — Based on “The 7:42”

Item 8

Which statement BEST expresses a theme of “The 7:42”?

- A) Public transportation in cities is not comfortable for most riders.
- B) People can feel a sense of community even with those they do not know.
- C) It is important to respect the personal space of others.
- D) Music can help people create shared experiences.

Item 9

How does the speaker’s action in Stanza III (“and I slip one earbud out, / just to hear it”) affect what happens in Stanza IV?

- A) It makes it easier for the speaker to listen for announcements about upcoming bus stops.
- B) It prepares the reader for the moment the speaker becomes aware of another bus rider.
- C) It explains why the three kids are laughing when they board the bus.
- D) It suggests that the speaker is becoming frustrated with the noise on the bus.

Item 10

Read these lines from Stanza I:

a porthole the size of my face,
where the world outside
is only a blur of coats

What does the speaker MOST LIKELY mean by describing the circle on the window as a porthole?

- A) The circle lets the speaker see the world outside within a small frame.
- B) The circle is made of the same heavy glass as the windows on a ship.
- C) The circle makes the speaker think of an ocean cruise they once took.
- D) The circle can be opened and closed to let air into the bus.

Item 11

Read these lines from Stanza II:

Near the door, a glove
slips from someone's pocket—
then flies, hand to hand,
back to its owner
like a small, black bird
returning to a branch.

What effect does the simile comparing the glove to a “small, black bird” create?

- A) It suggests that the glove is unusually beautiful.
- B) It reveals that the speaker fears the glove will be tossed off the bus.
- C) It hints that the owner of the glove is unconcerned about losing it.
- D) It emphasizes the natural grace of strangers passing the glove back to its owner.

Item 12

Read these lines from Stanza II:

the line of us
folds back like a ribbon

What does this description suggest about the passengers?

- A) They are moving smoothly as one.
- B) They prefer to look away from the man.
- C) They wish to give the man a wrapped gift.
- D) They have planned their actions in advance.

Item 13

How does Stanza IV change the focus of the poem?

- A) It shows that the speaker is reflecting on other perspectives.
- B) It introduces a new character who takes over as the speaker of the poem.
- C) It returns to details of the setting described by the speaker at the beginning of the poem.
- D) It describes the speaker considering what will happen in the future.

Item 14

How does the point of view in “The 7:42” shape the reader’s understanding of the poem’s meaning?

- A) The third-person speaker allows the reader to see inside the minds of each person on the bus.
- B) The first-person speaker lets the reader follow the inward thoughts of one person.
- C) The use of second person places the reader directly into the role of a person on the bus.
- D) The poem shifts its point of view between several people to represent the feeling of a morning commute.

Item 15

Read these lines from Stanza IV:

And though I have been the one
noticing all morning,
it is only now,
in the breath before my stop,
that I understand
what it means
to be the stranger who is seen.

What do these lines reveal about how the speaker’s understanding has changed by the end of the poem?

- A) The speaker realizes they have been judging other riders too harshly.
- B) The speaker understands that another rider on the bus has been following them.
- C) The speaker recognizes that they too are an unknown person who is being observed.
- D) The speaker concludes that no one on the bus truly pays attention to anyone else.

ITEMS — CROSS-TEXT, MEDIA LITERACY, AND LANGUAGE

Item 16

Read this short excerpt from another article about family memory.

Excerpt from “**What Archives Cannot Hold**”:

Every family keeps records it can touch—photographs, certificates, handwritten letters. But the research team found that even the most carefully filed documents fade from meaning within two generations unless someone takes the time to read them aloud to a younger listener. Archives preserve traces; only speakers preserve understanding.

How do the authors of “Keeping the Thread” and “What Archives Cannot Hold” MOST CLEARLY AGREE about family memory?

- A) Both argue that oral storytelling matters more than written records for keeping family memory alive.
- B) Both argue that written documents are the best way to reliably preserve family stories over long periods of time.
- C) Both argue that most families prefer written records to oral traditions.
- D) Both argue that family memory fades for most families within a single generation.

Item 17

Imagine that “The 7:42” is being adapted into a short photo essay. The photographer plans to include four images.

Which image would MOST LIKELY require an additional caption or text to help the viewer understand something the poem covered more clearly?

- A) a close-up of a fingertip drawing a circle on a fogged window
- B) a wide shot of a line of passengers letting a man with a cane pass
- C) an overhead shot of three kids boarding a bus and smiling
- D) the portrait of the speaker and the other teen making eye contact

Item 18

Imagine that “The 7:42” is being recorded as an audio version narrated by a single voice actor.

Which element of the written poem would be MOST CHALLENGING for the audio version to fully communicate?

- A) the speaker’s tone of quiet attention throughout most of the poem
- B) the visual pause created by the blank space at the start of Stanza IV
- C) sound words such as “hums” and “laughter”
- D) the emotional contrast between Stanza III and Stanza IV

Item 19

Read this sentence:

Walking down the sidewalk with my earbuds in, the city sounds seemed quieter than usual.

Which revision MOST clearly fixes the misplaced modifier?

- A) The city sounds seemed quieter than usual, walking down the sidewalk with my earbuds in.
- B) With my earbuds in, the city sounds seemed quieter than usual while walking down the sidewalk.
- C) Walking down the sidewalk, the city sounds seemed quieter than usual with my earbuds in.
- D) Walking down the sidewalk with my earbuds in, I noticed that the city sounds seemed quieter than usual.

SPELLING SECTION — TEACHER-ADMINISTERED

Item 20

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 21

Write the spelling word you heard:

Item 22

Write the spelling word you heard:
