Threads & Themes Grade 8, Unit 3, Investigation 2 Summative Assessment (Teacher Edition)

Focus Standards: RI.8.2, RI.8.3, RI.8.4, RI.8.5, RI.8.5a, RI.8.6, RI.8.8, RI.8.9, L.8.1.b, L.8.1.c, L.8.1.d, L.8.2.a, L.8.3.a

PASSAGE 1

Fighting Fire with Fire: The Return of Prescribed Burns — Lexile: 1060L | Informational

A CENTURY OF SUPPRESSION

(1) For more than a hundred years, the United States fought wildfires with a single strategy: put them out. Federal agencies adopted a policy of total fire suppression in the early 1900s. Every wildfire was treated as a threat to be removed as quickly as possible. Firefighters built roads into remote forests, developed aerial tankers, and staffed lookout towers across the western mountains. The goal was zero fires—complete control over a force that had shaped North American ecosystems for thousands of years.

(2) The consequences of that policy are visible across the American West. Without regular low-intensity fires to clear underbrush, forests have grown dangerously dense. Ponderosa pine forests that once held fewer than a hundred trees per acre now hold several hundred. Dead wood, dried leaves, and thick undergrowth have piled up into what fire scientists call “fuel loads.” When fire reaches these overloaded forests, the results are severe. Crown fires leap between treetops, sterilize the soil, preventing future growth, and leave landscapes unable to recover for decades. These are not the low, creeping burns that once moved across forest floors. They are catastrophic.

WHAT THE LAND REMEMBERS

(3) Long before suppression became policy, fire served as a tool. Indigenous communities across California practiced deliberate, seasonal burning for thousands of years. These burns were timed to meet specific goals. They cleared underbrush and encouraged the growth of food plants like acorns and camas. They improved habitat for deer and elk and maintained open travel corridors. In Australia, Aboriginal peoples developed parallel traditions. They used low-intensity fires to manage grasslands in a practice they describe as “caring for country.” Though separated by an ocean, both traditions reflect the same understanding. Fire, when applied with knowledge and care, is not a destructive force. It is a restorative one.

(4) Modern fire science has confirmed what these traditions have long shown. Research by the U.S. Forest Service has found that prescribed burns make later fires significantly less severe. Prescribed burns are planned, low-intensity fires set by trained crews under carefully managed conditions. Their benefits extend well beyond wildfire prevention. They return nutrients from dead plants to the soil and help the seeds of fire-adapted species like giant sequoia start to grow. They also reduce competition for water and sunlight among surviving trees. In fire-dependent ecosystems, the absence of fire is not neutral. It is a form of disruption.

SMOKE AND SKEPTICISM

(5) Despite this evidence, prescribed burning faces strong opposition. Air quality regulators in several western states have restricted the times when burning is allowed because of concerns about smoke near populated areas. Critics also point to times when prescribed burns have escaped their planned boundaries. The 2022 Hermits Peak fire in New Mexico burned over 340,000 acres after a Forest Service prescribed burn spread beyond control. Critics frequently cite this case as proof of unacceptable risk. Some fire professionals argue that better aircraft, computer tools that predict fire behavior, and satellites that detect fires from space have made widespread prescribed burning unnecessary.

(6) Advocates for prescribed fire respond to these objections directly. Regarding air quality, researchers at Stanford University have found that smoke from prescribed burns produces far less pollution per acre than smoke from unplanned wildfires. With escaped burns, supporters point to the details of the Hermits Peak case. That fire resulted from specific failures—starting fires during conditions that were too dry and windy—not from a basic problem with prescribed fire itself. And while suppression technology has improved, the record tells a different story. The ten most destructive fire seasons in California history have all occurred since 2000. Prescribed burning has also drawn support for its economic appeal. Communities near regularly burned forests have reported increased tourism revenue.

BURNING FORWARD

(7) The scientific evidence, the cultural record, and the worsening severity of fire seasons all point toward the same conclusion. If western states were to continue relying mainly on suppression, fuel loads would keep building. The fires that eventually ignite would only grow more severe. Prescribed burning represents a shift from reaction to reciprocity—working with fire instead of only reacting to it. The goal is not to eliminate fire, but to safely return it to the landscapes that evolved to depend on it. Making that shift would require training more burn crews and revising air quality rules. It would also mean building partnerships with Indigenous fire practitioners whose knowledge has developed over thousands of years, long before modern forestry.

(8) Fire will return to these landscapes regardless of policy decisions. The only question is whether it arrives planned and purposeful, informed by both science and tradition, or whether it arrives on its own terms.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 1

Item 1 — RI.8.3 | Paragraph connections | DOK 2 | MC

How do paragraphs 1 and 2 of "Fighting Fire with Fire" work together to develop the author's argument?

A) Paragraph 1 explains the goal of stopping all fires, and paragraph 2 shows how forests became more dense as a result.

B) Paragraph 1 presents the fire suppression policy and its goals, and paragraph 2 describes the long-term impact of that policy.

C) Paragraph 1 describes the methods used to control wildfires, and paragraph 2 explains how those methods changed the way fires behave.

D) Paragraph 1 explains why federal agencies supported fire suppression, and paragraph 2 argues that a different approach would have been better.

Item 2 — RI.8.8 | Relevant vs. tangential evidence | DOK 3 | TEI Sorting

Which details support the author's claim about what happened as a result of the United States' fire suppression policy?

Sort each detail into the correct category.

Category 1: Directly supports the claim
Category 2: Does not directly support the claim

A) Every wildfire was treated as a threat to be removed as quickly as possible.

B) Without regular low-intensity fires to clear underbrush, forests have grown dangerously dense.

C) Dead wood, dried leaves, and thick undergrowth have piled up into what fire scientists call "fuel loads."

D) [C]omplete control over a force that had shaped North American ecosystems for thousands of years.

Item 3 — RI.8.4 | Word choice and tone | DOK 2 | MC

Read these sentences from "Fighting Fire with Fire."

> These are not the low, creeping burns that once moved across forest floors. They are catastrophic.

How does the author's use of the word *catastrophic* in this sentence impact the tone?

A) It creates a critical tone by showing that the fires are a natural part of the environment.

B) It creates a concerned tone by emphasizing how destructive the fires are.

C) It creates a hopeful tone by suggesting fires can still be controlled.

D) It creates a neutral tone by simply describing how fires behave.

Item 4 — RI.8.6 | Author's purpose | DOK 2 | MC

Why does the author include information about Indigenous fire practices in paragraph 3 of "Fighting Fire with Fire"?

A) to show that prescribed burning has been used for thousands of years throughout the world to manage ecosystems

B) to explain why early federal fire policies ignored Indigenous knowledge about fire management

C) to describe how fire prevention is handled differently in regions outside the United States

D) to argue that the U.S. Forest Service should start using prescribed burning instead of using modern techniques

Item 5 — RI.8.5 | Paragraph refinement | DOK 3 | MC

Read these sentences from paragraph 4 of "Fighting Fire with Fire."

> In fire-dependent ecosystems, the absence of fire is not neutral. It is a form of disruption.

How do these sentences refine the key concept developed in paragraph 4?

A) They suggest that prescribed burns are risky because fire can disrupt ecosystems.

B) They explain how fire affects ecosystems by listing examples of its effects on plants and soil.

C) They restate the benefits of prescribed burns by summarizing the ways that fire supports forest health.

D) They refine the idea that prescribed burns are important by stating that ecosystems are harmed without regular fire.

Item 6 — RI.8.6 | Acknowledge/respond to conflicting evidence | DOK 3 | TEI – Multi Select

Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of "Fighting Fire with Fire."

> Some fire professionals argue that better aircraft, computer tools that predict fire behavior, and satellites that detect fires from space have made widespread prescribed burning unnecessary.

How does the author respond to this viewpoint in paragraph 6? Select TWO answers.

A) The author explains how new technology helps firefighters detect and respond to fires more quickly.

B) The author claims that the newer technology is too expensive to replace prescribed burning.

C) The author presents evidence that fires have worsened despite improvements in technology.

D) The author describes how prescribed burns are planned and carried out under controlled conditions.

E) The author describes research showing that smoke from prescribed burns is less harmful than smoke from wildfires.

Item 7 — RI.8.5 | Sentence role in developing key concept | DOK 2 | MC

Read this sentence from paragraph 7 of "Fighting Fire with Fire".

> Prescribed burning represents a shift from reaction to reciprocity—working with fire instead of only reacting to it.

How does this sentence develop a key concept in paragraph 7?

A) It explains the factors and conditions that led to the problem described earlier in the paragraph.

B) It highlights a more effective solution to the problem described earlier in the paragraph.

C) It summarizes the problem and possible solutions that were described earlier in the paragraph.

D) It introduces a new concern related to the problem described earlier in the paragraph.

Item 8 — RI.8.2 | Summary | DOK 2 | MC

Which statement BEST summarizes "Fighting Fire with Fire"?

A) Although prescribed burning can reduce wildfire severity, concerns about safety and risks continue to limit how widely it is used today.

B) Total fire suppression policies were used by federal agencies for many years, but they eventually made forests more vulnerable to severe wildfires.

C) After years of fire suppression increased the severity of wildfires, science now supports the Indigenous practice of prescribed burning, despite challenges.

D) While Indigenous communities have long used prescribed burning to prevent wildfires, modern science is only beginning to recognize the value of these practices.

Item 9 — L.8.3.a | Active/passive voice | DOK 1 | MC

Read this sentence from paragraph 1 of "Fighting Fire with Fire."

> Firefighters built roads into remote forests, developed aerial tankers, and staffed lookout towers across the western mountains.

Which revision uses passive voice?

A) Across the western mountains, firefighters built roads, developed aerial tankers, and staffed lookout towers.

B) Firefighters were building roads, developing aerial tankers, and staffing lookout towers across the western mountains.

C) Firefighters built roads and developed aerial tankers while staffing lookout towers across the western mountains.

D) Roads into remote forests were built, aerial tankers were developed, and lookout towers were staffed by firefighters across the western mountains.

Item 10 — L.8.1.c | Verb mood: conditional | DOK 1 | MC

Which sentence from "Fighting Fire with Fire" uses the conditional mood?

A) The goal is not to eliminate fire, but to safely return it to the landscapes that evolved to depend on it.

B) If western states were to continue relying mainly on suppression, fuel loads would keep building.

C) Federal agencies adopted a policy of total fire suppression in the early 1900s.

D) Fire will return to these landscapes regardless of policy decisions.

PASSAGE 2

The Underground Economy: How Forests Share — Lexile: 1100L | Informational

(1) In the summer of 1997, ecologist Suzanne Simard set out to test a question no one had answered: Could trees share nutrients with each other? Working in a forest in British Columbia, she injected a special form of carbon into a paper birch tree, a type of carbon that could be tracked with a handheld detector. Weeks later, she walked through the forest with that detector, and its signal grew stronger as she approached a Douglas fir twenty meters away. The carbon had traveled underground, from one tree species to another, through a pathway no one had mapped. That finding launched decades of research that would reshape how scientists understand forests.

(2) For most of the twentieth century, most scientists described forests using one main idea: competition. Every tree was assumed to be locked in a slow contest for sunlight, water, and soil nutrients. The tallest trees won access to light, while shorter trees were left in the shade below, struggling to survive on whatever the larger trees did not take. This framework shaped forest management for generations. Foresters routinely thinned what they considered weaker trees to give larger ones more room. They treated a forest like a production floor in a factory where efficiency meant eliminating the underperformers. Success was measured by the growth of individual trees, not by the health of the forest as a whole.

(3) Simard's research revealed a different reality. Beneath the forest floor, the roots of most trees are wrapped in a dense mesh of fungal threads called mycorrhizae. These fungi form physical connections between neighboring root systems—sometimes linking trees of different species—and create an underground network. Resources flow through these connections, and the fungi do more than simply connect trees. They move carbon from trees that have plenty of sunlight to trees struggling in the shade. In return, the fungi receive sugars they cannot make on their own. No single organism controls this exchange. Resources simply flow toward the parts of the forest that need them most, and the fungi benefit from keeping the whole system healthy.

(4) The scale of this sharing surprised even Simard. In one experiment, she found that a single large Douglas fir—what she called a "mother tree"—was connected to hundreds of other trees through mycorrhizal links. It was sending carbon to seedlings growing in its own shadow. When researchers dug trenches around individual trees to cut the underground connections, the isolated trees grew more slowly and died at higher rates than their connected neighbors. The network was not an extra feature of the forest. It was its foundation.

(5) Scientists studying these fungal networks in other parts of the world have found strikingly similar patterns. In tropical rainforests, cold northern forests, and hardwood forests in milder climates, the healthiest forests are those where resources move most freely. Old-growth forests, which have had centuries to develop dense fungal connections, show the most extensive sharing networks. Young plantation forests, planted in uniform rows with little variety among species, show the weakest. These plantations lack the web of connections that builds up over time in a natural forest. This contrast has practical consequences. Forests managed to keep these connections intact recover more quickly from drought, disease, and storm damage than forests managed only to grow the largest possible trees.

(6) This research has prompted some scientists to reconsider the language the field has long relied on. Describing trees as "competing" for resources, these researchers argue, says more

about human culture than about forests. The word suggests that every organism is out for itself, but it does not match what the data actually show. Trees in a connected forest are not hoarding resources. They are circulating them. Whether this pattern is best called “cooperation,” “mutualism,” or something human language does not easily describe remains debated. But the old vocabulary of winners and losers increasingly fails to capture what is happening underground.

(7) Simard has spent decades pushing for management practices that protect these networks. Clearcutting, she argues, does not merely remove trees; it can sever the fungal connections that remaining trees depend on. Instead, she recommends cutting only some trees while leaving the largest and oldest ones standing. This approach keeps the network intact and gives forests a better chance of recovery. The principle is not new. Indigenous forestry traditions in the Pacific Northwest have long emphasized leaving large trees in place and maintaining diverse, mixed stands. Through the lens of this research, those traditions look different than they once did. They were protecting exactly the networks that modern science has only recently learned to see.

ITEMS — PASSAGE 2

Item 11 — RI.8.4 | Connotation/word choice | DOK 2 | MC

Read this sentence from “The Underground Economy.”

> They treated a forest like a production floor in a factory where efficiency meant eliminating the underperformers.

What does the author suggest by using the word *underperformers* to describe smaller trees?

A) Smaller trees take too many resources from larger trees.

B) Scientists now agree that smaller trees serve no important role in forests.

C) Foresters viewed forests as economic systems rather than ecological ones.

D) The traditional approach to management focused on removing dying trees.

Item 12 — RI.8.3 | Connections among ideas | DOK 2 | MC

How does the information in paragraph 3 of “The Underground Economy” relate to the information in paragraph 2?

A) Paragraph 3 presents research findings that challenge the competition-based view of forests described in paragraph 2.

B) Paragraph 3 provides additional examples of the competition between trees described in paragraph 2.

C) Paragraph 3 shifts the focus from how humans manage forests in paragraph 2 to how trees interact underground.

D) Paragraph 3 explains how fungi help trees survive within the competitive system described in paragraph 2.

Item 13 — RI.8.5 | Sentence role in paragraph | DOK 2 | MC

Read this sentence from paragraph 3 of “The Underground Economy.”

> No single organism controls this exchange.

What role does this sentence play in the development of paragraph 3?

A) It summarizes the research methods Simard used in her experiment.

B) It introduces the concept of mycorrhizal networks for the first time in the passage.

C) It clarifies that the resource-sharing process operates without a central tree directing it.

D) It transitions the paragraph from discussing fungi to discussing the needs of individual trees.

Item 14 — RI.8.3 | Connections between ideas | DOK 2 | MC

How does paragraph 4 of "The Underground Economy" build on the ideas presented in paragraph 3?

A) It shifts from describing the fungal network to explaining how scientists first discovered it.

B) It introduces the idea of "mother trees" as the main way scientists classify different types of trees in a forest.

C) It provides specific evidence of the network's scale and shows what happens when the connections are broken.

D) It focuses on how fungi receive sugars from trees in exchange for helping them, expanding on the exchange described in paragraph 3.

Item 15 — RI.8.8 | Evaluate argument and evidence | DOK 3 | MC

Which piece of evidence from "The Underground Economy" most strongly supports the claim that underground networks are essential to forest health?

A) Researchers found that trees connected through underground networks were linked to many other trees, including seedlings growing nearby.

B) When scientists cut underground connections by digging trenches, the isolated trees grew more slowly and were more likely to die.

C) Forests in different regions, including tropical and northern forests, show similar patterns of underground connections.

D) The author explains that scientists once believed trees mainly competed for resources like sunlight and water.

Item 16 — RI.8.2 | Central idea | DOK 3 | MC

What central idea does "The Underground Economy" develop over the course of the passage?

A) Old-growth forests are healthier than plantation forests because they have had more time to develop strong underground connections and more diverse ecosystems.

B) Trees share resources through underground fungal networks, challenging the long-held assumption that forests are driven by competition among individuals.

C) Forest scientists have changed how they study and manage forests as new research reveals how trees are connected underground.

D) Forest management practices should focus on preserving underground fungal networks by leaving large, connected trees in place.

Item 17 — L.8.1.b | Active and passive voice | DOK 1 | MC

Read this sentence from paragraph 7 of "The Underground Economy."

> Indigenous forestry traditions in the Pacific Northwest have long emphasized leaving large trees in place.

Which sentence correctly rewrites this idea in the passive voice?

A) Leaving large trees in place has long been emphasized by Indigenous forestry traditions in the Pacific Northwest.

B) Large trees have been leaving in place for a long time by Indigenous forestry traditions in the Pacific Northwest.

C) In the Pacific Northwest, it was the leaving of large trees in place that Indigenous forestry traditions had long emphasized.

D) Indigenous forestry traditions in the Pacific Northwest have long been emphasizing that large trees should be left in place.

Item 18 — L.8.2.a | Appositives | DOK 1 | MC

Read the sentence from paragraph 1 of "The Underground Economy."

> In the summer of 1997, ecologist Suzanne Simard set out to test a question no one had answered.

Which revision of the sentence correctly uses an appositive to provide information about Suzanne Simard?

A) In the summer of 1997, Suzanne Simard, an ecologist, set out to test a question no one had answered.

B) In the summer of 1997, Suzanne Simard set out to test a question no other ecologist had answered.

C) In the summer of 1997, Suzanne Simard was an ecologist who set out to test a question no one had answered.

D) In the summer of 1997, an ecologist named Suzanne Simard, set out to test a question no one had answered.

Item 19 — L.8.1.d | Correcting verb voice shift | DOK 2 | MC

A student wrote this sentence about "The Underground Economy."

> Simard's research revealed a different reality, and the fungal networks she studied are now described in detail by scientists around the world.

Which revision corrects the inappropriate shift in verb voice?

A) A different reality was revealed by Simard's research, and the fungal networks she studied are now described in detail by scientists around the world.

B) Simard's research revealed a different reality, and the fungal networks she studied were now described in detail by scientists around the world.

C) Simard's research was revealing a different reality, and the fungal networks she studied are now described in detail by scientists around the world.

D) Simard's research revealed a different reality, and scientists around the world now describe the fungal networks she studied in detail.

ITEMS — CROSS-TEXT

Item 20 — RI.8.9 | Cross-text comparison | DOK 3 | MC

Which statement describes a key difference in how "Fighting Fire with Fire" and "The Underground Economy" explain the role of human activity in forests?

A) "Fighting Fire with Fire" explains how human actions can harm forests, while "The Underground Economy" explains how human actions can help forests.

B) "Fighting Fire with Fire" explains how humans can help forests recover after fires, while "The Underground Economy" explains how humans can help trees share resources underground.

C) "Fighting Fire with Fire" claims that forests should be left completely untouched by humans, while "The Underground Economy" argues that forests require constant human intervention to survive.

D) "Fighting Fire with Fire" argues that forests function best with human-managed burning, while "The Underground Economy" suggests forests rely on underground networks that can be damaged by certain human actions.

SPELLING

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

Item 21

Word: flourish

Sentence: When fire is used as a tool, native plants are able to **flourish** in the renewed soil.

Repeat: **flourish**

_____

Item 22

Word: abundance

Sentence: The mycorrhizal network allows an **abundance** of nutrients to reach trees growing in shade.

Repeat: **abundance**

_____

Item 23

Word: sustainability

Sentence: Both passages argue that **sustainability** depends on working with natural systems rather than against them.

Repeat: **sustainability**

_____

Item 24

Word: extinguish

Sentence: For decades, the goal of federal fire policy was to **extinguish** every wildfire as quickly as possible.

Repeat: **extinguish**

_____

Item 25

Word: affirmation

Sentence: Simard's experiment provided an **affirmation** of what Indigenous communities had long understood about forest networks.

Repeat: **affirmation**

_____

ANSWER KEY

#	Answer	Standard	Skill	DOK	Type
1	**B**	RI.8.3	Paragraph connections	2	MC
2	**Cat. 1: B, C** **Cat. 2: A, D**	RI.8.8	Relevant vs. tangential evidence	3	TEI – sorting
3	**B**	RI.8.4	Word choice and tone	2	MC
4	**A**	RI.8.6	Author's purpose	2	MC
5	**D**	RI.8.5	Paragraph refinement	3	MC
6	**C, E**	RI.8.6	Conflicting evidence response	3	TEI – Multi Select
7	**B**	RI.8.5	Sentence role in developing key concept	2	MC
8	**C**	RI.8.2	Summary	2	MC
9	**D**	L.8.3.a	Active/passive voice	1	MC
10	**B**	L.8.1.c	Verb mood: conditional	1	MC
11	**C**	RI.8.4	Connotation/word choice	2	MC
12	**A**	RI.8.3	Connections among ideas	2	MC
13	**C**	RI.8.5	Sentence role in paragraph	2	MC
14	**C**	RI.8.3	Connections between ideas	2	MC
15	**D**	RI.8.5	Concluding paragraph development	3	MC
16	**B**	RI.8.2	Central idea	3	MC
17	**A**	L.8.1.b	Active and passive voice	1	MC
18	**A**	L.8.2.a	Appositives	1	MC
19	**D**	L.8.1.d	Correcting verb voice shift	2	MC
20	**D**	RI.8.9	Cross-text comparison	3	MC
21	**flourish**	Spelling	Spelling	1	FITB
22	**abundance**	Spelling	Spelling	1	FITB
23	**sustainability**	Spelling	Spelling	1	FITB
24	**extinguish**	Spelling	Spelling	1	FITB
25	**affirmation**	Spelling	Spelling	1	FITB

RATIONALE APPENDIX

Passage 1

Item 1 — RI.8.3

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This is partly true, but it's too limited. Paragraph 2 shows more than just dense forests—it explains how this leads to more dangerous fires.

✔ **Correct: B)** Paragraph 1 explains the policy and its goal, and paragraph 2 shows the results of that policy. This shows a clear cause-and-effect relationship.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** Paragraph 2 does not say the methods changed fire behavior. It explains that built-up fuel made fires more severe.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** Paragraph 1 does not explain why agencies supported the policy, and paragraph 2 does not argue for a different approach. The argument for alternatives comes later in the passage.

Item 2 — RI.8.8

A) [Category 2] This describes the fire suppression policy itself, not what happened as a result of it.

B) [Category 1] This shows a consequence of suppression—without regular fires, forests became too dense and more dangerous.

C) [Category 1] This explains another result of suppression—fuel built up over time, increasing the risk of severe fires.

D) [Category 2] This describes the goal of the fire suppression policy, not what happened as a result of it, so it does not provide evidence of its effects on forests.

Item 3 — RI.8.4

✘ **Incorrect: A)** The word focuses on damage, not on showing fires as a normal or natural part of the environment.

✔ **Correct: B)** Catastrophic emphasizes extreme damage, creating a concerned tone about how dangerous the fires are.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** The word shows the fires are very destructive, not under control.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** Catastrophic is a strong, emotional word, so the tone is not neutral.

Item 4 — RI.8.6

✔ **Correct: A)** The author shows that Indigenous communities have used prescribed burning successfully for a long time, supporting the idea that fire can be managed in a beneficial way.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** The paragraph does not explain why federal policies ignored Indigenous knowledge; it focuses on the effectiveness of those practices.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** Although the paragraph mentions Indigenous fire practices, the author's purpose is not to compare different regions but to show how these practices work and why they matter.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** The author does not argue that prescribed burning should replace modern techniques, but rather that it should be used as part of a broader approach.

Item 5 — RI.8.5

✘ **Incorrect: A)** These sentences focus on the harm of not having fire, not the risks of using fire.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** These sentences do not list examples—they make a general statement about what happens without fire.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** They don't repeat earlier benefits; instead, they add a new idea about the negative effects of no fire.

✔ **Correct: D)** Paragraph 4 presents the benefits of prescribed burns. The final two sentences extend the argument: the absence of fire is not merely a neutral gap but an active form of harm. Students must analyze how the sentences refine, rather than merely repeat, the paragraph's main idea.

Item 6 — RI.8.6

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This explains what technology can do, but it does not show why prescribed burns are still needed.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** The author does not mention the cost of technology in paragraph 6.

✔ **Correct: C)** The author shows that fires have gotten worse even with better technology, which challenges the idea that technology alone is enough.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** This describes how prescribed burns work, but it does not directly respond to the claim about technology replacing them.

✔ **Correct: E)** The author includes research showing prescribed burns are less harmful, supporting the need to keep using them.

Item 7 — RI.8.5

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This sentence does not explain what caused the problem; it focuses on a different way to solve it.

✔ **Correct: B)** The sentence shows a better way to address the problem by describing a new approach to managing fire.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** The sentence does not summarize earlier ideas; it introduces a new approach instead.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** The sentence does not introduce a new concern; it presents a solution.

Item 8 — RI.8.2

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This focuses on the risks and limits of prescribed burning, but it leaves out the main problem and the overall argument about why it is needed.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** This explains how fire suppression caused problems, but it does not include the solution the author focuses on, so it is incomplete.

✔ **Correct: C)** This includes the problem (fire suppression), the solution (prescribed burning), and how science supports Indigenous practices, making it the most complete summary.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** This explains Indigenous practices and how science is recognizing them, but it does not include the problem of fire suppression or the full argument.

Item 9 — L.8.3

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This is still active voice because "firefighters" are doing the actions, even though the sentence order is changed.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** This is also active voice—"firefighters" are still performing the actions, just in a different verb tense.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This is active voice because "firefighters" are doing the actions, so the focus stays on them.

✔ **Correct: D)** This uses passive voice ("were built," "were developed," "were staffed") to focus on the actions and their results instead of the firefighters.

Item 10 — L.8.1

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This sentence states a goal, not a situation that depends on a condition.

✔ **Correct: B)** This sentence uses the conditional mood, signaled by "If . . . were to . . . would." It presents a hypothetical situation (continued reliance on suppression) and its projected consequence (fuel loads building).

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This sentence uses the indicative mood. It states a historical fact about what agencies did, not a hypothetical situation.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** This sentence uses the indicative mood. It makes a prediction presented as certain, not as dependent on a condition.

Passage 2

Item 11 — RI.8.4

✘ **Incorrect: A)** The passage states shorter trees were struggling to survive on leftovers, not that they took too many resources.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** The passage makes the opposite point. Simard's research shows smaller trees are critical to forest health.

✔ **Correct: C)** "Underperformers" is a term from business and economics, and the words "factory" and "business" reinforce this comparison. By choosing this word, the author suggests foresters applied an economic framework rather than understanding ecological roles (DOK 2).

✘ **Incorrect: D)** The paragraph describes removing trees considered weaker, not specifically dying trees.

Item 12 — RI.8.3

✔ **Correct: A)** Paragraph 2 presents the competition framework. Paragraph 3 opens with "Simard's research revealed a different reality" and describes mycorrhizal networks—directly challenging the competition model.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** Paragraph 3 describes the opposite of competition: resource sharing through fungal networks.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** While paragraph 2 does mention forest management and paragraph 3 explains underground interactions, this answer misses the main point. The key connection is that paragraph 3 challenges the competition idea from paragraph 2, not just shifts the topic.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** paragraph 3 does explain how fungi help trees, but not within a competitive system. Instead, it shows that trees are connected and sharing, which goes against the idea that they are only competing.

Item 13 — RI.8.5

✘ **Incorrect: A)** Research methods are described in paragraph 1. This sentence does not describe a method.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** Mycorrhizal networks are introduced earlier in the paragraph. This sentence comes after that introduction.

✔ **Correct: C)** The sentence clarifies an important feature of the network: resources flow toward need without central direction. This deepens the reader's understanding of how the network operates (DOK 2).

✘ **Incorrect: D)** The paragraph continues discussing the exchange between fungi and trees after this sentence.

Item 14 — RI.8.3

✘ **Incorrect: A)** Paragraph 4 does not explain how scientists first discovered the network. That idea appears earlier. Instead, paragraph 4 adds evidence about how the network works.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** Paragraph 4 mentions "mother trees," but not to classify trees. It uses the example to show how one tree connects to and supports many others.

✔ **Correct: C)** Paragraph 4 adds clear evidence to paragraph 3. It shows the network's size and explains what happens when connections are cut, proving their importance.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** The exchange of sugars between fungi and trees is explained in paragraph 3. Paragraph 4 focuses on connections and what happens when they are broken.

Item 15 — RI.8.8

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This evidence shows that trees are connected to many others, including seedlings. While this supports the idea that networks exist and are widespread, it does not directly show how the networks affect forest health.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** This evidence shows what happens when underground connections are removed. The fact that trees grow more slowly and are more likely to die provides clear, direct proof that the networks are essential to forest health.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This evidence shows that underground networks appear in many different types of forests. While this suggests the networks are common, it does not directly show that they are necessary for forest health.

✔ **Correct: D)** This statement describes an earlier belief about competition in forests. It provides background information but does not serve as evidence supporting the claim about underground networks.

Item 16 — RI.8.2

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This focuses on one comparison in the passage—old-growth versus plantation forests. While this detail supports the author's ideas, it is not the main point developed across the entire text.

✔ **Correct: B)** The passage explains that trees share resources through underground fungal networks. It also shows how this idea challenges the earlier belief that forests are mainly driven by competition, which is developed throughout the passage.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This focuses on how scientists have changed their thinking and practices. While this is discussed, it is a result of the research, not the central idea about how forests function.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** This focuses on a recommendation for forest management. This idea appears at the end of the passage, but it is based on the central idea rather than being the central idea itself.

Item 17 — L.8.1

✔ **Correct: A)** This correctly forms passive voice by moving the object ("Leaving large trees in place") to subject position and using "has long been emphasized by" as the passive verb phrase. The meaning is preserved.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** "Have been leaving" is progressive active, not passive. The sentence is ungrammatical in this context.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This uses a cleft construction ("it was . . . that"), not passive voice. The original active voice is maintained.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** The sentence is still in active voice. The subject, "Indigenous forestry traditions," is performing the action ("have been emphasizing"). In passive voice, the focus should shift so the action is done to the subject (for example, "has been emphasized by . . .").

Item 18 — L.8.2

✔ **Correct: A)** The phrase "an ecologist" gives extra information about Suzanne Simard and is placed right next to her name. It is also set off with two commas, showing it is additional information.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** This sentence does not use an appositive. It changes the meaning by adding “no other ecologist” instead of giving extra information about Suzanne Simard. An appositive should describe Suzanne Simard, not change the rest of the sentence.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This sentence does give information about Suzanne Simard, but it does not use an appositive. Instead, it uses a full clause (“was an ecologist who . . .”). An appositive should be a short noun phrase placed next to the name.

✘ **Incorrect: D)** This sentence includes a comma that does not belong. The phrase “an ecologist named Suzanne Simard” is essential to the sentence, so it should not be separated by a comma. This means it is not functioning as an appositive.

Item 19 — L.8.1

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This makes both clauses passive, shifting the first clause away from active rather than correcting the second.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** Changing tense while keeping passive voice does not correct the voice shift.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** Changing to progressive aspect does not address the voice shift.

✔ **Correct: D)** The original shifts from active (“revealed”) to passive (“are described by”). This revision changes the second clause to active (“scientists now describe”), correcting the shift.

Item 20 — RI.8.9

✘ **Incorrect: A)** This choice oversimplifies both texts. “Fighting Fire with Fire” does not only show harm, it also explains how controlled burning can help forests. “The Underground Economy” does not only show help, it also explains how human actions like cutting can damage underground networks.

✘ **Incorrect: B)** This choice does not show a real difference. While “Fighting Fire with Fire” does explain how humans can help forests recover, “The Underground Economy” focuses on how trees share resources naturally, not on humans helping that process.

✘ **Incorrect: C)** This choice misrepresents both texts. “Fighting Fire with Fire” does not argue that forests should be left untouched, and “The Underground Economy” does not claim forests need constant human intervention.

✔ **Correct: D)** This choice shows a clear difference. “Fighting Fire with Fire” presents human-managed burning as helpful, while “The Underground Economy” explains that forests depend on underground networks that can be harmed by certain human actions.

SPELLING ANSWER KEY

Item 21: flourish

Common Errors: florish (missing u), flouresh (e for i), florush (missing u and wrong vowel)

Item 22: abundance

Common Errors: abondance (o for u), abundence (e for a), abundants (t for c with s ending)

Item 23: sustainability

Common Errors: sustainablity (missing i), sustainibility (i for a), sustanability (missing i)

Item 24: extinguish

Common Errors: extinquish (qu for gu), extinguesh (e for i), extingush (missing ui)

Item 25: affirmation

Common Errors: afirmation (single f), affermation (e for i), affirmmation (double m)