

## Threads & Themes Grade 8, Unit 4, Investigation 1 Summative Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

### PASSAGE 1

#### *“Orpheus’s Journey”*

(1) The ancient Greeks tell of a singer named Orpheus whose songs could move stones, summon wild creatures, and slow the rivers as they passed. When Orpheus played his lyre, even the wind set down its quarrels. Yet the gift of song could not protect him from the deepest grief he would ever know: losing his wife not once, but twice.

(2) His wife, Eurydice, was walking one morning in a meadow when a hidden serpent struck her ankle, and although the wound seemed small, she had grown still by evening. The world that had once turned at the sound of his voice now stood empty.

(3) For many days, Orpheus did not eat or sleep, and his lyre rested untouched against the wall. Then, one cold morning, drawn by an idea he could not refuse, he took up his lyre and walked toward a cave that the elders said led down into the kingdom of the dead, for he had decided he would descend himself and bring his wife back.

(4) The spirits who guard the world below do not part for the living, and they stood in his path with iron faces. Orpheus did not strike them, nor did he plead with them. Instead, he played. He played a song so quiet that the silence around the music seemed louder than the music itself, and the spirits, who had never heard such a thing, stepped aside. He passed the rivers and the great three-headed dog that had fallen asleep with his music and finally reached the throne of Hades and Persephone, the lord and lady of that realm.

(5) Standing before the throne, Orpheus implored the king and queen of the underworld for mercy. He laid down his lyre, held out his empty hands, and described his wife with the kind of careful detail the dead are not supposed to hear from the living: her sudden laughter, her quick clever fingers, the small mole at the back of her neck. Then he took up the lyre and let his sorrow speak through the strings. Persephone wept, and even Hades, who was said to possess no heart at all, listened a long time before he answered.

(6) “I will yield her to you,” Hades said at last, “but only on a single condition. You will walk ahead of her, past the rivers, through the gate, back into the world above. She will follow at your heels. You will not turn. You will not look. If you look even once before her foot has touched the living earth, she will return to me forever.”

(7) Orpheus agreed. He turned and began the long climb upward, with Eurydice’s footsteps softly behind him. The path was long and dark and narrow, and as he walked, he could hear her breath

when the cave was still, although he could hear nothing when the wind moved through the rock. He kept his eyes fixed forward, exactly as Hades had instructed.

**(8)** Near the end of the climb, Orpheus could see a thin gray light at the cave’s mouth and feel cold morning air on his face for the first time in many days. His heart, which had raced since Eurydice’s death, began to slow at last. And then, in the strange way that both fear and hope work at once, he faltered. What if she was not truly behind him? What if the figure he had heard in the dark was nothing more than a trick of the cave? What if Hades had laughed at his music and sent him home alone?

**(9)** Orpheus turned.

**(10)** Eurydice stood, petrified, only three paces behind him on the path. She had been there the whole time. Her face, in the gray light at the mouth of the cave, was already turning to stone. She raised her hand toward him, and the dark of the cave closed around her once again.

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## ITEMS — PASSAGE 1

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### Item 1

Read this excerpt from paragraph 4 of “Orpheus’s Journey.”

. . . they stood in his path with iron faces.

**The author chose iron over a related word like stern. What does iron suggest about the spirits’ faces that stern might NOT suggest?**

- A) The faces have sharp features.
- B) The faces have serious expressions.
- C) The faces are unmoving.
- D) The faces are shiny.

### Item 2

**How does the description of Hades’s reaction to Orpheus’s music in paragraph 5 shape the reader’s understanding of Hades’s character?**

- A) It shows that Hades has the power to grant requests.
- B) It shows that Hades is moved in a way that is unexpected.
- C) It shows that Hades wants to please Persephone.
- D) It shows that Hades wishes to learn to play like Orpheus.

### Item 3

Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of “Orpheus’s Journey.”

Standing before the throne, Orpheus implored the king and queen of the underworld for mercy.

Which context clue from paragraph 5 BEST helps the reader determine the meaning of **implored**?

- A) the description of Orpheus holding out his empty hands
- B) the details Orpheus shares about his wife
- C) the fact that Orpheus chooses to play the lyre
- D) the description of the response the queen has to Orpheus

**Item 4**

What is the role of the final sentence in paragraph 6 of “Orpheus’s Journey”?

- A) It explains why Hades has set the condition.
- B) It removes any chance for Orpheus to respond.
- C) It adds a new condition not in the previous sentences.
- D) It states the consequence of not following the rule.

**Item 5**

Read this sentence from paragraph 6 of “Orpheus’s Journey.”

“I will yield her to you,” Hades said at last, “but only on a single condition.”

**yield (verb)**

1. to produce or provide a crop or result
2. to give way to pressure or force
3. to give up possession of something to another
4. to stop arguing in order to let another person speak

Which definition BEST matches the meaning of **yield** as it is used in the passage?

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

**Item 6**

Read this sentence from paragraph 8 of “Orpheus’s Journey.”

And then, in the strange way that both fear and hope work at once, he faltered.

What does the word **faltered** MOST suggest about Orpheus in this moment?

- A) He has lost his confidence in the bargain.
- B) He has decided to break the rule that was set.
- C) He has begun to think more clearly than before.
- D) He has grown too tired to continue walking.

**Item 7**

Match each piece of information about the moment at the end of paragraph 8 of “Orpheus’s Journey” to the category that BEST describes who recognizes it at that point in the story.

Match targets:

Category 1: The reader knows; Orpheus does not yet

Category 2: Both the reader and Orpheus know

- A) A thin gray light is visible at the cave’s mouth.
- B) Orpheus is on the verge of breaking Hades’s condition.
- C) Orpheus’s heart, which has raced since Eurydice’s death, is finally beginning to slow.
- D) Orpheus begins to worry that Eurydice is not following him.
- E) Looking back even once before Eurydice reaches the living world will return her to the underworld.

**Item 8**

Read this sentence from paragraph 10 of “Orpheus’s Journey.”

Eurydice stood, petrified, only three paces behind him on the path.

**The word petrified contains the Greek root petr-. What does this root help the reader understand about petrified?**

- A) Petr- means “rock or stone,” so petrified describes Eurydice being as still as stone.
- B) Petr- means “fear,” so petrified describes Eurydice as afraid of Orpheus.
- C) Petr- means “to weep,” so petrified describes Eurydice as crying.
- D) Petr- means “queen,” so petrified describes Eurydice as being taken by Persephone.

**Item 9**

**Which sentence BEST summarizes “Orpheus’s Journey”?**

- A) Orpheus is a powerful musician whose songs can move stones and rivers, and he travels to the kingdom of the dead because his music makes him believe he can do anything.
- B) After Eurydice dies, Orpheus uses his music to win her release from the underworld but loses her again when he turns to look at her before she has reached the world above.
- C) Hades and Persephone are convinced by Orpheus’s speech and decide to make a bargain with him in order to teach him patience and the value of trust.
- D) Eurydice is bitten by a serpent and falls into a long stillness from which only her husband’s music can finally wake her again.

**Item 10**

**Which statement BEST describes a theme developed in “Orpheus’s Journey”?**

- A) The stronger a person's gift, the harder it is for that person to lose it.
- B) People who love deeply will find a way to bring back what they have lost.
- C) Trust given to those in power is rarely returned in equal form.
- D) Doubt at a critical moment can reverse what hope has begun to win back.

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## PASSAGE 2

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### ***“Forward, Forward”***

- (1) Tobi could hear the audience through the wall of the green room—that low ocean of voices that always sounds the same, no matter what city or what concert hall. Someone had brought a pitcher of lemon water and set it on the table beside the door, and Tobi sat with the program folded on one knee and his phone face down on the other, waiting for the long stretch of minutes to pass.
- (2) The piece on the program was a lullaby that Aunt Sona had always played slowly, turning the melody over carefully, like a small object held up to the light. She had taught Tobi the lullaby years ago, on the upright piano in her apartment, in a small room that smelled faintly of tea and oranges and held a cracked porcelain cup beside the timepiece.
- (3) Aunt Sona had been gone for eight months now. The lullaby was a piece she had loved, one she had always wanted Tobi to learn.
- (4) Aunt Sona had explained the most important thing about the lullaby like this: “Keep your eyes on the next note, Tobi. The minute you start looking back to where you have been, you stop hearing what is coming.” She had said this many times across many lessons, and Tobi had not always understood what she meant.
- (5) Tobi turned the phone over now and tapped the screen open. The recording was still there in the music files: Aunt Sona, three years ago, sitting at the upright. She had stopped halfway through, laughed at something off-camera, and then begun again. Tobi had listened to it almost every night for eight months. The recording was not perfect, but the song itself was Aunt Sona's, and Tobi had been keeping it carefully, like a small steady light.
- (6) Fifteen minutes. Tobi's hand was hesitant on the screen of the phone. Just one last listen, Tobi thought, just to hear how Sona had taken the second-to-last bar; just one last listen, just to be sure. Tobi pressed play.
- (7) The screen glowed and showed a message in plain white letters: File corrupted. The little circle began to spin, then stopped, and showed the same message a second time. File corrupted.
- (8) Tobi pressed play again, and the same message returned. Tobi tried opening the recording from the cloud account, but the screen reported the file was no longer available. The phone, with the kind of indifference machines have toward what humans care about, told Tobi the recording was gone.

(9) Something in Tobi’s chest lingered for a long, slow moment, the way a held breath lingers before it is finally released, and then it let go.

(10) Five minutes. Tobi stood up and stepped into the hallway that led to the stage, where the piano sat alone in the bright square of the stage lights, waiting to be played.

(11) Tobi walked out into the heat of the lights, and the audience went still. Tobi faltered for one breath at the edge of the bench before sitting down. The bench was the wrong height, and the lemon water had not really helped. But Tobi placed both hands carefully on the keys. There was no recording to check now, no second-to-last bar to listen back to. There was only the next note.

(12) The first chord was Aunt Sona’s chord, the way she had taught it, slowly, with the two hands turning the melody between them. The second chord was Aunt Sona’s chord, and so was the third. Then, somewhere in the middle of the second line, Tobi played a note that Aunt Sona had never played, because Aunt Sona had never been in this particular room, on this particular evening, with an audience listening for something they did not yet know.

(13) Tobi did not look back. Tobi played the lullaby forward, with both hands together, with the small things that were Aunt Sona’s and the small things that were his own, until at the last bar, Tobi let the chord ring on into the air. He lifted both hands from the keys, and the room was full.

(14) The audience did not move at first. The piano hummed on its own, the way pianos do after they have just held a long note. Tobi listened. Somewhere in the back, a single person started to clap, and then the rest joined in, and the room came back into itself. Tobi looked up only once, at the stage lights. They were warm.

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## ITEMS — PASSAGE 2

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### Item 11

Read this excerpt from paragraph 5 of “Forward, Forward.”

. . . but the song itself was Aunt Sona’s, and Tobi had been keeping it carefully, like a small steady light.

**What does the word *keeping* suggest about Tobi’s relationship to the recording that the word *storing* might NOT suggest?**

- A) Tobi’s relationship to the file is distant and impersonal.
- B) Tobi’s relationship to the file is technical and organizational.
- C) Tobi’s relationship to the file is temporary and brief.
- D) Tobi’s relationship to the file is attentive and protective.

### Item 12

Read paragraph 6 of “Forward, Forward.”

Fifteen minutes. Tobi's hand was hesitant on the screen of the phone. Just one last listen, Tobi thought, just to hear how Sona had taken the second-to-last bar; just one last listen, just to be sure. Tobi pressed play.

**How does the word *hesitant* shape the reader's understanding of what is happening?**

- A) It signals that Tobi is making a choice he has made many times before.
- B) It signals that Tobi is uncertain about what he is about to do.
- C) It signals that Tobi is afraid of forgetting the song that he will play onstage.
- D) It signals that Tobi is unsure about whether he should perform for an audience.

**Item 13**

**What is the role of paragraphs 7 and 8 in "Forward, Forward"?**

- A) to introduce the moment Tobi loses access to Aunt Sona's recording
- B) to show a saved message from Aunt Sona to Tobi
- C) to hint that Tobi relies on technology more than he should
- D) to suggest that Tobi has been careless with something valuable

**Item 14**

**What does Tobi's behavior in paragraphs 9 through 12 reveal about how he is changing?**

- A) He grows increasingly concerned about the facilities at the theater.
- B) He becomes more nervous about how the audience will react.
- C) He lets go of the idea of playing in a way that matches the recording.
- D) He tries harder to remember the advice his aunt gave him.

**Item 15**

**Reread paragraphs 12 and 13 of "Forward, Forward." How does the author's choice to stay close to Tobi's perspective shape the reader's understanding of this moment?**

- A) It lets the reader understand the quality of Tobi's playing.
- B) It hides Aunt Sona's role in Tobi's playing from the reader.
- C) It lets the reader experience Tobi's change a little at a time.
- D) It shows Tobi's difficulty remembering the lullaby without help.

**Item 16**

**Which sentence BEST summarizes "Forward, Forward"?**

- A) Tobi imagines arguing with Aunt Sona about past lessons.
- B) Tobi accidentally deletes Aunt Sona's recording, which is very upsetting, and then he goes on stage.
- C) Tobi loses a recording of Aunt Sona's lullaby and decides to stop playing.

D) Tobi tries to listen to a recording of Aunt Sona, finds it gone, but still plays the lullaby.

**Item 17**

**Which statement BEST describes a theme developed in “Forward, Forward”?**

- A) People who lose someone close also lose their creative voice.
- B) Letting go of a valued memory can make more space for oneself.
- C) Practicing alone is necessary to perform well in front of an audience.
- D) Old recordings preserve people more accurately than memories can.

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**ITEMS — BOTH PASSAGES**

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**Item 18**

**Select the TWO statements that BEST describe how “Forward, Forward” draws on “Orpheus’s Journey.”**

- A) Both passages take place in the past and feature characters from myth.
- B) Both passages follow a character with a musical gift who faces the loss of someone they love.
- C) Both passages include the idea that the main character must not look back during an important moment.
- D) Both passages end with the main character in despair.
- E) Both passages focus on the role of music and its power to persuade.

**Item 19**

**What is the MOST important way that “Forward, Forward” renders a main piece of “Orpheus’s Journey” in a new way?**

- A) by replacing the musical instrument that is played
- B) by changing the lost loved one from a wife to a different family member
- C) by turning a loss into a chance for a character growth
- D) by moving the action from the underworld to a theater space

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**SPELLING**

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**Item 20**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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**Item 21**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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**Item 22**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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**Item 23**

Write the spelling word you heard:

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