

Grade 5 English Language Arts

DIRECTIONS

This session contains two reading selections with fifteen multiple-choice questions and two open-response questions.

Why is play important? Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

Play, Play Again

by Ellen Braaf

Play puzzles scientists. Why do animals spend time and energy doing silly things that seem to have no purpose?

- 1 **T**he struggle for survival in nature is deadly serious. What place is there for play, an activity that doesn't help animals eat, grow, or reproduce?



Leopard cubs play rough to develop the strength and skills they will need as adult hunters.

- 2 And play is risky. Animals can break bones, pull muscles, or get bitten or scratched. Why is play worth the risk? Many scientists believe it's essential for survival—as important as food or sleep. According to animal play expert Marc Beckoff at the University of Colorado, “play is serious business.”

Getting Ready for the Adult World

- 3 Playing lets young animals try out different ways of doing things again and again in a safe environment, where a mistake won't be fatal. Most scientists believe that when animals play, they are practicing skills they'll need later in life. This is why different kinds of animals play in different ways. Young predators, such as wolves, lions, and bears, play by stalking, pouncing, biting, and shaking their heads from side to side. They're honing their skills for when they will run down, catch, and kill prey. When a wolf pup chases its own tail, bites it, and yanks it back and forth, the pup is rehearsing skills it will need one day as a hunter.
- 4 Prey animals, such as elk, deer, or antelope, play differently. They dash about like crazy, leaping wildly in the air—twisting, turning, twirling. According to biologist John Byers of the University of Idaho, they act like they have “flies in their brains.” But these animals are rehearsing skills they'll need one day to escape predators and avoid becoming dinner.
- 5 During play, animals constantly monitor their behavior to keep play going. If one animal plays too roughly, the play ends. To keep things fun, they often reverse roles. A stronger or dominant animal will lie on its back, assuming a submissive position, while a weaker animal gets to play “boss.”



Animals play in different ways. Wolf cubs play at chasing and attacking, while young mountain goats play at leaping and running away.

Taking Risks

- 6 Animals at play are also training for the unexpected. In play, animals learn about the world around them and their own physical limits. The need to test those limits, and experience unpredictable situations, could explain why animals sometimes seem to prefer play that is a bit dangerous.
- 7 A study of Siberian ibexes at Brookfield Zoo in Chicago showed that even though half their enclosure was flat and grassy—a perfect place to frolic in safety—the young goats chose to play most of the time on a steep, rocky area where they were much more likely to get hurt. Why did they place themselves in danger?
- 8 Beckoff believes that such play helps animals develop flexibility—in their minds as well as their muscles—so that they are better prepared to deal with unexpected

or uncontrolled events. In the confusion of fleeing a sudden attack by a predator, an ibex may stumble or crash into another member of the herd. But if it has had lots of practice regaining its footing in play, its misstep is less likely to spell disaster.

Playing for Smarts

- 9 Research shows that smarter animals spend more time playing. Elephants play more than horses. Wolves play more than rabbits. And parrots play more than ducks or sparrows. Smarter animals also play in more creative and complex ways. Not surprisingly, humans and chimpanzees are among the most playful species.
- 10 Could play actually help the brain grow? Some scientists think so. They believe that play exercises the brain like lifting a weight exercises a muscle. They even call play “brain food.” So play on! Your brain will thank you for it.



1 According to the article, how do animals stay safe when playing?

- A. They follow the rules set by adults.
- B. They keep the play low to the ground.
- C. They avoid changing the games they play.
- D. They quit the game when it gets out of control.

2 Based on the article and the photographs, what is the **main** reason predators and prey animals play differently from one another?

- A. They live in different areas.
- B. They have different running speeds.
- C. They practice different types of skills.
- D. They have different levels of intelligence.

3 Read the sentence from paragraph 10 in the box below.

They believe that play exercises the brain like lifting a weight exercises a muscle.

What is the **most likely** reason the author includes the comparison?

- A. to show that the brain can be flexed
- B. to show that animals must rest after play
- C. to show that strong animals are often smart
- D. to show that the brain can improve through play

- 4 What is the **most likely** way the author prepared to write the article?
- A. by taking care of animals in the wild
 - B. by studying some notes taken during a class
 - C. by gathering information from a variety of sources
 - D. by imagining what it would be like to be an animal

- 5 Which of the following words from paragraphs 3–5 are synonyms?
- A. “safe” and “fatal”
 - B. “honing” and “rehearsing”
 - C. “escape” and “monitor”
 - D. “dominant” and “submissive”

Question 6 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

6 Based on the article, explain why Marc Beckoff claims that “play is serious business.” Support your answer with important details from the article.

*In the science fiction novel *Among the Hidden*, Luke is the third child in his family—but they live in a society where families are limited to only two children. To avoid the Population Police, Luke must remain hidden in his home. Read the chapter that describes a discovery Luke makes and answer the questions that follow.*

from **Among the Hidden**

by Margaret Peterson Haddix

- 1 **O**ne cool, rainy morning a few weeks later, Luke's family left in such a rush, they barely had time to say good-bye. They dashed out the door after breakfast, Matthew and Mark complaining about their packed lunches, Dad calling back, "I'm going to that auction up at Chytlesville. Won't be home until supper." Mother hurried back and handed Luke a bag of cracklings and three pears and some biscuits from the night before. She muttered, "So you won't get hungry," and gave him a quick kiss on the head. Then she was gone, too.
- 2 Luke peeked around the stairway door, surveying the chaos of dirty pans and crumb-covered plates left in the kitchen. He knew not to look out as far as the window, but he did, anyway. His heart gave a strange jump when he saw the window was covered. Someone must have pulled the shade the night before, to try to keep the kitchen warm, and then forgotten to raise it in the morning. Luke dared to lean out a little further—yes, the shade was down on the other window, too. For the first time in almost six months, he could step out into the kitchen and not worry about being seen. He could run, skip, jump—dance, even—on the vast linoleum without fear. He could clean up the kitchen and surprise Mother. He could do anything.
- 3 He put his right foot out, tentatively, not quite daring to put his full weight on it. The floor squeaked. He froze. Nothing happened, but he retreated, anyway. He went back up the stairs, crawled along the second-floor hallway to avoid the windows, then climbed the stairs to the attic. He was so disgusted with himself, he could taste it.
- 4 *I am a coward. I am a chicken. I deserve to be locked away in the attic forever,* ran through his head. *No, no,* he countered himself, *I'm cautious. I'm making a plan.*
- 5 He climbed up onto the stool on top of a trunk that served as his perch for watching out the back vents. The neighborhood behind his house was fully occupied now. He knew all the families and had come up with names for most of them. The Big Car Family had four expensive cars sitting in their driveway. The Gold Family all had hair the color of sunshine. The Birdbrain Family had set a row of thirty

birdhouses along their backyard fence, even though Luke could have told them it was pointless to do that until spring. The house he could see best, right behind the Garners' backyard, was occupied by the Sports Family. Two teenaged boys lived there, and their deck overflowed with soccer balls, baseball bats, tennis rackets, basketballs, hockey sticks, and apparatus from games Luke could only guess at.

- 6 Today, he wasn't interested in games. He was interested in seeing the families leave.
- 7 He had noticed before that all of the houses were empty by nine in the morning, with kids off to school and grown-ups off to work. Three or four of the women didn't seem to have jobs, but they left, too, returning late in the afternoon with shopping bags. Today, he just had to make sure no one was staying home sick.
- 8 The Gold Family left first, two blond heads in one car, two blond heads in another. The Sports Family was next, the boys carrying football pads and helmets, their mother teetering on high heels. Then there was a flurry of cars streaming from every driveway onto the still-sparkling new streets. Luke counted each person, keeping track so carefully that he made scratches on the wall, and counted the scratches twice again at the end. Yes—twenty-eight people gone. He was safe.
- 9 Luke scrambled down from his chair, his head spinning with plans. First, he'd clean up the kitchen; then he'd start some bread for supper. He'd never made bread before, but he'd watched Mother a million times. Then maybe he could pull the shades in the rest of the house and clean it thoroughly. He couldn't vacuum—that'd be too loud—but he could dust and scrub and polish. Mother would be so pleased. Then, in the afternoon, before Matthew or Mark or the kids in the neighborhood got back, he could put something on for supper. Maybe potato soup. Why, he could do this every day. He'd never considered housework or cooking particularly thrilling before—Matthew and Mark always scoffed at it as women's work—but it was better than nothing. And maybe, just maybe, if this worked, he could convince Dad to let him sneak out to the barn and help there, too.
- 10 Luke was so excited, he stepped into the kitchen without a second thought this time. Who cared if the floor creaked? No one was there to hear it. He gathered up dishes from the table and piled them into the sink, scrubbing everything with extraordinary zeal. He measured out flour and lard and milk and yeast and was putting it all in a bowl when it occurred to him it might be okay to turn on the radio, very softly. Nobody'd hear. And if they did, they'd just figure the family had forgotten to turn it off, just as they'd forgotten to raise the shades.

11 The bread was in the oven and Luke was picking up lint by hand
from the living room rug when he heard tires on the gravel driveway.
It was two o'clock in the afternoon, too early for the school bus or
Mother or Dad. Luke sprinted for the stairs, hoping whoever it was
would just go away.

12 No luck. He heard the side door creaking open, then Dad exclaiming,
"What the—"

13 He was back early. That shouldn't matter. But hiding on the staircase,
Luke suddenly felt like the radio was as loud as an entire orchestra, like
the smell of baking bread could fill three counties.

14 "Luke!" Dad yelled.

15 Luke heard his father's hand on the doorknob. He opened the door.

16 "I was just trying to help," Luke blubbered. "I was safe. You left the
shades down, so I thought it was okay, and I made sure everyone was
gone from the neighborhood, and—"

17 Dad glared. "You can't be sure," he snapped. "People like that—they
get deliveries all the time, they get sick and come home from work,
they have maids come during the day—"

18 Luke could have protested, no, the maids never come before the kids
get home from school. But he didn't want to give himself away any
more than he already had.

19 "The shades were down," he said. "I didn't turn on a single light.
Even if there were a thousand people back there, nobody would know
I was here! Please—I've just got to do something. Look, I made bread,
and cleaned up, and—"

20 "What if a Government inspector or someone had stopped by here?"

21 "I would have hidden. Like always."

22 Dad was shaking his head. "And leave them smelling bread baking
in an empty house? You don't seem to understand," he said. "You can't
take any chances. You can't. Because—"

23 At that precise moment, the buzzer on the oven went off, sounding
as loud as a siren. Dad gave Luke a dirty look and stalked over to the
oven. He pulled out the two bread pans and tossed them on the stove
top. He flipped off the radio.

24 "I don't want you in the kitchen again," he said. "You stay hidden.
That's an order."

25 He went out the door without looking back.

26 Luke fled up the stairs. He wanted to stomp, angrily, but he couldn't.
No noise allowed. In his room, he hesitated, too upset to read, too
restless to do anything else. He kept hearing *You stay hidden. That's an
order*, echoing in his ears. But he'd been hidden. He'd been careful. To

prove his point—to himself, at least—he climbed back up on his perch by the back vents and looked out on the quiet neighborhood.

- 27 All the driveways were empty. Nothing moved, not even the flag on the Gold Family's flagpole or the spokes on the Birdbrain Family's fake windmill. And then, out of the corner of his eye, Luke caught a glimpse of something behind one window of the Sports Family's house.
- 28 A face. A child's face. In a house where two boys already lived.

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- 7 What does paragraph 1 suggest about Luke?
- A. He is often ignored by his brothers.
 - B. He is delayed in leaving for school.
 - C. He is in charge of cooking for his family.
 - D. He is the only person who stays at home.

- 8 In paragraph 2, what is the **most likely** reason Luke's heart gives a "strange jump"?
- A. It is unusual that the shade is down.
 - B. It is surprising that the day is so dark.
 - C. He is nervous, because the kitchen is messy.
 - D. He is afraid, because he sees another person.

- 9 Which detail from the chapter suggests that Luke's life is different from other people's?
- A. Luke's family leaves in a rush.
 - B. Luke's chores take a long time.
 - C. Luke worries about being seen.
 - D. Luke plans to surprise his mother.

- 10 What do the italics in paragraph 4 show?
- A. Luke's journal
 - B. Luke's thoughts
 - C. a distant memory
 - D. a loud conversation

- 11 Based on the chapter, what does Luke use to create names for the other families in his neighborhood?
- A. the details of their lives
 - B. the locations of their houses
 - C. the number of children they have
 - D. the stories other people tell about them

- 12 Based on paragraphs 5–8, which word **best** describes Luke?
- A. amused
 - B. peaceful
 - C. observant
 - D. suspicious

- 13 Based on the chapter, why would it have been a problem if a Government inspector had smelled the bread baking?
- A. No one was supposed to be at home.
 - B. All children were required to go to school.
 - C. No one was allowed to cook during the day.
 - D. All children were expected to be with their parents.

- 14 Based on the chapter, what will **most likely** happen in the novel?
- A. Luke will be captured by the police.
 - B. Luke will meet the other hidden child.
 - C. Luke will decide he must be more careful.
 - D. Luke will be given more freedom by his parents.

15 In paragraph 5, what does the word *apparatus* mean?

- A. litter
- B. furniture
- C. uniforms
- D. equipment

16 Read the sentence from paragraph 5 in the box below.

He climbed up onto the stool on top of a trunk that served as his perch for watching out the back vents.

In the sentence, which part of speech is the word *perch*?

- A. verb
- B. noun
- C. adverb
- D. adjective

Question 17 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

17 Explain how the author creates a sense of mystery in the chapter. Support your answer with important details from the chapter.