

## 8th Grade ELA Unit 2 Assessment

Read each question carefully.

### **From *The Call of the Wild***

*In the following excerpt, an Alaskan dog runs long distances as part of a sled team.*

1 They made Sixty Mile, which is a fifty-mile run, on the first day; and the second day saw them booming up the Yukon well on their way to Pelly. But such splendid running was achieved not without great trouble and vexation on the part of Francois. The insidious revolt led by Buck had destroyed the solidarity of the team. It no longer was as one dog leaping in the traces. The encouragement Buck gave the rebels led them into all kinds of petty misdemeanors. No more was Spitz a leader greatly to be feared.

2 The old awe departed, and they grew equal to challenging his authority. Pike robbed him of half a fish one night, and gulped it down under the protection of Buck. Another night Dub and Joe fought Spitz and made him forego the punishment they deserved. And even Billee, the good-natured, was less good-natured, and whined not half so placatingly as in former days. Buck never came near Spitz without snarling and bristling menacingly. In fact, his conduct approached that of a bully, and he was given to swaggering up and down before Spitz's very nose.

3 The breaking down of discipline likewise affected the dogs in their relations with one another. They quarreled and bickered more than ever among themselves, till at times the camp was a howling bedlam. Dave and Sol-leks alone were unaltered, though they were made irritable by the unending squabbling. Francois swore strange barbarous oaths, and stamped the snow in futile rage, and tore his hair. His lash was always singing among the dogs, but it was of small avail. Directly his back was turned they were at it again. He backed up Spitz with his whip, while Buck backed up the remainder of the team. Francois knew he was behind all the trouble, and Buck knew he knew; but Buck was too clever ever again to be caught red-handed. He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him; yet it was a greater delight slyly to precipitate a fight amongst his mates and tangle the traces.

4 At the mouth of the Tahkeena, one night after supper, Dub turned up a snowshoe rabbit, blundered it, and missed. In a second the whole team was in full cry. A hundred yards away was a camp of the Northwest Police, with fifty dogs, huskies all, who joined the chase. The rabbit sped down the river, turned off into a small creek, up the frozen bed of which it held steadily. It ran lightly on the surface of the snow, while the dogs ploughed through by main strength. Buck led the pack, sixty strong, around bend after bend, but he could not gain. He lay down low to the race, whining eagerly, his splendid body flashing forward, leap by leap, in the wan white moonlight. And leap by leap, like some pale frost wraith, the snowshoe rabbit flashed on ahead.

5 All that stirring of old instincts which at stated periods drives men out from the sounding cities to forest and plain to kill things by chemically propelled leaden pellets, the blood lust, the joy to kill--all this was Buck's, only it was infinitely more intimate.

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He was ranging at the head of the pack, running the wild thing down, the living meat, to kill with his own teeth and wash his muzzle to the eyes in warm blood.

6 There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life, and beyond which life cannot rise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes when one is most alive, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive. This ecstasy, this forgetfulness of living, comes to the artist, caught up and out of himself in a sheet of flame; it comes to the soldier, war-mad on a stricken field and refusing quarter; and it came to Buck, leading the pack, sounding the old wolf-cry, straining after the food that was alive and that fled swiftly before him through the moonlight.

7 He was sounding the deeps of his nature, and of the parts of his nature that were deeper than he, going back into the womb of Time. He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars and over the face of dead matter that did not move.

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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Answer the following questions

- 1) Which of the following is the **best** inference that can be made based on the events in this passage?
- ✓ A) Buck is becoming head of the pack.
  - B) Buck is risking the safety of the sled.
  - C) Buck is making an enemy of Francois.
  - D) Buck is trying to escape from bondage.
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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### From the Call of the Wild answer the following

- 2) Which of the following quotations from the passage gives evidence for the **best** inference about the meaning of the events?
- A) "Directly his back was turned they were at it again."
  - ✓ B) "Buck led the pack, sixty strong, around bend after bend."
  - C) "But such splendid running was achieved not without great trouble and vexation on the part of Francois."
  - D) "They quarreled and bickered more than ever among themselves, till at times the camp was a howling bedlam."

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AZ-RI.8.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

- 3) Which of the following **best** describes Francois?
- ✓ A) He is frustrated by the dogs' lack of discipline.
  - B) He is too cruel to be effective in running his team.
  - C) He is a kind-hearted owner who loves his animals.
  - D) He is inexperienced at leading a team of sled dogs.

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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 4) Which of the following gives the **best** evidence about Francois' character?
- A) "The breaking down of discipline likewise affected the dogs in their relations with one another."
  - ✓ B) "Francois swore strange barbarous oaths, and stamped the snow in futile rage, and tore his hair."
  - C) "Such splendid running was achieved not without great trouble and vexation on the part of Francois."
  - D) "He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew."

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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 5) Which quotation best supports a theme in the passage?
- A) "He worked faithfully in the harness, for the toil had become a delight to him."
  - B) "The encouragement Buck gave the rebels led them into all kinds of petty misdemeanors."
  - ✓ C) "He was sounding the deeps of his nature, and of the parts of his nature that were deeper than he."
  - D) "The rabbit sped down the river, turned off into a small creek, up the frozen bed of which it held steadily."

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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 6) Which of the following describes a theme that can be inferred from the events in this passage?
- ✓ A) Natural ability is a factor in success.
  - B) A group is smarter than a single individual.
  - C) Animals, like people, find it hard to change.
  - D) Those who try to seize control of a group usually fail.
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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 7) Which of the following quotations from the passage **best** supports a theme of the action?
- A) "At times the camp was a howling bedlam."
  - B) "It no longer was as one dog leaping in the traces."
  - C) "No more was Spitz a leader greatly to be feared."
  - ✓ D) "Buck was too clever ever again to be caught red-handed."
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- 8) Based on the context in the second paragraph, what does the clause his lash was always singing mean?
- A) The lash had a life of its own.
  - B) Francois used the lash angrily.
  - ✓ C) The lash made a high, ringing sound.
  - D) The dogs wailed when the lash hit them.

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- 9) Which clause from the passage **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of his lash was always singing?
- ✓ A) "He backed up Spitz with his whip."
  - B) " Francios swore strange barbarous oaths."
  - C) "In a second the whole team was in full cry."
  - D) "He lay down low to the race, whining eagerly."

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10) Based on the context in the second paragraph, what does ecstasy mean?

- A) the comfort of belonging to the group
- ✓ B) a sensation of being carried away by joy
- C) the knowledge of having done one's best
- D) a sense of having been in the same place before

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11) Which phrase from paragraph 5 **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of ecstasy?

- A) "in a sheet of flame"
- ✓ B) "comes to the artist"
- C) "complete forgetfulness"
- D) "when one is most alive"

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- 12) Which of the following states a central theme in the passage?
- A) Humans and animals will never understand each other.
  - B) Life in the wilderness is the most exciting type of experience.
  - C) Cooperation between humans and animals is the key to a good life for both.
  - ✓ D) The greatest moment in life occur when a creature follows its truest instincts.
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## 8th Grade ELA Unit 2 Assessment

### “Leave Orcas in the Ocean”

*In this article, the author presents opposing viewpoints on the issue of orcas performing in amusement parks.*

1 A recent documentary film attacked the treatment of orcas at an ocean amusement park. The film suggested that one of its whales caused the death of a trainer. It blamed the whale’s behavior on the stressful conditions of its captivity. On social media sites, people began talking about “abusement” parks and orcas trapped in tanks like pickles in a jar.

2 Some lawmakers tried to pass bills that would prevent orcas from being held in captivity. The amusement park quickly defended itself by saying that the film contained many errors. Its officials insist that they spend millions of dollars on state of the art facilities to provide comfortable pools for marine mammals.

3 Animal rights groups point out that orcas can swim one hundred miles a day in their natural environment while captive orcas float for hours in the blazing sun, in tanks that aren’t deep enough to dive down for relief from the heat and light.

4 Complicating matters is the fact that little is known about orcas in the wild. They live in remote northern waters and travel much of the time. Scientists working for this amusement park have discovered details about orcas’ reproductive system, anatomy, and learning behaviors. Critics point out that the amusement park only knows this because it trains animals in performing for their profit. They also criticize the park for breeding orcas too often, though park representatives claim that its breeding program prevents them from having to take orcas from the wild. The film also highlighted this barbaric practice, illustrating how separating captive orcas from their tight-knit family pod causes great stress and even death.

5 The causes and blame for the tragic deaths of handlers is also a subject of much debate. The park admits that there is danger in allowing tiny humans to interact with creatures vastly larger and more powerful. Yet their staff maintains that every precaution is taken to avoid injuries. They claim that the deaths were rare and unusual events, and not the result of stress or faulty treatment of orcas. The film suggests the opposite. It maintains that these complex creatures have minds of their own and choose to react capriciously because they are unhappy or suffering.

6 Humans cannot get into the mind of a giant sea mammal to understand whether the recent death of an orca’s trainer was the result of a game gone wrong or behavior outside the norm that could not be controlled. The park insists its animals aren’t forced to perform, and that they do so willingly. However, it is obvious that these animals would rather be in the wild. It is too late for those in captivity, who would not know how to hunt and would not be able to join a pod. Perhaps the only answer is to stop using animals for human entertainment.

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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 13) What is the author's main claim in "Leave Orcas in the Ocean?" Use details from the passage to support your answer.
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AZ-RI.8.8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

- 14) How does the author of "Leave Orcas in the Ocean" respond to conflicting viewpoints?
- A) He shows how the park's owners have been able to discredit the film.
  - ✓ B) He reveals how the amusement park argues against the claims made in the film.
  - C) He uses scientific data to show that the amusement park is harming the orcas.
  - D) He discusses how opinions on social media disprove the park owners' statements.
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AZ-RI.8.8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

- 15) Which sentence from the passage **best** illustrates the author's response to critics?
- A) Complicating matters is the fact that little is known about orcas in the wild."
  - ✓ B) "The amusement park quickly defended itself by saying that the film contained many errors."
  - C) "It maintains that these complex creatures have minds of their own and choose to react capriciously because they are unhappy or suffering."
  - D) "On social media sites, people began talking about 'abusement' parks and orcas trapped like pickles in a jar."

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AZ-RI.8.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

- 16) Based on the context in the third paragraph of "Leave Orcas in the Ocean," what is the meaning of barbaric?
- A) crafty
  - B) difficult
  - C) outdated
  - ✓ D) brutal

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- 17) Which expression in the last two paragraphs **best** help the reader understand the meaning of capriciously?
- A) "tragic deaths of handlers"
  - B) "creatures vastly larger"
  - C) "rare and unusual events"
  - D) "minds of their own"
  - E) "a game gone wrong"
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AZ-RI.8.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

- 18) Based on the context in the fourth paragraph of "Leave Orcas in the Ocean," what does capriciously mean?
- A) wildly
  - B) unpredictably
  - C) angrily
  - D) intelligently
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## 8th Grade ELA Unit 2 Assessment

### Have Trained Camels to Dance”

*In this narrative scene, an animal trainer reflects on a recent experience with a captive orca.*

1 I have trained camels to dance, hairy spiders to hit their spots from twenty feet up, and I have caused a dog to argue with her master in clever, convincing barks. That is the gift I bring to our nation’s television networks, which I now regret. I cajoled dolphins to do whatever the director wanted, things they didn’t do in their natural lives. But they were so intelligent that they gave their boss what he wanted and then they’d be rewarded. This is a lesson few members of the human workforce ever master.

2 I was hired to train an orca at an amusement park that entertained guests with 12,000-pound beasts breaching into the air and splashing down on cue, obeying their handlers. From the very first time I worked with orcas I sensed that they needed extremely delicate conditions in order to feel calm. I could easily detect the off-ness of these mammals. I could tell when they did not want to perform. The problem was that my employer wanted me to work with an older bull male they had bought from another, failing park. He had caused the death of a trainer, whom he had “playfully” pinned to the bottom of his tank.

3 When I first observed the bull they called Tadam, I noticed the telltale sign of a captive male. He had a drooping dorsal fin at the top of his body. Wild orcas do not have this. Some scientists think it is the first sign of stress. Other say its cause is unknown or unproven. Yet as I began to read more about orcas in the wild and in captivity, I realized that there is nothing natural about a huge animal living in a tank instead of roaming the sea.

4 I had heard rumors that Tadam was considered aggressive. However, he is a “killer whale” after all, a name given to these intelligent, social mammals because they munch on seals to provide the three hundred pounds of prey they need per day to survive. Kazza has the rake marks of sharp teeth down his sides. He had put a few rake marks on the other orcas he used to live with. He was removed after he kept ramming another male, injuring it. When I met him, he floated listlessly in a tank too shallow for his tail, which trailed along the bottom in defeat. He didn’t eat well and his fins were covered with warts from a virus he couldn’t shake. And worse, he wouldn’t make eye contact with me. It has been my experience with every critter from snakes to giraffes, that if they won’t engage with you, there is trouble. If they won’t begin a relationship and stare you down, they either don’t care because you are nothing to them, or they think you are something they may have to attack.

5 I told Tadam’s owners he needed to be set free in giant net enclosure in a nearby bay. I realized he had been in OceanPlanet too long to return to the wild like any other orca. He now swims around in a deep refuge. He’s mostly alone, but at least he has fresh seawater and can breach when he wants to, not just to hear the squeals of the crowd as his splash soaks them.

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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 19) Which of the following **best** describes a main lesson learned by the narrator of "I Have Trained Camels to Dance"?
- ✓ A) The only solution was not training him.
  - B) Dolphins were smarter than most workers.
  - C) A new pool would allow this animal to be trained.
  - D) The best way to train an orca was getting their attention.
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AZ-RI.8.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 20) What evidence **best** supports the narrator's main lesson?
- ✓ A) "...I realized that there is nothing natural about a huge animal living in a tank instead of roaming the sea."
  - B) "When I met him, he floated listlessly in a tank too shallow for his tail..."
  - C) "And worse, he wouldn't make eye contact with me."
  - D) "I realized he had been in Ocean Planet too long to return to the wild like any other orca."
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AZ-RI.8.8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

- 21) In what ways are these passages, *Leave Orcas in the Ocean* and *"I Have Trained Camels to Dance"*, similar? In what ways are they different? Include details from the passage in your explanation.
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AZ-RI.8.8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

- 22) People have different viewpoints about whether animals should live in the wild or in a man-made environment. Write an expository essay explaining if animals should be kept at zoos or exhibits for human entertainment. Be sure to cite evidence from *"Leave Orcas in the Ocean"* and from *"I Have Trained Camels to Dance"* in your essay.
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