

# Summer 2022



## Grade 08

# ELAR

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

## The Old Saguaro

Over on the next street  
is a saguaro taller than the tallest man.  
It stands with fists raised,  
crown angled back  
5 as though shouting at the sky.

They say saguaro are slow to grow—  
this one is older than the oldest house in town.  
Its green flesh has faded  
flecked white  
10 like the muzzle of an aged dog.

It didn't grow here, of course—  
it was trucked in, unbuckled, stood up.  
It digs its toes into sand  
now familiar,  
15 dreams of family left behind.

I wonder if it counts the sunrises  
or the neighbors that come and go.  
What are the things that matter  
when year after year  
20 all that stands still  
is the sun  
and you?

✓E1.08F analyze how the author's diction and syntax contribute to the mood, voice, and tone of a text

Keyword mood DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

1 Which line from the poem can best be described as conveying the idea of loneliness?

- F Its green flesh has faded (line 8)
  - G it was trucked in, unbuckled, stood up. (line 12)
  - H dreams of family left behind. (line 15)
  - J What are the things that matter (line 18)
- 

✓E1.08D analyze how the author's use of language achieves specific purposes

Keyword use of language DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

2 In lines 3 through 5, the poet uses imagery to —

- A demonstrate how tall the saguaro is now
  - B suggest that the saguaro is defiantly standing up to time
  - C help the reader understand how angry the speaker is
  - D illustrate how regal the saguaro seems to the speaker
- 

✓E1.07B analyze the structure, prosody, and graphic elements such as line length and word position in poems across a variety of poetic forms

Keyword graphic elements DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

3 Why might the poet have used a dash at the end of line 11?

- F To highlight the fact that the saguaro was transplanted
- G To emphasize how important it is to grow a garden
- H To suggest that the speaker wishes he could have more saguaros
- J To indicate why the speaker likes the saguaro so much

This question has two parts.

#### 4 Part A

Which line from the poem uses a simile?

- A It stands with fists raised, (line 3)
  - B They say saguaro are slow to grow— (line 6)
  - C like the muzzle of an aged dog. (line 10)
  - D I wonder if it counts the sunrises (line 16)
- 

#### 5 Part B

Which statement describes the author's most likely purpose for using the simile in Part A?

- A To emphasize the advancing years of the saguaro
- B To illustrate the need to take care of yourself while you are young
- C To highlight how much the speaker dreads getting old
- D To suggest that the speaker is exhausted and worn out

✓E1.08E analyze the use of literary devices such as irony and oxymoron to achieve specific purposes

Keyword literary devices DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

**6** What does the old saguaro most likely represent in the poem?

- F** The need to spend more time in nature
- G** The comfort to be found in gardening
- H** The passage of time
- J** The pride that people feel about their neighborhoods

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

## **A Touch of Gray**

- 1 The floor tasted like dust, mildew, chemicals. I hadn't meant to get a mouthful, but there was no escaping it when you were down on your hands and knees, scouring away the memories of the house's last occupant.
- 2 This house was Dad's latest conquest. He had a nose for finding the worst house on the street—in the whole town, often. He'd buy it for a song, do it up, then sell it for a symphony. The more awful the place, the better the opportunity. The best were the homes of chain-smokers, or the ones destroyed by squatters. No one else would touch them.
- 3 "Smell that, kids?" he'd say every time we gingerly tiptoed into a tumbledown shack and were slapped in the face by the stench of years of settled-in cigarettes—or worse. "Smells like money."
- 4 The paperwork signed, we'd start in on fixing the place up, setting up camp in a nearby motel. Sometimes a tent in the yard, neighborhood and time of year permitting.
- 5 It was callus-making, bone-aching work, even if us kids were only helping out outside of school or on weekends. You found out a lot about yourself doing that kind of work, and a lot about other people, too.
- 6 I used to always wonder how a place got like that. How did something go from a home to a fallen-down time capsule, and so quickly, too? You'd realize just how quickly when you were up in the attic and you came across church choir sheet music just a few years old, or when a family of baseballs came floating up out of the earth in the backyard. It was like time ran differently in these places, speeding voraciously, destructively through the hour glass.
- 7 Maybe what Dad was smelling wasn't money, but someone else's pain.
- 8 "Got some materials to move, Tom." Dad was standing outside, a corrugated pyramid of cardboard boxes behind him. They were full of gray vinyl flooring, gray bathroom tiles, and tins of gray paint. The color scheme, the materials were always the same. Whatever mess we walked into, we knew exactly what it would look like when we finally walked out.
- 9 Dad liked the way the uniformity kept our costs down, and I think it gave him something concrete to aim for. Me, I always felt a stab of something like regret when we locked up for the last time, a down-on-its-luck but memory-filled house turned into something paint-by-number, scrubbed clean of personality.

- 10 But, of course, the job wasn't about personality. It was about putting a roof over our own heads. Someone else's, too, I guess, when we were able to sell the place a few months later.
- 11 I stood, dusting the residue of years of slovenliness from my jeans, and helped Dad haul in the boxes, slicing each one open with a quick slash of my knife. Set against the stained walls, the patched-up floors, the crumbling counters, their gray innards exhaled possibility.
- 12 Over the last few weeks, we had laid tile, glued in flooring, and covered over the wall-shadows caused by a life-long smoking habit with generous lashings of paint. The house's previous life and owner had receded bit by bit, stepping back and aside until they were nothing more than a name on the documents we had signed months ago.
- 13 And, at last, the day of our final walk-through had arrived, us kids picking up trash while Dad ran the calculations in his head. Tonight, since the numbers looked good, dinner at Mickey D's awaited. Celebratory drinks and sundaes in hand, we sat together, recuperating and joking around.
- 14 As we drove away, Dad pulled up at a sad-looking property with a sagging fence, smashed windows, and a chimney teetering off to one side.
- 15 Dad rolled down the window and tiptoed up the driveway, oiled by some ancient, long-gone car. He pretended not to be spooked by the cat or possum that darted out from beneath an overgrown bush at the side of the house.
- 16 He sniffed the air, pinched his nose, and grimaced, and we all knew exactly what was about to happen.
- 17 "Smells like money!"

✓E1.08D analyze how the author's use of language achieves specific purposes

Keyword specific purpose DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

7 From paragraph 6, the reader can infer that Tom —

- A wishes that his family could keep the home they are renovating right now
- B has decided that he would like to stay in one place long enough to join a baseball team
- C feels sentimental about the way that the houses he works on have deteriorated
- D no longer wants to help his family fix up houses anymore

---

✓E1.02B analyze context to distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words

Keyword denotative DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

8 What does the word *slovenliness* in paragraph 11 mean?

- F Incoherence
- G Untidiness
- H Tension
- J Consistency



✓E1.06C analyze non-linear plot development such as flashbacks, foreshadowing, subplots, and parallel plot structures and compare it to linear plot development

Keyword plot development DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

9 The details in paragraphs 1 through 5 are important because they —

- A emphasize how angry Tom is about the methods his dad uses to purchase the houses they work on
- B highlight how challenging the day to day circumstances are of Tom and his family
- C show all of the processes Tom and his family must take before they can move into their new home
- D illustrate how Tom feels about the previous owners of the homes that he and his family renovate

---

✓E1.02B analyze context to distinguish between the denotative and connotative meanings of words

Keyword denotative DOK 3-Strategic Thinking RR C-Assimilation Blooms 4-Analysis/Analyzing

10 In paragraph 13, the word *recuperating* means —

- F teasing
- G tolerating
- H recovering
- J healing

**11** What is the best summary of the selection?

- A** Tom and his family move from home to home, fixing each one up as they go. Tom especially enjoys the process of making each one look the same, because he feels that consistency is the key to leaving them looking better than they did originally.
- B** Tom reminisces about his family's work renovating houses, making each look the same as the last, as he works on their current project. After finishing the final details on the house, he goes out to dinner with his family. As they leave the restaurant, Tom's dad discovers another house that needs repairs.
- C** After transferring to a new town, Tom and his family begin to renovate their new home. They celebrate after finishing up the house, but then their father tells them they have to move again.
- D** While renovating a home with his family, Tom realizes that he no longer wants to work on houses anymore because he dislikes making each one look alike. He tries to tell his dad about it while they are having dinner together, but his father tells him they are going to be starting up on a new project anyway.