



# **Nebraska State Accountability**

**Grade 7  
Reading  
Practice Test**

Name:

**Directions:**

On the following pages are passages and multiple-choice questions for Grade 7 Reading Practice Test, a practice opportunity for the *Nebraska State Accountability (NeSA)*.

Each question will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For all questions:

- Read each passage. Then answer each question carefully by choosing the best answer.
- Mark your answers for ALL of the questions.

Only one of the choices provided is the correct answer.

## A Pioneer Diary

### February 28, 1846

1 We had good luck a few days ago when the Mississippi River froze and we were given permission to cross with all of our horses and belongings. Mother was so happy she cried. Father looked stern as he always does, but I noticed a tiny glint in his eyes. We had been waiting for many days and thought we would be forced to pay **exorbitant** rates to cross the river.

Now it is bitterly cold for walking. The ice patches are numerous, and this makes it treacherous for all of us. It is tremendously difficult to trudge through this land on foot, but I must take my turn walking next to the wagon while others take their turn riding. We are traveling in a group of fifty people. Everyone has a job to do that is important to the success of our trip. My job is to water the horses when we stop and to keep the young children away from our wagon while we are walking. Our wagons can move only ten to fifteen miles per day and less if the trail is muddy and treacherous, which it is every day.

### March 27, 1846

We are traveling as a family, and Father is the captain of our group so he decides the route and everyone's job for the trip. Mother and Anna stay up front in the wagon to watch for roadblocks and wild animals. Because Father is the captain, everyone must obey his rules. We have always known what discipline he has and what a fine leader he is. Now others know it, too.

The other children on the trail are able to take care of one another. They pass the time by spelling words, telling stories, and singing.

### May 15, 1846

The handcarts are full of our food supplies. When we stop, we prepare cornbread and beans. We brought a few vegetables along, but they did not last for more than a few days. Sometimes we find wild dandelion for salads, apple trees that are abandoned, wild berries, and fish from the lakes and streams we happen upon.

### June 17, 1846

We crossed the Missouri River and arrived at Winter Quarters a few days ago, after a long, dusty, and sweltering journey. There is a buzzing of constant movement here as men and women alike are preparing to spend the winter here. We gathered prairie hay and stacked it inside to keep it dry and safe for our livestock. Hundreds of gallons of berries were preserved for winter consumption. Wild game was sought and then salted and dried. We gathered as much grain as possible, but the horse-driven mills do not produce a quality milled grain. We will use what is appropriate.

We are at a disadvantage with our fruits and vegetables. We left Illinois before we could plant anything, and we have been traveling during the growing season. We have been scavenging, scouring, and purchasing whatever we can to keep up our supplies this winter.

**September 20, 1846**

Now we are building a cabin for our family using the cottonwood trees that are in abundance here. We know we will have enough time to finish before it gets cold in late fall. The roof will be sod, and we need to be careful laying it above the roof trusses.

**December 10, 1846**

Father and I are filling the cracks of our log cabin to keep the cold air out and the warm air of our wood fire inside. As part of the first group walking the trail, we are spending the winter here to help build the place for future pioneers. When the winter ice melts, we know we will have safe footing to travel to the new land.

**April 28, 1847**

Today we set out from Winter Quarters and are traveling on the north side of the Platte River. We will be crossing Nebraska for many, many nights. We have heard stories of mountainous terrain ahead and are preparing for a tough journey. Anna and I swap stories as we walk. We have learned all about a new part of the world.

**May 29, 1847**

Before we left, we were told that following the Platte River on the north side would be healthier, and that is how we chose this route. Each day, we meet many other travelers with whom we eat our meals and share advice. The river is a dependable navigator for our westward walk, and the land is stable and flat. The river is not very deep, but it is very wide.

**June 5, 1847**

I am happy that Father says we are close to our destination, and I wonder what adventures we have before us.

1. Why did the author write the passage?
  - A. to identify dangers on a trail
  - B. to list the types of food available
  - C. to explain how to build a cabin
  - D. to record a westward journey
  
2. In paragraph 1, what is the meaning of the word **exorbitant**?
  - A. appropriate
  - B. customary
  - C. excessive
  - D. reasonable
  
3. Why did the family in the passage use cottonwood trees to build their cabin?
  - A. because of the trees' size
  - B. because of the quality of the wood
  - C. because of the availability of the wood
  - D. because of the trees' resistance to insects
  
4. Which literary device is used in the phrase "The river is a dependable navigator . . ."?
  - A. hyperbole
  - B. onomatopoeia
  - C. oxymoron
  - D. personification

5. What is the main idea of the passage?
- A. Pioneers endured hardships as they traveled.
  - B. Pioneers relied on the advice of other travelers.
  - C. Pioneers had a difficult time securing fresh food.
  - D. Pioneers completed many preparations for the winter.
6. Which phrase is an example of alliteration?
- A. westward walk
  - B. wild dandelion
  - C. sweltering journey
  - D. constant movement
7. Which organizational pattern is used in this passage?
- A. cause and effect
  - B. chronological order
  - C. problem and solution
  - D. proposition and support

## The World's Tallest Trees—The Redwoods

The world is full of all types of trees, but only one type grows over 300 feet tall. It is the coast redwood tree, officially named *Sequoia sempervirens*. The tallest tree standing in the United States is a redwood tree. It is 374 feet tall—as tall as a thirty-story building. Oak, maple, and elm trees rarely tower more than one hundred feet. A redwood is more than three times that height. The girth of the redwood tree is also significant and can be up to eighteen feet in diameter.

The coastal redwood tree grows in a 450-mile strip along the coast of the Pacific Ocean from southern Oregon to just south of San Francisco, California. This area is a moist, fog-covered canyon that supports these huge trees. The redwood species thrives on moisture and cannot survive more than thirty to forty miles away from the coast. The canyon creeks that flow through the redwood forests provide moisture, but they dry up in the summer. The constant fog lowers the temperature, provides humidity, and creates moisture for these trees by condensing and settling on the leaves, then dripping to the ground. Evidence has shown that fog drip creates up to ten inches of moisture annually for the redwood trees. The forest floor that surrounds the redwoods is filled with dropped needles, trapped dust, seeds, and other natural materials forming a mat of mulch. This mat traps moisture for the trees to use during the dry California summers.

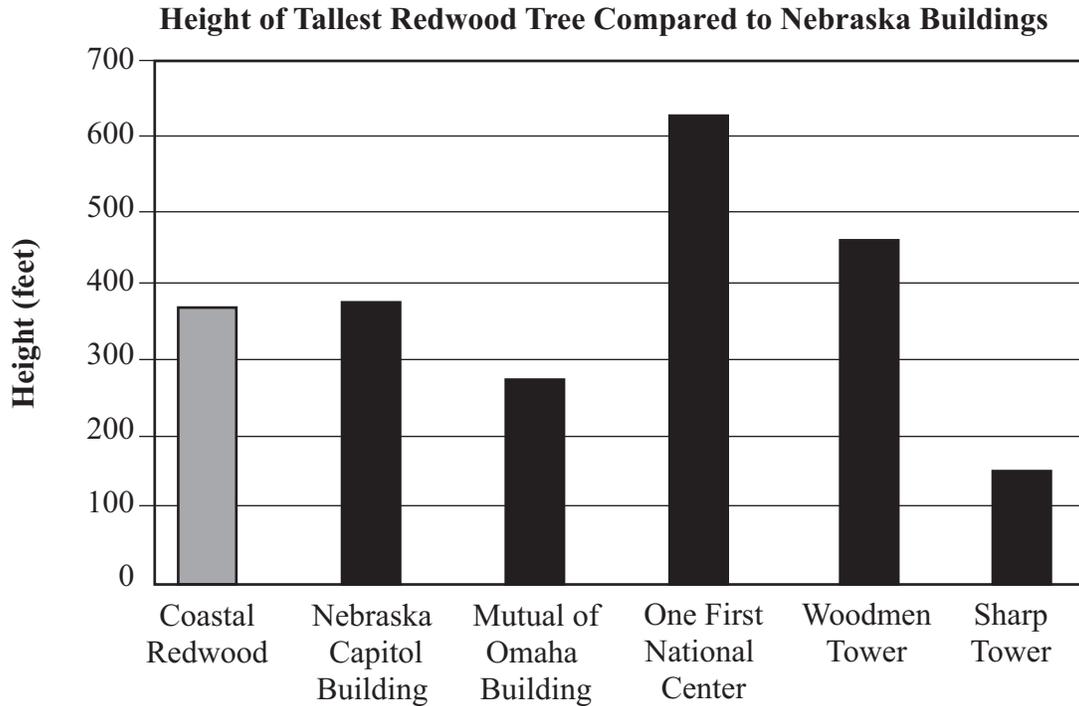
- 3 Redwoods are swiftly growing trees that can live longer than two thousand years. Their height and their age make them unusual and unique among the tree species. Foresters say that the oldest living redwood tree is 2,200 years old. Redwoods have characteristics that make them healthy and strong in their environment. Their bark is fire resistant, from six to twelve inches thick, and does not carry the sticky resins that can fuel a fire. Redwoods are resistant to disease and **undesirable** to insects that consume wood.

Redwood trees have shallow roots that rest near the top of the soil, which seems unusual for their size. They do not have the taproots that burrow deeply into the ground like so many other trees. Redwoods form a wide radius of shallow roots around their base, and this is what has helped them survive for so many years. These trees are able to survive flooding and the resulting mudflows that cover the roots because they grow new roots quickly. The old roots simply rot away from being buried so deeply.

In the redwood forests of California, the trees are the dominant living plants. The canopy of shade that these giant trees provide makes it extremely difficult for many other plants and trees to grow alongside them. Even though the redwoods have a thick bark that is resistant to fire, repeated fires occasionally damage them. They bear the black marks of fire damage and begin decaying. A process called stump sprouting then occurs. The decaying tree sends out root buds that begin growing around it. Small saplings, or beginner trees, start to grow and survive. In the forest, there are often many saplings surrounding a fire-damaged redwood because they are the only plants that survive in the shady, moist environment.

- 6 The stump-sprouting process of redwood tree reproduction is much more successful than seeding. All redwoods have cones growing within their branches. The cones release tiny brown seeds when the tree is mature. The brown seeds are so tiny that more than one hundred thousand are needed to create a pound. Individual trees produce up to six million seeds annually! Yet, a scant five percent of these seeds actually **germinate**. Even less actually grow into mature trees. The already established root systems from the stump-sprouted trees provide the new saplings with the ability to grow more forcefully than the seeded trees.

The redwood tree is the California state tree. It is magnificent in size, stature, and longevity. Visitors come from all over the world to see the redwoods and to enjoy their greatness.



8. In paragraph 3, what does the word **undesirable** mean?
- A. not needed
  - B. craved again
  - C. not wanted
  - D. yearned for
9. In paragraph 6, what is the meaning of the word **germinate**?
- A. produce pollen
  - B. sprout
  - C. expire
  - D. prevent disease

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10. What is the main source of moisture for redwoods during dry periods?
- A. Pacific Ocean
  - B. canyon creeks
  - C. fog condensation
  - D. annual rainfall
11. What is the main idea of the passage?
- A. The canyon provides the redwoods with many sources of moisture.
  - B. The redwoods have shallow roots that grow quickly in mudflows.
  - C. The ability to sprout stumps allows the redwoods to continue to survive.
  - D. The redwoods are unique because of their size, height, and ability to survive.
12. Which fact from the passage is supported by the graph?
- A. The redwood tree grows along the Pacific coast.
  - B. A redwood tree can grow to be more than 300 feet.
  - C. The oldest living redwood tree is 2,200 years old.
  - D. A redwood tree can produce millions of seeds annually.
13. According to the graph, which building's height is closest to the height of the coastal redwood?
- A. Nebraska State Capitol Building
  - B. Woodmen Tower
  - C. One First National Center
  - D. Mutual of Omaha Building

14. Which genre does the passage represent?
- A. fiction
  - B. poetry
  - C. editorial
  - D. nonfiction
15. Which statement is NOT a reason the redwoods continue to survive?
- A. They have deep-reaching roots.
  - B. They have bark that is thick and tough.
  - C. They typically repel disease.
  - D. They are able to produce beginner trees.

**Grade 7  
Reading Practice Test  
Answer Key**

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | D |
| 2  | C |
| 3  | C |
| 4  | D |
| 5  | A |
| 6  | A |
| 7  | B |
| 8  | C |
| 9  | B |
| 10 | C |
| 11 | D |
| 12 | B |
| 13 | A |
| 14 | D |
| 15 | A |