



Nebraska State Accountability

**Grade 11
Reading
Practice Test**

Name:

Directions:

On the following pages are passages and multiple-choice questions for Grade 11 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.

Remember only one of the choices provided is the correct answer.

Uncle Wilbur

My uncle Wilbur used to spend hours every day checking on the lightning rods that stood guard on the roof of his house. We get a lot of storms here in our state. Sometimes we see wind up to sixty miles per hour and baseball-size hail. Lightning, Uncle Wilbur would say, is a living thing, and like a cat, it will strike anything that moves. You'd better not tempt it, he always told us. He advised my cousins and me to always be mindful of the nearest sheltering tree. He said we should be prepared to drop to the ground like a hot potato at the first sound of thunder. Knowing that lightning is attracted to the tallest thing around, Uncle Wilbur worried constantly about my cousin Jared, who, at sixteen, was 6'2" and still growing.

Uncle Wilbur has always been a smart man. We all listened as he dismissed the automobile as a passing fancy. Every year it seemed more and more Model Ts came rolling into town, but Uncle Wilbur insisted that nothing could replace the reliability of a good old-fashioned mule when it came to transportation, work, or even entertainment. Yes, Uncle Wilbur's Mule Olympics, complete with obstacle courses and a long jump, was known far and wide. Sadly, the Mule Olympics did not survive into the next decade because the mules got too old and lost interest.

Nonetheless, my uncle Wilbur continued to predict future trends and warn us of impending tragedy. To this day, he reminds us that he foresaw the stock market crash of 1929, and that's why he kept his money wrapped in a handkerchief under his mattress. When the government started collecting income taxes a few years back, Uncle Wilbur reluctantly shared his wealth with Uncle Sam, insisting that the money was just a temporary loan.

Uncle Wilbur did not take kindly to the power company man who came knocking one day in 1936. This was the year the government launched a campaign to bring electricity to rural areas like ours. Most people, like Uncle Wilbur, were a little wary of having electricity in their homes. Many of us had running water, and we just weren't sure that the two mixed. Nevertheless, Uncle Wilbur was downright floored when the man said he wanted to string power lines up to the house. Nearly losing his temper, Uncle Wilbur exclaimed, "Here I am doing everything in my power to keep from getting struck by lightning, and you want to bring it right to my doorstep?" He sent the man on his way with a "No, thank you," and a "Good day, sir," but in the months that followed, we all eventually relented and let in the light. I must admit, playing checkers in the dark is a talent you can easily lose without daily practice.

Many things have changed since those times. Uncle Wilbur still lives in mortal fear of a lightning strike, but because he doesn't get out much anymore, most of his lightning rods have rusted through and fallen to the ground. Uncle Wilbur lives mostly on Social Security, which he proudly proclaims as his victory (see, he says, the government did *eventually* give his money back). He probably spends more time reminiscing about the past than he does making future predictions, but Uncle Wilbur will be the first to tell you that television will never be as popular as radio, and the idea of a human traveling into outer space is just plain crazy!

1. What is the prefix in the word **foresaw**?
 - A. fore
 - B. saw
 - C. for
 - D. aw

2. Which phrase is an example of personification?
 - A. lightning rods standing guard
 - B. dismissed the automobile as a passing fancy
 - C. string power lines up to the house
 - D. idea of a human traveling into outer space

3. How would Uncle Wilbur feel about cellular phones?
 - A. fearful
 - B. distrustful
 - C. welcoming
 - D. indifferent

4. Compared to Uncle Wilbur, how does the narrator feel toward modern advancements?
 - A. resisting
 - B. accepting
 - C. uncertain
 - D. exhilarated

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5. Which reason explains why the author wrote about Uncle Wilbur?
- A. to explain him
 - B. to pacify him
 - C. to remember him
 - D. to persuade him
6. Which pair of words best describe how the narrator most likely feels about Uncle Wilbur?
- A. annoyed and frustrated
 - B. respectful and amused
 - C. sad and indifferent
 - D. envious and distrustful
7. What BEST describes the passage?
- A. a character sketch
 - B. a factual research
 - C. a persuasive essay
 - D. a news article

The Happiness Effect

Happiness may be the primary goal of human existence. Philosophers have wrestled with the concept of happiness. Legislators create laws to support citizens' rights to pursue happiness. Television, radio, and print advertisers assure consumers that various products will guarantee happiness. Interestingly, people have a tendency to believe they are happier than their neighbors, and they are optimistic about their happiness in the future. Most people assume that they will be happier a decade from now than they are today.

Clearly, everyone from writers and philosophers to legislators and the average person on the street thinks a great deal about happiness. What makes happiness so important to human existence?

Why Be Happy?

Not only does happiness feel good, but it appears to provide a variety of psychological and physical benefits. Happiness plays a significant role in enhancing good health, strengthening the immune system, promoting longevity, improving productivity and performance, and increasing resilience. Happy people work hard, play hard, have an active social life (and a social conscience), experience good health, and live longer. A happy person lives an average of nine years longer than a miserable one.

The Opposite of Happiness

- 4 When studying happiness, it makes sense that its opposite condition would also be a topic of examination. Scientists have observed that there are two **unfortunate** life events that induce profound unhappiness, perhaps over the course of many years: the loss of a spouse and the loss of a job.

What Causes Happiness?

However, good news abounds in the study of happiness. Fortunately, humans experience happiness from a wide range of stimuli, from traveling to an exotic destination to redecorating one's home or from winning a game of soccer to eating a delicious meal. Simply watching a favorite television show or laughing at a funny joke can boost a depressed mood. While the happiness produced by such experiences tends to be short lived, certain conditions do promote a more long-lasting and durable state of happiness as a lifestyle: a wide social network, believing in a meaningful reason for one's existence, and establishing goals and working to achieve them.

With a Little Help from My Friends

Surprisingly, income is not a primary factor in determining a person's level of happiness once the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter have been met. More important is one's social network. Being socially active may be more effective in increasing one's immunity to illness than a vaccine. Misery may love company, but so does happiness, and having close friends and family is vital to one's overall level of happiness. (If friends and family are crucial, so is a loving partner. Research suggests that being married increases one's potential for happiness.) Even sharing one's home with an animal companion can make a person happier.

Why Am I Here?

Scientists report that believing in some kind of meaning for one’s life is necessary to living a happy life. This may be a religion, a code of ethics, a particular value system, a philosophy, or any other reason for being that lifts people out of the mundane routine of daily existence and gives their life meaning beyond a weekly paycheck.

The Habit of Happiness

Happiness is not an **innate** characteristic but may actually be developed as a habit. Scientists suggest that incorporating new habits and practices can go a long way in increasing one’s state of happiness. While people generally do not transform their basic temperaments, people can learn to become happier by participating in a variety of activities, including socializing, watching funny movies or reading funny books, keeping a gratitude journal (writing a daily list of three to five things for which one is grateful), involving oneself in pleasurable activities, such as sports, hobbies, or the arts, focusing on positive outcomes, and performing acts of kindness for others. Apparently, doing something to make someone else happy will make you happy, too.

<p style="text-align: center;">Reasons to Smile</p> <p>Smiling... is contagious. relieves stress. improves your mood. helps you stay positive. lowers your blood pressure. attracts other people to you. makes you appear confident. boosts your immune system.</p>
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8. In the section **Why Be Happy?**, why does the author include parentheses around “and a social conscience”?
- A. to point out that social conscience leads to good health
 - B. to emphasize the importance of playing and working hard
 - C. to point out that having a social conscience can promote longevity
 - D. to emphasize the importance of social conscience as a part of an active social life

9. What change occurs as a result of adding the prefix **un-** to **fortunate** in paragraph 4?
- A. the word becomes more intense
 - B. the word becomes less intense
 - C. the word takes on the opposite meaning
 - D. the word takes on a different part of speech
10. Which statement summarizes the heading **What Causes Happiness**?
- A. A wide social network is the key to happiness.
 - B. Laughing at funny jokes helps to lift a gloomy mood.
 - C. Scientists conclude that good news leads to long-lasting happiness.
 - D. Both short- and long-term happiness are caused by a variety of experiences.
11. In the section **With a Little Help from My Friends**, why does the author use the phrase “misery may love company”?
- A. to convince people that pets are better company than a loving partner
 - B. to encourage people to find mates for their friends who are unhappy
 - C. to point out that people will be happier with positive relationships
 - D. to recommend that people try to influence negative people in a positive way
12. What is one assumption the author makes about attaining happiness?
- A. Some people find comfort in mundane routines.
 - B. A person needs a social network to attain happiness.
 - C. Reading and writing about your problems will produce happiness.
 - D. Convincing negative people to become positive is a life goal.

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13. In the section **The Habit of Happiness**, what does the word **innate** mean?
- A. natural and existing
 - B. incomplete and building
 - C. absent and unfamiliar
 - D. learned and habitual
14. Which statement is an opinion?
- A. Happiness is not a physical characteristic.
 - B. Legislators create laws to support happiness.
 - C. Happiness may be the primary goal of human existence.
 - D. Advertisers use happiness to promote their products.

Grade 11 Practice Test Answers

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