

ELA Benchmark 2 Grade 6

Name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

Read this rough draft of a student's narrative. Then answer questions 1 - 13.**The Mysterious Wall**

1 A few years ago, ten-year old Elise and her family bought and moved into a large house set a distance from the road. It was not visible to passersby, mainly because of the immense trees surrounding it. It was not a particularly beautiful house, but it was old and full of character.

2 Elise had her own room for the first time in her life. In their ultra-modern condominium, she had to share an undersized room with her little sister, Rachel. The room's sleek, shiny white walls and clean lines seemed to leave no room for privacy or keeping secrets. Elise looked at the boxes that held her prized possessions, and reflected on the squabbles she had with her sister over their belongings and room space. She was excited to unpack her things and put them exactly where she wanted them in her new room, which was full of dark corners and potential hiding places.

3 While pinning up posters of her favorite bands, Elise noticed a strange gap in her wall paneling. Two of the panels did not quite come together; it looked as if something was hidden behind them. Elise ran downstairs to grab a flashlight so she could inspect the mysterious opening. To her surprise, the light shone through and onto something that was hidden or stored behind the wall.

4 "What in the world?" gasped Elise. This was spooky, and it made her feel uneasy. Her imagination wandered, causing chills to run up her spine. Goosebumps seemed to form all over her body. "Mom! Dad! Rachel! Take a look at this!" yelled Elise.

5 Within a few seconds, Elise's mother, father, and sister ran into Elise's room. "What's wrong?" her father asked. Elise showed them the space in the wall. Mr. Hardaway inspected it and decided to check out what was behind the wall. He left the room briefly and returned with a claw hammer. He yanked one of the panels from the wall, making sure he did not damage the plywood too much. Elise and her family were astounded when, behind the paneling, they found half a dozen withered boxes, an antique trunk, and several piles of yellowing papers covered with cobwebs and dust.

6 Mr. Hardaway left again to get a stronger flashlight to look further into the wall. The other Hardaways talked about what they had found. They weren't sure what to do. Would it be appropriate if they dug through these things in the wall? "This is *our* house now," asserted Mr. Hardaway as he marched back into the room. "If you think about it, everything here belongs to us now. In this democracy, my vote matters most. I say that we go ahead and explore!" With that decision handled, the family began to inspect the newly discovered items.

7 They discovered that the items belonged to a family who had lived in the house many years prior to their moving in. The papers had belonged to a couple named John and Laura Brennan. They were actually letters that John and Laura had written to each other.

8 After reading through some of the letters, the Hardaways learned many things about the Brennans. When John Brennan was a young soldier during the Second World War, he was stationed overseas, somewhere in France. He vowed to his wife that he would return to her soon. Letter after letter described the battles John fought and his role in serving his country.

Laura wrote to John about what was going on at home and even sometimes mentioned their house. Their letters continued until John returned following the end of World War II. Through these letters, the Hardaways learned more about John and Laura: how much they loved each other, the four children they had, and the time they lived in the house.

9 The Hardaways decided to examine all the boxes and truly enjoyed doing so. One box contained John Brennan's military uniforms, medals, and articles from the local newspaper recounting his adventures during the war. Another box had some of Laura's clothes in them, which were crisply folded in faded tissue paper. Elise tried on some of the perfectly preserved old-fashioned dresses and hats, and modeled them for her family. They fit almost perfectly. Other boxes contained a variety of items the Hardaways thought belonged to the Brennans. There was a box of beautiful china, so durable that it survived through all the years without a chip. The ancient trunk contained baby clothes that looked nearly brand new, carefully layered among cedar chips. Elise and Rachel gingerly looked through them, careful not to disturb the order of the delightful treasures they'd found.



10 After they looked through all the items, the Hardaways decided they should try to find members of the family that had once owned the house to give them their rightful treasures. The Hardaways placed a notice in the local paper. However, they had no luck. After weeks of placing personal ads in the newspaper, no one came forward to claim the items.

11 The Hardaways donated the uniforms to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and gave the clothing to an antique shop. They put the letters in a small metal box and put them back in the wall where they had been found. They felt that this was the only fitting place for the precious letters. The Hardaways decided that if they ever moved from this house, they would put part of their own history in the wall along with what the Brennans had left.

1. According to the narrative, which statement best describes how Elise feels about her new room?
 - A. Elise was scared about having her own room for the first time in her life.
 - B. Elise was annoyed by the shiny, white walls and clean lines that seemed to leave no privacy.
 - C. Elise was excited to unpack and decorate her new room.
 - D. Elise was worried about the dark corners and hiding places in her room.

2. Read the quote from the story:

"If you think about it, everything belongs to us now. In this democracy, my vote matters most. I say that we go ahead and explore! With that decision handled, the family began to inspect the newly discovered items."

How does the author's word choice develop the father's point-of-view about the items found in the wall?

- A. "In this democracy, my vote matters most" shows the father's uncertain nature.
- B. "In this democracy, my vote matters most" shows the father's helpful nature.
- C. "In this democracy, my vote matters most" shows the father's anger at finding items in the wall.
- D. "In this democracy, my vote matters most" shows the father's role as a decision-maker within the family.

3. Why does the author choose to end the passage with, "The Hardaways decided that if they ever moved from this house, they would put part of their own history in the wall along with what the Brennans had left"?

- A. The author wants to show that the family appreciates the history found in the home and hopes to continue the tradition.
- B. The author wants to show that the family has a great respect for antiques.
- C. The author wants to show that the family appreciates the idea of using the extra space behind the wall for storage.
- D. The author wants to show that the Hardaways want to be remembered once they are gone.

4. How does the first paragraph contribute to the development of the story's plot?

- A. It summarizes the central idea of the passage.
- B. It explains the conflict that is presented to the characters.
- C. It describes the relationship between the characters of the story.
- D. It introduces the main characters and the setting of the story.

5. Which of the following sentences best builds suspense throughout the story?
- A. "He left the room briefly and returned with a claw hammer."
 - B. "Two of the panels did not quite come together; it looked as if something was hidden behind them."
 - C. "Elise and her family were astounded when, behind the paneling, they found half a dozen withered boxes, an antique trunk, and several piles of yellowing papers covered with cobwebs."
 - D. "The room's sleek, shiny white walls and clean lines seemed to leave no room for privacy or keeping secrets."

6. Read the following sentence.

"It was not a particularly beautiful house, but it was old and full of character."

What does the author mean by the phrase, "full of character?"

- A. needing attention
 - B. bursting with life
 - C. requiring many repairs
 - D. containing charm and personality
7. Read the following sentence.
- "Mr. Hardaway **inspected** it and decided to check out what was behind the wall."
- Based on the root "spec," meaning "to look," what does the word **inspected** mean?
- A. to look inside the room
 - B. to closely examine
 - C. to envision
 - D. to glance quickly
8. How does the idiom "**causing chills to run up her spine**" impact the meaning of the passage?
- A. It shows how Elise became cold.
 - B. It shows how Elise felt nervous about what was behind the wall.
 - C. It shows how Elise was surprised to find an opening.
 - D. It shows how Elise was scared about getting in trouble for finding the opening.

9. "Withered," "antique," and "yellowing" are adjectives used to describe the items found behind the paneling of the wall. What does the relationship between the words show the reader about the items?
- A. It shows how the items could be considered trash.
 - B. It shows that the items have the potential to be valuable.
 - C. It shows that the items were extremely old.
 - D. It shows the items were dusty.
10. Choose the best way to write the two sentences below as a compound sentence.
- "The other Hardaways talked about what they found. They weren't sure what to do."
- A. Because they weren't sure what to do, the other Hardaways talked about what they found.
 - B. The other Hardaways talked about what they found, yet they weren't sure what to do.
 - C. The other Hardaways talked about what they found, they weren't sure what to do.
 - D. The other Hardaways talked about what they found and they weren't sure what to do.
11. Which sentence, if added to the dialogue below, correctly uses pronouns?
- "This is *our* house now," asserted Mr. Hardaway as he marched back into the room.
- A. "She should have full access to these items; what was theirs is ours."
 - B. "We should have full access to these items; what was there's is ours."
 - C. "They should have full access to these items; what was their's is ours."
 - D. "We should have full access to these items; what was theirs is ours."
12. A possible theme for this story could be that family history and traditions should be valued. Which of the following paragraphs supports the theme?
- A. Paragraph 5
 - B. Paragraph 8
 - C. Paragraph 11
 - D. Paragraph 9

13. Which transition word would best clarify the relationship between paragraphs 10 and 11?
- A. In conclusion, the Hardaways donated the uniforms to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and gave the clothing to an antique shop.
 - B. Eventually, the Hardaways donated the uniforms to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and gave the clothing to an antique shop.
 - C. In addition, the Hardaways donated the uniforms to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and gave the clothing to an antique shop.
 - D. For instance, the Hardaways donated the uniforms to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post and gave the clothing to an antique shop.

Read the article. Then answer questions 14 - 21.

It All Started With the Frying Pan



Turn It Up

Guitarists needed to find a way to increase the volume of their guitars so they could perform in larger concert settings and still be heard. As a result, the first electric guitar was invented in the 1920s. Dance music was very popular, and most guitarists were using metal guitars. Guitar makers and inventors had been experimenting for quite some time with ways to electrify these metal guitars to make them as loud as possible. Country and jazz musicians were among the first to use the louder electrified guitars.

The “Frying Pan”

The first electric guitar was a *lap steel* guitar called the “Frying Pan.” It got this name because it looked like a frying pan with a long handle. It was made out of metal and had steel strings. Most guitar strings at the time were made of nylon. Guitar players would hold the “Frying Pan” in their lap and place a small steel pipe around one of their fingers. This pipe was called a *slide*. The guitarist would pick the strings with one hand and move the slide across the strings to play chords and notes. Sometimes, guitar players would use the broken neck of a bottle for a slide.

The “Log”

The lap steel guitar is used in almost every kind of music today, but it is most popular among country music players. Around 1940, a man named Les Paul invented another kind of guitar with an unusual name. Paul used a solid piece of wood instead of metal. He called his guitar the “Log.” Paul used a strap to hang the “Log” around his neck, like a regular guitar. The Gibson Guitar Company used Les Paul’s solid-wood design to create a line of guitars called the *Les Paul*. These guitars are still very popular today.

Electric Guitars Are Here to Stay

Many people felt that electric guitars were just too loud. They thought that these instruments did not have an “authentic musical sound.” But after rock and roll became popular in the 1950s, many of these critics changed their tune. Just about every rock and roll band used electric guitars. In fact, the electric guitar has become the ultimate symbol for rock and roll music.

Electric guitars are heard in all types of modern music. Rock and roll, country, blues, jazz, and even orchestral styles of music use electric guitars. There are also many different kinds of electric guitars with different sounds and characteristics all their own. There is even a guitar called the *Flying V*! Some guitars can be connected to computers to create sounds similar to those of other instruments. Electric guitars are a very important part of the music scene today. And just think . . . it all started with the “Frying Pan”!



14. Which of the following sentences, if added to the article, would maintain the style and tone for the intended audience of 6th grade students?
- A. The inventors had to create the amplification systems and guitars to magnify the sound for audiences to be able to hear from a significant distance from the original source.
 - B. The inventors had to, like, make the amplifiers and guitars so they could make good sounds and stuff.
 - C. The inventors had to create amplifiers and guitars to create a louder sound that could be heard from far away.
 - D. The inventors had to create things like amplifiers and guitars to make loud noises.
15. How does the author organize the ideas in this article?
- A. The author gives relevant details to describe how the first guitar, the "Frying Pan," came to be.
 - B. The author gives relevant details in chronological order describing how the electric guitar came to be.
 - C. The author compares "The Frying Pan" and "The Log."
 - D. The author describes causes and effects of inventing the electric guitar.

16. What is the correct way to combine these two sentences to make them more fluent?
- "The first electric guitar was a lap steel guitar called the 'Frying Pan.' It got this name because it looked like a frying pan with a long handle."
- A. The first electric guitar was a lap steel guitar called the "Frying Pan," it got its name because it looked like a frying pan with a long handle.
 - B. The first electric guitar was a lap steel guitar called the "Frying Pan" and it got its name because it looked like a frying pan with a long handle.
 - C. The first electric guitar was a lap steel guitar called the "Frying Pan." It got its name; because it looked like a frying pan with a long handle.
 - D. The first electric guitar, a lap guitar called "The Frying Pan," got its name because it looked like a frying pan with a long handle.
17. How does the central idea of the section "Electric Guitars Are Here to Stay" contribute to the development of the article?
- A. It shows people felt that the electric guitar was too loud.
 - B. It shows how there are many kinds of electric guitars with different sounds that can be heard in all types of music.
 - C. It shows how rock and roll was completely changed due to the electric guitar.
 - D. The critics were wrong that rock and roll did not have an "authentic musical sound."
18. In which section of the article would this sentence best be added to develop the topic?
- Joseph Kekuku is credited with inventing the lap steel guitar.
- A. "Turn It Up"
 - B. "The 'Frying Pan'"
 - C. "The 'Log'"
 - D. "Electric Guitars Are Here to Stay"
19. Which sentence best introduces the topic of the "Turn It Up" section of the article?
- A. The first electric guitar was metal.
 - B. The "Frying Pan" was the first electric guitar.
 - C. The electric guitar was invented to make music louder.
 - D. The electric guitar was first used in country and jazz.

20. How does the author of the article best convey the importance of the electric guitar to music?
- A. The author explains why the electric guitar was invented.
 - B. The author states that many rock and roll bands use electric guitars.
 - C. The author names the first electric guitar the "frying pan."
 - D. The author informs the reader that most styles of music today use electric guitars.

21. "But after rock and roll became popular in the 1950s, many of these critics **changed their tune.**"

In this sentence, what does the phrase, "changed their tune" mean?

- A. It is a metaphor comparing rock and roll music with country music.
- B. It is personification showing the guitar's ability to tune itself.
- C. It is an idiom meaning the critics changed their opinion.
- D. It is hyperbole used to show that the critics were exaggerating.