



**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
2012**

**Grade 6  
Reading**

# Reading

He will land the job he wants if he believes in his abilities.

- 1 What does the word land mean as it is used in the box?
- A. to come down from a height
  - B. to obtain something
  - C. to end up in an undesirable place
  - D. to appear unexpectedly

Use the definitions below to answer the question.

**reflect** v **1.** to bend back **2.** to think **3.** to show  
**4.** to pass judgment

- 2 Which is the **best** definition of the word reflect as it is used in this sentence?

She wanted her work to reflect that she was a serious student.

- A. definition 1
- B. definition 2
- C. definition 3
- D. definition 4

Read this article about the unusual talents of an octopus. Then answer the questions that follow.

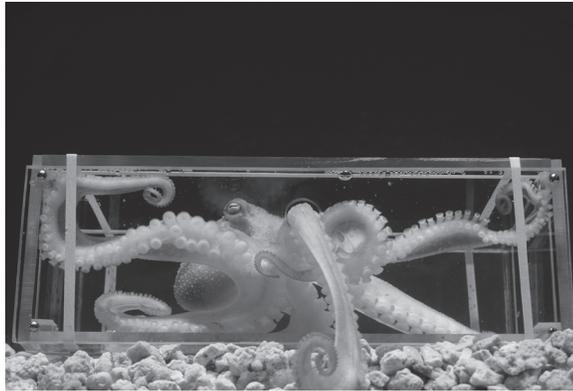
## Escape Artist

What has eight arms, two eyes, and a beak? You guessed it. The octopus. It doesn't have a nose, ears, or fingers, but each arm is covered with a double row of white suction cups called *suckers*. It uses these suckers to explore its world. Each sucker moves by itself like the way we wiggle our toes or fingers. And a sucker not only grips objects, it tastes them. An octopus has a beak like a bird, and a tongue—called a *radula*—that's covered with razor-sharp teeth. These teeth are able to cut through crab and snail shells like a buzzsaw. An octopus will often carry a crab back to its den for dinner. Then, after it's finished eating, the octopus will deposit the shells just outside its den. Very tidy!

The octopus is the great shape-shifter of the sea. It can make itself big and wide like an umbrella, or long and thin like a piece of rope. It can squeeze through cracks under a rock or flatten itself against the walls of a cave. The octopus is also a master of disguise. Its skin can change color instantly, acting as a camouflage to protect it from sharks and other predators.

When it comes to brains, the octopus goes to the head of the class. It is the smartest of all invertebrates. It can find its way through a maze, or figure out how to unscrew the lid of a jar and remove the tasty fish that's inside. The octopus is a very curious creature, and can actually die of boredom if kept in a tank with no world to explore and nothing to entertain it.

- 4 It can be pretty sneaky, too. Scientists at an aquarium were baffled by a mysterious disappearing act. Every day they'd place new fish in a tank, but when they returned in the morning, the fish would be gone. Finally they set up a video camera to see who was stealing the fish. They watched in amazement as an octopus in a tank across the room waited for the museum to close, then squeezed its way out of its tank, slid across the floor, slipped into the fish tank, and ate all the fish. Then it crawled back into its own tank and took a nap!



*Caught in the act! This octopus is sneaking out of its tank through a tiny crack.*

3 How are the *suckers* and the *radula* of an octopus similar?

- A. Both are colorful.
- B. Both are used for eating.
- C. Both are parts of the arm.
- D. Both are long and thin.

4 The picture and caption show how an octopus

- A. disguises its body.
- B. becomes a shape-shifter.
- C. cleans its tank.
- D. eats different types of food.

5 Which sentence from the article is an **opinion**?

- A. “An octopus will often carry a crab back to its den for dinner.”
- B. “It can find its way through a maze.”
- C. “It can be pretty sneaky, too.”
- D. “Finally they set up a video camera to see who was stealing the fish.”

6 In paragraph 4, the word baffled means

- A. confused.
- B. uncaring.
- C. worried.
- D. disappointed.

7 Explain what the reader learns about what an octopus can do. Use information from the article to support your answer.

Read this story and poem about hard work. Then answer the questions that follow.

## Maushop, the Good Giant

James Bruchac and Joseph Bruchac, Ph.D.

Back when the earth was new, there was a great giant named Maushop. He lived with the Wampanoag, the People of First Light. Maushop loved these human beings and thought of them as his children. He taught them many things and helped them in every way that he could. Before long, though, the people began to rely upon him for everything.

“Maushop,” the people would say, “we are cold.”

So Maushop would go into the forest and pull up dead trees. Then he would carry great armloads of them back to the villages of the people.

“Thank you, Maushop,” the people would say.

“But those trees are so large. It would be hard for us to cut them up into firewood. Can you do that for us?”

So Maushop would break the big trees up into firewood.

“That is better,” the people would say. “But firewood is heavy to carry. Can you bring piles of it to each of our wigwams?”

So Maushop would carry the firewood to each wigwam and stack it in a neat pile by the door.

“Now that we have firewood,” the people would say, “we need something to cook because we are hungry. Can you bring us some food to eat, Maushop?”

Once again, because he loved his Wampanoag people so much, Maushop would help them. He waded into the ocean and caught great fish with his hands. He carried them into the villages and cut them up into meat for the people.

So it went for a long time. Whenever the people needed help, they would call upon Maushop to help them. Because he was a great, strong giant, it was not hard for him, but the people began to rely on him more and more. Whether it was building their wigwams or gathering food and wood, they expected the good giant to do it for them.

Then one day Maushop came into the village and found the people just lying about.

“What are you doing?” Maushop asked them.

“We have decided that it is too difficult to walk from place to place,” they told him. “So we would like you to carry us. Then we will not have to tire ourselves by using our legs.”

Maushop realized then that he had done too much for his Wampanoag people. They had become lazy.

“My friends,” he said, “I am sorry. I have done too many things for you. There is one final lesson I must teach you—to rely upon yourselves.”

## Results and Roses

*Efforts bring roses, laziness nothing.*

The man who wants a garden fair,  
Or small or very big,  
With flowers growing here and there,  
Must bend his back and dig.

5 The things are mighty few on earth  
That wishes can attain,  
Whate'er we want of any worth  
We've got to work to gain.

10 It matters not what goal you seek  
Its secret here reposes:\*  
You've got to dig from week to week  
To get Results or Roses.

—Edgar Guest

\*reposes: rests

8 Why does Maushop **first** begin to help the people?

- A. He has been asked to do so.
- B. He wants to become popular.
- C. He cares a lot about them.
- D. He knows they are young.

9 What will **most likely** happen next in the story?

- A. Maushop will no longer help the people.
- B. Maushop will ask the people for a favor.
- C. The people will be glad Maushop is gone.
- D. The people will find another person to be like Maushop.

10 In line 6 of the poem, the word attain means

- A. spread.
- B. accept.
- C. take.
- D. achieve.

11 Which line from the poem supports the message of the story?

- A. “Must bend his back and dig.”
- B. “The things are mighty few on earth”
- C. “It matters not what goal you seek”
- D. “Its secret here reposes:”

12 Explain Maushop’s problem in the story **and** how the poem suggests a solution. Use details from the story and the poem to support your answer.

# Acknowledgments

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