



NMSBA  
Prep

*English Language Arts*

7

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## 1-D: READING SELECTION

**Directions:** Read the information about “The Mysterious Great Lakes” and answer questions 1 through 9.

### Introduction

*The Great Lakes have the highest number of shipping accidents in the world. They have held this record for over a hundred years. This passage talks about some of the reasons for this large number of shipping accidents.*

## The Mysterious Great Lakes

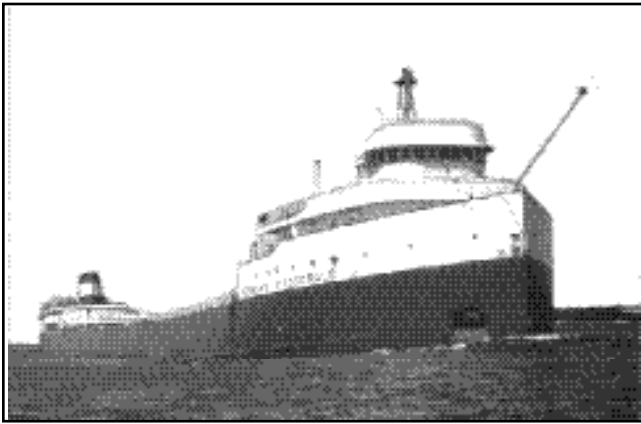
The Great Lakes are the world’s greatest freshwater transportation system. Many ships carry cargo to ports on the five lakes. Some also travel through the St. Lawrence Seaway to ports on the Atlantic. Yet, over the past three hundred years, thousands of these ships have been lost, some with their entire crews.

The explorer Robert de La Salle’s ship, *The Griffin*, was one of the first large ships to sail the Great Lakes. It was built and launched in 1679 by La Salle to transport the furs from the animals his men had trapped in the wilderness. The ship sailed from Green Bay on its maiden voyage. Unfortunately, this was also its last voyage and not even one board from the ship was ever found. *The Griffin* became the first of many mysterious ship disappearances on the lakes.

The number of ships lost on the Great Lakes is staggering. In 1871, 1,167 disasters were recorded. Between 1878 and 1898, 5,999 vessels were wrecked and of this number over a thousand were total losses. Insurance records show that the Great Lakes have more shipping accidents than any other area of similar size in the world. Moreover, it has held this record for over a hundred years.

Collisions, explosions, and fires have caused many of the shipwrecks. However, many have also been caused by the lethal storms that occur suddenly on the Great Lakes. These storms are measured by their wind speed. “Gales” are declared when the winds reach a speed of 39 miles per hour. When the winds reach fifty-five miles per hour, the disturbance is called a “storm.” Storms are the highest rating given to any wind disturbance on the Great Lakes, even if the wind reaches hurricane force. No disturbances on the lakes are classified as “hurricanes.” The fiercest storm was gauged at one hundred and three miles per hour.

November seems to be the worst month for storms and shipwrecks on the lakes. Since 1835, nineteen of the twenty disturbances classified as storms occurred in November. This is the month the sailors do not like to sail on the lakes. Sometimes, these storms rage for days and take numbers of ships with them. The “Great Storm of 1913” raged for over four days and sank twenty ships and damaged dozens more.



The most famous ship sunk during the month of November was the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. Gordon Lightfoot immortalized the sinking of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* through a popular song. This ship suddenly disappeared from the radar during a storm. The wreckage was found four days later with her stern resting on top of the midsection of the ship in five hundred and thirty-five feet of water in Lake Superior. This was the largest freighter ever lost on the Great Lakes, and the reason for her sinking still remains one of the great mysteries of the lakes.

Surviving a Great Lakes storm is still a challenge, even with today's technology. These storms can explode across hundreds of miles of open water with little or no warning. Often, storms on the Great Lakes cause more navigational problems than storms on the oceans. One reason is that the storms often appear very quickly, almost out of nowhere. In some instances, ships caught in these storms barely have time to radio for help before sinking. A second reason is that the waves in the Great Lakes jump and strike quickly. They are not the rolling and swelling types found in ocean storms. On the Great Lakes during a storm it is this jumping and striking action of the waves that results in more pounding of a ship.

The five lakes also react differently to the storms. Most captains like Lake Erie the least because it is the shallowest and has a muddy bottom. This causes problems with navigation in both good and bad weather. Lake Superior, the largest and deepest lake, is liked by most captains. The large size provides room for maneuvering during a storm. However, its rocky coastline and huge waves (because of its great depth) present problems not found in the other lakes.

Captains feel Lake Michigan is the trickiest of the lakes to navigate. The prevailing winds constantly sweep across it and cause different currents; they are particularly evident in the Straits of Mackinac. Therefore, it is these currents that make Lake Michigan the most difficult of the lakes for a ship trying to stay on course. Lake Huron has its deadly stretch of water called the "Marysburgh Vortex" that has a long history of bizarre ship losses, some of which defy explanation.

Some people point out that there have been even stranger happenings in the Great Lakes than in the waters off Bermuda. There also have been more ships lost in the Great Lakes than in the Bermuda Triangle. Nevertheless, most people do not think of the Great Lakes in the same way as they do the Bermuda Triangle.

## Summary

The five Great Lakes are a very large freshwater transportation system in the northern part of the United States, between the United States and Canada. For most of the time, ships travel these waters safely but some do experience difficulty and are lost. Yet, the authorities feel that people writing books have caused some of the mystery that surrounds the loss of some ships. Many ships have passed through these lakes during storms and at worst have suffered only minor damage.

1. In paragraph 2, what does “maiden” mean?
  - A a young woman
  - B the first time for something
  - C an unmarried lady
  - D someone who does housework
  
2. Which of these statements is **false**?
  - F Robert de La Salle was an explorer interested in the fur trade.
  - G *The Griffin* was the first large ship to sail the Great Lakes.
  - H Robert de La Salle built *The Griffin* to carry cargo on the Great Lakes.
  - J *The Griffin* never completed its first voyage.
  
3. What is unusual about the Great Lakes?
  - A Gales are storms with winds between 39 and 55 miles per hour.
  - B Winds never reach hurricane force.
  - C Storms are never called “hurricanes.”
  - D The term, “storm,” indicates winds greater than 55 miles per hour.
  
4. Why do Great Lakes’ sailors dread sailing in November?
  - F They are sure to be caught in storms lasting several days.
  - G They don’t like the cold weather.
  - H The *Edmund Fitzgerald* was sunk in November.
  - J The worst storms seem to occur then.
  
5. Lake Erie poses a navigational problem because of
  - A its depth and lake bottom.
  - B its depth and rocky coastline.
  - C its wind-driven currents.
  - D its area known as a “vortex.”
  
6. Why might it be difficult and expensive to insure boats on these lakes?
  - F There are poor crews sailing the ships.
  - G So many ships sail on the lakes.
  - H There are many mysterious disappearances.
  - J So many shipping accidents occur there.
  
7. Which statement **best** describes the Great Lakes?
  - A The same skills are needed to sail the five lakes.
  - B Navigating each of the lakes is quite different.
  - C The Great Lakes are too dangerous for shipping.
  - D Sailing on the Great Lakes is just like sailing on the ocean.
  
8. The author thinks that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ has led to the mystery of  
lost ships. (Fill in the blank.)

9. This passage can **best** be described as

- F information about the dangers posed by the Great Lakes.
- G a narrative about ships sunk on the Great Lakes.
- H a history of the ships sunk on the Great Lakes.
- J a rule book for sailing on the Great Lakes.

## 2-H: EDITING

**Directions:** Read this passage and correct the errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage.

The Walker family was spending a vacation in the far east.

One of the places on they're itinerary was a stop in Manila.

This capital city of the Philippines is on the Island of Luzon, just one of the many islands making up this country.

As part of his U.S. History coarse, Larry had studied about the long involvement of the United States in the Philippines.

He knew that in World War II Americans and Filipinos had fought together against the Japanese. He had even read accounts of the Death March of prisoners capture in the Philippines.

Larry knew that the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay was the sight of the surrender of American forces in May 1942.

Moreover, he had seen films recounting the famous evacuation of General McArthur from there to Australia in which he promised that he would return. The famous picture showing him wading a shore in the Philippines is a classic. A trip by hovercraft to Corregidor was to be a high point of their visit.

As the tour group was to leave for the Philippines, a typhoon was forming. So, almost hour by hour there was a question of whether or not they'd be able to fly to Manila. Finally, the tour guide informed them that they would be leaving on schedule.

However, when they arrived in Manila, they saw what damage the typhoon had caused. In the center of the city mobile units were inoculating people against possible disease from contaminated drinking water. The city was surviving from a natural disaster, but not really ready for tourists.



## 3-D: READING SELECTION

**Directions:** Read the story and answer questions 1 through 12.

### Introduction

*This passage is about friendship and prejudice.*

## You Never Can Tell

Joella was very disturbed as she left soccer practice and was at a loss to explain the unusual behavior of two of her teammates. She, Marcy, and Trisha always walked home together from practices every day, except today.

Coach Daniels called to Joella and Vanessa as they came off the field at the end of practice. He had a slight smile on his face, so they knew it didn't mean a lecture admonishing them about "sloppy play" or "poor technique" or "uninspired execution." No, what he had to say was something quite different and unexpected.

"I've been watching the way you two play together. You have really improved significantly in your ball handling. You saw who had the best chance to make a shot on goal and immediately got the ball to her. That's demonstrating real teamwork."

Vanessa and Joella were astonished and couldn't help breaking out in ear-to-ear silly grins. When the coach turned away, they gave each other "high fives." They could hardly contain themselves. Their coach seldom complimented anyone on her playing. They were ecstatic.

When Joella turned to join Marcy and Trisha to walk home, they were already leaving the field. Joella called to them, "Hey, wait up! I have to get my stuff. It'll only take me a minute."

However, Trisha and Marcy kept right on walking. "Maybe they didn't hear me," Joella reasoned. So, she called out again only louder this time, "Marc, Trish, wait for me! I'm coming as fast as I can."

Marcy and Trisha never turned around. In fact, Joella thought it looked as if they were walking even faster. She was about to run after them to try to catch up, but after a few steps she stopped. Joella couldn't understand why her two friends had left without her.

As she walked home alone, Joella kept shaking her head and muttering to herself under her breath. "I can't believe that Marcy and Trisha did that. We've always walked home together." Before she had more time to contemplate her friends' weird behavior, she had arrived at her home and was trudging up the steps, dragging her gym bag.

"Oh, Joella, you're home. Have I got a treat for you!" Gran Jo exclaims, opening her arms to give Joella a hug. "What's this?" she remarks holding her granddaughter by the shoulders and stepping back to evaluate Joella's appearance. "You look like you need a 'Super Before Dinner

Gran Jo Special.’ Come into the kitchen. I’ve made a new recipe you just have to try and let me know if it’s a keeper.”

Mr. Wilson’s mother was visiting for a few weeks and Joella was delighted. “Gran Jo,” as Joella called her, was a remarkable woman. They shared so many things in common including their name. When Joella was just learning to talk she couldn’t say “Grandma Joella.” It came out sounding like “Gran Jo,” and she has been Gran Jo ever since.

Gran Jo was a superb cook and a wonderful baker. So, everything she made was outstanding. However, she pretended that she would only keep recipes that Joella pronounced “de-li-cious!” Today, she had made a pan of s’mores with lots of chocolate chips, marshmallows, and graham cracker crumbs. They were even better than those made over a campfire. Nothing falls off the stick into the fire, and there’s plenty for seconds or even thirds, with more for later on.

Joella frowned and licked her lips before speaking. “Gran Jo, I’m afraid you will have to make another batch before I can fairly evaluate this recipe,” she said with a mischievous giggle.

“Now that that’s settled, tell me about your day,” Gran Jo replied.

Joella told her about classes, the soccer practice, and Marcy and Trisha’s strange behavior. Gran Jo said it was probably nothing and it would all get straightened out shortly.

The next day Joella had the opportunity to ask her two friends about what had happened the previous day. They seemed reluctant to discuss it. Then finally Trish blurted out that her folks didn’t want her associating with people like Vanessa. Joella was shocked when Marcy added, “She’s not our kind.” Joella was so stunned that she was speechless.

For the balance of the day and all through practice Joella kept recalling her friends’ remarks. When she got home, Grandmother instantly recognized that her granddaughter seemed deeply troubled. Gradually as they talked while sitting at the kitchen table, Joella told her grandmother about the incident with her friends.

“Hmm,” grandmother responded, “it reminds me of something that happened to me once.” With that she proceeded to tell Joella of a similar experience.

“When I was in college there were three sororities—one for those of a particular religion, one for whites only, and one for anyone who cared to join. I joined the latter. It wasn’t that I especially wanted some people to join; it was just that I didn’t like telling people they weren’t eligible to join.”

“One night, we held a sorority meeting at my best friend’s home. I was staying overnight and in the morning I realized that something was wrong. My friend’s parents couldn’t hide their anger. I wondered if I had offended them somehow. Later, as we drove back to college, I learned that they were incensed that one of the sorority sisters, who happened to be a minority person, was in their home.

“It seemed incredulous. How could well-educated people harbor such prejudice? I asked my friend what she intended to do, and she replied, ‘Nothing. I can’t change my parents’ attitudes. I love them but I don’t have to be bound by their prejudices.’”

“So, you see Joella, you don’t have to be bound by the prejudices of others in choosing your friends.”

Joella got up and came around the table and gave her grandmother a hug and a kiss on the cheek. With that, the telephone rang and Joella went to answer it.

“Hello. Yes. That’s wonderful. I’m thrilled. Thanks, Coach, I’ll be there. Bye.” As Joella turned to face her grandmother, her face lighted up in a glorious smile. “Coach has called a special practice for Saturday. It seems that Vanessa and I will be trying out for a traveling soccer team.” Then, she added with an impish grin, “And so will Trish and Marcy. Maybe if we all make the team they might change their attitude toward Vanessa. What do you think?”

“Don’t be too disappointed if it doesn’t happen,” Gran Jo replied, “but then again you never can tell about people!”

1. Where did most of the story take place?

- A in the Wilsons’ kitchen
- B on the soccer field
- C walking home from soccer practice
- D at school

2. What **best** describes the soccer coach?

- F mean, harshly critical
- G analytical, unlikely to praise
- H stubborn, a tyrant
- J friendly, complimentary

3. What happened just before Joella left soccer practice to go home?

- A Joella called to her friends to wait for her.
- B Joella saw her two friends walking home.
- C The coach called to Vanessa and Joella.
- D She and Vanessa gave each other “high fives.”

4. What was Joella feeling when she arrived home?

- F angry and pouting
- G confused and upset
- H delighted and talkative
- J tired and grouchy

5. Joella’s grandmother didn’t immediately ask her what was bothering her because

- A she didn’t think it was something of great importance.
- B she wanted to know if Joella liked her special treat.
- C she knew Joella needed time to unwind before they talked. ‘
- D she hadn’t noticed that Joella was upset.

6. The “Super Before Dinner Gran Jo Special” was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



