**PART 1:**

**Directions:** Read the following passage and answer the multiple choice questions after each passage. Circle the best suggested answer to each question.

Early in her marriage, as Abigail Smith Adams began to experience the long separations

from her husband, John, that would ultimately shadow and shape their marriage, letter

writing became a way of life for her. Her bursting heart often found vent at her pen.

Indeed, Abigail lives in history because of the letters she wrote to her family and

friends, and we are the richer for them. More than two thousand letters survive today as a

written legacy to us because her husband ignored her plea to burn them. John’s reply to her

was: “The Conclusion of your Letter makes my Heart throb more than a cannonade would.

You bid me burn your Letters. But I must forget you first.”

In fact, recognizing the potential importance of their letters, John ultimately asked

Abigail to “put them up safe and preserve them. They may exhibit to our posterity a kind of

picture of the manners, opinions, and principles of these times of perplexity, danger, and

distress.”

They do just that! And more. For me, personally, these past five years that I have spent

reading and re-reading them have been an inspiration. They have taken me on a journey

back in time and allowed me the privilege every biographer yearns for: a glimpse into the

heart and mind, and even the soul, of Abigail Adams.

They were extraordinary letters that recorded an extraordinary life — one that not only

gave impetus to a husband and son to become presidents of the United States but opened

wide a window on a crucial period in history. Her letters allow us to witness, through her

eyes, the birth of our nation, and to come to know the people who played a vital role in it.

It is Abigail’s voice in those letters that I hoped to capture for my readers. And it is those

letters that became the vehicle by which I could take my readers on a journey back in time.

For we cannot really know Abigail Adams unless we know what it was like to live in the

eighteenth century. …

In my persistent search for what the biographer calls truth, beyond the necessary

reading and hard labor that go into writing a life, I have had the joy and excitement of

myriad unexpected happenings. All have left their mark on me. In the case of Abigail

Adams, the more details I uncovered in my quest for her, the more I found myself

becoming Abigail Adams.

I was with her in Boston on a cold, clear night in March of 1770, as she coped with two

small children while the explosion that came to be known as the Boston Massacre was

taking place outside her window. I felt her terror as Massachusetts was plunged into the

fierce tumult of war, and every alarm sent minutemen marching past her door, hungry,

thirsty, looking for a place to rest.

I listened as she taught John Quincy how to read and write, and subtly began to

inculcate in him a sense of duty to his father and to his country. Years later, still concerned

about her children’s education, Abigail instructed their father: “You will not teach them

what to think, but how to think, and they will know how to act.”

I sat with her on lonely nights when, in the silence of the cold, dark house, using her

pen as her emotional outlet, she wrote letters to her husband pouring out her fears as well

as her passionate love for him.

As she vividly described the devastating situation in Massachusetts to her husband in

Philadelphia, she brought the reality of war home to him. When some members of

Congress continued to press for conciliation with Great Britain, Abigail’s letters echoed in

John’s mind and he pressed for [gun]powder.

In her own way, Abigail Adams may have changed the course of history.

As she reached beyond the kitchen and the nursery to explore the outside world, she

worried about the lack of education for women: “If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen and

Philosophers, we must have learned women,” she warned.

Reflecting on the importance of her position as a woman and on her own growing independence, she wrote the letter to John that has echoed down through the centuries, and

marks, in a sense, the beginning of change in the status of women:

“In the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire

you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your

ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all

Men would be tyrants if they could.” She recognized the possibilities as well as the limits of

her position as a woman in a man’s world.

When Abigail died, her daughter-in-law Louisa, John Quincy’s wife, described her as

“the guiding planet around which all revolved, performing their separate duties only by the

impulse of her magnetic power.” That magnetic power still pulls me. …

— excerpted from “Abigail Adams: Witness to a Revolution”

*The Horn Book Magazine,* January/February 1996

1. As stated by the speaker, letter writing presented Abigail Adams with

(1) an unexpected friendship

(2) a trivial pastime

(3) an emotional release

(4) a displeasing chore

2. For the speaker, the “journey” through Abigail Adams’ many letters proved to be

(1) revealing (3) humorous

(2) sorrowful (4) tedious

3. Which issue of world concern may have been influenced by Abigail Adams’ letters?

(1) medical policies (3) land expansion

(2) free trade (4) military actions

4. By stating that Abigail Adams “reached beyond the kitchen and the nursery,” the speaker suggests that Abigail

(1) suffered from boredom

(2) broke with tradition

(3) sought new friends

(4) traveled the country

5. Abigail Adams advised her husband to create laws that would

(1) protect women (3) enforce treaties

(2) promote commerce (4) supply troops

6. According to the account, the comparison of Abigail Adams to a “guiding planet around which all revolved” suggests her ability to

(1) isolate individuals

(2) encourage conformity

(3) initiate action

(4) criticize others

7. In recognizing that she was a “woman in a man’s world,” Abigail Adams reveals her

(1) desire for fame (3) sense of humor

(2) financial ability (4) political awareness

8. The speaker’s tone in the account can be described as

(1) harsh (3) sarcastic

(2) respectful (4) objective

**Part 2**

**Directions** (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer, using a No. 2 pencil, on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

**Reading Comprehension Passage A**

…It was late in December, the last busy days of the year. But the seven or eight boys

on the windy beach were as lighthearted and free as ever. The eldest was twelve, the

youngest nine. They were gathered beneath a dune in lively discussion. Some were

standing. Others sat. One rested his chin in his hands, elbows dug deep in the sand. As they

talked, the sun went down in the west.

Their talking now over, the boys galloped off along the water’s edge. From inlet to inlet

each ran as he pleased. The group was quickly dispersed. One by one they retrieved what

the storm had brought two nights before and the ebb tide had left behind: rotted boards, a

chipped bowl, bamboo slivers, chunks of wood, an old ladle with the handle torn off. The

boys heaped them up on a dry patch of sand away from the lapping waves. All that they

gathered was soaking wet. …

The spoils of their hunt they had gathered for burning. With the red flames, wild joy

would be theirs. Running and leaping across, they would prove their courage. And now

from the dunes they gathered dry grass. The eldest stepped forward and touched it with

fire. They stood in a circle and waited to hear the crack of bamboo split by the flames. But

only the grass burned. It caught and died, caught and died. A few puffs of smoke floated

up, nothing more. The wood, the bamboo were untouched. The mirror frame only was

charred here and there. With a weird hiss, steam shot out from the end of the pole. One

after another the boys dropped to the sand and blew at the pile as hard as they could. But

instead of flames, smoke arose, stinging their eyes. Their cheeks were stained with tears. …

Look, look, one boy shouted, the Izu hill fires! If their fires burn, then why shouldn’t

ours? All leaped to their feet, looking out towards the water. Far across the great Bay of

Sagami two fires flickered and trembled, so feeble they might be just will-o’-the-wisps. Now

that harvest is over, the farmers of Izu must be burning the chaff of their fields in the hills.

Surely these are the fires that bring tears to the eyes of winter travellers. Their distant

beams tell only of the long, dark road ahead.

The boys danced wildly and clapped and sang, The hills are burning, the hills are

burning. Their innocent voices rang through the dusk, down the long, lonely beach. The

whispering of the waves blended with their voices. The waves rushed in from the southern

tip of the inlet in foaming white lines. The tide was beginning to rise. …

Still vexed by their failure, the eldest boy looked back at the pile as he ran. One more

time he looked back from the top of the dune before running down the far side. It has

caught, he shouted, Our fire has caught, when he saw the flames on the beach. The others,

amazed, climbed back to the top. They stood in a row and looked down.

It was true. The stubborn bits of wood, fanned by the wind, had caught fire. Smoke

billowed up and red tongues of flame shot out, disappeared and shot out again. The sharp

crack of bamboo joints splitting in the fire, the shower of sparks with each report[[1]](#footnote-1). Indeed,

the fire had caught. But the boys stood their ground, clapped and shouted with joy, then

turned and raced down the hill for home.

Now the ocean was dark and from the beach, too, the sun was gone. All that was left

was the winter night’s loneliness. And on the desolate beach the fire burned, alone,

untended. …

— Kunikida Doppo

Excerpted from “The Bonfire”

*Monumenta Nipponica: Studies in Japanese Culture,* 1970

The Voyagers’ Press

9. The word “But” (line 1) emphasizes the contrast between

(1) season and activity (3) calmness and anger

(2) age and experience (4) bravery and fear

10. The actions of the boys in lines 6 and 7 suggest a mood of

(1) fear (3) sadness

(2) excitement (4) peacefulness

11. In line 12, “The spoils of their hunt” refers to

(1) large clams (3) horseshoe crabs

(2) colorful rocks (4) beach debris

12. The repetition used in line 16 emphasizes the

(1) sand’s power (3) boys’ hopes

(2) wind’s speed (4) ocean’s beauty

13. In line 31, “vexed” most nearly means

(1) scared (3) embarrassed

(2) threatened (4) frustrated

14. The purpose of lines 40 through 42 is to

(1) personify the Sun (3) characterize the narrator

(2) describe the setting (4) demonstrate the action

**Part 3**

**Directions:** Read the passages on the following pages (an excerpt from an essay and a poem) about work. You

may use the margins to take notes as you read. Answer the multiple-choice questions on the answer sheet

provided for you. Then write your response for question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on

page 2 of your essay booklet.

**Passage I**

…My house occupies an average-sized lot in the old courthouse town where I grew up,

and where I returned to raise my own children, but it’s on a corner, and in winter that makes

all the difference. The sidewalk stretches 50 feet across the front of the house, a reasonable

assignment for one man and a shovel. But then it turns and unspools for 160 feet along the

side of the house, a distance that seems to lengthen as the snow deepens.

If I lived in an isolated corner of town, my sidewalk might not beckon me so

insistently each snowfall. If I were the only one who needed it to get somewhere, maybe I

could let the snow rest undisturbed on it for a while, and admire, at least briefly, the fresh

sheet of white billowing out to the curb. But four doors down is the high school, and around

the corner in the other direction is the elementary school. A crossing guard stands out front

in the morning. I have obligations.

I first learned about the obligations imposed by snow from my grandfather, long before

I had a sidewalk of my own. My grandparents lived in the house behind ours when I was a

boy, and they, like us, had the requisite 50 feet of sidewalk to care for. But my grandfather

worked as the custodian at the savings and loan a few doors away, on a busy stretch of Main

Street. It was a corner lot, too, maybe twice as wide and deep as my own; its sidewalk felt

miles long when I used to help him clear it.

Before they moved into town, my grandparents had lived nearby on a small farm, which

my grandmother never missed and my grandfather never quite got over. She had muscled

the farm along while he worked at a factory in town, and she was glad to leave the

butchering of chickens behind. But he kept planting fields in his head, and he cultivated his

small new patch of land as if it were his sustenance. The white picket fence around his lush

backyard garden could barely contain his bountiful crops. He died 25 years ago, but people

in town still stop me to talk about his tomatoes. …

The farms that once circled my town are all but gone now, including my grandparents’,

and in many of the housing developments that replaced them there are no sidewalks at all.

Nobody travels by foot anywhere, and nobody is responsible for the safe winter passage of

the neighbors. Friends of mine who live out there have a different, narrower obligation

when it snows: to shovel their driveways, so their cars can reach the roads.

But children would be walking past my house to school in the morning, and it was my

job to make the way clear before they arrived. The snow was feathery, just a couple of

inches—nothing like the blizzard that took almost a full day to dig through—and when I

was done, I stood leaning on my shovel for a moment, looking with satisfaction down the

long path that stretched to the corner. I can’t grow tomatoes anything like my grandfather’s,

but my shoveling will suffice. I had cleared the way, as he always had, for whoever might

follow.

In the morning, news came of a delayed opening for school: two hours. It was a

welcome reprieve, because more snow had fallen through the night. I went out and

shoveled again. Later I got up from my desk to watch through the window as the morning traffic

commenced along my sidewalk, where nothing stopped the children—or anyone

else—from wherever they needed to go.

— Kevin Coyne

excerpted from “Clearing Paths to the Past”

from *The New York Times*, February 15, 2009

**Passage II**

**To be of use**

The people I love the best

jump into work head first

without dallying in the shallows

and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.

They seem to become natives of that element,

the black sleek heads of seals

bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,

who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,

who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,

who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge

in the task, who go into the fields to harvest

and work in a row and pass the bags along,

who stand in the line and haul in their places,

who are not parlor generals and field deserters

but move in a common rhythm

when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

— Marge Piercy

from *To Be of Use,* 1973

Doubleday & Company, Inc.

**Passage I** (the essay excerpt) — Questions 21–23refer to Passage I.

21. The author lists the length of his sidewalk in order to

(1) complain about his neighbors

(2) exaggerate his importance

(3) emphasize his efforts

(4) show off his property

22. The author’s feelings about his grandfather can best be described as

(1) indifferent (3) troubled

(2) admiring (4) envious

23 The author’s attitude about shoveling can best be summed up by which statement?

(1) “I have obligations” (line 11)

(2) “its sidewalk felt miles long” (lines 16 and 17)

(3) “nobody is responsible” (line 27)

(4) “It was a welcome reprieve” (lines 37 and 38)

**Passage II** (the poem) — Questions 24–25 refer to Passage II.

24. The narrator uses the phrases “who harness”(line 8), “who pull” (line 9), “who strain” (line 10), and “who do” (line 11) to emphasize the

(1) repetitious nature of labor

(2) rewards of hard work

(3) perils of farm chores

(4) slow pace of rural life

25. As used in the poem, the phrase “parlor generals” (line 16) suggests those who

(1) lead naturally (3) follow carefully

(2) ignore advice (4) avoid participation

**Short-Response Questions**

**Directions** (26–27): Write your response to question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on

page 2 of your essay booklet. Be sure to answer **both** questions.

26 Write a well-developed paragraph in which you use ideas from both passages to establish a controlling idea about work. Develop your controlling idea using specific examples and details from each passage.

27 Choose a specific literary element (e.g., theme, characterization, structure, point of view, etc.) or literary technique (e.g., symbolism, irony, figurative language, etc.) used by **one** of the authors. Using specific details from that passage, in a well-developed paragraph, show how the author uses that element or technique to develop the passage.

1. Report- an explosive noise [↑](#footnote-ref-1)