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Read the passages “Effort” and “The Boy Who Called ‘Next’” and then answer each question.

Passage 1: Effort

by Edgar A. Guest

He brought me his report card from the teacher and he said
He wasn't very proud of it and sadly bowed his head.
He was excellent in reading, but arithmetic, was fair,
And I noticed there were several “unsatisfactorys” there;
5 But one little bit of credit which was given brought me joy—
He was “excellent in effort,” and I fairly hugged the boy.

“Oh, it doesn't make much difference what is written on your card,”
I told that little fellow, “if you're only trying hard.
The ‘very goods’ and ‘excellents’ are fine, I must agree,
10 But the effort you are making means a whole lot more to me;
And the thing that's most important when this card is put aside
Is to know, in spite of failure, that to do your best you've tried.

“Just keep excellent in effort—all the rest will come to you.
There isn't any problem but some day you'll learn to do,
15 And at last, when you grow older, you will come to understand
That by hard and patient toiling men have risen to command.
And some day you will discover when a greater goal's at stake
That better far than brilliance is the effort you will make.”

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Passage 2: The Boy Who Called “Next”

A Saturday in June

- 1 You'll see this kid at every basketball game in every park in every city. You know the type: the girl who is off to the side, bouncing a basketball all alone or the boy watching the older kids tear it up on the court, hoping they'll ask him if he wants to play. This kid may be too young, too small, too inexperienced, or all of the above and is too afraid to call “next” and confidently join in the game.
- 2 When the game is over, this lone kid takes to the court while the others plan the next game—dribbling up a storm, shooting a couple shots, even sinking a few. This kid hopes that someone will notice, but nobody ever does.
- 3 Well, I'm that kid. My name is Eugene, but I'd prefer it if you call me “G” because G sounds like the nickname of a person who would call “next” and stride onto the court with the big-league players. Suede is the best player in the neighborhood, and he has a cool nickname to match. I don't know if a cool nickname will really help, though. Maybe the problem is that I'm just not the kind of player who'll ever get to call “next.” Good but not good enough, fast but not fast enough.
- 4 I know, I know. I should be positive and realistic. The kids on the court are thirteen and fourteen, and I'm only ten. Those other kids are also a foot taller than me and have known each other since kindergarten. Why would they want me to play with them? I wouldn't choose me either.
- 5 I learned a new word in science class this year—*heliotropic*. That's what they call flowers that face the sun and grow tall. I could be heliotropic if someone just shone a little sun on me.
- 6 And then, on the last game before summer break, I feel a tiny ray of light. Suede comes over to me and says, “You take care, kid.”

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A Saturday in September

- 7 Summer is over, I'm back in school after spending my vacation on my grandparents' farm in Virginia, and what a summer it has been! I grew six inches in two months. It's what the doctor calls a growth spurt, but I call it *fantastic*. All summer, all I did between my chores was practice my shots and my moves. The basket is a lot closer than it was before!
- 8 My first Saturday back in town, I head straight for the basketball court in the park, and sure enough, the older kids are at it again. At first, I go into my usual routine—bouncing the ball and watching the game from the sidelines. When it ends, one of the boys, a kid named Marco, packs it in.
- 9 “My parents said I have to be home early today,” he says. “I’ve got to go.” And off he goes. Then my heart leaps when Suede turns to me and yells, “Well, kid, are you going to call ‘next,’ or what?”
- 10 What happened during the first game with the older boys? I can barely remember. I know I passed when I should have, took a few shots when I was clear (and missed them all), but none of that mattered. At the end of the game, Suede came over to me and said, “Not bad, kid. You’ve got potential.” That was all I needed to hear. *Heliotropic* at last!

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Now answer each question. Base your answers on the passages “Effort” and “The Boy Who Called ‘Next.’”

1. Read these lines from Passage 1.

“He brought me his report card from the teacher and he said He wasn’t very proud of it and sadly bowed his head.” (lines 1–2)

Which inference is supported by these lines?

- Ⓐ The boy feels ashamed of his grades.
 - Ⓑ The boy knows the speaker will be angry.
 - Ⓒ The boy believes he could have done better.
 - Ⓓ The boy is disappointed by his grade in reading.
2. What are **two** purposes of the second stanza (lines 7–12) in Passage 1?
- Ⓐ It explains what will happen in the future.
 - Ⓑ It explains what matters most to the speaker.
 - Ⓒ It explains what the speaker has done in the past.
 - Ⓓ It explains how the child feels about the speaker’s words.
 - Ⓔ It explains why the speaker is still pleased with the child.

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3. Read these lines from Passage 1.

“But one little bit of credit which was given brought me joy—
He was ‘excellent in effort,’ and I fairly hugged the boy.” (lines 5–6)

What is the word credit referring to in these lines?

- Ⓐ an apologetic remark from the boy
 - Ⓑ a positive comment from the teacher
 - Ⓒ a small compliment from the speaker
 - Ⓓ an unexpected reward from the school
4. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

In Passage 1, what is the speaker’s point of view on the disappointing report card results?

- Ⓐ They are a stage all people go through.
- Ⓑ They can be a valuable lesson for the future.
- Ⓒ They are a warning to work harder next time.
- Ⓓ They can be a forgettable childhood occurrence.

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Part B

Which lines from the poem support your answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ “He brought me his report card from the teacher and he said
He wasn’t very proud of it and sadly bowed his head.” (lines 1–2)
- Ⓑ ““Oh, it doesn’t make much difference what is written on your card,
I told that little fellow, ‘if you’re only trying hard.’” (lines 7–8)
- Ⓒ “The ‘very goods’ and ‘excellents’ are fine, I must agree,
But the effort you are making means a whole lot more to me;”
(lines 9–10)
- Ⓓ “And at last, when you grow older, you will come to understand
That by hard and patient toiling men have risen to command.”
(lines 15–16)

5. What is a theme of Passage 2?

- Ⓐ Being smart is better than being good at sports.
- Ⓑ A cool nickname can help give you confidence.
- Ⓒ Patience and hard work will eventually pay off.
- Ⓓ Working together is more important than winning.

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6. What is the main difference between the June and September sections of Passage 2?
- (A) In June, Eugene is immature and Suede is rude toward him; in September, Eugene is more mature, and Suede is less rude.
 - (B) In June, Eugene is annoying and Suede ignores him; in September, Eugene is more pleasant and Suede pays more attention to him.
 - (C) In June, Eugene is insecure and Suede barely notices him; in September, Eugene is more confident and Suede encourages him.
 - (D) In June, Eugene is frightened of the older boys and Suede is impatient with him; in September, Eugene is cocky and Suede is kind to him.
7. Read the dictionary entry for the word spurt. Select the one definition that matches the way spurt is used in paragraph 7 of Passage 2.

spurt

- (A) 1 *verb* to gush forth
- (B) 2 *verb* to squirt
- (C) 3 *noun* a sudden gush
- (D) 4 *noun* a sudden burst of activity or development
- (E) 5 *noun* a short period of time
- (F) 6 *noun* a sharp or sudden increase in business

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8. Based on the definition of heliotropic in paragraph 5 of Passage 2, what is the meaning of *helio-*?
- Ⓐ sun
 - Ⓑ summer
 - Ⓒ science
 - Ⓓ realistic
9. What is a difference in the way the speaker or narrator of each passage describes events?
- Ⓐ The speaker of Passage 1 is excited; the narrator of Passage 2 is angry.
 - Ⓑ The speaker of Passage 1 is dishonest; the narrator of Passage 2 is honest.
 - Ⓒ The speaker of Passage 1 is humorous; the narrator of Passage 2 is serious.
 - Ⓓ The speaker of Passage 1 is reassuring; the narrator of Passage 2 is anxious.
10. How are the themes of Passages 1 and 2 similar?
- Ⓐ They both involve young people who go unnoticed.
 - Ⓑ They both involve young people who are trying to figure out why they failed.
 - Ⓒ They both involve young people who ask others to help them solve a problem.
 - Ⓓ They both involve young people who try hard but are not the best at something.

