



Grade 6

Weekly Assessments

Read the passage “The Sacred Salmon” before answering Numbers 1 through 5.

The Sacred Salmon

“Neil, are you ready yet?” his grandmother called. “We’re going to miss the ceremony!”

“I’m just putting my shoes on.” Reluctantly, Neil texted his friend that he had to go. He had tried telling his grandmother that he had lots of homework to do, but she had mentioned that this ceremony included a feast. His grandmother had great powers of persuasion, especially since she knew he was a pushover when it came to food. Besides, he knew that her heritage was Native American, and she really liked all this tradition stuff.

By the time they drove to Riverside Park, the riverbank was crowded with at least 200 people. Many of them were wearing traditional Native American clothing with beads and feathers. In his jeans and tee shirt, Neil was like a kid sitting at the grown-up’s table.

Then an older woman materialized out of the crowd, dressed in beaded clothes and leaning on a cane. Neil could tell that she was in charge by the way she used her cane to direct her helpers. Some of them were covering long tables with white tablecloths, while others set the tables with vases of flowers, picked from the riverbank.

“Her name is Joyce Martinez,” Neil’s grandmother whispered to him, “but we call her Joy. The ceremony you will see today is thousands of years old, but Joy just started this celebration about fifteen years ago. It honors the salmon, who give to us in life and in death.”

Neil looked unsure, even dubious, so his grandmother explained, “We catch and eat salmon, right?” He nodded. “Well, after swimming upstream to lay her eggs, the female salmon heads back to the ocean. On the way, battered and tired, she dies. She provides food for birds, animals, and other fish then, too. In time, the nourishment from the salmon returns to the water and the soil, ready to support more living things. That’s how she gives to us, even in death. The salmon teach us to give back.”

Now Joy was chanting and waving burning grasses over a long table loaded with whole salmon. Then several people stepped forward and utilized special knives to cut the salmon into small slices. They threaded each slice onto a sharpened redwood stake and pushed the other end of the stake into the fire. The heat from the fire rose and quickly cooked the salmon on the stakes.

As Neil watched, helpers pulled up the stakes and gave them to Joy. She sliced off bites of salmon and gave one to everyone, even Neil! "Save the skin and bones from the salmon," his grandmother told him. "We'll give them back to Joy."

Neil wondered about that, but the older woman really did collect bits of skin and bones from everyone. Then she turned to four young men. As drums thumped, they accepted her gift, ran together to the river, and dove in! They left the skin and bones on the river bottom as, on the riverbank, women in Native clothing and beads danced in a circle and chanted.

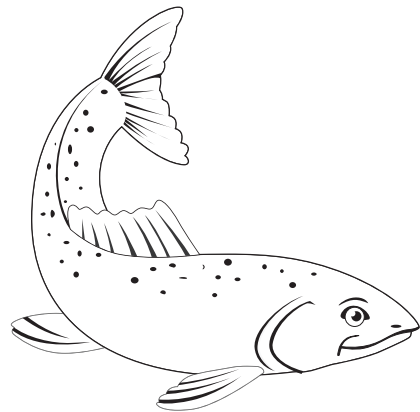
"We bless the female salmon," Joy said, "for her long, dangerous journey up the river to spawn, still nurturing as she dies."

"Since we started celebrating this ceremony again," Neil's grandmother whispered, "the number of salmon in the river has greatly increased. We have more optimism for the future of the salmon now—and hope for the future of our people." Neil could tell that his grandmother thought it was miraculous.

Neil knew his grandmother meant the future of the Takelma people, for they were her ancestors, and his, too. Talking happily, people sat along the tables and started passing bowls and platters of traditional food, including more salmon. As Neil and his grandmother sat, he asked, "Who will be in charge of this ceremony when Joy is gone?"

"Joy wants this ceremony to continue," his grandmother answered, "so she is always looking for helpers. Maybe you can be one of them."

Neil thought for a second before he smiled and told her, "I really want to!"



Now answer Numbers 1 through 5. Base your answers on “The Sacred Salmon.”

- 1** This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: How does Neil **most likely** feel at the beginning of the passage?

- (A)** He is excited about going to the ceremony because there is a feast.
- (B)** He is interested in going to the ceremony but does not understand it.
- (C)** He is unsure about going to the ceremony because he misses his friends.
- (D)** He is unhappy about going to the ceremony but wants to please his grandmother.

Part B: Which sentence from the passage **best** states how Neil feels?

- (A)** “‘Neil, are you ready yet?’ his grandmother called.”
- (B)** “‘We’re going to miss the ceremony!’”
- (C)** “Besides, he knew that her heritage was Native American, and she really liked all this tradition stuff.”
- (D)** “By the time they drove to Riverside Park, the riverbank was crowded with at least 200 people.”

- 2** Read the sentence from the passage.

Then several people stepped forward and utilized special knives to cut the salmon into small slices.

The Greek suffix *-ize* means “to make.” What does the word utilized suggest in the sentence?

- (A)** The people used their knives.
- (B)** The people forgot their knives.
- (C)** The people carried their knives.
- (D)** The people remove their knives.

- 3** How does the third-person point of view help to describe the salmon ceremony? Select **two** choices.

- ☐ (A) It tells why Joy started the ceremony.
- ☐ (B) It tells only how Neil feels about the ceremony.
- ☐ (C) It explains the ceremony from a single viewpoint.
- ☐ (D) It explains what different people do during the ceremony.
- ☐ (E) It shows different ways that the ceremony could be performed.
- ☐ (F) It shows how the ceremony affects both Neil and his grandmother.

- 4** This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: Read the sentence from the passage.

“We have more optimism for the future of the salmon now—and hope for the future of our people.”

The base word of optimism means “best,” and the suffix *-ism* means “state of.” If people have optimism, what do they believe?

- ☐ (A) They can do anything.
- ☐ (B) Things cannot improve.
- ☐ (C) Things will turn out well.
- ☐ (D) They are better than others.

Part B: Which other word has the same suffix as optimism?

- ☐ (A) opinions
- ☐ (B) options
- ☐ (C) favoritism
- ☐ (D) reclaims

- 5** Read the excerpt from the passage. Underline the sentence that **best** shows how Neil’s attitude toward the ceremony changes by the end of the passage.

Neil knew his grandmother meant the future of the Takelma people, for they were her ancestors, and his, too. Talking happily, people sat along the tables and started passing bowls and platters of traditional food, including more salmon. As Neil and his grandmother sat, he asked, “Who will be in charge of this ceremony when Joy is gone?”

“Joy wants this ceremony to continue,” his grandmother answered, “so she is always looking for helpers. Maybe you can be one of them.”

Neil thought for a second before he smiled and told her, “I really want to!”

Read the article “The Rug Maker” before answering Numbers 6 through 10.

The Rug Maker

Grandmother insisted that no one could learn to weave anymore. Every time I pestered her, she answered, “Children are too impatient nowadays and can hardly even sit still. You barely have the patience for needlework or ceramics, which means you will have much less patience for weaving!”

Trying not to seem rebellious, I respectfully disagreed with her. I insisted that I was as patient as a rock—well, maybe a nervous rock.

I had been sitting on Grandmother’s rugs ever since I was a little girl, and I had always admired their beautiful symmetry. Now, I told her, I wanted to make my own rug, and I begged her to set up a loom for me. “But the loom,” she said with conviction in her voice, “is not the starting place. First, you have to learn the weaving songs and chants.”

Songs and chants are the beginning? I did not see what these things had to do with a rug.

Grandmother, of course, could read my mind. “Oh, yes,” she told me, “the sheep who give us wool have a chant, the spindle has a chant, and the loom has a chant. Even the spider has a chant.”

“The spider has a chant?” I repeated doubtfully, picturing a spider crawling on the loom.

She nodded. “The spider taught us how to weave long ago, so we cannot forget him. The more songs we sing, the more valuable your rug will be. Perhaps,” Grandmother added with a smile, “you can weave a rug that symbolizes your journey from a girl to a woman.”

That sounded like a challenge, but I was willing to give it a try!

“Next,” Grandmother said, “we will shear the sheep. It’s almost dinner time, and we need the benefit of sunlight, so we will do the shearing tomorrow, up there on the mountain.”

The mountain was far in the distance, a steep and difficult hike from the arid Navajo desert land where we lived. I furrowed my brow and bit my tongue because I did not want Grandmother to say I was impatient again, but I despised hiking and shearing those smelly old sheep.

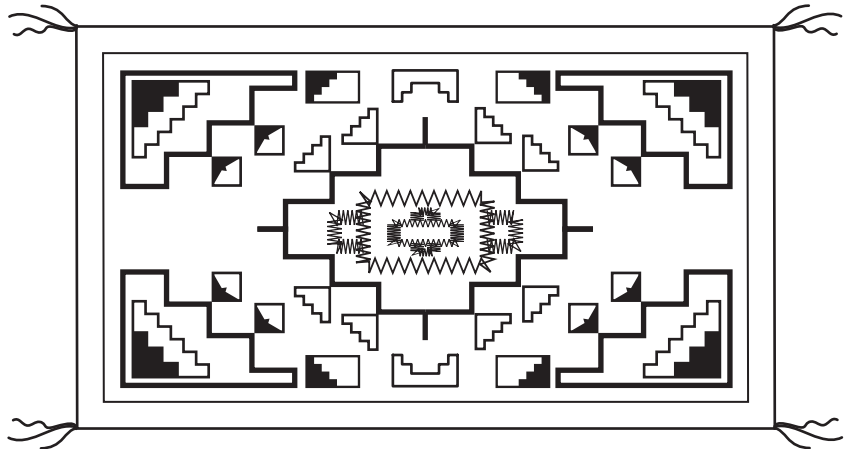
GO ON →

Our hike began the next morning as the sun peeked over the horizon. The rocky trail was more hazardous than I had expected. By sundown, we were tired, dirty, and smelly after wrestling the reluctant sheep, but we had gathered a fluffy pile of woolly fleece. The fleece did not look like anything you could make a rug from, though, and I voiced my opinion.

“Certainly not,” Grandmother sighed, “for you have to straighten and spin the wool by combing it.” She held out a long wooden spindle and, demonstrating her skilled technique, she deftly twisted and stretched the wool as she rotated the spindle, making the yarn even and strong. She chanted as she worked and, after a while, I sang with her, memorizing the words the best I could.

Then Grandmother showed me how to do basic weaving. “The secret,” she whispered as I watched her closely, “is to include a mistake in every rug. It’s a Navajo tradition. Human beings are not perfect, so we make mistakes, like this one,” she said, weaving a strand of wool under two other strands, instead of under one.

Grandmother promised that next, we would string the loom just for me. Before long I would have my first rug. It would be woven the Navajo way, with chants and songs and wool from our own sheep, along with a mistake (or two) because I am only human.



Now answer Numbers 6 through 10. Base your answers on “The Rug Maker.”

- 6** Read the sentence from the passage.

“But the loom,” she said with conviction in her voice, “is not the starting place.

The base word of conviction is *convince*. Why does the narrator’s grandmother speak with conviction?

- (A)** She is being convinced by the narrator.
- (B)** She is convinced she is right.
- (C)** She wants to be convinced.
- (D)** She cannot be convinced.

- 7** This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A: What does the narrator think about weaving?

- (A)** It is difficult but rewarding.
- (B)** It is a mystery she wants to solve.
- (C)** It is beyond her ability to understand.
- (D)** It is a necessary tradition she must follow.

Part B: Which evidence from the passage **best** supports your answer in part A?

- (A)** “That sounded like a challenge, but I was willing to give it a try!”
- (B)** “. . . I despised hiking and shearing those smelly old sheep.”
- (C)** “The fleece did not look like anything you could make a rug from . . .”
- (D)** “Grandmother promised that next, we would string the loom just for me.”

- 8 Read the sentence from the passage.

The rocky trail was more hazardous than I had expected.

The Latin suffix *-ous* can mean “having” or “full of.” What is a correct description of a hazardous hike?

- (A) a hike that is likely to be fun
- (B) a hike that is full of obstacles
- (C) a hike that requires a lot of energy
- (D) a hike that has to do with mountains

- 9 Put the events from the passage in the correct sequence by numbering them from 1 to 6. Write the correct number in front of each event.

_____	Grandmother tells the narrator about the chants.
_____	The narrator and Grandmother begin to weave.
_____	The narrator and Grandmother climb the mountain.
_____	The narrator and Grandmother shear the sheep.
_____	Grandmother spins the wool into yarn.
_____	The narrator learns to include a mistake in her weaving.

Name: _____ Date: _____

10 How would the passage be different if it were written from a third-person point of view? Select **two** options.

- ☐ **A** It would include more characters.
- ☐ **B** It would only include one viewpoint.
- ☐ **C** It would have more details about how to shear sheep.
- ☐ **D** It would have less information about the narrator's feelings.
- ☐ **E** It would have fewer details about how to weave a Navajo rug.
- ☐ **F** It would have more information about Grandmother's feelings.



Name: _____ Date: _____

Now answer Number 11. Base your answer on “The Sacred Salmon” and “The Rug Maker.”

- 11** Compare and contrast the plots of “The Sacred Salmon” and “The Rug Maker.” Which parts in the passages are similar? How do the main characters change as they respond to events in the plot? Support your answer with details from both texts.

[illegible]

Question	Correct Answer	Content Focus	CCSS	Complexity
1A	D	Point of View	RL.6.3	DOK 3
1B	C	Point of View/Text Evidence	RL.6.3/ RL.6.1	DOK 3
2	A	Greek and Latin Suffixes	L.6.4b	DOK 1
3	D, F	Point of View	RL.6.6	DOK 3
4A	C	Greek and Latin Suffixes	L.6.4b	DOK 1
4B	C	Greek and Latin Suffixes	L.6.4b	DOK 1
5	see below	Point of View	RL.6.3	DOK 2
6	B	Greek and Latin Suffixes	L.6.4b	DOK 1
7A	A	Point of View	RL.6.6	DOK 3
7B	A	Point of View/Text Evidence	RL.6.6/ RL.6.1	DOK 3
8	B	Greek and Latin Suffixes	L.6.4b	DOK 1
9	see below	Character, Setting, Plot: Sequence	RL.6.3	DOK 1
10	D, F	Point of View	RL.6.6	DOK 3
11	see below	Writing About Text	W.6.9a	DOK 4
Comprehension 1A, 1B, 3, 5, 7A, 7B, 9, 10			/12	%
Vocabulary 2, 4A, 4B, 6, 8			/8	%
Total Weekly Assessment Score			/20	%

- 5 Students should underline the following sentence:
- Neil thought for a second before he smiled and told her, “I really want to!”
- 9 Students should order the events as follows:
- 1: Grandmother tells the narrator about the chants.
 - 2: The narrator and Grandmother climb the mountain.
 - 3: The narrator and Grandmother shear the sheep.
 - 4: Grandmother spins the wool into yarn.
 - 5: The narrator and Grandmother begin to weave.
 - 6: The narrator learns to include a mistake in her weaving.
- 11 To receive full credit for the response, the following information should be included: In both passages, the plot involves the main characters learning about a Native American tradition from their grandmothers. In “The Sacred Salmon,” Neil attends a salmon ceremony with his grandmother and decides to become a helper for the next ceremony. In “The Rug Maker,” the narrator learns the Navajo way of weaving from her grandmother and gains new respect for this tradition. Both passages stress that people must pass down traditions from generation to generation so that a culture can continue.