



Language Arts: Reading

Free Half-Length Practice Test – FPT8



Language
English

Released
2024

hiset.org

- Get the HiSET® testing experience.
- Answer questions developed by the test maker.
- Find out if you're ready for the actual subtest.

Copyright © 2025 PSI Services LLC. All rights reserved. PSI, the PSI logo and HiSET are registered trademarks of PSI Services LLC.

Language Arts: Reading

Directions

Time – 35 minutes

20 Questions

This is a test of some of the skills involved in understanding what you read. The passages in this test come from a variety of works, both literary and informational. Each passage is followed by a number of questions.

The passages begin with an introduction presenting information that may be helpful as you read the selection. After you have read a passage, go on to the questions that follow. For each question, choose the best answer and mark your choice on the answer sheet. You may refer to a passage as often as necessary.

Work as quickly as you can without becoming careless. Do not spend too much time on any question that is difficult for you to answer. Instead, skip it and return to it later if you have time. Try to answer every question even if you have to guess.

Mark all your answers on the answer sheet. Give only one answer to each question.

If you decide to change one of your answers, be sure to erase the first mark completely.

Be sure that the number of the question you are answering matches the number of the row of answer choices you are marking on your answer sheet. The answer sheet may contain more rows than you need.

The next two passages are related. Questions 1 and 2 refer to the following passage.

The following non-fictional passage gives an account of the mythical city of gold known as El Dorado, with a focus on an Englishman's expedition.

The Quest for El Dorado

Ideas should be treasured, but should all ideas be pursued? What if an idea snowballs into an obsession? El Dorado lured many Europeans who fancied it to be unimaginably rich in gold, silver, and precious stones. With tales of El Dorado's grandeur filling his thoughts, one such explorer was Walter Raleigh, an Elizabethan scholar, statesperson, and courtier. He believed
5 that discovering El Dorado would not only bring him immense riches but also elevate his status in the eyes of Queen Elizabeth and secure his place in history. Little did he know that this pursuit would lead him down a perilous path fraught with hardships, and ultimately, despair.

In February 1595, Raleigh sailed to Guiana in South America with five ships and a hundred
10 adventurers. They used various boats and a native pilot familiar with the coast. Raleigh reached Trinidad, attacked San Joseph, and captured Spanish governor Antonio de Berrio. Berrio provided information about the rumored city of El Dorado and guided Raleigh through the territories he had explored in search of El Dorado in 1592. Raleigh then proceeded up the Orinoco River towards the Guiana highlands.

The voyagers faced numerous obstacles, such as stormy weather, treacherous sandbanks, and
15 the shallow waters of the basin. Even Raleigh's trusted native pilot, once believed to be knowledgeable, struggled to navigate the complex water routes. After enduring four tiring days of oppressive heat, the explorers reached a smoother passage. The crew persevered in their unyielding search for El Dorado, fueled by the hope of uncovering the fabled treasures that had lured them to Guiana. As they sailed deeper into the heart of Guiana, the explorers encountered
20 dense jungles. Raleigh guided his crew to overcome each obstacle that stood in their way.

The crew's unwavering commitment pushed them to journey around 150 miles along the Orinoco and reach the Caroni River's confluence. After a long struggle against the river's current, Raleigh stood before its might and rowed upstream. He sent out his scouts to look for the gold and mines. Ahead stood Mount Roraima, a towering mesa, with its sheer cliffs reaching
25 400 meters. Raleigh was filled with awe and temptation as he gazed upon this magnificent spectacle. Was this El Dorado – a heavenly site! The very essence of the land itself echoed a sense of mystery and allure. Raleigh couldn't help but wonder if the fabled city of gold, El Dorado, was hidden somewhere within the depths of Mount Roraima. The lush vegetation and

unexplored wilderness surrounding the mesa only multiplied his desire to find the untouched
30 paradise.

However, by then, Raleigh's crew had traveled nearly 400 miles inland. The rainy season had begun, so navigation on the Orinoco became terrible. Raleigh had to leave his ships in Trinidad and return to England with nothing but a sense of unfulfillment. Back in England, he was accused of overspending on the expedition and hiding gold in distant lands. Fueled by
35 frustration, Raleigh penned an exaggerated narrative, "The Discovery of Guiana." Yet, the question lingers: where is El Dorado? Is it still concealed in the mists of legend and romance, forever tempting explorers with its alluring treasures?

1 _____

How does paragraph 1 (lines 1-7) link Raleigh's pursuit of El Dorado with the overarching theme of temptation?

- A. It focuses on Queen Elizabeth propelling Raleigh toward the quest for El Dorado.
- B. It highlights that the exploration of El Dorado was based on a risky and complicated plan.
- C. It illustrates an example of a trip in which many Europeans encountered challenges, even before proceeding on the journey.
- D. It draws an analogy between Raleigh's voyage and the idea that allure can lead to decisions with regrettable outcomes.

2 _____

Which of these phrases best describes how Raleigh is portrayed in this passage?

- A. A determined explorer with vaulting ambitions
- B. A competent writer with a persuasive pen
- C. A statesperson with aggressive policies
- D. A shady figure with mysterious goals

Question 3 refers to the following poem, and questions 4 and 5 refer to both the passage “The Quest for El Dorado” and the poem “Eldorado.”

The following poem by Edgar Allen Poe describes a mythical expedition to El Dorado.

Eldorado

5 Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in
shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

10 But he grew old,
This knight so bold,
And o'er his heart a
shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
15 That looked like
Eldorado.

20 And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim
shadow:
“Shadow,” said he,
“Where can it be,
This land of Eldorado?”

25 “Over the mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the valley of the
Shadow,
30 Ride, boldly ride,”
The shade replied,
“If you seek for
Eldorado!”

Public Domain

3 _____

Which of these statements best explains the major source of the knight's gaiety in stanza 1 (lines 1-7) of the poem "Eldorado"?

- A. His belief that Eldorado is within reach, backed by the shadow's encouragement to ride on
- B. His aspirations and the anticipation of finding Eldorado, which made him hopeful
- C. His innate talent for crooning songs, providing him relief during his tedious and long travels
- D. His splendid discovery of the legendary city of gold, Eldorado, which brought him ecstasy

4 _____

Use both "The Quest for El Dorado" and "Eldorado" to answer this question.

What fundamental aspect of human nature do both texts, "The Quest for El Dorado" and "Eldorado," illustrate?

- A. Our desire to chase the unknown is fueled by our wishful thinking about a perfect, wealthy world.
- B. Our perception is shaped by the stories and legends of places of mystery and wonder.
- C. Our imaginary fears and persistent self-doubt prevent us from pursuing our dreams.
- D. Our curiosity to uncover and record the hidden pushes us to explore places.

5 _____

Use both “The Quest for El Dorado” and “Eldorado” to answer this question.

Choose the statement that best reflects how the two texts differ in their depiction of the topic “the quest for El Dorado.”

- A. The passage describes Raleigh’s expedition as a notable, historical venture; however, the poem depicts the knight’s quest as metaphorical wandering.
- B. The passage describes Raleigh’s expedition as a heroic adventure; however, the poem depicts the knight’s quest as a terrifying experience.
- C. The passage presents Raleigh’s expedition as a purposeful exploration; however, the poem depicts the knight’s quest as pointless roaming.
- D. The passage portrays Raleigh’s expedition as a depressing excursion; however, the poem illustrates the knight’s quest as a delightful journey.

Questions 6 through to 10 refer to the following passage.

The following essay, written in 2023, is about trends in global inflation in the early 2020s, and it presents a discussion of whether inflation is temporary or long lasting.

Is Inflation Here to Stay?

It is hardly surprising that inflation is a hot topic today. It is pretty much everywhere. Inflation is defined as the rate of the surge in prices of daily-use items and services over a long period. People experience it while paying bills or buying groceries. A little inflation is healthy for an economy. It increases demand and spurs economic activity. However, hyperinflation creates uncertainty. It erodes purchasing power, destabilizing the economy. War, pandemics, monetary policies, and demand fluctuations trigger hyperinflation. Let us explore the trends in global inflation to see if inflation is here to stay.

For nearly half a century, from 1970-2020, the world experienced an average decline in global inflation. This decline can be ascribed mainly to these three factors:

- i. Technological advancements – Companies are using technology to increase production and reduce costs.
- ii. Demographic changes – Increasing population and age composition affect inflation. Population growth increases demand, and excessive demand creates inflation. Based on a study by Juselius and Takats, an increase in the dependent population – the children and the elderly – is associated with higher inflation. Likewise, an increase in the share of the working-age population is linked to weaker inflation.
- iii. Better policy frameworks – Central banks check inflation through monetary policy. It involves changing interest rates and controlling the money supply.

In the 2020s, global inflation has been triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. These incidents disrupted supplies. The price of commodities rose, and these factors caused a surge in inflation. As per the “World Economic Outlook Update” produced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in July 2023, the global inflation rate rose to 8.7% in 2022. This was the highest level since 1996.

Is the current inflation temporary or permanent? We can look at some forecasts from reliable sources. According to Research Affiliates, an inflation rate of 4% is often temporary, but when it rises to 6-8%, it may last for about 10 years. As per the economic update presented in the IMF report, global inflation may drop from 8.7% in 2022 to 6.8% in 2023 and 5.2% in 2024. Similarly,

central banks say that they will meet their goals of bringing down inflation. Still, inflation will depend on how the three previously mentioned factors unfold in the future.

- 30 Some economists opine that high global inflation is transitory. They reason that this will be over once the pandemic- and/or war-related disruptions are resolved. Others contend that inflation will last for a decade. They argue that inflation may rise again because of various risk factors. Some companies may restrict trade to protect their industries and jobs. The war and trade disputes and other geo-political tensions may continue to disrupt supplies and raise inflation.
- 35 To conclude, global inflation may go up or down depending on how different factors interact and evolve in the future. To keep a healthy global inflation rate, policymakers need to monitor inflation. They also need to adjust their policies to stabilize prices and support growth. Additionally, they must cooperate to address the challenges that could affect global inflation.

6 _____

Which of the following has contributed to the surge in inflation since 2021?

- A. Increased production
- B. Better monetary policies
- C. Increase in youth population
- D. Pandemic- and war-related issues

7 _____

In paragraph 2 (lines 8-18), how does the author develop and refine the idea that inflation is influenced by various factors?

- A. By comparing the effects of inflation and hyperinflation
- B. By citing opinions from central banks and policy makers
- C. By providing definitions and examples of different factors
- D. By assessing various factors using some figures and forecasts

8 _____

Which of these countries' economies is the least likely to suffer?

- A. A country with zero inflation
- B. A country in a war-like situation
- C. A country with inflation above 8%
- D. A country with inflation between 2-3%

9 _____

What is the purpose of paragraph 4 (lines 24-29) in this passage?

- A. To prove that inflation may drop or last longer depending on different factors
- B. To provide evidence for the claim that inflation is permanent
- C. To provide some suggestions for policymakers to deal with inflation
- D. To provide evidence for the claim that inflation is temporary

10 _____

What is the main topic of discussion in paragraph 5 (lines 30-34)?

- A. The reasons behind low global inflation before 2020
- B. The effects of global inflation on people and the economy
- C. The factors that triggered global inflation in the year 2022
- D. The arguments behind the idea that inflation is either transitory or long-lasting

Questions 11 through to 15 refer to the following passage.

The following informational passage is about why students should learn foreign languages at school.

Why Should Students Learn Foreign Languages in School?

In today's increasingly interconnected world, the ability to speak a foreign language is essential. It's a bridge that connects us to others, cultures, and opportunities. To thrive in the global economy, students must learn a foreign language. Proficiency in a foreign language opens doors to lucrative careers, seamless communication with global clients, and a deeper understanding of the world. It sharpens our cognitive skills, ignites creativity, and broadens our horizons. Therefore, learning a foreign language is not only a valuable skill but also a rewarding experience. It enriches our lives, expands our minds, and empowers us to achieve our goals.

People who speak two languages have better thinking abilities. Gaining expertise in a foreign language is a mental activity that strengthens memory, thinking, and problem-solving skills and developing these skills can benefit students in their daily lives. Language acquisition nurtures critical thinking as it requires students to comprehend and interpret linguistic nuances. It also sharpens their analytical and logical reasoning, enabling them to make better decisions.

Language ability is a ticket to a wide range of work prospects in a job market that is becoming more globalized. Foreign language proficiency gives professionals an advantage over others. It allows them to communicate with clients from around the world, close deals with foreign partners, and expertly function in culturally diverse workspaces. The ability to speak directly with clients, colleagues, and partners in their native language can form business relationships. It also leads to the widening of professional horizons globally.

With that said, language is more than a tool for communication. It is also a means of understanding and respecting different cultures. Learning a new language lets the student learn about a country's rich history, centuries-old stories, and customs. This exposure cultivates empathy and cross-cultural understanding. It also enables people to build intercultural relationships with sensitivity and respect. It allows them to connect with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. As they dig into the nuances of a language's syntax and idioms, language learners gain a thorough comprehension of the viewpoint of a new culture.

At the same time, mastering a foreign language can be challenging. Students refrain from pursuing this course of study because of the difficulty of learning a foreign language. Modern teaching methods have made language learning effective by using interactive techniques, such as language camps and applications. These modes of learning are more engaging and educational. Teachers can make studying a foreign language an enjoyable experience via new methods. Students can also learn by watching movies and videos in the language that they are learning. This will make the challenge of learning a foreign language less difficult and easier to achieve, thus allowing students to reap all the benefits that knowing a foreign language provides.

11 _____

According to paragraph 1 (lines 1-7), how can learning a foreign language benefit an individual?

- A. It can help them communicate with clients globally.
- B. It can help them get high-position jobs in other fields.
- C. It can help enhance a person's overall writing skills.
- D. It can help them appreciate different forms of art.

12 _____

The phrase "language acquisition nurtures critical thinking" (lines 10-11) implies that learning a foreign language can

- A. replace the need for analytical reasoning.
- B. make you a proficient linguist quickly.
- C. boost memory and problem-solving skills.
- D. help you appreciate different cultures.

13 _____

What does the word "empathy" (line 22) mean as it is used in the passage?

- A. The ability to feel sorry for someone else's misfortune
- B. The ability to understand another person's feelings
- C. The ability to know what others are thinking
- D. The ability to feel compassion for someone else

14 _____

What point does the writer make about language teaching and learning?

- A. Development in language teaching methods have made language learning less challenging.
- B. Using media resources, such as watching movies, is the best way to learn a language.
- C. Finding teachers who have mastered the language has always been challenging.
- D. Language teachers do not know how to make learning an enjoyable experience.

15 _____

What is the central idea of the entire passage?

- A. Learning a foreign language is not difficult in modern times.
- B. Learning a foreign language benefits a student in numerous ways
- C. Learning foreign languages is more useful than a second language.
- D. Learning a foreign language is not a benefit unless one becomes fluent in it.

Questions 16 through to 20 refer to the following passage.

The following informational article is about out-of-place artifacts and how they are disruptive to conventional historical or geological narratives.

Out-Of-Place Artifacts

5 The 16th century Scientific Revolution catalyzed our understanding of the world around us. Today's technology allows the brightest minds to connect digitally despite the distance. We are gradually finding order in the daily chaos. However, despite our progress, some artifacts have been discovered that baffle us. Out-of-place artifacts (OOPArts) are objects that are discovered in settings that contradict common knowledge.

10 The ocean floor beneath Symi Island, in Greece, cradled one such ancient artifact. In 1901, local sponge divers surfaced with the Antikythera Mechanism, salvaged from a shipwreck. Initially thought to be a lump of rusting metal, it was found to be an analog computer. What a contrast of brilliant innovation against the backdrop of those times! Scientific dating placed its origins around 150-100 BCE. This means the machine is over 2,000 years old. Scientists still can't explain how such complex technology came to exist back then. They believe that it was used to predict the positions of the planets, moon phases, and eclipses using an intricate clockwork mechanism. Clearly, we share a fascination for space with our ancestors.

15 Another unusual object was found in 1934. A couple spotted a rock with a wooden handle sticking out of it. Upon taking it home and cracking it open, they were delighted to find an ancient hammer embedded inside. The rock's age was approximately 500 million years. The hammer's wooden handle was so old it was turning into coal. However, this discovery posed a puzzling question: how could a manmade tool be older than human existence? After all, humans didn't appear until around 300,000 years ago, and the production of iron didn't begin until 1200 BCE.
20 The contradictions in these facts have geologists scratching their heads. An unproven theory suggests that highly soluble minerals present in limestone may have caused rock formation around it. This unique object, the London Hammer, is now on display in a museum.

25 Similarly, the Dorchester Pot was located in a 600-million-year-old stone quarry that was being blasted in 1851. The June 1852 edition of *Scientific American* noted that it was a zinc-silver alloy pot with finely made silver flowers and wreaths. It was strangely embedded in the rock ten feet below the surface. Explanations are yet to be supplied.

30 There have been other supposed OOPArts that were hoaxes, while others were just natural formations. For example, the 2.7-billion-year-old metal cricket balls, grooved spheres mined in South Africa during the 1980s, were identified as natural mineral clumps. Similarly, three rock collectors found a spark plug embedded in a geode. Geodes normally take almost a million years to form. It made waves in the scientific community before it was finally determined that it was a spark plug made in the 1920s. The "geode" turned out to be a more recent chemical concretion formed naturally.

35 Despite such cases, OOPArts serve as reminders that our understanding of reality is still far from complete. The world's mysteries are far from being resolved. They whet our curiosity, disrupt old beliefs, and allow us to explore new possibilities. While many OOPArts may eventually be explained, they ignite the thrill of discovery and the joy of uncovering the unexpected.

16 _____

Which inference is supported by the following sentence: “We are gradually finding order in the daily chaos” (lines 2-3)?

- A. Science is helping us make sense of a chaotic universe.
- B. Human evolution is slowing down due to the chaos in the universe.
- C. Humans are inherently an optimistic species, which helps them survive.
- D. Sixteenth century scientists have done more for our progress than today’s scientists.

17 _____

According to the passage, what can be inferred about Greek civilization due to the discovery of the Antikythera Mechanism?

- A. They were not very technologically advanced compared to other civilizations.
- B. They were far more advanced scientifically than they were initially thought to be.
- C. They were the only civilization interested in astronomy in those times.
- D. They were expert clockmakers with an eye for detail.

18 _____

What does the word “disrupt” (line 36) mean as it is used in passage?

- A. To break out suddenly and dramatically
- B. To cause disorder or confusion in a system
- C. To create order and stability
- D. To improve a system or process

19 _____

Which word best describes the tone conveyed by the author’s use of phrases like “whet our curiosity” (line 35) and “ignite the thrill of discovery” (line 37)?

- A. Grateful
- B. Intrigued
- C. Jubilant
- D. Puzzled

What is the central idea of the passage?

- A. The process behind geological formations and how the age of rocks and minerals are calculated
- B. The progress after the Scientific Revolution and how it aided us to understand our world
- C. The incredible intricateness of the Antikythera Mechanism and its calculated age
- D. The way OOPArts upset common narratives and highlight our incomplete understanding of reality

HiSET Answer Key and Rationales

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
1	D	I. Literary	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because it accurately captures the analogy comparing Raleigh's fascination to a small thought that turned into an obsessive idea, ultimately costing him his reputation and fortune.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
2	A	I. Literary	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because it captures the most accurate description of Raleigh based on the passage's descriptions and events.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
3	B	I. Literary	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because the knight's cheerfulness in stanza 1 was due to his hopeful attitude, idealistic vision of Eldorado, and enthusiasm for exploration.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
4	A	I. Literary	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because both texts suggest a fundamental aspect of human nature, which is wishful thinking that drives our desire to search for an idealized world (utopia) filled with riches, and hence the explorations.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
5	A	I. Literary	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because it contrasts how Raleigh's expedition is presented as a reality (historical investigation) to how the knight's quest is presented in a more symbolic or metaphorical manner.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
6	D	II. Informational	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because the passage mentions that the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine War disrupted the supplies, leading to a price rise and inflation.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
7	C	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because the author explains the three factors that influence inflation by explaining each factor and providing examples.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
8	D	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because the text says that slight inflation increases demand and economic activity, thereby positively affecting the economy.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
9	A	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because paragraph 4 lists some forecasts about the future of inflation and also talks about some factors to indicate the unpredictable nature of inflation.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
10	D	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because paragraph 5 of the passage mainly discusses the arguments and counterarguments related to the nature of inflation, i.e., whether it would recede or last for a decade.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
11	A	II. Informational	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because it enables individuals to communicate with people from other countries, which can be very beneficial in a variety of professional settings, including business.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
12	C	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option C is correct because overall, the passage provides strong evidence to support the main idea that learning a foreign language benefits a student in many ways.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
13	B	II. Informational	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because this definition captures the essence of empathy, which is the ability to put you in someone else's shoes and see the world from their perspective.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
14	A	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because language teachers have new modes of teaching, including media and language camps, that make language teaching more effective, thus less challenging.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
15	B	II. Informational	Hard
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because overall, the passage provides strong evidence to support the main idea that learning a foreign language benefits a student in many ways.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
16	A	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option A is correct because it is a logically accurate inference to make from the highlighted sentence. Besides, it also fits well with the context of the previous two sentences that talk about how scientific progress has improved our understanding of the world around us.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
17	B	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because the fact that they created such an advanced analog computer years ago indicated that they were far more scientifically advanced than we initially thought them to be, which is why its discovery sent shock waves through the scientific community.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
18	B	II. Informational	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because the word disrupt means “to throw into confusion or disorder,” which is exactly what OOPArts did by shaking up old narratives of the established timelines and accepted wisdom.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
19	B	II. Informational	Easy
Rationale			
<p>Option B is correct because the word intrigued means “to arouse the curiosity or interest of; fascinate,” and the phrases reflect the author is fascinated by OOPArts and the ramifications of their discovery.</p>			

Sequence Number	Correct Response	Content Category	Question Difficulty
20	D	II. Informational	Medium
Rationale			
<p>Option D is correct because the passage repeatedly stresses OOPArts’ disconnectedness from the settings in which they are discovered, highlighting the fact that we are still far from completely understanding reality.</p>			