

# Reading

## Question Sampler



**Standard  
Paper**

**Aspire**  
**ACT**

P L U S



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Proctor Name \_\_\_\_\_

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# Reading Question Sampler

## Directions

This question sampler allows students to experience the types of items presented on the Utah Aspire Plus assessment. Items on the question sampler may not be representative of the level of content knowledge presented in the assessment. The question sampler should not be used to measure students' content knowledge.

This question sampler asks you to read and then answer questions about each of several reading passages.

### **Multiple-choice questions:**

- Read the question and then choose the best answer from the answer choices given.
- If you decide to change your answer, erase your first mark completely.
- It is best to mark an answer for every question even if you are not sure which answer is correct.

### **Please note:**

- Any writing in your question sampler booklet will NOT be scored. Your answers in the booklet will be entered online by a test administrator.
- Begin working on the question sampler when you are told to do so.

**GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.**

The following passage is a story about two friends snorkeling together.

### What Comes Next

1 “You need to get your mind off things,” my friend Cassie announced. “And whenever I need to get *my* mind off things, this is where I go.”

2 “Have I ever told you that the ocean kind of creeps me out?”

3 “I believe you may have mentioned it once or twice, yes.”

4 We were halfway to the edge of the water, burdened down with piles of snorkeling equipment that Cassie accumulated in startling quantities. During the entire trip to the beach, I had been replaying the conversation I’d had with my father that morning about what I was going to do after graduation. That event was over a year away, but my father had a tendency to plan for everything eons in advance, and he expected the rest of his family to do the same. If we didn’t, he was more than happy to step in and offer plans of his own.

5 “I think it would do you good to get away from home,” he had said. “Out of your comfort zone. Maybe go to college out of state, or even travel overseas for a while. A lot of young people do that before deciding what they want to do, you know.”

6 “I have friends here.”

7 “You’d make new friends there. And think of the experiences you’d have!”

8 My father wants me to see the world, immerse myself in foreign cultures, broaden my horizons, that kind of thing. My question to him was why I would leave a place where I was happy, to risk unhappiness somewhere far away.

9 “Here we are,” Cassie said. “My absolute favorite spot in the world.”

10 “You don’t want me to go, do you? Away, I mean.”

11 “Oh no, you’re not getting me involved in that debate. Now get your gear on. This is going to blow your mind.”

12 “So tell me, oh Queen of the Sea, what happens if we see a shark?”

13 “Try to make yourself look as unappetizing as possible.”

14 Cassie laughed, as if congratulating herself on the funniest thing ever said. Truthfully, it was not really the prospect of sharks—which, as far as I knew, didn’t inhabit this region anyway—that made me apprehensive about the ocean. I wasn’t one of those people who refused to take a bath for a month after seeing the movie *Jaws*. It had more to do, I think, with the utter vastness of the ocean itself, the way the expanse of water stretched out so far into the distance that it seemed to go on forever. Who knew what lay beneath it all?

15 I was just a little girl the last time I’d gone snorkeling, on a weekend excursion to the beach with my parents. My father was going through a short-lived marine biology phase, and was determined to teach my mother and me about what he called “the inexplicable wonders” of the ocean. I recalled the sensation of moving slowly through the liquid landscape as I looked through my mask at the cloudy terrain below, imagining that behind every rock lurked a community of strange, menacing creatures. I had recently seen a nature show about the kinds of fish—if you could even call them fish—that inhabited the greatest depths of the oceans: grotesque, insect-like things with translucent bodies, huge eyes, and feelers that sprouted from their heads like some kind of alien appendages. Although of course I knew these monstrous things existed so far down that no human ever encountered them, the thought that they even existed down there gave me the shivers.

16 At one point during that snorkeling expedition, as I was paddling around through the murk, it suddenly seemed as if the bottom fell out of the ocean floor. I could feel a corresponding drop in the pit of my stomach as the water around me turned colder, and deepened to where I could no longer see the bottom at all. The fact that both my parents were only yards away didn't help: I was certain that I had passed some boundary and entered a world where I did not belong.

17 "How did I let you talk me into this?" I said to Cassie, but she was already yards ahead, slapping her fins, penguin-like, through the shallow water.

18 I put on my mask and adjusted the snorkel along the side of my head as carefully as I could, knowing that I'd probably suck vast quantities of sea water through it just the same. ("Hey," my father used to gently mock, "save some for the fish!") Gazing off into the distance, I thought about the people inhabiting the houses that lined the coast, and those aboard the ship that was passing by just off shore—living mysteries, all of them. I glanced back at Cassie, who was gently gliding through the water near an outcrop of rocks, her face down, her snorkel jutting into the air like some kind of weird antenna. We had been friends since we were kids, and though our personalities could not have been more different, we understood each other on some basic level that I couldn't have put into words if someone demanded it. She was, needless to say, one of the people I could not stand the prospect of leaving behind, a source of comfort who made the prospect of "new experiences" pale in comparison.

19 "C'mon, slowpoke," she called, now treading water out by the reef. "You won't believe how beautiful it is down there."

20 Beauty was not a concept I'd ever associated with the ocean before. But watching Cassie then, perceiving the look of utter joy on her face, it struck me just how differently the two of us viewed the world, and how the depths that so spooked me on

occasion were to her a source of never-ending wonder and promise.

21 I took a deep breath as I moved out farther, past the gentle waves breaking against my thighs, and gave one last adjustment to my mask and snorkel before stretching out into a swim, resolved to try and let her show me whatever might be out there, whatever might come next.

"What Comes Next" written for the Utah State Office of Education.

1. Select two ways that the interactions with other characters support the development of the narrator's character.

- A Cassie encourages her to hurry, and that eases the narrator's fears.
- B Cassie expresses her feeling that the ocean is beautiful, and the narrator realizes she is right.
- C The narrator's father encourages her to go beyond her comfort zone, and at the end she does.
- D Going to the ocean with her family as a child makes the narrator feel assured about exploring new places.

2. What effect does the narrator's use of the phrase "eons in advance" have on her description of her father in paragraph 4?

- A The loaded phrase shows that the narrator believes her father's planning is funny.
- B The inaccuracy leads the reader to think that the narrator misinterprets her father.
- C The exaggeration reinforces the idea that the father makes a lot of advanced plans.
- D The emotion in the phrase illustrates that the narrator expects her father to say something else.

3. What connotation does apprehensive have in paragraph 14 of the passage?

- A It indicates neutral feelings.
- B It shows that the narrator is somewhat worried.
- C It implies that the narrator is tense but hopeful.
- D It conveys that the narrator is afraid, even terrified.

4. **Part A**

Why does the author mention the horror movie *Jaws* and a nature show about sea creatures?

- A To show why the narrator is intimidated by the unknown.
- B To show that snorkeling in the ocean can be dangerous.
- C To reinforce the idea that the unknown can be challenging.
- D To help describe what the narrator sees while snorkeling.

**Part B**

Select the detail from the passage that supports the answer to Part A.

- A "I wasn't one of those people who refused to take a bath for a month after seeing the movie *Jaws*."
- B "Who knew what lay beneath it all?"
- C "I had recently seen a nature show about the kinds of fish—if you could even call them fish—that inhabited the greatest depths of the oceans: grotesque, insect-like things with translucent bodies, huge eyes, and feelers that sprouted from their heads like some kind of alien appendages."
- D "I put on my mask and adjusted the snorkel along the side of my head as carefully as I could, knowing that I'd probably suck vast quantities of sea water through it just the same."

**GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE:** “The Antikythera Discovery” is an original work of nonfiction.

5 It was a stormy day as Captain Dimitrios Kondos sailed home to Greece from a sponge-diving expedition in North Africa in October 1900. So, he decided to wait out the weather near the tiny island of Antikythera, northwest of Crete. Seizing the opportunity to harvest more sponges, the captain sent his crew down to the sea floor to search. That is when diver Elias Stadiatos made an  
10 astonishing discovery: the remnants of a Roman ship that had sunk at least 2,000 years earlier, still containing statues, coins, jewelry, and other items stolen from the Greeks.

15 For the next year, aided by the Greek Navy, divers wearing unwieldy metal suits brought up a variety of furniture, weapons, and other artifacts from the wreck. The trove included an oddly shaped lump about the  
20 size of a shoebox that sat in a museum in Athens for months before anyone examined it. That lump turned out to be the most significant treasure of all. Now called the Antikythera Mechanism, it is a bronze  
25 clocklike device with an intricate system of gears and dials as well as astronomical inscriptions on its case. What was it used for? No one at the time could say. Over the next  
30 century, as technology became more advanced, researchers concluded that the mechanism was a complicated early “computer” designed to track the cycles of the solar system. Probably built between 150 and  
35 100 BCE, it could predict eclipses and had one dial dedicated to the four-year Olympic Games cycle.

40 The device shed new light on the sophisticated abilities of the ancient Greeks, and it raised tantalizing questions about what else might still be in the sunken ship. The initial divers had been forced to terminate their search because their suits were inadequate for the 200-foot depth. In the  
45 twentieth century, only one other expedition, led by undersea researcher Jacques

50 Cousteau, examined the Antikythera site. Although Cousteau’s exploration revealed that there was much more to be unearthed, the water was too deep for divers to spend more than a few minutes at a time on the ocean floor.

55 Fast-forward to 2012. Describing the ship as “the richest ancient wreck ever discovered,” the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports partnered with the Woods Hole (Massachusetts) Oceanographic Institution and the Hellenic Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities to launch the “Return to Antikythera” project. Divers now have “closed-circuit rebreathers,” suits that permit divers to  
60 spend up to 30 minutes on the ocean floor by removing their exhaled carbon dioxide and replacing the consumed oxygen. Even more exciting is a straight-from-science-fiction  
65 diving suit that allows divers to remain at depths of up to 1,000 feet for hours.

70 The project has produced a 3-D map of the site and has retrieved more pieces of the ship, including anchor fragments and hull planks that have led researchers to determine that the vessel was much bigger than first  
75 thought. Many scientists are hoping that more pieces of the Antikythera Mechanism will be found. Who knows what treasures still lie in wait beneath the sea?



5. Which statement best describes the author's overall attitude toward the renewed excavation of the shipwreck?
- Ⓐ The author thinks the excavation is important to revitalize tourism to Greece.
  - Ⓑ The author believes the excavation will likely uncover more important artifacts.
  - Ⓒ The author believes the excavation will show the advantages of modern rebreathers.
  - Ⓓ The author thinks the excavation is necessary to discover more about ancient Greek culture.
6. Which of the following allowed archaeologists to finally understand the purpose of the Antikythera Mechanism?
- Ⓐ Technology enabled divers to bring the mechanism back to the surface for study.
  - Ⓑ Technology helped divers find additional pieces of the mechanism around the shipwreck.
  - Ⓒ Technology advanced to the point where modern researchers could make similarly complex mechanisms.
  - Ⓓ Technology advanced to the point where modern researchers could reconstruct how the mechanism functioned.
7. Which phrase best summarizes the second paragraph (lines 15–36)?
- Ⓐ The shipwreck contained a mysterious astronomical device.
  - Ⓑ The shipwreck was explored quickly to bring up the most important items.
  - Ⓒ The shipwreck had archaeologically valuable weapons and furniture.
  - Ⓓ The shipwreck could only be explored by divers wearing bulky diving suits.
8. As it is used in the passage, what does the underlined word *richest* most nearly mean?
- Ⓐ Most vivid
  - Ⓑ Most unlikely
  - Ⓒ Most valuable
  - Ⓓ Most prosperous

**LITERARY NARRATIVE:** “Words from the Master” is an original work of fiction.

School ended for the day, and as usual, Lincoln and Jared headed for Lincoln’s favorite haunt: that famous delicatessen in New York City frequented by many Broadway celebrities. The boys found their favorite booth and plopped down. Lincoln opened his music composition notebook and began writing lines of music, while Jared twirled a football on his index finger. French fries were the order of the day, and when they arrived, the boys dived in.

“Hey, Linc, you know what I think?” Jared started in. A resigned smile crossed Lincoln’s face; he knew what was coming. “Every Tuesday it’s the same thing. You pull out that book and start scribbling.” Jared gestured at Lincoln’s notebook. “Then you go home and practice guitar and piano and probably write more music. Dude, you gotta get a life!”

“You’re a broken record, man,” Lincoln responded good-naturedly. “By ‘get a life,’ you mean play sports, right? So, for the thousandth time, sports are your thing; this is my thing. I want to write music—I have to write music.”

Jared studied his friend for a moment. “Yeah, I get that,” he said. There was a brief silence, and then Jared, gobbling French fries, quickly went back to his noisy teasing. “But come on, Linc, who are these people? Some of them look wicked old,” Jared teased while motioning to the hundreds of photographs lining the deli’s legendary “wall of fame.” Jared picked up his football again, pointed to it, and exclaimed, “This is where the action is, pal.”

Glancing around at the photos, Lincoln reached across and punched Jared lightly on the arm. “Get over yourself,” he said. “You know who these people are. They made Broadway. These people are legends, so show a little respect.”

Jared looked around, feigning boredom. “Now if it was photos of the great football players that would be different. Then I’d get it,” he declared. “You know, if you’re so determined to write music, you need to go where the money is, man. Start a rock ’n’ roll band and write the songs.” An idea formed and he offered, “Hey, I’m good at organizing my team out on the field, and they love me as their captain—I could be your manager.”

Lincoln turned his attention once again to his music. He didn’t look up, but he was grinning. “Yeah, out of the goodness of your heart, right?” he laughed. “Sorry, but no. And don’t worry, I’ll do fine writing my kind of music. You won’t be laughing when my first musical opens on Broadway. Hey, I’ll even send you free tickets.”

Neither boy noticed as the man sitting at the table behind them rose to leave. As he passed them, he paused and looked down at Lincoln’s notebook for a moment or two.

“Not bad, kid,” he said to Lincoln. “Keep at it.” Then he walked away.

“Who was that guy?” asked Jared.

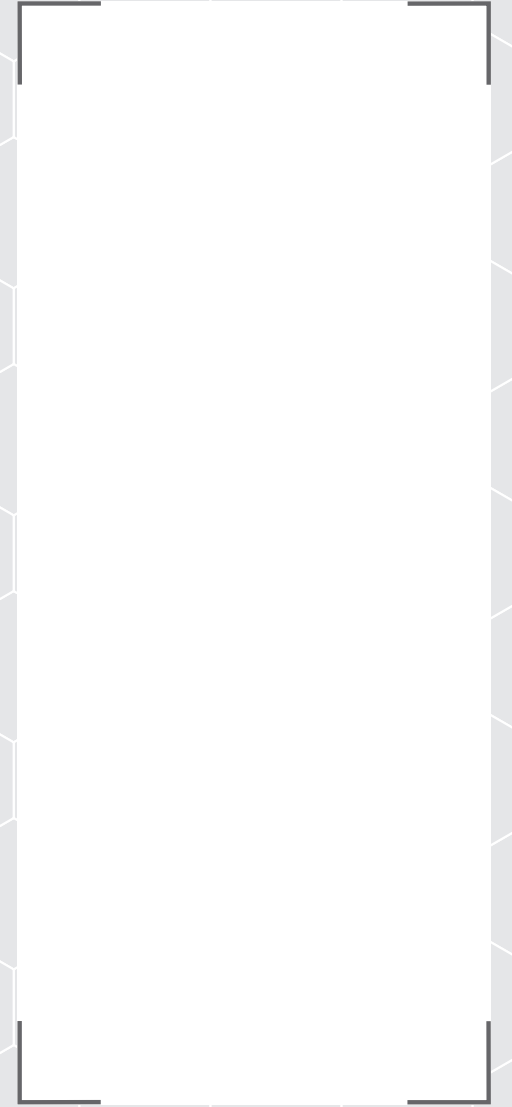
Lincoln, stunned at what had just happened, stared intently at the man exiting the delicatessen. “THAT was Sir Abner Owings,” he breathed. “You know, only The Most Famous Broadway Composer Alive!”

Jared looked at Lincoln with new eyes, shouting, “And he liked your music, man; you’re gonna be famous!”

9. Why does Lincoln most likely enjoy spending time at the delicatessen?
- Ⓐ He often sees Sir Abner Owings eating there.
  - Ⓑ He hopes to be hired by a Broadway composer.
  - Ⓒ He likes the after-school tradition of meeting Jared there.
  - Ⓓ He wants to share the same environment as Broadway composers.
10. Based on the passage, what makes Jared change his mind about Lincoln's dream of being a Broadway composer?
- Ⓐ Jared hears Lincoln speak about how important music is to him.
  - Ⓑ Jared realizes that Lincoln will never prefer sports.
  - Ⓒ Jared sees a famous composer compliment Lincoln's music.
  - Ⓓ Jared understands that his comments are hurtful to Lincoln.
11. A main theme of the passage is that it is important to:
- Ⓐ keep searching for heroes.
  - Ⓑ keep pursuing one's dreams.
  - Ⓒ be willing to adjust one's goals.
  - Ⓓ be willing to follow important advice.
12. What is the most likely purpose of the underlined description of Jared playing with a football?
- Ⓐ To illustrate Jared's personal interests
  - Ⓑ To demonstrate Jared's sense of humor
  - Ⓒ To show that Jared wants to leave the delicatessen
  - Ⓓ To reveal that Jared is not interested in the conversation



Pearson



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