Practice 1: "Sea Fever"
by John Masefield

Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.
I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying.
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.
I must down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

1. What is the theme, or message, the author expresses in this poem?
   a. Hard work never hurt anyone.
   b. The simple things in life may be the best.
   c. Everyone should learn to sail.
   d. There should be freedom for all people.

2. What words are repeated to point out the theme?
   a. and the
   b. to the seas
   c. all I ask
   d. I must down

3. In your own life, according to the theme, if you
   a. work harder, you can own your own boat.
   b. look around, you'll find simple things that make you happy.
   c. like the sea, you will be very happy on shore.
   d. don't have a hobby, you should get one.
Epaminondas lived with his mama in a little house on a hill. He was a sweet boy, but as his mama always said, not the brightest bulb in the lamp! Most days, Epaminondas went to visit his auntie. She lived on the other side of the hill. He loved to walk through the forest and cross the stream to her house. Most days she gave him something to take home.

One day Auntie gave Epaminondas half a cake. He grabbed it in his fists and carried it home. When he got there, it was smeared all over his hands. "What have you got there?" asked Mama.

"Cake, Mama," said Epaminondas.

"Epaminondas, that's no way to carry cake!" said Mama. "You wrap it in clean leaves and put it in your hat. Now will you remember that?"

"Yes, Mama," said Epaminondas.

The next week, Auntie gave Epaminondas some fresh, sweet butter. He wrapped it in leaves and put it in his hat. It was a hot day. The butter began to melt and when he got home, it was all over him. His mama cried, "That's no way to carry butter! You wrap it in leaves, cool it in the brook, and carry it home! Will you remember that?"

By and by, Auntie gave Epaminondas a puppy. He wrapped it in leaves, cooled it in the brook, and carried it home. His mama rubbed the poor shivering pup with a soft towel and fed it warm soup. "That's no way to treat a puppy!" she said. "You tie a string around its neck, put it on the ground, and walk it home! Will you remember?"

"Yes, Mama," said Epaminondas.

Today, Auntie gave Epaminondas a freshly-baked loaf of bread. He tied a string around it, put it on the ground, and walked home! The birds loved it because there were enough crumbs on the ground to feed a flock for a week! But when he got home, all he had left was a small, sticky lump of bread stuck to the string!

His mama shook her head and said, "No sense telling you any more, Epaminondas! Now I'm going to get more bread from Auntie. You see those pies cooling on the porch? They're for the bake sale. While I'm gone, you mind how you step in those pies!"

Now we know she meant "be careful and don't step in the pies," but Epaminondas minded his mama. He stepped right in the middle of each pie! When his mama got home and saw the mess, she just laughed. "Oh, Epaminondas, you ain't got the brains you were born with … but I love you anyway!" Then she gave him a big hug … and a slice of fresh bread.

4. Which best states the theme of this folk tale?
   a. Do things the right way the first time.
   b. Give unconditional love and accept differences in people.
   c. Always bring your own groceries home.
   d. Volunteer to help children visit their relatives.
5. Which character in the story most clearly states the author's message?
   a. Mama
   b. Epaminondas
   c. Auntie
   d. none of the above

6. Which would most likely have been the theme if Auntie had given Epaminondas a bag of money and he had lost it on the way home?
   a. You can't believe everything you hear!
   b. It's better to be safe than sorry.
   c. Slow and steady wins the race.
   d. Money can't buy happiness.

7. The most likely theme, if Auntie gave Epaminondas milk and he dropped it, is
   a. better late than never.
   b. don't cry over spilled milk.
   c. deeds speak louder than words.
   d. everyone has some kind of talent.

8. Which other word describes the theme of the Epaminondas story?
   a. compassion
   b. loathing
   c. panic
   d. Prosperity

Practice 5: *The Hare and the Tortoise*
An Aesop's Fable retold
Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

"I'm the fastest animal around!" Hare boasted to all the other animals. "I can run faster than anyone in (1) the world!"

"POOH!" Tortoise said with a sly smile. "Lots of us could beat you. Why, I could even beat you in a (2) race."

All the animals laughed. Some of them thought they might be able to beat Hare, but Tortoise? She was a slowpoke and always late, arriving just a little ahead of Snail, who was the slowest! Hare thought the whole idea so funny he fell down laughing. "You think you can beat ME?" he chuckled. (3)

"I KNOW I can!" replied Tortoise. (4)

"Okay," Hare said, "let's race from here to the lake right now!"

Tortoise looked down the road. She was so short that she couldn't actually see the lake, but she knew (5) how to get there.

"Are we going to race or what?" Hare asked as he winked at the other animals. (6)

"Let's go!" replied Tortoise. (7)

"I'll start the race for you," said Goose. "When I honk, the race will begin." (8)
Tortoise and Hare stood very still. All was quiet. Then . . . HONK! Hare raced off, hopping down the road as fast as his legs would take him. Tortoise crawled away, lumbering down the road behind him as fast as her feet would go. When he was about halfway to the lake, Hare stopped and looked back. He could barely see the outline of Tortoise plodding along the road far behind. "Man, that Tortoise will never catch me!" he laughed. "I think I'll take a nap!" So he curled up under a big apple tree and before long, was fast asleep.

When Hare finally awoke, he looked back down the road to see where Tortoise was. She was nowhere in sight. Then he looked ahead and couldn't believe his eyes! Tortoise was almost at the finish line! He jumped up and ran as fast as he could, but he was too late. He arrived just as Tortoise slowly crawled across the finish line, the winner.

Amid cheers from the crowd, a smiling Tortoise said to Hare, "I may be slow, much slower than you, but I don't stop until I'm through. 'Cause no matter how hard a hill is to climb, slow and steady wins every time!"

9. According to the theme of this fable,
   a. it's important to take time out to nap.
   b. being a tortoise is much harder than being a goose.
   c. keep going and you'll reach your goal.
   d. it's important to win at any cost.

10. Which would most likely have been the theme if Tortoise had NOT won?
    a. You can do anything you set your mind to.
    b. Friendship is more important than anything.
    c. Slow and steady wins the race.
    d. Don't overestimate your own ability.

11. Which one word best describes the theme of the fable?
    a. recklessness
    b. perseverance
    c. admiration
    d. extravagance

12. The most likely theme, if Hare had started before the HONK, would be
    a. the early bird gets the worm.
    b. all is fair in love and war.
    c. keep your eye on the prize.
    d. winners never cheat and cheaters never win.

13. Which messages does the author also get across in the selection?
    a. Don't brag about how good you are at something.
    b. Don't take anything for granted.
    c. Think before you speak.
    d. all of the above
14. Determine the theme of *The Hare and the Tortoise* and the events that contribute to it. Use details and examples from the text to support your answer.
The theme of *The Hare and the Tortoise* is to never give up. In the beginning of the story the Tortoise can’t even see where she is running to and by the end she ends up winning the race. First, the Tortoise was challenged to a race and couldn’t even see where the race would end but she still was willing to take on the Hare’s challenge. In the text it states, “She was so short that she couldn’t actually see the lake, but she knew how to get there.” By the end of the story the Tortoise ends up winning the race because she never gave up she just kept going. In the text it also state, “I may be slow, much slower than you, but I don’t stop until I’m through.”