

You are going to read an extract from a novel. For questions 1–8, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

1.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

'Afternoon, Mattie!' Mr Eckler called from the bow of his boat. 'Got a new one. Brand-new. Just come in. By a Mrs Wharton. *House of Mirth*, it's called. I tucked it in behind the coffee beans, under W. You'll see it.'

'Thank you, Mr Eckler!' I said, excited at the prospect of a new book. 'Did you read it?'

'Yep. Read it whole.'

'What's it about?'

'Can't hardly say. Some flighty city girl. Don't know why it's called *House of Mirth*. It ain't funny in the least.'

The Fulton Chain Floating Library is only a tiny room, a closet really, below decks in Charlie Eckler's pickle boat. It is nothing like the proper library they have in Old Forge, but it has its own element of surprise. Mr Eckler uses the room to store his wares, and when he finally gets around to moving a chest of tea or a sack of cornmeal, you never know what you might find. And once in a while, the main library in Herkimer sends up a new book or two. It's nice to get your hands on a new book before everyone else does. While the pages are still clean and white and the spine hasn't been snapped.

I stepped onto the boat and went below decks. The *House of Mirth* was under W, like Mr Eckler said it would be, only it was wedged next to Mrs Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch. Mr Eckler sometimes gets authors

and titles confused. I signed it out in a ledger he kept on top of a molasses barrel, then rooted around behind a crate of eggs, a jar of marbles and a box of dried dates but found nothing I hadn't already read. I remembered to get the bag of cornmeal we needed. I wished I could buy oatmeal or white flour instead, but cornmeal cost less and went further. I was to get a ten-pound bag. The fifty-pound bag cost more to buy but was cheaper per pound and I'd told Pa so, but he said only rich people can afford to be thrifty.

Just as I was about to climb back upstairs, something caught my eye – a box of composition books. Real pretty ones with hard covers on them, and swirly paint designs, and a ribbon to mark your place. I put the cornmeal down, and Mrs Wharton too, and picked one up. Its pages were smooth and white. I thought it would be a fine thing to write on paper that nice. The pages in my old composition book were rough and had blurry blue lines printed on them, and were made with so little care that there were slivers of wood visible in them.

I handed Mr Eckler fifty cents of my father's money for the cornmeal. 'How much is this?' I asked, holding up one of the pretty composition books. I had sixty cents from all the fiddleheads Weaver and I had sold to the Eagle Bay Hotel. It was money I knew

I should have given to my pa. I'd meant to, really. I just hadn't gotten around to it.

'Those notebooks? They're expensive, Mattie. Italians made them. I've got to get forty-five cents apiece,' he said. 'I've got some others coming in for fifteen cents in a week or so if you can wait.'

Forty-five cents was a good deal of money, but I didn't want the ones for fifteen cents, not after I'd seen the others. I had ideas. Tons of them. For stories and poems. I chewed the inside of my cheek, deliberating. I knew I would have to write a lot when I went to Barnard College – if I went to Barnard College – and it might be a good idea to get a head start. Weaver had said I should be using my words, not just collecting them, and I knew they would just glide across this beautiful paper, and when I was done writing them, I could close them safely inside the covers. Just like a real book. Guilt gnawed at my insides. I took the money from my pocket and gave it to Mr Eckler quickly, so the thing was done and I couldn't change my mind. Then I watched breathlessly as he wrapped my purchase in brown paper and tied it with string. I thanked him as he handed me the package, but he didn't hear me because Mr Pulling, the station-master, was asking him the price of oranges.

1 When Mr Eckler told Mattie about the new book,

- A Mattie felt that it sounded familiar to her.
- B he said that he thought its title was inappropriate.
- C he said that it was a book Mattie would enjoy.
- D Mattie suspected that he hadn't really read it.

2 What does Mattie say about the library in Mr Eckler's boat?

- A New books are frequently added to it.
- B All the books in it are in excellent condition.
- C It contains books that are hidden from view.
- D Mr Eckler doesn't know exactly what is in it.

3 When Mattie found the new book, she

- A discovered that there were other new books nearby.
- B saw that it had been put in the wrong place.
- C followed Mr Eckler's system for borrowing books.
- D had to move something so that she could find it.

4 What was the situation concerning the cornmeal?

- A Her father was unable to save money by buying the bigger bag.
- B Her father could not see the point of buying the bigger bag.
- C Her father felt that cornmeal was better than oatmeal or white flour.
- D Her father had decided to stop buying what he usually bought.

5 One reason why Mattie liked the look of the composition books was that

- A the covers were shiny.
- B the pages were completely clear.
- C the pages were thicker than in her old book.
- D they had better ribbons than her old book.

6 When Mattie asked Mr Eckler how much the composition books cost, he said that

- A they weren't really worth the money.
- B they were not the books he had been expecting to receive.
- C he did not expect many people to buy them.
- D he had no choice about how much to charge for them.

7 While she was buying one of the books, Mattie thought about

- A how she could use it for making lists of words.
- B what the experience of writing in it would be like.
- C what people at Barnard College would think of it.
- D whether she would have enough ideas to fill the whole book.

8 What do we learn about Mattie in the text as a whole?

- A She always thought carefully before making any decisions.
- B She was very keen to impress other people.
- C She was often criticized by people who were close to her.
- D She had an enormous interest in both literature and language.

You are going to read an article about an activity in Spain. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–H the one which fits each gap (9–15). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

2.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

The Tower and the Glory

Chris Wilson starts at the bottom when he joins a Spanish team making competitive human pyramids



A large man jams his foot in my ear and jumps on to my shoulders. He is quickly followed by another only slightly smaller gentleman who grabs my belt and shimmies up me like a pole. Another follows. My face contorts with pain as the fourth tier mounts on to my back and I begin to sway dangerously.

9 _____ 'Castelling' (making human castles) is a family sport in Catalonia. Groups normally consist of everyone from tiny children, through awkward adolescents and wiry women, to well-built men at the bottom. 10 _____ I had also heard that being overweight and unfit would not count against me. Sure enough, when I turned up for my first training session, I could sense that, for the first time in years, my ever-expanding physique was being appreciatively looked at.

Castelling began almost 200 years ago near Tarragona, just south of Barcelona. Out of nowhere, it seems that people suddenly began forming themselves into human towers. Since then the sport, if you can call it that, has become an expression

of Catalan identity, with groups competing to build ever higher and more elegant structures.

11 _____ Once or twice it has managed a six-tier tower. The top teams regularly manage eight or nine. It was my intention to add a little British beef to the group to help them reach the next level in time for the competitions to be held tomorrow in Barcelona on the National Day of Catalonia.

At first I had thought that I might like to go on top to bask in the glory, but the club's president soon put me straight. He indicated a spindly little girl who looked as though she had been raised entirely on broccoli, and not much of it at that. It is she who has pride of place on top of the pyramid. 12 _____ For my first try-out I was given the role of *segones*

(second hands), which meant that I supported the wrists of the man who supported the buttocks of the first rank of the pyramid.

Once I had assumed my position, people began to scramble up me and on to the tower without warning. 13 _____ Still, my hard work must have been appreciated because I was quickly promoted to be *primeres mans* and support the bottoms of the first level of the pyramid that we were making under the watchful eye of the artistic director.

My performance in the 'hands' section had obviously been satisfactory because at the third training session I was called forward and given the very great honour of the President's Belt. 14 _____ Being offered this belt, still warm from the very waist of the President, was a clear gesture that me and my bulk had been accepted. Finally, I had made it to the bottom of the pile.

Being a pillar in a castell is much like being a bass player in a band. You know that everyone in the crowd is cheering for the singer or the lead guitarist, no matter how important the rhythm section. When we take the stage tomorrow, no one in the crowd will know who I am, or even be able to see me down at the bottom. All their cheering will be for the little girl on top. 15 _____ It felt great.

A The best I could hope for was to be at the bottom, but even that honour has to be earned.

B So I knew that everyone at the training session that night would have cheered with good-natured delight if I had done that.

C But that memorable night in Figueres, despite the incredible strain, I held steady and the applause was all for me.

D I had been attracted to castelling because I had been told that it requires almost no skill or co-ordination.

E Within seconds I had assisted in the formation of a three-tier tower without really noticing what was happening.

F It's not easy being the bottom man of a human pyramid.

G Each casteller is wound into a large strip of material worn around the waist to support the back and to help the other castellers grip when they climb.

H The group I had joined in Figueres, near the French border, is very much a second-division outfit.

TEST

2

READING