

Student Test Form

Read Selection 1, an excerpt from a story called *All Alone in the Universe*.

SELECTION 1

Early December from *All Alone in the Universe*

Lynne Rae Perkins

My dad and Chrisanne were still upstairs in bed, limp washrags trying not to move. The house was dark and still, except for the light over the kitchen sink and the radio on low. The smell of my toasting English muffin filled the stale air with the promise of health and life, like the first crocus of spring. But it probably made Dad and Chrisanne queasy. I needed to breathe some fresh air.

“I’m going for a walk, Mom,” I said.

She tucked the phone under her chin and said quietly, “Okay, doll. Dress warm.”

4 The whole world was gray and brown. Even if the brick chimneys had managed to reach a few inches higher and snag holes in the heavy clouds, there probably would have been more gray behind them. The trees in the front yards were bare. A few unraked brown leaves, curly and brittle, lay scattered around. My footsteps made a nice thud in the cold, motionless air, which filled my nose and lungs and made me feel sharp and alive.

5 I looked around and found some colors hiding in the browns and grays. Dark green pines and spruces. A red awning. A blue garage door. Red berries on a bush. The purple-black bricks of the Baxters’ house. I myself was an emissary of color, moving through the world in a fluorescent red coat Chrisanne didn’t know I was wearing and my eight-foot-long scarf. I trod once more over a much-trodden dirt path frozen hard as a rock, through a small bunch of trees to the Boney Dump, a flat place where the power company dumps ash and kids ride their bikes on it. As I came out into the open, snow started to fall. I sat down on a rock and watched. The snow wasn’t sticking to the ground yet, but I could look at the snowflakes on my coat sleeve. I knew each one was supposed to be completely different from every other one, but I couldn’t see the differences that clearly. I could see that each one had exactly six sides, which seemed amazing enough for something just falling out of the sky. An extra detail, more than anyone would expect.

The snow fell more thickly. The hills, then the houses at the far edge of the Boney Dump, disappeared behind curtains of falling flakes. It felt private, like a room, with walls you could walk through.

“Early December” by Lynne Rae Perkins, from *All Alone in the Universe*. Copyright © 1999 by Lynne Rae Perkins. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Read Selection 2, a poem about what may happen in November. Then answer the questions that follow.

SELECTION 2

November

The snow
began slowly,
a soft and easy
sprinkling

5 of flakes, then clouds of flakes
in the baskets of the wind
and the branches
of the trees—

oh, so pretty.
10 We walked
through the growing stillness,
as the flakes

prickled the path,
then covered it,
15 then deepened
as in curds and drifts,

as the wind grew stronger,
shaping its work
less delicately,
20 **taking greater steps**

over the hills
and through the trees
until, finally,
we were cold,

25 and far from home.
We turned
and followed our long shadows back
to the house,

stamped our feet,
30 went inside, and shut the door.
Through the window
we could see

how far away it was to the gates of April.
Let the fire now
35 put on its red hat
and sing to us.

— *Mary Oliver*

“November” by Mary Oliver, from *Why I Wake Early*. Copyright © 2004 by Mary Oliver. Published by Beacon Press Books.

STUDENT NAME:	TEACHER NAME:	DATE:
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Reading Literary Texts
Early December/November

For each question, choose the correct answer. Then completely fill in the circle for the answer you chose.

1. Which detail would **most likely** be included in a summary of Selection 1?
- (A) "I needed to breathe some fresh air."
 - (B) "The trees in the front yards were bare."
 - (C) "A few unraked brown leaves, curly and brittle, lay scattered around."
 - (D) "An extra detail, more than anyone would expect."

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 4 of Selection 1.

Even if the brick chimneys had managed to reach a few inches higher and snag holes in the heavy clouds, there probably would have been more gray behind them.

What does this sentence **most strongly** suggest?

- (A) The clouds will blow away soon.
- (B) The clouds are low and very thick.
- (C) The chimneys need to be taller to work.
- (D) The tops of the chimneys are very sharp.

3. What is **mainly** contrasted in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Selection 1?
- (A) the narrator's thoughts and her feelings
 - (B) the narrator's true wishes and her actions
 - (C) the narrator's first impressions and what she begins to see
 - (D) the narrator's mood in the house and how she feels outside

4. How does the author develop the point of view of the speaker in Selection 2?
- (A) by giving the speaker important dialogue
 - (B) by describing the scene around the speaker
 - (C) by comparing the speaker to other characters
 - (D) by describing physical characteristics of the speaker

5. In Selection 2, the phrase **taking greater steps** refers to
- Ⓐ the deepening snow.
 - Ⓑ the darkening path.
 - Ⓒ the flurrying flakes.
 - Ⓓ the increasing wind.
6. The authors of both selections **mainly** develop the central ideas of the selections through
- Ⓐ simile.
 - Ⓑ alliteration.
 - Ⓒ imagery.
 - Ⓓ onomatopoeia.

For this question, write your answer in the box provided. Be sure to support your answer with details.

7. Describe a theme that both selections share. Use details from both selections to support your answer.

Handwriting practice area with horizontal lines for writing an answer to question 7.



