



New York State Testing Program

English 
Language Arts

Book 2

Sample Test

Name _____



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This test asks you to write about what you have listened to or read. Your writing will NOT be scored on your personal opinions. It WILL be scored on:

- how clearly you organize and express your ideas
- how accurately and completely you answer the questions
- how well you support your ideas with examples
- how interesting and enjoyable your writing is
- how correctly you use grammar, spelling, punctuation, and paragraphs



Whenever you see this symbol, be sure to plan and check your writing.

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Adaptation of “Brainy Birds” by Cynthia Berger from *Ranger Rick Magazine’s* August 2000 issue, copyright © 2000 by the National Wildlife Federation. Used by permission.

Part 1: Listening

Directions

In this part of the test, you are going to listen to a story called “Waldo’s Up and Down Day.” Then you will answer some questions about the story.

You will listen to the story twice. The first time you hear the story, listen carefully but do not take notes. As you listen to the story the second time, you may want to take notes. Use the space below and on the next page for your notes. You may use these notes to answer the questions that follow. Your notes on these pages will NOT count toward your final score.

Here is a word you will need to know as you listen to the story:

- **homeroom:** a class in which the teacher takes attendance and shares announcements with the students

Notes

Go On

Notes

STOP

Do NOT turn this page until you are told to do so.

Waldo does not have a good day at school. In the boxes below, write three things that go wrong for Waldo at school.

The first thing that goes wrong is . . .

The second thing that goes wrong is . . .

The third thing that goes wrong is . . .

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At the end of the story, Sylvia offers Waldo his penny. Why doesn't Waldo want it back? Use information from the story in your answer.

Go On

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for Number 31 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Your writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer beginning on the next page.



Part 2: Writing

Directions

In this part of the test you will write a story of your own. Do NOT include information from the story “Waldo’s Up and Down Day” in your writing.

Follow the directions on Pages 10 and 11 to write your story.

Go On

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for Number 32 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Your writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer beginning on the next page.



Do NOT turn this page until you are told to do so.

Reading

Directions

In this part of the test, you are going to read an article called “Brainy Birds” and a story called “Why the Raven Has Only One Color.” You will do Numbers 33 through 36 and write about what you have read. You may look back at the article and the story as often as you like.

BRAINY BIRDS

by Cynthia Berger

What's the world's smartest bird? Most scientists say it's the common raven. One sign of ravens' brain power is their adaptability. That means that they can change their behavior to solve new problems.

For example, if they can't find one kind of favorite food, they learn to eat something else. In fact, they eat almost any food they can get their beaks on. Their foods include small animals, fruit, seeds, eggs, garbage, and dead meat. And because they eat so many different foods, they can live in lots of different places around the world: deserts, mountains, forests, cities, and even the cold Arctic.

The size of a raven's brain may help explain why the bird is so smart. It has a large brain compared to its body size. For example, a chicken weighs twice as much as a raven. But its brain is only one-fifth as heavy as the raven's brain.

Quork-quork-quork! Oo-oo. Rap-rap-rap. Kek-kek-kek. Honk-honk! Ravens make lots of different sounds. Scientists have counted as many as 80 different sounds. Ravens can copy sounds too. One raven learned to imitate all the dogs in a neighborhood. They can also imitate other kinds of birds, the sound of falling water, human speech, motorcycles, and even the ringing of the bell on an ice cream truck. Copying sounds may not be a sign of smarts, but it sure makes ravens interesting to have around!

Ravens play more than most other birds, and this may be a sign of intelligence. They seem to have tons of fun just flying around. They especially like to roll over in the air. They also fly in roller-coaster patterns and in swooping loop-the-loops.

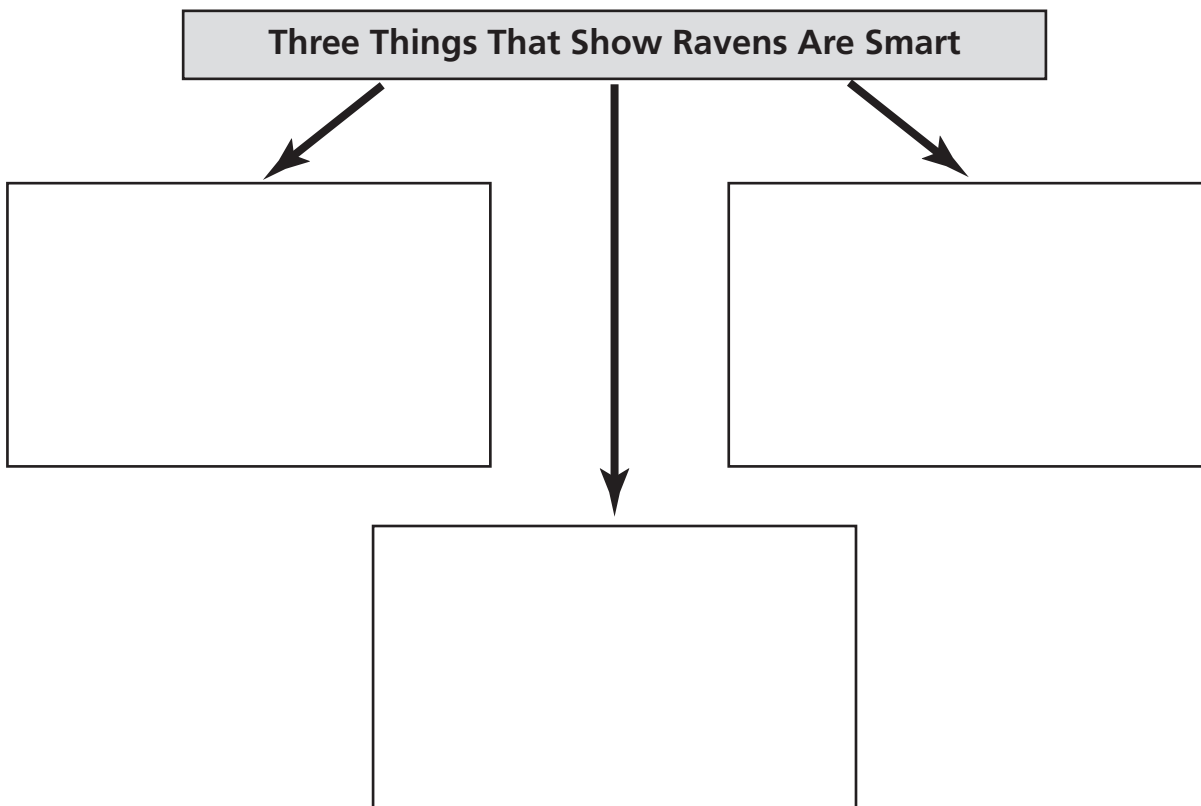
Ravens like to swing, but they don't need a swing set to do it. They lean backward off a perch and swing upside down by their feet just for the fun of it. They even swing by their beaks from branches!

Ravens often save food in the top of a rotting stump, in a clump of tall grass, or in a hole dug in dirt or snow. With their excellent memories, they have no trouble finding their meals later on. What's more, ravens watch where other ravens hide food—and then they steal it.

Sometimes a raven can be too clever. A scientist named Konrad Lorenz kept a raven named Roah to study it. One day, Roah picked up some wet laundry that had fallen off Dr. Lorenz's clothesline. The scientist rewarded the helpful bird with food. Big mistake. After that, Roah showered the scientist with wet laundry from all the neighborhood clotheslines! A raven may look plain—but oh, what a brain!



33 According to the article, what are three things that ravens do that show how smart they are? Write your answers in the boxes below.

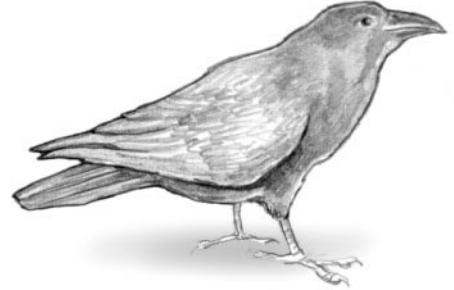


WHY THE RAVEN HAS ONLY ONE COLOR

A Retelling of an Inuit Fable

The raven is the cleverest of all birds, but he is also impatient and stubborn. Sometimes this causes him problems.

In the beginning when they were first created, birds had no special colors. The crow, the sparrow, the parrot—all the birds were the same dull shade of gray. Except for their size, they all looked very much alike.



When the time came for the birds to have colors and patterns, they decided that it would be fun to paint each other. Many of them got together and chatted about the best ideas for lively colors or interesting patterns.

The goose and the raven happened to meet, and agreed to paint each other. The goose said, “I would like to have a pretty pattern, black and white. You are clever. Can you paint a lovely pattern for me?”

So the raven painted the goose, with some feathers black and others white. The raven made such a lovely pattern on the goose that he wanted the same for himself.

The goose then began to paint the raven, but the raven was impatient and kept interrupting.

“No, no,” said the raven soon after the goose began, “you are painting the wrong feather black. That is the wrong pattern and it will be ugly.”

“Be patient,” said the goose. “It will be beautiful when I am finished.”

And the goose continued to paint. The raven could not sit still. “You are doing it wrong,” cried the raven. “Do it the way I did!”

“I know what I am doing,” said the goose. “Just wait.” The goose began to paint again, but again the quarrelsome raven interrupted.

“Not like that,” said the raven. “You are making a mess. Do it right or don’t bother.”

At these words, the goose finally grew angry at the raven. “If you are going to be so difficult, I won’t help you,” she cried. And she threw the remaining black paint all over the raven, covering every trace of the pattern she had begun.

No other bird would paint the raven after that. No one wanted to help a bird who was so cross and hard to get along with. So, even though he is clever and talented, to this day the raven has only one color and no pattern at all.

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Why did the raven and the goose become upset with each other? Use information from the story to support your answer.

Fables are stories that teach the readers a lesson. What lesson does this fable try to teach us? Use information from the story to support your answer.

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for Number 36 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Your writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer beginning on the next page.



Go On

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Book 2
English Language Arts
Grade 4

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