



New York State Testing Program

English 
Language Arts

Listening Selection

Sample Test



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This listening selection is to be used in administering Session 1, Part 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

Remember: This is a secure test. You are not to discuss this test, show it to anyone, or photocopy these materials, as the security of the test could be breached.

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RENAISSANCE COOKERY

by Richard S. Calhoun

TAKE a step back in time to the fifteenth century. Picture a land with towering mountains, fertile river valleys, and broad plains. Much of the land is covered with pine, fir, and oak trees. Deer, bears, and wild birds inhabit the land. The rivers are filled with trout and eel. The sea offers an abundance of tuna, sardines, lobsters, and shrimp. Farms produce various grains, vegetables, fruits, and livestock. This was northern Italy at the time of the Renaissance.

Although each area had its own specialties, pasta was a favorite throughout Italy. During the Renaissance, pasta was already being fashioned into various shapes. Noodles originated in the northern city of Siena, while green lasagna (made with spinach juice) came from Bologna. A filled pasta called ravioli started in the port city of Genoa.

As you think of the various sauces used with Italian pasta today, tomato sauce probably tops the list. This was not so during the Renaissance. Tomatoes were not introduced to Europe until the sixteenth century, when Spanish explorers brought them to the Continent. Two popular Renaissance pasta sauces were *pesto*, with an olive oil base, and *panna*, with a butter and cream base.

Thick soups were also popular during the Renaissance. These hearty soups were full of vegetables, beans, and pasta cooked in chicken broth. In some parts of northern Italy, rice was usually added. The soup was called minestrone.

Wealthy households often offered as many as thirty-two different dishes in the course of one meal. According to tradition, dinner always started with a green salad with an olive oil and vinegar dressing. This was followed by cooked vegetables, pasta, fruit, eggs, soup, meat, cheese, and dessert, in that order.

But food was not the only gift from this period in history. Now listen to the next article.



LEGACY OF THE RENAISSANCE

by Rosalie F. Baker



THE Renaissance spread from Italy to the rest of Europe. As each country adopted or adapted the spirit of the Italian Renaissance, the ideas that emerged passed to other areas. When European ships began traveling to and trading with the New World, passengers and merchants brought with them ideas that traced their roots to Italy and the Renaissance.

As the decades passed, the ideas and innovations of the Renaissance drew artists, architects, writers, and musicians from around the world to Italy. The eighteenth-century English writer Samuel Johnson (known as Dr. Johnson) once said, “A man who has not been in Italy is always conscious of an inferiority.” Indeed, many Europeans felt that to be complete, a person’s education had to include a “grand tour” of Italy. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans seeking to expand their horizons also made the grand tour.

Today thousands of art students from around the world, including many from the United States, spend part of their college years studying in Italy, especially Florence. In addition, some modern practices trace their origins to principles established during the Italian Renaissance. Gardening and architecture provide good examples of this.

When landscape architects plan the placement of trees and shrubs in today’s formal gardens, they carry on a tradition developed by artists in Renaissance Italy. The mood of the Renaissance pushed artists to incorporate nature and the countryside into their works. Landscape painting was the result. The landscape was not the untamed countryside, however, but planned formal gardens where villa owners could walk and talk.

The palaces and villas created by sixteenth-century architect Andrea Palladio have had a tremendous influence on Western architecture. Many American architects continue to incorporate Palladio’s ideas into their plans for houses and other buildings. The Palladian window, with its three arched panels—the middle one higher than the other two—is the best-known feature of his style. Today at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson’s home in Virginia, visitors can see how Palladio influenced early American architecture.

The traditions of the Renaissance have had far-reaching effects. Our modern world has been influenced and shaped by the ideas of the past.

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Listening Selection
English Language Arts
Grade 8

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