

PARCC ELA/Literacy Samples

Read the poem "Shadows." Then answer the following question(s).

Shadows

by April Pulley Sayre

	Shadow of a flower, Shadow of the moon.		A man keeps a shadow under his hat.	
	Shadow of a tree trunk, Shadow of the moon.	30	An umbrella opens. A shadow falls.	
5	Searching for shadows, we run, hop, stare... at lots of shadows here and there.		Splat! Clouds move in—	
	Dragonfly shadows zip and pop.	35	sponging shadows away. But the shadows return with the sun. Let's play!	
10	Running horse shadows never stop!		Hand shadows hop through the tall, green grass.	
	Our shadowy shapes shift as we dance.	40	Underwater shadows Follow four fast bass. Toe shadows walk	
15	Leg kick! Leg kick! Prance, prance, prance! My friend catches my shadow's hand.		on the bottom of a creek. Sudden scary shadows make us shriek!	
	Hand in shadow, we walk the sand.	45	Bird shadows skim over shrubs and rocks. Sundial shadows turn like clocks.	
20	A ball and its shadow fall and meet, rolling to my shadow's feet.		50	Tree shadows make cool spots to rest. I think I like these shadows best.
25	We outline shadows with a piece of chalk. But later they've moved on the hot sidewalk.			

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- (1) Which evidence from the poem helps the reader know the speaker’s feelings about shadows?

Drag evidence from the poem to the graphic organizer to show *three* examples of how the reader knows the speaker’s feelings about shadows.

- A “with a piece of chalk.” (line 26)
- B “Sudden scary shadows” (line 44)
- C “turn like clocks.” (line 49)
- D “Searching for shadows,” (line 5)
- E “cool spots to rest.” (line 51)

Evidence of the Speaker’s Feelings about Shadows

fearful	
curious	
creative	

- (2) Which words or phrases show time is passing?

Select *two* underlined words or phrases that show time is passing.

We outline shadows
with a piece of chalk,
But later they’ve moved
on the hot sidewalk
A man keeps a shadow
under his hat.
An umbrella opens.
A shadow falls.
Splat!
Clouds move in—
sponging shadows away.
But the shadows return
with the sun. Let’s play!

- (3) **Part A**

What does the word shriek mean as it is used in line 45 of the poem?

- A. whisper
- B. giggle
- C. yell
- D. flee

Part B

Which word in the lines supports the answer in Part A?

- A. walk (line 20)
- B. scary (line 44)
- C. skim (line 46)
- D. turn (line 49)

- (4) **Part A**

Which phrase *best* describes the speaker in the poem?

- A. someone willing to help others with an important task
- B. someone comfortable performing before a large audience
- C. someone who shares books with friends
- D. someone who enjoys being outside

Part B

Which *two* details from the poem provide evidence for the answer to Part A?

- “Our shadowy shapes” (line 13)
- “My friend catches” (line 17)
- “under his hat.” (line 30)
- “through the tall, green grass.” (line 39)
- “on the bottom of a creek.” (line 43)
- “make us shriek!” (line 45)

Read the passage from “*Straw Houses: No Need to Fear the Big, Bad Wolf*.” Then answer the questions.

from “Straw Houses: No Need to Fear the Big, Bad Wolf”

- 1 In the story of the three little pigs, the one who built his house of straw did not fare well; the big, bad wolf huffed and puffed and blew his house down.
- 2 But builder Michael Furbish, who made his own home from bales of straw and an elementary school of the same material, says in reality, straw houses are not only sturdy but also good for the environment.
- 3 Straw—the stalks of plants like wheat, oats, and barley—is considered a waste material and is commonly used for farm animal bedding. But more and more people are discovering that straw baled into rectangular blocks is an excellent, inexpensive building material. “Our mental picture is that a straw bale is light,” says Furbish. “But each bale weighs about 40 pounds (18 kilograms). We stack them like bricks and then spray plaster—mud, essentially—on the inside walls to coat them one and a half to two inches [3.8 to 5.1 centimeters] thick. Then we put stucco on the outside. So a straw building is really like a fortress, and it is not going to rot as long as water is kept out of the bales.”
- 4 There are two ways to make a straw-bale structure. You can build load-bearing walls with them, which means the walls support the roof. Or you can build a post-and-beam wooden frame that supports the roof and fill in the walls with straw bales.
- 5 Either way, the walls are there to stay. And they provide great insulation, helping keep straw homes in cold climates cozy in winter and those built in hot places like the desert cool in summer.
- 6 Straw is considered a “green” (good for the environment) building material because it is a renewable resource: A whole new crop can be grown and harvested every year, easily “renewing” the supply.
- 7 Also, planting and harvesting straw uses relatively little energy. “Most other building materials require a lot of energy use in production and manufacturing at a factory,” explains Furbish. “With straw-bale construction, you are getting a building product without using much energy at all.”

From “Straw Houses: No Need to Fear the Big, Bad Wolf” NGS Staff/National Geographic Creative

(5) **Part A**

What is the meaning of the word insulation as it is used in paragraph 5 of the passage from “Straw Houses: No Need to Fear the Big, Bad Wolf”?

- A. a product that is always available
- B. a layer that protects
- C. a substance that is easily made
- D. a material that lasts

Part B

Which detail from paragraphs 5–7 helps the reader understand the meaning of insulation?

- A. “...the walls are there to stay.”
- B. “...helping keep straw homes in cold climates cozy in winter and those built in hot places like the desert cool in summer.”
- C. “...it is a renewable resource: A whole new crop can be grown and harvested every year, easily ‘renewing’ the supply.”
- D. “...planting and harvesting straw uses relatively little energy.”

(6) **Part A**

According to the passage from “Straw Houses: No Need to Fear the Big, Bad Wolf,” which reason explains why builders put stucco on the outside of a straw house?

- A. It increases the comfort of the home in all seasons by maintaining the temperature.
- B. It maintains the shape of the bales and prevents them from shifting.
- C. It keeps home building and operating costs down.
- D. It adds strength to the bales and protects them from moisture.

Part B

Which detail supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “‘...it is not going to rot as long as water is kept out....’” (paragraph 3)
- B. “...the walls are there to stay.” (paragraph 5)
- C. “...they provide great insulation....” (paragraph 5)
- D. “...straw uses relatively little energy.” (paragraph 7)

Read the poem “If.” Then answer the questions.

If—

by Rudyard Kipling

- If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
5 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
- If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
10 If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
15 Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with wornout tools;
- If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
20 And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: “Hold on”;
- 25 If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
30 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run—
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

“If—” by Rudyard Kipling—Public Domain

(7) **Part A**

What does the phrase **force your heart and nerve** in line 21 most likely mean?

- A. using power to make others do what you wish
- B. asking others for help in times of trouble
- C. pushing yourself to the limits
- D. caring for people in need

Part B

Which text evidence in stanza 3 supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "...make one heap of all your winnings"
- B. "...risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,"
- C. "...never breathe a word about your loss;"
- D. "...hold on when there is nothing in you"

(8) **Part A**

What is the theme of the poem "If—"?

- A. Having many friends is key to becoming a powerful leader.
- B. Self-awareness and control are necessary for success.
- C. Explaining one's problems to others leads to growth.
- D. Understanding the motivations of one's enemies is needed for success.

Part B

What advice does the speaker give that supports the theme selected in Part A?

- A. Trust yourself, but try to understand why others doubt you.
- B. Do whatever is necessary to be liked by others.
- C. Help others because you might need their help one day.
- D. Confront enemies who are trying to hurt you.

(9) How do lines 9–16 of the poem develop the speaker's ideas about life?

Read the statements in the table. Write the lines from the poem next to the statements the lines support.

Statement	Support
Know that your words may be misrepresented.	
Know that you should have realistic expectations.	
Be prepared to try again when you fail.	
Be able to handle the good with the bad.	

Read the article “Short Circuit.” Then answer the following questions.

Short Circuit

What happens when you blow a fuse?

Current flowing through a wire heats the wire. The length of a wire affects its resistance, which determines how much current flows in the wire and how hot the wire gets.

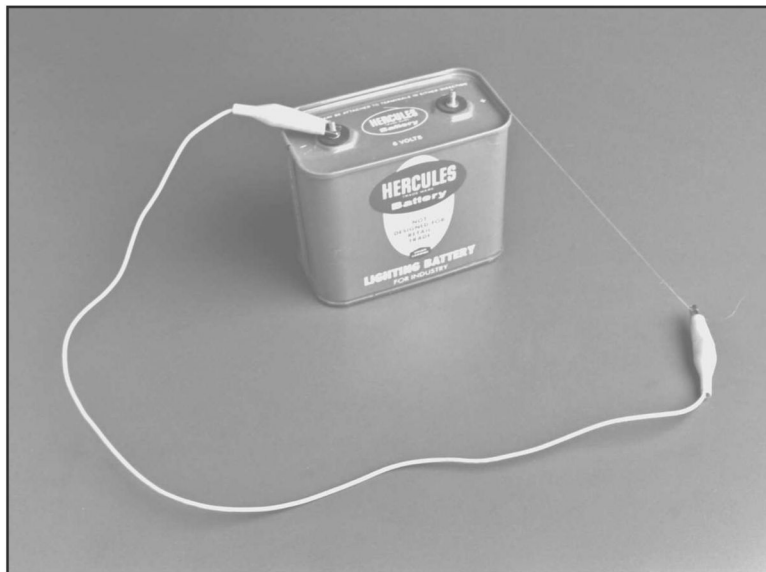
Materials

- A fresh 6-volt or 12-volt lantern battery.
- A length of copper wire with alligator clips attached to each end (or a test lead) from any electronics supply store.
- A strand of very fine iron wire, about 5 to 6 inches (13 to 15 cm) long. (You can get this by unbraiding braided iron wire.)
- Adult help

Assembly

(5 minutes or less)

- 1 Attach one end of the clip lead to one of the battery terminals. Attach one end of the fine iron wire to the other terminal. Attach the other end of the clip lead to the other end of the iron wire, placing the clip as far from the terminal as possible.



To Do and Notice

(15 minutes or more)

- 2 Observe what happens to the iron wire after you connect the clip. Move the clip on the iron wire a little closer to the battery and watch what happens. Keep moving the lead closer until you see the final dramatic result. (**CAUTION:** The wire gets very hot!)

What's Going On?

- 3 The thin iron wire is a good conductor of electricity, but not as good as the copper wire, which is deliberately chosen to have very low resistance. Thus, most of the resistance of the circuit is in the iron wire. When you connect the clip to the iron wire, the voltage of the battery pushes electrons through the circuit against the resistance of the iron wire, causing the iron wire to heat up. As you move the clip closer to the battery, the resistance of the iron wire decreases. Because the same voltage is applied across a lower resistance, more current flows, and the wire heats up more. Eventually, when you make the iron wire short enough, so much current flows that it melts the wire. Even the copper wire becomes warm.

- 4 In a normal electric circuit, an electric current powers an appliance, such as a refrigerator or TV. Every such appliance has a certain amount of resistance to the current flow, which keeps the current from reaching very large values. A *short circuit* occurs when the current finds a way to bypass the appliance on a path that has little or no resistance—for example, where frayed insulation bares a wire and allows it to touch the frame of the appliance, so the current can flow straight to the ground. In this situation, a very large current can occur, producing a lot of heat and a fire hazard.
- 5 Although houses today often contain circuit breakers rather than fuses, fuses are still around. A fuse contains a thin strip of wire, somewhat like the thin iron wire in our experiment. The current that goes to appliances must also pass through this strip of wire. If a short circuit occurs—or even if too many appliances get hooked up to one wire, so that too much current flows—the wire in the fuse heats up quickly and melts, breaking the circuit and preventing a fire from breaking out.

“*The Exploratorium Science Snackbook*,” © Exploratorium, www.exploratorium.edu.

Read the article “Conducting Solutions.” Then answer the following questions.

Conducting Solutions

by Rodney Schreiner

- 1 An electric current is a flow of electrical charge. When a metal conducts electricity, the charge is carried by electrons moving through the metal. Electrons are subatomic particles with a negative electrical charge. When a solution conducts electricity, the charge is carried by ions moving through the solution. Ions are atoms or small groups of atoms that have an electrical charge. Some ions have a negative charge and some have a positive charge.
- 2 Pure water contains very few ions, so it does not conduct electricity very well. When table salt is dissolved in water, the solution conducts very well, because the solution contains ions. The ions come from the table salt, whose chemical name is sodium chloride. Sodium chloride contains sodium ions, which have a positive charge, and chloride ions, which have a negative charge. Because sodium chloride is made up of ions, it is called an ionic substance.
- 3 Not all substances are made up of ions. Some are made of uncharged particles called molecules. Sugar is such a substance. When sugar is dissolved in water, the solution does not conduct electricity, because there are no ions in the solution.
- 4 Some substances that are made of molecules form solutions that do conduct electricity. Ammonia is such a substance. When ammonia dissolves in water, it reacts with the water and forms a few ions. This is why laundry ammonia, which is a solution of ammonia in water, conducts electricity, but not very well.
- 5 Sometimes, when two different solutions are mixed, the substances they contain react with each other and form ions. This is what happens when ammonia and vinegar are mixed. An ammonia solution contains only a few ions, and it conducts electricity only poorly. A vinegar solution also contains only a few ions and conducts only a little electricity. But when these solutions are mixed, the ammonia reacts with the acid in vinegar (acetic acid), and they form a lot of ions. This is why the mixture of ammonia and vinegar conducts electricity very well.

“Conducting Solutions” by Rodney Schreiner, from *Science Is Fun* (scifun.org). Copyright © 2011 by Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy. Reprinted by permission of WISL.

(10) **Part A**

Which paragraph *best* summarizes the conclusions of the experiment in “Short Circuit”?

- A. paragraph 2
- B. paragraph 3
- C. paragraph 4
- D. paragraph 5

Part B

Identify *three* details from “Short Circuit” that provide the *best* summary of the conclusions in the experiment.

- Most houses have circuit breakers.
- Frayed wires can touch appliances.
- Iron wire is a good conductor of electricity.
- The length of a wire affects its resistance.
- Electric current powers appliances.
- A short circuit occurs when there is a high resistance. flow of current with low
- Appliances can short-circuit, creating a fire hazard.

(11) **Part A**

As it is used in the passage, what does the word solution mean?

- A. an ability to combine smaller parts
- B. an answer to a problem
- C. a capacity to carry a stronger charge
- D. a liquid mixture

Part B

Which detail from “Conducting Solutions” provides the *best* clue to the meaning of the word solution?

- A. “conducts electricity”
- B. “dissolved in water”
- C. “are no ions”
- D. “made of molecules”

(12) **Part A**

In “Conducting Solutions,” why does the author *most likely* include the information in paragraph 5?

- A. to explain how solutions that contain ions conduct electricity
- B. to show how some solutions low in ions can conduct electricity
- C. to describe several ways to use solutions that conduct electricity
- D. to list several solutions that are effective conductors of electricity

Part B

Which detail from paragraph 5 of “Conducting Solutions” *best* supports the answer in Part A?

- A. “This is what happens when ammonia and vinegar are mixed.”
- B. “An ammonia solution contains only a few ions, and it conducts electricity only poorly.”
- C. “A vinegar solution also contains only a few ions and conducts only a little electricity.”
- D. “But when these solutions are mixed, the ammonia reacts with the acid in vinegar (acetic acid), and they form a lot of ions.”

- (13) Refer to the articles “Energy Story,” “Short Circuit,” and “Conducting Solutions.” Then answer the following question.

You have learned about electricity by reading three articles, “Energy Story,” “Short Circuit,” and “Conducting Solutions.”

In an essay, analyze how each source uses explanations, examples, and/or descriptions to help accomplish its purpose. Support your response with evidence from each source.

Today you will read a passage from the epic poem *The Odyssey* and view the painting *Penelope and the Suitors*. *The Odyssey* tells the story of Ulysses, who, after the decade-long war between the Greeks (the Achaeans) and the Trojans, spends an additional ten years journeying back to his home in Greece, where his son Telemachus and wife Penelope await his return. As you read, you will gather information about the passage and the painting and answer questions about them so you can write a narrative story.

Read the passage from *The Odyssey*. Then answer the questions.



from *The Odyssey*

by Homer

- 1 “The sons of all the chief men among you are pestering my mother to marry them against her will. They are afraid to go to her father Icarus, asking him to choose the one he likes best, and to provide marriage gifts for his daughter, but day by day they keep hanging about my father’s house, sacrificing our oxen, sheep, and fat goats for their banquets, and never giving so much as a thought to the quantity of wine they drink. No estate can stand such recklessness; we have now no Ulysses to ward off harm from our doors, and I cannot hold my own against them. I shall never all my days be as good a man as he was, still I would indeed defend myself if I had power to do so, for I cannot stand such treatment any longer; my house is being disgraced and ruined. Have respect, therefore, to your own consciences and to public opinion. Fear, too, the wrath of heaven, lest the gods should be displeased and turn upon you. I pray you by Jove and Themis, who is the beginning and the end of councils, [do not] hold back, my friends, and leave me singlehanded—unless it be that my brave father Ulysses did some wrong to the Achaeans which you would now avenge on me, by aiding and abetting these suitors. Moreover, if I am to be eaten out of house and home at all, I had rather you did the eating yourselves, for I could then take action against you to some purpose, and serve you with notices from house to house till I got paid in full, whereas now I have no remedy.”
- 2 With this Telemachus dashed his staff to the ground and burst into tears. Every one was very sorry for him, but they all sat still and no one ventured to make him an angry answer, save only Antinous, who spoke thus:—
- 3 “Telemachus, insolent braggart that you are, how dare you try to throw the blame upon us suitors? It is your mother’s fault not ours, for she is a very artful woman. This three years past, and close on four, she has been driving us out of our minds, by encouraging each one of us, and sending him messages without meaning one word of what she says. And then there was that other trick she played us. She set up a great tambour frame in her room, and began to work on an enormous piece of fine needlework. ‘Sweet hearts,’ said she, ‘Ulysses is indeed dead, still do not press me to marry again immediately, wait—for I would not have my skill in needlework perish unrecorded—till I have completed a pall for the hero Laertes, to be in readiness against the time when death shall take him. He is very rich, and the women of the place will talk if he is laid out without a pall.’

- 4 “This was what she said, and we assented; whereon we could see her working on her great web all day long, but at night she would unpick the stitches again by torchlight. She fooled us in this way for three years and we never found her out, but as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work, so she had to finish it whether she would or no. The suitors, therefore, make you this answer, that both you and the Achaeans may understand—‘send your mother away, and bid her marry the man of her own and of her father’s choice’; for I do not know what will happen if she goes on plaguing us much longer with the airs she gives herself on the score of the accomplishments Minerva has taught her, and because she is so clever. We never yet heard of such a woman; we know all about Tyro, Alcmena, Mycene, and the famous women of old, but they were nothing to your mother any one of them. It was not fair of her to treat us in that way, and as long as she continues in the mind with which heaven has now endowed her, so long shall we go on eating up your estate, and I do not see why she should change, for she gets all the honour and glory, and it is you who pay for it, not she. Understand, then, that we will not go back to our lands neither here nor elsewhere, till she has made her choice and married some one or other of us.”

From THE ODYSSEY by Homer—Public Domain

Art: © Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections.

(14) **Part A**

What is the impact of the author’s introduction of the character of Antinous on the development of the passage?

- A. It emphasizes the futility of Telemachus’s pleas, which fail to produce the desired effect of shaming the suitors into leaving.
- B. It reveals the true nature of Telemachus’s pleas, which seem selfless and sincere but are actually selfish and boastful.
- C. It reinforces a key claim of Telemachus’s pleas by showing all the suitors to be heedless of how society judges them.
- D. It suggests the fragility of Telemachus’s pleas by exposing the presence of a traitor from within his supposedly unified estate.

Part B

Select the quotation from the passage that *best* supports the answer to Part A.

- A. “‘Have respect, therefore, to your own consciences and to public opinion.’” (paragraph 1)
- B. “‘Telemachus, insolent braggart that you are...’” (paragraph 3)
- C. “‘...as time wore on and she was now in her fourth year, one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us, and we caught her in the act of undoing her work...’” (paragraph 4)
- D. “‘...as long as she continues in the mind with which heaven has now endowed her, so long shall we go on eating up your estate...’” (paragraph 4)

(15) **Part A**

In paragraph 3 of the passage from *The Odyssey*, Antinous uses the phrases *insolent braggart*, *driving us out of our minds*, and *that other trick she played us*. What is the effect of these phrases on the tone of the paragraph?

- A. They create a pessimistic tone that highlights Antinous’s doubts about becoming Penelope’s chosen husband.
- B. They create a resentful tone that emphasizes Antinous’s belief that he has been misused by Penelope and her family.
- C. They create a regretful tone that underscores all the time Antinous has wasted waiting for Penelope’s answer.
- D. They create an injured tone that indicates the depth of Antinous’s disappointment at losing Penelope’s good opinion.

Part B

Select *three* quotations from paragraph 4 that create an effect *most* similar to the answer to Part A.

- “‘She fooled us in this way for three years...’”
- “‘...one of her maids who knew what she was doing told us...’”
- “‘The suitors, therefore, make you this answer...’”
- “‘...if she goes on plaguing us much longer...’”
- “‘...they were nothing to your mother any one of them.’”
- “‘It was not fair of her to treat us in that way...’”
- “‘...heaven has now endowed her...’”

- (16) You have read a passage from *The Odyssey* and viewed the painting *Penelope and the Suitors*. Using what you have learned from these sources, write an original narrative in the form of a journal entry from Penelope’s point of view, describing what happens after she finishes weaving her cloth. Your journal entry should offer insight into Penelope’s thoughts and interactions with other characters.

(17) Provide an objective summary of the passage from *The Odyssey*. Drag and drop key events from the list of sentences into the boxes in chronological order.

A	Penelope confesses her love for Ulysses in his absence.	B	Telemachus is told that until his mother chooses a new husband, the suitors will not leave his estate.
C	The leaders acknowledge the artistry of Penelope's needlework.	D	One of the suitors challenges Telemachus's claim that the situation is their fault.
E	Telemachus details his financial and emotional challenges and asks for understanding.	F	Antinous reveals how Penelope has delayed making a decision about a new husband.
G	Telemachus gets into a physical confrontation with one of the suitors.	H	Ulysses returns from his long journey to find chaos at home.

1.
2.
3.
4.

(18) Complete the table by selecting the boxes in the appropriate columns to indicate whether the central ideas listed apply to either the passage from *The Odyssey*, the painting *Penelope and the Suitors*, or both the passage and the painting.

Central Idea	Penelope focuses on her project and ignores the suitors.	Penelope's weaving is revealed as a way for her to challenge the suitors.	The suitors are destroying Ulysses's estate.	The suitors are determined to achieve their objective.
The Odyssey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Penelope and the Suitors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Both	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(19) **Part A**

In the painting *Penelope and the Suitors*, the artist places Penelope at the center of the image and makes her the focal point for the other six figures. How do these artistic choices affect the viewer's interpretation of the painting?

- A. They indicate that Penelope has intentionally put herself in this situation.
- B. They imply that Penelope is a neutral party in a disagreement among others.
- C. They suggest that Penelope is trapped by a lack of privacy.
- D. They highlight that Penelope has an elevated rank in the social hierarchy.

Part B

Select *two* other details from the painting that create an effect similar to that in Part A.

- the vivid color of Penelope's gown
- the golden cup on the table at the lower right
- the flower bouquet that nearly touches Penelope's dress
- the unhappy expressions on the suitors' faces
- the musical instrument held by the suitor at the top right
- the large window openings in the room

(20) **Part A**

How does the use of dialogue in the passage from *The Odyssey* contribute to the passage's development?

- A. It provides valuable details about where the characters are from by showcasing regional dialects and behaviors.
- B. It provides a more objective account of past events by having two different characters describe them.
- C. It develops the characters by revealing information directly from the characters themselves.
- D. It minimizes the urgency of the action by eliminating the reflections of a narrator.

Part B

Which statement about the passage provides the *best* support for the answer to Part A?

- A. Telemachus appeals to the fathers of the suitors, whereas Antinous directly addresses Telemachus.
- B. Telemachus's speech conveys desperation, whereas Antinous's speech shows outrage.
- C. Antinous quotes another character, whereas Telemachus speaks only about himself.
- D. Both speeches by Telemachus and Antinous contain emotional outbursts, but each character uses different terms to communicate emotion.