



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2011**

**Grade 6
Reading**

Reading

- ① An **antonym** (opposite meaning) for the word chaos is
- A. hurry.
 - B. calm.
 - C. trust.
 - D. concern.

Use the definitions below to answer the question.

position *n* 1. a rank 2. an opinion 3. the correct place 4. a role on a team

- ② Which is the **best** definition of the word position as it is used in this sentence?
- The parents wondered what the principal's position was on making the school day longer.
- A. definition 1
 - B. definition 2
 - C. definition 3
 - D. definition 4

Read this folktale about what a boy named Petr (Peter) learns about necessity. Then answer the questions that follow.

Necessity *Josepha Sherman*

ONCE THERE was a farmer who was blessed with all a farmer could wish for: fine, fertile lands, happy, healthy animals, a comfortable home, and a handsome son, Petr. Petr was a good-natured young man and as loving a son as ever a father could wish for. But because everything went so well on the farm, he knew nothing at all of hardship and want.

His father worried about that. "Petr has never experienced even the slightest bit of ill luck. I don't even know if he could be clever enough to fend for himself if something went wrong! No, no, this will never do. I must find a way to test my boy and see if he can, indeed, overcome some hardship," he said to himself.

From that day on, the farmer gave Petr all the difficult jobs to do, all the tasks that might possibly go wrong. But nothing went wrong!

"This will never do," the farmer mused. "I must find some way to test Petr."

He thought about it and thought about it. Then, late one night, the farmer woke with a laugh. "Ha! I have it! I know exactly how I'll test my Petr."

So the next morning he called his son to him and said, "Petr, I wish you to go on an errand for me."

"Of course, Father. What is it you need?" the son replied.

"I wish you to go into the forest and look for necessity."

Petr frowned. He assumed his father meant for him to go and find a person. But Necessity! That was an odd name for anyone to bear. "And where will I find Mr. Necessity?"

"Don't worry, my boy. If you don't find necessity, necessity will surely find you and teach you a wise lesson. But I don't want you to come home before that happens. Do you understand? You are not to come home until you have found necessity or necessity has found you."

Now Petr was more confused than before. Was the mysterious Necessity a friend of his father's?

Whoever he was, he must be a clever fellow indeed, if he could find someone in that vast forest! "Very well, Father," Petr said reluctantly. "Let me take a horse and—"

"No, no," his father interrupted. "We need all the horses today."

"Then I shall take a sturdy oxcart and—"

"No, no, we shall need all the sturdy oxcarts as well. Here is what you may take."

He led the boy to the most rickety, most worn-out oxcart on the whole farm. "This?" Petr asked. "B-but it will surely fall apart the moment I enter the forest."

"Don't worry," his father said with a smile. "If it does fall apart, necessity will help you fix it."

18 And so a truly puzzled Petr drove his two oxen off into the forest, the rickety old cart rocking and creaking beneath him. He drove far and long into the forest, till the tall trees nearly shut out the light with their leaves and he could barely see

his way. And all the time he rode, Petr called out: “Mr. Necessity? Mr. Necessity? Can you hear me? Please, Mr. Necessity, I’m looking for you!”

But no one answered. The day wore on, and the night came near, and Petr looked around uneasily. The forest was a very wild place, full of wolves and bears that might want to eat a team of oxen. Or even a boy!

“Mr. Necessity! Please!”

Just then, the oxcart struck a rock and tilted sideways so suddenly that Petr was thrown to the ground. As he picked himself up, the boy groaned.

22 “Look at this cart. One of the axles has snapped right in half, and there’s the wheel, rolled off by itself.” Petr glanced around with a shiver. He was alone, all alone in the middle of the wild forest. *And there isn’t a glimpse of Mr. Necessity. Now what am I going to do?* the boy wondered to himself.

He sat down on a rock, with his head in his hands, until the oxen, who had been peacefully nibbling on leaves, straightened up with a snort. Petr straightened, too. What was that? Had he heard wolves howling?

“I can’t stay here and wait for Mr. Necessity. Father was wrong; he’s nowhere around. I can’t walk all the way home, not with the night almost here. So I’ll just have to fix the cart myself. But how?”

Petr walked around the cart. The wheels looked all right, but the axle was definitely broken.

“There are many stray branches lying around. I wonder . . .,” Petr thought aloud. He used his belt knife to whittle off a good, straight branch that looked to be the right size.

“Now, how do I hoist the cart up so that I can get the broken axle off and the new one on?” He paused and then said, “I think I know.”

Petr took another branch, a strong, springy one. He balanced it on a rock, slipped one end of the branch under the cart, and stood on the other end. Sure enough, the branch acted as a lever, and the cart bed came up off the ground. Petr braced the branch with another rock, so the cart wouldn’t fall on him, and set about pulling off the broken axle and slipping in the new one. He fixed both wheels firmly onto the new axle, then let the cart settle back to the ground.

“It worked! The new axle is holding!”

Petr jumped back onto the cart and picked up the reins. “Come, my oxen. Let’s go home!”

Meanwhile, Petr’s father was pacing back and forth, forth and back. Had he done the right thing, sending his boy off into the forest? Here it was, nearly night, and there wasn’t a sign of the boy.

Ah, but here he comes! Here comes Petr now! The father looked at the newly repaired cart and beamed. “My boy, my clever, clever boy, you did find necessity!”

Petr frowned. “I did no such thing. I saw no one in the forest at all, most certainly not any Mr. Necessity. And he didn’t teach me a thing! All I learned was that if something needs to be done, you cannot just wait around for someone else to do it. You have to help yourself.”

The farmer laughed. “My dear boy, I never meant for you to find a *man* named Necessity! I just wanted to be sure you could solve problems by yourself. And now I can be proud because necessity has taught you a fine lesson after all.”

—A tale from Romania

3 What happens when the father gives Petr all the jobs that can go wrong?

- A. The father's plan fails.
- B. Petr looks for help.
- C. The father feels sorry for Petr.
- D. Petr refuses to work.

4 How does Petr react when his father asks him to find necessity?

- A. He does not want to go into the forest.
- B. He enjoys the idea of going on an adventure.
- C. He hopes he can leave right away.
- D. He does not understand what he is looking for.

5 In paragraph 18, the word rickety means that the cart is

- A. large.
- B. shaky.
- C. expensive.
- D. ordinary.

6 In paragraph 22, when Petr "glanced around with a shiver," it shows that he

- A. cannot see in the dark.
- B. is cold from the night air.
- C. is afraid of his surroundings.
- D. does not like the oxen.

7 Describe how Petr passes his father's final test. Use details from the folktale to support your answer.

- 8 What does Petr do when he learns he cannot walk home from the forest?
- A. He waits for his father.
 - B. He decides to fix the cart.
 - C. He builds a place to sleep.
 - D. He rides back on the oxen.

- 9 A synonym for the word braced is
- A. raised.
 - B. moved.
 - C. supported.
 - D. followed.

- 10 Why is Petr's father pacing back and forth?
- A. He is worried about Petr's safety.
 - B. He is thinking of another test for Petr.
 - C. He is waiting to use Petr's team of oxen.
 - D. He is afraid the test is too easy for Petr.

- 11 At the end of the folktale, the **main** lesson that Petr learns is to
- A. leave early if he goes far from home.
 - B. rely on himself if he has a problem.
 - C. understand a job before he starts it.
 - D. give people time to come to see him.

- 12 Explain how Petr's actions show what kind of person he is. Use details from the folktale to support your answer.

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