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Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program  
TCAP

**TNReady — Grade 7 English Language Arts  
Part I**

**PRACTICE TEST**

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Student Name

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Teacher Name



Tennessee Department of Education

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**Directions**

In this Practice Test, you will read a passage or set of passages and then write a response to a writing task. This task gives you an opportunity to demonstrate how well you can organize and express your ideas in written text.

After reading the passage(s) and writing task, take a few minutes to think about the material and to plan what you want to write before you begin to answer. Do your best to write a clear and well-organized response. Be sure to keep in mind your purpose and audience when developing your response.

If you finish before the allotted time ends, review your work.

Read the passage and write a response to the writing task.

**from “Mrs. Majeska and Sara Duck”**

by Ethel Pochocki

- 1** There once was an old woman who lived on the edge of a city and the edge of a woods. Her house sat right smack in the middle of where one ended and the other began. Mrs. Majeska, for that was her name, was quite content with this, for either way she turned, she had the best of both worlds.
- 2** If she turned left, she followed the path into the bustling city and reveled<sup>1</sup> in the music of church bells and car horns and children laughing and dogs barking and brakes screeching and radios blaring from apartment windows and the smells of peanuts and hot dogs roasting. She filled her basket with books from the library and necklaces of dried mushrooms from pushcarts on the street and remnants of yarn from the thrift store. Sometimes, on a Wednesday afternoon, when tickets were cheap, she went to the movies and lost herself in worlds she could only imagine.
- 3** If she turned right, she followed the path through the woods and meadow that led to the ocean shore. Here there was no traffic, no noise, except the warning caws of crows, as she wended<sup>2</sup> her way to the bank that opened to the sea. Once on shore, she searched for the day’s treasure of beach glass, hunched over, moving side to side like an excited crab, her eyes like searchlights probing for the bits of colored glass and china, polished smooth by the punishing waves and thrown up by the receding tide.
- 4** Then she would sit on a driftwood log, bleached to white by the sun, and fondle her treasures, wondering about their history. What ship had once served meals on this china bordered with roses? What medicine was once held in these green and blue bottles? . . . The red beach glass was Mrs. Majeska’s joy. She danced a jig of happiness whenever she found red.
- 5** It didn’t take much to make Mrs. Majeska happy. She enjoyed her life. She was not sad or lonely or frail or needy. She liked living alone and being able to do whatever she wanted. She could wake up and go to sleep as she pleased. She could eat chili for breakfast and a pear for supper. She could wear mismatched socks and sit in the moonlight at midnight and watch the zucchinis grow with no one to tell her otherwise.
- 6** Mrs. Majeska had no family or pets. She liked children and small animals, but those she knew already belonged to other families. Sometimes a cat on its

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<sup>1</sup> **reveled:** took delight

<sup>2</sup> **wended:** walked or went along

way to the city or the woods would stop by for a snack and a cuddle, and Mrs. Majeska kept a can of milk and a tin of sardines on hand for such visits.

- 7** One April morning, when Mrs. Majeska could smell spring in the air, even though all she could see outside was mud, she put on her heavy brown sweater that came down to her knees and her boots that came up to her knees, grabbed her basket, and took the path to the right. She needed driftwood for kindling and hoped she might find some leeks for soup. The frozen leaves crunched beneath her boots as she searched, and finally—there they were, the first green tips pushed through and waiting!
- 8** She picked her fill and then slip-slid down the bank to the shore, where the grey, sullen, grumbling waves were disappearing with the tide. Left in their wake lay deposits of shells and sand dollars, fresh slimy seaweed, and four broken chair rungs, perfect for kindling. Everything shone and sparkled in the sun.
- 9** Mrs. Majeska searched in vain for beach glass. Not today, she sighed, as she straightened up. Then a quick hint of red beneath a clump of seaweed caught her eye. She pulled away the protecting strands and gasped. “Well, I never!” she exclaimed. “What’s a rubber duck doing here? A red rubber duck?”
- 10** No child could have left it. Children didn’t come here; it was too rocky. And weren’t rubber ducks supposed to be yellow? Wasn’t that the *rule*? Still, it tickled her fancy to find such a thing, and she wedged it into the basket between the leeks and the rungs.
- 11** That evening, she sat in her rocker by the fire, which crackled with the day’s bounty. As she cradled the rubber duck in her hands, she wondered: What was its story, what was its past? Finally she got up and said, “Past is past. Right now you’re going for a swim in the tub.”
- 12** She ran the water into the deep old tub with the claw feet, filled it with lilac bubble bath, and tossed in the duck. . . . Mrs. Majeska named her Sara, and so began the friendship between the old lady and the rubber duck, who enjoyed the pleasure of each other’s company every evening after. It was as if it had always been this way.
- 13** Sara was a good listener, never interrupting Mrs. Majeska’s recital of the day’s happenings. Truth to tell, Sara didn’t have much to report, since she spent her day sitting atop the bar of soap in the tray, waiting for the evening go-round. Her short life with hundreds of brothers and sisters had almost come to an end when the boat carrying them from China had split open during a violent storm and sunk. Its cargo of toys spilled into the churning sea, forced to go wherever the wild wind and current took them.

**14** Some landed on shores in Alaska and Russia and Mexico and Maine, where foragers<sup>3</sup> like Mrs. Majeska found them. Some are still sailing around the world waiting to be rescued. Sara had had enough of adventure. Right now, Mrs. Majeska’s tub was exactly where she wanted to be.

Excerpt from “Mrs. Majeska and Sara Duck,” by Ethel Pochocki. Reprinted from *Cicada*, July/August 2008, Vol. 10, No. 6, © 2008 by Ethel Pochocki/Carus Publishing Company/Cricket Media.

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<sup>3</sup> **foragers:** people who search for food or provisions

**Writing Task**

Write a narrative in which you are the red duck. Explain to Mrs. Majeska how you came to be on the beach where she found you. Write from a first-person point of view, using dialogue, description, and chronology to describe your adventures.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

- Plan your response
- Write your response

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph narrative story. Spend about 90 minutes on this response, including the time you spend reading the passage(s), planning, and writing your response.

**Write your response to the Writing Task in the space provided below.**

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