

Grade 5 Achievement Test – May 2007
Annotated Item 9

Standard and Benchmark Assessed:

Standard: Acquisition of Vocabulary

Benchmark: C. Apply knowledge of connotation and denotation to learn the meanings of words.

Multiple Choice Question:

9. We **marvel** at their great skill in hunting, and the easy grace they display when they move.

What does **marvel** mean in the sentence?

- A. look with disrespect
- B. look with fright
- C. look with wonder
- D. look with humor

Commentary:

This item asks students to determine the meaning of the word **marvel** as it is used in this sentence. Students at the 5th grade level are expected to identify the connotations and denotations of new words according to the Grade 5 Ohio Academic Content Standards in English Language Arts. Answer choice A is incorrect. Their skill hunting and the grace of their movement does not cause any feelings of disrespect. Disrespect is not a meaning for **marvel**. Answer choice B is incorrect. When watching a lion, there is often a sense of awe at their movements and skill, not a sense of fear. Fright is not one of the meanings for **marvel**. Answer choice C is correct. The word **marvel** means to fill with awe. Wonder is the correct meaning for **marvel** as it is used in this sentence. Answer choice D is incorrect. There is no indication of humor in the given sentence.

Performance Data:

The percent of public school students selecting answer choice C for question 9 on the May 2007 Grade 5 Reading Achievement was 72%.

Keywords: connotation, denotation, word meaning

Linked Passage:

Lions

by John Bonnett Wexo

Lions have been admired and feared by people for thousands of years. Ancient hunters sometimes found themselves competing with lions when they hunted, and the greater strength and size of the lions usually meant that the cats got the prey and the humans did not. It was also true that the lions could easily kill people. For these reasons, people developed the two main human attitudes about lions that have survived to this day: admiration and fear.

When we look at lions today, we can't help but admire them. We still feel a thrill because they are so strong and so powerful. We marvel at their great skill in hunting, and the easy grace they display when they move.

Grade 5 Achievement Test – May 2007
Annotated Item 9

At the same time, we may feel unhappy and fearful about the fact that lions kill prey. Lions are *predators*—animals that hunt other animals. The entire life of a lion is focused on the chasing, catching, and eating of prey. This shocks some people, but we must understand that lions have no choice about the matter. Unlike humans, they have only one way to survive. They *must* hunt to stay alive. If a lion stops hunting, it will die.

Lions are members of a group called *Big Cats*. The group includes other big predators—tigers, leopards, and jaguars. But within the group, the only predators that are larger than lions are Siberian tigers. Of course, Siberian tigers and lions never meet each other because they live in different parts of the world—so lions are the biggest and most ferocious predators in the places where they live.

Lions have the biggest eyes of any meat-eating animal or *carnivore*, and can sometimes see prey that is miles away. Like other cats, they can see very well in the dark—and this helps them to hunt at night. (Many lions do most of their hunting at night.) The ears of a lion also help to find prey. A lion can sometimes hear animals that are more than a mile away.

When they hunt, lions can run fast for short distances to catch prey. But many times, they prefer to *sneak up* on the animals they are hunting. Very slowly, a lion creeps as close as it can get without being seen. Then, when the prey animal is looking the other way, the lion leaps! A lion can jump as much as *35 feet* in one leap.

Family life is very important to lions. Of all the cats in the world, they are *the only ones* that live together in large family groups. Other cats, like leopards and tigers, live alone most of the time. But lions believe in *togetherness*. They raise their young together, and they hunt together.

A family of lions is called a *pride*. There are between 3 and 40 lions in a pride—and a typical pride includes a group of females, their young, and several males. The females are usually sisters or closely related, and they often stay with the same pride all of their lives. But the male lions usually stay with a pride for only a few years.

Getting food isn't easy. Lions are expert hunters, but they often have to work hard to get their food. *Working together* makes hunting easier, and this is one major reason why lions live in prides. A group of lions hunting together can catch more food than a single lion hunting alone.

Young lions are well protected from the moment they are born. And they need all the protection they can get. At the moment of their births, they are almost totally helpless. They may weigh less than three pounds and can hardly crawl. Sometimes, their eyes don't even open until they are five or six days old.

The babies are called *cubs*. Unlike adult lions, cubs have spots on their coats. Many people believe that the spots help to protect the cubs by making it harder for predators to see them.

But the greatest protection for a young lion comes from its mother and the other females in the pride. *All* of the females work together to protect and feed *all* of the cubs in the pride. And because the females in a pride can catch more food than a single mother could catch, all of the babies eat better and stay healthier. You might say that a young lion has *many mothers* to love it and keep it safe.