The Unit 1 common assessment will be based on 4 reading passages. Questions will require you to understand the meaning and application of the following terms. While the format for most of the test is multiple choice, you will also have to write a constructed response that will require you to support your claims with evidence from the selection.

- Theme
- Cite evidence to support theme
- Context clues
- Characterization—Direct and Indirect (what is revealed by description, words, actions, thoughts and feelings, what others say)
- Setting
- Plot
  - Exposition
  - Rising Action
  - Climax/Turning Point
  - Resolution
- Mood
- Tone
- Compare/contrast 2 texts
- Compare/contrast 2 characters
- Make inferences
- Identify sentence structure (simple, complex, compound, compound-complex)

The following passages are similar to the types of passages and questions you will see on the test.

**A Bright Idea**

This is an old story. It was written 100 years ago. So you will find it has a different style from stories people read and write today. For example, you'll read that the children sell popcorn for 5 cents a bag and are thrilled. Today, that's not enough money to buy much.

Mrs. Meredith was a most kind and thoughtful woman. She spent a great deal of time visiting the poor. She knew they had problems. She wanted to help them. She brought food. She brought medicine, too.

The family lived in a small community with some people who were poor and others who were rich. In the town, some people worked but others had no jobs, and families needed money to pay their bills. Some families were poor because the parents had lost jobs, and the economy was in decline. People tried to help each other meet these challenges.

One morning she told her children about a family she had visited the day before. There was a man sick in bed, his wife, who took care of him and could not go out to work, and their little boy. The little boy—his name was Bernard—had interested her very much.

"I wish you could see him," she said to her own children, John, Harry, and Clara, "he is such a help to his mother. He wants very much to earn some money, but I don't see what he can do."

After their mother had left the room, the children sat thinking about Bernard. "I wish we could help him to earn money," said Clara. "His family is suffering so much."

"So do I," said Harry. "We really should do something to assist them."

For some moments, John said nothing, but, suddenly, he sprang to his feet and cried, "I have a great idea! I have a solution that we can all help accomplish."

The other children also jumped up all attention. When John had an idea, it was sure to be a good one.

"I tell you what we can do," said John. "You know that big box of corn Uncle John sent us for popping? Well, we can pop it, and put it into paper bags, and Bernard can take it around to the houses and sell it."
When Mrs. Meredith heard of John's idea, she, too, thought it a good one. Very soon, the children were busy popping the corn, while their mother went out to buy the paper bags. When she came back, she brought Bernard with her.

In a short time, he started out on his new business, and, much sooner than could be expected, returned with an empty basket. Tucked into one of his mittens were ten nickels. He had never earned so much money before in his life. When he found that it was all to be his, he was so delighted he could hardly speak, but his bright smiling face spoke for him. After he had run home to take the money to his mother, John said, "We have corn enough left to send Bernard out ever so many times. May we do it again?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Meredith, "you may send him every Saturday morning, if you will pop the corn for him yourselves. John, will you agree to take charge of the work?"

"Indeed I will," replied John, and he kept his word. For many weeks, every Saturday morning, no matter what opportunities there were to play, he saw that the corn was all popped, the paper bags filled, and arranged in the basket when Bernard arrived.

People began to watch for the "little pop-corn boy," and every week he had at least fifty cents to take home, and often significantly more, income that supported his family. All of this was because of the way John carried out his bright idea.

1. What does the conversation tell you about the mother and her children? The mother and her children are caring people who try to help others.

2. What do John’s words and actions at the end of the story tell you? John agrees to do the work of popping the corn and he then keeps his word. This shows that he is dependable and trustworthy.

3. What is the theme of this story? Helping others is important and rewarding.

4. Select a sentence from the story that shows evidence to support this theme.
   "I wish we could help him to earn money," said Clara. “His family is suffering so much.”
   “We really should do something to assist them.”
   All of this was because of the way John carried out his bright idea.

5. What is the story’s primary conflict? Bernard’s family is struggling against poverty.

6. Identify the following elements of plot in this story.
   - Rising action: The children try to think of ways to help Bernard’s family and come up with an idea.
   - Climax/Turning point: In a short time, he started out on his new business, and, much sooner than could be expected, returned with an empty basket. Tucked into one of his mittens were ten nickels. He had never earned so much money before in his life. When he found that it was all to be his, he was so delighted he could hardly speak, but his bright smiling face spoke for him.
   - Resolution: John wants to keep Bernard in business and he continues to earn money as the pop-corn boy.

7. What details do you know about the setting of the story? The story is set in a small community. It was many years ago because 50 cents is not a lot of money today but it was in this time.

8. What are 3 words to describe John. John is smart, caring, and dependable.

9. How does the author establish the mood of the story? The author provides information through the narrator about the town and the struggles that some people face.
10. What is one detail the author learns about Bernard through the narrator? He had never before earned 50 cents.

11. How does John’s family differ from Bernard’s family? John’s family is financially stable, but Bernard’s family is in poverty.

12. Read the following sentence.

Some families were poor because the parents had lost jobs, and the economy was in decline.

What is the meaning of the underlined word in the sentence? downturn, reduction, decrease

13. Read the following paragraph.

For some moments, John said nothing, but, suddenly, he sprang to his feet and cried, "I have a great idea! I have a solution that we can all help accomplish."

What change occurs in John in this paragraph? He moves from quietly thinking about the situation to moving and speaking about his idea.

14. What is the main reason the children help Bernard? They genuinely feel bad for his family and want to help them (ie. They are not told to by their mother)

15. For each of the following sentences, tell what sentence structure is used.

- Mrs. Meredith was a most kind and thoughtful woman. Simple
- Some families were poor because the parents had lost jobs, and the economy was in decline. Compound-complex
- After their mother had left the room, the children sat thinking about Bernard. Complex
- He wants very much to earn some money, but I don't see what he can do. Compound

Movie Theaters and Popcorn

In American, we often associate movie theaters with popcorn. So how did this association begin? In 1885, Charles Cretors of Chicago, Illinois, invented the first popcorn machine. Popcorn quickly became a popular treat as street vendors were soon pushing steam or gas-powered poppers through fairs, parks, and expositions. It took a while before popcorn landed in movie theaters, but once it did, it became a staple.

The nickelodeons that popped up in small towns across the country in the early 1900s offered five-cent silent movies and the live accompaniment of a piano or organ player—but no food. Instead, patrons purchased food and drinks from nearby restaurants and boldly carried their stash in with them, a brazen violation of today’s ubiquitous “no outside food or drink” rules. Industrious vendors set up popcorn poppers or rented storefront space next to theatres and sold popcorn to patrons on their way into the theater. Theaters even allowed self-employed vendors to roam the cinema selling sweet and salty wares like popcorn and peanuts.

In the ’20s and ’30s, nickelodeons were replaced by more upscale movie theaters. These European-inspired “palaces”—with their marble-lined hallways, crystal chandeliers, billiards rooms, and drop-off day care centers—courted wealthier customers and were intolerant of messy and disruptive snacks. Many theater owners refused to sell popcorn in the theaters because they felt it was too messy. But ticket holders then, just as today, flouted the rules and smuggled in goodies.
7th ELA Unit 1 Study Guide ANSWER KEY

When the Great Depression hit, times were tough, and cinema owners needed cash to stay afloat, which meant they no longer had the luxury of ignoring movie refreshments. At first, they simply installed candy dispensers or sold (rather than gave away) space to those entrepreneurial vendors who formerly strolled the aisles. Eventually, though, theater construction itself started to incorporate concession stands into the design.

The new star of the concession stand was not candy but popcorn. Many theatre owners began installing popcorn poppers inside their theatres; those who refused to sell popcorn quickly went out of business. Popcorn was easy to store and cheap to produce, and movie-going Americans swallowed it by the bucketful. During the depression, 5 and 10 cent bags of popcorn were one of the few luxuries families could afford. Unlike other confections, popcorn sales actually increased throughout the Depression. A major reason for this increase was the introduction of popcorn into movie theatres. One businessman actually lowered the price of his theatre tickets and added a popcorn machine. He soon saw huge profits.

Movie-goers continue this trend of consuming popcorn at the movies in 2015, even though prices have since jumped over 600 percent (when adjusted for inflation). At many cinemas, popcorn remains the number 1 best seller, followed by sodas, pretzels, nachos, and hot dogs.

16. How did the Great Depression contribute to the increase in popularity of popcorn?
   A. Theaters were required to sell popcorn or go out of business.
   B. People no longer worried about popcorn making a mess in theaters.
   C. Theater owners needed to find new ways to make money so they turned to concessions.
   D. More people began having popcorn poppers in their homes during the Great Depression.

17. According to “Movie Theaters and Popcorn” why did popcorn sales increase during the Depression?
   A. Profit margins on popcorn sales were over 600 percent.
   B. Sales of all confections increased during the Depression.
   C. It was introduced in movie theaters as an affordable luxury.
   D. The first popping machine was invented at the beginning of the Depression.

18. Which sentence is true of both selections?
   A. Both selections talk about helping others.
   B. Both selections include characters and dialogue.
   C. Both selections talk about sales of a popular product.
   D. Both selections talk about the invention of the popcorn popper.