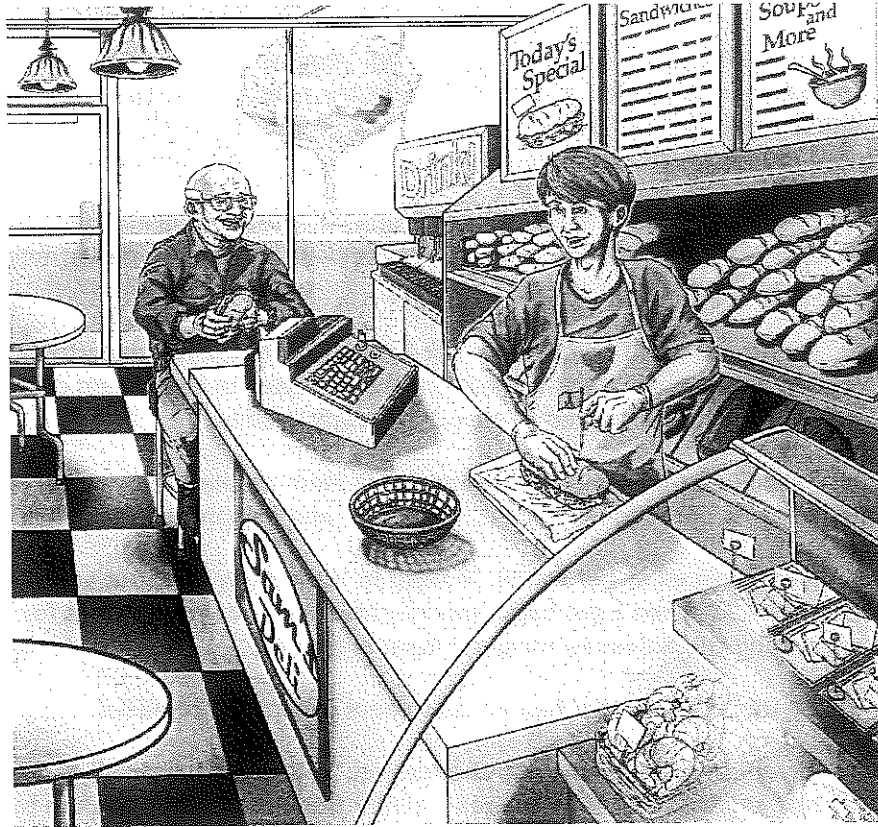


STAAR Practice

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

The Regulars



- 1 "Turkey Melt," "Corned Beef on Rye," and "Ham and Cheese" waved good-bye. They were three of the regulars at my parents' deli. Every day Mr. and Mrs. Sandlin shared a turkey-melt sandwich, Mr. Augsburger had a corned beef on rye bread, and Mr. Bates ordered ham and cheese on whole wheat from his perch on the stool beside the cash register. I didn't even know their real names until one very eventful day at the deli.
- 2 It was the day of the Twin Rivers Summer Festival, and I had just been told that I had to help at the deli that afternoon instead of enjoying the event with my friends Lisa and Carlos.
- 3 "Can't we hire extra help?" I complained.
- 4 "There's not enough time to train someone else," Mom responded. "Plus, they wouldn't know our customers. We have to take care of our regulars because they're part of what makes Sam's Deli a special place."

- 5 I had to admit that Sam's Deli served good sandwiches, but I didn't think our sandwiches were *that* special. And I wouldn't exactly consider Sam's Deli an exciting place to hang out. A TV in the corner and people strolling past the deli's windows were about the only sources of entertainment. Sometimes people chatted with one another about the local news, but overall our days at the deli were quiet.
- 6 I know Mom and Dad appreciated our regular customers' business. I just couldn't understand why they fussed over them so much. Personally, I didn't think it would hurt for some of our regulars to try a new restaurant every now and then—or at least consider ordering a different type of sandwich.
- 7 "Where is Dad?" I thought to myself as I wiped off plastic menus. He had left more than an hour ago to drop off a delivery for the fire department, which was running a booth at the festival.
- 8 My friends and I had been excited to hear that the fire department was planning to spray children at the festival with water to keep them cool. "Lisa and Carlos are probably soaked by now," I thought glumly.
- 9 "Thanks for cleaning the menus," said Mom as she gathered her items for the festival's pie-judging contest. "Your dad and I appreciate your help."
- 10 Mom glanced at her watch. "I need to leave now, Eric. But your dad should be here soon. When I get back, you can meet up with your friends for the concert and the fireworks tonight," Mom promised.
- 11 By this time the deli had no customers except the regulars.
- 12 "Everyone else is enjoying the festival," I thought to myself as I wistfully watched excited festival attendees walk by the deli window en route to the parade.
- 13 Soon, though, the parade was over, and Dad was still not back. A solid wall of hungry people entered the deli's door.
- 14 "What's today's lunch special?" one customer called out.
- 15 "Why don't they have more people working here?" I heard another complain.
- 16 I methodically took care of one order after another. I thought I was doing all right considering the crowd, but I had no time for all the other details of running a restaurant, like cleaning tables. Plus, I was running low on ice. It seemed that the machine wasn't working as usual.
- 17 Then, the next moment I had a chance to look up, Ham and Cheese handed me two large bags of ice.
- 18 "Your parents get ice from down the street when your ice maker doesn't keep up," he informed me. "I'm Mr. Bates, by the way. The Sandlins and Mr. Augsburger and I will help you out till your folks get back."

- 19 As I thanked him, I noticed that the Turkey Melts were making room for new customers by cleaning tables as quickly as they were vacated.
- 20 Together the regulars and I managed the crowd. I took orders and made sandwiches while they kept the restaurant clean and visited with customers.
- 21 "Remember the time Sam's car broke down?" Ham and Cheese asked.
- 22 "We delivered sandwiches by bicycle!" Corned Beef on Rye replied.
- 23 As the tidal wave of customers trickled to a stream, Mom and Dad rushed into the deli.
- 24 "I couldn't get through because of traffic," explained Dad.
- 25 "And I just got finished with the contest," Mom said, looking anxious.
- 26 "It's all right," I replied with a smile. "I had good help."
- 27 "Eric, why don't you take a break and go find your friends?" Dad suggested.
- 28 It was an enticing thought, but I had another idea.
- 29 "Maybe later," I said. "I have a few more orders to fill."
- 30 "We can take care of them," Mom said. "Especially after what you've been through."
- 31 "That's O.K.," I said. "These are special orders, the most important ones of the day. After all, you have to take care of your regulars."
- 32 Carefully, I began making a turkey melt, a corned beef on rye, and a ham-and-cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread.

1 What is the meaning of wistfully in paragraph 12?

- A With sadness
 - B With relief
 - C With anxiety
 - D With curiosity
-

2 Read paragraph 23 from the story.

As the tidal wave of customers trickled to a stream, Mom and Dad rushed into the deli.

The author includes this figurative language to show that the —

- F customers come in and out of the deli at a steady pace
 - G new customers got wet from the firefighters' hoses at the festival
 - H number of customers at the deli has become manageable
 - J customers are upset at first but calm by the time they leave
-

3 Eric's actions at the end of the story are significant because they reveal that he —

- A has learned that working in the deli is more fun than being with friends
- B understands that his parents deserve to rest before they return to work
- C is ready to accept more responsibilities at the deli
- D realizes the importance of loyal customers

- 4 Which of the following best describes Eric's main conflict in the story?
- F He does not know the names of the customers who frequently eat at his parents' deli.
 - G He thinks his parents need to offer a better variety of sandwiches at the deli.
 - H He has to help his parents on a day that he has plans with his friends.
 - J He is bothered by the lack of excitement in his parents' deli.
-

- 5 The first-person point of view of the story allows the reader to understand the —
- A actions of only the regulars at the deli
 - B narrator's changing perspective on the busy deli
 - C reasons the narrator's parents are not at the deli
 - D inner thoughts of the customers at the deli
-

- 6 Which sentence from the story best expresses its theme?
- F *"We have to take care of our regulars because they're part of what makes Sam's Deli a special place."*
 - G *Personally, I didn't think it would hurt for some of our regulars to try a new restaurant every now and then—or at least consider ordering a different type of sandwich.*
 - H *"Your dad and I appreciate your help."*
 - J *I took orders and made sandwiches while they kept the restaurant clean and visited with customers.*

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

Hidden in Abuelita's Soft Arms

by Daniel A. Olivas

Wrinkled and brown like an old paper bag,
Abuelita¹ smiles with her too-perfect white teeth,
And she calls out as I run from Papa's old, gray station wagon,
"Mi cielo, come here! I need a big abrazo from you!"

5 And I bury myself deep, hidden in Abuelita's soft arms,
Smelling like perfume and frijoles and coffee and candy.

A whole weekend with Abuelita!
I shout, "Bye, Papa!"

Papa smiles and drives off in a puff of white smoke.
10 I bury my face deeper into her,
Just me and Abuelita,
For the whole weekend.

We march happily into her house
Painted yellow-white like a forgotten Easter egg,
15 And cracked here and there like that same egg.
But it is her home,
Near the freeway and St. Agnes Church.

On the wall there are pictures of Mama and my two aunts.
And there's one of Abuelita, so young and beautiful,
20 Standing close to Abuelito on their wedding day.

"Mi cielo," Abuelita says holding my sweaty cheeks in her
Cool, smooth hands.
"You are so big! My big boy!"
And I laugh and stand on my toes to be even bigger.

25 And I bury myself deep, hidden in Abuelita's soft arms,
Smelling like perfume and frijoles and coffee and candy.

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¹Abuelita is the Spanish word for "grandmother."

7 In lines 5 and 25, the words "bury myself" and "hidden" highlight that the speaker —

- A wishes he could live permanently with Abuelita
 - B fears being seen by others when he hugs Abuelita
 - C feels safe and content with Abuelita
 - D is able to forget where he is when he is with Abuelita
-

8 What is the most likely reason the poet uses exclamation points in the third stanza?

- F To emphasize how much respect the speaker has for Abuelita
 - G To show the speaker's excitement about his long visit with Abuelita
 - H To convey Papa's hesitation about leaving the speaker with Abuelita
 - J To highlight how long it has been since the speaker last saw Abuelita
-

9 Read lines 14 and 15 from the poem.

Painted yellow-white like a forgotten Easter egg,
And cracked here and there like that same egg.

The poet includes these similes most likely to —

- A suggest that the speaker has not visited Abuelita in a long time
- B help the reader visualize Abuelita's house
- C identify the speaker's favorite holiday to spend with Abuelita
- D help the reader imagine a specific place in Abuelita's house

10 Read lines 23 and 24 of the poem.

"You are so big! My big boy!"
And I laugh and stand on my toes to be even bigger.

These lines are included to suggest that the speaker —

- F wishes he could be taller than he is
 - G is embarrassed by the name Abuelita calls him
 - H thinks Abuelita is very amusing
 - J enjoys making Abuelita feel proud of him
-

11 From the speaker's experience, the reader can learn that —

- A parents are to be appreciated
 - B happiness can be found in trying new things
 - C time spent with family should be cherished
 - D relationships can strengthen with time
-

12 By including Abuelita's dialogue in the poem, the poet is able to —

- F tell the qualities Abuelita likes about the speaker
 - G indicate what Abuelita and the speaker enjoy doing together
 - H reveal how Abuelita feels about the speaker
 - J suggest that Abuelita enjoys speaking Spanish with the speaker
-

13 How does the poet develop the theme of this poem?

- A By comparing the actions of Papa and Abuelita
- B By explaining the reasons the speaker visits Abuelita
- C By telling about the photographs in Abuelita's house
- D By describing the speaker's interaction with Abuelita