

Read the next *selection*. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Tomato Harvest

by Robert D. San Souci

What it was I still don't know
That urged a fourth-grade me to grow
Tomatoes in the strip of clay
Not used for planting—just for play.

5 My brothers laughed and called me dense—
Tomato farming made no sense.
What's more, the place already grew
Lots of sour grass to chew.

I ignored them both, my mind on things
10 Like hanging foil strips on strings
To keep away the birds that hoped to eat
The seeds fresh-sown in earth and peat.

I watered and weeded those seedlings of mine
Braced the stalks with stakes and twine,
15 And watched for snails and worms—that bunch
Of pests for whom green leaves mean lunch.

One night it rained so fiercely that
By dawn most plants were beaten flat;
I felt beaten splashing out to see
20 How little garden was left to me.

Those losses made my harvest small:
One bucketful of fruit was all—
But when I picked my first and tried it,
What sweetness and pride I found inside it.

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Use "Tomato Harvest" () to answer questions
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

1. In line 24, why does the speaker say that he found "sweetness and pride" in the first tomato?

- A He has worked hard to grow the tomatoes.
- B He has planted a very sweet-tasting variety of tomato.
- C Tomatoes are his favorite food to eat.
- D He knows the next tomato will not taste as good.

2. Stanza 4 is important to the poem because it shows —

- A the way the speaker feels about his brothers
- B the speaker's commitment to his garden
- C the speaker's lack of experience with gardening
- D the changes the speaker notices in his plants

3. Read these lines from the poem.

*I felt beaten splashing out to see
How little garden was left to me.*

The poet uses these lines to show that the speaker feels —

- A defeated by the storm
- B confused by the effect the rain had on the garden
- C burdened by the amount of work required to manage a garden
- D concerned that the storm has not ended

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4. The poet organizes the poem by —

- A explaining the reasons for each of the speaker's actions
- B listing the growing phases of the speaker's tomato plants
- C presenting the order of events in the speaker's experience
- D noting the frequent changes in the speaker's emotions

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5. Which line from the poem presents a problem that the speaker cannot control?

- A To keep away the birds that hoped to eat
- B Of pests for whom green leaves mean lunch.
- C Tomatoes in the strip of clay
- D One night it rained so fiercely that

Directions Read the poem.

Vacant Lot

The empty lot down the block,
Is the best place to play,
Full of wood and stray papers,
Loose gravel and clay.
5 We children know better
Just how to create
With the magical treasure
That lies past the gate.
We make imaginary kingdoms
10 From old bricks and rocks
Tarnished pennies, lengths of string,
Weathered wooden blocks

To a grownup, the woodpile
Might look a bit plain,
15 Like a bunch of old junk
Lying out in the rain.
But we kids can see
It is more than just wood.
It's the span of a bridge
To a make-believe neighborhood.
20 It's a castle's tall tower,
A cave dweller's lair,
It's a rabbit's tight burrow,
A creaky old stair.
25 It's the passage we take
That leads straight to pretending.
You're welcome to join us;
The game's never-ending.



6. Which pair of words from the poem rhyme?

- A. grow, clay
 - B. sense, grew
 - C. mine, twine
 - D. all, it
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7. Why does the poet include stanzas 1 & 2?

- A. To show that this was an unlikely place to plant a garden
 - B. To prove that the speaker's brothers were bullies
 - C. To explain why the speaker wanted to plant a garden
 - D. To suggest that planting a garden was a good idea
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8. The poem is structured in

- A. couplets
 - B. triplets
 - C. quatrains
 - D. one stanza
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9. Because the poem is written from the speaker's point of view, the reader is better able to understand –

- A. how to make a garden
- B. the highs and lows of taking on a new challenge
- C. the best location for growing tomatoes
- D. why the brothers make fun of the speaker

10. The author's point of view in this poem is

- A. first person.
- B. second person
- C. third-person.
- D. no point of view

11. Read Lines 1 through 4.

*The empty lot down the block,
Is the best place to play,
Full of wood and stray papers,
Loose gravel and clay.*

The rhyme in these lines occurs on

- A Lines 1 and 4.
- B Lines 2 and 4.
- C Lines 1 and 3.
- D Lines 2 and 3.

12. Choose the implied theme of this poem.

- A. Travel to distant lands requires only a walk and a pair of clear eyes.
- B. A child learns best in an inspirational environment.
- C. Work and play do not necessarily need to take place at different times.
- D. Ordinary items are transformed by an extraordinary imagination.

13. In this poem, the vacant lot is a metaphor for

- A** emptiness.
- B** adulthood.
- C** neglect.
- D** possibilities.

14. The reader knows that this passage can only be a poem because it

- A** explains how to complete a task.
- B** has short lines and is divided into stanzas.
- C** has a clearly stated problem and solution.
- D** gives information about a specific topic.

15. Which line contains a metaphor?

- A.** line 7
- B.** line 11
- C.** 17
- D.** 25

16. Which lines suggest that the vacant lot is unattractive and trashy?

- A.** that lies past the gate
- B.** it's more than just wood
- C.** a cave dweller's lair
- D.** full of wood and stray papers

17. In line 28, why does the speaker say that "the game's never-ending?"

- A.** Children love to play games.
- B.** The vacant lot is very big and seems never-ending.
- C.** Creativity and imagination have no limits.
- D.** It would take a very long time to clean up the lot.