

Alaska

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT STANDARDS BASED ASSESSMENTS (SBA)

Reading Item Sampler

Grade 7



Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

INTRODUCTION

The Assessment Item Sampler is designed to help teachers assist students to do their best on the Alaska Comprehensive System of Student Assessment, Standards Based Assessments in grades 3 through 9. Data Recognition Corporation, the contractor designing the Standards Based Assessments, produced this item sampler from questions developed for Alaska.

The Standards Based Assessments are designed to estimate the degree to which students have mastered the Academic Performance Standards for reading, writing, and mathematics outlined in the Grade Level Expectations. These assessments are written specifically for Alaska and are the foundation of the Alaska school accountability system. Results are valuable for districts, schools, and students. Results are used to measure a school's Adequate Yearly Progress in accordance with No Child Left Behind. Additionally, these assessments, because they are consistent across grade levels, provide the ability to gauge students' academic progress. This test combined with other information from classroom and local assessments provides districts with valuable student performance data and degrees of mastery.

The Assessment Item Sampler was developed to give students and teachers a practical way to become familiar with the kinds of test questions that will appear on the Standards Based Assessments. The Assessment Item Sampler is in no way a predictor of the test taker's ability to perform on the actual Standards Based Assessments, nor are the questions the same as those on the actual test. The questions on the item sampler reflect the type of questions one might see on the actual assessment. The length of the item sampler does not reflect the amount of time it will take for a student to complete the actual Standards Based Assessments. The purpose of the sampler is to help teachers become familiar with the Standards Based Assessments and give them a tool to use with students as they prepare for the assessment.

Additional copies of the Assessment Item Sampler can be downloaded from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Web site by going to <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/tls/assessment/sba.html>.

Read the Japanese folktale. Then, answer the questions that follow.

Kiyomi and the Three Impossible Tasks

by Joan Hiatt Harlow

Once when the world was young, a girl lived near the banks of a great river in Japan. Her father was the emperor, and because of this, the girl Kiyomi would one day be ruler. She felt the need to be wise in order to rule her people well, for this was a very great task.

Now, the river that flowed through the land watered the fields and valleys and made them bright and green and beautiful. For many years it rippled quietly through the country. But one spring there were heavy rains, and the river became wild. It flooded over the banks and angrily swirled around the gardens of Kiyomi's home. It washed away farmlands and houses.

The people became fearful and decided that a *kappa*, or river urchin, had come to their land and now dwelled in the river. Some claimed to have seen the ugly creature. It was said that the kappa lived in the river, but emerged at night to steal melons and breadfruit, its favorite food.

In the emperor's large garden near the river were many trees that bore breadfruit, and fields of beautiful melons. One evening when the moon had just peered from behind the hovering clouds, Kiyomi wandered through the garden. In the shadows she saw something move. It was the dreadful kappa, hunching and hobbling from tree to tree, grabbing fruit from the branches. Its skin was like a toad's, green and warted, and when its piercing eyes caught sight of Kiyomi, the kappa gave a frightening cry, a howl mingled with terror and mocking laughter.

The kappa became part of the garden shadows as it crept back into the river.

Kiyomi was afraid of the creature, but she walked bravely to the riverbank. "Kappa," she asked, "what are you, and why are you so mean?"

"I am powerful! I am wild!" answered the kappa in a voice very much like the roaring of the waves.

"My father has a horse that is powerful. He was once wild, but now he is tame," said Kiyomi.

"What is tame?" gurgled the kappa.

"Tame is gentle and good," answered Kiyomi, "and obedient."

"I shall never be tame!" screamed the kappa, and great foamy waves swirled fiercely at Kiyomi's feet.

"Then you must leave our land," Kiyomi said fearlessly. "I will make it my task!" She looked down into the water and saw the kappa's leering face.

"Your task! You can never make me leave this land—unless," sneered the creature, "unless you're able to capture the song of the wind! Or find a rainbow in a stone! Or, perhaps, shoot a star across the sky? Impossible tasks!" The kappa laughed. "All are impossible tasks!"

"It has been said that nothing is impossible," Kiyomi said bravely. "If I'm to rule this land, I must be wise enough to do all these things." She ran back to the palace and went directly to her father.

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“Father, is it impossible to capture the song of the wind? Or to find a rainbow in a stone? Or to shoot a star across the sky?”

“All very impossible, my dear,” Father sighed.

“And is it also impossible to make the kappa flee forever?”

“I’m afraid so, Kiyomi,” said her father sadly. “If it were possible, our lands would never be flooded again.”

Kiyomi walked back into the garden. The wind was warm and rustled the leaves in the trees and the grasses. She put out her hand and could feel the breath of the wind. “How can I capture the song of the wind? Where can I find its song?” she asked herself.

Kiyomi was still thinking when she curled up on her bedroll that night. A cool breeze floated from her window, and slowly her eyes began to close. She heard the soft tinkling of the wind chimes in her window. The chimes were made of pearly shells that clapped gently together in the breeze, singing and ringing like many tiny bells.

Kiyomi sat right up. “My wind chimes!” she said. “Their music is made by the wind.” She took the silvery chimes off their hook by the window and quickly ran down the steps and across the wet grass to the churning river.

“Kappa,” she called. “Do you hear me?”

“I hear you, girl,” a voice answered from deep in the river.

Kiyomi said, “Here’s the song of the wind, captured in my wind chimes. Listen!” She held the wind chimes high, and their song rang clearly over the black water.

The kappa said nothing.

“And you shall leave our land!” Kiyomi looked deep into the water. She could see the kappa’s angry face.

“The rainbow in stone,” swished the voice from the river. “Show me the rainbow in stone!”

The next day Kiyomi walked along the garden path, thinking of the second task, a rainbow in stone. She picked up a pebble and turned it over slowly in her hand. It was gray and cold. Surely this must be impossible, she thought, to find a rainbow in a stone.

Kiyomi went into the palace. In the hallway was a painting of her grandmother, the empress. “Oh, honorable Grandmother, could you find the rainbow in a stone?” Kiyomi asked the painting.

It seemed as if Grandmother could almost speak. Her robe looked soft and rich, her jewels bright. Then Kiyomi noticed a pin the empress was wearing. “Oh,” she gasped and ran to her father’s rooms.

“Father!” she cried. “May I see Grandmother’s jewels?”

Father brought a beautiful jewel box and handed it to Kiyomi. Inside were many sparkling jewels. Near the bottom of the box, Kiyomi found her grandmother’s pin. It was a simple white stone, but when the sunlight touched it, many colors shimmered inside—like a rainbow.

“That is an opal,” her father explained.

“Why are there colors so deep inside?” Kiyomi asked.

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“There is water inside the stone. When the light touches the water, it reflects the colors of the rainbow.”

“Then I have found the rainbow in stone!” She kissed her father, fastened the pin to her robe, and ran to the river.

“Kappa!” she called. “Do you see what I’m wearing over my heart? It is the rainbow in stone!”

The kappa did not speak, but Kiyomi could see its gleaming eyes watching her from deep in the river.

“And there will be a way to shoot a star across the sky. You’ll see!” said Kiyomi as she ran happily back to the palace.

Again the river churned and tossed waves over the banks, flooding the fields and farmlands.

Kiyomi knew that the third task, to shoot a star across the sky, would be the most difficult of all. For many weeks Kiyomi looked at the night sky and wondered about the impossible task. She went to the wise men for help.

“The kappa has tricked you. This is truly an impossible task,” they all agreed.

How sad Kiyomi felt. And the river seemed to laugh at her as it lapped across the garden paths.

Then one day there was a festival to celebrate the marriage of Kiyomi’s

cousin. It was such a happy time that all the people forgot their gloom about the kappa. There was feasting and games. At night there was singing and dancing in the streets. Then something very special and beautiful happened. With loud cracks and bangs, fireworks were set off and flew into the heavens. They burst like fountains of colors into millions of stars and reflected in the river.

Kiyomi clapped her hands in delight. Then, running to the river, she looked into its black depths. “Look up, kappa,” she said. “Do you see the beautiful stars shooting above you? They have been captured and are released tonight. So all your impossible tasks were not impossible at all. Now you must leave our land and let our river be quiet and beautiful again.”

The kappa, just below the surface of the water, gave a long, angry wail. Kiyomi could see his green, slimy body drift farther and farther down the stream. The black and angry waves followed after him until they all faded from sight. The river urchin was gone forever.

Kiyomi watched as the wild torrent became a gentle, quiet stream that watered the valleys and made them bright and green and beautiful.

And this is how Kiyomi solved the three impossible tasks, once, when the world was young.

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Reporting Category: Forming a General Understanding
Grade Level Expectation: 3.3.2

1. How does Kiyomi show wisdom?
 - A by visiting the kappa
 - B by learning about the kappa
 - C by going to the wise men for help
 - D by realizing she must solve the tasks

Reporting Category: Forming a General Understanding
Grade Level Expectation: 3.3.1

2. What happens after Kiyomi shows the kappa the wind chime?
 - A The kappa decides to leave.
 - B The kappa disagrees with her.
 - C The kappa causes the river to flood.
 - D The kappa demands the rainbow in stone.

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Reporting Category: Word Identification Skills

Grade Level Expectation: 3.1.4

3. As used in the passage, a torrent is

- A a heavy rain.
- B a turbulent river.
- C a tree-lined riverbank.
- D a river urchin.

Reporting Category: Forming a General Understanding

Grade Level Expectation: 3.3.1

4. What does Kiyomi think will be **most** difficult in getting rid of the kappa?

- A shooting a star across the sky
- B finding a stone with a rainbow inside
- C capturing the wind's song in some way
- D convincing him to leave when the tasks are done

Reading Item Sampler: Grade 7

Reporting Category: Analysis of General Content and Structure

Grade Level Expectation: 3.6.2

Short Constructed Response (2 points)

5. What is one literary device the author uses to show the kappa is to be feared? Use one example from the passage to support your response.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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