

## English Language Arts

### GRADE 8

**Question 1:**

Read the sentence below.

**Romansch** and two other European languages are officially spoken in Switzerland.

Choose the best definition for **Romansch**.

- a. a small nation bordering Switzerland
- b. a Swiss language related to Latin
- c. a word that can be pronounced in two or more ways
- d. an alphabet used in Northern Europe

**Question 2:**

Read the sentence below.

Many authors publish books using a **pseudonym**—for example, Samuel Clemens wrote under the name Mark Twain.

Choose the best definition for **pseudonym**.

- a. a dialect
- b. a famous author
- c. a method to bind books
- d. a fictitious name

**Question 3:**

Read the sentence below.

Many beverages come with a **garnish** on top, such as a cherry or a small umbrella.

Choose the best definition for **garnish**.

- a. a piece of decoration for food
- b. a variation of a recipe
- c. a small fruit
- d. anything not intended to be eaten

**Question 4:**

Read the sentence below.

Science has disproved the idea that the Earth is flat as well as **preposterous** theories.

Choose the best definition for **preposterous**.

- a. believed by many people
- b. ridiculous or unreasonable
- c. related to geography
- d. proven to be true

**Question 5:**

Read the sentence below.

Hot dog carts, souvenir stands, and other street **vendors** need to obtain a license from the city first.

Choose the best definition for **vendor**.

- a. a restaurant, particularly a diner
- b. a person or company that sells something
- c. a large vehicle for shipping merchandise
- d. a tourist attraction in a major city

**Question 6:**

Read the sentence below.

The mother **beckoned** to her child so that he would know it was time to leave the park.

Choose the best meaning for **beckon**.

- a. to signal someone to come
- b. to grab someone's hand
- c. to shake hands with someone
- d. to wave in a friendly manner

**Question 7:**

Read the sentence below.

The carpenter's hands were **gnarled** because he had used them for so much work over the years.

Choose the best meaning for **gnarled**.

- a. twisted from age or use
- b. covered in decorative nail polish
- c. bejeweled with rings
- d. smooth and supple

**Question 8:**

Read the sentence below.

The dog made an **ominous** growling sound in order to warn the cat of an impending attack.

Choose the best meaning for **ominous**.

- a. excited
- b. friendly
- c. threatening
- d. exhausted

**Question 9:**

Read the sentence below.

The lawyer argued **vehemently** for his client because he believed passionately that the man was not guilty.

Choose the best meaning for **vehemently**.

- a. quietly
- b. quickly
- c. with strong emotion
- d. with disinterest

**Question 10:**

Read the sentence below.

A baseball catcher will **crouch** in order to catch low pitches.  
Choose the best meaning for **crouch**.

- a. to walk slowly
- b. to stoop down on bent knees
- c. to stretch one's arms widely
- d. to catch a baseball

**Question 11:**

Read the sentence below.

The **desolate** city looked like an empty desert after the car plant shut down.

Choose the best definition for **desolate**.

- a. very popular
- b. hot and humid
- c. booming in business
- d. lacking people or things

**Question 12:**

Read the sentence below.

The **haggard** specimen did not appear healthy or energetic.

Choose the best definition for **haggard**.

- a. tired or worn out
- b. unrecognizable
- c. lively and active
- d. extremely hungry

**Question 13:**

Read the sentence below.

Half of the chickens were slightly overweight, but the other half were **gaunt**.

Choose the best definition for **gaunt**.

- a. related to birds
- b. incomplete, not whole
- c. fattened or plump
- d. bony or overly skinny

**Question 14:**

Read the sentence below.

The European Union wants to increase energy from the sun, but it wants to **minimize** the use of gasoline.

Choose the best definition for **minimize**.

- a. make as small as possible
- b. not able to be replaced
- c. expand in size or importance
- d. related to foreign countries

**Question 15:**

Read the sentence below.

Most of the artist's early works depicted simple patterns or common objects, but her later paintings contained more **intricate** images.

Choose the best definition for **intricate**.

- a. complex or very detailed
- b. primitive or ancient
- c. stiff or rigid
- d. using only one or two colors

**Question 16:**

Read the passage below.

My friend's talk made so odd an impression upon my mind, that soon after I went to bed I fell insensibly into a most unaccountable **reverie**, that had neither moral nor design in it, and cannot be so properly called a dream as a delirium.

*-Adapted from "The Adventures of a Shilling" by Joseph Addison*

Choose the best meaning for **reverie**.

- a. a person who talks too much
- b. an uncomfortable bed
- c. a fanciful daydream
- d. an interesting discussion

**Question 17:**

Read the passage below.

The book *Dracula* became popular after an **unauthorized** film adaptation took the world by storm. In 1922, German director F. W. Murnau released *Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror*. This silent movie haunted audiences of the time and has been used as a cinematic touchstone since then. However, Murnau and his film studio did not ask Bram Stoker's wife for permission to film *Dracula*. While they made minor changes—the word vampire was changed to nosferatu, and the count's name was changed to Orlok—the courts ruled that the film was clearly based on Stoker's work and ordered the destruction of all the copies of the film.

*-Adapted from "From Medieval Count to the Silver Screen: The History of Dracula" by Peter Rhomberg*

Choose the best meaning for **unauthorized**.

- a. lacking official permission
- b. lacking skill
- c. lacking popular support
- d. lacking comfort

**Question 18:**

Read the passage below.

Bela Lugosi played the Count in the 1931 black and white adaptation of *Dracula*, and it is his portrayal that most people still imagine when they think of a vampire. With a halting speech pattern and Eastern European accent, Lugosi still portrayed the role with a noble charisma, and created such **iconic** lines as "I want to suck your blood!" and "I do not drink... wine."

*-Adapted from "From Medieval Count to the Silver Screen: The History of Dracula" by Peter Rhomberg*

Choose the best meaning for **iconic**.

- a. the quality of matching a small picture on a computer screen
- b. the quality of being regarded as the main representation of something
- c. the quality of being similar to a religious figure painted on a piece of wood
- d. the act of creating a very successful brand

**Question 19:**

Read the passage below.

Why have Count Dracula—and the many other vampires based on him—proven to be so popular? Unlike other movie monsters, vampires are usually highly **charismatic** immortal beings—they represent many of humanity’s darker urges. Count Dracula represents both incredible power and the terrible cost of that power, making him an enormously fascinating villain, hero, or anything in-between in the hands of a creative writer or director. The character, born out of historical fact, medieval superstition, and one man’s creativity has gone beyond even these origins to become an enduring and complex character for the ages.

*-Adapted from "From Medieval Count to the Silver Screen: The History of Dracula" by Peter Rhomberg*

Choose the best meaning for **charismatic**.

- a. devoted
- b. charming
- c. excitable
- d. ugly

**Question 20:**

Read the passage below.

Over time, people developed defenses against vampires. Garlic and holy symbols were common, although other plants such as wild rose or mustard seeds appeared in some folklore. Vampires were said to be unable to walk on **hallowed** ground, such as a church, and could not cross running water when not in their coffins. Many stories also claimed that a mirror could repel a vampire, although only recently have writers begun to include vampires’ nonexistent reflections in their stories.

*-Adapted from "Vampires in Folklore and Culture" by Peter Rhomberg*

Choose the best meaning for **hallowed**.

- a. holy
- b. quiet
- c. indoor
- d. ancient

**Question 21:**

Read the sentence below.

The figures are primarily made of red **terracotta** clay.

Choose the best connotation for **terracotta**.

- a. positive
- b. negative
- c. neutral

**Question 22:**

Read the sentence below.

The goal of the peer-editing process is to provide **constructive** feedback for your partner.

Choose the best connotation for **constructive**.

- a. positive
- b. negative
- c. neutral

**Question 23:**

Read the sentence below.

Some scholars view this emperor as a **childish** ruler, making selfish decisions without thinking about his people.

Choose the best connotation for **childish**.

- a. positive
- b. negative
- c. neutral

**Question 24:**

Read the sentence below.

The new store sells a variety of **cheap** knickknacks and other low-quality goods.

Choose the best connotation for **cheap**.

- a. positive
- b. negative
- c. neutral

**Question 25:**

Read the sentence below.

The **nosy** reporter had many questions about the incident, some of which made the victim uncomfortable.

Choose the best connotation for **nosy**.

- a. positive
- b. negative
- c. neutral

**Question 26:**

Which word best conveys the idea of **annoyance**?

- a. nagging
- b. determined
- c. unrelenting
- d. tenacious

**Question 27:**

Which word best conveys the idea of **beauty**?

- a. plain
- b. uncomplicated
- c. basic
- d. pristine

**Question 28:**

Which word best conveys the idea of **curious**?

- a. examination
- b. exploration
- c. search
- d. inspection

**Question 29:**

Which word best conveys the idea of **friendliness**?

- a. courteous
- b. polite
- c. diplomatic
- d. sociable

**Question 30:**

Which word best conveys the idea of **fault-finding**?



- a. precise
- b. nitpicky
- c. diligent
- d. careful

**Question 31:**

Read the passage below.

The mayor declared that the new recycling initiative was a breath of fresh air. No other city in the state had such a revolutionary program in place.

Choose the best meaning for the underlined metaphor.

- a. a refreshing change
- b. something that shocks or frightens
- c. a method of improving air quality
- d. a poor decision

**Question 32:**

Read the passage below.

The wet roads were as slick as oil. Commuters were urged to drive carefully.

Choose the best meaning for the underlined simile.

- a. run-down
- b. clever
- c. slippery
- d. shiny

**Question 33:**

Read the passage below.

The library was a maze. Patrons frequently found themselves lost among the stacks.

Choose the best meaning for the underlined metaphor.

- a. The library had lots of games for children.
- b. The layout of the library was confusing.
- c. The library was oddly decorated.
- d. Mazes require close study.

**Question 34:**

Read the passage below.

The periodic table of elements was a major stumbling block for Jackson. Although he sat down to study it every day after school, he never seemed to remember any of it during tests.

Choose the best meaning for the underlined metaphor.

- a. a helpful tool
- b. a school assignment
- c. an object that is easily misplaced
- d. an obstacle or challenge

**Question 35:**

Read the passage below.

The new fabric feels as light as a feather. Because it is not as heavy as many other materials, it may have many useful scientific applications.

Choose the best meaning for the underlined simile.

- a. very lightweight
- b. soft and fluffy
- c. delicate and breakable