

Unit 3 – Responding to Texts

Lesson 8: Listening and Note-Taking

New York ELA Practice

Pages 111–113

Read the following listening passage aloud twice, with a short pause between readings. Students should take notes during the second reading.

A Boy Comes to America

Between 1880 and 1920, more than 23 million immigrants arrived in the United States. Like the boy in this story, most of them came for economic opportunity and landed in New York City. The United States was a growing nation in need of workers.

A steamship left the Italian city of Naples on a hot August day. Hundreds of poor passengers jammed into the pit of the lower steerage section. Whole families, individual young men and women, and a few elderly people were leaving for the promised land of the United States. In this packed crowd was a thirteen-year-old boy named Alberto.

Alberto traveled with his older cousin Vincenzo and Vincenzo’s wife, Carmella. He wouldn’t stay with them in America, though. Once they landed, Alberto would be on his own. Another cousin had found Alberto a sponsor, a man who ran a barber shop in New York. That shop would be where Alberto would work and learn how to be an American.

The boat moved out onto the Mediterranean Sea, heading for the Strait of Gibraltar and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Alberto sat in a corner and tried not to be a bother. The first day of the journey was pleasant enough. A sea breeze blew into the lower steerage hold. His cousins shared their food: bread dipped in oil, cheese, a few tomatoes, water sipped from a jug. Alberto didn’t miss his parents yet. They had not been happy to see him go to the United States. Mama had cried when he asked their permission; Papa had made an angry face and said nothing. But they let him go just the same.

The second day brought rough waters, which made many people seasick. Alberto stayed in his corner, refused food, and somehow managed to get through the day. Carmella said to him in Italian, “Alberto, in twelve days we will be in America. You will have work and make money. You will find happiness.”

Alberto was the eleventh child of twelve. There was little work for him in Benevento, the small city in the hills several hours from Naples. Alberto knew if he stayed in Benevento, he would always live as a poor man. His family could not afford to send him to school. His mother wanted him to join a monastery and become a monk, but that did not appeal to Alberto.

Their boat passed through the Strait of Gibraltar and entered the Atlantic Ocean. For the next ten days, they traveled over mostly calm seas. Time was a blur; luckily, no major storms rocked the boat. They had small amounts of food to keep hunger away, and several days of nice weather allowed the throng in steerage to go on deck to stretch and take in the sun. Evenings found Alberto tucked in his corner, trying to stay out of everybody’s way. As they got closer to America, Alberto wondered if his dreams would be fulfilled in this strange, new land.

At last they entered Upper New York Bay. Their boat glided by a huge statue of a woman. “The Statue of Liberty!” exclaimed Carmella, with tears in her eyes. Only fourteen years before, in 1884, France gave this statue to America as a symbol of the alliance between France and the American colonists during the American Revolution. It had quickly come to stand for freedom and opportunity for new immigrants, too.

Alberto looked at the Lady of Freedom. He gave a prayer of thanks as the boat headed to the dock.

The ship docked and travelers were taken to Immigration on smaller boats. People who traveled first class went first. Those in steerage went last.

The boy had heard stories of people not allowed in, mostly for health reasons, but also if the person’s sponsor was not real. Alberto had in his pocket a letter from Rico Barboza, owner of the Mulberry Street Men’s Barbershop, stating that Alberto would have employment. He hoped that his sponsor would be there to prove the letter’s truth—and that Mr. Barboza would be able to recognize Alberto from the photos he had mailed. He waited nervously.

At last, Alberto and his cousins were taken to Immigration. A long line of people waited for approval, and Alberto stayed close to the comfort of Carmella. When it was his turn to be checked by the nurse and then have his papers stamped by the man in a uniform, Alberto said nothing. He couldn’t understand English, nor could he speak it. He didn’t want to be turned away because of the language that he would eventually learn at work.

Alberto showed his letter to the man in the uniform. The man stared at the letter for a long minute, causing Alberto’s heart to pound and a lump to form in his throat. What if the man didn’t believe the letter?

Suddenly, he heard a voice calling out his name, speaking in both Italian and English. The voice belonged to Mr. Barboza, who was standing on the other side of the fence. He had recognized Alberto! The man in the uniform nodded, and stamped Alberto’s papers.

The three cousins had passed through Immigration, and it was time to part. Carmella gave the boy a big hug and said in her sweet voice, “Ciao, Alberto.” Vincenzo nodded and added in Italian, “Have a good life, my cousin.”

Mr. Barboza greeted Alberto and indicated that the boy should follow him. Alberto drifted into the crowd, trailing after his new boss. His heart was both happy and sad. He had come to America.

Lesson 9: Responding to Short-Answer Items

Pages 116–119

1. Responses will vary.

Listening Passage for Practice Test A

Henry Hudson & the Elves

As retold by Charley Olsen

Introduction: The Catskill Mountains of New York have been home to many legends. “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving are the most famous. The following legend concerns Henry Hudson, the explorer who discovered the Hudson River and its valley.

Henry Hudson was the first European to explore the Hudson River, which is named after him. Hudson and his crew sailed his ship, called the Half Moon, up the Hudson River as far as they could go. They were looking for a short cut to China. They made it to Albany and could go no further, so they decided to turn around.

That night, they stopped where the Catskill Mountains loomed over the river. The mountains were known to be home of magical creatures. Hudson and his men heard music coming from the hills. They went out to take a look.

There in the hills, they found a party of elves. The elves were very small, with pointed ears and long white beards. The elves drank from mugs, and danced and sang to strange songs. They invited Hudson and his men to join them.

“These must be the magic people I’ve heard about,” Hudson told his men. “They do valuable things with metal, and may be very valuable to us.”

Hudson and his men joined the elves. They drank, sang, and danced like the others. They played games of 9-pin, where they rolled a ball toward nine wooden sticks. Everyone was having a wonderful time.

Henry Hudson was a cautious man. He took only a few sips from his drink. He spoke with the head of the elves. He wanted to learn their secrets.

It was getting late, and the next morning they were due to set sail. When Hudson looked for his men, he realized they had all been turned into elves.

“What have you done to my men?” Hudson asked the head of the elves.

“They have only had too much fun. Take them back to your ship. Tomorrow they will return to normal.”

Hudson brought his men back to the Half Moon. Some did not want to go, but they followed their captain’s orders. The next day, everyone slept late. When the men awoke, they were back to normal.

The following year, Hudson and his men made another attempt to find a short cut to the Orient. His ship got lost in northern Canada, on a huge body of water now known as Hudson Bay.

But something strange happens every 20 years on the night Hudson and his men sang and danced with the elves. Music, laughter, and games of 9-pin echo from the hills of the Catskills. Natives of the area say that it is Henry Hudson and the elves having their party.

Listening Passage for Practice Test B

Lake-Effect Snow

by Betsy Allen Smythe

Laurel looked out her living room window and for the third straight day all she saw was snow: lake-effect snow. Her brothers Josh and Jared were downstairs in the family room, making more noise than a crowd at Niagara Falls on the 4th of July. Laurel was stuck home baby-sitting them. She sighed and thought, *will this ever end?*

Thirty-four inches of snow had fallen so far, with another four to five inches due this morning and early afternoon. It had started on Sunday. By Tuesday morning, it had piled up everywhere. Mom and Dad used the snow blower each morning and evening, and could still barely keep up.

“Why do we live in Tonawanda?” complained Laurel. “Why can’t we live someplace nice and sensible, like Orlando, Florida, or Cancun, Mexico?” Laurel’s family had traveled to Cancun last winter, and she had loved the beach and the warm weather.

“Tonawanda gets a lot of snow,” explained Dad. “We live beside two Great Lakes, Lake Ontario to the North and Lake Erie to the West. This creates a snow belt as the lakes pile all their snow on us. It causes tough winters, but that’s why our summers are so glorious. And we grow the best fruit in the country. A good place to live if you can take it,” said Dad. “I wouldn’t live anywhere else except here, right beside the great city of Buffalo.”

Dad! Why was he so proud of coming from here?

“Laurel! Josh hit me.” Jared came sniffing into the room. Four years old, he normally went to pre-school. Six-year old Josh was his king and ruler, always bossing him and telling him what to do. When Jared protested, Josh took the law into his own hands.

“Josh, I’m coming down there,” warned Laurel. “You better be ready to apologize to your brother.”

Oooh, thought Laurel, *why do I have to baby-sit my brothers?*

By three, the snow had tapered off. Laurel’s best friend Mindy called. “You and your brothers meet me out back. We’re going sledding.”

Laurel would rather be in Mindy’s rec’ room, listening to CDs and looking over magazines. But Mindy always found fun in the oddest of places. Though Laurel wasn’t fond of sledding, she liked being with Mindy.

“I wish I didn’t have to take my brothers,” said Laurel. But Mom and Dad were at work, and the boys were Laurel’s obligation.

Mindy lived across the street from a hill that was part of a park. The park faced the river that connected Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. To the North, Niagara Falls attracted tourists like a magnet. Mindy's dad owned a restaurant near the Falls, and she loved to be there, looking out over the water, with the mist rising from below. Laurel thought that Cancun, with its Gulf of Mexico and the Mayan ruins off on the mainland, was a much better place.

Laurel and her brothers met Mindy in her backyard. Mindy had them carry a long plastic sled across the street to the park. A bunch of school kids were already there, enjoying the snow.

"Isn't this awesome?" asked Mindy. "The sun's out, it's still snowing, and we have three feet of powder to ride on."

"Yeah," said Laurel, looking into the declining sun, squinting through sun glasses and admiring the view. It did look kind of awesome.

Josh picked up a bunch of snow and threw it at Jared. Rather than cry and whine, Jared threw some back. Mindy laughed, and even Laurel got a kick out of the two brothers heaving snow on each other, then rolling in the white stuff.

Mindy found a spot where she could put the sled. Already, paths had been made down the hill, through a large field dotted with trees and shrubs. The park land flattened at the hill's bottom. A breeze blowing off the water promised cold weather that night. But with the sun still shining, the air had a bracing effect, and everything looked clean, white, and new.

The four of them got on the sled, with Mindy the last to board. She pushed Laurel from behind, and the flat plastic bottom started gliding downhill. Mindy jumped on, and they were off.

Brothers laughed gleefully. Laurel felt joy swell up inside her as she looked out over the neighborhood as if she was seeing it for the first time. The sled flew over the snow, carried by its downward motion and the weight of its four occupants. When the sledders got to the bottom of the hill, the brothers wanted to do it again. They agreed to carry the sled back up the hill.

Laurel and Mindy followed the boys, talking quietly to themselves about secrets they shared. Laurel was as happy as she could ever remember. What a great way to cap off three days of lake-effect snow.