



## **SAMPLES OF STANDARDS STUDENTS ARE LEARNING THIS NINE WEEKS:**

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA**

**STANDARDS: RL.7.1, RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.5, RI.7.5, RI.7.6, RI.7.7, RI.7.8, W.7.3**

**D**<sup>207058P</sup>irections  
Read this story. Then answer the questions.

*Allegra Shapiro is twelve years old and lives in Portland, Oregon. She is waiting for her turn to compete in the Bloch Competition where she will be playing music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791), a famous classical composer. In order to play well and to focus both before and during her performance, Allegra pictures images in her mind. Often she imagines her beloved great-grandmother, Elter Bubbe Leah.*

### **Excerpt from *The Mozart Season***

*by Virginia Euwer Wolff*

As I looked at the keyboard of the piano, my mind tried to empty itself; it tried to pour all my thoughts down a chute of some kind. I could feel them sliding away. Like a big balloon deflating, like a tank of something emptying. I felt my eyes bug out with the shock of it, and I saw my arms reach out to catch what was emptying out of me. I stood  
5 there looking at the space between my arms, and tried to find Mozart. I closed my eyes and looked for the first movement first; there it was, with its cadenza.<sup>1</sup> Second movement. Third. They were there, with their notes in order, with Mr. Kaplan's blue markings on the pages.

Very strange, my mind doing that. I picked up my violin and played the third-  
10 movement cadenza. It was there, solid, it hadn't gone off anywhere. I wrapped Elter Bubbe Leah's purse in its tissue paper and put it back in my violin case. I went down the hallway to the bathroom. I looked at myself in the mirror. I was just a person in a blue dress standing in dim light in a public bathroom next to a towel machine. I turned around and went back to room 104 and sat down with my violin and bow in my hand.

15 The envelope woman came and got me, and we walked down the hall and then down the stairs and then through a heavy door. Suddenly the lights were very bright and the floor was very polished and there was a line of screens on my right. Several screens were lined up so the jury couldn't see any part of me, even my feet. The woman pointed to where I was supposed to stand. I went to the spot and stood. It was the place  
20 Landauer, Number Three, had just walked away from. I suddenly remembered. Alice in Wonderland getting smaller and smaller. I propped myself firmly on my feet, looked down at them; they were the same size they'd been five minutes before, and I knew I wasn't shrinking.

I decided to look at the vertical line down one of the screens.

<sup>1</sup> **cadenza:** a solo inserted into a movement (or section of music), typically near the end

25 A man's voice came from the other side of the screens: "Number Four, you may begin when you're ready."

I thumbed my strings and heard the D string a shade flat. While I was tuning it I closed my eyes and saw Elter Bubbe Leah's photograph with the purse and the goose and the broom, and into my vision came a teenage hand with a quill pen in it, just at the edge  
30 of the photograph. Music being written, I listened in my mind for the rhythm and I took a medium-size breath and started.

The start was a good one; notes came up out of the violin on time, in time, things weren't blurred, it was fun. Through the notes, I saw Elter Bubbe Leah shooing her geese up a slope with her broom in Poland; the notes went scooting along. It was strange: I was  
35 able to hear every note clearly, every group of sixteenth-notes, every little sforzando,<sup>2</sup> and at the same time I was seeing a movie of pastures and the little house in Suprasl.

The second movement. How many times Heavenly and I'd gone to sleep listening to it, with our arms around each other. I reached inside my body for the key change and the rhythm change and I felt for the gentleness of it. I saw Leah, a little girl in a long white  
40 nightgown, climbing into her bed by candlelight, and I took a medium-size breath and played. The notes sounded like little flickerings of flame from the candle, little bright lights floating in a dark room. I played it for her to drop off to sleep in her feather bed with her braids spread out on the pillow.

The third movement, the Rondeau.<sup>3</sup> If you turn on the radio just in time to hear this  
45 movement, you think it's such a happy thing, those alternating sections, dances. And yet, when you pay close attention, there's a kind of fragile sound—as if something's going to break somewhere but you don't know where. And little silences come up between the sections. I looked into what was going on in my mind and I saw the early morning waking Leah up with the sun coming in, a blessing. I took a medium-size breath and began. She  
50 woke up in the sunshine and she was a real girl in a real house, and I could see the grass and flowers growing as she walked outside, and I could feel the solid ground under her feet, and during the cadenza she was scampering along, very happy. And I got so carried away with the little girl in the story in my mind that I played an E-sharp a little bit askew, my finger came down on it too sideways. But I was happy. I was happy with the sounds of  
55 Mozart coming up out of the wood, and as I moved toward the ending it felt right. The last three notes came out just the way I liked them, balanced, even, each one of them getting softer until the last one just skips away into the air.

I took my violin down off my shoulder. I was in Portland, Oregon, and I'd just finished doing what I'd promised and feared to do. I was twelve years old, standing with  
60 my two feet on the floor and my arms hanging down. I might never even tell anybody

<sup>2</sup> **sforzando**: a strong, sudden accent on a note or chord

<sup>3</sup> **Rondeau**: a medieval French song

about Leah and her goose and her feather bed in my mind. A whole story of her had happened inside the music. I looked down at the scroll<sup>4</sup> of my violin. It's like a seashell, as if there's such a story inside that you could never find out all of it.

A man's voice came from the other side of the screen. "Thank you, Number Four."

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<sup>4</sup> scroll: the wooden handle of a violin appears rolled up like a paper scroll

Lines 1 through 8 contribute to the reader's understanding of the story by

- A allowing the reader to immediately understand Allegra's state of mind
- B sharing with the reader the frustration Allegra feels before the performance
- C emphasizing how important it is for Allegra to empty her mind of all thoughts
- D suggesting that Allegra's surroundings are less important than her feelings

### RL.7.5

**Rationale.** Option A is correct. These lines set the stage for the rest of the story by demonstrating how Allegra goes inside her mind to capture the music of Mozart.

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Why does Allegra think of Alice in Wonderland in lines 20 through 23?

- A The size of the room makes her feel extremely small.
- B She is so nervous that she feels as if she might be shrinking.
- C She feels uncomfortable with the jury behind the line of screens.
- D The boy before her makes her feel unsure because of his skillful playing.

### RL.7.1

**Rationale.** Option B is correct. Allegra is standing behind a screen where even the judges cannot see her. She is very nervous and for a moment feels like Alice in Wonderland getting smaller and smaller.

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Based on lines 27 through 31, which statement **best** explains how the photograph helps Allegra?

- A It inspires a vision that prepares her for performing the music.
- B It reminds her that her great-grandmother was a teenage musician like her.
- C It provides a memory that creates a mood of disappointment.
- D It prompts her to recall a pleasant time composing music with her great-grandmother.

### RL.7.3

**Rationale.** Option A is correct. The photograph sparks a memory of music being written and allows Allegra to prepare to play her music.

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The author's repetition of Allegra taking "a medium-size breath" in lines 30 through 31, 40, and 49 helps to create a feeling of

- A agitation before performing
- B release in finally performing
- C controlled focus during her performance
- D patience in persisting through her performance

**RL.7.4**

**Rationale. Option C is correct. Medium-sized breaths allow Allegra to control her breathing and help her to focus on playing the music correctly.**

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# Telling Plastic to ‘Bag It’

by Patricia Smith

with reporting by William Yardley of The New York Times

Two years ago, a dead gray whale washed ashore in Seattle’s Puget Sound. When scientists examined the contents of the whale’s stomach, they found more than 20 plastic bags.

5 “It was a gut-wrenching experience for me,” says Robb Krehbiel, 23, of Seattle, “Nothing that we use for a few minutes should ever end up in the belly of a whale. That’s just so wrong.”

For the last seven months, Krehbiel has been working on a campaign to ban plastic grocery bags in Seattle. The ban passed in December and will go into effect July 1.

10 Seattle will join cities like San Francisco; San Jose, California; Portland, Oregon; Brownsville, Texas; and Westport, Connecticut, as well as the Outer Banks of North Carolina and several counties in Hawaii, that have already banned plastic grocery bags. And Washington, D.C., has begun charging a five-cent tax on plastic bags to discourage customers from using them.

15 Since 2009, 12 states have considered a variety of plastic-bag bans, according to The National Conference of State Legislatures. No statewide bans have passed. But the list of cities and counties with bag bans is growing.

Americans use between 70 billion and 100 billion plastic bags annually, with families taking home an average of 1,500 a year.

## Paper Vs. Plastic

20 Environmental groups say plastic bags, which are made from petroleum products, increase America’s dependence on oil and are a chief cause of litter. It takes about 12 million barrels of oil to make the plastic bags used in the U.S. annually. Most plastic bags eventually end up in landfills, where it can take hundreds of years for them to decompose. But first, or instead, many become litter.

25 “They’re hanging from trees and littering our beaches,” says Eric Goldstein of the National Resources Defense Council, an environmental group.

Plastic bags are also a major source of pollution in the ocean, where they can harm sea turtles and other ocean creatures that mistake the bags for food and eat them.

But Mark Daniels of Hilex Poly, a plastics maker based in South Carolina, calls the bans “badly misguided efforts.”

30 He says 90 percent of Americans already reuse plastic grocery bags—as garbage bags, to pack school lunches, and to store household items.

“Moving consumers away from plastic bags only pushes people to less environmentally friendly options, such as paper bags, which require more energy to produce and transport, and reusable bags, which are not recyclable,” Daniels says.

35 The plastic-bag manufacturing industry employs 10,000 Americans, and bans jeopardize those jobs, the industry says.

The U.S. is not the only place where bans have been instituted. Plastic bags are now banned in several nations including China, Italy, France, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Rwanda. Other countries tax plastic bags to discourage their use. In Ireland, for example, a  
40 15-cent-per-bag tax introduced in 2002 has reduced their use by more than 90 percent.

#### Plastic Bottle Bans

Environmentalists in recent years have also targeted disposable plastic bottles for many of the same reasons they’ve set their sights on bags. The town of Concord, Massachusetts; several national parks, including the Grand Canyon; and a growing list of universities now  
45 ban the sale of disposable water bottles. A handful of big cities, like San Francisco and Seattle, ban the sale of plastic water bottles in government offices.

The plastic-bag bans already in effect have had a dramatic effect on litter, some officials say. In Brownsville, Texas, a plastic-bag ban in place for more than a year has eliminated more than 350,000 bags per day, according to former Mayor Pat Ahumada. He says the ban “transformed our city from littered and dirty to a much cleaner city.”

50 Under the Seattle ban, plastic bags will still be available for produce and bulk grocery items. The new law also imposes a five-cent fee on paper bags.

Three years ago, Seattle city officials approved a 20-cent-per-bag fee on paper and plastic bags. The idea was to create a financial incentive to reduce pollution; the fee was supposed to prompt people to bring reusable bags with them to shop.

55 But before the 2008 fee could take effect, the plastic-bag industry led a petition drive that forced the issue onto a citywide ballot. In August 2009, in the midst of the recession and after the industry spent \$1.4 million on the campaign, Seattle voters rejected the fee. It’s not yet clear if the plastic bag industry will mount a similar campaign this time.

60 If there’s a fight, Krehbiel, the Seattle activist, will be one of those arguing to keep the ban.

“It’s not going to be a silver bullet that solves all our environmental problems,” he says. “But my thinking is you do what you can, when you can, where you can.”

### Plastic Bags: By the Numbers

**1,500**

Average number of plastic shopping bags American families take home annually.

**12 million**

Barrels of oil it takes each year to make the plastic bags used in the U.S.

**10,000**

Number of U.S. jobs in the plastic-bag manufacturing industry.



Why does the author include the information about plastic bottles in lines 41 through 45?

- A to show where the idea for the plastic-bag ban originated
- B to illustrate the conflict between environmentalists and businesses
- C to show how the government is concerned with litter in public places
- D to illustrate a widespread concern with plastic waste in the environment

**RI.7.5**

**Rationale.** Option D is correct. Many cities, parks, and universities now have a ban on plastic bags.

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The author of the article balances different points of view on the issue of banning plastic bags by including

- A information about plastic-bag bans in Europe and Asia
- B arguments from environmentalists and businesses on plastic-bag bans
- C data from scientists concerned with plastic bags in the environment
- D quotes from people living in American cities where plastic bags are banned

**RI.7.6**

**Rationale. Option B is correct. Both sides of the argument, for and against plastic bags, are shared in the article.**

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Which statement is supported by sufficient evidence from the article?

- A The petroleum industry is fighting plastic-bottle bans.
- B A statewide ban on plastic bags is unlikely to happen.
- C Paying a fee on plastic bags is unappealing to some people.
- D Many Americans prefer paper or reusable bags to plastic bags.

**RI.7.8**

**Rationale. Option C is correct.**

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The author most likely includes "Plastic Bags: By the Numbers" at the end of the article to

- A introduce new facts about plastic bags into the argument
- B compare figures about plastic-bag use across the country
- C emphasize the figures about plastic bags mentioned in the article
- D show that plastic-bag bans can cause factory closures and large-scale job loss

**RI.7.7**

**Rationale. Option C is correct. The author restates the figures to bring out the numerical facts from the article.**

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