

Kentucky Summative Assessments



Grade 8 Reading Released Items 2026



Directions: Read the excerpt from *Life of Pi*. Then answer the questions.

from Life of Pi

by Yann Martel

- 1 It was a huge zoo, spread over numberless acres, big enough to require a train to explore it, though it seemed to get smaller as I grew older, train included. Now it's so small it fits in my head. You must imagine a hot and humid place, bathed in sunshine and bright colours. The riot of flowers is incessant. There are trees, shrubs and climbing plants in profusion—peepuls, gulmohurs, flames of the forest, red silk cottons, jacarandas, mangoes, jackfruits and many others that would remain unknown to you if they didn't have neat labels at their feet. There are benches. On these benches you see men sleeping, stretched out, or couples sitting, young couples, who steal glances at each other shyly and whose hands flutter in the air, happening to touch. Suddenly, amidst the tall and slim trees up ahead, you notice two giraffes quietly observing you. The sight is not the last of your surprises. The next moment you are startled by a furious outburst coming from a great troupe of monkeys, only outdone in volume by the shrill cries of strange birds. You come to a turnstile. You distractedly pay a small sum of money. You move on. You see a low wall. What can you expect beyond a low wall? Certainly not a shallow pit with two mighty Indian rhinoceros. But that is what you find. And when you turn your head you see the elephant that was there all along, so big you didn't notice it. And in the pond you realize those are hippopotamuses floating in the water. The more you look, the more you see. You are in Zootown!
- 2 Before moving to Pondicherry, Father ran a large hotel in Madras. An abiding interest in animals led him to the zoo business. A natural transition, you might think, from hotel keeping to zookeeping. Not so. In many ways, running a zoo is a hotelkeeper's worst nightmare. Consider: the guests never leave their rooms; they expect not only lodging but full board; they receive a constant flow of visitors, some of whom are noisy and unruly. One has to wait until they saunter to their balconies, so to speak, before one can clean their rooms, and then one has to wait until they tire of the view and return to their rooms before one can clean their balconies; and there is much cleaning to do. . . . Each guest is very particular about his or her diet, constantly complains about the slowness of the service, and never, ever tips. . . . Are these the sorts of guests you would want to welcome to your inn? The Pondicherry Zoo was the source of some pleasure and many headaches for Mr. Santosh Patel, founder, owner, director, head of a staff of fifty-three, and my father.
- 3 To me, it was paradise on earth. I have nothing but the fondest memories of growing up in a zoo. I lived the life of a prince. What maharaja's son had such vast, luxuriant grounds to play about? What palace had such a menagerie? My alarm clock during my childhood was a pride of lions. They were no Swiss clocks, but the lions could be counted upon to roar their heads off between five-thirty and six every morning. Breakfast was punctuated by the shrieks and cries of howler monkeys, hill mynahs and Moluccan cockatoos. I left for school under the benevolent gaze not



only of Mother but also of bright-eyed otters and burly American bison and stretching and yawning orang-utans. . . . On my way out I might stop by the terraria to look at some shiny frogs glazed bright, bright green, or yellow and deep blue, or brown and pale green. Or it might be birds that caught my attention: pink flamingoes or black swans or one-wattled cassowaries, or something smaller, silver diamond doves, Cape glossy starlings, peach-faced lovebirds, Nanday conures, orange-fronted parakeets. Not likely that the elephants, the seals, the big cats or the bears would be up and doing, but the baboons, the macaques, the mangabeys, the gibbons, the deer, the tapirs, the llamas, the giraffes, the mongooses were early risers. Every morning before I was out the main gate I had one last impression that was both ordinary and unforgettable: a pyramid of turtles; the iridescent snout of a mandrill; the stately silence of a giraffe; the obese, yellow open mouth of a hippo; the beak-and-claw climbing of a macaw parrot up a wire fence; the greeting claps of a shoebill's bill. . . . And all these riches were had quickly, as I hurried to school.

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1

RE008636673_1

Read the sentences from paragraph 1.

It was a huge zoo, spread over numberless acres, big enough to require a train to explore it, though it seemed to get smaller as I grew older, train included. Now it's so small it fits in my head.

What can be inferred from the sentences in paragraph 1?

- A** The zoo is now a memory for the narrator.
- B** The zoo is smaller since many acres have been sold.
- C** The zoo is less interesting to the narrator as an adult.
- D** The zoo is so large the narrator cannot explore all of it.



Released Item Performance

Kentucky Summative Assessments

Spring 2026

Grade 8

Reading

Item: RE008636673

Book Question Number: 1

Standard: RL.8, RL.8.1

Item Type: MC

Key: A

Student Group	Number of Students	Percent Correct	Average Item Score	Item Breakout Statistics - Answer Choice Options			
				A (%)	B (%)	C (%)	D (%)
All Students	20,061	64%	0.64	64%	8%	25%	3%
Gender							
Female	9,798	69%	0.69	69%	7%	21%	3%
Male	10,261	59%	0.59	59%	8%	29%	4%
Ethnicity							
African American	2,039	54%	0.54	54%	12%	29%	5%
American Indian or Alaska Native	18	72%	0.72	72%	11%	0%	17%
Asian	453	63%	0.63	63%	4%	28%	4%
Hispanic or Latino	1,901	55%	0.55	55%	11%	30%	4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36	53%	0.53	53%	17%	28%	3%
White (non-Hispanic)	14,525	67%	0.67	67%	7%	24%	3%
Two or more races	1,086	62%	0.62	62%	8%	27%	3%
Migrant							
Migrant	81	42%	0.42	42%	23%	26%	9%
English Learner							
English Learner	880	44%	0.44	44%	19%	28%	9%
Economically Disadvantaged							
Economically Disadvantaged	11,360	60%	0.60	60%	9%	26%	4%
Students with Disabilities							
Students with Disabilities	1,295	55%	0.55	55%	16%	22%	8%



2

RE009242767_4

What does paragraph 2 reveal about the narrator's father, Mr. Santosh Patel?

- A** He does his best to set a good example for his son.
- B** He leaves a stable business in order to pursue his dreams.
- C** He expects his son to take over managing the zoo in the future.
- D** He discovers that managing a zoo is more difficult than managing a hotel.



Released Item Performance

Kentucky Summative Assessments

Spring 2026

Grade 8

Reading

Item: RE009242767

Book Question Number: 2

Standard: RL.8, RL.8.3

Item Type: MC

Key: D

Student Group	Number of Students	Percent Correct	Average Item Score	Item Breakout Statistics - Answer Choice Options			
				A (%)	B (%)	C (%)	D (%)
All Students	20,060	71%	0.71	7%	16%	5%	71%
Gender							
Female	9,798	74%	0.74	7%	16%	4%	74%
Male	10,260	69%	0.69	8%	17%	6%	69%
Ethnicity							
African American	2,038	65%	0.65	10%	18%	7%	65%
American Indian or Alaska Native	18	78%	0.78	6%	17%	0%	78%
Asian	453	73%	0.73	6%	19%	2%	73%
Hispanic or Latino	1,901	70%	0.70	7%	15%	7%	70%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36	83%	0.83	6%	8%	3%	83%
White (non-Hispanic)	14,525	72%	0.72	7%	16%	5%	72%
Two or more races	1,086	73%	0.73	7%	15%	5%	73%
Migrant							
Migrant	81	67%	0.67	15%	7%	11%	67%
English Learner							
English Learner	880	61%	0.61	11%	15%	13%	61%
Economically Disadvantaged							
Economically Disadvantaged	11,359	70%	0.70	8%	16%	6%	70%
Students with Disabilities							
Students with Disabilities	1,295	67%	0.67	9%	14%	10%	67%

**3**

RE009244698_3

Read the sentence from paragraph 2.

The Pondicherry Zoo was the source of some pleasure and many headaches for Mr. Santosh Patel, founder, owner, director, head of a staff of fifty-three, and my father.

What does this sentence reveal about the characters in the story?

- A** It shows the narrator and his father have the same perspective.
- B** It hints that the narrator doubts his father's ability to run the zoo.
- C** It reflects the narrator's admiration for his father's strength as a leader.
- D** It explains how the narrator feels about his father's decision to become a zookeeper.



Released Item Performance

Kentucky Summative Assessments

Spring 2026

Grade 8

Reading

Item: RE009244698

Book Question Number: 3

Standard: RL.8, RL.8.3

Item Type: MC

Key: C

Student Group	Number of Students	Percent Correct	Average Item Score	Item Breakout Statistics - Answer Choice Options			
				A (%)	B (%)	C (%)	D (%)
All Students	20,059	69%	0.69	7%	9%	69%	16%
Gender							
Female	9,798	74%	0.74	6%	7%	74%	13%
Male	10,259	64%	0.64	8%	10%	64%	18%
Ethnicity							
African American	2,038	60%	0.60	9%	12%	60%	19%
American Indian or Alaska Native	18	61%	0.61	11%	6%	61%	22%
Asian	453	72%	0.72	4%	6%	72%	17%
Hispanic or Latino	1,901	64%	0.64	7%	11%	64%	18%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36	78%	0.78	0%	6%	78%	17%
White (non-Hispanic)	14,524	71%	0.71	6%	8%	71%	15%
Two or more races	1,086	67%	0.67	6%	9%	67%	17%
Migrant							
Migrant	81	58%	0.58	5%	14%	58%	23%
English Learner							
English Learner	880	49%	0.49	10%	16%	49%	25%
Economically Disadvantaged							
Economically Disadvantaged	11,359	65%	0.65	8%	10%	65%	18%
Students with Disabilities							
Students with Disabilities	1,295	52%	0.52	11%	15%	52%	22%



4

RE008639847_5,4

What evidence from the story supports the idea that the narrator's routines were very different from other children's? Select **two** correct answers.

- A** "You must imagine a hot and humid place, bathed in sunshine and bright colours." (paragraph 1)
- B** "Before moving to Pondicherry, Father ran a large hotel in Madras." (paragraph 2)
- C** "Each guest is very particular about his or her diet, constantly complains about the slowness of the service, and never, ever tips." (paragraph 2)
- D** "My alarm clock during my childhood was a pride of lions." (paragraph 3)
- E** "On my way out I might stop by the terraria to look at some shiny frogs glazed bright, bright green, or yellow and deep blue, or brown and pale green." (paragraph 3)



Released Item Performance

Kentucky Summative Assessments

Spring 2026

Grade 8

Reading

Item: RE008639847

Book Question Number: 4

Standard: RL.8, RL.8.1

Item Type: MS

Key: D,E

Student Group	Number of Students	Percent Correct	Average Item Score	Item Breakout Statistics - Score Percentages		
				Score 0 (%)	Score 1 (%)	Score 2 (%)
All Students	20,036	75.0%	1.50	8%	34%	58%
Gender						
Female	9,786	77.5%	1.55	7%	31%	62%
Male	10,248	72.5%	1.45	9%	37%	54%
Ethnicity						
African American	2,031	65.5%	1.31	13%	44%	44%
American Indian or Alaska Native	18	66.7%	1.33	11%	44%	44%
Asian	453	84.5%	1.69	3%	26%	72%
Hispanic or Latino	1,895	69.5%	1.39	11%	40%	50%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36	72.2%	1.44	14%	28%	58%
White (non-Hispanic)	14,517	76.8%	1.54	7%	32%	61%
Two or more races	1,083	74.4%	1.49	7%	37%	56%
Migrant						
Migrant	81	63.0%	1.26	10%	54%	36%
English Learner						
English Learner	871	53.7%	1.07	18%	56%	25%
Economically Disadvantaged						
Economically Disadvantaged	11,342	70.5%	1.41	10%	39%	51%
Students with Disabilities						
Students with Disabilities	1,293	61.3%	1.23	15%	47%	38%



Directions: Select the correct answers.

Which phrases from paragraph 1 help to establish the lighthearted tone of the story?

Select **three** correct answers.

You must imagine a hot and humid place, bathed in sunshine and bright colours. The riot of flowers is incessant. There are trees, shrubs and climbing plants in profusion—peepuls, gulmohurs, flames of the forest, red silk cottons, jacarandas, mangoes, jackfruits and many others that would remain unknown to you if they didn't have neat labels at their feet. There are benches. On these benches you see men sleeping, stretched out, or couples sitting, young couples, who steal glances at each other shyly and whose hands flutter in the air, happening to touch.



Released Item Performance

Kentucky Summative Assessments

Spring 2026

Grade 8

Reading

Item: RE009339034

Book Question Number: 5

Standard: RL.8, RL.8.4

Item Type: TE

Key: see below

Student Group	Number of Students	Percent Correct	Average Item Score	Item Breakout Statistics - Score Percentages		
				Score 0 (%)	Score 1 (%)	Score 2 (%)
All Students	20,053	59.4%	1.19	12%	57%	31%
Gender						
Female	9,795	60.5%	1.21	10%	59%	31%
Male	10,256	58.3%	1.17	14%	55%	31%
Ethnicity						
African American	2,035	53.2%	1.06	18%	57%	25%
American Indian or Alaska Native	18	61.1%	1.22	17%	44%	39%
Asian	453	62.5%	1.25	6%	63%	31%
Hispanic or Latino	1,900	56.2%	1.12	16%	55%	28%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	36	63.9%	1.28	8%	56%	36%
White (non-Hispanic)	14,523	60.4%	1.21	11%	58%	32%
Two or more races	1,085	60.6%	1.21	12%	55%	33%
Migrant						
Migrant	81	51.2%	1.02	25%	48%	27%
English Learner						
English Learner	879	47.4%	0.95	25%	56%	19%
Economically Disadvantaged						
Economically Disadvantaged	11,353	57.1%	1.14	15%	57%	29%
Students with Disabilities						
Students with Disabilities	1,294	51.5%	1.03	22%	53%	25%

Key: Hot text with identifiers of bathed in sunshine, hands flutter, have neat labels should be selected



Investing in Kentucky's Future, One Student at a Time