

## READING Practice



*Get Ahead*—Even though some of the terminology and format for drama are different from other fictional works, be sure to exercise your READING Power. These strategies work for all passages on the EOC Reading exam. Use the blank bubbles to write marginal notes.

**Directions:** Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

### Excerpt from *A Wife for a Life*

by Eugene O'Neill

#### CHARACTERS

THE OLDER MAN

JACK, *The Younger Man*

OLD PETE, *a miner*



SCENE—*The edge of the Arizona desert; a plain dotted in the foreground with clumps of sagebrush. On the horizon a lonely butte is outlined, black and sinister against the lighter darkness of a sky with stars. The time is in the early hours of the night. In the foreground stands a ragged tent the flap of which is open. Leaning against it are some shovels and a pick or two. Two saddles are on the ground nearby. Before the tent is a smoldering campfire at which an elderly man of about fifty is seated. He is dressed in miner's costume; flannel shirt, khaki trousers, high boots etc. —all patched and showing evidences of long wear and tear. His wide-brimmed Stetson hat lies on the ground beside him. His hair is turning gray and his face is the face of one who has wandered far, lived hard, seen life in the rough, and is a little weary of it all. Withal his air and speech are those of an educated man whose native refinement has clung to him in spite of many hard knocks.*

*On one side of the tent stands a rough stool and a gold-miner's panning tub—a square box half filled with water.*

**SOL GRAND SLAM**, *End-of-Course Reading*

THE OLDER MAN—*(stirring the fire in a futile attempt to start it into flame)* I wonder what can be keeping him so long? *(hears noise of someone approaching)* Hello, Jack, I was just beginning to think you were lost.

*(Old Pete enters. He is an old man dressed in rough miner's costume but he wears spurs and carries a quirt, which is a riding whip, in his hand. He is covered with dust and has evidently been riding hard.)*

OLD PETE—It ain't Jack. It's me.

THE OLDER MAN—*(disappointed)* Hello, Pete. What brings you around at this time of the night?

OLD PETE—*(taking telegram from his pocket)* I was just leaving Lawson when the operator stopped me and give me this for Jack. I seen your campfire burning and reckoned I'd bring it right over.

THE OLDER MAN—*(taking telegram)* Many thanks, Pete. Won't you sit down and rest a bit?

OLD PETE—Much obliged but I reckon I'll travel along. I ain't slept none to speak of in the past few nights and I got to be up at sunrise. *(grinning sheepishly)* That fool town of Lawson sure does keep you up nights. *(He starts to go, then stops.)* Claim panning out as good as ever?

THE OLDER MAN—Better every day. This morning we took a sample from the upper end which we haven't touched so far. It looks good but we haven't panned it yet.

OLD PETE—You-alls ought to get rich. You know how to keep money. Now me and money never could get on no-way. *(pulls out pockets ruefully)* They cleaned me out in Lawson this time and I reckon they'll clean me again the next time. *(shaking his head)* Adios. *(exits)*

THE OLDER MAN—Good night. Poor Pete. Same old story. Been bucking the faro bank again I suppose. *(looks at telegram)* Hmm. Wonder what this is? Jack has had no correspondence in the five years I've been with him. May be something important in connection with the mine. I guess I'd better open it. He won't mind anyway. *(He opens the telegram and reads aloud)* "I am waiting. Come." No name signed. It comes from New York too. Well, it's too much for me. I give it up. *(puts telegram in pocket)* Must be that fool operator got mixed up in his names. I wouldn't like to see Jack obey any summons like that. He's about all I've got now and I'd hate to see him leave just when we've struck it rich. *(dismissing the subject)* I guess this wire is all a mistake anyway. *(He looks around yawning and his eye lights on the panning tub.)* Now if only the upper part of the claim is as rich as that we've been working— *(The noise of someone approaching is heard.)* Here he comes now. Welcome, wanderer! Where have you been all this time?

*(Jack enters. He is dressed about the same as the Older Man but is much younger—in the early thirties.)*

**1 Why is the Older Man disappointed to see Old Pete?**

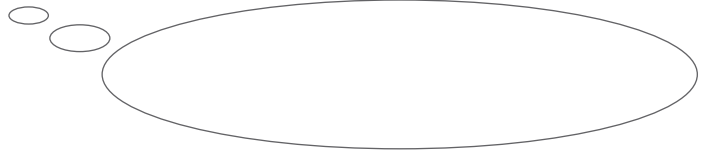
- A He does not like Old Pete.
- B He is expecting someone else.
- C He does not want Old Pete to know that they struck it rich.
- D He is suspicious of what Old Pete will say in town.



Why did you choose this answer?

**2 This excerpt is an example of which component of scripting?**

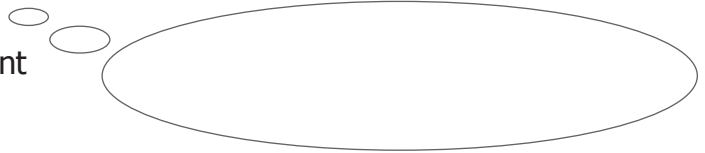
- F Exposition
- G Rising action
- H Falling action
- J Denouement



Why did you choose this answer?

**3 Based on the stage directions, how should Old Pete act when he “pulls out pockets ruefully”?**

- A With great regret and embarrassment
- B Without learning or refinement
- C With much joy and excitement
- D Without connection to reality



Why did you choose this answer?

**4 Which line is an example of dialect?**

- F Older Man: "Hello, Jack, I was just beginning to think you were lost."
- G Stage directions: "He is covered with dust and has evidently been riding hard."
- H Old Pete: "I was just leaving Lawson when the operator stopped me and give me this for Jack."
- J Old Pete: "Much obliged but I reckon I'll travel along."

Why did you choose this answer?

**5 Before the Older Man notices Jack's entrance, the scene's final lines spoken by him are an example of —**

- A an aside
- B dialogue
- C a monologue
- D a soliloquy

Why did you choose this answer?

**6 Based on what happens so far, what type of irony will occur as indicated in the opening stage notes and as a result of the Older Man's placing the telegram in his pocket?**

- F Dramatic irony
- G Situational irony
- H Verbal irony
- J Satirical irony

Why did you choose this answer?

Shade your answers in the box below.

<b>1</b>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	<b>4</b>	(F)	(G)	(H)	(J)
<b>2</b>	(F)	(G)	(H)	(J)	<b>5</b>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<b>3</b>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	<b>6</b>	(F)	(G)	(H)	(J)

To learn the answers to the questions and understand why the answers are correct, turn to Appendix A.

## Cooling Down with Drama

How well did you do? Why did you miss the ones you did? Explain how you will approach questions about drama on the SOL EOC Reading assessment.

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