

from *An American Childhood* by Annie Dillard

Selection Test A

Critical Reading Identify the letter of the choice that best answers the question.

- ___ 1. At the beginning of the excerpt from *An American Childhood*, what important thing do you learn about Annie Dillard when she talks about playing football?
- A. She thinks football is a difficult game.
 - B. She has never fooled the other team.
 - C. She values concentration and courage.
 - D. She realizes how hard it is to get hurt.
- ___ 2. In *An American Childhood*, why are the children throwing snowballs at cars?
- A. They are already bored with winter.
 - B. They want the drivers to chase them.
 - C. The cars are getting in the way of their street game.
 - D. The cars are moving slowly and make good targets.
- ___ 3. Use context clues in the following passage from *An American Childhood* to choose the correct meaning of the underlined word.
- He chased us silently over picket fences, through thorny hedges, between houses, around garbage cans, and across streets. Every time I glanced back, choking for breath, I expected he would have quit.
- A. fell
 - B. looked quickly
 - C. gasped loudly
 - D. shoved
- ___ 4. Use context clues in the following passage from *An American Childhood* to choose the correct meaning of the underlined word.
- Mikey and I had nowhere to go, in our own neighborhood or out of it, but away from this man who was chasing us. He impelled us forward.
- A. caught
 - B. pushed
 - C. helped
 - D. called

- ___ 5. In *An American Childhood*, after the man catches her and Mikey, Dillard says:
He had released our jackets; . . . he knew we weren't going anywhere. We all played by the rules.
- What does she mean?
- A. The children will have to unzip their jackets so they do not catch cold.
 - B. The children will have to help the man find his way back to his car.
 - C. The children will not try to run away once they have been fairly caught.
 - D. The children will wait for the man to catch his breath so he can scold them.
- ___ 6. Why does the man chase the children in *An American Childhood*?
- A. to have some fun
 - B. to get some exercise
 - C. to get their names and call the police
 - D. to teach them a lesson
- ___ 7. Dillard writes from the first-person point of view in *An American Childhood*. Which of the following statements is always true of a first-person narrative?
- A. It is about a childhood memory.
 - B. It is told by one of the characters.
 - C. It describes characters' thoughts and actions.
 - D. It includes conversations among characters.
- ___ 8. *An American Childhood* is told from the first-person point of view. What information must therefore be left out of the story?
- A. how the man feels as he chases the two children
 - B. how Dillard feels when she plays football
 - C. how Dillard feels when she is chased by the man
 - D. how the neighborhood looks as Dillard runs through it
- ___ 9. Which word best describes the young Annie Dillard in *An American Childhood*?
- A. troublesome
 - B. funny
 - C. adventurous
 - D. lonely
- ___ 10. Why does Dillard admire the driver of the Buick in *An American Childhood*?
- A. He eventually outruns her and Mikey.
 - B. He throws himself into the chase.
 - C. He is braver than other drivers.
 - D. He scolds them after he has caught them.

- ___ 11. What lesson does Annie Dillard share in *An American Childhood*?
- A. the importance of telling the truth
 - B. the joy of flinging oneself into life's events
 - C. the danger of throwing snowballs at cars
 - D. the importance of not talking to strangers

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 12. In which sentence is the word *strategy* used correctly?
- A. When children throw snowballs at cars, they are wise to plan a strategy for escape.
 - B. When traffic slows to a strategy, it is a good time for children to aim their snowballs.
 - C. When the man catches the two children, he scolds them with his strategy.
 - D. When Dillard looks back on her childhood, she remembers the strategy of winter.
- ___ 13. Which of the following phrases from *An American Childhood* contains a plural possessive noun?
- A. your team's score
 - B. the cars' tires
 - C. the man's lower pants legs
 - D. the backyard's new snow
- ___ 14. In which sentence about *An American Childhood* is an apostrophe used correctly to form a plural possessive noun?
- A. The narrator appears to be proud of having a boys' arm.
 - B. The childrens' snowball hit the windshield of the black Buick.
 - C. All the car's tires made tracks in the newly fallen snow.
 - D. Dillard and Mikey ran through all the neighbors' front yards.

Essay

15. In an essay, explain why Annie Dillard might have chosen to write *An American Childhood* from the first-person point of view. How would her comments about playing football and her description of being chased through the snow have been different if they had been written from the third-person point of view? Cite examples from the story to support your points.
16. This selection from *An American Childhood* creates a picture of Annie Dillard as a girl. In an essay, describe what she was like. Then consider whether you would have liked her. Refer to Dillard's thoughts and adventures to support your points.