



**PRACTICE TEST WITH
SAMPLE TEST ITEMS**

BASED ON GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS

ELA

SIXTH GRADE

Read the text. Then, answer questions 1 through 7.

Fishy Weather Conditions

By Phillip Cho

Lajamanu, Australia, is a dry little town with 600 residents, sitting right on the edge of the Tanami desert. On a map, Lajamanu looks a lot closer to the center of Australia than any coast. On any given day, red dust blows down the streets, and a dry wind hurries weeds down the dirt roads. Not much happens that is new or unexpected, so imagine how amazed its residents were when live fish rained down on them from a dark gray cloud one afternoon.

That is exactly what happened in the remote Australian village. Raining fish, especially more than 300 miles from an ocean, seems like it must be an elaborate hoax. In some places, however, it happens so often that it doesn't even surprise residents any longer. In Yoro, Honduras, it happens so regularly that they have begun to predict the Lluvia de Peces, or Rain of Fishes, once or twice a year.

How do clouds make fish? The simple answer is that they don't. There is a particular weather phenomenon called a waterspout. A waterspout is just like a tornado, only it forms above oceans, lakes, or rivers. Like a tornado, a waterspout is shaped like a funnel and moves in a circle at high speeds. The speed creates a vacuum effect which causes the funnel to suck everything it passes upward into its highest, widest section. Some waterspouts are only a few feet tall, but others are over a hundred feet high! When they vacuum in the water, waterspouts tend to carry the fish with them, as well as frogs or other small plants or animals.

As these waterspouts reach land, they begin to dissipate, or lose momentum. But since warm air rises, the water and all of the things in it tend to move upward, into the atmosphere, in the form of clouds. When the clouds, carried by wind, travel rapidly over land, they become laden with too much weight, and it begins to rain. This is how the fish and frogs seem to fall from the sky.

Scientists couldn't figure it out at first. To make matters stranger still, the fish in Yoro were very much alive when they rained down to the ground, but they were all blind. In England, it rained fish, frogs, spiders, and snakes, and none were blind. In Lajamanu, Australia, the fish were not only alive, but some were large enough to eat. It was difficult to puzzle out, but the blind fish in Yoro gave them a place to start.

Scientists knew that some fish that lived in deep, underground caves with no light sources often lost their eyesight over generations of adaptation. They simply no longer needed to see. So when blind fish rained down on Yoro, scientists began to connect some dots. Clearly, these particular fish were pulled from an underground water source by force. The waterspout theory began to seem more and more possible.

It has rained fish on every continent, and each time, people have tried in various ways to explain this strange phenomenon. Historically, villagers thought the “fishes from the heavens” might be answers to prayers for food. Others proposed that flashfloods overran river banks and oceans, depositing the fish on the city streets. No scientist had actually seen the rain as it occurred, only the fish left on the ground. But in 1970, a National Geographic team happened to be in Yoro when the Rain of Fishes began. They recorded what was happening and made history by finally proving that the fish really did fall from the sky.

This huge breakthrough wasn't just a spot of good luck. It changed thousands of years of myths and legends into true stories and provided scientific explanations for how fish came to live in deep caves and isolated ponds. It explained ancient cave paintings and shed new light on how species have spread over time. It turned out to be a lot more than just a little fishy weather.

1. The author suggests that raining fish was a welcomed event to some people. Which sentence from the text **best** supports this inference?
 - A. “In some places, however, it happens so often that it doesn't even surprise residents any longer.”
 - B. “In Yoro, Honduras, it happens so regularly that they have begun to predict the Lluvia de Peces, or Rain of Fishes, once or twice a year.”
 - C. “In Lajamanu, Australia, the fish were not only alive, but some were large enough to eat.”
 - D. “It has rained fish on every continent, and each time, people have tried in various ways to explain this strange phenomenon.”

2. Which statement **best** summarizes the central idea of the text?
 - A. Fish adapt to their environments, and in some cases lose certain abilities.
 - B. Animals raining from the sky is an unusual event that can be explained through science.
 - C. Scientists need to capture fish raining from the sky on film before the event is believable.
 - D. Animals live through varying weather conditions despite extreme changes to their environments.

3. Read the paragraphs from the text. Then, answer the question.

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Which statement **best** summarizes the central idea of the paragraphs?

- A. Scientists were interested in knowing why the raining animals differed from place to place.
- B. Details about animals affected by the unusual event led to an understanding of how it was happening.
- C. The presence of unusual animals brought about the belief that the event was rare and due to special situations.
- D. Understanding how animals change to match their environments helped scientists determine why particular events happened to them.

4. This question has **two** parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A

Choose the statement that **best** describes what the reference to tornadoes shows about waterspouts.

- A. A waterspout can cause destruction.
- B. A waterspout can carry items within it.
- C. A waterspout is difficult to catch on film.
- D. A waterspout is a unique weather system.

Part B

Choose the sentence from the text that **best** supports your answer in part A.

- A. How do clouds make fish?
- B. The simple answer is that they don't.
- C. There is a particular weather phenomenon called a waterspout.
- D. A waterspout is just like a tornado, only it forms above oceans, lakes, or rivers.
- E. Like a tornado, a waterspout is shaped like a funnel and moves in a circle at high speeds.
- F. The speed creates a vacuum effect which causes the funnel to suck everything it passes upward into its highest, widest section.
- G. Some waterspouts are only a few feet tall, but others are over a hundred feet high!