



**NEW ENGLAND  
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items  
2010**

**Grade 4  
Reading**

# Reading

① In the word colder, the ending *-er* means

- A. able.
- B. small.
- C. more.
- D. make.

② Which sentence uses the word fair to mean “honest”?

- A. There will be games at the school fair.
- B. When the weather is fair we can go outside.
- C. Please be fair when you play the game.
- D. We saw live animals at the summer fair.

Read this passage about how the Northwest Coast Indian tribes used the western red cedar tree. Then answer the questions that follow.

## A People and a Tree

by Christine Graf

1 Hundreds of years ago, babies born to the Northwest Coast Indians slept in cradles made of cedar wood. They snuggled under blankets and wore diapers made from cedar bark. As the babies grew, they came to understand how important the cedar tree was to their way of life.

Northwest Coast Indian tribes have always lived along the western shores of Canada and the northwestern coast of the United States. Long ago, the Indians relied on the western red cedar in every part of their lives. It was so important to them that they called it the Tree of Life.

The Indians used the cedar trees with care and respect. Of the hundreds of things they made from the trees, only a few used up whole trunks. Trunks were taken only for special purposes, such as house or canoe building. Amazingly, the Indians had learned how to take bark, roots, and branches without killing the tree.

### Bark

Large pieces of the cedar's outer bark were cut into strips to make boxes and other kinds of containers. Narrow strips were woven into mats, which were used for bedding, room dividers, and tablecloths.

5 The inner bark would be pounded with a stone until it was soft and fluffy. It would also be shredded, using tools made of whale or deer bone. Women worked on pieces of

inner bark until they were soft enough to make diapers and crib padding. Before taking bark, women said special prayers of thanks to the tree. They knew how much bark they could take without harming the cedar. Bark was also used to make masks, skirts, headbands, blankets, ropes, and more.

### Wood

The Indians used cedar wood to build their longhouses. These buildings were large enough to be home to 20 people. Whole trees were cut down to provide the large logs needed for house beams.

One method the Indians used to cut down a tree was to set the bottom of the tree on fire. Above the fire, wet clay was packed on the tree to keep the fire from spreading upward. After burning for a while, the fire was put out and the burnt wood was scraped away. The whole process was repeated several times until the tree fell.

Huge logs were hollowed out to make canoes. Canoes were very important to the lives of the Northwest Coast Indians. Used for travel, fishing, hunting, and trading, the canoes were sometimes as large as 50 feet long and 8 feet wide, and they could carry 30 men.

### Branches

Cedar trees have special thin branches called *withes*. After being stripped of their leaves and bark, *withes* were soaked in hot

Original text contained a graphic of the Northwest Coast Indians at work.

water and twisted to make strong, flexible ropes. *Withe* ropes were so tough that whale hunters could use them to tow dead whales.

### **Roots**

Cedar roots were dug up and used for many purposes. After their bark was removed, the roots were separated into thin strips and used to weave beautiful baskets. Strong root

threads were also used for sewing and tying things together.

- 11** The lives of the Northwest Coast Indians began in cedar cradles and ended in cedar burial boxes. During the years in between, the Indians understood how important this tree was to their lives. They used the cedar tree to its fullest and treated it with great respect.

- 3 Based on the first paragraph, a cradle is a kind of
- A. bed.
  - B. house.
  - C. craft.
  - D. weapon.

- 4 Why did the Northwest Coast Indian tribes call the western cedar tree the “Tree of Life”?
- A. They were difficult trees to kill.
  - B. The trees were used in important ways.
  - C. Babies were born under the trees.
  - D. The trees were planted where the Indian tribes lived.

- 5 According to paragraph 5, Indian women who made things out of bark
- A. used bark in place of using heavy tools.
  - B. took only as much bark as they needed.
  - C. used the oldest bark they could find.
  - D. thought the bark was difficult to work with.

- 6 What did the Indians make out of whole tree trunks?
- A. boxes
  - B. masks
  - C. canoes
  - D. baskets

7 Fill in the chart.

<b>Choose four words from the Word Box that have the same vowel sound as <u>coast</u>:</b>	<b>Word Box</b>
1. _____	could
2. _____	float
3. _____	must
4. _____	stood
	first
	blows
	hour
	stone
	toe

- 8 The inner bark of cedar trees was used to make
- A. tools.
  - B. canoes.
  - C. boxes.
  - D. diapers.

- 9 Read the words in the box.

masks
canoes
beams

What do the words show?

- A. things traded for cedar trees by the Northwest Coast Indians
- B. things found by the Northwest Coast Indians when looking for cedar trees
- C. things made by the Northwest Coast Indians from cedar trees
- D. things used by the Northwest Coast Indians when growing new cedar trees

- 10 Which part of the passage gives information about building Indian homes?

- A. **Bark**
- B. **Wood**
- C. **Branches**
- D. **Roots**

- 11 In paragraph 11, what do the words to its fullest **most likely** mean?

- A. with each other
- B. some of the time
- C. with other tribes
- D. as much as they could



# Acknowledgments

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