1. Which statement does NOT represent a conflict the author presents in the short story “Two Kinds?”

A. the struggles between generations—old and young members of the same family
B. the contentious mother-daughter relationship
C. the disharmony between two mothers whose daughters are very close friends
D. old country values and traditions clashing with the feelings and expectations of the new country

LA.910.2.1.5
The correct answer is C. Options A, B, and D are incorrect because they represent conflicts that occur in the short story.

**Option A** is incorrect because “Two Kinds” contains the conflict between two generations as represented by a mother and her daughter. **Option B** is incorrect because “Two Kinds” explores the issues that develop between a mother and her daughter: the mother’s efforts to make her daughter into a prodigy in various fields, such as becoming the Chinese Shirley Temple, a memorizer of various facts, or a pianist; and the rebelliousness shown by the daughter, such as the daughter’s remarks on page 41, “Sometimes the prodigy in me became impatient.” or on page 43, “I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations.” as well as the failure to properly practice and play the piano. **Option C** is correct because this disharmony is between the daughters, Jing-Mei and Waverly: “We had grown up together and shared all the closeness of two sisters squabbling over crayons and dolls. In other words, for the most part, we hated each other.” (page 48) There is not disharmony between the mothers who are close friends. **Option D** is incorrect because the short story is about the new country, the United States. The reader learns that Jing-Mei’s mother lost her parents, her family home, her first husband, and twin baby girls in China, “But she never looked back with regret.” (page 40)

2. Mr. Chong thought Jing-Mei was correctly playing her assigned piano pieces for many reasons EXCEPT

F. he was a retired piano teacher, and he heard the music played correctly in his mind
G. he was deaf and, despite thick glasses, he had very poor vision
H. Jing-Mei kept her wrists still and curved her hands like she was holding an apple
I. whether Jing-Mei hit the correct note or not, she always kept the correct rhythm

LA.910.1.7.4
The correct answer is H. Options F, G, and I are incorrect because they represent correct rationales and interpretations of implied causal relationships.

**Option F** is incorrect because he was deaf but could imagine what the music should sound like as the reader learns on page 46, “I soon found out why Old Chong had retired from teaching piano. He was deaf. “Like Beethoven!” he shouted to me. “We’re both listening only in our head!” **Option G** is incorrect because he was deaf and had poor vision as the reader learns on page 46 where it says, “…he
wore thick glasses…” and later, “So that’s how I discovered that Old Chong’s eyes were too slow to keep up with the wrong notes I was playing.” **Option H** is correct because as the reader learns on page 46, Mr. Chong “…had me curve my hand around an apple and keep that shape when playing chords.” The posture of the student or the position of the hands while practicing did not relate to the “correct” sound being made when playing a piece of music on the piano. **Option I** is incorrect because as the reader learns on page 47, “He taught me all these things, and that was how I also learned I could be lazy and get away with mistakes, lots of mistakes. If I hit the wrong notes because I hadn’t practiced enough, I never corrected myself. I just kept playing in rhythm.”

3. What does the piano in “Two Kinds” symbolize?

A. Jing-Mei’s willingness to go along with any of her mother’s ideas and schemes to become famous and rich
B. the cultural belief that a child’s success and achievements mean that the mother and father have been good parents
C. the product of the hard work of her parents over time to accumulate enough wealth to buy Jing-Mei whatever she wanted
D. the feelings of Jing-Mei toward her mother—from acceptance then rebelliousness and finally to understanding and love

**LA.910.2.1.5**
The correct answer is **D**. Options A, B, and C are incorrect because they represent plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

**Option A** is incorrect because it is at the beginning of the story that Jing-Mei is willing to go along with her mother’s schemes, before the reader is introduced to the part of the story where Jing-Mei takes piano lessons. **Option B** is incorrect because the piano is not a cultural symbol in this short story. **Option C** is incorrect because as the reader learns on page 48, after taking piano lessons and arrangements had been made for Jing-Mei to play in the talent show, “By then, my parents had saved up enough to buy me a secondhand piano, a black Wurlitzer spinet with a scarred bench. It was the showpiece of our living room.” However, the piano was not purchased because Jing-Mei wanted it. **Option D** is correct because during the piano section of the story, the piano symbolizes another hope of the mother for a successful future for her daughter which ends in great disappointment. From then on, the piano symbolizes the stubbornness of the daughter, and, in the end of the story, after her mother dies, Jing-Mei had forgiven her mother for her pushing her daughter to be what she did not want to be. As a result, Jing-Mei has the piano tuned and, finally, she sits down and plays it because she wants to play. (pages 55 and 56).

4. The author helps the reader learn about the relationship between Jing-Mei and her mother in many ways EXCEPT

F. their actions and/or gestures toward one another
G. the way they treat characters not in the family
H. the language they use when they converse
I. the thoughts they have about each other
LA.910.2.1.5
The correct answer is G. Options F, H, and I are incorrect because they represent accurate interpretations of character, point of view, plot development, setting, conflict, or theme.

Option F is incorrect because the reader does learn about the mother/daughter relationship by the way the two characters act toward each other. Option G is correct because the way they treat other characters does not show how the mother and daughter feel about each other. Option H is incorrect because the language used when Jing-Mei and her mother interact shows the reader a lot about their contentious relationship. Option I is incorrect because the reader learns about the mother/daughter relationship through the thoughts of the two characters. The mother’s thoughts are implied, but those of Jing-Mei are stated, such as on page 43, “So now on nights when my mother presented her tests, I performed listlessly, my head propped on one arm. I pretended to be bored. And I was.” or on page 48, “And right then, I was determined to put a stop to her foolish pride.”

5. Why did the author conclude this short story with the discussion of the two songs "Perfectly Contented" and "Pleading Child?"

A. At her recital, Jing-Mei played “Pleading Child,” a simple, moody, slower piece symbolizing her battle of will with her mother who wanted to create a piano prodigy while Jing-Mei did not want to be a pianist.
B. Although both pieces had the same flowing rhythm, they represented opposing forces: "Pleading Child" was shorter, slower, and moody while "Perfectly Contented" was longer, faster, and lighter.
C. “Pleading Child” represented the young Jing-Mei, begging to be herself and not be forced into becoming someone she wasn’t while “Perfectly Contented” represents the adult Jing-Mei, at peace with life, herself, and her mother.
D. Although it was in the same song book, “Perfectly Contented” was not played by Jing-Mei as a child because no one was content in life, not the rebellious Jing-Mei or her ambitious mother.

LA.910.1.7.2
The correct answer is C. Options A, B, and D are incorrect because they represent plausible but incorrect or incomplete distractors based on the text.

Option A is incorrect because this is an incomplete response to the question since it only references one of the two pieces of music. Option B is incorrect because although this response reflects a correct analysis of the two pieces, it does not tell why the author concluded the short story with the discussion of the two songs. Option C is correct because it represents the reasons why the author concluded this short story with the discussion of the two songs—one played by the young Jing-Mei pleading to be her own kind of child and the other “discovered” by the adult Jing-Mei now perfectly contented in her grown-up life. Option D is incorrect because as a child, Jing-Mei was assigned to play “Pleasing Child,” and “Perfectly Contented” was not one of the pieces of music that young Jing-Mei played.
6. Which is NOT true about the lives of Jing-Mei and Amy Tan?

F. both were proven to be academically and musically gifted  
G. both had mothers who had very high aspirations for their daughters  
H. as young girls, both had to practice the piano daily  
I. both are of Chinese descent and grew up in the United States

LA.910.1.7.7
The correct answer is **F**. Options G, H, and I are incorrect because they represent correct comparisons.

**Option F** is correct because at age 5 Amy Tan was practicing the piano for an hour a day and, with a high IQ, her mother decided she should be a neurosurgeon first and a concert pianist second. Jing-Mei did not put forth sufficient effort to learn to play the piano and, as she says on page 45, “Why don’t you like me the way I am? I am not a genius!” **Option G** is incorrect because both had mothers who had high hopes for their daughters: on page 40 the reader learns the Jing-Mei’s mother thinks “…you can be prodigy, too…You can be best anything.” Amy Tan’s mother had her IQ tested when Amy was six years old and learned that she was smart enough to become a doctor (page 60). **Option H** is incorrect because both girls did have to practice the piano. At a young age, Jing-Mei’s mother arranged for weekly piano lessons and piano practice to occur two hours daily from 4-6 PM. (page 45). At age 5 Amy Tan was practicing the piano an hour a day (page 60). **Option I** is incorrect because this statement is true—both are of Chinese descent and grew up in the United States. The profile of the writer, Amy Tan, on page 38, includes the fact that she is the daughter of Chinese American immigrants. On page 40 the reader learns that Jing-Mei’s mother came to the United States from China in 1949 before Jing-Mei was born.

7. Why does Amy Tan wear different wigs, outfits, and sunglasses when she performs with the Rock Bottom Remainders?

A. to hide the fact that she is Chinese American  
B. in order to look the part of a real rock star  
C. because everyone else in the band wears a costume  
D. the whole idea of the band is be silly and have fun

LA.910.1.7.4
The correct answer is **D**. Options A, B, and C are incorrect because they represent plausible but incorrect distractors based on the text.

**Option A** is incorrect because the profile does not say that Amy Tan is embarrassed or ashamed of her heritage. **Option B** is incorrect because although some real rock stars may dress up and look unusual, this is not the reason for Amy’s costuming. **Option C** is incorrect because as the picture on page 59 shows, not everyone in the band wears a costume. **Option D** is correct because as the caption on page
60 says, “Wearing colorful wigs and costumes is part of the fun when Amy Tan sings with the Rock Bottom Remainders.”

8. What topic in the profile is illustrated by the chart on page 61?

F. The band is made up of famous writers who are rock stars in their dreams.
G. All band members are famous authors of novels.
H. Writers who work alone, work together to sing and play music for charity.
I. There is a connection between music and creativity.

LA.910.2.2.1
The correct answer is H. Options F, G, and I are incorrect because they represent facts, details, or other information drawn from the text but unrelated to the question being asked.

The chart is a list of the authors’ names, their literary achievements, and the musical contribution they make to the Rock Bottom Remainders. Option F is incorrect because although this is a true statement (page 60 “…a garage band made up of famous writers who secretly dream of being rock stars.”), it is not the topic of the chart. Option G is incorrect because not all of the authors listed on the chart are novelists—Dave Barry is a newspaper humor columnist. Option H is correct because by studying the chart the reader can see that the authors have literary achievements they have accomplished by themselves, yet together they contribute different musical efforts to the Rock Bottom Remainders which the article tells us on page 60 raises money for literacy-based charities. Option I is incorrect because although this may be a true statement (top of page 61), it is not a topic of the chart.

9. Read the pairs of statements about Jing-Mei from “Two Kinds” and about Amy Tan from “Novel Musician.” Which pair of statements does NOT compare similar topics?

A. Jing-Mei: “I pictured this prodigy part of me as many different images, and I tried each one on for size.”
Amy Tan: “Wearing colorful wigs and costumes is part of the fun when Amy Tan sings with the Rock Bottom Remainders.”

B. Jing-Mei: “But I was so determined not to try, not to be anybody different, and I learned to play only the most ear-splitting preludes, the most discordant hymns.”
Amy Tan: “When I was practicing the piano, what I always saw when I played the pieces were stories in my head.”

C. Jing-Mei: ”Of course, you can be a prodigy, too,” my mother told me when I was nine. ”You can be best anything.”
Amy Tan: “She was given an IQ test at age 6 and her parents were told that she was smart enough to be a doctor.”

D. Jing-Mei: “… my mother had traded housecleaning services for weekly lessons and a piano for me to practice on every day, two hours a day, from four until six.”
Amy Tan: “Tan’s musical career started at age 5, when she practiced piano an hour a day.”

LA.910.1.7.7
The correct answer is B. Options A, C, and D are incorrect because they represent facts and details drawn from the text that are related to the test question.
Option A is incorrect because the two statements compare similar topics: the changing images that people project for various reasons. Option B is correct because the statements compare dissimilar topics: what occurred when two children were each learning to play the piano—one piano student was rebelling (Jing-Mei) by consciously playing the wrong notes and the other student (Amy Tan) was using carefully played music as a backdrop for stories in her mind. Option C is incorrect because the two statements compare similar topics: they show the wish of parents to prove that their children are smart and have the potential to become successful adults. Jing-Mei’s mother believed in her heart that she could make her daughter into something wonderful, while Amy Tan’s mother used an IQ test to prove that her daughter could be something wonderful. Option D is incorrect because the two statements compare similar topics: both girls were directed by their mothers to practice the piano daily at a very young age.

10. Why did the author write the profile “Novel Musician?”

F. to show that serious author Amy Tan has a whimsical, playful side
G. to encourage readers to go to the next concert by “The Rock Bottom Remainders”
H. to inspire readers to perform with a band, whether they are musical or not
I. to arouse reader’s interest donating money to literacy-based charities

LA.910.1.7.2
The correct answer is F. Options G, H, and I are incorrect because they represent incorrect interpretations of the author’s purpose or perspective.

Option F is correct because she wanted to show that this successful author who writes serious, insightful books has a playful side where she dresses up in costumes and sings loudly with the band even though she may lack talent as a singer. Option G is incorrect because although the profile tells the reader about the band, the purpose of the article is not to advertise for the group. Option H is incorrect because the author is not directly encouraging musically untalented people to join a band; the point is that famous authors are in this band raising money for charity, and, as Amy Tan says on page 62, “Everyone [in the band] is so great about their lack of musical talent… We’re a joke …” Option I is incorrect because although on page 60 the reader is told “Once a year, the band goes on tour across the United States to create a few laughs and to raise money for literacy-based charities.” this is simply a detail in the profile. The profile is not written to solicit donations to any charity.