

K-PREP
Sample Items
2012

Reading Grade 8

Discovering and using one's talents can be very advantageous. Read this passage about two boys who capitalize on their talents. Then answer the questions that follow.

Finding the Right Role

- 1 "Hey, Raj, we're going to be an awesome team for our history report!" Pedro said, feeling quite sure of this. Not only was Raj the top student, but Pedro always made everyone laugh with his comments during discussion. They were the ultimate team and best friends.
- 2 Raj smiled and said, "Yeah, but it's going to take a lot of work, and it's due tomorrow. Let's split the project up, half-and-half, and then we can get together tomorrow before class to make sure we've got everything covered, right?"
- 3 "Sure—" Pedro started to say, but Raj was already moving on.
- 4 "So, I divided up the timeline of Washington's life, with you getting the post-president years, and I made copies of the kinds of charts I think would work best for you to get some ideas."
- 5 Pedro stared at the pile of papers that Raj pushed into his hands. If the papers were a building, they'd be a skyscraper. Pedro's heart also sank at the realization that Raj intended for them to work separately, but he shook off the disappointment. Raj was the best student in the entire class, so he surely knew the best way to put together a report. He'd trust Raj any day of the week, because Raj was his best friend. Pedro gave his friend a salute and set off to the library down the street from his house.
- 6 Hours later, Pedro sat amid piles of books, still at the library, eyes burning from too much reading. He slammed his current book shut and slumped in his seat. He'd filled out pages and pages of notes to figure out a creative way to make a chart like Raj had said, but he couldn't seem to make a chart to save his life. He imagined Raj at home already, beaming at his completed perfect charts, and how disappointed Raj would be in him if Pedro let his friend down by not doing a good job. Making his friend fail a major project definitely fell under the heading, "Not a Good Friend."
- 7 Library books about the first president were scattered around Pedro, and he gazed at the cover of the one he had just shut. Washington always seemed to have that little smile that was almost a smirk, Pedro considered. Tired of looking at his lame chart ideas, he stood up and looked in the mirror across from him instead. He practiced the same smile, holding the book up next to him, impressed with his own miniature impersonation. It made Pedro laugh, the sound echoing loudly through the library.

- 8 A girl peered around the bookshelf. "Is that you, Pedro? I thought I recognized that laugh," she said. Pedro recognized Alison Kramer, another student from history class. She walked over and craned her neck to take a look at his tenuous plans for his chart. He started to blush, the red slowly crawling up in his cheeks, and he quickly snatched the papers.
- 9 "Uh, those are just some ideas, you know, because Raj wants us to do charts and stuff . . ." he trailed off, realizing he sounded ridiculous. She smiled, which made him ask, "What?" and hunch his shoulders just a little. He didn't want to sound like he was griping about his friend, either. Pedro was lucky to be Raj's partner, after all.
- 10 "Well, I think if making a chart isn't working for you, you should go with what you like, you know? Because the rest of us would rather watch you have fun up there than see two sets of charts, one made by someone who hates charts!"
- 11 Pedro felt like he had been struck by lightning. "You're suggesting I do my own thing for my part of the project, even if it's different from Raj's?"
- 12 She nodded and added, "No rule says you guys have to use the same kind of approach. I bet Ms. Gilbert will love what you do because she's always saying, 'Push the envelope, young lady!' Think outside the box, my friend!" Pedro had to laugh at the way Alison wagged her finger as though she were lecturing a small child.
- 13 Pedro sat down as Alison wandered off. He looked at himself in the mirror across from the study desk. *Think outside the box?* The thought made a surprised smile slide across his lips, just a little hesitant at the corners, which reminded him of Washington's smile. He molded his face again into his impersonation of George Washington, and an idea struck him.
- 14 He scrambled to collect his books and raced home. He had just one night to arrange a lot of things. He wasn't sure how Raj would feel about it, but Pedro knew it was a perfect solution . . . for himself, at least.
- 15 The next day when he arrived for class, Raj was already there, setting up his charts. Pedro had to admit that those charts were everything a chart should be: full of clearly presented information, complete, interesting. Pedro pulled out a lumpy brown paper bag.
- 16 Raj said, "Where's your chart, man?" He licked his lips as he looked around, hoping Pedro had hidden the charts behind his back.
- 17 "I've got something better than a chart, Raj. Just trust me. All I need is for you to introduce me."

- 18 Raj's eyebrows drew down and he said, "Look, we said we were going to use charts!" with a voice a bit rough around the edges. "And now you're going to bail on me? I can't afford to fail this project!"
- 19 Pedro's stomach trembled; his best friend sounded pretty angry, but he took a deep breath and plunged forward. "No, Raj, YOU said we were going to do charts, but you never gave me a chance to tell you that I make the ugliest charts known to humankind. Now, just let me explain what I'm thinking." As Raj's grin began to bloom, the tightness in Pedro's chest began to release.
- 20 "Do you think it will work?" Raj asked, worried. "It's pretty risky to try something new."
- 21 "That's why it'll work, Raj-my-boy!" At least he hoped it would, but Pedro didn't mention that part. Now all they had to do was get through the actual presentation.
- 22 Raj did his part first, and Pedro slid out of the room as his partner neared his finishing point. When he heard Raj say, "Now, ladies and gentlemen, I present to you . . . President George Washington!" Pedro walked through the door to the gasps and laughter of his classmates and teacher.
- 23 "Good afternoon, class. My name is President Washington, and I am often referred to as the Father of Our Country." He moved with ponderous grace until he reached the front of the class. He stood, shoulders straight, in his stockings, knickers, jacket, and curly white wig. The wig wasn't quite from the right era, but Pedro didn't mind, because it just made everything funnier. Pedro stayed in character, as if on stage, and spoke of all the trials he, as Washington, had faced. Alison sent him a covert thumbs-up midway through his monologue.
- 24 At the end of the presentation, the class burst into applause, along with Ms. Gilbert. He looked toward Raj to see his response. Raj walked over to him, clapped him on the shoulder and then, with both arms outstretched toward Pedro, showed him off like a prize trophy, as the applause continued. Then Raj leaned over and whispered, "You were right, Pedro. I'm sorry I didn't trust you from the beginning, but anytime you need a partner for a project, you can give me a call!"
- 25 Pedro grinned back and said, "Deal!" and the two boys shook hands, surrounded by hoots and hollers of "Way to go, Washington!"

1

In the story Alison tells Pedro, “Think outside the box, my friend!”

Explain what “the box” is in the context of the story. Use details from the story to support your response.

Reading

A rectangular box with a thick black border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the box. The top line is slightly shorter than the others, starting from the left margin.

2

Henry David Thoreau was a nineteenth-century American author, poet, and philosopher best known for his desire to simplify his life by relying on himself. He went into the woods to live away from the pressures of society. He is well-known for this statement.

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured, or far away.”

Explain how Pedro’s situation and actions in the story compare to Thoreau’s words. Use at least two specific details from the story to support your response.

Reading

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box. The first line is slightly indented from the left margin.