GRADE NINE

WEEK OF MARCH 14-18 READING

Below are passage sets with questions that you can use for the Problem of the Day initiative.

Day One

Read excerpt from **"Odysseus and the Sirens" by Homer.** Answer the questions that follow.

Passage 1: "Odysseus and the Sirens" by Homer

In this excerpt from Homer's Odyssey, the Greek king Odysseus tells of his encounter with a group of dangerous creatures called the Sirens. He begins with the warnings given by the witch Circe before he and his men leave her island.

1 "'Now, then, stay here for the rest of the day, feast your fill, and go on with your voyage at daybreak tomorrow morning. In the meantime I will tell Ulysses[1] about your course, and will explain everything to him so as to prevent your suffering from misadventure either by land or sea.'

2 "We agreed to do as she had said, and feasted through the livelong day to the going down of the sun, but when the sun had set and it came on dark, the men laid themselves down to sleep by the stern cables of the ship. Then Circe took me by the hand and bade me be seated away from the others, while she reclined by my side and asked me all about our adventures.

3 "'So far so good,' said she, when I had ended my story, 'and now pay attention to what I am about to tell you—heaven itself, indeed, will recall it to your recollection. First you will come to the Sirens who enchant all who come near them. If any one unwarily draws in too close and hears the singing of the Sirens, his wife and children will never welcome him home again, for they sit in a green field and warble him to death with the sweetness of their song. . . . Therefore pass these Sirens by, and stop your men's ears with wax that none of them may hear; but if you like you can listen yourself, for you may get the men to bind you as you stand upright on a cross piece half way up the mast, and they must lash the rope's ends to the mast itself, that you may have the pleasure of listening. If you beg and pray the men to unloose you, then they must bind you faster. . . .

[1] Ulysses: the Roman name for Odysseus

4 "Here she ended, and dawn enthroned in gold began to show in heaven, whereon she returned inland. I then went on board and told my men to loose the ship from her moorings; so they at once got into her, took their places, and began to smite the grey sea with their oars. Presently the great and cunning goddess Circe befriended us with afair wind that blew dead aft, and staid steadily with us, keeping our sails well filled, so we did whatever wanted doing to the ship's gear, and let her go as wind and helmsman headed her.

5 "Then, being much troubled in mind, I said to my men, 'My friends, it is not right that one or two of us alone should know the prophecies that Circe has made me, I will therefore tell you about them, so that whether we live or die we may do so with our eyes open. First she said we were to keep clear of the Sirens, who sit and sing most beautifully in a field of flowers; but she said I might hear them myself so long as no one else did. Therefore, take me and bind me to the crosspiece half way up the mast; bind me as I stand upright, with a bond so fast that I cannot possibly break away, and lash the rope's ends to the mast itself. If I beg and pray you to set me free, then bind me more tightly still.'

6 "I had hardly finished telling everything to the men before we reached the island of the two Sirens, for the wind had been very favourable. Then all of a sudden it fell dead calm; there was not a breath of wind nor a ripple upon the water, so the men furled the sails and stowed them; then taking to their oars they whitened the water with the foam they raised in rowing. Meanwhile I took a large wheel of wax and cut it up small with my sword. Then I kneaded the wax in my strong hands till it became soft, which it soon did between the kneading and the rays of the sun-god son of Hyperion. Then I stopped the ears of all my men, and they bound me hands and feet to the mast as I stood upright on the cross piece; but they went on rowing themselves. When we had got within earshot of the land, and the ship was going at a good rate, the Sirens saw that we were getting in shore and began with their singing.

7 "'Come here,' they sang, 'renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song—and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the wholeworld.'

8 "They sang these words most musically, and as I longed to hear them further I made signs by frowning to my men that they shouldset me free; but they quickened their stroke, and Eurylochus and Perimedes bound me with still stronger bonds till we had got out of hearing of the Sirens' voices. Then my men took the wax from their ears and unbound me."

Excerpt from "Odysseus and the Sirens" by Homer, from *The Odyssey*, translated by Samuel Butler. In the public domain.

1. Part A: What advice from Circe is essential for Ulysses and his men to prepare for the Sirens in Passage 1?

A. The Sirens are few in number.

B. The Sirens can predict the future.

C. The Sirens enjoy flattery and praise.

D. The Sirens never let anyone leave their island.

2. Part B: Fill in the circle before the detail from the Sirens' song in Passage 1 that contradicts what Circe tells the men.

"◯ A Come here,' they sang,'renowned Ulysses, honour to the Achaean name, and listen to our two voices. ◯ B No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting sweetness of our song— ◯ C and he who listens will go on his way not only charmed, but wiser, ◯ D for we know all the ills that the gods laid upon the Argives and Trojans before Troy, and can tell you everything that is going to happen over the whole world.'

3. Ancient Greece was a seagoing culture that made important explorations. Ancient Greeks also believed the sea to be a dangerous place. How is this aspect of ancient Greek culture symbolized in Passage 1?

A. The Sirens appear enchanting, but they are lethal.

B. Circe enjoys the adventures of Ulysses but warns him of the Sirens.

C. The Sirens reveal important knowledge to sailors who listen to them.

D. Ulysses follows Circe's instructions, but he is tempted by the Sirens' song.

Day Two

Read the excerpt from "**The Sirens**" **by James Russell Lowell** and view the painting ***Ulysses and the Sirens*** **by John William Waterhouse**. Using them and the Day One reading from **"Odysseus and the Sirens" by Homer,** answer the questions that follow.

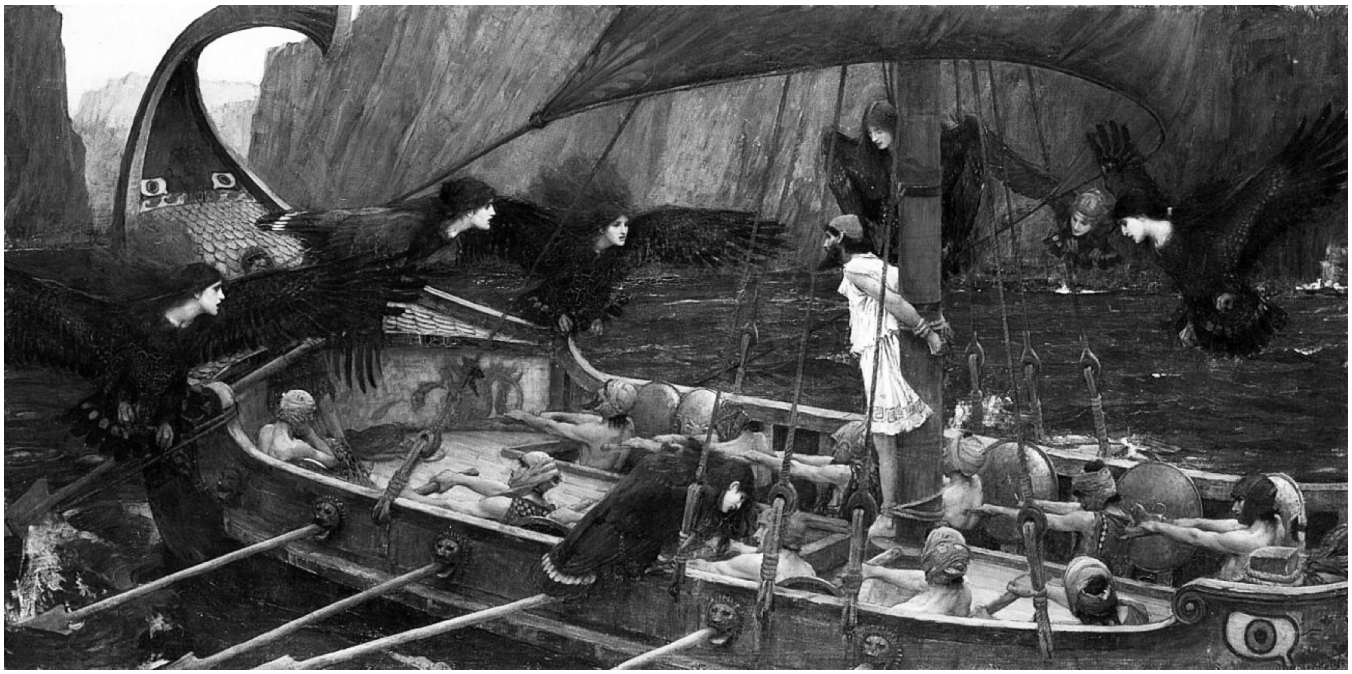
Passage 2: Excerpt from "The Sirens" by James Russell Lowell

The sea is lonely, the sea is dreary,
The sea is restless and uneasy;
Thou seekest quiet, thou art weary,
Wandering thou knowest not whither;—
Our little isle is green and breezy,
Come and rest thee! O come hither,
Come to this peaceful home of ours,
Where evermore
The low west-wind creeps panting up the shore
To be at rest among the flowers;
Full of rest, the green moss lifts,
As the dark waves of the sea
Draw in and out of rocky rifts,
Calling solemnly to thee
With voices deep and hollow,—
"To the shore Follow! O, follow!
To be at rest forevermore!
Forevermore!"

Look how the gray old Ocean
From the depth of his heart rejoices,
Heaving with a gentle motion,
When he hears our restful voices;
List how he sings in an undertone,
Chiming with our melody;
And all sweet sounds of earth and air
Melt into one low voice alone,
That murmurs over the weary sea,
And seems to sing from everywhere,—
"Here mayst thou harbor peacefully,
Here mayst thou rest from the aching oar;
Turn thy curvèd prow ashore,
And in our green isle rest for evermore!
Forevermore!"

Excerpt from "The Sirens" by James Russell Lowell. In the public domain.

Passage 3: *Ulysses and the Sirens* by John William Waterhouse



Ulysses and the Sirens by John William Waterhouse. In the public domain.

4. Which ideas are contrasted throughout Passage2?

A. the harshness of the sea and the peace of the island

B. the ugliness of the ship and the beauty of the island

C. the comfort of home and the toughness of the open sea

D. the excitement of the battlefield and the dullness of the sea

5. In Passage 3, which element of Ulysses's encounter with the Sirens does the artist emphasize?

A. the heroism of Ulysses's actions on the ship

B. the struggle of the sailors to resist the Sirens' song

C. the menacing nature of the Sirens' physical appearance

D. the dangerous nature of Ulysses's surrounding environment

Day Three

Read the article **"Flavor is Price of Scarlet Hue of Tomatoes, Study Says " by Gina Kolata,** and answer the following questions.

1 Plant geneticists say they have discovered an answer to a near-universal question: Why are tomatoes usually so tasteless?

2 Yes, they are often picked green and shipped long distances. Often they are refrigerated, which destroys their flavor and texture. But now researchers have discovered a genetic reason that diminishes a tomato's flavor even if the fruit is picked ripe and coddled.

3 The unexpected culprit is a gene mutation that occurred by chance and that was discovered by tomato breeders. It was deliberately bred into almost all tomatoes because it conferred an advantage: It made them a uniform luscious scarlet when ripe.

4 Now, in a paper published in the journal *Science*, researchers report that the very gene that was inactivated by that mutation plays an important role in producing the sugar and aromas that are the essence of a fragrant, flavorful tomato. And these findings provide a road map for plant breeders to make better-tasting, evenly red tomatoes.

5 The discovery "is one piece of the puzzle about why the modern tomato stinks," said Harry Klee, a tomato researcher at the University of Florida in Gainesville who was not involved in the research. "That mutation has been introduced into almost all modern tomatoes. Now we can say that in trying to make the fruit prettier, they reduced some of the important compounds that are linked to flavor."

6 The mutation's effect was a real surprise, said James J. Giovannoni of the United States Department of Agriculture Research Service, an author of the paper. He called the wide adoption of tomatoes that ripen uniformly "a story of unintended consequences."

7 Breeders stumbled upon the variety about 70 years ago and saw commercial potential. Consumers like tomatoes that are red all over, but ripe tomatoes normally had a ring of green, yellow or white at the stem end. Producers of tomatoes used in tomato sauce or ketchup also benefited. Growers harvest this crop all at once, Dr. Giovannoni said, and "with the uniform ripening gene, it is easier to determine when the tomatoes are ripe."

8 Then, about 10 years ago, Ann Powell, a plant biochemist at the University of California, Davis, happened on a puzzle that led to the new discovery.

9 Dr. Powell, a lead author of the *Science* paper, was studying weed genes. Her colleagues had put those genes into tomato plants, which are, she said, the lab rats of the plant world. To Dr. Powell's surprise, tomatoes with the genes turned the dark green of a sweet pepper before they ripened, rather than the insipid pale green of most tomatoes today.

10 "That got me thinking," Dr. Powell said. "Why do fruits bother being green in the first place?" The green is from chloroplasts, self-contained energy factories in plant cells, where photosynthesis takes place. The end result is sugar, which plants use for food. And, Dr. Powell said, the prevailing wisdom said sugar travels from a plant's leaves to its fruit. So chloroplasts in tomato fruit seemed inconsequential.

11 Still, she said, the thought of dark green tomatoes "kind of bugged me." Why weren't the leaves dark green, too?

12 About a year ago, she and her colleagues, including Dr. Giovannoni, decided to investigate. The weed genes, they found, replaced a disabled gene in a tomato's fruit but not in its leaves. With the weed genes, the tomatoes turned dark green.

13 The reason the tomatoes had been light green was that they had the uniform ripening mutation, which set up a sort of chain reaction. The mutation not only made tomatoes turn uniformly green and then red, but also disabled genes involved in ripening. Among them are genes that allow the fruit to make some of its own sugar instead of getting it only from leaves. Others increase the amount of carotenoids, which give tomatoes a full red color and, it is thought, are involved in flavor.

14 To test their discovery, the researchers used genetic engineering to turn on the disabled genes while leaving the uniform ripening trait alone. The fruit was evenly dark green and then red and had 20 percent more sugar and 20 to 30 percent more carotenoids when ripe.

15 But were the genetically engineered tomatoes more flavorful? Because Department of Agriculture regulations forbid the consumption of experimental produce, no one tasted them.

16 And, Dr. Giovannoni says, do not look for those genetically engineered tomatoes at the grocery store. Producers would not dare to make such a tomato for fear that consumers would reject it.

17 But, Dr. Powell said, there is a way around the issue. Heirloom tomatoes and many wild species do not have the uniform ripening mutation. "The idea is to get the vegetable seed industry interested," Dr. Powell said.

6. Part A: Which idea is introduced in paragraphs 1-3 and developed in the passage?

A. Flavorless tomatoes are best understood as an accident of nature.

B. In the near future, tomatoes will be both delicious and easy to transport over long distances.

C. Scientists have found that there may be a genetic cause for tomatoes' lack of flavor.

D. The interests of tomato growers and consumers have finally come together.

7. Part B: Which three details from the article support the answer to Part A?

A. The refrigeration of tomatoes during transportation destroys their flavor and texture.

B. A mutation resulted in tomatoes that are beautiful and uniform in shape when they ripen.

C. By trying to make a prettier tomato, breeders have produced a tomato that lacks important flavor compounds.

D. Tomato breeders recognized the mutation about 70 years ago and recognized its commercial potential.

E. Producers of tomato sauce and ketchup have also benefited from using the modern variety that ripens uniformly.

F. The mutation shuts off genes that allow a tomato to make its own sugar instead of getting it from the plant's leaves.

G. Using genetic engineering to activate the disabled gene, researchers produced a fruit with 20 percent more sugar.

Day Four

Using the article **"Flavor is Price of Scarlet Hue of Tomatoes, Study Says " by Gina Kolata,** from Day Three, answer the following questions.

8. Part A: What concept does the author develop in paragraphs 14-16 of the article?

A. The tomatoes containing the weed gene are more flavorful than traditional tomatoes, but they will be rejected by consumers because or their appearance.

B. Because of the controversy surrounding genetically engineered tomatoes, the public will not have the opportunity to taste them.

C. Despite their increased sugar levels, the genetically engineered tomatoes actually lack improved flavor.

D. The vegetable seed industry is lobbying to persuade the Department of Agriculture to permit people to eat experimental produce.

9. Part B: What piece of evidence from the article best supports the answer to Part A?

A. "To test their discovery, the researchers used genetic engineering to turn on the disabled genes while leaving the uniform ripening trait alone." (paragraph 14)

B. "The fruit was evenly dark green and then red and had 20 percent more sugar and 20 to 30 percent more carotenoids when ripe." (paragraph 14)

C. "But were the genetically engineered tomatoes more flavorful?" (paragraph 15)

D. "Producers would not dare to make such a tomato for fear that consumers would reject it." (paragraph 16)

10. For each Effect listed in the third column, decide if it was caused by Event 1 or Event 2 by putting checkmarks in the correct boxes under each Event. Each Event caused two Effects. Some Effects will not correlate to either Event.

EVENT 1 Seventy years ago, breeders engineered a tomato that ripened uniformly.	EVENT 2 Ten years ago, scientists introduced weed genes into tomato plants.	EFFECTS
		Producers found it easier to determine when to harvest the tomatoes.
		The new tomato was proven to be more flavorful.
		The tomatoes turned dark green before they ripened.
		The ripe tomato lacked any carotenoids.
		The fruit of the tomato was able to manufacture some of its own sugar.
		Consumers found the tomatoes more appealing visually.

Day Five

Using the article **"Flavor is Price of Scarlet Hue of Tomatoes, Study Says " by Gina Kolata,** from Day Three, answer the following questions.

11. Part A: What can the reader infer about the author's attitude toward standard modern tomatoes?

A. She is concerned that the tomatoes are unhealthful.

B. She admires the tomatoes' beautiful color and shape.

C. She is puzzled that scientists would experiment with tomatoes.

D. She is dissatisfied with the tomatoes' bland flavor.

12. Part B: Which two words from the article best support the answer to Part A?

A. tasteless B. green C. luscious

D. fragrant E. stinks F. prettier

13. What central idea is suggested by the article's title?

A. Bright red tomatoes cost more than other tomatoes because customers desire them.

B. Costly research has identified the connection between the color and flavor of tomatoes.

C. An artificially modified tomato may look more appealing but can be less flavorful.

D. Scientists must learn to grow bright red tomatoes that are delicious to eat.

GRADE NINE

ANSWERS FOR WEEK OF MARCH 14-18 READING

1. **D** (RL.9-10.1)

2. **C** (RL.9-10.1)

3. **A** (RL.9-10.6)

4. **A** (RL.9-10.2)

5. **C** (RL.9-10.7)

6. **C** (RI.9-10.2)

7. **C**, **F**, and **G** (RI.9-10.2; RI.9-10.1)

8. **B** (RL.9-10.1)

9. **D** (RI.9-10.2; RI.9-10.1)

10.

EVENT 1 Seventy years ago, breeders engineered a tomato that ripened uniformly.	EVENT 2 Ten years ago, scientists introduced weed genes into tomato plants.	EFFECTS
✓		Producers found it easier to determine when to harvest the tomatoes.
		The new tomato was proven to be more flavorful.
	✓	The tomatoes turned dark green before they ripened.
		The ripe tomato lacked any carotenoids.
	✓	The fruit of the tomato was able to manufacture some of its own sugar.
✓		Consumers found the tomatoes more appealing visually.

(RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.3; RI.9-10.5)

11. **D** (RI.9-10.6)

12. **A** and **E** (RI.9-10.6; RI.9-10.4)

13. **C** (RI.9-10.2; RI.9-10.5)