

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

From Here to the Sargasso

by Andrew S. Williams

- 1 We walk onto the beach in the late evening, as the last rays of the sunset scatter a vivid red amongst the clouds. The beach itself is already dark, shaded from the final remnants of daylight by a dense row of condos pressed against the edge of the dunes.
- 2 It's the first day of a week in Florida, a brief respite from jobs and lives to get together as a family. Mom is walking next to me, but worry lines her face. I can tell her mind is on my little brother, Charlie. He couldn't join us; instead, he's driving across the country to Los Angeles, where a suddenly opened spot in a dance school awaits him. For the rest of us, the beach awaits instead.
- 3 We cross from the wooden walkway onto the warm white sand. The heat of the day has given way to a cooling breeze, and the worry in the air fades under the calm of an evening shore.
- 4 The beach is nearly deserted. There are only two other figures visible in the dark: one tall, one short, watching a nearby patch of sand. It looks like a mother and child. The child runs toward us. "They're hatching!" she yells, before hurrying back to her mom.
- 5 As we approach, I see a roped-off area about four feet square, where a shallow hole has been dug into the sand. In the middle is something small and dark. "Look," says the mother, "it moved!"
- 6 The child stops running around to stare at it for a moment. The woman looks up at us. "Do you have a cell phone on you?"
- 7 We don't, and she laughs. "Figures. The one day my husband decided not to come with us, they hatch. 'Oh no,' he said, 'they'll never hatch tonight.'" She points to one of the corners of the square, where a wooden stake marks the line that humans shall not cross (under pain of fines and/or imprisonment from Volusia County). On it is written a series of dates.
- 8 "See," she says, "June 22nd is when the nest was discovered. August 7th is the earliest they could have hatched, and August 31st is the most likely date. They're ten days early. On the one night we have no flashlight, no cell, no car . . ." She sighs. "Are you all here on vacation?"
- 9 "Yes," I nod. "We just got here today."
- 10 "We've been coming down here for years," she says. "We're locals. And we've never seen a nest of sea turtles hatch."

- 11 We wait for a few minutes. The baby turtle seems to be taking a break from his attempts to free himself from the nest. "Why don't we keep walking," Mom suggests, "then come back and see how they're doing?"
- 12 We start down the beach, but a moment later the little girl shrieks, "They're coming!"
- 13 We hurry back to the nest, where a few other beachwalkers have been drawn in as well. A baby turtle, no bigger than a half-dollar coin, has made it out of the nest and about one foot toward the water.
- 14 "Where's he going?" the little girl asks.
- 15 "Into the ocean," her mother says. "He has a long way to swim to reach his home."
- 16 "But where's his home?"
- 17 "Many miles away," she answers softly. "A place far out in the ocean, called the Sargasso Sea."
- 18 "Wow . . ." the girl says. She hurries off to the water to dip her feet in the surf, and then runs back to join her mother, watching the baby turtle make its slow progress along the sand.
- 19 The turtle doesn't notice his group of fans, this somber assembly of a few quiet adults and a rambunctious little girl. He's operating on instinct, and instinct doesn't tell him to stop and wave. So he scrambles over sand dunes half an inch high and massive clumps of seaweed the size of my foot, single-minded in his determination to reach the breaking waves.
- 20 Behind him, one of his siblings has made it out of the nest and started toward the water. It doesn't seem to be as strong, though, and the first turtle is putting an increasing amount of distance between them. Family ties aren't very strong in sea turtle families.
- 21 Behind me, Mom snuffles. "It makes me think of Charlie leaving the nest."
- 22 The turtle has reached the water's edge, where the remnants of a wave are soaking into the sand. He scrambles forward, and a wave washes over him. It pushes him backward, then pulls him toward the ocean. Then another, pushing the turtle backward, then pulling him forward as it recedes.
- 23 "That one's Freddy," the little girl says to her mother, as the turtle, caught on the wave, recedes out of reach.
- 24 We lose sight of Freddy almost instantly in the dark water. I know he's out there, paddling furiously, rocked and tumbled by the back and forth of the waves, trying to reach a destination over the horizon. The odds are against him, but I can't help rooting for him, hoping he's one of the turtles who beats those odds.

25 Freddy’s sibling has reached the water, and without looking back, I know there are more on the way. But I can’t take my eyes off the horizon, hidden by the murky darkness of twilight.

26 Come on, Freddy. You can do it.

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- 9** How does the setting advance the plot of the story?
- A** It allows the characters to witness an uncommon event.
 - B** It gives the characters the opportunity to identify a problem.
 - C** It offers the characters a chance to develop new relationships.
 - D** It causes the characters to feel unsafe.
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- 10** Which sentence shows that the narrator is aware of the feelings of others?
- F** *It doesn't seem to be as strong, though, and the first turtle is putting an increasing amount of distance between them.*
 - G** *The baby turtle seems to be taking a break from his attempts to free himself from the nest.*
 - H** *We hurry back to the nest, where a few other beachwalkers have been drawn in as well.*
 - J** *I can tell her mind is on my little brother, Charlie.*
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- 11** Why doesn't the narrator watch the other turtles hatch at the end of the story?
- A** He is consumed by his thoughts about the first turtle's destiny.
 - B** He doesn't have the patience to observe such a long process.
 - C** He is concerned that his mother has started worrying again.
 - D** He doesn't want to ruin the experience for the little girl.

12 What is the primary theme of this story?

- F** The young must make their own path in life.
 - G** Home is wherever a person feels accepted.
 - H** People have a responsibility to protect nature.
 - J** Strangers can bond while sharing an experience.
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13 What is the best summary of the story?

- A** While on vacation the narrator and his mother come across a nest of hatching sea turtles. The narrator listens as a woman explains to her young daughter that the small turtles will travel far across the ocean. A small crowd watches the turtles make their way across the sand. The narrator tries to continue watching the first turtle after the waves pull it out to sea, but the creature is soon hidden from view.
- B** The narrator is on a family vacation in Florida. While on an evening walk along the beach, the narrator and his mother have the opportunity to watch baby sea turtles hatch and struggle toward the ocean. The turtles remind the mother of her younger son, who is traveling alone to Los Angeles. The narrator hopes that the first newly hatched sea turtle will overcome the odds and survive in the ocean.
- C** The narrator and his mother decide to walk on the beach at sunset, but it soon becomes dark. They meet a little girl and her mother, who explains that a nest of sea turtles has unexpectedly begun to hatch. The woman asks whether the narrator and his mother have a cell phone so that she can call her husband, but they do not. The narrator and his mother leave, but they return when the little girl yells that a turtle is out of the nest.
- D** A little girl tells people walking on the beach that some baby turtles are hatching. The narrator and his mother join the girl and her mother in watching the turtles, which are hatching about 10 days earlier than expected. The girl asks her mother where the first turtle is going and learns that it must swim to the Sargasso Sea. The narrator admires the small turtles' determination to cross the sand and reach the water.

- 14** Using the first-person point of view allows the author to —
- F** describe the occasion’s importance to the local residents
 - G** explain the narrator’s complex relationship with his mother
 - H** present each character’s thoughts about the event
 - J** help the reader feel closely connected with the narrator’s experience
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- 15** Why are the woman’s comments about the nest in paragraphs 6 through 10 important to the story?
- A** They explain why it is problematic that the turtles are hatching early.
 - B** They establish that the woman is knowledgeable about the life cycle of turtles.
 - C** They reveal the significance of seeing the turtles hatch from their nest.
 - D** They show that the local residents think tourists disregard the safety of the turtles.

- 16** In paragraph 19, the author refers to the turtle’s onlookers as a “group of fans” to show that —
- F** people are leading the turtle to the ocean
 - G** the crowd wants the turtle to succeed
 - H** the narrator feels like part of the crowd
 - J** the narrator wishes more people could see the event
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- 17** The narrator’s observations in paragraph 2 are important to the story because they —
- A** imply that Charlie values his personal interests more than family
 - B** suggest that the narrator envies his brother
 - C** illustrate the family’s desire to spend time together
 - D** convey the mother’s anxiety about Charlie