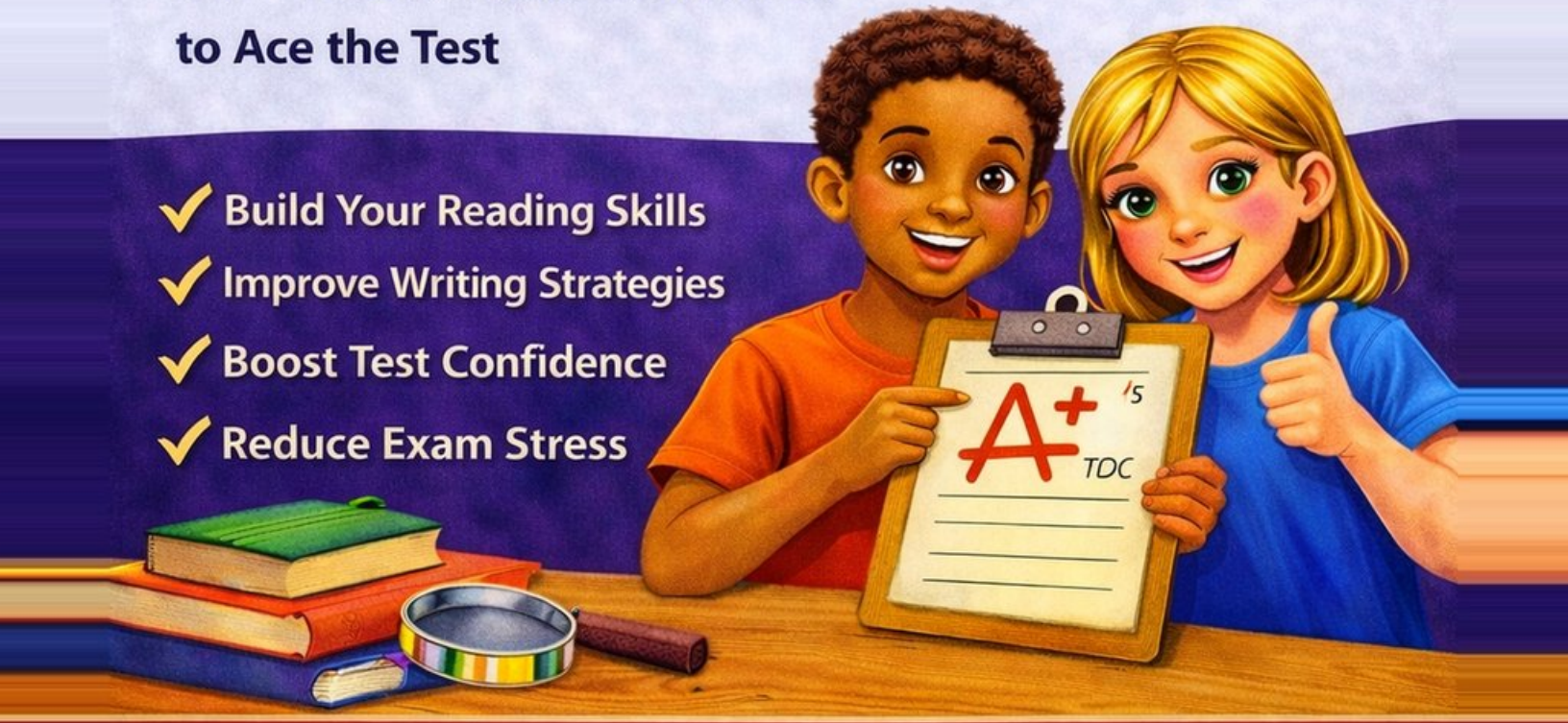
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8 Arizona Grade 8

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Smart Practice

The Difference Between Busy and Better.

Busy practice fills time. Better practice changes you. The quiet truth: the thirty minutes after a test matters more than the ninety minutes of the test itself. That is where real learning lives — in the review, not the rep. Here is what separates a score plateau from a score climb:

✓ Six Moves That Raise Real Scores

1. **Simulate the pressure.** One seat, one timer, no phone, no interruptions. Stamina is its own skill and you can only train it by using it.
2. **Preview the questions, then attack the passage.** Skim the question stems first. That turns reading from passive intake into a directed search.
3. **Annotate with purpose.** Circle transitions (*however*, *therefore*, *in contrast*). Bracket claims. Underline evidence. These marks become your map back to the answer.
4. **Do a miss audit after every test.** Sort your wrong answers into four piles: *knowledge gap*, *careless misread*, *time pressure*, *trap answer*. Each one demands a different fix.
5. **Upgrade one skill per week.** Pick one weakness — inference, vocabulary in context, claim-and-evidence writing — and make it the focus. Narrow practice beats broad review.
6. **Protect sleep like it is part of the test.** Working memory, focus, and stamina all collapse on less than seven hours. You cannot out-study exhaustion.

⋆ The Rewrite Habit

After each test, pick one short response and rewrite it — cleaner claim, tighter evidence, sharper analysis. Do this just three times across this book and your writing will visibly level up. The rewrite, not the first draft, is where eighth-grade writing becomes high-school-ready.

The Big Day

Your Test Day Playbook.

Calm is a skill. This is how to bring it with you.

◯ The Night Before

- Pack everything tonight. Pencils, eraser, water, ID, approved calculator if needed.
- Do light review only — a single short passage. No new material. No all-nighter.
- Eat something familiar. Tonight is not the night to experiment with anything new.
- Phone out of the room an hour before bed. Protect your sleep like it is part of the grade.

◯ The Morning Of

- Eat protein and complex carbs. Skip the sugar spike — the crash comes during the test.
- Move your body for five minutes. Walk, stretch, shake out your hands. Lower the nerves.
- Arrive early enough to settle, not so early that waiting builds up pressure.
- At the door, four slow breaths: *in for four, hold for four, out for six.* It works.

Read the story and the poem. Then answer questions 9–19.

The Archive Room

1 On the first afternoon of her internship, Jo was assigned to the archive room beneath the city theater. She had imagined rehearsals, stage lights, and dramatic entrances. Instead she found shelves of costume sketches, prompt books, and brittle programs bound with fading ribbon. The room smelled like dust, glue, and old paper warming under fluorescent bulbs.

2 Her supervisor, Ms. Larkin, asked her to sort a box labeled *Unfiled Notes*. Jo expected lists and receipts. What she found were small handwritten messages slipped between rehearsal scripts: reminders about costume repairs, questions about scene changes, and one-line observations such as *pause longer here* or *audience laughed unexpectedly*. They were fragments, but together they made the productions feel startlingly alive.

3 As Jo organized the notes by year and show title, she began to understand that the theater's history did not live only in its celebrated performances. It also lived in the adjustments, hesitations, and problem solving that audiences never saw. A pencil correction in the margin of a script could reveal as much dedication as a final ovation.

4 Late in the week, Ms. Larkin asked Jo what surprised her most about the archive. Jo looked around the quiet room and answered honestly: the amount of thinking hidden behind what looks effortless. Ms. Larkin nodded and said, *That is true of more than theater*. Jo carried that sentence upstairs with her as she watched actors rehearse under bright lights that now seemed to contain invisible layers of labor.

5 On the last day of the internship, Jo slipped a blank index card into the final box she filed. She did not write on it. She only left it there as a reminder to herself that every finished performance would someday become evidence, and that evidence would matter because someone had chosen to preserve it.

Backstage Record

Applause remembers the ending,
but paper keeps the work before the ending:
the crossed-out cue,
the note in the margin asking for one more breath.

Under the bright event lives a quieter archive,
a history of revisions,
of hands making small corrections
so the finished moment can appear seamless.

What lasts is not only what the audience saw,
but what care left behind.

9) What does the word *fragments* mean as it is used in paragraph 2 of the story?

(A) complete speeches
(B) small broken or incomplete pieces
(C) accurate schedules
(D) expensive stage props

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

10) How does Jo change over the course of the story?

(A) She begins as an expert archivist and ends uninterested in theater.
(B) She decides archives matter more than live performances.
(C) She moves from expecting theatrical excitement to appreciating the hidden labor preserved in the archive.
(D) She becomes frustrated because the archive contains too little information.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

11) Which statement best expresses a theme of the story?

(A) Archives should remain closed to interns.
(B) Theater succeeds only when audiences understand every detail.
(C) Old papers are valuable mainly because they are rare.
(D) Important work is often hidden beneath polished final results.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

12) What does the author suggest by including the note *audience laughed unexpectedly* in paragraph 2?

(A) Even live productions are shaped by observation and adjustment.
(B) Actors prefer comedy to every other genre.
(C) Performances never change once rehearsals begin.
(D) The archive contains mostly unimportant comments.

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