**Assessment Task for Reading**

**Topic: Friends of the Orphans**

This assessment task focuses on developing senior secondary students’ reading skills.

This set of materials contains the following:

* **The reading text**
* **A set of questions**
* **Suggested answers**

**Reading Text**

**Friends of the Orphans**

**[1]** It is a simple but absolute truth: Education not only transforms and fulfills the lives of students as knowledge expands their minds, but it also has the power to strengthen nations.

**[2]** In the United States, educational opportunities for children abound, with many beginning their school journeys with preschool programs as early as age 3. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2010, record numbers of prekindergarten and kindergarten students entered the nation's public school systems, and 49.4 million students attended public and secondary schools. More than 19 million students advanced to two-year and four-year colleges and universities in 2010, another attendance record.

**[3]** "U.S. children are so incredibly fortunate to live in a prosperous nation where education is taken for granted, and high school, college and post-college expectations are on par with eating a hot dinner every night," says Sharon Saxelby, president and CEO of Friends of the Orphans, a Chicago-based charitable organization that transforms the lives of orphaned, abandoned and disadvantaged children in Latin America and the Caribbean.

**[4]** Contrast that with access to education and lack of opportunities for children in need in less prosperous countries and the differences are startling. World Bank estimates that 75 million children of primary school age around the world are not in school, often because they need to work so their families can survive. For instance, in Peru, 34 percent of children aged 14 and under are involved in labor activities, which often render schooling impossible.

**[5]** Elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, children's access to education is equally dire. In Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, just more than half of primary school-aged children are enrolled and fewer than 2 percent of children finish secondary school. And in El Salvador, according to Unicef, 70 percent of children aged 16 and 17 do not have access to secondary education.

**[6]** Unicef attributes these low numbers to a variety of factors, including inadequate teacher competencies, scarcity of teaching materials, poor physical learning environments, limited interaction between schools and communities, the need for children to work instead of attend school, and overall poverty rates, which dictate that limited resources will be directed to things other than education.

**[7]** Organizations such as Friends of the Orphans, which supports the network of Nuestros Pequenos Hermanos (NPH, Spanish for "Our Little Brothers and Sisters") homes and takes a holistic approach to transforming children's lives, recognizes the power of education and makes it a mandatory component.

**[8]** "Becoming educated is the most valuable thing a young person can do for himself and his community, especially in developing countries," Saxelby explains. "Our philosophy of raising children in the countries we serve is to provide unconditional love, shared responsibility and education. Well-rounded children are able to transcend poverty and ultimately become productive members of their communities."

**[9]** One of many examples of how education leads to a more prosperous life is Yadira, a young woman from Mexico who has embraced education despite many challenges. She came to NPH at age 13 following the death of her mother, unable to read or write, and was placed in third grade. She quickly thrived, and advanced to NPH's technical middle and high school, which provides vocational certification and university preparation. While there, she focused her studies on mechanics and computers.

**[10]** Ready to move on, she began her university studies, setting her sights on law. Her studies enlightened her on her own rights as a Mexican citizen, taught her how to write legal documents and navigate the legal system. She even wrote a final thesis about social inequality with respect to legal rights in Mexico. She is continuing her studies and will make law her permanent profession.

**[11]** "I have seen firsthand the difference people can make in each other's lives and hope to have the same impact on other people through my work in the legal profession," Yadira says. "I am thankful for all the opportunities I've been given and how my life has been transformed."

**[12]** Saxelby explains that the relative cost of supporting these children as they pursue their education is low compared to U.S. expenses, and their positive future outcomes and contributions are undeniable. For example, Yadira, who lives in NPH university housing, spends about $580 monthly on expenses. Of that, $267 is tuition and food is $205, with the remainder going toward materials, transportation and books.

**[13]** "Investing in these children today is well worth it because of their transformations tomorrow," Saxelby says. "Education is power and all children deserve the chance to grow and learn."

**[14]** For more information about Friends of the Orphans, interested parties should visit [www.friendsoftheorphans.org](http://www.friendsoftheorphans.org).

**END OF READING TEXT**

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**Questions**

**Refer to the text and answer Questions 1-12. Write your answers in the spaces provided. For multiple-choice questions, choose the best answer and blacken ONE circle only.**

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| 1. | | According to the opening paragraph, education is of benefit to whom? | | | | | | |
|  | | *(2 marks)* | | | | | | |
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| 2. | | Complete the table below which summarises the attendances in US schools in 2010 provided by the National Center for Education Statistics. | | | | | | |
|  | | *(3 marks)* | | | | | | |
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|  | |  | **Level of Education** |  |  | **Attendance** |  |  |
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|  | |  | Pre-school |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  | |  | Public and secondary schools |  |  |  |  |  |
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|  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | |  | Colleges and universities |  |  |  |  |  |
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| 3. | | Explain, in your own words, the point that Sharon is making in lines 9-11. | | | | | | |
|  | | *(2 marks)* | | | | | | |
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| 4. | What are the differences that the writer finds “startling” (line 15)? | | | | | | | |
|  | *(2 marks)* | | | | | | | |
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| 5. | Why does Sharon Saxelby give the example of Peru? | | | | | |
|  | *(1 mark)* | | | | | |
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| 6. | In addition to Peru, Sharon also uses the examples of two other countries, Haiti and El Salvador. | | | | | |
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|  | (i) | | Complete the table below to summarise the education situation in the three countries. | | | |
|  | *(4 marks)* | | | | | |
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|  |  | **Country** | |  | **Education situation** |  | |
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|  |  | Peru | |  |  |  | |
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|  |  | Haiti | |  |  |  | |
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|  |  |  | |  |  |  | |
|  |  | El Salvador | |  |  |  | |
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|  | (ii) | | Which of these countries do you think is facing the biggest problem and why? | | | |
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|  |  | | *(2 marks)* | | | |
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| 7. | According to Unicef, there are a variety of factors to explain why children do not attend school. Complete the figure below which summarises these factors by ticking (✓) the circle to indicate whether the problem related to each factor is that there is not enough of it, too much/many of it or the quality of it is low. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | *(6 marks)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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|  |  | **Factor** | | | | | | **Not**  **enough** | | | **Too much/**  **many** | | | **Low**  **quality** |  |
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|  |  | Teachers | | | | | | 〇 | | | 〇 | | | 〇 |  |
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|  |  | Teaching materials | | | | | | 〇 | | | 〇 | | | 〇 |  |
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|  |  | Schools | | | | | | 〇 | | | 〇 | | | 〇 |  |
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|  |  | School – community interactions | | | | | | 〇 | | | 〇 | | | 〇 |  |
|  |  |  | | | | | |  | | |  | | |  |  |
|  |  | Children working | | | | | | 〇 | | | 〇 | | | 〇 |  |
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|  |  | Poverty | | | | | | 〇 | | | 〇 | | | 〇 |  |
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| 8. | (i) | | The local organization NPH, which means "Our Little Brothers and Sisters" in Spanish, runs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | *(2 marks)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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|  |  | | | |  | | | | and |  | | | for children. | | |
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|  | (ii) | | | The American charity, Friends of the Orphans, helps children by giving them | | | | | | | | | | | |
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|  | *(3 marks)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 9. | The passage gives the example of a young girl from Mexico, Yadira, who has been helped by NPH. Complete the chart below which documents her progress. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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|  | *(6 marks)* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**YADIRA’S PROGRESS AT NPH**

* Educational level: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Learnt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Educational level: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Studied: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Educational level: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Studied: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| 10. | Why do you think that Yadira wrote her thesis about “social inequality with respect to legal rights in Mexico” (lines 46-47)? | | | | | |
|  | *(2 marks)* | | | | | |
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| 11. | The passage states that Yadira’s monthly expenses are about US$580. Write two expressions used in the passage (lines 52-58) which show the writer’s opinion of such expenses. | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | |
|  | *(2 marks)* | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | |
|  | (i) |  | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | |
|  | (ii) |  | | | | |
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| 12. | Which of the following do you think is the most suitable title for this passage? | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | |
|  | *(1 mark)* | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | |
|  | A. | Education leads to knowledge for children in need | | | | |
|  |  |  | | | | |
|  | B. | Education leads to prosperity for children in need | | | | |
|  |  |  | | | | |
|  | C. | Education leads to responsibility for children in need | A | B | C | D |
|  | D. | Education leads to empowerment for children in need | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ | ⭘ |
|  |  |  | | | | |

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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| **Suggested Answers**  **Teacher’s Notes** | | | | |
| 1. | students / children (1 mark)  nations / countries (1 mark) | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| 2. | record numbers // many (1 mark)  49.4 million (1 mark)  more than 19 million (1 mark) | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| 3. | Children in the US are very lucky (1 mark) as they have many educational opportunities (1 mark). | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| 4. | (Differences in) access to education / opportunities (1 mark) between the US (prosperous) and less prosperous countries (1 mark). | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| 5. | | As an example of a country where many children cannot go to school as they have to work (1 mark). | | |
|  | |  | | |
| 6. | | (i) | | Peru: 34 percent of children aged 14 and under do not go to school. (1 mark).  Haiti: just more than half the primary-school children go to school (1 mark) and most children do not finish secondary school (1 mark).  El Salvador: 70 percent of children aged 16 to 17 are not able to go to secondary school (1 mark). |
| (ii) | | The problem seems worse in Haiti (1 mark) as less than half the children can even go to primary school (1 mark). |
|  | |  | | |
| 7. | | Teachers – Low quality  Teaching materials – Not enough  Schools – Low quality  School-community interactions – Not enough  Children working – Too much  Poverty – Too much (6 marks) | | |
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| 8. | | (i)  (ii) | homes  schools / education (2 marks) | |
| (unconditional) love  shared responsibility  education (3 marks) | |
|  | |  | | |
| 9. | | third grade  to read and write / reading and writing  technical middle and high school  mechanics and computers  university  law (6 marks) | | |
|  | |  | | |
| 10. | | Because she had experienced this (social inequality) herself when she was younger // She didn’t have a chance to go to school when she was young (or equivalent) (1 mark) and she was studying law (1 mark). | | |
|  | |  | | |
| 11 | | (i) | | low compared to US expenses (1 mark) |
|  | | (ii) | | well worth it (1 mark) |
|  | |  | | |
| 12. | | D (1 mark) | | |

END OF SUGGESTED ANSWERS

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