



New York State Testing Program

English

Language Arts Test

Listening Selection

Grade

6

January 20–23, 2009

This listening selection is to be used in administering Book 2 of the English Language Arts Test. The entire selection is to be read aloud twice to the students. For complete directions, please follow the instructions in the *Teacher's Directions*.

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Listening Selection***About Me***

by Robert Kimmel Smith

I may as well start by writing down my name. But not all of it.

My name is Robert E. Ellis. The E. is for Ebenezer, a grandpa of mine who died before I was born. I think Ebenezer is a horrible name, even for a person who is dead.

I never tell anybody my middle name. Because I know there are some wise guys in the world who would give me a nickname I really hate. My big brother, Sammy, who knows my middle name, teases me sometimes by calling me Sneezer.

I think a person should decide his own nickname for himself. My friend Jason calls me Bobby. Kids I know in school call me Bob or Bobby, or even Robby. My folks call me Bobby, but once in a while my dad will call me Bob-o. All those names are okay with me, and definitely better than Sneezer.

But I have already decided my baseball nickname, which every big league player has to have.

I am going to be known as Bobby “Baseball” Ellis.

This is a great nickname and one that is sure to be remembered. Sometimes I say it to myself under my breath and I really like the sound of it.

I know “Bobby Baseball” sounds a little show-offy. The truth is I do act like a show-off sometimes. I can also behave like a stupid jerk and a real nerdo with no trouble at all.

I am nowhere near being a perfect person.

My biggest problem is my terrible temper. When it grabs me, I can go bananas in two seconds. I try to hold it back, I really do, but mostly I can't. Once, when I was four years old, I bit Sammy's hand so bad he still has a red raggedy scar near his thumb.

Go On

Trouble is, when my temper takes over I still act like I'm four years old.

The biggest thing in my life is baseball. Dad says I have baseball in my blood. I know he's right. I think about baseball a lot. Like most of the time. I also dream about baseball. Even when I am awake.

I've gotten into trouble more than once by dreaming about baseball. Mostly in school and mainly in math class. Math and me don't get along too well. I figure that's because my head is round and math is very square and logical. So all that square math just bounces off my round head and never gets in there.

The only class in school I like is language arts, especially creative writing. I can write baseball stories for a week straight and never run out of ideas. Miss DeBoer, my teacher, is getting sick of it. "Another baseball story?" she said when I handed in the last one. "Robert, there are other things in life besides baseball, you know."

I suppose Miss DeBoer is right. But my head is stuffed with batting averages and all-time records. I know most of the important stats by heart, and I keep memorizing more of them.

You see, I have been planning on becoming a major league pitcher since I was seven years old. Someday I will be up at Cooperstown making my speech when they put me in the Baseball Hall of Fame. I have not actually begun writing my speech yet. There is plenty of time for that. First I will have to get into the big leagues, which will take a while since I am only ten years old.

Once I am a big-leaguer I will begin writing my terrific baseball books. It's a smart thing to do in the off-season, when it's too cold to play ball. I'm surprised that more big-leaguers haven't done this. Maybe it's because few of them can write as good as me.

If that sounds show-offy, I can't help it. I really do think I was born to be a baseball immortal, and also a great writer.

STOP



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