

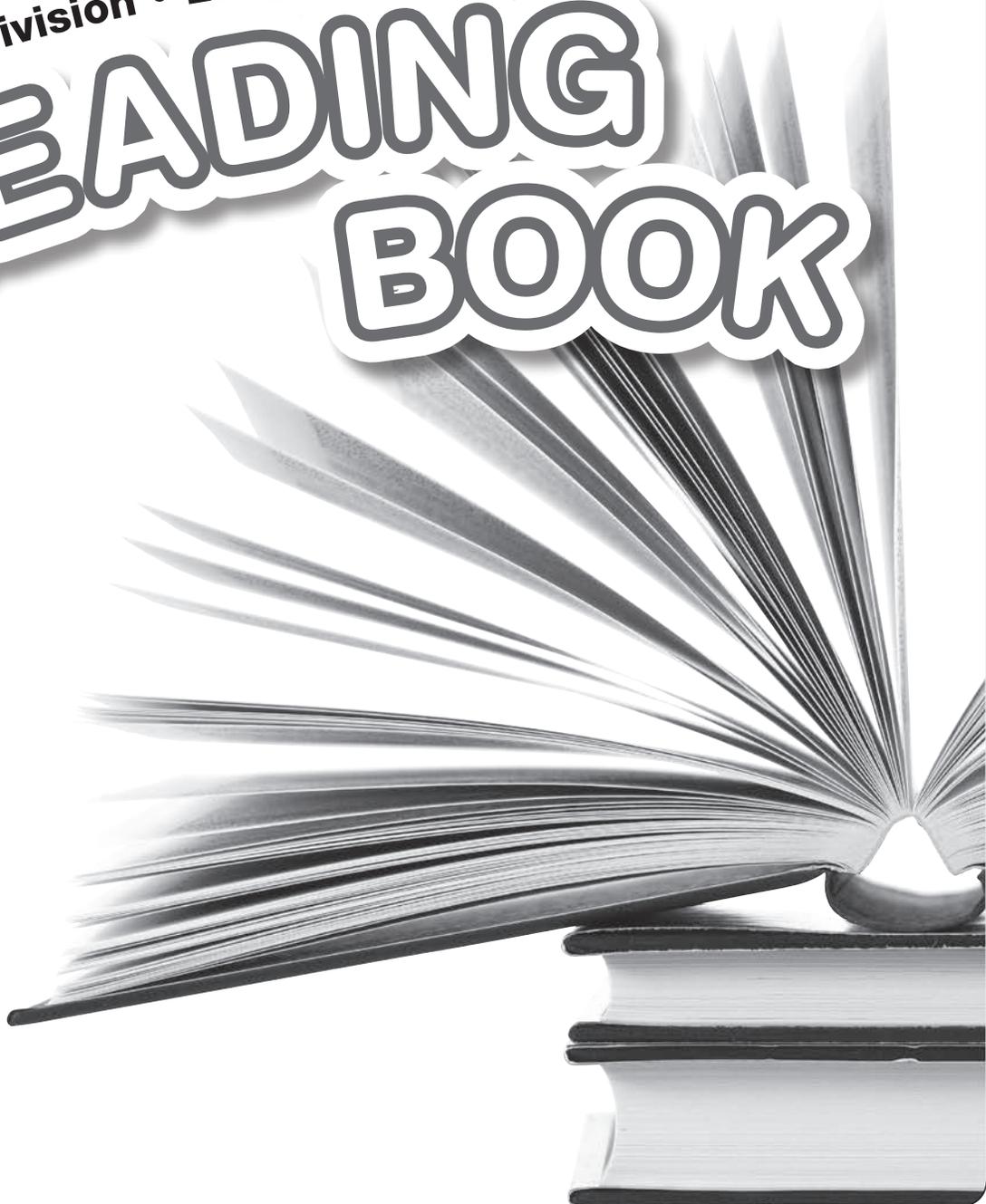
# Released Reading Selections, 2016

Grade

# 6

Junior Division • Language

# READING BOOK



Education Quality and  
Accountability Office



## Marilyn Bell and Her Historic Swim

It was just after 11 p.m. on September 8, 1954, when a 16-year-old from Toronto, Marilyn Bell, slipped into Lake Ontario. The water was dark and cold, lit only by the glow of lights from Youngstown, New York. From the beginning, Marilyn set a determined pace. Fifty-five times a minute, her arms churned through the water. Her goal—a breakwater off Toronto—was more than 50 kilometres away. 1



Through the early hours of the morning, her stroke remained strong. She eventually slowed her pace slightly to 50 strokes a minute. But all night, she never stopped to rest. Her coach, following alongside in a motorboat, wrote encouraging messages on a blackboard, and held them over the water for her to read as she rose for breath. 2

During the following day, a 30-kilometre-an-hour wind whipped the water into choppy waves and blew Marilyn off course, making her path to the opposite shore even longer. 3

In Ontario, radio stations had picked up the story, and news of Marilyn's attempt was soon broadcast across the country. By evening, crowds began to gather at the lakeshore. Vacationers extended their stays to watch for the swimmer to arrive. Marilyn's schoolmates crowded the shore. Bright pink flares shot into the air to help keep her on course as darkness fell. 4

For a moment, Marilyn stopped. She floated in the water and turned exhausted eyes toward the boat. Her coach waited, allowing her to make her own decision. Her parents, in a boat just behind her, struggled to stay silent. Then she turned back to the water and began her steady front crawl once more. 5

Twenty hours and 57 minutes after she began, Marilyn reached Canadian shores. To the cheers of thousands, she was lifted from the water and carried to a waiting ambulance. She was the first person in history to swim Lake Ontario. 6



As a marathon swimmer, she later crossed the Strait of Juan de Fuca in British Columbia and, at 17, became the youngest person ever to swim the English Channel. Her achievements changed the world's ideas about women's athletic abilities and endurance.

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GO TO

Language  
ANSWERS**A1**

## The King of the Forest

With a hint of pride and a little smile, I have to admit  
That despite my 200 years, I'm still quite fit.  
Many are those who follow the twisting trail  
That leads to the depths of the forest to take my picture.  
Once at my feet, with emotion they loudly exclaim: 5  
"This tall, amazing maple is so old, so handsome!"

Hesitant, they touch my rough, chapped bark.  
Then their eyes travel up my long, slender trunk  
To the deep fissure, an old wound. 10  
And it's there, high up, that they discover beneath the fork  
The life that thrives in my leafy mane.  
My tenants love me; I have many branches.

During the summer, a mother robin built  
With mud and twigs, a little nest. 15  
On the floor above, her neighbours are busy;  
A squirrel family runs all day  
And on the highest of the long branches  
Roosts a black crow who loves to loudly call.

In the fall, some of my friends leave for new horizons. 20  
I say goodbye and wish them a pleasant journey.  
My roots run deep, so at home I stay;  
This beautiful time of year brings me great joy.  
Like a glowing sunset sky, for a brief time  
I proudly display my cloak of many colours.



But a heavy downpour and a violent wind  
Carry my leaves away and tell me it's time  
To conserve my strength, to keep warm.  
Ah! If only I could wear a hat!  
Then begins the season of snow squalls and endless nights  
When I listen to the stories of my cousins, the poplar, the oak and the pine. 30  
And at long last comes the thaw; I feel very lightheaded.  
The sap rises in my veins and revives me.  
I stretch my limbs, I bloom, I grow and I say to myself  
I am really fortunate, I love life so much.  
One of these days, no matter the season, come and visit me. 35  
You'll always find me here in the woods, where I plan to stay.



## Rocket Man



Many adults enjoy the excitement of skydiving. They jump from an airplane, free-fall at a high speed and at just the right moment, pull the cord on the parachute to slow themselves and land safely on the ground. 1

Not surprisingly, skydivers have to train and practise to avoid injury and learn how to jump and land safely. Most skydiving jumps take place at lofty altitudes between 1000 and 4000 metres above the ground. 2

But even jumping from those heights would not have helped Felix Baumgartner reach his goal of setting a world record for the highest-altitude jump. Instead, “Fearless Felix” had to take the sport to new heights: space. 3

Well, near space, anyway. 4

On October 14, 2012, Baumgartner rode into the atmosphere 39 000 metres above the earth in a special balloon and then jumped. 5

What happens during a jump from that height? 6

- You travel faster than the speed of sound—343.2 metres per second! 7
- Travelling at speeds faster than sound creates shock waves so great that you require a special suit for protection. 8
- The atmosphere at that height is so thin that it is very challenging to control where your body goes. A “flat spin” could have rendered Baumgartner unconscious. 9
- Any tear in his suit would have exposed him to extreme temperatures (as low as  $-57^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and a lack of oxygen. 10

There were a couple of glitches during Baumgartner’s feat. His visor fogged up, reducing visibility, and during the fall he started spinning. Thanks to his training and with help from the support crew on the ground, he landed safely. 11

With his jump, Baumgartner broke three world records: for the highest human-occupied balloon ride, the fastest free fall and the highest-altitude jump. He became the only human to travel faster than sound outside an airplane. 12

NASA is using the information from Baumgartner’s jump to help perfect its spacesuits. It also collected data that may help future astronauts survive in space—for instance, when something goes wrong and they have to bail out from a high altitude. 13

As for Baumgartner, with his goal accomplished, he is retiring from extreme jumping. He said he plans to fly rescue helicopters in the U.S. and Austria as his future career.

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GO TO

Language  
ANSWERS**B1**

After each assessment, EQAO makes approximately half of the test items (questions) public. This allows EQAO to build a bank of assessment material that can be used in the future. Items that are not published in this booklet are replaced by their description. Test booklets and examples of student answers from the past five years are available at [www.eqao.com](http://www.eqao.com).

Items that are not being published have been described below, with a reference to the skill they assessed.

## READING SKILLS

**Explicit:** understanding explicitly stated information and ideas

**Implicit:** understanding implicitly stated information and ideas

**Making Connections:** making connections between information and ideas in a reading selection and personal knowledge and experience

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### Long Narrative

10 multiple-choice questions  
(3 Explicit, 6 Implicit, 1 Making Connections)  
2 open-response questions (2 Implicit)

### Graphic Text

4 multiple-choice questions  
(1 Explicit, 2 Implicit, 1 Making Connections)  
2 open-response questions  
(1 Implicit, 1 Making Connections)

## WRITING SKILLS

**Content:** identify and support the main idea of a paragraph; make revisions to improve clarity

**Organization:** identify the main idea and supporting details and group them in a paragraph using common organizational patterns

**Grammar:** use parts of speech to communicate clearly

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### Short-Writing Prompt

18 lines available for response

### Long-Writing Prompt

36 lines available for response

### Multiple-Choice Writing

8 multiple-choice questions  
(Content, Organization and Grammar)

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## Permissions and Credits

### Section A1: Reading

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### Section A2: Reading

Written for EQAO.

### Section B1: Reading

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