

Session 1, Reading Selection #1

*Many beautiful things last only a little while. But are they worth the time it takes to create them?
Read the selection below. Use information from the selection to answer the questions that follow.*

Sand Art, on Deadline

Talent Is a Divine Gift—Not to Be Squandered¹
Anonymous

- 1 The young man arrived on the Massachusetts beach early carrying a portable radio, a shovel, and an odd assortment of tools. There were a bricklayer's trowel, a palette knife, spatulas, spoons, and a spray bottle.
- 2 He walked down near the water—the tide was out—put down the radio and tuned it to soft rock. Then he shoveled wet sand into a pile nearly four feet high and as many feet across. He took up the trowel and used it to slice large hunks off the pile, creating a rectangular shape.
- 3 After that, he set to work with palette knife, spatulas, and spoons. He shaped a graceful tower, topped walls with crenelated² battlements, fashioned elegant bay windows, and carved out a massive front gate.
- 4 The man knew his sand. With deft³ strokes, he smoothly finished some surfaces, embroidered baroque designs on others. As delicate shapes began to dry, he gently moistened them with water from the spray bottle, lest they crumble in the breeze.
- 5 All this took hours. People gathered, commenting to each other and asking questions of the sculptor. Lost in concentration, he gave only perfunctory⁴ replies. At last he stood back, apparently satisfied with a castle worthy of the Austrian countryside or Disneyland.
- 6 Then he gathered his tools and radio and moved them up to drier sand. He had known for a while what many in the rapt crowd still overlooked; the tide was coming in. Not only had he practiced his craft with confidence and style, he had done so against a powerful, immutable deadline.



¹ *squandered* — wasted

² *crenelated* — notched; indented

³ *deft* — quick and expert

⁴ *perfunctory* — showing little interest or care

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7 As the spectators looked on, water began to lap at the base of the castle. In minutes it was surrounded, a miniature Mont-Saint-Michel.⁵ Then the rising flood began to erode the base, chunks of wall fell, the tower tumbled, finally the gate's arch collapsed. More minutes passed, and small waves erased bay windows and battlements—soon no more than a modest lump was left.

8 Many in the crowd looked distraught; some voiced dismay. But the sculptor remained serene. He had, after all, had a wonderful day, making beauty out of nothing, and watching it return to nothing as time and tide moved on.

⁵ *Mont-Saint-Michel* — a small island in northwestern France connected to the mainland by a road that is covered by water at high tide

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Session 1, Multiple-Choice Questions

- 1 In this selection, why does the sculptor start early in the day?
- A. He knows the tide is out on this particular morning.
 - B. It gives time for the crowd to gather.
 - C. He needs the sun to help dry the sand.
 - D. It is easier to begin with only a few people around.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 1: Literature/Learning Standard 12

- 2 The writer uses paragraphs 3 and 4 to describe the sculptor's
- A. enthusiasm.
 - B. skill.
 - C. speed.
 - D. motivation.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 2: Literature/Learning Standard 13

- 3 Which statement **best** indicates that the sculptor was an expert?
- A. He attracted a large crowd.
 - B. He had an ability to create elaborate details.
 - C. He was able to finish his work.
 - D. His satisfaction with the results showed on his face.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 3: Literature/Learning Standard 13

- 4 In this selection, what does the incoming tide signal?
- A. It is time to begin working.
 - B. It is the busiest time of the day.
 - C. It is the end of a day's work.
 - D. It is time for the spectators to leave.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 4: Literature/Learning Standard 13

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- 5 How did the spectators react when the tide began to come in?
- A. They tried to save the sand castle.
 - B. They were upset to see the art ruined.
 - C. They were nervous about their own belongings.
 - D. They helped the artist finish the castle.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 5: **Literature/Learning Standard 8**

- 6 The reader can tell that the sculptor's reward for his work is
- A. personal satisfaction.
 - B. attention from the crowd.
 - C. fame as an artist.
 - D. payment for his work.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 6: **Literature/Learning Standard 8**

- 7 In paragraph 8, the word *serene* means
- A. nervous.
 - B. alert.
 - C. drowsy.
 - D. calm.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 7: **Language/Learning Standard 4**

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Session 1, Open-Response Question

- 8 The artist does not feel that sand art is a waste of time. What evidence from the story indicates that the artist values his work? Use information from the story to support your answer.

Reporting Category/Learning Standard for Item 8: Literature/Learning Standard 13