

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

## Stage Fright

by Lee Bennett Hopkins

I wanted the role.  
The Prince.

*The Prince.*

I got it.  
5 Knew it.  
I was totally convinced.

I memorized each line.  
Learned them by heart.  
I studied and studied  
10 my perfect Prince-part.

But—  
when I took center stage  
I stammered  
stuttered  
15 hemmed  
hewed  
suddenly shuddered.

My heart skipped a beat.  
Face turned bright red.  
20 Until finally  
Prince-words popped back in my head.

Though I'll always know  
my mind simply snapped  
I still got a thrill  
25 when I took my last bow  
as my classmates  
stood up  
shouted  
and  
30 clapped.

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- 1 Imagine that you are an actor performing in a play for the first time. You have learned all your lines, you know where to walk onstage, and your costume fits perfectly. Waiting behind the closed curtain, you can hear people in the audience whispering and taking their seats. Then your big moment arrives!
- 2 The curtain goes up, and the crowd falls silent. All you can see is the spotlight shining down on you. You try to speak your lines, but nothing seems to come out. The inside of your mouth is dry, and your palms are wet. The icy chill of panic starts to spread from your stomach to your arms and legs.
- 3 If you have experienced a moment like this, you know all too well what it means to have stage fright, also known as performance anxiety. It is one of the most common types of fear and tends to strike people when they find themselves at the center of attention. You don't have to be onstage to get stage fright. People experience this fear when playing sports, giving a business presentation, or even speaking in class. A person who suffers from stage fright may get sweaty hands, a dry mouth, a tight throat, or shaky knees. Stage fright is actually a form of panic, and these feelings are very real.
- 4 Stage fright is part of the body's reaction to stress. The experience differs from person to person, but the same chemical process occurs in each of us. In reaction to anxiety, our bodies produce a chemical called adrenaline that prepares us to either fight or run away quickly. Scientists refer to this as our bodies' "fight or flight" reaction. As a result, we feel a boost of energy that makes our palms sweat, our hearts race, and our knees shake.
- 5 The good news about stage fright is that there are ways to cope with it. Practicing your performance and following some simple tips can help calm nerves and manage the feelings caused by anxiety. First, dress comfortably and appropriately. Second, before the performance, take deep breaths and stretch to help relax your body. Third, stay away from beverages that contain caffeine. These might

make your heart race even faster. Instead, try a banana! Some doctors believe that eating a banana can help calm your heart and the rest of your body. Finally, when you look into a crowd, try to focus on particular people instead of the whole group. These tips have helped many famous people learn to deal with their fears.

- 6 The singer and actress Mariah Carey is a good example of how stage fright doesn't have to stop people from reaching their goals as performers. Carey is a world-famous singer who has sold millions of albums, won many awards, and performed for thousands of fans. There was a time, though, when stage fright prevented her from even stepping onstage. She feared her performances would be bad. She didn't give up, however. With practice Carey learned how to relax while onstage. As she gained confidence, her feelings of anxiety diminished. She was soon performing again, and all her fans came to cheer for her. Carey showed that stage fright can win only if you let it.

**Use "Stage Fright" (p. 15) to answer questions 18–22.  
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

**18** Read these lines from the poem.

I memorized each line.  
Learned them by heart.

The poet uses the figurative expression "learned them by heart" to emphasize that the speaker —

- F** has volunteered to be in the play
- G** practices on the stage
- H** enjoys playing the role of the prince
- J** feels prepared for his performance

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**19** The poet uses line 11 to signal that the speaker changes from —

- A** cheerful to sad
- B** interested to bored
- C** confident to unsure
- D** desperate to hopeful

**20** In line 3, why does the poet repeat and italicize the words from line 2?

- F** To show that the role will be difficult
  - G** To emphasize that this role is important to the speaker
  - H** To show that the speaker is familiar with the play
  - J** To give the name of the play the speaker is in
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**21** The poem is mostly about a speaker who —

- A** is chosen for a role in a play that he doesn't understand
  - B** has trouble with his lines after seeing his classmates in the audience
  - C** experiences problems onstage but is able to finish his performance
  - D** can hardly wait to be onstage because he has practiced so much
- 

**22** The poet uses figurative language in line 18 to highlight the speaker's —

- F** determination to do well
- G** anxiety once he gets onstage
- H** satisfaction in being chosen for the role
- J** eagerness to perform

**Use "Fear Takes Center Stage" (pp. 16–17)  
to answer questions 23–26. Then fill in the answers on your  
answer document.**

- 23** Which of these best expresses the main idea of paragraph 5?
- A** Eating certain foods can help prevent stage fright.
  - B** Stage fright affects people who do not practice their performance.
  - C** Wearing the proper clothing can help relieve stage fright.
  - D** Stage fright can be overcome by using several strategies.

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- 24** The author speaks directly to the reader in paragraphs 1 and 2 in order to —
- F** encourage the reader to try out for a play
  - G** share a personal story with the reader
  - H** help the reader understand the experience of stage fright
  - J** demonstrate that acting requires skill

**25** Read this dictionary entry.

<p><b>strike</b> \ˈstriːk\ <i>verb</i> <b>1.</b> to hit with a hand or an object <b>2.</b> to crash against <b>3.</b> to affect suddenly <b>4.</b> to come to an agreement</p>
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Which definition best matches the word strike as it is used in paragraph 3?

- A** Definition 1
- B** Definition 2
- C** Definition 3
- D** Definition 4

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**26** The author's opinion that stage fright can be overcome is best supported by —

- F** the reaction of Mariah Carey's fans
- G** Mariah Carey's experience
- H** the description of how a body reacts to stress
- J** information about the source of stage fright

**Use "Stage Fright" and "Fear Takes Center Stage" to answer questions 27–30. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 27** Both selections suggest that stage fright can —
- A** happen even when a person wants to perform
  - B** permanently affect a person's health
  - C** get better when an audience shows support
  - D** be worse for actors than for other types of performers
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- 28** What is one difference between the selections?
- F** The article describes how stage fright feels, but the poem does not.
  - G** The article provides a scientific explanation for stage fright, but the poem does not.
  - H** The poem indicates that a person can overcome stage fright, but the article does not.
  - J** The poem gives an example of a person with stage fright, but the article does not.

**29** Based on information provided in both selections, the reader can conclude that stage fright is the result of —

- A** an unexpected event that shocks a person
- B** making a mistake in front of others
- C** not really wanting to perform
- D** being the center of attention

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**30** With which statement would the poet and the author most likely agree?

- F** Performing in front of a crowd can make a person nervous.
- G** The foods people eat can affect their performance.
- H** A crowd's applause can disturb a performer.
- J** Acting is the most difficult kind of performing.