

Read the interview with Gary Soto entitled “The Poet.” Then answer the questions that follow.

The Poet

Gary, what is an ode?

An ode is a poem of praise. In *Neighborhood Odes*, I wanted to praise a neighborhood like the one in Fresno, California, where I grew up. I thought of the different pieces of a neighborhood. I thought of cats, and running through the sprinkler, and goats. That’s what I wrote about.

Is writing a poem harder than writing a novel?

A poem must pack a whole story in a little space. Each word in a poem is very important. You have to choose it carefully. Poetry is sort of a puzzle with words.

Why do people read poems again and again?

The more you read poems, the better you understand them. I like to think of each poem as a new person. Just because you say hello once doesn’t mean you never want to see the person again. A poem needs to be seen again and again.

“The Poet” from *Storyworks*, February 1994. Copyright © 1994 by Scholastic Inc. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. According to the poet, the book <i>Neighborhood Odes</i> is <i>mainly</i> about what?</p> <p>A scenes from Gary Soto’s childhood</p> <p>B how to write poetry about streets</p> <p>C one Mexican-American family</p> <p>D the leaders of Fresno, California</p> <p>2. Which word might Gary Soto use to describe a good poem?</p> <p>A confusing</p> <p>B meaningful</p> <p>C misunderstood</p> <p>D unreal</p> | <p>3. In “The Poet,” why is there a question before each paragraph?</p> <p>A to tell what the interviewer had asked Gary Soto</p> <p>B to tell the main idea of each paragraph</p> <p>C to show what Gary Soto was thinking about</p> <p>D to show the kinds of questions Gary Soto was asking</p> |
|---|--|

4. What did Gary Soto most want to show by writing about his childhood and neighborhood?
- A that hardworking people lived there
 - B that there were too many cats in the area
 - C that he was thankful to have grown up there
 - D that many people had funny stories to tell

End of Set

In compliance with federal law, including the provisions of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Department of Public Instruction does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or military service in its policies, programs, activities, admissions or employment.

Answers to
Grade 5 Reading Comprehension Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Category	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
The Poet	1	A	Cognition	Analyzing	2.04
The Poet	2	B	Interpretation	Integrating	2.05
The Poet	3	A	Cognition	Knowledge	2.02
The Poet	4	C	Interpretation	Analyzing	2.05