Read the passage below about flying an airplane. Then answer the questions that follow.

3-2-Alpha

by Edna Ledgard

I was so sick of that motel room! We had been grounded for three whole days, and Dad was getting edgy[1].

Dad is a private pilot. That means he is licensed to fly certain light planes and can take passengers like us, his family. Not for pay, though.

This was our vacation trip, and we were flying back East from Chicago in a little Cessna 172 called *3-2-Alpha*. We'd had good weather until now. But wouldn't you guess! We hit Pittsburgh and the Alleghenies and flew right into a stalled weather front of stale, smoggy August air, which made for lousy visibility. Since Dad can only fly VFR (Visual Flight Rules), he has to be able to *see* where he is going. He can't just rely on the plane's instruments to tell him where he is.

So, early each morning, Dad called the Pittsburgh Flight Service Station, and each day the people in the station told us the lousy weather was just going to sit right there on top of us. We twiddled our thumbs and made the best of it.

At last, after three days, Flight Service told us the weather was finally moving and the stale air was gone. There would be lots of clouds instead, they said, but they told Dad where they thought he could find a pretty clear path across the mountains.

My dad has trained all of us to help get the plane ready. My little brother unties one rope, I do another, and Mom does the third. Meanwhile, Dad walks around checking all the control cables and little holes the flight instruments depend on. Then he checks to see if there are any problems with the fuel. It all takes a lot of time, so when we finally got the plane ready and climbed in, it was midmorning. It had already been a couple of hours since Dad last talked to the Flight Service Station. But we took off anyway. It sure was good to be up and flying and on our way home.

Dad radioed the tower, told them who and where we were, and activated his flight plan. The tower answered that now they expected more clouds and advised Dad to fly a path that went farther south than the one on his plan. Mom and I helped Dad navigate by matching stuff shown on the air charts with what we could see on the ground.

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[1] edgy: nervous

There sure were a lot of scattered clouds out there. That meant we'd have to be careful. Light planes have real strict rules about staying out of and away from clouds. For one thing, you can't see inside a cloud, but an even bigger danger is turbulence—the updrafts can really rip a small plane to bits!

After a while, Dad said these clouds today were too high. *3-2-Alpha* wouldn't be able to climb high enough to fly above them. So I was disappointed but not surprised when he said we'd better turn around and go back.

We made a "180" (an about-face) and then we saw that the clouds had also closed in behind us. We were in a cloud hole a few miles across, and there was no telling where the other clear air and holes might be. Dad did a full "360" and circled a couple of times. But the hole was getting smaller. Neither Mom nor I could tell where we were. We saw a small lake and some houses and a road below us, but lots of different places on the air chart had lakes and small towns and stuff that almost matched what we saw. We couldn't see far enough to compare the ground with the chart properly.

Now the clouds began to block our view completely. Dad could have his pilot's license suspended for getting us into a jam like this. If Dad had been edgy this morning, he seemed real calm now. But I knew that meant he was worried, too. He didn't have to tell us to be quiet.

Dad set the radio dial to the number for the Pittsburgh tower.

"Pittsburgh Tower—Pittsburgh Tower. This is *3-2-Alpha*. Can you help us—repeat —can you help us? Over."

"Go ahead, *3-2-Alpha*, this is Pittsburgh Tower. Is this a Mayday? Over."

"Negative, Pittsburgh Tower." Then Dad explained the problem.

MAYDAY! The word made my skin crawl. It meant an emergency. The engine hadn't quit, but we sure weren't O.K., and the tower knew it.

They also knew how to help us out, though. Because Dad had filed his flight plan, the controller had a good idea of where to start looking for us. Then they asked Dad if we had a transponder[2]. I was sure glad we did!

See, the people in the tower get a blip on their radar screen for each solid object in the sky, but with lots of planes in the sky, they can't be sure which one is which. The transponder can make your blip brighter than the others. So Dad set a certain number on the transponder's dial and pressed a button. That's called squawking. The blip from our plane got brighter for a moment. The tower said they thought they knew where we were.

Next, the tower told all other planes in the area to leave or land! While they did that, we were to fly a square: three minutes west, three minutes north, and so on. And we were to keep squawking our number every few seconds.

When we were the only plane left, the tower told us which compass heading to fly and how high to stay. We were over the mountains!

Step by step, the tower directed us back to the small airport from where we had taken off.

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[2] transponder: a special radio that sends out signals

In less than half an hour, we were safe on the ground again.

You might think that an experience like this would make us nervous about flying again. But it didn't. Sure, we were a little on edge the next time we took off, but it didn't last. And actually, everyone agreed that Dad had taken all reasonable care, and no one blamed him for what had happened. Now I feel safer than ever in the air. That trip reminded me that the Flight Service and tower people are always out there ready to give pilots a hand if they need one.

A.1.1.2

7. Read the following sentence from the passage.

   "Dad radioed the tower, told them who and where we were, and activated his flight plan."

   Which is a synonym for the word activated?

   A started

   B changed

   C repeated

   D checked

A.1.3.1

8. According to the passage, flying in a "cloud hole" means that a pilot is flying

   A under the clouds.

   B on top of the clouds.

   C around the clouds.

   D surrounded by the clouds.

B.1.1.1

9. When the plane is in the cloud hole, this setting affects the reader by

   A increasing concern for the family's safety.

   B realizing that the family will land safely.

   C introducing a new character to the passage.

   D suggesting conflict between family members.

A.1.4.1

10. According to the passage, a transponder is a piece of equipment that can

    A help private pilots fly in stale air.

    B warn pilots about bad weather ahead.

    C prevent an airplane from hitting turbulence.

    D brighten an airplane's blip on a radar screen.

B.1.1.1

11. Which word **best** describes how the narrator feels about flying in the last paragraph of the passage?

A angry

B scared

C confident

D fascinated

B.1.1.1

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

Item #12

This item will be reported under Category B, Interpretation and Analysis of Fiction and Nonfiction Text.

Assessment Anchor:

B.1 Describe/interpret components within and across texts.

Specific Eligible Content addressed by this item:

B.1.1.1 Describe the theme of fiction text.

Scoring Guide:

Score	In response to this item the student—
3	demonstrates complete knowledge by describing the theme and by using two examples from the passage to support the description.
2	demonstrates partial knowledge in describing the theme and supporting the description. (Example: Student describes the theme and uses one example from the passage to support the description.)
1	demonstrates incomplete knowledge in describing the theme and supporting the description. (Example: Student describes the theme without using any examples from the passage to support the description.)
0	response provides insufficient material for scoring or is inaccurate in all respects. BLK-Blank OT-Off task/topic LOE-Response in a language other than English IL-Illegible

Example—Top Scoring Response (3 Points):

Theme and Examples
The theme is that teamwork provides safety. The dad called in his flight plan so that others knew where he was going to be. When he couldn't see where he was, he radioed for help and then followed directions from the tower to strengthen his plane's signal on the screen. This teamwork helped him fly back to safety.

B.1.1.1 Response Score: 3

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

There is always a theme of any story. I believe that the theme of the passage is that even if you are in trouble, don't panic because staying calm will help you think of a solution easier. Other that is the theme because the narator said "My dad had calmed-edgy this morning, he seemed real calm now. The father thought of a solution by calling the town because he was calm and had his head clear. Another reason why I think that is the theme is because the family got out of the cloud safely with some help of their solution and being calm. No matter what situation, you can always think of a solution.

The student has described the theme and has supported the description using two examples from the passage.

B.1.1.1 Response Score: 2

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

Theme is to show that it is good to stay calm in an emergency. He shows this by dad being calm even though he was worried and had been edgy.

The student has described the theme and has supported the description using one example from the passage.

B.1.1.1 Response Score: 2

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

I think the theme is supported by these examples from the passage. "Dad walks around checking all the control cables and little holes the flight instruments depend on."
"because Dad had filed a flight plan, the controller had a good idea where to start looking for us."
"Dad had taken all reasonable care."

The student has used three related and relevant examples from the passage that imply a theme without explicitly stating that theme.

B.1.1.1 Response Score: 1

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

The theme in this story is to stay calm in an emergency. You need to stay quite and don't get in another person's way. Help out if you are asked to. And always, always try to keep other people calm as well in an emergency.

The student has described a theme. No examples from the passage have been used to support the description.

B.1.1.1 Response Score: 1

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

((the fligth service and tower people are always out there ready to give pilots a hand if they need one.))

The student has used one relevant example from the passage that implies a theme without explicitly stating that theme.

B.1.1.1 Response Score: 0

12. What is a theme of the passage? Support your choice with at least two examples from the passage.

The theme is flight atendance.
Who do I know that it said it
in the bapr. Here are some
examples. The kid's dad is a flight
atendent because he flys plains,
his kid said his dad was one.
And if he would have got
suspended he couldnt fly as a
flight atendent. And that is how
I know what the theme is.

The student's response is incorrect.