

**Macomb Collaborative: Thematic Units to Teach Michigan's ELA GLCE's**  
**Unit: 6.1—Pre-Reading Assessment—Student**

**Disposition:** Exploration and Discovery—**Theme:** Looking for one thing can lead to finding another.

**Excerpt from *Jason's Gold* by Will Hobbs (Genre: Action Adventure)**

**Directions:** Read the excerpt at <http://search.barnesandnoble.com/Jasons-Gold/Will-Hobbs/e/9780380729142#EXC>

**OR Read the excerpt below. Then answer the questions that follow.**

Excerpt from Chapter One of *Jason's Gold* by Will Hobbs

When the story broke on the streets of New York, it took off like a wildfire on a windy day.

"Gold!" Jason shouted at the top of his lungs. "Read all about it! Gold discovered in Alaska!"

The sturdy fifteen-year-old newsboy waving the paper in front of Grand Central Depot had arrived in New York only five days before, after nearly a year spent working his way across the continent.

"Gold ship arrives in Seattle!" Jason yelled. "EXTRA! EXTRA! Read all about it! Prospectors from Alaska. Two tons of gold!"

The headline, GOLD IN ALASKA, spanned the width of the entire page, the letters were so enormous. People were running toward him like iron filings to a magnet. He was selling the *New York Herald* hand over fist. His sack was emptying so fast, it was going to be only a matter of minutes before he was sold out.

"Prospectors from Alaska arrive in Seattle! Two tons of gold!"

Jason wanted to shout, Seattle is where I'm from! but instead he repeated the cry "Gold ship arrives in Seattle," all the while burning with curiosity. Beyond the fact that the ship had arrived this very day--this momentous seventeenth of July, 1897--he knew nothing except what was in the headlines. He hadn't even had a chance to read the story yet.

It was unbelievable, all this pushing and shoving. A woman was giving a man a purse-beating over his head for knocking her aside. "Skip the change!" a man in a dark suit cried amid the crush, pressing a silver dollar into Jason's hand for the five-cent newspaper. "Just give me the paper!"

When there was only one left, Jason took off running with it like a dog with a prize bone. In the nearest alley, he threw himself down and began to devour the story.

*At six o'clock this morning a steamship sailed into Seattle harbor from Alaska with two tons of gold aboard. Five thousand people streamed from the streets of Seattle onto Schwabacher's Dock to meet the gold ship, the Portland.*

Five thousand people at Schwabacher's Dock! He knew Schwabacher's like the back of his hand. Mrs. Beal's rooming house was only six blocks away! Were his brothers, Abraham and Ethan, among the five thousand? Maybe, but probably not. At that hour they would have been on their way to work at the sawmill. Would they have risked being fired for arriving late? He didn't think so. His older brothers were such cautious sorts. Hurriedly, Jason read on:

*"Show us your gold!" shouted the crowd as the steamer nosed into the dock. The prospectors thronging the bow obliged by holding up their riches in canvas and buckskin sacks, in jars, in a five-gallon milk can, all manner of satchels and suitcases. One of the sixty-eight, Frank Phiscator, yelled, "We've got millions!"*

Jason closed his eyes. He could picture this just as surely as if he were there. He'd only been gone for ten months. Suddenly he could even smell the salt water and hear the screaming of the gulls above the crowd. Imagine, he told himself, millions in gold. His eyes raced back to the newsprint:

*Another of the grizzled prospectors bellowed, "The Klondike is the richest goldfield in the world!" "Hurrah for the Klondike!" the crowd cheered. "Ho for the Klondike!"*

*Klondike.* Jason paused to savor the word. "Klondike," he said aloud. The name had a magical ring to it, a spellbinding power. The word itself was heavy and solid and dazzling, like a bar of shiny gold.

*One of the newly rich disembarking the ship was a young man from Michigan who'd left a small farm two years before with almost nothing to his name. As he wrestled a suitcase weighing over two hundred pounds down the gangplank, the handle broke, to a roar from the crowd.*

It almost hurt reading this, it was so stupendous. Two hundred pounds of gold!

That man had left home with almost nothing to his name, Jason thought, just like I did. That could have been me if only I'd heard about Alaska ten months ago, when I first took off....It could have been Jason Hawthorn dragging a fortune in gold off that ship.

Jason could imagine himself disembarking, spotting his brothers in the crowd, seeing the astonishment in their eyes ... their sandy-haired little brother returning home, a conquering hero!

"Dreams of grandeur," he whispered self-mockingly, and found the spot where he'd left off:

*A nation unrecovered from the panic of '93 and four years of depression now casts its hopeful eyes upon Alaska. Today's events, in a lightning stroke, point north from Seattle toward that vast and ultimate frontier whose riches have only begun to be plumbed. It may well be that a gold rush to dwarf the great California rush of '49 may already be under way as these lines are penned, as untold numbers of argonauts, like modern Jasons, make ready to pursue their Golden Fleeces. Klondike or Bust!*

The rush is only beginning, he realized. It could still be me.

A grin was spreading across his face. A modern Jason he already was, and in fact his father had named him after the treasure-seeking hero from Greek mythology.

In a split second all his plans were turning about like a racing sloop. His sails were filling with a wind blowing from an entirely different direction.

Then he hesitated, remembering the vow he'd made to himself to live on his own hook for a year before returning home. But ten months was nearly a year, he reasoned, and he knew from his brothers' letters and telegrams that they were already impressed by his stamina and resourcefulness, as well as by the marvelous mountains and prairies and cities that he had seen.

Just think how it would strike Abraham and Ethan if he returned from the road only long enough to pack tip and light out for the Klondike!

**Directions: Answer the questions below, basing your answers on the excerpt from *Jason's Gold*.**

1. **Which of the following is an example of a simile?**

- A. "... dragging a fortune in gold off that ship."
- B. "... wind blowing from an entirely different direction."
- C. "... it took off like a wildfire on a windy day."
- D. "... mountains and prairies and cities that he had seen."

2. **In this selection, the *New York Herald* is which of the following?**

- A. pamphlet
- B. newspaper
- C. magazine
- D. novel

3. **In this selection, the *Portland* is which of the following?**

- A. a local newspaper
- B. a city in New York
- C. a city in Oregon
- D. a gold ship

**4. Read the sentence below.**

A modern Jason he already was, and in fact his father had named him after the treasure-seeking hero from Greek mythology.

**The sentence is an example of what literary device?**

- A. metaphor
- B. foreshadowing
- C. symbolism
- D. personification

**5. What text feature does the author use to show that Jason is reading a newspaper?**

- A. italics
- B. bold print
- C. capitals
- D. subheadings

**6. The story is told from the point of view of**

- A. Mrs. Beal.
- B. Ethan.
- C. Jason.
- D. Klondike.

**7. What does the word *grandeur* mean in the following sentence from the story?**

"Dreams of grandeur," he whispered self-mockingly, and found the spot where he'd left off

- A. splendor
- B. exploration
- C. success
- D. sailing

**8. In this selection, what word would Jason most likely use to describe his brothers?**

- A. cautious
- B. brilliant
- C. bitter
- D. bashful

**9. Which word best describes Jason?**

- A. cunning
- B. adventurous
- C. agreeable
- D. courteous

**10. What do you predict will be Jason's future actions? Support your prediction with details from the passage. (Three possible points, scored with the rubric following question 11.)**

**11. Use three details to show Jason's independent nature. (3-point constructed response)**

## MISD ELA Pre-Assessment Rubric

	<b>3 (complete)</b>	<b>2 (partial)</b>	<b>1 (minimal)</b>
<p><b><u>Traits:</u></b> <b><u>Content</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Answers question</li> <li>▪ Uses relevant details from text to support answer</li> <li>▪ Stays on topic</li> </ul>	<p>Answer is relevant with many details and examples.</p>	<p>Answer is relevant but has few details to support or explain the answer.</p>	<p>Answers question with misinterpretation.</p> <p>Little or no relevance to text or question.</p> <p>Ideas and content are not developed or connected.</p>
<p><b><u>Organization</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restatement (Beginning)</li> <li>▪ Details in support (Middle)</li> <li>▪ Conclusion (End)</li> </ul>	<p>Student restates the question in his/her own words.</p> <p>Details support point.</p> <p>Response is written in a logical sequence that makes connections.</p>	<p>Student restates the question in the answer.</p> <p>Events are retold in a somewhat disconnected structure.</p>	<p>Students answer either “yes,” “no,” or “I agree” without reference to the question.</p> <p>Writing lacks sequence.</p>
<p><b><u>Style/Voice</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses quotes to support,</li> <li>▪ Concludes with prediction characters feelings, opinions, etc...</li> </ul>	<p>Word choice is precise.</p> <p>Uses quotes effectively. Conclusion engages the reader.</p>	<p>Vocabulary is basic.</p> <p>May use quotations, but reference is unclear.</p> <p>Conclusion is partially successful.</p>	<p>Vocabulary is limited.</p> <p>Quotations are not used.</p> <p>The conclusion is ineffective or does not exist.</p>
<p><b><u>Conventions/Presentation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Writing is neat.</li> <li>▪ Uses proper conventions</li> </ul>	<p>Presentation makes the writing inviting.</p> <p>Writing shows control over conventions.</p>	<p>Writing is readable.</p> <p>Errors in conventions do not distract from meaning.</p>	<p>Writing may not be legible.</p> <p>Errors in conventions distract from meaning.</p>