



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler



2021*
Grade 6

* This is a revised version of the 2017 Item and Scoring Sampler.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INFORMATION ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	1
Introduction	1
General Introduction	1
Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS).....	1
What Is Included	1
Purpose and Uses.....	2
Item Format and Scoring Guidelines	2
Testing Time and Mode of Testing Delivery for the PCS-Based PSSA.....	3
English Language Arts Grade 6	3
PSSA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 6	4
English Language Arts Test Directions for Reading Passages and Questions	4
Passage 1.....	6
Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question	8
Multiple-Choice Questions	10
Passage 2.....	12
Multiple-Choice Questions	13
Passage 3.....	16
Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt	20
Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline.....	24
English Language Arts Test Directions for Conventions of Standard English Questions.....	42
Conventions of Standard English Multiple-Choice Questions.....	43
English Language Arts—Sample Item Summary Data.....	47
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	49

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides districts and schools with tools to assist in delivering focused instructional programs aligned with the Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS). These tools include Academic Standards, Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content documents, assessment handbooks, and content-based item and scoring samplers. This Item and Scoring Sampler is a useful tool for Pennsylvania educators in preparing local instructional programs by providing samples of test item types and scored student responses. The item sampler is not designed to be used as a pretest, a curriculum, or other benchmark for operational testing.

This Item and Scoring Sampler is available in Braille format. For more information regarding Braille, call (717) 901-2238.

Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS)

This sampler contains examples of test questions designed to assess the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards. The Mathematics, Reading, and Writing PSSA transitioned to PCS-based operational Mathematics and English Language Arts assessments starting with the spring 2015 PSSA administration.

The PCS-aligned Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content documents are posted on this portal:

- www.education.pa.gov [Hover over “Data and Reporting,” select “Assessment and Accountability,” and select “PSSA-PA System of School Assessment.” Then select “Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content” on the right side of the screen.]

What Is Included

This sampler contains stimulus reading passages with test questions, Conventions of Standard English questions, and a text-dependent analysis (TDA) prompt that have been written to align to the Assessment Anchors, which are based on the Pennsylvania Core Standards. The passages represent some of the genres approved by PDE to appear on an operational, PCS-based PSSA. The test questions provide an idea of the types of items that may appear on an operational, PCS-based PSSA. Each sample test question has been through a rigorous review process to ensure alignment with the Assessment Anchors.

Typically an item and scoring sampler is released every year to provide students and educators with a resource to assist in delivering focused instructional programs aligned to the PCS. However, due to the cancellation of standardized testing in 2019–2020, the 2021 Item and Scoring Sampler is a revised version of the previously released 2017 Item and Scoring Sampler. This revised version ensures that students and educators have an enhanced item and scoring sampler to use during instruction and/or preparation of students to take the PSSA Exam.

Purpose and Uses

The items in this sampler may be used¹ as examples for creating assessment items at the classroom level. Classroom teachers may find it beneficial to have students respond to the text-dependent analysis prompt questions in this sampler. Educators can then use the sampler as a guide to score the responses either independently or together with colleagues within a school or district.

Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

The 2021 PCS-based PSSA has multiple types of test questions. For grade 6, the types of test questions are Multiple-Choice (MC) questions, Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) questions, and Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) prompts.

Multiple Choice: Each of this type of test question has four answer choices. Some MC test questions are based on a stimulus reading passage, while Conventions of Standard English MC test questions are independent of a passage. Each correct response to an MC test question is worth one point.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response: Each two-part EBSR question is designed to elicit an evidence-based response from a student who has read either a literature or an information text passage. In Part One, which is similar to an MC question, the student analyzes a passage and chooses the best answer from four answer choices. In Part Two, the student utilizes evidence from the passage to select one or more answers based on the response to Part One. Part Two is different from a multiple-choice question in that there may be more than four answer options and more than one correct answer. Each EBSR test question is worth either two or three points, and students can receive points for providing a correct response to Part One or for providing one or more correct responses in Part Two.

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt: The TDA prompt is a text-dependent analysis prompt based on a passage or passage set that each student has read during the test event. There are three response pages in the paper-and-pencil format and up to 5,000 characters in the online format. Both literature and informational text passages are addressed through this item type. Students use explicit and implicit evidence to make inferences leading to a conclusion or generalization in response to the task stated in the prompt. Students construct a well-written analytical essay to communicate inferences and connection to the evidence using grade-appropriate writing skills. The TDA response is scored using a holistic scoring guideline on a 1–4-point scale.

¹ The permission to copy and/or use these materials does not extend to commercial purposes.

Non-Score Considerations: For TDA items, responses can be designated as non-scorable (NS). While every effort is made to score each student response, a response may receive an NS designation if it falls into one of five categories:

Blank – Blank, entirely erased, entirely crossed out, or consists entirely of whitespace

Refusal – Refusal to respond to the task

Non-scorable – In a language other than English, incoherent, illegible, insufficient, unrelated to the passage, or consisting solely or almost solely of text copied from the passage

Off Topic – Makes no reference to the item or passage but is not an intentional refusal

Copied – Consists of text copied from the item and/or test directions

Testing Time and Mode of Testing Delivery for the PCS-Based PSSA

The PSSA is delivered in traditional paper-and-pencil format as well as in an online format. The estimated time to respond to a test question is the same for both methods of test delivery. The following table shows the estimated response time for each item type.

During an official test administration, students are given as much additional time as is necessary to complete the test questions.


English Language Arts Item Type	MC	EBSR	TDA
Estimated Response Time (minutes)	1.5	3 to 5	45

English Language Arts Grade 6

This English Language Arts Sampler is composed of 3 passages, 5 passage-based MC questions, 1 EBSR question, a TDA prompt, and 4 Conventions of Standard English MC questions.

There are 3 passages in this booklet. The first passage is followed by a set of passage-based MC questions and an EBSR question. The second passage is followed by a set of passage-based MC questions. The third passage is followed by a TDA prompt. This booklet also contains 4 Conventions of Standard English MC questions.

Each question is accompanied by a table that contains the Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content coding, answer key(s), depth of knowledge, and testing data. Each question is followed by a brief analysis or rationale. The TDA prompt is displayed with the item-specific scoring guideline and examples of student responses with scores and annotations at each scoring level.

The PCS-based PSSA may be administered in paper-and-pencil format or online. As a result, this sampler includes samples of TDA prompt responses in both formats. A sample online response is noted by the symbol .

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR READING PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS**Directions:**

On the following pages are the Reading passages and questions.

Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:

Some questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- First, read the passage carefully.
- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer the question.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

Directions for Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions:

Some questions will have two parts and will ask you to select one or more answers in each part.

For the evidence-based selected-response questions:

- Read Part One of the question and choose the best answer.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part One of the question.
- Record your answer to Part One in the answer booklet.
- Only one of the answers provided in Part One is correct.
- Then, read Part Two of the question and choose the evidence to support your answer in Part One. If Part Two tells you to select two answers, be sure to select two answers.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part Two of the question.
- Record your answer or answers to Part Two in the answer booklet.

Directions for Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Prompts:

The English Language Arts TDA prompt will ask you to analyze the passage and use evidence from the passage to write an essay.

For the TDA Essay:

- Be sure to read the passage and the TDA prompt carefully.
- Review the Writer’s Checklist to help you plan and organize your response.
- You may look back at the passage to help you write your essay.
- Write your essay in the appropriate space in the answer booklet. If you use scratch paper to write a rough-draft essay, be sure to transfer your final essay to the answer booklet.
- Be sure to check that your essay contains evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Be sure to check your essay for errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

PASSAGE 1

The following passages feature Abraham Lincoln. Read the first passage and answer questions 1–3. Then, read the second passage and answer questions 4–6.

Frontier Boy

by Edison McIntyre

Abraham Lincoln’s rise to the national political stage and the presidency did not come easily. He lost his first election, finishing eighth among 13 candidates. While Lincoln was no stranger to setbacks, he possessed a determination to succeed that was born in the rugged country where he grew up.

Abraham’s parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, married in 1806. The couple settled near Elizabethtown, Kentucky, where their daughter, Sarah, was born in 1807. The Lincolns owned a series of farms, but Thomas grew barely enough food to feed his family. He made additional money as a skilled carpenter. He built a one-room log cabin near Hodgenville, where a son, Abraham, was born on February 12, 1809.

In later years, Abe remembered little about Kentucky. He was just seven years old when his family decided to leave and move farther west, across the Ohio River to Indiana. The Lincolns settled in what is now Spencer County, a few miles north of the river. Although Indiana became a state that year, 1816, the land along the Ohio was still dense forest, with few trails or settlements. The Lincolns spent their first winter there in a rough lean-to shelter while Thomas built a cabin.

Tall and strong for his age, Abe took up an ax to cut down the trees surrounding their new home and hitched up a team to plow the fields he had helped clear. He hauled water to the house from the nearest spring, a mile away.

The farm began to yield good crops, and as other settlers came to the area, Thomas found more work as a carpenter. But 1818 was a cruel year. A disease called “milk-sick” struck the community. It killed Nancy, who was just 34 years old.

Death at such an early age was common in the 1800s. Abe’s younger brother, Thomas, died when he was only a baby; his sister, Sarah, died at age 20 while bearing her first child. When Abe was 10, he was nearly killed after being kicked in the head by a horse. He learned quickly the hard lessons of life.

Abe also learned to value knowledge. Thomas and Nancy had little formal education. In fact, Thomas could hardly sign his name, while Nancy signed with an X. Still, Nancy had great respect for learning. She loved to tell stories to Sarah and Abe, and before the family left Kentucky, she sent Abe to a small school near their home.

About a year after Nancy died, Thomas went back to Elizabethtown. When he returned to Indiana, he brought with him his second wife. Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln was a widow with three children. Warm and loving, she treated Abe and Sarah as though they were her own children.

Abe's stepmother encouraged him to learn all he could. Over the years, he received fewer than 12 months of schooling, but he learned to read, write, and do a bit of arithmetic. An eager student, Abe often walked several miles to borrow books. He read *Aesop's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, a biography of George Washington—anything he could find. He enjoyed listening to his father and other adults talk late into the night about farming, politics, and life.

By age 14, Abe was old enough to work away from the Lincoln farm when his father could spare him. Over the next few years, he held several jobs—clearing land, splitting logs for fence rails, running a ferry. He gave most of his earnings to his father. When he was 19, he helped guide a flatboat loaded with produce down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. It was his first trip to a big city.

In 1830, the Lincoln family moved west again, this time to Illinois. Soon afterward, Abe left home and began working in a general store in New Salem, a small settlement near Springfield. He enjoyed roughhousing with his new friends, and he loved to wrestle, but he also spent many hours reading. He joined a debating group and, in 1831, voted for the first time.

The following year, Lincoln decided to run for the Illinois legislature. His campaign was severely delayed, though, when he volunteered for the state militia during the Black Hawk War. After serving for three months, he returned to New Salem in late July. He campaigned hard but lost the election. Still, he got 277 of the 300 votes in his town, and that encouraged him to run again. In 1834, with overwhelming support from New Salem, Lincoln won a seat in the state legislature, an office he would win three more times. After he was admitted to the bar in 1836, politics and the practice of law would pave a new path for this hardworking frontier boy.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question

1. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

Part One

In “Frontier Boy,” which claim about Lincoln does the author make?

- A. Lincoln had a determination to succeed.
- B. Lincoln used his physical appearance to gain popularity.
- C. Lincoln achieved more in his life than his parents.
- D. Lincoln understood the importance of educating others.

Part Two

Which sentences from the passage support the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- A. “Abe’s stepmother encouraged him to learn all he could.”
- B. “Over the next few years, he held several jobs—clearing land, splitting logs for fence rails, running a ferry.”
- C. “In fact, Thomas could hardly sign his name, while Nancy signed with an X.”
- D. “In 1830, the Lincoln family moved west again, this time to Illinois.”
- E. “Still, he got 277 of the 300 votes in his town, and that encouraged him to run again.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key: Part One	A
Answer Key: Part Two	B, E
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.25
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to identify a claim about Lincoln that the author makes in the passage and to select two sentences from the passage that support the claim.</p> <p>Part One: Option A is the correct answer, because the passage gives details of how Lincoln always tried to do his best and did not give up. Option B is not correct, because there is no textual evidence to support this claim. Both options C and D are not correct, because even though the reader may draw these inferences, the author does not put forth these claims in the passage.</p> <p>Part Two: Both options B and E are correct, because they support the claim in Part One that Lincoln was determined to succeed. Options A, C, and D do not support the correct answer in Part One. Option A is not correct, because it focuses on how Lincoln’s stepmother supported his education. Option C is not correct, because it focuses on the education of Lincoln’s parents. Option D is not correct, because it focuses on the fact that Lincoln moved frequently throughout his childhood.</p>

Multiple-Choice Questions

2. Which sentence from “Frontier Boy” **best** conveys the central idea of the passage?
- A. “Abraham Lincoln’s rise to the national political stage and the presidency did not come easily.”
 - B. “An eager student, Abe often walked several miles to borrow books.”
 - C. “He enjoyed listening to his father and other adults talk late into the night . . .”
 - D. “His campaign was severely delayed, though, when he volunteered for the state militia . . .”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	80% (correct answer)
p-value B	9%
p-value C	4%
p-value D	7%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the sentence that best conveys the central idea of the passage. Option A is the correct answer, because it represents the central idea that is supported by the entire passage: Lincoln had challenges throughout his life that he was able to overcome with hard work and dedication. Option B is not correct, because it shows only how as a child Lincoln worked hard to succeed, and it does not connect his childhood to his adulthood and rise to national politics; it is a minor detail from his childhood, not a central idea. Option C is not correct, because it only identifies an event from Lincoln’s childhood. Option D is not correct, because it is a detail that supports how Lincoln’s rise in politics was temporarily stalled.

3. Which statement **best** describes the author’s purpose in “Frontier Boy”?
- A. to explain to the reader how Lincoln was educated
 - B. to persuade the reader that Lincoln was a great leader
 - C. to entertain the reader with stories of Lincoln’s childhood
 - D. to inform the reader about Lincoln’s life before the presidency

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.2.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	5%
p-value B	5%
p-value C	9%
p-value D	81% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the author’s purpose in the passage. Option D is the correct answer, because the intent of the passage is to inform the reader about Lincoln’s life. Options A, B, and C are not correct, because they misidentify the author’s purpose. Option A is not correct, because even though the passage does include information about how Lincoln was educated, that is not the author’s purpose. Option B is not correct, because the passage does not include information about how Lincoln was a great leader. Option C is not correct, because the author’s purpose was to provide the reader with information, not entertainment.

PASSAGE 2

Abraham Lincoln wrote this autobiography for Jesse Fell, a long-time Illinois Republican friend who was a native of Pennsylvania. Fell used his influence to get the piece incorporated in an article appearing in a Pennsylvania newspaper on February 11, 1860. Lincoln enclosed the autobiography in a letter to Fell that said, “There is not much of it, for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me.”

Abraham Lincoln Autobiography

December 20, 1859

I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Macon County, Illinois. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or 2. His ancestors, who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania.

My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age; and he grew up, literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals, still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called; but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond “readin, writin, and cipherin” to the Rule of Three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three; but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education, I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

I was raised to farm work, which I continued till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois, and passed the first year in Macon County. Then I got to New-Salem (at that time in Sangamon, now in Menard County), where I remained a year as a sort of Clerk in a store. Then came the Black-Hawk war; and I was elected a Captain of Volunteers—a success which gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went the campaign, was elated, ran for the Legislature the same year (1832) and was beaten—the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next, and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterwards. During this Legislative period I had studied law, and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was once elected to the lower House of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, both inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before. Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses—I was losing interest in politics, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again. What I have done since then is pretty well known.

If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, six feet, four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair, and grey eyes—no other marks or brands recollected.

Multiple-Choice Questions

4. Read the sentence from the text box that introduces “Abraham Lincoln Autobiography.”

“Lincoln enclosed the autobiography in a letter to Fell that said, ‘There is not much of it, for the reason, I suppose, that there is not much of me.’ ”

What does the repetition of the phrase “not much” **most** reveal about Lincoln?

- A. Lincoln’s simple education
- B. Lincoln’s humble personality
- C. Lincoln’s reluctance to write the piece
- D. Lincoln’s fear of disappointing a friend

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.2.1.3
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	27%
p-value B	50% (correct answer)
p-value C	14%
p-value D	9%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to infer what the repetition of the phrase “not much” most reveals about Lincoln. Option B is the correct answer, because his words indicate to the reader that he was modest and downplayed his accomplishments. Option A is not correct, because Lincoln’s claim that “there is not much of me” encompasses more than his education. Both options C and D are not correct, because they are not supported by textual evidence.

5. Which meaning of the word tickets is used in “Abraham Lincoln Autobiography”?
- A. lists of candidates for nominations
 - B. cards recording transactions
 - C. documents that serve as permits
 - D. certificates showing that fees have been paid

Item Information	
Alignment	B-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	65% (correct answer)
p-value B	12%
p-value C	15%
p-value D	8%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to use context clues to determine which meaning of the multiple-meaning word “tickets” is used in the passage. Option A is the correct answer, because “lists of candidates for nominations” is the appropriate meaning based on how the word is used in the passage. Options B, C, and D, although they are other correct meanings of the word, do not make sense in the given context.

6. Which sentence expresses how the focus of “Frontier Boy” differs from the focus of “Abraham Lincoln Autobiography”?
- A. “He lost his first election, finishing eighth among 13 candidates.”
 - B. “He learned quickly the hard lessons of life.”
 - C. “He gave most of his earnings to his father.”
 - D. “He joined a debating group and, in 1831, voted for the first time.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.2
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	17%
p-value B	52% (correct answer)
p-value C	15%
p-value D	16%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to compare the presentation of information about Abraham Lincoln in both passages. Option B is the correct answer, because the choice reflects the focus of the first passage: Lincoln had to overcome great personal challenges as a young person. Options A, C, and D are not correct, because they focus more on other events of his life, which are discussed in both passages.

PASSAGE 3

Read the following folktale about the creation of a famous dessert. Then answer question 7.

Paranka's Dumplings

based on a Ukrainian Tale
by Nancy Hallas

In old Ukraine, before cooks collected their recipes in books, a young girl named Paranka worked alongside the old cook of a wealthy aristocrat's manor house, memorizing all of her delicious recipes. The old cook, whom everyone affectionately called Babka after her wonderful small cakes, loved Paranka dearly. The two spent many hours working together, passing the time with stories and riddles.

One day Paranka was making her favorite recipe, tasty fruit dumplings, called *varenyky* or *pyrohy*. Paranka laughed as she mixed the dumpling dough. Paranka formed the dough into small circles and spooned cherries into the center of each. She gently folded the half-moon pockets, then pinched them closed with her nimble fingers. As Paranka delicately boiled the dough to perfection, Babka told her how dumplings were brought to Europe from Asia long ago.

Summer days passed, and Babka, who was getting quite old, suddenly became ill and couldn't cook anymore.

Ivan, the butler, hoped Paranka would take over the running of the kitchen. But the next day the lady of the manor said, "Paranka, I'm afraid you are too young and inexperienced to cook for my husband and our important guests. I have hired a new head cook." Paranka's heart sank, but she did not complain.

That afternoon Olya came to take over the kitchen of the manor. She marched about and bragged of the fine houses she had cooked for all over Europe. Soon she was shrieking orders. Olya laughed scornfully as Paranka and the others scurried about trying to stay out of her way. It wasn't long until the older servants had had enough of her nasty ways.

One morning the aristocrat sent word that he would like fruit dumplings for dessert. Paranka begged Olya, "Please let me make them—it is my favorite recipe."

"No," barked Olya. "You are only a girl. You know nothing of dumplings."

Paranka watched in horror as Olya jabbed the dough, threw on more flour, and whacked it with a rolling pin. Paranka shook her head and thought, dumplings must be made tenderly and gently.

Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers. When the dumplings had overboiled in the too-salty water, she put them on a cold, wet, drippy plate and sent them into the dining room.

The aristocrat bit into a dumpling and cried out in pain. "I've broken a tooth on a cherry pit!" The lady of the manor was furious.

"Take these back!" she ordered Ivan. "Send out the new cook. I wish to speak with her."

Olya rushed into the dining room.

The lady of the manor stared at her coldly and said, “These dumplings are terrible.”

Olya smiled like a snake. “It is that girl Paranka, my lady,” she hissed. “I told her to let me make the dumplings, but she wouldn’t listen. She is so useless—no help at all.”

“Paranka is young, and you must teach her,” said the lady, her tone softening, “but don’t let it happen again.”

Back in the kitchen, Olya laughed at her own cleverness. “Not a word from any of you,” she snapped at the servants, “or I’ll have Paranka sacked¹!”

Days passed, and whenever a meal was not pleasing to the lady, Olya blamed it on Paranka.

The day came when the gardener brought a basket of sweet, ripe, purple plums. As everyone made ready to serve the midday meal, Olya ordered Paranka to make plum dumplings for dessert.

“And if you tell anyone that you made them,” she threatened, “I’ll have you sent to live with the pigs.”

Paranka nodded and reached for a bowl.

“And, by the way,” said Olya, yawning, “I’m going to have a rest. So you’ll have to serve the soup and all of the courses, too.” Then Olya sneaked some sweets from the cupboard, which she always kept locked, and retired to her bedroom by the kitchen. Soon she was snoring heavily.

“That Olya!” steamed Paranka as she flew about the kitchen giving direction to the other servants. She ladled out the soup and served the bread rolls. She arranged the fish, meats, and *kovbasa* onto platters and the *holubtsi* and vegetables into bowls. Hurrying to make the dumplings, she raced to the flour bin. She threw open the lid and gasped. There was hardly any flour left! Lazy Olya had forgotten to order more to be ground. Paranka scraped the last of the flour from the bin and mixed her dough.

“There isn’t much, but hopefully the dumplings will work,” she told herself. While the dough rested, Paranka washed and pitted the plums. Just as she was about to start making dumplings, Ivan burst through the door.

“A most distinguished guest has arrived!” he announced, rushing into the kitchen. “He is to join the master’s table for dessert.” Ivan turned to Paranka. “This guest is very important. You must help our master make a good impression.”

“I’m making plum dumplings, but—” started Paranka.

“Ah, that is good!” interrupted Ivan. “They are the master’s favorite. Your dumplings would warm the heart of any aristocrat. Hurry! Work, Paranka, and prosperity could be ours!”

Ivan rushed out of the kitchen before Paranka could say another word.

“But there’s no flour to make more dumplings!” she wailed.

“What are you going to do?” asked the scullery maid.

Paranka shook her head. She paced the floor in front of the cooking fire and pondered her dilemma. The fire crackled gently, whispering to her.

Suddenly in the small, friendly flames Paranka saw an image of Babka, the beloved old cook.

¹ sacked—dismissed from a job

“Oh, Babka!” Paranka cried. “Please help me.”

The image smiled at Paranka. Then the flames flickered, and pictures began to emerge. The first showed the plums as they stood on the table. The second showed a white sheet on a clothesline flapping in the breeze. Then the image grew smoky and turned into a whirlpool of water, spinning round and round, until it dissolved into the flames and a puff of smoke.

Babka’s image has given me a riddle to solve, thought Paranka. What could it mean?

Paranka quickly but gently rolled the dough onto the table. As she rolled, she grew calmer. She thought over the riddle she had seen in the fire: the plums, a bedsheet, and a rolling swirl of water. How could she make a dessert from a bedsheet? It was crazy! As if in a dream, she rolled the dough thinner and thinner. Could it possibly stretch to make enough? But when she looked, it was too thin to make proper dumplings. It was thin like a sheet.

“That’s it!” exclaimed Paranka. She brushed the stretched dough with melted butter, then topped it with sliced plums and honey. Taking one edge, she rolled it over and over, as she would to make a poppy seed roll. She rolled it like a bedsheet into a whirlpool. Then she cut the roll into two long pieces and placed them in the hot oven to bake.

When Ivan returned to the kitchen, Paranka was serving warm slices of thick, flaky pastry filled with sweet plums onto plates. She sprinkled each slice with poppy seeds and a drizzle of buckwheat honey, then placed a generous dab of rich sour cream on the top.

The delicious smells soon woke Olya. She stumbled into the kitchen, rubbed her eyes, and yawned.

“These are not dumplings!” she scolded Paranka. “How dare you disobey me!” Olya grabbed the dessert from Paranka and prepared to toss it into the fire, but Ivan stopped her.

“Stop, I beg you, Olya,” Ivan said. “While you were resting, a distinguished guest arrived. We have nothing else to serve him for dessert.”

“Is that so?” Olya sneered. “If the lady doesn’t like this strange dessert, tell her that Paranka made it. But if she does like it, be sure to tell her that / made it.”

“As you wish,” said Ivan, gritting his teeth. The servers took the dessert into the dining room. Soon Ivan returned.

“They like it!” he said. The servants cheered, but not Olya. She grumbled jealously.

“The master and the lady would like to have a word with the cook of the dessert,” Ivan announced.

“That’s me!” said Olya. She primped her hair and rushed into the dining room.

“Cook, it seems you have made a new dessert to celebrate our guest’s visit,” said the lady. “How did you make it?”

Olya, who didn’t have a clue how Paranka had made the dessert, was quick to boast all the same. “I chose only the finest flour and the sweetest plums . . . ,” she began.

“It’s delicious!” exclaimed the guest. He turned to his host. “I simply must have your cook. She must come to my manor house and make this wonderful dessert for all of my guests.”

“Very well,” commanded the aristocrat, not wanting to offend his guest. “She will go with you today.” Olya, who was taken completely by surprise, was, for once, speechless.

Paranka, Ivan, and the other servants happily waved good-bye as Olya trundled away behind the guest's carriage, in a pig's cart filled with heaping baskets of ripe plums and squawking geese.

After the carriage had gone, the lady of the manor complained, "I am tired of replacing cooks just to have them taken away."

"My lady, may I suggest that you put Paranka in charge of the kitchen?" said Ivan. "She is young, but she is very capable." Desperate, the lady took the butler's advice and appointed Paranka head cook on a trial basis.

Olya went to the guest's fine manor house, but she didn't know how to make the rolled plum dessert and was eventually let go. The rolled pastry, however, traveled widely throughout central Europe. Eventually the artful cooks of Hungary and Austria made it into a grand dessert. World famous, it became known by the German name for whirlpool—strudel.

As for Paranka, she stayed on at the manor and became a great cook, and the aristocrat and his wife were pleased to find that she made very tasty fruit dumplings after all.

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

7. The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Writer’s Checklist for the Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

PLAN before you write

- Make sure you read the prompt carefully.
- Make sure you have read the entire passage carefully.
- Think about how the prompt relates to the passage.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map, outline, or other graphic organizer to plan your essay.

FOCUS while you write

- Analyze the information from the passage as you write your essay.
- Make sure you use evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Use precise language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions in your essay.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write

- I wrote my final essay in the answer booklet.
- I stayed focused on responding to the prompt.
- I used evidence from the passage to support my response.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline

#7 ITEM INFORMATION

Alignment	E.1.1	Depth of Knowledge	3	Mean Score	1.86
------------------	-------	---------------------------	---	-------------------	------

ASSESSMENT ANCHOR:

E06.E.1–Evidence-Based Analysis of Text

SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT ANCHOR DESCRIPTOR ADDRESSED BY THIS ITEM:

E06.E.1.1–Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Score	Description
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively addresses all parts of the task demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text(s) • Effective introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s) • Strong organizational structure that effectively supports the focus and ideas • Thorough analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to effectively support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Substantial, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant key details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Substantial reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer’s purpose • Skillful use of transitions to link ideas • Effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events • Few errors, if any, are present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present do not interfere with meaning

Score	Description
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately addresses all parts of the task demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text(s) • Clear introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s) • Appropriate organizational structure that adequately supports the focus and ideas • Clear analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Sufficient, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Sufficient reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer’s purpose • Appropriate use of transitions to link ideas • Appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events • Some errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present seldom interfere with meaning
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistently addresses some parts of the task demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text(s) • Weak introduction, development, and/or conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea somewhat related to the text(s) • Weak organizational structure that inconsistently supports the focus and ideas • Weak or inconsistent analysis of explicit and/or implicit meanings from text(s) that somewhat supports claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Vague reference to the text(s) using some details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Weak reference to the main idea(s) and relevant details of the text(s) to support the writer’s purpose • Inconsistent use of transitions to link ideas • Inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events • Errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present may interfere with meaning
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimally addresses part(s) of the task demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text(s) • Minimal evidence of an introduction, development, and/or conclusion • Minimal evidence of an organizational structure • Insufficient or no analysis of the text(s); may or may not support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Insufficient reference to the text(s) using few details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Minimal reference to the main idea(s) and/or relevant details of the text(s) • Few, if any, transitions to link ideas • Little or no use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) • Many errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present often interfere with meaning

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points

7. The passage "Paranka's Dumplings" focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka's and Olya's different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage, Paranka and Olya have different approaches when preparing dumpling. While Paranka takes her time, Olya is very harsh and careless. Paranka's dumplings taste better because she takes her time and cares about making them.

When Paranka creates dumplings, she works slowly, but wastes no time. Paranka boils dumplings that taste delicious because kneads and folds the dough delicately. An example from the passage reads, "Paranka formed the dough into small circles and spooned cherries into the center of each. She gently folded the halfmoon pockets, then pinched them closed with her nimble fingers. As Paranka delicately boiled the dough to perfection..."

GO ON 

The girl makes her dumpling caringly because she wants to please the people who are going to eat them.

On the otherhand, Olya makes her dumplings in a cruel way. In the passage it says, "Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers.

When the dumplings had overboiled in the too-salty water, she put them on a cold, wet, drippy plate and sent them into the dining room." A few sentences later the passage expresses that a lady broke her tooth on a cherry pit. Olya lies and says that Paranka made the dumplings so that she could keep her job and not have to take the blame. This information shows the reader that Olya is a selfish and careless person. She did not care that she was serving an overcooked, sloppy dumpling. All she cared about was completing the

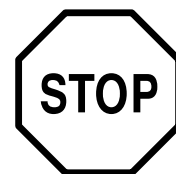
GO ON 

task so that she could get paid.

When Olya got in trouble she blamed it on her competitor, Paranka, in order to get the girl out of her way. Olya did everything in a way to only help herself.

The significance of Paranka and Olya's dumpings is to explain to the reader good and bad character traits and where they will lead you in the future. For example, Olya got fired while Paranka became a head chef. The ways that Paranka and Olya make their dumpling reflects on their character traits and flaws.

After you have checked your work, close your answer booklet and test booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.



This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure of the student’s response is strong and has an effective introduction, substantial development, and an insightful conclusion, all focused on the significance of the two characters’ different approaches to preparing dumplings. In the introductory paragraph, the student initiates a comparison of the two characters’ approaches by combining high-level inferences with relevant details from the text (. . . *Paranka takes her time, Olya is very harsh and careless. Paranka’s dumplings taste better because she takes her time and cares about making them*) to outline the significance of their different approaches and set the organizational structure for the rest of the essay. In the first body paragraph, the student focuses on characterizing Paranka’s approach to preparing dumplings (*When Paranka creates dumplings, she works slowly, but wastes no time. Paranka boils, dumplings that taste delicious . . .*). The student includes relevant text (. . . *[she] kneads and folds the dough delicately; “Paranka formed the dough into small circles and spooned cherries . . . As Paranka delicately boiled the dough to perfection . . .”*), that provides both effective development and a bridge to the insightful analysis that follows (*The girl makes her dumpling caringly because she wants to please the people who are going to eat them*). Using a skillful transition (*On the otherhand*), the student shifts the focus to characterizing the other character/cook (. . . *Olya makes her dumplings in a cruel way*). Again, well-chosen text inferences provide strong development (*“Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers”, . . . a lady broke her tooth on a cherry pit. Olya lies and says that Paranka made the dumplings so that she could keep her job and not have to take the blame*) and set up the insightful analysis that follows (*This information shows the reader that Olya is a selfish and careless person. She did not care . . . Olya did everything in away to only help herself*). The student’s response effectively concludes by combining an astute generalization with higher-level analysis (*The significance of Paranka and Olya’s dumpings is to explain to the reader good and bad character traits and where they will lead you in the future. For example, Olya got fired while Paranka became a head chef. The ways that Paranka and Olya make their dumpling reflects on their character traits and flaws*), demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. The student uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary from the passage to effectively explain the topic (*takes her time, wastes no time, wants to please, selfish, overcooked, sloppy dumpling, competitor, get the girl out of her way, character traits, reflects*). The transitions are used skillfully (*While Paranka takes her time, When Paranka creates dumplings, On the otherhand, This information shows the reader*) to link ideas throughout the response. The few errors in this response do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points



7. The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Throughout the story of “Paranka’s Dumplings,” there were different ways Paranka and Olya approached to make dumplings. Paranka took making dumplings seriously, and deep in the heart. Olya on the other hand could’ve cared less about the different tips to prepare dumplings, all she did was brag.

In the beginning, Paranka talks about how dumplings should be tender and gentle. I know this because it said that she gently folded the half moon pockets. Also, she delicately boiled the dough to perfection. Then, Olya thinks she knows everything about dumplings, and she totally screws up. She jabbed the dough and threw in more flour, and she overboiled the dumplings on a cold, wet, drippy plate.

In the middle of the story, Paranka got to make plum dumplings to serve to the guests. When she starts, she realizes there is no flour left to make another dumpling. Paranka panicks and goes to the fire when an image appears. She asks for help and solves this riddle. While Paranka was doing that, Olya was taking a nap and steals some snacks. This shows their different personalities and how much they care about their job.

In the end of the story, Paranka made a lovely dish the guests loved. Olya was frustrated that Paranka disobeyed Olya and didn’t make dumplings. Olya showed her jealousy and said it was her dish she made. After, the guests took her to their house to serve that meal to them, and later was fired. Happily, Paranka became head chef of the lovely house.

In conclusion, both Paranka and Olya take their jobs and preparing dumplings very differently. The story is telling you that if you aim nowhere that’s where you’ll go. Olya was being selfish and careless and she got fired. Paranka was strong, and caring and became head chef.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure of the student's response is strong, with an effective introduction and conclusion and development that follows passage events chronologically to address the task. In the introductory paragraph, the student provides a thorough analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from the text (*Paranka took making dumplings seriously, and deep in the heart. Olya on the other hand could've cared less about the different tips to prepare dumplings, all she did was brag*), effectively conveying the significance of the cooks' different approaches to preparing dumplings and setting the context for the rest of the essay. The first body paragraph starts off with a high-level inference (. . . *dumplings should be tender and gentle*) and text references (. . . *she gently folded the half moon pockets. Also, she delicately boiled the dough to perfection*). The student uses inferences and text references that effectively compare Paranka's approach to Olya's (*Then, Olya thinks she knows everything about dumplings, and she totally screws up*). The student uses well-chosen text references to describe Olya's approach (*She jabbed the dough and threw in more flour, and she overboiled the dumplings . . .*). This pattern of comparing Paranka and Olya through their differing cooking styles continues throughout the rest of the essay, demonstrating the student's careful planning. The next body paragraph further develops Paranka through text references, describing her approach during a cooking situation (. . . *Paranka got to make plum dumplings to serve to the guests. When she starts, she realizes there is no flour left to make another dumpling. Paranka panicks and goes to the fire when an image appears. She asks for help and solves this riddle*). Then, the student shifts focus to Olya's actions during the same situation (. . . *Olya was taking a nap and steals some snacks*), effectively contrasting the two characters. Next, the student draws a reasonable conclusion from the comparison (*This shows their different personalities and how much they care about their job*), demonstrating an in-depth analytic understanding of the text. In the final body paragraph, the student's response clearly describes the two characters' differing approaches and the related outcomes (. . . *Paranka made a lovely dish the guests loved. Olya was frustrated that Paranka disobeyed Olya and didn't make dumplings. Olya showed her jealousy and said it was her dish she made; After, the guests took her to their house to serve that meal to them, and later was fired; Happily, Paranka became head chef of the lovely house*). The student concludes by restating part of the prompt and then adds a higher-level generalization (*The story is telling you that if you aim nowhere that's where you'll go*), which is extended with effective analysis (*Olya was being selfish and careless and she got fired. Paranka was strong, and caring and became head chef*) to support the student's claims and ideas. The student uses varied transitions (*When she starts, In the end of the story, Happily*) that skillfully link ideas as they are developed. The precise language and domain-specific vocabulary help to effectively analyze the significance of Paranka's and Olya's different approaches. The few errors present in sentence structure and spelling do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points



7. The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

When an ill cook dies in an aristocat’s manor, they call up a new cook to take over. Were they using their heads? I don’t think so. They ignored the dead cook’s daughter, Paranka, who makes the best dumplings around. They tell young Paranka that she is too inexperienced. Paranka is a gentle, tender, and delicate woman, unlike the new head cook, Olya. Olya is nasty to all the servants and brags about how good she is. Paranka and Olya have a different approach to preparing dumplings.

Just like Paranka’s personality, she makes dumplings with love and delicacy. Paranka has a personal connection to dumplings. When her mom was still alive, she used to make dumplings with her all the time. Dumplings are Paranka’s specialty and has a fun time making and preparing them. Paranka gently pinches close the dough with her nimble fingers. She also carefully forms the dough into small circles. Paranka takes her time and doesn’t rush when she has to make shapes with the floppy dough. She takes her time the most when she folds the dough into half moon pocket shapes. Then, Paranka delicately boils the dough to perfection. Right before she serves the dumplings to the people, she tenderly spoons out cherries on top. Paranka has gotten mistreated and should be the head cook.

Olya is the complete opposite of Paranka. She makes her dumplings roughly and carelessly. Olya doesn’t care about how well she makes her food, just how much credit she gets. She shouldn’t be head cook, because she jabs the dough roughly. Olya also throws flour on top without measuring. Instead of flattening it gently like Paranka, she whacks it with a rolling pin. Olya clumsily pinches shut the dough with her thick fingers. Olya also doesn’t care when she overboils the dough in way too salty water. She thinks putting it on a cold, wet, drippy plate will make it better. To top it off, she then jabs and pokes cherries in the dumpling. When she presented it to her master, she barely snuck out of getting blames for breaking the master’s tooth with a cherry pit.

Paranka becomes head cook in the end. Olya is sent to another aristocat’s kitchen where she later gets fired. Dishonesty gets paid off in the end.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The student's response contains an appropriate organizational structure, which includes a clear introduction. Although the conclusion is abrupt, the development is adequate and the focus of the response on analyzing the significance of the different approaches of the two cooks is maintained throughout the student's response. In the introduction, the student uses inferences, clear analysis, and relevant details to provide context and set up the comparison of the two main characters (. . . *they call up a new cook to take over . . . They ignored . . . Paranka, who makes the best dumplings around; Paranka is a gentle, tender and delicate woman, unlike . . . Olya. Olya is nasty to all the servants and brags about how good she is*). In the two body paragraphs, each character is analyzed separately, highlighting the main differences along the way. In the first body paragraph, the student describes Paranka's approach to preparing dumplings using clear analysis, relevant text references, and higher-level inferences (*Paranka has a personal connection to dumplings, Dumplings are Paranka's specialty and has a fun time making and preparing them, Paranka gently pinches close the dough . . . , Paranka takes her time and doesn't rush . . . she tenderly spoons out cherries on top*). The student concludes by demonstrating understanding of the text (*Paranka has gotten mistreated and should be the head cook*). In the next body paragraph the student's response shifts the focus to Olya's approach, by using relevant text and inferences (*Olya is the complete opposite of Paranka. She makes her dumplings roughly and carelessly. Olya doesn't care about how well she makes her food, just how much credit she gets. She shouldn't be head cook, because she jabs the dough roughly, Olya also throws flour on top without measuring. Instead of flattening it gently like Paranka, she whacks it; . . . she barely snuck out of getting blames for breaking the master's tooth with a cherry pit*) to support the comparison. The student briefly concludes by using an adequate generalization (*Dishonesty gets paid off in the end*) that broadens the scope of the analysis. The student uses precise language (*personal connection, specialty, mistreated, snuck*) throughout the response. The transitions are used appropriately (*As you know, But if they do, Knowing Olya's personality, To top it off*) to link ideas. There are few errors in the response that do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points

7. The passage "Paranka's Dumplings" focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka's and Olya's different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage "Paranka's Dumplings" There are two different cooks with different styles, working in the same kitchen. Paranka cares about her food and Olya does not care about her food. In the next paragraph I will explain the style Paranka uses in cooking.

Paranka is graceful and calm in the kitchen. She make delectible food and pleases the aristocrats. In the passage it says "She gently folded the half-moon pocket, then pinched them closed with her nimble fingers." This tells the reader that Paranka is prideful in her work and only wants to serve the best. It also says in the

GO ON 

passage "Paranka shook her head and thought, dumplings must be made tenderly and gently." This proves that Paranka cares about her ending product. That was Parankas cooking style.

Olyas cooking style is careless and disgraceful. Olya only wanted to take credit for Parankas brilliant work. The reader can infer that Olya is careless because of what it says in the passage. In the passage it says "Olya jabbed the dough, threw on more flour, and whacked it with a rolling pin." Also Olya bossed the servants around and they didn't appreciate that. That was Olyas cooking style.

As you can see Paranka cared about her wonderful and



enjoyable food. Also you can see that Olya was crude and careless. Those are some significant differences between the cooks cooking styles.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The student's response contains an appropriate organizational structure that supports the focus of analyzing the significance of Paranka's and Olya's different approaches to preparing dumplings. The student's response has an adequate introduction, sufficient development, and a clear conclusion. There is clear analysis of explicit and implicit meanings of the text evident throughout the student's response, beginning with the introduction, in which the student sets a comparative tone for the rest of the response (*Paranka cares . . . , Olya does not care . . .*). In the first body paragraph, the student focuses on characterizing Paranka using adequate inferences (*Paranka is graceful and calm in the kitchen. She make delectible food and pleases the aristocrats*). Then the student extends this characterization with two relevant text references ("*She gently folded the half-moon pocket, then pinched them closed with her nimble fingers*", "*Paranka shook her head and thought, dumplings must be made tenderly and gently*"), connecting each reference with clear, appropriate analysis (*This tells the reader that Paranka is prideful in her work and only wants to serve the best, This proves that Paranka cares about her ending product*). The paragraph concludes with (*That was Parankas cooking style*). In the second body paragraph, the student's response shifts focus to characterizing Olya's approach to dumpling preparation (*Olyas cooking style is careless and disgraceful. Olya only wanted to take credit for Parankas brilliant work. The reader can infer that Olya is careless . . .*). These inferences and clear analysis are then connected to accurate text references ("*Olya jabbed the dough, threw on more flour, and whacked it with a rolling pin,*" and *Olya bossed the servants around and they didn't appreciate that*), that support the characterization and contrast Olya's approach with Paranka's. The conclusion summarizes the cooks' differing approaches (*As you can see Paranka cared about her wonderful and enjoyable food. Also you can see that Olya was crude and careless*) and provides closure. The transitions are used appropriately (*This tells the reader, It also says in the passage, This proves that, The reader can infer, In the passage, Also, As you can see*) to link ideas. There is an appropriate use of precise language to contrast the two characters' different approaches (*graceful and calm, delectible, pleases, infer, bossed, didn't appreciate, wonderful and enjoyable, crude*). There are some errors present in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and punctuation that seldom interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



7. The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” has two cooks that cook dumplings with different styles. Paranka is more gentle and delicate when she cooks dumplings, where as Olya cooks dumplings more rough and clumsily. As it says in the passage, “Paranka formed the dough into small circles and spooned cherries into the center of each.” But in the passage, “Olya jabbed the dough, threw on more flour, and whacked it with a rolling pin.” It also says that Paranka, “gently folded the half-moon pockets, then pinched them closed with her nimble fingers.” On the other hand, “Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers.” And don’t forget how “Paranka delicately boiled the dough to perfection” shows how delicate Paranka really is in the story. In the story Olya, “When the dumplings had overboiled in too salty water, she put them on a cold wet drippy plate, and sent them into the dining room.” These two cooks really have different cooking styles when it comes to dumplings. Olya is harsh, and brash cooking her dumplings, but Paranka is gentle, and delicate when cooking her dumplings. The two cooks have completely different styles cooking dumplings.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The student’s response has a weak organizational structure. There is a simplistic introduction (*The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” has two cooks that cook dumplings with different styles*), weak development, and a conclusion that restates ideas from the introduction (*The two cooks have completely different styles cooking dumplings*). The body of the student’s response begins by using inferences to compare Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches (*Paranka is more gentle and delicate . . . , Olya cooks dumplings more rough and clumsily*). These inferential ideas are supported with text quotes (“*Olya jabbed the dough . . . whacked it with a rolling pin*” and “*Paranka delicately baked the dough to perfection*”), followed by a series of text references (. . . “*Paranka formed the dough into small circles and spooned cherries into the center of each,*” *But in the passage, “Olya jabbed the dough, threw on more flour, and whacked it with a rolling pin”*; *It also says that Paranka, “gently folded the half-moon pockets, then pinched them closed with nimble fingers,” On the other hand, “Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers,” And don’t forget how “Paranka delicately boiled the dough to perfection” . . .*) that inconsistently compare the two cooks’ approaches. The student uses a final text reference (“*When the dumplings had overboiled in too salty water, she put them on a cold wet drippy plate, and sent them into the dining room*”) followed by inferences (*These two cooks really have different cooking styles when it comes to dumplings. Olya is harsh, and brash cooking her dumplings, but Paranka is gentle, and delicate when cooking her dumplings*) that repetitively contribute to the response moving beyond a literal interpretation of the text. There is an inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary (*harsh, brash*). There are a few errors in the response that do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points

7. The passage "Paranka's Dumplings" focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka's and Olya's different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Paranka's approach to preparing dumplings is making them very gently with her hands, in the book it said "Paranka gently folded the half-moon packets, then pinched and closed them with her nimble fingers." The book also said "Paranka shook her head and thought, dumplings should be made tenderly and gently."

O

Olya's approach to preparing dumplings is making the dumplings carelessly without concern. The book said on page 48, "Olya jabbed the dough threw on more flour, and whacked it with a rolling pin." The book also said on page 48, "Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers. When the dumplings had overboiled in the too-salty water, she put them on a cold, wet, drippy plate."

These were the approaches of Olya and Paranka making dumplings, Paranka makes them tenderly and gently and Olya makes them roughly.

GO ON 

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure of the student's response is weak and inconsistent. The student's response has no introduction, weak development, and a weak conclusion. The body paragraph of the response begins with a weak inference (*Paranka's approach to preparing dumplings is making them very gently with her hands,*) which is supported with text references (*"Paranka gently folded the half-moon packets, then pinched And closed them with her nimble fingers", "Paranka shook her head and thought, dumplings should be made tenderly and gently"*). Next, the student includes another inference (*Olya's approach to preparing dumplings is making the dumpings carelessly without concern*) that weakly characterizes Olya's approach and contrasts it with Paranka's, but falls short of clearly analyzing the significance of the cooks' differences. The student continues by adding direct quotes to provide support for the inferences (*"Olya jabbed the dough threw on more flour, and whached it with a rolling pin"; "Olya poked cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers. When the dumplings had overboiled in the too-salty water, she put them on a cold, wet, drippy plate"*). The conclusion, after restating part of the task, provides another inference regarding the two cooks' different approaches to preparing dumplings (*. . . Paranka makes them tenderly and gently and Olya makes them roughly*). The transition use is limited and relies too much on similar phrasing (*in the book it said, The book also said*) throughout the response. The few errors present do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point

7. The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Paranka and Olya's approaches to making dumplings are a lot different. Olya is an old woman who has been cooking for years. And Paranka is a young woman who just started cooking. People say Paranka's dumplings were good even great. But people say Olya's dumplings not so good. Olya's dumplings aren't good because she is old and forgets stuff. Paranka's dumplings are good because she is young and has good taste.

This response minimally addresses parts of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure of the student’s response is weak, with a minimal introduction (*Paranka and Olya’s approaches to making dumplings are a lot different*), insufficient development, and no conclusion. The body paragraph of the student’s response begins with simplistic inferences drawn directly from the text (*Olya is an old woman who has been cooking for years. And Paranka is a young woman who just started cooking, People say Paranka’s dumplings were good even great. But people say Olya’s dumplings not so good*). Next, the student attempts to provide analysis to characterize Olya’s approach (*Olya’s dumplings aren’t good because she is old and forgets stuff*). However, this inference is not supported by text and does not reflect one of the main ideas of the passage (i.e., In the passage, Olya’s dumplings are inferior because she doesn’t make them with care). The second attempt at analysis (*Paranka’s dumplings are good because she is young and has good taste*) is also weak and is not supported by the text. There are numerous errors in usage (*a lot* for *very*, *women* for *woman*), spelling (*approches*, *arn’t*), sentence formation (*But people say Olya’s dumplings not so good*), punctuation (missing comma), and capitalization (random), that sometimes interfering with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



7. The passage “Paranka’s Dumplings” focuses on two cooks with different styles who work in the same kitchen. Write an essay analyzing the significance of Paranka’s and Olya’s different approaches to preparing dumplings. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Olya really didn’t know how to make dumplings. According to the text it say “Olya poke cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers. When the dumplings had overboiled in the too-salty water, she put them on a cold, wet drippy plate and sent them in to the dining room. The aristocrat bit into the dumpling and cried out pain. “I’ve broken a tooth on a cherry pit!” The lady of the manor was furious.

Paranka made good dumplings. Even though Olya said Paranka is to young and knows nothing about dumpling. Plus Paranka is a great cook but Olya tells Paranka to making dumplings so Olya can get credit for something that she didn’t even make.

This response minimally addresses parts of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure of the student’s response is weak, has no introduction or conclusion, and insufficient development. The first paragraph begins with a minimal inference (*Olya really didn’t know how to make dumplings*), which does not address the significance of the two cooks’ different approaches. The remainder of the paragraph is a direct quote from the passage (*“Olya poke cherries into the dumplings and clumsily pinched them shut with her thick fingers. When the dumplings had overboiled in the too-salty water, she put them on a cold, wet drippy plate and sent them in to the dining room. The aristocrat bit into the dumpling and cried out pain. “I’ve broken a tooth on a cherry pit!” The lady of the manor was furious*) that vaguely supports the inference. The second paragraph starts with an inference (*Paranka made good dumplings. Even though Olya said Paranka is to young and knows nothing about dumpling*), which is followed by an even more minimal inference (*. . . Paranka is a great cook . . .*) followed by a loosely-related and confusing text reference (*. . . Olya tells Paranka to making dumplings so Olya can get credit for something she didn’t even make*). There are a few transitions (*Plus, so*) used in the response and the errors present in sentence formation and usage (*According to the text it say “Olya poke . . . , dumpling for dumplings, tells Paranka to making dumplings*), sometimes interfering with meaning.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH QUESTIONS

Directions:

On the following pages are the Conventions of Standard English questions.

Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:

Each question will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

8. Read the sentence.

For my research paper, I studied the giant sculptures on exhibit at the museum.

Which change would correct a spelling mistake in the sentence?

- A. Change research to reserch.
- B. Change giant to giante.
- C. Change sculptures to sculpters.
- D. Change exhibit to exhibit.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	5%
p-value B	1%
p-value C	8%
p-value D	86% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which change in the given sentence would correct a spelling mistake. Option D is the correct answer, because the word “exhibit” should be changed to “exhibit.” Options A, B, and C are not correct, because these words are spelled correctly in the given sentence.

9. Read the paragraph.

(1) Plants, just like animals, need certain things to stay alive. (2) Water is one thing that is needed to stay alive by both plants and animals. (3) If a plant does not have water, it will start to look droopy, and its leaves will dry up and eventually fall off the stems. (4) If the plant goes without water for too long, it will die. (5) Plants need other things too, such as air and light. (6) Most plants, but not all, also need soil. (7) Those that do not need soil can get the nutrients, or food, that they need in other ways instead.

Which revision that combines sentences 1 and 2 into one sentence **best** improves the style of the paragraph?

- A. Plants and certain animals are the same in that they need water to stay alive.
- B. By plants and animals, water is needed by both to stay alive.
- C. Water, by both plants and animals, is needed to stay alive.
- D. Plants, just like animals, need water to stay alive.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	17%
p-value B	15%
p-value C	13%
p-value D	55% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which revision of sentences 1 and 2 would best improve the style of the paragraph. Option D is the correct answer, because it provides the most concise revision and adds variety to the sentence structure of the paragraph. Option A is not correct because it is wordy and changes the meaning of the sentences. Option B is not correct because the phrase “by plants and animals” is misplaced and repetitive with “by both.” A correct revision would be “Both plants and animals need water to stay alive.” Option C is not correct, because it contains a misplaced modifier; water is not “by plants and animals”; water is needed by plants and animals.

10. Read the paragraph.

(1) Some people think bananas, which are available at many grocery stores, make good desserts. (2) They are healthier than many other sweet foods. (3) Many people believe, that sugary desserts should be avoided. (4) Eating fruits like bananas may be a great way to enjoy a healthy dessert.

Which revision should be made to the paragraph?

- A. Remove the comma after stores in sentence 1.
- B. Add a comma after healthier in sentence 2.
- C. Remove the comma after believe in sentence 3.
- D. Add a comma after fruits in sentence 4.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	13%
p-value B	6%
p-value C	62% (correct answer)
p-value D	19%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to choose the punctuation revision that should be made to the given paragraph. Option C is the correct answer because the comma should not separate the verb “believe” from its object “that.” The comma should be removed. Option A is not correct, because the comma after “stores” is needed to set off the nonrestrictive phrase “which are available at many grocery stores.” Options B and D are not correct, because a comma is not used within a comparison; “healthier than” and “fruits like” do not need punctuation.

11. Read the paragraph.

(1) Monarch butterflies, like many other animals, migrate south for the winter. (2) Butterfly lovers flocks to Michoacán, Mexico, every year to see the millions of monarchs that spend the winter there. (3) These monarchs hatched somewhere in the north the previous spring, and because monarchs have a short lifespan, no single monarch lives long enough to make the return trip. (4) That task is left to their offspring, who somehow find their way north.

Which change should be made to the paragraph to correct the error in agreement?

- A. Change migrate to migrates in sentence 1.
- B. Change flocks to flock in sentence 2.
- C. Change lives to live in sentence 3.
- D. Change find to finds in sentence 4.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.8
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	12%
p-value B	63% (correct answer)
p-value C	8%
p-value D	17%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which revision should be made to the given paragraph to correct the error in agreement. Option B is the correct answer, because “flocks” should be changed to “flock” to show subject-verb agreement in sentence 2. Option A is not correct, because sentence 1 already shows subject-verb agreement between “butterflies” and “migrate.” Option C is not correct, because sentence 3 already shows subject-verb agreement between “monarch” and “lives.” Option D is not correct, because sentence 4 already shows subject-verb agreement between “offspring” and “find.”

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS—SAMPLE ITEM SUMMARY DATA

Multiple-Choice and Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	p-value A	p-value B	p-value C	p-value D
1	B-C.3.1.1	Part One: A Part Two: B, E	3	Mean Score: 1.25			
2	B-K.1.1.2	A	3	80%	9%	4%	7%
3	B-C.2.1.1	D	3	5%	5%	9%	81%
4	B-C.2.1.3	B	2	27%	50%	14%	9%
5	B-V.4.1.1	A	2	65%	12%	15%	8%
6	B-C.3.1.2	B	3	17%	52%	15%	16%
8	D.1.2.2	D	2	5%	1%	8%	86%
9	D.2.1.1	D	2	17%	15%	13%	55%
10	D.1.2.1	C	2	13%	6%	62%	19%
11	D.1.1.8	B	2	12%	63%	8%	17%

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
7	E.1.1	4	3	1.86

Acknowledgements

“Frontier Boy” by Edison McIntyre from *Cobblestone* magazine, © 2008 by Carus Publishing Company. Reproduced with permission. All Cricket Media material is copyrighted by Carus Publishing Company, d/b/a Cricket Media, and/or various authors and illustrators. Any commercial use or distribution of material without permission is strictly prohibited.

“Paranka’s Magic Dumplings” by Nancy Hallas from *Cricket Magazine*, © 2004 by Carus Publishing Company. Reproduced with permission. All Cricket Media material is copyrighted by Carus Publishing Company, d/b/a Cricket Media, and/or various authors and illustrators. Any commercial use or distribution of material without permission is strictly prohibited.

PSSA Grade 6 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler

Copyright © 2021 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The materials contained in this publication may be duplicated by Pennsylvania educators for local classroom use. This permission does not extend to the duplication of materials for commercial use.
