



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler



**2024–2025
Grade 8**

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INFORMATION ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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 (AAEC) 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 and Scoring Sampler is not designed to be used as a pretest, a curriculum, or any 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 Item and Scoring Sampler contains examples of test questions designed to assess the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content aligned to the PCS. 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 Item and Scoring 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 PCS. The sample test questions model the types of items that may appear on an operational PSSA. Each sample test question has been through a rigorous review process to ensure alignment with the Assessment Anchors prior to being piloted in an embedded field test within a PSSA assessment and then used operationally on a PSSA assessment. Answer keys, scoring guidelines, and any related stimulus material are also included. Additionally, sample student responses are provided with each open-ended item to demonstrate the range of responses that students provided in response to these items.

Purpose and Uses

The items in this Item and Scoring 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 TDA prompt question in this Item and Scoring Sampler. Educators may then use the Item and Scoring Sampler as a guide to score the responses either independently or together with colleagues within a school or district.

Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

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 informational 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 an MC question in that there may be 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 and/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 connections to the evidence using grade-appropriate writing skills. The TDA response is scored using a holistic scoring guideline on a 1–4-point scale.

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

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

The PSSA is delivered in a 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 estimated response time for each item type is listed below.


- **Multiple Choice:** 1.5 minutes
- **Evidenced-Based Selected-Response:** 3 to 5 minutes
- **Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt:** 45 minutes

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

English Language Arts

This English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler is composed of 2 passages, 7 passage-based MC questions, 2 EBSR questions, 1 TDA prompt, and 3 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 Item and Scoring Sampler includes samples of TDA prompt responses in both formats. A sample online response is noted by the symbol .

Item and Scoring Sampler Format

This Item and Scoring Sampler includes the test directions and scoring guidelines that appeared in previous PSSA English Language Arts assessments. Each MC item is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the answer key, the depth of knowledge (DOK) level, the percentage² of students who chose each answer option, and a brief answer-option analysis or rationale. Each EBSR item is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the answer key to Part One of the item, the answer key to Part Two of the item, the DOK level, the mean student score, and a brief answer-option analysis for each part of the item. The TDA prompt is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the DOK level, and the mean student score. Additionally, the *Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guidelines* is combined with sample student responses representing two examples of each score point to form a practical item-specific scoring guideline. The student responses in this Item and Scoring Sampler are actual student responses; however, the handwriting has been changed to protect the students' identities and to make the Item and Scoring Sampler accessible to as many people as possible.

Example Multiple-Choice Item Information Table

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	Assigned AAEC
Answer Key	Correct Answer
Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK
p-value A	Percentage of students who selected option A
p-value B	Percentage of students who selected option B
p-value C	Percentage of students who selected option C
p-value D	Percentage of students who selected option D
Option Annotations	Brief answer-option analysis or rationale

Example Evidence-Based Selected-Response Item Information Table

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	Assigned AAEC
Answer Key: Part One	Correct Answer
Answer Key: Part Two	Correct Answer
Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK
Mean Score	Average Score
Option Annotations	Brief answer-option analysis or rationale

² All p-value percentages listed in the item information tables have been rounded.

Example Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt Information Table

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	Assigned AAEC
Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK
Mean Score	Average Score

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 8

English Language Arts Test Directions for Reading Passages and Items

Directions

On the following pages are the Reading passage and questions.

Directions for Multiple-Choice Items:

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

Read the following science-fiction passage that imagines a great discovery on the planet Mars. Then answer questions 1–9 in your answer booklet.

Under Construction

by Justin Werfel

Irina stared out the window of the habitat, past the low domes of the other pods, past the towering crane-crafter printing out a new extension to the complex, wishing she could see across the Martian landscape to the edge of the basin where her swarm was supposed to be. She glanced for the thousandth time at her deskpad, but it read only “Status: Building,” as it had for the last week and a half. This was absurd. Her trip to the site at the edge of Chryse Planitia was supposed to be days underway by now, and here she was still waiting for the construction rover to get back. Or report failure. Or do *something*, but how could the swarmbots still be at work? Muttering, she grabbed her deskpad and went in search of one of the engineers.

She found Tomer monitoring the crane-crafter’s progress, watching status readouts as the huge print head shuttled back and forth over the building site, extruding a steady flow of thick gray paste to build up the structure layer by layer.

“Swarm’s still out,” she said.

“Good morning to you too,” Tomer answered without looking up. “What’s up now?”

“I’m *supposed* to be out at Site 403 on my two-month study. Sent the rover out two weeks ago to build the research station, and they’re still not back.”

“What’s the status say went wrong?”

“Nothing—it still says they’re building.”

Tomer looked over at her for the first time. “That doesn’t make any sense,” he said. “The 400s are what, eight hundred clicks away? And you sent them to build a standard one-person station? No way that should have kept them busy more than a week.”

Irina smiled humorlessly.

“Okay, well, then we’ve got an interesting puzzle to solve,” Tomer said, spinning in his chair. “Let’s start at the beginning. You’re off to do a geology study at 403. That’s out near Tharsis, so it takes, what, a day and a half to drive there. Commuting from base is out, so you need a field station built so you can live out there for the course of the study.”

“So I requisition the construction swarm and send out the rover,” said Irina, bringing up the link on her deskpad and handing it to him.

“The rover’s autonomous and heavily loaded, so it’s going to be slow; might have taken it two or three days to get out there. Yes, fifty-six hours,” said Tomer, scanning the screen. “No hiccups reported. It gets there, opens the trailer, the swarmbots come pouring out and start building the station. We know it got that far from the status report. You directed them to build the usual design? No special modifications?”

"No, just the standard. I'm used to it," said Irina. "They're getting their material from the regolith, right?"

"Yup, just scooping up whatever sand and rock is loose on the surface and making that into the material they use for building, like the big guy here," Tomer confirmed, jerking his head toward the crane-crafter behind him. He paused. "They couldn't have run out of regolith, could they?"

"Not a chance; it's tens of meters deep," said Irina. "Though I don't know if they'd have more trouble excavating as they get farther down. Anyway, they just go farther out to collect more if they need it, right?"

"Yeah, you're right, so that's not it either," Tomer muttered. He stared at the screen. "I wish this status monitor could tell us something more precise. There's so little to go on."

"Maybe there's a boulder or something at the site where they're trying to build the station that's getting in their way?" Irina suggested. "Or, I don't know, they knocked something loose and a rock fell and broke some of them?"

"Well, they're flexible, so they'd build around a boulder or take advantage of it—make it part of a wall, there's half their job done already, that sort of thing," said Tomer. "And individual robots go wrong all the time, but the rest keep going and finish the job. That's the whole point of the swarm. It would take a real catastrophe to knock out enough of them that the rest wouldn't have finished by now. But a disaster at that scale probably would have taken out the rover as well, and we're still in radio contact, so we know that hasn't happened." He sighed, then looked up and grinned.

"What?" said Irina.

"Pack a bag," said Tomer. "We're going to go out and take a look."

* * *

The Tharsis plateau gradually rose in the distance as the buggy continued its slow crawl west. Light glinted off the rover as it came into view, and the buggy angled slightly north to head for it. Ten minutes later the buggy pulled up alongside, the hatch popped, and two figures in surfacesuits climbed out. They stretched, turned to look at the building site, and—

"Oh my goodness," said Irina. "Are you seeing this?"

"I'm seeing something, but I don't know what I'm seeing," crackled Tomer's voice over the radio. "Is that rock?"

Irina was already down in the excavation, examining the edge of the pit. It stretched out beyond, a perfect square about fifteen meters on each side and less than a meter deep. Near one of the far corners stood a half-finished habitat: several hundred palm-sized robots wandered the bottom or bumped against the sides, unable to climb out. "This top half-meter or so is regolith, but look, this lower wall is all one piece with the floor. It looks like metal! Hang on, I'm getting my kit." She vaulted out and bounded toward the buggy. A nearby robot gathered up the sand that had spilled down into the depression with her.

"The robots must have been scouring and rescouring this thing for material; they've used everything there was, couldn't climb out . . ." Tomer marveled. "They're all still working but the job is stalled—no one would have thought to prepare them for this kind of situation."

Irina had her field equipment out and was testing the shiny material. "This is an aluminum alloy! About five percent magnesium, traces of nickel, copper, tin . . . there is no possible way this could be natural."

"I could have told you that from the shape," Tomer answered, still in shock.

Irina dropped the spectrometer and grabbed for the ground-penetrating radar. Looking at the monitor, she shook her head. "This is going to take some real surveying, but at a glance this is the tip of something very big and very regular, waiting to be excavated."

"Do you realize what this means?" They looked at each other for a moment. Neither wanted to be the first to say it, but the conclusion was inescapable. "This is it. *This is the first artifact of alien origin. There has been other intelligent life here.*"

They were silent for a moment. The robots continued their rattling search of the depression. Irina laughed.

"What are you thinking?" said Tomer.

"I was thinking this must be the most important discovery in human history, and if it hadn't been for these little robots and an insanely lucky place for them to start building, it might have stayed buried for thousands of more years. What about you?"

Tomer laughed too. "I'm thinking we're going to need more of these robots. This site is going to call for a *lot* more than a one-person research station."

Multiple-Choice Items

1. Read the sentences from the passage.

“ ‘Pack a bag,’ said Tomer. ‘We’re going to go out and take a look.’ ”

What do the sentences **most** suggest about Tomer?

- A. He is an impatient person.
- B. He enjoys playing games.
- C. He wants to have a change of scenery.
- D. He is a practical thinker.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	27%
p-value B	5%
p-value C	18%
p-value D	50% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine what the given sentence from the passage suggests about Tomer. Option D is the correct answer since this dialogue shows that Tomer is a person of action who wants to solve the problem as soon as possible. Option A is incorrect; Tomer analyzes the problem by discussing the situation with Irina before realizing they need to observe the problem with the robots in person. Option B is incorrect; the dialogue between Tomer and Irina occurs at work and entails a serious problem with the robots. There is no evidence that Tomer enjoys playing games. Option C is incorrect; Tomer realizes that he and Irina need to examine the problem of the robots in person since they do not have enough electronic data to discern the problem. This does not mean he wants a change of scenery.

2. Read the sentence from the passage.

“She found Tomer monitoring the crane-crafter’s progress, watching status readouts as the huge print head shuttled back and forth over the building site, extruding a steady flow of thick gray paste to build up the structure layer by layer.”

Based on the sentence, what does the word extruding mean?

- A. displaying
- B. passing
- C. squeezing out
- D. rolling over

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	22%
p-value B	11%
p-value C	61% (correct answer)
p-value D	6%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to use context clues to determine the meaning of the word “extruding.” Option C is the correct answer since the word means to “force,” “press,” or “squeeze out.” The context clues of “huge print head” and “a steady flow of thick gray paste to build up the structure layer by layer” support this meaning. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since they do not provide an accurate definition for the word “extruding.”

3. Read the sentence from the passage.

“Irina smiled humorlessly.”

What does the phrase “smiled humorlessly” suggest about Irina?

- A. She is frustrated with the situation.
- B. She is angry with Tomer.
- C. She is unsure whether Tomer is joking.
- D. She is distracted.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-C.2.1.3
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	46% (correct answer)
p-value B	5%
p-value C	43%
p-value D	6%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine how the word choice “smiled humorlessly” impacts meaning by analyzing what this phrase suggests about Irina. Option A is the correct answer; Irina’s frustrated response is in agreement with Tomer’s claim that the project assigned to the robots should not “have kept them busy more than a week.” Option B is incorrect; although Irina is frustrated with the situation, there is no evidence that she is angry with Tomer. Option C is incorrect; Irina’s reaction is in response to Tomer’s words that the job assigned to the robots should not “have kept them busy more than a week.” There is no evidence that these words suggest that Tomer is joking. Option D is incorrect; Irina is focused on, not distracted by, the problem.

4. Read the excerpt from the passage.

“ ‘The robots must have been scouring and rescouring this thing for material; they’ve used everything there was . . . ’ ”

How does the phrase “scouring and rescouring” affect the reader’s understanding of the passage?

- A. It suggests that the excavation site is clean.
- B. It conveys the image of small robots moving helplessly around.
- C. It expresses the harshness of the Martian landscape.
- D. It reflects the characters’ confusion about what has happened.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-C.2.1.3
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	24%
p-value B	42% (correct answer)
p-value C	18%
p-value D	16%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine how the use of the phrase “scouring and rescouring” affects the reader’s understanding of the passage. Option B is the correct answer since this phrase suggests that the robots repeatedly searched for materials to build the structure once they fell into the pit. Option A is incorrect since the passage states there was “sand that had spilled down into the depression.” Option C is incorrect; even though the description of the regolith suggests the harshness of the Martian landscape, the use of the phrase “scouring and rescouring” suggests they continued to search for materials as they moved around. Option D is incorrect; the given phrase expresses the robots’ actions, not the feelings of Irina and Tomer.

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Evidence-Based Selected-Response Item

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

Part One

Which statement **best** describes Tomer's point of view concerning the construction delay?

- A. Tomer approaches problems in a logical way.
- B. Tomer is annoyed by the interruption to his work.
- C. Tomer understands why the technology has failed.
- D. Tomer predicts it will lead to an interesting discovery.

Part Two

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer in Part One? Choose **one** answer.

- A. "Tomer looked over at her for the first time. 'That doesn't make any sense,' he said."
- B. " 'Okay, well, then we've got an interesting puzzle to solve,' Tomer said, spinning in his chair. 'Let's start at the beginning.' "
- C. " 'I'm seeing something, but I don't know what I'm seeing,' crackled Tomer's voice over the radio. 'Is that rock?' "
- D. "Tomer laughed too. 'I'm thinking we're going to need more of these robots.' "

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-C.2.1.1
Answer Key: Part One	A
Answer Key: Part Two	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
Mean Score	1.15
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine Tomer's point of view concerning the construction delay and to select the evidence from the passage that supports this point of view.</p> <p>Part One: Option A is the correct answer; Tomer investigates the problem by analyzing the facts in a sequential way. Option B is incorrect; Tomer responds to Irina's problem by asking her, "What's up now?" That indicates concern, not annoyance. Option C is incorrect; Tomer does not understand why the technology has failed. In fact, he asks Irina, "What's the status say went wrong?" and tells her, "That doesn't make any sense." Option D is incorrect; Tomer states that they will have "an interesting puzzle to solve" but not that the construction delay will lead to an interesting discovery.</p> <p>Part Two: Option B is the correct answer since Tomer's words "Let's start at the beginning" support his approaching the problem in a logical way. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they do not support Tomer's perspective in Part One.</p>

Multiple-Choice Item

6. Which event in the passage **most** impacts the outcome of the plot?
- A. Irina wonders where her swarmbots are.
 - B. Tomer asks Irina whether the building has special modifications.
 - C. Irina and Tomer discuss the possibility that a rock fell and broke some robots.
 - D. Tomer tells Irina to pack a bag because they are going to take a look.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	23%
p-value B	13%
p-value C	25%
p-value D	39% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the event in the passage that most impacts the outcome of the plot. Option D is the correct answer since it is Tomer's decision that he and Irina will travel to the site that leads them to discover the cause of the robots' construction problem and the structure made of metal. Option A is incorrect; Irina wondering where her swarmbots are leads her to merely discuss the issue with Tomer. Option B is incorrect; Tomer's asking Irina about modifications leads only to the discussion about the amount of regolith available. Option C is incorrect; the discussion about the rock leads to Tomer's explanation about the design of the robots, which allows them to finish a job even if something goes wrong.

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Evidence-Based Selected-Response Item

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

Part One

Which inference can be made about the abilities of the swarmbots?

- A. They are not programmed to recognize the material at Tharsis.
- B. They cannot communicate with the humans stationed on Mars.
- C. Because they are robots, they are not as dependable as human workers.
- D. Although they are efficient workers, they are incapable of problem solving.

Part Two

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- A. “ ‘And you sent them to build a standard one-person station? No way that should have kept them busy more than a week.’ ”
- B. “ ‘So I requisition the construction swarm and send out the rover,’ said Irina, bringing up the link on her deskpad and handing it to him.”
- C. “ ‘It gets there, opens the trailer, the swarmbots come pouring out and start building the station. We know it got that far from the status report.’ ”
- D. “ ‘They’re all still working but the job is stalled—no one would have thought to prepare them for this kind of situation.’ ”

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-K.1.1.1
Answer Key: Part One	D
Answer Key: Part Two	A, D
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.56
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to make an inference about the abilities of the swarmbots and to select two pieces of evidence from the passage that support this inference.</p> <p>Part One: Option D is the correct answer; the passage suggests that the robots can work quickly since there are so many of them assigned to a task. The passage also states that they could not figure out how to climb out of the pit they had fallen into. Option A is incorrect; it is not the robots' job to recognize the material at Tharsis, only to build structures. Option B is incorrect; the passage states that the robots have communicated with the humans. Irina states that she has received a status update that says they are building. Option C is incorrect since the passage suggests that the robots are more dependable than human workers; the robots fell into a pit and continued to work. Irina tells Tomer that "it would take a real catastrophe to knock out enough of them that the rest wouldn't have finished by now."</p> <p>Part Two: Options A and D are the correct answers. Option A shows that the robots are efficient since they are usually able to work quickly. Option D shows that the robots are unable to solve their problem since they were not programmed to do so. Options B and C are incorrect since they do not support the inference that the swarmbots are efficient or incapable of problem solving.</p>

Multiple-Choice Items

8. Which statement **best** describes a central idea of the passage?
- A. Irina and Tomer work on Mars and discover that their construction robots have been delayed because they have stumbled upon proof of earlier alien life.
 - B. Sometime in the future, Irina is on Mars wondering why her swarmbots have not returned from their assignment to build a new research station.
 - C. Irina is hoping to do a geology study on Mars and asks Tomer for help in figuring out why her deskpad still reads “Status: Building.”
 - D. Construction robots on Mars have become trapped in an excavation site because they have encountered a metal floor left by alien visitors.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-K.1.1.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	54% (correct answer)
p-value B	17%
p-value C	15%
p-value D	14%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine a central idea of the passage. Option A is the correct answer since it conveys what the text is mostly about. Option B is incorrect since it states a detail from the passage. Option C is incorrect since it states a detail from the passage. Option D is incorrect since it leaves out information about the human characters—Tomer and Irina.

9. How do the characters' points of view change after the characters realize what the excavation has revealed?
- A. The characters are disappointed that it has taken so long to find the artifact.
 - B. The characters are concerned that they may have already overlooked other sites.
 - C. The characters are amazed at the role that chance has played in their discovery.
 - D. The characters are surprised that the robots failed to let them know what they had found.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-C.2.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	9%
p-value B	10%
p-value C	66% (correct answer)
p-value D	15%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine how the characters' point of view changes after they realize what the excavation has revealed. Option C is the correct answer; it is the malfunction of the robots in completing the research station and the creation of the pit that allows Tomer and Irina to accidentally discover the structure that proves alien life has visited Mars. Option A is incorrect since the characters did not know the artifact existed before they accidentally discovered it. Option B is incorrect; there is no evidence to suggest that the characters have thought about other alien artifacts. Option D is incorrect; the characters were not surprised since the robots had not been programmed to let them know what they had found.

Passage 2

Read the following passage about a canoe trip on the Delaware River. Then answer question 10 in your answer booklet.

Rite of Passage

by Victoria Marie Lees

I gulped as a huge tree limb raced by in the current ahead of our canoe in the river. “Water’s fast, Jude.”

My cousin glanced at the Delaware. “We can handle it. You scared, Ben?”

Jude sat in the stern of the canoe to steer. He liked to be in command, and it was his canoe. The problem was he needed to listen to the bowman. Me.

Unconsciously, I tightened my life jacket. Jude’s grin ate away at my confidence, making the morning’s breakfast flop in my stomach. “No. The canoe might be harder to control today, that’s all.”

From years of canoeing, we knew our strong sides. I paddled right; Jude took the left. We glided into the sweeping current in the middle of the river.

Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the Delaware River by ourselves, as a rite of passage, since we’d be starting high school in September. I wasn’t afraid of canoeing the river with Jude. We’d been canoeing since we could walk and had done this section with our dads three times.

Waves scalloped the water from an uneven rock bed below as the canoe danced along the river’s surface. We moved fast, water breaking over the bow and onto my sneakers. I shivered.

Jude laughed. “It’s going to be a wild ride.”

Laughter didn’t enter my mind. The wild ride meant that we should work as a team. I scanned the slabs of rock poking into the river, looking for tips of sunken boulders in our path. One jutted above the waves in front of our canoe. “Need to cut right.”

“I can see, Ben,” Jude shouted back. “Pull left!”

He could see? I glanced over my shoulder. Jude was up on one knee to look above me. I changed grips on the paddle to pull the bow left. The rock scraped our right side.

What was wrong with Jude? Our fathers had shown us how the bowman could see better. Dad put me right up front in the canoe to learn the water and choose the path. He taught me never to take my eyes off the water.

Jude usually canoed by himself on the lake by his house. When we canoed together on that flat lake, it was fine to follow Jude’s orders. But a river like the Delaware demanded the bowman stay alert.

The river snaked along the border between Pennsylvania and New York, lined by rugged, forested banks. Jude barked more commands. I decided to work with him even if he wouldn’t cooperate. It was safer.

The morning wore on, sun beating down on my head as I labored with my cousin to slip the canoe between rock piles and skirt the sucking swirls. The swift current carried us faster and faster downstream, and my adrenaline pumped. Together we cut around boulders and swells, working on instinct like we did with our dads. After we cleared our first battle against the rapids, I sat back and filled my lungs with fresh air.

“Wahoo!” Jude called from behind me. “That’s the way it works, Ben.”

A smile tugged at my lips as I turned to tap paddles. As long as we’re following your orders, right Jude? I took off my sunglasses and cupped a handful of river to wash away sweat from my face.

We pulled up for lunch early at the usual spot along the bank. A slab of rock jutted out into the river like a pier.

I climbed out of the canoe and dragged the bow onto land so Jude could jump out onto the rock. He pulled out the collapsible spare paddle from the watertight rubber pack we’d secured to the canoe, in order to find the water bottles and sandwiches. I joined him on the pier. We loosened our life jackets.

“I told you we could handle the water,” Jude said, taking a bite of his sandwich.

“It’d be more fun if we worked as a team,” I mumbled. Jude didn’t seem to hear. I took a slug of water and unwrapped my peanut butter and jelly. “Water’s getting rougher,” I said more clearly.

“Probably from all the rain earlier in the week.”

I nodded. “Dad said the river was unpredictable, remember Jude? The only thing we have is our experience of it.”

“Yeah, and our dads gave us that experience.” Jude jammed his trash into the pack.

And they expected us to listen to each other, I thought. We’re as close as brothers, Jude. We’re equals. Why can’t you see that?

A breeze had picked up along the Delaware by the time we pushed off from the bank. A hint of pine filled the air as we drifted into the flow of the river.

Skinnners Falls rapids came up fast. Rocks dotted the dark water in the shadows under the bridge as waves crashed the sides of our canoe. I tensed and leaned forward in my seat, muscles on high alert. My heart thudded in my ears. A cluster of rocks poked out above the water dead ahead.

“Back-paddle, Jude!” I shouted and pulled water on the right to turn the bow. It wasn’t enough. Or maybe my cousin didn’t back-paddle.

The canoe slammed onto the surface rocks. I gripped the gunwale¹ to stay in the canoe. The current pushed the bow forward.

“Ben!”

Jude’s voiced dripped in anger. If he wouldn’t listen to me, he couldn’t blame me. No one could control the river. We only reacted to it. Jude had to understand that.

I fell backward into the canoe and crawled toward Jude to get the weight off the bow. The canoe slid from the rocks, and the current carried us downstream, stern first. Keeping low, I returned to my seat, took up my paddle, and pulled right while Jude paddled forward on the left.

The canoe turned forward.

¹ gunwale—the upper edge of a boat’s side

"The bowman sees better from up front," I snapped. "Two-man canoeing's different from one-man canoeing." I turned back to face the river. "And I know what to do."

"But I've been canoeing longer."

I ignored Jude and sunk my paddle back into the Delaware. The water tried to rip it from my hands. All around the canoe, underwater swells deepened. My mind raced back two years ago when we canoed with our dads. Another water surge? They must have released water from the Rio Dam. My stomach knotted.

Cherry Island split came into view.

"Ben, dig right!" Jude commanded.

"Left!" I pointed. "Read the water! It's too deep on the right!"

Rapids erupted to the right side of the island, big and sloppy. We shouldn't take that in a canoe. I turned back for a moment to see Jude up on one knee again. No time for argument. He wouldn't listen anyway. My paddle dug right.

The canoe cut into the white water. Waves crashed over the bow. Swells bombarded the canoe. We bounced around like a toy in a washing machine.

"Stay with me, Ben!" I heard Jude yell.

I braced my sneakers against the canoe's aluminum sides and struggled to maintain balance. Gripping the paddle in my hands, I reached for the water.

The Delaware broke over the bow and filled the front of the canoe. The watertight rubber pack bobbed around like a cork on a string. High water mushroomed beneath the canoe as I dug in with my paddle. We were thrown about the river until a deep trench opened before us.

"Left!" I shouted to Jude, and pulled left. No chance to look back at him as the canoe banged against submerged rocks. We started fishtailing, as if there was no weight in the back.

"What's going on?" My breath hitched as I turned to find Jude's seat empty. I swallowed, hard.

Water spilled into the canoe on all sides. Alone in the canoe, I fought to keep it steady, picking my way back to its center. Down on my knees, bracing them against the hull for stability, I jabbed at the swells, side to side. Spray coated my sunglasses, blinding me, forcing me to yank them off and drop them by their lanyard against my life jacket.

Water's too rough, too fast, to pull the canoe to shore by myself. I chanced a look behind. Maybe Jude swam to land. I searched the banks. Nothing but trees. I'm not leaving you, buddy!

The canoe tilted left. I leaned right, heart hammering in my chest. I glanced along the river's surface. My cousin was about ten yards back, stuck in a whirlpool. Air finally returned to my lungs as I took a deep breath.

But Jude needed to break free from spinning or he could drown. I leaned back, arms out, trying to show him what to do. "Lie back!"

But Jude struggled.

He had to keep his feet up to avoid getting them stuck in rock. I grabbed the gunwale of the canoe, pulled out my leg, raising it up quickly, and pointed at my foot with the paddle. "Feet up, feet first!"

Suddenly Jude seemed to get the idea. His feet popped out of the water; his arms reached wide, and he floated downstream.

I turned back to the swells ahead of me, searching for the end of the rapids and smooth water as waves crashed over the bow.

After thirty yards of bouncing off submerged rock, I paddled out the other end of Cherry Island with a canoe full of water. I was never so happy to see the Delaware open up and iron out.

Exhausted, I labored to bring the barely floating canoe to the nearest bank and dumped some water, wedging it on land. I waded into the shallows with my paddle, waiting for Jude to appear from behind the island.

He floated out feet first, and I began to breathe easy again. He didn't have his paddle. I waved mine. "Jude!" He looked over and tried to swim toward me.

I swam into the river and reached my paddle to Jude. He latched on, and I brought him to shore. We both collapsed into the brush beside the canoe.

Closing my eyes, I raised my face toward the sun and welcomed its warmth on my aching muscles.

Jude tried to catch his breath. "A-mazing how you forget—" He took another breath. "What to do—" Jude swallowed. "When you're actually in trouble."

"Yeah."

He coughed, expelling some water. "You were right. Shoulda taken the left."

I shrugged, trying not to smile. "There must've been another dam release right before Cherry Island." I reached for the watertight pack, untangled it, and dug out the collapsible paddle, handing it to Jude.

He nodded, extending the paddle. "Why don't you guide us to the pickup point?"

"I got a better idea. Let's work as a team."

Jude smiled and clapped me on the back. We climbed into the canoe, me in the bow, my cousin at the stern, and headed downstream.

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. 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.

- 10.** A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

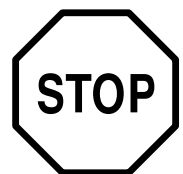
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After you have checked your work, close your answer booklet and test booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.



Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guidelines

#10 Item Information

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	2.20

Assessment Anchor:

E08.A-K.1—Key Ideas and Details

Specific Assessment Anchor Descriptor addressed by this item:

E0K.A-K.1.1.3—Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story, drama, or poem propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

Item-Specific Scoring Guideline

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

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The short story, "Rite of Passage" by Victoria Marie Lees is about two cousins who spend the day canoeing the Delaware River. The day is a rite of passage for them as they mature throughout the story. Some ways that they mature that demonstrates how the day is a rite of passage are Jude learning to admit his mistakes, Ben learning to be self sufficient, and the cousins learning to work together.

Jude learning to admit to his mistakes helps to convey that the day is a rite of passage. Because Jude is displayed early on as a leader despite him not being in the correct spot to guide, he is unable to make the proper calls and therefore gets into rough water. He gets frustrated when the canoe hits a rock and he doesn't realize that "No one could control the river. We only reacted to it." When the cousins get into another similar situation later in the story, instead of getting mad, he says to his cousin, "You were right. Shoulda taken the left", it shows that he matured which is an important occasion and therefore helps to develop that the day was a rite of passage. The dramatic positive change in reaction to similar events allows the day to be considered a rite of passage.



As well as the day being a rite of passage for Jude, the narrator Ben also experienced the rite of passage by learning to be self sufficient. At the beginning of the story when Ben is explaining that, "Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the Delaware River by ourselves . . .", he expressed concern that the water would be dangerous and they needed to work together to get through it however, when Jude falls in the river, Ben was, "Alone in the canoe, I fought to keep it steady, picking my way back to its center." Although Ben had his concerns about navigating the river and him deciding that they needed to work together, he was able to depend on himself and learn that he could do it all by himself. Because of this important lesson learned and the cousins being at a age when they are maturing, their experience was a rite of passage.

While the cousins did each learn their own lesson, they also both learned to work together. At the beginning of the story, the cousins didn't cooperate and they ended up in trouble when they couldn't agree on which way to go during a split in the river. Later in the story, the cousin that hadn't been listening to the other one,



Jude, said "Why don't you guide us to the pickup point?" to which Ben replied, "I got a better idea. Lets work as a team." This change in cooperation between the two boys allows the day to be called a rite of passage because the boys learned many lessons while they were maturing.

Throughout the short story, the boys are able to learn many important lessons including how to work together; Jude also learned to admit his mistakes while Ben learned to be self sufficient. Because of these lessons learned and the cousins at an age where they are maturing, the day can be considered, a rite of passage.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the task. A strong organizational structure effectively supports the student's focus and ideas. In the effective introduction, the student identifies three ways in which the canoe trip represents a rite of passage that allows the characters to mature (*The day is a rite of passage for them as they mature throughout the story. Some ways that they mature that demonstrates how the day is a rite of passage are Jude learning to admit his mistakes, Ben learning to be self sufficient, and the cousins learning to work together*). Taken together, these elements serve as the controlling idea for the response's development. The first body paragraph focuses on Jude (*Jude learning to admit to his mistakes helps to convey that the day is a rite of passage*). The student provides thorough and substantial analysis (*Because Jude is displayed early on as a leader despite him not being in the correct spot to guide, he is unable to make the proper calls and therefore gets into rough water. He gets frustrated when the canoe hits a rock*) supported with well-chosen text (*"No one could control the river. We only reacted to it"*). Next, more clear analysis is integrated with supporting text (*When the cousins get into another similar situation later in the story, instead of getting mad, he says to his cousin, "You were right. Shoulda taken the left", it shows that he matured which is an important occasion and therefore helps to develop that the day was a rite of passage. The dramatic positive change in reaction to similar events allows the day to be considered a rite of passage*), all of which reinforces the controlling idea. The next paragraph shifts focus to Ben, beginning with insightful analysis (*Ben also experienced the rite of passage by learning to be self sufficient*). Then, a well-chosen text reference (*At the beginning of the story when Ben is explaining that, "Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the Delaware River by ourselves"*) provides context and support for more thorough analysis (*he expressed concern that the water would be dangerous and they needed to work together . . . Although Ben had his concerns about navigating the river and him deciding that they needed to work together, he was able to depend on himself and learn that he could do it all by himself. Because of this important lesson learned, and the cousins being at a age when they are maturing, their experience was a rite of passage*). In the last body paragraph, the student provides thorough analysis (*While the cousins did each learn their own lesson, they also both learned to work together*) that is supported with a relevant key text detail (*At the beginning of the story, the cousins didn't cooperate and they ended up in trouble when they couldn't agree*). The development is extended with more strong analysis (*This change in cooperation between the two boys allows the day to be called a rite of passage because the boys learned many lessons while they were maturing*), with the student maintaining the focus on the cousins' newfound maturity. The effective conclusion ties back to the introduction again (*Throughout the short story, the boys are able to learn many important lessons including how to work together . . . admit his mistakes . . . be self sufficient. Because of these lessons learned and the cousins at an age where they are maturing, the day can be considered, a rite of passage*), supporting the focus and ideas. The student uses transitions skillfully to link ideas between and within paragraphs (*The short story, Some ways, Because, despite, therefore, and, doesn't realize that, When, instead, it shows, which, allows, As well as, also, by, At the beginning, he expressed, however, Although, While, At the beginning of the story, Later in the story, to which Ben replied, This change, Throughout the short story, including*) and effectively utilizes precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text to convey ideas (*mature, admit his mistakes, self sufficient, work together, convey, displayed, early on, leader, despite, correct, guide, unable, therefore, proper calls, rough, frustrated, realize, similar situation, occasion, develop, dramatic positive change, reaction, experienced, explaining, expressed concern, dangerous, depend, lesson learned, cooperate, trouble, agree, allows*). The errors present in usage (*A for "At"*), spelling (*Deleware, together, convey, proper, frustrated, allows, cooperate, cooperation*), and punctuation (*missing hyphens*), though somewhat numerous, do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

**Computer Response Score: 4 points**

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Ben and Jude use their canoe trip as a rite of passage by going on dangerous rapids alone to show their parents they are mature and capable of canoeing without them.

In the story, "Rite of Passage" Ben says "Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the Delaware Rive by ourselves, as a rite of passage, since we'd be starting highschool in September. We'd been canoeing since we could walk and had done this section with out dads three times." This is showing they are both already skilled at conoeing but wish to do it without the guidance of their parents to show they can handle them selves on the water. The kids are starting a new school life and want to show their dads they're confidence by traveling the river without them.

With their rite of passage came a lesson of learning to resolve their own issues. "And they expected us to listen to each other, I thought. We're as close as brothers, June. We're equals. Why can't you see that?" The boys are having issues on working together and without the help of their fathers to reconnect them, they must prove their maturity by working as a team to resolve their argument. The ability to handle your own problems is a great way for the boys to show their dads their grown.

Them going alone was to gain lessons and experience as well as building their teamwork. "I leaned right, heart hammering in my chest. I glanced along the river's surface. My cousin was about ten yards back, stuck in a whirlpool." "I swam into the river and reached my paddle to Jude. He latched on, and I brought him to shore. We both collapsed into the brush beside the canoe." By facing a deadly situation the boys learned the importance of their friendship and teamwork. Even without the guidance or assistance of their parents they worked together to save Jude and finish canoeing the river.

The boy's rite of passage was a success. They get to return to their parents having gained great lessons and formed a stronger bond. Also the experience of canoeing alone and gaining respect from their dads.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the task. A strong organizational structure effectively supports the focus and ideas. The introduction uses an effective controlling idea to establish how the canoe trip represents a rite of passage for the characters (*Ben and Jude use their canoe trip as a rite of passage by going on dangerous rapids alone to show their parents they are mature and capable of canoeing without them*). The first body paragraph begins with a relevant text reference (*“Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the Deleware Rive by ourselves”*) that provides context for the thorough analysis that follows (*This is showing they are both already skilled at canoeing but wish to do it without the guidance of their parents to show they can handle them selves on the water. The kids are starting a new school life and want to show their dads they’re confidence by traveling the river without them*). The next paragraph begins with more strong analysis (*With their rite of passage came a lesson of learning to resolve their own issues*) that is supported with a well-chosen quote (*“And they expected us to listen to each other, I thought. We’re as close as brothers, June. We’re equals. Why can’t you see that?”*) and extended with insightful analysis (*The boys are having issues on working together and without the help of their fathers to reconnect them, they must prove their maturity by working as a team to resolve their argument. The ability to handle your own problems is a great way for the boys to show their dads their grown*). The next body paragraph starts with strong analysis (*Them going alone was to gain lessons and experience as well as building their teamwork*). A relevant text reference about teamwork (*“I leaned right, heart hammering in my chest. I glanced along the river’s surface” . . . “We both collapsed into the brush beside the canoe”*) provides support for the analysis that follows (*By facing a deadly situation the boys learned the importance of their friendship and teamwork. Even without the guidance or assistance of their parents they worked together to save Jude and finish canoeing the river*). The conclusion is effective (*The boy’s rite of passage was a success. They get to return to their parents having gained great lessons and formed a stronger bond. Also the experience of canoeing alone and gaining respect from their dads*), addressing both the controlling idea and the text while providing a sense of closure to the response. Transition use is skillful (*In the story, This is showing, but, to show, and, by, With their rite of passage, without the, as well as, By facing a deadly situation, Even without, Also*) throughout the response, and an effective use of precise language (*dangerous, rapids, mature, capable, canoeing, already skilled, guidance, handle them selves, confidence, lesson of learning, resolve their own issues, reconnect, prove, argument, building, teamwork, importance, friendship, assistance, success, gained, formed, stronger bond, respect*) conveys experiences and events. The errors present in usage (*them selves* for “themselves,” *confidence* for “confident,” *their* for “they’re”), spelling (*Deleware, Rive, June* for “Jude”), and punctuation do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE


Response Score: 3 points

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the short story, "Rite of Passage" by Victoria Marie Lees, Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures throughout the event.

This canoe trip is a rite of passage because at the beginning of the trip Ben and Jude had completely different point of views toward the trip. Jude was mostly there for the thrill of the trip. This is supported when Jude is laughing and says, "It's going to be a wild ride." While Jude wanted the thrill, Ben wanted to learn from the trip and do it safely. This is supported when while Jude was being reckless and unsafe, Ben decided to work with him even if he wasn't going to cooperate because, "It was safer".

Continuing onto why the trip was a rite of passage, the boys two different points of veiws clashed when Ben decided to take charge to do what was right on the canoe and snapped and let Jude know that, "Two-man canoeing's different from one-man canoeing". Jude had a different veiw

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on that replying with, "But I've been canoeing longer". Their different opinions led to bad things to happen when Ben realizes - while trying to fight the waters current - that Jude was gone.

When in trouble, ben looked to help and led Jude through a tough situation. Jude began to appreciate Ben because he realized that it's "amazing how you forget what to do when your actually in trouble". Jude realized that somethings are a team effort and that listening to a friend can be the answer Sometimes even when you think you're right.

In conclusion, In the short story, "Rite of Passage", Ben and Judes canoe trip is a rite of passage because Jude learns and matures during this diffcut event.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. An appropriate organizational structure adequately supports the student's focus and ideas. The introduction clearly acknowledges the task (*Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage*), reiterating the definition of "rite of passage" (*A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion . . . especially as a person matures*) given in the question. Clear analysis in the first body paragraph reveals the controlling idea (the boys' evolving points of view). The development begins with clear analysis (*This canoe trip is a rite of passage because at the beginning of the trip Ben and Jude had completely different point of veiws toward the trip. Jude was mostly there for the thrill of the trip*). Next, a supporting text reference (*Jude is laughing and says, "It's going to be a wild ride"*) provides context for more clear analysis (*While Jude wanted the thrill, Ben wanted to learn from the trip and do it safely*). Then, more clear analysis is integrated with a supporting text reference (*This is supported when while Jude was being reckless and unsafe, Ben decided to work with him even if he wasn't going to cooperate because, "It was safer"*). In the next body paragraph, development remains focused on the controlling idea (*Continuing onto why the trip was a rite of passage, the boys two different points of veiws clashed when Ben decided to take charge to do what was right on the canoe*), with relevant text references interspersed with more clear analysis (*and snapped and let Jude know that, "Two-man canoeing's different from one-man canoeing."* *Jude had a different veiws on that replying with, "But I've been canoeing longer". Their different opinions led to bad things to happen when Ben realizes – while trying to fight the waters current – that Jude was gone*). In the next body paragraph, the student continues the pattern of clear analysis integrated with relevant text (*When in trouble, ben looked to help and led Jude through a tough situation. Jude began to appreciate Ben because he realized that it's "amazing how you forget what to do" . . . Jude realized that somethings are a team effort*). Next, the student adds a generalization (*listening to a friend can be the answer sometimes even when you think you're right*) that contextualizes the development. In the final paragraph, clear analysis (*Ben and Judes canoe trip is a rite of passage because Jude learns and matures during this difficut event*) ties the development back to the introduction to conclude the response. There is an appropriate use of transitions to link ideas throughout the response (*In the short story, especially, because, This is supported when, While, even if, Continuing, and, replying with, when, In conclusion*). An appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text conveys experiences and events (*canoe, completely different, point of veiws, thrill, learn, safely, reckless, unsafe, cooperate, safer, clashed, take charge, snapped, opinions, realizes, while trying to fight the waters current, trouble, tough situation, appreciate, team effort, listening, friend, answer, even when you think you're right, matures, difficut event*). The errors present in usage (*point of veiws* for "points of view," *your* for "you're"), spelling (*veiw, difficut*), and punctuation (missing apostrophes and commas) seldom interfere with meaning.

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STUDENT RESPONSE

**Computer Response Score: 3 points**

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage "Rite of Passage" Victoria Marie Lees narrates an event where two friends realize how important friendship, teamwork, and communication really is. In the passage Ben and Jude go canoeing but lack teamwork, which gets them caught in some dangerous situations. During the rite of passage the canoe this river alone for the first time, learn that you have to work together, and then decide they should work as a team to do their best.

First, Ben and Jude tell themselves that, "Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the Delaware river, as a rite of passage . . . I wasn't scared of canoeing with Jude. We'd been canoeing since we could walk, and we had done this section with our dads three times." So they acknowledge the importance of this event. This is a rite of passage because this is the first time canoeing this section alone, and because their parents want this event to be an important occasion.

Next, Ben tries to get on the same page as Jude saying, "The bowman sees better from the front" I snapped. "Two-man canoeing is different from one-man canoeing." I turned back to face the river. "And I know what to do." This shows that Ben is trying to get Jude to understand that they have to work together to canoe safely. Which means it is a rite of passage because it is important when you learn and bond like in this event.

Finally, Ben and Jude decide that the best way to canoe safely is to work as a team, "He nodded, extending his paddle "Why don't you guide us to the pickup point?" "I got a better idea. Let's work as a team." This shows they have learned, and took a next step in their canoeing journey.

In the passage "Rite of Passage" Victoria portrays an important event, a rite of passage. During the rite they canoe by themselves for the first time in this river, learn that it takes two people to canoe safely, and then decide to work together to do their best.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. An appropriate organizational structure tracks story events while adequately supporting the student's focus and ideas. The clear introduction begins with context-providing analysis (*In the passage . . . two friends realize how important friendship, teamwork, and communication really is*) that is integrated with relevant text (*In the passage Ben and Jude go canoeing*) and developed with more clear analysis (*but lack teamwork, which gets them caught in some dangerous situations*). The student then provides additional context (*During the rite of passage the[y] canoe this river alone for the first time*) for more clear analysis (*learn that you have to work together, and then decide they should work as a team to do their best*) to complete the introductory paragraph. The first body paragraph begins with an inference paired with a relevant quote (*First, Ben and Jude tell themselves that, "Our fathers had dropped us off to canoe this section of the deleware river, as a rite of passage . . . I wasn't scared of canoeing with Jude. We'd been canoeing since we could walk, and we had done this section with our dads three times"*). The student then provides clear analysis (*So they agdoknowledge the importance of this event . . . and because their parents want this event to be an important occasion*) to clarify the quote's significance. The next body paragraph also begins with an inference (*Next, Ben tries to get on the same page as Jude*) that is supported by relevant text (*saying, "The bowman sees better from the front" I snapped. "Two-man canoeing is different from one-man canoeing." I turned back to face the river. "And I know what to do"*). Additional clear analysis (*This shows that Ben is trying to get Jude to understand that they have to work together to canoe safely. Which means it is a rite of passage because it is important when you learn and bond like in this event*) provides more context for the quote. The last body paragraph continues the pattern, beginning, again, with an inference (*Finally, Ben and Jude decide that the best way to canoe safely is to work as a team*) that is supported with relevant text (*"He nodded, extending his paddle "Why don't you guide us to the pickup point?" "I got a better idea. Let's work as a team"*) and clarified with more analysis (*This shows they have learned, and took a next step in their canoeing journey*). In the final paragraph, the student reiterates ideas from the introduction (*In the passage . . . portrays an important event, a rite of passage. During the rite they canoe by themselves for the first time in this river, learn that it takes two people to canoe safely, and then decide to work together to do their best*) to conclude the response. There is an appropriate use of transitions to link ideas throughout the response (*In the passage, but, During, First, So, because, Next, This shows that, Which means, Finally, This shows they, and then*) as well as an appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*realize, important, friendship, teamwork, communication, canoeing, lack, dangerous situations, learn, work together, decide, as a team, to do their best, decide, tell themselves, agdoknowledge, get on the same page, understand, bond, next step, journey*). Errors present in usage (*the* for "they"), spelling (*narrorates, deleware, agdoknowledge*), capitalization (*deleware river*), and punctuation seldom interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In "Rite of Passage" by Victoria Marie Lee, two cousins named Jude and Ben go out canoeing together at the Delaware River. While canoeing, Jude ignores Ben while they try warning Jude about what not to do but then it leads them both to get into a dangerous accident that makes Jude realize that maybe too much over confidence leads to bad consequences sometimes. In the passage it states "Dad said the River was unpredictable, remember Jude?" (Page 39 – 22 paragraph) this text shows that Ben tried to warn Jude about the stuff his father said. Ben tried to give warnings to the point they got into an accident and almost fell off the canoe. Always try and listen to the person warning you about things or else bad consequences happen to you.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. A weak organizational structure inconsistently supports the student's focus and ideas. The response consists mainly of a retelling of story events. The student begins by providing context for the action (*two cousins named Jude and Ben go out canoeing together at the Delaware River*). Then, the student intersperses story events with inferences and weak analysis (*While canoeing, Jude ignores Ben while they tRy [he tries] warning Jude about what not to do but then it leads them both to get into a dangerous accident that makes Jude realize that maybe too much over confidence leads to bad consequences sometimes*). Next, a text reference is provided (*"Dad said the River was unpredictable, remember Jude?"*), which connects to another inference (*this text shows that Ben tried to warn Jude about the stuff his father said. Ben tried to give warnings to the point they got into an accident and [Ben] almost fell of [off] the canoe*). A weak generalization (*Always try and listen to the person warning you about things or else bad consequences happen to you*) concludes the response. The student uses transitions inconsistently to link ideas (*While, but then, In the passage it states, this text shows that*). An inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*canoeing, warning, dangerous accident, realize, over confidence, bad consequences*) conveys experiences and events. The few errors present in usage (*they* for "he," *tRy* for "tries," *of* for "off"), punctuation, and capitalization seldom interfere with meaning. Holistically, due to the weak organizational structure, weak analysis and inferences, and vague text references, this response receives a score of 2.

STUDENT RESPONSE

**Computer Response Score: 2 points**

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Victoria Marie Lees shows a rite of passage in Ben and Jude's life in many ways.

For starters Jude learns that it is okay to take risks as long as they aren't extremely deadly. She also learned that mabey she should listen to someoneelse or try to use teamwork. Ben should have realized that it was a bad idea to even attempt crossing the Deleware. I think that Jude learned now, that she should not push someone.

Victoria Lees show a very good rite in a persons life in the story "Rite of Passage".

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. A weak organizational structure inconsistently supports the student's focus and ideas. The weak introduction acknowledges the task (*Victoria Marie Lees shows a rite of passage in Ben and Jude's life in many ways*) without further clarification. The body paragraph begins with a weak inference addressing the character of Jude (*For starters Jude learns that it is okay to take risks as long as they aren't extremely deadly. She also learned that mabey she should listen to someoneelse or try to use teamwork*). The student then provides an inference about Ben (*Ben should have realized that it was a bad idea to even attempt crossing the Deleware*). This is followed with an inference addressing Jude (*I think that Jude learned now, that she should not push someone*). Only vague references to the text (*teamwork, the Deleware*) are integrated in the development. Though text references are weak, the weak inferencing does go beyond a literal interpretation of the text. The weak conclusion (*Victoria Lees shows a very good rite in a persons life in the story*) simply reiterates the weak introduction. There are an inconsistent use of transitions (*For starters, as long as, also, or, Ben should have, I think that*) and an inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*risks, extremely deadly, listen, teamwork, realized, attempt crossing, learned*). The errors in spelling (*mabey, Deleware*) and punctuation, though sometimes distracting, do not interfere with meaning. Holistically, this response earns a score of 2.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage Ben marked an important occasion because Jude said to go right, even though Ben said "we should go left because it's more shallow." Ben also said that on "the right side that the stream is to rapid and it would be sloppy." Then Jude didn't listen to Ben anyway and Bens paddle turned to the right side. The canoe then began to bounce because how bad the waves were.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. The response is mostly a retelling of a portion of the passage and does not, specifically, address the question of how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. The student begins by minimally addressing part of the task (*In the passage Ben marked an important occasion because*). The body of the response consists of a paraphrased text reference that contains two direct quotes (*Jude said to go right, even though Ben said . . . The canoe then began to bounce*). The last sentence contains a very minor inference (*because how bad the waves were*) that does little to conclude the response or address the task. There are few transitions (*because, said, also said, Then*) that only minimally link ideas. There is little use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*bounce*) beyond what is quoted directly from the text or prompt (*important occasion, shallow, stream, rapid, sloppy, paddle, canoe, waves*). Errors present in usage (*to* for "too") and punctuation (missing commas and an apostrophe) do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

**Computer Response Score: 1 point**

10. A rite of passage is an event that marks an important occasion in a person's life, especially as a person matures. Write an essay analyzing how Ben and Jude's canoe trip is a rite of passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

It APPeArs that this cAnoe triP As they hAVe never cAnoed this river Alone, but They hAve Done it before with their fAthers. This is tAted on Page 38 where in the text it states "hAD Done this section with our DADs 3 times."

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure in this very brief response. The response indicates a minimal understanding of the task. The student attempts an introduction with a muddled rephrasing of ideas taken from the story (*It APPeArs that this cAnoe triP As they hAVe never cAnoed this river Alone, but They hAve Done it before with their fAthers*). This is followed with a minimal text reference (*This is tAted on Page 38 where in the text it states "hAD Done this section with our DADs 3 times"*) that ends the response. There is no conclusion. There are few transitions (*but, This is tAted on Page 38*) and little use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*cAnoe, cAnoed*). The errors present in sentence formation, usage (missing words), spelling (*tAted*), and capitalization sometimes interfere with meaning.

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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

11. Read the paragraph.

(1) The jeep was designed to meet the needs of the army in World War II. (2) Jeeps could handle almost any terrain. (3) They could ford streams, maneuver through gullies, and climb small hills. (4) A jeep was called a general-purpose vehicle, or G.P. for short, which is one theory about how it got its name. (5) The army thought jeeps were good and ordered more. (6) Their popularity spread after the war ended, and civilians demanded models they could drive on their own outdoor adventures.

Maintaining the style of the paragraph, which revision of sentence 5 **most** improves the meaning of the paragraph?

- A. Amazed at the jeep, the army ordered more.
- B. Impressed with the capabilities of jeeps, the army ordered more.
- C. The army thought jeeps were great and ordered more.
- D. The army thought jeeps were rough and tough and ordered more.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	D.2.1.6
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	10%
p-value B	75% (correct answer)
p-value C	9%
p-value D	6%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the revision of a given sentence that most improves the meaning of the paragraph. Option B is the correct answer since the phrase “impressed with the capabilities of jeeps” tells why the army ordered more. Option A is incorrect; it does not improve the meaning of the sentence since it does not tell why the army ordered additional jeeps. Option C is incorrect since it does not improve the meaning of the sentence. Option D is incorrect since it uses slang in a piece of formal writing and does not establish the connection between jeeps’ abilities and why the army ordered more.

12. Read the sentence.

If I didn't remind my brother that his library books are due, he _____ to put them in his backpack every time.

Which words **best** complete the sentence?

- A. will forget
- B. would forget
- C. could have forgotten
- D. might have forgotten

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	D.2.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	13%
p-value B	59% (correct answer)
p-value C	16%
p-value D	12%
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine the verb phrase that correctly completes the given sentence. Option B is the correct answer; the use of "would forget" is the conditional verb mood, which is appropriately used to tell under what condition something would happen. In this case, the condition is "if I didn't remind my brother that his library books are due." The use of "would" is the correct modal to indicate a future event that may occur under the specific condition; the use in this example is the second conditional.</p> <p>Option A is incorrect since the use of "will" should be used only to refer to future events. Options C and D are incorrect since "could" and "might" with the past participle "forgotten" are used to make a guess about something that occurred in the past.</p>

13. Read the quote from George Washington Carver.

“From a child, I had an inordinate desire for knowledge and especially music, painting, flowers, and the sciences, algebra being one of my favorite studies.”

A student wants to use part of the quote in a report. Which sentence correctly punctuates the partial quote?

- A. “From a child, I had an inordinate desire for knowledge . . . algebra being one of my favorite studies.”
- B. “From a child, I had an inordinate desire for knowledge—algebra being one of my favorite studies.”
- C. “From a child, I had an inordinate desire for knowledge, algebra being one of my favorite studies.”
- D. “From a child, I had an inordinate desire for knowledge; algebra being one of my favorite studies.”

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	D.1.2.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	36% (correct answer)
p-value B	14%
p-value C	31%
p-value D	19%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the sentence that correctly punctuates the partial quote. Option A is the correct answer since the ellipsis is used to show words omitted from a quotation. Options B, C, and D are incorrect since the em dash, the comma, and the semicolon are not used to indicate an omission from quoted material.

English Language Arts—Sample Item Summary Data

Multiple-Choice and Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions

An asterisk (*) indicates the key.

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	p-value A	p-value B	p-value C	p-value D
1	A-K.1.1.3	D	2	27%	5%	18%	50%*
2	A-V.4.1.1	C	2	22%	11%	61%*	6%
3	A-C.2.1.3	A	2	46%*	5%	43%	6%
4	A-C.2.1.3	B	2	24%	42%*	18%	16%
5	A-C.2.1.1	Part One: A Part Two: B	2	Mean Score: 1.15			
6	A-K.1.1.3	D	2	23%	13%	25%	39%*
7	A-K.1.1.1	Part One: D Part Two: A, D	3	Mean Score: 1.56			
8	A-K.1.1.2	A	3	54%*	17%	15%	14%
9	A-C.2.1.1	C	2	9%	10%	66%*	15%
11	D.2.1.6	B	3	10%	75%*	9%	6%
12	D.2.1.1	B	2	13%	59%*	16%	12%
13	D.1.2.2	A	2	36%*	14%	31%	19%

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
10	A-K.1.1.3	4	3	2.20

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PSSA Grade 8 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler

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