



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

New York State Testing Program
Grade 8
English Language Arts Test

Released Questions

2024

New York State administered the English Language Arts Tests in April 2024 and is making approximately 75% of the questions from these tests available for review and use.



New York State Testing Program Grades 4–8 English Language Arts

Released Questions from 2024 Exams

Background

As in past years, SED is releasing large portions of the 2024 NYS Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics test materials for review, discussion, and use.

For 2024, included in these released materials are at least 75 percent of the test questions that appeared on the 2024 tests (including all constructed-response questions) that counted toward students' scores. Additionally, SED is providing information about the released passages; the associated text complexity for each passage; and a map that details what learning standards each released question measures and the correct response to each question. These released materials will help students, families, educators, and the public better understand the tests and the New York State Education Department's expectations for students.

Understanding ELA Questions

Multiple-Choice Questions

Multiple-choice questions are designed to assess the New York State P–12 Next Generation Learning Standards in English Language Arts. These questions ask students to analyze different aspects of a given text, including central idea, style elements, character and plot development, and vocabulary. Almost all questions, including vocabulary questions, will be answered correctly only if the student comprehends and makes use of the whole passage.

For multiple-choice questions, students select the correct response from four answer choices. Multiple-choice questions assess reading standards in a variety of ways. Some ask students to analyze aspects of text or vocabulary. Many questions require students to combine skills. For example, questions may ask students to identify a segment of text that best supports the central idea. To answer these questions correctly, a student must first comprehend the central idea and then show understanding of how that idea is supported. Questions tend to require more than rote recall or identification.

Two-Credit Constructed-Response Questions

Two-credit constructed-response questions are designed to assess New York State P–12 Reading and Language Standards. These are single questions in which a student uses textual evidence to support his or her answer to an inferential question. These questions ask the student to make an inference (a claim, position, or conclusion) based on their analysis of the passage, and then provide two pieces of text-based evidence to support their answer.

The purpose of the two-credit constructed-response questions is to assess a student's ability to comprehend and analyze text. In responding to these questions, students are expected to write in complete sentences. Responses require no more than three complete sentences. The rubric used for evaluating two-credit constructed-response questions can be found in the grade-level Educator Guides at <https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/grades-3-8-ela-math-and-science-test-manuals>.

Four-Credit Constructed-Response Questions

Four-credit constructed-response questions are designed to measure a student’s ability to write from sources. Questions that measure Writing from Sources prompt students to communicate a clear and coherent analysis of one or two texts. The comprehension and analysis required by each four-credit response is directly related to grade-specific reading standards. Student responses are evaluated on the degree to which they meet grade-level writing and language expectations. This evaluation is made by using a rubric that incorporates the demands of grade-specific New York State P–12 Reading and Language Standards.

The integrated nature of the standards for ELA and literacy requires that students are evaluated across the strands (Reading, Writing, and Language) with longer pieces of writing, such as those prompted by the four-credit constructed-response questions. The rubric used for evaluating four-credit constructed-response questions can be found in the grade-level Educator Guides at <https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/grades-3-8-ela-math-and-science-test-manuals>.

New York State P–12 Next Generation Learning Standards Alignment

The alignment to the New York State P–12 Next Generation Learning Standards for English Language Arts is intended to identify the analytic skills necessary to successfully answer each question. However, some questions measure proficiencies described in multiple standards, including writing and additional reading and language standards. For example, two-credit and four-credit constructed-response questions require students to first conduct the analyses described in the mapped standard and then produce written responses that are rated based on writing standards. To gain greater insight into the measurement focus for constructed-response questions, please refer to the rubrics.

These Released Questions Do Not Comprise a “Mini Test”

To ensure it is possible to develop future tests, some content must remain secure. This document is *not* intended to be representative of the entire test, to show how operational tests look, or to provide information about how teachers should administer the test; rather, its purpose is to provide an overview of how the test reflects the demands of the New York State P–12 Next Generation Learning Standards.

The released questions do not represent the full spectrum of the standards assessed on the State tests, nor do they represent the full spectrum of how the standards should be taught and assessed in the classroom. It should not be assumed that a particular standard will be measured by an identical question in future assessments.

2024 Grade 8 ELA Test Text Complexity Metrics for Released Questions

Selecting high-quality, grade-appropriate passages requires both objective text complexity metrics and expert judgment. For the Grades 3–8 assessments based on the New York State P–12 Next Generation Learning Standards for English Language Arts, both quantitative and qualitative rubrics are used to determine the complexity of the texts and their appropriate placement within a grade-level ELA exam.

Quantitative measures of text complexity are used to measure aspects of text complexity that are difficult for a human reader to evaluate when examining a text. These aspects include word frequency, word length, sentence length, and text cohesion. These aspects are efficiently measured by computer programs. While quantitative text complexity metrics are a helpful start, they are not definitive.

Qualitative measures are a crucial complement to quantitative measures. Using qualitative measures of text complexity involves making an informed decision about the difficulty of a text in terms of one or more factors discernible to a human reader applying trained judgment to the task. To qualitatively determine the complexity of a text, NYS educators use a rubric composed of five factors; four of these factors are required and one factor is optional. The required criteria are: meaning, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. The optional factor, graphics, is used only if a graphic appears in the text.

To make the final determination as to whether a text is at grade-level and thus appropriate to be included on a Grades 3–8 assessment, New York State uses a two-step review process, which is an industry best-practice. First, all prospective passages undergo quantitative text complexity analysis using three text complexity measures. If at least two of the three measures suggest that the passage is grade-appropriate, the passage then moves to the second step, which is the qualitative review using the text-complexity rubrics. Only passages that are determined appropriate by at least two of three quantitative measures of complexity **and** are determined appropriate by the qualitative measure of complexity are deemed appropriate for use on the exam.

Text Complexity Metrics for 2024 Grade 8 Passages

| Passage Title | Word Count | Lexile | Flesch-Kincaid | ATOS | Qualitative Review |
|---|------------|--------|----------------|------|--------------------|
| Excerpt from Growing a Farmer | 794 | 980 | 6.8 | 7.25 | Appropriate |
| Excerpt from The Voyage of the Frog | 1010 | 1200 | 7.8 | 5.98 | Appropriate |
| Counting Giraffes | 718 | 1050 | 8.7 | 8.28 | Appropriate |
| Excerpt from Lydia Darragh’s Secret Mission | 767 | 910 | 7.7 | 6.81 | Appropriate |
| PAIR - Excerpt from The Gold Hunters: A Story of Life and Adventure in the Hudson Bay Wilds | 593 | 990 | 5.9 | 6.82 | Appropriate |
| PAIR – “Only Gold” from Allegories of Life | 425 | 1050 | 7 | 7.9 | Appropriate |

New York State 2024 Quantitative Text Complexity Chart for Assessment and Curriculum

To determine if a text’s quantitative complexity is at the appropriate grade level, New York State uses the table below. In cases where a text is excerpted from a large work, only the complexity of the excerpt that students see on the test is measured, not the large work, so it is possible that the complexity of a book might be above or below grade level, but the text used on the assessment is at grade level. Because the measurement of text complexity is inexact, quantitative measures of complexity are defined by grade band rather than by individual grade level and then paired with the qualitative review by an educator.

| Grade Band | ATOS | Degrees of Reading Power | Flesch-Kincaid | The Lexile Framework | Reading Maturity | SourceRater |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 2 nd –3 rd | 2.75 – 5.14 | 42 – 54 | 1.98 – 5.34 | 420 – 820 | 3.53 – 6.13 | 0.05 – 2.48 |
| 4 th –5 th | 4.97 – 7.03 | 52 – 60 | 4.51 – 7.73 | 740 – 1010 | 5.42 – 7.92 | 0.84 – 5.75 |
| 6 th –8 th | 7.00 – 9.98 | 57 – 67 | 6.51 – 10.34 | 925 – 1185 | 7.04 – 9.57 | 4.11 – 10.66 |
| 9 th –10 th | 9.67 – 12.01 | 62 – 72 | 8.32 – 12.12 | 1050 – 1335 | 8.41 – 10.81 | 9.02 – 13.93 |
| 11 th –12 th | 11.20 – 14.10 | 67 – 74 | 10.34 – 14.20 | 1185 – 1385 | 9.57 – 12.00 | 12.30 – 14.50 |

Source: Student Achievement Partners

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

English Language Arts Test Session 1

Grade **8**

Spring 2024

RELEASED QUESTIONS

Excerpt from *Growing a Farmer* by Kurt Timmermeister. Copyright © 2011 by Kurt Timmermeister. Published by W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used with permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.

From *VOYAGE OF THE FROG* by Gary Paulsen. Copyright © 1989 by Gary Paulsen. Reprinted by permission of Orchard Books, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

Developed and published under contract with the New York State Education Department by NWEA, a division of HMH, 14720 Energy Way, Apple Valley, MN 55124. Copyright © 2024 by the New York State Education Department.

Session 1



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some ideas to help you do your best:

- Read the whole passage before you answer the questions. Most questions will only make sense after you read the whole passage.
- You might need to read the passage more than once to answer a question.
- Read each question carefully. Take your time.
- A question may include a quote from a passage. You might need to review both the quote and the whole passage to answer the question.

When you write your answers

- make sure to answer the whole question;
- use examples or details from the text;
- write in complete sentences; and
- use correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 15 through 21.

Excerpt from *Growing a Farmer*

by Kurt Timmermeister

- 1 I found an ad for a beekeeping supply house in the back of a *Mother Earth News* magazine. The Brushy Mountain Bee Farm in North Carolina made beehives and sold them through the mail. I ordered their catalogue and when it arrived I studied it obsessively, choosing what I would need to begin my apiary.¹
- 2 Intimidated by the many choices in the slim catalogue, I ordered the beginner's kit. After all, I was a beginner. It contained a hive box, lids, base and frames, together with thick gauntlet gloves and that hat and veil from the photo in that vintage book. A hive tool and a bee brush rounded out the kit. I eagerly awaited the shipment.
- 3 When the large box arrived from North Carolina, I spread the contents all out on the floor of my humble chicken coop and began to assemble the pieces. Traditionally hive boxes are painted white; I went with a deep barn-red. I wanted my hives to have a bit more style, and I had a can left over from painting the outside of my house.
- 4 Also in the supply catalogue were advertisements for bee suppliers. These were bee farms located in the southern states that grew large colonies of bees and shipped them north for beekeepers. I had my pick of suppliers from Alabama, Texas, South Carolina, Georgia. All were a great distance from my home, but I chose a firm from Texas. I called up and placed an order for a box of Italian bees, a subspecies of honeybees. Carniolan are another subspecies of the honeybee used commonly in beekeeping, but I decided to go with Italian bees because of the familiarity of their name.
- 5 The first box of bees arrived in relatively good condition. A percentage of the bees were dead, but there were still many live bees in the box. The three-pound box that the bees are shipped in is fairly small—six inches by eight inches by fifteen—and contains around three thousand bees. The two longest sides are open, covered with tight mesh to keep the bees in but allow air to freely circulate. The other four sides are made of low-quality wood, similar to old food crates. Within the sealed box is a smaller, much smaller, box containing the queen. The bees are also given a tin can filled with sugar water to feed them on their journey north.
- 6 Once I received the bees I proceeded to install them into my freshly painted hive. I had read the books, spent time on setting up the hive and now I was ready to suit up and start raising bees.

GO ON

- 7 I failed. It was a cool spring that very first year and I got the bees out of the box and onto the hive, but I couldn't put the covering lid of the hive on because the bees had not quickly entered the hive. Sadly, it began to rain that afternoon. Cool and rainy, not good bee weather. Fearful of putting the lid on their apparently delicate bodies, I left the lid off. My first decision in beekeeping turned out to be one of my worst. The next morning I returned to the hive to find the bees all dead from the rain and cold. I would have to start over quickly. . . .
- 8 The second year proved a tad more successful but was still a failure. The bees made it to the farm, managed to colonize my hive and lived through the year. Not a drop of honey, but still I was hooked, convinced that I could make a go of this. I liked the wardrobe, the simple design of the wooden boxes, the smell of the beeswax foundations.
- 9 It would take a few years to get the basic skills necessary to keep a hive alive through the spring, into the summer, so that I could capture some of the honey produced. Once I achieved that level of success and tasted the result, the honey, all of the setbacks and lessons were worth it.
- 10 Fresh, local honey is an amazing product. Not sticky, not cloyingly sweet, full of delicate flavors. When I harvest the honey early in the summer it is light in color and light in flavor, simple, the product of bees on clover and spring flowers. By late summer the honey is dark brown, thick, complex and tastes of madrone trees and late flowers. Since that first year of success, I have kept hives every year. I have never been too successful, but I have always harvested enough honey for myself and my friends. In a good year, gallons of honey fill plastic pails; in the lean years, a scant single bucket has to suffice.

¹**apiary:** a place where a person keeps bees

- 15** What tone does the phrase “I studied it obsessively” in paragraph 1 establish in the article?
- A** It creates curiosity by encouraging readers to consider becoming beekeepers.
 - B** It creates interest by showing the passion the author has for beekeeping.
 - C** It creates seriousness by showing readers how compelling beekeeping can become.
 - D** It creates suspense by suggesting how long the process is to become a beekeeper.

- 16** Paragraphs 2 through 4 develop the idea presented in paragraph 1 by
- A** explaining the reasons why the author finds beekeeping to be so complicated
 - B** detailing a range of things about beekeeping that attracted the author to the hobby
 - C** describing the steps the author followed to select the equipment for and build a beehive
 - D** summarizing the experience that led the author to become a successful beekeeper

- 17** Paragraph 7 contributes to a central idea of the article by demonstrating that
- A** bees prefer the climate of southern states
 - B** beekeeping requires learned knowledge and skills
 - C** bees need several days to adjust to a new hive
 - D** beekeeping is easier in areas that are hot and dry

18

Which sentence from the article **best** reveals the author’s enthusiasm for beekeeping as a hobby?

- A “I wanted my hives to have a bit more style, and I had a can left over from painting the outside of my house.” (paragraph 3)
- B “Once I received the bees I proceeded to install them into my freshly painted hive.” (paragraph 6)
- C “Once I achieved that level of success and tasted the result, the honey, all of the setbacks and lessons were worth it.” (paragraph 9)
- D “I have never been too successful, but I have always harvested enough honey for myself and my friends.” (paragraph 10)

19

In the author’s first two years of beekeeping, he was unable to

- A get the bees to colonize his hive
- B maintain a positive attitude
- C keep the bees alive all year
- D harvest any honey

20

How does the author’s attitude toward beekeeping change over the course of the article?

- A It shifts from excitement about the arrival of the beehive to defeat because of the dead bees.
- B It varies from confusion about how to proceed to contentment with the new hobby.
- C It shifts from eagerness to set up the apiary to embarrassment for his failures.
- D It varies from strong interest in the new project to satisfaction with his accomplishments.

21

Which statement **best** expresses a central idea of the article?

- A Beekeeping is challenging, yet it yields rewards.
- B Few farmers are able to become successful beekeepers.
- C Beekeeping requires the purchase of special, expensive equipment.
- D Some farmers specialize in growing and selling bee colonies.

GO ON

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 22 through 28.

Fourteen-year-old David became lost at sea nine days ago when a huge storm blew his sailboat, the Frog, far off course. Now, as he sails out of a bay, he experiences swells, large waves that do not break, and knows that another storm is coming.

Excerpt from *The Voyage of the Frog*

by Gary Paulsen

1 The swells took the *Frog* immediately. They were larger than when he had come in and had a purpose to them, a rapid movement in spite of their size that almost triggered alarm bells in David's brain. He knew now that swells were telegraph systems, that they came ahead of weather, and that large swells moving this hard and fast probably meant a fair storm.

2 He thought of turning and going back into the bay to ride it out but decided against it. The storm might be days getting to him, might not come at all, and he didn't have much food and fishing wasn't going that well.

3 He did not know for certain where he was—except that it was somewhere down along the Baja coast—but he knew that if he didn't sail, didn't move, didn't use the wind and sea he would never get home, and so he hated to just sit.

4 Once clear of the land he brought her¹ around, up into the wind until she was tacking² northwest and making a solid six knots.³ She hit the swells fairly hard, the bow slamming down on every fourth or fifth one, but he held her, heeling well, under full sail for seven hours, until just before dawn, when the storm came.

5 The swells grew in size at a regular rate, and the wind began to increase but started slowly and worked up at a steady, growing pace. . . .

6 There were waves coming now as well, on top of the swells, growing in chop and intensity each moment. The *Frog* was slamming, making noise, but he held her angled up into the wind and took it. Spray came over the bow and covered him, soaking him, but he didn't think he could leave again now and he took it as well—he would not let her do it alone again, not let the sea have her again.

7 Dawn showed a mean gray sea heading up into leaden gray clouds and a wind that moaned through the stays and rigging. Gusts hit now, like body blows taking her over, but he worked the helm,⁴ let her ease up, held her off the wind again and kept the speed between five and six knots, did not run from the storm but into it, used it, rolled with it, absorbed it.

GO ON

8 The wind became worse. The waves grew until they were larger than the swells they rode on, towering over him, burying the bow. More than once he was knocked off his feet by a wall of water coming back over the side of the cabin but he never let go of the helm, rose and took it again and again, held her through wave after wave when they rose over him, walls of water, mountains of water moving down on him, down on the *Frog*.

9 They took it. All that day, slamming, rising, heeling, skidding, slamming down again, up and over and down in the gale—at one point he snarled, growled at the wind and sea—the helm in his gut, his arms aching, his legs on fire; they took it until late day when he sensed a change, felt the storm was whipped. It had thrown everything it had at them and was now passing.

10 Inside an hour the wind had lowered from a shriek and the tops of the waves weren't being blown over so hard. In another hour, just before dusk, the main force of the gale was well past them, the waves settling and the wind becoming a good, steady force. He raised the mainsail again to full size and found that she pointed higher yet into the wind, so that he could go a little north of northwest and he was thinking that it felt good to be aimed more for home, was thinking it would be wonderful if he could head straight north and just get home before he ran out of food, however far it was, was thinking of his parents and home and food and the wind and the sea and the storm and how he felt good that he and the *Frog* had taken the storm the way they did together . . .

11 It was then that he saw the ship—a small, older ship, coming out of the dusk, aiming almost at him but slightly off his bow, running with the wind and sea. Right there. A ship. Right in front of him. She had been running without lights but as soon as the people on deck saw him—there were three of them—they yelled and the lights came on and they started to pass not a hundred yards away, the people waving and yelling and laughing.

12 For a moment he couldn't say anything. He just didn't think it would happen this way. He didn't know for certain how it would happen, but not this way. Not so sudden. Suddenly he was saved. She was an old, very small coastal freighter but had been fixed up and repainted and she carried an American flag above her bridge. . . .

13 He let go of the helm and waved with both arms, screamed, pointed at them and then at himself and at last they got the message and he heard the engines in the freighter rumble down to a stop west and slightly north of him.

14 He came about and let the *Frog* sail closer, came up into the wind and stopped about thirty yards away, rising and settling on the waves and swells. He looked up at the people on the rail.

15 “My name is David Alspeth,” he yelled. “I was driven out to sea in a storm. . . .”

16

“It’s him!” one of the young men yelled up at the bridge of the ship. “It’s that kid they were searching for up off Ventura.” He looked back down at David. “They had your picture in the paper and everything. Man, you are one heck of a distance from where they looked. They finally gave you up for dead, you know that?”

¹**her:** boats and ships are typically referred to using female pronouns

²**tacking:** a sailing technique used to change the boat’s direction

³**six knots:** a speed equivalent to six miles per hour when sailing

⁴**helm:** steering wheel

22

Read this sentence from paragraph 7.

Dawn showed a mean gray sea heading up into leaden gray clouds and a wind that moaned through the stays and rigging.

What tone does this sentence create in the excerpt?

- A a tone of threat and danger
- B a tone of distrust and sadness
- C a tone of curiosity and confusion
- D a tone of reflection and longing

23

In paragraph 9, what is the effect of the phrase “slamming, rising, heeling, skidding, slamming down again”?

- A It imitates the disorder of David’s thoughts during the storm.
- B It shows the persistent force of the storm on David and the *Frog*.
- C It emphasizes the repetitive nature of the waters along the Baja coast.
- D It illustrates the conditions in which the *Frog* was intended to sail.

24

Which detail **best** shows David’s attitude toward his situation?

- A “The storm might be days getting to him, might not come at all, and he didn’t have much food and fishing wasn’t going that well.” (paragraph 2)
- B “. . . he brought her around, up into the wind until she was tacking northwest and making a solid six knots.” (paragraph 4)
- C “More than once he was knocked off his feet by a wall of water . . . but he never let go of the helm, rose and took it again and again . . .” (paragraph 8)
- D “It was then that he saw the ship—a small, older ship, coming out of the dusk, aiming almost at him but slightly off his bow, running with the wind and sea.” (paragraph 11)

GO ON

25

Which detail from the excerpt **best** supports the idea that David is an experienced sailor?

- A “He thought of turning and going back into the bay to ride it out but decided against it.” (paragraph 2)
- B “. . . he worked the helm, let her ease up . . . kept the speed between five and six knots, did not run from the storm but into it, used it, rolled with it, absorbed it.” (paragraph 7)
- C “. . . at one point he snarled, growled at the wind and sea—the helm in his gut, his arms aching, his legs on fire . . .” (paragraph 9)
- D “He came about and let the *Frog* sail closer, came up into the wind and stopped about thirty yards away, rising and settling on the waves and swells.” (paragraph 14)

26

How does paragraph 16 contribute to a theme of the excerpt?

- A by revealing that David’s family and friends are people who tend to think negatively
- B by including the name of David’s hometown to show where his trip began
- C by emphasizing that David has persevered and survived despite the dangerous storm
- D by including details about the location of the young man as he spoke to David

27

This question is worth 2 credits.

In “Excerpt from *The Voyage of the Frog*,” what effect does the setting have on David? Use **two** details from the excerpt to support your response.

Write your response for this question in your separate Session 1 Answer Booklet.

Writing on this page will not be scored.

28

This question is worth 2 credits.

In “Excerpt from *The Voyage of the Frog*,” why does David continue on his journey despite the danger? Use **two** details from the excerpt to support your response.

Write your response for this question in your separate Session 1 Answer Booklet.

Writing on this page will not be scored.

STOP

Grade 8
English Language Arts Test
Session 1
Spring 2024

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

English Language Arts Test Session 2

Grade **8**

Spring 2024

RELEASED QUESTIONS

“Counting Giraffes” by David Brown, Highlights for Children, May 2017. Copyright © 2017 by Highlights for Children, Inc. Used with permission of Highlights for Children, Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.

Excerpt from “Lydia Darragh’s Secret Mission” by Rosalie Lauerma, *Highlights*, 2017. Copyright © 2017 by Highlights for Children, Inc. Used with permission of Highlights for Children, Inc. via Copyright Clearance Center.

Excerpt from *The Gold Hunters: A Story of Life and Adventure in The Hudson Bay Wilds* by James Oliver Curwood. Originally published in 1909.

“Only Gold” from *Allegories of Life* by Mrs. J. S. Adams. Originally published in 1872.

Developed and published under contract with the New York State Education Department by NWEA, a division of HMH, 14720 Energy Way, Apple Valley, MN 55124. Copyright © 2024 by the New York State Education Department.

Session 2



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some ideas to help you do your best:

- Read the whole passage before you answer the questions. Most questions will only make sense after you read the whole passage.
- You might need to read the passage more than once to answer a question.
- Read each question carefully. Take your time.
- A question may include a quote from a passage. You might need to review both the quote and the whole passage to answer the question.

When you write your answers

- make sure to answer the whole question;
- use examples or details from the text;
- write in complete sentences; and
- use correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

For the last question in this test book, you may plan your writing on the Planning Page provided. However, do NOT write your final answer on the Planning Page. Write your final answer on the lined pages.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 29 through 35.

Counting Giraffes

by David Brown

1 When she was studying to become a scientist, Megan Strauss rode in a small airplane to study giraffes. She sat on one side of the plane, and another researcher sat on the other side. While a pilot flew over the Serengeti in Tanzania, Africa, the researchers peered down and counted giraffes.

2 “Giraffes can be really hard to spot from the air!” says Dr. Strauss, who has since become an independent wildlife ecologist. “I am always amazed how easily we can spot warthogs and other small animals, yet we sometimes have trouble seeing giraffes. Giraffes are slender in shape, and they may not cast a good shadow, depending on the angle of the sun.”

3 In their search for giraffes, scientists spotted trouble. In the 1970s, about 13,000 giraffes lived in Serengeti National Park. Since then, the number has been going down, and the park now has about 3,500.

4 The research team that studied Serengeti giraffes included Dr. Craig Packer of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Morris Kilewo of Tanzania National Parks, and Dr. Dennis Rentsch of Germany’s Frankfurt Zoological Society.

5 The Serengeti is about the size of Vermont, so the scientists could not study the entire area. Instead, they surveyed three regions where giraffes were studied in the 1970s. As they expected, they saw far fewer of these animals. In one area, the number of giraffes dropped from about 550 to about 75.

Four Likely Suspects

6 The team wanted to find out why the number of giraffes was now smaller. The scientists looked at four possible causes: lions, parasites, illegal hunters (called poachers), and poor food supply. “We found that both poaching and food supply were likely limiting population growth,” Dr. Strauss says. “[Lack of] food limits birth rates, and poaching is a significant cause of adult mortality.”



GO ON

7 To find out if lions had been killing more giraffes in recent years, the team looked at calf survival rates and long-term records of giraffes killed by lions. Lions kill more calves than adults, but the team found no decrease in calf survival after the calves are born, compared with the 1970s. They also found little change in the number of giraffes killed by lions over the past four decades. Lions were not the problem.

8 The team then asked whether too many giraffes were being killed by parasites, such as worms that infect the digestive system. Like lions, parasites kill more calves than adults, but the numbers also pointed away from parasites. On the ground, the researchers counted parasite eggs in giraffe droppings, and they found too few to harm the giraffe population. Parasites were not the cause either.

Trouble for Giraffes

9 The research team looked at the two other possible causes. They asked if poachers were killing too many giraffes. Two of the areas they studied are close to places with a lot of people and where giraffe meat is sometimes sold in local markets. Poachers catch more adult males than other giraffes, probably because they set traps in dense woods, where male giraffes spend a lot of time. As the researchers feared, they spotted too few males compared with females and calves in those two areas, a sign of poaching.

10 The scientists also wondered if the giraffes had enough food. An environment with plenty of food can support lots of giraffes, including healthy females who have many calves. When the food supply is short, the environment supports fewer giraffes and the females have fewer calves. A lot of new trees have grown in the Serengeti since the 1970s, but many are a type that giraffes do not like to eat. The researchers found fewer calves today than in the 1970s compared with the number of adult females, a sign that food was in short supply.

11 In her research from the airplane and on the ground, Dr. Strauss helped discover why the Serengeti has so few giraffes. Now she plans to help the struggling animals. “The Serengeti is one of Earth’s natural wonders,” she says. “And giraffes are an essential part of it.”

12 Dr. Strauss is working with others on an environmental education program for Tanzania, including books for students. These materials will educate Tanzanians and help them to help giraffes. As knowledge grows and changes are made, they hope the giraffe population will rebound.

29

Which idea would be **most** important to include in a summary of the article?

- A “The Serengeti is about the size of Vermont, so the scientists could not study the entire area. Instead, they surveyed three regions . . .” (paragraph 5)
- B “The scientists looked at four possible causes: lions, parasites, illegal hunters (called poachers), and poor food supply.” (paragraph 6)
- C “To find out if lions had been killing more giraffes in recent years, the team looked at calf survival rates and long-term records . . .” (paragraph 7)
- D “When the food supply is short, the environment supports fewer giraffes and the females have fewer calves.” (paragraph 10)

30

Read this quotation from paragraph 11.

“The Serengeti is one of Earth’s natural wonders,” she says.

What is the effect of Dr. Strauss’s word choice in this quotation?

- A It indicates that Dr. Strauss considers this area a marvel.
- B It suggests that Dr. Strauss wants to study the ecology of the area.
- C It shows that Dr. Strauss wants to strengthen the reputation of Tanzania.
- D It demonstrates that Dr. Strauss considers the giraffe population level critical to the area.

31

What is the meaning of “rebound” as used in paragraph 12?

- A return to a location
- B recover from a challenge
- C replace with something new
- D reveal a problem

GO ON

32

Which sentence states a central idea of the article?

- A Researchers are determining the reasons for changes in the giraffe population.
- B Environmentalists are distributing books to increase understanding of giraffes.
- C Adult giraffes are better equipped than calves to handle threats in the wild.
- D Giraffes are more challenging to study than other wild animals in Africa.

33

How does the author emphasize the significance of a food source to the Serengeti giraffe population?

- A by describing the wide variety of foods the giraffes can choose from
- B by describing positive changes in the environment where the giraffes live
- C by explaining that female giraffes need plenty of food to sustain reproduction
- D by explaining that the giraffes have recently adapted to new diets

34

What benefit does Dr. Strauss's research team offer to Tanzanians and the future of the giraffes?

- A a chance to invent new methods for counting and keeping track of giraffe populations
- B a way to analyze nutrition sources for giraffes in challenging environments
- C a solution for keeping poachers out of protected giraffe environments
- D a new viewpoint on how to support endangered giraffe populations

35

Protecting Earth's plants and animals is important to keep the environment balanced and healthy. How do the details in the article support this idea?

- A by describing how scientific study influences diversity in the environment
- B by suggesting that one change can impact other parts of the environment
- C by arguing that the environment must be free of human influences to improve
- D by explaining how the environment will continue to naturally maintain animal variety

GO ON

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 through 42.

Excerpt from *Lydia Darragh's Secret Mission*

by Rosalie Lauerman

1 In the autumn of 1777, during the Revolutionary War, the British army seized Philadelphia and set up headquarters there.

2 Lydia Darragh and her family lived across from the British headquarters. When General William Howe, the British commander, needed an additional meeting room, he took over a large room at the Darragh house. Sometimes Lydia would overhear British soldiers discussing incoming shipments or troop movements. They spoke freely around her because they knew the Darraghs were Quakers, members of a religious group who remained neutral during the war.

3 But the British were unaware that the Darraghs secretly supported America's war for independence. Their oldest son, Charles, was a lieutenant in the American army, and Lydia was a spy for the American commander in chief, General George Washington.

A Spy in Action

4 In order to smuggle information to Washington, Lydia would tell her husband what she overheard. He would write the message in code. Lydia would then fit the note on a buttonmold, sew fabric over it, and attach it to her son John's coat. Fourteen-year-old John would eagerly trek to the American camp about 13 miles away at White Marsh to visit his brother. Charles would snip off the button, decode the message, and deliver the information to American headquarters.

5 On December 2, 1777, a British officer arrived at Lydia's house. He ordered her to prepare the large room for a top-secret meeting that evening and demanded that everyone be in bed before the meeting started.

6 When the officers arrived, Lydia let them in and went to bed. Her family was already asleep. But Lydia couldn't sleep. Muffled sounds from the room pulled Lydia from her bed.

7 She tiptoed toward the meeting room just in time to hear someone reading a final order. "The troops should march out . . . late in the evening of the 4th, attack Washington's army and . . . victory was certain."

8 Lydia slipped back into bed. Worried, she wondered how she would alert the troops of the planned attack only two days away.

GO ON

9 When an officer knocked on her bedroom door to say the meeting had ended, Lydia didn't answer. He returned shortly and again she didn't answer. On the third knock, Lydia rose and pretended to be half asleep. She stumbled into the hall, shuffled toward the door, and locked it after the officers.

A Secret Mission

10 Lydia was too troubled to sleep. She had never uncovered information this important. She knew she must act quickly to save the American soldiers, including Charles.

11 The next day, she plotted a secret mission to warn General Washington. It would be an act of high treason, punishable by death if she was caught. So Lydia decided to act alone without telling her family. She would not risk their lives.

12 Before dawn on December 4, Lydia arose, wrapped her gray wool cape around her, and headed out. As she neared Washington's camp, she spotted an American officer on horseback approaching her. She recognized him as a friend, Captain Charles Craig.

13 The captain asked what she was doing so far from home. In a soft, hushed voice, Lydia told him about the British plan. Captain Craig thanked her and raced to headquarters.

14 When the British arrived at White Marsh, General Howe found the American troops armed with cannons. Clearly, someone had warned them. In a cold fury, Howe ordered his troops to return to Philadelphia.

15 Lydia spent the next few days fearing for Charles's safety. She didn't know what had happened at White Marsh, and she certainly couldn't ask.

16 Once again, a British officer banged at her door. He marched in, stone-faced, ordered her into the meeting room—and locked the door.

17 Lydia trembled, fearing that her secret had been discovered. She knew that spies were hanged. She felt faint and almost fell to the floor. The officer told her to sit down.

18 Sternly, he asked if any of the others in her family were awake on the night of the officer's last meeting. Lydia replied truthfully that they were all in bed and asleep. "I need not ask you for we had great difficulty in waking you to fasten the door after us."

19 Rising from his chair so forcefully that it toppled over, he boomed, "One thing is certain; the enemy had notice of our coming, were prepared for us, and we marched back like a parcel of . . . fools."

20 He stormed out, without even considering that Lydia might have delivered the warning.

21 A wave of relief rushed over Lydia. She thanked God that Charles was safe and the British hadn't suspected her.

36

How do the details in paragraphs 1 through 3 help develop a central idea in the article?

- A They explain the events that strengthened the American army.
- B They establish the situation that made it easier to assist the war effort.
- C They explain the importance of religion to some people during the war.
- D They establish the reason the British located their headquarters in Philadelphia.

37

As used in paragraph 6, what does the phrase “sounds from the room pulled Lydia from her bed” suggest about Lydia?

- A She senses the men must be discussing something very important.
- B She hopes the officers will stop meeting at her home in Philadelphia.
- C She worries that one of the buttonmold messages has been discovered.
- D She wonders if the officers are beginning to question her neutrality as a Quaker.

38

What important idea does the author develop in paragraphs 5 through 7?

- A Lydia’s dedication to her family
- B Lydia’s willingness to risk her safety
- C Lydia’s tendency to do what she is asked
- D Lydia’s attitude about sharing her home

39

What is a motivation for Lydia's actions in paragraphs 12 and 13?

- A She wants to visit her son at White Marsh.
- B She believes Captain Craig knows her son.
- C She receives a message from her son.
- D She worries for her son's life.

40

What is the effect of the phrase "In a soft, hushed voice" as used in paragraph 13?

- A The reader realizes that Lydia's trip has taken a toll on her physically.
- B The reader is reminded of the dangers at every point in a mission such as this.
- C The reader is informed about how women were expected to address leaders in the army.
- D The reader understands that Lydia has doubts as to whether she should have made the trip.

41

Which quotation **most directly** causes the events in paragraph 16?

- A "When the officers arrived, Lydia let them in and went to bed." (paragraph 6)
- B "She recognized him as a friend, Captain Charles Craig." (paragraph 12)
- C "When the British arrived at White Marsh, General Howe found the American troops armed with cannons." (paragraph 14)
- D "Sternly, he asked if any of the others in her family were awake on the night of the officer's last meeting." (paragraph 18)

GO ON

42

How does the event in paragraph 20 relate to the details in paragraph 2?

- A It shows that the British continue to hold a mistaken belief about the Darraghs.
- B It presents evidence that the British will lose against the American troops.
- C It suggests that the British believe they can learn something from Lydia Darragh.
- D It provides support for the idea that the British still plan to attack White Marsh.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 43 and 44.

A young Native American named Wabigoon, or Wabi, has just shown Roderick, or Rod, and Mukoki a lump of gold he has found.

Excerpt from *The Gold Hunters: A Story of Life and Adventure in the Hudson Bay Wilds*

by James Oliver Curwood

- 1 Only those who have lived in this quest and who have pursued that elusive *ignis fatuus*¹ of all nations—the lure of gold—can realize the sensations which stir the blood and heat the brain of the treasure seeker as he dips his pan into the sands of the stream where he believes nature has hidden her wealth. As Roderick Drew, a child of that civilization where the dollar is law as well as might, returned to the exciting work which promised him a fortune he seemed to be in a half dream. About him, everywhere, was gold! For no moment did he doubt it; not for an instant did he fear that there might be no more gold in the sand and gravel from which Wabigoon’s nugget had come. Treasure was in the very sandbar under his feet! It was out there among the rocks, where the water beat itself angrily into sputtering froth; it was under the fall, and down in the chasm, everywhere, everywhere about him. In one month John Ball and his companions had gathered twenty-seven pounds of it, a fortune of nearly seven thousand dollars! And they had gathered it here! Eagerly he scooped up a fresh pan of the precious earth. He heard the swish-swish of the water in Wabigoon’s and Mukoki’s pans. But beyond this there were no sounds made by them.
- 2 In these first minutes of treasure seeking no words were spoken. Who would give the first shout of discovery? Five minutes, ten, fifteen of them passed, and Rod found no gold. As he emptied his pan he saw Wabi scooping up fresh dirt. He, too, had failed. Mukoki had waded out waist deep among the rocks. A second and a third pan, and a little chill of disappointment cooled Rod’s blood. Perhaps he had chosen an unlucky spot, where the gold had not settled! He moved his position, and noticed that Wabigoon had done the same. A fourth and a fifth pan and the result was the same. Mukoki had waded across the stream, which was shallow below the fall, and was working on the opposite side. A sixth pan, and Rod approached the young Indian. The excitement was gone out of their faces. An hour and a half—and no more gold!

GO ON

3

Mukoki came across to join them. Out among the rocks he had found a fleck of gold no larger than the head of a pin, and this new sign gave them all fresh enthusiasm. Taking off their boots both Rod and Wabi joined the old pathfinder in midstream. But each succeeding pan added to the depressing conviction that was slowly replacing their hopes. The shadows in the chasm began growing longer and deeper. Far overhead the dense canopies of red pine shut out the last sun-glow of day, and the gathering gloom between the mountains gave warning that in this mysterious world of the ancient cabin the dusk of night was not far away. But not until they could no longer see the gleaming mica in their pans did the three cease work. Wet to the waist, tired, and with sadly-shattered dreams they returned to their camp. For a short time Rod's hopes were at their lowest ebb. Was it possible that there was no more gold, that the three adventurers of long ago had discovered a "pocket" here, and worked it out? The thought had been growing in his head. Now it worried him.

¹**elusive *ignis fatuus***: something chased after that leads nowhere

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 45 and 46.

One day children go out to a field where they are delighted to find some small, golden stones. All return at night except one son.

“Only Gold” from *Allegories of Life*

by Mrs. J. S. Adams

- 1 The next day at noon his parents sent a messenger to him, bidding him return. But the love of his golden stones was paramount to the wishes of kindred,¹ and the unnumbered comforts of a happy home; and his reply to the messenger was, “I will return, when I have enough of these,” pointing to a large collection which was already higher than his head. At nightfall hunger seized him. He felt too weary to go in search of food, but the demand of nature asserted its claim, and he dragged himself to a field nearby, where grew berries and fruits in abundance. His spirits rose after the cravings of hunger were satisfied, and he lay down again by his precious pile of stones.
- 2 The days glided into weeks, and still he fed upon the berries and gathered the golden pebbles. His father had ceased to send messengers to him, knowing that nothing but a long experience would teach his child the value of life’s many blessings, and that gold alone has no power to bless us. The father suffered much in knowing and realizing that his son must learn the truths of life through such severe lessons; but wisdom told him it could not be otherwise.
- 3 The household mourned much for their absent brother. They missed him in their daily joys, and every hour they watched, waited, and hoped to see him return. They almost rejoiced when the bleak winds of autumn swept the foliage from the trees, because they could look farther down the road for their brother.
- 4 “I shall soon be able to travel and see the world,” said the youth to himself every day as the pile of gold grew higher; but, alas for human calculation! He awoke one morning to find his huge mountain of gold one solid mass. The action of the light, heat, and atmosphere had fused them together, and no exertion of his could break off even the smallest atom.
- 5 Must he return with not even one golden pebble? For he had gathered them all—not one was in sight, no more were to be found.
- 6 His golden dream of travel was over, and, worse, the freshness and buoyancy of youth had departed. His limbs, alas! were stiff and sore. He had a mountain of gold, not one atom of which he could use for himself or others. And now he must return to his father’s house empty-handed, and void of truths or incidents to relate to his brothers.

¹**paramount to the wishes of kindred:** more important than the wishes of family

GO ON

Planning Page

You may **PLAN** your writing for question 46 here if you wish, but do **NOT** write your final answer on this page. Writing on this Planning Page will **NOT** count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 19 and 20.



GO ON

Grade 8
English Language Arts Test
Session 2
Spring 2024

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234
2024 English Language Arts Tests Map to the Standards
Grade 8

| Question | Type | Key | Points | Standard | Subscore | Multiple Choice Questions | Constructed Response Questions | |
|------------------|----------------------|-----|--------|---------------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| | | | | | | Percentage of Students Who Answered Correctly (P-Value) | Average Points Earned | P-Value (Average Points Earned ÷ Total Possible Points) |
| Session 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.4 | Reading | 0.72 | | |
| 16 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.55 | | |
| 17 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.65 | | |
| 18 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.6 | Reading | 0.61 | | |
| 19 | Multiple Choice | D | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.58 | | |
| 20 | Multiple Choice | D | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.6 | Reading | 0.61 | | |
| 21 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.80 | | |
| 22 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.4 | Reading | 0.76 | | |
| 23 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.4 | Reading | 0.55 | | |
| 24 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.6 | Reading | 0.65 | | |
| 25 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.8 | Reading | 0.78 | | |
| 26 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.72 | | |
| 27 | Constructed Response | | 2 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Writing to Sources | | 1.53 | 0.76 |
| 28 | Constructed Response | | 2 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.8 | Writing to Sources | | 1.49 | 0.75 |
| Session 2 | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.57 | | |
| 30 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.4 | Reading | 0.49 | | |
| 31 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.L.4 | Reading | 0.80 | | |
| 32 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.84 | | |
| 33 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.68 | | |
| 34 | Multiple Choice | D | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.55 | | |
| 35 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.9 | Reading | 0.62 | | |
| 36 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.49 | | |
| 37 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.4 | Reading | 0.81 | | |
| 38 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Reading | 0.73 | | |
| 39 | Multiple Choice | D | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.70 | | |
| 40 | Multiple Choice | B | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.4 | Reading | 0.72 | | |
| 41 | Multiple Choice | C | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.68 | | |
| 42 | Multiple Choice | A | 1 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.3 | Reading | 0.70 | | |
| 43 | Constructed Response | | 2 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Writing to Sources | | 1.42 | 0.71 |
| 44 | Constructed Response | | 2 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.9 | Writing to Sources | | 1.35 | 0.67 |
| 45 | Constructed Response | | 2 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.2 | Writing to Sources | | 1.52 | 0.76 |
| 46 | Constructed Response | | 4 | NGLS.ELA.Content.NY-8.R.6 | Writing to Sources | | 1.91 | 0.48 |

*This item map is intended to identify the primary analytic skills necessary to successfully answer each question on the 2024 operational ELA test. However, each constructed-response question measures proficiencies described in multiple standards, including writing and additional reading and language standards. For example, two-point and four-point constructed-response questions require students to first conduct the analyses described in the mapped standard and then produce written responses that are rated based on writing standards. To gain greater insight into the measurement focus for constructed-response questions, please refer to the rubrics shown in the Educator Guides.