



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

GRADE 8
Reading Language Arts

Practice Assessment

READING LANGUAGE ARTS

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

A Day in the Life aboard the International Space Station¹

- 1 Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live and work in space?

Eating in Space

- 2 Imagine going camping for more than a week with several of your close friends. You would make sure you have plenty of food and the gear to cook and eat it with. The food would have to be stored properly and be nonperishable to avoid spoilage. After finishing your meal, or at the end of your camping trip, you would then stow all your gear and dispose of your trash properly just before the ride home.
- 3 Astronauts basically do the same thing when they go to space. Preparation varies with the food type. Some foods can be eaten in their natural forms, such as brownies and fruit. Other foods require adding water, such as macaroni and cheese or spaghetti. Of course, an oven is provided in the space station to heat foods to the proper temperature. There are no refrigerators in space, so space food must be stored and prepared properly to avoid spoilage, especially on longer missions.
- 4 Condiments, such as ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise, are provided. Salt and pepper are available but only in a liquid form. This is because astronauts can't sprinkle salt and pepper on their food in space. The salt and pepper would simply float away. There is a danger they could clog air vents, contaminate equipment, or get stuck in an astronaut's eyes, mouth, or nose.
- 5 Astronauts eat three meals a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Nutritionists ensure the food astronauts eat provides them with a balanced supply of vitamins and minerals. Calorie requirements differ for astronauts. For instance, a small woman would require only about 1,900 calories a day, while a large man

¹The International Space Station is a large spacecraft that orbits Earth. It is a temporary home to astronauts from several countries, who conduct research on the effects of life in space.

would require about 3,200 calories. An astronaut can choose from many types of foods such as fruits, nuts, peanut butter, chicken, beef, seafood, candy, brownies, etc. Available drinks include coffee, tea, orange juice, fruit punches, and lemonade.

- 6 As on Earth, space food comes in disposable packages. Astronauts must throw their packages away when they have finished eating. Some packaging actually prevents food from flying away. The food packaging is designed to be flexible and easier to use, as well as to maximize space when stowing or disposing of food containers.

Sleeping in Space

- 7 After a long day at work, nothing is better than a good night's sleep! Just like on Earth, in space a worker goes to bed at a certain time, then wakes up and prepares for work again. There are a few differences, though. Space has no "up" or "down," but it does have microgravity. As a result, astronauts are weightless and can sleep in any orientation. However, they have to attach themselves so they don't float around and bump into something. Space station crews usually sleep in sleeping bags located in small crew cabins. Each crew cabin is just big enough for one person.

- 8 Generally, astronauts are scheduled for eight hours of sleep at the end of each mission day. Like on Earth, though, they may wake up in the middle of their sleep period to use the toilet, or stay up late and look out the window. Different things such as excitement or motion sickness can disrupt an astronaut's sleep pattern. During their sleep period, astronauts have reported having dreams and nightmares. Some have even reported snoring in space.

Free Time in Space

- 9 Living in space is not just all work and no play. Astronauts like to have fun, too. If you're staying on the International Space Station for a few months, it is certainly okay to look out the window, play with your food, or tease your crewmates once in a while. Fun is an essential ingredient to the quality of life.
- 10 Astronauts need a break from their busy schedules when they are orbiting Earth. Days or even months of straight work are certain to cause stress among space workers. That is why

flight planners on Earth schedule time each day for astronauts to relax, exercise, and have some fun. Station crew members even manage to have fun while working. Experiments in space sometimes involve ordinary toys and how microgravity affects them.

- 11 A popular pastime while orbiting Earth is simply looking out the window. Inside the International Space Station, crew members have numerous windows they can look out. Astronauts often comment on their fascination and awe as they look at Earth spin beneath them with its multiple shades and textures. Sunsets and sunrises are also very spectacular, occurring every 45 minutes above Earth’s atmosphere.

“A Day in the Life Aboard the International Space Station”—Public Domain/NASA

- 1** Which sentence best belongs in a summary of the section “Eating in Space”?
- (A) Discarding all trash is important when leaving a camping area.
 - (B) Food packaging for use on Earth and in space can be recycled.
 - (C) Food packaging made for use in space is flexible.
 - (D) Packing for a trip to space is similar to packing for a camping trip.
-

- 2** How does the author organize the section “Free Time in Space” to develop the thesis of the article?
- (A) By explaining the ways astronauts can relax while on board the space station
 - (B) By listing activities available to astronauts outside of work hours
 - (C) By describing how astronauts can make work entertaining
 - (D) By following the activities of an astronaut on an average day
-

- 3** The details in paragraphs 7 and 8 support the key idea that —
- (A) sleeping in space can be much more dangerous than sleeping at home on Earth
 - (B) astronauts must approach sleep the same way they approach other scheduled activities
 - (C) sleep patterns often change for astronauts spending extended periods in space
 - (D) astronauts feel like they are camping outdoors when they sleep in space

- 4** What is the most likely reason the author includes the information about sunsets and sunrises in paragraph 11?
- (A) To explain why astronauts choose to live on the space station
 - (B) To describe some circumstances that make life on the space station enjoyable
 - (C) To show how astronauts keep track of the days and nights
 - (D) To indicate how often the astronauts record their observations about Earth
-

- 5** Based on information in the article, what can the reader conclude about how the conditions of space affect life aboard the space station?
- (A) Everything taken into space must be compact in order to keep from interfering with equipment on the space station.
 - (B) Astronauts must adapt many daily activities because of how weight is experienced in space.
 - (C) Sleep periods are carefully planned because of the way time is experienced in space.
 - (D) Astronauts combine work and recreation in order to avoid boredom from being in the space station each day.

6 What is the controlling idea of the article?

- (A) Astronauts need time to eat, sleep, and relax while living on the space station.
 - (B) To survive living in space, astronauts eat the same food as they do on Earth and need to store it correctly.
 - (C) Living and working in space is both similar to and different from living and working on Earth.
 - (D) Living on the space station is both interesting and difficult because many experiments must be performed.
-

7 What does the footnote in the article help the reader understand?

- (A) The International Space Station is used by multiple nations for scientific studies.
 - (B) The International Space Station is a motionless spacecraft.
 - (C) The International Space Station is used for short- and long-term living.
 - (D) The International Space Station is the size of a large city.
-

8 What is the most likely reason the author uses a descriptive organizational structure for the article?

- (A) To provide the reader with a schedule of daily life on the space station
- (B) To provide the reader with a list of requirements for life on the space station
- (C) To help the reader understand different parts of the space station
- (D) To help the reader experience what life is like on the space station

- 9 In paragraph 11, how do the words “fascination,” “awe,” and “spectacular” contribute to the author’s tone in the article?
- Ⓐ By revealing the gratitude that astronauts feel about what they can see from space
 - Ⓑ By demonstrating the satisfaction that astronauts feel about living on the space station
 - Ⓒ By creating a feeling of wonder about the sights that astronauts view from space
 - Ⓓ By developing a feeling of mystery about astronauts who live and work on the space station

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Leading Men

- 1 It's probably important to explain that Atticus really is my best friend, although sometimes it can be difficult to tell, particularly when we are locked in some colossal, overblown competition.
- 2 It would be the understatement of the millennium to say that we are feeling competitive this morning as we arrive at school. The whole crew strolls in at roughly the same time—Carson, Atticus, and me, piling into our regular booth in the cafeteria to wait for classes to start.
- 3 "Today's the big day, Saul. Are you ready to see my name in lights?" Atticus chuckles, patting my shoulder just a bit more vigorously than necessary. "You remember when Mr. French said, 'There are no small parts, only small actors?'" I nod and he continues, "Well, all I can say is I better not get a small part in this play." I roll my eyes and Carson laughs, which surprises me. He's usually so quiet. Then Carson's face morphs into a look of dogged determination. *Curious*, I think, before turning my attention back to Atticus.
- 4 "Sure thing, Atticus," I say. "We'll just see whose name is on the board."
- 5 Atticus and I, as well as most of our friends, auditioned last week for parts in the high school production of the musical *Oliver!* Spoiler alert! It's a play about a boy in England who is thrown out of a workhouse, experiences misadventures, and eventually finds a wonderful home.
- 6 Since the production will be at the high school, Ms. Lopez, the high school director, came to our middle school to hold auditions for the kids' parts. Most of the younger roles are just parts in the chorus. They sing in group scenes, but they don't have many lines. All the adult parts will be played by high school students.

- 7 There are a few parts with lines for younger kids. One interesting character, the Artful Dodger, would be fun to play, but the part that we all have our eyes on is the lead, Oliver.
- 8 “Come on, man. You know I always get the best parts. Remember?” Atticus stands up and lifts his arms in front of his head, chomping down like a giant pair of jaws.
- 9 “Seriously, *The Carnivore Waltz*? That was second grade, Atticus,” I respond, as that day comes flooding back to me.
- 10 Do I remember? Of course I remember. Atticus and I had bolted to the cafeteria after recess, excited to audition for our first-ever class play. Our teacher told us that everyone would have a part, but we all wanted to be the mightiest dinosaur, *Tyrannosaurus rex*. We took turns performing our interpretation of a *T. rex* roar and showing off our best dinosaur moves. Atticus auditioned last, pushing his elbows into his shirt sleeves so that he had tiny front arms and stomping ferociously in circles. I wished I had thought of making my arms look shorter. When our teacher smiled at his interpretation, my heart dropped to my stomach. Clearly, Atticus was made to be front and center, playing the lead.
- 11 I jolt back to the present when I hear others around me laughing and cheering as Atticus revives his role from *The Carnivore Waltz*. He lumbers around the booths, growling at everyone while performing a ridiculous dance. Yes, yes, he had been the *Tyrannosaurus rex*, and I had been some herbivore whose name I can’t remember and could never pronounce correctly. That was a long time ago.
- 12 Atticus and I always seem to be in direct competition. Whether it was who got to be line leader in our third-grade class or who earned a solo in a school production, it was always Atticus and me, struggling to get the biggest part. The frustrating thing is that he usually gets it. It’s exasperating! Last year our drama class presented two theater productions, and he got the lead role in both. I get parts, but Atticus gets leads.
- 13 Maybe this time will be different. I feel like I was made for this part. It’s Oliver, the underdog, the kid who wants just a little bit more and ends up realizing his dreams. I have talent—I can sing and act as well as any kid, almost as well as Atticus.

- 14 Eventually, Atticus quits clowning around and sits down beside me. “You know I’m joking, right?” he says. “You would make a perfect Oliver, Saul. I’ll be happy if you get it.”
- 15 “Thanks, Atticus. You’re right, I would be perfect,” I say with a smirk. Then I add sincerely, “You would be great too.” After all the bantering, I am relieved that we can have this moment. Whatever happens, we will always be friends.
- 16 The bell rings, and a throng of students moves toward the door. We are jostling to get ahead, eager to see the page hanging on the wall outside the auditorium door, the page that will tell us who got which part.
- 17 Everyone crowds together, scanning the page. Carson gasps, and I glance at him and then back at the paper. There it is, in large print at the top—Oliver: Carson V.
- 18 Atticus and I finally find our names at the very bottom of the page with our characters’ names written next to them: “Boy 3” and “Boy 4.” After a moment of shock, we both start laughing. Then we turn toward Carson, each of us trying to give him the first “congratulations!”

12 Read this sentence from paragraph 15.

After all the bantering, I am relieved that we can have this moment.

Which text evidence from the story best helps the reader understand the meaning of the word bantering?

- (A) *Most of the younger roles are just parts in the chorus.* (paragraph 6)
 - (B) *"You know I always get the best parts."* (paragraph 8)
 - (C) *Atticus and I always seem to be in direct competition.* (paragraph 12)
 - (D) *"You know I'm joking, right?"* (paragraph 14)
-

13 How does the use of a flashback help develop the plot of the story?

- (A) It reveals that Atticus and Saul have been in competition for years.
- (B) It shows why Saul is unconcerned about getting the lead role.
- (C) It shows that Atticus and Saul prefer acting as dinosaurs.
- (D) It reveals why Saul sees himself as similar to the Artful Dodger.

14 Based on his thoughts throughout the story, how will Saul most likely feel after congratulating Carson?

- Ⓐ Relieved that he will not have to learn the role of Oliver, but troubled that Carson may have difficulty learning his part
 - Ⓑ Proud to have gotten any part in the high school play, but worried about having to sing in his role of Boy 4
 - Ⓒ Concerned that Atticus did not get the lead, but hopeful that the play will be a hit
 - Ⓓ Saddened that he will not get to play the role of Oliver, but happy that it was Carson who got the lead this time
-

15 How does the author use irony at the end of the story?

- Ⓐ By having Carson earn the lead role instead of Atticus or Saul
- Ⓑ By having Saul pretend to be happy when he did not earn the lead role
- Ⓒ By having Saul and Atticus compete to see who will be nicest to their friend
- Ⓓ By having Carson react casually when he sees his name on the list

- 16** Which sentence from the story best supports why Saul thinks of himself as similar to the character of Oliver?
- Ⓐ *"We'll just see whose name is on the board."* (paragraph 4)
 - Ⓑ *Yes, yes, he had been the Tyrannosaurus rex, and I had been some herbivore whose name I can't remember and could never pronounce correctly.* (paragraph 11)
 - Ⓒ *Then I add sincerely, "You would be great too."* (paragraph 15)
 - Ⓓ *We are jostling to get ahead, eager to see the page hanging on the wall outside the auditorium door, the page that will tell us who got which part.* (paragraph 16)
-

- 17** How does Atticus and Saul's behavior help resolve the conflict of the story?
- Ⓐ They both remember competitions between them from the past.
 - Ⓑ They each admit that they will be happy if the other gets the part.
 - Ⓒ They each decide to try out for the parts of the Artful Dodger and Oliver.
 - Ⓓ They both congratulate Carson before the other students can.

18 Read paragraph 9.

"Seriously, The Carnivore Waltz? That was second grade, Atticus," I respond, as that day comes flooding back to me.

Decide whether each sentence shows how Saul's comment to Atticus supports the theme of the story.

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

Sentence	Shows How Saul's Comment Supports the Theme	Does Not Show How Saul's Comment Supports the Theme
It shows that having an accurate memory is important in acting.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
It indicates that friendships develop over time.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
It illustrates that actors must reflect on previous performances.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
It suggests that friendship can overcome old frustrations.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
It demonstrates that teasing usually damages a friendship.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Avery's Gift

- 1 “Everything looks beautiful,” Avery whispered to Danielle as they waited for others to arrive. Balloons and flowers festooned the music room, and above the table lavishly laden with cookies and punch stretched a banner that read, “Happy retirement, Mrs. Vadakin! We’ll miss you!”

- 2 But as perfect as everything looked, Avery couldn’t help feeling beset by doubts. More students began to arrive, and teachers and parents, and a mass of cards and gifts began to grow on the table next to the food. Avery held onto the large manila envelope she’d brought, a viper in her hand, agitated by thoughts that she should have gotten Mrs. Vadakin something else.

- 3 “What’s in the envelope anyway?” asked Danielle, nibbling a cookie.

- 4 Avery, embarrassed, replied, “It’s something I wrote for Mrs. Vadakin.”

- 5 “Something you wrote, like an essay?”

- 6 Avery lowered her voice. “Not an essay, a piece of piano music.”

- 7 “A composition?” Danielle asked. “I didn’t know you composed!”

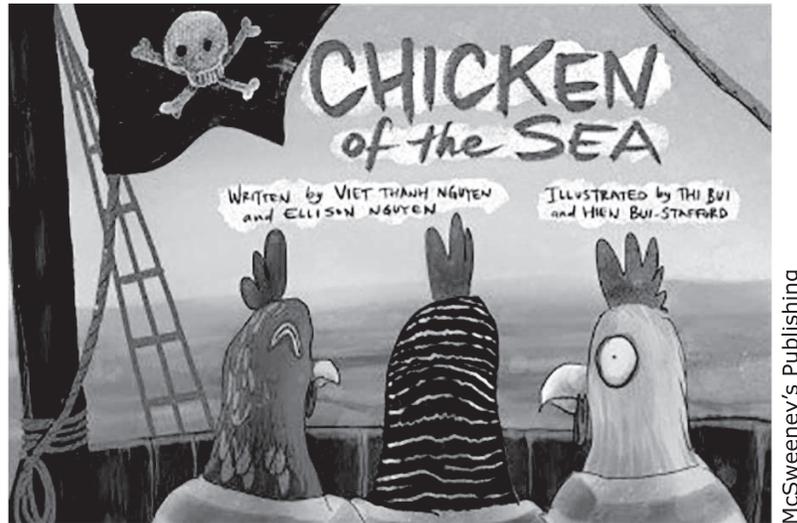
- 8 Avery looked at the envelope in her hands, hoping it hadn’t been a mistake, hoping it wasn’t too ridiculous a gift for an exceptional teacher. Avery didn’t actually write music, but her father was a professional composer, creating masterpieces for both film and theater. He was the one who convinced her to try, arguing an original arrangement was the perfect gift—something meaningful.

- 9 So, her father transcribed the piece for her. Note by note, chord by chord, Avery played her piece repeatedly while he wrote out the notes, and when they finished several hours later, Avery was flushed with accomplishment.

- 10 But now the reservations had returned. Reluctantly, Avery sidled up to the table and began to slip her envelope into the mound.
- 11 Danielle snatched it up, and to Avery’s mortification, called out “Mrs. Vadakin, Avery has a unique gift for you!”
- 12 Avery froze while Mrs. Vadakin took the envelope and opened it, her mouth dropping open in surprise.
- 13 “Avery, you wrote this yourself?”
- 14 Avery forced herself to nod.
- 15 “May I play this right now?” Avery closed her eyes and wished herself a thousand miles away as Mrs. Vadakin moved to the piano and settled herself at the bench and everyone gathered.
- 16 While Mrs. Vadakin played, Avery’s melody, full of light and shadows, filled the room. When the final haunting chord hung in the air, everyone burst into applause. Avery blushed but smiled back at Mrs. Vadakin, whose eyes glistened with tears.
- 17 Her father was right: this was the perfect gift.

Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids

by Samantha Balaban



- 1 When Ellison Nguyen was 4 years old, he got the chance to meet Thi Bui, the illustrator of one of his favorite books. He was so inspired by her work that he promptly wrote and drew his own picture book—"It came to me," Ellison, now 6, explains simply.
- 2 *Chicken of the Sea* tells the story of three farm chickens: Every day they wake up, they lay eggs, they go to sleep . . . and then they start the process all over again. They're bored and ready for an adventure, until one day a rat pirate arrives at the farm ready to enlist the chickens to sail the high seas ("but they're too dumb to be pirates," Ellison says).
- 3 The project became a multi-generational collaboration. Ellison's dad, Viet Nguyen (who is also very good at writing books), helped him with the story, and got in touch with Thi Bui to see if she might like to illustrate it. Bui enlisted *her* son, Hien Bui-Stafford, 13, for the job.

4 "My mom . . . helped me with pointers like the background or like a posture of the character," Hien says. "We usually would work like after school or during the weekends when we had our time together. Really the whole thing looked really bad without my mom."

5 Bui thinks her son is just being modest.

6 "I really was intimidated by the idea of illustrating this story because it's way more creative and imaginative than what I normally do, which is nonfiction," Bui says. "So I needed Hien's brain, which was like closer to Ellison's brain, to give me the raw material to work with and so he did all the line drawings on his own."

7 Bui says if she had been illustrating this book, she would have probably "overthought" it—doing lots of research about chickens. Her son was able to be more intuitive.

8 "Hien just thought: chicken," she says. "And then he drew this thing straight out of his imagination and it was spot on."



9 Viet Nguyen says he loved working with his son Ellison on the book.

10 "It affirmed for me something that I think a lot of artists and writers know, which is that it's really crucial for us to try to tap into the playfulness that's inside of us—and the child's capacity to think beyond the conventions that we've absorbed as adults," he says.

- 11 As for 6-year-old Ellison’s review of working with his dad?
- 12 “It was great,” he says.
- 13 When asked what moral he hopes his readers will take away from *Chicken of the Sea*, Ellison asks for clarification about what a “moral” is. Told that it’s an idea people take away after reading a book, he replies: “Nothing.”
- 14 So why end the book with a party? Simple: “I like happy endings,” Ellison says.

©2019 National Public Radio, Inc. News report titled “‘Chicken Of The Sea’ Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created By Kids” by Samantha Balaban as originally published on npr.org on December 29, 2019, and is used with the permission of NPR. Any unauthorized duplication is strictly prohibited.

19 Which phrase from paragraph 16 of the story "Avery's Gift" shows that Avery's melody expresses a mixture of emotions?

- (A) *full of light and shadows*
 - (B) *filled the room*
 - (C) *final haunting chord*
 - (D) *hung in the air*
-

20 Read this information about the word agitate.

from Latin *agitatus*, meaning "to put in constant or violent motion"

Based on this information, what is a synonym for the word agitated as it is used in paragraph 2 of the story "Avery's Gift"?

- (A) Threatened
- (B) Handled
- (C) Bothered
- (D) Served

21 Which line of dialogue from the story "Avery's Gift" supports the theme that success sometimes comes from being willing to take a risk?

- (A) *"What's in the envelope anyway?"* (paragraph 3)
 - (B) *"It's something I wrote for Mrs. Vadakin."* (paragraph 4)
 - (C) *"Something you wrote, like an essay?"* (paragraph 5)
 - (D) *"May I play this right now?"* (paragraph 15)
-

22 In paragraph 2 of the story "Avery's Gift," the most likely reason the author uses the metaphor "a viper in her hand" is to —

- (A) emphasize the strength of Avery's fear
- (B) suggest that Avery's concern is legitimate
- (C) call attention to the unusual nature of Avery's gift
- (D) suggest that Avery's gift may have a shocking result

- 23** Read this paragraph about the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids.*”

Inspired by Thi Bui, the illustrator of one of his favorite books, four-year-old Ellison Nguyen decided to write his own book titled *Chicken of the Sea*. The book is about three chickens who go on an adventure. Ellison’s father helped him write the story, and Thi Bui helped her son Hien draw the pictures.

Which idea should be included in this paragraph to create a complete summary of the article?

- (A) Hien’s mom gave him advice on how to draw pictures during the weekends.
 - (B) Viet Nguyen enjoyed working with his son on the book.
 - (C) Ellison said his story idea just came to him after he met Thi Bui.
 - (D) While the book had no particular message for the reader, it included a happy ending.
-
- 24** What is the most likely reason the author includes the details in paragraph 2 of the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids*”?
- (A) To provide information about the book the author is discussing
 - (B) To show the reason why many people contributed to the book
 - (C) To support the illustrations that are shown from the book
 - (D) To emphasize that the writer of the book is a young boy

25 Which conclusion about the creative process in the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids*” is **DIFFERENT** from the conclusion about the creative process in the story “Avery’s Gift”?

- (A) Children are proud after they finish a project.
 - (B) Adults provide professional help with a project.
 - (C) Children are less likely to overthink ideas than adults are.
 - (D) Adults appreciate the work of children.
-

26 The story “Avery’s Gift” and the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids*” are **SIMILAR** because —

- (A) they both demonstrate the benefits of working together as a team
- (B) they both show that adult guidance is critical for children to succeed
- (C) they both explain why artists are sometimes reluctant to share their work
- (D) they both reveal that children and adults generally think in similar ways

- 27** Which sentence best describes how the tone in the story “Avery’s Gift” **DIFFERS** from the tone in the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids*”?
- Ⓐ The tone of the story is disapproving, while the tone of the article is admiring.
 - Ⓑ The tone of the story is comforting, while the tone of the article is humorous.
 - Ⓒ The tone of the story is curious, while the tone of the article is thoughtful.
 - Ⓓ The tone of the story is anxious, while the tone of the article is positive.

- 28** Read the story “Avery’s Gift” and the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids.*” Based on the information in both selections, write a response to the following:

Explain how Avery’s father in the story “Avery’s Gift” is similar to Ellison’s father in the article “*Chicken of the Sea Is So Wacky—Of Course It Was Created by Kids.*”

Write a well-organized essay that uses specific evidence from the selections to support your answer.

Remember to —

- clearly state your controlling idea
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use evidence from both selections in your response
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

- review the selections
- plan your response
- write your response
- revise and edit your response

Record your answer in the box provided.

A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal lines, intended for writing or drawing.

A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal lines, intended for writing or drawing.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Akim wrote this paper about a memorable experience he had on a trip with his family. Read Akim's paper and look for revisions he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Bears of Kodiak Island



© bobby13/stock.adobe.com

(1) My parents are wildlife photographers, which means that their job assignments often take us to places where wildlife abounds. (2) We have been to jungles, forests, mountains, and oceans. (3) Traveling is not the best way to build relationships with your friends. (4) Still, I will always remember a trip we took a few years ago because of the awe-inspiring encounter we had with one of Alaska's mightiest creatures—the Kodiak bear.

(5) When my parents told me that I would be going with them to Kodiak Island, an isolated location in the Gulf of Alaska, I was not excited. (6) Would we really have to spend two weeks on a remote island off the coast of Alaska? (7) Did anyone even live there? (8) Where would we stay? (9) My parents assured me that the island was lovely and that we would be sleeping in a nice, comfortable lodge. (10) I felt only slightly better.

(11) A few months later, we traveled to Alaska and then took a ferry out to Kodiak, also known as Emerald Isle. (12) The strong currents caused the little boat to bob and weave on the open ocean, but the landscape was breathtaking. (13) When the lofty emerald peaks of the island came into view, I stood in awe.

(14) After we got off the ferry and into a rental car for a good place to turn off the road and look for wildlife, my mother began looking. (15) "Mom, can't we check out the lodge first?" I moaned.

(16) "Akim, we're here to photograph wildlife. (17) That's our job. (18) We'll see plenty of the lodge later," she said. (19) "James, turn here," she continued. (20) "The sign says there's a viewing area just ahead."

(21) Soon we made a stop. (22) The green-blue water was alive with leaping salmon. (23) As my parents occupied themselves with adjusting their camera lenses, I heard a loud *splooosh!* (24) Soon the culprit revealed itself. (25) A gigantic Kodiak bear, the largest creature I had ever seen in my life, was in the river just a few yards away. (26) I froze in fear.

(27) My parents, on the other hand, raised their cameras enthusiastically and started snapping pictures. (28) Sensing my distress, my father stopped filming and assured me that the bear had only one thing on his mind—to eat as many salmon as he could fit in his belly.

(29) Trusting my father's judgment, I began to relax. (30) I watched as the majestic creature battled his way through the rapids. (31) He would catch and consume one gleaming salmon after another. (32) I was mesmerized. (33) The combination of the fresh Alaska air, the towering emerald mountains, the sparkling river, and the gigantic brown beast left an impression on me that remains to this day. (34) In fact, that wild experience is the reason I asked my parents for a camera for my birthday. (35) It's also the reason I ask my parents every year if we can return to Kodiak Island to see its magical bears.

- 29** Which sentence should replace sentence 3 to create a more effective introduction to this paper?
- Ⓐ Fortunately, we live close to the coast and are able to make frequent trips to the beach.
 - Ⓑ Additionally, my favorite family activity is movie night, especially when the movie is about animals.
 - Ⓒ Truthfully, I have a hard time deciding what to bring with me, and I typically pack too much.
 - Ⓓ Admittedly, I have at times been less than thrilled to tag along on these wild excursions.
-

30 What is the **BEST** way to revise sentence 14?

- Ⓐ After we got off the ferry and into a rental car, wildlife is what my mother began looking for and a good place to turn off the road.
- Ⓑ After we got off the ferry and into a rental car, my mother began looking for a good place to turn off the road to look for wildlife.
- Ⓒ After we got off the ferry to begin looking for wildlife, we were into a rental car, and my mother was looking for a good place to turn off.
- Ⓓ After we got off the ferry and into a rental car and began looking for wildlife, my mother began looking for a good place.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Niko wrote this essay in response to a change of heart he experienced. Read Niko's paper and look for revisions he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Procrastination and Me

(1) Most people think that procrastination is a negative habit. (2) In fact, Benjamin Franklin said, "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today." (3) But people like me, who routinely put off doing assignments and chores, are likely to defend our "slower" approach to getting tasks done. (4) I was in for a surprise when my history teacher assigned a big project last month. (5) I wasn't expecting to learn that too much procrastination really can keep you from doing your best work.

(6) I'm the only procrastinator in my family. (7) My parents and sister were all born with the "do it right now" gene. (8) Personally, I prefer a more relaxed pace.

(9) When my parents expressed concern about my tendencies, I researched procrastination and found that the behavior is not all bad. (10) People procrastinate when they need to solve a problem or commit to a topic or project. (11) In these cases, waiting to make a decision can be a good thing. (12) This is because our minds continue to mull over problems even when we are not actively thinking about them, which can lead to more creative solutions. (13) My findings made me feel smug. (14) My method for getting things done was just as good as my sister's . . . or so I thought.

(15) At school we'd been talking about the colonial days. (16) My teacher said we would each have a month to build a replica of a small colony out of any materials we wanted. (17) We were expected to include things we had learned regarding the lives of the early colonists. (18) Some worked in the towns, while others made a living on small farms. (19) The finished projects would be displayed in the cafeteria.

(20) I thought the assignment sounded really fun. (21) But November was busy, and I didn't think about the project much. (22) Before I knew it, I had only three days left for the project. (23) In a panic I ransacked our recycle bin, pulling out brown cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes, and finding paper scraps

that I hastily glued together. (24) The finished result looked like something my little cousin might have made.

(25) When I entered the cafeteria and saw everyone else's models on display, I felt even more unusual about mine. (26) Several of my classmates had created amazingly detailed colonies. (27) They had used materials such as clay, wood, and in one case, sugar cubes. (28) It was obvious that they had put a lot more time into the assignment than I had.

(29) That day was a bit of a wake-up call for me. (30) I'm still more relaxed about deadlines than the rest of my family, but something has changed. (31) Now I tackle things a lot earlier than I would have in the past. (32) This means I don't have quite as much time for drawing and gaming, but the trade-off is worth it. (33) And I have to admit that it feels pretty good!

- 33** Which sentence could **BEST** follow sentence 7 to support the ideas presented in the second paragraph (sentences 6–8)?
- Ⓐ My dad is an auto mechanic at a large car dealership, so he often has to work on the weekends.
 - Ⓑ My sister is a few years older than me, and she has always done quite well in school.
 - Ⓒ My mom plans meals months in advance, and my sister turns in projects before they are due.
 - Ⓓ My parents enjoy traveling around the state and learning more about history.
-

- 34** Niko has included a sentence that does not belong in the fourth paragraph (sentences 15–19). Which sentence should he remove from this paragraph?
- Ⓐ Sentence 15
 - Ⓑ Sentence 17
 - Ⓒ Sentence 18
 - Ⓓ Sentence 19

35 What is the **MOST** effective revision to make in sentence 23?

- (A) In a panic I ransacked our recycle bin, pulling out brown cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes, and paper scraps that I hastily glued together.
 - (B) In a panic I ransacked our recycle bin, pulling out brown cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes, and there were paper scraps that I hastily and quickly glued together.
 - (C) In a panic I ransacked our recycle bin, hastily and quickly gluing together what I pulled out, which was brown cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes, and paper scraps.
 - (D) In a panic I ransacked our recycle bin, pulling out and removing brown cardboard boxes, paper towel tubes, and paper scraps for hastily gluing together.
-

36 The word ***unusual*** is not the **MOST** appropriate word to use in sentence 25. Select the **ONE** correct word that should replace ***unusual*** in this sentence.

When I entered the cafeteria and saw everyone else's models on

display, I felt even more

- | |
|-----------------|
| (A) indifferent |
| (B) suspicious |
| (C) irritated |
| (D) embarrassed |

about mine.

- 37** Niko forgot to include this sentence in the last paragraph (sentences 29–33).

I have the satisfaction of knowing that I won't have to scramble at the last minute.

Where is the **BEST** place to insert this sentence?

- (A) After sentence 29
- (B) After sentence 30
- (C) After sentence 32
- (D) After sentence 33

This page intentionally left blank

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Natalia is writing a paper to argue that traditional, printed newspapers still have value. Read this body paragraph from Natalia's paper and look for corrections she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Value of the Printed Newspaper

(1) There is no substitute for the traditional, printed newspaper. (2) The bolder and larger Headlines allow readers to find articles of interest quickly. (3) The content is fixed and does not get modified throughout the day. (4) This makes it easy to access an article for a second look. (5) Furthermore, printed newspapers include stories and details that online versions omit. (6) For example, if a big story dominates the day's news; online readers may not see articles about other events in their city or community. (7) And even though both news platforms contain advertisements, the ads are easier to ignore in print. (8) Online newspapers use pop-up ads and stories that play automatically. (9) Many readers complain that these ads were distracting, annoying, and intrusive.

38 What change should be made in sentence 2?

- (A) Change **Headlines** to **headlines**
 - (B) Change **allow** to **allows**
 - (C) Insert a comma after **readers**
 - (D) Change **quickly** to **quick**
-

39 What change should be made in sentence 6?

- (A) Change **if** to **since**
 - (B) Change **dominates** to **domanates**
 - (C) Change the semicolon after **news** to a comma
 - (D) Change **about** to **in**
-

40 What change, if any, should be made in sentence 8?

- (A) Change **use** to **using**
- (B) Change **that** to **they**
- (C) Change **automatically** to **automatic**
- (D) No change is needed.

41 What change should be made in sentence 9?

- Ⓐ Change ***complain*** to **complaining**
- Ⓑ Change ***were*** to **are**
- Ⓒ Delete the comma after ***distracting***
- Ⓓ Change ***annoying*** to **anoying**

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Nathan is writing an essay about losing a close election for student council president. Read this paragraph from Nathan's essay and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Lost Election

(1) When Mr. Alconeda announced the election results, I glued a smile on my face. (2) I clapped with everyone else, then I made a point of shaking Kendra's hand and saying, "Congratulations." (3) Some of my friends gave me sympathetic looks; I pretended not to notice. (4) The best way to salvage my pride, I thought, was to convince everyone that I was fine from the outcome. (5) Unfortunately, Mr. Alconeda expounded on the Bailey Middle School election, looking right at me and emphasizing that it had been competitive. (6) "It was close, Nathan" he said in front of the whole class. (7) "Your vote tally was only slightly less than Kendra's." (8) He was obviously trying to make me feel better, but initially at least, his efforts had the opposite affect.

42 What is the correct way to write sentence 2?

- Ⓐ After clapping with everyone else, I made a point of shaking Kendra's hand and saying, "Congratulations."
 - Ⓑ I clapped with everyone else and then made a point I shook Kendra's hand and said, "Congratulations."
 - Ⓒ I clapped with everyone else and then made a point. Of shaking Kendra's hand and saying, "Congratulations."
 - Ⓓ While clapping with everyone else. I made a point of shaking Kendra's hand and saying, "Congratulations."
-

43 What change should be made in sentence 4?

- Ⓐ Change **salvage** to **salvege**
 - Ⓑ Change **was to convince** to **were to convince**
 - Ⓒ Change **that** to **when**
 - Ⓓ Change **from** to **with**
-

44 What change, if any, should be made in sentence 6?

- Ⓐ Insert a comma after **Nathan**
- Ⓑ Change **said** to **says**
- Ⓒ Change **whole** to **hole**
- Ⓓ No change is needed.

45 What change should be made in sentence 8?

- Ⓐ Change **He** to **It**
- Ⓑ Delete the comma after **better**
- Ⓒ Change **had** to **which had**
- Ⓓ Change **affect** to **effect**



**STAAR
GRADE 8
Reading Language Arts
PRACTICE**

