



Our Students. Their Moment.

**New York State Testing Program
Grade 8
English Language Arts Test**

Released Questions

June 2018

New York State administered the English Language Arts Tests in April 2018 and is now making approximately 75% of the questions from these tests available for review and use.



New York State Testing Program Grades 3–8 English Language Arts

Released Questions from 2018 Exams

Background

In 2013, New York State began administering tests designed to assess student performance in accordance with the instructional shifts and rigor demanded by the new New York State P-12 Learning Standards in English Language Arts (ELA). To help in this transition to new assessments, the New York State Education Department (SED) has been releasing an increasing number of test questions from the tests that were administered to students across the State in the spring. This year, SED is again releasing large portions of the 2018 NYS Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics test materials for review, discussion, and use.

For 2018, included in these released materials are at least 75 percent of the test questions that appeared on the 2018 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 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.

Short-Response Questions

Short-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 his or her analysis of the passage, and then provide two pieces of text-based evidence to support his or her answer.

The purpose of the short-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 short-response questions can be found in the grade-level Educator Guides at <https://www.engageny.org/resource/test-guides-english-language-arts-and-mathematics>.

Extended-Response Questions

Extended-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 extended 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 extended-response questions. The rubric used for evaluating extended-response questions can be found in the grade-level Educator Guides at <https://www.engageny.org/resource/test-guides-english-language-arts-and-mathematics>.

New York State P-12 Learning Standards Alignment

The alignment(s) to the New York State P-12 Learning Standards for English Language Arts is/are 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-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.

These Released Questions Do Not Comprise a “Mini Test”

To ensure future valid and reliable tests, some content must remain secure for possible use on future exams. As such, 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 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. Specific criteria for writing test questions, as well as additional assessment information, are available at <http://www.engageny.org/common-core-assessments>.

2018 Grade 8 ELA Test Text Complexity Metrics for Released Questions Available on EngageNY

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 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, 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.

For more information about text selection, complexity, and the review process please refer to:

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-passage-selection-resources-for-grade-3-8-assessments>

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/selection-of-authentic-texts-for-common-core-instruction-guidance-and-a-list-of-resources>

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/december-2014-nti-understanding-text-complexity-grades-9-12>

Text Complexity Metrics for 2018 Grade 8 Passages

Passage Title	Word Count	Lexile	Flesch-Kincaid	Reading Maturity Metric*	Degrees of Reading Power*	Qualitative Review
Excerpt from <i>Winter Wheat</i>	990	800-900	4.8		51	Appropriate
Excerpt from <i>The Amazing Author of Oz</i>	1000	1000-1100	6.9		57	Appropriate
Excerpt from <i>Bee Season</i>	956	700-800	5		53	Appropriate
<i>The Hive Mind</i>	943	1000-1100	7.5		60	Appropriate
Excerpt from <i>The Open Boat</i>	793	800-900	5.6		56	Appropriate
<i>Sea Fever</i>	161	NA, poem	NA		NA	Appropriate

* Depending on when the passage was selected, either the Reading Maturity Metric or Degrees of Reading Power was used as the third quantitative metric.

New York State 2018 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

2018 English Language Arts Test Session 1

Grade 8

April 11–13, 2018

Released Questions

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Session 1



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read all the directions carefully.
- Most questions will make sense only when you **read the whole passage**. You may read the passage more than once to answer a question. When a question includes a quotation from a passage, be sure to keep in mind what you learned from reading the whole passage. You may need to review **both** the quotation and the passage in order to answer the question correctly.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before making your choice.

Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

Excerpt from *Winter Wheat*

by Mildred Walker

- 1 September is like a quiet day after a whole week of wind. I mean real wind that blows dirt into your eyes and hair and between your teeth and roars in your ears after you've gone inside. The harvesting is done and the wheat stored away and you're through worrying about hail or drought or grasshoppers. The fields have a tired peaceful look, the way I imagine a mother feels when she's had her baby and is just lying there thinking about it and feeling pleased.
- 2 It was hot, though, like a flash-back to July. I was glad we weren't cooking for harvest hands. There wasn't any fire in the stove and everything was spick-and-span because I had just washed the dinner dishes. Mom was out having another look for the turkeys that were always wandering off. Dad was lying on the couch in the other room waiting for the noon broadcast of wheat prices to come on. We had to sell our wheat this month and not hold it over; that is, we did if I was going to the university that fall. It might go higher along toward Christmas, but we couldn't wait for that.
- 3 The house was so quiet I could hear Mom calling the turkeys down by the barn. Dad told Mom not to bother, they'd come back by themselves, but Mom worried if anything was lost or left unlocked.
- 4 "When I've got something, I take care of it," she always said.
- 5 I washed some cucumbers while I was waiting. They were bright green and shiny in the water. I used to play they were alligators when I was a child. Then I fenced them in with my hand and poured off the water into the kettle on the stove. When you have to carry every drop of water you use half a mile, you don't throw away any.
- 6 And then it began. I knew before Dad turned it up. The voice of the man who announces the wheat prices is as familiar to me as Dad's. It's different from anybody's voice around Gotham—more like one of those city voices that broadcasts the war news. That voice touches us here, and all the ranches spread out over the prairies between the Rockies and the Mississippi. It touches all the people in Clark City, thirty miles from here, who live on the ranchers,¹ even though they try to forget it.
- 7 "Here is your Grain Market Broadcast for today: Spring and Winter . . . up two."

GO ON

- 8 I could add two to yesterday's price, so I didn't have to hear any more, but I listened out of habit and because I love to hear it.
- 9 "One heavy dark Northern Spring . . . fifty-two." The words came so fast they seemed to roll downhill. Nobody ever calls it all that; it's just spring wheat, but I like the words. They heap up and make a picture of a spring that's slow to come, when the ground stays frozen late into March and the air is raw, and the skies are sulky and dark. The "Northern" makes me feel how close we are to the Rockies and how high up on the map, almost to Canada.
- 10 "One dark hard Winter . . . fifty-three."
- 11 It's just winter wheat to the people who raise it, only to me it means more than that. It means all the winter and all the cold and the tight feeling of the house in winter, but the rich secret feeling I have, too, of treasure in the ground, growing there for us, waiting for the cold to be over to push up strong and green. They sound like grim words without any comfort to them, but they have a kind of strength all their own.
- 12 "Durum, Flax, and Rye . . . up one." The broadcast ran on. Mom came in while I was standing there listening.
- 13 "Wheat's up," I told her.
- 14 Mom nodded. She stood there untying her bandanna and I watched her as though I didn't know her face better than my own. Mom's is a quiet face with a broader forehead than mine and dark brows and eyes and a wide mouth. She doesn't show in her face what she thinks or feels—that's why people in Gotham think she's hard to know—but when she laughs, the laughter goes deeper down in her eyes than anybody's I know.
- 15 I look more like Dad. He is tall and thin and has light hair and blue eyes and his face shows what he thinks or feels. Mom is square and stocky with broad shoulders and hips. It's just as well that I am more like Dad in my body. I like being slender and straight. I am strong like Mom, though, and I like working in the fields better than in the house.
- 16 Dad clicked off the radio and came out to the kitchen. "Well, we'll go over and tell Bailey we're going to sell. Fifty-three is good enough. Come on, Ellen, you can drive me over."
- 17 I took off my apron and was running across to the barn for the pickup before Dad had taken his hat from behind the door. I felt so excited I couldn't walk soberly.

- 18 Glory, it was hot! I had the doors of the truck tied open with a piece of rope so the air could rush through, but it felt hot enough to scorch my bare ankles, and the heat of the engine came up through the rubber soles of my sneakers.
- 19 You can't see the elevator² till you get past our place. There's only one in Gotham, but it stands up from the crossroads like a monument. That and the railroad station are the only things to let people know Gotham's a town.
- 20 "I feel I'm going for sure, Dad," I told him.
- 21 "You bet you're going," Dad answered. "The war spoiled college for me, all but one year. Nothing's going to spoil it for you."

¹**ranchers:** a ranch house

²**(grain) elevator:** a building to store and move grain

GO ON

1 What does paragraph 4 **most** reveal about the mother?

- A She is tireless.
- B She is responsible.
- C She has a hard time relaxing.
- D She has devotion for animals.

2 The personification of the sky as “sulky” in paragraph 9 suggests the sky is

- A unpredictable
- B northern
- C snowy
- D gloomy

3 What does paragraph 9 **mainly** reveal about the narrator?

- A She thinks of nature as calming.
- B She is attached to familiar things and is close to her family.
- C She loves language and has a vivid imagination.
- D She pays attention to yearly patterns.

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

- A “We had to sell our wheat this month and not hold it over; that is, we did if I was going to the university that fall.” (paragraph 2)
- B “It might go higher along toward Christmas, but we couldn’t wait for that.” (paragraph 2)
- C “She stood there untying her bandanna and I watched her as though I didn’t know her face better than my own.” (paragraph 14)
- D “I took off my apron and was running across to the barn for the pickup before Dad had taken his hat from behind the door.” (paragraph 17)

5 In paragraph 19, what does the phrase “like a monument” **mainly** suggest about the elevator?

- A It is a beautiful building.
- B It is a landmark.
- C It was designed by an architect.
- D It is an old building.

6 What is the **best** definition of “spoiled” as used in paragraph 21?

- A decreased the value of
- B made greedy by giving too much
- C took away an opportunity
- D made unfit for use

GO ON

7

How does the author **mainly** develop the narrator's point of view in the story?

- A by exaggerating how harsh the winter months are
- B by using elements of humor
- C by showing how the narrator interacts with her family
- D by sharing the narrator's thoughts

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 8 through 14.

Excerpt from *The Amazing Author of Oz*

by Bruce Watson

- 1 All the children in Aberdeen knew the tall, dapper gentleman who strolled through town each day. For a child on the Dakota Plains, life in the late 1880s sometimes seemed little more than hard work. The bleakness of the prairie cried out for a fantasy to take a boy or girl far away. Mr. Baum’s stories were pure fantasy, so when he walked down the street in his finely tailored suit, children clamored in his wake.
- 2 Unlike stories told by parents, Baum’s were not merely lectures in disguise. Instead, he made everyday objects—scarecrows, pumpkins, rag dolls—come alive. His stories glittered with color; whole fields were shaded blue, green or red. As he went on, Baum often seemed to lose himself in the telling. Years later, his mother-in-law, who had overheard many of his stories, urged Baum to write them down. But while living in Aberdeen, he was content to tell his tales just to please a child or two.
- 3 When Lyman Frank Baum finally did set pencil to paper, stories poured out of him. In a career of just two decades, he wrote more than 70 books. Many are long forgotten, but one was called *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. It’s about a girl from Kansas who meets a scarecrow, a tin woodman and a cowardly—well, perhaps you know the story. But you may not know that Oz is more than a single book that inspired one of Hollywood’s greatest movies. Long before TV staked its claim to children’s fantasies, Oz was mapped in the imaginations of countless children. Going on beyond the wizard, Baum wrote 13 other Oz books. After he died, his successors churned out 26 more. Between 1913 and 1942, a new Oz book came out every Christmas. Oz Reading Clubs devoured each one. An Oz Who’s Who charted the kingdom’s colorful characters, including the Patchwork Girl, the Tik-Tok Man, Princess Ozma and hundreds more. These days, the ubiquitous¹ MGM movie overshadows the books, but readers who choose to go there still find Oz so much more than lions, tigers and bears, oh my. Baum’s fairyland is a place of childish dreams and fears, a kingdom ruled by love but haunted by fear of sudden death. It’s a land where adults are as helpless as children and children are as strong as adults. Peppared with puns and wordplay, Oz is charming and altogether ambivalent about the benefits of age. In short, it’s much like its creator, L. Frank Baum, the “Royal Historian of Oz.”

GO ON

- 4 The seventh child born to Benjamin and Cynthia Baum came not trailing clouds of glory but clouds of gloom. In 1856, Frank was born. From an early age, he seems to have suffered from angina pectoris, a heart disease causing severe chest pain. Baum's delicate condition made him a sedentary, solitary child. He read constantly, mostly fairy tales. For most of his youth, he was schooled at home. While Frank was still very young, his father developed some oil fields in Pennsylvania and made a fortune. The Baums moved to a mansion, called Rose Lawn, where Frank flourished.
- 5 At 18, he began hanging around some nearby theaters and decided he wanted to become an actor. His father tried to steer his stagestruck son from his dream but finally relented, asking only that Frank not disgrace the family name. Going by various stage names, Baum moved to New York City to begin his acting career.
- 6 No road to success was ever more winding than Baum's. He followed the stage from job to job and state to state. Actors must moonlight, so Baum worked as a newspaper reporter, a dry goods salesman and finally as a playwright. His only hit, under the name Louis F. Baum, was an Irish melodrama called *The Maid of Arran*. Baum wrote and starred in the play that opened on his 26th birthday. The tall, mustachioed gentleman with the smiling eyes seemed on his way; so successful was he that he could even consider marriage.
- 7 According to the family legend, it was love at first sight. Maud Gage was a sophomore at Cornell University. On introducing him to Maud, his aunt said, "I'm sure you will love her." Baum smiled and replied, "Consider yourself loved, Miss Gage." Maud held out her hand and answered, "Thank you, Mr. Baum. That's a promise. Please see that you live up to it." He did. Married the next year, Frank and Maud Baum remained as devoted as any fairy tale couple. But Maud soon found that her husband often resided in a world entirely of his own.
- 8 Around the time of his marriage in 1882, Baum suffered a series of setbacks in business and health. To add to his burdens, his family's money had been lost. Maud's sisters and her brother had recently moved to the Dakota Territory, and their letters told of fortunes to be made. So in 1888, with his life on the downward side of the rainbow, Baum moved his family west to the prairie.
- 9 What is now Aberdeen, South Dakota, was then a boomtown of 3,000. Baum decided the town needed an upscale store and started Baum's Bazaar. The bazaar broke even for a while, but when the Dakota boom ended, the store went belly-up.

- 10 Broke and far from home, Baum fell back on old friends—his fantasies. The stories he told children on Aberdeen’s dusty sidewalk spoke of a better land where goodness prevailed, love triumphed and no one was hungry or poor. Yet Baum was still required to make a living in this world, so he moved the family to Chicago in 1891.
- 11 For a time, he edited his own magazine promoting store window displays, but of more importance to children, he finally began to write down his stories. In 1897, his first successful book, *Mother Goose in Prose*, was published. His next book, *Father Goose, His Book*, became the nation’s best-selling children’s title. After decades of dead ends, Baum had finally found his road.

¹**ubiquitous:** ever-present

8

Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

Mr. Baum's stories were pure fantasy, so when he walked down the street in his finely tailored suit, children clamored in his wake.

What is the effect of the author's word choices in this sentence?

- A It indicates how much children admired Baum and his stories.
- B It hints that Baum was a serious person who told silly stories.
- C It suggests that children moved aside when Baum was near.
- D It shows how rarely Baum told his stories to others.

9

Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

Unlike stories told by parents, Baum's were not merely lectures in disguise.

Based on this sentence, what is the author's point of view about Baum's stories?

- A They are good at providing a strong moral.
- B They are more entertaining than educational.
- C They are different from children's stories of today.
- D They are enjoyed more by children than by adults.

10

How does paragraph 3 develop a central idea in the article?

- A by listing characters that appeared in Baum's books
- B by describing the work for which Baum is best known
- C by explaining that other authors continued Baum's work
- D by emphasizing that many books Baum wrote were forgotten

GO ON

11 In paragraph 4, what inference can be drawn from the information about Baum's early childhood?

- A** Baum's health problems affected how he felt about his family.
- B** Baum's older siblings influenced his approach toward education.
- C** Baum's home education affected how he felt about other children.
- D** Baum's constant reading of fairy tales influenced his later writing.

12 Read this sentence from paragraph 6.

No road to success was ever more winding than Baum's.

How does this sentence contribute to the structure of the article?

- A** It summarizes the first five paragraphs of the article.
- B** It contrasts the first half of the article with the second half.
- C** It serves as the topic sentence for the remainder of the article.
- D** It gives the cause for the events in the remainder of the article.

13 Which sentence states a central idea of the article?

- A** Baum was devoted to his wife and family.
- B** Baum wrote a play and acted in the starring role.
- C** Baum lived for several years in a small prairie town.
- D** Baum had to overcome many difficulties throughout his life.

GO ON

14

What benefit did Baum's stories offer to listeners, readers, and to Baum himself?

- A They offered an entertaining distraction from the harsh realities of life.
- B They offered a chance to invent new and exciting characters and places.
- C They offered an exciting way to learn about the world around them.
- D They offered a new perspective on how adults and children should behave.

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 15 through 21.

Excerpt from *Bee Season*

by Myla Goldberg

- 1 More than ever, Eliza wants to win. She wants to win with a word so difficult her father will have to admit that he was wrong, that the letters are already guiding her.
- 2 When Number 127 is being asked to spell LOQUAT, Eliza closes her eyes and feels her mind empty out. L fills her head, a glowing yellow the color of molten metal. *This is what Dad meant.* She’s surprised at how easy it is. Inside Elly’s head, L grows longer, its edges curving inward to form an O. Her body loosens. When the edge of O grows a tail to become Q, Eliza feels the change in her fingertips. Q’s top evaporates and its tail disappears, U settling warm in her belly. Elly feels a tickle as U flips and grows a line through its middle to become an A. When A’s legs slide together as its arm floats up T fills Eliza, straightening her spine. Eliza opens her eyes. She feels as if she has just woken from a deep sleep. Number 127 is walking offstage to the sound of vigorous applause.
- 3 “I did it,” she mouths to her father across the room.
- 4 Saul smiles and nods. “I love you too,” he mouths back equally indecipherably.
- 5 By Round 7, there are seventeen of them. Number 14, whose perpetually perfect posture adds to the overall impression that he is an android, causes murmurs of admiration when he rips through DVANDVA without asking for a derivation or use in a sentence. When Number 22 gets her word wrong, No Chin has to pry her hand from the microphone. Number 33 decides midway through PERIPATETIC that he has made a mistake. He turns stubbornly silent, demanding to be dinged out rather than made to complete the word. He stands mute until his time runs out. The judge’s spelling reveals that the boy’s progress had been perfect until he had refused to go on.
- 6 Number 36 is called to the mike. Rachel almost trips on her way to the front of the stage, removes the microphone from its stand, and holds it to her mouth like a lounge singer. The Independence Ballroom suddenly seethes with the sound of her nervous breathing.
- 7 “Number 36, your word is GREGARINE.”

GO ON

- 8 Having been informed that a gregarine is a parasitic protozoan taken from the Latin, Rachel has no choice but to start spelling. She pounds her palm against her forehead after each letter, as if trying to knock the next one loose. Because she is holding the microphone so close to her face, each moment of contact sounds like a heavy blow.
- 9 “. . . I . . .” Pound. “. . . N . . .” Pound. “. . . E . . .” Pound. “Gregarine.”
- 10 Eliza finds herself bracing for the next blow, but none comes. The judge’s “Correct” sends Rachel leaping back to her seat to resume picking at her placard, which is now noticeably smaller than the others.
- 11 When Number 41 is given PURIM Eliza almost laughs out loud. Then she realizes that such an easy word right before her turn is a bad sign, almost certain to mean she’s destined to get something awful. Number 41, the only contestant wearing a yarmulke, makes short work of PURIM and returns to his seat with a dazed grin. The judge calls Eliza to the mike.
- 12 As she stands, Elly hazily recalls her nightmare: the expectant silence, the feeling she is holding up time, the endless path from her seat to the microphone. She decides that if she can get this next word, whatever it may be, her chances of winning are practically guaranteed. From the moment she rises from her chair, she locks eyes with Saul, whose gaze practically steers her to the microphone.
- 13 “Number 59, your word is DUVETYN.”
- 14 “Dew-veh-teen?” Eliza’s heart lurches into her throat. In her mind’s eye, she sees nothing.
- 15 “That is correct. Duvetyn.”
- 16 Saul is staring so hard it feels like he’s directly in front of her instead of halfway across the room. She wants to ask him to leave, to just get on the plane and fly back home.
- 17 “Um, what does it mean?”
- 18 The judge’s voice is irritatingly friendly. “Duvetyn is a soft, short-napped fabric with a twill weave, made of wool, cotton, rayon, or silk.”
- 19 Eliza whispers the word, feels the way it shapes her tongue and lips. From these movements she tries to chart the word’s path through time and place. Where has it traveled? When was it born?
- 20 “What is the derivation, please?”

- 21 The judge's voice is ever neutral, revealing nothing. "Duvetyn comes to us from the French."
- 22 Eliza wants to see herself through the judge's eyes. Does he have favorites? Is she one of them? Or are they interchangeable, one long blur of nervous hands and voices? Her placard suddenly reminds her of the stickers affixed to new underwear: INSPECTED BY 59.
- 23 She's got to focus. There isn't much time. She returns to Duvetyn, pushes everything else aside.
- 24 I know it starts with D.
- 25 "Dew-veh-teen."
- 26 At first it is a struggle to empty her mind which keeps conjuring up fresh images: her father's face, a conveyer belt laden with tagged children, but eventually all is black and blank. D, D, D, D, D, D, Eliza thinks *until* D, proud and foreboding appears in her mind's eye. Then, its top disappears. The letters are showing her the way.
- 27 "D-U . . ."
- 28 Dew- veh - teen. She speeds through the next few letters, which are obvious.
- 29 ". . . V-E-T . . ." and now she's got the word in her head, letters rearranging themselves into something that looks right, something French.
- 30 ". . . I-N-E. Duvetine." It feels good.
- 31 Time moves so slowly. The silence lasts so long Eliza is sure it means she is correct. Her heart begins to pound faster. Walter Cronkite and the loving cup are practically hers.
- 32 *Ding.*

15 What does paragraph 2 **most** reveal about Eliza?

- A She has a strong imagination.
- B She seldom misspells a word.
- C She thinks her father knows best.
- D She gets easily distracted.

16 In paragraph 12, how does the description of the nightmare **mainly** affect the tone of the story?

- A It suggests that Eliza doubts she will win the bee.
- B It suggests that the bee seems unreal to Eliza.
- C It suggests that Eliza is unwilling to compete in the bee.
- D It suggests that the bee is stressful for Eliza.

17 Which quotation **best** expresses a central idea of the story?

- A “She wants to win with a word so difficult her father will have to admit that he was wrong, that the letters are already guiding her.” (paragraph 1)
- B “Eliza finds herself bracing for the next blow, but none comes.” (paragraph 10)
- C “The judge’s voice is ever neutral, revealing nothing.” (paragraph 21)
- D “Eliza wants to see herself through the judge’s eyes.” (paragraph 22)

18 The ideas in paragraphs 22 and 26 **mostly** contribute to the reader's understanding of Eliza by revealing

- A her inability to understand the judges
- B her discomfort standing in front of the audience
- C her concern about impressing her father
- D her difficulty with spelling the assigned word correctly

19 What does paragraph 31 **mainly** reveal about Eliza?

- A her patience
- B her intelligence
- C her confidence
- D her enthusiasm

20 Which detail would be **most** important to include in a summary of the story?

- A Eliza knows that difficult words follow easy words at spelling bees.
- B Eliza gets a word that means a kind of fabric with a twill weave.
- C Eliza empties her mind and sees the letters come up as images.
- D Eliza is one of seventeen spellers in this round of the spelling bee.

GO ON

21

How does the point of view **most** influence the tone of the story?

- A The descriptions of the contestants competing builds suspense.
- B The references to unusual words add humor.
- C Eliza's distant observations of her father develop conflict.
- D Eliza's interior monologue creates a sense of strangeness.

Grade 8
2018
English Language Arts Test
Session 1
April 11–13, 2018

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2018 English Language Arts Test Session 2

Grade 8

April 11–13, 2018

Released Questions

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Session 2



TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

Here are some suggestions to help you do your best:

- Be sure to read all the directions carefully.
- Most questions will make sense only when you **read the whole passage**. You may read the passage more than once to answer a question. When a question includes a quotation from a passage, be sure to keep in mind what you learned from reading the whole passage. You may need to review **both** the quotation and the passage in order to answer the question correctly.
- Read each question carefully and think about the answer before writing your response.
- In writing your responses, be sure to
 - clearly organize your writing and express what you have learned;
 - accurately and completely answer the questions being asked;
 - support your responses with examples or details from the text; and
 - write in complete sentences using correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.
- For the last question in this test book, you may plan your writing on the Planning Page provided, but do NOT write your final answer on this Planning Page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on the lined response pages provided.

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 through 38.

The Hive Mind

by Avery Elizabeth Hurt

- 1 Honeybees are the picture of hard work and cooperation. They pollinate plants, helping to ensure that humans will have enough food to eat. They also make honey, protect themselves from predators, and keep the interiors of their hives at just the right temperature. But even though they are pretty impressive as a group, individual bees don't have much going on in the mental department—or so science has always thought. What would you expect from a single bee, anyway? It has a brain roughly the size of one of the sesame seeds on your hamburger bun.
- 2 It has only about one million neurons, compared to the 90 billion neurons of the human brain. It's only by working together as a colony that bees manage to pull off the impressive feats they are so well known for. A colony of bees is like one big brain, and the bees are like brain cells, explains animal behaviorist and bee expert Thomas Seeley. "Even though each unit (bee or neuron) has limited information and limited intelligence, the group as a whole makes first-rate collective decisions," Seeley writes in a description of his research.
- 3 It turns out, however, that the members of a beehive aren't quite the dimwitted robots we've imagined for so long. Bees can do surprising things with their tiny brains. Individually, they have mental skills that may rival or outdo those of many mammals.

How to Study a Bee Brain

- 4 It's hard enough to study the minds of humans, who can actually tell you what they're thinking. So how does one look into a bee's brain?
- 5 Clint Perry, a scientist working at Queen Mary University of London, has spent a lot of time studying how bees think. He says studying bees is not very different from studying other animals. "A major difficulty is designing an experiment that will actually test what we want," he says. "With humans, we can ask them a question and get an answer. But bees don't know that we want to know what they are thinking. They are just trying to get sugar. Bees like sugar."

GO ON

6 This fact can be very helpful when designing experiments to study bees. For example, in one experiment, Perry gave bees a choice between landing on a spot above a black bar or a spot below it. If they landed above the bar, they would find a delicious sugary drink. If they chose the spot below the black bar, they found a nasty-tasting bitter liquid. (Perry made the test easier or harder by moving the landing spots farther from or closer to the black bar.) Most experiments with bees involve training them to go to a particular spot to find a reward. Many studies use artificial flowers with sugar water at their centers. In some experiments bees even learn to go through mazes.

7 So experiments with bees are not that different from experiments with our favorite lab mammal, the rat. Rats press bars to get food pellets; bees land on targets to get sugary drinks. And humans try to figure out what it all means.

Am I Ready for the Test?

8 Perry’s research suggests that bees have something called “metacognition.” Metacognition is the awareness of your own thought processes—in other words, knowing what you know and what you don’t know. Only a few other animals, including humans, dolphins, rats, and some monkeys, are thought to have at least some level of metacognition.

9 Perry tested this using the experiment with the black bars described above. Bees got a sweet drink if they succeeded and a bitter one if they failed. But they also had the option of avoiding the task if they weren’t sure they would succeed. Perry found that bees avoided the test when it was difficult and gave it a try when it was easy.

10 If you had the choice, you might choose to skip a history test on a day when you hadn’t studied and take it on a day when you were better prepared. In the same way, the bees seemed to make a decision based on what they thought their chances were of “passing” the test. “With their behavior,” says Perry, “the bees were telling us if they ‘did know’ or if they ‘didn’t know.’ Our results show that bees use their uncertainty to guide their decisions, which is considered a basic form of metacognition.”

11 That’s not bad for a scant one million neurons. Perry points out that we can’t know for sure from tests like this whether bees are actually judging their own knowledge or simply opting out of the task because of an unpleasant association with the yucky-tasting liquid. It might have been more of an instinct than a thoughtful choice. But here’s the thing: we look for metacognition in other animals based on tests very similar to this one. If dolphins and rats are in the metacognition club, then bees should be let in too.

- 12 Scientists still do not know how bees manage to do so much with their tiny brains. It could be that skills such as simple math and navigation take far less actual brainpower than we previously thought. No one is suggesting that bees are as smart as mammals, at least not when it comes to things like memory and language. But learning more about how bees' brains work could help us learn more about how our own brains process information.
- 13 We may also have to rethink how we view the rest of the insect world. There are an awful lot of small creatures flying around in the garden and crawling around the basement. Who knows what those tiny minds might be capable of?

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 39 and 40.

Four men are afloat in a small boat, or dingey, trying to make it to shore after their larger ship has sunk.

Excerpt from *The Open Boat*

by Stephen Crane

1 None of them knew the colour of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save¹ for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colours of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks.

2 Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small boat navigation.

3 The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale² which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: "Gawd! That was a narrow clip." As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

4 The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.

5 The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

6 The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he commanded for a day or a decade, and this captain had on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down.

GO ON

Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

7 “Keep ‘er a little more south, Billie,” said he.

8 “ ‘A little more south,’ sir,” said the oiler in the stern.

9 A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and, by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.

10 A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slaty³ wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.

- 11 In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtlessly have been weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the colour of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the colour of the waves that rolled toward them.

¹**save:** synonym for “except”

²**gunwale:** top edge of a boat’s side

³**slaty:** like slate, a bluish-gray rock

GO ON

Directions
Read this poem. Then answer questions 41 through 43.

Sea Fever

by John Masefield

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

- 5 I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

- I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
10 To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted¹ knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn² from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

¹**whetted:** sharpened

²**yarn:** story

Planning Page

You may **PLAN** your writing for question 43 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 17 through 18.



Grade 8
2018
English Language Arts Test
Session 2
April 11–13, 2018

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234
2018 English Language Arts Tests Map to the Standards
Grade 8 Released Questions on EngageNY

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								
1	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading	0.90		
2	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Reading	0.81		
3	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading	0.41		
4	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Reading	0.85		
5	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Reading	0.60		
6	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4	Reading	0.78		
7	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6	Reading	0.68		
8	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.4	Reading	0.87		
9	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6	Reading	0.66		
10	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2	Reading	0.70		
11	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3	Reading	0.78		
12	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Reading	0.47		
13	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2	Reading	0.89		
14	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3	Reading	0.66		
15	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading	0.81		
16	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Reading	0.62		
17	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Reading	0.83		
18	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading	0.50		
19	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading	0.76		
20	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Reading	0.66		
21	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6	Reading	0.51		
Session 2								
36	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Writing to Sources		1.56	0.78
37	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Writing to Sources		1.52	0.76
38	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6	Writing to Sources		1.1	0.55
39	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Writing to Sources		1.38	0.69
40	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Writing to Sources		1.3	0.65
41	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Writing to Sources		1.46	0.73
42	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Writing to Sources		1.44	0.72
43	Constructed Response		4	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.6	Writing to Sources		2.36	0.59

*This item map is intended to identify the primary analytic skills necessary to successfully answer each question. 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.