



Our Students. Their Moment.

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

Released Questions

June 2017

New York State administered the English Language Arts Common Core Tests in April 2017 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 2017 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 2017 NYS Grades 3–8 Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematics test materials for review, discussion, and use.

For 2017, included in these released materials are at least 75 percent of the test questions that appeared on the 2017 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>.

2017 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 2017 Grade 8 Passages

Passage Title	Word Count	Lexile	Flesch Kincaid	Reading Maturity Metric*	Degrees of Reading Power*	Qualitative Review
Excerpt from One-Eyed Cat	989	1190L	6.9		56	Appropriate
Clash of the Condiments: Wasabi vs. the Chili Pepper	1027	900L	9		65	Appropriate
Excerpt from Humans With Amazing Senses	785	1150L	8.5		61	Appropriate
Excerpt from Birdology	1005	1240L	8		61	Appropriate
Excerpt from No Horizon Is So Far: Two Women and Their Extraordinary Journey Across Antarctica	1033	1110L	8		59	Appropriate
Excerpt from World Without Fish	1009	1180L	9.4		65	Appropriate
Excerpt from I.Q. Rising	702	1150L	10		64	Appropriate
Excerpt from “Who Are You Today, Maria?” from Call Me María	926	900L	5.6		52	Appropriate
Excerpt from The Watcher	960	1180L	7.4		57	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 2017 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

2017 Common Core English Language Arts Test Book 1

Grade 8

March 28–30, 2017

Released Questions

Excerpt from ONE-EYED CAT by Paula Fox. Copyright © 1984, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. Used by permission.

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Book 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 choosing your response.

D*irections* Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

Excerpt from *One-Eyed Cat*

by Paula Fox

Ned loved snow, the whisper when he walked through it, a sound like candles being blown out, the coming indoors out of it into the warmth, and standing on the register in the big hall through which the dusty, metal-smelling heat blew up, and the going back out again, shivering, cold, stooping and scooping up a handful to make a snowball, packing it
5 hard with wet mittens, hefting it, tossing it as far as he could, and the runners of his sled whispering across it as he sleighed down the slopes which were smooth and glittering and hard, like great jewels.

On the first of December, there was a heavy snowfall. When Ned looked out of his window the next morning, the river glowed like a snake made out of light as it wound
10 among the snow-covered mountains.

He ate breakfast hastily, too preoccupied to read the story on the cereal box. Mrs. Scallop¹ was broody this morning and left him alone, her glance passing over him as it passed over the kitchen chairs.

On the porch, he paused to take deep breaths of air which tasted, he imagined, like
15 water from the center of the ocean, then he waded into the snow, passing the Packard,² its windows white and hidden, the crabapple tree with its weighted branches, down the long hill trying to guess if he was anywhere near the buried driveway. By the time he reached Mr. Scully's house, his galoshes were topped with snow and his feet were wet. Mr. Scully's shades were drawn; the house had a pinched look as though it felt the cold.

20 Ned went around to the back until he could see the shed. There were boot tracks in the snow leading to it and returning to the back door. He guessed the old man had taken in the cat's bowl; it was nowhere to be seen. You couldn't leave anything out in this weather, it would freeze. Mr. Scully had told him that finding water in the winter was a big problem for animals. Licking the snow or ice could make them sick.

25 Ned stared hard at the shed. Perhaps the cat was inside, squeezed in behind logs in a tight space where its own breath would keep it warm. He was going to be late to school if he didn't get a move on, but he kept looking hard all over the yard as though he could make the cat appear out of snow and gray sky. Twice, his glance passed over the icebox. The third time, he saw that the motionless mound on top of it was not only the quilt but
30 the cat, joined into one shape by a dusting of snow.

¹ **Mrs. Scallop:** Ned's family's housekeeper

² **Packard:** a brand of car that is no longer manufactured

GO ON

Ned held his breath for a moment, then put his own feet in Mr. Scully's tracks and went toward the shed. The tracks had frozen and they crunched under Ned's weight, but the cat didn't raise its head. Ned halted a few feet away from it—but of course, he realized, it wouldn't hear him because of its deaf ear. He could have gone closer to it than he'd ever
35 been but he had a sudden vision of the cat exploding into fear when it finally did hear him.

When he got back to the front of the house, he saw fresh footsteps on the road. He could tell it was the road because of the deep ditches which fell away to either side. He guessed they were Billy's tracks. It was odd to think that Billy, huffing and puffing, had
40 gone past Mr. Scully's place, thinking his own thoughts, while he, Ned, only a few yards away, had been searching for the cat. He found Evelyn's tracks, too, and later on, Janet's, the smallest of all. He felt ghostly as if he'd been left alone on a white, silent globe.

Somewhere in the evergreen woods, snow must have slid off a bough, for he heard the loud plop, then the fainter sound of the bough springing up, relieved of the weight. He
45 thought about the cat, visualizing how it had looked on the quilt. How still it had been! Why hadn't he gone right up to it, looked at it close, touched its fur? Why had it been so motionless—still as death, still as a dead vole he'd seen last summer in the grass near the well? He came to the snow-covered blacktop road upon which a few cars had left their ridged tire tracks. He had a strong impulse to turn back, to play hooky for the first time in
50 his life. Mr. Scully, with his poor eyesight, might not spot the cat on top of the icebox, might not, then, set food out for it. Fretting and shivering, his feet numb, Ned went on to school.

He tried very hard to concentrate on his lessons, to watch Miss Jefferson's plump, even handwriting on the blackboard as she wrote out the lines from a poem by Thomas Gray
55 that the class was to memorize that week, but try as he might, the image of the unmoving animal on the ragged old quilt persisted. Last week, on a rainy afternoon, the cat had looked at Ned, had cocked its head as though to see him better. Its one eye, narrowed, had reminded him of a grain of wheat.

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
60 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea . . .”

Ned read the lines several times before copying them down in his copybook. The words made no sense to him. It was this that had made his hours in school so hard ever since he and Mr. Scully had seen the cat last autumn, this drawing away of his attention from everything that was going on around him. He was either relieved because the cat was
65 where he could see it or fearful because he didn't know where it was.

1 Read these words from lines 18 and 19.

Mr. Scully’s shades were drawn; the house had a pinched look as though it felt the cold.

The use of the words “pinched look” contributes to the tone of the story by making the house seem

- A** tense
- B** angry
- C** uncertain
- D** disappointed

2 Lines 20 through 24 contribute to the development of the plot by

- A** showing that Ned and Mr. Scully are friends
- B** describing the challenges of dealing with heavy snow
- C** suggesting that Mr. Scully has been neglecting the cat
- D** describing weather conditions that can be dangerous for the cat

3 In lines 31 through 36, Ned keeps his distance from the cat because he

- A** envisions the cat being sick from licking ice or snow
- B** believes the cat will make him late to school
- C** imagines the cat will become panicked
- D** remembers the cat is deaf and unlikely to respond

GO ON

4 Lines 37 through 42 in the story reveal that Ned feels

- A isolated
- B confused
- C relieved
- D confident

5 Ned's decision to leave the cat causes

- A the cat to become more afraid
- B Ned to be left behind by the other children
- C the cat to go hungry for the rest of the day
- D Ned to be distracted from his work during school

6 Which quotation **best** supports a central theme of the story?

- A "He ate breakfast hastily, too preoccupied to read the story on the cereal box." (line 11)
- B "Twice, his glance passed over the icebox." (line 28)
- C ". . . but try as he might, the image of the unmoving animal on the ragged old quilt persisted." (lines 55 and 56)
- D "Ned read the lines several times before copying them down in his copybook." (line 61)

Which quotation from the story **best** shows how the cat has impacted Ned's life?

- A** "He was going to be late to school if he didn't get a move on, but he kept looking hard all over the yard as though he could make the cat appear out of snow and gray sky."
(lines 26 through 28)
- B** "The third time, he saw that the motionless mound on top of it was not only the quilt but the cat, joined into one shape by a dusting of snow." (lines 29 and 30)
- C** "It was odd to think that Billy, huffing and puffing, had gone past Mr. Scully's place, thinking his own thoughts, while he, Ned, only a few yards away, had been searching for the cat." (lines 39 through 41)
- D** "It was this that had made his hours in school so hard ever since he and Mr. Scully had seen the cat last autumn, this drawing away of his attention from everything that was going on around him." (lines 62 through 64)

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 22 through 28.

Clash of the Condiments: Wasabi vs. the Chili Pepper

by Mary Beth Cox

Most condiments are peaceable enough. The sauces, spreads, and pickles of the world add flavor to our foods without kicking up much of a fuss. This is not true of the pungent or “hot” condiments. They are more aggressive. They get our attention by purposely causing us pain. These strong-armed seasonings are often the source of friendly
5 competitions. Loyal fans will contend that their favorite pungent condiment is the one that packs the most powerful punch. Ladies and gentlemen, you are cordially welcomed to just such a contest. Here it is, the Match of the Moment: Wasabi vs. the Chili Pepper.

IN YOUR CORNERS

Introducing in the Green Corner, hailing from the island nation of Japan, sushi’s inseparable sidekick: Wasabi! *Wasabia japonica* grows wild on the cool, damp banks of
10 Japan’s many mountain streams. The chill of its habitat is quite ironic since wasabi is famous for bringing the heat. The plant is a botanical relative of mustard and horseradish. Pungency runs in the family. Traditionally, wasabi is prepared by grating its rootstock on the abrasive skin of an angel shark. Authentic wasabi is relatively rare and difficult to come by. The emerald condiment that is served outside of Japan is almost always
15 horseradish pulp dyed with green food coloring. Whether the wasabi is real or whether it’s the more common substitute, a whopping snootful will make you cry for your momma!

And in the red corner, originating from the Central and South Americas, now an international culinary superstar: the Chili Pepper. Chili peppers are fruits of the plants of the botanical genus *Capsicum*. They are related to the tomato and the eggplant. They’re
20 the renegades in an otherwise mild-mannered botanical family. Chili peppers include but are not limited to the poblano, the cayenne, the jalapeño, the tabasco, the habanero, and the serrano. One of these culprits sometimes goes by the alias “chipotle.” A chipotle (pronounced chee-POHT-lay) is none other than a dried smoked jalapeño. Chilies were introduced to the non-American world by Christopher Columbus, who mistakenly
25 identified them as variants of black pepper. Chilies have since taken the culinary world by storm. They appear alongside dishes served around the globe, from the Basque provinces to North Africa and the Middle East, to India and Southeast Asia. A potent chili pepper in the kisser will make you rue the day you were born!

GO ON

POWERFUL PUNCHES

Both wasabi and chilies are condiments of world-class pungency. But how do they
30 match up head to head? Each has its own unique tactical move. Each has its own special
point of attack. The active ingredient of the wasabi plant is stored stealthily in its cells.
Under normal growing conditions, this ingredient is completely harmless. It's not until the
plant's cells are ruptured (as by the grating action of angel shark skin) that the trouble
begins. *Enzymes* convert the ingredient into molecules of allyl isothiocyanate. It's the
35 chemical characteristics of these irritating molecules that are the secret to wasabi's
pungency. Allyl isothiocyanate molecules are lightweight. They are *volatile*. They are also
soluble in water. As a consequence, the consumption of wasabi launches an airborne
assault on the consumer's sinuses. Allyl isothiocyanate molecules waft up the nose and
back of the throat. They dissolve in the watery fluids they find there. They intercept nerve
40 endings in the nasal passages. Specifically, these molecules target pain receptors of the
type known as TRPA₁. TRPA₁ receptors respond to the attack by sending emergency
signals to the brain: "Yikes . . . we've gotten hold of something painfully hot!"

Chili peppers conduct operations of a different sort. Their active ingredient is a
substance called capsaicin. It's found in the spongy inner tissue of peppers, but it can leak
45 onto the seeds and inner wall of the fruit. Capsaicin molecules are heavier than the
molecules of wasabi's allyl isothiocyanate. They are not volatile. They prefer to dissolve in
oils, so they aren't as easily dissolved in water. Capsaicin molecules instigate an incendiary
assault upon contact with exposed vulnerable surfaces. They cling to the tender tissues of
the lips, mouth, and throat. They burn eyes that are rubbed with capsaicin-laced fingers.
50 Capsaicin molecules interact with pain receptors of the type TRPV₁. Again an alert is
expedited to the brain: "Mayday! Mayday! Let's not eat any more of that, please!"

WHERE'S THE REFEREE?

So which of these condiments causes the most pain? To settle any contest, a scoring
system is required. There is a way to compare the relative heat intensities of the various
chili peppers. It's called the *Scoville scale*. Scoville ratings are determined by brave human
55 test subjects who willingly sip extracts of chili pepper juice. Extracted juices are diluted
again and again until their heat can no longer be detected. A high rating on the Scoville
scale means that a lot of dilutions are necessary to eliminate the pain caused by a
particular pepper. Unfortunately, Scoville ratings are not applicable to wasabi. The method
is specifically designed to extract capsaicin from chili peppers. It doesn't work for allyl
60 isothiocyanate, or for anything else.

Pepper pungencies are also compared by using chromatography. *Chromatography* is an analytical technique that separates the chemical components of a mixture. After separation, the amounts of each component are quantified. Chromatography can determine how much capsaicin is in a pepper. It can also determine how much allyl isothiocyanate is in wasabi. If two chili peppers have the same amount of capsaicin, it can be assumed that those peppers are equally “hot.” But the same assumption cannot be made when comparing chili peppers to wasabi. There’s no way to know if equal amounts of capsaicin and allyl isothiocyanate cause equal degrees of pain. So chromatography cannot definitively judge this contest.

It isn’t even possible to directly measure and compare nerve responses, since two different types of pain receptors are involved. Wasabi and chili peppers are like pungent apples and oranges. There’s no objective way to declare one more potent than the other. This friendly competition won’t be settled anytime soon. Everyone is free to chime in with an opinion. You just have to try both of these pungent powerhouses, then root for your own favorite flavor of pain.

22 How do lines 1 through 7 **mainly** establish the tone of the article?

- A They create curiosity by inviting the reader to provide an opinion on the two condiments.
- B They create interest by describing loyal fans supporting their favorite condiment.
- C They create humor by personifying two condiments in an imagined contest.
- D They create tension by analyzing the popularity of two condiments.

23 Read lines 25 and 26 from the article.

Chilies have since taken the culinary world by storm.

Which detail **best** supports the author's claim?

- A Chili peppers come in many varieties.
- B Chili peppers are used in many different countries.
- C Chili peppers are related to tomatoes and eggplants.
- D Chili peppers were mistakenly thought to resemble black pepper.

24 Read this sentence from lines 37 and 38 of the article.

As a consequence, the consumption of wasabi launches an airborne assault on the consumer's sinuses.

What does the phrase "airborne assault" add to the author's description?

- A It explains the effect of experiencing the molecules in wasabi.
- B It suggests a painful experience that makes wasabi undesirable.
- C It warns that direct contact with wasabi causes injury.
- D It cautions that wasabi causes an intense repeated attack occurring over time.

GO ON

- 25** What is the role of the section “Powerful Punches” in the development of the article?
- A** It describes the physical differences between wasabi and chili peppers.
 - B** It explains the best ways to experience the heat from wasabi and chili peppers.
 - C** It describes why wasabi and chili peppers are both enjoyable and painful to consume.
 - D** It provides a scientific explanation for the effects of consuming wasabi and chili peppers.
- 26** The Scoville scale determines the strength of the heat in chili peppers by
- A** counting the number of sips of chili pepper juice a human subject can consume
 - B** recording the amount of capsaicin present in specific amounts of chili pepper juice
 - C** measuring how much chili pepper juice must be weakened for it to no longer cause pain
 - D** comparing descriptions of the heat a human subject feels while drinking chili pepper juice
- 27** What is the result of being unable to use the Scoville scale to measure the heat strength of wasabi?
- A** Chromatography is used to compare the heat strengths of wasabi and chili peppers.
 - B** Comparing the heat strengths of wasabi and chili peppers using a scientific method is impossible.
 - C** A new scale will be developed to compare the degree of pain caused by wasabi and chili peppers.
 - D** Experts now rely on a scale based on measuring consumer pain responses to wasabi and chili peppers.

GO ON

Read this sentence from lines 71 and 72 of the article.

Wasabi and chili peppers are like pungent apples and oranges.

Which evidence from the article **best** supports this statement?

- A “They get our attention by purposely causing us pain.” (lines 3 and 4)
- B “After separation, the amounts of each component are quantified.” (lines 62 and 63)
- C “If two chili peppers have the same amount of capsaicin, it can be assumed that those peppers are equally ‘hot.’” (lines 65 and 66)
- D “There’s no way to know if equal amounts of capsaicin and allyl isothiocyanate cause equal degrees of pain.” (lines 67 and 68)

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 29 through 35.

Excerpt from *Humans With Amazing Senses*

When bats go out to hunt, they send out sonar signals at such high frequencies and in such rapid bursts that they can hear the signals bounce off mosquitoes in midair. They then zero in on the insects like laser-guided missiles. Dolphins use the same technique to find their dinners. It's called echolocation, a technique that uses sound to identify objects by the echoes they produce.

Fourteen-year-old Ben Underwood of Sacramento, Calif., is one of the few people known to use echolocation as a primary means of navigating the world on land. There's not even a hint of light reaching his brain. His eyes are artificial, but his brain has adapted to allow him to appraise his environment. He makes a "clicking" sound to communicate with objects and people around him.

Scientists have discovered that in the brains of the blind, the visual cortex has not become useless, as they once believed. When blind people use another sense—touch or hearing, for example—to substitute for sight, the brain's visual cortex becomes active, even though no images reach it from the optic nerve. Echolocation creates its own images.

"I can hear that wall behind you over there. I can hear right there—the radio, and the fan," Ben says.

Ben says every object in his life talks to him in ways that no one else can hear or understand.

Forty-year-old Daniel Kish of Long Beach, Calif., also uses echolocation, and has become an expert on it, founding the World Access for the Blind, an organization that teaches others how to echolocate. Kish leads other blind people on mountain biking tours and hikes in the wilderness, visualizing and describing the picturesque sights around him through echolocating.

Clicking to Do Anything

If you listen closely to Ben or Kish, you can hear how they find their way. Ben says he can distinguish where the curbs are as he cruises his neighborhood streets.

He can find the pole and the backboard on a basketball goal, and tell which is which by the distinctive echo each makes. Even though he can't see the goal he's aiming for, he can sink a basket. Ben doesn't remember how or when he began clicking, but he's developed his abilities to such an extent that aside from echolocation, he can rapidly discriminate the sounds in video games.

GO ON

Ben lost his sight when he was 2. He was diagnosed with cancer in both eyes, and when chemotherapy failed, his mother, Aquanetta Gordon, was left with one option: For her son to live, both his eyes had to be surgically removed.

Gordon remembers her son after the operation.

35 “He woke up and he said, ‘Mom, I can’t see anymore, I can’t see anymore.’ And I took his hands and I put them on my face and I said, ‘Baby, yes, you can see.’ I said, ‘You can see with your hands.’ And then I put my hand on his nose and I said, ‘You smell me? You can see with your nose and your ears. . . . You can’t use your eyes anymore, but you have your hands and your nose and your ears.’”

40 In a house already filled with three other children, Ben’s mother decided not to treat his blindness as a handicap. In school, Ben recognizes his classmates by their voices. With the help of Braille books and a talking laptop computer, Ben attends the same classes as sighted students.

Rich Mental Images, Without Visual Elements

45 Like Ben, Kish also lost his eyesight to cancer at age 1. He was raised to believe he could do pretty much anything, and he discovered clicking by accident as a child.

“I have mental images that are very rich, very complex. They simply do not possess the visual element,” Kish says.

In retrieving those pictures, Kish varies the pace and volume of his clicks as he walks along; and what he can tell you about an object’s qualities is sometimes
50 astonishingly thorough.

If bats can distinguish prey as small as mosquitoes with echolocation, and some dolphins can detect small targets a hundred yards away, what are the ultimate capabilities of human beings like Ben and Kish?

55 Peter Scheifele, who studies hearing and sound production in animals and people at the University of Connecticut, analyzed samples of the clicks that Ben and Kish make.

“Ben clicks, looks to me like once every half second, whereas a dolphin is actually making 900 clicks per second. And the bat is even faster than that,” Scheifele says.

The bottom line: Human beings send out sounds at much slower rates and lower frequencies, so the objects people can picture with echolocation must be much larger than
60 the ones bats and dolphins can find.

- 29** Which statement expresses a central idea of the article?
- A** Very few people use echolocation in their daily lives.
 - B** Echolocation is a technique that can be utilized by humans.
 - C** Echolocation has been studied by scientists for many years.
 - D** Some animals are known for using echolocation to find food.

- 30** How do lines 1–5 contribute to the understanding of the text?
- A** by showing the widespread use of echolocation by animals
 - B** by giving examples to explain how echolocation works
 - C** by presenting the characteristics of animals that use echolocation
 - D** by describing how each species uses echolocation differently

- 31** In people who are blind, the visual cortex seems to help
- A** activate the optic nerve where images are formed
 - B** increase the amount of light reaching the brain
 - C** create images in the brain based on sounds
 - D** make echoes of sounds from clicks

GO ON

32

Read this sentence from lines 17 and 18.

Ben says every object in his life talks to him in ways that no one else can hear or understand.

Which quotation **best** supports this claim?

- A “He can find the pole and the backboard on a basketball goal, and tell which is which by the distinctive echo each makes.” (lines 26 and 27)
- B “Even though he can’t see the goal he’s aiming for, he can sink a basket.” (lines 27 and 28)
- C “In school, Ben recognizes his classmates by their voices.” (line 41)
- D “With the help of Braille books and a talking laptop computer, Ben attends the same classes as sighted students.” (lines 41 through 43)

33

Read Daniel Kish’s claim from line 46.

“I have mental images that are very rich, very complex.”

Which quotation from the article **best** supports this claim?

- A “. . . Kish of Long Beach, Calif., also uses echolocation, and has become an expert on it. . . .” (lines 19 and 20)
- B “He was raised to believe he could do pretty much anything. . . .” (lines 44 and 45)
- C “. . . Kish varies the pace and volume of his clicks as he walks along. . . .” (lines 48 and 49)
- D “. . . what he can tell you about an object’s qualities is sometimes astonishingly thorough.” (lines 49 and 50)

- 34** How do lines 51 through 53 develop a key concept of the article?
- A** by using a comparison to suggest the echolocation potential of humans
 - B** by demonstrating that humans use echolocation more effectively than animals do
 - C** by describing why using echolocation benefits bats and dolphins in unique ways
 - D** by showing that scientists need more time to study echolocation techniques
- 35** Echolocation used by humans is distinct from echolocation used by animals because animals can
- A** create louder clicking noises
 - B** distinguish among more sounds
 - C** see objects that are farther away
 - D** locate objects that are smaller in size

STOP

Grade 8
2017 Common Core
English Language Arts Test
Book 1
March 28–30, 2017

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2017 Common Core English Language Arts Test Book 2

Grade 8

March 28–30, 2017

Released Questions

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TIPS FOR TAKING THE TEST

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- 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 choosing your answer or writing your response.
- For written-response questions, 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 passage. Then answer questions 36 through 42.

In this excerpt, the author talks about introducing her chickens to her yard.

Excerpt from *Birdology*

by Sy Montgomery

At first I was afraid they'd run away or become lost. We had a cozy, secure home for them prepared in the bottom storey of our barn, with wood shavings scattered over the dirt floor, a dispenser for fresh water, a trough for chick feed, some low perches made from dowels, and a hay-lined nest box made from an old rabbit hutch left over from one
5 of the barn's previous denizens, in which they could lay future eggs. Chickens need to be closed in safe at night to protect them from predators, but by day we didn't want to confine them; we wanted to give them free run of the yard. But how could they possibly understand that they lived here now? Once we let them out, would they even recognize their space in the barn and go back in it? When I was in seventh grade, my family had
10 moved, once again, to a new house; my first afternoon there I literally got lost in my own backyard. Could these six-week-old chicks be expected to know better?

Gretchen assured me there would be no problem. "Leave them in the pen for twenty-four hours," she told me. "Then you can let them out and they'll stick around. They'll go back in again when it starts to get dark."

15 "But how do they know?" I asked.

"They just do," she said. "Chickens just know these things."

When before dusk, I found them all perched calmly back in their coop, I saw that Gretchen was right.

20 In fact, chickens know many things, some from the moment they are born. Like all members of the order in which they are classified, the Galliformes, or game birds, just-hatched baby chickens are astonishingly mature and mobile, able to walk, peck, and run only hours after leaving the egg.

25 This developmental strategy is called precocial. Like its opposite, the altricial strategy (employed by creatures such as humans and songbirds, who are born naked and helpless), the precocial strategy was sculpted by eons of adaptation to food and predators. If your nest is on the ground, as most game birds' are, it's a good idea to get your babies out of there as quickly as possible before someone comes to eat them. So newborn game birds hatch covered in down, eyes open, and leave the nest within twenty-four hours. (An Australian game bird known as the malleefowl begins its life by digging its way out of
30 its nest of decaying vegetation and walks off into the bush without ever even meeting either parent.)

GO ON

That chickens hatch from the egg knowing how to walk, run, peck, and scratch has an odd consequence: many people take this as further evidence they are stupid. But instinct is not stupidity. (After all, Einstein was born knowing how to suckle.) Nor does instinct preclude learning. Unlike my disoriented seventh-grade self (and I have not improved much since), young chickens have a great capacity for spatial learning. In scientific experiments, researchers have trained days-old chicks to find hidden food using both distant and nearby landmarks as cues. Italian researchers demonstrated that at the tender age of fifteen days, after just a week's training to find hidden food in the middle of their cage, chicks can correctly calculate the center of a given environment—even in the absence of distinctive landmarks. Even more astonishing, they can do it in spaces they have never seen before, whether the area be circular, square, or triangular. How? The chicks “probably relied on a visual estimate of these distances from their actual positions,” wrote University of Padova researcher L. Tommasi and co-authors in the *Journal of Comparative Physiology*, “. . . [but] it remains to be determined how the chicks actually measure distances in the task.”

We never determined how our first chickens knew their new home was theirs, either. We never knew how they managed to discern the boundaries of our property. But they did. At first, they liked to stay near the coop. But as they grew, they took to following me everywhere, first cheeping like the tinkling of little bells, later clucking in animated adult discussion. If I was hanging out the laundry, they would check what was in the laundry basket. If I was weeding a flower bed, they would join me, raking the soil with their strong, scaly feet, then stepping backward to see what was revealed. (Whenever I worked with soil, I suspect they assumed I was digging for worms.) When my husband, Howard, and I would eat at the picnic table under the big silver maple, the Ladies would accompany us. When my father-in-law came to help my husband build a pen for Christopher Hogwood, then still a piglet, the Ladies milled underfoot to supervise every move. The hens were clearly interested in the project, pecking at the shiny nails, standing tall to better observe the use of tools, clucking a running commentary all the while. Before this experience, Howard's dad would have been the first to say that he didn't think chickens were that smart. But they changed his mind. After a few hours I noticed he began to address them. Picking up a hammer they were examining, he might say, directly and respectfully, “Pardon me, Ladies”—as if he were speaking to my mother-in-law and me when we got in the way.

But when their human friends are inside, and this is much of the time, the Ladies explore on their own. A chicken can move as fast as nine miles an hour, which can take you pretty far, and ours are free to go anywhere they like. But ours have intuited our property lines and confine their travels to its boundaries. They have never crossed the street. And for years, they never hopped across the low stone wall separating our land from that of our closest neighbor. That came later—and it was not the result of any physical change in the landscape, but the outcome of a change in social relationships among their human friends.

- 36** Lines 1 through 11 **best** support the idea that the author
- A** is fearful the chicks will be vulnerable to predators
 - B** is unsure about what she can expect the chicks to understand
 - C** wants the chicks to explore the yard she has set up for their needs
 - D** has not planned how she will teach the chicks to adjust to a new environment

- 37** Based on lines 12 through 18, which statement **best** describes the exchange between Gretchen and the author?

- A** Gretchen proves a point, and the author feels embarrassed.
- B** Gretchen gives the author advice, and the author learns from it.
- C** Gretchen comforts the author, and the author feels more confident.
- D** Gretchen shares her personal experiences, and the author criticizes them.

- 38** What do lines 23 through 31 indicate about the developmental strategy of chickens?

- A** Chickens are adapted to food availability and pressure from predators.
- B** Chickens are born ready and require no further maturing.
- C** Chickens have a faster growth rate than other birds.
- D** Baby chickens spend no time with their parents.

39 Lines 49 through 59 develop the key idea that chickens raised by humans

- A** are curious about the activities of their caregivers
- B** become a nuisance to the other projects of their owners
- C** grow to prefer the company of people over other chickens
- D** develop their intelligence more than chickens raised by hens

40 Read lines 36 through 42 from the passage.

In scientific experiments, researchers have trained days-old chicks to find hidden food using both distant and nearby landmarks as cues. Italian researchers demonstrated that at the tender age of fifteen days, after just a week’s training to find hidden food in the middle of their cage, chicks can correctly calculate the center of a given environment—even in the absence of distinctive landmarks. Even more astonishing, they can do it in spaces they have never seen before, whether the area be circular, square, or triangular.

How do these lines relate to lines 59 through 64?

- A** Lines 36 through 42 express an opinion, and lines 59 through 64 provide support.
- B** Lines 36 through 42 identify why something happens, and lines 59 through 64 describe what happens.
- C** Lines 36 through 42 present facts, and lines 59 through 64 support the facts with a personal experience.
- D** Lines 36 through 42 provide a comparison, and lines 59 through 64 provide evidence for the comparison.

- 41** Which claim do lines 65 through 72 support?
- A** The chickens stay where they do as a direct result of what the author has taught them.
 - B** The chickens do what they do because of their interactions with their environment.
 - C** The chickens stay where they do because they are unfamiliar with other areas.
 - D** The chickens do what they do as a result of trial and error.
- 42** How does the author's attitude toward the chickens change from the beginning of the passage to the end?
- A** It varies from fear for their safety to gratitude for winning over the author's father-in-law.
 - B** It shifts from being uncertain about their abilities to being amazed at their complex ways.
 - C** As she observes the behavior of the chickens, she realizes their learning keeps pace with the risks they take.
 - D** As she gains confidence in her ability to raise her chickens, she comes to appreciate their self-sufficiency.

D*irections* Read this article. Then answer questions 43 and 44.

Excerpt from *No Horizon Is So Far: Two Women and Their Extraordinary Journey Across Antarctica*

by Liv Arnesen and Ann Bancroft with Cheryl Dahle

Ann woke me at 7:30 on our first morning on the ice. I hadn't slept well. I was still jittery and apprehensive from the wait, like a runner poised in the starting blocks too long. My muscles tingled with pent-up nervous energy. It would be several days into our trek up the Sigyn Glacier before I slept well. Ann fired up the stove to melt ice for the coffee and cocoa mixture that was to become our staple pick-me-up in the morning.
5 It took four hours every day (two hours each morning and two hours each evening) to melt enough ice for one day for the two of us. We would keep the water in insulated thermoses to prevent it from freezing again. We used that water to make all our hot drinks, as well as prepare our food, 80 percent of which consisted of dehydrated meals.

10 My least favorite of the dried food was the dreaded oatmeal. Neither Ann nor I was particularly fond of oatmeal, especially when it was laced with cooking oil to add extra fat. It tasted like oat-flavored glue and left an oily residue in my mouth. But it was the most efficient way to make a dent in the high-calorie diet we had to consume each day to stay healthy. Each of us burned between 4,200 and 5,000 calories a day—more than twice the
15 average amount—and if we didn't raise our food intake accordingly, our bodies would start to consume themselves, feeding on muscle to avoid starvation. Still, we would spend a few days hauling our sleds on the ice before we were hungry enough to stomach our full morning ration.

20 Our tent was a red tunnel of fabric with two small foyers, one at the tent opening and the other at the rear. It was about 3.5 feet (1.1 m) tall, so one could sit up inside but walk only hunched far over. We designated the rear foyer as our "kitchen"; this way, whoever was on cooking duty could have space to move about. While Ann sorted through our color-coded food bags for oatmeal packets, I slipped out of my sleeping bag and out of the tent. The view was just breathtaking, like nothing I had seen during my first trip to the
25 continent. Queen Maud Land is rockier than my previous starting point had been. Everywhere I looked, I could see jagged black rocks and glinting white ice and snow. Hidden by that beauty was much danger as well: bottomless chasms in the ice that could swallow us and our sleds with one false step. The intense duality of this place was for me part of its lure.

GO ON

30 When I met Ann, her plan then was to begin the crossing from Berkner Island, the most common starting point for trans-Antarctic expeditions. Berkner is at the narrowest span of the continent, where it seems as if the land had been cinched in by a belt, making for the shortest route across. But I had just read *In the Teeth of the Wind*, a book about two Belgians who had skied and sailed a trek that began in Queen Maud Land. I was
35 fascinated by this route, partly because it was relatively unexplored, and partly because of the challenge it presented as the farthest region from our destination point. Starting there would make our route one of the longest ever attempted. And because Ann and I represented the United States and Norway, I thought it would be fun to start from the Norwegian sector of Antarctica, go through the Amundsen-Scott Base at the South Pole
40 (an American research station) to the final point of McMurdo, another American scientific station. I was happy that Ann was intrigued enough by the same points to agree on the different starting location.

I looked south toward Sigyn Glacier. I wished we had time to detour and touch the mountains on either side of the glacier. It was more than tempting. But we were already
45 behind schedule, so we would merely pass between them. By Antarctic standards, the weather was balmy: 10°F (−12°C). I was comfortable standing outside in my long woolen underwear. I couldn't believe we were finally here. The waiting weeks in Cape Town had been frustrating for Einar as well as for me. I could hear the relief in his voice in the last phone call from Cape Town. He loves skiing as much as I do and I hoped for his sake that
50 the winter would come early in Norway. I knew that on the trek ahead, when I would be putting all my weight and strength into pulling my sled through the sticky snow, I would catch myself wishing I were at home gliding behind Einar through the forest with light cross-country equipment and in perfect ski tracks.

“Haaaloh!”

55 I was pulled from my reverie by Stannie, the Slovakian whose food had spoiled while he waited for transport in Punta Arenas and had shared the plane with us. He was attempting to travel across the continent by himself and had camped about sixty feet from us for the first night. He was a small skinny man, and though he spoke little English, Ann and I had exchanged friendly gestures and smiles with him. He was very sweet, and we
60 were intrigued by his equipment, which was so different from ours. He had constructed a strange contraption to get him across the ice, a sort of tractor seat on shocks that was lashed to skis and harnessed to a sail. His idea was to sit down while the wind pulled him along. Ann and I were a little skeptical. That sitting position would give him no ability to shift his weight, steer properly, or react quickly if he fell into a crevasse. The idea would've
65 worked on a flat, frozen sea, but for this rough terrain it was very optimistic—like trying to ski across Antarctica in a La-Z-Boy recliner. But what he lacked in experience he more than made up for in enthusiasm and childlike wonder. Watching him stand outside his tent and wave both arms above his head, I had to smile.

GO ON

43

What is Liv Arnesen’s attitude toward eating oatmeal in lines 10 through 18? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

44

What is a central idea of lines 19 through 29 of “Excerpt from *No Horizon Is So Far: Two Women and Their Extraordinary Journey Across Antarctica*”? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

Directions
Read this article. Then answer question 45.

Excerpt from *World Without Fish*

by Mark Kurlansky

It would seem that the simplest and surest solution to helping fish repopulate the oceans would be to just stop all fishing. After all, a complete end to fishing would remove a constant and important predator from the food chain. But while it might save the fish in the short term, we can't predict what the environmental impact of suddenly removing a major predator from the ocean would do to the Earth's natural order.

What's more, fish have been a staple of the human diet for hundreds of thousands of years. It is an extremely healthy source of protein, and fish, especially the mid-water varieties, are often prescribed by cardiologists to patients with heart disease. And lastly, of course, completely eliminating fishing would destroy peoples' lives.

To see this requires only a glimpse at modern Newfoundland. After the codfish ban in the 1990s, Newfoundland lost its way of life. Not only were the fishermen put out of work, so were the people who processed fish, and the people who marketed fish, and the people who transported fish. Most of the population, in fact, was out of work, supported solely by the money handed out from the Canadian government to help them.

The cod never returned to Newfoundland and life changed. Where there had been cod, there was now crab. The fishermen were not certain if these crab had moved in because of the absence of the predator, cod, or if they had simply always been there but no one had cared until the cod was gone.

Inshore fishermen who had been getting eighteen and a half cents a pound for cod were now getting a dollar and sixty cents Canadian for crab. Gone were the thirty-foot open-deck skiffs from which the inshore fishermen trapped cod. Now the inshore fishermen drag up their skiffs to lie in the weeds, and buy bigger boats to go farther out and set baited traps. The offshore fishermen started crabbing, too. The draggers removed the huge spools of net from their sterns and hauled in crab traps on pulleys fixed on the sides of the boats. The fish-processing plants were now all crab-processing plants. But it was a short season—about two months in the summer, and only 25,000 pounds of crab were allowed for each license.

Along with the environmental loss, Newfoundland lost its culture. Human beings are part of the natural order, so it's not surprising to find human society follows the same natural laws as biology. Just as species need diversity in order to survive and prosper, it may be that human civilization needs a wide variety of cultures, different ways of life, in order to survive and prosper. We live in a world in which cultures and ways of life are vanishing at an enormous rate. In the United States alone, thousands of family farms

GO ON

35 are closed down every year, changing the relationship of people to the land, the
nature of rural life, and the kind of food we eat. Online shopping is threatening the
culture of shopkeepers. The world is losing many of its languages. Only eighty-three out
of 7,000 languages are commonly spoken today, and linguists estimate that a language
from somewhere on earth dies as frequently as every other week.

40 Many things, not just fish, are in danger of extinction. Fishermen are in danger
of extinction. As with animal species, whenever anything is threatened with extinction,
it is worthwhile to ask what will take its place. In the case of fishermen, it appears to
be tourism.

In Newfoundland, that's already happened. The grocery stores and little shops in just
about every little fishing village have started selling souvenirs to visitors. What kind of
45 souvenirs? Cod. Cod hats, cod T-shirts, cod-shaped chocolates, cod-shaped cookies, cod
ornaments and sculptures and business-card holders. One line of cod cookies was labeled
"endangered species." In the ultimate irony, the restaurants that cater to tourists import
cod for their menus because when people travel to Newfoundland, they want to eat cod.

50 When the parks department of Canada proposed turning Bonavista Bay, a one-time
inshore fishing ground, into an aquatic reserve for tourists, the fishermen rebelled. This is
one of fishermen's most dreaded scenarios—that their boats will end up in museums and
their fishing grounds will be used only for viewing sea life, like the great African plains
where tourists go to view animals. The Bonavista Bay fishermen mounted such a
vociferous opposition to this plan for their future that the project was dropped.

55 This tension between the tourism and fishing industries, really a struggle for the
character and culture of coastlines, can be seen along many of the seashores of the world.

Fishing has always attracted people. Many of the most famous fishing ports have
drawn artists and writers. One of the most important movements in modern art, fauvism,
began in May of 1905 when French painters Henri Matisse and André Derain went to the
60 Mediterranean anchovy port of Collioure and painted the colorful fishing boats in pure,
bright colors. Rudyard Kipling's famous book, *Captains Courageous*, is about a boy who
accidentally serves on a Gloucester schooner to the Grand Banks, and the American
classic *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville starts in the New Bedford and Nantucket
whale fisheries.

65 Fishing has always been at the heart of the culture of nations with coastlines. And at
first glance, it would seem that tourism and fishing could coexist well. Tourists, like artists,
love working fishing towns. But in the conflict between the interests of tourism and
fishing, waterfront space becomes a vital issue. Yacht owners pay prices fishermen can't
afford for harbor-front mooring and dock space. In the end, they compete for almost
70 everything. A world without fishing would be sad. Coastlines would lose their meaning
and coastal people would lose their culture and their primary way of earning money. It
was a way of life for thousands of years without destroying the environment. And so
governments, fishermen, and scientists need to work together to find a way to fish without
destroying the fish.

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 45 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 13 and 14.



Grade 8
2017 Common Core
English Language Arts Test
Book 2
March 28–30, 2017

Name: _____



New York State Testing Program

2017 Common Core English Language Arts Test Book 3

Grade 8

March 28–30, 2017

Released Questions

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- 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 46 and 47.

Excerpt from *I.Q. Rising*

by Patricia Cohen

When the social scientist James R. Flynn started analyzing more than 50 years' worth of I.Q. scores, he noticed something peculiar. On tests that assessed vocabulary used in everyday life, adults showed enormous gains—nearly 18 points. That made sense. Many more people attend college and work in professions now than in 1950. But when he
5 examined children's scores, he was surprised by how far behind they lagged. Usually facility with words trickles down; children hear and absorb parents' expanded vocabulary and discussions. But that hadn't happened. Children's I.Q. showed only a 4.4 percent gain.

"I.Q. gains over time pose interesting questions about American society," Mr. Flynn said, speaking from his home in Otago, New Zealand, "and this is one of the most interesting."

10 Mr. Flynn is accustomed to puzzling questions. After uncovering one of the most intriguing mysteries surrounding intelligence research—that each generation has significantly higher I.Q. scores than the previous one—he has spent more than 25 years trying to explain why.

15 The reason, Mr. Flynn says, is not that the human brain suddenly and rapidly evolved. Rather, with modernization, we have come to look at the world through what he calls "scientific spectacles." We now reflexively organize information into abstract categories and discern complex relationships between concepts—the very skills that intelligence tests assess. The average 30-point rise in scores during the past century is now known as the Flynn effect.

20 Mr. Flynn revisits this groundbreaking work in his new book, "Are We Getting Smarter? Rising IQ in the Twenty-First Century," as well as in more recent research on I.Q. gains for women and for populations in the developing world. In findings announced this summer, Mr. Flynn showed that women for the first time had pulled ahead of men, possibly a result of the more demanding roles women have assumed as they juggle family
25 and jobs, and their increased access to higher education.

Of course, I.Q. testing remains a contentious area of social science. But Mr. Flynn's research shows that whatever it is an I.Q. test measures, scores are mutable.¹ He resists the current fashion of seeking genetic explanations for the data. Whether talking about gender or race, he insists, gains show that I.Q. differences are not biological but social and
30 cultural. "Brain physiology has a fascination that tempts us to forget all we know about human behavior on the personal and social level," he writes.

¹ **mutable:** continually changing

GO ON

Thus, it is not surprising that culture is where Mr. Flynn looks to explain the vocabulary gap between parents and their children. Mr. Flynn analyzed results from two widely used I.Q. tests. On the sections designed to evaluate math, adults improved only slightly more than children between 1950 and 2005—a testament to what Mr. Flynn maintains is the failure of the educational system to make people of any age comfortable with numbers. But on “active vocabulary”—words you might call up to use in everyday conversation, rather than those you would have to see in context to recognize—adults bounded ahead. Contrary to expectations, younger respondents failed to keep up.

Mr. Flynn has a theory: that since the 1950s, when adolescence began to emerge as a distinct culture, generations of teenagers increasingly segregated themselves from the adult world. “Who would have thought that child and teenage subcultures would have become so powerful and inward looking as to keep them from being socialized into the linguistic mainstream,” Mr. Flynn said. “Even younger children seem somehow more culturally distant from their parents.” He notes that children read and write less, and thanks to texting are more accustomed to spelling phonetically.

The good news is that differences in I.Q.s disappeared once children reached adulthood and entered the working world. The gap’s rate of increase also began to slow in 1995. After all, relations between the generations were much more strained in the late ’60s and ’70s. The proliferation² today of Skype and cell phones has brought generations closer. Just look at helicopter parents.³

These are the questions that intrigue Mr. Flynn. However much scores change, he emphasizes, the cause is not to be found in a test tube. Behind I.Q. curves are social developments, he says. “There are real people living out their lives.”

² **proliferation:** rapid growth

³ **helicopter parents:** an informal term used to describe overprotective parents

46

How does the author use lines 1 through 7 to build the reader's interest about I.Q.? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

47

Based on James R. Flynn's research, why have gains in language scores been greater than gains in math scores? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

GO ON

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 48 and 49.

Fifteen-year-old María, who was born in Puerto Rico, has moved to New York City with her father.

Excerpt from “Who Are You Today, María?” from *Call Me María*

by Judith Ortiz Cofer

Abuela¹ knocks on my bedroom door. She has come to my room this morning to watch me choose my outfit for Who You Are Day at school. This is a day when we are allowed to dress in clothes that we think tell the world who we really are. (Within reason, our principal warned—no extremes will be tolerated. I hope that her definition of the
5 word *extreme* is the same as my friend Whoopee’s. Nothing that she will put on this morning has ever been seen on this planet, much less at school.)

Abuela makes herself comfortable on my bed as I put on my costume of myself made up of pieces of my life. I thought about my Who You Are Day outfit a lot. Mr. Golden told us in English class to think about our choices: are you going to walk around as a joke or as
10 a poem? I have a suspicion that our teachers have allowed us this chance to dress up as ourselves for a reason. Our school is already a united nations, a carnival, and a parade all at once. There are students from dozens of different countries, and we do not always get along. Most of us are too shy to talk to others outside our little circles, and so misunderstandings come up. The principal has tried almost everything. The Who You Are
15 Day is another of her crazy ideas to get us to communicate. In each of my classes, the teacher said, let us know something about what has made you who you are by what you wear to school tomorrow. It all sounds like a conspiracy to me. But I like dressing up so I do not complain like the boys have been doing. Most of them hate the idea!

Abuela looks at my choices hanging on the door and shakes her head, smiling, like she
20 did when we went to see *Cats*. It is a smile that says, I do not understand, but if it is important to María, I will bear it the best I can. She is elegant even at 7:00 A.M. in her embroidered silk robe and red velvet slippers. She has wrapped a shawl over her shoulders because she is always cold in our *cueva*, as she calls the apartment. The shawl was
25 handmade by her mother and it is Abuela’s most prized possession. As a little girl, I liked to put it over my head because the pattern of sequins made a night sky full of stars and because it smelled like Abuela.

¹**abuela:** the Spanish word for grandmother

Abuela sips from her cup of café con leche as she watches me.

I feel a little strange about being in my underwear in front of her and go in my closet with my choices, which are:

30 My mother’s red skirt that she wore when she had a part in a musical play on the Island. I have played dress-up with it since I was five years old, but it finally fits me perfectly. It is the kind of skirt that opens like an umbrella when you turn in circles.

A top I sewed together from an old sari² Uma’s³ mother was going to throw away. It is turquoise blue with silver edges.

35 And finally, over my sari, I will wear my father’s sharkskin suit jacket—it’s big on me but I can roll up the sleeves. It is what he likes to wear when he sings at rent parties.⁴ Under the light, it changes colors and seems to come alive as the design shifts and moves. Papi says it is great for dancing; you don’t even need a partner.

40 And finally, tall platform shoes we found buried deep in Whoopee’s closet, circa 1974, she told me. Whoopee collects antique shoes to go with her science fiction outfits. It is a fashion statement; she will tell anyone who asks. No one knows what the statement means, and that is just fine with Whoopee.

45 When I part the clothes in my closet and come out like an actor in a play, Abuela’s eyes open wide. Before she can say anything, I point to each piece of my outfit and say a name: Mami, Papi, Uma, and Whoopee.

Abuela’s face changes as she begins to understand the meaning of my fashion statement.

“Ahora sé quién eres, María, y quién puedes ser, si quieres. Ven acá, mi amor.”

50 Abuela says that she knows who I am and who I may be if I choose. I have heard those words before but I don’t remember when or where. Abuela embraces me and kisses my face several times. This is a Puerto Rican thing. It goes on for a while. I close my eyes to wait it out and I suddenly inhale a familiar scent. When I open my eyes, I see a starry sky. Abuela has put her shawl over my head.

55 *“Algo mío para tu día de ser quien eres, mi hija,”* she tells me. *Something of mine for your day of being who you are.* She is letting me borrow her mother’s beautiful shawl!

All day at school, I feel elegant. Whenever anyone tries to make fun of my costume, I think of the words my grandmother quoted to me: *I know who you are and who you may be if you choose.* And when I go into Mr. Golden’s class and his eyes ask me, *Who are you today, María?* I will say by the way I walk in, head held high, that today I am a poem.

²**sari:** a long piece of cloth that is wrapped around the body and head or shoulder and worn by women in southern Asia

³**Uma:** one of María’s school friends

⁴**rent party:** a party given to raise money for the host’s rent

48

What is a theme developed in lines 7 through 18 of “Excerpt from ‘Who Are You Today, María?’ from *Call Me María?*” Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

49

In “Excerpt from ‘Who Are You Today, María?’ from *Call Me María?*”, what does the phrase “today I am a poem” (line 59) reveal about María? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Directions
Read this story. Then answer questions 50 and 51.

Excerpt from *The Watcher*

by James Howe

Evan hated Holden Caulfield. Really hated him. Maybe he was only a character in a book but to Evan he felt real, like one of those people you get stuck sitting next to on an airplane and they won't shut up about their totally uninteresting lives. Evan could in no way understand why his father had been shoving this book at him for the entire past year, insisting he read it, telling him it was one of the most important books of the twentieth century. His father got like that sometimes.

He decided to read it anyway. He'd seen it on his freshman reading list so he figured why not get it over with and get his father off his back at the same time. Two birds, one stone. In a weak moment, he'd admitted to his father that he hated Holden with a passion, and his father had given him this solemn look and said, "My guess is that this book is touching something deep inside you, Evan." To which he'd said, "Yeah, right, Dad." But sometimes in the middle of the night when he couldn't sleep, Evan wondered if maybe what his father said was true.

He was down at the beach reading the book one Friday afternoon when someone came up and said *hey* and asked if he wanted to hang out. It was Shane, one of what Evan referred to as the "boys in black." Evan often labeled people. He liked to think this was the product of a creative mind, but his best friend last year in eighth grade, right before he stopped being his best friend, had told Evan he thought he was basically a snob. Which Evan knew for a certifiable fact wasn't true, although no matter how many times he replayed the conversation in his head he couldn't come up with what he *was*, if he wasn't a snob.

The boys in black had caught Evan's attention the first week he and his family were out at the beach house. It was five o'clock, and like every other day at five o'clock, after the lifeguards blew their whistles and waved their arms to let everybody know they were going off duty, little kids in bunches, Callie¹ included, ran to the abandoned lifeguard stand to clamber to the top, hurl themselves off onto the huge pile of sand at the base, then repeat the process over and over until they were called away for dinner.

"Watch me, Evan!" Callie shouted. Evan watched, at the same time keeping an eye on the retreating figure of the lifeguard named Chris who secretly Evan thought was the coolest guy on the beach. Who secretly Evan wished he could be. Evan admired Chris's mirrored sunglasses and had decided he was going over to Fair Harbor one of these days to get a pair just like them. The only question was whether he'd have the nerve to wear them to the beach, although he wasn't sure why this was even a question.

¹Callie: Evan's younger sister

GO ON

35 Evan was imagining himself sitting up on top of the lifeguard stand in his mirrored sunglasses, twirling a whistle cord around his index finger and looking seriously cool, when five boys in black wet suits, shiny and snug as coats of fresh paint, raced past and plunged into the water. Once in, they pulled themselves onto their surfboards and paddled furiously over and through the rolling waves, calling to each other all the while like crows cawing. Everything about them worked together as one: their bodies, their suits, their
40 boards, the water, their coded calls. Evan wished he could be out there with them, envying not their surfboards but their ease with themselves and one another.

He saw them other times after that, other places. Sometimes there'd be just one of them, eating an ice cream out in front of the all-purpose store in town, or two of them, with fishing poles in hand, headed for the bay. But most times he saw all five, moving
45 shoulder-to-shoulder along the boardwalks, a basketball in constant play, looking, in their high-style shorts and ankle bracelets and backward baseball caps, like a pack of Gap-ad Huckleberry Finns.

At the beginning of their vacation his mother had been bugging him. "Why don't you make some friends, Evan? Those boys, you know the ones I mean, they look nice, don't
50 you think?" He had come up with reasons, then excuses, and finally had just ignored his mother until she backed off.

Then there he was, hearing somebody say *hey*, and looking up at this tall, tightly muscled kid with shoulder-length dirty-blond hair whom he recognized immediately as the one he'd heard the others call Shane.

55 "I see you sittin' here," Shane said, squinting down at Evan. "How come you're always sittin' here reading?"

"I'm not always reading."

"I never see you in the water."

"I go in the water. Maybe not when you're looking."

60 Evan's cheeks were hot. He prayed that his mother, stretched out on a towel several feet behind him, was plugged into her music or one of those meditation tapes she was always listening to these days and wasn't paying attention to this conversation.

"So what's your name?" he heard Shane ask.

"Evan. What's yours?"

65 "Shane," Shane said in a bored voice. "So you want to hang out? I mean, you know, you want to hang out?"

"I guess," Evan said. His eyes were level with Shane's knees. He noticed now many pink scars and scabs dotted the landscape of the other boy's sun-brown legs. He imagined all the falls and mishaps it must have taken to create so many scars and felt a deep sense
70 of shame that at fourteen his own body revealed so little history.

50

How do lines 14 through 21 of “Excerpt from *The Watcher*” contribute to the plot of the story? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

GO ON

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 51 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 13 and 14.



Grade 8
2017 Common Core
English Language Arts Test
Book 3
March 28–30, 2017

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
 THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234
 2017 English Language Arts Tests Map to the Standards
 Released Questions on EngageNY

Grade 8 Question	Type	Key	Points	Standard	Subscore	Secondary Standard(s)	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)
Book 1									
1	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Reading		0.72		
2	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading		0.65		
3	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1	Reading		0.79		
4	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading		0.68		
5	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Reading		0.81		
6	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Reading		0.86		
7	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1	Reading		0.78		
22	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.4	Reading		0.49		
23	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8	Reading		0.77		
24	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.4	Reading		0.46		
25	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Reading		0.57		
26	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1	Reading		0.46		
27	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3	Reading		0.44		
28	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3	Reading		0.53		
29	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2	Reading		0.73		
30	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Reading		0.53		
31	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1	Reading		0.64		
32	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8	Reading		0.74		
33	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8	Reading		0.65		
34	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Reading		0.70		
35	Multiple Choice	D	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3	Reading		0.48		
Book 2									
36	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1	Reading		0.61		
37	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.3	Reading		0.75		
38	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1	Reading		0.48		
39	Multiple Choice	A	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2	Reading		0.68		
40	Multiple Choice	C	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Reading		0.77		
41	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8	Reading		0.53		
42	Multiple Choice	B	1	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6	Reading		0.71		
43	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.83	0.92
44	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.62	0.81

Released Questions on EngageNY

Grade 8	Question	Type	Key	Points	Standard	Subscore	Secondary Standard(s)	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)
	45	Constructed Response		4	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.2	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4		2.58	0.65
Book 3										
	46	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.5	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.57	0.79
	47	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.32	0.66
	48	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.49	0.75
	49	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.59	0.79
	50	Constructed Response		2	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2		1.40	0.70
	51	Constructed Response		4	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3	Writing to Sources	CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.1, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.3, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4		2.64	0.66

*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.