

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

English Language Arts Item Sampler Grade 3



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OVERVIEW

This document contains samples of stimulus passages and test items similar to those on the Wisconsin Forward English Language Arts Exam. Each sample test item has been through a rigorous review process by DRC, Wisconsin educators, and a third party to ensure alignment with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. These items will not be used on the state assessment and may, therefore, be used in Wisconsin for professional development and student practice. The items in this document illustrate a sample of the content and types of items that students will encounter on the Forward Exam. A Summary Data table in the Appendices section identifies the alignment (standard measured), answer key, depth of knowledge, and annotations for each item.

CONNECTION TO THE STANDARDS

Wisconsin Academic Standards for English Language Arts are available on the [DPI webpage](#). Test items require students to prove their knowledge and abilities as stated in the standards.

TEXT COMPLEXITY CONSIDERATIONS

As part of the reading and listening passage development process, a passage's text complexity is analyzed so that an appropriate grade-level placement for each passage can be made. Data Recognition Corporation uses a process that measures (1) the quantitative evaluation of the text and (2) the qualitative evaluation of the text, which is reported out on a passage placemat. Passages along with their respective placemats may be submitted to DPI during initial passage reviews. In addition, a third component, matching reader/listener to text and task, is also taken into consideration during passage evaluation and teacher committee reviews.

HOW DO I USE THIS BOOK?

Professional Development

Sample items are useful as educators engage in conversations about what students are expected to know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency on the state assessments relative to the Wisconsin Academic Standards. Sample items can inform discussions about state and local standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Improving Instruction

Teachers may use sample items in classroom activities that help students understand how to

- review key vocabulary;
- solve problems;
- determine which answer choices are correct, which are incorrect, and why;
- approach long and/or multistep tasks;
- use good test-taking strategies.

Student Practice

Students may perform better and with less anxiety if they are familiar with the format of the test and with the types of items they will be required to answer. The Forward Exam is an online assessment; students will benefit from the use of the [Online Tools Training](#) in order to work within the system interface to answer items as they will appear on the assessment, as well as utilize the tools available to them in the online system.

Note: A student's score on the practice test cannot be converted to a scale score, used to predict performance on the Forward Exam, or used to make inferences about the student's learning.

Test Preparation

While using the Item Sampler for test preparation, care should be taken that this is done in a balanced manner and one that helps to enhance student knowledge of subject matter as well as test performance. Please note that test preparation is only useful to the extent that it is also teaching content area knowledge and skills. Therefore, the use of this resource for test preparation is of limited value to students due to the narrow opportunity for content learning. It is very important to ensure that teachers are teaching to the curriculum and not to the test, as teaching to the test narrows the focus of instruction to only that content covered by the test.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LISTENING PASSAGES

In order to closely mimic the student experience of the online Forward Exam, educators should read the Listening Passage for Session 2 found in Appendix A out loud to students. Educators should NOT read the items out loud, only the passage. Educators may read the passage more than once as needed.

TEXT-DEPENDENT ANALYSIS (TDA) WRITING PROMPT SESSION

Please note that the ELA Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) writing prompt (normally in ELA Session 1 of the Forward Exam) is not included in this item sampler. More information about the TDA is provided on page 6.

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE

Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix & Curricular Examples: Applying Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels to Bloom's Cognitive Process Dimensions - ELA

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 1 Recall & Reproduction	Webb's DOK Level 2 Skills & Concepts	Webb's DOK Level 3 Strategic Thinking/ Reasoning	Webb's DOK Level 4 Extended Thinking
Remember Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall, recognize, or locate basic facts, details, events, or ideas explicit in texts Read words orally in connected text with fluency & accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify, explain, show relationships; explain why, cause-effect Give non-examples/examples Summarize results, concepts, ideas Make basic inferences or logical predictions from data or texts Identify main ideas or accurate generalizations of texts Locate information to support explicit-implicit central ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence (quote, example, text reference) Identify/ make inferences about explicit or implicit themes Describe how word choice, point of view, or bias may affect the readers' interpretation of a text Write multi-paragraph composition for specific purpose, focus, voice, tone, & audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how concepts or ideas specifically relate to <i>other</i> content domains or concepts Develop generalizations of the results obtained or strategies used and apply them to new problem situations
Understand Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion), predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify or describe literary elements (characters, setting, sequence, etc.) Select appropriate words when intended meaning/definition is clearly evident Describe/explain who, what, where, when, or how Define/describe facts, details, terms, principles Write simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to identify the meaning of words/phrases Obtain and interpret information using text features Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply a concept in a new context Revise final draft for meaning or progression of ideas Apply internal consistency of text organization and structure to composing a full composition Apply word choice, point of view, style to impact readers' /viewers' interpretation of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate how multiple themes (historical, geographic, social) may be interrelated Select or devise an approach among many alternatives to research a novel problem
Apply Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation; carry out (apply) to a familiar task), or use (apply) to an unfamiliar task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use language structure (pre/suffix) or word relationships (synonym/antonym) to determine meaning of words Apply rules or resources to edit spelling, grammar, punctuation, conventions, word use Apply basic formats for documenting sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorize/compare literary elements, terms, facts/details, events Identify use of literary devices Analyze format, organization, & internal text structure (signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts Distinguish: relevant-irrelevant information; fact/opinion Identify characteristic text features; distinguish between texts, genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze interrelationships among concepts, issues, problems Analyze or interpret author's craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to create or critique a text Use reasoning, planning, and evidence to support inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze multiple sources of evidence, or multiple works by the same author, or across genres, time periods, themes Analyze complex/abstract themes, perspectives, concepts Gather, analyze, and organize multiple information sources Analyze discourse styles
Analyze Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct (e.g., for bias or point of view)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify whether specific information is contained in graphic representations (e.g., map, chart, table, graph, T-chart, diagram) or text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, captions) Decide which text structure is appropriate to audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for conjectures Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods Verify reasonableness of results Justify or critique conclusions drawn Synthesize information within one source or text Develop a complex model for a given situation Develop an alternative solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate relevancy, accuracy, & completeness of information from multiple sources Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective
Evaluate Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept 			
Create Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce				

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ITEM TYPES

The Wisconsin Forward Exam has multiple types of test items. However, because this item sampler is in a format that can be printed, the majority of its items are multiple-choice. In the Forward Exam, there will be a more diverse array of item types, including the ones described below.

Selected-Response (SR) Items

Selected-Response (SR) items are an efficient method for measuring a broad range of content, and can be used to assess a variety of skills. Three types of SR items are used on the online assessments: Multiple-Choice (MC), Enhanced Selected-Response (ESR), and Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR). In all cases, SR items require that a student determines the correct answer(s) to the item posed from a provided list. While it is still possible for a student to perform some work directly related to determining the correct answer, the student is not required to generate the content of the answer when responding to a Selected-Response item. An exception to this requirement is Mathematics Short-Response/Gridded-Response items where students will be required to enter a short alphanumeric response.

Multiple-Choice (MC) Items

Multiple-Choice (MC) items on Wisconsin's assessments have four answer choices, including three distractors and one correct answer. Distractors for Mathematics represent common misconceptions, incorrect logic, incorrect application of an algorithm, computational errors, etc. Distractors for English Language Arts (ELA) are written to represent a common misinterpretation, predisposition, unsound reasoning, casual reading, etc. A correct response to an MC item is worth one raw point. The process skills, directives, and action statements within an MC item also specifically align with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. Multiple-Choice items are present in all grades and are used with all content areas.

Multiple-Choice items can be further defined by being linked to, or independent from, a stimulus source. Items that operate independent of a stimulus are also known as "stand-alone MC." Stand-alone items may still have tables, graphs, or other information used in support of the stem. English Language Arts uses a mixture of MC items linked to a stimulus passage and some that are stand-alone. For Mathematics, all MC items are considered stand-alone.

Enhanced Selected-Response (ESR) Items

The Enhanced Selected-Response (ESR) items are multi-part autoscored items that may consist of varying combinations of Multiple-Choice, Multiple-Response, Gridded-Response, Completion or Short-Answer, and Technology-Enhanced items that explore in greater depth and cognitive complexity the knowledge, skills, and abilities specified by the standards of each content area. Typically, this item type has a common focus and explores authentic problem-solving skills. An example of a Statistics and Probability Mathematics ESR item would utilize a data-table stimulus, with Part A using a Technology-Enhanced (TE) graphing tool to create a bar graph of the data presented and Part B asking students to calculate the mean of the data using a Short-Response item.

Two-Part Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) Items

The Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) items have two parts and are designed to elicit a response based on what a student has read from a stimulus passage. EBSR items may be linked to a stimulus passage or to a stimulus passage set. There are several variations of two-part EBSR items, but all two-part EBSR items have an Accuracy piece and an Evidence piece.

The Accuracy piece of the item is Part A. Part A of a typical EBSR item will be similar to a standard MC test item. A student analyzes a passage and chooses a single, best (correct) answer from four answer choices. Part B of a typical EBSR item will elicit evidence from the stimulus passage and will require that the student selects one or more correct answers based on the response the student provided to Part A. Part B is also different from Part A in that it may have five or six answer options rather than just four answer options typical of an MC item and more than one option may be correct.

Technology-Enhanced (TE) Items

Technology-Enhanced (TE) item types share the same functional structure as traditional paper and pencil test items; however, the expansive features and functions of a computer-based medium allow for the incorporation of technical enhancements into traditional elements of a test item, such as the item stem, the stimulus (if any), the response area, or a combination of all three. TE items are used in the content areas of ELA, Mathematics, and Science.

Item types such as drag-and-drop, hot spot, and in-line selection of multiple answers from drop-down menus broaden item presentation with engaging, interactive open-ended items.

A wide variety of TE item types will be present on the Wisconsin Forward Exam, including, but not limited to:

- **Clock Input**, where a student is able to add an hour hand and a minute hand to the clock;
- **Angle Draw Input**, where given a base line, the student can represent an angle;
- **Short Input**, where there are many types of short inputs that can be used (The number of characters is usually limited to a relatively small number in order to facilitate auto-scoring. The types of characters allowed can also be limited to text only, numbers only, or a mix. An equation editor can be utilized to assist the student in creating something as basic as a fraction or something more complex. The available symbols and templates in the equation builder can be customized for a testing program. Certain Short Input items can also be used in a paper-based test (PBT) as a Gridded-Response item.);
- **Bar Graph Input**, where students can produce bar graphs with prepopulated titles, labels, and scales, or the system can allow the student to populate them (The number of bars and the color of the bars is predetermined by the system. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);
- **Number Line Input**, where students can create a graph that might involve plotting points only or points and lines (Both solid and open “dots” are available as well as line segments and rays. Number line graphs can have prepopulated titles, labels, and scales or can allow the student to populate them.);
- **Coordinate Graph Input**, which allows for the graphing and labeling of points and lines (Regions, determined by plotted lines, can be shaded. Solid and open “dots” as well as solid and dashed lines are available to the student. Coordinate graphs can have prepopulated titles, labels, and scales or can allow the student to populate them.);
- **Line Plot Input**, which is used as another way to graphically represent data (The basic structure is provided for the student. Certain labeling on the line plot can be done by the student. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);
- **List Input**, a combination of the short input described earlier that allows the student to add input boxes (For example, it can be used for describing the steps in a process without revealing to the student the number of steps needed. The added input boxes can be rearranged and/or deleted.);
- **Drag-and-Drop Input**, a wide variety of ways are available to utilize a drag-and-drop input (The main difference between it and a drag-and-paste is that each draggable entity can be used only once with a drag-and-drop input. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);

- **Drag-and-Paste Input**, a wide variety of ways are available to utilize drag-and-paste input (The main difference between it and a drag-and-drop is that each draggable entity can be used more than once with a drag-and-paste input. A reset feature is available that allows the student to start over from the original configuration.);
- **Drop-Down List Input**, allows for the creation of a situation where a great deal of information about a student's grasp of a concept can be determined with a single item (Students can be asked to choose from three function types, four number of real zero responses, and two inverse function responses. For one function alone, this provides 24 possible answer combinations. With the three functions, a considerable amount of information can be gained, making this almost an open-ended item type.);
- **Pictograph using Drag-and-Paste**, actually another example of drag-and-paste, but is worth mentioning on its own as it is a type of graphing often used at lower grade levels;
- **Circle Graph**, a graph that allows the student to create and label the "wedges" that represent the data (Circle graphs can have a prepopulated title or can allow the student to populate it. The color of the "wedges" is predetermined by the system.);
- **Matching**, allows for the use of text or graphics as the matching objects (The student clicks on one object and then clicks on a second object to connect them.);
- **Highlighting Text**, allows for designated text to be highlighted in a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph; and the
- **Graphic Modification Hot Spot**, allows for one image to replace another image when a hot spot is clicked.

Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Items

The English Language Arts (ELA) section of the Forward Exam presents students with a Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) item. A TDA is a text-based analysis based on a single passage or a multiple-passage set that each student has read during the assessment. The passage or passage set will consist of either literary or informational text. In order to successfully answer a TDA, students must analyze and use information from the passage(s) to plan a comprehensive, holistic response. Students will then write their response, including supporting evidence from the passage(s). Students will have up to 5,000 characters to formulate their response. Students' responses are scored using a rubric that takes into account both the composition and the conventions of the student's writing.

The TDA portion of the Forward Exam requires students to read the text and then respond in writing in one of two ways:

- identifying and explaining a theme or central idea, using textual evidence to support the claim about what that theme or central idea is, or
- analyzing the development of an event, character, central ideas, or theme, using textual evidence to support the explanation and analysis.

TDA Item Samplers are available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/assessment/forward/sample-items>.



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Answer the items.

1. Read the sentence.

Janell, I am glad we are going to be on the same basketball team, Krista said with a smile.

Which revision correctly adds quotation marks to the sentence?

- A. “Janell, I am glad we are going to be on the same basketball team, Krista said with a smile.”
 - B. “Janell, I am glad we are going to be on the same basketball team,” Krista said with a smile.
 - C. Janell, “I am glad we are going to be on the same basketball team”, Krista said with a smile.
 - D. Janell, “I am glad we are going to be on the same basketball team, Krista said with a smile”.
2. A student is writing a report about the human body. Read the paragraph from the report.

(1) The human body has over 200 bones. (2) Together, the bones of the body are known as the skeleton.

(3) Bones give the body its shape. (4) They help to protect the organs inside the body.

(5) _____ , they allow for some types of movement.

Which word would **best** show how sentence 5 connects with sentences 3 and 4?

- A. Besides
- B. Also
- C. Therefore
- D. Since

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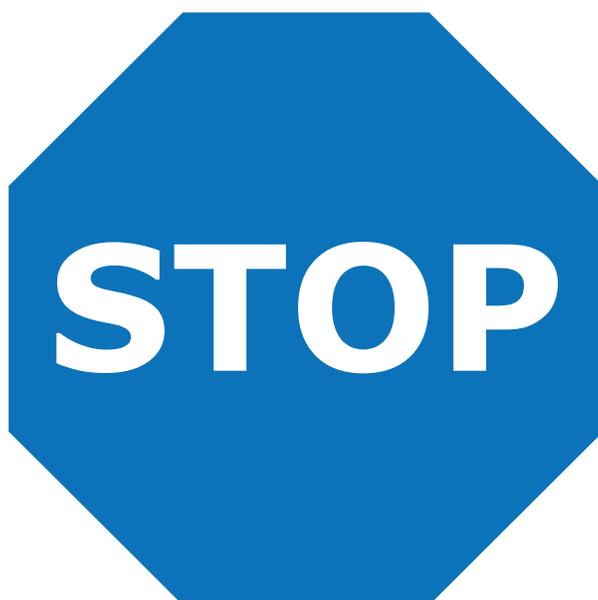
3. Read the paragraph from a student's research report about Sonja Henie.

Sonja Henie was only 5 years old when she won her first ice-skating contest. She went to the Olympics when she was 11 but finished in last place. She kept working hard to improve her skills. In the next three Olympic Games—in 1928, 1932, and 1936—she was the skating champion. After she quit skating, she worked as an actress and as a businesswoman.

Which source would most likely give the student more information about the life of Sonja Henie?

- A. a book called *Ice-Skating Stars*
- B. a website about the history of the Olympics
- C. a book called *Learn How to Skate Like a Pro*
- D. a website for a nearby ice-skating rink

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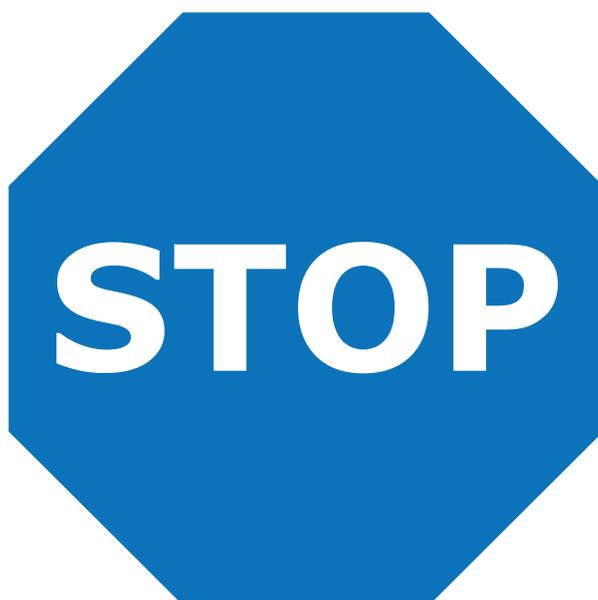




Listen to the presentation that your teacher reads to you. Then answer the items.

1. Which detail supports the idea that flamingo parents have a special bond with their chick?
 - A. They use mud to build a nest and keep the chick in it for a week.
 - B. They take the chick to meet the other chicks in the flock.
 - C. They recognize their chick's voice and come quickly if they hear it.
 - D. They take the chick to the flock to make sure it is safe from predators.

2. According to the presentation, which statement is true?
 - A. The only place to see a flamingo is at a zoo.
 - B. If flamingos ate different foods, they would not be pink.
 - C. Most of a flamingo's day is spent searching for food.
 - D. The reason why flamingos stay in large groups is because they cannot fly.



Read the following passage. Then answer the items. You may look back at the passage to help you answer the items.

Rainy Day Surprise

One rainy day, two merchants named Leah and Pablo opened their shop doors to begin the day's business. They each stood in front of their stores, wishing for customers. Sadly, the chilly, wet weather had chased all the villagers inside. Not one person walked down the cobblestone street.

"Rainy days are bad for business," Leah told Pablo. She often shared her opinion with him.

"But our trees needed water," Pablo responded. He always tried to find a positive side in every situation.

Before Leah could reply, she noticed a dog. The shaggy, wet animal was limping down the street towards them. Its head was hanging low and its tail drooped.

"Shoo," Leah told the dog. She did not want the dog around if a customer came to her store.

Pablo, however, patted the dog's head. "Would you like to come inside and rest?" he asked the furry visitor. Its tail slowly wagged.

"Don't be foolish," Leah warned Pablo. "You should not go looking for trouble. Dogs don't belong inside shops."

"It looks like it is cold and lost, and I have no customers to worry about," Pablo reasoned. He led the animal through the door.

Once they were inside the store, Pablo said to the dog, "I will find a towel to dry your fur."

Pablo hurried toward his supply room. However, a moment later, there was a terrific crashing sound. Pablo sprinted back into the shop. The dog had knocked over a display of pans. It was gobbling down a stale cookie that Pablo had left on the top shelf.

"I guess you were more interested in a meal than dry fur," Pablo smiled. The dog barked and licked its lips.

As Pablo looked for something else to feed the dog, Leah poked her head into the shop. She had heard the crash. With a knowing look, she surveyed the mess.

"You should have listened to my advice," Leah said.

"At least the metal pans cannot break," Pablo chuckled.

"Humph," Leah said. She turned around and left.

The dog happily finished the lunch that Pablo gave him. Then Pablo dried and brushed its fur. Pablo was starting to pick up the pans when a boy named Sam entered his shop. At once, the dog barked with joy.

"Prince!" Sam shouted. He stooped to hug the excited dog. "We've been looking everywhere for you."

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Sam ran back to the shop door. He opened it and called out, “I’ve found Prince!”

A moment later, Sam’s entire family was crowding into Pablo’s shop. They had all been searching for the missing pet. Pablo explained to them how he had invited Prince inside and given him lunch.

As Pablo told his story, Sam’s mother, Ida, noticed the pans that were still scattered across the floor. She knew Prince likely caused the disaster.

“We will thank you by cleaning your shop,” Ida said. Before Pablo could refuse, Ida organized her family. She gave them jobs of straightening, sweeping, and polishing.

When the busy crew finished, Pablo could not stop grinning. His pans sparkled and his windows gleamed. The goods on his shelves stood in neat and tidy rows.

After that, Ida and her family filled their arms with Pablo’s wares. They bought soap, pails, pans, dishes, and candles. As Pablo wrapped their purchases in paper, he whistled merrily. His shop had earned record sales.

Finally, the family left Pablo’s shop with Prince. Leah watched the parade of people walk down the street with their packages. At the sight, a dark cloud seemed to settle over her face. She had not had many customers that day.

“No act of kindness is ever wasted,” Pablo told Leah gently. “Let me treat you to dinner so I can share my good fortune with you.”

Leah paused for a moment. Perhaps, she should try listening to Pablo’s advice. His face always wore a content smile. “Yes, I’ll dine with you,” Leah said in a thankful voice. “I’m sure you’ll agree that it is never too late to learn new ways,” she added with her own fresh smile.

Go on to the next page.

1. Read the sentence from the passage.

Sadly, the chilly, wet weather had chased all the villagers inside.

What does the sentence mean?

- A. The weather seemed to follow people.
 - B. People wanted to stay indoors because of the weather.
 - C. The weather caused people to run to a dry place.
 - D. People felt bothered by the type of weather outside.
2. How does the action of Pablo letting the dog into his shop add to the sequence of events?
- A. It leads to good things happening to Pablo.
 - B. It allows Pablo to see that Leah is right.
 - C. It leads to a mess that Pablo cleans up.
 - D. It allows Pablo to teach friends how to work.

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3. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which sentence **best** states the central message of the passage?

- A. Kindness to others will be rewarded.
- B. People do not always get what they want.
- C. Beauty is sometimes hidden.
- D. Animals can help make people happy.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. They each stood in front of their stores, wishing for customers.
- B. Then Pablo dried and brushed its fur.
- C. At once, the dog barked with joy.
- D. His shop had earned record sales.

Go on to the next page.

Read the following passage. Then answer the items. You may look back at the passage to help you answer the items.

Nature's Builders

Some people are builders. They use wood, brick, metal, and other materials to build the things we need, like homes, schools, and roads. Many other living creatures are builders too. They use mud, plants, and more to build homes that are just right for them.

Birds

- 2 Most birds build nests. A kind of bird called a killdeer makes its nest by scraping a shallow hole in sand or gravel. The bird and its chicks then rest inside the hole. Other birds build their nests out of twigs, grass, or their own feathers. Red ovenbirds use mud to build a bowl-shaped nest. This mud bowl rests high in the top branches of a tree. The sun bakes the mud so that it becomes hard, helping to protect the birds.
- 3 Believe it or not, there is a kind of bird that builds something that seems like a bird city. This bird, called the social weaver, lives in Africa. Groups of these birds work together to build hundreds of nests. The nests are made from grass and sticks. They look like a big stack of hay hanging up in a tree.
- 4 Most species of birds make their own style of nest. Cowbirds and cuckoos are different, however. Instead of building their own nests, they lay their eggs in nests that other species of birds have already made!

Insects

There is a type of bug called a termite. Termites build huge structures. In Australia, these ant-like insects chew wood and mix it with mud. Then they pack the mixture into mounds that may be up to 30 feet tall. That's as tall as a three-story building! The mounds have tunnels running through them. These tunnels let air inside, keeping the middle of the tower cool. Underneath the mounds are more tunnels running through the ground. The termites use some tunnels as gardens to grow plants for food.

Some wasps also use mud for building. One type of wasp called a mud dauber makes a round, cup-shaped nest out of mud. Mud daubers may join together several of these mud nests. Another kind of mud dauber builds long, hollow tubes of mud with small holes in them. The holes are usually for storing eggs or food. Meanwhile, the paper wasp chews wood and plant stems and uses them to create a nest. This football-shaped nest hangs from a tree branch. The outside of it looks as if it were covered with layers of rough gray paper.

Go on to the next page.

Other Animals

A muskrat is an animal that lives in wet, swampy areas. It looks a little bit like a squirrel or a groundhog, but it has a long, dark tail. Some muskrats dig caves along the bank of a lake or stream. Others make lodges to live in out of plants. The lodge is round and is partly above the water. The muskrats must swim underwater to reach the entrance. The floor of the lodge is still above the water, allowing the muskrats to breathe air.

Prairie dogs live together in large communities. Hundreds of them may live in the same small area! They dig long passages underground. These passages connect one room to another. Some rooms are for sleeping, while others are for storing food. There are many entrances to these rooms too. Prairie dogs sometimes poke their heads above ground to look around. When they see danger, they can bark a warning to all the others. Like the homes of many other animals, the prairie dog's home can help it to survive.

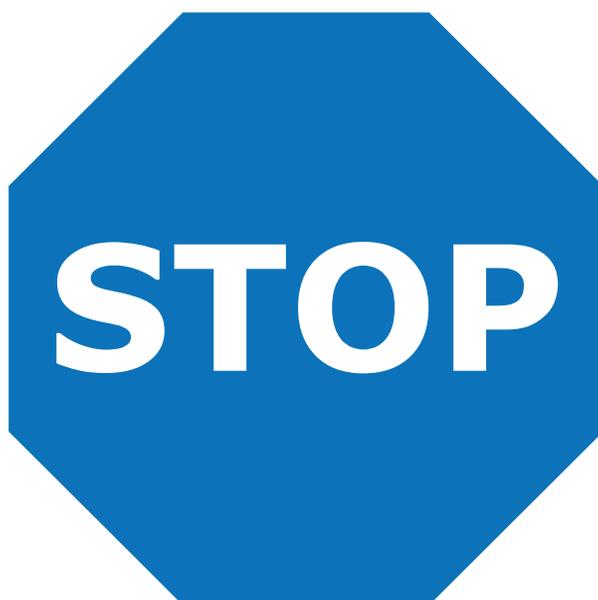
The living spaces that all of these birds, insects, and other animals create can be truly amazing to see. Each is different, but it is the perfect place for the creatures that live there.

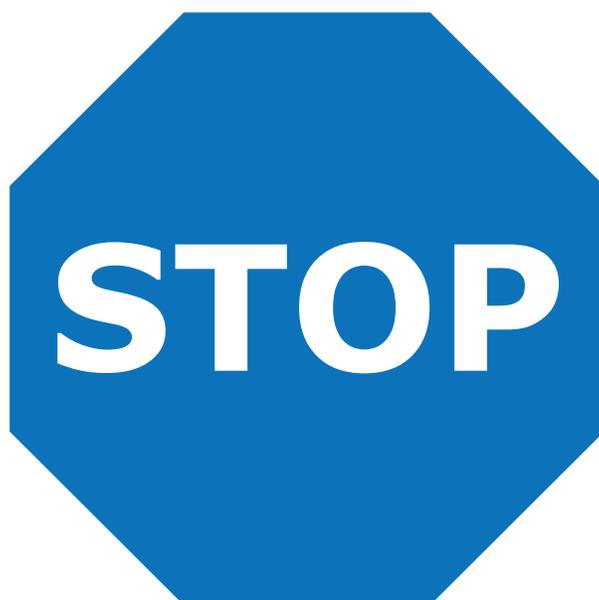
Go on to the next page.

4. Which sentence **best** describes the connection between paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of the passage?
- A. Paragraphs 2 and 3 describe a problem with bird nests and paragraph 4 tells how the problem is fixed.
 - B. Paragraphs 2 and 3 describe different bird nests and paragraph 4 tells how the nests protect the birds.
 - C. Paragraphs 2 and 3 describe the materials birds use to make nests and paragraph 4 tells the steps for how they build the nests.
 - D. Paragraphs 2 and 3 describe how different birds build nests and paragraph 4 tells how two types of birds use the nests made by other birds.
5. According to the passage, what is the purpose of the tunnels in the mounds of Australian termites? Choose **two** answers.
- A. to make the mound taller
 - B. to help the inside of the mound stay cool
 - C. to store the eggs that the termites lay
 - D. to give the termites a place to grow food
 - E. to protect the termites from other insects

Go on to the next page.

6. What is the author's purpose in this passage?
- A. to explain how building makes animals different from people
 - B. to tell stories about creatures that like to build
 - C. to explain the different types of homes that creatures build
 - D. to compare how bird nests are different than what insects build





APPENDIX A—LISTENING PASSAGE: LIFE IN THE FLAMINGO FLOCK

Educators should read the following passage out loud to their students. The passage may be read more than once. Educators should NOT read the items out loud to the students. Students should answer items independently.

Life in the Flamingo Flock

A flock of pink flamingos atop long, graceful legs wades through a lake. There are thousands of them. Suddenly, they begin marching together in one direction, like trained dancers. Then they all turn around and march the other way, stretching their necks and turning their heads.

This performance is more than just a dance show; it helps each flamingo to select a mate. Similar movements draw the birds together. Before long, two birds touch beaks and form a pair.

The pair then uses mud to build a large nest near the shore. The nest looks like a small mountain with a shallow hole on top, where the female soon lays one egg.

When the chick hatches, both parents care for it. After one week, the chick joins other young birds in the flock. The flock works together to guard the chicks from predators. If a chick calls, its parents arrive quickly. Flamingo parents can recognize their chick's voice in the big, noisy flock.

For the first few years, the chick's feathers are white or gray. However, when the growing chick starts eating fishy food, its feathers slowly turn pink, gaining their color from the food.

Flamingos feast on tiny plants called algae, as well as on insects and shellfish. To find a meal, the flamingo first kicks at the muddy lake bottom. It turns its head upside down to dip its beak into the water to scoop up the water and food. Then it uses its tongue to push the water out, while stiff hairs inside the beak work like a net to trap the food. Dinner is served.

Flamingos can be seen at many zoos, but large flocks of these beautiful birds live near lakes in warm places around the world, like Africa and South America. What an amazing sight it must be for the lucky people who view these flamingo flocks in the wild.

APPENDIX B—SUMMARY DATA

Grade 3

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
Session 1				
1	CCSS-1: 3.L.2c	B	2	Students need to choose the revision of the sentence that uses quotation marks correctly. Option B is the correct answer. The other options do not use quotation marks correctly.
2	CCSS-1: 3.W.2c	B	2	Students need to identify the correct linking word to connect the ideas in the sentences. Option B is the correct response. The other options do not correctly link the ideas.
3	CCSS-1: 3.W.8	A	2	Students need to identify the source where they could gather more information about the topic. Option A is the correct answer. The other options would not provide much information or relevant information on the topic.
Session 2				
1	CCSS-1: 3.SL.2	C	3	After listening to the presentation, students need to determine the best supporting detail for the idea that flamingo parents have a special bond with their chick. Option C is the correct answer. The other options do not provide support for the special bond flamingo parents have with their chick.
2	CCSS-1: 3.SL.3	B	2	After listening to the presentation, students need to identify the statement that is true. Option B is the correct answer. The other statements do not provide true statements.

Grade 3

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
Session 3				
1	CCSS-1: 3.RL.4	B	2	Students need to determine the meaning of the sentence. Option B is the correct answer. The other options do not provide the meaning of the sentence.
2	CCSS-1: 3.RL.3	A	3	Students need to describe how Pablo’s action contributes to the sequence of events. Option A is the correct answer. The other options do not identify how Pablo’s action contributes to the sequence of events.
3	CCSS-1: 3.RL.2	A/D	2	Students need to determine the central message of the passage and then find support. In Part A, option A is the correct answer. The other options are not the central message. In Part B, option D is the correct answer. The other options in Part B do not support the central message from Part A.
4	CCSS-1: 3.RI.8	D	2	Students need to describe the relationship between paragraphs. Option D is the correct answer. The other options do not describe the relationship between the paragraphs.
5	CCSS-1: 3.RI.1	B/D	1	Students need to demonstrate an understanding of the text by choosing two correct answers. The correct answers are B and D. The other options do not explain the purpose of the tunnels in the mounds of Australian termites.
6	CCSS-1: 3.RI.6	C	2	Students must distinguish the author’s purpose in the text. Option C is the correct answer. The other options are not the author’s purpose.

APPENDIX C—SAMPLE LISTENING STIMULUS COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS**Informational Stimulus—Life in the Flamingo Flock****Grade 3****Recommended Placement for Assessment**

The quantitative Easy Listening Formula (ELF) indicates that this document is at least suitable for a *reader* at the 4th grade, fifth month of class completed level. Research shows students can *listen* two to three grade levels higher than they can read. The qualitative review supports grade 3 based on the clarity of the topic and simple organization of the concepts presented in the audio stimulus. Based on these sets of measures, this audio stimulus is of medium complexity and is recommended for assessment at grade 3.

PURPOSE

Purpose: Low Complexity

Audience: Low Complexity

Presentation: Low Complexity

AUDITORY STRUCTURE

Organization of Audio Text: Medium Complexity

Sound Variety: audio not available at this time

ORAL LANGUAGE FEATURES

Conventionality: Medium Complexity

Vocabulary: Medium Complexity

Delivery: audio not available at this time

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

Subject Matter Knowledge: Medium Complexity

Allusions/References: Low Complexity

Use of Images: N/A

Listening Stimulus Rubric

The ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) developed the following qualitative measures rubric for listening stimuli. The rubric examines the following criteria judged as central to students’ successful comprehension of audio stimuli: purpose, auditory structure, oral language features, and knowledge demands. Each of these categories is ranked based on descriptors associated with the following levels: low complexity, medium complexity, and high complexity.

Grade 3

Qualitative Measures Rubric for Listening Stimuli			
Features	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
Purpose	Purpose: Explicitly stated; clear, concrete with a narrow focus	Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete	Purpose: Subtle, implied, theoretical elements
	Audience: Speaker’s approach is straightforward and transparent	Audience: Speaker’s approach is somewhat layered and may include elements intended to persuade or influence audience	Audience: Speaker may include a variety of persuasive techniques; speaker may direct the message to multiple audiences, and the listener must decipher the meaning on more than one level
	Presentation: A single speaker presents the information	Presentation: Two or more speakers interact. Their patterns of communication may influence the meaning and flow of information	Presentation: Two or more speakers interact. The juxtaposition of the speakers may reveal a contrast or otherwise influence the meaning

Grade 3

Qualitative Measures Rubric for Listening Stimuli

Features	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
Auditory Structure	Organization of Audio Text: Connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is clear or chronological or easy to predict.	Organization of Audio Text: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential	Organization of Audio Text: Connections between a range of ideas, processes or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle; organization may exhibit traits common to a specific discipline; organization may be different from chronological or sequential (i.e., cause/effect, problem/solution, compare/contrast)
	Sound Variety: Sound is distinct and approach is direct	Sound Variety: Sound is somewhat layered. Overlapping voices or sounds require listener to integrate sounds for fullest understanding	Sound Variety: Sound is multi-layered. Overlapping voices, music, or sounds provide context that listener needs to process (such as foreground noise, background noise, or music)
Oral Language Features	Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand	Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning	Conventionality: Complex; contains some specialized abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language
	Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language	Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or academic	Vocabulary: Complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or academic
	Delivery: Mainly direct, with simple declarative sentences	Delivery: Somewhat variable—at times, speaker changes pitch and volume to create emphasis	Delivery: Varied. Shifts in tone may be subtle and complex, requiring interpretation

Grade 3

Qualitative Measures Rubric for Listening Stimuli			
Features	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
Knowledge Demands	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday, practical knowledge; simple, concrete ideas	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas; knowledge of speaker may affect interpretation of content	Subject Matter Knowledge: Discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts; knowledge of speaker or source affects interpretation of content
	Allusions/References: No references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Allusions/References: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Allusions/References: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.
	Use of Images: a range of images that help student understanding	Use of images: minimal use of images that help student understanding	Use of images: no use of images that help student understanding

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APPENDIX D—SAMPLE LITERARY PASSAGE TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS

Literary Passage—Rainy Day Surprise

Grade 3

Recommended Placement for Assessment

The quantitative measures of several readability programs suggest an appropriate placement at the grade 2–3 band. The qualitative review supports grade 3 based on the moderate complexity of the passage. Based on these sets of measures as explained in the Wisconsin Academic Standards Appendix A, this passage is moderately complex and is recommended for assessment at grade 3.

MEANING: Moderately Complex

TEXT STRUCTURE

Organization: Moderately Complex

Text Features: Slightly Complex

Use of Images: N/A

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Conventionality: Moderately Complex

Vocabulary: Moderately Complex

Sentence Structure: Moderately Complex

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

Life Experiences: Moderately Complex

Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Slightly Complex

Literary Texts Qualitative Measures Rubric

The ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) developed the following qualitative measures rubric for literary texts. The rubric examines the following criteria judged as central to students’ successful comprehension of text meaning, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. Each of these categories is ranked based on descriptors associated with the following levels: slightly complex, moderately complex, very complex, and exceedingly complex.

Grade 3

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Meaning	Meaning: Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text	Meaning: Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	Meaning: More than one level of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	Meaning: One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
Text Structure	Organization: Organization is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines, and detail	Organization: Organization may include subplots, time shifts, and more complex characters	Organization: Organization may have two or more storylines and is occasionally difficult to predict	Organization: Organization of text is clear, chronological, or easy to predict
	Use of Images: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	Use of Images: If used, a few illustrations that support the text	Use of Images: If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	Use of Images: If used, extensive illustrations that directly support and assist in interpreting the written text

Grade 3

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Language Features	Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand, with some occasions for more complex meaning	Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand
	Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic	Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic	Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language
	Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts	Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
Knowledge Demands	Life Experiences: Explores complex, sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader	Life Experiences: Explores themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers	Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers	Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers
	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: A few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements

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APPENDIX E—SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL PASSAGE TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS**Informational Passage—Nature’s Builders****Grade 3****Recommended Placement for Assessment**

The quantitative measures of several readability programs suggest an appropriate placement at the grade 2–3 band. The qualitative review supports grade 3 based on the moderate complexity of the passage. Based on these sets of measures as explained in the Wisconsin Academic Standards Appendix A, this passage is moderately complex and is recommended for assessment at grade 3.

PURPOSE: Moderately Complex

TEXT STRUCTURE

Organization of Main Ideas: Slightly Complex

Use of Images: N/A

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Conventionality: Moderately Complex

Vocabulary: Moderately Complex

Sentence Structure: Moderately Complex

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

Subject Matter Knowledge: Moderately Complex

Intertextuality: Slightly Complex

Informational Texts Qualitative Measures Rubric

The ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) developed the following qualitative measures rubric for informational texts. The rubric examines the following criteria judged as central to students’ successful comprehension of text purpose, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. Each of these categories is ranked based on descriptors associated with the following levels: slightly complex, moderately complex, very complex, and exceedingly complex.

Grade 3

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Purpose	Purpose: Subtle, implied, difficult to determine; intricate, theoretical elements	Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete	Purpose: Implied, but easy to identify based upon context or source	Purpose: Explicitly stated; clear, concrete with a narrow focus
Text Structure	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between an extensive range of ideas or events are deep, intricate, and often implicit or subtle; organization of the text is intricate or specialized for a particular discipline	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between an expanded range of ideas, processes, or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle; organization may contain multiple pathways and may exhibit traits common to a specific discipline	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between ideas, processes, or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is clear or chronological or easy to predict
	Text Features: If used, are essential in understanding content	Text Features: If used, greatly enhance the reader’s understanding of content	Text Features: If used, enhance the reader’s understanding of content	Text Features: If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential
	Use of Images: If used, extensive, intricate, essential integrated images, tables, charts, etc., necessary to understanding the text; also may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text	Use of Images: If used, essential integrated images, tables, charts, etc., occasionally essential to understanding the text	Use of Images: If used, images mostly supplementary to understanding the text, such as indexes and glossaries; graphs, pictures, tables, and charts directly support the text	Use of Images: If used, simple images unnecessary to understanding the text; directly support and assist in interpreting the text

Grade 3

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Language Features	Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning	Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand
	Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic	Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic	Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language
	Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts	Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
Knowledge Demands	Subject Matter Knowledge: Extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge; range of challenging abstract and theoretical concepts	Subject Matter Knowledge: Moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday, practical knowledge; simple, concrete ideas
	Intertextuality: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Intertextuality: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Intertextuality: A few references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Intertextuality: No references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.

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English Language Arts Item Sampler Grade 3

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