



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

English Language Arts Item Sampler Grade 8



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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 3 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.

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 | | | |
| 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"> 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 |
| 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"> 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 |
| 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"> 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 information within data sets or texts 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 |
| Evaluate Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique | | | <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 | <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 |
| Create Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce | Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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"> Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective |

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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Oversleeping

So Jake spread his arms, leaped skyward from the sidewalk, and began to fly, rocketing up over the neighborhood. Suddenly he heard the distant voice of his father calling, as if from another universe, and Jake pried open sleep-heavy eyes.

“Get up, pal,” said Jake’s father, “or you’ll miss the school bus.”

“Just let me sleep a little longer,” Jake mumbled. Then he groaned and turned over, pulling the covers up over his head like a tent, as if to somehow recapture his dream. Jake loved to sleep. It wasn’t that he was lazy or lacked energy. Jake was a normal fourteen-year-old kid in every way. But he loved to curl up under a soft white cloud of sheets, rest his head on a marshmallow pillow, and luxuriate in the twilight world of slumber where life is exciting and dreams always come true.

So Jake was sitting at a table at a fancy café in Hollywood, having lunch with a famous movie director, who was offering Jake a role in his next big action flick when . . .

“Get up,” said Jake’s father, gently shaking his son’s shoulders. Jake yawned and hauled his legs over the side of the mattress, where he sat for a few moments to reconcile himself with the shocking reality of upright existence. He dragged himself into the shower, where he briefly dreamed of tropical rain forests, and at last shuffled downstairs to breakfast.

“Jake’s going to sleep his life away!” stated Taylor, his nine-year-old sister, as she sat at the table, kicking her dangling legs excitedly as if to show by comparison how wide awake she was.

“He’s just a growing boy,” said Jake’s father, washing dishes at the kitchen sink. “Right?” Jake nodded sleepily and finished his breakfast. He trudged out the front door with Taylor, still half-sleepwalking, and they waited on the curb for their school bus, as usual.

At school, finally fully awake, Jake cycled through the pleasant routine of another typical day.

He greeted his buddy Benjamin at the locker they shared. They discussed hockey games and books. Then there was science with Mr. Albert, math with Ms. Freed, and lunch with Benjamin, who always told great jokes. After school, there was homework, dinner with his dad and Taylor, maybe a little TV, and then off to dreamland. And so went week after week, and month after month.

So Jake swung the bat, sending the ball out of the stadium and into the Baseball Hall of Fame . . .

“Come on, get up,” commanded Taylor, holding a ringing alarm clock only inches from her brother’s face. “You’ll be late for school!” Jake shook his head in disbelief and ducked under the covers.

Moments later Jake awakened to an empty, quiet room. Then he got up and padded sleepily down the hallway. The bathroom mirror reflected a face that was oddly unfamiliar—one with heavier eyebrows and new creases in its brow. Jake rubbed a hand over his face and felt the unexpected sandpaper abrasion of whiskers. Mystified and dazed, he staggered downstairs to the kitchen, where he was perplexed to discover a teenaged Taylor sitting at the breakfast table beside his father, who seemed older somehow.

“So you finally woke up,” commented Jake’s father, casually sipping his coffee. “We thought you’d sleep forever.”

“You certainly overslept!” added Taylor in a surprisingly mature voice.

Go on to the next page.

Jake shook his head as if to disperse the fog of dreams. “What are you talking about?” “You’ve been asleep for four years,” Jake’s father replied calmly. “Better get dressed, or you’ll be late for your last day of school.” This statement set Jake’s mind reeling. His last day of school? Had he really slept so long? Was he now eighteen years old?

Lost in a whirl of confusion, Jake went to his room to dress for school and discovered that none of his clothes fit him. He borrowed a shirt, pants, and shoes from his father—and they made him look and feel even older.

Taylor led Jake out the front door to the curb. Boarding his bus, Jake stared in bewilderment. He was enthralled by the aged faces of his friends. “Hey, it’s Jake!” shouted someone from the back of the bus. “He’s back!” One by one, his schoolmates began to recognize him.

“Buddy, you sure look older!” said someone sitting near where Jake stood. Jake looked down to discover his friend Benjamin smiling heartily and looking startlingly like his older brother. Jake sat beside Benjamin, who eagerly told what had happened during Jake’s years of slumber—how Mr. Albert had retired from teaching science, and how Ms. Freed had been named Teacher of the Year. Benjamin spoke excitedly of hockey games won and lost; of books read and remembered; of school plays, classes, pep rallies, and car washes. They were small, ordinary events, but to Jake they seemed extraordinary because they had happened without him. He had missed grades nine through twelve. His stomach sank when he realized there would be no more school days with Benjamin, his teachers, or his other friends. Jake had slept them all away . . .

“Come on, buddy, get up,” called Jake’s father. Jake pried open leaden eyelids to see his father standing in the doorway, with his familiar easy-going grin. Beside him was nine-year-old Taylor, seemingly more girlish and bubbly than ever before.

“Come on, sleepyhead!” she giggled. Her laughter seemed as bright as the yellow sunshine splashing about the room. “You don’t want to miss school, do you?”

Jake beamed and looked at his family. “No, I wouldn’t want to do that,” he said as he jumped up to greet the day.

TDA Prompt:

In the story “Oversleeping”, the author blends reality and fantasy. Write an essay analyzing how the author helps the reader identify with the main character by blending reality and fantasy. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Go on to the next page.

Writer's Checklist

Text Dependent Analysis (TDA)

The Writer's Checklist is available as an online tool during the TDA. Students may also be provided with a hard copy of the checklist (available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#)) as long as it is then treated as secure testing materials and securely destroyed immediately after the testing session.

PLAN before you write

- Read the entire passage(s) carefully.
- Read the question carefully.
- Think about how the question relates to the passage(s).
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map or outline to plan your essay.
- Plan to include multiple paragraphs in your essay.

FOCUS while you write

- Analyze and explain what you think about the information from the passage(s) in your essay.
- Support and develop the ideas in your essay by using text evidence from the passage(s).
- Use correct language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions between paragraphs in your essay.
- Organize your essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write

- I re-read the question and my final essay answers the question.
- I included my own thoughts and ideas in my essay.
- I included evidence from the passage(s) to support my ideas in my essay.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.
- I used correct language, a variety of sentence types, and paragraph transitions in my essay.

STOP.



Answer the questions.

1. Read the paragraph and then answer the question.

In every student's academic career, there may be some challenges. Perhaps a certain subject or topic of study will be more difficult. The student's reaction to the situation is important. With a bit of fortitude, perhaps by investing extra time in studying or asking a teacher for help, the student will likely experience success.

Which underlined word needs to be corrected for a misspelling?

- A. academic
 - B. reaction
 - C. fortitude
 - D. investing
2. A student is interviewing staff and students for an opinion piece in support of the school allowing access to its computer lab on weekends for students who need to use the computers to do their homework.

Which quote would **best** help the student support the argument in the report?

- A. Mrs. Hopkins, the school librarian, commented, "Students spend so much time on the computer these days, they have stopped reading books."
- B. "It's a great idea! As soon as I am done researching, I can send some emails out to a few of my friends," said Anthony, an 8th-grade student.
- C. "More than half of the assignments I give out require some level of online research," states Mr. Kennedy, 9th-grade history teacher.
- D. Ms. Reynolds, P.E. teacher, says, "Teens need time out in the sunshine and fresh air. The last thing they need is more time in front of a computer."

Go on to the next page.

3. A student is writing a research paper about how to grow fruits and vegetables in a garden.

Which source would provide the most accurate information for the research paper?

- A. an interview with a person who has planted a tomato garden
- B. a local newspaper article titled “Gardening in Large or Small Spaces”
- C. a library book titled *A Walking Tour of Gardens to Discover in Europe*
- D. an online article discussing why it is important to have community gardens





Listen to the presentation that your teacher reads to you from Appendix A. Then answer the questions.

The Archstoyanie Festival

1. Which details from the presentation support the speaker’s reference to the festival as “one of the world’s most unusual events”? Choose **two** answers.
 - A. It began in 2006 and takes place in Russia.
 - B. Exhibits have included a wooden ear and giant harp.
 - C. The festival features food, music, and performances.
 - D. Art lovers come to the area to make their own type of art.
 - E. When the gathering is over, much of the artwork is burned.

2. Why did the author most likely include the quote from Nikolai Polissky?
 - A. to explain what motivated the artist to create his land art
 - B. to describe what the artist’s “Snowmen” display looked like
 - C. to clarify why the artist only wanted to use locally available materials
 - D. to establish why the artist felt the need to create such strange art

Go on to the next page.

3. In what way did Nikolai Polissky significantly impact art by coming to the village of Nikola-Lenivets?
- A. He hired local people to help him make his art.
 - B. He changed the landscape of the entire village with his land art.
 - C. He inspired other artists to come to the area and create more art.
 - D. He encouraged people to learn how to dance, play music, and become artists.





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

A Lasting Impact

Scarlett looked on with pride as she observed a fellow eighth grader casually walk over to one of the many recycling bins at school to dispose of an empty water bottle. As the new president of the school recycling club, Scarlett had played a big part in increasing awareness about the importance of recycling items properly. She and the other members of the club worked together to make sure that a recycling bin was in every public area at the school. “A simple action that has a lasting impact” was the slogan the members of the recycling club had placed on each bin, reminding students that disposing of recyclable items was an easy task that could have a profound effect on the environment.

The school year had just begun, and Scarlett was already thinking about activities to encourage students to be more enthusiastic about recycling. As the president of the recycling club, she wanted to surpass the recycling record the school had set the previous year. The school had recycled an amazing amount of trash for the past five years, and she hoped this year would be even better.

Scarlett went home at the end of the day, feeling optimistic about the school year. She sat down at her computer and looked online, hoping to find inspiration for events the club could organize at school. Instead, she uncovered some alarming information that quickly swept away her positive attitude. During her research, she learned that electronic waste, or e-waste as it is commonly called, represents about 2 percent of trash in landfills. No-longer-used computers, cell phones, and televisions are just a few examples of this type of waste. Unfortunately, as companies that produce these items continue to improve upon technology and people replace existing electronics with newer, better versions, the amount of e-waste that is created will only increase. Scarlett was disappointed in herself for not taking action to bring awareness to this problem sooner. At that moment, she began to develop a plan.

The next day at school, Scarlett was on a mission. There was one person who would definitely be able to help the recycling club bring attention to this cause. “Hey, Juan Carlos,” Scarlett beamed as she saw her friend in the hallway. “How would you like to make your last year of middle school a real success?” Juan Carlos gave a questioning look before Scarlett outlined her plan. It didn’t take much for Juan Carlos to agree to help even though he was not a member of the club. Next, she went to find Mr. Rhomberg, the recycling club sponsor, to receive approval. If she could convince him that this endeavor was worth pursuing, she knew the plan would be put into place soon.

“There is a special project I want us to work on this year,” Scarlett announced at that week’s recycling club meeting. “We have all heard about e-waste, but I recently learned the enormous impact it’s having on our environment.” She went on to tell the club members that she wanted to organize a drive to collect e-waste there at the school. In the next few months, the recycling club would organize an e-waste drive—a day when students and their families could drop off unwanted electronics to be recycled. A local recycling company would pick up the items to dispose of them properly.

“I’m sure you’ve all noticed that we have a visitor here today,” Scarlett said as she pointed to Juan Carlos. “He’s going to help us with the graphics to promote our drive.” The members responded to the news positively, since Juan Carlos was known for his artistic ability. “His drawings will be featured on flyers and in our school newsletter, which will include a special section about the upcoming drive. Now let’s get to work!”

Go on to the next page.

For several weeks, the recycling club planned the upcoming e-waste drive, or e-drive as it was soon called. Flyers were placed around the school, references were made during morning announcements, and science classes welcomed a guest speaker from a local recycling company to inform students about e-waste.

The big day finally arrived, and Scarlett was nervous. She and the other members of the recycling club arrived at school early that Saturday morning to make sure that everything went smoothly. Since this was going to be a large event, the local recycling company that the school had been working with agreed to haul away any electronic items that were collected that day. Scarlett learned that many local organizations accept e-waste daily, so Juan Carlos created a large poster with the names and locations of those organizations to remind people that proper disposal of electronics was something that could be done any time of the year. Everyone waited in anticipation, hoping that students at the school would participate in the event.

It wasn't long before the first cars pulled into the school parking lot. After several minutes, more people arrived. Before long, Scarlett and the other members were hurrying back and forth, helping people as they carried their electronics for recycling to the designated places in the gymnasium. Phones, computers, keyboards, and TVs soon began piling up in huge stacks. As Scarlett helped, she heard someone suggest that the school have another e-drive in a few months. Scarlett smiled, knowing that a simple action could truly have a lasting impact.

Go on to the next page.

1. Why was Scarlett disappointed with herself when she read the statistics about e-waste?
 - A. because she realized that the recycling club had been neglecting an area of concern
 - B. because she realized her recycling club had been focusing on the wrong problem
 - C. because she had not previously understood what the term “e-waste” meant
 - D. because she was unhappy with people who threw away their electronics

2. Which statement **best** summarizes the passage?
 - A. A young girl discovers the amount of e-waste in the country and decides to start a recycling club at her school.
 - B. A student broadens the scope of her school’s recycling program by including a drive specifically for e-waste.
 - C. A young girl enlists her friends in encouraging people within the community to produce less e-waste as it ends up in landfills.
 - D. A student is upset about the amount of e-waste being thrown out and asks her school to do something about it.

Go on to the next page.

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

Part A

How does the recycling club’s motto, “A simple action that has a lasting impact,” reflect the theme of the passage?

- A. By determining a new project for the recycling club, Scarlett keeps a lot of e-waste from ending up in a landfill.
- B. By allowing Juan Carlos to work with the club even though he was not a member, the e-waste drive was a success.
- C. Because the students in the recycling club knew Juan Carlos was a good artist, they were willing to work hard.
- D. Because of a small change she suggested for the recycling club, Scarlett will be the best president ever.

Part B

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

- A. The school year had just begun, and Scarlett was already thinking about activities to encourage students to be more enthusiastic about recycling.
- B. The members responded to the news positively, since Juan Carlos was known for his artistic ability.
- C. “His drawings will be featured on flyers and in our school newsletter, which will include a special section about the upcoming drive.”
- D. As Scarlett helped, she heard someone suggest that the school have another e-drive in a few months.

Go on to the next page.

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

A New Kind of Banknote

A Cool Five

Banknotes, or paper money, have been used in most countries for many years. However, currency just took a huge step into the future, thanks to Australia. If you get the chance to see one of Australia's new \$5 banknotes, you might think it was a prop from a science-fiction movie. Not only do these bills look futuristic, but they are believed to be impossible to duplicate.

A New Twist on Tradition

For years, Australia has been known for its colorful currency. In 1988, the country switched from traditional banknotes made from paper to ones made out of a plastic-like substance called polymer. It was the first country in the world to do so. Polymer made the banknotes especially durable. If you crumple them up, they will smooth out again—back into their original shape.

On September 1, 2016, Australia launched a new \$5 banknote. It was so unique that it was quickly nicknamed “money of the future.” Although the new \$5 note is very different, its design still maintains a few elements from the original note. For example, it still has some of the same shades of pink as the old bill, so it is still easily recognizable. The design still features a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II on the front and the likeness of the New Parliament House on the back.

The current bill retains a number of the same security features as well. If you run your fingers over the banknote, you will feel a unique texture around the queen's image, as well as around the number 5. The raised texture is an antifraud measure called intaglio. Also, the banknote includes the seven-point Federation Star in random light and dark colors. (The star represents Australia's six states and combined territories.) If you tilt the note, the colors will shift under the light.

Currency Trailblazer

Although many traditions from the old \$5 bill may seem to have carried over to the new bill, Australia truly is venturing into uncharted territory with its latest currency. If you look at the newest banknote, the first thing you may notice is a strip of transparent material running through it, from top to bottom. If you hold the bill in your palm, you can see your hand right through the clear strip! It is one of the first currencies in the world to have one of these windows.

The bill also contains some amazing features that resemble animation. On the bill is a picture of a long-billed Australian bird known as the Eastern Spinebill, and below it is the Federation Pavilion, a building that represents unity and strength in Australia. These images are three-dimensional. If you tip the bill up and down or from side to side, something incredible happens: the bird flaps its wings and looks as if it is flying! The bird even changes color. The Pavilion spins back and forth, and the number 5 appears and disappears. Then the 5 appears again, only this time, it is seen backwards, as if being viewed in a mirror.

Go on to the next page.

In addition to these changes, the \$5 banknote also has microprint, or tiny text, in multiple locations. The text is so small that it takes a magnifying glass to be able to read the words. One of the birds, as well as the note's serial number and year of print, will glow when the bill is placed under ultraviolet, or UV, light.

The clear strip, animations, microprint, and UV glow all work together to make the \$5 bill a banknote like no other. Best of all, since these elements are believed to be unable to be reproduced because of the specialized technology needed to do so, they help keep counterfeit currency from being made.

Touching the Future

The new currency has one more unique feature, thanks largely to the determination of a Sydney teenager named Connor McLeod. A few years ago, McLeod started an online petition requesting that identifying textures be added to currency. Blind since birth, this young man wanted to make it easier for people who are visually impaired to know the value of each banknote. McLeod collected 56,000-plus signatures on his petition, helping to convince the Australian government to make these important changes. The new \$5 note has two raised dots at the top and bottom of the bill, beside the clear window, so that the visually impaired can sense the bill's denomination with a single touch.

Coming up with the new design for the banknote took Australia ten years of study, research, and trials. Everyone from cashiers to counterfeit money experts was consulted. The first of the newly designed bills is now in circulation. Changes have been or will be made to other denominations of currency as well.

Australia has one of the world's lowest rates of counterfeiting, or illegal copying of money. Now that they are producing banknotes with so many advanced protections, these rates may drop even lower. Australia's great strides are proving that it pays to be creative!

Go on to the next page.

4. Why does the author most likely include the details about the history of Australia's currency?
- A. to point out why the new bill needed to be difficult to duplicate
 - B. to explain why the government wanted the new bill to look so futuristic
 - C. to emphasize that some features of the new bill are similar to the features of the old bill
 - D. to demonstrate that the colors used for the new bill are brighter than the colors on the old bill

5. Read the sentence from the passage.

Although many traditions from the old \$5 bill may seem to have carried over to the new bill, Australia truly is venturing into uncharted territory with its latest currency.

What does the phrase “uncharted territory” mean as used in this sentence?

- A. an insecure future
- B. an incredible choice
- C. a foreign or exotic place
- D. a new way of doing something

Go on to the next page.

6. Which sentence from the passage **best** shows the influence Connor McLeod had on the design of Australia's new \$5 bill?
- A. The new currency has one more unique feature, thanks largely to the determination of a Sydney teenager named Connor McLeod.
 - B. A few years ago, McLeod started an online petition requesting that identifying textures be added to currency.
 - C. Blind since birth, this young man wanted to make it easier for people who are visually impaired to know the value of each banknote.
 - D. The new \$5 note has two raised dots at the top and bottom of the bill, beside the clear window, so that the visually impaired can sense the bill's denomination with a single touch.





APPENDIX A—LISTENING PASSAGE: THE ARCHSTOYANIE FESTIVAL

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.

The Archstoyanie Festival

Every summer, thousands travel to the Russian village of Nikola-Lenivets for one of the world’s most unusual events. At a festival called Archstoyanie, which translates to “Archaic Standing,” artists and architects create strange, gigantic works of art using materials found locally, such as hay, logs, soil, and clay. Past exhibits have included an enormous wooden ear that people can climb inside, a fire-spouting wooden volcano, and a giant steel-stringed harp.

The festival began in 2006, but its roots started earlier, when artist Nikolai Polissky moved to the area. “I was looking for a beautiful place, a place for work,” Polissky said. “It simply astounded me. I haven’t seen anything [like it] so close to Moscow. Here is a river and a high river bank . . . a singular beauty.”

Polissky was so inspired by his surroundings that he hired local people to help him create his unusual art. His first work was called “Snowmen.” It was an army of over 200 enormous figures. Made out of hay and wood, they stretched out in straight lines across a green field. Polissky continued making what he calls “land art.” Soon, journalists and art lovers were flocking to the area. Before long, other artists began moving there and creating their own versions of land art. So it seemed only natural to Polissky to establish a festival and invite people to enjoy the exhibits.

Over the years, the Archstoyanie festival has grown to include musical and dance performances. There are lectures, activities for children, and locally prepared foods. The festival even features what is thought to be the world’s longest trampoline. At almost 170 feet long, it offers a unique way for visitors to travel through the landscape around the festival.

At the end of the festival, some of the artwork is ceremoniously burned. Most of it, however, remains so visitors can enjoy the fascinating art year-round.

APPENDIX B—SUMMARY DATA

Grade 8

| Sample Number | Alignment | Answer Key | Depth of Knowledge | Annotations |
|------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|---|
| Session 1 | | | | |
| 1 | CCSS-1: 8.W.2 | | 3 | Students need to analyze how an author uses literary techniques to reveal character traits. |
| Session 2 | | | | |
| 1 | CCSS-1: 8.L.2b | D | 1 | Students need to correctly identify a misspelled word. Option D is the correct answer. The other options do not include misspellings. |
| 2 | CCSS-1: 8.W.1b | C | 2 | Students need to support the argument with logical reasoning. Option C is the correct answer. The other options do not support the argument. |
| 3 | CCSS-1: 8.W.8 | B | 2 | Students need to decide which source would allow them to gather the most accurate information on the topic. Option B is the correct answer. The other options would not provide accurate information on the topic. |
| Session 3 | | | | |
| 1 | CCSS-1: 8.SL.3 | B/E | 2 | After listening to the presentation, students need to decide which two pieces of evidence sufficiently support the author’s reference. Options B and E are the correct answers. The other options do not sufficiently support the reference. |
| 2 | CCSS-1: 8.SL.2 | A | 2 | After listening to the presentation, students need to analyze the purpose for a quotation the presenter uses in the presentation. Option A is the correct answer. The other options do not correctly evaluate the reason for the quotation. |
| 3 | CCSS-1: 8.SL.2 | C | 3 | After listening to the presentation, students need to analyze how the artist made a significant impact by coming to the village of Nikola-Lenivets. Option C is the correct answer. The other options do not analyze how the artist made an impact. |

Grade 8

| Sample Number | Alignment | Answer Key | Depth of Knowledge | Annotations |
|------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|---|
| Session 4 | | | | |
| 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—The Archstoyanie Festival

Grade 8

Recommended Placement for Assessment

The quantitative Easy Listening Formula (ELF) indicates that this document is at least suitable for a *reader* at the 8th grade, ninth 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 8 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 8.

PURPOSE

Purpose: Medium 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: Low Complexity

Vocabulary: Medium Complexity

Delivery: audio not available at this time

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

Subject Matter Knowledge: Medium Complexity

Allusions/References: Medium 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 8

| 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 8

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 8

| 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—A Lasting Impact

Grade 8

Recommended Placement for Assessment

The quantitative measures of several readability programs suggest an appropriate placement at the grade 6-8 band. The qualitative review supports grade 8 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 slightly complex and is recommended for assessment at grade 8.

MEANING: Moderately Complex

TEXT STRUCTURE

Organization: Slightly Complex

Use of Images: N/A

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Conventionality: Moderately Complex

Vocabulary: Moderately Complex

Sentence Structure: Very 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 8

| 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 8

| 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—A New Kind of Banknote****Grade 8****Recommended Placement for Assessment**

The quantitative measures of several readability programs suggest an appropriate placement at the grade 6-8 band. The qualitative review supports grade 8 based on the subject matter 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 8.

PURPOSE: Moderately Complex

TEXT STRUCTURE

Organization of Main Ideas: Moderately Complex

Text Features: Slightly Complex

Use of Images: N/A

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Conventionality: Slightly Complex

Vocabulary: Moderately Complex

Sentence Structure: Very Complex

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

Subject Matter Knowledge: Moderately Complex

Intertextuality: Moderately 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 8

| 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 8

| 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 8

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