



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler



2019–2020
Grade 3

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INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides districts and schools with tools to assist in delivering focused instructional programs aligned with the Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS). These tools include Academic Standards, Assessment Anchor documents, assessment handbooks, and content-based item and scoring samplers. This Item and Scoring Sampler is a useful tool for Pennsylvania educators in preparing local instructional programs by providing samples of test item types and scored student responses. The Item Sampler is not designed to be used as a pretest, a curriculum, or other benchmark for operational testing.

This Item and Scoring Sampler is available in Braille format. For more information regarding Braille, call (717) 901-2238.

Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS)

This sampler contains examples of test questions designed to assess the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards. The Mathematics, Reading, and Writing PSSA transitioned to PCS-based operational Mathematics and English Language Arts assessments starting with the spring 2015 PSSA administration.

The 2014 PCS-aligned Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content documents are posted on this portal:

- www.education.pa.gov [Roll over 'DATA AND REPORTING' in the dark blue bar across the top of the page. Select 'ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.' Click on the link that reads 'Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).' Then click on 'Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content!']

What Is Included

This sampler contains stimulus reading passages with test questions and Conventions of Standard English questions that have been written to align to the Assessment Anchors that are based on the Pennsylvania Core Standards. The passages represent some of the genres approved by PDE to appear on an operational, PCS-based PSSA. The test questions provide an idea of the types of items that may appear on an operational, PCS-based PSSA. Each sample test question has been through a rigorous review process to ensure alignment with the Assessment Anchors.

Purpose and Uses

The items in this sampler may be used¹ as examples for creating assessment items at the classroom level. Classroom teachers may find it beneficial to have students respond to the short-answer question in this sampler. Educators can then use the sampler as a guide to score the responses either independently or together with colleagues within a school or district.

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Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

The 2019–2020 PCS-based PSSA has multiple types of test questions. For grade 3, the types of test questions are Multiple-Choice (MC) questions, Evidence-Based Selected-Response (EBSR) questions, and Short-Answer (SA) questions.

Multiple Choice: Each of this type of test question has four answer choices. Some MC test questions are based on a stimulus reading passage, while Conventions of Standard English MC test questions are independent of a passage. Each correct response to an MC test question is worth one point.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response: Each two-part EBSR question is designed to elicit an evidence-based response from a student who has read either a literature or an informational text passage. In Part One, which is similar to a multiple-choice question, the student analyzes a passage and chooses the best answer from four answer choices. In Part Two, the student utilizes evidence from the passage to select one or more answers based on his or her response to Part One. Part Two is different from a multiple-choice question in that there may be more than four answer options and more than one correct answer. Each EBSR test question is worth either two or three points, and students can receive points for providing a correct response to Part One or for providing one or more correct responses in Part Two.

Short Answer: Each of this type of test question includes a short response space in which the student composes an answer based on the passage the student has read. A short-answer (SA) test question may include multiple tasks, and the student may be asked to provide a brief explanation. Each SA test question is scored using an item-specific scoring guideline based on a 0–3-point scoring guideline. In this sampler, every item-specific scoring guideline is combined with examples of student responses representing each score point to form a practical, item-specific scoring guide. This sampler also includes the General Description of Scoring Guidelines for Short-Answer Questions used to develop the item-specific guidelines. The general description of scoring guidelines should be used if any additional item-specific scoring guidelines are created for use within local instructional programs.

Non-Score Considerations: For SA items, responses can be designated as non-scorable (NS). While every effort is made to score each student response, a response may receive an NS designation if it falls into one of five categories:

Blank – Blank, entirely erased, entirely crossed out, or consists entirely of whitespace

Refusal – Refusal to respond to the task

Off Task – Makes no reference to the item or passage but is not an intentional refusal

Foreign Language – Written entirely in a language other than English

Illegible – Illegible or incoherent

Testing Time and Mode of Testing Delivery for the PCS-Based PSSA

The PSSA is delivered in traditional paper-and-pencil format as well as in an online format. The estimated time to respond to a test question is the same for both methods of test delivery. The following table shows the estimated response time for each item type.

During an official test administration, students are given as much additional time as is necessary to complete the test questions.


English Language Arts Item Type	MC	EBSR	SA
Estimated Response Time (minutes)	1.5	3 to 5	5

English Language Arts Grade 3

This English Language Arts Sampler is composed of a passage, 5 passage-based multiple-choice questions, an evidence-based selected-response question, a short-answer question, and 4 Conventions of Standard English multiple-choice questions.

There is 1 passage in this booklet. The passage is followed by a set of passage-based multiple-choice questions, an evidence-based selected-response question, and a short-answer question. This booklet also contains 4 Conventions of Standard English multiple-choice questions.

Each question is accompanied by a chart that contains the Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content coding, answer key(s), depth of knowledge, and testing data. Each question is followed by a brief analysis or rationale. The short-answer question is displayed with an item-specific scoring guideline or mode-specific scoring guideline and examples of student responses with annotations at each scoring level.

The PCS-based PSSA may be administered in paper-and-pencil format or online. As a result, this sampler includes samples of short-answer question responses in both formats. A sample online response is noted by the symbol .

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR READING PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS**Directions:**

On the following pages are the Reading passage and questions.

Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:

Some questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- First, read the passage carefully.
- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer the question.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

Directions for Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions:

Some questions will have two parts and will ask you to select one or more answers in each part.

For the evidence-based selected-response questions:

- Read Part One of the question and choose the best answer.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part One of the question.
- Record your answer to Part One in the answer booklet.
- Only one of the answers provided in Part One is correct.
- Then, read Part Two of the question and choose the evidence to support your answer in Part One. If Part Two tells you to select two answers, be sure to select two answers.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part Two of the question.
- Record your answer or answers to Part Two in the answer booklet.

Directions for Short-Answer Questions:

Some questions will require you to write your response.

For the short-answer questions:

- Be sure to read each short-answer question carefully.
- You cannot receive the highest score for a short-answer question without completing all the tasks in the question.
- If the question asks you to do multiple tasks, be sure to complete all tasks.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer the question.
- Write your response in the appropriate space in the booklet. If you use scratch paper to write your draft, be sure to transfer your final response to the booklet.

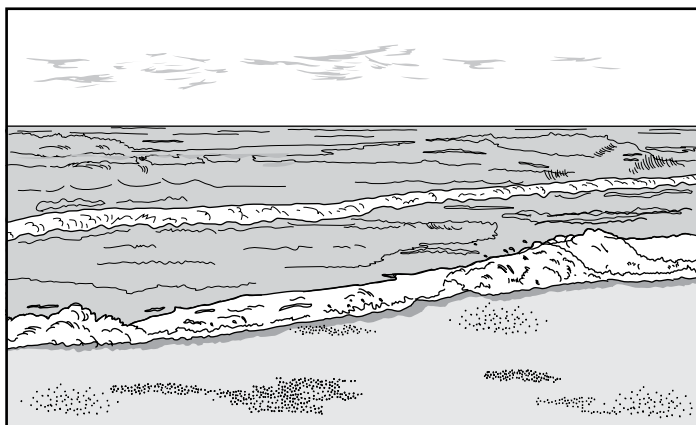
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PASSAGE 1

Read the following poem about the beach. Then answer questions 1 through 7.

Morning on the Beach

by Leo J. Molner



The sun was rising in the east.
It barely cleared the trees.
The wind was blowing from the west,
A soft and gentle breeze.

I walked along the lovely beach,
Just taking in the sights,
And passed by people hunting shells,
Some youngsters flying kites.

The rolling waves came into shore
And surged up on the beach,
While sand crabs scampered in their holes
As far as they could reach.

And sandpipers, in unison,
Moved left and then to right;
Their movement was so magical
It was a pretty sight.

They searched for critters in the sand
Until the surf approached.
Then turned and briskly walked away
As though they all were coached.

Giant tracks of loggerheads were there.
They lay their eggs at night.
The turtles then go back to sea,
Before the morning light.

And pelicans stood on the dock.
They'd sit and wait and look
For fishermen to catch a fish,
Then dive and clean his hook.

With seagulls screeching overhead
And egrets, tall and grand,
The beach is such an awesome place,
A kingdom in the sand.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Read the line from the poem.

As though they all were coached.

What does the line show about the sandpipers?

- Ⓐ They seem to be getting stronger.
- Ⓑ They seem to be playing games with each other.
- Ⓒ It seems like someone is telling them what to do.
- Ⓓ It seems like someone is helping them learn something.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-V.4.1.2
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	24%
p-value B	17%
p-value C	35% (correct answer)
p-value D	24%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the meaning of the line from the poem. Option C is the correct answer since the word “coached” suggests that the sandpipers’ quick movements are influenced by someone’s directions. Options A, B, and D are not supported in the context of the two stanzas focused on sandpipers.

2. Which two words from the poem are **most** alike in meaning?

- Ⓐ soft – gentle
- Ⓑ walked – passed
- Ⓒ moved – searched
- Ⓓ giant – awesome

Item Information	
Alignment	A-V.4.1.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	70% (correct answer)
p-value B	20%
p-value C	6%
p-value D	4%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the two words from the poem that are most alike in meaning. Option A is the correct answer since “soft” and “gentle” are synonyms. Option B is not correct since the words “walked” and “passed” are not synonyms because one can pass by others with movements other than walking. Option C is not correct since the words “moved” and “searched” are not synonyms. Option D is not correct; while one can think that something that is “giant” is “awesome,” the words are not synonyms.

3. Which animals in the poem leave the beach before the sun comes up?
- Ⓐ the sandpipers
 - Ⓑ the turtles
 - Ⓒ the pelicans
 - Ⓓ the seagulls

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	1
p-value A	19%
p-value B	67% (correct answer)
p-value C	7%
p-value D	7%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the animals in the poem that leave the beach before the sun comes up. Option B is the correct answer since the poem indicates that “The turtles then go back to sea, / Before the morning light.” Options A, C, and D are not correct since no evidence in the poem suggests that these animals leave the beach.

4. Which detail from the poem **best** tells what the poem is about?

- Ⓐ “The sun was rising in the east.”
- Ⓑ “Some youngsters flying kites.”
- Ⓒ “And pelicans stood on the dock.”
- Ⓓ “The beach is such an awesome place,”

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	15%
p-value B	5%
p-value C	5%
p-value D	75% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the detail from the poem that best tells what the poem is about. Option D is the correct answer since the poem is about all the ways that the beach is a special place. Options A, B, and C are not correct since they merely provide examples of the speaker’s observations of activities seen at the beach.

5. Why do the pelicans “sit and wait and look”?

- Ⓐ to see how the fishermen find fish
- Ⓑ to show other birds how to get fish
- Ⓒ to take fish away from the fishermen
- Ⓓ to scare other birds away from the fish

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	32%
p-value B	7%
p-value C	52% (correct answer)
p-value D	9%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine why the pelicans “sit and wait and look.” Option C is the correct answer; after a fisherman catches a fish, the pelican dives under the water to take his fish from the hook. Option A is not correct since the phrase “dive and clean his hook” provides textual evidence that the pelicans steal the fish. Options B and D are not supported at all in the text of the poem.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question

6. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

Part One

Which description **best** shows how the first person point of view is used in the poem?

- Ⓐ through a speaker who shares facts about the beach
- Ⓑ through a speaker who shares a dream about the beach
- Ⓒ through a speaker who shares personal feelings about the beach
- Ⓓ through a speaker who shares other people’s feelings about the beach

Part Two

Which line from the poem **best** supports the answer in Part One? Choose **one** answer.

- Ⓐ “It barely cleared the trees.”
- Ⓑ “I walked along the lovely beach,”
- Ⓒ “And sandpipers, in unison,”
- Ⓓ “Then dive and clean his hook.”

Item Information	
Alignment	A-C.2.1.1
Answer Key: Part One	C
Answer Key: Part Two	B
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.12
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine how the point of view is used in the poem and to select a line from the poem that best supports this answer.</p> <p>Part One: Option C is the correct answer since such words as “lovely,” “magical,” “pretty,” and “awesome” indicate the speaker’s feelings about the beach. Option A is not correct since the speaker shares his/her observations, not facts about the beach. Option B is not correct since there is no indication that the poem is a dream. Option D is not correct since the feelings expressed are those of the speaker, not of someone else.</p> <p>Part Two: Option B is the correct answer since the word “lovely” shows the personal feelings of the speaker. Options A, C, and D reflect the speaker’s observations, not feelings.</p>

Short-Answer Scoring Guideline

#7 Item Information

Alignment	A-K.1.1.2	Depth of Knowledge	3	Mean Score	1.36
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Assessment Anchor this item will be reported under:

E03.A-K.1—Key Ideas and Details

Specific Eligible Content addressed by this item:

E03.A-K.1.1.2—Recount poems, dramas, or stories. Determine the central message.

Score	Description
3	The response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer to what lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem. The response includes relevant and specific information from the passage.
2	The response is a partial answer to what lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem. The response includes limited information from the passage, and may include inaccuracies.
1	The response is a minimal answer to what lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem. The response includes little or no information from the passage, and may include inaccuracies. OR The response relates minimally to the task.
0	The response is totally incorrect or irrelevant or contains insufficient information to demonstrate comprehension.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points

7. What lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

The lesson^{that is} learned by the speaker is.
The beach is so full of life. The text states "And passed by people hunting shells, some youngsters flying kites." The text also states "sand crabs scampered in there holes As far as thay could reach." this shows the beach is active with anamals.

This response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer to what lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem (*beach is so full of life*). The response includes relevant and specific information from the passage ("*And passed by people hunting shells, some youngsters flying kites.*," "*sand crabs scampered in there holes As far as thay could reach.*," *beach is active with anamals*).

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



7. What lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

I learned that the beach is a vary pretty place. I think the beach can be very pretty place because of the way the poem discrbe it. For example the poem say, "I walked along the lovely beach." That what I learned from the speaker of the poem

This response is a partial answer to what lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem (*I learned that the beach is a vary pretty place*). The response includes limited information from the passage (*"I walked along the lovely beach,"*).

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



7. What lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

A lesson is that can be made is that the beach is an amazeing place.

This response is a minimal answer to what lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem (*the beach is an amazing place*). The response includes no information from the passage.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 0 points

7. What lesson can be learned from the speaker of the poem? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

We learned that not always do
dreams come true. We also learend
that eveni if we are think that
dousn't means it's going to happen.

After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.



This response contains irrelevant lessons. The response does not include any information from the passage.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH QUESTIONS

Directions:

On the following pages are the Conventions of Standard English questions.

Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:

Each question will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

8. Read the sentence.

The reader felt the character's _____ when the character's team won the big game.

Which word **best** completes the sentence?

- Ⓐ power
- Ⓑ sadness
- Ⓒ bravery
- Ⓓ pride

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.3
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	21%
p-value B	3%
p-value C	11%
p-value D	65% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the abstract noun that best completes the sentence. Option D is the correct answer since this abstract noun is best supported by the context. Although the character can be inferred to have power since he/she won the game, Option A is not the best answer. Option B is not correct since it is not supported by the context of the sentence. Although the character may be brave for playing in a game, Option C is not the best answer.

9. Read the sentences from a story.

(1) On a warm summer’s day, Mark went with his family to pick strawberries. (2) He was given his very own box to fill. (3) In less than an hour, his box _____.

Choose the **most** descriptive group of words to complete sentence 3.

- Ⓐ had more than enough strawberries in it
- Ⓑ had plenty of good strawberries in it
- Ⓒ was packed full of juicy strawberries
- Ⓓ was all filled with wonderful strawberries

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	24%
p-value B	17%
p-value C	39% (correct answer)
p-value D	20%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the most descriptive group of words that completes the given sentence. Option C is the correct answer since the words “packed full” and “juicy” provide the most imagery. Options A, B, and D are not correct since they are less specific and vivid.

10. Which sentence needs a comma and quotation marks?

- Ⓐ Our teacher told us about our trip to the aquarium.
- Ⓑ He said that we would see fish of all different sizes.
- Ⓒ I was excited when he said we would also see turtles.
- Ⓓ I'm going to have fun at the aquarium I told my mom.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.3
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	10%
p-value B	27%
p-value C	20%
p-value D	43% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which sentence needs a comma and quotation marks. Option D is the correct answer since it includes dialogue. Quotation marks are needed starting before "I'm" and ending after "aquarium," and a comma is needed after the word "aquarium." Options A, B, and C are not correct; no quotation marks or commas are needed since the answers do not include dialogue.

11. Read the sentences.

Many different animals live on or near my uncle’s farm. There are ponys in the field. There are geese near the water. There are even deer in the woods.

Which underlined word should be changed to correct the mistake?

- Ⓐ animals
- Ⓑ ponys
- Ⓒ geese
- Ⓓ deer

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.2
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	1
p-value A	15%
p-value B	56% (correct answer)
p-value C	19%
p-value D	10%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify which underlined word in the given sentences should be changed to correct the mistake in the formation of a plural noun. Option B is the correct answer; the correct plural form of “pony” is “ponies,” not “ponys.” Options A, C, and D are correct in the given sentences.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS—SAMPLE ITEM SUMMARY DATA

MULTIPLE-CHOICE AND EVIDENCE-BASED SELECTED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	p-value A	p-value B	p-value C	p-value D
1	A-V.4.1.2	C	2	24%	17%	35%	24%
2	A-V.4.1.2	A	2	70%	20%	6%	4%
3	A-K.1.1.1	B	1	19%	67%	7%	7%
4	A-K.1.1.2	D	3	15%	5%	5%	75%
5	A-K.1.1.3	C	2	32%	7%	52%	9%
6	A-C.2.1.1	Part One: C Part Two: B	3	Mean Score: 1.12			
8	D.1.1.3	D	2	21%	3%	11%	65%
9	D.2.1.1	C	2	24%	17%	39%	20%
10	D.1.2.3	D	2	10%	27%	20%	43%
11	D.1.1.2	B	1	15%	56%	19%	10%

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
7	A-K.1.1.2	3	3	1.36

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PSSA Grade 3 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler

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