



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# **The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment**

## **English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler**



**2023–2024**  
**Grade 8**

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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 Anchors and Eligible Content (AAEC) 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 released test items, of test item types, and scored student responses. The item sampler is not designed to be used as a pretest, a curriculum, or any 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 PCS. 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 PCS-aligned Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content documents are posted on this portal:

- [www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov) [Hover over “Data and Reporting,” select “Assessment and Accountability,” and select “PSSA-PA System of School Assessment.” Then select “Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content” on the right side of the screen.]

### What Is Included

This sampler contains stimulus reading passages with test questions, Conventions of Standard English questions, and a text-dependent analysis (TDA) prompt that have been written to align to the Assessment Anchors, which are based on the PCS. The sample test questions model the types of items that may appear on an operational PSSA. Each sample test question has been through a rigorous review process to ensure alignment with the Assessment Anchors prior to being piloted in an embedded field test within a PSSA assessment and then used operationally on a PSSA assessment. Answer keys, scoring guidelines, and any related stimulus material are also included. Additionally, sample student responses are provided with each open-ended item to demonstrate the range of responses that students provided in response to these items.

### Purpose and Uses

The items in this sampler may be used<sup>1</sup> as examples for creating assessment items at the classroom level. Classroom teachers may find it beneficial to have students respond to the text-dependent analysis prompt question in this sampler. Educators may 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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<sup>1</sup> The permission to copy and/or use these materials does not extend to commercial purposes.

## Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

The 2023 PCS-based PSSA has multiple types of test questions. For grade 8, the types of test questions are multiple-choice (MC) questions, evidence-based selected-response (EBSR) questions, and text-dependent analysis (TDA) prompts.

**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 an MC 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 the response to Part One. Part Two is different from an MC 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.

**Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt:** The TDA prompt is a text-dependent analysis prompt based on a passage or passage set that each student has read during the test event. There are three response pages in the paper-and-pencil format and up to 5,000 characters in the online format. Both literature and informational text passages are addressed through this item type. Students use explicit and implicit evidence to make inferences leading to a conclusion or generalization in response to the task stated in the prompt. Students construct a well-written analytical essay to communicate inferences and connections to the evidence using grade-appropriate writing skills. The TDA response is scored using a holistic scoring guideline on a 1–4-point scale.

**Non-score Considerations:** For TDA 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

**Non-scorable** – In a language other than English, incoherent, illegible, insufficient, unrelated to the passage, or consisting solely or almost solely of text copied from the passage

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

**Copied** – Consists of text copied from the item and/or test directions

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

The PSSA is delivered in a 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.

<b>English Language Arts Item Type</b>	<b>MC</b>	<b>EBSR</b>	<b>TDA</b>
Estimated Response Time (minutes)	1.5	3 to 5	45


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

### **English Language Arts Grade 8**

This English Language Arts Sampler is composed of 2 passages, 6 passage-based MC questions, 1 EBSR question, 1 TDA prompt, and 4 Conventions of Standard English MC questions.

There are 2 passages in this booklet. The first passage is followed by 6 passage-based MC questions and 1 EBSR question. The second passage is followed by 1 TDA prompt. This booklet also contains 4 Conventions of Standard English MC questions.

Each question is accompanied by a table 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 TDA prompt is displayed with the item-specific scoring guideline and examples of student responses with scores and 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 TDA prompt responses in both formats. A sample online response is noted by the symbol .

## Item and Scoring Sampler Format

This sampler includes the test directions and scoring guidelines that appear in previous PSSA English Language Arts assessments. Each MC item is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the answer key, the depth of knowledge (DOK) level, the percentage<sup>2</sup> of students who chose each answer option, and a brief answer-option analysis or rationale. The EBSR item is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the answer key to Part One of the item, the answer key to Part Two of the item, the DOK level, the mean student score, and a brief answer-option analysis for each part of the item. The TDA prompt is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the DOK level, and the mean student score. Additionally, the *Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline* is combined with sample student responses representing two examples of each score point to form a practical item-specific scoring guideline. The student responses in this item and scoring sampler are actual student responses; however, the handwriting has been changed to protect the students’ identities and to make the item and scoring sampler accessible to as many people as possible.

### Example Multiple-Choice Item Information Table

Item Information	
Alignment	Assigned AAEC
Answer Key	Correct Answer
Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK
p-value A	Percentage of students who selected option A
p-value B	Percentage of students who selected option B
p-value C	Percentage of students who selected option C
p-value D	Percentage of students who selected option D
Option Annotations	Brief answer-option analysis or rationale

### Example Evidence-Based Selected-Response Item Information Table

Item Information	
Alignment	Assigned AAEC
Answer Key: Part One	Correct Answer
Answer Key: Part Two	Correct Answer
Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK
Mean Score	Average Score
Option Annotations	Brief answer-option analysis or rationale

### Example Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt Information Table

Alignment	Assigned AAEC	Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK	Mean Score	Average Score

<sup>2</sup> All p-value percentages listed in the item information tables have been rounded.

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

On the following pages are the Reading passages 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 Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Prompts:**

The English Language Arts TDA prompt will ask you to analyze the passage and use evidence from the passage to write an essay.

For the TDA Essay:

- Be sure to read the passage and the TDA prompt carefully.
- Review the Writer’s Checklist to help you plan and organize your response.
- You may look back at the passage to help you write your essay.
- Write your essay in the appropriate space in the answer booklet. If you use scratch paper to write a rough-draft essay, be sure to transfer your final essay to the answer booklet.
- Be sure to check that your essay contains evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Be sure to check your essay for errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

## PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage about scientist Richard Feynman’s interest in rainbows. Then answer questions 1–7 in your answer booklet.

## Feynman and the Rainbow

by Stephen Whitt

Like most people, Richard Feynman admired rainbows. Rainbows need light, something the physicist thought about often.

One kind of rainbow appears in soap bubbles or in oily water puddles. These rainbows form because of something called interference—the idea that bits of light, called photons, can actually cancel each other out. In fact, the color you see in a soap bubble or on an oil slick is just the color left over after some of the photons have canceled each other out.

This idea of interference led to one of Feynman’s great contributions, a way of explaining something he called “the two-slit experiment.” For Feynman, this experiment contained all the weirdness of the strange science called quantum mechanics. When dealing with other problems in quantum mechanics, he would say, “You remember the case of the two-slit experiment? It’s the same thing.”

### Pieces of Light

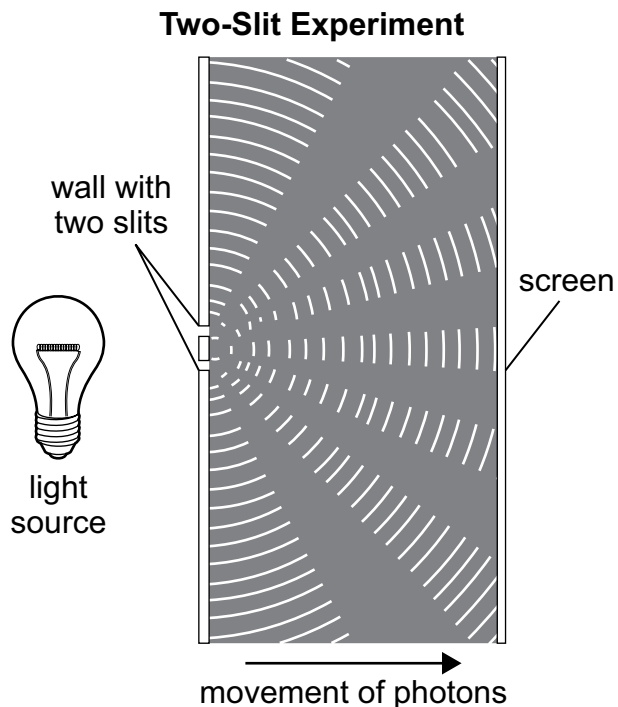
For the past 100 years, scientists have known that light is made of tiny pieces called photons. You might think of photons as small, fuzzy balls bouncing about at the speed of light. Keep in mind that this is just a model. To really “see” a photon, you have to absorb it in your eye, and this destroys the photon. But our model will be useful for the ideas to come.

### Slits in Walls

Imagine a light bulb so dim that it makes only one photon each second. The photon leaves the bulb and flies toward a wall. Usually the photon hits the wall, but occasionally a photon passes through a single thin slit in the wall. As it passes through the slit, the photon might be deflected up, deflected down, or keep going straight—you’re never sure just where the photon will go. After a short time, the photon runs into a screen that records the spot where the photon lands.

Most of the photons pass through the slit without much deflection, while a few are deflected up or down quite a bit. Now let’s add a second slit very near the first.

Photons may now pass through either slit to reach the screen. You might think that this second slit would just increase the number of photons that reach the screen. And you’d be partly right—the total number of photons does go up. But in certain regions the number of photons actually goes down.



### A Deep Mystery

How can this be? How can opening a second slit in the wall actually make fewer photons reach a particular spot? This is the great beauty and mystery of the double-slit experiment. It turns out that—just as with our oil-slick rainbow—the photons interfere with one another; they cancel each other out. But remember: These photons arrive at different times!

Think, for a moment, about how strange this is. A photon that leaves at 10:30 and passes through one slit apparently “knows” that another photon will leave at 11:00 and pass through the other slit, traveling just the right distance to cancel out the first photon. As a result, the first photon doesn’t land in that “forbidden” spot. How can it know ahead of time which spots are forbidden? How can it know anything about a slit through which it doesn’t pass?

### Answers and Questions

Feynman had an answer. He told us that the photon doesn’t pass through one slit. It passes through both slits. But wait, there’s more. Each photon actually “sniffs out” every possible path to reach the screen, all at the same time! Every possible path means just what it says. One path goes through the bottom slit. Another goes through the top slit. A third goes past your elbow, or maybe through a cat’s whiskers, before reaching the screen, and so on. And—here is the key point—as some of those paths interfere with each other, the photon won’t take those paths. In effect, the photon is interfering with itself.

### No Peeking

At this point, you’re probably thinking, “This is silly. Why not just look to see which slit the photon goes through?” But to “look,” you have to change the setup of your experiment, and this changes the results. For example, to make sure that the photon passed through the top slit, you might block off the bottom slit. But with the bottom slit blocked, you get the single-slit pattern.

It’s almost as if nature is covering her tracks, making sure that you can’t peek inside to see what’s “really” happening. When you peek, the weirdness disappears.

If by now you're a little dizzy, take heart. Quantum mechanics describes the way nature behaves. It predicts perfectly the way light bounces off mirrors, passes through windows, and makes rainbows on oily puddles. Yet even scientists who work with quantum mechanics admit that they don't understand why it works that way. Feynman said, "Nobody understands quantum mechanics. . . . If you will simply admit that maybe nature does behave like this, you will find her a delightful, entrancing thing. . . . But nobody knows how it can be like that."

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. How does the section “Slits in Walls” contribute to the overall structure of the passage?
- A. by describing the process of photon behavior
  - B. by comparing experiments related to photons
  - C. by introducing a problem associated with studying photons
  - D. by explaining what causes photons to behave in a certain way

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.2.1.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	47% (correct answer)
p-value B	13%
p-value C	17%
p-value D	23%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to determine how the section “Slits in Walls” contributes to the overall structure of the passage. Option A is the correct answer since the section explicitly describes the process of photon behavior. Option B is incorrect; although the section discusses photons, it does not talk about any experiments that have been done with photons. Option C is incorrect; although the section states, “You’re never sure just where the photon will go,” which could be considered a problem, the section is not written using a problem-and-solution structure. Option D is incorrect since the section does not discuss what causes the photons to behave in a certain way.

2. Read the sentence from the passage.

“Most of the photons pass through the slit without much deflection, while a few are deflected up or down quite a bit.”

What does the word deflection mean as used in the sentence?

- A. delay
- B. detour
- C. distraction
- D. difference

Item Information	
Alignment	B-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	24%
p-value B	44% (correct answer)
p-value C	18%
p-value D	14%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to use context clues to determine the meaning of the word “deflection.” Option B is the correct answer since the word “deflection” means “detour” as it is used in the sentence. In the sentence, the phrase “up or down” supports this definition. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they do not provide an accurate definition for the word “deflection.”

3. Read the claim from the section “No Peeking.”

“When you peek, the weirdness disappears.”

How does the author support the claim?

- A. by describing the path a photon takes to reach a screen
- B. by explaining that the behavior of light can be predicted
- C. by describing the way a photon can cancel out another photon
- D. by explaining the complications that arise when adjusting the number of slits

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	14%
p-value B	25%
p-value C	22%
p-value D	39% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to determine how the author supports a specific claim in the passage. Option D is the correct answer since the passage states, “But with the bottom slit blocked, you get the single-slit pattern,” which explains the complications that arise when you change the number of slits. Option A is incorrect since this section does not talk about the path a photon takes to reach the screen. Option B is incorrect; although the section states that scientists know the path the light is going to take, this does not support the claim stated in the question. Option C is incorrect since this section does not describe how one photon can cancel out another photon.

4. Which evidence **most** suggests that Richard Feynman is a prominent physicist?
- A. “This idea of interference led to one of Feynman’s great contributions, a way of explaining something he called ‘the two-slit experiment.’ ”
  - B. “For Feynman, this experiment contained all the weirdness of the strange science called quantum mechanics.”
  - C. “When dealing with other problems in quantum mechanics, he would say, ‘You remember the case of the two-slit experiment?’ ”
  - D. “He told us that the photon doesn’t pass through one slit. It passes through both slits.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.1
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	53% (correct answer)
p-value B	19%
p-value C	18%
p-value D	10%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which evidence shows that Richard Feynman is a prominent physicist. Option A is the correct answer since it mentions “one of Feynman’s great contributions,” which indicates he has made several important contributions. Options B, C, and D are incorrect; while all of these pieces of evidence are related to Feynman, they do not support the idea that Feynman is a prominent physicist.



5. Read the sentence from the section “No Peeking.”

“If by now you’re a little dizzy, take heart.”

What is meant by the phrase “take heart”?

- A. do not make changes
- B. do not give things away
- C. do not try to understand
- D. do not feel discouraged

Item Information	
Alignment	B-V.4.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	10%
p-value B	7%
p-value C	10%
p-value D	73% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to determine the meaning of the phrase “take heart.” Option D is the correct answer since the meaning of “take heart,” as it is used in the passage, is “do not feel discouraged.” Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they do not convey the meaning of “take heart” as it is used in the passage.

6. Which claim is supported by the section “Answers and Questions”?
- A. “Rainbows need light . . .”
  - B. “To really ‘see’ a photon, you have to absorb it in your eye . . .”
  - C. “. . . you’re never sure just where the photon will go.”
  - D. “ ‘Nobody understands quantum mechanics.’ ”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	9%
p-value B	22%
p-value C	56% (correct answer)
p-value D	13%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to determine which claim is supported in the section “Answers and Questions.” Option C is the correct answer since the section states, “As some of those paths interfere with each other, the photon won’t take those paths,” which supports the claim that you never know where the photon is going to go. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since none of these claims are supported in the section “Answers and Questions.”

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**Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question**

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

**Part One**

Which central idea about the study of science is developed in the passage?

- A. Some studies in science deserve more attention than others.
- B. Some questions in the field of science have answers that are difficult to find.
- C. Some researchers in the field of science report results that have not been proven.
- D. Some results from scientific research should not be shared with others.

**Part Two**

Which evidence from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part One? Choose **one** answer.

- A. “In fact, the color you see in a soap bubble or on an oil slick is just the color left over after some of the photons have canceled each other out.”
- B. “For the past 100 years, scientists have known that light is made of tiny pieces called photons.”
- C. “And—here is the key point—as some of those paths interfere with each other, the photon won’t take those paths.”
- D. “Yet even scientists who work with quantum mechanics admit that they don’t understand why it works that way.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.2
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	D
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.37
Option Annotations	<p>The student is being asked to determine which central idea about the study of science is developed in the passage and to select the evidence that best supports this central idea.</p> <p><b>Part One:</b> Option B is the correct answer since the idea that quantum mechanics is not fully understood by scientists is a central idea of the passage. Option A is incorrect since the passage is not making comparisons between scientific studies. Option C is incorrect since the passage does not discuss the results of researchers. Option D is incorrect since there is no information in the passage to support this idea.</p> <p><b>Part Two:</b> Option D is the correct answer since the idea that scientists do not fully understand how quantum mechanics works suggests that the answers to some scientific questions are difficult to find. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since the information in these quotes does not support the idea in Part One.</p>

## PASSAGE 2

Read the following passage that is a Greek myth. Then answer question 8 in your answer booklet.

## The Picture Minerva Wove

retold by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

Arachne, the wonderful girl weaver of Greece, took a roll of white wool in her skilled hands and separated it into long white strands. Then she carded it until it was as soft and light as a cloud. She was at work out of doors in a green forest, and her loom was set up under an old oak tree with the sunlight shining down between the leaves to brighten the pattern that she set up on it. In and out her shuttle flew without stopping until she had woven at last a fair piece of fabric.

Then Arachne threaded a needle with wool dyed in rainbow colors. She had all the colors of this long arch, that the sunbeams shining through raindrops make, to use in her work.

“What design will the clever Arachne embroider on her tapestry today?” one of the nymphs of the forest who had clustered about her to watch her work asked. Then all the nymphs, looking like a part of the forest in their soft green garments, crowded close as Arachne began to embroider a picture. The grass seemed to grow in it beneath her needle, and the flowers bloomed just as they always bloom in the spring.

“You weave and sew as if the great Minerva herself had taught you her arts,” a nymph said timidly to Arachne.

The girl’s face flushed with anger. It was true that the goddess Minerva, who presided over the arts that weavers need to know, spinning, weaving, and needlework, had taught Arachne her skill, but the girl was vain and always denied it.

“My skill is my own,” she replied. “Let Minerva try to compete with me, and if she is able to finish a rarer piece of work than mine, I am willing to pay any penalty.”

It was a thoughtless, daring boast which Arachne had made. As she spoke the leaves of the trees fluttered, for the nymphs, frightened at a mortal’s presumption, were moving away from Arachne. She looked up and in their place saw an old dame standing beside her.

“Challenge your fellow mortals, my child,” she said, “but do not try to compete with a goddess. You ought to ask Minerva’s forgiveness for your rash words.”

Arachne tossed her head in disdain.

“Keep your counsel,” she replied, “for your hand-maidens. I know what I say and I mean it. I am not afraid of the goddess. I repeat it; let Minerva try her skill with mine if she dare venture.”

“She comes!” said the old dame, dropping her disguise and appearing before Arachne in the shining silver mail of the goddess Minerva.

Arachne grew pale with fear at first, but her presumption overcame her fear. Her heart was full of her foolish conceit, and she set a new piece of work on her loom as Minerva produced a second loom, and the contest began. They attached the web to the beam and began tossing their slender

shuttles in and out of the threads. They pushed the wool up into place with their fine reeds until the fabric was compact. Then the needlework was begun.

Arachne, though, had decided to work something that was forbidden by the gods. She was going to use her skill of hand and all her art for evil instead of good.

She began embroidering a picture that would be displeasing to the gods, and she was able to make it seem as if it were alive, because of the figures and scenes she could outline with her needle and fill in with her colored wools. The picture Arachne embroidered was that of the fair Princess Europa tending her father's herds of cattle beside the sea. One of the bulls seemed so tame that Europa mounted his back, and he plunged into the sea with her and carried her far away from her native shores to Greece. Arachne pictured this bull as the great god Jupiter.

Minerva's embroidery was of a very different pattern from this. She was the goddess of wisdom, and her gift from Mount Olympus to the earth had been the beautiful olive tree that gave mortals shade, and fruit, and oil, and wood for their building. Minerva stitched the pattern of a green olive tree on the tapestry she was embroidering.

Among the leaves of the olive tree Minerva embroidered a butterfly. It seemed to live and flutter in and out among the olives. One could almost touch the velvet nap that lay on its wings and the silk down which covered its back; there were its broad, outstretched horns, its gleaming eyes, its glorious colors. Minerva's workmanship was more wonderful than Arachne could ever hope to learn. As they finished she knew that she was outdone.

Minerva looked at Arachne's tapestry, woven of pride and a desire for vain conquest. It could not be allowed to stand beside hers that showed the gift of life to humans in the olives and such beauty as that of the butterfly. The goddess struck Arachne's tapestry with her shuttle and tore it in pieces.

Arachne was suddenly filled with an understanding of how she had wasted her skill, and she longed to get away from all sight and sound of her weaving. A vine trailed down to the ground from a nearby tree. Arachne twisted it about her body and tried to pull herself up by it to the tree, but Minerva would not allow this. She touched Arachne's form with the juices of aconite and at once her hair came off, and her nose and her ears as well. Her body shrank and shriveled and her head grew smaller. Her fingers fastened themselves to her side and served for legs. She hung from the vine which changed to a long gray thread.

Arachne, the skillful weaver of Greece, was changed to Arachne, the spider of the forest. Through all the centuries since then she has been spinning her fragile threads and weaving her frail webs that a breath of wind, even, can destroy.

**Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt**

8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

**Writer’s Checklist for the  
Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt**PLAN before you write

- Make sure you read the prompt carefully.
- Make sure you have read the entire passage carefully.
- Think about how the prompt relates to the passage.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map, outline, or other graphic organizer to plan your essay.

FOCUS while you write

- Analyze the information from the passage as you write your essay.
- Make sure you use evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Use precise language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions in your essay.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write

- I wrote my final essay in the answer booklet.
- I stayed focused on responding to the prompt.
- I used evidence from the passage to support my response.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.









**Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline**

**#8 Item Information**

<b>Alignment</b>	A-K.1.1.2	<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	<b>Mean Score</b>	2.10
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**Assessment Anchor:**

E08.A-K.1—Key Ideas and Details

**Specific Assessment Anchor Descriptor addressed by this item:**

E08.A-K.1.1.2—Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively addresses all parts of the task demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>• Effective introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s)</li> <li>• Strong organizational structure that effectively supports the focus and ideas</li> <li>• Thorough analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to effectively support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>• Substantial, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant key details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>• Substantial reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer’s purpose</li> <li>• Skillful use of transitions to link ideas</li> <li>• Effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events</li> <li>• Few errors, if any, are present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

Score	Description
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequately addresses all parts of the task demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>• Clear introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s)</li> <li>• Appropriate organizational structure that adequately supports the focus and ideas</li> <li>• Clear analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>• Sufficient, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>• Sufficient reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer’s purpose</li> <li>• Appropriate use of transitions to link ideas</li> <li>• Appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events</li> <li>• Some errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present seldom interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistently addresses some parts of the task demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>• Weak introduction, development, and/or conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea somewhat related to the text(s)</li> <li>• Weak organizational structure that inconsistently supports the focus and ideas</li> <li>• Weak or inconsistent analysis of explicit and/or implicit meanings from text(s) that somewhat supports claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>• Vague reference to the text(s) using some details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>• Weak reference to the main idea(s) and relevant details of the text(s) to support the writer’s purpose</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of transitions to link ideas</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events</li> <li>• Errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present may interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimally addresses part(s) of the task demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>• Minimal evidence of an introduction, development, and/or conclusion</li> <li>• Minimal evidence of an organizational structure</li> <li>• Insufficient or no analysis of the text(s); may or may not support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>• Insufficient reference to the text(s) using few details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>• Minimal reference to the main idea(s) and/or relevant details of the text(s)</li> <li>• Few, if any, transitions to link ideas</li> <li>• Little or no use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s)</li> <li>• Many errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present often interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points



8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In folktales and other such stories, gods and goddesses are of great respect by mortals: Every now and then, a mortal feels that gods and goddesses do not deserve that respect and feel that they are better than a god and/or a goddess. In the story “The Picture Minerva Wove,” the theme vanity can be the cause of reckless actions is portrayed by Arachne in her selfishness, confidence and her foolishness.

In the story, Arachne claims her skills as her own instead of giving credit to Minerva for teaching them to her. She does so in saying, “My skill is my own.” The author describes this as a thoughtless, daring boast. Arachne knows her skill comes from Minerva, but she denies it and claims her skill as her own, self-taught talent. Doing so makes her selfish and it is also taking away from Minerva while claiming the skill, which in-turn causes a reckless action in putting herself in a bad position.

Arachne becomes over-confident in her skill in weaving and says things that she later regrets in her will to defeat Minerva. Arachne calls out Minerva, not knowing she was in disguise, “I know what I say and I mean it. I am not afraid of the goddess. Arachne is over-confident in her decision to challenge Minerva. She feels the need to prove that she is better than Minerva because she does not want to keep hearing of all the talk about Minerva. Arachne wants to be known as the best weaver, which leads to a reckless action in challenging a goddess in a competition.

Arachne is foolish in choosing a forbidden piece of work by the gods and goddesses, against a goddess. The author explains Arachne’s rebellious act in stating, “Arachne, though, had decided to work something that was forbidden by the gods. She was going to use her skill of hand and all her art for evil instead of good.” Arachne chooses a forbidden piece of work for the competition to try and create more of a rebellious feel in saying that she can do what she wants, even in the presence of and against a goddess, which then caused a reckless action in giving Minerva more of an urge to defeat Arachne.

In the story, “The Picture Minerva Wove,” the theme vanity can be the cause of reckless actions is portrayed through Arachne in her selfishness, confidence and foolishness. Reading this story helps to teach people to know their place and that there is almost always somebody better, and to stay humble, even with the most talent.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the task. A strong organizational structure effectively supports the focus and ideas. The effective introduction begins with a generalization (*In folktales and other such stories, gods and goddesses are of great respect by mortals: Every now and then, a mortal feels that gods and goddesses do not deserve that respect and feel that they are better than a god and/or a goddess.*), which connects to a main idea of the text as well as to the task. Next, the student identifies three ways that the theme from the prompt is revealed in the text (*the theme . . . is portrayed by Arachne in her selfishness, confidence and her foolishness*). The first body paragraph focuses on Arachne's selfishness, beginning the development with an inference (*Arachne claims her skills as her own instead of giving credit to Minerva for teaching them to her*), which is supported by a relevant quote (*"My skill is my own."*). The thorough analysis that follows demonstrates in-depth understanding of the text (*Arachne knows her skill comes from Minerva, but she denies it and claims her skill as her own, self-taught talent.*). Additional analysis (*Doing so makes her selfish and it is also taking away from Minerva while claiming the skill, which in-turn causes a reckless action in putting herself in a bad position.*) further extends the development and demonstrates insight in connecting Arachne's ingratitude and lack of respect to her selfishness. The second body paragraph shifts focus to Arachne's confidence, the second idea identified in the introduction. Strong analysis begins the development (*Arachne . . . says things that she later regrets in her will to defeat Minerva. Arachne calls out Minerva . . .*). Next, an apt quote is presented (*"I know what I say and I mean it. I am not afraid of the goddess.*), followed by thorough, in-depth analysis (*Arachne is over-confident in her decision to challenge Minerva. She feels the need to prove that she is better than Minerva because she does not want to keep hearing of all the talk about Minerva. Arachne wants to be known as the best weaver, which leads to a reckless action in challenging a goddess in a competition.*). In the final body paragraph, the focus shifts to Arachne's foolishness, the third idea identified in the introduction (*Arachne is foolish in choosing a forbidden piece of work by the gods and goddesses, against a goddess.*). The student presents a well-chosen quote to highlight Arachne's foolish rebelliousness (*"Arachne, though, had decided to work something that was forbidden by the gods. She was going to use her skill of hand and all her art for evil instead of good."*). In-depth analysis (*Arachne chooses a forbidden piece of work for the competition to try and create more of a rebellious feel in saying that she can do what she wants, even in the presence of and against a goddess, which then caused a reckless action in giving Minerva more of an urge to defeat Arachne.*) of explicit and implicit meanings in the text clarifies the significance of the quote. The response concludes with another insightful generalization (*Reading this story helps to teach people to know their place and that there is almost always somebody better, and to stay humble, even with the most talent.*) that connects the text to the task. Skillfully employed transitions (*Every now and then; In the story; but; also*) link ideas throughout the response, and an effective use of precise language (*folktales; giving credit; self-taught; regrets; rebellious; urge; know their place; humble; talent*) conveys experiences and events. The few errors present do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 4 points

8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Authors develop theme throughout certain events occurring throughout a passage. In this passage, Arachne makes the rash decision to challenge the goddess, Minerva, to a weaving contest. In the Greek myth, "The Picture Minerva Wove," retold by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, the theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage, such as Arachne's negative decisions, rash boasting, and waste of skill.

Arachne's vanity was the cause of her negative actions. Notably, Arachne meets an old woman, who is secretly Minerva, and speaks negatively about her (Bailey 40). Furthermore, Minerva tries to warn Arachne of what her bad decisions will cost her, but Arachne further challenges Minerva. As found in the passage, "The girl's face flushed with anger ... but the girl was vain" (Bailey 40). Now, Arachne always denies her connections to Minerva because Arachne wants to feel as if she is the best weaver. One can infer that Arachne's vain actions will be the cause of her terrible fate. As seen in the text, Arachne's boasting also will reveal the theme of the text.

The struggle to feel good about herself caused Arachne's senseless boasting. Bailey pens that Arachne is lying about teaching herself to weave, and dares Minerva to compete against her in a weaving contest.





(Bailey 40). Arachne wanted to compete against her teacher, Minerva, to prove herself. According to the passage, "Arachne grew pale with fear at first, but her presumption overcame her fear" (Bailey 41). Also, when Minerva suddenly appeared to her, Arachne was scared, but her desire to beat Minerva overcame it. The reader can infer that by boasting about her talents, Arachne accidentally caused Minerva to a weaving contest, and where the odds were stacked against Arachne. On the other hand, the way Arachne used her talent also caused her to fail.

By not using her talents for the better, Arachne set herself up for failure. Bailey writes that Arachne wanted to work on something forbidden by the gods to displease them (Bailey 41). Therefore, Arachne wove a tapestry for her pride and selfish reasons, while Minerva decided to weave a tapestry about wisdom. Arachne purposely decided not to choose good and to upset the gods. As found in the text, "Arachne was suddenly filled with an understanding of how she had wasted her skill, and she longed to get away from all sight and sound of her weaving" (Bailey 41). To sum up, Arachne felt remorse for the awful tapestry she had weaved, and wanted to get away from the reminder that she had failed. One can assume that Arachne had a revelation that she had chose wrong and would face her consequences because of her choices. Lastly, Arachne's vanity was the cause of her reckless actions.

Arachne's negative actions, rash boasting, and waste of skill help to reveal the theme of the passage, "The Picture Minerva Wove," by



Carolyn Sherwin Bailey. Hence, Arachne's vanity was the cause of her negative actions. Subsequently, because she wanted to feel good about herself, Arachne's mindless boasting led her to challenge Minerva. Consequently, by not making smart decisions, Arachne set herself up for failure. Revealed throughout the events in the passage, Arachne's vanity is the cause of her reckless actions.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. A strong organizational structure effectively supports the focus and ideas. The effective introduction engages the reader's attention by means of a generalization (*Authors develop theme throughout certain events occurring throughout a passage.*) that is then connected to the text (*In this passage, Arachne makes the rash decision to challenge the goddess, Minerva, to a weaving contest.*). Next, the student presents an effective controlling idea (*the theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage, such as Arachne's negative decisions, rash boasting, and waste of skill*) that reflects the task. The first body paragraph focuses on Arachne's vanity as a root cause of her negative/reckless actions. The student weaves relevant text details with strong analysis to show how the theme is revealed (*Notably, Arachne meets an old woman, who is secretly Minerva, and speaks negatively about her . . . Furthermore, Minerva tries to warn Arachne of what her bad decisions will cost her, but Arachne further challenges Minerva.*). Next, a quote that expresses Arachne's negativity/recklessness is presented (*"The girl's face flushed with anger . . . but the girl was vain"*) and developed with thorough analysis (*Now, Arachne always denies her connections to Minerva because Arachne wants to feel as if she is the best weaver. One can infer that Arachne's vain actions will be the cause of her terrible fate.*) that effectively connects Arachne's recklessness to her vanity. A transitional sentence at the end of the paragraph (*As seen in the text, Arachne's boasting also will reveal the theme of the text.*) shifts the reader's focus to the next point from the controlling idea: *rash boasting*. The second body paragraph opens with thorough analysis (*The struggle to feel good about herself caused Arachne's senseless boasting.*), which is supported with relevant text references (*Arachne is lying about teaching herself to weave, and dares Minerva to compete against her in a weaving contest*). Additional strong analysis (*Arachne wanted to compete against her teacher, Minerva, to prove herself.*) and a well-chosen quote (*"Arachne grew pale with fear at first, but her presumption overcame her fear"*) extend the development. The paragraph concludes with additional thorough development embedded with text references (*Also, when Minerva suddenly appeared to her, Arachne was scared, but her desire to beat Minerva overcame it. The reader can infer that by boasting about her talents, Arachne accidentally caused Minerva to a weaving contest, and where the odds were stacked against Arachne.*). Another transitional sentence shifts the focus to the last point made in the controlling idea (*On the other hand, the way Arachne used her talent also caused her to fail.*). The last body paragraph begins with insightful analysis (*By not using her talents for the better, Arachne set herself up for failure.*). Well-chosen, paraphrased text details provide support (*. . . Arachne wanted to work on something forbidden by the gods to displease them . . . Therefore, Arachne wove a tapestry for her pride and selfish reasons, while Minerva decided to weave a tapestry about wisdom*). The development continues with additional insightful analysis (*Arachne purposely decided not to choose good and to upset the gods.*) supported with relevant text (*"Arachne was suddenly filled with an understanding of how she had wasted her skill, and she longed to get away from all sight and sound of her weaving"*). The paragraph ends with additional thorough analysis (*Arachne felt remorse for the awful tapestry she had weaved, and wanted to get away from the reminder that she had failed. One can assume that Arachne had a revelation that she had chose wrong and would face her consequences because of her choices . . . vanity was the cause of her reckless actions*) to summarize the student's ideas. In the effective conclusion, the student elaborates on the three points made in the controlling idea (*Arachne's negative actions, rash boasting, and waste of skill help to reveal the theme of the passage*) to conclude the response. Transitions skillfully link ideas throughout the response (*Notably; Furthermore; As found in; Now; As seen in; Also; On the other hand; By not using; Therefore; To sum up; Lastly; Hence; Subsequently; Consequently*), and an effective use of precise language (*rash; challenges; negatively; terrible fate; senseless; desire; overcame; odds were stacked against her; talents; revelation; consequences*) conveys experiences and events. The few errors present do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 3 points

8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The passage "A Picture minerva wove" expresses vanity throughout the whole story. It is seen directly when someone even mentions minerva to Arachne. Vanity is shown when Arachne has the idea of what to make of her design. When she made this reckless decision, minerva punished her by turning her into a spider. All of these events led up to Arachne having consequences. This essay will analyze examples of how vanity can be the cause of reckless actions and the events leading up.

Arachne made her first mistake by underestimating Minerva in the first place. She should have never even thought that she could beat the best. She did not know what she was getting herself into. She also should not have spoke about Minerva in such a way without really knowing her or her skill. Even the people surrounding her agreed and suggested that she ask Minerva for forgiveness for her words.

Another example of Arachnes reckless actions is when she went against goddess rules with her design. She let her vanity get in the way and ruined her chance of ever doing



better than Minerva. She should have known the second that she started making it that it was a bad idea. This definitely effected Arachne in the long run. She knew the moment this happened she would be suffering from consequences.

Minerva brutally punishes Arachnae for all she has done. Arachnae deep down knew that she had deserved this. Because of these reckless decisions, she will have to suffer the consequences. Arachne let her foolish heart get in the way and should have never let her vanity over power her intelligance. Minerva turning Arachne into a spider was a very clever thing to do.

The passage gave off three main highlights of how vanity is the cause of reckless actions. Araches weaving design was an irrational thought. Her underestimating how much power and skill Minerva had. Finally, the punishment Arachne recieved at the end. This essay analyzed how vanity can be the cause of reckless actions and the events that led up.



This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. An appropriate organizational structure supports the focus and ideas. The clear introduction recounts the role vanity plays in the story's events (*The passage . . . expresses vanity throughout the whole story. It is seen directly when someone even mentions Minerva to Arachne. Vanity is shown when Arachne has the idea of what to make of her design. When she made this reckless decision, Minerva punished her by turning her into a spider. All of these events led up to Arachne having consequences.*), melding clear analysis with relevant text references. The introductory paragraph concludes with a controlling idea (*This essay will analyze examples of how vanity can be the cause of reckless actions and the events leading up.*) that provides a structure for the development that follows. Adhering to the controlling idea, the first body paragraph presents a key event from the text in which vanity plays a role (*Arachne made her first mistake by underestimating Minerva in the first place.*). The student clarifies the event's significance with strong analysis (*She should have never even thought that she could beat the best. She did not know what she was getting herself into. She also should not have spoke about Minerva in such a way without really knowing her or her skill.*). The paragraph concludes with a sentence that combines clear inferencing with an appropriate text detail (*Even the people surrounding her agreed and suggested that she ask Minerva for forgiveness for her words.*). Although the word *vanity* is not used in the paragraph, that concept's connection to Arachne's reckless actions is clearly addressed within the analysis. In the next paragraph, the student presents another event that demonstrates Arachne's vanity/recklessness (*when she went against goddess rules with her design*). Clear analysis embedded with relevant text clarifies the role vanity plays in Arachne's reckless actions (*She let her vanity get in the way and ruined her chance of ever doing better than Minerva. She should have known the second that she started making it that it was a bad idea.*). The development concludes with additional clear analysis (*This definitely effected Arachne in the long run. She knew the moment this happened she would be suffering from consequences.*) that supports the student's claims. The last body paragraph addresses the consequences of the events presented earlier. The paragraph begins with a key detail (*Minerva brutally punishes Arachne for all she has done.*) that is developed with strong analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from the text (*Arachne deep down knew that she had deserved this. Because of these reckless decisions, she will have to suffer the consequences. Arachne let her foolish heart get in the way and should have never let her vanity over power her intelligence.*). The paragraph concludes with an evaluative statement that contains a relevant text detail (*Minerva turning Arachne into a spider was a very clever thing to do.*), all of which supports the student's ideas. The conclusion reiterates the ideas from the introduction (*The passage gave off three main highlights of how vanity is the cause of reckless actions. Arachne's weaving design was an irrational thought. Her underestimating how much power and skill Minerva had. Finally, the punishment Arachne recieved at the end. This essay analyzed how vanity can be the cause of reckless actions and the events that led up.*), appropriately summing up the development. Transitions are used appropriately (*When she made this reckless decision; All of these events; also; Another example; Finally*) to link ideas, and there is an appropriate use of precise language (*consequences; underestimating; surrounding; ruined; suffering; brutally; irrational*) throughout the response. The few errors present in spelling (*forgivness; Arachnae; definately; intelligence; recieved*) do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points



8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In this Greek myth a boastful girl named Arachne challenges the goddess of weaving. She weaves an evil image of the gods so she is turned into a spider. The theme of the passage, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions, is revealed by these events, Arachne claiming her skill is her own, challenging the goddess Minerva and weaving an evil image.

The theme of the story, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless action, is revealed by Arachne claiming her skill is her own. The following quote shows this, “my skill is my own, she replied.” This quote is showing that because Arachne is so skilled she that she becomes boastful and will make reckless decisions. She doesn’t give credit to the origin of her skill and claims it is her own. Her vanity is causing her to be boastful and to make reckless decisions.

The theme of the story, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions, is revealed by Arachne challenging Minerva to a contest. This evidence shows this, “Let Minerva compete with me.” This quote is showing us how Arachne’s skill and vanity have made her actions reckless. Because she is the most skilled mortal she becomes arrogant and thinks none can best her. After she is beaten she regrets her decisions.

The theme of the story, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions, is revealed by Arachne weaving an evil image of the gods. The following quote demonstrates this, “she was going to use her skill for evil instead of good.” This quote is showing Arachne’s intentions. Even though she can weave for good things she uses her skill for evil. Her vanity is causing her to make evil things and there will be consequences for her reckless actions.

The theme of the story, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions, is revealed by these events, Arachne claiming her skill is her own, challenging Minerva to a contest and Arachne weaving an evil image of the gods. Arachne had skill and should have given the credit to Minerva, but instead she said it was her own and had to pay for it.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. An appropriate organizational structure groups ideas logically and adequately supports the focus. The introduction begins with a synopsis of the story events (*a boastful girl named Arachne challenges the goddess of weaving. She weaves an evil image . . . so she is turned into a spider*) that contains an inferential characterization of Arachne. The introductory paragraph concludes with a controlling idea (*The theme of the passage, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions, is revealed by these events, Arachne claiming her skill is her own, challenging the goddess Minerva and weaving an evil image.*) that provides structure for the development that follows. Adhering to the controlling idea, the first body paragraph focuses on Arachne's claim that her skill is her own. The student begins with a relevant quote (*"my skill is my own, she replied."*). Clear analysis develops the quote (*This quote is showing that because Arachne is so skilled she that she becomes boastful and will make reckless decisions. She doesn't give credit to the origin of her skill and claims it is her own. Her vanity is causing her to be boastful and to make reckless decisions.*) and supports the student's ideas. The second body paragraph addresses the second point from the controlling idea—*challenging Minerva to a contest*. The student develops this idea with a relevant quote (*"Let Minerva compete with me."*), which is clarified with analysis containing relevant text references (*Arachne's skill and vanity have made her actions reckless. Because she is the most skilled mortal she becomes arrogant and thinks none can best her. After she is beaten she regrets her decisions*). The third body paragraph shifts focus to the final idea from the controlling idea (*Arachne weaving an evil image of the gods*). A relevant quote supports the development (*"she was going to use her skill for evil instead of good."*), and clear analysis is used to explain the significance of Arachne's deliberate choice (*This quote is showing Arachne's intentions.*). Additional clear analysis completes the development (*Even though she can weave for good things she uses her skill for evil. Her vanity is causing her to make evil things and there will be consequences for her reckless actions.*). The response's conclusion reiterates the ideas from the introduction and presents additional clear analysis (*Arachne had skill and should have given the credit to Minerva, but instead she said it was her own and had to pay for it.*) to summarize the student's ideas regarding the theme. Transitions between paragraphs are appropriate, though basic and/or repetitive at points (*The theme of the story, which is vanity can be the cause of reckless action, is revealed by; This evidence shows this; The following quote demonstrates; This quote is showing*). There is an appropriate use of precise language (*origin; arrogant; intentions; consequences*) throughout the response. Errors present in spelling (*goddess; revealed; claiming; doesn't; origin; reckless; evidence; arrogant; causing; consequences*), usage (an extra word [*she*]), punctuation, and capitalization do not seriously interfere with meaning.



## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Throughout the story “The Picture Minerva Wove” Arachne shows alot of reckless Choices. Something reckless Arachne did was Challenge minerva to see who could weave a better picture. Arachne was being boastful and didn’t think about what would happen if she was lost. Minerva Accepted this because she knew she would win. Another reckless thing Arachne did was using a forbidden scene. This was reckless because Arachne knew minerva would not like this. Minerva then got angry and punished Arachne by turning herinto a spider. In conclusion, Arachne should have been morecarful and shouldn’t have had been so boastful.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. A weak organizational structure inconsistently supports the focus and ideas. The response focuses on two examples of Arachne’s reckless actions, which are then loosely connected to her vanity. To begin, the student presents a limited example (*Something reckless Arachne did was Challenge minerva to see who could weave a better picture.*) followed by weak analysis (*Arachne was being boastful and didn’t think about what would happen if she was lost.*) and a limited inference (*Minerva Accepted this because she knew she would win.*). The response continues with another limited text example (*Another reckless thing Arachne did was using a forbidden scene.*) followed by a vague inference (*because Arachne knew minerva would not like this*). Sparse text details address the consequences of Arachne’s reckless actions (*Minerva then got angry and punished Arachne by turning herinto a spider.*), albeit without any clarifying analysis. The brief conclusion attempts to evaluate Arachne’s vanity and recklessness (*Arachne should have been morecarful and shouldn’t have had been so boastful*), but the attempt at analysis is weak. There is an inconsistent use of transitions to link ideas (*Another; because; and; In conclusion*), and little precise language is drawn from the text (*Challenge; boastful; forbidden*). The errors in sentence construction (run-on), usage (*have had been*), spelling (*forbiden; morcarful*), punctuation, and capitalization may interfere with meaning.



## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 2 points

8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

"The Picture Minerva Wove," by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey is about two weaver's named Arachne, and Minerva. Arachne got so mad that she challenged Minerva to a weave off. In the passage it says, "My skill is my own," she replied. "Let Minerva try to compete with me." She feels so confindent in her work that she challenged one of the best weavers. They did the weave off and Arachne lost. So Minerva punished Arachne. Thats the events that lead up to the theme of the passage.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. A weak organizational structure groups ideas ineffectively and only inconsistently supports the focus. The response consists of a limited summary of the story with weak inferencing and vague references to the text. The body of the response begins with a weak inference (*Arachne got so mad that she challenged Minerva to a weave off.*) followed by a quote for support ("*My skill is my own,*" she replied. "*Let Minerva try to compete with me.*"). Another weak inference is then presented (*She feels so confindent in her work that she challenged one of the best weavers.*) with another supporting, limited text reference (*They did the weave off and Arachne lost.*). While the response does move beyond a literal interpretation of the text, the two inferences do not rise to the level of clear analysis. Transition use is limited (*In the passage*; *So*), and there is little use of precise language (*challenged*; *weave off*; *confindent*). Errors in usage (*Thats* for *Those are*), spelling (*confindent*), and punctuation may interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 1 point

8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the story "The picture Minerva wove" retold by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey the author describes a young weaver Arachne who was told to be the best in Greece but when compared by the god Minerva she gets scared, and challenges the goddess. When Minerva came they had a weaving contest. Minerva sewed a beautiful embroidery of an olive tree and nature but Arachne wove a different story of a bull or god taking away a princess needless to say she lost and Minerva turned her into a spider.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure. The response consists of a minimal retelling of the story (a young weaver Arachne who was told to be the best in Greece . . . and challenges the goddess . . . Minerva sewed a beautiful embroidery, of an olive tree and nature but Arachne wove a different story . . . she lost and Minerva turned her into a spider). While there is one very minimal inference (she gets scared), holistically, it is not enough to move the response to a higher score. Few transitions link ideas (but; When; needless to say) in the response, and there is little use of precise language (challenges; beautiful; olive tree; scared). Errors in sentence formation (run-ons), spelling (Greece; compared; goddess; different; story), capitalization, and punctuation sometimes interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



8. A theme of the passage is vanity can be the cause of reckless actions. Write an essay analyzing how this theme is revealed by the events throughout the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The theme is Vanity because in the story it's say that the two girls are aguarig about Who is better at an art Project accoriding to the text it say that Arachne was being Forced to aplogize to Minerva but She Say no cause She ment what She Said and She not taking it back.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure and minimal reference to the main ideas and relevant details of the text. The response consists of a minimal and simplistic retelling of the story (*the two girls are aguarig about Who is better at an art Project . . . Arachne was being Forced to aplogize . . . She ment what She Said and She not taking it back*). The response lacks analysis and demonstrates minimal understanding of the text and task. Transition use is minimal (*but*), and there is a minimal use of precise language (*aguarig; Forced; aplogize*). The many errors in sentence formation (run-ons), usage (*it's say* for *it says*; *say* for *says*; *She* for *she's*; *cause* for *because*), and spelling (*aguarig; accoriding; aplogize; ment*) interfere with meaning.

## 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

9. Read the paragraph.

(1) It is time to replace the curtains in the school auditorium. (2) Yesterday during play practice, the curtains stopped on their track twice when they were supposed to close the scene. (3) Also, the curtains have tears and holes in them. (4) Someone told us the curtains were bought by some group a long time ago and cost a lot of money. (5) If needed, students in the drama program could organize fundraisers to help with the expense of new curtains.

Which sentence should be revised to provide more precise information?

- A. sentence 2
- B. sentence 3
- C. sentence 4
- D. sentence 5

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.2
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	11%
p-value B	38%
p-value C	44% (correct answer)
p-value D	7%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked which sentence in the paragraph needs to be revised to provide more precise information. Option C is the correct answer since sentence 4 uses the phrases “Someone told us,” “some group,” and “cost a lot of money,” all of which could be more precise. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since these sentences do not require more precise information.

10. Read the paragraph.

The ancient Sumerians developed the first system of writing. It was called cuneiform. Cuneiform consisted of wedge-shaped marks made on clay tablets. How did writers make the marks? They used a thick reed as a stylus. Traders and merchants first used cuneiform to record transactions. Later, scribes and priests used the system to record stories and religious beliefs.

Which revision would **most** improve the paragraph?

- A. rewriting it using active voice
- B. correcting the run-on sentences
- C. changing the sentence order
- D. combining some of the sentences

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.3
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	16%
p-value B	15%
p-value C	14%
p-value D	55% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is being asked which revision would most improve the paragraph. Option D is the correct answer since combining sentences 1 and 2 and combining sentences 4 and 5 would create sentence variety and therefore improve the paragraph. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they do not describe revisions that would improve the paragraph.

11. Read the sentences from a story.

Over lunch in the cafeteria, Joe sat with Jennifer as they listened to Bill talk about his favorite hobby: building model cars.

“That’s really interesting,” said Jennifer. “What model car are you building now?”

Suddenly, Joe remembered that he needed to meet with his math teacher before class. He rose to leave.

“I’m working on a 1965 Corvette Joe, don’t leave yet and I plan to take it to the show next Saturday,” said Bill, as he, too, rose from the table to follow Joe.

Which revision correctly punctuates the underlined group of words to indicate a break in thought?

- A. “I’m working on a 1965 Corvette, Joe, don’t leave yet—and I plan to take it to the show next Saturday,” said Bill as he, too, rose from the table to follow Joe.
- B. “I’m working on a 1965 Corvette—Joe, don’t leave yet—and I plan to take it to the show next Saturday,” said Bill as he, too, rose from the table to follow Joe.
- C. “I’m working on a 1965 Corvette (Joe, don’t leave yet) and I plan to take it to the show next Saturday,” said Bill as he, too, rose from the table to follow Joe.
- D. “I’m working on a 1965 Corvette, Joe, don’t leave yet, and I plan to take it to the show next Saturday,” said Bill as he, too, rose from the table to follow Joe.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	21%
p-value B	45% (correct answer)
p-value C	12%
p-value D	22%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked which revision correctly punctuates the underlined group of words to indicate a break in thought. Option B is the correct answer since it shows the best way to punctuate the underlined group of words to indicate a break in thought. Options A, C, and D are incorrect as they do not show the best way to punctuate the group of words to indicate a break in thought.

12. Read the paragraph.

(1) Have you ever accidentally shaken a soda bottle and had it erupt when you opened the cap? (2) This is similar to the violent eruption of a stratovolcano, which has a deep magma reservoir beneath the surface. (3) Pressure builds in the magma chamber as gases which have been under immense heat and pressure are dissolved into liquid rock. (4) Because these types of volcanoes form in a system of underground channels, stratovolcanoes sometimes blow out the sides of their cone, as well as the crater at the summit.

Which revision should be made to the paragraph?

- A. Add a comma before when in sentence 1.
- B. Remove the comma before which in sentence 2.
- C. Add a comma before which and after pressure in sentence 3.
- D. Remove the comma before stratovolcanoes and after cone in sentence 4.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.4
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	11%
p-value B	22%
p-value C	50% (correct answer)
p-value D	17%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to identify which revision should be made to the paragraph. Option C is the correct answer since adding a comma before “which” and after “pressure” will fix egregious errors in sentence 3. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since these suggested revisions do not correct errors in the paragraph.



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	B-C.2.1.2	A	3	47%	13%	17%	23%
2	B-V.4.1.1	B	2	24%	44%	18%	14%
3	B-C.3.1.1	D	3	14%	25%	22%	39%
4	B-K.1.1.1	A	2	53%	19%	18%	10%
5	B-V.4.1.2	D	2	10%	7%	10%	73%
6	B-C.3.1.1	C	3	9%	22%	56%	13%
7	B-K.1.1.2	Part One: B Part Two: D	3	Mean Score: 1.37			
9	D.2.1.2	C	2	11%	38%	44%	7%
10	D.2.1.3	D	2	16%	15%	14%	55%
11	D.1.2.1	B	2	21%	45%	12%	22%
12	D.1.2.4	C	2	11%	22%	50%	17%

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
8	A-K.1.1.2	4	3	2.10



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **PSSA Grade 8 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler**

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