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INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The Pennsylvania Department of Education 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. It can also be useful in preparing students for the statewide assessment.

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 2013 PCS-aligned Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content documents are posted on this portal:

- www.education.pa.gov [Hover over “K–12,” select “Assessment and Accountability,” and select “Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).” Then select “Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content” on the right side of the screen.]

Change in Test Design

Beginning with tests taken in the 2017–2018 school year, the English Language Arts PCS-based PSSA will no longer include a mode-specific writing prompt. This Item and Scoring Sampler contains items representative of the tests administered during the 2016–2017 school year. The writing prompt in this sampler is provided as an instructional resource. The writing prompt and all resources for the writing prompt in this item sampler are for instructional purposes. The 2018 ELA PSSA test will not include a mode-specific writing prompt.

What Is Included

This sampler contains stimulus reading passages with test questions, standalone questions, and mode-specific writing prompts 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 used as examples for creating assessment items at the classroom level, and they may also be copied and used as part of a local instructional program. Classroom teachers may find it beneficial to have students respond to the test questions 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.

^F The permission to copy and/or use these materials does not extend to commercial purposes.
Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

The 2016–2017 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, Short-Answer (SA) questions, and mode-specific Writing Prompts (WP).

**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 other 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 partial credit 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. An 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.

**Writing Prompt:** Each of this type of test question includes an extended response space in which the student composes an answer based on a provided prompt. There are two response pages in the paper-and-pencil format and up to 3,000 characters in the online format. A writing prompt is based on a specific mode of writing and may ask the student to write an opinion essay, an informative/explanatory essay, or a narrative essay. Each writing prompt is scored on a 1–4-point scale using a holistic, mode-specific scoring guideline. In this sampler, examples of student responses representing each score point can be combined with the mode-specific scoring guideline to form a practical scoring guide.

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

- **Blank** — Blank, entirely erased, entirely crossed out, or consisting entirely of whitespace
- **Refusal** — Refusal to respond to the task
- **Non-scorable** — In a language other than English, incoherent, illegible, or insufficient
- **Off Topic** — Makes no reference to the item but is not an intentional refusal
- **Copied** — Consists of text copied from the item and/or test directions
INFORMATION ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading 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 a 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
- **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 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Language Arts Item Type</th>
<th>MC</th>
<th>EBSR</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Response Time (minutes)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3 to 5</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

English Language Arts Grade 3

This English Language Arts Sampler is composed of a passage, 4 passage-based multiple-choice questions, an evidence-based selected-response question, a short-answer question, 4 standalone multiple-choice questions, and a mode-specific writing prompt.

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 standalone multiple-choice questions and a mode-specific writing prompt.

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 and writing prompt are 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 and mode-specific writing prompt 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.
Read the following drama about bears in winter. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

The Hesitant Hibernator

by Cass Hollander

Characters:

Narrator
Rabbit
Twin Bear 1
Groundhog 1
Twin Bear 2
Groundhog 2

Act 1

The woods in October.

Narrator: Bear cubs are born in January or February. They stay with their mother through the spring, summer, fall, and winter of that first year. Then early in their second summer, they set out on their own. This story is about twin bears on their own for the first time. In June they said good-bye to their mother. They spent the summer fishing, eating berries, and climbing trees. As our story opens, it’s October.

Twin Bear 1: Isn’t the world amazing? The leaves were green. Then they turned yellow, orange, and red. Now they’re falling off the trees—

Twin Bear 2: So are the acorns! (Scoops up acorns with both paws and gobbles them up.) Yum!

Twin Bear 1: Stop eating!
Twin Bear 2: I’m a bear. (Tears open a decaying log.) Wow! Look at all these bugs in this old rotten log! (Starts scooping up bugs and eating them by the pawful.) Delicious! Here. Try some. (Offers the other bear a pawful of bugs.)

Twin Bear 1: No, thanks. I’m not hungry.

Twin Bear 2: (Still gobbling bugs.) You better get hungry! If you don’t eat, you’re gonna wake up starving halfway through winter. You won’t be able to hibernate all winter long.

Twin Bear 1: I’ve decided not to hibernate this year.


Twin Bear 1: Haven’t you ever wondered what happens in the winter? Aren’t you curious?

Twin Bear 2: About winter? No. Let’s see if there are any nuts under that tree.

Twin Bear 1: Well, I’m curious. I don’t want to sleep for four months. That’s one-third of the whole year. Why should I spend one-third of the year asleep?

Twin Bear 2: Because you’re a bear. It’s what bears do.

Twin Bear 1: Not this bear!

Act 2

The woods in late December.

Narrator: When the last autumn leaf finally fell, and when white flakes fell in soft mounds over all the woodlands, one of our bear friends knew it was time to snuggle deep in a dark, cozy cave and settle down to sleep. But our other bear friend decided to stay awake to see what winter was really like.

Twin Bear 1: This stuff is great! (Runs around in a circle.) It’s fluffy. (Rolls on his back in the snow.) It’s fun to roll in. (Gets up and brushes off fur.) I wonder what it is. (Walks down stage.) Look at these things hanging from the tree. (Breaks an icicle off a fir tree.) Pretty amazing. (Puts icicle in mouth.) Hmmmm. Tastes like cold water. I wonder what you call this? (Looks around. Moves one hind paw around in the snow.) Winter’s nice. But where is everybody?

(Rabbit hops on stage. Sees Twin Bear 1 and starts to hop away fast.)
Twin Bear 1: Wait!

Rabbit: Are you kidding! I’m not going to be your bedtime snack! *(Rabbit hops on one foot and then the other to keep warm.)*

Twin Bear 1: What are you talking about? I don’t want to eat you! I’m not even hungry!

Rabbit: Then what are you doing up? My mama told me the only reason bears wake up in winter is because they didn’t eat enough before they went to sleep. So they get up to find a snack. And I’m not gonna be your snack!

Twin Bear 1: I didn’t get up to find a snack. I didn’t get up at all! I’m not hibernating.


Twin Bear 1: I didn’t want to miss winter.

Rabbit: What’s to miss? It gets cold. The water freezes. There’s nothing to eat but bark. I hate it. I’d hibernate if I could. *(Rabbit turns to go.)*

Twin Bear 1: Wait! You’re the first living thing I’ve seen in days. Where is everybody?

Rabbit: Well, some animals are hibernating—like you should be. The birds migrated to someplace warm. And the rest of us try to stay out of the cold as much as we can. *(Rabbit starts to hop away.)*

Twin Bear 1: Wait! Stay and talk with me.

Rabbit: I’m cold. I hate hopping around in the snow. I’m going home where it’s warm.

*(Bear looks a little forlorn watching Rabbit hop away.)*

**Act 3**

*The woods on February 2. Downstage right there’s a groundhog hole with two groundhogs asleep inside. Bear is sitting on a stump near the groundhog hole, looking bored.*

**Narrator:** It’s the second day of February. Winter has dragged on for two long, cold months. All that time the ground has been covered with snow.

**Twin Bear 1:** The worst thing about winter is that nothing happens. There’s nothing to do. Nobody’s around. *(Holds chin in paw and stares off into space.)*

*(Groundhogs start to stir in their hole.)*
Groundhog 1: *(Stretching.)* I think I’ll take a little walk outside. See what’s happening.

Groundhog 2: *(Yawning.)* I’m right behind you. *(Groundhog 2 rolls over and goes back to sleep.)*

*(Groundhog 1 goes out and sees the bear sitting on the stump. Groundhog 1 screams and runs back into the hole. Inside the hole, the other groundhog wakes with a start when it hears the scream.)*

Groundhog 2: What’s the matter? Did you see your shadow?

Groundhog 1: No. There’s a bear right outside our hole!

Groundhog 2: What’s a bear doing up?

Groundhog 1: It must be hungry.

Groundhog 2: Don’t go out there again. Let’s just go back to sleep. We don’t have to get up for another six weeks.

*(Bear’s twin enters from stage left. Sees Twin Bear 1 on stump.)*

Twin Bear 2: *(Approaching Twin Bear 1 on stump.)* Is that you?

Twin Bear 1: *(Jumps up and embraces twin.)* I’m so glad to see you! Is it spring?

Twin Bear 2: I don’t think so. I heard some animal scream. It woke me up. I decided to come out and see what was going on. So, how’s it going? Are you enjoying winter?


Twin Bear 2: Are you ready to hibernate? You’ve probably got six weeks before winter’s over.

Twin Bear 1: I don’t think I can take six more weeks of winter.

Twin Bear 2: So, don’t. Sleep—the way you’re supposed to. Come on. You can share my cave.

Twin Bear 1: OK. *(Yawns.)* Next year, I think I’ll skip winter.

Twin Bear 2: Good idea. You could hibernate winter away. It’s what we bears do best!

*(Bears exit arm in arm, yawning together.*)
Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question

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

Part One

How does Twin Bear 1 feel when first seeing winter?

A. lonely
B. excited
C. upset
D. careful

Part Two

Which lines from the drama support the answer in Part One? Choose two answers.

A. “‘I’ve decided not to hibernate this year.’”
B. “‘It’s fun to roll in.’”
C. “‘Look at these things hanging from the tree.’”
D. “‘There’s nothing to do.’”
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
<td>A-K.1.1.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answer Key: Part One</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answer Key: Part Two</td>
<td>B, C</td>
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<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option Annotations</td>
<td>The student is asked to determine how Twin Bear 1 feels when first seeing winter and to select lines from the drama that support this analysis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part One:** Option B is the correct answer because details support that Twin Bear 1 feels “excited” when first seeing winter. Option A is not correct because it reflects how Twin Bear 1 feels later in the drama after experiencing winter for some time. Options C and D are not supported by information in the passage.

**Part Two:** Options B and C are the correct answers because Twin Bear 1 enjoys different activities and sights during the winter. Options A and D do not support the idea that Twin Bear 1 is excited about first seeing winter.
Multiple-Choice Questions

2. Read the line from the drama.

“The birds migrated to someplace warm.”

What is the meaning of the word *migrated* as it is used in the drama?

- A. lived for a long time
- B. enjoyed the summer weather
- C. traveled from one place to another
- D. planned to ask others

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answer Key</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depth of Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>p-value B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option Annotations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. How does Groundhog 1’s screaming affect the ending of the drama?

- A. Twin Bear 2 is able to convince Twin Bear 1 to go to sleep for the rest of winter.
- B. Twin Bear 2 is able to convince Groundhog 1 to stay in the hole for six more weeks.
- C. The groundhogs explain to Twin Bear 1 that it is time for him to go to sleep for the winter.
- D. The groundhogs allow Twin Bear 1 to help them store their food for the next winter.

**Item Information**

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<th>Alignment</th>
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<td>p-value B</td>
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<td>p-value C</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p-value D</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Option Annotations**
The student is asked to identify how an action affects the plot of the drama. Option A is the correct answer since it is Groundhog 1’s screaming that leads to Twin Bear 2’s discovery of Twin Bear 1 on the stump; this action leads to Twin Bear 2 convincing Twin Bear 1 to hibernate for the rest of the winter. Options B, C, and D are not correct since the events did not occur in the passage.
4. Which two words from the drama are most alike in meaning?

A. climbing – falling
B. scooping – hanging
C. doing – hopping
D. gobbling – eating

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>A-V.4.1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Answer Key</td>
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<td>$p$-value D</td>
<td>78% (correct answer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option Annotations</td>
<td>The student is asked to determine two words from the drama that are most alike in meaning. Option D is the correct answer since “gobbling” and “eating” are similar in meaning. Option A is not correct because “climbing” and “falling” are almost opposite in meaning. Options B and C are not correct because “scooping” and “hanging” as well as “doing” and “hopping” are unrelated in meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. How does the reader know the drama is told from the third person point of view?

- The narrator is a character in the drama and is one of the animals.
- The narrator gives information but is not part of the action of the drama.
- The narrator is part of the drama and tells each character’s thoughts.
- The narrator is the main character and expresses feelings in the drama.

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<tr>
<th>Item Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alignment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Answer Key</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Depth of Knowledge</strong></td>
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<td><strong>p-value B</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>p-value C</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>p-value D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Option Annotations</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Short-Answer Question

6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.
Short-Answer Scoring Guideline

#6 Item Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Alignment</th>
<th>A-K.1.1.1</th>
<th>Depth of Knowledge</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>1.23</th>
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</table>

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.1.1.1—Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer as to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter. The response includes relevant and specific information from the drama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The response is a partial answer as to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter. The response includes limited information from the drama and may include inaccuracies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1     | The response is a minimal answer as to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter. The response includes little or no information from the drama 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. |
6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

Twin bear 1 says “Next year I think I’ll skip winter because he is bored and has nobody to play or talk with. Here is what my text said, “Winter’s nice but where is everybody? (Rabbit comes on stage, and runs away) Wait! Stay and talk with me” I know that when people try something new and it doesn’t workout or they don’t like it, they won’t do it again. Here is something from my text, “How do you like winter? I liked the snow…. At first. But now it’s pretty boring. Nobody’s around. There’s nothing to do. I don’t want to stay here for another 6 weeks! That is some evidence for why Twin bear 1 says “Next year I think I’ll skip winter.

This response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter (he is bored and has nobody to play or talk with). The response includes relevant and specific information from the drama (“Winter’s nice but where is everybody? . . . Wait! Stay and talk with me,” How do you like winter? . . . I don’t want to stay here for another 6 weeks!).
STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points

6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

The thing that causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year I think I’ll skip winter,” is in the drama he is not really having a good time, he thinks snow is boring. The next thing that makes him say that line is, none of the animals are coming out to play and Twin Bear 1 gets bored.

This response is a partial answer to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter (he is not really having a good time, he thinks snow is boring). The response includes limited information from the drama (none of the animals are coming out to play and Twin Bear 1 gets bored).

After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.
Response Score: 1 point

6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

It causes him to say that because, There was

nothing to do or there was nobody to play

with.

This response is a minimal answer to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter (there was nothing to do or there was nobody to play with). The response includes little information from the drama beyond what is offered as the explanation.

After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.
6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

Bear come out due winter.

This response is considered insufficient because the information provided is irrelevant to the task.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR LANGUAGE QUESTIONS AND WRITING PROMPT

Directions:

On the following pages are the Language questions and the Writing Prompt.

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.

Directions for the Writing Prompt:

- Review the Writer’s Checklist to help you plan and organize your response.
- Read the writing prompt carefully.
- Write your response in the appropriate space in the answer booklet.
STANDALONE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

7. Read the directions.
   1. First, put soil in a flowerpot until it is **half** full.
   2. Next, add about **tweunty** flower seeds.
   3. Cover the seeds with an **inch** of soil.
   4. Your seeds are **ready** to grow.

Which underlined word is spelled wrong?

- **A** half
- **B** tweunty
- **C** inch
- **D** ready

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**Item Information**

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<tr>
<td>Option Annotations</td>
<td>The student is asked to determine which underlined word is spelled incorrectly. Option B is the correct answer because “tweunty” should be spelled as “twenty.” Options A, C, and D are not correct since they are words that are spelled correctly.</td>
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</table>
8. Read the sentence.

The sun ______ very bright to us yesterday because there were no clouds in the sky.

Which verb or verb phrase completes the sentence?

- A. is looking
- B. looks
- C. will look
- D. looked

**Item Information**

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**Option Annotations**
The student is asked to determine which verb or verb phrase completes the given sentence. Option D is the correct answer because “looked” is in the past tense, which belongs in the sentence based on the context; the word “yesterday” tells the reader the word that would complete the sentence should be in the past tense. Option A is not correct because “is looking” is in the present progressive tense. Option B is not correct because “looks” is in the simple present tense. Option C is not correct because “will look” is in future tense.
9. Read the sentences.

The writer has an interesting way of telling a story. Most readers like her_____ of writing.

Which word best completes the sentence?

- style
- surprise
- wisdom
- gladness

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<td><strong>Option Annotations</strong></td>
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10. Read the paragraph.

(1) Some people like to pick their own berries instead of buying them at the store. (2) They take buckets out to places where there are many berry plants. (3) Blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries all grow on bushes. (4) A persons bucket may be full of berries after picking for only a short time.

Which word needs an apostrophe added?

A. berries in sentence 1
B. places in sentence 2
C. bushes in sentence 3
D. persons in sentence 4

Item Information

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Option Annotations

The student is asked to determine which underlined word needs an apostrophe added. Option D is the correct answer because “A” indicates a singular noun; “persons” should have an apostrophe to show possession (person’s). Options A, B, and C are not correct since they are plural nouns, which do not need apostrophes.
Change in Test Design

Beginning with tests taken in the 2017–2018 school year, the English Language Arts PCS-based PSSA will no longer include a mode-specific writing prompt. This Item and Scoring Sampler contains items representative of the tests administered during the 2016–2017 school year. The writing prompt in this sampler is provided as an instructional resource. The writing prompt and all resources for the writing prompt in this item sampler are for instructional purposes. The 2018 ELA PSSA test will not include a mode-specific writing prompt.
WRITER’S CHECKLIST AND INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY WRITING PROMPT

11. A new student will be joining your class. Your teacher has asked you to write a letter to the new student. Think about what it would be like to be the new student at your school. What does the new student need to know about your school on his or her first day?

Write a letter to the new student that explains what he or she should know about your school on his or her first day. Use details and examples to support your ideas.

Writer’s Checklist for the Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

PLAN before you write

- Make sure you understand what the prompt is asking you to do.
- Think about your task and your audience.
- Think about the topic and what you want to write about it.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map, outline, or other graphic organizer to plan your essay.

FOCUS while you write

- Stay focused on the topic.
- Support your ideas with specific details and examples.
- Use a variety of sentence types.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Use transitions to connect your ideas.

PROOFREAD after you write

☐ I stayed focused on the topic.

☐ I used specific details to support my ideas.

☐ I corrected any errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.
Directions: On the following pages is the Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt.

11. A new student will be joining your class. Your teacher has asked you to write a letter to the new student. Think about what it would be like to be the new student at your school. What does the new student need to know about your school on his or her first day?

Write a letter to the new student that explains what he or she should know about your school on his or her first day. Use details and examples to support your ideas.

Go to the next page to begin writing your response.
11. Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt
   Final Copy

   If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.
After you have checked your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.
Informative/Explanatory Scoring Guideline

#11 Item Information

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Assessment Anchor:

E03.C.1—Text Types and Purposes

Specific Eligible Content addressed by this item:

E03.C.1.2—Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| 4     | • Sharp, distinct topic introduced, developed, and concluded with evident awareness of task, purpose, and audience  
• Effective order and organizational structure that develop a topic  
• Substantial and relevant content that demonstrates an understanding of the purpose  
• Thorough elaboration with clearly presented information that is consistently supported with facts, examples, and concrete details  
• Effective transitions that connect ideas and concepts  
• Consistent control of sentence formation  
• Few errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation; errors present do not interfere with meaning |
| 3     | • Clear topic introduced, developed, and concluded with general awareness of task, purpose, and audience  
• Adequate order and organizational structure that develop a topic  
• Adequate and relevant content that demonstrates an understanding of the purpose  
• Sufficient elaboration with clearly presented information that is supported with facts, examples, and concrete details  
• Clear transitions that connect ideas and concepts  
• Adequate control of sentence formation  
• Some errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation; errors present seldom interfere with meaning |
| 2     | • Vague topic introduced, developed, and concluded with limited awareness of task, purpose, and audience  
• Inconsistent order and organizational structure that somewhat develop a topic  
• Inadequate, vague content that demonstrates a weak understanding of the purpose  
• Underdeveloped and/or repetitive elaboration that is inconsistently supported with facts, examples, and details  
• Inconsistent/limited transitions that somewhat connect ideas and concepts  
• Inconsistent control of sentence formation  
• Errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation; errors present may interfere with meaning |
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<td>• Minimal topic introduced, developed, and concluded with little awareness of task, purpose, and audience&lt;br&gt;• Minimal order and organizational structure&lt;br&gt;• Minimal content that demonstrates little or no understanding of the purpose&lt;br&gt;• Undeveloped writing with little support; may be a bare list&lt;br&gt;• Minimal transitions that may or may not connect ideas and concepts&lt;br&gt;• Minimal control of sentence formation&lt;br&gt;• Many errors may be present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation; errors present often interfere with meaning</td>
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</table>
A new student will be joining your class. Your teacher has asked you to write a letter to the new student. Think about what it would be like to be the new student at your school. What does the new student need to know about your school on his or her first day?

Write a letter to the new student that explains what he or she should know about your school on his or her first day. Use details and examples to support your ideas.
Dear Heidi,

Welcome to Riverview! I promise you will have tons of fun here learning math, reading, science, and soon.

Right now in math we are measuring in centimeters which are abbreviated cm. We were also measuring inches, half inches, and quarter inches.

During reading and writing we’re working on past, present, and future and cause and effect.

In science we are learning about Earth’s layers and the Tectonic Plates. (It sounds harder than it really is).

We also have specials like computer lab, P.E, music, art, and library.

During computer, we do math and reading online to test our skill.

In P.E we’ve been doing a lot of jump roping.

When we go to music we usually practice chorus.

And did I mention

If you need additional space, please continue on the next page.
we are having a Spring concert!
And in art class we're painting
starry nights like Vensant Vango.
In library it's all peace and
quiet. I especially like chapter books.
Do you like to read?
At recess we have about 30
minutes to play on the swingset,
monkey bars, kickball field and much
much more!
Lunch is right after recess
and it starts at 1:00! Isn't that late?!
Well, anyway, now that you know
what our day is like, I hope that
you make lots of good friends
and have an amazing time in 3rd
grade!
From a friend,
THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK.
Hello!

My name is Emma. I am going to be in your new class. We all can’t wait for you! I know it is nervous to come to a new school, Eastside Elementary is a really nice school. In class these are the list of subjects that we have: First we have math, then we have writing, also we have reading. After that we have a “special” which is either music, library, gym, art, or computer lab. Next, we have lunch and recess. Then we have spelling or handwriting. Finally we have social studies and then it is the end of the day. I can’t wait to see you and I know you will love it here and make lots of new friends.

See you then!

This response provides a clear topic that is introduced (Hello! My name is Emma. I am going to be in your new class.), developed, and concluded with general awareness of task, purpose, and audience. There is an adequate organizational structure that supports development of the topic, and clear transitions are used to connect ideas and show the relationships between events in a typical school day (First . . . After that . . . Then . . . Finally). Sufficient elaboration ( . . . we have a “special” which is either music, library, gym, art, or computer lab) is used to clearly present information that is supported with concrete details. The conclusion (I can’t wait to see you and I know you will love it here and make lots of new friends. See you then!) provides an adequate end to this response. Control of sentence formation is adequate overall. Errors present in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation seldom interfere with meaning.
STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points

11. A new student will be joining your class. Your teacher has asked you to write a letter to the new student. Think about what it would be like to be the new student at your school. What does the new student need to know about your school on his or her first day?

Write a letter to the new student that explains what he or she should know about your school on his or her first day. Use details and examples to support your ideas.

Hi, new kid

Our school is really great and our rules are fair and good. On your first day of school when you walk in you turn right and you will see the office. You will be in Mrs. Morgan class. Some rules of the school are that you don’t be mean, respect others and leave nobody out. When you walk inside the school you keep going straight look to the door on the left and that is the playground. When you walk in the school you go to the playground but you go to the right door and that is the cafeteria. Those were things about our school.

your soon to be friend,
STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point

11. A new student will be joining your class. Your teacher has asked you to write a letter to the new student. Think about what it would be like to be the new student at your school. What does the new student need to know about your school on his or her first day?

Write a letter to the new student that explains what he or she should know about your school on his or her first day. Use details and examples to support your ideas.
A new student should know the rules and to be kind and respect people and know how to play right with someone else's toys and know how to do the alphabet, also to use your manners and listen when someone is talking to you.

This response provides a minimal topic (A new student should . . .) that is introduced and developed with little awareness of task, purpose, or audience. Development consists of a list of underdeveloped ideas ( . . . should know the rules and to be kind and respect people and know how to play right with someone else's toys and . . .) that demonstrates little understanding of the purpose. There is minimal sense of an organizational structure, and the few transitions used (also) do not connect ideas. Minimal control of sentence formation is demonstrated. Errors in spelling (you'r, maners), usage, punctuation, and grammar occasionally interfere with meaning.
# PSSA ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 3

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS—SAMPLE ITEM SUMMARY DATA

### MULTIPLE-CHOICE AND EVIDENCE-BASED SELECTED RESPONSE QUESTIONS

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### SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION AND WRITING PROMPT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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