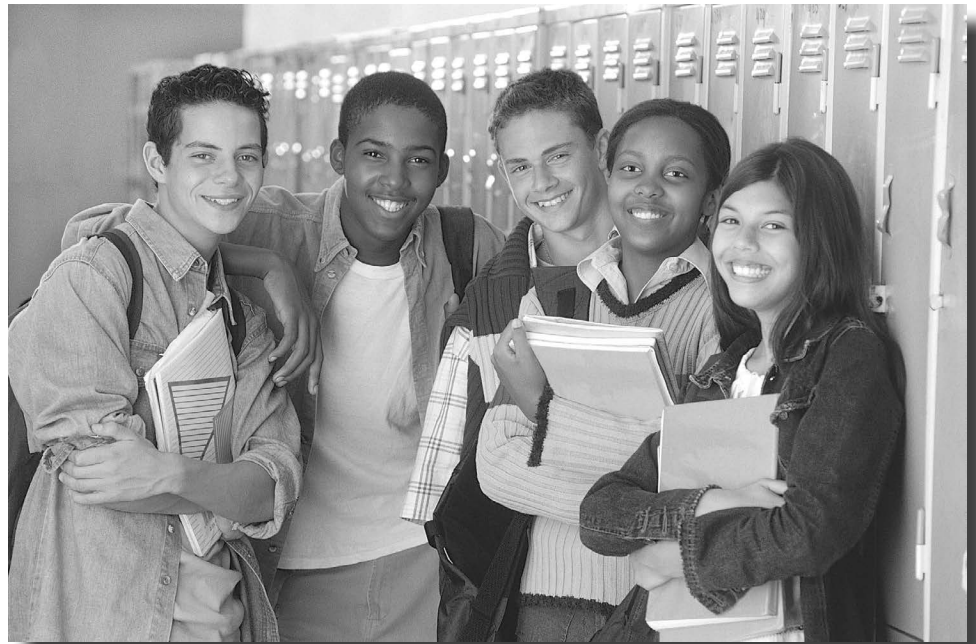




**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

## English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler



**2022–2023**  
**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 documents, assessment handbooks, and content-based item and scoring samplers. This Item and Scoring Sampler is a useful tool for Pennsylvania educators in preparing local instructional programs by providing samples of test item types and scored student responses. The item sampler is not designed to be used as a pretest, a curriculum, or 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 questions 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 2022 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 (for TDAs), or consisting solely or almost solely of text copied from the passage (for TDAs)

**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 the 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 guide. 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**

<b>Item Information</b>	
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**

<b>Item Information</b>	
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**

<b>Alignment</b>	<b>Assigned AAEC</b>	<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>Assigned DOK</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Average Score</b>
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<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 a family in Alaska. Then answer questions 1–7 in your answer booklet.

## The Last First Day

by Suzanne Westover

Anna stands in the doorway, her sister’s knapsack heavy on her shoulders, as Julie kneels by their mother, pulling the blue and green afghan more closely around her thin frame.

“It’ll be OK, Mom,” Julie says bravely, trying to disguise the quiver in her voice.

But Anna’s mom remains silent; her heart was broken when Billy left. Now the city is claiming Julie, too. Soon, it will be Anna’s turn, and then the house will be completely silent except for the rattling of the wind and the dripping of the faucet . . .

Anna stands shivering on the windswept tarmac as she watches her sister board the tiny airplane.

Finally, Julie’s face appears in a cloudy rear window. Her features look tiny and scrunched, and she already seems very far away.

Anna waves frantically, shouting her goodbyes, but her cries are futile. They’re caught up and carelessly tossed aside by powerful gusts of late afternoon wind. As the plane begins its juddering taxi down the short airstrip, Anna hugs her arms tightly to her sides, her eyes watering as the gravel swirls around her.

Several other families stand nearby in tight clusters. Mothers cling to their younger children, in defiance of the day when they, too, will have to leave. Fathers stand stoically, alone or in pairs, stone-faced and silent.

Anna kicks angrily at the dirt. Soon the plane is a tiny speck, barely visible among the scudding clouds. Shielding her eyes from the glare of the setting sun, Anna gazes at the sky until she feels dizzy from concentrating on the empty horizon.

The walk home is long and lonely. She thinks she sees a black bear on the far hills and turns to point it out to Julie before she realizes she is alone.

When Anna reaches her front porch, she hesitates on the bottom step. She can’t bear to think about the weighty silence that will greet her. She reluctantly pushes open the creaky screen door and tiptoes quietly past where her mother sits unmoving in the living room.

When Anna enters the room she had shared with Julie until that morning, the weak afternoon light streams through the frayed bedroom curtains, illuminating Julie’s neatly folded comforter and tightly tucked sheets. Anna throws herself down on Julie’s bed, angry at how utterly powerless she feels.

“This is so unfair,” she whispers fiercely, as she buries her face into the soft neck of Julie’s ragged stuffed monkey, a gift from years ago that she had either forgotten or deliberately left behind.

The next morning at school, after the tinny ringing of the bell and a half-hearted Pledge of Allegiance, Anna pulls herself to her full height, takes a deep breath, and raises her hand.

“Yes, Anna,” says Mrs. Saunders, smiling up from her large, scarred desk.

“I wanted to ask . . .” Anna hesitates, unsure of how to begin. But Mrs. Saunders smiles encouragingly, and somehow Anna finds her voice.

“I want to know why Nunapitchuk doesn’t have a high school. My brother and sister have both left to study in the city. It doesn’t seem right that we have to go away from our families and our homes, just to go to school. Why can’t all the communities across Alaska have high schools? After all, this isn’t the dark ages. It’s 1975!”

Mrs. Saunders looks slightly surprised but nods her head as if in agreement. “Anna, you bring up a very good point. Could you see me after class?”

After school, Anna stays in her seat while Mrs. Saunders folds her long legs under the adjacent, too-small desk. She looks at Anna fondly, and her kind eyes unwittingly crack Anna’s careful composure.

“This is my last year!” bursts Anna. “I don’t want to have to go and live with strangers. I want to stay right here where I belong.” Anna wipes tears of frustration from her cheeks with her red woolen scarf. “If I can’t go to school here, I’m not going anywhere!”

As she speaks these words, Anna begins to feel more powerful; she knows it won’t be easy, but she’s suddenly confident she’ll find a way.

“Mom, I’m home!” Anna bursts through the front door, thrumming with energy.

In the living room, Anna finds her mom still seated in the faded rocking chair. Anna sits next to her and takes her hand.

“Mom, I have to tell you something. Today, I met with my teacher. She told me about a lawyer who’s started to put together a case . . . I’m going to join in. We’re going to fight to have schools in every single Native village across Alaska.” Anna pauses for breath, her words tumbling over one another, each one a shining beacon of hope.

“Yesterday, when Julie left . . . that’s going to be the last time kids have to get onto a plane to go to high school. I promise.”

Anna’s mom looks up, and for the first time in days Anna sees in her mom’s eyes the hint of an almost-forgotten expression; it looks like a faint shadow of hope.

“Yesterday was the last first day,” says Anna, this time a little louder.

“Yesterday was the last first day,” repeats Anna’s mom.

Then they say it together. They say it over and over again, until tears stream down their cheeks and their laughter rings in the hills.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Read the sentences from the passage.

“Mothers cling to their younger children, in defiance of the day when they, too, will have to leave. Fathers stand stoically, alone or in pairs, stone-faced and silent.”

Which inference is **best** supported by the sentences?

- A. Parents support the decisions their children make for the future.
- B. Parents share feelings about their children studying away from home.
- C. Parents have little to say to their children going to a new area.
- D. Parents have a difficult time watching their children move away.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	9%
p-value B	10%
p-value C	6%
p-value D	75% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the inference that is best supported by the given sentences. Option D is the correct answer; the words “mothers cling” and “fathers stand . . . stone-faced” suggest that the parents are sad about their children having to move away to attend school. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since there is no textual evidence to support these inferences.

2. Based on the root “deliberatus,” which means “resolved upon,” the word “deliberately” means
- A. with thoughtful consideration.
  - B. with extreme precaution.
  - C. with repeated persuasion.
  - D. with unwavering cooperation.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	60% (correct answer)
p-value B	12%
p-value C	15%
p-value D	13%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to use the root “deliberatus” to determine the meaning of the word “deliberately.” Option A is the correct answer since “deliberately” means to do something in a way that is intentional and carefully considered. Options B, C, and D are incorrect since these are not the meanings of “deliberately.”

3. Read the sentence from the passage.

“The next morning at school, after the tinny ringing of the bell and a half-hearted Pledge of Allegiance, Anna pulls herself to her full height, takes a deep breath, and raises her hand.”

What does the term “half-hearted” reveal about Anna?

- A. Anna has a lack of interest in the events taking place at school.
- B. Anna is feeling confident about her answer to a question.
- C. Anna is disappointed that she is overlooked to be the leader.
- D. Anna has hope that she will be called on to participate in class.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-C.2.1.3
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	74% (correct answer)
p-value B	11%
p-value C	8%
p-value D	7%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine what the term “half-hearted” reveals about Anna. Option A is the correct answer since “half-hearted” means to do something without enthusiasm. Anna’s “half-hearted” Pledge of Allegiance demonstrates a lack of interest in a school event. Options B, C, and D are incorrect since they do not reflect the meaning of “half-hearted” and do not make sense in the given context.

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**Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question**

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

**Part One**

How does Anna’s conversation with Mrs. Saunders influence a decision?

- A. It encourages Anna to reach an agreement with her teacher.
- B. It encourages Anna to participate in an important cause.
- C. It encourages Anna to share her feelings with her mom.
- D. It encourages Anna to support the goals of her sister.

**Part Two**

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

- A. “Anna waves frantically, shouting her goodbyes, but her cries are futile.”
- B. “In the living room, Anna finds her mom still seated in the faded rocking chair. Anna sits next to her and takes her hand.”
- C. “ ‘She told me about a lawyer who’s started to put together a case . . . I’m going to join in.’ ”
- D. “ ‘Yesterday, when Julie left . . . that’s going to be the last time kids have to get onto a plane to go to high school.’ ”



Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	C
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.43
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to analyze how Anna’s conversation with Mrs. Saunders influences a decision and to select the evidence that best supports this analysis.</p> <p><b>Part One:</b> Option B is the correct answer since it is when Anna stays after class to express her frustration about having to leave town to attend high school that Mrs. Saunders informs her about how Anna can fight to have high schools in every Native village in Alaska. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they do not reflect decisions made by Anna as a result of speaking with Mrs. Saunders.</p> <p><b>Part Two:</b> Option C is the correct answer since it supports how Anna will participate in an important cause. Option A is not correct; although it relates to Julie, Anna’s sister, it does not support option B from Part One. Option B is not correct; although it relates to the mother, it does not support option B from Part One. Option D is not correct; although it expresses Anna’s new belief, it does not support option B from Part One.</p>

**Multiple-Choice Questions**

5. Read the sentence from the passage.

“As she speaks these words, Anna begins to feel more powerful; she knows it won’t be easy, but she’s suddenly confident she’ll find a way.”

How does Anna’s point of view create a sense of suspense?

- A. The reader realizes that Anna is growing stronger as a person.
- B. The reader wonders if Anna’s plan will affect others.
- C. The reader wants to know how Anna expects to achieve her goal.
- D. The reader questions Anna’s motive for wanting change.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-C.2.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	38%
p-value B	11%
p-value C	43% (correct answer)
p-value D	8%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to analyze how Anna’s point of view creates suspense. Option C is the correct answer; when the author reveals that Anna is “suddenly confident she’ll find a way,” the reader wants to find out how Anna will achieve this goal. Option A is not correct; although Anna may be growing stronger, this realization does not create suspense for the reader. Option B is incorrect since Anna has not yet formed a plan. Option D is incorrect since the reader understands Anna’s point of view and does not question Anna’s motive.

6. What does the dialogue at the end of the passage reveal about Anna and her mother?
- A. They are concerned about how the case may affect other villages.
  - B. They are optimistic that changes will occur to education in small villages.
  - C. They are nervous about the consequences of sharing opinions with others.
  - D. They are upset because they have little hope of success with the case.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	8%
p-value B	75% (correct answer)
p-value C	8%
p-value D	9%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to analyze what the dialogue at the end of the passage reveals about Anna and her mother. Option B is the correct answer; the fact that Anna and her mother keep repeating “yesterday was the last first day” suggests that Anna and her mother are hopeful that there will be a change that will allow children to stay home to attend high school. Therefore, the day that Julie left will be the last time that kids have to attend high school far from home. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they are not supported by context in the passage.

7. Which description is the **best** objective summary of the passage?
- A. Anna shouts goodbye to her sister, Julie, as she leaves in an airplane, but Julie cannot hear her because of the strong wind. As she walks home, Anna sees a black bear and tries to point it out to Julie before she remembers Julie is not there. At home, Anna realizes Julie forgot her stuffed monkey and feels sad about this. Anna’s mother is sad as well, so Anna tries to comfort her.
  - B. Feeling upset about her brother and sister who had to go away to a big city, Anna has a hard time concentrating in class. She raises her hand and tells her teacher that it isn’t fair that children have to go away to school and this isn’t the dark ages. Mrs. Saunders asks to see Anna after school. During their meeting, Mrs. Saunders discovers that Anna is afraid to leave home next year.
  - C. Anna’s mother is heartbroken after saying goodbye to her children Billy and Julie. Anna worries about her mother, so she decides to come up with a plan to get her siblings back. With the help of her teacher, Mrs. Saunders, she thinks of a way to get a high school established in their village so that her brother and sister can come home.
  - D. Anna watches her sister, Julie, leave to go to high school in a different city. After going home, she notices how quiet the house is and how upset her mother seems. At school, Anna speaks up in class about how every village should have a high school so that children don’t have to leave their families. Mrs. Saunders suggests a way she can help to achieve this goal. Anna hurries home to tell her mother the news.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	6%
p-value B	11%
p-value C	20%
p-value D	63% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the best objective summary of the passage. Option D is the correct answer since it is complete, contains only main events of the story, and is objective. Option A is incorrect since it contains minor details and vague events. Option B is incorrect since it is incomplete, contains some minor details, and contains inaccuracies. Option C is incorrect since it is incomplete and contains an inaccuracy.

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## PASSAGE 2

Read the following science fiction passage about penguin research on a space station. Then answer question 8 in your answer booklet.

## The Penguin Whisperer

by Guy Stewart

When Candace Mooney walked into the space station *Courage* Penguin Research Lab, Dejario Reynas had a penguin in his lap and two at his knees.

“What are you doing?” she exclaimed.

Dejario stood up quickly, sliding the penguin to the floor. “I’m not playing with them,” he said, a guilty look on his face. “I’m collecting data.”

The PRL was an inner-ring lab of *Courage*. Emperors were adapted to extreme temperatures and pressures, and scientists studied how they could go from deep ocean water to the surface like little submarines. Finding out how emperors stored oxygen in muscle tissue and survived sudden pressure drops might keep people alive longer during loss-of-pressure emergencies.

Candace rolled her eyes. “What kind of data?”

“Um, how wing length can be used to predict diving speed . . .”

Candace shook her head. “You were trying to be a penguin whisperer again.” She tugged on her gloves, grabbed a squeegee, and started pushing frigidly cold salt water across the floor to the recycle vents. “Grow up, Dejario. Penguins stopped being our pets when we were ten and a half. They’re just lab animals now.”

Dejario herded the emperors up a ramp to the Antarctic habitat and shooed them inside. “The birds listen to me!” he insisted, his breath making a cloud in the frosty air. “They do!”

Candace stared at him. “You’re wasting your time. Besides, your dad said to stop it. It bothers the penguins.”

“Dad doesn’t understand the emperors like I do!”

“Yeah, sure. He’s only the Lead Veterinary Researcher.” Candace went back to cleaning the floor, vents, walls, and tables. Her Intensive Training Team was currently in charge of keeping the PRL clean and the penguins fed. She glanced into the penguin habitat through an immense transp aluminum window. The birds seemed so playful and happy—waddling, diving, swimming—chasing their live food for sport before eating it. Candace sighed. When she was ten, she’d loved penguins. She used to watch them for hours. But that seemed so long ago, well before she’d been accepted by the ITT and begun her science rotation. The PRL’s research was much too important for fooling around with the animals.

“Playing with penguins, like a kid,” Candace muttered. She shoved her squeegee around Dejario’s boots, making him jump out of the way. “What a big fat waste of lab time.”

Candace heard her mother's voice over the public address. "This is not a drill. Micrometeoroid impact and penetration of Inner Ring, Life Science Quadrant, Section Two. All quadrants have been sealed and are on independent life support. Please remain calm and stay in your section. Rescue or maintenance staff will contact you when your area has been secured."

"That's across the hallway," Dejario said. His breath came out as a puff of fog.

The intercom lit up again. "Candace, are you there?"

In two steps, she was across the lab. Her own breath made a cloud as she answered, "I'm here with Dejario Reynas, Mom. We're fine."

Dejario said, "Have you heard from my dad?"

"We're still contacting all the sections. Stay there. Station Control, out." The intercom clicked off.

"Mom? Mom!" Candace said, but the intercom stayed silent. She banged it with her fist in frustration and then backed away as sparks flew out and sizzled.

"You and your temper!" Dejario said. "Talk about growing up. Now you've broken it!"

"I didn't break it! It's probably fine."

"Then why'd it spark?"

They glared at each other. Sometimes Candace wondered why they were friends at all. But she had to admit that sparring with Dejario could lead to unusually interesting ideas.

"It's colder in here than it was before." He turned his head toward the tank. "There's a skin of ice on the water."

It was always cold in the PRL, but Candace had never seen ice on the pool before. Usually, silverfish with antifreeze for blood flicked freely through the water. They were food for the penguins, but scientists also studied how the sleek fish were able to stay flexible at sub-zero temperatures. She checked the habitat monitor. "Water and air temperatures have already dropped a lot," Candace confirmed.

"Let me see," Dejario said, elbowing her out of the way. "The temperature is dropping almost a degree a minute! At that rate, the water will be frozen solid in an hour. In less than two hours the carbon dioxide in the air will start to freeze."

"Won't we be back on the sunny side of Earth soon? That should give us some time."

Dejario thought. "We're in geosynchronous orbit over Auckland, New Zealand, this month. Night just fell, so we'll be in Earth's shadow for twelve hours. If someone doesn't fix the heaters, we'll be corpsicles."

"Don't say that!"

"Why not? It's true."

Candace had lived on *Courage* long enough to know that the possibility was real. Researchers on this and other stations were occasionally lost in accidents. The risk went with the assignment.

Dejario slumped against the habitat window. Candace shook him. "We can't just give up, Dejario! Can't you think of anything?" She gazed into the penguin habitat. "How do the emperors survive?"

"During the worst storms, they huddle."

"Just huddle? That's all?"

“Well, the whole flock bunches together as tightly as it can. That way the birds in the middle keep warm enough not to freeze.”

“Then the ones on the edge just die?”

He looked up at her in alarm. “Oh, no! They wiggle their way in toward the center, then migrate back out to the edge, then squeeze back in again. It’s a behavior called colloidal jamming. Scientists in the early twenty-first century recorded it.”

“What kind of jam?”

“Jamming! The massing penguins modulate metabolic heat loss by dispersing through the huddle in coordinated periodic waves . . .”

“English, Dejarío! English!”

He took a deep breath, letting it out slowly in a gelid cloud. After a thoughtful moment he said, “You ever make dough?”

“Yeah. With Mom.”

“Kneading dough forces the dry flour into contact with the milk and eggs until the mixture is evenly wet and dry. Right?” He glanced into the habitat. The penguins were beginning to crowd together, each squeezing and jamming the others while slowly migrating through the huddle, keeping the flock evenly warm. “Like that.”

Candace shivered as she studied the undulating wave of penguins. The ice on the pool was now four centimeters thick. “Could we join their colloidal jamming—it sounds like the name of a band—until we get help?”

“Maybe. But Dad’s right, penguins don’t like people around them.”

“No problem,” Candace said, forcing a smile. “You’re the Penguin Whisperer. They like you.”

A booming, moaning sound vibrated through the PRL’s walls—ice forming and expanding in the confined space. The intercom by the door sparked again.

“They have no idea what’s going on in here,” Candace said. “They think we’re safe and sound. Whispering to your penguins to let us huddle with them is the only way we’ll get out of this . . . alive.” She took a final reading on the monitor station as the ice cried out again. “Air temp is  $-27^{\circ}\text{C}$ .”

Dejarío took her hand. “Come on. Slowly.” He slipped on the icy floor as he turned, and Candace helped him to his feet. Together they walked clumsily up the frozen ramp and unlocked the habitat door.

Peering inside, Dejarío took off his gloves and threw them onto the ice and then knelt down, shoving his hands into his pockets. Candace followed his lead, and together they skidded on their knees to the edge of the waddle of penguins.

A large emperor nipped his jacket as Dejarío sidled near. Dejarío didn’t flinch. He whispered calmly and soothingly until the penguins seemed to recognize him and allow him into their huddle.

Candace wasn’t so lucky. After she received two warning nips from skittish penguins, an especially large bird bit her hand. Though tears sprang to her eyes, Candace didn’t make a sound. Without thinking, she reached over and pinched the emperor back. It squawked and made room for her.



She was not nipped again as she and Dejario were carried on a kind of wave to the warm center of jostling penguins. Continually moving, they flowed out again to the edge of the huddle and then turned and were folded back into the scrum.

They'd gone through the waddle four times when the rescue crew, looking like shiny abominable snow monsters, arrived in their white hazmat suits. They picked up Candace and Dejario and rushed them out of the PRL to a warm physics lab. A rescuer popped her helmet off and exclaimed, "It was sixty-eight below zero in there!"

Candace looked at Dejario and said through chattering teeth, "What's the w-worry? The Penguin Whisperer and I were just doing the colloidal penguin jam."

"The what?"

Candace and Dejario burst out laughing. Finally Dejario managed to say, "I predict it will be a dance craze that will sweep the station."

**Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt**

8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejarío. 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-C.2.1.1	<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	<b>Mean Score</b>	1.97
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**Assessment Anchor:**

E08.A-C.2—Craft and Structure

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

E08.A-C.2.1.1—Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.

<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. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage, "The Penguin Whisperer," the penguins play a very important role. This role is that, throughout the passage, the author uses the penguins to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario. Through the penguins, the reader can see that Dejario is a very fun, leader while Candace is a serious character who takes pride in her work. These characteristics, though very different, all are shown by the penguins' role in the passage.

Due to the penguins' role in the passage, the reader can tell that Dejario is a very fun character. Right off the bat the reader can tell that Dejario is not all business when Candace first walks in on him playing with the penguins. When asked what he was doing with the penguins, Dejario responded, "I'm not playing with them," he said, a guilty look on his face. "I'm collecting data." (page 36) This shows how Dejario is fun because instead of doing only work in the research lab, he also made time to have fun and play with the penguins.

A second trait Dejario had that was shown through the penguins' role in the passage was leadership. When a life-threatening crisis came upon Candace and Dejario, Dejario was able to be a leader and save their lives. The heater broke and temperatures were dropping, meaning





that the two characters had to think quickly and decide that “jamming” with the penguins was their only way to survive. So, as said in the passage, “Candace followed his lead, and together they skidded on their knees to the edge of the waddle of penguins.” (page 38) Dejarío then preformed a dangerous task and joined the penguins’ “jam” with Candace following behind. This shows how Dejarío is a leader because when presented with an unsafe task, he was able to smoothly and calmly complete the task. Because of this help save both his and Candace’s lives by joining the penguines’ “jam.”

Finally, a charateristic of Candace that was revealed through the penguins’ role in the passage is how she is very serious. For example, in the lab she, while Dejarío was busy playing with the penguins, made sure to get straight to work on cleaning up the lab to make it a safe enviroment for the penguins. She also said to Dejarío, “Grow up, Dejarío. Penguins stopped being our pets when we were ten and a half. They’re just lab animals now.” (page 36) This shows how Candace is a serious character because she is very serious about her work, and is trying to get Dejarío to be too.

In the end, the penguins had a very important role in the passage tha was given to them by the author. This role was to reveal the charateristics of the characters Dejarío and Candace in the passage, “The Penguin Whisperer.” The penguins did, indeed, show the characteristics of the two charaters by revealing Dejarío as a very



fun, leader and Candace as a very serious character. The penguins, though they seemed unimportant, were actually a key element to this passage.

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This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. A strong organizational structure is provided and supports the controlling idea: that important character traits of both Candace and Dejarío are *shown by the penguins' role in the passage*. The introduction is effective in noting that Dejarío is both *fun* and a *leader*, while Candace is *serious* and *takes pride in her work*. Ideas surrounding these differentiating characteristics, and how they are revealed through Dejarío's and Candace's interactions with the penguins, are effectively developed throughout the response. The first body paragraph includes an inference characterizing Dejarío as *fun* (*Right off the bat the reader can tell that Dejarío is not all business when Candace first walks in on him playing with the penguins*). A substantial text reference supports this inference/characterization (*When asked what he was doing with the penguins, Dejarío responded, "I'm not playing with them," he said, a guilty look on his face. "I'm collecting data"*). Supporting analysis is then provided to demonstrate how the author uses Dejarío's interactions with penguins to highlight his *fun* personality (*This shows how Dejarío is fun because instead of doing only work in the reasearch lab, he also made time to have fun and play with the penguins*). The second body paragraph is focused on Dejarío's leadership qualities. First, a crisis scenario requiring the type of heroism often associated with the science-fiction genre is summarized using substantial, relevant text (*The heater broke and temperatures were dropping, meaning that the two characters had to think quickly and decide that "jamming" with the penguins was their only way to survive*). This description provides context for a supporting text reference (*"Candace followed his lead, and together they skidded on their knees to the edge of the waddle of penguins"*) and additional thorough analysis of Dejarío's leadership qualities (*Dejarío then preformed a dangerous task and joined the penguins' "jam" with Candace following behind. This shows how Dejarío is a leader because when presented with an unsafe task, he was able to smoothly and calmly complete the task. Because of this help save both his and Candace's lives*). The last body paragraph focuses on Candace's serious attitude regarding her work by analyzing her interactions with the penguins. Multiple text references are provided (*For example, in the lab she, while Dejarío was busy playing with the penguins, made sure to get straight to work . . . to make it a safe enviroment for the penguins. She also said to Dejarío, "Grow up, Dejarío. Penguins stopped being our pets when we were ten and a half. They're just lab animals now"*). Thorough analysis connects the references to the controlling idea (*This shows how Candace is a serious character because she is very serious about her work, and is trying to get Dejarío to be too*), thus revealing how Candace takes pride in her job (i.e., she tries to get her coworker to behave more seriously in their workplace). An effective conclusion reiterates the key role that the penguins play in developing the main characters' predominant traits. Transitions are skillfully employed to link ideas (*Due to the penguins' role; Right off the bat; A second trait; So, as said in the passage*). Precise language and domain-specific vocabulary are effectively used to explain the topic (*life-threatening crisis; when presented with an unsafe task; though they seemed unimportant*). The few errors present in spelling (*buisness, reasearch, temperatures, enviroment, charaters*) do not interfere with meaning.

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## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points



8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejarío. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In recent years, aspects of science-fiction have been blending with literary formats ranging from adult novels to children’s comic books. Through popular works such as *Star War’s*, authors and readers alike have acknowledged the bond formed between the audience and characters in this genre. In sci-fi, characters are often placed in extraordinary situations. Writers are then able to craft multi-layered characters as their interactions with fellow characters and responses to given circumstances reveal a character’s flaws and positive attributes. The author Guy Stewart excellently executed this in his short story, “The Penguin Whisperer.” In this futuristic tale, the presumably young Candance Mooney and Dejarío Reynas live and learn at an outer space lab, where they assist in caring for and studying penguins. Through the protagonists’ interactions with the mammals, the author revealed each person’s characteristics.

On the Courage Penguin Research Lab, Candace Mooney was undergoing intensive training. Through her work, she was frequently around the penguins, and consequently, Dejarío Reynas. While Moore was raised on the ship, she did not view the penguins as anything more than lab specimens. She spoke on this matter stating, “Penguins stopped being [my] pets when [I] was ten and a half.” Through Candace’s choice to solely interact with the penguins for lab purposes, the author showcased Candance’s business-like mindset. Additionally, Stewart utilized Candace’s non-emotional commitment to the penguins to highlight her open-mindedness. During the rising action of the plot, the heaters break in Mooney and Reynas’s section, causing the lab they are in to lethally drop in temperature. Candace surprisingly agreed to see if Dejarío could communicate with the penguins on an emotional level, which would allow them to join the penguin’s warm huddle, which would save their lives. The author used Candace’s disconnect with the penguins to emphasize her ability to try others’ ideas.

While Candace has an open-mind, Dejarío has an open heart. He has a special-bond with the penguins, and actively tries to communicate with the animals. While his father, who is a Lead Veterinary Volunteer, told Reynas his antics, quote, “[bothered] the penguins,” Dejarío still believed in his emotional connection. Stewart used Dejarío’s relationship with the penguins to spotlight the boy’s emotional intelligence, and stubbornness.

Additionally, the writer highlighted Dejarío’s lighthearted side, as he was caught playing with the penguins at the beginning of the passage.

From beginning to end, Gary Stewart’s science fiction writing includes main characters with engaging personality traits. Through Candace Mooney and Dejarío Reynas’s interactions with the penguins, the author emboldened their personality traits, without blatantly stating adjectives. Through this, the sci-fi passage truly reached the stars.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure is strong. An extensive introduction demonstrates clear understanding of the science-fiction genre, thus providing context helpful in addressing the two areas of focus: *multi-layered characters* within the science-fiction genre and how *interactions with fellow characters and responses to given circumstances reveal a character's flaws and positive attributes*. The student focuses first on Candace's character, making an inference (*Through Candace's choice to solely interact with the penguins for lab purposes, the author showcased Candace's business-like mindset*) that is supported with key text details and quotes (*Mooney was undergoing intensive training. Through her work, she was frequently around the penguins, and consequently, Dejarío Reynas; "Penguins stopped being [my] pets when [I] was ten and a half"*). Thorough analysis effectively characterizes Candace's role at the research lab (*Stewart utilized Candace's non-emotional commitment to the penguins to highlight her open-mindedness; Candace surprisingly agreed to see if Dejarío could communicate with the penguins on an emotional level; The author used Candace's disconnect with the penguins to emphasize her ability to try others' ideas*). Next, the student contrasts Candace's and Dejarío's personalities by making an inference that effectively illustrates a relevant implicit meaning from the text (*Candace has an open-mind, Dejarío has an open heart*) before shifting focus to Dejarío. Additional insightful analysis of implicit meanings from the text (*He has a special-bond with the penguins; Stewart used Dejarío's relationship with the penguins to spotlight the boy's emotional intelligence, and stubbornness; the writer highlighted Dejarío's lighthearted side*) effectively supports the student's focus on Dejarío's positive attributes. The conclusion, though succinct, further clarifies the student's ideas surrounding how Candace's and Dejarío's interactions with the penguins reveal their characteristics (*Through Candace Mooney and Dejarío Reynas's interactions with the penguins, the author embaldened their personality traits, without blatantly stating adjectives*). Skillfully employed transitions link ideas (*In recent years, In this futuristic tale, Through the protagonists' interactions with the mammals*). An effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary helps the student explain how the penguins reveal characteristics of Candace and Dejarío (*blending with literary formats, placed in extraordinary situations, multi-layered characters, utilized Candace's non-emotional commitment, emotional connection/intelligence, engaging personality traits, executed, futuristic, lethally, disconnect, embaldened, blatantly*). Very few errors are present in this response.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points



8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The story “The Penguin Whisperer” by Guy Stewart tells the story of two scientists that work with Emperor penguins. Throughout the story, the two scientists face various problems when there is a micrometeoroid impact and penetration issue in the lab. The story walks the reader through how the scientists, Candace and Dejario, resolve the problem with the help of their Emperor penguin friends. Throughout the story, Stewart uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario.

The author uses the Emperor penguins to portray secret characteristics of Candace and Dejario. For example, the author states “ ‘Grow up, Dejario. Penguins stopped being our pets when we were ten and a half. They’re just lab animals now.’ ” Candace is talking some sense into Dejario after she catches him playing with the penguins. From this quote, the reader can infer that Dejario is not as mature or serious about his job as Candace. Dejario is not a serious person, while Candace is.

The author also reveals more characteristics about Candace with the use of the penguins. The text states, “ ‘Mom? Mom!’ Candace said, but the intercom stayed silent. She banged it with her fist in frustration...as sparks flew out and sizzled. ‘You and your temper!’ Dejario said.” Candace and Dejario find out through the intercom that there is a micrometeoroid impact and penetration issue within the lab. The reader can infer that Candace is not very calm and she is frightened. Dejario stays calm and tries to think of a plan. Candace stands in the lab worried about getting out alive. Therefore, Candace is worrisome but Dejario is not.

Finally, the author reveals that Candace’s knowledge is limited when she is scared. The author writes, “ ‘Jamming! The massing penguins modulate metabolic heat loss by dispersing through the huddle in coordinated periodic waves...’ ‘English, Dejario! English!’ ” Dejario tells Candace his plan and tries to explain it to her, but Candace does not understand it. The reader can infer that Candace does not know about the colloidal jam. Therefore, Dejario has more knowledge on science and penguins than Candace does.

Overall, Guy Stewart uses the penguins in the story “The Penguin Whisperer” to portray characteristics about Candace and Dejario, the two scientists. The penguins show that Candace is frightened, serious, and is limited on her penguin knowledge. Dejario is not serious, calm, and has a lot of knowledge on penguins.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure is appropriate and adequately supports the focus/controlling idea (*Throughout the story, Stewart uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario*). The introduction provides context for the analysis that follows by providing brief descriptions of the setting and the problem/solution (*two scientists that work with Emperor penguins . . . face various problems when there is a micrometeoroid impact and penetration issue in the lab. The story walks the reader through how the scientists, Candace and Dejario, resolve the problem with the help of their Emperor penguin friends*). In the first body paragraph, the student provides an inference addressing both Dejario and Candace’s personalities (*Dejario is not as mature or serious about his job as Candace. Dejario is not a serious person, while Candace is*) that is drawn from a relevant text detail (“*Grow up, Dejario. Penguins stopped being our pets when we were ten and a half.*”) and supported with clear analysis (*Candace is talking some sense into Dejario after she catches him playing with the penguins*). The second body paragraph also draws a contrast between Candace’s and Dejario’s personalities (*The reader can infer that Candace is not very calm and she is frightened. Dejario stays calm and tries to think of a plan; Candace is worrismatic but Dejario is not*) that is revealed through their situation in the penguin lab (“*‘Mom? Mom!’ Candace said, but the intercom stayed silent. She banged it with her fist in frustration*”). The third body paragraph includes more analysis contrasting the two characters (*Candace’s knowledge is limited when she is scared; The reader can infer that Candace does not know about the colloidal jam. Therefore, Dejario has more knowledge on science and penguins than Candace does*) that is based on additional text references and relevant quotes (“*‘Jamming! The massing penguins modulate metabolic heat loss by dispersing through the huddle in coordinated periodic waves...’ ‘English, Dejario! English!’*” *Dejario tells Candace his plan and tries to explain it to her, but Candace does not understand it*). A clear conclusion clarifies the focus/controlling idea and reiterates previously made points (*The penguins show that Candace is frightened, serious, and is limited on her penguin knowledge. Dejario is not serious, calm, and has a lot of knowledge on penguins*). Transition use, though somewhat repetitive, appropriately links ideas (*From this quote, the reader can infer, The author also reveals, Finally*). Few errors are present (*worrismatic, micrometeoroid, missing capitalization*), and they do not interfere with meaning.

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## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 3 points

8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In this passage "The Penguin Whisperer" by Guy Stewart, tells a story about how two very different characters come together over Penguins and have to survive a life threatening event. The two characters that come together with help of the Penguins are Candace and Dejario. They are scientists about space station courage, working with Penguins, studying how they survive sudden pressure drops. Dejario loves the Penguins like a pet and believes that they listen to him. Candace thinks he acts like a child and only thinks of the Penguins as experiments. A disaster happens, and they are going to have to work together to survive unberably cold tempitures.

While in the time of crises candace asks Dejario what Penguins woud do to survive intence cold situations. He explaines how Penguins huddle to keep warm. "The Penguins were beginning to crowd together, each squeezing and jamming the other while slowly migrating throught the huddle, keeping the flock evenly warm" (Stewart LN34). This is important because it is showing the Penguins "squeezing



and Jamming" together to keep warm, and how this process is "keeping the flock evenly warm." Then Candace started to respect and see Dejarrio differently because he truly understands the Penguins.

When they realized that the only way for them to survive was to do the colloidal Penguin Jam they started to work together and use their skills to get to the Penguins. "Candace followed his lead, and together they skidded on their knees to the edge of the waddle of Penguins." (Stewart LN41). This is important because it talks about how "Candace followed his lead," before she thought he was childish...now, they are working together and listening to each other.

In this passage the Penguins save Candace and Dejarrio's lives. They also help bring them together because Candace is forced to trust and listen to Dejarrio's knowledge and his connection with the Penguins. That is how the Penguins helped reveal and bring together to characters with very different characteristics.

GO ON 

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure is appropriate and supports the controlling idea that *two very different characters come together over Penguins and have to survive a life threatening event*. The clear introduction provides context for the analysis that follows (*Candace and Dejarío . . . are scientists aboard space station courage, working with Penguins, studying how they survive sudden pressure drops; A disaster happens, and they are going to have to work together to survive unberably cold tempitures*). Also, within the introductory paragraph, clear analysis and relevant text is combined to clarify how the interaction with the penguins reveals Candace’s and Dejarío’s differing personalities (*Dejarío loves the Penguins like a pet and believes that they listen to him. Candace thinks he acts like a child and only thinks of the Penguins as experiments*). The first body paragraph begins by citing details and quotes relevant to the student’s ideas (*in the time of crises candace asks Dejarío what Penguins would do to survive; He explains how Penguins huddle to keep warm; “The Penguins were beginning to crowd together, each squeezing and jamming the other while slowly migrating throught the huddle, keeping the flock evenly warm. This is important because it is showing the Penguins “squeezing and Jamming” together to keep warm, and how this process is “keeping the flock evenly warm*). Next, the student provides clear supporting analysis based on explicit and implicit meanings from the text (*Then Cadace started to respect and see Dejarío diffrently because he truly understands the Penguins*). The second body paragraph combines additional clear analysis (*before she thought he was childish...now, they are working together and listening to each other*) based on relevant text details (*When they relized that the only way for them to survive was the colloidal Penguin jam they started to work together; This is important because it talks about how “Candace followed his lead,” before she thought he was childish now they are working together and listening to eachother*). The conclusion reinforces these ideas with more clear analysis (*They [the penguins] also help bring them together because Candace is forced to trust and listen to Dejarío’s knowledge and hisconection with the Penguins*), all of which helps strengthen the essay. Appropriate transitions are used to link ideas (*While in the time of crises, When they relized, In this passage*). An appropriate use of precise language clearly explains the topic (*two very different characters come together, disaster happens, truly understands*). There are errors present in capitalization, punctuation, spelling (*diffenent, thretening, charecters, aboard, unberably, tempitures, intence, explaines, throught, squeezing, relized, cadace, eachother, forced, conection*), and usage (incorrect or missing words); however, they seldom interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 2 points

8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and DeJario. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The penguins play an important role throughout the passage. The author uses them as means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and DeJario.

First, let's talk about DeJario. At the beginning of the passage, DeJario is caught playing with the penguins. He also claims that he can understand them. He seems to be childish when playing with the penguins, but shows Candace he knows what he is doing when he joins the huddle.

Next, let's talk about Candace. She is more serious than DeJario and thinks he is acting like a child when treating the animals like pets. She also doesn't believe he can understand the penguins and makes fun of him for it. Later on in the story, she realizes she is wrong when he easily joins the penguin huddle.

The penguins help find characteristics of both Candace and DeJario throughout the passage. Without the penguins, it would be difficult to find each character's personality.

This response inconsistently addresses the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure is functional, but also somewhat weak—especially the organization of ideas within the body paragraphs of the response. The introduction simply restates the task (*The penguins play an important role throughout the passage. The author uses them as means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and DeJario*) in a weak attempt at providing a controlling idea. In the first body paragraph, the student provides two weak, character-based inferences to describe DeJario (*He seems to be childish; shows Candace he knows what he is doing*) that are drawn from vague text references (*when playing with the penguins; when he joins the huddle*). The vague text and supporting inferences lack the analytic precision needed to clearly show how the penguins reveal DeJario's characteristics. In the second body paragraph, the student provides two weak inferences describing Candace's characteristics (*She is more serious than DeJario; she realizes she is wrong*) that are drawn from vague text references (*thinks he is acting like a child when treating the animals like pets; he easily joins the penguin huddle*). The weak conclusion again restates the prompt and adds a general assertion (*Without the penguins, it would be difficult to find each character's personality*) that is not supported in the response. Transition use (*First, At the beginning, Next*) is inconsistent; paragraphs are appropriately linked, but this is not the case for all the ideas within each paragraph. The few errors do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage *The Penguin Whisperer*, Guy Stewart explains how penguins reveal characteristics from both Candace and Dajario. The penguins have an effect on the two's different qualities.

To begin, Candace and Dajario Joke around a lot. The author writes, "You were trying to be the penguin whisperer again." This explains that the two joke around with each other and have fun. Another example is, "Yeah, sure. He's only the lead veterinary researcher." This is Candace being sarcastic with Dejario to have some excitement. Dejario is very intelligent when it comes to the penguins.

"Jamming! The massing penguins modulate metabolic heat loss by dispersing through the huddle in coordinated periodic waves."

This reveals that Dejario is very smart when talking about the penguins.

Candace and Dejario exhibit many different characteristics from the penguins. This reveals that they are very intelligent and fun kids.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The introduction restates the task and adds a weak controlling idea (*The penguins have an effect on the two's different qualities*). In the body paragraph, the student provides a weak inference (*Candace and Dajario Joke around a lot*) drawn from a quote ("*You were trying to be the penguin whisperer again*") in a weak attempt at showing how the author uses the penguins to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejario. Another weak inference (*Candace [is] being sarcastic*) is also drawn from a quote ("*Yeah, sure. He's only the lead veterinary researcher*") in another weak attempt at showing how the author's use of penguins reveals Candace's and Dejario's characteristics. A third inference (*Dejario is very intelligent when it comes to the penguins*) is drawn from a somewhat disconnected text reference ("*Jamming! The massing penguins modulate metabolic heat loss by dispersing through the huddle in coordinated periodic waves*") in a weak attempt at analyzing Dejario's intelligence. The conclusion moves somewhat beyond a literal interpretation of the text by means of an unsupported inference (*This reveals that they are very intelligent and fun kids*) but does not further clarify the ideas addressed in the body paragraph. Simple transitions inconsistently link ideas (*To begin, Another example*). The few errors present do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and DeJario. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Candace and DeJario like penguins and they research them. Candaces really admiration of penguins despite others criticism she goes from dismissing DeJario's penguin philosphy to believing in its potential and DeJario she is able to solve problems and she didn't really like penguins as much as Candace did but started to start liking the penguin at the end now Candace and DeJario is really is good freands' and they both like penguin's.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure is minimal, and the student's ideas are presented haphazardly. The student provides a minimal focusing idea (*Candace and DeJario like penguins*); however, it does not indicate how the author uses penguins to reveal Candace's and DeJario's characteristics. The rest of the response consists of minimal, unsupported inferences (*she goes from dismissing DeJario's penguin philosphy to believing in its potential and DeJario she is able to solve problems; she didn't really like penguins as much as Candace did but started . . . liking the penguin at the end; Candace and DeJario is really is good freands'*). There is insufficient reference to the text as well as some confusion surrounding the characters and the plot. There is minimal evidence of a conclusion. Transition use is minimal (*and, now*). Errors are present in sentence formation, usage (*admiration* for admired, *is* for are, missing words), spelling (*philosphy, freands*), and punctuation and often interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 1 point

8. The penguins play an important role in the passage. Write an essay analyzing how the author uses the penguins as a means to reveal characteristics of both Candace and Dejarío. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The penguins play an important role in the passage. Because that's what there studying on in the story. I know this because in the story dejarío always around penguins and want to adapted to how they live and survied in harsh cold weather's. And in the story it tell's you how candace have's a love for penguin's now and since she was ten. so yes I think the penguins do have an important role in the story.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure. The student provides an organizing focus for the response (*The penguins play an important role in the passage*); however, the idea only minimally addresses the task. There is a lack of connection between the important role played by the penguins and how the author uses them to reveal characteristics of Candace and Dejarío. The response focuses on Dejarío's interactions with the penguins (*dejarío always around penguins*) and Candace's feelings towards the penguins (*candace have's a love for penguin's now and since she was ten*). A minimal conclusion reaffirms the student's original misinterpretation of the task (*so yes I think the penguins do have an important role in the story*). There is little use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary. Many errors are present in sentence formation (fragment), grammar, usage (incorrect or missing words), spelling (*studing, survied*), capitalization (random and missing), and punctuation (extra apostrophes, missing commas); errors present often 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 sentence.

The school counselor told me that I should, select elective classes that interest me, check to see whether the times for those classes conflict with the times for my required courses, discuss my choices with my parents, and then complete the schedule form provided by my homeroom teacher.

Which revision should be made to correct the punctuation error in the sentence?

- A. Remove the comma after should.
- B. Add a comma after conflict.
- C. Remove the comma after courses.
- D. Add a comma after form.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.5
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	82% (correct answer)
p-value B	5%
p-value C	5%
p-value D	8%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the revision that corrects the punctuation error in the given sentence. Option A is the correct answer; the comma after “should” needs to be removed since it is not needed. The only commas in this sentence that are needed are the ones that separate items in a series. Option B is incorrect; no comma needs to be added after “conflict.” Option C is incorrect; the comma after “courses” needs to remain since it separates items in a series. Option D is incorrect; no comma after “form” is needed.

10. Read the sentence.

Once the microscopes and slides had been placed on the tables, the students could continue the experiment.

Choose the correct way to rewrite the sentence using only active voice.

- A. Once the microscopes and slides had been placed on the tables, the experiment could be continued.
- B. The students continued the experiment once they had placed the microscopes and slides on the tables.
- C. The students could continue the experiment once the microscopes and slides had been placed on the tables.
- D. Once the microscopes and slides had been placed on the tables by the students, they could continue the experiment.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.2
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	12%
p-value B	40% (correct answer)
p-value C	35%
p-value D	13%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to choose the correct way to write a given sentence using only the active voice. Option B is the correct answer since both verbs are written in the active voice. Option A is incorrect since both verbs are written in the passive voice. Option C is incorrect; although the first verb is written in the active voice, the second verb is written in the passive voice. Option D is incorrect; although the second verb is written in the active voice, the first verb is written in the passive voice.

11. Read the paragraph.

(1) The Student Art Society was invited to help host an art exhibit at a local gallery. (2) The members of our organization helped to hang the artwork. (3) The gallery owner supervised our work very closely. (4) She was understandably a little nervous. (5) When we finished, the gallery owner praised us for our careful and helpful work. (6) Later, we worked in pairs to learn as much as possible about each piece of artwork so that we could answer questions for visitors. (7) Having played a role in preparing and hosting the show, we were very satisfied to see the crowd of patrons enjoying the event.

Choose the **best** way to revise sentences 2, 3, and 4 to improve meaning in the paragraph.

- A. The members of our organization helped to hang the artwork as the gallery owner, understandably a little nervous, closely supervised our work.
- B. The gallery owner supervised our work very closely, the members of our organization helping to hang the artwork and her being a little nervous.
- C. The members of our organization helped to hang the artwork, while the gallery owner supervised our work very closely though she was nervous.
- D. The gallery owner supervised our work very closely, she was understandably a little nervous, and the members of our organization helped to hang the artwork.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.3
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	48% (correct answer)
p-value B	7%
p-value C	32%
p-value D	13%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the best way to revise sentences 2, 3, and 4 to improve meaning in the given paragraph. Option A is the correct answer since this sentence best clarifies the meaning of the original sentences. Options B, C, and D are incorrect since they are awkward and do not clearly express the meaning of the original sentences.

12. Read the sentences from a story.

Holding her binoculars with both hands, Jennifer stepped lightly on the winding path, searching the treetops for her favorite bird, the cardinal. A rustling sound from somewhere in the forest caught her attention. She stopped, crouched down, and silently scanned the forest. In the distance, she spotted two red squirrels going everywhere. Amused by the sight, Jennifer slowly rose and continued down the path in search of a cardinal.

Which revision of the underlined words **best** describes the squirrels and maintains the style of the paragraph?

- A. moving rapidly from tree to tree
- B. running happily through the forest
- C. scurrying playfully from branch to branch
- D. proceeding quickly through the trees in the forest

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.6
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	32%
p-value B	17%
p-value C	36% (correct answer)
p-value D	15%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the revision of the given underlined words that best describes the squirrels and maintains the style of the paragraph. Option C is the correct answer since it has the most descriptive language and best maintains the lighthearted tone of the paragraph. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since they are not as descriptive and do not reflect the cheerful and carefree tone of 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	A-K.1.1.1	D	2	9%	10%	6%	75%
2	A-V.4.1.1	A	2	60%	12%	15%	13%
3	A-C.2.1.3	A	2	74%	11%	8%	7%
4	A-K.1.1.3	Part One: B Part Two: C	3	Mean Score: 1.43			
5	A-C.2.1.1	C	2	38%	11%	43%	8%
6	A-K.1.1.3	B	2	8%	75%	8%	9%
7	A-K.1.1.2	D	3	6%	11%	20%	63%
9	D.1.2.5	A	2	82%	5%	5%	8%
10	D.1.1.2	B	2	12%	40%	35%	13%
11	D.2.1.3	A	2	48%	7%	32%	13%
12	D.2.1.6	C	2	32%	17%	36%	15%

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
8	A-C.2.1.1	4	3	1.97



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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