

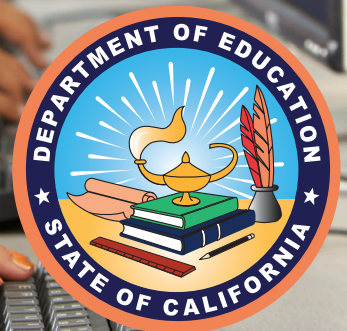


California Assessment of  
Student Performance and Progress

Grades  
6•7•8

# Parent Guide to the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments

## *Overview and Sample Questions*



California Department of Education



### **Acknowledgments**

The Parent Guide to the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments was developed by Sally Bennett-Schmidt of the San Joaquin County Office of Education and California Department of Education staff, with support from the California State PTA and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. It was designed and prepared for printing by San Joaquin County Office of Education.

© 2015 by the California Department of Education

### **Copyright Restrictions**

Permission is granted in advance for reproduction of this resource, in its entirety, for the explicit use by parents, students, and educators to better understand student performance on the Smarter Balanced assessments. For any other purpose (including commercial enterprises), this resource, or portions thereof, may not be reproduced without permission from the California Department of Education and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. To obtain permission to reproduce the information (text or graphics) contained in this document, submit the specifics of your request in writing to the Copyright Program Office, Communications Division, California Department of Education, 1430 N Street, Suite 5602, Sacramento, CA 95814. Fax: 916-319-0100.

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>How the Online Smarter Balanced Assessments Are Different from Previous California Tests</b> .....	2
Accessibility Supports and Accommodations .....	2
Item and Task Types .....	3
<b>How Student Performance Is Reported on the Smarter Balanced Assessments</b> .....	4
Overall Score and Achievement Level .....	4
Area Performance .....	4
How Reports Are Used.....	5
<b>Student Performance in English Language Arts/Literacy</b> .....	6
English Language Arts/Literacy Areas (Claims) .....	6
Grade Six English Language Arts/Literacy.....	7
Grade Six Sample Test Items for English Language Arts/Literacy.....	8
Grade Seven English Language Arts/Literacy .....	17
Grade Seven Sample Test Items for English Language Arts/Literacy.....	17
Grade Eight English Language Arts/Literacy .....	25
Grade Eight Sample Test Items for English Language Arts/Literacy.....	25
<b>Student Performance in Mathematics</b> .....	35
Mathematics Areas (Claims) .....	35
Grade Six Mathematics.....	35
Grade Six Sample Test Items for Mathematics .....	36
Grade Seven Mathematics.....	39
Grade Seven Sample Test Items for Mathematics.....	39
Grade Eight Mathematics.....	43
Grade Eight Sample Test Items for Mathematics.....	43
<b>Glossary</b> .....	43
<b>Appendixes</b>	
Appendix A: Other Assessments in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress System.....	52
Appendix B: Additional Resources for Parents/Guardians.....	53
Appendix C: Scoring Rubric and Sample Responses (Constructed Response) .....	55

**This page intentionally left blank.**

## Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide information about the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments, including sample test items for English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics. This information will help parents better understand their children's test results. The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System, which replaces the previous Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program.

Every spring, students in grades three through eight and grade eleven take the **Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments** for ELA and mathematics. Results from these assessments are just one piece of information to help teachers, parents/guardians, and students understand how well a student is meeting the grade-level standards.

The Smarter Balanced System includes additional resources to improve teaching and learning. These resources include formative assessment tools and interim assessments. **Formative assessment** is a process that teachers use every day to check on student understanding. It includes a variety of informal and formal strategies to help both teachers and students assess what students are learning. This information can then be used by both teachers and students to decide what they must do next or differently to help students learn the material they have not learned.

From time to time, teachers may also give tests to check how well students have learned the material they have been taught **over a period of time** and what may need to be reviewed or retaught. These types of tests, called **interim assessments**, may be given at the end of a few days (such as a mathematics quiz or a spelling test), after a unit of instruction (such as a chapter test or unit writing assignment), or after a few weeks (such as a quarterly test). More information about the Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments is available on the CDE's Interim Assessments Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/sbacinterimassess.asp>.

A glossary of important terms used in this handbook is provided at the end.

Information on other assessments in the CAASPP System, as well links to important resources and sample responses to a constructed response item, are provided in the appendixes of this guide.

## How the Online Smarter Balanced Assessments Are Different from Previous California Tests

The new Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments are very different from the old STAR tests in several ways:

- They are aligned with California’s new content standards for ELA and mathematics.
- They reflect the critical thinking and problem solving skills that students will need to be ready for college and the 21st century job market.
- They are taken on a computer and are adaptive, which means that during the test, the questions will become more or less difficult on the basis of how the student performs. If the student answers a question correctly, the next question may be a bit more challenging; if the student answers it incorrectly, the next question may be less difficult.
- They provide many more supports for students who need them, including students learning English and students with disabilities, as described in the section below.

### Accessibility Supports and Accommodations

The computer-based Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments provide all students with greater flexibility than traditional pencil-paper tests. For example, students can increase the size of an image using the “Zoom In” option or highlight key words as they read a passage. Additional accessibility supports also are available for English learners and students with individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans. For example, some students may access translations or American sign language.

For more information, please see the CDE Student Assessment Accessibility Supports 2014–15 Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/sass1415.asp>.

## Item and Task Types

The Smarter Balanced assessment system includes a variety of item types, including:

- Selected-response items, which prompt students to choose one or more answers.
- Technology-enhanced items, which might prompt students to edit text or draw an object.
- Constructed-response items, which prompt students to write a short written or numerical response.
- Performance tasks, in which students engage in a complex set of tasks to demonstrate their understanding. (Students may be asked to conduct research and then write an argumentative essay, using sources as evidence. Or they may be asked to solve a complex problem in mathematics. Performance tasks integrate knowledge and skills across many areas and standards.)

Parents can take the Practice Test to see the different types of questions that students will be given on the Smarter Balanced Assessments. The Practice Test is posted on the Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/practice-test/>.

## How Student Performance Is Reported on the Smarter Balanced Assessments

Student performance is reported in several ways, as explained below.

### Overall Score and Achievement Level

For each grade level and subject area, students receive a score from approximately 2000 to 3000. The overall score falls into one of four achievement levels:

- **Standard Exceeded:** The student has exceeded the achievement standard and demonstrates advanced progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.
- **Standard Met:** The student has met the achievement standard and demonstrates progress toward mastery of the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.
- **Standard Nearly Met:** The student has nearly met the achievement standard and may require further development to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.
- **Standard Not Met:** The student has not met the achievement standard and needs substantial improvement to demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed for likely success in future coursework.

See the CDE's Smarter Balanced Scale Score Ranges Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/sbscalerange.asp>.

### Area Achievement

The test reports show how a student performed in key areas, also called **claims**, in ELA and mathematics.

- **ELA Areas:** Reading, Writing, Listening, and Research/Inquiry
- **Mathematics Areas:** Problem Solving & Modeling/Data Analysis, Concepts & Procedures, and Communicating Reasoning



For each area, a student’s performance is represented as “**Above Standard**,” “**At or Near Standard**,” or “**Below Standard**.”

A sample student score report is provided on the CDE’s CAASPP Individual Score Reports Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/caaspp15rpttalkpts.asp>.

The CDE video *Understanding Your Child’s Score Report* is posted on the Youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQi4qI0Crnk>. This video describes and explains the 2015 CAASPP Student Score Report. A Spanish version of the video is available on this site.

Although the results of the state tests are important, they are just one way to assess the progress of students. Students and parents should review the test results in combination with report cards, class assignment grades, and teacher feedback.





### How Reports are Used

Results from the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments provide one piece of information about a student’s academic performance that can:

- Help facilitate conversations between parents/guardians and teachers about student performance.
- Serve as a tool to help parents/guardians and teachers work together to improve student learning.
- Help schools and school districts identify strengths and areas that need improvement in their educational programs.
- Provide the public and policymakers with information about student achievement.

## Student Performance in English Language Arts/Literacy

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA are organized by four areas, or claims.

ELA Areas (Claims) For Grades Six, Seven, and Eight		
	<b>Reading</b>	Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts
	<b>Writing</b>	Producing clear and purposeful writing
	<b>Listening</b>	Demonstrating effective communication skills
	<b>Research/Inquiry</b>	Investigating, analyzing and presenting information

For more information, see the Smarter Balanced Assessments Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/>.

## Grade Six ELA

In grade six, students **read a range of challenging books, articles, and texts**, and are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the material by answering questions and contributing to class discussions. In writing, students continue to work on their use of **language, sentence structure, and organization of ideas**. They are also expected to **integrate information from different sources** and respond to challenging content through **written interpretation and analysis**.

For more information, see the *Parent Roadmap—Supporting Your Child in Grade Six, English Language Arts*, which is posted on the Council of the Great City Schools Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceId=416&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=722&PageID=330>.

A Spanish version of the publication is available on the same Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceId=427&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=784&PageID=365>.

## Grade Six Sample Test Items for ELA

This section provides sample ELA test items for grade six.

### Notes About Sample Test Items

The test items that students see online appear and function differently than the sample items shown in this document. For example, students may be asked to “drag,” “select,” or “click” their response. Parents can experience these different functionalities on the Training Test available on the CAASPP’s Smarter Balanced Practice and Training Tests Web page at <http://www.caaspp.org/practice-and-training/index.html>.

The sample test items presented in this guide represent the kinds of passages and questions that grade six students at different levels of achievement would likely answer correctly. For example, a student at the “Standard Met” achievement level would typically receive and correctly answer an item associated with that achievement level.

Please note that these sample items represent only a few of the standards that are assessed on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for ELA. (An online version of the sample items is in development.)

For each sample test item, the following information is included:

- ELA area for the item
- ELA state standard(s) that the item measures
- Correct answer(s)

## Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met

Read the text and answer the questions. (Note: This text will be used for the next two questions.)

#### An Elephant's "aha!" Moment

Kandula is a young Asian elephant that lives at the Smithsonian's National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C. He's a clever pachyderm. Scientists recently watched Kandula solve a problem in a way never before seen in elephants.

This test may have looked unusual. Scientists attached pieces of fruit to a branch and then hung the branch out of reach of the elephant's trunk. Unlike other elephants, this didn't stop Kandula: He used his trunk to roll a plastic box so that it sat underneath the branch. He then stood on the box, lifted his trunk and easily pulled down the branch. And ate the treat.

Elephants are smart. They have magnificent memories, they recognize themselves in mirrors and they can use simple tools. Until recently, scientists didn't know if the giant animals also could come up with a solution to a problem on the spot, called using insight. You use insight when you study a difficult puzzle for a while, leave to do something else and then suddenly see a solution. Insight is the ability to solve a problem in a flash.

"It's the lightbulb going on," said Preston Foerder, a comparative psychologist at the City University of New York. Comparative psychologists study animal behavior to understand how they think.

In previous tests, elephants haven't shown evidence of insight. Foerder was part of a team of scientists who went looking for elephant insight anyway. He designed tricky problems for Kandula and two other elephants at the zoo in Washington.

These elephants usually live in tropical forests, and Foerder told Science News that they regularly solve problems in their lives. The challenge for scientists was distinguishing whether the animals complete tasks by trial and error, by watching other animals or by quickly realizing the solution on their own (insight). The only way to know was to present an elephant with a problem and watch.

**Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading**  
**Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met (continued)**

“If you’re not there for the first time they do it, you don’t know if it was insight,” Foerder told Science News.

To probe how elephants solve problems, the researcher and his colleagues tested Kandula and two other National Zoo elephants — Kandula’s mother, 33, and a 61-year-old elephant neighbor — in a series of experiments.

First, the scientists placed trays of fruit outside the animals’ enclosure. The food was just out of reach. They also placed some sticks nearby. The elephants tried but failed to get the treat; they never used the sticks to draw the food closer.

They did use the sticks in other ways. “They would beat the wall, they would beat the floor, they would beat their toys,” Foerder told Science News.

Next, the experiment moved outside. The scientists hung bamboo branches decorated with fruit high overhead. They also provided the elephants with sticks and a plastic box that could serve as a stepping stool. After six tries, Kandula wasn’t able to get the food (though he did reach for it). In the seventh try, Kandula seemed to have been struck by the right idea and used insight to solve the puzzle. Foerder explained that in one smooth motion, the clever elephant rolled the box directly to the branch and stood on the box to get the food. The other elephants didn’t make the same connection.

Diana Reiss, a psychologist who tries to understand how animals think, also worked on the study. Reiss, who teaches psychology at Hunter College in New York, told Science News that maybe it’s time to think differently about how elephants solve problems. Perhaps their brains do allow them to make easy connections among bits of information.

On the other hand, some scientists say elephants’ brains have different strengths. Benjamin Hart is a veterinary science professor at the University of California, Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. He has studied elephant behavior and he told Science News that elephants’ brains are built for long-lasting memory and social skills, but not so much for connecting the dots among different pieces of information.

“An Elephant’s “aha!” Moment” by Stephen Ornes, from *Science News for Kids*. © 2011 by Science News. Reprinted by permission of Science News.

**Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading**  
**Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met (continued)**

First, read the dictionary definition. Then, complete the task.

(v.) **1.** to search into or examine thoroughly; question closely

Click on the word in the sentence that **most closely** matches the definition provided.

To probe how elephants solve problems, the researcher and his colleagues tested Kandula and two other National Zoo elephants—Kandula’s mother, 33, and a 61-year-old elephant neighbor—in a series of experiments.

First, the scientists placed trays of fruit outside the animals’ enclosure. The food was just out of reach. They also placed some sticks nearby. The elephants tried but failed to get the treat; they never used the sticks to draw the food closer.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Reading</b> Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts
<b>Standard(s)</b>	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
<b>Answer</b>	probe

## Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

This question is based on the passage, “An Elephant’s “aha!” Moment, printed above. The question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

#### Part A

What is **most likely** the author’s intent by mentioning that “the other elephants didn’t make the same connection” at the end of the third-to-last paragraph?

- A. to suggest that all elephants might not be smart
- B. to suggest that other elephants should not have been included in the experiment
- C. to persuade readers that further research on elephants would be a waste of time
- D. to emphasize that research has not proven that all elephants are able to solve problems using insight

#### Part B

Which sentence from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- A. “On the other hand, some scientists say elephants’ brains have different strengths.”
- B. “Scientists recently watched Kandula solve a problem in a way never before seen in elephants.”
- C. “In the seventh try, Kandula seemed to have been struck by the right idea and used insight to solve the puzzle.”
- D. “Reis, who teaches psychology at Hunter College in New York, told Science News that maybe it’s time to think differently about how elephants solve problems.”

#### Area

#### Reading

Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts

#### Standard(s)

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

#### Answer

Part A: Answer D  
Part B: Answer D

Note: Students must correctly answer both Part A and Part B in order to receive the point. There is no partial credit for answering just one part correctly.



## Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded

Read the text and answer the questions.

#### The Mouse of Amherst

It must have been Fate that steered me to choose Emily's bedroom for my own. My proximity gave me a chance to observe her closely. Whenever I heard her pattering footsteps coming up the stairs, I would retreat and wait for the hem of her white dress to brush past my doorway, stirring up a small cloud of dust. Peeking out, I would see her sit down at her desk, the look on her face one of utter concentration. Then she would pick up her pen and begin scribbling madly. *Scratch, scratch, scratch* went the pen for what seemed a small eternity. Usually after a half hour or so, Emily would put down the pen with a look of supreme satisfaction, as if she had just created a magnificent cheese soufflé.

At all times of the day and night, the same thing happened. What on earth was she writing? A diary? Letters? If so, why didn't she mail them? Instead, when she was finished, she always gathered up the loose sheets, stacked them neatly in a box, put the box in the drawer of her writing table, and shut the drawer firmly. This went on for several weeks and I despaired of ever solving the mystery of Emily Dickinson.

Not everyone in the Dickinson household took so warm an interest in Emily's scribbling as I did. The burdens of housekeeping seemed to fall most heavily upon Lavinia, and sometimes she was cross. One warm sunny day she interrupted Emily at her writing table, placed her hands upon her hips, and cried aloud:

"Sister, you are lost to the world. Why, a mouse might run across your hand while you are scrawling and you would take no notice of it."

Behind the wainscot, my whiskers pricked. It seemed certain that my presence was suspected. But Lavinia soon enough went off, and Emily was again bent over her desk, scribbling away, a small blizzard of paper around her. All the windows in the room were open, the filmy white curtains rising and falling in the gentle breeze. Suddenly an unexpected gust of wind blew sharply across the room, scattering half-sheets everywhere. A small scrap

**Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading**  
**Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)**

landed near my doorway. I made up my mind that I *had* to see what was written on it, even if I perished as a result of my curiosity.

I dashed out, snatched up the scrap, and ran back into my room. Finally I would know what preoccupied Emily to such a great degree. For a minute I had trouble reading Emily's peculiar, slanting handwriting. Then the words fell into place, and I felt my face turn crimson, as if I were reading someone's private diary:

*If I can stop one Heart from breaking  
I shall not live in vain  
If I can ease one Life the Aching  
Or cool one Pain*

*Or help one fainting Robin  
Unto his Nest again  
I shall not live in Vain*

Imagine my surprise when I realized I was holding a poem! The words *spoke* to me. These were my feelings exactly, but ones I had always kept hidden for fear the world would think me a sentimental fool. I felt giddy and inspired, as if a whirligig were spinning in my brain. Almost without thinking I sat down at my table, picked up my quill pen, and began writing on the back of Emily's poem. Words poured out of me in a torrent:

*I am a Little Thing,  
I wear a Little Dress.  
I go about my Days and Nights  
Taking little barefoot Steps.*

*But though You never notice me  
Nor count me as your Guest,  
My Soul can soar as High as yours  
And Hope burns in my chest!*

**Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading**  
**Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)**

My hand trembled and my heart beat rapidly as I read what I had just written. Was it possible that *I* was a poet? I scarcely dared to believe it. And yet I had just written something that expressed my deepest feelings. From what secret place had my words come?

That evening, while Emily was downstairs, I copied my poem into my notebook, making a few small improvements, and returned Emily's poem to her desk. Would she notice *my* poem on the back of hers? Would she be able to read my minuscule script?

Excerpt from *The Mouse of Amherst* by Elizabeth Spires. Copyright © 1999 by Frances Foster Books Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

### Grade Six Sample Test Item—Reading Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)

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

#### Part A

Click on the statement that best describes how reading Emily's poem affects the mouse's viewpoint.

It makes the mouse suddenly want to read poetry by many different authors.

It makes the mouse feel guilty for looking through Emily's private writings and work.

It makes the mouse eager to tell others about the lovely poetry he has just discovered.

It makes the mouse wonder whether he could express himself with words as Emily does.

#### Part B

Click on all of the sentences from the text that best support your answer in part A.

I made up my mind that I had to see what was written on it, even if I perished as a result of my curiosity.

Finally I would know what preoccupied Emily to such a great degree.

Then the words fell into place, and I felt my face turn crimson, as if I were reading someone's private diary.

Almost without thinking I sat down at my table, picked up my quill pen, and began writing on the back of Emily's poem.

Was it possible that I was a poet?

Would she be able to read my minuscule script?

#### Area

#### Reading

Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts

#### Standard(s)

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

#### Answer

Part A: It makes the mouse wonder whether he could express himself with words as Emily does.

Part B: Almost without thinking I sat down at my table, picked up my quill pen, and began writing on the back of Emily's poem; Was it possible that I was a poet?

## Grade Seven ELA

In grade seven, students continue to develop the ability to **cite relevant evidence** when interpreting or analyzing a text or supporting their points in speaking and writing. They also **build academic vocabulary** as they read **more complex texts**, including stories, plays, historical novels, poems, and informational books and articles. Students **construct short research projects**, and also write a range of well-developed and organized **stories, essays, reports, and persuasive papers**.

For more information, please see the *Parent Roadmap—Supporting Your Child in Grade Seven, English Language arts*, which is posted on the Council of the Great City Schools Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=416&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=723&PageID=330>.

A Spanish version of the publication is available on the same Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=427&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=785&PageID=365>.

### Grade Seven Sample Test Items for ELA

The sample test items below represent the kinds of passages and questions that grade seven students at different levels of achievement would likely answer correctly. For example, a student at the “Standard Nearly Met” achievement level would typically receive and correctly answer an item associated with that achievement level.

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

#### Living off the Land

Iowa Scouts find that most of what they need to survive is already there in the environment around them.

There are all kinds of things we humans think we need, but when it really comes down to it, there are only three things we can't live without: food/water, shelter and clothing.

With clothing, you pretty much just have to be prepared to buy your own. (While some particularly clever folks might be able to produce a nice sweater from the pelt of a wild animal, that's a skill that goes well beyond the knowledge of the average Boy Scout.)

But the others—food and shelter—are easy enough to find in the natural world around you, with a little help from a trusted adult trained for such scenarios.

Troop 500 from Cedar Falls, Iowa, spent one weekend last year living off the land—foraging for food and constructing shelters with only the most basic materials available to them.

#### Taking Shelter

The Scouts of Troop 500 hiked to a plot of private land in northeast Iowa with only a few critical supplies on hand. Since this wasn't a true wilderness-survival situation, they wanted to be prepared for any real-life emergency that might arise.

First priority: shelter. Even though they had brought some tents, the guys tested themselves by constructing emergency shelters with only tarp and rope.

"We managed to build a shelter between a couple of trees, and it worked out great," says Eagle Scout Brendan Alexander. "It stayed up the entire weekend."

The boys learned that finding shelter has to be a priority in a survival situation. "Shelter is really important," says Eagle Scout Conner Calhoun. "You might have to be creative."

**Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading  
Achievement Level: Standard Met (continued)****Fast Food**

With a place to protect them from the elements, the Scouts' next priority was finding something to eat. The area was ripe with edible plants, and the boys caught—and ate—plenty of fish from a nearby pond.

“We followed a little path out into the woods, and there were just bushes and bushes of blackberries,” Brendan says.

With a little bit of ingenuity and a whole lot of hard work, the Scouts were able to survive and thrive during their weekend living off the land.

Though they brought little food with them, they found plenty to eat. And the shelters worked out fine, though swarms of mosquitoes made some areas nearly uninhabitable.

“You have to be willing to take some time to get your food and set up your shelter,” Conner says. “You have to be patient. And you just have to make it work.” Just remember to buy your clothes in advance.

**What's Edible?**

Eating wild plants is a very serious—and potentially dangerous—undertaking. We absolutely do not recommend that you go out and start eating random plants without an adult on hand who's an expert on vegetation in the area in which you're exploring.

Troop 500 did have such an expert nearby when it went camping in Iowa last year. Here are some of the edible plants the guys found and eventually ate. (Make sure that any plants you do eat have not been treated with herbicide.)

**Asparagus:** The young plants are edible and quite tasty; as it grows it gets much tougher. At restaurants, asparagus is usually served cooked, but it's safe to eat it raw as well.

**Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading**  
**Achievement Level: Standard Met (continued)**

**Purple Clover:** It's quite possible that your yard has some clover growing in it right now. (Your parents probably call it a weed.) Though not the tastiest plant, the leaves and flowers are edible. (BTW, you can eat dandelion leaves, too. But don't try it without an expert on hand!)

**Daylily:** Be careful—not all lilies are edible. But the flowers and stalks of the common daylily certainly are, and they don't taste half bad.

**Blackberry:** One of the most common berries in this country, blackberries taste better wild than they do from the grocery store. Again, be careful: Not all berries are edible.

**Gooseberry:** They grow on bushes and look more like grapes than berries, but they taste great.

**Miner's Lettuce:** It doesn't look much like the lettuce you get in salads these days, but it's called miner's lettuce because it was popular among miners during the California Gold Rush in the 1800s. Tastes like spinach. (We'll let you decide if that's a good thing.)

**Black Raspberry:** You'd have to be really lucky to come across these at random in the wild—they're ripe for only a few weeks, usually in July. But if you do come across some fresh black raspberries, you're in for a treat. They taste great, and they're really healthy, too.

From "Living off the Land" by Aaron Derr, from *Boys' Life* Magazine. Copyright 2013 by Boy Scouts of America. Reprinted by permission of Boy Scouts of America.



**Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading  
Achievement Level: Standard Met (continued)**

Click the **two** sentences that **best** support the conclusion that the Scouts in Troop 500 did not make their own clothing on the trip.

Iowa Scouts find that most of what they need to survive is already there in the environment around them.

There are all kinds of things we humans think we need, but when it really comes down to it, there are only three things we can't live without: food/water, shelter and clothing.

With clothing, you pretty much just have to be prepared to buy your own. (While some particularly clever folks might be able to produce a nice sweater from the pelt of a wild animal, that's a skill that goes well beyond the knowledge of the average Boy Scout.)

But the others—food and shelter—are easy enough to find in the natural world around you, with a little help from a trusted adult trained for such scenarios.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Reading</b> Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts
<b>Standard(s)</b>	Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
<b>Answer</b>	With clothing, you pretty much just have to be prepared to buy your own. (While some particularly clever folks might be able to produce a nice sweater from the pelt of a wild animal, that's a skill that goes well beyond the knowledge of the average Boy Scout.)

Grade Seven

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded

#### Stone Doctors

Have you ever wondered how an ancient stone statue or monument can survive thousands of years buried in the earth or under the ocean? The answer may surprise you—the long time spent underground or underwater can actually help preserve it. The environment surrounding a buried artifact or monument that has had no exposure to oxygen, sunlight, wind, and rain for many years becomes balanced and experiences little change. It is as if the artifact's life clock has stopped and it is in a long, peaceful sleep.

But remove a “peacefully sleeping” artifact or monument from that environment and expose it to the sun, rain, heat, frost, and/or wind, then its life clock starts ticking again.

The goal of the archaeologist, when excavating, is to harm each find as little as possible. So archaeologists work hard, not only to discover artifacts, but also to preserve what they uncover. To keep a monument's life clock going after so many hidden centuries, archaeologists work with conservators. Like an artifact doctor, conservators examine, record, treat, and design special storage units for excavated artifacts.

#### Mud As Glue

When you excavate a site, you find many artifacts made of stone, metal, wood, bone, and ceramics. While only a few artifacts are found in perfect condition, all are found dirty. Most are also broken, stained, and scratched. One exceptionally well-preserved find is the statue of Queen Tiye found at Mut Temple in 2006. Carved of very hard stone, it was little affected by its burial environment.

Archaeologists excavating the Isheru area during the 2008 season found many decorated stone fragments covered with thick mud. Even though the lake was emptied of its water, the lakebed is still very muddy. So, while it was tempting to clean off the mud and peek at the decoration on the surface, the archaeologists brought them to a conservator first for a thorough cleaning with gentle tools. Without this careful examination, artifacts may lose important original materials such as beautiful paint. Once these are removed, gone is the story behind the original use of the artifact. Sometimes, all that holds a piece of pottery together is a layer of mud. If you try to “clean” off the mud, the artifact will quickly fall apart into dozens of pieces.

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)

#### Salt Contaminates

Sometimes, recovered artifacts are contaminated with chemicals that cause damage. For example, at the Isheru site, the artifacts were not only wet and muddy, but they also were contaminated with salts. The salts found in underground water can penetrate deep inside an artifact. When the artifact is excavated, it dries, and the salts change their form from liquid to crystal. You have probably seen this process yourself.

Imagine dropping a tablespoon of salt in a glass of water and then letting the water evaporate. After the water is gone, you will see the salt you added at the bottom of the glass. In this process, the salt has changed from a crystal to a liquid, and then back again to a crystal. Because salts swell when they dry, salts in crystal form are actually much larger than those in liquid form. If this crystallization happens too quickly, it can cause cracking inside the artifact and may eventually break it completely to pieces. To counter-act this effect, conservators often remove salts by soaking artifacts in clean water.

While excavating the lakebed, archaeologists found a stone torso of Ramesses II. The surface was completely covered with years of accumulated hard mineral crust. Unlike the salts described above, these minerals were so hard that they could not be removed by soaking in clean water. Rather, a conservator removed the crust, inch by inch, by carefully chipping it off with tiny tools. Once the work was done, we could finally see the beautiful, red granite body.

#### Back to ‘Sleep’!

You might be surprised to learn that at the end of each season in Mut Temple, after all finds have been recorded, we bury them again! So, you can say that after we woke them from a long sleep, we let them go back to sleep.

From “Stone Doctors” by Kariya Hiroko, from *Dig* magazine. Copyright 2009 by Carus Publishing. Reprinted by permission of Carus Publishing.

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)

The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

#### Part A

Which statement **best** summarizes the central ideas of the text?

- A. Archaeologists dig into the earth to find artifacts as proof of ancient civilizations, and conservators clean and replace the artifacts that are uncovered.
- B. Archaeologists work to find and carefully remove artifacts of ancient peoples, and conservators work to clean and preserve the artifacts that are excavated.
- C. Archaeologists dig in the earth to uncover artifacts of ancient peoples, and conservators work to reverse and repair any damage done to the artifacts that are found.
- D. Archaeologists work to find and preserve artifacts to understand ancient civilizations, and conservators work to help them understand the artifacts that are unearthed.

#### Part B

Which sentence from the text **best** supports your answer in part A?

- A. “To keep a monument’s life clock going after so many hidden centuries, archaeologists work with conservators.”
- B. “While only a few artifacts are found in perfect condition, all are found dirty.”
- C. “Carved of very hard stone, it was little affected by its burial environment.”
- D. “So, while it was tempting to clean off the mud and peek at the decoration on the surface, the archaeologists brought them to a conservator first for a thorough cleaning with gentle tools.”

<b>Area</b>	<b>Reading</b> Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts
<b>Standard(s)</b>	Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary.
<b>Answer</b>	Part A: Answer B Part B: Answer D

## Grade Eight ELA

In grade eight, students read **major works of fiction and nonfiction from all over the world and from different time periods**. They continue to learn how to understand what they read and **evaluate an author’s assumptions and claims**. They also conduct research that will require the **analysis of resources and accurate interpretation of literary and informational text**. In their writing, then **connect information and ideas** efficiently and effectively.

For more information, please see the *Parent Roadmap—Supporting Your Child in Grade Eight, English Language Arts*, which is posted on the Council of the Great City Schools Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=416&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=724&PageID=330>.

A Spanish version of the publication is available on the same Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=427&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=786&PageID=365>.

### Grade Eight Sample Test Items for ELA

The sample test items below represent the kinds of passages and questions that grade eight students at different levels of achievement would likely answer correctly. For example, a student at the “Standard Nearly Met” achievement level would typically receive and correctly answer an item associated with that achievement level.

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met

#### Marks the Spot!

It was official. Khufu had been crowned king of Egypt, and one of his first duties was to find a place to build his tomb. It would be his own special site, a new place that was away from the pyramids of the kings that had ruled before him.

Khufu had plans to build an enormous complex, one that would include smaller pyramids for his mother and his wives, and many tombs for the rest of his family and the members of his court. To do so, he needed a very large area. He also had to follow religious tradition and choose a site that lay on the west side of the Nile River, in the direction of the setting sun. According to the ancient Egyptians, the sun died every night in the west and was born again in the east the next morning. Therefore, it was customary to bury people on the west bank of the river so that they could travel with the sun god through the night and be reborn with him at dawn.

#### Exactly What Was Needed

For the Egyptians, the desert was the perfect cemetery. As it lay beyond the reaches of the Nile's floodwaters, the tombs and bodies remained safe and dry. The desert was also the best place to find stone to build tombs. Equally important was the fact that by using the desert, the Egyptians kept the fertile strip of land along the eastern bank of the Nile for farmland.

But why pick Giza? When choosing a site, Khufu had had to keep other requirements in mind as well. The pyramid had to be near the city of Memphis, Egypt's capital at the time and the center of his government. Memphis traced its origins to the beginning of Egyptian history. It had been founded by a king named Menes, who chose the area because it was at the point where Upper and Lower Egypt met.

As the meeting point for many trade routes, Memphis was filled with government offices, temples, and houses for the officials who ran the country. The city's chief deity was Ptah, the creator god. The Egyptians also honored Ptah as the patron of craftsmen—the people who made pottery, carved statues, and painted the pictures that covered the walls of tombs and temples.

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met (continued)

#### Near a God's City

The pyramid also needed to be near Heliopolis. Located on the east bank of the Nile, the city was sacred to the sun god Re, the most important deity in Egypt at the time. Re was worshipped in a temple at Heliopolis that was surrounded by statues and obelisks. Obelisks are tall pillars that are topped by small pyramids and acted as symbols of the sun. The Egyptians often covered the tops with gold so that they would reflect and shine in the sunlight. Egyptologists think that there might have been a special large obelisk in the temple at Heliopolis. Perhaps Khufu thought that his pyramid had to have a view of the temple and its obelisk.

Giza, however, was not the only site in the western desert that was near Memphis and had a view of Heliopolis. Khufu chose Giza because it had a large, flat plateau that was high above the floodplain and because there was a lot of good-quality building material in the area. Giza was also close enough to the Nile for Khufu's construction teams to transport additional building materials and supplies to the site by boat. Excavations offer evidence that workers dug a huge harbor at the foot of the Giza Plateau so that the imported goods could be brought as close as possible to the pyramid site.

#### A Family Affair

While his own tomb complex was being built, Khufu planned for the burials of his family and courtiers. Three small pyramids were erected to the east of his pyramid, perhaps for his mother and two of his wives. Two huge cemeteries were laid out like miniature towns to the east and west of Khufu's pyramid. Arranged in rows along narrow streets, the tombs were houses for the dead. Members of Khufu's immediate family were given tombs in the eastern cemetery. The western cemetery was mostly for courtiers.

The tombs in these cemeteries are solid rectangles with sides that slope inward. Egyptologists call them mastabas, because they look like benches (mastabas in Arabic) found outside traditional Egyptian homes. The mastabas were built of limestone, just as the pyramids were. The small rooms inside were decorated with images of the dead person in front of tables piled high with food. Relatives of the dead person came to these rooms to visit their loved ones, to say prayers for their souls, and to bring their spirits more food and drink. The bodies of the deceased were placed in huge stone coffins that were in rooms dug into the stone below the mastabas.

### Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met (continued)

Khufu ordered the construction of a great many tombs in these two cemeteries. Only after they were built did he assign them to specific people: Some were family members, others were courtiers and officials who had proved themselves worthy of a burial site near that of the king. Every person who was given a tomb then placed his or her name in the tomb chapel and chose the decorations. After Khufu died, the cemetery remained in use for hundreds of years.

“Marks the spot!” by Salima Ikram and Janice Kamrin. Copyright © 2012 by Carus Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of Carus Publishing Company.

This question is based on the text above, “Marks the Spot!”

What is the **most likely** reason the author included subheadings in the text?

- A. to decrease the time it takes to read the text
- B. to make clear the author’s purpose for writing the text
- C. to inform the reader what each section of the text is about
- D. to help the reader quickly determine the main idea of the text

Area

Reading

Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts

Standard(s)

Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

Answer

C



## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

Read the text and answer the questions.

#### The Deserted Road

by Sheila Burnford

There was a slight mist when John Longridge rose early the following morning. Downstairs he found the animals waiting patiently by the door for their early morning run. He let them out, then cooked and ate his solitary breakfast. He was out in the driveway, loading up his car when the dogs and cat returned from the fields. He fetched some biscuits for them and they lay by the wall of the house in the early sun, watching him. He threw the last item into the back of the car, then walked over and patted the heads of his audience, one by one.

“Be good,” he said. “Mrs. Oakes will be here soon. Good-bye, Luath,” he said to the Labrador, putting his hand under the young dog’s soft muzzle. The golden-brown eyes looked steadily into his, and then the dog did an unexpected thing: he lifted his right paw and placed it in the man’s hand. Longridge was curiously touched and affected by the trust it conveyed.

He looked at his watch and realized he was already late. He had no worries about leaving the animals alone outside, as they had never attempted to stray beyond the large garden and the adjacent fields; and they could return inside the house if they wished, for the kitchen door was the kind that closed slowly on a spring, and could be pushed open from the outside.

Longridge started the car and waved to them out of the window as he drove slowly down the drive, feeling rather foolish as he did so. “What do I expect them to do in return?” he asked himself with a smile. “Wave back? Or shout ‘Good-bye’? The trouble is I’ve lived too long alone with them and I’m becoming far too attached to them.”

Twenty minutes passed by and no move was made; then suddenly the young dog rose, stretched himself, and stood looking intently down the drive. He remained like this for several minutes, while the cat watched closely, then slowly the Labrador walked down the driveway and stood at the curve, looking back as though inviting the others to come. The old dog rose too, now, somewhat stiffly, and followed. Together they turned the corner, out of sight.

The cat remained utterly still for a full minute, blue eyes blazing in the dark mask. Then, with a curious hesitating run, he set off in pursuit. The dogs were waiting by the gate when he turned the corner, the old dog peering wistfully back, as though he hoped to see his friend Mrs. Oakes materialize with a juicy bone; but when the Labrador started up the road he followed. The cat still paused by the gate, one paw lifted

### Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading Achievement Level: Standard Met (continued)

delicately in the air—undecided, questioning, hesitant; until suddenly, some inner decision reached, he followed the dogs. Presently all three disappeared from sight down the dusty road, trotting briskly and with purpose.

About an hour later Mrs. Oakes walked up the driveway from her cottage, carrying a string bag with her working shoes and apron, and a little parcel of tidbits for the animals. Her placid, gentle face wore a rather disappointed look, because the dogs usually spied her long before she got to the house and would rush to greet her.

“I expect Mr. Longridge left them shut inside the house if he was leaving early,” she consoled herself. But when she pushed open the kitchen door and walked inside, everything seemed very silent and still. She stood at the foot of the stairs and called them, but there was no answering patter of running feet, only the steady tick-tock of the old clock in the hallway. She walked through the silent house and out into the front garden and stood there calling with a puzzled frown.

She washed and put away the few dishes, then took her cleaning materials into the sitting room. There her eye was caught by a sparkle on the floor by the desk, and she found the glass paperweight, and after that the remaining sheet of the note on the desk. She read it through to where it said: “I will be taking the dogs (and Tao too of course!) . . .,” then looked for the remainder. “That’s odd,” she thought, “now where would he take them? That cat must have knocked the paperweight off last night—the rest of the note must be somewhere in the room.”

She searched the room but it was not until later that she noticed the charred curl of paper in the hearth. She bent down and picked it up carefully, for it was obviously very brittle, but even then most of it crumbled away and she was left with a fragment which bore the initials J. R. L.

“He must mean he’s taking them all to Heron Lake with him. But why would he suddenly do that, after all the arrangements we made?”

While Mrs. Oakes was amazed that Longridge would take the animals on his vacation, it did not occur to her to be astonished that a cat should go along too, for she was aware that the cat loved the car and always went with the dogs when Longridge drove them anywhere or took them farther afield for walks.

Mrs. Oakes swept and dusted and talked to the house, locked it and returned home to her cottage. She would have been horrified if she had known the truth. Far from sitting sedately in the back of a car traveling north with John Longridge, as she so fondly visualized, the animals were by now many miles away on a deserted country road.

“The Deserted Road” by Sheila Burnford, from *The Incredible Journey*. Copyright © 1996 by Delacorte Press.

**Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading  
Achievement Level: Standard Met (continued)**

What inference can be made about the pets’ relationship with one another? Support your answer with details from the text.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Reading</b> Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts
<b>Standard(s)</b>	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
<b>Answer</b>	Constructed Response: Students write a short response, drawing an inference from the selection and supporting their answers with specific details from the text. A scoring rubric and sample responses for this item appear in <b>Appendix C</b> .

Grade Eight

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading

### Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded

Read the text and answer the questions.

#### Christopher Columbus

by Eva March Tappan

One man who was thinking most earnestly about India was named Christopher Columbus. He was born in Genoa and had been at sea most of his life since he was fourteen. He had read and studied and thought until he was convinced that the world was round and that the best way to reach China and Japan was not to make the wearisome overland journey through Asia, but to sail directly west across the Atlantic.

He had asked the city of Genoa to provide money for the expedition; and he had also asked the king of Portugal; but to no purpose. Finally he appealed to Ferdinand and Isabella, king and queen of Spain.

This was why, toward the end of the fifteenth century, a company of learned Spaniards met together at Salamanca to listen to the schemes of a simple, unknown Italian sailor. Columbus told them what he believed. Then they brought forward their objections. "A ship might possibly reach India in that way," said one gravely, "but she could never sail uphill and come home again." "If the world is round and people are on the opposite side, they must hang by their feet with their heads down," declared another scornfully.

Another objection was that such an expedition as Columbus proposed would be expensive. Moreover, he demanded the title of admiral of whatever lands he might discover and one tenth of all precious stones, gold, silver, spices, and other merchandise that should be found in these lands. This was not because he was greedy for money, but he had conceived the notion of winning the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem from the Turks and to do this would require an enormous fortune.

Columbus had formed a noble scheme, but there seemed small hope that it would be carried out by Spanish aid, for the Spaniards were waging an important war with the Moors, or Mohammedans. The Moors had a kingdom in the south of Spain containing a number of cities. In the capital, Granada, was the palace and fortress of the Alhambra, a wonderfully beautiful structure, even in ruins as it is today. Granada was captured, but even then the Spaniards seemed to have no time to listen to Columbus.

### Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)

At length he made up his mind to leave Spain and go for aid to the king of France. With his little son Diego he started out on foot. The child was hungry, and so they stopped at the gate of the convent of La Rabida, near the town of Palos, Spain, to beg for the food that was never refused to wayfarers. The prior was a student of geography. He heard the ideas of Columbus, put faith in them, and invited some of his learned friends to meet the stranger. "Spain must not lose the honour of such an enterprise," the prior declared, and he even went himself to the queen. He had once been her confessor, and she greeted him kindly. King Ferdinand did not believe in the undertaking, but the queen became thoroughly interested in it. She was Queen of Aragon by her marriage to Ferdinand, but she was Queen of Castile in her own right, and she exclaimed, "I undertake the enterprise for my own crown of Castile and will pledge my jewels to raise the necessary funds."

Thus, after eighteen years' delay, the way opened for Columbus, and he set sail from Palos with three small vessels; however, even after they were at sea Columbus must have felt as if his troubles were just beginning, for his sailors were full of fears. They were not cowards, but no one, they thought, had ever crossed the Atlantic, and there were legends that in one place it was swarming with monsters, and that in another the water boiled with intense heat. There was real danger, also, from the jealous Portuguese, for it was rumored that they had sent out vessels to capture Columbus's little fleet. It is small wonder that the sailors were dismayed by the fires of the volcanic peak of Teneriffe, but they were almost equally alarmed by every little occurrence. The mast of a wrecked vessel floated by, and they feared it was a sign that their vessel, too, would be wrecked. After a while, the magnetic needle ceased to point to the north star, and they were filled with dread lest they should lose their way on the vast ocean. One night a brilliant meteor appeared, and then they were sure that destruction was at hand.

The good east wind was sweeping them gently along; but even that worried them, for they feared it would never alter, and how could they get home? Some of them had begun to whisper together of throwing Columbus overboard, when one day they saw land-birds and floating weeds and finally a glimmering light. Then the sailors were as eager to press onward as their leader.

Early on the following morning land appeared. Columbus, wearing his brilliant scarlet robes and bearing the standard of Spain, was rowed ashore. He fell upon his knees and kissed the ground, thanking God most heartily for his care. Then he took possession of the land for Spain.

Excerpt from *Heroes of the Middle Ages* by Eva March Tappan. Copyright ©2006 by Yesterday's Classics. Reprinted by permission of Yesterday's Classics.

### Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Reading Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)

Read the sentence from the text.

The good east wind was sweeping them gently along; but even that worried them, for they feared it would never alter, and how could they get home?

How does the underlined phrase impact the reader's interpretation of the meaning of the text? Select **three** options.

- A. The weather delayed the sailors.
- B. The weather quickened the journey.
- C. The weather slowed down the journey.
- D. The sailors were happy about the conditions.
- E. The sailors lacked knowledge about weather.
- F. The sailors remained suspicious of positive events.

Area

Reading

Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts

Standard(s)

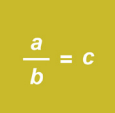


Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. A) Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.

Answer

B, E, and F

## Student Performance in Mathematics

The Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for Mathematics are organized by areas, or **claims**.

Mathematics Areas (Claims) For Grades Six, Seven, and Eight		
	<b>Concepts &amp; Procedures</b>	Applying mathematical concepts and procedures
	<b>Problem Solving &amp; Modeling/Data Analysis</b>	Using appropriate tools and strategies to solve real world and mathematical problems
	<b>Communicating Reasoning</b>	Demonstrating ability to support mathematical conclusions

For more information, please see the Smarter Balanced Assessments Web page at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/>.

### Grade Six Mathematics

In grade six, students learn the concept of **rates and ratios** and use these tools to solve word problems. They work on quickly and accurately dividing **multi-digit whole numbers** and adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing **multi-digit decimals**. Students extend their previous work with fractions and decimals to understand the concept of **rational numbers**—any number that can be made by dividing one integer by another, such as  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 0.75, or 2. Students also learn how to write and solve **equations**—mathematical statements using symbols, such as  $20+x = 35$ —and apply these skills in solving **multi-step word problems**.

For more information, please see the *Parent Roadmap—Supporting Your Child in Grade Six, Mathematics*, which is posted on the Council of the Great City Schools Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceId=429&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=735&PageID=366>.

A Spanish version of the publication is available on the same Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceId=431&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=790&PageID=367>.

## Grade Six Sample Test Items for Mathematics

This next section provides sample test items for grade six mathematics

The test items that students see online appear and function differently than the sample items shown in this document. For example, students may be asked to “drag, select, or click” their response. Parents can experience these different functionalities on the Training Test available at <http://www.caaspp.org/practice-and-training/index.html>.

The sample test items presented here represent the kinds of questions that Grade Six students at different levels of achievement would likely answer correctly. For example, a student at the “Standard Met” achievement level would typically receive and correctly answer an item associated with that achievement level.

Please note that these sample items represent only a few of the standards that are assessed on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments in mathematics. (An online version of the sample items is in development.)

For each sample test item, the following information is included:

- Mathematics area for the item
- Mathematics state standard(s) that the item measures
- Correct answer(s)



## Grade Six Sample Test Item—Communicating Reasoning

### Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met

Evan’s car can travel 84 miles on 3 gallons of gas. Using this rate, he constructs a table showing the number of miles that his car can travel on different amounts of gas.

#### Part A

Click on each of the errors in Evan’s table.

#### Part B

Select the number of miles Evan’s car can travel on 1 gallon of gas.

A.

<b>Gallons of Gas</b>	2	4	6	8	10
<b>Miles Traveled</b>	56	112	156	224	300

B. Evan’s car travels  miles on 1 gallon of gas.

24

26

28

30

**Area** **Communicating Reasoning**  
 Demonstrating ability to support mathematical conclusions

**Standard(s)** Use ratio and rate reasoning to solve real-world and mathematical problems, e.g., by reasoning about tables of equivalent ratios, tape diagrams, double number line diagrams, or equations.

**Answer** A. (6,156) and (10,300)  
 B. 28

## Grade Six Sample Test Item—Concepts & Procedures

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

Consider the equation showing the distributive property.

$$27 + 12 = 3(9 + \square)$$

Enter the unknown value that would make the equation true.

← → ↶ ↷ ✖

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
0	.	-

**Area****Concepts & Procedures**

Applying mathematical concepts and procedures

**Standard(s)**

Find the greatest common factor of two whole numbers less than or equal to 100 and the least common multiple of two whole numbers less than or equal to 12. Use the distributive property to express a sum of two whole numbers 1–100 with a common factor as a multiple of a sum of two whole numbers with no common factor.

**Answer**

4

## Grade Seven Mathematics

In grade seven, students further develop their understanding of rates and ratios, using **tables, graphs, and equations to solve real-world problems involving proportional relationships**. Students also work on quickly and accurately solving **multi-step problems** involving **positive and negative rational numbers**—any number that can be made by dividing one integer by another, such as  $\frac{1}{2}$ , 0.75, or 2. Additionally, students expand their knowledge of geometry and apply the properties of operations to solve real world problems involving the **measurement of multi-dimensional objects**.

For more information, please see the *Parent Roadmap—Supporting Your Child in Grade Seven, Mathematics* posted on the Council of the Great City Schools Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceId=429&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=734&PageID=366>.

A Spanish version of the publication is available on the same Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceId=431&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=791&PageID=367>.

### Grade Seven Sample Test Items for Mathematics

The sample test items below represent the kinds of questions that grade seven students at different levels of achievement would likely answer correctly. For example, a student at the “Standard Nearly Met” achievement level would typically receive and correctly answer an item associated with that achievement level.

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Communicating Reasoning

### Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met

Click in the box next to the **two** statements that are **always** true for all real numbers  $a$  and  $b$ .

	<p><b>Statement 1</b> The sum of <math>-a</math> and <math>b</math> is greater than 1.</p>
	<p><b>Statement 2</b> The sum of <math>-a</math> and <math>a</math> equals 0.</p>
	<p><b>Statement 3</b> <math>a - (-b) = a - b = -b + a</math></p>
	<p><b>Statement 4</b> <math>a - b = a + -b = -b + a</math></p>

Area

**Communicating Reasoning**

Demonstrating ability to support mathematical conclusions

Standard(s)

Apply and extend previous understandings of addition and subtraction to add and subtract rational numbers; represent addition and subtraction on a horizontal or vertical number line diagram.

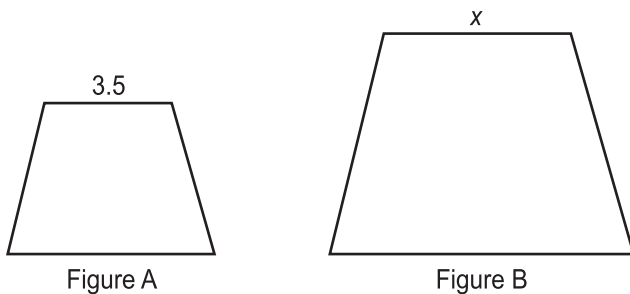
Answer

Statement 2 and Statement 4

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Concepts & Procedures

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

Figure A is a scale image of Figure B, as shown.



The scale that maps Figure A onto Figure B is  $1:4\frac{1}{2}$ .

Enter the value of  $x$ .

Area

Concepts &amp; Procedures

Applying mathematical concepts and procedures

Standard(s)

Verify experimentally the properties of rotations, reflections, and translations.

Answer

15.75

## Grade Seven Sample Test Item—Problem Solving & Modeling/Data Analysis

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

A shipping company charges \$2.65 plus \$0.40 per ounce to ship a package from New York to Los Angeles.

Write an equation to show the relationship between  $c$ , the total cost to ship a package from New York to Los Angeles using the shipping company, and  $w$ , the weight of the package, in ounces.

← → ↶ ↷ ✖

1	2	3	$c$	$w$		
4	5	6	+	-	*	÷
7	8	9	<	=	>	
0	.	-	$\frac{\square}{\square}$	$\square^\square$	( )	

**Area****Problem Solving & Modeling/Data Analysis**

Using appropriate tools and strategies to solve real world and mathematical problems

**Standard(s)**

“Use variables to represent quantities in a real-world or mathematical problem, and construct simple equations and inequalities to solve problems by reasoning about the quantities.”

**Answer**

$$c = 0.40w + 2.65$$

[Scoring note: Accepts equivalent equations as correct]

## Grade Eight Mathematics

In grade eight, students take their understanding of **unit rates and proportional relationships** to a new level, connecting these concepts to **points on a line** and ultimately using them to **solve linear equations** that require them to **apply algebraic reasoning** as well as knowledge of the **properties of operations**. Students also expand their understanding of numbers beyond rational numbers to include numbers that are **irrational**—meaning that they cannot be written as a simple fraction, such as the square root of 2 or  $\sqrt{2}$ .

For more information, please see the *Parent Roadmap—Supporting Your Child in Grade Eight, Mathematics* posted on the Council of the Great City Schools Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=429&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=733&PageID=366>.

A Spanish version of the publication is available on the same Web page at <http://www.cgcs.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=431&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=792&PageID=367>.

### Grade Eight Sample Test Items for Mathematics

The sample test items below represent the kinds of passages and questions that grade eight students at different levels of achievement would likely answer correctly. For example, a student at the “Standard Nearly Met” achievement level would typically receive and correctly answer an item associated with that achievement level.

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Concepts & Procedures

### Achievement Level: Standard Nearly Met

A taxi cab company charges a fixed rate of \$2 and an additional \$1.60 for every mile traveled.

Enter an equation in the form of  $y = mx + b$  that represents the amount ( $y$ ), in dollars, charged by the taxi cab company for  $x$  miles.

← → ↶ ↷ ✖

1	2	3	x	y				
4	5	6	+	-	*	÷		
7	8	9	<	≤	=	≥	>	
0	.	-	$\frac{\square}{\square}$	$\square^{\square}$	( )	$\sqrt{\square}$	$\sqrt[n]{\square}$	$\pi$

**Area****Concepts & Procedures**

Applying mathematical concepts and procedures

**Standard(s)**

Construct a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities. Determine the rate of change and initial value of the function from a description of a relationship or from two  $(x, y)$  values, including reading these from a table or from a graph. Interpret the rate of change and initial value of a linear function in terms of the situation it models, and in terms of its graph or a table of values.

**Answer**

$$y = 1.6x + 2$$

[Scoring note: Accepts equivalent equations as correct]



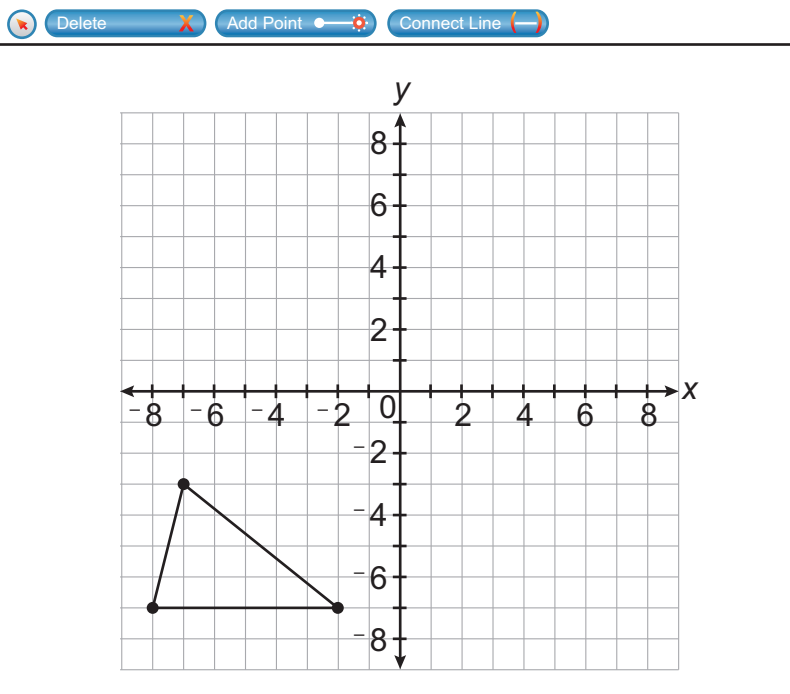
## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Concepts & Procedures

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

Consider this figure.

Use the Add Point and Connect Line tools to draw the image of the figure after the following transformations:

- A vertical translation up 4 units.
- A horizontal translation to the right 7 units.



**Area**

**Concepts & Procedures**

Applying mathematical concepts and procedures

**Standard(s)**

Describe the effect of dilations, translations, rotations, and reflections on two-dimensional figures using coordinates.

**Answer**

Triangle with vertices of  $(-1, -3)$ ,  $(5, -3)$ , and  $(0, 1)$

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

China is the most populous country on Earth. India is the second most populous country on Earth. Japan is the tenth most populous country on Earth.

The population of China is approximately  $1.4 \times 10^9$ .

The population of Japan is approximately  $1.3 \times 10^8$ .

The population of India can be expressed in the form  $a \times 10^b$ , where  $a$  is approximately 1.2.

Enter a reasonable value for  $b$ .

**Area****Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis**

Using appropriate tools and strategies to solve real world and mathematical problems

**Standard(s)**

Use numbers expressed in the form of a single digit times an integer power of 10 to estimate very large or very small quantities, and to express how many times as much one is than the other.

**Answer**

[Scoring note:  
Programmed to accept a range of responses]

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis

### Achievement Level: Standard Met

At the school football game, a customer bought 4 hot dogs and 3 hamburgers for a total of \$13.50. Another customer bought 2 hot dogs and 5 hamburgers for \$15.50.

Enter the price, in dollars, of a hamburger.

← → ↶ ↷ ✖

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
0	.	-

**Area**

**Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis**

Using appropriate tools and strategies to solve real world and mathematical problems

**Standard(s)**

Analyze and solve pairs of simultaneous linear equations.

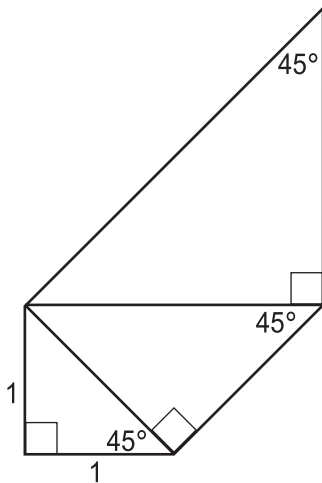
**Answer**

2.50

## Grade Eight Sample Test Item—Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis

### Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded

Steven is making a pattern of a spiral as shown in the figure.



He started by making an isosceles right triangle with legs of length 1. He then made a new isosceles right triangle, using the hypotenuse of the first triangle as one of the legs of the new right triangle. He will continue making right triangles using this pattern until he has made a triangle with a hypotenuse with a length of 8.

Determine how many of these triangles, including the three shown in the figure, Steven will make.

← → ↶ ↷ ✖

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
0	.	-

**Area**

**Problem Solving & Modeling and Data Analysis**

Using appropriate tools and strategies to solve real world and mathematical problems

**Standard(s)**

Apply the Pythagorean Theorem to determine unknown side lengths in right triangles in real-world and mathematical problems in two and three dimensions.

**Answer**

6

## Glossary

### accessibility supports and accommodations

Tools and supports that help students access the test questions so they can best demonstrate what they know and are able to do. The Smarter Balanced tests include:

- **Universal Tools** available to all students based on their preference. These include online tools such as highlighting, digital notepads, and zooming in and out as well as other supports like scratch paper or breaks between test sections.
- **Designated Supports** available for a student when an educator or support team determines a special need. These include such tools as color contrast or masking as well as language supports for English learners, such as translated test directions or bilingual glossaries.
- **Accommodations** specially identified for students with IEPs or 504 plans. These include online tools, such as text-to-speech, closed captioning, and on-screen ASL translation as well as other supports, such as read aloud or use of a scribe.

### achievement level

A score or descriptive statement that represents how well the student knows the standards for the subject area and grade level. For the Smarter Balanced tests, there are four achievement levels labeled as Standard Exceeded, Standard Met, Standard Nearly Met, and Standard Not Met.

### assessment

A term generally used to mean the same thing as test.

### CAASPP

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, which is the new state assessment system. The CAASPP system includes tests that public school students take at the end of the school year in different subject areas and grade levels.

<b>claim or area</b>	Broad sets of knowledge and skills within a subject area, such as Reading within English Language Arts/Literacy or Problem Solving in Mathematics. On the Smarter Balanced tests, students will get results in key areas based on groups of test questions that measure similar or related knowledge or skills.
<b>college and career ready</b>	A phrase that indicates a student is leaving high school well-prepared to succeed in college and the workplace.
<b>Common Core State Standards</b>	Academic content standards adopted by California that describe what students should know and be able to do at each grade level in order to graduate from high school ready for college and a career. The Common Core State Standards challenge students to develop a deep understanding of subject matter, learn how to think critically, and apply what they are learning to the real world.
<b>computer adaptive test</b>	A test given on a computer in which the questions change or adapt on the basis of a student’s answers, so each student gets a customized test. When a student answers incorrectly, the computer assigns easier or less complex questions. When a student gets answers correct, the computer gives the student harder or more complex questions.
<b>computer-based test</b>	A test given on a computer.
<b>content standards</b>	Statements of academic expectations that describe what students should know and be able to do in a subject area.
<b>formative assessment</b>	A process teachers use during instruction to check on student understanding.
<b>interim assessment</b>	A test given at regular intervals, such as a chapter test, to evaluate what students have learned.

---

<b>performance task</b>	A connected set of questions and activities, based on a theme or scenario, in which students apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems. In the Smarter Balanced assessments, students do a performance task in English language arts/literacy and one in mathematics. The performance task includes a classroom activity, done with the teacher, to introduce vocabulary and make sure all students have basic knowledge and understanding about the topic. Students then go to the computer to read materials, respond to several shorter questions, and complete a longer essay or problem.
<b>scale score</b>	Each year, in each subject area, a student will get an overall score between approximately 2000 and 3000. This score represents how well a student did on the test, and it corresponds to one of four achievement levels: Standard Exceeded, Standard Met, Standard Nearly Met, and Standard Not Met.
<b>Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium</b>	A state-led public agency, currently supported by member states and territories, that developed new tests that align to the new Common Core State Standards and measure student progress toward college and career readiness.
<b>STAR</b>	The Standardized Testing and Reporting Program, the previous California assessment system that has been phased out.
<b>summative assessment</b>	An assessment designed to be given near the end of the school year to evaluate a student's knowledge and skills relative to a specific set of academic standards.
<b>test item</b>	A question, problem, or task on a test. Test items may take different forms such as multiple choice, fill-in the blank or short answer, or constructed response (where students may write sentences or essays, or show how they solve a mathematics problem).

---

---

## Appendix A: Other Assessments in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress System

### California Alternate Assessment

Students in grades three through eight and grade eleven who have significant cognitive disabilities and whose individual education program requires that an alternate test be administered are eligible to take the California Alternate Assessment (CAA) instead of the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments.

### Required Assessments for Science

Students in grades five, eight, and ten continue to take the science assessments that were part of the California STAR program. These include the California Standards Test (CST); the California Modified Assessment (CMA), which can be taken by eligible students with disabilities; and the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), which may be taken by students with significant cognitive disabilities.

### Optional Assessment: Reading/Language Arts

The Standards-based Test in Spanish (STS) for Reading/Language Arts is available for students in grades two through eleven who receive instruction in Spanish. This paper-based test, part of the previous STAR program, can be given to Spanish-speaking English learners who are learning language arts in Spanish and to English speakers who are learning Spanish through an immersion or dual language program.



## Appendix B: Additional Resources

The links below provide additional information on the new state standards and CAASPP assessments.

### Common Core State Standards

- **California Department of Education**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/ccssresourcesparents.asp>

This Web page containing information for parents and students includes links to informational fliers, videos, Web sites, and other resources.

- **California State PTA**

<http://capta.org/focus-areas/education/common-core/>

This site provides informational fliers and documents, in multiple languages, about the standards and what children are learning at each grade level.

### New Assessments

- **California Department of Education**

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca/index.asp>

This website provides variety of resources about the CAASPP system. The Students & Parent tab includes links to videos, fact sheets, practice and training tests, and other related information.

- **California State PTA**

<http://capta.org/focus-areas/education/student-assessments/>

This site provides information about the new assessments as well as a sample student report of test results.

- **Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/parents-students/>

This Web site, from the developers of the new ELA and mathematics tests, provides information about the new assessments, a downloadable fact sheet for parents, and links to other resources.

- **California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress**

[https://login3.cloud1.tds.airast.org/student/V112/Pages/LoginShell.aspx?c=California\\_PT&v=112](https://login3.cloud1.tds.airast.org/student/V112/Pages/LoginShell.aspx?c=California_PT&v=112)

This Web site provides access to training and practice tests that parents and students can use to experience what the new assessment is like, including how the technology works and the kinds of questions and tasks that are on the new tests.

## Appendix C: Scoring Rubric and Sample Responses (Constructed Response)

This item is worth a possible two points (0, 1, or 2) and is hand scored.

### Scoring Rubric

Score	Rationale
<b>2</b>	<p><b>A response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to determine/summarize the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event</li> <li>• Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text</li> <li>• Adequately explains the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event with clearly relevant information based on the text</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>A response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives limited evidence of the ability to determine/summarize the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event</li> <li>• Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the text</li> <li>• Explains the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event with vague/limited information based on the text</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<p><b>A response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives no evidence of the ability to determine/summarize the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event, but includes no examples or no examples/details that make reference to the text</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives the theme/lesson/author’s message/main idea, or what happens after or during a key event, but includes no explanation or no relevant information from the text</li> </ul>

Sample responses that would earn a “0,” a “1,” and a “2” are provided on the next pages.

The scoring rubric and sample responses are based on the Grade 3 constructed response item on pages 29–31.

## Sample Responses

### Score: 0 Points

*they all are very close*

*That it is a very strong bond*

*They are like bestfriends*

*The pets relationship with each other is that they all trust eachother.*

*The relationship between the pets is a good one.*

*The pets relationship with one another is nice and good. This is how the relationship is between the pet and one another.*

### Score: 1 Point

*The inference can be made that the pets get along because it seems that they have a bond that keeps them together, and that is why the cat made the decision, to go with his friends/family or to stay behind.*

*They love each other and want to be around each other. When the labrador left to follow Mr. Longridge, each of the other animals followed the labrador.*

*Based on the text I believe that the animals have a good relationship with each other. They did things together and it seems like they treat each other as siblings.*

*The pets are close friends and stay by each other even on adventures away from the one place they know best.*

*I think the pets are all close, because after the young dog got up the old one followed and the cat followed after that*

*An inference that can be made is that they care about each other. An example of this is that when the young dog was at the gate instead of going on he waited for the others.*

*The pets like and trust each other. When one animal left, they all followed even those that were hesitant.*

**Score: 2 Points**

*I believe after reading this this text that the pets have a very close bond. I make this assumption from the fact that in the text, when the dog started running down the dirt road the cat was hesitant, but it only took a few seconds before the cat realized that she wanted to go with the dog, and left. There has to be an amazing relationship there if they would rather chase after one another than be without one another*

*the inference I can make is that their relationship is very strong. I know this because in the text it said that one dog looked back at the other animals as a sign of invitation to go along with him to go after their owner. The rest followed him and that shows that they depend a lot on each other and stick together*

*It seems that the pets had a close relationship with one another. It even says that they were both waiting by the gate, making it seem that they were next to each other. In addition it says, "He remained like this for several minutes, while the cat watched closely, then slowly the Labrador walked down the driveway and stood at the curve, looking back as though inviting the others to come. The old dog rose to, now, somewhat tiffly and followed." This shows that in fact the pets do have a relationship with one another. In this piece extracted from the article it does make it seem that they all interacted with one another, making it seem that they were close.*

*The pets' relationship would be most likely described as a strong relationship they have with one another as clearly showed in paragraph six. In paragraph six it states, "The cat remained utterly still for a full minute, blue eyes blazing in the dark mask. Then, with a curious hesitating run, he set off in pursuit. The dogs were waiting by the gate when he turned the corner, the old dog peering wistfully back, as though he hoped to see his friend Mrs. Oakes materialize with a juicy bone; but when the Labrador started up the road he followed. The cat still paused by the gate, one paw lifted delicately in the air—undecided, questioning, hesitant; until suddenly, some inner decision reached, he followed the dogs." This clearly shows their relationship as a tight one because it states many times they followed each other everywhere.*

*A inference that can be made from the pets relationship with one another is that they all trust each other a fair amount. Evidence of this is shown when the young dog rose and walked down the driveway the old dog rose and then the cat followed suit thus showing a trust between the animals.*

*I think all of Mr. Longridge's pets have good relationship because they all go outside together. After, John left they all stayed in the yard. But, when one of them left then all of them followed because they are friends so I think they just wanted to stick together." Twenty minutes passed by and no move was made; then suddenly the young dog rose, stretched himself, and stood looking intently down the drive. He remained like this for several minutes, while the cat watched closely, then slowly the Labrador walked down the driveway and stood at the curve, looking back as though inviting the others to come. The old dog rose too, now, somewhat stiffly, and followed. Together they turned the corner, out of sight" (Burnford Paragraphs).*