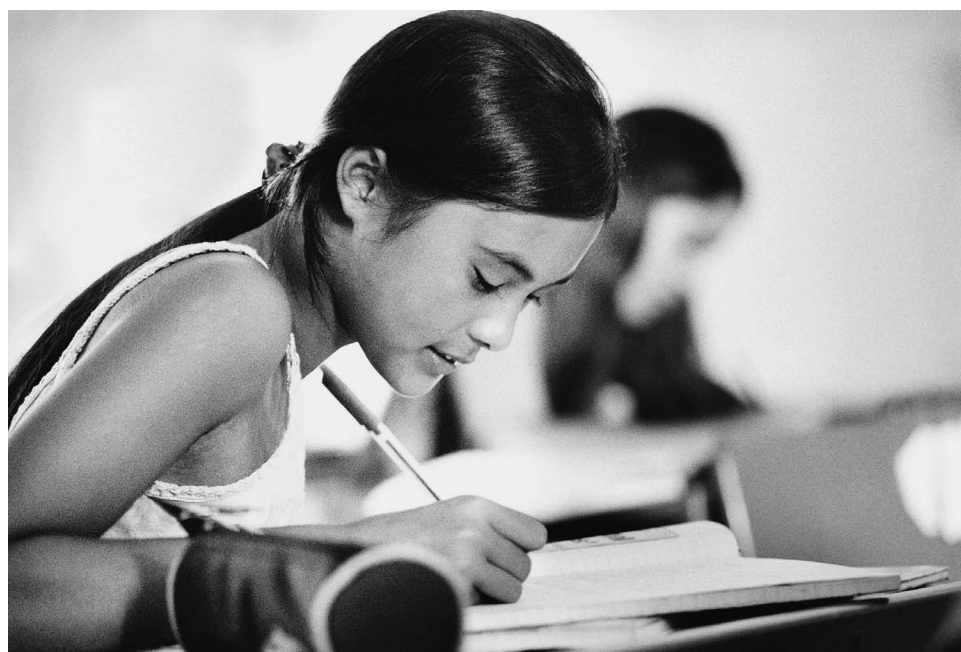




pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler



2023–2024
Grade 6

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INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

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

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

Pennsylvania Core Standards (PCS)

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

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

- www.education.pa.gov [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 used¹ as examples for creating assessment items at the classroom level. Classroom teachers may find it beneficial to have students respond to the text-dependent analysis prompt question in this sampler. Educators may then use the sampler as a guide to score the responses either independently or together with colleagues within a school or district.

¹ The permission to copy and/or use these materials does not extend to commercial purposes.

Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

The 2023 PCS-based PSSA has multiple types of test questions. For grade 6, the types of test questions are multiple-choice (MC) questions, evidence-based selected-response (EBSR) questions, and text-dependent analysis (TDA) prompts.

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

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

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

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

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

Refusal – Refusal to respond to the task

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

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

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

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

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

English Language Arts Item Type	MC	EBSR	TDA
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 6

This English Language Arts Sampler is composed of 2 passages, 4 passage-based MC questions, 2 EBSR questions, 1 TDA prompt, and 3 Conventions of Standard English MC questions.

There are 2 passages in this booklet. The first passage is followed by 4 passage-based MC questions and 2 EBSR questions. The second passage is followed by 1 TDA prompt. This booklet also contains 3 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 appeared in previous PSSA English Language Arts assessments. Each MC item is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the answer key, the depth of knowledge (DOK) level, the percentage² of students who chose each answer option, and a brief answer-option analysis or rationale. The EBSR item is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the answer key to Part One of the item, the answer key to Part Two of the item, the DOK level, the mean student score, and a brief answer-option analysis for each part of the item. The TDA prompt is followed by a table that includes the item alignment, the DOK level, and the mean student score. Additionally, the *Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline* is combined with sample student responses representing two examples of each score point to form a practical item-specific scoring guideline. The student responses in this item and scoring sampler are actual student responses; however, the handwriting has been changed to protect the students’ identities and to make the item and scoring sampler accessible to as many people as possible.

Example Multiple-Choice Item Information Table

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

Example Evidence-Based Selected-Response Item Information Table

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

Example Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt Information Table

Alignment	Assigned AAEC	Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK	Mean Score	Average Score
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² 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 nature preserve in Papua New Guinea. Then answer questions 1–6 in your answer booklet.

Kangaroos, Clouds, and Coffee

by Amy Poffenbarger

High up in the cloud forests of New Guinea, a small brown face peers down from a tree. Could it possibly be—a kangaroo?

Lisa Dabek hopes so. She works at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington, and she has come to Papua New Guinea to study her favorite animal, the elusive Matschie’s tree kangaroo. Even with binoculars, the small, shy marsupials are hard to find. Their reddish-brown fur blends in perfectly with the moss growing thickly on the trees.

A Face in the Forest

Surprisingly, 10 different species of kangaroos live in trees instead of hopping along the ground. Matschie’s tree kangaroos live in the mountain cloud forest of Papua New Guinea. Weighing about 20 pounds (9 kg), these kangaroos are great climbers, but they’re kind of lazy. They spend 15 hours a day sleeping or lounging in trees, munching on leaves, moss, and bark. Sometimes they take a giant leap to the ground to nibble flowers, ferns, and grass shoots.

Tree kangaroos are loners—they don’t hang out together very much. Mothers carry their babies, called joeys, in a pouch, like other kangaroos. But when the joeys are about 18 months old, they go off to live by themselves.

People live in the cloud forest too, in the YUS area between the Yopno, Uruwa, and Som Rivers. For thousands of years, they have cut trees for wood and fuel and hunted animals and birds for food.

No Pets for Lisa

On the other side of the world, in New York City, Lisa Dabek grew up loving animals, even though she was allergic to them. Since she couldn’t have a pet, she watched ants that lived on her garage roof. She dreamed of being an animal trainer someday.

When she got older, Dabek studied marine mammals and animal behavior. She became interested in environmental studies and conservation, like her hero, Jane Goodall. But it wasn’t until she went to work at the Woodland Park Zoo that Dabek saw her first tree kangaroo. “I was totally intrigued,” she says.

Dabek set up a program at the zoo to educate people about tree kangaroos and cloud forests. But it was many years before she got to see one in the wild.

When she finally got to Papua New Guinea, asthma made mountain travel difficult, but she didn't let it stop her. Dabek saw her first wild tree kangaroos after five weeks of hiking through the forest. But they are so rare that it was seven years before she saw another one. Now she returns every year to study the kangaroos and the forest. You can read about her work in a book called *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*.

Friends in High Places

The people of YUS own most of the land where the tree kangaroos live. They showed Dabek their special forest, and she told them about her interest in the tree kangaroos. At first they were surprised. They had no idea that the Matschie's tree kangaroo only lives in their cloud forest.

She met with teachers and students too. "I really believe the future of conservation is with kids," Dabek says. "The more kids around the world understand the importance of protecting plants and animals, the better off we'll be."

The people of YUS have always known that their forest is special. After talking with Dabek and other scientists, they decided to set aside more than 180,000 acres to create a cloud forest nature preserve. This became the YUS Conservation Area, the first in all of Papua New Guinea. Hunting, mining, and cutting down trees are now forbidden there.

The protected area gives the special cloud forest plants and animals a safe place to live and raise families. And that helps keep the whole forest healthy.

In the past, the people of YUS had often set aside special parts of the forest as *tambu*, or sacred places. So preserving a home place for tree kangaroos made sense.

Kangaroo Coffee

The people of YUS are happy to protect their unique forest. But this left them with a problem. If they didn't hunt or cut down trees, how were they going to make a living?

Dabek and the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program worked with the villagers to find a solution. The answer came in another plant that likes to grow on cool, foggy mountains—coffee.

People all over the world like to drink coffee. They will pay a lot of money for coffee beans—which aren't really beans, but the seeds of a small bushy tree. Some coffee trees already grew around YUS. With more trees and a way to ship and sell the beans, maybe they could turn it into a business.

Together, Dabek, the villagers, and the Tree Kangaroo Conservation Program came up with a plan to grow, transport, and market their coffee. Once the coffee is harvested, the bags of beans are carried to a grass airstrip in the village and flown by small planes to the city of Lae—since there are no roads up the mountain. From there, the beans travel to the United States on cargo ships.

When people buy the YUS coffee, it helps the people of YUS keep their forests safe for tree kangaroos and other wildlife. When one coffee buyer in Seattle heard about the tree kangaroo coffee project, he wanted to help. So his company, Caffe Vita Coffee, started buying YUS beans to roast and sell. YUS Conservation Coffee is now sold at coffee shops, at the Woodland Park Zoo, and online. So far, the project is working. And it may be just the beginning. Cocoa beans—the source of chocolate—grow well in lower parts of the YUS country. Will Tree Kangaroo Chocolate be next?

What Is a Cloud Forest?

Cloud forests are a special kind of mountain rain forest. They are cool and wet, but most of the moisture comes from fog and cloud rather than rain. Cloud forests are not common, but they are found all over the world. Each one is home to plants and animals that live nowhere else.

If you walk through a cloud forest, the first thing you notice is that every surface is covered with growing things. Cloud forests explode with lichens, fungi, mosses, fruits, and flowers. You might see more than 300 species of plants growing on a single tree! One thing you won't find much of are pesky mosquitoes—cloud forests are too cold for them.

Forest vs. Farming

One of the biggest challenges for many endangered animals—including the Matschie's tree kangaroo—is losing their homes. This happens when people cut or burn down forests to make room for farms or to raise cattle. It might be easy to say, "Stop cutting down the forest!" But people need to live too.

This can be a hard problem to solve. People who are working to preserve nature are learning that the best solutions need to include the humans. Rather than just forbidding farming, they look for better ways to farm or try to discover new crops that will let the forests, animals, and people live together in peace.

Multiple-Choice Question

1. Read the sentences from the passage.

“She works at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington, and she has come to Papua New Guinea to study her favorite animal, the elusive Matschie’s tree kangaroo. Even with binoculars, the small, shy marsupials are hard to find.”

What does the word elusive mean as used in the passage?

- A. difficult to capture
- B. difficult to observe
- C. difficult to remember
- D. difficult to understand

Item Information	
Alignment	B-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	27%
p-value B	61% (correct answer)
p-value C	5%
p-value D	7%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to use context clues to determine the meaning of the word “elusive.” Option B is the correct answer since “elusive” means “difficult to observe.” Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they do not accurately define the word “elusive” as it is used within the context of the passage.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question

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

Part One

Which word **best** describes Dabek?

- A. stubborn
- B. amusing
- C. persistent
- D. relaxed

Part Two

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

- A. “When she got older, Dabek studied marine mammals and animal behavior.”
- B. “She became interested in environmental studies and conservation, like her hero, Jane Goodall.”
- C. “When she finally got to Papua New Guinea, asthma made mountain travel difficult, but she didn’t let it stop her.”
- D. “You can read about her work in a book called *Quest for the Tree Kangaroo*.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.3
Answer Key: Part One	C
Answer Key: Part Two	C
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.23
Option Annotations	<p>The student is being asked to determine which word best describes Dabek and to support the answer to Part One with evidence from the passage.</p> <p>Part One: Option C is the correct answer since the passage states “saw her first wild tree kangaroos after five weeks of hiking.” Options A, B, and D are incorrect since there is no evidence in the passage to suggest that Dabek possesses these traits.</p> <p>Part Two: Option C is the correct answer since it suggests that even though she was struggling to travel through the mountains to see the kangaroos, “she didn’t let it stop her,” which supports the idea that she is persistent. Options A, B and D are incorrect since they do not suggest reasons why Dabek is considered persistent.</p>

Multiple-Choice Questions

3. Read the sentences from the passage.

“This became the YUS Conservation Area, the first in all of Papua New Guinea. Hunting, mining, and cutting down trees are now forbidden there.”

How do these sentences convey a central idea of the passage?

- A. They describe the natural resources that the people of the YUS area used to develop their economies to support themselves.
- B. They reveal how the people of the YUS area decided to stop selling timber and focus instead on selling coffee beans that grow in the forest.
- C. They demonstrate how researchers and the people of the YUS area decided to create a preserve to protect the habitats of the unique species that live there.
- D. They identify how researchers showed the people of the YUS area how to responsibly remove trees from the forest without damaging surrounding habitats.

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.2
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	15%
p-value B	17%
p-value C	56% (correct answer)
p-value D	12%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to explain how the two sentences convey a central idea of the passage. Option C is the correct answer since the sentences show that the YUS Conservation Area was created and describe how the creation of this conservation area is protecting the habitat by not allowing hunting, mining, and cutting down trees. Option A is incorrect; although wood is a natural resource, the sentences do not convey the central idea that wood is used to develop the YUS economy. Option B is incorrect; although the passage states that the people of YUS did stop cutting the trees and instead focused on growing coffee, the two sentences in the stem do not support these ideas. Option D is incorrect; although the people of YUS did look for alternative farming methods, the sentences in the stem do not support this idea.

4. How does the author support the argument that the people of the YUS are able to start businesses?
- A. by suggesting that tourists might come to visit their preserve
 - B. by showing how people in other countries support the effort by buying YUS coffee beans
 - C. by describing the steps needed to transport the YUS coffee beans from the forest to the market
 - D. by explaining that the forest needs roads so people from outside can access cocoa and coffee beans

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	11%
p-value B	48% (correct answer)
p-value C	29%
p-value D	12%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to identify how the author supports the argument that the people of YUS are able to start businesses. Option B is the correct answer since the passage states, “When people buy the YUS coffee, it helps the people of YUS keep their forests safe.” Option A is incorrect; although it seems like a logical idea that people would want to visit the YUS preserve, this is not suggested in the passage. Option C is incorrect; although the steps needed to transport the coffee are outlined in the passage, this does not support the argument that the people of YUS are able to start businesses. Option D is incorrect; although the idea of needing roads is logical, this is not mentioned in the passage and it does not support the idea that the people of YUS are able to start businesses.

5. Read the details from the text box at the end of the passage.

“One of the biggest challenges for many endangered animals—including the Matschie’s tree kangaroo—is losing their homes. This happens when people cut or burn down forests to make room for farms or to raise cattle.”

Which statement is **best** supported by these details?

- A. The needs of people are more important than the conservation of the habitats of endangered species.
- B. The efforts of people to prevent the destruction of animal habitats have come at the expense of developing human communities.
- C. The needs of people and animals often conflict, which increases the urgency to develop solutions that benefit both people and animals.
- D. The efforts of people to rapidly transform the land around them for economic purposes pose a primary threat to some animal species.

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	11%
p-value B	18%
p-value C	33%
p-value D	38% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to determine which statement is best supported by specific details from the text box. Option D is the correct answer since the sentences quoted from the text box refer to people transforming the land around them for economic purposes (“This happens when people cut or burn down forests to make room for farms or to raise cattle”), posing a primary threat to an animal species (“One of the biggest challenges for many endangered animals—including the Matschie’s tree kangaroo—is losing their homes”). Option A is incorrect; although the idea of destroying natural habitats could imply that people may feel their needs are more important than the needs of animals, that idea is not supported by the sentences. Option B is incorrect; although the main idea of the passage is about people working to protect an animal’s habitat, the sentences do not support the idea that it is at the expense of developing human communities. Option C is incorrect; although the idea that the needs of people and animals often conflict is related to ideas in the passage, the idea that solutions that benefit both people and animals are being developed is not supported by the sentences.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question

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

Part One

How do **both** sections in the text box at the end of the passage relate to the idea that the cloud forest in Papua New Guinea should be protected?

- A. They define what a cloud forest is and describe why the cloud forests are not common.
- B. They explain why a cloud forest is an important environment and discuss an approach for preventing its destruction.
- C. They identify what kind of species live in a cloud forest and highlight the importance of their existence.
- D. They illustrate how the cloud forest benefits species and claim that the animals' needs are more important than human needs.

Part Two

Which evidence from the text box supports the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- A. "Cloud forests are a special kind of mountain rain forest."
- B. "Each one is home to plants and animals that live nowhere else."
- C. "This happens when people cut or burn down forests to make room for farms . . ."
- D. "Rather than just forbidding farming, they look for better ways to farm . . ."

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.2.1.2
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	B, D
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.38
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked how both sections of the text box relate to the idea that the cloud forest in Papua New Guinea should be protected and to choose two pieces of evidence that support the idea.</p> <p>Part One: Option B is the correct answer since the text box states, “Each one is home to plants and animals that live nowhere else,” and “You might see more than 300 species of plants growing on a single tree.” Both of these quotes demonstrate the importance of cloud forests. The text box also states that, “they look for better ways to farm,” which shows that people are looking for ways to farm that will preserve the cloud forest. Option A is incorrect; although the first section does explain what cloud forests are and states that they are not common, this option does not state any information from the second section in the text box. Option C is incorrect; although the passage talks about some of the animals that live in a cloud forest, the focus of the text box is not on the animals in the cloud forest. Option D is incorrect; although the information in the text box does state the importance of cloud forests to the survival of many species, this is not the main focus of the text box.</p> <p>Part Two: Options B and D are the correct answers; option B shows the importance of cloud forests and option D shows that the people are looking for alternate ways to farm. Option A is incorrect; although this evidence says that cloud forests are “special,” this does not indicate that they are important. Option C is incorrect; although this evidence mentions farming, it does not support the answer in Part One.</p>

PASSAGE 2

Read the following passage about Misty Copeland. Then answer question 7 in your answer booklet.

Misty Copeland

by Margaret Fuhrer

Misty Copeland has the kind of natural facility most dancers only dream about. But Misty, who was a late bloomer in ballet terms, didn't begin studying dance seriously until she was 13. Since joining ABT II (the American Ballet Theatre, it was then called the "Studio Company") in 2000, she's been wowing audiences with her magnetic stage presence, natural charm, and athletic ability. Now a soloist with the American Ballet Theatre, she's putting her distinctive stamp on both classical and contemporary roles, excelling as the delicate Gulnare in *Le Corsaire* one night and tearing up Jorma Elo's gymnastic *Glow-Stop* the next. She's even had a taste of the commercial world: The late Prince once asked her to be in the music video for his remake of "Crimson and Clover"!

Obviously it's easy to idolize Misty. And as one of the very few African American ballerinas dancing today, she's an especially inspiring role model. Here, as she answers your questions (and some of ours), she gives us a peek at her unique path to stardom.

When and why did you first start dancing?

I'd never really thought about dance until I was 13, when a teacher in my middle school told me that I had the physique of a dancer and that I should consider taking classes. I was curious and decided to go to a local Boys and Girls Club, where Cynthia Bradley, who would become my first serious dance teacher, was giving free classes. So my first ballet class was on a basketball court. I wore socks and gym clothes!

Since you had a late start, was it difficult for you to catch up with your classmates?

— Heather Vales, 22, Pinellas Park, FL

It was hard to learn the names of all the steps! I went away to my first ballet summer program, at San Francisco Ballet, when I'd only been dancing for a year and a half, and there were still steps that I didn't know. I was placed in the highest level because physically I could do things, but it was really embarrassing because often I just wouldn't understand what they were telling me to do.

What advice do you have for other late beginners?

If you know that ballet is truly what you want to do, it's possible to make up for the lost time. You just have to be that much more focused and dedicated. Put in the extra work—you'll get there.

Who were your first role models?

When I was growing up, Paloma [Herrera, principal dancer with ABT] was it. She was the first dancer I saw perform live, and I was obsessed. Later, when I came to ABT’s summer program, I finally met her. I was totally starstruck!

Was there a moment when you knew you’d “made it”?

Probably my first time performing on the Metropolitan Opera House stage. I’d just gotten my corps de ballet contract, and the first thing I danced was a Little Swan in *Swan Lake*. I was terrified—it was the biggest stage I’d ever been on!—but at the same time I was thinking, “Wow, I’m here. I’ve arrived.”

Do you have a pre-performance ritual?

No, and everyone makes fun of me because I don’t! I’m really laid-back. I do my makeup in 15 minutes. If I get there two hours early, I feel like it’s too much time to think about things. I get stressed out.

Was there a point in your career when you felt “stuck”? If so, how did you move forward?

— Kayla K., 13, Sacramento, CA

There was a period when I was really down on myself because I desperately wanted to move up through ABT’s ranks, and it wasn’t happening. I didn’t understand how long a process that usually is! But I have a sponsor [a non-dancer mentor and supporter] at ABT, Susan Fales-Hill, and she helped me believe that I would make it eventually. It was nice to hear her words of encouragement, because once you get into a big company, you don’t have people giving you positive feedback all the time.

What is your proudest career moment?

Being promoted. I’ll always remember that day: It was almost the end of the Met season, and everyone was exhausted. I was in my dressing room relaxing before a show and I got called into Kevin’s office [Kevin McKenzie, artistic director of ABT]—which is normal. But instead of giving me a correction, he told me he was promoting me to soloist. I was in shock! I think I said, “Oh, OK.” It didn’t really hit me until I spoke to my mother and my sponsor.

What’s the story behind the Prince video?

A little while ago, I got a call from one of his people, who asked if it would be OK if he called me. Of course I said yes. The next thing I know, I’m talking to Prince on my cell! He said he’s been a huge fan of mine for years and that I inspire him to create music. I was so flattered—and totally floored. He asked me to do the video, and soon I was on a plane to L.A. It was quick, in and out, just a day of shooting. Aside from the crew people, it was only Prince and me on the set. He just put on the music and said, “Do whatever you want.” So I improvised. Prince was funny; I kept asking him for advice or if there was anything specific he thought I should do, and he said, “No, just do what you’re doing!”

What are your career goals? Any more music videos?

[Laughs] You never know, but I don’t think so. As far as my ballet career goes, ABT is definitely where I want to be. I can’t imagine a better environment. And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT’s first African American female principal.

Because you're one of the only African American classical ballerinas, you symbolize a lot to many people. How does that affect you?

I try my best to be a good role model, to show people that it's possible to do what I've done. If I can inspire even one person, encourage her not to be discouraged because of the color of her skin, that's fantastic.

What is your favorite ballet step? Your least favorite?

— balletdancer231, via e-mail

I love grand jetés! They're so free and fun. I'd say my least favorite is probably fouettés. Turning is definitely something I've had to work on, strength-wise.

What do you like to do in your time off?

I'm really into cooking. I'd love to go to culinary school when I'm done dancing. I do a good broiled salmon with sweet potato mash. And unsurprisingly I spend a lot of time with my boyfriend. We love to travel. The Dominican Republic, Greece, and Japan are my favorite destinations.

Why do you dance?

I was shy as a child, and I never really expressed myself verbally. Dancing was the first time I felt like I had a voice. It brings me joy—and I can share that joy with other people.

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. 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.

7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

GO ON 

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Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline

#7 Item Information

Alignment	B-K.1.1.3	Depth of Knowledge	3	Mean Score	2.01
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Assessment Anchor:

E06.B-K.1 – Key Ideas and Details

Specific Assessment Anchor Descriptor addressed by this item:

E06.B-K.1.1.3— Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, or elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples, anecdotes, or sequence of steps).

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

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

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points



7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Professional ballerina Misty Copeland shows dedication to her art—dance—in many ways. Her dedication is shown through commitment, resilience and perseverance. For example, she puts in extra work. Another way is that a professional dance company’s feedback can often be negative, but she stayed strong through the negativity. A final way is that, thanks to her late start, she was placed in higher levels without the dance knowledge or years of experience, which was embarrassing. Yet, she still danced on. These are, some of the reasons, among many, that show Misty Copeland is dedicated to her art.

One statement that shows Copeland’s dedication to the art of dance is when, in her interview, she states, “You just have to be that much more focused and dedicated.” This explicitly points out Misty Copeland was very focused and dedicated, as she stated. She also later says, “Put in the extra work—you’ll get there.” This makes it clear, as she is talking about herself; that she has put in the extra work.

Another way Copeland shows dedication is when she doesn’t let negative comments affect her dancing. “Once you get in a big company, you don’t hear positive feedback all the time.” Copeland stated. You must be very dedicated and resilient to continue on against that negativity. misty Copeland did that, thus showing she’s dedicated to her art, because she never let the negativity break her focus.

Lastly, Copeland did not let embarrassing moments or lack of understanding stop her. She stated, “I was placed in the highest level ...it was really embarrassing because often I just wouldn’t understand what they were telling me to do. This shows that—since Copeland had a late start—she couldn’t understand some of the moves. But through that experience, she persevered. This shows her dedication to her act, the art of the dance.

This concludes how misty copeland clearly shows a lot of dedication to the art of dance. Whether it’s putting in all the extra hours or not letting negative feedback affect her and her dancing, or continuing even when she had a late start and when she didn’t grasp some of the steps at first. Through her resilience, and commitment, misty copeland’s dedication to her art is clearly shown.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. A strong organizational structure supports the focus and ideas throughout the response. In the effective introduction, the student not only presents three ways Copeland shows determination (*through commitment, resilience and perseverance*), but illustrates each with a clarifying example/extension (*she puts in extra work; a professional dance company's feedback can often be negative, but she stayed strong through the negativity; and she was placed in higher levels without the dance knowledge or years of experience, which was embarrassing. Yet, she still danced on.*). Each idea (*commitment, resilience and perseverance*) is developed further in the body of the response. In the first body paragraph, the student analyzes Misty's *commitment* to her art. Two well-chosen quotes (“*You just have to be that much more focused and dedicated.*” and “*Put in the extra work—you'll get there.*”) support the thorough analysis (*This explicitly points out Misty Copeland was very focused and dedicated and This makes it clear, as she is talking about herself; that she has put in the extra work.*) that follows. This analysis demonstrates insight in connecting Copeland's advice to others to her own experience—by showing commitment to her art, Copeland exhorts others to do the same. The next paragraph focuses on Copeland's *resilience*. A strong inference (*she doesn't let negative comments affect her dancing*) provides context for the development that follows. A well-chosen quote (“*Once you get in a big company, you don't hear positive feedback all the time.*”) is extended with an insightful generalization (*You must be very dedicated and resilient to continue on against that negativity.*) that ties back to Copeland's life story by means of more thorough analysis (*misty Copeland did that, thus showing she's dedicated to her art, because she never let the negativity break her focus.*). In the third body paragraph, the student shifts focus to Copeland's *perseverance*, again following the organizational structure laid out in the introduction. The paragraph begins with another strong inference (*Copeland did not let embarrassing moments or lack of understanding stop her*) followed by another well-chosen quote (“*I was placed in the highest level ...it was really embarrassing because often I just wouldn't understand what they were telling me to do.*”). The analysis that follows is clear and supports the student's ideas (*since Copeland had a late start—she couldn't understand some of the moves. But through that experience, she persevered.*). The conclusion reiterates the student's ideas surrounding Copeland's dedication to her art (*Whether it's putting in all the extra hours or not letting negative feedback affect her and her dancing, or continuing even when she had a late start and when she didn't grasp some of the steps at first. Through her resilience, and commitment, misty copeland's dedication to her art is clearly shown.*) to effectively conclude the essay. There is skillful use of transitions (*For example; Another way; A final way; Yet; also later; thus; Lastly; But through that; This concludes*) throughout the response. Precise language (*commitment; resilience; perseverance; negativity; explicitly*) is employed effectively to convey experiences and events. The few minor spelling errors (*resilience; perseverance*) do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points

7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

misty Copeland is no ordinary artist because she is an artistical dancer. In the passage it is filled with question and answers that reveal details about her. She is dedicated to dance because of her determination to succeed and success

One thing misty Copeland had in her career was determination to succeed. When Copeland originally started taking dancing seriously, she was already 13. Even though she had a late start, she overcame it by having lessons taught to her by a serious teacher. This shows she was able to push through even though she wasn't as educated about dancing as others. Another time in Copeland's life, she felt as if she was stuck. She wanted to move through ABT's ranks. One of her non-dancing mentors at ABT gave her encouragement by telling her she would eventually get there. This gives the reader the idea that this made Copeland determined to succeed. Eventually, she moved up in rank. One final thing to demonstrate her determination



was a time when she knew she made it. She eventually ended up performing on the Metropolitan Opera House Stage. She was terrified and was also amazed at the same time, because she was there. This suggests that her determination led her to an important event in her life. Misty's determination has helped her succeed in her art better than it would've ever been.

Copeland's success ultimately came because of her dedication to dancing. This was mostly because of her natural facility. When she was only interested in dancing, she was told she had the physique of a dancer. This detail evidently foreshadows her future career because her early ability to do things not everybody could do. Another thing that demonstrates her success in her art was when she got her promotion.

One day, she was called to the artistic director's office and was given a promotion: to be a soloist. This shows that her talent was so great, she needed a promotion to be even better. One last thing that proves Copeland's success was a music video she was in. She was asked to be in a music video with Prince.



This implies that she was so amazing, even a celebrity wanted her to do something for him. misty's success is what made her what she is. An amazing and talented dancer.

In the passage, Misty Copeland is an artist who's dedicated to her dancing career. Her dedication to dancing is so great because of her determination to succeed and her success. Copeland is an amazing person. with value in her art and her character.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. A strong organizational structure effectively supports the focus and ideas; thorough analysis is interwoven with well-chosen text references throughout the response. The introduction identifies two ways Copeland demonstrates dedication (*She is dedicated to dance because of her determination to succeed and success*). In the first body paragraph, the student develops three ideas, all of which demonstrate Copeland's *determination to succeed*. The first idea (overcoming her late start) is supported by a relevant text reference (*When Copeland originally started taking dancing seriously, she was already 13.*), which connects to thorough analysis (*Even though she had a late start, she overcame it by having lessons taught to her by a serious teacher. This shows she was able to push through even though she wasn't as educated about dancing as others.*). The next idea (coping with her perceived slow career progress) is supported by another well-chosen text reference (*Another time in Copeland's life, she felt as if she was stuck. She wanted to move through ABT's ranks. One of her non-dancing mentors at ABT gave her encouragement by telling her she would eventually get there.*), which connects to more thorough analysis (*This gives the reader the idea that this made Copeland determined to succeed. Eventually, she moved up in rank.*). The third idea (carrying on in a professional manner despite her initial trepidation and stage fright) is also supported with well-chosen text (*One final thing to demonstrate her determination was a time when she knew she made it. She eventually ended up performing on the Metropolitan Opera House Stage.*) and connects with more thorough analysis (*She was terrified and was also amazed at the same time. because she was there. This suggests that her determination led her to an important event in her life.*). Awkwardly worded but insightful analysis sums up the first body paragraph (*Misty's determination has helped her success in her art better than it would've ever been*). The second body paragraph focuses on the second way (*success*) that Copeland demonstrates dedication (*Copeland's success ultimately came because of her dedication*). Again, well-chosen text details support thorough, insightful analysis (*. . . her natural facility. When she was only interested in dancing, she was told she had the physique of a dancer. This detail evidently foreshadows her future career because her early ability to do things not every body could do.*). Another relevant text detail (*One day, she was called to the artistic director's office and was given a promotion: to be a soloist.*) provides support for more clarifying analysis (*This shows that her talent was so great, she needed a promotion to be even better.*). Continuing the pattern, the student presents another piece of relevant text (*She was asked to be in a music video with Prince.*), which is followed by additional thorough analysis (*This implies that she was so amazing, even a celebrity wanted her to do something for him.*). Insightful analysis at the end of the paragraph summarizes the way Copeland's success demonstrates her dedication (*Misty's success is what made her what she is. An amazing and talented dancer.*). The effective conclusion reiterates the ideas presented in the introduction and extends them with an evaluative statement (*Copeland is an amazing person. with value in her art and her character.*). Transitions (*One thing; When; Even though; Another time; Eventually; Another thing; One day; One last thing; This implies*) skillfully link ideas throughout the response. The use of precise language (*ordinary; overcame; seriously; educated; encouragement; amazed; terrified; suggests; foreshadows; celebrity; talented; character*) is effective in conveying Copeland's experiences and life events. Minor errors in spelling (*encouragement; ultimately; foreshadows*) and usage (*was for were; every body for everybody*) do not interfere with meaning.

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STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points

7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Misty Copeland is a dancer who works hard and is extremely dedicated to ballet, her art. Copeland shows this when she got “stuck” when people get “stuck” in life; they generally have two choices. They can either give up, or perservere through it. With the help of Susan Fales-Hill, her sponsor, Copeland got unstuck and continued to work hard at what she loves. This shows dedication because she didn't give up.

Misty Copeland is asked what her career goals are. She replied, “...And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT's first African American female principal.” To even get into ABT is impressive. Copeland worked hard to get there. Yet, she's willing to run the extra mile to become the first African American principal dancer. That definately shows her dedication and willingness to work hard.

Whether it's giving advice to others or getting promoted to a soloist, Copeland never fails to amaze.



When she is asked why she dances, her reply shows her love Of ballet, “Dancing was the first time I felt like I had a voice. It brings me joy—and I can share that joy with other people.” Copeland says she dances for joy, which most people can do. They usually don’t dedicate so much time that they become part of ABT, a soloist, and a role-model to millions of people. Copeland did that, not just for herself but for everyone else. Working extra hard for something that brings you joy shows Misty Copeland’s dedication to her art.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. An appropriate organizational structure adequately supports the focus with logically grouped ideas. After a brief inferential introduction (*Copeland is a dancer who works hard and is extremely dedicated . . .*), the student provides clear analysis in the form of a generalization about perseverance (*when people get “stuck” in life, they generally have two choices. They can either give up, or perservere through it.*), which is supported with relevant text to connect the generalization to Copeland (*With the help of Susan Fales-Hill, her sponsor, Copeland got unstuck and continued to work hard at what she loves.*). More clear analysis (*This shows dedication because she didn’t give up.*) is employed to further clarify the generalization and connect to the task. The next point the student makes about Copeland’s dedication relates to her career goals. A relevant quote (*“...And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT’s first African American female principal.”*) is used to support clear analysis (*To even get into ABT is impressive. Copeland worked hard to get there. Yet, she’s willing to run the extra mile to become the first African American principal dancer. That definately shows her dedication and willingness to work hard.*), all of which convey that Copeland’s achievements are the direct result of her dedication. The last portion of the response focuses on Copeland’s motivation to succeed. The student presents two text references that showcase Copeland’s success (*Whether it’s giving advice to others or getting promoted to a soloist . . .*) and extends them with an evaluative statement (*. . . Copeland never fails to amaze*) to begin the development. More relevant details and a quote (*When she is asked why she dances, her reply shows her love Of ballet, “Dancing was the first time I felt like I had a voice. It brings me joy—and I can share that joy with other people.”*) build toward additional clear analysis (*Copeland says she dances for joy, which most people can do. They usually don’t dedicate so much time that they become part of ABT, a soloist, and a role-model to millions of people. Copeland did that, not just for herself but for everyone else.*). The conclusion (*Working extra hard for something that brings you joy shows Misty Copeland’s dedication to her art.*) reiterates the idea that runs through the entire response—Copeland’s work ethic and dedication. Transitions are used appropriately to link ideas (*When; With the help of; To even; Yet; Whether*). Precise language is employed appropriately (*perservere; impressive; extra mile; amaze*) to convey experiences and events. The few spelling and other errors (*perservere; definately; missing caps*) seldom interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points



7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the passage “Misty Copeland” Margaret Fuhrer shares about Misty Copeland’s dance career. In the passage Misty Copeland an inspiring dancer, answers questions about her dance career. Copeland shows dedication to her art.

First, she didn’t give up even when things got hard and when she didn’t understand. Based on what I read “I was placed in the highest level because physically I could do things, but it was really embarrassing because often I just wouldn’t understand what they were telling me to do.” This proves that she was dedicated, she never quit or gave up. Second, Copeland gives advice for late beginners. In the text “you just have to be that much more focused and dedicated. Put in the extra work—you’ll get there.” This shows she had to do those things to become who she is now. Lastly, Misty Copeland wants to keep working hard to achieve more things. The text states “And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT’s first African American female principal.” This is important because she just doesn’t want to settle for what she is right now. She wants to go above and beyond which shows her dedication.

In the passage “Misty Copeland” Margaret Fuhrer shares about Misty Copeland’s dance career. She shows dedication to dance. Misty Copeland doesn’t give up when things get hard, she gives her own advice to late beginners, lastly she wants to keep working to achieve more. Misty Copeland shows her dedication in dance in many ways.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. An appropriate organizational structure adequately supports the focus by grouping related ideas together. The introduction clearly connects with the text (*Copeland an inspiring dancer, answers questions about her dance career*) and the task (*Copeland shows dedication to her art.*). In the body of the response, the student begins by presenting clear analysis of how Copeland demonstrates dedication (*she didn’t give up even when things got hard and when she didn’t understand*), which is followed by a supporting quote (“*I was placed in the highest level because physically I could do things, but it was really embarrassing because often I just wouldn’t understand what they were telling me to do.*”) and further extended with a strong inference (*This proves that she was dedicated, she never quit or gave up.*). Next, the student provides a quote (“*you just have to be that much more focused and dedicated. Put in the extra work—you’ll get there.*”) that conveys Copeland’s dedication to her art and encouraging others in their artistic pursuits. The quote builds to analysis that is succinct but clear (*This shows she had to do those things to become who she is now.*). The last point the student makes addresses Copeland’s dedication to achieving goals (*Copeland wants to keep working hard to achieve more things*). A text quote identifies one of Copeland’s goals (“*And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT’s first African American female principal.*”). Clear analysis (*This is important because she just doesn’t want to settle for what she is right now. She wants to go above and beyond which shows her dedication.*) clarifies how her dedication allows her to be successful in pursuing her goals. The clear conclusion summarizes how Copeland shows dedication (*She shows dedication to dance. Misty Copeland doesn’t give up when things get hard, she gives her own advice to late beginners, lastly she wants to keep working to achieve more.*). Transitions are formulaic but appropriate (*First; Second; Lastly*), and there is appropriate use of precise language (*inspiring; settle; above and beyond*) throughout the response. The few errors present in sentence formation (run-on; comma splice) and spelling (*thoes; achive*) do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points

7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The way Misty Copeland is dedicated to her art is how she's trying to become the first African-american Principal of ABT.

My text evidence to support that is "And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT's first African American female principal." A second way she's dedicated to her job is that she makes goal's for herself. She makes these goals to get better even tho She is already amazing at what she dose.

In conclusion tho's are some ways Misty Copeland is dedicated to dancing.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. A weak organizational structure inconsistently supports the focus and ideas. The response lacks an introduction. The response opens with a weak inference intended to convey Copeland's dedication to her art (*she's trying to become the first African-american Principal of ABT*). The student then attempts to support the inference with the text quote from which it was paraphrased ("*And I would love to be a principal dancer—ABT's first African American female principal.*"); however, the inference/support is largely circular. Next, the student presents weak analysis (*she makes goal's for herself. She makes these goals to get better even tho She is already amazing at what she dose.*) that only ineffectively supports the focus. The student cites no textual information to support the weak analysis. There is a weak conclusion (*tho's are some ways Misty Copeland is dedicated to dancing*) to end the response. Transitions are employed in limited fashion (*My text evidence to support that is; A second way; In conclusion*) and there is an inconsistent use of precise language (*goals, amazing*). Errors in spelling (*tho; tho's; dose*), capitalization, and punctuation (*goal's for goals; some missing commas*) may sometimes interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

misty copeland is dedicated to the art of ballet. There is lots of evidence in the passage to prove this. For example, she says that if you have a late start in ballet, you can still be good if you put in the extra work. Some more evidence is that when she felt “stuck” she kept going because she had encouragement from Susan. Finally, She wants to be ABT’s first african american female principal, and it’s going to take a lot of hard work and dedication to get there. In conclusion, misty is dedicated to ballet.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The weak introduction identifies a limited controlling idea (*There is lots of evidence in the passage to prove this [Copeland’s dedication].*). Then, using a combination of paraphrasing and weak inferences, the student addresses Copeland’s late start in ballet (*For example, she says that if you have a late start in ballet, you can still be good if you put in the extra work.*). Next, the student presents a weak text reference (*Some more evidence is that when she felt “stuck” . . .*), which connects to a very weak, heavily paraphrased inference (*. . . she kept going because she had encouragement from Susan*). The response then focuses on one of Copeland’s goals (*Finally, She wants to be ABT’s first african american female principal,*). This example is extended with a weak inference (*and it’s going to take a lot of hard work and dedication to get there*) to conclude the response. The weak inferencing, interwoven with limited text references, moves the response beyond a literal interpretation of the text. Transition use is limited (*For example; Some more evidence; Finally; In conclusion*), and there is little use of precise language in the response. The few errors present in capitalization do not seriously interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Copland is an dedicated dancer because she trys alot and doesn't give up no matter what and that is how copeland is a dedicated dancer.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating an inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure or development in this very brief response. The one vague inference, loosely based on the text (*because she trys alot and doesn't give up no matter what*), only minimally supports the student's ideas. The response lacks supporting text details/examples. There is one transition (*because*) and little or no use of precise language. Errors in usage (*an* for *a*), spelling (*trys*; *alot*), sentence formation, and capitalization interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point

7. Misty Copeland is an artist and her art is dance. Write an essay analyzing how Copeland shows dedication to her art. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Misty loves to Dance she danced as a ballet doing spines
and being on her toes she likes swimming to.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating an inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure in this very brief response; ideas are listed at random. There is one simplistic inference (*Misty loves to Dance*) followed by an insufficient text reference (*she danced as a ballet*). Additional details are confused (*doing spines and being on her toes she likes swimming to*) and only minimally connect to ideas in the text. There is one transition (*to[o]*) and little to no use of precise language. Errors in sentence formation (run-ons), punctuation, capitalization, usage (missing words; *to* for *too*; *spines* for *spins*), and spelling (*swiming*) 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

8. Which sentence contains a misspelled word?
- A. I usually accompany my sister to her team practices, but I was too busy to go with her this afternoon.
 - B. It was awkward when a cellphone started ringing loudly in the middle of the serious ceremony.
 - C. The owner of the restaurant received an award from the city council for helping others in the community.
 - D. She had been impatient with her younger brother and now felt ashamed for snapping at him.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	62% (correct answer)
p-value B	19%
p-value C	11%
p-value D	8%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to identify the sentence that contains a misspelled word. Option A is the correct answer since “accompany” is misspelled in the sentence. Options B, C, and D are incorrect because these sentences do not contain any misspelled words.

9. Read the paragraph.

(1) In many areas around the world, highways pass directly through the habitats of many animals. (2) Crossing the roads got really, really hard for some animals. (3) As a result, people have designed and built special bridges and tunnels just for wildlife. (4) These new wildlife crossings allow animals to move over or under the highway safely.

Which sentence should be revised to maintain the style of the paragraph?

- A. sentence 1
- B. sentence 2
- C. sentence 3
- D. sentence 4

Item Information	
Alignment	D.2.1.2
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	15%
p-value B	54% (correct answer)
p-value C	20%
p-value D	11%
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to identify the sentence in the paragraph that needs to be revised so that the style of the paragraph is maintained. Option B is the correct answer since sentence 2 contains informal language which does not match the style of the other sentences in the paragraph. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since all of these sentences in the paragraph maintain the same style.

10. Read the paragraph.

(1) On the day of the student council elections, my opponents and I were nervous. (2) We candidates for president each had to give a speech at the assembly. (3) At the end of the day, the council sponsor announced that I, the last candidate to speak at the assembly, was the winner. (4) My fellow officers and me promised that we would work hard.

Which change should be made to the paragraph to correct the error in pronoun usage?

- A. Change I to me in sentence 1.
- B. Change We to Us in sentence 2.
- C. Change I to me in sentence 3.
- D. Change me to I in sentence 4.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	1
p-value A	4%
p-value B	27%
p-value C	6%
p-value D	63% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is being asked to identify a change that needs to be made to correct a pronoun usage error in the paragraph. Option D is the correct answer because within the context of the sentence, the pronoun “me” should be changed to the pronoun “I.” Options A, B, and C are incorrect since these suggested changes would not correct a pronoun usage error.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS—SAMPLE ITEM SUMMARY DATA

Multiple-Choice and Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	p-value A	p-value B	p-value C	p-value D
1	B-V.4.1.1	B	2	27%	61%	5%	7%
2	B-K.1.1.3	Part One: C Part Two: C	3	Mean Score: 1.23			
3	B-K.1.1.2	C	2	15%	17%	56%	12%
4	B-C.3.1.1	B	2	11%	48%	29%	12%
5	B-K.1.1.1	D	2	11%	18%	33%	38%
6	B-C.2.1.2	Part One: B Part Two: B, D	3	Mean Score: 1.38			
8	D.1.2.2	A	2	62%	19%	11%	8%
9	D.2.1.2	B	2	15%	54%	20%	11%
10	D.1.1.1	D	1	4%	27%	6%	63%

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
7	B-K.1.1.3	4	3	2.01

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PSSA Grade 6 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler

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