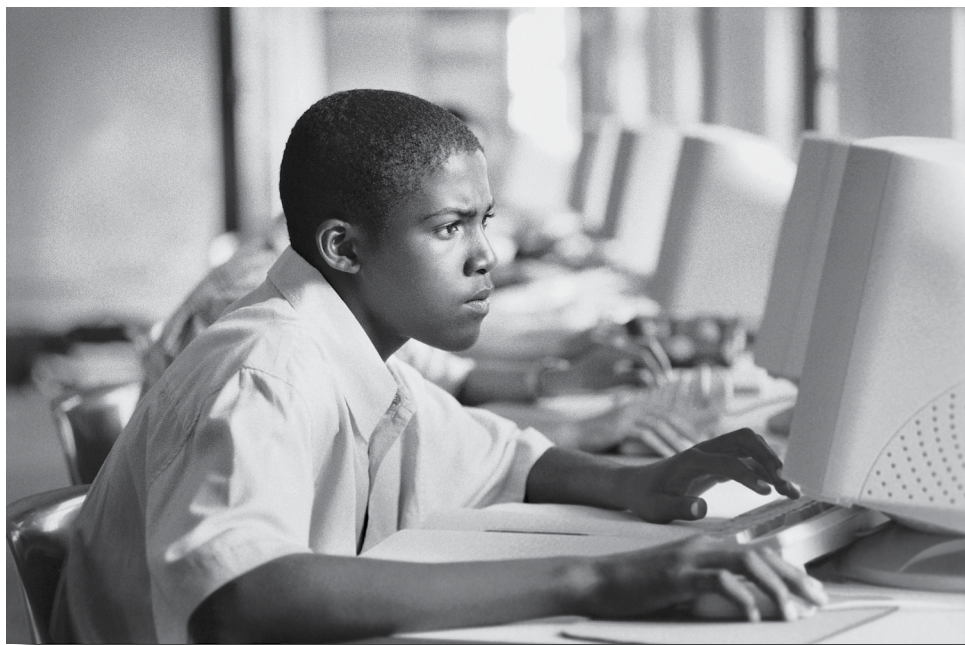




pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

**English Language Arts
Item and Scoring Sampler**



**2024–2025
Grade 7**

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INFORMATION ABOUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

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 test item types and scored student responses. The Item and Scoring 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 Item and Scoring 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 Item and Scoring 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 Item and Scoring 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 TDA prompt in this Item and Scoring Sampler. Educators may then use the Item and Scoring Sampler as a guide to score the responses either independently or together with colleagues within a school or district.

Item Format and Scoring Guidelines

Multiple Choice: Each test question of this type 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 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 and/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

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

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 estimated response time for each item type is listed below.


- **Multiple Choice:** 1.5 minutes
- **Evidenced-Based Selected-Response:** 3 to 5 minutes
- **Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt:** 45 minutes

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

English Language Arts

This English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler is composed of 2 passages, 6 passage-based MC questions, 2 EBSR questions, 1 TDA prompt, and 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 Item and Scoring 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 Item and Scoring 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

Category	Item-Specific 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

Category	Item-Specific 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

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

Example Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt Information Table

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	Assigned AAEC
Depth of Knowledge	Assigned DOK
Mean Score	Average Score

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 7

English Language Arts Test Directions for Reading Passages and Items

Directions

On the following pages are the Reading passage and questions.

Directions for Multiple-Choice Items:

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 different ways of identifying people. Then answer questions 1–8 in your answer booklet.

Biometrics and Fingerprints

by Maria Birmingham

You are one in a million. Actually, if we include all the people roaming the planet, you're more like one in 7.4 *billion*. (But who's counting?) There are lots of things that make you stand out from the gigantic human crowd. Your ideas, values, and beliefs are an important part of what make you an individual.

Your physical features play a big role in your uniqueness, too. Each day, you're recognized as "you" because of the way you look. And you recognize those who are important in your life just the same way. For instance, when you spot a family member getting out of a car, you know that person immediately based on appearance. And that person knows you just by glancing your way.

Now think about your fingerprints. No one else in the world has prints that match yours. The same goes for everyone else out there. Since the late 1800s, scientists have used fingerprints to accurately identify people.

It doesn't end with your physical appearance, though. You may recognize a friend from a distance based solely on the way he walks. You're familiar with the unique way he moves and know it almost instantly. A person's voice is also very distinctive. If your best friend calls you on the phone, chances are you'll know it's her as soon as you hear her voice.

We humans rely on our natural ability to recognize people by their many traits—both physical ones and aspects of behavior. Now we've entered a new era where computers are doing the same thing, analyzing our bodies and behaviors to identify us. This has turned the human body into a form of identification—an ID that we never forget to carry with us.

Biometrics is the name for the science of using the body to identify a person. The word "biometrics" comes from the Greek *bio* (meaning "life") and *metron* (meaning "measure"). This technology measures unique physical traits, such as our ear shape, scent, or vein patterns, to identify us. It can also ID us by analyzing how we perform a specific task, such as talking or typing.

Biometrics is really based on the age-old fact that there is no one else like you on Earth. And that makes your body the ultimate ID.

So why is identification so important?

The bottom line is that it confirms we are who we say we are. It proves that we have the right to be in a certain place, do a certain thing, or receive a certain item or service. In our daily lives, we need identification if we want to go to school, sign up for a sports team, visit the doctor, or travel outside the country. ID is sometimes necessary if we want to gain access to a building or to information on a computer.

Who are you?

In ancient times, we identified a person by little more than physical appearance. Over time, we've turned to stronger methods of ID, such as birth certificates and driver's licenses. These documents offer details like our birth date, a simple physical description, and even a photo. They're something you can hold in your possession and present to prove that you are you.

What's the password?

Passwords are another common form of ID. They're a word or a series of characters that are meant to be something only you know. Passwords allow us to access computers, devices, bank machines, social media accounts, and way more. But they have their own long history. Thousands of years ago, people relied on passwords to determine if someone was "one of them." For instance, a Roman soldier might have challenged a person to say the secret password—and prove he was an ally—before he could enter a particular region.

A Hacker Attack

While passwords and identification documents have been used successfully for years, they are far from perfect. Pieces of ID can be copied or faked. And there are more and more instances of passwords being cracked or stolen. In fact, in the past several years, tens of millions of passwords have been stolen by criminals hacking into the databases of major stores and banks. This has led to an increase in identity theft—when someone pretends to be somebody else. Identity theft allows thieves to get their hands on other people's private information, property, and money. It's a big problem. And this is where biometrics comes in.

Who do you think you are?

In the world of identification, biometrics is a game changer. Rather than depending on passwords or documents—things that you *know* or *own*, but that can be easily copied or stolen—biometrics focuses on who you *are*. Since your body and its specific traits are a part of you, they can't be misplaced or taken, and they're extremely difficult to duplicate. Biometrics takes advantage of the fact that no two people are exactly alike.

Follow These Steps

There are two stages involved in using biometrics to prove your identity. The first one is called *enrollment*. In this stage, a biometric system gets to know you for the first time by collecting a sample, such as a fingerprint or an iris pattern. During the second stage, called *verification*, identification is confirmed by comparing your original sample—known as the *template*—to another sample that you submit in the future.

The More the Merrier

You may be wondering why there are so many different biometric methods. Isn't it enough to use, say, our fingerprints to prove our identity and call it a day? Why bother with our face, eyes, ears, hands, and so on? Well, for one thing, no biometric method is 100 percent foolproof. So experts continue to search for that one flawless method that'll leave all the others behind. But our curiosity may be the biggest reason for the growing interest in biometrics. Humans, especially scientists, are always on the lookout for an original idea. So when we come up with a new one, we just have to try it out to see how well it works!

Fingerprints

While the concept of biometrics may be new to you, you're probably very familiar with the most common biometric method used to ID a person—fingerprinting. Those ridges found on the tips of your fingers formed before you were born, and they remain the same throughout your lifetime. Every person has distinctive prints—even those of identical twins are different from one another. These fingerprint patterns are more than a series of fancy loops and whorls. In the world of biometrics, they are your own portable password, unlocking rooms, buildings, and devices.

Catching a Break

Tiny details within a fingerprint—called minutiae (ma-NU-she-ah)—are critical when it comes to identifying a person. These small breaks in the print's ridges are what make your fingerprints so unique. Computer software examines these minutiae to figure out whether one fingerprint matches another.

Where It All Began

Throughout human history, fingerprints have been used as a type of signature. They were always considered a personal mark of an individual, but our ancient ancestors probably didn't realize that they could uniquely identify a person. The idea that no two fingerprints are exactly the same came about in the 1820s, when a Czech biologist named Jan Evangelista Purkinje made this observation. Even then, it took another sixty years before anyone suggested using fingerprints to ID an individual. That's when a Scottish doctor named Henry Faulds published an article about just that. Soon after, a system for classifying fingerprints was developed by the British scientist Francis Galton. His method of fingerprint identification is still used by experts to this day.

Where can you see it?

Here are a few of the places where fingerprints have made their mark.

- A Canadian company designed a bike lock with a built-in fingerprint scanner. It will unlock only with the owner's print.
- Several smartphones and tablets use fingerprint verification to keep the devices secure.
- An American credit card has a built-in fingerprint scanner. The card can be used only after the cardholder swipes a finger across the sensor.

Still to come?

An American company is developing a scanner that will read fingerprints from a distance of 20 ft. (6 m) away. If successful, this could completely change the way that fingerprint scanning is done, allowing people to be identified without placing their fingers on a biometric sensor. While it sounds ultra-cool, this new technology does raise concerns about privacy. With this system, fingerprints could potentially be collected without a person even being aware that it's happening. And shouldn't we be able to choose when and if we want to share our ID with others?

Scientists in South Korea have discovered a new way of analyzing fingerprints. It turns out we all have unique sweat pores on our fingertips. The experts hope to learn how to map the patterns of these pores so they may one day be used as identification.

Multiple-Choice Items

1. Read the sentence from the passage.

“A person’s voice is also very distinctive.”

Which word **best** replaces the word “distinctive” without changing the meaning of the sentence?

- A. effective
- B. familiar
- C. pleasing
- D. unique

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-V.4.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	11%
p-value B	27%
p-value C	4%
p-value D	58% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the word that best replaces the word “distinctive” without changing the meaning of the sentence. Option D is the correct answer since a synonym of the word “distinctive” is “unique.” Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they are not synonyms for “distinctive” and do not make sense in the context of the passage.

2. How does the section titled “A Hacker Attack” contribute to the purpose of the passage?
- A. It reviews the methods criminals use to illegally access computers.
 - B. It explores the flaws in identification systems that need improvements.
 - C. It emphasizes the steps that people can take to protect their passwords online.
 - D. It describes the consequences that result from failing to protect personal information.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-C.2.1.2
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	27%
p-value B	43% (correct answer)
p-value C	9%
p-value D	21%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine how the section titled “A Hacker Attack” contributes to the purpose of the passage. Option B is the correct answer since this section explains how ID documents can be stolen or faked, showing that current systems for confirming one’s identify need improvement. This contributes to the purpose since the passage explains how biometrics is the future of proving one’s identity. Option A is incorrect; although the section does state that hackers access databases to steal personal information, this fact does not contribute to the purpose of the passage. Option C is incorrect since this section does not discuss steps that people can take to protect their passwords online. Option D is incorrect; although the section does mention that identity theft can result from unprotected passwords, this fact does not relate to the purpose of the passage.

3. Which conclusion about identity theft is **best** supported by the passage?
- A. Every protection method is vulnerable in some way.
 - B. Creating unique passwords is necessary to protect accounts.
 - C. Businesses are at a greater risk compared to the general public.
 - D. New technologies will ensure that the rate of hacking decreases.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-K.1.1.1
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	46% (correct answer)
p-value B	20%
p-value C	7%
p-value D	27%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the conclusion about identity theft that is best supported by the passage. Option A is the correct answer; even though different methods have been devised to protect one’s identity, many of them have been manipulated or attacked. Option B is incorrect since unique passwords have been “cracked or stolen.” Option C is incorrect since the passage states that ID documents can be “copied or faked,” which can happen to the general public. Option D is incorrect; the passage states that “no biometric method is 100 percent foolproof” and that “experts continue to search for that one flawless method.”

4. Which detail from the passage provides the **best** evidence that using biometric identification has advantages over using other forms of identification?
- A. “For instance, when you spot a family member getting out of a car, you know that person immediately based on appearance.”
 - B. “We humans rely on our natural ability to recognize people by their many traits . . .”
 - C. “While passwords and identification documents have been used successfully for years, they are far from perfect.”
 - D. “Since your body and its specific traits are a part of you, they can’t be misplaced or taken . . .”

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	13%
p-value B	14%
p-value C	21%
p-value D	52% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the detail from the passage that provides the best evidence to support the claim that biometric identification has advantages over other forms of identification. Option D is the correct answer; the use of a person’s unique body for identification is an advantage that biometrics has over passwords and documents. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they do not relate to how biometric identification has advantages over other types of identification.

5. Which sentence from the passage **best** develops the central idea that fingerprints are an effective form of biometric identification?
- A. “Every person has distinctive prints—even those of identical twins are different from one another.”
 - B. “Throughout human history, fingerprints have been used as a type of signature.”
 - C. “Several smartphones and tablets use fingerprint verification to keep the devices secure.”
 - D. “The experts hope to learn how to map the patterns of these pores so they may one day be used as identification.”

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-K.1.1.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	62% (correct answer)
p-value B	16%
p-value C	14%
p-value D	8%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the sentence from the passage that best develops the central idea that fingerprints are an effective form of biometric identification. Option A is the correct answer; this sentence emphasizes that biometrics are truly unique for each person, thus making them a more effective means of identification and of preventing identity theft. Options B and C are incorrect; although these sentences provide facts about fingerprints, they do not relate to fingerprints being an effective form of biometric identification. Option D is incorrect since it relates to a method of identification that is still being developed.

Evidence-Based Selected-Response Items

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

Part One

Based on the passage, why are there many biometric identification processes?

- A. Different processes of biometric identification provide varying degrees of protection.
- B. No single process for proving identity has been determined to be completely secure.
- C. Scientists have competed to develop the best biometric identification process ever since the first process of this kind was introduced.
- D. Unique processes for proving identity have been needed in recent years since people figured out that fingerprints are easy to duplicate.

Part Two

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

- A. “Biometrics takes advantage of the fact that no two people are exactly alike.”
- B. “In this stage, a biometric system gets to know you for the first time by collecting a sample, such as a fingerprint or an iris pattern.”
- C. “So experts continue to search for that one flawless method that’ll leave all the others behind.”
- D. “They were always considered a personal mark of an individual, but our ancient ancestors probably didn’t realize that they could uniquely identify a person.”

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-K.1.1.3
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
Mean Score	0.88
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine why there are so many biometric identification processes and to select the evidence from the passage that supports this idea.</p> <p>Part One: Option B is the correct answer; fingerprints, sweat pores, and iris patterns are all types of biometric identification techniques that are being used or developed since no one source has proven to be completely “foolproof.” Option A is incorrect since the passage does not state that the different processes “provide varying degrees of protection.” Option C is incorrect; although scientists have explored different biometric methods, there is no evidence in the passage that scientists have competed to find the best biometric identification process ever since the first such process was introduced. Option D is incorrect; since fingerprints are unique to each person, there is no evidence in the passage suggesting that fingerprints can be easily duplicated.</p> <p>Part Two: Option C is the correct answer; the fact that “experts continue to search for that one flawless method” supports the idea that there is no one perfect identification method yet. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since they do not support the idea that current biometric methods are not completely secure.</p>

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

Part One

Which claim is supported by the information in the passage?

- A. Numerical passwords protect against the risk of theft and fraud.
- B. Biometrics provides the most accurate source of personal identification.
- C. Fingerprints and irises are biometric measures that change as a person grows.
- D. Identification cards will always be necessary to drive a car or register for school.

Part Two

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

- A. “Biometrics is really based on the age-old fact that there is no one else like you on Earth. And that makes your body the ultimate ID.”
- B. “These documents offer details like our birth date, a simple physical description, and even a photo.”
- C. “Passwords allow us to access computers, devices, bank machines, social media accounts, and way more.”
- D. “These small breaks in the print’s ridges are what make your fingerprints so unique.”

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	A, D
Depth of Knowledge	2
Mean Score	1.77
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine which given claim is supported by information in the passage and to identify the two pieces of evidence that support this claim.</p> <p>Part One: Option B is the correct answer since biometric methods, which use body features, are the most secure form of identification. Option A is incorrect since no password protects completely against fraud and theft. Option C is incorrect since fingerprints and iris patterns are consistent throughout a person’s life. Option D is incorrect since the passage states that “biometrics is a game changer” since it uses parts of the body that are very difficult to replicate or steal, as opposed to identification cards.</p> <p>Part Two: Options A and D are the correct answers; the use of “no one else like you on Earth” and “what make your fingerprints so unique” supports the claim in Part One that biometrics offers the most accurate source of personal identification. Options B and C are incorrect since they do not relate at all to biometrics.</p>

Multiple-Choice Item

8. Which statement **best** describes the author’s purpose for writing the passage?
- A. The author’s purpose is to urge people to learn how to protect their identification online.
 - B. The author’s purpose is to argue that the public should be concerned about the use of new identification devices.
 - C. The author’s purpose is to introduce the concept of biometric identification and explain how different forms are used.
 - D. The author’s purpose is to inform about identification methods that have been used in the past and how they have changed.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	B-C.2.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	10%
p-value B	7%
p-value C	59% (correct answer)
p-value D	24%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the author’s purpose for writing the passage. Option C is the correct answer; the focus of the passage is to explain biometrics and to explain how different biometric methods function. Option A is incorrect; although the passage does discuss passwords used online, it does not offer suggestions for how people should protect their identification online. Option B is incorrect; although the passage mentions that the use of fingerprint scanning “does raise concerns about privacy,” it is not the author’s purpose to argue that the public should be worried about this technology. Option D is incorrect; although the passage does mention that people in ancient times, people were identified by “physical appearance” and how more recently people used birth certificates and driver’s licenses as identification, the purpose is not to explain how identification methods from the past have changed over time.

Passage 2

Read the following passage about finches living in a classroom. Then answer question 9 in your answer booklet.

The Finch

by Lauren Orme

Not everyone considers their classrooms at night. Dull, mute corridors contrast with the echoes of daytime shouts and chatter. The life of a school goes out with the sun. In the darkened classroom with the number 268, there was a little sign of life. A small reminder of the animated day. A tiny bird, a finch, was hopping methodically across her cage.

Room 268 was a science classroom, and the teacher who occupied it kept finches. She liked them because they were tough, not needing all the special equipment a fish or reptile requires. She liked the birds' brave and curious nature and appreciated that though they always had something to say, they said it quietly enough.

This particular finch was hopping in and out of the single beam of yellow illumination coming from outside. Every few hops she would stop and squint down at the newspaper that covered the floor of her cage. Her head would move slowly, and then off she'd go again, bouncing along, shifting position. It looked exactly like what was truly happening. The finch was reading.

Nimbus was a zebra finch. She was a dusty gray color with black and white bands on her tail and eyes. Her beak was the fiery orange of a sunset she had never seen. Had she known what they were, Nimbus would have loved sunsets. Sunsets meant evening, and evening meant she could learn more about the world. The dim light cast by the lamp outside was a poor substitute for the daylight during school hours, but Nimbus dared not read then. Daytime was for absorbing as much of the lessons as she could, trying hard not to sneak glances at the tempting words below.

Nimbus fluttered to the coconut birdhouse and perched on top, causing it to swing wildly. She poked her head inside and saw Zephyr. If Nimbus was small, Zephyr was tiny in comparison. Half the size of a normal zebra finch, Zephyr was very light brown, almost white, with delicate stripes along her back and eyes. But she more than made up for her size with her audacious spirit.

Nimbus fluttered her wings, causing the coconut to swing more wildly still.

Zephyr giggled. "Faster, Nim!"

Nimbus started giggling, too. She couldn't help herself. Soon, the birds were whirling and bouncing, twittering with glee as the coconut whizzed around. As usual, just as the pair was having the most amount of fun, an irritated voice erupted across the cage.

"Stop that maniacal swinging at once! Really, you'd think it was a spring day the way you two are whirling about." Luna, the oldest and largest finch, fluffed her snow-white feathers indignantly. Nimbus peeked into the coconut just in time to see Zephyr puff her feathers and waggle her beak in secret imitation as Luna continued, unaware of the mockery.

“It’s bad enough being subject to incessant noise by those *insufferable* children during the day, and their dreadful cage rattling is enough to shake my feathers right out. Just when a poor bird thinks she can get some quiet solitude, you two start beleaguering my ears with your silly acrobatics!” Luna concluded with a “Humph!” and a punctuating feather fluff.

The grump of the finch trio, Luna only craved peace. Nimbus immediately felt sorry. Luna’s size often made her the subject of extra attention during the school day. And her reactions to noise were entertaining to the children, who would rap the sides of the cage to watch her flutter.

Nimbus glided to the perch next to Luna and began to groom her neck feathers. “Poor Luna, I’m sorry you had a bad day,” Nimbus soothed. “Would you like me to read to you the funnies?”

“Humph! Indeed not. Reading is a dreadful habit that should be kept to humans. It is absolutely unnatural to get information from the newspaper the way you do.”

Nimbus knew this would be Luna’s first reaction. It usually was. Nimbus gently disagreed. “I hear you, but just think of all the information we’ve learned from those papers! And about the world outside! We’d never know there were such wonders as sky and trees and starlight if it weren’t for reading.”

The coconut began to bounce and twirl again as Zephyr joyfully chattered, “The world! The world! Tell us more about the world, Nim!” A burst of song exploded from the coconut.

The birds had never known about the world outside until the day Nimbus discovered words. She remembered when understanding had hit her like a thunderbolt.

B-i-r-d. A word written on the teacher’s whiteboard. “Bird,” the teacher had said, along with a string of other words. But her human finger had stopped at the word as she made the sound. It was a word Nimbus had seen before. It was on the cage. People had looked at her and said it. *She* was a bird.

In time, the teacher’s simple habit of pointing to words on the board and saying them aloud helped Nimbus discover more. Before the month was out, she had learned a bit of geography, weather, and astronomy, gobbling up the information like millet seeds. Most important, she had learned about the sky, flight, and a world beyond the school door filled with many other birds. This information jolted Nimbus’s brain like electricity. It meant there was more to discover. More to life. It answered a question in Nimbus’s heart she had always possessed but could not name. Something *more* was out there.

In time, with practice and patience, Nimbus could read the newspapers. She was never able to choose the information, of course, but there was enough about weather and geography to build her knowledge and keep her thirsty for more.

Luna pretended to be above it all. She huffed and hooted with indignity. “Birds we may be,” she scolded, “but birds we shall also remain. We are safe and well-fed in this habitat, and I shudder to think of the trials and tribulations lying in wait outside.”

Though Luna and Zephyr never learned to read, Nimbus read to them. Luna loved the principle of long and important-sounding words. Zephyr liked the sports.

“Coming in from the outfield . . .,” she would screech while flying madly about the cage, “. . . the five-time world champion . . .” *Zoom!* “. . . tournament-cup winning . . .” *Zoom!* “. . . all-starrrr makes aaaa GOAAAL!” *Zoooom!*

“The world. Out there.” Nimbus loved the sound of the words. As she began to speak, Zephyr fluttered from the coconut down to her favorite spot—sandwiched between Nimbus and Luna.

Nimbus talked of air that moved, of different temperatures in the sky, of swirling clouds, of trees, and of nights filled with stars.

“I wish I could go,” Zephyr whispered.

“I would take us all if I could!” Nimbus promised.

As was often the case, Luna was cautious. “The world out there is big, and we know very little. What we do know comes from words, which aren’t a part of nature, and only one of us understands them. We are safe and comfortable here. Be grateful.” She shuffled on her perch as if settling down forever.

“But are we happy?” Zephyr asked.

Nimbus’s brain didn’t know the answer to that question, but her heart did. Only, how do you share what there are no words for? She knew the best chance they would have “out there” was together. They were a team of brave, brain, and caution. And they loved each other. Alone was not the answer.

It didn’t matter anyway. Without the ability to escape, they would never have the choice of leaving. So Nimbus continued to read and to listen, hoping one day she would discover the words that described the thought in her heart.

The right words came one day in late spring. The yawning teacher shuffled in, carrying heavy-looking bags and her daily cup of horrible-smelling brown liquid. After the first group of students arrived, it was clear they were beginning new lessons. Normally, new subjects were filled with different words she didn’t understand, and Nimbus would despair at the learning she was missing. But “Physics” was different. It sounded interesting, and Nimbus leaned forward eagerly on her perch.

“Physics” was filled with words that were familiar, like push, force, pull, down, air, up, action, and reaction. Movements and ideas went with the sounds in new ways, teaching Nimbus what it was that finally changed everything. It took several class periods with the same lesson on “Simple Machines” for the words and motions to make sense. But it wasn’t new! She had seen them somewhere. Memory tugged at Nimbus’s mind the way Zephyr yanked on her feathers.

That moment, Luna, dozing in a ray of sunlight, shifted a bit in her sleep. The light around her changed and suddenly illuminated words faintly etched in the bottom corner of the cage. Nimbus had seen the words a hundred times before. She even knew what they were individually. But that day, in the glowing shaft of afternoon sunlight, Nimbus read what the words meant, and that idea in her heart, that instinct, burst forth into a possibility, an option of freedom. She read, “To Open Cage, Turn Latch and Pull Up.”

And Nimbus understood.

That evening, after school had ended, the janitor opened the door to Room 268 to wheel in the cleaning cart. It had been a warm and windy day. The sunset glowed pink, yellow, and the same fiery orange color of a zebra finch beak. On top of the school roof, feathers ruffled in their first spring breeze as the sinking sun in all its colors was viewed by three new pairs of eyes.

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Writer’s Checklist for the Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

PLAN before you write

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

FOCUS while you write

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

PROOFREAD after you write

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

GO ON 

Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guidelines

#9 Item Information

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	A-K.1.1.2
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	2.10

Assessment Anchor:

E07.A-K.1—Key Ideas and Details

Specific Assessment Anchor Descriptor addressed by this item:

E07.A-K.1.1.2—Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Item-Specific Scoring Guideline

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

 **Computer Response Score: 4 points**

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The theme of the short story “The Finch” by Lauren Orme is “You never know until you try”. The question, “ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.” relates to the theme in two ways. One way Zephyr’s question relates to the theme is that it gives Nimbus motivation to learn new things. The other way the question relates to the theme is that it gives the finches motivation to escape their cage. That is how Zephyr’s question relates to the theme.

One way Zephyr’s question relates to the theme is that it gives Nimbus motivation to learn new things. In the story, it says, “So Nimbus continued to read and listen, hoping one day she would discover the words that described the thought in her heart. The right words came one day in late spring.” Wanting but not having an answer to Zephyr’s question gave Nimbus motivation to keep learning and find the right words to answer the question. Nimbus’s urge to learn led her to learn physics. That is one way that Zephyr’s question relates to the theme of the story.

The other way that Zephyr’s question relates to the theme is that it ended up causing their escape. In the story, it states, “But that day, in the glowing shaft of afternoon sunlight, Nimbus read what the words meant, and that idea in her heart, that instinct, burst forth into a possibility, an option of freedom. She read ‘To Open Cage, Turn Latch and Pull Up.’ And Nimbus understood.” This proves that because of Zephyr’s question, Nimbus was motivated to learn physics which led to her learning how to open their cage and escape. This shows that if Nimbus, Luna and Zephyr truly wanted to know if they’d be happy if they escaped, they’d have to try it. That is the other reason that Zephyr’s question relates to the theme.

In “The Finch”, a short story written by Laruen Orme, the theme is “You never know until you try”. The question, “ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.” relates to the theme in two ways. One way is that the question gave Nimbus motivation to learn new things. The other reason the question relates to the theme is that it led to the three finches escaping their cage. That is how Zephyr’s question relates to the theme.

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 of showing how the quote relates to the theme in two ways. The student begins the effective introduction by stating the theme (“*You never know until you try*”). Next, the student provides a controlling idea that focuses on how the theme relates to the question given in the prompt (*The question . . . relates to the theme in two ways. One way Zephyr’s question relates to the theme is that it gives Nimbus motivation to learn new things. The other way the question relates to the theme is that it gives the finches motivation to escape their cage*). The first body paragraph begins with effective analysis that addresses the question’s relationship to the theme (*One way Zephyr’s question relates to the theme is that it gives Nimbus motivation to learn new things*). Next, a well-chosen text reference (“*So Nimbus continued to read and listen, hoping one day she would discover the words that described the thought in her heart*”) provides context for the thorough analysis that follows (*Wanting but not having an answer to Zephyr’s question gave Nimbus motivation to keep learning and find the right words to answer the question. Nimbus’s urge to learn led her to learn physics*). The next paragraph also incorporates strong analysis (*The other way that Zephyr’s question relates to the theme is that it ended up causing their escape*) that is supported with well-chosen text (“*But that day, in the glowing shaft of afternoon sunlight, Nimbus read what the words meant*”). Additional thorough analysis (*This proves that because of Zephyr’s question, Nimbus was motivated to learn physics which led to her learning how to open their cage and escape. This shows that if Nimbus, Luna and Zephyr truly wanted to know if they’d be happy if they escaped, they’d have to try it*) completes the response’s development. The effective conclusion reiterates the controlling idea (*One way is that the question gave Nimbus motivation to learn new things. The other reason the question relates to the theme is that it led to the three finches escaping their cage*), providing a sense of completeness to the response. Transitions are skillfully used throughout the response (*One/the other way, Wanting but not having, This shows that if, In “The Finch”, The question, That is how*), and an effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*motivation/motivated, Wanting but not having, escape/escaping, keep learning, find the right words, urge, physics, causing, proves, because, learn/learning, truly, led*) is also evident. There are no errors that interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the fiction story, “The Finch” by Lauren Orme, Zephyr’s question connects to the theme of the story because the bird asks a question that helps the other birds find their purpose. By asking, “But are we happy?” on page 40, he is questioning how he and the other finches feel, connecting to the theme of don’t quit, you have to find a way because they are putting themselves in danger to do what is best in their hearts.

First, on page 40 the author writes, “It didn’t matter anyways. Without the ability to escape, they would never have the chance of leaving. So Nimbus continued to read and listen, hoping one day she would discover the words described in her heart.” This shows that Nimbus knew she couldn’t do anything yet, but kept working towards her ultimate goal of escaping. Also on page 40, the author writes, “Nimbus’s brain didn’t know the answer to the question, but her heart did,” and “She knew the best chance they had out there was together. This shows that

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even though her brain didn't know, she knew exactly what she wanted and how to get it. Second, the eventually found their way to where they wanted to be. This is shown on page 41, where the text states "The sunset glowed pink, yellow, and the same fiery orange of a zebra finch beak. On top of the school roof, feathers ruffled in their first spring breeze as the sinking sun in all its colors was viewed by three new pairs of eyes." This shows they didn't quit and kept going to achieve the goal of being happy. If they quit, they wouldn't of found their hearts's potentials.

In conclusion, Zephyr's question allowed them to keep going even though they felt the cage was unescapeable. Without the question, how would Nimbus find her heart's goal? How would they gain the drive to achieve their goal? How would someone in the real world find their purpose if they don't know how to start?



This response effectively addresses all parts of the task demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. A strong organizational structure effectively supports the student's ideas and helps to maintain a consistent focus on the task. The effective introduction incorporates thorough analysis and clearly identifies a relevant theme (*because the bird asks a question that helps the other birds find their purpose. By asking, "But are we happy?" on page 40, he is questioning how he and the other finches feel, connecting to the theme of don't quit, you have to find a way because they are putting themselves in danger to do what is best in their hearts*). In the main body paragraph, the student develops the response around the stated theme, demonstrating a well-planned organizational structure that is evident throughout the response. Starting with a relevant quote (*"It didn't matter anyways. Without the ability to escape, they would never have the chance of leaving. So Nimbus continued to read and listen, hoping one day she would discover the words described in her heart"*), the student incorporates strong analysis (*This shows that Nimbus knew she couldn't do anything yet, but kept working towards her ultimate goal of escaping*) that ties directly to the theme (*don't quit, you have to find a way*). Next, more relevant text (*"Nimbus's brain didn't know the answer to the question, but her heart did"* and *"She knew the best chance they had out there was together"*) is employed to support additional thorough analysis (*This shows that even though her brain didn't know, she knew exactly what she wanted and how to get it. Second, the[y] eventually found their way to where they wanted to be*). The development is extended with another well-chosen text selection (*"The sunset glowed pink, yellow, and the same fiery orange of a zebra finch beak . . . the sinking sun in all it's colors was viewed by three new pairs of eyes"*) that is clarified with more thorough analysis (*This shows they didn't quit and kept going to achieve the goal of being happy. If they quit, they wouldn't of found their hearts's potentials*), all while maintaining a strong focus on the stated theme. The conclusion employs a strong inference (*Zephyr's question allowed them to keep going even though they felt the cage was unescapeable*) to provoke a series of perceptive rhetorical questions (*Without the question, how would Nimbus find her heart's goal? How would they gain the drive to achieve their goal?*). The final rhetorical question (*How would someone in the real world find their purpose if they don't know how to start?*) incorporates a thoughtful generalization that effectively concludes the response. There is a skillful use of transitions throughout the response (*because, By asking, on page, First/Second, This shows/This is shown on/where, Also on, and, If, In conclusion, Without the question*) and an effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*find their purpose, connecting, yet, towards, ultimate goal of escaping, exactly, eventually, found their way, quit, achieve, hearts's potential, unescapeable, drive, real world*). The few errors present do not interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

**Computer Response Score: 3 points**

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Everybody always wants to step forward in life. To make an advancement, meet a new goal, etc. And these three birds work to meet theirs.

But to start off, what is the theme? And, how does it relate to the quote? The theme is that working hard for your goal may seem hard todo, but it will be complete at some point. And the quote relates to the theme by asking a question that would start the action of trying to accomplish a new goal to acheive newfound standards to life.

Evidence in the passage for this could be found basically anywhere. But the strongest piece can be found near the end where Nimbus gets fixated on reading at the time and then a science unit comes up. Nimbus then gets taught new words and then reads the instruction to open the lock with ease. “She read, “To Open Cage, Turn Latch, and Pull up.” she follows these steps and all of the birds live in freedom and comfort knowing that they’ve accomplished lifes goals.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure adequately supports the student’s focus and ideas. The introduction incorporates a generalization with clear analysis (*Everybody always wants to step forward in life. To make an advancement, meet a new goal, etc. And these three birds work to meet theirs*). In the first body paragraph, the student employs rhetorical questions to engage the reader (*But to start off, what is the theme? And, how does it relate to the quote?*). These are followed by clear analysis (*The theme is that working hard for your goal may seem hard todo, but it will be complete at some point. And the quote relates to the theme by asking a question that would start the action of trying to accomplish a new goal to acheive newfound standards to life*) that connects to both the theme and the quote. The next paragraph incorporates more clear analysis with relevant text (*Evidence in the passage for this could be found basically anywhere. But the strongest piece can be found near the end where Nimbus gets fixated on reading at the time and then a science unit comes up. Nimbus then gets taught new words and then reads the instruction to open the lock with ease*). Next, a relevant quote is provided (*“She read, “To Open Cage, Turn Latch, and Pull up”*). This is followed by additional clear analysis (*she follows these steps and all of the birds live in freedom and comfort knowing that they’ve accomplished lifes goals*) to conclude the response. There is an appropriate use of transitions to link ideas (*But to start off, A/and, B/but, by, where, then*) throughout the response as well as an appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*Everybody, always, forward, advancement, meet a new goal, trying, accomplish, acheive, newfound standards, Evidence, basically anywhere, strongest, fixated, taught, ease, Freedom, comfort, knowing, accomplished lifes goals*). Minor errors present in sentence formation, spelling (*acheive*), and punctuation seldom interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In the story, "The Finch" a finch named Zephyr asks a question of are they happy. This question relates to a theme that the story is based on.

One way the question relates is when the context is taken into consideration. Nimbus wants for them to see the world. But in the story, Luna says, "The world out there is big, and we know very little. What we do know comes from words, which aren't a part of nature, and only one of us understands them. We are safe and comfortable here. Be grateful." And then shortly after, Zephyr asks, "Are we happy?" which can be put to, Are we happy where it is safe and comfortable but not much more? This shows how it relates to a theme in a passage, where Luna wants to stay and be safe while the others want to leave and explore.

GO ON 

Another way you could put it as it also relates to the theme is, "Are we happy with our choice?" Luna is choosing to stay somewhere where she doesn't even like it. The kids are noisy and play with Luna, which is something she doesn't like. As, from the story, "And her reactions to noise were entertaining to the children, who would rap the sides of the cage to watch her flutter." This shows how Zephyr's question relates more and more. As Luna's choice becomes more questionable.

Zephyr's question in, "The Finch" relates to the theme of the story as his question also leads to the ending, of them finally escaping.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The organizational structure adequately supports the student's focus and ideas. The introduction begins with a paraphrasing of the task (*In the Story, "The finch" a finch named Zephyr asks a question of are they happy. This question relates to a theme that the Story is based on*). The response continues with clear analysis (*One way the question relates is when the context is taken into consideration. Nimbus wants for them to See the world*) interspersed with key details (*But in the Story, Luna Says, "The world out there is big, and we know very little. . . . Be grateful"* and *Shortly after, Zephyr asks, "Are we happy?"*), all of which support the writer's purpose. Next, the student provides additional clear analysis (*Which can be put to, Are we happy where it is safe and comfortable but not much more? This Shows how it relates to a theme in a passage, where Luna wants to stay and be Safe while the others want to leave and explore*) that addresses the question given in the prompt. In the next paragraph, the student delves deeper into the question of whether the birds should stay or go by incorporating more clear analysis with relevant text details (*Another way you could put it as it also relates to the theme is, "Are we happy with our choice?" Luna is choosing to Stay Somewhere where she doesn't even like it. The Kids are noisy and play with Luna, Which is something she doesn't like*). The development is extended with specific text references used for support (*As, from the story, "And her reactions to noise were entertaining to the children"*) followed by more clear analysis (*This Shows how Zephyr's question relates more and more. As Luna's choice becomes more questionable*). The clear conclusion ties directly back to the task (*Zephyr's question in, "The Finch" relates to the theme of the Story as his question also leads to the ending, of them finally escaping*) to provide a sense of completeness to the response. Transition use is appropriate (*In/But in/As, from the story, One way, And then Shortly after, Which can be put to, This Shows how, Another way you could put it*), as is the use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*context, consideration, explore, choosing, choice, questionable, finally escaping*). The errors present (mostly random and/or missing capitalization and punctuation) seldom interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE**Computer Response Score: 2 points**

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Zephyr’s question relates to a theme by showing how each finch thinks. Luna has a complete different way of thinking on how she wants to live her life, while the others want to do the opposite.

In the story, three finches are the class pet of a science class. One of them, Nimbus, learns how to read from analyzing the science lessons. She commonly read to the other finches about the outside world and what it’s like. Over time, one of the finches Zephyr alongside Nimbus got restless inside of the cage and wanted out. When Nimbus learns how to use the cage door from a lesson on physics, they all escape to the outside world together. When Zephyr said his question it made not just Luna think, but all of them think.

This response inconsistently addresses some parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The weak organizational structure inconsistently supports the focus and ideas (*showing how each finch thinks*). The student's introduction weakly addresses the task and provides an inference regarding how the finches think (*Zephyr's question relates to a theme by showing how each finch thinks. Luna has a complete different way of thinking . . . while the others want to do the opposite*). The next paragraph incorporates vague and sometimes incorrect text references to summarize the story (*In the story, three finches are the class pet of a science class. One of them, Nimbus, learns how to read*). These connect with weak analysis (*restless inside of the cage and wanted out*) and an inference (*they all escape to the outside world together*). Additional weak analysis (*When Zephyr said his question it made not just Luna think, but all of them think*) concludes the response. Transitions are used inconsistently to link ideas (*by, while, In the story, One of them, Over time, When, not just, but*), and there is an inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*complete[ly], opposite, science, analyzing, commonly, alongside, restless, physics, escape*). The few errors present in usage (*complete* for *completely*) and punctuation (missing commas) do not interfere with meaning. Holistically, this paper goes beyond a literal interpretation of the text and therefore receives a 2.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

When Zepher asked the question, "But are we happy?" It relates to the theme because the birds have so many things and opportunities but, it isn't making them happy. I agree with Zepher because, what's the point of doing something when it isn't making you happy? This question relates to another topic: money doesn't buy happiness. At the end of the story Luna told Nimbus how to open the cage door. Nimbus opened it but we don't know if they fully escaped. In conclusion the real question is, "Are you happy where you are at right now?" You should always do things that make you happy, because you are going to do it for the rest of your life.

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 introduction is weak (*When Zepher asked the question, "But are we happy?" It relates to the theme because the birds have so many things and opportunities but, it isn't making them happy*) and, due to the vagueness of the ideas expressed, only somewhat related to the text. To begin the response's development, the student provides a weak generalization in the form of a rhetorical question (*I agree with Zepher because, what's the point of doing something when it isn't making you happy?*) that is not supported with text. After an extraneous sentence (*This question relates to another topic: money doesn't buy happiness*), the student provides an inaccurate text reference (*At the end of the story Luna told Nimbus how to open the cage door. . . . [W]e don't know if they fully escaped*). The conclusion contains an inference (*In conclusion the real question is, "Are you happy where you are at right now?"*) followed by a weak generalization (*You should always do things that make you happy, because you are going to do it for the rest of your life*) that, again, is only somewhat related to the text. Holistically, there are enough inferences that the response moves beyond a literal interpretation of the text. There is an inconsistent use of transitions to link ideas (*When, because, but, This question relates, At the end, In conclusion*) and an inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*what's the point, relates, topic, rest of your life*). Minor errors present in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and punctuation seldom interfere with meaning.

STUDENT RESPONSE

 **Computer Response Score: 1 point**

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“ ‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Zephyr asks this because they all live in a cage, and only one of them wants to learn and see the world outside.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure; the response consists of a single sentence. The student attempts to respond to the task (*Zephyr asks this because*) by means of minimal text and a very minimal inference (*they all live in a cage, and only one of them wants to learn and see the world outside*). However, the inference is not completely accurate, as at least two of the birds show some interest in the world outside. Additionally, there is no analysis of the text, and the text references are insufficient. There are few transitions (*because, and*) and few uses of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text (*outside*).

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point

9. Read the sentence from the passage.

“‘But are we happy?’ Zephyr asked.”

Write an essay analyzing how Zephyr’s question relates to a theme in the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Zephyr’s qestion relates to a them in the passage
because nimbus heard him ask the question but
the just didn’t say anything.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. Consisting of a single sentence, the response displays minimal evidence of an organizational structure. The student attempts to address the task (*Zephyr’s qestion relates to a them in the passage because*), combining minimal text with a very minimal inference (*nimbus heard him ask the question but the just didn’t say anything*). However, there is no analysis of the text, and the text references are both vague and insufficient. There are few transitions (*because, but*) and no use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text. The errors present in spelling (*qestion*), usage (*them* for “theme”; *the* for “then”), and capitalization sometimes 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

10. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. My neighbor has a large, scruffy, black, dog that likes to play in our yard with my dog.
- B. Shannon raced toward the ball stretched out her glove, and dove to the ground, making a great catch.
- C. When I added a new ingredient to the beaker, the liquid inside bubbled, fizzed, and changed colors.
- D. Jake tried to reach the small, red toolbox on the shelf but he soon realized he couldn't get it down, without a stool.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	D.1.2.4
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	22%
p-value B	12%
p-value C	58% (correct answer)
p-value D	8%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the sentence that uses punctuation correctly. Option C is the correct answer since the sentence correctly uses a comma after an introductory clause and uses commas to separate the words “bubbled,” “fizzed,” and “and.” Option A is incorrect since the comma after “black” in the list of coordinate adjectives should be removed. Option B is incorrect since a comma needs to be inserted after “ball.” Option D is incorrect since the comma after the word “down” should be removed.

11. Which underlined word is used correctly?
- A. Carly gave me advise on how to solve my problem.
 - B. We began our descent down the long, steep staircase.
 - C. The sunlight had a major affect on the flower’s growth.
 - D. Kingston, smiling happily, walked up to except his award.

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	D.1.1.8
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	24%
p-value B	36% (correct answer)
p-value C	29%
p-value D	11%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which underlined frequently confused word is used correctly. Option B is correct since the word “descent” in context refers to moving downward in a scale of gradation. Option A is incorrect; the correct word is “advice.” Option C is incorrect; the correct word is “effect.” Option D is incorrect; the correct word is “accept.”

12. Read the paragraph.

(1) Watching her little brother playing with clay one night, Nadine realized that she missed being creative. (2) She decided to start doing things that would require her to use her imagination. (3) She begins by keeping a journal, filling its pages with story ideas and sketches. (4) She also volunteered to help construct a papier-mâché dragon for the school play.

Which sentence contains an inappropriate shift in verb tense?

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

Category	Item-Specific Information
Alignment	D.1.1.6
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	23%
p-value B	18%
p-value C	34% (correct answer)
p-value D	25%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify which sentence in the paragraph contains an inappropriate shift in verb tense. Option C is the correct answer; the verb “begins” should be “began” since it refers to an event that occurred in the past. Options A, B, and D are incorrect since the verbs “realized,” “decided,” and “volunteered” are all past tense and do not show an inappropriate shift in verb tense.

English Language Arts—Sample Item Summary Data

Multiple-Choice and Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions

An asterisk (*) indicates the key.

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	p-value A	p-value B	p-value C	p-value D
1	B-V.4.1.2	D	2	11%	27%	4%	58%*
2	B-C.2.1.2	B	3	27%	43%*	9%	21%
3	B-K.1.1.1	A	3	46%*	20%	7%	27%
4	B-C.3.1.1	D	3	13%	14%	21%	52%*
5	B-K.1.1.2	A	3	62%*	16%	14%	8%
6	B-K.1.1.3	Part One: B Part Two: C	2	Mean Score: 0.88			
7	B-C.3.1.1	Part One: B Part Two: A, D	2	Mean Score: 1.77			
8	B-C.2.1.1	C	2	10%	7%	59%*	24%
10	D.1.2.4	C	2	22%	12%	58%*	8%
11	D.1.1.8	B	2	24%	36%*	29%	11%
12	D.1.1.6	C	2	23%	18%	34%*	25%

Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PSSA Grade 7 English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler

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