

Grade Three Sample Test Item—Reading

Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded

Read the text and answer the question.

Digging into the Past

Imagine you are digging in a garden or walking across a field. You find a stone arrowhead or an old broken pot. These objects could be clues to how people lived long ago.

Studying the Past

The study of human life in the past is called archaeology. Scientists who study people who lived long ago are called archaeologists. Old tools, bones, and buildings are clues to how people lived.

Archaeologists look for places where early humans lived, hunted, farmed, or gathered food. They learn about the people by studying the objects that were used in the past. They can discover how people lived and worked. They can find out what people wore and what they ate.

Finding the Clues

Finding a place where people may have lived long ago is only the first step. Finding the clues to how people lived requires careful study. The objects people used may be buried. Because archaeologists dig into the ground to look for clues, the site is called a dig. A dig could be in a cave, a forest, a desert, or a modern city.

At a dig, archaeologists divide the ground into sections. Then, they carefully remove dirt from each section. They use special tools such as small shovels and brushes. Each section must be searched slowly. If a tool or piece of pottery is found, it is photographed and notes are taken before it is carefully removed from the ground. These objects are called artifacts. An artifact can help explain how people lived in the past.

Grade Three Sample Test Item—Reading
Achievement Level: Standard Exceeded (continued)**Knowing Where to Dig**

Places for digs can be discovered by accident. Someone plowing a field might discover a bone or a tool. Archaeologists would go to the site and decide if it was a good place for a dig. Artifacts are sometimes found when a building is being constructed. Then work is stopped. Archaeologists and others are given a chance to study the site before construction continues.

In recent years, archaeologists have found other ways to decide where to dig. They read old texts. The writings may provide clues to where people lived. They use satellites to study large areas of land. Computers can also help. Models of what ancient towns might have looked like can be created. These new methods give archaeologists ideas about where to dig.

If archaeologists think artifacts are present, they do a survey, or study of an area. They look for anything that shows that people may have lived there. They look for the remains of old buildings. These could include houses or huts. They also use tools to help find metal objects that are buried. A survey helps them decide if an area should become a dig.

What Archaeology Teaches Us

Archaeology helps us understand the past. Putting together a story about the past is like doing a big puzzle. The problem is we don't have a box lid to show what the completed picture should look like. Artifacts are some of the pieces, but they are only part of the big picture. Artifacts are taken back to a lab and studied closely. Then archaeologists put together pieces of the past.

Most of human history is not written down. Sometimes, even written history is an incomplete story. We are left to find out the rest. So archaeology is important. It is how we learn about people and the ways they used to live. Archaeologists try to answer questions. They might try to find out what jobs people had or what families did for fun. The answers teach us about history.

English Language Arts/Literacy

Sample Test Items

Grade Three

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

What is the main idea of the **Finding the Clues** section?
Use details from the passage to support your answer.

Area

Reading

Demonstrating understanding of literary and nonfiction texts

Standard(s)

Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

Answer

Constructed response:
Students write a short response, identifying the main idea of the section and support their answers with specific details from the text. A scoring rubric and sample responses for this item appear []

Scoring Rubric and Sample Responses (Constructed Response)

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

Scoring Rubric

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

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

The scoring rubric and sample responses are based on the Grade 3 constructed response item on pages 14–16.

Sample Responses

Score: 0 Points

The main idea is there are many steps to finding how people lived.

Think like a scientist and lots of things will tell you everything from the past

The main idea of the Finding the Clues is people that go around looking in places that people lived long ago for objects are called archaeologists.

The main idea of the paragraph is how archaeologists find clues on how it was in the past.

Score: 1 Point

The main idea of this passage is what a dig is and where to find a dig. It said a dig is a place where you dig to try to find how or where people used to live. It also said digs are usually in caves, a forest, a desert, or a modern city.

The main idea of the finding the clues is where and how to find artifacts. This section talks about where to find where people lived a long time ago. It also talks about how they have to be very careful and they have to use special tools to uncover dirt and sand.

The main idea is that they go places all around the world to find clues or artifacts. They used tools like small shovels and brushes. They studied the artifacts and carefully removed them from ground. They were very helpful to the people who visit them and get info.

Score: 2 Points

The main idea of "Finding the Clues" is about a dig site, what you do at a dig site, and finding artifacts. First, a site can be in a cave, a forest, a desert, or a modern city. At the site you first have to divide the ground into sections, and then you remove dirt from each section carefully. Special tools are used such as small shovels and brushes. You also have to search each section slowly. If you find tools or a piece of pottery, you photograph it, and notes are taken. After, you remove it from the ground carefully. These objects are called artifacts. Artifacts help explain how people lived in the past.

The main idea in Finding the Clues is finding the clues how people lived in the past requires careful study. They use special tools, each section must be searched slowly if a piece of pottery or a tool is found, it is photographed and notes are taken before it is removed from the ground.