

**VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING**

**Spring 2005 Released Test**

**GRADE 8  
ENGLISH: WRITING**

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**CORE 1**

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**DIRECTIONS**

Read the passage in each box. Read each question after the passage. Choose the best answer. Then mark the space in the answer booklet for the answer you have chosen.

**SAMPLE A**

***A Special Person***

In English class, Sarah has been asked to write a description of someone special to her. Sarah wants to write about her older brother.

Which of these would *best* help Sarah write her description of her older brother?

- A Calling his friends and telling them about him
- B Thinking about all the things she likes about him
- C Making a list of things she wants him to do for her
- D Asking him to take her to the library

**SAMPLE B**

Here is the first part of Sarah's rough draft.

(1)A special person in my life is my big brother. (2)His name is Ben. (3)He is tall and thin.

How are sentences 1 and 2 *best* combined?

- F A special person in my life is Ben, my big brother.
- G A special person in my life is Ben, he is my big brother.
- H In my life a special person is my big brother, his name is Ben.
- J My big brother Ben, he is a special person in my life.

**SAMPLE C**

Here is the next part of Sarah's rough draft.

(4)He helps me with my homework.  
(5)He is a good student.

In sentence 4, He helps should be written —

- A He were helping
- B He have helped
- C He help
- D as it is

## ***Music Education Grant***

Jeffrey is writing a letter to an organization that supports music education by providing grant money. He wants the organization to award a grant to the community center in his neighborhood.

Jeffrey makes this outline. Use it to answer question 1.

**I. The facts about the grant**

- A. It will be awarded for the coming year.
- B. It can be used in one of three ways.
- C. Community centers, schools, and individuals can apply.

**II. The facts about the Terrence Hill Community Center**

- A. I help out there after school.
- B. It offers a music education program.

**III. The benefits of a grant to the center**

- A. It will provide more music instructors.
- B. It is awarded by the Lynette Lyman Music Education Fund.
- C. It will provide for new instruments.
- D. It would send a positive message to kids.

**1 Which of these is in the wrong place in Jeffrey's outline?**

- A I.A. It will be awarded for the coming year.
- B I.C. Community centers, schools, and individuals can apply.
- C II.B. It offers a music education program.
- D III.B. It is awarded by the Lynette Lyman Music Education Fund.

**Here are two drafts of the first part of Jeffrey's letter. Use them to answer questions 2–5.**

**DRAFT A**

Dear Music Grant People,

I read what the paper said about how you guys will be awarding \$10,000 in grant money this year. I think that's great! The article said the grants could be used for different things, such as buying instruments. It also said you'll be giving the grant money to people, schools, and community centers. This caught my eye because I know of a terrific community center.

The Terrence Hill Community Center, located at 5th Avenue and Vine Street, provides many wonderful opportunities for children. I volunteer at the center after school, so I've had a chance to see the good work it does. One of the areas the center is most committed to is music education. My little brother Simon who has a music lesson there each day is one of 11 children. These lessons have helped Simon make friends and develop more confidence. Unfortunately, this important program is in jeopardy. The center desperately needs financial help to go on providing the lessons that mean so much to Simon and the others.

**DRAFT B**

Dear Lynette Lyman Music Education Fund,

I read with great interest your announcement in the September 2nd Sunday *Times*. The announcement said that your organization will be awarding \$10,000 in grant money this year. According to the guidelines presented in the announcement, the grants can be used to buy instruments, pay for studio space, or expand existing musical programs. Furthermore, individuals, schools, and community centers are eligible.

My little brother Simon participates in a music education program at Terrence Hill Community Center. This program has helped Simon quite a bit. Other children also depend on the program. However, the center needs help if it is going to keep its music program alive. I hope you can provide that help.

The center's music instructor is Alicia Brown. She is talented and caring. Unfortunately, Miss Brown faces the nearly impossible task of teaching 11 children at once. Furthermore, each of these children has a different level of musical knowledge. An assistant, or better yet, another full-time instructor, would allow this group of children to be divided up. Smaller classes would provide a better learning experience for everyone. Your generous grant would make this possible.

**2 Which of these could Jeffrey add to the end of paragraph 1 in Draft B?**

- F** I know of a deserving community center that would qualify for a grant.
- G** I always thought it would be kind of cool to learn how to play the drums.
- H** In my opinion, schools do not pay enough attention to music education.
- J** I began reading the newspaper from cover to cover when I was 10, and it's a habit I'll never break.

**3 When Jeffrey rereads paragraph 1 of both drafts, he will notice that —**

- A** Draft B contains information that is off the topic
- B** Draft A provides more specific details
- C** Draft B lacks transitions between sentences
- D** Draft A contains more opinions

**4 In paragraph 2 of Draft A, how is the sentence My little brother Simon who has a music lesson there each day is one of 11 children. *best* rewritten?**

- F** One of 11 children my little brother Simon who has a music lesson there each day.
- G** My little brother Simon is one of 11 children who have music lessons there each day.
- H** Simon who has a music lesson there each day is my little brother one of 11 children.
- J** Having a music lesson there each day is one of 11 children, my little brother Simon.

**5 In paragraph 2 of Draft B, Jeffrey focuses mainly on —**

- A** providing examples of Simon's natural talent for music
- B** telling how Jeffrey became a volunteer at the Terrence Hill Community Center
- C** explaining the Terrence Hill Community Center music program
- D** convincing the reader that music is just as important as English or math

**Read the next part of Jeffrey’s rough draft, and use it to answer questions 6–10. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.**

Another problem the center’s musical program faces is the poor condition of some of the instruments. Many of the instruments aren’t in any condition to be used anymore. The two pianos, for example, are more than twenty-five years old. A grant would allow the center to replace the old instruments with new ones. This might even boost enrollment in the summer music program, exposing more children to the joys’ of music.

Your announcement mentioned that the Lynette Lyman Music Education Fund was formed in order to “support and develop a love of music in our children”. I can think of no better way to do that than to award a grant to the Terrence Hill Community Center. In providing these much-needed funds, you would breath new life into a really worthwhile program. Even more importantly, you would teach children that his efforts to make music are valuable.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Pepin

**6 How is joys' of music correctly written?**

- F joys of music
- G joy's of music
- H joys's of music
- J As it is

**7 How is our children". correctly written?**

- A our children."
- B are children".
- C our children.
- D As it is

**8 How is can think of no better way correctly written?**

- F can't think of no better way
- G can thank of no better way
- H can't thank of no better way
- J As it is

**9 How is you would breath correctly written?**

- A you would breathed
- B you would breathe
- C you will breath
- D As it is

**10 How is his efforts correctly written?**

- F its efforts
- G their efforts
- H they're efforts
- J As it is



## *Stage Fright*

Donna's English teacher asks her students to write about someone who overcomes a challenge. Donna decides to write a story about a girl her age.

Donna reviews her assignment and makes the following story map. Use it to answer question 11.

<b>Characters</b>	Julia and her mom
<b>Setting</b>	Julia's house and the park opening ceremony
<b>Problem</b>	Julia has been chosen to read her poem at the park opening ceremony.
<b>Conflict</b>	Julia is afraid of being in front of an audience.
<b>Resolution</b>	Julia's mom tells her how to overcome her stage fright.

11 As Donna writes her story, her map will help her to —

- A convince others to read her story
- B select the best typeface for her story
- C include the important story elements
- D discard unusable story titles

**Here is a rough draft of the first part of Donna’s story. Use it to answer questions 12–15.**

(1) From the window, Mom saw Julia running up the walk, grinning from ear to ear.

(2) Mom went to the door to see the situation. (3) Julia nearly bowled Mom over when she blasted through the front door.

(4) Julia waved a paper around as she tried to tell Mom the news.

(5) “Me,” she said. (6) “They chose me!” (7) She was still gasping and waving around the paper.

(8) “Julia, let’s sit down so you can catch your breath. (9) Tell me what on earth you are talking about,” Mom said.

(10) When Julia’s heart stopped racing, she explained that she had won the poetry contest for the new park. (11) The paper she was waving around was a letter from the mayor inviting her to read her poem. (12) At the park’s opening ceremony next week.

(13) Mom was so happy that she clapped her hands and cried for joy. (14) She told Julia how proud she would be of her. (15) She would be proud to see her standing up on the stage reading her poem.

(16) Julia stopped talking. (17) In her excitement over winning the contest, she had not thought about being in front of an audience. (18) “I can’t do it,” Julia said. (19) “I’m afraid to get up in front of all those people.”

**12 In paragraph 1, how can the situation be rewritten to be the *most* specific?**

- F** what was happening
- G** why there was a problem
- H** what was going on
- J** why Julia was so happy

**13 Which sentence contains the *most* descriptive language?**

- A** Sentence 3
- B** Sentence 4
- C** Sentence 8
- D** Sentence 17

**14 Which of these is *not* a complete sentence?**

- F** Sentence 4
- G** Sentence 7
- H** Sentence 12
- J** Sentence 16

**15 What is the *best* way to combine sentences 14 and 15 without changing their meaning?**

- A** She told Julia how proud to see her she was standing up on the stage, reading her poem.
- B** She told Julia how proud she would be she would be proud to see her standing up on the stage reading her poem.
- C** She told Julia how proud she would be standing up on the stage and seeing her reading her poem.
- D** She told Julia how proud she would be to see her standing up on the stage, reading her poem.

**Read the next section of Donna’s rough draft, and use it to answer questions 16–20. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.**

(20)“Sure you can! (21)You just have a little stage fright,” Mom said. (22)She said that she used to be nervous about speaking in front of a crowd, too, but knew a couple of secrets to reduce Julia’s anxiety.

(23)“First, you practice a lot. (24)Second, you imagine everyone in the crowd is wearing a rainbow wig and big, red shoes,” she said.

(25)Julia could not help smiling at the thought of it. (26)She and Mom planned to visit many of their relatives and friends over the next week so Julia could practice reading her poem good in front of a few people before reading it in front of a crowd.

(27)When Julia’s big day came she still had jitters. (28)She waited nervously while Mayor Perkins made his speech. (29)Finally, he called Julia up to the stage.

(30)She felt as if popcorn were popping in her stomach and her legs were made of lead, but she managed to climb the steps to the stage without tripping. (31)She made it to the microphone in the center of the stage, but she could not find her voice when she saw her principal and teacher sitting directly in front of her.

(32)She remembered Mom’s advice, closed her eyes, and imagined her principal and teacher both wearing the most wildest rainbow wigs and the biggest red shoes. (33)She held back a giggle and began to read in a strong, sure voice.

(34)When she had finished, the audience rose to its feet and applauded. (35)Julia had never felt more accomplished.

**16 In sentence 26, reading her poem good is correctly written —**

- F reading her poem gooder
- G reading her poem well
- H reading her poem more good
- J as it is

**17 In sentence 27, When Julia's big day came is correctly written —**

- A When Julia's big day came,
- B When Julia's big, day came
- C When, Julias big day came,
- D as it is

**18 In sentence 28, while Mayor Perkins made is correctly written —**

- F while Mayor perkins made
- G while Mayor Perkins' made
- H while mayor Perkins made
- J as it is

**19 In sentence 29, Finaly, he called Julia is correctly written —**

- A Finaly he called Julia
- B Finaly, he calls Julia
- C Finally, he called Julia
- D as it is

**20 In sentence 32, the most wildest rainbow wigs is correctly written —**

- F the wildest rainbow wigs
- G the wilder rainbow wigs
- H the more wildest rainbow wigs
- J as it is

