

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

Spring 2004 Released Test

GRADE 8 WRITING 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.

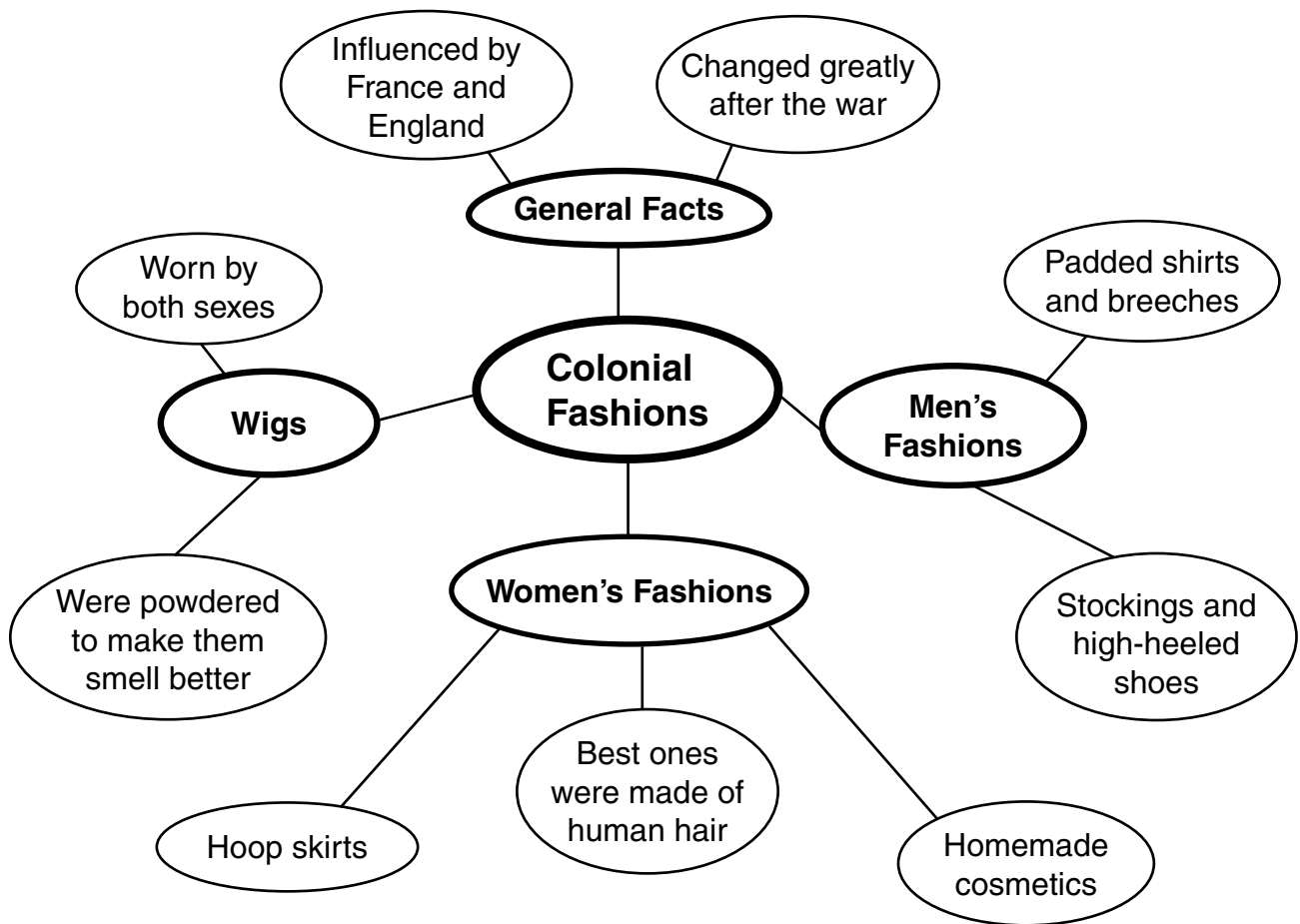
In sentence 4, He helps should be written —

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

Fashion in Colonial America

Julie's history teacher asked the students to write a report about some aspect of colonial life. Julie decides to write about clothing fashions in colonial times.

Julie made this web. Use it to answer questions 1-2.



1 Which phrase is in the wrong place on Julie's web?

- A Influenced by France and England
- B Were powdered to make them smell better
- C Hoop skirts
- D Best ones were made of human hair

2 Julie wants to add the idea Laws prohibited poor people from wearing silk. With which of these headings does it belong?

- F General Facts
- G Men's Fashions
- H Women's Fashions
- J Wigs

Here is the first part of Julie’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 3–5.

(1)We usually imagine American colonists wearing very plain clothing. (2)Many colonists, however, loved to keep up with the latest fashions from Europe. (3)Wealthy Americans copying the dress of French and English nobles. (4)Sometimes this led to very silly styles, especially for men.

(5)In 1607, the English founded their first colony in America. (6)At first there were no women, but that fact didn’t stop the men from trying to look good. (7)To make their chests look bigger, they padded their shirts with bombast, a mixture of rags, horsehair, cotton, and bran. (8)Men also packed bombast around the upper part of their legs. (9)It was considered attractive for men to have legs that looked a certain way. (10)Of course, bombast was not a perfect fashion solution. (11)If a man’s clothing tore, he would leave a trail of bran behind him as he walked!

(12)After women settlers arrived, colonial leaders noticed that people of both sexes were using fine clothes to raise their social status. (13)The leaders did not approve of the fact that people from the working class were dressing as well as the upper class. (14)As a result, they passed laws stating that people who earned less than a certain amount of money could not wear silk, gold lace, or expensive leather boots. (15)In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested. (16)The cause of their arrest was wearing silk hoods and scarves. (17)They were set free after proving that their husbands had the amount of money required for them to wear silk.

3 How is sentence 3 *best* rewritten to make a complete sentence?

- A Wealthy Americans, they were copying the dress of French and English nobles.
- B Wealthy Americans, trying to copy the dress of French and English nobles.
- C Copying the dress of French and English nobles there were wealthy Americans.
- D Wealthy Americans tried to copy the dress of French and English nobles.

4 In sentence 9, how can legs that looked a certain way be written *most* specifically?

- F a particular effect in the leg area
- G bulging thighs and slender calves
- H a certain fashionable appearance
- J legs that met the standard of the day

5 How can sentences 15 and 16 *best* be combined without repeating information?

- A In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested, and the cause was wearing silk hoods and scarves.
- B In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested, the cause being they wore silk hoods and scarves.
- C In 1653, two women in Massachusetts, arrested for wearing silk hoods and scarves, were detained by police.
- D In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested for wearing silk hoods and scarves.

Read the next part of Julie’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.

(18)Laws about hair were also passed during this period. (19)In England, men often wore their hair long and curled like King Charles I, but the Puritans in England and America did not support the king. (20)They wore their hair very short to send a political message. (21)In 1634, the Massachusetts legislature passed a law forbidding long hair.

(22)The question of long hair versus short hair becomes less of an issue when wigs came into fashion. (23)Rich men bought wigs of human hair, while poorer men bought those made of horsehair or goat hair. (24)Wigs were hardly ever washed, so powder was used to make them look and smell more clean. (25)Before a wig was powdered, the man wearing it had to cover his face and body. (26)Then a servant greased the wig well and shook a bag of flour over it. (27)The rest of a well-dressed man’s outfit consisted of a coat, breeches that went to his knee, stockings to show off his lower legs, and high-heeled boots or shoes. (28)At this time, men’s clothes came in as many colors and fancy fabrics as women’s.

(29)Colonial fashions changed in the late eighteenth century. (30)Patriots, seeking their independence from England no longer wanted to dress like English royalty. (31)Instead, they took pride in wearing plain, homemade cloth. (32)After the Revolutionary War, the huge wigs, padded stockings, and other early fashions dissappeared forever.

6 In sentence 22, how is becomes correctly written?

- F becoming
- G would have become
- H became
- J As it is

7 In sentence 24, how is more clean correctly written?

- A more cleanly
- B cleaner
- C cleanlier
- D As it is

8 In sentence 30, how is independence from England no longer correctly written?

- F independence, from England, no longer
- G independence from England, no longer
- H independence, from England no longer
- J As it is

9 In sentence 32, how is Revolutionary War correctly written?

- A Revolutionary war
- B revolutionary war
- C revolutionary War
- D As it is

10 In sentence 32, how is dissappeared correctly written?

- F disappeared
- G dissapeared
- H disapeared
- J As it is

Hotep, the Buffalo

Darrell's teacher has asked each student to write a fable.

- 11 Darrell cannot remember what makes a fable different from other kinds of writing. Which of these would *best* help him?
- A A history textbook
 - B An encyclopedia
 - C A thesaurus
 - D A literature textbook
- 12 All of these could help Darrell before he begins to write his fable EXCEPT —
- F rereading other stories he has written for his teacher
 - G making a web of the information he wants to use
 - H narrowing his topic
 - J brainstorming for possible story ideas

Here is the first part of Darrell’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 13–15.

(1)Long ago, there lived a large buffalo named Hotep who could run faster than any other creature in the forest. (2)Every day, he would crash through the trees, yelling, “I am the fastest, and no one can beat me!” (3)Frightening the large animals and nearly trampling the small ones.

(4)The animals decided they really had to do something. (5)One night while Hotep was sleeping, the animals held a secret meeting. (6)They argued for hours about what to do. (7)They were very loud. (8)Suddenly they heard a small voice coming from the stream. (9)They looked to see who was speaking. (10)They saw a tiny fish.

(11) “Excuse me,” the fish said. (12)“I think I may have a solution.”

(13)The next day, when Hotep ran through the forest, a deer jumped in front of him. (14)Then she turned and ran away.

(15)“You think you can run faster than I can?” Hotep asked. (16)He chased the deer. (17)She ran to the stream and then dashed into a narrow cave. (18)Hotep could not follow her.

(19)When Hotep looked around, he saw his own face reflected in the stream.

(20)“I am the fastest and no one can beat me!” he shouted at his reflection, thinking it was another buffalo.

13 How can sentence 7 be rewritten to be *most* descriptive?

- A Their loud talking made a lot of noise.
- B The sounds they made could be heard all over.
- C Their grunts, growls, and squeaks echoed through the forest.
- D They weren't at all quiet.

14 How can Darrell *best* combine sentences 9 and 10 without changing the meaning?

- F They looked to see who was speaking, but they saw a tiny fish.
- G In order to see who was speaking, they looked and saw a tiny fish.
- H When they looked to see who was speaking, they saw a tiny fish.
- J They looked to see who was speaking and they saw a tiny fish speaking.

15 Which of the following needs to be revised because it is *not* a complete sentence?

- A Frightening the large animals and nearly trampling the small ones.
- B Suddenly they heard a small voice coming from the stream.
- C "Excuse me," the fish said.
- D Then she turned and ran away.

Read the next part of Darrell’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.

(21)The buffalo in the water didn’t answer, making Hotep very angry. (22)Hotep started running beside the stream. (23)The other buffalo in the water started running too, making Hotep even angrier. (24)Hotep thought the other buffalo was trying to outrun him, so he ran even faster. (25)Out of the corner of his eye, Hotep could still see the other buffalo, running just as fast as he was. (26)At last, when he could run no more, Hotep sank down on the grassy bank. (27)Hotep was panting and snorting, but the other buffalo wasn’t barely breathing hard. (28)The other buffalo didn’t make a sound.

(29)“You win!” Hotep gasped. (30)“I’m not the fastest anymore! (31)Oh, this is terrable! (32)Running is the only thing I can do well. (33)Can we just keep this between you and me?”

(34)Just then the little fish appeared. (35)“Don’t feel bad, Hotep,” he said. (36)“You’re still very fast and very strong. (37)Why not use those qualaties to help the other forest animals when they need it?”

(38)Hotep thought about the fish’s words. (39)He couldn’t deny that they made sense. (40)From that day on, he decided to be kinder more considerate, and more helpful. (41)If he couldn’t be the fastest buffalo in the forest, Hotep would be the nicest.

16 In sentence 27, how is wasn't barely breathing hard correctly written?

- F wasn't not barely breathing hard
- G was not barely breathing hard
- H was barely breathing hard
- J As it is

17 In sentence 31, how is Oh, this is terrable! correctly written?

- A Oh this is terrible!
- B Oh, this is terrible!
- C Oh this is terrable!
- D As it is

18 In sentence 35, how is bad, Hotep," he said. correctly written?

- F bad, Hotep, he said.
- G bad, Hotep." he said.
- H bad Hotep," he said.
- J As it is

19 In sentence 37, how is those qualaties correctly written?

- A them qualities
- B those qualities
- C these qualitys
- D As it is

20 In sentence 40, how is kinder more considerate, and more helpful correctly written?

- F kinder more considerate and more helpful
- G kinder more considerate, and, more helpful
- H kinder, more considerate, and more helpful
- J As it is

Grade 8 English: Writing

Direct Writing Component

In the direct writing component, students write a composition about a topic presented to them in a writing prompt. The writing prompt page also includes a “Checklist for Writers” that lists points for students to keep in mind as they write. Writing compositions are scored in each of the following domains:

- Composing
- Written Expression
- Usage/Mechanics

Scores in the Composing and Written Expression domains are reported as part of the Reporting Category called **Plan, Compose, and Revise Writing in a Variety of Forms for a Variety of Purposes**. Scores in the Usage/Mechanics domain are reported as part of the Reporting Category called **Edit for Correct Use of Language, Capitalization, Punctuation, and Spelling**. A writing prompt from the Spring 2003 administration is on the following page.

ENGLISH: WRITING

PROMPT No. 951

Your principal is considering replacing all physical education classes with study skills classes. Write to explain why you agree or disagree with this idea.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

- _____ I planned my paper before writing it.
- _____ I revised my paper to be sure that
 - _____ the introduction captures the reader's attention;
 - _____ the central idea is supported with specific information and examples that will be interesting to the reader;
 - _____ the content relates to my central idea;
 - _____ ideas are organized in a logical manner;
 - _____ my sentences are varied in length;
 - _____ my sentences are varied in the way that they begin;
 - _____ the conclusion brings my ideas together.
- _____ I edited my paper to be sure that
 - _____ correct grammar is used;
 - _____ words are capitalized when appropriate;
 - _____ sentences are punctuated correctly;
 - _____ words are spelled correctly; and
 - _____ paragraphs are clearly indicated.
- _____ I checked my paper.