

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Spring 2009 Released Test

GRADE 8 WRITING

Form W0119, CORE 1

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Directions

Read the passage. Then read each question about the passage and choose the best answer.

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 can sentences 1 and 2 *best* be combined?

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

Directions

You do not need to read a passage to answer the following question. Read and answer the question.

SAMPLE D

Read this sentence.

The race proved that Lee was a more fast runner than Bob.

In this sentence, more fast should be written

- F** faster
- G** fastest
- H** more faster
- J** As it is

The Brownie-Baking Blues

John's English teacher asks the class to write a humorous story. He decides to write about a funny experience he had while cooking.

- 1 John realizes that his topic is too general. Which of these will *best* help him choose a more specific topic?**
- A** Reading humorous stories by famous authors
 - B** Choosing one amusing incident to describe
 - C** Asking friends to tell him their funniest jokes
 - D** Thinking about a comical story that he enjoyed
-
- 2 Which of these will *best* help John organize events in his story?**
- F** Writing his story from the first-person point of view
 - G** Thinking of a good title for his story
 - H** Writing an interesting first sentence
 - J** Making a story map of key events and details

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

(1)One Sunday a few weeks ago, as I finished my weekend homework, I remembered that I was supposed to contribute a batch of Mom’s homemade brownies to the school bake sale. (2)Glad that I had not forgotten, I went looking for Mom to tell her what I needed. (3)I found her in the dining room with books spread out all over the table. (4)Mom attends evening classes at the college, and I remembered hearing her say that she had a big project due on Monday. (5)“Mom,” I said, hopeful that she would help, “I need a batch of brownies for the bake sale at school.”

(6)Mom stopped working and looked up at me warily. (7)“Okay,” she said suspiciously. (8)“When do you need the brownies?”

(9)“Well, the bake sale is tomorrow,” I replied meekly.

(10)“John,” Mom said, shaking her head. (11)“How many times have I told you not to wait until the last minute to tell me about these things?” (12)I started to point out that, technically, I had not waited until the last minute. (13)Then I reconsidered. (14)Mom probably wasn’t in the mood for technicalities. (15)“No,” she said, before I had a chance to say anything. (16)“I can’t do it this time; you waited too late.”

(17)I thought about protesting, but Mom had a look in her eyes that said, *Don’t mess with me*. (18)“What if I made them?” I asked hopefully. (19)Mom raised her eyebrows. (20)I could tell she was intrigued by the idea. (21)After pondering it for a few seconds, she agreed that I could make the brownies on the condition that I clean up the kitchen when I was finished. (22)She found her recipe book and told me that I could find all the ingredients either in the pantry or the refrigerator. (23)Mom has about a thousand little magnets stuck on the refrigerator. (24)I felt a little worried as I walked into the kitchen, but I was sure I could handle it. (25)After all, how hard could it be? (26)Besides, Mom was in the next room just in case I needed her, though she had forbidden interruption for anything other than an emergency.

3 John decides to add an additional detail after sentence 3. Which of these sentences would be *best*?

- A** I wondered if she would make an extra batch for the family.
- B** I don't know how she keeps from losing something important.
- C** I really love the brownies my mom makes.
- D** I realized right then that I should have said something earlier.

4 Which of these is the *best* way to combine sentences 12 and 13?

- F** I started to point out that, technically, I had not waited until the last minute then I reconsidered.
- G** I started to point out that, technically, I had not waited until the last minute because then I reconsidered.
- H** I started to point out that, technically, I had not waited until the last minute, but then I reconsidered.
- J** I started to point out that, technically, I had not waited until the last minute since then I reconsidered.

5 Which sentence should John delete because it does *not* belong?

- A** Sentence 17
- B** Sentence 18
- C** Sentence 20
- D** Sentence 23

Read the next part of John’s rough draft, and use it to answer questions 6–11. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

(27)The first thing I did was consult Mom’s recipe book. (28)I needed a large bowl a measuring cup, and some measuring spoons. (29)I also needed a glass baking pan that was eight inches wide by ten inches long. (30)Mom had several glass baking dishes, and I didn’t have a ruler. (31)I grabbed the most smallest one and headed into the dining room. (32)“Mom, is this the right pan?” I asked. (33)She gave me a look that sent me scurrying back into the kitchen without an answer. (34)“Close enough”, I whispered to myself, determined not to ask for help again.

(35)The recipe stated that I needed to preheat the oven to 350 degrees for thirty minutes. (36)Being in a hurry, I didn’t want to wait that long. (37)I decided that I could shorten the time if I turned the oven to a hotter tempreture. (38)Next, I began mixing the ingredients. (39)I decided to change the recipe a little to make my own creation. (40)I really like chocolate, so I put in twice as much as the recipe instructed. (41)I also added extra butter and sugar. (42)The recipe also called for vanilla, but that didn’t sound right. (43)I had never heard of vanilla brownies, so I decided the recipe contained mistakes. (44)I figured salt wasn’t necessary either.

(45)I poured the mixture into the baking pan, put it in the oven, and looked around to survey the damage. (46)The kitchen looked like a bulldozer had driven through it. (47)Brownie batter, along with flour and sugar, was everywhere. (48)Dirty dishes filled the sink, and bags and boxes of ingredients littered the countertops. (49)I would need hours to clean up the disaster. (50)Suddenly, I smelled something burning. (51)I had forgotten to turn the oven down to 350 degrees! (52)Mom walked in just as I opened the oven door and black smoke filled the room. (53)Overhead, the smoke detector blared loudly. (54)In the pan, the brownies smoldered, blackened to a crisp. (55)I thought Mom would be angry, but after looking at the charred brownies and wrecked kitchen, all she did was laugh. (56)Embarrassed, I started cleaning up the mess without saying a word. (57)Later, I had to laugh too. (58)Baking brownies is certainly more difficult than Mom makes it look.

6 In sentence 28, how is large bowl a measuring cup, and some measuring spoons correctly written?

- F** large bowl, a measuring cup, and, some measuring spoons
- G** large bowl, a measuring cup, and some, measuring spoons
- H** large bowl, a measuring cup, and some measuring spoons
- J** As it is

7 In sentence 31, how is most smallest correctly written?

- A** smallest
- B** most small
- C** more smallest
- D** As it is

8 Read sentence 34 from John’s rough draft.

**“Close enough”, I whispered to myself,
determined not to ask for help again.**

How is the underlined part of this sentence correctly written?

- F** “Close enough” I whispered
- G** “Close enough, I whispered”
- H** “Close enough,” I whispered
- J** As it is

9 In sentence 35, how is The recipe stated that I correctly written?

- A** The recipe stated that, I
- B** The recipe stated, that I
- C** The recipe stated, that, I
- D** As it is

10 In sentence 37, how is tempreture correctly written?

- F** temprature
- G** temperature
- H** tempereture
- J** As it is

11 In sentence 53, how is blared loudly correctly written?

- A** blared loud
- B** blaring loud
- C** blares loudly
- D** As it is

**Go to the next
page and continue
working.**

Andrea Davis Pinkney

Wanda’s English teacher assigns a report on a favorite author. Wanda decides to write about Andrea Davis Pinkney.

- 12 Which strategy would *most* help Wanda before she begins to draft her report?**
- F** Making a cover sheet for her report on Pinkney
 - G** Finding a picture of Pinkney
 - H** Brainstorming questions about Pinkney she wants to address
 - J** Imagining being an author like Pinkney

**Go to the next
page and continue
working.**

Here is the first part of Wanda’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 13–16.

(1)Andrea Davis Pinkney, my favorite author, has written many books. **(2)**A common theme runs through all of Pinkney’s work. **(3)**By writing and editing books for children and young adults, this popular author works to understand and celebrate African-American history, experience, and culture.

(4)Pinkney was born on September 25, 1963, in Washington, D.C. **(5)**Pinkney’s father, a great storyteller, entertained and educated his daughter through stories. **(6)**Her mother was an English teacher, and Pinkney grew up in a house full of books. **(7)**Her parents influenced Pinkney in a career choice. **(8)**In addition, they were deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement. **(9)**Pinkney grew up proud and gained a strong sense of her African-American heritage from her family. **(10)**She also gained a firm belief that each individual has the power to make the world better.

(11)Pinkney loved to read as a child. **(12)**Therefore, she did not set out to become a children’s book author. **(13)**A character in a television show caused her to dream of being a journalist for a big-city magazine because she wanted to become a writer. **(14)**She graduated from Syracuse University in 1985 with a degree in journalism. **(15)**Pinkney then went to work as an editor for the magazine *Mechanics Illustrated*. **(16)**The new job required her to move to New York City.

13 To make sentence 2 clearer, Wanda should replace work with —

- A** efforts
- B** writings
- C** labors
- D** actions

14 Which sentence should Wanda add after sentence 8 for elaboration?

- F** Andrea Davis Pinkney went on to write for many leading magazines.
- G** Pinkney believed that we all should try to improve our own lives as well as other people's lives.
- H** Many African-American writers owe their success to Pinkney's efforts.
- J** Her parents' participation in the movement had a profound effect on Pinkney.

15 In sentence 12, which transition should Wanda use to replace Therefore?

- A** Likewise
- B** Furthermore
- C** Consequently
- D** However

16 Which sentence should Wanda revise because it needlessly repeats information within the sentence?

- F** Sentence 11
- G** Sentence 13
- H** Sentence 14
- J** Sentence 16

**Go to the next
page and continue
working.**

Read the second part of Wanda’s rough draft and use it to answer questions 17–24. This part has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.

(17)The *Mechanics Illustrated* offices were located in a building with other businesses. (18)The office of a competeing magazine, *Field & Stream*, was located across the hall. (19)Pinkney’s future husband Brian Pinkney, worked in *Field & Stream*’s art department. (20)The couple married in 1991. (21)Pinkney gave her husband credit for suggesting she switch from editing magazines to writing books for children. (22)The two worked together to create several picture books including *Dear Benjamin Banneker* and *Seven Candles for Kwanzaa*.

(23)Pinkney stated that she recognized a lack of African-American literature for young people and wanted to help fill the gap. (24)She certain succeeded. (25)Pinkney has produced more than 15 books since she began her writing career in 1993. (26)Some, like *Shake Shake Shake* and *Watch Me Dance*, are written for very young readers. (27)Others are complex novels featuring strong characters who deal with obstacles, such as, slavery, prejudice and peer pressure. (28)Still others celebrate the contributions of prominent African-American artists and activists. (29)In *Let It Shine: Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters*, Pinkney wrote about ten women who worked to advance civil rights. (30)Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubman are two of the heroic women whose are included. (31)In the introduction to the book, Pinkney encourages readers to believe in his or her own power and to stand up for the rights of others.

(32)In addition, Pinkney still edits children’s books. (33)In fact while working for a major book publisher, she began editing her own line of books for children called *Jump at the Sun*. (34)According to Pinkney, this line of books intended to “celebrate the experiences of the African-American community,” thus giving other authors the chance to publish books with African-American themes. (35)She published the work of many well-known authors as well as exciting new voices. (36)Readers of all cultures and ages have reason to be grateful for Pinkney’s energy, talent, and above all, her dedication.

17 In sentence 18, how is competeing correctly written?

- A** competing
- B** compeating
- C** compeeting
- D** As it is

18 In sentence 19, how is husband Brian Pinkney, correctly written?

- F** husband Brian, Pinkney
- G** husband, Brian Pinkney
- H** husband, Brian Pinkney,
- J** As it is

19 In sentence 22, how is picture books including correctly written?

- A** picture books, including
- B** picture books including,
- C** picture books, including,
- D** As it is

20 In sentence 24, how is certain correctly written?

- F** certained
- G** certainedly
- H** certainly
- J** As it is

21 In sentence 27, how is obstacles, such as, slavery, prejudice and peer pressure correctly written?

- A** obstacles such as, slavery, prejudice and, peer pressure
- B** obstacles such as slavery, prejudice, and peer pressure
- C** obstacles such, as slavery, prejudice, and, peer pressure
- D** As it is

22 In sentence 30, how is whose correctly written?

- F** who
- G** who's
- H** which
- J** As it is

23 In sentence 31, how is his or her correctly written?

- A** their
- B** his or hers
- C** our
- D** As it is

24 In sentence 33, how is In fact while correctly written?

- F** In fact while,
- G** In fact, while
- H** In fact, while,
- J** As it is

