

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Spring 2011 Released Test

# GRADE 8 WRITING

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Form W0111, CORE 1

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**Directions**

Read the passage. Then read each question about the passage and choose the best answer. Fill in the circle on your answer document 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 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

***Be Involved!***

**Jarius is concerned about the lack of student participation in school activities. He writes an editorial for his middle school newspaper.**

**1 Which will Jarius *most* want to do in his editorial?**

- A** Examine the different types of fundraisers held at school
- B** Provide a detailed comparison of all the school activities
- C** Explain all of the different activities offered at the school
- D** Convince students to participate in student activities

**Here is the first part of Jarius’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 2–4.**

**(1)**We have all seen students running down the hall to go to an after-school basketball game or posting fliers for the Eastland Middle School Science Club bake sale. **(2)**Some students may have even briefly thought, *I should do that*, but then have gone on with their day. **(3)**This is why I think it is important to be involved.

**(4)**First of all, participating in activities can help us develop valuable personal insights. **(5)**Sports and clubs can offer an opportunity to learn new skills and make new friends. **(6)**Like some kids may have tried shooting hoops, but they are not really sure if they are good enough to make the basketball team. **(7)**A student who never tries out will never know what might have been. **(8)**For students who already know that they possess skills in a particular sport, academic subject, or hobby, a team or club may help them further develop their talent. **(9)**Also, teams and clubs give all students the chance to interact with their peers. **(10)**Students may meet others with whom they may have something in common.

**(11)**There are other ways to be involved at school. **(12)**Fundraisers such as bake sales can help our school earn money for things that otherwise could not be purchased with the school’s budget. **(13)**The money earned could be used in ways that contribute to school pride and provide opportunities for student activities. **(14)**The collected funds could help pay for a field trip or new band uniforms.

**2 Which sentence could Jarius *best* add after sentence 2 to clearly communicate his purpose?**

- F** Staying after school means having to make other transportation plans.
- G** Even if you cannot play basketball, it does not require any skill to go to the game and support the team.
- H** Some of the food that is sold at bake sales is actually quite tasty, so this is a great fundraiser.
- J** Many students do not realize what they are missing by not participating in school activities.

**3 How is sentence 6 *best* revised for appropriate tone?**

- A** Like some students may have tried their hand at basketball, but they do not know if they are good enough for the team.
- B** So some kids may have shot a few hoops, but maybe they are not totally sure if they have the skills to be on the team.
- C** Some students may have tried basketball, but they are not really sure if they have the talent to play on a team.
- D** Some kids may have tried shooting hoops, but like they may not really know if they are as good as the other kids.

**4 How would the word things in sentence 12 *best* be revised to clarify the meaning?**

- F** actions
- G** doings
- H** stuff
- J** materials

**Read the next part of Jarius’s rough draft and use it to answer questions 5–11. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.**

**(15)**Some events and fundraisers held at school benefit the world at large.

**(16)**Do you remember last year’s earth day event? **(17)**The fund drive helped to sponsor cleanup days in cities around the world. **(18)**Students who volunteer for such a fundraiser could make friends with others who share similar ideas about the world. **(19)**Doing something that makes the world a better place also feels good. **(20)**I cannot overstate this benefit. **(21)**There is no better feeling than that which comes from helping other people or from improve conditions in the world.

**(22)**I participate in Eastland’s “Make the Grade.” **(23)**“Make the Grade” is a tutoring program in which Eastland students tutor children in elementary schools around the city. **(24)**Tutoring takes about two hours of my time each week. **(25)**I tutor three elementary students and have already seen considerable improvement in their grades. **(26)**Many other opportunities to help students throughout our city exist. **(27)**What else could make a person feel that their actions affect the world in a really beneficial way?

**(28)**One of the best reasons to be involved is that communities need people to participate in order for events to take place, money to be earned, and development to occur. **(29)**Imagine if no one joined sports teams, worked on the school newspaper, or tried out for theater productions. **(30)**How would students’ school spirit be maintained? **(31)**Student talents would not be showcased. **(32)**Records of school ceremonys and events, such as those provided by newspapers and yearbooks, would be lost.

**(33)**I have no doubt that participation in an activity beyond our own personal lives creates communities, encourages interaction, and inspires growth and success. **(34)**Remember this the next time fliers are posted for an upcoming fundraiser. **(35)**If everyone become involved, we can achieve beyond our dreams.



**5 In sentence 16, how is earth day event correctly written?**

- A** Earth day event
- B** Earth Day event
- C** Earth day Event
- D** As it is

**6 In sentence 19, how is good correctly written?**

- F** well
- G** more good
- H** most well
- J** As it is

**7 In sentence 21, how is improve correctly written?**

- A** improves
- B** improved
- C** improving
- D** As it is

**8** In sentence 25, how is considerable correctly written?

- F** considarable
- G** considerable
- H** considarible
- J** As it is

**9** In sentence 29, how is school newspaper, or tried correctly written?

- A** school, newspaper or tried
- B** school newspaper, or, tried
- C** school newspaper or, tried
- D** As it is

**10** In sentence 32, how is ceremonys correctly written?

- F** ceremoneys
- G** ceramonys
- H** ceremonies
- J** As it is

**11** In sentence 35, how is become correctly written?

- A** is becoming
- B** becomes
- C** had become
- D** As it is

## ***Leaping Lizards***

**Ashley's science teacher asks the class to write a report about an animal with an unusual physical ability. Ashley writes about gliding lizards.**

**Ashley makes the following notes for her report. Use them to answer question 12.**

1. Gliding lizards live in the jungle.
2. They can fly by leaping and gliding.
3. They eat ants and other insects.
4. Lizards glide away from enemies such as the bronzeback snake.
5. Lizards can glide five feet for every foot that they drop.

**12 These notes will *best* help Ashley —**

- F** organize the information from most to least important
- G** maintain focus on her topic and include important facts
- H** decide which kinds of lizards to include in her report
- J** keep the attention of readers by telling exciting facts

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

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

**(1)**“Leaping lizards!” is an exclamation people sometimes say when they find something surprising or unusual. **(2)**People seem to think a lizard that can like fly is really weird. **(3)**Actually, in certain parts of the world, these small reptiles can leap and then soar so well that they are called “gliding lizards” or even “flying lizards.”

**(4)**Gliding lizards live in tropical jungles. **(5)**They live in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and parts of China. **(6)**They look much like lizards anywhere else in the world. **(7)**Their skin is colorful, which allows these creatures to blend with their surroundings. **(8)**However, unlike most other lizards, they have the ability to fly. **(9)**Gliding lizards have a wide flap of skin with a series of ribs on each side of their bodies. **(10)**When these lizards spread out their ribs, the skin unfolds like a fan. **(11)**Gliding lizards do not flap wings as birds do. **(12)**Rather, they leap into the air from a high location and use the flaps of skin to glide from one place to the next.

**13 Which is the *best* way for Ashley to write sentence 2 so it has an appropriate tone?**

- A** People can be freaked out by a lizard that can leap.
- B** People seem to think that a lizard that can leap is peculiar.
- C** People think sometimes that a lizard that leaps is really wacky.
- D** People seem to think that a lizard that flies around like a superhero is not cool.

**14 How can sentences 4 and 5 *best* be combined?**

- F** Malaysia, Thailand, and parts of China are countries where gliding lizards live in tropical jungles.
- G** In tropical jungles, in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and parts of China, gliding lizards live.
- H** Gliding lizards live in tropical jungles, but they live in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and parts of China.
- J** Gliding lizards live in tropical jungles in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and parts of China.

**15 What is the *best* way for Ashley to add more specific details to sentence 7?**

- A** Their skin is a leathery mixture of greens, browns, and blacks that allows these creatures to blend with their surroundings.
- B** Their unusual skin is green and brown, and this colorful mixture allows these creatures to blend with their surroundings.
- C** Their skin is so dark that it allows these creatures to blend with their surroundings.
- D** Their colorful skin allows these creatures to blend with their surroundings.

**16 Ashley decides to add an additional detail after sentence 9. Which of these would be *best*?**

- F** Lizards can be seen catching insects in jungles.
- G** The ribs are soft and flexible so they can move.
- H** Studies show that the ribs on the lizard are small.
- J** The color of the flap matches the skin of the lizard.

**Read the next part of Ashley’s rough draft and use it to answer questions 17–21. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.**

**(13)** Having wings gives the gliding lizards a big advantage at mealtime.

**(14)** These creatures spent most of their lives scampering up and down trees, dining on insects. **(15)** If they find few insects on one tree, these lizards do not have to sit and wait for more to come along. **(16)** They can simply leap from their perches, soar with their wings, and search a neighboring tree instead of waiting for a meal. **(17)** For every foot the lizards drop, they can glide approximately five feet horizontally, so it is easy to reach nearby trees.

**(18)** Of course, having wings also allows the gliding lizard to avoid becoming another creature’s meal. **(19)** Although gliding lizards have the benefit of camouflage, they are at risk from some snakes, such as the bronzeback snake. **(20)** This snake can climb flat smooth tree trunks in the jungle to look for lizards. **(21)** A bronzeback snake can use its tongue to detect the scent of a lizard. **(22)** When a gliding lizard sees the snake, the lizard easily leaps from the tree, opens the flap of skin, and soars to a more safer place.

**(23)** Gliding lizards are amazing creatures, but they are not as uncommon as one might think. **(24)** In fact, Southeast Asia has about 40 different species of soaring lizards. **(25)** They differ a great deal in size and appearance. **(26)** Some are quite small, while others, such as the common gliding lizard or “flying dragon,” can grows to be eight inches long. **(27)** However different, all gliding lizards share their ability to surprise predator and prey alike as “leaping lizards.”



**17 In sentence 14, how is spent correctly written?**

- A** spending
- B** spends
- C** spend
- D** As it is

**18 In sentence 18, how is creature's correctly written?**

- F** creatures's
- G** creatures'
- H** creatures
- J** As it is

**19 In sentence 20, how is climb flat smooth tree trunks correctly written?**

- A** climb flat smooth, tree trunks
- B** climb flat, smooth, tree trunks
- C** climb flat, smooth tree trunks
- D** As it is

**20** In sentence 22, how is a more safer place correctly written?

- F** a safer place
- G** a most safest place
- H** a safest place
- J** As it is

**21** In sentence 26, how is grows correctly written?

- A** growing
- B** grow
- C** grown
- D** As it is

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

22 Read this sentence.

Today, these big structures stand as a lasting tribute to the rich culture of ancient Egypt.

How is the word big *best* revised for appropriate tone?

- F massive
- G humongous
- H jumbo
- J king-size

23 Read this sentence.

Jared put on some descent clothes.

In this sentence, how is descent correctly written?

- A desent
- B decent
- C dissent
- D As it is

**24 Read this sentence.**

The class decided that a picnic not a dance would be more fun.

**How is a picnic not a dance correctly written?**

- F** a picnic, not a dance,
- G** a picnic, not a dance
- H** a picnic not a dance,
- J** As it is