

VIRGINIA STANDARDS OF LEARNING

Spring 2006 Released Test

# GRADE 8 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 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 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

Go to the next  
page and continue  
working.

## *Signs of Friendship*

Heather's English teacher asks each of her students to write a story about friendship.

- 1 Before Heather begins writing her story, she wants to make a story map. Her map will help her to —
- A organize the events in her story
  - B edit her story
  - C decide on a title for her story
  - D decide on action words to put in her story

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

(1) Marcy saw the colorful sign the minute she got off the school bus. (2) It said, “WELCOME BLUE BADGES!”

(3) “This will be a good day,” she thought. (4) “No, it’s going to be a *great* day!”

(5) The students at the middle school had looked forward to this day for weeks. (6) The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was coming to play a concert at a school assembly. (7) The concert was to promote Law Enforcement Week. (8) This was their first appearance at the school, and excitement was running high.

(9) In first period class, Marcy took her seat near the window. (10) Suddenly, she noticed two strangers in the class. (11) One was a student sitting at a desk across the room, and the other was an adult who stood near the new student.

(12) The woman made some hand motions, and the girl made some back. (13) The quick, fluid hand motions went back and forth between them like some secret code.

(14) “Good morning, students,” said Mr. Zoller, the teacher. (15) “I’d like to introduce Patrice Jones, our new student, and her sign language interpreter, Ms. Brown. (16) Ms. Brown studied at Yale University. (17) Patrice is hearing-impaired and communicates in sign language,” he continued, “and she has just moved here from North Carolina. (18) I know you will make her feel welcome.”

**2 How can Heather *best* combine sentences 6 and 7 without changing their meanings?**

- F** The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, coming to play a concert promoting Law Enforcement Week at a school assembly.
- G** The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was coming to a school assembly to promoting Law Enforcement Week, and playing a concert.
- H** The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was promoting Law Enforcement Week and was coming to play a concert and the concert was at a school assembly.
- J** The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was coming to play a concert at a school assembly to promote Law Enforcement Week.

**3 In which of the following sentences does Heather use the *most* vivid, descriptive language?**

- A** “This will be a good day,” she thought.
- B** One was a student sitting at a desk across the room, and the other was an adult who stood near the new student.
- C** The quick, fluid hand motions went back and forth between them like some secret code.
- D** “I’d like to introduce Patrice Jones, our new student, and her sign language interpreter, Ms. Brown.”

**4 Which of the following sentences does *not* belong in Heather’s story?**

- F** Sentence 5
- G** Sentence 9
- H** Sentence 15
- J** Sentence 16

**Read the next part of Heather’s rough draft, and use it to answer questions 5–12. This section has groups of underlined words. The questions ask about these groups of underlined words.**

(19)At the end of the hour, the students pored into the hall to head for second period, but Marcy hung back.

(20)“Hi, I’m Marcy,” she said to Patrice.

(21)Ms. Brown made some hand motions to Patrice, who responded to Marcy with a flick of her hand, ending with her little finger held streight up.

(22)“That’s the sign for ‘Hi,’ ” explained Ms. Brown. (23)“you’ll learn quickly.

(24)Soon you and your classmates will be using sign language too!”

(25)Then Marcy thought of the concert. (26)“There’s a concert today by a band called The Blue Badges. (27)They’re the best band around! (28)You should go!”

(29)Suddenly, Marcy remembered that Patrice was hearing-impaired.

(30)Embarrassed, she blushed and said a real quick good-bye.

(31)“Why did I say that?” she thinks, annoyed with herself. (32)“She can’t hear none of the music.”

(33)When the students assembled for the concert that afternoon, Marcy found herself sitting right next to Patrice, without Ms. Brown.

(34)Patrice signed, “Hi!” and Marcy did the same, using the simple gesture she had learned.

(35)The concert began, and soon the sounds of guitars, drums, and keyboards filled the auditorium.

(36)Marcy glanced at Patrice, who were swaying to the music’s beat.

(37)Sensing Marcy’s surprise, Patrice mouthed the words, “I can feel it!”

(38)That made Marcy smile. (39)The two girls enjoyed the rest of the concert together, and Patrice even taught Marcy some words in sign language. (40)It was a great day after all because Marcy had made a new friend.



**5 In sentence 19, how is students pored correctly written?**

- A student's pored
- B students' poured
- C students poured
- D As it is

**6 In sentence 21, how is streight correctly written?**

- F straight
- G strait
- H strate
- J As it is

**7 In sentence 23, how is you'll correctly written?**

- A you will
- B You'll
- C Youll
- D As it is

**8 In sentence 29, how is remembered correctly written?**

- F rembered
- G rememebered
- H remebered
- J As it is

**9 In sentence 30, how is a real quick good-bye correctly written?**

- A a real quickly good-bye
- B a really quickly good-bye
- C a really quick good-bye
- D As it is

**10 In sentence 31, how is she thinks, annoyed correctly written?**

- F she will think, annoyed
- G she is thinking, annoyed
- H she thought, annoyed
- J As it is

**11 In sentence 32, how is can't hear none of correctly written?**

- A can't hear any of
- B can't not hear none of
- C can not hear none of
- D As it is

**12 In sentence 36, how is who were swaying correctly written?**

- F who are swaying
- G who was swaying
- H who is swaying
- J As it is

Go to the next  
page and continue  
working.

## ***How Do Whales and Dolphins Sleep Without Drowning?***

**Jana's science class has just finished a unit on oceanography. The students are asked to write a report about some form of ocean life.**

**13 Jana is considering writing about whales and dolphins. What should she do next?**

- A Read entries in a thesaurus
- B Start writing her rough draft
- C Narrow her topic
- D Ask if others have chosen this topic

**14 Which of these should Jana do to organize the information she has gathered for her report?**

- F Read her science book
- G Research her topic on the Internet
- H Take notes
- J Make an outline

**Here is the first part of Jana’s rough draft. Use it to answer questions 15–18.**

(1) Marine mammals, such as whales and dolphins, spend all of their lives in the water. (2) Scientists have observed them at zoos and aquariums. (3) Scientists have also observed them in the wild to see when and how they sleep. (4) Their observations have shown that some of these animals sleep. (5) While some may not sleep at all.

(6) Whales and dolphins have adapted very well to their living space. (7) They have been very successful at learning to hold their breath. (8) Some scientists believe whales and dolphins have even lost the involuntary aspects of breathing, which means they have to decide when to take each breath. (9) Consequently, to breathe, they must be conscious, they must be alert. (10) This fact prevents the animals from sleeping.

(11) Many sleep tests have been done on dolphins. (12) They are very entertaining animals. (13) The tests show that in a sleep cycle dolphins have the ability to shut down half of their brain and one of their eyes at a time. (14) The other half of the brain is still active and alert. (15) The alert side of the brain signals when danger or obstacles are near. (16) It also reminds the animal to go to the surface to breathe. (17) After about two hours, the dolphin will reverse the process. (18) In this way, the dolphin can stay alert 24 hours a day. (19) Observation shows that dolphins spend a lot of time in this state. (20) Researchers believe whales and dolphins have identical sleep cycles.

**15 What is the *best* way to combine sentences 2 and 3 without changing their meaning?**

- A In zoos and at aquariums they have been observed by scientists and also in the wild to see when and how they sleep.
- B To see how and when they were observed by scientists, they sleep in zoos, at aquariums, and in the wild.
- C Observing them in the wild, scientists observed them to see when and how they sleep in zoos and at aquariums.
- D Scientists have observed them at zoos, at aquariums, and in the wild to see when and how they sleep.

**16 Which of these sentences needs to be revised because it is *not* a complete sentence?**

- F Sentence 5
- G Sentence 7
- H Sentence 16
- J Sentence 19

**17 What is the *best* way to rewrite sentence 9?**

- A To breathe, consequently, being conscious and alert.
- B Consequently, they must be conscious and alert to breathe.
- C Being conscious, consequently, to breathe and also be alert.
- D Consequently, they must be alert. And conscious to breathe.

**18 Which of these sentences does *not* belong in Jana's paper?**

- F Sentence 7
- G Sentence 12
- H Sentence 17
- J Sentence 20

**Read the next part of Jana’s rough draft, and use it to answer questions 19–24. This section contains groups of underlined words. The questions will ask about these groups of underlined words.**

(21) Fortunately for whales and dolphins, they can hold their breath longer than most mammals. (22) They are uniquely suited to spending long periods of time underwater without taking in oxygen. (23) They have a specialized respiratory system that allows this. (24) Because their lungs are proportionately more larger than most animals, they can take in more air with each breath.

(25) There are other ways these mammals have learned to live underwater. (26) A baby whale sleeps while its mother swam. (27) It follows closely behind the mother in her slipstream, a current of water thrust backward by the mother while she swims forward. (28) A mother must swim constantly during the baby’s first few weeks of life because the baby does not yet have enough blubber, or fat, on their body to float. (29) If the mother stopped swimming, the baby would sink to the bottom of the sea.

(30) In order to come up to breathe dolphins and whales sleep near the surface of the ocean. (31) It’s not uncommon to see dolphins “logging,” or floating slowly along the surface of the water with very little movement. (32) In sleeping, as well as in other life processes dolphins and whales have adapted to the environmental challenges that have been presented.

**19 In sentence 21, they can hold their breath is correctly written —**

- A they can hold there breath
- B they can hold they're breath
- C they can hold thier breath
- D as it is

**20 In sentence 24, more larger than most animals, is correctly written —**

- F more larger then most animals,
- G larger than most animals,
- H larger then most animals,
- J as it is

**21 In sentence 26, while its mother swam is correctly written —**

- A while its mother was swimming
- B while its mother swimmmed
- C while its mother swims
- D as it is

**22 In sentence 28, fat, on their body is correctly written —**

- F fat, on our body
- G fat, on your body
- H fat, on its body
- J as it is

**23 In sentence 30, to breathe dolphins and whales is correctly written —**

- A to breathe dolphins, and whales
- B to breathe dolphins and, whales
- C to breathe, dolphins and whales
- D as it is

**24 In sentence 32, other life processes dolphins is correctly written —**

- F other, life processes dolphins
- G other life processes dolphins,
- H other life processes, dolphins
- J as it is