



## **Grade 4 English Language Arts**

**SAMPLE ITEMS**

## Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Education provides districts and schools with tools to assist in delivering focused instruction aligned with the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCRS). This document contains a set of twenty SC READY test items that have been written to align with the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards. These items were reviewed for content and bias prior to being field tested and approved for release to the public.

## Purpose

This document is intended to be a resource for educators; it is not designed to be a practice test for students. The sample items are examples of college- and career-ready assessment items. These items were chosen to reflect the increased rigor of assessing the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards. SC READY assesses content standards in a variety of ways. This document does not include all item types or standards.

## Item Information Format

<b>Indicator Alignment</b>	SCCCR
<b>Indicator Description</b>	text from SCCCR
<b>Answer Key</b>	correct answer
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	cognitive demand
<b>Estimated Difficulty</b>	estimate based on student responses

## Links

South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards

<https://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/file/programs-services/59/documents/ELA2015SCCCRStandards.pdf>

Norman Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge for the Four Content Areas

<http://www.webbalign.org/Webbs-DOK-Levels-Summary.pdf>

1. A student is writing a report about clouds. Read the information from the source.

Clouds are large collections of tiny water droplets or ice crystals. These droplets are so light that they float in the air. Heat from the sun causes the water in oceans, lakes, and rivers to evaporate, or become a gas. As the gas cools, it rises, and the water droplets begin to stick together. Millions of these tiny water droplets create the clouds we see in the sky.

Which subheading would **best** describe the information from this source?

- A. How Clouds Form
- B. Types of Clouds
- C. How Clouds Move
- D. Using Clouds to Predict Weather

SC READY ELA Sample Item <b>1</b>	Indicator Alignment	4.1.0.3.2
	Indicator Description	Organize and categorize important information; collaborate to validate or revise thinking; report relevant findings.
	Answer Key	A
	Depth of Knowledge	2
	Estimated Difficulty	Low Difficulty

2. A student is planning to write a research report about whether video games are good for kids. Which question would **best** focus the research so that the student would find information to use in the report?
- A. Which video games are most popular with young people?
  - B. What are some positive effects of playing video games?
  - C. When is a good time to introduce children to video games?
  - D. How do people begin a career creating video games?

SC READY ELA Sample Item

**2**

<b>Indicator Alignment</b>	<b>4.1.0.1.1</b>
<b>Indicator Description</b>	Formulate questions to focus thinking on an idea to narrow and direct further inquiry.
<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Estimated Difficulty</b>	<b>Medium Difficulty</b>

3. A student has made a plan for a research report. Read the plan.

**Research Report Plan**

Topic: space travel

Audience: teacher and classmates

Purpose: to inform

Research question: How has space travel changed since the first spacecraft landed on the moon?

The student found several sources. Which source would most likely have information that would be useful in the student's report?

- A. a book titled *The Space Mission Mystery*
- B. a book titled *The History of Space Travel*
- C. a website that describes how to make model rockets for a classroom project
- D. a newspaper article with the heading "Interesting Facts about the Moon and Stars"

SC READY ELA Sample Item

3

**Indicator Alignment** 4.1.0.3.1

**Indicator Description** Develop a plan of action for collecting relevant information from primary and secondary sources.

**Answer Key** B

**Depth of Knowledge** 2

**Estimated Difficulty** Low Difficulty

Use the following Sample Passage with Sample Items numbers 4 – 10.

### Enjoy the Moment

Sam walked barefoot over the warm sand, enjoying the feel of the small grains under his feet. It was very early in the morning. He and his grandmother made their way toward the shore in comfortable silence, each carrying a pole and a tackle box filled with necessary fishing supplies.

“I have a good feeling this morning, Sam,” Gran said as her blue eyes twinkled in the young sunlight. “You take this spot, and I’ll walk down a ways. You know I need plenty of elbow room when I’m fishing.” Giving Sam a friendly jab in the side with her arm, Gran continued down the shoreline with her fishing pole and tackle in hand.

Sam quickly set up his pole with one of his favorite lures for catching fish. Holding the lure up to the sunlight, he twisted it gently between his thumb and forefinger, watching as the light danced off of its metallic sides.

*Wow, oh, wow, Sam thought to himself. This is bound to catch a whopper!*

Satisfied, Sam waded into the surf in his waterproof fishing boots, shuffling his feet through the cool water to avoid stepping on a stingray. Since it would soon be high tide, it didn’t take long until he was standing just below knee-deep in the ocean. With a well-practiced toss, he sent the lure out into the deeper water beyond the waves and let it float back toward shore a bit. Sam waited a few seconds, giving the line time to sink, then started the slow, rhythmic process of reeling in the line.

As he reeled, Sam looked over to the spot Gran had claimed. He smiled when she cast her line out into the ocean. It amazed him that, even when she was having a bad day, Gran could cast her line a good thirty feet farther than Sam could on his best day.

During these trips with Gran, Sam’s attention would move from fishing to the beauty of his surroundings. His grandmother often said that the fishing was secondary to the experience. Gazing out into the surf, Sam watched as a school of silver-banded whiting fish cut its way across the waves. Hearing the call of the seagulls and the sounds of the surf, Sam thought he’d have to agree with his best friend, Gran.

Suddenly, a sharp tug on the line sent Sam stumbling. Recovering from his near fall, he gave his pole a mighty jerk. With a hoot of excitement, Sam watched as the tip of his pole bent sharply. He listened to the line whirl as it was carried out into deeper water by an unknown foe.

Sam was vaguely aware of Gran appearing next to him, calmly coaching him, whispering words of encouragement in his ear.

After what seemed like an hour-long battle, Sam saw a ripple in the water.

“There it is!” Sam shouted breathlessly.



He slowly walked back toward the shore until he was in ankle-deep water and stared in wonder at the huge redfish on the end of his line. Sam knelt down and gently removed the fish from the line, taking care to hold it under the water as he admired the fish's size.

"Oh, Sammie, your catch is just magnificent!" Gran whispered next to him. "It's a red drum! It must weigh a good ten pounds! Take a picture with your mind, and send the fish on its way."

Sam took a moment to savor his victory. He felt the weight and power of the fish in his hands and watched it shimmer as the light reflected off its silvery-red scales.

"You put up a good fight," Sam said softly. "Maybe we'll meet again one day." He loosened his grip, smiling as the fish darted back into the cover of deeper water.

Gran patted Sam on the back. "I don't know about you, but I worked up an appetite. What do you say to some lunch—my treat?"

Sam nodded. He and Gran gathered their gear and headed up the dunes from the shore. As they reached the crest, a girl and her father were making their way toward the water, fishing poles in hand. The girl looked at Sam sympathetically.

"No luck today, huh?" she asked.

With a quick wink to Gran, Sam smiled at the girl and replied, "Actually, it was one of the best days of my life!"

4. Which sentence from the passage supports the idea that Sam is still learning how to fish?
- A. During these trips with Gran, Sam’s attention would move from fishing to the beauty of his surroundings.
  - B. With a hoot of excitement, Sam watched as the tip of his pole bent sharply.
  - C. Sam was vaguely aware of Gran appearing next to him, calmly coaching him, whispering words of encouragement in his ear.
  - D. Sam knelt down and gently removed the fish from the line, taking care to hold it under the water as he admired the fish's size.

SC READY ELA Sample Item <b>4</b>	Indicator Alignment	4.RL.MC.5.1
	Indicator Description	Ask and answer inferential questions to analyze meaning beyond the text; refer to details and examples within a text to support inferences and conclusions.
	Answer Key	C
	Depth of Knowledge	2
	Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty



5. This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

What is the theme of the passage?

- A. Spending time outside can help people forget their problems.
- B. People should not worry about what others think.
- C. Happy memories are an important part of life.
- D. Mastering a new activity can take a long time.

**Part B**

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in part A?

- A. Sam walked barefoot over the warm sand, enjoying the feel of the small grains under his feet.
- B. It amazed him that, even when she was having a bad day, Gran could cast her line a good thirty feet farther than Sam could on his best day.
- C. “No luck today, huh?” she asked.
- D. With a quick wink to Gran, Sam smiled at the girl and replied, “Actually, it was one of the best days of my life!”

SC READY ELA Sample Item <b>5</b>	Indicator Alignment	4.RL.MC.6.1
	Indicator Description	Determine the development of a theme within a text; summarize using key details.
	Answer Key	Part A: C; Part B: D
	Depth of Knowledge	3
	Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

6. Which sentence from the passage **best** shows that Sam has respect for both the fish and the battle of bringing it in?
- A. Suddenly, a sharp tug on the line sent Sam stumbling.
  - B. “There it is!” Sam shouted breathlessly.
  - C. Sam took a moment to savor his victory.
  - D. “You put up a good fight,” Sam said softly.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

6

Indicator Alignment 4.RL.MC.8.1a

Indicator Description Use text evidence to explain how conflicts cause the characters to change or revise plans while moving toward resolution.

Answer Key D

Depth of Knowledge 2

Estimated Difficulty High Difficulty

7. Read the sentences from the passage.

*Wow, oh, wow, Sam thought to himself. This is bound to catch a whopper!*

What do the sentences **best** reveal about Sam?

- A. He feels hopeful about the day.
- B. He has caught large fish before.
- C. He thinks he will catch more fish than Gran.
- D. He is better prepared for the day than Gran is.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

7

**Indicator Alignment** 4.RL.LCS.9.2

**Indicator Description** Explain how the author's choice of words, illustrations, and conventions combine to create mood, contribute to meaning, and emphasize aspects of a character or setting.

**Answer Key** A

**Depth of Knowledge** 2

**Estimated Difficulty** Medium Difficulty

8. Read the sentences from the passage.

With a well-practiced toss, he sent the lure out into the deeper water beyond the waves and let it float back toward shore a bit. Sam waited a few seconds, giving the line time to sink, then started the slow, rhythmic process of reeling in the line.

What mood does the description in the sentences suggest?

- A. a lonely mood
- B. a peaceful mood
- C. a humorous mood
- D. a mysterious mood

SC READY ELA Sample Item

8

**Indicator Alignment** 4.RL.LCS.9.2

**Indicator Description**

Explain how the author's choice of words, illustrations, and conventions combine to create mood, contribute to meaning, and emphasize aspects of a character or setting.

**Answer Key**

B

**Depth of Knowledge**

2

**Estimated Difficulty**

Medium Difficulty

9. Which sentences from the passage **best** show the special relationship that Sam and Gran have? Choose **two** answers.
- A. Giving Sam a friendly jab in the side with her arm, Gran continued down the shoreline with her fishing pole and tackle in hand.
  - B. As he reeled, Sam looked over to the spot Gran had claimed.
  - C. His grandmother often said that the fishing was secondary to the experience.
  - D. Hearing the call of the seagulls and the sounds of the surf, Sam thought he'd have to agree with his best friend, Gran.
  - E. He and Gran gathered their gear and headed up the dunes from the shore.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	9	Indicator Alignment	4.RL.LCS.9.2
		Indicator Description	Explain how the author's choice of words, illustrations, and conventions combine to create mood, contribute to meaning, and emphasize aspects of a character or setting.
		Answer Key	A,D
		Depth of Knowledge	3
		Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

**10.** Read the sentence from the passage.

“I have a good feeling this morning, Sam,” Gran said as her blue eyes twinkled in the young sunlight.

How does this sentence fit into the overall structure of the passage?

- A. It reveals the theme of the story.
- B. It hints at the events that happen later in the story.
- C. It hints at the major change of setting in the story.
- D. It reveals the setting for the main events in the story.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

**10**

**Indicator Alignment** 4.RL.LCS.12.1

**Indicator Description** Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fit together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.

**Answer Key** B

**Depth of Knowledge** 2

**Estimated Difficulty** High Difficulty

Use the following Sample Passage with Sample Items numbers 11 – 16.

### The Buzz about the GeoBee

The final two students in the 2009 National Geographic Bee waited patiently for their next question. Alex Trebek, the long-time host of the popular television show Jeopardy!®, stood before them. After a pause, Trebek asked, “Timis County shares its name with a tributary of the Danube and is located in the western part of which European country?”

The two students wrote down different answers. But seventh-grader Eric Yang had written the correct answer: Romania. As a result, this student from Texas won the top prize that year. Yang took home a \$25,000 college scholarship. Other prizes in the 2009 contest included a trip with a parent or guardian to the Galapagos Islands in South America.

### Another Famous Bee

Many people have heard of the Scripps National Spelling Bee®. The National Geographic Bee—or “GeoBee,” as it is called—does not involve spelling. However, it is similar to Scripps in some ways. It encourages students to sharpen their memories and thinking skills. Participants make their way from a contest within their own schools all the way up to a statewide contest. State winners and their teachers then receive a free trip to Washington, D.C. There, each student competes for the top geography prize in the nation.

The first GeoBee was held in 1989. Since then, millions of students in grades 4 through 8 have participated. About 10,000 schools in the nation take part in the contest! Students who attend homeschools are also eligible to participate in the bee.

### A Love of Learning

GeoBee winners come from many different backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common. They share a deep interest in people and places around the world. For example, South Carolina student Connor Fraley, who is from the town of Florence, was a state winner in the 2017 contest. Eighth-grader Fraley had always been curious. When he was younger, he used to make his own maps and enjoyed looking at globes.

Going to the national GeoBee in Washington, D.C., was a true adventure for Fraley. Though he did not win, all his hard work and studying offered him a great chance to explore. “Being from a small town,” he says, “I do not go to big cities that often, and I had never been to D.C. It was so cool for me to see all the monuments I had seen in textbooks and on TV but never up close.”

### The Path to GeoBee Success

2009 champion Eric Yang has been described as an enthusiastic reader of everything from history books to cookbooks. Yang admitted, though, that he hadn’t known the answer to the final question right off the bat. “I just made an educated guess,” he explained.

There may be something to Yang’s method. The GeoBee website includes some sample questions. With each question is its correct answer and a strategy that students might use



to arrive at that answer. Upon taking a closer look, students may find that clues to the answer are often built right into the question. (See the box below for some sample questions.)

**In the GeoBee, a participant might be asked questions like these:**

**Which state has a climate suitable for growing citrus fruits—California or Maine?**

*You know that oranges and grapefruit are citrus fruits and that they grow in warm places. Since California's climate is definitely warmer and sunnier than Maine's, you correctly answer **California**.*

**The North Atlantic Current brings warm waters from the tropics to the west coast of which continent?**

*From studying physical maps, you know that the North Atlantic is the main area of the Atlantic that lies north of the equator and that the entire west coast of Europe borders the North Atlantic, so you correctly answer **Europe**.*

[Source: National Geographic Website]

In addition to sample questions, the GeoBee website also offers students study tips to help them prepare for the Bee. They can look through study guides, take online quizzes, and play games. Plus, anyone who is interested in the GeoBee can download an online app called the GeoBee Challenge. Players answer questions and even take part in a Map Challenge Round. People of any age are welcome to use the GeoBee Challenge app!

The last GeoBee national champion from South Carolina was David Beihl. He was an eighth-grader who won back in 1999. Could you be the next champ from the Palmetto State?



11. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the idea that students enjoy the GeoBee no matter how well they do in the contest?
- A. The final two students in the 2009 National Geographic Bee waited patiently for their next question.
  - B. There, each student competes for the top geography prize in the nation.
  - C. Though he did not win, all his hard work and studying offered him a great chance to explore.
  - D. Yang admitted, though, that he hadn't known the answer to the final question right off the bat.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

11

Indicator Alignment	4.RI.MC.5.1
Indicator Description	Ask and answer inferential questions to analyze meaning beyond the text; refer to details and examples within a text to support inferences and conclusions.
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	3
Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

12. This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

Based on the passage, what is a goal of the GeoBee?

- A. to encourage students to learn about different parts of the world
- B. to show students what it is like to take part in a game show
- C. to help students from around the U.S. get to know one another
- D. to give students a chance to take trips to different U.S. cities

**Part B**

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer in part A?

- A. The man who hosts the GeoBee also hosts a television show.
- B. The national GeoBee takes place in Washington, D.C.
- C. The GeoBee website offers study guides, quizzes, games, and maps.
- D. GeoBee winners come from different states.

<div>SC READY ELA Sample Item</div> <div>12</div>	Indicator Alignment	4.RI.MC.5.1
	Indicator Description	Ask and answer inferential questions to analyze meaning beyond the text; refer to details and examples within a text to support inferences and conclusions.
	Answer Key	Part A: A; Part B: C
	Depth of Knowledge	3
	Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

13. Which information is a central idea that belongs in a summary of the passage?
- A. GeoBee state winners get to travel with their teachers to the national contest.
  - B. GeoBee winners come from all different places and backgrounds.
  - C. One prize given in the 2009 GeoBee was a trip to South America.
  - D. David Beihl from South Carolina won the GeoBee in 1999.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

13

Indicator Alignment	4.RI.MC.6.1
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Indicator Description	Summarize multi-paragraph texts using key details to support the central idea.
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Answer Key	B
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Depth of Knowledge	3
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Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty
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14. Read these sentences from the passage.

The National Geographic Bee—or “GeoBee,” as it is called—does not involve spelling. However, it is similar to Scripps in some ways. It encourages students to sharpen their memories and thinking skills.

What does the phrase “encourages students to sharpen” mainly reveal about the GeoBee?

- A. The GeoBee has changed over time.
- B. The GeoBee is very popular.
- C. The GeoBee is difficult for students.
- D. The GeoBee can be helpful to students.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

14

**Indicator Alignment** 4.RI.LCS.8.1

**Indicator Description** Determine how the author uses words and phrases to shape and clarify meaning.

**Answer Key** D

**Depth of Knowledge** 2

**Estimated Difficulty** Medium Difficulty

15. What does the information inside the box **best** help readers to understand?
- A. how students can prepare to answer the GeoBee questions
  - B. which questions students must answer in order to win the GeoBee
  - C. why students should use the GeoBee Challenge app
  - D. which questions Eric Yang got right in order to win the GeoBee

SC READY ELA Sample Item

15

Indicator Alignment	4.RI.LCS.8.2
Indicator Description	Apply knowledge of text features to gain meaning; describe the relationship between these features and the text.
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

16. How does the use of headings help the reader to understand the passage?
- A. The headings state the central ideas of the passage.
  - B. The headings organize ideas from the passage.
  - C. The headings list in order the steps for taking part in the GeoBee.
  - D. The headings give solutions to some problems with the GeoBee.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

16

**Indicator Alignment** 4.RI.LCS.11.1

**Indicator Description** Apply knowledge of text structures to describe how structures contribute to meaning.

**Answer Key** B

**Depth of Knowledge** 3

**Estimated Difficulty** High Difficulty

17. Read the draft of a student's essay.

Zookeepers spend their days with animals. They learn what the animals like best and how to care for them. Many of the humans and animals form special relationships. The zookeepers are able to watch the animals grow and change over time. Sometimes, there is also an opportunity to feed and care for baby animals that are born in the zoo. What could be more fun and exciting than that?

Which sentence would provide the **best** introduction for the paragraph?

- A. I hope to visit the zoo this summer with my family.
- B. Animals such as bears and monkeys can be seen in many zoos.
- C. I think that working at a zoo would be the best type of job.
- D. There are hundreds of zoos in cities around the world.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

17

Indicator Alignment	4.W.MCC.1.1a
Indicator Description	Write opinion pieces that introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	3
Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

18. A student is writing an opinion paper. Read the draft.

I appreciate all four seasons, but fall is my favorite. It is the best time of year. There are many reasons why I enjoy the fall.

First of all, chilly fall days are a relief after a long hot summer. It is neither too hot nor too cold. The weather feels comfortable and pleasant. My mom likes to make delicious, warm soups as it gets cold outside. People tend to do more outdoor activities when the temperature starts to drop.

Which sentence from the draft should be removed because it does **not** support the underlined idea?

- A. It is neither too hot nor too cold.
- B. The weather feels comfortable and pleasant.
- C. My mom likes to make delicious, warm soups as it gets cold outside.
- D. People tend to do more outdoor activities when the temperature starts to drop.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	18	Indicator Alignment	4.W.MCC.1.1e
		Indicator Description	Write opinion pieces that develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing building on personal ideas and the ideas of others.
		Answer Key	C
		Depth of Knowledge	2
		Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty



19. A student wrote a paragraph explaining the results of a science experiment. Read the paragraph.

Today our class completed a science experiment. We were trying to find out whether we could stop apple slices from turning brown. Ms. Thompson gave each team of students pieces of an apple that she had cut. We put each piece into a small dish. Then, we poured lemon juice, olive oil, water, vinegar, or saltwater over each piece of apple. One piece was left as a control. That means that we did not add anything to one of the dishes with an apple slice. After everything was ready, we took notes about the appearance of each piece of apple. Throughout the day, we came back to check on our experiment and took more notes on any changes we saw. I noticed that the control was the first piece of apple to turn brown. The piece of apple in the lemon juice had changed the least by the end of the day. Ms. Thompson told us that the acid in the lemon juice is what helped keep the apple from turning brown. All of the liquids slowed the browning of the apple slices at least a little because the liquid can protect the fruit from the air. The air reacts with the fruit, causing it to turn brown.

Which sentence provides the **best** conclusion for the paragraph?

- A. I liked this science experiment more than if we had read something in our science textbook.
- B. We needed to clean up the dishes and the rest of our area after the experiment was finished.
- C. Joey thought the piece of apple in the vinegar turned brown faster than the one in the olive oil.
- D. Now I know that a good way to keep an apple slice looking fresh longer is to dip it in lemon juice.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	19	Indicator Alignment	4.W.MCC.2.1k
		Indicator Description	Write informative/explanatory texts that provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
		Answer Key	D
		Depth of Knowledge	2
		Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

**20.** Read the sentences.

People visiting Myrtle Beach may want to think before riding the huge Ferris wheel. It soars about 200 feet above the Atlantic Ocean.

Which conjunction correctly combines the two sentences?

- A. People visiting Myrtle Beach may want to think before riding the huge Ferris wheel since it soars about 200 feet above the Atlantic Ocean.
- B. People visiting Myrtle Beach may want to think before riding the huge Ferris wheel even though it soars about 200 feet above the Atlantic Ocean.
- C. People visiting Myrtle Beach may want to think before riding the huge Ferris wheel as long as it soars about 200 feet above the Atlantic Ocean.
- D. People visiting Myrtle Beach may want to think before riding the huge Ferris wheel whenever it soars about 200 feet above the Atlantic Ocean.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

**20**

**Indicator Alignment** 4.W.L.4.1g

**Indicator Description** When writing use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

**Answer Key** A

**Depth of Knowledge** 2

**Estimated Difficulty** Medium Difficulty