

# Pennsylvania PSSA 2023 Grade 3 English Language Arts

Exam & Answer Key Materials  
Pages 2 - 26



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# **The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment**

## **English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler**



**2023–2024  
Grade 3**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR READING PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS****Directions:**

On the following pages are the Reading passage and questions.

**Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:**

Some questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- First, read the passage carefully.
- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer the question.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

**Directions for Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions:**

Some questions will have two parts and will ask you to select one or more answers in each part.

For the evidence-based selected-response questions:

- Read Part One of the question and choose the best answer.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part One of the question.
- Record your answer to Part One in the answer booklet.
- Only one of the answers provided in Part One is correct.
- Then, read Part Two of the question and choose the evidence to support your answer in Part One. If Part Two tells you to select two answers, be sure to select two answers.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part Two of the question.
- Record your answer or answers to Part Two in the answer booklet.

**General Description of Scoring Guidelines for Reading Short-Answer Items****3 Points**

- The response provides a complete answer to the task (e.g., a statement that offers a correct answer as well as text-based support).
- The response provides specific, appropriate, and accurate details (e.g., naming, describing, explaining, or comparing) or examples.

**2 Points**

- The response provides a partial answer to the task (e.g., indicates some awareness of the task and at least one text-based detail).
- The response attempts to provide sufficient, appropriate details (e.g., naming, describing, explaining, or comparing) or examples; may contain minor inaccuracies.

**1 Point**

- The response provides an incomplete answer to the task (e.g., indicating either a misunderstanding of the task or no text-based details).
- The response provides insufficient or inappropriate details or examples that have a major effect on accuracy.
- The response consists entirely of relevant copied text.

**0 Points**

- The response provides insufficient material for scoring.
- The response is inaccurate in all aspects.

**Directions for Short-Answer Questions:**

Some questions will require you to write your response.

For the short-answer questions:

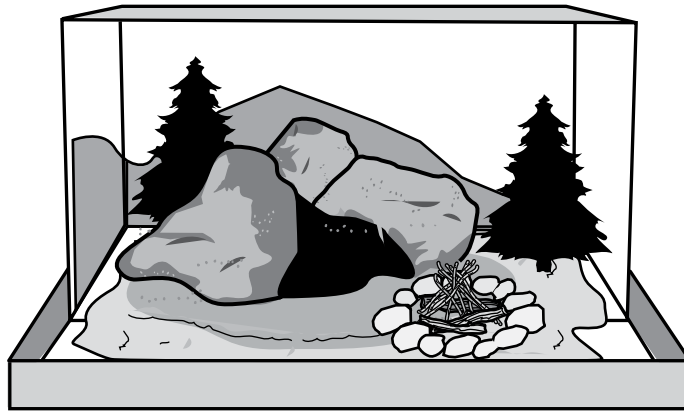
- Be sure to read each short-answer question carefully.
- You cannot receive the highest score for a short-answer question without completing all the tasks in the question.
- If the question asks you to do multiple tasks, be sure to complete all tasks.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer the question.
- Write your response in the appropriate space in the booklet. If you use scratch paper to write your draft, be sure to transfer your final response to the booklet.

## PASSAGE 1

Read the following passage about a science project. Then answer questions 1 through 5.

## Family Science

by Nancy Viau



“Eeeww! Karly, get that slimy, disgusting piece of junk away from my doll!” Jessie hollered.

“It’s not slimy. It’s SHINY,” I said. “Look!” I pushed my rock under Jessie’s nose. “Rocks aren’t disgusting, especially this one. It’s called obsidian, and it’s from a volcano. Dad and I bought it at the Natural Science Museum.”

Jessie shoved my rock. “Who cares? Karly, you are clueless. Girls don’t play with that stuff.”

“I like rocks.” I let out a puffy sigh and put the rock in my pocket. “I may be a famous geologist one day. What will you be?”

“Leave me alone,” Jessie snapped.

I didn’t feel like arguing, so I stomped out the door, plopped on the ground, and dug a hole. “Karly,” Mom called from the potting shed. “Do you have to play in the dirt? Look at your clothes. They’re filthy.”

“Maybe I’ll be an archaeologist when I grow up,” I shouted. “They get paid to look for artifacts in the ground.” I dusted off my pants and marched to the porch. “Good dinosaur book?” I asked Dad, peering over his shoulder.

“Excellent, want me to read to you?” he asked.

“Not now. Sometime soon I want to get started on the book I got at the museum—the one that came with an awesome fish fossil and . . .”

Jessie interrupted and asked me, “What in the world would you do with a fossil?”

“I’d study a bunch of fossils and become a paleontologist. I might even discover a new dinosaur,” I replied.

My sister shook her head so hard I thought her braids would fly off. “Dad, we can’t possibly be twins,” she said. “Karly’s weird.”

Dad gave Jessie his don’t-mess-with-me look. “Not that again.”

Jessie took the hint. “I’m leaving. I have to find a shoebox and make a caveman diorama for school.”

“Wait!” I fished around in my pocket. “I found a chunk of granite earlier today. Do you want to use it?” I asked.

“Eeeww! You’ve got to be kidding.” Jessie grabbed my rock and threw it down the driveway. “I certainly don’t need that!”

I watched my sister disappear into the house, then wiped away an annoying tear. A scientist doesn’t cry, but I sure wished Jessie would see things my way sometimes. After lunch, I heard sobs coming from Jessie’s room. I was still upset, but I peeked around the door. Jessie was sitting on the floor in a heap of construction paper. “What’s wrong?” I asked.

Jessie sniffled. “I can’t think of any materials for this dumb diorama. Colored paper doesn’t look prehistoric.”

Jessie was right. An idea sizzled in my brain. I grabbed her hand and pulled her outside. I didn’t stop until we were next to Mom’s potting shed.

“What are we doing here?” Jessie whined. “I have a project to do.”

“Dig, just dig,” I said, “and no questions.”

My sister tickled the dirt with her fingertips. “Eeeww!”

“Dig deeper,” I said. Jessie scrunched up her face, closed her eyes, and clawed at the earth. She felt something. “What is it?” I asked.

Jessie picked up a piece of hardened red clay. “What good is broken pottery?”

“It could be part of your caveman diorama, Jessie. It looks like a tiny primitive bowl, don’t you think?”

“Well . . . I guess,” said Jessie as she grinned and looked at the ground. “Maybe there’s a cup in here too.” My sister pushed and pulled at the dirt. I couldn’t believe she was giggling! Jessie worked for an hour on her diorama. She arranged the pottery bits around a fireplace that was made from crisscrossed twigs. Then Jessie sifted through layers of earth to find the right size stones for benches. “Now I need a cave,” she said. Racing down the driveway and skipping back, she opened her hand. “How about this? You said I could have it.”

I took the chunk of granite from my sister’s palm and gently placed it in the shoebox. “A granite cave,” I replied, “it’s perfect. And I have just the thing that looks like a cave drawing.” I ran into the house and brought out my fish fossil.

“Try this,” I said.

“Your museum fossil?” Jessie asked.

“You can borrow it. I will need it back, though, if I become a paleontologist and not a geologist or an archaeologist.”

“My diorama still needs something. I know! I have a miniature boy doll I can dress up like a caveman!” Jessie exclaimed.

“A doll?” I rolled my eyes. “Eeeww!”

“Ok, I’ll do this part myself. Thanks for helping me. I won’t call you weird anymore. I’d be lost without you for my sister,” Jessie said as she gave me a hug.

I hugged her back and whispered, “Sister scientists save the day.”



## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Read the sentence from the passage.

My sister tickled the dirt with her fingertips.

What does “tickled the dirt” mean in the sentence?

- Ⓐ lightly touched the dirt
- Ⓑ drew a picture in the dirt
- Ⓒ patted the dirt back into place
- Ⓓ dug in the dirt looking for things

| Item Information   |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Alignment          | A-V.4.1.2   |
| Answer Key         | A   |
| Depth of Knowledge | 2   |
| p-value A          | 62% (correct answer)  |
| p-value B          | 6%  |
| p-value C          | 7%  |
| p-value D          | 25%   |
| Option Annotations | The student is asked to determine the meaning of a phrase from the passage. Option A is the correct answer since the phrase “tickled the dirt” means to touch the dirt lightly. The literal meaning of the word “tickled” provides context for the correct answer. The development of the idea that Jessie does not like to get dirty and her reaction to touching the dirt provide additional context for the correct answer. Options B, C, and D do not convey the meaning of the word “tickled.” |

2. Which sentence **best** tells what the sisters learn in the passage?

- Ⓐ Twin sisters see how they are alike.
- Ⓑ Twin sisters respect one another's differences.
- Ⓒ Twin sisters work together to make a diorama.
- Ⓓ Twin sisters talk about what they will be when they grow up.

| Item Information   |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Alignment          | A-K.1.1.2  |
| Answer Key         | B  |
| Depth of Knowledge | 2  |
| p-value A          | 16%  |
| p-value B          | 50% (correct answer)   |
| p-value C          | 26%  |
| p-value D          | 8%   |
| Option Annotations | <p>The student is asked to determine what the sisters learn in the passage. Option B is the correct answer since the sisters have very different interests, but Karly is able to use her interest in digging, dirt, and rocks to help Jessie with her diorama project. When the project is just about complete, Jessie declares, "I won't call you weird anymore," indicating that she has learned to appreciate that her sister has different interests. Option A is incorrect since the sisters only reveal their differences in the passage, not the things they have in common. Option C is incorrect; although the sisters do work together to make the diorama, this does not state something they learned in the passage. Option D is incorrect; although Karly talks about the job she wants to have when she grows up, Jessie does not.</p> |

**Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions**

3. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

**Part One**

What is the result of Karly helping Jessie with her school project?

- Ⓐ Jessie appreciates Karly's having different interests.
- Ⓑ Jessie decides to become an archaeologist.
- Ⓒ Jessie accepts Karly's offer to finish the diorama.
- Ⓓ Jessie decides to collect different types of dolls.

**Part Two**

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- Ⓐ “ ‘A granite cave,’ I replied, ‘it’s perfect.’ ”
- Ⓑ “ ‘I have a miniature boy doll I can dress up like a caveman!’ Jessie exclaimed.”
- Ⓒ “ ‘I won’t call you weird anymore.’ ”
- Ⓓ “ ‘I’d be lost without you for my sister,’ Jessie said as she gave me a hug.”

| Item Information     |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Alignment            | A-K.1.1.3   |
| Answer Key: Part One | A   |
| Answer Key: Part Two | C, D  |
| Depth of Knowledge   | 3   |
| Mean Score           | 1.40  |
| Option Annotations   | <p>The student is asked to determine the result of Karly helping Jessie with her project and to select two sentences from the passage that support this answer.</p> <p><b>Part One:</b> Option A is the correct answer since Jessie is thankful Karly is able to help her with her diorama project. Option B is incorrect since Jessie is not sure which type of scientist she wants to be. Option C is incorrect since Karly does not offer to finish the diorama. Option D is incorrect; although Jessie decides to use a boy doll that she has, there is no indication that she decides to collect different types of dolls.</p> <p><b>Part Two:</b> Options C and D are the correct answers; option C shows that Jessie will not insult Karly anymore because of her different interests, and option D shows that Jessie is glad to have Karly as her sister because Karly was able to help Jessie complete her project. Options A and B are incorrect since they do not support the idea that Jessie is appreciative of Karly's different interests.</p> |

4. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

**Part One**

From which point of view is the passage written?

- Ⓐ third person through a narrator
- Ⓑ first person through Karly
- Ⓒ third person through Dad
- Ⓓ first person through Jessie

**Part Two**

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part One?  
Choose **one** answer.

- Ⓐ “ ‘Karly, get that slimy, disgusting piece of junk away from my doll!’ Jessie hollered.”
- Ⓑ “I pushed my rock under Jessie’s nose.”
- Ⓒ “ ‘Dad and I bought it at the Natural Science Museum.’ ”
- Ⓓ “Jessie scrunched up her face, closed her eyes, and clawed at the earth.”

| Item Information     |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Alignment            | A-C.2.1.1  |
| Answer Key: Part One | B  |
| Answer Key: Part Two | B  |
| Depth of Knowledge   | 3  |
| Mean Score           | 0.98   |
| Option Annotations   | <p>The student is asked to determine the point of view used in the passage and to select one sentence from the passage that supports this answer.</p> <p><b>Part One:</b> Option B is the correct answer since the passage is told using first-person point of view through Karly. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they do not describe the point of view used in the passage.</p> <p><b>Part Two:</b> Option B is the correct answer since it describes an action and uses the word “I,” which shows that Karly is telling the story. Option A is incorrect since this sentence is Jessie’s dialogue. Option C is incorrect; although this sentence uses the word “I,” it is dialogue and therefore does not show the point of view used in the passage. Option D is incorrect; although this sentence describes an action in the story, it does not use the word “I,” which is needed to show that the story is being told using first-person point of view.</p> |

**Short-Answer Question**

5. Read the sentences from the middle of the passage.

An idea sizzled in my brain. I grabbed her hand and pulled her outside.

How does Karly's idea contribute to the sequence of events in the passage? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

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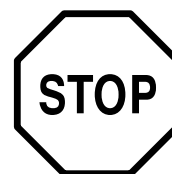
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**After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.**



## Short-Answer Scoring Guideline

### #5 Item Information

|                  |           |                           |   |                   |      |
|------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---|-------------------|------|
| <b>Alignment</b> | A-K.1.1.3 | <b>Depth of Knowledge</b> | 3 | <b>Mean Score</b> | 1.24 |
|------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---|-------------------|------|

### Assessment Anchor this item will be reported under:

E03.A-K.1—Key Ideas and Details

### Specific Eligible Content addressed by this item:

E03.A-K.1.1.3—Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

### Item-Specific Scoring Guideline

| <b>Score</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
|--------------|--|
| <b>3</b>     | The response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer to how Karly's idea contributes to the sequence of events in the passage. The response includes relevant and specific evidence from the passage.  |
| <b>2</b>     | The response is a partial answer to how Karly's idea contributes to the sequence of events in the passage. The response includes limited evidence from the passage and may include inaccuracies.   |
| <b>1</b>     | The response is a minimal answer to how Karly's idea contributes to the sequence of events in the passage. The response includes little or no evidence from the passage and may include inaccuracies.<br>OR<br>The response relates minimally to the task. |
| <b>0</b>     | The response is totally incorrect or irrelevant or contains insufficient information to demonstrate comprehension.   |



## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points

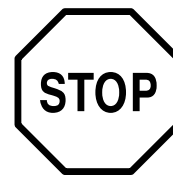
5. Read the sentences from the middle of the passage.

An idea sizzled in my brain. I grabbed her hand and pulled her outside.

How does Karly's idea contribute to the sequence of events in the passage? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

Karly's idea contributes the sequence of events in the passage by; First, being really anoyed at Jessie. Then, Karley works with her sister on her school project. Last, Jessie appericeates the diffrentces of her twin sister and they make up. I know this because it says in the last paragraph; Thanks for helping me. I won't call you weird anymore. I would be lost without you as my sister. That is how Karley's idea contributes with the sequence of the events.

After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.



This is a clear, complete, and accurate answer to the question, and it includes relevant and specific evidence from the passage. The student briefly describes the sequence of events in the passage (*being really anoyed at Jessie . . . Karley works with her sister on her school project*) and then provides an explanation (*Jessie appericeates the diffrentces of her twin sister and they make up*). This is supported by a quote (*Thanks for helping me. I won't call you weird anymore. I would be lost without you as my sister.*).

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



5. Read the sentences from the middle of the passage.

An idea sizzled in my brain. I grabbed her hand and pulled her outside.

How does Karly's idea contribute to the sequence of events in the passage? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

Because later in the story jessie appericiated Karly for her help, in the last part of the story Jessie said, "Thank you for helping me. I wont call you weird anymore. I'd be lost without you for my sister."

This is a partial answer to the question and includes limited evidence from the passage. The explanation (*later in the story jessie appericiated Karly for her help*) is supported by a quote ("*Thank you for helping me. I wont call you weird anymore. I'd be lost without you for my sister.*").

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



5. Read the sentences from the middle of the passage.

An idea sizzled in my brain. I grabbed her hand and pulled her outside.

How does Karly's idea contribute to the sequence of events in the passage? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

It said I grabed her hand and pulled her out side I didn't stop until We were next to mom's potting Shed.

This is a minimal answer to the question and consists of relevant copied text (*I grabed her hand and pulled her out side I didn't stop until We were next to mom's potting Shed.*). The first part of the copied text is also found in the prompt.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 0 points

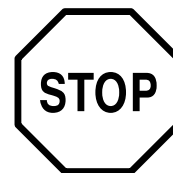
5. Read the sentences from the middle of the passage.

An idea sizzled in my brain. I grabbed her hand and pulled her outside.

How does Karly's idea contribute to the sequence of events in the passage? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

Karley ment that an idea sizzled in  
her brain that means that an idea  
came to her mind and she doesn't  
want to share it.

After you have finished your work, close this booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.



This answer is incorrect and contains insufficient information to demonstrate comprehension. The response is incorrect (*an idea came to her mind and she doesn't want to share it*) and does not answer the prompt.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH QUESTIONS

### Directions:

On the following pages are the Conventions of Standard English questions.

### Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:

Each question will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

## CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

6. Read the sentence.

Jill likes to take care of the \_\_\_\_\_ in the nursery.

Which word should fill in the blank to correctly complete the sentence?

- Ⓐ babeis
- Ⓑ babies
- Ⓒ babyes
- Ⓓ babyies

| Item Information   |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Alignment          | D.1.2.6  |
| Answer Key         | B  |
| Depth of Knowledge | 2  |
| p-value A          | 8%   |
| p-value B          | 76% (correct answer)   |
| p-value C          | 10%  |
| p-value D          | 6%   |
| Option Annotations | The student is asked to identify the word that uses the correct spelling rule to pluralize the word “baby.” Option B is the correct answer since it uses the rule change “y” to “i” and add “es.” Options A, C, and D are incorrect since they do not use the correct spelling rule. |

7. Which sentence uses a pronoun incorrectly?

(1) Ms. Gustavo wishes Darien and his friends would wipe their feet before entering the house. (2) She asked them to try to remember more often. (3) Sometimes Darien remembers. (4) His friends only wipe them feet when Ms. Gustavo reminds them.

- Ⓐ sentence 1
- Ⓑ sentence 2
- Ⓒ sentence 3
- Ⓓ sentence 4

| Item Information   |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Alignment          | D.1.1.6  |
| Answer Key         | D  |
| Depth of Knowledge | 2  |
| p-value A          | 17%  |
| p-value B          | 15%  |
| p-value C          | 17%  |
| p-value D          | 51% (correct answer)   |
| Option Annotations | The student is asked to identify the sentence that uses a pronoun incorrectly. Option D, sentence 4, is the correct answer since the word “them” is incorrect: “His friends only wipe them feet . . .” Options A, B, and C are incorrect since these sentences do not contain errors in pronoun use. |

## 8. Read the paragraph.

(1) Jen takes good care of her bike. (2) She washed it yesterday afternoon.  
 (3) Then she made sure the tires had enough air. (4) Tomorrow her dad put a new bell on the bike.

Which verb should be changed?

- Ⓐ takes in sentence 1
- Ⓑ washed in sentence 2
- Ⓒ made in sentence 3
- Ⓓ put in sentence 4

| Item Information   |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Alignment          | D.1.1.5   |
| Answer Key         | D   |
| Depth of Knowledge | 2   |
| p-value A          | 17%   |
| p-value B          | 20%   |
| p-value C          | 16%   |
| p-value D          | 47% (correct answer)  |
| Option Annotations | The student is being asked to identify the verb in the paragraph that is incorrect within the context of the paragraph. Option D is the correct answer since “put” is not the correct verb tense for the context of the paragraph. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since these verbs are correct within the context of the paragraph. |



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS—SAMPLE ITEM SUMMARY DATA

## Multiple-Choice and Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions

| Sample Number | Alignment | Answer Key                    | Depth of Knowledge | p-value A        | p-value B | p-value C | p-value D |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1             | A-V.4.1.2 | A                             | 2                  | 62%              | 6%        | 7%        | 25%       |
| 2             | A-K.1.1.2 | B                             | 2                  | 16%              | 50%       | 26%       | 8%        |
| 3             | A-K.1.1.3 | Part One: A<br>Part Two: C, D | 3                  | Mean Score: 1.40 |           |           |           |
| 4             | A-C.2.1.1 | Part One: B<br>Part Two: B    | 3                  | Mean Score: .98  |           |           |           |
| 6             | D.1.2.6   | B                             | 2                  | 8%               | 76%       | 10%       | 6%        |
| 7             | D.1.1.6   | D                             | 2                  | 17%              | 15%       | 17%       | 51%       |
| 8             | D.1.1.5   | D                             | 2                  | 17%              | 20%       | 16%       | 47%       |

## Short-Answer Question

| Sample Number | Alignment | Points | Depth of Knowledge | Mean Score |
|---------------|-----------|--------|--------------------|------------|
| 5             | A-K.1.1.3 | 3      | 3                  | 1.24       |