

Pennsylvania PSSA 2021 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



2021*
Grade 3

* This is a revised version of the 2017 Item and Scoring Sampler.

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.

Directions for Short-Answer Questions:

Some questions will require you to write your response.

For the short-answer questions:

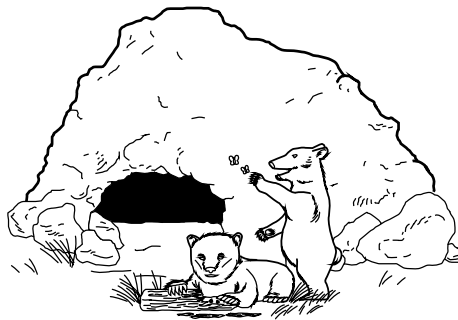
- Be sure to read each short-answer question carefully.
- You cannot receive the highest score for a short-answer question without completing all the tasks in the question.
- If the question asks you to do multiple tasks, be sure to complete all tasks.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer 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 drama about bears in winter. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

The Hesitant Hibernator

by Cass Hollander



Characters:

Narrator	Rabbit
Twin Bear 1	Groundhog 1
Twin Bear 2	Groundhog 2

Act 1

The woods in October.

Narrator: Bear cubs are born in January or February. They stay with their mother through the spring, summer, fall, and winter of that first year. Then early in their second summer, they set out on their own. This story is about twin bears on their own for the first time. In June they said good-bye to their mother. They spent the summer fishing, eating berries, and climbing trees. As our story opens, it's October.

Twin Bear 1: Isn't the world amazing? The leaves were green. Then they turned yellow, orange, and red. Now they're falling off the trees—

Twin Bear 2: So are the acorns! (*Scoops up acorns with both paws and gobbles them up.*) Yum!

Twin Bear 1: Stop eating!

Twin Bear 2: I'm a bear. *(Tears open a decaying log.)* Wow! Look at all these bugs in this old rotten log! *(Starts scooping up bugs and eating them by the pawful.)* Delicious! Here. Try some. *(Offers the other bear a pawful of bugs.)*

Twin Bear 1: No, thanks. I'm not hungry.

Twin Bear 2: *(Still gobbling bugs.)* You better get hungry! If you don't eat, you're gonna wake up starving halfway through winter. You won't be able to hibernate all winter long.

Twin Bear 1: I've decided not to hibernate this year.

Twin Bear 2: *(Nearly chokes with surprise.)* What? Not hibernate? You have to hibernate. You're a bear. It's what bears do.

Twin Bear 1: Haven't you ever wondered what happens in the winter? Aren't you curious?

Twin Bear 2: About winter? No. Let's see if there are any nuts under that tree.

Twin Bear 1: Well, I'm curious. I don't want to sleep for four months. That's one-third of the whole year. Why should I spend one-third of the year asleep?

Twin Bear 2: Because you're a bear. It's what bears do.

Twin Bear 1: Not this bear!

Act 2

The woods in late December.

Narrator: When the last autumn leaf finally fell, and when white flakes fell in soft mounds over all the woodlands, one of our bear friends knew it was time to snuggle deep in a dark, cozy cave and settle down to sleep. But our other bear friend decided to stay awake to see what winter was really like.

Twin Bear 1: This stuff is great! *(Runs around in a circle.)* It's fluffy. *(Rolls on his back in the snow.)* It's fun to roll in. *(Gets up and brushes off fur.)* I wonder what it is. *(Walks down stage.)* Look at these things hanging from the tree. *(Breaks an icicle off a fir tree.)* Pretty amazing. *(Puts icicle in mouth.)* Hmmm. Tastes like cold water. I wonder what you call this? *(Looks around. Moves one hind paw around in the snow.)* Winter's nice. But where is everybody?

(Rabbit hops on stage. Sees Twin Bear 1 and starts to hop away fast.)

Twin Bear 1: Wait!

Rabbit: Are you kidding! I'm not going to be your bedtime snack! *(Rabbit hops on one foot and then the other to keep warm.)*

Twin Bear 1: What are you talking about? I don't want to eat you! I'm not even hungry!

Rabbit: Then what are you doing up? My mama told me the only reason bears wake up in winter is because they didn't eat enough before they went to sleep. So they get up to find a snack. And I'm not gonna be your snack!

Twin Bear 1: I didn't get up to find a snack. I didn't get up at all! I'm not hibernating.

Rabbit: Not hibernating? Why not? You're a bear.

Twin Bear 1: I didn't want to miss winter.

Rabbit: What's to miss? It gets cold. The water freezes. There's nothing to eat but bark. I hate it. I'd hibernate if I could. *(Rabbit turns to go.)*

Twin Bear 1: Wait! You're the first living thing I've seen in days. Where is everybody?

Rabbit: Well, some animals are hibernating—like you should be. The birds migrated to someplace warm. And the rest of us try to stay out of the cold as much as we can. *(Rabbit starts to hop away.)*

Twin Bear 1: Wait! Stay and talk with me.

Rabbit: I'm cold. I hate hopping around in the snow. I'm going home where it's warm.
(Bear looks a little forlorn watching Rabbit hop away.)

Act 3

The woods on February 2. Downstage right there's a groundhog hole with two groundhogs asleep inside. Bear is sitting on a stump near the groundhog hole, looking bored.

Narrator: It's the second day of February. Winter has dragged on for two long, cold months. All that time the ground has been covered with snow.

Twin Bear 1: The worst thing about winter is that nothing happens. There's nothing to do. Nobody's around. *(Holds chin in paw and stares off into space.)*

(Groundhogs start to stir in their hole.)

Groundhog 1: (*Stretching.*) I think I'll take a little walk outside. See what's happening.

Groundhog 2: (*Yawning.*) I'm right behind you. (*Groundhog 2 rolls over and goes back to sleep.*)

(*Groundhog 1 goes out and sees the bear sitting on the stump. Groundhog 1 screams and runs back into the hole. Inside the hole, the other groundhog wakes with a start when it hears the scream.*)

Groundhog 2: What's the matter? Did you see your shadow?

Groundhog 1: No. There's a bear right outside our hole!

Groundhog 2: What's a bear doing up?

Groundhog 1: It must be hungry.

Groundhog 2: Don't go out there again. Let's just go back to sleep. We don't have to get up for another six weeks.

(*Bear's twin enters from stage left. Sees Twin Bear 1 on stump.*)

Twin Bear 2: (*Approaching Twin Bear 1 on stump.*) Is that you?

Twin Bear 1: (*Jumps up and embraces twin.*) I'm so glad to see you! Is it spring?

Twin Bear 2: I don't think so. I heard some animal scream. It woke me up. I decided to come out and see what was going on. So, how's it going? Are you enjoying winter?

Twin Bear 1: Not really. I liked the snow . . . at first. But now it's pretty boring. Nothing happens. There's nothing to do. Nobody's around.

Twin Bear 2: Are you ready to hibernate? You've probably got six weeks before winter's over.

Twin Bear 1: I don't think I can take six more weeks of winter.

Twin Bear 2: So, don't. Sleep—the way you're supposed to. Come on. You can share my cave.

Twin Bear 1: OK. (*Yawns.*) Next year, I think I'll skip winter.

Twin Bear 2: Good idea. You could hibernate winter away. It's what we bears do best!

(*Bears exit arm in arm, yawning together.*)

Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question

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

Part One

How does Twin Bear 1 feel when first seeing winter?

- Ⓐ lonely
- Ⓑ excited
- Ⓒ upset
- Ⓓ careful

Part Two

Which lines from the drama support the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- Ⓐ “ ‘I’ve decided not to hibernate this year.’ ”
- Ⓑ “ ‘It’s fun to roll in.’ ”
- Ⓒ “ ‘Look at these things hanging from the tree.’ ”
- Ⓓ “ ‘There’s nothing to do.’ ”

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	B, C
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.13
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine how Twin Bear 1 feels when first seeing winter and to select lines from the drama that support this analysis.</p> <p>Part One: Option B is the correct answer, because details support that Twin Bear 1 feels “excited” when first seeing winter. Option A is not correct, because it reflects how Twin Bear 1 feels later in the drama after experiencing winter for some time. Options C and D are not supported by information in the passage.</p> <p>Part Two: Options B and C are the correct answers, because Twin Bear 1 enjoys different activities and sights during the winter. Options A and D do not support the idea that Twin Bear 1 is excited about first seeing winter.</p>

Multiple-Choice Questions

2. Read the line from the drama.

“The birds migrated to someplace warm.”

What is the meaning of the word migrated as it is used in the drama?

- Ⓐ lived for a long time
- Ⓑ enjoyed the summer weather
- Ⓒ traveled from one place to another
- Ⓓ planned to ask others

Item Information	
Alignment	A-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	8%
p-value B	9%
p-value C	80% (correct answer)
p-value D	3%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the meaning of “migrated” by using context clues. Option C is the correct answer, because “traveled from one place to another” is the correct meaning of “migrated.” Options A, B, and D do not present the correct meaning of “migrated” and do not make sense in the given context.

3. How does Groundhog 1's screaming affect the ending of the drama?
- Ⓐ Twin Bear 2 is able to convince Twin Bear 1 to go to sleep for the rest of winter.
 - Ⓑ Twin Bear 2 is able to convince Groundhog 1 to stay in the hole for six more weeks.
 - Ⓒ The groundhogs explain to Twin Bear 1 that it is time for him to go to sleep for the winter.
 - Ⓓ The groundhogs allow Twin Bear 1 to help them store their food for the next winter.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-K.1.1.3
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	66% (correct answer)
p-value B	14%
p-value C	15%
p-value D	5%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify how an action affects the plot of the drama. Option A is the correct answer, because it is Groundhog 1's screaming that leads to Twin Bear 2's discovery of Twin Bear 1 on the stump; this action leads to Twin Bear 2 convincing Twin Bear 1 to hibernate for the rest of the winter. Options B, C, and D are not correct, because the events did not occur in the passage.

4. Which two words from the drama are **most** alike in meaning?

- Ⓐ climbing – falling
- Ⓑ scooping – hanging
- Ⓒ doing – hopping
- Ⓓ gobbling – eating

Item Information	
Alignment	A-V.4.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	10%
p-value B	5%
p-value C	7%
p-value D	78% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine two words from the drama that are most alike in meaning. Option D is the correct answer, because “gobbling” and “eating” are similar in meaning. Option A is not correct, because “climbing” and “falling” are almost opposite in meaning. Option B is not correct, because “scooping” and “hanging” are unrelated in meaning. Option C is incorrect, because it uses two verbs that imply physical activity, but the connection is not as strong as option D.

5. How does the reader know the drama is told from the third person point of view?
- Ⓐ The narrator is a character in the drama and is one of the animals.
 - Ⓑ The narrator gives information but is not part of the action of the drama.
 - Ⓒ The narrator is part of the drama and tells each character's thoughts.
 - Ⓓ The narrator is the main character and expresses feelings in the drama.

Item Information	
Alignment	A-C.2.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	15%
p-value B	52% (correct answer)
p-value C	20%
p-value D	13%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine how the reader knows the drama is told from the third person point of view. Option B is the correct answer, because the narrator is not part of the story line in the drama and only provides information about the actions of the characters. Options A, C, and D are not correct, because the narrator is uninvolved in the story line of the drama.

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STOP

Short-Answer Scoring Guideline

#6 Item Information

Alignment	A-K.1.1.1	Depth of Knowledge	3	Mean Score	1.23
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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.1.1.1 — Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for answers.

Score	Description
3	The response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer as to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter. The response includes relevant and specific information from the drama.
2	The response is a partial answer as to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter. The response includes limited information from the drama and may include inaccuracies.
1	The response is a minimal answer as to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter. The response includes little or no information from the drama and may include inaccuracies. OR The response relates minimally to the task.
0	The response is totally incorrect or irrelevant or contains insufficient information to demonstrate comprehension.

STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points



6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

Twin bear 1 says “Next year I think I’ll skip winter because he is bored and has nobody to play or talk with. Here is what my text said, “Winter’s nice but where is everybody? (Rabbit comes on stage, and runs away) Wait! Stay and talk with me” I know that when people try something new and it doesn’t workout or they don’t like it, they won’t do it again. Here is something from my text, “How do you like winter? I liked the snow.... At first. But now it’s pretty boring. Nobody’s around. Theres nothing to do. I don’t want to stay here for another 6 weeks! That is some evidence for why Twin bear 1 says “Next year I think I’ll skip winter.

This response is a clear, complete, and accurate answer to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter (. . . *he is bored and has nobody to play or talk with*). The response includes relevant and specific information from the drama (“*Winter’s nice but where is everybody? . . . Wait! Stay and talk with me,*” “*How do you like winter? . . . I don’t want to stay here for another 6 weeks!*”).

STUDENT RESPONSE

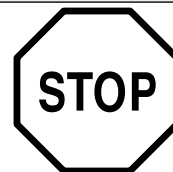
Response Score: 2 points

6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, "Next year, I think I'll skip winter"? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

The thing that causes Twin Bear 1 to say, "Next year I think I'll skip winter," is in the drama he is not really having a good time, he thinks snow is boring. The next thing that makes him say that line, is, none of the animals are coming out to play and Twin Bear 1 gets bored.

This response is a partial answer to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter (. . . *he is not really having a good time, he thinks snow is boring*). The response includes limited information from the drama (. . . *none of the animals are coming out to play and Twin Bear 1 gets bored*).

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



STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point

6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

It causes him to say that because, There was
nothing to do or there was nobody to play
with.

This response is a minimal answer to what causes Twin Bear 1 to want to skip winter (*There was nothing to do or there was nobody to play with*). The response includes little information from the drama beyond what is offered as the explanation.

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



STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 0 points



6. What causes Twin Bear 1 to say, “Next year, I think I’ll skip winter”? Use details from the drama to support your answer.

Bear come out due winter.



This response is considered insufficient, because the information provided is irrelevant to the task.

**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 QUESTIONS

7. Read the directions.

1. First, put soil in a flowerpot until it is half full.
2. Next, add about tweunty flower seeds.
3. Cover the seeds with an inch of soil.
4. Your seeds are ready to grow.

Which underlined word is spelled wrong?

- Ⓐ half
- Ⓑ tweunty
- Ⓒ inch
- Ⓓ ready

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.5
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	1
p-value A	4%
p-value B	90% (correct answer)
p-value C	3%
p-value D	3%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which underlined word is spelled incorrectly. Option B is the correct answer, because “tweunty” should be spelled “twenty.” Options A, C, and D are not correct, because they are words that are spelled correctly.

8. Read the sentence.

The sun _____ very bright to us yesterday because there were no clouds in the sky.

Which verb or verb phrase completes the sentence?

- Ⓐ is looking
- Ⓑ looks
- Ⓒ will look
- Ⓓ looked

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.5
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	6%
p-value B	12%
p-value C	2%
p-value D	80% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which verb or verb phrase completes the given sentence. Option D is the correct answer, because “looked” is in the past tense, which belongs in the sentence based on the context; the word “yesterday” tells the reader the word that would complete the sentence must be in the past tense. Option A is not correct, because “is looking” is in the present progressive tense. Option B is not correct, because “looks” is in the simple present tense. Option C is not correct, because “will look” is in the future tense.

9. Read the sentences.

The writer has an interesting way of telling a story. Most readers like her_____ of writing.

Which word **best** completes the sentence?

- Ⓐ style
- Ⓑ surprise
- Ⓒ wisdom
- Ⓓ gladness

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.3
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	79% (correct answer)
p-value B	5%
p-value C	10%
p-value D	6%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the best abstract noun that would complete the given sentence. Option A is the correct answer, because “style” fits best in the context and with the topic of writing. Options B, C, and D are not correct, because they are nouns that do not fit with the topic of writing and do not make sense in the given context.

10. Read the paragraph.

(1) Some people like to pick their own berries instead of buying them at the store. (2) They take buckets out to places where there are many berry plants. (3) Blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries all grow on bushes. (4) A persons bucket may be full of berries after picking for only a short time.

Which word needs an apostrophe added?

- Ⓐ berries in sentence 1
- Ⓑ places in sentence 2
- Ⓒ bushes in sentence 3
- Ⓓ persons in sentence 4

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.4
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	23%
p-value B	13%
p-value C	13%
p-value D	51% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine which underlined word needs an apostrophe added. Option D is the correct answer, because “A” indicates a singular noun; and “persons” should have an apostrophe to show possession (person’s). Options A, B, and C are not correct, because they are only plural nouns and not plural possessive nouns that would require apostrophes.

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-K.1.1.3	Part One: B Part Two: B, C	3	Mean Score: 1.13			
2	A-V.4.1.1	C	2	8%	9%	80%	3%
3	A-K.1.1.3	A	2	66%	14%	15%	5%
4	A-V.4.1.2	D	2	10%	5%	7%	78%
5	A-C.2.1.1	B	3	15%	52%	20%	13%
7	D.1.2.5	B	1	4%	90%	3%	3%
8	D.1.1.5	D	2	6%	12%	2%	80%
9	D.1.1.3	A	2	79%	5%	10%	6%
10	D.1.2.4	D	2	23%	13%	13%	51%

Short-Answer Question

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
6	A-K.1.1.1	3	3	1.23