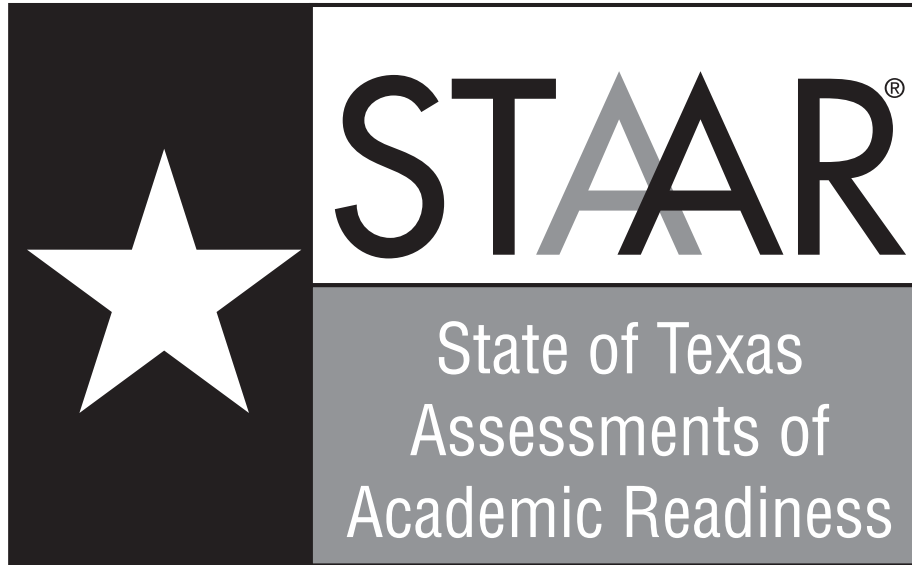


# Texas STAAR 2021 English II

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# **English II**

**Administered April 2021**

**RELEASED**

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

*Nancy wrote this essay to promote an idea she believes would improve the lives of students. Read Nancy's essay and look for the revisions she should make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.*

## **Four Days Is Enough**

(1) Students, are you having a difficult time completing all the activities in your schedule? (2) Teachers, are you exhausted from nonstop work? (3) You are not alone. (4) Every day in schools across the nation, teens have challenging classes, hours of homework, and extracurricular activities such as sports and music. (5) By Friday, students are waking up exhausted, but they must drag themselves through one more school day. (6) Likewise, teachers are spending their weekends grading papers and preparing lessons instead of relaxing with family and friends.

(7) In this program students spend a little more time in school four days a week. (8) Then they have Friday off to catch up on their sleep, enjoy time with family and friends, and complete their many responsibilities. (9) Although some experts fear that reducing the length of the school week will worsen student learning, recent studies contradict this. (10) In 2015 Dr. Mark Anderson of Montana State University and Dr. Mary Beth Walker of Georgia State University reviewed scores for Colorado elementary school students who were placed in a four-day system.

(11) They found that math scores improved by about 7 percent, and reading scores also improved. (12) "We thought that especially for the younger elementary school kids, longer days on a shorter school week would hurt their academic performance because their attention spans are shorter," Dr. Walker said. (13) Researchers also thought a longer weekend would give students more of an opportunity to forget what they had learned. (14) Clearly this was not the case. (15) The study cited shows this hypothesis is incorrect.

(16) Teachers are also noticing other benefits from shorter school weeks. (17) Shana Myers teaches in a four-day program near Phoenix, Arizona. (18) Myers says that the "Friday slump," when students would seem tired through the day, is

gone. (19) Absences are also down, as parents can schedule appointments for kids on Fridays. (20) They are also paying more attention when in school. (21) They are alert, they answer questions, and they are interested in what they are learning.

(22) Myers thinks the changes in students' behavior are partly due to the improved lessons that she and the other teachers are able to create. (23) While some educators and parents may argue that teachers cannot prepare effective lessons in a shorter school week, many teachers offer an alternative scenario. (24) Before, they had to work on weekends to plan lessons. (25) Now, they are using Friday as their planning day. (26) "We're still in school mode on Fridays, and we've found we're creating far superior lessons," Myers says. (27) High school English teacher Candyce Matlosz has found that longer days allow students to spend more time on activities. (28) And as a teacher with over twenty years of experience, Matlosz knows a lot about teaching English. (29) "For example, the science teachers have enough time to run labs, have the students write the lab reports, and clean up the labs in one class period," she says. (30) "In English class, students can write a rough draft, revise, and write a final draft of essays in one or two days instead of taking a week."

(31) School budgets may benefit from a shortened week as well.

(32) Introducing the four-day school week may provide a way for school districts to save money in areas where budgets are strained. (33) School budgets are stretched. (34) Districts reduce spending on fuel, bus drivers' salaries, and maintenance when they decrease the number of days students are transported to and from school. (35) Expenses to keep facilities open and clean are also lowered, as are food costs.

(36) The evidence in favor of switching to four-day school weeks is overwhelming. (37) Clearly it's time for our school system to implement this innovative program in our area. (38) For teachers, schools, and students, it is a winning solution.

1 Nancy has not used the most effective word in sentence 4. Which word should replace **have** to create a more effective sentence?

- A carry
  - B accept
  - C manage
  - D enroll
- 

2 Which of these sentences should Nancy add at the beginning of the second paragraph (sentences 7–15) to serve as the most effective position statement for her essay?

- F I think I would like the four-day school week because I would enjoy the extra time to rest on the weekend.
  - G The four-day school week is a great idea for all students and parents, and even the school district would likely benefit.
  - H We spend way too much time during the week in school, and it would be nice to have a three-day weekend for a part-time job or to just relax.
  - J The four-day school week provides benefits that would help the students, teachers, and schools in our district.
- 

3 Which sentence in the fourth paragraph (sentences 22–30) is extraneous and should be deleted?

- A Sentence 27
- B Sentence 28
- C Sentence 29
- D Sentence 30

**4** Nancy is concerned that she has included a redundant sentence in the fifth paragraph (sentences 31–35). Which sentence should be deleted from the paragraph?

**F** Sentence 32

**G** Sentence 33

**H** Sentence 34

**J** Sentence 35

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

*Reese wrote this essay for his biology class. Read Reese's essay and look for any revisions he needs to make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.*

## **A New Discovery about the Brain**

(1) But there is still one part of the human body that confuses scientists: the brain. (2) Although scientists have made extraordinary progress in understanding how the brain functions, there still is much to learn. (3) In fact, scientists are only now beginning to discover and understand the lymphatic system of the brain.

(4) The lymphatic system performs an important role in the overall functioning of the body, much like the circulatory system. (5) The lymphatic system also moves things around the body. (6) Instead of bringing the body what it needs through the blood, however, the lymphatic system carries away what the body doesn't need, such as germs and waste products, through a fluid called "lymph."

(7) The lymph then travels to the various lymph nodes throughout the body. (8) As the lymph is filtered through the lymph nodes, the nodes respond to any germs by mounting an appropriate defense.

(9) Scientists have been stumped by this process. (10) But in 2012 scientists found that the brain has its own type of lymphatic system. (11) Dr. Maiken Nedergaard and her team of researchers were surprised and excited to discover the first evidence of a tightly interwoven system that rapidly removes waste from the brain. (12) The brain's blood vessels have fluid that is running along the side of them, the team determined, and this fluid is what is carrying waste away from the brain. (13) However, unlike the lymphatic system—which operates on a slow, continuous basis—this newly discovered system operates only when a person is asleep, washing away waste by flooding the brain quickly with fluid. (14) Now you have one more reason to get a good night's sleep.

(15) It took three more years for scientists to discover the specific vessels in the brain that are part of this lymphatic system. (16) In 2015, researchers were able to provide proof of a lymphatic system in the brain when they actually managed to see the vessels that are used to flood the brain and carry away the waste.

(17) Even though what this relatively new discovery means is still not entirely clear, researchers are already making connections. (18) For example, many brain diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, involve the accumulation of specific proteins in the brain. (19) Although it is too early to jump to conclusions, it is reasonable to infer that these diseases may be connected in some way to the ability of this newly discovered lymphatic system to remove waste from the brain. (20) In the future, scientists will attempt to prove this connection.

(21) The discovery of an entirely new system opens up exciting new areas of research and inquiry. (22) It may offer more opportunities for discoveries as researchers increase their understanding of how this system functions and how it is related to health and disease. (23) Eventually, we may gain a fuller understanding of the mysterious workings of the human brain.



- 5** Reese needs to improve the introduction of his essay. Which sentence should be added before sentence 1 to create a more effective introduction for his essay?
- A** There are so many mysteries about the human body that you would never believe it.
  - B** The brain is like the body's big jigsaw puzzle.
  - C** Over the past centuries, many of the mysteries of the human body have been explained by science.
  - D** Scientists are determined to find out all the facts that can help them understand our world.
- 

- 6** Reese is considering adding this idea to his second paragraph (sentences 4–8).

*The circulatory system moves blood rich with nutrients and oxygen to all the different parts of the body.*

Where should Reese insert this idea?

- F** After sentence 4
  - G** After sentence 5
  - H** After sentence 6
  - J** Reese should not insert this idea.
- 
- 7** Reese needs a better transition between the second paragraph (sentences 4–8) and the third paragraph (sentences 9–14). Which sentence should replace sentence 9 to create a more effective transition?
- A** Until recently, scientists could not determine how the brain is able to rid itself of waste because the lymphatic system does not include the brain.
  - B** Scientists researched the brain for years before finally making a breakthrough.
  - C** No one knew how the brain was able to perform some functions.
  - D** The lymphatic system does not include the brain, so everyone always wondered about that.

- 8** Reese wants to improve the clarity of sentence 12. How should sentence 12 be revised?
- F** Running along the brain's blood vessels, the team determined is a fluid that carries waste away from the brain.
  - G** The team determined that fluid running along the brain's blood vessels carries waste away from the brain.
  - H** Waste by a fluid that is running along the brain's blood vessels is carried away from the brain, the team determined.
  - J** Along the side of the brain's blood vessels is a fluid, the team determined, and this carries away from the brain waste.
- 

- 9** Which sentence should Reese add after sentence 18 to provide additional support for the inference in sentence 19?
- A** It would be a good idea to get rid of these bad proteins.
  - B** Another type of protein is important to building strong muscles.
  - C** Alzheimer's is a disease that is heavily researched.
  - D** Some of these same proteins appear in the waste products of brain cells.

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

*Yesenia wrote this essay about an important figure she admires. Read Yesenia's essay and look for any corrections she needs to make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.*

## **Sally Ride — The Woman Who Broke the Space Ceiling**

(1) Before Sally Ride joined NASA in the 1970s, the idea of a woman becoming an astronaut seemed incomprehensible. (2) Ride was intrigued by the space program, but she did not necessarily envision becoming an astronaut. (3) Additionally, she had little interest in being famous as a symbol of feminism or as a trailblazer. (4) In 1983, however, she became both a symbol of feminism and a trailblazer as the United States' first female astronaut in space. (5) Her expertise in science, her dedication, and her hard work allowed Ride to break barriers and create opportunities for future scientists.

(6) Ride developed a love for science early. (7) Her parents encouraged this love by giving her a telescope and a chemistry set as a child. (8) After high school she continued studying science in college and earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree in physics and a Ph.D. in astrophysics.

(9) While Ride was working on her Ph.D., the trajectory of her career changed. (10) Traditionally NASA had focused on recruiting only male military pilots for the astronaut program. (11) However, in 1977 NASA began a campaign to recruit both female scientists and female pilots. (12) Ride saw one of the campaigns advertisements and realized that she met the qualifications, so she applied.

(13) Ride was accepted into the astronaut program and began preparing for a space mission. (14) Trained both physically and mentally. (15) She also shifted her focus from physics to engineering so that she could help develop a robotic arm for the space shuttle. (16) The expertise she demonstrated in designing and operating the robotic arm earned Ride a spot on the space shuttle *Challenger* during its 1983 mission. (17) When the shuttle broke free of Earth's atmosphere Ride broke through the country's highest glass ceiling by becoming the first American woman to fly in space. (18) She was an instant celebrity.

(19) While Ride loved her work at NASA, she did not enjoy all the publicity that resulted from her accomplishments. (20) As a deeply private person, Ride had no desire to be on the covers of magazines or to do product endorsements. (21) In fact, all she wanted to do was fly in space. (22) She explained this after the first of her two space missions by saying, "I am sure it was the most fun that I'll ever have in my life." (23) Perhaps only her passion for science could rival her passion for spaceflight.

(24) After retiring from NASA, Ride becomes a fierce advocate for science education. (25) Focusing on the middle grades and on female students in particular, she wrote books, gave talks, and started programs to promote her cause. (26) Her new goal became helping others to discover their own love of science and the world of opportunity a strong science background can open.

(27) Sally Ride did not set out to be an astronaut or a hero; nevertheless, she became both. (28) While flying was her joy, science education was her mission. (29) Cofounded by Ride and others, Sally Ride Science is a foundation that promotes science and technology education among young people. (30) Its programs provide students with opportunities to make breakthroughs in new fields of science and encourage them to shatter glass ceilings in all fields.

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**10** What change is needed in sentence 1?

- F** Insert a comma after **NASA**
  - G** Change **idea** to **ideas**
  - H** Change **becoming** to **to become**
  - J** Change **incomprehensible** to **incomprehensible**
- 

**11** What change is needed in sentence 12?

- A** Change **campaigns** to **campaign's**
  - B** Change **advertisements** to **advertizements**
  - C** Change **realized** to **realizing**
  - D** Delete the comma after **qualifications**
- 

**12** What is the correct way to write sentences 13 and 14?

- F** Ride was accepted into the astronaut program and began preparing for a space mission; trained both physically and mentally.
- G** Ride was accepted into the astronaut program and began preparing for a space mission by training both physically and mentally.
- H** Ride was accepted into the astronaut program and began preparing for a space mission: trained both physically and mentally.
- J** Ride was accepted into the astronaut program and began preparing for a space mission and she training both physically and mentally.

**13** What change is needed in sentence 17?

- A** Change *broke free* to **breaks free**
  - B** Insert a comma after *atmosphere*
  - C** Change *country's* to **countries**
  - D** Insert a comma after *ceiling*
- 

**14** What change, if any, is needed in sentence 24?

- F** Change *becomes* to **became**
- G** Change *fierce* to **feirce**
- H** Change *advocate* to **advocates**
- J** No change is needed in sentence 24.

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

*Saul wrote this essay to persuade readers of the importance of switching to the metric system. Read Saul's essay and look for the corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## **The United States Needs the Metric System**

(1) Since the mid-1800s the United States has been struggling with the question of whether or not to adopt the metric system. (2) The country was one of seventeen nations that signed the 1875 Treaty of the Metre, which increased the accuracy of the metric system and established the International Bureau of weights and measures. (3) However, despite this early involvement, the United States has been reluctant to adopt the metric system as its only standard of measurement.

(4) The United States is the only industrialized country that does not use metric as its dominant system. (5) As a general rule, people are not comfortable with change; this may be the reason that many cling to the old measurement system of miles, feet, inches, and pounds. (6) Yet changes in trade and technology have made using metric measurements more important than ever. (7) For example, the metric system makes writing very large and small numbers easier. (8) If the country is to thrive in international competition, it must adopt the metric system as its official measurement system.

(9) This adoption would not be a dramatic change in some areas. (10) For example, U.S. scientists use the metric system exclusively; because it provides a standard that is understood worldwide. (11) Because scientific research is often international in nature, a common measurement system must be used to avoid error and facilitate communication.

(12) In medicine, safety experts are urging all medical providers to use only the metric system. (13) Errors occurring because of confusion between the two measurement systems are among the top ten safety concerns for hospitals.

(14) Drug dosages are often based on a patient's weight, so confusing pounds and

kilograms can have serious consequences. (15) Imagine trying to convert pounds to kilograms in a hurry! (16) One safety analyst remarked that using pounds in drug calculations is like functioning in the Stone Age.

(17) Many U.S. manufacturers have had positive experiences in changing to metric. (18) For instance, Procter & Gamble created a metric diaper manufacturing machine and found that it cost less than previous machines, was able to function 25 percent faster, and was easier to repair and maintain. (19) Another example is Caterpillar, Inc., which decided to go metric in the United States in order to avoid problems with measurement conversion for its plants in other countries. (20) The company found that being consistently metric made its products more popular worldwide and reduced production costs.

(21) Those hesitant about the switch might complain that instead of the familiar miles, feet, and ounces, the metric system uses different units, a meter measures length, a gram measures mass, and a liter measures volume. (22) The metric system is easy to learn, however, because everything is measured in multiples of ten. (23) For example, a kilo equals 1,000, and thus 1,000 meters is called 1 kilometer. (24) If children were taught these simple calculations when they begin to study math, they would learn how easy the metric system is to use.

(25) Although change takes time, the conversion to the metric system will be worth it in the long run. (26) While “thinking in metric” won’t happen instantaneously, the simplicity of the metric system will make the transition easier. (27) Once the United States has made the change, its citizens will become accustomed to the metric system, just as they have become familiar with using new technologies, such as computers, cell phones, and the internet. (28) Best of all, they will be using the same system as 95 percent of the world, in turn it will contribute to safety, facilitate trade, and improve international communication.

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**15** What change should be made in sentence 2?

- A** Change *signed* to **signs**
  - B** Change *Metre* to **metre**
  - C** Change *which* to **this**
  - D** Change *weights and measures* to **Weights and Measures**
- 

**16** What change, if any, should be made in sentence 10?

- F** Change *use* to **using**
  - G** Delete the semicolon
  - H** Insert a comma after *standard*
  - J** No change is needed.
- 

**17** What change, if any, should be made in sentence 21?

- A** Delete the comma after *ounces*
- B** Change *uses* to **used**
- C** Change the comma after *units* to a colon
- D** Make no change

**18** What is the correct way to write sentence 28?

- F** Best of all, they will be using the same system as 95 percent of the rest of the world, in turn this will contribute to safety, facilitate trade, and improve international communication.
- G** Best of all, they will be using the same system as 95 percent of the rest of the world; in turn contributes to safety, facilitate trade, and improve international communication.
- H** Best of all, they will be using the same system as 95 percent of the rest of the world, which in turn will contribute to safety, facilitate trade, and improve international communication.
- J** Best of all, they will be using the same system as 95 percent of the rest of the world. In turn will contribute to safety, facilitate trade, and improve international communication.

BE SURE YOU HAVE RECORDED ALL OF YOUR ANSWERS  
ON THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

## WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Persuasive

Read the following quotation.

Don't spend so much time chasing your future that you run over your present.

—*Carlos Wallace*

Some people focus so much on the future that they do not enjoy the present. Others spend so much time living in the present that they do not prepare for the future. Carefully consider this statement.

Write an essay stating your opinion on which is more important: preparing for the future or focusing on the present.

Be sure to —

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Read the next two selections and answer the questions that follow.

*Thad is considering buying an old Stingl baby grand piano from Luc, the piano shop owner. Thad is playing this piano for the first time.*

## ***from*** **The Piano Shop on the Left Bank**

*by Thad Carhart*

1 I sat on the bench and smiled at Luc. I was nervous, almost spellbound; suddenly this great impractical hulk was the gateway to a territory from which I had been absent for too long. Something said "Yes!" before I even touched the keyboard. I trusted Luc but I realized, too, that I *wanted* to love this piano, I *wanted* to invite music back into my life. I tried a few scales, then some harmonic progressions, and finally, with more certainty, some arpeggios.<sup>1</sup> A thrill that I had not expected ran through me as the notes resounded. The Stingl had a good, clean action, but it took some work to move the keys. None of the vaunted silkiness of the Steinway or the velvet touch of other famous makes; no, this was a profoundly physical undertaking, almost athletic in its requirements. And yet the tone it produced was very sweet and full, a strange and wonderful combination of the robust and the delicate.

2 "It's a nice one, no?" Luc was beaming at my very apparent pleasure.

3 "It's a nice one, yes! It takes some work, but what a beautiful sound."

4 "You're a big guy, you can play a piano like this properly. Not everyone could." I wasn't sure if this was flattery or a dispassionate estimation of my capabilities. A bit of both, no doubt.

5 This was not just any old piano, Luc assured me. It had been made in Vienna in the thirties at a time when Vienna still had a craftsman's tradition worthy of the name (only Bösendorfer remains today), and its clear tone and solid feel suggested a solid pedigree. Never mind its pluck, this had all the marks of a rare find, a fine piano disguised as something simple and dependable. I could imagine it surviving the assaults of my young children, to say nothing of my own.

6 I laughed inwardly at all these musings; the combination of my vanity and artistic longings, together with the ungainly beauty of the piano itself, struck me as funny and vaguely absurd. I imagined myself flawlessly playing Chopin's Heroic Polonaise in A-flat at the keyboard of this unassuming instrument, an impossibility that nonetheless appealed to my sense of fantasy. One of the most difficult compositions for the piano, it would never be within my grasp, but the daydream itself was strangely satisfying. What would a visitor from another

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<sup>1</sup>Arpeggios are the notes of a musical chord played quickly one after the other, either going up or down.

century think of this notion of personal fulfillment that sought a pedigree in the past? My expression must have reflected the deep sense of irony I was feeling because Luc asked me why I was looking puzzled.

7        "It's just occurred to me how much of ourselves we project onto a piano when we consider what we're going to buy."

8        "Ah, but of course, that's the beauty of a piano. It's not just another instrument like a flute or a violin that you put away in the closet. You live with it and it with you. It's big and impossible to ignore, like a member of the family. It's got to be the right one!"

9        "And if one were interested, how much would this piano cost?"

10       "Fifteen thousand francs," was his unhurried response. "Of course, that includes delivery and tuning."

11       I made noises about having to measure my apartment to be sure, but I think that we both knew I was going to buy it. Actually, I think he knew well before I and it puzzles me still to consider how he made that assessment after our brief encounters. But then, we reveal far more of ourselves than we suspect when we enter the bedizened world of our passions and our longings.

12       I returned two days later, having measured my apartment carefully.

13       My wife, Simo, was surprised to hear that all my practical arguments in favor of an upright—the cost, the size, the children—had vanished virtually overnight. "What happened to the idea of a small piano?"

14       I listed all my points in favor of a grand, babbling with enthusiasm as I recited the litany.

15       She listened silently, gave me a long look that mixed skepticism and understanding, then responded to my fervor with the practical point: "Well, we'd better figure out where your new baby is going to live."

16       Together we found a corner between the window and the bookcase that formed an acute angle where the Stingl could be wedged in our apartment's main room. We adjusted our budget for the price Luc quoted. It was a lot of money, particularly since I was just setting out on a new career path as a freelance writer, but my wife encouraged me to indulge my newfound sense of freedom: "Think of it as an investment in personal expression."

17       This time at the atelier<sup>2</sup> I did bring sheet music, and Luc nodded approvingly when he saw me set it on the music stand. I've never been comfortable playing in front of others, but somehow this was different; his presence seemed encouraging as we listened together to the particular voice of this instrument among so many other pianos. I played for perhaps ten minutes, pieces I knew reasonably well and could listen to while I sight-read: some Beethoven bagatelles, a few of Schumann's pieces for children, an early Mozart fantasy. I was not disappointed. The Stingl's resonance filled the room with

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<sup>2</sup>An atelier is a workshop or studio of an artist.

tones at once clear and robust, and a sharp sense of pride welled up at the prospect of owning this distinctive piano, of seeing and playing it daily, of living with it. Good God, I thought, this is a kind of love; and, as in love, my senses amplified and enhanced the love object, all with an insouciance and willing enthusiasm.

18 I finished playing and turned to Luc with what must have been a delighted look on my face.

19 "I would say that you have found your piano." His eyes sparkled, the successful matchmaker rejoicing in his skill.

20 "And I would say that you were right."

Excerpt(s) from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank: Discovering a Forgotten Passion in a Paris Atelier* by T. E. Carhart, copyright © 2000 by T. E. Carhart. Used by permission of Random House, an imprint and division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

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# from Those Old Piano Blues

by Neil Wertheimer  
AARP Bulletin  
October 2017

- 1 For much of the 20th century, most every self-respecting home in America had a piano. It was the home entertainment system long before the era of electronics; families would play and sing together, or listen to their children's recitals. The peak year for piano sales was 1909, when Americans bought 364,500 new models. Sales stayed high until the Depression and World War II years, but once the late '40s arrived, piano sales grew strong and steady again for the next 30 years.
- 2 Then a slow, downward sales arpeggio<sup>1</sup> started. In the late 1970s, "baby boomers began to stop buying new pianos," says Larry Fine, publisher of *Acoustic & Digital Piano Buyer*. "Every year, a sales decline. People are doing other things." In 2016, sales of new acoustic pianos hit a low note of 30,000 units.
- 3 And as more families like ours downsize or move, used pianos have flooded the market. We discovered that no one wanted our Steinway — for any price, including free. We started with music stores that advertised "top dollar" for used pianos. After sending photos and details, we received only declines; one came with a form letter that rang with bitterness. "Pianos often have a substantial amount of emotional value to their owners, so it can be difficult to accept that many pianos do not have meaningful value on the open market," it told us. Reasons include a "tremendous oversupply" of pianos, less interest in them as a home furnishing, and the availability of "inexpensive, realistic" digital pianos.
- 4 The song had gone from major to minor, but we pressed on. None of our friends or relatives wanted it; neither did local churches, schools or charities. Then the song shifted to the saddest of blues. We discovered that the growth area in the business is paying someone to dispose of your old piano. "I've seen a boom in the last five years" of people getting rid of their pianos, says Bob Zahtilla at A Thru Z Piano, a company in Cleveland that sells and maintains, but also removes, pianos. He says he handles roughly five piano removals a month. "We tear them down, recycle the metals."
- 5 "We get lots of calls from schools and institutions looking to get rid of their pianos," adds Mike Ripatti at Beethoven Pianos in New York, another business that sells, services and disposes. They gather old pianos in their warehouse and, once they've accumulated a dozen or so, bring them to the dump. Disposal prices vary based on weight of the instrument and how treacherous its path to the truck is. Typical, though, is about \$300 for an upright.

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<sup>1</sup>Arpeggios are the notes of a musical chord played quickly one after the other, either going up or down.

- 6 But like many a blues song, this piano riff ends with hope. We finally did find a friend who wants our piano, so his young son can learn to play. And while the day of the home piano is passing, “there’s no decline in piano lessons,” says Natalia Huang, who has piano studios in New York, Los Angeles and Connecticut. “Younger students are brought in to promote a love of music and personal development,” Huang says. “Adult students come in for personal growth and stress relief.”
- 7 And to be sure, many older pianos have reached their coda.<sup>2</sup> “Sometimes, they’re just ready,” Zahtilla notes. A piano’s life span is typically 50 years; at that point, it needs rebuilding if it is to be played as it was meant to. So the pruning of a century’s worth of neglected home pianos might not be such a bad thing, if we continue to cherish the music.

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<sup>2</sup>Coda is an ending part of a piece of music that is separate from the earlier parts.



Use *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* (pp. 26–28) to answer questions 19–25. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

- 19 Read this quotation from paragraph 17 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*.

*I thought, this is a kind of love; and, as in love, my senses amplified and enhanced the love object, all with an insouciance and willing enthusiasm.*

Why does the narrator use a metaphor to describe his response to playing the piano?

- A To explain how he is able to remember a piece of music
  - B To show how sharing music increases enjoyment
  - C To suggest that owning a piano can spark enthusiasm
  - D To reveal the depth of his feelings towards the piano
- 
- 20 In paragraph 8 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, Luc suggests that the narrator —
- F trust his ability to make decisions
  - G reflect on the commitment of buying a piano
  - H be willing to consider other pianos
  - J think about playing different instruments

- 21** In paragraph 1 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, which idea is introduced?
- A** The power of intuition
  - B** An unachieved goal
  - C** Impractical choices
  - D** The wisdom of experience
- 

- 22** Read this quotation from paragraph 16 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*.

*"Think of it as an investment in personal expression."*

What can the reader infer about the narrator's wife based on her words?

- F** The wife believes it is more important to invest in the arts than in other things.
  - G** The wife does not believe people should deny themselves things that they want.
  - H** The wife views the piano as an attractive addition to their living room.
  - J** The wife sees music as a necessary outlet for her husband's creativity.
- 
- 23** In paragraph 17 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, how does the narrator feel about playing the Stingl piano in the piano shop?
- A** He needs Luc to help him build confidence in his musical ability.
  - B** He hopes Luc will believe that he is worthy of the Stingl.
  - C** He feels oddly comfortable playing in front of Luc.
  - D** He enjoys showing Luc that he can play different types of music.

- 24** In paragraph 1 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, why does the narrator describe the piano as “a strange and wonderful combination of the robust and the delicate”?
- F** To explain why he feels this particular piano is special
  - G** To reveal that he needs a piano that is not too fragile or ornate
  - H** To state why he is physically able to play this particular piano
  - J** To suggest that he prefers a piano that won’t require much upkeep
- 

- 25** Read this quotation from paragraph 1 of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*.

*I was nervous, almost spellbound; suddenly this great impractical hulk was the gateway to a territory from which I had been absent for too long. Something said “Yes!” before I even touched the keyboard.*

What is the narrator’s purpose for including this description?

- A** To explain where he is shopping for a piano
- B** To highlight his doubts about wanting a piano
- C** To show how he exaggerates when describing events
- D** To reveal the strength of his desire to play the piano again

**Use “From Those Old Piano Blues” (pp. 29–30) to answer questions 26–33  
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 26** In the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues,” how does the author mainly organize his ideas?
- F** He lists the benefits of owning a piano by referencing a magazine article about musical instruments.
  - G** He supports people learning to play the piano with stories from students who enjoy the instrument.
  - H** He argues against getting rid of old pianos by explaining how important they once were.
  - J** He discusses trends in piano ownership by describing his experience trying to get rid of an old piano.
- 

- 27** Read this quotation from paragraph 2 of the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues.”

*Then a slow, downward sales arpeggio started.*

What does the author’s use of musical terminology convey in the quotation?

- A** How the popularity of the piano has shifted like notes in a song
- B** How piano dealers use musical language when they speak
- C** How piano tones affect the price of the instruments
- D** How piano music will persist despite its decrease in popularity

- 28** Which quotation best shows that the author of the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues” is relieved someone wants his old piano?
- F** *The song had gone from major to minor, but we pressed on.* (paragraph 4)
- G** *Then the song shifted to the saddest of blues.* (paragraph 4)
- H** *But like many a blues song, this piano riff ends with hope.* (paragraph 6)
- J** *And to be sure, many older pianos have reached their coda.* (paragraph 7)
- 

- 29** What is the purpose of the information in the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues”?
- A** To explain why traditional pianos have greatly declined in value
- B** To describe the differences between old pianos and new ones
- C** To prove that pianos made in the last century are irreplaceable
- D** To inform people about new American trends with musical instruments
- 

- 30** Read this dictionary entry.

**boom** \ˈbūm\ *n*  
**1.** a deep hollow sound **2.** a rapid increase in activity **3.** a long pole for holding a microphone **4.** a barrier to obstruct navigation

Which definition most closely matches the meaning of *boom* as it is used in paragraph 4 of the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues”?

- F** Definition 1
- G** Definition 2
- H** Definition 3
- J** Definition 4

**31** In the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues,” what is the primary purpose of paragraph 7?

- A** To explain why letting go of pianos is acceptable at times
  - B** To state the reasons why pianos are still important
  - C** To detail the life cycle of pianos
  - D** To describe pianos in a historical context
- 

**32** Which word from the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues” means “an approximate amount”?

- F** *peak* (paragraph 1)
- G** *substantial* (paragraph 3)
- H** *roughly* (paragraph 4)
- J** *treacherous* (paragraph 5)

**33** Which is the best summary of the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues”?

- A** Many families in America once owned acoustic pianos, but there are now fewer families who want them. In fact, if you have an old piano, it can be very hard to sell it or find someone who wants it. That’s why there are companies now offering to pick up old pianos. It is sad these instruments were once prized but have little value today, unless someone is willing to restore them to their original working condition.
- B** Although acoustic pianos were once a popular item in American life, many are now being disposed of or recycled for parts. Changes in American entertainment, as well as the space and upkeep required to own an acoustic piano, have led people to pursue other interests or purchase less expensive digital pianos. However, the number of Americans learning to play the piano has not changed, which shows that the instrument is still appreciated.
- C** Many families in America still own pianos but many of them are now digital pianos. People who own old acoustic pianos still feel sentimental about them and believe they are worth a lot of money. However, the people who make money from pianos are the ones that know how to remove or recycle them.
- D** Today, Americans are learning to play piano as adults, and they often go to piano studios in cities like Los Angeles and New York. Piano playing was popular in the 20th century and still is. Pianos used to be an important part of family entertainment, but other instruments have taken their place. Today, old acoustic pianos are stored in warehouses because they take up too much room in houses.

**Use *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* and “Those Old Piano Blues” to answer questions 34–37. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 34** In the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* and the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues,” with which statement would **both** authors most likely agree?
- F** Old pianos offer a great deal of emotional value to their owners.
  - G** Old pianos are constructed from better materials than new pianos.
  - H** People can learn a lot about the history of pianos from musicians.
  - J** People should learn to play on an acoustic piano before moving to a digital one.
- 

- 35** While the narrator of the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* finds an old Stingl valuable enough for him to spend a lot of money on it, the author of the excerpt from the article “Those Old Piano Blues” —
- A** expects to sell an old Steinway for a high price
  - B** insists on donating his old piano to a school
  - C** gives an old Steinway to someone who wants it
  - D** thinks old pianos should be destroyed



**36** What is one notable **difference** between the two excerpts?

- F** The selection from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* explains why someone wants to play piano, while the selection from the article "Those Old Piano Blues" explains why piano lessons are less popular.
  - G** The selection from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* describes evaluating and buying an old piano, while the selection from the article "Those Old Piano Blues" describes an abundance of unwanted old pianos.
  - H** The selection from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* emphasizes the craftsmanship of a new acoustic piano, while the selection from the article "Those Old Piano Blues" emphasizes today's preference for digital pianos.
  - J** The selection from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* shows how rare it is for someone to appreciate an old piano, while the selection from the article "Those Old Piano Blues" shows how people overvalue all musical instruments.
- 

**37** What feeling is conveyed by **both** the excerpt from *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* and the excerpt from the article "Those Old Piano Blues"?

- A** Amusement
- B** Ambition
- C** Attachment
- D** Awe

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

## *from* **See Yourself Through the Eyes of Others**

*by Jennifer Reynolds*  
Chicago Review Press  
2013

- 1 Something happened to my exuberance as I approached high school. This deep desire of mine faded, as I was also influenced by a lack of self-worth. I felt as though I didn't have anything to say that was worthwhile. I was distracted by the voices and opinions of others.
- 2 One of my heroes, Mattie Stepanek, reminds me and everyone else about this truth in one of his poems entitled "Heartsong," from his book *Heartsongs*. Mattie was an inspirational 11-year-old child who suffered from a rare form of muscular dystrophy. He set his dreams high and showed the world the power involved in such an endeavor. He was a dreamer, a poet, and a peacemaker. This particular poem reminds us that there is hope, there is love, and there are dreams waiting to become realities deep within each of us. A few striking lines are:

I have a song, deep in my heart,  
And only I can hear it.  
If I close my eyes and sit very still  
It is so easy to listen to my song.

—*Mattie J.T. Stepanek, Heartsongs*

- 3 We often distract ourselves from these "heartsongs" in order to listen to louder, more obnoxious voices that taunt us from outside ourselves. They can lead us in directions we never should have ventured if we were honest with ourselves.
- 4 After I earned a master's degree in communications, my husband and I moved to Flagstaff, Arizona. We were immediately struck by the beauty of the San Francisco Peaks that are the pride of many who live there. Not too long after we settled in, we journeyed the hour and ten minutes to the Grand Canyon. The magnitude and grandeur of this natural wonder is spectacular.
- 5 During our visit we commented to each other how the colors, unlike the desert's browns and dull greens, were an elegant mix of reds, pinks, and yellows. The visible layers of the rock served as a metaphor for the life experiences we each held. In high school, I was standing on top of the rocks, but no incisions had been made—no canyon had been formed. There was a river and it was flowing, but I did not see the layers beneath. Throughout the years to the present

moment I am slowly allowing the river to cut through the rock of my past experiences. I have faith that in the end that process will reveal magnificent layers that inspire rather than repress and remain buried. It takes time to excavate a past, but it is well worth it.

- 6 After the fact, we can't change what has happened. You may not be able to change the voices you have believed any more than I can go back and rewrite my journal entries from high school. But these facts can become historical events; they can become past rather than present. And as you move beyond this pain, you can create extraordinary beauty.
- 7 If the Grand Canyon was made up of only one type of rock throughout the ages it would lack the stunning beauty it possesses today. What makes it awe inspiring and a destination for millions of people from all over the world is that a river cut through the rock for miles and miles and miles over many, many years to expose layers of color and texture. It is the history—a glimpse into the past—that is so phenomenal. There is a story that only the Grand Canyon can tell about the ages it has endured, the pain and cutting that has made it the beautiful site it is today.
- 8 You, too, have a story to tell about your experiences and how they have created the person you are today. It is the honesty that comes from examining, learning about, and sharing these layers as a whole that is inspirational.
- 9 During my life in high school, seeking approval from others was a deeply embedded pattern. It was toxic water to my spirit: I drank it in thinking it was life, but later came to find it was slowly killing me. Our fears, inhibitions, and need for approval from others are our cages. We become so used to hearing these voices and living under their rule that we give away hope of ever overcoming them. They transform into our security. And then we fool ourselves into thinking that our greatest fear is leaving these cages we have created for ourselves, our comfort zone: *What if I fail?* This is a lie that only serves to keep powerful people in captivity.
- 10 What could happen if you allowed yourself to step outside the cages and breathe in the fresh air of your freedom? How could you change the world—even the world of your high school—if you reclaimed your voice and pursued your dreams with reckless abandon? How might you inspire others to do the same, taking the power away from cynical doubters and dream stompers? It is worth fighting against the voices that seek to tell you that you can't, you shouldn't, or you aren't worth it.
- 11 I am learning to love and appreciate the woman who gazes back at me in the mirror every morning whispering a vote of confidence: *Don't be afraid of the power of your spirit, shine your light bright.* And the voices that taunted me in high school so many years ago? Their strength is hollow, and their message is powerless to touch the real me.

- 12 Start now by refusing to see yourself through the lens of others. Others do not define you. Their opinions will not last, and their words hold no power. You define you. And you don't need to fear your strength. It is as captivating as the Grand Canyon itself.

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**38** Which sentence from the selection best expresses the author’s opinion about the culture of high school?

**F** *Something happened to my exuberance as I approached high school.* (paragraph 1)

**G** *It takes time to excavate a past, but it is well worth it.* (paragraph 5)

**H** *You may not be able to change the voices you have believed any more than I can go back and rewrite my journal entries from high school.* (paragraph 6)

**J** *It was toxic water to my spirit: I drank it in thinking it was life, but later came to find it was slowly killing me.* (paragraph 9)

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**39** In paragraph 2, what is the author’s main reason for including the anecdote about Mattie Stepanek?

**A** Stepanek wrote poetry for high-school students.

**B** Stepanek encouraged people to publish their writing.

**C** Stepanek inspired others to overcome personal obstacles.

**D** Stepanek helped others deal with physical challenges.

---

**40** In paragraph 4, what does *grandeur* most nearly mean?

**F** Elegance

**G** Magnificence

**H** Sophistication

**J** Shapeliness

**41** What evidence does the author primarily use to support her message?

- A** Quotations from well-known individuals
  - B** Comparisons to other high-school students
  - C** Reflections on personal experiences
  - D** Causes that led her to move to a new location
- 

**42** Read this quotation from paragraph 10.

*What could happen if you allowed yourself to step outside the cages and breathe in the fresh air of your freedom?*

Based on the quotation, the author views her high-school years as a source of —

- F** transition
  - G** confinement
  - H** order
  - J** discipline
- 

**43** Based on paragraphs 4 and 5 of the selection, what can be inferred about the author?

- A** She finds deep meaning in the beauty of nature.
- B** She wishes she had spent more time in nature in her youth.
- C** She enjoys traveling to faraway places to see natural wonders.
- D** She grew up in an urban area where there was little natural landscape.

**44** According to the selection, the author urges high-school students to be —

- F** concerned about their effects on others
  - G** opinionated and outspoken
  - H** unafraid of being themselves
  - J** willing to accept consequences for their actions
- 

**45** Which sentence from paragraph 5 best illustrates the author’s feeling that her life experiences have made her more confident?

- A** *During our visit we commented to each other how the colors, unlike the desert’s browns and dull greens, were an elegant mix of reds, pinks, and yellows.*
- B** *In high school, I was standing on top of the rocks, but no incisions had been made—no canyon had been formed.*
- C** *There was a river and it was flowing, but I did not see the layers beneath.*
- D** *I have faith that in the end that process will reveal magnificent layers that inspire rather than repress and remain buried.*

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

*Beartown is a fictional small town in Sweden.*

## ***from*** **Beartown**

*by Fredrik Backman*

- 1 For more than ten years now the neighbors have grown accustomed to the noises from the Erdahl family's garden: *bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*. Then a brief pause while Kevin collects the pucks. Then *bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*. He was two and a half years old the first time he put a pair of skates on, three when he got his first stick. When he was four he was better than the five-year-olds, and when he was five he was better than the seven-year-olds. During the winter following his seventh birthday he got such a bad case of frostbite that if you stand close enough to him you can still see the tiny white marks on his cheekbones. He had played his first proper game that afternoon, and in the final seconds missed a shot on an open goal. The Beartown youngsters won 12–0, and Kevin scored all the goals, but he was inconsolable. Late that evening his parents discovered that he wasn't in his bed, and by midnight half the town was out searching for him in the forest. It wasn't until dawn that someone realized the boy wasn't among the trees but down on the frozen lake. He had dragged a net and five pucks down there, as well as all the flashlights he could find, and had spent hour after hour firing shots from the same angle from which he had missed the final shot of the match. He sobbed uncontrollably as they carried him home. The white marks never faded. He was seven years old, and everyone already knew that he had the bear inside him. That sort of thing can't be ignored.
- 2 His parents paid to have a small rink of his own constructed in the garden. He shoveled it himself every morning, and each summer the neighbors would exhume puck-graveyards in their flowerbeds. Remnants of vulcanized rubber will be found in the soil around there for generations to come.
- 3 Year after year they have heard the boy's body grow—the banging becoming harder and harder, faster and faster. He's seventeen now, and the town hasn't seen a player with anything close to his talent since the team was in the top division, before he was born. He's got the build, the hands, the head, and the heart. But above all he's got the vision: what he sees on the ice seems to happen more slowly than what everyone else sees. You can teach a lot about hockey, but not that. You're either born with that way of seeing or you aren't.
- 4 "Kevin? He's the real deal," Peter Andersson, general manager of the club, always says, and he ought to know: the last person in Beartown who was as good as this was Peter himself, and he made it all the way to Canada and the NHL,<sup>1</sup> matching up against the best in the world.

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<sup>1</sup>NHL stands for National Hockey League.



- 5 Kevin knows what it takes; everyone's been telling him ever since he first stood on a pair of skates. It's going to demand nothing less than his all. So every morning, while his classmates are still fast asleep under their warm comforters, he goes running in the forest, and then he stands here, *bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*. Collects the pucks. *Bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*. Collects the pucks. Practices with the junior team every afternoon, and with the A-team every evening, then the gym, then another run in the forest, and one final hour out here under the glare of the floodlights specially erected on the roof of the house.
- 6 This sport demands only one thing from you. Your all.
- 7 Kevin has had every sort of offer to move to the big teams, to attend hockey school in a bigger town, but he keeps turning them down. He's a Beartown man, his dad's a Beartown man, and that may not mean a thing anywhere else, but it means something here.
- 8 So how important can the semifinal of a junior tournament be? Being the best junior team around would remind the rest of the country of this place's existence again. And then the politicians might decide to spend the money to establish a hockey school here instead of over in Hed, so that the most talented kids in this part of the country would want to move to Beartown instead of the big cities. So that an A-team full of homegrown players could make it to the highest division again, attract the biggest sponsors once more, get the council to build a new rink and bigger roads leading to it, maybe even the conference center and shopping mall they've been talking about for years. So that new businesses could appear and create more jobs so that the townspeople might start thinking about renovating their homes instead of selling them. It would only be important to the town's economy. To its pride. To its survival.
- 9 It's only so important that a seventeen-year-old in a private garden has been standing here since he got frostbite on his cheeks one night ten years ago, firing puck after puck after puck with the weight of an entire community on his shoulders.
- 10 It means everything. That's all.

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**46** What do the repeated italicized words "*bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*" in both paragraphs 1 and 5 emphasize?

- F** Kevin's constant desire to improve
  - G** Kevin's irritation regarding his perceived weakness
  - H** Kevin's need to draw the attention of his neighbors
  - J** Kevin's growing frustration with his teammates
- 

**47** In paragraph 2, what does *exhume* mean?

- A** Dig up
  - B** Blend in
  - C** Establish
  - D** Conceal
- 

**48** Which quotation best suggests that Kevin probably feels increasing pressure from external expectations?

- F** *When he was four he was better than the five-year-olds, and when he was five he was better than the seven-year-olds.* (paragraph 1)
- G** *Year after year they have heard the boy's body grow—the banging becoming harder and harder, faster and faster.* (paragraph 3)
- H** *"Kevin? He's the real deal," Peter Andersson, general manager of the club, always says, and he ought to know. . . .* (paragraph 4)
- J** *Kevin knows what it takes; everyone's been telling him ever since he first stood on a pair of skates.* (paragraph 5)

- 49** How are paragraphs 8 through 10 important to the development of the plot?
- A** They show Kevin overcoming an emotional experience of his youth.
  - B** They reveal that Kevin wants something different than what the town wants.
  - C** They introduce the idea of Kevin leaving the community to play elsewhere.
  - D** They explain how Kevin’s abilities may help the entire community.
- 

- 50** Why does the author include the extended flashback in paragraph 1?
- F** To clarify the setting of the story
  - G** To give an early example of Kevin’s determination
  - H** To introduce characters who are important to the selection
  - J** To highlight the conflict that occurs within the town
- 

- 51** What does the narrator suggest about Kevin in paragraph 3?
- A** Kevin would have an advantage as a hockey player even if he didn’t practice so much.
  - B** Many teammates resent Kevin’s superior skills.
  - C** Kevin has an unhealthy obsession with hockey.
  - D** The townspeople’s expectations of Kevin are unrealistic.

**52** Read this quotation from paragraph 7.

*He's a Beartown man, his dad's a Beartown man, and that may not mean a thing anywhere else, but it means something here.*

Based on the quotation, the reader can infer that Kevin feels —

- F** appreciated
- G** trapped
- H** loyal
- J** embarrassed



Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
1	5	Readiness	E.9(C)	C
2	5	Supporting	E.9(B)	J
3	5	Supporting	E.9(B)	B
4	5	Readiness	E.9(B)	G
5	5	Supporting	E.9(B)	C
6	5	Supporting	E.9(B)	F
7	5	Supporting	E.9(B)	A
8	5	Readiness	E.9(C)	G
9	5	Supporting	E.9(B)	D
10	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	J
11	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	A
12	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	G
13	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	B
14	6	Supporting	E.9(D)	F
15	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	D
16	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	G
17	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	C
18	6	Readiness	E.9(D)	H
Prompt	4	Readiness	E.10(C)	*
19	2	Supporting	E.4(F)	D
20	2	Supporting	E.4(F)	G
21	2	Supporting	E.4(F)	A
22	2	Supporting	E.4(F)	J
23	2	Supporting	E.4(F)	C
24	2	Supporting	E.8(F)	F
25	2	Supporting	E.8(F)	D
26	3	Readiness	E.7(D)	J
27	3	Readiness	E.4(F)	A
28	3	Readiness	E.4(F)	H
29	3	Readiness	E.8(A)	A
30	1	Readiness	E.2(A)	G
31	3	Readiness	E.8(A)	A
32	1	Readiness	E.2(B)	H
33	3	Readiness	E.5(D)	B
34	1	Readiness	E.4(F)	F
35	1	Readiness	E.4(F)	C
36	1	Readiness	E.4(F)	G
37	1	Readiness	E.4(F)	C
38	3	Supporting	E.5(C)	J
39	3	Readiness	E.7(D)	C
40	1	Readiness	E.2(B)	G
41	3	Readiness	E.7(D)	C
42	3	Supporting	E.4(F)	G
43	3	Supporting	E.4(F)	A
44	3	Supporting	E.4(F)	H
45	3	Supporting	E.5(C)	D
46	2	Readiness	E.4(F)	F
47	1	Readiness	E.2(B)	A
48	2	Readiness	E.5(C)	J
49	2	Readiness	E.6(C)	D
50	2	Readiness	E.6(C)	G
51	2	Readiness	E.4(F)	A
52	2	Readiness	E.4(F)	H

Note: The first character of the Content Student Expectation designates English I or English II.

\*A scoring guide is used to determine the score for the written composition.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	Replacing the word “have” with the word “manage” creates an effective sentence because it emphasizes that teens are responsible for their busy schedules.
	Option A is incorrect	Teens do not “carry” classes, hours of homework, and extracurricular activities, so the word “carry” is not the most effective word to use in this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The word “accept” is not the most effective word to use in this sentence. Teens must “manage” a variety of responsibilities and commitments, not just “accept” them.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence the act of enrolling is only appropriate for classes and extracurricular activities, so changing “have” to “enroll” does not create a more effective sentence.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
2	Option J is correct	A position statement is a statement that summarizes the main point or claim of a piece of writing. By adding this sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph, the writer clearly states her position and why she supports the four-day school week.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the ideas in this sentence include a possible benefit of the four-day school week, adding this sentence does not offer a clear position statement.
	Option G is incorrect	The benefits to parents of a four-day week are not mentioned in the selection, so adding this sentence would not establish an effective position statement.
	Option H is incorrect	Adding this sentence would not provide an effective position statement for the paper because it is a detail rather than a summarizing sentence of the writer's position.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
3	Option B is correct	The focus of sentences 22 through 30 is how teachers and students benefit from shorter school weeks and longer school days. Deleting sentence 28 removes extraneous information since Matlosz's teaching experience is not relevant to the rest of the information in the paragraph.
	Option A is incorrect	The information in sentence 27 is important because it supports the idea that students benefit from the four-day school week.
	Option C is incorrect	The specific examples presented in sentence 29 provide support for the idea that students and teachers benefit from the four-day school week, so this sentence should not be deleted.
	Option D is incorrect	The information presented in sentence 30 emphasizes how students benefit from the four-day school week and should not be deleted.



## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
4	Option G is correct	Sentence 33 includes redundant information because “budgets are stretched” is the same idea presented in sentence 32 “where budgets are strained.”
	Option F is incorrect	The information in sentence 32 supports the focus of the paragraph and should not be deleted.
	Option H is incorrect	Specific examples of how schools can save money by shortening the school week are included in sentence 34 and support the ideas presented in the paragraph.
	Option J is incorrect	Sentence 35 is important because the author provides additional information regarding how schools can save money by shortening the school week.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
5	Option C is correct	Adding this sentence emphasizes the mysterious nature of the human brain, which is the focus of the essay, by contrasting it with “many of the mysteries of the human body have been explained by science.”
	Option A is incorrect	The phrase “you would never believe it” is an opinion and lacks the emphasis necessary for an effective introduction.
	Option B is incorrect	Comparing the brain to a jigsaw puzzle is ineffective because it is too similar to the idea introduced in sentence 1.
	Option D is incorrect	The details in this sentence are vague, so adding it before sentence 1 does not create an effective introduction.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
6	Option F is correct	Details about the circulatory system should be added after sentence 4 because the comparison between the circulatory system and the lymphatic system is emphasized.
	Option G is incorrect	Placing the additional sentence after sentence 5 would create a disruption in the paragraph by adding details about the circulatory system after explaining the purpose of the lymphatic system.
	Option H is incorrect	Adding this idea after sentence 6 interrupts the logical flow of ideas in the paragraph by introducing information about the circulatory system after the writer has narrowed the focus to the lymphatic system.
	Option J is incorrect	A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. Details about the purpose of the circulatory system should be added to the paragraph because they strengthen the transition between sentence 4 and sentence 5.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
7	Option A is correct	A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. Replacing sentence 9 with this sentence effectively transitions from the idea of how the lymphatic system gets rid of waste in the body to the idea of “how the brain is able to rid itself of waste.”
	Option B is incorrect	An effective transition between the second and third paragraphs is not provided because there is no connection to the lymphatic system that the writer discusses in the second paragraph.
	Option C is incorrect	The information included in this sentence is vague, so replacing sentence 9 with this sentence provides an ineffective transition between the two paragraphs.
	Option D is incorrect	The phrase “so everyone always wondered about that” is imprecise. It fails to create an effective transition.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
8	Option G is correct	Rearranging the wording in this way eliminates the awkward phrasing and clearly shows the connection of ideas by clarifying that there is fluid “running along the brain’s blood vessels.”
	Option F is incorrect	A confusing sentence is created with this revision, and a misplaced-modifier error is introduced. A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word it modifies or describes.
	Option H is incorrect	Revising the sentence in this way results in a confusing sentence with an awkward structure.
	Option J is incorrect	This revision results in an awkward sentence that does not improve the clarity of the sentence.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
9	Option D is correct	The idea that specific “proteins appear in the waste products of brain cells” effectively supports the inference that brain diseases are connected to the lymphatic system’s ability to remove waste in the brain.
	Option A is incorrect	This sentence is a personal opinion and provides no additional support for the inference.
	Option B is incorrect	This revision includes extraneous information that is irrelevant to the inference presented in sentence 19.
	Option C is incorrect	Adding this sentence introduces extraneous information that does not support the inference in sentence 19.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
10	Option J is correct	Changing "incomprehensable" to "incomprehensible" corrects the spelling error in the sentence.
	Option F is incorrect	Inserting a comma after "NASA" would introduce a punctuation error because no comma is needed.
	Option G is incorrect	The singular noun "idea" is correctly used in the sentence since there is only one idea that is referenced.
	Option H is incorrect	Changing "becoming" to "to become" introduces a verb-form error in the sentence.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
11	Option A is correct	A possessive is a noun or a pronoun that shows possession by the addition of an apostrophe. Changing "campaigns" to "campaign's" corrects a punctuation error by showing that the advertisement belongs to the campaign.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing "advertisements" to "advertizements" would create a spelling error.
	Option C is incorrect	The verb "realized" is used correctly in the sentence, because the events being described took place in the past.
	Option D is incorrect	It is appropriate to use a comma before the conjunction "so" when separating two independent clauses, which are clauses that can stand alone as complete sentences.



## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
12	Option G is correct	Sentence 14 is a sentence fragment, which is a group of words that is not a complete sentence. Combining sentences 13 and 14 in this manner corrects the sentence fragment.
	Option F is incorrect	Combining sentences 13 and 14 with a semicolon is grammatically incorrect.
	Option H is incorrect	Replacing the period with a colon to combine the two sentences introduces a grammatical error.
	Option J is incorrect	The phrase “and she training” is grammatically incorrect and is not the correct way to eliminate the sentence fragment in sentence 14.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
13	Option B is correct	Inserting a comma after “atmosphere” corrects a punctuation error in the sentence since a comma is needed after the long introductory phrase.
	Option A is incorrect	The past-tense verb phrase “broke free” is used correctly to describe an action that took place in the past.
	Option C is incorrect	A possessive is a noun or a pronoun that shows possession by the addition of an apostrophe. In sentence 17, the possessive noun “country’s” is correctly used to refer to the “glass ceiling” that belongs to the country.
	Option D is incorrect	Adding an unnecessary comma after “ceiling” creates a punctuation error.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
14	Option F is correct	Changing "becomes" to the past-tense verb "became" corrects the verb-tense error in the sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	Changing "fierce" to "feirce" would introduce a spelling error in the sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	The singular noun "advocate" is used correctly to refer to Sally Ride in the sentence.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the verb-tense error.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
15	Option D is correct	Proper nouns are nouns that refer to a specific person, place, idea, or event. The “International Bureau of Weights and Measures” is a proper noun and should be capitalized.
	Option A is incorrect	The past-tense verb “signed” is correctly used to refer to an event that took place in the past.
	Option B is incorrect	“The 1875 Treaty of the Metre” is a proper noun and should be capitalized.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing “which” to “this” results in a run-on sentence, which is an error in which two or more clauses are joined incorrectly.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
16	Option G is correct	The semicolon incorrectly links the information in this sentence, so deleting it corrects the punctuation error.
	Option F is incorrect	Changing “use” to “using” would introduce a verb-form error in the sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	This change creates a punctuation error by inserting an unnecessary comma.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the punctuation error in the sentence.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
17	Option C is correct	Changing the comma after “units” to a colon corrects the punctuation error since the author provides a list after the word “units.”
	Option A is incorrect	The comma is used correctly in the sentence as it separates a long introductory clause from the main part of the sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The present-tense verb “uses” is correctly used to describe an action that is taking place in the present.
	Option D is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the punctuation error in the sentence.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
18	Option H is correct	The comma splice in sentence 28 occurs when two independent clauses are connected with only a comma. The comma splice is corrected by changing the second clause to a dependent clause, which is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence contains another comma splice and does not correct the original sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	The replacement of the comma with a semicolon is not effective because the second main clause that follows the semicolon is a sentence fragment, which is a group of words that do not form a complete sentence, rather than an independent clause.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the first sentence is an independent clause and is correctly punctuated, the second sentence is a sentence fragment and makes this an incorrect answer.
19	Option D is correct	A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. The narrator compares playing the piano to “the love object,” which reveals the depth of his feelings towards the piano.
	Option A is incorrect	The narrator uses a metaphor to refer to his feelings of love for playing the piano, not to explain his ability to remember a piece of music.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the narrator enjoys playing the piano, he suggests a preference for playing alone. The metaphor is not used to promote sharing music.
	Option C is incorrect	The narrator uses a metaphor to describe his own feelings for the piano, not to suggest others feel the same enthusiasm he feels.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
20	Option G is correct	In paragraph 8, Luc emphasizes the significance of buying a piano and how important it is to choose “the right one.” Luc is encouraging the narrator to reflect on the idea that buying a piano is a commitment.
	Option F is incorrect	It is clear from the dialogue in paragraph 8 that Luc recognizes that it is up to the narrator to make the decision, but Luc does not suggest the need for the narrator to trust himself.
	Option H is incorrect	Although Luc reminds the narrator of the importance of picking the right piano, he is not trying to direct the narrator to consider other pianos in paragraph 8.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Luc mentions “a flute or a violin” in paragraph 8, he is contrasting them with pianos in terms of the commitment involved. Luc is not suggesting the narrator play other instruments.
21	Option A is correct	In paragraph 1, the narrator says, “Something said ‘Yes!’ before [he] even touched the keyboard.” The narrator intuitively understands that he has found the right piano.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the narrator says he “ <i>wanted</i> to invite music back” into his life in paragraph 1, there is no evidence to suggest that he recognizes an unachieved goal.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the piano is described as an “impractical hulk,” but this description is about the size of the piano. The idea of whether a choice is practical is not introduced.
	Option D is incorrect	The reader can infer from details in paragraph 1 that the narrator has experience playing the piano, but the idea of wisdom gained through this experience is not introduced.



## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
22	Option J is correct	The reader can infer that the narrator's wife regards her husband's musical creativity, what she calls his "personal expression," as a necessary outlet that is worth the "investment" of buying a piano.
	Option F is incorrect	The narrator's wife is not comparing the arts to anything; rather, she is comparing the purchase of the piano to being creative.
	Option G is incorrect	The narrator's wife thinks her husband should get the piano because he needs an outlet for his creativity, not just because he wants it.
	Option H is incorrect	The narrator's wife views the piano as a means for her husband to express his creativity, not merely as an attractive addition to their living room.
23	Option C is correct	In paragraph 17, the narrator admits that he has "never been comfortable playing in front of others." However, he acknowledges that playing for Luc was "different" and that Luc's "presence seemed encouraging," which supports the conclusion that the narrator feels oddly comfortable playing in front of Luc.
	Option A is incorrect	Although in paragraph 6 the narrator recognizes his musical limitations, in paragraph 17, he does not seem to need help building confidence since he plays the piano in front of Luc.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that the narrator considers whether he will appear to Luc as someone who is worthy of the Stingl.
	Option D is incorrect	The narrator and Luc are more focused on the sound of the piano than the types of music the narrator is playing.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
24	Option F is correct	This description is provided to reveal the narrator's delight with the piano's distinctive tone. Based on this description, the reader can conclude that the narrator feels that this piano is special.
	Option G is incorrect	This description is about the piano's tone, not its durability or physical appearance.
	Option H is incorrect	The narrator describes the piano's tone. However, the narrator does not state why he is physically able to play the piano.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no evidence in paragraph 1 to suggest the narrator is considering the piano's upkeep or that this piano differs from other pianos in that regard.
25	Option D is correct	In this quotation, the narrator uses a tone of excitement and awe to describe the piano. Based on the descriptive language, the reader can conclude that the narrator has a strong desire to play the piano again.
	Option A is incorrect	The narrator expresses excitement about a piano. The narrator does not explain where he is shopping.
	Option B is incorrect	The description is used to highlight the narrator's fascination with a piano, not about his doubts about what he wants.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that the narrator tends to exaggerate, even in the description he provides in this quotation.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
26	Option J is correct	In paragraphs 1 and 2, the author gives a brief history of the rise and fall of piano sales and then describes his difficulty in getting rid of a piano, which illustrates a reason for the downward trend in piano ownership.
	Option F is incorrect	While a magazine title is mentioned, the author makes no reference to an article listing the benefits of owning a piano.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author mentions that there are still many students taking lessons, there are no stories about students enjoying music.
	Option H is incorrect	The author does not argue against getting rid of pianos. In fact, he admits that the “pruning of a century’s worth of neglected home pianos might not be such a bad thing.”
27	Option A is correct	The author refers to a “downward . . . arpeggio” to emphasize the decline in piano sales that started in the late 1970s. The author’s use of musical terminology compares the shifting popularity of the piano and the shifting notes in a song.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not attribute the sentence to a music dealer. The reference to the arpeggio is being made by the author.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no evidence to support the conclusion that the tones made by pianos affect the overall price of pianos.
	Option D is incorrect	Based on paragraph 2, the reader can conclude that fewer people are buying pianos, but there is no reference to how that trend might affect piano music.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
28	Option H is correct	In paragraph 6, the author compares his struggle to find a buyer for his piano to a blues song. The reference to the hopeful end is used to suggest that the author was relieved to finally find someone who wanted his old piano.
	Option F is incorrect	This quotation is a reference to the author's persistence, not his relief.
	Option G is incorrect	This quotation is a reference to the author's increasing despair, not his relief.
	Option J is incorrect	This quotation is a reference to old pianos reaching the ends of their life spans, not to the author's relief.
29	Option A is correct	The purpose of the selection is to highlight the acoustic piano's value to American society, and to illustrate why that value has declined over time. The author explains that people are pursuing interests other than playing the piano, moving into smaller homes, and purchasing digital pianos—all factors that contribute to a decline in value.
	Option B is incorrect	Although there is information about old pianos and a reference to newer digital pianos, the author does not compare old pianos with new ones.
	Option C is incorrect	The author says that old pianos are being destroyed because they do not sell, which suggests that the instruments can be replaced.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does mention digital pianos as a new trend in paragraph 3, but the only trend discussed at length is the waning popularity of older pianos.
30	Option G is correct	In paragraph 4, the author refers to the "growth area" of piano disposal and includes a quotation linking a <u>boom</u> with the action "getting rid of their pianos." Based on this context, the reader can determine that in paragraph 4, <u>boom</u> is closest in meaning to Definition 2, a rapid increase in activity.
	Option F is incorrect	The <u>boom</u> described in paragraph 4 is about the disposal of pianos, not about a type of sound.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no context in paragraph 4 related to poles or microphones.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no context in paragraph 4 related to navigation.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
31	Option A is correct	In paragraph 7, the author explains the issues with pianos that “have reached their coda,” or ending. The author’s purpose for including this information is to support the idea that it may be acceptable to get rid of an old piano.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author expresses the idea that piano music will continue to be important, not the pianos themselves.
	Option C is incorrect	The author refers to the end of a “piano’s life span” in paragraph 7 but does not provide details about the life cycle of pianos.
	Option D is incorrect	The author refers to older pianos in paragraph 7 but provides no historical details about them.
32	Option H is correct	The word <u>roughly</u> is used in paragraph 4 to refer to the monthly rate of piano removals. The rate provided—five pianos a month—is an approximate, not an exact, number and can change every month.
	Option F is incorrect	The word “peak” is used to describe a year, 1909, in which the greatest number of pianos were sold. A year cannot be described as “an approximate amount.”
	Option G is incorrect	Based on the context in paragraph 3, the reader can conclude that “substantial” is close in meaning to a sizeable quantity, not “an approximate amount.”
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 5, “treacherous” is used to describe the path removers take to get a piano to a truck; a path would not be described as “an approximate amount.”

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
33	Option B is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The popularity of owning a piano in the past and the current decline in ownership are both described, as are the reasons for the decline. The key idea that people still appreciate the piano and want to learn how to play the instrument is also conveyed.
	Option A is incorrect	Information about the decline in piano ownership is included in this summary, but the reasons for this decline are excluded.
	Option C is incorrect	Although some key details from the selection are included in this summary, the decline in piano ownership is not mentioned.
	Option D is incorrect	The specific details included in this summary are not key ideas of the selection. This summary does not present the gist of the selection.
34	Option F is correct	In <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> , the narrator is described as being “spellbound” (paragraph 1) and “babbling with enthusiasm” (paragraph 14) when he describes the piano to his wife. In “Those Old Piano Blues,” the author describes feeling the “saddest of blues” (paragraph 4) when he learns that many pianos are being disposed of.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author of <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> describes the “solid feel” (paragraph 5) of a piano, neither author discusses the materials that make up a piano.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no information about the history of pianos included in <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> , and “Those Old Piano Blues” includes only the recent history of piano sales.
	Option J is incorrect	Only the author of “Those Old Piano Blues” mentions digital pianos, and neither author claims that people should learn to play an acoustic piano before moving to a digital one.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
35	Option C is correct	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author tries unsuccessfully to sell an old Steinway piano and ultimately gives the instrument away.
	Option A is incorrect	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author tries to sell an old Steinway piano "for any price, including free" in paragraph 3. The reader can infer that the author did not have high expectations.
	Option B is incorrect	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author gives his old piano to a friend, not a school.
	Option D is incorrect	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author concludes that some pianos have reached the end of their life cycle but does not share the thought that old pianos should be destroyed.
36	Option G is correct	In <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> , the focus is on the narrator's efforts to evaluate and buy an old Stingl piano—from playing it and falling in love with it at the shop, to convincing his wife that he had found the perfect piano. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author explains that there is such an abundance of unwanted old pianos that he cannot even give his away and that the business of disposing of old pianos is booming.
	Option F is incorrect	The author of "Those Old Piano Blues" explains that unlike piano ownership, piano lessons have not declined in popularity.
	Option H is incorrect	In <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> , the narrator emphasizes the craftsmanship of an old piano, not a new one. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author mentions digital pianos but does not give emphasis to the idea that they are preferred over acoustic pianos.
	Option J is incorrect	In <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> , the author tells only of his own appreciation for an old piano but never says such appreciation is rare. In "Those Old Piano Blues," people are described as overvaluing their pianos, not all instruments.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
37	Option C is correct	In both selections, the authors convey the attachment people have for pianos. In <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> , the narrator highlights his own passion and longing for an old Stingl piano. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author describes his effort to find a home for his old piano, as well as how people overvalue their old pianos because of their emotional attachment to them.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author of "Those Old Piano Blues" describes pianos as a source of entertainment in the past, the feeling conveyed in both selections is attachment.
	Option B is incorrect	Neither the narrator in <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> nor the author of "Those Old Piano Blues" describe a feeling of ambition. Though there is a personal task described in both selections, the reader cannot infer that it is a sense of ambition that drives the authors.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the narrator in <i>The Piano Shop on the Left Bank</i> is "spellbound" by the Stingl piano in paragraph 1, no feeling of awe is apparent in "Those Old Piano Blues."
38	Option J is correct	In paragraph 9, the author notes an "embedded pattern" of seeking approval in high school, pointing to a culture that, in her opinion, can be "toxic" to students.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence is a reference to how the author felt before beginning high school, not to her opinion of high-school culture.
	Option G is incorrect	High school is part of the author's past, but this sentence is not focused specifically on her high-school experience.
	Option H is incorrect	In this sentence, the author refers to journal entries she wrote when she was in high school but does not reveal her opinion of high-school culture.



## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
39	Option C is correct	In paragraph 2, the author describes one of her heroes, Mattie Stepanek, who “was an inspirational 11-year-old child.” Mattie “set his dreams high” despite suffering from muscular dystrophy. The author includes the anecdote about Mattie to show how he inspired her and others to believe “that there is hope, there is love, and there are dreams waiting to become realities deep within each of us.”
	Option A is incorrect	Stepanek’s significance to the author goes beyond the fact that his poems have been geared for high-school students. The author includes the anecdote because Stepanek inspired people.
	Option B is incorrect	Stepanek inspired people to follow their dreams and perhaps pursue career paths, but there is no evidence in the selection that he encouraged people to publish their writing.
	Option D is incorrect	The author mentions Stepanek’s own physical challenge—muscular dystrophy—but not whether he helped others deal with physical challenges like his.
40	Option G is correct	In paragraph 4, the author describes the Grand Canyon as a “natural wonder” and “spectacular.” Based on this context, and noting the root word “grand,” the reader can conclude that <u>grandeur</u> means magnificence.
	Option F is incorrect	The word “elegance” means refinement, which connotes a state of perfection. The author writes about the “elegant mix” of colors in paragraph 5; however, in paragraph 4 <u>grandeur</u> is used with the word “magnitude” to emphasize the canyon’s size.
	Option H is incorrect	The word “sophistication” means complexity or worldly experience, which would not be used to describe a canyon.
	Option J is incorrect	The shape of the Grand Canyon would likely not be what struck the author as being “spectacular” because the next paragraph describes all the many features of the canyon. The word “shapeliness” means having a pleasing shape.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
41	Option C is correct	The author's message is that early experiences do not have to define our lives when we are older. Throughout the selection, the author provides reflections on personal experiences to support this message. In paragraphs 4 and 5, the author describes a visit to the Grand Canyon, where she looks at the river flowing through the canyon and thinks about "slowly allowing the river to cut through the rock" of her "past experiences," and states that she has "faith that in the end that process will reveal magnificent layers." In paragraph 11, the author explains how "the voices that taunted" her in high school are now "powerless."
	Option A is incorrect	The author includes only one quotation from a well-known individual, Mattie Stepanek.
	Option B is incorrect	The author refers to her experiences in high school, but she does not compare herself to other high-school students.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author mentions moving to Flagstaff, Arizona, but does not explain her reasons for moving.
42	Option G is correct	The author's description of stepping out of "the cages" to "breathe in the fresh air of . . . freedom" is used to depict various experiences during her high-school years as a source of confinement.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author establishes a contrast between the idea of being in "cages" and breathing "the fresh air of . . . freedom," the reader can infer that the author does not view her own experiences in high school as a source of transition.
	Option H is incorrect	The quotation is used to link approval-seeking behavior with something that limits freedom, not something that provides order.
	Option J is incorrect	The quotation is used to highlight the need for people to assert their own freedom from a certain mindset. The quotation has nothing to do with discipline in high school.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
43	Option A is correct	In paragraph 4, the author explains how she and her husband “were immediately struck by the beauty of the San Francisco Peaks,” and she describes the Grand Canyon as “spectacular.” In paragraph 5, the author describes the appearance of the canyon in detail. Based on these details, the reader can conclude that the author finds deep meaning in the beauty of nature.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author writes about her past, she does not express regret about not spending enough time in nature.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author enjoys the “natural wonder” of the Grand Canyon, the author does not provide any evidence to support that she considered the canyon to be a faraway place.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not reveal where she grew up, so there is no way for the reader to infer that she grew up in an urban area.
44	Option H is correct	In paragraph 8, the author tells high-school students, “You, too, have a story to tell about your experiences and how they have created the person you are today,” and in paragraph 10, she states that “It is worth fighting against the voices that seek to tell you that you can’t, you shouldn’t, or you aren’t worth it,” which implies a strength in being oneself. In paragraph 12, the author states “you don’t need to fear your strength.”
	Option F is incorrect	The author is urging high-school students to not let other people affect them in a negative way, not talking about how they affect others.
	Option G is incorrect	The author wants high-school students to have the courage to be themselves, but she is not urging them to be opinionated and outspoken.
	Option J is incorrect	The author is urging high-school students to act with confidence, but she does not refer to consequences for their actions.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
45	Option D is correct	In this sentence, the author expresses the confidence she has gained over time by comparing her life experiences with “magnificent layers that inspire rather than repress and remain buried.” She feels inspired and empowered by her past.
	Option A is incorrect	This author includes this sentence to describe the colors she saw on a trip to the Grand Canyon, not a sense of her confidence.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence is a reference to the author at an early stage in her life, before her life experiences made her more confident.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence, the author is referring to a point in her life where she felt a sense of change, but it is before she becomes more confident. It was the recognition of “the layers beneath” that led to her confidence.
46	Option F is correct	The repeated italicized “ <i>bang-bang-bang-bang-bang</i> ” is the sound of Kevin continuously shooting hockey pucks. The repetition and italics are used to draw the reader’s attention to Kevin’s dedication.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the repetition of “ <i>bang-bang-bang-bang-bang</i> ” could indicate a noise that causes irritation, there is no evidence to support the idea that Kevin is irritated.
	Option H is incorrect	Kevin’s neighbors hear the “ <i>bang-bang-bang-bang-bang</i> ” noises whenever Kevin practices, but there is no evidence to support the idea that Kevin needs their attention.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Kevin did score all twelve goals in the hockey game described in paragraph 1, there is no evidence that he is frustrated with his teammates.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
47	Option A is correct	In paragraph 2, the author references “puck-graveyards” and “vulcanized rubber” in neighbors’ flowerbeds. The reader should infer that neighbors would not want to leave hockey pucks in their flowerbeds, but that they would dig them up, or <u>exhume</u> them.
	Option B is incorrect	Kevin’s neighbors would not likely blend Kevin’s pucks in with their flowerbeds; they would likely dig up the pucks.
	Option C is incorrect	Kevin’s neighbors would not likely establish, or set up, puck-graveyards in their flowerbeds; they would likely dig up the pucks.
	Option D is incorrect	Kevin’s neighbors would likely spend time digging up the pucks in their flowerbeds for the sake of their flowers rather than trying to find ways to conceal, or hide, the unsightly pucks.
48	Option J is correct	The detail in paragraph 5 that “everyone’s been telling him ever since he first stood on a pair of skates” is used to suggest that Kevin probably feels increasing pressure from external expectations.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence is about Kevin’s natural talent and quick improvement as a hockey player. No pressure from outside is suggested.
	Option G is incorrect	In this sentence, the author suggests that people are aware of Kevin’s development, not that they are putting pressure on him.
	Option H is incorrect	Based on this sentence, the reader can conclude that Andersson appreciates Kevin’s talent, but there is no suggestion that Andersson is pressuring Kevin.

## 2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
49	Option D is correct	In paragraphs 8 through 10, the author suggests that people would take notice of Beartown if Kevin's team is successful in the junior tournament, and that benefits would follow, including a hockey school, new businesses, job opportunities, and a flourishing local economy.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author does describe an emotional experience from Kevin's youth earlier in the selection and briefly refers to it again in paragraph 9, this is not the focus of paragraphs 8 through 10.
	Option B is incorrect	Based on paragraphs 8 through 10, the reader can conclude that Kevin wants what is best for his community.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author suggests that Kevin has no intention of leaving his community to play elsewhere. There is no evidence in paragraphs 8 through 10 that suggests otherwise.
50	Option G is correct	In paragraph 1, the author describes an experience from Kevin's youth. Kevin's hockey team won a game 12-0, and Kevin scored all 12 goals, but he is despondent over one shot that he missed. As a result, Kevin stays out all night in the freezing cold shooting hockey pucks into a net. This extended flashback is included to contribute to the plot by providing a specific example of Kevin's determination.
	Option F is incorrect	Mention of the "frozen lake" and "forest" in paragraph 1 only serves to situate an early example of Kevin's determination; the story takes place in other locations as well.
	Option H is incorrect	Kevin is the only character described in detail in paragraph 1.
	Option J is incorrect	The conflict introduced in paragraph 1 is an internal conflict, one that involves the intense expectations Kevin places on himself. The author discusses some external, mainly political, conflicts later in the story.

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51	Option A is correct	The narrator's description of Kevin's physical makeup indicates that he has the natural athletic ability and talent to be a great hockey player.
	Option B is incorrect	Although it is possible that some of Kevin's teammates might feel resentment or envy given his superior level of play, their reactions are not mentioned in paragraph 3.
	Option C is incorrect	Although other portions of the story do convey Kevin's intense interest in hockey, paragraph 3 focuses on Kevin's natural abilities, not his attitude toward hockey.
	Option D is incorrect	The townspeople recognize Kevin's promise of greatness, but there is no indication in paragraph 3 that their expectations are unrealistic.
52	Option H is correct	Because the author highlights that "it means something" to be "a Beartown man" in the Beartown community, the reader can infer that Kevin feels loyal to his community.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Kevin is appreciated in Beartown, the quotation is about how much people in Beartown appreciate Beartown.
	Option G is incorrect	Based on the quotation, the reader can infer that living in Beartown is important to Kevin; he is not likely to feel trapped in a place he loves.
	Option J is incorrect	Based on the quotation, the reader can infer that Kevin feels proud, not embarrassed, to be from Beartown.