

Rhode Island RICAS 2023  
Grade 8 English Language Arts

Exam Materials  
Pages 2 - 28

Answer Key Materials  
Pages 29 - 30



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

*Release of Spring 2023*

*RICAS Test Items*

*from the*

*Grade 8 English Language Arts  
Paper-Based Test*

**June 2023**

**Rhode Island Department of Education**

# Overview of Grade 8 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2023 grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA) test was a next-generation assessment that was administered in two formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. Most students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for eligible students who were unable to use a computer. More information can be found on the MCAS Test Administration Resources page at [doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html](https://doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html).

Most of the operational items on the grade 8 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same ELA content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

**This document displays released items from the paper-based test**, along with associated reading passages. Released items from the computer-based test are available on the RICAS Resource Center website at [ricas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items](https://ricas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items).

The Scoring Guides can be found at [doe.mass.edu/mcas/student](https://doe.mass.edu/mcas/student). They provide the released constructed-response questions, a unique scoring guide for each question, and samples of student work at each score point.

## Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 8 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items and multiple-select items, in which students select the correct answer(s) from among several answer options.

## Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 8 ELA test was based on grades 6–12 learning standards in three content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (2017), listed below.

- Reading
- Writing
- Language

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework* is strongly aligned with Rhode Island’s English Language Arts/literacy standards: the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The RICAS ELA assessment tables articulate this alignment and are available on the RIDE website at [ride.ri.gov/ricas](https://ride.ri.gov/ricas). The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at [doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html](https://doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).

ELA test results are reported under three MCAS reporting categories, which are identical to the three framework content strands listed above.

The tables at the conclusion of this document provide the following information about each released and unreleased operational item: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, and item description. The correct answers for released selected-response questions are also displayed in the released item table.

## Reference Materials

During both ELA test sessions, the use of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former English learner students only. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA test session.

# Grade 8 English Language Arts

This session contains 19 questions.

## Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

In this passage from the fantasy novel *The Night Circus*, Bailey's sister, Caroline, dares 10-year-old Bailey to visit the grounds of a circus that suddenly arrived in their town. The circus has appeared once before. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

### from *The Night Circus*

by Erin Morgenstern

- 1 It materialized in the same spot then, and now it looks like it never left. As though it were merely invisible for the five-year period when the field sat empty.
- 2 At the age of not quite six, he was not allowed to visit the circus. His parents deemed him too young, so he could only stare from afar, enchanted, at the tents and the lights.
- 3 He had hoped it would stay long enough for him to age properly into old enough, but it vanished without notice after two weeks, leaving too-young Bailey heartbroken.
- 4 But now it has returned.
- 5 It arrived only a few days ago and is still a novelty. Had it been present for longer, Caroline likely would have chosen a different dare, but the circus is currently the talk of the town, and Caroline likes to keep her dares *en vogue*.<sup>1</sup>
- 6 The night before had been Bailey's first proper introduction to the circus.
- 7 It was like nothing he had ever seen. The lights, the costumes, it was all so different. As though he had escaped his everyday life and wandered into another world.
- 8 He had expected it to be a show. Something to sit in a chair and watch.
- 9 He realized quickly how wrong he was.
- 10 It was something to be explored.
- 11 He investigated it as best he could, though he felt woefully unprepared. He did not know what tents to choose out of dozens of options, each with tantalizing signs hinting at the contents. And every turn he took through the twisting striped pathways led to more tents, more signs, more mysteries.

<sup>1</sup>*en vogue*—a French expression meaning “fashionable or up-to-date”

- 12 He found a tent full of acrobats and stayed amongst them as they twirled and spun until his neck ached from staring up. He wandered through a tent full of mirrors and saw hundreds and thousands of Baileys staring, wide-eyed, back at him, each in matching grey caps.
- 13 Even the food was amazing. Apples dipped in caramel so dark they appeared almost blackened but remained light and crisp and sweet. Chocolate bats with impossibly delicate wings. The most delicious cider Bailey had ever tasted.
- 14 Everything was magical. And it seemed to go on forever. None of the pathways ended, they curved into others or circled back to the courtyard.
- 15 He could not properly describe it afterward. He could only nod when his mother asked if he had enjoyed himself.
- 16 They did not stay as long as he would have liked. Bailey would have stayed all night if his parents had let him, there were still so many more tents to explore. But he was ushered home to bed after only a few hours, consoled with promises that he could go back the next weekend, though he anxiously recalls how quickly it disappeared before. He ached to go back almost the moment he walked away.
- 17 He wonders if he accepted the dare, in part, to return to the circus sooner.
- 18 It takes Bailey the better part of ten minutes to walk all the way across the field, and the closer he gets, the larger and more intimidating the tents look, and the more his conviction fades.
- 19 He is already trying to come up with something he can use as proof without having to go in, when he reaches the gates.
- 20 The gates are easily three times his height, the letters atop it spelling out LE CIRQUE DES RÊVES<sup>2</sup> are almost indiscernible in the daylight, each one perhaps the size of a rather large pumpkin. The curls of iron around the letters do remind him of pumpkin vines. There is a complicated-looking lock holding the gates shut, and a small sign that reads:

*Gates Open at Nightfall & Close at Dawn*

in swirly lettering, and under that, in tiny plain letters:

*Trespassers Will Be Exsanguinated*

<sup>2</sup>LE CIRQUE DES RÊVES—a French phrase meaning “The Circus of Dreams”

- 21 Bailey doesn't know what "exsanguinated" means, but he doesn't much like the sound of it. The circus feels strange in the daytime, too quiet. There is no music, no noise. Just the calls of nearby birds and the rustling of the leaves in the trees. There doesn't even appear to be anyone there, as though the whole place is deserted. It smells like it does at night, but fainter, of caramel and popcorn and smoke from the bonfire.
- 22 Bailey looks back across the field. The others are still in the tree, though they look tiny from so far away. They are undoubtedly watching, so he decides to walk around to the other side of the fence. He is no longer entirely certain he wants to do this, and if and when he does, he doesn't particularly want to be watched.
- 23 Most of the fence past the gates borders the edges of tents, so there isn't really anywhere to enter. Bailey keeps walking.
- 24 A few minutes after he loses sight of the oak tree, he finds a part of the fence that is not right up against a tent but borders a small passageway, like an alley between them, wrapping around the side of one tent and disappearing around a corner. It is as good a place as any to try to get in.
- 25 Bailey finds that he does, actually, want to go inside. Not just because of the dare but because he is curious. Dreadfully, hopelessly curious. And beyond proving himself to Caroline and her gang, beneath the curiosity, there is that need to return tugging at him.
- 26 The iron bars are thick and smooth, and Bailey knows without trying that he will not be able to climb over. Besides the fact that there are no good footholds past the first few feet, the top of the fence curls outward in swirls that are something like spikes. They are not overly intimidating, but they are definitely not welcoming.
- 27 But the fence was apparently not built with the express purpose of keeping ten-year-old boys out, for while the bars are solid, they are spread almost a foot apart. And Bailey, being somewhat small, can squeeze through comparatively easily.
- 28 He does hesitate, just for a moment, but he knows he will hate himself later if he doesn't at least try, no matter what might happen after.
- 29 He had thought it would feel different, the way it had at night, but as he pulls himself through the fence and stands in the passage between the tents, he feels exactly as he had on the outside. If the magic is still there in the daytime, he cannot feel it.

## English Language Arts

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- 30 And it seems to be completely abandoned, with no sign of any workers or performers.
- 31 It is quieter inside; he cannot hear the birds. The leaves that rustled around his feet on the outside have not followed him past the fence, though there is room enough for the breeze to carry them through the bars.
- 32 Bailey wonders which way he should go, and what might count as proof for his dare. There doesn't seem to be anything to take, only bare ground and the smooth striped sides of tents. The tents look surprisingly old and worn in the light, and he wonders how long the circus has been traveling, and where it goes when it leaves. He thinks there must be a circus train, though there is not one at the nearest station, and as far as he can tell, no one ever sees such a train come or go.
- 33 Bailey turns right at the end of the passage, and finds himself in a row of tents, each with a door and a sign advertising its contents. FLIGHTS OF FANCY, reads one; ETHEREAL ENIGMAS, another. Bailey holds his breath as he passes the one marked FEARSOME BEASTS & STRANGE CREATURES, but he hears nothing from inside. He finds nothing to take with him, as he is unwilling to steal a sign, and the only other things out in plain sight are scraps of paper and the occasional smushed piece of popcorn.
- 34 The afternoon sun casts long shadows across the tents, stretching over the dry ground. The ground has been painted or powdered white in some areas, black in others. Bailey can see the brown dirt beneath that has been kicked up by so many feet walking over it. He wonders if they repaint it every night as he turns another corner, and because he is looking at the ground, he nearly runs into the girl.
- 35 She is standing in the middle of the path between the tents, just standing there as though she is waiting for him. She looks to be about his own age, and she wears what can only be called a costume, as they certainly aren't normal clothes. White boots with lots of buttons, white stockings, and a white dress made from bits of every fabric imaginable, scraps of lace and silk and cotton all combined into one, with a short white military jacket over it, and white gloves. Every inch from her neck down is covered in white, which makes her red hair exceptionally shocking.
- 36 "You're not supposed to be here," the red-haired girl says quietly. She does not sound upset or even surprised. Bailey blinks at her a few times before he manages to respond.



- 37 "I . . . uh, I know," he says, and it sounds to him like the stupidest thing in the world to say, but the girl only looks at him. "I'm sorry?" he adds, which sounds even stupider.
- 38 "You should probably leave before anyone else sees you," the girl says, glancing over her shoulder, but Bailey cannot tell what she is looking for. "Which way did you come in?"
- 39 "Back, uh . . ." Bailey turns around but cannot tell which way he came, the path turns in on itself and he cannot see any of the signs to know which ones he had passed. "I'm not sure," he says.
- 40 "That's all right, come with me." The girl takes his hand in her white-gloved one and pulls him down one of the passageways. She does not say anything more as they walk through the tents, though she makes him stop when they reach a corner and they do not move for almost a minute. When he opens his mouth to ask what they are waiting for she simply holds her finger to her lips to quiet him and then continues walking a few seconds later.
- 41 "You can fit through the fence?" the girl asks, and Bailey nods. The girl takes a sharp turn behind one of the tents, down a passageway Bailey had not even noticed, and there is the fence again, and the field outside.
- 42 "Go out this way," the girl says. "You should be fine."
- 43 She helps Bailey squeeze through the bars, which are a bit tighter in this part of the fence. When he is on the other side, he turns around to face her.
- 44 "Thank you," he says. He cannot think of anything else to say.
- 45 "You're welcome," the girl says. "But you should be more careful. You're not supposed to come in here during the day, it's trespassing."
- 46 "I know, I'm sorry," Bailey says. "What does exsanguinated mean?"
- 47 The girl smiles.
- 48 "It means draining all your blood," she says. "But they don't actually do that, I don't think."
- 49 She turns and starts back down the passageway.
- 50 "Wait," Bailey says, though he doesn't know what he is asking her to wait for. The girl returns to the fence. She does not respond, just waits to hear what he has to say. "I . . . I'm supposed to bring something

## English Language Arts

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back,” he says, and regrets it instantly. The girl’s brow furrows as she stares at him through the bars.

51 “Bring something back?” she repeats.

52 “Yeah,” Bailey says, looking down at his scuffed brown shoes, and at her white boots on the other side of the fence. “It was a dare,” he adds, hoping she will understand.

53 The girl smiles. She bites her lip for a second and looks thoughtful, and then she pulls off one of her white gloves and hands it to him through the bars. Bailey hesitates.

54 “It’s okay, take it,” she says. “I have a whole box of them.”

55 Bailey takes the white glove from her and puts it in his pocket.

56 “Thank you,” he says again.

57 “You’re welcome, Bailey,” the girl says, and this time when she turns away he does not say anything, and she disappears behind the corner of a striped tent.

58 Bailey stands there for a long while before he walks back across the field. There is no one left in the oak tree when he reaches it, only a great deal of acorns on the ground, and the sun is starting to set.

59 He is halfway home when he realizes he never told the girl his name.

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## English Language Arts

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- 1 Based on paragraphs 2–4, what does paragraph 4 **mainly** suggest?
- Ⓐ Bailey’s casual attitude toward an expected event
  - Ⓑ Bailey’s tendency to reflect quickly on past mistakes
  - Ⓒ Bailey’s belief that he might have a different experience now that he is older
  - Ⓓ Bailey’s fear that previous enjoyments might be less rewarding the second time

2 **Part A**

Read the sentence from paragraph 5 in the box.

It arrived only a few days ago and is still a novelty.

Based on the paragraph, what is the meaning of the word *novelty* as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ something expensive because it is rare
- Ⓑ something interesting because it is new
- Ⓒ something risky because it is dangerous
- Ⓓ something forgettable because it is unclear

**Part B**

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “It was like nothing he had ever seen.” (paragraph 7)
- Ⓑ “Bailey looks back across the field.” (paragraph 22)
- Ⓒ “Bailey finds that he does, actually, want to go inside.” (paragraph 25)
- Ⓓ “If the magic is still there in the daytime, he cannot feel it.” (paragraph 29)

- 3 Read the sentence from paragraph 16 in the box.

He ached to go back almost the moment he walked away.

Based on the paragraph, what does the word “ached” suggest about Bailey’s feelings toward the circus?

- Ⓐ His feelings are causing him to make regrettable choices.
  - Ⓑ His feelings are so strong that they are emotionally painful.
  - Ⓒ His feelings are oddly out of place under the circumstances.
  - Ⓓ His feelings are distracting him from his physical discomfort.
- 4 What does paragraph 16 **most likely** suggest about Bailey’s parents?
- Ⓐ They had decided to convince Bailey to disregard his memories.
  - Ⓑ They were not sensitive in their approach to managing Bailey’s emotions.
  - Ⓒ They did not appreciate how unwilling Bailey was to leave the circus early.
  - Ⓓ They had rules that took priority over Bailey’s desire to remain at the circus.

## English Language Arts

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- 5 Read the sentences from paragraph 32 in the box.

The tents look surprisingly old and worn in the light, and he wonders how long the circus has been traveling, and where it goes when it leaves. He thinks there must be a circus train, though there is not one at the nearest station, and as far as he can tell, no one ever sees such a train come or go.

What do the sentences **mainly** emphasize about the circus?

- Ⓐ its impressive size
  - Ⓑ its unclear origins
  - Ⓒ its friendly nature
  - Ⓓ its inferior quality
- 6 What is the **main** effect of the descriptions in paragraph 35?
- Ⓐ They show the depth of Bailey's perceptions.
  - Ⓑ They detail the striking appearance of the girl.
  - Ⓒ They reveal the harshness of Bailey's judgments.
  - Ⓓ They suggest the many hardships the girl has faced.

**7** Based on paragraphs 38–40, what is the **most likely** reason the girl pauses in paragraph 40?

- Ⓐ She is considering which way to take Bailey.
- Ⓑ She is changing her mind about helping Bailey.
- Ⓒ She is trying to avoid attracting the attention of others.
- Ⓓ She is catching her breath before continuing to the destination.

**8** Read the sentence from paragraph 41 in the box.

The girl takes a sharp turn behind one of the tents, down a passageway Bailey had not even noticed, and there is the fence again, and the field outside.

What do the details in the sentence **mainly** suggest about the girl?

- Ⓐ her skills as a performer in the circus
- Ⓑ her desire to get away from the circus
- Ⓒ her disdain for the routines of the circus
- Ⓓ her familiarity with the layout of the circus

## English Language Arts

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- 9 Based on paragraphs 50–54, choose the option that **best** completes each sentence.

Bailey interprets the girl’s facial expression in paragraph 50 as a sign of her

- Ⓐ sadness.
- Ⓑ frustration.
- Ⓒ selfishness.
- Ⓓ disapproval.

Paragraphs 53 and 54 reveal that her facial expression in paragraph 50 likely signaled that she was

- Ⓐ imitating his attitude.
- Ⓑ considering his need.
- Ⓒ remembering her role.
- Ⓓ disguising her surprise.

**10** Which word **best** describes the tone of paragraph 59?

- Ⓐ triumphant
- Ⓑ secretive
- Ⓒ puzzling
- Ⓓ worried



- 11 Which sentence **best** states a central idea of the passage?
- Ⓐ Bailey is both fascinated and unsettled by the circus.
  - Ⓑ Bailey is pleased to find unlikely companionship at the circus.
  - Ⓒ Bailey struggles to compare the circus now with how it used to be.
  - Ⓓ Bailey denies what he saw at the circus and wonders if it actually happened.

## English Language Arts

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**For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Write your essay in the space provided on the next two pages. Your writing should:**

- **Present and develop a central idea.**
- **Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).**
- **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**

- 12** Based on *The Night Circus*, write an essay that explains how Bailey's reactions to the circus throughout the passage reveal his character. Be sure to use information from the passage to develop your essay.

**Write your answer on the next two pages.**

*You have a total of two pages on which to write your response.*

12

Lined area for writing response.



In this passage from *Life on the Mississippi*, the author, Mark Twain, recalls his days growing up along the Mississippi River in the mid-1800s and his admiration of the riverboats and those who worked on them. Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

### from *Life on the Mississippi*

by Mark Twain

- 1 Boy after boy managed to get on the river. The minister's son became an engineer. The doctor's and the post-master's sons became "mud clerks";<sup>1</sup> the wholesale liquor dealer's son became a barkeeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the county judge, became pilots.<sup>2</sup> Pilot was the grandest position of all. The pilot, even in those days of trivial wages, had a princely salary—from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and no board to pay. Two months of his wages would pay a preacher's salary for a year. Now some of us were left disconsolate.<sup>3</sup> We could not get on the river—at least our parents would not let us.
- 2 So by and by I ran away. I said I never would come home again till I was a pilot and could come in glory. But somehow I could not manage it. I went meekly aboard a few of the boats that lay packed together like sardines at the long St. Louis wharf, and very humbly inquired for the pilots, but got only a cold shoulder<sup>4</sup> and short words from mates and clerks. I had to make the best of this sort of treatment for the time being, but I had comforting daydreams of a future when I should be a great and honored pilot, with plenty of money. . . .
- 3 Months afterward the hope within me struggled to a reluctant death, and I found myself without an ambition. But I was ashamed to go home. I was in Cincinnati, and I set to work to map out a new career. I had been reading about the recent exploration of the river Amazon by an expedition sent out by our government. It was said that the expedition, owing to difficulties, had not thoroughly explored a part of the country lying about the head-waters,<sup>5</sup> some four thousand miles from the mouth of the river. It was only about fifteen hundred miles from Cincinnati to New Orleans, where I could doubtless get a ship. I had thirty dollars left; I would go and complete the exploration of the Amazon. This was all the thought I gave to the subject. I never was great in matters of detail. I packed my valise, and took passage on an ancient tub called the "Paul Jones," for New Orleans. . . .

<sup>1</sup>mud clerks—helpers on a steamboat

<sup>2</sup>pilots—the workers on riverboats who guided the boats around hazards in the water

<sup>3</sup>disconsolate—unhappy

<sup>4</sup>a cold shoulder—an unfriendly attitude

<sup>5</sup>head-waters—streams that form the source of a river

- 4 When we presently got under way and went poking down the broad Ohio, I became a new being, and the subject of my own admiration. I was a traveler! A word never had tasted so good in my mouth before. I had an exultant<sup>6</sup> sense of being bound for mysterious lands and distant climes<sup>7</sup> which I never have felt in so uplifting a degree since. I was in such a glorified condition that all ignoble<sup>8</sup> feelings departed out of me, and I was able to look down and pity the untraveled with a compassion that had hardly a trace of contempt in it. Still, when we stopped at villages and wood-yards, I could not help lolling carelessly upon the railings of the boiler deck to enjoy the envy of the country boys on the bank. If they did not seem to discover me, I presently sneezed to attract their attention, or moved to a position where they could not help seeing me. And as soon as I knew they saw me I gaped and stretched, and gave other signs of being mightily bored with traveling.
- 5 I kept my hat off all the time, and stayed where the wind and the sun could strike me, because I wanted to get the bronzed and weather-beaten look of an old traveler. Before the second day was half gone I experienced a joy which filled me with the purest gratitude; for I saw that the skin had begun to blister and peel off my face and neck. I wished that the boys and girls at home could see me now.

<sup>6</sup>exultant—joyous

<sup>7</sup>climes—places with distinct climates

<sup>8</sup>ignoble—not honorable

- 13 Which sentence **best** expresses the irony in paragraph 5?
- Ⓐ The narrator is near a place he had been unable to find.
  - Ⓑ The narrator is far from those who had once misjudged him.
  - Ⓒ The narrator is delighted by a situation that sounds unpleasant.
  - Ⓓ The narrator is appreciated by those he had been too timid to ask for a job.
- 14 Which statement **best** expresses a theme of the passage?
- Ⓐ Confronting serious challenges can change one's personal beliefs.
  - Ⓑ People who defy authority can experience unexpected hardships in life.
  - Ⓒ Being too boastful about one's accomplishments can result in embarrassment.
  - Ⓓ People often find satisfaction even when failing to fulfill their original ambitions.

- 15** Select **two** quotations that **best** show that the narrator is unrealistic and impulsive about his plans.
- Ⓐ "But somehow I could not manage it." (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓑ "I had to make the best of this sort of treatment for the time being. . . ." (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓒ ". . . I had comforting daydreams of a future when I should be a great and honored pilot. . . ." (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓓ "Months afterward the hope within me struggled. . . ." (paragraph 3)
  - Ⓔ "I had been reading about the recent exploration of the river Amazon. . . ." (paragraph 3)
  - Ⓕ "This was all the thought I gave to the subject. I never was great in matters of detail." (paragraph 3)



Read the poem about one person's perspective on life. Then answer the questions that follow.

### Life While-You-Wait

*by Wisława Szymborska*

Life While-You-Wait.  
Performance without rehearsal.  
Body without alterations.  
Head without premeditation.

- 5 I know nothing of the role I play.  
I only know it's mine, I can't exchange it.

I have to guess on the spot  
just what this play's all about.

- 10 Ill-prepared for the privilege of living,  
I can barely keep up with the pace that the action demands.  
I improvise, although I loathe improvisation.  
I trip at every step over my own ignorance.  
I can't conceal my hayseed<sup>1</sup> manners.  
My instincts are for hammy histrionics.<sup>2</sup>  
15 Stage fright makes excuses for me, which humiliate me more.  
Extenuating circumstances<sup>3</sup> strike me as cruel.

- Words and impulses you can't take back,  
stars you'll never get counted,  
your character like a raincoat you button on the run—  
20 the pitiful results of all this unexpectedness.

- If I could just rehearse one Wednesday in advance,  
or repeat a single Thursday that has passed!  
But here comes Friday with a script I haven't seen.  
Is it fair, I ask  
25 (my voice a little hoarse,  
since I couldn't even clear my throat offstage).

<sup>1</sup>hayseed—informal word for a person lacking sophistication or refinement

<sup>2</sup>hammy histrionics—exaggerated, overly dramatic behavior

<sup>3</sup>extenuating circumstances—specific reasons that excuse someone's actions

- You'd be wrong to think that it's just a slapdash quiz  
taken in makeshift accommodations. Oh no.  
I'm standing on the set and I see how strong it is.
- 30 The props are surprisingly precise.  
The machine rotating the stage has been around even longer.  
The farthest galaxies have been turned on.  
Oh no, there's no question, this must be the premiere.  
And whatever I do
- 35 will become forever what I've done.

"Life While-You-Wait" by Wisława Szymborska, from *Poems New and Collected, 1957–1997*. Translated by Stanislaw Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh. Copyright © 1998 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Republished by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

## English Language Arts

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**16** What situation does the speaker's point of view in the poem **mainly** suggest?

- Ⓐ an actor struggling in an unfamiliar theater production
- Ⓑ a celebrity who is finally getting the fame she deserves
- Ⓒ an executive who is inspiring the members of her organization
- Ⓓ a spectator sympathizing with the losing team at a sporting event

**17** Read the lines from the poem in the box.

- Words and impulses you can't take back, (line 17)
- If I could just . . . / . . . repeat a single Thursday that has passed! (lines 21 and 22)
- And whatever I do / will become forever what I've done. (lines 34 and 35)

Based on the lines, with which statement would the speaker **most likely** agree?

- Ⓐ People are more forgetful than they realize.
- Ⓑ People must break from their daily routines.
- Ⓒ People should hold on to the innocence of their youth.
- Ⓓ People are powerless to change what has already happened.

## English Language Arts

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- 18** Read line 18 in the box.

stars you'll never get counted,

Based on the poem, what do the "stars" in the line **most likely** symbolize?

- Ⓐ beautiful sights
  - Ⓑ favorite possessions
  - Ⓒ missed opportunities
  - Ⓓ unrecognized achievements
- 19** How is the poem **mainly** structured?
- Ⓐ as a flashback to the speaker's childhood
  - Ⓑ as a description of the speaker's occupation
  - Ⓒ as a metaphor describing the speaker's feelings
  - Ⓓ as a series of observations about the speaker's talents

**Grade 8 English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2023 Released Operational Items**

<b>PBT Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Item Type*</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Correct Answer (SR)**</b>
1	9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Analyze a character based on details from specific paragraphs of a passage.	C
2	9	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Use context to determine the meaning of a word in a paragraph of a passage and identify a detail from the passage that supports the meaning.	B;A
3	10	<i>Language</i>	L.8.5	SR	Determine how a word reveals a character's feelings in a paragraph of a passage.	B
4	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Analyze characters based on details from a specific paragraph in a passage.	D
5	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine how details from a paragraph of a passage help develop the setting.	B
6	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Analyze the effect of descriptive language used in a passage.	B
7	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.1	SR	Make an inference about a character based on details from sections of a passage.	C
8	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.1	SR	Make an inference about a character based on specific details in a paragraph of a passage.	D
9	13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.6	SR	Analyze the points of view of two characters in a passage.	D;B
10	14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Determine the tone of a specific paragraph in a passage.	C
11	15	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine the central idea of a passage.	A
12	16	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay explaining how a character's reactions to an event reveal his character; use information from the passage for support.	
13	21	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Analyze an instance of irony in a paragraph of a passage.	C
14	21	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine a theme of a passage.	D
15	22	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Identify evidence from a section of a passage that supports an inference about the narrator.	C,F
16	25	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.6	SR	Analyze the speaker's point of view in a poem.	A
17	25	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Identify a statement that a speaker of a poem would agree with based on specific lines.	D
18	26	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Analyze a symbolic image from a line in a poem.	C
19	26	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the structure of a poem.	C

\* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR), constructed-response (CR), and essay (ES).

\*\* Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for any constructed-response and essay items will be posted to the Department's website later this year.

**Grade 8 English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2023 Unreleased Operational Items**

<b>PBT Item No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Item Type*</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Determine the author’s purpose for writing an article.
21	<i>Language</i>	L.8.2	SR	Determine the purpose of specific punctuation in a sentence.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.5	SR	Analyze the purpose of section headings in an article.
23	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Identify the purpose for using a specific point of view in a paragraph of an article.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Make an inference based on a specific paragraph in an article.
25	<i>Language</i>	L.8.2	SR	Analyze the use of specific punctuation in an article.
26	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.7	SR	Analyze the purpose of a text feature in an article.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Compare the development of an idea in two articles on similar topics.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.2	SR	Identify the central idea of two articles on similar topics.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.4	SR	Determine how a specific sentence contributes to the development of an article and identify a sentence from a different article on a similar topic that expresses the same idea.
30	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.8	SR	Categorize types of evidence used in quotations from two articles on similar topics.
31	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay analyzing a key idea in two articles on similar topics; use information from both articles for support.

\* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR), constructed-response (CR), and essay (ES).