



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction

English Language Arts Item Sampler Grade 7



Letter to Her Daughter from the New White House

By Abigail Adams

John and Abigail Adams were the first presidential couple to live in the White House. In the letter, First Lady Adams describes the White House as unfinished and the city of Washington, D.C., as still in development.

Washington, 21 November 1800

My Dear Child:

I arrived here on Sunday last, and without meeting with any accident worth noticing, except losing ourselves when we left Baltimore and going eight or nine miles on the Frederick road, by which means we were obliged to go the other eight through woods, where we wandered two hours without finding a guide or the path. Fortunately, a straggling man came up with us, and we engaged him as a guide to extricate us out of our difficulty; but woods are all you can see from Baltimore until you reach the city, which is only so in name. Here and there is a small cot, without a glass window, interspersed amongst the forests, through which you travel miles without seeing any human being. In the city there are buildings enough, if they were compact and finished, to accommodate Congress and those attached to it; but as they are, and scattered as they are, I see no great comfort for them. The river, which runs up to Alexandria¹, is in full view of my window, and I see the vessels as they pass and repass. The house is upon a grand and superb scale, requiring about thirty servants to attend and keep the apartments in proper order, and perform the ordinary business of the house and stables; an establishment very well proportioned to the President's salary. The lighting of the apartments, from the kitchen to parlors and chambers, is a tax indeed; and the fires we are obliged to keep to secure us from daily agues² is another very cheering comfort. To assist us in this great castle, and render less attendance necessary, bells are wholly wanting, not one single one being hung through the whole house, and promises are all you can obtain. This is so great an inconvenience that I know not what to do, or how to do. The ladies from Georgetown and in the city have many of them visited me. Yesterday I returned fifteen visits—but such a place as Georgetown appears—why, our Milton is beautiful. But no comparisons—if they will put me up some bells and let me have wood enough to keep fires, I design to be pleased. I could content myself almost anywhere three months; but surrounded with forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had because people cannot be found to cut and cart it? Briesler entered into a contract with a man to supply him with wood. A small part, a few cords only, has he been able to get. Most of that was expended to dry the walls of the house before we came in, and yesterday the man told him it was impossible for him to procure it to be cut and carted. He has had recourse to coals; but we cannot get grates made and set. We have, indeed, come into a new country.

You must keep all this to yourself, and, when asked how I like it, say that I write you the situation is beautiful, which is true. The house is made habitable, but there is not a single apartment finished, and all within side, except the plastering, has been done since Briesler came. We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience, without, and the great unfinished audience room I made a drying room of, to hang up the clothes in. The principal stairs are not up, and will not be this winter. Six chambers are made comfortable; two are occupied by the President and Mr. Shaw; two lower rooms, one for a common parlor, and one for a levee room. Upstairs there is the oval room, which is designed for the drawing room, and has the crimson furniture in it. It is a very handsome room now; but, when completed, it will be beautiful. If the twelve years, in which this place has been considered as the future seat of government, had been improved, as they would have been if in New England, very many of the present inconveniences would have been removed. It is a beautiful spot, capable of every improvement, and the more I view it, the more I am delighted with it.

¹ Alexandria—a city in northern Virginia

² agues—chills or shivering

Go on to the next page.

Since I sat down to write, I have been called down to a servant from Mount Vernon³, with a billet⁴ from Major Custis, and a haunch of venison, and a kind, congratulatory letter from Mrs. Lewis, upon my arrival in the city, with Mrs. Washington's love, inviting me to Mount Vernon, where, health permitting, I will go before I leave this place.

Affectionately, your mother

³ Mount Vernon—George Washington's Home

⁴ billet—note

TDA Prompt:

In the letter Adams informs her daughter about the experience of moving to a new city and living in a new home. Write an essay analyzing how Adams responds to her new surroundings. Use evidence from the letter to support your response.

Go on to the next page.

Writer's Checklist

Text Dependent Analysis (TDA)

The Writer's Checklist is available as an online tool during the TDA. Students may also be provided with a hard copy of the checklist (available on the [Forward Exam Resources webpage](#)) as long as it is then treated as secure testing materials and securely destroyed immediately after the testing session.

PLAN before you write

- Read the entire passage(s) carefully.
- Read the question carefully.
- Think about how the question relates to the passage(s).
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map or outline to plan your essay.
- Plan to include multiple paragraphs in your essay.

FOCUS while you write

- Analyze and explain what you think about the information from the passage(s) in your essay.
- Support and develop the ideas in your essay by using text evidence from the passage(s).
- Use correct language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions between paragraphs in your essay.
- Organize your essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write

- ☐ I re-read the question and my final essay answers the question.
- ☐ I included my own thoughts and ideas in my essay.
- ☐ I included evidence from the passage(s) to support my ideas in my essay.
- ☐ I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.
- ☐ I used correct language, a variety of sentence types, and paragraph transitions in my essay.

STOP.



STOP.

Answer the questions.

1. A student is writing a research paper about the Panama Canal. Read the paragraph from the research paper and answer the question that follows.

The Panama Canal cuts through the country of Panama to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Before the canal was built, ships going from one ocean to another had to sail around the southernmost point of South America. This route added thousands of extra miles to the journey. The French began building the canal in the 1800s, and it was completed by the United States in 1914.

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

- A. Building the Panama Canal proved to be a very difficult project.
- B. The southern tip of South America is known as Cape Horn.
- C. The finished canal was hailed as an engineering marvel.
- D. Ships that use the Panama Canal carry different types of cargo.

2. Read the sentence.

Two weeks after Kelsey applied for a summer job bagging groceries, she received a call at the supermarket from the store's hiring manager.

What is the **best** way to rewrite this sentence for clarity?

- A. Two weeks at the supermarket after Kelsey applied for a summer job bagging groceries, she received a call from the store's hiring manager.
- B. Two weeks after Kelsey applied for a summer job bagging groceries, she received a call at the supermarket from the store's hiring manager at the supermarket.
- C. Two weeks after Kelsey applied for a summer job bagging groceries at the supermarket, she received a call from the store's hiring manager.
- D. Two weeks after Kelsey at the supermarket applied for a summer job bagging groceries, she received a call from the store's hiring manager.

Go on to the next page.

3. Which website would be most helpful to a student writing a report about plants that have adapted to thrive in a dry desert environment?

Search: Desert Plants

Results: 1–4 of 200

A. **Desert Plants Varieties**

Many people think of cacti when they hear the words “desert plants.” However, the desert is also home to beautiful flowers . . .

B. **Desert Plants Watering**

One of the best things about desert plants is that they do not need a lot of attention. Experts recommend . . .

C. **Desert Plants Landscaping**

Use desert plants to turn your yard into a one-of-a-kind showplace. Get the most popular ideas and designs for free . . .

D. **Desert Plants Abilities**

The desert is a harsh environment. Many desert plants have developed ways to cope with the lack of water . . .

STOP.



STOP.

Listen to the presentation that your teacher reads to you from Appendix A. Then answer the questions.

The Animals of World War I

1. According to the presentation, what are **two** tasks performed by horses and mules in World War I? Choose **two** answers.
 - A. standing guard
 - B. transporting people and supplies
 - C. carrying messages
 - D. finding soldiers who needed help
 - E. pulling artillery

2. How does the speaker support the claim that dogs “proved to be some of the best animal soldiers of all”?
 - A. by listing several different ways that dogs successfully assisted soldiers
 - B. by giving examples of specific dogs and the soldiers they were assigned to
 - C. by providing an expert’s opinion about the usefulness of dogs in the war
 - D. by emphasizing that dogs were a soldier’s first choice for carrying messages

Go on to the next page.

3. Which sentence from the presentation **best** expresses the main idea?
- A. When you think about soldiers in World War I, chances are you imagine fighters with two legs, not four—and certainly no wings!
 - B. More than 16 million animals played key roles in World War I.
 - C. Horses, mules, and even camels were put to work on all types of battlefields during this time.
 - D. It may be difficult to imagine dogs being involved in the war, but they proved to be some of the best animal soldiers of all.



STOP.

Read the following passage. Then answer the questions. You may look back at the passage to help you answer the questions.

A Vacation Unlike Any Other

Margot loved everything about summer. The sun on her face, the feeling of grass beneath her feet on a warm day, outdoor picnics, and homemade lemonade were just a few things that she looked forward to at the end of each school year. Although she often counted down the days until she could enjoy these moments, there was one thing that always topped her list of favorite summertime activities. Every June, she and her family would make the long drive to visit her aunt and uncle in a town many miles away. Although being stuck in a car with four other people may not sound appealing, she often enjoyed this time she was able to spend with her family, even though she rarely admitted it. She and her sisters would pile into the car with her parents as they all made their way to her aunt and uncle's home to spend a week there.

Margot was looking forward to another vacation, but there was something that did not seem quite right about the events leading up to this trip. Unlike previous years, her parents had not mentioned anything about going to visit her relatives, which was odd. By the first week in May, her parents usually had a plan in place. This year, though, the beginning of May had come and gone, and it was already the first week of June. Margot suspected that something was amiss.

After a conversation with her dad one Saturday morning, Margot had confirmed her theory. Her dad informed her that her mother would be teaching summer courses at the local community college, and her aunt and uncle would be going on a vacation of their own to visit another relative in Washington, D.C. The timing did not quite work out for a trip this year. Margot was dumbfounded.

Margot went to her room and sat on her bed, upset that the summer would slip by without an opportunity to go anywhere. She mindlessly began to flip through old school papers that were strewn across her bedroom floor. Suddenly, she came across an old project that unexpectedly sparked an idea.

"This is perfect!" Margot exclaimed to herself as she grabbed the old assignment and ran to find her sisters, Abbie and Sarah.

"Hey!" Margot said as she ran over to her sisters, who were enjoying the warm weather outside. "Dad just told me that we aren't going to visit Aunt Lucille and Uncle Carl this summer."

"Yeah, Dad just told us too," Abbie mumbled.

"It's OK, though," Margot said, hoping that she could make the situation better. "I have something that may be just as fun. Look at this," she said as she showed her sisters the project she held in her hands. Seeing their furrowed brows caused Margot to elaborate. "Do you remember when I had to get brochures from museums, parks, and historical sites around the city?"

"I think so," Sarah said reluctantly.

"Well, for one of my school assignments last year, I had to create a fictional advertisement for the city," Margot said. "I used ideas from the brochures and flyers to make a collage of different things to do here in our city."

Go on to the next page.

“I remember now,” Abbie said, “but how is that going to help us with our summer vacation?”

Margot smiled. “What if we have a stay-cation instead of a va-cation?” Margot looked at the confused expressions on her sisters’ faces. “Instead of going somewhere else, we can stay here and see our city through the eyes of a tourist,” Margot explained. “Every year, hundreds of people visit our city for their vacations. Why can’t we stay here for ours?”

Margot saw a flicker of interest in her sisters’ eyes. “This might be our only opportunity to go on a vacation this summer,” Margot stated. “Plus, there are so many things here in the city that we’ve never done.” Margot’s sisters looked at each other and nodded, seeming to surrender to Margot’s idea and beginning to find the merits of this proposition.

A few minutes later, the three sisters were presenting their ideas to their parents. Of course, Margot held up the fake advertisement for everyone to see, smiling at the fact that there wasn’t anything fake about it anymore. She was truly using this assignment to advertise the many attractions their city had to offer. Her parents nodded in agreement and were quickly able to identify a few days in late June that would work with everyone’s schedule. It was not going to be the summer that Margot had originally hoped for, but she was looking forward to seeing what this new twist on a summer vacation would bring.

Go on to the next page.

1. In paragraph 8, what does the phrase “furrowed brows” suggest about Margot’s sisters?
 - A. They feel puzzled.
 - B. They feel amused.
 - C. They feel surprised.
 - D. They feel annoyed.

2. How does the author contrast Margot’s point of view with her sisters’ initial point of view about a stay-cation?
 - A. by explaining how the sisters’ summer plans will conflict with Margot’s idea for a stay-cation
 - B. by describing how the sisters react to Margot’s attempt to convince them to have a stay-cation
 - C. by explaining how the sisters’ school assignment makes them want to include their aunt in a stay-cation
 - D. by describing how the sisters oppose their parents’ suggestion to turn their family trip into a stay-cation

Go on to the next page.

3. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which sentence **best** expresses the theme of the passage?

- A. People should always put work before play.
- B. The best thing about summer is doing nothing.
- C. A disappointment can lead to a fresh opportunity.
- D. Doing things you have done before can still be fun.

Part B

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

- A. The sun on her face, the feeling of grass beneath her feet on a warm day, outdoor picnics, and homemade lemonade were just a few things that she looked forward to at the end of each school year.
- B. This year, though, the beginning of May had come and gone, and it was already the first week of June.
- C. Her dad informed her that her mother would be teaching summer courses at the local community college, and her aunt and uncle would be going on a vacation of their own to visit another relative in Washington, D.C.
- D. It was not going to be the summer that Margot had originally hoped for, but she was looking forward to seeing what this new twist on a summer vacation would bring.

Go on to the next page.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions. You may look back at the passage to help you answer the questions.

Sailing Stones

Deep in Death Valley National Park in California and Nevada, stones appeared to sail across the desert on their own, leaving paths behind them in the sand. For many years, people tried to explain the mystery of the stones. Hypotheses about the stones' movement varied, but it was not until someone captured the stones on film that the real, scientific explanation was discovered.

The first report of the sailing stones came in 1915. Joseph Crook, a prospector looking for gold, visited a place known as the Racetrack Playa lake bed in Death Valley. He saw that some stones had long trails of disturbed dirt behind them. The trails were about a half an inch deep and as long as 820 feet. They often made sharp turns after traveling in a straight line for some time.

The first explanation was that whirlwinds of sand had picked up the rocks and moved them. Others thought that algae had spread across the lake bed, making it slick enough for the stones to slide around. Another common belief was that magnetic fields of Earth had moved the stones across the land.

It wasn't until 1948 that the first scientific report about the stones was published. Geologists Jim McAllister and Allen Agnew theorized that high winds moved stones that were resting on wet, slick mud. Unfortunately, the scientists were never able to catch the stones in motion, so they could not prove their theory.

In 1955 George M. Stanley determined that the stones were far too heavy to be moved by wind. He suggested that low temperatures would cause water that flooded the lake bed to freeze. The rocks would then be trapped in a large sheet of ice and move with the ice as it began to melt.

Researchers Bob Sharp and Dwight Carey finally tested that theory in 1972. Over seven years, they observed the stones' movement. Twenty-eight of the thirty stones they had marked had moved. The smallest stone had moved the farthest; the heaviest stone (700 pounds) had not moved at all. (Shortly after the experiment ended, the large stone disappeared. Twenty years later it was found a half mile from its original spot.) Sharp and Carey concluded that the ice wasn't in full sheets as Stanley had suggested. They believed there were only small slabs of ice surrounding the stones. Therefore, something else had to be happening.

Professor John Reid found in 1955 that some of the stones were moving parallel to one another. He said that George Stanley was right and that these stones were, in fact, frozen into the same large sheet of ice. That did not explain the movement of all the stones, though, as some stones were clearly moving individually.

It was thought that Ralph Lorenz, a scientist with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, had finally found the answer in 2006 when he did an experiment in a lab. He put a small rock in a plastic container and filled the container with just enough water that part of the stone was sticking out. He then placed the container in the freezer. Soon, he had a piece of ice with a rock embedded in it. He then filled a tray with sand and added just enough water to cover the sand. Finally, he placed the ice with the rock in it on the tray and blew air across it. The air sent the stone sailing across the tray. It left behind a trail in the sand. He concluded that the moving stones were frozen in a slab of ice that floated across the rain-soaked, windy desert.

Go on to the next page.

Lorenz's theory was widely accepted, but some scientists were not convinced because no one had actually seen the rocks move. Enter a team from the University of California, San Diego, led by cousins Richard and Jim Norris. In December 2013, the team of scientists absolutely solved the mystery of how the stones were moving. No one could doubt them because it all was captured on film.

Using cameras from a weather station and GPS tracking software, they discovered that the movement was not due to heavy winds or thick plots of ice. It wasn't mud, algae, magnets, or whirlwinds of sand. The stones sailed across the desert due to a combination of events that must take place in a specific order.

The first thing that happens is that the lake bed fills with water just deep enough that ice can form on top of the water, but leaving some liquid water below it. It can't be too deep. When the temperature in the desert drops enough to form the sheet of ice, the rocks are trapped inside. Then, the next day, the sun warms the desert. The ice begins to melt and break into pieces. When a light wind hits, the stones slide—or sail—away, leaving their tracks in the wet dirt below. The film even showed how a change in direction of the wind created the sharp turns of the stones.

People love to try to solve a good mystery. Sometimes experiments are enough to solve the mysteries of our world, but nothing beats a good video camera to prove when theories about mysteries are correct. It seems that for every mystery that is solved, there are many others waiting for an answer.

Go on to the next page.

4. How does the next-to-last paragraph most contribute to the development of an idea in the passage?
- A. It describes the steps in the process of how the stones move.
 - B. It explains how scientists once viewed the reason for why the stones move.
 - C. It describes the features of the national park that contains the moving stones.
 - D. It explains how technology has been used to study the moving stones.
5. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the inference that advanced technology helped scientists solve the mystery of the moving stones?
- A. Another common belief was that magnetic fields of Earth had moved the stones across the land.
 - B. Unfortunately, the scientists were never able to catch the stones in motion, so they could not prove their theory.
 - C. It was thought that Ralph Lorenz, a scientist with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, had finally found the answer in 2006 when he did an experiment in a lab.
 - D. Using cameras from a weather station and GPS tracking software, they discovered that the movement was not due to heavy winds or thick plots of ice.

Go on to the next page.

6. Using information from the passage, which steps are in the correct order to explain how the stones actually move across the desert?
- A. Rocks get trapped in a sheet of ice. Ice forms on top of water. The rocks begin to slide. The wind blows. The sun warms up the ice.
 - B. Rocks get trapped in a sheet of ice. The sun warms up the ice. The wind blows. The rocks begin to slide. Ice forms on top of water.
 - C. Ice forms on top of water. Rocks get trapped in a sheet of ice. The sun warms up the ice. The wind blows. The rocks begin to slide.
 - D. The wind blows. The sun warms up the ice. The rocks begin to slide. Ice forms on top of water. Rocks get trapped in a sheet of ice.



STOP.

APPENDIX A—LISTENING PASSAGE: THE ANIMALS OF WORLD WAR I

Educators should read the following passage out loud to their students. The passage may be read more than once. Educators should NOT read the items out loud to the students. Students should answer items independently.

The Animals of World War I

When you think about soldiers in World War I, chances are you imagine fighters with two legs, not four—and certainly no wings! However, some of the bravest fighters of that era possessed those very characteristics.

More than 16 million animals played key roles in World War I. Many of them were used to transport supplies, ammunition, and people from one place to another. Horses, mules, and even camels were put to work on all types of battlefields during this time. They pulled heavy pieces of artillery and carried food, water, and other materials that were essential to troops.

It may be difficult to imagine dogs being involved in the war, but they proved to be some of the best animal soldiers of all. They could easily scamper across fields and through trenches and could carry simple items on their backs, including important messages to be shared between groups of soldiers. Some dogs were specially trained to find soldiers who needed assistance and to bark until help arrived, and others stood guard at night to watch for any kind of movement. Still others used their sensitive noses to catch the scent of anything unusual. If the dogs caught the slightest whiff of something out of the ordinary, they began barking a loud warning to let the soldiers know that something wasn't quite right.

Another type of animal soldier during World War I was one with wings: the pigeon. More than 100,000 of these speedy, reliable birds were used to send messages back and forth during the war. Even lightning bugs played a part during the war. Soldiers would collect dozens of these bright bugs and put them in glass jars, using the light from the insects to read maps and other important papers at nighttime.

There are many heroes in a war. Now you know that some of the heroes even had four legs or a set of wings!

APPENDIX B—SUMMARY DATA

Grade 7

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
Session 1				
1	CCSS-1:7.W.2		3	Students need to analyze how the author responds to her new surroundings.
Session 2				
1	CCSS-1: 7.W.2f	C	3	Students need to provide a concluding statement that follows from the information in the paragraph. Option C is the correct answer. The other options are not good concluding statements.
2	CCSS-1: 7.L.1c	C	2	Students need to correct the misplaced modifier. Option C is the correct answer. The other options do not correct the modifier.
3	CCSS-1: 7.W.8	D	3	Students need to choose the best source from which to gather relevant information on plants that have adapted to thrive in a dry desert environment. Option D is the correct answer. The other options would not provide the best information for the report.
Session 3				
1	CCSS-1: 7.SL.2	B, E	1	After listening to the presentation, students need to choose two details that support a main idea. Options B and E are the correct answers. The other options do not support the idea in question.
2	CCSS-1: 7.SL.3	A	2	After listening to the presentation, students need to provide sufficient evidence for the speaker's claim. Option A is the correct answer. The other options do not completely support the specific claim.
3	CCSS-1: 7.SL.2	B	2	After listening to the presentation, students need to provide the main idea. Option B is the correct answer. The other options do not provide the main idea of the presentation.

Grade 7

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	Annotations
Session 4				
1	CCSS-1: 7.RL.4	A	2	Students need to determine how the phrase “furrowed brows” is used in the passage and how it applies to Margot’s sisters. Option A is the correct answer. The other options do not make the correct assumptions about Margot’s sisters.
2	CCSS-1: 7.RL.6	B	2	Students need to analyze how the author contrasts the points of view of Margot and her sisters. Option B is the correct choice. The other options do not correctly contrast the points of view.
3	CCSS-1: 7.RL.2	C, D	3	In Part A, students need to determine the theme of the passage. Option C is the correct answer in Part A. The other options in Part A do not express the theme. In Part B, students need to provide the evidence to support the answer to Part A. Option D is the correct answer in Part B. The other options in Part B do not support the correct answer to Part A.
4	CCSS-1: 7.RI.5	A	2	Students need to analyze how the next-to-last paragraph contributes to the development of an idea in the passage. Option A is the correct answer. The other options do not provide support for how the next-to-last paragraph contributes to the ideas in the passage.
5	CCSS-1: 7.RI.1	D	3	Students need to provide textual support for the inference that advanced technology helped scientists solve the mystery of the moving stones. Option D is the correct answer. The other options do not provide textual support for the inference.
6	CCSS-1: 7.RI.1	C	1	Students need to use information from the passage to demonstrate how the stones move across the desert. Option C is the correct answer. The other options do not demonstrate the correct order of events for the stones to move.

APPENDIX C—SAMPLE LISTENING STIMULUS COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS

Informational Stimulus—The Animals of World War I

Grade 7

Recommended Placement for Assessment

The quantitative Easy Listening Formula (ELF) indicates that this document is at least suitable for a *reader* at the 8th grade, sixth month of class completed level. Research shows students can *listen* two to three grade levels higher than they can read. The qualitative review supports grade 7 based on the clarity of the topic and simple organization of the concepts presented in the audio stimulus. Based on these sets of measures, this audio stimulus is of medium complexity and is recommended for assessment at grade 7.

PURPOSE

Purpose: Medium Complexity

Audience: Low Complexity

Presentation: Low Complexity

AUDITORY STRUCTURE

Organization of Audio Text: Medium Complexity

Sound Variety: audio not available at this time

ORAL LANGUAGE FEATURES

Conventionality: Low Complexity

Vocabulary: Medium Complexity

Delivery: audio not available at this time

KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS

Subject Matter Knowledge: Medium Complexity

Allusions/References: Medium Complexity

Use of Images: N/A

Listening Stimulus Rubric

The ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) developed the following qualitative measures rubric for listening stimuli. The rubric examines the following criteria judged as central to students' successful comprehension of audio stimuli: purpose, auditory structure, oral language features, and knowledge demands. Each of these categories is ranked based on descriptors associated with the following levels: low complexity, medium complexity, and high complexity.

Grade 7

Qualitative Measures Rubric for Listening Stimuli			
Features	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
Purpose	Purpose: Explicitly stated; clear, concrete with a narrow focus	Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete	Purpose: Subtle, implied, theoretical elements
	Audience: Speaker's approach is straightforward and transparent	Audience: Speaker's approach is somewhat layered and may include elements intended to persuade or influence audience	Audience: Speaker may include a variety of persuasive techniques; speaker may direct the message to multiple audiences, and the listener must decipher the meaning on more than one level
	Presentation: A single speaker presents the information	Presentation: Two or more speakers interact. Their patterns of communication may influence the meaning and flow of information	Presentation: Two or more speakers interact. The juxtaposition of the speakers may reveal a contrast or otherwise influence the meaning

Grade 7

Qualitative Measures Rubric for Listening Stimuli			
Features	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
Auditory Structure	Organization of Audio Text: Connections between ideas, processes or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is clear or chronological or easy to predict.	Organization of Audio Text: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential	Organization of Audio Text: Connections between a range of ideas, processes or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle; organization may exhibit traits common to a specific discipline; organization may be different from chronological or sequential (i.e., cause/effect, problem/solution, compare/contrast)
	Sound Variety: Sound is distinct and approach is direct	Sound Variety: Sound is somewhat layered. Overlapping voices or sounds require listener to integrate sounds for fullest understanding	Sound Variety: Sound is multi-layered. Overlapping voices, music, or sounds provide context that listener needs to process (such as foreground noise, background noise, or music)
Oral Language Features	Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand	Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning	Conventionality: Complex; contains some specialized abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language
	Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language	Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or academic	Vocabulary: Complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or academic
	Delivery: Mainly direct, with simple declarative sentences	Delivery: Somewhat variable—at times, speaker changes pitch and volume to create emphasis	Delivery: Varied. Shifts in tone may be subtle and complex, requiring interpretation

Grade 7

Qualitative Measures Rubric for Listening Stimuli			
Features	Low Complexity	Medium Complexity	High Complexity
Knowledge Demands	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday, practical knowledge; simple, concrete ideas	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas; knowledge of speaker may affect interpretation of content	Subject Matter Knowledge: Discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts; knowledge of speaker or source affects interpretation of content
	Allusions/References: No references or allusions to other texts, or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Allusions/References: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Allusions/References: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.
	Use of Images: a range of images that help student understanding	Use of images: minimal use of images that help student understanding	Use of images: no use of images that help student understanding

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APPENDIX D—SAMPLE LITERARY PASSAGE TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS**Literary Passage—A Vacation Unlike Any Other****Grade 7****Recommended Placement for Assessment**

The quantitative measures of several readability programs suggest an appropriate placement at the grade 6–8 band. The qualitative review supports grade 7 based on the subject matter of the passage. Based on these sets of measures as explained in the Wisconsin Academic Standards Appendix A, this passage is slightly complex and is recommended for assessment at grade 7.

MEANING: Moderately Complex**TEXT STRUCTURE****Organization:** Slightly Complex**Use of Images:** N/A**LANGUAGE FEATURES****Conventionality:** Moderately Complex**Vocabulary:** Slightly Complex**Sentence Structure:** Very Complex**KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS****Life Experiences:** Moderately Complex**Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge:** Slightly Complex

Literary Texts Qualitative Measures Rubric

The ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) developed the following qualitative measures rubric for literary texts. The rubric examines the following criteria judged as central to students' successful comprehension of text meaning, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. Each of these categories is ranked based on descriptors associated with the following levels: slightly complex, moderately complex, very complex, and exceedingly complex.

Grade 7

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Meaning	Meaning: Several levels and competing elements of meaning that are difficult to identify, separate, and interpret; theme is implicit or subtle, often ambiguous and revealed over the entirety of the text	Meaning: Several levels of meaning that may be difficult to identify or separate; theme is implicit or subtle and may be revealed over the entirety of the text	Meaning: More than one level of meaning with levels clearly distinguished from each other; theme is clear but may be conveyed with some subtlety	Meaning: One level of meaning; theme is obvious and revealed early in the text.
Text Structure	Organization: Organization is intricate with regard to elements such as narrative viewpoint, time shifts, multiple characters, storylines, and detail	Organization: Organization may include subplots, time shifts, and more complex characters	Organization: Organization may have two or more storylines and is occasionally difficult to predict	Organization: Organization of text is clear, chronological, or easy to predict
	Use of Images: If used, minimal illustrations that support the text	Use of Images: If used, a few illustrations that support the text	Use of Images: If used, a range of illustrations that support selected parts of the text	Use of Images: If used, extensive illustrations that directly support and assist in interpreting the written text

Grade 7

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Language Features	Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand, with some occasions for more complex meaning	Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand
	Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic	Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic	Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language
	Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts	Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
Knowledge Demands	Life Experiences: Explores complex, sophisticated themes; experiences are distinctly different from the common reader	Life Experiences: Explores themes of varying levels of complexity; experiences portrayed are uncommon to most readers	Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are common to many readers	Life Experiences: Explores a single theme; experiences portrayed are everyday and common to most readers
	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Many references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: Some references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: A few references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements	Intertextuality and Cultural Knowledge: No references or allusions to other texts or cultural elements

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APPENDIX E—SAMPLE INFORMATIONAL PASSAGE TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS**Informational Passage—Sailing Stones****Grade 7****Recommended Placement for Assessment**

The quantitative measures of several readability programs suggest an appropriate placement at the grade 6–8 band. The qualitative review supports grade 7 based on the moderate complexity of the passage. Based on these sets of measures as explained in the Wisconsin Academic Standards Appendix A, this passage is moderately complex and is recommended for assessment at grade 7.

PURPOSE: Moderately Complex**TEXT STRUCTURE****Organization of Main Ideas:** Moderately Complex**Text Features:** N/A**Use of Images:** N/A**LANGUAGE FEATURES****Conventionality:** Slightly Complex**Vocabulary:** Slightly Complex**Sentence Structure:** Moderately Complex**KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS****Subject Matter Knowledge:** Moderately Complex**Intertextuality:** Moderately Complex

Informational Texts Qualitative Measures Rubric

The ELA State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) developed the following qualitative measures rubric for informational texts. The rubric examines the following criteria judged as central to students' successful comprehension of text purpose, text structure, language features, and knowledge demands. Each of these categories is ranked based on descriptors associated with the following levels: slightly complex, moderately complex, very complex, and exceedingly complex.

Grade 7

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Purpose	Purpose: Subtle, implied, difficult to determine; intricate, theoretical elements	Purpose: Implied, but fairly easy to infer; more theoretical than concrete	Purpose: Implied, but easy to identify based upon context or source	Purpose: Explicitly stated; clear, concrete with a narrow focus
Text Structure	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between an extensive range of ideas or events are deep, intricate, and often implicit or subtle; organization of the text is intricate or specialized for a particular discipline	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between an expanded range of ideas, processes, or events are deeper and often implicit or subtle; organization may contain multiple pathways and may exhibit traits common to a specific discipline	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between some ideas or events are implicit or subtle; organization is evident and generally sequential	Organization of Main Ideas: Connections between ideas, processes, or events are explicit and clear; organization of text is clear or chronological or easy to predict
	Text Features: If used, are essential in understanding content	Text Features: If used, greatly enhance the reader's understanding of content	Text Features: If used, enhance the reader's understanding of content	Text Features: If used, help the reader navigate and understand content but are not essential
	Use of Images: If used, extensive, intricate, essential integrated images, tables, charts, etc., necessary to understanding the text; also may provide information not otherwise conveyed in the text	Use of Images: If used, essential integrated images, tables, charts, etc., occasionally essential to understanding the text	Use of Images: If used, images mostly supplementary to understanding the text, such as indexes and glossaries; graphs, pictures, tables, and charts directly support the text	Use of Images: If used, simple images unnecessary to understanding the text; directly support and assist in interpreting the text

Grade 7

Features	Exceedingly Complex	Very Complex	Moderately Complex	Slightly Complex
Language Features	Conventionality: Dense and complex; contains abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Complex; contains some abstract, ironic, and/or figurative language	Conventionality: Largely explicit and easy to understand with some occasions for more complex meaning	Conventionality: Explicit, literal, straightforward, easy to understand
	Vocabulary: Generally unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic language; may be ambiguous or purposefully misleading	Vocabulary: Somewhat complex language that is sometimes unfamiliar, archaic, subject-specific, or overly academic	Vocabulary: Mostly contemporary, familiar, conversational; rarely unfamiliar or overly academic	Vocabulary: Contemporary, familiar, conversational language
	Sentence Structure: Mainly complex sentences, often containing multiple concepts	Sentence Structure: Many complex sentences with several subordinate phrases or clauses and transition words	Sentence Structure: Simple and compound sentences, with some more complex constructions	Sentence Structure: Mainly simple sentences
Knowledge Demands	Subject Matter Knowledge: Extensive, perhaps specialized or even theoretical discipline-specific content knowledge; range of challenging abstract and theoretical concepts	Subject Matter Knowledge: Moderate levels of discipline-specific content knowledge; some theoretical knowledge may enhance understanding; range of recognizable ideas and challenging abstract concepts	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday practical knowledge and some discipline-specific content knowledge; both simple and more complicated, abstract ideas	Subject Matter Knowledge: Everyday, practical knowledge; simple, concrete ideas
	Intertextuality: Many references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Intertextuality: Some references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Intertextuality: A few references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.	Intertextuality: No references or allusions to other texts or outside ideas, theories, etc.

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