

New York NYSTP 2015 Grade 6
English Language Arts

Exam & Answer Key Materials
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Our Students. Their Moment.

**New York State Testing Program
Grade 6 Common Core
English Language Arts Test**

Released Questions

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Get Your ZZZZZs!

by Kathiann Kowalski and Marcia Lusted

Your alarm goes off at 6 a.m. Fifteen minutes later, Mom yells up the stairs “Get up!” You’re out of bed by 6:30, on the bus by 7, and school starts a half hour later. What would you do without your alarm clock and mom?

Too Little Sleep

5 Did you know that if you need an alarm clock to wake up in the morning, you’re probably sleep-deprived? Most teens don’t get enough sleep, according to Cornell University psychologist Dr. James B. Maas. “Almost all teenagers, as they approach puberty, become walking zombies because they are getting far too little sleep,” Maas says. On average, American teens get two hours less than the average 9.2 hours of sleep they need each night to function at their best.

10 And teens are not alone. The National Sleep Foundation says that 63 percent of adults get less than their recommended eight hours of sleep. Nearly one-third sleep less than seven hours on weeknights. “Most people view sleepiness and sleep deprivation as a minor annoyance,” notes Mark Mahowald at the Minnesota Regional Sleep Disorders Center. “You never brag about how much sleep you got. You only brag if you didn’t get very
15 much.” Sadly, sleep deprivation can cause serious problems.

“Sleep is a basic biological need, just like food and drink,” says Jodi Mindell at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. “Amazingly enough, you can go much longer without food and drink than you can go without sleep.” But why do our bodies need sleep so much? Mindell admits that sleep researchers don’t know. “But we do know
20 that almost every species sleeps,” she says, and we also know what happens to our bodies if we don’t sleep. So we kind of look at it [the need for sleep] in a backwards way.”

Taking a Toll

Grumpiness and irritability from sleep deprivation cause behavior problems at home and school. “The less you sleep, the more likely you are to have difficulty in school,” notes Amy Wolfson at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. Dr. Maas
25 adds, “You can give the most stimulating, interesting lectures to sleep-deprived kids early in the morning or right after lunch, when they’re at their sleepiest, and the overwhelming drive to sleep replaces any chance of alertness, cognition, memory, or understanding.” Wolfson’s research into high school students and sleep revealed that kids who received C, D, and F grades in school usually slept 25 minutes less and went to bed 40 minutes later

30 than kids who received A's and B's. Lack of sleep also makes people more likely to feel down or depressed.

School isn't the only place where sleep deprivation takes a toll. Behind the wheel, it can be deadly. "Fall-asleep car crashes probably kill more young Americans under the age of 25 than alcohol-related crashes," observes Mahowald. And even if the tired driver
35 doesn't actually nod off, impaired concentration and coordination make accidents more likely to happen.

Not sleeping is, simply, bad for your health, too. "Your immune functioning gets depressed," says Mindell, "so you're more likely to get colds and flus." The body also secretes hormones during sleep, including growth hormone. Some studies suggest that a
40 hormone imbalance in sleep-deprived people could accompany abnormal weight gain. Sleep also affects the ability to regulate our mood. If someone says something mean to you, and you've had enough sleep, you can probably brush it off. "But if you're sleepy, you can't regulate your emotions," says Mindell. "You're going to burst out in tears, even [over] an embarrassing situation." And who needs extra emotional upheaval, especially when
45 you're a teen?

So Why Don't Teens Sleep More?

There are many reasons why teens don't get enough sleep, and one of them is a relatively new development. When your parents were young, they might have read a book or watched television before trying to go to sleep. But today's teens are likely to be surfing the Internet, texting, emailing, or playing video games right before bed. Electronic devices
50 are more stimulating than simply watching television, and using them right before bed can result in difficulty getting to sleep. According to a survey by the National Sleep Foundation, adolescents with four or more electronic devices in their rooms are much more likely than their peers to get an insufficient amount of sleep at night, and are almost twice as likely to fall asleep in school and while doing homework.

55 Many teens also drink too much caffeine to sleep well. In the National Sleep Foundation survey, three-quarters of the teens polled drank at least one caffeinated beverage every day, and nearly one-third consumed two or more every day. With all the trendy "high-energy" beverages and coffees out there right now, it's easy to get a caffeine overload and that's not good for sleep.

60 Researchers also have found that biology plays a role in teens' sleep patterns. Ironically, as the need for sleep increases in the teen years—9.2 hours compared to 7.5 to 8 for adults—teens experience a "phase shift" during puberty. They naturally fall asleep later at night than younger children, while needing to wake up earlier in the morning for school. When you go to bed late and wake up early, there just isn't enough time for sleep.
65 Many school districts are starting to pay attention to sleep researchers and are shifting their start times to later morning for middle school and high school students.

Get Some Sleep!

70 So what can *you* do if you're running a sleep deficit? "The good news is that you only have to make up about a third of what you have lost, to function and feel better," says Mahowald. Those extra two hours of sleep on Saturday and Sunday mornings can really help. But sleeping until noon on the weekend can cause problems—you'll likely be wide-eyed
75 until late those nights. Instead, try maintaining a reasonable, regular sleeping and waking schedule. And remember, sleep is not negotiable. Get those zzzzzs!

Tips for a Good Night's Sleep

- Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Have a bedtime routine that's relaxing, such as taking a warm shower or reading for fun.
- Keep your bedroom comfortable, dark, cool, and quiet.
- Limit your use of electronics, such as computers and video games, for several hours before you go to sleep.
- Avoid drinking any caffeine after lunchtime.
- Avoid cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs.
- Get regular exercise, but don't exercise late in the evening.

14206079_2

1

How do lines 1 through 3 **most** contribute to the article?

- A** by demonstrating that the school day starts too early for many students
- B** by describing a common and familiar experience for readers to relate to
- C** by showing the technology around sleep issues for teenagers and adults
- D** by asking readers to compare their morning routine to the one described in the article

Key: B

CCLS: RI.6.5:

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 64%

14206078_4

2

The authors use the phrase “impaired concentration” in line 35 to mean that drivers are

- A** irritated
- B** injured
- C** unconcerned
- D** unfocused

Key: D

CCLS: RI.6.4:

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 86%

14206083_1

3

The information presented by Jodi Mindell in lines 16 through 21 and lines 37 through 45 **best** supports the claim that

- A** a lack of sleep affects the body and the mind
- B** the body does most of its growing during sleep
- C** a lack of sleep can lead to more arguments between people
- D** researchers hope to understand the sleep habits of other species

Key: A

CCLS: RI.6.1:

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 89%

14206080_3

4

How does the section “Taking a Toll” relate to the section “So Why Don’t Teens Sleep More”?

- A** Both sections show how a situation has changed over time.
- B** Both sections compare problems at home and school.
- C** The first section describes effects, while the second section describes causes.
- D** The first section describes a problem, while the second section describes solutions.

Key: C

CCLS: RI.6.5:

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 52%

5

Which lines **best** support the authors' idea that people do not take sleep deprivation seriously?

- A** "On average, American teens get two hours less than the average 9.2 hours of sleep they need each night to function at their best." (lines 8 and 9)
- B** "You never brag about how much sleep you got. You only brag if you didn't get very much." (lines 14 and 15)
- C** "So we kind of look at it [the need for sleep] in a backwards way." (line 21)
- D** "Many school districts are starting to pay attention to sleep researchers and are shifting their start times to later morning for middle school and high school students." (lines 65 and 66)

Key: B**CCLS: RI.6.1:**

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 44%

6

Which evidence **best** supports the idea that teenagers could be happier and more successful in school if they got more sleep?

- A** "Did you know that if you need an alarm clock to wake up in the morning, you're probably sleep-deprived? Most teens don't get enough sleep, according to Cornell University psychologist Dr. James B. Maas. 'Almost all teenagers, as they approach puberty, become walking zombies because they are getting far too little sleep,' Maas says." (lines 4 through 7)
- B** "Wolfson's research into high school students and sleep revealed that kids who received C, D, and F grades in school usually slept 25 minutes less and went to bed 40 minutes later than kids who received A's and B's. Lack of sleep also makes people more likely to feel down or depressed." (lines 28 through 31)
- C** "They naturally fall asleep later at night than younger children, while needing to wake up earlier in the morning for school. When you go to bed late and wake up early, there just isn't enough time for sleep." (lines 62 through 64)
- D** "Those extra two hours of sleep on Saturday and Sunday mornings can really help." (lines 71 and 72)

Key: B**CCLS: RI.6.2:**

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 72%

7

Which evidence from the article supports the “Tips for a Good Night’s Sleep” section?

- A** Amy Wolfson’s research into high school students in lines 28 through 31
- B** Mark Mahowald’s comments about safety in lines 33 and 34
- C** the National Sleep Foundation’s survey for teenagers in lines 51 through 59
- D** the authors’ remarks about sleep on the weekends in lines 71 through 78

Key: C

CCLS: RI.6.1:

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 45%

Pigeon Patrol

by Karin Lynn Kandur

Did you know that the pigeons you see at the park and on the sidewalks can be trained as rescue heroes? While we may only see them coo and peck at the ground in search of food, they were once an important part of search and rescue missions.

5 Jim Simmons is a scientist who recognized the power of pigeons. In 1976, he started Project Sea Hunt, a program that trained pigeons to spot people lost at sea. The project was sponsored by the United States Coast Guard.

10 Jim's experience with animals qualified him to run this program. He once trained bottlenose dolphins, pilot whales, and gooney birds. He also studied their behaviors and abilities to learn. He used food to reward them when they performed a task correctly. It's like training a dog to sit by rewarding him with a biscuit.

15 What would you do for your favorite snack? Jim taught the pigeons that every time they saw the colors red, orange, or yellow and pecked at a special button, they would be rewarded with a seed. Why those colors? They are the colors of life jackets, life rafts, and distress signals, such as flares and flashing lights. These objects are often used by people to get help when they are stranded in the ocean.

20 "The Sea Hunt pigeons were selected first for good health and secondly on the speed and reliability that each bird learned the behavior that was being trained," Jim explained. While a large number of birds were originally selected for the program, approximately 12 to 14 of them completed the training and were able to perform actual searches, Jim says. Training usually lasted 10 months.

25 Why did Jim choose pigeons for rescue missions? A pigeon's sharp eyesight and ability to search long hours without getting tired made it the perfect worker. Before using pigeons, search and rescue teams consisted of humans scanning the ocean from boats and helicopters. When going nose to beak against a human during training, the pigeons spotted objects faster and more often. What's even better, the pigeons could see objects from as far away as 2000 feet. That's the distance of almost seven football fields. Plus, the pigeons didn't have to concentrate on flying the helicopter while they searched.

30 To put their skills to the test, the pigeons were used in several official search and rescue missions. Three pigeons were strapped into a clear capsule attached to a helicopter. Two pigeons faced forward and one faced backward. This allowed them to see in a complete circle. The pigeons pecked at an alert button in front of them when they spotted

something red, yellow, or orange in the water below. Meanwhile, the pilot was notified in the cockpit by a flashing light and could begin a closer search.

35 While the birds did not find missing people in any of their official rescue missions, they did find small objects in the water that matched the colors the birds were trained to identify. The missions took place off the coasts of Hawaii and California.

40 Project Sea Hunt ended in 1982. “The effort helped draw attention to the difficulties of searching for small objects in a big ocean,” Jim said. Since then, technology, such as infrared and radar sensor systems and emergency transmitters, has been developed to make search and rescue missions even more successful.

With their search and rescue days behind them, pigeons prefer living in parks or on top of tall buildings. The next time you think about calling someone a birdbrain, think again. That birdbrain may be able to save your life.

14206016_1

29

The author demonstrates that Jim Simmons is qualified for Project Sea Hunt by

- A** describing his previous work with animals
- B** giving examples of his training techniques
- C** explaining his choice of birds for the program
- D** establishing his relationship with the government

Key: A

CCLS: RI.6.3:

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 65%

14206018_4

30

The author uses the phrase “nose to beak” in line 24 to show that pigeons are

- A** replacing people on rescue missions
- B** using their senses to find people
- C** working alongside people
- D** being compared to people

Key: D

CCLS: RI.6.4:

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 36%

14206013_2

31

Which evidence **best** shows that teaching animals is challenging?

- A** Project Sea Hunt was halted after six years.
- B** Most pigeons were not able to complete the training.
- C** The trained birds did not find any missing people.
- D** Jim Simmons had to switch from mammals to birds.

Key: B

CCLS: RI.6.1:

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 53%

32

Jim Simmons used the pigeons in several official search and rescue missions because he

- A** needed to determine the limits of their endurance
- B** wanted to test their ability to work with humans
- C** wanted to assess what they had learned in their training
- D** planned to save many people with their skills

Key: C**CCLS: RI.6.3:**

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 37%**33**

Which detail **best** suggests that Project Sea Hunt was a partial success?

- A** The pigeons were selected for their good health and quick learning ability.
- B** The project made scientists aware of the need for search and rescue missions.
- C** The project helped allow helicopter pilots to concentrate on flying while searching.
- D** The pigeons found objects that matched the colors they had been trained to identify.

Key: D**CCLS: RI.6.1:**

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 58%

14206015_3

34

Which detail would be **most** important to include in a summary of the article?

- A** “He once trained bottlenose dolphins, pilot whales, and gooney birds.” (lines 7 and 8)
- B** “These objects are often used by people to get help when they are stranded in the ocean.” (lines 14 and 15)
- C** “. . . the pigeons could see objects from as far away as 2000 feet.” (lines 25 and 26)
- D** “. . . the pilot was notified in the cockpit by a flashing light and could begin a closer search.” (lines 32 and 33)

Key: C

CCLS: RI.6.2:

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 52%

14206022_1

35

The author conveys the purpose of the article by

- A** describing pigeons’ searching abilities
- B** indicating how few pigeons graduate training
- C** telling how long the training takes
- D** showing the success of the missions

Key: A

CCLS: RI.6.6:

Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 60%

Stitches in Time

by Philip Gulley

Electricity was discovered by the ancient Greeks, though it didn't find its way to my in-laws' farm until the summer of 1948. That's when the truck from the Orange County Rural Electric Cooperative made its way down Grimes Lake Road, planting poles and stringing wire. My mother-in-law, Ruby, sat on her front porch snapping beans while the
5 linemen set the poles. That night she asked her husband, Howard, what he thought of her getting an electric sewing machine. Her treadle sewing machine was broken, the victim of two high-spirited boys who had pumped the treadle to an early death.

They drove to Bedford the next day to the Singer Sewing Center and bought a brand-new electric Singer with a buttonholer, a cabinet and a chair. It cost \$240, money they'd
10 earned from selling a truckload of hogs to the meatpacking plant in New Solsberry.

Ruby set into sewing for her boys. They added three children to their flock. More sewing. After supper, when the table was cleared and dishes washed, Ruby would bend over the machine, churning out clothes for her children and her neighbors. Thousands of dresses and shirts and pants. Clothes for dolls. Clothes for the minister's wife in town.
15 Prom dresses. Wedding dresses. The Singer raised its needle millions of times. Her family would fall asleep under Ruby-made quilts, lulled to sleep by the Singer hum.

The kids grew up and moved away. Grandchildren came, eight in all. The Singer stitched maternity clothes, baby dresses, baptismal gowns and quilts for the cribs. In 1987, Ruby called us on the phone, discouraged. After thirty-nine years, her Singer was limping.
20 She took it to Mr. Gardner in the next town. He fixed sewing machines but couldn't revive hers. He sent it away to Chicago. A month later, it came back, a paper tag hanging from its cord. *Obsolete. Parts not available*, the tag read.

I went to a sewing machine store the next day to buy a new one. Her old one was metal. The new machines are plastic and have computers and cost the same as Ruby's first
25 car. They give classes on how to use them. In the display window was a 1948 metal Singer blackhead.

"Does that one work?" I asked the man.

"I don't know," he said. "Let's plug it in." He plugged it in. It hummed to life.

"It's not for sale," he told me. "It's a display. There aren't a lot of these old Singer
30 blackheads around anymore."

I told him about Ruby—how she lives by herself and sews to keep busy, how she charges only six dollars to make a dress because the people she sews for don't have a lot of money, how a lot of times she doesn't charge a dime, how sewing is her ministry.

He sold the machine to me for twenty-five dollars.

35 The next weekend we hauled it down to Ruby's. She was sitting on the front porch watching for our car to round the corner on the gravel lane. She came outside and stood by the car as we opened the trunk. As she peered down at the '48 blackhead, a smile creased her face.

"It's just like my old one," she whispered.

40 We wrestled it inside and installed it in her old cabinet. Perfect fit. Plugged it in. When Ruby heard the hum, she clapped her hands.

It's still going strong. Ruby still charges six dollars a dress—unless it's a bride's dress. Then she sews it by hand. That'll cost you fifteen dollars, but only if you can afford it.

45 Ruby recently traveled north to visit her granddaughter Rachael. Rachael showed Ruby her Barbie doll, then asked if Ruby could maybe please sew some clothes for Barbie. The first night Ruby was home, she bent over her '48 blackhead, stitching matching dresses for Rachael and her Barbie. Way past midnight she sewed. The next morning she drove to town and mailed a package northward. Three days later her phone rang. Rachael called to say "Thank you" and "I love you" and "When can I see you again?"

50 On two other occasions, my wife and I found 1948 Singer blackheads in antique stores. We bought them and gave them to Ruby. She's got a lot of sewing ahead, and we don't want her to run out of sewing machines before she runs out of things to sew.

I don't always applaud every new thing that comes down the road, though I'm grateful that in 1948 electricity made its way down Grimes Lake Road. I'm grateful, too, for a
55 woman who sews way into the night, who dispenses love one stitch at a time.

43

How does the arrival of electricity propel the main events of the plot?

- A** The arrival of electricity brings electrical poles to Grimes Lake Road.
- B** The arrival of electricity makes it cheaper for Ruby to clothe her growing family.
- C** The arrival of electricity forces Ruby to update the technology she uses for sewing.
- D** The arrival of electricity causes Ruby to consider buying an electric sewing machine.

Key: D

CCLS: RL.6.3:

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 62%

44

How do lines 11 through 18 help develop the plot of the passage?

- A** They illustrate Ruby's passion for her hobby.
- B** They emphasize Ruby's generosity toward children.
- C** They prove the economic value of an electric sewing machine.
- D** They demonstrate the benefits of an electric sewing machine.

Key: A

CCLS: RL.6.5:

Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 69%

45

The author **most likely** includes the event described in lines 23 through 34 to show that

- A** metal sewing machines are still in use but no longer practical
- B** the value of an object is not always related to its price
- C** any object can be purchased for the right price
- D** metal sewing machines can still be located

Key: B

CCLS: RL.6.3:

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 55%

46

Read lines 31 through 33.

I told him about Ruby—how she lives by herself and sews to keep busy, how she charges only six dollars to make a dress because the people she sews for don't have a lot of money, how a lot of times she doesn't charge a dime, how sewing is her ministry.

The word “ministry” is connected to

- A** Ruby's purpose in life
- B** what people expect of Ruby
- C** why Ruby chooses to treat her customers fairly
- D** Ruby's desire to share the profits from her sewing

Key: A

CCLS: RL.6.4:

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 69%

47

Which statement **best** shows how the author reveals the narrator's opinion of Ruby?

- A** by telling about the purchase of the first sewing machine in lines 8 through 10
- B** by including the explanation given to the man in lines 31 through 33
- C** by quoting Ruby's words when she sees the replacement machine in line 39
- D** by describing Ruby's reaction to the sewing machine in line 41

Key: B

CCLS: RL.6.6:

Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 56%

48

Which detail shows the **main** reward Ruby receives for her efforts?

- A** “Her family would fall asleep under Ruby-made quilts, lulled to sleep by the Singer hum.” (lines 15 and 16)
- B** “The Singer stitched maternity clothes, baby dresses, baptismal gowns and quilts for the cribs.” (lines 17 and 18)
- C** “When Ruby heard the hum, she clapped her hands.” (line 41)
- D** “Rachael called to say ‘Thank you’ and ‘I love you’ and ‘When can I see you again?’ ” (lines 48 and 49)

Key: D

CCLS: RL.6.1:

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 69%

49

Read this sentence from lines 54 and 55.

I’m grateful, too, for a woman who sews way into the night, who dispenses love one stitch at a time.

The phrase “dispenses love one stitch at a time” mainly suggests that Ruby

- A** is obsessed with her interest in sewing
- B** approaches her sewing in a tender and patient way
- C** shows her kindness for others through her sewing
- D** divides her attention between sewing and her family

Key: C

CCLS: L.6.4,a:

Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Percentage of Students Statewide Who Answered Correctly: 71%

Goo Fighters

by John Perritano

Firefighters in Florida Have Discovered a Way to Turn the Polymers in Disposable Diapers into a Barricade Against Fire.

In 1998, Jim and Debbie Hodges moved into their dream house in a quiet, wooded neighborhood in Palm Coast, Fla. But their dreams almost went up in smoke that year during the Fourth of July weekend. That's when a wildfire roared through their new neighborhood.

The wildfire, one of many in Florida that summer, destroyed 200 buildings and blackened a half million acres. It moved so quickly that firefighters forced the couple to leave the area at once. Their mutt, Elvis, hid from the flames in his doghouse.

The Hodgeses returned to their dream house the next day, expecting to find it in ruins and Elvis dead. They were amazed at what they saw instead. Among the scorched trees and smoking ashes, their house stood virtually untouched by the blaze. As for Elvis, "He made it. He's still alive. Elvis is alive," Debbie Hodges said.

What spared Elvis and his owners' house?

Just before flames engulfed the neighborhood, firefighters slimed the house and doghouse with a chemical compound found in disposable baby diapers. The sticky, gellike substance protected everything it covered in a cocoon of fire-resistant ooze. "That gel is the best invention since the fire truck," Jim Hodges said.

Superabsorbent Polymer

The idea for that invention came seven years ago, when John Bartlett, a firefighter in Florida's Palm County, was cleaning up after a routine trash fire. As he picked through the debris, he noticed something that hadn't burned. That something was a wet disposable diaper.

Why didn't the diaper turn to ashes? Bartlett investigated. He found that the main ingredient in disposable diapers is a superabsorbent polymer called sodium polyacrylate.

A polymer is a chemical compound that forms as a long, sometimes branched, chain of molecules. Each link in its structure is an individual molecule called a monomer. Polymers occur naturally, as in cotton, wool, and rubber. Materials made of synthetic, or artificial, polymers include vinyl, nylon and neoprene.

30 Bartlett also learned that sodium polyacrylate acts like a tiny, superabsorbent sponge, soaking up to 800 times its weight in water. When the baby wet the diaper before the trash fire, the sodium polyacrylate in the diaper soaked up so much moisture that the flames could not burn through.

35 A light bulb went on in Bartlett's head. Why not, he wondered, spray sodium polyacrylate onto a house to build a barrier that flames cannot penetrate? He tested combinations of sodium polyacrylate, water, and other chemicals to make a sticky gel. Working with his father and another firefighter, Bruce Hill, for a period of five years, Bartlett finally created Barricade, the slime firefighters spewed on Jim and Debbie Hodges's house. Barricade, or "diaper goo," as some firefighters call it, can fend off flames for up to 30 hours. "What we've developed is sticky water," Hill told *Current Science*.

Water Stuck On a Wall

40 Barricade doesn't start as sticky water. Sodium polyacrylate is a powder. Firefighters mix that powder at the scene of a fire with water, in a process called hydration. During that process, sodium polyacrylate encases millions of tiny water droplets in a bubblelike shell. That shell is very sticky and has the consistency of warm maple syrup.

45 Firefighters spray the diaper goo on a structure with a hose. Firefighters can use the gel to protect a building before a fire or to put out a blaze. The gel sticks to wood, metal, brick, asphalt, plastic, glass, and most other building materials.

"It's like sticking water on a wall," Bartlett said. "Think of the polymers as sponges. By using Barricade gel, we're basically wetting millions of sponges and throwing them, one on top of another, against a wall or whatever it is we don't want to burn."

Natural Decay

50 Hill said that once a fire has been put out, Barricade can be washed away with water. The gel is biodegradable—it breaks down into harmless substances. It is nontoxic and safe for the environment.

55 Barricade has scored a number of successes during the short time it has been used. The gel saved 20 homes in Florida in 1998 and a paper mill in Slave Lake, Alberta, Canada, that same year. It's relatively inexpensive, too. It takes 3 to 5 gallons of Barricade to protect one house, at an average cost of \$60 per application, said Hill. One coating of gel remains active for up to six days, depending on wind, humidity—the amount of water vapor in the air—and other weather conditions.

Quantum Leap

60 In areas prone to wildfires, Barricade has caught on like, well, wildfire. All firefighters in Los Angeles carry diaper goo in their trucks. Homeowners can even purchase

do-it-yourself spray kits of Barricade. Bill Kramer, a former fire chief who teaches fire science at the University of Cincinnati, calls the gel “a quantum leap in firefighting” because the goo can save lives as well as property.

65 Said one firefighter: “If it’s safe enough for a baby’s bottom, it’s safe enough for us.”
Elvis and his owners would certainly agree.

52

How does the story of Jim and Debbie Hodges's experience in lines 1 through 18 contribute to the article? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

Primary CCLS: RI.6.5:

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

Secondary CCLS: L.6.1 and L.6.2

Statewide Average Points Earned: 1.35 out of 2

See Short-Response (2-point) Holistic Rubric and the full-credit sample student response.

How does the story of Jim and Debbie Hodges's experience in lines 1 through 18 contribute to the article? Use **two** details from the article to support your response.

The story of Jim and Debbie contributes to the article because the article is about fire barricade (goo) and their story is an example of how it works. Lines 4 says, "... their dreams almost went up in smoke..." Also, lines 16 and 17 state, "The sticky, gellike, substance ... a cocoon of fire resistant ooze." Showing that the goo protected the house from fire.

Score Point 2 (out of 2 points)

This response makes a valid inference from the text to explain how the story of Jim and Debbie Hodges's experience contributes to the article (*their story is an example of how it works*). The response provides a sufficient number of concrete details from the text for support as required by the prompt (*their dreams almost went up in smoke* and *The sticky, gellike, substance . . . a cocoon of fire resistant ooze*). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.

In your response, be sure to

- explain how John Bartlett’s invention shows that big ideas can come from small observations
- describe the steps John Bartlett took to develop his idea into a product
- use details from the article to support your response

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Primary CCLS: RI.6.3:

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

Secondary CCLS: W.6.2, W.6.9, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3 and L.6.4

Statewide Average Points Earned: 2.23 out of 4

See Extended-Response (4-point) Holistic Rubric and the full-credit sample student response.

Sometimes big ideas come from small observations. How does John Bartlett's invention show a big idea coming from a small observation? What steps did John Bartlett take to develop his idea into a product? Use details from the article to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- explain how John Bartlett's invention shows that big ideas can come from small observations
- describe the steps John Bartlett took to develop his idea into a product
- use details from the article to support your response

Innovations can come from anywhere. John Bartlett's gel is an example of this. He noticed that a wet baby diaper didn't burn in a garbage fire. His gel saves lives. John Bartlett was clearing a garbage fire. When he looked at the debris, he noticed that one thing didn't burn in the fire. It was a wet, disposable baby diaper. Bartlett decided to research. He found out that the main ingredient in diapers is an extremely absorbent polymer called Sodium Polycrylate. Bartlett also learned that sodium polycrylate can absorb up to 800 times its own weight in water. The baby wetting the diaper left enough moisture to survive the fire. Bartlett thought that this might be able to protect homes from fire. He

tested sodium polycrylate by combining
 it with water and different chemicals. Working
 with his father and Bruce Hill, he created
 "Barracade", or diaper goo. The new product
 could last six days depending on weather,
 and could protect from fires for 30 hours.
 The product washes away with water
 and is biodegradable. Also, it's non-toxic.
 This gel saved 20 homes in Florida, and
 a paper-mill in Canada. This observation
 has saved many homes and lives.
 John Bartlett has made a
 life saving invention from an observation.
 Innovation comes from all different places.
 John Bartlett has saved many.

Score Point 4 (out of 4 points)

This response clearly introduces a topic in a manner that follows logically from the task and purpose (*Innovations can come from anywhere John Bartlett's gel is an example of this*). The response demonstrates insightful analysis of the text (*Bartlett thought that this might be able to protect homes from fire*). The topic is developed with relevant, well-chosen details from the text (*John Bartlett was cleaning a garbage fire; he noticed that one thing didn't burn in the fire. It was a wet, disposable baby diaper; He found out that the main ingredient in diapers is an extremely absorbent polymer called Sodium polycrylate*). The response sustains the use of varied, relevant evidence (*Bartlett also learned that sodium polycrylate can absorb up to 800 times its own weight in water; by combining it with water and different chemicals; he created "Barracade", or diaper goo. The new product could last six days depending on weather, and could protect from fires for 30 hours; This gel saved 20 homes in Florida, and a paper-mill in Canada*). The response exhibits clear organization with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole (*He found out, Bartlett also learned, Working with his father*). The response establishes and maintains a formal style using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary (*extremely absorbent polymer, depending on weather, biodegradable*). The concluding section follows clearly from the topic and information presented (*John Bartlett has made a life saving invention from an observation. Innovation comes from all different places*). The response demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors.

Wolf

by Albert Payson Terhune

The collie is supposed to be descended direct from the wolf, and Wolf looked far more like his original ancestors than like a thoroughbred collie. From puppyhood he had been the living image, except in color, of a timber-wolf, and it was from this queer throw-back trait that he had won his name.

5 Lad was the Mistress' dog. Bruce was the Master's. Wolf belonged to the Boy, having been born on the latter's birthday.

For the first six months of his life Wolf lived at The Place on sufferance.¹ Nobody except the Boy took any special interest in him. He was kept only because his better-formed brothers had died in early puppyhood and because the Boy, from the outset, had
10 loved him.

At six months it was discovered that he was a natural watch-dog. Also that he never barked except to give an alarm. A collie is, perhaps, the most excitable of all large dogs. The veriest trifle will set him off into a thunderous paroxysm² of barking. But Wolf, the Boy noted, never barked without strong cause.

15 He had the rare genius for guarding that so few of his breed possess. For not one dog in ten merits the title of watch-dog. The duties that should go with that office are far more than the mere clamorous announcement of a stranger's approach, or even the attacking of such a stranger.

20 The born watch-dog patrols his beat once in so often during the night. At all times he must sleep with one ear and one eye alert. By day or by night he must discriminate between the visitor whose presence is permitted and the trespasser whose presence is not. He must know what class of undesirable to scare off with a growl and what class needs stronger measures. He must also know to the inch the boundaries of his own master's land.

25 Few of these things can be taught; all of them must be instinctive. Wolf had been born with them. Most dogs are not.

¹ **sufferance:** patient tolerance

² **paroxysm:** sudden outburst

His value as a watch-dog gave Wolf a settled position of his own on The Place. Lad was growing old and a little deaf. He slept, at night, under the piano in the music-room. Bruce was worth too much money to be left at large in the night time for any clever dog-thief to steal. So he slept in the study. Rex, a huge mongrel, was tied up at night, at the lodge, a furlong away. Thus Wolf alone was left on guard at the house. The piazza was his sentry-box. From this shelter he was wont to set forth three or four times a night, in all sorts of weather, to make his rounds.

The Place covered twenty-five acres. It ran from the high-road, a furlong above the house, down to the lake that bordered it on two sides. On the third side was the forest. Boating-parties, late at night, had a pleasant way of trying to raid the lakeside apple-orchard. Tramps now and then strayed down the drive from the main road. Prowlers, crossing the woods, sometimes sought to use The Place's sloping lawn as a short cut to the turnpike below the falls.

For each and all of these intruders Wolf had an ever-ready welcome. A whirl of madly pattering feet through the dark, a snarling growl far down in the throat, a furry shape catapulting into the air—and the trespasser had his choice between a scurrying retreat or a double set of white fangs in the easiest-reached part of his anatomy.

The Boy was inordinately proud of his pet's watchdog prowess. He was prouder yet of Wolf's almost incredible sharpness of intelligence, his quickness to learn, his knowledge of word meaning, his zest for romping, his perfect obedience, the tricks he had taught himself without human tutelage³—in short, all the things that were a sign of the brain he had inherited from Lad.

But none of these talents overcame the sad fact that Wolf was not a show dog and that he looked positively underbred and shabby alongside of his sire or of Bruce. Which rankled at the Boy's heart; even while loyalty to his adored pet would not let him confess to himself or to anyone else that Wolf was not the most flawlessly perfect dog on earth.

Under-sized (for a collie), slim, graceful, fierce, affectionate, Wolf was the Boy's darling, and he was Lad's successor as official guardian of The Place. But all his youthful life, thus far, had brought him nothing more than this—while Lad and Bruce had been winning prize after prize at one local dog show after another within a radius of thirty miles.

³ **tutelage:** instruction

56

What does the story “Wolf” reveal about the family members’ relationships with their dogs? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Primary CCLS: RL.6.1:

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Secondary CCLS: L.6.1 and L.6.2

Statewide Average Points Earned: 1.35 out of 2

See Short-Response (2-point) Holistic Rubric and the full-credit sample student response.

What does the story "Wolf" reveal about the family members' relationships with their dogs? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

The story "Wolf" tells me that the mistress, the master, and the boy all love their dogs. According to line 27-28 it quoted, "Lad was growing old and a little deaf. He slept at night, under the piano in the music room". This quote explains that because Lad was deaf the mistress did not give the watch-dog job to him and let him sleep in the music room. According to line 29-30 it also quoted, "Bruce was worth too much money to be left at large in the night time for any clever dog-theif to steal." This quote explains that because Bruce was worth too much to lose the master did not give Bruce the job of a watch dog. Both quote has proven how much the mistress and master love their dog.

Score Point 2 (out of 2 points)

This response makes a valid inference from the text to explain what the story "Wolf" reveals about the family members' relationship with their dogs (*the mistress, the master, and the boy all love their dogs*). The response provides a sufficient number of concrete details from the text for support as required by the prompt (*Lad was growing old and a little deaf. He slept at night, under the piano in the music room and Bruce was worth too much money to be left at large in the night time for any clever dog-theif to steal*). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.

Directions

306034P

Read this story. Then answer questions 57 through 59.

That Spot had been purchased for sixty-five dollars by two men setting out to search for gold in the Klondike. They have now decided to sell him because, although he is a good-looking dog, he cannot be coaxed into working.

That Spot

by Jack London

But he was a good looker. At the end of the first week we sold him for seventy-five dollars to the Mounted Police. They had experienced dog-drivers, and we knew that by the time he'd covered the six hundred miles to Dawson he'd be a good sled-dog. I say we *knew*, for we were just getting acquainted with that Spot. A little later we were not brash
5 enough to know anything where he was concerned. A week later we woke up in the morning to the dangdest dog-fight we'd ever heard. It was that Spot came back and knocking the team into shape. We ate a pretty depressing breakfast, I can tell you; but cheered up two hours afterward when we sold him to an official courier, bound in to Dawson with government despatches. That Spot was only three days in coming back, and,
10 as usual, celebrated his arrival with a rough-house.

We spent the winter and spring, after our own outfit was across the pass, freighting other people's outfits; and we made a fat stake. Also, we made money out of Spot. If we sold him once, we sold him twenty times. He always came back, and no one asked for their money. We didn't want the money. We'd have paid handsomely for any one to take
15 him off our hands for keeps. We had to get rid of him, and we couldn't give him away, for that would have been suspicious. But he was such a fine looker that we never had any difficulty in selling him. "Unbroke," we'd say, and they'd pay any old price for him. We sold him as low as twenty-five dollars, and once we got a hundred and fifty for him. That particular party returned him in person, refused to take his money back, and the way he
20 abused us was something awful. He said it was cheap at the price to tell us what he thought of us; and we felt he was so justified that we never talked back. But to this day I've never quite regained all the old self-respect that was mine before that man talked to me.

When the ice cleared out of the lakes and river, we put our outfit in a Lake Bennett
25 boat and started for Dawson. We had a good team of dogs, and of course we piled them on top the outfit. That Spot was along—there was no losing him; and a dozen times, the first day, he knocked one or another of the dogs overboard in the course of fighting with them. It was close quarters, and he didn't like being crowded.

"What that dog needs is space," Steve said the second day. "Let's maroon him."

30 We did, running the boat in at Caribou Crossing for him to jump ashore. Two of the
other dogs, good dogs, followed him; and we lost two whole days trying to find them. We
never saw those two dogs again; but the quietness and relief we enjoyed made us decide,
like the man who refused his hundred and fifty, that it was cheap at the price. For the first
time in months Steve and I laughed and whistled and sang. We were as happy as clams.
35 The dark days were over. The nightmare had been lifted. That Spot was gone.

Three weeks later, one morning, Steve and I were standing on the river-bank at
Dawson. A small boat was just arriving from Lake Bennett. I saw Steve give a start, and
heard him say something that was not nice and that was not under his breath. Then I
looked; and there, in the bow of the boat, with ears pricked up, sat Spot. Steve and I
40 sneaked immediately, like beaten curs, like cowards, like absconders from justice. It was
this last that the lieutenant of police thought when he saw us sneaking. He surmised that
there was law-officers in the boat who were after us. He didn't wait to find out, but kept us
in sight, and in the M. & M. saloon got us in a corner. We had a merry time explaining,
for we refused to go back to the boat and meet Spot; and finally he held us under guard of
45 another policeman while he went to the boat. After we got clear of him, we started for the
cabin, and when we arrived, there was that Spot sitting on the stoop waiting for us. Now
how did he know we lived there? There were forty thousand people in Dawson that
summer, and how did he *savve* our cabin out of all the cabins? How did he know we were
in Dawson, anyway? I leave it to you.

57

In the title and many times in the story, “that” is used before the dog’s name of Spot. What does the word “that” show about the narrator’s relationship with the dog? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Primary CCLS: RL.6.4:

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

Secondary CCLS: L.6.1 and L.6.2

Statewide Average Points Earned: 1.24 out of 2

See Short-Response (2-point) Holistic Rubric and the full-credit sample student response.

In the title and many times in the story, “that” is used before the dog’s name of Spot. What does the word “that” show about the narrator’s relationship with the dog? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

When the Author refers Spot as “that” this means he does not like Spot. For example “We were as happy as clams. The dark days are over. The nightmare had been lifted. Spot was gone.” It shows the Author was happy Spot was gone. Another quote is “We had to get rid of him and we couldn’t give him away for that would be suspicious.” This quote shows the author not liking Spot.

Score Point 2 (out of 2 points)

This response makes a valid inference from the text to explain what the word “that” shows about the narrator’s relationship with the dog (*he does not like Spot*). The response provides a sufficient number of concrete details from the text for support as required by the prompt (*We were as happy as clams. The dark days are over. The nightmare had been lifted. Spot was gone and We had to get rid of him and we couldn’t give him away for that would be suspicious*). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.

58

What is a theme expressed in lines 35 through 46 of “That Spot”? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

Primary CCLS: RL.6.2:

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Secondary CCLS: L.6.1 and L.6.2

Statewide Average Points Earned: 1.11 out of 2

See Short-Response (2-point) Holistic Rubric and the full-credit sample student response.

What is a theme expressed in lines 35 through 46 of “That Spot”? Use **two** details from the story to support your response.

A theme expressed in lines 35 through 46 of “That Spot” is “You can run but you can’t hide.” In the text Steve and the author had sold their dog to two men for 65 dollars because he cannot be coaxed in working. Steve and the author kept trying to get away from, so they marooned him, they lost him; Steve and the author ran to a cabin at Dawson but their Spot was sitting on the stoop.

Score Point 2 (out of 2 points)

This response makes a valid inference from the text to explain a theme expressed in lines 35 through 46 of “That Spot” (*You can run but you can’t hide*). The response provides a sufficient number of concrete details from the text for support as required by the prompt (*Steve and the author kept trying to get away and Steve and the author ran to a cabin at Dawson but their Spot was sitting on the stoop*). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.

In your response, be sure to

- [illegible]

Primary CCLS: RL.6.3:

Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

Secondary CCLS: W.6.2, W.6.9, L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3 and L.6.4

Statewide Average Points Earned: 2.03 out of 4

See Extended-Response (4-point) Holistic Rubric and the full-credit sample student response.

Both Wolf and Spot face challenges in their lives. How are the challenges Wolf and Spot face similar? Discuss how the two dogs respond to these challenges. Use details from **both** stories to support your response.

In your response, be sure to

- describe the similar challenges that Wolf and Spot face in their lives
- explain how Wolf responds to these challenges
- explain how Spot responds to these challenges
- use details from **both** stories to support your response

Both Wolf and Spot face challenges in their lives. But they have different approaches in responding to these challenges.

From the stories, "Wolf," and "That Spot," Wolf and Spot face a similar challenge. The challenge being that they do not have the one specific factor that in anyone's eyes, would make them a perfect pet. Wolf's missing factor is his physical beauty. He does not look as attractive as any dog in the house; he is an eye sore. Spot, unlike Wolf, is a good looking dog, he is attractive. It's just that he "cannot be coated into working." Spot, when returning home from being sold, usually celebrates with a dog fight with the other dogs.

Wolf responds to his challenges in his live, more specifically his many other talents. Wolf's talents being a amazing watch-dog outshines his outside beauty. His owner, the Boy, is proud to have Wolf as a pet, even if he isn't a great thing to look at. Wolf was born with his "incredible sharpness of intelligence, his quickness to learn, his knowledge of word meaning, his zest romping, his perfect obedience, the tricks he had taught himself without

human tutelage." These abilities would do more than make up for his lack of beauty department.

Spot has a different approach in responding to his challenges. Spot is neglected, not wanted by his original owners. Spot always seem to find a way back, even at the ending where the narrator and his friend try to "maroon" him. He was back at their front porch, waiting for them. He deals with his challenges by getting rough-housing the other dogs by getting into a dog fight when he returns from being sold. His outer beauty makes people overlook.

The pets, Wolf and Spot face the challenge of missing a trait that makes them face consequences.

Wolf by not being able to participate in local dog shows because he doesn't look attractive, and Spot for him not being able in coaxed into working. But these dogs have different approaches in dealing and responding to the challenges.

Score Point 4 (out of 4 points)

This response clearly introduces a topic in a manner that follows logically from the task and purpose (*Both Wolf and Spot face challenges in their lives. But they have different approaches in responding to these challenges*). The response demonstrates insightful analysis of the texts (*The challenge being that they do not have the one specific factor that in anyone's eyes, would make them a perfect pet*). The topic is developed with relevant, well-chosen details from the texts (*Wolf's missing factor is his physical beauty. He does not look as attractive as any dog in the house; he is an eye sore and he "cannot be coaxed into working. "Spot, when returning home from being sold, usually celebrates with a dog fight with the other dogs*). The response sustains the use of varied, relevant evidence (*Wolf was born with his "incredible sharpness of intelligence, his quickness to learn, his knowledge of word meaning, his zest romping, his perfect obedience, the tricks he had taught himself without human tutelage"* and *Spot always seem to find a way back, even at the ending where the narrator and his friend try to "maroon" him. He was back at their front porch, waiting for them*). This response exhibits clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole (*Both, Wolf responds, Spot has a different approach, The pets*). The response establishes and maintains a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary (*challenges, celebrates, rough-housing, coaxed*). The concluding section follows clearly from the topic and information presented (*Wolf and Spot face the challenge of missing a trait that makes them face consequences. Wolf by not being able to participate in local dog shows because he doesn't look attractive, and Spot for him not being able in coaxed into working. But these dogs have different approaches in dealing and responding to the challenges*). The response demonstrates grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors.

2-Point Rubric—Short Response

Score	Response Features
2 Point	<p>The features of a 2-point response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid inferences and/or claims from the text where required by the prompt • Evidence of analysis of the text where required by the prompt • Relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt • Sufficient number of facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text as required by the prompt • Complete sentences where errors do not impact readability
1 Point	<p>The features of a 1-point response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mostly literal recounting of events or details from the text as required by the prompt • Some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt • Incomplete sentences or bullets
0 Point*	<p>The features of a 0-point response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response that does not address any of the requirements of the prompt or is totally inaccurate • A response that is not written in English • A response that is unintelligible or indecipherable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 1.

* Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).

New York State Grade 6-8 Expository Writing Evaluation Rubric

CRITERIA	CCLS	SCORE				0*
		4	3	2	1	
CONTENT AND ANALYSIS: the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics or texts	W.2 R.1–9	Essays at this level: —clearly introduce a topic in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose —demonstrate insightful analysis of the text(s)	Essays at this level: —clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose —demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the text(s)	Essays at this level: —introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose —demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s)	Essays at this level: —introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose —demonstrate little understanding of the text(s)	Essays at this level: —demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
	W.9 R.1–9	—develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence	—develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety	—partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant —use relevant evidence with inconsistency	—demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant	—provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant
COMMAND OF EVIDENCE: the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support analysis and reflection	W.9 R.1–9	—exhibit clear organization, with the skillful use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning —establish and maintain a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice —provide a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the topic and information presented	—exhibit clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole —establish and maintain a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the topic and information presented	—exhibit some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions —establish but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement or section that follows generally from the topic and information presented	—exhibit little attempt at organization, or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task —lack a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task —provide a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented	—exhibit no evidence of organization —use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s) —do not provide a concluding statement or section
	W.2 L.1 L.2	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	—demonstrate emerging command of conventions, with some errors that may hinder comprehension	—demonstrate a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension	—are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 2.
- If the student writes only a personal response and makes no reference to the text(s), the response can be scored no higher than a 1.
- Responses totally unrelated to the topic, illegible, or incoherent should be given a 0.
- A response totally copied from the text(s) with no original student writing should be scored a 0.
- * Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).