

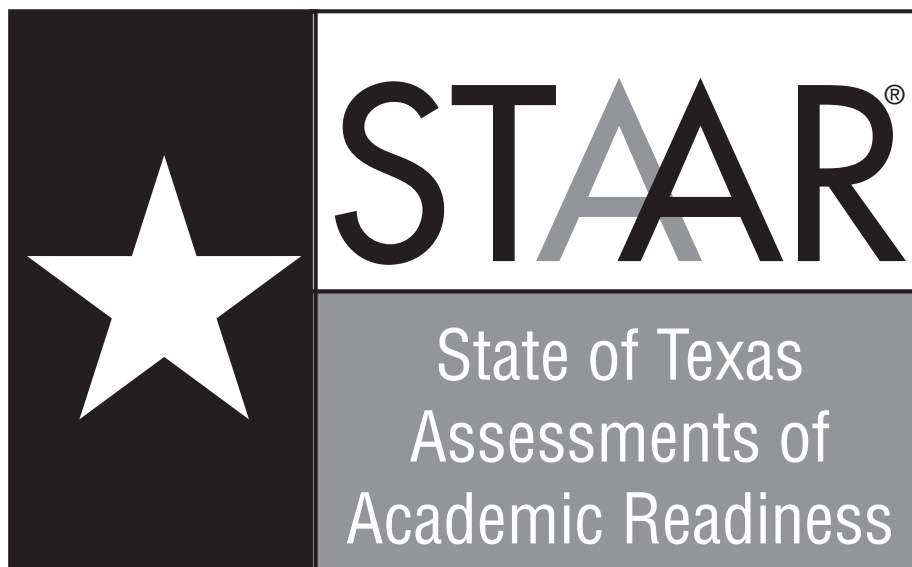
# Texas STAAR 2021 Grade 4 Reading

Exam Materials

Pages 2 - 32

Answer Key Materials

Pages 33 - 49



# **GRADE 4**

## **Reading**

**Administered May 2021**

**RELEASED**

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

# Big Talkers

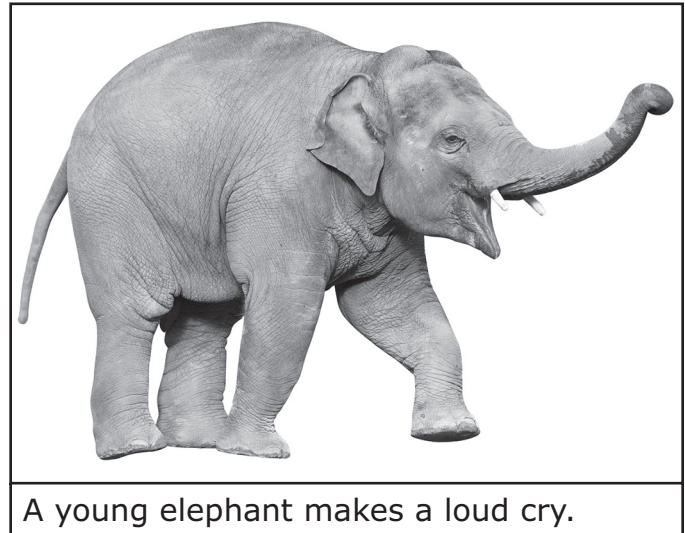
by Hannah Schardt

- 1 Super-smart and super-social, elephants have a lot to say—and many different ways of saying it.

## Sound

- 2 You may think you know how *elephants* communicate: With trunks held high, they blast the air with loud trumpeting sounds. But that's not the only way elephants make themselves heard within the herd. These massive mammals have a vocabulary to match their size: more than 70 different vocal sounds, from barks to snorts to cries.

- 3 Elephants make rumbles—deep, vibrating noises—more often than they do any other sound. An elephant makes its rumble the same way a person speaks: with its *larynx* (LAIR-inks, “voice box”). But an elephant's huge larynx produces very low sounds. In fact, some rumbles are too low for human ears to hear. A person standing nearby may feel the vibrations. But elephants can pick up these rumbles from miles away! They use special sensors in their feet to “hear” the distant vibrations through the ground.



A young elephant makes a loud cry.

© iStock.com/rusm

## Body Language

- 4 An elephant can also say a lot without making a sound. All it needs to do is strike a pose. Some gestures—a twitch of an ear, a wag of the head—are so small that most people wouldn't even notice them. But scientists who study elephants have discovered that even when the animals are silent, they are using their bodies to “chat.” For example, that ear twitch may mean “I'm done here—let's go.” And the head wag may translate as “Let's play!”

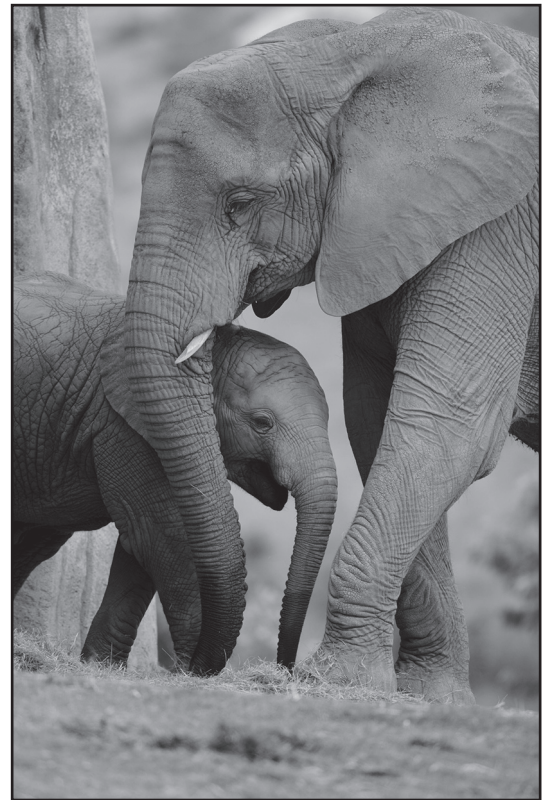
- 5 Some elephant “sign language” is easier to translate. A happy elephant will flap both ears and wag its tail. Faced with a threat, an elephant will flare its ears and stick its tail out straight. Sometimes, a whole herd gets spooked. All the elephants stand perfectly still, holding their trunks high in the air or draping them on the ground. Scientists call this “synchronized freezing.” They think it may help the elephants focus all their attention on the sounds and smells around them.

## Smell

- 6 If you ever wonder what an elephant is paying attention to, don’t watch its eyes. Watch its trunk! The big body may look still. But the tip of that super-sensitive smeller is always on the move, sniffing out the answers to some important questions: *What did my friend eat for breakfast? Who’s been to this watering hole recently? Are there any predators nearby?*
- 7 Many of those answers can be found in smelly “messages” left behind by other elephants.

## Touch

- 8 When human toddlers feel tired or sad, they may head for the comfort of a parent’s lap. Elephant calves do something similar. Worn out from playing or stressed by an unfamiliar situation, a calf will tuck itself under Mom’s big, sheltering body. (Elephants don’t have laps!) That lets Mom know that her baby needs extra attention.
- 9 Throughout a herd, touching helps create bonds of family and friendship. One female may pat another with her trunk: “How’s it going?” A male may twist his trunk around a female’s: “I like you!” Or one elephant may use its trunk to shove another: “Back off! You’re getting on my nerves.” Who needs words when you have a trunk?



A Young Elephant and Its Mother

© iStock.com/Windzeph

Ranger Rick. Sep2016, Vol. 50 Issue 8, p6-11. 6p. 7 Color Photographs.

**1** The prefix *un-* helps the reader know that the word unfamiliar in paragraph 8 means —

- A** partly known
  - B** known together
  - C** known in the past
  - D** not known
- 

**2** What is the best summary of the selection?

- F** Loud trumpeting sounds are just one of the sounds elephants make. They also make rumbles, barks, snorts, and cries to communicate with members of the herd.
- G** Elephants have many more ways of communicating than most people might think. Elephants use touch, smell, noise, and movement to give one another messages.
- H** An elephant's trunk lets an elephant share messages such as "Let's play" or "Danger!" The trunk has a sensitive tip for touching other elephants and picking up smells.
- J** People and elephants both have a larynx, a body part that lets them make sounds. Elephants "talk" in low sounds, and elephants also use their sense of touch and smell a lot.

- 3** Based on information in the selection, what is the most likely reason the author includes the photograph of the baby elephant standing close to its mother?
- A** To suggest that the baby elephant is warning its mother that there is danger nearby
  - B** To show the reader what the baby elephant does to try to get its mother to play with it
  - C** To show the reader what the baby elephant does when it wants its mother to know it is hungry
  - D** To suggest that the baby elephant feels safe and protected when it is near its mother
- 
- 4** How do the subheadings provide an overview of the selection?
- F** They identify the ways elephants communicate.
  - G** They describe important roles in an elephant herd.
  - H** They tell why elephants need attention.
  - J** They compare ways that elephants find food.
- 
- 5** Which sentence from the selection supports the idea that elephant herds try to guard themselves from danger?
- A** *But an elephant's huge larynx produces very low sounds.* (paragraph 3)
  - B** *Some gestures—a twitch of an ear, a wag of the head—are so small that most people wouldn't even notice them.* (paragraph 4)
  - C** *They think it may help the elephants focus all their attention on the sounds and smells around them.* (paragraph 5)
  - D** *If you ever wonder what an elephant is paying attention to, don't watch its eyes.* (paragraph 6)

**6** Based on information in paragraph 4, what can the reader infer about elephants?

- F** An elephant's ears help the elephant communicate.
  - G** Elephants usually feel either happy or scared.
  - H** A large herd will rarely experience danger.
  - J** Scientists are confused by an elephant's body language.
- 

**7** The author includes questions at the end of paragraph 6 most likely —

- A** to show the details scientists want to learn about elephants
- B** to show that an elephant's most important sense is the sense of smell
- C** to show that elephants can identify members in their herd
- D** to show that elephants gather information from different smells

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

# The Gift of Rhyme

## Characters

**BELLA:** A nine-year-old girl

**SCOTT:** Bella's best friend

**AMY:** Bella's classmate

**MOM:** Bella's mother

**SAMANTHA:** Bella's six-year-old sister

## SCENE 1

- 1 *[The scene opens in the school cafeteria. Bella, Scott, and Amy are eating lunch with their classmates.]*
- 2 **BELLA:** I'm nervous about the spelling test this afternoon.
- 3 **SCOTT:** Don't be, Bella. Remember what I told you? When you hear a word that ends with the "shun" sound, you just have to write *t-i-o-n* at the end of it.
- 4 **BELLA:** *[Glumly.]* You make it sound so easy.  
*[Bella is silent for a moment, and then she begins rapping.]*  
I studied for this test like I had a fascination  
No hesitation  
Like my life wouldn't go on without this "shun" sensation!  
But now I'm getting nervous . . . about my limitation.  
I try to pay attention!  
But then it feels like my brain just loses its retention.  
Oh yeah, and did I mention  
That an every-Friday spelling test was NOT a great invention?
- 5 *[Laughter is heard. As Bella, Scott, and Amy stand up and gather their belongings, Amy stops Bella.]*
- 6 **AMY:** Can I ask you something? *[Bella nods.]* Why do you always rap in front of everybody? I sing in the shower sometimes, but I don't think I would sing while everyone is eating their lunch.
- 7 **BELLA:** What do you mean?
- 8 **AMY:** Well, I would be embarrassed if everyone were laughing at me.
- 9 **BELLA:** Really?



10 **AMY:** Look, if you had a piece of food stuck in your teeth, I would let you know. So I'm going to tell you that you sound pretty silly when you rap.

11 [*Amy pats Bella on the shoulder and walks away. Bella sits and slumps into her chair.*]

## SCENE 2

12 [*School hallway, one week later. Bella stands at her locker. Scott arrives and looks at the paper she is holding.*]

13 **SCOTT:** From what I can see, "shun" words aren't easy for you. If you like, I can help you study to retake the test on Wednesday.

14 **BELLA:** I don't think it'll help. I already studied for this test.

15 **SCOTT:** It's O.K. You'll get it. Besides, you're *really* good at lots of other stuff. Seriously, how many people can put together rhymes on the spot like you?

16 **BELLA:** Well, I never meant to look foolish. Why didn't you tell me that everyone's been laughing at me?

17 **SCOTT:** Aren't you *trying* to make us laugh?

18 **BELLA:** Yeah, but I want people to laugh because I'm funny. Not because I'm embarrassing myself.

19 **SCOTT:** You *are* funny.

20 **BELLA:** Amy thinks I sound silly.

21 **SCOTT:** Amy just wishes *she* could make everybody laugh. Listen, you have the gift of rhyme. You should just keep on rapping.

22 **BELLA:** [*Shrugs.*] We'll see.

## SCENE 3

23 [*Late afternoon, the same day. Bella sits in her living room. Mom enters and picks up a paper.*]

24 **MOM:** I guess we should've spent more time studying the "shun" words.

25 **BELLA:** I'm going to try again on Wednesday.

26 **MOM:** Are you worrying about these spelling tests?

- 27 **BELLA:** They're really hard. And I'm used to making good grades.
- 28 **MOM:** I understand, Bella. But you can't excel at *everything*.
- 29 *[Samantha enters, holding a car she built with building blocks.]*
- 30 **SAMANTHA:** *[With beat and attitude.]*  
I built a cool car!  
I've got snails in a jar!  
And beside my bed  
Is a book I have read!
- 31 **BELLA:** *[Stunned.]* Did she just rap?
- 32 **MOM:** Yes. She raps all the time. She wants to be like her big sister.
- 33 **BELLA:** *[Looks at Samantha.]* Well, I'm probably not ever going to be a renowned rapper.
- 34 **MOM:** Bella, your sister is not hoping you'll be famous. She just thinks it's cool when you rhyme, and she wants to do it, too. It's good for her to see how quickly you create a rap. *[Mom turns to Samantha.]* Let's clean up before dinner.
- 35 *[Mom and Samantha pick up toys. Bella watches them, deep in thought. After a few minutes she stands in front of Mom and Samantha.]*
- 36 **BELLA:** So my little sister Sammy seems to have a gift like me.  
She can put the words together like a bumble and a bee.  
I have always liked rapping. I really don't know why.  
There is nothing I like more than making rhymes on the fly.  
Yes, it's hard sometimes, to go out on a limb  
And share secret thoughts with your family and friends.  
But I'm realizing now, if I let folks bring me down,  
I'll be teaching little Sammy to let her passions drown.  
That wouldn't be cool, and I must not forget that  
Life's hard enough, sister, so let's have some fun with it!  
We can use our rapping skills almost all the time  
Spelling words with cool rhythms and a rhyme in every line!

**8** How does Mom help Bella solve her problem?

- F** She shows Bella different ways to improve as a speller.
  - G** She reminds Bella that she needs to play with her sister.
  - H** She convinces Bella that her rapping is a special talent.
  - J** She persuades Bella to forgive her classmate Amy.
- 

**9** Which line from the play suggests that Scott disagrees with Amy's opinion of Bella?

- A SCOTT:** Remember what I told you?
  - B SCOTT:** From what I can see, "shun" words aren't easy for you.
  - C SCOTT:** Besides, you're *really* good at lots of other stuff.
  - D SCOTT:** You should just keep on rapping.
- 

**10** As it is used in line 28, the word excel means to —

- F** do many tasks at once
- G** do better than others
- H** pretend to know everything
- J** be afraid of trying new activities

**11** The reader can tell that “The Gift of Rhyme” is a play because it has a —

- A** common theme
  - B** list of characters
  - C** rhyming pattern
  - D** problem that is resolved
- 

**12** Samantha’s rap in Scene 3 is important to the play because it helps Bella —

- F** realize that her sister admires her raps
  - G** discuss her concerns with her mother
  - H** understand why studying is so important
  - J** determine what has been wrong with her raps
- 

**13** Read this sentence from line 10.

**AMY:** Look, if you had a piece of food stuck in your teeth, I would let you know.

This line is meant to show that Amy —

- A** does not like to be told that she’s wrong
- B** wishes that Bella wasn’t such a messy eater
- C** thinks she’s being a good friend to Bella
- D** notices things that other people don’t see

- 14** The playwright includes the stage directions at the beginning of each scene mainly to —
- F** identify the time and place
  - G** hint at how a problem will be solved
  - H** describe the main character's problem
  - J** explain the characters' feelings and actions

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

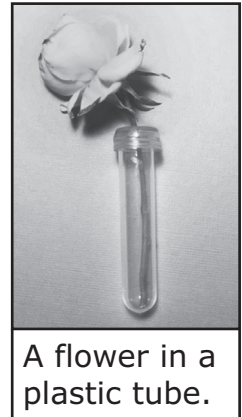
Student Inventors  
Magazine

Special Edition

February 2018

## The Broken-Crayon Solution

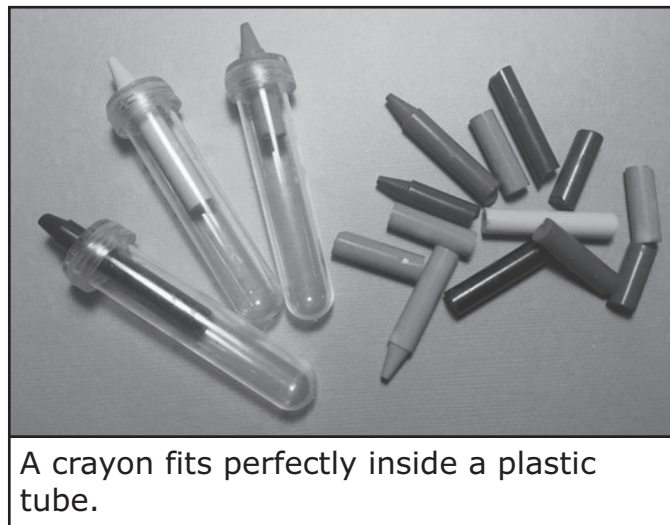
- 1 One day 11-year-old Cassidy Goldstein was trying to work on an art project. She noticed that all of her crayons were broken. Cassidy searched for a way to save the small stubs of the crayons. She wanted to use every last stroke of color in each little crayon. She didn't like to be wasteful. "I wanted to find something that would hold the crayon in place and extend it," said Cassidy. Then Cassidy found some plastic tubes used to hold single-cut flowers. And she had an idea. The tubes were just the right size to hold her broken crayons. She would make her own crayon holders.



A flower in a plastic tube.

Courtesy of ETS.

- 2 Cassidy gathered the tubes, popped her crayons inside, and began to draw. The ends of the tubes fit tightly around the crayons. Each tube was long enough to hold one full-size unbroken crayon. It could also hold a small broken one. The crayon holders worked so well that she thought other kids would want to use them too.



A crayon fits perfectly inside a plastic tube.

Courtesy of ETS.

- 3 Cassidy knew that her invention would make many young artists happy. With her father's help, she worked hard to get her product on the shelves of stores. Cassidy met with a group of lawyers who help

inventors get patents.<sup>1</sup> First the lawyers discovered that no one had made anything like Cassidy's product before. Then they helped her get a patent for her crayon holder. Next the lawyers helped her find a company that could make and sell the product. Soon people could buy crayon holders online and in stores. Eventually so many crayon holders were sold that Cassidy was able to pay for most of her college education out of her earnings.



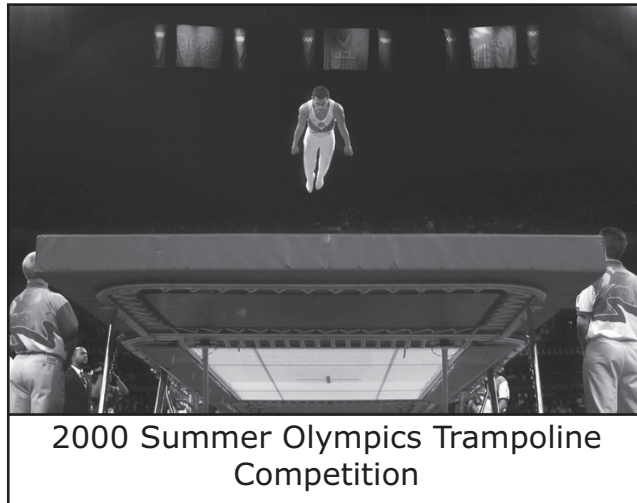
Image used with permission. © Crayola. Serpentine Design®

- 4 Thanks to Cassidy's crayon holders, using every bit of a crayon is much easier than it used to be. Cassidy's invention encourages others to waste less. It also inspires others to think of clever ways to use what they've got. Cassidy's invention is a brilliant idea. It is a perfect solution for a broken-crayon problem.

<sup>1</sup>A patent is a document that gives the inventor of something the right to be the only one to make or sell the invention for a certain number of years.

# Bouncing Around

- 1 The 2000 Olympic Games started in Sydney, Australia. At the center stage was a trampoline. The first Olympic trampoline event was about to start, and 86-year-old George Nissen sat in the audience. He was waiting to see his lifetime goal spring into action. Nissen was only a teenager when he invented the trampoline, but he had always hoped to see it used in the Olympics.



- 2 Many years earlier George Nissen was a gymnast and a diver in high school. He was very interested in being healthy and strong too. One day at a circus, he saw trapeze artists flipping through the air and bouncing off the safety nets below.
- 3 Nissen was interested in the nets. He thought that bouncing on a net could help improve his tumbling and diving. So, in his garage, Nissen tied heavy canvas to a steel frame. It worked, but his bouncer wasn't as springy as he wanted it to be. Nissen continued refining it. He wanted it to be just right so he could work on his sports skills.
- 4 In 1934 Nissen went to college. He continued to think about the bouncer. Nissen decided to use strips of rubber to connect the canvas to the frame. Now he had a bouncer he could *really* jump on.
- 5 Nissen took his bouncer to a swimming camp. The swimmers and divers enjoyed jumping on the bouncer so much that they didn't even want to swim. From then on they used the bouncer to practice and improve their twists and flips in the air.
- 6 After college Nissen joined a tumbling group that used the bouncer for performing. People were amazed by how high the group could jump and flip.



- 7 Soon after, Nissen named his bouncer “trampoline.” The name is from the Spanish word *trampolín*, which means “diving board.” Nissen opened a store and sold trampolines. People were excited to try them. People also thought of other ways trampolines could be used. People jumped on them for exercise, and the military used trampolines to help pilots adapt to being in the air.
- 8 Today kids and adults jump on trampolines in gyms and backyards to stay active and healthy. Nissen’s invention not only added variety to the Olympics, it also provided a fun way for many people to stay fit.

*Third party trademark Olympic® was used in these testing materials.*



Girl Having Fun on a Trampoline

© iStock.com/Renphoto

**Use “The Broken-Crayon Solution” (pp. 13–14) to answer questions 15–18.  
Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

- 15** What can the reader tell about the article “The Broken-Crayon Solution” based on its title?
- A** The article will most likely describe different ways to use crayons.
  - B** The article will most likely explain how crayons were invented.
  - C** The article will most likely explain an answer to a problem.
  - D** The article will most likely offer many uses for objects that are old.
- 
- 16** The most likely reason that the author provides the information in paragraph 1 of the article “The Broken-Crayon Solution” is —
- F** to explain why Cassidy wanted to make her invention
  - G** to explain why Cassidy has so many crayons
  - H** to explain who helped Cassidy to become an inventor
  - J** to explain what color of crayon Cassidy likes best

**17** Which sentence from the article "The Broken-Crayon Solution" best supports the conclusion that Cassidy's product was profitable?

- A** *She noticed that all of her crayons were broken.* (paragraph 1)
  - B** *Cassidy knew that her invention would make many young artists happy.* (paragraph 3)
  - C** *Eventually so many crayon holders were sold that Cassidy was able to pay for most of her college education out of her earnings.* (paragraph 3)
  - D** *Cassidy's invention encourages others to waste less.* (paragraph 4)
- 

**18** Which sentence from the article "The Broken-Crayon Solution" supports the idea that the author likes Cassidy's crayon holder?

- F** *And she had an idea.* (paragraph 1)
- G** *The ends of the tubes fit tightly around the crayons.* (paragraph 2)
- H** *It could also hold a small broken one.* (paragraph 2)
- J** *Cassidy's invention is a brilliant idea.* (paragraph 4)

**Use “Bouncing Around” (pp. 15–16) to answer questions 19–22. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

**19** In paragraph 3 of the selection “Bouncing Around,” what does the word refining mean?

- A** Making improvements
- B** Sharing with others
- C** Wishing for success
- D** Planning for the future

---

**20** What is the most likely reason the author included the photographs in the selection “Bouncing Around”?

- F** To show that the trampoline was invented many years ago
- G** To show that the trampoline can be used for different purposes
- H** To show that people enjoy watching others use trampolines
- J** To show that people can perform together on a trampoline

**21** What is the best summary of the selection “Bouncing Around”?

- A** The 2000 Olympic Games included a trampoline event for the first time. George Nissen, the inventor of the trampoline, always dreamed that his invention would one day be used in the Olympics.
  - B** In high school George Nissen was a diver and gymnast. After watching a trapeze artist, he decided to make a bouncer in his garage. However, it did not work as he expected.
  - C** The trampoline was invented by George Nissen, an athlete who wanted a new way to practice his skills. When Nissen began selling trampolines, many people bought them and used them for a variety of purposes.
  - D** As a teenager George Nissen invented a bouncer he could use to jump on. He shared the bouncer with swimmers and divers at a swimming camp. They used the bouncer to practice flips and twists.
- 

**22** What is the most likely reason that the author includes the information in paragraph 8 of the selection “Bouncing Around”?

- F** To compare how different types of athletes use Nissen’s invention
- G** To show that Nissen’s invention is still enjoyable and useful for many people
- H** To describe how Nissen feels about his invention years after he made it
- J** To explain when Nissen’s invention was first used in the Olympics

**Use “The Broken-Crayon Solution” and “Bouncing Around” to answer questions 23–26. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

**23** What is a way that Cassidy’s crayon holders in the article “The Broken-Crayon Solution” **differ** from Nissen’s trampoline in the selection “Bouncing Around”?

- A** Only the crayon holders were made while the inventor was in college.
- B** Only the crayon holders help make a common object easier to use.
- C** Only the crayon holders can be used to help improve a skill.
- D** Only the crayon holders can be used by children.

---

**24** Which statement best describes a **difference** between Cassidy in the article “The Broken-Crayon Solution” and Nissen in the selection “Bouncing Around”?

- F** Cassidy found it easy to sell her product, but Nissen found it difficult.
- G** Cassidy was not happy with her invention at first, but Nissen was pleased with his at first.
- H** Cassidy got the idea for her invention at a public event, but Nissen thought of his idea at home.
- J** Cassidy made her product to avoid waste, but Nissen made his for exercise.

**25** What is one way the article “The Broken-Crayon Solution” and the selection “Bouncing Around” are **different**?

- A** “The Broken-Crayon Solution” tells about a short period in Cassidy’s life. “Bouncing Around” describes several years of Nissen’s life.
  - B** “The Broken-Crayon Solution” explains many benefits of Cassidy’s product. “Bouncing Around” suggests that there is only one benefit from using Nissen’s product.
  - C** “The Broken-Crayon Solution” describes the steps Cassidy used to make her invention. “Bouncing Around” does not tell how Nissen made his invention.
  - D** “The Broken-Crayon Solution” shows that Cassidy had many interests as a child. “Bouncing Around” shows Nissen had only one interest.
- 

**26** Read this sentence from paragraph 3 of the selection “Bouncing Around.”

*So, in his garage, Nissen tied heavy canvas to a steel frame.*

Which sentence from paragraph 1 of the article “The Broken-Crayon Solution” describes in a **similar** way what led to building an invention?

- F** *One day 11-year-old Cassidy Goldstein was trying to work on an art project.*
- G** *She noticed that all of her crayons were broken.*
- H** *Then Cassidy found some plastic tubes used to hold single-cut flowers.*
- J** *She would make her own crayon holders.*

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

# The Red River

*by Jane Kurtz*



© Annie Griffiths Belt/Corbis

The river wiggled  
like a fat brown thread  
along the flat quilt of the Red River Valley,  
stitching North Dakota and Minnesota together.

- 5 My friend Sarah and I  
ran races up and down the dike.<sup>1</sup>  
In winter, we walked across the river  
to touch Minnesota.  
In spring, we sat on her back porch  
10 and watched the river ripple.  
Sometimes, full of spring rain,  
it crawled up her yard,  
leaving chunks of trees  
that we made into pirate ships.  
15 My brother, Max, fished on the river's banks.  
Sometimes he let me carry his fishing pole  
and I sat beside him,  
loving the wet, muddy smell of the summer river.  
One time, Max caught the biggest fish any of us ever saw.  
20 I ran and got the scale.

---

<sup>1</sup>A dike is a mound of earth that is built to control water.



We weighed it  
and Max kissed it  
and then he threw it back.  
That was us.  
25 That was the river.

From *River Friendly, River Wild* by Jane Kurtz. Text copyright © 2000 by Jane Kurtz. Reprinted with the permission of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. All rights reserved.

**27** Read this dictionary entry.

**scale** \ˈskāl\ *noun*

- 1.** one of the small, hard parts that covers a fish
- 2.** a tool for measuring heaviness
- 3.** a series of musical notes
- 4.** a set of marks in a row used to measure distance

Which definition most closely fits the way the word scale is used in line 20?

- A** Definition 1
  - B** Definition 2
  - C** Definition 3
  - D** Definition 4
- 

**28** Based on details in the poem, which statement best describes how the speaker most likely feels about Max?

- F** She wishes he would listen to her.
  - G** She is jealous of him.
  - H** She admires him.
  - J** She wants to protect him.
- 

**29** What is the most likely reason the poet includes the seasons in the poem?

- A** To explain the safest time of year to travel by boat on the river
- B** To suggest when the speaker likes to fish in the river
- C** To identify the best time of year to make friends at the river
- D** To highlight when the speaker observes changes in the river

**30** In line 2, “like a fat brown thread” suggests that the river —

- F** is full of many kinds of fish
- G** makes a wide path through the land
- H** is filled with branches
- J** becomes darker over time

---

**31** Read lines 13 and 14 from the poem.

leaving chunks of trees  
that we made into pirate ships.

What do these lines suggest about the speaker’s experience at the river?

- A** The river creates problems that the speaker wants to avoid.
- B** The river gives the speaker a chance to travel to new places.
- C** The river provides a way for the speaker to be creative.
- D** The river can be a confusing place for the speaker.

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

*Phineas considers himself to be a scientist in all that he does. After shopping with his babysitter, Sarah, Phineas is allowed to cook a spaghetti dinner, including pasta, sauce, and garlic bread. He plans to serve the dinner to his mother, stepfather Lyle, his sister, and himself.*

## ***from*** **Phineas L. MacGuire . . . Gets Cooking!**

*by Frances O’Roark Dowell*

- 1      When I walked into the kitchen, I decided to think of it as my lab. The stove was a giant Bunsen burner, and the pots and pans were beakers and flasks. *If only I had a lab coat*, I thought, and then I had a brilliant idea. I ran upstairs and grabbed one of Lyle’s white work shirts. It was long enough on me to look like a coat. I looked like a genius scientist.
- 2      Next, I needed a plan. I read the instructions on the pasta box, which said that I should boil the spaghetti for ten to twelve minutes. I checked out the serving size, which was two ounces. Since I was going to make two pounds of spaghetti so we could have leftovers the next night, I calculated I should boil the pasta for four times as long: forty to forty-eight minutes.
- 3      Easy peasy.
- 4      I got out a big pot from the cabinet, filled it up with water, and then put it on the burner. Here’s where I ran into my first problem.
- 5      I’m not allowed to use the stove.
- 6      “Hey, Sarah!” I called. “How am I supposed to cook dinner if turning on the stove is against the rules?”
- 7      Sarah came in from the living room. “Do you know how to turn it on?”
- 8      I felt my face turn red. “Uh, not really.”
- 9      “No need to be embarrassed, little buddy,” Sarah said, patting me on the shoulder, which made me feel even more embarrassed. “There’s a first time for everything.”

- 10 Then she showed me what I needed to do.
- 11 The instructions on the pasta box said I had to let the water come to a boil before I put the spaghetti in the pot. I didn't know how long that would take, so I thought I'd go ahead and pour the sauce into another pan and start heating that up. Which is where I ran into my second problem.
- 12 I couldn't get the lid off the jar.
- 13 "Like I said, there's a first time for everything, right?" Sarah said, patting me on the back again. "The trick to this is use a rubber glove."
- 14 Sarah wrapped the lid with one of the yellow rubber gloves by the sink, took a deep breath, and twisted. The top popped off.
- 15 "Know why the jar makes that popping sound when it comes off?" Sarah asked.
- 16 "Um, I'm not sure," I said, my face getting even redder. I was starting to feel like a total failure in the lab. "Maybe it's gas that's being released from the jar?"
- 17 Sarah nodded. "That sounds like a good explanation. Hey, do you know how to turn on the oven? You need to start preheating it for the garlic bread."
- 18 That, I did know.
- 19 Five minutes later I had the sauce heating up in a pot, the garlic bread unwrapped and on a baking tray, and the box of spaghetti ready to dump in the water.
- 20 I also had six spaghetti sauce stains on Lyle's shirt, but I was pretty sure they'd wash out.
- 21 I dumped the spaghetti into the pot. All two pounds of it.
- 22 That might not have been the greatest idea in the world.
- 23 After dinner was over, I decided to write a lab report, which is what scientists do, whether their experiments are successful or not. I wrote down a list of everything I'd learned, including:

1. After you put spaghetti in boiling water, you need to stir it. Otherwise, it all clumps together into one big pasta log.
2. It's also a good idea to stir your spaghetti sauce if you don't want most of it to burn to the bottom of the pot.
3. Two pounds of pasta is enough to feed a family of four for about a week.
4. When you cook pasta for forty minutes, it sort of disintegrates. Forget about eating it.
5. Cheerios for dinner is really pretty good, especially with garlic bread.

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**32** Based on details in the story, what can the reader infer about Phineas?

- F** He is excited about making the meal for his family.
  - G** He likes cooking more than he likes science.
  - H** He feels confused by the unusual items in the kitchen.
  - J** He has cooked meals for his family before.
- 

**33** Which conclusion about Phineas is best supported by the list at the end of the story?

- A** He hopes he never has to cook again.
  - B** He discovers that cooking is easier than he thought.
  - C** He realizes he made some mistakes while cooking.
  - D** He decides that pasta is his favorite meal to cook.
- 

**34** Which sentence from the story suggests that Phineas is embarrassed to ask for help?

- F** *Next, I needed a plan.* (paragraph 2)
- G** *I'm not allowed to use the stove.* (paragraph 5)
- H** *I felt my face turn red.* (paragraph 8)
- J** *I couldn't get the lid off the jar.* (paragraph 12)

**35** Sarah's conversations with Phineas show that Sarah —

- A** does not think Phineas is old enough to cook
  - B** does not mind helping Phineas in the kitchen
  - C** is surprised at how much Phineas wants to cook
  - D** wishes Phineas was better at following directions
- 

**36** Which sentence best helps the reader understand that the story is told from the first-person point of view?

- F** *The stove was a giant Bunsen burner, and the pots and pans were beakers and flasks.* (paragraph 1)
- G** *Sarah came in from the living room.* (paragraph 7)
- H** *Then she showed me what I needed to do.* (paragraph 10)
- J** *Sarah wrapped the lid with one of the yellow rubber gloves by the sink, took a deep breath, and twisted.* (paragraph 14)





Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
1	1	Readiness	4.3(C)	D
2	3	Readiness	4.7(D)	G
3	3	Supporting	4.10(C)	D
4	3	Readiness	4.9(D)(ii)	F
5	3	Readiness	4.7(C)	C
6	3	Readiness	4.6(F)	F
7	3	Readiness	4.10(A)	D
8	2	Supporting	4.6(F)	H
9	2	Supporting	4.7(C)	D
10	1	Readiness	4.3(B)	G
11	2	Supporting	4.9(C)	B
12	2	Supporting	4.6(F)	F
13	2	Supporting	4.6(F)	C
14	2	Supporting	4.9(C)	F
15	3	Readiness	4.6(F)	C
16	3	Readiness	4.10(A)	F
17	3	Readiness	4.7(C)	C
18	3	Readiness	4.7(C)	J
19	1	Readiness	4.3(B)	A
20	3	Supporting	4.10(C)	G
21	3	Readiness	4.7(D)	C
22	3	Readiness	4.10(A)	G
23	1	Readiness	4.6(E)	B
24	1	Readiness	4.6(E)	J
25	1	Readiness	4.6(E)	A
26	1	Readiness	4.6(E)	H
27	1	Readiness	4.3(A)	B
28	2	Supporting	4.6(F)	H
29	2	Supporting	4.6(F)	D
30	2	Supporting	4.10(D)	G
31	2	Supporting	4.6(F)	C
32	2	Readiness	4.6(F)	F
33	2	Readiness	4.6(F)	C
34	2	Readiness	4.7(C)	H
35	2	Readiness	4.8(B)	B
36	2	Supporting	4.10(E)	H

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option D is correct	In paragraph 8, the author describes how baby elephants react when stressed by “an <u>unfamiliar</u> situation.” The reader can use this context and the prefix <i>un-</i> to determine that the word <u>unfamiliar</u> means “not familiar” or “not known.”
	Option A is incorrect	The prefix <i>un-</i> does not mean “partly,” and the author does not include context that supports that baby elephants are stressed by something “partly known.”
	Option B is incorrect	“Together” is not the meaning of the prefix <i>un-</i> , and there is no context to support the idea that baby elephants are stressed by something that is “known together.”
	Option C is incorrect	The reader cannot use the meaning of the prefix <i>un-</i> in the word <u>unfamiliar</u> or any context in the selection to support the idea that baby elephants are stressed by something that they have “known in the past.”
2	Option G is correct	This is the most complete summary of the selection. The main idea of the selection (elephant communication) is described, along with the different types of communication that correspond to the different sections (“Sound,” “Body Language,” “Smell,” and “Touch”).
	Option F is incorrect	Only sounds are described in this summary, but there are many more ways that elephants communicate, making this summary incomplete.
	Option H is incorrect	This summary is incomplete. Different uses of the elephant’s trunk are described in this summary. The ways in which an elephant produces sound and the different types of body language an elephant uses are main ideas that are not included in this summary.
	Option J is incorrect	Small details, such as the comparison between elephants and humans, are focused on in this summary instead of the overall idea of elephant communication, so this is not the best summary of the selection.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
3	Option D is correct	In the photograph, the baby elephant is standing close to its mother. In paragraph 8, next to the photograph, the author explains that when a calf is tired or stressed, it will go to its mother for comfort. The reader can conclude that the author includes the photograph “to suggest that the baby elephant feels safe and protected when it is near its mother.”
	Option A is incorrect	The author mentions that an elephant reacts to danger by flaring its ears or sticking out its tail (paragraph 5), which are not shown in the photograph.
	Option B is incorrect	The author mentions in paragraph 8 that baby elephants stand close to their mother when they are tired of playing, so the reader can conclude that the author does not include the photograph in order to show what the baby elephant does when it wants its mother to play with it.
	Option C is incorrect	Elephants’ behavior when hungry is not mentioned in the selection, so the author does not want to show what the baby elephant does when hungry by including the photograph.
4	Option F is correct	A new way that elephants communicate is identified in each subheading: “Sound,” “Body Language,” “Smell,” and “Touch.”
	Option G is incorrect	The subheadings are words that are used to describe ways of communicating that all elephants use, not roles within an elephant herd.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the author provides information about baby elephants needing attention from their mother (paragraph 8), the subheadings are not included to tell why elephants need attention.
	Option J is incorrect	The subheadings are included to describe ways elephants communicate, not how they find food, and food is only mentioned within the section titled “Smell.”

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
5	Option C is correct	When elephants perceive danger, sometimes the whole herd will freeze, which helps them “focus all their attention on the sounds and smells around them” to evaluate the situation in order to avoid danger.
	Option A is incorrect	Elephants’ vocal communication is described in this sentence, but it is not mentioned in relation to danger.
	Option B is incorrect	The subtlety of elephants’ gestures is described in this sentence, but it is mentioned to describe an elephant’s body language, not how herds try to stay safe.
	Option D is incorrect	The author includes this sentence to support the idea that elephants use their trunks, not their eyes, to pay attention to their surroundings, but it is not specified in this sentence that the elephant is paying attention to danger.
6	Option F is correct	The reader can infer from the idea that an “ear twitch may mean ‘I’m done here—let’s go’” that an elephant’s ears help the elephant communicate.
	Option G is incorrect	Elephants’ feelings of happiness and fear are mentioned in paragraph 5, not paragraph 4.
	Option H is incorrect	Danger and large elephant herds are not mentioned in paragraph 4.
	Option J is incorrect	The author explains the meaning of elephants’ body language in paragraph 4, so it is incorrect to infer that scientists are confused by an elephant’s body language.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
7	Option D is correct	By sniffing different smells with its trunk, the elephant can better understand its surroundings. The author includes questions to provide some examples of information elephants gather from smells, such as what food another elephant ate and what kind of animals are near.
	Option A is incorrect	Scientists know that elephants use their trunk to smell and gather information. These are not questions about elephants that scientists are trying to answer through research.
	Option B is incorrect	The author includes these questions to demonstrate an elephant's sense of smell, not to rate it above other senses.
	Option C is incorrect	These questions are used to suggest that elephants can do more than identify other elephants based on the way they smell.
8	Option H is correct	After Mom explains that Samantha "thinks it's cool" (line 34) when Bella rhymes and wants to create rhymes too, Bella realizes that putting together rhymes in her raps is a gift and not something to be embarrassed about (line 36).
	Option F is incorrect	Mom mentions she helped Bella study her spelling words in line 24 but does not show her "different ways to improve as a speller."
	Option G is incorrect	Mom explains that Samantha wants to rap like Bella (line 34) but does not say Bella should play with Samantha.
	Option J is incorrect	Bella talks to Scott about Amy in lines 20 and 21, but Bella does not talk with Mom about Amy.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
9	Option D is correct	Amy thinks Bella should stop rapping because it's embarrassing when the kids laugh at her (lines 6-10). When Bella shares Amy's opinion with Scott, he tells Bella to "just keep on rapping" because he believes her rhymes are funny and good, not embarrassing.
	Option A is incorrect	Scott's response to Bella's spelling problem is expressed in this line, not how Scott feels about Bella's rapping or Amy's opinion of it.
	Option B is incorrect	Scott expresses an opinion about Bella's spelling ability in this line, not what he thinks about Amy's opinion of Bella's rapping.
	Option C is incorrect	Scott tries to make Bella feel better about not doing well on her spelling test in this line by assuring her that she is good at other things.
10	Option G is correct	In line 27, Bella is concerned because she is "used to making good grades" but is not doing well in spelling. When Bella's mother says "you can't <u>excel</u> at <i>everything</i> ," the reader can conclude from this context that Bella is better than others at certain things, such as rapping, but not spelling.
	Option F is incorrect	Bella and her mother are only discussing Bella's concern with her spelling grade. Bella is not trying to do "many tasks at once" nor does her mother expect her to.
	Option H is incorrect	Bella realizes and admits that she has trouble with spelling; she is not pretending to know everything.
	Option J is incorrect	Bella is not good at spelling. She is not afraid of trying different ways to improve her spelling.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
11	Option B is correct	The list of characters before scene 1 includes the characters' names ( <b>BELLA, SCOTT, AMY, MOM, SAMANTHA</b> ) and information about who the characters are. The character list is included to help the reader identify this selection as a play.
	Option A is incorrect	A well-known theme is something that is included in different types of literary genres, such as poems, stories, and plays, so a common theme is not a characteristic that is specific to a play.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Bella's raps include rhyme, the other lines of the play are description and dialogue and do not have a rhyming pattern.
	Option D is incorrect	Many stories have a problem that is resolved, so it is not an element that is specific to the structure of a play.
12	Option F is correct	In scene 3, Samantha imitates Bella by creating a rap (line 30). Bella is surprised to hear Samantha rapping but realizes that Samantha raps because she admires Bella's rapping.
	Option G is incorrect	Bella does discuss her concerns about spelling with her mother, but the beginning of that discussion is included in line 24 before Samantha's rap in line 30.
	Option H is incorrect	The amount of time Bella studied her spelling words is mentioned in line 24, but the idea of the importance of studying is not expressed in Samantha's rap in line 30.
	Option J is incorrect	Bella says she is "probably not ever going to be a renowned rapper" in line 33, but Samantha's rap doesn't help Bella determine problems with her raps.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
13	Option C is correct	Amy believes that telling Bella her rapping is silly is just as much of a favor as telling her if she had food in her teeth. Amy thinks she is helping Bella avoid any further embarrassment, which is what Amy believes good friends do for each other.
	Option A is incorrect	Amy is explaining why she is telling Bella her rapping is silly. Amy believes being truthful is being a good friend and is not concerned about what others think of her comments.
	Option B is incorrect	Bella does not actually have food in her teeth, and Amy is not concerned about Bella being a messy eater.
	Option D is incorrect	Amy does not see food in Bella's teeth. Amy just provides an example of why she is giving Bella advice.
14	Option F is correct	In line 1, the reader learns that events in scene 1 occur " <i>in the school cafeteria</i> " during lunch. In line 12, the reader learns that events in scene 2 occur in the " <i>School hallway, one week later.</i> " In line 23, the reader learns that events in scene 3 occur in the " <i>Late afternoon, the same day</i> " in Bella's living room.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no mention of a problem or hints about how a problem will be solved in the stage directions at the beginning of each scene.
	Option H is incorrect	Bella begins to describe her problem with a spelling test in line 2. There is no mention of her problem in the stage directions at the beginning of each scene.
	Option J is incorrect	Although some characters' actions are described in the stage directions, the characters' feelings are not explained.



## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
15	Option C is correct	Based on the title "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the reader can infer that the author will explain a problem with broken crayons and the solution to that problem in the article.
	Option A is incorrect	The reader does not get any hints that the article will be about different ways to use crayons from the words in the title, "The Broken-Crayon Solution."
	Option B is incorrect	The reader cannot infer that the article will be about how crayons were invented from the words in the title, "The Broken-Crayon Solution."
	Option D is incorrect	Broken crayons are the only objects mentioned in the title.
16	Option F is correct	In paragraph 1 of "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author describes that Cassidy realizes that her crayons were broken and difficult to use, which leads her to think of the invention.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not imply in paragraph 1 that Cassidy has many crayons but does state that all of them were broken.
	Option H is incorrect	Cassidy is the only person the author mentions in paragraph 1.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author does not mention specific colors but states that Cassidy "wanted to use every last stroke of color in each little crayon."
17	Option C is correct	This sentence from "The Broken-Crayon Solution" can be used to support the conclusion that Cassidy made enough money (profit) from her invention "to pay for most of her college education."
	Option A is incorrect	There is no mention of Cassidy's invention or its profits in this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The effect of Cassidy's invention on young artists is mentioned in this sentence, but not the profits Cassidy made from the invention.
	Option D is incorrect	The way that Cassidy's invention affects others is mentioned in this sentence, but not the profits Cassidy made from the invention.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
18	Option J is correct	In this sentence from "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author expresses the opinion that Cassidy's idea for a crayon holder was brilliant.
	Option F is incorrect	In this sentence, the author states that Cassidy had an idea; the author does not state an opinion.
	Option G is incorrect	The author explains a fact about Cassidy's invention but does not express an opinion in this sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	The author states a fact related to the usefulness of Cassidy's invention but does not express an opinion in this sentence.
19	Option A is correct	In paragraphs 3 and 4 of "Bouncing Around," the author describes changes Nissen made to improve his bouncer so that it could be springier when he jumped on it.
	Option B is incorrect	Nissen created and improved the bouncer in order to help develop his sports skills. It was when Nissen took the bouncer to a swim camp that he shared it with others.
	Option C is incorrect	Nissen took action to improve his bouncer; he was not just wishing for success.
	Option D is incorrect	Although Nissen continued refining the bouncer after he invented it, he was not trying to improve the bouncer as a way to plan for the future.
20	Option G is correct	The photographs in "Bouncing Around" include an athlete on a trampoline while competing in the Olympics and a child "Having Fun on a Trampoline" in a backyard.
	Option F is incorrect	It is mentioned in the caption of the first photograph that the photograph was taken in the year 2000, but that was not when the trampoline was invented.
	Option H is incorrect	There are other people watching the gymnast use the trampoline in the first photograph, but there is no one watching the girl in the second photograph.
	Option J is incorrect	Both trampoline users are alone on the trampoline in each photograph.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
21	Option C is correct	The best summary of "Bouncing Around" is presented in these sentences. The main idea (how George Nissen invented the trampoline) and key details (the different ways trampolines can be used) are restated.
	Option A is incorrect	There is too much emphasis on the Olympics in this summary. The purpose of the trampoline invention and its uses are missing from this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option B is incorrect	This summary is incomplete because there is no mention of Nissen's success with the trampoline or its many uses.
	Option D is incorrect	The author dedicates four paragraphs to describing why and how Nissen invented the trampoline, yet there is no mention of these important ideas in this summary.
22	Option G is correct	In paragraph 8 of "Bouncing Around," the reader can infer from the author's description "Today kids and adults jump on trampolines in gyms and backyards to stay active and healthy" that many people still use and appreciate Nissen's trampoline.
	Option F is incorrect	The Olympics are mentioned in paragraph 8, but the ways different types of athletes use trampolines are not mentioned.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author does not include Nissen's opinion of the trampoline.
	Option J is incorrect	The Olympics are mentioned in paragraph 8, but no date is given.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
23	Option B is correct	Cassidy's crayon holders described in "The Broken-Crayon Solution" make crayons (a common object) easier to use. The trampoline in "Bouncing Around" is an invention that people use for a variety of purposes (exercise, fun, and Olympic sports, for example), not something that makes a common object easier to use.
	Option A is incorrect	Cassidy in "The Broken-Crayon Solution" earned enough money for college (paragraph 3) by inventing the crayon holder when she was 11 (paragraph 1).
	Option C is incorrect	Nissen created the trampoline with the goal of using it to "improve his tumbling and diving" (paragraph 3 of "Bouncing Around").
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 8 of "Bouncing Around," the author includes the statement "kids and adults jump on trampolines," so children can also use trampolines.
24	Option J is correct	Cassidy made her crayon holders to avoid wasting crayons that were broken and difficult to use (paragraph 1 of "The Broken-Crayon Solution"). Nissen made his trampoline for exercise because he wanted to "improve his tumbling and diving" (paragraph 3 of "Bouncing Around").
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 7 of "Bouncing Around," the author explains that "Nissen opened a store and sold trampolines," but there is no mention that they were difficult to sell.
	Option G is incorrect	Cassidy was happy with her invention right away (paragraph 2 of "The Broken-Crayon Solution"), whereas Nissen spent time improving his inventions (paragraphs 3 and 4 of "Bouncing Around").
	Option H is incorrect	In "The Broken-Crayon Solution," it is not specified where Cassidy was when she got the idea for her invention, whereas Nissen thought of his idea at a public event, the circus (paragraph 2 of "Bouncing Around").

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
25	Option A is correct	In "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author tells about a short period in Cassidy's life, from when she was 11 years old until she was in college. In "Bouncing Around," the author describes several years of Nissen's life, from before 1934 all the way up until the year 2000.
	Option B is incorrect	This is a similarity instead of a difference because there are multiple benefits for each product.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraphs 2 and 3 of "Bouncing Around," the author tells how Nissen made the trampoline.
	Option D is incorrect	Only one of Cassidy's interests (drawing) is discussed in "The Broken-Crayon Solution," whereas Nissen enjoyed "tumbling and diving" in "Bouncing Around" (paragraph 3).
26	Option H is correct	In this sentence from "The Broken-Crayon Solution," the author describes the plastic tubes Cassidy used in her invention. Similarly, the author of "Bouncing Around" describes the canvas and steel frame Nissen used to create the trampoline in his garage. In each sentence, the author describes materials the person used to accomplish a goal or solve a problem.
	Option F is incorrect	Nissen was not working on a project when he thought of his invention; he was at a circus, so Cassidy "trying to work on an art project" is not similar to the idea expressed in the sentence from "Bouncing Around."
	Option G is incorrect	Cassidy noticing broken crayons is not similar to Nissen building a trampoline, as described in the sentence from "Bouncing Around."
	Option J is incorrect	Specific materials that Cassidy used to make her crayon holders are not mentioned in this sentence, so this is not similar to the idea expressed in the sentence from "Bouncing Around."
27	Option B is correct	The speaker mentions the size of the fish in line 19, and then she and her brother use a <u>scale</u> to weigh the fish.
	Option A is incorrect	A fish is mentioned in the poem, but the <u>scale</u> is not part of the fish. It is an object the speaker ran to get and used to weigh the fish.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no mention of sounds or music in relation to the fish the speaker describes.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker and her brother are measuring the fish's weight, not a distance.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
28	Option H is correct	In line 16, the speaker says "Sometimes he let me carry his fishing pole," which suggests that the speaker feels it was an honor or privilege to do so. The speaker also sat next to Max while fishing and is impressed by Max in line 19, saying "Max caught the biggest fish any of us ever saw."
	Option F is incorrect	There is no context to support the idea that the speaker wishes Max would listen to her.
	Option G is incorrect	The speaker describes Max in a positive way, so there is no context to support the idea that she is jealous of him.
	Option J is incorrect	Max is never in any danger, so there is no context to support the idea that the speaker wishes to protect him.
29	Option D is correct	The reader can conclude that the poet highlights when the speaker observes changes in the river by including the seasons. During the winter, Sarah and the speaker "walked across the river" (line 7) because it was frozen. The river was full during the spring (line 11) and was muddy when they fished in the summer (line 18).
	Option A is incorrect	Neither safety nor danger is ever mentioned in the poem, so there is no context to support this reason.
	Option B is incorrect	In line 18, the speaker references the "smell of the summer river"; however, there is no context to support the idea that summer is the speaker's favorite season for fishing in the river.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker mentions going to the river with her friend Sarah (line 5) but does not say that she became friends with Sarah at the river.
30	Option G is correct	The poet describes the river wiggling through the land (line 1) and specifies that the river is wide (fat) in line 2, looking "like a fat brown thread" to the speaker.
	Option F is incorrect	The poet includes "like a fat brown thread" to describe the river, not different kinds of fish in the river.
	Option H is incorrect	The poet is describing how the river looks as it moves through the land, not what it is filled with.
	Option J is incorrect	The passing of time is not mentioned in line 2, and there is no context to support the idea that the river gets a darker shade of brown.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
31	Option C is correct	When the river floods, it brings parts of trees, perhaps branches and trunks, that the speaker and Sarah use to create "pirate ships."
	Option A is incorrect	The poet does not use negative language regarding the "chunks of trees," so there is no context to support the idea that the river creates a problem for the speaker.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker does not say she rides on the "pirate ships," just that she makes them from tree chunks.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker does not express any confusion in these lines. She describes exactly what she does with the pieces of trees.
32	Option F is correct	At the beginning of the story, Phineas excitedly gathers supplies, runs up the stairs to get a shirt to wear as a lab coat, and makes a plan for the dinner.
	Option G is incorrect	Phineas models his cooking experiment after a science experiment because he considers himself a scientist, but there is no text evidence to support that he likes cooking more than he likes science.
	Option H is incorrect	Phineas does not know how to use the stove or how to open the sauce, but he does not think these are unusual kitchen items.
	Option J is incorrect	Phineas makes a plan for dinner in paragraph 2, but there is no text evidence to support the idea that he has cooked before, especially since he does not know how to use the stove.

## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
33	Option C is correct	In the list at the end of the story, Phineas writes everything he learned from his experiment, which is the result of the mistakes he made: the spaghetti clumps, the sauce burns and sticks to the bottom of the pot, there is too much pasta, and the pasta disintegrates from cooking too long.
	Option A is incorrect	Phineas is suggesting that he has learned some things about cooking, but there is no context to support the idea that he never wants to cook again.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 3, Phineas says that his plan for cooking dinner is “Easy peasy.” However, Phineas makes a lot of mistakes that ruin the dinner, so the reader can conclude that Phineas thinks cooking is more difficult than he thought.
	Option D is incorrect	Phineas’ pasta is not something the family could eat for dinner. Although Phineas learned some valuable lessons, there’s no text evidence to suggest pasta is his favorite meal to cook.
34	Option H is correct	In this sentence, the author suggests that Phineas is embarrassed to ask for help. When someone’s face turns red, it is often a result of being embarrassed.
	Option F is incorrect	Phineas is not showing or expressing any emotion in this sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	Phineas is recognizing a problem, but he is not showing that he is embarrassed.
	Option J is incorrect	Phineas is identifying a problem he encounters while trying to cook the dinner. He has not yet asked for help with opening the jar, so he is not embarrassed.
35	Option B is correct	Sarah does not seem to mind showing Phineas how to turn the stove on or open the sauce. She just says ““There’s a first time for everything”” (paragraphs 9 and 13) and helps him.
	Option A is incorrect	Sarah does not express any thoughts about Phineas’ age and does not criticize him when he tries to cook.
	Option C is incorrect	Sarah shows no signs of surprise when she sees Phineas trying to cook a dinner.
	Option D is incorrect	Sarah helps Phineas do things that do not have directions. Her opinions about the pasta, which comes with directions, are not given.



## 2021 STAAR Grade 4 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
36	Option H is correct	Point of view is the perspective from which the events in the story are told. In the first-person point of view, the narrator tells the story from the narrator's perspective and uses the word "I."
	Option F is incorrect	There are no pronouns in this sentence to help the reader understand that the author used a first-person point of view in the story.
	Option G is incorrect	In this sentence, the narrator is describing what Sarah is doing. There are no pronouns to help the reader determine that first-person point of view is used in the story.
	Option J is incorrect	Details about Sarah's actions are described in this sentence. This description does not include pronouns that would help the reader understand that the story is told from the first-person point of view.