

New Mexico NM-MSSA Grade 8 English Language Arts Practice

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NEW MEXICO MEASURES
OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND
ACHIEVEMENT

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NM-MSSA

English Language Arts/Literacy

Grade 8 • Practice Test



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English Language Arts/Literacy Session 1

DIRECTIONS

Today you will take a test in reading. For this test, you will read passages and then answer questions about the passages. Some of the questions may look different from test questions you have seen before, and some may ask about material that is new to you, but it is important to do your best. If you are not sure of the answer to a question, you should still try to answer it.

You will now read two passages and answer the questions that follow. Some of the questions may ask you to compare the two passages.

This passage is about Louis Pasteur, a nineteenth-century French microbiologist and chemist, who conducted experiments on the theory of spontaneous generation.

Passage 1

Spontaneous Generation

by Jane Ackerman

- 1 Scientists and philosophers had argued for centuries about whether living organisms could come from non-living substances, an idea called spontaneous generation. Before the 1700s, people believed that wasps and beetles were formed out of dung; mice from riverbanks, swamps, or slime; and maggots and flies from rotting meat. More scientific approaches were applied to the question of spontaneous generation in the 1700s. By the 1800s, animal reproduction was understood, but the origin of disease was still in question.
- 2 Despite warnings from Biot and Dumas¹ that it would be a waste of time to focus on a question so seemingly impossible to answer, Pasteur forged ahead. He wrote to his old friend Chappuis in January 1860: "I hope to make soon a decisive step by solving, without the least confusion, the celebrated question of spontaneous generation . . . it will require nothing less than the cogency² of arithmetical demonstration to convince my adversaries of my conclusions. I intend to accomplish even that."

¹**Biot and Dumas:** Jean-Baptiste Biot and Jan-Baptiste-Andre Dumas were French scientists who mentored Pasteur during his studies and research

²**cogency:** persuasiveness, effectiveness

- 3 Pasteur set up an experiment to test whether microbes generated spontaneously or were instead carried by dust in the air. He filled two flasks with yeast water, then heated them until boiling, killing any germs inside. He sealed the flasks tightly so no air could enter. He kept one flask intact and broke open the other flask so dust could enter. Soon microbes were growing, but only in the broken flask. Pasteur concluded that germs had entered on particles of dust. Thus, microbes did not grow spontaneously, but reproduced like other living things.
- 4 There were many scientists who doubted Pasteur's work, arguing that the sealed flask did not develop microbes because no oxygen was allowed to enter. Oxygen was thought to contain a life force required for spontaneous generation. Pasteur silenced those critics by repeating the experiment with swan-necked flasks, bottles with bends in the necks. The shape of the necks allowed air to enter, but gravity caused the dust in the air to settle in the curve of the neck, where it was trapped. The yeast water solution did not produce microbes until a bottle was tipped, allowing dust from the bend of the neck to enter the fluid.
- 5 In 1862, in a public lecture at the Sorbonne, Pasteur shone a beam of light into the dark auditorium, illuminating millions of dust particles floating in the air. Pale-faced, eyes shining through his glasses, he said:
- I have taken my drop of water . . . full of elements most suited to the development of small beings. And I wait, I observe, I question it, I beg it to be so kind as to begin over again just to please me, the primitive act of creation; it would be so fair a sight! But it is mute! . . . Ah! That is because I . . . have kept from it the germs that float in the air; I have kept it from life, for life is a germ and a germ is life. Never will the belief in spontaneous generation arise from the mortal blow that this simple experiment has given it.
- 6 The audience, which included Princess Mathilde, novelist and playwright Alexander Dumas, writer George Sand, and other great minds of the day, gave him a standing ovation. The still unbroken flask used in his famous experiment can be seen today in the Pasteur Institute's museum.

From Jane Ackerman, *Louis Pasteur and the Founding of Microbiology*. © 2004 Jane Ackerman.

Passage 2**Microbes****How long have microbes been around?**

- 1 The history of life on Earth is overwhelmingly microbial. As you can see from the timeline below, if the history of the Earth were condensed into a single year, microbes could be said to have originated around late February, while human beings didn't make their appearance until late in the evening on December 31!
- 2 Fossil evidence of microbes has been found in some of the oldest rocks known to exist. The Earth is estimated to be about 4.5 billion years old. Microbes arose about 3.8 billion years ago, other animals about 700 million years ago, and modern humans less than 1 million years ago.

The Microbial Age - 3.1 Billion YearsSESSION
1**How many microbes are there?**

- 3 Microbes are the most abundant organisms on the planet—way more numerous than human beings! The current human population is estimated to be about 6.33 billion. Let's put that in scientific notation, because we'll soon be talking about some very large numbers. Another way of writing 6,330,000,000 is 6.33×10^9 .
- 4 There's no way to count exactly how many microbes exist, but scientists estimate that there are approximately 55,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 microbes sharing the planet with us. That's 5.5×10^{31} .

- 5 Let's try to put that in perspective. That's more microbes than there are stars in the Milky Way (which is only about 4×10^{11}). That's 9 sextillion, or 9×10^{21} , microbes for every human. In fact, a dense microbial culture in the laboratory contains about 5 billion microbes per milliliter. So a test tube can easily hold about a dozen times the world's human population in microbes.
- 6 Admittedly, a test tube is not exactly a microbe's natural habitat. But microbes are pretty thick in the natural environment as well. A mere teaspoon of topsoil harbors about a billion bacterial cells, not to mention some 120,000 fungal cells and 25,000 algal cells. And direct microscopic counts of viruses indicate they are 10 times more abundant than bacteria in natural waters, with up to 100 million viruses in every milliliter.

Excerpt from "Microbe FAQs," *Delaware EPSCoR* @ <http://www.epscor.udel.edu/microbe-faqs>. © 2010 University of Delaware NSF EPSCoR.

1. In paragraph 3 of Passage 1, which step of the experiment introduces the microbes in the flask?
- A filling two flasks with yeast water
 - B heating the flasks to boiling
 - C keeping one flask intact
 - D breaking open one of the flasks

This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.

2. In paragraph 5 of Passage 1, what is the **most likely** meaning of the word “illuminating”?
- A releasing into the air
 - B making visible with light
 - C activating by chemical reaction
 - D pointing out through description

Which choice provides the **best** evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A “were instead carried by dust in the air”
 - B “The yeast water solution did not produce microbes until a bottle was tipped.”
 - C “Pasteur shone a beam of light into the dark auditorium.”
 - D “That is because I . . . have kept it from the germs that float in the air.”
3. Which sentence **best** states the central idea of Passage 1?
- A Pasteur disproved the idea of spontaneous generation.
 - B Pasteur disproved the effectiveness of sealed flasks.
 - C Pasteur disproved the existence of dust particles.
 - D Pasteur disproved the need for yeast water.

4. How does Passage 2 **best** illustrate the length of time microbes have been on Earth compared to that of humans and other animals?
- A by using an analogy of a calendar year to describe Earth's history
 - B by describing the development of life on Earth in chronological order
 - C by breaking down the different kinds of life on Earth into different categories
 - D by showing how many more microbes there are on Earth than there are humans
5. In Passage 2, what is the effect of comparing the number of microbes to the human population and the number of stars in the Milky Way?
- A It shows readers how small microbial populations are.
 - B It provides context for how large microbial populations are.
 - C It describes ways to count the total population of microbes.
 - D It illustrates that microbial populations cannot be estimated.
6. In Passage 2, what text structure does the author **mainly** use in paragraphs 3–6?
- A chronological
 - B order of importance
 - C problem and solution
 - D compare and contrast

SESSION

1



- 7.** How is the treatment of the topic of microbes different in Passage 1 and Passage 2?
- A** Passage 1 shows how microbes appear in a laboratory environment; Passage 2 describes how microbes reproduce in the natural environment.
 - B** Passage 1 reveals how our knowledge of microbes was limited; Passage 2 suggests how our knowledge of microbes has expanded in recent years.
 - C** Passage 1 explains a milestone in scientific understanding of microbes; Passage 2 emphasizes the early existence and astounding number of microbes in the environment.
 - D** Passage 1 demonstrates how the scientific community hindered our understanding of microbes; Passage 2 suggests that mathematical formulas can increase our understanding of microbes.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Ventriloquism: It's a Science and an Art

- 1 In its simplest form, ventriloquism is a conversation between a person and a puppet. This hypnotizing art form charms people into suspending their rational belief and perceiving the puppet as a living being with a real personality.
- 2 Ventriloquism is grounded in the art of creating illusions. Ventriloquists cleverly convince the audience that their puppet is doing the talking, despite the fact that this defies common sense. How do they do this? The answer involves science—specifically the science of how our brains process sounds.

The Science Behind Ventriloquism

- 3 Scientists once believed that different parts of the brain processed each of the five senses. As explained by Jennifer Groh, a neurobiologist, “The prevailing wisdom among brain scientists has been that each of the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste—is governed by its own corresponding region of the brain. . . . Now we are beginning to appreciate that it’s not that simple.” In a 2007 study undertaken by Duke University, researchers found that a tiny structure in the brain associated with hearing also responds to visual input. According to Groh, who was a member of the research team, “This means that visual and auditory information gets combined quite early and before the ‘thinking part’ of the brain can make sense of it.” So, the brain comes to a conclusion before the person can think about what has happened. This “audio-visual integration” accounts for why we connect the sound at a movie theater with what is happening on the screen rather than recognizing that it is coming from speakers on either side of the theater. Ventriloquism takes advantage of this complexity. Ventriloquists use the brain’s desire to merge what we are seeing with what we are hearing to create an illusion that tricks the brain.
- 4 Part of the illusion occurs due to the science of sound. Sound travels across the molecules in the air. It is the vibration of these molecules that creates sound. Because air is all around us, it can be difficult to know where a sound came from. This is especially true when there are obstacles in the path of the sound. For instance, if you hear your name in a crowded room, at first you might not know where the sound came from. The brain relies on the other senses to help us figure out the origin of the sound. Ventriloquists take advantage of this by creating “misdirection,” which is when the performer subtly leads the audience members to focus their attention on one element of the show to distract them from what is actually happening. In short, misdirection *redirects* the attention of the audience members, which leads them to draw false conclusions about what is really happening.



- 5 Ventriloquists also take advantage of people’s ability to distinguish among different sounds. A person’s brain is conditioned to recognize different people’s voices. In fact, research exists to support the idea that babies know their mother’s voice as soon as they are born. Ventriloquists use this to their advantage. When the ventriloquist first comes onto the stage, for example, he or she generally starts with an introduction and then tells a few jokes using his or her own voice. The listener gets used to the sound of this voice, and the brain associates this voice with the ventriloquist. Then the ventriloquist uses a different voice for the puppet. The brain naturally associates the different voice with another person—in this case, the puppet. All of this takes place unconsciously for the listener. To encourage this process, ventriloquists typically use very different voices for their various puppets. The more different the voice, the more the brain wants to believe it is a different person.

The Art Behind Ventriloquism

- 6 People once believed that ventriloquists were able to “throw” their voice to make it come from a different direction. A voice cannot be thrown; the sound originates from the ventriloquist. Instead, the ventriloquist uses misdirection to make the sound *appear* to come from somewhere else. For example, the ventriloquist looks at the puppet as he or she talks to it, so the audience looks there too. This distracts the audience from trying to see whether the ventriloquist’s lips are moving.
- 7 Ventriloquists capitalize on the brain’s desire to make sense of things. One old ventriloquism trick involves using a puppet that is, at first, unseen. One famous ventriloquist kept his puppet stowed in a suitcase at the beginning of the show. As he introduced himself, the puppet would interrupt him. That sound—the interruption—traveled through the air, so the audience members could not be sure where it came from. Meanwhile, the ventriloquist would use misdirection to help the audience figure it out. With an expression of surprise, he would look toward the suitcase. For those in the audience, their brains would make the connection between what they saw and what they heard, integrating the audio and visual into one image.
- 8 Ventriloquists may also use similar tricks of the eye. They might move their lips in an exaggerated way when speaking themselves, so the audience is less likely to notice minor movements when the puppet is speaking. They also give the puppet human-like characteristics. Anytime the puppet nods, laughs, or says things that the audience members think the ventriloquist would be unlikely to say, their brains confirm what audio-visual integration has suggested: the sound is coming from the puppet.
- 9 Perhaps one reason ventriloquists are successful is because the audience wants to go along with the story. Most ventriloquist acts are funny and engaging. Puppets get away with saying things that sound too outrageous coming from a comedian. But central to the act is the fact that our brains support the illusion.



8. Read this sentence from paragraph 3.

Ventriloquists use the brain's desire to merge what we are seeing with what we are hearing to create an illusion that tricks the brain.

Which detail from the passage **best** supports this claim?

- A Obstacles in a room can make it difficult to determine where the sound came from.
- B Ventriloquists focus the attention of the audience to conceal the source of a sound.
- C Ventriloquists start with a single puppet to engage the audience with its sound.
- D Sounds travel through the air to stimulate the senses.

This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.

9. Which sentence **best** describes how paragraph 4 contributes to the section **The Science Behind Ventriloquism**?

- A It describes how science can be used to help determine the best environment for making sound.
- B It explains the science required to know the amount of space needed for people to hear sound.
- C It suggests that the science of sound will be better understood with further research.
- D It shows how the science of sound affects what people perceive.

Which choice provides the **best** evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A "Sound travels across the molecules in the air."
- B "It is the vibration of these molecules that creates sound."
- C "If you hear your name in a crowded room, at first you might not know where the sound came from."
- D "The brain relies on the other senses to help us figure out the origin of the sound."



10. Read this sentence from paragraph 5.

All of this takes place unconsciously for the listener.

What does the word “unconsciously” tell the reader about people watching a ventriloquist?

- A They fall asleep after the ventriloquism show begins.
 - B They usually are unaware of the techniques of the ventriloquist.
 - C They are tricked into believing that a puppet is speaking.
 - D They often stop paying attention to the show if it becomes too involved.
11. Based on the passage, what are **two** ways ventriloquists make their puppets seem real? Select **two** answers.
- A by using the same voice for the various puppets used in the show
 - B by having the puppets move and behave in convincing ways
 - C by exaggerating the movements of the puppets’ mouths
 - D by looking directly at the puppets when speaking to them
 - E by hiding the puppets after they start to speak

12. Which choice provides the **best** objective summary of the passage?
- A Ventriloquists use scientific data to create humorous illusions onstage. Scientists have found that certain parts of the brain are able to process both sight and sound at the same time.
 - B Ventriloquism is about balancing art and science in a show. I think all ventriloquists are talented at performing funny shows and can often get away with making statements that are odd.
 - C Ventriloquism works due to the science behind sound. Because of the way people process sound, ventriloquists use a variety of techniques in their art to create convincing illusions.
 - D Ventriloquists rely on scientists to create their illusions. Researchers and artists come together to make shows that are more entertaining than most other types of live performances.
13. What is the **main** way the author develops the science and art of ventriloquism in the passage?
- A by introducing a theory and then supporting it with evidence
 - B by describing events in sequential order and then analyzing them
 - C by presenting subtopics with evidence and explaining how they relate to each other
 - D by explaining an opinion and showing how it was shaped by personal experiences

SESSION

1



You will now read two passages and answer the questions that follow. Some of the questions may ask you to compare the two passages.

The first passage is based on a traditional tale of the Swahili people. The modern Arabic word “sadaka,” or “sadaqah,” means “voluntary charity or kindness.”

Passage 1

The Voyage of Sadaka

- 1 Long ago, a sultan ruled over a rich and fertile land by the ocean. The sultan had seven sons, and he cared for them with a love larger than the expanse of his lands. As such, there was little he would not do to make them happy; so, when his eldest son expressed a desire to journey across the boundless seas, the sultan provided him a fine boat, plentiful supplies, and best wishes for a safe and wondrous expedition.
- 2 The eldest son was pleased, for even as a small boy, he craned and stretched his neck—longing to see beyond the next turn in the road, beyond the next field, beyond the bay.
- 3 And now, at long last, he was captaining his own boat so that he could see for himself what lay beyond the distant horizon.
- 4 After two days of smooth travel with only slight, intermittent winds, the eldest son came to an island teeming with trees whose branches were heavy with fruit. As he came closer, the eldest observed that the trees were like nothing he had ever seen.
- 5 The eldest anchored his boat, sloshed through a shallow cove, and walked onto land to approach one of the strange trees. He picked a piece of ripe, low-hanging fruit and took a bite into its sweet, juicy pulp. The bite was exquisite with only a few seeds to mar it, which the eldest spat upon the ground.
- 6 To his amazement, new fruit trees grew immediately from the precise spots where the seeds landed!
- 7 Not only will these fruits provide me nourishment, but fame and perhaps fortune as well, thought the eldest.
- 8 After collecting many pieces of fruit, the eldest lifted anchor and set sail for two more days until he came upon an island kingdom. There, he was received by a powerful prince. Before the prince, the eldest extolled the virtues of the fruit, expecting astonishment and praise from his new acquaintance.
- 9 Instead, the prince frowned, raised one eyebrow, and replied, “Fine. Show me the fruit, if you like. However, be warned—I will not stand for being made a fool. If no trees arise, expect to go to prison.”
- 10 With a flourish of his hand and a wide grin, the eldest pulled a piece of fruit out of his bag, took a bite, and spat the seeds upon the ground.
- 11 Nothing.



- 12 After a few silent moments, the prince nodded. The eldest, stunned, turned back to stare at the sparkling seas behind him as he was led away by the prince's guards to a small, gray cell.

- 13 Weeks and months went by with no word from the eldest.

- 14 One day, as the sultan stood on a beach looking out at the ocean with strained eyes, Sadaka, his youngest son, approached him.

- 15 "Father, I will find him."

- 16 Hesitant at first, the sultan, anxious for news of his eldest son, agreed. He gave the youngest son a boat and supplies for the journey, including millet and rice. The Sultan parted with his youngest, hoping a miracle would reunite their family once more.

- 17 Unknowingly, after leaving the bay, Sadaka began his journey just slightly west of his elder brother's original route and after two days' travel, discovered an uncharted island different from the one visited by his brother. Sadaka disembarked, hoping to find news. However, Sadaka soon realized that the island was small, with little vegetation, and no people.

- 18 All Sadaka could see was a flock of withered seabirds with nothing to eat.

- 19 Sadaka was consumed with worry for his brother; however, his capacity for care and concern for others was large—large as the world his elder brother so desired to see. Sadaka felt pity for the seabirds and spread his millet stores with no thought of himself. The seabirds ate and were rejuvenated. To express their gratitude for Sadaka's generosity, they flew to a nearby cave and returned with a small pouch of incense sticks, which they laid at his feet. The seabirds instructed the astonished Sadaka to burn it should he ever find himself in need, and they would go to him at once.

- 20 Sadaka set sail and after two days, he found another island. Anticipation turned to disappointment when once again, Sadaka saw no people. But as he was leaving, he happened upon a group of jinns¹ who, like the seabirds, were also without food. Sadaka went directly to his boat to retrieve his rice to cook for the jinns. The jinns ate with relish, expressing their gratitude by also telling Sadaka that they would be available to him in times of need.

- 21 Sadaka set sail once more, and after two days he came upon the island of the precious, fruit-filled trees found earlier by his brother. Sadaka, like his brother, was amazed by the sweet flavor of the fruit and by the seeds from which trees immediately grew. Wanting to know more, Sadaka returned to the island of the jinns to show them the fruit. Remembering Sadaka's kindness, the jinns advised him that the seeds would only grow if they were planted in special soil. They gave Sadaka the soil he would need, and Sadaka again set sail.

¹jinns: spirits of Arabic mythology

- 22 Finally, he landed on the island where his brother lay in his cell. Sadaka met the formidable prince and told him of the fruit, hoping to make another friend and perhaps find word of his brother. However, the prince with one lifted eyebrow said, “a man sits in prison for telling me the very same tale. You may show me the fruit and seeds tomorrow, but if your story proves false, just like him, you shall be imprisoned.”
- 23 That night, Sadaka spread the soil of the jinns on the ground in secret.
- 24 The next day, fruit in hand, Sadaka met the prince and his guards where the special soil lay. Sadaka took a bite, and spat the seeds upon the ground. Three perfect fruit trees sprang up before the prince’s eyes.
- 25 The prince concealed his surprise, believing there was still a chance he was being deceived. “You are fortunate, my friend. However, you have one more test.” The prince took Sadaka to a room full of several types of seeds, mixed in disarray on the floor. “You are to remain locked in here tonight. If you can separate these seeds by the morning, you are free.”
- 26 That night, Sadaka burned his incense, calling upon the once-starving seabirds of the first island. The seabirds came and with pleasure separated the seeds for Sadaka.
- 27 The next morning, the prince could not hide his surprise upon seeing the separated seeds.
- 28 But once again the prince was skeptical. Again and again, Sadaka—with the help of his new friends—passed each new seemingly impossible test given to him by the prince.
- 29 At long last, after many days of trials, Sadaka earned the respect of the once-doubting prince, his own freedom, and the gratitude of his eldest brother who was ready to return to sea once more.



“The Voyage of Sadaka” © 2017 by Cogna, Inc.

Passage 2**Sand of Sadaqah**

My aunts and my mother spoke of *sadaqah*,¹
the giving of oneself,
but the word had little meaning.

Because in the city, I was alone.

- 5 One grain of sand
sliding, slipping
beneath the surface,
avoiding steps
of indifference.
- 10 There was nothing to give.
No *sadaqah*—
only protons, neutrons, electrons,
bound tightly together,
surrounded by crust
- 15 desperate not to dissolve,
not to erode,
under the thrashing
of an unfamiliar surf.
- 20 It took time to understand
that in the electric hum of my
new city, I was never alone.
It took patience and remembrance
and courage
for my eyes to adjust to

¹**sadaqah:** alternate spelling of the Arabic word “sadaka”

- 25 a new light and see with clarity:
The landlady who gave me bread,
challah, from her own oven.
The man on 32nd who every morning, with
the *thump-thump-thump* of his plastic drum, lifted my soul.
- 30 The officer who gave me advice, whispering
in my ear the safest place to cross.
The professor who would not
let me stay silent . . .
Not slip under.
- 35 We were all grains of sand, and
I give thanks.
- For the landlady
who needed my help with her Wi-Fi,
for the man on 32nd
- 40 who needed my dark-brewed coffee,
for the officer
who needed my box
of candies from home.
And for the professor who, after a
- 45 walk in drizzle and fog,
needed my bold answer
in a room of indifference.
- We were all grains of sand,
not hiding from the relentless surf,
- 50 but rising, a dune of protons, neutrons, electrons
charged, bound, growing, and living,
fed by the bonds between us.
- My aunts and my mother spoke of *sadaqah*,
the giving of oneself,
- 55 and the word has great meaning.

14. In Passage 1, which evidence **best** explains the reason the eldest son leaves his home?
- A “The sultan provided him a fine boat . . . and best wishes for a safe and wondrous expedition.”
 - B “For even as a small boy, he craned and stretched his neck—longing to see beyond the next turn . . . beyond the bay.”
 - C “He was captaining his own boat so that he could see for himself what lay beyond the distant horizon.”
 - D “The eldest observed that the trees were like nothing he had ever seen.”
15. In Passage 1, paragraphs 7 and 21 reveal an important difference between the brothers **mainly**
- A by suggesting that the eldest brother will continue on his journey, while Sadaka will return home sooner than planned.
 - B by showing how the eldest brother must decide alone what to do with the seeds, while Sadaka can go to the jinns for advice.
 - C by emphasizing that the eldest brother thinks of the fruit as nourishment too, while Sadaka is more interested in its taste.
 - D by showing how the eldest brother assumes he can use the seeds to benefit himself, while Sadaka wants to learn more about them.



This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.

- 16.** In Passage 1, how does the author create suspense in Sadaka's first meeting with the prince?
- A** The reader knows the prince will follow through with his threat to imprison Sadaka, but Sadaka does not believe him.
 - B** The reader knows the man the prince has imprisoned is Sadaka's brother, but Sadaka is not aware of this.
 - C** The reader worries that Sadaka will be tricked by the prince, but Sadaka trusts they will become friends.
 - D** The reader wonders if the jinns' special soil will work, but Sadaka is certain that it will.

Which choice provides the **best** evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A** "They gave Sadaka the soil he would need, and Sadaka again set sail."
- B** "Sadaka met the formidable prince and told him of the fruit."
- C** "If your story proves false, just like him, you shall be imprisoned."
- D** "You are fortunate, my friend. However, you have one more test."



- 17.** What is the theme in Passage 1?
- A** If you travel too far away from home, bad luck may follow you.
 - B** Be wary when placing your trust in things that seem too good to be true.
 - C** If you take time to help others, they will likely help you in times of trouble.
 - D** Close family members are the only people you can rely on when you need help.

18. In Passage 2, which lines **most strongly** support that the speaker feels isolated?
- A "One grain of sand / sliding, slipping / beneath the surface,"
 - B "It took patience and remembrance / and courage / for my eyes to adjust to"
 - C "The officer who gave me advice, whispering / in my ear the safest place to cross."
 - D "We were all grains of sand, / not hiding from the relentless surf,"

19. Read lines 50–52 from Passage 2.

but rising, a dune of protons, neutrons, electrons / charged, bound, growing,
and living, / fed by the bonds between us.

The effect of using this figurative language near the end of the poem shows that the speaker

- A feels happy about finally learning how to navigate the city.
- B has now become more self-confident around people.
- C finally identifies with the commotion of the city.
- D now feels deeply connected to other people.

20. Which evidence from Passage 2 **best** shows how the speaker has become like Sadaka from Passage 1?
- A "My aunts and my mother spoke of *sadaqah*, / the giving of oneself,"
 - B "only protons, neutrons, electrons, / bound tightly together, / surrounded by crust"
 - C "under the thrashing / of an unfamiliar surf."
 - D "I give thanks. / For the landlady / who needed my help with her Wi-Fi,"

English Language Arts/Literacy Session 2

DIRECTIONS

Today you will take a test in writing and language. For this test, you will read passages and answer questions. Some questions might ask about how to improve the passage. Other questions might ask you to correct errors in the passage. Some of the questions may look different from test questions you have seen before, and some may ask about material that is new to you, but it is important to do your best. If you are not sure of the answer to a question, you should still try to answer it.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Stand Up!

1. Soon the classic command “Sit still!” may become obsolete in American classrooms. 2. Research suggests that fidgeting actually helps students learn. 3. With this new understanding, we should make school a place where students can move around a little while they work. 4. As schools have placed more emphasis on academics, students have been losing opportunities to move around during the day. 5. Recess time has been reduced in many school systems, and time spent in gym classes is frequently short as well. 6. To summarize, less than four percent of elementary schools give their students the amount of physical education recommended by health experts.

7. Traditionally, we’ve seen fidgeting in the classroom as a problem—a sign of distraction. 8. New studies show, however, that students need to move around in order to focus on difficult tasks, particularly ones that require them to analyze and retain information. 9. When our attention starts to wander, fidgeting wakes us up, and we are helped to concentrate.

10. Many teachers are catching on to this idea and using standing desks, exercise balls, music, and other tools to grow physical activity in their classrooms. 11. As a result, they see fewer discipline problems and calmer classrooms.

12. Being allowed to move around promotes students’ persistence and patience with learning tasks. 13. Fortunately, teachers have always been able to move in their classrooms. 14. License to move around also helps students’ grades go up. 15. A study that examined the effects of standing desks found that students who used them were more attentive and engaged. 16. Engagement, stresses an author of the study, is “the most important contributor to student achievement.”

17. Now that we know how much students benefit from moving around while learning, standing desks and similar adjustments should become the norm. 18. Even those who prefer to sit may find the changes interesting.

“Stand Up!” © 2015 by Cognia, Inc.

21. How should the underlined words in sentence 6 be changed to provide a transition from sentence 5?
- A In the same way
 - B However
 - C Therefore
 - D In fact
22. Which is the **best** choice to replace the underlined portion of sentence 9?
- A fidgeting wakes us up and concentration is helped.
 - B fidgeting wakes us up and helps us to concentrate.
 - C concentration is helped when fidgeting wakes us up.
 - D we are woken up by fidgeting which helps us concentrate.
23. In sentence 10, which is the **best** choice to replace the word “grow”?
- A raise
 - B widen
 - C spread
 - D increase
24. Which sentence should be removed because it is not well connected to the topic of the paragraph?
- A sentence 10
 - B sentence 11
 - C sentence 12
 - D sentence 13

25. How should the underlined words in sentence 14 be changed to maintain the style of the passage?
- A improves students' grades.
 - B bumps up students' grades.
 - C makes students' grades great.
 - D makes students' grades get better.

This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.

26. Which sentence is the **best** choice to replace sentence 18 as a concluding statement?
- A Instead of saying "Sit still!" we should command students to "Stand up!" to satisfy the fitness experts.
 - B Rather than "Sit still!" the better command to promote classroom learning is, almost certainly, "Stand up!"
 - C Asking students to "Stand up!" rather than "Sit still!" will improve teacher satisfaction in our nation's schools.
 - D We should say "Stand up!" rather than "Sit still!" to students so that they get more activity and have less need for gym classes.

Which statement provides the **best** support for the answer to the previous question?

- A Very few elementary schools give their students the amount of physical education recommended by health experts.
- B Teachers are catching on to the idea of encouraging physical activity in classrooms.
- C Students who use standing desks are more attentive and engaged.
- D Time spent in gym classes is frequently short as well.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Giant Pando

1. Anyone who tours Utah’s Fishlake National Forest is likely to marvel at its beautiful grove of aspen trees. **2.** However, the 47,000 trees in this woodlands area are not individual trees. **3.** They share a single root system and even originated from the same seed. **4.** As such, the Pando Clone is made up by them and are believed by scientists to be the world’s largest living thing.

5. Pando is a Latin word that means “I spread.” **6.** It is an apt name for this super huge tree system. **7.** The Pando Clone expands across 106 acres of land and weighs approximately 13 million pounds. **8.** The aspen copies, or clones, itself by shooting long stem-like roots up out of the soil.

9. Pando is not only one of the world’s largest living things; it is also one of its oldest. **10.** Scientists expect that Pando is at least 80,000 years old, and possibly 1 million years old. **11.** Each stem turns into a new aspen, though all the trees are connected to each other and all share the same genetic material.

12. Unfortunately, Pando is facing several threats. **13.** Disease and insects have also killed off certain parts of it. **14.** Scientists are worried that Pando is not cloning itself as fast as creatures and other environmental changes are destroying it.

15. To protect this living treasure, the National Forest Service has fenced off sections of the Pando Clone. **16.** Although animals sometimes find their way around the fence, many young stems in the enclosed areas appear to be thriving. **17.** Rangers are also using forest maintenance methods such as controlled cuts and burns to encourage new growth. **18.** This too is helping preserve this ancient giant for future generations to enjoy.

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“Giant Pando” © 2017 by Cognia, Inc.

- 27.** How should sentence 4 be changed to be written in active voice?
- A** As such, they make up the Pando Clone, which scientists believe is the world's largest living thing.
 - B** As such, they are being made up by the Pando Clone, which scientists believe is the world's largest living thing.
 - C** As such, the Pando Clone is being made up by them and have been believed by scientists to be the world's largest living thing.
 - D** As such, they have been made up by the Pando Clone, which is believed by scientists to be the world's largest living thing.
- 28.** How should the underlined words in sentence 6 be changed to maintain the formal style of the rest of the article?
- A** NO CHANGE
 - B** gigantic
 - C** jumbo
 - D** whopping

29. Which word or phrase **best** replaces the underlined word in sentence 7?
- A exactly
 - B close to
 - C more than
 - D precisely
30. How should the underlined word in sentence 10 be changed to describe the **most** precise reasoning?
- A estimate
 - B suspect
 - C suppose
 - D think

31. Where should sentence 11 be moved to **best** organize the ideas in the article?
- A after sentence 6
 - B after sentence 8
 - C after sentence 13
 - D after sentence 14

This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.

32. The writer would like to add another example after sentence 12 to expand on its idea. Which sentence would be the **best** to add?
- A There are too many animals such as deer and elk, which causes problems.
 - B Tourists love to explore this national treasure, with thousands of people visiting every year.
 - C Pando's giant root system enables it to survive floods, landslides, and fires.
 - D Animals such as deer and elk like to eat the tree's new stems as they emerge from the soil.

Which sentence provides the **best** evidence for the answer to the previous question?

- A "Anyone who tours Utah's Fishlake National Forest is likely to marvel at its beautiful grove of aspen trees."
- B "However, the 47,000 trees in this woodlands area are not individual trees."
- C "Scientists are worried that Pando is not cloning itself as fast as creatures and other environmental changes are destroying it."
- D "Although animals sometimes find their way around the fence, many young stems in the enclosed areas appear to be thriving."

You are now going to read three brief passages and respond to a writing task. First, read the following passages about the Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Passage 1

Striking a Balance

by Jennifer Mason

- 1 Valerie Gohlke is a park ranger at Carlsbad Caverns National Park in New Mexico.
- 2 Inside Carlsbad, visitors marvel at the range of *speleothems*¹ that have formed resembling ribbons, fangs, and even popcorn.
- 3 At Carlsbad, balancing visitor use with park protection is extremely difficult. Natural oils on a person's hands can prevent the dripping water from depositing more minerals. One human touch can kill the fragile cave ecosystem and impact thousands of years of growth. The caves are also home to tens of thousands of hibernating bats, which can become sick if a fungal disease is introduced. Park rangers make sure the soles of visitors' shoes are decontaminated before people enter the caverns!
- 4 According to Gohlke, park rangers "want everyone to have a fabulous experience and fall head over heels in love with the national parks. But the reality is, we're going to frustrate people with our rules." Some people don't understand or like the restrictions.
- 5 The core mission of the National Park Service (NPS) is to conserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife so that the park remains unimpaired for all generations. But even the most careful visitors can cause damage. Trash disposal and foot or vehicle traffic for that many people take their toll on the natural surroundings. Treasure hunters have removed natural or historic objects.
- 6 On the other hand, says Gohlke, "The parks were not created to just lock the gates and not let anyone in." Allowing people to see up close the natural wonders that exist in the United States helps gain support for the NPS's mission. So what's a ranger to do?
- ***
- 7 Excited spectators assemble in the amphitheater facing Carlsbad Caverns's Natural Entrance. The evening exodus of bats will begin soon, and everyone wants to record or photograph 400,000 bats cycloning out of the cave! While they wait, Gohlke shares fascinating facts about bats. For instance, she explains how bats fly in the dark and hunt bugs. Gohlke reminds the visitors that the flashes, clicks, ticks, and whirs of cameras can hinder the bats' nocturnal navigation. She asks that all electronic devices be powered off.

¹**speleothems:** cave formations formed by deposits of minerals from water

8 Everyone stares.

9 *Is she serious?*

10 Although a few people are disgruntled, everyone complies with the blackout. They seem to understand that Gohlke's restriction doesn't change the fact that they are in a unique place and that they are going to witness something amazing. She's asked them to preserve and conserve the bats' habitat. In that moment, the visitors become unofficial park rangers who help Gohlke protect these special places.

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Passage 2**Facts, Figures, and Phenomena****Did you know Carlsbad Caverns National Park . . .**

- is a geological wonder hidden beneath the surface of the Chihuahuan Desert in New Mexico.
- has 119 limestone caves, or chambers, that were formed by sulfuric acid dissolving the limestone along cracks and folds in the rock.
- was declared a national monument by President Calvin Coolidge on October 25, 1923. He wanted to make sure that its unique beauty and natural presence would be protected.
- was designated a national park by the U.S. Congress on May 14, 1930.
- has an elevator (750' down) that was completed in January 1932 and is still used today.
- has a Bat Flight Amphitheater that was constructed and opened to the public in 1963.
- was declared a World Heritage site in December 1995.
- attracts about half a million tourists every year, averaging over 1,000 tourists a day! But, be mindful that the presence of humans affects the composition of the caves. If you go, try not to touch the walls and cave features because the oil from people's skin can damage the cave walls and formations.
- is affected by the carbon dioxide people exhale. The carbon dioxide raises the temperature in the caverns, which disrupts the cavern's ecology.
- averages about 44 pounds per year per tour route of accumulated lint from people's skin and clothing — and you can volunteer to be a "Lint Picker" and help clean up the caverns.
- is home to approximately 400,000 bats. This number nearly doubles during the bat migration period (mid-April to late-October).
- includes a Bat Flight Amphitheater, which is a sitting area designed for visitors to witness the flight of the outbound bats (around dusk). Imagine that! Seeing 400,000 bats pour out of the cavern to feed on insects like moths and mosquitoes.

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- has banned the use of all cameras, cell phones, and video cameras at the Bat Flight Amphitheater. Why? Bats dwell in an environment that is dark and silent; exposure to sound and light can alter their behavior.
- helps New Mexico's economy! In 2018, it was estimated that \$32.7 million was generated by tourism, providing approximately 458 jobs, \$11.5 million in labor income, and \$19.6 million in overall profit.

"Facts, Figures, and Phenomena" © 2020 by Cognia, Inc.

Passage 3**Tourism to Carlsbad Caverns National Park Creates \$34 Million in Economic Benefits***by NPS*

May 24, 2019

- 1 A new National Park Service (NPS) report shows that 466,000 visitors to Carlsbad Caverns National Park in 2018 spent \$30.2 million in communities near the park. That spending supported 405 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$34 million.
- 2 “Carlsbad Caverns National Park welcomes visitors from across the country and around the world,” said Superintendent Doug Neighbor. “We are delighted to share the story of this place and the experiences it provides. We also feature the park as a way to introduce our visitors to this part of the country and all that it offers. National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it’s a big factor in our local economy as well. We appreciate the partnership and support of our neighbors and are glad to be able to give back by helping to sustain local communities.”
- 3 The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas and Egan Cornachione of the U.S. Geological Survey and Lynne Koontz of the National Park Service. The report shows \$20.2 billion of direct spending by more than 318 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 329,000 jobs nationally; 268,000 of those jobs are found in these gateway communities. The cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy was \$40.1 billion.
- 4 Lodging expenses account for the largest share of visitor spending, about \$6.8 billion in 2018. Food expenses are the second largest spending area and visitors spent \$4 billion in restaurants and bars and another \$1.4 billion at grocery and convenience stores.
- 5 Visitor spending on lodging supported more than 58,000 jobs and more than 61,000 jobs in restaurants. Visitor spending in the recreation industries supported more than 28,000 jobs and spending in retail supported more than 20,000 jobs.

In the public domain.

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- 33.** Now read the writing task and draft a response. As you write, think about what makes writing successful.

Features of Successful Writing

Clearly addresses the topic and purpose identified in the prompt
Includes relevant and specific details and examples in support of ideas
Has a clear focus and an organizational plan
Uses language that is engaging and contributes to a style and tone appropriate to the task
Shows attention to sentence structure, sentence variety, and conventions (grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation)

Writing Task

You have read three articles about the Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The articles include information about tourism and its effects on the state, the caverns, and the caverns' ecosystem. Having read about tourism at the Carlsbad Caverns National Park, take a position about whether the Carlsbad Caverns should remain open for tourism.

You decide to write an argumentative letter to the editor of your local newspaper in which you present your argument and state your position about whether the Carlsbad Caverns should remain open for tourism. Use details and examples from the articles, along with your own ideas and experience, to support your claim and position.

Today you will be writing an argument. When you write an argument, you

- make and support a claim based on factual evidence.
- gather and present reasons for making that claim.
- use specific facts, examples, and details to support and elaborate upon those reasons.

After you have read the passages, and before you begin writing, think about

- what evidence in the passages leads you to make your claim about whether the Carlsbad Caverns National Park should remain open for tourists.
- what you already know and what fact-based evidence you have to support your claim about whether the Carlsbad Caverns should remain open for tourism.
- how you might address evidence that supports a different idea or position.

Now write your response in the space provided.

NM-MSSA ELA

PRACTICE TEST ANSWER KEY

Grade 8

Item Number	Key	Standards
Session 1 READING		
1	D	RI.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2	B; C	RI.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
3	A	RI.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
4	A	RI.8.3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).
5	B	RI.8.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
6	D	RI.8.5 Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
7	C	RI.8.9 Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
8	B	RI.8.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
9	D; C	RI.8.5 Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
10	B	RI.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Practice Test Answer Key • Grade 8 ELA

Item Number	Key	Standards
11	B, D	RI.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
12	C	RI.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
13	C	RI.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
14	B	RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
15	D	RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
16	B; C	RL.8.6 Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through the use of dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
17	C	RL.8.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
18	A	RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
19	D	RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
20	D	RL.8.9 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new.
Session 2 WRITING AND LANGUAGE		
21	D	W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. c) Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Practice Test Answer Key • Grade 8 ELA

Item Number	Key	Standards
22	B	L.8.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. d) Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
23	D	L.8.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. c) Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., <i>bullheaded</i> , <i>willful</i> , <i>firm</i> , <i>persistent</i> , <i>resolute</i>).
24	D	W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. b) Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
25	A	W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. d) Establish and maintain a formal style.
26	B; C	W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. e) Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
27	A	L.8.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. b) Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
28	B	W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. e) Establish and maintain a formal style.
29	B	L.8.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on <i>grade 8 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. b) Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>precede</i> , <i>recede</i> , <i>secede</i>).
30	A	W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. d) Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

Practice Test Answer Key • Grade 8 ELA

Item Number	Key	Standards
31	B	W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. a) Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
32	D; C	W.8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. b) Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
33	NA	W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Production of Writing: NM-MSSA Argumentative Writing Rubric (Grades 6–8)				
	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	The Writing:			
Development/ Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a claim that fully addresses the topic. Develops the argument with consistently logical reasons and consistently relevant evidence. Uses consistently accurate and credible sources and demonstrates substantial understanding of the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a claim that generally addresses the topic. Develops the argument with generally logical reasons and generally relevant evidence. Uses generally accurate and credible sources and demonstrates general understanding of the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a claim that partially addresses the topic. Develops the argument with only some logical reasons and partially relevant evidence. Uses partially accurate and/or credible sources and demonstrates limited understanding of the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes a claim that minimally addresses the topic or does not explicitly make a claim. Attempts to develop the argument but includes few, if any, logical reasons and/or relevant evidence. Uses few accurate and/or credible sources and demonstrates little/no understanding of the topic.
Organization/ Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a clear and engaging introduction of the claim(s) and a concluding statement or section that logically follows from and supports the argument presented. Consistently organizes reasons and evidence logically. Substantially acknowledges alternate or opposing claims.* Consistently demonstrates effective use of words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among the claim(s), reasons, and evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a generally clear introduction of the claim(s) and a concluding statement or section that adequately follows from and supports the argument presented. Generally organizes reasons and evidence logically. Generally acknowledges alternate or opposing claims.* Generally demonstrates effective use of words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among the claim(s), reasons, and evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a partially clear introduction of the claim(s) and a concluding statement or section that partially follows from and supports the argument presented. Sometimes organizes reasons and evidence logically. Sometimes acknowledges alternate or opposing claims.* Sometimes demonstrates effective use of words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among the claim(s), reasons, and evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be missing an introduction of the claim(s) and/or a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented. May attempt to organize reasons and evidence logically. May not acknowledge alternate or opposing claims.* Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate effective use of words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among the claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes language choices that establish and consistently maintain a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes language choices that generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely includes/does not include language choices that contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task and/or includes language that is inappropriate to the task.

Use of Conventions: NM-MSSA Conventions Rubric (Grades 3–8)			
	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	The Writing:		
Grammar/ Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates general command of standard English grammar and usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of standard English grammar and usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little command of standard English grammar and usage.
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates general command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have minor or infrequent errors that do not interfere with meaning or confuse the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have errors or patterns of errors that somewhat interfere with meaning or confuse the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have errors that interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.

*Only assessed at grades 7 & 8

Production of Writing: NM-MSSA Informative Writing Rubric (Grades 6–8)				
	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	The Writing:			
Development/ Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that thoroughly address the task. Substantially develops the topic with consistently pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that generally address the task. Generally develops the topic with mostly pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that partially address the task. Partially develops the topic with some pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents ideas that minimally address the task. Minimally develops the topic with few pertinent facts, definitions, details, examples, and other information from relevant sources.
Organization/ Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and consistently maintains an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. Provides a thoroughly clear and engaging introduction and a concluding statement or section that clearly follows from and supports the preceding ideas/information. Consistently demonstrates effective use of transitions to create cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and generally maintains an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. Provides a generally clear introduction and a concluding statement or section that generally follows from and supports the preceding ideas/information. Generally demonstrates effective use of transitions to create cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to establish and partially maintains an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. Provides a partially clear introduction and a concluding statement or section that loosely follows from and supports the preceding ideas/information. Sometimes demonstrates effective use of transitions to create cohesion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May attempt to establish but does not maintain an organizational plan focused on a controlling or central idea. May lack an introduction; a concluding statement, if provided, may not follow from or support preceding ideas/information. Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate any effective use of transitions to create cohesion.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently uses precise language to inform or explain the topic. Includes language choices that establish and consistently maintain a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often uses precise language to inform or explain the topic. Includes language choices that generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes uses precise language to inform or explain the topic. Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely uses/does not use precise language to inform or explain the topic. Rarely includes/does not include language choices that contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task and/or includes language that is inappropriate to the task.

Use of Conventions: NM-MSSA Conventions Rubric (Grades 3–8)			
	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	The Writing:		
Grammar/ Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates general command of standard English grammar and usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of standard English grammar and usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little command of standard English grammar and usage.
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates general command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have minor or infrequent errors that do not interfere with meaning or confuse the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have errors or patterns of errors that somewhat interfere with meaning or confuse the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. Has errors or patterns of errors that interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.

Production of Writing: NM-MSSA Narrative Writing Rubric (Grades 6–8)

	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	The Writing:			
Development/ Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that consistently address the task. Uses consistently effective and varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Substantially develops the narrative using consistently relevant descriptive details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that generally address the task. Uses generally effective and somewhat varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Generally develops the narrative using mostly relevant descriptive details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that partially address the task. Uses partially effective and/or varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, and description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Partially develops the narrative using some relevant descriptive details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents a narrative that develops real or imagined experiences or events that minimally address the task. Rarely uses/does not use effective and/or varied narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, or description to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. Minimally develops the narrative using few, if any, relevant descriptive details.
Organization/ Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engages and effectively orients the reader by clearly establishing a context and point of view*and clearly introducing a narrator and/or character(s). Establishes and consistently maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Provides a conclusion that clearly follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. Consistently demonstrates effective use of a wide variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequately engages and orients the reader by generally establishing a context and point of view* and adequately introducing a narrator and/or character(s). Establishes and generally maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Provides a conclusion that generally follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events. Generally demonstrates effective use of a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempts to engage and orient the reader but does not clearly establish a context and point of view* and/or clearly introduce a narrator and/or character(s). Attempts to establish and partially maintains an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Provides a conclusion that partially follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences of events. Sometimes demonstrates varied and effective use of transition words, phrases, and/or clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May attempt to engage and/or orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view* and/or introduce a narrator and/or character(s). May attempt to establish but does not maintain an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically. Provides a conclusion that minimally follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events or does not follow from them. Rarely demonstrates/does not demonstrate varied or effective use of transition words, phrases, and/or clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts in time frame or setting.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Includes language choices that establish and consistently maintain a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Includes language choices that generally contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes uses precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Includes language choices that sometimes contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely uses/does not use precise words and phrases, vivid descriptive details, and/or sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events. Rarely includes/does not include language choices that contribute to a style and tone appropriate to the task and/or includes language that is inappropriate to the task.

Use of Conventions: NM-MSSA Conventions Rubric (Grades 3–8)

	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
	The Writing:		
Grammar/ Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates general command of standard English grammar and usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of standard English grammar and usage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little command of standard English grammar and usage.
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates general command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have minor or infrequent errors that do not interfere with meaning or confuse the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates partial command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have errors or patterns of errors that somewhat interfere with meaning or confuse the reader. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates little command of standard English conventions relative to the length and complexity of the text. May have errors that interfere with meaning or confuse the reader.

*Only assessed at grades 7 & 8