

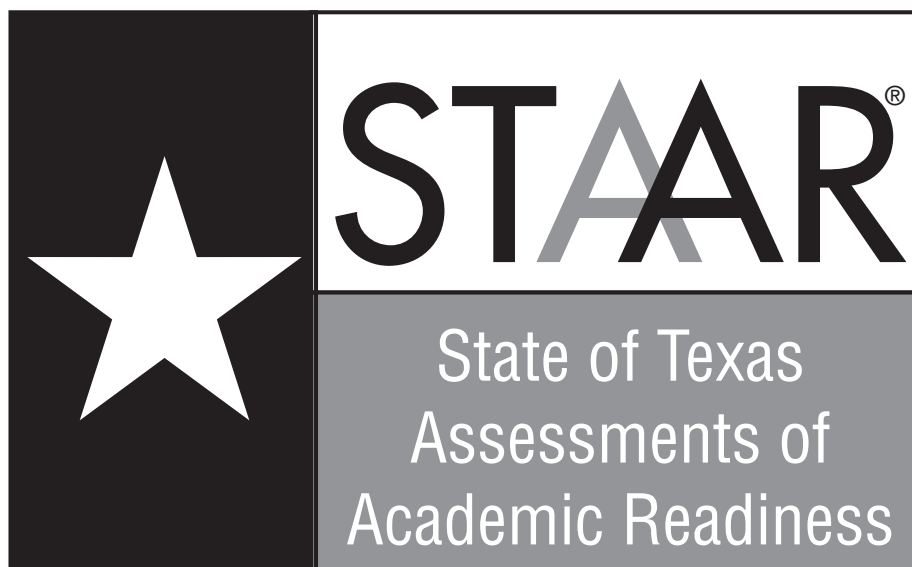
# Texas STAAR 2019 English II

Exam Materials

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# **English II**

**Administered April 2019**

**RELEASED**

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

*J.T. wrote this paper about a unique Japanese activity. Read the paper and look for any revisions J.T. should make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## **In Sync**

(1) Texas is known for its superb high school marching bands. (2) Each week during football season, thousands of students take to the field to display their musical and marching talents. (3) These same students also compete in local, state, and national competitions and exhibitions. (4) However, marching bands aren't found in just this state or even just this country. (5) But in one country there are marchers who skip the music component all together. (6) Students at Japan's Nippon Sports Science University, NSSU, participate in an intricate marching-like exhibition known as precision walking.

(7) NSSU students have perfected the nearly 50-year-old tradition of *shuudan koudou*, which means "collective action." (8) The collective action is a carefully choreographed display of synchronized walking. (9) Identically dressed students walk forward and backward to form lines and shapes, even crossing between one another at times. (10) There are no musical cues for the students to use as they march in the changing formations. (11) Furthermore, they walk in perfect step by following the direction of an announcer. (12) Directors bellow loud, sharp commands, such as "Front row, turn left!" and "Cross walk," over a loudspeaker. (13) And with each command, the students fall into perfect alignment. (14) Even the swing of their arms is synchronized. (15) A misstep by just one student creates a flaw in the perfectly coordinated display that is visible.

(16) To prepare for an exhibition, students practice three days a week for five months at a time. (17) They participate in training exercises to help get them in shape. (18) During this time it is estimated that they walk more than 700 miles, which is about the same distance as walking across the entire state of Texas!

(19) Many of the students at NSSU will go on to become coaches, physical education teachers, and trainers. (20) The university also offers master's and doctoral degree programs. (21) Keiko Suzuki, captain of the 2014 walking team, says that by participating in precision walking, she and her classmates will be better

prepared for their careers. (22) "We all mastered this highly disciplined training and made it our habit to stick to strict rules," said Suzuki. (23) "I believe this experience will be an asset as we enter into the job market."

(24) At a recent NSSU festival, close to 11,000 spectators watched as the students performed their walking routine. (25) The school posted a video of the performance on the Internet, where it was watched and shared by thousands of viewers. (26) The announcer commented that people at NSSU were extremely proud that the school's distinctive tradition has now become famous around the world.

- 1 J.T. would like to add the following sentence to the first paragraph (sentences 1–6).

*Students from around the world are also part of musical marching groups.*

Where is the most effective place to insert this sentence?

- A After sentence 1
  - B After sentence 2
  - C After sentence 4
  - D After sentence 5
- 

- 2 J.T. wants to use a more appropriate transition in sentence 11. Which of the following can best replace **Furthermore** in this sentence?

- F For example
- G In conclusion
- H Overall
- J Instead

**3** What is the most effective revision to make in sentence 15?

- A** A misstep by just one student and a flaw is created that is visible in the perfectly coordinated display.
  - B** A misstep by just one student creates a visible flaw in the perfectly coordinated display.
  - C** A misstep by just one student creates a flaw in the perfectly coordinated display, the flaw is visible.
  - D** A misstep by just one student creates a visible flaw that can be seen in the perfectly coordinated display.
- 

**4** J.T. has included an extraneous sentence in his paper. Which of these sentences should be deleted from this paper?

- F** Sentence 9
- G** Sentence 13
- H** Sentence 18
- J** Sentence 20

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

*Mimi has written this essay to express her opinion about reusable water bottles. Read Mimi's essay and look for the revisions she should make. Then answer the questions that follow.*



## **Make the Switch!**

(1) Sweating during a summer afternoon in Texas, people gaze into convenience-store refrigerators. (2) They select chilled bottles of water and stand in line at the register, where they might pay more than \$2.00 per bottle. (3) After chugging the water, they toss the bottles into the trash. (4) What's wrong with this picture? (5) Consumers pay far too much for a drink of water, and those same bottles clog oceans and contaminate the soil. (6) This needs to stop now!

(7) Although bottled water is often advertised for its purity, the quality of this water is not necessarily better than that of tap water. (8) Bottled water may be attractively packaged. (9) It is simply processed tap water. (10) In fact, there is reason to be concerned about its contents in many cases. (11) When plastic is exposed to heat, it can release harmful chemicals into the water, chemicals that scientists have linked to illnesses. (12) The government regulates only 30–40% of

all bottled water, so it can be difficult to know exactly what processes a bottle of water has gone through to ensure its quality. (13) In contrast, municipal water systems are inspected annually to ensure city residents have safe drinking water.

(14) The safety of bottled water not only raises health concerns, but bottled water is also significantly overpriced in comparison to tap water. (15) In fact, it can cost as much as 2,000 times more than tap water. (16) For instance, at eight glasses a day, the yearly cost for tap water is about 50 cents. (17) The same amount of bottled water would cost well over \$1,000. (18) Most people can probably think of better ways to spend that money.

(19) The unnecessary use of bottles causes environmental damage at several stages. (20) Consider the resources used to produce and transport bottled water. (21) Also consider that chemicals are released by these many bottles when they are discarded into landfills over hundreds of years and decompose. (22) Other bottles may end up in rivers, lakes, and oceans. (23) The Ocean Conservancy has determined that every square mile of the ocean is contaminated with 46,000 pieces of plastic.

(24) As consumers, we can help our budgets and our world with one simple choice: make the switch to reusable water bottles! (25) For only about \$10 to \$15, one can buy a reusable bottle that is not only useful but looks great too. (26) Reusable water bottles come in a variety of colors and styles. (27) Many come with hooks that attach to backpacks or straps that allow the bottles to be worn on the body. (28) Reusable bottles with filters are also available so that tap water can be further purified before drinking. (29) With all of these great features, there's really no reason to buy plastic water bottles ever again.



- 5** Mimi’s essay does not have a strong position statement. Which of the following sentences should replace sentence 6 to serve as an effective position statement?
- A** It’s foolish to buy several bottles of water each day when there’s no good reason for doing this.
  - B** People need to stop doing this now and protest against bottled-water companies.
  - C** These problems can be solved, however, if people choose to drink water from reusable containers instead of plastic bottles.
  - D** The list of problems that people are causing, such as increasing pollution, by buying bottled water is endless.
- 

- 6** What is the most effective way to combine sentences 8 and 9?
- F** Bottled water may be attractively packaged, but it is simply processed tap water.
  - G** Bottled water is simply processed tap water because it is attractively packaged.
  - H** Bottled water may be attractively packaged, so it is simply processed tap water.
  - J** Bottled water is attractively packaged, because it is simply processed tap water.
- 

- 7** Mimi wants to improve the transition between the third paragraph (sentences 14–18) and the fourth paragraph (sentences 19–23). Which sentence can be added before sentence 19 to accomplish this goal?
- A** Because bottled water can cost so much, a reusable water bottle is a wise investment.
  - B** People think bottled water is harmless, and other plastic containers are just as bad.
  - C** Money is a concern for many people, so it should be saved whenever possible.
  - D** Bottled water is a huge monetary expense, but the cost to our planet is even greater.

**8** What is the most effective way to revise sentence 21?

- F** Also consider that many bottles are discarded into landfills, where the bottles release chemicals as they decompose over hundreds of years.
  - G** Also consider that landfills are filled with released chemicals, where they decompose many discarded bottles over hundreds of years.
  - H** These bottles, decomposing over hundreds of years, should also be considered to release chemicals where they have been discarded into landfills.
  - J** Over hundreds of years, landfills are filled with many bottles, and it should also be considered that the bottles decompose and release chemicals.
- 

**9** Mimi wants to conclude her essay by motivating her readers to take action. Which of the following statements should she insert after sentence 29 to accomplish this goal?

- A** The future of our planet depends on people like you doing away with a terrible threat—plastic water bottles.
- B** We should make the decision today to be smart about our finances and responsible with our planet by opting for reusable water bottles.
- C** Think of how much you can help the fish in our lakes, rivers, and oceans by avoiding bottled water.
- D** Choose reusable water bottles, and watch your savings grow.

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

*Savannah wrote this essay for a descriptive writing assignment in her English class. Read Savannah's essay and look for corrections she should make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## **Smells Like a Memory**

(1) The acrid scent of burning firewood wafts through the crisp night air. (2) Suddenly being transported back to childhood as a memory plays in my mind like a movie. (3) My dad, brothers, and I are lounging around a campfire, spearing marshmallows with sticks and holding them over the open flames. (4) My marshmallow catches fire, and I turn it slowly, letting it brown on all sides before blowing it out. (5) I pull gently at its crisp brown shell, the aroma of its gooey sweetness teases my nostrils. (6) I wait impatiently for it to cool enough to put in my mouth.

(7) Memories always seem to flood my mind when I experience certain smells. (8) The smell of freshly cut grass reminds me of my twelve-year-old self, playing Soccer on Saturday mornings. (9) I can still smell the warm, damp dirt and hear the voice of my best friend Erin calling out as I wiped the sweat beads off my forehead. (10) After playing for hours, we would all traipse down to the local corner store to buy beverages that were so cold they would make our teeth hurt. (11) I pop the lid off a bubbly drink, and the fizz gently stings my nose. (12) My mind flashes back to those lazy afternoons, leaning against the wall in the cool shade of the store's striped awning, laughing with my friends.

(13) Then there is the distinctive scent of garlic and onion cooking as my grandmother prepares the filling for our holiday tamales. (14) I remember when I was a little girl dragging my chair over to the counter to watch the onions and garlic cook. (15) I would beg my grandmother to let me help fill the tamales, and she would let me sample tiny bites along the way. (16) To this day the smell of steaming tamales fills me with excitement.

(17) It is said that scent is the most powerful memory trigger of all the senses. (18) The brain is wired in such a way that the sense of smell is processed near the centers' of emotion and memory. (19) So it's no wonder that specific smells

can generate amazing memories that make us feel just as we did when the events originally occurred. (20) Whatever the case may be, I know for myself that certain smells today always take me back to times that were innocent and full of exploration and wonder. (21) I'm thankful for the variety of spicy, sweet, and savory smells that continue to remind me of family, friends, and all the best things in life.

**10** What change, if any, needs to be made in sentence 2?

- F** Change *being* to **I am**
  - G** Insert a comma after *childhood*
  - H** Change *plays* to **playing**
  - J** Sentence 2 should not be changed.
- 

**11** What is the correct way to write sentence 5?

- A** I pull gently at its crisp brown shell, the aroma of its gooey sweetness that teases my nostrils.
  - B** As I pull gently at its crisp brown shell, the aroma of its gooey sweetness teases my nostrils.
  - C** Pulling gently at its crisp brown shell, the aroma of its gooey sweetness teasing my nostrils.
  - D** When I pull gently at its crisp brown shell, and the aroma of its gooey sweetness teasing my nostrils.
- 

**12** How should sentence 8 be changed?

- F** Insert a comma after *grass*
- G** Change *reminds* to **reminding**
- H** Change *playing* to **to play**
- J** Change *Soccer* to **soccer**

**13** What change, if any, is needed in sentence 18?

- A** Insert a comma after **way**
  - B** Change **is processed** to **has processed**
  - C** Change **centers'** to **centers**
  - D** Sentence 18 should not be changed.
- 

**14** What change, if any, needs to be made to sentence 20?

- F** Delete the comma
- G** Insert a comma after **today**
- H** Change **innocent** to **inocent**
- J** Make no change to sentence 20.

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

*Adam has written this essay to encourage his classmates to try a new food source. Read Adam's essay and look for the corrections he needs to make. When you finish reading, answer the questions that follow.*

## **Try It; You'll Like It**

(1) According to a report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: there are 1,900 edible insect species on Earth. (2) It is not common for people in the United States to eat insects, but I believe there are many good reasons for making insects an important part of our diets.

(3) Insects are an important part of the diets of people in many cultures. (4) In Africa, Asia, Mexico, and South and Central America, many people already eat insects. (5) The most commonly consumed insect around the world is the grasshopper, but beetles are popular in the Amazon basin and some parts of Africa. (6) In the past American Indians also ate beetles by roasting them and eating them like popcorn.

(7) There are several good reasons for eating insects. (8) They are an inexpensive source of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. (9) Grasshoppers and mealworms are as nutritious as beef and fish, and raising insects instead of cattle or pigs can be beneficial to the environment. (10) Cattle and pigs require large amounts of food, but insects need very little, and insects produce much smaller amounts of greenhouse gases than large animals like cows.

(11) Of course, since Americans are not accustomed to eating insects, many are hesitant to trying. (12) If you find a worm hiding inside your apple, you will throw it away, and few want to eat a sandwich with ants in it. (13) For this reason, it will take a major shift in the way we think about food for Americans to become insect eaters. (14) Doing so is not impossible, though, because most food preferences are simply a state of mind. (15) For example, when I was little, I thought oysters were revolting simply because they looked strange, but I tried them recently and really liked them. (16) My cousin used to gag at the mushy texture of avocados when her mother served them, but now she eats them all the time.

(17) My interest in eating insects developed during a recent visit by a family member. (18) My uncle, whose very adventurous, brought some roasted grasshoppers from Mexico for me to try, and I liked them—they have a nice, salty crunch. (19) A crunchy grasshopper is just as tasty as a crunchy potato chip and a lot better for you. (20) And insects have some interesting flavors; wasps are said to taste like pine nuts, and bee larvae supposedly remind people of peanuts. (21) Anyone who likes nuts should give wasps or bee larvae a try.

(22) I know that everyone in this class is interested in making choices that are better for the planet, and many of you have a sense of adventure. (23) I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and try eating a tasty insect.



**15** What change, if any, should be made in sentence 1?

- A** Change ***Organization*** to **organization**
  - B** Change the colon to a comma
  - C** Change ***species*** to **species'**
  - D** No change is needed in sentence 1.
- 

**16** What change, if any, should be made in sentence 11?

- F** Delete ***since***
- G** Change ***accustomed*** to **acustomed**
- H** Change ***to trying*** to **to try**
- J** No change is needed in this sentence.

**17** What change should be made in sentence 14?

- A** Change *Doing* to **When we do**
  - B** Delete the comma after *though*
  - C** Change *preferances* to **preferences**
  - D** Change *simply* to **simple**
- 

**18** What change, if any, should be made in sentence 18?

- F** Change *whose* to **who's**
- G** Change *brought* to **bringing**
- H** Delete the comma after *try*
- J** No change is needed in sentence 18.

BE SURE YOU HAVE RECORDED ALL OF YOUR ANSWERS  
ON THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

## WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Persuasive

Read the information in the box below.

It is common for people to compete with one another. Competition can foster creativity, provide valuable lessons, and inspire people to challenge themselves and achieve things they never thought possible. On the other hand, competition can breed selfishness and promote the idea that the most successful people are those who have the most power and who will win no matter what the cost.

Think carefully about the following question.

Do people have to be competitive in order to succeed?

Write an essay stating your position on whether competition is necessary for success.

Be sure to —

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Read the next two selections and answer the questions that follow.

## To a Daughter with Artistic Talent

by Peter Meinke

I know why, getting up in the cold dawn  
you paint cold yellow houses  
and silver trees. Look at those green birds,  
almost real, and that lonely child looking  
5 at those houses and trees.  
You paint (the best way) without reasoning,  
to see what you feel, and green birds  
are what a child sees.

Some gifts are not given: you  
10 are delivered to them,  
bound by chains of nerves and genes  
stronger than iron or steel, although  
unseen. You have painted every day  
for as long as I can remember  
15 and will be painting still  
when you read this, some cold  
and distant December when the child  
is old and the trees no longer silver  
but black fingers scratching a grey sky.

20 And you never know why (I was lying  
before when I said I knew).  
You never know the force that drives you wild  
to paint that sky, that bird flying,  
and is never satisfied today  
25 but maybe tomorrow  
when the sky is a surreal sea  
in which you drown . . .

I tell you this with love and pride  
and sorrow, my artist child  
30 (while the birds change from green to blue to brown).

"To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" from *Liquid Paper: New and Selected Poems* by Peter Meinke, ©1991. All rights are controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.

# *from* **Big Fish**

*by Daniel Wallace*

1       He takes another sip of water. It seems not to be a matter of thirst so much as it is a desire for this element, to feel it on his tongue, his lips: he loves the water. Once upon a time he swam.

2       “But you know, my father was gone a lot, too,” he says, his voice crackling soft. “So I know what it’s like. My dad was a farmer. I told you that, didn’t I? I remember once he had to go off somewhere to get a special kind of seed to plant in the fields. Hopped a freight. Said he’d be back that night. One thing and another happened and he couldn’t get off. Rode it all the way out to California. Gone most of the spring. Planting time came and went. But when he came back he had the most marvelous seeds.”

3       “Let me guess,” I say. “He planted them and a huge vine grew up into the clouds, and at the top of the clouds was a castle, where a giant lived.”

4       “How did you know?”

5       “And a two-headed woman who served him tea, no doubt.”

6       At this my father tweaks his eyebrows and smiles, for a moment deep in pleasure.

7       “You remember,” he says.

8       “Sure.”

9       “Remembering a man’s stories makes him immortal, did you know that?”

10       I shake my head.

11       “It does. You never really believed that one though, did you?”

12       “Does it matter?”

13       He looks at me.

14       “No,” he says. Then, “Yes. I don’t know. At least you remembered. The point is, I think—the point is I tried to get home more. I did. Things happened, though. Natural disasters. The earth split once I think, the sky opened several times. Sometimes I barely made it out alive.”

15       His old scaly hand crawls over to touch my knee. His fingers are white, the nails cracking and dull, like old silver.

16       “I’d say I’d missed you,” I say, “if I knew what I was missing.”

- 17        "I'll tell you what the problem was," he says, lifting his hand from my knee and motioning for me to come closer. And I do. I want to hear. The next word could be his last.
- 18        "*I wanted to be a great man,*" he whispers.
- 19        "Really?" I say, as if this comes as some sort of surprise to me.
- 20        "Really," he says. His words come slow and weak but steady and strong in feeling and thought. "Can you believe it? I thought it was my destiny. A big fish in a big pond—that's what I wanted. That's what I wanted from day one. I started small. For a long time I worked for other people. Then I started my own business. I got these molds and I made candles in the basement. That business failed. I sold baby's breath to floral shops. That failed. Finally, though, I got into import/export and everything took off. I had dinner with a prime minister once, William. A prime minister! Can you imagine, this boy from Ashland having dinner in the same room with a—. There's not a continent I haven't set foot on. Not one. There are seven of them, right? I'm starting to forget which ones I . . . never mind. Now all that seems so unimportant, you know? I mean, I don't even know what a great man *is* anymore—the, uh, prerequisites. Do you, William?"
- 21        "Do I what?"
- 22        "*Know,*" he says. "Know what makes a man great."
- 23        I think about this for a long time, secretly hoping he forgets he ever asked the question. His mind has a way of wandering, but something in the way he looks at me says he's not forgetting anything now, he's holding on tight to that thought, and he's waiting for my answer. I don't know what makes a man great. I've never thought about it before. But at a time like this "I don't know" just won't do. This is an occasion one rises to, and so I make myself as light as possible and wait for a lift.
- 24        "I think," I say after a while, waiting for the right words to come, "that if a man could be said to be loved by his son, then I think that man could be considered great."
- 25        For this is the only power I have, to bestow upon my father the mantle of greatness, a thing he sought in the wider world, but one that, in a surprise turn of events, was here at home all along.
- 26        "Ah," he says, "*those* parameters," he says, stumbling over the word, all of a sudden seeming slightly woozy. "Never thought about it in those terms, exactly. Now that we are, though, thinking about it like that, I mean, in this case," he says, "in this very specific case, *mine*—"
- 27        "Yeah," I say. "You are hereby and forever after my father, Edward Bloom, a Very Great Man. So help you Fred."
- 28        And in lieu of a sword I touch him once, gently, on the shoulder.

- 29        With these words he seems to rest. His eyes close heavily, and with an eerie sort of finality that I recognize as the beginning of a departure. When the window curtains part as though of their own accord I believe for a moment that this must be the passage of his spirit going from this world to the next. But it's only the central air coming on.
- 30        "About that two-headed lady," he says with his eyes closed, murmuring, as if falling into a sleep.
- 31        "I've *heard* about the two-headed lady," I say, shaking him gently by the shoulder. "I don't want to hear about her anymore, Dad. Okay?"
- 32        "I wasn't going to *tell* you about the two-headed lady, Mr. Smarty-pants," he says.
- 33        "You weren't?"
- 34        "I was going to tell you about her sister."
- 35        "She had a *sister*?"
- 36        "Hey," he says, opening his eyes now, getting his second wind. "Would I kid you about something like that?"

From *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythical Proportions* by Daniel Wallace. © 1998 by Daniel Wallace.  
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**Use “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” (p. 26) to answer questions 19–23. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.**

**19** In which lines does the poet use personification to create a somber mood?

- A** Lines 3 through 5
  - B** Lines 9 and 10
  - C** Lines 17 through 19
  - D** Lines 28 and 29
- 

**20** Lines 20 and 21 suggest that the speaker —

- F** wants to be honest about how little he understands the creative impulse
- G** does not want to mislead his daughter into believing that she has special talent
- H** is now willing to risk hurting his daughter’s self-esteem by telling her the truth about her work
- J** wants to admit his confusion about the sometimes-stifling life choices that creative people make



**21** Read lines 26 and 27 from the poem.

when the sky is a surreal sea  
in which you drown . . .

This image can best be interpreted as meaning that —

- A** a child sees the sky as a magical ocean full of mysterious creatures
  - B** the speaker hopes to save his daughter from a terrible future
  - C** artists experience a sea of wild and unpredictable emotions
  - D** there is a danger that artists may get lost in their own creations
- 

**22** The final line of the poem suggests that —

- F** the daughter will develop an interest in more practical pursuits as she matures
  - G** the speaker expects his daughter's art to transform as she grows older
  - H** the daughter's paintings will become more whimsical as she develops her technical skills
  - J** the speaker believes that his daughter will one day be a successful professional artist
- 

**23** Which sentence describes a shift in the poem's focus?

- A** In stanza 1, the speaker focuses on his daughter's creative struggles, while in stanza 2, he imagines her eventual success as an artist.
- B** In stanza 1, the speaker focuses on his daughter's paintings, while in stanza 2, he describes his own artwork.
- C** In stanza 1, the speaker focuses on his daughter's art as an expression of childhood, while in stanza 2, he considers her future as a mature artist.
- D** In stanza 1, the speaker focuses on his daughter's early artistic success, while in stanza 2, he questions whether she should pursue a career as a painter.

Use *Big Fish* (pp. 27–29) to answer questions 24–31. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

- 24** Read paragraph 15.

*His old scaly hand crawls over to touch my knee. His fingers are white, the nails cracking and dull, like old silver.*

In this paragraph, the author uses imagery to —

- F** show the son’s fear of being touched by his father
- G** imply that the father may not really be dying after all
- H** emphasize how aged and decrepit the father appears to his son
- J** suggest that the son has little respect for his father

- 
- 25** What does paragraph 16 reveal about the son?

- A** He blames himself for his father’s long absences.
- B** He thinks his father never gave them the opportunity to be close.
- C** He is too willing to forgive his father for lying.
- D** He is unwilling to share what he knows with his father.

**26** Which line of dialogue provides the best evidence that the father is questioning his priorities?

- F** *"Now all that seems so unimportant, you know?"*
  - G** *"Remembering a man's stories makes him immortal, did you know that?"*
  - H** *"I had dinner with a prime minister once, William."*
  - J** *"I wasn't going to tell you about the two-headed lady, Mr. Smarty-pants," he says.*
- 

**27** In paragraphs 3 through 5, the phrases "Let me guess" and "no doubt" give the son's dialogue a tone that is —

- A** naive
  - B** hypercritical
  - C** indignant
  - D** sarcastic
- 

**28** Paragraph 17 suggests that the son is motivated to listen to his father because —

- F** he values his father's advice
- G** he regrets not paying attention to his father in the past
- H** he believes his father is dying
- J** he believes his father will tell him a secret

**29** Which sentence best describes the father’s moral dilemma?

- A** He must choose between impressing his son with outlandish stories and admitting that he is a financial failure.
  - B** He must resolve feelings about his failure to persuade his son to follow in his footsteps.
  - C** He must decide whether to continue to pursue his dreams or devote himself to helping his son.
  - D** He must reconcile his lifelong desire to be important with the knowledge that he neglected his family.
- 

**30** Paragraph 20 reveals that the father views his childhood home of Ashland as —

- F** a place of tremendous comfort
  - G** a place with limited opportunities
  - H** the best place to raise a family
  - J** a place of haunting memories
- 

**31** The story explores the theme of a son —

- A** disappointing his father
- B** imitating his father
- C** trying to impress his father
- D** making peace with his father

Use “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” and *Big Fish* to answer questions 32–36. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

32 Read these quotations from the two selections.

**To a Daughter with Artistic Talent**

*And you never know why (I was lying before when I said I knew).*

**Big Fish**

*I don't know what makes a man great. I've never thought about it before.*

These quotations provide evidence that **both** the speaker in “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” and the narrator in the excerpt from *Big Fish* feel —

- F as though they must prove something
- G embarrassed by their ignorance
- H compelled to admit their mistakes
- J challenged to explain something difficult

33 What is a **difference** in how the two selections portray fathers?

- A While the father in “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” is optimistic, the father in the excerpt from *Big Fish* is cynical.
- B While the father in “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” seems caring, the father in the excerpt from *Big Fish* seems self-centered.
- C While the father in “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” is open-minded, the father in the excerpt from *Big Fish* is judgmental.
- D While the father in “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” seems defensive, the father in the excerpt from *Big Fish* seems relaxed.

**34 Both** the daughter’s paintings in “To a Daughter with Artistic Talent” and the father’s stories in the excerpt from *Big Fish* —

- F** depict a world that seems more fanciful than realistic
  - G** contain imagery drawn from well-known fairy tales
  - H** are difficult for others to understand
  - J** portray heroic characters
- 

**35** Read these quotations.

**To a Daughter with Artistic Talent**

*You have painted every day  
for as long as I can remember  
and will be painting still  
when you read this, some cold  
and distant December when the child  
is old and the trees no longer silver  
but black fingers scratching a grey sky.*

**Big Fish**

*"No," he says. Then, "Yes. I don't know.  
At least you remembered. The point is, I  
think—the point is I tried to get home  
more. I did. Things happened, though.  
Natural disasters. The earth split once I  
think, the sky opened several times.  
Sometimes I barely made it out alive."*

**Both** quotations use imagery that conveys a sense of —

- A** inner turmoil
- B** stubbornness
- C** guilt
- D** exaggerated self-confidence

- 36** Which sentence best states a **difference** between the attitude of the speaker in the poem and the attitude of the narrator in the story?
- F** The speaker in the poem worries that his daughter gets carried away by her imagination, while the narrator in the story admires the way his father uses his imagination.
  - G** The speaker in the poem believes that his daughter paints to express her true feelings, while the narrator in the story believes that his father tells stories to escape reality.
  - H** The speaker in the poem thinks his daughter paints to bring them closer together, while the narrator in the story thinks his father tells stories to distance himself from others.
  - J** The speaker in the poem believes that painting is good for his daughter's health, while the narrator in the story worries that his father's stories are a symptom of illness.

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

## Where the Wild Things Are

by Beth Pratt-Bergstrom  
Earth Island Journal

- 1 In 2012, I read a headline in the *Los Angeles Times*, “Mountain lion makes itself at home in Griffith Park,” that radically transformed my life’s work. At first glance I thought it simply a curious story that defied plausibility. How could a mountain lion be living in the middle of the second largest city in the United States? And why would the poor cat even want to?
- 2 Most of my 25-year environmental career has been spent in two of the largest national parks in this country—Yosemite and Yellowstone. Protected areas like those fit more with my preconceived notion of where wildlife should live, especially a large predator. My long-held view of Los Angeles (or of any city really) dismissed urban centers as environmental wastelands, full of endless highways, traffic snarls, and unchecked development that had banished all hope of even a butterfly being able to safely flutter through.
- 3 Like most opinions founded on ignorance, this proved to be very wrong.
- 4 After reading about the city-dwelling cougar, I contacted the National Park Service researchers studying the mountain lion—now famously known as P-22—and accompanied them on an excursion to track him in Griffith Park. The park is a hybrid of city and nature surrounded by a spider web of freeways, only two miles from the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and visited by 10 million people annually. As I trekked around, surrounded by people at every turn and confronted with the inescapable Hollywood sign and the imposing Los Angeles skyline, I dismissed this landscape as being about as far from the untrammelled wilderness of a Yellowstone or Yosemite as one could get. I scoffed at the notion of “nature” in a park with a golf course, tennis courts, a merry-go-round and miniature train, the Griffith Observatory, and the Greek Theater.





- 5 And then I had a life changing epiphany. *This cat has more of an imagination than I do.*
- 6 Why *can't* a mountain lion live in a city? Why is the human-built environment seen as off-limits to wildlife? If it's good enough for a mountain lion, who are we to judge?
- 7 I'll always be a national park advocate. Yosemite remains my favorite place on Earth, and I relish my experiences of listening to a wolf howl and watching a grizzly bear lope by in the wilds of Yellowstone. Five years ago, I would have laughed hysterically if you had told me I'd soon be dedicating my career to the conservation of wildlife in cities. But P-22 shifted my perspective. His remarkable story of crossing two of the busiest freeways in the country to find a new home, as well as his ability (and those of his Santa Monica Mountain cougar kin) to adapt to life in a challenging urban interface speaks to the beauty and resiliency of wild things.
- 8 After P-22 opened my eyes, I began seeing examples of this new paradigm of coexistence working across California. Now I focus most of my work on helping wildlife in cities, and I've just finished writing a book on the success stories of people and wildlife bending our preconceived rules about what is "natural," and thriving together instead of apart.
- 9 You'd be surprised at the places where these stories crop up. In Silicon Valley, for instance, a family of foxes decided to make a home on the Facebook campus in Menlo Park along with 2,500 employees, and Mark Zuckerberg himself took an interest in the skulk. Instead of treating them as pests, the Facebook staff embraced sharing their workplace with these admittedly adorable wild neighbors. They even created a FB Fox page that boasts over 100,000 followers from all over the world. But the interest extended beyond sharing images suitable for #cuteoverload. The motto of the FB Fox page "Please honor the foxes—no chasing or feeding—just mutual respect," speaks to the desire to ensure the animals stay safe, healthy, and wild. Facebook's facilities-management team worked with wildlife officials and contacted a local gray fox researcher to educate staff about the animal. In one typical pro-fox social media post, an employee shared a photo of one of the foxes resting under his automobile with the reminder: "Before you drive off, please check if there is a fox under or near your car."
- 10 The traditional philosophy of conservation has been to segregate people and wildlife—to set aside islands of habitat—and although we must continue to do so, it's not enough. And it's not entirely working. Even in the best-protected places on the planet—national parks—some species are having a tough time. When the number-one threat to wildlife worldwide is loss of habitat, we can no longer think of our cities or towns or neighborhoods, or even our backyards, as exempt from the natural world—or as off-limits to wildlife. Our shared spaces are as essential to conservation as our traditionally protected lands.

- 11 Yes, wildlife would be better served if cities were converted back to open space. But barring a stunning reversal of the trends of human existence, this won't happen any time soon. Given this reality, isn't a city that incorporates wildlife surely better than one that doesn't?
- 12 Not that every city could, or should, have a mountain lion. But there are many other creatures, both big and small, that could do with some urban love. Take the monarch butterfly, for instance. Populations of this amazing orange and black butterfly, which migrates thousands of miles from Canada to Mexico City, have declined by as much as 90 percent across the US. The problem? The plentiful "gas stations" of milkweed and other plants needed to sustain them along their migration route have largely disappeared. Planting milkweed and creating habitat is one easy way to help monarch populations rebound, and this can even be done from an apartment balcony. Wherever we live, we can create our own "national park" space.
- 13 National parks and other protected areas are vital to conservation. But what I have come to realize since that day spent walking in Griffith Park is that cities are also essential to the future of wildlife. Wouldn't it be a wonderful legacy for the next 100 years of national parks if we expanded our values and considered it just as important for cities to have the same charge as our parks "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations"?
- 14 Adopting an expanded view of the national park ethic in our urban spaces would exponentially increase our ability to protect wildlife and biodiversity around the world.
- 15 I, for one, believe cities and nature can mix and need to mix for wildlife to have a future. We need to foster a daily relationship with our wild, nonhuman kin. It's not about habituating wildlife to us, but about habituating ourselves to the wild world.

Used with permission.

**37** What is the author’s purpose for writing this article?

- A** To encourage people to visit national parks
  - B** To advocate for coexistence of humans and wildlife in urban areas
  - C** To explain methods for tracking a cougar through Griffith Park
  - D** To persuade people to convert urban cities back to natural spaces
- 

**38** Which words from paragraph 7 best help the reader understand the meaning of the word *resiliency*?

- F** *relish my experiences*
- G** *cougar kin*
- H** *adapt to life*
- J** *urban interface*

**39** Why does the author use rhetorical questions in paragraph 6?

- A** To argue that human-built environments are not suitable for wildlife
  - B** To illustrate a shift in her perspective regarding wildlife habitats
  - C** To explain that mountain lions are vastly different from other types of wildlife
  - D** To prove that she has experience on the subject of mountain lions
- 

**40** In paragraph 12, why does the author refer to milkweed plants as “gas stations” for monarch butterflies?

- F** Milkweed plants are enjoyed by several species of butterflies.
  - G** Milkweed plants are becoming more available in cities.
  - H** Milkweed plants can be grown in any environment.
  - J** Milkweed plants are essential for the migration of monarch butterflies.
- 

**41** In paragraph 5, the author conveys a tone of —

- A** relief
- B** surprise
- C** humiliation
- D** pride

**42** What is one conclusion the author makes about wildlife?

- F** Certain urban spaces should be abandoned by people because wildlife need them more.
  - G** Larger species of wildlife are not as strong as smaller species of wildlife.
  - H** Humans need to change their understanding of wildlife preservation.
  - J** More national parks should be formed to help wildlife.
- 

**43** Read this quotation from paragraph 9.

*You'd be surprised at the places where these stories crop up. In Silicon Valley, for instance, a family of foxes decided to make a home on the Facebook campus in Menlo Park along with 2,500 employees, and Mark Zuckerberg himself took an interest in the skulk.*

Why does the author include this idea?

- A** To emphasize that wildlife living in urban areas is more common than people think
  - B** To compare the wildlife found in different regions of California
  - C** To describe Mark Zuckerberg's disapproval of the foxes living on the Facebook campus
  - D** To question whether the foxes are safe living in Menlo Park
- 

**44** In paragraph 14, what does *biodiversity* mean?

- F** Decisions about nature made by people
- G** Understanding and respecting nature
- H** Multiple species of plants and animals
- J** Animals living in populated urban areas

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

## Your Brain on Movies

by Aaron Millar  
Odyssey Magazine  
March 2014

- 1 The fell beast, a black dragon with snake teeth and razor talons, swoops down on the wizard Gandalf. Cut to Frodo, a hobbit from the Shire, holding the ring of power over the fiery Cracks of Doom. As the ring falls, Mount Doom starts to explode, leaving Frodo stranded, surrounded on all sides by red-hot lava, and facing certain death.
- 2 During the final scenes of *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, we experience the full gamut of emotions. We gasp as the flames engulf Frodo; we cheer when Gandalf saves him. But hobbits do not exist, and there never was one ring to bind them all, or save them. So what's going on? There must be a special kind of movie magic that makes us believe what we know to be false and care about what we know isn't real. Well, as it happens, there is a special kind of magic, but it's not in the movie. It's in the minds of people who watch them.

### Handing Over Control

- 3 Dr. Norman Holland, of the University of Florida and author of *Literature and the Brain*, believes this magic is particularly potent when we watch movies on the big screen. "The first thing that happens," he argues, "is you give up control. The movie is in control." In normal life our brains are like tractor beams, busy scanning the environment with our senses, and sucking up any information that seems important or interesting: a sudden loud noise, a car racing towards us. This is called the attentional system, and it literally means the part of the brain that directs what we pay attention to. But as the lights come down in the cinema, and the characters come alive on screen, we switch off our tractor beams and let the movie control our attention instead. Edits, close-ups, sudden on-screen movement—these are all filmmaking techniques that direct our attention and allow us to cede control to the movie.
- 4 As that happens, we become increasingly absorbed in the film: the real world of school and parents and homework disappears. We stop sensing our body, we forget where we are, we are utterly transported to the world of the silver screen. Psychologists call this kind of mental state "flow": when our attention is completely absorbed in one activity and there isn't any juice left in the tractor beam, our attentional system, to suck up any more information. We are effortlessly swept along in the currents of the ride. This is why we love the movies: it's like going on a roller coaster for the brain.

### Are You for Real?

- 5 But there's another kind of magic at work here too: as we give up control, our sense of reality changes. "The way we know things are real," Holland explains,

"is when we interact with them. In a movie theater we're not planning to do anything—we're not going to change what we're watching—and that turns off the systems we use for regulating our actions; in particular it turns off the system that tells us what's real and what's not real." Deep down we know that what we're seeing is make-believe, but because we're not going to act upon it, because it doesn't have a direct physical bearing upon us, we don't test its plausibility in the same way we do normal life. It's like that part of our brain goes on a temporary vacation. Film theorists and psychologists call this "suspension of disbelief" and because of it, fell beasts really are frightening, and we genuinely care about what happens to Frodo.

- 6 But something else is happening in the brain to make this possible too. In the same way that a smart phone has different apps for different jobs, and each one has a unique place on your home screen, the mind has different abilities, and each one has a distinct place in the brain. "Your knowledge that you're only watching a movie happens in the front part of your brain," Holland explains. "That's the most advanced part, where you do your thinking and planning." But emotions come from a different area, the limbic system, in the back of the brain, one of the most primitive parts. "We feel real emotions toward unreal fictions," Holland says, "because two different brain systems are at work." In other words, even though our front brain knows that a movie isn't real, the back brain never gets the message. When Frodo is rescued from the fire, our limbic system automatically produces a physiological response, and a feeling of genuine relief, as if it were actually happening. Movies may be an illusion, but the emotions they produce are real.

### **The Big Screen**

- 7 Sadly, the intensity of the emotions that movies produce in us, and the consequent pleasure we get from watching them, may actually be diminishing. It has to do with the new ways in which we consume them. At home, or on our smart phones, movies are wonderfully convenient. But watching in this way limits their magic because we're in control: we have the power to stop the film or fast forward bits we don't like. On top of that, we are bombarded with distractions: unfinished homework lying on the coffee table, the text message that's just arrived from a friend. The cinema is designed to take us away from all of that, and in doing so, it maximizes the psychological effects of film. "If you're not giving up control to the movie," Holland says, "you're getting a thinned-out movie experience." More control might be more convenient, but it won't mean more magic. Surely we deserve better than that, and Frodo does too.

## Maximizing the Magic of Movies

The best environment to watch movies is in the theater; cinemas are designed to maximize the psychological effects of film. But if you're watching at home, try out these simple tips to make your viewing experience richer and more fun.

- **TURN THE LIGHTS OFF.** Remove all sensory information except the lights from the screen. Your brain's attentional system, the part that directs what we pay attention to, will be drawn deeper into the world of the movie.
- **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.** Turn off your phone and clear the clutter from your coffee table. Your brain's ability to suspend disbelief will be increased if there's nothing drawing attention away from the screen.
- **DON'T TALK.** When you talk during a movie—especially when you analyze what's happening—you're reminding your brain that what you're watching isn't real, reducing the movie's believability and emotional impact.
- **TURN THE SOUND UP.** Onscreen sounds are an important way film makers direct our attention and keep us engaged with the movie. Music is important too: noises and soundtracks affect us emotionally, intensifying the viewing experience.

"Your Brain on Movies" by Aaron Millar, from *Odyssey*, March 2014. Copyright © 2014 by Carus Publishing Company d/b/a Cricket Media.



**45** Read this quotation from paragraph 4.

*This is why we love the movies: it's like going on a roller coaster for the brain.*

Why does the author use this comparison?

- A** To illustrate the level of excitement a movie can provide
  - B** To explain the filmmaking techniques used by movie directors
  - C** To show how movies help people cope with real-world worries
  - D** To describe the mental processes involved with making a movie
- 

**46** Which word from paragraph 3 means “powerful” or “effective”?

- F** *potent*
  - G** *racing*
  - H** *attentional*
  - J** *literally*
- 

**47** What is the primary purpose of the boxed information at the end of the article?

- A** To persuade readers to watch movies in an actual theater rather than at home
- B** To explain why movies watched at home are less enjoyable
- C** To give advice for ways to enhance the home movie-watching experience
- D** To demonstrate why the convenience of watching movies at home is appealing

**48** In paragraph 1 of the article, what type of evidence does the author present?

- F** Factual data
  - G** Personal experience
  - H** Persuasive argument
  - J** Anecdotal details
- 

**49** Which statement best expresses the main idea of paragraph 5?

- A** Movies can cause people to become emotional.
- B** The way people relate to a movie depends on how realistic it is.
- C** Movies can make people ignore the difference between reality and fiction.
- D** People lose awareness of their surroundings in a movie theater.

**50** According to paragraph 6, what does the limbic system control?

- F** Emotions
  - G** Selective attention
  - H** Comprehension
  - J** Spatial awareness
- 

**51** Why does the author include paragraph 7?

- A** To contrast the enjoyment received from older and newer movies
  - B** To express concern regarding the ways people often watch movies today
  - C** To suggest that newer movies lack emotional appeal for viewers
  - D** To explain why theater attendance has declined in recent years
- 

**52** Which of these best describes the author's purpose for writing this article?

- F** To inform people about what makes a movie-watching experience enjoyable
- G** To analyze the techniques moviemakers use to create popular movies
- H** To compare the experiences of watching a movie at home and in a theater
- J** To persuade people to avoid watching movies on smart phones



Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
1	5	Supporting	E.15(A)	C
2	5	Readiness	E.13(C)	J
3	5	Readiness	E.13(C)	B
4	5	Supporting	E.15(A)	J
5	5	Supporting	E.16(A)	C
6	5	Readiness	E.13(C)	F
7	5	Supporting	E.16(D)	D
8	5	Readiness	E.13(C)	F
9	5	Supporting	E.16(D)	B
10	6	Readiness	E.17(C)	F
11	6	Readiness	E.17(C)	B
12	6	Readiness	E.18(A)	J
13	6	Readiness	E.18(B)	C
14	6	Readiness	E.13(D)	J
15	6	Readiness	E.18(B)	B
16	6	Supporting	E.17(A)	H
17	6	Readiness	E.19(A)	C
18	6	Readiness	E.13(D)	F
Prompt	4	Readiness	E.16(A)	*
19	2	Supporting	E.3 Fig. 19(B)	C
20	2	Supporting	E.3 Fig. 19(B)	F
21	2	Supporting	E.7 Fig. 19(B)	D
22	2	Supporting	E.3 Fig. 19(B)	G
23	2	Supporting	E.3(A)	C
24	2	Readiness	E.7 Fig. 19(B)	H
25	2	Readiness	E.5 Fig. 19(B)	B
26	2	Supporting	E.5(B)	F
27	2	Supporting	E.5(C)	D
28	2	Readiness	E.5 Fig. 19(B)	H
29	2	Supporting	E.5(B)	D
30	2	Readiness	E.5 Fig. 19(B)	G
31	2	Readiness	E.2 Fig. 19(B)	D
32	1	Readiness	Fig. 19(B)	J
33	1	Readiness	Fig. 19(B)	B
34	1	Readiness	Fig. 19(B)	F
35	1	Readiness	Fig. 19(B)	A
36	1	Readiness	Fig. 19(B)	G
37	3	Readiness	E.8(A)	B
38	1	Readiness	E.1(B)	H
39	3	Supporting	E.10 Fig. 19(B)	B
40	3	Supporting	E.10 Fig. 19(B)	J
41	3	Supporting	E.10 Fig. 19(B)	B
42	3	Supporting	E.10 Fig. 19(B)	H
43	3	Readiness	E.10 Fig. 19(B)	A
44	1	Supporting	E.1(A)	H
45	3	Readiness	E.9(C)	A
46	1	Readiness	E.1(B)	F
47	3	Supporting	E.12 Fig. 19(B)	C
48	3	Supporting	E.9(B)	J
49	3	Readiness	E.8(A)	C
50	3	Readiness	E.8(A)	F
51	3	Readiness	E.9(C)	B
52	3	Readiness	E.8(A)	F

Note: The first character of the Content Student Expectation designates English I or English II.

\*A scoring guide is used to determine the score for the written composition.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	A transition, which is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas, is created with this sentence. In sentence 4, the author informs the reader “marching bands aren’t found in just this state or even just this country,” and then in sentence 5, the author begins to focus in on “one country” that has a unique marching band. Adding the sentence after sentence 4 creates an appropriate transition.
	Option A is incorrect	Placing the additional sentence here would create a disruption in the paragraph by introducing information about marching bands in other countries in between two sentences about marching bands in Texas.
	Option B is incorrect	Placing the additional sentence here would introduce information about students from around the world in between two sentences about students from Texas. This would be an ineffective place for the new sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	Placing the additional sentence here would confuse the reader by inserting information about marching bands around the world after the author has begun to narrow in to focus on one country.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
2	Option J is correct	Replacing “Furthermore” with “Instead” in sentence 11 creates an appropriate transition, which is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. Using “Instead” establishes a contrast between the musical cues used by traditional marching bands and the direction of an announcer utilized by NSSU students practicing <i>shuudan koudou</i> .
	Option F is incorrect	Sentence 10 refers to music cues typically used by marching students, so using the transition “For example” at the beginning of sentence 11 establishes the expectation that the author will provide examples of music cues.
	Option G is incorrect	The phrase “In conclusion” is typically used to introduce a summary of a topic or idea, which the author is not doing in sentence 11.
	Option H is incorrect	The word “Overall” is typically used to indicate that the author is going to offer a general opinion, but a contrasting idea with sentence 10 is provided in sentence 11.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
3	Option B is correct	A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word it modifies or describes. The misplaced modifier error is corrected in this revision by moving the word "flaw" next to the word "visible."
	Option A is incorrect	A confusing sentence is created with this revision, and the misplaced modifier error is not adequately repaired.
	Option C is incorrect	A comma-splice error, which occurs when two clauses are incorrectly joined, is introduced in this revision.
	Option D is incorrect	Because the phrase "visible flaw" is used in the sentence, it is redundant to also say that the flaw "can be seen."

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
4	Option J is correct	The focus of sentences 19 through 23 is the benefit students at NSSU obtain from participating in precision walking. J.T. can remove the extraneous information about master's and doctoral degree programs, since there is no connection between this sentence and the rest of the information in the paragraph.
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 2, J.T. describes synchronized walking. In sentence 9, J.T. describes the actions of students participating in <i>shuudan koudou</i> , which helps the reader have a better idea of what synchronized walking is, so it should not be deleted.
	Option G is incorrect	In sentence 13, J.T. offers additional information about what is involved in synchronized walking. This information is helpful to the reader and not extraneous.
	Option H is incorrect	The focus of sentences 16 and 17 is on the preparation students put into synchronized walking. J.T. includes additional information in sentence 18 to elaborate on this idea.



## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
5	Option C is correct	A position statement, or thesis statement, is a statement that summarizes the main point or claim of a piece of writing. In sentence 6, Mimi tells the reader that the consumption of bottled water “needs to stop now!” In this replacement, Mimi clarifies her claim, which is that reusable containers are a much better alternative to plastic water bottles and can solve problems.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Mimi does refer to buying bottled water as a problem, she does not clearly establish her claim in this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	Mimi telling the reader to immediately stop doing something and protest is not a clear position statement, because she offers a demand instead of a clear explanation of her ideas.
	Option D is incorrect	Mimi does not offer a clear position statement that clarifies her ideas in this sentence.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
6	Option F is correct	Mimi expresses a similar idea in sentences 8 and 9: bottled water is just attractively packaged tap water. The most effective way to combine the two short sentences into a single sentence is through the use of a comma and a coordinating conjunction.
	Option G is incorrect	By combining the sentences in this manner, Mimi introduces an erroneous cause-and-effect relationship. Bottled water is not processed tap water because of the packaging.
	Option H is incorrect	In this sentence, Mimi uses the coordinating conjunction “so,” which suggests a cause-and-effect relationship that does not exist between the two clauses within the sentence.
	Option J is incorrect	By combining the sentences in this manner, Mimi introduces an erroneous cause-and-effect relationship. Bottled water is not attractively packaged because it is processed tap water.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
7	Option D is correct	In sentences 14 through 18, Mimi focuses on the monetary cost of bottled water. In sentences 19 through 23, Mimi describes the cost to the environment. By adding this sentence as a transition, which is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas, Mimi is connecting the ideas that purchasing bottled water is a huge cost both in terms of money and environmental damage.
	Option A is incorrect	By adding this sentence, Mimi is restating what she has already explained in sentences 14 through 18, rather than improving the transition between the third and fourth paragraphs.
	Option B is incorrect	Adding this sentence does not make sense, as Mimi does not make the claim that people think bottled water is harmless, nor does she compare different types of plastic containers.
	Option C is incorrect	By adding this sentence, Mimi would be repeating an idea from the previous sentence, rather than creating a transition between the third and fourth paragraphs.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
8	Option F is correct	By making the revision to sentence 21, Mimi is clarifying that the bottles decompose “over hundreds of years” and release chemicals in the process. The awkward original sentence is better clarified with this revision.
	Option G is incorrect	Mimi wants to make the point that landfills are filled with discarded bottles that release chemicals as they decompose, not that landfills are filled with chemicals that decompose the bottles.
	Option H is incorrect	Based on the revision, the reader may think that chemicals, rather than bottles, have been discarded into landfills. The resulting sentence is still awkward and unclear.
	Option J is incorrect	By making this revision, Mimi is suggesting that there are two separate problems—bottles filling up landfills and bottles decomposing and releasing chemicals—when in fact the two issues are directly related.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
9	Option B is correct	A call to action is a statement that encourages the reader to consider an idea or change a behavior. Throughout her paper, Mimi informs the reader about the economic and environmental costs of purchasing bottled water. By inserting this statement after sentence 30, Mimi reiterates the issues and encourages readers to take action.
	Option A is incorrect	By including this statement, Mimi is reminding the reader that plastic water bottles are a problem, but she is not offering an actionable solution.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Mimi does remind readers about a specific problem associated with bottled water, she only focuses on the environmental points of her essay in this sentence. It is too narrow to serve as a clear call to action.
	Option D is incorrect	Although Mimi is reminding readers that bottled water is an avoidable expense, she does not include any reference to the environmental costs of bottled water.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
10	Option F is correct	A sentence fragment is a group of words containing an incomplete thought and lacking the grammatical structure that a sentence must include. By making the revision, Savannah is clarifying that she is the subject of the sentence and the one being “transported back to childhood.” This change corrects the existing sentence fragment in sentence 2.
	Option G is incorrect	Inserting a comma after “childhood” creates an unnecessary pause in the sentence. The sentence fragment is not corrected.
	Option H is incorrect	Changing “plays” to “playing” introduces a verb-form error in the sentence and does not correct the sentence fragment.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the sentence fragment.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
11	Option B is correct	A run-on sentence is an error in which two or more clauses are joined incorrectly. By inserting the conjunction “as” at the beginning of sentence 5, Savannah corrects the run-on.
	Option A is incorrect	Unnecessarily adding the word “that” in front of “teases my nostrils” does not correct the run-on error. Instead, a sentence fragment, which is a group of words containing an incomplete thought and lacking the grammatical structure that a sentence must include, is created.
	Option C is incorrect	Removing the subject “I” reduces the clarity of the sentence and creates a sentence fragment.
	Option D is incorrect	The first clause in the sentence is improved in this revision, but the change to the second clause creates a sentence fragment.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
12	Option J is correct	Proper nouns refer to a specific person, place, idea, or event and are capitalized. "Soccer" is not a proper noun and does not need to be capitalized.
	Option F is incorrect	Inserting a comma after "grass" incorrectly separates the subject and the verb in the sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	Changing "reminds" to "reminding" introduces a verb-form error into the sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	Changing "playing" to "to play" introduces a verb-form error into the sentence.



## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
13	Option C is correct	Changing "centers'" to "centers" fixes a punctuation error involving the incorrect use of a possessive noun. In sentence 18, Savannah is referring to two centers: emotion and memory. She is not referring to something that belongs to a center.
	Option A is incorrect	Inserting a comma after "way" would introduce an unnecessary separation between the clauses in the sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing "is processed" to "has processed" would incorrectly change the verb tense from present to past.
	Option D is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged would not correct the inappropriate use of a possessive noun.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
14	Option J is correct	As written, sentence 20 is free of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors, so no change is needed.
	Option F is incorrect	The comma is used correctly in the sentence, as it separates the introductory clause from the main part of the sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	This change creates a punctuation error by inserting an unnecessary comma.
	Option H is incorrect	Changing “innocent” to “inocent” would create a spelling error.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
15	Option B is correct	Changing the colon to a comma corrects a punctuation error in the sentence. The text before a colon should be a grammatically complete sentence, so a comma is the appropriate punctuation to use in this sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	The word "Organization" is part of the proper noun "Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations." Proper nouns, which are nouns that refer to a specific person, place, idea, or event, should be capitalized.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing "species" to "species'" introduces a punctuation error into the sentence by incorrectly making the noun possessive with an apostrophe.
	Option D is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged would not correct the inappropriate use of a colon instead of a comma.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
16	Option H is correct	Changing “to trying” to “to try” corrects a verb-form error in sentence 11.
	Option F is incorrect	Removing the word “since” will result in a run-on sentence, which is an error in which two or more clauses or phrases are joined incorrectly.
	Option G is incorrect	Changing “accustomed” to “acustomed” would introduce a spelling error.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged would not correct the verb-form error.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
17	Option C is correct	Changing "preferances" to "preferences" corrects a spelling error in the sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing "Doing" to "When we do" changes the meaning of the sentence. The change makes it seem like the author is referring to something that happens, instead of something that might or could happen.
	Option B is incorrect	The word "though" is being used as an adverb in the middle of a sentence, and the author is correctly setting off the adverb with a comma before and after it.
	Option D is incorrect	The use of "simply" is correct because it is being used as an adverb to modify the verb "are."

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
18	Option F is correct	Changing “whose” to “who’s” corrects a usage error in the sentence. Adam is describing his uncle, who is “very adventurous.” The word “who’s” is a contraction linking the words “who” and “is,” while “whose” is the possessive form of “who.”
	Option G is incorrect	Adam is describing an action his uncle performed in the past, so using “brought” is appropriate.
	Option H is incorrect	It is appropriate to use a comma before the conjunction “and” when separating two independent clauses, which are clauses that can stand alone as complete sentences.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged would not correct the usage error in the sentence.
19	Option C is correct	Personification is a type of figurative language where human or animal characteristics are applied to something that is not alive. The poet uses personification in lines 17 through 19 to create a somber mood. With the words “the trees no longer silver/but black fingers scratching a grey sky,” the poet gives trees the human quality of fingers to suggest that with age the painter may replace pretty silver branches with branches that are jagged and bare.
	Option A is incorrect	In lines 3 through 5, the poet is explaining that the “green birds” in the painting look “almost real.” When he uses the words “lonely child,” he is referring to an actual child, so there is no personification in these lines.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet does not attribute any human or animal characteristics to the gifts, so there is no personification in lines 9 and 10.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet is addressing the child, not giving human characteristics to an inanimate object, so there is no personification in lines 28 and 29.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
20	Option F is correct	In lines 20 and 21, the author suggests that the speaker wants to be honest about how little he understands the creative impulse. The speaker says, “(I was lying/before when I said I knew.)” He is trying to be honest and admit that he does not truly understand his daughter’s artistic drive.
	Option G is incorrect	The speaker is talking about a lack of understanding regarding his daughter’s creative drive. There is no suggestion that he worries about misleading his daughter about her artistic talent.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker is not risking hurting his daughter’s self-esteem by telling her the truth about her work; rather, he is telling her the truth about his lack of understanding of her creative drive.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the speaker admits how little he really understands about his daughter’s creative impulses, he is not confused about the life choices of creative people in general.
21	Option D is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The poet uses the imagery in lines 26 and 27 to suggest that there is danger that artists may get lost in their own creations. In these lines, the artist isn’t literally drowning but figuratively being swept into the dreamlike world of artistic creations.
	Option A is incorrect	The poet uses imagery in these lines to suggest that artists may become lost in their own creations, not to suggest that a child imagines the sky in one particular way.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no evidence that the imagery in these lines is intended literally or that the speaker hopes to save his daughter from a terrible future.
	Option C is incorrect	The poet is not referring to the emotions of artists in lines 26 and 27. He is referring to the possibility that an artist’s own creations may be overwhelming.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
22	Option G is correct	In the final line of the poem, the speaker expects his daughter's art to transform as she grows older. His daughter's paintings of birds will "change from green to blue to brown" as she loses her childlike view of the world and adopts a more realistic approach to painting.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker expects that his daughter's paintings will change as she grows older, but there is no evidence that her interests will become more practical and move her away from painting.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker believes his daughter's paintings will become more realistic as she grows and develops her skills, which means they will become less whimsical, not more whimsical.
	Option J is incorrect	The speaker is contemplating how his daughter's paintings will change, but there is no evidence that the speaker believes his daughter will become a professional artist.
23	Option C is correct	The poet uses this sentence to describe the shift in the poem's focus. In stanza 1, the speaker focuses on his daughter's art as an expression of childhood, since he explains she paints things such as green birds "without reasoning" (line 6), as any child would. In stanza 2, the speaker shifts focus to his daughter's future as an artist, suggesting that when she is older she will be painting trees more realistically and "no longer silver" (line 18).
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker does not suggest that his daughter has any creative struggles in stanza 1 — she paints intuitively, "without reasoning" (line 6). In stanza 2, there is no evidence to support the idea that the speaker expects his daughter to become a successful artist.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker focuses on his daughter's artwork throughout both stanza 1 and stanza 2. There is no focus on his own artwork.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no context in stanza 1 to support the idea that the speaker's daughter has had early artistic success, and there is no evidence in stanza 2 that the speaker questions whether she should pursue painting as a future career.



## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
24	Option H is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. In this paragraph, the author uses imagery to emphasize how aged and decrepit the father appears to his son. The father's hand is described as "old" and "scaly." The nails are unkempt and are described as "cracking and dull."
	Option F is incorrect	Although a description of the father's hand and its actions are presented in paragraph 15, there is no evidence to support the idea that the son is afraid of being touched by his father.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no evidence provided in paragraph 15 regarding the father's death and when it will occur.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the description of the father's hand is indicative of the man's age and decrepit state, there is no evidence that the son has a lack of respect for his father.
25	Option B is correct	In paragraph 16, the author reveals that the son thinks his father never gave them the opportunity to be close. The son says that he would tell his father he missed him all those times he wasn't home, except he didn't know what he was missing because he wasn't able to spend more time with his father.
	Option A is incorrect	The son is not taking blame for his father's long absences; he is telling his father that he doesn't know what he missed because his father was not able to spend more time with him.
	Option C is incorrect	Paragraph 16 is about the distance that existed between father and son, not about the father lying to the son.
	Option D is incorrect	The son is willingly sharing his feelings about not being close with his father, so he is not unwilling to share what he knows.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
26	Option F is correct	Evidence that the father is questioning his priorities is presented in this line of dialogue from the end of paragraph 20, after the father describes some of the things he accomplished in his life that could be considered great. Now he is questioning whether those things are even important.
	Option G is incorrect	Although in this line of dialogue the father poses a question to his son, the father isn't questioning his own priorities with this question.
	Option H is incorrect	This is something that the father accomplished, but it is just a statement of a fact; the father's concerns about his priorities are not evident in this line of dialogue.
	Option J is incorrect	In this line of dialogue, the father is teasing his son, not questioning his own priorities.
27	Option D is correct	In paragraphs 3 through 5, the phrases "Let me guess" and "no doubt" are used to give the son's dialogue a sarcastic tone. The son is used to his father's unbelievable stories, so he is sarcastically guessing why his father spent a lot of time away from home.
	Option A is incorrect	The son does not actually believe his father's stories, so he is not naïve.
	Option B is incorrect	The son does not present a hypercritical tone about his father in these paragraphs, but he does have a sarcastic tone regarding his father's stories.
	Option C is incorrect	The son does not have an indignant tone in these paragraphs. He does express sarcasm through the phrases "Let me guess" and "no doubt."

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
28	Option H is correct	In paragraph 17, the author suggests that the son is motivated to listen to his father because he believes his father is dying. When the father motions for the son to come closer so he can listen to what the father is going to say, the son explains, "I want to hear. The next word could be his last."
	Option F is incorrect	Although the son wants to hear his father's words, it is because they might be the last words he speaks, not because the son values his father's advice.
	Option G is incorrect	Although in other paragraphs the son indicates that he is tired of hearing his father's repeated stories, in paragraph 17 there is no evidence to support the idea that he regrets not paying attention to his father.
	Option J is incorrect	The son wants to hear what his father is going to say because these words could be his last. There is no indication that the son believes his father will tell him a secret.
29	Option D is correct	This statement best describes the father's moral dilemma. The father was not home much because he was out trying "to be a great man" (paragraph 18), and at the end of his life he must reconcile his desire to be important with the knowledge that he neglected his own family.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 20 the father admits he had a few failed businesses, and throughout the selection there are references to the fantasy stories he often shares with his son. However, there is no evidence that he is making a choice between impressing his son with stories and admitting financial failure.
	Option B is incorrect	The father does not attempt to persuade his son to follow in his footsteps in the selection.
	Option C is incorrect	The father does not express a desire to continue to pursue his dreams or to devote himself to helping his son in the selection. Instead, he reflects on choices he made in the past.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
30	Option G is correct	In paragraph 20, the father's recollections reveal that he views his childhood home of Ashland as a place with limited opportunities. He asks if his son can imagine "this boy from Ashland having dinner in the same room" with a prime minister, suggesting it was an unlikely occurrence for someone who came from an insignificant place such as Ashland.
	Option F is incorrect	There is no evidence to support the idea that Ashland was a place of tremendous comfort for the father.
	Option H is incorrect	The father does not discuss raising a family in paragraph 20, so there is no context to support the idea that Ashland is the best place to raise a family.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the father describes some memories of failed businesses in paragraph 20, he does not suggest that his memories of Ashland are haunting.
31	Option D is correct	The theme, or central idea, of the story is about a son making peace with his father. The father is old and in failing health, and although he was not close to his son in the past, the son tells him, "[I]f a man could be said to be loved by his son, then I think that man could be considered great" (paragraph 24). The son wants to satisfy his father's desire to be great before his father dies.
	Option A is incorrect	The father is not disappointed in his son. If anything, he is disappointed in himself because he isn't sure if he accomplished what he hoped to accomplish during his life.
	Option B is incorrect	Although at one point the son recounts one of his father's outlandish stories, he is not imitating his father; he is humoring his father's habit of telling outlandish stories as they talk about his father's life.
	Option C is incorrect	The son is not trying to impress his father in the story; he is trying to make peace with his father before he passes away.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
32	Option J is correct	There is evidence in these quotations that the speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" and the narrator in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> both feel challenged to explain something difficult. The speaker from the poem is trying to explain his daughter's artistic drive, although he admits he doesn't understand it. The narrator from <i>Big Fish</i> is trying to help his father satisfy his lifelong quest for greatness by explaining what a man has to do to be considered great.
	Option F is incorrect	Neither the speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" nor the narrator in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is trying to prove anything. The speaker in the poem openly admits he doesn't understand his daughter's artistic drive, and the narrator in the excerpt admits he is no longer certain about what makes a man great.
	Option G is incorrect	Neither the speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" nor the narrator in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> feel embarrassed by their ignorance. Both individuals openly admit that they don't exactly know how to explain the concepts on which they are reflecting.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" and the narrator in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> do openly admit that they are struggling to understand the concepts on which they are reflecting, it is because they are explaining difficult concepts, not because they are admitting to mistakes.
33	Option B is correct	In "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent," the father seems caring because he is trying to understand his daughter's artistic drive and addresses his daughter "with love and pride" (line 28). By contrast, the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> comes across as somewhat self-centered, since he is concerned with whether or not he fulfilled his lifelong quest to be great.
	Option A is incorrect	The father in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" is not necessarily optimistic, especially when thinking about the ways his daughter will struggle as an artist, and the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is more self-centered than cynical.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the father in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" seems open-minded toward his daughter's artwork and artistic drive, the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is not judgmental.
	Option D is incorrect	The father in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" is not defensive, and the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is concerned with whether or not he wasted his life, so he is not relaxed.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
34	Option F is correct	A world that seems more fanciful than realistic is depicted in both selections. In "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent," the daughter paints creative images and in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> , the father tells fantasy stories.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> tells his son stories with elements from fairy tales, there is no evidence that the daughter in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" bases her paintings on fairy tales.
	Option H is incorrect	The father in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" struggles to understand what inspires his daughter, not her paintings themselves. The son in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> has not always understood the choices his father made, but he does not struggle to understand the father's stories.
	Option J is incorrect	Neither the daughter's paintings in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" nor the father's stories in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> portray heroic characters.
35	Option A is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. In both quotations, the authors use imagery to convey a sense of inner turmoil. In "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent," the father is sad because he knows that eventually, when his daughter is older, she will paint more realistic trees that look like "black fingers scratching a grey sky" instead of pretty silver trees. In the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> , the father is creating fanciful stories because he is struggling to admit that he was absent from his family's life.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the reader could interpret the quotation in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> as an expression of stubbornness because the father is struggling to admit that he should have spent more time with his family, there is no evidence of stubbornness conveyed in the quotation from "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent."
	Option C is incorrect	Neither quotation is used to convey guilt. The father in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" and the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> both convey inner turmoil through these quotations.
	Option D is incorrect	The imagery in the quotation from "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" is used to show that the father is feeling turmoil about how his daughter's approach to painting will change, not exaggerated self-confidence. The imagery in the quotation in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is used to show the father's turmoil over his past decisions, not exaggerated self-confidence.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
36	Option G is correct	The difference between the attitude of the speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" and the attitude of the narrator in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is stated in this sentence. The speaker in the poem acknowledges that his daughter paints to express her true feelings, while the son in the excerpt believes his father tells fantasy stories as an escape from reality.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" reflects on how his daughter will use her imagination less as she grows older, as opposed to the idea that she will use her imagination more. The narrator in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> seems somewhat annoyed at times by his father's fantasy stories, not admiring of the stories.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no evidence in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" that the speaker thinks his daughter paints to bring the family closer together. Although there is evidence in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> that the narrator's father distanced himself from the family, there is no evidence that the father's stories are intended to create distance from others.
	Option J is incorrect	The speaker in "To a Daughter with Artistic Talent" does not mention his daughter's health, and although the father in the excerpt from <i>Big Fish</i> is ill, the stories he tells are not symptoms of his illness.
37	Option B is correct	The author's purpose for writing this article is to advocate for coexistence of humans and wildlife in urban areas. In paragraph 15, the author explains that she believes "cities and nature can mix and need to mix" and states, "We need to foster a daily relationship with our wild, nonhuman kin."
	Option A is incorrect	Although in paragraph 2 the author explains that most of her work has been in national parks, her purpose is to promote the idea that humans and animals can coexist in urban areas, not to encourage people to visit national parks.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author does describe tracking a cougar in Griffith Park, but this is a detail from the article rather than the author's overall purpose.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 11, the author admits "wildlife would be better served if cities were converted back to open space," but she acknowledges that this would never happen. Instead, her purpose is to propose a human coexistence with wildlife in urban areas.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
38	Option H is correct	The words “adapt to life” can be used to help the reader understand the meaning of the word <u>resiliency</u> . In paragraph 7, the author explains that the cougar adapted to life in the city by “crossing two of the busiest freeways in the country to find a new home,” which shows the “resiliency of wild things.”
	Option F is incorrect	The author uses the word <u>resiliency</u> to describe the ability of wild animals to adapt. The words “relish my experiences” provide no context for the meaning of the word.
	Option G is incorrect	The author uses the word <u>resiliency</u> to describe the ability of wild animals to adapt, not to refer specifically to “cougar kin.”
	Option J is incorrect	The author uses the word <u>resiliency</u> to describe the ability of wild animals to adapt. The words “urban interface” do not provide context for the meaning of the word.
39	Option B is correct	A rhetorical question is a question that is asked in order to create a dramatic effect or to make a point rather than get an answer. The author uses rhetorical questions in paragraph 6 to illustrate a shift in her perspective regarding wildlife habitats. The author asks, “Why can’t a mountain lion live in a city? Why is the human-built environment seen as off-limits to wildlife?” to demonstrate her thought process and realization that she’s been looking at wildlife conservation in the wrong way.
	Option A is incorrect	The author argues that if a mountain lion thinks a human-built environment is “good enough,” then “who are we to judge?” She thinks animals can live in human-built environments that are suitable if the animals deem them so; she does not argue against this idea.
	Option C is incorrect	The author’s use of rhetorical questions does not explain a difference between mountain lions and other groups of wildlife.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author has experience on the subject of mountain lions, she is using rhetorical questions to show that her experience has led her to view wildlife conservation differently than she once viewed it.



## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
40	Option J is correct	In paragraph 12, the author refers to milkweed plants as “gas stations” for monarch butterflies because milkweed plants are essential for their migration. Just like people need to stop at gas stations to refuel their cars when they are traveling, monarchs stop at milkweed plants for “fuel” during their migration across North America.
	Option F is incorrect	Only monarch butterflies are mentioned in paragraph 12, so there is no evidence to support the idea that milkweed plants are enjoyed by several species of butterflies.
	Option G is incorrect	In paragraph 12, the author states that milkweed plants along the migration routes of monarch butterflies “have largely disappeared,” so they are not becoming more available.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 12, the author compares milkweed plants to gas stations to demonstrate the milkweed plant’s function, not to detail where it can be grown.
41	Option B is correct	In paragraph 5, the author conveys a tone of surprise. The author experiences a “life changing epiphany” and suddenly comes to the realization that the cougar has a better imagination than her.
	Option A is incorrect	The author experiences a “life changing epiphany,” which would be a surprising and unexpected event, not one that inspires a tone of relief.
	Option C is incorrect	The author is not humiliated by the fact that the cougar has a better imagination than she does. Instead, she is surprised when she realizes this fact.
	Option D is incorrect	The author is not proud of her realization; she is surprised by it.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
42	Option H is correct	The author comes to the conclusion that humans need to change their understanding of wildlife preservation. In paragraph 10, she explains that the traditional approach to wildlife conservation “has been to segregate people and wildlife” but that approach is no longer working, so people should adopt “an expanded view of the national park ethic in our urban spaces” (paragraph 14) to protect wildlife.
	Option F is incorrect	The author does admit in paragraph 11 that people abandoning urban places would be the most effective way to conserve wildlife, but she also realizes it “won’t happen any time soon” so this is not a conclusion she makes.
	Option G is incorrect	The author refers to the “resiliency of wild things” in paragraph 7 but does not distinguish between the resiliency of large versus small species.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author admits, “I’ll always be a national park advocate,” but she does not convey the idea that she thinks more national parks should be formed to help wildlife.
43	Option A is correct	The author includes this quotation from paragraph 9 to emphasize that wildlife living in urban areas is more common than people think. The author tells the reader, “you’d be surprised at the places where these stories crop up” and then includes the example of foxes living on the Facebook campus among 2,500 people.
	Option B is incorrect	The author uses the quotation to give examples of wildlife living in urban areas, not to compare the types of wildlife found in different parts of California.
	Option C is incorrect	The author explains, “Mark Zuckerberg himself took an interest” in the foxes, so she isn’t conveying the idea that he was disapproving of the foxes.
	Option D is incorrect	The author includes the quotation about the foxes to demonstrate humans and wildlife successfully coexisting in urban areas, not to question whether the foxes are safe in Menlo Park.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
44	Option H is correct	The phrase “multiple species of plants and animals” is closest in meaning to the word <u>biodiversity</u> . The author is calling for people to view urban areas as places where wildlife are capable of living in order to protect different types of wildlife “around the world.”
	Option F is incorrect	The word <u>biodiversity</u> is used to refer to different types of wildlife, not decisions made by people regarding nature.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author is calling for a certain understanding and respect for nature, the word <u>biodiversity</u> is used to describe a variety of plants and animals rather than the understanding people should have of these species.
	Option J is incorrect	The word <u>biodiversity</u> is used to describe plants and animals living “around the world,” not specifically in populated urban areas.
45	Option A is correct	The author uses this comparison to illustrate the level of excitement a movie can provide. In paragraph 4, the author compares the experience of watching a movie to “going on a roller coaster” in order to express the idea that movies produce a similar feeling of excitement as going on a roller coaster.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not mention filmmaking techniques in this comparison.
	Option C is incorrect	The author is comparing watching a movie to riding a roller coaster to show the level of excitement viewers perceive, not to show how people use movies to cope with their worries.
	Option D is incorrect	In this comparison, the author does not describe any mental processes involved with making a movie.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
46	Option F is correct	The word “potent” from paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to “powerful” or “effective.” In paragraph 3, the author explains that Dr. Norman Holland believes that magic happening in the brains of people watching movies is “particularly potent when we watch movies on the big screen,” suggesting that the environment created by the movie theater makes movie magic and the ability for movies to feel real and more powerful.
	Option G is incorrect	The word “racing” is being used to describe the movement of a car, which would not be considered “effective.”
	Option H is incorrect	The word “attentional” is used to describe the system our brains use to pick up important information. It does not mean “effective” or “powerful.”
	Option J is incorrect	The word “literally” is being used to explain that the actual meaning of the “attentional system” is “the part of the brain that directs what we pay attention to.” The word does not mean “powerful” or “effective.”
47	Option C is correct	The primary purpose of the boxed information at the end of the article is to give advice for ways to enhance the home movie-watching experience. The title of the boxed information is “Maximizing the Magic of Movies.” In the first line, the author states, “The best environment to watch movies is in the theater” and then suggests ways to make your home more like a theater to make the “viewing experience richer and more fun.”
	Option A is incorrect	Although in the first line the author explains, “The best environment to watch movies is in the theater,” the author then explains how to enhance your movie-watching experience at home. The author is not using the boxed information to persuade the reader to watch movies in the theater.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not provide reasons why watching movies at home is less enjoyable than in the theater; instead, the author gives advice about how to make a home-viewing experience more theater-like.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not mention the appeal or convenience of watching movies at home in the boxed information.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
48	Option J is correct	An anecdote is a brief retelling of an event. In paragraph 1 of the article, the author presents anecdotal details. He includes a short scene from the <i>Lord of the Rings</i> film.
	Option F is incorrect	Although there are facts about what happens in a certain scene of a movie, the actual retelling of the scene provided by the author in paragraph 1 is more anecdotal than factual.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not use any emotions or personal reactions to the scene, so he is not presenting a personal experience.
	Option H is incorrect	The author is recounting a scene from <i>Lord of the Rings</i> and does not use any persuasive language.
49	Option C is correct	The main idea of paragraph 5 is that movies can make people ignore the difference between reality and fiction. The author begins by explaining, “as we give up control, our sense of reality changes.” Then he explains how a “suspension of disbelief” makes us stop questioning the reality of what we are seeing on the movie screen.
	Option A is incorrect	Although emotions such as fear and compassion are mentioned in the last sentence of paragraph 5, the idea that movies cause people to become emotional is not the main idea of the paragraph.
	Option B is incorrect	The author’s main idea in paragraph 5 is to explain that even when movies aren’t realistic, our “suspension of disbelief” keeps us from questioning their reality. The idea that people relate to a movie depending on how realistic it is opposes the main idea.
	Option D is incorrect	Although people do become less aware of their surroundings in a movie theater, this is not the main idea of paragraph 5.
50	Option F is correct	According to paragraph 6, the limbic system controls emotions. The author explains, “emotions come from a different area, the limbic system, in the back of the brain.”
	Option G is incorrect	Selective attention is not mentioned in paragraph 6, and this is not what the limbic system controls.
	Option H is incorrect	The limbic system controls human emotions, not comprehension.
	Option J is incorrect	Spatial awareness is not mentioned in paragraph 6, and this is not what the limbic system controls.

## 2019 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
51	Option B is correct	The author includes paragraph 7 to express concern regarding the ways people often watch movies today. The author believes “the intensity of the emotions that movies produce in us” is diminishing because we watch them “At home, or on our smart phones,” which “limits their magic because we’re in control.”
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not mention the difference in enjoyment between older and newer movies. He does, however, mention the difference between older and newer ways of viewing movies, which he thinks is a concern.
	Option C is incorrect	The author suggests that newer ways of viewing movies result in less emotional responses, not that newer movies themselves lack emotional appeal for viewers.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not discuss a decline in theater attendance in paragraph 7.
52	Option F is correct	The author’s purpose for writing the article is to inform people about what makes a movie-watching experience enjoyable. The author includes information about how movies have the ability to affect viewers emotionally and how viewers can enhance their experience when watching a movie.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author does mention a few movie-making techniques, he does not analyze them, so this is not his purpose for writing the article.
	Option H is incorrect	Although there is a comparison made between watching movies at home and in the theater, the author uses these details to help inform readers about what makes movie-watching enjoyable, which is the overall purpose of the article.
	Option J is incorrect	The author’s purpose is to inform people about what makes movie-watching enjoyable, not to persuade people to avoid watching movies on smart phones.