

# Nebraska NSCAS Grade 7 English Language Arts Practice

Exam Materials  
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**2021-2022**



**Grade 7 - Item Type Sampler**  
**English Language Arts**

**Directions:**

On the following pages of your booklet are passages and questions for the Grade 7 *Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System English Language Arts (NSCAS-ELA)* Item Type Sampler.

Read these directions carefully before beginning this item type sampler.

This item type sampler will include several different types of questions. Some questions are based on one or two passages. Multiple choice questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices. Multiple select questions will ask you to select multiple correct answers from among five or more answer choices. For some questions, there may be two parts, Part A and Part B, where each part has a multiple choice or multiple select question.

For all questions:

- Read each question carefully and choose the best answer.
- You may use scratch paper to make notes.
- Be sure to answer ALL the questions on your answer sheet.

When you come to the word STOP, you have finished the Grade 7 NSCAS English Growth Language Arts Item Type Sampler.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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**The item on this page is not passage-based.**

★ 1. **Read the paragraph.**

[1] My family has decided to take a Nebraska state vacation this summer. [2] Our first stop is going to be the Homestead National Monument of America, which honors passage of the Homestead Act of 1862. [3] There is about 100 acres of tallgrass prairie there, too; it looks just like it did before pioneers settled Nebraska. [4] Also there is an original homesteader cabin, called the Palmer-Epard Cabin, built in 1867. [5] There is also, from 1872 to 1967, the Freeman School that was the longest continuously used school in Nebraska state history, and it was a one-room school, too. [6] All of this is great, but what my sister and I are looking forward to is walking on all of the trails at the monument. [7] We are looking at the online National Park Service map and will convince our parents to park at the Homestead Heritage Center in the bottom corner. [8] That way we can walk all of the trails in a big loop.

What is the BEST way to revise sentence 5?

- A. From 1872 to 1967 there was the Freeman School that was the longest continuously used school in Nebraska state history, a one-room school.
- B. There is also the Freeman School that was the longest continuously used school in Nebraska state history, from 1872 to 1967, and it was a one-room school.
- C. There is also the Freeman School, which was the longest continuously used one-room school in Nebraska state history, from 1872 to 1967.
- D. There is also the longest continuously used school in Nebraska state history, the Freeman School from 1872 to 1967, and it was a one-room school.

The item on this page is not passage-based.

★ 2. Read the student's essay.

Although most people are aware that girls' athletics offer the same physical benefit as boys' athletics—overall fitness—recent studies have shown that girls' participation in sports also carries unforeseen benefits. First, girls who participate in sports report having fewer problems with depression and have higher self-esteem than those who don't participate. Perhaps this partly accounts for why female athletes graduate at a higher rate, 69 percent, compared to 51 percent for girls who are not in sports. The outlook for even more young women participating in sports seems likely, especially since a survey of parents found that 83 percent believe that girls' athletic programs are as important as boys' programs.

Which statements need citations to verify the information? Select **all** that apply.

- A. Although most people are aware that girls' athletics offer the same physical benefit as boys' athletics . . .
- B. . . . girls who participate in sports report having fewer problems with depression and have higher self-esteem than those who don't participate.
- C. First, girls who participate in sports . . .
- D. . . . female athletes graduate at a higher rate, 69 percent, compared to 51 percent for girls who are not in sports.
- E. . . . a survey of parents found that 83 percent believe that girls' athletic programs are as important as boys' programs.

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The items on this page are not passage-based.

★ 3. Read the paragraph.

**Set** in America's heartland, stretching from Iowa to Texas, is a dangerous area known as Tornado Alley. First named by researchers in 1952, this area of the United States is more likely to experience tornadoes than any other place in the country (except Florida, which has over 60 tornadoes per year). Tornado Alley is prime territory for tornadoes because of its geographic location. Each year, hundreds of supercell thunderstorms form over this region, which is between two mountain ranges and the Gulf Coast. Despite the large number of occurrences each year, only a small number of tornadoes cause significant damage. When a tornado is reported, the National Weather Service assigns it a rating on the Enhanced Fujita Scale based on different characteristics of the storm (wind speed, size, damage caused, etc.). Americans who live in Tornado Alley need to be prepared for any size of tornado, simply because of where they live.

Select the word that could BEST replace **set** to make the paragraph more precise.

- A. fixed
- B. found
- C. located
- D. placed

★ 4. Read the paragraph.

My class went on a field trip to the Neligh Mill State Historic Site near Norfolk, Nebraska. It was a water-powered flour mill powered by the Elkhorn River, which operated until 1969. It was built by John Neligh, who also founded the town of Neligh. Grinding wheat, corn, and buckwheat, the mill began operation on August 29, 1874, when W. C. Gallaway finished construction. Its turbines were improved so it could supply electricity until 1925. It is now a museum run by the Nebraska State Historical Society. It commemorates the importance of flour mills to Nebraska as well as the Western United States.

Which revision needs to be made to improve the author's sentence fluency?

- A. Sentences need to vary more in length.
- B. More pronouns should replace proper nouns.
- C. The word *commemorates* should be changed.
- D. The beginnings of the sentences need more variation.

**Excerpt from The Little Colonel Stories  
by Annie Fellows Johnston**

- 1** It was one of the prettiest places in all Kentucky where the Little Colonel stood that morning. She was reaching up on tiptoes, her eager little face pressed close against the iron bars of the great entrance gate that led to a fine old estate known as “Locust.”
- 2** A ragged little Scotch and Skye terrier stood on its hind feet beside her, thrusting his inquisitive nose between the bars, and wagging his tasselled tail in lively approval of the scene before them.
- 3** They were looking down a long avenue that stretched for nearly a quarter of a mile between rows of stately old locust-trees.
- 4** At the far end they could see the white pillars of a large stone house gleaming through the Virginia creeper that nearly covered it. But they could not see the old Colonel in his big chair on the porch behind the cool screen of vines.
- 5** At that very moment he had caught the rattle of wheels along the road, and had picked up his field-glass to see who was passing. . . . Then his glance fell on the two small strangers coming through his gate down the avenue toward him. One was the friskiest dog he had ever seen in his life. The other was a child he judged to be about five years old. . . .
- 6** There was something strangely familiar about the child, especially in the erect, graceful way she walked.
- 7** Old Colonel Lloyd was puzzled. He had lived all his life in Lloydsborough, and this was the first time he had ever failed to recognize one of the neighbours’ children. He knew every dog and horse, too, by sight if not by name.
- 8** Living so far from the public road did not limit his knowledge of what was going on in the world. A powerful field-glass brought every passing object in plain view, while he was saved all annoyance of noise and dust.
- 9** “I ought to know that child as well as I know my own name,” he said to himself. “But the dog is a stranger in these parts. Liveliest thing I ever set eyes on! They must have come from the hotel. Wonder what they want.”
- 10** He carefully wiped the lens for a better view. When he looked again he saw that they evidently had not come to visit him.
- 11** They had stopped half-way down the avenue, and climbed up on a rustic seat to rest.
- 12** The dog sat motionless about two minutes, his red tongue hanging out as if he were completely exhausted.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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- 13 Suddenly he gave a spring, and bounded away through the tall blue grass. He was back again in a moment, with a stick in his mouth. Standing up with his fore paws in the lap of his little mistress, he looked so **wistfully** into her face that she could not refuse this invitation for a romp.
- 14 The Colonel chuckled as they went tumbling about in the grass to find the stick which the child repeatedly tossed away. . . .
- 15 It had been many a long year since those old locust-trees had seen a sight like that. Children never played any more under their dignified shadows. . . .
- 16 Suddenly the little maid stood up straight, and began to sniff the air, as if some delicious odour had blown across the lawn.
- 17 “Fritz,” she exclaimed, in delight, “I ’mell ’trawberries!”
- 18 The Colonel, who could not hear the remark, wondered at the abrupt pause in the game. He understood it, however, when he saw them wading through the tall grass, straight to his strawberry bed. It was the pride of his heart, and the finest for miles around. The first berries of the season had been picked only the day before. Those that now hung temptingly red on the vines he intended to send to his next neighbour, to prove his boasted claim of always raising the finest and earliest fruit.
- 19 He did not propose to have his plans spoiled by these stray guests. Laying the field-glass in its accustomed place on the little table beside his chair, he picked up his hat and strode down the walk. . . .
- 20 He could not hear the happiest of little voices that was just then saying, “Oh, Fritz, isn’t you glad we came? An’ isn’t you glad we’ve got a gran’fathah with such good ’trawberries?”
- 21 It was hard for her to put the s before her consonants.
- 22 As the Colonel came nearer she tossed another berry into the dog’s mouth. A twig snapped, and she raised a startled face toward him. . . .
- 23 “What are you doing here, child?” he asked, in a voice so much kinder than his eyes that she regained her usual self-possession at once.
- 24 “Eatin’ ’trawberries,” she answered, coolly.
- 25 “Who are you, anyway?” he exclaimed, much puzzled. As he asked the question his gaze happened to rest on the dog, who was peering at him through the ragged, elfish wisps of hair nearly covering its face, with eyes that were startlingly human. . . .
- 26 “Mothah calls me her baby,” was the soft-spoken reply, “but papa an’ Mom Beck they calls me the Little [Colonel].”
- 27 “What under the sun do they call you that for?” he roared.
- 28 “‘Cause I’m so much like you,” was the startling answer.



5. Which phrase in paragraph 4 helps the reader understand what Virginia creeper is?

- A. big chair
- B. white pillars
- C. screen of vines
- D. large stone house

6. This question has two parts. Answer Part A, and then answer Part B.

**Part A**

**Read the sentence.**

“Standing up with his fore paws in the lap of his little mistress, he looked so **wistfully** into her face that she could not refuse this invitation for a romp.”

What is the meaning of **wistfully**?

- A. angrily and bittery
- B. frantically and wildly
- C. excitedly and eagerly
- D. sadly and thoughtfully

**Part B**

Based on your answer in Part A, which sentence uses the word **wistfully** the same way it is used in the excerpt?

- A. The commander rode by, yelling wistfully at his soldiers.
- B. I screamed wistfully when I saw my father come home after a long trip.
- C. The high school coach wistfully ran on the court to assist his injured player.
- D. Dean looked wistfully at his old house as he remembered the good times he had had there.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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7. What is the tone in paragraphs 1–4 of the excerpt?
- A. sad and depressing
  - B. anxious and frustrated
  - C. humorous and mocking
  - D. light-hearted and curious
8. From what point of view is this excerpt told?
- A. first person, told by the little girl
  - B. first person, told by the Old Colonel
  - C. third person, limited to the Old Colonel's thoughts and experiences
  - D. third person, providing the thoughts and experiences of both characters
9. What is MOST LIKELY the author's purpose for writing this excerpt?
- A. to inform readers how to care for a plantation
  - B. to entertain with a story about two people meeting
  - C. to illustrate conflicts between different generations
  - D. to share observations with readers about life in the Old South

10. Based on information in the story, why is the estate called “Locust”?

- A. It was named after the Old Colonel.
- B. It was named after the grassy fields.
- C. It was named after the trees on the estate.
- D. It was named for the insects that roam the field.

11. This question has two parts. Answer Part A, and then answer Part B.

**Part A**

What is the relationship between the young girl and the Old Colonel in the story?

- A. They are neighbors.
- B. They are close friends.
- C. He is the young girl’s father.
- D. She is the old man’s granddaughter.

**Part B**

Which pieces of textual evidence support your answer in Part A? Select **all** that apply.

- A. Then his glance fell on the two small strangers coming through his gate . . .
- B. The other was a child he judged to be about five years old. . . .
- C. “Who are you, anyway?” he exclaimed, much puzzled.
- D. “An’ isn’t you glad we’ve got a gran’fathah with such good ’trawberries?”
- E. “but papa an’ Mom Beck they calls me the Little [Colonel]. . . . Cause I’m so much like you.”

### **from Women in STEM: Saving the Natural World through Conservation**

*As manager of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, Jennifer Owen-White is used to getting her hands dirty. Established in 2012, Valle de Oro is the first urban wildlife refuge in the southwest, and it's becoming an important asset for the residents of New Mexico. In a recent . . . talk, Owen-White shared her story of why she gave up being a doctor to play in the dirt and why we need more women in the conservation field.*

**Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is one of the newest wildlife refuges in the country. What makes it unique?**

- 1 Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is the first urban national wildlife refuge in the Southwest region, but what really makes it special is the community support and involvement in the refuge's establishment and development. People from the surrounding neighborhood created Friends of Valle de Oro because they were concerned about what the land would turn into and wanted to see something positive for their community and families. Community members continue to play an active role in the refuge's design and development—Valle de Oro is built BY and FOR its community!

**Why are urban wildlife refuges important?**

- 2 Urban refuges bring the great **conservation** and **restoration** work of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the front doors and backyards of large populations of people, some of whom have limited access to the outdoors. This is key for Valle de Oro—45 percent of New Mexico's population lives within 30 minutes of the refuge. Providing a safe place for community members to get outside that's easy to get to, allows people who may have never played in a field or experienced wildlife to learn about the connection between people and a healthy environment. This is critical not only to the success of Valle de Oro but also conservation work all over the country.

**What are some interesting things visitors can do or learn about at Valle de Oro?  
What's your favorite part of the refuge?**

- 3 Since Valle de Oro is in its very beginning stages, it still looks like a dairy farm. . . . The refuge doesn't have trails or habitat restoration YET, but there is still a lot of wildlife to be seen. Our first Sandhill Cranes of the season showed up in early October, and in total over 200 species of birds have been seen in the area. Prairie dogs were just spotted on the property for the first time this summer, and through visitor observations and student research, we are adding new species to the refuge list all the time.
- 4 What's most exciting requires multiple visits: Visitors can experience and even be a part of the refuge's growth and development! Watching the property go from basically a blank slate to a vibrant community asset that serves wildlife and people is something everyone can be a part of.

**You recently gave a . . . talk about getting more women in conservation. How did you end up working in this field?**

- 5 As a young girl, I loved science and did well in school so I felt pressure to become a doctor—even though all my free time was spent outdoors learning about animals. Through soul-searching, following my passion, some great role models and supportive friends, I finally put stock into what really fulfilled me as opposed to what I could do to impress others. Now I am incredibly happy and fulfilled because I have a job that is exciting, engaging and makes a difference. I am proud of the work I do, and you know what—so is my family . . .

**What are some of the cool projects you’ve worked on in your career as a conservationist?**

- 6 Once I made the decision to **focus** on conservation biology, I was **overwhelmed** by great opportunities! As an undergraduate student, I worked in a lab studying Morelet’s Crocodiles, and for my Master’s Degree, I spent time in the Caribbean studying Cuban Treefrogs. As a Fish and Wildlife Services employee, I have helped on projects with Kemp’s Ridley Sea Turtles (they’re endangered), Ocelots and Peregrine Falcons. I even spent a couple weeks in China, talking with Chinese reserve managers and conservation officials about connecting people to birds.

**You mentor a number of young women. What’s one piece of advice you would give all women—or even young men?**

- 7 My biggest advice would be to diversify your skills. I studied conservation biology AND environmental education/interpretation—I loved both and didn’t want to choose one over the other. Being a biologist who can make scientific data understandable and relatable has given me opportunities that I wouldn’t have had if I focused on one or the other. Diversity is the key to success in our ecosystems, our communities and our careers.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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12. If the suffix **-ation** means “action or process,” what does the word **restoration** mean in paragraph 2?
- A. the act of returning something to its original state
  - B. the act of taking on the work of another organization
  - C. the process of involving community members in a task
  - D. the process of moving an organization closer to an urban area
13. According to the information in paragraph 5, what did Ms. Owen-White feel would impress others?
- A. becoming a doctor
  - B. becoming a role model
  - C. being happy and fulfilled
  - D. managing a wildlife refuge
14. Select the words that are synonyms of the word **focus** in paragraph 6. Select **all** that apply.
- A. attention
  - B. challenge
  - C. concentrate
  - D. distract
  - E. ignore

15. What does the word **overwhelmed** mean in paragraph 6?
- A. overboard
  - B. overcome
  - C. overdue
  - D. overlooked
16. After which interview question does Ms. Owen-White indicate that changes are coming to the refuge?
- A. What makes it unique?
  - B. Why are urban wildlife refuges important?
  - C. What's your favorite part of the refuge?
  - D. How did you end up working in this field?
17. Which text from the passage BEST supports the idea that the refuge has multiple goals?
- A. . . . something positive for their community . . .
  - B. . . . conservation work all over the country.
  - C. . . . asset that serves wildlife and people . . .
  - D. . . . focused on one or the other.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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18. Which phrase from paragraph 2 BEST helps determine the meaning of **conservation**?

- A. front doors and backyards
- B. limited access to the outdoors
- C. safe place for community members to get outside
- D. connection between people and a healthy environment

19. Which word BEST describes the interviewer's attitude toward conservation?

- A. delighted
- B. disappointed
- C. interested
- D. unconvinced

20. Which text from the passage states an opinion?

- A. Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is the first urban national wildlife refuge in the Southwest region, . . .
- B. . . . allows people who may have never played in a field or experienced wildlife to learn . . .
- C. Our first Sandhill Cranes of the season showed up in early October, . . .
- D. . . . I have a job that is exciting, engaging and makes a difference.



**NSCAS Growth Grade 7  
Item Type Sampler Answer Key  
English Language Arts**



Sequence	Key	Points
1.	C	1
2.	B, D, E	2
	Any two correct answers	1
3.	C	1
4.	D	1
5.	C	1
6.	Part A: D Part B: D	2
	Part A Only	1
7.	D	1
8.	C	1
9.	C	1
10.	C	1
11.	Part A: D Part B: D, E	2
	Part A Only	1
12.	A	1
13.	A	1
14.	A, C	2
	A or C	1
15.	B	1
16.	C	1
17.	C	1
18.	D	1
19.	C	1
20.	D	1