



GRADE 7
Reading

Administered May 2022

RELEASED

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

Time for a “Digital Diet”

- 1 Young people today rely heavily on digital technology. Text messaging and email allow people to effortlessly stay connected to others. Television and computer screens provide people with constant entertainment. Everywhere you look people are distracted by screens. Technology can be useful, but it is easy for someone to become too dependent on it. In fact, research has shown that the way young people interact with each other and with the world is rapidly changing due to digital overload. Staying connected has become so important that many young people find it stressful to be away from their phones. As a result, people have developed bad habits. They spend less time outside, get less sleep, and develop a shorter attention span. However, it is possible to achieve a more balanced relationship with technology. People should consider going on a “digital diet.”
- 2 When people think of a diet, they usually think about it in relation to food. There are some healthy eating habits you can develop, and there are bad eating habits. A digital diet helps promote developing healthy habits with technology. Developing healthy habits with digital devices looks different for everyone. But overall the main goal is to limit the amount of time we spend using digital devices.
- 3 “The primary use of technology by young people is for entertainment,” states media expert Michael Levine. On average, young people spend over seven hours in front of a screen every day. As a result, children and teenagers today spend as little as four minutes outside per day. Limiting the amount of time young people spend on their screens is one way to establish a healthy digital habit. By taking a break from digital devices, young people have more time to go outside. Collin O’Mara is the head of the National Wildlife Federation. She believes that outdoor free time provides a wide variety of benefits. Some of these benefits include better school performance, more creativity, and higher levels of fitness. Rather than spending several hours in front of a screen, people can gain the benefits from spending time outside instead.
- 4 Another boundary that people can set is avoiding using digital devices before going to sleep. Doctors suggest establishing a specific time of night when all devices must be turned off. Stopping the use of digital devices two hours before bedtime will likely lead to better sleep. Staring at a cell phone, computer, or television screen

right before bedtime is distracting. Researcher Jean Twenge says that “answering texts and scrolling through social media is mentally and emotionally stimulating, which leads to disturbed sleep.” In addition, the blue light that smartphones emit keeps the brain from producing melatonin. Melatonin helps people fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night.

- 5 Being more mindful of when we use technology allows us to be more present when interacting with others. Doctors and scientists are concerned that the heavy use of electronic devices is creating a generation that is easily distracted. People who depend on technology shift their attention from one media platform to another about 27 times per hour. Additionally, the majority of young people say they would rather text people than speak with them in person. It can be difficult to have a meaningful conversation with friends when everyone is distracted by a cell-phone screen. If you notice that those around you are using their phones too much, speak up. It is much more rewarding to have a conversation with people who are attentive.
- 6 Some people think it is best to cut the use of technology completely. Although this seems like a good solution, eliminating technology is not always possible. The use of digital devices can even be helpful in some instances. For example, a student may want to use a computer to complete schoolwork. A person who is driving to an unfamiliar location may want to look up directions on a phone before making the trip. The goal is to use digital devices when they are needed but to spend some time away from them as well.
- 7 Forming healthier digital habits is possible without having to give up technology completely. Going on a digital diet may not be easy, but it is worth it. Limiting the amount of time spent using digital devices helps us live a more balanced life.



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1 Look at this cartoon from the selection.



What is the most likely reason the author includes the cartoon?

- A To highlight how children have created new ways to use phones for play
- B To indicate that children today should use phones when outside
- C To suggest that children are too attached to phones
- D To emphasize that phones can help children complete activities

2 What does the word attentive mean in paragraph 5?

- F Encouraging
- G Focused
- H Grateful
- J Understanding

- 3** Based on the information throughout the selection, how could a person put a digital diet into practice?
- A** By adjusting the brightness of a screen when using an electronic device at night
 - B** By playing games over the computer with a group of friends
 - C** By memorizing different routes to avoid using a map on the internet
 - D** By putting away the phone when eating lunch with a friend
-

- 4** Which detail from the selection supports the key idea that a digital diet is rewarding?
- F** Television screens offer a good source of entertainment.
 - G** Students can use a computer to help them with homework.
 - H** Mindfulness allows us to be more present with others.
 - J** Reading text messages keeps the mind alert.
-

- 5** The author uses a comparison to present the ideas in paragraph 2 so that the reader will understand that a digital diet —
- A** is a complicated process that requires careful planning
 - B** causes some people to think about food
 - C** solves a number of problems for everyone
 - D** can help people form better habits

6 What is the best summary of the selection?

- F** Technology is an important part of people’s lives, but the time spent with digital devices needs to be balanced with other activities. A digital diet would help people limit screen time and reverse some bad habits from too much digital use. This balance could mean more time outside, more sleep, and longer attention spans. A digital diet would be worth the effort.
- G** Young people depend on technology for almost everything, but too much technology can be bad. Everyone who uses digital devices needs to restrict the hours they spend with screens. People can limit their time on a screen by spending more time outside or reading a book before they go to bed. Even though computers are still needed for homework, people would benefit from less screen time.
- H** Most people rely on technology to communicate with others through text and email, but too much time looking at a screen creates bad habits. Instead, everyone should try to go outside during their free time so that they can get better grades in school and develop their creativity. Although a digital diet would be hard at first, it would help people in the end.
- J** Although electronic devices can help people, they can also be bad for people’s health. Digital overload should be replaced with a digital diet. Most people know that a food diet helps people get rid of poor eating habits, and the same is true with a digital diet. Going on a digital diet would prevent people from developing poor habits with their digital devices.

7 What is the most likely reason the author includes the phrase “Everywhere you look” in paragraph 1?

- A** To suggest that people want to ignore a critical issue
- B** To show how society has only recently changed
- C** To explain that people are fascinated by trends
- D** To emphasize a problem that is widespread

- 8** What primary claim does the author make in this selection?
- F** Electronic devices are the main reason why people have meaningless conversations.
 - G** Children and teenagers should give up their digital devices completely.
 - H** People would benefit greatly by limiting their time with technology.
 - J** Individuals are spending more time indoors using screens than ever before.
-

- 9** What is the most likely reason the author includes a quotation in paragraph 4?
- A** To explain what can happen when people do not take a break from technology
 - B** To show that people must be able to send information at all times
 - C** To highlight a typical routine of someone who regularly uses technology
 - D** To suggest that people do not know how to give up their devices

10 Read this sentence from paragraph 5.

If you notice that those around you are using their phones too much, speak up.

What is the most likely reason the author uses direct address in this sentence?

- F** To show the reader that texting is enjoyable
- G** To suggest that the reader take action
- H** To encourage the reader to be more observant
- J** To help the reader develop better friendships

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

Silas and Caleb, soldiers in the Continental army, are standing guard at Valley Forge. They are watching for spies. Caleb exits, leaving Silas alone.

Martha Washington's Spy

by Earl J. Dias

Characters

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

MARTHA WASHINGTON

SILAS WEGG: *Young soldier*

CALEB JENKINS: *Young soldier*

BETSY: *A young woman*

SAM HOWARD: *Young soldier*

TIME: *A cold night in January, 1777.*

SETTING: *A sentry outpost at Valley Forge.*

- 1 *(Silas begins pacing. There is a sudden noise offstage left, followed by an exclamation. Silas advances cautiously toward exit. He exits. Silas returns holding Betsy by the collar. She wears a man's coat and hat. Silas points at his captive, who huddles, shivering and afraid.)*
- 2 **SILAS:** Now, my sly fellow, just what is your business here? *(Silas advances toward captive, examines the face closely, and then whistles in surprise.)* You're a girl!
- 3 **BETSY:** Y-yes. My name is Betsy.
- 4 **SILAS:** So the British are using females now to do their nasty work!
- 5 **BETSY:** *(With spirit.)* What do you mean?
- 6 **SILAS:** My meaning should be clear. Here you are, creeping about the camp on a night as cold as King George's heart, and dressed as a man, too! It's as plain as a dish of beans that you're bent on mischief.
- 7 **BETSY:** That's not true.

- 8 **SILAS:** (*He whistles loudly.*) That will bring somebody here who'll take you to General Washington.
- 9 **BETSY:** (*Cringing.*) I swear to you that I'm not a spy!
- 10 **CALEB:** What's wrong, Silas? I heard your signal. (*Looking at Betsy.*) And who is this?
- 11 **SILAS:** A female dressed as a man, Caleb.
- 12 **CALEB:** (*Going to Betsy and examining her closely.*) I told you the countryside was swarming with spies. I'll bring the General to her. He's not far from here now. And his wife is with him.
- 13 (*Caleb exits.*)
- 14 **BETSY:** I wish he'd hurry, then.
- 15 (*Caleb enters, followed by General Washington and Martha Washington.*)
- 16 **WASHINGTON:** (*Looking at Betsy.*) And who is this? Is this war now being fought by women?
- 17 **SILAS:** She's a spy, sir.
- 18 **WASHINGTON:** Hm-m. (*To Betsy.*) And what have you to say for yourself, young woman?
- 19 **BETSY:** I am not a spy, sir.
- 20 **MARTHA:** You certainly don't look like a spy.
- 21 **WASHINGTON:** If you're not a spy, what are you? And what are you doing here?
- 22 **BETSY:** (*Defiantly.*) I can't say, sir.
- 23 **WASHINGTON:** (*A bit impatiently.*) Surely, if your presence here is entirely innocent, you can tell us about it. (*More gently.*) I don't bite, child.
- 24 **BETSY:** (*Beginning to cry.*) I—I can't say.
- 25 **MARTHA:** (*Gently.*) Why can't you tell us why you are here?
- 26 **BETSY:** Because—well, because someone would get into trouble if I did.

- 27 **MARTHA:** But can't you see that you're in even greater trouble yourself?
- 28 **WASHINGTON:** Please—let's get to the business at hand. You had better come with us, young woman.
- 29 **MARTHA:** Wait, George. (*Leading Betsy right.*) Let's go over here, and you can whisper your secret to me.
- 30 **BETSY:** (*Obviously relieved.*) I will! (*She starts whispering to Martha, who smiles and nods with increasing signs of approval.*)
- 31 **WASHINGTON:** Do you know anything of a soldier named Sam Howard? He's missing from his quarters.
- 32 **SILAS:** (*Hesitating.*) W-well, sir—
- 33 **WASHINGTON:** I see. He has deserted, and you don't want to give him away.
- 34 **CALEB:** Sam has gone back to his farm, sir. It's only a few miles from here.
- 35 **WASHINGTON:** (*Shaking his head.*) If only we can get through this bitter winter. It does things to a man, weakens the very moral fiber of him.
- 36 (*Martha and Betsy walk to center.*)
- 37 **MARTHA:** George—this young woman is no spy.
- 38 **WASHINGTON:** Indeed—then what is she?
- 39 **MARTHA:** I'll tell you privately, George. There is no reason for her secret to be shared by the entire army.
- 40 **WASHINGTON:** (*Dubiously.*) But, surely—
- 41 **MARTHA:** (*Irritated.*) George, certainly you don't doubt the word of your own wife.
- 42 **WASHINGTON:** (*To Silas and Caleb.*) Give her something warm to drink.
- 43 (*Silas, Caleb and Betsy go toward right. Before they exit, Betsy speaks.*)
- 44 **BETSY:** Thank you with all my heart. (*The three exit.*)

- 45 (Sam Howard *enters quietly and pauses hesitantly.*)
- 46 **WASHINGTON:** Who goes there? (Sam *goes center, surprised at the sight of Washington.*) Your face is familiar.
- 47 **SAM:** (*Saluting.*) Sam Howard, sir.
- 48 **WASHINGTON:** I heard you had gone back to your farm.
- 49 **SAM:** I couldn't do it, sir.
- 50 **WASHINGTON:** Good lad!
- 51 **SAM:** You see, sir, I have been worried about my wife. She hasn't been well, and then there is the baby to care for.
- 52 **MARTHA:** Your Betsy is here. She came near to being taken as a spy.
- 53 **SAM:** What is she doing so far from home?
- 54 **WASHINGTON:** You're not the only one who would like to solve that mystery.
- 55 **MARTHA:** (*To Sam.*) When Betsy received your last letter, Sam—
- 56 **SAM:** (*Sighing, ruefully.*) I said a lot of foolish things in that letter.
- 57 **MARTHA:** When Betsy received it, she had a suspicion you might be planning to desert the army. So she walked a good eight or ten miles to see you tonight.
- 58 **SAM:** Poor Betsy—in all this cold.
- 59 **MARTHA:** She wanted to persuade you to stay. She says that she is over her sickness, and that she can manage things on the farm. Her mother and father have come to stay with her.
- 60 **WASHINGTON:** (*Thoughtfully.*) So that is why young Betsy attempted to break through the lines tonight. I see now why she was reluctant to discuss her mission.

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11 What is significant about Martha’s approach to talking with Betsy?

- A** It causes George Washington to change the way he speaks to others.
 - B** It allows Martha to show Betsy that her presence at the camp is unnecessary.
 - C** It allows Betsy to keep her motive hidden from George Washington.
 - D** It causes Betsy to feel comfortable sharing her reason for being near the camp.
-

12 In line 6, the playwright uses the comparison “it’s as plain as a dish of beans” most likely to emphasize that —

- F** Betsy is dressed like a common farmer
 - G** Betsy appears weary and hungry from her journey
 - H** Betsy is obviously doing something suspicious
 - J** Betsy’s presence is insignificant
-

13 How does the historical time period affect the plot?

- A** By making Sam regret what he wrote to Betsy in a letter
- B** By forcing Silas to ask for help in dealing with a problem
- C** By leading Martha to need to speak to George away from others
- D** By causing Betsy to have to travel in order to communicate with Sam

14 What is a central message in this play?

- F** Sometimes it is difficult to correct a mistake.
 - G** It is important to rely on others for help.
 - H** Understanding a situation may take time and patience.
 - J** Ignoring advice from others can have harsh consequences.
-

15 How does the playwright develop George Washington's character through the dialogue in lines 37 through 42?

- A** By revealing that Washington does not believe in keeping secrets from his soldiers
- B** By demonstrating that Washington considers the opinion of his wife
- C** By suggesting that Washington is suspicious of anyone unfamiliar to him
- D** By showing that Washington depends on his wife to identify spies

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

Last Dance

- 1 Every evening before my older sister Becca and I went to sleep, we would take five minutes to have a full-blown dance party. We took turns each night picking which song to dance to, and no matter what had gone on that day or how mad we would be at each other, we would dance.
- 2 It was a tradition my dad helped establish when we were little. One day Becca and I were having a huge argument over who got to play with Olivia the doll. A few minutes in time-out had not been enough for us to stop being angry at each other, so before bedtime our dad took us to the living room and turned on his favorite song.
- 3 “You two are going to dance!” he exclaimed with a huge smile. “For a full five minutes. No talking, only rhythmic movement. Then you’re going to bed.”
- 4 My sister and I shared the same expression as we stared back at my dad. *He had gone crazy.*
- 5 Nonetheless, he replayed the song until we both agreed to start dancing. Becca went first—making a sarcastic, jerky movement—but it was all I needed to break out my best moves. Becca and I both started laughing and continued to dance as our anger crept out of the living room. After the five minutes were over, we were laughing so hard that neither of us remembered Olivia or why we had been angry.
- 6 Since that night, and up until recently, our five-minute dance party was something we returned to every evening; it was a refuge in the midst of our petty arguments and silly misunderstandings.
- 7 Now it was the night before Becca moved across the country to attend college, and it had been a whole month since our last dance party. We were older now, and I understood that Becca had things to do and was preoccupied with spending her final days of high school with her friends. I never realized how much I had cherished those nightly dance parties with my sister. I couldn’t shake the feeling of how upset I would be if we didn’t get to have one last dance party.

- 8 Becca and I sat with my parents at the dinner table as we had so many nights before. It was sad to think this would be the last time we all ate together for a while.
- 9 My mom had made Becca’s favorite meal, but Becca seemed more distracted than usual. She quickly ate her meal and asked to be excused.
- 10 “I just want to go say bye to Alex and Jeanie one more time!” she exclaimed.
- 11 My mom sighed but agreed. I stared at the empty chair at the table and started to reminisce about times with Becca as I finished my meal. I thought about the days when our biggest problems involved Olivia the doll.
- 12 Some hours passed, and I began to get ready for bed, giving up on the notion that a last dance party would be happening. I felt childish worrying about it in the first place. Maybe it was time to grow up.
- 13 Suddenly I heard a slight knock on my door.
- 14 “Are you still up?” Becca whispered and tiptoed in.
- 15 “Yes, I’m still awake. What are you doing?”
- 16 Becca chuckled and flicked on the light. “Julie, you didn’t seriously think I was going to leave tomorrow without us dancing it out one more time, did you?”
- 17 I tried to fight the smile from forming on my lips and threw a pillow at her.
- 18 “I think it’s only appropriate that I get to pick the departing song,” she declared.
- 19 I stood waiting, assuming she’d pick a song by one of those weird groups she had been listening to lately. I was surprised when the melody of Dad’s favorite song—the one that had started it all—began playing. Becca jerked her arm and started dancing, and I laughed, following her lead. We didn’t even notice when Dad stepped into the doorway, watching us with the same smile he had on that first night.
- 20 I basked in the bittersweet, realizing that these were the moments to cherish. Things would always be changing, and though I hated to think of my sister leaving, the fact that this last dance was as important to her as it was to me made the moment even more

special. I pushed the thought of Becca leaving tomorrow out of my head, and we danced.

The Tree

by William Virgil Davis

Each evening for a full five minutes,
when the light is right, the elm
across the street casts its shadow
upon my neighbor's house.

5 The tree
seems to grow into the house, its shadow
alive in the solid stucco. The leaves
dance within the windows, filled,
fractured, by the wind, the twilight.

10 For years I never noticed. Then,
one morning, the saws awakened me.
That evening the tree was gone,
cut up and carted off in trucks.

The gap it left created a silence,
15 an emptiness, along the street:
the presence of the absence of the tree.

That evening, before the darkness fell,
the sky burned brilliant red and gold
and the shadow of the outline of the tree
20 fell full against my neighbor's house.

Used with permission.

16 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

What does the word reminisce mean in paragraph 11 of the story “Last Dance”?

- F** To remember past events
 - G** To have doubts
 - H** To judge someone’s actions
 - J** To resolve an issue
-

17 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

What can the reader infer about the narrator based on paragraph 7 of the story “Last Dance”?

- A** She is angry that Becca has spent the last month busy with friends.
- B** She wonders if her relationship with Becca will change after the move.
- C** She thinks that Becca is happy about leaving home to go to college.
- D** She fears that the nightly tradition is no longer important to Becca.

18 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of the story “Last Dance.”

Becca and I both started laughing and continued to dance as our anger crept out of the living room.

What is the most likely reason the author uses personification in this sentence?

- F** To suggest that the girls appreciate their dad’s suggestion
 - G** To show that the girls have forgotten about their argument
 - H** To highlight the bond the girls have with each other
 - J** To emphasize the girls’ willingness to work together
-

19 Use *Last Dance* to answer the following question.

Which sentence from the story “Last Dance” best conveys the theme?

- A** *We took turns each night picking which song to dance to, and no matter what had gone on that day or how mad we would be at each other, we would dance.* (paragraph 1)
- B** *A few minutes in time-out had not been enough for us to stop being angry at each other, so before bedtime our dad took us to the living room and turned on his favorite song.* (paragraph 2)
- C** *Some hours passed, and I began to get ready for bed, giving up on the notion that a last dance party would be happening.* (paragraph 12)
- D** *I basked in the bittersweet, realizing that these were the moments to cherish.* (paragraph 20)

20 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

What is a message in the poem “The Tree”?

- F** Some things in life are not fully appreciated until they are gone.
 - G** The world is sometimes beyond our own understanding.
 - H** Home is where people feel most comfortable to be themselves.
 - J** It is difficult to predict the actions of our neighbors.
-

21 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

Which line from the poem “The Tree” best helps the reader understand that the speaker is experiencing regret?

- A** Each evening for a full five minutes, (line 1)
- B** upon my neighbor’s house. (line 4)
- C** That evening the tree was gone, (line 12)
- D** an emptiness, along the street: (line 15)

22 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

How does the author's use of language in lines 14 through 16 contribute to the mood of the poem "The Tree"?

- F** By explaining that the speaker is surprised by feelings of disappointment
 - G** By highlighting how the speaker is frustrated with the current situation
 - H** By suggesting that the speaker is uncertain about what will happen next
 - J** By showing that the speaker is experiencing a sense of abandonment
-

23 Use *The Tree* to answer the following question.

Based on lines 10 and 11 of the poem "The Tree," what can the reader infer about the speaker?

- A** The speaker pays little attention to the nearby environment.
- B** The speaker has suddenly become mindful of the tree.
- C** The speaker prefers to sleep when it is completely silent.
- D** The speaker fears the tree has accidentally been cut down.

24 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

Which idea do **BOTH** the story “Last Dance” and the poem “The Tree” emphasize?

- F** A need for help
 - G** A fascination with time
 - H** A noticeable loss
 - J** A longing for something new
-

25 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

In what way is the narrator in the story “Last Dance” **UNLIKE** the speaker of the poem “The Tree”?

- A** The narrator spends most of her time alone, but the speaker is surrounded by others.
- B** The narrator has a lot of time to sit and think, but the speaker is too busy to take time for reflection.
- C** The narrator knows her sister has not permanently left home yet, but the speaker sees that the tree is already gone.
- D** The narrator has spent her whole life with her sister, but the speaker has only lived by the tree for a short amount of time.

26 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

What is a theme that is present in **BOTH** the story “Last Dance” and the poem “The Tree”?

- F** Have the courage to live life to its fullest.
 - G** Always be prepared to confide in loved ones.
 - H** Have patience when striving to reach a goal.
 - J** Never take for granted the small wonders of daily life.
-

27 Use *Last Dance* and *The Tree* to answer the following question.

One major **DIFFERENCE** between the story “Last Dance” and the poem “The Tree” is that only the story ends with a sense of —

- A** adventure
- B** fulfillment
- C** sympathy
- D** concern

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

Brittany has been training for a gymnastics competition for several months. Her best friend Alix has been coming to every practice and cheering her on, but also critiquing Brittany's performance—and with the competition only a week away, Brittany is tiring of Alix's suggestions.

A Dose of Support

- 1 “Brittany, your routine looks great—the judges will be so impressed!” Alix shouted and greeted Brittany with a hug after an excruciating practice. “But tomorrow, it might help if you reduce the number of flips toward the end of the routine so that it can look a bit more polished—then you’re sure to get a perfect score.”
- 2 “Look, Alix,” Brittany interrupted, unable to hide her feelings. “I know what’s best for my routine—I’ve been perfecting it for months—and I can figure out what needs to be fixed, if anything. I’ve got it from here.”
- 3 Alix frowned, clearly perturbed by Brittany’s response.
- 4 “I’m sorry, Brittany, I know you’re great at gymnastics, but I was just trying to offer some advice. I just thought . . . never mind. I’ll give you some space.” With that, Alix turned and headed toward the exit.
- 5 Brittany felt a dark cloud above her, realizing she had driven her friend away, but she refused to let her feelings distract her. *It’ll be easier to focus without the constant critiquing*, Brittany convinced herself.
- 6 Five days had passed since Brittany had confronted Alix—and just two days were left until the competition.
- 7 “Come on, Brittany—watch that somersault!” Coach Jen yelled from the sidelines as Brittany rehearsed her routine. Brittany grunted with pain and frustration; her muscles were strained, and sweat from her brow stung her eyes. Brittany looked into the stands and saw the empty seat beside Coach Jen and tried to ignore the pang she felt from her friend’s absence.
- 8 Coach Jen approached Brittany after practice. “You seem off your game, Brit—and you need to get it together by Saturday morning.

I'd hate to see all your hard work go to waste." Coach Jen walked off with a look of disappointment, leaving Brittany feeling alone.

- 9 Brittany sat on the tumbling mat, her hands holding her head as if it were a weighty boulder. Alix always nitpicked her performance too, but she always had something supportive to say as well. Brittany missed the encouragement Alix gave her when she was doubting herself—like now. Brittany stared at the empty stands, imagining how she must have made Alix feel.
- 10 When the day of the competition finally arrived, Brittany was plagued with nerves. Her parents were in the stands, and Coach Jen was in the front row beside other coaches. Brittany practiced her moves and, although she had memorized the routine, she felt clumsy and insecure. Brittany stood with a solemn expression, concerned that this was about to be a disaster.
- 11 "You're going to be great!" Brittany heard suddenly. She turned toward the familiar voice and was stunned to see Alix walking toward her.
- 12 Brittany stood with her mouth hanging open. "I really didn't think you were going to show up. I'm sorry—you were just trying to help me, and I didn't want to take the time to listen to what you had to say."
- 13 Alix enveloped Brittany in a hug. "I know how important this competition is to you, Brit. There's no way I was going to miss this—you're my best friend! I know you needed your space, but that doesn't mean I was going to abandon you."
- 14 Alix placed her hands on Brittany's shoulders and gave her a little shake. "You've got this, Brit; and no matter what happens, I'll be cheering you on." Brittany gave Alix a warm embrace before Alix went to sit in the stands beside Brittany's parents.
- 15 After a few moments, the judges announced the beginning of the event and called Brittany's name first. Brittany approached the edge of the mat with her head held high. She saw Alix, giving two thumbs up, and Brittany envisioned the judges giving her the same gesture after her routine. She felt a weight lift from her shoulders, now buoyed by a dose of support from her friend.

28 Read this sentence from paragraph 15.

She felt a weight lift from her shoulders, now buoyed by a dose of support from her friend.

What does the author's use of figurative language in this sentence help the reader understand?

- F** The burden Brittany feels about winning the competition
 - G** The sense of relief Brittany feels from Alix's presence
 - H** The mutual respect Brittany and Alix have for each other
 - J** The challenges in gymnastics that Brittany has had to overcome
-

29 In paragraph 10, what does the word solemn mean?

- A** Serious
- B** Confused
- C** Shocked
- D** Annoyed

- 30** Which sentence supports the idea that Brittany is concerned about her friendship with Alix?
- F** *With that, Alix turned and headed toward the exit.* (paragraph 4)
 - G** *Brittany stared at the empty stands, imagining how she must have made Alix feel.* (paragraph 9)
 - H** *Alix placed her hands on Brittany’s shoulders and gave her a little shake.* (paragraph 14)
 - J** *She saw Alix, giving two thumbs up, and Brittany envisioned the judges giving her the same gesture after her routine.* (paragraph 15)
-

- 31** Which sentence suggests that Brittany’s performance suffers because of Alix’s absence?
- A** *“I’m sorry, Brittany, I know you’re great at gymnastics, but I was just trying to offer some advice.”* (paragraph 4)
 - B** *Five days had passed since Brittany had confronted Alix—and just two days were left until the competition.* (paragraph 6)
 - C** *“You seem off your game, Brit—and you need to get it together by Saturday morning.”* (paragraph 8)
 - D** *Brittany approached the edge of the mat with her head held high.* (paragraph 15)

- 32** How does the change of setting in paragraph 10 of the story contribute to the plot?
- F** By causing Brittany to believe that Alix will not come to support her
 - G** By increasing the pressure Brittany feels about her performance
 - H** By revealing that Brittany has practiced as much as she can for the competition
 - J** By highlighting the reason Brittany needed time apart from Alix
-

- 33** Read this sentence from paragraph 14.

"You've got this, Brit; and no matter what happens, I'll be cheering you on."

How does this sentence support a primary theme of the story?

- A** By explaining that it is important to be honest with others
- B** By revealing that achieving a goal often requires eliminating distractions
- C** By suggesting that participating in athletic competitions can be stressful
- D** By showing that good relationships can withstand minor disagreements

34 In paragraph 15, the author's choice of language creates a mood of —

F fondness

G admiration

H hopefulness

J amusement

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

Ready, Set, Walk!

- 1 Most people know that exercise is important. When people think of exercise, they probably envision someone muscular lifting hundreds of pounds on a barbell or swift and strong sprinters speeding along a racetrack. It is daunting to think about exerting this kind of energy. However, you don't have to be like the professional athletes who push their bodies to the limit to get in a good workout. Luckily there is a much easier form of exercise that is just as beneficial as an intense sport. If you are looking to incorporate exercise into your routine, then you should consider walking.

Easing into Exercise

- 2 The American Heart Association recommends that people get 150 minutes of exercise a week. That means that a person should exercise for about 30 minutes a day, five days a week. A half hour of brisk walking can easily help someone meet that goal. Simply increasing your normal walking speed from a slothlike pace to a quick-step movement counts as a moderate form of exercise. You don't need to walk 30 minutes all at one time to start either. A professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, Dr. I-Min Lee, recommends that beginners start with three short 10-minute walks. Eventually longer walks will become easier. Who knew that such a small change in something we already do counts as exercise?
- 3 Some people believe that exercise requires certain equipment or gear. For this reason people are discouraged to exercise because they do not believe they have what they need. One great benefit to walking is that you do not need special equipment. You do not even need to have access to a special area like a racetrack. You can begin walking toward better health as early as today. Don't have workout clothes to wear? You're in luck, because what you're wearing right now is probably perfect for walking. Anywhere you can walk at a quick pace is a suitable way to get in your daily steps. Once you are finished, you can have the satisfaction of knowing you have done something good for your health. All you need to do is walk quickly enough to raise your heart rate.

It Does a Body Good

- 4 Many studies stress the values of walking and its benefits for our health and fitness. According to a Harvard Medical School study,

research has shown that briskly walking for 30 minutes can burn over 100 calories. Walking also builds muscle in your legs and core. Although it may not seem like it, walking is weight training because your legs carry the weight of your upper body whenever you walk. Walking does not cause the same strain on your bones that running or other high-impact exercises do. As a result, walking helps your leg bones become stronger and resist the bone loss that typically happens as people get older.

- 5 Even your immune system benefits when you walk. A report from Harvard noted one study involving over 1,000 participants. It showed that “those who walked at least 20 minutes a day, at least five days a week, had 43% fewer sick days than those who exercised once a week or less. And if they did get sick, it was for a shorter duration, and their symptoms were milder.” Beyond reducing your chances of catching the common cold, walking has been shown to reduce your risk of developing several severe diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

Clear Your Mind

- 6 If the physical perks of walking aren’t enough to motivate you, know that walking also has positive effects on your mood. Walks can be taken in peaceful places such as nature trails or parks. Walking in these areas can help a person feel calm. Going on a daily walk gives your mind a break from the busyness of each day as well. A good walk lets you clear your mind. The exercise causes your brain to produce chemicals that improve your mood. As a bonus, walking with a friend provides a bonding opportunity to strengthen your relationships and enjoy the company of others.



A Walking Trail

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Join the Crowd

- 7 Walking has long been valued as a way to stay fit. It has also been a way for people to engage in healthy competition. It is believed that hieroglyphics in ancient Egypt document walking contests dating over 4,000 years ago! A competitive sport known as racewalking officially began in England when the Amateur Athletics Association (AAA) held the AAA Championships in 1880. Since then racewalking has gone on to become an Olympic event.
- 8 Walking for exercise is increasing in popularity with the arrival of new technologies too. Fitness trackers and step counters on smartphones and wristbands are becoming commonplace. People can set goals on these trackers to help themselves reach the numbers of steps they hope to walk each day. It is clear that people everywhere are embracing this great activity.
- 9 If you are looking for a simple exercise that comes with several benefits, then walking may be the activity for you. Lace up your shoes, and take a walk!

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- 35** What is the most likely reason the author uses a cause-and-effect organizational structure in the selection?
- A** To help the reader understand the common misunderstandings associated with exercising
 - B** To help the reader understand the steps to follow when beginning a new exercise program
 - C** To help the reader understand the ways to introduce a variety of exercises into daily life
 - D** To help the reader understand the advantages of adopting a regular exercise routine
-

- 36** Which inference about walking is supported by the information in paragraph 2?
- F** Skilled athletes can complete their daily walk in a few minutes.
 - G** People have trouble finding time in their day to walk.
 - H** Longer walks may be difficult for beginners to complete.
 - J** Moving at a fast pace makes walking a more enjoyable experience.

37 Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

When people think of exercise, they probably envision someone muscular lifting hundreds of pounds on a barbell or swift and strong sprinters speeding along a racetrack.

Which key idea is suggested by this sentence?

- A** Most exercise routines require an advanced level of skill.
 - B** Proper equipment is often needed for certain exercise programs.
 - C** Anyone can take part in exercise with the right amount of training.
 - D** People avoid exercise because they think it is beyond their capabilities.
-

38 Which sentence states the author's main claim in the selection?

- F** *If you are looking to incorporate exercise into your routine, then you should consider walking. (paragraph 1)*
- G** *You're in luck, because what you're wearing right now is probably perfect for walking. (paragraph 3)*
- H** *As a result, walking helps your leg bones become stronger and resist the bone loss that typically happens as people get older. (paragraph 4)*
- J** *As a bonus, walking with a friend provides a bonding opportunity to strengthen your relationships and enjoy the company of others. (paragraph 6)*

39 In paragraph 5, in what way does the information about the findings in the Harvard study support the author’s argument?

- A** The findings confirm that many people appreciate walking.
 - B** The findings explain why people choose to take walks.
 - C** The findings prove that walking has desirable results.
 - D** The findings show how often people go for a walk.
-

40 Which phrase in paragraph 8 helps the reader understand the meaning of commonplace?

- F** *increasing in popularity*
 - G** *arrival of new technologies*
 - H** *can set goals*
 - J** *help themselves reach*
-

41 Who is the intended audience of the selection?

- A** People who participate in sports on a daily basis
- B** People who have prepared for athletic competitions in the past
- C** People who are familiar with the best ways to exercise
- D** People who are interested in starting an exercise routine

42 Look at this photograph from the selection.



A Walking Trail

© iStock.com/MarioGuti

What is the most likely reason the author includes this photograph?

- F** To show how walking produces chemicals in the brain that can improve a person's mood
- G** To indicate that walking can be done in places that bring feelings of peace
- H** To emphasize that walking gets easier once it becomes a habit
- J** To highlight how walking provides countless physical advantages to a person's well-being

Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
1	3	Supporting Standard	9.C	C
2	1	Readiness Standard	2.B	G
3	3	Readiness Standard	5.H	D
4	3	Readiness Standard	5.G	H
5	3	Supporting Standard	9.B	D
6	3	Readiness Standard	6.D	F
7	3	Supporting Standard	9.G	D
8	3	Readiness Standard	8.Ei	H
9	3	Readiness Standard	8.Eii	A
10	3	Supporting Standard	9.G	G
11	2	Readiness Standard	7.B	D
12	2	Supporting Standard	9.D	H
13	2	Supporting Standard	7.D	D
14	2	Readiness Standard	9.A	H
15	2	Supporting Standard	8.C	B
16	1	Readiness Standard	2.B	F
17	2	Readiness Standard	5.F	D
18	2	Supporting Standard	9.D	G
19	2	Supporting Standard	7.A	D
20	2	Readiness Standard	9.A	F
21	2	Readiness Standard	6.C	D
22	2	Supporting Standard	9.F	J
23	2	Readiness Standard	5.F	B
24	1	Readiness Standard	5.E	H
25	1	Readiness Standard	5.E	C
26	1	Readiness Standard	5.E	J
27	1	Readiness Standard	5.E	B
28	2	Supporting Standard	9.D	G
29	1	Readiness Standard	2.B	A
30	2	Readiness Standard	6.C	G
31	2	Readiness Standard	6.C	C
32	2	Supporting Standard	7.D	G
33	2	Supporting Standard	7.A	D
34	2	Supporting Standard	9.F	H
35	3	Supporting Standard	9.B	D
36	3	Readiness Standard	5.F	H
37	3	Readiness Standard	5.G	D
38	3	Readiness Standard	8.Ei	F
39	3	Readiness Standard	8.Eii	C
40	1	Readiness Standard	2.B	F
41	3	Supporting Standard	8.Eiii	D
42	3	Supporting Standard	9.C	G

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	The author includes the cartoon most likely because showing children using their phones during a game of tag is an exaggerated way for the author to stress that children use digital technology far too much. As the author points out in paragraph 1, “Young people today rely heavily on digital technology.”
	Option A is incorrect	Although this might be a new game these children came up with, highlighting this is not why the author includes the cartoon. Throughout the selection, the author encourages young people to reduce screen time, such as when they’re outdoors. For example, in paragraph 3, the author states, “By taking a break from digital devices, young people have more time to go outside.”
	Option B is incorrect	The cartoon shows kids using their phones outside, but the author is showing them as being limited in their game because of their phones. The cartoon helps the author promote the idea of a “digital diet,” such as for the benefits of creativity and better fitness, as described in paragraph 3, not the idea that children should use phones when outside.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author discusses in paragraph 6 how technology can help students complete homework, the illustration is not used to emphasize that phones are helping children; instead, the author includes the illustration to support the idea that children use digital technology too much.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
2	Option G is correct	In paragraph 5, the author states “it is much more rewarding to have a conversation with people who are <u>attentive</u> ,” or those who are focused on what’s being said, than with those using their phones.
	Option F is incorrect	People might be encouraged, or given a sense of hope, by people who are <u>attentive</u> , but there is no mention of encouragement in paragraph 5, which makes it clear that this is not the meaning of <u>attentive</u> .
	Option H is incorrect	Although someone might feel “grateful,” or appreciative, to someone for being <u>attentive</u> during a conversation, this is not the meaning of the word. In paragraph 5, the author uses <u>attentive</u> to describe people who pay attention to the person they’re speaking with instead of their phone.
	Option J is incorrect	It is possible to “be understanding,” or sympathetic to, someone during a conversation, but that is not the same as being <u>attentive</u> . In paragraph 5, <u>attentive</u> people are presented as those who pay attention to the people around them, instead of their phones, during a conversation.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
3	Option D is correct	In paragraph 2, the author explains a “digital diet” involves limiting time with digital devices. In paragraph 5, the author encourages people to pay more attention to other people than their phones. Information throughout the selection indicates people can practice digital dieting by putting away phones while with friends.
	Option A is incorrect	The author mentions device use at night in paragraph 4 but focuses on shutting off devices several hours before bedtime, not adjusting the brightness of the screen. The “digital diet” described by the author involves less screen time, not adjusted brightness.
	Option B is incorrect	Playing computer games with friends is not practicing digital dieting, which involves spending more time with people without the use of digital devices. In paragraph 5, the author encourages people to put aside devices “to be more present when interacting with others.”
	Option C is incorrect	Using digital devices less when navigating would reduce time spent on those devices which is related to the digital diet described by the author, but this use would likely be considered useful by the author. Paragraph 6 states that a person driving to an unfamiliar location would benefit from using GPS, and the author emphasizes that “the goal is to use digital devices when they are needed.”

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
4	Option H is correct	The idea that a digital diet is rewarding is supported by the author's idea that mindfulness (about the use of digital devices) allows us to be more present with others. The author states, "Developing healthy habits with digital devices looks different for everyone" (paragraph 2), but a shared goal should be mindfulness, which "allows us to be more present when interacting with others" (paragraph 5).
	Option F is incorrect	Television is a form of digital entertainment that can be shared, but it is still a digital screen that takes away from human interaction. Therefore, this choice does not support the key idea that a digital diet is rewarding.
	Option G is incorrect	Although computers can be helpful in completing homework, this detail does not support the idea that digital dieting, or reducing the use of digital devices, is rewarding.
	Option J is incorrect	Since reading text messages involves the use of a digital device, this choice does not support the idea that digital dieting, which involves reducing the use of digital devices, is rewarding.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
5	Option D is correct	In paragraph 2, the author compares healthy technology habits with healthy eating habits to demonstrate that a digital diet can help people form better habits. As is the case with healthy eating habits, healthy technology habits will look “different for everyone” (paragraph 2)—the idea is to promote healthy habits, not introduce specific requirements for all to follow.
	Option A is incorrect	The comparison the author uses in paragraph 2 is used not to show that digital dieting is a complicated process, but to demonstrate that people can develop healthy (and unhealthy) technology habits, just as they can develop healthy (and unhealthy) eating habits.
	Option B is incorrect	Although reading about the comparison to food might cause some people to think about food, this is not why the author uses this comparison in paragraph 2; rather, it’s used to help the reader understand that people’s use of technology is a habit that can be developed.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author conveys that a digital diet can help people improve their lives, such as with school performance and fitness (paragraph 3), the comparison in paragraph 2 is not used to show how digital dieting solves problems; instead, the author makes the comparison to help the reader understand that technology use is a habit that can be improved upon.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
6	Option F is correct	The best summary of the excerpt is presented in these sentences. Information is provided about why technology is important, why its usage should be limited and balanced with other activities, and how this balance benefits people's lives.
	Option G is incorrect	This is not the best summary of the selection because it does not present the author's balanced view; it lacks information about what the benefits of reduced screen time actually are. The negative side of an over-reliance on technology and recommendations for people to use screens less are included in this summary, but the idea about developing healthy technology habits is left out.
	Option H is incorrect	This is not the best summary because it omits the author's view that healthy technology habits involve balance (paragraph 2) and overstates how the author presents digital dieting benefits. While the author suggests outdoor time might improve school performance and creativity (paragraph 3), the author does not say this is the reason people should go outside.
	Option J is incorrect	This is not the best summary because it presents only a portion of the ideas from the selection, primarily paragraph 2. These sentences miss key details presented by the author, such as the benefits of digital dieting and the importance of taking a balanced approach.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
7	Option D is correct	In paragraph 1 the author uses the phrase "Everywhere you look" to point out how a problem, that "people are distracted by screens," is widespread, or affecting a lot of people.
	Option A is incorrect	This is not why the author includes the phrase "Everywhere you look" in paragraph 1. For people to ignore an issue, they need to first be aware of it, and the author's focus is primarily on educating people about a digital diet. For example, the author explains in paragraph 1 that "it is possible to achieve a more balanced relationship with technology."
	Option B is incorrect	The author includes the phrase "Everywhere you look" to point out what's currently happening, not to make any statement about society changing.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author does not provide any details to explain that people are fascinated by trends; rather, the focus is on how many people are distracted by screens, and this is why the author includes the phrase "Everywhere you look."

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
8	Option H is correct	The author's primary claim in this selection is that people should work toward achieving "a more balanced relationship with technology" and "consider going on a 'digital diet'" (paragraph 1). As the author explains in paragraph 2, the main goal of a digital diet is to "limit the amount of time we spend using digital devices."
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author states in paragraph 5 that it's hard to "have a meaningful conversation" with people who are distracted by devices, the author does not make the claim that electronic devices are responsible for meaningless conversations.
	Option G is incorrect	The author is suggesting that people reduce their use of digital devices, not give them up completely. For example, in paragraph 6, the author points out "[t]he goal is to use digital devices when they are needed but to spend some time away from them as well."
	Option J is incorrect	This statement implies that digital devices are restricted to indoor use, which the author is not claiming. For example, the illustration included in the selection shows children on their digital devices while outside.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
9	Option A is correct	The author includes the quotation in paragraph 4 as support for why it's important to take technology breaks and to show what can happen when people don't take these breaks. According to the quotation, not taking a break from technology at night can cause "disturbed sleep."
	Option B is incorrect	The author's use of the quotation in paragraph 4 does not support the idea that people must be able to send information at any time; rather, it supports the idea that it's important to put technology aside at times.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the quotation in paragraph 4 could help emphasize why it's important to break the routine of using too much technology, its focus is on identifying negative effects of using technology, not highlighting a typical routine of a technology user.
	Option D is incorrect	The quotation in paragraph 4 is focused on negative effects of overusing devices, not on whether people can give up their devices.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
10	Option G is correct	The author includes this direct address most likely to encourage the reader to take action as part of the author's encouragement in paragraph 5 to be "more mindful of when we use technology," so people can be "more present when interacting with others."
	Option F is incorrect	The use of direct address does not suggest anything about the enjoyment people find in texting. In contrast, the author is encouraging the reader to "speak up" and play an active role in helping conversations become "more rewarding" (paragraph 5) and therefore more enjoyable.
	Option H is incorrect	The author's use of the direct address to "speak up" is not to encourage people to be more observant, but rather to call on them to do something to reduce the use digital devices during social interactions.
	Option J is incorrect	Although friendships might improve if people spend less time on their devices, this is not the reason the author uses this direct address. Rather, by saying "speak up," the author encourages the reader to play an active role in reducing the use of devices during social interactions.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
11	Option D is correct	Martha's approach to talking with Betsy is significant because it makes Betsy feel more comfortable. Betsy is "obviously relieved" (line 30) when Martha leads Betsy away to speak privately. By telling Betsy that she can "whisper your secret to me," she suggests that she is willing to hear Betsy's reasons in a way that will not lead to trouble for Betsy's husband, Sam.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Martha's irritation and directness with her husband (line 41) encourage him to listen to her, Martha's approach does not change George's manner of speaking to others. Throughout the play, he speaks to the others with authority yet fairness. For example, George states "let's get to the business at hand" (line 28) and "If only we can get through this bitter winter" (line 35).
	Option B is incorrect	Martha's leading Betsy away from the others to give her more privacy has nothing to do with Betsy's presence being unnecessary; rather, her presence is necessary to clear up why she is there and the mystery around Sam (line 60).
	Option C is incorrect	Martha's approach to talking with Betsy is to allow her the chance to share her reason for being in camp quietly and with a sympathetic person who is not her husband's commander, not to keep Betsy's motive hidden from George. It is obvious that Martha plans to tell George. For example, in line 39, Martha says, "I'll tell you privately, George."

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
12	Option H is correct	The playwright uses the comparison in line 6 to a “plain” dish of beans to make it clear that Silas thinks Betsy’s reason for disguising herself is obviously suspicious.
	Option F is incorrect	The comparison in line 6 is used to highlight how Silas perceives Betsy’s behavior, not that the costume Betsy wears is plain, or “like a common farmer.”
	Option G is incorrect	The playwright does not use the comparison in line 6 to remark that Betsy appears to be tired and hungry; instead, he uses it to describe how Silas considers her behavior.
	Option J is incorrect	The comparison to a dish of beans does not refer to the significance or meaning of Betsy’s arrival, but instead to the way Silas considers her behavior.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
13	Option D is correct	The time period is significant because, since it's 1777, phones have not yet been invented, and Betsy does not have any way to communicate with her husband aside from traveling to find him.
	Option A is incorrect	The time period of the play does not affect Sam's regret for what he wrote in his letter to his wife. The plan to "desert the army" (line 57) would be as problematic now as it was then.
	Option B is incorrect	As described in the list of characters, Silas is a young soldier, which is most likely his reason for asking for help and has nothing to do with the time period of the play.
	Option C is incorrect	The need for privacy is not affected by the time period of the play. Now, as then, a person in authority such as a general might hear information in secret, instead of sharing it with "the entire army" (line 39).

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
14	Option H is correct	A central message in this play is that it can take time and patience to understand a situation. Betsy required time and patience to feel comfortable divulging her reason for her disguise and for making the trip; also, it can take time and patience to connect different pieces of information, such as the connection between Sam and Betsy disclosed in lines 51 and 52.
	Option F is incorrect	The playwright focuses the play on Betsy's trip and her reason for making it rather than on the letter that Sam initially wrote to his wife. Therefore, the difficulty of correcting a mistake is not a central message in this play.
	Option G is incorrect	Rather than focusing on Betsy's reliance on others, the playwright focuses on the time and patience that it took for anyone to understand why Betsy risked making her trip.
	Option J is incorrect	The idea that ignoring advice can have harsh consequences does not factor into the events of the play. Although Betsy wanted to "persuade" Sam "to stay" (line 59), she was not able to share her advice with him until he already decided to stay.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
15	Option B is correct	Through the dialogue in lines 37 through 42, the playwright shows how Martha can change her husband's mind. This demonstrates that Washington considers and respects the opinion of his wife.
	Option A is incorrect	Lines 37 through 42 imply that George Washington is more invested in Martha's opinions than he is in not keeping secrets from his soldiers. For example, after Martha says "[t]here is no reason for her secret to be shared by the entire army," (line 39) George sends the soldiers out.
	Option C is incorrect	This exchange does not suggest that George Washington is suspicious, but that it is his duty as a commander to know what is going on. In fact, he's open to hearing Martha's response when he asks, "Indeed—then what is she?" (line 38).
	Option D is incorrect	Martha's intention in lines 37 through 42 is to share information she has learned about a young woman who has been accused by others of being a spy, but there is no evidence that she ever identifies spies. In fact, in this case she assures her husband George Washington that his soldiers are wrong, telling George, "this young woman is no spy."

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
16	Option F is correct	In paragraph 11, <u>reminisce</u> means to remember things that happened in the past. As Julie prepares to bid goodbye to her sister, who is leaving for college, she reflects on their dances together.
	Option G is incorrect	<u>Reminisce</u> does not mean to have doubts, which means to distrust something.
	Option H is incorrect	Julie is not judging anyone; <u>reminisce</u> does not mean to judge, which means to form an opinion about something.
	Option J is incorrect	The tradition of dancing was created by their dad to resolve their anger during an argument, but <u>reminisce</u> does not mean to resolve an issue. Instead, Julie is simply remembering earlier days with her sister when their “biggest problems involved Olivia the doll.”

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
17	Option D is correct	Based on paragraph 7 of "Last Dance," now that Becca is leaving, Julie is afraid that the dancing tradition will no longer seem important to Becca. Julie can't "shake the feeling of how upset" she would be if she and her sister "didn't get to have one last dance party."
	Option A is incorrect	As the author points out in paragraph 7, Julie understands that "Becca had things to do" to prepare to leave for college, but she is not angry; she is realizing how much she will miss her sister.
	Option B is incorrect	Julie may well be wondering whether her relationship with Becca will change when Becca leaves, which would be a natural thing for her to do, but paragraph 7, and the story, is focused on the dancing tradition.
	Option C is incorrect	Julie knows Becca is excited about going to college, but paragraph 7 focuses on Julie's worry that there may not be one last dance party.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
18	Option G is correct	Personification is a type of figurative language where human characteristics are applied to something that is not alive. In this story, the author's personification of the girls' anger in the sentence from paragraph 5—"our anger crept out of the living room"—emphasizes how well the dancing overpowered the anger.
	Option F is incorrect	The girls do learn to appreciate the dance parties, but it is not the author's use of personification ("our anger crept out of the living room") that shows this.
	Option H is incorrect	It is the dancing itself, not the personification in paragraph 5 ("our anger crept out of the living room"), that emphasizes the bond the girls share.
	Option J is incorrect	The girls dance in the same room at the insistence of their father, though they are initially unwilling to do so. The use of personification ("our anger crept out of the living room") shows that they are forgetting their argument as they dance, but there is no evidence that they are willing to work together.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
19	Option D is correct	The theme is best conveyed in the sentence in paragraph 20, when Julie “basked in the bittersweet,” understanding that sometimes the most unexpected moments can turn into “moments to cherish.” Julie discovers this during the last dance with Becca.
	Option A is incorrect	This sentence in paragraph 1 does not express the theme but simply shares a detail from the story about how the dance was conducted each night.
	Option B is incorrect	The girls’ dad tried something new when the girls were still angry with one another after a time out, turning on his favorite song and insisting they dance. Although this action led to a tradition that the girls continued for many years, it does not convey the theme of the story which is established when Becca prepares to move away to college.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence in paragraph 12 focuses on Julie’s feelings of resignation, but that is not the theme.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
20	Option F is correct	A message in "The Tree" is that the speaker does not fully appreciate the beauty of the tree until it is gone. The speaker says in line 10, "For years I never noticed," and then in line 16 remarks on "the presence of the absence of the tree."
	Option G is incorrect	The speaker fully understands that the tree was cut down and recognizes in lines 14 and 15 the "gap it left created . . . an emptiness."
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker is reflecting on the absence of a tree. This statement about being comfortable at home is not part of the message given in the poem.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the poem describes the tree's shadow against the neighbor's house, the neighbors and their specific actions are not mentioned in the poem.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
21	Option D is correct	The “emptiness” discussed in line 15 indicates the speaker’s feeling of regret that the tree is gone.
	Option A is incorrect	The specified time frame of five minutes in line 1 does not suggest the speaker’s regret.
	Option B is incorrect	Line 4 shows where the tree’s shadow had fallen, but no regret is suggested.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no indication of regret in line 12; this line states the simple fact that the tree is gone.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
22	Option J is correct	The phrases “a silence,” “an emptiness,” and “presence of the absence” in lines 14 through 16 convey the speaker’s feelings and the mood of the poem, which both involve a sense of abandonment.
	Option F is incorrect	Lines 14 through 16 do not contribute to a mood of surprise. Rather, the speaker feels a sense of abandonment.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the speaker feels the loss of the tree, as indicated by the use of “gap,” “silence,” “emptiness,” and “absence” in lines 14 through 16, the mood created is not one of frustration.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker reflects upon the absence of the tree in lines 14 through 16 and the space that is left behind but does not indicate any thoughts about what may or may not come next.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
23	Option B is correct	Based on lines 10 and 11 of the poem, the reader can infer that the speaker suddenly fully considers the tree once it is about to go away. In these lines, when the speaker says, “For years I never noticed,” he is referring to the tree as a separate object, not simply something creating shadows, and not something that might have grown “into the house” (line 6).
	Option A is incorrect	Although in line 10 the speaker says, “For years I never noticed,” this is not referring to noticing the nearby environment; it refers to the fact that, while the speaker was keenly aware of the tree’s shadows, he took for granted the tree itself—that it would always be there, creating the environment as he knew it.
	Option C is incorrect	Lines 10 and 11 contain nothing about the speaker’s preference to sleep when everything is quiet.
	Option D is incorrect	The idea of the tree being accidentally cut down is not included within lines 10 and 11.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
24	Option H is correct	Both "Last Dance" and "The Tree" emphasize a noticeable loss. In "Last Dance," Julie experiences a feeling of loss when she faces the reality that her sister is leaving home; the speaker in "The Tree" experiences the loss of the tree and its shadows.
	Option F is incorrect	Although both Julie in "Last Dance" and the speaker in "The Tree" experience difficult changes, a need for help is not emphasized in either the story or the poem.
	Option G is incorrect	Although both the story "Last Dance" and the poem "The Tree" capture the idea of the passage of time and the changes it brings, neither one emphasizes a fascination with time. Rather, they each show how people adjust to the changes that occur with time.
	Option J is incorrect	In both the story "Last Dance" and the poem "The Tree," there is a sense of longing for something in the past rather than a longing for something new.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
25	Option C is correct	The narrator in the story "Last Dance" is unlike the speaker of the poem "The Tree," because the narrator in the story realizes that her sister is still at home until college begins; in contrast, the speaker in the poem realizes that the tree is gone with only the memory of it remaining.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the narrator in "Last Dance" might spend some time alone, the focus of the story is on her spending time with her family. For example, they ate dinner together (paragraphs 8–11); in the poem "The Tree," the speaker says nothing about being around anyone else but focuses on the impact of a single missing tree.
	Option B is incorrect	In the story "Last Dance," the narrator seems to have time to sit and think, but in the poem "The Tree," the speaker is not described as being busy, and he spends the length of the poem reflecting on the loss of the tree.
	Option D is incorrect	It can be inferred that the narrator in the story "Last Dance" has spent her entire life with her sister. In the poem "The Tree," the length of time for which the speaker has lived by the tree is not indicated. However, there are clues that he has lived by the tree for longer than a short amount of time. For example, "Each evening" (line 1) and "the tree seems to grow into the house" (lines 5–6). These details suggest a similarity between the narrator of the story and the speaker in the poem, not a difference.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
26	Option J is correct	In both the story "Last Dance" and the poem "The Tree," the theme is of not taking small wonders for granted. For example, in the story, Julie says she realizes "that these were the moments to cherish" (paragraph 20), and in the poem, the speaker reflects, "For years I never noticed" (line 10) and "The gap it left created a silence" (line 14).
	Option F is incorrect	Although loss, which is a theme in both the story "Last Dance" and the poem "The Tree," takes courage to face and deal with, neither the story nor poem presents a theme of having the courage to live life to its fullest.
	Option G is incorrect	It is hinted in the story "Last Dance" that the narrator should have confided in her sister, but this is not a theme of the poem "The Tree."
	Option H is incorrect	Although it can take patience to come to terms with change and loss, which are themes in both the story "Last Dance" and the poem "The Tree," having the patience to achieve a goal is not a theme for either the story or the poem.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
27	Option B is correct	Unlike the poem "The Tree," the story "Last Dance" ends with a sense of fulfillment, in that Julie gets to experience a last dance with her sister and realizes that it is a moment "to cherish." In contrast, the poem does not end with a sense of fulfillment; it ends with a sense of loss and reflection.
	Option A is incorrect	Although "Last Dance" ends with Becca heading off to college, which can be considered an adventure, the ending of the story deals more with acceptance of change and cherishing good moments. The poem "The Tree" does not end with any sense of adventure; it ends with a sense of loss and reflection.
	Option C is incorrect	In the story "Last Dance," the sisters discover that the dances are important to them both, so there is no need for a sense of sympathy; in the poem "The Tree," the speaker feels a sense of loss but does not feel a need for sympathy from anyone.
	Option D is incorrect	Neither the story "Last Dance" nor the poem "The Tree" ends with a sense of concern. The story ends more with acceptance, not concern, that Becca is leaving; the poem ends with the speaker reflecting on the loss of the tree, but he does not demonstrate a sense of concern.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
28	Option G is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different from the literal interpretation. In paragraph 15, the phrase “felt a weight lift from her shoulders” is a figurative way to describe relief from worries, which can feel like carrying something heavy. The phrase “buoyed by a dose of support” is a figurative way to say Alix’s support helped Brittany keep her head up, or afloat.
	Option F is incorrect	The author’s use of figurative language in paragraph 15 does not indicate that Brittany feels burdened or down about the competition; in contrast, the use of the phrases “weight lift” and “dose of support” indicate lighter feelings, not burden.
	Option H is incorrect	Although Brittany and Alix appear to respect one another, the author’s use of figurative language—“weight lift from her shoulders, now buoyed by a dose of support”—does not refer to the respect Brittany and Alix have for each other.
	Option J is incorrect	The author’s use of figurative language refers to Brittany’s feelings about Alix’s presence, not to the challenges Brittany had to overcome.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
29	Option A is correct	In paragraph 10, Brittany has a serious, or <u>solemn</u> , look on her face because she is “plagued with nerves” and she thinks that Alix is not there to support her.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 10, Brittany is not confused; instead, she has a serious or <u>solemn</u> look on her face as she waits to compete.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Brittany is shocked to see Alix, this does not happen in paragraph 10, when she has a serious or <u>solemn</u> look on her face while she waits to compete.
	Option D is incorrect	Brittany is not annoyed before she competes. In paragraph 10, she has a serious or <u>solemn</u> expression as she waits for her turn.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
30	Option G is correct	In paragraph 9, Brittany is “holding her head as if it were a weighty boulder,” then stares at the empty stands, “imagining how she must have made Alix feel,” concerned that she may have ruined her friendship with Alix.
	Option F is incorrect	At this point in the story, in paragraph 4, Brittany is more concerned about how Alix’s critiques of her routine will affect her focus than she is concerned about their friendship.
	Option H is incorrect	This sentence from paragraph 14 does not support Brittany’s concern; instead, Alix’s gesture proves to Brittany that they are still friends.
	Option J is incorrect	The thumbs-up gesture that Alix makes to Brittany in paragraph 15 shows support for Brittany, so she is no longer worried about their friendship.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
31	Option C is correct	In paragraph 8, the coach communicates that Brittany's performance in practice is not up to her usual level by telling her that she is "off [her] game." Right before this point, in paragraph 7, Brittany notices Alix's empty seat "and tried to ignore the pang she felt from her friend's absence." This suggests Alix's absence is the reason Brittany's performance suffers.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 4, Alix apologizes for hurting Brittany's feelings, but there is no suggestion in this sentence that Alix is absent from Brittany's performance or that she affected the performance.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence from paragraph 6 is simply giving the time frame before the actual competition begins, but it does not suggest Brittany's performance is suffering because of Alix's absence.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 15, by holding her head high, Brittany displays the return of her confidence now that Alix has come to support her.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
32	Option G is correct	In paragraph 10, the setting changes to the day of the competition, with only Brittany's parents and Coach Jen there to support her. Since it's the day of the competition and Alix is not there to support her, Brittany feels increased pressure, and "clumsy and insecure," about her upcoming performance.
	Option F is incorrect	The day of the competition is not what causes Brittany to believe that Alix will not come; Brittany has already been concerned about that for days. For example, in paragraph 9, Brittany is shown before competition day, missing "the encouragement Alix gave her when she was doubting herself."
	Option H is incorrect	Although in paragraph 10, the author discloses that "Brittany practiced her moves" and "memorized the routine," this does not show how the change of setting contributes to the plot. Brittany felt pressure about her routine because of the disagreement with Alix, not because she did not practice enough.
	Option J is incorrect	The day of competition does not highlight a need for time apart from Alix. Instead, it emphasizes Brittany's need for Alix's support.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
33	Option D is correct	This sentence from paragraph 14 supports the story's theme that people who share a good relationship can overcome minor disagreements or repair small ruptures between them. Alix is telling her friend that "no matter what happens," she'll be there for her. As Alix explains in paragraph 13, "I know you needed your space, but that doesn't mean I was going to abandon you."
	Option A is incorrect	Although by this point Brittany realizes Alix was giving her honest advice, this sentence from paragraph 14 supports Alix's understanding and the strength of their friendship, not the importance of honesty.
	Option B is incorrect	Although Brittany might have momentarily considered Alix to be a distraction, by this point her annoyance has passed, and she realizes she needs Alix's support and encouragement. This sentence from paragraph 14 supports the idea of their strong friendship, not the moment Brittany is annoyed with Alix.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 14, Alix's expression of support reduces Brittany's stress rather than adding to it, and her confidence returns.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
34	Option H is correct	The language in paragraph 15 creates a mood of positivity and hopefulness by showing that Brittany has “her head held high” and is envisioning the “judges giving her the same” positive thumbs-up gesture after her routine as Alix gave her before the routine.
	Option F is incorrect	Brittany is fond of Alix, but the author’s word choice in paragraph 15 creates a mood of hopefulness, not fondness.
	Option G is incorrect	Although Brittany envisions getting two thumbs up from the judges in paragraph 15, this is related to Brittany’s positive frame of mind, and the author’s choice of language in the paragraph does not create a mood of admiration.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author’s word choice in paragraph 15 creates a positive mood, it is not one of amusement. The language reflects Brittany’s sense of hope; there is no evidence of a mood of amusement.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
35	Option D is correct	The author uses a cause-and-effect organizational structure to demonstrate the benefits of adopting a walking routine. In paragraph 1, the author explains the importance of exercise (cause) and then focuses much of the article on explaining the advantages (effects) of walking. For example, it burns calories (paragraph 4) and improves mood (paragraph 6).
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not use a cause-and-effect organizational structure to explain common misunderstandings associated with exercising. Although the author refers to misunderstandings in paragraph 1, these are details included as part of establishing the cause that it's important for people to exercise.
	Option B is incorrect	The author encourages people to walk regularly but does not focus the structure on steps to follow when starting an exercise program; if the author had done this, listing the step-by-step processes would be used as the organizational structure instead of a cause-and-effect structure.
	Option C is incorrect	The author discusses ways that readers can benefit from a regular walking routine, not ways to introduce a variety of exercises into daily life; this is not why the author uses a cause-and-effect organizational structure.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
36	Option H is correct	In paragraph 2, the author implies that long walks may be difficult for beginners and includes a recommendation that beginners “start with three short 10-minute walks” per day.
	Option F is incorrect	The author does not mention skilled athletes in paragraph 2; instead, the focus is on beginners.
	Option G is incorrect	Although time restraints might make it hard for some people to add regular exercise to their days, there is no suggestion of this in paragraph 2, which focuses on how people can adjust to the new physical activity of walking.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author refers to “brisk walking” in paragraph 2, there is no suggestion that fast walking is more enjoyable, so this cannot be inferred from the information in paragraph 2.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
37	Option D is correct	This sentence from paragraph 1 points out how people might consider exercise as something reserved for people who are already fit. The key idea from this sentence is that these beliefs make people feel incapable of exercising, so they avoid it.
	Option A is incorrect	Although this sentence from paragraph 1 illustrates athletes with advanced levels of skill, this reflects people's assumptions about exercise, not the reality of exercise, so the idea that most exercise routines require this level of skill is not a key idea suggested by this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	Although this sentence from paragraph 1 references a barbell and a racetrack, the author is not suggesting these are needed for exercise programs. The key idea involves people's assumptions about exercise, not the equipment people use to exercise.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence from paragraph 1, the author is not suggesting that readers need a certain amount of training to take part in an exercise program. The key idea has nothing to do with any advice from the author; it has to do with people's assumptions about exercise.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
38	Option F is correct	Beginning with the title "Ready, Set, Walk!," the author presents information intended to encourage readers to spend more time walking. The author's recommendation for readers to "consider walking" in paragraph 1 is repeated throughout the article, with sections devoted to how to get started walking, ways that walking benefits the body and the mind, and descriptions of how walking has evolved as exercise and a social activity over many years.
	Option G is incorrect	The idea from paragraph 3 that almost any apparel is appropriate for walking is a detail to show that special equipment is not required for this popular activity, but it is not the main claim of the article. The author provides the information to support the main claim that walking can benefit anyone.
	Option H is incorrect	This possible medical benefit discussed in paragraph 4 is a detail used to provide an example of how walking is good for people. This is not the main claim of the article, but it adds support for the author's main claim that walking is an easy and accessible exercise for almost everyone.
	Option J is incorrect	Bonding with a friend while walking, as described in paragraph 6, is a detail which strengthens the author's argument that walking is good for a person's mood. The detail supports the author's main argument that walking is beneficial, but it is only a small part of that argument.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
39	Option C is correct	The study findings discussed in paragraph 5 offer evidence that walking is beneficial to people's health and well-being, which is the author's argument.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author includes benefits of walking, which could cause people to appreciate walking; however, the author never makes a connection between the findings and people's appreciation of walking.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 5, although the author describes benefits people gain from walking, the author does not present these benefits as explanations for why people choose to take walks.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the findings in paragraph 5 reveal the minimum frequency at which study participants walked, this is not the information that supports the author's argument, which is focused on the idea that walking is beneficial.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
40	Option F is correct	In paragraph 8, the author explains that the number of people walking for exercise is growing as new technologies like trackers and counters are “increasing in popularity.” By reading about this trend, the reader can determine based on the context that <u>commonplace</u> means commonly found.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the phrase “arrival of new technologies” helps the reader understand that new exercise-related technologies are being introduced, it does not suggest how many people are using them. Therefore, it does not help readers understand the meaning of <u>commonplace</u> .
	Option H is incorrect	The phrase “can set goals” is a task the new technology can do; it’s not related to how popular it is, and so it does not help the reader understand the meaning of <u>commonplace</u> .
	Option J is incorrect	The phrase “help themselves reach” relates to people using trackers to set goals, not how many people use the trackers and counters, so it does not help the reader understand the meaning of <u>commonplace</u> .

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
41	Option D is correct	Throughout the passage, the author provides information useful for people interested in starting an exercise routine. For example, in paragraph 2, the author explains how to begin an exercise routine; in paragraph 3, the focus is on how people can exercise (walk) without the need for equipment; and in paragraphs 4 through 6, the author discusses the benefits of exercise (walking).
	Option A is incorrect	People who participate in sports most likely already know how to exercise and are aware of the benefits of exercise.
	Option B is incorrect	Former athletic competitors are most likely already aware of the benefits of exercise and do not need tips on how to start an exercise routine.
	Option C is incorrect	People who already know the best ways to exercise would likely not feel a need to read about the basics and health benefits of exercise.

2022 STAAR Grade 7 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
42	Option G is correct	The most likely reason the author includes this photograph—showing a person on a trail in the woods—is to demonstrate that walking can be done in places that bring feelings of peace. In paragraph 6, the author indicates this by saying walking can be done “in peaceful places such as nature trails or parks.”
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author reveals in paragraph 6 that walking “causes your brain to produce chemicals that improve your mood,” the photograph does not show how chemicals in the brain affect the person’s mood.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the author reveals in paragraph 2 that walking becomes easier once it’s a habit, the photograph does not include any evidence to emphasize that this occurs.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author makes clear in paragraphs 4 through 6 that walking provides benefits to a person’s well-being, the photograph does not include any elements that highlight how walking provides these benefits.