

**2021-2022**



**Grade 5 - Item Type Sampler**  
**English Language Arts**

**Directions:**

On the following pages of your booklet are passages and questions for the Grade 5 *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.

When you come to the word STOP, you have finished the Grade 5 NSCAS Growth English 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 student's paragraph.

In the summer's morning sunlight, the water was gleaming and the surf felt refreshing on Jacob's feet. He had nothing to do that day, and was enjoying the fresh air. Gathering seashells and skipping stones as he went, Jacob was having a ball exploring the seemingly never-ending beach. After a while, Jacob noticed a rundown house nestled in the trees. It looked to be unoccupied. The porch was in total disarray, covered with dust, sand, dead leaves, and overturned furniture.

The student wants to make more precise word choices in the paragraph. Which word BEST replaces the underlined word in the paragraph?

- A. jogged
- B. moved
- C. passed
- D. wandered

The item on this page is not passage-based.

- ★ 2. This question has two parts. Answer Part A, and then answer Part B.

**Read the paragraph.**

Find a tall glass. Spoon in two scoops of vanilla ice cream. Slowly pour root beer into the glass. The root beer will foam very quickly. Allow the foam to rise and then recede. Add more root beer if needed.

**Part A**

Which sentence BEST introduces the paragraph?

- A. Make a float carefully, but enjoy it slowly.
- B. Be careful because root beer floats are foamy.
- C. You will have enough for two people to have a float.
- D. This recipe for a root beer float uses two ingredients.

**Part B**

Why is your choice in Part A the BEST choice?

- A. It includes a useful transition.
- B. It provides additional information.
- C. It describes the intended audience.
- D. It reveals the topic of the paragraph.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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**The items on this page are not passage-based.**

- ★ 3. A student is writing a persuasive essay about the use of digital technology in classrooms. Which source would MOST LIKELY give the student relevant information?

- A. a biography about the creator of computers
- B. a newspaper article about types of cell phones
- C. an interview with a local teacher about technology
- D. a website timeline of how technology has changed

- ★ 4. **Read a student's first draft of a report about the football.**

According to Jimmy Stamp from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., the very first football was accidentally shaped into an oval. The original football was intended to be completely round but ended up being an oval shape. Many believe it was engineered specifically for football and made out of pigskin.

Which introductory sentence should the student use to increase sentence variety?

- A. Today's football has a long history.
- B. People wonder if a football is shaped like a sphere.
- C. Based on the first football, today's football is quite a change.
- D. It began as a ball, and it ended up as something else entirely.

Pasta Pals

- 1 Ethan, Raj, and TJ jogged along the sidewalk, passing a soccer ball. While chatter of sports and school bounced between the three teammates, Luca trailed behind. He was so caught up in worrying about his plans that he could barely keep up with the others.
- 2 All four boys were on the soccer team; it was the first activity Luca had joined when he started at his new school. Now they were on their way to Luca’s grandmother’s house because Luca had promised his new teammates a delicious feast and a game of soccer later.
- 3 Earlier that week, Luca had mentioned to his grandmother that he would like to make friends at his new school, but he wasn’t sure how. “Food is the glue that brings people together,” Nonna had said. “Bring some of the boys from your soccer team here. We will make Italian pasta, and you will all become fast friends.”
- 4 But Luca had doubts; he had been making pasta with Nonna since he was a toddler, but what if these **potential** friends were not interested in family gatherings or the time and effort it took to produce the feast he had promised them? What if they never wanted to hang out with him again?
- 5 Luca hurried in front of the boys and stopped on the wide front step of Nonna’s house. “Guys, I need to warn you about something,” Luca declared.
- 6 “Ooh, sounds serious!” TJ teased, his face cracking into a toothy grin.
- 7 Luca wiped the sweat from his brow. The boys, sensing his nervousness, grew serious. “What’s up?” Ethan asked.
- 8 “When I invited you over for a meal at my nonna’s house, I didn’t tell you—”
- 9 “That it would smell so good!” Raj interrupted.
- 10 “He’s right,” TJ agreed. “Something smells delicious!”
- 11 Ethan inhaled deeply and closed his eyes. “I’m hungry already.”
- 12 Before Luca could explain further, the front door burst open and there stood Nonna, smiling and beckoning them into her large, sunny kitchen.
- 13 “Guys, meet Giovanna Rossi—my nonna,” Luca said.
- 14 He introduced each of his friends to Nonna and was surprised when TJ said, “TJ’s short for Timothy James, ma’am. I’m named after my granddad. Can you tell me what smells so good?”

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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- 15 Nonna laughed, pointing to a large covered pot simmering on the stove. “It is our family recipe for red sauce. My nonna taught it to me when I was just a girl, and she learned it from her nonna back in Calabria, Italy. It cooks all day to bring out the best flavors.”
- 16 “I’ve made spaghetti before,” Ethan volunteered, “and macaroni and cheese plenty of times for my little sisters. It’s easy.”
- 17 “Noodles from a box are a time saver for busy families,” Nonna agreed, “but there is great satisfaction in working with fresh ingredients and treasured recipes to create something special for your family and friends. How would you like to make your own pasta to use in ravioli?”
- 18 The boys hesitated for a moment, and Luca felt his palms grow sweaty.
- 19 “Do we get to eat what we make?” TJ asked.
- 20 “May I take some home to show my papa?” Raj added.
- 21 “Absolutely to both questions!” Nonna laughed.
- 22 Luca smiled in relief at his grandmother and she winked back. So far, so good.
- 23 In no time, the four boys were mixing small mountains of flour with eggs, water, and salt and laughing at the sticky mess squishing between their fingers. The laughter turned to groans when Nonna taught them to knead. Folding and flattening, turning and pounding the dough was entertaining at first, but after the necessary ten minutes, their arms felt as wobbly as wet noodles. They deposited their smooth, rounded pasta lumps beneath some plastic wrap to rest and then cheerfully accepted a treat of milk and crescent-shaped almond cookies.
- 24 With a large flour-coated rolling pin, Nonna demonstrated the next step. “Make your pasta as thin as possible,” she said, lifting her flattened dough over her hand with her fingers spread wide. “If you can see your hand through the pasta, it’s thin enough.”
- 25 Rolling the dough required some practice and resulted in some good-natured teasing between the boys, but eventually they produced four large sheets of semitransparent pasta.
- 26 To cut the sheets of pasta into the appropriate shapes, Nonna brought out her bag of pasta tools. She showed the boys how to use a round cutter with scalloped edges to create perfect wavy-edged dough circles. Raj and Luca brushed half of the dough circles with an egg wash. Then TJ and Ethan dropped a meatball-sized scoop of the parmesan and ricotta cheese filling in the center.
- 27 “This is fun,” said Ethan. “My granny makes a spicy Cajun dish called jambalaya. She always appreciates when I offer to peel the shrimp.”

- 28 “Yum, spicy shrimp would taste scrumptious in the pasta pies we’re making,” said Nonna. “Now that you know the process, you can put your favorite flavors into your own pasta at home.”
- 29 Luca modeled how to tuck each top circle around the filling and finish each ravioli shell by crimping the edges with a fork.
- 30 Using Nonna’s pasta tools, the boys cut the leftover dough into soccer balls, wiggly worms, and pasta-people. TJ stacked some of the soccer-ball shapes, saying, “Looks like a stack of pancakes, doesn’t it?”
- 31 “Do you like pancakes?” Luca asked.
- 32 TJ nodded. “But I like waffles better. My granddad makes the best blueberry waffles.”
- 33 “What’s your papa’s specialty, Raj?” Luca asked.
- 34 “Ordering pizza,” joked Raj.
- 35 Everyone laughed.
- 36 By this time, the boys and even Nonna were hungry. A harmony of growling stomachs, bubbling pasta, and simmering seasoned sauce filled the kitchen. Nonna asked the boys to set the table with plates, glasses, and silverware. “This ravioli and sauce is the best I’ve ever eaten!” TJ proclaimed. “Would it be all right if we made pasta together again sometime? I had a lot of fun.”
- 37 As Ethan and Raj enthusiastically agreed, Luca shared a **confidential** smile with Nonna. He was grateful Nonna had cooked up a plan to help him make new friends.



5. Read this sentence from the story.

“... what if these **potential** friends were not interested in family gatherings or the time and effort it took to produce the feast he had promised them?”

Which word can be used in place of **potential** to keep the same meaning of the sentence?

- A. apparent
- B. athletic
- C. possible
- D. problematic

6. Read this sentence from the story.

“As Ethan and Raj enthusiastically agreed, Luca shared a **confidential** smile with Nonna.”

What does **confidential** mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A. asking a question quickly
- B. sharing something secretly
- C. giving something generously
- D. feeling pride for an accomplishment

7. What does Nonna mean when she says that “Food is the glue that brings people together”?

- A. Creating new friendships is built on shared experiences.
- B. Finding new friends means connecting with many people.
- C. Joining together for a meal helps repair broken friendships.
- D. Building new friendships takes effort combined with patience.

8. What is a theme of the story?
- A. Something that everyone has to learn is how to make new friends.
  - B. The best way to be successful is to have family members help out.
  - C. Sometimes people need to take chances in order to achieve a goal.
  - D. Eating a meal together is the first step in being accepted at a new school.
9. Which statement BEST summarizes the story?
- A. Luca and his grandmother think up a plan to help Luca make some friends at his new school.
  - B. Luca and three of his new friends learn how to make ravioli with the help of Luca's grandmother.
  - C. Luca's grandmother shows Luca's friends how to make ravioli, then they take food home to their parents.
  - D. Luca and his grandmother work together to help Luca make new friends before they go out to play soccer.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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

### **Part A**

How is Luca's grandmother MOST important to the plot of this story?

- A. She is knowledgeable about traditional recipes.
- B. She lets Luca's friends take home some homemade ravioli.
- C. She comes up with a plan that helps Luca make new friends.
- D. She plants an idea that helps four boys to assist their parents.

### **Part B**

Which statement from the story BEST supports the answer in Part A?

- A. "Food is the glue that brings people together," Nonna had said.
- B. "Absolutely to both questions!" Nonna laughed.
- C. "Make your pasta as thin as possible," she said.
- D. "Now that you know the process, you can put your favorite flavors into your own pasta at home."

11. Select **two** examples from the story that show the closeness between Luca and Nonna. Select **two**.

- A. "Bring some of the boys from your soccer team here."
- B. "My nonna taught it to me when I was just a girl, and she learned it from her nonna back in Calabria, Italy."
- C. Luca smiled in relief at his grandmother and she winked back.
- D. She showed the boys how to use a round cutter with scalloped edges to create perfect wavy-edged dough circles.
- E. As Ethan and Raj enthusiastically agreed, Luca shared a confidential smile with Nonna.

12. Why did the author MOST LIKELY write this story?

- A. to explain how making ravioli from scratch is one way to enjoy a good meal
- B. to describe how a group of friends share a meal of ravioli after making it themselves
- C. to convince readers that the way to make new friends is to make ravioli from scratch
- D. to entertain readers with a story about how making ravioli helps a boy make new friends

### Birds of Nebraska

- 1 The state of Nebraska is a bird lover's paradise. All year long, birds of all colors and sizes fly to and from the state. Around 460 species of birds can be spotted in Nebraska. In fact, birds are so beloved that festivals have even sprung up around some of these feathered celebrities.

#### The Sandhill Crane

- 2 During springtime in Nebraska, over a quarter of a million sandhill cranes begin to gather before migrating north for the summer. These tall birds are known for their long legs, which allow them to stroll through water and over land in search of plants, rodents, bugs, and even snakes for food. Their loud trumpeting calls echo across the Platte River, and the sky and ground are filled with their cream-colored feathers. These beautiful creatures help attract thousands of visitors to Nebraska year after year.

#### The White Pelican

- 3 Another **remarkable** gathering of birds occurs at the Harlan County Reservoir, where thousands of white pelicans soar majestically across the water and through the sky. Traveling in groups of up to 100, these huge birds gradually spiral upward using air currents to help provide lift. Boasting a wingspan of up to 9.5 feet, they can circle for long periods of time with little effort. In fact, of North American birds, only the California condor has a greater wingspan than the pelican. When it is time for a snack, the pelican tends to float on the water, scooping fish in its long beak. Pelicans often hunt together in shallow water, cooperating to direct fish toward one another. Since they eat around four pounds of fish a day, this kind of cooperation is beneficial.

#### The Burrowing Owl

- 4 Long ago, cowboys riding across the plains began calling burrowing owls "howdy birds." The small birds would pop their heads out of burrows in the ground and appear to give passersby a friendly nod as if wishing them well. Burrowing owls are still nodding in Nebraska today, though their numbers have declined as efforts to reduce prairie dog populations have impacted the owls as well. Growing to a little less than one foot tall, these speckled brown birds are known for their strikingly bright yellow eyes, which help them to hunt at night. They mostly eat insects and small mammals. When danger is near, they will call out an alarm to warn other burrowing birds to seek the safety of their homes.
- 5 The sandhill crane, the white pelican, and the burrowing owl are only three of the fascinating birds that make their homes in Nebraska for at least part of the year. It is easy to see why birdwatchers flock to the state to watch and study these birds.

13. As used in paragraph 3, what is the meaning of **remarkable**?

- A. crowded
- B. detailed
- C. interesting
- D. talkative

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

**Part A**

Which characteristic helps determine the genre of the passage?

- A. the deep history of Nebraska
- B. the legendary stories of cowboys
- C. the descriptions of types of birds
- D. schedules of birdwatching events

**Part B**

Choose **two** phrases that support the answer in Part A. Choose **two**.

- A. . . . festivals have even sprung up . . .
- B. . . . cream-colored feathers.
- C. . . . wingspan of up to 9.5 feet . . .
- D. Long ago . . .
- E. . . . cowboys riding across the plains . . .

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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15. Which organizational pattern is used MOST in the passage?

- A. Compare and contrast is used to show differences between the varieties of birds.
- B. Description is used to show three different varieties of birds that are found in Nebraska.
- C. A sequence of events is used to show the order in which different varieties of birds arrive.
- D. Order of importance is used to show information about three varieties of birds, from most to least important.

16. What is the author's purpose for writing the passage?

- A. to inform the reader about how birdwatchers gather during different seasons in Nebraska
- B. to inform the reader about three interesting types of birds among many found in Nebraska
- C. to inform the reader that some bird populations in Nebraska are thriving while others are declining
- D. to inform the reader about how three different types of birds in Nebraska are distinct from one another

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

**Part A**

What is the MAIN idea of the passage?

- A. Nebraska has a diverse bird population that many people enjoy observing.
- B. Nebraska has a rich history of burrowing birds and people who watch them.
- C. Nebraska has millions of cranes, pelicans with great wingspans, and owls that live in the ground.
- D. Nebraska has many people who come to the state to watch sandhill cranes, white pelicans, and burrowing owls.

**Part B**

Which sentence from the passage BEST supports your answer in Part A?

- A. All year long, birds of all colors and sizes fly to and from the state.
- B. Boasting a wingspan of up to 9.5 feet, they can circle for long periods of time with little effort.
- C. Since they eat around four pounds of fish a day, this kind of cooperation is beneficial.
- D. Long ago, cowboys riding across the plains began calling burrowing owls “howdy birds.”

18. How do the subheadings contribute to the reader’s understanding of the passage?

- A. They organize the birds in chronological order.
- B. They indicate which bird the author will describe.
- C. They show how each bird is similar to the others.
- D. They include additional information about each bird.



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - ITEM TYPE SAMPLER

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19. Which statement supports the idea that Nebraska cowboys liked burrowing owls?
- A. The owls appeared to nod at the cowboys.
  - B. The owls were given an affectionate nickname.
  - C. The owl population was greater in number in past years.
  - D. The owls are small with intense yellow eyes that help them hunt.
20. Choose **two** sentences from the passage that support the idea that some birds help each other. Choose **two**.
- A. All year long, birds of all colors and sizes fly to and from the state.
  - B. These beautiful creatures help attract thousands of visitors to Nebraska year after year.
  - C. Pelicans often hunt together in shallow water, cooperating to direct fish toward one another.
  - D. The small birds would pop their heads out of burrows in the ground and appear to give passersby a friendly nod as if wishing them well.
  - E. When danger is near, they will call out an alarm to warn other burrowing birds to seek the safety of their homes.

**NSCAS Growth Grade 5  
Item Type Sampler Answer Key  
English Language Arts**



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