

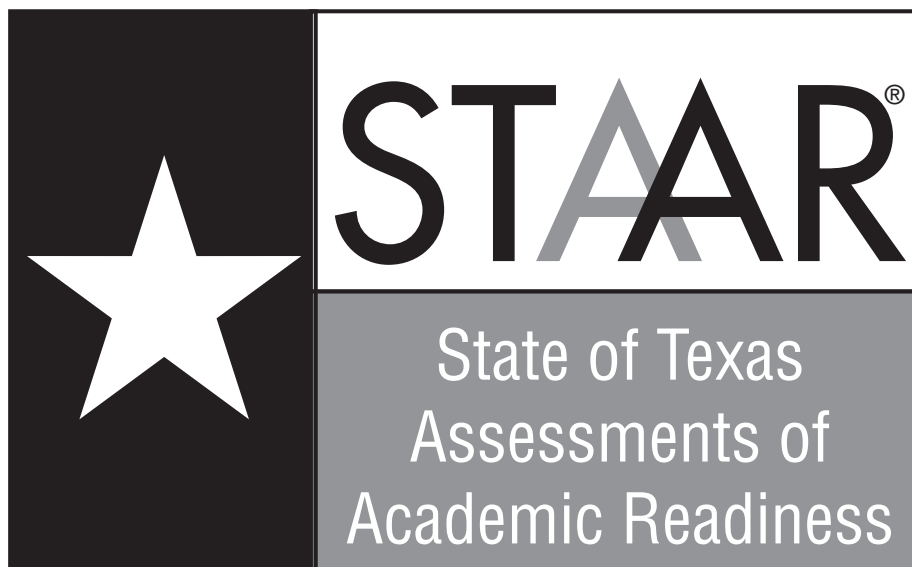
Texas STAAR 2019 Grade 8 Reading

Exam Materials

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Answer Key Materials

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GRADE 8

Reading

Administered April 2019

RELEASED

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

A Rite of Passage (and the Importance of Penguin Etiquette)

by Chris Epting

- 1 There's a common expression, "No pain, no gain," which means that achievement requires some sort of sacrifice—mental sacrifice, physical sacrifice—something. Little did I know how important that phrase would soon become in my life, all because of an invitation to witness, up close and personal, some of the most fascinating (and loveable) animals on this planet.
- 2 When my fourteen-year-old daughter, Claire, and I found out that we were going to Antarctica to visit with and study the emperor penguins, we were thrilled. We had entered and won an essay contest. The grand prize promised an almost unfathomable adventure: three weeks living aboard a Russian icebreaker ship near an icy, remote outpost called Snow Hill Island.
- 3 Getting to Antarctica is no small feat. It is extremely difficult to fly there, as the official population is zero. The few who are lucky enough to visit this most mysterious continent do so by ships.
- 4 This is where the "pain" comes in. You see, to reach Antarctica, ships must pass through a notoriously violent area of ocean called the Drake Passage, considered to be the roughest stretch of sea on the planet.
- 5 Walls of water thirty, sometimes forty feet high—tremendous towers of dark green, icy waves—continually crashed about our ship for two solid days. We would hold on to a railing inside the ship while being violently tilted to one extreme side, then to the other, and then back again. Over and over and over, nonstop. If not for the belt straps on our cabin bed, we would have flown up in the air as we tried to sleep.
- 6 My daughter and I knew about the Drake Passage and were as mentally prepared as we could be. We knew what waited at the end of the journey—the penguins—and so together we convinced ourselves it was all worth the pain. But as mentally prepared as we were, we also had to be physically aware, as well. It was important to always watch our footing as we crept to the dining room each day to carefully grab a quick meal before returning to our cabin to ride out the sickening, never-ending storm.
- 7 I started to wonder, "Is this worth it? Will the gain be worth all of this struggle?"



- 8 Then, about two and a half days after entering the Drake Passage, the waters calmed. For the first time on our journey, we walked out on deck and felt the sweet bite of the cold, clean air on our faces.
- 9 Soon, we noticed small black specks on nearby pieces of floating ice. Emperor penguins! The closer our ship got, the more it seemed as if the animals were welcoming us—some of them actually beating their wings together, as if they were applauding our arrival.
- 10 Before long, we reached our final destination, and we were allowed to take our first ice walk. Across the crunchy surface, we could see hundreds of penguins in the distance, watching us as we watched them.
- 11 As we learned on board, their interest was to be expected. Penguins are extremely curious and not fearful of humans.
- 12 The next day, two helicopters that would take us from our ship to the base camp were assembled on the deck of the ship.
- 13 After landing, we were given instructions on “penguin etiquette.” These were the basic rules: You can’t touch a penguin, but they can touch you if they’d like. You can’t crowd them, but they can crowd you if they so desire. And you always give them the right of way. Beyond those rules, we were free to explore, photograph, and observe to our heart’s content.
- 14 We began the two-mile hike over the ice to the penguin colony.
- 15 Within several hundred yards, little clusters of emperors, perhaps ten or so at a time, greeted us, sliding on their bellies and making their wonderful noises, sort of a nasally squeal. But the real treat still awaited: the colony.
- 16 As far as we could see, there were emperor penguins—tens of thousands of them, stretched out to the horizon line. It was breathtaking. Thousands of newly hatched chicks waddled among the adults, vying for attention.



A Colony of Emperor Penguins
at Snow Hill Island

Jonathan & Angela Scott/Getty Images

- 17 We found a quiet piece of ice, sat down, and within minutes were surrounded by dozens of curious emperors. In some cases, their beaks were just inches from our noses.
- 18 One day, two adult emperors with their three chicks in tow approached Claire, who was resting on the ice. They left the chicks with her, as if she were the babysitter. Twenty minutes later they returned to collect the chicks. And I will never forget the penguin that, when I jokingly asked which way back to the helicopters, pointed a wing in the correct direction.



Emperor Penguin Chicks

Frank Krahmer

- 19 Every night aboard our safe and warm ship, we thought about what it takes to survive in Antarctica, an incredibly harsh place.
- 20 But each day on the ice, we also thought about the Drake passage, that monstrous body of water we had to endure to get where we were. Over the course of our visit, we came to respect and even revere the power of that sea.

21 We still talk about the penguins, as I'm sure we always will. But we talk about the Drake too. Both experiences were unforgettable, and one would not have been possible without the other.

22 No pain, no gain.

From Breakfast on Mars and 37 Other Delectable Essays: Your Favorite Authors Take a Stab at the Dreaded Essay Assignment © 2013 edited by Rebecca Stern and Brad Wolfe. Reprinted by permission of Roaring Brook Press, a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership. All rights reserved.

1 When describing the penguins, the author mostly focuses on their —

- A concern for their baby chicks
 - B friendly and entertaining behavior
 - C ability to survive in their environment
 - D dependence on one another
-

2 In paragraph 4, what does the word notoriously mean?

- F Frequently traveled
 - G Hard to locate
 - H Recognized in a negative way
 - J Viewed from a distance
-

3 Which sentence from the selection best conveys the author's main message?

- A *But as mentally prepared as we were, we also had to be physically aware, as well.* (paragraph 6)
- B *Every night aboard our safe and warm ship, we thought about what it takes to survive in Antarctica, an incredibly harsh place.* (paragraph 19)
- C *Over the course of our visit, we came to respect and even revere the power of that sea.* (paragraph 20)
- D *Both experiences were unforgettable, and one would not have been possible without the other.* (paragraph 21)

- 4** The organizers of the expedition created “penguin etiquette” most likely to —
- F** limit the interaction between the penguins and the visitors
 - G** minimize possible negative effects of visitors on the penguin habitat
 - H** create awareness among the visitors about the challenges penguins face
 - J** boost visitors’ chances of observing tens of thousands of penguins each day
-

- 5** Based on the selection, what did the author most likely gain from his experience?
- A** An understanding of how animals survive in cold climates
 - B** An interest in other journeys that involve physical challenges
 - C** An awareness of the types of activities his daughter enjoys
 - D** An increased respect for the power of nature
-

- 6** What is the best summary of this selection?
- F** When the author and his daughter win a trip to Antarctica, they board an icebreaker ship and travel through an area called the Drake Passage. During their time in Antarctica, they observe a penguin colony made up of tens of thousands of penguins. They must adhere to certain rules while they are there.
 - G** Getting to Antarctica requires people to travel by ship through a rough area of the sea. After winning a trip to Antarctica to observe penguins, the author and his daughter make this difficult voyage. Once they arrive, they see thousands of penguins up close and know the trip was worth the suffering.
 - H** The author and his daughter take a trip to Antarctica, where they have an opportunity to observe penguin behavior up close. They take photographs of the large penguin colony. Long after the trip, they still talk about the experience.
 - J** After winning a contest, the author and his daughter travel to Antarctica and see penguins. Since there are no airports in Antarctica, they have to sail there through rough water. Once they arrive, they must take a helicopter from their ship over to the penguin colony.

- 7 Which sentence from the selection best expresses the author’s enthusiasm during his observation of the penguins?
- A *Across the crunchy surface, we could see hundreds of penguins in the distance, watching us as we watched them.* (paragraph 10)
 - B *Penguins are extremely curious and not fearful of humans.* (paragraph 11)
 - C *We began the two-mile hike over the ice to the penguin colony.* (paragraph 14)
 - D *And I will never forget the penguin that, when I jokingly asked which way back to the helicopters, pointed a wing in the correct direction.* (paragraph 18)
-

- 8 Read this sentence from paragraph 8.

For the first time on our journey, we walked out on deck and felt the sweet bite of the cold, clean air on our faces.

The sensory language in this sentence best reveals the author’s —

- F sense of relief and accomplishment at having arrived in Antarctica
- G understanding of the extreme weather conditions in Antarctica
- H frustration at having been kept in his cabin for most of the voyage
- J feeling of anticipation to soon be interacting with the penguins

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

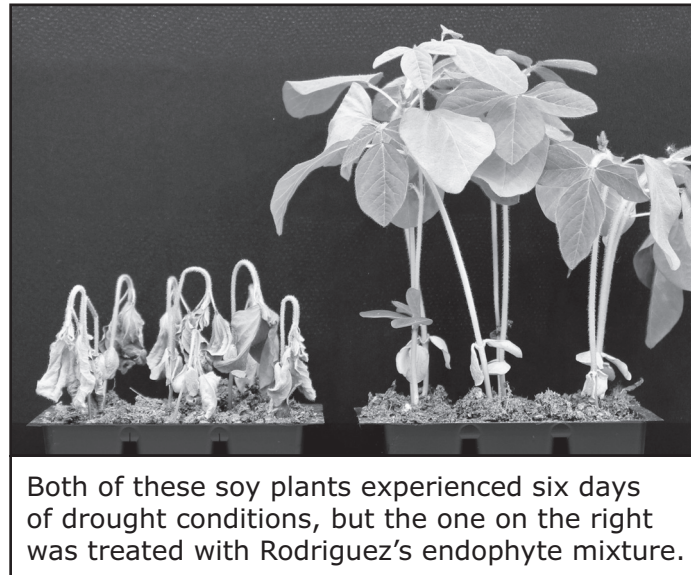
Persevering Plants

- 1 Yellowstone National Park extends across a unique area of land in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho. Thousands of geothermal vents that lie just below the earth's surface cover this vast region. Geothermal vents are deep holes in the ground that release built-up pressure in the form of steam and scalding-hot water. The temperature of the ground near these hot spots can rise to more than 150 degrees Fahrenheit. During a trip to Yellowstone, microbiologist Rusty Rodriguez noticed something peculiar. He observed many plants thriving in the searing soil despite these intense conditions. Rodriguez wondered how these plants were able to flourish in such extreme temperatures while other plants in similar or milder environments perish.
- 2 To solve this mystery Rodriguez took plant samples back to his laboratory for investigation. Under a microscope he saw tiny strands of fungi called endophytes living on the plants. Rodriguez's research revealed that the endophytes made the plants better able to handle climate stressors such as drought, heat, and cold. Correspondingly, the plant provided sugar to support the existence of the fungi.
- 3 About 80 percent of the earth's plants have a strain of endophyte fungus living on them. However, in the last few decades the fungi have unintentionally been destroyed by pesticides and fertilizer. Rodriguez believed that if the fungi could somehow be added back to a plant, its natural protection could be restored.
- 4 Rodriguez extracted endophyte fungi from several native plants known for surviving extreme temperatures to create a mixture. He found that when the mixture is applied to seeds, plants become immune to many of the agricultural woes that plague farmers. When plants are restored with endophyte fungi, they are protected from heat or cold. They also require less water and fertilizer to grow. Overall, plants are much healthier and more resilient.



A Geothermal Vent at
Yellowstone National Park

© iStock.com/SBTheGreenMan



- 5 Rodriguez has tested his endophyte mixture on crops and achieved success. In 2012 the state of Michigan was experiencing severe drought and extreme temperatures. Corn and rice seeds were coated with Rodriguez's creation to see how they would endure such conditions. The results were overwhelmingly optimistic. Crop yields increased by 85 percent. In addition, the plants used between 25 and 50 percent less water than those not treated. Simply put, plants that had the mixture added to them were more inclined to tolerate drought than others.
- 6 Scientists are hopeful about the potential of endophyte fungi. Plants are easily protected from drought and other severe conditions when they are treated with this fungus. It is also a natural, nontoxic substance that does not harm plants or humans. Endophyte fungi could quite possibly be the key to providing sustainable crops for the future.

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Brilliant Ideas

Smart Discoveries in Science



In this issue: *The Cure for Concrete*

September 2015

The Cure for Concrete

- 1 Bacteria have a reputation for being harmful. However, not all bacteria are bad. Some food products, such as yogurt, contain good bacteria. The human body even stores bacteria that help us produce vitamins and fight diseases.
- 2 Dutch microbiologist Hendrik Jonkers studies bacteria. He also has researched how certain living organisms are able to heal themselves when injured. An octopus, for example, can grow a new arm if needed. When a bone breaks in the human body, it is able to repair itself. Jonkers wondered if bacteria could be used to “heal” nonliving substances in a similar way. He tested this theory by adding bacteria to concrete. He discovered that concrete may also be able to recuperate from damage.
- 3 Concrete is one of the most important building materials. It was even used by the ancient Romans to build massive structures such as the Colosseum. Today it is used to construct highways, bridges, and high-rise buildings. In fact, concrete demand has doubled in the last decade. Concrete production now accounts for 5% of the world’s carbon emissions, which is harmful to the environment.



The Colosseum in Rome, Italy, is almost 2,000 years old.

© Nataliya Hora/Dreamstime.com

- 4 Despite its popularity, concrete cracks. When water gets inside the cracks, it weakens the composition of the concrete. Eventually the concrete must be repaired or replaced. In Europe the annual cost of maintaining concrete structures is billions of dollars.

- 5 Jonkers has developed a self-healing concrete, or bioconcrete, to help solve these problems. He combines concrete with bacteria that are naturally able to produce limestone, a hard rock. The bacteria are placed inside plastic capsules that are mixed into wet concrete. The bacteria can live in the hardened concrete for decades. When water enters through cracks in the concrete, the plastic capsules open, and the bacteria are released. As the bacteria grow and multiply, they form limestone, which fills in the cracks.



- 6 In 2011 self-healing concrete was used to construct a lifeguard station near a lake in the Netherlands. Lifeguard stations are susceptible to damage by water and weather. With the help of Jonkers' bioconcrete, the lifeguard station has remained intact. Bioconcrete has been used on the floors and roofs of parking garages. It has even been used to reconstruct a canal and irrigation system in Ecuador.
- 7 While bioconcrete has its advantages, it is 50 percent more costly to create than traditional concrete. This makes the product unappealing to some people in the construction industry. Still, Jonkers believes the initial investment is worth the long-term savings and advantages it will provide.
- 8 Bioconcrete will reduce the need for repairs and making new concrete. In return, this will help manufacturers save money over time, and it will help lessen the amount of carbon pollution. Jonkers says, "I think it's a really nice example of tying nature and the built environments together in one new concept."

Use “Persevering Plants” (pp. 11–12) to answer questions 9–13. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

9 Which characteristic of the geothermal vents made the survival of nearby plants so surprising?

- A** The depth of the holes
 - B** The heat they generate
 - C** The number of them that exist
 - D** The amount of pressure they release
-

10 How do the photograph and caption after paragraph 4 help the reader better understand the selection?

- F** They explain how endophytes work to help plants.
 - G** They demonstrate the effect endophytes can have on plants.
 - H** They illustrate what kinds of plants endophytes can help.
 - J** They show the conditions against which endophytes can protect plants.
-

11 How are paragraphs 2 through 4 organized?

- A** They compare the plants Rodriguez collected to the endophytes living on the plants.
- B** They describe the steps Rodriguez followed while researching plants in his laboratory.
- C** They explain the problem Rodriguez was trying to solve based on his observations.
- D** They describe the structure of the plants Rodriguez collected from a harsh environment.

12 What is paragraph 1 mostly about?

- F** The unusual conditions in which some plants can survive
 - G** The occurrence of geothermal vents in several western states
 - H** The way geothermal vents release pressure in the form of steam
 - J** The types of plants that microbiologists have observed at a national park
-

13 An idea emphasized throughout the selection is that Rodriguez's endophyte solution —

- A** can improve plant life in national parks
- B** eliminates the need to water plants regularly
- C** will allow farmers to plant crops regardless of the season
- D** can restore a plant's natural resistance to the effects of a harsh climate

Use “The Cure for Concrete” (pp. 13–14) to answer questions 14–18. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

14 Which statement best expresses the main idea of paragraph 3?

- F** Modern highways and bridges are often constructed with concrete.
 - G** Concrete was used by ancient Romans to build massive structures.
 - H** The demand for concrete has doubled in the last decade.
 - J** Concrete has been and continues to be an important building material.
-

15 The information in paragraph 6 helps the reader understand that bioconcrete —

- A** works best in areas affected by harsh weather conditions
 - B** is effective in repairing water damage
 - C** has a maximum weight that it can support
 - D** is limited to use in certain parts of the world
-

16 How does the author organize paragraph 1?

- F** By listing types of bacteria and then telling how they help fight diseases in the human body
- G** By defining bacteria and then explaining how bacteria are used in some products
- H** By stating a popular belief about bacteria and then disproving it with examples
- J** By comparing good and bad bacteria and then describing how bacteria work

17 What is the best summary of the article?

- A** Concrete is a popular material, but it can develop cracks over time. Microbiologist Hendrik Jonkers believes that adding bacteria to concrete can help remedy this problem and provide savings for the construction industry.
 - B** Hendrik Jonkers, a Dutch microbiologist, noticed that concrete cracks over time. He decided to add bacteria to concrete to make a substance called bioconcrete. The bacteria are placed inside plastic capsules that are mixed into wet concrete.
 - C** A Dutch microbiologist named Hendrik Jonkers became interested in investigating how bacteria might be applied to concrete to fill cracks in concrete caused by water. He developed a self-healing bioconcrete that works to make concrete more durable.
 - D** Microbiologist Hendrik Jonkers wondered if concrete could repair itself in the same way that human bones do. He developed bioconcrete, which was used to build a lifeguard station near a lake in the Netherlands and repair an irrigation system in Ecuador.
-

18 Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

When a bone breaks in the human body, it is able to repair itself.

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

- F** To advocate for more research concerning skeletal injuries
- G** To suggest that bacteria could improve people's health
- H** To show the need for Jonkers' research
- J** To provide an example of the goal of Jonkers' research

Use “Persevering Plants” and “The Cure for Concrete” to answer questions 19–22. Then fill in the answers on your answer document.

19 What is one way that Rodriguez’s and Jonkers’ methods were **similar**?

- A** They both created mixtures using living materials.
 - B** They both traveled to an unfamiliar location to begin their research.
 - C** They both studied particular animals to inform their research.
 - D** They both considered how temperature might affect their results.
-

20 Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of “Persevering Plants.”

Rodriguez has tested his endophyte mixture on crops and achieved success.

Which sentence from “The Cure for Concrete” shows a **similar** outcome for bioconcrete?

- F** *The bacteria can live in the hardened concrete for decades. (paragraph 5)*
- G** *In 2011 self-healing concrete was used to construct a lifeguard station near a lake in the Netherlands. (paragraph 6)*
- H** *With the help of Jonkers’ bioconcrete, the lifeguard station has remained intact. (paragraph 6)*
- J** *Bioconcrete has been used on the floors and roofs of parking garages. (paragraph 6)*

21 What is one problem presented about bioconcrete that is **not** presented about endophyte fungi?

- A** Bioconcrete is expensive to produce.
 - B** Bioconcrete may be unintentionally destroyed.
 - C** Bioconcrete contains harmful bacteria.
 - D** Bioconcrete is exposed to weather conditions.
-

22 What is one **difference** between Rodriguez's endophyte mixture and the bacteria in Jonkers' products?

- F** The endophyte mixture is clearly visible on seeds.
However, the bacteria in the concrete cannot be detected.
- G** The endophyte mixture covers the outside of seeds.
However, the bacteria are placed inside the concrete.
- H** The endophyte mixture is not a substance found naturally in plants.
However, the bacteria is a natural part of concrete.
- J** The endophyte mixture remains inactive for a period of time.
However, the bacteria begin to work immediately.

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

invitation

by Mackenzie Connellee

- used to write poetry in art class
when the teacher wasn't looking,
but now i don't take art and i can't
afford not to pay attention in my
5 classes. now i write poetry in my
free time but that's difficult
because words don't appear like
- a dog when you call their name, no,
poetry is anything but convenient.
10 right now it's 1:05 A.M. because poetry
shook me by the shoulders and said
hey, this is important but now i'm wondering
if the lack of sleep is worth it. i feel
i am always weighing time by the quality
15 of poems written, because even when
the words grace me with their presence,
they don't always choose to step
delicately into the world, pink shoes
treading softly over the white horizon.
20 usually poetry slops lazily over the couch
of a page and dangles while i remove its muddy
shoes and rearrange the pillows, all the while
muttering something about Frost and how maybe
his comments against free verse were right
25 all along (poetry in rhyme always cleans up
after itself) although honestly, you haven't lived
until the homeless free-verse poem on your couch
decides to stay for a cup of tea and, if you're
lucky, lets you take notes on everything he says.

Courtesy of Mackenzie Connellee

23 Which of these ideas is emphasized by the simile in lines 7 and 8?

- A** Poetry can appear in many different forms.
 - B** New poems can be valued like a companion.
 - C** New poems do not come to mind right away.
 - D** Poetry writing is not as enjoyable as having a pet.
-

24 Read the dictionary entry.

afford \ə-ˈfôrd\ v
1. to bear the financial cost of **2.** to be able to spare or give up **3.** to provide for another **4.** to be the cause or source of

Which definition best matches the way the word afford is used in line 4?

- F** Definition 1
 - G** Definition 2
 - H** Definition 3
 - J** Definition 4
-

25 What process is the poet describing when she uses the words “i remove its muddy shoes and rearrange the pillows” in lines 21 and 22?

- A** Finding a topic to write about
- B** Writing from personal experience
- C** Revising a poem’s ideas and words
- D** Sharing a poem with an audience

26 The title of the poem is effective because it suggests that the speaker —

- F** desires more poetry to come into her life
 - G** tries to schedule time for writing poetry
 - H** longs for poetry assignments at school
 - J** wants people to enjoy reading her poetry
-

27 What do the contrasting images in lines 17 through 22 suggest?

- A** Writing poetry can be relaxing.
 - B** Poets are sensitive by nature.
 - C** Writing poetry is often not easy.
 - D** Poets have active imaginations.
-

28 The poet uses lines 1 through 6 to establish that —

- F** art and poetry share many similarities
- G** the speaker hopes to keep her poetry a secret
- H** poetry is an important subject to learn in school
- J** the speaker wishes she had more time to write poetry

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

What Can We See in a Logo?

- 1 The typical person is bombarded by hundreds of logos each day. We see them on signs, vehicles, television, and even on the clothes we wear. Logos are distinct images used to represent brands. There are logos such as the famous Nike “swoosh,” the colorful rings to identify the Olympic Games, and the United States Postal Service eagle emblem, just to name a few. All of these logos are designed to attract our attention. They also help us remember a product or service connected to that image. However, research conducted at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) supports the idea that remembering what a logo looks like is a very difficult task.

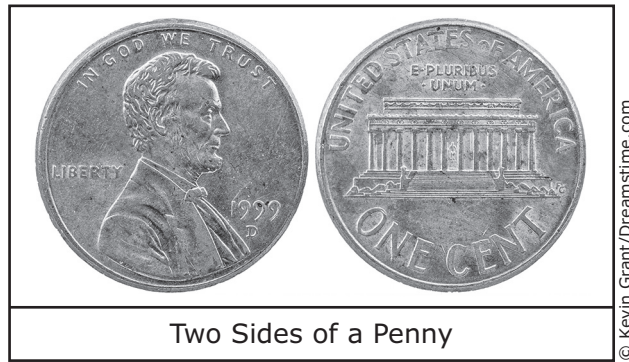
- 2 In 2015 researchers at UCLA gave 85 students a simple assignment. They had to draw the Apple logo purely from memory. Most of the students were Apple users, so they had the opportunity to look at the logo every day. Surprisingly, only one student in the study could accurately draw the logo from memory. Many of the sketches the other students made were flawed. Some of them drew the basics right but missed minor details of the design—no bite out of the apple or the wrong number of leaves. At first the researchers thought the problem might be that the students were just not very good at drawing.



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They decided to ask the students to look at several different images and choose the logo that was most accurate. Less than half of the students could detect the correct image.

- 3 The UCLA Apple study is not the first time our ability to remember the details of images has been tested. In the 1970s researchers asked a group of people to draw a penny from memory. Participants were instructed to show the images and words just as they appear on the coin. Like the Apple study, most people could not precisely depict the image. Participants were unable to correctly identify which way Lincoln was facing or where the word “Liberty” was placed on the coin. While the penny is not technically a logo, it is an object with which people have frequent interaction. So why is it so difficult for people to recall the details of images, such as logos, that they see every day? Researchers have developed a theory they think might help to explain this blind spot in our memories.



- 4 Logos are typically designed to be simple and easy to recognize with a quick glance. Yet the frequent exposure to these logos can actually make our brains overlook them. This process is known as “attentional saturation.” It would be challenging to try to remember every single thing that crosses our path. We take in so much information every day that the brain works to spot information that does not need to be stored. It allows this unimportant information to fade from our memory. Our brains actually signal us to ignore information we do not think we will need to remember.
- 5 The details of product logos are just the kind of information our brains tell us we do not need. This may be discouraging to logo designers and to companies that use these eye-catching logos. But there are still many business experts who believe in the importance of a recognizable logo.
- 6 Even though the brain is accustomed to ignoring unnecessary details, it is also programmed for recognition. When we see images such as logos over and over again, we become familiar with them. This constant exposure leads to something scientists refer to as gist memory. “Gist memory” means that our brain remembers the basic idea without all of the details. This general sense of memory has its own benefits. When we see that “swoosh” or the apple with a bite out of it, we are acquainted with the image. We may not be able to draw a perfect outline of the logo, but we are able to recognize the image. When people are able to recognize an image, it can make them feel like they really know the product behind the logo. In fact, familiarity with a prevalent logo can even make people feel more comfortable about purchasing or using certain products.
- 7 Logos are everywhere we look today. A fancy design or a thoughtful color combination may be a good start for a logo concept, but there are other factors to consider. Those establishing a logo need to know that people will only remember what they believe is worthwhile. A clever design may be interesting, but most people will forget the details—especially if our brains have anything to say about it.

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29 “Gist memory” occurs when the brain —

- A** recalls specific details
 - B** remembers a general idea
 - C** connects information
 - D** overlooks common images
-

30 In paragraph 6, the word prevalent means —

- F** elaborate
 - G** creative
 - H** vital
 - J** widespread
-

31 What example of “attentional saturation” does the author provide in the selection?

- A** Companies use memorable logos to represent their brands.
- B** Participants in a study could not recall details of images seen every day.
- C** Business experts believe that product logos are important.
- D** Researchers gave students a simple assignment to complete.

32 Which sentence from the selection suggests that companies may want to reconsider their approach to branding their products?

- F** *We see them on signs, vehicles, television, and even on the clothes we wear.* (paragraph 1)
 - G** *Researchers have developed a theory they think might help to explain this blind spot in our memories.* (paragraph 3)
 - H** *The details of product logos are just the kind of information our brains tell us we do not need.* (paragraph 5)
 - J** *But there are still many business experts who believe in the importance of a recognizable logo.* (paragraph 5)
-

33 The author mentions common name brands in the first paragraph most likely to —

- A** create a connection with the reader
 - B** define key terms for the reader
 - C** offer an opinion to the reader about the topic
 - D** introduce the reader to the main idea of the selection
-

34 What is paragraph 2 mainly about?

- F** The skill it takes to identify a logo from several images
- G** The popularity of a certain technology brand
- H** The poor drawing ability of students
- J** The results of a research study

35 How does the author organize the selection?

- A** By describing how logos are problematic and then offering solutions on how to improve them
 - B** By presenting research about logos and then explaining how logos are perceived by the brain
 - C** By listing familiar logos and then showing how those logos are influential in advertising
 - D** By comparing common objects to logos and then contrasting the theories about logos
-

36 According to paragraph 6, people are more likely to buy a product when they —

- F** notice a clever design and feel curious about the product
- G** see a colorful label and are drawn to reading its information
- H** recognize an image and feel like they know the product well
- J** glance quickly at a brand and are attracted by the packaging

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

The Lesson in Design

- 1 It was Friday afternoon, and another week of school was finally over. Andy weaved his way through the crowded hall, trying to avoid colliding with students at their lockers getting books and backpacks. He walked out the nearest exit and headed for the student parking lot, where he would wait for his best friend Broden.
- 2 While Andy waited at Broden's car, he studied the fabrics and colors of the other students' clothes. Everyone wore the same basic outfit—jeans and some sort of shirt. Nothing out of the ordinary, nothing flashy or stylish. Being from a family of tailors, Andy had learned a lot about clothing over the years—how to make it and how to alter it. But Andy wanted to be more than just a tailor.
- 3 Broden dropped Andy off at his father's tailor shop. Andy watched his father—pins in his mouth, measuring tape draped around his neck—expertly hem and repair Mr. Simone's pants.
- 4 Mr. Simone paid his bill and then carefully, almost proudly, placed the newly perfected pants over his arm. Andy thought he detected a spring in Mr. Simone's step as he left the shop. Andy watched Mr. Simone as he laid the pants on the backseat of his car, smoothing them so that they wouldn't wrinkle. There was no denying that tailoring was a valuable service to some. But to Andy his family's business seemed like a whole lot of tedious busywork: hemming pants, shortening the length of sleeves, taking in or letting out a waistline, replacing buttons, hooks, or snaps.
- 5 Andy's father peered over his eyeglasses, studying Andy as Andy observed Mr. Simone. "Often, when people look better, they act better too. When people know they look good, they are more comfortable, less worried," Andy's father explained.
- 6 Andy knew that his father had a point. That was exactly the reason Andy longed to create something of his own. Something different. Something *exceptional*.
- 7 "Well that's it for today," said Andy's father, flipping the sign on the door to the CLOSED side and letting out a tired but satisfied sigh in response to a long workday. "There's something I want to give you, Andy," he said as he beckoned for Andy to follow him to the back room. On the corner of a large worktable sat a bulky antique sewing machine, a retro model that looked very different from the modern one Andy's father used. "I was your age when my father gave this to me, and now I'm giving it to you."
- 8 Andy eyed the old machine appreciatively. "Thank you, Dad. This is perfect!"
- 9 Andy wanted to use the sewing machine right away, but first he needed to draw his clothing design. He needed a design that was stylish yet original. Fortunately he wasn't starting with a blank page. Andy had been sketching designs as long

as he could remember. Sometimes he drew in Ms. Greene’s art class; sometimes he drew during lunch. Mostly he drew during the free minutes of his day, when he could empty his mind and just trust his charcoal pencil.

- 10 A visit to the fabric store that weekend turned into an expedition as he hunted down the perfect textiles for his creation. “Your father doing something special?” asked the owner.
- 11 “It’s for a school project,” Andy replied. It wasn’t exactly a lie. On his way back home, he looked at what people were wearing, the parade of pants, shirts, dresses, jeans, and ordinariness.
- 12 Andy began working that same night, losing himself in lines and folds, ripping out stitches and redoing them. It took over a week, but after multiple fittings and adjustments, his outfit was ready for its debut.
- 13 On Monday morning, Andy walked into school anticipating the glowing admiration of his fellow students. As he walked down the hall, heads turned. Teachers moved aside, guys pointed at him, and girls covered their mouths to hide their laughter.
- 14 Even Broden looked at him sympathetically. “Was this a dare or something?” he whispered to Andy at their lockers.
- 15 A morning full of whispers, jeers, and awkward questions left Andy slumped in his seat in art class like a spent parachute. Although he had donned his creation proudly that morning, he now wished he had a change of clothes.
- 16 “It hasn’t been a great day, huh?” asked Ms. Greene, sitting beside him.
- 17 “I’ve had better,” Andy replied glumly.
- 18 “You know, it’s fine to want to do something different—you just have to be prepared for the consequences. Not everyone is going to see things the way you do—not right away, and maybe not ever.”
- 19 “They don’t know anything about fashion,” Andy snipped.
- 20 “Well, people like different styles,” Ms. Greene responded. “As for me . . . I like your incredible fabric choice. Think of this outfit as just the beginning; think of it as your first draft. The most famous designers didn’t build their clothing empires on one outfit—especially their first.”
- 21 Andy knew she was right, of course. But still, he hadn’t thought his design would warrant such ridicule. He sighed as he rose from his chair, putting his sketch pad and pencils into his backpack. “A first draft, huh?” he thought. And then he remembered what his English teacher Mrs. Ford always said: your first draft is just the beginning.
- 22 Apparently that was good advice—and not just for writers.

37 The main role of Andy’s art teacher in this story is to help —

- A** resolve a conflict the main character is experiencing
 - B** create the setting in which the main conflict occurs
 - C** develop the rising action of the plot to a turning point
 - D** supply background information about the main character
-

38 What is the best summary of the story?

- F** Andy wants to use his knowledge of tailoring to design original clothing. His father gives him a sewing machine, so Andy creates an outfit. When Andy wears his new clothing to school, he does not get the response that he wants, but his art teacher helps him regain confidence.
 - G** As Andy waits for Broden, he observes the other students’ clothing. When Andy arrives at his family’s shop, he realizes that being a tailor helps people feel better. After his father gives him a sewing machine, Andy begins working on a unique clothing design.
 - H** After closing the family store for the night, Andy’s father gives Andy a sewing machine that has been in the family for years. Andy is excited and immediately begins creating his own clothing designs. He works hard on his new design and wears his new outfit to school.
 - J** Andy knows a lot about clothing because of the family business, but he wants to do something different. Andy’s father understands his interests, so he gives Andy an old sewing machine. Andy uses this gift to complete a school project.
-

39 Which sentence from the story creates an image of how tailoring can help people?

- A** *Being from a family of tailors, Andy had learned a lot about clothing over the years—how to make it and how to alter it.* (paragraph 2)
- B** *Mr. Simone paid his bill and then carefully, almost proudly, placed the newly perfected pants over his arm.* (paragraph 4)
- C** *There was no denying that tailoring was a valuable service to some.* (paragraph 4)
- D** *That was exactly the reason Andy longed to create something of his own.* (paragraph 6)

40 In paragraph 15, the word donned means —

- F** mended
 - G** thought about
 - H** put on
 - J** imagined
-

41 What lesson is referred to in the title of the story?

- A** Andy learning to work with clothing by watching his father
 - B** Broden learning about fashion from Andy's clothing designs
 - C** Broden learning how to feel as proud of himself as Andy does
 - D** Andy learning the consequences of trying something different
-

42 Read this sentence from paragraph 9.

Mostly he drew during the free minutes of his day, when he could empty his mind and just trust his charcoal pencil.

Based on this sentence, the reader can conclude that Andy —

- F** puts very little thought into his designs
- G** draws when he is bored and has nothing else to do
- H** feels compelled to sketch his designs at every opportunity
- J** is unsure about how to use special drawing techniques

43 Which sentence best expresses a theme in the story?

- A** *"Often, when people look better, they act better too."* (paragraph 5)
 - B** *A visit to the fabric store that weekend turned into an expedition as he hunted down the perfect textiles for his creation.* (paragraph 10)
 - C** *On his way back home, he looked at what people were wearing, the parade of pants, shirts, dresses, jeans, and ordinariness.* (paragraph 11)
 - D** *"Not everyone is going to see things the way you do—not right away, and maybe not ever."* (paragraph 18)
-

44 Read this sentence from paragraph 15.

A morning full of whispers, jeers, and awkward questions left Andy slumped in his seat in art class like a spent parachute.

The author uses a simile in this sentence to illustrate —

- F** how difficult it can be to concentrate in Andy's art class
- G** how perplexed the students are about Andy's new outfit
- H** how discouraged Andy feels by his peers' reactions to his outfit
- J** how exhausting a typical day at Andy's school is

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



Item Number	Reporting Category	Readiness or Supporting	Content Student Expectation	Correct Answer
1	2	Supporting	8.7 Fig. 19(D)	B
2	1	Readiness	8.2(B)	H
3	2	Supporting	8.3 Fig. 19(D)	D
4	2	Supporting	8.7 Fig. 19(D)	G
5	2	Supporting	8.7 Fig. 19(D)	D
6	2	Supporting	8.7 Fig. 19(E)	G
7	2	Supporting	8.7 Fig. 19(D)	D
8	2	Supporting	8.8 Fig. 19(D)	F
9	3	Readiness	8.10(A)	B
10	3	Supporting	8.13 Fig. 19(D)	G
11	3	Readiness	8.10(C)	B
12	3	Readiness	8.10(A)	F
13	3	Readiness	8.10(D)	D
14	3	Readiness	8.10(A)	J
15	3	Readiness	8.10 Fig. 19(D)	B
16	3	Readiness	8.10(C)	H
17	3	Readiness	8.10 Fig. 19(E)	C
18	3	Readiness	8.9 Fig. 19(D)	J
19	1	Readiness	8.19(F)	A
20	1	Readiness	8.19(F)	H
21	1	Readiness	8.19(F)	A
22	1	Readiness	8.19(F)	G
23	2	Supporting	8.8(A)	C
24	1	Readiness	8.2(E)	G
25	2	Supporting	8.4 Fig. 19(D)	C
26	2	Supporting	8.4 Fig. 19(D)	F
27	2	Supporting	8.8 Fig. 19(D)	C
28	2	Supporting	8.4 Fig. 19(D)	J
29	3	Readiness	8.10(A)	B
30	1	Readiness	8.2(B)	J
31	3	Readiness	8.10(D)	B
32	3	Readiness	8.10 Fig. 19(D)	H
33	3	Readiness	8.9 Fig. 19(D)	A
34	3	Readiness	8.10(A)	J
35	3	Readiness	8.10(C)	B
36	3	Readiness	8.10(A)	H
37	2	Readiness	8.6(A)	A
38	2	Readiness	8.6 Fig. 19(E)	F
39	2	Readiness	8.8 Fig. 19(D)	B
40	1	Readiness	8.2(B)	H
41	2	Readiness	8.3 Fig. 19(D)	D
42	2	Readiness	8.6 Fig. 19(D)	H
43	2	Readiness	8.3 Fig. 19(D)	D
44	2	Supporting	8.8(A)	H

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option B is correct	When describing the penguins, the author mostly focuses on their friendly and entertaining behavior. In paragraph 15, the author explains that the penguins greeted them when they arrived. In paragraph 18, the author recalls a comical time when two parent penguins left their three chicks with Claire and another time when a penguin “pointed a wing in the correct direction” of their ship when asked where the ship was.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 18, the author describes a time when two penguins left their chicks with Claire as the babysitter, but this is more of a detail to explain their entertaining behavior rather than their concern for the chicks.
	Option C is incorrect	The author expresses awe at the penguins’ ability to survive in their environment only in paragraph 19, so it is not the author’s focus.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not describe any ways in which the penguins depend on one another.
2	Option H is correct	“Recognized in a negative way” is the phrase that best matches the meaning of <u>notoriously</u> as it is used in paragraph 4. It is explained that the Drake Passage is known to be a “violent area of ocean” and “the roughest stretch of sea on the planet,” which can be considered negative qualities.
	Option F is incorrect	The word <u>notoriously</u> is used to describe how violent the Drake Passage is, not how often it is traveled.
	Option G is incorrect	The word <u>notoriously</u> is used to describe how violent the Drake Passage is, not its ability to be located.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author states that “to reach Antarctica, ships must pass through” the Drake Passage, so it is not being viewed from a distance.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
3	Option D is correct	The author's main message is best conveyed by this sentence. Traveling through the Drake Passage and interacting with the emperor penguins were memorable experiences. In order to see the penguins, the author had to endure traveling through the Drake Passage. He repeats the phrase "No pain, no gain" (paragraphs 1 and 22) to explain this contrast.
	Option A is incorrect	The positive experience of seeing the penguins (the "gain") is not reflected in this sentence, so the author's message of "No pain, no gain" is not conveyed.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence is about the "pain" half of the "No pain, no gain" message. The "pain" was the Drake passage, not the cold of Antarctica mentioned in the option, so the author's message is not conveyed by this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	The power of the sea is referenced in the sentence, but the author's message of "No pain, no gain" is not conveyed.
4	Option G is correct	"Penguin etiquette" is a set of guidelines for interacting with penguins. The organizers of the expedition created "penguin etiquette" most likely to minimize the possible negative effects of visitors on the penguin habitat. The rules outlined in paragraph 13 provide boundaries for the humans as they interact with the penguins in their environment.
	Option F is incorrect	"Penguin etiquette" is a set of guidelines for interacting with penguins. The interactions between the penguins and visitors are not limited, so this is not why the rules were created.
	Option H is incorrect	"Penguin etiquette" is a set of guidelines for interacting with penguins. It has nothing to do with the challenges penguins face, so this is not a reason the rules were created.
	Option J is incorrect	"Penguin etiquette" limits what visitors are allowed to do. It does not boost visitors' chances of seeing the penguins, so this is not a reason the rules were created.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
5	Option D is correct	The author most likely gained an increased respect for the power of nature. In paragraph 19, he expresses his respect for the penguins' ability to "survive in Antarctica, an incredibly harsh place," and in paragraph 20, he explains that he "came to respect and even revere the power of that sea," referring to the Drake Passage.
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not discuss <i>how</i> the penguins survive in such a cold climate; instead, he expresses awe at their ability to survive.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not discuss any journey other than the one to Antarctica in the selection.
	Option C is incorrect	The author does not discuss his daughter's enjoyment of activities in the selection.
6	Option G is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The author's journey to Antarctica and his experience with the penguins are both described, and the author's message of "No pain, no gain" is restated.
	Option F is incorrect	The author's message of "No pain, no gain" is not included in this summary, and the last sentence about rules is a detail, so this is not the best summary of the selection.
	Option H is incorrect	The author's experience traveling through the dangerous Drake Passage is not included in this summary, so it is not the best summary of the selection.
	Option J is incorrect	This summary is comprised of minor details, and key ideas from the selection (such as the author's interactions with the penguins) are omitted, so this is not the best summary.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
7	Option D is correct	The author's enthusiasm during his observation of the penguins is best expressed in this sentence from paragraph 18. In this sentence, the author recalls an exciting and incredible moment when a penguin seemed to understand what he was saying.
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence, the author is simply describing what he viewed from afar; there is no enthusiasm about what is happening.
	Option B is incorrect	The idea that penguins are "curious and not fearful of humans" is the author's observation, not an expression of enthusiasm.
	Option C is incorrect	The author had not reached the penguin colony in this sentence, so he is not expressing any enthusiasm while observing penguins.
8	Option F is correct	The sensory language in this sentence reveals the sense of relief and accomplishment that the author felt. The "sweet bite of the cold, clean air" is used to suggest that, although cold air might be something to avoid, the author considered it positive because it meant that he was close to his destination.
	Option G is incorrect	The sensory language in this sentence is used to reveal how the author felt about arriving in Antarctica. The description does not indicate that the author has an understanding of "extreme weather conditions" in Antarctica.
	Option H is incorrect	The author is not indicating frustration in this sentence; he was relieved to finally feel Antarctica's "sweet bite" of "cold, clean air."
	Option J is incorrect	There is no expression of anticipation in this sentence.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
9	Option B is correct	The heat generated by the geothermal vents made the survival of nearby plants surprising. It is explained in paragraph 1 that the ground temperature near the vents can “rise to more than 150 degrees Fahrenheit,” a temperature that usually kills plants, which led Rodriguez to wonder “how these plants were able to flourish.”
	Option A is incorrect	The plants grow near the geothermal vents, not inside them, so the depth of the vents does not affect the plants’ survival.
	Option C is incorrect	Although it is stated in paragraph 1 that there are “[t]housands of geothermal vents,” the number of vents does not affect the plants’ survival.
	Option D is incorrect	The plants grow near the geothermal vents, not inside them, so the pressure released by the vents does not affect the plants’ survival.
10	Option G is correct	The effect that endophytes can have on plants is demonstrated in the photograph and caption after paragraph 4. In the caption, it is explained that both plants “experienced six days of drought conditions.” The plant on the left in the photograph is small and shriveled, while the plant on the right (the one that was treated with the endophyte mixture) is healthy and tall.
	Option F is incorrect	In the photograph and caption, there is no explanation of <i>how</i> endophytes work to help plants, just a demonstration that they do have an effect on plants.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the plants in the photograph are specifically soy plants, it is not specified in the caption that endophytes help <i>only</i> soy plants, and no other types of plants are mentioned.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the conditions under which the plants in the photograph were grown are specified in the caption, it is not stated that plants cannot be protected by endophytes in other conditions.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
11	Option B is correct	The steps Rodriguez followed while researching plants in his laboratory are described in paragraphs 2 through 4. In paragraph 2, Rodriguez “took plant samples back to his laboratory,” where he studied them and discovered endophytes on the plants. In paragraph 3, the author explains Rodriguez’s hypothesis that endophytes could protect plants, and in paragraph 4 that hypothesis is tested.
	Option A is incorrect	The plants are never compared to the endophytes living on the plants, so this is not how paragraphs 2 through 4 are organized.
	Option C is incorrect	The problem Rodriguez was trying to solve is explained in paragraph 1. In paragraphs 2 through 4, the author focuses on the research done to solve the problem.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no mention in paragraphs 2 through 4 of the structure of the plants Rodriguez collected from Yellowstone National Park.
12	Option F is correct	Paragraph 1 is mostly about the unusual conditions in which some plants can survive. The author describes the very hot landscape of Yellowstone National Park and introduces a microbiologist, Rusty Rodriguez, who wondered how plants “were able to flourish in such extreme temperatures.”
	Option G is incorrect	The mention of geothermal vents in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho is a detail used to describe the landscape of Yellowstone National Park, where some plants can survive despite extreme temperatures.
	Option H is incorrect	The mention of geothermal vents releasing steam is a detail used to describe the landscape of Yellowstone National Park, where some plants can survive despite extreme temperatures.
	Option J is incorrect	The specific types of plants at Yellowstone National Park are not mentioned in paragraph 1, so this is not what the paragraph is about.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
13	Option D is correct	In paragraph 2, Rodriguez discovered that endophytes help plants “handle climate stressors,” and in paragraph 4, he experimented with restoring endophytes to plants and was successful in growing plants that are “healthier and more resilient.” The restorative effects of endophytes on crops and the future use of endophytes are also discussed in paragraphs 5 and 6.
	Option A is incorrect	As described in paragraphs 5 and 6, Rodriguez’s endophyte solution is mainly used to help protect crops, not plants in national parks.
	Option B is incorrect	Although Rodriguez’s endophyte solution helps protect plants in drought conditions, there is nothing in the selection that says the plants do not need to be watered.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no mention of Rodriguez’s endophyte solution allowing farmers to plant crops regardless of the season.
14	Option J is correct	The main idea of paragraph 3 is best expressed in this statement. In paragraph 3, the author describes concrete as “one of the most important building materials” and then describes some of the past and present uses of concrete.
	Option F is incorrect	In this statement, only two details of how concrete is used are described instead of the overall importance of concrete, which is the main idea of the paragraph.
	Option G is incorrect	In this statement, only one detail of how concrete was used in the past is described instead of the overall importance of concrete, which is the main idea of the paragraph.
	Option H is incorrect	In this statement, only the demand for concrete is detailed instead of the overall importance of concrete, which is the main idea of the paragraph.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
15	Option B is correct	From reading the information in paragraph 6, the reader can understand that bioconcrete is effective in repairing water damage. The author describes bioconcrete as “self-healing,” and lists different places susceptible to water damage where bioconcrete has successfully been used.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the places mentioned by the author could be affected by harsh weather, it is specifically bioconcrete’s ability to repair water damage that is discussed in paragraph 6.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no mention of a weight limit in paragraph 6, so this is not something the reader can understand from the paragraph.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author mentions bioconcrete being used specifically in the Netherlands and Ecuador, that does not mean it is limited to use in certain parts of the world.
16	Option H is correct	The author organizes paragraph 1 by stating a popular belief about bacteria and then disproving it with examples. The author begins by describing bacteria’s reputation as “harmful” and then explains that some bacteria, such as the bacteria in fermented food products and in our body, are good.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author mentions that bacteria can help fight diseases, there is no listing of types of bacteria, so this is not how paragraph 1 is organized.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not offer any definition of bacteria, so this is not how the paragraph is organized.
	Option J is incorrect	The author does not offer any comparison between good and bad bacteria, so this is not how the paragraph is organized.
17	Option C is correct	The best summary of the article is presented in these sentences. The scientist Hendrik Jonkers and his study of bacteria and concrete are described, including his invention of bioconcrete.
	Option A is incorrect	Bioconcrete is not mentioned in this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option B is incorrect	Descriptions of the use and effectiveness of bioconcrete are not included in these sentences, so this is not the best summary.
	Option D is incorrect	There are only a few details included in these sentences, rather than main ideas and key points, so this is not the best summary.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
18	Option J is correct	The author most likely includes information about human bones' ability to self-repair to provide an example of the goal of Jonkers' research. Jonkers wanted to find out if bacteria could "'heal' nonliving substances" in a way similar to bones, so he experimented with adding bacteria to concrete.
	Option F is incorrect	Jonkers' research focused on applying bacteria to concrete; he does not advocate for more research concerning skeletal injuries.
	Option G is incorrect	Although in paragraph 1 the author introduces the idea that bacteria can be good for people's health, this sentence from paragraph 2 does not have anything to do with bacteria.
	Option H is incorrect	In this sentence the author states a fact about bones in the human body. It does not show any need for Jonkers' research on bacteria.
19	Option A is correct	Rodriguez and Jonkers both created mixtures using living materials. Rodriguez used "tiny strands of fungi called endophytes" (paragraph 2) to help restore a plant's natural protection. Jonkers used bacteria to give concrete the ability to repair itself when it cracks.
	Option B is incorrect	Although Rodriguez went to Yellowstone National Park, there is no context to support the idea that the park was unfamiliar to him, and there is nothing mentioned about Jonkers traveling anywhere, so this is not a similarity.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Jonkers researched "certain living organisms" (paragraph 2) to see how they "heal themselves when injured," Rodriguez studied only plants, not animals, so this is not a similarity.
	Option D is incorrect	Although Rodriguez found that endophyte fungi allowed plants to be "protected from heat or cold" (paragraph 4), Jonkers' research did not consider temperature, so this is not a similarity.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
20	Option H is correct	In this sentence from "Persevering Plants" the author describes the success of Rodriguez's endophyte mixture. Similarly, Jonkers' bioconcrete was successful because it helped the lifeguard station remain intact.
	Option F is incorrect	The author uses this sentence to explain that the bacteria can live in the concrete for a long time without dying, but no success in repairing cracked concrete is mentioned, so an outcome similar to Rodriguez's success is not shown.
	Option G is incorrect	In this sentence, an example of the application of bioconcrete in the real world is described, but it is not stated whether it was successful, so an outcome similar to Rodriguez's success is not shown.
	Option J is incorrect	An example of the application of bioconcrete in the real world is described in this sentence, but it is not stated whether it was successful, so an outcome similar to Rodriguez's success is not shown.
21	Option A is correct	The one problem presented about bioconcrete that is not presented about endophyte fungi is that bioconcrete is expensive to produce. In paragraph 7 of "The Cure for Concrete," it is explained that bioconcrete is "50 percent more costly to create than traditional concrete," but there is no mention of the cost of treating plants with endophyte fungi.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 3 of "Persevering Plants," the author does explain that pesticides and fertilizer unintentionally destroy endophytes, but there is no mention of bioconcrete being unintentionally destroyed.
	Option C is incorrect	It is not specified in "The Cure for Concrete" whether the bacteria in bioconcrete are harmful.
	Option D is incorrect	Both endophytes and bioconcrete are exposed to weather conditions.

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Item#	Rationale	
22	Option G is correct	The difference between Rodriguez’s endophyte mixture and the bacteria in Jonkers’ products is that the endophyte mixture covers the outside of the seeds, or is “applied to the seeds” (paragraph 4), while the “bacteria are placed inside plastic capsules that are mixed into wet concrete” (paragraph 5).
	Option F is incorrect	Bacteria in concrete could probably be detected the same way as on seeds — with a microscope.
	Option H is incorrect	“Endophytes are found on “[a]bout 80 percent of the earth’s plants” (paragraph 3), while bacteria does not occur naturally in concrete and has to be added using “plastic capsules that are mixed into wet concrete” (paragraph 5).
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 5 of “The Cure for Concrete,” the author explains that “water enters through cracks in the concrete” before the bacteria are released, so this is not beginning work immediately.
23	Option C is correct	The idea that new poems do not come to mind right away is emphasized by the simile in lines 7 and 8. A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word “like” or “as.” The poet explains that words in a poem “don’t appear like a dog when you call their name,” which helps express the idea that a new poem cannot be summoned like a dog and appear immediately.
	Option A is incorrect	The simile is used by the poet to express the challenge of writing poetry, not to explain what form poems can take.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet uses the simile to express the challenge of writing poems not to assess their value.
	Option D is incorrect	Although a dog is mentioned in line 8, the poet uses the simile to express that new poems do not come to mind right away, not to compare writing poetry to having a pet.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
24	Option G is correct	The definition “to be able to spare or give up” is the best match for the way the word <u>afford</u> is used in line 4. The speaker of the poem is unable to give up paying attention in class.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker expresses no financial cost associated with paying attention in class, so this is not the best match for the way <u>afford</u> is used in line 4.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker of the poem is not talking about providing for anyone, so this is not the best match for the way <u>afford</u> is used in line 4.
	Option J is incorrect	The speaker of the poem is not talking about being “the cause or source of” not paying attention in class, so this is not the way <u>afford</u> is used in line 4.
25	Option C is correct	In lines 21 and 22, the poet is describing the process of revising a poem’s ideas and words. The poet explains that poetry is “muddy” at first and needs rearranging.
	Option A is incorrect	The poet does not find a topic to write about in the text of lines 21 and 22; instead, the poet captures the initial idea for a topic in lines 20 and 21 when she writes “usually poetry slops lazily over the couch/of a page and dangles.”
	Option B is incorrect	Although the poet uses words in lines 21 and 22 that help express the poet’s experience of writing a poem, this language is specifically used to describe the process of revising the poem’s ideas and words.
	Option D is incorrect	In lines 21 and 22, the poet is still working on the poem, so it is not yet ready to share with an audience.

2019 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
26	Option F is correct	The title is effective because it is used to suggest that the speaker desires more poetry to come into her life. Because the speaker does not always seem very enthusiastic about poetry, the title is helpful because it helps explain that although writing poetry can be a messy, inconvenient process, the author still welcomes more chances to write poetry.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the speaker explains “now i write poetry in my/free time” (lines 5 and 6), she also explains that poetry shows up whenever it wants to, so she cannot schedule time. However, she can invite it into her life.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker explains that she writes poetry in her free time, not while at school. The title suggests that she invites poetry into her life, but she does not necessarily do any type of poetry assignments.
	Option J is incorrect	The “invitation” the speaker is extending is for poetry to come into her life, not for people to enjoy her poems.
27	Option C is correct	The poet uses the contrasting images in lines 17 through 22 to suggest that writing poetry is often not easy. Instead of poetry that comes easily or steps “delicately” wearing “pink shoes treading softly” (lines 18 and 19), the speaker experiences poetry that is messy as it “slops lazily,” “dangles,” and wears “muddy shoes” (lines 20 through 22).
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker is not saying poetry is relaxing. It is the opposite of relaxing because it requires a lot of rearranging of words and ideas.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet does not talk about being sensitive by nature in these lines.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet does not discuss any involvement of imagination; instead, she describes poems as if they have a life of their own and show up when they want, which makes writing poetry difficult.

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Item#	Rationale	
28	Option J is correct	The poet uses lines 1 through 6 to establish that the speaker wishes she had more time to write poetry. The speaker explains that she “used to write poetry in art class,” but now she doesn’t take art and has to pay attention in other classes, so she has to try to write in her free time.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker describes how she wrote poetry in art class because that’s when she could make time for it, not because art and poetry are similar.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the speaker explains that she used to write poetry “when the teacher wasn’t looking” (line 2), it was because she wasn’t supposed to be writing poetry at that time, not because she wanted to keep it secret.
	Option H is incorrect	The poet does not offer any opinions on the importance of poetry in school.
29	Option B is correct	“Gist memory” is when the brain remembers a general idea. In paragraph 6, the author explains that we don’t normally remember every detail of a logo because our brains filter out the unnecessary information and remember only “the basic idea without all of the details.”
	Option A is incorrect	“Gist memory” is when the brain remembers a general idea, not specific details.
	Option C is incorrect	“Gist memory” is when the brain remembers a general idea, not when the brain connects information.
	Option D is incorrect	When the brain experiences constant exposure to images, it creates a general idea of them; it does not overlook them.

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Item#	Rationale	
30	Option J is correct	The meaning of <u>prevalent</u> as it is used in paragraph 6 is “widespread.” In paragraph 6, the author explains that when a logo is everywhere and people can recognize the image, they become familiar with it and feel “more comfortable about purchasing” products with that logo.
	Option F is incorrect	The author uses the word <u>prevalent</u> to describe how often certain logos appear rather than how detailed they are, which is what “elaborate” would be used to suggest.
	Option G is incorrect	The word <u>prevalent</u> is used to describe how often certain logos appear rather than how creative they are, so this is not the meaning.
	Option H is incorrect	The author uses the word <u>prevalent</u> to describe how often certain logos appear rather than how necessary they are, so this is not the meaning.
31	Option B is correct	The author provides the example of participants in a study who could not recall details of images they saw daily to explain “attentional saturation.” In paragraph 4, the author explains that “attentional saturation” happens when our brains overlook logos that we see frequently, making it hard to recall them.
	Option A is incorrect	Although it is explained in paragraph 1 that logos “help us remember a product or service connected to that image,” the idea of “attentional saturation” applies to instances where the details of the logo are actually forgotten.
	Option C is incorrect	It is stated in paragraph 5 that there are business experts who “believe in the importance of a recognizable logo,” but this is not an example of “attentional saturation.”
	Option D is incorrect	One of the memory recall studies is described here, but the outcome (the fact that the students couldn’t correctly recall the logo) is not described, so it does not demonstrate “attentional saturation.”

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Item#	Rationale	
32	Option H is correct	In this sentence, the author explains that our brains do not remember the details of product logos, implying that companies may want to reconsider their approach to branding their products.
	Option F is incorrect	In this sentence, the author describes where we see logos, so this would actually further encourage the use of logos rather than make companies reconsider their approach to branding.
	Option G is incorrect	This sentence is used to introduce the idea of “attentional saturation,” not to make a suggestion about companies’ approach to branding.
	Option J is incorrect	This sentence is used to explain that many experts believe logos still work, so it would not be used to suggest that companies might want to reconsider their approach to branding.
33	Option A is correct	The author mentions common name brands in the first paragraph most likely to create a connection with the reader. By mentioning the “Nike ‘swoosh’” and the “colorful rings” of the Olympic Games, the author creates a picture of these logos in readers’ minds and helps them relate to what they are reading.
	Option B is incorrect	The author already defines logos as “distinct images used to represent brands” in paragraph 1. The inclusion of common name brands is intended to create a connection with the reader because they are something the reader would recognize.
	Option C is incorrect	The author is not offering any opinions in the first paragraph. Only facts are used to introduce the topic of remembering logos.
	Option D is incorrect	The author introduces the main idea of the selection <i>after</i> making a connection with the reader by mentioning common brands and logos.

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Item#	Rationale	
34	Option J is correct	Paragraph 2 is mainly about the results of a research study. The author details a study at UCLA that tested how well students could “draw the Apple logo purely from memory.” Most students could not recall the logo accurately, and less than half could identify the correct logo from a set of images.
	Option F is incorrect	The paragraph does include information that is mainly about the results of the study rather than the skill the study required.
	Option G is incorrect	Paragraph 2 does include information that mentions a certain technology brand, but its popularity is not discussed, so this is not what the paragraph is mainly about.
	Option H is incorrect	Although researchers thought at first that the students might be “just not very good at drawing,” this is just a single detail from the research study, not what the paragraph is mainly about.
35	Option B is correct	The author organizes the selection by presenting research about logos and then explaining how the brain perceives logos. The topic of logos is introduced in paragraph 1, and two studies on people’s difficulty in recalling logos are described in paragraphs 2 and 3. Paragraphs 4 through 7 explain why people don’t remember logos accurately all the time and how logos can still be valuable to a company.
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not offer any solutions to improve logos, so this is not how the selection is organized.
	Option C is incorrect	Although familiar logos are listed in paragraph 1, the author focuses more on people’s abilities to recall these logos rather than their influence in advertising.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author discusses people’s ability to recall the design of a penny and states that although it “is not technically a logo, it is an object with which people have frequent interaction” (paragraph 3), these are details of a study and not how the overall selection is organized.

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Item#	Rationale	
36	Option H is correct	In paragraph 6, the author states, "When people are able to recognize an image, it can make them feel like they really know the product behind the logo." This makes people more likely to buy a product.
	Option F is incorrect	The author does not mention curiosity or a clever design in paragraph 6. The author focuses more on the familiarity of a logo.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not mention seeing colorful labels or reading information in paragraph 6. The author focuses more on the familiarity of a logo.
	Option J is incorrect	Packaging is not mentioned in paragraph 6.
37	Option A is correct	The main role of Andy's art teacher is to help resolve Andy's conflict. In paragraph 15, Andy is discouraged because his classmates did not give him the reaction he was hoping for when he wore his new outfit to school. Ms. Greene offers him encouragement and a new perspective in paragraph 20 when she says this is his first outfit and he should think of it as "just the beginning."
	Option B is incorrect	Andy's art teacher does not create the setting. Andy is already in the art class when Ms. Greene begins a conversation with him.
	Option C is incorrect	Andy's art teacher does not help develop rising action. She does not have any part in the plot until paragraph 16.
	Option D is incorrect	Andy's art teacher does not offer any background information about Andy.

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Item#	Rationale	
38	Option F is correct	The best summary of the story is presented in these sentences. The rising action (Andy creating his own clothing), conflict (Andy doesn't get a good reaction from his classmates), and resolution (Ms. Greene helps him change his perspective) are all included.
	Option G is incorrect	The conflict and its resolution are not included in this summary, so it is not the best summary of the story.
	Option H is incorrect	The conflict and its resolution are not included in this summary, so it is not the best summary of the story.
	Option J is incorrect	The conflict and its resolution are not included in this summary, and Andy is not completing a school project.
39	Option B is correct	The description of how Mr. Simone "carefully, almost proudly, placed the newly perfected pants over his arm" creates an image of how tailoring can help people feel better. His actions show that he feels good about his tailored pants and is taking extra care with them.
	Option A is incorrect	These are technical things that Andy learned about tailoring, but an example of how tailoring can help people is not demonstrated in this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	The idea that tailoring is valuable is touched on in this sentence, but there is no image created that shows the reader an example of how tailoring can help people.
	Option D is incorrect	The reason that Andy wants to create his own clothes is touched on in this sentence, but there is no image created that shows the reader an example of how tailoring can help people.

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Item#	Rationale	
40	Option H is correct	In paragraph 15, the author suggests that the word <u>donned</u> means “put on.” The author explains that Andy had “ <u>donned</u> his creation proudly that morning,” or in other words, had worn or “put on” his outfit proudly.
	Option F is incorrect	Andy’s outfit is brand new; it would not have needed mending. In paragraph 15, he wishes he had changed his clothes because of the reaction he received, not because they were torn or damaged.
	Option G is incorrect	Although Andy did think about his creation with pride, the word <u>donned</u> is used to reference actually wearing the clothes, not thinking about them.
	Option J is incorrect	Andy actually wore his creation to school. He did not imagine it, so the word <u>donned</u> does not mean “imagined.”
41	Option D is correct	The lesson referred to in the title “The Lesson in Design” is Andy learning the consequences of trying something different. When Andy’s classmates don’t react positively to the outfit he designed, his teacher tells him that ““Not everyone is going to see things the way you do”” (paragraph 18).
	Option A is incorrect	Although Andy does learn how to work with clothing by watching his father, he already learned this before the story begins. The lesson in the story is about learning the consequences of trying something different.
	Option B is incorrect	Broden does not learn anything from Andy in this story, so this is not a lesson referred to in the title.
	Option C is incorrect	Broden does not learn how to feel proud of himself in this story, so this is not a lesson referred to in the title.

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Item#	Rationale	
42	Option H is correct	Based on this sentence, the reader can conclude that Andy feels compelled to sketch his designs at every opportunity. In his free time, when he has the chance to do anything he wants, he chooses to sketch.
	Option F is incorrect	Andy spends a lot of time on his drawings, so it is unlikely that he puts very little thought into his designs.
	Option G is incorrect	Andy chooses to spend his free time drawing, so he is not bored.
	Option J is incorrect	Andy is not unsure about anything in this sentence.
43	Option D is correct	The theme of the story is expressed in this sentence. Andy's "Lesson in Design" is that he has to accept that people's reactions might not always be positive when he tries something new.
	Option A is incorrect	This is a lesson that Andy's father teaches him about tailoring, but it is not the theme of the story.
	Option B is incorrect	In this sentence, the author includes details about Andy's trip to the fabric store, but the theme of the story is not expressed.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence, Andy's motivation to create something extraordinary is described, but the overall theme is not expressed.
44	Option H is correct	A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word "like" or "as." The author uses a simile in this sentence to illustrate how discouraged Andy feels by his peers' reactions to his outfit. The phrase "like a spent parachute" helps the reader understand that Andy is empty of the pride that previously filled him because no one liked his creation.
	Option F is incorrect	Andy is not having difficulty concentrating; instead, he is discouraged because he did not get the reaction he desired.
	Option G is incorrect	The author uses this simile to illustrate Andy's discouragement, not to describe any reaction the students have.
	Option J is incorrect	Andy is not exhausted. He is discouraged because he did not get the reaction he desired from his new clothing design.