

Pennsylvania PSSA 2022 Grade 4  
English Language Arts

Exam & Answer Key Materials  
Pages 2 - 43



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

## English Language Arts Item and Scoring Sampler



**2022–2023**  
**Grade 4**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR READING PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS****Directions:**

On the following pages are the Reading passages and questions.

**Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:**

Some questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- First, read the passage carefully.
- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer the question.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

**Directions for Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions:**

Some questions will have two parts and will ask you to select one or more answers in each part.

For the evidence-based selected-response questions:

- Read Part One of the question and choose the best answer.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part One of the question.
- Record your answer to Part One in the answer booklet.
- Only one of the answers provided in Part One is correct.
- Then, read Part Two of the question and choose the evidence to support your answer in Part One. If Part Two tells you to select two answers, be sure to select two answers.
- You may look back at the passage to help you answer Part Two of the question.
- Record your answer or answers to Part Two in the answer booklet.

**Directions for Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Prompts:**

The English Language Arts TDA prompt will ask you to analyze the passage and use evidence from the passage to write an essay.

For the TDA Essay:

- Be sure to read the passage and the TDA prompt carefully.
- Review the Writer's Checklist to help you plan and organize your response.
- You may look back at the passage to help you write your essay.
- Write your essay in the appropriate space in the answer booklet. If you use scratch paper to write a rough-draft essay, be sure to transfer your final essay to the answer booklet.
- Be sure to check that your essay contains evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Be sure to check your essay for errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

**PASSAGE 1**

Read the following passage about using clay animation to make a movie. Then answer questions 1–8 in your answer booklet.

## **Clay Animation**

by Erica Elmer

Have you ever seen an animated movie or television show that looks like everything has been made out of clay? This technique using clay figurines and objects is called “claymation,” or stop-motion animation, and was first seen as early as 1902 in Georges Méliès’s film *A Trip to the Moon*. From that point, filmmakers around the world began to explore and grasp this technique, and in recent years this art form has become quite popular with films.

Making a film like this is somewhat similar to drawing a flipbook. If you were to draw a flipbook of a person waving his hand, there would be only slight, minor changes in the position of the hand on each page. When the pages are flipped through in one simultaneous motion, it gives the illusion of the character raising his arm to wave “hello.”

The techniques behind stop-motion film are very similar, except oftentimes filmmakers will use figures made entirely out of clay and will use a camera to capture their footage rather than a pencil and paper. In order to begin, they must first come up with a concept as to what they want the film to be about. They will then mold their characters and the entire world of the film using clay. Then they will move and manipulate each figure to create the illusion of movement. Each object is moved slowly and then recorded on film. After shooting one or two frames of film, the camera is paused and the object is moved again. Each character or object is moved extremely slowly, the movement being almost invisible to the naked eye. Objects are moved slowly to create fluid, realistic movements and faster to create swifter, jerkier movements. Sometimes this process of creating a claymation film can take years.

Although making a film this way may seem difficult, don’t let appearances be deceiving. With the right supplies and a lot of patience, you, too, can make your very own short claymation film.

### **Molding a Movie: How to Make a Claymation Film**

#### **Materials:**

- Modeling clay
- Video camera or digital still camera
- Tripod
- Dark cloth (to use for the background)

**Steps:**

1. Use modeling clay to create characters and objects that you will use to tell your story.
2. Get a video camera or digital still camera to record your images. Make sure that there is a memory card in the camera. Be sure to get your parent's permission first!
3. Using the dark cloth, create a backdrop for shooting your movie. The dark cloth will even out the lighting so everything will look the same.
4. Secure the camera onto the tripod, and secure your backdrop by hanging it up or draping it over a stable object like a box.
5. Place the characters and other objects onto the backdrop, positioning them for your first shot.
6. To record your movie, put the camera into "camera" mode to record, and if using a digital still camera, make sure the camera is in "video" mode.
7. Press the record button, count to one by saying, "one, one thousand," and then press the record button again to stop recording.
8. You have now captured the first image of your movie.
9. Move each clay figure or object in the movie slightly, about a couple of inches each time, to create more fluid, realistic effects. For quicker moving objects and faster moving action, move them farther, about 4–6 inches.
10. After moving each object to its desired position, press record again and count to one, as done in step 7, and then press record again.
11. Keep moving each object steadily and recording after each movement to create the illusion of a moving image.
12. When you are finished, put the camera into playback mode to view your masterpiece!

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which statement **best** describes the structure of the second paragraph of the passage?
- A. It compares drawing a flipbook to making a clay animation film.
  - B. It describes how a flipbook can be turned into a clay animation film.
  - C. It solves the problems of a flipbook by showing how to make a clay animation film.
  - D. It explains the process of using a flipbook to create a clay animation film.

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.2.1.2
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	58% (correct answer)
p-value B	15%
p-value C	8%
p-value D	19%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the structure of the second paragraph of the passage. Option A is the correct answer since the paragraph explains how making a clay animation film is “similar to drawing a flipbook.” Option B is incorrect since the paragraph does not describe how a flipbook can be turned into a clay animation film. Option C is incorrect since the paragraph does not discuss problems related to making a flipbook. Option D is incorrect since the paragraph does not explain how to use a flipbook to create a clay animation film.

## 2. Read the sentence from the passage.

“Each character or object is moved extremely slowly, the movement being almost invisible to the naked eye.”

What does the phrase “invisible to the naked eye” mean?

- A. unable to compare
- B. unable to explain
- C. too unusual to be believed
- D. too slow to be noticed

Item Information	
Alignment	B-V.4.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	9%
p-value B	8%
p-value C	10%
p-value D	73% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine the meaning of the phrase “invisible to the naked eye.” Option D is the correct answer since the phrase emphasizes how imperceptible the movement of the character or object is due to it being moved so slowly. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they do not describe the given phrase and do not make sense in the context of the passage.



3. What reason does the author give for why character sculptures are moved slowly when filming clay animation?
- A. It creates the effect of slow motion.
  - B. The clay that is used is difficult to mold.
  - C. It makes their movements look smoother.
  - D. The camera is unable to capture quick movements.

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.1
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	20%
p-value B	7%
p-value C	60% (correct answer)
p-value D	13%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine what reason the author gives for why character sculptures are moved slowly when filming clay animation. Option C is the correct answer since the author states that objects are moved slowly to “create fluid . . . movements . . .” Options A, B, and D are incorrect since there is no textual evidence to support these choices.

## 4. Read the sentence from the passage.

“After moving each object to its desired position, press record again and count to one, as done in step 7, and then press record again.”

What does the word desired mean as used in the passage?

- A. concerned
- B. preferred
- C. reasoned
- D. required

Item Information	
Alignment	B-V.4.1.1
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	8%
p-value B	41% (correct answer)
p-value C	9%
p-value D	42%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to use context clues to determine the meaning of “desired.” Option B is the correct answer since the word “desired” means “preferred.” Options A and C do not make sense in the given context. Option D is incorrect since the passage does not indicate that objects must be moved to a compulsory position.

5. Which statement **best** describes the structure of the section “Steps” at the end of the passage?
- A. The steps are listed in the order of their importance.
  - B. The steps are listed according to which materials are needed.
  - C. The steps are listed in the order they should be completed.
  - D. The steps are listed according to their level of difficulty.

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.2.1.2
Answer Key	C
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	15%
p-value B	17%
p-value C	62% (correct answer)
p-value D	6%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the structure of the section “Steps” at the end of the passage. Option C is the correct answer since the list presents information in sequential order. Option A is not correct; although some steps may be more important than others, the steps are not presented in order of importance. Option B is not correct; although a list of needed materials is included in this section, the steps are not presented according to the materials needed. Option D is not correct; although some steps may be viewed as more difficult than others, the steps are not presented by level of difficulty.

**Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question**

6. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

**Part One**

What is the main idea of the overall passage?

- A. Claymation is a well-known art that anyone can take part in.
- B. Claymation can be created using pencil and paper.
- C. Claymation films can take many years to create.
- D. Claymation is featured in many movies and television shows.

**Part Two**

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- A. “From that point, filmmakers around the world began to explore and grasp this technique, and in recent years this art form has become quite popular with films.”
- B. “When the pages are flipped through in one simultaneous motion, it gives the illusion of the character raising his arm to wave ‘hello.’ ”
- C. “With the right supplies and a lot of patience, you, too, can make your very own short claymation film.”
- D. “Use modeling clay to create characters and objects that you will use to tell your story.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.2
Answer Key: Part One	A
Answer Key: Part Two	A, C
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.79
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine the main idea of the passage and choose two pieces of evidence from the passage that support this main idea.</p> <p><b>Part One:</b> Option A is the correct answer since the passage mainly tells about the art of clay animation and provides a set of directions for creating a clay animation film. Option B is incorrect since flipbooks, not clay animation films, are created using paper and pencil. Option C is incorrect since the fact that a claymation film may take years to create is a detail, not a main idea. Option D is incorrect since the fact that claymation is featured in many movies and television shows is a detail, not a main idea.</p> <p><b>Part Two:</b> Options A and C are the correct answers; option A supports the idea that clay animation is a “well-known art,” and option C supports the idea that “anyone can take part in” this art. Options B and D are incorrect since they do not support the main idea from Part One.</p>

## Multiple-Choice Question

7. How does the section “Steps” connect to the rest of the passage?
- A. It provides instructions for how to make a clay animation film.
  - B. It provides suggestions for how to improve a clay animation film.
  - C. It provides comparisons between clay animation films and other films.
  - D. It provides shortcuts to take when making a longer clay animation film.

Item Information	
Alignment	B-C.3.1.3
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
p-value A	80% (correct answer)
p-value B	8%
p-value C	7%
p-value D	5%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to determine how the section titled “Steps” connects to the rest of the passage. Option A is the correct answer since the numbered list provides instructions for how to create a clay animation film. Option B is incorrect since the steps do not provide suggestions for how to improve a clay animation film. Option C is incorrect since the steps do not make any comparisons between clay animation films and other types of films. Option D is incorrect since the steps do not explain any shortcuts when making a clay animation film.

**Evidence-Based Selected-Response Question**

8. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

**Part One**

Based on information from the passage, which inference can **best** be made about clay animation?

- A. It is popular with children.
- B. It has a long history.
- C. It is more realistic than a flipbook.
- D. It requires artistic talent.

**Part Two**

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer in Part One? Choose **one** answer.

- A. “Have you ever seen an animated movie or television show that looks like everything has been made out of clay?”
- B. “This technique using clay figurines and objects is called ‘claymation,’ or stop-motion animation, and was first seen as early as 1902 in Georges Méliès’s film. . . .”
- C. “. . . except oftentimes filmmakers will use figures made entirely out of clay and will use a camera to capture their footage rather than a pencil and paper.”
- D. “Sometimes this process of creating a claymation film can take years.”

Item Information	
Alignment	B-K.1.1.1
Answer Key: Part One	B
Answer Key: Part Two	B
Depth of Knowledge	3
Mean Score	1.09
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to make an inference about clay animation and choose one sentence from the passage that supports this inference.</p> <p><b>Part One:</b> Option B is the correct answer since the passage states that it “was first seen as early as 1902.” Option A is incorrect; although the passage states that clay animation “has become quite popular,” the passage does not provide enough information for the reader to infer that this art form is popular with children. Option C is incorrect; although the passage does include some information about flipbooks, it does not include information that would allow the reader to infer that clay animation is more realistic than a flipbook. Option D is incorrect; although one could infer that creating clay animation would require artistic talent, the passage makes it seem like practice is more important than artistic talent. Therefore, the <b>best</b> inference would be option A.</p> <p><b>Part Two:</b> Option B is the correct answer since the sentence supports the inference that clay animation has a long history. Options A and C are incorrect since they do not support the correct inference from Part One. Option D is related to the amount of time that creating a clay animation film may take, but it does not relate to the history of the art form.</p>



## PASSAGE 2

Read the following passage about two musicians. Then answer question 9 in your answer booklet.

## Playing Like Pa

by Pam Bachorz

I'll never play piano like my grandpa.

Pa's fingers fly so fast you don't see them touch the keys. His hands tumble and leap, and the notes spill from the piano faster than popcorn from a popper.

Pa has played at the Tulip Café for forty-nine years. He plays every Friday and Saturday night, except the Friday night when Mom was born.

Tonight the Tulip is bursting with people. They cleared away the tables so more people could fit. Everyone has to hold their plates on their laps and put drinks under their chairs, but nobody minds. It's a special night.

This is the last time my grandpa will play at the Tulip. Everyone is a little sad.

Pa is ready to retire.

Name a song—any song—and Pa will play it for you. Nobody can stump him. He has a music library in his head.

Jazz is his favorite. Whenever Pa rips into ragtime, I'm like a pot of water boiling over. I can't stop my toes a-tapping, fingers a-snapping, head bo-bopping to the beat.

All my aunts and uncles are at the Tulip tonight, with all my cousins. My great-aunt Pauline came on the train all the way from Albany. We whoop and holler at the end of every song. Pa even plays the song with my name in it: "Stella by Starlight."

Pa has been teaching me piano ever since I was five. He's taught me chords, so I can make any song sound fancy. Sometimes Pa balances a nickel on the back of my hand to keep my fingers curved and my hand level. He listens while I practice for a half hour every single day. I make mistakes, but Pa never says anything. He just reads the newspaper. Sometimes he smiles.

Some days I want to quit. I tell Pa that I'm no good at piano. But he says, "One day you'll be better than me." So I keep practicing. Other times the notes just flow. My mind stays quiet while my fingers do all the work. That's when Pa says, "Not bad, kid. Not bad." Then I know I've hammered it home.

Tonight people keep stopping by to talk. They leave money in a jar on top of the piano. They want Pa to leave with a pocketful of tips.

I'm finishing my dessert when Pa surprises me. "Ladies and gentlemen." His voice quavers a little, but it's still strong. "I have a special treat for you tonight. Please welcome my granddaughter, Stella Babcock, to the piano!"

I drop my spoon and duck low. What's Pa thinking? I can't play in front of all these people!

Cousin Amy pokes me. "Get up there already, Stella," she orders in a no-nonsense voice. "Do it for Pa."

My rubbery legs take me to the piano. Pa's big hands grip my shoulders and gently push me onto the piano bench. My fingers settle around middle C.

"I can't," I say. I'm not like Pa. People won't like what I play. They might laugh.

"Play something you love," Pa whispers in my ear.

But I can't remember a single song. I wish I knew my grandpa's favorite, "Mood Indigo," by the jazz great Duke Ellington. Pa makes it his last song every night.

I close my eyes and try to pretend there aren't dozens of people staring at me. Pa keeps his hands on my shoulders. They feel warm, strong, and steady. I'm trembling now.

I play one note, the D next to middle C. Then my fingers remember, and a song rushes through me: one of Bach's Two-Part Inventions. It's not jazz, but it's fast and tricky. Pa always smiles when I play this one.

One note tumbles out, and another. The music pushes my hands across the piano, with no mistakes. It's not like jazz bubbling under my skin. This song is a cool river running inside me, my fingers rippling and flowing over the rocky black keys.

Aunt Diann hollers, "You go, Stella! You're on fire."

And then I'm done. My fingers are ordinary again, with no notes left in them.

Everyone is cheering for me. I stand up and hug my grandpa hard. He turns me to the audience. I give them a little wave and say, "Thanks, folks," just like Pa.

I'll never play piano like my grandpa. But that's O.K. Because I can play like me, Stella Babcock, just the way Pa taught me.

**Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt**

9. Read the sentences from the passage.

“I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh.”

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

## **Writer’s Checklist for the Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt**

### PLAN before you write

- Make sure you read the prompt carefully.
- Make sure you have read the entire passage carefully.
- Think about how the prompt relates to the passage.
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. Use a thought map, outline, or other graphic organizer to plan your essay.

### FOCUS while you write

- Analyze the information from the passage as you write your essay.
- Make sure you use evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Use precise language, a variety of sentence types, and transitions in your essay.
- Organize your paper with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

### PROOFREAD after you write

- ☐ I wrote my final essay in the answer booklet.
- ☐ I stayed focused on responding to the prompt.
- ☐ I used evidence from the passage to support my response.
- ☐ I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence formation, punctuation, and word choice.

- 9.** Read the sentences from the passage.

"I'm not like Pa. People won't like what I play. They might laugh."

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

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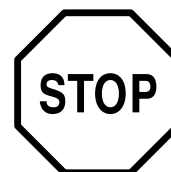
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**GO ON** 

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**After you have checked your work, close your answer booklet and test booklet so your teacher will know you are finished.**



## Text-Dependent Analysis Scoring Guideline

## #9 Item Information

<b>Alignment</b>	A-K.1.1.2	<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	<b>Mean Score</b>	1.69
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## Assessment Anchor:

E04.A-K.1 — Key Ideas and Details

## Specific Assessment Anchor Descriptor addressed by this item:

E04.A-K.1.1.2—Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

<b>Score</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively addresses all parts of the task demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Effective introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s)</li> <li>Strong organizational structure that effectively supports the focus and ideas</li> <li>Thorough analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to effectively support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>Substantial, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant key details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>Substantial reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer's purpose</li> <li>Skillful use of transitions to link ideas</li> <li>Effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events</li> <li>Few errors, if any, are present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

Score	Description
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequately addresses all parts of the task demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Clear introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s)</li> <li>Appropriate organizational structure that adequately supports the focus and ideas</li> <li>Clear analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>Sufficient, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>Sufficient reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer's purpose</li> <li>Appropriate use of transitions to link ideas</li> <li>Appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events</li> <li>Some errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present seldom interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistently addresses some parts of the task demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Weak introduction, development, and/or conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea somewhat related to the text(s)</li> <li>Weak organizational structure that inconsistently supports the focus and ideas</li> <li>Weak or inconsistent analysis of explicit and/or implicit meanings from text(s) that somewhat supports claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>Vague reference to the text(s) using some details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>Weak reference to the main idea(s) and relevant details of the text(s) to support the writer's purpose</li> <li>Inconsistent use of transitions to link ideas</li> <li>Inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events</li> <li>Errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present may interfere with meaning</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimally addresses part(s) of the task demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Minimal evidence of an introduction, development, and/or conclusion</li> <li>Minimal evidence of an organizational structure</li> <li>Insufficient or no analysis of the text(s); may or may not support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences</li> <li>Insufficient reference to the text(s) using few details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions</li> <li>Minimal reference to the main idea(s) and/or relevant details of the text(s)</li> <li>Few, if any, transitions to link ideas</li> <li>Little or no use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s)</li> <li>Many errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present often interfere with meaning</li> </ul>



## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 4 points

9. Read the sentences from the passage.

"I'm not like Pa. People won't like what I play. They might laugh."

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

I think the sentences show the theme of the passage because it shows it's okay to be nervous but you can still over come it, this also shows that you can do anything if you're willing to put the work into it. In the following paragraphs you will see how answers relate to the question.

First, I think the sentences show the theme of the passage because it shows it's okay to be nervous but you can still over come it. The author said, "I drop my spoon and duck low. Cousin Amy pokes me. "Get up there already, Stella," she orders in no-nosence voice. "Do it for Pa." my rubbery legs take me to the piano. Pa's big hands grip my shoulders and gently push me onto the piano bench. my fingers settle around middle C." I believe my cite relates to the answer because she acts nervous by saying she couldn't play in front of all the people. Her saying that shows that she gave up before she even tried because she was scared and nervous that she would

GO ON 

ge laughed at. In the next paragraph I will show one more reason of how the sentences relate to the theme of the story.

Next, I think the sentences show the theme of the story because it shows you can do anything if you're willing to put the work into it. The author said, "Pa has been teaching me piano ever since I was five". The author also said, "One note tumbles out and another. The music pushes my hands across the piano, with no mistakes. It's not like jazz bubbling under my skin. This song is a cool river running inside me, my fingers rippling and flowing over the rocky black keys". I think this relates with my answer because she was willing to put the work into it because she says she's been practicing since she was five. During the end of the story she uses all of that practice to do a song at the Tulip Café.

As you can see, these are my two answers of why the sentences relate to the theme of the story which is, it's okay to be nervous but you can still overcome it, the sentences also show you can do anything if you're willing to put the work into it.

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This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. An effective introduction provides context for the analysis that follows by providing generalizations of the theme (*it's okay to be nervous but you can still over come it and you can do anything if you're willing to put the work into it*) that is implicitly related to the sentences given in the prompt and foreshadows Stella's eventual success. Skillful transitions connect ideas within and between paragraphs building a strong organizational structure and enhancing reader understanding (*In the following paragraphs; First; because it shows; The author said; In the next paragraph; As you can see*). Substantial references to the text (*"I drop my spoon and duck low. Cousin Amy pokes me. "Get up there already, Stella . . . Do it for Pa. . . . My rubbery legs take me to the piano . . . My fingers settle around middle C"*) integrate key details into the thorough analysis (*I believe my cite relates to the answer because she acts nervous by saying she couldn't play in front of all the people. Her saying that shows that she gave up before she even tried because she was scared and nervous that she would ge laughed at*). Text and analysis clearly support ideas referenced in the first part of the theme (*it's okay to be nervous but you can still over come it*). Next, the student addresses the second part of the theme (*you can do anything if you're willing to put the work into it*) with additional well-chosen text (*"Pa has been teaching me piano ever since I was five"; "One note tumbles out and another. The music pushes my hands . . . my fingers rippling and flowing over the rocky black keys"*). These text references, coupled with in-depth analysis (*this relates with my answer because she was willing to put the work into it because she says she's been practicing since she was five . . . she uses all of that practice to do a song at the Tulip Café*), clearly support the student's claims. Though the analysis supporting the first part of the theme is more thorough than the analysis supporting the second part, holistically, the response effectively analyzes how the sentences given in the prompt support the two-part theme identified by the student. There are few errors (*ge* for *get*), and those present do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 4 points



9. Read the sentences from the passage.

“I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh.”

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The theme is don’t care about what other people think of you, only care about what you think of yourself. Here are my reasons why I think this is the theme of the passage.

My first reason why I think these sentences show the theme is because the sentence shows that Stella is unsure of herself and worries everyone will think she is terrible, but when she pretends that nobody is there but herself to care, she isn’t worried. On page 2 of the story, the text says, “I close my eyes and try to pretend there aren’t dozens of people staring at me.” This shows that the sentence shows the theme of the passage.

If you still don’t believe me, heres another reason why the sentence shows the theme of the passage. My second reason why the sentence shows the theme is because she then realizes that she doesn’t need to be like Pa to play good, she needs to play like herself, which she thinks is good. On page 2 of the passage, the text says; “I’ll never play piano like grandpa. But that’s O.K. because I can play like me, Stella Babcock, just the way Pa taught me.” This shows that the sentence shows a theme from the passage because when she played like herself, she liked it.

If you still don’t believe that the sentence shows a theme, heres my last reason why the sentence shows my theme. My last reason is that when Stella plays the piano for Pa, she doesn’t care what other people think because only Pa is there, which also explains why Pa smiles. On page 2 of the passage the text says, “Pa always smiles when I play this one.” This shows how the sentence “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh.” shows a theme.

These are my reasons why the sentence shows a theme.

This response effectively addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text. An effective introduction identifies the theme (*don't care about what other people think of you, only care about what you think of yourself*), which provides a clear counterpoint to the ideas expressed in the sentences in the prompt. The opening body paragraph provides a relevant reason the given theme is appropriate in the context of the sentences (*the sentence shows that Stella is unsure of herself and worries everyone will think she is terrible*) and extends that idea with insightful analysis (*but when she pretends that nobody is there but herself to care, she isn't worried*) and connections to well-chosen key details from the text (*"I close my eyes and try to pretend there aren't dozens of people starting at me"*). Another reason the theme is supported by the quote is provided (*she then realizes that she doesn't need to be like Pa to play good, she needs to play like herself*) and is also connected to a well-chosen text quote (*"I'll never play piano like grandpa . . . just the way Pa taught me"*). This reason/supporting text is extended with additional effective analysis (*when she played like herself, she liked it*) to further clarify how the sentences show the theme. A third reason (*when Stella plays the piano for Pa, she doesn't care what other people think . . . which also explains why Pa smiles*) builds off of another relevant text quote (*"Pa always smiles when I play this one"*) to reinforce the connections between the sentences and the identified theme. While the third reason is slightly less effective than the first two—primarily because the connection between it and the supporting text is more tenuous—the level of analysis and the supporting text references are both strong. The organizational structure throughout the response is similarly strong, and the transition use (*My first reason; On page 2 of the story; This shows that; If you still don't believe that*) is skillful. Precise language and vocabulary (*unsure of herself; she then realizes; which also explains*) are employed effectively—if somewhat sporadically—to explain the topic. The few errors in this response do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 3 points



9. Read the sentences from the passage.

“I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh.”

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

In “Playing Like Pa” the sentences “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh,” shows the theme that you should never give up, because Stella said she couldn’t do it, but since she tried she could do it, and, Stella tried, even though she knew she could play as good as her Pa and she didn’t want to be the replacement of him.

To begin with, in “Playing Like Pa” the sentences “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh,” shows the theme that you should never give up, because Stella said that, but she tried anyway and since she tried she could do it. The author says, “I play one note, the D next to the middle C. Then my fingers remember, and a song rushes through me: one of Bach’s Two-Part Inventions.” The author also says, “One note tumbles out, and another. The music pushes my hands across the piano, with no mistakes.” This explains, in “Playing Like Pa”, the sentences, “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh,” shows the theme that you should never give up, because Stella said that, but she tried anyway and since she tried she could do it.

In addition, in “Playing like Pa” the sentences, “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh,” shows the theme that you should never give up, because Stella tried even though she knew she wasn’t her Pa, and she didn’t want to replace him. The author states, “I’ll never play piano like my grandpa. But that’s O.K.” The author also states, “I can’t say. I’m not like Pa.” This proves, in “Playing like Pa” the sentences, “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh,” shows the theme that you should never give up, because Stella tried even though she knew she wasn’t her Pa and she didn’t want to replace him.

To sum up, in “Playing Like Pa” the sentences, “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh,” shows the theme that you should never give up, because Stella said she couldn’t do it, but since she tried she could, and Stella tried, even though she knew she wasn’t going to be as good as her Pa and she didn’t want to replace him.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. The theme (*you should never give up*) is identified in the introduction and is employed deliberately, though somewhat repetitively, throughout the response. This focus aids in establishing appropriate organization, although the repetitiveness does, at times, detract slightly from the flow of ideas and language. Substantial, relevant text is used throughout the response (*"I play one note . . . one of Bach's Two-Part Inventions"; "One note tumbles out, and another. . . with no mistakes"; "I'll never play piano like my grandpa. But that's O.K."; "I can't' I say. I'm not like Pa"*) and supports the clear analysis (*you should never give up, because Stella said that, but she tried anyway and since she tried she could do it; you should never give up, because Stella tried even though she knew she wasn't her Pa, and she didn't want to replace him*). The integration of text and analysis helps to clarify how the sentences given in the prompt support the generalization identified in the theme of the passage (*that you should never give up*). All of these connections indicate higher-level thinking and clear analysis. Appropriate transitions are used to link ideas (*To begin with; This explains; In addition; To sum up*). The few errors present in usage, spelling, and punctuation seldom interfere with meaning (*could* for *couldn't*; *thought*; missing or misplaced punctuation).

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 3 points

9. Read the sentences from the passage.

"I'm not like Pa. People won't like what I play. They might laugh."

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The sentences show one theme in the passage. The theme is that if you don't believe in yourself, then you won't get a lot of work accomplished.

My first piece of evidence for the theme is when Stella sometimes wanted to quit playing the piano. This shows the theme because Stella doesn't believe she can play the piano and if you don't believe in yourself, you don't get a lot done.

My second piece of evidence is when Stella said I can't play in front of all these people. This is connected to the theme because if Stella doesn't believe in herself, then she would've made a lot of mistakes.

My last piece of evidence is when Stella says that she is no good at the piano. This is very close to the theme because Stella would've kept on telling herself that and she would've quit, but her grandfather was there and he encouraged her to keep playing.

My three pieces of evidence is all about Stella not believing in herself, and I am saying the the theme one

GO ON 



last time. The theme is that if you don't believe in yourself, then you won't get a lot of work accomplished.

This response adequately addresses all parts of the task, demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text. A theme that implicitly relates to the sentences in the prompt (*if you don't believe in yourself, then you won't get a lot of work accomplished*) is established in the introduction and remains the focus throughout the response. Though the given theme does not clearly connect to the entire arc of the story, it does clearly connect to the sentences in the question. The organizational structure is appropriate and builds off of a clear, if somewhat perfunctory, introduction. In the first body paragraph, a relevant text reference (*Stella sometimes wanted to quit playing the piano*) supports clear analysis that connects with the sentences given in the prompt (*Stella doesn't believe she can play the piano and if you don't believe in yourself, you don't get a lot done*). This same pattern of supporting text (*Stella said I can't play in front of all these people; Stella says that she is no good at the piano*) followed by clear analysis (*if Stella doesn't believe in herself, then she would've made a lot of mistakes; Stella would've kept on telling herself that and she would've quit, but her grandfather was there and he encouraged her to keep playing*) continues throughout the remainder of the response. Each text/analysis pairing connects with the identified theme and, to varying degrees, with ideas encompassed by the sentences in the prompt. Finally, a clear conclusion characterizes the text references as *all about Stella not believing in herself*, and reiterates the theme. Appropriate, though somewhat repetitive, transitions (*My first piece of evidence; My second piece of evidence; My last piece of evidence*) link ideas throughout the response, and the few errors present in spelling (*believe, accomplished*) do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 2 points



9. Read the sentences from the passage.

“I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh.”

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The theme of the story, “Playing Like Pa” the charictar lears the lesson, that you should never doubt y yourself.

In the story the theme is you should never doubt yourself. In the text it states, “I’ll never play as good as grandpa.” From this statment we can learn that she is doubting herself. In the text it says, “You go, Stella! You’re on fire.”In this sentence you can tell that she is doing spectacutar.

In conclusion I think that Stella has learned she should never doubt herself.

This response inconsistently addresses the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. The introduction identifies the controlling idea (*the charictar lears the lesson, that you should never doubt y yourself.*) The student then establishes this lesson as the theme of the story and supports it with relevant quotes (“*I’ll never play as good as grandpa*”; “*You go, Stella! You’re on fire*”). The quotes are accompanied by weak inferences (*she is doubting herself; she is doing spectacutar*). Taken together, the text and inferences somewhat support the thematic idea that you should never doubt yourself. By making these inferences, the student has moved beyond a literal interpretation of the text. Organization, while functional, is somewhat weak. Transition use is repetitive (*In the story; In the text; In this sentance*) and basic. A brief conclusion (*I think that Stella has learned she should never doubt herself*) reiterates the controlling idea and implies that Stella learns the lesson stated in the theme. The errors present in sentence formation, usage, spelling, and punctuation may interfere with meaning (opens with a fragment; *charictar, lears, statment, sentance, spectacutar*; misplaced or missing commas).

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 2 points

9. Read the sentences from the passage.

"I'm not like Pa. People won't like what I play. They might laugh."

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

The sentences show a theme of the passage by because Stella doesn't beleive in herself that she can play the piano. When she goes up in front of everyone, and plays the first note, Stella builds up cofadence and plays the song with no mistakes. On page 37 is says "I play a note, the D next to middle C. Then my fingers rember, and a song rushes through me: one of Bach's Two-Part Inventions." This shows she isn't like Pa, but she is Stella and she can play the Piano. The theme of the passage is not to give up and you can do anything.

This response inconsistently addresses parts of the task, demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text. A weak organizational structure includes an introduction that provides a vague inference, based on the text, about Stella (*doesn't beleive in herself that she can play the piano*). This idea connects with a general text reference and another weak inference indicating a change in Stella's attitude (*When she goes up in front of everyone, and plays the first note, Stella builds up cofadence and plays the song with no mistakes*). Another relevant piece of text (*On page 37 is says "I play a note, the D next to middle C. Then my fingers rember, and a song rushes through me"*) supports the idea of Stella's confidence building. More weak analysis follows (*This shows she isn't like Pa, but she is Stella and she can play the Piano*) but does not clearly connect to the response as a whole, begging the question, "How is Stella not like Pa?" For the conclusion of the response, the student identifies a weak theme (*not to give up and you can do anything*), but does not provide any context for it. Overall, the response exhibits little in the way of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary. Transitions are employed inconsistently to link ideas (*because; When she goes up in front of everyone; On page 37; This shows*). The few errors present in usage (*is for it*), spelling (*beleive, cofadence, rember*), and capitalization (*Piano*) do not interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

## Response Score: 1 point

9. Read the sentences from the passage.

"I'm not like Pa. People won't like what I play. They might laugh."

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

Stella wont's to be like her pa but stella says that she never will She sayes that the people wil laugh at her wan she playing the piano she keep practicesin how to touch the piano stella want to the stage to touch the piano in front of all those people her pa keep saying that she can do it and she start touching the piano and she close her eyes and she said that she is going to pretanded that no one is staring at her and then she stared playing the piano.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure. For an introduction, the student simply rephrases the sentences from the prompt (*Stella wont's to be like her pa but . . . she never will, people wil laugh at her*) without indicating how the sentences show a theme. Although the response does include a weak inference (*Stella wont's to be like her pa*), it does not provide, or imply, a theme of the passage. Much of the response consists of paraphrased ideas taken directly from the text (*wan she playing the piano she keep practicesin; she start touching the piano; . . . pretanded that no one is staring; and she stared playing the piano*). Few transitions link ideas and errors present in usage (*want's* for *wants*, *keep* for *kept*, *start* for *started*), sentence structure (run-ons), and spelling (*wan*, *practicesin*, *want* for *went*, *pretanded*) interfere with meaning.

## STUDENT RESPONSE

Response Score: 1 point



9. Read the sentences from the passage.

“I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play. They might laugh.”

Write an essay analyzing how the sentences show a theme of the passage. Use evidence from the passage to support your response.

I think This sentence helps with the theme because it said, “I’m not like Pa. People won’t like what I play they might laugh.” And the part that said, “I’m not like Pa.” Give me and idea for the theme, And I think the theme is, If someone plays better than you try harder again.

This response minimally addresses part of the task, demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text. There is minimal evidence of an organizational structure. The introduction simply rephrases the question (*I think This sentence helps with the theme because it said*) and then repeats the sentences given in the prompt. The student eventually provides a theme (*And I think the theme is, If someone plays better than you try harder again*); however, the rest of the response consists of an insufficient reference to a sentence in the prompt as a contributing factor behind the student’s stated theme (*And the part that said, “I’m not like Pa.” Give me and idea for the theme*). No context for the idea expressed in the theme is provided, either through inference, implication, or supporting text. Transitions are minimal (*because*), and there is little use of precise or domain-specific vocabulary. Errors are present in capitalization (incorrect or missing caps in the middle of sentences), usage (*Give* for *gives*, *and* for *an*), and sentence formation (fragment) in this brief response.

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEST DIRECTIONS FOR CONVENTIONS OF  
STANDARD ENGLISH QUESTIONS****Directions:**

On the following pages are the Conventions of Standard English questions.

**Directions for Multiple-Choice Questions:**

Some questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.

For the multiple-choice questions:

- Read each question and choose the best answer.
- Only one of the answers provided is correct.
- Record your choice in the answer booklet.

## CONVENTIONS OF STANDARD ENGLISH MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

10. Read the paragraph.

(1) I am watching a bird outside my window. (2) It is using sticks to build a nest in a tree.  
(3) It is flying up to the nest and down again. (4) Now it was picking up a string to use in the nest.

Which sentence should be revised to correct the error in verb tense?

- A. sentence 1
- B. sentence 2
- C. sentence 3
- D. sentence 4

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.2
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	13%
p-value B	14%
p-value C	24%
p-value D	49% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify which sentence should be revised to correct the error in verb tense. Option D is the correct answer. Sentence 4 has a past progressive verb form; “was picking” needs to be changed to “is picking” to correct the error in verb tense. Then all the verbs would be in the present tense. Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they all have the correct verb tense for the given paragraph.

11. Which underlined word should be changed to correct the error in pronoun usage?

- A. Mary made the rocket that flew higher than all the other rockets.
- B. The girl who just moved here from Arizona sits next to me in science class.
- C. Paul and his cousin played a game of chess that lasted more than two hours.
- D. The teacher which taught me to play the trumpet is a member of the community band.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.1
Answer Key	D
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	16%
p-value B	16%
p-value C	10%
p-value D	58% (correct answer)
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the underlined word that should be changed to correct the error in pronoun usage. Option D is the correct answer since the word “which” is the incorrect relative pronoun; the correct relative pronoun is “who.” Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they all use correct relative pronouns.



12. Read the information.

\_\_\_\_\_ and then camped at a beautiful park.

Choose the words that complete the sentence.

- A. Went on a trip to the mountains
- B. My family and I visited our cousins
- C. My family, my friends, and I on a trip
- D. Visited our cousins in the mountains

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.1.6
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	14%
p-value B	68% (correct answer)
p-value C	9%
p-value D	9%
Option Annotations	The student is asked to identify the group of words that completes the given sentence. Option B is the correct answer since this group of words, when added to the given information, creates a complete sentence. Options A, C, and D are incorrect since these groups of words, when added to the given information, produce fragments.

13. Which sentence is punctuated correctly?

- A. Pittsburgh has many museums yet my favorite, is the sports museum.
- B. The museum shows the history of football in Pennsylvania, but it also has quite an exhibit on baseball.
- C. The museum has an exhibit on racing and it provides information about car, and bike races.
- D. The museum offers a lot of different activities so visitors, are sure to have a good time.

Item Information	
Alignment	D.1.2.3
Answer Key	B
Depth of Knowledge	2
p-value A	15%
p-value B	58% (correct answer)
p-value C	13%
p-value D	14%
Option Annotations	<p>The student is asked to determine which given sentence is punctuated correctly. Option B is the correct answer since it has a comma separating the two independent clauses of a compound sentence. Option A is incorrect since the comma is misplaced; the comma should be before the conjunction “yet” to separate the two independent clauses in a compound sentence. Option C is incorrect since the comma should be placed before the conjunction “and” to separate the two independent clauses in a compound sentence. Option D is incorrect since the comma should be placed before the conjunction “so” to separate the two independent clauses in a compound sentence.</p>

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS—SAMPLE ITEM SUMMARY DATA

## Multiple-Choice and Evidence-Based Selected-Response Questions

Sample Number	Alignment	Answer Key	Depth of Knowledge	p-value A	p-value B	p-value C	p-value D
1	B-C.2.1.2	A	3	58%	15%	8%	19%
2	B-V.4.1.2	D	2	9%	8%	10%	73%
3	B-C.3.1.1	C	2	20%	7%	60%	13%
4	B-V.4.1.1	B	2	8%	41%	9%	42%
5	B-C.2.1.2	C	3	15%	17%	62%	6%
6	B-K.1.1.2	Part One: A Part Two: A, C	3	Mean Score: 1.79			
7	B-C.3.1.3	A	3	80%	8%	7%	5%
8	B-K.1.1.1	Part One: B Part Two: B	3	Mean Score: 1.09			
10	D.1.1.2	D	2	13%	14%	24%	49%
11	D.1.1.1	D	2	16%	16%	10%	58%
12	D.1.1.6	B	2	14%	68%	9%	9%
13	D.1.2.3	B	2	15%	58%	13%	14%

## Text-Dependent Analysis Prompt

Sample Number	Alignment	Points	Depth of Knowledge	Mean Score
9	A-K.1.1.2	4	3	1.69