



Grade 8

English Language Arts

Item and Scoring Sampler Supplement:

—

Reading and Evidence-Based Writing

Passage and Item Set

December 2017

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READING AND EVIDENCE-BASED WRITING OVERVIEW

The Georgia Milestones English Language Arts (ELA) End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments are criterion-referenced tests designed to provide information about how well a student has mastered the grade-level state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts. These assessments consist of a variety of item types including selected-response, constructed-response, extended constructed-response, and extended writing-response items.

The Reading and Evidence-Based Writing (REBW) portion of the Grade 8 ELA assessment is administered as the first test section of the ELA Milestones Assessment. When responding to the REBW portion of the assessment, students read a passage set (consisting of two passages) and answer five test questions about the passages. The five test questions include three selected-response items, one two-point constructed-response item, and one seven-point extended writing response.

All of these items help focus the student on the main idea(s) and key details in the passages prior to writing the extended essay. The first two selected-response items address each of the passages separately. The third selected-response item and the constructed-response item address both of the passages together. All four of these items contribute to a student's score in the Reading and Vocabulary domain. These four items are then followed by the extended-writing task, which requires the student to draw from the reading experiences when writing the response and to cite evidence from the passage(s) to support claims and conclusions in the essay.

PURPOSE OF THIS REBW ITEM AND SCORING SAMPLER SUPPLEMENT

The purpose of this supplement is to provide a sample REBW passage and item set as it would appear on the REBW section of an operational Georgia Milestones assessment. The items in this sampler may be copied and used for classroom instruction purposes. At a later date, updated Item and Scoring Samplers—featuring these released items—will be provided with sample student responses and additional scoring information.

ELA REBW ITEM TYPES

A selected-response item, sometimes called a multiple-choice item, is defined as a question, problem, or statement that appears on a test followed by several answer choices, sometimes called options or response choices. The incorrect choices, called distractors, usually reflect common errors. The student's task is to choose, from the alternatives provided, the best answer to the question posed in the stem (the question). The English Language Arts (ELA) selected-response items will have four answer choices.

A constructed-response item asks a question and solicits the student to provide a response constructed on his or her own, as opposed to selecting a response from options provided. For ELA, these items are worth two points, and partial credit may be awarded if part of the response is correct.

The seven-point extended writing task (also called an extended writing prompt) requires the student to write an argumentative essay or develop an informational/explanatory essay. The prompt requires the student to draw from the reading experiences when writing the response and to cite evidence from the passages to support claims and conclusions in the response. The extended writing task is considered "on-demand writing in response to text." Students write their responses in a somewhat limited amount of time without the benefit of time allocated for revision and rewrites. For this reason, the scoring

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process takes into account that the student responses are to be viewed as first drafts and are not expected to be polished papers. The scoring process is approached in such a manner as to award credit to students for what they do well according to the prompt and rubric. Students are not penalized for errors unless they permeate the response and impact or interfere with overall understanding. More information about scoring will be provided when these items are released in the Item and Scoring Sampler.

All sample items contained in this guide are the property of the Georgia Department of Education.

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REBW Section Test Directions

Section 1 of this test assesses your skill to comprehend reading passages and use information from the passages to write an informational essay.

Before you begin writing your essay, you will read two passages and answer three multiple-choice and one short-constructed response question about what you have read.

As you read the passages, think about details you may use in an informational essay about how a student might organize a successful fundraiser.

These are the titles of the passages you will read:

1. Thinking up a Storm
2. The Teamwork Trap

REBW Passage Set: Passage 1

Thinking up a Storm

Tucker and Anita need to decide on the topic of their upcoming science project. Both are feeling stuck because they are having a hard time coming up with workable ideas. Anita wisely suggests that they just start writing down all the ideas that come into their heads, however seemingly silly or unusable. From their list, Tucker points out that they actually have a few really great proposals.

In this scenario, Anita and Tucker made use of a brainstorming technique. Brainstorming is valuable when a creative idea is needed and ideas are difficult to generate. One begins the process by throwing out as many ideas as possible—even some that seem crazy. Sometimes the perfect idea comes straight from that list, or sometimes that list just leads to other ideas.

There are certain things to consider when brainstorming for a project. First, set the tone by reminding people not to criticize anyone's ideas so that no one feels uncomfortable giving wild suggestions, which can sometimes turn out to be the best ones. Next, try out several brainstorming tools and see which works most effectively. For example, try having everyone write ideas down individually and then compare thoughts aloud. Another option is to start by using a "brain dumping" technique, where you simply write every thought that comes into your head for five minutes, no matter how unrelated to the topic it may seem.

A more extreme method of brainstorming is called "reversing," which starts by taking a thought and reversing it. For example, the question of, "What is the best way to build this website?" would be reversed and turned into, "What is the worst way to build this website?" An outside-the-box question such as this fuels the imagination. Then some of the bad ideas can inspire a great idea that would not have been considered using a more traditional brainstorming method.

However you choose to start, the important thing is to play around with ideas until some start to stick. Be creative, be wacky, and have fun with the topic. If you remember that no thought is a wasted thought while brainstorming, you can find some truly imaginative solutions.

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REBW Passage Set: Passage 2

The Teamwork Trap

A fairly common thought is that if everyone else thinks something is the best idea, then it must be the best idea. This is a prime example of a phenomenon known as “groupthink.” Groupthink often occurs when members of a team attempt to make a decision or solve a problem. The problem with groupthink is that group members start to overvalue unity and hesitate to oppose popular opinion. The negative result is that alternate ideas are not even considered and flaws in the popular plan are not discussed.

However, what are the causes of groupthink? It often occurs when there is a persuasive leader with whom the other group members always want to agree. Sometimes there is the illusion of unanimity, or the belief that everyone else is in agreement already, so you should be too. Another cause of groupthink is when people feel they will be criticized for their opinions. The result of this attitude is that no one wants to think too creatively. Too much confidence can even be a cause. If everyone is so positive that an idea will succeed, they will not likely explore alternatives to that idea. Furthermore, many people simply want to be agreeable so that they are accepted and liked by the group.

The problem with this mindset is that it often yields poor results. For instance, suppose no one wants to argue with the leader that their group essay is not being written well, and so all students end up receiving a bad grade. At its worst, groupthink can be a trap that produces disastrous outcomes. One example occurred in 1986 when the Challenger space shuttle exploded before ever making it out of Earth’s atmosphere. It was revealed later that a few members of the group who designed the shuttle knew that a few parts were not quite right. Due to a groupthink mentality, none of them spoke up before the shuttle launched.

Ultimately, a group needs to make a decision to value and listen to everyone’s opinions in order to avoid groupthink. Groups that learn to brainstorm well together often avoid a group mentality, and this is when the best ideas tend to thrive.

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REBW Selected-Response Item: Question 1

Which sentence from “Thinking up a Storm” BEST supports the conclusion that, when brainstorming, even suggestions that seem unworkable can be helpful?

- A. Anita wisely suggests that they just start writing down all the ideas that come into their heads, however seemingly silly or unusable.
- B. Brainstorming is valuable when a creative idea is needed and ideas are difficult to generate.
- C. Next, try out several brainstorming tools to see which works most effectively.
- D. Then some of the bad ideas can inspire a great idea that would not have been considered using a more traditional brainstorming method.

REBW Selected-Response Item: Question 2

Which sentence from “The Teamwork Trap” BEST supports the conclusion that groupthink can have negative results?

- A. It often occurs when there is a persuasive leader with whom the other group members always want to agree.
- B. Furthermore, many people simply want to be agreeable so that they are accepted and liked by the group.
- C. For instance, suppose no one wants to argue with the leader that their group essay is not being written well, and so all students end up receiving a bad grade.
- D. Ultimately, a group needs to make a decision to value and listen to everyone’s opinions in order to avoid groupthink.

REBW Selected-Response Item: Question 3

Which of these BEST expresses the central ideas of each individual passage?

- A. Brainstorming can lead to original ideas.
Groupthink can lead to poor results.
- B. Brainstorming depends upon reversing ideas.
Groupthink creates overconfidence.
- C. Brainstorming requires more than one person.
Groupthink discourages creativity.
- D. Brainstorming helps create strong work relationships.
Groupthink interferes with work performance.

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REBW Two-Point Constructed-Response Item: Question 4

Explain whether or not the authors of the passages successfully support their arguments.

Use details from BOTH passages to support your answer. **Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.**

REBW Seven Point Extended-Writing Task: Question 5

WRITING TASK

There are different approaches to brainstorming when a group gets together to solve problems. Some people believe that working as a group can give people opportunities they otherwise would not have, but there can be problems with this process.

Write an **informational/explanatory essay** explaining what leaders should consider to encourage successful group problem solving.

Be sure to use information from BOTH passages in your **informational/explanatory essay**.

Writer's Checklist

Be sure to:

- Introduce the topic clearly, provide a focus, and organize information in a way that makes sense.
- Use information from the two passages so that your essay includes important details.
- Develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- Identify the passages by title or number when using details or facts directly from the passages.
- Develop your ideas clearly and use your own words, except when quoting directly from the passages.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to connect ideas and to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Use clear language and vocabulary.
- Establish and maintain a formal style
- Provide a conclusion that supports the information presented.
- Check your work for correct usage, grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

Now write your informational/explanatory essay on your answer document. Refer to the Writer's Checklist as you write and proofread your essay.

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SCORING INFORMATION

REBW Assessment Selected-Response Items	Standard	Key
Question 1	8.RI.1	D
Question 2	8.RI.1	C
Question 3	8.RI.2	A

Two-Point Constructed-Response Item: Question 4		Standard
Constructed Response Scoring Rubric:		8.RI.8
Score	Description	
2	<p><i>The response gives sufficient evidence of the ability to delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and evidence is relevant and sufficient.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an adequate explanation of whether or not the authors of the passages successfully support their arguments. Includes specific, relevant examples/details from both passages for support. 	
1	<p><i>The response gives limited evidence of the ability to delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and evidence is relevant and sufficient.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a weak explanation of whether or not the author(s) of the passage(s) successfully support their argument(s). Includes vague/limited examples/details from the passage(s) for support. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a credible explanation based on the passage(s) of whether or not the author(s) of the passage(s) successfully support their argument(s), without including relevant examples/details from either passage for support. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes relevant examples/details from the passage(s) that imply an explanation of whether or not the author(s) of the passage(s) successfully support their argument(s), without explicitly explaining whether their arguments are supported. 	
0	<p><i>The response gives no evidence of the ability to delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and evidence is relevant and sufficient.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides no explanation of whether or not the author of either passage successfully supports his or her argument. Includes no relevant examples/details from the passages that imply an explanation of whether or not the author of either passage successfully supports his or her argument. 	

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REBW Seven Point Extended-Writing Task: Question 5		Standards
SEVEN-POINT, TWO-TRAIT RUBRIC		8.W.2
Trait 1 for Informational/Explanatory Mode:		
Writing Trait	Points	Criteria
Idea Development, Organization, and Coherence <i>This trait examines the writer's ability to effectively establish a controlling idea and to support the idea with evidence from the text(s) read and to elaborate on the idea with examples, illustrations, facts, and other details in order. The writer must integrate the information from the text(s) into his/her own words and arrange the ideas and supporting evidence (from text that they have read) in order to create cohesion for an informative/explanatory essay.</i>	4	<i>The student's response is a well-developed informative/explanatory text that examines a topic in depth and conveys ideas and information clearly based on text as a stimulus.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Effectively introduces a topicEffectively organizes ideas, concepts, and information using various strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effectEffectively develops the topic with multiple, relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topicEffectively uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and conceptsUses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topicEstablishes and maintains a formal styleProvides a strong concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented
	3	<i>The student's response is a complete informative/explanatory text that examines a topic and presents information based on a text as a stimulus.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduces a topicGenerally organizes ideas, concepts, and informationDevelops the topic with a few facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examplesUses some transitions to connect and clarify relationships among ideas, but relationships may not always be clearUses some precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain the topicMaintains a formal style, for the most partProvides a concluding statement or section
	2	<i>The student's response is an incomplete or oversimplified informative/explanatory text that cursorily examines a topic.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Attempts to introduce a topicAttempts to develop a topic with too few detailsIneffectively organizes ideas, concepts, and informationUses limited language and vocabulary that does not inform or explain the topicUses few transitions to connect and clarify relationships among ideasUses a formal style inconsistently or uses an informal styleProvides a weak concluding statement or section
	1	<i>The student's response is a weak attempt to write an informative/explanatory text that examines a topic.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">May not introduce a topic or topic is unclearMay not develop a topicMay be too brief to group any related ideas togetherMay not use any linking words to connect ideasUses vague, ambiguous, or repetitive languageUses a very informal styleProvides a minimal or no concluding statement or section
	0	<i>The student's response is flawed for various reasons and will receive a condition code:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">BlankCopiedToo Limited to Score/Illegible/IncomprehensibleNon-English/Foreign LanguageOff-Topic/Off Task/Offensive

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REBW Seven Point Extended-Writing Task: Question 5		Standards
SEVEN-POINT, TWO-TRAIT RUBRIC		8.L.1 and 8.L.2
Trait 2 for Informational/Explanatory Mode:		
Writing Trait	Points	Criteria
Language Usage and Conventions <i>This trait examines the writer’s ability to demonstrate control of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics as embodied in the grade-level expectations of the language standards.</i>	3	<i>The student’s response demonstrates full command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Effectively varies sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and styleShows command of language and conventions when writingAny errors in usage and conventions do not interfere with meaning*
	2	<i>The student’s response demonstrates partial command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Varies some sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and styleShows some knowledge of languages and conventions when writingHas minor errors in usage and conventions with no significant effect on meaning*
	1	<i>The student’s response demonstrates weak command of language usage and conventions.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Has fragments, run-ons, and/or other sentence structure errorsShows little knowledge of languages and conventions when writingHas frequent errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning*
	0	<i>The student’s response is flawed for various reasons and will receive a condition code:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">BlankCopiedToo Limited to Score/Illegible/IncomprehensibleNon-English/Foreign LanguageOff-Topic/Off Task/Offensive
<p>*Students are responsible for language conventions learned in their current grade as well as in prior grades. Refer to the language skills for each grade to determine the grade-level expectations for grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Also refer to the “Language Progressive Skills, by Grade” chart in Appendix A for those standards that need continued attention beyond the grade in which they were introduced.</p>		