

English Language Arts 8

Quarter 3 Benchmark Assessment

Name:

Date:

Class:

1. Monica has been assigned an oral presentation, and her teacher wants her to focus on the sleep patterns of certain animals. She has decided to focus on bears because she has always been fascinated with them. While doing her research, she has located a scientist who lived in the wilderness for two years and studied bear habits. She has decided to interview him so that she can cite his experiences in her oral presentation to make it more factual and interesting.

Which question could Monica ask the scientist that would be most helpful for her presentation?

- (a) How long are the periods of hibernation during the winter?
- (b) What inspired you to study bears in the wilderness?
- (c) Do bears at the zoo sleep at night?
- (d) Did you enjoy watching the bears sleep?

2. Read this information on green tea and answer the question that follows.

Green tea is regarded as a good source of the antioxidants that are known to be beneficial in preventing cancer.

- A. The capsules are not an exact match-up for brewed tea, however. The pills don't contain the aromatic oils, which have additional antioxidant effects and help to improve circulation, according to physician Mark Stengler.
- B. Several companies have introduced capsules that contain the equivalent of one to four cups of tea in one capsule.
- C. Now you can acquire the health benefits of green tea without the tea kettle or microwave.
- D. Still, the capsules can provide a valuable daily supply of antioxidants of 300 milligrams of green tea extract per capsule..

Order the information as it would appear in a magazine article.

- (a) C, B, D, A
- (b) C, B, A, D
- (c) A, B, C, D,
- (d) B, A, D, C

Use this passage to answer number 3 and 4. *Here is the first part of Gabriella's rough draft.*

The Dream of Flight

(1) Every day, all over the world, thousands of people fly from city to city, country to country, even continent to continent. (2) Have you ever wondered what the very first flight was like? (3) If you want the answers to these questions, you will have to go back a little over 100 years to Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and look into the lives and adventures of Orville and Wilbur Wright. (4) And have you ever stopped to think about when or why people started flying?

(5) In 1900, the Wright brothers rented a building in Kitty Hawk near a beach to experiment with flying. (6) They wanted to do something noteworthy and believed that building a simple flying machine was possible. (7) Over the next three years, they completed more than 1,000 glider flights. (8) Before several mechanical setbacks, the Wright brothers finally were able to attach an engine to one of their planes. (9) They called this new machine the *Wright Flyer*.

3. Read the above passage “*Dream of Flight*” to answer this question.

In sentence 8, the phrase “Before several mechanical setbacks” does not correctly link ideas.

Which phrase should be used instead?

- (a) Instead of several mechanical setbacks
- (b) Because of several mechanical setbacks
- (c) Although several mechanical setbacks
- (d) After several mechanical setbacks

4. Read the above passage “*Dream of Flight*” to answer this question.

The order of the sentences in the first paragraph does not support the central idea.

How should the sentences be ordered?

- (a) 1, 4, 3, 2
- (b) 2, 1, 3, 4
- (c) 2, 1, 4, 3
- (d) 1, 2, 4, 3

Use this passage to answer number 5, 6, and 7

My Road to NASA

Ever since I was a young boy when I lived on a farm in Indiana I have always been interested in space. I read books about space and astronauts. I used my telescope to look at the stars and planets, and I dreamed of walking in places that no person had ever walked before. I even went to the U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, and got my first taste of weightlessness. I knew becoming an astronaut would take hard work and dedication, but I was willing and determined.

In high school, I took my academics seriously. Especially in all my science and math classes. (8) When I went to college, I decided entirely to focus my studies on engineering.

After receiving my degree, I worked as an engineer for a Canadian company before applying to be a NASA astronaut. The first time I applied I wasn't accepted, but I refused to give up on my dream. I worked as an engineer for a couple more years and, when I believed that my skills and experience were beyond reproach, applied to be a NASA astronaut for a second time. This time I was selected as one of the fortunate applicants to go to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

In Texas, I went through several interviews, medical examinations, and orientation sessions. It was difficult, but I knew that NASA wanted only the best people to be astronauts. Finally, I got the news which was printed on official NASA letterhead that I was selected to enter the training course to be an astronaut. I worked hard and learned a lot during my training. After working at NASA for three years, I was chosen to be its mission specialist on the next space shuttle mission.

5. Use the passage "Road to NASA" to answer this question.

Which sentence, if placed at the end of the passage, would best support the main idea of the passage?

- (a) I wouldn't change my years of hard work for anything because I love my career as a NASA astronaut.
- (b) I also had to spend many hours in the library studying the many skills needed to be a successful astronaut.
- (c) Some day I hope that my own children will want to become NASA astronauts, too.
- (d) In addition, I took extra courses about astronomy to learn more about the stars and planets.

6. Use the passage "Road to NASA" to answer this question.

Sentence 1 from the passage states, "Ever since I was a young boy when I lived on a farm in Indiana I have always been interested in space. "

What is the correct way to write this sentence?

- (a) Ever since I was a young boy, when I lived on a farm in Indiana I have always been interested in space.
- (b) Ever since I was a young boy, when I lived on a farm in Indiana, I have always been interested in space.
- (c) Ever since I was a young boy when I lived on a farm in Indiana, I have always been interested in space.
- (d) The sentence is correct as it is.

7. Use the passage "Road to NASA" to answer this question.

Sentence 12 from the passage states, "This time I was selected as one of the fortunate applicants to go to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas."

What is the best way to spell the word *applicants*?

- (a) applecants
- (b) applicants
- (c) applycants
- (d) The spelling is correct as it is.

Read this excerpt from a social studies report to answer questions 8 and 9.

¹ Lesotho is a country that, although little known, provides a relaxing and beautiful atmosphere that makes for an out-of-the-ordinary vacation experience. ²This "kingdom in the sky" is largely made up of majestic

mountains whose breathtaking scenery is like The Switzerland of South Africa. ³The mountains in Switzerland, though, are actually much bigger.

⁴The climate of Lesotho is different from Switzerland. ⁵ It is comfortable and varied, with dry, cool to cold winters, and wet, warm to hot summers. ⁶This provides a pleasant break from the smothering, year-round desert heat of so many African countries. ⁷ The Lesotho people are warm and friendly and have many interesting goods to sell, including their famous cone-shaped hats, tapestries and textiles, and unusual jewelry.

8. What sentence in the excerpt contains figurative language?

- (a) 1
- (b) 4
- (c) 2
- (d) 7

9. Which of these would result in the best transition between paragraphs?

- (a) No change needed. The transition between paragraphs is fine.
- (b) Remove sentence 4.
- (c) Reword sentence 3 to read "The mountains in Switzerland, though, are actually much bigger and the climate is also quite different." Remove sentence 4.
- (d) Remove sentence 3. Combine sentences 4 and 5 to read "Lesotho's general climate is comfortable and varied, with dry, cool to cold winters, and wet, warm to hot summers."

The following passage describes the true experiences of young girls who worked in textile mills in the 1830s. Use the following passage to answer 10 – 17 and the writing piece.

Textile mills sprang up along rivers throughout New England, their noisy rooms filled with girls and young women from New England farms. They were hardworking girls who left home to help their families and to find

adventure in the city. A mill girl arrived in a factory town clutching a single carpetbag or “hair trunk” and walked down treeless streets lined with brick boardinghouses that all looked alike, searching for the address that had been written on a scrap of paper. Upon arrival she would check in with the mistress, throw her bag on a bed, introduce herself to six or eight new roommates, and try to get some sleep. She would need it.

Lucy Larcom was eleven when she and her older sister Linda first walked through the gates of the giant mill at Lowell, Massachusetts. Lucy had agreed to apply for a job because she felt guilty that she was another mouth for her mother to feed. Lucy’s mother ran a boardinghouse for mill girls and women, but there was never enough money. The mill agent had only one job. He offered it to Lucy because she was taller than Linda and he thought that meant she was older. Both girls kept their mouths shut.

Lucy’s aunt had taught her to read and she loved the time she had spent in school. Still, even as a little child, she always expected that she’d wind up in the mill. “As a small child I got the idea that the chief end of woman was to make clothing for mankind,” she later wrote. “I supposed I’d have to grow up and have a husband and put all those little stitches in his coats and pantaloons.”

But, for the sake of the family, Lucy put aside her dreams and took a job as a “bobbin girl” in the spinning room. The windows were nailed shut and the room was hot and damp. Her wage was a dollar a week. Still, she made up her mind to be happy. “I went to my first day’s work in the mill with a light heart,” she wrote. “And it really was not so hard, just to change the bobbins on the spinning frames every three-quarters of an hour or so, with half a dozen other girls who were doing the same thing.”

But after a while the fun wore off. Each day started at five in the morning with a bone-rattling blast from the factory whistle. There was barely enough time to splash cold water on her face, stuff breakfast in one pocket and lunch in another, and sprint to the spinning room on the second floor of the mill. Like the others, Lucy pinned her hair up to make sure it didn’t get caught in the wheels. Then she faced her machine, reminding herself to be careful about where she put her fingers.

As the days wore on, Lucy pasted poems on the nearest window and tried to will the noise away. “I defied the machinery to make me its slave,” she wrote. “Its incessant discords could not drown the music of my thoughts if I would let them fly high enough.” But sometimes it was hard to make thoughts fly so high. “The buzzing and hissing whizzing of pulleys and rollers and spindles and flyers often grew tiresome. I could not see into their complications or feel interested in them, when you do the same thing twenty times, a hundred times a day, it is so dull!”

Lowell mill girls got a fifteen-minute breakfast break and another thirty minutes for lunch at noon. Most stood all day. The little ones often fell asleep standing up. But the machines never slept. Mill owners convinced themselves that they were helping children build character through hard work. They fired men and replaced them with women and children, who worked for lower wages. Soon whole families began to live off the wages of their exhausted children.

In the 1830s, the mill women and girls began to stand up for themselves, organizing strikes for more pay and shorter hours. Eleven-year-old Harriet Hanson, also the daughter of a rooming-house keeper, was one of fifteen hundred girls who walked out of the Lowell mill in 1836. They were protesting the company’s plan to raise the fees the workers had to pay to sleep in a company-owned boardinghouse like the one run by Harriet’s mother.

Because the company controlled virtually every part of a mill girl’s life, it took a lot of courage to even think about “turning out,” as they called striking. For weeks, Harriet listened as girls and women on her floor discussed just that, and then, finally, made up their minds to walk out. When the strike day came and the signal to stop working was passed around, so many workers on the upper floors spilled out chanting into the street that the entire mill was shut down. But the girls in Harriet’s spinning room remained frozen in place, glancing nervously at one another and wondering what to do. What if they lost their jobs? What would the company do to them?

240 Harriet was disgusted. After all their talk about oppression, how could they even think about staying inside? For long minutes they stood indecisively at their looms, whispering among themselves. Finally Harriet faced them. “I don’t care what you do,” she said firmly. “I am going to turn out whether anyone else does or not.”

245 With that, Harriet marched toward the door, eyes straight ahead. In the next moment, she heard a great shuffling of feet. She looked back to see the entire floor lining up behind her. Everyone was turning out. As expected, the company punished Harriet by taking the boardinghouse away from her mother. “Mrs. Hanson,” the agent lectured, “you could not prevent the older girls among your boarders from turning out, but your daughter is a child, and her you could control.”

Harriet never regretted what she did. Many years later she said that leading the walkout was the best moment of her life. “As I looked back on the long line that followed me,” she later wrote, “I was more proud than I have ever been since.”

10. Read the following excerpt and then answer both parts of the question below.

Lucy Larcom was eleven when she and her older sister Linda first walked through the gates of the giant mill at Lowell, Massachusetts. Lucy had agreed to apply for a job because she felt guilty that she was another mouth for her mother to feed. Lucy's mother ran a boardinghouse for mill girls and women, but there was never enough money. The mill agent had only one job. He offered it to Lucy because she was taller than Linda and he thought that meant she was older. Both girls kept their mouths shut.

What does the excerpt above suggest about Lucy and her family?

- A. They all worked for the mills
- B. They lived at a boardinghouse
- C. Lucy had a large family
- D. Lucy the youngest in her family

11. Read the following excerpt and then answer both parts of the question below.

Lucy Larcom was eleven when she and her older sister Linda first walked through the gates of the giant mill at Lowell, Massachusetts. Lucy had agreed to apply for a job because she felt guilty that she was another mouth for her mother to feed. Lucy's mother ran a boardinghouse for mill girls and women, but there was never enough money. The mill agent had only one job. He offered it to Lucy because she was taller than Linda and he thought that meant she was older. Both girls kept their mouths shut.

Lucy's aunt had taught her to read and she loved the time she had spent in school. Still, even as a little child, she always expected that she'd wind up in the mill. "As a small child I got the idea that the chief end of woman was to make clothing for mankind," she later wrote. "I supposed I'd have to grow up and have a husband and put all those little stitches in his coats and pantaloons."

How did the author most likely learn about Lucy Larcom?

- A. By reading accounts that Lucy had written about her experiences
- B. By interviewing Lucy about her experiences
- C. By listening to stories about Lucy that her relatives told
- D. By watching a movie about the experiences of mill girls

12. Read the following excerpt and then answer both parts of the question below.

"Its incessant discords could not drown the music of my thoughts if I would let them fly high enough"

In the excerpt above, “incessant discords” can best be described as

- A. boring and repetitive actions
- B. complex and dangerous machines
- C. stimulating musical notes
- D. constant harsh noises

13. Which of the following are examples of “incessant discords?”

- A. “music of my thoughts” (line 29)
- B. “buzzing and hissing whizzing” (line 30)
- C. “pulleys and rollers and spindles and flyers” (line 30)
- D. “complications” (line 31)

14. Read the following excerpt and then answer both parts of the question below.

“Mill owners convinced themselves that they were helping children build character through hard work”

The sentence above suggests that the mill owners

- A. only wanted to help children learn valuable lessons
- B. knew it was wrong to have children work in the mills
- C. believed working in the mills was good for children
- D. tried to make life easier for the children

15. Which word from the sentence best supports your answer?

- A. “convinced”
- B. “helping”
- C. “build”
- D. “character”

16. Read the following excerpt and then answer both parts of the question below.

“For long minutes they stood indecisively at their looms, whispering among themselves”

In the excerpt above, the word “indecisively” most nearly means

- A. not being able to move
- B. without making a choice
- C. speaking quietly
- D. showing courage

17. Which phrase from the passage shows that the workers were indecisive?

- A. “wondering what to do” (line 48)
- B. “talk about oppression” (line 50)
- C. “staying inside” (lines 50-51)
- D. “a great shuffling of feet” (lines 54-55)

18. Instead of writing about the experiences of mill workers in general, the author of the passage discusses the experiences of children. Why do you think the author chose to focus on the stories of two children, Lucy and Harriet? What information do you learn about young mill workers that helps you understand the experiences of ALL mill workers, both children and adults?

Your response should

- show why focusing on Lucy and Harriet was important
- discuss information that applies to the experiences of all mill workers
- include appropriate supporting details from the text
- present a coherent, organized explanation
- conclude in a logical way that supports your explanation
- use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

You will be scored on a rubric of a total of 16 points.