



English Language Arts Student Guide Georgia Performance Standards Version

A Guide for Students
Preparing for the
Georgia High School
Graduation Tests

English Language Arts

Includes:

- Description of the Content of the Test
- Sample ELA Test Items and Explanations
- Practice Questions

NOTE: This document is intended as a student aid.
Please photocopy as necessary for student use.

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INTRODUCTION

The Georgia High School Graduation Tests

To earn a high school diploma in Georgia, all students must pass tests in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. The content tests are referred to as the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT). The writing test is referred to as the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHS WT). Students take all five tests for the first time in the 11th grade.

For a detailed explanation of the GHS GT, refer to the Department of Education's Web site: http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_testing.aspx?PageReq=CI_TESTING_GHS GT

The Georgia High School Graduation Test in English Language Arts

This document is designed to help you prepare for the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) version of the graduation test in English language Arts (ELA). This test was administered for the first time in spring 2008.

The GPS/Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) version of the graduation test in ELA, was administered to first time test-takers in 2006 and 2007. The *English Language Arts Student Guide–GPS/QCC Transitional Version* test can be viewed at the Web site provided above. If you have taken the transitional version of the test, you may retake the same version.

If you took the ELA test in spring 2005 or earlier, you will take a QCC version of the test. A student guide for the ELA–QCC version of the test can also be found at the Web site provided above.

Look for the GPS, GPS/QCC, and QCC designations in the document titles of the student guides. You may also use this document for extra review.

If you are an 11th grade student, you must take the test in the spring of the 11th grade. Students who are unsure when they should take the test should contact their school counselor.

Students who have taken the test without passing may retest at any administration. You will have up to five opportunities to take and pass the test between the spring administration of your 11th-grade year and the summer of 12th grade.

If you do not pass the English language arts test but have met all other graduation requirements, you may be eligible for a certificate of performance or a special education diploma. If you leave school with a certificate of performance or a special education diploma, you may retake the test as often as necessary to qualify for a high school diploma.

Students who meet certain criteria may be eligible to apply to the State Board of Education for a waiver or variance. Refer to the [Georgia Department of Education's Web site](#) for more information.

CONTENT COVERED ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GHSGT

The content covered in the GPS version of the English language arts GHSGT is found in an ELA document entitled [English Language Arts Test Content Descriptions GPS Version](#) on the Georgia Department of Education Web site.

For detailed definitions of the Georgia Performance Standards, please consult the following resources:

1. Georgia Performance Standards (American Literature and Grade 9):
<http://www.georgiastandards.org/english.aspx>
2. English Language Arts Test Content Descriptions GPS Version:
http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_testing.aspx?PageReq=CI_TESTING_GHSGT

For students taking the GPS/QCC version of the test, refer to the ELA document entitled [English Language Arts Test Content Descriptions GPS/QCC Version](#) on the Testing Division's Web site at the second address given above. For students taking the QCC version of the test, an ELA document entitled [English Language Arts Test Content Descriptions QCC Version](#) is provided at the same Web site.

Content Domains of the GPS English Language Arts GHSGT

The content in the GPS English Language Arts GHSGT is grouped into the three sections called **domains** described below. The sample test items that appear on pages 9 through 11 of this student guide are representative of these domains and closely resemble items found on the actual GHSGT test. The items are also aligned to the GPS. The percentages listed for each domain indicate the emphasis it is given on the test.

Domain 1: Reading Comprehension (47–49% of the test)

These items test your ability to read and understand the meaning and main ideas in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Also tested is your ability to identify an author's use of literary elements including language and style, character development, point of view, irony, sound, form, and structure to convey meaning.

Domain 2: Literary Analysis (37–39% of the test)

These items test your ability to analyze what you read, focusing on your ability to analyze how authors use language for particular purposes in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Items in this domain also test your ability to recognize theme and underlying meaning as well as your understanding of the history of American literature. In addition, items require you to identify and analyze techniques used by authors to produce particular effects on readers.

Domain 3: Conventions and Writing (14–16% of the test)

These items test your knowledge of vocabulary, writing for specific audiences, and proper English usage, as well as your ability to formulate clear research questions. Items in this domain also test your ability to revise writing to address different audiences and improve the coherence of the organization.

PREPARING FOR THE TEST

The [English Language Arts Test Content Descriptions GPS Version](#) describes the content that you can expect to find on the test. The sample test items that appear on pages 9 through 11 are representative of test items that assess content knowledge of each of the three domains. There is also a practice test of 35 questions on pages 12 through 26 to help you prepare to take the actual test.

Finally, you may use questions in the [Georgia Online Assessment System](#) for further practice. You may locate a link to the Georgia Online System on the Georgia Department of Education home page, www.gadoe.org.

What you will find on the test

The English language arts test consists of between 50 and 60 multiple-choice questions. Each question has four possible answers; only one of the four choices is the correct answer. Most of the questions that address Domain 1: Reading Comprehension and Domain 2: Literary Analysis require you to read a stimulus. You should be able to complete the test in 60 minutes. However, you have up to 3 hours and 10 minutes if needed.

The following short sample reading selection and multiple-choice item explain the parts of a test question:

Read the following passage and answer question 1.

"Don't you sass me, boy!" Grandmother's eyes burned fiercely at the young man. He lowered his eyes and scuffed his feet on the scarred, faded kitchen floor, but said nothing. Grandmother frowned, raised one eyebrow, then turned abruptly and slowly limped out of the room.

1. Which universal idea is the author **most likely** trying to convey in this scene between the boy and his grandmother?

- A. Older people are better at controlling their anger.
- B. Pain can make people get angry easily.
- C. Communication can be difficult between people of different ages.
- D. Young people do not show respect for their elders today.

< Distractor

< Distractor

< Correct

< Distractor

Stimulus

Stem

Answer Choices

Stimulus: text that you must read and use to answer the question(s)

Stem: the question or statement to be answered (pay particular attention to **bold** words)

Distractors: answer choices you might select; one of the four choices is the correct answer

DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE

The questions on the test require a range of thinking skills. You may be asked to identify, describe, explain, analyze, or evaluate important ideas found within a reading selection.

We use the term ***Depth of Knowledge*** to describe the degree of mental processing that is necessary to answer an item correctly.

Level 1

Some items will ask you to recall, observe, question, or represent facts; apply simple skills; or demonstrate simple abilities. These questions require only a surface understanding of text. The following are examples of skills that might be required to answer Level 1 questions in ELA:

- Support ideas by referring to details in the text.
- Identify literary devices in a selection.
- Identify appropriate grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Level 2

Many items will require you to apply more complex mental processes than simply recalling facts. Level 2 requires both comprehension and subsequent processing of text or portions of text. It involves ordering and classifying text as well as identifying patterns, relationships, and main points. The following are some examples of skills and processes that might be required to answer Level 2 questions in ELA:

- Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.
- Construct compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Level 3

You should expect to see many challenging items on the test that require you to think beyond the text. Level 3 questions require students to explain, generalize, and connect ideas. They may involve prediction and elaboration and require you to use prior knowledge to support positions and manipulate themes across selection. The following are some examples of the skills and processes that may be required by Level 3 questions in ELA:

- Determine the effect of the author's purpose in using text elements.
- Summarize the information from multiple sources.
- Critically analyze the various types of literature.
- Compose focused, organized, coherent, and purposeful prose.

Examples of questions that represent these three levels can be found in the Sample Items and Explanations section on pages 9 through 11.

TAKING THE TEST

You cannot use instructional materials such as dictionaries, textbooks, or other materials while taking the test. The only exceptions are English Language Learning (ELL) students who may use word-to-word translation dictionaries if their Testing Participation Committee Plan calls for one. Furthermore, you are not permitted to use any electronic communications devices such as cell phones, PDAs, or other devices that receive, store, and/or transmit text. Please do not take these devices into the room. Students who attempt to use these devices during testing will be in danger of having their tests invalidated.

Use these strategies to help you succeed on the test.

Read everything carefully.

Many of the **GHS**GT questions involve reading poems and selected passages from short stories, novels, biographies, essays, newspapers, magazines, and other sources. Some questions include sentences and paragraphs to analyze, correct, or revise. You should read all parts of each test item very carefully, including directions, passages, questions, and all four answer choices.

Remember that there are no trick questions.

The questions are **not** designed to be tricky. If you read the entire question, including all accompanying material, and think carefully about what the question is asking, the meaning should be clear. Also, remember that each question has only one answer that content experts agree is the correct answer. However, you may be looking for the **best** answer among the choices. If so, the word **best** will be emphasized.

Sometimes questions ask you for the choice that is **not** correct among the options. Always notice words such as **not**, **except**, or **but** in the question. These words tell you to look for a choice that does not answer or complete the item stem correctly. For example, you might be asked, "Which sentence is **not** a complete sentence?" You should look for the sentence that is incomplete; three of the choices will be complete sentences.

Consider every choice.

From the four answer choices, you must choose the one that **best** answers the question. Some of the alternative choices will be attractive because they include an irrelevant detail, a common misconception, or the correct information applied in the wrong way.

Guess intelligently.

There is no penalty for guessing on any **GHS**GT. If you are not certain of the correct answer, then reread the material. If you are still uncertain, make your best guess. Guessing is easier if you can eliminate one or more distractors as clearly incorrect. Be warned, however, that many of the distractors are very attractive because they are based on common mistakes students make.

Spend test time wisely.

Many tests are arranged so that the easier items are first and the harder items are last. The GHSGT are not arranged in this way. Therefore, it is possible to find several difficult questions followed by a set of easier questions later. If you come to a few hard questions, do not get discouraged. It would be better to move on, answer as many questions as possible, and then go back to answer the remaining questions.

You may have up to three hours to take the ELA GHSGT. If you finish early, use the time to check your answers. However, it is still important to use your time wisely.

SAMPLE ITEMS AND EXPLANATIONS

The items provided in this section are sample items. These items should be considered **examples** of items and types of items that may be found on the English language arts test.

Hope is the thing with feathers

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

5 And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land
10 And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

(Emily Dickinson)

Domain 1: Reading Comprehension

1. Which pair of words from the poem is an example of end rhyme?

- A. "feathers" and "words"
- B. "storm" and "warm"
- C. "land" and "extremity"
- D. "soul" and "sea"

Correct Answer and Explanation: Option **B** is correct. End rhyme occurs in the last syllables of verses. Only "storm" and "warm" end in syllables that rhyme: *-orm* in "storm" and *-arm* in "warm." In option A, readers can detect the s sound in "feathers" and "words," but the words do not rhyme. Similarly, "land" and "extremity" in option C do not rhyme. In option D, "soul" and "sea" both exhibit the characteristics of alliteration, but they do not rhyme.

Depth of Knowledge: This is a Level 1 item. It requires identifying the option that meets the criteria for end rhyme.

Domain 1: Reading Comprehension

2. The bird that kept “so many warm” in line 8 is **most likely** a metaphor for
- A. the comfort provided by hope.
 - B. the importance of feathers.
 - C. the need to be sheltered.
 - D. the beauty of song.

Correct Answer and Explanation: Option **A** correctly identifies the comparison in the metaphor. It is the bird’s song that keeps the listener warm in much the same way that hope offers comfort in times of distress. Option B refers to the literal benefit of feathers but misses the poet’s obvious use of figurative language. Option C represents an example of how a student might misread the poem by focusing too much on details, overlooking the metaphor altogether. Finally, option D is a plausible comparison for a metaphor, but it is not the comparison that is implied in the poem.

Depth of Knowledge: This is a Level 2 item. It requires a level of analysis that is more complex than simply recalling or identifying information. It requires the student to analyze and interpret a specific example of figurative language to achieve a better understanding of the poem.

Domain 2: Literary Analysis

2. This poem is an example of the literary movement Romanticism because of its
- A. description of people facing an indifferent universe.
 - B. attention to facts and reality written in simple language.
 - C. focus on inner feelings and images from nature.
 - D. embrace of diversity, irony, and wordplay.

Correct Answer and Explanation: Option **C** correctly defines the characteristics of the Romantic movement. In particular, the poem conveys a strong emotion and invokes a connection to nature, both characteristics of the Romantic movement. Option A is a more appropriate definition of Naturalism. Option B describes the characteristics of Realism. Finally, option D identifies some of the traits of Postmodernist literature.

Depth of Knowledge: This is a Level 2 item. The student must know the characteristics of Romanticism and then apply this knowledge to the entire poem.

Domain 1: Literary Analysis

4. The use of the bird's song in the poem helps create a tone that is
- A. joyous.
 - B. humorous.
 - C. reassuring.
 - D. mystifying.

Correct Answer and Explanation: Option **C** is correct. The phrase used in line 4, "And never stops at all," is perhaps the best example of how the bird's song is constantly reassuring. Option 1, A is incorrect because "joyous" would imply that there is something in the poem to celebrate or some reason to rejoice. Option B is incorrect since nothing in the poem is comical or funny. Finally, option D is also incorrect. There is little in the poem to suggest that the speaker is bewildered or that some mystery remains unsolved.

Depth of Knowledge: This is a Level 3 item. It requires the student to interpret and analyze the effect of the bird's song in establishing the poem's tone.

The following item is an example of an independent item that does not accompany a separate reading selection. Most items of this type deal with the process of writing, revising, or researching in an academic context.

Domain 3: Conventions and Writing

5. Bob is writing an essay about the water quality for residents in his area. Which research question would be the **best** for Bob to use as he begins his research?
- A. What is being done to make our environment cleaner?
 - B. Is the water Americans drink becoming more polluted?
 - C. Does the water in this community meet health and safety standards?
 - D. What are the differences between bottled water and tap water?

Correct Answer and Explanation: Option **C** offers a focused question that addresses the proposed topic of study, narrowing the scope to "health and safety standards" in "this community." Options A and B are too broad, reaching far beyond "residents in his area." Option D is simply off topic, failing to address the question of "water quality."

Depth of Knowledge: This is a Level 3 item. It requires the student to analyze and evaluate four possible research questions.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Directions: These questions are representative of some of the types of questions you will answer on the GHS GT in English language arts. Read each question carefully. Then read each answer choice and mark the best answer. When you are finished, check your answers on pages 27 through 34.

Read the following passage and answer questions 1 through 8.

This passage is from the last chapter of Winesburg, Ohio, a novel by Sherwood Anderson about people living in the small town of Winesburg, Ohio, near the end of the 19th century. In this passage, George Willard, a young resident, is leaving Winesburg for a new life in the city.

The Departure

On the station platform everyone shook the young man's hand. More than a dozen people waited about. Then they talked of their own affairs. Even Will Henderson, who was lazy and often slept until nine, had got out of bed. George was embarrassed. Gertrude Wilmot, a tall thin woman of fifty who worked in the Winesburg post office, came along the station platform. She had never before paid any attention to George. Now she stopped and put out her hand. In two words she voiced what everyone felt. "Good luck," she said sharply and then turning went on her way.

- 2 When the train came into the station George felt relieved. He scampered hurriedly aboard. Helen White came running along Main Street hoping to have a parting word with him, but he had found a seat and did not see her. When the train started Tom Little punched his ticket, grinned and, although he knew George well and knew on what adventure he was just setting out, made no comment. Tom had seen a thousand George Willards go out of their towns to the city. It was a commonplace enough incident with him. In the smoking car there was a man who had just invited Tom to go on a fishing trip to Sandusky Bay. He wanted to accept the invitation and talk over details.
- 3 George glanced up and down the car to be sure no one was looking, then took out his pocketbook and counted his money. His mind was occupied with a desire not to appear green. Almost the last words his father had said to him concerned the matter of his behavior when he got to the city. "Be a sharp one," Tom Willard had said. "Keep your eyes on your money. Be awake. That's the ticket. Don't let anyone think you're a greenhorn."

After George counted his money he looked out of the window and was surprised to see that the train was still in Winesburg.

- 5 The young man, going out of his town to meet the adventure of life, began to think but he did not think of anything very big or dramatic. Things like his mother's death, his departure from Winesburg, the uncertainty of his future life in the city, the serious and larger aspects of his life did not come into his mind.
- 6 He thought of little things—Turk Smollet wheeling boards through the main street of his town in the morning, a tall woman, beautifully gowned, who had once stayed overnight at his father's hotel, Butch Wheeler the lamp lighter of Winesburg hurrying through the

streets on a summer evening and holding a torch in his hand, Helen White standing by a window in the Winesburg post office and putting a stamp on an envelope.

- 7 The young man's mind was carried away by his growing passion for dreams. One looking at him would not have thought him particularly sharp. With the recollection of little things occupying his mind he closed his eyes and leaned back in the car seat. He stayed that way for a long time and when he aroused himself and again looked out of the car window the town of Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.

(excerpt from *Winesburg, Ohio* by Sherwood Anderson, Public Domain)

1. Why is George “embarrassed” as he waits for the train to arrive?
 - A. He secretly wants to stay in Winesburg.
 - B. He thinks he will be a failure in the city.
 - C. Many townspeople resent his departure.
 - D. Many townspeople come to say good-bye.

2. In paragraph 2, the author includes Tom Little’s thoughts **most likely** to show that
 - A. George’s journey is typical.
 - B. Tom enjoys working on the train.
 - C. George’s friends are concerned about him.
 - D. Tom wishes he were also moving to the city.

3. Read these sentences from paragraph 3.

“Be a sharp one,” Tom Willard had said. “Keep your eyes on your money. Be awake. That’s the ticket. Don’t let anyone think you’re a greenhorn.”

What does Tom suggest in these sentences?

- A. George needs more money.
- B. George will achieve his dreams.
- C. George should stay in Winesburg.
- D. George will be vulnerable in the city.

4. Based on paragraphs 5 and 6, what does George remember **most** vividly about Winesburg?
- A. his father's advice
 - B. his life's big moments
 - C. the daily routines of the town
 - D. the varied landscape of the town

5. Read this part of the last sentence in the passage.

Winesburg had disappeared and his life there had become but a background on which to paint the dreams of his manhood.

The author includes these words **most likely** to show

- A. how rapidly the train left Winesburg.
 - B. the fears George has about his future.
 - C. how concerned George is about appearing manly.
 - D. the role Winesburg will play in George's imagination.
6. Which contrast is **most** related to the theme of the passage?
- A. death and rebirth
 - B. nature and society
 - C. fantasy and reality
 - D. innocence and experience
7. What is the **most likely** reason the author uses a third-person omniscient narrator in the passage?
- A. to provide the perspective of more than one character's thoughts
 - B. to allow George to share his feelings about leaving Winesburg
 - C. to provide an opinion about George's move to the city
 - D. to allow the narrator to speak directly to readers

8. Based on the passage, to which literary period or movement does the novel *Winesburg, Ohio* belong?
- A. Colonial
 - B. Revolutionary
 - C. Romanticism
 - D. Realism

Read the following passage and answer questions 9 through 12.

I am a man who, from his youth upwards, has been filled with a profound conviction that the easiest way of life is the best. Hence, though I belong to a profession proverbially energetic and nervous, even to turbulence, at times, yet nothing of that sort have I ever suffered to invade my peace. I am one of those unambitious lawyers who never address a jury, or in any way draw down public applause; but in the cool tranquility of a snug retreat, do a snug business among rich men's bonds, and mortgages, and title-deeds. All who know me, consider me an eminently safe man. The late John Jacob Astor,¹ a personage little given to poetic enthusiasm, had no hesitation in pronouncing my first grand point to be prudence; my next, method. I do not speak it in vanity, but simply record the fact, that I was not unemployed in my profession by the late John Jacob Astor; a name which, I admit, I love to repeat; for it hath a rounded and orbicular sound to it, and rings like unto bullion.² I will freely add, that I was not insensible to the late John Jacob Astor's good opinion.

(excerpt from "Bartleby the Scrivener" by Herman Melville, Public Domain)

¹ John Jacob Astor (1763–1848): a successful fur trader who became one of America's wealthiest persons

² bullion: gold

9. The point of view used in the passage reveals
- A. the narrator's unhappiness with his work.
 - B. John Jacob Astor's habit of repeating names.
 - C. the narrator's sense of self-importance.
 - D. John Jacob Astor's distrust of the narrator.

10. Which phrase describes how the passage is **mainly** organized?
- A. a conflict followed by the resolution
 - B. details describing a character
 - C. main idea with anecdotes
 - D. a sequence of events
11. The author's description of the narrator as an "unambitious lawyer" is an example of which literary device?
- A. irony
 - B. hyperbole
 - C. symbolism
 - D. personification
12. Which theme from American literature is **best** supported by ideas from the passage?
- A. Unharnessed ambition often leads to ruin.
 - B. Freedom ensures the happiness of all.
 - C. Nature is more powerful than the individual.
 - D. Wealth is often viewed as a measure of success.

Read the following two poems and answer questions 13 through 17.

Poem 1

“Truth,” said a traveller,
“Is a rock, a mighty fortress;
Often have I been to it,
5 Even to its highest tower,
From whence the world looks black.”

“Truth,” said a traveller,
“Is a breath, a wind,
A shadow, a phantom;
Long have I pursued it,
10 But never have I touched
The hem of its garment.”

And I believed the second traveller;
For truth was to me
A breath, a wind,
15 A shadow, a phantom,
And never had I touched
The hem of its garment.

(Stephen Crane)

(from *The Black Riders and Other Lines* by Stephen Crane. Public Domain)

Poem 2

The wayfarer,
Perceiving the pathway to truth,
Was struck with astonishment.
It was thickly grown with weeds.
5 “Ha,” he said,
“I see that none has passed here
In a long time.”
Later he saw that each weed
Was a singular knife.
10 “Well,” he mumbled at last,
“Doubtless there are other roads.”

(Stephen Crane)

(from *War is Kind and Other Lines* by Stephen Crane. Public Domain)

13. In line 2 of poem 1, the first traveller compares truth to “a rock” and “a mighty fortress” **most likely** to suggest that truth is
- A. inconvenient.
 - B. indisputable.
 - C. unpredictable.
 - D. unapproachable.
14. In lines 7 and 8 of poem 1, the second traveller compares truth to “a breath,” “a wind,” “a shadow,” and “a phantom” **most likely** to suggest that truth is
- A. elusive.
 - B. frightening.
 - C. mysterious.
 - D. remote.
15. In lines 8 and 9 of poem 2, the comparison of the weeds overgrowing the path to knives **best** suggests that seeking truth is
- A. adventurous.
 - B. painful.
 - C. rewarding.
 - D. tedious.

Questions 16 and 17 pertain to both poems.

16. Which word **best** describes the tone of each poem?
- A. cynical
 - B. indifferent
 - C. surprised
 - D. worried

17. How are these poems representative of the Naturalism literary movement?

- A. Both explore the supernatural aspects of life.
- B. Both portray a world that lacks moral order.
- C. Both suggest human life is a meaningful journey.
- D. Both recognize the importance of individual effort.

Read the following passage and answer questions 18 through 20.

from “Winter Animals” in *Walden*

For sounds in winter nights, and often in winter days, I heard the forlorn but melodious note of a hooting owl indefinitely far; such a sound as the frozen earth would yield if struck with a suitable plectrum¹ the very *lingua vernacula*² of Walden Wood, and quite familiar to me at last, though I never saw the bird while it was making it. I seldom opened my door in a winter evening without hearing it; *Hoo hoo hoo, hooser, hoo*, sounded sonorously, and the first three syllables accented somewhat like *how der do*; or sometimes *hoo, hoo* only. One night in the beginning of winter, before the pond froze over, about nine o'clock, I was startled by the loud honking of a goose, and, stepping to the door, heard the sound of their wings like a tempest in the woods as they flew low over my house. They passed over the pond toward Fair Haven, seemingly deterred from settling by my light, their commodore honking all the while with a regular beat. Suddenly an unmistakable cat-owl from very near me, with the most harsh and tremendous voice I ever heard from any inhabitant of the woods, responded at regular intervals to the goose, as if determined to expose and disgrace this intruder from Hudson's Bay by exhibiting a greater compass and volume of voice in a native, and *boo-hoo* him out of Concord horizon. What do you mean by alarming the citadel at this time of night consecrated to me? Do you think I am ever caught napping at such an hour, and that I have not got lungs and a larynx as well as yourself? *Boo-hoo, boo-hoo, boo-hoo!* It was one of the most thrilling discords I ever heard. And yet, if you had a discriminating ear, there were in it the elements of a concord such as these plains never saw nor heard.

(excerpt from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, Public Domain)

¹plectrum: a small, thin piece of metal, bone or other material used to pluck the strings of instruments such as the guitar or lute.

²*lingua vernacular*: common everyday language

Read this sentence from the passage.

They passed over the pond toward Fair Haven, seemingly deterred from settling by my light, their commodore honking all the while with a regular beat.

18. In the sentence, the word commodore **most** nearly means

- A. leader.
- B. enemy.
- C. listener.
- D. observer.

19. Which word **best** describes the owl's reaction to the intruding geese?
- A. curious
 - B. indignant
 - C. jealous
 - D. sympathetic
20. What idea does the author suggest about nature in his concluding sentence?
- A. Nature consists of competing species.
 - B. Nature demonstrates some harsh lessons.
 - C. Nature is harmonious when considered as a whole.
 - D. Nature is not meant to be understood by people.

The following items are independent items that do not accompany a separate reading selection.

21. Mike is writing a research paper on how good grades can affect students' overall driving records. Which research question would be the **best** to use as he begins his research and writing?
- A. How many miles do students drive each week to and from school?
 - B. What impact do automobile accidents have on student insurance rates?
 - C. Do students with poor school records have more automobile accidents?
 - D. Do driver's education courses positively affect students' driving records?

22. Which source would provide the **best** information for an essay on the use of character development in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*?
- A. a biography of Jane Austen
 - B. another novel written by Jane Austen
 - C. the review of the movie *Pride and Prejudice*
 - D. a book of literary criticism about *Pride and Prejudice*
23. Ashley's assignment for a research paper on the Revolutionary War requires the use of at least one primary source. Which source would be the **best** for Ashley to use to satisfy this requirement?
- A. a history textbook
 - B. a history magazine
 - C. a novel about the Revolutionary War
 - D. a journal written during the Revolutionary War
24. Marvin is preparing a class presentation on recent exploration of the planet Mars. The **best** source for current information on this subject would be
- A. an encyclopedia.
 - B. an astronomy book.
 - C. a reliable space Web site.
 - D. a popular weekly newsmagazine.

Read this paragraph and answer question 25.

1) Even though penicillin was first observed by the British over 80 years ago, it is still considered an effective way to kill germs. 2) Most people I know do not get an allergic reaction to this drug. 3) Penicillin acts both by killing bacteria and by slowing their growth. 4) It does not kill organisms in the resting stage but only those that are growing and reproducing. 5) It is effective against a wide range of disease-bearing microorganisms.

25. Which sentence should be deleted to keep the same perspective throughout the paragraph?

- A. sentence 2
- B. sentence 3
- C. sentence 4
- D. sentence 5

Read this paragraph and answer question 26.

1) The swamp is about 40 miles long, 30 miles wide, and covers an area of approximately 700 square miles. 2) The region is drained by the St. Marys and the Suwannee rivers. 3) The Okefenokee Swamp, the largest swamp in North America, is located in southeast Georgia and north Florida. 4) Some portions of the area are densely covered with swamp trees and low vegetation, others are grassy, and in still others, where the sandy soil comes above the surface of the swamp water, are pine groves. 5) Over 30 species of mammals, 200 kinds of birds, and 60 varieties of reptiles inhabit the swamp.

26. Which sentence should be first in the paragraph?

- A. sentence 2
- B. sentence 3
- C. sentence 4
- D. sentence 5

27. Which sentence is the **most** appropriate to include in a formal report on the history of the Nobel Peace Prize?

- A. During the First World War, the Nobel Peace Prize was not awarded to anyone.
- B. The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to those guys who started the Red Cross.
- C. For over 100 years, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to really fantastic world leaders.
- D. Jane Addams was the first American woman to get her act together to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

28. Which sentence would be the **best** to include in a persuasive essay that argues for high school students to be required to volunteer in their communities?

- A. Parents would know where to find their children after school.
- B. Volunteering helps students meet other students in the community.
- C. Community work not only helps others but teaches students new skills.
- D. Most teachers support students who volunteer in the community.

29. Which sentence contains a grammatical error?

- A. Cody spoke quiet so I could not hear him.
- B. The salesperson aggressively tried to sell the car.
- C. Margaret played the piano extremely well.
- D. The swimmer slowly climbed onto the diving board.

30. Read the sentence.

The movie theater was crowded, everyone found a seat.

Which way **best** corrects this run-on sentence?

- A. Since everyone found a seat, the movie theater was crowded.
- B. If everyone found a seat, the movie theater was crowded.
- C. The movie theater was crowded, because everyone found a seat.
- D. Although the movie theater was crowded, everyone found a seat.

31. Which sentence is written incorrectly?

- A. Even though it was cold outside, I enjoyed walking in the snow.
- B. Having finished her homework, the music was turned on in her room.
- C. Almost every weekend, the Jones family went hiking in the mountains.
- D. When Thomas blew out his birthday candles, he wished for a car.

32. Which sentence is written correctly?

- A. The sudden change in the weather taught the students an important lessen.
- B. The sudden change in the weather taught the students an important lesson.
- C. The sudden change in the whether taught the students an important lessen.
- D. The sudden change in the whether taught the students an important lesson.

33. Which sentence would be the **best** to include in a letter to the school board requesting more money for the school band?

- A. The school band is horrible because the uniforms are out of fashion.
- B. You should give us more money because our band is awesome.
- C. It isn't our fault that the band is terrible, so you shouldn't blame us.
- D. Please consider supporting the band, which is vital to our school.

34. Which sentence is written correctly?

- A. Pat has the best grades in our school.
- B. Pat has the better grades in our school.
- C. Pat has like the best grades in our school.
- D. Pat has the more better grades in our school.

Read this sentence and answer question 35.

Life on the Mississippi is Mark Twain's memoir of the days he spent learning to pilot a steamboat that navigates the mighty Mississippi River.

35. How should the sentence be corrected?

- A. Change *is* to *was*.
- B. Change *Twain's* to *Twains'*.
- C. Change *learning* to *to learn*.
- D. Change *navigates* to *navigated*.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
1	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.a	1	2	D	The correct answer is D . George is embarrassed by the number of people, some of whom he barely knows, who made an effort to be at the train station to see him depart.
2	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.d	1	3	A	The correct answer is A . By including Tom Little's thoughts, "Tom had seen a thousand George Willards go out of their towns to the city. It was a commonplace enough incident with him," the author makes the point that George's journey is typical.
3	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.a	1	2	D	The correct answer is D . Tom is warning George to be "sharp" and "awake" to avoid being taken advantage of in the city.
4	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.a	1	2	C	The correct answer is C . The things referred to in paragraph 6 are not "very big or dramatic" but "little things," the daily routines that are part of life in Winesburg.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
5	Literary Analysis	ALRL1.fiction.c	2	3	D	The correct answer is D . This sentence compares George's life in Winesburg to a canvas on which George will "paint the dreams of his manhood." It suggests his memories of Winesburg will remain as the foundation upon he will build a new life in the future.
6	Literary Analysis	ALRL2.theme.a	2	3	D	The correct answer is D . George is portrayed as a naïve young man who is embarking on a journey to maturity.
7	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.d	1	2	A	The correct answer is A . A third-person omniscient narrator allows readers to benefit from the varied perspectives of multiple characters. For example, knowing Tom Little's thoughts as well as George's helps put George's departure into a broader perspective.
8	Literary Analysis	ALRL1.fiction.f	2	2	D	The correct answer is D . This passage portrays the lives of ordinary people in a typical small town. The emphasis on the realities of ordinary life is characteristic of Realism.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
9	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.a	1	2	C	The correct answer is C . The first-person point of view used in the passage helps convey the narrator's sense of self-importance as evidenced by such phrases as "all who know me consider me an eminently safe man" and "my first grand point to be prudence."
10	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.a	1	2	B	The correct answer is B because the passage is primarily descriptive, providing details about the narrator.
11	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.fiction.d	1	1	A	The correct answer is A . The phrase "unambitious lawyer" is an example of irony since the narrator is, in fact, quite ambitious. He does a "snug business among rich men's bonds, and mortgages and title-deeds." The narrator also uses understatement throughout: "I was not unemployed in my profession."
12	Literary Analysis	ALRL2.theme.a	2	3	D	The correct answer is D . John Jacob Astor was one of America's first truly wealthy individuals. Like many, the narrator is impressed by this wealth and measures his own success, in part, by the same standards.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
13	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.poetry.iii	1	2	B	The correct answer is B . By using metaphors that compare truth to “a rock” and a “mighty fortress,” the traveller is suggesting that truth has the qualities of a rock and a fortress. Those qualities of stability and strength are best described as “indisputable.”
14	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.poetry.iii	1	2	A	The correct answer is A . All the comparisons this traveler makes with truth include things such as “a wind” or a “phantom” that elude the traveller.
15	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.poetry.iii	1	2	B	The correct answer is B . If each weed that has overgrown the path to truth is a “singular knife,” walking that path would be painful.
16	Literary Analysis	ALRL1.poetry.b	2	3	A	The correct answer is A . Both the speaker in the third stanza of “Poem 1” and the speaker of “Poem 2” react negatively to the possibility of finding truth. Negative or scornful attitudes are characteristic of cynicism.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
17	Literary Analysis	ALRL2.theme.d	2	2	B	The correct answer is B . One of the major concepts underlying Naturalism is the belief that the universe is controlled by a set of natural laws, such as survival of the fittest, rather than a code of morality. In these poems, the possibility of realizing truth, a moral quality, is seriously questioned.
18	Conventions and Writing	ALRL15a	3	2	A	The correct answer is A . A commodore is the leader of a line of ships. This is a reference to the goose that is leading the flock to a resting spot for the night.
19	Reading Comprehension	ALRL1.nonfiction.a	1	2	B	The correct answer is B . The author's characterizations of the owl's thoughts such as "What do you mean by alarming the citadel at this time of night consecrated to me?" express the owl's indignation toward the intrusion of the geese.
20	Literary Analysis	ALRL2.theme.a	2	3	C	The correct answer is C . The reference to "the elements of a concord" suggest that this conflict between the owl and the geese is part of the balance of nature that results in order or harmony.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
21	Conventions and Writing	9W3a	3	3	C	The correct answer is C . Only option C specifically asks the question about how good grades can affect students' overall driving records.
22	Conventions and Writing	9W3a	3	2	D	The correct answer is D because a book of literary criticism would provide analysis, evaluation, and description of the character development in Jane Austen's <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . None of the other sources listed would provide the specific information needed to write an essay on character development in this novel.
23	Conventions and Writing	9W3a	3	2	D	The correct answer is D as it is only primary source listed. Primary sources are usually documents (such as diaries, letters, journals, etc.) created during the period of time being studied.
24	Conventions and Writing	9W3a	3	2	C	The correct answer is C . While all the sources listed could provide information about the planet Mars, only a reliable Web site on space would have the most current information about recent exploration on Mars.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
25	Conventions and Writing	9W4b	3	3	A	The correct answer is A . Sentence 2 interjects the author's voice, which does not fit with the perspective of the paragraph.
26	Conventions and Writing	9W4b	3	3	B	The correct answer is B as it clearly provides the topic sentence for the paragraph. All the other sentences in the paragraph support sentence 3.
27	Conventions and Writing	9W4c	3	2	A	The correct answer is A . Only A uses appropriate language for a formal report. The sentence is impersonal and the tone is formal.
28	Conventions and Writing	9W4c	3	2	C	The correct answer is C . Only C addresses the purpose of the essay. The sentence is both appropriate for the topic and persuasive.
29	Conventions and Writing	9C1a	3	1	A	The correct answer is A as it is the only sentence that uses an adverb incorrectly. To correct the error, "quiet" should be changed to "quietly."
30	Conventions and Writing	9C1a	3	1	D	The correct answer is D as it is the only sentence that correctly combines the two main clauses (sentences) while accurately conveying their meaning.

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS TO PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Question Number	Domain	GPS Standard and Element	Domain Number	DOK Level	Correct Answer	Explanation
31	Conventions and Writing	9C1a	3	2	B	The correct answer is B as it is the only sentence in which a modifying phrase is misplaced.
32	Conventions and Writing	9C1a	3	1	B	The correct answer is B as it is the only sentence that correctly uses the words “weather” and “lesson.”
33	Conventions and Writing	9W4c	3	2	D	The correct answer is D . Only D addresses the school board in a formal tone. The request is both respectful and persuasive.
34	Conventions and Writing	9C1a	3	1	A	The correct is A . It is the only sentence that uses the superlative correctly.
35	Conventions and Writing	9C1a	3	1	D	The correct answer is D . The verb “navigates” needs to be changed to “navigated” to indicate that the steamboat operated in the past.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS

Honors

Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive ability to use textual evidence to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate works of American literature. Students demonstrate mastery in identifying appropriate research techniques and resources, in identifying correct revisions to improve the logic and appropriateness of writing for different audiences and purposes, and in applying standard conventions of usage, mechanics, and grammar in writing.

Advanced Proficiency

Students at this level demonstrate a strong ability to use textual evidence to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate works of American literature. Students demonstrate a consistent ability to identify appropriate research techniques and resources, to identify correct revisions to improve the logic and appropriateness of writing for different audiences and purposes, and to apply standard conventions of usage, mechanics, and grammar in writing.

Basic Proficiency

Students at this level demonstrate an adequate ability to use textual evidence to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate works of American literature. Students demonstrate an adequate ability to identify appropriate research techniques and resources, to identify correct revisions to improve the logic and appropriateness of writing for different audiences and purposes, and to apply standard conventions of usage, mechanics, and grammar in writing.

Below Proficiency

Students at this level demonstrate that they read with partial comprehension and infrequently use textual evidence to support their interpretation of works of American literature. Students demonstrate a minimal ability to identify appropriate research techniques and resources, to identify correct revisions to improve the logic and appropriateness of writing for different audiences and purposes, and to apply standard conventions of usage, mechanics, and grammar in writing.