

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

The following pages have test questions from the 2015 English language arts (ELA) AMP assessment. ELA includes both reading and writing. Not all students had exactly the same test, so not all students saw all of these questions. The questions included are not intended to show all the types of questions on the test and they are not the only important skills tested on AMP. Instead, they have been chosen because they show a significant increase in student performance from one achievement level to another. This document helps educators compare skills and knowledge typical of each achievement level. For example, one type of question a student with an overall score in level 2 answered correctly that a student with an overall score in level 1 did not answer correctly. The passage (story or informational text) that students read prior to answering the questions is included.

**Grade 3, Level 3** **A**

Under the heading **Turtle Shells**, what does exhale mean?

fit in **B**

pull in

toss out

blow out

Correct Answer: blow out

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 10 / Determine intended meanings of words, including academic/tier 2 words, domain-specific (tier 3) words, and words with multiple meanings, based on context, word relationships (e.g., synonyms), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary), with primary focus on the academic vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines. **C**

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to understand the meaning of an academic or domain-specific word that has clear context. **D**

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
46.3%	9.5%	58.1%	79.1%	97.5%

<b>A</b>	Grade level of the question; The Level indicates the overall achievement level of students who had a high probability of answering the question correctly compared to the level below. Achievement levels range from 1 – 4, with 4 being the highest.
<b>B</b>	The question, answer choices, and correct answer.
<b>C</b>	A description of the Claim (broad statement) and Target (group of related standards).
<b>D</b>	Alaskan student results in 2015. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The total % of students who answered correctly</li> <li>2. The % of students in each level, 1 – 4, who answered correctly. This comparison provides teachers with information about the types of questions that were difficult or attainable for students at each achievement level. For example, only 9.5% of students with a score in ELA level 1 were able to answer this question correctly compared to the high percent of students with scores in ELA Level 2, 3, or 4.</li> </ol>

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Recommendations for the use of this document:

- In grade level groups, or individually, teachers might group their student reports by overall achievement level and then discuss what they notice about the skills and knowledge of a group of students based on classroom work.

For example:

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / strategically use language and vocabulary (including academic or domain-specific vocabulary) appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to enhance a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully identify inappropriate word choice and to choose a replacement for the targeted phrase that improves the meaning of the sentence.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
58.8%	11.7%	55.0%	75.9%	96.3%

*When I think about my students who have an overall score of level 2, do I have evidence that shows me that they likely struggled with this item like 55% of students across the state? Or is it more likely that my students fall into the percentage of students in level 2 that answered this correctly? How do I know? What are we doing in our school to teach this skill? What should we keep the same or what might we try to do differently?*

- Multi-grade groups, or a teacher of multi-grade classrooms, could look at the types of problems and skills that incoming or outgoing students are likely to have mastered and those that they are likely to need additional support for. Using the example above, teachers in the receiving grade of students with a level 1 score in ELA will want to ensure adequate re-teaching of the strategic use of language and vocabulary as well as the concepts of purpose and audience in writing. Additionally, principals may want to examine alignment of materials and instruction.

**Grade 3 Reading**

**Passage:**

**What Is a Shell?**

by Becky Mandelbaum

There are many different kinds of shells in the world. Seashells, snail shells, and turtle shells are a few familiar ones. Shells come in all different colors, shapes, and sizes. But they all share the same purpose: protection.

**Seashells**

Seashells are really shells that belonged to creatures in the sea. Oysters, snails, and clams are some animals whose shells wash up on shore. When you find a seashell in the sand, think of it as finding an animal's old house.

Sea creatures that have shells are called mollusks. Mollusks must make their own shells. The shell is formed by proteins and minerals released by the mollusk's tissue. The proteins and minerals are what make the shell hard. The more proteins and minerals the mollusk makes, the larger its shell will be. As the mollusk grows, it must make its shell bigger.

**Snail Shells**

Snails are also a type of mollusk. They must make their own shells. The only difference between a snail and an underwater mollusk, such as an oyster or a clam, is that a snail lives on land.

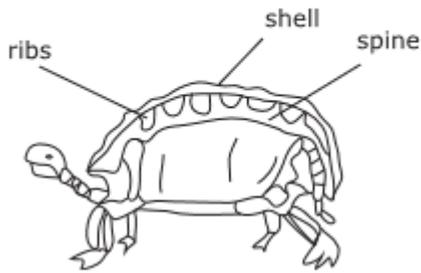
Like other creatures, a snail uses its shell for protection. Because snails are slow, it is hard for them to run away from a predator. This is why, when a snail is in danger, it will pull back inside its shell. Once inside its shell, a snail can then close itself in. Think of it like shutting the door to a room in which you are hiding. To seal themselves in, some snails will press the muscular organ that they use to move, called the "foot," against the opening of their shells. Others will make a wall of thick slime. Once the opening is closed, the snail is safe. Sometimes snails will stay hidden in their shells for weeks at a time.

**Turtle Shells**

Turtle shells are different from the shells of mollusks. A turtle shell is actually part of the turtle's skeleton. Instead of making its own shell, like mollusks do, a turtle is born with a shell that grows as the turtle grows. The shell is connected to the turtle's ribs and spine. Also, unlike the shells of mollusks, turtle shells have nerves, living cells, and blood vessels. This means they have feeling in their shells. Touching a turtle's shell is like touching a human fingernail. Pressure and pain can be felt through the shell.

Like snails, some turtles can even hide inside their shells. They do this by pulling their limbs and head into their shells. But there isn't much room inside. Sometimes a turtle has to exhale all of the air in its lungs so that it can fit.

### Turtle Skeleton



### How We Use Shells

Throughout history, humans have been fascinated by shells. Not only are shells beautiful, but they can be useful, too. Decorations, buttons, and jewelry are a few of the things that are sometimes made from shells. In ancient times, people even used seashells as money.

Some people also collect shells as a hobby. Collecting shells has happened for hundreds of years. Many people collect shells for their beauty. Others collect shells for their value. Shells can be sold for large amounts of money, but not all shells are alike. Some shells are more valuable than others. Certain types of shells are only found at the bottom of the ocean. These shells do not wash up on shore and must be hauled from the sea. This makes them more valuable. The rarest seashell is called the "glory of the sea." It can sell for close to \$100.

If you see a shell, think about where it came from and what creature might have once called it home. Although it might be a free souvenir, it was also once a protective cover for an animal.

### Pictures of Shells



turtle shell



oyster shell



snail shell



clam shell

END OF TEXT

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Bibliography:

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### Acknowledgment:

"What Is a Shell?" by Becky Mandelbaum, copyright © 2012 by The University of Kansas.

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 3, Level 2

Read the sentence from the text.

"To seal themselves in, some snails will press the muscular organ that they use to move, called the 'foot,' against the opening of their shells."

What does seal mean as it is used in the sentence?

- crush
- move
- shake
- shut

Correct Answer: shut

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 10 / Determine intended meanings of words, including academic/tier 2 words, domain-specific (tier 3) words, and words with multiple meanings, based on context, word relationships (e.g., synonyms), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary), with primary focus on the academic vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to understand the meaning of a common or academic word that has clear context within the sentence.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
57.7%	4.5%	81.3%	96.2%	99.9%

Grade 3, Level 3

Under the heading **Turtle Shells**, what does exhale mean?

- fit in
- pull in
- toss out
- blow out

Correct Answer: blow out

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 10 / Determine intended meanings of words, including academic/tier 2 words, domain-specific (tier 3) words, and words with multiple meanings, based on context, word relationships (e.g., synonyms), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary), with primary focus on the academic vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to understand the meaning of an academic or domain-specific word that has clear context.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
46.3%	9.5%	58.1%	79.1%	97.5%

Grade 3, Level 4

Which detail from the text **best** shows the main idea that shells help keep animals safe?



- "Shells come in all different colors, shapes, and sizes."
- "Seashells are really shells that belonged to creatures in the sea."
- "Like snails, some turtles can even hide inside their shells."
- "Some people also collect shells as a hobby."

Correct Answer: "Like snails, some turtles can even hide inside their shells."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 9 / Identify central ideas, key events, or procedures and details that support them.

Supporting-detail items ask students to provide textual evidence that supports a given main idea. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose the strongest textual evidence as support.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
43.8%	14.3%	49.2%	65.8%	90.4%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 3 Writing

Grade 3, Level 2

Maya is writing a story. The title of her story has a capitalization error. Read the title and answer the question that follows.

The Wonderful World of dolphins

Which change should be made?

- change "Wonderful" to "wonderful"
- change "World" to "world"
- change "of" to "Of"
- change "dolphins" to "Dolphins"

Correct Answer: change "dolphins" to "Dolphins"

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and opinion texts.

Grammar and punctuation items ask students to revise or identify grade-level errors found in a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully correct the capitalization of a book's title.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
63.1%	18.0%	63.1%	79.1%	96.0%

Jimmy is writing a report about his visit to the insect zoo for science class. He needs to have better word choices to make the meaning more clear. Read the sentence and answer the question.

Even though I was wanting to know more about the golden tortoise beetle, its unusual color caused me to keep my distance.

Which word **best** replaces the underlined phrase in the sentence?

- curious
- learning
- smart
- speaking

**Grade 3, Level 3**

Correct Answer: curious

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / Accurately use language and vocabulary (including academic and domain-specific vocabulary) appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to enhance a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully choose a replacement for the targeted phrase that improves the meaning of the sentence.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
61.1%	9.2%	63.5%	84.0%	98.6%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 3, Level 4

A student is writing a story about his family vacation. He needs to add more details to the story. Read the sentences from his story and answer the question.

My sister and I just got back from a family vacation to our grandmother's house. Our grandmother lives in a small home in the old part of town. Her home is cozy and cute.

Which sentence would **best** add more details to the story?

- Her house is the way it was when my mom was a little girl.
- The vacation was nice and calm, but my sister was a little tired.
- The vacation was a good time for me to do some reading I had been wanting to do.
- The walls are light blue, and the curtains have tiny yellow flowers on the edges.

Correct Answer: The walls are light blue, and the curtains have tiny yellow flowers on the edges.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 1 / Revise one or more paragraphs demonstrating specific narrative techniques (use of dialogue, description), chronology, appropriate transitional strategies for coherence, or authors' craft.

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the purpose of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose a descriptive detail that matches the purpose of the writing sample.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
34.6%	4.2%	28.6%	48.8%	87.6%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 4 Reading

#### Passage:A Busy Day

The bluff March wind set out from home  
Before the peep of day,  
But nobody seemed to be glad he had come,  
And nobody asked him to stay.

Yet he dried up the snow-banks far and near,  
And made the snow-clouds roll,  
Huddled up in a heap, like driven sheep,  
Way off to the cold North Pole.

He broke the ice on the river's back  
And floated it down the tide,  
And the wild ducks came with a loud "Quack, quack,"  
To play in the waters wide.

He snatched the hat off Johnny's head  
And rolled it on and on,  
And oh, what a merry chase it led  
Little laughing and scampering John!

He swung the tree where the squirrel lay  
Too late in its winter bed,  
And he seemed to say in his jolly way,  
"Wake up, little sleepy head!"

He dried the yard so that Rob and Ted  
Could play at marbles there,  
And he painted their cheeks a carmine red  
With the greatest skill and care.

He shook all the clothes-lines, one by one,  
What a busy time he had!  
But nobody thanked him for all he had done;  
Now wasn't that just too bad?

—Anonymous

#### END OF TEXT

Acknowledgment:

"A Busy Day" by Anonymous. In the public domain.

Grade 4, Level 2

In the **second** stanza, what does huddled up mean?



- gathered together
- playing together
- floating apart
- racing apart

Correct Answer: gathered together

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 3 / Determine intended meanings of words, including words with multiple meanings (academic/tier 2 words), based on context, word relationships (e.g., synonyms), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus), with primary focus on determining meaning based on context and the academic (tier 2) vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to understand the meaning of a common or academic word that has clear context within the sentence.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
89.2%	11.1%	96.9%	99.7%	100.0%

Grade 4, Level 3

In the **first** stanza, what does "Before the peep of day" mean?



- sooner than the baby chicks hatch
- when the birds start singing
- very early in the morning
- very late at night

Correct Answer: very early in the morning

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 7 / Interpret figurative language, literary devices, or connotative meanings of words and phrases used in context and the impact of those word choices on meaning or tone.

Figurative-language items ask students to interpret or analyze the meaning of non-literal words and phrases. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully interpret the meaning of a non-literal expression.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
71.3%	13.1%	72.5%	89.9%	99.3%

Grade 4, Level 4

Which line from the poem **best** supports the idea that the March wind helps the seasons change?



- "But nobody seemed to be glad he had come,"
- "Yet he dried up the snow-banks far and near,"
- "Huddled up in a heap, like driven sheep,"
- "He swung the tree where the squirrel lay"

Correct Answer: "Yet he dried up the snow-banks far and near,"

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 1 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Inference and conclusion items ask students to utilize evidence or details to support an idea from a reading selection. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose the strongest textual support for a given inference or conclusion.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
57.7%	18.0%	54.8%	71.5%	92.8%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 4 Writing

Grade 4, Level 2

Darius is writing a paragraph about his weekend. Read the sentences and answer the question that follows.

I wanted to see the new movie. The tickets were sold out.

Which is the correct way to combine the sentences?

- I wanted to see, the new movie but the tickets were sold out.
- I wanted to see the new movie, but the tickets were sold out.
- I wanted to see the new movie but, the tickets were sold out.
- I wanted to see the new movie but the tickets, were sold out.

Correct Answer: I wanted to see the new movie, but the tickets were sold out.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and opinion texts.

Grammar and punctuation items ask students to revise or identify grade-level errors found in a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully identify the correct usage of a comma before a coordinating conjunction.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
52.3%	28.3%	69.2%	82.5%	96.1%

Grade 4, Level 3

Chris is writing an opinion article about zoos. One sentence needs a **more** exact word. Read the sentence and answer the question.

I believe that zoos should be closed because zoos do not treat animals fairly. Animals should not be locked up in cages as a spectacle. These weird animals should not be captured and be treated like prisoners. They should be free to roam in their natural environment.

Which change should Chris make to his report to make the writing **more** clear?

- change believe to "know"
- change fairly to "correctly"
- change weird to "rare"
- change roam to "walk"

Correct Answer: change weird to "rare"

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / strategically use language and vocabulary (including academic or domain-specific vocabulary) appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to enhance a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully identify inappropriate word choice and to choose a replacement for the targeted phrase that improves the meaning of the sentence.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
58.8%	11.7%	55.0%	75.9%	96.3%

Grade 4, Level 4

Jorge is writing a story. He needs to use more descriptive details. Read the sentence from his story and answer the question.

The wind blew hard and fast, whipping the waves into the cliff.

Which phrase **best** replaces the underlined phrase?

- The wind went across the ocean hard
- The fierce wind raced across the ocean
- The fierce wind blew across the ocean
- The wind blew on the ocean

Correct Answer: The fierce wind raced across the ocean

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 1 / Revise one or more paragraphs demonstrating specific narrative techniques (use of dialogue, sensory or concrete details, description), chronology, appropriate transitional strategies for coherence, or authors' craft appropriate to purpose (closure, detailing characters, plot, setting, or an event).

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to understand the intended meaning of the text and to choose the most descriptive revision to improve the message.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
45.4%	19.6%	42.0%	53.6%	76.7%

Grade 5 Reading

Passage:

**A Grand Trip**

by Gillian Luellen

Monique was outraged. She had been invited to the party of the summer—the first and only pool party she'd ever been invited to. She, however, would not be able to attend. Instead, her family was taking a road trip to the Grand Canyon during the week of the pool party. She imagined the boredom of spending an entire week with her family while her friends splashed around in a pool. But no matter how much she begged her mom or how many times she promised her dad that she would do extra chores if only he would postpone their trip, they would not budge.

When the day of the trip arrived, Monique grudgingly helped her family load the car with camping gear before they all piled in to begin the long journey. She was used to driving out to Denver to visit her aunt, but this drive was all the way to the Grand Canyon. Instead of a day-long drive to Denver, she would have to stay in the car with her annoying brother for two days! She wished she could be with her friends instead, listening to music by the pool.

By midafternoon, they drove onto a clay-red road, where they began to see the outline of the mountains rising in the distance. The scenery here was completely different from that of Kansas. She was no longer looking at the never-ending faces of sunflowers. Instead, there was a rocky cliff to her right that towered higher than she could see and a sharp drop off on her left that she tried to avoid looking at. Although the mountains really were incredible, Monique still wished she was lounging by a pool with her friends.

Finally, they stopped at a campsite. "If we camp here tonight and leave at sunrise tomorrow," her dad announced, "we'll be looking at the Grand Canyon by midafternoon tomorrow."

Monique had often camped in her backyard with her brother, Thomas, but she had never stayed the night in the mountains. She was a little scared that a bear might want to share her food!

After the tent was set up, Monique went with Thomas to explore the river valley where they were staying. The river near their campsite was as cold and clear as ice. She could see rainbow trout flopping about, just asking to be caught for dinner. As they followed a path that climbed upward, Monique noticed delicate columbine flowers that lined the path. Their petals looked like purple stars.

Suddenly Thomas whispered, "Oh, Monique! Look, up on the top of that ridge, mountain goats!"

"Wow," said Monique, breathlessly. High above them, two masses of white hair with black horns balanced effortlessly on the rocks that protruded from the ridge. *I can't wait to tell my friends about this*, Monique thought to herself.

Thomas and Monique followed the delicious smell of fried trout all the way back to camp, excited to tell their mom what they had witnessed. After dinner they sat around a campfire, roasting marshmallows and listening to their dad tell a story about seeing a bear on a road trip many years ago. As Monique snuggled into

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

her sleeping bag that night, she imagined her dad as a kid in these same mountains, and she fell into a contented sleep.

At the crack of dawn the next morning, they packed up the car and hit the road. As they traveled closer to the canyon plateau,<sup>1</sup> the excitement in the car grew. Monique could not stop staring out the window, hoping to be the first to spot the Grand Canyon.

Finally, her father pulled off the main highway and drove down a winding, two-lane road through the forest before pulling up to a row of log cabins. "This is where we'll be staying," he said. "The Grand Canyon should be just a five-minute walk from here." Monique could barely contain her excitement. She was only five minutes away from seeing one of the greatest wonders of the world.

As they climbed out of the car and walked up to the edge of the Grand Canyon, Monique's jaw dropped. She had seen plenty of pictures of the canyon but never imagined anything so big and majestic in her entire life. The earth had been carved out like a sculpture, an ancient river as the artist, into gorgeous layers of red, orange, and yellow. The canyon was so deep that the bottom of it could not even be seen. As Monique stared out across the canyon, she wondered: *How many years did it take for the river to cut away at the stone to make this beautiful canyon? What did the early explorers think when they stumbled upon it accidentally?*

What she did not think about was her friends at home or the pool party she was missing. She now had her own unique experience, which was something she would not trade for all the pool parties in the world.

<sup>1</sup>a level, raised piece of land

**END OF TEXT**

Acknowledgment:

"A Grand Trip" by Gillian Luellen, copyright © 2012 by The University of Kansas.

Grade 5, Level 2

The family's trip to the Grand Canyon is **different** from other trips they have taken. Which sentence from the story **best** supports this inference?



- "She was used to driving out to Denver to visit her aunt, but this drive was all the way to the Grand Canyon."
- "She could see rainbow trout flopping about, just asking to be caught for dinner."
- "As they followed a path that climbed upward, Monique noticed delicate columbine flowers that lined the path."
- "Monique could not stop staring out the window, hoping to be the first to spot the Grand Canyon."

Correct Answer: "She was used to driving out to Denver to visit her aunt, but this drive was all the way to the Grand Canyon."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 5 / Examine or compare relationships (literary elements: setting, conflict, dialogue, point of view, characterization) within or across texts.

Literary-analysis items ask students to examine or compare traditional literary elements, such as character relationships, setting, or conflict, in a reading selection. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully identify clear differences between events in the reading selection.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
71.3%	16.6%	67.6%	88.7%	98.7%

Grade 5, Level 3

Which sentence from the story **best** shows what Monique learned from her trip?



- "She had seen plenty of pictures of the canyon but never imagined anything so big and majestic in her entire life."
- "The earth had been carved out like a sculpture, an ancient river as the artist, into gorgeous layers of red, orange, and yellow."
- "The canyon was so deep that the bottom of it could not even be seen."
- "She now had her own unique experience, which was something she would not trade for all the pool parties in the world."

Correct Answer: "She now had her own unique experience, which was something she would not trade for all the pool parties in the world."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 2 / Identify or summarize central ideas/key events.

Identification and summary items ask students to determine the author's message or lesson based on the events in a reading selection. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully interpret the lesson that a character has learned.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
62.7%	5.6%	55.1%	87.1%	99.2%

Grade 5, Level 4



Read the sentence from the story.

"Instead, there was a rocky cliff to her right that towered higher than she could see and a sharp drop off on her left that she tried to avoid looking at."

What does sharp mean as it is used in the sentence?

- clear
- pointy
- smart
- sudden

Correct Answer: sudden

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 3 / Determine intended or precise meanings of words, including words with multiple meanings (academic/tier 2 words), based on context, word relationships (e.g., antonyms, homographs), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus), with primary focus on determining meaning based on context and the academic (tier 2) vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose the correct word among definitions of a multimeaning word based on the context in the reading selection.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
47.7%	5.1%	37.0%	69.3%	95.8%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 5 Writing

Grade 5, Level 2

A student is writing a report about tea. The report needs a transition word. Read the sentences from the report and choose the **best** transition word.

Tea has a long history. \_\_\_\_\_, tea was enjoyed in China. Later, tea was introduced to Portugal. Next, tea became popular in Britain. Finally, the British gave tea to America.

- Also
- First
- Likewise
- Then

Correct Answer: First

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 3 / Revise one or more informational/explanatory paragraphs demonstrating ability to organize ideas by stating a focus (main idea), including appropriate transitional strategies for coherence, or supporting evidence and elaboration, or writing body paragraphs, or a conclusion that is appropriate to purpose and audience and related to the information or explanation presented.

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully choose the common transition word to clarify the connection between ideas.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
58.3%	17.4%	73.9%	92.4%	99.3%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 5, Level 3

Grant is writing an opinion paper. He needs to add a sentence about his opinion. Read the paragraph from his paper and answer the question.

Recess is important and helps students to learn. They can work off energy or wake themselves up. Students also get a chance to talk with friends during recess so they don't need to during class.

Which sentence **best** states his opinion of recess?

- Students like to go to school because they can play and talk during recess.
- Recess is a chance for students to play around but does not have any value.
- Recess is a time for students to take a break and come back to class more alert.
- Students do not need recess and would learn better if they were not interrupted.

Correct Answer: Recess is a time for students to take a break and come back to class more alert.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 6 / Revise one or more paragraphs demonstrating ability to state opinions about topics or sources; set a context, organize ideas, develop supporting evidence/reasons and elaboration, or develop a conclusion appropriate to purpose and audience and related to the opinion presented.

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully choose the opinion that represents the content of the writing sample.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
64.1%	15.9%	60.2%	82.9%	97.3%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 5, Level 4

Alyssa is writing a story. One of the sentences from her story contains an error in punctuation. Read the sentence and answer the question.

Although I had been to Ben and Josh's house several times I got lost on the walk there.

Which word should be followed by a comma?

- Although
- Ben
- times
- lost

Correct Answer: times

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and opinion texts.

Grammar and punctuation items ask students to revise or identify grade-level errors found in a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to choose the correct placement of a comma after an introductory clause.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
56.6%	15.3%	49.8%	72.0%	93.0%

Grade 6 Reading

Passage:

**Playing in Dirt**  
by Gillian Luellen

When you were a kid, did you ever play in dirt? Did you make mud pies or draw pictures in the dirt with sticks? There is a man by the name of Stan Herd who has become a professional at playing in dirt!

Stan Herd was born in 1950 in a small farming town. He lived there and worked on his art until he graduated from high school. He then attended college with an art scholarship. Herd established himself as a talented painter. When he moved from painting on canvas to creating large murals, he realized how much he enjoyed working on a bigger scale. Then, while flying over a field, he got an idea: He could use a tractor to make even bigger works of art. In 1976, he returned to his farming roots and invented a new form of artwork called "crop art" or "Earthworks." Stan Herd is the first known American to use the earth as his canvas on a grand scale. He creates enormous sculptures that can be seen from planes, hills, and other high vantage points.

To construct these giant designs, Herd usually starts by making an outline with bricks. After that, he begins filling in the area with various materials. These can range from different colors of dirt, sand, and rocks to various types of plants and flowers. His method sometimes includes trimming or burning existing crops to create colors or textures. Herd often uses local volunteers to help with his projects because his projects are too big for just one person. While he is creating his pieces, he is sometimes able to look at them by going up in a hot air balloon, but not always. Usually, he just creates his work based on his previous experiences. Herd has been making Earthworks for over 30 years. He says it is his hard work and many years of practice that have made him so skilled.

Stan Herd has created art around the world, from as far away as Cuba and Australia to his home in the United States. He has been commissioned<sup>1</sup> to create work for many different companies and people. For example, he created a piece to advertise the television show *Jericho*, which was set in a small farming town. He also made a piece that was photographed for a CD cover for country singer Garth Brooks, and he created an image on billionaire Donald Trump's land in New York. Although Stan Herd prefers not to do artwork for other people, he appreciates the income so he can continue making his own personal artwork.

Herd's personal artwork frequently revolves around the theme of rural farm life. Herd comes from a family of farmers that is seven generations deep. His art is a tribute to their hard work. He has also donated his time to creating an earthen medicine wheel at Haskell Indian Nations University—a big project that he is very proud of. The medicine wheel can still be seen from the air today, and it is also enjoyed by people on the ground.

Stan Herd can be an inspiration to all of us. Through hard work and years of practice, he created his own unique art form by combining his farm upbringing with his love of art. Herd has been able to successfully earn money while creating art that has personal meaning to him.

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

<sup>1</sup>hired for a particular project

**END OF TEXT**

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Acknowledgement:

"Playing in Dirt" by Gillian Luellen, copyright © 2012 by The University of Kansas.

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 6, Level 2

Which detail from the text **best** supports the idea that Stan Herd is a generous man?



- "He created an image on billionaire Donald Trump's land in New York."
- "He appreciates the income so he can continue making his own personal artwork."
- "His art is a tribute to their hard work."
- "He has also donated his time to creating an earthen medicine wheel at Haskell Indian Nations University."

Correct Answer: "He has also donated his time to creating an earthen medicine wheel at Haskell Indian Nations University."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 8 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Inference and conclusion items ask students to utilize evidence or details to support an idea from a reading selection. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully choose textual support with clear connections to the given inference or conclusion.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
65.1%	3.9%	55.6%	92.1%	99.6%

Grade 6, Level 3



Read the sentence from the text.

"When he moved from painting on canvas to creating large murals, he realized how much he enjoyed working on a bigger scale."

What does scale mean in the sentence?

- balance
- load
- mass
- proportion

Correct Answer: proportion

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 10 / Determine intended or precise meanings of words, including domain-specific (tier 3) words and words with multiple meanings (academic/tier 2 words), based on context, word relationships (e.g., antonyms, homographs), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary, digital tools), with primary focus on the academic vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement word or phrase for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully choose a word that maintains the same meaning and tone used by the author.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
53.0%	4.5%	40.5%	79.5%	97.7%

Grade 6, Level 4

Which type of structure does the author use in the **second** paragraph of the text?



- The author uses details to describe what makes Herd a talented painter.
- The author uses comparison to contrast Herd's small works of art to his large works of art.
- The author uses chronological order to outline the events in Herd's life that led to his present art.
- The author uses cause and effect to show why Herd still has a relationship with the people in his hometown.

Correct Answer: The author uses chronological order to outline the events in Herd's life that led to his present art.

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 13 / Relate knowledge of text structures or genre-specific features to analyze or integrate information.

Text-structure items ask students to recognize a text's structure and to analyze its impact on the meaning of the text. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to understand the connection between the text's structure and the author's purpose in writing the text.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
48.1%	8.7%	38.4%	68.2%	92.1%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 6 Writing

#### Grade 6, Level 2

A student is writing a report about sports injuries. One of the sentences contains a punctuation error. Read the sentence from the report and answer the question.

It is difficult to make estimates especially exact estimates about the rate of serious sports injuries among professional athletes.

Which sentence **best** corrects the punctuation error?

- It is difficult to make estimates, especially exact estimates, about the rate of serious sports injuries among professional athletes.
- It is difficult to make estimates especially, exact estimates, about the rate of serious sports injuries among professional athletes.
- It is difficult to make estimates—especially exact—estimates about the rate of serious sports injuries among professional athletes.
- It is difficult to make estimates; especially exact estimates; about the rate of serious sports injuries among professional athletes.

Correct Answer: It is difficult to make estimates, especially exact estimates, about the rate of serious sports injuries among professional athletes.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and argumentative texts.

Grammar and punctuation items ask students to revise or identify grade-level errors found in a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to choose the sentence that uses the correct punctuation for a nonrestrictive element.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
60.1%	14.0%	52.1%	79.0%	95.4%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 6, Level 3

Read the sentences from a report that a student is writing about Genghis Khan. The sentences are out of order. Put the sentences in the correct order.

1.	A) The Mongol Empire became the largest empire in the world.
2.	B) When he was 20 years old, he began to build an army in order to unite Northeast Asia under his rule.
3.	C) He succeeded and headed the Mongol Empire.
4.	D) Genghis Khan was born around 1155 in Mongolia.

Correct Answer:

Read the sentences from a report that a student is writing about Genghis Khan. The sentences are out of order. Put the sentences in the correct order.

1.	A) The Mongol Empire became the largest empire in the world.
2.	B) When he was 20 years old, he began to build an army in order to unite Northeast Asia under his rule.
3.	C) He succeeded and headed the Mongol Empire.
4.	D) Genghis Khan was born around 1155 in Mongolia.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 3 / Apply a variety of strategies when revising one or more paragraphs of informational/explanatory text: organizing ideas by stating and maintaining a focus (thesis)/tone, providing appropriate transitional strategies for coherence, developing a topic including relevant supporting evidence/vocabulary and elaboration, or providing a conclusion that is appropriate to purpose and audience and follows from the information or explanation presented.

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Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully order a series of sentences in a logical order to clarify and explain ideas.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
66.9%	10.6%	66.2%	92.5%	99.3%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 6, Level 4

A student is writing a report about mountains for class. One of the words in the report needs to be more exact. Read the paragraph and answer the question.

In Alaska, there are three main groups of mountains. The three groups include the Brooks Range, Alaska Range, and Aleutian Range. The Brooks Range is located in the northern part of Alaska. The Alaska and Aleutian Ranges can be found in the southern part of the state. These mountain ranges all receive different amounts of snowfall. While it is natural to guess that the Brooks Range receives the most snow because it is the farthest north, the opposite is true.

Which word **best** replaces different in the paragraph?

- individual
- separate
- unlike
- varying

Correct Answer: varying

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / Strategically use precise language and vocabulary (including academic words, domain-specific vocabulary, and figurative language) and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to enhance a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose the best academic or domain-specific word to clarify the ideas in the writing sample.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
30.1%	1.8%	17.1%	49.8%	89.5%

Grade 7 Reading

Passage:

**Yeh-Shen: A Chinese Folktale**

by Rachel Cunning

Yeh-Shen dropped to her knees along the shore of her family's pond and leaned over the water's edge to sprinkle the remnants of her dinner. The few grains of rice bobbed in the water until—with a plunk—they disappeared into the cavernous mouth of a spectacular fish. Yeh-Shen felt relaxed in the fish's presence. This rare golden fish was Yeh-Shen's only source of comfort after the death of first her mother, who was renowned for her charity, and then her father, who was the respected chieftain of their village. Yeh-Shen visited the pond every evening to share the remains of her dinner—whatever her stepmother grudgingly gave her—with her beloved fish.

Yeh-Shen rose and climbed the steep slope that led to the caves in which her family had lived for generations. Her stepmother narrowed her eyes when Yeh-Shen entered and said, "Where have you been, Yeh-Shen? There's not enough firewood, so I know you haven't been out doing your chores."

Yeh-Shen bowed her head and responded, "I have only been as far as the pond to finish eating my dinner."

The stepmother looked at her disapprovingly and turned her attention back to her own daughter, spreading a cream along her daughter's cheeks to improve her daughter's chances at finding a husband at the Spring Festival.

The next evening, Yeh-Shen slipped from the cave again to visit the golden fish, but Yeh-Shen's stepmother followed and hid in the bushes to spy on her. She saw Yeh-Shen kneel by the pond and empty the rest of her dinner into the water. The stepmother saw the massive golden fish consuming the rice, and she bristled with indignation. She had given that girl rice off her own table, and here was Yeh-Shen, giving it to a fish!

In the morning, the stepmother gave Yeh-Shen a particularly difficult task: she was ordered to hike down into the valley, cut down a poisonous yew tree, and haul back the firewood. Even though the steep climb back would be dangerous, Yeh-Shen didn't question her stepmother. She picked up the axe and began her long journey.

The stepmother then disguised herself in Yeh-Shen's tattered coat and brought a bowl of rice and a sharp knife down to the pond. She threw in a handful of rice, and when the golden fish broke the surface of the water, the stepmother caught the fish and cut it up for dinner.

When Yeh-Shen returned home with the yew wood, her stepmother greeted her at the door with a plate of food.

"Yeh-Shen, I have made you a special treat for dinner!" announced her stepmother.

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Yeh-Shen looked down at the plate, where she saw rows of luminous golden scales lying on a pile of white rice.

"Because you fed this fish with food from my own table," said her stepmother, "it is only fitting that it return to our table now."

Yeh-Shen dragged herself to bed, sobbing. That night, she dreamed of an old man with a long grey beard. He bade her to retrieve the fish bones from the rubbish and place them in a ceramic jar. He told Yeh-Shen that the bones would grant her a wish for her kindness.

When Yeh-Shen awakened, she dug through the rubbish until she found the bones of her beloved fish and placed them tenderly into a jar. She wished only for a dress without rips and a pair of shoes without holes so that she could go to the Spring Festival and find a husband. Yet the fish's bones produced an extraordinary sea-foam green dress of silk that rippled like ocean waves, a fine coat made from kingfisher feathers, and a pair of tiny golden shoes that glistened like diamond rings. Yeh-Shen was overwhelmed by the fish's generosity.

Yeh-Shen hastily put on the beautiful clothes and departed for the Spring Festival. When she arrived, everyone stopped and stared in amazement, including her stepmother and stepsister, who were greeting the king. As soon as the king saw Yeh-Shen, he came to her, leaving her stepsister and stepmother without a word. Yeh-Shen bowed her head. The king stretched out his hand, and the two began dancing under a canopy of red lanterns.

As Yeh-Shen noticed her stepmother and stepsister's glares from across the pavilion, she whispered to the king, "I'm so sorry, but I must leave now."

She bowed her head and fled. In her haste, she stumbled on a stone staircase and lost a golden shoe. When she arrived home, she carefully hid her fine clothing and was sound asleep in bed when her family returned.

The next day the king ordered a thorough search of the vicinity so he could find the mysterious maiden with the golden shoes. He declared that the maiden whose tiny foot would fit the slipper would become his wife. Dozens of maidens, including Yeh-Shen's stepsister, lined up to try on the slipper. Yeh-Shen, however, stood back with her lone golden slipper tucked inside her threadbare jacket.

The king stood by his assistant and eyed each girl hopefully as she tried on the golden shoe. When Yeh-Shen's stepsister tried on the shoe, it was far too small for her hefty foot. The official waved her on despite her pleas.

Yeh-Shen stepped forward to try on the shoe, but her stepmother yanked her backward. The king looked at Yeh-Shen's face as she struggled against her stepmother, and a spark of recognition gleamed in his eyes despite Yeh-Shen's ragged appearance.

"Release her," he commanded, "and allow her to try on the shoe."

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Yeh-Shen approached the golden shoe and produced its match from under her jacket. She slipped on both shoes easily, to the astonishment of all who watched. Instantly, the fish's kindness transformed her. Her silken dress rustled in the slight breeze, her coat of feathers fanned out behind her, and her shoes glittered in the sunlight. The king stretched his hand to hers and bowed his head before he asked for her name, which she provided readily.

"And will you consent to be my wife, Yeh-Shen?" the king asked.

Yeh-Shen answered with a smile more radiant than her golden shoes when she agreed to marry the king.

And so the king and Yeh-Shen lived happily ever after. Her stepmother and stepsister returned home, never to be heard from again.

### END OF TEXT

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#### Acknowledgment:

"Yeh-Shen: A Chinese Folktale" by Rachel Cuning, copyright © 2012 by The University of Kansas.

Grade 7, Level 2

Which sentence from the text **best** supports the idea that Yeh-Shen is obedient?



- "She saw Yeh-Shen kneel by the pond and empty the rest of her dinner into the water."
- "She had given that girl rice off her own table, and here was Yeh-Shen, giving it to a fish!"
- "Even though the steep climb back would be dangerous, Yeh-Shen didn't question her stepmother."
- "Yeh-Shen stepped forward to try on the shoe, but her stepmother yanked her backward."

Correct Answer: "Even though the steep climb back would be dangerous, Yeh-Shen didn't question her stepmother."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 1 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Inference and conclusion items ask students to utilize evidence or details to support an idea from a reading selection. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully interpret a repeated idea from the reading selection in order to choose the sentence that provides clear support.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
76.9%	7.8%	86.1%	98.7%	100.0%

Grade 7, Level 3

Which sentence from the story **best** shows that spending time with the fish at the pond allows Yeh-Shen to escape from her stepmother's cruelty?



- "Yeh-Shen dropped to her knees along the shore of her family's pond and leaned over the water's edge to sprinkle the remnants of her dinner."
- "Yeh-Shen felt relaxed in the fish's presence."
- "The next evening, Yeh-Shen slipped from the cave again to visit the golden fish, but Yeh-Shen's stepmother followed and hid in the bushes to spy on her."
- "She saw Yeh-Shen kneel by the pond and empty the rest of her dinner into the water."

Correct Answer: "Yeh-Shen felt relaxed in the fish's presence."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 1 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Reasoning and evidence items ask students to utilize details to support an idea based on a reading selection. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully interpret the idea presented in order to choose the sentence from the reading selection that directly relates to that idea.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
65.4%	13.6%	67.6%	90.4%	98.7%

Grade 7, Level 4

Read the sentence from the story.



"When Yeh-Shen awakened, she dug through the rubbish until she found the bones of her beloved fish and placed them tenderly into a jar."

Which word is an **antonym** of rubbish as it is used in the story?

- food
- nonsense
- trash
- treasures

Correct Answer: treasures

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 3 / Determine intended or precise meanings of words, including academic/tier 2 words, domain-specific (tier 3) words, and words with multiple meanings, based on context, word relationships (e.g., synonyms), word structure (e.g., common Greek or Latin roots, affixes), or use of resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary), with primary focus on determining meaning based on context and the academic (tier 2) vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to understand the meaning of the targeted word and to identify a word that has the opposite meaning.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
37.0%	5.0%	31.1%	61.2%	89.7%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 7 Writing

#### Grade 7, Level 2

Maria is writing about koalas for class. The underlined phrase contains language that does not fit with the audience and purpose. Read the paragraph and answer the question that follows.

Australia can get super toasty, so koalas have to find a way to keep cool. Koalas sometimes lick their coats to keep cool. They also pant, much like dogs. These methods do work but can cause the koala to dehydrate. New research suggests that the main way koalas cool down is by holding trees. The tree is cooler than the koala, so trees help maintain the koala's body temperature during hot weather.

Which would **best** replace the underlined phrase?

- boiling
- scorching
- wildly warm
- extremely hot

Correct Answer: extremely hot

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / Strategically use precise language and vocabulary (including academic words, domain-specific vocabulary, and figurative language) and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to enhance information from a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully choose a replacement for the targeted phrase that improves the meaning of the sentence.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
66.3%	21.3%	75.0%	92.4%	98.8%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 7, Level 3

Which sentence does **not** have any errors in grammar, usage, or mechanics?

- Changing the tires, the car was much safer.
- The Strikers are quite a tough, soccer team.
- Quickly following directions, I finished the test.
- James is known for his sweet quiet personality.

Correct Answer: Quickly following directions, I finished the test.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and argumentative texts.

Grammar and punctuation items ask students to revise or identify grade-level errors found in a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully show understanding of the multiple functions of commas by identifying the sentence that is correctly punctuated.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
55.6%	13.7%	54.7%	79.7%	95.2%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 7, Level 4

Nick is writing an argumentative paper for his computer technology class. He needs to revise the draft to improve the transition between paragraphs. Read the draft and answer the question.

Desktop computers are just as important today as they were a decade ago. Desktop computers are cheaper to own over time than laptops or tablets. Desktop computers have parts that can be easily repaired or improved by the average user. Laptop computers and tablets are not as easily upgraded or repaired. Due to the limited ability to increase power and features for laptops and tablets, users have to replace the devices more often. In the long run, a desktop computer will be a better investment.

Because the user can easily replace parts, a desktop computer can be changed to suit the purpose of each individual. For example, computer game players often upgrade the memory, visual display, and sound capability for the best experience in their games. Laptops simply cannot match the power of desktop computers for serious gamers.

Which sentence provides the **best** transition between paragraphs?

- Investing money in a desktop is a wise choice, especially for those who like to compete in online game tournaments.
- Though desktop computers are better than laptops and tablets, they are not as popular.
- Desktop computers can be used for playing games more easily than laptops or tablets.
- Many users find desktop computers to be more useful due to their ability to be upgraded.

Correct Answer: Many users find desktop computers to be more useful due to their ability to be upgraded.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 6 / Apply a variety of strategies when revising one or more paragraphs of text that express arguments about topics or sources: establishing and supporting a claim, organizing and citing supporting evidence using credible sources, providing appropriate transitional strategies for coherence, appropriate vocabulary, or providing a conclusion that is appropriate to purpose and audience and follows from and supports the argument(s) presented.

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the purpose of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully join two paragraphs so that the idea from the first paragraph connects clearly to the second paragraph.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
43.5%	13.4%	38.7%	58.9%	81.4%

Grade 8 Reading

Passage:

*My Antonia* is a novel by Willa Cather that takes place in the 1880s. Jim Burden is the novel's narrator and protagonist. Jim travels by train cross-country to live on his grandparents' farm on the Nebraska plains after the death of his parents. Jim befriends a girl named Antonia. *My Antonia* is his recollection of their acquaintance and lifelong friendship. The excerpt begins shortly after his arrival in Nebraska, before he meets Antonia.

**from *My Antonia***  
by Willa Cather

North of the house, inside the ploughed fire-breaks, grew a thick-set strip of box-elder trees, low and bushy, their leaves already turning yellow. This hedge was nearly a quarter of a mile long, but I had to look very hard to see it at all. The little trees were insignificant against the grass. It seemed as if the grass were about to run over them, and over the plum-patch behind the sod chicken-house.

As I looked about me I felt that the grass was the country, as the water is the sea. The red of the grass made all the great prairie the colour of winestains, or of certain seaweeds when they are first washed up. And there was so much motion in it; the whole country seemed, somehow, to be running.

I had almost forgotten that I had a grandmother, when she came out, her sunbonnet on her head, a grain-sack in her hand, and asked me if I did not want to go to the garden with her to dig potatoes for dinner.

The garden, curiously enough, was a quarter of a mile from the house, and the way to it led up a shallow draw past the cattle corral. Grandmother called my attention to a stout hickory cane, tipped with copper, which hung by a leather strap from her belt. This, she said, was her rattlesnake cane. I must never go to the garden without a heavy stick or a corn-knife; she had killed a good many rattlers on her way back and forth. A little girl who lived on the Black Hawk road was bitten on the ankle and had been sick all summer.

I can remember exactly how the country looked to me as I walked beside my grandmother along the faint wagon-tracks on that early September morning. Perhaps the glide of long railway travel was still with me, for more than anything else I felt motion in the landscape; in the fresh, easy-blowing morning wind, and in the earth itself, as if the shaggy grass were a sort of loose hide, and underneath it herds of wild buffalo were galloping, galloping...

Alone, I should never have found the garden—except, perhaps, for the big yellow pumpkins that lay about unprotected by their withering vines—and I felt very little interest in it when I got there. I wanted to walk straight on through the red grass and over the edge of the world, which could not be very far away. The light air about me told me that the world ended here: only the ground and sun and sky were left, and if one went a little farther there would be only sun and sky, and one would float off into them, like the tawny hawks which sailed over our heads making slow shadows on the grass. While grandmother took the pitchfork we

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

found standing in one of the rows and dug potatoes, while I picked them up out of the soft brown earth and put them into the bag, I kept looking up at the hawks that were doing what I might so easily do.

When grandmother was ready to go, I said I would like to stay up there in the garden awhile.

She peered down at me from under her sunbonnet. "Aren't you afraid of snakes?"

"A little," I admitted, "but I'd like to stay, anyhow."

"Well, if you see one, don't have anything to do with him. The big yellow and brown ones won't hurt you; they're bull-snakes and help to keep the gophers down. Don't be scared if you see anything look out of that hole in the bank over there. That's a badger hole. He's about as big as a big 'possum, and his face is striped, black and white. He takes a chicken once in a while, but I won't let the men harm him. In a new country a body feels friendly to the animals. I like to have him come out and watch me when I'm at work."

Grandmother swung the bag of potatoes over her shoulder and went down the path, leaning forward a little. The road followed the windings of the draw; when she came to the first bend, she waved at me and disappeared. I was left alone with this new feeling of lightness and content.

I sat down in the middle of the garden, where snakes could scarcely approach unseen, and leaned my back against a warm yellow pumpkin. There were some ground-cherry bushes growing along the furrows, full of fruit. I turned back the papery triangular sheaths that protected the berries and ate a few. All about me giant grasshoppers, twice as big as any I had ever seen, were doing acrobatic feats among the dried vines. The gophers scurried up and down the ploughed ground. There in the sheltered draw-bottom the wind did not blow very hard, but I could hear it singing its humming tune up on the level, and I could see the tall grasses wave. The earth was warm under me, and warm as I crumbled it through my fingers. Strange little red bugs came out and moved in slow squadrons around me. Their backs were polished vermilion, with black spots. I kept as still as I could. Nothing happened. I did not expect anything to happen. I was something that lay under the sun and felt it, like the pumpkins, and I did not want to be anything more. I was entirely happy. Perhaps we feel like that when we die and become a part of something entire, whether it is sun and air, or goodness and knowledge. At any rate, that is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great. When it comes to one, it comes as naturally as sleep.

### END OF TEXT

Acknowledgement:

Introduction to *My Antonia* by Gillian Luellen, copyright © 2012 by The University of Kansas.

Excerpt from *My Antonia* by Willa Cather. In the public domain.

Grade 8, Level 2

Which is the **best** summary of the story?



- After a long trip, Jim spends an afternoon outdoors enjoying nature. While observing the nature around him, he digs potatoes with his grandmother, learns about the animals in the area, and relaxes in the garden.
- Jim spends an afternoon with his grandmother. She describes how she is not afraid of a striped badger that lives in a hole in the garden, and she likes the animals in the country.
- Despite a warning from his grandmother, Jim decides to stay in the garden alone without protection. Fortunately, he does not see any snakes and nothing bad happens to him.
- Jim is easily distracted when he is outside. He is distracted by the grass while waiting for his grandmother, and he is distracted by hawks while digging potatoes.

Correct Answer: After a long trip, Jim spends an afternoon outdoors enjoying nature. While observing the nature around him, he digs potatoes with his grandmother, learns about the animals in the area, and relaxes in the garden.

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 2 / Summarize central ideas/key events using key details from the text.

Summary items ask students to recognize important details that best support the theme or central idea presented in a reading selection. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully choose the answer that includes all major details from the reading selection.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
61.4%	12.1%	76.4%	96.4%	99.7%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 8, Level 3

Read the statement based on the story.



The main reason the grandmother carries a hickory cane is to help her walk.

Which **best** explains why this statement is either true or false?

- It is true because she struggles to walk.
- It is false because she uses it mostly for gardening.
- It is true because she keeps the cane with her at all times.
- It is false because she uses it mostly to protect against snakes.

Correct Answer: It is false because she uses it mostly to protect against snakes.

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 1 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Reasoning and evidence items ask students to utilize details to support an idea based on a reading selection. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully use clearly stated details that the author presents in order to support a well-defined idea.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
49.1%	3.8%	60.4%	94.6%	99.7%

Grade 8, Level 4

How does the story's setting relate to the central message of the story?



- The picturesque setting describes an ideal place for experiencing harmony with nature.
- The peaceful setting contrasts sharply with the idea of the value of hard work.
- The beautiful setting provides a perfect backdrop for studying wildlife.
- The rural setting emphasizes the value of family farming.

Correct Answer: The picturesque setting describes an ideal place for experiencing harmony with nature.

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 4 / Make an inference or provide a conclusion and use supporting evidence to justify/explain inferences (character development/actions/traits; first- or third-person point of view).

Inference and conclusion items ask students to utilize evidence or details to support an idea from a reading selection. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully form an idea about the central message in order to choose the answer that explains the role of the setting.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
39.0%	6.3%	40.4%	76.1%	95.4%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 8 Writing

#### Grade 8, Level 2

A student is writing a report about women's rights advocate Susan B. Anthony. One of the paragraphs from the report needs a transition word. Read the paragraph and answer the question that follows.

(1) Susan B. Anthony is one of the most important figures in women's suffrage. (2) After meeting Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she joined the women's rights movement in 1852. (3) Anthony was determined to win women the right to vote. (4) the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was not added until 1920. (5) This was 14 years after her death.

Which transition word should be added to the beginning of sentence 4?

- Although,
- Further,
- However,
- Therefore,

Correct Answer: However,

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 3 / Apply a variety of strategies when revising one or more paragraphs of informational/explanatory text: organizing ideas by stating and maintaining a focus (thesis)/tone, providing appropriate transitional strategies for coherence, developing a topic including relevant supporting evidence/vocabulary and elaboration, or providing a conclusion that is appropriate to purpose and audience and related to the information or explanation presented.

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully show understanding of a topic and can link ideas so that one concept is closely tied to the next.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
64.8%	23.1%	63.2%	84.7%	95.8%

Grade 8, Level 3

A student is writing a story for class. Read the paragraph and select the sentence that has an error in grammar or punctuation.

Another fascinating feature of the kangaroo is the tail. A kangaroo has four legs, like most other land-dwelling animals. Its tail, however, can also act like a leg. A kangaroo depends on its tail, for support, making it a fifth leg.

Correct Answer:

A student is writing a story for class. Read the paragraph and select the sentence that has an error in grammar or punctuation.

Another fascinating feature of the kangaroo is the tail. A kangaroo has four legs, like most other land-dwelling animals. Its tail, however, can also act like a leg. **A kangaroo depends on its tail, for support, making it a fifth leg.**

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and argumentative texts.

Grammar and punctuation items ask students to revise or identify grade-level errors found in a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully recognize the incorrect use of commas used to separate extraneous information.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
44.4%	13.6%	38.6%	61.3%	82.9%

2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Grade 8, Level 4

Bailey is writing a report for class about film directors. Read the paragraph from the draft of the report and answer the question.

Hayao Miyazaki is recognized as one of the best animated film directors in history. He created the notable Studio Ghibli, which has produced many well-known animated films. His films appeal to a wide range of audiences in Japan and America.

Bailey would like to strengthen her point that Miyazaki's fame is well deserved. Which word **best** replaces the underlined word for that purpose?

- celebrated
- impressive
- renowned
- superior

Correct Answer: renowned

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / Strategically use precise language and vocabulary (including academic words, domain-specific vocabulary, and figurative language) and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to add detail to a provided writing sample. Students who perform at Level 4 are more likely to successfully identify words that have more refined meanings to support the provided writing sample.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
33.3%	4.7%	25.1%	54.5%	84.8%

Grade 9 Reading

Passage:

**The Cliff-Dwellers of North America**

by Helena Heath

If you take a map of North America, and trace the line of the Rocky Mountains downwards, you come to the State of Colorado, with New Mexico and Arizona lying below; and if you tried to explore this country you would find yourself in a perfect network of mountains. In Colorado there are magnificent snow-peaks, with richly wooded valleys lying between them, whilst in New Mexico and Arizona the land is much more bare, mountain ridges, often covered with stones and pebbles, dividing flat table-lands of great extent.

Common to all three States are wonderful gorges, or splits in the cliffs, of immense depth. Sometimes from below one can hardly see the sky between the precipices<sup>1</sup>; at other times the gorge may open out into quite a broad valley; but, whether narrow or wide, we may be quite sure that wherever there is a canyon (as these rock-splits are called in Western America) there will be a river running down it.

One of these rivers, named the Colorado, travels for more than three hundred miles along a channel of its own cutting, never less than a mile below the level of the surrounding country. If we remember that we take from fifteen to twenty minutes to walk a mile, and then fancy that mile standing on end like a pole, we may get some idea of what the cliffs are like in these canyons.

The currents of the mountain rivers, like those of all waters flowing from high lands, are very strong and swift; and when the snows are melting, or after heavy rainfalls, the force of the stream is enormous. The result is that the channel is worn deeper and deeper, whilst the cliffs at the side are eaten away in places. The hardest rocks remain in jagged points and ledges, and the softer parts are in time washed away, leaving caverns of all shapes and sizes.

The kind of people who lived in this country of highlands and canyons were tribes of American Indians, whose food was chiefly found in hunting. Some tribes were strong, and others weak, so that by degrees the powerful folk drove away the less warlike people from the rich hunting-grounds and wooded country into the barren rocks. Now, if these hunted tribes were to exist at all, it was clear they must find some means of protecting themselves; thus it may have happened that scrambling up the cliffs one day to avoid their foes, some fugitive American Indian came into one of the dwelling-places hollowed out in bygone ages by the river, which roared below. What joyful news he would carry home to his friends when he ventured to go back to them! Shelter from rain, and snow, and wind! Homes easily defended from marauding foes! What a new life of ease for the persecuted people! One by one families would climb the cliffs, until at last a great population looked down from their eyries<sup>2</sup> in certain gorges of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, where only eagles or mountain-goats might be supposed to dwell.

The table-lands above the ravines were, as a rule, fairly fertile, and the American Indians were able to grow maize, or corn. When they were obliged to give up the roving life of hunters, animal food must have become a scarce luxury.

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Being industrious, they were not long content to live in the rugged caverns as nature made them, but with wonderful labour built walls, floors, and roofs, to make their homes more comfortable, and to keep out the icy winds which howled up the canyons. The marvel is how they reached their homes, which are often at great heights. Every drop of water, every bit of fuel, and all food of every kind, must have been carried up those awful precipices, usually on ladders placed from ledge to ledge, and drawn up after the climber. That any people should choose such dwelling-places shows how unsafe life down in the plains must have been.

<sup>1</sup>a very steep or overhanging place

<sup>2</sup>a room or a building built up high

**END OF TEXT**

Acknowledgement:

"The Cliff-Dwellers of North America" by Helena Heath, from *Chatterbox*. In the public domain.

Grade 9, Level 2

The reader can infer that the author appreciates Colorado more than New Mexico or Arizona. Which sentence from the text **best** supports this inference?



- "If you take a map of North America, and trace the line of the Rocky Mountains downwards, you come to the State of Colorado, with New Mexico and Arizona lying below; and if you tried to explore this country you would find yourself in a perfect network of mountains."
- "In Colorado there are magnificent snow-peaks, with richly wooded valleys lying between them, whilst in New Mexico and Arizona the land is much more bare, mountain ridges, often covered with stones and pebbles, dividing flat table-lands of great extent."
- "Common to all three States are wonderful gorges, or splits in the cliffs, of immense depth."
- "One of these rivers, named the Colorado, travels for more than three hundred miles along a channel of its own cutting, never less than a mile below the level of the surrounding country."

Correct Answer: "In Colorado there are magnificent snow-peaks, with richly wooded valleys lying between them, whilst in New Mexico and Arizona the land is much more bare, mountain ridges, often covered with stones and pebbles, dividing flat table-lands of great extent."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 8 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Reasoning and evidence items ask students to utilize details to support an idea based on a reading selection. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully make a distinction between details that fully support a clear idea and those that loosely support the idea.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
80.7%	15.9%	83.3%	97.0%	99.8%

Grade 9, Level 3

What does the author communicate to the reader with the use of the word marauding in the fifth paragraph?



- Other tribes were raiders.
- Other tribes felt unsafe in the cliffs.
- Other tribes wanted to join the cliff-dwellers.
- Other tribes were peaceful.

Correct Answer: Other tribes were raiders.

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 10 / Determine intended or precise meanings of words, including academic/tier 2 words, domain-specific/technical (tier 3) words, and connotation/denotation, based on context, word patterns, relationships, etymology, or use of specialized resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary, digital tools), with primary focus on the academic vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement for a word or phrase. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully interpret the meaning of the targeted word and to select an appropriate explanation for the meaning.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
69.5%	6.7%	69.4%	94.3%	99.6%

Grade 9, Level 4

What is the **most likely** reason the author included the last paragraph?



- to reveal the physical strength of the American Indians
- to suggest that the cliffs were a better home than the forests
- to express concern for the safety of the American Indians
- to demonstrate the difficulty of living in the cliffs

Correct Answer: to demonstrate the difficulty of living in the cliffs

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 13 / Relate knowledge of text structures or formats, or genre features (e.g., graphic/visual information), to integrate information or analyze the impact on meaning or presentation.

Text-structure items ask students to show understanding of an author's purpose for using and arranging information in a reading selection. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose an answer that reflects the reason for including the paragraph as opposed to choosing the answers that state the content of the paragraph.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
52.5%	11.6%	47.9%	73.9%	93.3%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 9 Writing

#### Grade 9, Level 2

Dylan is writing a story about his first marching band competition. Select the sentence that would **best** add vivid, descriptive details to the story.

- The sun was bearing down on the members of the marching band as they took their appropriate positions.
- Performers in the marching band were all dressed in white, and they stood stiffly in formation like dozens of dominoes carefully arranged.
- The competition was scheduled to start in precisely two hours, and people were anxious to watch the performances.
- The stadium was filled with students and parents who were impatiently waiting.

Correct Answer: Performers in the marching band were all dressed in white, and they stood stiffly in formation like dozens of dominoes carefully arranged.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 1 / Apply narrative techniques (e.g., dialogue, description, pacing) and appropriate text structures and transitional strategies for coherence when revising one or more paragraphs of narrative text (e.g., closure, introduce narrator’s point of view, or using dialogue when describing an event or to advance action).

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve upon the message. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully choose the answer that includes details that create a visual image of the topic for the reader.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
76.5%	29.7%	76.7%	91.5%	98.3%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 9, Level 3

Sean is writing a narrative for his English class. He needs to improve the language used in his paragraph. Read the paragraph and answer the question.

As a young boy, James was often angry at his twin brother, John. They are nearly impossible to tell apart, and they used that to their advantage when they were younger. John felt it was his duty to act like he was his brother and get him into trouble. James would exact vengeance by stealing John's moments in the spotlight.

What is a **more** concise word to replace the underlined phrase?

- impersonate
- imitate
- mimic
- mock

Correct Answer: impersonate

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / Strategically use precise language and vocabulary (including academic and domain-specific vocabulary and figurative language) and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to add detail to a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully use the purpose of the provided writing sample to choose the answer that closely resembles the writing sample.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
62.3%	14.2%	60.0%	84.3%	97.0%

**2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts**

**Grade 9, Level 4**

Select the sentence that correctly uses punctuation.

- There were several colors available: blue, purple, orange, and yellow.
- There were several colors available; blue, purple, orange, and yellow.
- There were several colors available, blue, purple, orange, and yellow.
- There were several colors available . . . blue, purple, orange, and yellow.

Correct Answer: There were several colors available: blue, purple, orange, and yellow.

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and argumentative texts.

Punctuation items require students to use their knowledge of grade-level punctuation rules to edit or recognize errors. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose the correct punctuation usage to introduce a list.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
52.5%	22.6%	49.5%	66.4%	84.1%

Grade 10 Reading

Passage:

**Cursive: Outdated Script or Crucial Tool?**

by Becky Mandelbaum

In an age of texting and e-mailing, what value does the instruction of cursive bring to the modern institution of education? This question has prompted many schools to stop teaching cursive so teachers and students may focus more classroom time on subjects perceived as more relevant, such as computer skills. However, learning cursive is crucial for many different reasons. Cursive is an important tradition still relevant in this age of technology.

Cursive provides young students with important fine motor skills they may not otherwise develop. Motor skills are specific, detailed movements intended to achieve a certain task. The physical act of meticulously crafting cursive letters is an ideal way to develop and exercise fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. The ability of cursive script to enhance cognitive development has been touted, as well. The physical act of cursive writing may be intimately connected with literacy, research suggests.

Many people also consider cursive to be an art form. The aesthetics of fluid cursive provide a creative element not found in ordinary print. The elegance of a formal invitation written by hand, for example, would be highly diminished if it were printed by hand rather than crafted in the flowing cursive of a calligrapher. For some students, cursive can be a way to express creative individuality.

Creative identity also comes into play with the development of a cursive signature. Signatures are an important part of society's legal structure, generally functioning as a person's unique thumbprint on important social and legal documents. Using print to sign paperwork, checks, or even letters would not have the same personal appeal or official impression as signing with a cursive signature. Cursive signatures also prevent forgery because every person's signature is unique and therefore more difficult to replicate. Functionally, signatures printed by hand would be easy to replicate and would, therefore, be easier for someone to forge.

Even if innovations in technology provide an alternative to the signature, such as retinal scanning or fingerprinting, there would be privacy concerns—not to mention the real financial concerns of how to equip every office with the proper technology tools. Any transition would, accordingly, still require skill in reading cursive as society's usage shifts, and this skill would also be useful in the study of historical texts.

Many historians fear that if future generations are unfamiliar with cursive, few people will be able to read historical documents proficiently. The original Constitution, for example, would be extremely difficult to read without a basic knowledge of cursive script. Historians must sort through documents written entirely in cursive, most of which are already close to being illegible. Without practice, reading these materials would be difficult, if not impossible. Even today, many students have difficulty reading older cursive script, such as that written by grandparents in letters or greeting cards. Some people suggest that, in order for future generations to stay in touch with historical documents, students must be taught, at the very least, how to read cursive script. However, cursive is not just essential for understanding history.

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Cursive script in written English exists for a reason. Throughout history, cursive scripts have naturally developed from their original forms. Even ancient Greek and Latin written forms had their own cursive variations for less formal occasions. Due to the tedious writing process of hieroglyphics, the Egyptians developed hieratic script—a faster way of communicating via writing. If a formal written form of a language exists, chances are high that someone has created a faster mode of writing it. In English, cursive script is that faster mode, enabling the writer to let the pen flow across the page with thoughts in tow.

Script expert Steven Roger Fischer argues that students who do not learn cursive will eventually produce their own form of cursive, especially as they advance in their education. This personal brand of cursive is often sloppy and difficult for outsiders to read. Considering this, schools should teach proper cursive so that when students do write longhand, as they undoubtedly will, their writing will be legible and in a familiar form.

Fischer proposes a unique solution to the problem of teaching cursive in schools. If the argument against teaching cursive is that teachers do not have time to teach print, cursive, and typing, then print should be the script to go—not cursive. In Fischer's opinion, cursive is a faster method of handwriting than print and should therefore be the favored script.

Learning to write legibly can also affect a student's life farther down the academic road. Literacy expert Steve Graham claims that students with poor handwriting are often judged on their messy script rather than the content of their writing. This unconsciously perceived link between sloppy handwriting and inconsistencies in arguments may negatively affect a student's scores on exams where essays are required, especially in college. Testing is not the only case where this apparent link arises. Even into adulthood, poorly written communication can imply a lack of thought. Therefore, although more and more testing is done using computers, the importance of legible handwriting is unlikely to disappear completely.

If cursive is allowed to fade away from the traditional curriculum, questions may arise about whether other academic traditions remain relevant in the face of technology. In an age of calculators and computer spell-checking, some students may not understand the necessity of learning the basic skills of arithmetic and spelling. As technology advances, other staples of the American education system may seem increasingly irrelevant or obsolete, despite their inherent value. While the fight for cursive may seem like an exaggerated struggle for what some may consider an antiquated script, it represents a much larger shift in education and society as a whole.

When the big picture is considered, the benefits of cursive appear to justify the classroom time required to teach it. At young ages, cursive increases fine motor skill development and assists with cognitive development and literacy. As one matures, cursive allows for creative expression, ensures the development of a personal signature, provides a faster mode of written communication, and improves legibility and legitimacy of ideas. Cursive remains a useful, relevant tool, even in the twenty-first century.

**END OF TEXT**

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## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

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"Cursive: Outdated Script or Crucial Tool?" by Becky Mandelbaum, copyright © 2013 by The University of Kansas.

Grade 10, Level 2

Which detail from the text **best** supports the conclusion that the use of cursive enhances personal security?



- "Using print to sign paperwork, checks, or even letters would not have the same personal appeal or official impression"
- "Cursive signatures also prevent forgery because every person's signature is unique and therefore more difficult to replicate."
- "Even today, many students have difficulty reading older cursive script"
- "Learning to write legibly can also affect a student's life farther down the academic road."

Correct Answer: "Cursive signatures also prevent forgery because every person's signature is unique and therefore more difficult to replicate."

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 8 / Given an inference or conclusion, use explicit details and implicit information from the text to support the inference or conclusion provided.

Reasoning and evidence items ask students to utilize details to support an idea based on a reading selection. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully apply sentences taken from the reading selection to support a clear idea.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
81.7%	19.3%	88.7%	98.5%	99.9%

Grade 10, Level 3

Which word could **best** replace relevant in the first paragraph?



- applicable
- compatible
- consistent
- harmonious

Correct Answer: applicable

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 10 / Determine intended or precise meanings of words, including academic/tier 2 words, domain-specific/technical (tier 3) words, and connotation/denotation, based on context, word patterns, relationships, etymology, or use of specialized resources (e.g., dictionary, glossary, digital tools), with primary focus on the academic vocabulary common to complex texts in all disciplines.

Word-meaning items ask students to utilize clues in a reading selection to determine a definition or a replacement word or phrase for a targeted word or phrase. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully choose a word that maintains the same meaning and tone used by the author.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
60.7%	9.7%	63.2%	90.5%	98.8%

Grade 10, Level 4

Which summary correctly identifies the author's claim and the key evidence used to support it?



- Everyone needs to learn to write in cursive because cursive is more elegant than print, learning about history requires knowledge of cursive, and cursive is as basic as arithmetic and spelling.
- Cursive has become obsolete in modern society because cursive is purely a tradition and lacks practical value, cursive is not the only way to develop fine motor skills, and technology has replaced a need for cursive.
- Schools should continue to instruct students in cursive writing because cursive improves fine motor skills, cursive allows for creative expression, and cursive aids in identity security.
- Cursive is a traditional writing form that should be kept because knowledge of cursive provides a connection to history, cursive can never be truly replaced by new technology, and continued use of cursive prevents a dramatic societal shift.

Correct Answer: Schools should continue to instruct students in cursive writing because cursive improves fine motor skills, cursive allows for creative expression, and cursive aids in identity security.

Aligned to: Claim 1, Target 9 / Summarize central ideas, topics/subtopics, key events, or procedures using supporting ideas and relevant details.

Summary items ask students to recognize important details that best support the theme or central idea presented by the author. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully choose the summary statement that also includes a main argument the author is presenting.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
47.1%	17.1%	45.9%	66.9%	85.6%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 10 Writing

#### Grade 10, Level 2

Jackie is writing a paper for science class about DNA. She needs to revise the paper so that the language precisely conveys her meaning. Read the paragraph from her paper and answer the question.

Deoxyribonucleic acid, or simply "DNA," contains the biological instructions that make all living things unique. For example, DNA determines eye color, hair color, and height. Children inherit half of their DNA from their male parent and half from their female parent.

Which **best** replaces the underlined word?

- dictates
- imposes
- mandates
- ordains

Correct Answer: dictates

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 8 / Strategically use precise language and vocabulary (including academic and domain-specific vocabulary and figurative language) and style appropriate to the purpose and audience when revising or composing texts.

Word-choice items draw on students' abilities to use varying levels of academic vocabulary as well as grade-appropriate words or phrases to add detail to a provided writing sample. Students who score at Level 2 are more likely to successfully choose the most appropriate words that are specific to the topic and subject of the writing sample.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
61.8%	22.9%	60.3%	80.6%	93.6%

Grade 10, Level 3

Harper is writing an informational report about William Shakespeare. She needs to maintain consistent focus in the report. Read the paragraph from the report and select the sentence that should be removed.

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A contemporary of William Shakespeare once said that Shakespeare "was not of an age, but for all time." This prophetic statement seems to have come true. Though Shakespeare died in the early seventeenth century, his plays have been translated into 80 languages and are performed and read more often than when he was alive. One of his most famous works, *Romeo and Juliet*, is a tale of "star-crossed lovers" who meet tragic ends. He wrote at least 37 plays, not counting lost plays that have been attributed to him or plays written in collaboration.

Correct Answer:

Harper is writing an informational report about William Shakespeare. She needs to maintain consistent focus in the report. Read the paragraph from the report and select the sentence that should be removed.

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A contemporary of William Shakespeare once said that Shakespeare "was not of an age, but for all time." This prophetic statement seems to have come true. Though Shakespeare died in the early seventeenth century, his plays have been translated into 80 languages and are performed and read more often than when he was alive. **One of his most famous works, *Romeo and Juliet*, is a tale of "star-crossed lovers" who meet tragic ends.** He wrote at least 37 plays, not counting lost plays that have been attributed to him or plays written in collaboration.

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 3 / Apply a variety of strategies when writing one or more paragraphs of informational texts: organizing ideas by stating a thesis and maintaining a focus, developing a complex topic/subtopics, including relevant supporting evidence (from texts when appropriate) and elaboration, or providing a conclusion that is appropriate to purpose and audience and follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (i.e., articulating implications or the significance of a topic).

Organization and revision items draw on students' abilities to understand the intent of a provided writing sample in order to improve on the message. Students who score at Level 3 are more likely to successfully recognize information that does not support the main idea of the paragraph.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
42.5%	8.9%	50.7%	81.4%	96.4%

## 2015 AMP Released Items – English Language Arts

### Grade 10, Level 4

Adriana is writing a report about archeology. Her report needs to be revised to correct punctuation errors. Read the sentences from her report and answer the question that follows.

(1) Some people argue about whether archeology is anthropology or history. (2) Either way, archeology is fundamental to learning about the ways of humankind before the written record. (3) Archeology today is rapidly changing due to new technological aids, like the proton magnetometer. (4) Even though the amount of data that can be collected and examined has changed the goals of archeology have not.

Which revision should be made to correct the punctuation error?

- add a comma after "people" in sentence 1
- remove the comma after "way" in sentence 2
- remove the comma after "aids" in sentence 3
- add a comma after "changed" in sentence 4

Correct Answer: add a comma after "changed" in sentence 4

Aligned to: Claim 2, Target 9 / Apply or edit grade-appropriate grammar usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to clarify a message and edit narrative, explanatory/informational, and argumentative texts.

Punctuation items require students to use their knowledge of grade-level punctuation rules to edit or recognize errors. Students who score at Level 4 are more likely to successfully recognize correct comma usage with introductory clauses and clauses with explanatory information.

% of students who answered correctly	% of students with a level 1 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 2 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 3 scale score who answered correctly	% of students with a level 4 scale score who answered correctly
44.9%	9.6%	47.4%	77.1%	94.6%