



Test Specifications

New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA)
English Language Arts

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Purpose

Part of a Balanced Assessment System

The New Mexico Measures of Student Success and Achievement (NM-MSSA) is New Mexico's statewide summative assessment for Mathematics and English Language Arts, administered at the end of grades 3-8. As the NM-MSSA is a single measure at the end of a grade band, interpretations, and uses of NM-MSSA scores should be supplemented with additional measures, including information from classroom summative and formative assessments in mathematics and English Language Arts as well as interim assessments.

Formative assessment may include the use of the Cognia Formative Assessments, which is a collection of formative assessment materials for grades 3–8 being provided by Cognia during the term of the contract with the state to administer the NM-MSSA. The materials are aligned to the CCSS and therefore to the New Mexico *Common Core State Standards*.

Claims/Score Interpretation and Use Statements

The NM-MSSA is designed to measure whether students are on track to be ready for college or career, as defined by the state, by showing they have mastered the New Mexico *Commons Core State Standards*.

In addition to the overall ELA scale score, student performance in Reading, Language & Writing, and seven subdomains is reported as noted in the reporting categories subsection in the following pages. For the complete set of NM-MSSA score interpretation and use statements, see the Score Interpretation and Use (SIU) documents, which can be accessed at <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/resources-nm-mssa/>.

Test Specifications

Reporting Categories

The reporting categories for NM-MSSA are based on the clusters of standards found in the New Mexico *Common Core State Standards* for both content and practices as noted below.

Reporting Categories: Reading

Grades 3-8

- Reading
- Text Type
 - Literary Text
 - Informational Text
- Reading Strategy
 - Comprehension
 - Analysis and Interpretation

Reporting Categories: Writing & Language

Grades 3-8

- Writing & Language
- Writing Analysis & Language Conventions
- Production of Writing (rubric score)
- Use of Conventions (rubric score)

The percentages for the distribution of operational (core) test points for each of the reporting categories reflect the distribution in the standards so as not to over- or underrepresent content. The internal test blueprint has specifications for inclusion on the core forms.

Test Blueprints

Specifications for the full test blueprints for the construction of the core forms reflect the reporting category specifications, as well as percentage requirements for each cluster. These constructs represent key aspects of the standards to which items are aligned; as such, the percentage of operational (core) test points for each should be maintained from year to year.

Note that percentages in reading for (a) text type and (b) reading strategy are calculated independently. An individual item may contribute to multiple parts of the blueprint.

All NM-MSSA ELA items are based on passages, either literary or informational (e.g., expository, argument, opinion, memoir, autobiography, etc.). The configuration of texts on the ELA assessment seeks to balance national high-quality assessment guidance (e.g., NAEP, CCSSO, etc.) as well as considerations around test length. The ELA test design incorporates as much of a 50/50 split of literary and informational texts as possible in the elementary grades while still maintaining a limited summative test footprint. Beginning at grade 6, there is a shift in emphasis to informational texts at the upper grade band.

Operational Test Blueprint – Spring 2021

English Language Arts		Grade 3-5		Grade 6-8		
		Ideal # of Core Pts	Ideal % of Core Pts	Ideal # of Core Pts	Percent of Core Pts	
Reading	Text Type	Literary Text	15	65%	8	35%
		Informational Text	8	35%	15	65%
	Reading Strategy	Comprehension	12-14	52-60%	9-12	39-52%
		Analysis and Interpretation	9-11	39-47%	13-16	56-70%
	Cluster	Key Ideas and Details	9-11	7-11%	7-11	9-13%
		Craft and Structure	7-9	30-39%	6-10	26-43%
		Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	4-6	17-26%	4-6	17-26%
Total		23*	100%*	23*	100%*	
Writing & Language	Language & Writing Passage Sets	Writing Analysis	13-17	62-80%	13-17	62-80%
		English Language Conventions	4-8	19-38%	4-8	19-38%
	Writing Prompt**	Production of Writing	0	0%	0	0%
		Use of Conventions	0	0%	0	0%
	Total		21	100%	21	100%

*All items align to a text type (Literary, Informational), reading strategy (Comprehension, Analysis, and Interpretation), and a cluster (Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas).

** Writing prompts will not contribute to the student's score in Spring 2021.

Operational Test Blueprint – Spring 2022 and beyond

English Language Arts		Grade 3-5		Grade 6-8		
		Ideal # of Core Pts	Ideal % of Core Pts	Ideal # of Core Pts	Ideal % of Core Pts	
Reading	Text Type	Literary Text	15	65%	8	35%
		Informational Text	8	35%	15	65%
	Reading Strategy	Comprehension	12-14	52-60%	9-12	39-52%
		Analysis and Interpretation	9-11	39-47%	13-16	56-70%
	Cluster	Key Ideas and Details	9-11	7-11%	7-11	9-13%
		Craft and Structure	7-9	30-39%	6-10	26-43%
		Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	4-6	17-26%	4-6	17-26%
Total		23*	100%*	23*	100%*	
Writing & Language	Language & Writing Passage Sets	Writing Analysis	9-11	42-52%	9-11	42-52%
		English Language Conventions	3-5	14-23%	3-5	14-23%
	Writing Prompt**	Production of Writing	4	19%	4	19%
		Use of Conventions	3	14%	3	14%
	Total		21	100%	21	100%

*All items align to a text type (Literary, Informational), reading strategy (Comprehension, Analysis, and Interpretation) and a cluster (Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas).

** Writing prompts will not contribute to the student's score in Spring 2021.

Cognitive Complexity

Percentages for the distribution of operational (core) test points across the cognitive complexity levels (DOK classification) are noted in the table below.

Depth of Knowledge Distribution - Reading

DOK	Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Level 1	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%	0-20%
Level 2	50-70%	50-70%	50-70%	50-70%	50-70%	50-70%
Level 3	20-40%	20-40%	20-40%	20-40%	20-40%	20-40%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Depth of Knowledge Distribution – Writing & Language

DOK	Grade					
	3	4	5	6	7	8
Level 1	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%
Level 2	40-60%	40-60%	40-60%	40-60%	40-60%	40-60%
Level 3	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%	15-35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Test Design

Assessable Standards

The NM-MSSA assesses the New Mexico *Common Core State Standards*. The following standards are eligible to be included in the NM-MSSA.

- Grade 3-5 test: Reading: Literature (RL.1-7, RL.9), Reading: Informational Text (RI.1-RI.9), Writing, and Language standards.
- Grade 6-8 test: Reading: Literature (RL.1-7, RL.9), Reading: Informational Text (RI.1-RI.9), Writing, and Language standards.

Student Experience

The *Student Testing Experience* tables on the following pages provide a summary of the number of items and points by item type, usage (i.e., operational items or field test items), and estimated testing time for each grade's NM-MSSA assessment.

As shown in the test design tables, the types of items on the NM-MSSA are 1-point machine-scored items (MS-1), 2-point machine-scored items (MS-2), and 7-point writing prompts (WP). Additional item type descriptions and sample items can be found in the item specifications section of this document.

Each NM-MSSA test is administered in two sessions. The test form contains both core operational items and matrix field test items. The core operational items are items administered to all students taking that core form, and that count toward a student score. Matrix field test items are items administered to subsets of students to “try out” performance (with different students receiving different field test items), and therefore do not count toward student score.

Student Testing Experience (Full Form)

ELA Grades 3-8 (Spring 2021)	Passage-Based Items				Total Items	Total Points		
	Passage Sets	MS-1	MS-2	WP		Min	Max	
Core Operational Items	6	32	6	0	38	44	44	
Matrix Operational Items	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Matrix Field Test Items	2	5	1	1	7	14	14	
Total Student Experience	8	37	7	1	45	58	58	
						Estimated Test Time (min)		150 (60/90)

ELA Grades 3-8 (Spring 2022 and beyond)	Passage-Based Items				Total Items	Total Points		
	Passage Sets	MS-1	MS-2	WP		Min	Max	
Core Operational Items	6	27	5	0	32	37	37	
Matrix Operational Items	0	0	0	1	1	7	7	
Matrix Field Test Items	2	8-10	2-4	0	12	14	16	
Total Student Experience	8	35-37	7-9	1	45	58	60	
						Estimated Test Time (min)		150 (60/90)

Practice Test

A full-length practice test mirroring the operational test design, along with supporting materials, can be accessed at <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/practice-tests-nm-mssa/>.

Fairness

Fairness is defined as the extent to which the test scores are valid for different groups of test takers. Consideration of universal design, bias, and sensitivity guidelines support the construction of fair, valid assessments.

Universal Design for Assessments

The concept of Universal Design for Assessments focuses on developing content and assessments that reach the widest population of students possible. Stimuli and items on the NM-MSSA are designed to simply and clearly present tasks and to provide maximum readability, comprehensibility, and legibility. The seven elements of Universal Design for Assessments are based on the original UDL guiding principles:

Universal Design for Assessments

Principle	Explanation
Inclusive Assessment Population	Tests designed for state, district, or school accountability must include every student except those in the alternate assessment, and this is reflected in assessment design and field-testing procedures.
Precisely Defined Constructs	The specific constructs tested must be clearly defined so that all construct-irrelevant cognitive, sensory, emotional, and physical barriers are removed.
Accessible, Non-Biased Items	Accessibility is built into items from the beginning, and bias review procedures ensure that quality is retained in all items.
Amenable to Accommodations	Test design facilitates the use of needed accommodations (e.g., all items can be translated to braille).
Simple, Clear, and Intuitive Instructions and Procedures	All instructions and procedures are simple, clear, and presented in understandable language.
Maximum Readability and Comprehensibility	A variety of readability and plain language guidelines are followed (e.g., sentence length and number of difficult words kept to a minimum) for readable and comprehensible text.
Maximum Legibility	Characteristics that ensure easy decipherability are applied to text, tables, figures, and illustrations, and to response formats.

Bias

The concept of Bias is defined as the presence of some characteristic of an item that results in differential performance for two individuals of the same ability but from different ethnic, sex, cultural, or religious groups.

Bias can occur whenever content offends or disadvantages a student or group of students due to gender, race, regional background, socioeconomic status, or any other such classification.

Test developers take care to craft content in a way that does not misrepresent specific groups or rest on assumptions made about specific groups, that in turn could negatively impact how students interpret content.

- Stimulus and item content on the NM-MSSA must not present stereotypes or unfair representations of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, culture, or religion.

- Stimulus and item content on the NM-MSSA should not depend on overly-experiential information such as knowledge of technology, consumer goods, pop culture, geographic locations, or sports and extracurricular activities. While these topics are not completely excluded from use, care must be taken to ensure that the items are presented in a way that does not require a level of knowledge that would not be held by all students.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity refers to the presence of content that is contrary to the acceptable norms of the students, educators, parents, or other members of the community that may interact with the assessment. Sensitive subject matter can impact student performance or attitudes toward testing, and hence, their test scores.

Consideration of bias and sensitivity issues is very important when developing content for an assessment. Test developers must ensure that stimuli and items are free of content that will negatively affect a student's performance not because of what the student knows and can do but because the content evokes an emotional response from that student (or is in some other way distracting to the student).

Subjects/contexts that are likely to prompt emotional distress on the part of students cannot be used on the NM-MSSA (e.g., war, violence, human death or debilitating disease, animal-based medical research). Careful judgment should be applied to standards that cover topics that may be considered controversial by some groups (e.g., evolution examples, population dynamics including death/extinction, environmental impact). Those standards represent content knowledge to be assessed, but the assessment must be done in a sensitive, unbiased way.

Stimulus Specifications

Reading Stimuli

All NM-MSSA reading items are based on permissioned passages, either literary or informational (e.g., expository, argument, opinion, memoir, autobiography, etc.). The configuration of authentic texts on the assessment seeks to balance national high-quality assessment guidance (e.g., NAEP, CCSSO, etc.) as well as considerations around test length. For grades 3–5, item sets are based on single literary passages, paired literary passages, and paired informational passages. For grades 6–8, item sets are based on paired literary passages, single informational passages, and paired informational passages. In an effort to reflect a 50/50 split of literary and informational texts in the elementary grades, the assessment at grades 3-5 does contain a balance of paired literary and paired informational texts. Beginning at grade 6, there is a shift in emphasis to informational texts at the upper grade band.

Literary passages should include experiences with which students are familiar or provide enough context that a student unfamiliar with the experience is not disadvantaged. Passages should be excellent models of exemplary writing in including such literary elements as character development, a well-crafted plot, a text structure that supports the meaning of the passage, and the development of a point of view. Passages should include text structures and literary devices (figurative language, irony, etc.) appropriate to the grade-level being assessed.

Informational passages must include current and accurate information. In addition, care must be taken to avoid topics and details that could quickly become dated (news stories, technologies, discoveries, etc.). Text content should be consistent with the current best thinking in the various fields represented on the test and be neither overly speculative nor highly tentative, given the likelihood of such texts becoming dated over the long course of test development and administration.

Informational passages must be able to stand on their own and should not require any outside knowledge (other than common knowledge) to understand the topic or author's position. Informative/explanatory texts and arguments should be accurate, well-reasoned, and logically organized, reflecting a variety of logical text structures including, but not limited to, compare/contrast, cause/effect, order of importance, sequence/steps in a process, problem/solution, description and explanation, question and answer, and cyclical structures. It should also be noted that domain-specific vocabulary must be easily understood via context clues, minimal footnotes, and/or authorial explanation.

Quantitative measures are certainly helpful in situating a passage within a grade band; they will also help to establish a passage as appropriate (or not) for a particular grade. However, quantitative complexity evaluations must be coupled with thorough qualitative reviews in order to make an informed grade assignment. The qualitative measures of text complexity are evaluated using the qualitative dimensions of text complexity found in Appendix A of the CCSS, as well as the CCSSO Text Complexity Qualitative Measures Rubrics for Informational and Literary Texts.

The quantitative measures used for NM-MSSA reading passages are shown below. It should be noted that passages may sometimes exceed these specifications if the passage content is deemed appropriate in light of qualitative complexity measures.

Word Count (within the prescribed ranges)

Grade	Passage Type	Word Count
3	Single	300 – 800
	Paired	600 – 1,000
4	Single	300 – 800
	Paired	600 – 1,000
5	Single	300 – 800
	Paired	600 – 1,000
6	Single	500 – 1,000
	Paired	800 – 1,200
7	Single	500 – 1,000
	Paired	800 – 1,200
8	Single	500 – 1,000
	Paired	800 – 1,200

Readabilities (Lexile and TextEvaluator also within the prescribed ranges)

Grade Level	College and Career Ready “Stretch” Lexile Bands
1	190L to 530L
2	420L to 650L
3	520L to 820L
4	740L to 940L
5	830 L to 1010L
6	925L to 1070L
7	970L to 1120L
8	1010L to 1185L
9	1050L to 1260L
10	1080L to 1335L
11 and 12	1185L to 1385L

Grade Level	TextEvaluator SM
3	310 – 590
4	405 – 655
5	480 – 720
6	550 – 790
7	615 – 860
8	685 – 940

Language Usage Stimuli

All NM-MSSA language usage passages will be commissioned texts which contain embedded errors. A commissioned passage is an original text written for a specific purpose (e.g., editing task). Passages should demonstrate accurate and engaging expository writing, effective argumentation, and vivid, intelligible narrative writing. The essential elements of each of these genres are derived from the applicable Common Core State Standards in Writing. (e.g., per the standards, argumentation in G7 and G8 should develop a claim in part through engagement with a counterclaim; narratives in all grades should be developed through dialogue, thoughts, and description; etc.)

Expository passages are expected to meet the highest standards of factual accuracy, syntactical and grammatical proficiency, reader engagement, and originality. Generally, expository passages will represent one of three subject areas: Social Studies/History; Science/Social Science/Technical Subjects; and, to a lesser extent, the Humanities. Although written with the general reader in mind, passages nevertheless strive to present compelling information that responds to relevant issues in each field—a new interpretation of an event or phenomenon; an examination of an overlooked (or misunderstood) movement, moment, or figure; an introduction to foundational knowledge in any of the three disciplines, etc.

Passages should assume no content background or expertise on the part of readers, but writers should invest their work with the precision and novelty that rewards attentive reading. This principle extends to technical or discipline-specific language, which should appear where necessary and natural, and never gratuitously or without supporting context. The NM-MSSA writing and language assessment is not intended to evaluate students' reading comprehension abilities. If students struggle simply to read a passage, they will surely be unable to demonstrate a meaningful understanding of how to edit or revise it.

Argument/Opinion passages maintain the same high standards of accuracy, syntax, engagement, and originality expected of expository passages. They also demonstrate cogent argumentation. That is, the writer must establish a position; provide claims, supported by evidence, that develop that position; introduce and rebut a counterclaim (in grade 7 and 8); and, throughout, use rhetorical techniques (persuasive transitions, rhetorical questions, appeals to reason or personal experience, etc.) to advance the position.

Argument/Opinion passages will tend to be informed by issues in the social sciences or current events. Successfully realized topics are not inherently controversial, and the writer’s position is not diffident or universalist—that is, the argument is primarily positive in tone and modest in scope. Nonetheless, the position is clear.

Narrative passages succinctly and lucidly describe a fictional event. Although these passages will feature many or all of the hallmarks of the narrative form—plot/conflict, climax/epiphany, conclusion, dialogue, characters’ thoughts, action, description—they must be coherent in spite of their brevity. They avoid long stretches of dialogue; flashbacks and other jarring time-shifts; florid, clichéd, or self-consciously “literary” language; and more than three speaking characters.

Determining the complexity of a text requires a multifaceted approach. In addition to evaluating text based on quantitative data (readability statistics), the writers must also rely on qualitative measures to help determine whether a passage being developed is appropriate for the target audience. The qualitative measures of text complexity are evaluated using the qualitative dimensions of text complexity found in Appendix A of the CCSS, as well as the CCSSO Text Complexity Qualitative Measures Rubrics for Informational and Literary Texts.

The quantitative measures used for NM-MSSA language usage passages are shown below. It should be noted that passages may sometimes exceed these specifications if the passage content is deemed appropriate in light of qualitative complexity measures.

Word Count (within the prescribed ranges)

Grade	Word Count
3	250–400
4	275–425
5	300–450
6	325–550
7	350–625
8	350–625

Readabilities (Lexile and TextEvaluator also within the prescribed ranges)

Grade Level	College and Career Ready “Stretch” Lexile Bands
1	190L to 530L
2	420L to 650L
3	520L to 820L
4	740L to 940L
5	830 L to 1010L
6	925L to 1070L
7	970L to 1120L
8	1010L to 1185L
9	1050L to 1260L
10	1080L to 1335L
11 and 12	1185L to 1385L

Grade Level	TextEvaluatorSM
3	310 – 590
4	405 – 655
5	480 – 720
6	550 – 790
7	615 – 860
8	685 – 940

Writing Prompt Stimuli

All NM-MSSA writing prompts will be partnered with one to three brief text stimuli. These may be intact (whole) passages or excerpts (only a part) of a more extended text. Some possible text types include:

- Story
- Memoir
- Biography
- Poem
- Article
- Essay
- Review (book, music, performance, etc.)
- Editorial
- Website
- Letter
- Journal (diary, log) entry
- Instructions
- Advertisement
- Brochure
- Memo
- Script
- Transcript
- Display text (e.g., to accompany an artifact in a museum)

The number of text stimuli will vary depending on the purpose for writing. Narrative prompts will be associated with 1-2 text stimuli, while informative/explanatory and opinion/argument prompts will be associated with 2-3 text stimuli. The passages may be either permissioned or commissioned.

Word Count (maximum total word count 800-1000)

Grade	Word Count
3	800
4	850
5	900
6	950
7-8	1,000

Readability (Lexile within the prescribed ranges)

Grade Level	College and Career Ready “Stretch” Lexile Bands
1	190L to 530L
2	420L to 650L
3	520L to 820L
4	740L to 940L
5	830 L to 1010L
6	925L to 1070L
7	970L to 1120L
8	1010L to 1185L
9	1050L to 1260L
10	1080L to 1335L
11 and 12	1185L to 1385L

Item Specifications

Alignment

The items on the NM-MSSA are aligned to the New Mexico *Common Core State Standards*. Each item is aligned to one of the content standards in NM-CCSS. More information about the standards can be accessed at <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/instructional-materials/new-mexico-content-standards/>.

Item Types

The types of items on the NM-MSSA are 1-point machine-scored items (MS-1), 2-point machine-scored items (MS-2), and 7-point writing prompts (WP):

MS-1 Items

MS-1 items are worth 1 point. These items may be multiple choice, multiple select, or technology enhanced item interactions. Multiple-select items consist of a single prompt, much like standard multiple-choice items, but include up to a maximum of six answer choices. Of these answer choices, two or three choices make up the key. Students are directed to select a given number of answer choices. The multiple-select items are scored correct only; partial credit is not awarded for partially correct responses. Technology-enhanced items are digital, interactive questions designed to assess students in ways that go beyond traditional multiple-choice or text-based formats. These types of questions often allow for more diverse types of responses and interactions, which can improve how well the questions measure complex skills. A few common types of technology-enhanced assessment items include drag-and-drop, in which students can drag and drop items (e.g., labels, images, or words) to categorize, match, or sequence responses; hot text, in which students can click on specific areas of a text to answer a question; and inline choice, in which students fill in blanks in text by selecting from a dropdown menu.

MS-2 Items

MS-2 items are worth 2 points. These items may be evidence-based selected response (EBSR) or technology enhanced item interactions. EBSR items have two parts (Part a and Part b) for students to answer. The second part of an EBSR item asks students to select evidence that supports the response in the first part. Students will earn 0, 1, or 2 points total across Part a and Part b. Technology enhanced items that are worth 2 points will have multiple response options and may involve partial-credit scoring rules.

Writing Prompt Items

Writing prompts are worth 7 points. These items require students to write an extended response to a single prompt. These items are hand-scored, with scorers using a multi-trait rubric and scoring notes to evaluate responses. The WP items are evaluated using a “Production of Writing” rubric on a scale from 1–4 and a “Use of Conventions” rubric on a scale from 1-3.

Sample Items

Reading Items

MS-1 Items

MS-1 items are worth 1 point. These items may be multiple choice, multiple select, or technology-enhanced item interactions.

Passage 1 Passage 2 →

You will now read two passages and answer the questions that follow. Some of the questions may ask you to compare the two passages. Read Passage 1 and then click the Passage 2 tab at the top of the screen to read Passage 2.

These passages are based on Greek myths. A myth is a traditional story that explains how something came to be or can be used to teach a lesson.

Passage 1

How Athens Got Its Name

- 1 Athens, the capital of Greece, has a long and rich history. It is the home of the Acropolis, and the ruins of many monuments and temples still stand after more than 15 centuries. Among the most remarkable is the Parthenon, which is the largest temple dedicated to Athena, the goddess of wisdom. It was here that great celebrations took place each year to pay tribute to Athena on her birthday. Also, it was for Athena that Athens was named.
- 2 But why was Athens named for Athena? Thousands of years ago, the ancient Greeks believed their towns and cities were protected by gods and goddesses. The people of the town gave gifts to the gods who they believed protected them. Usually the townsfolk only worshipped one patron god or goddess. Worshipping two, it turns out, could lead to trouble!
- 3 The village that would later become Athens was located along the coast of Greece. According to legend, Poseidon, god of the seas, thought he should protect the village. He had other coastal towns that he looked after as well. However, Athena felt otherwise. She also claimed this new

Choose the word from the drop-down list that **best** completes the sentence.

Based on **both** passages, Athena can **best** be described as .

- confident
- gentle
- honest
- loyal

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow →

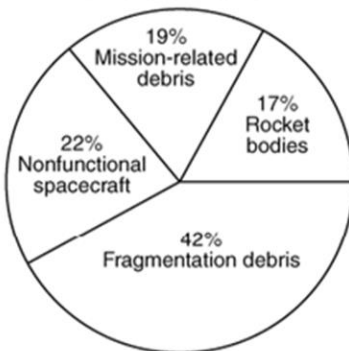
Space Junk

- 1 Satellites and space stations aren't the only objects orbiting Earth. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), there are more than 500,000 pieces of debris in orbit. This "space junk" poses a threat to satellites, spacecraft, and the International Space Station. Even a small piece of space junk the size of a marble can damage them. This could put astronauts' lives at risk.

Where Does Space Junk Come From?

- 2 Some space junk comes from natural objects, such as space rocks. It can also come from human-made items, such as parts of satellites. Human-made junk that circles Earth is more accurately known as orbital debris. This debris includes old satellites, rocket launch stages, or fragments from space equipment that was destroyed upon launch.

Debris Orbiting Earth



How does the diagram support the information in the passage?

- (A) It explains which type of debris is the most dangerous.
- (B) It suggests how long debris remains in orbit around Earth.
- (C) It represents the composition of human-made debris orbiting Earth.
- (D) It demonstrates which types of human-made debris are the largest.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.



Pie Next Time

- 1 It was a beautiful summer afternoon. The sun shone down on the field of wild blackberry bushes behind Daniel's apartment building. Daniel looked out his bedroom window, gazing down onto the field and itching to join his friends. He could join them just as soon as he finished cleaning his room. He heard his father's voice at the other end of the apartment.
- 2 "Daniel!" he called from the kitchen. "I'm going to the grocery store. What do you want for dinner?"
- 3 "Hot dogs and corn on the cob!" Daniel shouted, as he ran to the kitchen.
- 4 His dad pretended to think it over. "Well, I suppose we can do that," he said, winking.
- 5 "Yesssssss!" Daniel punched his fists in the air.
- 6 "Do you also have a strong opinion about dessert?" his dad asked, laughing.
- 7 Suddenly Daniel had an idea. In all those blackberry bushes, surely there were enough blackberries to make a pie! "I'll make dessert, Dad. It will be a surprise!" Daniel had helped his father make pies earlier in the summer, and he was pretty sure there was still some pie dough in the freezer. He loved the idea of helping his dad, impressing his mom and older brother, and of course, eating the pie.
- 8 While his father went grocery shopping, Daniel went out to join his friends. Together, they set out on a mission to gather blackberries. They slowly filled a big shiny bucket, reaching between branches and dodging the thorns. Pretty soon, the

In the passage, why do Daniel and his friends eat the berries? Select **two** answers.

Hide All

- (A) because they are hungry and thirsty
- (B) because they want berries with ice cream
- (C) because the berries are too sweet and juicy to resist
- (D) because they have filled the bucket and it is overflowing
- (E) because they think they should make sure the berries are fresh



Passage 1

Passage 2



You will now read two passages and answer the questions that follow. Some of the questions may ask you to compare the two passages. Read Passage 1 and then click the Passage 2 tab at the top of the screen to read Passage 2.

Passage 1

Apes Are Interesting

Apes Have More Skills

- 1 Sometimes people think monkeys and apes are the same animal. Even though they are both primates, they have totally different characteristics. The most obvious is that monkeys have tails and apes do not. There are also many differences that are not visible though. For example, one part of the ape brain, called the cortex, is more similar to a human's. Scientists think this is why apes have good reasoning skills. Their advanced brains explain why they can use objects such as sticks as tools or weapons. Jane Goodall, who has studied chimpanzees (a type of ape) for more than 50 years, first witnessed chimpanzees using sticks to "fish" for termites and using rocks to break open nuts. This discovery was a surprise to the scientific community, who didn't know animals could use tools.
- 2 Their advanced brains are also what allow apes to learn certain forms of communication. Although they cannot speak with words, some apes have been taught to use sign language. Perhaps the most famous of these apes is Koko, a gorilla who learned more than 1,000 signs of an altered form of the American Sign Language.

Apes Are Social Animals

- 3 Apes have just one baby at a time. Once their babies are

Drag and drop into the box **two** details from Passage 2 that **best** show that Galdikas had a difficult job. Choose **two** answers.

Two Details Showing that Galdikas Had a Difficult Job

Empty box for selecting two details.

Orangutans like to keep to themselves.

Orangutans are in danger of losing their homes.


She made valuable observations about orangutans.

Her studies found that orangutans enjoy many foods.

She spent many years trying to get the orangutans to trust her.

MS-2 Item

MS-2 items are worth 2 points. These items may be evidence-based selected response or technology enhanced item interactions.

Passage 1	Passage 2 	
<p><i>This passage is about a water nymph who longs to be something else.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Passage 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CLYTIE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>by Flora J. Cooke</i></p> <p>1 CLYTIE was a beautiful little water nymph who lived in a cave at the bottom of the sea. The walls of the cave were covered with pearls and shells. The floor was made of sand as white as snow.</p> <p>2 There were many chairs of amber with soft mossy cushions. On each side of the cave-opening was a great forest of coral. Back of the cave were Clytie's gardens.</p> <p>3 Here were the sea anemones, starfish and all kinds of seaweed.</p> <p>4 In the garden grotto were her horses. These were the gentlest goldfish and dolphins.</p> <p>5 The ocean fairies loved Clytie and wove her dresses of softest green sea lace.</p> <p>6 With all these treasures Clytie should have been happy, but she was not. She had once heard a mermaid sing of a glorious light which shone on the top of the water.</p> <p>7 She could think of nothing else, but longed day and night to know more of the wonderful light.</p> <p>8 No ocean fairy dared take her to it, and she was afraid to go alone.</p> <p>9 One day she was taking her usual ride in her shell carriage. The water was warm and the dolphins went so slowly that Clytie soon fell asleep. On and on they went, straight towards the light, until they came to an island.</p> <p>10 As the waves dashed the carriage against the shore Clytie</p>		<p><i>This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.</i></p> <p>In Passage 2, how has Clytie changed by the end of the story?</p> <p>Hide All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> A She has become the new ruler of the sky.<input type="radio"/> B She has found happiness on land in a new form.<input type="radio"/> C She has learned to appreciate her underwater home.<input type="radio"/> D She has become bitter and upset about her situation. <p>Which choice provides the best evidence for the answer to the previous question?</p> <p>Hide All</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> A "With all these treasures Clytie should have been happy."<input type="radio"/> B "After this, she came every day, wishing more and more to be like the great kind king."<input type="radio"/> C "She leaned out over the sea and knew that she had her wish."<input type="radio"/> D "Her yellow hair had become golden petals."

Writing & Language Items

MS-1 Item

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow. →

Joshua's Vegetables

1. As soon as he opened his eyes in the morning, Joshua sprinted to the window and peered down at the garden below. 2. He could see that some of the tomatoes were starting to turn red. 3. Joshua had been waiting all summer for the tomatoes to ripen!

4. Joshua and his dad were growing a pizza garden. 5. They planned to make pizza with the vegetables and spices they planted: tomatoes, peppers, basil, and oregano. 6. They even designed the garden in the shape of a pizza, dividing the circular bed into "slices" for each kind of plant. 7. Joshua usually preferred cheese pizza, but Dad said Joshua would change his mind once he tasted vegetables and spices he could have grown himself.

8. "This will open the door to a new experience," Dad promised. 9. "Nothing compares to fresh, home-grown ingredients."

10. Joshua wasn't sure if Dad was right, but he was eager to find out. 11. They decided to plant the garden in the backyard where it would get plenty of direct sun. 12. Before the ground had completely thawed from winter, Joshua planted seeds in small pots and set them in a south-facing window. 13. "How could those little seeds produce full-size tomatoes?" he marveled. 14. But before long, the vegetables started to grow.

15. The seedlings were ready to plant. 16. Joshua tended the pizza garden all summer, making sure the plants got plenty of water on hot days. 17. Finally, some of the tomatoes were ready to pick!

18. That night, Dad chopped the vegetables and spices, and Joshua helped roll out the soft pizza dough. 19. When the pizza was done, Joshua took his first bite and knew that Dad was right. 20. It was the most delicious pizza he had ever tasted.

"Joshua's Vegetables" © 2015 by Cognia, Inc.

Read this sentence.

14. But before long, the vegetables started to grow.

In sentence 14, the writer wants to describe what Joshua sees. Which change to the underlined words would **most** appeal to the reader's senses?

Hide All

- (A) some small, growing leaves were visible
- (B) Joshua noticed that something looked different
- (C) Joshua beamed when he saw the seeds were growing
- (D) tiny, tender green sprouts began to poke out of the soil

MS-2 Item

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow. →

Joshua's Vegetables

1. As soon as he opened his eyes in the morning, Joshua sprinted to the window and peered down at the garden below. 2. He could see that some of the tomatoes were starting to turn red. 3. Joshua had been waiting all summer for the tomatoes to ripen!

4. Joshua and his dad were growing a pizza garden. 5. They planned to make pizza with the vegetables and spices they planted: tomatoes, peppers, basil, and oregano. 6. They even designed the garden in the shape of a pizza, dividing the circular bed into "slices" for each kind of plant. 7. Joshua usually preferred cheese pizza, but Dad said Joshua would change his mind once he tasted vegetables and spices he could have grown himself.

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This question has two parts. Be sure to answer both parts of the question.

How does the writer introduce the events of the story?

Hide All

- A by showing Joshua's excitement about the garden
- B by explaining the best place to plant Joshua's garden
- C by telling about ways Joshua and his father are different
- D by describing the activities Joshua and his father like best

Which detail from the story **best** supports the answer above?

Hide All

- A "Joshua sprinted to the window and peered down at the garden"
- B "They planned to make pizza with the vegetables"
- C "Joshua wasn't sure if Dad was right"
- D "They decided to plant the garden in the backyard"



Writing Prompt Item

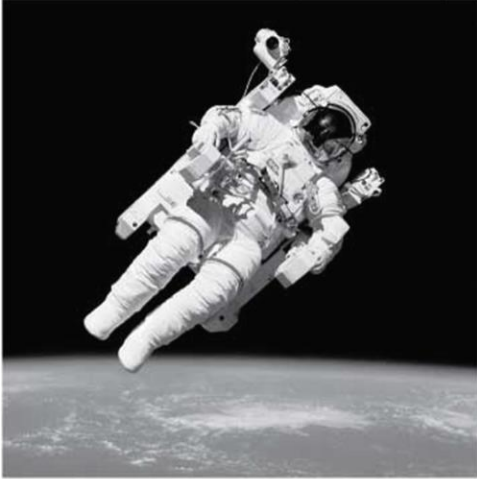
Writing prompts (WPs) are worth 7 points. These items require students to write an extended response to a single prompt.

Passage 1 Passage 2 Tips for Writing →

You are now going to read two short passages and respond to a writing task. First, read the following passage about different ways scientists learn about space. Read Passage 1 and then click the Passage 2 tab at the top of the screen to read Passage 2.

Passage 1

Out of This World!
How We Learn about Outer Space



NASA

- 1 Have you ever considered what lies beyond our planet Earth?
- 2 If so, you are not alone.
- 3 People have wondered about the stars and planets since ancient times. Today, people have different ways of learning about space.

Read the writing task and draft a response. You can select the Tips for Writing tab for information about how to make your writing the best it can be.

Writing Task

Your school will be hosting a Rocketeer Academy program presented by educators from the New Mexico Museum of Space History. Your teacher is asking students to give their opinion about which program they would like to have come to your school: #1 Portable Planetarium, #2 The Awful Truth about Zero Gravity, or #3 Ozobots.

You have just read an article about the study of space and a web page of the New Mexico Museum of Space History that describes three Rocketeer Academy programs. Write a letter to your teacher giving your opinion about which program you want to participate in and why. Use details from what you have read, along with your own interests and experiences, to write your opinion letter.

Now write your response in the space provided.

← → **B** *I* U ☰ ☷ ☹ ☺ ☻ ☼ ☽ ☿