

Test Specifications

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

English Language Arts



Purpose

- Part of a Balanced Assessment System
- Claims/Score Interpretation and Use Statements

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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 overall ELA scale score, student performance on Reading and Language & Writing and seven subdomains is reported as noted in the reporting categories subsection in the following pages.

See the Score Interpretation and Use (SIU) documents for the complete set of NM-MSSA score interpretation and use statements. These documents can be accessed at <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/resources-nm-mssa/>.



Test Specifications – Reporting Categories and Test Blueprint

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)

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.

Core 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.



Test Specifications – 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 Specifications – 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.

Test Design - 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 on page 16.

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	10	2	0	12	14	14	
Total Student Experience	8	37	7	1	45	58	58	
						Estimated Test Time (min)		150 (60/90)

Practice Test

A full-length practice test mirroring the operational test design is available beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. The practice tests and supporting materials can be accessed at <https://newmexico.onlinehelp.cognia.org/practice-tests-nm-mssa/>.



Test Specifications – 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

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 review 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

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

Writing Prompts

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 NMCCSS.

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 prompt (WP):

- MS-1 items are worth 1 point. These items may be multiple choice or multiple select.
- MS-2 items are worth 2 points. In ELA, these items are also known as evidence-based selected response items (EBSR). These items have two parts (Part a and Part b) for students to answer, and 0, 1, or 2 points total can be earned across Part a and Part b. Each part provides choices from which to select.
- Writing prompts (WPs) 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 WPs 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

- MS-1 items are worth 1 point. These items may be multiple choice or multiple select.

Question **3**

Zoom Text-to-Speech:

18 “Buenos días,³ Yolanda,” Mr. Castillo says.

19 “Buenos días, Señor Castillo.”

20 Mr. Castillo pours Cuban coffee into a small plastic cup. I breathe in the warm, sweet smell as it passes by me on its way to Abuelo. In one gulp, the coffee is gone.

21 Mr. Perera checks his watch. “Where’s Juan Carlos?” he asks.

22 Abuelo takes the box from me and sits down. “Yolanda is my partner today.”

23 Mr. Perera slaps his hand on the table. “What does this señorita know about dominoes?”

24 “I know how to play,” I say. “I have a good teacher.” I sit across from Abuelo, in his partner’s chair. My chair.

25 “I’m sorry, Yolanda, but this is a game just for us old men. I will only play with Juan Carlos.” Mr. Perera stands up and crosses his arms.

26 “Then you forfeit,” Abuelo says, “and Yolanda and I win.” I try not to smile. We all know Mr. Perera will never forfeit.

27 Mr. Perera sits back down, grumbling like a summer thunderstorm. “*Está bien*.⁴ What are you waiting for? Let’s play.”

Read the sentence from paragraph 27 in Passage 1.

Mr. Perera sits back down, grumbling like a summer thunderstorm.

As used in the sentence, what does the phrase grumbling like a summer thunderstorm show about Mr. Perera?

(A) He feels sad.

(B) He feels bothered.

(C) He is interested in others.

(D) He is comfortable with change.

¹plancha: a small appliance used to press flat bread and sandwiches
²guayabera: a men’s shirt popular in Latin American countries
³buenos días: good morning
⁴está bien: That’s okay

abc





Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

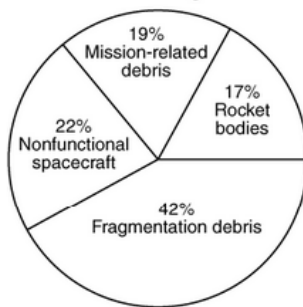
Space Junk

- 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






- 3 As more satellites and spacecraft are launched into orbit, the amount of orbital debris will increase. NASA

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.



- MS-2 items are worth 2 points. In ELA, these items are also known as evidence-based selected response items (EBSR). These items have two parts (Part a and Part b) for students to answer, and 0, 1, or 2 points total can be earned across Part a and Part b. Each part provides choices from which to select.

Question 13  Zoom  Text-to-Speech: 

7 Right now, with the help of the U.S. Department of Defense, NASA is tracking any pieces of orbital debris large enough to pose a threat. With modern technology, these scientists are able to track objects that are as small as three millimeters in diameter. In low-Earth orbit, the elevation where all spaceflights take place, NASA tracks objects two inches in diameter or larger. In higher orbit, over 22,000 miles above sea level, NASA tracks objects one yard in length. At those high altitudes, these large objects can interrupt communications via satellites.

8 To determine how these objects can threaten an operating satellite or the International Space Station, NASA developed a method called the "pizza box." This is a flat and rectangular zone around the satellite a mile deep and 30-by-30 miles in length. If any orbital debris enters this zone, NASA can use a debris-avoidance maneuver to get the satellite or spacecraft out of harm's way. The need for this maneuver is based on the chance of a crash, how it might affect a mission at hand, or whether the astronauts might be at risk.

9 Scientists have a few ideas on how to remove space debris and prevent more from being created. Some say building smaller satellites could help. With fewer parts to break off, these satellites could be the future in efficient design. Other scientists disagree. They say filling Earth's orbit with lots of smaller satellites could make the problem worse.

10 To remove existing debris, the European Space Agency is working on a harpoon system that can grab debris from a distance and collect it. International agreements to ban satellite-destroying tests can help reduce further debris.

11 However, these actions are only a partial fix. A more permanent solution is needed. The problem is getting worse. As space missions turn toward the Moon, Mars, and beyond, protecting astronauts and spacecraft is now more important than ever.

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

Which sentence **best** describes the author's point of view on space junk?

(A) NASA is responsible for solving the problem of space junk.

(B) Space junk is a crisis that scientists cannot solve.

(C) We must address the problem of space junk to make space safer.

(D) Various countries are at fault for creating space junk.









Which choice provides the **best** evidence for the answer to the previous question?

(A) "Scientists have a few ideas on how to remove space debris."

(B) "The European Space Agency is working on a harpoon system that can grab debris."

(C) "International agreements to ban satellite-destroying tests can help reduce further debris."

(D) "A more permanent solution is needed."





Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow →

The History of Skateboarding

1. Have you ever ridden a skateboard? 2. A skateboard has a deck with wheels on the bottom for riding and doing tricks.

3. About 100 years ago, people used skateboards, and so they were very different from the ones people use now. 4. They were made from wooden boxes and roller skate wheels. 5. Over the years, skateboards have changed. 6. They have become safer and easier to ride.

7. In the 1950s, skateboards were made like those made today, with a deck and four wheels. 8. At that time, the wheels were made of clay. 9. They were slippery like ice and unsteady. 10. They did not grip well to sidewalks and other places people skated. 11. In the 1970s, companies changed the materials they used. 12. Now the wheels were made of a material that was more like rubber. 13. More people became interested and took up skateboarding as a hobby. 14. In the 1990s, skateboarding became very popular. 15. People thought up new tricks to show off on skateboards.

16. People's love for skateboarding keeps growing today. 17. Many towns and cities have built special parks for skateboarders. 18. There is one more important thing that people who are interested in skateboarding should remember. 19. Skateboards are built better now than before, but people can still fall. 20. For things to wear, they should always wear helmets, knee pads, and gloves. 21. Then, they will be ready to learn and have fun.

"The History of Skateboarding" © 2020 by Cogna.

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

Read this sentence.

20. For things to wear, they should always wear helmets, knee pads, and gloves.

How should the underlined part of sentence 20 be changed to **best** join the writer's ideas in the last paragraph?

- (A) For safety
- (B) To follow the rules
- (C) On older skateboards
- (D) For extra power on skateboards

Which words from the passage **best** support the correct answer above?

- (A) "They were made from wooden boxes"
- (B) "More people became interested"
- (C) "towns and cities have built special parks"
- (D) "but people can still fall"



- Writing prompts (WPs) 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 WPs 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.

Question 33

1 2

You are now going to read two short passages and respond to a writing task. First, read the following passage about events that are happening at a school and then read a page from that school's newsletter. Read Passage 1 and then click the Passage 2 tab at the top of the screen to read Passage 2.

Passage 1

Lots to Do!

1 As soon as the bell rang, Lupe grabbed her backpack and headed for the front door of the school. It was Friday, and she was excited about the weekend ahead.

2 She saw her older brother, Marcos, waiting for her at the front door. He was leaning against the wall reading something. He seemed very interested in it.

3 "What are you reading?" Lupe asked as she walked toward him.

4 "The school newsletter," Marcos replied.

5 "What's that?" Lupe said curiously.

6 "It's something the school sends out every month to tell about events that are coming up," Marcos said as he showed her the piece of paper. "There are lots of things to do."

7 "Like what?" Lupe asked as they began walking home.

8 "Well, Principal Hernandez is having lunch with the third graders this month," he said. "My friend Eloy went last month and he said it was really fun. Principal Hernandez told the students about his black Lab puppy, Angus, and they got to tell him all about their pets."

9 "But I'm not in third grade," Lupe said frowning. "Is there anything I can do?"

10 "Sure," Marcos said. "There's a soccer match tomorrow afternoon on the field behind the school. You like soccer."

11 Lupe nodded her head excitedly. "I love watching soccer. I like to cheer when my team gets a goal. I always bring my umbrella in case it's too hot or it rains. What else is happening?"

12 "Next Wednesday after school, Mrs. Carmen is going to read *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story* in the reading corner," Marcos said. "She's going to

Now read the writing task and draft a response. As you write, think about what makes your writing the best it can be.

My Best Writing

Stays on topic and pays attention to all parts of the writing task
Includes details and examples to support ideas
Is clearly organized
Makes word choices that are well suited to the task
Uses simple, compound, and complex sentences with correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

Writing Task

You have read a story about students reading a school newsletter. You have also read a page from that newsletter. The newsletter lists many exciting school events. Pick one of these events or another event that might happen at a school.

Write a story to share with your class. Tell about a real or imaginary time when you or someone else went to a school event. Use ideas from what you have read, along with your own ideas, to write your story.

Today you will be writing a narrative. When you write a narrative, you

- tell about real or imaginary events.
- think about the characters you want to introduce.
- put events in an order that makes sense.
- use details and dialogue to make the events and characters interesting.
- think about how your story can affect the feelings of your reader.

After you have read the passages, and before you begin writing, think about

- who your narrative will be about.
- what events you want your narrative to include.
- when and where the events in your narrative happen.
- why the people in your narrative think and act as they do.

Now write your response in the space provided.

Rich text editor toolbar: B, I, U, list, link, unlink, undo, redo, help

Rich text editor icons: abc, camera, video, eraser, pencil, highlighter, sticky note