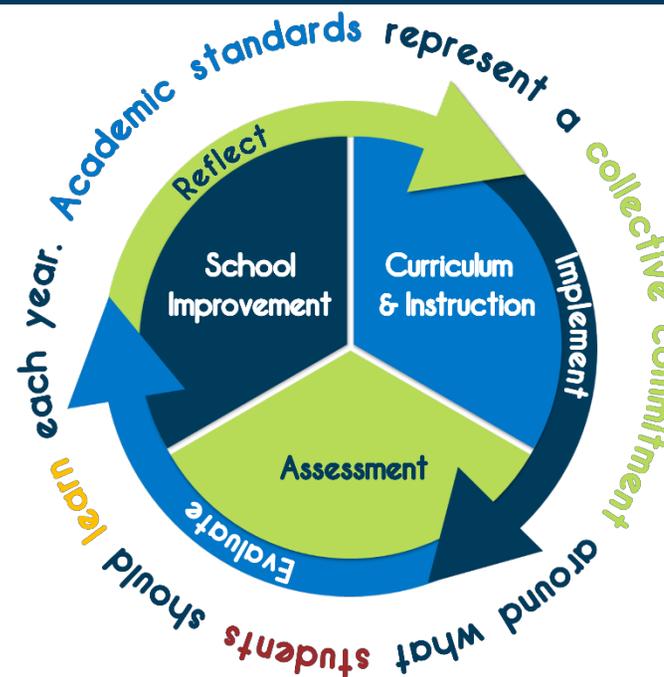


Samples for Success

Sample items provide valuable insight into how students engage with different texts, tasks, and contexts, highlighting the types of opportunities they need for success in the classroom. These items offer a shared reference point for understanding proficiency expectations, complementing the assessment's role in measuring learning. By analyzing items alongside performance data, educators can gain a deeper understanding of students' strengths and areas for growth. Students thrive in environments rich with diverse materials, challenges that vary in task type, and multiple avenues for demonstrating understanding. High-quality instruction, aligned with the learning goals, is the most effective way to support students' growth and prepare them for success.



Test questions can measure a single skill or a set of knowledge and skills. The ELA test differs from other subjects in that it has fewer items overall, but each item assesses multiple skills or knowledge by asking students to demonstrate skills through performance, such as writing a response to literary or informational texts. Therefore, what differentiates the levels of performance are the degree to and quality with which a student performs.

Grade 8 – Claim 1: Reading Literary Text

1st Text – P. 5

English Language Arts/Literacy
 ELA2025076
 Today you will analyze a passage from *The Black Pearl* and a poem titled "The Last Bargain." As you read these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about the themes of each text as you can engage a written response.

Read the passage from *The Black Pearl*, in which pearl divers visit the Salazar family. Then answer the questions.

from *The Black Pearl*
 by Scott O'Grady

- They came early in the afternoon, dressed in their best black suits and carrying a sack and compass and their mirrors, as is customary. The excitement in the town had died after a couple of days, but when word got around that the divers were going to the Salazars to buy the great sack was a great renewed hope and crowd outside the gate.
- My mother and my two sisters had come back from Laredo, so they too had heard the news of the sack, and so the bustle in the patio was turned on and the patio was filled up with flowers and all the furniture shone.
- The four men were serious faces and they put their compasses and scales on the square table and their mirror case on the floor. They sat down and tested their hands and said nothing.
- Then my father said, "The sack is very small, gentlemen. I doubt that it holds enough money to buy the great Pearl of Pearls."
- The four divers did not like this. One of them, named Antonio Martin, was the one who had a barrel and had sailed with barrels.
- "I have heard that the pearl is in the size of a grapefruit," he said, "so which sack do you have? Money that we need, for to buy such the large ones are of little value."
- "They do not buy large, these monkeys," said Miguel Palmarino, who was as fat as a horse and had a belt that he girded. "They often die or become dull before a year passes."

GO ON ►

2nd Text – P. 11

English Language Arts/Literacy
 ELA2025076
 Read the poem "The Last Bargain." Then answer the questions.

The Last Bargain
 by Kahlil Gibran: Targem

"Come and live with me," I cried, while in the morning I was walking on the marketplace road.
 Said in kind, the King came in his chariot,
 He held my hand and said, "I will live with you my son."
 For his crown shined for me, and he was king in his chariot.

- As he held of me, he looked for a moment and said what he saw.
 I wondered along the crowded line,
 An old man came out with his bag of gold,
 He nodded and said, "I will live with you my son."
 He weighed his coins and he said, "I will live with you my son."
- It was evening. The garden hedge was all aflame.
 The fair maid came out and said, "I will live with you with a smile."
 Her smile faded and melted into tears, and she went back alone into the dark.
 The sun glowered on the water, and the sea waves broke against the shore.
 I sat all day playing with shells.
- He raised his head and seemed to know me, and said, "I live with you with nothing."
 From that moment that bargain struck in other's gray made me a free man.
 "The last bargain" by Kahlil Gibran: Targem (version)

GO ON ►

Writing Tasks – P. 16 & 18

English Language Arts/Literacy
 ELA2025076
 7. You have read a passage from *The Black Pearl* and the poem "The Last Bargain."
 Write an essay analyzing how the events in each text contribute to the development of each text's theme. Be sure to use evidence from **both** texts in your essay.

Multiple items on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) are linked to a set of texts to read, often accompanied by images or multimedia. The sample [item set](#) has two literary texts and two writing tasks. Small screenshots and page numbers are provided to help you navigate the linked sample item set.

Each text is followed by several two-part multiple-choice items. Students must select a correct response in Part A and supporting evidence in Part B. Both texts also have items in which students must either correctly sequence or categorize events in a table where partial credit is possible.

This sample item set also contains two Literary Analysis writing tasks comparing two texts. Student responses are graded according to page 1 of the [Literary Analysis Rubric](#). Literary writing tasks often contribute to a student's **Reading Comprehension** score in addition to their **Writing** score. Student writing samples and annotations are found in the Written Expression Claim section in this document.

Two-part Multiple-choice Pgs. 9-10, 12-14 & 19	Categorizing & Sequencing Questions P. 16	Answer Key Pgs. 3-4	Written Response Scoring Rubric P. 5																																																																																																																																																																					
<p>English Language Arts/Literacy ELA2025076 Read the passage from <i>The Black Pearl</i> and the poem "The Last Bargain." Then answer the questions.</p> <p>from <i>The Black Pearl</i> by Scott O'Grady</p> <p>1. They came early in the afternoon, dressed in their best black suits and carrying a sack and compass and their mirrors, as is customary. The excitement in the town had died after a couple of days, but when word got around that the divers were going to the Salazars to buy the great sack was a great renewed hope and crowd outside the gate.</p> <p>2. My mother and my two sisters had come back from Laredo, so they too had heard the news of the sack, and so the bustle in the patio was turned on and the patio was filled up with flowers and all the furniture shone.</p> <p>3. The four men were serious faces and they put their compasses and scales on the square table and their mirror case on the floor. They sat down and tested their hands and said nothing.</p> <p>4. Then my father said, "The sack is very small, gentlemen. I doubt that it holds enough money to buy the great Pearl of Pearls."</p> <p>5. The four divers did not like this. One of them, named Antonio Martin, was the one who had a barrel and had sailed with barrels.</p> <p>6. "I have heard that the pearl is in the size of a grapefruit," he said, "so which sack do you have? Money that we need, for to buy such the large ones are of little value."</p> <p>7. "They do not buy large, these monkeys," said Miguel Palmarino, who was as fat as a horse and had a belt that he girded. "They often die or become dull before a year passes."</p> <p>GO ON ►</p>	<p>English Language Arts/Literacy ELA2025076 8. Categorize and sequence the structure of the passage from "The Black Pearl" and the structure of the poem "The Last Bargain." Drag each description into the appropriate box. All descriptions will be used.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px;">The text is a series of different descriptions.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px;">The setting changes as the story progresses.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 2px; font-size: 8px;">I looked at the description during the story.</div> </div> <p>The setting remains the same throughout the text.</p> <p>The narrator of a story also looks to a first understanding.</p> <p>from <i>The Black Pearl</i></p> <p>"The Last Bargain"</p> <p>GO ON ►</p>	<p>English Language Arts/Literacy ELA2025076 Answer Key</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: 8px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item Code</th> <th>Item Type</th> <th>Item Text</th> <th>Relationship/Evidence</th> <th>Alignment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 2</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 2</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 3</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 3</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 4</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 4</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 5</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 5</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 6</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 6</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part A: 7</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FF20250769</td> <td>Item Type: EBCC</td> <td>Part B: 7</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> <td>RI.8.1.1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>GO ON ►</p>	Item Code	Item Type	Item Text	Relationship/Evidence	Alignment	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 1	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 1	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 2	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 2	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 3	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 3	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 4	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 4	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 5	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 5	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 6	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 6	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part A: 7	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	FF20250769	Item Type: EBCC	Part B: 7	RI.8.1.1	RI.8.1.1	<p>ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION GRADE 8 Score Rubric for Reading Comprehension Item Reading Comprehension Item (2025) and Literary Analysis Item (2025)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; 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Grade 8 – Claim 3: Reading Vocabulary

1st Text – P. 4

English Language Arts/Literacy

Today you will research the topic of **exercising in cold weather**. You will read the passage **"Train the Mind to Run Right Through Winter"**. Then you will read the passage **"Exercise and Cold Weather"**. You will gather information and answer questions about exercising in cold weather as you write an essay.

Read the passage "Train the Mind to Run Right Through Winter." Then answer the questions.

From the Mind to Run Right Through Winter

1. What advice does Sharon Richardson, the manager of the outdoor athletic center, give to his team, and what organizing solution is mentioned? How do you think he will address these ideas in a future piece or an interview?
2. There was a good turnout at the event, more than the organizers had hoped for. How do you think the organizers will address this?
3. How do you think the organizers will address this?
4. How do you think the organizers will address this?
5. How do you think the organizers will address this?
6. How do you think the organizers will address this?
7. How do you think the organizers will address this?
8. How do you think the organizers will address this?

GO ON ►

2nd Text – P. 10

English Language Arts/Literacy

Read the passage "Exercise and Cold Weather." Then answer the questions.

Exercise and Cold Weather

1. Which evidence can you use to support the author's claim that you should exercise in cold weather? How do you think the author will address this?
2. How do you think the author will address this?
3. How do you think the author will address this?
4. How do you think the author will address this?
5. How do you think the author will address this?
6. How do you think the author will address this?
7. How do you think the author will address this?
8. How do you think the author will address this?

GO ON ►

3rd Text – P. 15

English Language Arts/Literacy

Read the passage "Winter Wonders." Then answer the questions.

Winter Wonders

By Chris Beckman

1. How do you think the author will address this?
2. How do you think the author will address this?
3. How do you think the author will address this?
4. How do you think the author will address this?
5. How do you think the author will address this?
6. How do you think the author will address this?
7. How do you think the author will address this?
8. How do you think the author will address this?

GO ON ►

Reading vocabulary items are found within Reading Informational and Reading Literary item sets. This [released item set](#) (the same sample set from Claim 2) contains three embedded reading passages; items; and an associated answer key, which is located at the beginning of the document. (Screenshots are included to support navigation of the linked items.)

Vocabulary items ask students to select a correct response in Part A and then to select a response that supports that answer in Part B of the item. This set has three vocabulary items.

Two-part Multiple-choice P. 7, 13 & 18	Answer Key P. 3																																																																											
<p style="text-align: center;"><small>English Language Arts/Literacy</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vocabulary</p> <p>1. Part A</p> <p>What is the meaning of the word <i>beneficial</i> as it is used in paragraph 1 of "Train the Mind to Run Right Through Winter"?</p> <p>A. avoidable B. necessary C. unhelpful D. helpful</p> <p>Part B</p> <p>Which two pieces from the passage support the meaning of the word <i>beneficial</i>?</p> <p>A. detail (paragraph 4) B. detail (paragraph 4) C. paragraph (paragraph 1) D. detail (paragraph 14) E. paragraph (paragraph 14) F. detail (paragraph 14)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>GO ON ►</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><small>English Language Arts/Literacy</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Released Items Answer and Alignment Document ELA/Literacy Item 8</p> <p>Item Type: Multiple-Choice Item Passage(s): "Train the Mind to Run Right Through Winter" (entire text) Text(s) and/or Item(s): Item 8</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Item Code</th> <th>Item Type</th> <th>Standard(s)</th> <th>Evidence</th> <th>Item(s) Alignment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>VF042507</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042508</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042509</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042510</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042511</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042512</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042513</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042514</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042515</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042516</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042517</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042518</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042519</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VF042520</td> <td>Item Type: EBSK</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> <td>Part A, B</td> <td>RI.8.1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Item Code	Item Type	Standard(s)	Evidence	Item(s) Alignment	VF042507	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042508	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042509	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042510	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042511	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042512	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042513	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042514	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042515	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042516	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042517	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042518	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042519	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1	VF042520	Item Type: EBSK	RI.8.1	Part A, B	RI.8.1
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Grade 8 – Claim 5: Conventions

Conventions Writing Rubric P.2

Proficiency with writing conventions is also measured through writing tasks that are evaluated by a rubric. The prompt for this question can be found on page 13 of this [sample item set](#). The IAR [writing rubrics](#) align with PLDs by specifying how different aspects of writing correspond to these proficiency levels. These [released item responses](#) contain notes that explain the rationale for student's **Conventions** score. These samples come from a variety of writing prompts; therefore, the types of responses will vary, but the conventions remain the focus of this claim. The samples begin with the highest-scoring example and end with the lowest-scoring example.

3 Points P. 3	2 Points P. 11	1 Point P. 13	0 Points P. 19
<p style="text-align: right;">A1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Score Point 3</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">A4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Score Point 2</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">A5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Score Point 1</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">A8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Score Point 0</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">P.7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P. 9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P. 14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P. 20</p>
<p>Annotations</p> <hr/> <p>Anchor Paper 3 Conventions Score Point 3</p> <p>This response demonstrates full command of the conventions of standard English at an appropriate level of complexity for the grade. Despite minor errors, which result in a single or two errors, the response is free of errors. The response is free of errors and demonstrates a clear understanding of the conventions of standard English. The response is free of errors and demonstrates a clear understanding of the conventions of standard English. The response is free of errors and demonstrates a clear understanding of the conventions of standard English.</p>	<p>Annotations</p> <hr/> <p>Anchor Paper 4 Conventions Score Point 2</p> <p>The response demonstrates some command over conventions. Only minor errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar exist, but the response is clear and easy to read. The response is clear and easy to read, but it contains some errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. The response is clear and easy to read, but it contains some errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.</p>	<p>Annotations</p> <hr/> <p>Anchor Paper 5 Conventions Score Point 1</p> <p>Frequent errors occur and include missing commas and other punctuation (comma), a sentence that begins with a lower case letter (in the last 5 lines), and an incorrect use of capitalization in the middle of a sentence (I). Overall, this brief response demonstrates limited command of the conventions of standard English.</p>	<p>Annotations</p> <hr/> <p>Anchor Paper 8 Conventions Score Point 0</p> <p>Frequent errors in spelling (center, director, for [there]), thoughts [thoughts], capitalization, punctuation (They are made good thought of each character, the way what they actually are. And having details of them), and grammar (that error once in a detailed writer that the answer has one answer) impact understanding in this response. Overall, the command of conventions is demonstrated.</p>