

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option A is correct	In paragraph 23, Lucy shifts her focus away from herself to the project, which helps to resolve her conflict. Her “embarrassment [begins] to dissipate” as she listens to what the other students are discussing and realizes that the footage of her fall is useful.
	Option B is incorrect	Lucy watches “Alicia’s film clip transform her stairway disaster into drama,” but this reveals a change in Lucy’s perception of her fall, rather than a change in how the students treat her.
	Option C is incorrect	Lucy does get physically closer to join the group, but this is to brainstorm ideas and does not necessarily imply that she will become close friends with the group members.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no indication of Lucy’s level of experience in film creation as compared to that of the other group members. The resolution of the conflict is also not influenced by her ability to create a film.
2	Option H is correct	The meaning of the word <u>potential</u> as is used in paragraph 20 is “an existing possibility.” Rodney tells Lucy that her name, Lucy Falls, provides possibility for the main character in their film because of the play on words that it provides.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Rodney is excited about the possibility of using the name Lucy Falls, he does not have a “specific plan” yet, so this is not the meaning of the word <u>potential</u> .
	Option G is incorrect	Rodney wants to use the name Lucy Falls because it offers a possibility for a play on words, not because it is “unexpected.”
	Option J is incorrect	Lucy’s last name may be unusual, but the characters are not in a “strange situation” in this paragraph, so this is not the meaning of the word <u>potential</u> .

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
3	Option C is correct	In paragraph 21, Lucy smiles as she reacts to Rodney and his encouraging words in paragraph 20, which “definitely [make] her first day less terrible.” She begins to feel accepted at her new school even though she has had a rough start to her first day.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 20, Rodney tells Lucy why he is happy to have her in his group, so in paragraph 21, Lucy is not “unsure about Rodney’s motivation for speaking to her.”
	Option B is incorrect	Lucy is not “critical of herself” in this paragraph; she is instead expressing optimism that the day is not so bad.
	Option D is incorrect	Lucy’s feelings in the current moment are the focus of this paragraph; Lucy is not thinking about what Rodney might do in the future.
4	Option J is correct	The events in paragraphs 1 and 2 are important to the plot because they affect Lucy’s attitude at the beginning of the day. Lucy is frustrated, frazzled, and nervous, which influences her perception of how others are responding to her throughout the morning.
	Option F is incorrect	Lucy does not regret registering at the new school; she only questions the midyear timing.
	Option G is incorrect	The problems described in the first two paragraphs are included to establish a reason for Lucy’s negative attitude, not to suggest that she dislikes the school in general.
	Option H is incorrect	Lucy is frustrated by the early morning events, but she is not confused.
5	Option A is correct	Point of view refers to the perspective from which the events in the story are told. In this selection, the narrator’s third-person point of view is limited to the thoughts and feelings of Lucy. This allows the author to emphasize Lucy’s feelings about what happens when she transfers to a new school.
	Option B is incorrect	The narrator is only able to describe the other students’ reactions as Lucy sees them. The thoughts and feelings behind these reactions are not revealed by the narrator’s limited point of view.
	Option C is incorrect	The narrator’s point of view is limited to Lucy, so the author is not able to convey Rodney’s initial impression of Lucy based on the video.
	Option D is incorrect	The narrator’s point of view is limited to Lucy, so the cinema teacher’s thoughts are not emphasized.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
6	Option J is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The conflict and resolution are described, key events are included, and minor details are omitted.
	Option F is incorrect	The resolution of the conflict is not included in this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option G is incorrect	Irrelevant details are included in this summary, and the resolution is omitted, so this is not the best summary of the selection.
	Option H is incorrect	Neither Lucy’s main conflict nor the resolution are mentioned in this summary, making it incomplete.
7	Option C is correct	A turning point is the point of highest tension in a story; also known as the climax. When Lucy first enters her second period class in paragraph 10, her face is hot with embarrassment. After Rodney talks to her in paragraph 15, her discomfort begins to disappear, and she becomes more optimistic.
	Option A is incorrect	Lucy does question her choice to transfer schools in paragraph 1 and again in paragraph 19, but her doubt does not signal a turning point in the selection.
	Option B is incorrect	Although first period is uneventful, and Lucy tries to forget about her fall, this is not a turning point because her embarrassment returns as soon as she enters her second period class.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 17, Lucy’s embarrassment continues as a result of being ignored, so this is not a turning point in the selection.
8	Option J is correct	Lucy’s negative experience of falling down the stairs provides an opportunity for the positive outcome of her being welcomed and included by new classmates.
	Option F is incorrect	There is no mention of Lucy’s academic grades and/or success, so this is not the theme explored in this selection.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the group works together to achieve a goal, the theme of the selection is focused on Lucy’s negative experience as the cause of a positive outcome.
	Option H is incorrect	Lucy must adjust to her new school, but this selection does not take place over “a long period of time,” so this is not the theme explored in this selection.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
9	Option A is correct	Based on these paragraphs, the reader can conclude that identifying a new species requires careful analysis of an animal, because the scientists analyze the “characteristics that set [this octopod] apart from other octopods.”
	Option B is incorrect	The scientists are analyzing an animal found by accident, not searching for an unknown animal.
	Option C is incorrect	Land animals are not mentioned in these paragraphs.
	Option D is incorrect	The scientists work for a government agency, but this is detailed in paragraph 3. There is nothing to suggest government agencies conduct most animal research.
10	Option H is correct	The photograph of the octopod is included most likely to help the reader better understand why scientists named the octopod after a cartoon character. In paragraph 6, the author explains that the octopod was named Casper “because of [its] ghostlike appearance.” In the photograph, the stark contrast between the dark ocean and the ghostly white octopod is shown.
	Option F is incorrect	The octopod is shown on the ocean floor in the photograph, but this does not explain why it lives there.
	Option G is incorrect	The octopod may or may not have been moving when the image was taken, but a still photograph cannot show movement.
	Option J is incorrect	The octopod is not grasping any objects in this photograph, so this is not the reason for its inclusion.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
11	Option C is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The introduction is restated and key details are explained, including when and where the octopod was discovered, why it is considered a new species, and why its discovery is important.
	Option A is incorrect	These sentences are focused only on the video of the “ghostlike” octopod and what the scientists named it. The importance of the discovery of a new species is omitted, making the summary incomplete.
	Option B is incorrect	This summary includes minor details from the selection and omits key ideas, such as the discovery of a brand new species of octopod. These omissions make this summary incomplete.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the discovery of the octopod is mentioned in this summary, there is no explanation that the octopod is a new species, which is a key point in the selection. Additionally, the last two sentences of this option are details rather than key ideas.
12	Option J is correct	The idea that the octopod was found near the Hawaiian Islands best explains why this map is included. The map is of the Hawaiian Islands with an arrow pointing to the island near where the octopod was found.
	Option F is incorrect	Only a small part of the Pacific Ocean is shown on the map, so the map is not included to show that octopods are found in oceans worldwide.
	Option G is incorrect	It is not known whether the new species is common only near Hawaii, nor does the map include this information.
	Option H is incorrect	This particular octopod was found near an island, but there is nothing in the map to indicate where most octopods are found.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
13	Option B is correct	From Michael Vecchione’s comments, the reader can conclude that Vecchione is fascinated by the discovery of a new species. In paragraph 2 he states “I was really excited . . .” in reference to discovering the ghostly octopod, and in other paragraphs he talks about how unique and unusual the discovery is.
	Option A is incorrect	Vecchione says that it would not be a “productive” use of time to look for another specimen but does not say he is not interested.
	Option C is incorrect	Vecchione is the scientist who was interviewed about the discovery, but this does not mean he was the coordinator for the project.
	Option D is incorrect	Vecchione appears to understand the significance of this discovery, as noted in paragraph 8, but he does not claim to be the first to do so.
14	Option H is correct	Definition 3 best matches the meaning of the word <u>screening</u> as used in paragraph 1. The scientists are examining the leaves carefully for the purpose of finding tiny frogs.
	Option F is incorrect	The scientists want to find the frogs within the leaves; they are not trying to shelter them.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the scientists are being careful because the frogs are tiny, they are trying to examine the frogs, not guard them.
	Option J is incorrect	The scientists are trying to uncover the frogs, not shield them from view.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
15	Option C is correct	In paragraph 1 the author explains that the frogs are very tiny, so scientists must look carefully to find them. In paragraph 3 the author explains why "locating the frogs is extremely difficult" and begins paragraph 5 with "countless challenges . . ." in reference to finding the frogs.
	Option A is incorrect	Only the mountains of Brazil are mentioned in paragraph 2; there is nothing to suggest tiny frogs are being found worldwide.
	Option B is incorrect	The tiny frogs in Brazil are brightly colored, but the frogs in New Guinea are brownish green, making them hard to find.
	Option D is incorrect	Only the Brazilian tiny frogs' poisonous skin is mentioned, and only in paragraph 2, so this idea is not highlighted throughout the selection.
16	Option J is correct	The reader can conclude that the Brazilian frogs have adaptations that protect them from danger. The frogs' poisonous skin, described in paragraph 2, and their ability to detect vibrations, explained in paragraph 3, are adaptations that keep the frogs safe.
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author states that the Brazilian frogs "live in 'leaf litter,' or piles of dead leaves," so they do not "make their homes in treetops."
	Option G is incorrect	Even with their bright colors, it is difficult for the scientists to find the frogs hidden among the leaves.
	Option H is incorrect	The frogs live in the leaves, but there is no suggestion that they eat the leaves.
17	Option C is correct	The author includes the photograph after paragraph 3 to "emphasize how small the frog is by comparing it to a familiar object." The reader can see how small the frog is compared to a coin.
	Option A is incorrect	The frog is being compared to coins, not to other frogs, so the photograph is not included to prove the frogs are the smallest ever discovered.
	Option B is incorrect	The frog is pictured with coins, which would not be present in its habitat, so the photograph is not included to demonstrate the frog's natural camouflage.
	Option D is incorrect	The sound of the frog's call cannot be expressed in a photograph.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
18	Option F is correct	The difference between the two scientists' work is that Vecchione uses high-tech equipment (a remotely operated vehicle that takes live videos) to observe animals, but Pie does not. Pie searches on foot and by sorting through leaves with his hands.
	Option G is incorrect	The ghostly octopod and the tiny frogs are both difficult to find, so this is a similarity between the selections, not a difference.
	Option H is incorrect	Pie's employer is not described, and Vecchione works for a government agency, so this is incorrect.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 2 of "A Ghostly New Creature," Vecchione is described as a zoologist, a kind of scientist who studies many animals, and the extent of Pie's research is not mentioned, so this is not a difference between the men's work.
19	Option C is correct	Both scientists conduct their work in remote areas. The scientists in "A Ghostly New Creature" map the ocean from a ship (paragraph 1) and the scientists in "Tiptoeing Scientists" search for frogs in the "mountains of Brazil" (paragraph 2).
	Option A is incorrect	Only the scientists in "A Ghostly New Creature" study animals that live in the ocean, so this is not a similarity.
	Option B is incorrect	Scientists in "Tiptoeing Scientists" find frogs in Brazil by listening for their singing, but scientists in "A Ghostly New Creature" do not indicate that octopods make sounds.
	Option D is incorrect	Scientists in "Tiptoeing Scientists" capture the tiny frogs, but in "A Ghostly New Creature," scientists only have a video of the octopod; they have not been able to capture one.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
20	Option G is correct	Moore is unlike Vecchione because Moore knows he will likely observe the frog species more than once. Vecchione expresses doubts that he will ever see another ghostly octopod: “The likelihood of encountering another one of these octopods is very small.”
	Option F is incorrect	Both Moore and Vecchione studied the animals in their natural habitats, so this is not how Moore is unlike Vecchione.
	Option H is incorrect	Moore found a new species of frog in Papua, New Guinea, but there is nothing to suggest he is searching in other places.
	Option J is incorrect	Moore found a brand-new species, not one “commonly found throughout the world,” and the same is true of Vecchione.
21	Option D is correct	These sentences are both used to explain the significance of discovering a new species and are used to convey a similar idea that there are more species to discover.
	Option A is incorrect	This sentence is used to describe how scientists find tiny frogs, which is unrelated to the idea that there are more species to be discovered.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence is used to describe how small the frogs are, which is unrelated to the possibility of finding other new species.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence is used to describe the difficulty of catching tiny, jumping frogs, not to express excitement about undiscovered species.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
22	Option F is correct	Moore’s frogs in “Tiptoeing Scientists” differ from the octopod in that the frogs’ bodies have coloration that protects the frogs by camouflaging them within the leaves (paragraph 4), while the octopod in “A Ghostly New Creature,” does not have coloration for protection (paragraph 4).
	Option G is incorrect	The frogs are found in Brazil and Papua, New Guinea, and the octopod was sighted near an island in Hawaii.
	Option H is incorrect	The frog’s size is smaller than frogs typically seen, and the ghostly octopod’s size relative to other octopi is not mentioned.
	Option J is incorrect	The octopod also has adaptations, which are described in paragraphs 4 and 5 of “A Ghostly New Creature,” so this is not how they differ.
23	Option D is correct	In stanza 2, the reader can tell that the speaker feels relieved that she is going to a familiar place where there will be less conflict. “At least we’re finally/on our way” (lines 7 and 8) expresses relief, and “I won’t have to struggle” (line 10) indicates there will be less conflict.
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker expresses relief that the conflict regarding communication will soon be over, rather than irritation that it exists.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker says in this stanza she will be around animals more than people, so she is no longer concerned about talking to people who speak different languages.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker is expressing relief, not confidence, about the change in her situation.
24	Option G is correct	A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word “like” or “as.” The speaker uses the simile “as divided/as the gaps between/languages” in stanza 1 to show she feels torn between two different worlds that have little in common because they speak different languages.
	Option F is incorrect	There is nothing in this simile that suggests the speaker’s desire to learn a new language.
	Option H is incorrect	There is nothing in this simile that suggests the speaker wants to go home again.
	Option J is incorrect	The feeling of being torn between two worlds, and not annoyance at having to listen to others, is expressed in the simile.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
25	Option D is correct	The poet hopes to convey the message that one’s “sense of identity is often linked to a meaningful location in one’s past.” The speaker feels that her “other self has been here/all along” (lines 28–29), and she expresses that a part of her has “never left this island.”
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker does not mention growing older, so the message that memories become more meaningful with age is not conveyed.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker is visiting the island for the summer, not “[m]oving to a new place.”
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker is focused on her connection with a place rather than a person.
26	Option F is correct	The speaker’s conflict is best identified in lines 1 through 3 of the poem. She lives in California but feels a closer connection with Cuba. She is caught between two worlds where people speak two different languages, which makes her feel “divided.”
	Option G is incorrect	In these lines the speaker suggests a relief from the conflict, but the lines do not identify the conflict’s source.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker is simply making observations in these lines. The source of her conflict is not identified.
	Option J is incorrect	In these lines the speaker is describing how the island looks, not discussing her conflict.
27	Option A is correct	The two-word sentences in lines 19–21 (“Red soil./Green hills./White cows.”) are used to emphasize the distinct contrast in colors found on the farm. The color of a different element is described in each line.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker is observing the farm in the present time while they “bump along a muddy track” (line 13). It is not a memory that is being described.
	Option C is incorrect	The size of the farm is not detailed in these lines.
	Option D is incorrect	Only cows are mentioned in these lines, so “types” of farm animals are not revealed.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
28	Option G is correct	By referring to the speaker’s “invisible twin,” the poet is suggesting the speaker feels a strong bond with the land of Cuba and believes it will always be home. The speaker does not live in Cuba but feels more connected to this island than to California.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker does not literally mean she has a twin sister; she is talking about a part of herself that feels connected to the island.
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker feels at home on the island, not lonely. Her family is there to share the experience with her, as evidenced by the reference to riding in her uncle’s jeep in line 14.
	Option J is incorrect	The speaker does not mention her friends in the poem; she is referring to herself in these lines.
29	Option C is correct	The author most likely includes the information in these paragraphs to emphasize that “forests must be managed well to be successful.” It takes time, money, and effort to manage and protect food forests so that they produce enough food to make them worthwhile.
	Option A is incorrect	Pests are briefly mentioned, but the focus of these paragraphs is on what a successful food forest needs, not that most food forests are unsuccessful.
	Option B is incorrect	Grants are only mentioned in paragraph 17, and the emphasis there is on the lack of funding rather than where the funding comes from.
	Option D is incorrect	The time it takes for crops to grow is mentioned in paragraph 17 only to support the idea that food forests must be managed properly in order to be successful.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
30	Option F is correct	The author most likely includes paragraphs 12 through 14 to explain the food forest concept and design model. The land and labor for food forests is discussed in paragraph 12 and the ideal design for food forests is discussed in paragraph 13. Reasons for this approach are presented in paragraph 14.
	Option G is incorrect	Volunteers are mentioned to explain who does the work in a food forest, not to encourage nonprofit groups to look for help from volunteers.
	Option H is incorrect	The information in these paragraphs is about the concept of food forests in general, not about existing food forests.
	Option J is incorrect	Maximizing sustainable agricultural production is only part of the food forest concept and design discussed in these paragraphs.
31	Option A is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The main idea, including the concept and purpose of food forests, is restated, and examples of food forests are provided.
	Option B is incorrect	The focus of this summary is the challenges pertaining to food forests. The concept and purpose of food forests are missing, making this summary incomplete.
	Option C is incorrect	The concept and purpose of a food forest is omitted from this summary, and minor details are included, so it is not the best summary.
	Option D is incorrect	The focus of this summary is Carol LeResche rather than the concept and purpose of food forests, so it is not the best summary.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
32	Option H is correct	People might assume food forests are a “spin-off” of community gardens because, despite their differences, which are explained in these paragraphs, they both offer residents public areas to harvest food in a community setting.
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 7 the author states that residents “must devote the labor required to maintain their plots,” so the crops in community gardens do need maintenance.
	Option G is incorrect	Food banks are only mentioned in paragraph 15, not paragraphs 7 through 9, and only in reference to food forests.
	Option J is incorrect	Food forests are funded by grants; they do not “require residents to make a monetary investment.”
33	Option B is correct	The author highlights the idea that food forests are an “asset to communities around the country” by explaining the benefits of successful food forests and giving examples of those in Wyoming, California, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington.
	Option A is incorrect	The author presents some of the benefits of food forests over community gardens but does not say that “people prefer food forests.”
	Option C is incorrect	The author emphasizes that the purpose of food forests is practical because they provide fresh produce to the community.
	Option D is incorrect	Volunteers maintain food forests, and this detail is included only in paragraph 7, so it is not highlighted throughout the selection.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
34	Option H is correct	The author most likely wrote this selection to detail the growing popularity of an alternative agricultural practice. The author teaches the reader about food forests by explaining their purpose, citing real examples of them, and explaining the requirements for food forests to succeed.
	Option F is incorrect	Food forests do involve the community, but this is a detail, not the author’s overall purpose in writing the selection.
	Option G is incorrect	The purpose of the selection is to provide information about food forests; the author does not urge leaders to establish food forests.
	Option J is incorrect	Although some problems with food forests are briefly discussed, the author focuses more on their benefits and growing popularity.
35	Option A is correct	This sentence explains why the food forest in Thorne-Rider Park was planted. In this quotation, the food forest coordinator at Thorne-Rider Park, Carol LeResche, explains that public space should be used to provide a food resource for the public.
	Option B is incorrect	LeResche describes the reason her community started a food forest; she does not describe a general level of interest in food forests.
	Option C is incorrect	LeResche is not reflecting critics’ doubts about the effectiveness of food forests; she is expressing an opinion about the use of public space.
	Option D is incorrect	This quotation is about a food forest called Thorne-Rider Park, not a community garden.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
36	Option J is correct	The author most likely contrasts food forests with community gardens to highlight distinctions between the two in costs, labor, and featured plants. The author explains that funding for forests comes from grants and the labor comes from volunteers, not from residents, and the forests' plants are perennials rather than annuals.
	Option F is incorrect	The "amount of time it takes for community gardens to produce crops" is not mentioned in these paragraphs.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not explain why food forests contain more perennial plants than community gardens do; the reader must infer that it is because perennial plants require less work over time.
	Option H is incorrect	The author notes that food forests are free but does not object to the fees residents must pay for the use of community garden plots.
37	Option A is correct	The author develops the thesis of the selection mainly by alternating descriptions and specific examples of food forests (paragraphs 1-6, 11-13, 15) with more general information about the reasons for creating them (paragraphs 7-10, 14, 16-20).
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not describe LeResche's day, and funding is only a detail the author uses to develop the thesis.
	Option C is incorrect	The author mentions some locations, but the importance of having knowledgeable volunteers is not key to the development of the thesis.
	Option D is incorrect	A few food forest locations are given, but there is no list of requirements, so this does not represent the overall development of the thesis.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
38	Option J is correct	In line 17, the word <u>ultimately</u> means “in the end.” Samantha’s mother is telling her that, in the end, it is her choice to continue orchestra or to try something new.
	Option F is incorrect	Samantha has been wanting to try something new all summer, so “all of a sudden” is not the meaning of <u>ultimately</u> .
	Option G is incorrect	Samantha has thought carefully about her decision, but her mother is telling her that, in the end, Samantha can’t let someone else make the decision for her.
	Option H is incorrect	Choosing to leave orchestra is not just “for the most part” Samantha’s decision; it is entirely her own decision.
39	Option B is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different than their literal interpretation. The playwright uses figurative language in these sentences to show that Alyssa believes Samantha has chosen the newspaper over their friendship. When Alyssa says, “I’m still playing second fiddle,” she feels she’s not as important to Samantha as the newspaper.
	Option A is incorrect	Alyssa is expressing her own feelings of abandonment; she is not talking about “Samantha abandoning the orchestra.”
	Option C is incorrect	Alyssa is expressing doubts about her importance to Samantha in these lines; she is not referring to doubts Samantha might have.
	Option D is incorrect	Alyssa misses Samantha because Samantha is writing for the newspaper; Alyssa is not thinking about her friend missing the violin.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
40	Option J is correct	Foreshadowing is a literary element that offers a warning or indication of future events. In scene 2, the author foreshadows Samantha’s determination to be honest with Alyssa. Samantha is discouraged because Alyssa won’t listen to her, but after a talk with her mother about making her own choice, she says she’s made her decision.
	Option F is incorrect	Alyssa indicates that she and Samantha shared a motto “orchestra for life,” which suggests that Samantha has enjoyed orchestra class.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no indication in scene 2 that Samantha may want to write for the newspaper, only that she wants to try something different.
	Option H is incorrect	Samantha appears concerned about preserving her friendship with Alyssa, which does not suggest she wants other friends.
41	Option C is correct	The best summary of scene 2 is presented in this sentence because the conflict (Samantha’s conversation with Alyssa) and its resolution (Samantha deciding she is sure of her choice) are restated.
	Option A is incorrect	Samantha’s admission that she did not tell Alyssa the news and her final decision to do so are missing, so this summary is incomplete.
	Option B is incorrect	The summary does not include any mention of Alyssa, who is the source of Samantha’s conflict, so this summary is incomplete.
	Option D is incorrect	This summary is incomplete. The conflict stemming from Samantha’s conversation with Alyssa is not mentioned in this summary, nor is Samantha’s decision to stick to her plan.

2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
42	Option F is correct	In scene 4 the playwright shows that Alyssa has matured by revealing her “decision to try robotics.” In line 35 Alyssa says that she is coping in a positive way with missing Samantha by focusing on something new.
	Option G is incorrect	Alyssa is not reluctant to complain about her hurt feelings to Samantha, so Alyssa is still overreacting to Samantha’s decision, which reveals her immaturity.
	Option H is incorrect	Alyssa’s excitement about orchestra comes before the conflict with Samantha arises, so she has not yet had a need to mature.
	Option J is incorrect	In scene 1, Alyssa says that Samantha’s playing is “great as usual,” so she has always accepted Samantha’s talent.
43	Option C is correct	In scene 4, though the girls pursue different activities, they smile and hug, supporting the inference that they are still friends.
	Option A is incorrect	The girls have realized that they do not need to share an interest in order to be friends.
	Option B is incorrect	Although she does enjoy robotics, there is no indication that Alyssa will “quit the orchestra.”
	Option D is incorrect	Samantha is happy with what she is doing and does not suggest she wants to participate in future orchestra competitions.
44	Option G is correct	A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. With the metaphor “king of the hill,” the playwright suggests that Samantha has proved herself to be a leading violinist in the orchestra.
	Option F is incorrect	The playwright uses this metaphor to describe Samantha’s position in the orchestra rather than the length of her time with the orchestra.
	Option H is incorrect	The playwright uses this metaphor to describe Samantha’s position in the orchestra rather than the amount of time she spends practicing.
	Option J is incorrect	Samantha’s talent may be envied by other players, but in this line, Alyssa praises her for her position as first violin.