

## 2018 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
1	Option B is correct	Definition 2 best matches the way the word <u>stretch</u> is used in paragraph 9. The words “road,” “intersection,” and “street” suggest a specific area while “half-block” refers to the size of something. These words suggest that in this context, <u>stretch</u> can be defined as the length or extent of an area.
	Option A is incorrect	While the author and his brother’s adventure may seem unusual given their young age, the adjective “half-block” suggests the word <u>stretch</u> refers to the length of an area, not an activity that is beyond what is normal.
	Option C is incorrect	While the word “scurried” emphasizes how long it took the author and his brother to cross the street, “half-block” suggests the word <u>stretch</u> refers to the length of an area, not a period of time.
	Option D is incorrect	The word <u>stretch</u> is not referring to the physical attributes of the author or the amount of elasticity in something.
2	Option J is correct	The sensory language in paragraph 7 shows that the author has vivid memories of this day. The phrase “In my mind’s eye, I can still see us” suggests that the author has distinct memories of a past event. This conclusion is reinforced by the author’s inclusion of specific, sensory-based details.
	Option F is incorrect	The author does not express his doubts about completing his adventure until later in the selection. The sensory language in paragraph 7 does not indicate any sense of doubt.
	Option G is incorrect	The sensory language does not help the reader understand that it was difficult to push the wagon.
	Option H is incorrect	The sensory language does not indicate any measure of distance.
3	Option B is correct	Paragraphs 8 and 9 are mainly describing the boys’ typical route to the store. The description of their neighbors in paragraph 8, combined with the safety measures described in paragraph 9 (avoiding painful weeds, taking precautions at a busy intersection), suggest that they had been to the grocery store numerous times and were following their typical routine.
	Option A is incorrect	Neither paragraph 8 or 9 describes how the author and his brother worked together to push the wagon.
	Option C is incorrect	While the author recalls passing the houses of two different neighbors in paragraph 8, no neighbors are described in paragraph 9.
	Option D is incorrect	While the author recalls “keeping a sharp eye out for painful goathead weeds” and looking “both ways” in paragraph 9, no safety measures are described in paragraph 8.
4	Option J is correct	The sentence in paragraph 12 “I couldn’t stand it” implies that the author began to worry about getting in trouble after he saw his house across a vacant lot and realized his mother might see him. He decided the new experience was not worth getting in trouble.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Mr. Byford calls the boys back in to the store at the end of paragraph 12, the author had not yet realized at this point in the selection that his groceries were not in the wagon with his brother.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author describes turning around before finishing his adventure, it is not because he was satisfied. The fact that he muttered “Turn around” after realizing he “couldn’t stand it” indicates that he was dissatisfied with having to turn back.
	Option H is incorrect	The author had not forgotten that his mother was waiting for them and suddenly remembered. He decided to abandon his plan when he realized his mother might see him across the vacant lot.

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5	Option A is correct	The author refers to his five-year-old self several times in the selection (paragraphs 1, 4, and 6), which shows the significance of his venture to the next street over. Many phrases and descriptions throughout the selection (“I had a secret mission in mind”; “my devious 5-year-old mind had concocted a plan”; “the big adventure I was planning”; “I could see the other road—the road almost taken”) emphasize how important he felt it was.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author’s experience includes pushing his brother in a wagon to the neighborhood store, the amount of time it took to get there is not emphasized in the selection.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the student could infer that the author took care of his little brother by pushing him in a wagon, the importance of caring for his brother is not highlighted as a significant part of his experience.
	Option D is incorrect	This selection mentions only one rule, stated in paragraph 5: “But the next street over was off-limits—too close to the busy Dallas Highway, Mama said.” Although paragraph 13 suggests that the author was worried about the consequences of his actions, the author does not describe his experience in a way that highlights how much he worried about following his mother’s rules when he was a child.
6	Option G is correct	The student should recognize the theme of wanting to explore the unknown. The author introduces the idea in paragraph 4 when he describes how he had been wanting to venture beyond the boundaries set by his mother. The author further develops the idea with descriptions of being eager to explore “the unknown” (paragraph 11). Finally, the author’s description in paragraph 16 of looking at the forbidden road from his front porch and deciding he may try to see it again in the future supports this theme.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author did break the rules by deciding to explore the next street over, his mother was unaware of it. There is no evidence in the selection to suggest a negative outcome for his actions, even though he was worried that there might be.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the author did forget the bag of groceries at the store, the selection does not emphasize his forgetfulness nor does it develop a theme about the consequences of hurrying.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the selection is centered on going to a new location, this theme is not fully developed because the author was too nervous to finish his journey. The new location (“the next street over”) wasn’t exciting to the author because he was “feeling too guilty” (paragraph 11).
7	Option A is correct	This summary successfully includes the major events and key details from the entire selection. The first sentence covers the events of paragraphs 1–10: the author plans to visit a forbidden street after picking up groceries for his mother. The second and third sentences describe the climax of the story, and the last sentence describes the resolution of the story when the author returns home and does not get in trouble.
	Option B is incorrect	This summary leaves out important details about why the author turned around and does not include the resolution.
	Option C is incorrect	This summary indicates that the author did not complete his journey because he forgot the groceries. This option omits the important information from paragraphs 11 and 12 that suggests he didn’t finish the journey because of his guilty conscience and his fear of being caught by his mother. It also omits the resolution.
	Option D is incorrect	This summary leaves out important details, such as how the author was not allowed to go to the next street over and how he was called back to the store for the forgotten groceries.

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8	Option J is correct	The details in paragraph 5 support the idea that human communication is too complex to replicate with computers. Humans rely on “more than words” to communicate, and meaning is derived also through “context, tone, facial expressions, body movements, and objects in the world.”
	Option F is incorrect	Although paragraph 5 briefly mentions humor and sarcasm, the idea that humans use a lot of humor and sarcasm in everyday speech is not supported by the details in the paragraph.
	Option G is incorrect	Paragraph 5 gives details to support how humans are able to derive meaning and effectively communicate, as opposed to focusing on “miscommunication.”
	Option H is incorrect	The idea that language software is designed for a specific style of communication is not supported by paragraph 5. There is no mention of language software nor its purposes.
9	Option D is correct	The main idea of paragraphs 7 and 8 is that speech-recognition technology poses a variety of potential problems. This idea is supported in paragraph 7 with examples, including attachment issues and the likelihood of computers taking over human jobs. The main idea is further supported with the privacy concerns described in paragraph 8, such as “the collection of large quantities of personal data.”
	Option A is incorrect	While paragraph 8 addresses privacy concerns with the use of speech-recognition applications, paragraph 7 does not.
	Option B is incorrect	While paragraph 7 suggests that young people might become overly dependent on technology, there is no reference to this problem in paragraph 8.
	Option C is incorrect	Although paragraph 7 addresses the possibility that computers might take over human jobs, paragraph 8 does not mention the loss of human jobs to computers at all.
10	Option H is correct	Developers are still trying to develop speech-recognition technology that makes people feel like they are speaking to a human. Paragraph 3 discusses an ongoing competition where judges commend computers that seem the most humanlike, and paragraph 9 asserts that modern software companies strive to make computer interaction “just like communicating with another human.” Such technology does not yet exist. Paragraph 2 states that many people find speech-recognition systems “impersonal,” and so far, judges are not consistently fooled by computers in the Turing test.
	Option F is incorrect	Paragraph 2 establishes that this technology exists today. Therefore this is no longer technology that speech software creators are striving to develop.
	Option G is incorrect	Paragraph 6 explains that speech-recognition technology that helps people complete simple tasks on electronic devices already exists. The description of the virtual personal assistant (VPA) “Siri” shows that software is now capable of hearing a human command and acting upon it.
	Option J is incorrect	The selection does not suggest that minimizing human interaction is a goal. Paragraphs 7 and 8 express numerous concerns about computer-dependent societies. The tone of the selection implies that human interaction is still important.

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11	Option B is correct	The author emphasizes the idea that speech-recognition systems are constantly improving. In paragraph 2, the author states that the technology has advanced since the 1950s. The author provides numerous details regarding the capabilities of speech-recognition systems and concludes with the statement that “the continuing evolution of speech-recognition software is thrilling to behold” in paragraph 9.
	Option A is incorrect	While the author does describe speech-recognition systems as “money-saving tools” in paragraph 1, this idea is not developed throughout the rest of the selection.
	Option C is incorrect	While the author describes the advent and capabilities of virtual personal assistants (VPAs) in paragraph 6, the selection does not elaborate on this idea.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does address the limited capabilities of early speech-recognition systems. However, this information is included mainly to provide a contrast with modern speech-recognition systems, whose improvements are emphasized throughout the selection.
12	Option F is correct	The author’s main purpose is to describe the history and advancement of speech-recognition technology. To achieve this purpose, the author presents examples of early, current, and future speech technology, discusses specific accomplishments and relevant concerns.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author outlines a few specific concerns about speech-recognition technology in paragraphs 7 and 8, criticism is not the inherent purpose of the selection.
	Option H is incorrect	While the author mentions consumer familiarity with speech-recognition technology, there is no suggestion that customers rely on it too much.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author includes a graphic depiction of “How VPAs Work,” the selection is not written to describe a process. The illustration is included to support the message about technological progress.
13	Option A is correct	This sentence from paragraph 2 explains why some people prefer human-to-human communication. It cites the reasons why many people are not enthusiastic about communicating with computers (they are “impersonal, stilted, and sometimes frustrating”) and therefore may prefer speaking with a human.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence does not explain why some people prefer to communicate with other humans rather than with computers; it simply states that judges in a contest can usually tell when they are communicating with a computer rather than another person.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence does not suggest that humans prefer to communicate with other humans over computers nor explain why that might be so.
	Option D is incorrect	This sentence reveals that some people have doubts about human-computer interactions, but it does not explain why nor does it express a preference for human-to-human communication.
14	Option G is correct	The author organizes the information in the selection by describing both advancements of and concerns about speech-recognition technology. Advancements are described throughout the selection. In paragraphs 7 and 8, the author describes concerns related to the technology. The pros and cons of speech-recognition technology provide the organizational structure for the selection.
	Option F is incorrect	While the author describes the development of speech-recognition technology, the organizational pattern of the selection is not based solely on time-order. The author gives some dates, but also includes paragraphs that do not show progress over time.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the author provides a graphic illustration of speech-recognition’s technical processes, the text does not follow a similar format. The author does not explain the steps software must follow to understand speech.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author provides a contrast in the way humans and computers communicate. However, the text overall does not follow a comparison structure.

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15	Option D is correct	This sentence expresses the author’s opinion about speech-recognition technology. The idea that the progress being made is “thrilling” is not an objective fact that can be measured or proved.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the claim is not supported with definitions or statistics in the selection, this is a measurable fact that likely could be verified.
	Option B is incorrect	While the idea that machines “will take over functions that were traditionally performed by humans” is an opinion held by some people, it is not established as the author’s own opinion.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the idea that people’s digital trails might result in “data mining” may seem speculative, the author presents it as a factual claim and supports it by explaining that people leave an “audio track” of their speech behind and that speech can be “saved to a remote server for processing.”
16	Option H is correct	Anthony is surprised by the difference in Grandpa Joe’s appearance, particularly how he lets his hair “run wild.” This detail, along with the description of Grandpa Joe’s “muddy work gloves, rumpled jeans, and lime-green garden shoes,” supports the meaning of <u>refined</u> as someone who has a clean, neat appearance, rather than a wild, messy appearance.
	Option F is incorrect	The fact that Grandpa Joe is “weeding his garden” does not provide an antonym context clue for <u>refined</u> , which the context suggests is related to his appearance.
	Option G is incorrect	The context in paragraph 1 suggests that <u>refined</u> is related to Grandpa Joe’s former appearance rather than his former profession.
	Option J is incorrect	While the selling of his house in the suburbs seems to have prompted Grandpa Joe to make a transformation, the phrase “sold his house” does not provide an antonym context clue for <u>refined</u> .
17	Option B is correct	The first three paragraphs of the story establish that Anthony is surprised to learn how much Grandpa Joe has changed. In paragraph 1, Anthony explains how he “wasn’t expecting” Grandpa Joe “to look so different.” In paragraph 2, Anthony expresses a sense of wonder that his grandfather “who had been preoccupied for decades with interest rates now cared only about organic gardening.” In paragraph 3, Anthony reveals that he is supposed to observe Grandpa and report his behavior.
	Option A is incorrect	While Anthony does contrast his wild-haired, gardening grandpa to the “bank president” version of his grandfather, there is no evidence in paragraphs 1 through 3 to suggest he prefers the more serious Grandpa he has always known.
	Option C is incorrect	Anthony does explain in paragraph 3 that he is visiting his grandfather on behalf of his mother, who is worried about Grandpa Joe. However, the worry is related to Grandpa Joe living alone, not so much his activities. Additionally, Mom’s worry is not addressed in paragraphs 1 and 2
	Option D is incorrect	While Anthony does describe Grandpa Joe’s enthusiasm for gardening, he does not reveal a personal interest in learning how to maintain a garden.
18	Option G is correct	Grandpa Joe is excited to make pesto sauce for his grandson, who is fond of the dish. The fact that Grandpa and Anthony drive “15 miles to the nearest co-op grocer” to purchase the ingredients for the sauce provides additional evidence of Grandpa Joe’s excitement.
	Option F is incorrect	While Anthony is initially excited to eat homemade pesto sauce, there is no evidence in paragraph 5 to suggest Anthony believes Grandpa Joe’s sauce will taste better than the store-bought variety.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that Anthony is comparing the sauce he sees at the store with the kind he usually buys.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that spending time with Grandpa Joe is Anthony’s motivation for not mentioning the store-bought sauce. He is spending time with Grandpa whether they use the ready-made pesto or not.

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19	Option C is correct	Anthony's first-person description of events in paragraphs 12 through 15 reveals why he enjoys Grandpa Joe's homemade pesto sauce despite the taste. Anthony describes Grandpa Joe "proudly" serving the sauce and Grandpa's "sparkling" eyes when he asks Anthony's opinion of the sauce. In paragraph 14, Anthony reveals how he associates the sauce with all the other fun details of his day with Grandpa Joe. Finally, Anthony describes how happy Grandpa Joe is when he hears how much Anthony loves the sauce and how this makes Anthony truly love the sauce after all.
	Option A is incorrect	Anthony does not describe or think about how Grandpa Joe feels about living by himself in the old cottage. The reader would only understand Grandpa Joe's feelings if the story were told from his point of view.
	Option B is incorrect	While the reader does learn that Grandpa Joe's parents "made everything from scratch . . ." in contrast to Grandpa Joe who "never seemed to have the time to cook" while working full-time, this detail is provided by Grandpa Joe's dialogue, not through Anthony's first-person viewpoint.
	Option D is incorrect	While Anthony does think about his Italian heritage in paragraph 9, the use of first-person point of view does not reveal how all the characters feel about their Italian heritage.
20	Option H is correct	Grandpa Joe's actions suggest that he wants to reconnect with his Italian roots. In paragraph 8, Grandpa Joe uses the Italian word for grandpa to refer to himself while talking about making "a big home-cooked meal," suggesting he views this as an Italian custom. Paragraph 10 suggests that he wants to reconnect with his Italian heritage as he makes homemade pesto sauce for Anthony.
	Option F is incorrect	Although his banking career is mentioned, Grandpa Joe does not do anything in the story to suggest he regrets the years he spent working as a banker.
	Option G is incorrect	While Grandpa Joe refers to details of his former life in paragraph 10, he does not do anything in the story to suggest he misses living and working in the suburbs.
	Option J is incorrect	While Grandpa Joe acknowledges that he never made Italian food for his daughter, his actions do not support the conclusion that he wishes she would cook Italian food for him.
21	Option D is correct	The student is provided with the prefix "per," which means "throughout," and the root word "annus," which means "year." Combined, this means "throughout the year," which closely matches the correct response, "continually present."
	Option A is incorrect	While the poem does not provide a specific number of years that the "old man" has operated the vegetable stand, the provided Latin root word and suffix do not support the meaning of <u>perennial</u> as "not measurable."
	Option B is incorrect	While Mother is looking for the most desirable produce, the word <u>perennial</u> is used to describe the "baking sun," not the vegetables. Neither the context of the poem nor the information about the origin of <u>perennial</u> support the meaning "highly desirable."
	Option C is incorrect	The context of the poem suggests that the old man does not avoid the "baking sun." However, the provided Latin root word and suffix do not support the meaning of <u>perennial</u> as "not easily avoided."
22	Option H is correct	The metaphor describing Mother "on the hunt in search of prime specimens" of peppers (lines 1–2) emphasizes that Mother is actively searching, or hunting, for the peppers, which suggests she is determined to find exactly the right peppers to use in her sauce.
	Option F is incorrect	There is no evidence in the poem to suggest Mother is eager to return home to start preparing her sauce. The description of her "hunt" for the best peppers suggests that she is taking her time and being very thorough in her search for ingredients.
	Option G is incorrect	While the hunting metaphor does suggest that Mother is determined to find the best produce, there is no evidence that she is competing with other shoppers.
	Option J is incorrect	Mother does combine different ingredients in her hot sauce, and the second stanza suggests that she is skilled at preparing the sauce. However, the first stanza describes her searching for the ingredients, not combining them.

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23	Option B is correct	The words “patiently,” “pounds,” and “promptly” highlight Mother’s devotion to her task. She “patiently” washes the hot peppers, showing that she is willing to dedicate time to making her sauce. She “pounds” the ingredients with “force,” which shows the physical effort she puts into making her sauce. Finally, the fact that she “promptly places her concoction outdoors to ferment,” shows that she is determined to see the process through to its conclusion.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Mother clearly puts effort into making the hot sauce, there is no evidence in the poem to suggest that improvements are desired or necessary.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker is nearby, but there is no evidence that the speaker is actually helping with the preparations or that Mother needs assistance.
	Option D is incorrect	Mother’s patient washing of each pepper suggests that she is focused on carefully completing the task rather than trying to quickly finish up her work.
24	Option H is correct	The detailed present-tense description of Mother hunting for and examining ingredients, the description of “fiery” peppers with “skins shiny smooth as plastic . . . screaming from inside glad sandwich bags,” the step-by-step description of Mother preparing the sauce, and the suggestion that this process takes place “year after year,” convey that the experience is vividly recollected by the speaker.
	Option F is incorrect	There is no evidence that the speaker wants to visit the market again soon. Also, the phrase “year after year” suggests that making hot sauce is an annual tradition rather than one that takes place frequently.
	Option G is incorrect	Most likely this poem is told from the perspective of a child, and the phrase “year after year” suggests that this process took place throughout the speaker’s childhood. However, there is no reference to the speaker’s age or that she wishes to be young again.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no evidence that the memory of Mother making hot sauce makes the speaker feel childlike. In fact, the speaker may still be a child; the poem makes no reference to the speaker’s age.
25	Option A is correct	The description of Mother hunting through the market, a process that seemingly takes place “year after year,” suggests that she takes the task of making hot sauce for her family seriously. This conclusion is supported by the description of Mother carefully preparing the ingredients so that her family can enjoy the sauce.
	Option B is incorrect	The phrase “Back home” in line 27 suggests that Mother shops for ingredients for the sauce and prepares the sauce in the same day, so she is not spending the entire day making the sauce.
	Option C is incorrect	The details in the poem suggest that this is an annual event rather than something Mother does every day. And the fact that the sauce has to ferment in the sun suggests that it takes more than a day for it to be ready.
	Option D is incorrect	The details in the poem suggest that the speaker carefully observes her mother making the hot sauce, and has done so over many years. However, there is no evidence to support the conclusion that Mother wants her child to learn to make the sauce.
26	Option J is correct	Both the story and the poem provide details about preparing food in a traditional way. In the story, Grandpa Joe makes homemade pesto sauce, shopping for ingredients, mixing “eggs and flour into dough,” and cleaning “basil leaves.” In the poem, the speaker describes her mother’s process for making hot sauce, from searching the market for ingredients to “patiently” washing the peppers and packing them into “an old vinegar bottle,” which she places outside in the sun to ferment.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Mother’s selection process is described in the poem, there is no real description in the story about how Grandpa Joe selects his ingredients. Also, hot sauce is a condiment, not a meal.
	Option G is incorrect	Neither the story nor the poem make a comparison between how much the younger and older people know about preparing food.
	Option H is incorrect	Anthony’s description of eating Grandpa Joe’s sauce and pasta suggest that it is not as good as the store-bought variety, and the poem does not make any comparisons between Mother’s hot sauce and hot sauce that is available in the store.

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27	Option C is correct	Anthony did not expect Grandpa Joe to look so different, and this surprise carries over to dinner, when Grandpa Joe talks about making homemade Italian food. Anthony's surprise contrasts with the speaker in the poem, who seems completely familiar with her mother's process of making hot sauce. In this way Anthony differs from the speaker in the poem.
	Option A is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest Anthony finds Grandpa Joe's actions particularly amusing. And, while the speaker in the poem describes her mother's behavior, there is no evidence to suggest the speaker feels concerned.
	Option B is incorrect	Anthony reveals in paragraphs 14 and 15 that he does appreciate his grandfather's efforts. However, the detailed description of Mother making hot sauce does not support the conclusion that the speaker in the poem feels indifferent towards her mother's efforts.
	Option D is incorrect	When Grandpa Joe says to Anthony, "if I remember correctly, you like pasta with pesto sauce," Anthony eagerly nods, which encourages Grandpa Joe's interest in preparing homemade food. However, the speaker in the poem appears impressed, not concerned, about Mother's traditional ways.
28	Option J is correct	Details in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the story show that Grandpa Joe just recently became interested in growing and preparing his own food. Furthermore, Grandpa pulls recipes off the internet and his blender appears to have had little use. In contrast, Mother has been hunting for "prime" ingredients at the same market year after year. The step-by-step description of Mother's process suggests experience in preparing her own sauce, as does the fact that she does not consult a recipe.
	Option F is incorrect	Grandpa Joe prepares a homemade dinner of pesto sauce and pasta for himself and Anthony the same night. However, Mother's hot sauce needs to ferment in the "Puerto Rican sun," suggesting it will not be ready to consume right away.
	Option G is incorrect	While Mother does make her hot sauce from fresh produce she selects at the market, Grandpa uses freshly picked basil and garlic from his garden. This is a similarity between the two characters, not a difference.
	Option H is incorrect	While Mother does use "her wooden mortar and pestle" to make her hot sauce, Grandpa uses a pasta maker and a blender, which could be considered special equipment as well. Therefore this does not show how the characters differ.
29	Option B is correct	Both Anthony and the speaker in the poem take comfort in observing a family member doing something with love. In paragraph 12 of the story, Anthony notes Grandpa Joe's pride in serving his meal. In paragraphs 14 and 15, Anthony fondly recalls the day he shared with his grandfather and Grandpa Joe's warm smile. In the second stanza of the poem, the speaker compares her mother's preparations to a "concert," where "the hanging pictures over the dinner table all dance to her cooking drum," suggesting that Mother makes the sauce with love.
	Option A is incorrect	Both parts of this option are untrue. Anthony does help Grandpa Joe make homemade pasta with pesto sauce, and making the pesto sauce and pasta is not portrayed as a routine chore. In the poem, there is no evidence that the speaker wants to help, nor is the process portrayed as a routine chore.
	Option C is incorrect	Anthony does help Grandpa Joe make pesto sauce, suggesting that he may learn how to make the sauce. However, the speaker in the poem does not help her mother make hot sauce, so there is no evidence that she has learned to make the sauce on her own.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker in the poem refers to Mother's "concoction" fermenting under "a Puerto Rican sun," suggesting that she understands the cultural tradition in Mother's process. However, Anthony does not address the significance of any cultural tradition at the end of the story.

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30	Option H is correct	Both characters would likely agree that making food from scratch can be very satisfying. Paragraph 4 reveals Grandpa Joe’s eagerness to make homemade pesto sauce, while paragraph 7 illustrates Grandpa Joe’s pride in making his own pasta. Grandpa Joe “proudly” serves the home-cooked meal in paragraph 12. Mother clearly puts much time and effort into her yearly tradition of making hot sauce—from carefully selecting “prime specimens” of peppers, to “patiently” washing each pepper before combining them with spices and placing her “concoction” out in the sun to ferment.
	Option F is incorrect	Evidence from the story and poem suggests that Grandpa and Mother enjoyed the time spent cooking and preparing food for family, so it is not likely they believe that cooking meals for others takes too much time.
	Option G is incorrect	While Grandpa Joe clearly enjoys living in the country, he does not actually compare it to living in the city. The “vegetable post” described in lines 5 through 10 of the poem indicates a country setting, but no preference for country living is suggested.
	Option J is incorrect	While the story shows that Grandpa Joe enjoys growing and preparing food “from scratch,” and the poem describes a mother’s tradition of making hot sauce for her family, neither text suggests that “old” methods of doing things are preferable to modern ways.
31	Option C is correct	The adventurers hoped that filming their journey would help people around the world to appreciate the beauty and diversity of the river. In paragraph 5, the author describes the sights and experiences on the journey as “awe-inspiring” and suggests that not many other people encounter these sights.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Scaturro and Brown likely gained some fame as a result of their journey, the selection does not emphasize their desire to become more famous.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the selection does mention “urban pollution” in paragraph 6, there is no evidence to suggest that Brown and Scaturro are promoting efforts to clean and protect areas along the river.
	Option D is incorrect	Scaturro noted in his journal that he and Brown saw few people on their journey along the Nile River; however, there is no evidence to suggest that the two men want to encourage more tourists to visit the Nile. In fact, the selection emphasizes that many sections of the river are hazardous for travelers.
32	Option J is correct	Details from paragraph 2 support the idea that the Nile spans diverse areas. Paragraph 2 refers to the Nile flowing through “large cities,” “capital cities,” “deserts,” “mountains,” and more.
	Option F is incorrect	Although this detail illustrates that the Nile flows through a large area, it does not support the idea that the area is diverse.
	Option G is incorrect	Although this detail shows that the two branches of the Nile originate in different countries, it does not highlight the diversity of the areas through which the river flows.
	Option H is incorrect	The fact that the main tributaries of the Nile River meet in Sudan does not reveal whether this area is diverse.
33	Option B is correct	In paragraph 3, the author suggests that the expedition was challenging by stating that no one had successfully completed it before Scaturro and Brown. This idea is continued in paragraph 4 through descriptions of the dangers the explorers encountered.
	Option A is incorrect	While paragraph 3 indicates that no other explorers had successfully traveled the length of the river, this idea is not continued in paragraph 4. There is also no reference to the number of explorers that have attempted the journey.
	Option C is incorrect	While paragraph 3 indicates that a small crew joined Scaturro and Brown and helped with planning, it does not indicate how much planning the expedition took, and this idea is not continued in paragraph 4.
	Option D is incorrect	While a small crew is described in paragraph 3, the selection does not expand on why the crew was small, and this idea is not continued in paragraph 4.

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34	Option F is correct	For Scaturro and Brown, the satisfaction of traveling the Nile River outweighed the dangers of the journey. The author begins the paragraph by stating that the two men encountered dangers but were also “met with awe-inspiring sights and experiences.” Scaturro describes the journey as “an adventure” in which he and Brown had the river all to themselves.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author indicates that Scaturro and Brown saw few travelers on their expedition, this detail alone is not enough to support an inference that they were able to get away from modern life, particularly since they were using modern equipment on their journey.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no indication in paragraph 5 that the men’s survival skills were tested. Instead, it focuses on the amazing sights they saw and the solitude they experienced.
	Option J is incorrect	Although it can be inferred that Scaturro and Brown captured what they saw on film, nothing suggests that these sights were better experienced on film than in person.
35	Option C is correct	Details in paragraph 6 support the idea the river is a shared foundation for many diverse cultures. The author describes the many different areas the Nile flows through and indicates that these areas are “countries with diverse cultures, beliefs, and environments that are all connected by the mighty river.”
	Option A is incorrect	This question asks the student to go beyond the details given to determine a bigger idea that the details support. While paragraph 6 does list many African countries that the Nile River flows through, the main idea in this paragraph is that the river is “a unifying thread of civilization in northeastern Africa.”
	Option B is incorrect	While the author does mention pollution at the beginning of the paragraph, the additional details in paragraph 6 do not support this idea.
	Option D is incorrect	Paragraph 6 does not compare the size of cities in Egypt to those in other countries. The idea that the largest cities along the Nile are in Egypt is not supported.
36	Option G is correct	The map of the Nile River Valley is included to illustrate the long, winding course of the river that is described in paragraph 2. The map shows the entire course of the Nile, including the two rivers that serve as the Nile’s sources and the countries the river flows through. It also shows the meandering path of the river.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the map shows that the Blue Nile is one source of the Nile, it also shows the larger White Nile as an additional source of the river. The map does not indicate that the Blue Nile is the primary source.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the map shows the different countries the Nile flows through, it does not emphasize the importance of the river to those countries.
	Option J is incorrect	Although some popular locations along the river are mentioned at the end of paragraph 2 (“ancient cities”; “the pyramids”), these locations are not highlighted on the map.
37	Option D is correct	In paragraphs 1 through 3, the author includes background information about the Nile River, including where it is located and why it is important. In paragraphs 4 through 6, the author goes on to describe Scaturro and Brown’s expedition along the river, including the dangers they faced along the way, as well as their hope for the outcome of the expedition.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author begins the selection by suggesting why Scaturro and Brown would want to explore the Nile River, there are very few details regarding how they prepared for the journey. This option also leaves out that the author describes their expedition in paragraphs 4 through 6.
	Option B is incorrect	The selection does not make comparisons between the Nile River and other rivers. Furthermore, this option limits the journey to the Blue Nile, whereas the selection discusses the journey along the entire Nile River.
	Option C is incorrect	This option leaves out that the author provides background information about the Nile in paragraphs 1 through 3. The selection is not organized in a way that focuses only on Scaturro and Brown’s difficulties.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
38	Option G is correct	The author's main purpose for writing the selection is to describe the first expedition to travel the full length of the Nile River. The author provides background information about the history of the Nile to reveal why Scaturro and Brown would make such an expedition. In paragraph 4, the author describes the dangers, and in paragraphs 5 and 6, the author concludes by suggesting why the expedition was important.
	Option F is incorrect	The idea that the Nile River brings together a variety of cultures is mentioned in the conclusion, but explaining that idea is not the author's purpose for writing the selection.
	Option H is incorrect	The purpose of the selection is not to discuss dangers that "travelers" have encountered. Rather, it is to give information about Scaturro and Brown's successful expedition of the entire Nile River.
	Option J is incorrect	While the author begins by providing some information about the history of the Nile River in paragraphs 1 and 2, that is not the focus of the selection.
39	Option C is correct	This summary successfully includes key events and major details from the entire selection. The first and second sentences of the summary covers information from paragraphs 1–4 about why Scaturro and Brown's expedition was significant and what their journey was like. The third and fourth sentences of the summary include information from paragraphs 4–6 regarding the conditions Scaturro and Brown experienced on their expedition as well as the effect the journey down the Nile had on the two men.
	Option A is incorrect	This option does not address why Scaturro and Brown's expedition was significant, nor does it illustrate the effect the journey had on the two men. The second sentence includes a list of details; these are not necessary in a summary statement.
	Option B is incorrect	This option leaves out information about why the expedition was significant and what the two men learned from the expedition. The last sentence of this option includes minor details that are not appropriate in a summary.
	Option D is incorrect	This option does not address the significance of the expedition or what Scaturro and Brown learned on their journey, nor does it address the conditions the two men encountered along the river. This option gives too many minor details and not enough key ideas.
40	Option F is correct	Coach Wilson calls Teresa's mother most likely to tell her that Teresa's tryout will not be successful. In paragraph 6, Coach Wilson warns Teresa, "I'm not sure you're ready." In paragraph 29, Teresa's mother reveals that the coach called to prepare her "for what to expect." The conclusion is further supported by the discrepancy between Teresa's and the other athletes' jumps, as well as Coach Jennings's dismissive attitude towards Teresa.
	Option G is incorrect	Though the text describes Teresa's brief interactions with a new coach, there is no evidence to suggest that Coach Wilson warns about an adjustment to this coach. Coach Wilson does not believe the tryout will result in a new relationship between Teresa and the new coach.
	Option H is incorrect	While paragraph 6 suggests Coach Wilson has reservations about the tryout, nothing in the story suggests that she asks Teresa's mother to discourage it.
	Option J is incorrect	Coach Wilson calls to ensure that Teresa has a ride to Grand Prairie, not to provide directions to the facility.

## 2018 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationales	
41	Option C is correct	This comment reveals Teresa's overestimation of her talent, which is a theme throughout the story as she insists on a tryout at an Olympic training facility. Teresa objects to her coach's suggestion of practice and also asserts that she has Olympic potential, despite her limited experience. She does not recognize her mistake until she sees elite athletes outperforming her.
	Option A is incorrect	Teresa's comment demonstrates a lack of maturity, but it does not influence the theme of the story. Teresa's failure at the tryouts is not related to her lack of knowledge about her chosen sport.
	Option B is incorrect	The theme of the story is not centered on the usefulness of the coach's advice. Furthermore, Teresa is not critical of the advice; she simply ignores it as she overestimates her own talent.
	Option D is incorrect	Teresa's comment implies that she does not feel the need to prove her abilities; she assumes she will make the Olympic team ("When I'm on the Olympic team, you'll see what I mean.").
42	Option F is correct	Teresa reevaluates her talent as a long jumper when she witnesses another athlete jump "6.27 meters." She reflects on her own jumps, realizing she cleared "barely more than 5 meters" and suddenly understanding "why no one had measured her jump" (paragraph 21).
	Option G is incorrect	While Teresa's mother encourages additional practice before the tryout, her urgings do not inspire reevaluation but instead prompt Teresa to respond "But this is my big chance!" in paragraph 11.
	Option H is incorrect	While Coach Jennings is unimpressed with Teresa's first jump, this does not prompt Teresa to reevaluate her talent; instead, she thinks "I just need to stretch" (paragraph 16).
	Option J is incorrect	Teresa does decline the opportunity to jump a second time. However, this event occurs after Teresa reevaluates her talent.
43	Option D is correct	In paragraph 27, Teresa's mother states that Teresa "refused to listen" to Coach Wilson's advice, suggesting that Teresa is not being honest with herself about her current skill level. This conclusion is further supported in paragraph 31, when Teresa's mother urges Teresa to be "realistic" about her skill level.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Teresa's mother drives Teresa to a tryout with the Olympic long-jump coach, their conversation afterward does not suggest she believes that Teresa can make the Olympic team if she practices enough. Rather, she thinks Teresa needs to be more "realistic."
	Option B is incorrect	Teresa's mother voices reservations before the tryout, but the story does not suggest that she knows the trip was a waste of time. Teresa's mother hopes Teresa will return to her routine with a more "realistic" assessment.
	Option C is incorrect	Nothing in the story suggests that Teresa's mother tries to "trick" her daughter into taking practice seriously. She expresses her hope that Teresa will be "a successful long jumper" as well as a "realistic" one.
44	Option H is correct	The story's third-person limited point of view reveals Teresa's thoughts regarding her performance at her tryout with Coach Jennings. Paragraphs 16 through 18 illustrate that Teresa is starting to question her ability. In paragraph 26, the reader learns that Teresa is unhappy that Coach Wilson didn't warn her about what to expect at the tryout. Finally, in paragraph 34, the reader learns that Teresa has not given up on her dreams of being an Olympic long jumper.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Teresa's mother does have doubts about Teresa attending the tryout, this is revealed through dialogue between Teresa and her mother, not through the third-person limited point of view.
	Option G is incorrect	The third-person limited narration only offers insight into Teresa's point of view. The narration does not share Coach Jennings's thoughts or feelings; rather, it reveals Teresa's perception of them.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Coach Wilson states, "I'm not sure you're ready, Teresa," the third-person limited narration only offers insight into Teresa's point of view. Coach Wilson's thoughts and feelings are revealed through conversation with Teresa.