

Item Position	Rationale
1	The word <i>mess</i> in paragraph 1 has a similar meaning to the word <i>kerfuffle</i> in paragraph 2, which means “disagreement or commotion.” In paragraph 1, the author illustrates the confusion and disorder caused when “an explosion” occurs because of players arguing over the rules of a game, with the players needing to “try to sort through” the disagreement.

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Item Position	Rationale	
2	Option D is correct	In paragraphs 3 and 4, the author describes how playing board games helps develop “ ‘soft skills,’ such as problem-solving, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to work as a team” (paragraph 3). Additionally, the author points out that playing board games teaches effective communication skills, “patience and the ability to focus” (paragraph 4). These qualities allow players to cooperate effectively and build strong relationships, reinforcing the author’s key idea that board games encourage qualities that help people get along with others.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author mentions in paragraph 2 the practice of following the rules of a board game, the author does not suggest that losing gracefully is more important than following those rules.
	Option B is incorrect	The author notes in paragraph 4 that explaining rules can enhance public-speaking abilities, but this idea supports the broader discussion of skill development and is not the key idea of paragraphs 3 and 4.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author mentions resolving conflicts as one example in paragraph 3 of a soft skill learned by playing board games, this example is only part of a larger idea about how board games promote qualities that help people get along with others.

Item Position	Rationale	
3	Option B is correct	In paragraph 7, the author acknowledges that “video gamers may argue that online gaming makes board games old-fashioned” but then asserts that video games “cannot replace the experience of playing board games” because of the lack of “face-to-face interactions.” The author establishes this contrast in order to counter the belief that traditional board games are outdated.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author briefly mentions that some board games have digital versions, but the author uses this reference to support the argument that video games do not replicate the in-person interaction of board games, rather than to document the evolution of gaming.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author includes information in paragraph 7 that supports the idea that online gaming lacks face-to-face interaction, the author uses this detail to strengthen the rebuttal to critics who claim that board games are outdated. The author’s noting of this difference is not the main reason the author mentioning video games.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author emphasizes that video games “cannot replace” the unique social experience of board games and does not imply that the two activities offer similar benefits.

Item Position	Rationale	
4	Option A is correct	In paragraph 8, the author notes that “board games have near-universal appeal,” highlighting the idea that almost all players can find a game they enjoy. The author uses this idea to encourage the reader to view board games positively by stressing their popularity and wide appeal.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author’s use of the phrase “near-universal appeal” might suggest connection among people, in paragraph 8 the author focuses on variety and enjoyment rather than explicitly emphasizing social unity.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author does not include specific details about individual game features. Instead, the author speaks broadly about the range of options available to different interests.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not use the phrase “near-universal appeal” in paragraph 8 to contrast board games with video games but rather to emphasize the popularity of board games on their own terms.

Item Position	Rationale	
5	Option B is correct	In paragraphs 3 and 4, the author emphasizes the social and emotional benefits of playing board games by stating that players practice skills such as “problem-solving, creativity, flexibility, . . . and the ability to work as a team,” as well as communication strategies, “patience and the ability to focus.” These benefits appeal to the reader who wants to find enjoyable ways to connect with others. By presenting board games as opportunities for face-to-face interaction and shared fun, the author targets an audience interested in socializing through group activities.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author mentions that there are many types of board games, the author highlights the benefits and inclusiveness of board games rather than persuading the reader to collect or purchase games.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author briefly references public speaking as one possible skill people can learn from playing board games, but it is not the author’s central focus in the selection, nor does it highlight the intended audience.
	Option D is incorrect	Although some games involve strategy, the author does not attempt to teach an audience game tactics but to emphasize broader social and emotional benefits of playing board games.

Item Position	Rationale	
6	Option A is correct	In paragraphs 3 through 5, the author organizes information into categories—soft skills, emotional benefits, and intellectual skills—to demonstrate that playing board games provides multiple types of advantages. The author’s use of this structure helps the reader understand that board games offer a range of benefits and reinforces the main idea that board games are valuable for different aspects of personal growth.
	Option B is incorrect	The author never ranks or compares which benefits are more useful. Instead, the author presents the categories as equally valuable.
	Option C is incorrect	The author does not suggest that different types of board games are required to gain the benefits discussed but rather that playing board games in general can promote many skills.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author mentions a few research-supported skills, the author does not indicate that certain benefits have been studied more than others. The author uses the categories to serve an explanatory purpose, not a research emphasis.

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7	Option C is correct	Mood in a text is when the author makes the reader feel a certain way through words or details. In paragraph 1, the author uses the sentence "Someone else calls out, 'But LAST time . . .'" to heighten the sense of disorder and to build the chaotic mood of the scene.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author uses the sentence "You're all talking and playing and eating snacks" to reflect a casual, lighthearted atmosphere at the start of the scene rather than to reflect the chaos that follows.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author uses the sentence "The game stops, and the room is suddenly quiet" to signal the transition from casual to chaotic (the argument) and to build anticipation. The author does not use this sentence to create chaos.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author uses the sentence "Eventually, the game gets back on track" to restore a sense of calm and to indicate that the conflict has subsided. The author does not use this sentence to intensify the chaotic mood.

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8	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

Item Position	Rationale	
9	Option C is correct	In paragraphs 14 through 17 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author portrays how his family supported him when he wanted to climb the world's tallest mountains as a boy. The author's father motivated him by setting challenging goals to help make him get "stronger and stronger," and his stepmother gave "encouraging speeches" advising him to approach big challenges in smaller steps. The author includes these interactions to reveal how his family helped him stay focused and determined during training.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraphs 14 through 17 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author does not include general information about mountain-climbing techniques or training routines. Instead, the author highlights a personal experience during a strenuous hike and his family's emotional support.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author does include information about preparing to climb Kilimanjaro in previous paragraphs, in paragraphs 14 through 17 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author does not include information to support how he, as a boy, prepared for his climb. Rather, the author describes how he responded to the challenges of his training and how his family helped him persevere.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author does mention specific climbing gear in paragraph 5, in paragraphs 14 through 17 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author emphasizes his perseverance and motivation rather than describing equipment or tools.

Item Position	Rationale	
10	Option D is correct	In the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author mentions sprinting during speed intervals, which enabled him to transform frustration into productive effort. In paragraph 13, he explains that sprinting “tired [him] out faster,” and by paragraph 14, he reached the summit, indicating that this physical exertion became the means through which he resolved his struggle and succeeded.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 1 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author mentions adding weight to the day pack to describe an early stage of training, rather than to describe an action that resolved the immediate conflict on Snow Summit in paragraphs 11 through 15.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 11 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author mentions questioning his father’s methods in order to demonstrate the author’s doubt and frustration, not to show the moment of resolution.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 5 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author references climbing Snow Summit in order to reflect on his experience and background preparation, but the author does not depict that act as something that helped him overcome the challenge described later in the excerpt.

Item Position	Rationale	
11	Part A	
	Option A is correct	In paragraph 13 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author describes the training as “the hardest thing [he had] ever done,” and in paragraph 15, he wonders how he will make it to the top of Kilimanjaro. Through these reflections, the author reveals that his experience on Snow Summit led him to recognize the immense difficulty of his ultimate goal.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author shares moments with his father during the Snow Summit climb in the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author’s focus remains on his physical struggle and the realization of the larger challenge rather than appreciation of family time.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author relied on guidance from his father and Karen throughout his experience on Snow Summit in the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author does not suggest that learning to trust others was the primary outcome of the experience.
	Option D is incorrect	The author uses the climb on Snow Summit in the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> to demonstrate perseverance, but the author’s main intent is to highlight his understanding of the magnitude of his ambition, as shown in paragraph 15.
	Part B	
	Option D is correct	In the sentence from paragraph 15 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author directly confirms that the Snow Summit climb prompted his awareness of his ultimate challenge.
	Option A is incorrect	In the sentence from paragraph 6 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author notes surprise about hiking on snow and ice for the first time, but the author does not reflect on the scale of his final goal.
	Option B is incorrect	In the sentence from paragraph 13 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author conveys difficulty by defining the training as “the hardest thing [he had] ever done,” but the author does not explicitly link this idea to his recognition of Kilimanjaro’s magnitude.
	Option C is incorrect	In the sentence from paragraph 14 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author shows the encouragement and support he received from his father in paragraph 14. The author includes the moment to indicate his accomplishment rather than to reflect on his larger goal.

Item Position	Rationale	
12	Option D is correct	In paragraph 10 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author writes that interval training “for an entire mountain was more than a little <u>intimidating</u> ,” indicating that the challenge made him feel uneasy or uncertain about his ability to complete it. The surrounding context—his description of the workout as demanding but ultimately rewarding—confirms that <u>intimidating</u> means “causing doubt or concern.”
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 10 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author describes the training as a way of “building strength and endurance,” not as something that might lead to physical deterioration. The word <u>intimidating</u> relates to emotional apprehension rather than physical ruin or decay.
	Option B is incorrect	In the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author does not express feelings of despair or sorrow. Instead, he conveys apprehension about the strenuous nature of the workout and whether he can meet its demands.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author briefly worried about the possibility of failure in the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , he uses the word <u>intimidating</u> in paragraph 10 to convey doubt or concern, not the act or outcome of failing to meet expectations.

Item Position	Rationale	
13	Option B is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different than their literal interpretation. In lines 8 and 9 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas" ("When my brain is a barren desert,/a whistling of tumbleweeds through a land empty of ideas,"), the poet uses figurative language to show the speaker's state of mind by comparing the speaker's mind to a desolate landscape. The poet's use of this image helps the reader infer the speaker's sense of creative emptiness and frustration. Through this vivid comparison, the poet conveys the speaker's discouragement rather than describing literal events.
	Option A is incorrect	In line 8 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet's comparison of the speaker's brain to "a barren desert" does not include information about what the speaker values. The poet includes information that conveys the mental frustration of being unable to think of ideas rather than emphasizing importance or priorities.
	Option C is incorrect	In lines 8 and 9 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet does not include information that refers to specific past events. Instead, the poet includes the description to represent the speaker's present feeling of mental stagnation.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet uses the desert imagery in lines 8 and 9 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas" to portray the speaker's emptiness and lack of inspiration, contrasting with the hopeful tone that later appears in lines 25 through 30, when the speaker envisions creative renewal.

Item Position	Rationale	
14	Option A is correct	In the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet uses the single-sentence stanza in line 21 ("I stay still.") to interrupt the flow of the poem in order to draw attention to a moment of deliberate quietness. The poet's use of this pause mirrors the speaker's decision to calm the mind and allow inspiration to arrive. Structurally, the poet uses the single-sentence stanza to signal a turning point for the speaker: after the frustration of earlier stanzas, the speaker's stillness leads to renewed creativity.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet uses the concise structure of line 21 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas" to affect pacing, not rhyme or rhythm. The poet wrote the poem in free verse, so the poet uses this moment as a purposeful pause rather than as compensation for a rhyme scheme.
	Option C is incorrect	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The poet does not include sensory detail in line 21 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas." Instead, the poet uses this line to present an abstract statement about the speaker's decision to be still.
	Option D is incorrect	In the single-sentence stanza in the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet expresses a single unified idea—remaining still—rather than merging two distinct concepts. The poet isolates the moment of quiet reflection.

Item Position	Rationale	
15	Option B is correct	A theme is a central message that conveys a universal idea about life. In lines 5 through 7 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet describes "the old boards that we turned into a tree house" and "the old boards that we camped in during the summer and/turned into a fortress against snowballs in the winter." Through these details, the poet shows how discarded materials become something both useful and imaginative, supporting the theme that "something new can be created from something old."
	Option A is incorrect	In lines 1 through 3 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker remembers the old boards gathered from the garage, but the poet does not show the creative transformation in these lines. The poet uses lines 1 through 3 to set up the later change but does not illustrate the creation that the theme refers to.
	Option C is incorrect	In lines 8 through 10 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker recalls the pie tin after describing a blank mind ("When my brain is a barren desert,/a whistling of tumbleweeds . . ./I remember the pie tin:"). The poet uses these lines to signal reflection, not transformation. The speaker's reuse of the pie tin by turning it into a Frisbee and a game—the act of creating something new from something old—happens in subsequent lines.
	Option D is incorrect	In lines 22 through 24 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker states, "I remember the old boards./I remember the pie tin./I remember me." Although these lines link back to earlier examples of creation, the poet uses the lines themselves to emphasize reflection or self-recognition, not the act of making something new from something old.

Item Position	Rationale	
16	Option D is correct	Throughout the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker recalls how ordinary objects, such as the old boards that "turned into a tree house" (line 5) and the pie tin that "turned into a Frisbee" (line 12), once inspired creativity and imagination. By the end, the speaker connects those memories to the present, realizing that imagination continues to help overcome creative challenges: "I remember me./I dream of what will be. . . /Will I leave behind a legacy?/Abandon the ordinary?/So many possibilities—/I crack the door and welcome that shy idea:/'Come in!' " (lines 24–30). The poet's idea that youthful imagination fosters creative responses to challenges reflects the poem's central message and belongs in a summary.
	Option A is incorrect	In lines 5 through 7 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet describes the speaker's specific actions: "The old boards that we turned into a tree house./The old boards that we camped in during the summer and/turned into a fortress against snowballs in the winter." The poet uses these details to illustrate examples of imaginative play, which are supporting details rather than the poem's central idea. Including this sentence in a summary would overemphasize a secondary detail.
	Option B is incorrect	In line 11 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet notes that the pie tin "cradled apple pies on my grandmother's windowsill." The poet includes this detail to provide background imagery and establish the speaker's personal memory, not to convey the poet's main point about how imagination repurposes ordinary objects.
	Option C is incorrect	In lines 12 through 14 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet includes information to show that the pie tin "became a Frisbee" and "became a game," which are concrete examples of creative reuse. However, the poet includes these specifics to support the larger theme rather than stating the theme outright. Summaries should state the central claim rather than list individual examples such as these.

Item Position	Rationale	
17	Option C is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The author and the poet both include sensory details to deepen the reader's understanding of each situation. In the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author describes "freezing cold wind blowing into [his] face" and that "tears streamed down [his] cheeks" during the climb, which convey physical struggle (paragraph 13). And in lines 8 and 9 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the poet uses imagery to communicate the speaker's creative emptiness: "When my brain is a barren desert,/a whistling of tumbleweeds." The author's and the poet's use of imagery helps the reader form a clearer, more empathetic picture of the author's and the speaker's circumstances.
	Option A is incorrect	Both the author and the poet include information to show internal reactions to challenges. However, neither the author nor the poet uses imagery as a tool for analysis; instead, their uses of descriptive language immerse the reader in the physical or mental experience itself. The author's and the poet's use of imagery helps the reader experience the emotion, not study it from a distance.
	Option B is incorrect	Although both the author and the poet include information about mountain climbing and creative thinking, the author's and the poet's vivid descriptions are not used to show instructions for performing those activities. The author's and the poet's use of sensory language builds atmosphere and emotion rather than explaining how to climb or find inspiration.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author and the speaker both persist through difficulty, the author's and poet's use of imagery does not provide models for overcoming obstacles. The author's struggle against cold and exhaustion in paragraph 13 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> and the speaker's barren landscape of the mind in lines 8 and 9 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas" are how the author and poet reveal what persistence feels like and are not a step-by-step approach others should follow. The author and the poet include imagery to portray individual internal experiences rather than universal strategies.

Item Position	Rationale	
18	Option D is correct	Tone is the author’s use of words and phrases to show the way he or she feels about the subject. In the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author uses the language in paragraphs 11 through 13 to emphasize persistence. The author’s detailed descriptions of “sprinting during [his] speed intervals,” learning to “sink all ten spikes on [his] crampons,” and enduring “freezing cold wind blowing into [his] face” convey endurance and mental strength. In contrast, the poet uses the language in lines 1 through 10 of the poem “Waiting for Ideas” to convey longing through expressions of creative emptiness and desire for inspiration. The author uses phrases such as “failure freezes me in my tracks” and “my brain is a barren desert” to evoke yearning for ideas to return. The author of the excerpt creates a tone of persistence in physical struggle, whereas in contrast, the poet creates a tone of longing for renewed creativity.
	Option A is incorrect	The author uses the language in paragraphs 11 through 13 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> to convey determination rather than caution. The author describes pushing through exhaustion and frustration as he sprinted up a freezing slope, indicating persistence, not hesitation. The poet uses the language in lines 1 through 10 of the poem “Waiting for Ideas” to focus on creative struggle and self-doubt, not enthusiasm. The poet uses phrases such as “failure freezes me in my tracks” and “my brain is a barren desert” to suggest discouragement rather than excitement.
	Option B is incorrect	The author’s tone in paragraphs 11 through 13 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> does not invite sympathy. Instead, the author’s narrative voice emphasizes effort and grit: “tears streamed down my cheeks” and “climbing practically straight up the ski slope.” In the poem “Waiting for Ideas,” the speaker does not express pride but uncertainty; the poet uses imagery to convey emptiness and creative stagnation.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author’s language in paragraphs 11 through 13 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> is serious, the speaker in the poem “Waiting for Ideas” has not yet reached a hopeful tone in lines 1 through 10. At this stage of the poem, the speaker remains caught in frustration and self-doubt, referring to a “barren desert” of ideas. The poet develops a hopeful tone later in the poem, when the speaker begins to welcome inspiration.

Item Position	Rationale	
19	Option A is correct	A first-person point of view is a narrative perspective in which the story is told by a character within the text. Both the author and the poem's speaker reveal inner conflict through personal reflection, and the author's and poet's use of first-person perspective helps the reader understand these internal struggles. In the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author describes frustration and doubt while training: "I was so frustrated that tears streamed down my cheeks" (paragraph 13). In lines 15 and 16 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker admits to feeling inferior: "When I am sure that every person in the world/is immeasurably smarter than me."
	Option B is incorrect	Neither the author nor the poem's speaker expresses a wish to alter previous events. In paragraphs 1 through 15 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author reflects on training challenges and progress, and in lines 21 through 30 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker focuses on current creative blocks and the hope for new ideas, not on changing the past.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author mentions his father's and Karen's encouragement in paragraphs 1 through 4 and paragraphs 16 and 17 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author's use of first-person narration is intended to reveal his internal experience rather than to highlight appreciation for help from loved ones. In the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker does not refer to assistance from others, so appreciation for help is not a shared emphasis.
	Option D is incorrect	Neither the author nor the poet includes information that centers on an inability to accept the future. In paragraph 15 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author wondered about reaching Kilimanjaro's summit but ultimately continued training, and in lines 29 through 30 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker opens the "door" to new ideas, indicating openness rather than refusal to accept the future.

Item Position	Rationale	
20	Option A is correct	In the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author's goal is explicitly physical. In paragraphs 1 through 13, he trained by carrying heavier packs, using a medicine ball, and practicing interval training and crampon technique to prepare for climbing mountains such as Kilimanjaro. In lines 1 through 30 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker addresses a creative obstacle while waiting for ideas and reviving imagination. Thus, only the author's goals require physical training as described in the excerpt.
	Option B is incorrect	Both the author and the poem's speaker demonstrate goals that require mental focus. In paragraphs 9 through 15 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author endured frustration and strategized training methods, and in lines 21 through 30 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker uses reflection and small steps to encourage ideas. Mental focus is therefore a shared detail, not a difference exclusive to the author.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraphs 1 through 4 and paragraphs 16 and 17 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author's training involves family support through his father and Karen, and in lines 5 through 14 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker recalls collaborative childhood play with the old boards and pie tin. Neither the author nor the speaker pursues goals entirely alone, so working alone is not a distinguishing difference.
	Option D is incorrect	Both the author and the poem's speaker develop confidence through persistence. In paragraph 15 of the excerpt from <i>No Summit Out of Sight</i> , the author felt "a little bit proud" after reaching the top of Snow Summitt, and in lines 25 through 30 of the poem "Waiting for Ideas," the speaker regains trust in imagination by welcoming a "shy idea." Confidence is a shared outcome, not a differentiating characteristic.

Item Position	Rationale	
21	Option A is correct	In paragraph 1, the author lists some of the remarkable capabilities of maglev trains: they “can reach speeds of 400 miles per hour”; are “smoother, quieter,”; and “use about 30% less energy than regular trains.” From these specific details, the reader can infer that maglev trains represent an impressive technological feat because they combine extraordinary speed, improved ride quality, and greater energy efficiency.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author notes in paragraph 1 that maglev trains are “smoother [and] quieter” than regular trains, the author does not use those two descriptors alone to establish that comfort is the primary or defining characteristic. In paragraph 1, the author pairs smoothness and quietness with speed and energy savings, which collectively emphasize technological performance rather than passenger comfort as the main idea.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author includes details that focus on performance attributes (speed, smoothness, lower energy use), but the author does not include references pertaining to cost, amenities, or clientele that would indicate luxury.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the author does not discuss the history or novelty of maglev trains, nor does the author state or imply that maglev trains are newly invented. Instead, the author treats their features as established facts about the technology.

Item Position	Rationale	
22	Option B is correct	A controlling idea is a statement that summarizes the overall idea of a piece of writing. In this sentence from paragraph 2, the author includes information that explicitly frames the article's primary focus: maglev trains illustrate how engineers apply scientific principles to build advanced technology. The author develops that idea by comparing maglevs to conventional trains in paragraphs 3 through 6, by including an explanation of magnetic and electromagnetic forces in paragraphs 7 through 11, and by addressing guideways and feasibility in paragraphs 12 through 15. The author includes these sections to support the controlling idea identified in paragraph 2.
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence from paragraph 1, the author provides information about an important fact but does not express the broader controlling idea about engineering and scientific design. Because the author confines the focus in this sentence to speed without connecting that detail to engineers' use of science, the sentence is not intended to state the controlling idea for the full article.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence from paragraph 13, the author includes information that introduces the presence of a specific drawback. The author does not intend this sentence to synthesize the overall purpose.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence from paragraph 15, the author includes information that focuses narrowly on cost estimates and feasibility and highlights practical limitations. Although this detail contributes to the article's overall discussion, the author does not intend this sentence to restate the central idea.

Item Position	Rationale	
23	Option C is correct	The author dedicates paragraphs 7 through 11 to explaining magnetism and electromagnetism and explicitly links those forces to maglev train design: "Magnetism is one of the forces engineers use to design and build maglev trains" (paragraph 7); "Engineers use electromagnetism in the design and construction of maglev trains" (paragraph 9). Given that textual emphasis, the author includes the diagrams most likely to clarify how electromagnets produce levitation and forward motion, making the technical explanation in those paragraphs more accessible.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author discusses construction costs and feasibility in paragraphs 13 through 15, the diagrams are illustrations of magnetic and electromagnetic principles. Therefore, the author uses the diagrams most likely as a technical explanation of how electromagnets work, rather than explanations of construction budgets.
	Option B is incorrect	Although in paragraphs 1 through 6 the author compares maglev trains' ride quality and energy use with that of traditional trains, the author includes the diagrams to accompany the technical discussion of magnetism and electromagnetism. The author includes the diagrams most likely to support the information in paragraphs 7 through 11.
	Option D is incorrect	Although in paragraph 1 the author states that maglev trains are "smoother [and] quieter" than traditional trains, the author includes the diagrams most likely to depict electromagnetic mechanisms and to support the information in paragraphs 7 through 11, not to provide evidence for passenger comfort. The author reserves the diagrams for clarifying the science.

Item Position	Rationale	
24	Option B is correct	A controlling idea is a statement that summarizes the overall idea of a piece of writing. In paragraph 7, the author introduces magnetism and permanent magnets; in paragraph 8, the author discusses poles and attraction/repulsion; and in paragraph 9, the author defines electromagnets and their temporary, switchable magnetism. This sequence of information creates a compare-and-contrast presentation that the author uses to emphasize multiple magnetic forces at work in maglev design. The author's use of this organizational pattern supports the controlling idea that engineers apply scientific principles to design the trains.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraphs 7 through 9, the author does not present advantages and disadvantages of electromagnetism; instead, the author defines terms and clarifies differences. The author does not include an evaluative listing in those paragraphs that would raise doubts about the value of maglev trains.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraphs 7 through 9, the author describes what permanent magnets are and how electromagnets function, but the author does not present a step-by-step process for acquiring or producing electromagnets. The author maintains a comparison approach to the organizational pattern rather than a procedural one in these paragraphs.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraphs 7 through 9, the author focuses on the science of magnets and electromagnets rather than on categorizing experiments that inspired maglev design. In these paragraphs, the author provides an operational explanation of magnetic forces but does not document experiments that served as historical inspiration.

Item Position	Rationale	
25	Option B is correct	This paraphrase accurately restates that engineers rely on magnetism to design maglev trains and that magnetism comes from permanent magnets made of naturally occurring metals such as iron, nickel, and cobalt.
	Option A is incorrect	Although this paraphrase mentions that engineers use permanent magnets, it omits the specific information about how magnetism is produced and includes the unnecessary detail that other forces are also “highly useful.”
	Option C is incorrect	This paraphrase adds an inference not present in paragraph 7 by stating that maglev trains are “powered by the force of magnetism.” The paraphrase also introduces permanent magnets and identifies their metal composition, introducing phrasing that conflates content from paragraph 8.
	Option D is incorrect	This paraphrase includes information that recasts permanent magnets as “objects that are made from force-producing metals” and states that engineers “depend on these objects to power the trains.” In paragraph 7, the author does not label the metals as “force-producing,” nor does the author assert that engineers depend on permanent magnets to power trains. Rather, in paragraph 7, the author identifies permanent magnets as a natural source of magnetism that engineers use in design.

Item Position	Rationale	
26	Option A is correct	The author includes this sentence from paragraph 2 to support the idea that maglev trains are more advanced because magnetism and electromagnetism are innovative technologies not found in diesel or electric-powered trains. The author uses the descriptions of levitation and propulsion to reflect a technological advancement beyond traditional methods of rail movement.
	Option B is incorrect	The author includes this sentence from paragraph 4 to describe a general physical principle that applies to all trains, rather than to identify an innovation unique to maglev technology.
	Option C is incorrect	The author includes this sentence from paragraph 6 to provide data about energy consumption, not to support the idea that maglev trains are technologically superior. The author is highlighting the limitations of traditional trains rather than demonstrating how maglev trains surpass them.
	Option D is incorrect	The author includes this sentence from paragraph 12 to emphasize similarity among types of maglev trains, not to show maglev trains' superiority to other train systems. The author is not providing evidence of advancement over diesel or electric-powered models.

Item Position	Rationale	
27	Option D is correct	The author's primary purpose for writing this article is most likely to inform. Throughout the article, the author describes how maglev trains function and notes their growing development, suggesting that this technology could become a regular transportation option.
	Option A is incorrect	In the article, the author explains how maglev trains function but does not present an argument or make a call to action for improving the U.S. railroad system. The author does not use persuasive techniques or evaluative statements to influence the reader's opinions about current infrastructure.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author includes information about engineers and design, the author's focus in the article is on explaining how maglev trains operate rather than on solving a specific problem. In paragraphs 2 through 12, the author provides general information rather than a discussion of challenges and solutions.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author mentions fuel consumption of traditional trains in paragraph 6, the author's main reason for writing the article is not likely conservation. The author's purpose extends beyond energy efficiency and focuses on introducing the reader to a new transportation technology.

Item Position	Rationale	
28	Option C is correct	An analogy is a rhetorical device that compares two dissimilar ideas or objects for the purpose of explaining or clarifying an idea. In paragraphs 10 and 11, the author introduces an analogy that compares electromagnetism in maglev trains to a simple experiment involving a battery, wire, and nail. By connecting the train's use of electromagnetism to a recognizable example, the author enables the reader to infer that the same scientific principle operates at different scales. Through this analogy, the author helps strengthen the reader's understanding of a complex technology.
	Option A is incorrect	The comparison in paragraphs 10 and 11 is most likely not meant to minimize the complexity of maglev design. The author describes how an electric current passing through a wire can magnetize a nail and how removing the current causes the nail to lose its magnetism. This explanation simplifies the concept of electromagnetism, not the engineering process itself. The author's use of analogy helps clarify scientific principles; it does not suggest that building a maglev train is easy.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author refers to a battery in paragraph 10, the purpose is illustrative rather than literal. The author's inclusion of the battery and nail example helps the reader understand how electrical current creates temporary magnetism. Engineers designing maglev systems use large-scale electromagnetic equipment, not household batteries.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not use the analogy to address design flaws or potential problems. In paragraphs 10 and 11, the author focuses on explaining how electromagnetism functions—how turning electrical current on or off controls magnetic force. The author uses language such as “the electrical flow will stop, and the nail will no longer be magnetized” to illustrate control, not malfunction (paragraph 11). The author does not provide evidence in this section to indicate that the analogy is meant to warn about design errors.

Item Position	Rationale
29	The student response below has been identified by Texas educators as meeting the requirements for a 10-point (maximum score) response based on the rubric criteria. For additional information, refer to the Grade 8 scoring guide available on the STAAR Reading Language Arts Resources webpage. The United States should invest in Maglev trains because they are more efficient, better for the environment, and help the country grow technologically. The first reason why the United States should invest in Maglev trains is because they are more efficient. In the article How Maglev Trains Work it states "The new train would cut the current travel time from 30 minutes to 15 minutes." That means that Maglev trains would cut the travel time to 50% of the original travel time which would make public transportation much quicker and more people would use it, causing more profit to help run the trains. The Maglev trains would also be more efficient because they would be more comfortable to ride. They wouldn't be as bumpy or make so much noise, disrupting peoples lives. The second reason why the United States should invest in Maglev trains is because they are better for the environment. In the article it states "In 2016, freight trains consumed about 3.4 billion gallons of diesel fuel." Consuming that much fuel and more every year for trains is detrimental to our environment especially when global warming is so prominent now days. Making the switch to Maglev trains would be the intelligent thing to do, because it would decrease the amount of fuel used since Maglev trains run on an electromagnetism. The third reason why the United States should invest in Maglev trains is because it would help the country grow technologically. Eventually, Diesel and Electric-Powered Trains will have been innovated to the max, unable to make more improvements without just completely switching the Maglev trains. That will end up costing lots of money, probably even more, for not as good results then if the US just switched to Maglev trains now, spending the money and time to build and then reaping the rewards later. In the long run the Maglev trains would give the most bang for your buck. Some people might argue that the building process of replacing the diesel and electric powered trains with maglev trains all around the country would be even worse for the environment than simply sticking with diesel and electric powered trains. However, in the long run this wouldnt be the case. The huge construction task this would take would be gradual, not all at once, spacing out the damage done so that there is enough rest in between, and just sticking to diesel trains would end up being far worse to the environment if no action is made. In the end the Maglev trains would be less harmful. The United States should invest in Maglev trains because of how efficient and benifitting they are for the country and world.

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Item Position	Rationale	
30	Option B is correct	Adding this sentence provides support for sentence 8 because it provides more detail about Duke’s response when Uncle Jed calls his name. This detail helps the writer make it clear that Duke is not a dangerous animal.
	Option A is incorrect	By inserting this sentence, the writer reports an action that has no direct relevance to Duke’s behavior or Uncle Jed’s attempt to reassure Julian. Adding this sentence does not provide support for sentence 8.
	Option C is incorrect	Most of these details about Duke have already been noted in sentence 4. Repeating them here does not support sentence 8.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence, the writer adds a fact about Duke and Uncle Jed that is not related to Duke’s personality and behavior. It would be out of place following sentence 8.

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Item Position	Rationale
31	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

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Item Position	Rationale	
32	Option A is correct	In this revision, the writer repositions the word “contentedly,” thus making it clear that Uncle Jed is acting contentedly, not the rocking chair. The revised sentence is now clear and effective.
	Option B is incorrect	Here the writer’s use of both “leaned” and “leaning” needlessly repeats an idea. The result is an ineffective, redundant sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	In this revision, the use of the unneeded phrase “who was” makes this sentence a convoluted and awkward expression of the writer’s meaning in sentence 31.
	Option D is incorrect	The writer has written sentence 31 in a way that misleads the reader about who or what is acting “contentedly.” The sentence needs to be revised to more clearly express the writer’s intention.

Item Position	Rationale	
33	Option D is correct	A closing sentence should capture the overall meaning of the paper or emphasize an important message. With this sentence, Julian makes it clear that he has gotten over the “rocky start” to his visit and that he now feels happy to be with Uncle Jed and is looking forward to the rest of his time there.
	Option A is incorrect	With this claim about the setting sun, the writer fails to convey any sense of his feelings about the events of the day and what he has learned. This is not a satisfying way to conclude a paper about his coming to feel more and more comfortable staying with Uncle Jed.
	Option B is incorrect	In this sentence, the writer seems to be beginning a new storyline about Duke’s adventure outside. Therefore, the sentence does not do a good job of bringing Julian’s paper to a close.
	Option C is correct	Replacing sentence 34 with this sentence would merely add one more detail about the conversation with Uncle Jed, without really addressing the overall meaning of the paper. This would not be an effective way to close the paper.

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Item Position	Rationale	
34	Option B is correct	A controlling idea is a statement that summarizes the overall idea of a piece of writing. This option stands as the best replacement for sentence 4, because in it the writer explains how and why powers are carefully distributed and balanced among the three branches of the U.S. government.
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence, the writer repeats points that have already been made in sentences 1 and 3. The insertion of this sentence adds nothing to the reader's grasp of the overall idea of this paper.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence amounts to an empty introductory gesture by the writer. It does not add any substance to the first paragraph, so substituting it does not contribute to the reader's understanding of the paper's controlling idea.
	Option D is incorrect	Adding this sentence misleads the reader about the overall idea of the paper. The writer actually denies the claim that the U.S. system is the "simplest" (see sentence 33), and the paper is not primarily a comparison of our system with others in the world.

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Item Position	Rationale	
35	Option C is correct	The claim made in sentence 13 just repeats the information already presented in sentence 12, so sentence 13 should be removed from this paragraph.
	Option A is incorrect	In sentence 10, the writer introduces the topic of the third paragraph by noting the general role and responsibilities of the legislative branch. This sentence is essential to the paragraph and should not be deleted.
	Option B is incorrect	The writer uses sentence 11 to disclose further, more specific responsibilities of the U.S. Congress. This builds on sentence 10 and expands the reader's understanding of the powers of the legislative branch, so it would be a mistake to remove this sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	Sentence 14 is used to directly support sentence 12 by identifying the two groups that make up the U.S. Congress. Deleting this sentence might leave the reader wondering about these "two smaller bodies."

Item Position	Rationale	
36	Option D is correct	A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. Since the writer is using sentences 16–18 to list various offices that make up the executive branch, the phrase “In addition” is the best choice as a transition into sentence 18. Its use signals that this sentence is aimed at adding to that list.
	Option A is incorrect	Using the word “Ordinarily” as the transition into sentence 18 would distort the sentence’s meaning by implying that these agencies only belong to the executive branch sometimes, or under ordinary circumstances. This is not the writer’s intent here.
	Option B is incorrect	The transition phrase “Above all” is used to indicate that something is the most important item in a list. Inserting it here would lead the reader to believe that the agencies mentioned in sentence 18 are the most important parts of the executive branch, which is not what the writer intends.
	Option C is incorrect	The choice of “Conversely” does not fit the relation of sentence 18 to the preceding sentences. Sentence 18 is not being used to inform the reader of something that contrasts with or is opposed to what has just been stated. Thus, “Conversely” is not a suitable transition word in this context.

Item Position	Rationale	
37	Option D is correct	In this sentence, the writer combines the ideas in sentences 34 and 35 in a concise and effective manner. The phrase “Because many people must reach agreement” is used to indicate why lawmakers with different views work together and arrive at solutions through compromise.
	Option A is incorrect	This rewrite is constructed in a way that suggests that the “many people” and the “diverse group of lawmakers” are separate bodies that must agree with each other. This distorts the meaning of sentences 34 and 35.
	Option B is incorrect	This option is a confusing sentence in which the writer’s use of “While” fails to properly relate the ideas in sentences 34 and 35. The awkward and misplaced phrase “that are to compromise when necessary” also adds to the confusion.
	Option C is incorrect	Here the writer creates a needlessly long and repetitive sentence by repeatedly using the conjunction “and.” This ineffective sentence also fails to properly express the relation between the ideas in the original sentences, where one fact (stated in sentence 34) requires or causes the other (in sentence 35).

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Item Position	Rationale	
38	Option C is correct	It is a mistake to capitalize "summer" in sentence 9 because it is not being used as a proper noun, a noun that refers to a specific person, place, idea, or event. This option provides the needed correction.
	Option A is incorrect	At this point in sentence 3, the writer is stating how much bouquets usually cost, correctly using the present-tense verb "are" rather than the past-tense verb "were."
	Option B is incorrect	Sentence 9 is a compound sentence, so the comma after "expensive" is needed to separate the two independent clauses, each of which could stand alone as a complete sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	Here the writer is not comparing two ideas, so it is incorrect to use "greater," the comparative form of the adjective "great."

Item Position	Rationale	
39	Option D is correct	In sentence 6, the writer reports that she showed her bouquet to someone who offered to buy it. The singular pronoun "it," not the plural pronoun "them," should be used to refer to the bouquet.
	Option A is incorrect	In this part of the story, the writer is using past-tense verbs ("spent," "arranged") to describe events that took place at an earlier time. For consistency, the past-tense verb "showed" should not be changed to "show."
	Option B is incorrect	Using the singular possessive noun "mom's" in sentence 6 is correct, since the writer made it clear in sentence 2 that she has just one mother. There is no support for replacing "mom's" with the plural possessive noun "mom's."
	Option C is incorrect	By replacing the conjunction "and" with the word "immediately," the writer would produce a run-on sentence, an error in which two main clauses are joined incorrectly.

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Item Position	Rationale	
40	Option D is correct	Changing “profitible” to “profitable” corrects the spelling error in sentence 7.
	Option A is incorrect	Replacing the phrase “I realized” with the word “Realizing” would create a sentence fragment, an incomplete sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no need for a comma after the word “idea” in this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	In sentence 7, the writer is describing a realization that occurred to her in the past. The use of the past-tense verb “had” is correct in this context.

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Item Position	Rationale	
41	Option A is correct	Sentence 8 contains a comma-splice error, which occurs when two independent clauses (each of which can stand alone as a complete sentence) are connected only with a comma. In this revision, the writer corrects the error and creates an effective, properly punctuated sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	This option includes a sentence fragment, or incomplete sentence. The second punctuated phrase lacks a subject and therefore cannot stand alone as a sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	This cannot be a correct way to write sentence 8 because it is a run-on sentence, a sentence in which two or more main clauses are joined incorrectly.
	Option D is incorrect	Here the second punctuated phrase ("For just enough to make a profit") is a sentence fragment. This is not an acceptable way to rewrite sentence 8.

Item Position	Rationale	
42	Option B is correct	Sentence 3 is a run on sentence, an error in which two or more main clauses are joined incorrectly. In this option, the writer corrects the run-on sentence by forming a clause at the end of the sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	In this instance, the second punctuated phrase is a sentence fragment, an incomplete sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	Here the second punctuated phrase ("Sketching objects or designs") contains no verb, so it too is sentence fragment.
	Option D is incorrect	The writer has included a comma-splice error in this option since two independent clauses (each of which could stand alone as a complete sentence) are only connected with a comma.

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Item Position	Rationale	
43	Option D is correct	By changing the preposition “with” to “on,” the writer more clearly identifies the “task at hand” as the object of the artist’s focus, rather than how the artist focuses.
	Option A is incorrect	The phrase “It can” in sentence 7 clearly refers to the activity of drawing, as mentioned in sentence 6. Changing the pronoun to the plural “They” would not fit this context.
	Option B is incorrect	A semicolon is used to link two independent clauses that are closely related. But the phrase that follows the word “break” is a dependent clause that cannot stand alone. Thus, inserting a semicolon after “break” would introduce a punctuation error into sentence 7.
	Option C is incorrect	The word “during” is spelled correctly in this sentence and should not be replaced by the incorrect “durring.”

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Item Position	Rationale	
44	Option C is correct	In sentence 8, the writer is noting an attribute that drawing is currently believed to have. Using the present-tense verb “is” is the appropriate way to express that claim.
	Option A is incorrect	Inserting the word “being” at this point in sentence 8 creates an incomplete sentence. This cannot be the correct answer.
	Option B is incorrect	The verb phrase “will be” is the future-tense form of the verb “to be.” The writer’s topic in sentence 8 is the properties drawing has now, not in the future.
	Option D is incorrect	Using the verb phrase “has been” would turn the focus in sentence 8 to benefits that drawing had in the past, rather than to its current benefits. That is not the writer’s intent.

Item Position	Rationale	
45	Option B is correct	The phrase “as a person’s ability to draw improves” is a subordinate clause, a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. The writer needs to insert a comma after “improves” because a comma is required after a subordinate clause that precedes the main clause.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing “as” to “before” distorts the meaning of sentence 9. The writer is claiming that people’s confidence increases while they get better at drawing, not before they get better at it.
	Option C is incorrect	“Self-confidance” is a misspelling of the word that the writer intends to use. It should not be substituted for “self-confidence.”
	Option D is incorrect	In sentence 9, the writer cites the fact that mastering a new skill brings self-confidence. This is not a report about what happened in the past, but about what can happen now. The present-tense verb “comes” should not be replaced with “came.”