

2023 STAAR Grade 5 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	Ideas in paragraphs 2 through 6 are presented in chronological order to explain how puzzles were improved upon after the first was invented in 1760. The author includes details such as “a new type of saw made it easier to cut wood into small pieces.”
	Option A is incorrect	The author does not include a specific explanation of when puzzles became more popular. Interest in puzzles grew over time, according to the selection.
	Option B is incorrect	Chronological order would not necessarily be used to explain how puzzles were sold in the past, though it might include that information.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author writes that “puzzles were a cheap form of entertainment,” this idea is not a reason for using chronological order.

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2	Option A is correct	The author uses details in paragraphs 3 and 4, such as descriptions of “a new type of saw” and “new dyes and lower printing costs,” to explain how puzzles were created more quickly.
	Option B is incorrect	Details about the saw are found in paragraph 3, but the saw is used to support the key idea of faster production.
	Option C is incorrect	The author writes about how long the process could take in paragraph 4, but this is a detail about the process.
	Option D is incorrect	The author’s reference to a new wood-cutting tool supports the key idea that puzzle production became faster, but the tool itself is not a key idea.

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3	Option D is correct	The detail in paragraph 6 that “Americans bought about 10 million jigsaw puzzles a week” and the reference to how families could use, reuse, and trade jigsaw puzzles are included to suggest that Americans in the 1930s enjoyed family activities.
	Option A is incorrect	There is no reference to the speed at which Americans traded jigsaw puzzles before the 1930s.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not suggest that children’s playtime increased; the author suggests only that children played with jigsaw puzzles more.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no indication in this paragraph that Americans made their own jigsaw puzzles. The author says that Americans bought jigsaw puzzles.

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4	Option D is correct	In the first sentence of paragraph 9, the author explains a cause: “completing puzzles also helps the right side of the brain.” The details that follow are the effects of this cause, including improved problem-solving, memory, and concentration.
	Option A is incorrect	Although certain skills are listed in paragraph 9, they are not listed in order of importance.
	Option B is incorrect	The details in paragraph 9 are neither compared nor contrasted to any other details.
	Option C is incorrect	The author does not incorporate the element of time into paragraph 9.

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5	Option C is correct	In this sentence, the author demonstrates one clear way that puzzles have changed, saying that more recent puzzles could “create an image that rose into the air.”
	Option A is incorrect	The author uses this sentence to explain how people solve puzzles. The author does not explain how puzzles have changed as an activity.
	Option B is incorrect	The detail that puzzles have increased in popularity does not demonstrate that the puzzles themselves have changed.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author uses this sentence to suggest that puzzles can change people, it is not intended to show how puzzles have changed.

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6	Option D is correct	The use of the word “exciting” and the reference to puzzles as “entertaining” convey the author’s belief that puzzles are a worthwhile activity.
	Option A is incorrect	The author demonstrates appreciation for puzzles but does not mention other activities in these sentences.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no reference to the author’s childhood in these sentences.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author uses the word “wonder” in the second quotation, the author says that there is “no wonder,” or no mystery, as to why puzzles are fun.

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7	Option A is correct	The author uses this idea to express the central idea of the selection, the history, purpose and impact of jigsaw puzzles.
	Option B is incorrect	The original function of puzzles as maps is too specific to be the central idea of the selection.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the selection features an image of two children working on a puzzle together, the central idea is not that people enjoy working on puzzles together.
	Option D is incorrect	The author states in paragraph 10 that “puzzles can be quick and easy or difficult and take time to complete,” but this is a detail about the wide variety of puzzles, not a central idea of the selection.

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8	Option B is correct	The author included these photographs because one shows a puzzle that can be completed by young children and the other shows a more complex vertical puzzle. With these photographs, the author shows that there are different types of puzzles.
	Option A is incorrect	Although puzzles are featured in both photographs, the author does not use either photograph to explain the origin of the name "jigsaw puzzle."
	Option C is incorrect	It cannot be determined that the first puzzles were made of wood by simply looking at the photographs.
	Option D is incorrect	It cannot be determined which type of puzzle best helps the right side of the brain by simply looking at the photographs.

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9	Option A is correct	The author states in paragraph 2 that “Spilsbury’s invention was a success” and then describes the continued rise in popularity of jigsaw puzzles in paragraphs 6 and 7.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not discuss how puzzles should be completed. The reader cannot conclude that puzzles should be worked on in groups.
	Option C is incorrect	There have been puzzles that depict maps, as the author explains in paragraphs 2 and 3, but this idea does not mean that puzzles and maps have many things in common.
	Option D is incorrect	This selection does not include information that would allow the reader to conclude the current cost of puzzles

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10	Option D is correct	The author describes how Thoreau looked at nature carefully, such as when Thoreau noticed how “he watched the seasons change the land and the pond,” so this definition is best.
	Option A is incorrect	There is no rule described in the context of paragraph 5.
	Option B is incorrect	Although Thoreau’s experience in the woods could be seen as an experiment, the reader would be unclear about what the experiment was trying to determine, making this definition ineffective.
	Option C is incorrect	Thoreau wrote many important essays, but the author uses paragraph 5 to specify what Thoreau noticed during his time in nature.

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Item #	Rationale	
11	Option A is correct	In paragraph 6, the author details Thoreau’s ideas about having time to think alone. Because this is an important idea of Thoreau’s book, it should be included in a summary of the article.
	Option E is correct	Including this idea in the summary is important because it helps explain Thoreau’s desire to spend time away from American society.
	Option B is incorrect	This detail is too specific to be included in a summary of the article. Changes in nature are referred to only in one sentence in paragraph 5.
	Option C is incorrect	Thoreau’s book is important to discuss in the summary, but the exact number of essays it contains is not important enough to include.
	Option D is incorrect	The literary style of the time is not relevant enough to the central ideas of the article to include in a summary.

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12	Option D is correct	The poet’s description of a smile beginning “the trip over my face” is a figurative way to emphasize the poet’s own happiness.
	Option A is incorrect	The poet uses the word “pranced” to describe actions as a five-year-old, which suggests a sense of happiness. However, this is a literal description of the poet’s movements, not a figurative description.
	Option B is incorrect	In lines 10-11, the poet uses the words “enclosed in warm walls” to emphasize the act of sitting indoors, almost as if trapped. The poet does not build happiness with these lines, but a sense of desperation to escape.
	Option C is incorrect	The poet does not build a sense of happiness by describing a whisper as “childish” in lines 19 and 20. A “childish whisper” could convey other emotions.

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Item #	Rationale	
13	Option A is correct	Since the poet does not “know/How to bend the backyard to my will,” as indicated in lines 8 and 9, it makes sense that the poet’s first step outside would be careful. Therefore, “careful” is the right definition of “wary” in the poem.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet in Line 21 says “Go out and play, dig, run!” which indicates action, but “quick” is not the definition of “wary.”
	Option C is incorrect	“Large” could describe a step, but large is not a definition of “wary.”
	Option D is incorrect	Steps can sometimes be “Loud,” but loud is not a definition of “wary.”

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Item #	Rationale	
14	Option D is correct	The poet uses lines such as “And all that I wish again comes alive” (line 30) to reveal the speaker’s feelings about playing outside. The poet uses first-person point of view to reveal these feelings clearly and emphatically.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the speaker does explain some favorite hobbies, the poet’s use of first person does not add anything to those explanations. Third person would have been just as effective.
	Option B is incorrect	Other people or perspectives are not featured in this poem.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker refers to time indoors in the second and third stanzas and identifies “looking for wonder in a box” as a problem, but the impact of the poet’s use of first-person perspective is more clearly seen when the speaker thinks about and returns to the outdoors beginning in line 19.

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15	Option D is correct	The end of the poem suggests that the speaker is happy to have ventured outside to play, so it is reasonable to predict that the speaker will do so more often.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the poet uses lines 13 through 18 to suggest that the speaker has grown tired of “the box,” which refers to a device, there’s no way to predict that the speaker will get rid of it or any other technology just to spend more time outside.
	Option B is incorrect	The poet does not seem to suggest that the speaker has made rushed or poor decisions at any point in the poem.
	Option C is incorrect	Though camping is an outdoor activity, the speaker does not specifically suggest a desire to go camping in the woods. The reader would not imagine that the speaker will go camping based on the information in the poem.

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Item #	Rationale	
16	Option C is correct	The speaker of the poem says, “A smile begins/The trip over my face” after going outside; the author of the selection writes that Thoreau believed that “exploring the unknown outdoors was one of the greatest pleasures of life.” Therefore, both the article and the poem convey the message that time spent outdoors brings happiness.
	Option A is incorrect	Thoreau had a clear appreciation for nature, but there is no indication that the poem’s speaker or the poet are advocating for its protection.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author of the article refers to the idea of making money, the speaker of the poem never does.
	Option D is incorrect	The author of the article does not mention children or discuss the experience of being a child.

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Item #	Rationale	
17	Option D is correct	The author of the article notes that Thoreau, through his experience in the woods, wanted to find a solution to society being “too wrapped up in material things.” The speaker of the poem wants to spend less time inside after a personal discovery: “I’m wishing for more to do than stare.”
	Option A is incorrect	Thoreau’s goal for life near Walden Pond was to spend time alone in nature. Although the speaker of the poem describes activities that do not involve others, the speaker does not express a desire to be alone.
	Option B is incorrect	In the article, Thoreau appears to have spent as much time as he would like outdoors. The speaker is not satisfied yet. By the end of the poem, the speaker seems to want to spend more time outdoors.
	Option C is incorrect	The author of the article demonstrates that Thoreau enjoyed being outdoors, though he spent time observing and analyzing his surroundings and not simply enjoying them. There is no indication that the speaker of the poem is required to go outside, but instead heeds an internal desire.

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18	Option C is correct	Both the author of the article and the speaker in the poem suggest that spending time outdoors can help a person build creativity. Thoreau “spent much of his time thinking and writing.” In lines 3 and 4, the speaker of the poem describes “Discovering new worlds each day. / I molded dirt into pies,” and in line 9 shows creativity by bending “the backyard to my will.”
	Option A is incorrect	The author of the article states in paragraph 7 that Thoreau’s “essays also encouraged people to preserve America’s natural environment,” but there is no indication that the speaker of the poem wants to protect the environment or has learned how to do so by going outside.
	Option B is incorrect	Thoreau was self-sufficient in the article, but the speaker of the poem does not learn or mention any outdoor survival skills.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the speaker of the poem’s opinion about the outdoors shifts by the poem’s end, the author of the article indicates that Thoreau’s opinion of nature was consistently positive.

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Item #	Rationale	
19	Option C is correct	In the story, Mom explains that the park is closing in order to take “extra precautions.” In other words, the park is taking a careful, “safe” approach, rather than being “sorry” and risking a bad incident.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Mom may have asked the park rangers questions on the phone, the author does not include her conversation in the story. Mom learned the information she needed from the rangers, but “Asking questions is the only way to get answers” is not the meaning of “better safe than sorry.”
	Option B is incorrect	Although Mom delivers bad news to her family, she does not do so to be “safe.” She is telling them the result of her phone call.
	Option D is incorrect	The “extra precautions” Mom refers to are the park’s efforts to keep people safe and away from the park, not to better understand the weather.

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20	Option A is correct	The fact that Jaylen packs fun activities including a book of scary stories, a deck of cards, coloring books and puzzles suggests that he wants to be sure his family has an enjoyable time on the trip.
	Option D is correct	Because it is a long drive to the state park, Dad reminds them in paragraph 7 that they must be on the road early. Their willingness to depart so early supports the family's eagerness to make the trip.
	Option B is incorrect	The yearly nature of the family's camping trip is not what makes the family eager to go to on this year's trip. The family is excited about the destination, not the repeated nature of the trip.
	Option C is incorrect	A first-aid kit indicates that the family is taking precautions to stay safe, but it is not an indication of eagerness or excitement about the trip.
	Option E is incorrect	Mom talks to the park ranger on the phone to determine whether the park will stay open. She wants to know whether they can go camping. The author does not use the conversation to demonstrate that she desires to go camping.

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21	Option B is correct	The fact that the family reserves their campsite several months before the trip demonstrates careful planning.
	Option A is incorrect	The author includes details in this sentence to provide some features of the state park. Those amenities would exist whether the family were planning a trip or not.
	Option C is incorrect	Kim’s thoughts indicate that she is thinking about the trip, not that the trip itself has been carefully planned.
	Option D is incorrect	Although Kim may have learned how to set up a tent in preparation for the trip, the fact that she is excited to prove herself does not demonstrate that preparation.

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Item #	Rationale	
22	Option C is correct	When Kim realizes that the family can still go camping in the backyard, it prompts her to start setting up the tent there, leading to the story's resolution.
	Option A is incorrect	Kim's plan to read stories is a small detail that is not essential to the plot of the story.
	Option B is incorrect	The plot of the story could still progress without the author's explanation that Kim's father offers to help her.
	Option D is incorrect	Jaylen agreeing to watch a movie is a small detail that is not important to the plot. It does not help the story progress.

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23	Option A is correct	Because the author uses a chronological structure, the reader experiences the emotions of the characters when the characters do, which serves to emphasize those feelings.
	Option B is incorrect	While the main character does experience a series of surprises (the trip is cancelled because the park is closed, but the family decides to camp anyway), the chronological structure serves to present those events in the order they occurred, not to identify which event was most surprising.
	Option C is incorrect	The family is unable to take their trip as planned, but there is no indication in the story that the characters cannot keep track of time.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author explains that it takes Kim a half hour to set up a tent, the story does not need to be chronologically for that detail to be included.

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24	Option B is correct	The author uses the word “hopefully” in this sentence to express a message about staying positive after receiving bad news. “Hopefully” signals Kim’s idea to salvage their plans.
	Option A is incorrect	The phrase “were gone” in this sentence conveys a sense of sadness. Kim’s internal thoughts show that she initially did not feel positive about the situation.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Dad smiles, he seems to smile in support of the daughter’s actions, not because he is trying to stay positive given the situation.
	Option D is incorrect	Dad’s offer of help supports an idea of supportiveness, but without context the sentence is neutral and cannot be used to support a message of positivity.

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Item #	Rationale
25	For ECR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

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Item #	Rationale	
26	Option B is correct	In sentence 4 of the first paragraph, the writer explains that Ms. Kessler was not at her desk, so it makes sense to start sentence 2 with the word “usually” to set up that distinction.
	Option A is incorrect	Ms. Kessler does not set her backpack down, so comparing her actions to what the writer does with “likewise” would not make sense.
	Option C is incorrect	Sentence 2 in the first paragraph is not a specification of a more general statement made in sentence 1.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no clear contrast between the information in sentence 1 and sentence 2. The actions in sentence 2 do not happen despite the actions in sentence 1.

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27	Option A is correct	The revision to this sentence clearly describes the events in the order they take place in the story and in the most concise manner.
	Option B is incorrect	It is unclear what the “it” in this sentence refers to—the backpack or the action of standing up—making the sentence confusing.
	Option C is incorrect	The writer’s revision here makes it seem as though the backpack were knocked onto the floor, but sentence 11 in the story does not indicate that this is true.
	Option D is incorrect	The writer’s use of “knocked and bumped” is redundant. Only one of those words is needed in the sentence.

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Item #	Rationale	
28	Option D is correct	In sentence 21, the writer states that she “couldn’t stop thinking” about her mistake, so she is clearly distracted when her friends are talking about something else.
	Option A is incorrect	Using the word <i>dreamy</i> would suggest a dreamlike state and the word has a positive connotation. The writer is not dreaming, she is just distracted with worry.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the writer is thinking intensely about her mistake, she is not fascinated by it. She dwells on it because it worries her, not because it interests her.
	Option C is incorrect	Replacing “lost” with the word <i>clueless</i> would indicate that the writer is unable to understand what her friends are saying. The writer does not pay attention to her friends, but she is not unable to understand them.

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Item #	Rationale
29	For SCR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

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Item #	Rationale	
30	Option B is correct	"Those seats" clearly refers to the places where African Americans were sitting on a city bus, places that then "had to be given up."
	Option A is incorrect	It is unclear what "them" in this phrase is referring to, making it an ineffective revision.
	Option C is incorrect	Based on the information in the second paragraph, whole buses are not being given up to white passengers.
	Option D is incorrect	"The passengers" are not being given up to anyone. The seats of African American passengers are.

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31	Option C is correct	This revision eliminates the repeated idea of “instructed and told” in the original sentence 14.
	Option A is incorrect	The revision correctly removes the repeated idea of “instructed and told” but introduces confusion by moving the word “and” after the subject.
	Option B is incorrect	Including the repeated idea of both “instructed” and “he told her” does not correct the error.
	Option D is incorrect	This revision makes it seem as if Colvin is giving the instructions, which is not correct according to the original sentence 14.

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Item #	Rationale	
32	Option B is correct	The writer places the subject of the sentence at the start and then clearly expresses the action, creating a concise and effective sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	There is no need to include “it” and the action that “it” describes in this short sentence. This revision is not concise.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no need to include “this” and the action that “this” describes in this short sentence. This revision is not concise. It is an awkward way of expressing the information.
	Option D is incorrect	The meaning of this revision is different from the meaning of the original sentence 24. Here, it seems as though Colvin and the other women may have filed separate lawsuits.

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33	Option A is correct	The information in sentence 26 is not relevant to the rest of the information in the paragraph. If it were removed, the paragraph would still be clear.
	Option B is incorrect	The detail that the Supreme Court is the court that heard Colvin’s case appears in sentence 27. That detail is important and should remain in the paragraph.
	Option C is incorrect	Sentence 28 needs to be included because it provides an effective transition from the information in sentence 27 to the information in sentence 29.
	Option D is incorrect	The Supreme Court’s final decision appears in sentence 29. It is information that is relevant to the writer’s paper and should remain in the paragraph.

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34	Option D is correct	"Persons" should be made possessive in the context of this sentence. An apostrophe should be added.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing "known" to "knew" would introduce the wrong verb form in this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	"And" is a coordinating conjunction that is needed to combine the two independent clauses in sentence 2.
	Option C is incorrect	If "lies" were changed to "lying," the writer would also need to include the helping verb "is."

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35	Option D is correct	Changing “acheive” to “achieve”, corrects the error in misspelling.
	Option A is incorrect	The present tense “use” is the controlling tense of the paragraph. Past tense “used” is not appropriate in the context of this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The comma is needed after “decisions” because it correctly separates the items in this series.
	Option C is incorrect	“Problems” is not possessive. An apostrophe should not be added.

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36	Option C is correct	The comma after “thoughts” is unnecessary and creates a punctuation error.
	Option A is incorrect	“This part of the brain” serves as the subject of the sentence. “It” should not be added because it would incorrectly repeat the subject of the sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	“Brings” is the appropriate form of “to bring” in this sentence. “Brang” is not a standard form of “to bring” in any tense.
	Option D is incorrect	“Feelings” is not the correct spelling of the word “feelings.”

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37	Option C is correct	The use of “it shapes” makes the sentence complete. The sentence now has a subject and a predicate.
	Option A is incorrect	This correction creates a fragment because it removes the subject. It is not a complete sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	This correction removes the subject and creates a fragment. It is not a complete sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	Starting the sentence with “but shapes” makes the sentence incomplete because there is no subject.

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38	Option C is correct	"Texas Hill Country" is a proper noun, so the first letter of every word in it should be capitalized.
	Option A is incorrect	Charlotte is just one person, so "Charlotte's" is the correct way to make her name possessive. "Charlottes" would indicate that there are multiple Charlottes.
	Option B is incorrect	"Memery" is an incorrect spelling of "memory."
	Option D is incorrect	A change is needed in sentence 4 to correct the capitalization error.

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39	Option D is correct	The writer is referring to a memory, so past tense is appropriate here.
	Option A is incorrect	Past tense is needed here for sentence 6 to be consistent with sentence 5. Present tense would not be a logical way to describe the memory.
	Option B is incorrect	“Their” is a possessive pronoun that is used correctly in this sentence. The contraction “they’re” has a different meaning that would not be logical in this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	“Unusual” is used correctly as an adjective in this sentence, modifying “shapes.”

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40	Option B is correct	The comma-splice error in the original sentence 8 is corrected and no additional errors are introduced.
	Option A is incorrect	The subordinating conjunction "so that" is used to combine two clauses. "Showing the two girls together" is a predicate fragment, not a clause, because it lacks a subject.
	Option C is incorrect	Although this revision creates a complete sentence, it does not express the meaning of the original sentence 8.
	Option D is incorrect	"Because it showed the two girls together" is not a complete sentence.

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41	Option B is correct	Changing “packit” to “packet” fixes the spelling error in the sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	Past tense is needed here for sentence 9 to be consistent with sentence 8. Present tense would make this paragraph confusing.
	Option C is incorrect	Writing “in” here would suggest that Charlotte is giving the seeds inside Katie, which does not make sense.
	Option D is incorrect	Charlotte plans to give the seeds to Katie, so “she would give” is an appropriate tense of “to give” here. “Would have given” would suggest that Charlotte had planned to give Katie the seeds but was unable to.