

2023 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	Definition 3 is correct because, in paragraph 8, <u>substantial</u> is used to describe the “amount of time” spent on devices as too much, or “considerable in quantity.”
	Option A is incorrect	There is no question about whether the “amount of time” is real, although the focus of the article is virtual reality.
	Option B is incorrect	The “ <u>substantial</u> amount of time” refers to “quantity” and not a solid structure.
	Option D is incorrect	The question of whether the “amount of time” is important or essential does not relate to how the word <u>substantial</u> is used in paragraph 8.

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Item #	Rationale	
2	Option D is correct	The information in paragraphs 3 and 4 that VR field trips “allow students to experience places they might otherwise never get to visit,” such as the deep ocean and the surface of another planet, support the author’s argument that VR field trips should be an option in all classrooms because VR technology allows students to overcome barriers of time and distance.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the student’s recollection in paragraph 3 is used to imply that some schools provide the necessary equipment, the information in paragraph 4 describes theoretical, not actual, VR field trips.
	Option B is incorrect	Paragraphs 3 and 4 include examples of VR field trips in different subjects, but the author does not illustrate that some subjects are better suited for VR than others.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 3, a student points out a difference between VR and videos; however, there is no suggestion in paragraphs 3 and 4 that VR technology reduces students’ time watching videos.

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3	Option B is correct	In paragraph 5, Hoisington is quoted as explaining that the highest rate of retention occurs when people are immersed in an activity. It can be inferred that being immersed results in being more fully involved in an activity.
	Option A is incorrect	Although enjoyable reading material might enhance student learning, this is not what can be inferred from Hoisington's quotation in paragraph 5.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 5, Hoisington's quotation implies that being immersed increases retention; it does not suggest that students would need to discuss VR field trips.
	Option D is incorrect	Even though it might be inferred that VR field trips are popular among students, Hoisington's quotation in paragraph 5 does not imply this.

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Item #	Rationale	
4	Option A is correct	In paragraph 7, the author presents an opposing argument that the “initial cost” to set up VR technology in the classroom “may be prohibitive,” making it costly technology.
	Option B is incorrect	Paragraph 7 includes a reference to VR programs that are “dependent on students having access to smartphones,” but there is no reference to students having trouble using VR technology on their smartphones.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author discusses parents’ concerns about kids spending too much time using screens; however, the author never mentions parents’ objections to their children using VR technology.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author includes several opposing arguments in paragraphs 7 and 8, none of these refer to challenges in understanding VR technology.

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5	Option A is correct	The author explains how VR technology can improve student learning. For example, the author refers to the “many opportunities that this technology offers to enhance learning” in paragraph 2 and how “VR field trips have the ability to gain students’ attention like no other experience” in paragraph 5.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author argues in paragraph 6 that VR field trips have practical advantages over traditional field trips, the author does not investigate the effectiveness of traditional field trips.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author provides examples of classroom topics that VR could be used for, but this is presented as a detail, not as the author’s purpose for writing the selection.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraphs 7 and 8, the author refers to the costs and other challenges of implementing VR technology in the classroom. However, these are counterarguments and do not represent the author’s purpose for writing the selection.

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6	Option D is correct	Throughout the selection, the author argues for the use of VR technology in schools and explains in paragraph 7 that costs are a particular challenge. The audience who can address that challenge and introduce VR into classrooms are school leaders who plan campus budgets.
	Option A is incorrect	The author’s focus, as explained in paragraph 9, is on the idea that “schools need to strongly consider ways to implement and fund” VR technology, not on the idea that taxpayers should urge schools to do so.
	Option B is incorrect	The author gives no reasons to support the idea that schools need to invest in VR technology because of parents’ concerns regarding the education of their children.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author refers to classroom lessons that could be designed around VR technology, the author’s focus is on why schools should financially invest in VR technology. Teachers are not responsible for planning campus budgets.

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7	Option C is correct	This is the best summary of the selection. The paragraph provides key information about the benefits and challenges of implementing VR field trips in the classroom and an outline of the author’s argument in favor of implementation.
	Option A is incorrect	This summary includes information that should not be in a summary. The detail about NASA is not relevant to this summary. In addition, this summary focuses too much on one of the benefits of VR technology—student interest—and does not mention other benefits or any challenges, such as the benefit of helping students remember information or the challenge of costs.
	Option B is incorrect	The sentences in this summary include too much of a focus on students’ experience of VR technology and neglect to include an overview of benefits, challenges, and the author’s main argument.
	Option D is incorrect	This summary includes the claim that, without VR technology, it would “be impossible” for students to visit certain places through traditional field trips. This is an overstatement and cannot be verified.

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8	Option A is correct	In this sentence from paragraph 1, the author uses vivid descriptions of a person’s experiences while on a VR field trip. The phrase “your breath catches in your throat” clearly supports the idea that the experience is engaging.
	Option B is incorrect	The author refers to a practical consideration in this sentence from paragraph 2. This sentence does not support the idea of the VR experience being engaging.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence from paragraph 3, the author describes a potential benefit of VR field trips. However, the author does not convey the idea that the experience is engaging.
	Option D is incorrect	The author simply states in this sentence from paragraph 4 that “history teachers can use VR to help students understand historic events,” which is a detail that does not describe the engaging experience of VR field trips.

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9	Option C is correct	The Latin word for “to turn away,” <i>divertere</i> , includes the Latin root of “div” (which means “separate”) with <u>diversion</u> . This helps the reader understand that <u>diversion</u> means distraction, or the turning away of attention.
	Option A is incorrect	“Commotion” does not include the Latin root of “div” (which means “separate”) with <u>diversion</u> . “Commotion” describes a noisy disturbance, which is unrelated to the idea of “to turn away.”
	Option B is incorrect	“Competition” does not include the Latin root of “div” (which means “separate”) with <u>diversion</u> . “Competition” refers to an act or behavior of trying to defeat others, which is not related to the idea of “to turn away.”
	Option D is incorrect	“Recreation” does not include the Latin root of “div” (which means “separate”) as is found in <u>diversion</u> . “Recreation” refers to an enjoyable activity and is not related to the idea of “to turn away.”

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10	Option B is correct	The flashback in paragraphs 2 through 9 is used to remind Jesse of his childhood fondness for the shop. For example, Jesse recalls the shop seeming “magical” in paragraph 2 and a “wonderland” in paragraph 3, and in paragraph 7, he seems amazed by the age of the hat.
	Option A is incorrect	The flashback in paragraphs 2 through 9 is used to show Jesse recalling his childhood excitement about the shop, which is contrary to the idea that Jesse wants to spend more time away from the shop.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author’s use of flashback reveals that Jesse was captivated by the shop during his childhood, there is no evidence in paragraphs 2 through 9 that Jesse sees himself as lucky to work in the shop.
	Option D is incorrect	In the flashback, Jesse recalls the excitement of seeing the antiques for the first time and remembers his father referring to the hat as “a family heirloom” (paragraph 9). However, there is no evidence in paragraphs 2 through 9 that Jesse is encouraged to learn about the value of antiques.

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11	Option D is correct	These sentences provide the best summary of the story by including an explanation of why Jesse is at the antique shop, details about how his attitude about the shop has changed since he was a kid, and a description of the event that helps Jesse once again see the value of the shop.
	Option A is incorrect	The sentences in this summary misplace the mention of the family heirloom, which is not referred to at the start of the story. They also leave out Jesse’s newfound appreciation for the shop, which is detailed at the end of the story.
	Option B is incorrect	The sentences in this summary are not effective because they do not include any details from Jesse’s flashback, nor do they include his change of perspective about why people come to the shop.
	Option C is incorrect	Although these sentences include details about Jesse’s time in the shop when he was a kid and his happiness with the shop at the end of the story, they skip the important detail about his dissatisfaction with the shop at the start of the story.

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

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Item #	Rationale	
13	Option B is correct	In lines 7 through 10, the poet describes the different kinds of books you can find at the library, including works of fiction and nonfiction, emphasizing the variety of books at the library.
	Option A is incorrect	In lines 7 through 10, the poet uses figurative language to describe books, depicting novels as having “big eyes” and nonfiction books as “no-nonsense, all muscle/Greyhounds and Dobermans.” However, this is not done to suggest anything about the books’ popularity.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the poet describes in lines 7 through 10 the different kinds of books that can be found at the library, there is no acknowledgment of the difficulty of choosing books.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet does describe different kinds of books found at the library, but there is no evidence that the poet is making any suggestions.

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Item #	Rationale	
14	Option A is correct	The author uses italics to help convey that seeking knowledge is appealing, which is made clear by the comparisons made between knowledge and “doughnut scent” and the “aroma of coffee” in lines 13 and 14, as well as the idea that when “the first page is turned” (line 12), there is “something for everyone” (line 15).
	Option B is incorrect	Even though gaining knowledge can be challenging, the comparisons made between knowledge and the scent of doughnuts and the “aroma of coffee” in lines 13 and 14 do not convey a sense of challenge.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no indication that seeking knowledge, which is compared to the scent of doughnuts and the “aroma of coffee” in lines 13 and 14, is conveyed as shocking.
	Option D is incorrect	Although in lines 13 and 14 knowledge is compared to the scent of doughnuts and the “aroma of coffee,” which could be considered soothing, the italics in line 13 convey a sense of something stronger than simple comfort.

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Item #	Rationale	
15	Option C is correct	The image of “deli offerings” in line 16 is paired with the idea that there is “something for everyone” at the library in line 15. The figurative language is intended to convey that there are many options at the library, as there are at a deli.
	Option A is incorrect	Although not all library books, nor deli offerings, are appealing to all people, the author uses the phrase “something for everyone” in line 15 to make it clear that the figurative language is intended to imply that people can find at least one book that appeals to them.
	Option B is incorrect	The popularity of libraries is not relevant to the poet’s use of figurative language in line 16, which compares deli offerings to library offerings.
	Option D is incorrect	No connection is made in line 16 or elsewhere in the poem between the figurative idea of deli offerings and the importance of certain topics found in the library.

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Item #	Rationale	
16	Option A is correct	In the story, Jesse finds joy when his perspective on the antique shop changes to the understanding that it could be “a place of great discoveries” (paragraph 21); in the poem, the poet conveys a sense of joy about the library, such as the idea in lines 5 and 6 that you will always leave the library “holding something in your arms” and will discover “knowledge” (line 13) and “answers” (line 22).
	Option B is incorrect	Although this statement relates to a theme found in the story, it does not relate to a theme found in the poem.”
	Option C is incorrect	This might be a theme explored in the poem if a person did not expect to find answers at the library; however, there are no difficult questions presented in the story.
	Option D is incorrect	Both the story and the poem include the idea of people learning something; however, there is no evidence of any necessary action in either one.

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Item #	Rationale	
17	Option D is correct	Both the sentence from paragraph 14 of the story and lines 23 and 24 of the poem are used to capture the idea of a person undergoing positive change as a result of an experience—the experience of finding an item in the antique shop in the story and the experience of finding ideas in the library in the poem.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the idea of a pet store or bakery could be connected to “a happy memory,” lines 3 and 4 of the poem are not used to convey the idea of a person being changed as the sentence from the story does.
	Option B is incorrect	In lines 8 and 9 of the poem, the poet refers to the practicality of nonfiction books, whereas the author uses the sentence from the story to capture the idea of a person changing as a result of an experience.
	Option C is incorrect	Lines 11 and 12 of the poem and the sentence from the story are both used to convey change. However, the sentence from the story is about a positive change in a person, whereas lines 11 and 12 of the poem are about a change in the perception of a book.

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Item #	Rationale	
18	Option B is correct	In the poem, the poet portrays the library as a setting that provides wisdom to visitors. Although visitors to the antique shop might gain some wisdom from the objects they find there, the author focuses on the memories, not wisdom, the setting provides.
	Option A is incorrect	The settings of both the story and the poem are presented as containing many important objects—antiques, in the story, and books, in the poem.
	Option C is incorrect	The author uses the setting of the story to invite visitors to discover antiques, and the poet uses the setting to invite visitors to discover books and ideas, making the settings similar in this way.
	Option D is incorrect	In both the story and the poem, the settings are illustrated as appealing to a range of people, so the settings are not different in this way.

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Item #	Rationale	
19	Option A is correct	In paragraph 8, the author describes the study on horses' behavior, including the methods the researchers used; in paragraph 9, the author refers to an effect of the study, that scientists recognized purposeful interspecies communication in horses.
	Option B is incorrect	Although researchers are described in paragraph 8 as keeping food out of the reach of horses, this is part of the description of the methods used in the study. Therefore, it does not explain why the author uses a cause-and-effect structure.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author refers to a human standing passively near a horse as part of the study but does not say that horses showed little interest in humans.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 9, the author refers to communication in dogs, but not to say that people believed that horses communicate better than dogs do.

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Item #	Rationale (Need to add HRR in ITS)	
20	Option B is correct	The detail about horses recognizing and using written symbols, from paragraph 12, is an example of horses communicating in ways other than body language.
	Option E is correct	The description in paragraphs 12 and 13 of how horses indicated preferences by selecting previously learned symbols demonstrates how horses can communicate in ways other than body language.
	Option A is incorrect	The author refers to disagreement about blankets on horses in paragraph 11; however, this detail does not support the idea that horses can communicate using more than body language.
	Option C is incorrect	Although it is noted in paragraph 12 that horses learned to do tasks in this time frame, this detail is not used to support the idea that horses can communicate using more than body language.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 12, the author does refer to positive reinforcement being used to train horses, but this detail demonstrates how the horses responded to treats, which is an example of body language.

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Item #	Rationale	
21	Option C is correct	The author explains in paragraph 5 that “horses appeared to accurately read human emotions” and, in paragraph 6, that “horses are good at reading our moods.” The reader can infer from these details that horses can tell how people are feeling.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author states that horses have 17 different facial expressions, which is a comparatively large number of facial expressions, not a limited number.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no suggestion in this section that horses are suspicious around unfamiliar people.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the author portrays horses as highly responsive to human mood in this section, there is no suggestion that horses use a special sense to perceive mood. Rather, in paragraph 6, the author credits this ability to the horse’s very large eyes.

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Item #	Rationale	
22	Option A is correct	The article is focused on how horses can alter their actions based on human behavior, including references to how scientific studies have revealed that “horses have been watching us more closely than we imagined” (paragraph 14).
	Option B is incorrect	Although the article includes information about horses using more than body language to communicate, there is no suggestion that horses recognize and understand spoken language.
	Option C is incorrect	The author focuses on studies of communication by horses, but there is no mention of horses being trained to perform other difficult tasks.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no mention in the article of research indicating that horses’ facial expressions are too subtle for humans to notice.

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Item #	Rationale	
23	Option D is correct	In this phrase from paragraph 2, the author captures the idea that human understanding of horses is changing because scientists are “taking a fresh look” instead of making assumptions.
	Option A is incorrect	This phrase from paragraph 1 is used to refer to human interaction with horses, but it does not show a change in human understanding of horses.
	Option B is incorrect	In this phrase from paragraph 1, the author refers to the way in which horses have behaved in the past—as though they understand humans. The author does not address human understanding in this phrase.
	Option C is incorrect	This phrase from paragraph 2 is used to reveal something researchers have found in their studies of horses, but it does not show a change in human understanding of horses.

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Item #	Rationale	
24	Option C is correct	<u>Abstract</u> describes something that has a quality apart from an object. In paragraph 10, it describes symbols that are apart from, or look different from, the objects they represent. For example, in paragraph 12, symbols represent whether a horse wants a blanket or not.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the symbols referred to in paragraph 10 may refer to things indirectly, such as a vertical bar meaning “Take my blanket off” (paragraph 12), there is no indication that these symbols reveal any secret codes or messages.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author explains in paragraph 10 that horses use these symbols to communicate or “read,” these symbols are described in paragraph 12 as vertical and horizontal bars, which are not necessarily easy for people to understand.
	Option D is incorrect	Since the horses use symbols to communicate, it is not logical to say that these symbols are unlikely to produce change.

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Item #	Rationale	
25	Option D is correct	The rhetorical question in paragraph 7 is followed by a sentence about the new study described in the next paragraph, making it likely that this is the reason the author includes the question.
	Option A is incorrect	There is no indication in the article of any weakness in the argument that horses can communicate.
	Option B is incorrect	Although it may be true that horse behavior could be studied more, the rhetorical question in paragraph 7 is included not to point this out but to introduce the new study mentioned in the following sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	The rhetorical question in paragraph 7 is inquiring whether horses might communicate with humans, not suggesting that they can.

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Item #	Rationale	
26	Option B is correct	In the article, the author classifies, or divides into groups, the results of different studies—the University of Sussex study in paragraphs 4 through 5, the School for Ethical Equitation study in paragraph 8, and the 2016 Norwegian study in paragraphs 10 through 13—that support the idea that horses understand body language.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author mentions the lack of understanding of how horses communicate with humans, the article does not contain information about problems that could result from an inability to communicate with horses.
	Option C is incorrect	The information in paragraphs 5 through 7 about horses understanding human facial expressions is not presented chronologically and does not represent an organizational pattern in the article. It is a detail that helps support the topic of the article.
	Option D is incorrect	The comparisons between horses and other animals in paragraph 4 are presented as a detail to introduce the topic of the article. These comparisons are not representative of the article’s organizational pattern.

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

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Item #	Rationale	
28	Option B is correct	This sentence more effectively states Gage’s claim that community celebrations have value, and it logically follows sentence 2, which states that these events should not be viewed as “expendable.”
	Option A is incorrect	Although Gage might agree that community events should occur in communities of all sizes, this sentence does not effectively state Gage’s claim about the value of community events and why they should not be considered expendable.
	Option C is incorrect	In his paper, Gage points out different types of community celebrations; however, sentence 3 should be used to reinforce the claim introduced in sentence 2, that celebrations should be viewed as essential community activities.
	Option D is incorrect	Even though Gage makes it clear that both children and adults have fun at community events, this is not the most effective way to state the claim that community events should not be considered expendable, as Gage indicates in sentence 2.

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

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Item #	Rationale	
30	Option C is correct	This sentence eliminates the repetition of “large” and “big” and clearly states the idea.
	Option A is incorrect	Although this sentence eliminates the repetition of “large” and “big,” it changes “a celebration” to “it,” making it unclear what the pronoun “it” stands for.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence eliminates the repetition of “large” and “big.” However, it introduces the pronoun “it” in a way that does not make clear that “it” stands for “a celebration.”
	Option D is incorrect	This sentence eliminates the repetition of “large” and “big,” but it introduces a new repetition error with “start and begin.”

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Item #	Rationale	
31	Option A is correct	This sentence best follows and supports sentence 24 because it provides a consequence of the difficulty of recruiting people—that some people will need to take on too many jobs. It also logically connects to the idea in sentence 25, that, despite some people needing to take on too much, the event is worthwhile.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence is redundant with sentence 24 in that it focuses on the idea that it will be difficult to find people to do some of the jobs. Also, the use of “furthermore” does not logically connect the two sentences, since this sentence does not introduce a new idea.
	Option C is incorrect	The detail in this sentence is unrelated to the idea that sometimes it will be difficult to find enough people to help (sentence 24) and that, despite this, the event will be worthwhile (sentence 25).
	Option D is incorrect	This sentence introduces a detail that is not related to the ideas in sentence 24, that it can be hard to recruit enough people to help, and sentence 25, that the event will be worthwhile no matter the time and effort it requires from organizers.

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Item #	Rationale	
32	Option C is correct	This sentence effectively captures the ideas of Gage’s argument that community events have value to both individual people and communities. Connecting the ideas of “community” and “home” emphasizes this value.
	Option A is incorrect	A concluding sentence should not introduce a new idea. The frequency and projected longevity of community celebrations is a new idea, so this sentence does not effectively capture the ideas of Gage’s argument.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence repeats information presented in the fourth paragraph (sentences 21–26) instead of effectively wrapping up the argument Gage makes in the paper.
	Option D is incorrect	Since the detail about making good friends is a new idea, this sentence is not an effective conclusion. It does not effectively wrap up the paper’s overall argument.

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33	Option B is correct	“In exchange” is an effective transition that clarifies what Thomas will receive for the “long days without pay” described in sentence 5.
	Option A is incorrect	“As a result” is not an effective transition at the beginning of sentence 6, as it would suggest that Mr. Lamb’s teachings are a direct effect of Thomas working long days without pay. In reality, Thomas’s work prompts Mr. Lamb to provide him with something in return but does not necessarily cause Mr. Lamb to do so.
	Option C is incorrect	“For instance” is not an effective transition to start sentence 6, since it implies Mr. Lamb’s teaching is an example of Thomas living with Mr. Lamb and working “long days without pay.”
	Option D is incorrect	“In comparison” is not an effective transition for the beginning of sentence 6, since there is no comparison being made between Thomas’s working long days and Mr. Lamb’s teaching.

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34	Option D is correct	This sentence effectively introduces the third paragraph, in which Thomas’s father continues to encourage Thomas about the new apprenticeship.
	Option A is incorrect	Although this sentence accurately introduces Thomas’s father as the speaker in sentence 11, this sentence does not effectively introduce the third paragraph, which is not about the weather conditions.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence correctly identifies Thomas’s father as the speaker in sentence 11; however, this detail is irrelevant to the information in the third paragraph and is therefore not a good introductory sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence provides a detail about the farm mentioned in sentence 11, but the detail about the nine other children is unrelated to the information in the third paragraph and does not effectively introduce it.

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Item #	Rationale	
35	Option B is correct	This sentence fixes the use of passive voice in sentence 23 while clearly and effectively presenting the events as they occur.
	Option A is incorrect	Although this sentence fixes the use of passive voice in sentence 23, it introduces an awkward phrase, implying that Thomas sinks down in a supper instead of on the mattress.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence fixes the use of passive voice in sentence 23; however, by making the straw mattress part of the object of the preposition “after,” it appears to suggest that the mattress is an event.
	Option D is incorrect	Sentence 23 uses passive voice with “a tiny room was shown to Thomas by Mr. Lamb” and should be revised to use active voice.

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Item #	Rationale	
36	Option D is correct	In sentence 31, “assured” is a more effective word than “told” because it better illustrates Henry’s attempts to make Thomas feel better about Mr. Lamb’s blustering qualities.
	Option A is incorrect	Henry is not trying to get Thomas to do or say anything, making “prompted” an incorrect choice.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the information Henry tells Thomas teaches Thomas something new about Mr. Lamb, the phrase “educated Thomas that” does not capture the idea that Henry is trying to make Thomas feel better.
	Option C is incorrect	Even though Henry is notifying Thomas about something, “notified” does not illustrate Henry’s attempts to make Thomas feel better.

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Item #	Rationale	
37	Option A is correct	This sentence correctly combines the two sentences to eliminate the fragment in sentence 2.
	Option B is incorrect	Although this corrects the fragment in the original sentence 2, it creates a new fragment.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence is not correct because it creates a comma splice by combining two independent clauses with a comma but no conjunction.
	Option D is incorrect	The second sentence in this option is a fragment because it lacks a supporting verb. "Asking" should be in the simple past tense, "asked."

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38	Option D is correct	This option correctly capitalizes the first word in a quotation.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing “opened” to “will open” incorrectly presents the information in the future tense. The story is written in the past tense.
	Option B is incorrect	Adding a comma after “match” is incorrect, since “by saying” is not a parenthetical expression that can be removed while keeping a complete sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	In phrases such as this one, “with” usually introduces a noun and “by” usually introduces an action. “Saying” is an action.

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Item #	Rationale	
39	Option B is correct	Inserting a semicolon after “pawn” corrects the run-on sentence by separating two independent clauses.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing “countered” to the present participle “countering” creates a verb tense error and does not correct the run-on sentence error.
	Option C is incorrect	Replacing “hit” with “hits” does not correct the run-on sentence and incorrectly changes the verb to the present tense.
	Option D is incorrect	“Signal” is not the correct spelling of “signal.”

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Item #	Rationale	
40	Option C is correct	The supporting verb “was” correctly places the phrase in the past tense, matching the rest of the story.
	Option A is incorrect	The supporting verb “is” is in the present tense, which does not match the past tense of the story.
	Option B is incorrect	The supporting verb “has been” is in the present perfect tense, which does not match the past tense of the story.
	Option D is incorrect	The supporting verb “would be” is in the future tense, which does not match the past tense of the story.

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41	Option D is correct	The paper is referring to one planet, so changing the plural possessive noun “planets’ ” to the singular possessive noun “planet’s” is correct.
	Option A is incorrect	“These” is needed because it is a demonstrative pronoun that identifies the noun “plates.” The pronoun “Them” cannot serve this purpose, since it is an objective pronoun, which receives the action of a verb.
	Option B is incorrect	“Responce” is not the correct spelling of “response.”
	Option C is incorrect	The paragraph is written in the present tense, so changing the present participle “radiating” to the past tense “radiated” is incorrect.

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Item #	Rationale	
42	Option B is correct	“Collide” corrects the misspelling of “colide.”
	Option A is incorrect	Inserting a comma after “form” creates an error in sentence structure.
	Option C is incorrect	The paragraph is written in present tense, so changing present tense “Push” to past tense “pushed” is incorrect.
	Option D is incorrect	Changing “Earth’s” to “Earths” eliminates the apostrophe, which is needed to indicate that the crust is a part of Earth.

2023 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
43	Option B is correct	Capitalizing “mountains” is correct because it names a particular mountain range, “Himalayan Mountains.”
	Option A is incorrect	Adding an apostrophe to “years” would put the word in the possessive form, and there is no possessive relationship between “years” and “ago.”
	Option C is incorrect	Changing “began” to “were beginning” creates an error in verb tense and does not correct the capitalization error.
	Option D is incorrect	Sentence 4 contains a capitalization error, so a change is needed.

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44	Option C is correct	Replacing “continues” with “continue” is correct because it creates subject-verb agreement.
	Option A is incorrect	The paragraph is written in present tense, so changing present tense “continues” to past tense “has continued” is an incorrect change.
	Option B is incorrect	The paragraph of this paper is written in present tense, so changing present tense “continues” to past tense “continued” is incorrect.
	Option D is incorrect	Changing “continues” to “continuing” introduces an incorrect verb form and creates an error in subject-verb agreement.

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45	Option C is correct	Adding a semicolon before the transitional phrase “in fact” and a comma after the transitional phrase corrects the run-on sentence error and clearly connects the two independent clauses (groups of words that can stand as a complete sentence) “Mount Everest is getting taller” and “it grows about half an inch every year.”
	Option A is incorrect	This sentence places the semicolon in the wrong location, assigning the transitional phrase “in fact” to the wrong independent clause.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence contains a comma splice, which incorrectly combines two independent clauses using only a comma.
	Option D is incorrect	This sentence places the comma in the incorrect position and is missing a semicolon before the transitional phrase “in fact.” These errors create a comma splice, which incorrectly combines the two independent clauses in the sentence.