



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

# **GRADE 5**

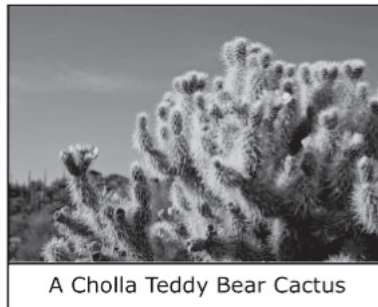
## **Reading**

# **Paper Item Sampler**

**Read the two selections and then choose the best answer to each question.**

## **The Cholla Cactus**

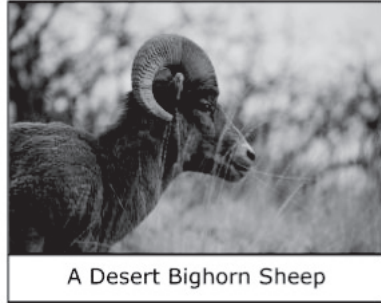
- 1 When you hear the word “cactus,” you might think of tall, lanky plants covered with prickly spines. Beads of sweat may form on your forehead as you think of extreme desert heat. The thought of gritty sand burning beneath your feet might come to mind. But you may not know that cactus, one of the few plants able to survive in the extreme heat of the desert, can be beneficial to many animals and even to people.
- 2 The cholla (CHOY-yuh) is a cactus that grows in the deserts of the United States and Mexico. There are about 20 species that belong to the cholla family. Some chollas grow to be only a few inches tall, while others grow to be up to 15 feet tall and 6 feet wide.



A Cholla Teddy Bear Cactus

### **Searching for Water**

- 3 Regardless of the cholla’s size, desert animals have learned to rely on it for survival. Chollas have many stems that are similar to tree branches. Precipitation is scarce in the desert, but cholla stems store rainwater that is absorbed through the plant’s root system. Some desert animals depend on the water stored in cholla stems.
- 4 The desert bighorn sheep, for example, has learned to get water from the cholla cactus. Like many other desert animals, the bighorn rests when the temperatures rise and then goes in search of a cholla when the temperatures cool. The animal uses its large curled horns and its hooves to tear off pieces of a cholla and remove the spines. The bighorn gets water by eating the moist insides of the cholla.



A Desert Bighorn Sheep

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### **A Prickly Feast**

- 5 The cholla cactus also provides tasty meals for many other desert animals. Bees enjoy the pollen of its colorful blooms. Birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals dine on the cholla's juicy fruit.
- 6 The cholla also provides nutritious food for people. Members of the O'odham tribe and other desert-dwelling people eat the flower buds of some types of chollas. They roll the buds on a hard surface to remove the spines and then roast them slowly on an open fire. Once the buds have been thoroughly roasted (usually for a day), they are ready to eat. Cholla buds contain protein, calcium, and fiber—all of which are important to good health.

### **A Safe Haven**

- 7 Food and water aren't the only needs of desert dwellers. Many animals also seek shelter from the scorching sun. Wood rats, also called pack rats, are known to save collected objects and use them in the construction of their nests. They sometimes use pieces of a cholla to build a nest in or on the cactus. The sharp spines of the cactus keep predators away from their nests. And the thick covering of the cholla also helps the wood rats keep cool during the hot summer and maintain body heat during cold winter months.
- 8 The cactus wren, the largest wren in the United States, has something in common with the wood rat. These birds also build their nests in chollas. They often situate the nest high in a cholla to keep their eggs a safe distance away from ground animals. A large nest is well supported in a sturdy cholla. And when young wrens hatch, the prickly spines of the cholla help keep the hatchlings inside the nest and shield them from would-be intruders.

## Desert Survival

- 9 While the desert may seem virtually uninhabitable, it is home to many animals and plants. The cholla cactus not only survives in the desert but also helps animals live comfortably in this extreme environment.

# Cactus Wren

*by Byrd Baylor*



On the hottest  
summer afternoons  
when desert creatures  
look for shade  
5 and stay close to the earth  
and keep their voices  
low

I sit high on a cactus  
and fling  
10 my loud ringing trill  
out to the sun . . .

over and over  
again.

My home is  
15 in a cholla cactus.  
I won't live  
where cactus doesn't grow

because I know  
the only safe place  
20 for a nest  
is a stickery branch  
in a cactus thicket.

I like thorns  
in all directions.

25 At the entrance  
of my nest  
I pile more cactus.  
I peck off the spines  
where I go  
30 in and out.

It is so good a nest  
that when we leave it  
other creatures  
will move in—  
35 a family of crickets  
or a cactus-climbing mouse.

But now  
it holds  
six small brown birds  
40 and me.

From *Desert Voices* by Byrd Baylor. Text copyright © 1981 Byrd Baylor. Used with the permission of Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division. Electronic rights used by permission of Marian Reiner for the author.

**1** Use "The Cholla Cactus" to answer the following question.

What are the most likely reasons the author includes paragraphs 1 and 2 of the article "The Cholla Cactus"?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- To connect the reader to the topic
- To argue for the protection of a species
- To explain how a cactus grows in the desert
- To provide a mental picture of the subject
- To show how animals survive in harsh climates

2 Use “The Cholla Cactus” to answer the following question.

Read the question carefully. Then record your answer in the box provided.

Based on paragraph 7 of the article “The Cholla Cactus,” why does the wood rat use the cholla cactus to build its nest? Support your answer with evidence from the article.


- 3 Use “The Cholla Cactus” and “Cactus Wren” to answer the following question.

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which important idea is explained in **BOTH** the article “The Cholla Cactus” and the poem “Cactus Wren”?

- (A) Many animals make their homes inside of the cholla cactus.
- (B) Birds sing from the cholla cactus when other animals are asleep.
- (C) The cholla cactus provides moisture for some desert wildlife.
- (D) The cholla cactus is used as a food source for some animals and people.

**Part B**

Which lines from the poem support the answer to Part A?

- (A) On the hottest  
summer afternoons  
when desert creatures  
look for shade (lines 1–4)
- (B) I sit high on a cactus  
and fling  
my loud ringing trill  
out to the sun . . .  
  
over and over  
again. (lines 8–13)
- (C) is a stickery branch  
in a cactus thicket.  
  
I like thorns  
in all directions. (lines 21–24)
- (D) It is so good a nest  
that when we leave it  
other creatures  
will move in—  
a family of crickets  
or a cactus-climbing mouse. (lines 31–36)



- 4 Use “The Cholla Cactus” to answer the following question.

Which sentences from paragraphs 4 through 6 show that the cholla cactus is difficult to harvest?

Select the **TWO** correct answers.

- 4 Ⓐ The desert bighorn sheep, for example, has learned to get water from the cholla cactus. Like many other desert animals, the bighorn rests when the temperatures rise and then goes in search of a cholla when the temperatures cool. Ⓑ The animal uses its large curled horns and its hooves to tear off pieces of a cholla and remove the spines. The bighorn gets water by eating the moist insides of the cholla.

### **A Prickly Feast**

- 5 The cholla cactus also provides tasty meals for many other desert animals. Ⓒ Bees enjoy the pollen of its colorful blooms. Birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals dine on the cholla’s juicy fruit.
- 6 The cholla also provides nutritious food for people. Members of the O’odham tribe and other desert-dwelling people eat the flower buds of some types of chollas. Ⓓ They roll the buds on a hard surface to remove the spines and then roast them slowly on an open fire. Once the buds have been thoroughly roasted (usually for a day), they are ready to eat. Ⓔ Cholla buds contain protein, calcium, and fiber—all of which are important to good health.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

## The Return of Goldie Locks

### Characters

**MAMA BEAR**  
**BABY BEAR**  
**PAPA BEAR**  
**MRS. LOCKS**  
**GOLDIE LOCKS**

### SCENE 1

- 1 *[The Three Bears' house. Mama Bear puts on her apron and reaches for a pot on the stove. She begins to scoop porridge into bowls placed on the kitchen table.]*
- 2 **MAMA BEAR:** The porridge is ready!
- 3 *[Enter Baby Bear.]*
- 4 **BABY BEAR:** Is it too hot?
- 5 **MAMA BEAR:** It's perfectly fine.
- 6 *[Baby Bear sits and begins eating.]*
- 7 **PAPA BEAR:** *[Entering.]* Honey, how's this tie? I've got an important presentation today.
- 8 **MAMA BEAR:** It's fine, dear. Eat your porridge before it gets cold.
- 9 **PAPA BEAR:** Honey, this porridge is just right.
- 10 **MAMA BEAR:** Oh, that reminds me. I saw Mrs. Locks yesterday. I invited her daughter Goldie over for a playdate with Baby Bear.
- 11 **BABY BEAR:** *[Objecting.]* Mother! Twelve-year-olds do not make playdates!
- 12 **PAPA BEAR:** Do you mean that hooligan who broke into our house?
- 13 **MAMA BEAR:** Oh, she didn't break in, dear. You forgot to lock the door.

- 14 **BABY BEAR:** She broke my chair!
- 15 **MAMA BEAR:** You were getting too big for that chair anyway, Baby Bear.
- 16 **PAPA BEAR:** Isn't he getting too old for that name? We should start calling him Robert.
- 17 **MAMA BEAR:** He will always be my Baby Bear.
- 18 **PAPA BEAR:** Well, I never felt right about how Goldie ran out of here all those years ago. Let's face it—she did commit a crime!
- 19 **MAMA BEAR:** She was only five years old! She has matured since then.
- 20 **BABY BEAR:** She probably thinks that just because we're bears, we're going to eat her.
- 21 **MAMA BEAR:** Nonsense. We certainly would never eat a guest.
- 22 **PAPA BEAR:** Lock up the fine silver.
- 23 **BABY BEAR:** No way I'm letting her near my video games.
- 24 **MAMA BEAR:** Enough. She's our guest.
- 25 [*There is a knock at the door. Mama Bear answers it.*]
- 26 **MAMA BEAR:** Please come in, Mrs. Locks.
- 27 **MRS. LOCKS:** [*Entering.*] Thank you for inviting Goldie. [*Talking to someone outside the door.*] Goldie, come here. They're not going to bite you.
- 28 **BABY BEAR:** [*To Papa Bear.*] See what I was saying?
- 29 **MAMA BEAR:** Please, come in. It's not like we're wolves.
- 30 [*Goldie enters.*]
- 31 **PAPA BEAR:** [*To Baby Bear.*] She has grown.
- 32 **BABY BEAR:** [*To Papa Bear.*] Yep.
- 33 **MAMA BEAR:** Hello, Goldie. You remember Baby Bear.
- 34 **BABY BEAR:** Mom! [*To Goldie.*] Call me Robert.

## SCENE 2

35 [*Baby Bear and Goldie are playing a video game.*]

36 **GOLDIE:** Beat you again!

37 **BABY BEAR:** Aw, man!

38 **GOLDIE:** You have to learn to take chances.

39 **BABY BEAR:** Yeah, I should have known that's how you'd play.

40 **GOLDIE:** What's that supposed to mean?

41 **BABY BEAR:** Not every girl just walks in and makes herself at home like you do.

42 **GOLDIE:** Did you have to bring *that* up?

43 **BABY BEAR:** Actually, it was a gutsy thing to do. I admire what you did. Really.

44 **GOLDIE:** Well, don't waste your time. I'm never doing anything like that again. My parents didn't trust me for a long time. I learned my lesson big-time.

45 **BABY BEAR:** Dad said we should lock up our silver.

46 **GOLDIE:** I was never going to steal anything that day when I came in and no one was home. It was a silly dare, and I was foolish for going through with it.

47 **BABY BEAR:** Who dared you?

48 **GOLDIE:** A former friend of mine, that girl who always wears that red hoodie.

49 **BABY BEAR:** You mean the one kids call Little Red?

50 **GOLDIE:** Yes. It was all her idea. She kept me up way late watching scary movies at her sleepover. Then her mom woke us early and told her to walk me home. Can you believe that?

51 **BABY BEAR:** It's kind of rude.

52 **GOLDIE:** And we had no breakfast. If someone sleeps over at your house, your mom serves breakfast, right?

- 53 **BABY BEAR:** Right.
- 54 **GOLDIE:** Your mom makes excellent porridge, by the way.
- 55 **BABY BEAR:** Thanks.
- 56 **GOLDIE:** On the way home Red kept making fun of me for hiding my face in my sleeping bag. She's not even afraid of a real wolf, she said, let alone a fake movie werewolf. "I bet you're even scared of bears," she said. So I said, "I am not!" Then she dared me to knock on your door. If nobody answered, I was supposed to go inside and stay for five minutes. If I did that, I'd get a batch of her grandma's cookies.
- 57 **BABY BEAR:** I never heard that part of the story.
- 58 **GOLDIE:** I was nervous, but as soon as I was in your house, I smelled the porridge. I hadn't had breakfast, so I couldn't help myself. I was so tired that I wasn't thinking straight. I found a comfortable bed, and before I knew it, I had fallen asleep.
- 59 **BABY BEAR:** Did you get the cookies?
- 60 **GOLDIE:** No. She claimed I made up the whole "dare" thing.
- 61 **BABY BEAR:** Some friend!
- 62 **GOLDIE:** I know.
- 63 **BABY BEAR:** Well, you're welcome in our house anytime.
- 64 **GOLDIE:** Thanks, Baby B—I mean, Robert.

**THE END**

**5** Why are lines 10 through 18 important to the plot?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- They provide a background explanation of the characters' attitudes.
- They introduce the resolution to the conflict.
- They provide the climax of the play.
- They introduce a problem that the characters face.
- They provide the falling action of the play.

- 6 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

Which sentence best describes Baby Bear’s relationship with Goldie in “The Return of Goldie Locks”?

- Ⓐ Baby Bear is not interested in playing with Goldie, but he agrees to play with her in order to please Papa Bear.
- Ⓑ Baby Bear and Goldie bond over enjoying Mama Bear’s cooking.
- Ⓒ Baby Bear respects Goldie’s courage.
- Ⓓ Goldie blames a friend for what happened, but Baby Bear does not believe her.

**Part B**

Which line from the play best supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ **BABY BEAR:** [*Objecting.*] Mother! Twelve-year-olds do not make playdates! (line 11)
- Ⓑ **BABY BEAR:** Actually, it was a gutsy thing to do. I admire what you did. Really. (line 43)
- Ⓒ **GOLDIE:** A former friend of mine, that girl who always wears that red hoodie. (line 48)
- Ⓓ **GOLDIE:** Your mom makes excellent porridge, by the way. (line 54)

- 7 Which sentences from lines 12 through 21 show that Mama Bear is defending Goldie Locks?

Select the **TWO** correct answers.

- 12 **PAPA BEAR:** Do you mean that hooligan who broke into our house?
- 13  **MAMA BEAR:** Oh, she didn't break in, dear. You forgot to lock the door.
- 14 **BABY BEAR:** She broke my chair!
- 15  **MAMA BEAR:** You were getting too big for that chair anyway, Baby Bear.
- 16 **PAPA BEAR:** Isn't he getting too old for that name? We should start calling him Robert.
- 17  **MAMA BEAR:** He will always be my Baby Bear.
- 18 **PAPA BEAR:** Well, I never felt right about how Goldie ran out of here all those years ago. Let's face it—she did commit a crime!
- 19  **MAMA BEAR:** She was only five years old! She has matured since then.
- 20 **BABY BEAR:** She probably thinks that just because we're bears, we're going to eat her.
- 21  **MAMA BEAR:** Nonsense. We certainly would never eat a guest.



**8** Read the question carefully. Then record your answer in the box provided.

Why is the play divided into two scenes? Support your answer with evidence from the play.


- 9** Read the play “The Return of Goldie Locks.” Based on the information in the play, write a response to the following:

Explain why Baby Bear changes his attitude toward Goldie over the course of the play.

Write a well-organized informational essay that uses specific evidence from the play to support your answer.

Remember to —

- clearly state your central idea
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use evidence from the selection in your response
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

- review the selection
- plan your response
- write your response
- revise and edit your response

Record your response in the box provided.

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO  
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON  
THE LINED PAGE IN THE TEST BOOKLET.

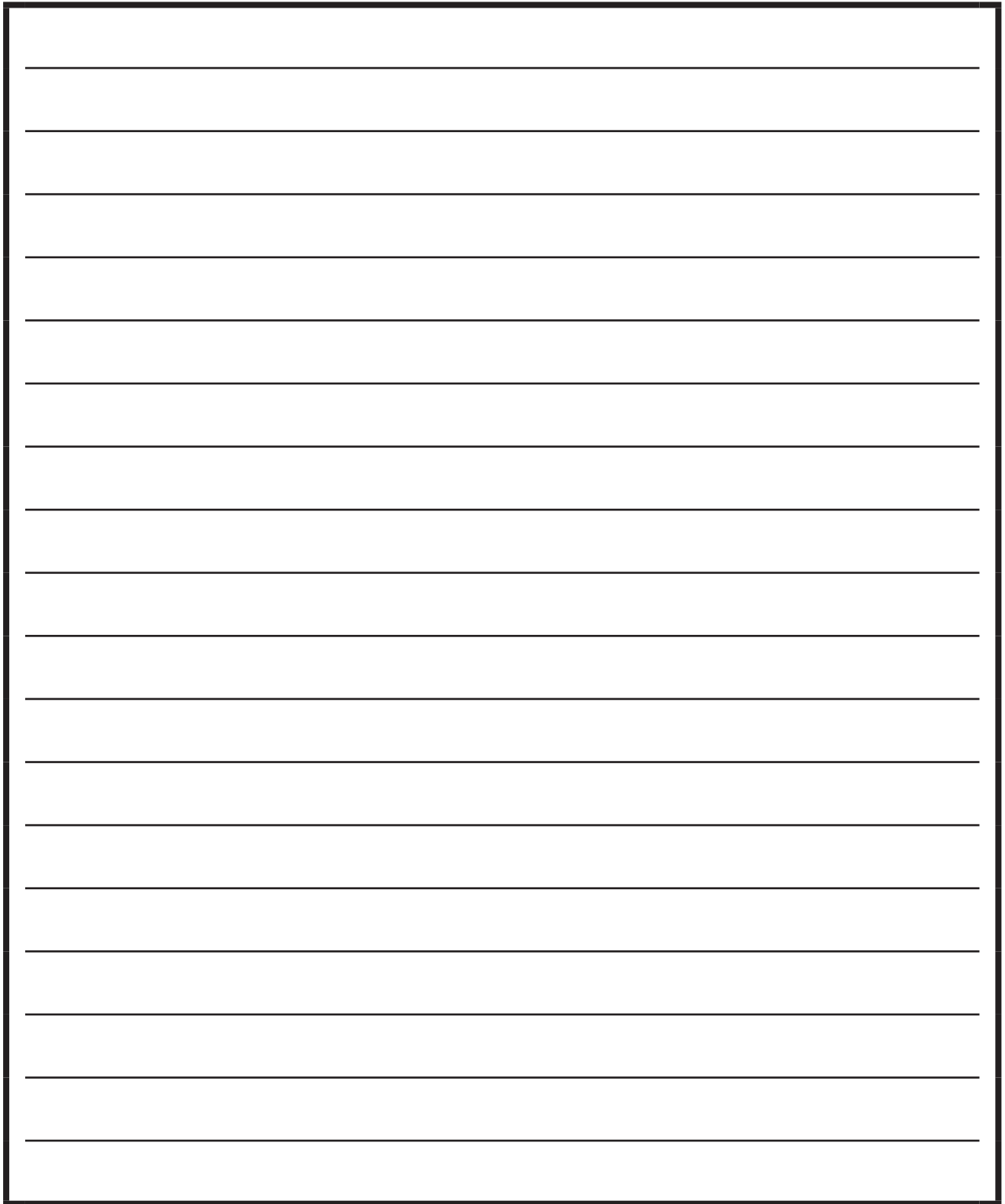
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## Written Composition

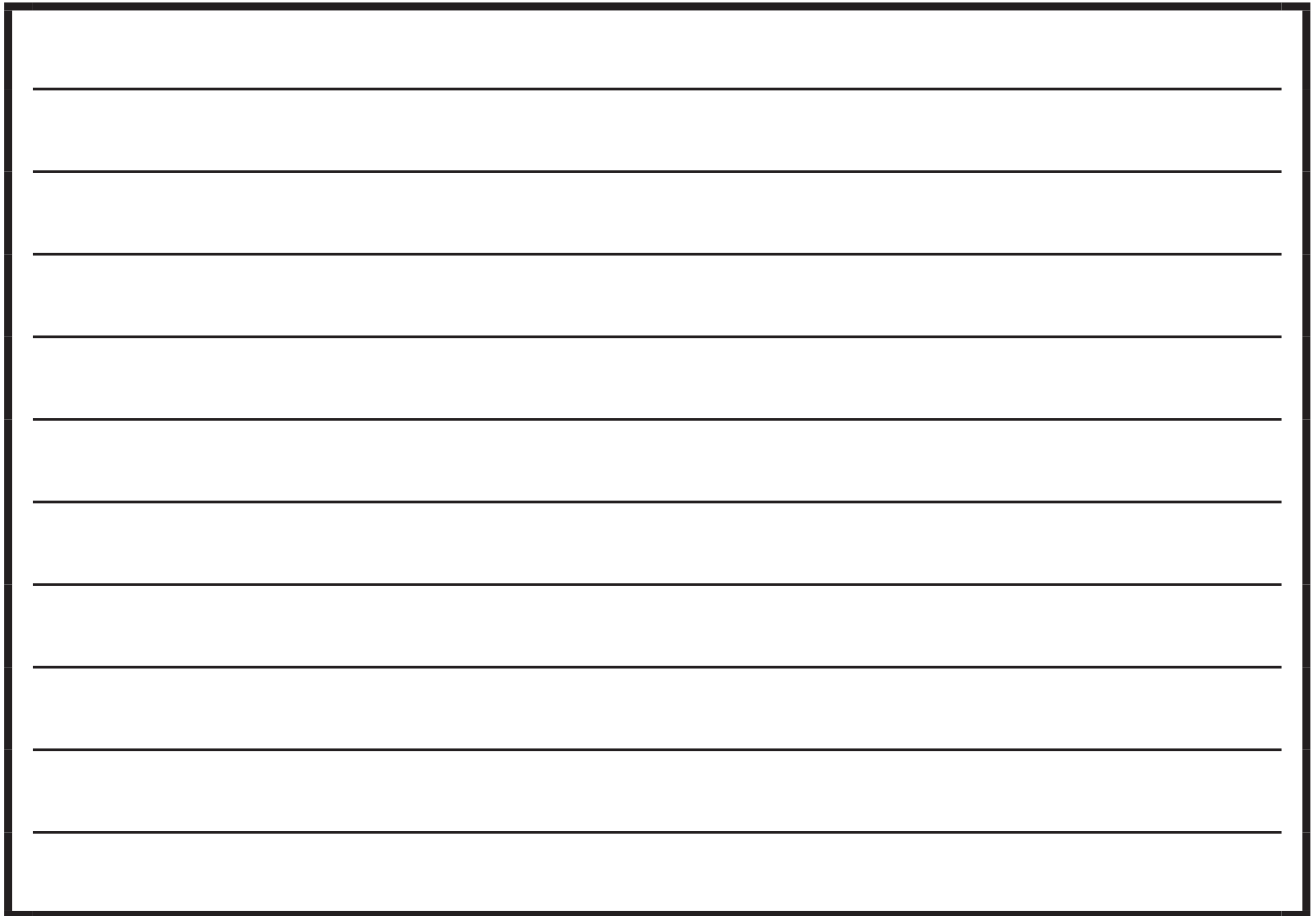
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## Written Composition



A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

**Written Composition**



A large rectangular box with a black border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

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*Claudia wrote this letter to her principal. Read the letter and look for revisions that Claudia needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## Letter

Dear Principal Jones,

(1) Many students enjoy learning about science by doing science experiments in a lab. (2) Likewise, Nolan Elementary does not have one. (3) We can change that this year. (4) Students and teachers can work together to create a science lab.

(5) The National Science Teachers Association recognizes the importance of school science labs. (6) They are places where students can develop safe habits while experiencing science. (7) Students like to learn through experience and discovery. (8) That is why we need a lab at our school.

(9) Many people may say that a new science lab would be too high. (10) But it doesn't have to be. (11) We don't need brand new furniture and supplies. (12) Most of what is required for a good science lab is already in our school.

(13) We can use any large classroom for a science lab. (14) Once the space is chosen, the school community can gather what is needed for the lab. (15) For example, there are extra cafeteria tables that could be moved to the lab. (16) Students could work in large groups at these tables. (17) They could work in small groups too. (18) We would also need cabinets and drawers for storing materials. (19) Most of the classrooms in our school have extra furniture that could be used for this kind of storage.

(20) Supplies would be required, but many teachers have extra science supplies in their classroom closets. (21) They take these items out when they want to introduce an idea in a science lesson. (22) We could encourage them to donate some of their supplies to the school science lab. (23) Parents could also be asked to bring items in that they might have in their homes.

(24) Students at our school are eager in a space made especially for science to learn. (25) If we all work together, we can have a space like this in no time at all.

Sincerely, Claudia Garcia



- 10** Claudia has not used an appropriate transition at the beginning of sentence 2. Select the word that should replace **Likewise** in this sentence.

- (A) Unfortunately
- (B) Therefore
- (C) Furthermore
- (D) Ordinarily

, Nolan Elementary does not have one.

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- 11** Claudia wants to replace the word **high** in sentence 9. Select the **BEST** word to use in this sentence.

Many people may say that a new science lab would be

- too
- (A) valuable
  - (B) precious
  - (C) gigantic
  - (D) expensive

- 12** Claudia wants to combine the ideas in sentences 16 and 17. In the box provided, write a new sentence that combines these ideas in a clear and effective way.


**13** Sentence 24 needs to be revised. In the box provided, rewrite sentence 24 in a clear and effective way.


*Milo is writing a paper about the accomplishments of Benjamin Franklin. Read these paragraphs from the body of Milo's paper and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## **Benjamin Franklin**

(1) Benjamin Franklin was also known for an entertaining book he wrote when he was just 26 years old. (2) The book, *Poor Richard's Almanack*, was a collection of information and advice. (3) Having weather predictions, a calendar, and recipes. (4) It also had common sayings, such as "Speak little, do much."

(5) There were many books like Franklin's in the American colonies. (6) However, people believed his book was more funnier and more useful than other books. (7) It sold 10,000 copies per year from 1732 to 1758. (8) Even a French emperor wanted a copy of the book.

**14** Sentence 3 is written incorrectly. Select the response that corrects this sentence.

- (A) With
- (B) Also
- (C) It had
- (D) And had

weather predictions, a calendar, and recipes.

**15** Milo has made an error in sentence 6. Select the response that corrects this error.

However, people believed his book was

- (A) more funny
- (B) funnier
- (C) most funniest
- (D) funniest

and more

useful than other books.

**STAAR  
GRADE 5  
Reading  
Paper Item Sampler**

