



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

English II

Paper Item Sampler

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

When Subtracting Technology Is a Plus

- 1 When you get up in the morning, what is the first thing that you tend to do? By chance, is it to check notifications on a cell phone or a watch? For many, keeping up with the most current methods of learning, working, and entertaining themselves is a must. That usually means using the newest technology in nearly every aspect of life. Sometimes, though, constant connectivity can become a bit overwhelming. One beneficial approach is to find a balance in using technology and to consider which experiences might be better with less of it.
- 2 One major impact of advanced technology has been the change in the way people read. After centuries of reading the printed page, people now do much of their reading on various kinds of screens. While this shift may be convenient and cost-effective, some people choose to read on paper when possible. One concern is that light from computer and phone screens can eventually cause teary, overworked eyes. In addition, recent research has found advantages to reading on paper. Professor Virginia Clinton of the University of North Dakota examined results from 33 studies on reading. This research indicates that students demonstrated better comprehension when reading on paper rather than on screens. That does not mean to never read on a phone. It simply suggests that reading on paper has not yet lost its value.
- 3 In the era of location-tracking software and GPS mapping, people traveling over long distances take comfort in the routes offered by computers and satellites. However, not all trips are about getting to a destination in the fastest way. In some cases, exploring routes without electronic assistance might be more satisfying. The best balance might be found in using GPS for an on-time school or work commute while being open to turning off the satellite guidance on a more leisurely journey.
- 4 How often do people find themselves watching videos or using websites only to find that hours have passed with their original goal unfulfilled? That is because designers use artificial intelligence to create video feeds and music streaming programs

that absorb your attention for as long as possible. Therefore, it is more important than ever to be able to take a step back. Users should evaluate whether they are making good use of digital applications or whether the applications are dominating their time without working in their best interests. One of the best arguments for moderating the use of technology is that this approach can give people back their time and sense of agency.

- 5 Consider tasks such as shopping or doing research. These activities often rely on using network technology. As a society, people will continue to move in this direction. In spite of this trend, it is possible that some overlooked gems require a different kind of search. There are historical records, literature, and music that are not yet recorded in digital formats. It may be necessary to physically visit archives, libraries, or music shops to find what the web may have failed to capture. Even in the digitized age, there are still adventures and exciting rediscoveries that may not be found in search engine results.
- 6 Changing or reconsidering use of technology may seem unrealistic or even backward. In the early nineteenth century, some groups of workers banded together in England and began to destroy manufacturing machinery. They believed that new machines took away people's jobs. These protesters were known as Luddites. Today this term refers to people who resist innovation and new inventions. It would be misguided to adopt such a stance today when access to essential things such as literacy, medicine, and healthy food depends greatly on the latest technologies. There is no need to reject technological progress. Instead, the best path is to examine people's habits and try to understand the possible costs of overreliance on these powerful tools.
- 7 Technology is situational. The value of it often depends on the judgment of the user. Sometimes, small decisions can go a long way. One practice used by some folks is downshifting during evenings or relaxation times from viewing screens to one of the oldest pastimes: listening to stories. Through podcasts, music, and other recordings, many people have gone back nearly a century to times when great-great-grandparents listened to news and entertainment on the only technology available at home, radio broadcasts.

- 8 The constant flow of news, notifications, and social communications across a wave of platforms and apps has led to the development of tech-free retreats. This new industry is capitalizing on some people's desire to roll back the intrusive influence of their electronic devices. These "digital detox" programs can last anywhere from 24 hours to several weeks. People pay a fee to meditate, exercise, and socialize without using smart technology. As it turns out, there is a better option than an expensive one-time escape from the tide of information. The more sensible choice is to set goals, use time limits, and avoid letting any single medium or electronic platform take up the lion's share of your time.
- 9 Consider how much healthier, better rested, and more productive people can be when they make wise use of smartphones and social media. The ability of devices to track and anticipate your actions and choices is an advantage that your ancestors did not have. The risk is that by deferring so many of your daily decisions to convenient technology and artificial intelligence, you may be missing out on irreplaceable human experiences. These might include having an uninterrupted conversation with a friend, getting a peaceful night's sleep, or making the perfect paper airplane—and taking it outside for a test flight.

1 What are the most likely reasons the author includes paragraph 6?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- To acknowledge the importance and the role technology has in our lives
 - To reveal that people in the past foresaw that technology would cause major problems
 - To explain that England has an impressive history of technological innovation
 - To reassure the reader that the author is not advising people to stop using technology completely
 - To suggest that we should change our approaches to developing medicines and ensuring food safety
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2 Read these sentences from paragraph 8.

The constant flow of news, notifications, and social communications across a wave of platforms and apps has led to the development of tech-free retreats. This new industry is capitalizing on some people's desire to roll back the intrusive influence of their electronic devices.

Record your answer in the space provided.

The word ____ (1) ____ provides the best clue to the meaning of the word *intrusive* as it is used in paragraph 8.

1 _____

3 Read this quotation from paragraph 9.

The risk is that by deferring so many of your daily decisions to convenient technology and artificial intelligence, you may be missing out on irreplaceable human experiences. These might include having an uninterrupted conversation with a friend, getting a peaceful night's sleep, or making the perfect paper airplane—and taking it outside for a test flight.

Which of the following statements represent ideas emphasized in the emotional appeal in this quotation?

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

Statement	Is an Idea Emphasized in the Appeal	Is Not an Idea Emphasized in the Appeal
People should not attempt to reduce the number of daily decisions they have to make.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Certain ways of using technology can have regrettable outcomes.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
It is too difficult to rest properly if a person owns a large number of networked devices.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
People should remember to focus on what is essential and rewarding in life.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Manual projects are a better use of one's time than tasks that rely on technology.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B

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

Part A

Which of these best states the author's main claim about technology?

- (A) We need to continue to innovate our technology so that we can eventually reduce the harms it causes.
- (B) Technology is the primary source of all the problems in our world today.
- (C) We should make thoughtful choices about technology and avoid being overly dependent on it.
- (D) Over time, technological devices become more advanced, while society struggles to improve.

Part B

Which sentence from the selection best supports the answer to Part A?

- (A) *For many, keeping up with the most current methods of learning, working, and entertaining themselves is a must. (paragraph 1)*
- (B) *One concern is that light from computer and phone screens can eventually cause teary, overworked eyes. (paragraph 2)*
- (C) *In the era of location-tracking software and GPS mapping, people traveling over long distances take comfort in the routes offered by computers and satellites. (paragraph 3)*
- (D) *Users should evaluate whether they are making good use of digital applications or whether the applications are dominating their time without working in their best interests. (paragraph 4)*

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

Read this quotation from paragraph 7.

One practice used by some folks is downshifting during evenings or relaxation times from viewing screens to one of the oldest pastimes: listening to stories. Through podcasts, music, and other recordings, many people have gone back nearly a century to times when great-great-grandparents listened to news and entertainment on the only technology available at home, radio broadcasts.

How does the author’s use of language in this quotation affect the reader? Support your answer with evidence from the selection.

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

The Fox

by Faith Shearin

It was an ordinary morning: November, thin light,
and we paused over our pancakes to watch
something red move outside. Our house is on

an untamed patch of land and, across the lagoon,
5 another house surrounded by trees. On the banks
of their shore, facing us: a fox. We thought

he might be a dog at first for he trotted and sniffed
like a dog but when he turned to us
we knew he was nobody's pet. His face was arranged

10 like a child's face—playful, dainty—and his eyes
were liquid and wild. He stood for awhile, looking out,
as if he could see us in our pajamas, then found

a patch of sand beneath a tree and turned himself
into a circle of fur: his head tucked into his tail.

15 It was awful to watch him sleep: exposed,

tiny, his eyes closed. How can any animal
be safe enough to rest? But while I washed
our dishes he woke again, yawned, and ran

away to the places only foxes know. My God

20 I was tired of being a person. Even now his tail
gestures to me across the disapproving lagoon.

"The Fox" by Faith Shearin, from MOVING THE PIANO, Stephen F. Austin Press, 2011. Used by permission.

6 Record your answer in the space provided.

In stanza 4 (lines 10–12), the poet uses the word _____ (1) _____ to emphasize the fox’s delicate beauty.

1 _____

7 Which lines from the poem support the impulse to connect with nature?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- It was an ordinary morning: November, thin light, (line 1)
- an untamed patch of land and, across the lagoon, (line 4)
- he might be a dog at first for he trotted and sniffed/like a dog (lines 7–8)
- found/a patch of sand beneath a tree and turned himself (lines 12–13)
- My God/I was tired of being a person. (lines 19–20)

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

Part A

The poet’s description of the setting emphasizes —

- (A) a clear portrayal of life
- (B) the importance of preserving nature
- (C) a sense of playfulness
- (D) the freedom of the outdoors

Part B

Which phrase from the poem best supports the answer to Part A?

- (A) something red move outside (line 3)
- (B) untamed patch of land (line 4)
- (C) head tucked into his tail (line 14)
- (D) safe enough to rest (line 17)

9 Which phrases from the poem emphasize the fox’s vulnerability?

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

Phrase	Emphasizes the Fox’s Vulnerability	Does Not Emphasize the Fox’s Vulnerability
he trotted and sniffed (line 7)	(A)	(B)
like a child’s face— (line 10)	(A)	(B)
He stood for awhile, (line 11)	(A)	(B)
a patch of sand (line 13)	(A)	(B)
circle of fur: (line 14)	(A)	(B)

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

What is the most likely reason the poet includes the words “tired” and “disapproving” in the last stanza (lines 19–21)? Support your answer with evidence from the poem.

- 11** Read the poem “The Fox.” Based on the information in the poem, write a response to the following:

Explain the feelings the poet expresses while watching the fox and how those feelings are developed by the poet.

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

Remember to —

- clearly state your thesis
- 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

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Cassidy wrote this paper to argue that the Olympics need a permanent home. Read Cassidy's paper and look for revisions she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Olympic Games Need a Permanent Home

(1) Since the Olympic Games were revived in 1896, cities around the world have taken turns hosting them. (2) Alternating the host allows different countries to reap the benefits that accompany this major international sporting event. (3) It also exposes viewers around the world to a variety of exciting locations and cultures. (4) However, in recent decades hosting the Olympics has become extremely expensive. (5) Many host cities have incurred such huge debts that other would-be hosts are now backing away from the opportunity. (6) For this reason, it is time to consider a permanent home for the Olympics. (7) Holding the Olympics in the same place every time would safeguard its future while also relieving the financial burden that is currently being shouldered by some cities.

(8) Cities that want to must undergo a screening process, and it is rigorous, to host the Winter or Summer Games. (9) It is overseen by the International Olympic Committee, or IOC. (10) Those under serious consideration have to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars, even though they may not be selected. (11) And that is just the beginning of the costs. (12) When a city is chosen as the host, it is expected to provide state-of-the-art athletic facilities. (13) It must also furnish an "Olympic village" that can house thousands of people. (14) It must also be able to provide reliable transportation and security.

(15) The 2016 Summer Olympics were a resounding success in some ways. (16) Some 3.6 billion people watched on television, and more than 1.17 million tourists attended in person. (17) For these reasons, the host city of Rio de Janeiro failed to benefit financially because it had spent so much money. (18) A 2017 *USA Today* article reported that the cost of the Rio Olympics was \$13.1 billion. (19) The 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, were even more expensive. (20) Niall McCarthy of *Forbes* magazine reported that "in the end, the Games cost Russia over \$20 billion, a mammoth cost overrun of 289 percent."

(21) Researchers say that the Olympic Games have been overtaking their budgets since at least 1960. (22) The extra costs have been harmful to host cities. (23) Montreal, Canada, needed 30 years to pay off the debt it incurred by hosting the 1976 Olympics. (24) And many economists agree that Greece's decision to host the 2004 Summer Olympics helped spur the country's financial crisis.

(25) Another unfortunate effect of hosting is that cities are frequently left with venues that are useless after the Olympic Games are over. (26) Not every city can fill a gigantic stadium. (27) Many former host cities have found themselves with eliminated structures that are now rotting away.

(28) These negative results have caused some cities that once wanted to host the Olympics to change their minds. (29) Cities that have recently withdrawn their bids include Calgary, Canada; Stockholm, Sweden; and Hamburg, Germany, to name just a few.

(30) The Olympic Games will be in serious trouble if they can no longer count on the world's cities to provide them with a location in which to compete. (31) Rather than wait until the problem becomes worse, the IOC should establish a fixed location for the Olympics.

(32) Some people object to this idea because only one city would forever receive the attention and increased tourism that hosting provides. (33) However, there are some possible solutions. (34) University of Maryland professor John Rennie Short, who has written extensively about the Olympics, suggests holding the Olympics on an island overseen by the United Nations. (35) That way no particular country would get the benefits. (36) Or perhaps the Olympics could make its home in a place, such as Los Angeles or Paris, that already has all the structures required for hosting. (37) Then that city could split some of the hosting duties with a different partner city each time.

(38) While many details still need to be worked out, it's essential to address this matter now. (39) The IOC should at least begin to identify a possible permanent home for the Olympics. (40) That way the world can focus on the Olympic Games' dazzling moments, rather than on their dazzling costs.

12 Sentence 8 needs to be revised. In the box provided, rewrite sentence 8 in a clear and effective way.

13 Cassidy wants to combine the ideas in sentences 13 and 14. In the box provided, write a new sentence that combines these ideas in a clear and effective way.

- 14** Cassidy has used an ineffective transition at the beginning of sentence 17. Select the phrase that should replace **For these reasons** in this sentence.

- (A) All things considered
- (B) In spite of this
- (C) Generally speaking
- (D) Without a doubt

, the host city of Rio de Janeiro failed to

benefit financially because it had spent so much money.

- 15** The word **eliminated** is not the most appropriate word to use in sentence 27. Select the word that should replace **eliminated** in this sentence.

Many former host cities have found themselves with

- (A) illegible
- (B) subordinate
- (C) compulsory
- (D) abandoned

structures that are now rotting away.

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Leo read about an unusual practice and is writing a paper to tell what he learned. Read the first few paragraphs of Leo's paper and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Renting a Quiet Space

(1) In Japanese cities, car sharing is a popular alternative to owning a vehicle. (2) This is mostly due to the high price of parking in the cities. (3) With car sharing, drivers can make a reservation with a phone app and then walk to a nearby station to pick up a vehicle. (4) The rentals are relatively inexpensive, they cost just a little over seven dollars an hour. (5) For drivers who only occasionally need a car, it's a convenient and economical option. (6) But recently Japanese car-share companies made a puzzling discovery. (7) In fact, one in eight cars was being returned to the car-share company with zero new miles logged on the odometer. (8) These findings baffled the car-share companies. (9) What were people doing with the cars they were renting? (10) Company representatives began to investigate this puzzling, widespread phenomenon.

(11) A global health organization identifies Japan as the noisiest country in the entire world. (12) City dwellers are subjected to a daily stream of blaring announcements from public loudspeakers, screaming salespeople sharing their latest deals, and election campaigning which consists of the candidate's name being repeatedly blasted from speakers atop cars. (13) As it turns out, many people in Japan were renting cars to have a private, quiet space.

- 16** Sentence 4 is written incorrectly. Select the response that corrects this sentence.

The rentals

<p>Ⓐ are relatively inexpensive, costing just a little</p> <p>Ⓑ are relatively inexpensive and cost. Just a little</p> <p>Ⓒ are relatively inexpensive they cost just a little</p> <p>Ⓓ are relatively inexpensive. And cost just a little</p>
--

 over
seven dollars an hour.

-
- 17** Leo has made an error in sentence 12. Select the response that corrects this error.

City dwellers are subjected to a daily stream of blaring announcements from public loudspeakers, screaming salespeople sharing their latest

deals, and

<p>Ⓐ election campaigning; which consists of</p> <p>Ⓑ election campaigning, which consists of</p> <p>Ⓒ election, campaigning, which consists of</p> <p>Ⓓ election campaigning: which consists of</p>
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 a candidate's
name being repeatedly blasted from speakers atop cars.

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English II
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