

2018 STAAR English II Rationales

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| 1 | Option D is correct | Adding the word “However” creates an appropriate transition, which is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. What most people think is explained in sentence 5, and an alternative viewpoint is offered in sentence 6. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Adding the phrase “Even though” to sentence 6 would create an incorrect transition statement because it does not signal an alternative viewpoint. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Although the phrase “In contrast” does signal an opposing idea, it is too strong to serve as a correct transition between the ideas in these sentences. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Adding the word “Furthermore” would create an incorrect transition because it suggests the continuation of a parallel idea from sentence 5. |
| 2 | Option H is correct | Adding this sentence creates an effective transition, a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas, because it introduces what circadian rhythms are and connects to the previous paragraph by transitioning into another reason for sleepiness. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Although the topic of sleepiness impacting health is part of the necessary transition, the concept of circadian rhythms is not introduced in this sentence. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Sleepiness affecting one’s mood is an idea mentioned in the second paragraph, but the idea of circadian rhythms is not introduced. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Although the idea of circadian rhythms is included in this sentence, the concept is not properly explained until several sentences into the third paragraph. |
| 3 | Option D is correct | Replacing “changes” with “decreases” in the sentence clarifies the likelihood of individuals hitting the snooze button if the alarm clock is placed across the room. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Replacing “changes” with “varies” suggests that the likelihood of hitting the snooze button could increase or decrease if the alarm clock is placed across the room. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Replacing “changes” with “shifts” does not provide additional clarity. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Replacing “changes” with “controls” does not provide additional clarity. People control their behavior; the placement of an object does not control people. |
| 4 | Option J is correct | The sentence should not be added to the fourth paragraph at all. The content of the fourth paragraph is related to ways to avoid relying on the snooze button, not sleep deprivation. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Adding this sentence after sentence 16 would disrupt the linked ideas in sentences 16 and 17, creating a disjointed and awkward paragraph. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Adding this sentence after sentence 17 would interrupt the linked ideas suggesting ways to avoid relying on the snooze button, creating a disjointed and awkward paragraph. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Adding this sentence after sentence 18 would disrupt the linked ideas in sentences 18 and 19, creating a disjointed and awkward paragraph. |

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| 5 | Option B is correct | A call to action is a statement that encourages the reader to consider an idea or change a behavior. Direct words such as “Banish” are used in this sentence to establish an effective call to action for people to stop relying on the snooze button. |
| | Option A is incorrect | The idea that people should avoid using the snooze button is included in this sentence, but there is no evidence of an urgency in the tone. The reader is not persuaded because there is no effective call to action. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Specific examples from the essay are included in this sentence rather than a clear call to action. |
| | Option D is incorrect | One detail from the essay is included in this sentence rather than a clear call to action. |
| 6 | Option H is correct | A thesis statement is a statement that summarizes the main point or claim of a piece of writing. The author provides a strong rationale for visiting the site because it is “completely different” and “a unique attraction that many people would love to experience.” The overall message of the essay is captured, which results in an effective thesis. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Although some of the aquarium’s physical characteristics are described in this sentence, the overall message of the essay is not adequately provided. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Reasons to visit the attraction are not provided, and the overall message of the essay is not provided in this sentence. |
| | Option J is incorrect | No strong language or examples are provided, and the overall message of the essay is not provided in this sentence. |
| 7 | Option C is correct | A topic sentence is a sentence that captures the meaning of an entire paragraph. The elevator feature of the AquaDom, which is the focus of the third paragraph, is effectively introduced in this topic sentence. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Although the elevator feature of the AquaDom is introduced in this sentence, it is awkwardly constructed and lacks the emphasis necessary for a topic sentence. |
| | Option B is incorrect | This is an ineffective topic sentence since the elevator, which is the focus of the third paragraph, is not introduced. |
| | Option D is incorrect | This is an ineffective topic sentence since the elevator, which is the focus of the third paragraph, is not introduced. |
| 8 | Option F is correct | Details from the previous sentence and a transition, which is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas, into the topic of tank divers are present, helping the reader to understand the connection from idea to idea. Without the additional sentence, there is no transition between “aquatic residents” and “tank divers,” and readers could be confused. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Placing the additional sentence here would create a disruption in the paragraph by reintroducing information that was already established. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Placing the additional sentence here would create a disruption in the paragraph by reintroducing information that was already established. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Placing the additional sentence here would disrupt the transition between the third and fourth paragraphs as well as reintroduce information that was already established. |

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| 9 | Option B is correct | A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word it modifies or describes. “Strolling through the clear shaft” is placed next to “visitors” in this sentence, correcting the misplaced-modifier error. |
| | Option A is incorrect | “Strolling through the clear shaft” is incorrectly modifying “fish” in this sentence. The fish are not strolling—the visitors are strolling. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Although an attempt is made to correct the misplaced modifier in this sentence, it results in the introduction of a new modification error since the visitors seem to be the ones surrounding the fish. |
| | Option D is incorrect | “Strolling through the clear shaft” is incorrectly modifying “fish” in this sentence. The fish are not strolling—the visitors are strolling. |
| 10 | Option F is correct | Changing “disintigration” to “disintegration” corrects the spelling error that is present in the sentence. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Changing “exposed” to “expose” creates a grammatical error since the sentence is past tense. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Inserting a comma after “water” would mistakenly separate a dependent clause, which is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence, from the rest of the sentence, resulting in incorrect punctuation. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Changing “filtered” to “filterred” would create a spelling error. |
| 11 | Option D is correct | Changing “was” to “were” corrects the subject-verb agreement error in the sentence, as the verb now agrees with the subject “schools.” |
| | Option A is incorrect | Changing “meandering” to the present tense “meanders” would introduce a grammatical error into the participial phrase, which is a verbal phrase that modifies a noun or pronoun. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Changing “turquoise” to “turquoys” would create a spelling error. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Deleting the comma after “pool” would create a punctuation error since the phrase “meandering through the same turquoise pool” requires a comma. |
| 12 | Option G is correct | A run-on error is a sentence in which two or more main clauses are joined incorrectly. Breaking the sentence into two complete sentences corrects the run-on error. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Removing the word “and” creates a comma splice error, which occurs when two main clauses are connected only with a comma, and does not correct the run-on error. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Although breaking a run-on sentence into two complete sentences can be an effective solution, the second sentence still contains a run-on error due to the inclusion of a comma splice. |
| | Option J is incorrect | This sentence is a run-on. It contains multiple comma errors, with extra commas incorrectly setting off the adverb “instantly” and a missing comma after the word “rest.” |

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| 13 | Option B is correct | Proper nouns, which are nouns that refer to a specific person, place, idea, or event, require capitalization, so “hall” should be changed to “Hall” as in “Carnegie Hall.” |
| | Option A is incorrect | Inserting a comma after “imagine” would create a punctuation error by setting off a dependent clause, which is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Changing “would have been” to “would not have been” creates a double negative, which occurs when two negative words are used in the same sentence. The double negative changes the intended meaning of the sentence. |
| | Option D is incorrect | The name of the concert hall, “Carnegie Hall,” is a proper noun and requires capitalization. |
| 14 | Option F is correct | A possessive is a noun or a pronoun that shows possession with the addition of an apostrophe. Changing “Decade’s” to “Decades” removes the unnecessary apostrophe and corrects the possessive error in the sentence. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Changing the verb “provided” to the present tense “provides” would create a verb-tense error in the sentence. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Changing “lovers” to its possessive form, “lover’s,” would create a punctuation and usage error. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Changing “recorded” to “recording” would alter the meaning of the sentence and create a usage error. |
| 15 | Option A is correct | Changing “should have been giving” to the present-tense verb form “should give” corrects the grammatical error in the sentence. |
| | Option B is incorrect | A superlative is a form of an adjective or adverb that is being described as having more of a quality than all others. Changing “earlier” to its superlative form, “earliest,” creates a usage error; music on vinyl records is not the earliest type of music. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Inserting a comma after “chance” creates a punctuation error by incorrectly separating the verbs from their subject—“Teens.” |
| | Option D is incorrect | Changing “themselves” to “themselfs” would create a spelling error. |
| 16 | Option G is correct | The lowercase “how” should be capitalized as “How” since it is the first word in dialogue. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Deleting the comma after “ask” would create a punctuation error since a comma should appear before a quotation. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Changing the question mark to a period would create a punctuation error since the sentence is an interrogative question instead of a declarative statement. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Making no change would not correct the capitalization error present in the sentence. |
| 17 | Option A is correct | A serial comma is a series of commas separating multiple words. A serial comma needs to be inserted after “large” since both “large” and “gorgeous” are coordinate adjectives, both modifying the word “artwork.” |
| | Option B is incorrect | Deleting the comma would create a punctuation error. The comma separates the phrase “Plastered with large gorgeous artwork” from the word “cover,” which it modifies. |
| | Option C is incorrect | An infinitive is a verb form that often acts as a noun. Changing the infinitive “to be” to the future tense “will be” creates a sentence fragment, which is a group of words that are not a complete sentence. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Changing the spelling of “appreciated” to “apreciated” would create a spelling error. |

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| 18 | Option G is correct | Changing the word “endeaver” to “endeavor” corrects the misspelling in this sentence. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Changing “prolonged” to “prolonging” would create a usage error, since the word is being used as an adjective modifying “endeavor.” |
| | Option H is incorrect | Changing “who” to “whom” is incorrect since in this sentence the pronoun is receiving the action from a verb or a preposition. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Leaving the sentence as is would not correct the misspelled word “endeaver.” |
| 19 | Option B is correct | The author includes paragraph 5 to address a misconception about living alone. He states that there is “little evidence” to suggest living alone is “making more Americans lonely” and provides additional evidence to support his statement. |
| | Option A is incorrect | There are no details in the paragraph that analyze the benefits of living alone. |
| | Option C is incorrect | In paragraph 5 the author provides research addressing the misconception that people living alone are lonely. The author presents the findings that it is the quality, not the quantity, of social interactions that predicts loneliness. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Although in paragraph 5 the author mentions that living with the wrong person can be lonely, he does not analyze the reasons why people prefer to live alone instead of with another. |
| 20 | Option H is correct | According to the author, the growing number of people living alone shouldn’t be interpreted as a sign of increased feelings of loneliness. Disproving this common misconception is one of the main purposes of the article. |
| | Option F is incorrect | There is no indication the author faced difficulties in studying people’s happiness. For example, in paragraph 6, he details 300 interviews he conducted with people who live alone, many of whom were socially satisfied. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although the author states people who live alone are likely to continue living alone, there is no correlation shown between choosing to live alone and declining family values. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Although the author mentions in paragraph 7 that there are “less expensive options” than living alone, there is no evidence indicating that the economy will be affected in a variety of ways. |
| 21 | Option B is correct | The best summary of the article is presented in this option. The introduction is restated, the author’s studies and research findings are explained, and comprehensive details from the beginning, middle, and end of the article are included. |
| | Option A is incorrect | In this option, a few specific details are given instead of the entirety of the author’s message, resulting in a poor summary. There is also no evidence in the article to support the claim in this summary that the social fabric of the United States has improved. |
| | Option C is incorrect | In this option, a few specific details are given instead of the entirety of the author’s message, resulting in a poor summary. There is no evidence in the article to support the claim in this summary that people are decreasingly concerned with raising a family. |
| | Option D is incorrect | In this option, a few specific details are given instead of the entirety of the author’s message, resulting in a poor summary. The author does mention social networks in the article, but there is not an explicit claim that people feel overwhelmed by their social networks and constant connectedness to others. |

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| 22 | Option F is correct | The author mentions his own research in paragraph 6 in order to provide additional evidence about the positive aspects of choosing to live alone. |
| | Option G is incorrect | There is no textual evidence that the author himself lives alone. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Although the interpretation of some research in the article is questioned, the author never suggests that any of the research in favor of living alone is not valid. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Although in paragraph 6 the author alludes to singletons being socially active and enjoying a public culture, he does not include specific details about the ways people who live alone spend their time. |
| 23 | Option C is correct | In paragraph 4, the author has a critical attitude toward past research on living alone. At the end of the paragraph, the author points out “a problem with the data” in a study acknowledged by one of the study’s authors as “unreliable.” The author is also critical of the study’s interpretation of the data: “the record number of people who live alone is a sign of how lonely and disconnected we have become.” |
| | Option A is incorrect | Although the author displays a critical attitude in paragraph 4 when discussing past research, he does so logically and without becoming aggressive. |
| | Option B is incorrect | The author evaluates past research findings in paragraph 4, but his attitude is less understanding and more critical of the research used to support the studies. |
| | Option D is incorrect | The author does not display enthusiasm toward the past research findings in paragraph 4. |
| 24 | Option J is correct | The author’s belief that living alone is an appealing choice is best supported by information included in paragraph 9, which states that “living alone can offer even greater benefits: the time and space for restorative solitude” in today’s busy world. |
| | Option F is incorrect | In paragraph 4, the author references the book <i>Bowling Alone</i> to refute the book’s claims and dispel misconceptions about declining communities. The claim that living alone is an appealing choice is not supported by this sentence. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Support for the author’s belief that living alone is appealing is not provided. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Although the idea that living alone does not necessarily result in loneliness is supported by this sentence, specific support for the author’s belief that living alone is appealing is not provided. |
| 25 | Option A is correct | The percentage of people listed in a variety of countries featured in the graphic titled “Where They’re Living Solo” provides evidence for the idea that living alone is a global practice. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Percentages of people living alone around the world are shown in the graphic, but information about how long individuals choose to live alone is not provided. |
| | Option C is incorrect | According to the graphic, living alone is widespread throughout the world, but lower percentages in some countries indicate that it is not necessarily a dominant practice in all countries. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Percentages of people who live alone in a variety of countries are listed in the graphic, not cyclical data. |

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| 26 | Option F is correct | In paragraph 8, the word <u>exhilarating</u> is introduced in contrast with “occasional longing” and “home-sickness,” indicating that the author also experiences excitement and happiness in “an isolated realm.” |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although the author mentions “bouts of home-sickness” and “the occasional longing for new music and old friends,” the word <u>exhilarating</u> means “exciting” and is specifically presented in contrast to these longing emotions. |
| | Option H is incorrect | There is no textual context indicating that the word <u>exhilarating</u> means “fear of the unknown.” |
| | Option J is incorrect | The word <u>exhilarating</u> means “exciting.” It does not refer to something that provides assistance or comfort. |
| 27 | Option D is correct | In paragraph 10, the author includes details such as the use of cell phones and MP3 audio files. The author’s statement “the isolating aspects of technology were taking hold” suggests that people near Mount Everest were rapidly embracing new technology. |
| | Option A is incorrect | In paragraph 10, the author mentions that Sherpas and porters wear “telltale white headphone cords” and were “lost in the private soundtracks of their MP3 files,” which suggests that they have access to and enjoy technology. |
| | Option B is incorrect | In paragraph 10, there is no textual evidence indicating that the technology helped people who work near Mount Everest become more efficient. |
| | Option C is incorrect | There is no textual evidence in paragraph 10 indicating that trekkers or workers preferred to use traditional forms of communication. |
| 28 | Option H is correct | The author’s main purpose is to convince readers to consider how technology and the Internet have changed the experience of traveling in remote places. He focuses specifically on the significant changes in the Himalaya due to technology and access to the Internet. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Although the author does indicate that he has visited Nepal and trekked the Everest route more than once, he does not discuss his love of trekking or how it developed. |
| | Option G is incorrect | In paragraph 14, the author does not present evidence indicating that Internet access is a danger to the region. |
| | Option J is incorrect | The author mentions that the Mount Everest region “was a lot more crowded” in paragraph 10, but the purpose of the article is not to criticize the growing popularity of the mountain. |
| 29 | Option A is correct | In paragraph 9, the author describes his past experiences in the Himalaya without the availability of technology as pleasant and focused on being mentally present. He uses many positive examples of making friendships, experiencing the culture, enjoying solitude, playing games, and sharing stories. |
| | Option B is incorrect | There is no expert testimony presented as evidence in paragraph 9. |
| | Option C is incorrect | In paragraph 9, the author describes his memories and provides textual evidence indicating that his experiences were quite common and not rare experiences for climbers at that time. |
| | Option D is incorrect | In paragraph 9, the author fondly describes his experiences as pleasant, but there is no evidence presented to support an emotional appeal for change. |

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| 30 | Option G is correct | In this sentence from paragraph 14, the author explains that to be connected and live in the moment, one must temporarily disconnect from other technological and environmental demands for attention. Therefore, making a real, personal connection requires a form of vigilance or effort in addition to temporarily abstaining from technology. |
| | Option F is incorrect | In paragraph 14 the author does not mention that it is difficult to disconnect from the modern world. He states that interpersonal connections require a form of vigilance or effort in addition to temporarily abstaining from technology. |
| | Option H is incorrect | The author believes that interpersonal connections require a form of vigilance or effort in addition to temporarily abstaining from technology. |
| | Option J is incorrect | The author does not mention that society does not value connectedness. Rather, the author believes that interpersonal connections require a form of vigilance or effort in addition to temporarily abstaining from technology. |
| 31 | Option D is correct | In this sentence from paragraph 15, the author mentions a fictional location as the only place where Internet likely would not be found. This demonstrates that the author understands the inevitability of Internet access on Mount Everest. |
| | Option A is incorrect | In this sentence from paragraph 1, there is no indication of the author's feelings about the inevitability of technology. |
| | Option B is incorrect | There is no indication of the author's feelings about the inevitability of technology in this sentence from paragraph 7. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Although in this sentence from paragraph 11 the author describes the act of talking in person with others as more comforting than using the Internet to communicate, there is no indication of the author's feelings about the inevitability of technology. |
| 32 | Option H is correct | A woman working on a laptop is shown in the photograph and described in the caption; people work on laptops on Mount Everest on a daily basis. The photograph and caption help the reader understand that it is a normal occurrence for people to use technology atop Mount Everest. |
| | Option F is incorrect | There is no indication that using the laptop in that location is challenging. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although a laptop can be considered an expensive item, laptop use is made to seem common in the photograph and caption. There is no indication that using a laptop on Mount Everest is elitist. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Laptop use is made to seem common in the photograph and caption, so it is not a whimsical situation. |
| 33 | Option A is correct | Although solitude is mentioned in both articles, the author of "Living Alone Is the New Norm" uses research to explain his ideas, while the author of "Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?" describes his personal experiences and provides anecdotes to support his ideas. |
| | Option B is incorrect | The author of the article "Living Alone Is the New Norm" primarily discusses technology in the form of digital media, without a strong opinion of whether the media should be accepted or discouraged. The author of "Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?" discusses technology usage on Mount Everest, but he does not reject it. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Both authors include positive discussions of social interactions; however, there is no evidence that the author of "Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?" favors a life of social isolation. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Neither author discusses improvements to the environment or predictions of ecological trouble. |

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| 34 | Option G is correct | The authors of both articles indicate that cultural changes can affect the human experience. In “Living Alone Is the New Norm,” the author discusses living alone as an acceptable lifestyle, while the author of “Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?” discusses Internet connectivity in remote locations and its impact on humanity. |
| | Option F is incorrect | There is no evidence to indicate that the author of either article worries that his views are not aligned with most of society. |
| | Option H is incorrect | There is no evidence that either author intends to continue his research. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Although both authors mention societal trends, there is no evidence that either author is encouraging readers to examine trends in other cultures. |
| 35 | Option C is correct | Both authors end their articles by offering reflective suggestions about people connecting in a meaningful way. The author of “Living Alone Is the New Norm” offers the idea that living alone leads to reconnecting, while the author of “Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?” suggests that people take the time to consider which connections are most important. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Neither author concludes by presenting a bold contradiction. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Although both authors suggest that individuals connect with others or nature, neither issues a stern warning. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Both authors present optimistic ideas throughout; neither ends with a pessimistic prediction. |
| 36 | Option G is correct | Both authors explore how cultural changes occur and the idea that change is inevitable. In “Living Alone Is the New Norm,” the author argues against a common misconception that living alone, while a growing modern phenomenon, leads to increased levels of loneliness. The author of “Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?” explores how technology access has changed the environment and communities surrounding Mount Everest. |
| | Option F is incorrect | There is no claim in either article that life was better prior to the introduction of the Internet. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Although both authors examine ways humans have adapted to changes, there is no evidence in either article that most people dislike change. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Although both authors mention technology and being constantly connected to others, the author of “Living Alone Is the New Norm” does not focus on the idea that technology should be embraced. |
| 37 | Option D is correct | Tone is the way the author expresses his or her attitude through the writing. Both quotations have a positive tone. In the quotation from “Living Alone Is the New Norm,” people who live alone are described as “socially active” and enjoying a “thriving public culture.” In the quotation from “Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?,” the author mentions how updated technology will “undoubtedly save lives” from potential dangers. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Although dangerous situations are discussed in the quotation from “Will Wi-Fi Ruin Mount Everest?,” a guarded tone is not found in either quotation. |
| | Option B is incorrect | A surprised tone is not found in either quotation. |
| | Option C is incorrect | An incredulous tone is not found in either quotation. |

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| 38 | Option H is correct | Definition 3 is supported by the way the word <u>contain</u> is used in line 9. In line 9, the horses “can hardly <u>contain</u> their happiness,” which means the horses are having trouble keeping their feelings “within bounds.” |
| | Option F is incorrect | The reader can use information from the dictionary entry to understand the word <u>contain</u> refers to the horses keeping their happiness within bounds and not “holding within a fixed area” as definition 1 suggests. |
| | Option G is incorrect | The reader can use information from the dictionary entry to understand that in line 9, the word <u>contain</u> refers to the horses keeping their happiness within bounds and not “to consist of” or “comprise” as definition 2 suggests. |
| | Option J is incorrect | The reader can use information from the dictionary entry to understand that in line 9, the word <u>contain</u> refers to the horses keeping their happiness within bounds and not controlling “enemy forces” as definition 4 suggests. |
| 39 | Option C is correct | In line 14, the quotation “munching the young tufts of spring” provides context for the word <u>grazing</u> because “munching” suggests eating. |
| | Option A is incorrect | The idea in line 4 does not provide context to support the meaning of <u>grazing</u> because the line mentions only the ponies’ eyes and not eating. |
| | Option B is incorrect | The idea in line 9 does not provide context for <u>grazing</u> because the line refers to the ponies’ reaction to the speaker and not to eating. |
| | Option D is incorrect | The idea in line 17 does not provide context for <u>grazing</u> because “nuzzled” refers to the ponies’ interaction with the speaker and not to eating. |
| 40 | Option F is correct | Poetic language is figurative language that uses words which mean something different than their literal interpretation. The poet uses poetic language in lines 3 and 4 to describe the eyes of the ponies as they “Darken with kindness,” which conveys a sense of the ponies’ gentleness. |
| | Option G is incorrect | The poet does not convey a sense of gentleness in lines 13 and 14. |
| | Option H is incorrect | A sense of gentleness is not present in lines 7 and 8. |
| | Option J is incorrect | A sense of gentleness is not conveyed in lines 18 and 19. |
| 41 | Option D is correct | The structure, or form, of the poem is best described as lacking rhyme and regular meter, or rhythm; this is known as a free-verse poem. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Although there are stanzas, or verses, present in the free-verse poem, the lines do not contain rhyming couplets, or two-line verses. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Although there are stanzas, there are no triplets made of three successive rhyming lines in this free-verse poem. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Although there are stanzas and a lack of rhyming words in this free-verse poem, the lines do not contain the same meter. |

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| 42 | Option F is correct | Tone is the way the author expresses his or her attitude through the writing. The poet describes the ponies as having an incomparable loneliness in line 12. The speaker's close-up observation of the animals creates an intimate and mournful tone. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although loneliness can sometimes be associated with bitterness, the poet conveys a tone of intimacy and mournfulness in line 12. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Although loneliness can sometimes be associated with scorn and cynicism, the poet conveys a tone of intimacy and mournfulness in line 12. |
| | Option J is incorrect | The speaker's close-up observation of the ponies creates a sense of intimacy and a mournful tone, not a sense of resignation or bafflement. |
| 43 | Option B is correct | In lines 13 and 14, the poet states that the ponies are "At home once more" and suggests that they are becoming comfortable and familiar with the visitors and that they are "munching the young tufts" of spring grass. |
| | Option A is incorrect | The poet's intention in lines 13 and 14 is to reveal the ponies' comfort with their location, not to suggest they have returned from a trip. |
| | Option C is incorrect | In line 14, the poet describes the ponies eating grass, but there is no indication that they have been deprived of food. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Although the poet suggests that the ponies seem happy and excited early in the poem, by lines 13 and 14 there is evidence to suggest the ponies have become comfortable and familiar with the visitors. |
| 44 | Option H is correct | In line 7, the speaker's act of stepping over barbed wire represents a desire to embrace nature by approaching and spending time with the ponies. |
| | Option F is incorrect | Tone is the way the author expresses his or her attitude through the writing. Although the tone of the poem is personal, the act of stepping over the barbed wire reveals the speaker's connection with nature, not increasing self-awareness. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although the speaker stepping over the barbed wire could signify something dangerous, it does not represent hardship in the context of line 7. |
| | Option J is incorrect | There is no indication that stepping over the barbed wire is meant to symbolize, or represent, forgiveness based on the context of line 7. The poet focuses largely on nature, not mankind. |
| 45 | Option C is correct | A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word "like" or "as." The simile in line 11 presents the ponies as timid and graceful, comparing them to swans bowing shyly. |
| | Option A is incorrect | In line 11, the speaker uses the word "wet" as an adjective describing swans, but there is no indication the ponies have been in the rain. |
| | Option B is incorrect | In line 11, the speaker describes how the ponies interact with one another, but the simile does not address how the ponies interact directly with the speaker and his friend. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Although the ponies are compared to swans who "bow shyly," there is no indication that the ponies are fearful of the visitors. |

2018 STAAR English II Rationales

| Item # | Rationales | |
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| 46 | Option G is correct | Based on the descriptive language in the quotation from paragraph 1, the narrator feels pity for the salesperson. The narrator notes the poor condition of the salesperson's clothes and the "glint of desperation in his eyes." |
| | Option F is incorrect | Based on the quotation, there is no indication that the narrator has appreciation for the salesperson; instead, he feels pity, as evidenced by the description of the salesperson's clothing and expression. |
| | Option H is incorrect | Based on the quotation, there is no indication that the narrator feels frustration toward the salesperson. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Based on the quotation, there is no indication that the narrator is suspicious of the salesperson. |
| 47 | Option A is correct | The term point of view refers to the person telling or narrating a piece of writing. The author's use of first-person point of view helps the reader understand the narrator's thoughts. |
| | Option B is incorrect | Although the author uses a first-person point of view and provides a physical description of the salesperson, the reader cannot determine what the salesperson is feeling. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Although the author describes some of the salesperson's actions, there is little insight into why the salesperson behaves any particular way. |
| | Option D is incorrect | Although the author uses a first-person point of view to express the narrator's thoughts, the narrator's fears are not conveyed by the point of view. |
| 48 | Option H is correct | In paragraph 1, the narrator feels pity for the salesperson and then awkwardness when he allows the salesperson into the house. The narrator hastily buys an item because he wants the salesperson to leave. The narrator's sense of conflict is evident through his feelings. |
| | Option F is incorrect | The narrator's observation of how heavy the weight of the salesperson's case is does not effectively establish the conflict in paragraph 1. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although the narrator describes his neighborhood, his observations do not effectively establish the conflict in paragraph 1. |
| | Option J is incorrect | Although the narrator mentions the speed at which the salesperson moves and reveals his product in paragraph 1, these details do not effectively establish the conflict. |
| 49 | Option A is correct | The narrator recalls the salesperson's appearance and feels irritated when he remembers the comment the salesperson made while opening his case: "This is your lucky day." The narrator is affected by his encounter with the salesperson based on evidence in this sentence. |
| | Option B is incorrect | There is no indication in this sentence that the narrator is affected by his encounter. |
| | Option C is incorrect | There is no indication in this sentence that the narrator is affected by his encounter. |
| | Option D is incorrect | There is no indication in this sentence that the narrator is affected by his encounter. |

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| Item # | Rationales | |
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| 50 | Option H is correct | A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. The author uses the metaphor to indicate the narrator has experienced a transformation. In the sentence from paragraph 5, the narrator compares his changed reflection to a lawn brightening when a cloudy sky changes to a sunny sky. |
| | Option F is incorrect | In the sentence from paragraph 5, the narrator compares his reflection to a lawn brightening when a cloudy sky changes to a sunny sky; the metaphor does not compare the lawn to the mirror. |
| | Option G is incorrect | In the sentence from paragraph 5, although the narrator sees a different version of himself, the metaphor does not indicate confusion, only a positive transformation. |
| | Option J is incorrect | In the sentence from paragraph 5, the narrator compares his reflection to a lawn brightening when a cloudy sky changes to a sunny sky; the metaphor does not literally describe the weather. |
| 51 | Option B is correct | Tone is the way the author expresses his or her attitude through the writing. The narrator feels pity for the salesperson and is suspicious about the Miracle Polish, resulting in a distrustful tone at the beginning of the excerpt. A shift occurs in paragraph 5 when the narrator cleans the mirror and sees a positive transformation in himself and feels optimism as he notes a “freshness” to his image. |
| | Option A is incorrect | Although the narrator does feel sympathy for the salesperson, this tone is present at the beginning of the excerpt, not the end. There is never a sense of defiance in the excerpt. |
| | Option C is incorrect | Although the narrator may feel improved energy at the end of the excerpt, there is no evidence of a fatigued tone at the beginning of the excerpt. |
| | Option D is incorrect | There is no indication that the narrator was uncooperative, only that he initially wanted to buy the Miracle Polish so that the salesperson would leave. There is no evidence of a concerned tone at the end of the excerpt. |
| 52 | Option F is correct | The narrator’s polishing of the mirror in paragraph 5 suggests a theme, or central message, of renewal. When he cleans the mirror with the polish, he sees a renewed and more positive image of himself. |
| | Option G is incorrect | Although the narrator polishes the mirror in paragraph 5 and sees an improved image of himself, a theme regarding the importance of self-care is not presented in the excerpt. |
| | Option H is incorrect | A theme regarding the inaccuracies found in images is not presented in the excerpt. |
| | Option J is incorrect | The theme of the excerpt refers to the narrator’s renewed self-image and not the rewards of hard work. |