

2021 STAAR Grade 3 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	In paragraph 6, the suffix <i>-less</i> is added to the root word <i>help</i> . The author’s use of the suffix and the context in the sentences “Some newborn animals are <u>helpless</u> , but not baby porcupines” and “They’re born with their eyes open and are able to walk right away” show that some newborn animals are “not able to help” themselves like the baby porcupines.
	Option A is incorrect	The suffix <i>-less</i> does not mean “others,” and there is no context to support the idea that newborn animals help others.
	Option B is incorrect	The suffix <i>-less</i> does not mean “again,” and the author does not include context that supports that newborn animals are helping again.
	Option D is incorrect	The suffix <i>-less</i> does not mean “too much,” and the author does not include context that supports that newborn animals help too much.
2	Option J is correct	The reader can locate information about “why many animals leave porcupines alone” under the subheading “Super Quills.” The author begins the section “Super Quills” with “most animals, though, won’t mess with a porcupine,” and then explains why.
	Option F is incorrect	The labels on the map can be used to locate places, but the labels cannot be used to explain “why many animals leave porcupines alone.”
	Option G is incorrect	The reader can locate information about what porcupines eat under the subheading “On the Menu.” There is no information about “why many animals leave porcupines alone” included in the section.
	Option H is incorrect	The caption under the photograph next to paragraph 6 is included to identify what is in the picture. There is no information about “why many animals leave porcupines alone” included in the caption.

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3	Option C is correct	In the selection, the author provides a broad range of facts about porcupines, including what kind of animals they are, where and when they can be seen, what they look like, their abilities as babies, and their means of defense against predators.
	Option A is incorrect	Only the section "On the Menu" and the map "Porcupines in North America" are included to give the reader information about the location of porcupines. Where porcupines live is just one of many facts about porcupines the author provides in the selection.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does mention how porcupines act when a predator attacks in paragraph 2 and again in the section "Super Quills," but the author presents a broader range of facts about porcupines throughout the selection.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does compare porcupines to other animals in paragraphs 3 and 6. However, the author does not include these comparisons to "explain why porcupines look different from other animals."
4	Option F is correct	The subheading "On the Menu" is included to provide a clue that information about what a porcupine eats will be described in the section. The author states in this section that a porcupine eats "buds, flowers, leaves, and more" in the spring and "bark and evergreen needles" in the winter.
	Option G is incorrect	The subheading "Little Pricklies" is included to provide a clue that information about baby porcupines will be described in the section. The author does mention that baby porcupines nurse from their mother but does not mention different types of food porcupines eat.
	Option H is incorrect	The subheading "At Home up a Tree" is included to provide a clue that information about where a porcupine spends its time will be described in the section.
	Option J is incorrect	The subheading "Super Quills" is included to provide a clue that information about a porcupine's quills will be described in the section.

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5	Option D is correct	The word "chew" is a synonym for the word <u>nibble</u> because both words can be used to tell that porcupines chew "buds, flowers, leaves, and more" while eating.
	Option A is incorrect	The word <u>nibble</u> is not a synonym for "sleep." There is no evidence to suggest that porcupines would sleep on the food they eat.
	Option B is incorrect	Although animals do "hide" their food, the word <u>nibble</u> is used to describe the way porcupines eat. Specifically, they "chew" their food.
	Option C is incorrect	The words <u>nibble</u> and "walk" are not synonyms. No evidence is given to suggest porcupines "walk" on their food.
6	Option F is correct	On the map of North America, shading is used to show "Where porcupines live," according to the key, and most of Canada and part of the United States are shaded.
	Option G is incorrect	The shaded part of the map, which is used to show where porcupines live, includes Canada as well as the United States.
	Option H is incorrect	Most of Alaska is shaded to show that porcupines live there, but there is no information comparing the number of porcupines that live in Alaska to the number in other areas.
	Option J is incorrect	There is a lot of land shaded that is not near an ocean. Since the shaded part of the map is used to show where porcupines live, porcupines do not live only near water.

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7	Option D is correct	The words "gently in her hands" are used to help the reader understand what <u>cradled</u> means in paragraph 14. Layla is holding the geode in paragraph 13, and <u>cradled</u> is used in paragraph 14 to emphasize how "gently" she is holding the geode.
	Option A is incorrect	The words "at her classmates" are used to tell the reader where Layla is looking, not how Layla is holding the geode.
	Option B is incorrect	The words "down the trail" are used to tell the reader where Layla's classmates are, not how Layla is holding the geode.
	Option C is incorrect	The words "with the tour guide" are used to tell the reader where Layla's classmates are, not how Layla is holding the geode.
8	Option H is correct	In paragraph 1, Layla is excited about exploring a park. She "loved being outside because there was always something new to discover." Knowing that Layla loves nature helps the reader understand Layla's actions (admiring and then choosing to respect nature), which guide the plot of the story.
	Option F is incorrect	Layla is pleased while on the field trip because she enjoys nature and she is in a national park, but there is no indication that she is generally "easy to please."
	Option G is incorrect	Layla is enjoying herself on the field trip, but she is on the field trip with her classmates and hurries to join them after she is separated from them.
	Option J is incorrect	Layla does like to be outside, and she is on her second field trip, but there is no indication that her first field trip was to a forest.

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9	Option D is correct	Layla is conflicted when she finds the geode. She wants to keep it because it's pretty and will remind her of the field trip, but in paragraph 11, she thinks about the tour guide's words, " <i>Take only pictures. Leave only footprints.</i> " Layla has a difficult choice to make but ultimately does the right thing.
	Option A is incorrect	Layla does not make a mistake. She has a difficult choice to make, and she makes the right decision.
	Option B is incorrect	Layla feels that being outdoors is rewarding, but the main message is related to the resolution of Layla's conflict (choosing to make the right decision).
	Option C is incorrect	No one is in danger in this story, so safety is not in question. The guide's rule is about respecting nature, and Layla thinks about it to make her decision.
10	Option F is correct	Layla stopping to take a photograph of a butterfly on the lantana in paragraph 3 leads to her discovery of the geode. "As she tucked her camera back in her backpack, something on the trail caught her eye," and it is the geode that Layla sees.
	Option G is incorrect	Layla finds the geode in paragraph 3, but Cooper doesn't speak to her until paragraph 4, after she has already found it.
	Option H is incorrect	Cooper repeats the tour guide's words to Layla in paragraph 9, and Layla thinks about these words again in paragraph 11, but this is after she finds the geode.
	Option J is incorrect	Layla jogs toward her classmates in paragraph 14 with the geode in her hand, so this is after she finds the geode.

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11	Option B is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The imagery in this sentence, "the heavy feeling that had settled in her heart," is not used to describe an actual weight in Layla's heart but rather to describe an uncomfortable feeling Layla experiences because she knows she's making a mistake.
	Option A is incorrect	Layla does not show any signs of anger in paragraph 10. She acknowledges that taking the geode makes her uncomfortable because she knows it is wrong.
	Option C is incorrect	Layla shows no signs of curiosity in paragraph 10. She is trying to decide what to do with the geode, but she does not consider studying it to "learn more about it."
	Option D is incorrect	Layla does not feel proud in paragraph 10. She feels uncomfortable because she knows taking the geode is wrong.
12	Option J is correct	In paragraph 11, Layla is considering what she should do with the geode. Layla wants to take the geode home with her but remembers that her tour guide had said, "Take only pictures," which suggests that taking the geode would be wrong.
	Option F is incorrect	The tour guide had said, "Take only pictures," but Layla is considering taking the geode itself, not a picture of the geode.
	Option G is incorrect	Layla is remembering the tour guide's words, but only because they pertain directly to her situation. By remembering this detail, Layla cannot be said to be "good at recalling important ideas."
	Option H is incorrect	Layla knows exactly what the tour guide meant, which is why she thinks about those words while trying to decide what to do with the geode.

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13	Option B is correct	The reader can infer that Layla decides against taking the geode home because she realizes it should stay in the park. She remembers the tour guide’s words, “Take only pictures,” and realizes that the geode should stay in the park.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 10, Layla says the geode would help her remember the trip, so she is able to “think of a way to make the rock useful.”
	Option C is incorrect	Layla is not concerned about what anyone else would say about her keeping the geode. In fact, Cooper encourages her to keep it.
	Option D is incorrect	Cooper encourages Layla to keep the geode for herself, so he is not trying to take it from her.
14	Option J is correct	Layla “listened carefully” to the tour guide in paragraph 2, and in paragraph 8, she thinks she should show the geode to the tour guide in order to find out more about it. The reader can conclude from Layla’s actions that she “respects the tour guide’s knowledge.”
	Option F is incorrect	Layla sees and learns “about many interesting things” (paragraph 2) on the path, so she does not wish “the tour guide had selected a more interesting path.”
	Option G is incorrect	Layla listens to the tour guide with interest and is enthusiastic about learning new information, so Layla does not think “the tour guide is boring.”
	Option H is incorrect	Layla finds the geode by accident because she stayed behind to take a picture. There is no indication that the tour guide has also seen the geode.

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15	Option B is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. The imagery in the first sentence, "the grin on her face stretched from ear to ear," is used to help the reader understand that Layla is excited about being on a field trip because of her big smile.
	Option A is incorrect	Layla is smiling in this sentence, which does not indicate tiredness, and she is not "doing schoolwork."
	Option C is incorrect	Layla is smiling in this sentence, which does not indicate concern.
	Option D is incorrect	Layla is smiling in this sentence, which does not indicate curiosity, and she is more focused on the current trip rather than wondering "where her class will go next."
16	Option F is correct	The author mentions the sunlight bouncing off the crystals and sending rays in different directions to describe what Layla sees when her geode reflects sunlight. Layla then says, "You sure are pretty" while looking at the geode.
	Option G is incorrect	Although there is support for Layla wanting to keep the geode, the description is about what the geode looks like.
	Option H is incorrect	The author includes this sentence to describe the specific geode that Layla finds, not to mention other geodes hidden in the forest.
	Option J is incorrect	This description is about what the geode looks like, not about what Layla is wondering.

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17	Option B is correct	The reader can use the prefix <i>un-</i> to understand that <u>unnoticed</u> means “not seen” as used in paragraph 1 because <i>un-</i> means “not” and <i>noticed</i> means “seen.” In paragraph 1, the reader also learns that sloths move slowly to go <u>unnoticed</u> , or to keep from being seen, by their enemies.
	Option A is incorrect	The prefix <i>un-</i> means “not”; it does not mean “first.” The sloths are trying to keep enemies from seeing them; they do not want to be the “first seen.”
	Option C is incorrect	The prefix <i>un-</i> means “not”; it does not mean “together.” The sloths are trying to keep enemies from seeing them; they do not want to be “seen together.”
	Option D is incorrect	The prefix <i>un-</i> means “not”; it does not mean “from below.” The sloths are trying to keep enemies from seeing them; they do not want to be “seen from below.”
18	Option F is correct	Sloths have <u>curved</u> claws that can hook onto tree branches, allowing them to hang upside down. The opposite of <u>curved</u> is “straight.”
	Option G is incorrect	The author uses <u>curved</u> to describe the shape of sloths’ claws, not how thin (opposite of “thick”) the claws are.
	Option H is incorrect	The author uses <u>curved</u> to describe the shape of sloths’ claws, not how light (opposite of “dark”) in color the claws are.
	Option J is incorrect	The author uses <u>curved</u> to describe the shape of sloths’ claws, not how rough (opposite of “soft”) the claws are.
19	Option C is correct	In the section “Sloth Snacks,” there is “information about what sloths eat.” The author explains that sloths eat “twigs, leaves, and fruit.”
	Option A is incorrect	In the section titled “Sloth Style,” the author describes what sloths look like, not what sloths eat.
	Option B is incorrect	In the section titled “Slow Movers,” the author describes how and when sloths move. The author does mention that “at night sloths wake up to eat,” but does not say what sloths eat.
	Option D is incorrect	In the section titled “Staying Safe,” the author explains the dangers sloths face, not what sloths eat.

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20	Option J is correct	The reader can conclude that the author includes the details in paragraph 1 to suggest that sloths' slow movement is a special quality that helps them survive. In this paragraph, the author explains that sloths can avoid being noticed by their enemies by moving slowly.
	Option F is incorrect	The author says other animals "can run very fast," but does not say sloths can move fast.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does not compare sloths to other animals that live in trees.
	Option H is incorrect	The author uses the phrase "as scientists are discovering" to suggest that scientists are learning about sloths, but there is no mention of any specific sloths that have become well known to scientists.
21	Option A is correct	Each of the first three photographs depicts a sloth in a tree. The author includes these photographs to support the idea that "sloths spend a lot of time in trees."
	Option B is incorrect	The photographs are of sloths in trees, not scientists studying sloths.
	Option C is incorrect	The sloths are shown from different angles and distances in each photograph, so their sizes are not being compared.
	Option D is incorrect	In the photographs, each sloth is either eating, resting, or hanging out in a tree. These are not activities that require energy or would suggest sloths are not "as lazy as they look."
22	Option H is correct	In this sentence, the author describes the sloth as having "gentle brown eyes and a flat little nose" and provides an opinion that sloths look cute, which suggests that the author likes sloths.
	Option F is incorrect	A fact is stated in this sentence, so it is not the author's opinion of sloths.
	Option G is incorrect	A general observation scientists have made about sloths is included in this sentence, but not what the author thinks of sloths.
	Option J is incorrect	The approximate size of sloths is provided in this sentence, but whether the author likes sloths is not included.

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23	Option A is correct	The reader can infer that the author wrote this selection to provide interesting facts about sloths. Throughout the selection, the author includes facts about sloths' appearance, behavior, diet, and how they are being studied and cared for.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not include a call to action asking the reader to support a place that helps sloths.
	Option C is incorrect	The author discusses dangers sloths face only in the section "Staying Safe." There is a wider range of interesting facts about sloths throughout the selection.
	Option D is incorrect	The author mainly describes the purpose of a sloth sanctuary in the section "Helping Sloths"; there is no mention of "what it is like to visit a sloth sanctuary."
24	Option G is correct	In lines 18 through 21, the speaker shows excitement and anticipation by suggesting that the leaves are there "Just waiting" for the speaker to crunch them underfoot.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker describes the leaves gathering in piles in the previous stanza (lines 10–17), so the speaker is not "surprised to find a big pile of leaves."
	Option H is incorrect	The speaker wants to crunch the leaves, not find out what is under them.
	Option J is incorrect	The speaker is excited, not worried, about the amount of leaves on the ground.
25	Option B is correct	Sounds are described in the first stanza (lines 1–4), the fifth (lines 26–27), and the sixth (lines 28–31), and colors are described in the second stanza (lines 5–9) and the seventh (lines 32–36). Actions are described as leaves gather in the third stanza (lines 10–17) and as the speaker marches in the fourth stanza (lines 18–25).
	Option A is incorrect	There are no intentional rhymes in this poem.
	Option C is incorrect	Throughout the poem, there are descriptions related to the speaker's experience with piles of leaves. New events are not described in each stanza.
	Option D is incorrect	Lines are only repeated in the first stanza (lines 1–4) and the sixth stanza (lines 28–31).

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26	Option G is correct	The leaves are tumbling in the wind and gathering in “piles and drifts” in the street. The reader pictures how the leaves “look along the street” using this description.
	Option F is incorrect	There are no colors mentioned in these lines.
	Option H is incorrect	There are no sounds mentioned in these lines.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no description of how leaves feel in these lines.
27	Option D is correct	In lines 1 through 4 and lines 28 through 31, the word “Crunch” is staggered like footsteps, which is meant to emphasize “each step the speaker is taking” through the crunchy leaves, first with the left foot and then with the right foot.
	Option A is incorrect	It is the leaves, not the speaker talking, that is making the “Crunch” sound.
	Option B is incorrect	Given the description of the leaves in the third stanza, there are likely more leaves in the piles the speaker crunches through than there are instances of the word “Crunch” in the poem.
	Option C is incorrect	The placement of the word “Crunch” is used to show movement, but there is no evidence to suggest that the speaker is moving carefully through the piles of leaves.
28	Option H is correct	The speaker likes the leaves because they make a “wonderful/Crunching sound” (lines 26–27).
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker describes the color of the leaves in these lines but does not express an opinion about them.
	Option G is incorrect	The speaker describes the movement of the leaves in these lines but does not express an opinion about them.
	Option J is incorrect	These lines focus on the speaker’s feet, not on crunching leaves, which is what the speaker enjoys.

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29	Option D is correct	The speaker is pleased by the crunching sound the leaves make (lines 1–6) and describes the sound as “wonderful” in lines 26 and 27. In the fourth stanza (lines 18–25), the speaker seems pleased that the leaves are “Just waiting” to be crunched underfoot.
	Option A is incorrect	There are no words that imply bewilderment or chaos, so the speaker is not confused.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker does not wonder or ask any questions in the poem, which would have indicated curiosity.
	Option C is incorrect	There are no words that would suggest sadness or anger in the poem, so the speaker is not upset.
30	Option F is correct	The reader can conclude from this sentence that there are differences in the way bark paper looks even before it is painted since bark from different types of trees makes different colors of paper.
	Option G is incorrect	A step in the amate-making process is described in this sentence. Although bark is mentioned, there is no comparison to show differences in the way bark paper looks before it is painted.
	Option H is incorrect	A step in the amate-making process is described in this sentence. Although bark is mentioned, there is no comparison to show differences in the way bark paper looks before it is painted.
	Option J is incorrect	A step in the amate-making process is described in this sentence. Although bark is mentioned, there is no comparison to show differences in the way bark paper looks before it is painted.
31	Option B is correct	The reader can infer that the author included paragraph 1 to “interest the reader in learning about bark art.” By beginning with a story about Frederick Starr’s discovery, the author tries to make the reader want to know what happens and develop an interest in bark art.
	Option A is incorrect	Bark art is not compared to any other art in paragraph 1.
	Option C is incorrect	The author mentions that scientists “thought people no longer knew how to make bark paper,” but this is not a change in bark art over time.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no reason given for making bark art in paragraph 1.

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32	Option H is correct	The paper in the section "Make Your Own Amate Painting" is different from the bark paper described in the rest of the selection because it is crumpled to look rough like paper made from bark. Real bark paper is not crumpled.
	Option F is incorrect	In the section "Make Your Own Amate Painting," the paper itself is flattened. The author mentions in paragraph 9 that strips of bark are flattened to make the bark paper.
	Option G is incorrect	Bark paper is made from strips (paragraph 8). The imitation bark paper is made from a paper bag. There is no mention of cutting the imitation bark paper into strips in the section "Make Your Own Amate Painting."
	Option J is incorrect	The difficulty of drawing on real bark paper or on imitation bark paper is not mentioned anywhere in the selection.
33	Option B is correct	Starr's discovery was important because "he found that people were still making amate." Before his discovery, scientists thought that people did not know how to make amate anymore (paragraph 1).
	Option A is incorrect	The author mentions a different purpose for bark paper in paragraph 5 but does not mention that the type of amate Starr saw was a different kind.
	Option C is incorrect	The author, not Starr, mentions in paragraph 5 that amate was used for books.
	Option D is incorrect	The author, not Starr, mentions in paragraph 2 that people have made amate "for hundreds of years."
34	Option H is correct	In the section "Making Bark Paper," the author begins paragraph 8 by noting that "bark is stripped from the trees" and then describing the process of making that bark into paper.
	Option F is incorrect	In the first paragraph, the author describes a man witnessing people making bark paper but does not tell the steps of what happens after the bark is stripped from trees.
	Option G is incorrect	In the section "Bark Paintings Now and Then," the author describes ways the bark paper is decorated, not the process people take to turn the bark that is stripped from trees into bark paper.
	Option J is incorrect	Tree bark is not mentioned in the boxed section at the end of the selection.