

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
1	Option D is correct	Definition 4 is the correct meaning of <u>hassle</u> , an inconvenient problem. The issue of “finding and paying for a parking space in a crowded city” (paragraph 7) is best defined as an inconvenient problem.
	Option A is incorrect	Finding a parking space can take long periods of time, but it does not typically become a prolonged argument.
	Option B is incorrect	Although confusion may occur when trying to find a parking space, finding parking is an inconvenient problem, not a confusing situation.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the word <u>hassle</u> relates to finding a parking place as an inconvenient problem, not as a debate or controversy.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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2	Option G is correct	Paragraph 6 supports the author’s argument by describing the safety records of high-speed trains in Japan and France. The example that Japan’s high-speed trains have not had a single accident since 1964 proves the author’s claim that high-speed trains are “one of the world’s safest forms of transportation.” In addition, paragraph 6 supports the author’s argument with the example of France’s record of safe train travel for many years.
	Option F is incorrect	Information on how long these trains have been used in other countries may help sway doubters; however, the safety records of Japan and France provide more precise support.
	Option H is incorrect	The number of passengers that were transported is an interesting detail; however, it does not support the author’s argument that high-speed trains are safer than other transportation.
	Option J is incorrect	Although international studies were used as the source for analyzing high-speed trains, unlike the safety records, they do not directly support the author’s argument.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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3	Option A is correct	Based on the passage, the intended audience is most likely readers who have not considered the benefits of high-speed trains. The intended audience may have limited knowledge about high-speed trains, so the author’s discussion of the benefits of high-speed trains, including safety, convenience, and environmental friendliness, would convince these readers that high-speed trains could be worth using in U.S. cities.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author does mention job creation in paragraphs 9 and 10, that is not the focus of the selection.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author states that commuter cars create a lot of exhaust; however, readers who do not believe that auto exhaust is a problem may see no reason to use high-speed trains.
	Option D is incorrect	Relieving traffic is one benefit of high-speed trains, but this is just one idea presented in the passage. Unlike commuters who want to relieve traffic, the author’s intended audience is not knowledgeable about high-speed trains and their potential value in U.S. cities.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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4	Option J is correct	In paragraphs 9 and 10, the author supports the key idea by describing how the creation of high-speed trains leads to “local manufacturing and construction jobs” as well as “more jobs in building components of the system,” among other employment opportunities.
	Option F is incorrect	The focus of the details in paragraphs 9 and 10 is exclusive to high-speed trains, not to alternate forms of transportation.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the details in paragraphs 9 and 10 are about employment opportunities that high-speed trains may create, the information is not exclusive to Florida.
	Option H is incorrect	The details in paragraphs 9 and 10 do not focus on real estate markets or cities’ commitments to improving urban planning, neither of which is a key idea of the selection.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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5	Option C is correct	In paragraph 11, the author presents a counterargument by conceding that “many people prefer having their own method of transportation and the freedom it provides” and may be reluctant to accept train travel.
	Option A is incorrect	Paragraph 11 is a counterargument that emphasizes the disadvantages, not the benefits.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 11, the author does state that some people “are unfamiliar with trains, and they do not know how to plan a trip” on a train, but suggesting that travelers may be unable to plan train trips is not the most likely reason the author presents the counterargument.
	Option D is incorrect	The counterargument does not stress disruptiveness as one of the disadvantages of train travel.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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6	Option F is correct	The reader can infer from paragraphs 4 and 5 that high-speed trains enable people to get to their destinations much faster, so passengers “can save valuable time in their day” and avoid the frustration of wasting time by “dealing with stopped traffic, major delays, and accidents.”
	Option G is incorrect	Schedules are needed for people to know when the trains run, but these paragraphs do not imply the need for people to establish a daily schedule.
	Option H is incorrect	Although in paragraph 4 the author states that those working farther from home would spend less time traveling, no suggestion is made that this would encourage people to seek jobs that are farther from home.
	Option J is incorrect	No mention is made in paragraphs 4 and 5 that people would visit places they’ve never been to, even though high-speed trains would reduce travel time.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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7	Option C is correct	In the sentence from paragraph 1, the author uses language with strong emotional overtones or connotations to convince readers that high-speed trains would have a positive impact on travel. The quotation marks around “yes” and the exclamation mark at the end of the sentence emphasize the author’s strong sentiments.
	Option A is incorrect	The author discusses the safety records of high-speed trains used in other countries in paragraph 6, but the author’s use of emotional language in paragraph 1 does not suggest an international movement.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author does discuss transportation by car in the passage, the author does not use emotional language in the sentence to suggest that high-speed trains replace all other forms of transportation.
	Option D is incorrect	The author uses emotional language in the sentence from paragraph 1 to convince the readers to support the development of high-speed trains; however, it does not go so far as to emphasize the rejection of current transportation.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
8	Option H is correct	In paragraph 16, the author’s use of language contributes to the tone of the selection by creating a sense of confidence from the character. The author uses phrases such as “he knew he was faster than everybody else” and “he was always one of the first picked” to convey the confidence Danny feels about his athletic abilities.
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 16, Danny is stating what he thinks about himself with specific examples of what makes him “the best passer his age.” Although the author uses language that shows Danny’s confidence, the words and phrases do not suggest he is being sentimental.
	Option G is incorrect	The author’s use of language could suggest a negative tone when he says, “you got to just play without a whistle blowing every ten seconds or somebody yelling out more instructions.” However, this language is used to show how Danny’s peers recognize Danny’s talents and is not intended to be sarcastic.
	Option J is incorrect	Even though the language used in paragraph 16 shows that Danny is confident about his athletic talents, the author does not establish a tone of disrespect.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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9	Option A is correct	In the excerpt, the author uses flashback, a technique that involves a brief interruption in the plot to describe an earlier event, to help the reader understand that Danny has always known he is small. In paragraph 7, the author uses this technique to explain that “it happened the first time when he was eight, back when he still had to put the ball up on his shoulder and give it a heave just to get it up to a ten-foot rim.”
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 9, the flashback continues when Danny’s mother offers him advice by telling him to pretend that he heard “Blah, blah, blah” when anyone teased him about his size. However, the author provides no indication in the story that Danny needed her help to deal with his issues.
	Option C is incorrect	Although Danny has dealt with “clipboard dads” in the past, the author’s use of the flashback mostly helps the reader understand that Danny has been dealing with comments about his size since he was young.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author’s use of flashback suggests that Danny has learned many basketball tricks, but unlike the details about his height, this detail is not essential to the reader’s understanding.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
10	Option G is correct	This paragraph is the best summary of the excerpt. The paragraph provides key information about Danny’s small size, hard work, and passing skills; his reading about short basketball players; and his aspiration to play for the NBA.
	Option F is incorrect	This paragraph is incomplete because it fails to mention several key points, such as all the practicing Danny does and his research about short professional basketball players.
	Option H is incorrect	Although it contains details that add interest, this paragraph does not contain all the key ideas that are needed in a summary, including Danny’s research about short professional basketball players and his aspiration to play for the NBA.
	Option J is incorrect	This paragraph includes extraneous information that should not be in a summary, such as the name of Danny’s role model, Muggsy Bogues, and other sports that Danny tried out for. In addition, key ideas that are needed in a summary are missing, including Danny’s small size and his aspiration to play in the NBA.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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11	Option A is correct	In paragraph 9, the reader can conclude that Danny’s mom wants to help Danny. She recognizes that Danny may face criticism for his stature all his life, so she suggests a strategy for Danny to use to ignore insensitive comments from others.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no indication in paragraph 9 that Danny’s mom does not have time to listen to Danny. His mom is a caring person who takes the time to listen to how Danny’s tryouts went but is also quick to offer a solution.
	Option C is incorrect	Nothing in paragraph 9 suggests that Danny’s mom is overwhelmed. On the contrary, she smiles and offers a helpful way for him to shrug off comments about his size.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 9, Danny’s mom does not suggest that Danny is overreacting. She merely teaches him how to deal with the comments about his height.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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12	Option G is correct	Danny becomes aware at an early age that he is shorter than the average basketball player his age. His early motivation to be successful leads him to develop strategies such as leaning “into the bigger kid guarding him” (paragraph 7) so that he can be successful against opponents who are taller and bigger than he is.
	Option F is incorrect	Danny’s desire to be a successful basketball player motivates him to practice for many hours, but the story does not suggest that his success leads to him playing with older teammates or opponents.
	Option H is incorrect	Although Danny uses speed to compensate for his size, nothing in the story suggests that he must prove this to his teammates.
	Option J is incorrect	Danny’s mother, not his early motivation to succeed at basketball, inspires him to be more patient when dealing with criticism.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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13	Option A is correct	Point of view refers to the perspective from which the events in the story are told. In this selection, the narrator’s third-person point of view is limited to the thoughts and feelings of Danny. This allows the author to emphasize Danny’s feelings about his athletic abilities and limitations.
	Option B is incorrect	The clipboard dad’s opinion was verbalized to Danny, so the reader would have known this information even if the story were told from Danny’s point of view.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the reader understands that Danny’s mom waits to ask him about the tryouts, the narrator is able to describe Danny’s mom’s reactions only as Danny sees them, so her reason for waiting is never revealed.
	Option D is incorrect	Even though the reader learns what Danny’s dad told him, the narrator’s point of view is limited to Danny’s thoughts and feelings, so the reader never learns how Danny’s dad gained this insight.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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14	Option H is correct	The entire purpose of the fundraiser is to help in rebuilding the animal shelter from which Emily got Boots, so the reader can predict that they will complete the Circle Tour to help the animal shelter.
	Option F is incorrect	Because the bike tour is so strenuous and all-consuming, their energy and attention are focused on the tour and the shelter. This makes it unlikely that they will plan other fundraisers right away.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no suggestion that the girls have the skill or inclination to help in the actual rebuilding of the shelter. Their focus is on raising money to make rebuilding possible.
	Option J is incorrect	Although many friends and supporters cheered for Emily and Shelby while they completed the month-long fundraiser, there is nothing to suggest that they will encourage their friends to participate as bicyclists in the Circle Tour.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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15	Option B is correct	The phrase “ebbed and flowed” indicates that the girls’ feelings changed along the way. In paragraph 9, the author explains that the girls had to wait in “a smelly rest stop” and “had flat tires to repair” to emphasize their negative feelings. Other details, such as when they “witnessed a bald eagle” and “met many friendly people,” highlight their positive feelings.
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence, the author describes the support the girls received from a family member, but it does not describe the girls’ feelings.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence, the author shows some negative experiences the girls had, but there is no indication that the girls have experienced a change in feelings about the bike ride.
	Option D is incorrect	Although writing log entries was an activity one of the girls took up while on the bike tour, this does not provide any details regarding the girls’ feelings about the tour.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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16	Option J is correct	The theme of the story is the idea that regardless of the challenges it presented, the Circle Tour was worth taking on because it was for a good cause.
	Option F is incorrect	In this sentence from paragraph 8, the author gives details about the bike ride but does not express the theme.
	Option G is incorrect	In the story, the pledges are a detail related to the girls' bike ride experience but do not express the theme.
	Option H is incorrect	In this sentence, the author shows how the girls remained motivated during their month-long journey but does not explain the challenges the girls faced or the idea that the event was for a good cause, which are essential to the theme of the story.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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17	Option C is correct	The meaning of the word <u>waned</u> as used in paragraph 9 is “decreased.” In the story, the girls’ energy decreased during the days of the ride because of the strenuous tasks involved.
	Option A is incorrect	The word <u>waned</u> does not mean “encouraged”; the physical stress exhausted the girls, and they had less energy.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the girls’ energy did go up and down, the word <u>waned</u> does not mean “combined.” In paragraph 9, the author describes the girls’ aching muscles, which shows that they were exhausted and had less energy.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 9, the author describes the challenges the girls have endured, including mosquito bites, flat tires, and aching muscles. Through these details, the author shows that the girls’ energy decreased, not that their energy was “calculated.”

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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18	Option J is correct	The author includes a map to show the distance the riders need to go. In paragraph 8, the author describes the journey as “1,300 challenging miles,” and the map helps the reader visualize the journey, including the different cities and states they travel through.
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 10, Emily mentions several places she and Shelby visit, but there is no discussion of which places Emily most enjoys.
	Option G is incorrect	The map does not show the topography, so it is impossible to tell where hills might have to be climbed or where areas are flat and easier to navigate.
	Option H is incorrect	The size of the lake itself is not provided on the map, nor are other lakes shown to offer any size comparison.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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19	Option C is correct	During their difficult horseback ride, the boys welcomed the opportunity to rest. Therefore, the meaning of the word <u>repose</u> is “rest.”
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author explains that the boys were welcomed into homes for food and rest. There is no mention of fancy materials or treatment, so “refinement” is not the meaning of <u>repose</u> .
	Option B is incorrect	Making money was not an aspect of the boys’ journey, so <u>repose</u> does not mean “revenue.”
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author describes how the boys “rest at some Indian camps” and are invited into people’s homes. The author does not discuss the need for change, so <u>repose</u> does not mean “reform.”

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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20	Option H is correct	In paragraph 4, the author lists the items the boys brought on their journey to show that they did not expect help along the way. The “extra clothes” and “oats for their horses” were things the boys needed to have with them to be able to complete the journey independently.
	Option F is incorrect	The author explains that the boys’ travel was restricted; this restriction supports the idea that the father helped them plan their journey but does not support the boys’ being expected to take care of their own needs.
	Option G is incorrect	The information in this sentence from paragraph 4 supports the idea that the boys traveled a long distance, but it does not support the idea that the boys expected to take care of themselves.
	Option J is incorrect	The boys’ crossing American Indian territory and stopping at some of the camps supports the idea that the boys had many experiences, but it does not show that the boys were expected to have to take care of their own needs.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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21	Option A is correct	The author includes the background information in paragraph 2 about their father’s “speed and skills on horseback” to help the reader understand why the boys would be able to succeed on their journey, despite the length and difficulty of it.
	Option B is incorrect	Including information in paragraph 2 about the family’s relationship with President Theodore Roosevelt is interesting, but that information does not explain how the boys got their grit and determination.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author does state in paragraph 2 that the boys were “born with adventure in their blood,” he does not specifically explain how Bud and Temple got the idea for the 2,000-mile journey.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author describes Jack Abernathy’s “outstanding horsemanship,” but there is no discussion of how this characteristic was important to people living in this time period.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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22	Option J is correct	The controlling idea refers to the focused message the author hopes to communicate to the audience. In this selection, the author describes the journey of Bud and Temple Abernathy as “one of the most astonishing treks of all time” (paragraph 1). In addition, the author describes the challenges the boys faced in order to support the idea that this was an impressive journey for two young boys to complete on their own.
	Option F is incorrect	Knowing the boys were young and enjoyed the adventure is a simple description, not the controlling idea of the entire selection.
	Option G is incorrect	The author does mention that the boys would end their journey by participating in a parade for Theodore Roosevelt. While this is an interesting detail, it is not the focused message that the author was trying to communicate.
	Option H is incorrect	Although this sentence explains a general fact about horseback riding in the early 1900s, it is not specific to the young Abernathy boys’ journey, which is the focus of this selection.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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23	Option B is correct	The author includes the photos to emphasize the time period in which the journey took place. The photos illustrate the types of clothing and the mode of transportation described in the selection, which may not be familiar to the reader.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the first photograph does seem to indicate that the boys and their father had a close relationship, the second photograph does not include the father.
	Option C is incorrect	The second photograph may suggest the boys' skill and comfort with horses, but the first photograph does not emphasize this skill.
	Option D is incorrect	The photographs show none of the sights the boys encountered on their journey.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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24	Option J is correct	In "Biking for Boots," the author describes how people expressed interest in the girls' bike ride using social media. The sentence from paragraph 6 of "The Ride of a Lifetime!" conveys a similar idea because the "press was eager to write" and "Americans were eager to read" about the boys' journey on horseback. In both selections, people showed interest in the events by using the media.
	Option F is incorrect	Although there is a reference to a "bicycle" in this sentence, bicycle riding is not a similar idea conveyed in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" The similar idea conveyed is the interest from others in the boys' journey.
	Option G is incorrect	This sentence does not convey a similar idea as the sentence from "Biking for Boots," because it describes how Jack Abernathy assisted in planning the boys' journey. The sentence from "Biking for Boots" conveys the interest expressed by others through social media.
	Option H is incorrect	In this sentence, the author describes details about the boys' journey, which is similar to the idea of riding bikes around Lake Superior. However, the idea conveyed in paragraph 10 of "Biking for Boots" is about people's use of social media to show interest in the girls' bike ride, not the description of the locations they traveled around Lake Superior.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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25	Option A is correct	Difficult and exciting moments are integral parts of the journeys in both "Biking for Boots" and "The Ride of a Lifetime!"
	Option B is incorrect	Although the reader is told in detail how the boys in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" prepared for their ride on horseback, no information is given in "Biking for Boots" about how the girls prepare for their bike ride.
	Option C is incorrect	Neither the journey in "Biking for Boots" nor the horseback journey in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" was focused on sightseeing.
	Option D is incorrect	In "Biking for Boots," the girls travel with a support team, but the boys in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" traveled alone.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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26	Option G is correct	A key difference between the two selections is that the girls in "Biking for Boots" were helping raise money for the animal shelter, while the boys in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" were not riding to support a cause.
	Option F is incorrect	Both the girls in "Biking for Boots" and the boys in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" had to deal with extreme weather, so this is not a difference.
	Option H is incorrect	Both the girls in "Biking for Boots" and the boys in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" had specific destinations for their journeys, which is a similarity between the selections, not a difference.
	Option J is incorrect	In both "Biking for Boots" and "The Ride of a Lifetime!," people along the way offered support to the travelers in a similar way.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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27	Option A is correct	The presentation of the two selections is different because in "Biking for Boots," the author includes details in paragraph 9 to show the enjoyment the girls feel when they see the eagle and hear the cheers of friendly people. However, the author of "The Ride of a Lifetime!" does not include details about the boys' feelings during their journey.
	Option B is incorrect	Comparisons are not made in either "Biking for Boots" or "The Ride of a Lifetime!"
	Option C is incorrect	In both selections, the author focuses on more than the beginning or end of each journey. In "Biking for Boots," the author describes what leads to the girls' decision to do the bike ride. In "The Ride of a Lifetime!" the author describes the challenges the boys faced throughout the experience, as well as where their journey would end.
	Option D is incorrect	Neither the girls in "Biking for Boots" nor the boys in "The Ride of a Lifetime!" could establish routines, because of the many unexpected variables, such as the weather and wildlife, throughout their journeys.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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28	Option G is correct	Using a leading question can enhance the reader’s interest by establishing a personal connection.
	Option F is incorrect	The leading question asks the reader about a dislike, but it does not suggest there is a problem that will be solved. Instead, the reader is thinking about the personal experience of disliking “broccoli, dark chocolate, or cottage cheese.”
	Option H is incorrect	Although the leading question allows the reader to think about eating habits, it does not ask for an examination of these habits.
	Option J is incorrect	No comparison between the author and the reader is made in the leading question.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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29	Option A is correct	The author develops the thesis of the selection in paragraphs 5 through 7 by classifying the three learning styles, including “flavor-nutrient learning” in paragraph 5, “taste-flavor learning” in paragraph 6, and “social learning” in paragraph 7. In each paragraph, the author describes how the learning style helps develop or change a person’s food preferences.
	Option B is incorrect	Although specific foods are mentioned in the paragraphs, such as peanut butter in paragraph 6, they are not listed in order of importance or related to stages in a person’s life.
	Option C is incorrect	Food preparation is not discussed in paragraphs 5 through 7. Diversity in one’s diet is not related to the thesis of how food preferences develop and change.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author discusses social learning, or enjoying foods that family and friends like, but no suggestion is made that people should try new foods in social situations.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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30	Option H is correct	According to paragraph 3, when babies are between four and six months of age, they are typically more accepting of new foods as the flavor window is open during this time frame.
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 3, the details emphasize that babies can develop a willingness to try new foods; the emphasis is not on their natural resistance to trying new foods.
	Option G is incorrect	This idea is emphasized in paragraph 4, not paragraph 3.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 3, the author explains that giving babies new foods when the flavor window is open increases their willingness to try more new things, but there is no discussion of a shortened flavor window. This is an incorrect inference and contradicts the idea that the flavor window never closes, which is discussed in paragraph 4.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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31	Option D is correct	The word <u>dubious</u> as it is used in paragraph 2 means “uncertain.” As the flavor window slowly closes, young children become more uncertain about trying new foods.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the selection describes the different types of foods babies will try when the flavor window is open, there is no suggestion that the young children are “greedy,” so this is not the meaning of <u>dubious</u> .
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author is not saying that children are bored with new foods but that they are uncertain about trying them. <u>Dubious</u> means “uncertain,” not “bored.”
	Option C is incorrect	Even though the flavor window is only open when a baby is four to six months old, there is nothing to suggest that the baby feels impatient about the new foods being tasted. Therefore, <u>dubious</u> does not mean “impatient.”

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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32	Option J is correct	The author includes paragraph 9 most likely to emphasize that learning to enjoy new flavors takes time and effort. The author says that people need to “try a new food repeatedly” and test “different preparations,” which shows the effort required to reopen a person’s flavor window.
	Option F is incorrect	The author mentions that adding salt or sugar might help some people develop a liking for a particular food, but this is not the main reason why the author includes paragraph 9 in the selection.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author uses the phrase “natural suspicion” in paragraph 9 to suggest that resisting new foods may be normal, this is a minor detail and not the main reason for including the paragraph.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 9, the author describes different methods of preparing foods, such as “adding an ingredient,” but there is no mention of the difficulty of preparing new foods properly.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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33	Option A is correct	The controlling idea refers to the focused message the author hopes to communicate to the audience. In this sentence, the author describes how food preferences are developed in youth but can be changed, which is the focus of the selection.
	Option B is incorrect	This information is specific to one time frame rather than being a controlling idea.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence from paragraph 5 is an introduction of how people develop food preferences but does not explain how these preferences can be changed.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence, the author describes one way that children may learn to alter taste preferences, but this is too specific to be the controlling idea.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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34	Option G is correct	The idea of taste preferences being influenced by other people is supported by the details in paragraph 7. In the paragraph, the author explains that “talking about food in social situations and tasting new foods with friends and family” can influence a person’s food preferences.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author explains in paragraph 7 that a baby “will probably enjoy carrot-flavored cereal” if the mother drinks carrot juice while pregnant, the paragraph is not about the health benefits of carrot juice.
	Option H is incorrect	The author mentions how people learn to like new foods after talking about them, but this statement is too simplistic and does not include other examples of social learning.
	Option J is incorrect	The point about babies liking foods their mothers ate during pregnancy is not true for all infants and is only a supporting detail, not the key idea of the paragraph.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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35	Option D is correct	It can be inferred from paragraph 4 that learning to like new foods can happen at different times in people’s lives. The author explains that “the flavor window may never be completely shut,” suggesting that people can learn to like new flavors at any time in their lives.
	Option A is incorrect	While the author says that toddlers who are “introduced to a new food five to 10 times” can grow to like it, the behavior of toddlers’ parents is not mentioned in paragraph 4.
	Option B is incorrect	The author says in paragraph 4 that the number of times a child needs to be introduced to a new food “goes up as children grow older,” but this does not mean that toddlers like more foods than older children do.
	Option C is incorrect	This statement is an illogical inference that contradicts the idea presented in paragraph 4 that it takes “persistence and exposure” to learn to like new foods.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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36	Option H is correct	Realistic fiction consists of stories that resemble real-life settings and situations to which the reader can relate. The quotation from paragraph 23 that Millie is dealing with is true to life and one to which the reader can relate.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the story takes place in a gymnasium, which is a true-to-life location, the quotation from paragraph 23 does not provide details about the setting.
	Option G is incorrect	Based on the narrator’s language and descriptions, the story takes place in a contemporary time period, but the quotation from paragraph 23 is focused on the narrator’s decision, which is most characteristic of an event, not a time period.
	Option J is incorrect	While the quotation from paragraph 23 is taken from the end of the story, it does not clearly show the narrative structure of the story. In addition, the characteristic of containing a beginning, middle, and end is not unique to realistic fiction.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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37	Option D is correct	Millie realizes that a solution to her problem may be found by engaging Emily in conversation and revealing more personal information. She must quickly decide whether she can trust Emily and hope to gain a friend by doing so.
	Option A is incorrect	Although Millie might agree that more physical activity is good for her, it is clear in the story that participating in a team sport is uncomfortable for her and not the crucial element affecting the falling action.
	Option B is incorrect	Millie may want it to be true that she and Emily will become best friends, but she is still apprehensive that once she reveals her unusual academic success, Emily may not be interested in pursuing a friendship any longer.
	Option C is incorrect	Realizing the importance of making friends is an important step, but nothing implies that Millie will not also keep focusing on her academic successes.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
38	Option F is correct	Irony in literature is something happening that is different or opposite from what is expected to happen. The fact that Millie kicked the ball in volleyball is unexpected because people use their hands, not their feet, to move the ball in volleyball.
	Option G is incorrect	In paragraph 3, the narrator says "Luckily, I was already on a team and did not have to suffer the indignity of being chosen last," which suggests that Millie has experienced ridicule before, so the laughter is not something unexpected.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 12, Millie says, "Not making eye contact with anyone helped, although I am sure my teammates were miffed that I kept bumping into them." Millie's lack of eye contact has no impact on the outcome of the game. In fact, there is no indication of how the game ends.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the narrator says, "To everyone's amazement, I sent the ball flying back to enemy territory," and in paragraph 8, there is "stunned silence." Although these details describe other people's reaction to her contact with the ball, there is no evidence that Millie believes she has been successful.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
39	Option D is correct	The author develops the theme of friends offering support and understanding when it is needed through the interactions between Emily and Millie. In paragraph 17, Emily says, "Don't you hate volleyball?" and talks about her own lack of coordination. All of this provides Millie with the support she needs after her poor performance in the volleyball game.
	Option A is incorrect	Friends having different interests is not the theme the author develops in this selection, because Emily and Millie do not discuss their interests.
	Option B is incorrect	This is not the theme the author developed, as there is no anger shown in the interactions between Millie and Emily.
	Option C is incorrect	Although it is generally true that friendships can develop despite an age difference, there is no discussion of their ages during the interaction between Millie and Emily.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
40	Option H is correct	The first-person point of view allows the reader to understand how Millie thinks and feels throughout the story. She doesn't believe that she is particularly good at team sports, and she has already experienced "the indignity of being chosen last" (paragraph 3).
	Option F is incorrect	Since the story is told from Millie's point of view, the reader does not know what her teammates think of her or how Millie's attitude affects them.
	Option G is incorrect	The story focuses on an experience Millie has in the gym while playing volleyball and not on her behavior in the classroom.
	Option J is incorrect	The first-person point of view focuses on what Millie thinks and feels, not on what other characters think or feel.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
41	Option A is correct	The author’s use of figurative language—“looked like she could squish me like a bug” (paragraph 5)—helps the reader understand Millie’s perceptions of the player’s physical size and intentions as well as her reaction to the player.
	Option B is incorrect	The author’s use of figurative language to describe the opposing player does not compare Millie’s actual physical stature to that of other girls on the court.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 5, the author describes Millie thinking that the player “looked like she could squish me like a bug.” This does not make the reader aware of anything the opposing player is thinking or intending.
	Option D is incorrect	The author’s use of figurative language is focused only on Millie’s impression of the opposing player, not on hinting what might happen next.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
42	Option G is correct	The sentence from paragraph 4 hints that the volleyball game will not end well for Millie. The description of “the ball flying back and forth” shows how the game is supposed to happen, but the phrase “unless, of course” indicates that when the ball comes near Millie the game will not go as planned. Instead, Millie ends up kicking the ball instead of hitting it with her hands.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence from paragraph 2 is not about the actual volleyball game, so there is no hint about how the game will end.
	Option H is incorrect	This sentence from paragraph 7, in isolation, seems to indicate that the game will be a successful venture for Millie. However, the following sentence proves otherwise.
	Option J is incorrect	The description of the ball’s flight in this sentence does not hint at the outcome being unsuccessful for Millie, because the actual delivery method of the ball is not included.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
43	Option D is correct	Emily recognizes that Millie needs some encouragement and support.
	Option A is incorrect	Millie's parents are not mentioned as being at the game.
	Option B is incorrect	Millie's actions during the game were exactly what the other girls on the team expected of her, so they would have ignored her anyway.
	Option C is incorrect	In her conversation with Millie, Emily talks about disliking volleyball, so she is unlikely to teach Millie to be a better player.

2022 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
44	Option H is correct	Millie recognizes that her intelligence and acceleration in academics makes it hard for others her age to understand her.
	Option F is incorrect	There is no evidence given in paragraph 23 to suggest that Emily mistrusts those who are more academically gifted than she is.
	Option G is incorrect	Millie does not believe that she needs to participate more in physical activities.
	Option J is incorrect	The information in paragraph 23 does not convey anything about Millie’s friendships prior to Emily.