



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

**GRADE 7**  
**Reading**

**Paper Item Sampler**

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

## A Star-Spangled Catastrophe

### Characters

**PETE:** Seventh grader, soloist and member of the chorus

**ANGIE:** Eighth grader, member of the media club

**COMMENTATOR**

- 1 *[The curtain rises on Angie, who is sitting alone in the media booth above the football field. She is reading a book. Her feet are propped up on a desk. To her right a video camera facing the audience sits on a tripod.]*
- 2 **PETE:** *[Singing from offstage.]* And the home of the brave!
- 3 *[The audience can be heard applauding halfheartedly.]*
- 4 **COMMENTATOR:** *[From offstage.]* Okay . . . um . . . thank you, Pete Mahoney, for that . . . And now the referee will get ready for the coin toss. *[Voice fades.]*
- 5 *[Pete enters from stage right looking distressed. He is mumbling to himself.]*
- 6 **PETE:** That was indisputably the most humiliating moment of my life. I mean, how could I—
- 7 **ANGIE:** *[Peering around the video camera so that she's in Pete's line of sight.]* What happened?
- 8 **PETE:** *[Startled.]* What? Who—oh. Hi, Angie. Did you not hear the desecration of the national anthem I just performed in front of an audience of 2,500 people?
- 9 **ANGIE:** I thought you sounded great. You were totally on pitch, which is more than I can say for the girl who sang at the last game.
- 10 **PETE:** How could you even tell? I forgot all the words. I nailed "O say can you see" and "the home of the brave." Beyond that, the performance was pretty much a sing-along. *[Exasperated.]* Two thousand people just coached me to remember "o'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming."

- 11 **ANGIE:** Well, maybe instead of instilling feelings of patriotism, you helped everyone think about teamwork. Thousands of people singing together? That's inspirational.
- 12 **PETE:** [*Sarcastically.*] I'm so glad I could bring the audience together for some warm and fuzzy feelings. Meanwhile, I won't be selected as the regular anthem singer for the school district next year.
- 13 **ANGIE:** [*Laughing.*] Don't worry. You're the best singer in the school, and you're going to redeem yourself in about 30 minutes when you sing with the chorus during the halftime show. No one will even remember your tiny mistake.
- 14 **PETE:** TINY? I butchered it. I'm not going back out there. [*On the verge of tears.*] For all I care, you can have my solo in the halftime show.
- 15 **ANGIE:** Nope. I make videos. I do not perform live. I'm just here to record the game for posterity.
- 16 **PETE:** Wait a minute. [*He notices the video camera.*] You have the most horrifying moment of my life ON FILM?
- 17 **ANGIE:** Of course. What do you think I'm doing back here? Twiddling my thumbs? I'm on the job here.
- 18 **PETE:** [*Firmly.*] Delete it.
- 19 **ANGIE:** [*Firmly.*] No.
- 20 **PETE:** I didn't give anyone permission to film me. I'm sure there's a law about this somewhere. Hand over that videotape. [*Holds out his hand.*]
- 21 **ANGIE:** It's not illegal. You're being absurd. I'm here to record the *football game*, not your tragic rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner." And besides, we're living in the digital age, if you haven't noticed. There is no physical tape for me to hand over.
- 22 **PETE:** [*Almost yelling.*] Do you have any idea what it feels like knowing the most humiliating moment of your life is on video?

- 23 **ANGIE:** [*Calmly.*] No, I don't. I would never put myself in that position. And neither would 99 percent of the audience out there. If people give you a hard time, remind them that they would never stand in front of 2,500 people to belt out one of America's most difficult songs. Really, why would someone write a song with a range of notes hardly anyone can sing?
- 24 **PETE:** No clue.
- 25 **ANGIE:** [*Pauses and takes a breath.*] Look over there. Do you see that tall bookcase? And the bottom three shelves? [*Angie motions toward a shelf filled with videotapes, DVDs, and thumb drives, each labeled with a date.*]
- 26 **PETE:** Yeah, so?
- 27 **ANGIE:** That shelf contains every national anthem calamity that has occurred on this football field since 1980. Trust me. You're not the first, and you won't be the last.
- 28 **PETE:** Wow, there are a lot of recordings on that shelf.
- 29 **ANGIE:** [*With a sly grin and sarcastic tone.*] Soon the media club members are going to combine the video clips into a montage and call it "A Star-Spangled Catastrophe." Then we'll post it on the Internet. But honestly, your flub is on the boring end of the spectrum. I don't think you'll make the final cut. [*She shrugs her shoulders.*]
- 30 **PETE:** [*Flustered.*] What do you mean *I* won't make the final cut? I'm the best sing—oh, wait. That's a good thing, right?
- 31 **ANGIE:** [*Smiling.*] Halftime will be here before you know it. Are you ready?
- 32 **PETE:** No. Maybe. I don't know.
- 33 **ANGIE:** How about this: I'll tell the media coordinator that I started recording late and missed the national anthem.
- 34 **PETE:** [*Relieved.*] Yes! Thank you!
- 35 **ANGIE:** But this is your one freebie for the rest of your national-anthem-singing career.
- 36 **PETE:** Fine.

37 [*They shake hands.*]

38 **ANGIE:** And promise me that if you ever mess up the national anthem again, you'll at least make it entertaining. Then I can highlight you in the video montage, and you can go down in the blooper hall of fame.

39 [*They laugh.*]

40 **PETE:** Thanks again, Angie.

41 [*Pete exits stage left. Angie checks the camera and then resumes reading.*]

42 [*Curtain closes.*]

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

**Part A**

How do the details about how crowded the football game is contribute to the plot?

- Ⓐ They highlight how carefully Pete has prepared for his performance.
- Ⓑ They give a clue about what Angie thinks about Pete.
- Ⓒ They suggest that Angie and Pete have a long history of working together.
- Ⓓ They emphasize how embarrassing the performance is for Pete.

**Part B**

Which quotation best supports the correct answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ **PETE:** Did you not hear the desecration of the national anthem I just performed in front of an audience of 2,500 people? (line 8)
- Ⓑ **ANGIE:** You were totally on pitch, which is more than I can say for the girl who sang at the last game. (line 9)
- Ⓒ **PETE:** Beyond that, the performance was pretty much a sing-along. (line 10)
- Ⓓ **ANGIE:** No one will even remember your tiny mistake. (line 13)

2 Read these sentences from line 29.

But honestly, your flub is on the boring end of the spectrum. I don't think you'll make the final cut.

Record your answer in the space provided.

In these sentences, the word \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_ provides the best clue to the meaning of calamity as it is used in line 27.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

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3 Based on the dialogue in lines 29 through 38, which words best describe Angie's behavior toward Pete?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- Admiring
- Astonished
- Encouraging
- Grateful
- Teasing

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

What effect does Angie have on the resolution of the conflict?  
Support your answer with evidence from the play.




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- 5** Read the play “A Star-Spangled Catastrophe.” Based on the information in the play, write a response to the following:

Explain how the friendship between Angie and Pete contributes to the development of a theme in the play.

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

Remember to —

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

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

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

Record your answer in the box provided.

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO  
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## Written Composition

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

## Turning Waste into Energy

- 1 Founded in 1869 by John James Sainsbury, Sainsbury's is one of England's oldest grocery chains. But its leaders have some modern ideas. Paul Crewe leads a continuous effort that is devoted to helping people "live well for less." This humble promise that led to efforts to eliminate food waste and create new energy sources is positively groundbreaking.
- 2 The revolutionary plan started with a simple idea—keep leftover food from getting into landfills. The dumping of organic waste into landfills is a problem everywhere. Every year more than a billion tons of food is wasted. All that organic material decomposes in landfills, which produces a by-product known as methane gas. This natural substance that is left over is released into the atmosphere. The excess amounts of this gas can have harmful effects. Sainsbury's management has developed a program that seeks to solve this gassy glut. Its organic waste does not go to landfills. Nor does the methane escape into the air. How does the grocery chain do it?



Woman Admiring Apple



- 3 Offering shoppers the freshest and most appealing products possible is a good start. Attractive food sells the best. At the end of each day, each grocery store reduces the prices of fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy products. Cheaper food sells even better. Whatever edible food is left goes to charities for distribution to people who need it. Free food goes into bellies rather than the ground. Sainsbury's gives away large amounts of food to farmers to feed animals as well. Animals do not care if lettuce is wilted.
- 4 In spite of Sainsbury's efforts, a large volume of waste remains. A machine grinds the waste into a slushy goo, which is then poured into giant silos called anaerobic digesters (ADs). These giant silos act like artificial stomachs. Inside, microbes digest organic waste and produce methane bubbles. The same thing happens to organic waste in landfills and waste-treatment plants. The difference is that the AD silos are tightly sealed so they can capture and store the methane. The resulting biofuel can power vehicles, or it can be burned to produce electricity. Sainsbury's management estimates that its ADs can produce enough energy to power 2,500 homes for one year, or it can make enough electricity to completely remove one of its stores from the public power grid.



Anaerobic digester silos trap methane gas.

© iStock.com/LianeM

- 5 That is exactly what Sainsbury's has done at its store in Cannock, England. Special trucks collect food waste from more than 1,200 grocery stores all over England. They deliver the food waste to ADs in Cannock. Some of the methane trapped during the process fuels the trucks. The vehicles then go out to collect more waste. Much of the gas is burned to generate electricity. A long cable carries the power from the generators directly to the Cannock store. In the event that more power is generated than the store needs, excess power could be added back into the national power grid of England for people all over the nation to use. Another beneficial by-product of ADs is a solid waste called digestate. This gritty substance makes a rich fertilizer for local farmers to help grow better crops.
- 6 One of the best things about ADs is that their source is reliable. Every meal, whether it's eaten in a restaurant or at home, results in some food waste. Fortunately much of that garbage can be turned into a valuable raw material for making biofuel. Thus, the waste is no longer wasted.
- 7 So far Europe has mainly led the way in biofuel development. The continent has more than 14,000 digesters. Germany alone has 9,000 of them. But the United States is making rapid progress. In 2014 more than 2,000 anaerobic digestion plants were reported to be in operation around the country. And many more are set to begin processing food waste soon.
- 8 Many people may be unaware of efforts like those of the Sainsbury's company. But such programs seem to represent a growing trend. Increased knowledge and interest worldwide could lead to even bigger and bolder biofuel experiments in the near future.

6 Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

*Inside, microbes digest organic waste and produce methane bubbles.*

Record your answer in the space provided.

In this sentence, the word \_\_\_\_\_ (1) \_\_\_\_\_ provides the best clue that microbes are things that are alive.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Part A**

What is the most likely reason the author wrote this article?

- Ⓐ To share interesting facts about methane
- Ⓑ To explain why Sainsbury's is the best grocery chain
- Ⓒ To tell about a method used to decrease everyday waste
- Ⓓ To describe how anaerobic digesters are similar to the human body

**Part B**

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

- Ⓐ *But its leaders have some modern ideas.* (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ *The excess amounts of this gas can have harmful effects.* (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ *These giant silos act like artificial stomachs.* (paragraph 4)
- Ⓓ *Fortunately much of that garbage can be turned into a valuable raw material for making biofuel.* (paragraph 6)

**8** Read this incomplete summary of the article.

1. Sainsbury's uses food waste to create energy sources.
2. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Sainsbury's distributes as much food to people and animals as it can.
4. The remaining waste goes into anaerobic digesters that trap the methane gas released in decomposition.
5. Sainsbury's powers one of its stores on the biofuels the company creates.
6. \_\_\_\_\_.

Which ideas should be included to create a complete summary of the article?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- The by-product digestate can be used to fertilize crops.
- Food waste in landfills turns into methane gas, which can be harmful.
- Germany has 9,000 anaerobic digesters for biofuel development.
- Biofuel programs are gaining popularity around the world.
- Sainsbury's collects food waste from over 1,200 of its grocery stores.

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

In paragraphs 2 through 4, how does the use of a problem-and-solution organizational structure help the reader understand the information in the article? Support your answer with evidence from the article.


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**10** Read the article “Turning Waste into Energy.” Based on the information in the article, write a response to the following:

Explain how the author supports the thesis that the system created by Sainsbury’s is “positively groundbreaking” and “revolutionary.”

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

Remember to—

- clearly state your controlling idea
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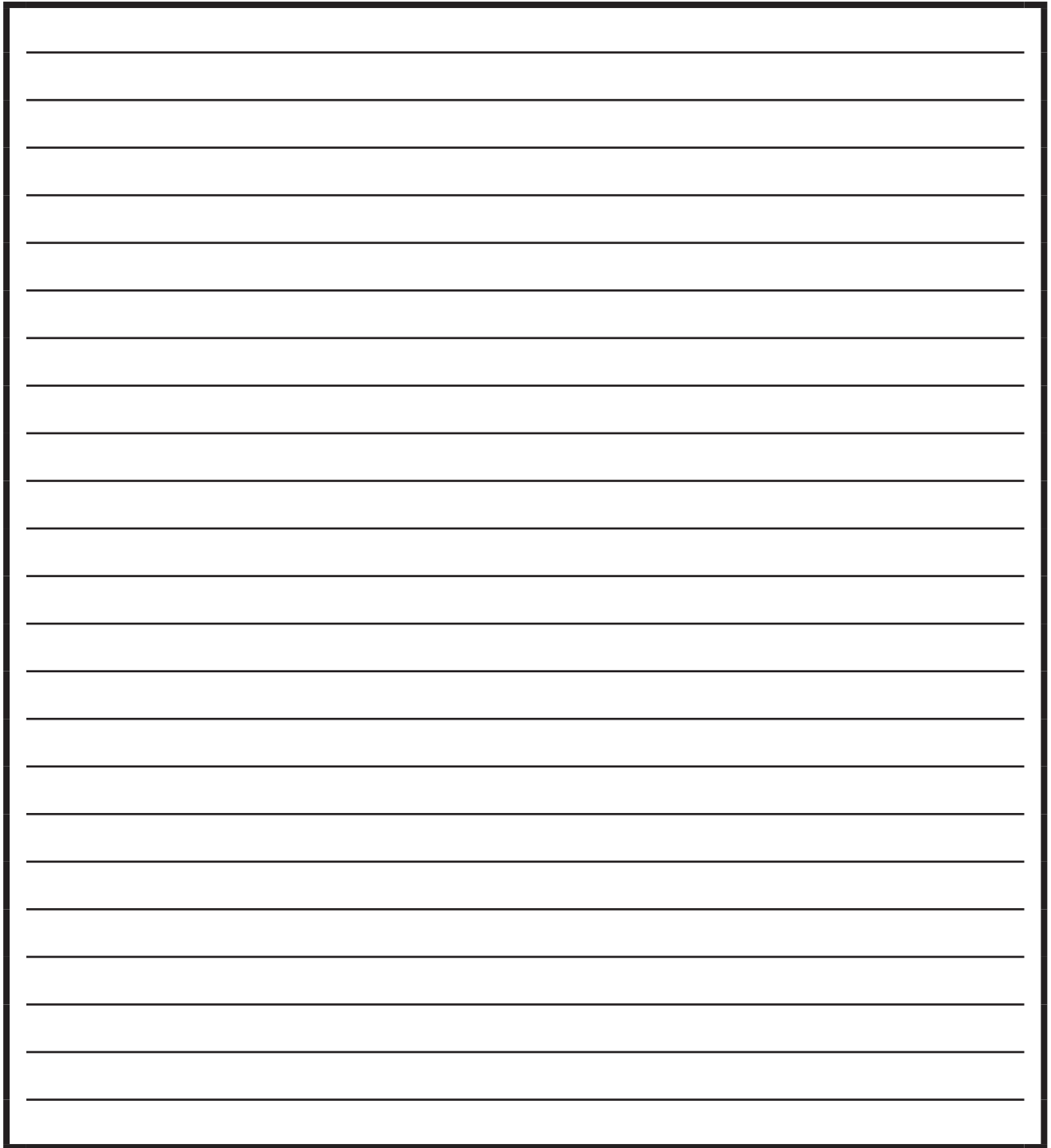
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*Rose wrote a letter to her school newspaper, expressing her opinion about the benefits of taking a martial-arts class. Read Rose's letter and look for revisions she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## **The Benefits of Martial Arts**

Dear Students,

(1) It's no secret that kids our age enjoy spending time on a computer or a cell phone. (2) Health experts tell us that we need to exercise for at least an hour a day. (3) And yet, tearing ourselves away from our electronic devices can be hard. (4) Playing a team sport is one way to get this exercise. (5) Not every kid wants to join a team. (6) For anyone who wants a fun, healthy way to exercise at his or her own pace, I have a suggestion: take a martial-arts class! (7) Learning and practicing self-defense can help you improve your physical fitness, mental focus, self-discipline, and social skills.

(8) I know from experience that studying martial arts can help you improve your physical fitness. (9) I began taking karate at age seven when my parents insisted I get off the couch and "do something." (10) At first it was difficult for me to complete the kicking, punching, and blocking drills in karate. (11) I practiced every week by striking foam pads with my hands. (12) Since that time, I have become stronger, faster, and better coordinated. (13) I love feeling healthier and knowing that I can defend myself if necessary.

(14) Participating in martial arts also helps kids develop strong mental focus. (15) Classes usually begin with breathing exercises and a time of silence to help clear the mind. (16) By engaging in these activities, students learn how to train their minds to be calm and alert. (17) Developing strong mental focus helps participants respond to an instructor's commands. (18) It also helps them sense when to adjust their form. (19) Additionally, instructors teach students how to focus their energy so they can kick and punch with more power and accuracy. (20) Having strong mental focus helps students defeat their opponents during a match.

(21) The longer people train in martial arts, the better they become at self-discipline. (22) As they push themselves to improve, they learn to conquer self-doubt. (23) This determination can even lead to better grades and behavior at school. (24) One study displayed that students' behavior in school improved after they attended just 10 weeks of martial-arts training, thanks to its emphasis on self-discipline.

(25) Studying martial arts has social benefits too. (26) Instructors stress the importance of respecting others, and respect is the basis for any successful relationship. (27) Also, martial-arts classes are often filled with students of all ages and backgrounds. (28) Participants have a chance to develop new friendships while learning new skills in a supportive environment.

(29) Learning to master martial arts takes effort and to dedicate yourself, but the benefits are countless. (30) Improved physical fitness, mental focus, self-discipline, and social skills are just a few of the many benefits the martial arts have to offer. (31) And you can practice on your own time, at your own pace, and in the comfort of your home. (32) Why not put down your phone, try a class, and see for yourself?

(33) Sincerely, Rose

- 11** Rose wants to combine the ideas in sentences 4 and 5. In the box provided, write a new sentence that combines these ideas in a clear and effective way.




**12** Rose wants to improve the transition between the second paragraph (sentences 8–13) and the third paragraph (sentences 14–20). Select the phrase that should be added to the beginning of sentence 14 to help with this transition.

- (A) As if the physical benefits weren't enough,
- (B) Although I enjoy a variety of competitive sports,
- (C) While karate is more commonplace today,
- (D) Because people need to separate from distractions,

participating

in martial arts also helps kids develop strong mental focus.

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**13** Rose wants to use a more appropriate word than **displayed** in sentence 24. Select the word that should replace **displayed** in this sentence.

One study 

(A) imparted
(B) proclaimed
(C) revealed
(D) exhibited

 that students' behavior in school

improved after they attended just 10 weeks of martial-arts training, thanks to its emphasis on self-discipline.

**14** Sentence 29 needs to be revised. In the box provided, rewrite this sentence in a clear and effective way.


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*Frederico is writing a letter to persuade his parents to take him to Space Center Houston. Read these paragraphs from the body of Frederico's letter and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the following questions.*

## **Space Center Houston**

(1) Our family should visit Space Center Houston over spring break. (2) Where else would we have the opportunity to meet an astronaut or touch a rock from the moon? (3) We could see exhibits that display space suits worn by astronauts. (4) As well as replicas of a shuttle and a space laboratory.

(5) We have talked about spending our vacation at an amusement park. (6) But Mom doesn't ride roller coasters, and Dad prefers educational places. (7) Space Center Houston has activities that everyone in the family will enjoy. (8) Check out the website for more information of this popular tourist destination and to read the latest news on space exploration. (9) If we go to Space Center Houston, each of us is sure to have a fun and fascinating experience.

- 15** Sentences 3 and 4 are written incorrectly. Select the response that corrects these sentences.

We could see exhibits that display space suits

- worn
- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <p>(A) by astronauts. And also replicas of</p> <p>(B) by astronauts as well as replicas. Of</p> <p>(C) by astronauts, there are also replicas of</p> <p>(D) by astronauts, as well as replicas of</p> | a shuttle and |
|---|---------------|

a space laboratory.

- 
- 16** Frederico has made an error in sentence 8. Select the response that corrects this error.

- Check out the website for more information
- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <p>(A) with</p> <p>(B) about</p> <p>(C) for</p> <p>(D) in</p> | this popular |
|---|--------------|

tourist destination and to read the latest news on space exploration.

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