



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

English I

Paper Item Sampler

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

In Bengali tradition children are given two names at birth: an informal name used only at home and a formal name, or "good name," used in public. In this excerpt, Gogol's parents, Ashoke and Ashima, want to give him a good name to use at school.

***from* The Namesake**

by Jhumpa Lahiri

- 1 There is a reason Gogol doesn't want to go to kindergarten. His parents have told him that at school, instead of being called Gogol, he will be called by a new name, a good name, which his parents have finally decided on, just in time for him to begin his formal education. The name, Nikhil, is artfully connected to the old. Not only is it a perfectly respectable Bengali good name, meaning "he who is entire, encompassing all," but it also bears a satisfying resemblance to Nikolai, the first name of the Russian Gogol. Ashoke had thought of it recently, staring mindlessly at the Gogol spines in the library, and he had rushed back to the house to ask Ashima her opinion. He pointed out that it was relatively easy to pronounce, though there was the danger that Americans, obsessed with abbreviation, would truncate it to Nick. She told him she liked it well enough, though later, alone, she'd wept, thinking of her grandmother, who had died earlier in the year, and of the letter, forever hovering somewhere between India and America, containing the good name she'd chosen for Gogol. Ashima still dreams of the letter at times, discovering it after all these years in the mailbox on Pemberton Road, opening it up only to find it blank.
- 2 But Gogol doesn't want a new name. He can't understand why he has to answer to anything else. "Why do I have to have a new name?" he asks his parents, tears springing to his eyes. It would be one thing if his parents were to call him Nikhil, too. But they tell him that the new name will be used only by the teachers and children at school. He is afraid to be Nikhil, someone he doesn't know. Who doesn't know him. His parents tell him that they each have two names, too, as do all their Bengali friends in America, and all their relatives in Calcutta. It's a part of growing up, they tell him, part of being a Bengali. They write it for him on a sheet of paper, ask him to copy it over ten times. "Don't worry," his father says. "To me and your mother, you will never be anyone but Gogol."

- 3 At school, Ashoke and Gogol are greeted by the secretary, Mrs. McNab, who asks Ashoke to fill out a registration form. He provides a copy of Gogol's birth certificate and immunization record, which Mrs. McNab puts in a folder along with the registration. "This way," Mrs. McNab says, leading them to the principal's office. CANDACE LAPIDUS, the name on the door says. Mrs. Lapidus assures Ashoke that missing the first week of kindergarten is not a problem, that things have yet to settle down. Mrs. Lapidus is a tall, slender woman with short white-blond hair. She wears frosted blue eye shadow and a lemon yellow suit. She shakes Ashoke's hand and tells him that there are two other Indian children at the school, Jayadev Modi in the third grade and Rekha Saxena in fifth. Perhaps the Gangulis know them? Ashoke tells Mrs. Lapidus that they do not. She looks at the registration form and smiles kindly at the boy, who is clutching his father's hand. Gogol is dressed in powder blue pants, red and white canvas sneakers, a striped turtleneck top.
- 4 "Welcome to elementary school, Nikhil. I am your principal, Mrs. Lapidus."
- 5 Gogol looks down at his sneakers. The way the principal pronounces his new name is different from the way his parents say it, the second part of it longer, sounding like "heel."
- 6 She bends down so that her face is level with his and extends a hand to his shoulder. "Can you tell me how old you are, Nikhil?"
- 7 When the question is repeated and there is still no response, Mrs. Lapidus asks, "Mr. Ganguli, does Nikhil follow English?"
- 8 "Of course he follows," Ashoke says. "My son is perfectly bilingual."
- 9 In order to prove that Gogol knows English, Ashoke does something he has never done before, and addresses his son in careful, accented English. "Go on, Gogol," he says, patting him on the head. "Tell Mrs. Lapidus how old you are."
- 10 "What was that?" Mrs. Lapidus says.
- 11 "I beg your pardon, madam?"
- 12 "That name you called him. Something with a G."

- 13 "Oh that, that is what we call him at home only. But his good name should be—is"—he nods his head firmly—"Nikhil."
- 14 Mrs. Lapidus frowns. "I'm afraid I don't understand. Good name?"
- 15 "Yes."
- 16 Mrs. Lapidus studies the registration form. She has not had to go through this confusion with the other two Indian children. She opens up the folder and examines the immunization record, the birth certificate. "There seems to be some confusion, Mr. Ganguli," she says. "According to these documents, your son's legal name is Gogol."
- 17 "That is correct. But please allow me to explain—"
- 18 "That you want us to call him Nikhil."
- 19 "That is correct."
- 20 Mrs. Lapidus nods. "The reason being?"
- 21 "That is our wish."
- 22 "I'm not sure I follow you, Mr. Ganguli. Do you mean that Nikhil is a middle name? Or a nickname? Many of the children go by nicknames here. On this form there is a space—"
- 23 "No, no, it's not a middle name," Ashoke says. He is beginning to lose patience. "He has no middle name. No nickname. The boy's good name, his school name, is Nikhil."
- 24 Mrs. Lapidus presses her lips together and smiles. "But clearly he doesn't respond."
- 25 "Please, Mrs. Lapidus," Ashoke says. "It is very common for a child to be confused at first. Please give it some time. I assure you he will grow accustomed."
- 26 He bends down and this time in Bengali, calmly and quietly, asks Gogol to please answer when Mrs. Lapidus asks a question. "Don't be scared, Gogol," he says, raising his son's chin with his finger. "You're a big boy now. No tears."
- 27 Though Mrs. Lapidus does not understand a word, she listens carefully, hears that name again. Gogol. Lightly, in pencil, she writes it down on the registration form.

- 28 Ashoke hands over the lunch box, a windbreaker in case it gets cold. He thanks Mrs. Lapidus. "Be good, Nikhil," he says in English. And then, after a moment's hesitation, he is gone.
- 29 When they are alone, Mrs. Lapidus asks, "Are you happy to be entering elementary school, Gogol?"
- 30 "My parents want me to have another name in school."
- 31 "And what about you, Gogol? Do you want to be called by another name?"
- 32 After a pause, he shakes his head.
- 33 "Is that a no?"
- 34 He nods. "Yes."
- 35 "Then it's settled. Can you write your name on this piece of paper?"
- 36 Gogol picks up a pencil, grips it tightly, and forms the letters of the only word he has learned thus far to write from memory, getting the "L" backward due to nerves. "What beautiful penmanship you have," Mrs. Lapidus says. She tears up the old registration form and asks Mrs. McNab to type up a new one. Then she takes Gogol by the hand, down a carpeted hallway with painted cement walls. She opens a door, and Gogol is introduced to his teacher, Miss Watkins, a woman with hair in two braids, wearing overalls and clogs. Inside the classroom it's a small universe of nicknames—Andrew is Andy, Alexandra Sandy, William Billy, Elizabeth Lizzy. It is nothing like the schooling Gogol's parents have known, fountain pens and polished black shoes and notebooks and good names and sir or madam at a tender age. Here the only official ritual is pledging allegiance first thing in the morning to the American flag. For the rest of the day, they sit at a communal round table, drinking punch and eating cookies, taking naps on little orange cushions on the floor. At the end of his first day, he is sent home with a letter to his parents from Mrs. Lapidus, folded and stapled to a string around his neck, explaining that due to their son's preference he will be known as Gogol at school. What about the parents' preference? Ashima and Ashoke wonder, shaking their heads. But since neither of them feels comfortable pressing the issue, they have no choice but to give in.

Excerpt from THE NAMESAKE by Jhumpa Lahiri. Copyright © 2003 by Jhumpa Lahiri. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

1 How does the author's use of language in paragraph 36 emphasize a theme in the excerpt?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- By showing why Mrs. Lapidus wants Gogol to pick a new name
 - By suggesting that Gogol will adapt to kindergarten
 - By specifying the importance of a classroom environment
 - By exaggerating the power of nicknames in school
 - By contrasting the schooling experiences of Gogol and his parents
-

2 Read this quotation from paragraph 1.

Not only is it a perfectly respectable Bengali good name, meaning "he who is entire, encompassing all," but it also bears a satisfying resemblance to Nikolai, the first name of the Russian Gogol.

Record your answer in the space provided.

The author uses the word ____ (1) ____ to suggest that the name Nikhil is inclusive of two cultures.

1 _____

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

Part A

Based on the information in paragraphs 23 through 36, Ashoke can best be described as —

- Ⓐ optimistic and irritable
- Ⓑ compassionate and stern
- Ⓒ elegant and critical
- Ⓓ insightful and authoritarian

Part B

Which quotation from the excerpt best supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ *"No, no, it's not a middle name," Ashoke says. He is beginning to lose patience. (paragraph 23)*
- Ⓑ *"Don't be scared, Gogol," he says, raising his son's chin with his finger. "You're a big boy now. No tears." (paragraph 26)*
- Ⓒ *Ashoke hands over the lunch box, a windbreaker in case it gets cold. (paragraph 28)*
- Ⓓ *Ashima and Ashoke wonder, shaking their heads. But since neither of them feels comfortable pressing the issue, they have no choice but to give in. (paragraph 36)*

4 Which statements express an idea about society reflected in the excerpt?

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

Statement	Expresses an Idea about Society	Does Not Express an Idea about Society
People may make assumptions based on a person's background.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Confronting your obstacles increases one's inner strength.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Building consensus will lead to stronger decisions for a community.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Children declare their independence in different ways.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Parents are responsible for making the best decisions for their children.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B

- 6** Read the excerpt from “The Namesake.” Based on the information from the excerpt, write a response to the following:

Explain how the characterizations of Ashoke and Mrs. Lapidus contribute to the development of the plot in this excerpt.

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

Remember to —

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

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

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

Record your answer in the box provided.

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON
THE LINED PAGE IN THE TEST BOOKLET.

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THE LINED PAGE IN THE TEST BOOKLET.

Written Composition

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

A Baseball School for Big League Dreamers

by Robert Benincasa

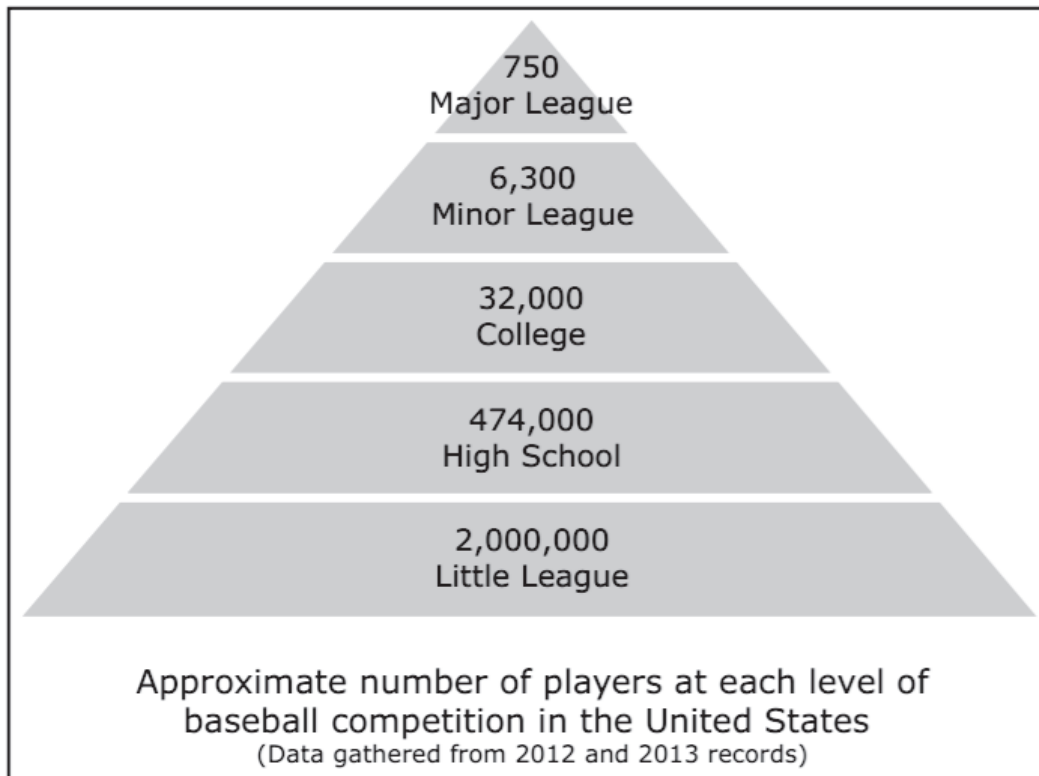
All Things Considered, National Public Radio

August 15, 2012

- 1 If you have ever dreamed of playing big-league baseball, chances are the dream started to fade sometime in high school.
- 2 It gradually becomes clear: You won't be starting in Game 7 of the World Series, and tipping your cap after hitting a walk-off homer. So at some point you go from player to fan—watching others chase greatness on the diamond.
- 3 But not every baseball dreamer is willing to give up so early. And in Bradenton, Florida, there's a place that lies somewhere between the Little League field and Yankee Stadium.
- 4 It's 90 degrees and sunny for an intrasquad game, one of the last of the year at IMG Academies, a private sports school where dreams of baseball glory are nurtured. Ketchum Marsh, a high school senior from Chatham, Massachusetts, looks in from third base as a lanky sophomore teammate winds up on the mound.
- 5 For Ketch, as he's known, a passion for baseball began when he was 8 years old, when his mother offered room and board for some players from college baseball's elite Cape Cod League.
- 6 The players started tossing the ball around with him and soon made him a batboy. Ketch says they were like big brothers to him. Before long, he says, he was captivated.
- 7 He remembers being fascinated by how the players and coaches talked and how fans reacted to the game. "You kind of just don't want to leave the field at the end of the night," he says. "You want to just keep going back. You just want to stay there."

Nurturing Potential

- 8 So, when Ketch was in the eighth grade, his mother sent him here, where students spend half the day in the classroom and the other half on the field.
- 9 IMG baseball chief Ken Bolek says Ketch’s school debut was less than stellar.
- 10 “There weren’t a lot of things that just came naturally to him as an athlete,” Bolek says, chuckling. “His first semester here, the coaches evaluated a successful day by the fact that he wasn’t maimed or killed out on the field from a lack of proficiency.”
- 11 But four years later, Ketch is bigger and better—5 foot 11 inches and 192 pounds, with massive forearms from his training regimen.
- 12 Bolek says Ketch has surpassed other players who may have had more athletic ability but lacked his work ethic.
- 13 “Ketchum Marsh is one of the most successful stories that will come out of IMG,” Bolek says, focusing not just on baseball, but on life.
- 14 Most players here won’t ever put on a big-league uniform, but they come to IMG trying to find and reach their potential. Virtually all of them want to play college ball—Division I if they can make it.



- 15 The pitcher on Ketch's team, Cameron Varga, is already headed to Division I. He'll play for the University of Florida team after he graduates in 2014.
- 16 His fastball is in the low 90s, big-league heat territory.
- 17 As the game gets started, Varga strikes out the side in the first inning and trots to the dugout. Pitching coach Dave Shepard is waiting.
- 18 "You struck out the side, and I'll give you that," Shepard tells him, "but as a starting pitcher you've got to know what the emphasis down the road for you is going to be."
- 19 Shepard, who pitched 11 seasons in the minor leagues, says Varga has great potential. Now, Shepard is trying to set him up for the journey.
- 20 "[I'm] looking into the future for big things from him," Shepard says. "He struck out the side in the first inning, but he threw 20 pitches. As a pitching coach, I'm looking for him to throw six pitches and get three outs and save 14 pitches for later."

Going Deeper Than Baseball

- 21 Baseball folklore tells us that the scrappiest kid on the sandlot has a shot at going to “the show.”
- 22 But IMG is a long way from St. Mary’s Industrial School for Boys, the Baltimore orphanage that produced Babe Ruth.¹ Tuition, room and board here for the combined academic and sports program is about \$70,000 a year.
- 23 Along with the price of admission comes the unvarnished truth about one’s athletic ability and potential.
- 24 The coaches are positive and encouraging, but they don’t sugarcoat their opinions. They don’t want to give any player false hope.
- 25 “We deal with reality on a daily basis,” says baseball chief Bolek. “We are not sending the message that every one of our players are going to wind up playing shortstop for the Mets.”
- 26 And there’s something else: Many of the coaches have given years to the game. They see beyond young men’s dreams and deeper into their lives.
- 27 Bolek, who has coached in the minors, the majors and college, says his job is not always about baseball.
- 28 “If we do a good job, stressing certain characteristics and traits that are necessary for anybody leaving here to be successful regardless of what the volition is, that’s the grand slam for us,” he says.
- 29 Today’s game ends in a one-run loss for Ketch and Cameron’s team. If these young players’ dreams come true, it’s just a footnote in a long career in the national pastime.
- 30 But the odds are long, even for the very best. Just 1,200 players are drafted each year, and major league rosters have only 750 active slots. IMG says it’s had 17 players drafted since 2006.

¹Babe Ruth (1895–1948) is considered one of the greatest players in the history of baseball. He led the American League in home runs 12 times and set many long-standing hitting records.

- 31 Ketch doesn't think about the numbers. He pursues his goals a day at a time.
- 32 "The chances are, you know, there's not a lot of kids that are going to be making a living playing this game. If you think about the numbers, the inspiration won't always be there."
- 33 Whether or not Ketch is destined for Cooperstown, this fall he'll be doing what he loves—playing baseball—for the Southwestern University Pirates in Georgetown, Texas.

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7 What are the most likely reasons the author includes the graphic after paragraph 14?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- To explain how Little League baseball players participate in multiple sports
 - To contrast the number of Little League players versus major league players
 - To show the importance of playing Little League baseball to playing major league baseball
 - To demonstrate the benefits of sports in educational settings
 - To suggest that baseball leagues become more selective as players advance
-

8 Which groups are most likely the intended audience of the article?

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

Group	Intended Audience	Not the Intended Audience
Coaches who are looking for tips on coaching a winning team	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Readers who want to learn more about a unique high school experience	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Parents who want their children to receive sports scholarships	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Baseball fans who are demanding stronger baseball players	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Student-athletes who want to improve their sports abilities	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B

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

Part A

Which statement best expresses the thesis of the article?

- (A) IMG Academies strives to make every athlete a baseball legend who inspires other players to reach their athletic dreams.
- (B) The athletes of IMG Academies prefer playing college baseball rather than minor-league baseball.
- (C) IMG Academies develops the talents of student-athletes through disciplined training and no-nonsense coaching.
- (D) Playing baseball for a unique school, such as IMG Academies, can advance players to the major leagues.

Part B

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

- (A) *So, when Ketch was in the eighth grade, his mother sent him here, where students spend half the day in the classroom and the other half on the field.* (paragraph 8)
- (B) *Most players here won't ever put on a big-league uniform, but they come to IMG trying to find and reach their potential.* (paragraph 14)
- (C) *He'll play for the University of Florida team after he graduates in 2014.* (paragraph 15)
- (D) *IMG says it's had 17 players drafted since 2006.* (paragraph 30)

Keisha wrote a story about a girl who learns a new skill. Read Keisha's story and look for revisions she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Road Service

(1) THUMP! (2) The entire course of the mother-daughter road trip was altered by that simple sound. (3) As simple as it was, it was excruciatingly loud; it was the sound of a car tire that had just gone flat.

(4) Because Ashley had only been driving for a few months, her eyes quickly widened as they got bigger, but before she could panic, her mom calmly instructed her to move toward the shoulder of the road. (5) She pulled off the busy thoroughfare and into a parking lot, and both mother and daughter breathed a sigh of relief as they came safely to a stop. (6) But now what were they supposed to do? (7) Although Ashley was gaining experience as a new driver, she knew nothing about fixing cars. (8) What she did know was that this one wasn't going any farther.

(9) Ashley's mind raced with questions. (10) Should they call a tow truck, phone a friend or neighbor, or just hope that a compassionate person would stop to help? (11) But Mom didn't look perplexed. (12) She calmly stated, "Occasionally the unexpected happens to teach us something that we couldn't have learned any other way. (13) This is one of those situations, dear, so today you are going to learn how to change a flat tire."

(14) Incidentally, Mom knew exactly what to do. (15) Ashley watched her rummage through the trunk, eventually finding the hidden, almost secret compartment that contained an additional tire and a few tools. (16) Confidently, Mom showed Ashley how to brace the rear wheels of the car with plastic wedges under each tire, which prevented the car from rolling backward as they changed the tire.

(17) Now that everything was ready, it was time to get that old tire off and replace it with the spare. (18) Mom demonstrated how to use the wrench to loosen the first lug nut holding the useless tire to the wheel hub. (19) She then handed the wrench to Ashley to loosen the rest. (20) A contraption specially designed to lift a heavy car off the ground safely, Mom got out the jack next. (21) A few minutes later, the spare tire was in place, and Ashley was tightening the lug nuts the way her mom had taught

her and stowing the flat tire in the trunk. (22) She started the car again, but Mom and Ashley's destination had now changed. (23) They needed to quickly find a car service center. (24) After a few phone calls, they headed immediately to a shop to get the damaged tire replaced.

(25) As Ashley and her mom grabbed lunch at the deli across the street from the tire shop, they reflected on the morning's experience. (26) Ashley was impressed that her mom knew how to change a tire without any help. (27) Mom reminded Ashley that it's important to know how to do things for yourself; there isn't always someone around to help you. (28) And now, thanks to her mom, Ashley knows totally what to do the next time a tire goes THUMP! on the road.

12 Keisha has included a redundant idea in sentence 4. In the box provided, rewrite sentence 4 in a clear and effective way.

13 Keisha has not used an effective transition at the beginning of sentence 14. Select the word that should replace ***Incidentally*** in this sentence.

- | |
|------------------|
| (A) Furthermore |
| (B) Similarly |
| (C) Fortunately |
| (D) Consequently |

, Mom knew exactly what to do.

Jordon is writing a paper about an interesting park in Pennsylvania. Read the first few paragraphs of Jordon's paper and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Mysterious Rocks of Ringing Rocks Park

(1) "Bring your own hammer." (2) That's the advice given to anyone considering a visit to a county park in the Pennsylvania countryside. (3) This park, which consists of a huge field with piles and piles of broken boulders, are not much to look at. (4) However, it has a secret that cannot be visually discerned. (5) When its rocks are gently tapped with a hammer, they ring like bells. (6) What's more, different rocks produce different notes. (7) People have learned that they can play simple tunes by striking combinations of rocks in the right order.

(8) Interestingly, only about a third of the rocks in the park ring when they are struck. (9) The rocks that ring are often referred to as "live," while those that don't are called "dead." (10) People have known about this special field of rocks for a long time. (11) Records show that in 1890 a man named J. J. Ott assembled a group of rocks from the field and played a concert for the local historical society. (12) Soon after, businessmen developed the surrounding area in an attempt to attract tourists, and the field of rocks became the highlight of a park.

- 16** Jordon has made an error in sentence 3. Select the response that corrects this error.

This park, which consists of a huge field with piles and piles of broken

boulders,

(A) were not
(B) have not been
(C) is not
(D) being not

 much to look at.

-
- 17** Select the response that corrects the spelling error in sentence 11.

Records show that in 1890 a man named J. J. Ott assembled a group of rocks from the field and played a concert for the

local

(A) historicle
(B) historical
(C) historrical
(D) historacel

 society.

**STAAR
English I
Paper Item Sampler**

