



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

GRADE 3
Reading

Paper Item Sampler

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

Howdy, Big Tex

- 1 Ask anyone who has been to the Texas State Fair in Dallas, Texas, to tell you what it's like. You might hear stories of the exciting rides, tasty food, and interesting farm animals. One thing you will definitely hear about is Big Tex. He is the giant cowboy who greets people at the front gate. His huge arm waves at visitors as he welcomes them with a cheerful "Howdy!"



In 2016, Big Tex greeted visitors as they entered the Texas State Fair.

Used with permission.

Big Tex in the Beginning

- 2 Since 1952, children and grown-ups have enjoyed seeing Big Tex. In 1951, the state fair president bought Big Tex. He thought it would be nice to have a big cowboy as a symbol of Texas at the fair. So Big Tex was placed at the entrance.
- 3 The giant cowboy was made out of metal, paper, cardboard, and glue. He stood 52 feet tall. He wore colorful clothing, a huge cowboy hat, and a giant pair of cowboy boots. Thick wires attached to Big Tex's body kept him from falling over. His hand was positioned to look like he was waving to visitors. Big Tex stood tall and smiled.

- 4 By 1953, Big Tex could speak. Words that had been prerecorded played over speakers while the giant cowboy's mouth moved. As the words played, his mouth moved like a puppet—open, closed, open, closed.
- 5 In 1997, Big Tex got a new look. His body was rebuilt with stronger materials. And by 2000, his arm could move. Big Tex waved at visitors as they entered the state fair.

Big Tex Gets Bigger

- 6 Unfortunately, in 2012 there was an accident, and Big Tex was destroyed in a fire. Although people were disappointed, a man named R. Eddy Snell realized this was a chance to make a bigger and better Big Tex. Snell's company had built a large dragon and giant cowboy boots before. Yet he knew the big cowboy would not be an easy job.
- 7 Snell had big ideas for the new cowboy. The new Big Tex would be taller. He would stand firmly on the ground without wires attached to hold him up. The new Big Tex's face would move and look more like a real cowboy. He would also have fingers that move and point. Overall, the new Big Tex would be more lifelike.
- 8 Snell's company wanted the new Big Tex to surprise people at the fair, so the company worked secretly for ten months. The workers were not allowed to tell anyone what they were building. In fact, they used a secret code for Big Tex in emails and on the phone. They called him "fried chicken." Drawings of the designs were also labeled "fried chicken." This way, the workers could keep the big cowboy a secret until he was finished.
- 9 Snell's workers found a new way to make Big Tex's face. A soft, light material called Styrofoam was used. It could be carved easily into the shape of a face. Then, thin layers of other soft materials were placed on top. This way, the mouth could move almost like a person's mouth. The workers were careful to use materials that would not burn easily. It was important to avoid another fire.
- 10 At last, Big Tex was finished. His steel-frame body was taken to a clothing factory. There, hundreds of yards of fabric were used to make his clothes. Big Tex was dressed in a red, white, and blue shirt, denim jeans, colorful cowboy boots, and an even bigger cowboy hat.

- 11 It was time to take Big Tex to his place at the fairgrounds. A large crane and several workers set him in place. He stood behind white curtains, and on September 26, 2013, the curtains were dropped. At last, everyone could see the new Big Tex.
- 12 Now, every fall, Big Tex greets visitors to the state fair with a smile, a nod, and a wink. He points the way to fun attractions.
- 13 Snell is happy with the work his team did to build Big Tex. "I know we won't please everybody," Snell says, "but I think future generations will love this Tex." Based on the public's response, Big Tex is a big hit in Texas.

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- 1** What are the most likely reasons the author includes the photograph in the article?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- To help the reader see how large Big Tex is
 - To show the reader how Big Tex was built
 - To help the reader see how Big Tex moves
 - To show the reader how Big Tex is dressed
 - To help the reader see how famous Big Tex is
-

- 2** Which sentence from paragraph 6 best explains why Snell thought he and his workers would know how to build a new Big Tex?

Select only **ONE** correct answer.

- | |
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| <p>Ⓐ Unfortunately, in 2012 there was an accident, and Big Tex was destroyed in a fire.</p> <p>Ⓑ Although people were disappointed, a man named R. Eddy Snell realized this was a chance to make a bigger and better Big Tex.</p> <p>Ⓒ Snell's company had built a large dragon and giant cowboy boots before.</p> <p>Ⓓ Yet he knew the big cowboy would not be an easy job.</p> |
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- 4 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 Big Tex
- Ⓑ To explain why the Texas State Fair is enjoyable
- Ⓒ To show that cowboys are important in the state of Texas
- Ⓓ To tell how to make something as large as Big Tex

Part B

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

- Ⓐ *You might hear stories of the exciting rides, tasty food, and interesting farm animals.* (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ *He thought it would be nice to have a big cowboy as a symbol of Texas at the fair.* (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ *The giant cowboy was made out of metal, paper, cardboard, and glue.* (paragraph 3)
- Ⓓ *Snell is happy with the work his team did to build Big Tex.* (paragraph 13)

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

Pants

by Mordicai Gerstein

We go everywhere
together.
You carry my treasures
for me.
5 When I find grass
on your knees and
sand in your pockets,
I know where I've been.
We go everywhere together
10 except
the washing machine.
"Don't let them
put me in there!"
you beg.
15 "Or at least
come with me!"
But all I can do
is watch you go round
and round
20 in the little window,
tumbling in the suds,
like me
when I'm caught
in an ocean wave.
25 I hear your buttons
clicking in
the spinning dryer.
You emerge, limp
and lifeless,
30 till I slip my legs
inside you.
You're alive again!
Eager
for our next
35 adventure!

DEAR HOT DOG by Mordicai Gerstein, Copyright © 2011 by Mordicai Gerstein. Used by permission of Abrams Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York. All rights reserved.

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

Part A

What is the meaning of the word limp in line 28 of the poem?

- Ⓐ Ready to be worn
- Ⓑ Like something new
- Ⓒ Weak and without shape
- Ⓓ Fresh and without dirt

Part B

Which word from the poem helps the reader understand the meaning of the word limp?

- Ⓐ spinning (line 27)
- Ⓑ lifeless (line 29)
- Ⓒ slip (line 30)
- Ⓓ inside (line 31)

- 6 Based on lines 1 through 11 of the poem, what does the speaker like best about his pants?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- The pants can carry special things.
 - The pants remind him of places he has gone.
 - The pants have spots on both of the knees.
 - The pants can hold a lot of sand.
 - The pants are able to talk to him.
-

- 7 Read lines 17 through 24 of the poem. Which line best shows that the speaker stays close to the pants even when he is not wearing them?

Select only **ONE** correct answer.

But all I can do
Ⓐ is watch you go round
and round
20 in the little window,
Ⓑ tumbling in the suds,
like me
Ⓒ when I'm caught
Ⓓ in an ocean wave.

- 9** Read the poem “Pants.” Based on the information in the poem, write a response to the following:

Explain the relationship between the poet and the pants and how this relationship is developed by the poet.

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

Remember to —

- clearly state your central 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 response in the box provided.

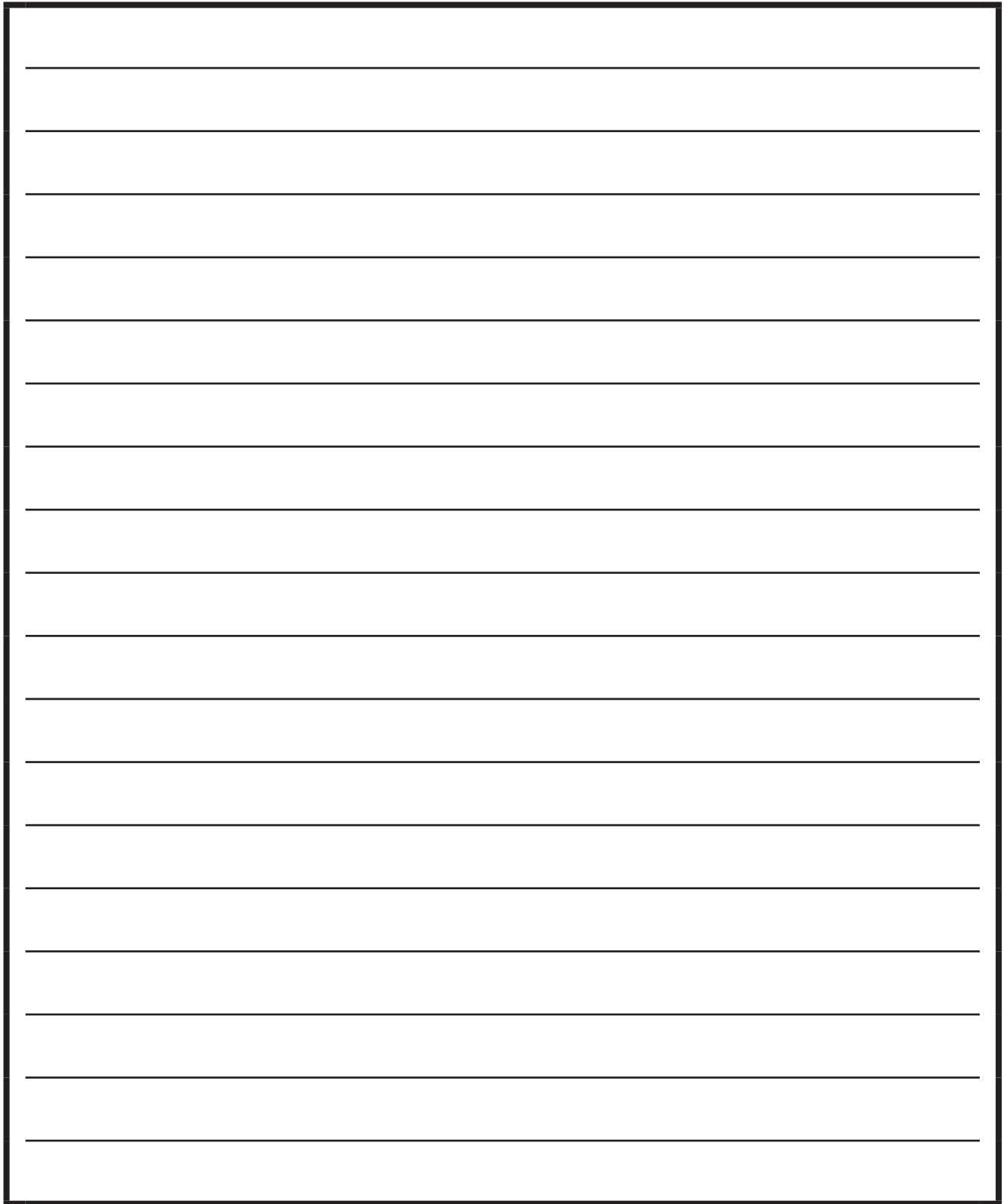
USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

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

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Written Composition

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

Written Composition

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 20 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, leaving a small margin at the top and bottom.

Kat wrote a paper about an interesting woman. Read Kat's paper and look for revisions she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Always Ready to Help

(1) The American Red Cross is known for its work in the United States. (2) It provides supplies, food, and clothing to people during difficult times. (3) Yet, many people do not know that the American Red Cross was started by a brave woman named Clara Barton. (4) Clara spent her entire life helping others.

(5) Clara Barton was born on December 25, 1821, in North Oxford, Massachusetts. (6) When Clara was 11 years old, her brother was in an accident. (7) Clara was his nurse for two years. (8) She gave him medicine until he became better. (9) The experience of caring for someone would help her later in life.

(10) In 1854 Clara moved to Washington, D.C. (11) While she was there, the Civil War began. (12) She learned about the men fighting in the war and knew they needed it. (13) She quit her job and went to offer aid to the soldiers. (14) She gave them supplies, clothing, and food. (15) Clara also read to them and listened to their stories.

(16) Clara went to Europe after the war ended, and Clara visited the country of Switzerland. (17) In Switzerland she learned about the International Red Cross. (18) The organization protected people during wars. (19) Clara helped this group by caring for people hurt in wars. (20) She was proud of the work the organization did. (21) Clara knew she wanted to help more people.

(22) Clara returned home and decided she wanted to start a Red Cross in the United States. (23) She told people about what she had done in Europe. (24) She hoped to start the organization right away. (25) However, she first needed permission from the government.

(26) In 1882 Clara got her wish. (27) The government gave her approval to form the American Red Cross. (28) Clara served as its president for 23 years.

(29) Today the American Red Cross keeps the work that Clara Barton started. (30) Many people have been able to rely on the American Red Cross because of her. (31) Clara Barton would be proud of the organization's many acts. (32) They are important.

12 The word **keeps** is not the right word for sentence 29. Select the word that should replace **keeps** in this sentence.

Today the American Red Cross

- (A) wants
- (B) imagines
- (C) shows
- (D) continues

the work that

Clara Barton started.

Jeff is writing a story about a tree house. Read these paragraphs from the body of Jeff's story and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

My Tree House

(1) Sadly I stared at my tree house. (2) It had a floor but no walls or roof. (3) I wanted to finish building it, but I needed someone who could help me. (4) Then I noticed my new neighbor Sam walking by from his father.

(5) "Dad and I built a tree house last year at my old house in Houston," Sam said. (6) "Do you need some help?"

(7) "Yes!" I cheered.

(8) Sam and his father spent the entire afternoon helping me. (9) By the end of the day, I had a beautiful new tree house and a new friend.

14 Jeff has made an error in sentence 4. Select the response that corrects this error.

Then I noticed my new neighbor Sam walking by

- (A) of
- (B) with
- (C) for
- (D) over

his father.

15 Select the response that corrects the spelling error in sentence 9.

By the end of the day, I had a

- (A) beatiful
- (B) beataful
- (C) beautiful
- (D) beautifull

new tree house and a

new friend.

**STAAR
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