

Student Name: _____



English Language Arts Test Booklet Grade 7

Paper-Based Item Sampler

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



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When you come to the word STOP at the end of a part, you may go back and review to check your answers. You may only review the part you just completed. You may not look at any other parts in the booklet.

Make sure you have marked all your answers in the answer document clearly and that you have completely erased any marks you do not want. When you are finished, close your test booklet and answer document. Then raise your hand.

Sir Isaac Newton

by Faye Huntington

“Every body in nature attracts every other body with a force directly as its mass and inversely as the square of its distance.” This has been called “The magnificent theory of universal gravitation which was the crowning glory of Newton’s life.” I doubt not many of you have struggled with this law as laid down in your schoolbooks and, having conquered it, fixed the principle in your minds to stay; you may like to know something about the philosopher himself. In 1642, a sickly baby was living its young life in Lincolnshire, England.

This child’s name was Isaac Newton. He belonged to a country gentleman’s family. His father having died, his mother’s second marriage occasioned the giving of the child into the care of his grandmother. As he grew older he gained in health and was sent to school. Having inherited a small estate, as soon as he had acquired an education which was considered sufficient to enable him to attend to the duties of one in his position, he was removed from school and entrusted with the management of his estate. However, this young Newton developed a passion for mathematical studies which led him to neglect the business connected with his estate. He busied himself in the construction of toys illustrating the principles of mechanics. These were not the clumsy work which might be expected from the hands of a schoolboy, but were finished with exceeding care and delicacy. It is said there is still in existence two at least of these toys; one is an hourglass kept in the rooms of the Royal Society in London.

Isaac Newton’s mother was a wise woman in that she did not discourage his desire for the pursuing of his studies and for investigation. She did not say, “Now, my son, you must put away these notions and attend to your business. You have a property here which it is your duty to manage and enjoy. You should find satisfaction in your position as a country squire and consider that you have no need of further study.” On the contrary, this mother allowed her son to continue his studies; he was prepared for and entered the college at Cambridge when he was eighteen. From that period until his death, at eighty-five, he devoted himself unweariedly to mathematical and philosophical studies.

You all know the story of the falling apple. He was spending some time at his country-seat in Woolsthorpe, and while resting one day in his garden, he saw an apple fall to the ground. Suddenly the question occurred, “Why should the apple fall to the ground? Why, when detached from the branch, did it not fly off in some other direction?”

And where do you suppose he found the answer? Read the first sentence of this article and see if you find it there! The truth had been the controlling power of all the falling apples since the beginning of time, but it had never before been understood or formulated; perhaps this discovery of the law of universal gravitation gave him more renown than all his other labors put together.

He met with a sad misfortune, later, when, by the accidental upsetting of a lighted candle, the work of twenty years was destroyed. The story as told by a biographer is that Sir Isaac left his pet dog alone in his study for a few moments when the candle was overturned amongst the papers on the study table. It is further told as an evidence of the calmness and patience of the great man, that he only said, “Ah! Fido, you little know of the mischief you have done!”

But although he was so quiet under the great loss, his health seemed to give way. He died in 1727 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

1. In the passage, the author develops the argument that Newton had a natural talent for science. Choose **two** facts that provide the strongest evidence for this argument.

- A. Newton discovered a universal principle after watching an apple fall.
- B. Newton had little interest in running the estate he inherited.
- C. Newton built detailed mechanical toys at a young age.
- D. Newton was able to attend Cambridge College at age 18.
- E. Newton spent 20 years working on papers about his discoveries.

2. Read the paragraph from the passage.

And where do you suppose he found the answer? Read the first sentence of this article and see if you find it there! The truth had been the controlling power of all the falling apples since the beginning of time, but it had never before been understood or formulated; perhaps this discovery of the law of universal gravitation gave him more renown than all his other labors put together.

Which phrase from the paragraph **best** conveys the author’s point of view that Newton was a brilliant thinker?

- A. where do you suppose he found the answer
- B. The truth had been the controlling power
- C. never before been understood or formulated
- D. gave him more renown than all his other labors put together

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

Part A

According to the passage, which factor **most** contributed to Newton’s becoming a scientist?

- A. He received an excellent education at the first school he attended.
- B. His mother allowed him to study mathematics.
- C. He gained experience managing a country estate at a young age.
- D. His grandmother dedicated herself to improving his health.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer to part A?

- A. His father having died, his mother’s second marriage occasioned the giving of the child into the care of his grandmother.
- B. As he grew older he gained in health and was sent to school.
- C. Isaac Newton’s mother was a wise woman in that she did not discourage his desire for the pursuing of his studies and for investigation.
- D. “You have a property here which it is your duty to manage and enjoy.”

4. Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the inference that no one expected Newton to become a scientist?
- A. This has been called “The magnificent theory of universal gravitation which was the crowning glory of Newton’s life.”
 - B. Having inherited a small estate, as soon as he had acquired an education which was considered sufficient to enable him to attend to the duties of one in his position, he was removed from school and entrusted with the management of his estate.
 - C. However, this young Newton developed a passion for mathematical studies which led him to neglect the business connected with his estate.
 - D. On the contrary, this mother allowed her son to continue his studies; he was prepared for and entered the college at Cambridge when he was eighteen.

5. In what ways does the story about Newton’s dog contribute to the development of the passage? Choose **two** answers.
- A. The story suggests a reason for Newton’s failing health before his death.
 - B. The story gives the reader insight into Newton’s character.
 - C. The story emphasizes that Newton’s theory of gravity remains his greatest achievement.
 - D. The story emphasizes the danger of candles back in Newton’s day.
 - E. The story allows the author to explain what Newton spent years working on.
6. The chart shows a summary of four events in Newton’s life before he went to college and a number for each event’s sequence. Match each event with the order it occurs by selecting the correct number. Each event is used only once. Record your answers in the answer document.

Event in Newton’s Life	1	2	3	4
a. Newton insisted on studying mathematics.				
b. Newton was sent to live with his grandmother.				
c. Newton was given responsibility for an estate.				
d. Newton attended school for the first time.				

an excerpt from “Osra, the Ostrich”

by Ellen Velvin

There is an old Eastern legend to the effect that once upon a time, ostriches, in addition to being the largest and strongest birds on Earth, were also the proudest, the most contemptuous, and the most egregiously conceited birds in creation.

So inflated with pride were they at their superior size and strength, that they looked down upon all their feathered companions, taunted and twitted them, and were forever exhibiting their wonderful powers of flight and beauty of form.

On one occasion they intimated to the smaller birds that they were going to fly to the sun, and winged creatures from far and wide, of all sizes and species, and of all colors, came to witness this wonderful feat.

Phoebus, the sun god, furiously angry at such unheard of presumption, waited until they were a little way up, and then punished them by suddenly singeing off their wings.

Deprived of their power of flying, the ostriches fell so heavily to Earth that when they struck the ground, it made a deep mark on their chests. This has been reproduced in all succeeding generations from that time to this.

This is the reason that ostriches have such tiny wings, and that one and all have this peculiar mark on their chest. Never, from that time to this, has any ostrich been able to fly. But even this has not entirely subdued their pride and arrogance, and their insufferable conceit.

The Ostrich

The ostrich never gets the bird's-eye views
that other, smaller birds get;
it never sees the white tops of mountain peaks,
the ribbons of roads,
and the pale colors of the savanna.

The ostrich never gets to feel
the crisp, cool air of the darkening night sky.
It never gets to drift on the warm updrafts,
to coast along easily like a canoe on a swift river.

Instead, the ostrich is stuck on the ground like a heavy stone,
different from almost all the other birds that are light,
all hollow bones and feathers.
Nevertheless, when other birds are on the ground,
pecking for insects in the dirt,
the ostrich towers over them,
as if proud to be at such lofty heights,
its long neck like a periscope.

Look at the ostrich's powerful legs—
they're not like most birds' legs at all.
Look at its two giant toes,
one with a sharp claw
for gripping the ground
and hurtling itself forward.
No other bird has just two toes.

And that large, conspicuous spot on its chest
isn't just for decoration—
it's to help hold its large wings,
like rudders on a ship,
guiding the ostrich as it scrambles across the soil.

People say the ostrich puts its head in the sand
when scared, as if it cannot bear to face its fears.
They say it is like children
covering their eyes, believing
that since things cannot be seen,
they cannot be seen either.
But this is another bit of undeserved unfairness
put upon the ostrich.

The ostrich isn't defenseless at all—
notice the ostrich's legs again,
strong and muscled,
feather and sinew.
Those legs can deliver a swift, solid kick
to a predator, as if demolishing a door.

And ostrich eggs are strange things,
arranged carefully in a community nest
scraped like a giant bowl into the dust and dirt.
The nest is filled with these wondrous ellipses,
each the color of buttermilk
with dimpled shells like the surface
of the moon.

Indeed, each one looks more like
an ancient relic or an alien artifact
than a bird's egg.

At first, it seems like it must be difficult
to be an ostrich, a member
of the class of birds but so different
from all its classmates.

But think of all the other birds:

the miniature hummingbird,
wings blurred together;

the flamingo with its bright rose pink,
standing on one leg;

the owl with its large eyes,
its eerie hoot that lingers in the night sky;

the peacock with its jeweled tail
spread out like a museum display.

The ostrich isn't as beautiful, as mysterious,
as dazzling as some other birds
but if you look closely enough,
like examining a splash of pond water
under a microscope,
mystery and wonder abound.

7. Read the first and last paragraphs of the excerpt from “Osra, the Ostrich.”

There is an old Eastern legend to the effect that once upon a time, ostriches, in addition to being the largest and strongest birds on the face of the earth, were also the proudest, the most contemptuous, and the most egregiously conceited birds in creation.

This is the reason that ostriches have such tiny wings, and that one and all have this peculiar mark on their chest. Never, from that time to this, has any ostrich been able to fly. But even this has not entirely subdued their pride and arrogance, and their insufferable conceit.

Which phrase **best** suggests the author’s purpose is to explain a natural phenomenon?

- A. being the largest and strongest birds
- B. most egregiously conceited birds
- C. one and all have this peculiar mark
- D. Never, from that time to this

8. This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A

Which statement **best** expresses the theme of the excerpt from “Osra, the Ostrich”?

- A. Every bad situation has a silver lining.
- B. Children often repeat the mistakes of their parents.
- C. Strong individuals should try to inspire weaker ones.
- D. It is best to be humble about one’s gifts.

Part B

Which excerpt from “Osra, the Ostrich” **best** supports the answer to part A?

- A. . . . winged creatures from far and wide, of all sizes and species, and of all colors, came to witness this wonderful feat.
- B. Phoebus, the sun god, furiously angry at such unheard of presumption, waited until they were a little way up, and then punished them by suddenly singeing off their wings.
- C. This has been reproduced in all succeeding generations from that time to this.
- D. This is the reason that ostriches have such tiny wings, and that one and all have this peculiar mark on their chest.

9. Near the end of “The Ostrich,” why does the poet most likely include several stanzas that are only two lines long?
- A. to emphasize that there is something wonderful about each type of bird
 - B. to contrast the ostrich’s size and coloration with those of other birds
 - C. to explain what characteristics an animal needs to be considered a bird
 - D. to make the point that many birds are much prettier than the ostrich
10. Which **three** phrases from the first stanza of “The Ostrich” reveal that the speaker is talking about flight?

The ostrich never gets the bird’s-eye views
that other, smaller birds get;
it never sees the white tops of mountain peaks,
the ribbons of roads,
and the pale colors of the savanna.

- A. ostrich never gets
- B. bird’s-eye views
- C. other, smaller birds
- D. white tops of mountain peaks
- E. ribbons of roads
- F. the savanna

11. Which **three** details about ostriches can be found in **both** the excerpt from “Osra, the Ostrich” and “The Ostrich”?
- A. They have only two toes.
 - B. They are larger than other birds.
 - C. They cannot fly.
 - D. They have a mark on their chests.
 - E. They hide their heads in sand.
 - F. They are very conceited.
12. The excerpt from “Osra, the Ostrich” and the poem “The Ostrich” use different techniques to emphasize that ostriches are unique among birds. Choose **two** techniques for “Osra, the Ostrich” and **two** techniques for “The Ostrich.” Each technique will be used only once. Record your answers in the answer document.

Technique				
Passage	1. examines the features of ostriches one by one	2. explains why ostriches have the appearance they do	3. gives ostriches the characteristics of people	4. uses metaphors and similes to describe an ostrich’s body
a. “Osra, the Ostrich”				
b. “The Ostrich”				

13. Turn to pages 4 and 5 of your answer document. Read the Writer’s Checklist and then complete the Text-Dependent Analysis Question.

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14. Read the paragraph.

The James Webb Space Telescope will use special infrared technology to help astronomers compare galaxies. An extraordinary invention, this equipment will give the scientists who are astronomers at NASA a better view of the universe.

Which underlined phrase is unnecessary and should be deleted?

- A. special infrared
- B. compare galaxies
- C. scientists who are
- D. of the universe

15. Read the sentences.

The Statue of Liberty is 305 feet tall.

The Statue of Liberty is from the people of France.

The Statue of Liberty symbolizes freedom.

Which revision **best** combines the sentences to show the relationship among the ideas?

- A. A gift from France, the Statue of Liberty is 305 feet tall and symbolizes freedom.
- B. Symbolizing freedom and being 305 feet tall is the gift from France of the Statue of Liberty.
- C. The Statue of Liberty is a symbol of freedom and a gift from France, standing 305 feet tall.
- D. At 305 feet tall, the gift from France symbolizes freedom and is the Statue of Liberty.

16. Which sentence uses a comma correctly?

- A. Members of the track team wear white, cotton jerseys.
- B. The frustrated, exhausted worker was glad when help arrived.
- C. The seventh graders took an easy, math quiz before the assembly.
- D. Six, trombone players worked together to plan a fall festival.

17. A student is writing an essay arguing that the printing press is one of the most important inventions of all time. Which statement establishes a formal style as part of the introduction?
- A. The printing press improved communication and allowed information to be shared.
 - B. The printing press seriously impacted tons of areas of life from education to the workplace.
 - C. The printing press increased understanding and helped people know what was up in the art world.
 - D. The printing press had no problem laying the foundation for the Internet, which as you know arrived later.
18. Which word or phrase creates the **best** transition between ideas?

People typically picture white sand when they think of beaches, but in some parts of the world, beaches are composed of black sand. This type of sand is formed from volcanic lava, and _____ the views on these beaches are stunning, black sand tends to be incredibly hot and painful to walk on.

- A. although
- B. furthermore
- C. in addition
- D. for example

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