

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_



# English Language Arts Test Booklet Grade 8

## Paper-Based Item Sampler

---

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



Copyright © 2018 by Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. No part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

**DO NOT  
MARK  
ON THIS  
PAGE**

## Directions

Now you will be taking the English Language Arts portion of the Performance Evaluation for Alaska’s Schools. This test has two parts that contain different types of questions. Record all of your answers in the answer document only. Do not write your answers in the test booklet.

Parts of this test include questions that are based on passages. Be sure to read each passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

This test includes questions that will ask you to provide your answer in a variety of ways.

- Some questions will have four answer choices and only one correct answer.
- Some questions have more than four answer choices and may have more than one correct answer. You will be asked to identify all the correct answers.
- Some questions will have two or more parts and require that you choose an answer or answers to each part.
- Some questions will ask you to write your answer to provide your response.

### Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Directions

One of the questions will be a text-dependent analysis, or TDA, question. The TDA question will ask you to analyze the passage and use evidence from the passage to support your response. The passage may be more than one page in length and/or you may need to read two passages. Be sure to read all of the passage pages. Be sure to read the passage(s) and TDA question carefully.

- Use the Writer’s Checklist to help you plan, write, and proofread your response.
- You may look back at the passage(s) to help you write your response.
- If you use scratch paper to plan your response or write a rough draft, be sure to write your final response in the space provided.

Remember, do not write your answers in the test booklet. All questions must be answered in your answer document ONLY.

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.

## The Labyrinth

excerpt from *Old Greek Stories*

by James Baldwin

As soon as the sun was up the guards came to lead the young prisoners to the Labyrinth. They did not see the sword which Theseus had under his cloak, nor the tiny ball of silk which he held in his closed hand. They led the youths and maidens a long way into the Labyrinth, turning here and there, back and forth, a thousand different times, until it seemed certain that they could never find their way out again. Then the guards, by a secret passage which they alone knew, went out and left them, as they had left many others before, to wander about until they should be found by the terrible Minotaur.

“Stay close by me,” said Theseus to his companions, “and with the help of Athena who dwells in her temple home in our own fair city, I will save you.”

Then he drew his sword and stood in the narrow way before them.

For hours they stood there, hearing no sound, and seeing nothing but the smooth, high walls on either side of the passage and the calm blue sky so high above them.

At last, late in the day, they heard a bellowing, low and faint as though far away. They listened and soon heard it again, a little louder and very fierce and dreadful.

“It is he! It is he!” cried Theseus. “And now for the fight!”

Then he shouted, so loudly that the walls of the Labyrinth answered back, and the sound was carried upward to the sky and outward to the rocks and cliffs of the mountains. The Minotaur heard him, and his bellowings grew louder and fiercer every moment.

“He is coming!” cried Theseus, and he ran forward to meet the beast. The seven maidens stood up bravely and faced their fate, and the six young men stood together with firm-set teeth and clinched fists, ready to fight to the last.

Soon the Minotaur came into view, rushing down the passage toward Theseus, and roaring most terribly. He was twice as tall as a man, and his head was like that of a bull with huge sharp horns and fiery eyes and a mouth as large as a lion’s, but the young men could not see the lower part of the Minotaur’s body for the cloud of dust which he raised in running. When the Minotaur saw Theseus with the sword in his hand coming to meet him, the Minotaur paused, for no one had ever faced him in that way before. Then he put his head down, and rushed forward, bellowing. But Theseus leaped quickly aside, and made a sharp thrust with his sword as the Minotaur passed, and hewed off one of the Minotaur’s legs above the knee.

The Minotaur fell upon the ground, roaring and groaning and beating wildly about with his horned head and his hoof-like fists; but Theseus nimbly ran up to him and thrust the sword into the Minotaur’s heart and was away again before the beast could harm him.

Then the youths and maidens ran to Theseus and kissed his hands and feet and thanked him for his great deed; and, as it was already growing dark, Theseus bade them follow him while he wound up the silken thread which was to lead them out of the Labyrinth. Through a thousand rooms and courts and winding ways they went, and at midnight they came to the outer door and saw the city lying in the moonlight before them; and, only a little way off, was the seashore where the black ship was moored which had brought them to Crete. The door was wide open, and beside it stood Ariadne waiting for them.

“The wind is fair, the sea is smooth, and the sailors are ready,” she whispered; and she took the arm of Theseus, and all went together through the silent streets to the ship.

When the morning dawned, they were far out to sea, and, looking back from the deck of the little vessel, only the white tops of the Cretan mountains were in sight.

King Minos, when he awoke from sleep, did not know that the youths and maidens had gotten safe out of the Labyrinth. But when Ariadne could not be found, he thought that robbers had carried her away. He sent soldiers out to search for her among the hills and mountains, never dreaming that she was now well on the way towards distant Athens.

Many days passed, and at last the searchers returned and said that the princess could nowhere be found. Then the king covered his head and wept, and said:

“Now, indeed, I am bereft of all my treasures!”

In the meanwhile, King Aegeus of Athens had sat day after day on a rock by the shore, looking and watching if by chance he might see a ship coming from the south. At last the vessel with Theseus and his companions hove in sight, but it still carried only the black sail, for in their joy the young men had forgotten to raise the white one.

“Alas! Alas! My son has perished!” moaned King Aegeus, and he fainted and fell forward into the sea. And that sea, from then until now, has been called by his name, the Aegean Sea.

Thus Theseus became king of Athens.

1. The chart shows some incidents from the passage that help characterize Theseus. Choose one characteristic that is revealed by each incident. Use **one** word for each incident. Do **not** use a word more than once. Record your answers in the answer document.

Incident from “The Labyrinth”	Characteristic of Theseus Revealed					
	1. kind	2. curious	3. forgiving	4. bold	5. flexible	6. clever
a. Theseus reassures his companions.						
b. Theseus fights the Minotaur.						
c. Theseus finds the way out of the Labyrinth.						

2. Compare the points of view of King Aegeus and King Minos by identifying the king each phrase **best** describes. Phrases may describe **both** kings. Record your answers in the answer document. Some phrases will **not** be used.

	<b>1. both kings</b>	<b>2. only King Aegeus of Athens</b>	<b>3. only King Minos of Crete</b>
<b>a.</b> thinks people should be put in the Labyrinth			
<b>b.</b> feels ready to give up ruling his kingdom			
<b>c.</b> expects that the Minotaur will be defeated			
<b>d.</b> worries about the safety of a loved one			
<b>e.</b> hopes that Theseus returns to Athens			

3. Read the sentences from the passage.

The door was wide open, and beside it stood Ariadne waiting for them.

“The wind is fair, the sea is smooth, and the sailors are ready,” she whispered; and she took the arm of Theseus, and all went together through the silent streets to the ship.

How do the words “fair,” “smooth,” “whispered,” and “silent” impact the tone of the passage?

- A. They create a funny tone by suggesting the entertaining nature of the victory.
- B. They create a sympathetic tone by describing the personal histories of the characters.
- C. They create a commanding tone by explaining the organizational structure of the monarchy.
- D. They create a harmonious tone by emphasizing the favorable aspects of the trip.

4. Read the sentence from the passage.

King Minos, when he arose from sleep, did not know that the youths and maidens had gotten safe out of the Labyrinth.

How does the sentence contribute to the structure of the passage?

- A. It introduces a new problem that Theseus will have to deal with.
- B. It shifts the focus of the passage to what happened after the young people escaped.
- C. It sets up a contrast between King Minos of Crete and King Aegeus of Athens.
- D. It provides an explanation for the young people’s situation at the beginning of the passage.

5. Read the sentence from the passage.

They did not see the sword which Theseus had under his cloak, nor the tiny ball of silk which he held in his closed hand.

Which **two** inferences are **best** supported by the sentence?

- A. Theseus was a skilled sword maker who could craft small but dangerous weapons.
- B. Silk was a valuable resource that was only available in limited quantities.
- C. Theseus anticipated the nature of the trials he would be facing.
- D. The temperatures in the Labyrinth were uncomfortably cold.
- E. The guards did not pay close attention to the prisoners.

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

**Part A**

Which statement **best** expresses the theme of the passage?

- A. One should challenge a bad situation rather than accept it.
- B. People are successful when they take their time and work together.
- C. Small details are often more important than they appear.
- D. A challenging problem will typically have more than one solution.

**Part B**

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

- A. Then the guards, by a secret passage which they alone knew, went out and left them, as they had left many others before, to wander about until they should be found by the terrible Minotaur.
- B. For hours they stood there, hearing no sound, and seeing nothing but the smooth, high walls on either side of the passage and the calm blue sky so high above them.
- C. The Minotaur heard him, and his bellowings grew louder and fiercer every moment.
- D. “He is coming!” cried Theseus, and he ran forward to meet the beast.

## What Is Truly Harming Our Bees?

In 2016, beekeepers in the United States lost 44% of their hives over the winter. The drop in populations is an alarming trend, which has covered several decades. Scientists have ardently researched the matter, uncovering one mysterious condition known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). It triggers entire hives to fail, and the weakened bees simply disappear. Although this condition has dwindled, others have taken its place.

Today, the leading cause of hive failure is most likely the *varroa* mite. This creature feeds on both bees and their broods. It weakens them, infects them with other viruses, and leads to dying hives. These mites also easily spread among bees and to other colonies. Current reports emphasize this problem. They show that the mites are much more profuse in hives than previously thought. In New York, one research team sampled 309 bee colonies, and they found that mites had infected 90% of them! Learning to control and manage the mites is essential.

Another contributing factor to the bees' falling numbers is the loss of wild habitat. Long ago, the American landscape featured fields and forests overflowing with diverse plant life. This varied pollen diet kept bees healthier. In fact, one study showed that bees with access to healthy pollens from natural surroundings are more resistant to diseases. Today, the growth of cities and urban areas as well as endless acres of similar crops has limited this advantage. To combat the issue, some groups, such as the National Resources Conservation Service, work with farmers to plant wildflowers and native grasses in fields not in production.

Some people believe specific pesticides called neonicotinoids, or neonics, are to blame for the bees' dilemma. Farmers often use neonics to control harmful insects. While the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers neonics a possible problem, they rank low. The EPA noted that some research regarding neonics showed that they could impair bees' memories and reproduction. However, the EPA concluded that scientists often conducted the tests in a laboratory setting that did not reflect true conditions. For example, one study applied doses of the chemical that were "hundreds of times higher" than the amounts regularly encountered by bees.

In addition, the EPA stressed the fact that pesticides do not pose a threat if managed properly. People must use them at appropriate times. This means avoiding treating blooming crops or weeds when bees are foraging nearby. In this way, bees do not come into contact with the chemical. By following these safeguards, agriculture will benefit without negative effects to bees. For this reason, the EPA has not banned neonics.

Today, scientists continue to study bees and search for ways to ensure their health. It is a complex issue without simple answers. These key insects pollinate one-third of the food we eat! Protecting them is a priority.

## The European Union Strives to Protect Its Bees

In 2013, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) surveyed bee populations in 17 European countries. Their findings showed that the decline of bees was a serious concern. Because the majority of farm crops in these countries rely on bees for pollination, ensuring the health of bees is crucial. EFSA began to tackle the problem in numerous ways.

First, EFSA offered a wealth of services to beekeepers in the European Union<sup>1</sup> (EU). For instance, EFSA provided training in disease prevention and in restocking their collapsed hives. In addition, EFSA created the EU Reference Library for bee health. The library worked to train experts in bee health, gave workshops on bees, and also continued to gather data and track bee numbers. Finally, EFSA funded and led research into the causes for bee decline.

The research team is finding that many factors cause distress in bees. Problems include invaders like mites and hive beetles, viruses, habitat loss, and pesticides. Pesticides called neonics are considered especially troubling. Early studies prompted the EU to place a two-year ban on them. Today, scientists have studied them more extensively. The findings have revealed some unsettling results.

First, studies showed that neonics linger in the environment much longer than expected. The water and soil absorbed them. The roots of other plants, such as wildflowers, ingested the chemicals. In fact, scientists recorded higher levels of neonics in nearby wildflowers than in treated crops. This led to much more exposure for bees than once thought.

Is this exposure significant? A large field study tackled that question. First, scientists established 33 sites of the colza plant in Germany, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. Next, scientists treated only certain colza plant sites with neonics. Finally, the researchers monitored and recorded how bees visiting the colza plant locations fared.

The results showed that in Germany, the bees prospered in spite of the presence of neonics. However, another factor, the ample presence of wildflowers, may have offset the chemical effect. The wildflowers added healthy, varied pollen to the bees' diet, which likely strengthened their immune systems. Nonetheless, some argued that this result proved the safety of the chemicals.

On the other hand, bees at other sites showed negative impacts from the neonics. While the chemicals did not directly kill them, the neonics weakened the bees' bodies. This made them more prone to mites and other diseases. Furthermore, whenever a number of bees die in a hive, other members must work more diligently to maintain the hive. These demands weaken them, adding to the risk of the collapse of hives.

Today, the EU two-year ban on neonics has ended, but the EU is leaning toward continuing this measure. Many people and governments believe neonics are a leading threat to thriving bees. For instance, a recent poll in the United Kingdom showed that 81% of its people favor the ban. It is the most critical step in protecting a valued resource, bees.

---

<sup>1</sup> European Union—The European Union is an organization that includes 28 member countries in Europe. It is a unified trade body, sharing services and goods.

7. This item has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

Which sentence from Paragraph 2 of “What Is Truly Harming Our Bees?” **best** states the point of view about the main cause of bee population decline?

- A. Today, the leading cause of hive failure is most likely the *varroa* mite.
- B. This creature feeds on both bees and their broods.
- C. It weakens them, infects them with other viruses, and leads to dying hives.
- D. These mites also easily spread among bees and to other colonies.
- E. Current reports emphasize this problem.
- F. They show that the mites are much more profuse in hives than previously thought.
- G. In New York, one research team sampled 309 bee colonies, and they found that mites had infected 90% of them!
- H. Learning to control and manage the mites is essential.

**Part B**

Which sentence from Paragraph 4 **best** states conflicting evidence of this point of view?

- A. Some people believe specific pesticides called neonicotinoids, or neonics, are to blame for the bees’ dilemma.
- B. Farmers often use neonics to control harmful insects.
- C. While the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers neonics a possible problem, they rank low.
- D. The EPA noted that some research regarding neonics showed that they could impair bees’ memories and reproduction.
- E. However, the EPA concluded that scientists often conducted the tests in a laboratory setting that did not reflect true conditions.
- F. For example, one study applied doses of the chemical that were “hundreds of times higher” than the amounts regularly encountered by bees.

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

**Part A**

Which statement **best** expresses the overall claim of “What Is Truly Harming Our Bees?”

- A. Bee populations have continued to decrease.
- B. Scientific studies do not always give accurate results.
- C. Controlling the spread of the *varroa* mite is important work.
- D. Safeguarding the bee population is essential to our food supply.

**Part B**

Which excerpt from the passage **best** supports the answer in part A?

- A. In 2016, beekeepers in our country lost 44% of their hives over the winter.
- B. They show that the mites are much more profuse in hives than previously thought.
- C. However, the EPA concluded that the scientists often conducted the tests in a laboratory setting that did not reflect true conditions.
- D. These key insects pollinate one-third of the food we eat! Protecting them is a priority.

9. The chart shows the three main causes and their effects that the author of “What Is Truly Harming Our Bees?” identifies in the passage. Match each cause to its effect. Use **one** effect for each cause. Do **not** use an effect more than once. Record your answers in the answer document.

	<b>Effect</b>		
<b>Cause</b>	<b>1.</b> limits diet of bees; fewer healthy pollens	<b>2.</b> eats the bees; spreads viruses	<b>3.</b> weakens reproduction of bees
<b>A.</b> parasitic mite			
<b>B.</b> use of pesticides			
<b>C.</b> loss of wild habitat			

10. Read the paragraph from “The European Union Strives to Protect Its Bees.”

On the other hand, bees at other sites showed negative impacts from the neonics. While the chemicals did not directly kill them, the neonics weakened the bees’ bodies. This made them more prone to mites and other diseases. Furthermore, whenever a number of bees die in a hive, other members must work more diligently to maintain the hive. These demands weaken them, adding to the risk of the collapse of hives.

The chart shows two causes identified in the studies and their effects. Match each cause to its effect. Use **one** effect for each cause. Do **not** use an effect more than once. Record your answers in the answer document.

	<b>Effect</b>	
<b>Cause</b>	<b>1.</b> Other bees work harder.	<b>2.</b> Bees are more vulnerable to mites and other diseases.
<b>A.</b> Neonics weaken the bees’ bodies.		
<b>B.</b> Bees die in the hive.		

11. Read the paragraphs from “The European Union Strives to Protect Its Bees.”

First, studies showed that neonics linger in the environment much longer than expected. The water and soil absorbed them. The roots of other plants, such as wildflowers, ingested the chemicals. In fact, scientists recorded higher levels of neonics in nearby wildflowers than in treated crops. This led to much more exposure for bees than once thought.

The results showed that in Germany, the bees prospered in spite of the presence of neonics. However, another factor, the ample presence of wildflowers, may have offset the chemical effect. The wildflowers added healthy, varied pollen to the bees’ diet, which likely strengthened their immune systems. Nonetheless, some argued that this result proved the safety of the chemicals.

How does the author respond to the conflicting evidence regarding neonics in the paragraphs? Choose **two** answers.

- A. by suggesting that different chemicals be substituted for those currently used by farmers
  - B. by admitting the flaws in the research study related to the locations where samples were gathered
  - C. by providing a possible reason for the results of the research study related to the benefits that wildflowers provide
  - D. by contrasting how farmers in different countries treat crops with certain chemicals
  - E. by presenting an alternative hypothesis to the one originally proposed that supports the safety of the chemical
12. Which statement **best** describes the main difference in the arguments of “What Is Truly Harming Our Bees?” and “The European Union Strives to Protect Its Bees”?
- A. One primarily blames neonics for the bee decline, while the other ranks neonics as a low threat.
  - B. One focuses on the loss of natural habitat as a major factor, while the other states it as a possibility.
  - C. One asserts that bees are essential to the health of the world’s food supply, while the other downplays their importance.
  - D. One claims that the bee problem is more serious in Europe, while the other claims that it is more devastating in the United States.

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

## **Directions**

Now you will be taking the English Language Arts portion of the Performance Evaluation for Alaska’s Schools. This test has two parts that contain different types of questions. Record all of your answers in the answer document only. Do not write your answers in the test booklet.

Parts of this test include questions that are based on passages. Be sure to read each passage carefully and answer the questions that follow.

This test includes questions that will ask you to provide your answer in a variety of ways.

- Some questions will have four answer choices and only one correct answer.
- Some questions have more than four answer choices and may have more than one correct answer. You will be asked to identify all the correct answers.
- Some questions will have two or more parts and require that you choose an answer or answers to each part.
- Some questions will ask you to write your answer to provide your response.

### **Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Directions**

One of the questions will be a text-dependent analysis, or TDA, question. The TDA question will ask you to analyze the passage and use evidence from the passage to support your response. The passage may be more than one page in length and/or you may need to read two passages. Be sure to read all of the passage pages. Be sure to read the passage(s) and TDA question carefully.

- Use the Writer’s Checklist to help you plan, write, and proofread your response.
- You may look back at the passage(s) to help you write your response.
- If you use scratch paper to plan your response or write a rough draft, be sure to write your final response in the space provided.

Remember, do not write your answers in the test booklet. All questions must be answered in your answer document **ONLY**.

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.

14. Which sentence is written in the active voice?

- A. Because they prey on aphids, which destroy plants, lady beetles are welcomed by gardeners.
- B. Lady beetles are welcomed by gardeners because they prey on aphids, which destroy plants.
- C. Gardeners welcome lady beetles because they prey on aphids, which destroy plants.
- D. Aphids, which destroy plants, are preyed upon by lady beetles so gardeners welcome them.

15. Which sentence is written in the conditional mood?

- A. If I attend basketball camp, I might increase my chance of making the high school team.
- B. You should attend basketball camp to increase your chance of making the high school team.
- C. Do not wait to attend basketball camp; you can increase your chance of making the high school team.
- D. I wish that I could attend basketball camp so that I could increase my chance of making the high school team.

16. Read the paragraph.

Jenna was excited that her older brother had trusted her enough to watch Owen, his new dog. Jenna had observed her brother training Owen and felt confident she could manage Owen on her own—maybe she could even teach Owen a new trick. Owen wagged his tail as Jenna opened the cabinet where her brother kept the leash. Jenna attached the leash to Owen’s harness and opened the back door.

Which detail, if added, shows a logical event sequence?

- A. Owen was so excited to take a walk that he bounded down the steps, pulling Jenna with him.
- B. Jenna had sincerely hoped her brother would appreciate her efforts, for his respect was important to her.
- C. When Jenna had watched her brother with the dog, Owen had been so obedient and had always walked slowly.
- D. Owen was the first dog Jenna had ever watched, and Jenna considered that maybe she could get a job as a dog sitter.

17. Read the paragraph.

Red squirrels of Alaska eat a variety of foods depending on the season. In the summer, they eat mushrooms, insects, and berries. During this time, they also eat mice and bird eggs. In the winter, red squirrels must rely on food they have gathered and stored in warmer weather.

Which detail, if added, develops the ideas in the paragraph?

- A. Red squirrels do not hibernate and are active all winter long.
- B. Red squirrels often make and live in several different nests.
- C. Red squirrels can live up to ten years if they avoid predators.
- D. Red squirrels collect conifer seeds and cones to eat in winter.

18. Which sentence shows the correct use of dashes to indicate a pause?

- A. The beautiful—trees of Alaska—poplars, cottonwoods, and aspens dotted the landscape and filled us with awe.
- B. The beautiful trees of Alaska—poplars, cottonwoods, and aspens—dotted the landscape and filled us with awe.
- C. The beautiful trees of Alaska poplars, cottonwoods, and aspens—dotted the landscape—and filled us with awe.
- D. The beautiful trees of Alaska poplars, cottonwoods, and aspens dotted the landscape—and filled—us with awe.

**DO NOT  
MARK  
ON THIS  
PAGE**



PERFORMANCE EVALUATION  
FOR ALASKA'S SCHOOLS

**English Language Arts  
Test Booklet  
Grade 8  
Paper-Based Item Sampler**