



Nebraska State Accountability

Grade 6 English Language Arts Practice Test

Name:

Directions:

On the following pages of your test booklet are passages and questions for the Grade 6 *Nebraska State Accountability–English Language Arts (NeSA–ELA)*.

Read these directions carefully before beginning the test.

This test will include several different types of questions. Some questions are based on one or two passages. Other questions are independent and will be answered based on the information provided in the question. Record all of your answers in the answer document.

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

- Some questions will ask you to select an answer from among four choices.
- Some questions will have two parts and require that you choose an answer or answers to each part.
- Some questions will ask you to construct an answer by following the directions given.

When you come to the word **STOP** at the end of the test, you have finished the Grade 6 English Language Arts Test. You may review the test to check your answers. Make sure you have marked all of your answers clearly and that you have completely erased any marks you do not want. When you are finished, put your answer sheet inside your test booklet and close your test booklet.

1. A student made a plan for a research report. Read the plan and the directions that follow.

Research Report Plan
Topic: Antarctica Audience: my classmates and teacher Purpose: to inform Research Question: How do people adapt to the difficult conditions in Antarctica?

The student found a source for the research report. Select **two** sentences that answer the research question. Select **two**.

- A. Since 1956, people have been living at McMurdo Station in Antarctica.
- B. Scientists go there to do research in many areas, including biology and medicine.
- C. On Earth, there are few places that are more difficult for life to survive than on the continent of Antarctica—it is the coldest and windiest place on Earth.
- D. Winter temperatures can be between minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit and minus 90 degrees Fahrenheit, and the winds can reach close to 200 miles per hour.
- E. Those who work at McMurdo Station must follow rules when traveling in and out of the station.
- F. There are many dangers that come with spending time in such cold conditions.
- G. To have some fun, the people staying at McMurdo Station can make use of the station’s small bowling alley or rent musical instruments.

2. A student is writing an informative report on how airplanes are built and is looking for relevant sources of information.

Choose whether each source is relevant or not relevant. Record the answers on the answer document.

	Relevant Source	Not a Relevant Source
a. an airline pilot training video		
b. a tour guide from an aircraft factory		
c. instructions from a model airplane kit		
d. the website of an aircraft manufacturer		
e. a flight attendant's description of airplane interiors		
f. images of different kinds of airplanes from the internet		

3. Read the paragraph from a story.

Sanjay felt elated—it was the first time that he had successfully swam from one end of the pool to the other without taking a rest or touching the bottom of the pool with his feet. Swimming over to the edge of the pool, he saw his friend, Seth, cheering and waving his arms in the air. For much of the summer, Seth had tried to convince Sanjay to try to swim across the pool, but Sanjay resisted. Eventually, Sanjay gave in and mustered up the courage to attempt to cross the pool. It was a week of awkward, and sometimes exhausting effort.

Choose the BEST concluding sentence for the paragraph.

- A. Seth dove in the water and challenged Sanjay to race him across the pool.
- B. Sanjay was proud he had gained enough strength to achieve his goal.
- C. Swimming had always been one of Sanjay's favorite activities.
- D. Sanjay enjoyed sharing hobbies with his friend Seth.

Campfire

We arrive close to dusk
after a day-long drive
down winding, country roads,
the dust billowing behind us
5 like the tail of a kite.
Already
it is late October,
and the campsite is nearly empty;
a handful of brightly colored tents
10 in the distance
flutter like faraway flags.

Together, we five
construct tents of our own
near the banks of a narrow creek
15 whose waters gurgle and bubble
over mossy fields
of slippery-smooth pebbles.
Silently, the fog rolls in,
its wispy, white mist
20 resembling strands of pulled cotton,
and lowers slowly into the treetops,
rudely dimming the light
of the rising yellow moon.

And the deeper the sun sinks,
25 the more aware we become
that winter will soon be coming
to whisk away our warmth.
To our dismay, all we can do
is gather up firewood
30 and pile it inside
a circle of large rocks.
Once we light the flame,
the comfort of heat is gradual,
and we're hopeful that winter
35 might be merciful after all.

Silently, we watch
as red-hot splinters of wood
whiz past our noses
and flicker against the fog,
40 then **dissolve** in an instant
against a slate gray sky.
Someone pulls out a guitar,
and we begin to sing,
each note lingering
45 warm, round, and full
before following the smoke
that swirls upward and away.
Our campfire grows weaker,
just as we knew it would,
50 finally mellowing to nothing more
than a faint
late-autumn glow.

4. In lines 1–5, how does the poet use a literary device?
- A. The poet uses personification to make dust seem human.
 - B. The poet uses a simile to compare the appearance of dust to a kite tail.
 - C. The poet uses onomatopoeia to describe the sound of dust billowing.
 - D. The poet uses a metaphor to compare the action of dust to a billowing kite.

5. Select **two** lines from the poem that suggest the poet does not enjoy cold weather. Select **two**.
- A. And the deeper the sun sinks,
 - B. the more aware we become
 - C. that winter will soon be coming
 - D. to whisk away our warmth.
 - E. To our dismay, all we can do
 - F. is gather up firewood
 - G. and pile it inside
 - H. a circle of large rocks.
6. In lines 18-23, what image does the poet BEST create for the reader?
- A. The campsite is going to be rained on.
 - B. The wildlife surrounding the campsite is calm.
 - C. The sky is becoming dark over the campsite.
 - D. The campsite is located near water.
7. In lines 32–35, which idea is developed?
- A. the sense of loss versus the feeling of hope
 - B. the warmth of the fire versus the cold threat of winter
 - C. the brightness of the future versus the darkness of the past
 - D. the intense color of the flame versus the absence of color in winter

8. Which word is a synonym for **dissolve**?

- A. vanish
- B. burn
- C. hasten
- D. mix

9. This question has two parts. Answer part A, and then answer part B.

Part A

From which point of view is the poem told?

- A. first person, through a camper
- B. first person, through a minor character
- C. third person, through an objective speaker
- D. third person, through a campground owner

Part B

Which excerpt from the poem supports the answer in part A?

- A. Already
it is late October,
- B. a handful of brightly colored tents
- C. Together, we five
construct tents of our own
- D. Someone pulls out a guitar,

10. How is the setting important to the poem?

- A. The setting causes each character to respond differently to the events that occur.
- B. The setting strengthens the conflict between the speaker and the other characters.
- C. The setting provides the opportunity for reflection of the speaker.
- D. The setting allows events in the plot to advance quickly.

A Highway of Water

In 1849, travelers going from the East Coast to the West Coast of the United States had three choices. They could go by wagon across America's sometimes dangerous prairie land. They could travel by sea to Panama, cross Panama by foot, and then sail the rest of the way to the West Coast of the United States. The third choice was to board a sailing ship in New York bound for California. This route led down the Atlantic Coast, around the southern tip of South America into the Pacific Ocean, and then north up the Pacific Coast to California. The 15,000-mile journey took months. Severe weather, which is common at the tip of South America where the two oceans meet, could add as much as five extra months to the trip.

The Solution

Could there be any other way to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific? The answer was a canal. A canal is a human-made waterway. It provides passage between two natural bodies of water. For centuries, people around the world have been using human-made waterways to move goods and people from one place to another. A canal is a highway made of water.

In the 1850s, the United States and Great Britain negotiated a treaty for the rights to build a canal through the Central American Republic of Nicaragua. However, this canal was never built. The project did not make it beyond the planning stages.

Panama, a small country connecting Central America to South America, was another logical option for a canal. It is located a little farther south than Nicaragua. At its narrowest part, Panama is barely 50 miles wide. The Atlantic Ocean is on the eastern side of Panama, and the Pacific Ocean is on the western side. With a canal in Panama, the trip from New York to California would be about 8,000 miles shorter than sailing around South America. Travel time could be three months instead of eight months.

The First Attempt to Build the Panama Canal

In 1879, France began to build a canal across Panama. This project was led by Ferdinand de Lesseps. He was the builder of the Suez Canal in Egypt. He was experienced, and the French government felt that he could get the job done.

- 6 Unfortunately, problems began as soon as construction started. It rained every day, causing the soil to become heavy and sloppy. Temperatures climbed as high as 130 degrees. Tropical diseases such as yellow fever and malaria caused illness or death to the majority of workers. These complications put a great deal of stress on the project. The money **allotted** to build the canal quickly ran out. In 1899, France abandoned the project.

The United States Decides to Finish the Panama Canal

The U.S. Congress decided to finish the canal. The U.S. government paid \$40 million to France for the completed work and abandoned equipment. In 1903, after some negotiating, a treaty between the United States and Panama was signed paying Panama \$10 million for a 10-mile wide strip of land for the canal. This treaty also guaranteed \$250,000 to Panama each year for the use of its land and ensured its independence. This deal was viewed as a major foreign policy¹ achievement at the time.

¹foreign policy—strategies a nation uses when dealing with other nations

In November 1904, American workers began completion of the Panama Canal. American officials wanted to avoid the problems that caused France to abandon the project. They wanted to protect workers from disease. An engineer, John F. Stevens, was sent to the work camp in Panama. He began building hospitals as well as water and sewage systems making the working conditions sanitary. He supported the camp doctor's efforts to fight mosquitoes, the cause of malaria and yellow fever. All of these efforts helped to keep the workers healthy and focused on the task at hand.

Using the Panama Canal

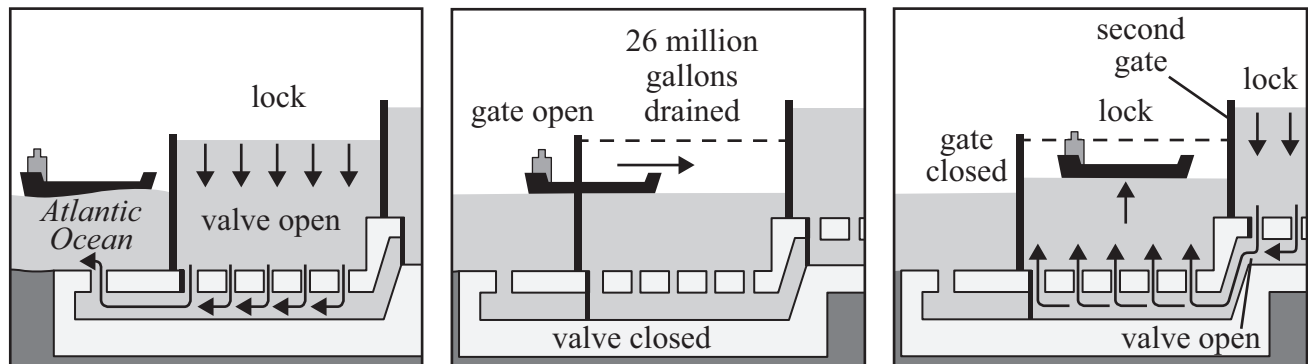
Since the water level of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans is not the same, a system of locks and gates had to be built in the canal. These locks are a pathway for ships to move from one ocean to the other. A lock is a giant box made of concrete. A ship must pass through three locks in the Panama Canal. Each lock holds millions of gallons of water. A ship moves into a lock, which is filled with water. Water is pumped into the lock or out of the lock. This raises or lowers the ship to the level of water in the next lock. The gates open, and the ship moves into the next lock.

By early 1913, the canal was nearly complete. It took several months to fill the canal with water. On September 26, 1913, an old tugboat was the first ship through the canal. Thousands of people watched and cheered. The locks worked perfectly.

In modern times, approximately 14,000 ships make the 50-mile trip through the canal each year. On average, the trip through the canal takes a ship 8 to 10 hours. The ship captain does not steer the ship through the canal. A specially trained canal pilot takes control of the vessel and expertly guides it through the canal.

Time, money, and possibly even lives have been saved as ships use the shorter route from ocean to ocean provided by the canal. The Panama Canal, a highway of water, is a phenomenon.

The Lock System



11. In paragraph 6, what is the meaning of the word **allotted**?
- A. paid
 - B. assigned
 - C. achieved
 - D. wasted

12. According to the passage, what caused France to stop work on the canal?
- A. Ferdinand de Lessep managed another canal project in Egypt.
 - B. The U.S. government paid France and took over the project.
 - C. Tropical diseases infected the majority of the people working on the project.
 - D. France incorrectly believed Ferdinand de Lessep could complete the project successfully.

13. This question has two parts. Answer part A, and then answer part B.

Part A

Based on the passage, which conclusion can be drawn about the building of the Panama Canal?

- A. It caused feelings of resentment between France and the United States.
- B. It strengthened the relationship between Panama and the United States.
- C. It united the people living on the east and west coasts of the United States.
- D. It created a strain on the relationship between Great Britain, Nicaragua, and the United States.

Part B

Which evidence from the passage BEST supports the answer in part A? Choose **two** answers.

- A. In the 1850s, the United States and Great Britain negotiated a treaty for the rights to build a canal through the Central American Republic of Nicaragua.
- B. With a canal in Panama, the trip from New York to California would be about 8,000 miles shorter than sailing around South America.
- C. These complications put a great deal of stress on the project.
- D. The U.S. government paid \$40 million to France for the completed work and abandoned equipment.
- E. This treaty also guaranteed \$250,000 to Panama each year for the use of its land and ensured its independence.
- F. This deal was viewed as a major foreign policy achievement at the time.

14. Which characteristic BEST distinguishes this passage as nonfiction?
- A. The events in the passage tell about the life of a real person.
 - B. The passage presents facts and tells about real-life events.
 - C. The passage presents a conflict, which is resolved by the characters.
 - D. The events in the passage include a rising action, climax, and falling action.

15. Choose which section supports each main idea in the passage. Record the answers on the answer document.

	The Solution	First Attempt to Build the Panama Canal	The United States Decides to Finish the Panama Canal	Using the Panama Canal
a. To avoid problems, John F. Stevens was hired to oversee efforts to keep workers productive.				
b. A canal in Panama would reduce the travel time between the East Coast and the West Coast of the United States.				
c. France wanted to build the canal but abandoned the project.				
d. A system of the three locks, or pathways, helps ships move from one ocean to the other.				

16. How does the graphic BEST support the information in the passage?
- A. It shows the reader how the water levels help boats pass through each lock in the Panama Canal.
 - B. It shows the reader why the trip through the three locks in the Panama Canal takes several hours.
 - C. It shows the reader how the locks worked the first time a boat passed through the Panama Canal.
 - D. It shows the reader why an expert pilot is needed to move ships through each lock in the Panama Canal.
17. What is the author's purpose for writing the passage?
- A. to inform readers about the Panama Canal and its history
 - B. to persuade readers that they should visit the Panama Canal
 - C. to inform readers with interesting facts about who built the Panama Canal
 - D. to persuade readers that building the Panama Canal was a good political decision

18. Read the definition below.

phenomenon: an unusual or significant fact or event

In the last sentence of “Highway of Water,” the author claims the Panama Canal is a **phenomenon**. Analyze how the author supports this claim throughout the passage. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

**Writer’s Checklist for the
Text-Dependent Analysis Question**

PLAN before you write

- Read the prompt carefully.
- Read the text(s) carefully.
- Think about how the prompt relates to the text(s).
- Organize your ideas on scratch paper. You may use a thought map, outline, or other prewriting activity to plan your response.

FOCUS while you write

- Analyze the information from the text(s) as you write.
- Use relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to support your response.
- Organize your response with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

PROOFREAD after you write

- I wrote my final draft in the response box.
- I wrote my response in English.
- I stayed focused on answering the question.
- I used/cited evidence from the text(s) to support my response.
- I corrected errors in capitalization, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, and word choice.

**Grade 6
ELA Practice Test
Answer Key**

1.	E, G
2.	a. 2, b. 1, c. 2, d. 1, e. 2, f. 2
3.	B
4.	B
5.	D, E
6.	C
7.	B
8.	A
9.	Part A: A Part B: C
10.	C
11.	B
12.	C
13.	Part A: B Part B: E, F
14.	B
15.	a. 3, b. 1, c. 2, d. 4
16.	A
17.	A
18.	refer to TDA rubric

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DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE**

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