



Nebraska State Accountability

Grade 7 English Language Arts Practice Test

Name:

Directions:

On the following pages of your test booklet are passages and questions for the Grade 7 *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 7 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. Read the paragraph from a student's draft of a report.

Athletes at the university were not always known as the Cornhuskers, however. Their original nickname was the Old Gold Knights. Then the school adopted scarlet and cream as its colors. Through the 1899 football season, the athletes were known as the Bugeaters. This was an appropriate nickname in an agricultural region where bull bats were a blessing to farmers and a menace to crop-devouring insects. Still, the Cornhuskers did not emerge for another decade. Finally, at the turn of the century and after one less-than-glorious season, the university felt that a new image was overdue. The Cornhuskers came to stay.

Which sentence BEST begins the paragraph?

- A. The University of Nebraska has a proud and honored tradition in collegiate athletics.
 - B. Some of the most exciting careers begin on practice fields at the University of Nebraska.
 - C. The University of Nebraska may have one of the most recognized nicknames in college sports.
 - D. It should be no surprise that the University of Nebraska offers advanced studies in agriculture.
2. A student is writing a paragraph describing an event. She is looking for more precise words to use.

Read the paragraph.

Raindrops drummed on the roof as Mia finished getting ready for school. Just as the news meteorologist had predicted, Mia's morning commute would be interrupted by a downpour. She peeked out the window and surveyed her neighborhood. She watched as water splashed off the hoods of cars and puddles transformed into small rivers in the street. Mia was dreading the walk to the bus stop, but she needed to arrive to school on time. So Mia zipped up her jacket and grabbed her umbrella. Then, she went out the door and sprinted the three blocks to the bus stop.

Select **two** words that could replace went to make the paragraph more precise. Select **two**.

- A. coasted
- B. darted
- C. moved
- D. rushed
- E. sauntered
- F. wandered

3. A student is writing a research report about spiders. The student found a source. Read the source and select **one** claim that the author makes that is NOT supported by credible evidence.

Spider silk, spun into beautiful webs to trap insects for food, is fascinating. This silk features several unique qualities. According to the National Nature Project, spider silk is stronger than steel, by weight, and yet it is more elastic than a rubber band. Scientists study spider silk because they hope to create materials with similar properties. Researchers at Utah State University are attempting to create synthetic spider silk for uses such as replacements for plastics and stronger airbags in cars. According to a man who makes online videos about current events, though, synthetic spider silk will probably take another twenty years to develop.

- A. Spider silk, spun into beautiful webs to trap insects for food, is fascinating.
- B. This silk features several unique qualities.
- C. According to the National Nature Project, spider silk is stronger than steel, by weight, and yet it is more elastic than a rubber band.
- D. Scientists study spider silk because they hope to create materials with similar properties.
- E. Researchers at Utah State University are attempting to create synthetic spider silk for uses such as replacements for plastics and stronger airbags in cars.
- F. According to a man who makes online videos about current events, though, synthetic spider silk will probably take another twenty years to develop.

The next two passages are paired. Read the first passage and then read the second passage.

Adventurous Storyteller

Jack London, one of America's major writers of adventure tales, was born in California in 1876. During his life, London worked at many jobs. His broad life experiences would become the background for his writing.

London grew up near the waterfront in Oakland. He loved the water. When he was fifteen years old, he bought a small sailboat called a sloop. Years later he sailed to Japan on a schooner, which is a much larger sailing boat.

London loved to read. As a teenager, he spent many hours educating himself at the public library in Oakland, California. He attended college at the University of California at Berkeley, but he stayed for only six months. He thought Berkeley was "not lively enough" and wanted to do something more exciting.

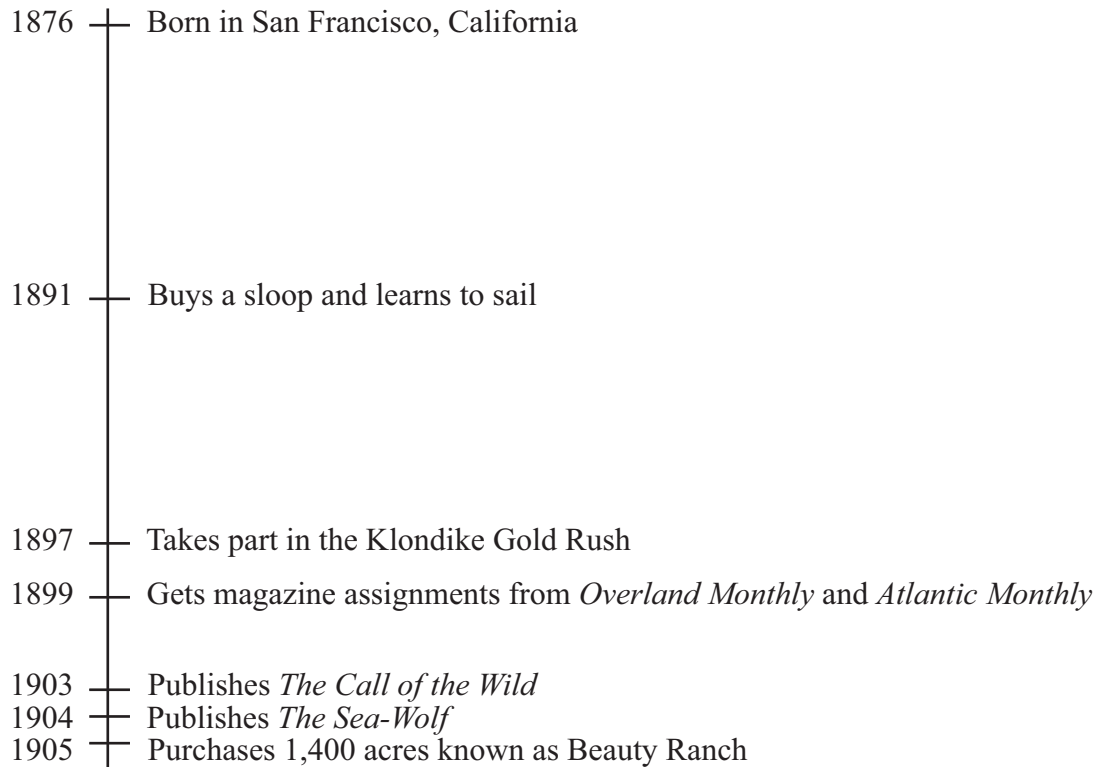
London wrote stories about working people and the hard times they had making a living. He knew their problems firsthand. He worked as a sailor, rancher, factory employee, railroad hobo, and gold prospector, to name just a few of his many jobs.

Like many people of the time, London caught the Klondike Gold Rush fever. In 1897, he headed for Alaska. He didn't find gold, but he discovered something even more valuable. He discovered that people enjoyed listening to the stories he made up with his vivid imagination. London entertained the miners with story after story. Later, using his experiences during the gold rush, he created many more colorful stories.

London resolved to live a full, exciting life. He once said, "I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet." Each day, he pushed himself. Once London determined that he was going to be a writer, nothing could stop him. His goal was to write at least one thousand words every day. He refused to stop even when he was sick. In eighteen years, the writer published fifty-one books and hundreds of articles. He was the best-selling and highest-paid author of his day. Many people also considered him to be the best writer.

His most famous stories, *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild*, are about surviving in the Alaskan wilderness. Readers can enjoy Jack London's energy and his talent for telling wonderful stories each time they open one of his novels.

Timeline of Events in Jack London's Life



Now read the second passage.

**excerpt from *The Call of the Wild*
by Jack London**

Buck did not read the newspapers, or he would have known that trouble was brewing, not alone for himself, but for every tide-water dog, strong of muscle and with warm, long hair, from Puget Sound to San Diego. Because men . . . in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were booming the find, thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. These men wanted dogs, and the dogs they wanted were heavy dogs, with strong muscles by which to toil, and furry coats to protect them from the frost. . . .

Buck . . . was not surprised when Curly, a good-natured Newfoundland, and he were led away. . . . That was the last he saw of the man in the red sweater, and as Curly and he looked at receding Seattle from the deck of the *Narwhal*, it was the last he saw of the warm Southland. Curly and he were taken below by Perrault and turned over to . . . Francois. Perrault was a French-Canadian, and swarthy; but Francois was a French-Canadian . . . , and twice as swarthy. They were a new kind of men to Buck (of which he was destined to see many more), and while he developed no affection for them, he none the less grew honestly to respect them. He speedily learned that Perrault and Francois were fair men, calm and impartial in administering justice, and too wise in the way of dogs to be fooled by dogs.

In the 'tween-decks of the *Narwhal*, Buck and Curly joined two other dogs. One of them was a big, snow-white fellow from Spitzbergen who had been brought away by a whaling captain, and who had later accompanied a Geological Survey into the Barrens. He was friendly, in a treacherous sort of way, smiling into one's face the while he meditated some underhand trick, as, for instance, when he stole from Buck's food at the first meal. . . .

The other dog made no advances, nor received any; also, he did not attempt to steal from the newcomers. He was a gloomy, morose fellow, and he showed Curly plainly that all he desired was to be left alone, and further, that there would be trouble if he were not left alone. "Dave" he was called, and he ate and slept, or yawned between times, and took interest in nothing, not even when the *Narwhal* crossed Queen Charlotte Sound and rolled and pitched and bucked like a thing possessed. When Buck and Curly grew excited, half wild with fear, he raised his head as though annoyed, favored them with an incurious glance, yawned, and went to sleep again.

Day and night the ship throbbed to the tireless pulse of the propeller, and though one day was very like another, it was apparent to Buck that the weather was steadily growing colder. At last, one morning, the propeller was quiet, and the *Narwhal* was pervaded with an atmosphere of excitement. He felt it, as did the other dogs, and knew that a change was at hand. Francois leashed them and brought them on deck. At the first step upon the cold surface, Buck's feet sank into a white mushy something very like mud. He sprang back with a snort. More of this white stuff was falling through the air. He shook himself, but more of it fell upon him. He sniffed it curiously, then licked some up on his tongue. It bit like fire, and the next instant was gone. This puzzled him. He tried it again, with the same result. The onlookers laughed uproariously, and he felt ashamed, he knew not why, for it was his first snow.

4. Which evidence from "Adventurous Storyteller" BEST supports the idea that London was very determined to be a writer?
- A. London wrote stories about working people and the hard times they had making a living.
 - B. His goal was to write at least one thousand words every day. He refused to stop even when he was sick.
 - C. He was the best-selling and highest paid author of his day. Many people also considered him to be the best writer.
 - D. Readers can enjoy Jack London's energy and his talent for telling wonderful stories each time they open one of his novels.

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

Part A

Read the sentence from “Adventurous Storyteller.”

“He once said, ‘I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.’”

What does the sentence mean?

- A. London preferred to live a life of excitement instead of a plain, safe one.
- B. London preferred to write fantasy stories instead of realistic, believable ones.
- C. London preferred to have a life of fame instead of a simple, normal one.
- D. London preferred to think about faraway places instead of nearby, familiar ones.

Part B

Select **two** details from the passage that support the answer in part A. Select **two**.

- A. London grew up near the waterfront.
- B. London spent many hours reading at a library in Oakland, California.
- C. London left Berkeley because he wanted a livelier lifestyle.
- D. London worked in a wide variety of jobs, from a sailor to a gold prospector.
- E. London published many books and hundreds of articles.

6. Which idea from “Adventurous Storyteller” is supported by the timeline?
- A. London educated himself before becoming a writer.
 - B. London’s writing career developed after his gold rush experience.
 - C. London was an American writer of adventure tales throughout his entire life.
 - D. London’s famous stories were written about his time in Alaska.

7. What is the author’s main purpose in “Adventurous Storyteller”?
- A. to describe the early life experiences of Jack London
 - B. to describe the process of becoming a published writer
 - C. to inform about the different job options of a time period
 - D. to inform about how Jack London became a famous writer

8. Read the sentence from *The Call of the Wild*.

“He was friendly, in a **treacherous** sort of way, smiling into one’s face the while he meditated some underhand trick, as, for instance, when he stole from Buck’s food at the first meal. . . .”

Which word is a synonym for **treacherous**?

- A. confusing
- B. deceiving
- C. persuasive
- D. dangerous

9. Select **two** sentences that should be removed from a summary of *The Call of the Wild*. Select **two**.
- A. Gold is found in the Arctic, which leads to a need for strong dogs.
 - B. Buck is one dog that is led away from the owner he knows and placed on a ship heading north with new owners.
 - C. Buck is a strong dog with a furry coat.
 - D. Buck is not emotionally attached to his new owners, but he does grow to respect them.
 - E. He also develops the same feeling for the other dogs on the ship.
 - F. Curly is a Newfoundland and Perrault is a French-Canadian.
 - G. The dogs are excited as the ship approaches land because they sense a change is coming.
 - H. Once the ship has landed, the dogs are led off of the boat.
 - I. Stepping onto land in the north, Buck gets to experience snow for the first time.
10. In *The Call of the Wild*, how does the point of view affect the scene where Buck experiences snow?
- A. Third person point of view allows the reader to understand how Buck acted in the snow, but not how any of the other characters reacted to the experience.
 - B. Third person point of view allows the reader to understand what Buck's first experience with snow was like for Buck and for the characters who were watching him.
 - C. First person point of view allows the reader to understand how Buck felt about his first experience with snow, but not how the other characters felt about the experience.
 - D. First person point of view allows the reader to understand what Buck's first experience with snow was like through the perspective of a character who was watching Buck.

The World's Tallest Trees—The Redwoods

The world is full of all types of trees, but one type of tree regularly grows over 300 feet tall. It is the coastal redwood tree, officially named *Sequoia sempervirens*. The tallest tree standing in the United States is a redwood. It is 374 feet tall—as tall as a 30-story building. Oak, maple, and elm trees rarely tower more than one hundred feet. A redwood is more than three times that height. The girth of the redwood tree is also significant and can be up to 18 feet in diameter.

An Ideal Environment

The coastal redwood tree grows in a 450-mile strip on the coast along the Pacific Ocean from southern Oregon to just south of San Francisco, California. This area is a moist, fog-covered canyon that supports these huge trees. The redwood species thrives on moisture and cannot survive more than 30 to 40 miles away from the coast. The canyon creeks that flow through the redwood forests provide moisture, but they dry up in the summer. The constant fog lowers the temperature, provides humidity, and creates moisture for these trees by condensing and settling on the needles, then dripping to the ground. Evidence has shown that fog drip creates up to 10 inches of moisture annually for the redwood trees. The forest floor that surrounds the redwoods is filled with dropped needles, trapped dust, seeds, and other natural materials forming a mat of mulch. This mat traps moisture for the trees to use during the dry summers.

Very Long Life

- 3 Redwoods can be swiftly growing trees that live longer than two thousand years. Their heights and their ages make them unusual and unique among tree species. Scientists say that the oldest living redwood tree is about 2,200 years old. Redwoods have characteristics that make them healthy and strong in their environment. Their bark is fire resistant, from 6 to 12 inches thick, and does not contain the sticky resins that can fuel a fire. Redwoods are resistant to disease and undesirable to insects that consume wood.

Tall Trees, Shallow Roots

Redwood trees have shallow roots that rest near the top of the soil, which seems unusual for their size. They do not have the taproots that burrow deeply into the ground like so many other trees. Redwoods form a wide radius of shallow roots around their base, and this is what has helped them survive for so many years. These trees are able to survive flooding and the resulting mudflows that cover the roots because they grow new roots quickly. The old roots simply rot away from being buried so deeply.

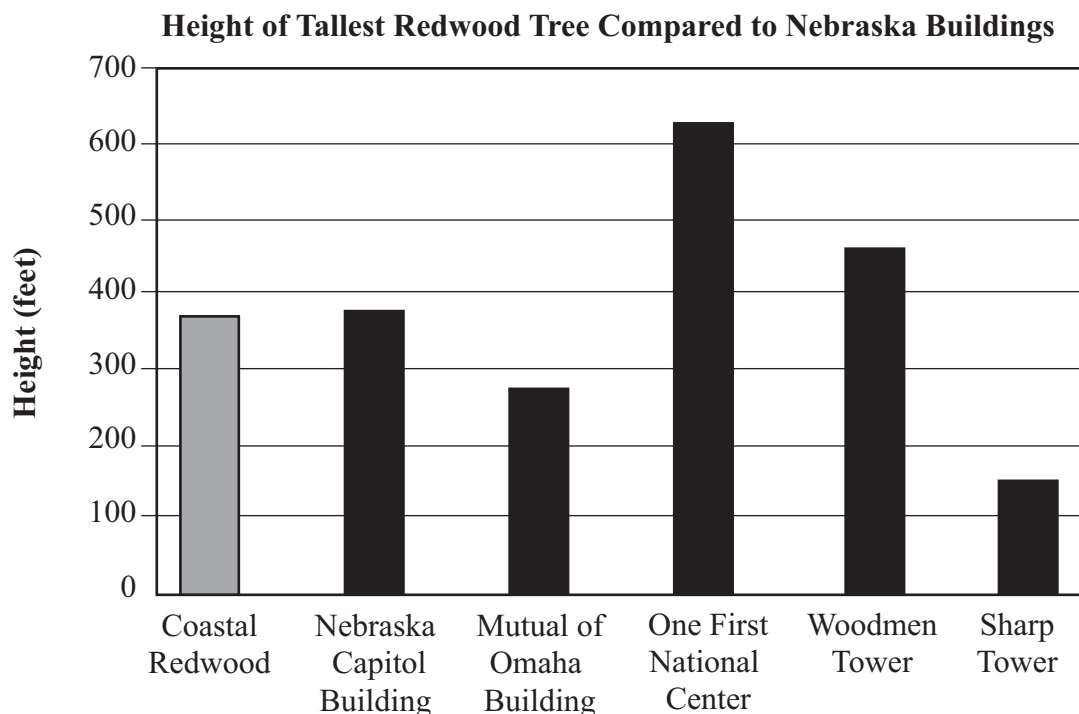
New Beginnings

- 5 In the redwood forests of California, the redwood trees are the **dominant** living plants. The canopy of shade that these giant trees provide makes it extremely difficult for many other plants to grow alongside them. Even though the redwoods have a thick bark that is resistant to fire, repeated fires occasionally damage them. They bear the black marks of fire damage and begin decaying. A process called stump sprouting then occurs. The decaying tree sends out root buds that begin growing around it. Small saplings, or beginner trees, start to grow and survive. In the forest, there are often many saplings surrounding a fire-damaged redwood because they are the only plants that survive in the shady, moist environment.

New Generations

The stump-sprouting process of redwood tree reproduction is much more successful than seeding. All redwoods have cones growing within their branches. The cones release tiny brown seeds when the tree is mature. The brown seeds are so tiny that thousands are needed to create a pound. Individual trees produce up to 6 million seeds annually! Yet, a scant 5 percent of these seeds actually germinate. Even less actually grow into mature trees. The already established root systems from the stump-sprouted trees provide the new saplings with the ability to grow more forcefully than the seeded trees.

The redwood tree is the California state tree. It is magnificent in size, stature, and longevity. Visitors come from all over the world to see the redwoods and to enjoy their greatness.



11. Select **two** sentences from paragraph 3 that explain why redwood trees are able to live for a long time. Select **two**.
- A. Redwoods are swiftly growing trees that can live longer than two thousand years.
 - B. Their height and their age make them unusual and unique among tree species.
 - C. Foresters say that the oldest living redwood tree is about 2,200 years old.
 - D. Redwoods have characteristics that make them healthy and strong in their environment.
 - E. Their bark is fire resistant, from six to twelve inches thick, and does not carry the sticky resins that can fuel a fire.
 - F. Redwoods are resistant to disease and undesirable to insects that consume wood.

12. In paragraph 5, what does **dominant** mean?
- A. surviving
 - B. crowded
 - C. growing
 - D. superior
13. How do the headings contribute to the reader's understanding of the passage?
- A. by creating suspense about ideas in each section
 - B. by expressing opinions about ideas in each section
 - C. by introducing the main idea of each section
 - D. by connecting ideas between each section
14. This question has two parts. Answer part A, and then answer part B.

Part A

Which aspect is most important in determining where redwood trees grow?

- A. open space
- B. wet climate
- C. forest fires
- D. dry summers

Part B

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer in part A?

- A. . . . cannot survive more than 30 to 40 miles from the coast.
- B. . . . but they dry up in the summer.
- C. Their bark is fire resistant, from 6 to 12 inches thick. . .
- D. Redwoods form a wide radius of shallow roots around their base. . .

15. What causes redwoods to begin “stump sprouting”?
- A. fire damage
 - B. tiny brown seeds
 - C. dense shade
 - D. thick bark layers
16. Why does the author include a graph at the end of the passage?
- A. It shows the reader that the redwood tree can be found in Nebraska.
 - B. It helps the reader understand how tall a redwood tree is by comparing it to something familiar.
 - C. It helps the reader understand that the redwood tree is similar to some buildings in Nebraska.
 - D. It shows the reader that the redwood tree is the tallest tree in the country.
17. How does the author organize the information in the passage?
- A. by comparing and contrasting redwoods to other trees in California
 - B. by explaining problems for redwoods and how they are solved
 - C. by telling the sequence of events of redwoods developing in California
 - D. by giving descriptions of different characteristics of redwoods

18. The passage “The World’s Tallest Trees—The Redwoods” provides information about redwood trees. Write a narrative describing a visit to a redwood forest. 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 7
ELA Practice Test
Answer Key**

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

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