

**NEBRASKA STATE  
ACCOUNTABILITY**



**NeSA**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  
ITEM AND SCORING SAMPLER  
GRADE 11**

Nebraska State Accountability assessments are administered by the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE).  
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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Nebraska Department of Education provides districts and schools with tools to assist in delivering focused instructional programs aligned to the state assessment system. These tools include Table of Specifications documents, administration manuals, and content-based item and scoring samplers. This Item and Scoring Sampler is a useful tool for Nebraska educators in the preparation of local instructional programs and the statewide NeSA-ELA.

## SAMPLER CONTENTS

This sampler contains reading passages with test questions (items) that have been written to align to the assessment indicators that are based on the Nebraska College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards. The passages represent some of the genres approved by NDE to appear on an operational Nebraska College- and Career-Ready NeSA-ELA. The test questions provide a simulation of the types of items that will appear on an operational Nebraska College- and Career-Ready NeSA-ELA. Each sample test question has been through a rigorous review process to ensure alignment with the assessment indicators.

## PURPOSE AND USES

The purpose of the sampler is to expose teachers and administrators to new item types and to show how these items align to the revised Nebraska College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards. Many of the items provided in the sampler will be accessible to students in the form of ELA Practice Tests, Guided Practice Tests, and Online Tools Training resources.

## ITEM FORMAT AND SCORING GUIDELINES

The Nebraska College- and Career-Ready NeSA-ELA has four types of test questions. For grade 11, the types of test questions are Multiple-Choice (MC), Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR), Auto-Scored Constructed Response (ASCR), and Text Dependent Analysis (TDA).

### Multiple Choice (MC):

All MC items have four answer choices, including three distractors and one correct answer. Distractors represent common misconceptions, incorrect logic, common misinterpretations, unsound reasoning, casual reading, etc. A correct response to an MC item is worth one point.

### Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR):

EBSR items have two parts and are designed to elicit an evidence-based response based on what a student has read from either an Informational Text or Literature stimulus passage. Each EBSR item is linked to a passage or passage set. Part A of an EBSR item is similar to a typical MC test question. A student analyzes a passage and chooses a single, best (correct) answer from four answer choices. Part B of an EBSR item elicits evidence from the stimulus passage and requires that the student select one or two answers based on the response the student provided in Part A. Part B is also different from Part A in that it may have more than four answer options, which is typical of an MC item. Each EBSR (Part A and Part B combined) is worth two points.

**Auto-Scored Constructed Response (ASCR):**

ASCR item types provide a new forum in which to address higher-level thinking skills without the use of hand-scored test questions. Using the expansive features and functions of online testing, developers will incorporate technical enhancements to the test question, the response area, and/or the stimulus. Item types may include drag-and-drop, hot-spot, and in-line selection of multiple answers from drop-down menus. Students will be able to manipulate information within dynamic tasks such as dragging and pasting elements, highlighting text, and selecting multiple answers from a variety of presentation methods. Each ASCR test question is worth one or two points.

**Text Dependent Analysis (TDA):**

Similar to an EBSR item, the TDA Writing Prompt is designed to elicit an evidence-based response from a student who has read either an Informational Text or Literature passage during the test event. The TDA is an on-demand, text-based writing piece that requires students to provide evidence from the text to support analysis, reflection, or ideas and opinions. Students must draw on basic writing skills while inferring and synthesizing information from the passage (making use of and referencing content from the passage to support the analysis) in order to develop a comprehensive response. Students will be given a TDA Writer's Checklist to assist in composing their response. The TDA will be scored using a holistic scoring rubric designed to provide a measurement of writing, conventions, and reading. The TDA is in alignment across grades 3–8 and 11 with the NeSA-ELA Standards indicated on the rubric. Each TDA Writing Prompt test question is scored using a rubric and will be reported to reading and writing.

**DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE**

In addition to being aligned to the standards, the sample items included in this sampler were also developed with a particular emphasis on cognitive complexity, or Depth of Knowledge (DOK). The DOK level is also provided for each item in this sampler in the Item Information Table. DOK measures the level of cognitive demand required to complete an assessment item. The following descriptions show the expectations of the DOK levels in greater detail.

**Level 1 (Recall of Information)** generally requires students to identify, list, or define, often asking them to recall who, what, when, and where. Consequently, this level usually asks students to recall facts, terms, concepts, and trends and may ask them to identify specific information contained in documents, excerpts, quotations, maps, charts, tables, graphs, or illustrations. Items that require students to “describe” and/or “explain” could be classified at Level 1 or Level 2, depending on what is to be described and/or explained. A Level 1 “describe” and/or “explain” would require students to recall, recite, or reproduce information.

**Level 2 (Basic Reasoning)** includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response. A Level 2 “describe” and/or “explain” would require students to go beyond a description or explanation of recalled information to describe and/or explain a result or “how” or “why.”

**Level 3 (Complex Reasoning)** requires reasoning, using evidence, and thinking on a higher and more abstract level than Level 1 and Level 2. Students will go beyond explaining or describing “how and why” to justifying the “how and why” through application and evidence. Level 3 questions often involve making connections across time and place to explain a concept or “big idea.”

## ITEM AND SCORING SAMPLER FORMAT

Sample questions are provided in this sampler, along with any related stimulus information such as a passage or graphic. Following each test question is an item information table.

### Example Response Item Information Table

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	Assigned Indicator	Assigned indicator definition
<b>Answer Key</b>	Correct Answer	<b>Option Annotations</b> Brief answer option analysis or rationale
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	Assigned DOK	
<b>Focus</b>	Skill/Task	

All Text Dependent Analysis items in this sampler are supported by an item information table, the TDA Scoring Rubric, and annotated sample student responses at each score point.

The NeSA-ELA is administered primarily online. Although there is a paper-pencil format, the examples in this sampler include samples of students' responses in online format.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information related to the Nebraska plan and schedule for making the transition to NeSA-English Language Arts, see <http://www.education.ne.gov/Assessment> and select the link on the left titled "ELA Transition."

**PASSAGE 1****The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System**

Should you be required to wear a seat belt in a moving car? How many days a year should you be required to attend school? These and other similar questions are discussed and answered by your senators—elected politicians who are authorized to institute, amend, or eliminate Nebraska laws. Forty-nine of the fifty states in the United States have a House of Representatives and a Senate. These two-house systems are called bicameral legislatures. Nebraska is unique in that it is the only state in the country that has just one legislative body.

**The Nature of a Unicameral Legislature**

A one-house system is called a unicameral legislature. In 1934 Nebraskans voted to do away with the House of Representatives.

In all other states, a bill, or proposed law, is first proposed by a member of the House or Senate. If the bill is passed by that particular legislative body, then it is passed on to the other legislative body and must be passed there, too. So, both the House and the Senate have to vote on and approve a bill before it can become a law. In Nebraska, however, a bill is discussed and voted on only by the Senate.

**How a Bill Becomes a Law in Nebraska**

Nebraska is divided into 49 equal districts. Each district has about the same population. Voters in each district elect a senator to represent them for four years. A senator must be at least 21 years old and have lived in the district for at least a year.

The senator takes the idea for a law to the capitol and writes it up as a bill. A bill in Nebraska may contain only one subject. Therefore, everyone is clear on exactly what is being discussed and voted on. The bill is filed with the clerk of the legislature, who reads its title aloud to all the senators and distributes written copies. Bills then get a public hearing in front of a committee of senators. Citizens can speak up and express their opinions at these hearings. After the hearing, the committee votes on whether to send the bill to the full legislature, to postpone it, or to defeat it.

If the bill goes to the full legislature, it is discussed and debated openly. Committees and individual senators can propose amendments, or changes, to the bill. The resulting draft is voted on. If a majority of senators (25 of the 49) approve it, then it has received general approval and moves on to the next stage of consideration.

The next stage involves discussion and debate of details. Amendments might be made, or the bill might be dropped. If a vote is taken and a majority of senators approve the bill in its new detailed form, then it moves on for a final reading. In the final reading, the entire bill is read aloud to the whole senate and voted on for the final time. If the bill passes the vote, then it is sent to the governor for his or her approval. If the governor signs the bill or chooses to ignore it, then the bill becomes a law. If the governor vetoes the bill, a vote of 30 senators is needed to make the bill a law.

### **Nebraska's Choice**

Nebraskans made the change from a bicameral legislature to a unicameral one for a number of reasons. For one, the state of Nebraska believes that a unicameral system is less expensive to support. In a bicameral system, there are many more politicians to pay and more building space needed than in a unicameral system. Having only senators discuss a bill and vote on it could be more efficient, both financially and logistically. In the unicameral system, ample time is allotted to carefully discuss everything in different stages but without inefficient repetition. Time and energy could be saved by not reviewing the same bill in two separate legislative bodies.

In addition, Nebraska believes that a unicameral system tends to keep the focus on a bill. In a bicameral system, bills are sometimes altered in order to convince members of both the House and the Senate to vote for them. The original intent might get lost. Discussions, in general, are focused on the proposed law and its intent, rather than on how to get it passed by another legislative body.

### **Support for the Bicameral Legislature**

If a unicameral legislature is so much more preferable, then why would other states choose to have a bicameral legislature instead? Some argue that the bicameral system ensures more thorough deliberation over a bill, since it has to be debated and passed by both the House and the Senate. Bicameral legislatures believe that their process actually saves time; if one legislative body rejects a bill, then the other body does not need to take the time to debate it. There are also more leaders involved in the passing of the bill, so this could provide better “checks and balances,” ensuring that no one group of leaders has too much law-making power.

Another benefit of a bicameral legislature could be that, because there are more legislative leaders in the state, there are more opportunities for citizens to make contact with them and express their views to them. Also, members of the House of Representatives in other states serve two-year terms, instead of the four-year terms that Senators serve, so citizens may feel they have more frequent control over who their elected lawmakers are.

### **Empowered Citizens**

Regardless of which legislative structure is best, lawmakers in Nebraska and all across the country are working hard to make the best choices for the citizens of their states. Citizens of Nebraska can propose a new law to the senator of their district. They can attend the public hearing in which their bill is discussed. They can even speak up at the hearing and explain more fully why the law they propose should be passed. Citizens can best support lawmakers by staying involved with current events and making their voices heard.

**MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS**

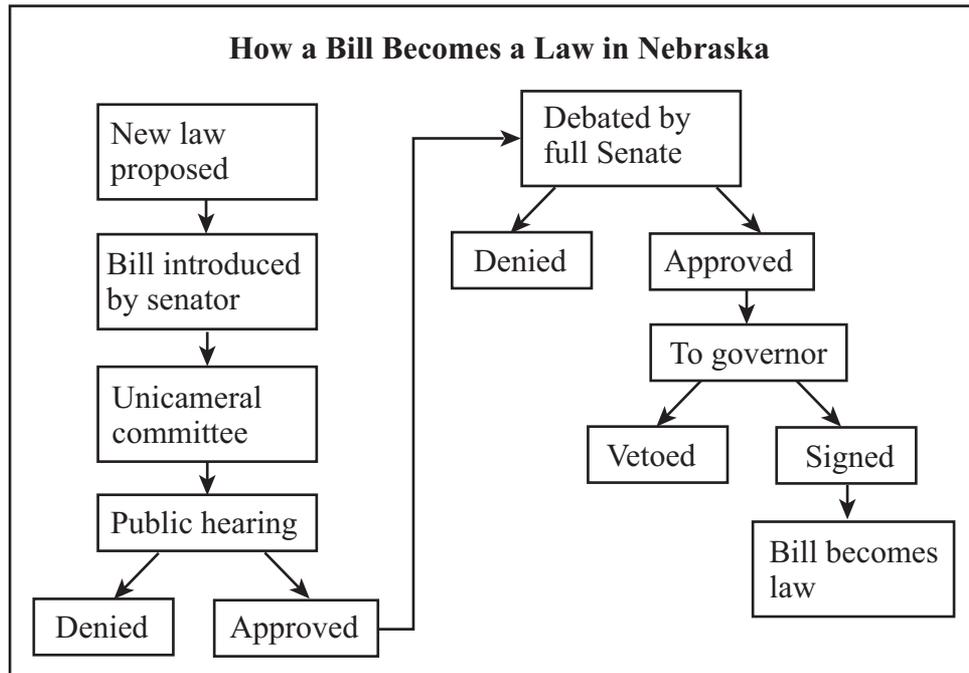
1. Which sentence from the passage BEST supports the inference that a unicameral legislative system simplifies the lawmaking process?
  - A. Nebraska is unique in that it is the only state in the country that has just one legislative body.
  - B. The bill is filed with the clerk of the legislature, who reads its title aloud to all the senators and distributes written copies.
  - C. After the hearing, the committee votes on whether to send the bill to the full legislature, to postpone it, or to defeat it.
  - D. Time and energy could be saved by not reviewing the same bill in two separate legislative bodies.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.i	Construct and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, analyzing and synthesizing evidence from the text and additional sources to support answers.
<b>Answer Key</b>	D	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to identify evidence that supports a given inference. Option D is the correct answer since the saving of time and money indicates a simplifying of the lawmaking process. Options A, B, and C are accurate details from the passage, but they are unrelated to the given inference.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Explicit Evidence for Inferential Question	

2. How does the last paragraph contribute to the author’s purpose?
- A. It urges the reader to become more involved as a citizen.
  - B. It engages the reader by showing he or she can be involved in the law-making process.
  - C. It informs the reader that he or she has more to learn about legislative systems of government.
  - D. It entertains the reader by explaining one citizen’s experience in using the legislative system to make a law.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.a	Evaluate the meaning, reliability, and validity of text considering author’s purpose, perspective, rhetorical style, and contextual influences.
<b>Answer Key</b>	B	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to determine how the last paragraph contributes to the author’s purpose in the passage. Option B is the correct answer since the author uses the last paragraph to engage the reader by showing that any citizen can be involved in the unicameral system. Option A is incorrect since the author does not attempt to persuade the reader to take action. Option C is incorrect since the last paragraph does not suggest there is more to learn. Option D is incorrect since the last paragraph does not describe the experiences of one citizen.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Author’s Purpose	

3. Maria created this flow chart based on the information in the passage.



What could Maria do to BEST improve her flow chart?

- A. change the order of the information presented to make it accurate
- B. remove the information that is repeated several times
- C. change the title to make it an accurate summary of the main idea
- D. add missing information about some outcomes of the process

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.f	Interpret and evaluate information from print and digital text features to support comprehension.
<b>Answer Key</b>	D	<b>Option Annotations</b> The student is asked to evaluate the flow chart to draw a conclusion about it. Option D is correct since some important information is missing from the chart. Option A is incorrect since the chart is not complete. Option B is incorrect since it does not introduce an additional concept. Option C is incorrect since the title is appropriate for the chart.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Text Features— Flow Chart	

4. How does the organizational pattern used in the section **How a Bill Becomes a Law in Nebraska** help the reader?
- A. Chronological order helps the reader understand the steps involved in passing a bill.
  - B. Order of importance helps to ensure that the reader focuses on the most significant information, which is presented first.
  - C. Compare and contrast helps emphasize why a unicameral system is more efficient when passing a bill.
  - D. Problem and solution helps the reader understand how the state resolves inefficiencies in the bill making process.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.j	Apply knowledge of organizational patterns to comprehend informational text (e.g., sequence, description, cause and effect, compare/contrast, fact/opinion, proposition/support, concept definition, question/answer).
<b>Answer Key</b>	A	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Option Annotations</b></p> <p>The student is asked to determine the organizational pattern used in a section of the passage. Option A is the Key, since the author presents the information in the section in the order that the steps occur in the senate. Options B, C, and D are incorrect, since Order of Importance, Compare/Contrast, and Problem/Solution are not methods of organization used in the passage.</p>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Text Organization	

5. How does the author’s purpose contribute to the validity of the passage?
- A. The author’s intent to entertain allows the author to manipulate the facts to make the passage more interesting.
  - B. The author’s intent to persuade allows the author to choose to include only facts that support the intended message of the passage.
  - C. The author’s intent to inform ensures that the author uses authentic facts to convey the information in the passage.
  - D. The author’s intent to describe allows the author to use vivid language to create a visual picture in the mind of the reader.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.a	Evaluate the meaning, reliability, and validity of text considering author’s purpose, perspective, rhetorical style, and contextual influences.
<b>Answer Key</b>	C	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to determine how the author’s purpose contributes to the validity of the passage. Option C is the correct answer since the author’s purpose is to inform and that ensures that the author uses authentic facts and opinions to convey the information that is presented. Options A, B, and D are incorrect as they do not accurately state the author’s purpose or how that contributes to the validity of the text.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	
<b>Focus</b>	Author’s Purpose/Validity of Text	

## EVIDENCE-BASED SELECTED RESPONSE ITEM

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

### Part A

How might the author's perspective influence the reader?

- A. By elaborating on the advantages of a unicameral system, the author demonstrates to the reader that a unicameral system is more complex than a bicameral system.
- B. By focusing mainly on the processes and benefits of the unicameral system, the author helps the reader to understand why Nebraska has selected a unicameral legislature.
- C. By comparing a unicameral system to a bicameral one, the author helps the reader to understand that both systems essentially follow the same process.
- D. By showing that the unicameral system is mainly facilitated by its citizens, the author demonstrates to the reader that a unicameral system is ideal.

### Part B

Which sentence from the passage BEST supports the answer in part A?

- A. Having only senators discuss a bill and vote on it could be more efficient, both financially and logistically.
- B. In a bicameral system, bills are sometimes altered in order to convince members of both the House and the Senate to vote for them.
- C. Regardless of which legislative structure is best, lawmakers in Nebraska and all across the country are working hard to make the best choices for the citizens of their states.
- D. Citizens of Nebraska can propose a new law to the senator of their district.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.a	Evaluate the meaning, reliability, and validity of text considering author’s purpose, perspective, rhetorical style, and contextual influences.
<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>Part A:</b> B <b>Part B:</b> A	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Option Annotations</b></p> <p>The student is asked to choose an inference about how the author’s perspective influences the reader and to identify a sentence from the passage that supports this chosen inference.</p> <p><b>Part A:</b> Option B is the correct answer, since the author’s descriptions of the unicameral system aim to explain why Nebraska has chosen a unicameral legislature. Option A is incorrect because, if anything, the author attempts to show that the unicameral (not the bicameral) system is more complex. Option C is incorrect because the two systems do not follow the same process. Option D is incorrect because the unicameral system is not mainly facilitated by its citizens but by its senators.</p> <p><b>Part B:</b> Option A is correct, since it is the only option that adequately shows why Nebraska has chosen a unicameral legislature. No other option demonstrates this.</p> <p>This item is worth 2 points. To receive full credit, the student must select the correct answer for both part A and part B. To receive 1 point, the student must select the correct answer for part A. No credit will be given for a correct response to part B if part A is incorrect.</p>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	
<b>Focus</b>	Author’s Perspective	

### AUTO-SCORED CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEM

7. Move the characteristics to the correct boxes to show how unicameral and bicameral legislative systems are similar and different.

The screenshot shows a digital interface for a constructed response item. On the left, there is a list of six characteristics: "includes Senate", "includes House of Representatives", "is less expensive for citizens", "makes decisions about state laws", "is system used by most states in United States", and "usually saves time in law-making process". On the right, there are three empty rectangular boxes for classification, labeled "Unicameral System Only", "Both Unicameral and Bicameral Systems", and "Bicameral System Only". At the bottom of the interface is a blue button with the text "Click To Respond".

Appears after the student selects the Click To Respond box (above).

This screenshot shows the same interface as above, but with a blue bar at the top containing a question mark icon. The "Click To Respond" button is no longer visible. At the bottom center, there is a blue button with the text "OK".

**Answer Key – Completed Correct Response**

**Unicameral System Only**  
is less expensive for citizens  
usually saves time in law-making process

**Both Unicameral and Bicameral Systems**  
includes Senate  
makes decisions about state laws

**Bicameral System Only**  
includes House of Representatives  
is system used by most states in United States

OK

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.i	Construct and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, analyzing and synthesizing evidence from the text and additional sources to support answers.
<b>Answer Key</b>	See Completed Correct Response	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Option Annotations</b></p> <p>The student is asked to compare unicameral and bicameral systems by moving characteristics into boxes to indicate which characteristics are unique to which system and which characteristic fits both systems. The first and fourth phrases are characteristics of both systems. The third and last phrases are characteristics of only the unicameral system. The remaining two phrases are characteristics of only the bicameral system.</p> <p>This item is worth 2 points. To receive full credit, the student must correctly complete all three sections of the chart. To receive 1 point, the student must correctly complete at least one section of the chart.</p>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Answer Literal Question	

**TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS ITEM**



8. “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System” compares a unicameral system to a bicameral system. Analyze whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

XXX/6000

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	<b>Reading:</b> 12.1.6.g <b>Writing:</b> See Rubric	Cite specific textual evidence to analyze and evaluate the effects of historical, cultural, biographical, and political influences of literary and informational text written by culturally diverse authors, to develop a regional, national, and international multicultural perspective.
<b>Answer Key</b>	See Rubric	<b>Option Annotations</b>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	

**TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

**DRAFT Nebraska Department of Education Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Scoring Rubric**

Nebraska English Language Arts Standards	1	2	3	4
<b>Analysis of Text</b> 1.6* 1.6.i	<b>Demonstrates limited analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimally addresses part(s) of the task to demonstrate limited understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Inadequately analyzes text(s) by minimally addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses some part(s) of the task to demonstrate partial understanding of text(s)</li> <li>Partially analyzes text(s) by occasionally addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrates effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Analyzes text(s) by addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>	<b>Demonstrates exemplary analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate thorough understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Thoroughly analyzes text(s) by purposefully addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Evidence</b> 1.6.i 2.1.c 2.2.b 4.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficiently integrates evidence from the text(s) by using few details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides little or no relevant and/or accurate evidence from the text(s) to support claims or ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially integrates evidence from the text(s) by using some details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides some relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to partially support claims or ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrates specific evidence from the text(s) by using details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to sufficiently support claims or ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilfully integrates specific evidence from the text(s) by using details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to thoroughly support claims or ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Writing Skills</b> 1.5.c 2.1.b 2.1.d 2.1.e 2.1.h 2.1.i 2.2.a 2.2.d 4.1.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates an inadequately focused response which lacks an introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and/or transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates little or no evidence of an organizational pattern and/or mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Limited or no use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Limited or no use of precise word choice and/or content-specific vocabulary from the text(s)</li> <li>Ineffectively demonstrates conventions of standard English; errors may seriously interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates a partially focused response which includes a weak introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and/or transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates partial evidence of an organizational pattern and/or mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Weak use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Occasionally uses precise word choice and/or content-specific vocabulary from the text(s)</li> <li>Partially demonstrates conventions of standard English; errors may interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates a focused response which includes a clear introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and appropriate transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates an appropriate organizational pattern and mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Clear use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Uses precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text(s)</li> <li>Demonstrates conventions of standard English; if present, errors seldom interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates a well-focused response which includes a strong introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and purposeful transitions</li> <li>Skilfully demonstrates an appropriate organizational pattern and mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Strong use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Skilfully uses precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text(s) to enhance ideas</li> <li>Thoroughly demonstrates conventions of standard English; if present, errors do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

\*Individual TDA prompts are aligned to one of the following 1.6 Reading Comprehension indicators: 1.6.a, 1.6.b, 1.6.c, 1.6.d, 1.6.e, 1.6.f, 1.6.g, 1.6.h, 1.6.i, or 1.6.j

**EXAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES****AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 4 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

8. “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System” compares a unicameral system to a bicameral system. Analyze whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

**Nebraska, the Unicameral State**

Every state has a unique identifier that most Americans are familiar with. For example, Florida is known for its oranges and New York is known as the “Big Apple”. Nebraska, on the other hand is more than just known for farming. Nebraska has a unicameral legislature which is both unique and successful.

Nebraska is the only state in all 50 of the United States of America to have just a senate and no House of Representatives. As stated in “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System,” Nebraskans decided to remove the house, “In 1934 Nebraskans voted to do away with the House of Representatives.” All other states have both a House of Representatives and Senate, making Nebraska a outlier from the rest of the country. Although not always a positive attribute, for the most part, the unicameral legislative system has been successful for Nebraska. The main advantages that make the unicameral legislature great are that it saves money, it is more efficient, and most importantly, allows for greater transparency in government decisions.

Money is always a concern for most everyone, and it is no different in Nebraska. “A unicameral system is less expensive to support”. Here in Nebraska, we only need to pay senators because there are no representatives, which decreases the total number of legislative groups. Since there is just one legislative group meeting at the capitol instead of two, the need for building space is also minimized, reducing energy costs. Other resources and expenses are also avoided saving us additional unnecessary spending. Other states need more support staff and with more staff they have higher equipment and supply costs. Our unicameral legislature is less expensive and provides substantial savings to the citizens of Nebraska.

Not only is the unicameral legislature less expensive, but it is also more efficient. In the 49 other states, both the House and Senate have to debate, vote, and approve every bill that is introduced. The process will therefore take much longer and with so many legislators involved, long discussions and disagreements are all too familiar. “In Nebraska... a bill is discussed and voted on only by the Senate.” Nebraska legislators save valuable time and energy that can be directed elsewhere, rather than reviewing and debating bills in two separate legislative bodies. Here in Nebraska, the Senate takes their time to go over all the details and look carefully at each bill to make sure it is the best it can be before they vote on it.

Along with being an efficient system, the unicameral legislature has sharper focus and greater transparency. “Nebraska believes that a unicameral system tends to keep the focus on a bill.” A bill in Nebraska may contain only one subject, unlike in a bicameral system where bills frequently come with add-ons or unrelated riders. Everyone is clear as to exactly what is on a bill and there are no surprises like those we often see in bicameral systems. Discussions “are focused on the proposed law and its intent, rather than on how to get it passed by another legislative body.” In a bicameral system the original intent of a bill may get lost. When we debate important bills like health care in Nebraska, we don’t tack on unrelated “pet projects” in order to get votes in another legislative body. Our senators, one from each of our 49 districts, represent all the citizens of Nebraska and they can give their whole focus towards the bill they are currently discussing. It is great for Nebraska as a whole.

Our unicameral legislative system is less expensive, more efficient, and transparent. When you put those three advantages together, the end result is ideal. I am proud to claim Nebraska as my home state. We definitely need to continue our unicameral legislative system that is both unique and successful.

3849/6000

This response demonstrates exemplary analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text, addressing all parts of the task and thoroughly analyzing whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. The response is well focused on the opinion that a bicameral system would be best for Nebraska, and relevant and accurate evidence from the text thoroughly supports this claim. Explicit and implicit ideas from the text have been purposefully addressed. An appropriate organizational pattern with purposeful transitions has been demonstrated, and a mode suited to the purpose is evident. There is strong use of quotes attributing information to the text. The response skillfully uses precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text and thoroughly demonstrates conventions of standard English.

**AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 3 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

8. “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System” compares a unicameral system to a bicameral system. Analyze whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

Should the citizens of Nebraska stay with their unicameral legislation or would they be better represented with a bicameral legislation? That is a good question and one that has pros and cons for both sides. For me, I think that the citizens of Nebraska should do away with the unimcameral legislation and adopt the bicameral one.

First of all, with both the House and Senate voting on a bill, you will have more people deliberating than if you just have 49 senators discussing a bill. This seems like a more thorough process to me. More people discussing a law will have more ideas. Some worry that too many people involved would actually make the intent of the bill get lost in the process. But the way I see it, more leaders involved allows for a better “checks and balance” system. This will keep one group of leaders from getting too much control.

Secondly, citizens may get more involved in the bicameral legislation. If there are more leaders, there are more people for citizens to contact to give their opinions. It is important for the citizens to be heard because these new laws effect them the most. Why shouldn't their concerns count?

Next, because the House of Represenatives in other states only serve two year terms, versus the four year terms that senators serve, this gives citizens new ideas from new people in a shorter period of time. I like the idea that I might be able to vote out someone who is not representing me like I think they should. 2 year terms are better and make me feel that I have some control who my leaders are.

Lastly, it all boils down to what is best for the citizens of Nebraska. I truly believe that the bicameral legislation is the way to go. We have had the unicameral way for too long. Out with the old, in with the new. Let the house and the senate work together to make us the best that we can be.

1849/6000

This response demonstrates effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response demonstrates sufficient understanding of the text. It addresses all parts of the task of analyzing whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. The response is focused on the opinion that a bicameral system would be best for Nebraska, and relevant and accurate evidence from the text supports this claim. Explicit ideas from the text have been specifically addressed (checks and balances, more people involved, new ideas). An organizational pattern with appropriate transitions has been demonstrated, and an appropriate mode suited to the purpose is evident. The response uses precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text and demonstrates conventions of standard English; errors seldom interfere with meaning.

**AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 2 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**



8. “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System” compares a unicameral system to a bicameral system. Analyze whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

The paper “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System” compares to a unicameral system to a bicameral system. The paper tells how Nebraskas unicameral legislature works and why Nebraska chose it. The paper also gives reasons why you could support the bicameral system.

I would support the unicameral system because that’s what we have now and it works I think the system is working fine for the citizens of Nebraska. I think using a bicameral system would be too expensive since there are more people to pay and more building space needed. I think its more efficient that way since only senators discuss bills and vote on them. A bill in Nebraska contains only one subject and bills get a public hearing in front of a committee. this way is much better than the bicameral way.

I would support a bicameral system because it ensures more thorough deliberation over a bill because it gets passed by both the House and Senate. I think a Bicameral systems save time. If a bill is rejected they do not need to take time to debate it. I think no one group of leaders has too much law-making power and that is good. In a bicameral system senators serve a four year term so there are more opportunities for citizens to make contact with them. Citizens may feel they have more frequent control. This is why bicameral system is better than unicameral.

I would choose a unicameral system because its what we have now and it works. That is why citizens would be better served by continuing a unicameral system.

1494/6000

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response partially addresses the task of analyzing whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. The response summarizes the relevant passage text and provides partial analysis and evidence that supports both positions, demonstrating a partial understanding of the task. Some inaccurate information regarding the bicameral system is evident. A weak conclusion that attempts to address which legislative system would best serve Nebraska is insufficient and not effective.

**AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 1 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**



8. “The Nebraska Unicameral Legislative System” compares a unicameral system to a bicameral system. Analyze whether the citizens of Nebraska would be best served by continuing a unicameral legislative system or adopting a bicameral legislative system. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from the passage to support your answer.

The citizens of Nebraska would be better served keeping the unicamral legislative system. Nebraska is unique and should stay that way. This system is less expensive and we need less politicians making up stupid laws spending more of my parents hard earned money.a unicameral system will keep the focus on a bill and is more efficent. No to bicamral I say.

355/6000

This response demonstrates limited analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response minimally addresses the task, provides little evidence from the passage for support, and demonstrates limited understanding of the text. Little evidence of an organizational pattern has been demonstrated, and precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary are rarely used. The brief response ineffectively demonstrates conventions of standard English, and evidence of appropriate writing skills is limited.

**PASSAGE 2**

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

## A Pioneer Diary

**February 28, 1846**

1 We were fortunate a few days ago when the Mississippi River froze and we were given permission to cross with all of our horses and belongings. Mother was so happy she cried. Father looked stern as he always does, but I noticed a tiny glint in his eyes. We had been waiting for many days and thought we would be forced to pay **exorbitant** rates to cross the river.

Now it is bitterly cold for walking. The ice patches are numerous, and this makes it hazardous for all of us. It is tremendously difficult to trudge through this land on foot, but I must take my turn walking next to the wagon while others take their turn riding. We are traveling in a group of 50 people. Everyone has a job to do that is important to the success of our trip. My job is to water the horses when we stop and to keep the young children away from our wagon while we are walking. Our wagons can move only 10 to 15 miles per day and less if the trail is muddy and treacherous, which it is every day.

**March 27, 1846**

We are traveling as a family, and Father is the captain of our group, so he decides the route and everyone's job for the trip. Mother and Anna stay up front in the wagon to watch for roadblocks and wild animals. Because Father is the captain, everyone must obey his rules. We have always known what discipline he has and what a fine leader he is. Now others know it too.

The other children on the trail are able to take care of one another. They pass the time by spelling words, telling stories, and singing.

**May 15, 1846**

The handcarts are full of our food supplies. When we stop, we prepare cornbread and beans. We brought a few vegetables along, but they did not last for more than a few days. Sometimes we find wild dandelion for salads, apple trees that are abandoned, wild berries, and fish from the lakes and streams we happen upon.

**June 17, 1846**

We crossed the Missouri River and arrived at Winter Quarters a few days ago after a long, dusty, and sweltering journey. There is a buzzing of constant movement here as men and women alike are preparing to spend the winter here. We gathered prairie hay and stacked it inside to keep it dry and safe for our livestock. Hundreds of gallons of berries were preserved for winter consumption. Wild game was sought and then salted and dried. We gathered as much grain as possible, but the horse-driven mills do not produce a quality milled grain. We will use what is appropriate.

We are at a disadvantage with our fruits and vegetables. We left Illinois before we could plant anything, and we have been traveling during the growing season. We have been scavenging, scouring, and purchasing whatever we can to keep up our supplies this winter.

**September 20, 1846**

Now we are building a cabin for our family using the cottonwood trees that are in abundance here. We know we will have enough time to finish before it gets cold in late fall. The roof will be sod, and we need to be careful laying it above the roof trusses.

**December 10, 1846**

Father and I are filling the cracks of our log cabin to keep the cold air out and the warm air of our wood fire inside. As part of the first group walking the trail, we are spending the winter here to help build the place for future pioneers. When the winter ice melts, we know we will have safe footing to travel to the new land.

**April 28, 1847**

Today we set out from Winter Quarters and are traveling on the north side of the Platte River. We will be crossing Nebraska for many, many nights. We have heard stories of mountainous terrain ahead and are preparing for a tough journey. Anna and I swap stories as we walk. We have learned all about a new part of the world.

**May 29, 1847**

Before we left, we were told that following the Platte River on the north side would be healthier, and that is how we chose this route. Each day, we meet many other travelers with whom we eat our meals and share advice. As we trudge along its banks, the river nudges us along with ease while sandhill cranes whoop their encouragement. The Platte River is a wide and shallow braided stream. This tributary is a dependable navigator for our westward walk, and the land is stable and flat.

**June 5, 1847**

I am happy that Father says we are close to our destination, and I wonder what adventures we have before us.

Now read the second passage.

## excerpt from *Recollections of a Pioneer*

by J. Watt Gibson

I shall never forget the morning we started. Everything had been loaded the day before, except the articles necessary to the sojourn over night. We were up bright and early, had breakfast in little better than camp style, and were off before sun up. My father, mother, and the younger children took the first wagon, and one of my brothers and my sisters the second. I was upon my pony and in my glory. The wagons moved forward and I rounded up the cattle and horses and forced them along after the wagons. I was too young to feel any tender sentiment toward the old home or to appreciate the fact that I was leaving it forever, but I remember that my father and mother often looked back, and as we passed over the hill out of sight, I saw them turn and wave a long farewell. Many times since I have thought of that scene and have learned to know full well its meaning to my father and mother.

. . . I remember that I soon lost the enthusiasm of that early morning on which we started and grew very tired and longed for the end of our journey. For a great many days it seemed to me we traveled through a rugged mountain country. The hills were long and toilsome, the streams had no bridges and had to be forded, and I frequently had great difficulty in getting my cattle and horses to follow the wagons. On such occasions, the caravan would stop and the whole family would come to my aid. Of course, there were no fences along the sides of the road and my stock becoming wearied or tempted by the green herbage alongside would wander out into the woods and brush and give me much trouble. When I think of these difficulties, I do not wonder that I became wearied, but as my life was afterwards ordered, this boyish experience taught me a lesson which many times proved useful.

I remember when we crossed what they said was the line into Kentucky. I could see no difference in the mountains, valleys or the rivers, but somehow I felt that there ought to be a difference and that Kentucky could not be like Tennessee, and yet it was. Here I learned, thus early in life, what so many people find it hard even in later years to appreciate, that names and distances do not make differences and that all places upon the face of the earth, no matter how they vary in physical appearance, are after all very much alike. I believe it is the realization of this fact that makes the difference between the man who knows the world and the one who does not. After a long time, as it seemed to me, we passed out of the mountains and into a beautiful rolling country improved even in that early day with many turnpikes and exhibiting every indication of prosperity. . . . I now know that this country was what has since been known as the “Blue Grass Region” of Kentucky, though at the time, I thought the mountains of my old home a much better place to live.

For a long time, even before the journey began, I had heard a great deal about the Ohio River and knew that we must cross it, and when the people along the road began to tell us that we were nearing that stream, I became filled with curiosity to see it and to know what it would be like and to see and experience the sensation of crossing it on a ferry-boat. Finally we came to the top of a long hill and away off to the north we saw the river winding through a deep valley, and some one, my father, I think, pointed out a mere speck on the surface of the water and told us it was a ferry-boat. When we reached the bank of the river we found the boat tied alongside, and to my surprise, horses, wagons and cattle were all driven upon it. I had no idea that a ferry-boat was such a huge affair. It was run by horse-power, and it took us only a few minutes to reach the farther shore, and I was disappointed that my trip was not a longer one. . . .

I do not remember at what point we crossed the Ohio River. I did not, of course, know at the time, and if my father or any member of the family ever told me the place afterwards I have forgotten it; but the event is as vivid in my mind as if it had occurred yesterday.

. . . Day after day our wagons trundled along, night after night we went into camp, worn out with the day's journey, only to get up again early in the morning and repeat the same experience.

**MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS**

9. In paragraph 1 of “A Pioneer Diary,” what is the meaning of **exorbitant**?
- A. outside the appropriate amount
  - B. normal for the circumstances
  - C. carefully determined
  - D. constantly changing

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.5.a	Apply word analysis strategies to determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words across content areas to aid in comprehension and improve writing.
<b>Answer Key</b>	A	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to identify the meaning of the word “exorbitant” as it is used in paragraph 1. Option A is the correct answer since “enthralled” means “outside the appropriate amount.” Options B, C, and D are not correct meanings for the given word.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Word Analysis Strategies/ Context Clues	

10. Read the sentence from “A Pioneer Diary.”

“We have been scavenging, scouring, and purchasing whatever we can to keep up our supplies this winter.”

How does the use of the words **scavenging** and **scouring** contribute to the meaning of the passage?

- A. The words suggest the narrator enjoys looking for supplies.
- B. The words suggest the narrator is desperate to find supplies.
- C. The words emphasize the types of supplies that are being sought.
- D. The words emphasize the features of the area where supplies are found.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.5.d	Use semantic relationships (e.g., figurative language, connotations, technical and multiple-meaning words, and key terms or phrases) to analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, aid in comprehension, and improve writing.
<b>Answer Key</b>	B	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to explain how two of the author’s word choices contribute to the meaning of the passage. Option B is the correct answer since “scavenging” and “scouring” suggest “the narrator is desperate to find supplies.” Option A is incorrect since there is no suggestion the narrator is enjoying looking for supplies. Options C and D are incorrect since the given words do not emphasize the types of supplies or the features of the area where they are found.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Context/ Connotation	

**11.** Read the detail from “Recollections of a Pioneer.”

“. . . the event is as vivid in my mind as if it occurred yesterday.”

How does this detail contribute to the overall meaning of the passage?

- A. Through the use of an allusion, the author suggests the event was imaginary.
- B. Through the use of reflection, the author shows the event happened recently.
- C. Through the use of an epiphany, the author implies the event carried bad memories.
- D. Through the use of figurative language, the author emphasizes the event was meaningful.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.c	Analyze the function and critique the effects of the author’s use of literary devices (e.g., allusion, symbolism, metaphor, personification, epiphany, oxymoron, dialect, tone, mood).
<b>Answer Key</b>	D	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to identify how the sentence contributes to the overall meaning of the passage. Option D is correct, as the author uses figurative language to express the meaningfulness of the event. Options A and C are incorrect since the excerpt does not use allusion or epiphany; Option B is incorrect—even though the sentence might be considered to be reflective—because the sentence does not suggest that the event really happened recently.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Figurative Language— Simile	

12. How does the tone at the end of “Recollections of a Pioneer” differ from the tone at the end of “A Pioneer Diary”?
- A. “Recollections of a Pioneer” ends with an informal tone while “A Pioneer Diary” ends with a formal tone.
  - B. “Recollections of a Pioneer” ends with a lighthearted tone while “A Pioneer Diary” ends with a serious tone.
  - C. “Recollections of a Pioneer” ends with an uncertain tone while “A Pioneer Diary” ends with a confident tone.
  - D. “Recollections of a Pioneer” ends with a fatigued tone while “A Pioneer Diary” ends with an enthusiastic tone.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.b	Analyze and evaluate literary text (e.g., characterization, setting, plot development, internal and external conflict, inferred and recurring themes, point of view, tone, mood).
<b>Answer Key</b>	D	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to contrast the tones at the end of each passage. Option D is correct since the narrator at the end of “Recollections of a Pioneer” is “worn out with the day’s journey,” while the narrator at the end of “A Pioneer Diary” is wondering “what adventures we have before us.” Options A, B, and C are incorrect since they do not identify tones that are consistent with the passage endings.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	
<b>Focus</b>	Difference in Tone Between Texts	

13. Which theme is present in BOTH “A Pioneer Diary” and the excerpt from “Recollections of a Pioneer”?
- A. The excitement of a journey fades over time.
  - B. A journey increases the appreciation for home.
  - C. Valuable new experiences occur on a long journey.
  - D. A disciplined leader is necessary for a long journey.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.d	Summarize, analyze, and synthesize the themes and main ideas between multiple literary and informational works (print, digital, and/or other media).
<b>Answer Key</b>	C	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to identify a theme present in both passages. Option C is correct since both passages describe “valuable new experiences” that occurred on the long journeys west. Option A is incorrect since only one of the narrators found the excitement of the journey fading over time. Option B is incorrect since the narrator in “A Pioneer Diary” did not seem to feel an increased appreciation for home. Option D is incorrect since the need for leadership is not a theme in the passages.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	
<b>Focus</b>	Theme	

**EVIDENCE-BASED SELECTED RESPONSE ITEM**

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

**Part A**

How do the perspectives of people in “Recollections of a Pioneer” contrast with one another?

- a The narrator has a more casual view of the journey than his parents.
- b The narrator feels inferior to the people in the first wagon.
- c The narrator takes his responsibilities more seriously than his siblings do.
- d The narrator believes the passage of time is faster than the other pioneers believe.

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

**Part B**

Select **two** quotes from the passage that support this inference? Select **two**.

- a My father, mother, and the younger children took the first wagon, and one of my brothers and my sisters the second.
- b I was too young to feel any tender sentiment toward the old home or to appreciate the fact that I was leaving it forever . . .
- c Many times since I have thought of that scene and have learned to know full well its meaning to my father and mother.
- d . . . the caravan would stop and the whole family would come to my aid.
- e . . . this boyish experience taught me a lesson which many times proved useful.
- f Here I learned, thus early in life, what so many people find it hard even in years later to appreciate . . .

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.i	Construct and/or answer literal, inferential, critical, and interpretive questions, analyzing and synthesizing evidence from the text and additional sources to support answers.
<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>Part A:</b> A <b>Part B:</b> B & C	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Option Annotations</b></p> <p>The student is asked to choose an inference that accurately contrasts the perspectives of people in one of the passages and to identify two sentences that support the chosen inference.</p> <p><b>Part A:</b> Option A is the correct answer since the passage indicates the parents are more serious about the journey than the narrator is. Options B, C, and D are incorrect since the passage does not indicate these contrasting perspectives.</p> <p><b>Part B:</b> Options B and C are correct since the sentences show the perspective of the narrator and the contrasting perspective of the narrator’s parents. The other sentences are incorrect since they do not support the idea of contrasting perspectives.</p> <p>This item is worth 2 points. To receive full credit, the student must select the correct answer for part A and both correct answer choices for part B. To receive 1 point, the student must at least select the correct answer for part A. No credit will be given for a correct response to part B if part A is incorrect.</p>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Answer Inferential with Text Evidence	

### AUTO-SCORED CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEM

15. Select **two** phrases from “A Pioneer Diary” that use figurative language to emphasize the significance of the river. Select **two**.



Before we left, we were told that following the Platte River on the north side would be healthier, and that is how we chose this route. Each day, we meet many other travelers with whom we eat our meals and share advice. As we trudge along its banks, the river nudges us along with ease while sandhill cranes whoop their encouragement. The Platte river is a wide and shallow braided stream. This tributary is a dependable navigator for our westward walk, and the land is stable and flat.

**Answer Key – Completed Correct Response**

Select **two** phrases from “A Pioneer Diary” that use figurative language to emphasize the significance of the river. Select **two**.

Before we left, we were told that following the Platte River on the north side would be healthier, and that is how we chose this route. Each day, we meet many other travelers with whom we eat our meals and share advice. As we trudge along its banks, the river nudges us along with ease while sandhill cranes whoop their encouragement. The Platte river is a wide and shallow braided stream. This tributary is a dependable navigator for our westward walk, and the land is stable and flat.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.1.6.c	Analyze the function and critique the effects of the author’s use of literary devices (e.g., allusion, symbolism, metaphor, personification, epiphany, oxymoron, dialect, tone, mood).
<b>Answer Key</b>	river nudges us along with ease AND tributary is a dependable navigator	<p><b>Option Annotations</b></p> <p>The student is asked to select two phrases from the passage that use figurative language to emphasize the significance of the river. The phrases “river nudges us along with ease” and “tributary is a dependable navigator” are the correct responses because they both personify the river and imply it is a guide for the pioneers. Both options emphasize the significance of the river. Other answer options are incorrect because they either do not include figurative language, or the figurative language used does not emphasize the significance of the river.</p> <p>This item is worth 2 points. To receive full credit, the student must select the two correct answer choices indicated in the completed correct response. To receive 1 point, the student must select one of the two correct answer choices.</p>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Figurative Language	

**TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS ITEM**



16. “A Pioneer Diary” and “Recollections of a Pioneer” both describe the experiences of pioneers in the 1800s. Analyze how the hardships of this historical era contribute to each narrator’s personal growth. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from BOTH passages to support your answer.

XXX/6000

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	<b>Reading:</b> 12.1.6.g <b>Writing:</b> See Rubric	Cite specific textual evidence to analyze and evaluate the effects of historical, cultural, biographical, and political influences of literary and informational text written by culturally diverse authors, to develop a regional, national, and international multicultural perspective.
<b>Answer Key</b>	See Rubric	<b>Option Annotations</b>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	3	Refer to the sample student responses.

**TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

**DRAFT Nebraska Department of Education Text-Dependent Analysis (TDA) Scoring Rubric**

Nebraska English Language Arts Standards	<b>1</b> Demonstrates limited analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills	<b>2</b> Demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills	<b>3</b> Demonstrates effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills	<b>4</b> Demonstrates exemplary analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills
<b>Analysis of Text</b> 1.6* 1.6.i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimally addresses part(s) of the task to demonstrate limited understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Inadequately analyzes text(s) by minimally addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses some part(s) of the task to demonstrate partial understanding of text(s)</li> <li>Partially analyzes text(s) by occasionally addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate sufficient understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Analyzes text(s) by addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addresses all parts of the task to demonstrate thorough understanding of the text(s)</li> <li>Thoroughly analyzes text(s) by purposefully addressing explicit and implicit ideas from the text(s)</li> </ul>
<b>Use of Evidence</b> 1.6.i 2.1.c 2.2.b 4.1.a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficiently integrates evidence from the text(s) by using few details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides little or no relevant and/or accurate evidence from the text(s) to support claims or ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially integrates evidence from the text(s) by using some details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides some relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to partially support claims or ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrates specific evidence from the text(s) by using details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to sufficiently support claims or ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilfully integrates specific evidence from the text(s) by using details, examples, and/or quotes</li> <li>Provides relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to thoroughly support claims or ideas</li> </ul>
<b>Writing Skills</b> 1.5.c 2.1.b 2.1.d 2.1.e 2.1.h 2.1.i 2.2.a 2.2.d 4.1.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates an inadequately focused response which lacks an introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and/or transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates little or no evidence of an organizational pattern and/or mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Limited or no use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Limited or no use of precise word choice and/or content-specific vocabulary from the text(s)</li> <li>Ineffectively demonstrates conventions of standard English; errors may seriously interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates a partially focused response which includes a weak introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and/or transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates partial evidence of an organizational pattern and/or mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Weak use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Occasionally uses precise word choice and/or content-specific vocabulary from the text(s)</li> <li>Partially demonstrates conventions of standard English; errors may interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates a focused response which includes a clear introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and appropriate transitions</li> <li>Demonstrates an appropriate organizational pattern and mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Clear use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Uses precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text(s)</li> <li>Demonstrates conventions of standard English; if present, errors seldom interfere with meaning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generates a well-focused response which includes a strong introduction/thesis, body, conclusion, and purposeful transitions</li> <li>Skilfully demonstrates an appropriate organizational pattern and mode suited to the purpose and intended audience</li> <li>Strong use of paraphrases or quotes that attribute information to the text(s)</li> <li>Skilfully uses precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text(s) to enhance ideas</li> <li>Thoroughly demonstrates conventions of standard English; if present, errors do not interfere with meaning</li> </ul>

\*Individual TDA prompts are aligned to one of the following 1.6 Reading Comprehension indicators: 1.6.a, 1.6.b, 1.6.c, 1.6.d, 1.6.e, 1.6.f, 1.6.g, 1.6.h, 1.6.i, or 1.6.j

**EXAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES****AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 4 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

16. “A Pioneer Diary” and “Recollections of a Pioneer” both describe the experiences of pioneers in the 1800s. Analyze how the hardships of this historical era contribute to each narrator’s personal growth. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from BOTH passages to support your answer.

Reflecting upon “A Pioneer Diary” and “Recollections of a Pioneer” it is easy to see the hardships of the 1800s for these pioneers. Whether traveling on foot or horseback, neither journey would be easy as they move across the country to a new life. Along the way, because of these hardships, much will be learned through the experience. And despite the pioneers’ differences, much will be shared.

Any travel would entail hardship during that time. As the pioneers searched for a better life they pushed their boundaries often leaving behind things they held dear. The safety that comes with familiarity would be left behind as well. These early pioneers ventured into new area, still looking forward to each new day even as the weariness of the day’s travel took its toll. Personally, both pioneers expanded horizons led them to look forward, not back. And although young, they would learn to appreciate the past while moving into the future.

Both endured the turbulent terrain as they forged ahead. Traveling through rugged mountain country, in “Recollections of a Pioneer,” it is noted that the hills were long and toilsome, the streams had no bridges and had to be forded. But while the pioneer remembers the difficulties he also notes that the “experience taught me a lesson which many times proved useful.”

Their expansive travels led to a worldliness of sorts. In “A Pioneer Diary” the narrator notes that “we have heard stories of the mountainous terrain ahead” and “Each day they meet many other travelers with whom we eat our meals and share advice”. In “Recollections of a Pioneer” the narrator shares learning lessons, “thus early in life, that names and distances do not make differences and that all places upon the face of the earth, no matter how they vary in physical appearance, are after all very much alike.” and “I believe it is the realization of this fact that makes the difference between the man who knows the world and the one who does not”. He looks back and sees that his experiences made him grow up.

Whether looking forward or reflecting back, both pioneers undoubtedly had their lives shaped as they persevered the hardships of the historic era in the 1800s. They did not just follow, they learned: “When I think of these difficulties, I do not wonder that I became wearied, but as my life was afterwards ordered, this boyish experience taught me a lesson which many times proved useful.”

2414/6000

This response demonstrates exemplary analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses all parts of the task, thoroughly analyzing how the hardships of the historical era contributed to each narrator’s personal growth, and provides purposeful, relevant analysis and specific text support for the idea that their experiences helped shape their lives. The writer makes consistent use of well-integrated, cited quotations from the text. The response is well-focused and demonstrates an appropriate organizational pattern. Precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text are both evident and used skillfully.

**AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 3 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

16. “A Pioneer Diary” and “Recollections of a Pioneer” both describe the experiences of pioneers in the 1800s. Analyze how the hardships of this historical era contribute to each narrator’s personal growth. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from BOTH passages to support your answer.

The hardships that pioneers had to face in the 1800’s definitely played a part in the personal growth of the narrators in these two passages. Both passages tell of the journeys that teenage boys experienced with their families as they settled in different territory.

First, the boy in the diary started his journey in February . The bitter cold and ice patches made it dangerous to walk through the land but they had to take turns while others rode in wagons. He learned that in order for the trip to be successful, everyone had to do a job. The boys father was the leader and he knew he had to follow his orders. That shows a personal growth for the boy to be obedient to his father and to abide by his rules.

Next, the journey also took the pioneers through the summer months where they were traveling during the growing season of fruits and vegetables. They had to gather all the food that they could so they could get through the winter months. The boy learned the importance of rationing food supply. During the fall, they boy learned how to build a cabin with his father. This will keep them safe during the winter months and the cabins will be there for other pioneers.

At journeys end, the boy was happy. He had met other traveler and had shared advice and meals with them. He will be able to take all his experiences with him to his next adventure.

In the exerpt by J.Watt Gibson he reminsices about what his journey was like. He realized that he was too young to feel attachment to his home that he was leaving but he does understand later in life what meaning his home had to his parents. This shows his personal growth. He also remembers the difficulty of getting wagons, cattle and horses to cross over hills and streams. The boy understands how tired he became over the long hard journey because of the physical challenges he experienced. He will rember how hard he had to work to help his family move.

Both passages show the importance of how hardships play a part in the personal growth of young pioneers growing up in the 1800's. The young pioneers learned many life long experiences that they will have for the rest of there lives and which made them who they are.

2180/6000

This response demonstrates effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses all parts of the task of analyzing how the hardships of the historical era contributed to each narrator's personal growth. Specific, relevant analysis, such as the connection between obedience and personal growth, as well as relevant text support are both evident. The response is focused on the idea that through their hard work, the narrators learned valuable life lessons. There is an appropriate organizational pattern, and some precise word choice and content-specific vocabulary from the text are evident. The response demonstrates the conventions of standard English; errors seldom interfere with meaning.

**AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 2 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**

16. “A Pioneer Diary” and “Recollections of a Pioneer” both describe the experiences of pioneers in the 1800s. Analyze how the hardships of this historical era contribute to each narrator’s personal growth. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from BOTH passages to support your answer.

Both passages show the hardships that pioneers had to experience during the 1800’s. Whether it was the long journeys, the bitter temperatures, the food shortage , or how tired the pioneers became during their travels. These hardships contributed to the personal growth of each narrator.

In the diary the boy says how treacherous the trails could be because of the mud and that the wagons got stuck so you had to go slow. They had food but they always had a shortage of fruits and vegetables. They traveled thru the winter so the cold was hard to take at times. Since this journey took over a year the boy was happy when it was over. The boy learned responsibility for others and learned all about a new part of the world.

In the excerpt the writer tells us that he grew tired the first day of the journey and wished it was over that very same day.

These are some of the hardships that the pioneers experienced and that contributed to their personal growth.

955/6000

This response demonstrates partially effective analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response addresses some parts of the task by analyzing how the hardships of the historical era contributed to one narrator’s personal growth. The response also provides partial analysis and text support from one of the passages, though very little from the other passage. The response includes a weak introduction, body, and conclusion and makes partial use of appropriately cited quotations by stating, “In the diary . . .”

**AN EXAMPLE OF A LEVEL 1 ON TEXT DEPENDENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC**



16. “A Pioneer Diary” and “Recollections of a Pioneer” both describe the experiences of pioneers in the 1800s. Analyze how the hardships of this historical era contribute to each narrator’s personal growth. Write a well-organized, structured response using specific evidence from BOTH passages to support your answer.

Pioneers had hardships in the 1800s that contributed to their personal growth two pioneers wrote about it. One pioneer wrote a diary writing about her experiences from February 28, 1846 to June 5, 1847. Her diary started at the Mississippi River and then they are crossing the Missouri river and then end up following the Platte River in Nebraska. The other pioneer wrote about traveling with his family and traveled from Tennessee to Kentucky and finally tells about crossing the Ohio river. Both writers were children and helped. The first writer helped take care of the horses by giving them water but the second writer help round up cattle and horses.

655/6000

This response demonstrates limited analysis of text, use of evidence, and writing skills. The response minimally addresses the task, provides little relevant evidence from the passage for support, and demonstrates limited understanding of the text. The response demonstrates partial evidence of an organizational pattern and ineffectively demonstrates conventions of standard English, with errors that interfere with meaning.

## INDEPENDENT WRITING ITEMS

17. A student is conducting research for a report about the county where she lives. Read her online source and the directions that follow.

Source: [statehandbook/burlesoncounty/geography/online](http://statehandbook/burlesoncounty/geography/online)

Burleson County consists of 423 square miles of gently sloping and level terrain with elevations ranging from 4260 feet in the southeast to 4890 feet in the northwest. The La Salle River is the one major watercourse and flows from the northwest to the southeast with tributaries draining both the western and eastern half of the county. Two natural geographic regions dominate the county: the smaller, Redland Prairie region in the southeast is predominately rolling grassland with soil of mostly shallow clay. The Timber Breaks region contains an abundance of deep loamy soil that supports hardwoods such as American elm and box elder. 84% of Burleson County is considered prime farm land.

The student wrote the following paragraph for her report. Select the sentence that requires revision to avoid plagiarizing the online source.

Burleson County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state, particularly the southeast portion of the county. New apartments and single-family homes are being built in the Redland Prairie area, where 60 acres of rolling grassland have been set aside for a regional high school. One of the significant effects of this development will be increased recreational traffic in the two county parks along the river. The La Salle River is the one major watercourse and flows to the southeast with tributaries draining the county. The only other alternative for camping is Ladder Bluff Canyon in the Timber Breaks region where public access is limited. Most of that northwestern part of the county is prime farm land and privately owned.

### Answer Key – Completed Correct Response

A student is conducting research for a report about the county where she lives. Read her online source and the directions that follow.

Source: [statehandbook/burlesoncounty/geography/online](http://statehandbook/burlesoncounty/geography/online)

Burleson County consists of 423 square miles of gently sloping and level terrain with elevations ranging from 4260 feet in the southeast to 4890 feet in the northwest. The La Salle River is the one major watercourse and flows from the northwest to the southeast with tributaries draining both the western and eastern half of the county. Two natural geographic regions dominate the county: the smaller, Redland Prairie region in the southeast is predominately rolling grassland with soil of mostly shallow clay. The Timber Breaks region contains an abundance of deep loamy soil that supports hardwoods such as American elm and box elder. 84% of Burleson County is considered prime farm land.

The student wrote the following paragraph for her report. Select the sentence that requires revision to avoid plagiarizing the online source.




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Burleson County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state, particularly the southeast portion of the county. New apartments and single-family homes are being built in the Redland Prairie area, where 60 acres of rolling grassland have been set aside for a regional high school. One of the significant effects of this development will be increased recreational traffic in the two county parks along the river. **The La Salle River is the one major watercourse and flows to the southeast with tributaries draining the county.** The only other alternative for camping is Ladder Bluff Canyon in the Timber Breaks region where public access is limited. Most of that northwestern part of the county is prime farm land and privately owned.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.2.1.i	Display academic honesty and integrity by avoiding plagiarism and/or overreliance on any one source and by following a standard format for citation.
<b>Answer Key</b>	Sentence 4	<b>Option Annotations</b>
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Avoid Plagiarism	

The student is asked to identify the sentence in the paragraph that is plagiarized. The correct answer is sentence 4, “The La Salle River is the one major watercourse and flows to the southeast with tributaries draining the county.” This is the correct answer because it is a direct copy of sentence 2 in the original source. The other options are incorrect because they include sentences that are not pulled directly from the online source.

18. A student is writing an informative report about a hiking trip. Read the draft and complete the task that follows.

Three trails are clearly marked through Arrowhead Canyon. The Lower Trail is an easy, two-hour loop along the creek bed. Most of the trail is hard-packed earth, level and wide enough for three hikers—or any trio out for a stroll—to walk side by side. There are even a few park benches along the way. The Middle Trail is more challenging. In several places, hikers need to scramble over fallen timber or rugged rock outcroppings. The path up to and around the waterfall can be a little treacherous, but with a little determination and a sturdy pair of shoes, kids as young as eight or nine can hike to Mason Falls and back within four or five hours. I'm completely amazed by the Upper Trail. That hike requires a little more preparation and no less than 18 hours.

Which revision of the underlined sentence BEST maintains the tone and focus of the paragraph?

- A. The Upper Trail is an entirely different challenge.
- B. You have to see the Upper trail to believe it.
- C. The Upper Trail is too amazing to imagine.
- D. You must indeed travel the Upper Trail.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.2.1.b	Generate a draft that interprets complex ideas, raises relevant questions, solves problems, or evaluates ideas through synthesis, analysis, reflection, and use of effective organizational patterns that are appropriate to the purpose and intended audience.
<b>Answer Key</b>	A	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to determine which revision best maintains the tone and focus of the paragraph. The correct answer is A because it fits the informational tone of the paragraph. In addition, it is an effective transition into the sentences that follow in the paragraph. Options B and D are incorrect because they refer directly to the reader, which does not fit the structure of the rest of the paragraph. Option C is incorrect because it does not fit the context of the surrounding sentences.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Draft Appropriate to Purpose and Audience	

19. Read the paragraph from a narrative about a hike.

Kim had hiked this mountain so many times. She loved the challenges of the trail, the gnarly roots that threatened to trip her and the embedded stones worn smooth by years of foot traffic. Her brother Ned had leapt ahead of her on the trail like a mountain goat. He had probably already arrived at Alpine Lake, the glistening, unspoiled expanse of brilliant blue that was their destination. As she emerged from the shaded trail for her first glimpse of the lake, she paused to take in its splendor.

Choose the sentence which, if added to the paragraph, would BEST create suspense.

- A. The lake settled into the landscape like a brilliant blue bowl, encircled by the emerald forest, presenting a striking contrast of intense color.
- B. Then, behind her, she heard the light thud of footsteps and the whisper of branches brushing against something, something mobile, and she shivered in the warm sunlight.
- C. Once, a real estate developer had threatened to create a small resort community on the shores of the lake, but he had met with so much resistance that he gave up the plan.
- D. She heard Ned calling for her somewhere along the shore, and she realized that he was waiting impatiently for her to join him.

Item Information		
<b>Alignment</b>	12.2.2.d	Use precise word choice and domain-specific vocabulary to write in a variety of modes.
<b>Answer Key</b>	B	<b>Option Annotations</b>  The student is asked to determine which sentence could be added to the paragraph to best create suspense. The correct option is B because “heard the light thud of footsteps,” “whisper of branches,” and “she shivered” all create a suspenseful tone. The other options are incorrect because, while descriptive word choice is used, the words do not create suspense.
<b>Depth of Knowledge</b>	2	
<b>Focus</b>	Word Choice	

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**NeSA-ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  
ITEM AND SCORING SAMPLER  
GRADE 11**

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