



Nebraska State Accountability

**Grade 11
English Language Arts
Practice Test**

Name:

Directions:

On the following pages of your test booklet are passages and questions for the Grade 11 *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 11 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 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.

2. 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

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 farmland.

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

- A. Burleson County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state, particularly the southeast portion of the county.
- B. 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.
- C. One of the significant effects of this development will be increased recreational traffic in the two county parks along the river.
- D. The La Salle River is the one major watercourse and flows to the southeast with tributaries draining the county.
- E. The only other alternative for camping is Ladder Bluff Canyon in the Timber Breaks region where public access is limited. Most of the northwestern part of the county is prime farmland and privately owned.

3. 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.

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.

4. 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.

5. Show how unicameral and bicameral legislation systems are similar and different by selecting whether the characteristic is a feature of the “Unicameral System Only,” “Bicameral System Only,” or “Both Unicameral and Bicameral Systems.” Record the answers on the answer document.

	1. Unicameral System Only	2. Bicameral System Only	3. Both Unicameral and Bicameral Systems
a. includes Senate			
b. includes House of Representatives			
c. is less expensive for citizens			
d. makes decisions about state laws			
e. is system used by most states in the United States			
f. usually saves time in law-making process			

6. 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.

7. 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.

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

Part A

How might the author’s perspective influence the reader?

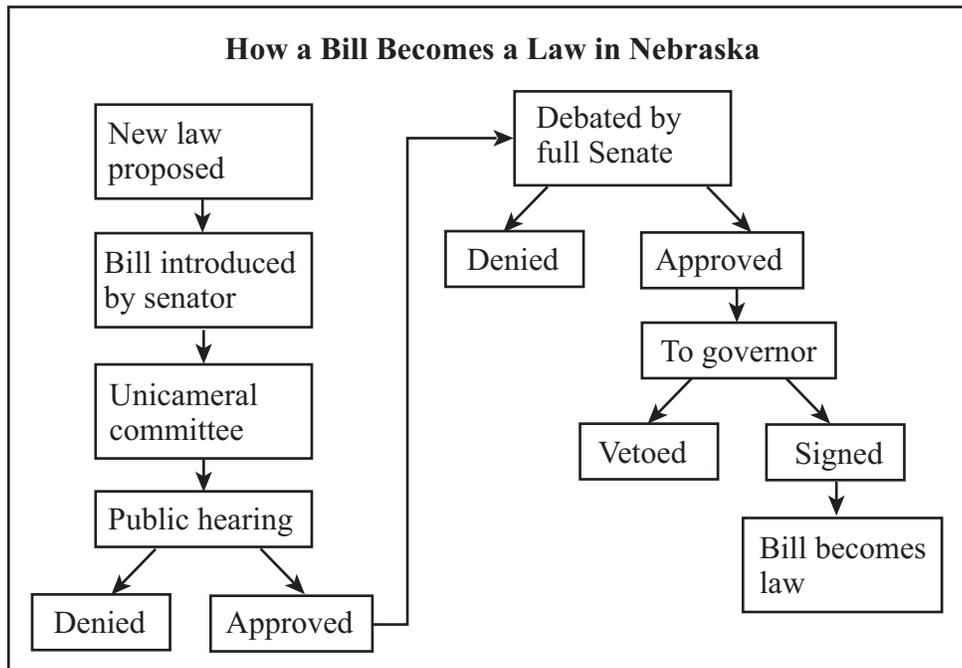
- A. By elaborating on the advantages of a unicameral system, the author demonstrates to the reader that a unicameral system is more complex than a bicameral system.
- B. By focusing mainly on the processes and benefits of the unicameral system, the author helps the reader to understand why Nebraska 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.

9. 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
10. 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.

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 river is a dependable navigator for our westward walk, and the land is stable and flat. The river is a wide and shallow braided stream.

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.

11. 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

12. 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.
13. Select **two** phrases from “A Pioneer Diary” that use figurative language to emphasize the significance of the river. Select **two**.
- A. following the Platte River on the north side would be healthier,
 - B. we trudge along its banks,
 - C. the river nudges us along with ease
 - D. sandhill cranes whoop their encouragement.
 - E. Platte River is a wide and shallow braided stream
 - F. tributary is a dependable navigator

14. 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.

15. 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.

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 . . .

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. “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.

**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 11
ELA Practice Test
Answer Key**

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

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