Directions:

On the following pages of your test booklet are passages and questions for the Grade 8 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 8 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.
City council members have proposed a new noise ordinance for the city. The new ordinance is an excellent idea. Noise has been a problem in my neighborhood for many years. Many people blare music through open windows until the wee hours of the morning. Often people ride by in cars or motorcycles with their radios playing at full volume. It is often impossible to sleep through such loud noise. Excessive noise can be harmful to people’s health, causing hearing damage and affecting blood pressure.

Choose the BEST concluding sentence for the paragraph.

A. Therefore, I strongly support the new noise ordinance and plead with council members to pass it into law.
B. The current ordinance is a weak one and is so vaguely worded that it is difficult to enforce.
C. As a result, my neighbors close their windows at night, even in the heat of summer, and wear earplugs when they go to sleep.
D. Persistent lack of sleep due to noise issues can cause a multitude of other health problems.
2. A student is doing research for a report on early filmmaking. Read her two sources and complete the task that follows.

**Source 1**

Modern moviegoers, familiar with dramatic special effects, are often surprised by the simplicity of early motion pictures. It is hard to imagine how black-and-white movies with no sound and simple plots could excite an audience. And yet in 1903, *The Great Train Robbery* created a sensation with no color, no soundtrack, and less than a dozen minutes in which to tell a simple but exciting story.

**Source 2**

The Kinetoscope was an early type of movie projector invented by Thomas Edison in 1891. For Edison, the invention was an amusing distraction, a toy. The moving images were the result of playful experiment. Most of the early efforts to produce motion pictures were brief representations of familiar scenes, such as a running horse or a man sneezing. Even so, people found them fascinating.

Select **two** statements that should be revised because they plagiarize one or both of the sources. Select **two**.

A. Audiences were amazed by even simple images like a man sneezing or a horse running.

B. As filmmakers gradually learned, audiences loved motion pictures that told an interesting story.

C. Most of the early efforts to produce motion pictures were brief representations of familiar scenes.

D. People today, who are familiar with dramatic special effects, are often surprised by the simplicity of early movies.

E. It seems likely that people were attracted to even the simplest of motion pictures because of novelty.

F. Even without special effects or sound, black-and-white movies were as popular as any movie made today.
3. A student is writing a research report about George Washington Carver. Read the paragraph from the report and the directions that follow.

George Washington Carver was an influential scientist and educator. He was a pioneer in studying how particular crops affected the health of farmland. At the time, southern farmers grew primarily cotton, which depleted nutrients in the soil. Carver showed farmers the value of alternating which crops they planted each year. For example, planting cotton one year, then peanuts or soybeans the next, restored nutrients in the soil and resulted in better crops with higher yields. Carver also discovered new ways to use a variety of crops, which meant higher demand and better prices. Carver’s work helped reshape farming in the South in the early twentieth century.

The student found information in different sources. Choose two pieces of information that support the claims in the student’s paragraph. Choose two.

A. He appreciated art and studied painting at Simpson College in Iowa.
B. Although known for his peanut research, Carver did not invent peanut butter.
C. In 1947, a fire destroyed many of the contents of a museum dedicated to Carver’s work.
D. In 1939, he received a presidential medal for his contributions to agriculture in the South.
E. He was the first African American graduate of the college now known as Iowa State University.
F. Carver thought of hundreds of ways to use peanuts, including nonfood ideas such as paper and ink.
Oversleeping

So Jake spread his arms, leaped skyward from the sidewalk, and began to fly, rocketing up over the neighborhood. Suddenly he heard the distant voice of his father calling, as if from another universe, and Jake tired open sleep-heavy eyes.

“Get up, pal,” said Jake’s father, “or you’ll miss the school bus.”

“Just let me sleep a little longer,” Jake mumbled. Then he groaned and turned over, pulling the covers up over his head like a tent, as if to somehow recapture his dream. Jake loved to sleep. It wasn’t that he was lazy or lacked energy. Jake was a normal fourteen-year-old kid in every way. But he loved to curl up under a soft white cloud of sheets, rest his head on a marshmallow pillow, and luxuriate in the twilight world of slumber where life is exciting and dreams always come true.

So Jake was sitting at a table at a fancy café in Hollywood, having lunch with a famous movie director, who was offering Jake a role in his next big action flick when . . .

“Get up,” said Jake’s father, gently shaking his son’s shoulders. Jake yawned and hauled his legs over the side of the mattress, where he sat for a few moments to reconcile himself with the shocking reality of upright existence. He dragged himself into the shower, where he briefly dreamed of tropical rain forests, and at last shuffled downstairs to breakfast.

“Jake’s going to sleep his life away!” stated Taylor, his nine-year-old sister, as she sat at the table, kicking her dangling legs excitedly as if to show by comparison how wide awake she was.

“He’s just a growing boy,” said Jake’s father, washing dishes at the kitchen sink. “Right?” Jake nodded sleepily and finished his breakfast. He trudged out the front door with Taylor, still half-sleepwalking, and they waited on the curb for their school bus, as usual.

At school, finally fully awake, Jake cycled through the pleasant routine of another typical day. He greeted his buddy Benjamin at the locker they shared. They discussed hockey games and books. Then there was science with Mr. Albert, math with Ms. Freed, and lunch with Benjamin, who always told great jokes. After school, there was homework, dinner with his dad and Taylor, maybe a little TV, and then off to dreamland. And so went week after week, and month after month.

So Jake swung the bat, sending the ball out of the stadium and into the Baseball Hall of Fame . . .

“Come on, get up,” commanded Taylor, holding a ringing alarm clock only inches from her brother’s face. “You’ll be late for school!” Jake shook his head in disbelief and ducked under the covers.

Moments later Jake awakened to an empty, quiet room. Then he got up and padded sleepily down the hallway. The bathroom mirror reflected a face that was oddly unfamiliar—one with heavier eyebrows and new creases in its brow. Jake rubbed a hand over his face and felt the unexpected sandpaper abrasion of whiskers. Mystified and dazed, he staggered downstairs to the kitchen, where he was perplexed to discover a teenaged Taylor sitting at the breakfast table beside his father, who seemed older somehow.

“So you finally woke up,” commented Jake’s father, casually sipping his coffee. “We thought you’d sleep forever.”
“You certainly overslept!” added Taylor in a surprisingly mature voice.

Jake shook his head as if to disperse the fog of dreams. “What are you talking about?”

“You’ve been asleep for four years,” Jake’s father replied calmly. “Better get dressed, or you’ll be late for your last day of school.” This statement set Jake’s mind reeling. His last day of school? Had he really slept so long? Was he now eighteen years old?

Lost in a whirl of confusion, Jake went to his room to dress for school and discovered that none of his clothes fit him. He borrowed a shirt, pants, and shoes from his father—and they made him look and feel even older.

Taylor led Jake out the front door to the curb. Boarding his bus, Jake stared in bewilderment. He was enthralled by the aged faces of his friends. “Hey, it’s Jake!” shouted someone from the back of the bus. “He’s back!” One by one, his schoolmates began to recognize him.

“Buddy, you sure look older!” said someone sitting near where Jake stood. Jake looked down to discover his friend Benjamin smiling heartily and looking startlingly like his older brother. Jake sat beside Benjamin, who eagerly told what had happened during Jake’s years of slumber—how Mr. Albert had retired from teaching science, and how Ms. Freed had been named Teacher of the Year. Benjamin spoke excitedly of hockey games won and lost; of books read and remembered; of school plays, classes, pep rallies, and car washes. They were small, ordinary events, but to Jake they seemed extraordinary because they had happened without him. He had missed grades nine through twelve. His stomach sank when he realized there would be no more school days with Benjamin, his teachers, or his other friends. Jake had slept them all away . . .

“Come on, buddy, get up,” called Jake’s father. Jake pried open leaden eyelids to see his father standing in the doorway, with his familiar easy-going grin. Beside him was nine-year-old Taylor, seemingly more girlish and bubbly than ever before.

“Come on, sleepyhead!” she giggled. Her laughter seemed as bright as the yellow sunshine splashing about the room. “You don’t want to miss school, do you?”

Jake beamed and looked at his family. “No, I wouldn’t want to do that,” he said as he jumped up to greet the day.

4. Which word is a synonym for mystified?
   A. dazed
   B. staggered
   C. perplexed
   D. seemed

A 8
Go on to the next page.
5. This question has two parts. Answer part A, and then answer part B.

**Part A**
In paragraph 11, how does the author use a metaphor?

A. to exaggerate the seriousness of Jake’s situation
B. to give human qualities to Jake’s whiskers
C. to express Jake’s shocked reaction to his situation
D. to describe the roughness of Jake’s face

**Part B**
Choose the sentence that BEST supports the answer in part A.

A. Moments later Jake awakened to an empty, quiet room.
B. Then he got up and padded sleepily down the hallway.
C. The bathroom mirror reflected a face that was oddly familiar—one with heavier eyebrows and new creases in its brow.
D. Jake rubbed a hand over his face and felt the unexpected sandpaper abrasion of whiskers.
E. Mystified and dazed, he staggered downstairs to the kitchen, where he was perplexed to discover a teenaged Taylor sitting at the breakfast table beside his father, who seemed older somehow.

6. In paragraph 17, what is the meaning of **enthralled**?

A. fascinated  
B. offended  
C. frightened  
D. amused
7. Which detail from the story supports the idea that a great deal of time has passed while Jake was sleeping?

A. He needs to borrow clothing from his father.
B. He awakens to a room that is quiet and empty.
C. He has to ride the school bus with all of his friends.
D. He still feels sleepy as he staggers down to the kitchen.
8. Choose **two** sentences that support the inference that Jake regrets oversleeping. Choose **two**.

A. “Buddy, you sure look older!” said someone sitting near where Jake stood.

B. Jake looked down to discover his friend Benjamin smiling heartily and looking startlingly like his older brother.

C. Jake sat beside Benjamin, who eagerly told what had happened during Jake’s years of slumber—how Mr. Albert had retired from teaching science, and how Ms. Freed had been named Teacher of the Year.

D. Benjamin spoke excitedly of hockey games won and lost; of books read and remembered; of school plays, classes, pep rallies, and car washes.

E. They were small, ordinary events, but to Jake they seemed extraordinary because they had happened without him.

F. He had missed grades nine through twelve.

G. His stomach sank when he realized there would be no more school days with Benjamin, his teachers, or his other friends.

9. Which characteristic helps the reader identify the genre of the story?

A. The futuristic setting helps the reader identify the story as science fiction.

B. The abilities of the main character help the reader identify the story as fantasy.

C. The lesson that is taught helps the reader identify the story as a folktale.

D. The main problem helps the reader identify the story as realistic fiction.

10. Which theme is most strongly conveyed through the story?

A. independence versus dependence

B. age versus experience

C. opportunity versus disappointment

D. individual versus society
The next two passages are paired. Read the first passage and then read the second passage.

There’s Still Gold in Those Hills

America experienced a “gold rush” in the middle of the nineteenth century. Gold was discovered in the California mountains in 1848, and thousands of people hurried there. These gold seekers were called forty-niners, named after the year that followed, 1849. Gold rushes also took place in the present-day states of Colorado, Nevada, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska.

Now, over one hundred years later, the gold-mining operations have long since been abandoned, but that doesn’t mean that all the precious metal is gone. In fact, there’s still gold in those hills, and with a little luck and a bit of work, people can find it. They can pan for gold, just as the forty-niners did so many years ago.

Where to Look

Although gold has been found in all 50 states, the most promising areas in which to search are the states in the western third of the country. Because the metal gets washed out of the mountains by water, a gold seeker looks for a stream. A smaller creek is usually the best place to find gold, since a stream that fills with rainwater from time to time will have seen a good deal of erosion, allowing gold to travel most easily.

With much luck, gold can be found in nugget form, but most often, it appears as small flakes. Gold is very heavy and sinks. A miner might look for a little waterfall in the stream, as gold may be below it. Also, gold gets trapped deep down along the banks where the creek bends or might also be found immediately downstream of a boulder or rock formation in the stream.

Getting to the Gold

Those searching for gold will likely need a shovel to dig up the rocks in the stream where there might be gold, as well as a pan that looks like a pie plate. Gold-panning pans are still sold at sports stores and hobby shops. Knowing how to care for the pan, however, is especially important.

Any grease or oil in the pan needs to be removed. If there’s anything slick on the pan’s surface—even just oil from a person’s fingers—the flakes of gold will be washed out. Heating the pan on a fire or the stove is the suggested way to get rid of the oil and make the pan ready for use!

A gold seeker digs up a shovelful of gravel from the stream and puts it in the pan; then, he or she dips the pan into the stream and allows the water to soak the material. The seeker shakes the pan a few times to let the heavier bits settle to the bottom. After the pan is tipped slightly so that the grass, leaves, pine needles, and any other material float out, the gold will begin sinking to the bottom of the pan.

The seeker will want to get rid of the remaining rocks and gravel but should avoid using his or her hands, since the oil left behind by fingers will wash the gold out. It is best to use a stick to scrape out the top inch or so of gravel.
More Water

Unless a gold seeker spies a nugget in the pan (what luck!), he or she needs to add more water to the mix. The seeker swishes the material in the pan in a slow, circular movement. The pan is tilted slightly so that the lightweight sand slips over the edge. Water is added as needed, and the process is repeated.

Soon only a small part of the pan will be covered with concentrated material of what appears to be black sand. The swishing motion will spread the sand out in a feather pattern. The bits of material at the tail end of the feather are called tailings, and it is in these tailings where the gold bits can be found.

Is It Gold?

The black sand is called magnetite because of its magnetic properties. By using a magnet, the sand can actually be picked up and moved out of the pan. What gold panners hope to see left behind are flakes of gold, which can be tiny specks or larger flakes the size and shape of breakfast cereal. But people can be tricked by the matter that twinkles like a crystal. This material is probably “fool’s gold”—a nearly worthless material that resembles gold—while actual gold is yellow with a sheen to it. Tweezers are used to pick out the authentic gold flakes and place them in a container. Now the gold miner is ready to dig up another shovelful of gravel and begin the process all over again.

What if the miner didn’t find any gold? He or she shouldn’t give up. Even the best miners didn’t find precious metal in every pan. But like the gold seekers of today who enjoy panning, the forty-niners were well aware that there was still gold in those hills.

How to Pan for Gold

1. Fill the pan almost to the top with sand and gravel from a stream.
2. Dip the pan into the stream to fill it with water.
3. Swirl the pan so the gold sinks to the bottom.
4. Add water and repeat the process until a small amount of sand remains.
5. Scrape the top layer of sand out of the pan.
6. Remove bits of gold with tweezers.
Now read the second passage.

The following letter was written in 1850 by Sheldon Shufelt, a gold seeker who wrote to his cousin from the gold fields in California.

Letter from a Gold Miner

Dear Cousin,

We hired an ox team to carry our baggage and started for this place....Ten miles from the river we passed Sutters fort, an old looking heap of buildings surrounded by a high wall of unburnt brick, and situated in the midst of a pleasant fertile plain, covered with grass and a few scattering oaks with numerous tame cattle and mules. We walked by the wagon and at night cooked our suppers, rolled our blankets around us and lay down to rest on the ground....After leaving the plains we passed over some hills that looked dry and barren being burnt up by the sun and the long droughts that we have there. We reached this place at night on the fourth day, and in the morning found ourselves in the midst of the diggings, being surrounded by holes dug.

We pitched our tents, shouldered our picks and shovels and with pan in hand sallied forth to try our fortunes at gold digging. We did not have very good success being green at mining, but by practice and observation we soon improved some, and found a little of the shining metal.

It is found along the banks of the streams and in the beds of the same, and in almost every little ravine putting into the streams. And often from 10 to 50 feet from the beds up the bank. We sometimes have to dig several feet deep before we find any, in other places, all the dirt and clay will pay to wash, but generally the clay pays best. If there is no clay, then it is found down on the rock. All the lumps are found on the rocks—and most of the fine gold. We tell when it will pay by trying the dirt with a pan. This is called prospecting here. If it will pay from six to 12 ½ per pan full, then we go to work. Some wash with cradles some with what is called a tom and various other fixings. But I like the tom best of anything that I have seen.

It is a box or trough, about 8 or 9 feet long, some 18 inches wide and from 5 to 6 inches high, with an iron sieve in one end punched with ½ inch holes. Underneath this is placed a ripple or box with two ripples across it. The tom is then placed in an oblique position, the water is brought on by means of a hose. The dirt, stone, clay and all is then thrown in and stirred with a shovel until the water runs clear, the gold and finer gravel goes through the sieve and falls in the under box and lodges above the ripples. Three men can wash all day without taking this out as the water washes the loose gravel over and all the gold settles at the bottom.

11. In paragraph 11 of “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills,” what is the meaning of properties?

A. specific pieces of land
B. individual items that are owned
C. special characteristics of a substance
D. common traits among a group of people

Go on to the next page.
12. This question has two parts. First answer part A, then answer part B.

**Part A**

What conclusion can be drawn from “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills”?

A. Gold is not found outside the United States.

B. People in the United States continue to pan for gold.

C. The gold mining process has changed over time.

D. Gold is valuable because large companies have stopped looking for it.

**Part B**

Which evidence from “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” supports the conclusion in part A?

A. Gold rushes also took place in the present-day states of Colorado, Nevada, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Oregon, and Alaska.

B. Now, over one hundred years later, the gold-mining operations have long since been abandoned, but that doesn’t mean that all the precious metal is gone.

C. In fact, there’s still gold in those hills, and with a little luck and a bit of work, people can find it.

D. Gold-panning pans are still sold at sports stores and hobby shops.

13. Which detail from “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” would be beneficial to include in the chart?

A. Heat the pan over fire.

B. Know how to care for the pan.

C. Find an area that has eroded.

D. Search the hills like the forty-niners did.
14. Which statement BEST explains how the author’s purpose is achieved in “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills”?

A. By telling about one gold seeker’s experiences, the author entertains the reader about gold mining.
B. By using the example of a gold seeker, the author explains to the reader how to mine for gold.
C. By including historical details, the author informs the reader about the past and present of gold mining.
D. By presenting a challenge to overcome, the author encourages the reader to keep trying to mine for gold despite obstacles.

15. In paragraph 2 of “Letter from a Gold Miner,” what does the author’s use of the idiom, “being green,” indicate about the gold seekers?

A. The miners were envious of others.
B. They lacked mining experience.
C. The miners felt ill after their first day.
D. They were wealthy from mining.
16. Based on the information in “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” and “Letter from a Gold Miner,” select the **three** main ideas that are shared by BOTH passages. Select **three**.

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<td>a. A stream is vital to the gold mining process.</td>
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<td>b. Teamwork helps to make gold mining more efficient.</td>
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<td>c. There is no guarantee that a miner will find gold.</td>
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<td>d. Gold is often found in the form of flakes rather than nuggets.</td>
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<td>e. People use the original panning techniques to gold mine as a hobby.</td>
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<td>f. In the mid-1800s, people traveled to California in search of gold.</td>
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<td>g. Miners can be tricked by fool’s gold.</td>
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17. How are the organizational structures of the two passages different?

A. “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” uses sequential steps to describe the process of panning for gold. “Letter from a Gold Miner” uses first-hand experience to describe a different process for locating gold.

B. “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” describes in detail how to identify gold. “Letter from a Gold Miner” explains the sequence of events that took place during the gold rush.

C. “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” compares the modern gold-seeking process to the original process. “Letter from a Gold Miner” uses facts about the gold-seeking process and expresses the author’s opinions about it.

D. “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” provides facts about how to find gold and opinions about the process. “Letter from a Gold Miner” explains the problems caused by the gold rush and the effects they had on people.
18. The passages “There’s Still Gold in Those Hills” and “Letter from a Gold Miner” are both about the history of gold mining. Explain how the passages help the reader understand the history and process of gold mining in the United States. 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.
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| 13. | A |
| 14. | C |
| 15. | B |
| 17. | A |
| 18. | refer to TDA rubric |