



# Nebraska State Assessment

**Grade 6**

**English Language Arts**

**Released Passage**

Name:



**Directions:**

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

Read these directions carefully before beginning the test.

This test will include several different types of questions. Record all of your answers in the answer document.

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

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

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

## Monarch Migration Celebration

Some people use the old proverb “seeing is believing” to describe situations where it’s hard to believe something is possible if you haven’t seen it happen. I am here today to tell you that old proverb is true and to share with you how a girl, her grandmother, a school report, and a childhood memory made a positive transformation in a community.

2 It was about a year ago when the transformation started. I was in fifth grade, and at the time, we were studying life cycles in science class. I wrote a paper about the life cycle of the monarch butterfly and received a perfect score. I was so thrilled; I called my grandmother, Nana, to tell her the exciting news. All of my talk about monarchs **evoked** memories from Nana’s childhood. “I remember when I was a girl out on the farm,” she said. “Those orange and black butterflies were a common sight. Come late summer, there would suddenly be hundreds of them, and before long there were so many butterflies it felt like you were standing in an orange cloud.”

“It sounds like you witnessed a migration just like it was described in my report,” I told Nana. “But what happened to all of the monarchs you used to see?”

“To be honest, I’ve never known what happened to the butterflies,” Nana admitted. “But there do seem to be fewer monarchs fluttering around the neighborhood each summer. Perhaps we should try to find out where they’ve gone.”

Nana and I decided to investigate.

That weekend, Nana met me at the public library where we sat side by side in the computer lounge, dividing up the types of monarch information we had located. Our research produced plenty of information. Some information was fascinating. We learned that monarchs only lay eggs on milkweed plants. The larvae that hatch eat the milkweed leaves to grow and become caterpillars. Some information was concerning. Apparently, the number of monarchs have been in decline for the last several decades. Housing developments and widespread use of weed prevention practices have destroyed much of the monarch’s habitat. Some information was hopeful, though, like how conservationists are working to save the monarch butterfly.

The best information was this—it doesn’t take loads of money, equipment, or government organizations to save the monarch butterflies. It takes only a little bit of land, some seeds, and dedicated people to create what’s called a Monarch Waystation. When I read this, an idea came to mind. “What if we set up our own Monarch Waystation?” I proposed.

Nana raised her eyebrow in consideration. “We’ll need several people to help us. Let’s think. Who would be best to recruit!” she replied enthusiastically. It didn’t take much to convince Nana to help me save the monarchs, and she didn’t waste any time getting started.

The next week, Nana presented the idea to her garden club and the members of her book club; I talked to my teachers, friends, and neighbors. Many people agreed to plant milkweed and nectar plants in their gardens. Nana’s garden club convinced the Parks and Recreation Board to plant a butterfly garden next to the city fountain. A few farmers donated a small section of their fields or planted milkweed in the ditches. Some of the teachers at the local school taught a unit on the monarch and its plight. The library put together a display of gardening and butterfly books. The editor of the local newspaper wrote an informative article on how to make our community monarch-friendly.

10 As spring turned into summer, those dedicated volunteers also worked to weed and care for the public gardens. We all waited and watched and **steeled** ourselves not to be disappointed if our plan didn't work—but it did work! A few dozen orange and black butterflies were spotted visiting the waystations. Two weeks later, people reported sightings of yellow, black, and white-striped caterpillars. First prize for this year's photo contest was a close-up of a green chrysalis. As summer progressed, the monarchs grew more plentiful. The butterfly gardens were gorgeous and smelled divine. One inventive citizen organized Monarch Waystation tours. A couple that had visited Mexico presented a slideshow of the monarchs' overwintering site. Across the city, banners, signs, T-shirts, and hats sported butterflies.

Nana and I wrote a blog that included photos and frequent updates about the community's efforts. Monarch enthusiasts from across the county contacted us with their own observations, ideas, and reflections. One day in late August, I got an email alert: the monarchs were on the move! We called the newspaper with the news and launched our first annual Monarch Migration Celebration.

It happened on a day when the sun was shining and the sky was a deep cobalt blue. Just like Nana remembered, a few fluttering orange wings soon became hundreds of soaring butterflies. One observer said, "It's snowing orange!" The soft sound of fluttering wings surrounded us. As monarchs sailed above and around us, people laughed and danced and snapped pictures; Nana cried tears of happiness and gave me an enormous hug. It was truly a spectacular experience.

So now I know what people mean when they say, "seeing is believing." I know what it means to stand in an orange cloud of monarchs. I learned that if you believe in something strong enough and work to make it happen, you will see your goal become a reality.

1. In paragraph 2, why does the author use imagery?
  - A. to compare the narrator's experience to the transformation of a butterfly
  - B. to describe Nana's experience of being surrounded by butterflies
  - C. to describe the narrator's enthusiasm for her paper about butterflies
  - D. to demonstrate the number of butterflies Nana saw
  
2. In paragraph 2, what is the meaning of the word **evoked**?
  - A. recalled
  - B. provided
  - C. involved
  - D. gained

3. Based on the use of the suffix **-ist**, what is the meaning of **conservationist**?
- A. a place that is protected from loss or harm
  - B. the act of protecting from loss or harm
  - C. one who protects from loss or harm
  - D. able to protect from loss or harm
4. Based on the story, which statement **BEST** describes the narrator’s point of view?
- A. The narrator believes that with dedication, people can restore the monarch butterfly population.
  - B. The narrator is concerned that unless people build waystations, the monarch butterflies will not return in the spring.
  - C. The narrator believes young people should research the life cycle of the monarch butterfly.
  - D. The narrator is concerned that there is not enough milkweed planted for monarchs to lay their eggs on.
5. Choose **two** sentences that **BEST** show people in the community were trying to teach others about monarchs. Choose **two**.

As spring turned into summer, those dedicated volunteers also worked to weed and care for the public gardens. We all waited and watched and steeled ourselves not to be disappointed if our plan didn’t work—but it did work! A few dozen orange and black butterflies were spotted visiting the waystations. Two weeks later, people reported sightings of yellow, black and white-striped caterpillars. First prize for this year’s photo contest was a close-up of a green chrysalis. As summer progressed, the monarchs grew more plentiful. The butterfly gardens were gorgeous and smelled divine. One inventive citizen organized Monarch Waystation tours. A couple that had visited Mexico presented a slideshow of the monarchs’ overwintering site. Across the city, banners, signs, T-shirts, and hats sported butterflies.

6. In paragraph 10, what is the meaning of the word **steeled**?
- A. devoted
  - B. observed
  - C. amazed
  - D. prepared
7. How did the narrator's monarch project impact the community?
- A. It caused the community to appreciate the past.
  - B. It taught the community to use the public library.
  - C. It informed the community about farming practices.
  - D. It organized the community around a purpose.
8. Which characteristic **BEST** distinguishes this story as realistic fiction?
- A. The characters encounter a challenge.
  - B. The story provides facts about an insect's habitat.
  - C. The characters and events are believable.
  - D. The story is about a person's life and is written by that person.

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

**Part A**

What is the theme of the story?

- A. Children should respect their elders.
- B. Success can come from teamwork.
- C. Families should try harder to do activities together.
- D. Changes occur when people least expect them.

**Part B**

Select **two** sentences from the story that support the answer in part A. Select **two**.

- A. I called my grandmother, Nana, to tell her the exciting news.
- B. “Perhaps we should try to find out where they’ve gone.”
- C. Many people agreed to plant milkweed and nectar plants in their gardens.
- D. Nana and I wrote a blog that included photos and frequent updates about the community’s efforts.
- E. Nana cried tears of happiness and gave me an enormous hug.

10. Which sentence BEST describes the author’s purpose for writing “Monarch Migration Celebration”?
- A. The author entertains the reader with a story about a girl who learns to love monarchs after living with her grandmother for the summer.
  - B. The author entertains the reader with a story about how two people inspire their community to help save the monarch population.
  - C. The author entertains the reader with a story about how a girl and her grandmother are recruited to help with an upcoming monarch event in their community.
  - D. The author entertains the reader with a story about two people who discover a solution to the worldwide monarch problem.

11. In the story “Monarch Migration Celebration,” Nana is an important character. Analyze how Nana’s character impacts the plot. Write a well-organized response using specific evidence from the story to support your answer.

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

**PLAN** before you write

- I read the task carefully.
- I read the text(s) carefully.
- I thought about how the task connects to the text(s).
- I organized my ideas on scratch paper.

**FOCUS** while you write

- I responded to all parts of the task.
- I analyzed the information from the text(s) in my response.
- I chose relevant and accurate evidence from the text(s) to support my response.
- I organized my response with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**REVISE** after you write

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







**Grade 6  
ELA Practice Test  
Answer Key**

1.	B
2.	A
3.	C
4.	A
5.	See below
6.	D
7.	D
8.	C
9.	B/C, D
10.	C
11.	refer to TDA rubric

5.

Choose **two** sentences that BEST show people in the community were trying to teach others about monarchs. Choose **two**.

   

As spring turned into summer, those dedicated volunteers also worked to weed and care for the public gardens. We all waited and watched and steeled ourselves not to be disappointed if our plans didn't work—but it did work! A few dozen orange and black butterflies were spotted visiting the waystations. Two weeks later, people reported sightings of yellow, black and white-striped caterpillars. First prize for this year's photo contest was a close-up of a green chrysalis. As summer progressed, the monarchs grew more plentiful. The butterfly gardens were gorgeous and smelled divine. One inventive citizen organized Monarch Waystation tours. A couple that had visited Mexico presented a slideshow of the monarchs' overwintering site. Across the city, banners, signs, T-shirts, and hats sported butterflies.

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