



Nebraska State Assessment

Grade 8

English Language Arts

Released Passage

Name:

Directions:

On the following pages of your test booklet are questions for the Grade 8 *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 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.

The Atoms of Sound

When I arrive home from school,
my two dogs bark wildly,
happy to see me,
their long claws
5 clicking on the floor,
their thick coats
exhaling a steamy, summer storm.

The house is full of sounds:
the television turned up;
10 chitchat on the telephone;
my baby brother wailing,
red fists clenched furiously.
All these sounds mix together
in a jumbled cacophony
15 like an overturned
bucket of bells.

As the sun sets,
a blanket of darkness settles;
the sounds of the house change.
20 The dogs are sleeping,
their pink tongues dangling out
of the sides of their mouths like thick ribbons.
The television hushed hours ago,
and the once-noisy devices charge,
25 inaudible now.
My brother's quiet, even breaths
mark off the movements
of the moon outside my window.

I can hear my watch counting off
30 the seconds, eating away at time
like a quiet wave
nibbling at the sand.

I **eavesdrop** as the house shifts and settles,

35 a creak from the wall,
 the squeaking of a nail
 as the wood expands and contracts.

I **overhear** the footsteps of my mother
 in the hallway, bare feet
 on padded carpet.

40 I can hear her heel pressing down
 and then her toes,
 the creasing of the knees
 of her denim jeans.

45 All those little sounds
 are always there,
 doing their jobs.
 They are the thin wooden easel
 in the artist's workshop,
 the extras on a movie set,
 50 the quiet click of a drum
 in the background of your favorite song.
 It's only when everything is **peeled** away,
 when the curtain falls
 on the loud sounds of industry and progress,
 55 that you realize
 these little noises
 are fundamental,
 that they are the minuscule
 atoms of sound.

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

Part A

How does the poet use alliteration?

- A. to illustrate changes of seasons
- B. to emphasize ordinary noises
- C. to describe the environment
- D. to imitate common sounds

Part B

Select **two** examples that support the answer in part A. Select **two**.

- A. my two dogs bark wildly (line 2)
- B. exhaling steamy, summer storm (line 7)
- C. a blanket of darkness settles (line 18)
- D. mark off the movements of the moon (lines 27–28)
- E. a creak from the wall, the squeaking of a nail (lines 34–35)

2. In lines 13-16, how does the poet use a literary device?
- A. The author uses a metaphor to explain how the sounds make one feel.
 - B. The author uses a metaphor to suggest that the sounds interrupt life.
 - C. The author uses a simile to mimic the different types of sounds.
 - D. The author uses a simile to illustrate a combination of multiple sounds.
3. At what point during the poem does the mood change?
- A. between lines 16 and 17
 - B. between lines 24 and 25
 - C. between lines 36 and 37
 - D. between lines 49 and 50
4. Based on the Latin root **aud**, what is the meaning of **inaudible**?
- A. not able to be carried
 - B. not able to be ruled
 - C. not able to be heard
 - D. not able to be finished

5. In lines 29–30, why does the poet use personification?
- A. to suggest that everyday tasks waste time
 - B. to imply that time is slipping away uncontrollably
 - C. to describe the inner workings of a clock
 - D. to show how meaningless it is to keep track of moments
6. What is the difference between **eavesdrop** in line 33 and **overhear** in line 37?
- A. Eavesdrop is motivated; overhear is lazy.
 - B. Eavesdrop is simple; overhear is complex.
 - C. Eavesdrop is purposeful; overhear is accidental.
 - D. Eavesdrop is thoughtless; overhear is determined.
7. Choose the **two** sets of lines that suggest that sound indicates creativity. Choose **two**.
- A. All those little sounds / are always there, / doing their jobs.
 - B. They are the thin wooden easel / in the artist’s workshop, / the extras on a movie set,
 - C. the quiet click of a drum / in the background of your favorite song.
 - D. It’s only when everything is peeled away, / when the curtain falls / on the loud sounds of industry and progress,
 - E. that you realize / these little noises / are fundamental,
 - F. that they are miniscule / atoms of sound.

8. In line 52, which meaning of the word **peeled** is used?
- A. observed carefully
 - B. departed quickly
 - C. ripped something by force
 - D. removed outer layers
9. Based on the poem, what is the poet's perspective?
- A. Sounds create amusement in life for those who are bored.
 - B. Sounds are a natural occurrence in life that bring comfort.
 - C. Sounds are an interruption to life that must be endured.
 - D. Sounds make the everyday tasks of life easier to accept.
10. How does the setting of the poem develop the characterization of the speaker?
- A. The passage of time from day to night shows the speaker is observant.
 - B. The movement from one room to another shows the speaker is cooperative.
 - C. The arrival home from school shows the speaker is independent.
 - D. The time of year shows the speaker is comfortable.

11. Theme is the central idea of a literary text. Analyze the development of a common theme in “The Atoms of Sound.” Write a well-organized response using specific evidence from the poem 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 8
ELA Practice Test
Answer Key**

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

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DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE**

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English Language Arts Released Passage**

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