

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

P

Grade 8  
English Language Arts/Literacy  
**Test Booklet**

*Practice Test*

TEST BOOKLET SECURITY BARCODE





# Unit 1

**Directions:**

Today, you will take Unit 1 of the Grade 8 English Language Arts/Literacy Practice Test.

Read each passage and question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Mark your answers by circling the answers in your test booklet. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

One of the questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided.

If you do not know the answer to a question, you may go on to the next question. If you finish early, you may review your answers and any questions you did not answer.

**Today you will analyze passages from two novels. As you read these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about the characters and points of view so you can write an analytical essay.**

Read the passage from the novel *Confetti Girl*. Then answer questions 1 and 2.

from *Confetti Girl*

by Diana López

- 1 Mom always had after-school projects waiting for me. “Can you help decorate cookies?” she’d say. Or, “Go outside and pick some flowers.” Or, “Fix my nails, please.” She loved to paint them, but since she wasn’t coordinated with her left hand, her right-hand nails looked like a preschooler’s coloring page.
- 2 I guess these projects were chores, but they were fun, too. Now when I come home, I’ve got to sweep, fold towels, or scrub the bathroom sink. Dad helps, but sometimes he makes a big mess.
- 3 Like today. He’s got flour, potato skins, and crumpled napkins on the counter. The pot boils over with brown scum. And I don’t want to talk to him because I’m still mad about the volleyball game, but I have to know what he’s up to.
- 4 “What are you doing, Dad?”
- 5 “Making dinner. Thought I’d give you a break.”
- 6 Except for game nights, dinner’s my responsibility. I cook while Dad cleans—that’s our rule. And even though I don’t cook as well as Mom did, Dad never complains.
- 7 “What are you going to make?” I ask.
- 8 “*Carne guisada* and *papas fritas*.”
- 9 “You need a recipe for that?”
- 10 “Are you kidding? I need a recipe for peanut butter sandwiches.”
- 11 How mad can a girl be at a man who makes fun of himself and wears a green frog apron that says KISS THE COOK and tube socks over his hands for potholders?

- 12 We clear space on the table. Dinner’s served. The beef’s tough and the *papas* are mushy, but who cares? I pretend it’s delicious because my dad lets me blabber about the Halloween carnival. He laughs out loud when I describe Vanessa’s potato baby and Ms. Cantu’s creative cascarones,<sup>1</sup> so I don’t complain when I notice he served ranch-style beans straight from the can instead of heating them up first.
- 13 Everything’s great until he asks about my English class.
- 14 “Any new vocabulary words?” he wants to know.
- 15 “I guess. Maybe. Super . . . super . . . super something. Can’t remember.”
- 16 “Was it *supersede*?” he asks. “*Supercilious*? *Superfluous*?”
- 17 “I don’t remember, Dad. It could have been *super-duper* or *super-loop* for all I care.”
- 18 He gets sarcasm from his students all the time so he’s good at ignoring it.
- 19 “Remember that *super* is a prefix that means ‘above and beyond,’” he says. “So no matter what the word is, you can get its meaning if you take it apart.”
- 20 “Okay, Dad. I get it. So did I tell you we’re having a book sale for our next fundraiser?”
- 21 “What else are you doing in English?” he asks. “Reading any novels?”
- 22 I sigh, bored, but he doesn’t get the hint. He just waits for my answer. “Yes,” I finally say. “I don’t remember the title, but it’s got a rabbit on the cover.”
- 23 “Is it *Watership Down*? It’s got to be *Watership Down*.”
- 24 “Yes, that’s it. But I left it in my locker. I guess I can’t do my homework.”
- 25 “Nonsense. I’ve got a copy somewhere. Let me look.”
- 26 He leaves the table to scan the bookshelves, and all of the sudden, I *care* about the tough beef, the mushy potatoes, and the cold beans. Why should I eat when my own father has abandoned his food? Nothing’s more important than his books and vocabulary words. He might say I matter, but when he goes on a scavenger hunt for a book, I realize that I really don’t.
- 27 I take my plate to the kitchen, grab my half-finished soda, and head to my room. When I walk past him, he’s kneeling to search the lower shelves. He’s got a paper towel and wipes it lovingly over the titles as if polishing a sports car. He doesn’t hear my angry, stomping footsteps. I catch the last part of his sentence.

<sup>1</sup>cascarones—hollow eggs filled with confetti or toys

- 28 “. . . a classic epic journey,” he says as if he were in class with a bunch of students. I can’t stand it. I just can’t stand it. I’d rather have Vanessa’s crazy mom.
- 29 Later, just as I write *I love Luís* for the three-hundredth time, my dad peeks through my bedroom door.
- 30 “Found my copy of *Watership Down*,” he says, handing me a paperback whose spine’s been taped a dozen times. “How far do you have to read tonight?”
- 31 “The first four chapters,” I say.
- 32 “That’s a lot. You better get busy.”
- 33 “Sure, Dad. I’ll start reading right away.”
- 34 But I don’t. As soon as he leaves, I put the book on my nightstand and use it as a coaster. The condensation from my soda makes a big, wet circle on the cover.

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**1. Part A**

What is the meaning of the word **sarcasm** as it is used in paragraph 18 of the passage from *Confetti Girl*?

- A. a remark indicating mockery and annoyance
- B. a response that is meant to be taken literally
- C. an answer that indicates confusion or skepticism
- D. an observation that is silly and childish

**Part B**

Which quotation from the passage helps clarify the meaning of **sarcasm**?

- A. "Super . . . super . . . super something. Can't remember."  
(paragraph 15)
- B. "It could have been *super-duper* or *super-loop* for all I care."  
(paragraph 17)
- C. "So did I tell you we're having a book sale for our next fundraiser?"  
(paragraph 20)
- D. "Yes, that's it. But I left it in my locker. I guess I can't do my homework."  
(paragraph 24)

2. **Part A**

What attitude does the narrator of *Confetti Girl* reveal when she uses the book as a coaster in paragraph 34?

- A. worry about being able to finish her schoolwork
- B. dishonesty in lying to her father about her homework
- C. carelessness when it comes to doing household chores
- D. resentment of her father’s efforts to impose his interests on her

**Part B**

Which quotation from the passage **best** shows additional evidence of the attitude in Part A?

- A. “Dad helps, but sometimes he makes a big mess.” (paragraph 2)
- B. “And I don’t want to talk to him because I’m still mad about the volleyball game . . . .” (paragraph 3)
- C. “Nothing’s more important than his books and vocabulary words. He might say I matter, but when he goes on a scavenger hunt for a book, I realize that I really don’t.” (paragraph 26)
- D. “Later, just as I write *I love Luís* for the three-hundredth time, my dad peeks through my bedroom door.” (paragraph 29)



**GO ON TO NEXT PAGE**

Read the passage from *Tortilla Sun*. Then answer questions 3 and 4.

from *Tortilla Sun*

by Jennifer Cervantes

- 1 *Clang cla-clang, clang clang.* The next morning, I found Mom in the kitchen with a chisel and hammer, chipping away at the kitchen counter. Little flecks of white flew through the air like ceramic snow, landing softly on her olive-colored cheeks.
- 2 I ducked as a piece of tile flew at me. "Hey!"
- 3 She turned toward me with a look of surprise. "Morning, Izzy. I didn't see you standing there."
- 4 "Wha . . . what are you doing?" I asked.
- 5 She stepped back and surveyed the half-demolished counter the way someone stands back to study a newly hung photograph. Wiping her cheek with the back of her hand she said, "There was this"—she searched the mess on the floor—"this one broken tile poking out and I thought I should fix it and . . ."
- 6 I pushed past her to get the broom but she grabbed me by the elbow. A feeling of nervousness swelled inside me.
- 7 "Izzy, wait. I have something to tell you."
- 8 There it was. My heart buckled in my chest. Something was wrong.
- 9 Mom leaned back against the counter and sucked in a great gulp of air. "It's strange actually. I wasn't expecting it, but then at the last minute the funding came through." She folded her arms across her waist. "I'm going to Costa Rica to finish my research."
- 10 Her words buzzed around me like a swarm of confused bees. "When? For how long?"
- 11 "I'll be gone for most of the summer. I leave Tuesday."
- 12 Mom wouldn't leave me. We'd go together. Right? "But that's only three days away." I stepped away from Mom and the shards of tile.
- 13 "I don't have a choice."
- 14 "But what am I supposed to do? That's three whole months."
- 15 "Two. I'll be home at the end of July. And after this I can finally graduate. Our

- lives will change then." She reached over and stroked my hair. "For the better."
- 16 I rolled those three words around in my mind: *for the better*.
- 17 Suddenly last night's phone call made perfect sense. I inched closer and pushed at the broken tile with my toes.
- 18 "Are you sending me to Nana's?" I asked. "In New Mexico?"
- 19 A flash of surprise crossed Mom's face. Like she knew I had heard her phone conversation. "She's so excited to have you and . . ."
- 20 "What happened to all your talk about you guys not seeing eye to eye?" I asked.
- 21 "It's not that we don't see eye to eye. We just don't see the world the same way."
- 22 "Why can't I go with you?" I said.
- 23 "Izzy . . ."
- 24 "New Mexico is worlds away from California. And what am I going to do for two whole months with someone I haven't seen since I was six? That was half my life ago. She's a stranger!" I felt a sudden urge to bolt for the front door and run.
- 25 Mom rolled her eyes. "Oh, Izzy. She's hardly a stranger. She's family. I already have your ticket. You leave Monday." Mom opened the refrigerator and took out a diet soda, pressing the cold can against her face before opening it.
- 26 I stared at the mess on the floor. "Why can't I stay here? Alone." My voice quivered.
- 27 Mom took a swig of her soda, then closed her eyes and took a deep breath. When she opened them, she spoke slowly and deliberately.
- 28 "You're going to New Mexico and that's final."
- 29 I swallowed hard and tried not to cry. "Why do you always get to decide everything? We just unpacked and I—I had plans."
- 30 She raised her eyebrows, surprised. "Plans?"
- 31 Mom was always bugging me to make friends, which I didn't see the point of, considering we moved every few months. And we moved for all sorts of reasons: closer to the university for her, better school for me, quieter, prettier, bigger, smaller.
- 32 "I was going to try and find some girls my age here in the complex so I

wouldn't have to be the new kid in school *again*," I said, trying to sound believable.

- 33 "Honey, you can make friends at your new school in the fall. Besides, this is a wonderful opportunity for you."
- 34 "Opportunity? For me? Or for you?"
- 35 I stormed off to my room and threw myself onto my bed. I ached inside. Like the feeling you get watching a lost balloon float far into the sky until it becomes an invisible nothing.
- 36 I reached for a story card and scribbled:
- 37 ***Gypsy was sent to prison for stealing the magic ball. And when she was tossed into the dungeon below the castle she found the word "opportunity" written across the stone wall.***
- 38 Staring at the card, I wondered what should happen next. Maybe a daring escape or a sorceress could rescue her. When nothing came to me, I scratched out the word *opportunity* until it was a big blob of blue ink and tossed the card on the floor.
- 39 I heard Mom's footsteps coming toward my closed bedroom door. I held my breath, hoping she wouldn't knock.
- 40 *Tap. Tap.*
- 41 Silence.
- 42 "Izzy?" she spoke quietly.
- 43 My hands wandered beneath my pillow and gripped the baseball I had hidden there. I squeezed my eyes closed and whispered, "I wish I didn't have to go. I wish I didn't have to go."
- 44 "I've brought your suitcase." She stood outside my door for what seemed like forever. I pictured her on the other side, arms crossed, head down.
- 45 "I think you're going to like the village." Her voice became a little muffled now, like her mouth was pressed right up against the door. "It's strange and beautiful at the same time and a perfect place to explore. You just might be surprised what you find there." She paused for a moment then continued. "Would you please talk to me?"
- 46 I burrowed my head under the pillow with the baseball. A tiny piece of me felt guilty for stealing it, but it belonged to my dad and that made it special. That made it a part of me.

47 “I’ll just leave the suitcase here for you,” she said. Her bare feet slapped against the tile and carried her away.

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**3. Part A**

How do the phrases **stormed off**, **float far**, and **invisible nothing** in paragraph 35 contribute to the tone of the passage?

- A.** They call attention to the narrator’s feelings of guilt and disappointment.
- B.** They emphasize the narrator’s growing sense of hopelessness.
- C.** They reflect the narrator’s escape into comforting daydreams.
- D.** They highlight the narrator’s strong sense of independence.

**Part B**

Which paragraph **most** directly reinforces the tone created in paragraph 35?

- A.** paragraph 32
- B.** paragraph 37
- C.** paragraph 38
- D.** paragraph 39

**4. Part A**

Which statement provides an objective summary of the passage?

- A.** A mother chooses to neglect her daughter’s interests in favor of completing her degree. She informs her daughter of this decision, and the daughter rightly points out the mother’s selfishness.
- B.** A mother decides it would be best for her daughter if they both moved to another country. The daughter complains that this will disrupt her life, but the mother holds firm to her decision.
- C.** A girl learns that she and her mother are moving in with their grandmother. The girl believes her mother is trying to take the easy way out. In response, the girl states that her father is a better parent.
- D.** A girl finds out her mother is going to leave her for the summer. She believes her mother is being selfish. In response, she becomes negative and withdrawn.

**Part B**

Select the **three** paragraphs that are **most** relevant to providing an objective summary of the passage.

- A.** paragraph 1
- B.** paragraph 5
- C.** paragraph 9
- D.** paragraph 17
- E.** paragraph 28
- F.** paragraph 34
- G.** paragraph 45

Refer to the passages from *Confetti Girl* and *Tortilla Sun*. Then answer questions 5 through 7.

**5. Part A**

In both passages, what causes the conflict between the narrator and her parent?

- A.** The narrator does something to disappoint her parent.
- B.** The narrator misunderstands her parent’s intentions.
- C.** The parent acts in a way that neglects the narrator’s interests.
- D.** The parent makes a mess that the narrator will have to clean up.

**Part B**

Which paragraphs from the two passages **best** support the answer to Part A?

- A.** paragraph 3, *Confetti Girl*; paragraph 1, *Tortilla Sun*
- B.** paragraph 12, *Confetti Girl*; paragraph 5, *Tortilla Sun*
- C.** paragraph 19, *Confetti Girl*; paragraph 6, *Tortilla Sun*
- D.** paragraph 26, *Confetti Girl*; paragraph 9, *Tortilla Sun*



**6. Part A**

The passage from *Confetti Girl* begins with the narrator's memories of her mother (paragraph 1). The passage from *Tortilla Sun* ends with Izzy's thoughts about the baseball that belonged to her father (paragraph 46). How do these paragraphs contribute to an understanding of both narrators?

- A.** The paragraphs reveal that the narrators have little reason to feel upset about their present situations.
- B.** The paragraphs suggest the efforts the narrators will go to so that they may please their parents.
- C.** The paragraphs emphasize the fact that the narrators may not be reporting events truthfully.
- D.** The paragraphs highlight the narrators' strong desire to regain a sense of closeness.

**Part B**

What additional similarity between the narrators builds on the same idea?

- A.** They both have trouble connecting with their remaining parent.
- B.** They both have an active and rich imaginary life.
- C.** They both feel as if there is no point in making friends.
- D.** They both have parents who value education above all else.

7. In the passages from *Confetti Girl* and *Tortilla Sun*, the narrators have points of view different from those of their parents. Write an essay analyzing how these differences in points of view create tension in both stories. Remember to use details from both texts to support your ideas.









**GO ON TO NEXT PAGE**

Read the passage from “Emerald Ash Borer.” Then answer questions 8 through 11.

## from “Emerald Ash Borer”

by Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

- 1 The emerald ash borer is a small, green beetle that belongs to a large family of beetles known as the buprestids, or metallic wood boring beetles. The description is apt, as many of the adult buprestids are indeed glossy, appearing as if their wing covers are made of polished metal. The emerald ash borer, with its green, iridescent wing covers, fits right in. Adult EABs are between 0.3 to 0.55 inches in length—small by most standards but large compared to other buprestids—and relatively slender.
- 2 During its life cycle, EAB undergoes a complete metamorphosis. It starts as an egg, becomes a larva (alternatively called a grub), and then changes to become a pupa and then an adult. The life cycle of an EAB takes either 1 or 2 years to complete. Adults begin emerging from within ash trees around the middle of June, with emergence continuing for about 5 weeks. The female starts laying her eggs on the bark of ash trees about 2 weeks after emergence. After 7 to 10 days, the eggs hatch and the larvae move into the bark, to begin feeding on the phloem (inner bark) and cambium of the tree. Throughout each of its successive instars (larval growth stages), the larva continues to feed within this same part of the tree. The larval stage may last for nearly two years. Before becoming an adult, the insect overwinters as a pre-pupal larva. It then pupates in the spring and emerges as an adult during the summer.
- 3 EAB feeds strictly on ash trees. The larvae feed on the phloem and cambium, while the adults feed on leaves. In Connecticut, there are three species of ash trees—the white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), the green or red ash (*F. pennsylvanica*) and the black ash (*F. nigra*). Despite its common name, mountain ash (*Sorbus* spp.) is not a true ash and does not attract the EAB.
- 4 Two other buprestids are well-known to those in Connecticut who are concerned about trees. The bronze birch borer is a pest of ornamental birch trees. The two-lined chestnut borer often attacks stressed oak trees, including oaks in the forest.

### Why is EAB a Problem?

- 5 EAB is an insect that is not native to North America. It was first found in 2002 in the vicinity of Detroit, MI, and Windsor, ON. It had arrived sometime within



the several years previous, presumably on woody packaging materials. It is now known to be found in 12 states. It is considered to be established in several of the upper Midwest states where it was first found. Movement of ash, in particular ash nursery stock and ash wood in the form of firewood, logs and wood packaging materials, has been cited as a likely means by which EAB has been assisted in its spread. More recently, strict regulations have been initiated to prevent the movement of these materials from infested areas.

from Emerald Ash Borer by Department of Energy and Environmental Protection—Public Domain

**8. Part A**

How does the author organize the information about the emerald ash borer?

- A.** by providing general facts followed by a statement of a problem
- B.** by defining the problem in scientific terms followed by an argument for proposed action
- C.** by presenting a problem followed by a suggested solution
- D.** by listing facts in order of importance followed by causes of a problem

**Part B**

How does paragraph 3 contribute to the organizational pattern of the passage?

- A.** by showing why some facts about EABs are of greater significance than others
- B.** by explaining what course of action should be taken to prevent borer infestations
- C.** by providing the scientific names of various species of borer insects
- D.** by contrasting the food sources of the mature and immature EABs

**9. Part A**

What is one reason why the author includes the explanation about the EAB in paragraph 5?

- A.** to help the reader understand the types of damage the EAB causes
- B.** to help the reader understand why the EAB issue did not exist in the previous century
- C.** to help the reader understand how the EAB exists in ash trees
- D.** to help the reader understand where the EAB will mostly likely travel next

**Part B**

Which detail from paragraph 5 **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** “. . . not native to North America.”
- B.** “. . . known to be found in 12 states.”
- C.** “. . . in particular ash nursery stock and ash wood . . .”
- D.** “. . . movement of these materials from infested areas.”

**10. Part A**

What is the meaning of **established** as it is used in paragraph 5 of the passage?

- A. in a strong position permitting growth
- B. proven beyond a doubt
- C. well known and respected
- D. accepted as a rule or law

**Part B**

Which phrase from paragraph 5 helps the reader understand the meaning of **established**?

- A. “. . . not native . . .”
- B. “. . . first found . . .”
- C. “. . . several years previous . . .”
- D. “. . . found in 12 states.”

**11. Part A**

Based on the information in the passage, what is one conclusion that can be drawn about the emerald ash borer?

- A.** The habits of the emerald ash borer are harmful to ash trees.
- B.** The emerald ash borer is the most destructive of the buprestids in North America.
- C.** The buprestids, including the emerald ash borer, cause problems for Connecticut homeowners.
- D.** Additional laws are needed in North America to protect the ash trees from the emerald ash borer.

**Part B**

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- A.** "The larvae feed on the phloem and cambium, while the adults feed on leaves." (paragraph 3)
- B.** "Two other buprestids are well-known to those in Connecticut. . . ." (paragraph 4)
- C.** "The two-lined chestnut borer often attacks stressed oak trees. . . ." (paragraph 4)
- D.** "More recently, strict regulations have been initiated to prevent the movement of these materials from infested areas." (paragraph 5)





**You have come to the end of Unit 1 of the test.**

- **Review your answers from Unit 1 only.**
- **Then, close your test booklet and answer document and raise your hand to turn in your test materials.**





**8 - ELA**

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