2021 STAAR English II Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option C is correct	Replacing the word “have” with the word “manage” creates an effective sentence because it emphasizes that teens are responsible for their busy schedules.
	Option A is incorrect	Teens do not “carry” classes, hours of homework, and extracurricular activities, so the word “carry” is not the most effective word to use in this sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The word “accept” is not the most effective word to use in this sentence. Teens must “manage” a variety of responsibilities and commitments, not just “accept” them.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence the act of enrolling is only appropriate for classes and extracurricular activities, so changing “have” to “enroll” does not create a more effective sentence.

Item#	Rationale	
2	Option J is correct	A position statement is a statement that summarizes the main point or claim of a piece of writing. By adding this sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph, the writer clearly states her position and why she supports the four-day school week.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the ideas in this sentence include a possible benefit of the four-day school week, adding this sentence does not offer a clear position statement.
	Option G is incorrect	The benefits to parents of a four-day week are not mentioned in the selection, so adding this sentence would not establish an effective position statement.
	Option H is incorrect	Adding this sentence would not provide an effective position statement for the paper because it is a detail rather than a summarizing sentence of the writer's position.

Item#	Rationale	
3	Option B is correct	The focus of sentences 22 through 30 is how teachers and students benefit from shorter school weeks and longer school days. Deleting sentence 28 removes extraneous information since Matlosz's teaching experience is not relevant to the rest of the information in the paragraph.
	Option A is incorrect	The information in sentence 27 is important because it supports the idea that students benefit from the four-day school week.
	Option C is incorrect	The specific examples presented in sentence 29 provide support for the idea that students and teachers benefit from the four-day school week, so this sentence should not be deleted.
	Option D is incorrect	The information presented in sentence 30 emphasizes how students benefit from the four-day school week and should not be deleted.

Item#	Rationale	
4	Option G is correct	Sentence 33 includes redundant information because "budgets are stretched" is the same idea presented in sentence 32 "where budgets are strained."
	Option F is incorrect	The information in sentence 32 supports the focus of the paragraph and should not be deleted.
	Option H is incorrect	Specific examples of how schools can save money by shortening the school week are included in sentence 34 and support the ideas presented in the paragraph.
	Option J is incorrect	Sentence 35 is important because the author provides additional information regarding how schools can save money by shortening the school week.

Item#	Rationale	
5	Option C is correct	Adding this sentence emphasizes the mysterious nature of the human brain, which is the focus of the essay, by contrasting it with "many of the mysteries of the human body have been explained by science."
	Option A is incorrect	The phrase "you would never believe it" is an opinion and lacks the emphasis necessary for an effective introduction.
	Option B is incorrect	Comparing the brain to a jigsaw puzzle is ineffective because it is too similar to the idea introduced in sentence 1.
	Option D is incorrect	The details in this sentence are vague, so adding it before sentence 1 does not create an effective introduction.

Item#	Rationale	
6	Option F is correct	Details about the circulatory system should be added after sentence 4 because the comparison between the circulatory system and the lymphatic system is emphasized.
	Option G is incorrect	Placing the additional sentence after sentence 5 would create a disruption in the paragraph by adding details about the circulatory system after explaining the purpose of the lymphatic system.
	Option H is incorrect	Adding this idea after sentence 6 interrupts the logical flow of ideas in the paragraph by introducing information about the circulatory system after the writer has narrowed the focus to the lymphatic system.
	Option J is incorrect	A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. Details about the purpose of the circulatory system should be added to the paragraph because they strengthen the transition between sentence 4 and sentence 5.

Item#	Rationale	
7	Option A is correct	A transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that connects topics or ideas. Replacing sentence 9 with this sentence effectively transitions from the idea of how the lymphatic system gets rid of waste in the body to the idea of "how the brain is able to rid itself of waste."
	Option B is incorrect	An effective transition between the second and third paragraphs is not provided because there is no connection to the lymphatic system that the writer discusses in the second paragraph.
	Option C is incorrect	The information included in this sentence is vague, so replacing sentence 9 with this sentence provides an ineffective transition between the two paragraphs.
	Option D is incorrect	The phrase "so everyone always wondered about that" is imprecise. It fails to create an effective transition.

Item#	Rationale	
8	Option G is correct	Rearranging the wording in this way eliminates the awkward phrasing and clearly shows the connection of ideas by clarifying that there is fluid "running along the brain's blood vessels."
	Option F is incorrect	A confusing sentence is created with this revision, and a misplaced-modifier error is introduced. A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word it modifies or describes.
	Option H is incorrect	Revising the sentence in this way results in a confusing sentence with an awkward structure.
	Option J is incorrect	This revision results in an awkward sentence that does not improve the clarity of the sentence.

Item#	Rationale	
9	Option D is correct	The idea that specific "proteins appear in the waste products of brain cells" effectively supports the inference that brain diseases are connected to the lymphatic system's ability to remove waste in the brain.
	Option A is incorrect	This sentence is a personal opinion and provides no additional support for the inference.
	Option B is incorrect	This revision includes extraneous information that is irrelevant to the inference presented in sentence 19.
	Option C is incorrect	Adding this sentence introduces extraneous information that does not support the inference in sentence 19.

Item#	Rationale	
10	Option J is correct	Changing “incomprehensable” to “incomprehensible” corrects the spelling error in the sentence.
	Option F is incorrect	Inserting a comma after “NASA” would introduce a punctuation error because no comma is needed.
	Option G is incorrect	The singular noun “idea” is correctly used in the sentence since there is only one idea that is referenced.
	Option H is incorrect	Changing “becoming” to “to become” introduces a verb-form error in the sentence.

Item#	Rationale	
11	Option A is correct	A possessive is a noun or a pronoun that shows possession by the addition of an apostrophe. Changing "campaigns" to "campaign's" corrects a punctuation error by showing that the advertisement belongs to the campaign.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing "advertisements" to "advertizements" would create a spelling error.
	Option C is incorrect	The verb "realized" is used correctly in the sentence, because the events being described took place in the past.
	Option D is incorrect	It is appropriate to use a comma before the conjunction "so" when separating two independent clauses, which are clauses that can stand alone as complete sentences.

Item#	Rationale	
12	Option G is correct	Sentence 14 is a sentence fragment, which is a group of words that is not a complete sentence. Combining sentences 13 and 14 in this manner corrects the sentence fragment.
	Option F is incorrect	Combining sentences 13 and 14 with a semicolon is grammatically incorrect.
	Option H is incorrect	Replacing the period with a colon to combine the two sentences introduces a grammatical error.
	Option J is incorrect	The phrase "and she training" is grammatically incorrect and is not the correct way to eliminate the sentence fragment in sentence 14.

Item#	Rationale	
13	Option B is correct	Inserting a comma after "atmosphere" corrects a punctuation error in the sentence since a comma is needed after the long introductory phrase.
	Option A is incorrect	The past-tense verb phrase "broke free" is used correctly to describe an action that took place in the past.
	Option C is incorrect	A possessive is a noun or a pronoun that shows possession by the addition of an apostrophe. In sentence 17, the possessive noun "country's" is correctly used to refer to the "glass ceiling" that belongs to the country.
	Option D is incorrect	Adding an unnecessary comma after "ceiling" creates a punctuation error.

Item#	Rationale	
14	Option F is correct	Changing “becomes” to the past-tense verb “became” corrects the verb-tense error in the sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	Changing “fierce” to “feirce” would introduce a spelling error in the sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	The singular noun “advocate” is used correctly to refer to Sally Ride in the sentence.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the verb-tense error.

Item#	Rationale	
15	Option D is correct	Proper nouns are nouns that refer to a specific person, place, idea, or event. The "International Bureau of Weights and Measures" is a proper noun and should be capitalized.
	Option A is incorrect	The past-tense verb "signed" is correctly used to refer to an event that took place in the past.
	Option B is incorrect	"The 1875 Treaty of the Metre" is a proper noun and should be capitalized.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing "which" to "this" results in a run-on sentence, which is an error in which two or more clauses are joined incorrectly.

Item#	Rationale	
16	Option G is correct	The semicolon incorrectly links the information in this sentence, so deleting it corrects the punctuation error.
	Option F is incorrect	Changing "use" to "using" would introduce a verb-form error in the sentence.
	Option H is incorrect	This change creates a punctuation error by inserting an unnecessary comma.
	Option J is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the punctuation error in the sentence.

Item#	Rationale	
17	Option C is correct	Changing the comma after "units" to a colon corrects the punctuation error since the author provides a list after the word "units."
	Option A is incorrect	The comma is used correctly in the sentence as it separates a long introductory clause from the main part of the sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	The present-tense verb "uses" is correctly used to describe an action that is taking place in the present.
	Option D is incorrect	Leaving the sentence unchanged does not correct the punctuation error in the sentence.

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Item#	Rationale	
18	Option H is correct	The comma splice in sentence 28 occurs when two independent clauses are connected with only a comma. The comma splice is corrected by changing the second clause to a dependent clause, which is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence contains another comma splice and does not correct the original sentence.
	Option G is incorrect	The replacement of the comma with a semicolon is not effective because the second main clause that follows the semicolon is a sentence fragment, which is a group of words that do not form a complete sentence, rather than an independent clause.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the first sentence is an independent clause and is correctly punctuated, the second sentence is a sentence fragment and makes this an incorrect answer.
19	Option D is correct	A metaphor is a figure of speech that makes a comparison between two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. The narrator compares playing the piano to "the love object," which reveals the depth of his feelings towards the piano.
	Option A is incorrect	The narrator uses a metaphor to refer to his feelings of love for playing the piano, not to explain his ability to remember a piece of music.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the narrator enjoys playing the piano, he suggests a preference for playing alone. The metaphor is not used to promote sharing music.
	Option C is incorrect	The narrator uses a metaphor to describe his own feelings for the piano, not to suggest others feel the same enthusiasm he feels.

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Item#	Rationale	
20	Option G is correct	In paragraph 8, Luc emphasizes the significance of buying a piano and how important it is to choose "'the right one.'" Luc is encouraging the narrator to reflect on the idea that buying a piano is a commitment.
	Option F is incorrect	It is clear from the dialogue in paragraph 8 that Luc recognizes that it is up to the narrator to make the decision, but Luc does not suggest the need for the narrator to trust himself.
	Option H is incorrect	Although Luc reminds the narrator of the importance of picking the right piano, he is not trying to direct the narrator to consider other pianos in paragraph 8.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Luc mentions "'a flute or a violin'" in paragraph 8, he is contrasting them with pianos in terms of the commitment involved. Luc is not suggesting the narrator play other instruments.
21	Option A is correct	In paragraph 1, the narrator says, "Something said 'Yes!' before [he] even touched the keyboard." The narrator intuitively understands that he has found the right piano.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the narrator says he "*wanted* to invite music back" into his life in paragraph 1, there is no evidence to suggest that he recognizes an unachieved goal.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the piano is described as an "impractical hulk," but this description is about the size of the piano. The idea of whether a choice is practical is not introduced.
	Option D is incorrect	The reader can infer from details in paragraph 1 that the narrator has experience playing the piano, but the idea of wisdom gained through this experience is not introduced.

Item#	Rationale	
22	Option J is correct	The reader can infer that the narrator's wife regards her husband's musical creativity, what she calls his "'personal expression,'" as a necessary outlet that is worth the "'investment'" of buying a piano.
	Option F is incorrect	The narrator's wife is not comparing the arts to anything; rather, she is comparing the purchase of the piano to being creative.
	Option G is incorrect	The narrator's wife thinks her husband should get the piano because he needs an outlet for his creativity, not just because he wants it.
	Option H is incorrect	The narrator's wife views the piano as a means for her husband to express his creativity, not merely as an attractive addition to their living room.
23	Option C is correct	In paragraph 17, the narrator admits that he has "never been comfortable playing in front of others." However, he acknowledges that playing for Luc was "different" and that Luc's "presence seemed encouraging," which supports the conclusion that the narrator feels oddly comfortable playing in front of Luc.
	Option A is incorrect	Although in paragraph 6 the narrator recognizes his musical limitations, in paragraph 17, he does not seem to need help building confidence since he plays the piano in front of Luc.
	Option B is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that the narrator considers whether he will appear to Luc as someone who is worthy of the Stingl.
	Option D is incorrect	The narrator and Luc are more focused on the sound of the piano than the types of music the narrator is playing.

Item#	Rationale	
24	Option F is correct	This description is provided to reveal the narrator's delight with the piano's distinctive tone. Based on this description, the reader can conclude that the narrator feels that this piano is special.
	Option G is incorrect	This description is about the piano's tone, not its durability or physical appearance.
	Option H is incorrect	The narrator describes the piano's tone. However, the narrator does not state why he is physically able to play the piano.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no evidence in paragraph 1 to suggest the narrator is considering the piano's upkeep or that this piano differs from other pianos in that regard.
25	Option D is correct	In this quotation, the narrator uses a tone of excitement and awe to describe the piano. Based on the descriptive language, the reader can conclude that the narrator has a strong desire to play the piano again.
	Option A is incorrect	The narrator expresses excitement about a piano. The narrator does not explain where he is shopping.
	Option B is incorrect	The description is used to highlight the narrator's fascination with a piano, not about his doubts about what he wants.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no evidence to suggest that the narrator tends to exaggerate, even in the description he provides in this quotation.

Item#	Rationale	
26	Option J is correct	In paragraphs 1 and 2, the author gives a brief history of the rise and fall of piano sales and then describes his difficulty in getting rid of a piano, which illustrates a reason for the downward trend in piano ownership.
	Option F is incorrect	While a magazine title is mentioned, the author makes no reference to an article listing the benefits of owning a piano.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author mentions that there are still many students taking lessons, there are no stories about students enjoying music.
	Option H is incorrect	The author does not argue against getting rid of pianos. In fact, he admits that the "pruning of a century's worth of neglected home pianos might not be such a bad thing."
27	Option A is correct	The author refers to a "downward . . . arpeggio" to emphasize the decline in piano sales that started in the late 1970s. The author's use of musical terminology compares the shifting popularity of the piano and the shifting notes in a song.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not attribute the sentence to a music dealer. The reference to the arpeggio is being made by the author.
	Option C is incorrect	There is no evidence to support the conclusion that the tones made by pianos affect the overall price of pianos.
	Option D is incorrect	Based on paragraph 2, the reader can conclude that fewer people are buying pianos, but there is no reference to how that trend might affect piano music.

Item#	Rationale	
28	Option H is correct	In paragraph 6, the author compares his struggle to find a buyer for his piano to a blues song. The reference to the hopeful end is used to suggest that the author was relieved to finally find someone who wanted his old piano.
	Option F is incorrect	This quotation is a reference to the author's persistence, not his relief.
	Option G is incorrect	This quotation is a reference to the author's increasing despair, not his relief.
	Option J is incorrect	This quotation is a reference to old pianos reaching the ends of their life spans, not to the author's relief.
29	Option A is correct	The purpose of the selection is to highlight the acoustic piano's value to American society, and to illustrate why that value has declined over time. The author explains that people are pursuing interests other than playing the piano, moving into smaller homes, and purchasing digital pianos—all factors that contribute to a decline in value.
	Option B is incorrect	Although there is information about old pianos and a reference to newer digital pianos, the author does not compare old pianos with new ones.
	Option C is incorrect	The author says that old pianos are being destroyed because they do not sell, which suggests that the instruments can be replaced.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does mention digital pianos as a new trend in paragraph 3, but the only trend discussed at length is the waning popularity of older pianos.
30	Option G is correct	In paragraph 4, the author refers to the "growth area" of piano disposal and includes a quotation linking a boom with the action "getting rid of their pianos." Based on this context, the reader can determine that in paragraph 4, boom is closest in meaning to Definition 2, a rapid increase in activity.
	Option F is incorrect	The boom described in paragraph 4 is about the disposal of pianos, not about a type of sound.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no context in paragraph 4 related to poles or microphones.
	Option J is incorrect	There is no context in paragraph 4 related to navigation.

Item#	Rationale	
31	Option A is correct	In paragraph 7, the author explains the issues with pianos that "have reached their coda," or ending. The author's purpose for including this information is to support the idea that it may be acceptable to get rid of an old piano.
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author expresses the idea that piano music will continue to be important, not the pianos themselves.
	Option C is incorrect	The author refers to the end of a "piano's life span" in paragraph 7 but does not provide details about the life cycle of pianos.
	Option D is incorrect	The author refers to older pianos in paragraph 7 but provides no historical details about them.
32	Option H is correct	The word roughly is used in paragraph 4 to refer to the monthly rate of piano removals. The rate provided—five pianos a month—is an approximate, not an exact, number and can change every month.
	Option F is incorrect	The word "peak" is used to describe a year, 1909, in which the greatest number of pianos were sold. A year cannot be described as "an approximate amount."
	Option G is incorrect	Based on the context in paragraph 3, the reader can conclude that "substantial" is close in meaning to a sizeable quantity, not "an approximate amount."
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 5, "treacherous" is used to describe the path removers take to get a piano to a truck; a path would not be described as "an approximate amount."

Item#	Rationale	
33	Option B is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The popularity of owning a piano in the past and the current decline in ownership are both described, as are the reasons for the decline. The key idea that people still appreciate the piano and want to learn how to play the instrument is also conveyed.
	Option A is incorrect	Information about the decline in piano ownership is included in this summary, but the reasons for this decline are excluded.
	Option C is incorrect	Although some key details from the selection are included in this summary, the decline in piano ownership is not mentioned.
	Option D is incorrect	The specific details included in this summary are not key ideas of the selection. This summary does not present the gist of the selection.
34	Option F is correct	In *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, the narrator is described as being "spellbound" (paragraph 1) and "babbling with enthusiasm" (paragraph 14) when he describes the piano to his wife. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author describes feeling the "saddest of blues" (paragraph 4) when he learns that many pianos are being disposed of.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author of *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* describes the "solid feel" (paragraph 5) of a piano, neither author discusses the materials that make up a piano.
	Option H is incorrect	There is no information about the history of pianos included in *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, and "Those Old Piano Blues" includes only the recent history of piano sales.
	Option J is incorrect	Only the author of "Those Old Piano Blues" mentions digital pianos, and neither author claims that people should learn to play an acoustic piano before moving to a digital one.

Item#	Rationale	
35	Option C is correct	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author tries unsuccessfully to sell an old Steinway piano and ultimately gives the instrument away.
	Option A is incorrect	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author tries to sell an old Steinway piano "for any price, including free" in paragraph 3. The reader can infer that the author did not have high expectations.
	Option B is incorrect	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author gives his old piano to a friend, not a school.
	Option D is incorrect	In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author concludes that some pianos have reached the end of their life cycle but does not share the thought that old pianos should be destroyed.
36	Option G is correct	In *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, the focus is on the narrator's efforts to evaluate and buy an old Stingl piano—from playing it and falling in love with it at the shop, to convincing his wife that he had found the perfect piano. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author explains that there is such an abundance of unwanted old pianos that he cannot even give his away and that the business of disposing of old pianos is booming.
	Option F is incorrect	The author of "Those Old Piano Blues" explains that unlike piano ownership, piano lessons have not declined in popularity.
	Option H is incorrect	In *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank,* the narrator emphasizes the craftsmanship of an old piano, not a new one. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author mentions digital pianos but does not give emphasis to the idea that they are preferred over acoustic pianos.
	Option J is incorrect	In *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, the author tells only of his own appreciation for an old piano but never says such appreciation is rare. In "Those Old Piano Blues," people are described as overvaluing their pianos, not all instruments.

Item#	Rationale	
37	Option C is correct	In both selections, the authors convey the attachment people have for pianos. In *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank*, the narrator highlights his own passion and longing for an old Stingl piano. In "Those Old Piano Blues," the author describes his effort to find a home for his old piano, as well as how people overvalue their old pianos because of their emotional attachment to them.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author of "Those Old Piano Blues" describes pianos as a source of entertainment in the past, the feeling conveyed in both selections is attachment.
	Option B is incorrect	Neither the narrator in *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* nor the author of "Those Old Piano Blues" describe a feeling of ambition. Though there is a personal task described in both selections, the reader cannot infer that it is a sense of ambition that drives the authors.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the narrator in *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* is "spellbound" by the Stingl piano in paragraph 1, no feeling of awe is apparent in "Those Old Piano Blues."
38	Option J is correct	In paragraph 9, the author notes an "embedded pattern" of seeking approval in high school, pointing to a culture that, in her opinion, can be "toxic" to students.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence is a reference to how the author felt before beginning high school, not to her opinion of high-school culture.
	Option G is incorrect	High school is part of the author's past, but this sentence is not focused specifically on her high-school experience.
	Option H is incorrect	In this sentence, the author refers to journal entries she wrote when she was in high school but does not reveal her opinion of high-school culture.

Item#	Rationale	
39	Option C is correct	In paragraph 2, the author describes one of her heroes, Mattie Stepanek, who "was an inspirational 11-year-old child." Mattie "set his dreams high" despite suffering from muscular dystrophy. The author includes the anecdote about Mattie to show how he inspired her and others to believe "that there is hope, there is love, and there are dreams waiting to become realities deep within each of us."
	Option A is incorrect	Stepanek's significance to the author goes beyond the fact that his poems have been geared for high-school students. The author includes the anecdote because Stepanek inspired people.
	Option B is incorrect	Stepanek inspired people to follow their dreams and perhaps pursue career paths, but there is no evidence in the selection that he encouraged people to publish their writing.
	Option D is incorrect	The author mentions Stepanek's own physical challenge—muscular dystrophy—but not whether he helped others deal with physical challenges like his.
40	Option G is correct	In paragraph 4, the author describes the Grand Canyon as a "natural wonder" and "spectacular." Based on this context, and noting the root word "grand," the reader can conclude that grandeur means magnificence.
	Option F is incorrect	The word "elegance" means refinement, which connotes a state of perfection. The author writes about the "elegant mix" of colors in paragraph 5; however, in paragraph 4 grandeur is used with the word "magnitude" to emphasize the canyon's size.
	Option H is incorrect	The word "sophistication" means complexity or worldly experience, which would not be used to describe a canyon.
	Option J is incorrect	The shape of the Grand Canyon would likely not be what struck the author as being "spectacular" because the next paragraph describes all the many features of the canyon. The word "shapeliness" means having a pleasing shape.

Item#	Rationale	
41	Option C is correct	The author's message is that early experiences do not have to define our lives when we are older. Throughout the selection, the author provides reflections on personal experiences to support this message. In paragraphs 4 and 5, the author describes a visit to the Grand Canyon, where she looks at the river flowing through the canyon and thinks about "slowly allowing the river to cut through the rock" of her "past experiences," and states that she has "faith that in the end that process will reveal magnificent layers." In paragraph 11, the author explains how "the voices that taunted" her in high school are now "powerless."
	Option A is incorrect	The author includes only one quotation from a well-known individual, Mattie Stepanek.
	Option B is incorrect	The author refers to her experiences in high school, but she does not compare herself to other high-school students.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author mentions moving to Flagstaff, Arizona, but does not explain her reasons for moving.
42	Option G is correct	The author's description of stepping out of "the cages" to "breathe in the fresh air of . . . freedom" is used to depict various experiences during her high-school years as a source of confinement.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author establishes a contrast between the idea of being in "cages" and breathing "the fresh air of . . . freedom," the reader can infer that the author does not view her own experiences in high school as a source of transition.
	Option H is incorrect	The quotation is used to link approval-seeking behavior with something that limits freedom, not something that provides order.
	Option J is incorrect	The quotation is used to highlight the need for people to assert their own freedom from a certain mindset. The quotation has nothing to do with discipline in high school.

Item#	Rationale	
43	Option A is correct	In paragraph 4, the author explains how she and her husband "were immediately struck by the beauty of the San Francisco Peaks," and she describes the Grand Canyon as "spectacular." In paragraph 5, the author describes the appearance of the canyon in detail. Based on these details, the reader can conclude that the author finds deep meaning in the beauty of nature.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author writes about her past, she does not express regret about not spending enough time in nature.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author enjoys the "natural wonder" of the Grand Canyon, the author does not provide any evidence to support that she considered the canyon to be a faraway place.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does not reveal where she grew up, so there is no way for the reader to infer that she grew up in an urban area.
44	Option H is correct	In paragraph 8, the author tells high-school students, "You, too, have a story to tell about your experiences and how they have created the person you are today," and in paragraph 10, she states that "It is worth fighting against the voices that seek to tell you that you can't, you shouldn't, or you aren't worth it," which implies a strength in being oneself. In paragraph 12, the author states "you don't need to fear your strength."
	Option F is incorrect	The author is urging high-school students to not let other people affect them in a negative way, not talking about how they affect others.
	Option G is incorrect	The author wants high-school students to have the courage to be themselves, but she is not urging them to be opinionated and outspoken.
	Option J is incorrect	The author is urging high-school students to act with confidence, but she does not refer to consequences for their actions.

Item#	Rationale	
45	Option D is correct	In this sentence, the author expresses the confidence she has gained over time by comparing her life experiences with "magnificent layers that inspire rather than repress and remain buried." She feels inspired and empowered by her past.
	Option A is incorrect	This author includes this sentence to describe the colors she saw on a trip to the Grand Canyon, not a sense of her confidence.
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence is a reference to the author at an early stage in her life, before her life experiences made her more confident.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence, the author is referring to a point in her life where she felt a sense of change, but it is before she becomes more confident. It was the recognition of "the layers beneath" that led to her confidence.
46	Option F is correct	The repeated italicized "*bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*" is the sound of Kevin continuously shooting hockey pucks. The repetition and italics are used to draw the reader's attention to Kevin's dedication.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the repetition of "*bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*" could indicate a noise that causes irritation, there is no evidence to support the idea that Kevin is irritated.
	Option H is incorrect	Kevin's neighbors hear the "*bang-bang-bang-bang-bang*" noises whenever Kevin practices, but there is no evidence to support the idea that Kevin needs their attention.
	Option J is incorrect	Although Kevin did score all twelve goals in the hockey game described in paragraph 1, there is no evidence that he is frustrated with his teammates.

Item#	Rationale	
47	Option A is correct	In paragraph 2, the author references "puck-graveyards" and "vulcanized rubber" in neighbors' flowerbeds. The reader should infer that neighbors would not want to leave hockey pucks in their flowerbeds, but that they would dig them up, or exhume them.
	Option B is incorrect	Kevin's neighbors would not likely blend Kevin's pucks in with their flowerbeds; they would likely dig up the pucks.
	Option C is incorrect	Kevin's neighbors would not likely establish, or set up, puck-graveyards in their flowerbeds; they would likely dig up the pucks.
	Option D is incorrect	Kevin's neighbors would likely spend time digging up the pucks in their flowerbeds for the sake of their flowers rather than trying to find ways to conceal, or hide, the unsightly pucks.
48	Option J is correct	The detail in paragraph 5 that "everyone's been telling him ever since he first stood on a pair of skates" is used to suggest that Kevin probably feels increasing pressure from external expectations.
	Option F is incorrect	This sentence is about Kevin's natural talent and quick improvement as a hockey player. No pressure from outside is suggested.
	Option G is incorrect	In this sentence, the author suggests that people are aware of Kevin's development, not that they are putting pressure on him.
	Option H is incorrect	Based on this sentence, the reader can conclude that Andersson appreciates Kevin's talent, but there is no suggestion that Andersson is pressuring Kevin.

Item#	Rationale	
49	Option D is correct	In paragraphs 8 through 10, the author suggests that people would take notice of Beartown if Kevin's team is successful in the junior tournament, and that benefits would follow, including a hockey school, new businesses, job opportunities, and a flourishing local economy.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author does describe an emotional experience from Kevin's youth earlier in the selection and briefly refers to it again in paragraph 9, this is not the focus of paragraphs 8 through 10.
	Option B is incorrect	Based on paragraphs 8 through 10, the reader can conclude that Kevin wants what is best for his community.
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author suggests that Kevin has no intention of leaving his community to play elsewhere. There is no evidence in paragraphs 8 through 10 that suggests otherwise.
50	Option G is correct	In paragraph 1, the author describes an experience from Kevin's youth. Kevin's hockey team won a game 12–0, and Kevin scored all 12 goals, but he is despondent over one shot that he missed. As a result, Kevin stays out all night in the freezing cold shooting hockey pucks into a net. This extended flashback is included to contribute to the plot by providing a specific example of Kevin's determination.
	Option F is incorrect	Mention of the "frozen lake" and "forest" in paragraph 1 only serves to situate an early example of Kevin's determination; the story takes place in other locations as well.
	Option H is incorrect	Kevin is the only character described in detail in paragraph 1.
	Option J is incorrect	The conflict introduced in paragraph 1 is an internal conflict, one that involves the intense expectations Kevin places on himself. The author discusses some external, mainly political, conflicts later in the story.

Item#	Rationale	
51	Option A is correct	The narrator's description of Kevin's physical makeup indicates that he has the natural athletic ability and talent to be a great hockey player.
	Option B is incorrect	Although it is possible that some of Kevin's teammates might feel resentment or envy given his superior level of play, their reactions are not mentioned in paragraph 3.
	Option C is incorrect	Although other portions of the story do convey Kevin's intense interest in hockey, paragraph 3 focuses on Kevin's natural abilities, not his attitude toward hockey.
	Option D is incorrect	The townspeople recognize Kevin's promise of greatness, but there is no indication in paragraph 3 that their expectations are unrealistic.
52	Option H is correct	Because the author highlights that "it means something" to be "a Beartown man" in the Beartown community, the reader can infer that Kevin feels loyal to his community.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Kevin is appreciated in Beartown, the quotation is about how much people in Beartown appreciate Beartown.
	Option G is incorrect	Based on the quotation, the reader can infer that living in Beartown is important to Kevin; he is not likely to feel trapped in a place he loves.
	Option J is incorrect	Based on the quotation, the reader can infer that Kevin feels proud, not embarrassed, to be from Beartown.