



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

English I

Practice Assessment

ENGLISH I

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

from The Wild Prince

by Brian Selznick

- 1 This is my backyard. Over there is the hill where everyone goes sledding in the winter, and over there is the small yellow bush, and over there is the big tree that I now know is going to die in a few years and fall down. The tree will slowly rot away until the only thing left of it is this memory and the words written across the paper you are now touching, which was, of course, made from some other tree that someone else, somewhere, might be remembering right now. And over there, if you squint because the sun is in your eyes, is the huge rumbling air-conditioning unit that cools the entire house. Come and take a closer look with me. The ground here is muddy and covered in weeds, and when I first moved into this house I played here in the dirt.
- 2 Kneel down in the weeds here. This is exactly where I was when I found him. I was kneeling, just like you are now, digging and playing, when I made a most incredible discovery. I thought at first he was a twig or a strange little rock, but I pulled him out of the grass and looked at him lying there in the palm of my hand. I had discovered a tin soldier, the way others before me had discovered Egyptian tombs and sunken ocean liners. Who had left this soldier behind? What kid had forgotten him? The soldier was covered in dirt, and he immediately became my treasure. I washed him carefully and examined him closely. His red-painted uniform was faded and scratched, and there was still a hint of a black mustache on his tiny face. His outstretched hand was empty. I turned him over and saw that the letters *WP* were stamped into his base. His tin hat had faded, and he wore some kind of backpack that I figured had once been black and gray.
- 3 I brought him everywhere with me, keeping him hidden in my pocket. Sometimes at night I would stare at him, hoping he would reveal something to me about his past, but he stood steadfast and silent. This mystery made me feel dizzy sometimes, and I loved him. I did drawings for him, pictures of battles that I thought he might like, and I imagined his friends, all thinking him lost, wishing he were with them again so they

could tell stories about the past and laugh and sing. I imagined my soldier had sacrificed himself for the others, so they could escape. I was sure my soldier was a hero and a true friend. He had to be brave to be outside in the tall weeds by himself for so long, never moving, never shivering, never crying. Even as his paint faded and his gun was lost, he didn't lose faith. Maybe he knew that I'd find him one day. Why be scared when you know you are going to be saved? I imagined the rain falling on him, and the snow, and the bugs crawling over him. And still he didn't move. Had he been there for weeks? Months? Years? How long had he waited for me to show up? How had he known I would come? I didn't know, but I was glad he waited. I'd never saved anyone before, and the responsibility was huge.

- 4 Now look over there, on the other side of my yard, past the small yellow bush, and you'll see the edge of a forest that divides our property from the new development going up across the way. I was afraid my soldier wouldn't like being cooped up in my pocket all day, so I built him a castle. I spent hours and hours building bridges and turrets and tunnels that snaked in and out of the ever-growing fortress of twigs at the edge of this forest. A miniature world rose here, all for my single, lonely, faded soldier, who had nothing in the world except me.

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- 1** Which word has the same connotation as *steadfast* as it is used in paragraph 3?
- (A) Unwavering
 - (B) Still
 - (C) Unresponsive
 - (D) Shallow
-

- 2** Based on what the narrator imagines, which detail from paragraph 3 supports the key idea that if the soldier were a real person, he would have the qualities to cope with real-life problems?
- (A) The soldier being alone outside for a long time
 - (B) The stillness of the soldier in cold and wet conditions
 - (C) The faded paint on the soldier and his missing weapon
 - (D) The soldier believing that he would one day be found

- 3** Decide whether each detail develops the theme that relationships come with obligations.

Select **ONE** correct answer in each row.

	Develops the Theme	Does Not Develop the Theme
Although the soldier is covered in dirt, the narrator immediately treasures him.	(A)	(B)
Contemplating the mystery of the soldier's past makes the narrator feel dizzy.	(A)	(B)
The narrator imagines the soldier sacrificed himself to help his friends escape.	(A)	(B)
The narrator wonders whether the soldier has been there for weeks.	(A)	(B)
Because the narrator has never saved anyone before, he takes the responsibility seriously.	(A)	(B)

- 4** Read this sentence from paragraph 4.

A miniature world rose here, all for my single, lonely, faded soldier, who had nothing in the world except me.

What does this sentence convey about the narrator?

- (A) He intends to search for another soldier to add to the world he created.
 - (B) He worries about what will happen to the soldier in the future.
 - (C) He resents the soldier because he believes the soldier has grown too needy.
 - (D) He feels a strong sense of responsibility to the soldier he discovered.
-

- 5** What is the most likely reason the author shifts from a descriptive to a chronological structure in paragraphs 1 and 2?

- (A) To emphasize that the narrator's feelings about the discovery begin to change
- (B) To create suspense by gradually revealing details about the narrator's discovery
- (C) To describe why the narrator decided to dig in the place the discovery was made
- (D) To explain how the narrator came to face a conflict as a result of making the discovery

- 6** Which statement best explains the irony in paragraphs 2 and 3?
- (A) The narrator discovers the soldier in a location that he has already explored many times before.
 - (B) The narrator fails to recognize the significance of the letters stamped into the base of the soldier.
 - (C) The narrator hates that the soldier was buried for so long, but then he keeps it hidden in his own pocket.
 - (D) The narrator digs up the soldier completely covered in mud, which enhances his estimation of its value.
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- 7** Which quotation from the story shows that the narrator is recalling a time from earlier in childhood?
- (A) *over there is the big tree that I now know is going to die in a few years and fall down* (paragraph 1)
 - (B) *Come and take a closer look with me.* (paragraph 1)
 - (C) *I imagined the rain falling on him, and the snow, and the bugs crawling over him.* (paragraph 3)
 - (D) *I spent hours and hours building* (paragraph 4)

- 8** Read these quotations from the excerpt.

The ground here is muddy and covered in weeds, and when I first moved into this house I played here in the dirt.
(paragraph 1)

Kneel down in the weeds here. This is exactly where I was when I found him. I was kneeling, just like you are now, digging and playing, when I made a most incredible discovery. (paragraph 2)

How does the author's use of descriptive language in these quotations affect the reader?

- (A) It captures the narrator's emotional reaction to the discovery.
 - (B) It suggests that the backyard is an ideal place to play.
 - (C) It places the reader in the moment with the narrator.
 - (D) It provides hints to the reader about the narrator's later actions.
-

- 9** How does the author's use of questions in paragraph 3 contribute to the tone of the story?

- (A) The questions that have no answer contribute to the introspective tone.
- (B) The questions about the narrator's arrival contribute to the cooperative tone.
- (C) The questions about the soldier's lack of fear contribute to the triumphant tone.
- (D) The questions that relate to passing time contribute to the urgent tone.

10 In paragraph 3, the narrator describes an imaginary flashback to the time the soldier was buried. Which idea in the excerpt does the flashback help explain?

- (A) Why the narrator makes a detailed inspection of the soldier
- (B) Why the narrator keeps the soldier secret
- (C) Why the narrator tries to get the soldier to tell how he had been lost
- (D) Why the narrator treats the soldier kindly

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

The Power of Open-Ended Play

- 1 A small child excitedly unwraps a present while her family watches and snaps photos as the toy inside is revealed. The child removes the toy, smiles at it, and then turns her full attention to the wrapping paper, the box, or maybe even the ribbon that had bound the gift together. Maybe she puts the box on her head or ties the ribbon to the leg of a table. This child is engaging in what educators and child psychologists refer to as open-ended play. This kind of play is child, rather than adult, directed and generally uses common objects in interesting ways. It has no expected outcome of intent. Mounting research supports that open-ended play is beneficial in sometimes surprising ways. While it can be difficult to foster open-ended play in our fast-paced, highly scheduled lives, experts suggest it is important to try.

Loose Parts

- 2 Open-ended play starts with the objects children play with. Electronic toys and toys based on movies and television shows often steer kids into playing with them in specific ways. There is typically a right and a wrong way to play a video game. A character from a movie comes with a premade story line. Imitating a character from a movie rather than creating a new one can stifle creativity. Open-ended toys, sometimes referred to as "loose parts," give children the room to do something new and creative. Loose parts could be almost anything, including blocks, egg cartons, seashells, cardboard boxes, and other common objects. They are the basis for imaginative play that helps children become more creative.

Becoming More Creative Adults

- 3 When a child picks up a stick and imagines that it is a horse or a telescope, she is exercising the ability to create and to think for herself. Each step in the process of free play is valuable. It begins by choosing an object. In the example given, the child sees the stick. She relates the stick to some other object. In her imagination the stick transforms into something else that has its own purpose. This process represents creativity

in action. Manufactured toys do not give the mind the same freedom to imagine as do common objects that do not come with expectations or history.

- 4 A child engaged in open-ended play is making more choices than a child whose play and activities are directed. Learning to make choices and creating opportunities to succeed in these choices are essential skills for adults. The Association for Childhood Education International, in their statement on creative thought, focused on the importance of having a workforce of people capable of being more than parts in a machine. Productive adults can think for themselves, make choices, and solve problems. Open-ended play supports and develops problem-solving thinking.

Promoting Physical Health

- 5 Open-ended play promotes physical development and good health. This is especially true when children are playing outdoors where they can run, jump, and climb. Both open-ended and organized activities can help children become more confident while developing motor skills and general fitness. However, open-ended active play also has the advantage of being child directed. Kids are making the decisions, determining the rules, and learning to negotiate with their peers.

The Value of Mistakes

- 6 Obviously, adult-directed activities are more controlled and more predictable, and often shield children from making mistakes. Open-ended play allows children to follow their interests and to make mistakes. With parents playing a more passive role, children are responsible for these mistakes. This allows for more chances to solve problems and creates opportunities for children to be successful, building confidence in their ability to reason.

The Value of Boredom

- 7 Kids do not always immediately choose open-ended play when they are provided with the time for it. Sometimes children get bored. However, boredom is not necessarily a bad thing—it can be a useful state of mind. A bored child must think her way out of boredom. She must observe her surroundings, consider her options, and then decide for herself what will make her feel

better. According to education professor Michael Patte, kids can learn to find happiness when fighting boredom.

- 8 The reality of modern life is that much of children's lives will be structured. But it does not all have to be, nor should it be. When parents, teachers, and caregivers take a step back, they open the door wider for children to create and learn.

11 Read the dictionary entry.

engaging \in-'gā-jin\ v

1. entering into competition or combat **2.** doing or taking part in a specific activity **3.** coming together to interlock various components **4.** arranging or obtaining the services of another

Which definition best matches the use of the word *engaging* in paragraph 1?

- (A) Definition 1
 - (B) Definition 2
 - (C) Definition 3
 - (D) Definition 4
-

12 Who is most likely the intended audience for this article?

- (A) People creating new toys for children
- (B) People studying to be behaviorists
- (C) People taking care of children
- (D) People interested in art and creativity

13 Which sentence best states the author’s claim about open-ended play?

- (A) The outcome of open-ended play varies according to the choices that children make.
 - (B) Open-ended play should begin with children finding the right toy to fit the chosen activity.
 - (C) Children who engage in open-ended play will frequently make mistakes.
 - (D) Children should be given the freedom to engage in open-ended play so that they can imagine and problem solve.
-

14 What is the most likely reason the author uses the heading “Loose Parts” for paragraph 2?

- (A) To contrast the main features of open-ended play and traditional play
- (B) To show the creative process involved in open-ended play
- (C) To emphasize the variety of objects that can be used during open-ended play
- (D) To introduce key features of the toys used during open-ended play

15 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What is one counterargument the author presents in the article?

- (A) Children prefer to choose for themselves how they play.
- (B) Children are too restricted by adult-directed play activities.
- (C) Open-ended play makes many adults uncomfortable.
- (D) Open-ended play removes accountability from adults.

Part B

What evidence does the author use to rebut the counterargument in Part A?

- (A) *Imitating a character from a movie rather than creating a new one can stifle creativity.* (paragraph 2)
- (B) *In her imagination the stick transforms into something else that has its own purpose.* (paragraph 3)
- (C) *This allows for more chances to solve problems and creates opportunities for children to be successful, building confidence in their ability to reason.* (paragraph 6)
- (D) *However, boredom is not necessarily a bad thing—it can be a useful state of mind.* (paragraph 7)

16 Which sentence best belongs in a summary of the article?

- (A) Electronic toys are less likely to lead to creative play because the toys are designed to be used in a specific way.
 - (B) Open-ended play can begin when a child decides to use a stick as a horse or as a telescope.
 - (C) An association for childhood education believes that people who think creatively are an important part of the workforce.
 - (D) Open-ended play can help children become independent thinkers and problem solvers when they grow up.
-

17 What is the most likely purpose of this article?

- (A) To show the benefits of traditional play
- (B) To teach children a variety of play options
- (C) To argue against providing too many play activities
- (D) To encourage the use of unstructured play activities

Read the next two selections. Then answer the questions.

The Cowboy's Home on Wheels

by LeeAnn Blankenship

- 1 Texas rancher Charles Goodnight had a problem. He needed skilled cowboys to drive his herd of two thousand longhorn cattle to New Mexico to be sold. He couldn't offer high wages. He couldn't promise easy jobs or even nice weather. But he decided that decent, warm meals might entice men to work for him.
- 2 In the mid- to late 1800s, cattle drives sometimes took three to four months, and once the drive began, there were no stores for hundreds of miles. All the food and supplies needed for the trip were carried on two-wheeled carts. Usually, the cowboy's food was boring and unappetizing.
- 3 Goodnight went to work and solved the problem. His invention of a mobile kitchen, the *chuck wagon*, got its name from the cowboy word for food, "chuck."
- 4 Goodnight took a surplus Army wagon and rebuilt it with Osage orange, a wood so tough that Indians used it to make bows. The wagon's iron axles were stronger than the wooden ones found on standard wagons, and the wider wheels lasted longer.
- 5 At the back of the wagon, Goodnight designed a big cabinet, called a *chuck box*, with a number of compartments and drawers. Cups, plates, eating utensils, flour, sugar, spices, dried fruit, pinto beans, and a keg for sourdough for biscuits could be stored separately there. One special drawer, called the *possible drawer*, held everything from first-aid supplies to needles and thread.
- 6 A hinged lid at the bottom of the chuck box folded down onto a swinging leg. This made a good worktable for the cook. The wagon also had a water barrel with a spigot; a toolbox; a coffee grinder; and a smaller box, the *boot*, for heavy pots and pans. Stretched underneath was a large piece of rawhide, the *possum belly*, for carrying fuel for fires.

- 7 The wagon also had a canvas top and room not only for bulky food items but also for extra clothing and bedrolls.
- 8 The first chuck wagon was an instant success. Eighteen cowhands joined Goodnight and his partner, Oliver Loving, to drive the cattle to New Mexico for a handsome profit. The route they took—later called the Goodnight-Loving Trail—became one of the most heavily used cattle trails in the Southwest.
- 9 The chuck wagon soon was the backbone of all successful cattle drives. Other ranchers created their own moving kitchens, and eventually the Studebaker Company produced chuck wagons that sold for \$75 to \$100 apiece, about [\$1,900 to \$2,500] today.
- 10 The chuck wagon was much more than a mobile kitchen. Sometimes called “the trail drive’s mother ship,” it was like a magnet that drew the men together.
- 11 The wagon and the ground around it were the cowboy’s home. There he enjoyed hot meals, a warm fire, and good companionship. He could also get a bandage, a haircut, or horse liniment for his sore muscles. And there, under the stars and around the chuck wagon, he crawled into his bedroll each night.
- 12 Though cowboys took their orders from the trail boss, the cook was king of the chuck wagon. Usually a retired cowhand, the cook was the hardest-working member of the trail team. He was the first up in the morning and the last in bed at night. Besides making meals, the cook packed and drove the chuck wagon, doctored sick or injured cowboys, pulled teeth, trimmed hair, repaired clothing, and settled bets and arguments.
- 13 Cooks were often grouchy and seemed to enjoy their reputations for being ill-tempered. It was said, “Crossin’ a cook is as risky as braidin’ a mule’s tail,” and “Only a fool argues with a skunk, a mule, or a cook.”
- 14 A good cook was essential to the drive’s success. One cowboy recalled, “A camp cook could do more toward making life pleasant . . . than any other man in the outfit.”
- 15 A good cook tried to offer a varied menu, even though he was limited to items that could be stored for weeks at a time. Cowboys ate plenty of beans, rice, sourdough biscuits, salt pork, and strong coffee. Dessert was a spoon of molasses, an

occasional pie, stewed tomatoes sweetened with sugar, or dried fruit such as apples, peaches, or prunes.

- 16 The need for long drives lessened by the 1890s, when railroads started running through cattle country. By then, Charles Goodnight's chuck wagon had found its place in history and in the hearts of thousands.

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The U-S-U Range

A traditional American cowboy ballad

O come cowboys and listen to my song,
I'm in hopes I'll please you and not keep you long;
I'll sing you of things you may think strange
About West Texas and the U-S-U range.¹

- 5 You may go to Stamford and there see a man
Who wears a white shirt and is asking for hands;
You may ask him for work and he'll answer you short,
He will hurry you up, for he wants you to start.
He will put you in a wagon and be off in the rain,
10 You will go up on Tongue River on the U-S-U range.

You will drive up to the ranch and there you will stop.
It's a little sod house with dirt all on top.
You will ask what it is and they will tell you out plain
That it's the ranch house on the U-S-U range.

- 15 You will go in the house and he will begin to explain;
You will see some blankets rolled up on the floor;
You may ask what it is and they will tell you out plain
That it is the bedding on the U-S-U range.

You are up in the morning at the daybreak
20 To eat cold beef and U-S-U steak,
And out to your work no matter if it's rain,—
And that is the life on the U-S-U range.

¹A range is an open region over which cattle, sheep, and other livestock may roam and feed.

You work hard all day and come in at night,
And turn your horse loose, for they say it's all right,
25 And set down to supper and begin to complain
Of the chuck that you eat on the U-S-U range.

The grub that you get is beans and cold rice
And U-S-U steak cooked up very nice;
And if you don't like that you needn't complain,
30 For that's what you get on the U-S-U range.

Now, kind friends, I must leave you, I no longer can remain,
I hope I have pleased you and given you no pain.
But when I am gone, don't think me strange,
For I have been a cow-puncher² on the U-S-U range.

"The U-S-U Range"—Public Domain

²Cow-puncher is another word for cowboy.

18 Which sentence about the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels” best represents the thesis of the article?

- (A) Chuck wagons stopped being useful once cattle drives no longer occurred.
 - (B) Chuck wagons were places where men gathered for companionship.
 - (C) Chuck wagons improved living conditions on cattle drives.
 - (D) Chuck wagons were important ways for companies to make money.
-

19 Based on paragraph 1 of the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels,” the reader can infer that ranchers —

- (A) required cowboys only once every year for cattle drives
 - (B) tended to lose money driving their cattle to market
 - (C) often drove the cattle without the help of others
 - (D) struggled to get cowboys to work for them on cattle drives
-

20 The details in paragraph 4 of the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels” support the key idea that chuck wagons were —

- (A) made to withstand harsh conditions
- (B) invented only after trial and error
- (C) designed with the cook in mind
- (D) sometimes used in military conflicts

21 In paragraph 1 of the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels,” what does the word *entice* mean?

- (A) To focus
 - (B) To require
 - (C) To treat
 - (D) To attract
-

22 What is the most likely reason the author includes the information in paragraph 2 of the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels”?

- (A) To suggest that only those with few other options became cowboys
- (B) To explain the challenges that had to be overcome by Goodnight
- (C) To suggest that cattle drives were longer than they needed to be
- (D) To explain why Goodnight could only offer cowboys low wages

- 23** Read the question carefully. Then record your answer in the box provided.

How does the descriptive organizational pattern used in paragraphs 4–7 of the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels” contribute to the development of the thesis? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

- 24** In the poem “The U-S-U Range,” what is the connection between the setting and the theme?

 - (A) Determination can help overcome challenging conditions.
 - (B) Proper provisions can improve the likelihood of success.
 - (C) Hard work can make loneliness more tolerable.
 - (D) Unexpected places can come to feel like home.

25 What effect do the rhyme scheme and rhythm have on the poem “The U-S-U Range”?

- (A) They create a tone of understanding.
 - (B) They create a tone of urgency.
 - (C) They create a sympathetic tone.
 - (D) They create a musical tone.
-

26 Which statement expresses an idea about society found in the poem “The U-S-U Range”?

- (A) Loneliness can strengthen one’s drive to succeed.
 - (B) Reality does not always align with one’s expectations.
 - (C) Friends working together can make a difficult job easy.
 - (D) Diligence does not always guarantee satisfaction.
-

27 What does the repetitive structure of the poem “The U-S-U Range” help convey?

- (A) The teamwork valued by a cowboy
- (B) The singer’s resigned acceptance of cowboy life
- (C) The singer’s process of becoming a cowboy
- (D) The drive of a cowboy to overcome adversity

28 What is the best summary of the poem "The U-S-U Range"?

- (A) A cowboy sings about what it is like to work at the U-S-U range. He describes how to get a job at the range and what the ranch looks like. He details the uncomfortable conditions and hard work, but he also says life on the range has to be accepted for what it is.
 - (B) A cowboy complains about life on the U-S-U range and warns any listeners to his song about the working conditions cowboys must endure. He describes the ranch house as nothing but a sod house. He says good-bye and hopes his song has pleased his listeners.
 - (C) A cowboy who worked at the U-S-U range sings a song that describes the ranch in detail. He wants his fellow cowboys to know what they should be prepared to find if they should go work there. There are only blankets instead of a bed, and the food consists mostly of beans and rice.
 - (D) A cowboy who is leaving the U-S-U range sings about his experiences there. He describes where to go to get a job at the range, and he warns that the work takes place every day, even when it is raining. The food provided to the cowboys never changes.
-

29 How is the impact of the setting of the article "The Cowboy's Home on Wheels" **DIFFERENT** from the impact of the setting of the poem "The U-S-U Range"?

- (A) The article's setting of vast open spaces emphasizes the long journey of a cowboy, while the poem's setting of a sod house conveys their feelings of confinement.
- (B) The article's setting of a chuck wagon on the open range presents the small comforts of life on a cattle drive, while the poem's ranch setting shows the difficult life of a cowboy.
- (C) The article's peaceful setting of the Goodnight Ranch shows the helpful innovations, while the poem's U-S-U Range setting presents the dangerous life of a cowboy.
- (D) The article's setting of the cattle drive emphasizes the common work activities of a cowboy, while the poem's ranch setting conveys their leisure activities.

30 BOTH the author of the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels” and the speaker of the poem “The U-S-U Range” would most likely agree that —

- (A) ranchers needed to be creative to attract qualified hands
 - (B) the bunk house was the most important place on a ranch
 - (C) work circumstances were consistent from ranch to ranch
 - (D) cowboys were treated respectfully to keep them on the job
-

31 How do the **DIFFERENCES** in the points of view in the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels” and in the poem “The U-S-U Range” contribute to the reader’s understanding of life as a cowboy?

- (A) The third-person point of view in the article conveys the opinions of two ranchers in the past, while the first-person point of view in the poem delivers the opinion of only one person.
- (B) The third-person point of view in the article presents facts about an aspect of cowboy life, while the first-person point of view in the poem offers insight into a cowboy’s thoughts about life on the range.
- (C) The third-person point of view in the article provides historical details about cowboy life, while the first-person point of view in the poem describes how cowboys behaved.
- (D) The third-person point of view in the article sets forth the reactions of several cowboys to ranching conditions, while the first-person point of view in the poem describes an energetic response to working on a ranch.

- 32** Read the article “The Cowboy’s Home on Wheels” and the poem “The U-S-U Range.” Based on the information in both selections, write a response to the following:

Explain how the author of the article and the poet both emphasize how the quality of food had an effect on cowboys’ morale.

Write a well-organized informational essay that uses specific evidence from the selections to support your answer.

Remember to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use evidence from both selections in your response
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

- review the selections
- plan your response
- write your response
- revise and edit your response

Record your answer in the box provided.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Elijah wrote the following paper to present his argument for learning to play a musical instrument. Read Elijah's paper and look for revisions he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Benefits of Learning to Play a Musical Instrument

(1) People play musical instruments to express themselves, to relax, or even to impress friends and family. (2) As you can see, there are many reasons to learn to play a musical instrument.

(3) First, learning to play an instrument can significantly speed up the amount of time it takes an individual to react to a stimulus or event. (4) According to a study published in the scientific journal *Brain and Cognition*, musicians had faster reaction times than non-musicians. (5) Through years of practice with their instruments, musicians have trained their mind to respond quickly to the next note on the page. (6) They have also learned to continually adjust their playing to blend in with a band or orchestra. (7) Participating in sports, driving a car, and response to emergency situations can all benefit from these sharpened reaction times.

(8) Musicians have also been found to have better memory than non-musicians. (9) Researchers at the Chinese University of Hong Kong conducted a study. (10) It showed that students who were involved in their school's orchestra for one to five years significantly outperformed students with no musical training when it came to word recall. (11) The scientists believe that the process of learning to play an instrument exercises the same region of the brain that humans use for memory. (12) When people are training to become musicians, they are also training their memory. (13) But the benefits of playing an instrument don't stop with reaction times and memory. (14) Playing an instrument can also build brain power.

(15) When comparing the brains of amateur musicians, professional musicians, and non-musicians, researchers found that the amount of "gray matter" in the brain increases with musical ability. (16) The study found that professional musicians have the most gray matter, as reported in *The Journal of Neuroscience*. (17) Amateur musicians have the second most amount of gray matter, and non-musicians have the least. (18) Gray matter gives humans the ability to process

information. (19) The amount present in the brain is believed to be an indicator of intelligence.

(20) While there are many benefits to learning to play an instrument, some people may never try. (21) One of the main barriers is the misconception that playing a musical instrument is too costly. (22) However, there are inexpensive ways to be introduced to an instrument. (23) For example, students entering middle school might choose to join their school's band or orchestra. (24) Instruments can be borrowed or rented for a nominal fee, and consistent instruction is free. (25) Furthermore, people today can find free lessons on the internet for almost any instrument.

(26) When learning a new instrument, some people become sad at their lack of progress and give up. (27) It is true that learning something new takes dedication and patience. (28) The rewards, however, are great for those who persevere. (29) With the right plan and the appropriate investment of time, anyone can learn to play an instrument. (30) Those who do will benefit from the process and develop a skill they can enjoy for many years to come.

33 Which sentence should replace sentence 2 to provide a more effective claim for this paper?

- (A) Regardless of the reason, musical instruments are a meaningful addition to a person's skill set.
 - (B) Throughout history, musical instruments have been enjoyed by young and old alike.
 - (C) Clearly, there are many different types of musical instruments, and all are beneficial and valuable.
 - (D) However, learning to play a musical instrument can benefit a person's life in a host of other ways.

34 Sentence 7 needs to be revised. In the box provided, rewrite sentence 7 in a clear and effective way.

35 What is the most effective transition to add to the beginning of sentence 12?

- (A) Furthermore
 - (B) Therefore
 - (C) However
 - (D) To illustrate
-

36 What revision, if any, is needed in sentence 16?

- (A) The study, as reported in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, found that professional musicians have the most gray matter.
 - (B) The study found that professional musicians, as reported in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, have the most gray matter.
 - (C) The study was reported in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, it found that professional musicians have the most gray matter.
 - (D) No change is needed.
-

37 Which sentence could best follow and support sentence 24?

- (A) Some instruments are simply too expensive for the average young person to purchase and learn how to play well.
- (B) This is a great way for a student to achieve the memory and recall benefits of learning to master a musical instrument.
- (C) For older individuals who don't have that option, there are inexpensive models of many instruments designed especially for beginners.
- (D) People who build into their lives the focused time that it takes to learn to play an instrument rarely regret the many hours spent on it.

38 The word **sad** is not the most effective word to use in sentence 26. Which word should replace **sad** in this sentence?

- (A) afflicted
- (B) mournful
- (C) discouraged
- (D) melancholy

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Arya wrote this story about a girl who travels with her family to Big Bend National Park in West Texas. Read Arya's story and look for revisions she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Adventures in Big Bend

(1) When Becca's parents informed her that the family would be trekking to Big Bend National Park in West Texas for spring break, Becca was not excited. (2) The only things she knew about Big Bend were some things her friend Shayla had told her. (3) It was in the middle of nowhere, the cell phone reception was spotty, and there was very little to do. (4) Becca seriously questioned her parents' decision-making on this one.

(5) As the family prepared to leave for their trip one early morning, Becca's parents' bubbly enthusiasm contrasted sharply with her apprehensiveness while they did the necessary things to get ready. (6) "Cheer up, Rabbit!" her father encouraged, while she grimaced at the nickname she had had since she was five. (7) Becca had always loved animals, but one silly encounter with a rabbit in the backyard had made an enormous impression on her family. (8) Ever since that day, she had been affectionately known as "Rabbit."

(9) Becca tossed her bag into the trunk of the car and asked how long it was going to take to get to the infamous park. (10) When her mom responded that it would take about five hours, Becca's mood soured even more. (11) "Is the scenery at least decent along the way?" she whined.

(12) "Well, hon," Becca's father replied optimistically, "if you enjoy lengthy stretches of highway in the midst of desert-like landscape, then yes, it's phenomenal scenery! (13) But I promise it'll be worth it when we get there, because the Chisos Mountains are breathtaking. (14) I give you my word it will all be worth it." (15) Then he added, "I can't wait for you to get a glimpse of them."

(16) "Yeah, can't wait," Becca replied sarcastically under her breath as she braced herself for one long, boring car ride and one long, boring vacation. (17) She climbed reluctantly into the back seat. (18) She rested her head against a pillow and promptly fell into a deep slumber.

(19) After hours of tossing and turning in the uncomfortable confines of the back seat, Becca was startled awake by her mother's excited proclamation: "We're heeeeere!" (20) Becca groggily raised her head and then bolted upright. (21) They were just inside Big Bend National Park, yet she could've sworn her dad had missed a turn and erroneously navigated to Colorado. (22) Glorious, tall, colorful mountains surrounded them at every bend as they meandered down a slow, winding road to the lodge where they would stay. (23) After rounding a hairpin turn, they confronted an incredible vista of a deep canyon overshadowed by steep, rocky cliffs. (24) Gazing wide-eyed into the canyon, Becca suddenly spotted a large animal crouched on a rock ledge. (25) "Dad, look!" she yelled.

(26) After a while Becca thought about the opinions her friend Shayla had shared with her. (27) "Whooooaaa, Rabbit, would you look at that? (28) You spotted a mountain lion! (29) Amazing." (30) The three of them gaped in astonishment at the majestic cat serenely surveying his domain. (31) Becca could barely speak.

(32) "Uh, Mom, Dad," Becca finally uttered as the cat slunk off into some tall brush. (33) "I didn't know Big Bend was so beautiful or that mountain lions resided here. (34) I can hardly believe what I am seeing!"

(35) "Well, Becca," her dad said, "you have to keep your mind open to things. (36) You'll often be surprised!"

(37) "The lodge looks so nice," Becca's mom added, "and this will be a vacation to remember. (38) This park is home to a tremendous variety of wildlife, including black bears!"

(39) Becca didn't know how to answer. (40) "Well, what are we waiting for? (41) Let's hurry to the lodge and put our things away so we can start exploring! (42) I'm so excited!"

(43) Becca's parents smiled knowingly. (44) They had been confident all along that their Rabbit would feel right at home in this environment of stunning natural beauty and wildlife.

39 How should Arya revise sentence 5 to avoid repeating ideas?

- (A) As the family prepared to leave for their trip one early morning, contrasting sharply with her apprehensiveness were the necessary things they did to get ready and Becca's parents' bubbly enthusiasm.
 - (B) As the family prepared to leave for their trip one early morning, Becca's parents' bubbly enthusiasm contrasted sharply with her apprehensiveness.
 - (C) As the family prepared to leave for their trip one early morning, they did the necessary things to get ready that contrasted sharply with Becca's parents' bubbly enthusiasm and her apprehensiveness.
 - (D) As the family prepared and got ready to leave for their trip one early morning, Becca's apprehensiveness and her parents' bubbly enthusiasm contrasted.
-

40 What revision, if any, is needed in sentence 7?

- (A) Becca had always loved animals because one silly encounter, being with a rabbit in the backyard, had made an enormous impression on her family.
- (B) Becca had always loved animals and with a rabbit in the backyard, one silly encounter had made an enormous impression on her family.
- (C) Becca had always loved animals, but one silly encounter had made an enormous impression on her family with a rabbit in the backyard.
- (D) No change is needed.

41 Arya has included a sentence in the fourth paragraph (sentences 12–15) that repeats information. Which sentence should be removed from this paragraph?

- (A) Sentence 12
 - (B) Sentence 13
 - (C) Sentence 14
 - (D) Sentence 15
-

42 What is the most effective way to combine sentences 17 and 18?

- (A) After climbing reluctantly into the back seat, she rested her head against a pillow and promptly fell into a deep slumber.
- (B) She climbed reluctantly into the back seat, and she rested her head against a pillow, and she promptly fell into a deep slumber.
- (C) As she climbed reluctantly into the back seat, she rested her head against a pillow that promptly fell into a deep slumber.
- (D) She climbed reluctantly into the back seat, she rested her head against a pillow and promptly fell into a deep slumber.

43 Which sentence can replace sentence 26 and improve the transition between the sixth paragraph (sentences 19–25) and the seventh paragraph (sentences 26–31)?

- (A) Becca thought that her dad had not heard her.
 - (B) Becca's dad smiled and slowed the car to a halt.
 - (C) Becca didn't know where her dad was going.
 - (D) Becca's dad appeared to be somewhat confused.
-

44 Arya wants a more effective topic sentence for the eleventh paragraph (sentences 39–42). Which sentence should replace sentence 39?

- (A) Becca was anxious to get into the lodge.
- (B) Becca looked hesitant.
- (C) Becca knew very little about bears.
- (D) Becca was finally convinced.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Hillary is writing a paper about a program that helps people learn to give speeches. Read these paragraphs from the beginning of Hillary's paper and look for corrections she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Hate Public Speaking? Try Toastmasters

(1) Public speaking is stressful for many people. (2) It does not matter whether the occasion is a class presentation, a board meeting, or a family celebration. (3) Many people say they would rather go to the dentist than give a speech. (4) Luckily for them, there is an organization called Toastmasters international that helps reluctant speakers. (5) With some effort, they can become skilled at public speaking.

(6) As everyone knows, the best way to become proficient at throwing a football or playing the piano is to practice public speaking is no different. (7) People who belong to public speaking clubs overcome their nerves, and bad habits by standing up and giving speeches in warm, supportive environments.

(8) Toastmasters was founded by Ralph Smedley. (9) Who wanted to promote leadership and communication skills in young men and thought that public speaking clubs would be a good way to do so. (10) Smedley's informal club gatherings proved popular, and in 1924 he organized his first official club meeting. (11) Smedley also wrote guidelines to help other people organize their own public speaking clubs.

45 What change needs to be made in sentence 4?

- (A) Change ***there is*** to ***theirs***
 - (B) Change ***called*** to ***it is called***
 - (C) Change ***Toastmasters international*** to ***Toastmasters International***
 - (D) Change ***helps*** to ***help***
-

46 Select the **ONE** response that corrects the error in sentence 6.

As everyone knows, the best way to become proficient at throwing a

football or playing the piano is

- (A) to practice, public speaking
- (B) to practice; public speaking
- (C) to practice public, speaking
- (D) to practice: public speaking

different.

47 What is the correct way to write sentence 7?

- (A) People who belong to public speaking clubs overcome their nerves and bad habits. By standing up to give speeches in warm, supportive environments.
 - (B) People who belong to public speaking clubs overcoming their nerves and bad habits by standing up and giving speeches in warm, supportive environments.
 - (C) People who belong to public speaking clubs overcome their nerves and bad habits by standing up and giving speeches in warm, supportive environments.
 - (D) People who belong to public speaking clubs overcome their nerves and bad habits by standing up and giving speeches. In warm, supportive environments.
-

48 What is the correct way to write sentence 9?

- (A) Smedley wanted to promote leadership and communication skills in young men and thought that public speaking clubs would be a good way to do so.
- (B) Smedley wanted to promote leadership and communication skills in young men and thought this. That public speaking clubs would be a good way to do so.
- (C) Smedley wanted to promote leadership and communication skills in young men he thought that public speaking clubs would be a good way to do so.
- (D) Smedley wanted to promote leadership and communication skills. In young men and thought that public speaking clubs would be a good way to do so.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Rohan is writing a paper to tell about a famous hiking trail. Read these paragraphs from the body of Rohan's paper and look for corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Thru-Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail

(1) This rugged hike spans 2,650 miles and goes through 26 national forests and seven national parks. (2) Hikers who complete the entire trail pass through varied types of wilderness, including scrubby desert lands, forested hills, and jagged peaks. (3) As they hike, they experience a range of elevations from just above sea level to 13,150 feet at the trail's highest point.

(4) The PCT dates back to 1932. (5) At that time a hiker named Clinton C. Clarke dreams of linking existing trails to make one long trail. (6) It would stretch all the way from Mexico to Canada. (7) Clarke mobilized different groups, including youth scouts and outdoor clubs. (8) Together they mapped the route and constructed the trails. (9) The project got a boost when President Lyndon B. Johnson designated the PCT as one of two national trails in 1968. (10) Despite this, the task was so big that the PCT was not officially completed until 1993.

(11) In recent years the number of thru-hikers on the PCT have skyrocketed. (12) This may be due to a best-selling book and subsequent movie in which a woman described her experiences hiking the trail. (13) More people seem willing to brave the potential obstacles, which include loneliness, treacherous weather, and wild-animal encounters.

49 What change needs to be made in sentence 2?

- (A) Insert a comma after **Hikers**
 - (B) Change **who** to **that**
 - (C) Change **pass** to **passes**
 - (D) Change **peeks** to **peaks**
-

50 What change should be made in sentence 5?

- (A) Change **hiker** to **Hiker**
 - (B) Change **named** to **he was named**
 - (C) Change **dreams** to **dreamed**
 - (D) Insert a comma after **trails**
-

51 What change should be made in sentence 9?

- (A) Change **boost** to **boosted**
- (B) Change **President** to **president**
- (C) Delete the comma after the word **one**
- (D) Change **national** to **National**

52 What change, if any, is needed in sentence 11?

- (A) Change ***recent*** to ***resent***
- (B) Insert a comma after ***thru-hikers***
- (C) Change ***have skyrocketed*** to ***has skyrocketed***
- (D) No change is needed.



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