# ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SAMPLE ITEMS**

**GRADE 5**

## Samples to Success

Sample items provide valuable insight into how students engage with different texts, tasks, and contexts, highlighting the types of opportunities they need for success in the classroom. These items offer a shared reference point for understanding proficiency expectations, complementing the assessment's role in measuring learning. By analyzing items alongside performance data, educators can gain a deeper understanding of students' strengths and areas for growth. Students thrive in environments rich with diverse materials, challenges that vary in task type, and multiple avenues for demonstrating understanding. High-quality instruction, aligned with the learning goals, is the most effective way to support students' growth and prepare them for success.
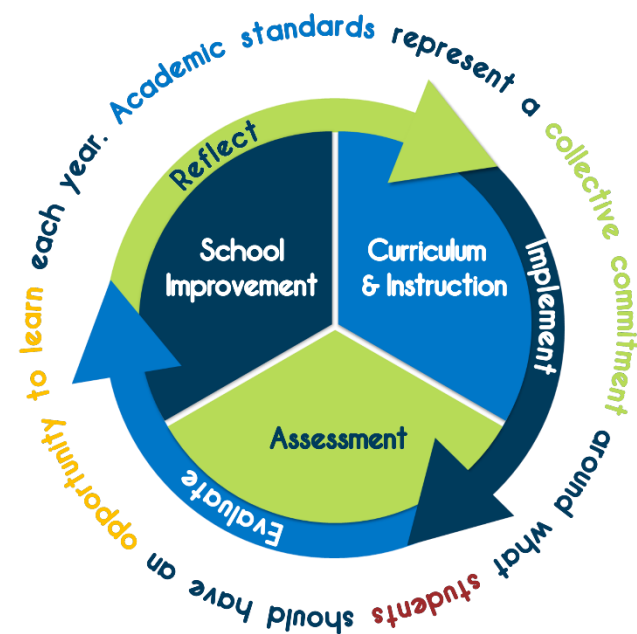


Test questions can measure a single skill or a set of knowledge and skills. The ELA test differs from other subjects in that it has fewer items overall, but each item assesses multiple skills or knowledge by asking students to demonstrate skills through performance, such as writing a response to literary or informational texts. Therefore, what differentiates the levels of performance are the degree to and quality with which a student performs.

# Grade 5 – Claim 1: Reading Literary Text

## 1st Text – P. 5-7

## 2nd Text– P. 12-13

## Writing Task – P. 17

Multiple items on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) are linked to a set of texts to read, often accompanied by images or multimedia. The sample item set has two sections from a literary text and a writing task. Small screenshots and page numbers are provided to help you navigate the linked sample item set.

Each text is followed by several two-part multiple-choice items. Students must select a correct response in Part A and supporting evidence in Part B. The set also has items that require different interactions, such as sequencing events where partial credit is possible.

Students at the **above proficient** and **proficient** levels are likely to correctly respond to most multiple-choice items and items such as the sequencing item in this sample. **Approaching proficient** students are likely to select a correct answer for Part A, but not for Part B and complete the sequencing item with two correct interactions to receive partial credit. **Below proficient** students may inaccurately respond to Part A and Part B and inaccurately sequence most or all events.

This sample item set also contains a Literary Analysis writing task comparing two texts. Student responses are graded according to page 3 of the Literary Analysis Rubric. Literary writing tasks often contribute to a student's **Reading Comprehension** score in addition to their **Writing** score. Student writing samples and annotations are found in the Written Expression Claim section in this document.

| Two-part Multiple-choice P. 10 | Sequencing Table P. 9 | Answer Key P. 3 | Answer Key P. 4 | Written Response Scoring Rubric P. 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## 1st Text P. 5-8

Today you will research giant pandas. You will read the article "Giant Pandas." Then you will read the article "Helping Giant Pandas" and a passage from the article "Giant Panda Cubs Give Hope to an Endangered Species." As you review these sources, you will gather information and answer questions about giant pandas so you can write an essay.

Read the article "Giant Pandas." Then answer the questions.

Giant Pandas

**Life Out in the Wild**

1  An adult giant panda spends much of its day resting, seeking food, and eating. Unlike other bears from temperate climates, giant pandas do not hibernate. Until recently, scientists thought giant pandas spent most of their lives alone. They believed that males and females met only during the breeding season.

2  Recent studies paint a different picture. Small groups of giant pandas share a large territory and sometimes meet outside the breeding season. Much remains to be learned about the secret lives of these animals. Every new discovery helps scientists in their battle to save this species.

**Giving Birth in Captivity**

3  Giant pandas are also born in captivity. Captive breeding centers were started because giant pandas are so endangered. The giant pandas' naturally slow breeding rate prevents a population from recovering quickly from illegal hunting, habitat loss, and other human-related causes of death. The captive breeding centers provide a protected place for giant pandas to breed and for baby pandas to grow up. One of the most famous centers for breeding baby pandas is the Wolong Nature Reserve.

**What to do with Twins**

4  When pandas are born in captivity, they often have twins. Panda mothers will only care for one baby at a time. This means the keepers at the breeding center have to help care for the babies and keep them healthy. They feed

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## 2nd Text P. 13

Read the article "Helping Giant Pandas." Then answer the questions.

Helping Giant Pandas

1  People the world over love the black-and-white bears known as pandas. The giant panda is a national treasure in China, and these rare bears are protected by law. Today, only around 1,600 giant pandas survive on Earth. Scientists are working together to find solutions to the problems these beautiful bears face.

2  With so few pandas in the wild, scientists are trying to understand the ways the bears find one another for breeding. Researchers have put special collars on some wild pandas. The collars send signals that the researchers can track. This helps them understand where the pandas are—it's difficult to study an animal that is so hard to locate as a panda! Scientists are also recording sounds pandas make in zoos. Researchers are even testing the scents pandas leave on trees and rocks to try to understand what messages these animals leave with scent.

3  Bamboo is the most important plant in a panda's life, because that is what it eats! Giant pandas eat four or five kinds of bamboo that grow in their home range. Sometimes their food supply is low because after bamboo produces seeds, the entire plant dies. When that happens, pandas move to another area. But now, with humans taking up much of the panda's habitat, pandas are often unable to move to another area and may starve. In some areas, humans have cleared forests to grow only one or two kinds of bamboo, but it is not the kind pandas need to survive.

4  Panda females use hollow tree stumps and stone caves as dens for raising their cubs. As forests are cleared for human uses, there are fewer dens available. San Diego Zoo researchers have been working with Chinese scientists to find out if putting man-made dens in the wild could help solve this problem.

5  Pandas only give birth every two years. Females give birth to one or two cubs, but often the mother can only care for one. China has some pandas in special places where they are cared for by humans. When a female panda gives birth to twins, the keepers help raise them so both cubs can survive. This has helped the number of pandas in the world to grow.

"Helping Giant Pandas" from San Diego Zoo Global, copyright © by San Diego Zoo Global. Used by permission.

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## 3rd Text P. 16-17

Read the passage from the article "Giant Panda Cubs Give Hope to an Endangered Species." Then answer the questions.

from "Giant Panda Cubs Give Hope to an Endangered Species"

by David George Gordon

**Pandas at Risk**

1  Scientists estimate that fewer than 2,000 giant pandas live in the mountains of central China. About another 200 pandas live in zoos and breeding stations, mostly in China. Giant pandas are among the most rare of the world's living mammals.

**Raising Babies**

2  "Every newborn panda is important," says Don Lindburg, leader of the giant panda research team at the San Diego Zoo. "After they have grown to adulthood, some of the captive-born cubs could be released into the mountainous wilds," he says. Those that mate and give birth to more cubs will help rebuild China's perilously small population of wild pandas.

3  "Breeding giant pandas is no easy feat," says Lindburg. Female giant pandas can produce cubs only once every two years. In the wild, an adult female may successfully raise five to eight cubs in her lifetime. By studying pandas in captivity, Lindburg and other scientists are discovering ways to improve the odds for the precious young pandas' survival.

4  Giant pandas once wandered freely across China to its eastern coast and from the country's mountaintops to the food-rich valleys below. But as more people made their homes in the valleys and began to farm the land, the naturally shy pandas lost a bit of their habitat and most of their food—the fresh stems, shoots, and leaves of wild bamboo plants.

**Hope for the Future**

5  Today conservation groups, scientists, zoo workers, and the Chinese government work to safeguard what remains of the pandas' habitat. Many think that creating bamboo corridors—strips of undisturbed land through which pandas can comfortably wander and feed—are one hope for saving the

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Here we provide an informational text sample item set. The set contains a set of informational texts to read along with several multiple-choice items. Small screenshots and page numbers are provided to help you navigate the linked sample item set.

Each informational text is followed by several two-part multiple-choice items. Students must select a correct response in Part A and supporting evidence in Part B.

Students at the **above proficient** and **proficient** levels are likely to correctly respond to most multiple-choice items. **Approaching proficient** students are likely to select a correct answer for Part A, but not for Part B. **Below proficient** students may inaccurately or inconsistently respond to either Part A or Part B.

The item set also contains a Research Simulation writing task. Student responses are graded according to page 3 the Research Simulation Task Rubric. All Research Simulation writing tasks contribute to a student's **Reading Comprehension** score in addition to their **Writing** score. Student writing samples and annotations are found in the Written Expression Claim section in this document.

| Two-part Multiple-choice P. 6-19 | Writing Task P. 11 | Answer Key P. 3 | Answer Key P. 4 | Written Response Scoring Rubric P. 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Part A**

What is the meaning of **indignantly** as it is used in paragraph 9?

A.  sadly

B.  kindly

C.  angrily

D.  happily

**Part B**

Which idea in the story supports the answer to Part A?

A.  Lars is concerned that Floe is lost.

B.  Lars is eager to give Floe fish to eat.

C.  Lars is bothered that Floe growls at him.

D.  Lars is glad to rescue Floe from the deep crack.

**3ʳᵈ Text P. 16-17**



Reading vocabulary items are found within Reading Informational and Reading Literary item sets. This released item set (the same sample set from Claim 2) contains two embedded reading passages; items; and an associated answer key, which is located at the beginning of the document. (Screenshots are included to support navigation of the linked items.)

Vocabulary items ask students to select a correct response in Part A and then to select a response that supports that answer in Part B of the item. In this particular item, students must select two words that help them understand the meaning of "estimate." Students at the **above proficient** and **proficient** levels are likely to correctly respond to all three interactions. **Approaching proficient** students are likely to select a correct answer for Part A and up to one correct answer out of two for Part B. **Below proficient** students may inaccurately respond to Part A and Part B.

| Two-part Multiple-choice P. 12 | Answer Key P. 3 |
|---|---|
|  |  |

## Written Expression Rubric P. 3



## Writing Task P. 8



**9.** Small houses are discussed in the passage from "Grandpa's Hobbit House" and the article "Itty-Bitty Houses." Write an essay that describes the key benefits of these types of houses. Be sure to include examples from **both** texts to support your ideas.

**For Research Simulation Writing Task – See Claim 2 to view all associated texts with the item**

The Written Expression Claim is measured through writing tasks. These sample student responses are from the Research Simulation Task introduced in Claim 2. This is followed by examples of student writing at different point levels. Comparing student responses to rubric criteria allows us to see how students earn points for performance of specific skills. The IAR writing rubrics align with performance level descriptors (PLDs) by specifying how different aspects of writing correspond to these proficiency levels.

Each writing sample is followed by notes that explain the rationale for the student's **Written Expression** score according to the rubric. The samples begin with the highest-scoring example and end with the lowest-scoring example. Students at the **above proficient** and **proficient** levels are likely to earn 3 or 2 points on writing tasks. **Approaching proficient** students are likely to earn 1 point. **Below proficient** students are likely to earn 0 points for their responses.

| 4 Points P. 10-12 | 3 Points P. 17-18 | 2 Points P. 23-24 | 1 Point P. 29-30 | 0 Points P. 34 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Notes P. 13 | Notes P. 6 | Notes P. 25 | Notes P. 31 | (Notes) P. 35 |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Note**: Most student responses are typed. Hand-written responses are consistent with paper-based, accommodated forms.

**Conventions Writing Rubric P. 3**

Sample writing tasks and student responses provide concrete examples of student writing at different levels. The IAR writing rubrics align with PLDs by specifying how different aspects of writing correspond to these proficiency levels. These released item responses contain notes that explain the rationale for student's **Conventions** score. These samples come from a variety of writing prompts; therefore, the types of responses will vary, but the conventions remain the focus of this claim. The samples begin with the highest-scoring example and end with the lowest-scoring example.

Students at the **above proficient** and **proficient** levels are likely to earn 3 or 2 points on writing tasks. **Approaching proficient** students are likely to earn 1 point. **Below proficient** students are likely to earn 0 points for their responses.

| 3 Points P. 3 | 2 Points P. 7 | 1 Point P. 11 | 0 Points P. 16 |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| Notes P. 4 | Notes P. 8 | Notes P. 12 | P. 17 |
|  |  |  |  |