ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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.

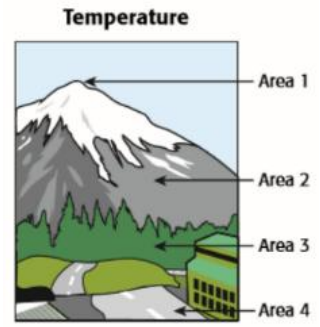
The items featured below are representative of those found on the ISA. The distinction between a student scoring proficient and above proficient on the ISA is primarily determined by the total points earned on all items, including those that require a brief written response. The ISA assesses content in clusters where a single stimulus or related stimuli are provided and then followed by a series of multiple-choice items and a single written response item. The samples below represent a single item taken from a larger cluster of items to illustrate the different types of stimuli with which students interact.

SCIENCE
GRADES 3-5

Earth and Space Science

Below Proficient

A class was studying how temperature and elevation are related.



Which area in the picture is the coldest?

A. Area 1

B. Area 2

C. Area 3

D. Area 4

Approaching Proficient

Students learn the use of fossil fuels has increased over time. Burning fossil fuels produces carbon dioxide. Table 1 shows the global surface temperatures from 1960 to 2020. The global surface temperature is measured in degrees Celsius (ºC).

Table 1. Change in Temperature Over Time

Year	Temperature (ºC)
1960	11.1
1980	11.6
2000	12.1
2020	13.2

Using the information, which statement describes what happened to the temperature from 1960 to 2020?

A. The temperature increased then decreased.

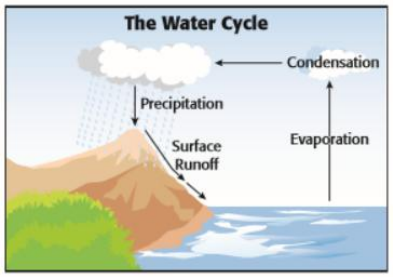
B. The temperature did not change.

C. The temperature decreased.

D. The temperature increased.

Proficient

The diagram shows how water is recycled in a lake ecosystem.



Which stage is most directly caused by energy from the sun?

A. Condensation

B. Evaporation

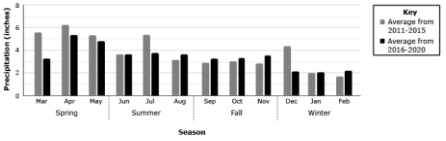
C. Precipitation

D. Surface runoff

Above Proficient

Green City was comparing the average monthly precipitation from 2011 to 2015 and 2016 to 2020. The data are in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Average Monthly Precipitation



Using Figure 1, which season had a **decrease** in average precipitation for all three months?

A. Spring

B. Summer

C. Fall

D. Winter

Life Sciences

Below Proficient

Students are studying animal behavior. Wolves usually live in groups called packs. Table 1 shows when wolf pups learn the behaviors needed to survive.

Table 1. Wolf Pups Behaviors

Age (weeks)	Learned Behaviors
3 – 7	- Playing with other pups -Wrestling with other pups
8 – 16	- Eating prey from adults - Watching adults hunt
17 – 51	- Traveling with adults - Hunting with adults

Using the information, how do wolf pups **benefit from living in a group?**

A. They learn to play from adults.

B. They learn to hunt from adults.

C. They learn to eat from other pups.

D. They learn to travel from other pups.

Approaching Proficient

Students are studying the nests of two types of birds. They observed 10 nests of each bird. Table 1 shows the number of nests with surviving baby birds.

Table 1. Nests with Surviving Baby Birds

Bird	Observation of Nests	Nests With Surviving Baby Birds
Robin		2 out of 10
Cardinal		8 out of 10

Using the information, which bird's population will increase faster and why?

A. Robin because each nest has three eggs

B. Robin because they have more nests with surviving baby birds

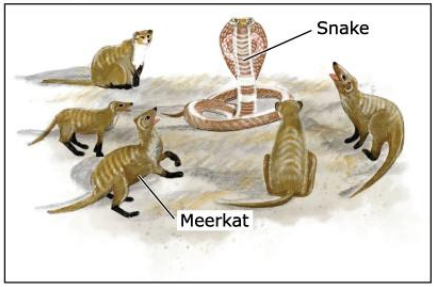
C. Cardinal because each nest has three eggs

D. Cardinal because they have more nests with surviving

Proficient

Students are studying meerkats. Meerkats live in groups. They try to look larger and make noise to defend themselves. Figure 1 shows meerkats defending themselves against a snake.

Figure 1. Meerkats and a Snake



Using the information, which statement best explains why meerkats benefit from living in groups?

A. Meerkats help get more food by hunting snakes together.

B. Meerkats sneak up quietly on predators to scare them away.

C. Meerkats crawl on the ground as a group to pass the snake safely.

D. Meerkats protect themselves by gathering to scare away predators.

Above Proficient

A class is studying inherited traits of fish. They measure the tail length and swimming speed of the fish in their classroom tank. Tables 1 and 2 show the data they collect.

Table 1. Parent Fish Data

Parent	Tail Length (millimeters)	Swimming Speed
1	4	Fast
2	10	Slow

Table 2. Offspring Fish Data

Tail Length (millimeters)	Swimming Speed	Number of Offspring
4	Fast	10
7	Medium	20
10	Slow	10

Using the information, how many of the offspring in Table 2 most likely belong to the parents in Table 1?

A. 10 because offspring only inherit traits from parent 1.

B. 20 because offspring only inherit traits from parent 2.

C. 30 because a mix of tail lengths can be inherited from both parents.

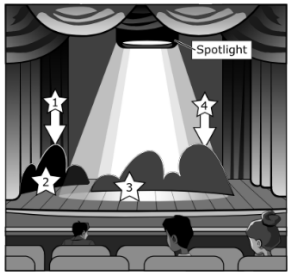
D. 40 because a mix of tail lengths can be inherited from both parents.

Physical Sciences

Below Proficient

Students are watching a school play. A spotlight only shines on some parts of the stage, and other parts of the stage remain unlit. Figure 1 shows a dark stage and the location lit by the spotlight as a white oval on the stage.

Figure 1. Four Stars on a Stage



Using the information, which star will the actor stand at for the audience to **best** see them and why?

A. Star 1 because most of the light is reflected off the audience

B. Star 2 because most of the light is reflected off the audience

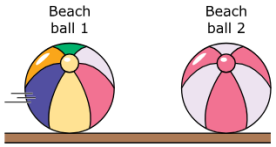
C. Star 3 because most of the light is reflected off the actor

D. Star 4 because most of the light is reflected off the actor

Approaching Proficient

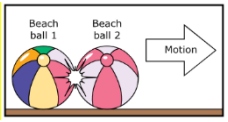
Students are studying the transfer of energy. Figure 1 shows a moving beach ball about to collide with a stationary beach ball.

Figure 1. Beach Ball Collision

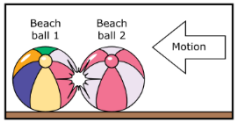


What **most likely** happens when the moving Beach ball 1 collides with the stationary Beach ball 2?

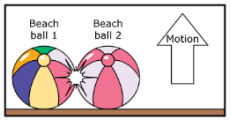
A.



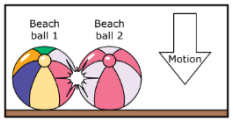
B.



C.



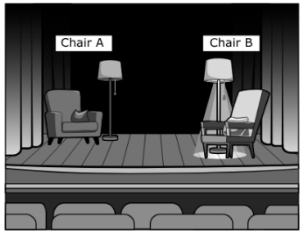
D.



Proficient

Students are watching a school play. Figure 1 shows two chairs on stage for a scene.

Figure 1. Stage with Chairs and Lamps



Using the information, why can the audience see chair B **better**? What change will make chair A **more** visible? What object reflects light to the audience?

Scoring Notes:

This is a 3-point item. One point is earned for correctly answering each question that is asked.

Exemplar Answer (earns all 3 possible points): Chair B can be seen because the light next to it is on. If you want to see chair A better, you should turn on the light. The light from the lamp reflects off the chair into the audience members' eyeballs.

Above Proficient

A class is learning how we use light to see objects. Figure 1 shows a student with open eyes. Figure 2 shows a student with closed eyes.

Figure 1. Open Eyes

Figure 2. Closed Eyes

Using the information, how does having closed eyes affect the student's ability to see the book?

- A. The eyes reflect light, so the student can see the book.
- B. The eyes reflect light, but the student cannot see the book.
- C. The book reflects light, so the student can see the book.
- D. The book reflects light, but the student cannot see the book.