GACE® Study Companion

Middle Grades Language Arts Assessment

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About the Assessment

Assessment Name	Middle Grades Language Arts
Grade Level	4–8
Test Code	011
Testing Time	2 hours
Test Duration	2.5 hours
Test Format	Computer delivered
Number of Selected-response Questions	90
Question Format	The test consists of a variety of short-answer questions such as selected-response questions, where you select one answer choice or multiple answer choices (depending on what the question asks for), questions where you enter your answer in a text box, and other types of questions. You can review the possible question types in the *Guide to Taking a GACE Computer-delivered Test*.
Number of Constructed-response Questions	2

The GACE Middle Grades Language Arts assessment is designed to measure the professional knowledge of prospective teachers of English Language Arts in middle schools in the state of Georgia.

The testing time is the amount of time you will have to answer the questions on the test. Test duration includes time for tutorials and directional screens that may be included in the test.

The questions in this assessment assess both basic knowledge across content areas and the ability to apply principles.

The total number of questions that are scored is typically smaller than the total number of questions on the test. Most tests that contain selected-response questions also include embedded pretest questions, which are not used in calculating your score. By including pretest questions in the assessment, ETS is able to analyze actual test-taker performance on proposed new questions and determine whether they should be included in future versions of the test.

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Content Specifications

This assessment is organized into content **subareas**. Each subarea is further defined by a set of **objectives** and their **knowledge statements**.

- The objectives broadly define what an entry-level educator in this field in Georgia public schools should know and be able to do.

- The knowledge statements describe in greater detail the knowledge and skills eligible for testing.

- Some tests also include content material at the evidence level. This content serves as descriptors of what each knowledge statement encompasses.

See a breakdown of the subareas and objectives for this assessment on the following pages.

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Test Subareas

Subarea	Approx. Percentage of Test
I. Reading	37%
II. Writing, Speaking, and Listening	23%
III. Language Use and Vocabulary	15%
IV. Analysis (constructed-response only)	25%

Test Objectives

Subarea I: Reading

Objective 1: Understands how to critically read, comprehend, and interpret literature

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Knows the major works, authors, and contexts of United States (specifically Georgia authors) and world literature that are appropriate for adolescents

B. Understands the defining characteristics of literary genres; e.g., poetry, literary nonfiction, drama

C. Knows the defining characteristics of major subgenres; e.g., sonnet, historical fiction, functional text

D. Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of a literary text can be supported with textual evidence

E. Understands how a theme is developed within and across works from a wide variety of literary genres and other media

F. Understands how literary elements (e.g., characterization, setting, plot development) contribute to the meaning of a text

G. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative language, connotative, or informal language) contribute to the meaning and tone of a text

H. Understands how poetic devices and structure contribute to the meaning of a poem

Objective 2: Understands how to critically read, comprehend, and interpret informational text

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands how literal and inferential interpretations of an informational text can be supported with textual evidence

B. Knows a variety of organizational patterns that can be used to develop a central idea in an informational text

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

C. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative, connotative, content-specific, or technical language) contributes to the meaning and tone of an informational text

D. Understands methods that authors use to convey purpose and perspective in informational texts

E. Understands methods that authors use in informational texts to appeal to a specific audience

F. Understands how authors develop and support a written argument in an informational text

G. Knows how to interpret media and non-print texts and how they influence an audience

Objective 3: Knows how commonly used research-based reading strategies support comprehension

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Knows commonly used research-based strategies for reading instruction; e.g., activating prior knowledge, modeling metacognitive practices, active reading

B. Understands how reading strategies (e.g., making predictions, making connections, summarizing) support comprehension

Subarea II: Writing, Speaking, and Listening

Objective 1: Understands the fundamental characteristics of writing, including research practices

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands the distinct characteristics of various types of writing; e.g., argumentative, informative/explanatory, narrative

B. Understands that effective writing is appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.

C. Understands the characteristics of clear and coherent writing; e.g., supporting details, organization, conventions

D. Knows effective and ethical research practices, including evaluating the credibility of multiple print and digital sources, gathering relevant information, and citing sources accurately

Objective 2: Understands the components of effective oral communication

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands the components of effective speech and presentation delivery

B. Understands the components of effective oral communication in a variety of settings; e.g., one-on-one, in groups

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Objective 3: Understands how to incorporate teaching approaches, assessment, and diversity into classroom instruction

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing

B. Understands purposes and methods of assessing reading, writing, speaking, and listening

C. Knows that students bring various perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds to reading, writing, listening, and speaking and knows how to incorporate that awareness into classroom instruction

Subarea III: Language Use and Vocabulary

Objective 1: Understands language use, the conventions of standard English, and vocabulary acquisition

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, syntax, and mechanics; e.g., sentence types, verb tenses, punctuation

B. Understands the use of affixes, context, and syntax to determine word meaning

C. Is familiar with variation in dialect and diction across regions, cultural groups, and time periods

Objective 2: Knows instructional approaches to support correct language usage and language and vocabulary development.

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands the use of print and digital reference materials to support correct language usage

B. Knows commonly used research-based approaches for supporting language acquisition and vocabulary development for diverse learners

Subarea IV: Analysis

Objective 1: Understands how to critically read, comprehend, and interpret literature

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands how literary elements (e.g., characterization, setting, plot development) contribute to the meaning of a text.

B. Understands how word choice (e.g., figurative language, connotative, or informal language) contributes to the meaning and tone of a text.

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Objective 2: Understands how to incorporate teaching approaches, assessment, and diversity into classroom instruction

The beginning Language Arts teacher:

A. Understands commonly used research-based approaches to teaching components of writing

B. Knows that students bring various perspectives, cultures, and backgrounds to reading, writing, listening, and speaking and knows how to incorporate that awareness into classroom instruction

C. Understands purposes and methods of assessing reading, writing, speaking, and listening

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Practice Questions

The practice questions in this study companion are designed to familiarize you with the types of questions you may see on the assessment. While they illustrate some of the formats and types of questions you will see on the test, your performance on these sample questions should not be viewed as a predictor of your performance on the actual test. Fundamentally, the most important component in ensuring your success is familiarity with the content that is covered on the assessment.

To respond to a practice question, choose one of the answer options listed. Be sure to read the directions carefully to ensure that you know what is required for each question. You may find it helpful to time yourself to simulate actual testing conditions. A correct answer and a rationale for each sample test question are in the section following the practice questions.

Keep in mind that the test you take at an actual administration will have different questions, although the proportion of questions in each subarea will be approximately the same. You should not expect the percentage of questions you answer correctly in these practice questions to be exactly the same as when you take the test at an actual administration, since numerous factors affect a person's performance in any given testing situation.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. _____ is a narrative that takes abstract ideas of behavior — good or bad, wise or foolish — and attempts to make them concrete and striking. The chief actor in these stories is usually an animal or inanimate object that behaves like a human and engages in a single significant act intended to teach a moral lesson.

   Which of the following will correctly complete the passage above?

   A. A myth
   B. A fable
   C. An epic
   D. A legend

Answer and Rationale

2. Science fiction: readers claim to either love it or loathe it; either they avoid it like poison or they devour favorite works and authors like chocolate addicts gulping down fudge truffles.

   The author of the passage compares certain readers with "chocolate addicts" primarily in order to

   A. suggest that science fiction is not a serious literary genre.
   B. indicate the depth of certain readers' feelings about science fiction.
   C. explain why some readers consider science fiction to be dangerous.
   D. contrast the characteristics of science fiction with those of other literary genres.

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

3. All of us find or invent our language. We may come up with new sentences never heard before. We may use words in a unique way. But we are always finding our voice, locating old patterns or long-heard expressions, reaching into our thesaurus for the right term. And in inventing English, we are always inventing ourselves — finding our place among the welter of the words or in the swell of sounds that is the ocean of our tongue.

   Which of the following most accurately describes how the author's use of point of view works as a rhetorical strategy?

   A. He speaks in the first person to invite the readers to see how they participate in the activities he describes
   B. He speaks in the first person to emphasize his unique experience with the subject under discussion
   C. He speaks in the third person to highlight the universality of the topic being discussed
   D. He speaks in the third person to construct a more authoritative position from which to argue his point

Answer and Rationale

4. If atoms are the letters of the chemical language, then molecules are the words. But in order to put the chemical letters together to form chemical words, we have to know something about the rules of chemical spelling.

   In the passage above, a discussion of atoms is introduced by

   A. an analogy.
   B. an aphorism.
   C. an example.
   D. a hypothesis.

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Questions 5-8 refer to the following two poems.

Spellbound

by Emily Brontë

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

Line
 5 The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
10 Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

Approach of Winter

by William Carlos Williams

The half-stripped trees
struck by a wind together,
bending all,
Line the leaves flutter drily
 5 and refuse to let go
or driven like hail
stream bitterly out to one side
and fall
where the salvias, hard carmine,—
10 like no leaf that ever was—
edge the bare garden.

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

5. Which of the following interpretations best applies to both poems?

    A. They portray winter as a time of waiting for the first signs of spring
    B. They liken the coming of winter to the shock of sudden death
    C. They describe acts of resistance against the powerful force of winter
    D. They relate the harshness of winter to the darkness of night

Answer and Rationale

6. In "Spellbound," the speaker's change in tone from the first to the third stanza can best be described as shifting from

    A. helpless to stubborn.
    B. apathetic to passionate.
    C. despondent to hopeful.
    D. agitated to complacent.

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

7. Which of the following statements best describes how the structure of "Spellbound" contributes to its meaning?

   A. The use of rhyming quatrains contrasts with the chaos of the storm.
   B. The use of blank verse strengthens the effect of the "tyrant spell."
   C. The breaks between stanzas symbolize moments of regret.
   D. The lack of internal punctuation reflects a sense of anticipation.

Answer and Rationale

8. Which of the following literary devices is present in "Approach of Winter"?

   A. Allusion
   B. Repetition
   C. Oxymoron
   D. Personification

Answer and Rationale

9. In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, the main character, Dorothy, is transported to a magical land by a tornado. While in the magical Land of Oz, Dorothy must go to the Emerald City to discover how to get back to her home. On her way to the Emerald City, she faces many obstacles, but she befriends a Scarecrow, a Tin Woodman, and a Cowardly Lion who help her along the way. After a climactic battle with an enemy, she discovers the secret of how to return home.

   Which of the following universal themes is most evident in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*?

   A. Human versus nature
   B. Coming of age
   C. The hero's journey
   D. Individual versus society

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

10. A teacher is working with an eighth-grade student who reads at the fifth-grade level. When the student encounters an unknown word, "cohabit," the teacher breaks the word into parts and has the student determine the meaning of "co" and the meaning of "habit," using words with the same prefix or root, such as "coworker" and "habitat."

   The activity described above relies most directly on knowledge of which of the following language concepts?

   A. Morphemes
   B. Synonyms
   C. Phonemes
   D. Orthography

Answer and Rationale

11. A teacher asks students to predict the outcome of a story. After students consider their predictions silently for one minute, they tell them to a partner. Then some students volunteer to describe their predictions to the class.

   During the activity, the students are using which of the following reading comprehension strategies?

   A. Anticipation guide
   B. Reciprocal teaching
   C. Shared reading
   D. Think-pair-share

Answer and Rationale

12. An article describes a method of writing instruction in which "children are in different stages of the writing process, working on self-selected topics. Simultaneously, teachers are meeting with individual or small groups of students to confer and help move them along with their writing. Other components include peer conferences and/or response groups."

The article best describes which of the following teaching models?

A. Writer's workshop
B. Direct instruction
C. Literature circles
D. Shared writing

Answer and Rationale

13. Mr. Mansour wants his students to use a wiki when collaborating on a group research project. Which of the following statements describes the main benefit of using a wiki as an educational tool for a collaborative research project?

A. Wikis provide an opportunity for students to develop memory skills, which are essential for effective collaboration.
B. Wikis are accessible off-line, making it easier for students and instructors to access content at any time.
C. Wikis provide storage for information that will not be edited, making them ideal for final presentations.
D. Wikis engage diverse learners by allowing for the inclusion of various media to support a given task.

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Questions 14-16 refer to the following student draft.

A seventh-grade class is learning how to respond to literary analysis prompts. The following is a student response to the prompt "Describe the significance of the White Rabbit in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll."

(1) The White Rabbit represents an adult who worries about schedules; he says, "Oh my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!" (2) Alice wanders after the rabbit down the hole because, unknown to her, she wishes to not be a child anymore, she wants to be an adult. (3) When she follows the rabbit down the hole, she makes the choice to transform into an adult and leave her childish ways behind. (4) She begins her journey to Wonderland confused about all of her choices. (5) The author uses The White Rabbit as a metaphor to contrast with the childish ways Alice is leaving behind. (6) Her choices are like the choices she will have to make as she gets older.

14. Which of the following revisions will best improve the clarity of the response?

    A. Switch sentence 1 and sentence 5
    B. Switch sentence 2 and sentence 3
    C. Switch sentence 4 and sentence 6
    D. Switch sentence 5 and sentence 6

Answer and Rationale

15. In sentence 1, which of the following words or phrases, inserted before "he says," provides the best transition between the first clause and the quotation?

    A. similarly,
    B. for instance,
    C. first of all,
    D. namely,

Answer and Rationale

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

16. Which of the following errors is present in sentence 2?

    A. Comma splice
    B. Faulty parallelism
    C. Incorrect subject-verb agreement
    D. Inconsistent verb tense.

Answer and Rationale

17. Though Josh mentioned that she was a good friend, Anna knew it was a hollow compliment.

    In the sentence above, the word "hollow" is best defined as

    A. deep.
    B. sunken.
    C. vicious.
    D. insincere.

Answer and Rationale

18. My sister and I always loved <u>sledding</u> down the hill behind our house.

    The underlined word in the sentence above is an example of

    A. a conjunction.
    B. a participle.
    C. a gerund.
    D. an adverb.

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

19. The primary action of allegory in a poem is

    A. adding associations that go beyond the literal interpretation.
    B. using familiar details to convey hidden meaning.
    C. developing a point of view through use of exaggerated language.
    D. incorporating words that imitate the sounds they describe.

Answer and Rationale

20. Which of the following describes an active reading strategy for an informational text?

    A. Asking oneself prereading questions to activate prior knowledge and determine the purpose of the text
    B. Highlighting or underlining all topic sentences to help when reviewing the text
    C. Participating in a small-group read-aloud of the text to both hear and see the text
    D. Distinguishing elements of informational text that make it unique to better understand the genre

Answer and Rationale

21. Theater is a nexus of rhetorical, poetic, mimetic, pictorial, musical, and architectural arts and crafts. Never in history has the theater developed in isolation from other human activities: politics, religion, economics, science, and sociocultural norms.

    — Felicia Hardison Londré and Margot Berthold, from The History of World Theater: From the English Restoration to the Present

    Which of the following statements is best supported by the excerpt?

    A. Theater has recently begun to reflect society and history
    B. Societal trends are influenced by vogue theater of the era
    C. Theater is recommended for research on modern politics and religion
    D. Theater reflects an interconnectedness of the cultural elements of the time

Answer and Rationale

22. Which of the following characteristics of drama distinguishes it from poetry?

    A. The events are part of the plot structure
    B. The text can be organized into rhyming lines
    C. The content can be divided into smaller sections
    D. The text is designed to be performed aloud

Answer and Rationale

23. A teacher divides students into small groups to have them determine themes of a short story they have just read. Which of the following teaching strategies would best promote oral participation from group members?

    A. Providing each group with an outline of the story
    B. Grouping outgoing students with more reluctant students
    C. Allowing students to form their own groups
    D. Having students write down their ideas prior to meeting with their groups

Answer and Rationale

24. During a unit on informational speaking, a teacher of a class that contains English-language learners (ELLs) brings in the ingredients to make a pizza. The teacher encourages students to pass the ingredients around the room as they discuss adjectives, such as "sticky," "mushy," and "smooth," that could be used to describe the dough. Which of the following best explains how the activity supports the language acquisition of ELLs?

    A. It provides them with an organizational framework for categorizing new words
    B. It helps them develop an understanding of the connotative meaning of new words
    C. It provides them with multisensory support to make new words comprehensible
    D. It helps them develop meaningful connections to new words by activating prior knowledge

Answer and Rationale

25. A teacher conducts individual writing conferences with students on a weekly basis. During each conference, the student orally reflects on a piece of writing, the teacher identifies some strengths and some weaknesses, and the teacher and student discuss the next writing assignment. Which of the following modifications to the conference would best promote improvement in the student's writing?

    A. Having the student brainstorm ideas for the next writing assignment
    B. Focusing exclusively on the areas of proficiency in the writing piece
    C. Modeling ways to address the areas of weakness in the writing piece
    D. Having the student give a written reflection of the piece rather than an oral one

Answer and Rationale

26. "A lady sez to me to-day: 'Père Jerome, 'ow dat is a dreadfool dat 'e gone at de coas' of Cuba to be one corsair! Aint it?' 'Ah, madame,' I sez, ''tis a terrible!' "

    The dialect in the excerpt is characteristic of which of the following regions of the United States?

    A. Louisiana
    B. Appalachia
    C. New England
    D. California

Answer and Rationale

27. Which of the following is most effective for determining if the information contained in a digital source is correct?

    A. Following links to other pages on the website to corroborate the information given
    B. Contacting the Web site's author to request additional information
    C. Determining if the information in the source is supported by credible outside sources
    D. Reading biographical information about the author to determine his or her credibility

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

28. What is the primary reason to include in-text citations in a research paper?

    A. To support the ideas presented in the paper
    B. To avoid using too much paraphrasing in the paper
    C. To establish that research was done for the paper
    D. To uphold intellectual integrity throughout the paper

Answer and Rationale

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Answer Key and Rationales

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
1	B	**Option B is correct.** The statements on which the question is based constitute a definition of a fable. Back to Question
2	B	**Option B is correct.** The author makes a comparison between science fiction readers and people who love chocolate so much they could be called addicts in order to stress that those who like science fiction cannot get enough of it. Back to Question
3	A	**Option A is correct.** In first-person point of view, the author or narrator writes from his or her own perspective. In this passage, the author uses the words "we" and "our" to suggest that his experience is similar to the reader's experience, and invites readers to understand how people invent themselves through the words they use. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
4	A	**Option A is correct.** By suggesting that atoms are like letters, the author of the passage has used an analogy; i.e., the author has characterized one thing by reference to another thing that functions in a similar way. Back to Question
5	C	**Option C is correct.** Brontë refers to the "giant trees" bending (line 5), and then writes "yet I cannot go." She goes on, "But nothing drear can move me; / I will not, cannot go." Brontë references the bending trees as evidence of the storm's force. At the beginning of the poem she is yielding to the storm, but finds her strength at the end with the statement "I will not, cannot go." William Carlos Williams also refers to "The half-stripped trees / struck by a wind together, / bending all, "whose leaves refuse to let go," and later contrasts the near-barren trees with carmine-colored salvia plants, which symbolize life at the edge of the garden. Back to Question
6	A	**Option A is correct.** The speaker's change in tone is most evident in lines 4 and 12. The speaker begins by saying that she "cannot, cannot go" (line 4), indicating that her actions are dictated by an outside force. She ends by saying she "will not, cannot go" (line 12). By saying she will not go, she is asserting an ownership over her actions. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
7	A	**Option A is correct.** The repeating rhyming quatrains are regular and predictable in form; however, the content of the poem — the spell and the storm — is neither predictable nor regular. This pairing of structure and irregularity serves to highlight the impact that the spell has on the speaker as well as her desire to regain control of her environment. Back to Question
8	D	**Option D is correct.** Personification involves giving human traits to nonliving things. Line 5 states that the leaves "refuse to let go," personifying the leaves and making them seem as if they are making the choice not to let go. Back to Question
9	C	**Option C is correct.** The story contains many of the main elements of the typical hero's journey: Dorothy is separated from her home and family; she accepts the call to adventure when she learns she must travel to the Emerald City to learn how to return home; she is tested along the way but meets friends and teachers who help her; and she has two battles, one with the witch and one final confrontation with the wizard, before she finally returns home. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
10	A	**Option A is correct.** Knowledge of morphemes is knowledge of the affixes, combing forms, and root words. This knowledge builds vocabulary, and it is necessary for the kind of word analysis described in the activity. Back to Question
11	D	**Option D is correct.** Think-pair-share is a strategy in which the student first thinks of an answer and then shares the answer with a partner for input and confidence in their answers. After sharing with a partner, the student may or may not want to share with the class. This strategy strengthens student confidence in answers. Back to Question
12	A	**Option A is correct.** The important features of writer's workshop are listed in the stimulus: 1. Students are progressing at various rates. 2. Teachers are conferencing. 3. Peer conferencing is also occurring. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
13	D	**Option D is correct.** The wiki platform allows users to load text, images, video, sound, and external links to support a given task. This capability helps wikis to support a variety of learning styles, such as visual-spatial, interpersonal, and linguistic. Back to Question
14	D	**Option D is correct.** Sentence 6 is most appropriate after sentence 4 because it clarifies why Alice is confused about the choices she must make in Wonderland. Sentence 5 is an appropriate conclusion because it ties back to the thesis stated in sentence 1. Back to Question
15	B	**Option B is correct.** It signals that the quotation illustrates the kind of worry described in the first clause. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
16	A	**Option A is correct.** The comma between "anymore" and "she wants" is a comma splice; it is used incorrectly to separate two independent clauses. Back to Question
17	D	**Option D is correct.** The use of the word "though" in the phrase, "Though Josh mentioned that she was a good friend," indicates that the compliment was not sincere. Back to Question
18	C	**Option C is correct.** In this sentence, the word "sledding" is a gerund, a verb functioning as a noun. Back to Question

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
19	B	**Option B is correct.** Allegorical poems use familiar details to convey a hidden meaning, typically a moral. Back to Question
20	A	**Option A is correct.** Activating prior knowledge and setting a purpose for reading are methods of active reading. Back to Question
21	D	**Option D is correct.** The author states that theater has never developed in isolation from sociocultural norms. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
22	A	**Option A is correct.** All plays have a plot, but not all poetry is narrative or contains a plot structure. Back to Question
23	D	**Option D is correct.** The strategy allows students to create a springboard for their ideas so they are not put on the spot during the group discussion. This is especially helpful for shy students or students who may need more processing time before they are comfortable sharing their ideas with a group of their peers. Back to Question
24	C	**Option C is correct.** The visual and tactile elements will help students to make the new words more understandable because they can "see" and "feel" what the words mean. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Question Number	Correct Answer	Rationale
25	C	**Option C is correct.** Modeling strategies to address specific weaknesses in the students' writing will help students to employ the strategies themselves to improve writing assignments. Back to Question
26	A	**Option A is correct.** The excerpt contains characteristics of the Cajun English dialect spoken in southern Louisiana, such as the influence of French in "madame" and "Père" and the pronunciation of /th/ as /d/ in "dat." Back to Question
27	C	**Option C is correct.** The best sign that information found on one website is correct is that information's presence on various reputable sites. Back to Question
28	D	**Option D is correct.** This option is correct because proper use of in-text citations avoids plagiarism. Back to Question

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Constructed-response Questions

The purpose of this section is to describe the constructed-response questions that appear on the GACE Middle Grades English Language Arts assessment and to explain the criteria used to score each constructed-response question. The test includes two constructed-response questions: a literary analysis question and a writing assessment and pedagogy (teaching/writing) question. Unlike the selected-response questions, the constructed-response questions require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by providing in-depth written responses.

Preparing for the Constructed-response Questions

When preparing for the constructed-response questions, read the sample questions and scoring guide carefully. You may wish to draft a response to each sample question by reading the question and planning, writing, and revising your essay. You should use a total of about 15 minutes for each constructed-response question. Also, because no reference materials will be available during the test, it is recommended that you refrain from using a dictionary, a thesaurus, or textbooks while writing your practice responses.

Once you have written your practice responses, reread the scoring guide, and then read the sample responses provided for each score level. Rationales that explain how the responses characterize the score point description are provided for each of the responses. After you have read through these materials, review your own responses in light of the score point descriptions. You may also wish to review your responses and the score scale with staff in your preparation program.

> **Note:** After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Scoring Guide

Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide.

Score	Description
3	The response is successful in the following ways: • It demonstrates an ability to analyze the stimulus material thoughtfully and in depth. • It demonstrates a strong knowledge of the subject matter relevant to the question. • It responds appropriately to all parts of the question. • It demonstrates facility with conventions of standard written English.
2	The response demonstrates some understanding of the topic, but it is limited in one or more of the following ways: • It may indicate a misreading of the stimulus material or provide superficial analysis. • It may demonstrate only superficial knowledge of the subject matter relevant to the question. • It may respond to one or more parts of the question inadequately or not at all. • It may contain significant writing errors.
1	The response is seriously flawed in one or more of the following ways: • It may demonstrate weak understanding of the subject matter or of the writing task. • It may fail to respond adequately to most parts of the question. • It may be incoherent or severely underdeveloped. • It may contain severe and persistent writing errors.
0	The response is blank, off-topic, totally incorrect, or merely rephrases the question.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Constructed-response Question 1: Literary Analysis

The first constructed-response question is an analysis of a literary text.

General Directions

Plan to use approximately 15 minutes to complete this question.

Read the constructed-response question carefully before you begin to write your response to ensure that you address all components. Think about how you will organize what you plan to write.

The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of standard written English. Your written response should be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. You may, however, use citations when appropriate.

Sample Literary Analysis Question

"Why, thank you so much. I'd adore to."

I don't want to dance with him. I don't want to dance with anybody. And even if I did, it wouldn't be with him. He'd be well down among the last ten. I've seen the way he dances. . . . Just think, not a quarter of an hour ago, here I was sitting, feeling sorry for the poor girl he was dancing with. And now I'm going to be the poor girl.

"The Waltz," a short story by humorist Dorothy Parker, opens with the lines above. Explain how Parker establishes tone and uses perspective in the excerpt.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Responses and Rationales for Literary Analysis Question

Sample Response Earning a Score of 3

Dorothy Parker tells the story in the first person with two contrasting perspectives: what her character says and what she is really thinking. This sets an amusing and intimate tone throughout the excerpt.

Contributing to the sense of intimacy with her character is the conversational tone of her thoughts. Immediately the reader identifies with the character. Also, the use of present tense, so we are overhearing the character's thoughts as she is having them, contributes to the intimacy of the internal dialogue. When she says that she didn't want to dance with anyone, and even if she did "it wouldn't be him," it feels like the character is having a private conversation with the reader. Finally, the reader is left with a feeling of ironic amusement. The character who so politely agrees to dance has just been feeling sorry for her partner's previous victim: "just think, not a quarter of an hour ago, here I was sitting, feeling sorry for the poor girl he was dancing with. And now I'm going to be the poor girl." Again, the reader identifies with the intimate tone the character uses since at one time or another most of us have also agreed to do something we would have preferred not to, just to be polite.

Rationale for the Score of 3

This is a successful response because it addresses and analyzes the aspects of tone and perspective thoughtfully and in depth. Not only does the response identify the first-person perspective, but it also recognizes the duality of the perspective in "what her character says and what she is really thinking." These "contrasting perspectives" reveal the outwardly proper and polite narrator, while the internal comments reflect the "ironic amusement" that she is now the "poor girl" who is the next "victim" of the awkward dance partner.

The words "amusing" and "intimate" accurately describe the tone of the piece, and the writer further analyzes how the tone establishes a connection ("the reader identifies") between the character and the reader, which adds to the intimacy and ironic humor of the piece.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 2

The tone of the story is humorous. Dorothy Parker does not want to dance with the man. While she says yes, she is thinking just the opposite. It's funny because in the first line of the story she says she would like to dance; "Why, thank you so much. I'd adore to." But in her mind, she is thinking about how much she does not want to dance with him. He would be one of the last people she'd dance with; "down among the last ten." She also makes fun of the "poor girl" that he danced with before her. She believes that when she dances with him, she will look as bad as the "poor girl," she does not want to look that bad. The story is funny because Dorothy Parker gets put in a tricky social situation.

Rationale for the Score of 2

While recognizing that the excerpt is intended to be humorous, the response is limited and provides only a superficial analysis of the subject matter. The writer identifies the fundamental conflict in Parker's excerpt; i.e., the speaker does not want to dance, but she cordially agrees when asked. However the response does not go on to provide an in-depth analysis of how Parker uses first-person perspective to establish a humorous, ironic tone in her short story. Furthermore, the response demonstrates a crucial misreading of the excerpt by positing that the speaker is also making fun of the "poor girl." In truth, the speaker was in sympathy with the "poor girl" and finds it ironic that she will now be the "poor girl" dancing with the young man.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 1

In the above passage, Parker establishes tone with short, precise sentences, gradually getting longer. She used perspective in dealing with the fact that she does not want to dance and especially with him. She also was putting herself in the other girl's position.

Rationale for the Score of 1

This response reveals a weak understanding of tone and perspective. It is severely underdeveloped, lacks analysis, and, moreover, includes a glaring misread of the piece. The explanation of how Parker establishes tone is limited to merely describing sentence style, and the writer's analysis of perspective is wrong. The response restates the central premise that "she does not want to dance and especially with him." This is followed by a misread of the ironic moment, as reflected in a reference to "the other girl's position" that misses the point that Parker is now in the position of the girl she earlier pitied.

Constructed-response Question 2: Teaching/Writing

The second constructed-response question asks you to read a student response to an assignment and then complete three tasks.

Directions

Introduction

Students in a sixth-grade class were asked to write a descriptive essay for an audience of their peers in response to an assignment about a favorite vacation destination. What follows is a draft of one student's response to this assignment. Read the student's response carefully, paying particular attention to the features of writing listed below, and then complete the three tasks that follow the student's response.

Features of Writing
- Focus/thesis
- Organization
- Content/supporting ideas
- Sentence variety and complexity

Sample Teaching/Writing Question

Student Response

Leaves are crunching. Squirrels are scurrying around. The river water is rushing by. Do you know where we are? We are camping!

Every year we go camping for a long weekend. This trip is my all-time favorite! We pack up the car with our tents, sleeping bags, coolers, fishing poles, and lanterns. We drive four hours to the state forest. Even though we also go to the beach, water park, and the mountains for vacation, camping is definitely my favorite.

When we get there, my job is to help Dad set up the tents. It's hard, but I can do it. Mom always packs all of our favorite foods in the cooler. I love cooking over the campfire. We cook cinnamon buns, hot dogs, cornbread, and corn. We also roast marshmallows on long sticks. I roast mine so they are burnt on the outside and gooey on the inside!

Some of the other things I like to do when we are camping are catch frogs in the stream, going for hikes, and go fishing. This year I caught a huge trout in the lake! I love camping.

Tasks
1. Identify one feature of the student's writing as a strength. Be sure to support your response with examples from the student's writing. Do NOT discuss facility in the conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation) in this part of your response.
2. Identify one feature of the student's writing as a weakness. Be sure to support your response with examples from the student's writing. Do NOT discuss errors in the conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation) in this part of your response.
3. Describe one follow-up assignment you would give to this student that would build on the strength you described in Task 1 OR address the weakness you identified in Task 2. Explain how the assignment would help the student.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Responses and Rationales for Teaching/Writing Question

Sample Response Earning a Score of 3

A strength of the essay is the use of descriptive details that appeal to the reader's senses. For example, the student opens the essay with a series of images that engage readers: "Leaves are crunching. Squirrels are scurrying around. The river water is rushing by." These visual and auditory images help readers to see and hear what the state forest is like, and the use of active verbs such as "crunching," "scurrying," and "rushing" makes the sensory details particularly vivid. The student continues to effectively use sensory details in the description of roasting marshmallows that are "burnt on the outside and gooey on the inside!" The adjectives "burnt" and "gooey" enliven the writing by providing visual and tactile imagery.

A weakness of the student's writing is the lack of variety in sentence structure. The student uses many simple sentences that begin with the word "We" ("We pack up the car . . ."; "We drive four hours . . ."; "We cook cinnamon buns . . . "; and "We also roast marshmallows . . ."). The student incorporates some varied sentence types by using complex sentences that begin with the dependent clauses "Even though we also go to the beach" and "When we get there." However, the word "We" is still used at the beginning of these sentences, and the repetition of "We" in the sentence beginnings gives the writing a monotonous effect.

To address the weakness in sentence variety, I would design a follow-up assignment that allows the student to practice writing sentences with varied beginnings. I would first model for the student how to improve sentence variety by beginning sentences with modifiers, such as prepositional phrases, participle phrases, appositive phrases, and infinitive phrases. Then I would give the student a series of simple sentences and ask the student to use modifiers to revise the sentences so that they have varied openings. For example, the student could revise "We hiked up a steep cliff" by beginning the sentence with an infinitive phrase ("To reach the top of the mountain, we hiked up a steep cliff"). Finally, I would have the student revise some of the sentences in the draft that start with "We" using the sentence variety skills they had just practiced.

This assignment would provide the student with practice writing sentences that deviate from the pattern of beginning sentences with "We" and would provide the student with alternative ideas for structuring sentences. Practice with this skill will support the student's ability to incorporate varied sentences in future writing assignments, which will allow the student to use sentence variety to achieve interest, emphasis, and clarity.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Rationale for the Score of 3

This is a successful response because it addresses all three tasks with strong evidence of understanding of the features of writing and how to support a student in strengthening an essay.

The response to Task 1 correctly identifies a strength as "the use of descriptive details that appeal to the reader's senses," which is a defining characteristic of descriptive writing. The response provides several appropriate examples of sensory details from the student's writing and thoroughly explains how the examples are evidence of the strength.

The response to Task 2 accurately identifies a significant weakness in the essay: "lack of variety in sentence structure." The analysis of the weakness is well supported with examples from the student writing that demonstrate a lack of variety.

The response to Task 3 provides a specific follow-up assignment that appropriately targets the weakness identified in Task 2. The description of the modeling and revision task provides several techniques for achieving sentence variety by beginning sentences with different types of modifiers. In addition, the response provides a clear explanation of how the assignment will strengthen the student's writing skills in relation to this specific assignment. The response demonstrates strong knowledge of sentence structure and a clear understanding of how to help a student improve his or her writing by targeting a skill for improvement.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 2

A strength of the student's essay is that it incorporates many sensory details. Some examples are "Leaves are crunching" and "The river water is rushing by" in the introduction, and later in the essay when the student describes how he/she likes marshmallows "burnt on the outside and gooey on the inside."

A weakness of the essay is the conclusion. The first two sentences make it seem as though the student is going to be writing about other fun things to do while camping, but the third sentence just ends it with "I love camping."

A follow-up assignment I would assign the student to address the weakness is a graphic organizer. The focus of the graphic organizer would be showing the differences between body paragraphs and a conclusion, and there would be boxes labeled for each. Each body paragraph box would have a line on top for a topic sentence and then at least three blanks for details/examples to specifically support the topic sentence. The conclusion box would have a line for the first sentence and at least three blanks for more information.

Rationale for the Score of 2

The response to Task 1 addresses a significant strength of the essay (sensory details) and gives specific examples. However, the response fails to provide any further analysis of these examples, which demonstrates only superficial knowledge of the topic and prevents it from earning a higher score.

The response to Task 2 addresses the conclusion as a weakness, but the explanation is vague and does not clearly explain why it is problematic. Again, the response demonstrates a superficial understanding. Further analysis would be needed for this response to achieve a higher score.

The response to Task 3 demonstrates some understanding of teaching writing. It could be an effective activity, but simply providing blank spaces for a conclusion paragraph does not provide the student with guidance about what to write in the spaces or the parts of an effective conclusion paragraph.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Sample Response Earning a Score of 1

One feature of this student's writing that is a strength is that the beginning is eye-catching. This is a very difficult skill for many writers to master, and this student really does it nicely. I often tell my students about the importance of writing a good beginning. If the beginning isn't eye-catching, a lot of times, the reader will just stop reading!

One thing that the student could improve upon is making sure that all sentences have subject-verb agreement and that the verbs listed are parallel in structure. The sentence "Some of the other things I like to do when we are camping are catch frogs in the stream, going for hikes, and go fishing" is an example of where the verbs are incorrect and not parallel.

To help the student improve, I would ask him/her to go through the essay sentence by sentence and check that each verb matches its subject. Improving the structure of the sentence will help the reader have a clearer understanding of the student's ideas.

Rational for the Score of 1

Though one strength of the essay is noted ("One feature of this student's writing that is a strength is that the beginning is eye-catching"), the response does not provide specific examples from the student writing, causing the paragraph to be underdeveloped. The response's commentary about the importance of a strong beginning does not qualify as an example.

The attempt to respond to Task 2 addresses grammatical weaknesses, subject-verb agreement and parallelism ("One thing that the student could improve upon is making sure that all sentences have subject-verb agreement and that the verbs listed are parallel in structure"), though the prompt specifies NOT to discuss errors in grammar or punctuation.

The response to Task 3 is weak because it addresses remediation of grammar (". . . go through the essay sentence by sentence and check that each verb matches its subject").

Preparation Resources

The resources listed below may help you prepare for the GACE assessment in this field. These preparation resources have been identified by content experts in the field to provide up-to-date information that relates to the field in general. You may wish to use current issues or editions of these materials to obtain information on specific topics for study and review.

Guide to Taking a GACE Computer-delivered Assessment

This guide explains how to navigate through a GACE assessment and how to answer different types of test questions. This free download is available in the Test Preparation Resources section of the GACE website at *www.gace.ets.org/prepare*.

Reducing Test Anxiety

This guide provides practical help for people who suffer from test anxiety. Designed specifically for GACE test takers, but useful to anyone who has to take tests, this guide reviews the major causes of test anxiety and offers practical advice for how to counter each one. Download this guide for free from the Test Preparation Resources section of the GACE website at *www.gace.ets.org/prepare*.

Study Tips: Preparing for a GACE Assessment

This document contains useful information on preparing for selected-response and constructed-response tests. The instruction, tips, and suggestions can help you become a better-prepared test taker. See the Test Preparation Resources section of the GACE website at *www.gace.ets.org/prepare* for this free download.

Journals

Exceptional Children, Council for Exceptional Children.

Instructor, Scholastic, Inc.

Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, International Reading Association.

Language Arts, National Council of Teachers of English.

Reading Research Quarterly, International Reading Association.

The Elementary School Journal, University of Chicago Press.

The Reading Teacher, International Reading Association.

Voices from the Middle, National Council of Teachers of English.

Other Resources

Alvermann, D. E., Moon, J., and Hagood, M. (Eds.) (1999). *Popular Culture in the Classroom: Teaching and Researching Critical Media Literacy*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Anderson, Jeff (2007). *Everyday Editing Grades 4–8*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Anderson, Jeff, and Spandel, Vicki (2005). *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage and Style into Writer's Workshop*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.

Atwell, Nancy, and Harwayne, Shelley (2007). *The Reading Zone*. NewYork, N.Y.: Scholastic Publishers.

Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., and Johnson, F. (2007). *Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling*. Columbus, Ohio: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Brown, H. D. (2003). *Language Assessment — Principles and Classroom Practices*. Glenview, Ill.: Pearson ESL.

Goudvis, Anne, and Harvey, Stephanie (2007). *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement*, Second Edition. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Lapp, D., Flood, J., and Farnan, N. (2004). *Content Area Reading and Learning: Instructional Strategies*. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon.

Moats, L. C. (2000). *Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers*. Baltimore, Md.: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.

Norton, E. E. (2006). *Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature*, Seventh Edition. Columbus, Ohio: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Pinnell, G. S., and Fountas, I. C. (2007). *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades K–8: Behaviors and Understandings to Notice, Teach, and Support.* Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Pinnell, G. S., Fountas, I. C., and Giacobbe, M. E. (1998). *Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Smith, P. G. (Ed.) (2001). *Talking Classrooms: Shaping Children's Learning Through Oral Language Instruction*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Taylor, B. M., Graves, M., and Van Den Broek, P. (Eds.) (2000). *Reading for Meaning: Fostering Comprehension in the Middle Grades*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Tompkins, G. (2005). *Language Arts Essentials.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Tompkins, G. (2010). *Literacy for the 21st Century: a Balanced Approach*, Fifth Edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson.

Tyner, Beverly, and Green, Sharon E. (2005). *Small Group Reading Instruction Grades 3–8*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Wagner, Richard K., Muse, Andrea E., and Tannenbaum, Kendra R. (2007). *Vocabulary Acquisition Implications for Reading Comprehension*. NewYork, N.Y.: Guilford Press.

Wepner, S. B., Valmont,W., and Thurlow, R. (Eds.) (2000). *Linking Literacy and Technology: A Guide for K–8 Classrooms*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.

Online Resources

Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) — ***www.eric.ed.gov***

GovSpot, StartSpot Mediaworks, Inc. — ***www.govspot.com***

International Reading Association — ***www.reading.org***

Kids.gov, U.S. General Services Administration — ***www.kids.gov***

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National Council of Teachers of English — *www.ncte.org*

readwritethink — *www.readwritethink.org*

National Writing Project: Improving Writing and Learning in the Nation's Schools — *www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource*

Navigating the ELPS, Using the New Standards to Improve Instruction for English Learners, Canter Press, John Seidlitz — *http://portal.esc20.net/portal/page/portal/doclibraryroot/publicpages/ELPS/Tab/ELPS_082809(2).pdf*

Paradigm Online Writing Assistant — *www.powa.org*

Georgia Department of Education — *www.doe.k12.ga.us*

Note: After clicking on a link, right click and select "Previous View" to go back to original text.