

2021 STAAR Grade 5 Reading Rationales

Item#	Rationale	
1	Option A is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different than their literal interpretation. By describing the telescopes as “the eyes that peered out into the universe,” the author emphasizes that the telescope is used to locate and view objects at a great distance in space.
	Option B is incorrect	Telescopes are used to view remote objects in space, not people.
	Option C is incorrect	The description of the telescopes as “eyes” is meant to emphasize that the instruments are used to view distant objects in space, not that they are “delicate objects.”
	Option D is incorrect	The figurative phrase in paragraph 4 is used to describe the function of the telescopes, not to explain who should be allowed to use them.
2	Option G is correct	Catalina loves helping her father with the telescopes and tells him, “Papá, I want to be an astronomer someday.” However, in paragraph 7, Catalina feels that “No one believed she would be a scientist one day,” which is her main conflict.
	Option F is incorrect	Although Catalina is not allowed to help with the telescopes during the day, her main conflict is that people doubt her ability to become a scientist.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 16, the author describes an action that Catalina performs while solving a problem. This is not directly related to the main conflict.
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 18, Catalina identifies how she is supposed to solve an urgent problem and acts, but this is not her main conflict.

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3	Option C is correct	Imagery is the use of vivid language to represent objects, actions, or ideas. In paragraph 1, Catalina is “drinking in deep lungfuls of the clear night air under the blazing Southern Hemisphere starshine” while observing the “pure white lace” of the Milky Way. The author includes this imagery to highlight Catalina’s appreciation of the nighttime.
	Option A is incorrect	Catalina is standing alone on top of a mountain, but there is no text evidence that she is feeling lonely; rather, she is appreciative of the nighttime beauty.
	Option B is incorrect	Although Catalina does seem to enjoy spending time outside, the author includes the imagery in paragraph 1 to emphasize Catalina’s appreciation of the nighttime.
	Option D is incorrect	Catalina does not have questions about the night sky in paragraph 1, so this is not the purpose of the imagery.
4	Option H is correct	Point of view is the perspective from which the events in the story are told. In this story the author uses third-person point of view to reveal Catalina’s thoughts and feelings: “She loved helping to service the grand telescopes” (paragraph 4). The point of view helps the reader understand why Catalina wants to spend time at the observatory.
	Option F is incorrect	Because the story is told from only Catalina’s point of view, the reader does not know what the astronomer is feeling.
	Option G is incorrect	Because the story is told from only Catalina’s point of view, the tourists’ thoughts or feelings about visiting the observatory are not revealed.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author explains that Catalina helps her father at the observatory, the relationship between the two characters is not described.

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5	Option B is correct	In paragraph 8, Catalina notices that a “telescope’s dome slit was open, but its angle was unusual.” Upon closer look, Catalina sees that the “telescope was pointed down, almost at the ground.” These two cues prompt her to enter the dome, where she discovers problems with both the telescope and the astronomer—problems that she is able to solve.
	Option A is incorrect	Catalina’s observation leads her to realize that something is wrong, not to “express her feelings about scientific discovery.”
	Option C is incorrect	In paragraph 8, the author develops the main conflict. However, Catalina’s actions resolve the conflict rather than cause it.
	Option D is incorrect	Catalina’s observation of the telescope emphasizes her familiarity with the telescopes at the observatory, not her unfamiliarity.
6	Option H is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different than their literal interpretation. In paragraph 6, the author describes the “knotted” patterns of the stars in the night sky, from “fuzzy balls of fluff to filaments.” This description emphasizes that Catalina pays careful attention to details in the night sky.
	Option F is incorrect	Although the telescope would help Catalina see the stars clearly, there is no evidence in paragraph 6 that she needs one of the instruments at that moment.
	Option G is incorrect	Catalina is studying the stars at night, but this is really the only time she can watch the stars, not just the best time.
	Option J is incorrect	The comparison of stars to “fuzzy balls of fluff” and “filaments” is related to the appearance of the stars, not Catalina’s lack of understanding of the objects she observes in the night sky.

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7	Option D is correct	Catalina discovers the injured scientist because she observes a problem with one of the telescopes. The scientist calls Catalina “observant,” a trait that will help her become a successful scientist. This is important to the plot because Catalina realizes she has the ability to become a scientist. This realization helps Catalina resolve her conflict.
	Option A is incorrect	The experience takes place at night, but it does not help explain why Catalina is “only allowed to help her father at certain times.”
	Option B is incorrect	Catalina helps the injured scientist, but there is no evidence that she thinks she knows more than he or the other scientists do.
	Option C is incorrect	The experience reveals Catalina’s knowledge of the telescopes, but there are no specific details related to what her father taught her about the instruments.
8	Option G is correct	The reader can infer from this sentence that by sleeping in “hanging beds,” sleepers were elevated and could avoid the problem caused by “the soggy ground and pesky forest animals.”
	Option F is incorrect	The author is describing the process the Taino used to make hammocks, not how hammocks have been used to help solve a problem.
	Option H is incorrect	The author is explaining that European explorers liked hammocks, not how hammocks have been used to help solve a problem.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author suggests that hammocks have multiple uses, the idea that hammocks have been used to help solve a problem is not supported by this sentence.

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9	Option D is correct	Joshua John Ward began crafting hammocks using cotton rope in 1889, and his company still employs this method today. This text evidence proves that Ward chose a successful design.
	Option A is incorrect	The author includes this detail to show that Joshua John Ward introduced hammocks to other parts of the world, not to show the success of his design.
	Option B is incorrect	The author includes this detail to show why Joshua John Ward was interested in hammocks, not to show the success of his design.
	Option C is incorrect	The author includes this detail to show what Joshua John Ward’s hammocks were made of, not to show the success of his design.
10	Option J is correct	When Christopher Columbus was exploring the Caribbean in 1492, he saw the Taino’s hammocks and wrote about them, so “to notice or identify with the eye” best matches the way <u>spotted</u> is used in paragraph 3.
	Option F is incorrect	Columbus was searching for the New World; he was not trying to find hammocks.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no mention in paragraph 3 of Columbus staining the hammocks, so this is not the meaning of <u>spotted</u> .
	Option H is incorrect	When Columbus arrived in the Caribbean, he noticed the hammocks, but he did not move them or place them in a certain position.

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11	Option C is correct	In paragraph 7, the author explains that “hammocks are not just for relaxing” and goes on to describe extreme hammocking, which is another way that hammocks are used.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author describes a creative way to spend time, but the reader is not told how to find creative ways to spend time.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the sport of extreme hammocking likely requires strong hammocks, the author does not discuss the strength of hammocks in paragraph 7.
	Option D is incorrect	The author describes equipment used in extreme hammocking, but this information is presented to tell the reader a different way some people use hammocks, not about equipment needed for one sport.
12	Option F is correct	In paragraph 7, Andy Lewis is quoted describing the joy he gets from extreme hammocking. Based on this quotation and the author’s description of him as an “expert,” the reader can conclude that Lewis likes going on adventures.
	Option G is incorrect	Andy Lewis does refer to a journey, but it cannot be determined from the details in paragraph 7 whether he speaks to other athletes on his journey.
	Option H is incorrect	In paragraph 7, the author states that hammockers enjoy the “challenges the climb brings.” So, it is likely that Andy Lewis has experienced some challenges on his journeys.
	Option J is incorrect	Based on the author’s description of Andy Lewis as an “expert” in extreme hammocking, it is likely that he has been on more than one adventure.

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13	Option B is correct	Hammocks “were small enough when folded that they could fit in small spaces on ships.” Based on this text evidence, the reader can infer that hammocks were helpful to explorers who traveled by sea.
	Option A is incorrect	Hammocks have been used for many years, but it cannot be inferred from this sentence that they were particularly helpful to seafaring explorers.
	Option C is incorrect	In this sentence, the author describes an explorer drawing a picture of a hammock on land but does not suggest why hammocks were helpful for sea voyages.
	Option D is incorrect	In this sentence, the author does not describe how Joshua John Ward’s type of hammock was helpful to sea travelers.
14	Option H is correct	Desha wants privacy and time away from her large family. In paragraph 10, Desha tells her brother, “Company is the last thing I want,” and asks, “Can’t I have a little peace and quiet?” However, when James talks about missing his brother Daniel and reminds Desha that their sister Sara helped her with her homework, Desha begins to realize that there are benefits to having family members who support one another.
	Option F is incorrect	Eliza looking through Desha’s journal is an example of Desha’s conflict; it is not the beginning of the resolution.
	Option G is incorrect	Desha is annoyed when James finds her, which introduces the conflict of the story. This event is not the beginning of the resolution.
	Option J is incorrect	Desha learns that James used to play guitar, but well after beginning to see that having a large family has some benefits.

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15	Option A is correct	In paragraph 2, Desha is relieved to reach her “special rock” and experience peace and quiet away from her large family. When James shows up, Desha complains that James has invaded her “perfect hideaway,” so the reader can infer that Desha is annoyed.
	Option B is incorrect	Desha eventually feels glad that James is sitting with her, but at this point in the story, the reader can infer she is annoyed that he has intruded on her privacy.
	Option C is incorrect	Desha is surprised and annoyed that James found her, not impressed.
	Option D is incorrect	Desha does not consider whether anyone would be interested in finding her.
16	Option F is correct	In paragraph 12, Desha complains, “Everyone’s so nosy and always <u>prying</u> into my business.” She supports this statement by describing how she found Eliza “looking through [her] journal.”
	Option G is incorrect	Desha is unable to watch a movie because “everyone is in the living room watching the game,” but this situation is not an example of <u>prying</u> .
	Option H is incorrect	Desha going to her room does not help the reader determine the meaning of <u>prying</u> .
	Option J is incorrect	Desha’s desire to be alone does not provide context to help the reader determine the meaning of <u>prying</u> .
17	Option B is correct	A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word “like” or “as.” Desha describes how she and her family are “stuffed like feathers in a pillow” in the house, emphasizing her feelings that she has to share space with too many people.
	Option A is incorrect	The author’s use of simile expresses Desha’s frustration at having limited space and privacy, not her belief that “no one wants to hear her practice the guitar.”
	Option C is incorrect	The author’s use of simile expresses Desha’s frustration at having to share a room with her sisters, not her feelings of closeness to them.
	Option D is incorrect	Desha is upset that Eliza read her journal, but the author’s use of a simile emphasizes how crowded Desha’s house is.

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18	Option H is correct	James found peace and quiet in the same place when he was Desha’s age, which enables him to find Desha and resolve the conflict by helping her to realize that there are benefits to having a large family.
	Option F is incorrect	James used to visit the same place where he finds Desha hiding, but he used the spot to get away from family members, not to seek their help.
	Option G is incorrect	James remembers what it was like being Desha’s age, but he does not think about how quickly she is growing up.
	Option J is incorrect	James shares memories of Daniel with Desha, but the memories are related to sharing a room with Daniel, not to the hiding place.
19	Option D is correct	The best summary of the story is presented in these sentences. The main conflict in the story—Desha’s need to get away from her large family and crowded house—is identified. Desha’s solution, which is to go to her special place in the woods, is also described, as is the resolution of her conflict, which is when Desha’s brother James helps her realize the positive aspects of her large family.
	Option A is incorrect	Although many important details are included in this summary, the resolution of Desha’s conflict is missing.
	Option B is incorrect	Only a partial explanation of why Desha left the house is presented in this summary, and the lesson she learns from her brother James is also omitted.
	Option C is incorrect	Desha’s reason for going to the woods is not included in this summary, nor is the lesson she learns from her brother James, so this is not the best summary.

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20	Option J is correct	By climbing up into the “gigantic” maple tree, the speaker can see everything going on in the neighborhood, just as a person in a tower would have an expansive view of the surrounding area.
	Option F is incorrect	By comparing the tree to a tower, the poet is referring to the height of the tree rather than its age.
	Option G is incorrect	By comparing the tree to a tower, the poet suggests that the tree’s height provides a good view, but the poet does not say what the speaker likes to sketch.
	Option H is incorrect	The poet’s comparison of the tree to a tower does not reveal the tree’s exact location.
21	Option C is correct	Despite his unappealing nasal drip, Jamie Hamlin shares his chocolate bars and allows the speaker to climb his “gigantic maple tree,” which the speaker clearly enjoys, so the reader can infer that the speaker is thankful to have Jamie as a neighbor.
	Option A is incorrect	Although the speaker describes the chocolate bars as stale, there is no indication that the speaker feels uncertain about taking them.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker has “no doubt” about the origins of the street’s name, so the speaker is not surprised.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet provides no evidence that the speaker is jealous of Jamie Hamlin’s family store.
22	Option J is correct	In these lines, the speaker describes being “hidden” by the tree’s leaves, supporting the idea he or she does not wish to be seen looking at others.
	Option F is incorrect	The speaker does hide in the tree, but the desire to remain hidden is not referenced in these lines.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no reference to a wish to be unseen in these lines.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the speaker can view the whole neighborhood from the tree, the desire to remain unseen is not supported by these lines.

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23	Option A is correct	The speaker expresses complete certainty that Maple Street is named after “the gigantic maple tree/in front of Jamie Hamlin’s house.” The conclusion that “the maple tree is the most noticeable object on the street” is supported by this assuredness.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the street is named after a prominent feature on the street, it is not suggested by the speaker’s words in lines 1 through 3 that this should be a common practice.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker refers to the street finding its name, but there is no evidence in these lines that the street had a different name prior to Maple Street.
	Option D is incorrect	According to the speaker, there’s “no doubt” where Maple Street gets its name, suggesting that there is no disagreement about the meaning of the street’s name.
24	Option F is correct	In “Peace and Quiet,” Desha practices playing her guitar in a quiet place in the woods, and the speaker in the poem “Maple Street” draws while hiding in the branches of a maple tree, so this is a way that Desha and the speaker are alike.
	Option G is incorrect	There is no evidence in the poem that the speaker is looking to get away from other people like Desha wants to in the story.
	Option H is incorrect	Although the speaker secretly observes others from the maple tree, Desha is focused on playing her guitar and does not want to see anyone.
	Option J is incorrect	Desha takes advice from her brother, but the speaker does not interact with other people in the poem.

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25	Option D is correct	In "Peace and Quiet," Desha is frustrated that she never gets time alone or a chance to do what she wants because of her large family and crowded house. The speaker in "Maple Street" refers to various people in the neighborhood but never expresses frustration about being around them.
	Option A is incorrect	Desha has a special place in the woods where she can go to be alone, and the speaker in the poem has the maple tree.
	Option B is incorrect	Both selections have examples of sharing and its impact on others. James shares helpful advice with Desha, and Jamie provides access to his tree, which has become a special place for the speaker in the poem.
	Option C is incorrect	Desha practices guitar in her special place in the woods, and the speaker finds a place to work on creating sketches in the maple tree, so the "desire to practice a hobby" is addressed by both authors.
26	Option H is correct	In "Peace and Quiet," Desha has a "special rock" she sits on when she's in her "favorite spot" in the woods. Desha's fondness for this rock is similar to how the speaker in "Maple Street" feels about the maple tree, which the speaker describes as a "perfect place."
	Option F is incorrect	Although Desha does play a song, what she really values is her "special rock" in her "favorite spot," just as the speaker values the tree.
	Option G is incorrect	Desha is frustrated at not being able to watch a movie, but she does not value the movie in the same way that the speaker values the tree.
	Option J is incorrect	Desha plays her guitar while sitting on her rock, but what Desha really values is the peace and quiet that the rock offers, just as the tree is a place of sanctuary to the speaker in the poem.

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27	Option A is correct	In "Peace and Quiet," Desha shares her thoughts about her crowded house full of annoying siblings with her brother. In "Maple Street," the speaker makes observations about the kids in the neighborhood, such as Paul and Carrie O'Brien "practicing karate moves" and girls swinging high in the air.
	Option B is incorrect	Desha's brother did not tell Desha about the secret location, and the speaker does not express concern about needing a place to spend time alone.
	Option C is incorrect	Much like how the maple tree is familiar to the speaker, Desha goes to her "favorite spot" in the woods, suggesting this is not the first time Desha has visited this place.
	Option D is incorrect	Desha is upset about events in the past, such as her sister Eliza looking through her journal, rather than future events. The speaker describes events in the present.
28	Option J is correct	The author describes common characteristics of mammals in paragraph 3. The author then contrasts the platypus with mammals by describing the animal's unique characteristics, such as the fact that the platypus is "one of only two mammals that lay eggs" and that male platypuses "have a sharp bone on their hind leg called a spur."
	Option F is incorrect	Although the author refers to scientists and what they have learned about platypuses, the author does not compare the ways scientists learn about the animal.
	Option G is incorrect	The author explains how a mother platypus cares for her young but does not compare this characteristic with other animals.
	Option H is incorrect	The author describes how male platypuses defend themselves but does not mention how female platypuses defend themselves.

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29	Option B is correct	Since the reader learns that the female platypus lays eggs, the reader can determine that facts about baby platypuses will be found in the section "The Female Platypus" (paragraphs 2–5). In paragraph 5, the author explains that "newly hatched platypuses are about the size of a lima bean."
	Option A is incorrect	Information about the baby platypus is not found in the introductory paragraph. It is found in paragraph 5 along with details about the female platypus.
	Option C is incorrect	The section called "The Male Platypus" does not include the size of a baby platypus. Information about baby platypuses is found in paragraph 5 along with details about the female platypus.
	Option D is incorrect	The section named "A Special Way to Find Food" is more likely to include information about how the platypuses find food than information about the size of a baby platypus.
30	Option F is correct	The author provides a variety of information about the platypus, including the animal's shape, where it lives, what it eats, how it gives birth to and raises its young, and how it is different from most mammals.
	Option G is incorrect	Although the author describes specific characteristics of mammals in paragraph 3, an explanation of how mammals compare to other groups of animals is not the purpose of the selection.
	Option H is incorrect	The author provides information about this particular unfamiliar animal but does not encourage the reader to appreciate unfamiliar animals in general.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author refers to scientists and what they know about the platypus, there is no information about how scientists "observe and study a wild animal," so this is not why the author wrote the selection.

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31	Option C is correct	In paragraph 5, the author explains that platypuses “go off on their own” and choose to live alone rather than in a group. Based on this context, the reader can determine that <u>prefers</u> means “likes one thing more than another.”
	Option A is incorrect	Platypuses choose to live alone once they are old enough, which suggests that the animal wants to live alone, not simply that it spends time living alone.
	Option B is incorrect	Although grown platypuses choose to live alone, there is no evidence to support the idea that finding comfort is a factor.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no evidence for the reader to determine that platypuses might want to live any other way than alone.
32	Option H is correct	The author emphasizes throughout the selection that the platypus is a unique animal. This idea is introduced in the introductory paragraph, in which the author describes the “odd looking” animal’s unusual appearance, which is a cross between a duck, a beaver, and an otter.
	Option F is incorrect	The platypus may share certain characteristics with the otter and the beaver, but the author does not state that the animals are related.
	Option G is incorrect	The author describes the moment the platypus was discovered but does not state that this discovery was recent.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the author refers to the platypus as living in Australia, there is no claim that this is the only place that the animal can live.

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33	Option D is correct	In paragraph 3, the author explains that the Nordkamp girls had to play on a field “filled with stones, thorns, and broken glass” against “bigger and tougher” boys’ teams. Despite these challenges, the “girls loved the game,” so the reader can infer that they were eager to play regardless of the conditions.
	Option A is incorrect	The girls faced difficult conditions, but there is no evidence that they found the game itself “difficult to learn.”
	Option B is incorrect	In paragraph 3, the author describes some of the challenges the girls overcame in order to play soccer but does not mention equipment until paragraph 4.
	Option C is incorrect	The girls played against boys’ teams; they did not have, or ask to have, boys on the team.
34	Option G is correct	In paragraph 3, the author explains how Gallagher set up matches against the boys’ soccer teams. Based on this context, the best definition of <u>arranged</u> is “to make plans for something.”
	Option F is incorrect	The matches against the boys’ teams were set up, but there is no evidence to suggest that the matches were set up in a certain order.
	Option H is incorrect	Gallagher planned matches against the boys’ teams, but there is no mention of her having to “come to an agreement.”
	Option J is incorrect	The author describes soccer matches in paragraph 3, not musical performances.

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35	Option C is correct	The author’s purpose is to inform the reader about the accomplishments of the first girls’ soccer team in Katutura. The Pumpkins played against boys’ teams and successfully competed in a tournament against other teams from Africa. The Pumpkins nearly won the tournament, inspired other girls in Namibia to take up the sport, and prompted schools in the country to sponsor teams and offer scholarships.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 4, the author explains how an American soccer team donated their uniforms and shoes to the Pumpkins, but that is only one detail in the selection.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author states that soccer was not played by girls in Katutura before 2005, the author’s main focus is on the accomplishments of the Pumpkins.
	Option D is incorrect	The author refers to the other teams the Pumpkins played in the tournament, but this is only a detail in the selection.
36	Option F is correct	When the Nordkamp girls received the donated shoes and uniforms from the American soccer team, they “danced with delight.” Based on this reaction, the reader can infer that the girls appreciated the support they received.
	Option G is incorrect	This sentence is included to show how the girls benefited from the donated uniforms rather than their appreciation for the support they received.
	Option H is incorrect	This sentence is included to illustrate the readiness of the team for competition, not their appreciation for the support they received.
	Option J is incorrect	This sentence is included to illustrate an experience the girls had while playing in the tournament, not their appreciation for the support they received.

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37	Option C is correct	In paragraphs 9 through 15, the author provides details about the soccer tournament, from the Pumpkins' first game in 2006 to their loss to Botswana in the final game. The author's chronological description of events helps the reader understand the successes and failures the girls experienced in the tournament.
	Option A is incorrect	The author describes some of the Pumpkins' games in paragraphs 9 through 15 but does not highlight a repeated process.
	Option B is incorrect	The author describes how the Pumpkins felt before tournament games, but not after.
	Option D is incorrect	The author mentions how the Pumpkins were perceived by others, but the reader's understanding of this is not based on the author's use of chronological order.
38	Option G is correct	Gallagher knew that the girls at Nordkamp Center would enjoy soccer as much as she did, so she organized a soccer team. Playing soccer was a positive experience for the girls, and it "wasn't long before the girls loved the game" (paragraph 3).
	Option F is incorrect	Although Gallagher encouraged girls to play soccer, there is no text evidence that she organized a team to fulfill a dream of "having a successful career as a girls' soccer coach."
	Option H is incorrect	Gallagher did not know in advance that the girls would outperform the boys.
	Option J is incorrect	Although the girls were young, the author does not suggest that Gallagher evaluated the girls' ability to participate in other sports based on their ages.