



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

GRADE 8

Reading

Paper Item Sampler

Read the next two selections. Then choose the best answer to each question.

Starting from Scratch

- 1 When we pulled in the gravel driveway, Grandpa Joe was weeding his garden. He stood up, brushed off his knees, and greeted us with wide-open arms. In his muddy work gloves, rumpled jeans, and lime-green garden shoes, he looked nothing like the refined grandfather I remembered. The ultraprofessional bank president who loved numbers had retired and let his hair run wild. I hadn't seen him since he sold his house in the suburbs, and I wasn't expecting him to look so different.
- 2 After the hugs and kisses, Grandpa couldn't wait to show off his garden. Mom reminded him that she was just dropping me off and that she had to get back for Jessica's recital, but Grandpa went on pointing out his almost-ripe tomatoes, complaining about the rabbits eating his lettuce, and lauding homegrown produce. The man who had been preoccupied for decades with interest rates now cared only about organic gardening.
- 3 It worried Mom, the idea of Grandpa alone in that old cottage in the middle of nowhere. That was the real reason I was there. So I could report back.
- 4 Once Mom was gone, Grandpa turned to me and said, "Now, Anthony, if I remember correctly, you like pasta with pesto sauce." I eagerly nodded. It was true. The grocery store by our house had the best pesto sauce. "That's perfect!" Grandpa said. "We'll make some. Just look how my basil is coming up."
- 5 We broke off some basil, pulled up some garlic, and then drove 15 miles to the nearest co-op grocer, where Grandpa bought parmesan cheese, pine nuts, and olive oil. I spotted some ready-made pesto sauce but didn't mention it.
- 6 "Do we need pasta?" I asked.
- 7 "No," Grandpa replied proudly. "I make my own now."
- 8 On the drive home Grandpa asked, "What's the point of having a *nonno* if he never makes you a big home-cooked meal?"

- 9 *Nonno*—Italian for “grandpa.” I had never called him that. Even though he often talked about how his parents had come to the United States from Italy, I had never really thought of him as particularly Italian.
- 10 “My parents made everything from scratch, like in the old country,” he said. “But I never seemed to have the time to cook when I was working full-time. Fortunately, your mom liked sauce from a jar when she was a kid.” He winked at me.
- 11 Grandpa had printouts of recipes he had pulled from the Internet. First he mixed eggs and flour into dough, and then he cranked the dough through a pasta maker over and over until he thought it was perfect. Then we got started on the pesto. While he cleaned the basil leaves, I grated the parmesan. It wore out my wrist, but when I was finally done, I had a beautiful pile of cheese. Then Grandpa showed me how to dice the garlic cloves. He put all the ingredients in a blender that looked like it hadn’t been touched in decades, poured in some olive oil, and let it grind away. When it was finished, it wasn’t all smooth and creamy like the stuff from the grocery store. But I figured brown and clumpy must be more authentically Italian. Then Grandpa dropped his homemade pasta into boiling water.
- 12 When everything was ready, he proudly served me a heaping helping. I twirled up a forkful while he watched. I stuck it in my mouth and . . . it was just awful. The garlic overpowered my senses, and I thought I might choke. The pasta was gooey—actually, gluey.
- 13 “So,” Grandpa said, his eyes sparkling, “what do you think?”
- 14 Before answering, I thought about our day. The garden, the shopping trip, the prep work, the embarrassing stories he shared about Mom that I stored away for later use. “I . . . I . . . love it, Nonno!” I said.
- 15 Then his face broke into a smile so warm that I was sure I hadn’t told him a lie.

1 Which words define the word lauding as it is used in paragraph 2 of the story?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- Sharing
 - Praising
 - Describing
 - Gathering
 - Advocating
-

2 Record your answer in the space provided.

The author uses ____ (1) ____-person point of view in this story.

1 _____

- 3** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What is the main message the author conveys in the story?

- Ⓐ Cultural traditions should be passed on between generations.
- Ⓑ Exploring new activities may lead to greater happiness.
- Ⓒ The process of creating may be more meaningful than the result.
- Ⓓ Practice is often the key to achieving excellence in a new skill.

Part B

Which sentence from the story best supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ *Even though he often talked about how his parents had come to the United States from Italy, I had never really thought of him as particularly Italian.* (paragraph 9)
- Ⓑ *"Fortunately, your mom liked sauce from a jar when she was a kid."* (paragraph 10)
- Ⓒ *First he mixed eggs and flour into dough, and then he cranked the dough through a pasta maker over and over until he thought it was perfect.* (paragraph 11)
- Ⓓ *Before answering, I thought about our day.* (paragraph 14)

- 4 Determine whether each detail should be included in a summary of the story.

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

Detail from the Story	Include in a Summary	Do Not Include in a Summary
Grandpa decides to make pasta with pesto sauce for Anthony.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Grandpa says that when Anthony's mom was a kid, she liked pesto sauce from a jar.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Anthony and Grandpa spend the day gathering ingredients and preparing the pesto and the pasta.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B
Anthony tells Grandpa that he loves the pasta with pesto sauce, even though it tastes awful.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B

- 5 Read the statement carefully. Then record your answer in the box provided.

Explain how Anthony’s behavior in paragraphs 12 through 14 affects the resolution of the plot. Support your answer with evidence from the story.

- 6** Read the story “Starting from Scratch.” Based on the information in the story, write a response to the following:

Explain how Anthony’s interactions with Grandpa help to develop a theme about how sharing experiences may lead to greater understanding between people.

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

Remember to —

- clearly state your controlling idea
- organize your writing
- develop your ideas in detail
- use evidence from the selection in your response
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar

Manage your time carefully so that you can —

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

Record your answer in the box provided.

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON
THE LINED PAGE IN THE TEST BOOKLET.

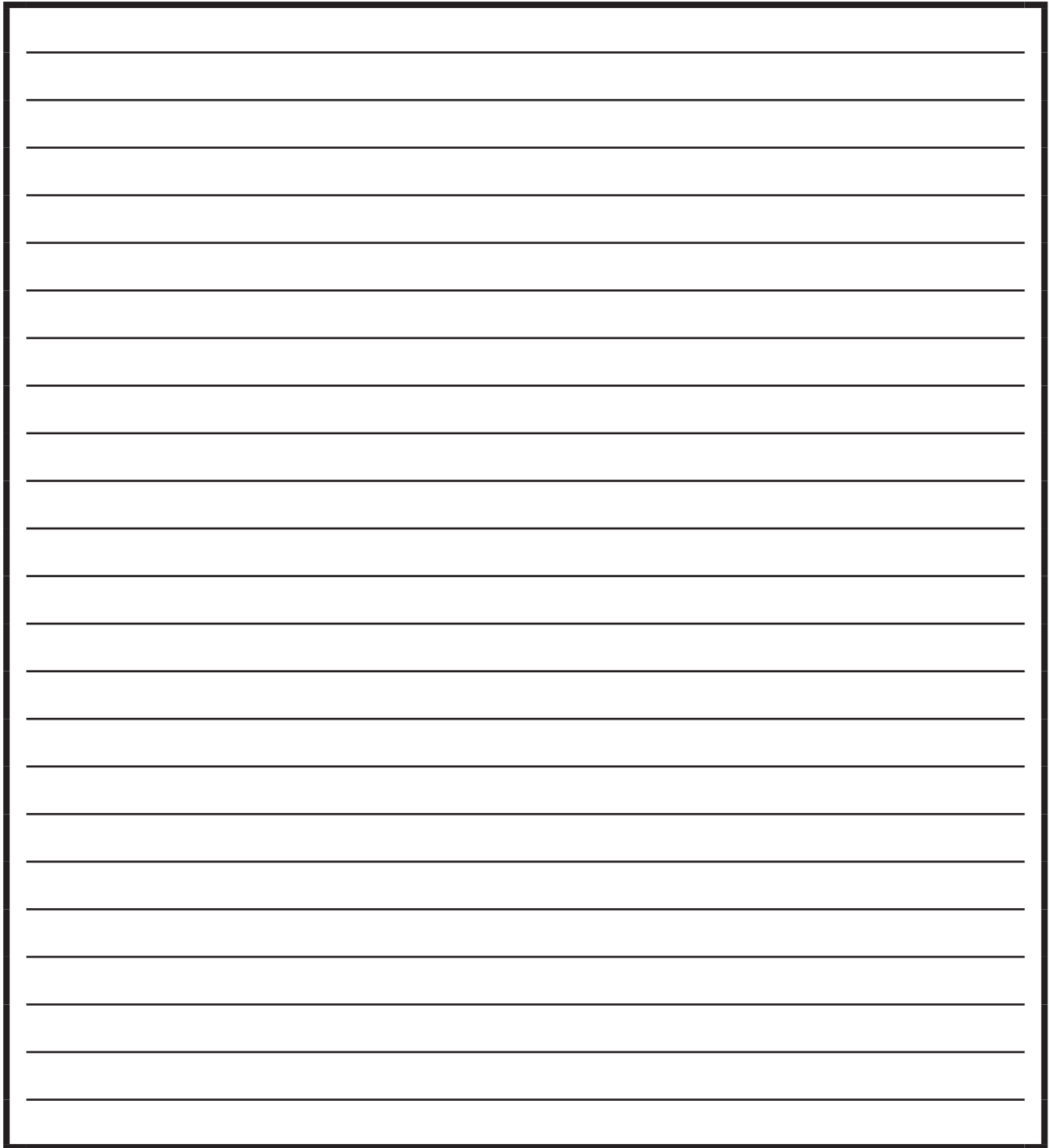
USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON
THE LINED PAGE IN THE TEST BOOKLET.

Written Composition

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

Written Composition



A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

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

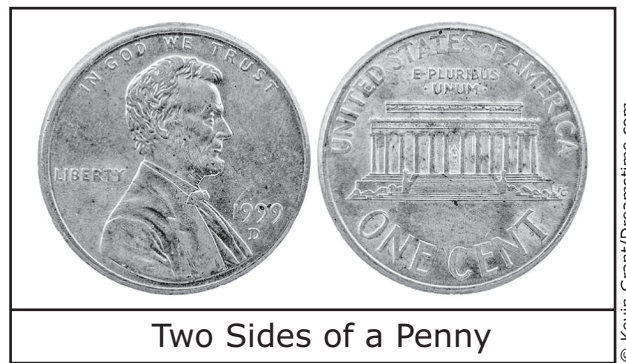
What Can We See in a Logo?

- 1 The typical person is bombarded by hundreds of logos each day. We see them on signs, vehicles, television, and even on the clothes we wear. Logos are distinct images used to represent brands. There are logos such as the famous Nike “swoosh,” the colorful rings to identify the Olympic Games, and the United States Postal Service eagle emblem, just to name a few. All of these logos are designed to attract our attention. They also help us remember a product or service connected to that image. However, research conducted at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) supports the idea that remembering what a logo looks like is a very difficult task.



- 2 In 2015 researchers at UCLA gave 85 students a simple assignment. They had to draw the Apple logo purely from memory. Most of the students were Apple users, so they had the opportunity to look at the logo every day. Surprisingly, only one student in the study could accurately draw the logo from memory. Many of the sketches the other students made were flawed. Some of them drew the basics right but missed minor details of the design—no bite out of the apple or the wrong number of leaves. At first the researchers thought the problem might be that the students were just not very good at drawing. They decided to ask the students to look at several different images and choose the logo that was most accurate. Less than half of the students could detect the correct image.

- 3 The UCLA Apple study is not the first time our ability to remember the details of images has been tested. In the 1970s researchers asked a group of people to draw a penny from memory. Participants were instructed to show the images and words just as they appear on the coin. Like the Apple study, most people could not precisely depict the image. Participants were unable to correctly identify which way Lincoln was facing or where the word "Liberty" was placed on the coin. While the penny is not technically a logo, it is an object with which people have frequent interaction. So why is it so difficult for people to recall the details of images, such as logos, that they see every day? Researchers have developed a theory they think might help to explain this blind spot in our memories.



- 4 Logos are typically designed to be simple and easy to recognize with a quick glance. Yet the frequent exposure to these logos can actually make our brains overlook them. This process is known as "attentional saturation." It would be challenging to try to remember every single thing that crosses our path. We take in so much information every day that the brain works to spot information that does not need to be stored. It allows this unimportant information to fade from our memory. Our brains actually signal us to ignore information we do not think we will need to remember.
- 5 The details of product logos are just the kind of information our brains tell us we do not need. This may be discouraging to logo designers and to companies that use these eye-catching logos. But there are still many business experts who believe in the importance of a recognizable logo.

- 6 Even though the brain is accustomed to ignoring unnecessary details, it is also programmed for recognition. When we see images such as logos over and over again, we become familiar with them. This constant exposure leads to something scientists refer to as gist memory. “Gist memory” means that our brain remembers the basic idea without all of the details. This general sense of memory has its own benefits. When we see that “swoosh” or the apple with a bite out of it, we are acquainted with the image. We may not be able to draw a perfect outline of the logo, but we are able to recognize the image. When people are able to recognize an image, it can make them feel like they really know the product behind the logo. In fact, familiarity with a prevalent logo can even make people feel more comfortable about purchasing or using certain products.
- 7 Logos are everywhere we look today. A fancy design or a thoughtful color combination may be a good start for a logo concept, but there are other factors to consider. Those establishing a logo need to know that people will only remember what they believe is worthwhile. A clever design may be interesting, but most people will forget the details—especially if our brains have anything to say about it.

Third party trademarks Nike®, swoosh®, Olympic®, United States Postal Service®, University of California Los Angeles®, UCLA® and Apple® were used in these testing materials.

7 What are the most likely reasons the author includes the information in paragraphs 2 and 3?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

- To explain why logos lack effectiveness
- To show scientific evidence for the researchers' theory
- To highlight the extensive work that goes into creating logos
- To build to the point that recognizing logos is more important than memorizing them
- To emphasize that people do not pay attention

8 Determine whether each statement is supported by both the UCLA study and the penny study or by just one study.

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

Statement about Remembering Familiar Images	Statement Supported by Both Studies	Statement Supported by One Study
It is a difficult task to use our memory to precisely depict a familiar image.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
Drawing ability is not related to correctly depicting the image from memory.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
Selecting an image that is most like a familiar image is less difficult than depicting an image precisely from memory.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ
The process of attentional saturation helps to explain the results of the study.	Ⓐ	Ⓑ

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

Part A

What is the controlling idea of the article?

- Ⓐ Repeatedly seeing a logo helps people to remember the details of the image.
- Ⓑ An effective logo builds awareness of the product it represents.
- Ⓒ Recognizing logos is more important than drawing them.
- Ⓓ Logos are a powerful way to market a product.

Part B

Which sentence from the article best supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ *All of these logos are designed to attract our attention.* (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ *Surprisingly, only one student in the study could accurately draw the logo from memory.* (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ *When we see images such as logos over and over again, we become familiar with them.* (paragraph 6)
- Ⓓ *Those establishing a logo need to know that people will only remember what they believe is worthwhile.* (paragraph 7)

10 Read the sentence from paragraph 6.

In fact, familiarity with a prevalent logo can even make people feel more comfortable about purchasing or using certain products.

Record your answer in the space provided.

In the sentence, the word (1) provides the best clue to the meaning of the word prevalent as it is used in paragraph 6.

1 _____

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Greg wrote this paper to tell about the science involved in designing roller coasters. Read Greg's paper and look for revisions he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

It Takes Science

(1) Imagine being on a roller-coaster track. (2) You feel the cars slowly climbing to the top of a large hill. (3) Suddenly the roller coaster plunges steeply.

(4) It bends and turns as it swiftly follows the curves of the track. (5) Happy screams fill the air as the brief but thrilling ride comes to an end. (6) Riding on a roller coaster may last only a few minutes. (7) Planning a new roller-coaster ride, however, takes several years. (8) Designing an exciting roller-coaster ride involves imagination and creativity, but designing the roller-coaster ride also requires science.

(9) Ride design begins with a computer program. (10) The program calculates the forces that will affect the roller-coaster cars as they move along the track. (11) Designers must understand the limits these forces create when building and they are improving their roller coasters. (12) Designers use their knowledge of friction, gravity, and the laws of motion to make the ride act in a way they plan. (13) This is the reason there are often large hills on roller coasters. (14) Designers take advantage of gravity to generate speed on their ride as cars descend these slopes. (15) Gravity causes the cars to increase their speed as they go down the hill.

(16) Speed alone is not enough for a fantastic roller coaster, though. (17) Designers often add loops and twists to rides. (18) However, the roller coasters must be safe as well as exciting. (19) Friction and gravity are key factors in determining how far designers can push the limits of a ride. (20) Will the cars have enough speed to complete the loop? (21) Will the cars move too fast to stay on the track during an abrupt turn? (22) These are questions designers must use science to answer.

(23) Another thought of roller coasters that designers have to consider is which material they should use to build the ride. (24) Steel roller coasters can be built with steeper hills than wooden roller coasters can handle. (25) Steel also allows wheels to ride more smoothly over a track than wood does. (26) Additionally, steel is stronger than wood and can withstand the forces of a car pressing against the track in tight turns and loops.

(27) Even the smallest detail must be considered when building new roller coasters. (28) In the meantime, too much paint on a track can cause resistance on the wheels of a roller coaster as they roll over the track. (29) A good track needs to have worn paint. (30) This allows the coaster to move more quickly.

(31) As science and technology advance, designers are constantly searching for ways to build faster and more complex roller coasters. (32) Designers are excited and hopeful about the possibilities of roller-coaster designs. (33) "Everybody is going higher and taller," says Kent Seko, a roller-coaster designer with Arrow Dynamics. (34) Designers aim to set new records with each new roller coaster they design.

(35) The sky is the limit when it comes to roller-coaster design. (36) Yet, one thing remains constant. (37) A well-designed roller coaster relies on knowledge of the laws of force and motion to ensure the ride is an amazing experience for everyone on board.

13 Sentence 11 needs to be revised. In the box provided, rewrite sentence 11 in a clear and effective way.

14 Greg has not used the most appropriate word in sentence 23. Select the word that should replace **thought** in this sentence.

Another

(A) regard
(B) strand
(C) outlook
(D) aspect

 of roller coasters that designers have to consider is which material they should use to build the ride.

15 Greg wants to use a more appropriate transition in sentence 28. Select the phrase that should replace **In the meantime** in this sentence.

(A) In other words
(B) For example
(C) In comparison
(D) As a result

, too much paint on a track can cause resistance on the wheels of a roller coaster as they roll over the track.

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Jazlynn is writing a story about a family reunion. Read these paragraphs from the body of Jazlynn's paper and look for corrections she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Family Reunion

(1) After parking the car near Metropolitan Centennial Park, Marta's father announced, "Welcome to the Esquivel family reunion!"

(2) Marta grumbled, "Dad, it's been a decade since we've seen these people."

(3) "You're going to have a great time," replied her father.

(4) "Your cousin Juan will be here, and the two of you used to play basketball for hours at a time."

(5) "He probably won't remember me even if he does, we won't have anything to say to each other," Marta fretted. (6) She sighed as her father walked away to greet some relatives.

(7) At last Marta saw Juan, who was wearing his Terra Vista middle school basketball jersey. (8) He saw Marta and hesitantly tossed his basketball to her. (9) Marta thought, "Maybe we do still have something in common."

- 16** Jazlynn has made an error in sentence 5. Select the response that corrects this error.

“He probably won’t remember

Ⓐ	me; even if he does,
Ⓑ	me, even if he does,
Ⓒ	me: even if he does,
Ⓓ	me even if he does;

 we won’t have anything to say to each other,” Marta fretted.

-
- 17** Select the response that corrects the capitalization error in sentence 7.

At last Marta saw Juan, who was wearing

his

Ⓐ	Terra vista middle school basketball jersey
Ⓑ	Terra Vista middle school Basketball jersey
Ⓒ	Terra Vista Middle School basketball jersey
Ⓓ	Terra Vista Middle School Basketball Jersey

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