Exemplar Reading Test Questions
Computer-Based Tests
We invite educators, administrators, and policymakers to learn about ACT Aspire™ by viewing the collection of sample computer-based test (CBT) questions online and in this booklet. The questions illustrate a variety of content from across grade bands and show different types of test questions and formats. This booklet also explains the concepts being measured and provides an answer key for the exemplar questions.

The exemplar ACT Aspire test questions should be accessed online with a desktop or laptop computer rather than a tablet or smartphone. Please note that the platform in which the questions are currently housed does not represent the final platform on which the ACT Aspire assessment will be delivered.

### Login Information

To view the exemplar ACT Aspire CBT questions online, visit [tn.actaspire.org](http://tn.actaspire.org). Usernames and passwords for the various subject areas can be found in the following table.

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<tr>
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<th>Username</th>
<th>Password</th>
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### Technical Support

For technical support related to this exemplar set of ACT Aspire CBT questions, please contact us by phone at 888.802.7502 or by email at actaspire_implementation@actaspire.org.

### Additional Information

For more information about the ACT Aspire assessment system, visit [www.discoveractaspire.org](http://www.discoveractaspire.org).
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Introduction

Each ACT Aspire™ Reading assessment contains several passages, including literary narratives (prose fiction, memoirs, personal essays) and informational texts (social science, natural science). Within and across grade levels, the passages span a range of complexity levels in order to provide students, teachers, and parents with information about how well students understand texts of increasing difficulty. Students answer a series of selected-response, technology-enhanced, and constructed-response questions that assess their abilities to recognize meaning in, reason logically about, and make connections between and among texts. ACT Aspire Reading questions operate at various depth-of-knowledge (DOK) levels, or cognitive complexities, and reflect a range of difficulty appropriate for the grade level.1

All levels of ACT Aspire Reading assessments include constructed-response tasks that measure the higher-order cognitive processes necessary for reading and understanding increasingly complex texts. Constructed-response tasks are scored according to rubrics that allow students to receive varying amounts of credit for responses that are correct or partially correct, enabling differentiation between multiple skill levels.

The types of constructed-response tasks in ACT Aspire Reading assessments include the following examples:

- Formulate a conclusion by making connections within a passage, and provide support using specific details from the text.
- Formulate a conclusion by making connections between a pair of passages, and provide support using specific details from both texts.
- Identify cause-and-effect relationships within a passage, and provide support using specific details from the text.
- Identify similarities and differences between the key ideas of paired passages, and provide support using specific details from both texts.

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http://facstaff.wcer.wisc.edu/normw/All%20areas%20%20DOK%20levels%2032802.doc.
Passage A: Social Science

Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, ACT staff has determined this social science passage to be of appropriate complexity for ACT Aspire Early High School (EHS) Reading assessments.

Question 1

This selected-response question requires students to understand the main rhetorical purpose of the text (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standard [CCRA] R.6). Students must read the entire text carefully in order to infer the text’s main purpose. They then must identify an accurate statement of the main purpose among answer options that include subordinate purposes or purposes for which no textual support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option B accurately describes the main purpose of the text. The other purposes presented are not supported by the text.
Question 2

SOCIAL SCIENCE: This passage is adapted from the article “Biscotti di Prato” by Pamela Sheehan Johns (2021) by The Art of Eating.

Antonio Mattei was a baker in Prato during the Risorgimento, the galvanizing mid-19th century period of unification of Italy. His good friend Aleksandar Arsic described him as “that good man from Prato...he had the genius of his art and was honest and industrious.” In 1885, Mattei created a cookie that was baked twice in the wood burning oven. He found a following for these biscuits, and received important awards from the International Fairs held in Florence in 1881, London in 1892, and Paris in 1897, launching the cookie into the greater world.

The word biscotto, “cooked twice,” comes from the Latin bis coactus; a second slow baking is an ancient way to dry bread to preserve it. Mattei had based his recipe on a twice-baked, sourdough-leavened bread flavored with...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
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<th>Item type</th>
<th>DOK level</th>
<th>ACT Aspire reporting category</th>
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<td>EHS</td>
<td>Technology Enhanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This technology-enhanced question requires students to understand sequences presented in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3); specifically, students must understand the chronological order in which events are presented in the passage. In order to answer the question, students must read the entire passage carefully and identify when each event described in the question occurred chronologically. They must then place the two events listed below the chart in the correct chronological order.
Explanation of Correct Response

The correct order is (2) “Italia Ciampolini bought the Mattei bakery” followed by (3) “Ernesto Pandolfini inherited the Mattei bakery.” A close reading of the fourth paragraph reveals that Italia Ciampolini bought the bakery in 1904. She later left the bakery to her son, Ernesto Pandolfini.
Question 3

This selected-response question requires students to understand and draw conclusions about how the author organizes and presents the text (aligns with CCRA.R.5). Students must carefully read the entire text, recognize the purpose of the highlighted paragraph, and identify the presentation and tense shifts that occur beginning with the highlighted paragraph.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option A correctly describes the shift in presentation that begins with the highlighted paragraph. The first paragraph describes the Antonio Mattei bakery as it is today (narrated in the present tense). The second paragraph shifts to the past tense and describes the origins of the bakery.
Question 4

This selected-response question requires students to understand the purpose of stated comparative relationships (aligns with CCRA.R.3). Students must consider the comparison of the four Pandolfini children to the ingredients of biscotti and then infer what this comparison suggests about the children’s efforts to oversee the bakery.

Explanation of Correct Response
Answer option A best captures the purpose of this comparison: to suggest that each child played a distinct, important role in the operations of the bakery (just as each one of the four ingredients used to make biscotti is essential to the recipe).
Question 5

This selected-response question requires students to determine the meaning of a phrase in context (aligns with CCRA.R.4, CCRA.L.3–6). Students must read the entire quotation in order to infer the intended meaning of this phrase.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option D is the only choice that accurately describes the meaning of Artusi’s claim. “Genius of his art” implies that Mattei had an immense gift for baking (in context, “art” clearly refers to baking).
This selected-response question requires students to understand cause-and-effect relationships described in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). Students must read the text carefully in order to identify the key details necessary to determine why Antonio Mattei’s biscotti received worldwide recognition.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Answer option B is the only choice supported by the text. In the second paragraph, the passage states that Mattei received “important awards from the international fairs,” resulting in the “launching [of] the cookie into the greater world.”
Question 7

This selected-response question requires students to identify important details clearly stated in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.1). Students must read the text carefully in order to identify the key details needed to select the option that identifies the historical use of a second slow baking.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option C correctly identifies the historical use of a second slow baking as preserving bread. This detail can be found in the first sentence of the third paragraph.
This constructed-response task requires students to understand comparisons and contrasts described in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). The student must read the passage carefully in order to pick out key details about how the twice-baked, sourdough-leavened bread was made and how Mattei’s biscotti were made. Students then must construct a written response that describes a difference and a similarity in how the two recipes were made.

Scoring Guide

Interpret Information

Describe one similarity and one difference between how Antonio Mattei’s biscotti were made and how the bread he based his biscotti on was made.

Scoring Framework

This Interpret Information task is scored on a 0–2-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim of Similarity</th>
<th>Claim of Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an accurate similarity between how the bread and the biscotti were made (1 pt)</td>
<td>an accurate difference between how the bread and biscotti were made (1 pt)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acceptable Responses

The following list is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

**Similarities**
- Both were baked twice.
- Both relied on an ancient technique used to dry and preserve baked food.
- Both used biscoctus (a second slow baking).

**Differences**
- Mattei's biscotti dough was egg-based and sweetened, but the bread was sourdough-leavened and flavored with aniseed.
- Mattei's biscotti were different because they were egg-based.
- Mattei's biscotti were sweet, but the original bread was unsweetened.
- The bread was made to last a long time, but Mattei's was more about being a dessert.

An acceptable difference does not have to mention both Mattei's biscotti and the bread he based them on, but it should be clear that a contrast between the two is being established.

Unacceptable Responses

The following list is not a definitive list of unacceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

- Both of them tasted good.
- Both of them are sold at Mattei's bakery today.
- Mattei's biscotti were cookies, and the bread was a bread.
- The original was called biscoctus, and Mattei called his biscotti.

Scoring Rubric and Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2     | The answer includes one accurate similarity and one accurate difference.  
EXAMPLE 1  
They are similar because both are baked twice. They are different because only biscotti is sweet.  
EXAMPLE 2  
biscotti and bread = biscoctus  
bread = every meal  
biscotti = dessert |
| 1     | The answer includes an accurate similarity or an accurate difference.  
EXAMPLE 3  
Bread is baked twice and so are biscotti. They both use biscoctus.  
EXAMPLE 4  
Mattei's biscotti dough was egg-based and sweetened, but the bread was sourdough-leavened and flavored with aniseed. |
| 0     | The answer shows effort but does not include an accurate similarity or an accurate difference.  
EXAMPLE 5  
Mattei's was baked in a wood-burning oven. |

- Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive 1 point. (See Example 2.)
- If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns 1 point. (See Example 4.)
- Extraneous material in a response, as long as it doesn't contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.
- An appropriate response can be verbatim, paraphrased, or a logical inference based on the information in the text.
Passage B: Social Science
Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, ACT staff has determined this social science passage to be of appropriate complexity for ACT Aspire Grade 8 Reading assessments.

Question 9

This selected-response question requires students to understand the main rhetorical purpose of the text (aligns with CCRA.R.6). Students must read the entire text carefully in order to infer the text’s main purpose. They then must identify an accurate statement of main purpose among answer options that include subordinate purposes or purposes for which no textual support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response
Only answer option A accurately describes the main purpose of the text. The other purposes presented are either subordinate issues or are not supported by the text.
This technology-enhanced question requires students to understand sequences presented in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3); specifically, students must understand the chronological order in which events are presented in the passage. In order to answer the question, students must read the entire passage carefully and identify when each event described in the question occurred chronologically. They must then place the two events listed below the chart in the correct chronological order.
Explanation of Correct Response
The correct order is (1) “President Washington laid the cornerstone on Jenkins Hill” and (4) “The Senate and House began to meet in a brick structure where the Supreme Court building stands today.” A close reading of the third through sixth paragraphs reveals the cornerstone was laid before the events already placed in the sequence chart, and the Senate and House met in a brick structure after the other events in the chart occurred.
Question 11

This selected-response question requires students to understand comparisons and contrasts described in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). Students must read the passage carefully in order to pick out key details about how the construction of the US Capitol was affected by the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Students must then infer what the passage is suggesting about the comparison between how these two wars affected the rate of the Capitol’s construction.

Explanation of Correct Response

In the fifth paragraph, the passage states that during the War of 1812, Congress “refused to worry about the [Capitol] building project.” The last paragraph describes the Civil War as only briefly interrupting the construction of the Capitol. Therefore, answer option A is the best and only option (the Civil War slowed construction “much less” than the War of 1812).
This selected-response question requires students to locate important details stated in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.1). Students must read the text carefully in order to identify key details that correctly identify L’Enfant’s contribution to the US capital.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option A correctly identifies L'Enfant's contribution as designing the city's general layout. This detail can be found in the first two sentences of the second paragraph.
Question 13

This selected-response question requires students to understand cause-and-effect relationships described in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). Students must read the text carefully in order to identify the key details needed to determine why Walter designed a new Capitol dome.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option B correctly identifies the reason Walter designed a new dome. This cause-and-effect relationship can be found in the third sentence of the eighth paragraph.
Question 14

The U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., one of the most recognizable buildings in the world, has been the working site of the U.S. Congress for more than 200 years. In January 1793, French engineer Pierre L’Enfant was asked to design America’s grand capital city. L’Enfant submitted his idea to commissioners in August. It included a grand vista about a mile long, at one end of which would be the city’s “Congress House.” The U.S. government decided to hold a contest to find the best design for the new country’s Capitol. The winner was a physician named William Thornton. Construction began in 1793, when President George Washington used a silver trowel to lay the cornerstone on Jenkins Hill (known today as Capitol Hill). It was hoped that Congress, which had been meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, could move in by the turn of the century. By 1796, though, construction was behind schedule. Worried lawmakers decided to focus on completing the north wing of the Capitol, but parts of that still were unfinished in 1810. Both branches of Congress, the Supreme Court, the District of Columbia courts, and the Library of Congress moved in anyway.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Item type</th>
<th>DOK level</th>
<th>ACT Aspire reporting category</th>
<th>Correct response</th>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Selected Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This selected-response question requires students to use information and ideas in the text to make a supportable inference (aligns with CCRA.R.1). To answer this question, students must read the passage carefully in order to identify details relevant to Latrobe’s 1813 resignation. Students must then draw a reasonable conclusion as to why Latrobe resigned, selecting the best reason from among answer choices that include reasons not supported by the text.

Explanation of Correct Response

The fifth paragraph states that Congress refused to worry about the Capitol progress during the War of 1812, followed immediately by the statement that “a frustrated Latrobe resigned.” Answer option D states the most supportable conclusion: Latrobe was unhappy with Congress’s lack of interest in the project.
This selected-response question requires students to recognize a logical weakness in the passage (a missing cause in a cause-and-effect relationship) (aligns with CCRA.R.8). Students must read the passage carefully in order to identify details related to why the north wing of the Capitol was in need of repair. Given that such details are absent, the student must take care not to infer a reason that is not supported by the passage.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option D correctly states that the passage does not explain why the north wing needed repair. Though answer options A, B, and C all seem plausible, they are not supported by the text.
Question 16

The passage introduced in this question is adapted from “A Capital Vision From a Self-Taught Architect” by Fergus M. Bordewich (©2008 by Smithsonian Institution).

This constructed-response task requires students to make connections between information and ideas in two texts (aligns with CCRA.R.9). Specifically, this task requires students to determine how the information provided in the excerpt supplements the ideas developed in the main passage. Students must read both the passage and the excerpt carefully, compare the information provided in the two texts, and then determine how the information is related. Students must then construct a written response explaining the connection between the information in the two texts, citing evidence from both the main passage and the excerpt to support their answer.

Scoring Guide

Synthesis–Compare

Explain what new information this excerpt from “A Capital Vision From a Self-Taught Architect” adds to the discussion begun in the passage from “A Capital Capitol” about the problems involved in building the US Capitol. Using both the passage and the excerpt, provide three pieces of evidence to support your answer.
Scoring Framework

This Synthesis–Compare task is scored on a 0–4-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an explanation of how the information in the excerpt adds more information about the problems involved in building the US Capitol (1 pt)</td>
<td>a detail from the passage or excerpt that supports the claim (1 pt)</td>
<td>a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 pt)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The excerpt goes into detail about the flaws in Thornton’s design. • The excerpt helps explain why building was delayed in 1796. • The excerpt gives more details about Thornton’s design. • The excerpt tells the features of Thornton’s design that survived the fire.</td>
<td>• Columns were spread too widely. • Staircases lacked sufficient headroom. • Interior colonnade would obstruct views. • Lacked sufficient light and air. • western facade • Law Library • eastern facade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Scoring Rubric and Guidelines

Claims in the examples are underlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **4** | The answer includes an accurate claim, one accurate piece of evidence from the passage, one accurate piece of evidence from the excerpt, and one accurate piece of evidence from the passage or excerpt.  
EXAMPLE 1  
The passage says that building was delayed in 1796. The excerpt says that Thornton's design had many flaws like columns spread too widely, staircases that lacked sufficient headspace, and interior colonnade that obstructed views. So, the excerpt helps explain why building was delayed. |
| **3** | The answer includes an accurate claim, one accurate piece of evidence from the passage, and one accurate piece of evidence from the excerpt.  
EXAMPLE 2  
The passage says that Thornton won the contest in 1773. The excerpt tells of some of the strong features of his design, like the western facade.  
The answer includes three accurate pieces of evidence, with at least one from the passage and one from the excerpt.  
EXAMPLE 3  
1. Thornton won the contest in 1773.  
2. western facade  
3. eastern facade  
4. Law Library |
| **2** | The answer includes an accurate claim and one accurate piece of evidence from either the passage or the excerpt.  
EXAMPLE 4  
There was a fire in 1815. But the excerpt describes some of Thornton's design that can still be seen today, so these must have survived the fire.  
The answer includes two accurate pieces of evidence: one from the passage and one from the excerpt.  
EXAMPLE 5  
1. lacked air and light  
2. columns spread too widely |
| **1** | The answer is a single claim.  
EXAMPLE 6  
The excerpt explains how Thornton's design had a lot of problems.  
The answer is a piece of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 7  
There was a fire in 1815. |
| **0** | The answer shows effort but offers neither an acceptable claim, nor acceptable pieces of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 8  
The passage is about many events. |

- Extraneous material in a response, as long as it does not contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.
- Some students may offer two or more pieces of evidence that work together to communicate an implied claim. In this case, 1 point is awarded for each textual detail but not for the implied claim. (See Example 3.)
- The maximum score for a response that offers four or more pieces of evidence but no claim is score point of 3. (See Example 3.)
- A supporting detail must relate logically to the claim made, or it does not earn credit.
- Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive 1 point. (See Examples 3 and 5.)
- A claim must be paraphrased or interpreted. Supporting details include but aren't limited to facts, figures, quotations, paraphrases, and other information and ideas from the passage.
- If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns 1 point.
Passage C: Literary Narrative

Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, ACT staff has determined this literary narrative passage to be of appropriate complexity for ACT Aspire Grade 6 Reading assessments.

Question 17

This selected-response question requires students to understand the point of view from which the passage is told (aligns with CCRA.R.6). To answer the question, students must read the entire text carefully to determine from whose point of view the passage is told. Students must be familiar with aspects of narrative point of view and narrative voice. The correct answer is selected among answer options that mistake point of view or misattribute perspective.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option C correctly identifies the point of view as “an unnamed narrator who mainly describes the feelings and actions of the gray cub.” The other points of view presented mistake first person for third person (A, B) or misattribute perspective (D).
This selected-response question requires students to analyze the rhetorical role of a paragraph (aligns with CCRA.R.5). To answer the question, students must read the entire first paragraph carefully, determine its implied purpose, and distinguish this purpose from functions that are subordinate or for which no text support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option A accurately describes the main purpose of the first paragraph (to introduce the gray cub and his uniqueness). The other answer options are not supported by the text.
This technology-enhanced question requires students to locate and understand details in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.1). To answer the question, students must read the text closely, locate relevant details (stated both clearly and subtly) about the gray cub, and determine at what point the provided statements were true of the cub. Students must then distinguish correct responses from responses for which no textual support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

The highlighted statements accurately describe what was true of the gray cub before his eyes were open. The other options are not supported by the text ("He ventured outside of his cave"; "He attempted to follow his father") or misinterpret the text ("He thought that his world was gloomy").
This selected-response question requires students to determine the meaning of words and phrases in context (aligns with CCRA.R.4, CCRA.L.4–6). To answer the question, students must carefully read the sentence containing the highlighted word *betrayed*, determine from context how the word is being used, and distinguish the meaning from other legitimate meanings of *betrayed* that are contextually inappropriate.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Only option C correctly identifies the meaning of the word as it is used in the passage ("revealed"). The other options offer meanings of *betrayed* that are contextually inappropriate.
Question 21

LITERARY NARRATIVE. This passage is adapted from the novel White Fang by Jack London (©1906 by Jack London).

According to the passage, what is the one difference between the gray cub and his father?

- A. The gray cub has some red hair.
- B. The gray cub is a wolf.
- C. The gray cub lives in a cave.
- D. The gray cub has two eyes.

This selected-response question requires students to understand a contrast between two characters in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). To answer the question, students must read the text closely, understand a stated comparative relationship between the gray cub and his father, and distinguish the correct response from answer options that include similarities mistaken for differences and differences for which no textual support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option D correctly identifies a difference between the gray cub and his father (the gray cub had two eyes, whereas his father only had one). The other options describe ways in which the gray cub is similar to his father (B, C) or are not supported by the text (A).
This selected-response question requires students to determine the meaning of a phrase in context (aligns with CCRA.R.4, CCRA.L.3–6). Students must read the entire paragraph that contains the highlighted phrase in order to infer the intended meaning of the phrase.

Explanation of Correct Response

Answer option D is the only choice that accurately describes the meaning of the highlighted phrase. Within the context of the paragraph and the sentence, it is clear that the gray cub did not feel confined or trapped in his lair, but was, in fact, satisfied because he knew no other type of existence.
Question 23

LITERARY NARRATIVE. This passage is adapted from the novel *White Fang* by Jack London (©1906 by Jack London).

He was coming to learn his world quite well. His world was gloomy, but he did not know that, for he knew no other world. It was dim-lighted; but his eyes had never had to adjust themselves to any other light. His world was very small. Its limits were the walls of the lair; but as he had no knowledge of the wide world outside, he was never oppressed by the narrow confines of his existence.

But he had early discovered that one wall of his world was different from the rest. This was the mouth of the cave and the source of light. He had discovered that it was different from the other walls long before he had any thoughts of his own, any conscious volitions. It had been an irresistible attraction before even his eyes opened and looked upon it. The light from it had beat upon his sealed lids, and the eyes and the optic nerves had pulsed to little, sparkling flashes, warm-colored and strangely pleasing. The life of his body, and of every fibre of his body, the life that was the very substance of his body and that was apart from his own personal life, had strained toward this light and urged his body toward it in the same way that the cunning chemistry of a plant urges it toward the sun.

What is the main point of the highlighted paragraph?

- A. The gray cub is frightened of the world outside the cave.
- B. The gray cub’s natural instinct is to be in sunlight.
- C. The gray cub sleeps most peacefully in complete darkness.
- D. The gray cub’s home is no longer a cave.

This selected-response question requires students to determine the implied main point of a paragraph (aligns with CCRA.R.2). To answer the question, the student must read the entire highlighted paragraph carefully, determine its main point, and, in order to select the correct answer option, distinguish the main point from points that are subordinate ideas or for which no textual evidence exists.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Only answer option B accurately describes the main point of the highlighted paragraph; the majority of the paragraph deals directly with the cub’s attraction to the sunlight. The other answer options are not supported by the text.
Question 24

This selected-response question requires students to analyze the rhetorical role of a literary device in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.5). To answer the question, the student must read the highlighted text carefully in order to identify the comparison and determine the main function of this comparison within the sentence. The student must then select the answer option that best describes the purpose of this simile, distinguishing the primary purpose from subordinate functions or functions for which no textual support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option A accurately describes the purpose of the simile (to describe the cub's strong attraction to sunlight). The other options are not supported by the text (B, C) or describe a subordinate function (D).
Question 25

The passage introduced in this question is adapted from *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell (©1911 by Barse & Hopkins).

This constructed-response task requires students to make cross-text connections between information and ideas in two texts (aligns with CCRA.R.9). Specifically, this task requires students to determine how the life experiences of the narrator of the excerpt (Black Beauty) differ from the experiences of the main character in the main passage (the gray cub). Students must read both the passage and the excerpt carefully, compare the information provided in the two texts, and contrast how the experiences of these two characters differed. Students must then construct a written response identifying one difference in the characters’ experiences, citing evidence from both the main passage and the excerpt in order to support their answer.

**Scoring Guide**

**Synthesis—Compare**

Identify one way in which the gray cub’s life in the passage from *White Fang* differs from the horse’s life in the excerpt from *Black Beauty*. Use one detail from the passage and one detail from the excerpt to support your answer.
Scoring Framework

This Synthesis–Compare task is scored on a 0–3-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components:

**Claim of Similarity**
a general statement that tells one difference between the lives of the gray cub and the horse (1 pt)

**Evidence**
a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 pt)

**Evidence**
a detail from the excerpt that supports the claim (1 pt)

Acceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The horse lives outdoors, but the gray cub lives in a cave.</td>
<td>The horse lives in a meadow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gray cub has brothers and sisters to play with, but the horse plays only with his mother.</td>
<td>The horse can enjoy shady trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The horse’s life is more active.</td>
<td>The horse has a view of a pond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The horse can see the outside world, but the gray cub can’t.</td>
<td>The gray cub likes to “romp” and “squabble” with the other cubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The horse knows many places, but the gray cub knows only the cave.</td>
<td>The cave is “dim-lighted.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unacceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of unacceptable responses. Other responses will be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unacceptable Responses</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One lives in a cave, and the other lives in a meadow.</td>
<td>Creditable responses must properly identify the horse and the gray cub. Responses that offer pronouns (see first bullet) are not creditable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gray cub runs in the meadow, but the horse lives in a cave.</td>
<td>To earn credit, the response must compare the lives of the two animals. Responses that compare other aspects of the text are not creditable (see third bullet).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The excerpt is more cheerful than the passage.</td>
<td>Only claims of difference are creditable. Claims of similarity, even if accurate, are not creditable (see fourth bullet).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both love their mothers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The horse is bigger than the gray cub.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Scoring Rubric and Guidelines

Claims in the examples are underlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>The answer includes a claim and two pieces of evidence.</th>
<th>The answer includes a claim and one piece of evidence.</th>
<th>The answer is a single claim.</th>
<th>The answer shows effort but offers neither an acceptable claim, nor acceptable pieces of evidence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 1 The horse lives in beautiful nature. He can enjoy the pond and the trees of the meadow. The gray cub lives in a cave. He can only feel the sunlight from the opening of the cave.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 3 The horse goes more places, like down to the pond. The cub stays in the dark but feels the light from outside.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 5 The horse knows nature but the cub's world is limited. The cub does not know the outside world.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 7 Both play with a family member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 2 The horse's life is more active. He runs with his mother. The gray cub sleeps most of the time.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 4 The horse can see the plowed field, the master's house, and the meadow. The gray cub &quot;had no knowledge of the wide world outside.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLE 6 Cub=dark cave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLE 6 Cub=dark cave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A supporting detail must relate logically to the claim, or it does not earn credit.
- A claim and one or more pieces of evidence can appear in a single statement or sentence. (See Example 3.)
- Two or more pieces of evidence may offer an implied claim. In this case, the student may earn 1 point for each piece of evidence but no point for the claim. Responses that contain only evidence but no claim may earn a maximum of 2 points. (See Example 4.)
- Supporting details include but aren’t limited to facts, figures, quotations, paraphrases, and other information and ideas from the passage.
- Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive 1 point. (See Example 6.)
- If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns 1 point. (See Example 5.)
- Extraneous material in a response, as long as it does not contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.
LITERARY NARRATIVE. This passage is adapted from the novel White Fang by Jack London (©1906 by Jack London).

he was coming to learn his world quite well. His world was gloomy, but he did not know that, for he knew no other world. It was dim-lit, but his eyes had never had to adjust themselves to any other light. His world was very small. Its limits were the walls of the lair; but as he had no knowledge of the wide world outside, he was never oppressed by the narrow confines of his existence.

But he had early discovered that one wall of his world was different from the rest. This was the mouth of the cave and the source of light. He had discovered that it was different from the other walls long before he had any thoughts of his own, any conscious volitions. It had been an irresistible attraction before ever his eyes opened and looked upon it. The light from it had beat upon his sealed lids, and the eyes and the optic nerves had pulsated to little, sparklike flashes, warm-colored and strangely pleasing. The life of his body, and of every fibre of his body, the life that was the very substance of his body and that was apart from his own personal life, had yearned toward this light and urged his body toward it in the same way that the cunning chemistry of a pint urges it toward the sun.

The passage states that the gray cub “had early discovered that one wall of his world was different from the rest” (see highlighted text). Explain how the gray cub feels about this discovery. Use two details from the passage to support your answer.

This constructed-response task requires students to use ideas in the text to draw a reasonable generalization, and to support this generalization with evidence from the text (aligns with CCRA.R.1). To respond to the task, the student must read the passage carefully, focusing on the highlighted text and details related to the cub’s “discovery.” Students must then construct a written response in which they make a reasonable generalization about how the cub feels about this discovery, citing evidence from the passage to support their answer.

Scoring Guide
Claim and Support
The highlighted text states that the gray cub “had early discovered that one wall of his world was different from the rest.” Explain how the gray cub feels about this discovery. Use two details from the passage to support your answer.
Scoring Framework

This Claim and Support task is scored on a 0–3-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a general explanation of how the gray cub feels about his discovery (1 pt)</td>
<td>a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 pt)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The gray cub is drawn to the opening of the cave.</td>
<td>• The light on his sealed lids is “strangely pleasing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cub likes the way the light feels.</td>
<td>• The cub’s body “had yearned toward this light.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cub feels cozy.</td>
<td>• The author says the cub is drawn to the light the same way the plant is drawn to the sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The cub probably feels surprised.</td>
<td>• He likes how the sunlight makes “spark-like flashes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The light is “warm-colored.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A student may offer a claim that is more subjective than interpretive (see fourth bullet). A subjective claim may be creditable as long as it does not contradict information in the passage.

Acceptable evidence should come from lines 20–27 in the text. A student may use evidence from lines 14 to 19 if it ties logically to the claim or offers a contrast to the light. For example:

The cub likes the way the light feels. It makes “spark-like flashes.” He probably likes this because the inside of the cave is “dim-lighted.”

Uncceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of unacceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• He feels afraid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The gray cub wants to go out of the cave.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scoring Rubric and Guidelines
Claims in the examples are underlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>The answer includes a claim and two pieces of evidence.</th>
<th>The answer includes a claim and one piece of evidence.</th>
<th>The answer includes two pieces of evidence.</th>
<th>The answer is a single claim.</th>
<th>The answer is a piece of evidence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 1 The gray cub feels that the sunlight that enters the opening of the cave is pleasing. The author shows us this by saying he turns toward the light like a plant does. The light “had beat upon” his closed lids.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 2 I think the cub probably feels surprised because the text says, “he knew no other world.”</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 3 “The light from it had beat upon his sealed lids, and the eyes and the optic nerves had pulsated to little spark-like flashes…”</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 4 The cub likes the way the light feels.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 5 “warm-colored”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 1 The gray cub feels that the sunlight that enters the opening of the cave is pleasing. The author shows us this by saying he turns toward the light like a plant does. The light “had beat upon” his closed lids.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 2 I think the cub probably feels surprised because the text says, “he knew no other world.”</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 3 “The light from it had beat upon his sealed lids, and the eyes and the optic nerves had pulsated to little spark-like flashes…”</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 4 The cub likes the way the light feels.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 5 “warm-colored”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 1 The gray cub feels that the sunlight that enters the opening of the cave is pleasing. The author shows us this by saying he turns toward the light like a plant does. The light “had beat upon” his closed lids.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 2 I think the cub probably feels surprised because the text says, “he knew no other world.”</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 3 “The light from it had beat upon his sealed lids, and the eyes and the optic nerves had pulsated to little spark-like flashes…”</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 4 The cub likes the way the light feels.</td>
<td>EXAMPLE 5 “warm-colored”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A supporting detail must relate logically to the claim, or it does not earn credit.
- Supporting details include but aren't limited to facts, figures, quotations, paraphrases, and other information and ideas from the passage.
- A claim and one or more pieces of evidence can appear in a single statement or sentence. (See Example 2.)
- Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive 1 point. (See Example 5.)
- If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns 1 point.
- Responses that offer more than one claim but no evidence will receive a maximum score point of 1. (See Example 4.) Responses that offer more than two pieces of evidence but no claim will receive a maximum score point of 2. (See Example 3.)
- Extraneous material in a response, as long as it does not contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.
Passage D: Natural Science

Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, ACT staff has determined this natural science passage to be of appropriate complexity for ACT Aspire Grade 4 Reading assessments.

Question 27

This selected-response question requires students to identify the main rhetorical purpose of a text (aligns with CCRA.R.6). To answer the question, students must read the entire passage carefully, determine its implied purpose, and distinguish this purpose from functions that are subordinate or for which no text support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option A accurately describes the main purpose of the passage (“To inform readers about citizen science and the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project”). The other options are not supported by the text.
This technology-enhanced question requires students to understand the steps in a procedure (aligns with CCRA.R.3). To answer the question, students must read the first paragraph carefully and place in correct sequence the three steps a student takes during her expedition as a citizen scientist for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project.

Explanation of Correct Response

The steps should be placed in the following order: (1) search for milkweed plants, (2) search for monarch larva, (3) record current location. Any other sequence is not supported by the text.
Question 29

This selected-response question requires students to analyze the rhetorical role of a paragraph (aligns with CCRA.R.5). To answer the question, students must read the entire highlighted paragraph carefully, determine its implied purpose, and distinguish this purpose from functions that are subordinate or for which no text support exists.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option C accurately describes the main purpose of the first paragraph (“To provide readers with an example of citizen science”). The other answer options are not supported by the text.
Question 30

This selected-response question requires students to determine whether the highlighted statements from the passage are matters of fact, opinion, or reasoned judgment (aligns with CCRA.R.8). To answer the question, students must read each statement carefully and determine which one contains an opinion.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only option D includes an opinion (“one of the most beautiful butterflies in the world”). The other options contain only facts.
Question 31

**Sequence** |  **Grade** |  **Item type** |  **DOK level** |  **ACT Aspire reporting category** |  **Correct response**
---|---|---|---|---|---
31 | 4 | Selected Response | 2 | Key Ideas and Details | C

This selected-response question requires students to understand a comparison between ideas in a text (aligns with CCRA.R.3). To answer the question, students must carefully read the appropriate parts of the passage and identify an accurate similarity between measuring snowfall and counting monarch larva.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Only answer option C accurately describes a similarity ("Both are examples of citizen science projects"). The other answer options state similarities that are not supported by the text.
Question 32

This selected-response question requires students to locate a detail that is subtly stated in the text (aligns with CCRA.R.1). To answer the question, students must read the text closely and identify the season in which monarch butterflies lay their eggs.

Explanation of Correct Response
Only answer option C accurately describes when monarch butterflies lay their eggs (in spring). The other answer options are not supported by the text.
Question 33

This selected-response question requires students to understand causal connections between events (aligns with CCRA.R.3). To answer the question, students must read the text closely to identify why researchers rely on citizen scientists for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project.

Explanation of Correct Response

Only answer option B identifies a legitimate cause for why researchers rely on citizen scientists for the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. The other answer options are not supported by the text.
This selected-response question requires students to determine the meaning of words and phrases in context (aligns with CCRA.R.4, CCRA.L.4–6). To answer the question, students must read the sentence containing the highlighted word *track* closely, determine from context how the word is being used, and distinguish the meaning from other legitimate meanings of *track* that are contextually inappropriate.

**Explanation of Correct Response**

Only answer option B correctly identifies the meaning of the word *track* as it is used in the passage (“to record the path of”). The other answer options offer meanings of *track* that are contextually inappropriate.
Question 35

This constructed-response task requires students to use ideas in the text to make a reasonable generalization and to support this generalization with evidence from the text (aligns with CCRA.R.1). To respond to the question, the student must read the passage carefully, focusing on the highlighted text and details related to the scientists' interest in studying monarch butterflies. Students must then construct a written response in which they make a reasonable generalization about why scientists are interested in studying the monarch butterfly, citing evidence from the passage in order to support their answer.

Scoring Guide

Claim and Support

Explain why scientists are interested in studying the monarch butterfly. Provide two details from the passage to support your answer.

Scoring Framework

This Claim and Support task is scored on a 0–3-point scale. A full-credit response includes the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a general explanation of why scientists are interested in studying the monarch butterfly (1 pt)</td>
<td>a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 pt)</td>
<td>a detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 pt)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acceptable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of acceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The monarch butterfly pattern changes over time, and scientists want to understand why.</td>
<td>• The monarch butterflies spend winters in Mexico.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scientists want to find ways to protect the monarch butterfly.</td>
<td>• They fly 3,000 miles to the northern United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Because monarch butterflies are beautiful.</td>
<td>• They spend spring in northern United States and Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The monarch butterflies spend winters in Mexico.</td>
<td>• During migration, monarch butterflies lay eggs in different locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They fly 3,000 miles to the northern United States.</td>
<td>• The monarch butterfly is threatened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They spend spring in northern United States and Canada.</td>
<td>• Climate change threatens monarch butterflies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• During migration, monarch butterflies lay eggs in different locations.</td>
<td>• Destruction of milkweed plants threatens the monarch butterfly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The monarch butterfly is threatened.</td>
<td>• Predators threaten the monarch butterfly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Climate change threatens monarch butterflies.</td>
<td>• “Future generations can enjoy the monarch, one of the most beautiful butterflies in the world.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A student may offer a claim that is more subjective than interpretive (see third bullet). A subjective claim may be creditable as long as it does not contradict information in the passage. However, please note that the text may not offer enough evidence to support a subjective claim (e.g., third bullet).

Acceptable evidence should come from lines 11 to 20 in the text.

Uncetable Responses

The following chart is not a definitive list of unacceptable responses. Other responses will also be included in the anchor papers and practice sets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It is a scientist's job to study things like butterflies.</td>
<td>The response must focus on why scientists want to study monarch butterflies. Responses that explain the role of citizen scientists are not creditable unless such evidence has a logical connection to the claim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The scientists want to help the citizen scientists.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Scoring Rubric and Guidelines

Claims in the examples are underlined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3     | The answer includes a claim and two pieces of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 1  
The scientists study monarch butterflies so they can find ways to protect them. When the monarch butterfly migrates, it lays its eggs on milkweed plants. But these milkweed plants are being destroyed. If they can find the places where monarch butterflies lay their eggs, they can help save them.  
- A supporting detail must relate logically to the claim, or it does not earn credit.  
- Supporting details include but aren't limited to facts, figures, quotations, paraphrases, and other information and ideas from the passage.  
- A claim and one or more pieces of evidence can appear in a single statement or sentence. (See Example 2.)  
- Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive 1 point. (See Example 5.)  
- If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it only earns 1 point.  
- Responses that offer more than two pieces of evidence but no claim will receive a maximum score point of 2. (See Example 3.) Responses that offer more than one claim but no evidence will receive a maximum score point of 1. (See Example 4.)  
- Extraneous material in a response, as long as it does not contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score. |
| 2     | The answer includes a claim and one piece of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 2  
I think the scientists want to learn why the population of monarch butterflies changes so they track all the places the butterflies go to when they migrate.  
- The answer includes two pieces of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 3  
1. Monarch butterflies migrate 3,000 miles.  
2. They lay eggs on milkweed plants.  
3. Destruction of milkweed plants threaten the monarch butterfly.  
- The answer is a single claim.  
EXAMPLE 4  
The scientists want future generations to enjoy the beautiful butterfly. They want to protect this beautiful butterfly.  
- The answer is a piece of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 5  
winter in Mexico |
| 1     | The answer shows effort but offers neither an acceptable claim, nor acceptable pieces of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 6  
Citizen scientists help find the monarch butterfly eggs. |
| 0     | The answer shows effort but offers neither an acceptable claim, nor acceptable pieces of evidence.  
EXAMPLE 6  
Citizen scientists help find the monarch butterfly eggs. |