

Released 2012
Achievement
Test

English
Language Arts

Part B: Reading
Readings and Questions

GRADE

9

Alberta  Government

This document contains a full release of the 2012 Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. A test blueprint and an answer key that includes the difficulty, reporting category, and item description for each test item are also included. These materials, along with the [program of studies](#) and [subject bulletin](#), provide information that can be used to inform instructional practice.

[Assessment highlights](#) provide information about the overall test, the test blueprints, and student performance on the Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test. Also provided is commentary on student performance at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence on the achievement test. This information is intended for teachers and is best used in conjunction with the multi-year and detailed school reports that are available to schools via the extranet. **Assessment highlights reports** for all achievement test subjects and grades are **posted on the Alberta Education website every year** in the fall.

For further information, contact

Harvey Stables, Grade 9 Humanities Assessment Standards Team Leader, at Harvey.Stables@gov.ab.ca;

Amy Villneff, Grade 9 Humanities Assessment Standards Examiner, at Amy.Villneff@gov.ab.ca; or

Sean Wells, Director, Achievement Testing Branch, at Sean.Wells@gov.ab.ca at the Assessment Sector, or call (780) 427-0010.

To call toll-free from outside Edmonton, dial (780) 310-0000.

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Part B: Reading—2012 Achievement Test Readings and Questions

The readings and questions presented in this document are from the previously secured 2012 *Part B: Reading* Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test and are representative of the readings and questions that form the test. These readings and questions are released by Alberta Education.

Grade 9 Achievement Test

2012

English Language Arts

Part B: Reading

Readings and Questions

Grade 9 Achievement Test
English Language Arts

Part B: Reading

Readings Booklet

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test mark and has two booklets:

- the **Readings Booklet**, which contains 10 selections
- the **Questions Booklet**, which contains 55 multiple-choice questions

This test was developed to be completed in 75 minutes; however, you may take an additional 30 minutes to complete the test.

You may write in this booklet if you find it helpful.

Make sure that your answers to the multiple-choice questions are placed on the answer sheet provided.

2012

Instructions

- You may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials.
- Be sure that you have a **Readings Booklet** and a **Questions Booklet**.

- I. Read the excerpt from a memoir below and answer questions 1 to 11 on pages 20 and 21.

The writer of this excerpt describes the experiences he and his wife Jenny have with their dog Marley. Here, they have just brought Marley, who is a young puppy, to their home.

**from MARLEY & ME:
LIFE AND LOVE WITH THE WORLD'S WORST DOG**

This excerpt from a memoir is unavailable for electronic posting.

Continued

This excerpt from a memoir is unavailable for electronic posting.

¹blacksmith's anvil—a heavy block of iron or steel with a smooth, flat top on which metals are shaped by hammering

²Slinky—a coil-shaped toy, made of metal or plastic, which moves as the coils stretch and reform

³goosed—poked or pinched

⁴sashaying—moving sideways

This excerpt from a memoir is unavailable for electronic posting.

John Grogan

⁵Intracoastal—a system of waterways along the coastline of Florida

Grogan, John. *Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog*. New York: William Morrow, 2005, pp. 27-31.

II. Read the poem below and answer questions 12 to 14 on page 22.

Water Slides

Sorting the wash
I pick clean
weeds from the empty
foot of my son's socks
5 and live again
the brambled¹
summer of his furious
paddling against the rough
edges of childhood,
10 a voyageur² caught
like a burr³ stuck
to an angel
exploring the edge of a flat
world to find the source
15 of slippery water
slides.

Carole Brost

¹brambled—a bramble is a prickly shrub or bush

²voyageur—a workman, boatman, or guide who used water routes to transport goods and supplies in the fur trade in Canada

³burr—a rough, prickly seed shell from a plant

Brost, Carole. "Water Slides." In *Celebrating Canadian Women: Prose and Poetry By and About Women*. Edited by Greta Hofmann Nemiroff. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989. Reproduced with permission from Carole Brost.

III. Read the excerpt from a nonfiction book below and answer questions 15 to 18 on page 23.

The writer of this excerpt is presenting information about survival in the woods, with reference to ideas in a book written by Stephen Herrero.

**from A WALK IN THE WOODS:
REDISCOVERING AMERICA ON THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL**

This excerpt from a nonfiction book is unavailable for electronic posting.

Bill Bryson

Bryson, Bill. *A Walk in the Woods*. New York: Broadway Books, 1998, pp. 71-72.

IV. Read the excerpt from a short story below and answer questions 19 to 28 on pages 24 and 25.

from HOMETOWN HERO

FOR TWENTY YEARS, the Wheelsburg rink had looked as if it might collapse at any moment—and for twenty years it had continued to fool everyone.

The roof had been propped up with so many assorted beams, timbers, and scantlings¹ that visitors always said you could identify a Wheelsburg hockey fan
5 anywhere by his limber neck, developed by dodging his head around timbers while watching Wheelsburg hockey matches.

But Wheelsburg hockey fans didn't mind a touch of inconvenience or even danger with their sports fare. Every game found the ramshackle old rink crowded.

When the roof caved in—and Wheelsburg fans all agreed that only a miracle was
10 holding it up—they gambled on the probability that the event would take place when there was no game in progress.

Tim batted the puck around in workout with his teammates at one end of the ice, while the Blueberry Bay outfit got the kinks out of their systems in the opposite goal area. Tim's kid brother Mike, who subbed on defence, skated alongside.

15 "There he is—sittin' behind the rail just this side of the penalty box!" said Mike in a high state of excitement. "The red-faced guy in the derby."²

The reference to the hue of Skates Kelsey's complexion was unnecessary. He was wearing the only derby there; the only derby in Wheelsburg, for that matter.

Tim cast a glance in the direction of the great Kelsey. So that stout little man
20 over there had the power to lift a youngster out of the monotony and obscurity of a small town and thrust him into the glamour and fame of big-time hockey!

"Golly!" he said, and tried to keep calm. He didn't dare build up any hopes.

As Skates Kelsey watched the rangy Wheelsburg forward in workout, his agile brain was busy. Mr. Kelsey's immediate problem was to pay his hotel bill and get
25 transportation back to the city. As to how this was to be managed, short of risking jail, he had no particular scruples.³

"I watch this kid do his stuff," communed Skates Kelsey with himself. "Then I phone Harron that I've discovered a natural and signed him for a tryout. Harron will be scared of missing something, and he'll send transportation for both of us."

30 He knew just what to expect of Tim Cardigan. A small-town hockey player who looked good against small-town competition. He had seen hundreds of them. Take them out of their own class and they become ordinary.

But the Wheelsburg team and the outfit from Blueberry Bay hadn't been playing for five minutes before Skates Kelsey was sitting up very straight and blinking.

¹scantlings—small pieces of wood

²derby—a stiff felt hat with a round crown and a narrow, curved brim

³scruples—moral concerns

35 Tim Cardigan could skate. Plenty of hockey players could skate—they all could, of course—but there is skating and *skating*. This was the real stuff, the real McCoy!

Kelsey saw that, the first time the lanky winger took the trip down the boards.

Cardigan had taken a pass at the blue line from one of his defencemen. And then he broke. No windup. He simply broke from a standing start, and his journey down
40 that right lane was a thing of beauty. The long legs ate up ice at every stride, and yet there seemed to be no extra effort. Tim Cardigan just loped down there like a greyhound, and when he crossed the blue line, his pass to centre was just a flick of the wrists.

The Blueberry defenceman got set with shoulders, knee, and stick as Tim
45 Cardigan skimmed straight toward him. He was ready.

Kelsey groaned.

“Why, that’s no way to go in,” gasped Skates Kelsey. And when the defenceman cut loose with that bodycheck, he looked to see Tim Cardigan knocked kicking.

But at the last split second, as the defenceman lunged, lanky Cardigan just
50 wasn’t there. He was around and in there like a gust of wind, with the defenceman clattering to the ice. And he picked up the forward pass from his centre, strolled in, and poked the puck just inside the corner of the post as if there was no goalie doing a jumping jack act inside the cage.

It all looked so simple and natural and easy that Kelsey was sure the Wheelsburg
55 fans didn’t appreciate it.

For all that, the Blueberry Bay players weren’t top-notchers; they were strong and heavy, good checkers, and their goalie was no slouch. It takes art to beat any goalie single-handed, without lifting the puck off the ice, and make it look soft.

“So!” mused Skates Kelsey, with tingling spine. “Where has this kid been all my
60 life?”

The Blueberry team, saddened by past experience, no doubt, had assigned a tough, red-headed husky to left wing, under obvious instructions to do no rushing whatever; to do nothing but hang on to Tim Cardigan.

It was fun to watch Cardigan handle this watchdog. How he faded away from
65 butt ends and bodychecks, how his stickhandling tied the left-winger into knots. As a matter of fact, the whole Blueberry team paid special attention to the lanky lad in the way of roughing it up, loudly encouraged by a small delegation of supporters; but you can’t smash a phantom with a cross-check.

“Yes, sir,” breathed Kelsey. “Regular ghost, that’s what he is.”

70 It was Cardigan’s footwork that did it, he decided finally. The boy might have been born with skates on. Kelsey had never seen anyone who could go faster on a straight rush, who could break quicker in any direction, who could feint and shift and sidestep with such deceptive ease.

Cardigan never seemed to be trying particularly hard. But when there was a pass
75 to his wing, he was always there to take it. When the Wheelsburg team were storming in around the Blueberry net, and Cardigan seemed to be loafing around outside the thick of the battle as an onlooker, there would be a swift, sudden swoop and he would be in there to collar a loose puck before anyone else had noticed the opening—and every time for a shot on goal.

Continued

80 Easy shots, they looked. He seldom tried a shot from farther than ten feet out.
Always he worked in close. And then, that quick flip, as if it didn't matter.

But Skates Kelsey knew just how the goalie dreaded those tricky flips from close
in—always headed toward an open corner! Much harder to block than the fast,
deliberate high shots from outside, although those were the drives that set the crowd
85 cheering.

When Cardigan went to the bench, and a sub went to the wing in his stead, the
Blueberry team managed to make some headway. The score was 4–1 against them,
but they swamped the Wheelsburg crew with a series of wild-eyed rushes that netted
them a couple of goals.

90 Then Cardigan came back. He was evidently an old and painful story to the
Blueberry Bay team. They tried to rough him out of the picture.

Skates Kelsey learned then that Cardigan wasn't yellow. He could take it.
“Just a one-man circus!” beamed Skates Kelsey.

This, he told himself, was the greatest break of his life.

95 “When Harron gets a look at that prize package, I'll not only get my job back,
but darned if I won't hit him for a raise. And get it.”

Leslie McFarlane

McFarlane, Leslie. “Hometown Hero.” In *Leslie McFarlane's Hockey Stories*. Vol. 2. Edited by Brian
McFarlane. Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2006. Reproduced with permission from Brian McFarlane.

V. Examine the cartoon below and answer questions 29 to 32 on page 26.

ZITS

This cartoon is unavailable for electronic posting.

Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman

Scott, Jerry and Jim Borgman. *Humongous Zits: A Zits Treasury*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2000, p. 53.

VI. Read the short story below and answer questions 33 to 37 on page 27.

THE UNWELCOME RAILROAD (OR GERTRUDE'S REVENGE)

For forty years, Gertrude had craved silence as a drought craves rain. Her daughters had married local farmers years ago and her husband had recently returned to the earth. Alone at sixty, she had prayed that solitude would be her reward for servitude.¹ But when the workcrew made its way over the hill at the edge of her property,
5 Gertrude knew her heirloom² of silence was a memory. The dull thud of wooden ties invaded the wheat fields like a natural disaster beyond her control. The metallic ring of mallets on spikes rang through her head every second on the second in time with the pulse visible on the thinning skin of her temples. Sooner imagine a man on the moon, she had never believed her homestead could be so trespassed upon.

10 It was weeks before the mallets swinging over muscled shoulders were in the distance. Then, in the eye of the hurricane, she allowed herself to believe once again in silence.

A fortnight³ later she awakened to a thunderous noise, and the accompanying vibrations spread a road map of goose bumps over her flesh. Outside her window a
15 fireworks of sparks rose high above the tree-tops, and Gertrude imagined a dragon was erupting its way over her hillside. The vibrations grew until the freight train's light nuzzled the hill's crest and, laying heavy on its whistle, vanished sedately⁴ into the harvest moon.

From that night forward the train disrupted her dreams, and each waking moment
20 only brought her closer to its return. Every morning she laboured to erase the railway from her life, scrubbing the skin of soot from her kitchen. She soaped everything from top to bottom, and when she ran out of soap she made some more, stacking it in large bricks in her barn. So much soap.

Early one evening she climbed the hill and surveyed the slope ascending from the
25 north. The rails spread as long as winter to the horizon. A sense of powerlessness covered her like a blanket as she stared and wondered what she could possibly do to stop this intrusion. Suddenly it seemed so obvious.

She returned later with her arms laden with soap. Rolling up her sleeves she
30 headed for the base of the hill and began rubbing the soap directly onto the rail in hard strokes, methodically chipping the bars until a thick coat covered both rails up to the hill's crest. She was exhausted and her hands were red, stiff and cramped by the time she returned home to pick vegetables from her garden for her dinner.

That evening the noise was deafening. The locomotive strained more than usual to
35 mount the hill, only to fall back again and again, like a faulty zipper. Gertrude lay in bed and listened to the forlorn wail that signalled the engine's repeated defeat, and a smile spread over her face when the train reversed itself back into town.

¹servitude—the state of being required to provide for the needs of others

²heirloom—a possession that is inherited from former generations in a family

³fortnight—two weeks

⁴sedately—calmly and deliberately

For the next week, Gertrude continued to soap the rails, and every night the train slunk back into town. If the rain hadn't come, the railway might have believed in a curse and switched its route.

40 But on the eighth night, the rain fell. Incandescent⁵ bubbles burst forth from the friction of wheels on rails. In the locomotive's light they beckoned like pearls; the engineer jumped from his panting beast and put his tongue to the froth.

45 On Thursday, Gertrude's morning tea was interrupted by a knock on the door. A railroad official presented her with a fine for obstructing traffic and threatened to confiscate her soap. He returned late in the night to insure the freight train's safe passage through her property.

50 Once again came the sparks, the noise, the vibrations and the soot. The engineer leaned on the whistle, gloating in his victory. And Gertrude lay quietly in bed, a mysterious smile lingering at the corners of her mouth. Already she had begun to imagine an alternate plan.

Theresa Shea

⁵Incandescent—brightly glowing

VII. Read the newspaper article below and answer questions 38 to 44 on pages 28 and 29.

This article was printed in the Edmonton Journal in 2007.

READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY—IF YOU CAN

Mike was among the thousands of machinists in Alberta churning out specialized industrial equipment used in the oilsands. The pay was great and jobs were plentiful.

5 One day, a new piece of machinery landed on the shop floor. His supervisor tossed him the instruction manual and said, “It’s supposed to be a lot faster than the old machine. I don’t have time to show you how it works—read the manual and get busy. We need 10 units finished and out the door by Friday.”

Mike flipped through the manual and tossed it aside. He was alone on the shop floor, but thought “How much different can this one be from the old model?”

10 Switching it on, he heard a quiet hum and started feeding in pieces of sheet metal. Suddenly, the machine jammed. Reaching inside as he had done a thousand times before on the old, familiar machine, he heard a horrible screech and then a crunch. Just before he passed out, he realized his left arm had been severed at the elbow.

15 But Mike was lucky. According to a recent report from the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, 143 Albertans were killed on the job in 2005—nearly double the number from a decade ago. Thousands more suffered serious injuries, and countless accidents went unreported.

20 The reason Mike tossed the safety manual aside was that he couldn’t read it. He represents one of the 753,000 Albertans (40 per cent of the province’s population) who are functionally illiterate—that is, they lack the ability to identify, understand, interpret, and communicate complex ideas and concepts through written and numeric materials.

25 Sure, Mike could read basic words, but he didn’t have the literacy skills necessary to comprehend the instruction manual for a sophisticated piece of machinery.

Literacy Alberta (along with its provincial counterparts elsewhere) promotes the importance of literacy as a serious health, safety, and economic issue.

30 Unfortunately, literacy groups across the country have seen their funding from Ottawa shrivel up as the federal government tries to rein in discretionary spending.

Aside from the health and safety issue at stake—which must be considered the most compelling reason why we need to ensure our workers are functionally literate—there are two significant reasons why inadequate levels of literacy are a growing concern in Alberta.

35 The first relates to labour shortages. The province is desperately short of workers, yet no one seemed to notice that 143 were killed in job-related accidents,

some of them due to illiteracy. If they had possessed the reading comprehension skills to understand the safety manuals, some of those 143 workers may be alive today. The province is looking to bring in thousands of overseas workers to help fill
40 the gaps. Immigrant workers are certainly a part of the solution for Alberta, but shouldn't keeping the existing workers alive and healthy be a solution, too?

The second reason has to do with productivity. Canadian workers have been thrashed in the media by economists who worry about our country's flagging productivity. Most of us resent being told we are unproductive—the implication is
45 that we are lazy.

Productivity doesn't mean chaining workers to their desks for longer hours and flogging them to work harder. Enhanced productivity means giving workers the best, most up-to-date, and most efficient tools with which to apply their trade, and letting each worker accomplish more work in less time. Economists call it capital
50 investment.

But along with the new machines, workers need to be upgrading their skills, their knowledge, and their comprehension of how to use the new equipment.

For 753,000 Albertans, that means becoming functionally literate to the point of being at least able to read and understand the instruction manuals.

55 The problem of illiteracy in our economy goes far beyond an inability to read.

In the broader sense, illiteracy is about those workers who lack the ability to comprehend complex sentences and ideas. It is the difference between learning to read, and reading to learn.

Literacy is not a special interest group—it's a fundamental economic necessity.
60 As we head into budget season, let us urge our governments to realize the importance of the work of literacy groups across the country and fund them accordingly.

This is of particular urgency in Alberta where labour shortages and faltering productivity threaten to put the brakes on the country's fastest growing economy.

Todd Hirsch

VIII. Read the poem below and answer questions 45 to 47 on page 30.

Hey World, Here I Am!

I said to the World, "I've arrived.
I, Kate Bloomfield, have come at last."
The World paid no attention.
I said to the World, "Hey World, here I am!
5 Don't you understand?
It's me, Kate Bloomfield."
The World ignored me.
I took myself off into a corner.
"Guess what?" I whispered. "I made it.
10 You know...Kate Bloomfield."
My Self bellowed, "YeaaaAAY, Kate!"
And spun six somersaults up the middle of Main Street.
The World turned.
"What did you say?" said the World.
15 I paid no attention.
After all, I gave it its chance.
It's not my fault that it missed me.

Jean Little

Material from *Hey World, Here I Am!* by Jean Little and illustrated by Sue Truesdell, is used by permission of Kids Can Press Ltd., Toronto. Text © 1986 Jean Little.

IX. Read the excerpt from a novel below and answer questions 48 to 51 on page 31.

The narrator of this excerpt is a painter named Elaine Riskey who has returned to Toronto, the city in which she lived many years earlier when she was a child. Here, she recalls spending time with her older brother, Stephen, when she was seven years old.

from CAT'S EYE

This excerpt from a novel is unavailable for electronic posting.

Margaret Atwood

¹infantry—soldiers trained, armed, and equipped to fight on foot

²collusion—secret agreement or cooperation for a deceitful purpose

Atwood, Margaret. *Cat's Eye*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988, pp. 24-25.

X. Examine the cartoon below and answer questions 52 to 55 on page 32.

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

This cartoon is unavailable for electronic posting.

Lynn Johnston

Johnston, Lynn. *With This Ring: A For Better or For Worse Collection*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2003, p. 141.

Grade 9 Achievement Test
English Language Arts

Part B: Reading
Questions Booklet

Description

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You may write in this booklet if you find it helpful.

Make sure that your answers to the multiple-choice questions are placed on the answer sheet provided.

2012

Instructions

- You may **not** use a dictionary, a thesaurus, or other reference materials.
- Be sure that you have a **Questions Booklet** and a **Readings Booklet**.
- Make sure that the number of the question on your answer sheet matches the number of the question you are answering.
- Read each question carefully, and choose the **correct** or **best** answer.

Example

A word that is used to name a person, place, or thing is called

- A. a verb
- B. a noun
- C. an adverb
- D. an adjective

Answer Sheet

Ⓐ ● Ⓒ Ⓓ

- Use **only** an **HB** pencil to mark your answer.
- If you change an answer, **erase** your first mark **completely**.
- Answer every question.

- I. Read the excerpt from the memoir *Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog* on pages 3 to 5 and answer questions 1 to 11.**
1. In lines 1 to 9, the writer reinforces the description of Marley's energetic character through the use of the words
- A. "threw" (line 1), "wrestled" (line 2), and "followed" (line 4)
 - B. "lay" (line 1), "play" (line 3), and "clenched" (line 7)
 - C. "scamper" (line 2), "racing" (line 7), and "sprinted" (line 8)
 - D. "gnaw" (line 4), "discover" (line 5), and "disappeared" (line 6)
2. In context, the phrase "night after night" (line 20) provides an example of
- A. irony
 - B. foreshadowing
 - C. a figurative comparison
 - D. a parenthetical comment
3. Which of the following quotations contains alliteration?
- A. "Marley was growing at a furious pace" (line 31)
 - B. "His paws were enormous" (line 37)
 - C. "Marley's wildly wagging weapon" (line 42)
 - D. "He was like the canine version of a Slinky" (lines 49–50)
4. Context suggests that the words "evasive action" (line 65) mean to
- A. avoid capture
 - B. draw attention
 - C. express emotion
 - D. show contentment
5. The quotation "it was like a salvage yard in there" (line 71) refers to Marley's tendency to
- A. hide objects in his mouth
 - B. poke through the garbage
 - C. make a mess of the house
 - D. gather items of significance

6. Details in lines 86 to 95 suggest that for the writer, taking Marley for a walk was a
- A. frightening adventure
 - B. frustrating exercise
 - C. chaotic experience
 - D. pointless activity
7. The writer's tone throughout this excerpt is **mainly** one of
- A. concern
 - B. affection
 - C. frustration
 - D. admiration
8. This excerpt centres on how, for the writer and his wife, Marley
- A. becomes an integral part of their lives
 - B. enables them to learn from each other
 - C. teaches them to enjoy leisure time together
 - D. enhances the closeness of their relationship
9. In this excerpt, the writer's inclusion of dialogue serves to
- A. establish the conflict
 - B. advance the plot
 - C. enhance realism
 - D. create suspense
10. The writer's **main** purpose in this excerpt is to
- A. recount experiences with a beloved dog
 - B. detail the responsibilities of owning a dog
 - C. highlight the importance of adopting a dog
 - D. provide instructions on how to raise a young dog
11. The writer's portrayal of events in this excerpt is **mainly** enhanced by his
- A. foreshadowing of the outcome of the conflict
 - B. inclusion of specific aspects of the setting
 - C. vivid description of the characters
 - D. direct participation in the action

II. Read the poem “Water Slides” on page 6 and answer questions 12 to 14.

- 12.** Details in lines 1 to 9 suggest that, while “Sorting the wash” (line 1), the speaker experiences feelings of
- A.** fond reflection
 - B.** eager anticipation
 - C.** confidence and optimism
 - D.** fulfillment and belonging
- 13.** The image evoked by the word “paddling” (line 8) is reinforced by the poet through the use of the word
- A.** “rough” (line 8)
 - B.** “childhood” (line 9)
 - C.** “voyageur” (line 10)
 - D.** “slippery” (line 15)
- 14.** This poem focuses on a parent’s
- A.** desire to influence a child’s decisions
 - B.** preoccupation with ensuring a child’s safety
 - C.** observations regarding a child’s development
 - D.** concerns about the consequences of a child’s actions

III. Read the excerpt from the nonfiction book *A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail* on page 7 and answer questions 15 to 18.

15. Context suggests that the phrase “the advised stratagems” (line 2) refers to
- A. proven results
 - B. complicated tasks
 - C. individual choices
 - D. recommended actions
16. The writer’s tone in the statement “This is the sort of advice you get from someone who is sitting at a keyboard when he gives it” (lines 6 to 7) is
- A. dismissive
 - B. respectful
 - C. emphatic
 - D. objective
17. In lines 16 to 24, the writer reveals that Herrero’s suggestions regarding what to do in order to avoid being attacked by a bear are
- A. complex
 - B. contradictory
 - C. well researched
 - D. easily understood
18. Which of the following statements **best** conveys the writer’s conclusion regarding the value of advice contained in “the instruction manuals” (line 37)?
- A. “All the books tell you that if the grizzly comes for you, on no account should you run” (lines 5–6)
 - B. “Take it from me, if you are in an open space with no weapons and a grizzly comes for you, run” (lines 7–8)
 - C. “On the other hand, he then adds judiciously, these tactics could ‘merely provoke the bear’” (lines 18–19)
 - D. “The fact is, no one can tell you what to do” (line 25)

IV. Read the excerpt from the short story “Hometown Hero” on pages 8 to 10 and answer questions 19 to 28.

19. In the context of lines 12 to 21, the tone of Mike’s statement in line 15 reveals that he views Skates Kelsey with
- A. admiration
 - B. sympathy
 - C. disdain
 - D. envy
20. Context suggests that the phrase “small-town” (line 30 and line 31) is used to describe hockey players whose abilities are
- A. rare
 - B. natural
 - C. unequaled
 - D. commonplace
21. In context, which of the following statements demonstrates a change in Skates Kelsey’s attitude toward Tim Cardigan?
- A. “I watch this kid do his stuff” (line 27)
 - B. “I’ve discovered a natural and signed him for a tryout” (line 28)
 - C. “He had seen hundreds of them” (line 31)
 - D. “This was the real stuff, the real McCoy” (line 36)
22. In lines 38 to 39, the writer heightens the description of events through the use of
- A. parallel structure
 - B. transitional words
 - C. sentence fragments
 - D. figurative language
23. The description of the goalie’s movements in lines 52 to 53 suggests that the goalie is
- A. calm
 - B. frantic
 - C. foolish
 - D. athletic

24. The expression “you can’t smash a phantom with a cross-check” (line 68) emphasizes the idea that
- A. some of the plays are difficult to see
 - B. Tim Cardigan is adept at avoiding hits
 - C. rough play is not the way to win the game
 - D. the Blueberry’s defencemen have insufficient ability
25. The phrase “Cardigan wasn’t yellow” (line 92) reveals that Tim Cardigan is
- A. bold
 - B. cowardly
 - C. energetic
 - D. depressed
26. The excerpt ends with a mood that is **best** described as being one of
- A. acceptance
 - B. expectancy
 - C. uncertainty
 - D. apprehension
27. Considering the entire excerpt, lines 1 to 11 provide
- A. an underlying moral
 - B. background exposition
 - C. details regarding the main characters
 - D. an introduction to the central conflict
28. Throughout this excerpt, Skates Kelsey is **mainly** motivated by
- A. self-interest
 - B. moral integrity
 - C. passion for hockey
 - D. love of competition

V. Examine the cartoon *Zits* on page 11 and answer questions 29 to 32.

- 29.** The statements of the characters in frames 1 and 2 are **best** described as
- A. critical
 - B. uncaring
 - C. foreboding
 - D. impractical
- 30.** In the statement “YOU’RE AT A TOUGH AGE, JEREMY...I ONLY HAVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR YOU...” (Frame 5), the cartoonist uses punctuation to indicate
- A. the speaker’s disinterested tone
 - B. a pause in the character’s speech
 - C. the speaker’s feelings of discomfort
 - D. a change in the character’s emotions
- 31.** The humour of the cartoon arises from the cartoonist’s use of
- A. personification in Frame 2
 - B. metaphor in Frame 3
 - C. simile in Frame 4
 - D. irony in Frame 5
- 32.** The main idea of this cartoon focuses on the difficulty of
- A. gaining popularity
 - B. learning from experience
 - C. making informed decisions
 - D. establishing a unique identity

VI. Read the short story “The Unwelcome Railroad (or Gertrude’s Revenge)” on pages 12 and 13 and answer questions 33 to 37.

33. In the quotation “in the eye of the hurricane, she allowed herself to believe once again in silence” (lines 11 to 12), the writer is
- A. suggesting that Gertrude is now safe
 - B. emphasizing that storms are never quiet
 - C. hinting that Gertrude’s ordeal is unresolved
 - D. clarifying that the construction work is ongoing
34. The imagery in lines 13 to 18 **most strongly** emphasizes the element of
- A. scent
 - B. sound
 - C. colour
 - D. texture
35. The detail “she laboured to erase the railway from her life” (lines 20 to 21) takes on added meaning later in the story when Gertrude
- A. rubs “soap directly onto the rail in hard strokes” (lines 29–30)
 - B. picks “vegetables from her garden” (line 32)
 - C. is interrupted during her “morning tea” (line 43)
 - D. is lying “quietly in bed, a mysterious smile lingering at the corners of her mouth” (lines 48–49)
36. The ideas presented in lines 33 to 42 suggest that the train resembles
- A. a person complaining bitterly
 - B. an animal struggling mightily
 - C. a competitor in an athletic contest
 - D. an insect in a confined environment
37. The story concludes with a sense of Gertrude’s
- A. contentment with her circumstances
 - B. satisfaction with her accomplishment
 - C. acceptance of responsibility for her actions
 - D. determination to continue pursuing her goal

VII. Read the newspaper article “Read the Instructions Carefully—If You Can” on pages 14 and 15 and answer questions 38 to 44.

38. Context suggests that the term “functionally illiterate” (line 21) is used to describe people who are
- A. capable of dealing with “complex ideas and concepts” (line 22)
 - B. fluent in “written and numeric materials” (lines 22–23)
 - C. able to “read basic words” (line 24)
 - D. skilled in operating “a sophisticated piece of machinery” (lines 25–26)
39. In lines 27 to 30, the writer suggests that the success of the work of literacy groups is limited by the
- A. reluctance of workers to change
 - B. lack of financial resources available
 - C. disinterest of employers in the welfare of workers
 - D. inability of the federal government to intervene in provincial policies
40. Context suggests that the answer to the question presented in line 41 is
- A. based on statistical data
 - B. intended to be self-evident
 - C. yet to be proven as a practical solution
 - D. dependent on familiarity with the topic under discussion
41. According to the writer, “capital investment” (lines 49 to 50) involves providing workers with
- A. flexible hours
 - B. competitive wages
 - C. modern equipment
 - D. specialized training
42. In lines 59 to 64, the writer concludes that
- A. workers need to join labour unions to influence government decisions
 - B. all citizens should provide financial donations to literacy groups
 - C. providing job training for workers is beneficial to employers
 - D. promoting literacy is a responsibility shared by all citizens

43. Throughout the article, the writer’s repetition of statistics regarding *143 workers* and *753,000 Albertans* serves to
- A. reinforce the magnitude of the problem of illiteracy
 - B. emphasize the impact illiteracy has on quality of life
 - C. suggest that everyone has a role to play in addressing illiteracy
 - D. demonstrate that illiteracy exists throughout all regions of the province
44. Which of the following quotations **best** summarizes the main idea of the article?
- A. “Unfortunately, literacy groups across the country have seen their funding from Ottawa shrivel up as the federal government tries to rein in discretionary spending” (lines 29–30)
 - B. “inadequate levels of literacy are a growing concern in Alberta” (lines 33–34)
 - C. “Canadian workers have been thrashed in the media by economists who worry about our country’s flagging productivity” (lines 42–44)
 - D. “illiteracy is about those workers who lack the ability to comprehend complex sentences and ideas” (lines 56–57)

VIII. Read the poem “Hey World, Here I Am!” on page 16 and answer questions 45 to 47.

45. In lines 1 to 2 and lines 4 to 6, the speaker adds emphasis through the use of
- A. repetition
 - B. exaggeration
 - C. informal vocabulary
 - D. figurative comparisons
46. Which of the following quotations **most clearly** suggests that the speaker has internalized a feeling of confidence?
- A. “I said to the World, ‘Hey World, here I am! / Don’t you understand? / It’s me, Kate Bloomfield’” (lines 4–6)
 - B. “I took myself off into a corner” (line 8)
 - C. “‘Guess what?’ I whispered. ‘I made it. / You know...Kate Bloomfield’” (lines 9–10)
 - D. “My Self bellowed, ‘YeaaaAAY, Kate!’” (line 11)
47. The main idea of this poem centres on an individual’s search for
- A. freedom
 - B. excitement
 - C. recognition
 - D. companionship

IX. Read the excerpt from the novel *Cat's Eye* on page 17 and answer questions 48 to 51.

48. In the statement “There is no arguing with him” (line 9), the writer **most clearly** reinforces the characterization of Stephen in the quotation
- A. “Stephen gives me a gun and a knife and we play war” (line 1)
 - B. “This is his favourite game” (line 1)
 - C. “I am the infantry, which means I have to do what he says” (lines 3–4)
 - D. “He waves me forward, motions me back, tells me to keep my head down so the enemy won’t blow it off” (lines 4–5)
49. Which of the following quotations contains a metaphor?
- A. “we hunt through the forest” (line 12)
 - B. “the snakes pouring themselves into darkness” (line 18)
 - C. “I want to play with him more than he wants to play with me” (line 21)
 - D. “We fight in whispers or well out of the way” (line 22)
50. According to the narrator, the “extra attraction” (line 25) of the fights she has with Stephen lies in their being
- A. pointless
 - B. ongoing
 - C. intense
 - D. private
51. Upon which of the following elements of fiction does this excerpt **primarily** focus?
- A. Plot
 - B. Theme
 - C. Setting
 - D. Character

- X. Examine the cartoon *For Better or For Worse* on page 18 and answer questions 52 to 55.**
- 52.** In the context of the entire cartoon, the girl's comparison of snow to a "BLANKET" (Frame 4) is based on her appreciation of how both can
- A. conceal flaws
 - B. provide warmth
 - C. be pleasant to touch
 - D. protect what lies beneath
- 53.** Details in frames 1 to 5 convey a sense of the girl's
- A. comfortable lifestyle
 - B. desire to play outside
 - C. reflective state of mind
 - D. feelings of personal isolation
- 54.** The central conflict in the cartoon is introduced in
- A. Frame 1
 - B. Frame 3
 - C. Frame 6
 - D. Frame 7
- 55.** The main idea underlying this cartoon is based on the mother's desire to teach her daughter to be
- A. ambitious
 - B. resourceful
 - C. considerate
 - D. accountable

***You have now completed the test.
If you have time, you may wish to check your answers.***

Part B: Reading—2012 Achievement Test Blueprint and Item Descriptions

The following blueprint shows the reporting categories and language functions by which questions were classified on the 2012 Grade 9 English Language Arts Achievement Test.

Reporting Category	Question Distribution by Language Function				Number (Percentage) of Questions
	Informational		Narrative / Poetic		
<p>Identifying and Interpreting Ideas and Details (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)*</p> <p>Students construct meaning by interpreting ideas and details pertaining to setting/atmosphere/context, character/narrator/speaker (actions, motives, values), conflict, and events.</p>	5	40	12	35	<p>17 Questions (31% of <i>Part B</i>: <i>Reading Total</i>)</p>
	6	41	21	46	
	17	42	23	50	
	39		24	52	
			29	53	
	7 (13%)		10 (18%)		
<p>Interpreting Text Organization (2.2, 2.3)*</p> <p>Students identify and analyze literary genres. Students identify and analyze the text creator’s choice of form, tone, point of view, organizational structure, style, diction, rhetorical techniques (e.g., repetition, parallelism), text features (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia, imagery, dialogue, foreshadowing, suspense), and conventions.</p>	2	9	22	45	<p>11 Questions (20% of <i>Part B</i>: <i>Reading Total</i>)</p>
	3	16	27	48	
			30	54	
			34		
	4 (7%)		7 (13%)		
<p>Associating Meaning (2.1, 2.2, 2.3)*</p> <p>Students use contextual clues to determine the denotative and connotative meaning of words, phrases, and figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, irony, symbolism).</p>	1	15	13	31	<p>11 Questions (20% of <i>Part B</i>: <i>Reading Total</i>)</p>
	4	38	19	33	
			20	49	
			25		
	4 (7%)		7 (13%)		
<p>Synthesizing Ideas (2.2)*</p> <p>Students draw conclusions and make generalizations by integrating information in order to identify the tone, purpose, theme, main idea, or mood of a passage.</p>	7	18	14	37	<p>16 Questions (29% of <i>Part B</i>: <i>Reading Total</i>)</p>
	8	43	26	47	
	10	44	28	51	
	11		32	55	
			36		
	7 (13%)		9 (16%)		
Number (Percentage) of Questions	22 Questions (40% of <i>Part B</i> : <i>Reading Total</i>)		33 Questions (60% of <i>Part B</i> : <i>Reading Total</i>)		55 Questions (100% of <i>Part B</i> : <i>Reading Total</i>)

*Numbers in parentheses refer to outcomes in the Program of Studies for Grade 9 English Language Arts to which the reporting categories are cross-referenced.

The table below provides information about each question: the keyed response, the difficulty of the item (the percentage of students who answered the question correctly), the reporting category, the language function, and the item description.

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
1	C	85.2	Associating Meaning	Informational	Identify the words used by the writer to reinforce the description of a dog's character in specified lines of an excerpt from a memoir. (SO 2.2)
2	D	47.8	Text Organization	Informational	Recognize the rhetorical technique employed by the writer in a specific phrase in an excerpt from a memoir. (SO 2.2)
3	C	80.3	Text Organization	Informational	Identify a quotation from an excerpt from a memoir that contains alliteration. (SO 2.3)
4	A	71.1	Associating Meaning	Informational	Derive from context the meaning of specific words in an excerpt from a memoir. (SO 2.1)
5	A	65.7	Ideas and Details	Informational	Describe the behaviour of a character suggested by a quotation from an excerpt from a memoir. (SO 2.2)
6	C	75.1	Ideas and Details	Informational	Interpret details in specified lines of an excerpt from a memoir to determine what the writer suggests about a personal experience. (SO 2.1)
7	B	60.9	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Draw a conclusion regarding the tone used by the writer throughout an excerpt from a memoir. (SO 2.2)
8	A	84.7	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Synthesize information in an excerpt from a memoir to determine the central idea presented. (SO 2.2)
9	C	66.5	Text Organization	Informational	Identify the effect achieved through the writer's use of dialogue in an excerpt from a memoir. (SO 2.2)
10	A	75.4	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Integrate information in an excerpt from a memoir to form a generalization regarding the writer's purpose. (SO 2.2)
11	D	52.5	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Analyze an excerpt from a memoir to determine how the writer enhances the portrayal of events. (SO 2.2)
12	A	63.9	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Analyze details in specified lines of a poem to determine the feelings experienced by the speaker. (SO 2.1)
13	C	46.9	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the word in a poem that is used by the poet to reinforce an image evoked by another word. (SO 2.3)
14	C	71.0	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Draw a conclusion regarding the content upon which a poem is focused. (SO 2.2)
15	D	87.2	Associating Meaning	Informational	Use contextual clues to determine the meaning of a phrase in an excerpt from a nonfiction book. (SO 2.1)
16	A	61.9	Text Organization	Informational	Recognize the writer's tone in a statement from an excerpt from a nonfiction book. (SO 2.2)

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
17	B	75.9	Ideas and Details	Informational	Interpret details in specified lines of an excerpt from a nonfiction book to identify what the writer reveals regarding another writer's ideas. (SO 2.1)
18	D	70.8	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Identify the statement that best conveys the writer's conclusion in an excerpt from a nonfiction book regarding advice given by experts. (SO 2.2)
19	A	72.6	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Determine from context what a character's statement suggests about his attitude toward another character in an excerpt from a short story. (SO 2.1)
20	D	45.9	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Derive from context the connotative meaning of a phrase used to describe hockey players in an excerpt from a short story. (SO 2.1)
21	D	66.5	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the statement from an excerpt from a short story that demonstrates a change in a character's attitude toward another character. (SO 2.2)
22	C	53.1	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Know the rhetorical technique used by the writer to heighten the description of events in specified lines in an excerpt from a short story. (SO 2.2)
23	B	57.2	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify what the description of an individual's movements in specified lines in an excerpt from a short story suggests about his character. (SO 2.1)
24	B	63.2	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Interpret the meaning of an expression used to describe a character in an excerpt from a short story. (SO 2.1)
25	A	65.4	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize what a phrase in an excerpt from a short story reveals about a character's personality. (SO 2.1)
26	B	50.0	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Integrate information to identify the mood with which an excerpt from a short story ends. (SO 2.2)
27	B	60.8	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Analyze events in an excerpt from a short story to determine the element of fiction provided by the writer in specified lines. (SO 2.3)
28	A	37.3	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Synthesize information in an excerpt from a short story to determine the main motivation behind a character's actions. (SO 2.2)
29	A	61.2	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Interpret the meaning of statements made by two characters in specified frames of a cartoon. (SO 2.2)
30	B	67.9	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize what the cartoonist uses punctuation to indicate in a frame of a cartoon. (SO 2.2)
31	D	69.5	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the figure of speech used by the cartoonist to create humour in a cartoon. (SO 2.2)
32	D	89.4	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Form a generalization regarding the main idea of a cartoon. (SO 2.2)

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
33	C	53.3	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Interpret what a metaphor used by the writer in a quotation from a short story suggests about a character's circumstances. (SO 2.2)
34	B	81.4	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Analyze specified lines of a short story to determine the sensory images most strongly emphasized. (SO 2.3)
35	A	76.1	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Determine how a detail in a short story takes on added meaning in an experience undergone later in the story by the protagonist. (SO 2.1)
36	B	55.9	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Conclude what is suggested by the ideas presented in specified lines of a short story. (SO 2.2)
37	D	78.4	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Form a generalization regarding what the conclusion of a short story suggests about the protagonist's state of being. (SO 2.2)
38	C	74.1	Associating Meaning	Informational	Recognize from context the definition of a term used to describe people in a newspaper article. (SO 2.1)
39	B	67.4	Ideas and Details	Informational	Identify what is suggested by the writer regarding the work of literacy groups in specified lines of a newspaper article. (SO 2.1)
40	B	48.2	Ideas and Details	Informational	Interpret from context the answer to a question posed in a specified line of a newspaper article. (SO 2.1)
41	C	63.6	Ideas and Details	Informational	Interpret the meaning of a phrase to determine the idea presented in a newspaper article regarding productivity in the workplace. (SO 2.1)
42	D	56.7	Ideas and Details	Informational	Examine specified lines in a newspaper article to identify the writer's conclusion regarding the topic under discussion. (SO 2.1)
43	A	63.6	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Form a generalization regarding the effect of the writer's repetition of statistics throughout a newspaper article. (SO 2.2)
44	B	60.7	Synthesizing Ideas	Informational	Synthesize information to identify the quotation that best summarizes the main idea of a newspaper article. (SO 2.2)
45	A	71.3	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Recognize the rhetorical technique used by the speaker to add emphasis in specified lines of a poem. (SO 2.2)
46	D	58.8	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the quotation from a poem that suggests the speaker has internalized a feeling of confidence. (SO 2.2)
47	C	81.8	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Determine the human experience upon which the main idea of a poem is centred. (SO 2.2)
48	C	77.9	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the quotation from an excerpt from a novel that is most clearly reinforced by the writer in a given statement. (SO 2.2)

Question	Key	Diff. %	Reporting Category	Language Function	Item Description
49	B	64.3	Associating Meaning	Narrative / Poetic	Determine the quotation from an excerpt from a novel that contains a metaphor. (SO 2.3)
50	D	60.5	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Interpret what the protagonist's reflections in the final paragraph of an excerpt from a novel suggest about her interactions with her brother. (SO 2.2)
51	D	55.9	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Draw a conclusion regarding the element of fiction upon which an excerpt from a novel primarily focuses. (SO 2.2)
52	A	52.8	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Determine from context what a comparison drawn by a character in a cartoon suggests about her viewpoint. (SO 2.2)
53	C	56.7	Ideas and Details	Narrative / Poetic	Interpret details in specified frames of a cartoon to identify what is established about a character. (SO 2.2)
54	C	67.7	Text Organization	Narrative / Poetic	Identify the frame in which the central conflict of a cartoon is introduced. (SO 2.3)
55	D	64.5	Synthesizing Ideas	Narrative / Poetic	Form a generalization regarding the intent underlying a character's actions in a cartoon. (SO 2.2)