



Grade 10

FAST ELA Reading

Sample Test Materials

Answer Key

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Passage 1: Senate-floor speech in favor of an amendment ending government subsidies for honey farmers

by Senator John Heinz

- 1 This amendment would eliminate one of the sweetest deals for one of the smallest groups of Americans engaged in agricultural activity: The Nation's 2,100 commercial beekeepers.
- 2 Established in 1949, the honey program mainly provides beekeepers with low interest operating loans whose collateral is the honey expected to be produced. The value of the collateral is set by law. The Government, in effect, loans money out to beekeepers and says that if the beekeeper can't sell the honey produced we will forgive the loan and take the honey.
- 3 The program was designed to increase the number of bee colonies in order to stimulate pollination of crops. A secondary purpose was to insure a sufficient supply of domestically produced honey. It has failed on both counts. The number of bee colonies has declined steadily—down some 24 percent between 1949 and 1985. In addition, the high price support led to an increase in imports of honey from abroad while domestic honey production stagnated.
- 4 During the 1985 farm bill, I supported an amendment by our Vice President, then-Senator Dan Quayle, to eliminate what he called the millionaire bees club. The amendment won overwhelming support on the Senate floor but the House maintained the program and the Senate conferees accepted the House provision in conference. Despite the clear sentiment of the Senate to end this sweetheart deal, the committee bill before us continues the honey price support at nearly 57 cents a pound for the next 5 years. Enough is enough.
- 5 The trends so abundantly clear in 1985 have persisted since passage of the 1985 farm bill. The number of colonies has declined another 25 percent. The level of import penetration from low cost honey producers remains high and honey has steadily lost out to other

sweeteners in the marketplace. Mr. President, this program does not advance its stated objectives.

6 What the program does achieve is to transfer a lot of taxpayers' money to a handful of beekeepers.

7 Over the last 5 years, our honey support program has cost the Federal Government an average of \$77 million a year. That's more than \$37,000 a year for each of the 2,100 commercial beekeepers in the program. For some of those beekeepers, the benefit has been even more substantial. The Congressional Research Service estimates that almost 10 percent of the total Federal benefits from this program went to 1 percent of the participating beekeepers.

8 What do we do with the honey we buy, Mr. President? Why do we give it away to foreign countries as part of our food assistance programs? There is no market for honey at 57 cents a pound in this country or any other.

9 There is absolutely no justification for this program. It has been the subject of two critical studies by the General Accounting Office.

10 It is time to end the "hive talk" and "bee" good to the taxpayer. I urge my colleagues to support the Chafee amendment.

Excerpt from "Senate-floor speech in favor of an amendment ending government subsidies for honey farmers" by Senator John Heinz, from the Congressional Record—Senate, July 24, 1990. In the public domain.

Passage 2: Senate-floor speech against an amendment ending government subsidies for honey farmers

by Senator Kent Conrad

11 Mr. President, I had the opportunity to chair a hearing before the Senate Agriculture Committee on the question of the honey program.

12 For 3 or 4 hours we heard at great length testimony, not just from honey producers, but more importantly from those who benefit from the pollination services of the honey industry.

13 Mr. President, the chart that was shown by the Senator from South Dakota says it all. USDA has estimated the benefit to the U.S. economy at \$9.3 billion a year as a result of the pollination services of the honeybee. That is the value to this economy.

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- 14 Mr. President, if we did not have a honey program, we would have to go invent one. We would have to go invent one in order to have the pollination that is necessary for this Nation's fruit, vegetables, and flowers.
- 15 I have said on this floor before, agriculture is an American success story. Why is it that when we go to the supermarket we are able to have an incredible choice of fruits and vegetables before us no matter where you are in the United States? . . .
- 16 Well, Mr. President, the reason is simply this: we have a system of agriculture that produces the result. One of those small but important parts of the system is what those honeybees do that are in hives all across America, because those little bees pollinate the crops that lead to the enormous productivity of the American fruit, vegetable, and flower industry. That is the reality.
- 17 Now some may say, well, if we did not have these honeybees in the protected hives, the wild bees would do the job. Mr. President, I thought that myself until I had the advantage of sitting through a hearing and finding out what is happening in America. The wild bee population in this country is being decimated, absolutely wiped out by the varroa mite. The varroa mite could eliminate wild bee populations in this country in the next 3 years. The fact is we have a major threat on our hands in America and most of us do not even know about it. And, of course, why would we? Why would anyone know that we have a pest and a parasite that is attacking the bee population all across this country that could decimate the wild bee population in 3 years? But it is happening.
- 18 Mr. President, if we do not have a bee population to go out and pollinate that fruit crop, that vegetable crop, those flowers, we are going to have to reconstruct a bee population nationwide at enormous costs. . . .
- 19 Mr. President, let me just sum up by saying if we fail to protect this program on the floor of the U.S. Senate today, we will have thrown away one of the finest investments we make as a public body. Less than \$60 million a year has been put into this program and we get a return, according to USDA—this is not the estimate of the beekeepers, this is not the estimate of anybody but the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who says we benefit to the tune of \$9.3 billion a year. That is a rate of return, Mr. President, if I am not mistaken, that is dramatically in excess of anything we see anywhere else in our society.

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- 20 Mr. President, after hearing the testimony of those who provided testimony before the Committee on Agriculture, I am convinced that we could make a very serious mistake if we decided to do in this Nation's honey program, not because of its effect on the honey producers, although obviously they would be decimated, but far more importantly because of what we would do to fruit, vegetable, and flower industries of America, industries that have been so successful and such a key part of our national economy.

Excerpt from "Senate-floor speech against an amendment ending government subsidies for honey farmers" by Senator Kent Conrad, from the Congressional Record—Senate, July 24, 1990. In the public domain.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

1. In Passage 1, the speaker lists the number of commercial beekeepers in the United States. How does this develop his purpose?
- Ⓐ It explains the support that has maintained the honey program.
 - Ⓑ It demonstrates the lack of a sufficient supply of domestically made honey.
 - It emphasizes that a small group of farmers receives large sums of benefits from the honey program.
 - Ⓓ It shows how few businesses are able to produce enough honey to profit without government support.

Option C: This answer is correct. The speaker points out that 10 percent of honey program benefits goes to 1 percent of the 2,100 bee farmers, adding to his point that a few people are getting government support that they do not deserve.

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2. Fill in the bubble **before** the word from Passage 1 that comes from a Latin root word meaning “settled” or “still.”

“In addition, the high price support led to an increase in imports of honey from abroad while domestic honey production stagnated.” (paragraph 3)

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3. Select **two** ways in which the speaker in Passage 1 develops the central idea that the honey program costs more than it is worth.
- Ⓐ by examining the expenses of maintaining different bee colonies
 - by detailing the amount of money commercial beekeepers receive
 - Ⓒ by explaining how much each taxpayer would save if the program ends
 - Ⓓ by identifying programs that need more financial support than beekeepers
 - by describing the honey trade activity between America and other countries

Option B: This answer is correct. In paragraph 7 the speaker details how much money commercial beekeepers make, showing that it is not equal to how much honey they produce.

Option E: This answer is correct. In paragraphs 3 and 5, the speaker mentions several instances of Americans having to pay for honey imported from other countries because of the lack of honey being produced in America.

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4. Why does the speaker in Passage 2 begin with the information in paragraphs 11 and 12?
- Ⓐ to summarize his argument about the honey program
 - Ⓑ to demonstrate how he learned about honey production
 - to present himself as a credible source on the honey program
 - Ⓓ to show that he has built trust with people who produce honey

Option C: This answer is correct. By explaining that he listened for "3 or 4 hours" about the benefits of the program, he suggests that he has the authority to argue for the importance of the honey program.

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5. Read this sentence from Passage 2.

“Mr. President, the chart that was shown by the Senator from South Dakota says it all.” (paragraph 13)

What does the speaker suggest about the chart with the phrase “says it all”?

- Ⓐ The chart explains both sides of an issue.
- Ⓑ The chart informs the audience in a relatable way.
- Ⓒ The chart shows enough evidence to prove the claim.
- Ⓓ The chart presents an interesting visual aspect of the argument.

Option C: This answer is correct. For the chart to “say it all” means that it is able to stand alone and provide all that is needed to support a point about bee populations.

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6. Select **two** reasons why the speaker in Passage 2 asks the rhetorical questions in paragraph 17.

- Ⓐ to show how difficult it is to study wild bees
- Ⓑ to shame people for knowing little about bees
- Ⓒ to protect the wild bees used in the honey program
- Ⓓ to suggest that most people take the work of bees for granted
- Ⓔ to acknowledge that there is limited understanding of the bee problem

*Option D: **This answer is correct.** The question suggests that people do not think information about wild bees is important because the honey program has been successful in keeping plenty of produce available.*

*Option E: **This answer is correct.** By explaining that wild bees are in danger and no one knows, the speaker is using the rhetorical questions to acknowledge that this information, while important, is not something most people understand.*

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7. How do the speakers in both passages address the financial aspects of the honey program differently?
- Ⓐ The speaker in Passage 1 argues that the cost is too high for the honey program, but the speaker in Passage 2 lists profitable alternatives.
 - Ⓑ Both speakers mention the cost of the honey program, but the speaker in Passage 1 describes how the profits may soon begin to decrease.
 - Both speakers mention the cost of the honey program, but the speaker in Passage 2 explains that the profits for agriculture in general are much higher.
 - Ⓓ The speaker in Passage 1 shows that the cost of the honey program has stayed the same, but the speaker in Passage 2 shows that profits have varied greatly.

*Option C: **This answer is correct.** The speaker in Passage 1 mentions how much the honey program costs, while the speaker in Passage 2 mentions this and how much profit is gained in revenue and agriculture.*

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

Part A

How does Passage 1 use the idea of a declining bee population?

- as evidence that the honey program is unsuccessful
- as a reason why the honey program helps few farmers
- as a counterargument that explains the need for the honey program
- as support for investing the honey program money in other sweeteners

Part B

How does Passage 2 use the information of a declining bee population differently than Part A?

- It identifies the exact percentage of the decline.
- It details the timeline of the decline and how to stop it.
- It examines the role of the American public in causing the decline.
- It provides a reason for the decline and highlights the lack of awareness.

Part A

Option A: This answer is correct. In paragraph 5, the speaker points out that the trend of declining bee colonies has continued since the honey program began, showing that the program failed to improve the bee population.

Part B

Option D: This answer is correct. The speaker in Passage 2 explains that the varroa mite threat is the reason for the decline and notes that most Americans do not know about it, arguing that the commercial population needs continued protection.

The Pebble and the Acorn

by Hannah Flagg Gould

- 1 "I am a Pebble! I yield to none!"
Were the swelling words of a tiny stone,
"Nor time nor season can alter me;
I am abiding, while ages flee.
- 5 The pelting hail and the drizzling rain
Have tried to soften me, long, in vain;
And the dew has tenderly sought to melt,
Or touch my heart; but it was not felt.
There's none to tell you about my birth,
- 10 For I am as old as the big, round earth.
The children of men arise, and pass
Out of the world, like blades of grass; . . .
I am a Pebble! but who art *thou*,¹
Rattling along from the restless bough?"
- 15 The Acorn was shocked at this rude salute,
And lay for a moment abashed² and mute:
She never before had been so near
This gravelly ball, the mundane sphere;
And she felt for a time at loss to know
- 20 How to answer a thing so coarse and low.
But to give reproof³ of a nobler sort

¹who art *thou*: who are you

²abashed: embarrassed

³reproof: blame, criticism

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- Than the angry look, or the keen retort,
At length she said, in a gentle tone,
"Since it has happened that I am thrown,
25 From the lighter element where I grew,
Down to another, so hard and new,
And beside a personage so august,
Abased, I'll cover my head with dust,
And quick retire from the sight of one
30 Whom time, nor season, nor storm, nor sun,
Nor the gentle dew, nor the grinding heel
Has ever subdued, or made to feel!"
And soon in the earth she sank away
From the cheerless spot where the Pebble lay.
- 35 But 'twas not long ere the soil was broke
By the jeering head of an infant oak!
As it arose, and its branches spread,
The Pebble looked up, and, wondering, said,
"Ah, modest Acorn! never to tell
40 What was enclosed in its simple shell;—
That the pride of the forest was folded up
In the narrow space of its little cup!—
And meekly to sink in the darksome earth,
Which proves that nothing could hide her worth!
- 45 And O, how many will tread on me,
To come and admire the beautiful tree,
Whose head is towering towards the sky,
Above such a worthless thing as I!
Useless and vain, a cumberer⁴ here,

⁴cumberer: one who bothers or annoys

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- 50 Have I been idling from year to year.
But never, from this, shall a vaunting word
From the humbled Pebble again be heard,
Till something without me or within
Shall show the purpose for which I've been!"
- 55 The Pebble could ne'er its vow forget,
And it lies there wrapt in silence yet.

Excerpt from "The Pebble and the Acorn" by Hannah Flagg Gould. In the public domain.

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9. In the first stanza, how does the Pebble's exaggeration of its accomplishments add to the author's purpose?
- Ⓐ It introduces the Pebble's fear of being trampled.
 - Ⓑ It illustrates the Pebble's disappointment in nature.
 - It establishes impossible expectations for the Acorn.
 - Ⓓ It shows a connection between the Acorn and nature.

Option C: This answer is correct. In the first stanza of the poem, impossible expectations are set when the Pebble says "nor time nor season can alter me" and then when the Pebble asks the Acorn, "but who art thou?" This contributes to the author's purpose of having the Acorn feel humbled in the beginning of the poem because of the Pebble's boasting.

10. Read these lines from the poem.

“She never before had been so near
This gravelly ball, the mundane sphere;
And she felt for a time at loss to know
How to answer a thing so coarse and low.” (lines 17–20)

How does the figurative language in these lines evoke a sympathetic mood? Select **two**.

- Ⓐ by showing that the Acorn is lying very close to the Pebble
- Ⓑ by suggesting that the Acorn feels rushed to speak to the Pebble
- Ⓒ by showing that the Acorn is unsure of how to act in a new situation
- Ⓓ by showing that the Acorn is made to feel afraid by the Pebble’s experience
- Ⓔ by suggesting that the Acorn feels awkward about the plainness of the Pebble

Option C: **This answer is correct.** The idiomatic phrase “at a loss” suggests that the acorn is unsure of what to do in this new situation, evoking a feeling of pity in the reader.

Option E: **This answer is correct.** The use of the words “mundane,” “coarse,” and “low” to describe the pebble combined with the acorn’s confusion about what to do suggest the acorn feels uncomfortable about responding to such a plain pebble, especially after its boasts, and this confusion can evoke pity in the reader.

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11. Fill in the bubble **before** the line from the poem that suggests that the Pebble receives the same treatment that it gave the Acorn.

- Ⓐ "But 'twas not long ere the soil was broke
- Ⓑ By the jeering head of an infant oak!
- Ⓒ As it arose, and its branches spread,
- Ⓓ The Pebble looked up, and, wondering, said," (lines 35–38)

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12. Read these lines from the poem.

“But never, from this, shall a vaunting word
From the humbled Pebble again be heard,” (lines 51–52)

What does the word vaunting mean as it is used in these lines?

- A bragging
- B calming
- C dismissing
- D minimizing

Option A: This answer is correct. The word “vaunting” as it is used in this context means to speak highly of, so the word “bragging” most closely matches the meaning of the word “vaunting.”

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- 13.** Fill in the bubbles to show how the experiences of the Acorn, the Pebble, or both characters are shaped by their perspectives in the poem.

	Acorn	Pebble	Both Characters
feels humbled by others	<input type="radio"/> A	<input type="radio"/> B	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
is proud of itself because of feelings of superiority	<input type="radio"/> D	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> F
is patient with others when faced with adversity	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> H	<input type="radio"/> I

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

Part A

Select **two** universal themes that are developed throughout the poem.

- A Boasting can make one look foolish.
- B Honesty builds valuable friendships.
- C Individuals can exceed expectations.
- D Communication can help resolve disagreements.
- E Initial impressions of others are usually trustworthy.

Part B

How does the author develop the themes in Part A?

- A by describing how the environment changes for the Acorn and the Pebble
- B by allowing the Acorn and the Pebble to present valid arguments for their opinions
- C by contrasting the environment of the Acorn's birthplace with the Pebble's birthplace
- D by comparing the Acorn's reaction to the Pebble and the Pebble's reaction to the Acorn's growth

Part A

Option A: **This answer is correct.** *The Pebble looks foolish by being overconfident about itself, and the Acorn, who remains humble, ends up surpassing the Pebble in significance.*

Option C: **This answer is correct.** *The Acorn begins the poem as an individual seed but later on grows into a large oak tree that humbles the Pebble.*

Part B

Option D: **This answer is correct.** *The Acorn and the Pebble react differently toward each other in the different stages of their existence. Those different reactions help develop the themes in Part A.*

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