



Grade 8

FAST ELA Reading

Sample Test Materials

Answer Key

The Grade 8 FAST ELA Reading Sample Test Materials Answer Key provides the correct response(s) for each item on the sample test. The sample items and answers are not intended to demonstrate the length of the actual test, nor should student responses be used as an indicator of student performance on the actual test.

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How Aretha Franklin’s Legacy Extends into Outer Space

by Marina Koren

- 1 In 2001, Aretha Franklin took the stage at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. She wore a bleach-white jumpsuit and feather boa, her hair teased up in her trademark style, glossy as obsidian. A guitar twanged over the cheers of a packed house. “What is that, Teddy?” Franklin said, addressing her son, the evening’s guitarist. “Play that riff again. We all know that, don’t we?” They did, and as the Queen of Soul broke into “Chain of Fools,” the crowd rose to their feet and clapped their hands sore.
- 2 Several months later, a telescope in Mexico City spotted a tiny pinprick of light in the sky during its nightly observations.
- 3 These events, of course, had nothing to do with each other. But their stories would align nearly 15 years later. The point of light turned out to be an asteroid, and astronomers decided to name it for the singer: 249516 Aretha.
- 4 To have an asteroid named after you is an honor, but Franklin . . . already had plenty of those. The legendary singer had accumulated, over a career spanning five decades, more than 100 singles on the *Billboard* charts, 18 Grammy Awards, and numerous other accolades. The state of Michigan, where Franklin grew up, had her voice designated a “natural resource.” That voice was powerful, velvety, unmatched. When Franklin asked the crowd to sing along with her at Radio City, no one would dare; she was met with “complete silence,” according to a *New York Times* review of the 2001 performance.
- 5 If anything, the honor fell on the asteroid.
- 6 The asteroid population kind of needed it, too. The first asteroids to be discovered, in the early 1800s, were named for figures in Roman and Greek mythology. As more were found, astronomers began naming the space rocks after themselves, and then after famous individuals in culture, science, art, music, and literature. In those times, all of these fields were dominated by men, so women working and contributing to the same arenas were overlooked.

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- 7 This is what led Amy Mainzer, an astronomer at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, to start naming asteroids after women. “My postdoctoral fellow Dr. Carrie Nugent brought to my attention the fact that although many asteroids have been named, very few have been named to honor the contributions of women (and particularly women of color),” Mainzer wrote in a blog post in 2015. Mainzer leads the NEOWISE mission, which uses an Earth-orbiting space telescope to search for asteroids and comets. In addition to Franklin, Mainzer has named asteroids after the civil-rights activist Rosa Parks, the abolitionists Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, and the Nobel Peace Prize–winning activist Malala Yousafzai.
- 8 Even though 249516 Aretha was first detected in 2001, it was not formally designated an asteroid until February 2010. To determine if a space rock is indeed an asteroid, astronomers must observe it dozens of times to figure out its orbit and other properties. After that, discoverers like Mainzer are free to submit potential names to the Minor Planet Center, the global organization that collects observational data for all known and suspected asteroids and comets. The names are then judged and chosen by a 15-person committee at the International Astronomical Union.
- 9 249516 Aretha measures two to three kilometers, or less than two miles, across. It orbits between Mars and Jupiter, one of hundreds of thousands of known asteroids that reside between the two planets. It takes about five and a half years to make one trip around the sun. . . .
- 10 In 2007, on the 40th anniversary of the release of “Respect,” an NPR segment declared that the record had “arrived with an impact of an asteroid.” What a suitable metaphor, when you leave the dinosaurs out of it. Aretha Franklin was a force, in music and beyond, in the cultural and social movements for which her lyrics provided the soundtrack. She completely shook the landscape, fusing gospel, blues, and pop in a way no one had ever done before—and hasn’t since.

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FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

1. What does the word accolades mean as it is used in paragraph 4?

- Ⓐ fictional stories
- Ⓑ formal recognitions
- Ⓒ various professions
- Ⓓ performance spaces

Option B: This answer is correct. The word "accolades" means "awards" or "recognition of work."

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

Part A

Which idea is developed in paragraph 6?

- Ⓐ Historically, women named asteroids after themselves.
- Ⓑ Originally, asteroids were thought to be mythical objects.
- Ⓒ Originally, scientists disagreed on how to name asteroids.
- Ⓓ Historically, few asteroids have been named after women.

Part B

Fill in the bubble **before** the sentence that supports the idea in Part A.

- 6 Ⓐ The asteroid population kind of needed it, too. Ⓑ The first asteroids to be discovered, in the early 1800s, were named for figures in Roman and Greek mythology. Ⓒ As more were found, astronomers began naming the space rocks after themselves, and then after famous individuals in culture, science, art, music, and literature. Ⓓ In those times, all of these fields were dominated by men, so women working and contributing to the same arenas were overlooked.

Part A

Option D: This answer is correct. Paragraph 6 introduces the idea that few asteroids have been named after women.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

3. How does paragraph 7 develop the author's purpose of celebrating a range of individuals' accomplishments?
- Ⓐ by describing Mainzer's criteria for naming an asteroid after someone
 - by justifying why scientists like Mainzer name asteroids after someone
 - Ⓒ by establishing Mainzer's scientific qualifications that allow her to name asteroids
 - Ⓓ by explaining how Mainzer collaborates with another scientist when naming asteroids

Option B: This answer is correct. The paragraph references the reasons why Mainzer named an asteroid after Franklin.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

4. What does the phrase “arrived with an impact of an asteroid” in paragraph 10 suggest?
- Ⓐ New scientific discoveries are often connected to musicians.
 - The success that Franklin achieved was artistically significant.
 - Ⓒ Revolutionary change within music can be destructive to society.
 - Ⓓ It was inevitable that scientists would name a discovery after Franklin.

Option B: This answer is correct. The phrase compares Franklin’s success to “an impact of an asteroid” because an asteroid makes a significant impact, like Aretha Franklin’s success.

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5. Select **two** ways the author supports the argument that Franklin is an important figure who should be recognized.
- by listing her many musical achievements
 - by naming the genres that inspired her music
 - by listing all the women asteroids have been named for
 - by explaining the facts about the asteroid named after her
 - by providing examples of ways people respond to her as a performer

Option A: **This answer is correct.** *Franklin's musical achievements are the main reason given for why she should be honored.*

Option E: **This answer is correct.** *The passage provides several examples of how people react to Franklin's music, voice, and performances, providing evidence that she should be honored.*

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

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

Part A

Select **two** central ideas of the passage.

- Ⓐ Thousands of asteroids are discovered each year.
- Ⓑ It is important to consider diversity when naming asteroids.
- Ⓒ Franklin should receive more attention than she has received in the past.
- Ⓓ More people should understand how the process for naming asteroids works.
- Ⓔ Franklin’s influence on the world and music has been honored in many ways.

Part B

How does the author develop the central ideas in Part A?

- Ⓐ by explaining the impact music can have on people
- Ⓑ by explaining what qualifies an asteroid to receive a name
- Ⓒ by explaining why Mainzer named an asteroid after Franklin
- Ⓓ by explaining how Mainzer was influenced by Franklin’s music

Part A

Option B: This answer is correct. One part of the passage focuses on introducing diversity, particularly in regard to women, and specifically women of color, to the names given to asteroids.

Option E: This answer is correct. One part of the passage focuses on Franklin, her musical career, and the many accolades she has received because of her talent.

Part B

Option C: This answer is correct. The author supports both main ideas by explaining why Mainzer named an asteroid after Franklin.

Passage 1: from *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*

by W. B. Laughead

- 1 Paul Bunyan came to Westwood, California in 1913 at the suggestion of some of the most prominent loggers and lumbermen in the country. When the Red River Lumber Company announced their plans for opening up their forests of Sugar Pine and California White Pine, friendly advisors shook their heads and said,
- 2 "Better send for Paul Bunyan."
- 3 Apparently here was the job for a Superman—quality-and-quantity-production on a big scale and great engineering difficulties to be overcome. Why not Paul Bunyan? This is a White Pine job and here in the High Sierras the winter snows lie deep, just like the country where Paul grew up. . . .
- 4 The Red River people had been cutting White Pine in Minnesota for two generations; the crews that came west with them were old heads and every one knew Paul Bunyan of old. Paul had followed the White Pine from the Atlantic seaboard west to the jumping-off place in Minnesota, why not go the rest of the way? . . .
- 5 Babe, the big blue ox, constituted Paul Bunyan's assets and liabilities. History disagrees as to when, where and how Paul first acquired this bovine locomotive but his subsequent record is reliably established. Babe could pull anything that had two ends to it. . . .
- 6 They could never keep Babe more than one night at a camp for he would eat in one day all the feed one crew could tote to camp in a year. For a snack between meals he would eat fifty bales of hay, wire and all, and six men with picaroons were kept busy picking the wire out of his teeth. Babe was a great pet and very docile as a general thing but he seemed to have a sense of humor and frequently got into mischief. He would sneak up behind a drive and drink all the water out of the river, leaving the logs high and dry. It was impossible to build an ox-sling big enough to hoist Babe off the ground for shoeing, but after they logged off Dakota there was room for Babe to lie down for this operation.

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- 7 Once in a while Babe would run away and be gone all day roaming all over the Northwestern country. His tracks were so far apart that it was impossible to follow him and so deep that a man falling into one could only be hauled out with difficulty and a long rope. Once a settler and his wife and baby fell into one of these tracks and the son got out when he was fifty-seven years old and reported the accident. These tracks, today, form the thousands of lakes in the "Land of the Sky-Blue Water." . . .
- 8 Back in the early days, when his camps were so far from anywhere that the wolves following the tote-teams got lost in the woods, Paul Bunyan made no attempt to keep in touch with the trade. What's the use when every letter that comes in is about things that happened the year before?
- 9 Since he came to Westwood Paul has renewed old friendships, formed new ones and kept close contact with the world. Everyone expects great things of Paul Bunyan and with the Red River outfit back of him he has the chance of his life to make good. Continuous production keeps a full assortment of stock on hand. Customers in all parts of America find Westwood a dependable source of supply.

Excerpt from *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan* by W. B. Laughead. In the public domain.

Passage 2: The Round River Drive

by Douglas Malloch and James MacGillivray

Originally a tall tale passed down by the oral tradition of loggers, this poem is the first known written story of Paul Bunyan. The poem begins by introducing the reader to Bunyan and his team, then describes a strange incident.

- 'Twas '64 or '65
We drove¹ the great Round River Drive;
'Twas '65 or '64—
Yes, it was durin' of the war,
5 Or it was after or before.

¹drove: in logging, used a river's current to move logs to a sawmill

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Those were the days in Michigan,
The good old days, when any man
Could cut and skid² and log and haul,
And there was pine enough for all. . . .

10 Paul Bunyan and his fightin' crew,
In '64 or '5 or '2,
They started out to find the pines
Without much thought of section lines.
So west by north they made their way

15 One hundred miles until one day
They found good timber, level land,
And roarin' water close at hand. . . .

We put one hundred million feet
On skids that winter. Hard to beat,
20 You say it was? It was some crew.
We took it off one forty, too.

A hundred million feet we skid—
That forty was a pyramid;
It runs up skyward to a peak—
25 To see the top would take a week. . . .

At last, a hundred million in,
'Twas time for drivin' to begin.
We broke our rollways in a rush
And started through the rain and slush
30 To drive the hundred million down
Until we reached some sawmill town.

²skid: in logging, to move logs from where they were cut to where they will be transported, such as from the forest to the river

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

- We didn't know the river's name,
Nor where to someone's mill it came,
But figured that, without a doubt,
- 35 To some good town 'twould fetch us out
If we observed the usual plan
And drove the way the current ran. . . .
- Some two weeks more and then we passed
A camp that looked just like the last.
- 40 Two weeks again another, too,
That looked like our camp, come in view.
- Then Bunyan called us all ashore
And held a council-like of war.
He said, with all this lumbering,
- 45 Our logs would never fetch a thing. . . .
- And then we realized at last
That ev'ry camp that we had passed
Was ours. Yes, it was then we found
The river we was on was round.
- 50 And, though we'd driven many a mile,
We drove a circle all the while!
And that's the truth, as I'm alive,
About the great Round River drive.

Excerpt from "The Round River Drive" by Douglas Malloch and James MacGillivray. In the public domain.

FAST ELA Reading Sample Items Answer Key

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

Part A

In paragraphs 1 and 2 of Passage 1, how does the narrator develop the perspective of the lumber company advisors?

- Ⓐ by explaining their logging experience
- Ⓑ by showing their conversation with the loggers
- Ⓒ by emphasizing their relationship with the loggers
- Ⓓ by sharing their response to the new plans for logging

Part B

In paragraph 3, how is the narrator's perspective developed differently than the advisors' perspective in Part A?

- Ⓐ with multiple people's opinions of Bunyan
- Ⓑ with details about Bunyan's recent decisions
- Ⓒ with questions about Bunyan's interest in work
- Ⓓ with references to Bunyan's successful reputation

Part A

Option D: This answer is correct. The passage shows that the advisors recommend calling Bunyan when they hear about the Red River Lumber Company's plans because he is an experienced logger.

Part B

Option D: This answer is correct. The narrator's descriptions of Bunyan's past successes and of his reputation are the clues to another perspective that supports the reason why Bunyan is qualified for the job.

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8. In paragraph 5 of Passage 1, what does the phrase “bovine locomotive” suggest about Babe?
- Ⓐ He is unusually loud.
 - He is incredibly strong.
 - Ⓒ He is often carrying people.
 - Ⓓ He is enhanced with metal parts.

Option B: This answer is correct. The subsequent description of Babe’s ability to pull anything shows that this metaphor compares Babe’s strength to that of a train.

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9. Read this sentence from Passage 1.

"Babe was a great pet and very docile as a general thing but he seemed to have a sense of humor and frequently got into mischief." (paragraph 6)

The word "docile" comes from the Latin word for "to teach." Based on this information, what is the meaning of the word docile as it is used in paragraph 6?

- Ⓐ aware
- Ⓑ ill-suited
- Ⓒ serious
- Ⓓ well-behaved

Option D: This answer is correct. The word "docile" means "well-behaved," as signaled by the fact that it is contrasted with "mischief" later in the sentence and confirmed by its root, which suggests "teachable."

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10. The first stanza of Passage 2 creates confusion about the events. Select **two** poetic devices that help achieve this effect.

- repetition of the word “or”
- using end rhyme in lines 3–5
- Ⓒ extending the length of line 2
- Ⓓ building imagery of the setting
- Ⓔ providing a list of actions in line 8

Option A: **This answer is correct.** The word “or” between the years and in “after or before” shows that the speaker is uncertain about when the events happened, creating doubt about whether they are true at all.

Option B: **This answer is correct.** Lines 3–5 extend the end rhyme pattern by having three instead of two lines of end rhyme.

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11. Read these lines from Passage 2.

46 And then we realized at last
 That ev'ry camp that we had passed
 Was ours. Yes, it was then we found
 The river we was on was round.

What is the effect of the line break between lines 47 and 48?

- Ⓐ It creates annoyance toward the river.
- Ⓑ It highlights what the speaker learned.
- Ⓒ It emphasizes how the loggers solved their problem.
- Ⓓ It builds suspense for the explanation about the camp.

Option D: This answer is correct. The line break delays the end of the sentence, creating suspense for how the camp sightings will be explained.

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

Part A

Select **two** themes developed in Passage 2.

- Ⓐ Working hard can be unnecessary.
- Ⓑ Traveling to unfamiliar places is risky.
- Ⓒ Situations can be different than they seem.
- Ⓓ Leaders need help from their team members.
- Ⓔ Paying attention to surroundings is important.

Part B

Which detail from Passage 2 develops the themes in Part A?

- Ⓐ The loggers have to work in bad weather.
- Ⓑ The loggers enjoy their work near the river.
- Ⓒ The loggers expect their work to be the same as usual.
- Ⓓ The loggers are surprised by how much work they complete.

Part A

Option C: **This answer is correct.** *The crew believed they were seeing different camps along the river, but it was actually their own camp.*

Option E: **This answer is correct.** *The fact that the crew wastes time on the river because they do not know that it is round supports the idea that they should have paid more attention to their surroundings.*

Part B

Option C: **This answer is correct.** *Because the loggers are so experienced, they assume their work will be the same as always despite the fact that they are working in an area they do not know well.*

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- 13.** The Hero character archetype is a soldier, winner, or rescuer who rises to a challenge.

Fill in the bubbles to show how Bunyan represents the Hero archetype in each passage.

	Passage 1	Passage 2	Both Passages
He explores unnamed logging territory.	<input type="radio"/> A	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> C
He helps a logging team work toward a goal.	<input type="radio"/> D	<input type="radio"/> E	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
He is asked to solve a difficult logging problem.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> H	<input type="radio"/> I

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