



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM
Released Items
2005**

**Grade 8
Writing**

Writing—Session 1

- 1 Which edit is needed in the sentence below?

All of those people had such busy scedules that they couldn't stay another thirty minutes.

- A. Change *busy* to **buzy**.
- B. Change *scedules* to **schedules**.
- C. Change *thirty* to **thurty**.
- D. Change *minutes* to **minuets**.

- 2 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

My sister said that she planned to attend the university of Maine next fall.

- A. sister
- B. she
- C. university
- D. fall

- 3 Which word should replace the underlined word in the sentence below?

They was a grassy hillside with thousands of plants and trees.

- A. They're
- B. Their
- C. Thear
- D. There

- 4 What is the correct form of the underlined word in the sentence below?

He bring most of his books to school yesterday.

- A. brang
- B. brought
- C. brung
- D. brings

- 5 What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

An iceberg is part of a glacier that breaks off. An iceberg is set adrift on the ocean after it breaks off from the glacier.

- A. Part of a glacier that breaks off, an iceberg is set adrift after.
 - B. An iceberg, breaks off from the glacier, is set adrift on the ocean.
 - C. An iceberg is part of a glacier that breaks off and is set adrift on the ocean.
 - D. Breaking off and set adrift on the ocean, an iceberg is part of a glacier.
- 6 Where should a semicolon (;) be placed to make the sentence below correct?

Eastbound and westbound trains meet during the trip travelers can see the historic railroad engines switch and pass.

- A. after *westbound*
- B. after *trip*
- C. after *see*
- D. after *switch*

- 7 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

She said, “our cabin by the lake is located a mile south of the main highway.”

- A. our
 - B. lake
 - C. south
 - D. highway
- 8 Which of the following is a sentence fragment?
- A. My friend and I still happy with the hammock, however.
 - B. It seems as if the ropes should be stronger than they are.
 - C. The product is not what I expected when I ordered it.
 - D. My sister, who owns the hammock, has not had a problem.

- 9 Where should a comma be placed in the sentence below?

An early inventor of gliders for example, developed his wing design by watching seabirds soar gracefully over the ocean.

- A. after *gliders*
- B. after *design*
- C. after *seabirds*
- D. after *gracefully*

- 10 What is the **best** way to combine the two sentences below?

The exhibit was outdoors. The exhibit was designed to look like the areas where gorillas live in Africa.

- A. The exhibit was outdoors, it was designed to look like the areas where gorillas live in Africa.
- B. The exhibit outdoors, looking like the areas where gorillas live in Africa, was designed.
- C. The exhibit was designed outdoors, to look like the areas where gorillas live in Africa.
- D. The exhibit was outdoors and designed to look like the areas where gorillas live in Africa.

When writing responses to prompts 11, 12, and 13, remember to

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt, and**
- **proofread and edit your writing.**

- ⑪ Imagine there is a storm coming across a lake. Write a description of the approaching storm. Use sensory language and varied sentence structures to develop your description.
- ⑫ Some people use cell phones while in restaurants, stores, movies, or even when they are driving. Is this good for our society? Write a paragraph that develops **one** strong argument to persuade the reader to agree with your opinion.

Read this poem and then write a response to the prompt that follows.

How to Eat a Poem

Don't be polite.
Bite in.
Pick it up with your fingers and lick the juice that
 may run down your chin.
It is ready and ripe now, whenever you are.

You do not need a knife or fork or spoon
or plate or napkin or tablecloth.

For there is no core
or stem
or rind
or pit
or seed
or skin
to throw away.

—Eve Merriam

- 13 What does the poet compare a poem to? Write a paragraph that explains how the poet makes this comparison. Include details from the poem to support your response.

Writing—Session 2

Read this passage to decide if babysitting is the right job for you. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

Is Babysitting the Right Job for You?

Carol Barkin and Elizabeth James

Babysitting is a great way to earn money. It's one of the few jobs that is always available. Wherever there are families with young children, babysitters are needed. And it's not full-time work. There are babysitting jobs to fit almost any schedule.

But before you plunge in, think over the pros and cons of this kind of work.

Do You Have Time to Babysit?

Try to be realistic about how much time you will have for work. You can't count on getting your homework done while you're babysitting. Your job as a sitter is to entertain and take care of the children, and they're not likely to enjoy watching you write your social studies paper. After the kids go to bed, of course, you'll have time to study—but what if this is the night little Debbie has a nightmare?

And don't forget that you have your own social life. You won't have much time for your friends if you take on babysitting jobs every afternoon and evening. Making tons of extra money won't be worth it if you're failing all your classes and your friends think you're ignoring them. So go slowly at first until you see how much work you can handle.

Do You Like Kids?

Think about whether you enjoy being with children. After all, that's the job; if little kids get on your nerves most of the time, then babysitting probably isn't for you.

Do you like children of all ages? You may not know yet which age groups appeal to you most, and of course you won't want to limit yourself too much—you probably won't find many jobs if you decide to sit only with five-year-olds. On the other hand, if handling tiny babies makes you nervous, why not pass up those job opportunities until you feel more sure of yourself around infants? And if changing dirty diapers really turns you off, you'd better stick with children over three years old. You'll enjoy babysitting more if you're realistic about what you do and don't like.

Unexpected Bonuses

Besides being fun and profitable, babysitting can pay off in ways you may not have thought of. First, the experience of looking for jobs and meeting prospective employers will come in handy when you're looking for a part-time or full-time job later on. And of course, babysitting is terrific preparation for other kinds of work with children: summer camp counselor, Sunday school assistant teacher, or summer park-program employee. In addition, a parent you've babysat for often will be happy to write a letter of reference; this recommendation may be very helpful when you're applying for other jobs.

And have you thought about how much you'll be learning while you babysit? As well as finding out about how children grow and develop, you'll be absorbing information about lifestyles that may be different from your family's. You'll probably never again have the chance to be part of the intimate day-to-day life in so many different homes. Keep your eyes open, both for the ideas you'd like to make use of in your own life and for the problems you'd like to avoid.

Once you've decided that you want to give babysitting a try, you're ready to break into the job market.

Is babysitting the right job for you? Write a response, using information from the passage and your own ideas.

Use the questions in the box below to organize your writing. You can answer the questions **before** you write to plan your response or **after** you write to check your response.

14 What is the focus/controlling idea of your response? _____

15 What are the supporting details/references to text in your response? _____

16 What is the conclusion to your response? _____

When writing a response to prompt 17, remember to

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt, and**
- **proofread and edit your writing.**

17 Is babysitting the right job for you? Write a response, using information from the passage and your own ideas.

Acknowledgments

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Grade 8 Writing Released Item Information

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Content Strand¹	SW	SR	SR	SR	ER	ER	ER	ER									
GLE Code	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-1	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-9	7-1	7-5	7-8	7-3	7-2	7-2	7-2	7-2
Depth of Knowledge Code	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Item Type²	MC	CR	CR	CR	SA	SA	SA	WP									
Answer Key	B	C	D	B	C	B	A	A	A	D							
Total Possible Points	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	1	1	1	12

¹Content Strand: SW = Structures of Language & Writing Conventions; SR = Short Responses: persuasive, response to literary text, or narrative; ER = Extended Response: response to informational text

²Item Type: MC = Multiple-Choice, CR = Constructed Response, SA = Short Answer, WP = Writing Prompt