MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Release of Spring 2025 MCAS Test Items

from the

Grade 10 English Language Arts Paper-Based Test

June 2025
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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and Secondary Education

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Interim Commissioner

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Overview of Grade 10 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2025 grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) test was administered in two formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. Most students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for eligible students who were unable to use a computer. More information can be found on the MCAS Test Administration Resources page at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html.

Most of the operational items on the grade 10 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same ELA content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

This document displays released items from the paper-based test, along with associated reading passages. Released items from the computer-based test are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/released-items.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 10 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response and essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items and multiple-select items, in which students select the correct answer(s) from among several answer options.

Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 10 ELA test was based on grades 6–12 learning standards in three content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (2017), listed below.

- Reading
- Writing
- Language

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

ELA test results are reported under three MCAS reporting categories, which are identical to the three framework content strands listed above.

The table at the conclusion of this document provides the following information about each released operational item: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, and item description. The correct answers for selected-response questions are also displayed in the table.

Reference Materials

During both ELA test sessions, the use of authorized bilingual word-to-word dictionaries and glossaries was allowed for students who are currently or were ever reported as English learners. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA test session.

Grade 10 English Language Arts
SESSION 1

This session contains 13 questions.

Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

Read the letter and the excerpt about life during the Dust Bowl, a period of severe drought and dust storms in the south-central prairies of the United States in the 1930s. Then answer the questions that follow.

Caroline A. Henderson and her husband were wheat farmers near Eva, Oklahoma. In the 1930s, Caroline wrote a series of letters to her friend Evelyn. In this letter, she writes about the impact of the Dust Bowl.

from "Letters from the Dust Bowl"

by Caroline A. Henderson

1 My Dear Evelyn:—

2 . . . Our recent transition from rain-soaked eastern Kansas with its green pastures, luxuriant foliage, abundance of flowers, and promise of a generous harvest, to the dust-covered desolation of No Man's Land[1] was a difficult change to crowd into one short day's travel. Eleanor has laid aside the medical books for a time. Wearing our shade hats, with handkerchiefs tied over our faces and vaseline in our nostrils, we have been trying to rescue our home from the accumulations of wind-blown dust which penetrates wherever air can go. It is an almost hopeless task, for there is rarely a day when at some time the dust clouds do not roll over. 'Visibility' approaches zero and everything is covered again with a silt-like deposit which may vary in depth from a film to actual ripples on the kitchen floor. I keep oiled cloths on the window sills and between the upper and lower sashes. They help just a little to . . . collect the dust. Some seal the windows with the gummed-paper strips used in wrapping parcels, but no method is fully effective. We buy what appears to be red cedar sawdust with oil added to use in sweeping our floors, and do our best to avoid inhaling the irritating dust.

3 In telling you of these conditions I realize that I expose myself to charges of disloyalty to this western region. A good Kansas friend suggests that we should imitate the Californian attitude toward earthquakes and keep to ourselves what we know about dust storms. Since the very limited rains of May in this section gave some slight ground for renewed hope, optimism has been the approved policy. Printed articles or statements by journalists, railroad officials, and secretaries of small-town Chambers of Commerce have heralded too enthusiastically the return of prosperity to the drouth[2] region. And in

[1]No Man's Land—a region of Oklahoma
[2]drouth—drought

our part of the country that is the one durable basis for any prosperity whatever. There is nothing else to build upon. But you wished to know the truth, so I am telling you the actual situation, though I freely admit that the facts are themselves often contradictory and confusing. . . .

4 Contrary to many published reports, a good many people had left this country either temporarily or permanently before any rains came. . . . [Few] actual residents have left our neighborhood, but on a sixty-mile trip yesterday to procure tractor repairs we saw many pitiful reminders of broken hopes and apparently wasted effort. Little abandoned homes where people had drilled deep wells for the precious water, had set trees and vines, built reservoirs, and fenced in gardens,—with everything now walled in or half buried by banks of drifted soil,—told a painful story of loss and disappointment. I grieved especially over one lonely plum thicket[3] buried to the tips of the twigs, and a garden with a fence closely built of boards for wind protection, now enclosing only a hillock[4] of dust covered with the blue-flowered bull nettles which no winds or sands discourage.

5 It might give you some notion of our great 'open spaces' if I tell you that on the sixty-mile trip, going by a state road over which our mail comes from the railroad, and coming back by a Federal highway, we encountered only one car, and no other vehicles of any sort. And this was on Saturday, the farmers' marketing day! . . .

6 We have had two most welcome rains in June—three quarters of an inch and one-half inch. Normally these should have been of the utmost benefit, though they by no means guarantee an abundant feed crop from our now sprouting seeds as many editorial writers have decreed, and they do nothing toward restoring subsoil moisture. Actually the helpful effects of the rains have been for us and for other people largely destroyed by the drifting soil from abandoned, unworked lands around us. It fills the air and our eyes and noses and throats, and, worst of all, our furrows, where tender shoots are coming to the surface only to be buried by the smothering silt from the fields of rugged individualists who persist in their right to do nothing. . . .

7 Naturally you will wonder why we stay where conditions are so extremely disheartening. Why not pick up and leave as so many others have done? It is a fair question, but a hard one to answer. . . .

[3]thicket—group of trees
[4]hillock—small hill

8 To leave voluntarily—to break all these closely knit ties for the sake of a possibly greater comfort elsewhere—seems like defaulting on our task. We may *have* to leave. We can't hold out indefinitely without some return from the land, some source of income, however small. But I think I can never go willingly or without pain that as yet seems unendurable. . . .

9 We long for the garden and little chickens, the trees and birds and wild flowers of the years gone by. Perhaps if we do our part these good things may return some day, for others if not for ourselves.

10 Will joins me in earnest hopes for your recovery. The dust has been particularly aggravating to his bronchial trouble, but he keeps working on. A great reddish-brown dust cloud is rising now from the southeast, so we must get out and do our night work before it arrives. Our thoughts go with you.

Letters from the Dust Bowl by Caroline Henderson. In the public domain.

In this excerpt from the novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, the narrator describes the impact the Dust Bowl had on the land and people of Oklahoma.

from *The Grapes of Wrath*

by John Steinbeck

1 To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth. The plows crossed and recrossed the rivulet[1] marks. The last rains lifted the corn quickly and scattered weed colonies and grass along the sides of the roads so that the gray country and the dark red country began to disappear under a green cover. In the last part of May the sky grew pale and the clouds that had hung in high puffs for so long in the spring were dissipated.[2] The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet. The clouds appeared, and went away, and in a while they did not try any more. The weeds grew darker green to protect themselves, and they did not spread any more. The surface of the earth crusted, a thin hard crust, and as the sky became pale, so the earth became pale, pink in the red country and white in the gray country.

2 In the water-cut gullies[3] the earth dusted down in dry little streams. Gophers and ant lions started small avalanches. And as the sharp sun struck day after day, the leaves of the young corn became less stiff and erect; they bent in a curve at first, and then, as the central ribs of strength grew weak, each leaf tilted downward. Then it was June, and the sun shone more fiercely. The brown lines on the corn leaves widened and moved in on the central ribs. The weeds frayed and edged back toward their roots. The air was thin and the sky more pale; and every day the earth paled.

3 In the roads where the teams moved, where the wheels milled the ground and the hooves of the horses beat the ground, the dirt crust broke and the dust formed. Every moving thing lifted the dust into the air: a walking man lifted a thin layer as high as his waist, and a wagon lifted the dust as high as the fence tops, and an automobile boiled a cloud behind it. The dust was long in settling back again.

[1]rivulet—small stream
[2]dissipated—vanished
[3]gullies—small valleys created by rain water

4 When June was half gone, the big clouds moved up out of Texas and the Gulf, high heavy clouds, rain-heads. The men in the fields looked up at the clouds and sniffed at them and held wet fingers up to sense the wind. And the horses were nervous while the clouds were up. The rain-heads dropped a little spattering and hurried on to some other country. Behind them the sky was pale again and the sun flared. In the dust there were drop craters where the rain had fallen, and there were clean splashes on the corn, and that was all.

5 A gentle wind followed the rain clouds, driving them on northward, a wind that softly clashed the drying corn. A day went by and the wind increased, steady, unbroken by gusts. The dust from the roads fluffed up and spread out and fell on the weeds beside the fields, and fell into the fields a little way. Now the wind grew strong and hard and it worked at the rain crust in the corn fields. Little by little the sky was darkened by the mixing dust, and the wind felt over the earth, loosened the dust, and carried it away. The wind grew stronger. The rain crust broke and the dust lifted up out of the fields and drove gray plumes into the air like sluggish smoke. The corn threshed the wind and made a dry, rushing sound. The finest dust did not settle back to earth now, but disappeared into the darkening sky.

6 The wind grew stronger, whisked under stones, carried up straws and old leaves, and even little clods,[4] marking its course as it sailed across the fields. The air and the sky darkened and through them the sun shone redly, and there was a raw sting in the air. During a night the wind raced faster over the land, dug cunningly among the rootlets of the corn, and the corn fought the wind with its weakened leaves until the roots were freed by the prying wind and then each stalk settled wearily sideways toward the earth and pointed the direction of the wind.

7 The dawn came, but no day. In the gray sky a red sun appeared, a dim red circle that gave a little light, like dusk; and as that day advanced, the dusk slipped back toward darkness, and the wind cried and whimpered over the fallen corn.

8 Men and women huddled in their houses, and they tied handkerchiefs over their noses when they went out, and wore goggles to protect their eyes.

[4]clods—lumps of dirt

9 When the night came again it was black night, for the stars could not pierce the dust to get down, and the window lights could not even spread beyond their own yards. Now the dust was evenly mixed with the air, an emulsion[5] of dust and air. Houses were shut tight, and cloth wedged around doors and windows, but the dust came in so thinly that it could not be seen in the air, and it settled like pollen on the chairs and tables, on the dishes. The people brushed it from their shoulders. Little lines of dust lay at the door sills.

10 In the middle of that night the wind passed on and left the land quiet. The dust-filled air muffled sound more completely than fog does. The people, lying in their beds, heard the wind stop. They awakened when the rushing wind was gone. They lay quietly and listened deep into the stillness. Then the roosters crowed, and their voices were muffled, and the people stirred restlessly in their beds and wanted the morning. They knew it would take a long time for the dust to settle out of the air. In the morning the dust hung like fog, and the sun was as red as ripe new blood. All day the dust sifted down from the sky, and the next day it sifted down. An even blanket covered the earth. It settled on the corn, piled up on the tops of the fence posts, piled up on the wires; it settled on roofs, blanketed the weeds and trees.

11 The people came out of their houses and smelled the hot stinging air and covered their noses from it. And the children came out of the houses, but they did not run or shout as they would have done after a rain. Men stood by their fences and looked at the ruined corn, drying fast now, only a little green showing through the film of dust. The men were silent and they did not move often. And the women came out of the houses to stand beside their men—to feel whether this time the men would break. The women studied the men's faces secretly, for the corn could go, as long as something else remained. The children stood near by, drawing figures in the dust with bare toes, and the children sent exploring senses out to see whether men and women would break. The children peeked at the faces of the men and women, and then drew careful lines in the dust with their toes. Horses came to the watering troughs and nuzzled the water to clear the surface dust. After a while the faces of the watching men lost their bemused perplexity[6] and became hard and angry and resistant. Then the women knew that they were safe and that there was no break. Then they asked, What'll we do? And the men replied, I don't know. But it was all right. The

[5]emulsion—mixture
[6]perplexity—inability to understand

women knew it was all right, and the watching children knew it was all right. Women and children knew deep in themselves that no misfortune was too great to bear if their men were whole. The women went into the houses to their work, and the children began to play, but cautiously at first. As the day went forward the sun became less red. It flared down on the dust-blanketed land. The men sat in the doorways of their houses; their hands were busy with sticks and little rocks. The men sat still—thinking—figuring.

The Grapes of Wrath: 75th Anniversary Edition by John Steinbeck. Copyright © 1939, renewed © 1967 by John Steinbeck. Reprinted by permission of Viking Books, an imprint of Penguin Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

1 Read the sentence from paragraph 2 of "Letters from the Dust Bowl" in the box.

> Our recent transition from rain-soaked eastern Kansas with its green pasture, luxuriant foliage, abundance of flowers, and promise of a generous harvest, to the dust-covered desolation of No Man's Land was a difficult change to crowd into one short day's travel.

Which word could **best** replace the word *luxuriant* in the sentence?

Ⓐ mature

Ⓑ precise

Ⓒ graceful

Ⓓ flourishing

2 Read the sentence from paragraph 2 of "Letters from the Dust Bowl" in the box.

> Wearing our shade hats, with handkerchiefs tied over our faces and vaseline in our nostrils, we have been trying to rescue our home from the accumulations of wind-blown dust which penetrates wherever air can go.

Which inference is **best** supported by the sentence?

Ⓐ The dust causes serious discoloration of clothing.

Ⓑ The wind is causing predictable weather patterns.

Ⓒ The dust is uncomfortable and even dangerous to breathe.

Ⓓ The measures taken to combat wind are useful and productive.

3 In paragraphs 1 and 2 of *The Grapes of Wrath*, what do the changes in the corn leaves **mainly** represent?

Ⓐ the concern for the workers

Ⓑ the arrangement of the plants

Ⓒ the anticipation for the harvest

Ⓓ the intensification of the drought

4 Read the sentence from paragraph 6 of *The Grapes of Wrath* in the box.

> During a night the wind raced faster over the land, dug cunningly among the rootlets of the corn, and the corn fought the wind with its weakened leaves until the roots were freed by the prying wind and then each stalk settled wearily sideways toward the earth and pointed the direction of the wind.

What does the figurative language in the sentence **most clearly** emphasize about the wind?

Ⓐ its painful defeat

Ⓑ its brief importance

Ⓒ its fluctuating speed

Ⓓ its destructive ability

5 In *The Grapes of Wrath*, how does the author **most clearly** create a feeling of sympathy for those impacted by the Dust Bowl?

Ⓐ by revealing the changing viewpoints of multiple characters

Ⓑ by foreshadowing the unfortunate obstacles altering the landscape

Ⓒ by establishing the setting as bleak before shifting to how it affects the characters

Ⓓ by creating a division between natural elements that will be challenging to resolve

6 Read the sentences from paragraph 7 of "Letters from the Dust Bowl" in the box.

> Why not pick up and leave as so many others have done? It is a fair question, but a hard one to answer.

Which quotation from *The Grapes of Wrath* **most clearly** illustrates a reaction similar to Caroline Henderson's in the sentences?

Ⓐ "The people brushed it from their shoulders." (paragraph 9)

Ⓑ "The people, lying in their beds, heard the wind stop." (paragraph 10)

Ⓒ "They lay quietly and listened deep into the stillness." (paragraph 10)

Ⓓ "The men sat still—thinking—figuring." (paragraph 11)

7 Read the quotations from the letter and the excerpt. Determine whether each quotation **mainly** demonstrates the physical or emotional effect of the dust storms.

> Naturally you will wonder why we stay where conditions are so extremely disheartening. (paragraph 7 of "Letters from the Dust Bowl")

Ⓐ physical effect

Ⓑ emotional effect

> The dust has been particularly aggravating to his bronchial trouble, but he keeps working on. (paragraph 10 of "Letters from the Dust Bowl")

Ⓐ physical effect

Ⓑ emotional effect

> The sun flared down on the growing corn day after day until a line of brown spread along the edge of each green bayonet. (paragraph 1 of *The Grapes of Wrath*)

Ⓐ physical effect

Ⓑ emotional effect

> Every moving thing lifted the dust into the air: a walking man lifted a thin layer as high as his waist, and a wagon lifted the dust as high as the fence tops, and an automobile boiled a cloud behind it. The dust was long in settling back again. (paragraph 3 of *The Grapes of Wrath*)

Ⓐ physical effect

Ⓑ emotional effect

> And the women came out of the houses to stand beside their men—to feel whether this time the men would break. (paragraph 11 of *The Grapes of Wrath*)

Ⓐ physical effect

Ⓑ emotional effect

8 Based on the letter and the excerpt, select the phrase that **best** completes each sentence.

"Letters from the Dust Bowl" provides an individual's

Ⓐ later retelling of the drought in Oklahoma.

Ⓑ personal experience of the drought in Oklahoma.

Ⓒ well-resourced account of the drought in Oklahoma.

The Grapes of Wrath tells the story with

Ⓐ a wider view of the events.

Ⓑ a more detached objectivity.

Ⓒ a lesser degree of sympathy.

Both the letter and the excerpt share insight into how the

Ⓐ farmers could help put an end to the dust storms.

Ⓑ entire community was affected by the dust storms.

Ⓒ people benefited from staying despite the dust storms.

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Write your essay in the space provided on the next two pages. Your writing should:

- **Present and develop a central idea/thesis.**
- **Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).**
- **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**

9 Based on "Letters from the Dust Bowl" and *The Grapes of Wrath*, write an essay analyzing how the authors develop the conflict between the people and their environment. Be sure to use details from **both** the letter and the excerpt to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the next two pages.

You have a total of two pages on which to write your response.

9

Read the poems about travel and then answer the questions that follow.

In this poem, the speaker reflects on the opportunities a road can provide.

What If This Road

by Sheenagh Pugh

What if this road, that has held no surprises
these many years, decided not to go
home after all; what if it could turn
left or right with no more ado
than a kite-tail? What if its tarry[1] skin
were like a long, supple bolt of cloth,
that is shaken and rolled out, and takes
a new shape from the contours beneath?
And if it chose to lay itself down
in a new way; around a blind corner,
across hills you must climb without knowing
what's on the other side; who would not hanker[2]
to be going, at all risks? Who wants to know
a story's end, or where a road will go?

"What If This Road" by Sheenagh Pugh, from *What If This Road and Other Poems*. Copyright © 2003 by Sheenagh Pugh. Reprinted by permission of Seren Books.

[1]tarry—covered with tar
[2]hanker—feel a strong desire for or to do

In this poem, the speaker alludes to the Greek epic *The Odyssey*, in which the protagonist Odysseus returns to his home island of Ithaka after a long journey.

Ithaka

by C. P. Cavafy

As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians[1] and Cyclops,[2]
angry Poseidon[3]—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope the voyage is a long one.
May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,

[1]Laistrygonians—fictional race of dangerous giants in *The Odyssey*
[2]Cyclops—one-eyed giant who threatens Odysseus and his crew in *The Odyssey*
[3]Poseidon—Greek god of the sea and antagonist from *The Odyssey*

wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
You will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

"Ithaka" by C. P. Cavafy, from *Collected Poems*. Translation copyright © 1975, 1992 by Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

10 How does the poet create a sense of tension in "What If This Road"?

Ⓐ by expressing regret for following a different road

Ⓑ by warning that taking a less popular road may be dangerous

Ⓒ by suggesting that the seemingly dull road will lead to personal gain

Ⓓ by highlighting the potential for unfamiliar experiences on a familiar road

11 Based on "Ithaka," which idea does the use of the plural "Ithakas" in line 37 **most likely** support?

Ⓐ that Ithaka represents many goals throughout life

Ⓑ that the city of Ithaka never existed in the first place

Ⓒ that the voyage consisted of returning to Ithaka regularly

Ⓓ that the location of Ithaka is tied to several geographic points

12 Read the excerpt from an English translation of the epic poem *The Odyssey* by Homer in the box. In it, the goddess Calypso speaks to the hero Odysseus, whom she has held prisoner on her island for many years.

> "[Odysseus] . . . so you would start home to your own land at once? Good luck go with you, but if you could only know how much suffering is in store for you before you get back to your own country, you would stay where you are. . . ."

How does the journey home in "Ithaka" differ from the one Calypso describes in the excerpt?

Ⓐ Calypso claims Odysseus's fortune will influence the success of the journey, while "Ithaka" suggests that success will depend on the resourcefulness of the traveler.

Ⓑ Calypso claims Odysseus will regret the journey, while "Ithaka" suggests the journey will cause the traveler to appreciate what others have overcome.

Ⓒ Calypso claims the journey will test Odysseus's courage and resolve, while "Ithaka" suggests the journey will be smooth and easy.

Ⓓ Calypso claims the journey will be a negative experience for Odysseus, while "Ithaka" suggests the journey will be worthwhile.

13 Based on the poems, choose the phrase that **best** completes each sentence.

In "What If This Road," the poet uses a series of questions to create a tone that is

Ⓐ playfully hesitant.

Ⓑ cautiously restrained.

Ⓒ full of agonizing doubt.

Ⓓ contemplative and searching.

In "Ithaka," the poet uses declarative and imperative statements to suggest that the speaker is

Ⓐ quite confident in his wisdom.

Ⓑ indecisive regarding his message.

Ⓒ irritated by the foolishness of others.

Ⓓ somewhat arrogant and overbearing.

Grade 10 English Language Arts
SESSION 2

This session contains 16 questions.

Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

Read the articles about growing food in innovative ways and then answer the questions that follow.

This article presents several strategies for growing food in urban environments.

from "Green Thumb"

by Kendrick Foster

1 When I think of a farm, I usually imagine an Iowa cornfield stretching for miles on end. A combine harvester spews out straw in collecting this crop; perhaps it's destined for our plates, but more likely it will become biofuel. Indeed, forty percent of the nation's corn supply goes to ethanol. The vast majority of the remainder, meanwhile, goes to feed livestock or to manufacture high fructose corn syrup. Only a small portion of the corn grown on these rural farms is served as corn on the cob at America's restaurants, barbecues, and supermarkets.

2 Urban farms differ in every way from the corporate behemoth that Midwestern corn agriculture has become. They are small, locally owned, and grow a wide range of crops, from garlic to tomatillos, callaloo to coriander. In turn, those crops often go directly onto plates, bypassing the dizzying amount of processing that most of our food goes through.

3 I must admit that I had a different conception of urban farming when I started this project. I imagined a monolithic venture, an industrial enterprise merely ported to the confines of the city. Of course, I was wrong: Even within Boston, urban farms range from small community farms to rooftop gardens on top of Fenway Park to hydroponic[1] operations growing underneath the LED lights of a shipping container.

4 Urban farms currently feed more than 800 million urban dwellers every year, but that number will certainly grow as the world's population keeps increasing and urbanizing. Indeed, the UN estimated that 68 percent of the world's population will live in cities by 2050, a larger proportion of a much larger number as the Earth's population continues to grow more broadly. Feeding these urban dwellers will require reimagining our agricultural systems, creating a puzzle for policymakers across the globe.

5 Urban farms can serve as a piece of the answer to that puzzle; increased urban farming will improve food security, aid in environmental justice, and help beautify neighborhoods, all while increasing community

[1]hydroponic—growing plants without soil, most often in nutrient-enhanced water

happiness. Urban farms certainly need increased governmental support, but policymakers must remember one key thing: Urban farming is a highly localized endeavor, and each city must consider its own local conditions before making generalized policies. . . .

Farming for Fairness

6 Every single person I spoke to emphasized food security in relation to urban farming. Many of the community gardens and nonprofits across Boston sell their produce at farm stands and farmers' markets in their local communities, improving food access. Green City Growers donates a portion of their produce to local food banks and soup kitchens, while school gardens help provide . . . teenagers with fresh produce in school lunches. Volunteering programs at many urban farms also provide residents with the opportunity to work with nature, which in turn encourages them to pick healthier foods when they go to the supermarket. In addition to teaching local residents how to grow their own food, the UFI's[2] farmer training program also helps them to develop useful skills for the workplace.

7 Above all, urban farms help to inspire the local community to grow their own food, which does the most to improve food access and nutrition. "The most successful thing is to inspire people to make a stronger connection to where their food comes from," [Apolo] Cátala[3] told me. "We have the ability to engage entire communities. It's a small scale, but it's still a scale that has a big impact, and it's important to measure that." Patricia Spence[4] reiterated the importance of this point: "We say, whether you've got a little bit of dirt in the backyard, if you've got a porch, if you've got a windowsill, we want you growing food." . . .

Up, Up, and Away

8 Dickson Despommier[5] thinks he has another way to transform lives through food: vertical farming. Vertical farming is not a new idea, but its widespread implementation in the United States could radically change the way we think about urban farming. The HPR[6] interviewed Despommier, who originally came up with the idea in 1999; he defined vertical farming as a "multiple-story greenhouse." In the first few years,

[2]UFI's—refers to Urban Farming Institute
[3][Apolo] Cátala—a farm manager of the OASIS at Ballou farm in the Codman Square area
[4]Patricia Spence—Executive Director of Urban Farming Institute
[5]Dickson Despommier—a professor at Columbia School of Public Health
[6]HPR—*Harvard Political Review*, a news journal

Despommier and the students who worked with him labored in obscurity. "We just carried out as if we were living on an iceberg somewhere floating in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and nobody would ever read anything we did or care about what we did, so we did whatever we want. That's the best way to approach any problem: There's no limits on the kinds of solutions you can suggest for something as long as the solutions make sense ecologically."

9 In recent years, though, larger-scale farms making true use of the vertical farm concept have sprouted up in cities across the world. AeroFarms has four farms in the city of Newark. Using what it calls a "smart aeroponic" technology, it claims to use 95 percent less water than traditional agriculture to produce yields of 370 times that of the standard model. In Japan, Spread Company recently built a vertical farm in 'Japan's Silicon Valley' with automated temperature, humidity, and maintenance controls. Singapore's Sky Greens also operates a commercially successful vertical farm, consisting of several 4-story translucent structures. Many other businesses have developed smaller-scale vertical farm operations that can take advantage of unused garage space in private residences. . . .

Creating the Green Thumb

10 . . . As I plodded around the urban farms I visited, as I kneeled down to smell the first inklings of pungent garlic, as I envisioned the small seedlings growing into full-fledged plants, I realized *somebody* has to grow the food I eat—and that somebody is unlikely to ever be me. But if I did grow my own food, I would care so much more about what I ate and how I ate it, and if I went to a farmer's market every weekend to hold produce in my hands, I would probably eat a lot more vegetables.

11 Urban farming has this effect on people. It certainly affects communities quantitatively, improving their access to healthy, nutritious food, but its impact is also more qualitative—it's hard to calculate the value of bringing communities closer to their food sources and closer to Mother Nature. . . .

12 Let's grow more food.

"Green Thumb" by Kendrick Foster, from *Harvard Political Review* (September 29, 2019). Copyright © 2019 by *Harvard Political Review*. Reprinted by permission of *Harvard Political Review*.

This article describes how food is starting to be grown in tiers above the ground.

from "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?"

by William Park

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"How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?" by William Park, from the *BBC* website (January 11, 2023). Text copyright © 2023 by BBC. Reprinted by permission of BBC. Photograph copyright © NurPhoto via Getty Images.

14 In "Green Thumb," what is the **main** purpose of paragraphs 1 and 2?

Ⓐ to show the limited knowledge the author has about large-scale traditional farming

Ⓑ to suggest that large-scale traditional farming has caused undesirable natural changes

Ⓒ to indicate that large-scale traditional farming practices and crops have been regulated

Ⓓ to create a contrast between large-scale traditional farming operations and other farming methods

15 Based on "Green Thumb," which statement **best** expresses the realization the author has in paragraphs 10 and 11?

Ⓐ Society would be improved if communities supported those who produced their food.

Ⓑ Most people are interested in buying locally produced food rather than growing their own.

Ⓒ More studies would help communities measure how local food production can impact a region.

Ⓓ Being directly involved in the production of food can lead to a deeper appreciation of what we eat.

16 In paragraph 6 of "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?," what is the **most likely** reason the author uses a series of rhetorical questions?

Ⓐ to indicate that the article will reveal scientific discoveries about vertical farming

Ⓑ to introduce the aspects of vertical farming that will be explored further in the article

Ⓒ to raise doubts about the reliability of available information regarding vertical farming

Ⓓ to present evidence about vertical farming that contradicts prior research on the topic

17 How are paragraphs 17 and 23 of "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?" **most** similar?

Ⓐ Both explain ways that policymakers can rescue vertical farming.

Ⓑ Both describe the technical advances that support vertical farming.

Ⓒ Both show possible challenges with the potential of vertical farming.

Ⓓ Both outline detailed plans to improve the outcome of vertical farming.

18 Read the quotations from the articles in the box.

- The HPR interviewed Despommier, who originally came up with the idea in 1999; he defined vertical farming as a "multiple-story greenhouse." (paragraph 8 of "Green Thumb")
- While the modern concept of vertical farming—growing food in trays or pipes stacked on top of one another like a giant plant lasagna—dates from around the 1990s . . . (paragraph 3 of "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?")

What do **both** quotations **most clearly** emphasize about vertical farming?

Ⓐ its appeal

Ⓑ its function

Ⓒ its urgency

Ⓓ its structure

19 Read the sentence from paragraph 11 of "Green Thumb" in the box.

> . . . its impact is also more qualitative—it's hard to calculate the value of bringing communities closer to their food sources and closer to Mother Nature.

Which detail from "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?" **most clearly** describes a "qualitative" impact of urban farming?

Ⓐ "Others might be built in massive greenhouses—making the most of the Sun's light and heat, but still controlling other inputs like water." (paragraph 8)

Ⓑ "'There's no organic matter, there's nothing else for the plant to compete with or to extract the water from.'" (paragraph 10)

Ⓒ "Pasona Urban Farm, for example, wasn't just for show—it allowed office workers to harvest their own food at work, which the company hoped would improve both their mental and physical health." (paragraph 14)

Ⓓ "Falagan says that this can be done by stressing the crops, for example by reducing their water, or exposing the harvested food to certain gases while in storage." (paragraph 22)

20 **Part A**

Read the sentence from paragraph 7 of "Green Thumb" in the box.

> Patricia Spence reiterated the importance of this point: "We say, whether you've got a little bit of dirt in the backyard, if you've got a porch, if you've got a windowsill, we want you growing food."

Based on the paragraph, which idea about urban farming does the sentence **mainly** emphasize?

Ⓐ It builds a connection between people and farmers.

Ⓑ It deserves support from either local or national groups.

Ⓒ It creates more access to food regardless of size or location.

Ⓓ It offers more opportunities to eat healthy food and be active.

Part B

Which sentence from "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?" **most clearly** emphasizes an idea similar to the answer to Part A?

Ⓐ "Tomatoes hung down from meeting-room light fittings, a rice paddy filled a large conference space, and mushrooms grew in drawers hidden discreetly under benches." (paragraph 2)

Ⓑ "For some, this was evidence that with time vertical farming could rival and ultimately exceed traditional farming for quality." (paragraph 4)

Ⓒ "What's more, with advanced plant science, the crops could be engineered to be healthier and tastier, she adds." (paragraph 13)

Ⓓ "Crops like spinach can be grown from seed to harvest in 30 days, meaning a vertical farmer could have 12 harvests from the same tray each year." (paragraph 16)

21 Both articles rely on different persuasive techniques. Select the persuasive technique that is **most clearly** used by the author in each sentence.

> I must admit that I had a different conception of urban farming when I started this project. (paragraph 3 of "Green Thumb")

Ⓐ includes personal experience

Ⓑ uses statistical data

Ⓒ creates inspired feeling

> Urban farms currently feed more than 800 million urban dwellers every year, but that number will certainly grow as the world's population keeps increasing and urbanizing. (paragraph 4 of "Green Thumb")

Ⓐ includes personal experience

Ⓑ uses statistical data

Ⓒ creates inspired feeling

> But if I did grow my own food, I would care so much more about what I ate and how I ate it, and if I went to a farmer's market every weekend to hold produce in my hands, I would probably eat a lot more vegetables. (paragraph 10 of "Green Thumb")

Ⓐ includes personal experience

Ⓑ uses statistical data

Ⓒ creates inspired feeling

> A meta-analysis of urban farming in a variety of settings across 53 countries found lettuces, kale and broccoli were particularly suited to vertical farms. (paragraph 16 of "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?")

Ⓐ includes personal experience

Ⓑ uses statistical data

Ⓒ creates inspired feeling

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Write your essay in the space provided on the next two pages. Your writing should:

- **Present and develop a central idea/thesis.**
- **Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).**
- **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**

22 Based on "Green Thumb" and "How Far Can Vertical Farming Go?," write an essay arguing that alternative methods of growing food can benefit both individuals **and** communities. Be sure to use information from **both** articles to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the next two pages.

You have a total of two pages on which to write your response.

22

Read the excerpts and the article about animation and the film *Toy Story*. Then answer the questions that follow.

Read the excerpt about animation.

Animation

1 The word "animate" comes from the Latin word anima, or soul, and literally means "to give life to." In filmmaking, animation is a technique that makes inanimate (lifeless) drawings or objects appear to live and move. Animation is most often used to make cartoon movies and television shows. It can also be used in television commercials or in educational films. Animation is sometimes used in combination with live action in movies.

2 Animation is not limited to recording things that really happened. So it can show viewers many things that live action cannot, from the movements of a single atom to a view of an entire galaxy. An animated character can fly without wings, fall off a cliff without getting hurt, or be squashed flat as a pancake and pop back into shape. The only limits to what animation can show are the limits of the artist's imagination.

Animation Techniques

3 There are three basic animation techniques. One uses two-dimensional (flat) drawings. Another technique involves the animation of three-dimensional objects such as puppets or clay figures. The third animation technique is computer animation.

4 Before any animation is done, the artists and writers prepare a storyboard. This is an illustrated script. It looks like a giant comic strip, with sketches showing the action of the story and dialogue (the characters' spoken lines) written under each sketch. Next, the songs and the dialogue are recorded. Then the work of animation begins.

"Animation" from *The New Book of Knowledge*. Copyright © 2012 by Scholastic, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic, Inc.

This excerpt is from a memoir by Lawrence Levy, who had just been hired as the Chief Financial Officer of Pixar Animation Studios when the events in this excerpt occurred.

from *To Pixar and Beyond*

by Lawrence Levy

1 *Toy Story*'s release date was set for November 22, 1995. That triggered a whole set of must-hit dates for the delivery of the film: completion of the songs and music, development of the marketing campaign, and many other details involved in preparing the film for release. Pixar was marching into a place no company had ever been. This was the first computer-animated feature film ever attempted, and, as I was beginning to realize, the challenges were staggering.

2 One of those challenges involved the need to create every single detail that the audience sees, literally everything. For example, in live-action filmmaking you don't have to think about where the sky will come from. Shoot any outdoor scene with a camera, and the sky will be there. Background buildings and trees will be there. The leaves on the trees will be there. The wind rustling the leaves on the trees will be there. Live-action filmmakers don't have to think about the leaves on the background trees. But in animation, there is no sky, no trees, no leaves, and certainly no gentle breeze rustling those leaves. There is just a blank screen on a computer. If you want anything on that screen, you have to give the computer instructions to draw it.

3 There are challenges even more daunting than these. We take for granted elements in our reality like light and shadow. We never think to ourselves, "How did that shadow get there?" or "How come that part of the fence is sunlit and that part isn't?" But if lighting and shadow are off, even a tiny bit, in a photo or portrait, we notice it immediately. It looks weird to us. In computer animation there is no light, no shadow. It all has to be created.

4 Even this pales in comparison to something as seemingly innocuous as skin. A live-action filmmaker never has to worry about skin. Touch it up with a little makeup perhaps, but it will be there. Yet skin is one of the most complex things to create artistically. It is full of details—color, hair, blemishes, folds, and texture—and it is very difficult to capture the way light interacts with skin. These are nuances we never think about, but they are glaringly obvious when they are missing. Ed told me that without these careful details, skin would look like "painted rubber."

5 Pixar had set up entire departments dedicated to these challenges. There was a lighting department, a team whose sole function was to get the computer to generate lighting and shadows correctly. There were technical directors who were dedicated to projects like leaves and sky and skin.

6 Bill Reeves was the company's top technical leader and the supervising technical director on *Toy Story*. Many of the trickiest challenges landed on his desk. Bill had been with the team all the way back to its days at Lucasfilm. He had red hair, thin-rimmed glasses, and a quiet demeanor. I sat in his office one day to see how he felt about finishing the film. His office was plain, a big computer screen on his desk, and not terribly well lit.

7 "I don't know if we can do it," he told me flat out. "The number of details we have to complete is enormous. But we're going for it. We've had tough challenges before." Bill conveyed a sense of calm confidence. He was worried, but not panicking.

8 "How would you assess the risk?" I asked.

9 "That's hard to say," he said. "There's risk. Our best people are working night and day. Animation is a few weeks behind. Lighting too. And we're trying to finish the humans, Andy and his mom. The skin, clothes, and facial features are challenging. But we're on it."

10 I began to fathom how these technical challenges imposed enormous constraints on the film. I learned that there was a reason the film was specifically about toys, and not about animals or people. Toys are made of plastic. They have uniform surfaces. No variation. No skin. No clothing that needs to wrinkle with every movement. Toys have geometries that are much easier to create with computers. For similar reasons, the opening scenes of the film take place inside Andy's bedroom. The bedroom is a square box. Its features—bed, dresser, fan, window, door—are more geometric than outdoor features. Easier to draw. Much easier to light.

11 Audiences would be in the last ten minutes of *Toy Story* before they saw the scenes that were far more technically challenging. There was a big outdoor chase scene at the end of the film in which Woody and Buzz are in a toy car trying to catch a moving truck. Imagine if that scene took place in streets with leafless trees, or carless roads. It turned out that part of the genius of *Toy Story* was not just the brilliance of the story and characters; it was crafting them amid almost impossible constraints. This built up more and more pressure on finishing the film. The hardest elements were being saved for last. Was it possible to get them done at all?

12 Some of the challenges were so technical that I would never have thought to even ask about them. For example, Pixar had a tiny department run by David deFrancisco, a brilliant graphics and film pioneer whose office consisted of two small, windowless rooms. One of those rooms looked like a high school lab, the other a photography darkroom. This was Pixar's photoscience department. I had never heard the term *photoscience*, but people at Pixar were worried about it.

13 To understand what all the fuss was about, I went to visit David. He was about ten years older than me, soft-spoken and understated, with a beard, glasses, and a professorial manner. David explained that the task of the department was to solve the problem of transferring computer images to film.

14 Pixar did computer animation. There were no cameras. No film. Just images on computer screens. But the only way to watch a film in a movie theater was to play it on a film projector. Pixar's computer images had to find their way onto celluloid if they were to be seen by the public. That was David's job. In order to accomplish it, he invented a machine to transfer computer images to film. This was the mystery machine I had seen during my first interview. It sat in the middle of a darkroom and looked like a huge slab of metal on which sat a giant microscope-like device. Into that machine came every single computer image of a Pixar project, where it was painstakingly recorded onto film.

15 David and I sat in this small, darkened room, with this huge machine in the middle. "So," I asked, . . . finally beginning to catch on, "this one machine has to record over a hundred thousand frames of *Toy Story* onto film?"

16 "Exactly," David replied.

17 "And it all has to happen in the right sequence, and with the right color and tone so it looks consistent?"

18 "Right again."

19 "And this is the only one?" I asked. "If this breaks down or a part fails, there's no backup?"

20 "Yes, that's right. This is the only one in the world. We have almost enough spare parts to make a backup, but we haven't really focused on that. It would take a while to assemble."

21 "What happens if this one breaks during production?"

22 "It can't," David blurted, then paused to correct himself. "Obviously, it could. But that would be a disaster. There would be no film that would be delivered and shown in the theaters. It's not an option."

23 The more I learned, the more the magnitude of what Pixar was attempting to do dawned on me. Making *Toy Story* was not just finishing another film. It was more like climbing Everest or landing on the moon for the first time. Computers had never been pushed to this level of artistry before. Pixar had more than one hundred of the most powerful computer workstations available just to draw the final images that would appear in the film. Each frame of the film took anything from forty-five minutes to thirty hours to draw, and there were around 114,000 of them. Pixar was embarked on a lonely, courageous quest through terrain into which neither it nor anyone else had ever ventured. The summit was just beginning to poke out from behind the distant clouds, and no one was certain how thin the air would get.

To Pixar and Beyond by Lawrence Levy. Copyright © 2016 by Lawrence Levy. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

Read the 2015 *TIME* magazine article about the impact of the film *Toy Story* on animation and movie history.

How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History

by Julia Zorthian

1 When the lights went down for the first screenings of *Toy Story* across America on Nov. 22, 1995, audiences were merely eager to see how the first fully computer-animated movie had turned out. But the stakes were a bit higher for one particular team of people.

2 The movie was a joint venture between Disney and Pixar, a young company—then chaired by Steve Jobs—that had been recruited by the animation giant for its video capabilities. Pixar had been given a $26 million deal for three computer-animated, feature-length movies, but its filmmakers and engineers had yet to pull off a single one. Neither had anyone else for that matter. Succeeding would mean creating the software and hardware they would need as they went along, and inventing a new kind of movie altogether.

3 "At that point, none of us knew what we were doing. We didn't have any production expertise except for short films and commercials. So we were all complete novices," Ed Catmull, who was then a software engineer and is now Pixar and Disney Animation President, tells *TIME*. "But there was something fresh about nobody knowing what the hell we were doing." . . .

4 Reflecting on the experience 20 years later, Catmull notes that the young production studio was up against the wall: one project's failure would likely mean the end of the three-movie contract, and the demise of Pixar studios.

5 "The entire company," he says, "was bet upon us figuring this out."

6 Spoiler alert: it was a good bet. The storytelling and technology of Pixar still rests upon the foundation *Toy Story* built. By the time the *Toy Story* credits started rolling that first day, the movies would never be the same.

The Toys

7 Catmull's preparation started early. When he was a boy in Utah, he had watched early Disney movies with fascination, his eyes drinking in the color and magic of movement on the screens. All along, he had dreams of illustrating movies himself one day.

8 "We grew up with hand-drawn [animation], done the best at Disney Studios," Catmull says. "It was very subtle and very emotional."

9 He notes that part of what made the films so magical was how Walt Disney incorporated all the latest technology of his time, letting that innovation stimulate the illustrations. When it came to *Toy Story*, the animators didn't have much choice but to follow Disney's lead. No one had ever tried to make a feature-length film with 3D animation, so the technological capabilities guided much of their creative process. . . .

10 Catmull and computer scientists at Pixar built the software that animators could use to design the film, like RenderMan, which originated from Catmull's studies at the University of Utah, and Menv ("modeling environment"), which the programmers developed for Pixar's 1988 short *Tin Toy*. The goal was to allow the animators, without much engineering background, to control movement and "rig" their own characters.

11 In some ways, working with computers opened new possibilities, letting animators add details they never would be able to (or would want to avoid, to minimize illustrators' "pencil mileage"), such as the plaid pattern on Woody's shirt or the stickers on Buzz's curved glass helmet.

12 But it had its limits—and that's where the toys came in.

13 That software lent itself to perfectly geometric objects, such as blocks, bouncing balls: the type of things found in Andy's stash of toys. Anything in a more "organic" shape or texture ended up looking plastic—which lent itself nicely to a movie about plastic objects springing to life. . . .

14 At first, the team was going to avoid humans altogether; choosing to keep them just out of the frames, *Lady-and-the-Tramp*[1]-style, rather than crudely animating their features. Eventually human presence was too hard to avoid, and as a result viewers could put a face to Andy (a face that showed the improvements of Pixar's rendering capabilities by the time he was off to college in *Toy Story 3*). . . .

The Story

15 That could very well have been the Pixar process, great technology powering their priorities. But even as the Pixar team leaned on the technology's strengths, they had a cautionary tale from Disney history to keep in mind. Catmull says that he found that after Walt Disney's death in 1966, the movies suffered when they prioritized art over story. And

[1]*Lady-and-the-Tramp*—a Disney animated film released in 1955

movies that live and die by technology can often suffer in retrospect, as those state-of-the-art special effects aged.

16 The problem is that, as Andrew Stanton[2] puts it, "it's not a widget you're making. It's not a product."

17 Stanton says that once the team received the green light for the movie, they looked back at films that had staying power even after their outdated technology left the "strings showing," such as *Snow White*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Star Wars*. "We said anything that we break ground with, computer graphics-wise, will be subservient to getting the story right," he adds, "because that's what history has shown wins."

18 So Stanton set about helping write the screenplay for a buddy movie, where the conversations would bring the characters to life as much as the unprecedented curves and planes. The writing team . . . paired the character concepts with a more cynical attitude than was typical for animated films, and Pixar also made the decision to skip musical numbers in favor of a more mature feel.

19 Disney balked at early versions of the story—Woody was not likeable enough, for example—and Catmull says the company "essentially shut down production" over the problem. The future "brain trust" shut themselves in a room to rethink the story. Stanton remembers telling Pete Docter[3] at one point that the two main characters had to be engaging enough that people would think Buzz and Woody stuck in an elevator for 70 minutes was the highest quality of entertainment.

20 These days, it may sound obvious to say that part of Pixar's success has been the appeal and emotion of the stories the studio tells—but 20 years ago, that didn't necessarily have to be the case. Pixar's contract with Disney had come as a result of its technological prowess, after all. The decision to put the story first was a key one, and it would power the next two decades of the company's creativity.

21 Decades later, Stanton says that the "strings" do show, but the measure of the film's success is that it doesn't matter: "It's the ugliest picture we will ever make, but you don't care because you get wrapped up in the story to this day." He remains so haunted by how well the movie turned out that he cannot watch the film more than once every two years or so, for fear of losing motivation on his current film projects.

[2]Andrew Stanton—a screenwriter of *Toy Story*
[3]Pete Docter—a screenwriter of *Toy Story*

To Infinity…

22 Children and adults flocked to theaters when *Toy Story* opened, making it the highest-selling film for three weeks in a row. As the first full-length, 3D computer-animated movie, it was a milestone for animation, possibly the most significant since the introduction of color.

23 But, many critics glossed over that achievement—which is exactly what the developers were hoping for. They were thrilled at the invisibility of the work, Catmull says.

24 Case in point: "Consider the new Disney animated feature, . . . *Toy Story*, which is, incidentally, the first full-length film created wholly by computer and, not at all incidentally—by design, in fact—the year's most inventive comedy," Richard Corliss wrote in his Nov. 27 review for *TIME* that year.

25 The film won an Academy Award for Special Achievement, as well as nominations for Best Original Screenplay, Score and Song. Jobs told *FORTUNE* in Sept. 1995 that Pixar and Disney would break even if the movie was a "modest hit" at $75 million. It made over $361 million worldwide during its run.

"How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History" by Julia Zorthian, from *TIME* (November 19, 2015). Copyright © 2015 by TIME USA, LLC. Reprinted by permission of TIME USA, LLC.

23 What is the **main** purpose of "Animation"?

Ⓐ to detail the first attempts at animation

Ⓑ to provide a basic introduction to animation

Ⓒ to describe the individuals involved in animation

Ⓓ to suggest that animation has changed over time

24 In *To Pixar and Beyond*, what is the **main** purpose of paragraph 2?

Ⓐ to explain why it takes so many different units to make computer-animated films

Ⓑ to establish the idea that everything seen in a computer-animated film must be made on a computer

Ⓒ to emphasize the fact that computer-animated scenes are more expensive than traditional film scenes

Ⓓ to suggest why outdoor scenes are more important in computer-animated films than in live-action films

25 Read the sentence from paragraph 10 of "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History" in the box.

> Catmull and computer scientists at Pixar built the software that animators could use to design the film, like RenderMan, which originated from Catmull's studies at the University of Utah, and Menv ("modeling environment"), which the programmers developed for Pixar's 1988 short *Tin Toy*.

In the sentence, what is the purpose of the information within the parentheses?

Ⓐ to provide support for Menv

Ⓑ to clarify the meaning of Menv

Ⓒ to add extra details about Menv

Ⓓ to quote the developers of Menv

26 Which sentence from "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History" **best** supports the idea that Disney sometimes exerted control over the process of creating *Toy Story*?

Ⓐ "The movie was a joint venture between Disney and Pixar, a young company—then chaired by Steve Jobs—that had been recruited by the animation giant for its video capabilities." (paragraph 2)

Ⓑ "When he was a boy in Utah, he had watched early Disney movies with fascination, his eyes drinking in the color and magic of movement on the screens." (paragraph 7)

Ⓒ "Disney balked at early versions of the story—Woody was not likeable enough, for example—and Catmull says the company 'essentially shut down production' over the problem." (paragraph 19)

Ⓓ "Pixar's contract with Disney had come as a result of its technological prowess, after all." (paragraph 20)

27 Read the sentence from paragraph 21 of "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History" in the box.

> Decades later, Stanton says that the "strings" do show, but the measure of the film's success is that it doesn't matter: "It's the ugliest picture we will ever make, but you don't care because you get wrapped up in the story to this day."

Which sentence from *To Pixar and Beyond* **best** shows what Stanton means by the "strings" showing in a film?

Ⓐ "But if lighting and shadow are off, even a tiny bit, in a photo or portrait, we notice it immediately." (paragraph 3)

Ⓑ "'Our best people are working night and day.'" (paragraph 9)

Ⓒ "Audiences would be in the last ten minutes of *Toy Story* before they saw the scenes that were far more technically challenging." (paragraph 11)

Ⓓ "I had never heard the term *photoscience*, but people at Pixar were worried about it." (paragraph 12)

28 Which concept in *To Pixar and Beyond* and "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History" is **best** characterized by the figurative language in paragraph 23 of *To Pixar and Beyond*?

Ⓐ the fame associated with hard work

Ⓑ an expression of a competitive spirit

Ⓒ the potential for growth in the industry

Ⓓ an effort to do something never done before

29 **Part A**

Based on *To Pixar and Beyond*, what is the **most** difficult thing to recreate in computer animation?

Ⓐ skin

Ⓑ wind

Ⓒ light

Ⓓ shadow

Part B

Which sentence from "Animation" or "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History" **best** supports the answer to Part A?

Ⓐ "In filmmaking, animation is a technique that makes inanimate (lifeless) drawings or objects appear to live and move." (paragraph 1 of "Animation")

Ⓑ "Animation is not limited to recording things that really happened." (paragraph 2 of "Animation")

Ⓒ "Eventually human presence was too hard to avoid, and as a result viewers could put a face to Andy (a face that showed the improvements of Pixar's rendering capabilities by the time he was off to college in *Toy Story 3*)." (paragraph 14 of "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History")

Ⓓ "So Stanton set about helping write the screenplay for a buddy movie, where the conversations would bring the characters to life as much as the unprecedented curves and planes." (paragraph 18 of "How *Toy Story* Changed Movie History")

Grade 10 English Language Arts
Spring 2025 Released Operational Items

PBT Item No.*	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type**	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)***
1	10	*Language*	L.9-10.4	SR	Identify a word that could replace a word used in a sentence of a letter.	D
2	10	*Reading*	RI.9-10.1	SR	Make an inference based on a specific sentence in a letter.	C
3	11	*Reading*	RL.9-10.2	SR	Analyze what the changes to an object represent in two paragraphs of an excerpt.	D
4	11	*Reading*	RL.9-10.4	SR	Determine what the use of figurative language in a specific sentence of an excerpt emphasizes about an object.	D
5	12	*Reading*	RL.9-10.5	SR	Determine how an author creates a specific feeling in an excerpt for individuals impacted by an event.	C
6	13	*Reading*	RL.9-10.1	SR	Identify a quotation from an excerpt that illustrates a similar reaction to the one in specific sentences from a letter on a similar topic.	D
7	14–15	*Reading*	RL.9-10.2	SR	Determine which effect of an event is demonstrated by quotations from a letter and an excerpt on similar topics.	B;A;A;A;B
8	16	*Reading*	RL.9-10.6	SR	Determine the differences and similarities in the narrators' points of view in a letter and an excerpt on similar topics.	B;A;B
9	17	*Language,Writing*	L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4	ES	Write an essay that analyzes how two authors develop a specific conflict in a letter and an excerpt on similar topics; use details from the letter and the excerpt to develop the essay.	
10	23	*Reading*	RL.9-10.5	SR	Determine how a poet creates a sense of tension in a poem.	D
11	23	*Language*	L.9-10.4	SR	Determine an idea that is supported by the use of a plural word in a specific line of a poem.	A
12	24	*Reading*	RL.9-10.9	SR	Determine how an action described in a poem differs from an action described in an excerpt.	D
13	25	*Language*	L.9-10.3	SR	Determine the tone that is created by a poet's use of a series of questions in one poem, and determine what is suggested about a speaker through a poet's use of declarative and imperative statements in another poem.	D;A
14	31	*Reading*	RI.9-10.5	SR	Determine the purpose of two paragraphs in an article.	D
15	31	*Reading*	RI.9-10.1	SR	Determine which statement expresses a realization an author has in two paragraphs of an article.	D
16	32	*Reading*	RI.9-10.6	SR	Determine the reason an author uses a series of rhetorical questions in a specific paragraph of an article.	B
17	32	*Reading*	RI.9-10.5	SR	Determine how the ideas developed in two paragraphs of an article are similar.	C

PBT Item No.*	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type**	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)***
18	33	*Reading*	RI.9-10.4	SR	Determine what is emphasized about a topic based on specific quotations from two articles on similar topics.	D
19	34	*Reading*	RI.9-10.1	SR	Identify a detail from an article that best supports the analysis of a detail from another article on a similar topic.	C
20	35	*Reading*	RI.9-10.1	SR	Determine an idea emphasized in a specific sentence from a paragraph of an article, and identify a sentence from another article on a similar topic that emphasizes a similar idea.	C;A
21	36–37	*Reading*	RI.9-10.6	SR	Determine which persuasive technique is used by an author in specific sentences from two articles on similar topics.	A;B;C;B
22	38	*Language, Writing*	L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4	ES	Write an essay arguing that a specific action can benefit individuals and communities based on two articles on similar topics; use information from both articles to develop the essay.	
23	50	*Reading*	RI.9-10.6	SR	Determine the purpose of an excerpt.	B
24	50	*Reading*	RI.9-10.5	SR	Determine the purpose of a specific paragraph of an excerpt.	B
25	51	*Language*	L.9-10.2	SR	Determine the purpose of parenthetical information in an article.	B
26	52	*Reading*	RI.9-10.1	SR	Identify a sentence from an article that supports a specific idea in the article.	C
27	53	*Reading*	RI.9-10.1	SR	Identify a sentence from an excerpt that supports a specific idea in an article on a similar topic.	A
28	53	*Reading*	RI.9-10.4	SR	Determine which concept in an excerpt and an article on similar topics is characterized by the figurative language used in a specific paragraph of the excerpt.	D
29	54	*Reading*	RI.9-10.8	SR	Determine a specific claim in an excerpt and identify a sentence from another excerpt or article that supports the claim.	A;C

* The 2025 grade 10 ELA test results were reported using 29 items instead of 30 items. DESE excluded one item that a small number of students reported having technology difficulties with during test administration. This item did not count toward any student's score.

** ELA item types are: selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).

*** Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for any constructed-response and essay items will be posted to the Department's website later this year.