

# 2021 MCAS Sample Student Work and Scoring Guide

## Grade 5 English Language Arts

### Question 12: Essay

**Reporting Categories:** Language and Writing

**Standard:** L.PK-12.1 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**Standard:** L.PK-12.2 - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

**Standard:** L.PK-12.3 - Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

**Standard:** W.PK-12.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Standard:** W.PK-12.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Item Description:** Write an essay that explains the relationship between two individuals in the passage; use information from the passage as evidence.

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### Essay Prompt

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For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:

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

Based on the passage, write an essay that explains why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. Be sure to use information from the passage to develop your essay.

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*Continue to the following page to see the scoring guides for this question. Sample student responses begin on page 3. The annotations that appear above each sample response describe elements of the response that contributed to its score for Idea Development and Standard English Conventions.*

### Scoring Guide for Idea Development

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
<a href="#">4A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea is clear and fully developed</li> <li>Effective selection and explanation of evidence and/or details</li> <li>Effective organization</li> <li>Clear expression of ideas</li> <li>Full awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<a href="#">4B</a>	
<a href="#">3</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea is general and moderately developed</li> <li>Appropriate selection and explanation of evidence and/or details</li> <li>Moderate organization</li> <li>Adequate expression of ideas</li> <li>Sufficient awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<a href="#">2</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea may be present and is somewhat developed</li> <li>Limited selection and explanation of evidence and/or details</li> <li>Limited organization</li> <li>Basic expression of ideas</li> <li>Partial awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<a href="#">1</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central idea is not present and/or not developed</li> <li>Insufficient evidence and/or details</li> <li>Minimal or no organization</li> <li>Poor expression of ideas</li> <li>Minimal awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<a href="#">0</a>	The response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question.

### Scoring Guide for Standard English Conventions

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
<a href="#">3A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures relative to length of essay</li> <li>Consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay</li> </ul>
<a href="#">3B</a>	
<a href="#">3C</a>	
<a href="#">2</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mostly consistent control of sentence structures relative to length of essay</li> <li>Mostly consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay</li> </ul>
<a href="#">1</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little control and/or no variety in sentence structure and/or</li> <li>Little control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or insufficient length</li> </ul>
<a href="#">0</a>	Sentences are formed incorrectly with no control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and/or insufficient length.

\*In both scoring guides, letters are used to distinguish between sample student responses that earned the same score (e.g., 4A and 4B).

**Idea Development—Score Point 4A**

The essay is a clear and fully developed explanation of why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. The writer states that Lewis and Seaman had "a truly special bonding relationship" on their adventure to the West Coast. Convincing evidence is selected to support the explanation of why "they 'knew' what each other was saying without saying it," were tough and liked the wilderness, and remained great companions. Details and explanations successfully support the reasoning presented in three body paragraphs, and the use of transitional words reveals effective organizational skills. Ideas are clearly expressed through strong word choice, as shown in these examples: "mutual bond," "mindset," "powerful," and "great companions." Overall, the essay effectively uses details to support the explanation of why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special and demonstrates a full awareness of the purpose for writing.

**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3A**

The essay demonstrates consistent control of a variety of sentence structures, including the control shown in this sentence: "This quote shows that they have a special relationship because Seaman always knows what to do, and he's always a helping hand to Lewis." The writer demonstrates control of punctuation, as shown in correctly integrated quotations in the essay. While there are a few errors, they do not detract from the overall meaning. Based on its length and complexity, the essay demonstrates consistent control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

Meriwether Lewis and his dog, Seaman, had a truly special bonding relationship on their adventure to the west coast.

One reason why their relationship was so powerful is because they "knew" what each other was saying without saying it. In paragraph two, it states, "...and I'd wait. We'd watch it fall....That's when I'd retrieve my prey. Lewis didn't have to say a word. I knew what to do and when to do it." This explains that their relationship was so strong that they had a mutual bond—they did something over and over again so that their mindset was practically the same.

Another reason why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was powerful was because they both were tough and liked the wilderness. In paragraph seven, it explains why the dog liked the wilderness. "I love running, hunting, swimming, and retrieving. I was happiest when I was doing those things." In paragraph eight, it explains why Lewis liked the wilderness. "Sometimes I think Lewis preferred the wilderness to people. He would spend hours looking at plants, examining animal specimens, and measuring the sky...We loved the stimulation of the wilderness. It was perfect for both of us." This shows that they both like the wilderness and was suited for each other. If Lewis didn't have a dog like Seaman and had a lazy cat, well, they wouldn't be perfect for each other as one would be sleeping while other would be hunting deer.

My final reason that Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special was because they were great companions. In paragraph five, it states, "Lewis was a great man. I know that..." In paragraph twelve, it states, "Prickly pear cactus needles stuck in my paws, and Lewis tenderly pulling them out one by one." This shows that Lewis was very kind to Seaman. If he was rude to Seaman, then Seaman wouldn't be calling him a great man. Lewis also must've thought Seaman was a great companion, as in paragraph two, Seaman retrieves

the prey for Lewis. If they weren't nice or kind to each other, Seaman would either be given away or Seaman would run away.

Meriwether Lewis and Seaman were very lucky to have each other on their journey.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

**Idea Development—Score Point 4B**

The essay is clear and fully develops the central idea that Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. The writer uses details from the passage that include Lewis and Seaman's love of the wilderness, the way they "always understand each other," and that they "have kind words to say" to each other to fully explain Lewis and Seaman's relationship. The essay's expression of ideas and explanation is effective when describing the bond between Lewis and Seaman. Details such as "both have the same passion" and "are both very intelligent" underscore the strong bond between the two. Organization is rigid and somewhat formulaic, and while most ideas are clearly expressed, the concluding sentence lacks clarity and begs more explanation: "They always are going to be one 'helping hand!'" However, there is a full awareness of the purpose for writing present in the essay.

**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3B**

This essay demonstrates consistent control of a variety of sentence structures, including this compound sentence: "Seaman and Lewis are both very intelligent, and that's what makes them a unique special team!" While there are minor errors in grammar and usage (e.g., "he does not need further instruction to basically anything"), they do not interfere with the reader's ability to understand the essay. Evidence from the passage is properly punctuated. Based on its length and complexity, the essay demonstrates consistent control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

Based on the passage, there are many ways why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. One way their relationship is special is that they both have a love for wilderness. In paragraphs 7 and 8, it says, "I was made for it in every way: my size, my fur, my paws, my instincts. I love running, hunting, swimming, and retrieving. I was happiest when I was doing those things. Lewis was happiest in the wilderness, too. Sometimes I think Lewis preferred the wilderness to people. He would spend hours looking at plants, examining animal specimens, and measuring the sky. He and I spent a lot of time hiking and exploring. We loved the stimulation of the wilderness. It was perfect for both of us." This quote shows their relationship was special because they both have the same passion, and can enjoy the wilderness together. They both have a strong bond, and I think it will never be broken apart.

Another way their relationship is special is that they always understand each other. In paragraphs 1 and 2, it states, "I've seen dogs with good men. And dogs with men who are just plain mean. Most dogs hope for a man they can understand. It's great when you know what you're supposed to do. Lewis knew exactly what I could do, and he let me do it. In fact, it got so that Lewis didn't have to tell me what he wanted me to do. I knew. Lewis would shoot an antelope, or some animal, and I'd wait. We'd watch it fall. . . . That's when I'd retrieve the prey. Lewis didn't have to say a word. I knew what to do and when to do it." This quote shows that they have a special relationship because Seaman always knows what to do, and he's always a helping hand to Lewis. He does not need further instruction to basically anything. Seaman and Lewis are both very intelligent, and that's what makes them a unique special team!

The final way their relationship is special is they have kind words to say. In Seaman's dream, paragraphs 13-15, it says, "And that triumphal return to St. Louis. Men, women, and children running to the docks to meet us. Dogs barking. Horses in a uproar. People shouting and cheering. I look at Lewis. He looks at me. He's smiling. He places his hand on my head. I push my head further into his hand. Then he says my favorite words. 'Good job, Seaman.'" This quote shows that they always have the right words to say to make each other happy, and to possibly change their lives. I think Lewis and Seaman are great best friends forever! They always are going to be one "helping hand!"



**Idea Development—Score Point 3**

The essay has a moderately developed central idea that explains why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. The central idea describes their shared understanding of each other's expectations "without communicating": "Lewis didn't have to say anything to Seaman. Seaman knew exactly what to do and when to do it." Adequate evidence and explanations are moderately organized in each of the three body paragraphs; however, idea development stays close to the text. Ideas are expressed with general language, as shown in these examples: "They understood each other in a way others couldn't"; "This quote explains why Seaman and Lewis were perfect for each other because, it shows how perfect they were together"; and "They had a really good connection, which made them really good friends." The conclusion, while limited, echoes the first paragraph in summarizing the central idea of the essay. The essay demonstrates sufficient awareness of the purpose for writing.

**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 3C**

The essay shows consistent control of grammar and usage. Although the writing consists of sentences that are simple in construction, they are correct. The integration of direct evidence from the passage reveals consistent control of punctuation, although there is a minor capitalization error in the passage title included in the essay. Based on its length and complexity, the essay demonstrates consistent control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

In the passage, *My Favorite Words from Lewis and Clark and me: A Dog's Tale*, written by Laurie Myers, Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. They knew what they each had to do without communicating. They suited each other perfectly. Also, they were very close.

Lewis didn't have to say anything to Seaman. Seaman knew exactly what to do and when to do it. In paragraph 2, the author writes, "Lewis didn't have to say a word. I knew what to do and when to do it." To me, this quote shows how Seaman and Lewis had a very special relationship because they didn't have to say anything. They understood each other in a way others couldn't.

Lewis and Seaman didn't just understand each other, they were perfectly suited for each other. In paragraph 4, the author says, "For Lewis and me, it was more than just understanding each other. We suited each other perfectly." This quote explains why Seaman and Lewis were perfect for each other because, it shows how perfect they were together. They suited each other really well and they really got along great.

Lewis and Seaman didn't just have those two things that made their relationship special. They were also really close. In paragraph 5, the author states, "By the end of our journey, we were as close as an animal and its hide." This quote helps me see how Seaman and Lewis had a special relationship because they were close. They had a really good connection, which made them really good friends.

These are the reasons why I think Seaman and Lewis have a special relationship. They understand each other, suit each other perfectly, and are really close.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

**Idea Development—Score Point 2**

The essay includes a somewhat developed central idea that explains why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. Details from the passage are limited and include partial explanations that relate to the central idea. These explanations are basically expressed with generic language, such as "they fit each other" and "they always do stuff together." Ideas include evidence from the text (e.g., "we were as close as an animal and its hide") and somewhat developed explanations, such as "he treated him how everyone **should**." Organization is limited in the essay, which consists of two short paragraphs that include transitional words. The essay demonstrates a partial awareness of the purpose for writing.

**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 2**

The essay demonstrates mostly consistent control over grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sentences are not varied, but they are mostly correct; for example, "They both also loved the wilderness because Seaman loved running around and Lewis loved examining plants and specimens." Based on its length, the essay reveals mostly consistent control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

Lewis's and Seaman's relationship with each other was very special. My first reason for that is that they fit each other. They are like each other that in the story, Seaman says "... we were as close as an animal and its hide." Lewis also doesn't have to give Seaman commands because Seaman already knows what he would say. They both also loved the wilderness because Seaman loved running around and Lewis loved examining plants and specimens.

My second reason is that they always do stuff together. Whenever Lewis goes out to hunt or walk around, Seaman always follows him. Also, they never get in fights or anything like that. In the story, it says, "Prickly pear cactus needles stuck in my paws, and Lewis tenderly pulling them out one by one." That helps the fact that Lewis wasn't ever harsh to Seaman and he treated him how everyone **should**. That's how I thought Lewis's and Seaman's relationship with each other was very special.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

**Idea Development—Score Point 1**

The response provides a minimally developed central idea that explains why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. The response states that "they got along very well like best friends" but does little to explain how this statement relates to the central idea of why their relationship was special. A poor expression of ideas is evident in insufficient details and explanation, although the idea that "both understand each other" is connected to paraphrased text evidence: "Lewis didn't have to tell Seaman what to do and when to do it[.] Seaman already [knew]." The response is minimally organized, lacks a conclusion, and demonstrates a minimal awareness of the purpose for writing.

**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 1**

The response demonstrates little variety in sentence structure, as most sentences are simple and straightforward. There are minor errors in punctuation and usage, such as "new" for "knew"; however, capitalization is correct. Based on its limited length and lack of complexity, the response shows little control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

Some reasons why the relationship with Lewis and Seaman was special is because they got along very well like best friends. They would also work together and hunt. Lewis didn't have to tell Seaman what to do and when to do it Seaman already new. Another thing is they would both understand each other. They also suited each other perfectly.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)



**Idea Development—Score Point 0**

The response does not explain why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. While there is evidence that the student has read the text, none of the few general references to the passage are related to the relationship between Lewis and Seaman. There is no awareness of the purpose for writing in the response.

**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 0**

The response is of insufficient length and complexity. It consists of two incorrect sentences that demonstrate no control of standard English conventions for this grade level.

seamand is a mystery newfoundlands were popular along the east cost .seamanis  
first mentioned in lewis's journal on september

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)