

# Certify Teacher English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



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## **Questions**

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- 1. How can a strong conclusion enhance an essay?**
  - A. By introducing new arguments**
  - B. By providing a memorable final thought**
  - C. By summarizing only the thesis statement**
  - D. By raising additional questions for reflection**
- 2. Which of the following is considered a nonliterary text?**
  - A. A. Hamlet by William Shakespeare**
  - B. B. Textbooks**
  - C. C. The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho**
  - D. D. L.A. Times**
- 3. In E.E. Cummings' poem "She Being Brand," which two literary devices emphasize meaning?**
  - A. A. Extended metaphor; stream-of-consciousness**
  - B. B. Extended metaphor; onomatopoeia**
  - C. C. Stream-of-consciousness; pathos**
  - D. D. Stream-of-consciousness; iambic pentameter**
- 4. Which of the following best describes Thomas Paine's Common Sense?**
  - A. expository text**
  - B. historical fiction**
  - C. extended metaphor**
  - D. primary document**
- 5. What is the appropriate correction for sentence 10?**
  - A. No change is needed.**
  - B. Latin base; but had.**
  - C. Latin base. But had.**
  - D. Latin base, but had.**
- 6. What does "literary device" refer to?**
  - A. Elements that create settings in a story**
  - B. Techniques used by writers to produce specific effects**
  - C. A classification of genres in literature**
  - D. The basic structure of a narrative**

- 7. How does evidence strengthen an argument?**
- A. It complicates the argument**
  - B. It distracts from the main point**
  - C. It provides support and validity to claims**
  - D. It introduces new ideas unrelated to the argument**
- 8. What is the primary feature of an expository essay?**
- A. To entertain the reader with anecdotes**
  - B. To argue for or against a viewpoint**
  - C. To explain a topic or inform the reader**
  - D. To create suspense and mystery**
- 9. What should a teacher do to ensure effective group discussions about texts?**
- A. Encourage students to speak one at a time.**
  - B. Establish ground rules for respectful listening.**
  - C. Prompt students with specific questions.**
  - D. Monitor social interactions closely.**
- 10. What are idioms?**
- A. Phrases whose meanings are not deducible from the individual words**
  - B. Words that have multiple meanings depending on context**
  - C. Common phrases used in everyday conversation**
  - D. Expressions that are universally understood across cultures**

## **Answers**

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1. B
2. B
3. A
4. D
5. D
6. B
7. C
8. C
9. B
10. A

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## **Explanations**

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## 1. How can a strong conclusion enhance an essay?

- A. By introducing new arguments
- B. By providing a memorable final thought**
- C. By summarizing only the thesis statement
- D. By raising additional questions for reflection

A strong conclusion is essential for reinforcing the main ideas of an essay and leaving a lasting impression on the reader. By providing a memorable final thought, the conclusion can effectively encapsulate the essence of the essay's argument or insights, helping to solidify the reader's understanding and engagement with the material. This final thought, whether it is a powerful statement, a poignant quote, or a call to action, serves to resonate with the reader and encourages them to reflect further on the topic discussed. In contrast to this, introductions of new arguments or information dilute the focus of the essay and can confuse the reader about the overall message. Summarizing solely the thesis statement lacks depth and fails to tie together the various points made throughout the essay effectively. Meanwhile, raising additional questions can sometimes enhance engagement but may also leave the reader unresolved if not executed with a strong concluding thought that provides closure. Overall, a conclusion that emphasizes a memorable final thought serves the strongest purpose in fortifying the essay's impact on its audience.

## 2. Which of the following is considered a nonliterary text?

- A. A. Hamlet by William Shakespeare
- B. B. Textbooks**
- C. C. The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho
- D. D. L.A. Times

Textbooks are categorized as nonliterary texts because they primarily aim to inform, educate, or present factual information rather than to express artistic or creative ideas. They are designed to provide knowledge on specific subjects and typically include explanations, diagrams, and structured content that supports learning objectives. Unlike literary texts, which focus on narrative, character, and thematic development through creative language, textbooks prioritize clarity, organization, and factual accuracy to facilitate the learning process. In contrast, works like "Hamlet" and "The Alchemist" are quintessential examples of literary texts, featuring elements such as themes, characters, and narrative structures that engage readers emotionally and intellectually. Similarly, a publication like the L.A. Times, while containing news articles and information, often intertwines human stories, opinions, and creative writing styles that align more with literary texts.

**3. In E.E. Cummings' poem "She Being Brand," which two literary devices emphasize meaning?**

- A. A. Extended metaphor; stream-of-consciousness**
- B. B. Extended metaphor; onomatopoeia**
- C. C. Stream-of-consciousness; pathos**
- D. D. Stream-of-consciousness; iambic pentameter**

In E.E. Cummings' poem "She Being Brand," the literary devices of extended metaphor and stream-of-consciousness play a crucial role in emphasizing the poem's meaning. The extended metaphor in this poem compares the female subject to various forms of natural and dynamic imagery, suggesting a deeper understanding of her identity and existence. This metaphorical framework allows readers to see the complexity of her character beyond the literal description, highlighting themes of femininity, freedom, and transformation. Stream-of-consciousness is a technique that allows readers to experience the character's thoughts in real-time, creating a sense of immediacy and intimacy. Through this device, Cummings captures the fluidity of the character's emotions and thoughts, allowing the reader to engage more deeply with her experiences. This narrative style reflects the natural flow of her consciousness, reinforcing the themes of spontaneity and personal perspective. Together, these literary devices enrich the poem's exploration of identity and perception, creating a layered meaning that resonates with readers on both intellectual and emotional levels.

**4. Which of the following best describes Thomas Paine's Common Sense?**

- A. expository text**
- B. historical fiction**
- C. extended metaphor**
- D. primary document**

Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" is best described as a primary document because it is a firsthand account that reflects Paine's arguments and views during a specific historical moment—the American Revolution. As a primary document, it provides direct insight into the political thoughts and motivations of the time, serving as a foundational text that helped sway public opinion towards independence from British rule. This work is considered essential in understanding the context of the revolutionary ideas circulating in the 18th century, showcasing Paine's rhetoric and persuasive techniques aimed at encouraging colonists to support independence. Its direct engagement with contemporary issues at the time underscores its importance as a primary source, enabling readers to grasp the mindset and arguments prevalent during the revolutionary period.

**5. What is the appropriate correction for sentence 10?**

- A. No change is needed.**
- B. Latin base; but had.**
- C. Latin base. But had.**
- D. Latin base, but had.**

The appropriate correction for sentence 10 emphasizes effective punctuation to connect two independent clauses. When using "but" to join these clauses, a comma before "but" is essential as it clarifies the relationship between the two ideas being expressed. In this case, "Latin base" and "had" likely represent two related thoughts that can stand alone as complete sentences. Using a comma before "but" indicates the transition from one idea to another while maintaining clarity for the reader. This structure enhances readability and properly denotes the contrast between the two statements. The other options do not provide the correct combination of punctuation needed for clarity and flow. Not placing a comma can lead to confusion or misinterpretation of the relationship between ideas. Hence, the selection of a comma placement before "but" is the best choice for ensuring clear communication of the intended meaning in the sentence.

**6. What does "literary device" refer to?**

- A. Elements that create settings in a story**
- B. Techniques used by writers to produce specific effects**
- C. A classification of genres in literature**
- D. The basic structure of a narrative**

The term "literary device" refers specifically to techniques that writers use to create particular effects in their writing. These devices encompass a wide range of tools, such as imagery, symbolism, metaphor, and alliteration, which authors employ to enhance their storytelling and convey deeper meanings. By utilizing these techniques, writers can invoke emotions, develop characters, build tension, and connect with readers on various levels. The other options focus on aspects of storytelling or writing but do not capture the essence of what a literary device is. While elements that create settings are important in storytelling, they are not classified as literary devices per se. Similarly, the classification of genres relates to the categorization of literature into different types, such as fiction or poetry, rather than the techniques used within a piece of writing. Lastly, the basic structure of a narrative pertains to its framework, which does not involve the specialized techniques that constitute literary devices. Thus, the correct answer emphasizes the specific methods that enrich a text and enhance its impact on the reader.

## 7. How does evidence strengthen an argument?

- A. It complicates the argument
- B. It distracts from the main point
- C. It provides support and validity to claims**
- D. It introduces new ideas unrelated to the argument

Evidence strengthens an argument by providing support and validity to claims. When an argument is backed by credible evidence, such as facts, statistics, expert testimonials, or real-world examples, it enhances the overall reliability of the claims being made. This support allows the audience to see that the argument is grounded in reality rather than mere opinion, enabling them to trust the conclusions being drawn. By incorporating evidence, the argument becomes more persuasive, as it appeals to logic and reason, thereby encouraging the audience to consider the argument more seriously. The presence of evidence addresses potential counterarguments and demonstrates that the position taken is well-informed and substantiated, ultimately leading to a more compelling overall argument.

## 8. What is the primary feature of an expository essay?

- A. To entertain the reader with anecdotes
- B. To argue for or against a viewpoint
- C. To explain a topic or inform the reader**
- D. To create suspense and mystery

The primary feature of an expository essay is to explain a topic or inform the reader. Expository essays are designed to provide clear, factual information on a specific subject, often employing evidence, examples, and logical reasoning to enhance the reader's understanding. This method of writing allows for the exploration of complex ideas in a structured way, enabling the audience to grasp the information presented without the influence of the writer's personal opinions or emotional appeals. The aim is to educate the reader, making clarity and accuracy the foremost objectives.

**9. What should a teacher do to ensure effective group discussions about texts?**

- A. Encourage students to speak one at a time.**
- B. Establish ground rules for respectful listening.**
- C. Prompt students with specific questions.**
- D. Monitor social interactions closely.**

Establishing ground rules for respectful listening is essential for fostering an environment conducive to effective group discussions about texts. When students understand and agree upon the importance of listening attentively to one another, it encourages a culture of respect and collaboration. This practice helps students feel valued and understood, leading to a more productive and open exchange of ideas. When ground rules are in place, students are more likely to engage critically with the text and with each other's perspectives, creating a safe space for differing opinions and enhancing the overall depth of the discussion. This focus on respect ensures that all voices are heard, which is fundamental for developing critical thinking skills and building community within the classroom. While other actions, such as encouraging students to speak one at a time or prompting with specific questions, can support discussions, they do not inherently address the necessity of respectful communication among peers. Additionally, monitoring social interactions, if not done carefully, can disrupt the flow of conversation and may inhibit students from expressing themselves freely. Ground rules lay the foundational expectations that are crucial for meaningful dialogue.

**10. What are idioms?**

- A. Phrases whose meanings are not deducible from the individual words**
- B. Words that have multiple meanings depending on context**
- C. Common phrases used in everyday conversation**
- D. Expressions that are universally understood across cultures**

Idioms are phrases whose meanings cannot be understood solely by interpreting the individual words within them. For example, the expression "kick the bucket" does not literally involve kicking a bucket; instead, it means to die. Understanding idioms requires familiarity with the cultural and contextual usage of the phrases, as their meanings are often figurative and specific to particular languages or communities. The other options fail to capture the essence of what idioms represent. While phrases with multiple meanings (as mentioned in another choice) exist, they are not the same as idioms, which have specific, culturally recognized interpretations. Common phrases used in everyday conversation may or may not be idiomatic; not all common phrases are idioms. Lastly, expressions that are universally understood across cultures would not be classified as idioms, since idioms are typically rooted in specific cultural contexts and may not hold the same meaning or recognition across different languages or societies.