

# PSSA English Language Arts (ELA) - Grade 5 Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



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## **Questions**

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- 1. What term describes the act of showing how two things differ?**
  - A. Comparison**
  - B. Contrast**
  - C. Similarity**
  - D. Similarity**
- 2. What is a group of letters added to the beginning of a root word called?**
  - A. Suffix**
  - B. Prefix**
  - C. Affix**
  - D. Compound**
- 3. What do you call the events that create tension or conflict in a story?**
  - A. Climax**
  - B. Conflict/Problem**
  - C. Resolution**
  - D. Setting**
- 4. What effect does foreshadowing have on the reader?**
  - A. It confuses the reader about the plot**
  - B. It creates anticipation and keeps them engaged**
  - C. It provides closure before the story unfolds**
  - D. It eliminates any suspense in the narrative**
- 5. Which component of a narrative often resolves the conflict and ties up loose ends?**
  - A. Climax**
  - B. Falling Action**
  - C. Resolution**
  - D. Exposition**

- 6. Which part of speech would describe the manner in which an action is performed?**
- A. Noun**
  - B. Verb**
  - C. Adverb**
  - D. Adjective**
- 7. In writing, what is the purpose of using onomatopoeia?**
- A. To create metaphors**
  - B. To convey a literal meaning**
  - C. To give life to sound effects**
  - D. To provide historical context**
- 8. Which type of sentence contains a subject and a predicate but does not express a complete thought?**
- A. Complete Sentence**
  - B. Run-on Sentence**
  - C. Sentence Fragment**
  - D. Complex Sentence**
- 9. Which prefix conveys the meaning of "with or together"?**
- A. anti**
  - B. co**
  - C. dis**
  - D. pre**
- 10. What is an important characteristic of expository writing?**
- A. It is meant to entertain the reader**
  - B. It often includes personal opinions and emotions**
  - C. It presents facts and information clearly**
  - D. It relies heavily on anecdotes and storytelling**

## **Answers**

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

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What term describes the act of showing how two things differ?**

- A. Comparison**
- B. Contrast**
- C. Similarity**
- D. Similarity**

The term that describes the act of showing how two things differ is "contrast." When you contrast two items, you highlight the differences between them, focusing on what sets them apart in various ways, such as characteristics, qualities, or behaviors. This process is essential in analyzing and understanding subjects more deeply, as it allows one to identify unique attributes that may not be apparent when looking at each item in isolation. In this context, comparison is often used to refer to examining both the similarities and differences between two subjects. However, since the question specifically asks about differences, "contrast" is the more precise term to express that particular action.

**2. What is a group of letters added to the beginning of a root word called?**

- A. Suffix**
- B. Prefix**
- C. Affix**
- D. Compound**

A group of letters added to the beginning of a root word is called a prefix. Prefixes are important because they modify the meaning of the root word to which they are attached. For instance, when you add the prefix "un-" to the root word "happy," it changes the meaning to "not happy." Understanding prefixes helps with vocabulary expansion and comprehension, as it allows readers to deduce the meanings of unfamiliar words based on their roots and the prefixes attached to them. In contrast, a suffix is added to the end of a root word, while the term affix refers to any addition (including both prefixes and suffixes) used to alter the meaning of a word. A compound word is formed when two or more root words are combined into one new word, which is different from the concept of adding letters to the beginning of a single root word.

**3. What do you call the events that create tension or conflict in a story?**

**A. Climax**

**B. Conflict/Problem**

**C. Resolution**

**D. Setting**

The events that create tension or conflict in a story are referred to as the conflict or problem. This element is crucial because it drives the narrative forward and engages the reader's interest. Conflict usually presents challenges or obstacles that characters must face, which helps to develop their personalities and motivations. In a well-structured story, the conflict often leads to a climax, where the tension reaches its peak, followed by a resolution that resolves the issues raised during the story. Understanding conflict is essential, as it helps readers to empathize with characters and recognize the themes that the author is exploring. The other choices, such as climax, resolution, and setting, refer to different elements of the story structure. Climax refers to the turning point of the story, resolution deals with how conflicts are resolved, and setting involves the time and place in which the story occurs. None of these elements directly describes the events that create tension or conflict.

**4. What effect does foreshadowing have on the reader?**

**A. It confuses the reader about the plot**

**B. It creates anticipation and keeps them engaged**

**C. It provides closure before the story unfolds**

**D. It eliminates any suspense in the narrative**

Foreshadowing serves to build anticipation within the reader, creating a sense of curiosity and intrigue about what is going to happen next in the story. By dropping subtle hints or clues about future events, the author effectively engages the audience, encouraging them to think critically about the details and to predict outcomes. This anticipatory feeling keeps readers invested in the narrative and enhances their overall experience, as they become eager to find out how these hints will connect to the unfolding plot. This technique enriches the storytelling by allowing readers to be actively involved, making the reading process more dynamic and exciting.

**5. Which component of a narrative often resolves the conflict and ties up loose ends?**

- A. Climax**
- B. Falling Action**
- C. Resolution**
- D. Exposition**

The resolution is the component of a narrative that specifically addresses and resolves the central conflict of the story. It is at this stage that the story's loose ends are tied up, and readers discover the outcomes of the characters' actions and decisions. This part of the narrative clarifies how the initial problems have been handled and often provides a sense of closure or insight. The resolution usually follows the climax, which is the peak of the story's action and emotional intensity but does not yet resolve the conflict. In contrast, the exposition serves as the introduction to the characters, setting, and initial situation but does not deal with conflict resolution. The falling action occurs after the climax and demonstrates the fallout from the climax events, leading into the resolution, but it is not where the conflict itself is resolved. Therefore, it is the resolution that completes the narrative arc by bringing everything together in a satisfactory way for the reader.

**6. Which part of speech would describe the manner in which an action is performed?**

- A. Noun**
- B. Verb**
- C. Adverb**
- D. Adjective**

The correct choice describes the manner in which an action is performed because adverbs are specifically designed to provide details about verbs, adjectives, and even other adverbs. They often answer questions such as "how?", "when?", "where?", and "to what extent?". For example, in the phrase "She sings beautifully," the adverb "beautifully" describes how she sings, providing important context about the action. In contrast, nouns name people, places, things, or ideas; verbs represent actions or states of being; and adjectives describe nouns, giving additional detail about them. Thus, the role of adverbs in expressing the manner of an action is what makes this answer the most fitting choice.

**7. In writing, what is the purpose of using onomatopoeia?**

- A. To create metaphors
- B. To convey a literal meaning
- C. To give life to sound effects**
- D. To provide historical context

The purpose of using onomatopoeia in writing is to give life to sound effects. Onomatopoeia refers to words that phonetically imitate or resemble the sound they describe, such as "buzz," "clang," or "sizzle." By incorporating these sound-imitating words, writers can create a vivid auditory experience for the reader, making the text more engaging and immersive. This technique helps to paint a picture in the reader's mind, allowing them to hear the sounds in addition to visualizing the action, which enhances the overall impact of the writing. In contrast, the other options do not accurately reflect the specific function of onomatopoeia. Metaphors involve comparisons that do not rely on sound imitation, while literal meanings focus on straightforward definitions without the auditory element. Historical context provides background information but doesn't focus on the experiential quality of sound that onomatopoeia embodies.

**8. Which type of sentence contains a subject and a predicate but does not express a complete thought?**

- A. Complete Sentence
- B. Run-on Sentence
- C. Sentence Fragment**
- D. Complex Sentence

A sentence fragment is a type of sentence that contains a subject and a predicate but does not express a complete thought. This means that while it may have the basic components that form a sentence, it lacks the necessary information to stand alone as a complete idea. For example, a fragment might be something like "When we went to the store," which leaves the reader expecting more information about what happened next. In contrast, a complete sentence provides a full thought and can stand alone. A run-on sentence improperly connects two or more independent clauses, while a complex sentence includes at least one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Thus, the key characteristic of a sentence fragment is its inability to convey a complete thought, making it clear why this option is the correct answer.

**9. Which prefix conveys the meaning of "with or together"?**

- A. anti
- B. co**
- C. dis
- D. pre

The prefix "co" conveys the meaning of "with" or "together." This prefix is derived from Latin and is commonly used in words that indicate partnership or collaboration, such as "cooperate" (to work together) and "coauthor" (a person who writes with another). By using "co," it signifies that the actions or entities mentioned are joined or connected in some way. In contrast, the other prefixes do not carry this meaning. The prefix "anti" typically means "against," while "dis" conveys a sense of negation or reversal, such as in "disagree" (not in agreement). The prefix "pre" means "before" and is used in words like "preview" (to view something before). Therefore, "co" is the only prefix among the options that accurately represents the idea of being "with" or "together."

**10. What is an important characteristic of expository writing?**

- A. It is meant to entertain the reader**
- B. It often includes personal opinions and emotions**
- C. It presents facts and information clearly**
- D. It relies heavily on anecdotes and storytelling**

Expository writing is fundamentally focused on conveying information in a clear and straightforward manner. This type of writing aims to explain, describe, or inform the reader about a specific topic using factual data and logical reasoning. The characteristic of presenting facts and information clearly is essential because it helps the reader understand complex ideas, processes, or concepts without ambiguity. In expository writing, the main goal is to educate or inform rather than to entertain or persuade, which makes clarity and factual accuracy paramount. Therefore, highlighting facts and a structured presentation of information is a hallmark of good expository writing.