



Grade 7 English Language Arts

SAMPLE ITEMS

Introduction

The South Carolina Department of Education provides districts and schools with tools to assist in delivering focused instruction aligned with the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCRS). This document contains a set of twenty SC READY test items that have been written to align with the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards. These items were reviewed for content and bias prior to being field tested and approved for release to the public.

Purpose

This document is intended to be a resource for educators; it is not designed to be a practice test for students. The sample items are examples of college- and career-ready assessment items. These items were chosen to reflect the increased rigor of assessing the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards. SC READY assesses content standards in a variety of ways. This document does not include all item types or standards.

Item Information Format

Indicator Alignment	SCCCR
Indicator Description	text from SCCCR
Answer Key	correct answer
Depth of Knowledge	cognitive demand
Estimated Difficulty	estimate based on student responses

Links

South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards

<https://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/file/programs-services/59/documents/ELA2015SCCCRStandards.pdf>

Norman Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge for the Four Content Areas

<http://www.webbalign.org/Webbs-DOK-Levels-Summary.pdf>

1. A student is writing a report on the effects of listening to music while studying. Read the draft of the report.

Studies suggest that some people learn better if they listen to instrumental music while they study. There seems to be a connection between the rhythms of the music and the ability to concentrate. When the music has a steady, repetitive beat, it creates background noise that can be beneficial. Of course, the music cannot be too loud, or it will become distracting.

If the student were conducting additional research, which question would **best** help the student focus the research for a deeper understanding of the subject?

- A. What types of music are the most popular with students who are studying?
- B. How many people participated in the studies about listening to music?
- C. What types of experiments have been done to show the connection between music and learning?
- D. How loud would the music need to be before it is considered too loud to have positive effects?

SC READY ELA Sample Item 1	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.R.1.1
	Indicator Description	...refine the scope of inquiry as relevant to the topic
	Answer Key	C
	Depth of Knowledge	3
	Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

Use the following Sample Passage with Sample Items numbers 2 – 8.

The Other Side of the Camera

Gabe hustled down the crowded school hallway. As he sped around the corner, he lost his grip on the folder he was carrying, and a stack of index cards scattered out onto the glossy floor.

“Oh, great!” Gabe grumbled. He was already running late, and now he was going to have to reorganize all his index cards for the newscast.

As he reached down to pick up the cards, someone bumped into him, and Gabe banged his head against an open locker door.

“Sorry!” hollered the guy who had collided with him, unscathed and still continuing ahead. Gabe rubbed the top of his head, resting his other hand on the floor to steady himself. Just then, another passing student accidentally stepped on Gabe’s hand.

“Ow!” Gabe moaned. Shrinking back against the lockers, Gabe felt grateful at least to see the hallway clearing. He grabbed the pile of index cards, hastily attempted to put them back in order, and headed toward the school’s television studio.

Each morning, middle-school students compiled a short live news segment, which was broadcast to every classroom in the school just before classes began. Gabe’s job was usually to write the news stories that the reporters would read on the air. But today, because Arun Kantak was home sick, Gabe would also need to sit in as one of the reporters in front of the camera. Gabe had never felt more anxious in his entire life.

Relieved to see that the “On the Air” sign was not yet on, Gabe took his seat at the news desk beside Marcella, the other regular reporter, and handed her half the stack of index cards.

“Sorry, I’m late,” he whispered sheepishly.

“It’s OK,” she said. “Just smooth out your hair and shirt a little. You look a little . . . rumpled or something.”

“Oh, it’s because I dropped—”

“Ok, everybody!” called out Lani, the student director of the newscast. “We’re on in ten! Nine! Eight! . . .”

As Lani counted down, Gabe took a deep breath. Marcella pivoted toward the camera, a wide smile plastered on her face. The “On the Air” sign flicked on.

“Good morning, Parker Middle School!” Marcella began. “Today is Monday, April 1st. My name is Marcella Ramos, and with me for the first time in front of the camera is Gabe Salazar. We’ve got your news for today.”



Marcella looked down at the cards Gabe had handed her and began reading in a loud, clear voice. “Tomorrow, April 2nd, the sixth-grade students will be taking their long-anticipated field trip to . . .”

Marcella paused as she flipped to the next index card. “. . . the area around the school track,” she continued.

Gabe shot a glance at Marcella. That wasn’t what he had written about the field trip!

Marcella flipped quickly through the index cards, her brow slightly furrowed.

Gabe somehow gained his composure and decided to continue. “This coming Thursday, the Drama Club will present the delightful play Charlie and . . . pizza, salad, and milk.”

Panicking, Gabe gazed down at the remaining cards. He knew he should have put each complete report on just one card the way he usually did, but he wanted to make his handwriting big enough to read easily. He had been concerned that, if the words were written too small, he might stumble over them when speaking on camera. But now the reports had gotten all mixed up, which was even worse!

Meanwhile, Marcella made another attempt. “Ecology Club members, remember to stay after school today to clean up . . . the Chocolate Factory,” she read dutifully, then grimaced.

Gabe sat there, feeling frozen, until Lani waved her arms at him frantically from the other side of the camera, urging him to continue. She silently mouthed the words “Hurry up! We’re live!”

In desperation, Gabe grabbed the final two cards and read, “Today’s lunch will consist of . . . the state museum and the university campus.”

Marcella shot Gabe a furious look; Lani threw up her hands and sighed. Gabe knew that both of them would be livid with him, and he would probably deserve it. His April Fool’s Day was off to a dreadful start.

Suddenly, Gabe felt a burst of inspiration. He looked into the camera and grinned broadly as he said, “This has been a special April Fool’s edition of the Parker Middle School newscast. We hope you’ve enjoyed it. We’ll be back tomorrow with more news—and no more April Fool’s jokes. We promise! This is Gabe Salazar, signing off.”

“And I’m Marcella Ramos,” his partner chimed in. “Thank you, and have a great day!”

After a few moments, the “On Air” light blinked off, and Lani hollered, “Thank goodness we’re off the air! Next time, can you please try to get your cards in order?” She slumped down in a chair to take a much-needed break.

Marcella turned to Gabe, a genuine smile slowly replacing her newscast smile. “Wow, quick thinking, Gabe!” she complimented. “You saved the day in the end.”

“Thanks, Marcella,” Gabe replied, standing up from the news desk and calmly making his way back to the other side of the camera.

2. This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A

Which sentence explains the most likely reason for the newscast containing nonsense?

- A. Gabe is distracted while writing out the news reports on index cards.
- B. Gabe wants to play a joke on the reporters and his middle school.
- C. Gabe mixes up the index cards when he drops them.
- D. Gabe is uncomfortable and reads the news incorrectly.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage supports the answer in part A?

- A. He grabbed the pile of index cards, hastily attempted to put them back in order, and headed toward the school's television studio.
- B. Each morning, middle-school students compiled a short live news segment, which was broadcast to every classroom in the school just before classes began.
- C. Relieved to see that the "On the Air" sign was not yet on, Gabe took his seat at the news desk beside Marcella, the other regular reporter, and handed her half the stack of index cards.
- D. He had been concerned that, if the words were written too small, he might stumble over them when speaking on camera.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	2	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.1.1
		Indicator Description	Analyze how... specific events or descriptive details develop the plot, reveal aspects of the characters, and/or create meaning
		Answer Key	Part A: C; Part B: A
		Depth of Knowledge	3
		Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

3. Which **two** details from the passage most strongly support the reason why Gabe is anxious about the day's newscast? Choose **two** answers.
- A. Gabe reads news in front of the camera for the first time.
 - B. One of the news stories is about a field trip.
 - C. Gabe writes down news reports on index cards.
 - D. Arun is absent from the news show due to illness.
 - E. Marcella is one of the hosts of the news broadcast.

3	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.1.1
	Indicator Description	Analyze how ... specific events... reveal aspects of the characters...
	Answer Key	A,D
	Depth of Knowledge	2
	Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

4. This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A

What is a theme of the passage?

- A. It is important to be on time.
- B. A good idea can change a bad situation.
- C. Friends help each other no matter what happens.
- D. You should always have more than one plan for success.

Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in part A?

- A. He was already running late, and now he was going to have to reorganize all his index cards for the newscast.
- B. "It's OK," she said.
- C. He knew he should have put each complete report on just one card the way he usually did, but he wanted to make his handwriting big enough to read easily.
- D. "You saved the day in the end."

SC READY ELA Sample Item	4	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.2.1
		Indicator Description	...themes within a literary text and how each is developed... (The Assessment Specifications document states one or more texts for summative assessment.
		Answer Key	Part A: B; Part B: D
		Depth of Knowledge	3
		Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

5. Which paragraph **best** summarizes the passage?
- A. Gabe is running late on his way to take part in the school newscast. He drops the cards that he wrote and has to pick them back up. When he gets to the studio, he has to sit in front of the camera with Marcella. Lani starts the show, but it is very confusing. Then Gabe tells everyone that it is April Fool's Day so that the report can end.
 - B. When Gabe is in the crowded hallway, several bad things happen to him. He has to rush to the school television studio to give the daily newscast. He is only reading the news because someone is absent. When the show starts Marcella reads that the students will be taking a field trip to the school track. Gabe knows it is his fault so he tries to solve the problem.
 - C. On his way to the school television studio, Gabe has many problems, including dropping his notes. It is his first time reading the news on camera. When Gabe and Marcella start reading the news reports, they do not make sense because the note cards are mixed up. Gabe realizes that he can play off the mistake by claiming it is an April Fool's Day joke as he ends the newscast.
 - D. Gabe usually writes the news reports on one card, but today he used large print so that he could see what he wrote better. The cards got mixed up so the newscast did not go as planned. Marcella and Gabe are on camera reading pieces of news that do not belong together. Gabe has an idea to save the day, which makes Marcella and Lani feel better. Gabe knows he will not make that mistake again.

SC READY ELA Sample Item 5	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.6.1
	Indicator Description	Summarize a text to enhance comprehension...
	Answer Key	C
	Depth of Knowledge	2
	Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

7. Read the sentences from the passage.

Gabe sat there, feeling frozen, until Lani waved her arms at him frantically from the other side of the camera, urging him to continue. She silently mouthed the words “Hurry up! We’re live!”

What does the phrase “feeling frozen” suggest about Gabe?

- A. Gabe is hiding from others as a joke.
- B. Gabe is concentrating on reporting the news.
- C. Gabe is shivering because he is cold.
- D. Gabe is sitting still because he is nervous.

SC READY ELA Sample Item 7	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.7.1a
	Indicator Description	Determine or clarify the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple-meaning words and phrases... use context to determine the meaning of words and phrases
	Answer Key	D
	Depth of Knowledge	2
	Estimated Difficulty	Low Difficulty

8. How do the events in paragraphs 1–4 contribute to the meaning of the passage?
- A. They show Gabe as a hardworking student.
 - B. They suggest Gabe will experience a difficult day.
 - C. They show Gabe enjoys being part of a team.
 - D. They suggest Gabe is the director for the school newscast.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

8

Indicator Alignment 2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.1.1

Indicator Description Analyze how... specific events... create meaning...

Answer Key B

Depth of Knowledge 2

Estimated Difficulty Medium Difficulty

Use the following Sample Passage with Sample Items numbers 9 – 15.

The Roller-Coaster Revolution

Riding a roller coaster can be a thrilling, memorable experience. This popular ride—which resembles a small, open-roofed car zipping along a twisty track—has an interesting history and can be found in amusement parks around the world. Careful, creative design is needed, however, to make these coasters exciting yet safe as possible.

The First Coaster

Back in the 1600s near the city of St. Petersburg in Russia, people used to build tall wooden slides and cover their surfaces with smooth ice. They would climb to the top of a slide, sit down on a sled (a somewhat-flat seat for riding on ice or snow), and zoom down to the bottom of the slide. The idea for the first roller coaster is believed to have come from these slides. Eventually, people started to ride in carts with wheels on them instead of on sleds so that they could use the slides without ice at any time of the year.

Historians disagree on whether the first official roller coaster was built in Russia in 1784 or in France in 1812. The French coaster, however, used cars with wheels that attached to the track and rails that kept the cars on course. These safety features were a vast improvement over the free-moving carts. As roller coaster engineers continued to enhance riders' safety, roller coasters were able to travel faster and make sharper turns.

- 4 While the Europeans made great strides with the roller coaster, it was in the United States that the modern-day coaster was born. In 1827, a railway in Pennsylvania used for transporting coal began giving downhill rides to brave individuals who rode along merely for fun. Then, in 1884, a man named La Marcus Thompson built an impressive coaster at Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York. The ride cost him \$1600 to build, and it became so popular that it took just three weeks of collecting ride admissions to earn back that cost and start making a profit. Ever since that time in history, the roller-coaster craze in the United States has been going strong.

How Coasters Coast

Most roller coasters are made either of wood or steel. Each material has its own set of advantages. Wooden coasters can be more affordable to build, and some riders think they are more exciting, since their flexible material tends to sway as the coaster cars travel over it. Because steel is so durable and strong, however, steel roller coasters can be built taller and run faster than wooden ones. According to Andy Boyd at the University of Houston, steel roller coasters can travel as fast as 125 miles per hour, while wooden coasters usually cannot travel faster than 80 miles per hour.

How do coaster cars manage to stay on their tracks? Typically, their cars have three separate sets of wheels. A pair of steel rails runs along the top of the tracks, and the



first set of wheels moves on top of these rails. A second set of wheels moves along on the sides of these rails, while a third set of wheels moves underneath the rails, keeping the coaster connected to the track no matter whether the coaster car is right-side up or upside down.

The (Safe) Thrill of the Ride

Safety is important not only to the design of the tracks, but also to the design of the seats. Riders sit either on benches or in individual seats. There are shoulder harnesses or bars that pull down securely across riders' torsos and legs, holding the riders securely in their seats.

Believe it or not, most roller coaster cars have no engines! At the beginning of the ride, the car is mechanically pulled to the top of a steep hill. Once the coaster is at the top, the cars begin their fast, downhill drop, and gravity takes over. Roller coasters usually reach their fastest speeds at the bottom of this first hill, and the energy from the first drop is enough to propel the car through the rest of the twists and turns of the ride.

- 9 Roller coaster rides typically last from one to four minutes. The duration depends on how long the track is and how fast the roller coaster cars are able to travel along the track. Many steel roller coasters—and some wooden coasters as well—have sections that invert the riders. The cars travel upside down for a brief time before returning upright. Some tracks also twist and turn into spirals while the riders are turned upside down! As you might imagine, strong brakes are needed to slow the cars down as they reach the end of the ride.

Roller-coaster engineers are perpetually searching for ways to make their rides all the more exciting and invigorating. For as long as these engineers improve their technology, roller-coaster riders will seek out the thrill of the latest and greatest rides that are available. The roller-coaster revolution continues!

10. Which statement expresses two central ideas of “The Roller-Coaster Revolution” that would **best** fit in a summary of the passage?
- A. The first roller coasters were designed and built in Europe, and their design is said to have originated from wooden slides covered with ice in the city of St. Petersburg.
 - B. Roller coasters have served as a form of entertainment for centuries, and protecting riders is one of the main goals of roller-coaster design.
 - C. Safety is an important consideration in the design of the tracks and seats of roller coasters, and some wooden and steel coasters are even able to turn riders upside down.
 - D. Roller coasters can be found in amusement parks worldwide, and they mainly use energy generated by gravity to propel them around their tracks.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.6.1
	Indicator Description	Summarize and/or paraphrase content from grade-level text to enhance comprehension.
	10 Answer Key	B
	Depth of Knowledge	3
	Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

11. Which detail from the passage **best** reveals the author’s perspective on roller coasters?
- A. Because steel is so durable and strong, however, steel roller coasters can be built taller and run faster than wooden ones.
 - B. Roller coasters usually reach their fastest speeds at the bottom of this first hill, and the energy from the first drop is enough to propel the car through the rest of the twists and turns of the ride.
 - C. As you might imagine, strong brakes are needed to slow the cars down as they reach the end of the ride.
 - D. For as long as these engineers improve their technology, roller-coaster riders will seek out the thrill of the latest and greatest rides that are available.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.4.1
	Indicator Description	Determine and author's perspective... in a text...
	11 Answer Key	D
	Depth of Knowledge	3
	Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

12. In paragraph 9, how does the word duration impact meaning?

- A. by describing the types of cars
- B. by describing the length of time the ride lasts
- C. by describing the size of the tracks
- D. by describing the position of the riders

SC READY ELA Sample Item	12	Indicator Alignment	7.RI.LCS.8.1	Does not align with the language of the 2024 ELA Standards
		Indicator Description	Determine figurative, connotative, and technical meanings of words and phrases used in a text; analyze the impact of specific words or phrases on meaning and tone.	
		Answer Key	B	
		Depth of Knowledge	1	
		Estimated Difficulty	Low Difficulty	

13. How does the author’s use of the subheading “The (Safe) Thrill of the Ride” impact the passage?
- A. It emphasizes a key idea about roller coasters that the author develops.
 - B. It reveals the author’s opinion that roller coasters are not as exciting as they may seem.
 - C. It introduces an explanation of how modern roller coasters compare to the first coasters.
 - D. It supports the author’s earlier claim that roller coasters have an interesting history.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

13

Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.5.2
Indicator Description	Explain how the structure of... text features convey an author's purpose...
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	3
Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

15. Which piece of evidence supports the author’s claim that “Careful, creative design is needed, however, to make these coasters exciting yet safe as possible”?
- A. Back in the 1600s near the city of St. Petersburg in Russia, people used to build tall wooden slides and cover their surfaces with smooth ice.
 - B. Historians disagree on whether the first official roller coaster was built in Russia in 1784 or in France in 1812.
 - C. There are shoulder harnesses or bars that pull down securely across riders’ torsos and legs, holding the riders securely in their seats.
 - D. Believe it or not, most roller coaster cars have no engines!

SC READY ELA Sample Item	15	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.AOR.5.3
		Indicator Description	Trace the development of an author's argument...
		Answer Key	C
		Depth of Knowledge	3
		Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

16. A student is writing an argument for allowing students to bring water bottles into classes. Read the concluding paragraph.

In the end, students would be much better off if they could bring water bottles into their classes. The benefits far outweigh the drawbacks, something on which everyone can agree. _____.

Which of these sentences would **best** end the paragraph?

- A. Leaving the decision up to the students might even be the best option.
- B. Changing this rule would be a positive step for students and teachers alike.
- C. In fact, people are constantly saying that water bottles would be a good compromise.
- D. For example, people who drink water throughout the day are better able to concentrate.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	16	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.C.1.1f
		Indicator Description	provide a concluding statement... that supports the argument presented
		Answer Key	B
		Depth of Knowledge	2
		Estimated Difficulty	High Difficulty

17. A student is writing a report on the importance of proper footwear for running. Read the paragraph.

Running shoes do more than protect a runner's feet against the elements. They also support the body's weight and keep the body in the proper position. That is why it is important to get shoes that feel right for your body. One way to do this is by going into a store to have your stride and weight distribution analyzed.

Which sentence would add additional information to **best** develop the topic?

- A. When you are ready to make a purchase, there are three stores in town that sell a variety of types and brands of running shoes to our athletes.
- B. When my brother went in to find a new pair of running shoes, he told me that certain shoes made him feel like he was running on air.
- C. According to a report in the *Journal of Sports Medicine*, it is important to try several shoes to determine which are the most comfortable.
- D. In order to keep up with all of the newest shoes on the market, a runner may want to subscribe to a publication like *Runners' Weekly*.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	17	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.C.2.1b
		Indicator Description	develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, and/or quotes
		Answer Key	C
		Depth of Knowledge	2
		Estimated Difficulty	Low Difficulty

18. A student is writing an essay about letter writing. Read part of the essay.

Years ago, before cell phones or computers, people used to write letters to friends who lived far away. The people to whom the letters were addressed opened them with joy. It made them feel good to know that someone thought enough about them to take the time to sit down and to put their thoughts on paper. Those times have almost disappeared. Writing letters is quickly becoming a lost art form. Today, people prefer to communicate with others by calling, by texting, or send emails.

What is the correct way to revise the last sentence of the paragraph?

- A. Today, people prefer to communicate with others by calling, by text, or by sending emails.
- B. Today, people prefer to communicate with others by calling, texting, or sending emails.
- C. Today, people prefer to communicate with others by calls, by texts, or by sending emails.
- D. Today, people prefer to communicate with others by calling, by texting, or also by sending emails.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	18	Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.C.5.1
		Indicator Description	Improve writing by... revising...
		Answer Key	B
		Depth of Knowledge	3
		Estimated Difficulty	Low Difficulty

19. Read the paragraph.

Not long ago, I decided I needed more exercise, so I began riding my bicycle almost every day. I like to ride on old country roads because there is a lot to see. Last Saturday morning, I saw a horse riding my bicycle down the street. What a magnificent animal it was!

Which revision corrects the misplaced modifier in the paragraph?

- A. Last Saturday morning, while riding my bicycle down the street, I saw a horse.
- B. I saw a horse riding my bicycle down the street last Saturday morning.
- C. Last Saturday morning, just down the street, I saw a horse riding my bicycle.
- D. I saw a horse riding my bicycle last Saturday morning down the street.

SC READY ELA Sample Item

19

Indicator Alignment	2024 Indicator Alignment - 7.C.4.1d
Indicator Description	...recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers
Answer Key	A
Depth of Knowledge	2
Estimated Difficulty	Medium Difficulty

20. Which sentence uses a comma correctly?
- A. After a while, Jimmy grew tired and fell asleep.
 - B. I usually eat a big breakfast, on Saturday mornings.
 - C. I was dressed and ready, an hour before the school bus arrived.
 - D. Before, Sherri could leave the house she had to make sure all of her chores were finished.

SC READY ELA Sample Item	Indicator Alignment	7.W.L.5.2b	Does not align with the language of the 2024 ELA Standards
	Indicator Description	Use a comma after introductory subordinate clauses.	
	20 Answer Key	A	
	Depth of Knowledge	2	
	Estimated Difficulty	Low Difficulty	