

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
1	Option A is correct	The author describes feeling “reluctant and unenthusiastic” (paragraph 2) about meeting up with her friends. Because the people she is meeting are her friends and the author made the plans “excitedly,” the reader can infer that the author wishes she did not feel this way.
	Option B is incorrect	The author explains that she is traveling home to Turkey in paragraph 2, but she says nothing to suggest that she has been away for too long.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author suggests in paragraph 1 that she is “dreading” the effort it will take to visit friends, there is nothing in paragraphs 1 through 3 the reader can use to infer that she feels nervous about seeing them.
	Option D is incorrect	Only one social outing is mentioned in paragraphs 1 through 3 by the author, which does not imply that she has made too many plans.

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2	Option A is correct	To “grouse” is to complain and using the word “chore” suggests work that is tedious. The author includes these words to convey a feeling of dread about the upcoming activity.
	Option B is incorrect	“Grouse” and “chore” are words with negative connotations, but the author did not use them to express concern.
	Option C is incorrect	The meanings of “grouse” and “chore” do not suggest doubt or disbelief, so the author did not include “grouse” or “chore” to express a sense of skepticism.
	Option D is incorrect	A “chore” in this context is used to suggest something that is upcoming, not something that happened in the past that a person could regret.

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3	Option C is correct	In paragraphs 1 and 19, the author directly addresses the reader about planned leisure time, suggesting that the intended audience is people wanting to understand why they might not enjoy it.
	Option A is incorrect	The author refers to experts who have studied behavior and decision-making, but those people do not represent the intended audience.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author highlights academic studies in the article, she does not describe any new research opportunities for students.
	Option D is incorrect	The author refers to people trying new and exciting leisure activities in paragraph 15, but those individuals were part of a study; they are not the intended audience of the article.

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4	Option B is correct	Using the word “increasingly” in this quotation clearly suggests that scheduling and organizing of people’s lives is happening more often than it did in past years.
	Option A is incorrect	The author writes about “long-awaited” reunions but does not reveal information about scheduling and organizing in the past in this quotation.
	Option C is incorrect	The use of this quotation does not show that people’s lives were less scheduled in the past, just that scheduling fun activities can have negative consequences.
	Option D is incorrect	This quotation is used to refer to studies about scheduling that were conducted, but there is no information about the degree to which people’s lives were scheduled in the past.

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5	Option B is correct	In paragraph 18, the author uses the word <u>alleviate</u> to mean that “negative consequences” are made less severe. The context of the sentence suggests that “relaxing the structure” makes weekend activities feel less like work.
	Option A is incorrect	Because a decision is not being made in paragraph 18, no context can be used to support the idea that <u>alleviate</u> means to make a decision.
	Option C is incorrect	To emphasize means to give more stress or attention to something. The context of this sentence is used to suggest the exact opposite: that the negative consequences are eased, rather than made worse.
	Option D is incorrect	Although using the word “disregard” can indicate that negative consequences are being avoided, <u>alleviate</u> specifically means that the consequences are reduced, not avoided entirely, which is more appropriate in this context.

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6	Option D is correct	In this quotation from paragraph 17, the author concedes to the argument that plans cannot always be made spontaneously (“For those who do need to make plans days or weeks in advance”) and offers a solution, “rough scheduling.”
	Option A is incorrect	In this quotation the author suggests a theory, not a concession to the argument that plans cannot always be made spontaneously.
	Option B is incorrect	Although the author does acknowledge a difference in the strictness of participants’ schedules, there is no concession that plans cannot always be made spontaneously in this quotation.
	Option C is incorrect	In this quotation, the author includes information summarizing the results of a study, which supports the main argument of the paragraph. There is no suggestion that plans cannot always be made spontaneously.

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7	Option A is correct	In last sentence of paragraph 17, the author proposes an alternative: “rough scheduling.” The author explains that this alternative relaxes “structure” (paragraph 18) and proposes that the reader try making plans more flexible (paragraph 19).
	Option B is incorrect	The author’s purpose in this section is not to reinforce the claim that scheduling “will take the fun out of everything”; instead, the information is included to propose an alternative to this claim.
	Option C is incorrect	Although this section appears in the article’s conclusion, the author does not include the information in the section to summarize and restate the key arguments in the article.
	Option D is incorrect	There is no recognition of a counterargument by the author in this section; however, the information is used to propose an alternative (“solution”) to the consequence of the key argument.

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8	Option A is correct	In paragraph 19, the author proposes that the reader make plans “flexible” but acknowledges throughout the article that plans can be made in advance. The author claims here that “rough scheduling” is the best way to plan leisure activities (paragraph 17).
	Option B is incorrect	The author recommends scheduling time for activities while maintaining a degree of flexibility, but the author does not suggest waiting to choose the activity without planning ahead.
	Option C is incorrect	The author proposes a solution that can make leisure activities feel more fun but avoids suggesting that the reader commit to having fun (paragraph 19).
	Option D is incorrect	The author describes ideas such as rough scheduling in paragraph 17 where specific details are not pre-determined for activities, but there is no recommendation to avoid making plans ahead of time.

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9	Option C is correct	The author begins the first paragraph of the section “A rough solution” with the word “But” to indicate a shift from the argument against firm scheduling to an acknowledgement that scheduling is sometimes necessary. The author explains “you can’t do everything on the fly” (paragraph 17).
	Option A is incorrect	While a rhetorical shift, a change in the author’s style or language, is often made to introduce a counterargument, this quotation is used in support of scheduling, not against it.
	Option B is incorrect	Although a rhetorical shift could be used to introduce a different opinion, the quotation is not intended to refute the author’s opinion that “even an impromptu leisure event starts to feel like work once it’s structured” (paragraph 16). The shift is included to acknowledge that scheduling can sometimes be necessary.
	Option D is incorrect	The author includes only one alternative to “rough scheduling” in this quotation.

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10	Option D is correct	The conclusion of the study is important to understanding the key idea that leisure activities are less fun when stringently scheduled.
	Option A is incorrect	Contained in this sentence are minor details of the activities studied that are not significant to understanding the key ideas of the article.
	Option B is incorrect	Although this information is used to help explain how one of the featured studies worked, such details are too minor and specific to be included in a summary of the whole article. In addition, information in this option is already presented in the second sentence of the boxed text.
	Option C is incorrect	Leisure activities and work activities are compared at various points in the article, but such a comparison can be omitted from a complete summary of the article without creating confusion about what the article presents.

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11	Option B is correct	Definition 2 is correct because both “Kirribilli Wharf” and the Wave Organ <u>amplify</u> , or increase, the importance of the “rhythm of the waves,” which is utilized in both works to create music.
	Option A is incorrect	The “rhythm of the waves” is not expanded by closer analysis.
	Option C is incorrect	The “rhythm of the waves” is not made complete by “Kirribilli Wharf” and the Wave Organ.
	Option D is incorrect	Definition 4 is not correct because genetic material is not a topic addressed by the author.

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12	Option A is correct	In paragraph 5, the author explains the influence of “Kirribilli Wharf”: “Richards first got the idea for the Wave Organ from listening to a recording . . .”. The author compares the two works and then distinguishes them in the section “ ‘Sound Sculpture’ vs. ‘Acoustic Sculpture’ .”
	Option B is incorrect	Although many details on the work of Richards and Fontana are included in the article, biographical details of the artists themselves are not used to develop the controlling thesis of the article.
	Option C is incorrect	The author includes details, in chronological order, in the article that demonstrate how difficult it was to create the Wave Organ; however, the fact that the wave organ was hard to build is not the thesis of the article.
	Option D is incorrect	The author does describe differences in the two forms of sound art, organizing the article by comparison, but there is no information included which specifies whether the points of comparison are advantages or disadvantages.

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13	Option C is correct	The photograph is used to depict what the sculpture described in paragraphs 1 through 3 looks like.
	Option A is incorrect	"Kirribilli Wharf" is a musical composition; the photograph is used to show a stone structure on a jetty.
	Option B is incorrect	The photograph is not used to show how the Wave Organ produces sound, a process that is explained in paragraph 17.
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author describes the sculpture as a "secret . . . place," not as a familiar work of art.

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14	Option D is correct	In paragraph 13, the author describes how the artist Peter Richards “intentionally alters the physical landscape” and “uses[s] pipes and the waves of San Francisco Bay” to make a sculpture that creates “musical sounds on purpose.”
	Option A is incorrect	Richards may have been inspired by a work of art, Fontana’s recording, but that detail is not used to support the key idea that the Wave Organ is also a work of art.
	Option B is incorrect	Although Richards used pipes to create the Wave Organ, including the material the artist used does not provide enough information to support the key idea that the Wave Organ is a work of art.
	Option C is incorrect	The idea that the Wave Organ is a work of art is not determined by where it is located; however, the waves in the natural environment are part of its artistic effect.

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15	Option B is correct	The comparison organizational structure of the section is used to show the differences between Fontana’s work and Richards’s work: “Richards, on the other hand, is an environmental sculptor. . . . As an environmental sculptor, Richards basically does the opposite of Fontana.” (paragraphs 11 and 13).
	Option A is incorrect	A comparison organizational structure can be used to determine which of two things is better, or more important, but the author uses comparison in this article to highlight the artworks’ similarities and differences, not to show how Fontana’s work is more important.
	Option C is incorrect	Information about Fontana’s project is revealed through comparison in this section, but not to demonstrate how it inspired Richard’s work. The details in this section are used to show how “Kirribilli Wharf” is similar to and different from the Wave Organ.
	Option D is incorrect	Richards may have been inspired by the work of Fontana; however, the comparison structure is not used to demonstrate the Wave Organ’s lack of originality.

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16	Part A	
	Option B is correct	The speaker is most likely an adult returning to a place he visited in his youth because the speaker uses past tense to convey the memory of the experience: “Where a boy once found . . . The cascading of Leaping Falls.” (lines 9 and 12).
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker is most likely not a boy exploring a new environment, because the memory is conveyed in past tense: “And so it was I sheered . . . Where a boy once found . . .” (lines 1 and 9).
	Option C is incorrect	Because the speaker refers to the journey as “The forgotten journey of a child,” the speaker is most likely not a pioneer discovering an unknown land (line 4).
	Option D is incorrect	Although the speaker conveys details about moving through wilderness, those details are not used to support the idea that the speaker is a hunter pursuing an animal.
	Part B	
	Option B is correct	The speaker uses the phrase “The forgotten journey of a child,” (line 4) to imply that he had “forgotten” events from his childhood, indicating that he is now an adult. The speaker uses the phrase “The forgotten journey of a child” (line 4) to imply that he had “forgotten” events from his childhood, indicating that he is now an adult.
	Option A is incorrect	“Eccentric, into outer space,” (line 2) is not used to give clear indication of who the speaker is.
	Option C is incorrect	“Up the deer-trail,” (line 6) might be used to show that the speaker knows the trail well enough to call it by name, but the speaker does not use the phrase to suggest he remembers it from his childhood.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker’s use of the phrase “Without motion or sound,” (line 14) does not convey information about the speaker. It describes how “the falls lay draped” (line 13).

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17	Option A is correct	The poet includes the word “Whereupon” in stanza 4 to close the stanza with an incomplete idea that leads into stanza 5. What happens next is not revealed until after the stanza break, which creates a sense of suspense (lines 24 and 25).
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker does not reveal the “bleak word” in stanza 4, nor does the reader know the speaker’s intention with this word. Therefore, the line break is not used to convey a sense of doubt so much as wonder what will happen next.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker discovers a frozen waterfall and speaks a single word, but nothing about the events through the end of stanza 4 seems to indicate a story that might not be true. Beginning in stanza 5, the waterfall thaws as if the word had some power. The timing of this thaw could cause the reader to question the truth of the story after the break, but not before.
	Option D is incorrect	The speaker describes a waterfall that was vibrant in childhood but is now frozen using vivid language. Although the speaker utters a “bleak word,” the speaker’s description does not evoke sympathy, but a sense of wonder about what will happen next.

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18	Option A is correct	The imagery “A twigfire of icicles burned pale blue” (line 36) is used in the poem to suggest that the falling icicles appear to move as dramatically as fire. The poet uses the combination of fire and ice to create a tone of wonder and awe.
	Option B is incorrect	Hopelessness and despair could be indicated by the image of a fire, but in the context of this poem, the comparison of icicles to a fire burning so hot that it is blue suggests something extraordinary.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker has braved the cold in a very determined way to find the waterfall. In lines 35–36, however, the speaker is describing the icy falls, so the tone is not courageous or determined but a sense of amazement.
	Option D is incorrect	The poet includes the idea of burning “pale blue” icicles (line 36) to suggest that the icicles have reached some type of extreme, as a fire does when it is blue, but there is no evidence to suggest that the speaker is angry or resentful and the lines are not used to refer to the speaker, but to the frozen waterfall.

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19	Option B is correct	The speaker of the poem is alone when observing the falls, but the author of the article does not include information that supports the idea that encountering wonders in nature is a private and individual experience. In paragraphs 2 and 17 of the article, the Wave Organ is encountered by the public and provides the occasion for people to observe a natural wonder.
	Option A is incorrect	The idea that artistic experiences can be found in natural environments is supported by the author’s description in the article because the sounds of both the Wave Organ and “Kirribilli Wharf” are created by the ocean (paragraphs 1 and 6).
	Option C is incorrect	Although the author of the article describes the hard work and dedication of two artists, that does not mean that all artistic projects require hard work and dedication to complete (paragraphs 3 and 15). Additionally, this idea is not emphasized in the poem.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the speaker of the poem and the author of the article express insights about the natural world, neither suggests that sharing insight about the natural world is a responsibility.

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20	Option A is correct	The theme is shown in the article through the author’s description of the Wave Organ as a “wave-activated acoustic sculpture.” The theme is shown in the poem through the description of the icicles falling: “A topmost icicle came loose/And fell . . ./With a bell-like sound” (lines 25–27).
	Option C is correct	The closing sentence “Both works bridge the gap between art and nature . . . to divulge the music of the sea,” is the theme (paragraph 18). The speaker of the poem describes how icicles falling from the frozen falls is “Like an outbreak of bells/That rings and ceases,” suggesting that the falling icicles create a sound that is like music (lines 31–32).
	Option B is incorrect	In the article, artist Peter Richards describes the Wave Organ sculpture as “romantic” (paragraph 3), but the poet does not include information about sculpture.
	Option D is incorrect	Although the poet and the author of the article convey experiences that require natural resources, neither includes information that supports the theme that people need to be careful about how they treat natural resources.
	Option E is incorrect	Lines of the poem such as “A heap of broken icicles/Lay dead blue on the snow” (lines 17–18) are used to suggest that winter is a harsh season, but neither the poet nor the author of the article include information to support the theme that winter is necessary for preserving natural balance.

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21	Option A is correct	In the paragraph from the article, “Fontana recorded ‘Kirribilli Wharf’ ” and later “recalled how he did it.” The rhythm of the lines from the poem are used to recreate the natural sound of the icicles falling by flowing each line into the next with rhythm reflective of that falling. The speaker’s language choices add to that rhythm, as in lines 28-30, “the falls / Leapt at their ledges, ringing / Down the rocks and on each other.”
	Option B is incorrect	The author of the article compares the sound of the waves to the sound of “a hand tapping an African drum” (paragraph 6), but the speaker of the poem does not compare the sound of falling icicles to speech.
	Option C is incorrect	Paragraph 6 of the article does not include a description of the silence before a sound was created, and the lines from the poem include a description of a sound “That rings and ceases,” not continuous sounds (line 32).
	Option D is incorrect	The author of the article describes the waves as “gently lapping,” which does not support the idea that the sound is clamorous (paragraph 6). The speaker of the poem describes the sound of the icicles as “an outbreak of bells,” which does not support the idea that the sound is passive or gentle (line 31).

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22	Option D is correct	The author of the article describes how two artists found meaningful experiences in nature that they used to inform and create art. The speaker of the poem describes the “journey” of a man who discovers the frozen falls and witnesses a dramatic scene of icicles falling (lines 4 and 22).
	Option A is incorrect	The author of the article would likely believe the opposite of this statement, because the author features an artificial structure in a natural environment. The poet of “Leaping Falls” does not include information on artificial structures.
	Option B is incorrect	The author of the article would not agree with this statement because the natural world inspired “Kirribilli Wharf.” The poet would not agree because the poem is an artistic creation, and the subject of the poem is a frozen waterfall.
	Option C is incorrect	Although both the author of the article and the poet of “Leaping Falls” describe natural environments, neither indicates that people are doing an admirable job of protecting it.

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Item #	Rationale	
23	Option D is correct	In this quotation, the phrase “her mind worked better” can be used to support the idea that Thea’s room serves as a place for reflection (paragraph 5).
	Option A is incorrect	The phrase “was snugly lined with soft pine” is used to suggest that the room was comfortable, but the author does not use the quotation to indicate that the room serves as a place of reflection (paragraph 2).
	Option B is incorrect	Although the reader can infer from this quotation that Thea reads in her room, the quotation does not include information to support the idea that the room serves as a place of reflection.
	Option C is incorrect	This quotation is used to refer to Thea’s positive feelings about “[t]he acquisition” of her room being one of the most important things that happened to her (paragraph 5); however, the author does not use the quotation to show that the room serves as a place of reflection.

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24	Option A is correct	In paragraph 3, the author includes the detail about leaving the window open to show that Thea will endure the cold to protect her singing voice: “Thea asked Dr. Archie about the window, and he told her that a girl who sang must always have plenty of fresh air, or her voice would get husky . . .”
	Option B is incorrect	Although Thea leaves the window open “against her mother’s advice,” Thea is following the advice of Dr. Archie, which does not support the idea that Thea resists authority (paragraph 3).
	Option C is incorrect	Although Thea’s mother advises that the window be kept closed, there is no evidence that Thea believes her family is overprotective.
	Option D is incorrect	Thea’s decision to leave the window open follows the recommendation of Dr. Archie but does not follow the advice of her mother or Tillie.

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25	Option B is correct	The “good joke” the boys play on Thea shows that the boys enjoy playing pranks. Based on the quotation, the reader can best infer that the boys are mischievous (paragraph 3).
	Option A is incorrect	The quotation does not include information suggesting that the boys are ambitious. In fact, the author uses the quotation to suggest the opposite because the boys “would never heat bricks for themselves” (paragraph 3).
	Option C is incorrect	Although jealousy can motivate pranks, the quotation includes no information from which readers can infer that the boys are jealous.
	Option D is incorrect	The boys believe that taking the brick from Thea is “a good joke.” Even though they are unfair to Thea, they do not necessarily intend to be malicious (paragraph 3).

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26	Part A	
	Option C is correct	The author reveals, through the description in paragraph 6, that Thea was busy “during the day” as “one of the Kronborg children.” Thea found time to be alone at night when “she had no clock, and there was no one there to nag her.”
	Option A is incorrect	Although the author writes in paragraph 6 “when the hours were full of tasks, she was one of the Kronborg children,” the author does not indicate that childhood is what Thea desires to escape. Thea wants to be alone with “no one to nag her.”
	Option B is incorrect	Thea lives a “double life” because during the day she is busy and among the other “Kronborg children.” At night she is alone with “no clock” instead of “hours . . . full of tasks.” She wishes to separate aspects of her life, not mislead anyone.
	Option D is incorrect	The reader can infer from the description in paragraph 6 that Thea is nagged during the day. While being nagged can feel demanding, Thea does not seem to ignore demands or think that the demands on her are unreasonable.
	Part B	
	Option D is correct	A theme about the need to find time to be alone is best supported by the quote “no one to nag her” because the author uses that phrase to suggest that Thea feels she is constantly being bothered when she is not alone.
	Option A is incorrect	Although one aspect of the “double life” Thea “began to live” is spent alone, the quotation “to live a double life” is not always used to describe a need to find time to be alone.
	Option B is incorrect	The author does not use the quotation that Thea’s day is “full of tasks” to suggest that Thea needs to find time to be alone. Thea needs to find time to be alone to avoid being nagged.
	Option C is incorrect	The quotation “a different person” is used to show how Thea feels when she is in her room at night but does not necessarily demonstrate that she needs to find time to be alone.

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27	Option A is correct	The idea of Thea “receiving an isolated room” in her house is critical to understanding the plot of the story. In paragraph 5 the author reveals that receiving the room “was one of the most important things that ever happened to” Thea.
	Option B is incorrect	“Tillie helps Thea paper the room” is too minor of a detail for the overall summary.
	Option C is incorrect	The summary paragraph already includes the information that Thea’s family helps her “furnish” the room. The detail describing the “dresser with a broken mirror” is too specific to include in the summary.
	Option D is incorrect	The detail that “Dr. Archie tells Thea that a singer needs to get plenty of fresh air” is important to understanding why Thea leaves her window open but is not necessary to understanding the plot. It does not need to be included in the summary.

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28	Option D is correct	The author’s use of the figurative language “she glowed like a little stove with the warmth of her own blood” suggests that Thea provides her own warmth to make the best she can of an uncomfortable situation.
	Option A is incorrect	Thea does not deny the consequences of her decision to keep her window open. In fact, she acknowledges that “her breath sometimes froze.”
	Option B is incorrect	The author uses figurative language in “she glowed like a little stove” to describe how Thea feels, not to describe what Thea is imagining.
	Option C is incorrect	Although the reader can infer from “her breath sometimes froze on the coverlid” that Thea’s surroundings are inhospitable, this phrase is literal, not figurative, and the author includes no details in the quotation to suggest that Thea is disturbed by her surroundings.

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Item #	Rationale	
29	Option B is correct	In paragraph 5, the room Thea obtains is described as “one of the most important things that ever happened to her” because it created “the beginning of a new era” where “[s]he thought things out more clearly” and “she had certain thoughts which were like companions.” Thea uses the room as a refuge for reflection.
	Option A is incorrect	The nineteenth-century household items described in paragraph 2 merely contribute to establishing the time period and are not included to provide information about Thea as an artist.
	Option C is incorrect	The frequent interactions with family members are described by the author as “clamor”; away from interactions with family, Thea’s “mind worked better” (paragraph 5).
	Option D is incorrect	In paragraph 1, the town is described using visual details as a “desert [that] glistened with light,” and “sand hills . . . [that] went through magical changes of color,” but these details are not used to portray anything about Thea.

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Item #	Rationale
30	For ECR items, please refer to the scoring guide.

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31	Option A is correct	Replacing “it” with “a strange smell” clearly describes and adds clarification to the encountered problem Sophia comes across, “A bit of gray smoke was seeping out of the edges of the oven. . . .”
	Option B is incorrect	The reader can infer that Sophia has encountered “a problem,” but Mariko needs to clarify what the specific problem is.
	Option C is incorrect	“Something else” does not correct the clarity error, because the phrase is not specific.
	Option D is incorrect	Mariko begins the sentence with a description of the smoke “seeping out” of the oven, so using the conjunction “while” to add a second description of the same smoke as “lurking in the air” does not make sense.

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32	Option D is correct	The dependent clause that starts with the subordinating conjunction “While” is followed by a comma and correctly placed to modify “she.” The meaning of the sentence is clear.
	Option A is incorrect	A reader can correctly interpret the action described in this sentence, but the placement of “it” could refer to the “pile of chocolate chips” in the previous sentence, which is not ideal.
	Option B is incorrect	The participial phrase “looking perfect” creates a clarity error. It is not clear if the phrase modifies “she” or “dough.”
	Option C is incorrect	Although there are technically no errors in this sentence, it is not concise. It unnecessarily repeats the word “dough.”

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Item #	Rationale
33	For SCR Items, please refer to the scoring guide.

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Item #	Rationale	
34	Option B is correct	The addition of the infinitive verb “see” provides clarity and places equal emphasis on the idea “to just open the windows.”
	Option A is incorrect	Although Sophia is opening the windows for the purpose of seeing if that will fix the problem, “seeing” is the incorrect form of the verb in this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence does not contain an error, but it changes the meaning of the original sentence. “That problem” is not the intended subject of the verb “would open.”
	Option D is incorrect	The second clause of sentence 20 is missing a verb.

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35	Option D is correct	“Cluttered” means that many objects are scattered in a disorderly way. Using the word “cluttered” is more effective and descriptive than using “wrecked” to convey the way the counter looks.
	Option A is incorrect	Although “tangled” is usually a negative description of how things interact, it would indicate that the items on counter have become knotted or confused, which is not the case.
	Option B is incorrect	Because “woven” implies that things have been combined, it is not a logical word to use in this context.
	Option C is incorrect	Although “confused” is a negative description, the counter is not literally or figuratively confused as described in the sentence. The counter is just filled with too many items.

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Item #	Rationale	
36	Option C is correct	The word “apparently” is the most effective transition to use in this sentence because it signals an explanation of the discovery Sophia makes in the preceding sentence: “That must have been what happened!”
	Option A is incorrect	Although the mistake described in the passage is an accident, “accidentally” does not logically connect the information in sentences 25 and 26.
	Option B is incorrect	In sentence 26, Mariko does not provide an example of anything; she elaborates on the discovery Sophia makes in sentence 25. Therefore, “for example” is not an effective transitional phrase in this sentence.
	Option D is incorrect	“In the meantime” could introduce a description of how Sophia’s cookies baked improperly after she got distracted, but in sentence 26, Mariko does not specifically describe Sophia’s cookies. She refers to all cookies.

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Item #	Rationale	
37	Option A is correct	This sentence best accomplishes the goal of strengthening the thesis because it replaces the “choices of activities” Raul refers to in sentence 5 with examples of the “extraordinary” experiences Big Bend has to offer.
	Option B is incorrect	“Wide variety of activities” expresses the thesis of the essay, but the purpose of the essay is not to convince the reader that at least one activity would be appealing, which is suggested in the rest of this sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	Although this option contains description of activities offered at Big Bend, it is too specific. The thesis should be more general in order to incorporate all the activities mentioned in the essay.
	Option D is incorrect	This idea expresses the thesis of the essay, but the revised sentence is not effective because it contains a pronoun-antecedent agreement error and adds an unnecessary comma before the prepositional phrase “to observing wildlife or different landscapes.”

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Item #	Rationale	
38	Option B is correct	Adding this sentence, with the statistical evidence that that Big Bend contains “[n]early a quarter of the animal species native to North America,” best supports the claim in sentence 8 and the topic sentence.
	Option A is incorrect	This option contains a description of specific qualities of the wildlife in Big Bend. However, it does not support the idea that the wildlife is diverse in general. In addition, fish are discussed in sentence 7, not 8. It is illogical to add additional information about fish following sentence 8.
	Option C is incorrect	Although sentence 9 includes a detail on endangered species, this option does not support the main idea of the paragraph.
	Option D is incorrect	Although this information is about diverse wildlife, it is about wildlife in tropical rain forests. The author is not trying to compare Big Bend with a tropical rain forest in this paragraph.

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Item #	Rationale	
39	Option D is correct	This transition sentence best connects the third and fourth paragraphs because the phrase “cooler water” relates by contrast to the closure of the fourth paragraph, which discusses warm water, and “rent a raft” introduces the topic of the fourth paragraph: paddling.
	Option A is incorrect	In this sentence, the second person “you” is used to directly address the reader, which is inconsistent with the tone of the essay and does not provide an effective transition, or connection, between the paragraphs.
	Option B is incorrect	Although it is reasonable to say that the activities the third and fourth paragraphs describe can be “fun and exciting,” these opinion words are not consistent with the informative tone and purpose of the essay. As used in the fourth paragraph, the words “rafting and paddling” are redundant.
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence is not concise and does not effectively connect the third and fourth paragraphs because it introduces the idea that rivers create canyons.

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Item #	Rationale	
40	Option B is correct	The new sentence contains additional evidence that explains the “signs of the park’s early indigenous inhabitants” (sentence 27). The “chipped stone tools” are signs, and “dating back over 12,000 years” specifies the time period the author means with the word “early.”
	Option A is incorrect	Whereas sentence 26 features the mention of “many historic sites,” the new sentence is about “the site,” singular, so adding the new sentence here would create confusion.
	Option C is incorrect	Adding the new sentence here would create an error in logic because the site in sentence 28 is “from the early 1900s” and the site in the new sentence “features a quarry dating back over 12,000 years.”
	Option D is incorrect	In sentence 29, Raul describes a site “established in the early twentieth century.” The new sentence refers to a site “dating back over 12,000 years.”

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
41	Option A is correct	In this sentence, the information is reorganized in a concise and logical way and the conjunction “when” replaces the confusing use of the pronoun “which.”
	Option B is incorrect	This option includes a misplaced modifier, “only,” which incorrectly emphasizes the word “visited” instead of the correct focus of the sentence, the total number of people.
	Option C is incorrect	This option contains redundancy. “That year” and “in 1944” repeat the time frame.
	Option D is incorrect	The addition of the phrases “was the number” and “when it was opened” introduces redundancies and makes this sentence the least concise option.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
42	Option D is correct	Changing “unforgettible” to “unforgettable” corrects the spelling error.
	Option A is incorrect	The comma after “skies” is a serial comma, which is used to separate three or more elements in a list. Deleting the comma would create an error.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing “are” to “is” creates a subject-verb agreement error.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing “geology” to “Geology” creates a capitalization error because “geology” is not a proper noun.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
43	Option C is correct	Changing “will head” to “headed” corrects the verb-tense error.
	Option A is incorrect	Deleting the comma after the introductory phrase “Leaving El Paso behind” creates a punctuation error.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing “me” to “I” creates an object pronoun error.
	Option D is incorrect	Changing “east” to “East” creates a capitalization error because “east” is being used as an adverb in a general sense here and not as a proper noun.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
44	Option A is correct	The addition of the conjunction “and” and the period corrects the two comma splices in sentence 7 in which a comma was used between clauses that are not connected by a conjunction.
	Option B is incorrect	The first comma splice after “stopped” is not correct. The second comma splice after “up” could be corrected using either the conjunction “but” or a semicolon but not both together.
	Option C is incorrect	The first comma splice after “stopped” is fixed correctly. The second comma splice after “up” could be corrected using either a conjunction or a semicolon but not both together. Also, the conjunction “yet” is illogical.
	Option D is incorrect	This option includes two comma splices and is missing a comma before “and.”

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
45	Option D is correct	An apostrophe is needed to form the possessive “park’s,” which is required to indicate that the visitor center is part of the park.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing the form of the verb to “wear” creates a verb-form error.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing “smothered” to “smuthered” creates a spelling error.
	Option C is incorrect	Removing the comma after the introductory participial phrase “smothered in sunscreen” creates an error because a comma is required to separate that phrase from the independent clause “we walked over to the park’s visitor center” which follows.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
46	Option C is correct	The colon after the words “composed of” should be deleted because it incorrectly separates the indirect object “fossilized sponges, algae, and shells” from the verb “composed.”
	Option A is incorrect	Inserting a comma after the noun “guidebook” creates a punctuation error.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing “informed” to “informing” creates a verb-form error.
	Option D is incorrect	In a series with other plural nouns (“fossilized sponges” and “algae”), “shells” should also be a plural noun.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
47	Option A is correct	Because the pronoun should refer back to the singular “seafloor” in sentence 18, it should also be singular. Changing “them” to “it” corrects this agreement error.
	Option B is incorrect	The pair of commas after “them” and “canyon” work together to set off the nonrestrictive participial phrase “towering majestically over the canyon.” Deleting one of the commas in the pair creates a punctuation error.
	Option C is incorrect	This change creates a capitalization error because “Capitan Reef” is a proper noun.
	Option D is incorrect	Changing “stand” to “have stood” creates a verb-tense error.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
48	Option A is correct	Changing “this person” to “who” corrects the run-on sentence.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing “this person” to “Who” and inserting the period after “individual” makes the second clause a sentence fragment.
	Option C is incorrect	The second sentence of this option is a sentence fragment.
	Option D is incorrect	This option is a run-on sentence.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
49	Option B is correct	Changing the comma after “rodents” to a semicolon corrects the run-on sentence that was created by the incorrect use of punctuation.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing “has owned” to “had owned” creates a verb-tense error because the tense is inconsistent with the tense of sentence 5.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing the first-person singular pronoun “I” to the third-person pronoun “they” results in an error because Ruby is referring to herself as the subject of the second clause.
	Option D is incorrect	This change creates a capitalization error because “caretaker” is not a proper noun.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
50	Option B is correct	Changing “are” to “is” corrects the subject-verb agreement error because “Happy Paws Pet Store and Grooming” is singular.
	Option A is incorrect	This change creates a fragment because it removes the subject “I” from the sentence.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing “passionate” to “passionite” creates a spelling error.
	Option D is incorrect	This change creates a prepositional error; the word “for” is less precise and introduces confusion.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
51	Option A is correct	Changing “their” to “your” in sentence 17 corrects the pronoun-antecedent error. “Their” refers to customers, and “your” refers to the staff of “Happy Paws Pet Store and Grooming.”
	Option B is incorrect	This change creates a spelling error; “commercials” was already correctly spelled.
	Option C is incorrect	Changing “highlight” to “highlights” creates a subject-verb agreement error because plural “highlight” should agree with plural “commercials.”
	Option D is incorrect	Inserting a comma after “relationships” creates a punctuation error.

2023 STAAR Grade 10 Reading Rationales

Item #	Rationale	
52	Option D is correct	Changing “Humane Society” to “humane society” corrects the capitalization error because “local humane society” is a common noun.
	Option A is incorrect	Changing the transition “Furthermore” to “Therefore” creates a logical error because the relationship between sentences 21 and 22 is one of addition, not cause and effect.
	Option B is incorrect	Changing “secretary” to “secretery” creates a spelling error.
	Option C is incorrect	This change creates a verb-tense error because the past-tense “volunteered” is inconsistent with the present-tense “serve.”