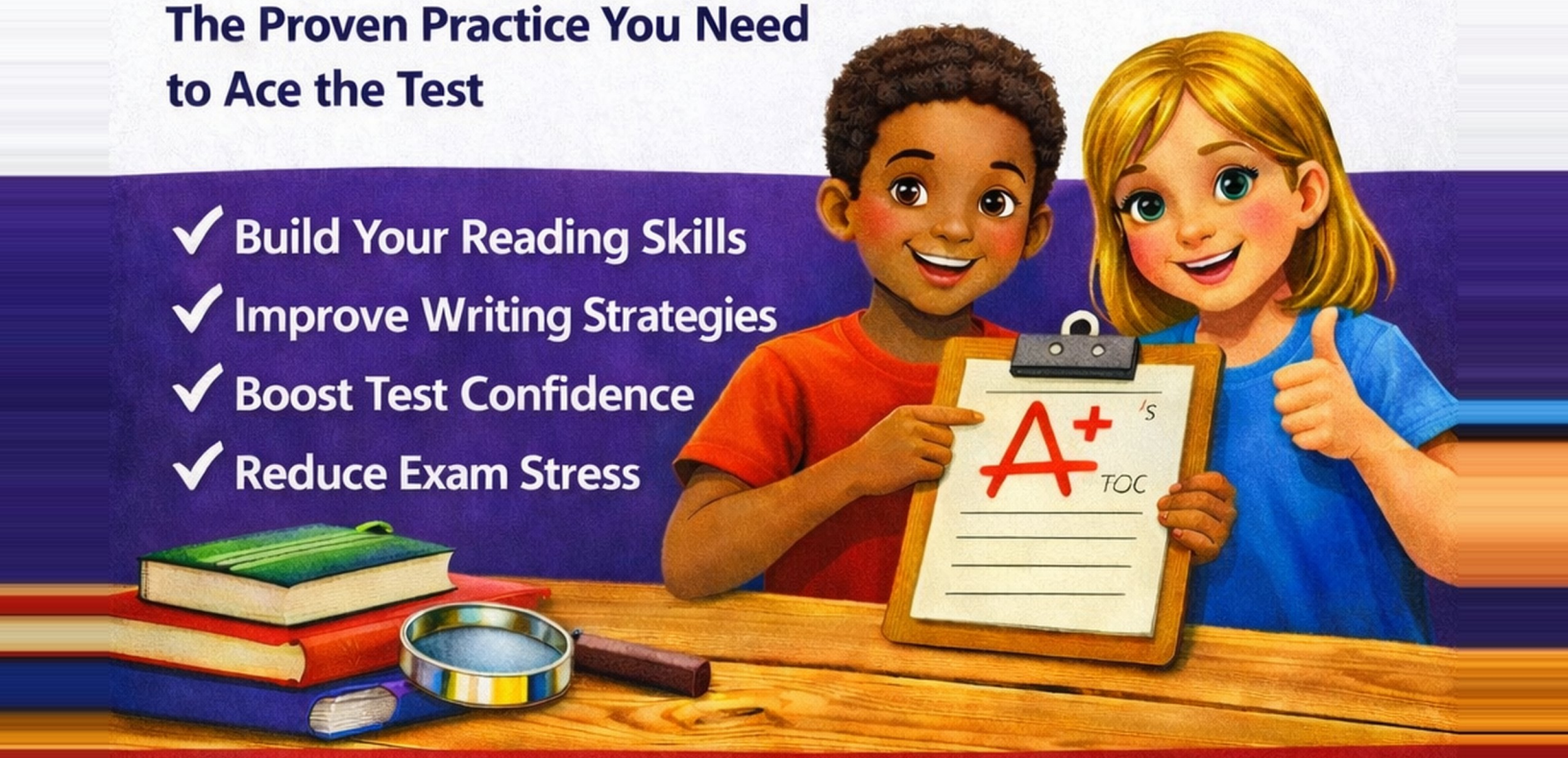
Everything You Need to Help Achieve an Excellent Score

8 South Dakota Smarter Balanced Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) Practice Tests

The Proven Practice You Need to Ace the Test



- ✓ Build Your Reading Skills
- ✓ Improve Writing Strategies
- ✓ Boost Test Confidence
- ✓ Reduce Exam Stress

✓ Includes Detailed Answer Explanations

Reza Nazari

Grade 3 · South Dakota · Smarter Balanced

8 South Dakota Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA) Practice Tests

Full-Length Practice for Smarter Balanced Preparation and Academic Confidence

Reza Nazari

Copyrighted Material

Copyright © 2026

Effortless Math Education Inc

Published by Effortless Math Education
www.effortlessmath.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law, including Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act.

This publication is independently produced and has no official connection to any state, district, or national testing program.

Test names and organizational names used herein are the property of their respective trademark holders.

Copyright © 2026

Copyrighted Material

Grade 3 English

English Language

1

Questions: Varies by section **Duration:** No time limit

Important Test Information

These practice items follow the style of third-grade English Language assessments. Formats can vary by section: you may see reading passages and graphics, different kinds of questions, or other tasks—follow the instructions on each page.

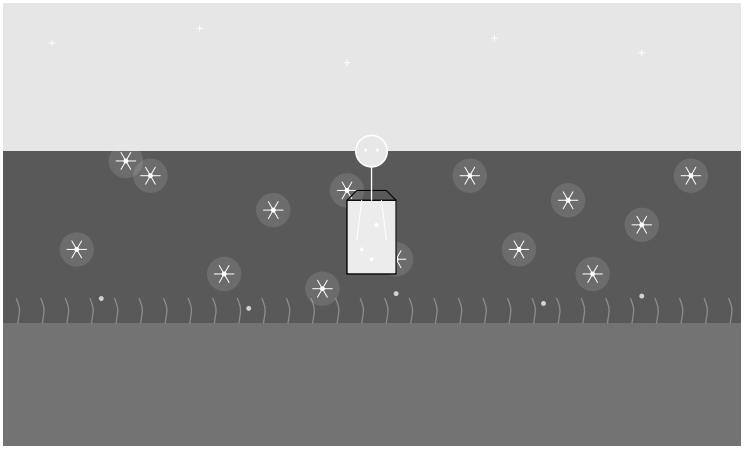
Test-Taking Tips:

- Read each question and every answer choice before you decide.
- Look back at the reading material or graphic when a question is based on them.
- Work carefully—there is no time limit on these practice tests, so use the time you need.

Remember: Take your time, stay calm, and do your best. You've prepared well for this practice—you've got this!

Read the passage below. Then answer questions 1–8.

The Secret Life of Fireflies



A glowing summer field shows how fireflies light up the night.

1 On warm summer evenings, tiny lights may blink above the grass, near trees, or along the edge of a pond. These flickering insects are fireflies. Some people call them lightning bugs, but they are actually a kind of beetle.

2 A firefly's light comes from the end of its body. Inside the insect, special chemicals mix together and create a cool glow. Unlike a lamp, the light does not get hot.

3 Fireflies flash for an important reason. They use patterns of light to send signals to one another. A firefly may blink once, pause, and then blink again. Another firefly may answer with the same pattern.

4 Fireflies begin life as eggs. Later, they hatch into larvae, which live in damp places and feed on small creatures such as snails and worms. After changing again, they become adult fireflies that can fly and glow.

Scan Me
Hot cards? Scan for hats.

5 Fireflies need safe places to live. Long grass, bushes, and dark nights help them survive. Bright outdoor lights can make it harder for them to see one another's signals. That is one reason people are trying to protect habitats where fireflies live.

Read this dictionary entry.

glow *verb*

1. to shine with a soft steady light
2. to grow very quickly
3. to make a loud humming sound
4. to jump from one place to another

1) Which meaning of the word *glow* is used in paragraph 2?

(A) Definition 3
(B) Definition 2
(C) Definition 1
(D) Definition 4

Use the passage "The Secret Life of Fireflies" to answer this question.

2) Which sentence is an **opinion**?

(A) Fireflies are a kind of beetle.
(B) Fireflies are the most magical insects in the world.
(C) Fireflies use light to send signals.
(D) Bright outdoor lights can make signaling harder.



Big coda? More on site.
Scan Me

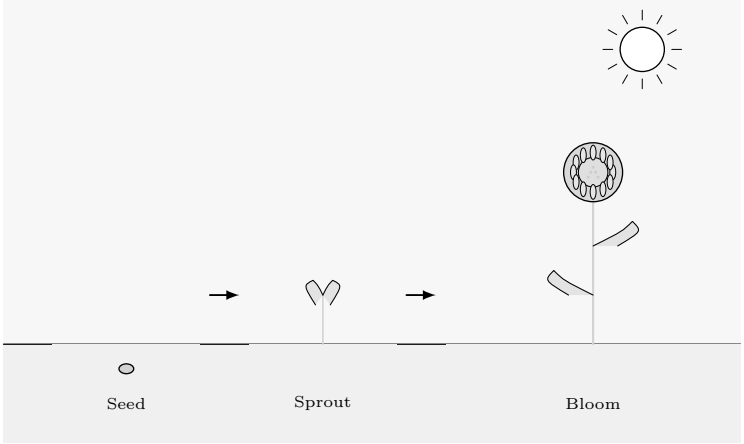
Use both "The Map in the Library Book" and "Morning in the Garden" to answer this question.

19) By the end of the story and the poem, what is the most likely reason both characters feel happy?

(A) They both finish before breakfast.
(B) They both find a secret tunnel.
(C) They both receive shiny prizes.
(D) They both experience the joy of discovery.

Read the passage below. Then answer questions 20–26.

How a Seed Becomes a Sunflower



A sunflower grows in stages from a tiny seed to a tall bright bloom.

1 A sunflower begins as a seed, but a seed cannot grow on its own. It needs water, warmth, air, and sunlight. When these conditions are right, the seed coat softens and begins to split open.



Zippy smells? Hear the beat.
Scan Me

2 The first part of the plant to appear is the root. It pushes down into the soil and begins taking in water and minerals. Soon after that, a shoot rises upward toward the surface.

3 Once the shoot reaches sunlight, leaves begin to grow. The young plant uses its leaves to make food from sunlight, water, and air. As the stem grows taller, the roots spread deeper and wider underground.

4 After many weeks, a green bud forms at the top of the stem. Slowly, the bud opens. Bright yellow petals unfold around a dark center full of tiny flowers that later make seeds.

5 Sunflowers are important to people and animals. Bees visit them for nectar, birds eat their seeds, and people enjoy planting them in gardens. Some farmers even grow large fields of sunflowers for food and oil.

---

20) What is the central idea of this article?

(A) All flowers grow in exactly the same way.
(B) A sunflower grows through several stages and becomes useful to living things.
(C) Birds are the most important part of a sunflower's life.
(D) Sunflowers are the tallest flowers in every garden.

Use the passage "How a Seed Becomes a Sunflower" to answer this question.

21) The author organizes this article by —

(A) comparing sunflowers with roses
(B) listing different kinds of seeds
(C) describing the stages of growth in order
(D) telling a made-up story about a garden

Use the passage "How a Seed Becomes a Sunflower" to answer this question.

22) What does the word *conditions* mean as it is used in paragraph 1?

(A) Short exciting races
(B) Colors found in nature
(C) Important needs or surroundings
(D) Strong pieces of wood

Use the passage "How a Seed Becomes a Sunflower" to answer this question.

23) In which paragraph would a reader find information about how a sunflower first begins to bloom?

(A) Paragraph 5
(B) Paragraph 2
(C) Paragraph 1
(D) Paragraph 4

Use the passage "How a Seed Becomes a Sunflower" to answer this question.

24) Which **TWO** details from the article show how sunflowers help living things?

Select **TWO** correct answers.

(A) Birds eat sunflower seeds.
(B) Bees visit sunflowers for nectar.
(C) A root grows down into the soil.
(D) The seed coat softens and splits open.
(E) A green bud forms at the top of the stem.



Jumpy titles? Proof in text.
Scan Me