7 Full-Length South Dakota Smarter Balanced

English Language Arts (ELA) Practice Tests

A Complete Guide to Building Mastery and Excelling on the English Test

Grade 4



Practice Master Achieve

Reza Nazari

Grade 4 · South Dakota · Smarter Balanced

7 South Dakota Grade 4 English Language Arts (ELA) Practice Tests

Full-Length Practice for Smarter Balanced Preparation and Academic Confidence

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Grade 4 English

English Language

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

Important Test Information

These practice items follow the style of fourth-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.

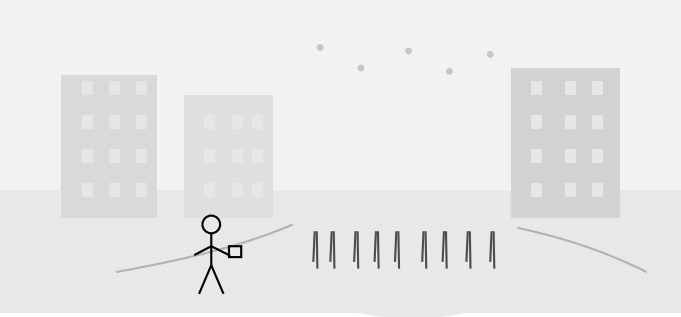
Remember: Take your time, stay calm, and do your best. You've prepared well for this practice—you've got this!



Icy shots?
Spot the clue.
Scan Me

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

The Park That Caught the Rain



1 After a heavy storm, the corner of Maple Street Park used to look like a shallow lake. Water slid off nearby sidewalks and parking lots, rushed into the low area, and stayed there for hours. The puddles were not deep enough to be dangerous, but they made the grass soggy, left mud across the path, and sometimes washed bits of trash into the storm drain at the edge of the curb.

2 At first, many people thought the answer was simple: add more concrete, build a bigger drain, or raise the ground. But city workers studying the problem suggested a different plan. Instead of forcing the water to leave as quickly as possible, they designed a rain garden.

3 A rain garden is a planted area shaped to collect rainwater for a short time. The shallow basin gives the water a place to gather, while special plants and soil help it soak slowly into the ground. This slows runoff, reduces flooding in nearby spots, and can filter out some dirt before the water continues on its way.

4 Workers dug the park corner into a gentle bowl and filled it with layers of soil chosen for drainage. Then they planted grasses, flowers, and shrubs that could handle both wet and dry conditions. A curved path was added nearby so visitors could walk past the garden without stepping into it after storms.

5 During the first few weeks, the rain garden did not look impressive. The plants were small, and the basin seemed almost too plain to matter. Then spring storms arrived. Instead of racing across the path, water settled into the planted area. A day later, much of it had disappeared underground. The path dried faster, and the muddy mess became far less common.

6 Over time, the rain garden changed the park in other ways too. Bees and butterflies began visiting the flowers. Sparrows hopped among the stems searching for seeds. School groups stopped by with clipboards to record how the garden looked before and after rain. What had started as a drainage project became a place for observation.

7 The rain garden does not stop every puddle from forming in the park, and it does not solve flooding in every part of the neighborhood. Still, it shows how one carefully designed space can do several jobs at once. It manages water, supports living things, and teaches visitors something about how land and rain can work together.

8 Some people now pass the corner without realizing it was ever a trouble spot. Others remember when it was little more than a soggy patch beside the path. The difference is not just that the area looks nicer. It now handles water in a smarter way. The park did not get rid of the rain. It learned how to receive it.

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1) Which sentence best states the central idea of the article?

(A) A rain garden helped the park handle stormwater more effectively while also supporting plants, animals, and learning.
(B) The park solved its water problem mainly by building more concrete surfaces.
(C) School groups improved the park by cleaning trash after storms.
(D) Butterflies and sparrows prefer parks with curved walking paths.



Warm tips? More on site.
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15) What idea is emphasized in lines 9 and 10?

(A) Bus rides are better when no one talks at all
(B) Silence is impossible on school buses
(C) Rain makes people speak more softly
(D) True quiet can come from feeling understood, not only from being alone

Use the poem "Ride Home Window" to answer this question.

16) What is the central message of the poem?

(A) People should always sit alone when upset
(B) Rainy afternoons are the best time for travel
(C) Talking about problems does not help
(D) A small moment of connection can gently ease a difficult day

Use the poem "Ride Home Window" to answer this question.

17) Which statement best explains how the speaker's feelings change during the ride home?

(A) The speaker begins weighed down and ends feeling lighter after sharing a quiet moment with someone else.
(B) The speaker becomes more upset because the ride takes longer than expected.
(C) The speaker starts cheerful and becomes frustrated after another person sits nearby.
(D) The speaker feels lonely throughout the ride and decides to stay silent at home.

Use both "The Quiet Seat" and "Ride Home Window" to answer this question.

18) Which idea is developed in both texts?

(A) Bus rides are usually too noisy for conversation
(B) Music mistakes should be ignored completely
(C) A quiet moment shared with another person can bring comfort
(D) Rain makes people more thoughtful than sunshine does



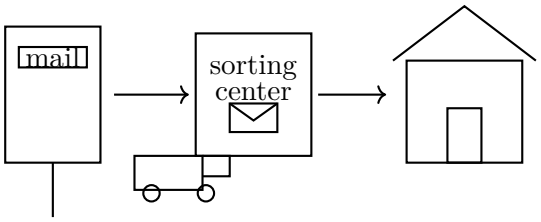
Use both "The Quiet Seat" and "Ride Home Window" to answer this question.

19) How is Ava's realization at the end of the story similar to the speaker's realization in the poem?

(A) Both discover that being completely alone is always best
(B) Both realize that understanding from another person can change the feeling of a quiet space
(C) Both decide to avoid buses in the future
(D) Both wish they had spoken sooner in the day

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

The Long Journey of a Letter



1 Dropping a letter into a mailbox takes only a moment. The small envelope slips from a person's hand, lands among other letters, and disappears behind a metal door. From there, however, its journey may involve many steps before it reaches the right home.

2 First, a mail carrier collects the letters from the mailbox and brings them to a postal facility. There, workers and machines begin sorting the mail. The address on each envelope matters greatly. Even the ZIP code helps tell where the letter should go next.

3 Some letters travel only across town. Others must cross an entire state or even the country. To help mail move efficiently, sorting centers group letters by destination. One bin may hold mail for nearby neighborhoods, while another may be filled with envelopes heading to faraway cities.

4 Machines can sort enormous amounts of mail quickly, but people still play an important role. If an address is hard to read or a letter is damaged, workers may have to examine it more closely. A clear address helps the journey go smoothly.

5 After the letter arrives at a postal center near its destination, it is sorted again. Finally, a mail carrier places it with other letters for a neighborhood route. The next time that carrier walks or drives the route, the envelope may be slid through a door slot or tucked into a mailbox.

6 Most of the time, people notice only the beginning and the end of this process. They mail a letter, and later someone receives it. The middle part remains mostly unseen, even though it involves planning, transportation, sorting, and many careful checks.

7 Sending a letter may seem old-fashioned in a world of quick digital messages, yet letters still matter. They can carry cards, forms, notes, and signatures that people want to hold in their hands. Some even become keepsakes.

8 The next time you mail a letter, it may help to imagine the path ahead: collection, sorting, travel, sorting again, and delivery. What looks like one simple action is actually the beginning of a well-organized trip.



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