5 Connecticut Smarter Balanced

English Language Arts

Practice Tests

Grade 8



Practice Smart. Score Higher.

Small Steps, Big Gains! Small Steps, Big Gains!

Practice Master Achieve

Reza Nazari

Connecticut Smarter Balanced Grade 8 English Language Arts: Five Full Practice Tests For Confident Prep

Focused Review To Help Students Ace The Test

Quick Start | Skill Check | Confidence

Best for a strong opening stretch

Build momentum with a compact set of full practice tests that sharpen close reading, careful evidence use, and calm decision-making from day one.

Reza Nazari

Built for a strong, steady start to Grade 8 practice

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The Big Day

Your Test Day Playbook.

Calm is a skill. This is how to bring it with you.

◯ The Night Before

- Pack everything tonight. Pencils, eraser, water, ID, approved calculator if needed.
- Do light review only — a single short passage. No new material. No all-nighter.
- Eat something familiar. Tonight is not the night to experiment with anything new.
- Phone out of the room an hour before bed. Protect your sleep like it is part of the grade.

◯ The Morning Of

- Eat protein and complex carbs. Skip the sugar spike — the crash comes during the test.
- Move your body for five minutes. Walk, stretch, shake out your hands. Lower the nerves.
- Arrive early enough to settle, not so early that waiting builds up pressure.
- At the door, four slow breaths: *in for four, hold for four, out for six.* It works.

During the Test

- **Preview the questions**, then read the passage hunting specific answers.
- **Answer every question.** A guess has better odds than a blank — always.
- **Skip hard ones and return.** Easy points protect your time budget. Come back with fresh eyes.
- **Trust your first read.** Change an answer only when you find concrete evidence, not a hunch.
- **Pace by section, not by question.** Check the clock every few minutes, not every question.
- **If anxiety spikes, breathe and reset.** Ten slow seconds saves ten lost minutes.
- **Save 2–3 minutes at the end.** Review flagged items, confirm your bubbled answers.

One last thing.

High school starts soon, but you do not have to wait for it to begin showing up as the reader and writer you want to be. Test day is just a window. Open it, show your thinking clearly, and step through. The next version of you is already on the other side.

— Reza Nazari

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becomes a door.

We write so the future can follow
what the paper already knows,
what careful hands hoped someone would learn to see.

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9) What does the word *cross-referencing* most nearly mean as it is used in paragraph 3 of the story?

(A) putting documents back into their original boxes
(B) repairing damaged photographs with special tools
(C) moving records from a basement to a museum exhibit
(D) comparing information from one source with information from another

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

10) How does Talia change over the course of the story?

(A) She moves from seeing archival work as dusty storage to understanding it as the work of making evidence meaningful and usable.
(B) She begins focused on rare artifacts but ends deciding that archives should stay private.
(C) She starts as an expert historian and realizes she prefers theater performance instead.
(D) She expects the box to hold valuable objects and becomes disappointed when it does not.

Scan Me

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

11) Which statement best expresses a theme of the story?

(A) Historical objects matter most when they are expensive enough to attract attention.
(B) The past can be preserved more fully when people connect evidence instead of merely storing it.
(C) Museum volunteers are useful only when they already know local history.
(D) Archives should focus only on large public events rather than local stories.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

12) In paragraph 2, what does the author suggest by saying the box held evidence but not yet meaning?

(A) The curator had placed fake documents in the box by mistake.
(B) The objects were too damaged for anyone to read.
(C) The information needed to understand the objects had not yet been connected or explained.
(D) The photographs were less important than the notebook.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

13) Why does the author include the curator's question in paragraph 4?

(A) To explain why the historical society rarely accepts volunteers
(B) To prove that he is unsure whether the theater ever reopened
(C) To suggest that Talia has mislabeled several of the artifacts
(D) To show that he wants Talia to understand the purpose of archival work, not just finish a task

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

14) How are the story and the poem most alike?

(A) Both argue that old paper should be replaced with digital copies as soon as possible.
(B) Both focus on actors preparing for a benefit concert after a flood.
(C) Both suggest that history is best preserved by leaving objects untouched and undescribed.
(D) Both show that records become more valuable when people help others understand what they mean.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

15) Which **TWO** lines from the poem best support the idea that historical records need context in order to guide future readers?Select **TWO** correct answers.

(A) A ticket stub alone is a whisper.
(B) On the shelf, a box waits quietly,
(C) A name beside a date
(D) becomes a door.
(E) what careful hands hoped someone would learn to see.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

16) How does the mood of the poem shift from beginning to end?

(A) From excitement to embarrassment
(B) From quiet obscurity to purposeful clarity
(C) From fear to relief
(D) From humor to anger

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