5 New Mexico NM-MSSA English Language Arts Practice Tests

Grade 8



Practice Smart. Score Higher.

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

Practice Master Achieve

Reza Nazari

New Mexico NM-MSSA 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

Table of Contents

★ Practice Test 1 ____ 10
★ Practice Test 2 ____ 42
★ Practice Test 3 ____ 73
★ Practice Test 4 ____ 105
★ Practice Test 5 ____ 138
Practice Test Answer Keys ____ 169
Practice Test Answers and Explanations ____ 172

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) She moves from wanting ready-made lines to valuing the harder work of testing claims and evidence.
(B) She starts out disliking debate and quits before the regional tournament.
(C) She expects the binder to be unhelpful and is surprised to find fully written speeches inside.
(D) She begins confident in her research but ends deciding that debate depends mostly on style.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) Team competitions are most successful when students copy past winners exactly.
(B) A strong argument depends more on being tested carefully than on sounding confident.
(C) Short speeches are always more persuasive than long ones.
(D) Good sources matter less than personal conviction in debate.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

12) In paragraph 2, what does the author suggest by saying the binder did not behave like a script?

(A) It offered questions and critiques rather than lines to repeat word for word.
(B) It was too damaged for Nia to read in the order she expected.
(C) The binder had been organized for a different debate topic.
(D) Its pages contained only schedules and blank forms.

Scan Me

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

13) Why does the author include the note about asking where the evidence for harm is and who is most affected?

(A) To prove that surveillance software should never be discussed in debate
(B) To suggest that Nia disagrees with every previous debater on the team
(C) To show the exact question that helps Nia recognize and revise a weak claim
(D) To explain why Nia prefers emotional language to factual support

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

14) How are the story and poem most alike?

(A) Both show that questioning and testing an argument can make it stronger.
(B) Both suggest that polished conclusions matter more than the process behind them.
(C) Both focus on a speaker winning a final championship round.
(D) Both argue that confidence should never be challenged in public.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

15) Which **TWO** lines from the poem best support the idea that strong reasoning must withstand scrutiny?Select **TWO** correct answers.

(A) I used to sharpen only my conclusions,
(B) the question beside the claim,
(C) the place where confidence must kneel to proof.
(D) polishing them until they flashed.
(E) Before the podium

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) From showy self-assurance to reflective discipline
(B) From anger to relief
(C) From embarrassment to boredom
(D) From fear to humor

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

17) What shared message do the story and poem convey?

(A) Public speaking matters more than research in formal debate.
(B) Arguments become stronger when people question them carefully and support them with proof.
(C) Past students should avoid leaving notes for future teams.
(D) A persuasive tone is usually more important than evidence.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

18) Which sentence best summarizes the story?

(A) Nia finds a binder of finished speeches and uses them to win a debate without revising anything.
(B) While preparing for a debate tournament, Nia learns from an old binder that strong arguments are built by questioning weak claims and strengthening evidence.
(C) A debate coach assigns Nia to organize team files, but she would rather write poetry.
(D) Nia loses interest in debate after discovering that research takes too much time.