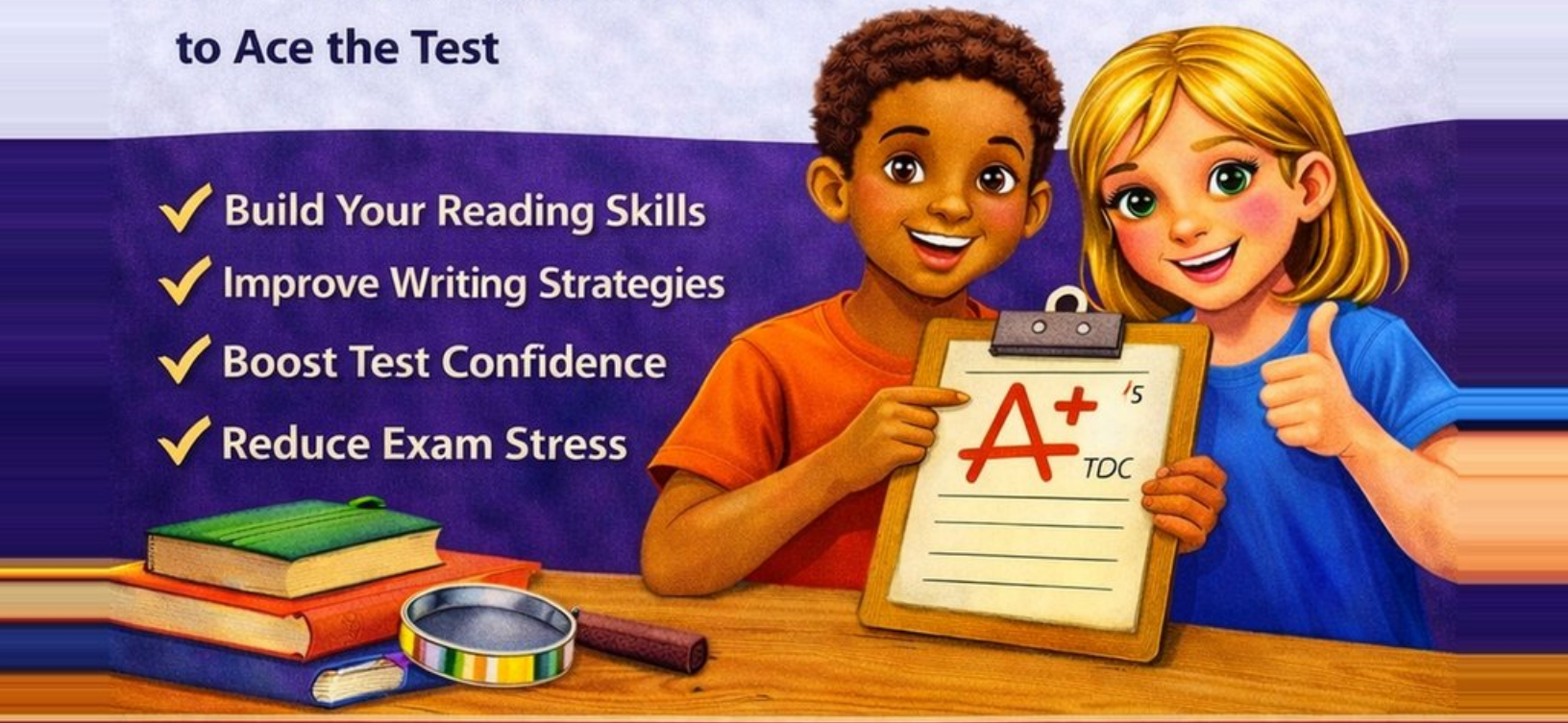
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8 Idaho Grade 8

English Language Arts (ELA)

Practice Tests

The Proven Practice You Need to Ace the Test

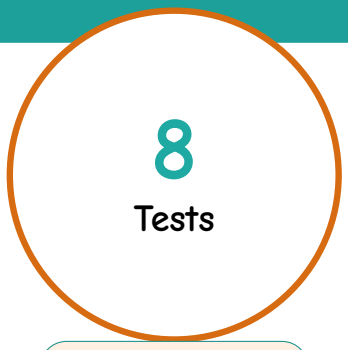


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Smart Practice

The Difference Between Busy and Better.

Busy practice fills time. Better practice changes you. The quiet truth: the thirty minutes after a test matters more than the ninety minutes of the test itself. That is where real learning lives — in the review, not the rep. Here is what separates a score plateau from a score climb:

✓ Six Moves That Raise Real Scores

1. **Simulate the pressure.** One seat, one timer, no phone, no interruptions. Stamina is its own skill and you can only train it by using it.
2. **Preview the questions, then attack the passage.** Skim the question stems first. That turns reading from passive intake into a directed search.
3. **Annotate with purpose.** Circle transitions (*however*, *therefore*, *in contrast*). Bracket claims. Underline evidence. These marks become your map back to the answer.
4. **Do a miss audit after every test.** Sort your wrong answers into four piles: *knowledge gap*, *careless misread*, *time pressure*, *trap answer*. Each one demands a different fix.
5. **Upgrade one skill per week.** Pick one weakness — inference, vocabulary in context, claim-and-evidence writing — and make it the focus. Narrow practice beats broad review.
6. **Protect sleep like it is part of the test.** Working memory, focus, and stamina all collapse on less than seven hours. You cannot out-study exhaustion.

⋆ The Rewrite Habit

After each test, pick one short response and rewrite it — cleaner claim, tighter evidence, sharper analysis. Do this just three times across this book and your writing will visibly level up. The rewrite, not the first draft, is where eighth-grade writing becomes high-school-ready.

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.

Read the story and the poem. Then answer questions 9–19.

The Margin Notes

1 When Nia's debate coach handed her a worn binder from the team cabinet, she expected blank templates and old tournament schedules. Instead, she found page after page of evidence packets marked with handwritten notes in three different colors of ink. Some comments questioned a source's credibility. Others suggested stronger transitions, sharper rebuttals, or places where an argument sounded persuasive but lacked proof. Across the top of the first divider, someone had written, *Winning is not the same as thinking.*

2 At first, Nia treated the binder like a shortcut. Regionals were two weeks away, and she hoped the notes would save time by telling her exactly what to say. But the more she read, the less the binder behaved like a script. Its comments did not provide finished speeches. They challenged assumptions, pointed out weak logic, and asked questions the original speakers had not answered.

3 One page in particular changed how Nia prepared. Next to a paragraph full of dramatic claims about school surveillance software, an earlier debater had written, *Where is the evidence for harm, and who is most affected?* Nia stared at the sentence for a long time. She had planned to use that paragraph because it sounded strong, but now she could hear how much of its confidence came from tone rather than support. She cut the claim, searched for better reporting, and rebuilt the argument from stronger sources.

4 At practice the next day, Nia's opening statement was shorter than before, but it held together more firmly under questioning. Afterward, her coach asked what had changed. Nia tapped the binder and said that it turned out not to be a collection of answers. It was a record of people learning how to ask better questions.

5 When she returned the binder to the cabinet, Nia added one note of her own on a fresh page near the back. She wrote that a strong argument should not only sound convincing to allies. It should remain clear when someone pushes on it. For the first time that season, she felt less interested in performing certainty and more interested in earning it.

Before the Podium

I used to sharpen only my conclusions,
polishing them until they flashed.

Then I learned the harder craft:
the margin note,
the question beside the claim,
the place where confidence must kneel to proof.

Now I trust the sentence that survives being tested
more than the one that enters the room already shining.

---

9) What does the word *credibility* most nearly mean as it is used in paragraph 1 of the story?

(A) the habit of speaking very quickly
(B) the quality of being believable and trustworthy
(C) the skill of memorizing long passages
(D) the ability to win a vote by popularity

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.

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