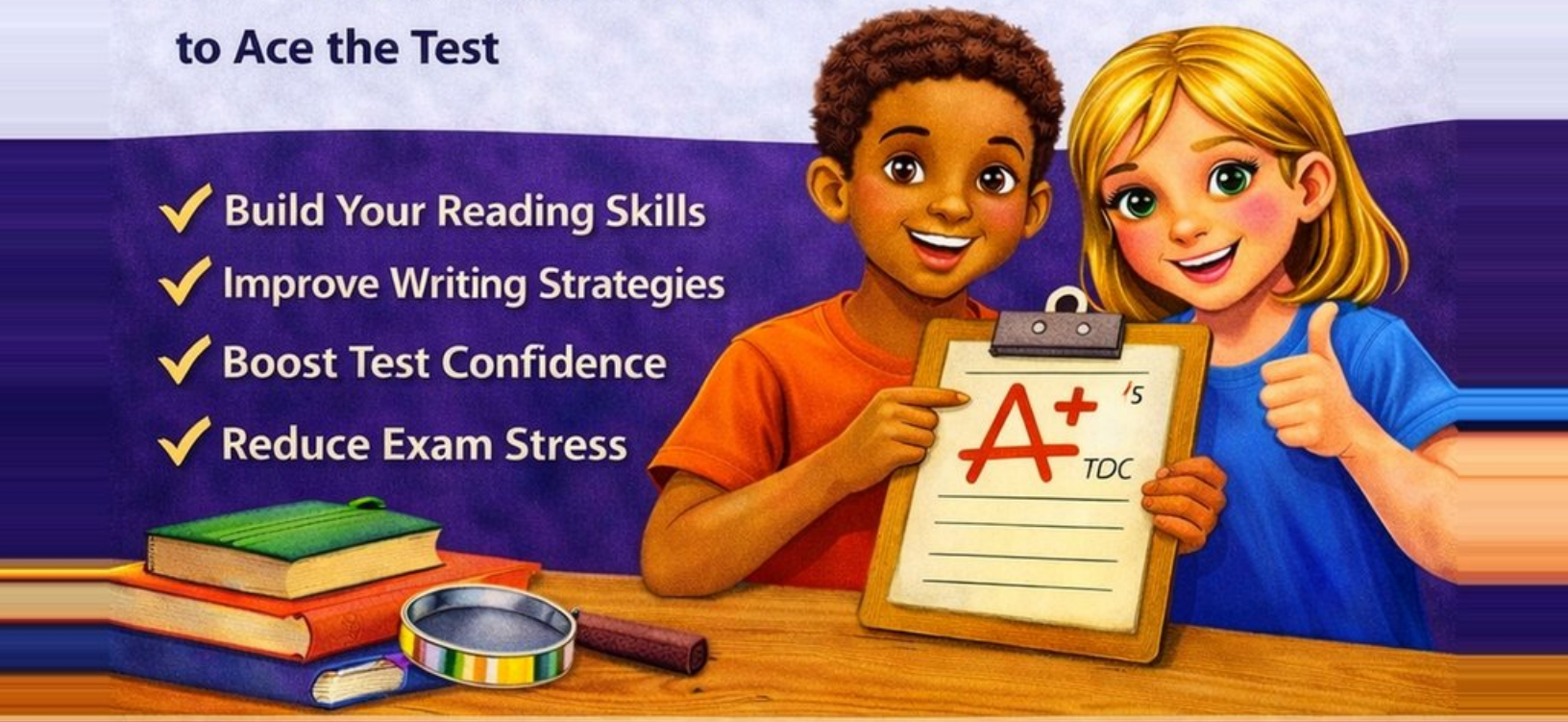
Everything You Need to Help Achieve an Excellent Score

8 Iowa Grade 8

English Language Arts (ELA)

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Tests

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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.

8) Which sentence best summarizes the passage?

(A) Light pollution makes astronomy impossible in every city, so volunteers are replacing observatories.

(B) Scientists are interested in artificial light mainly because it changes the appearance of constellations.

(C) Citizen-science projects measure local night-sky brightness in consistent ways, helping researchers and communities understand patterns in light pollution over time.

(D) Neighborhood lighting problems can be solved quickly once one bright location is identified.

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

The Unlabeled Box

1 When Talia agreed to volunteer at the River Street Historical Society for a week in July, she imagined dusting display cases and straightening postcards in the gift shop. Instead, the curator led her downstairs to the archive room, where shelves of gray boxes lined the walls from floor to ceiling. He set one unlabeled carton on the table between them and said, *Let's see whether this one is only storage or actually history.*

2 Inside the box, Talia found theater programs, ticket stubs, a stage manager's notebook, and several photographs with names written on the back in fading ink. None of the items looked dramatic on its own. What made the box frustrating was that nothing explained how the pieces fit together. Without dates, names, or notes connecting them, the box held evidence but not yet meaning.

3 Talia spent the afternoon cross-referencing the notebook with old newspapers on microfilm and a folder of town-event calendars. Bit by bit, the objects stopped feeling random. She realized the box documented the volunteer campaign that reopened the Riverside Theater after a flood had closed it for two years. A ticket stub matched a benefit concert mentioned in a newspaper column, and one photograph showed students repainting the lobby beside a sign announcing the theater's return.

4 When the curator came back, he did not ask whether Talia had found anything valuable. He asked what made the box usable now when it had seemed almost invisible before. Talia looked at the notes spread across the table and understood that the answer was context. The artifacts had not changed, but their relationships had. Once the items were connected to one another, other people could learn from them too.

5 By closing time, they had written a catalog summary and labeled each item sleeve. As Talia slid the box onto its shelf again, it no longer looked like a pile of leftover paper. It looked like a record waiting for future readers. She left the archive room realizing that preserving the past was not only about keeping objects safe. It was also about making memory findable.

Catalog Card

On the shelf, a box waits quietly,
not empty,
only unopened by understanding.

A ticket stub alone is a whisper.
A name beside a date

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.