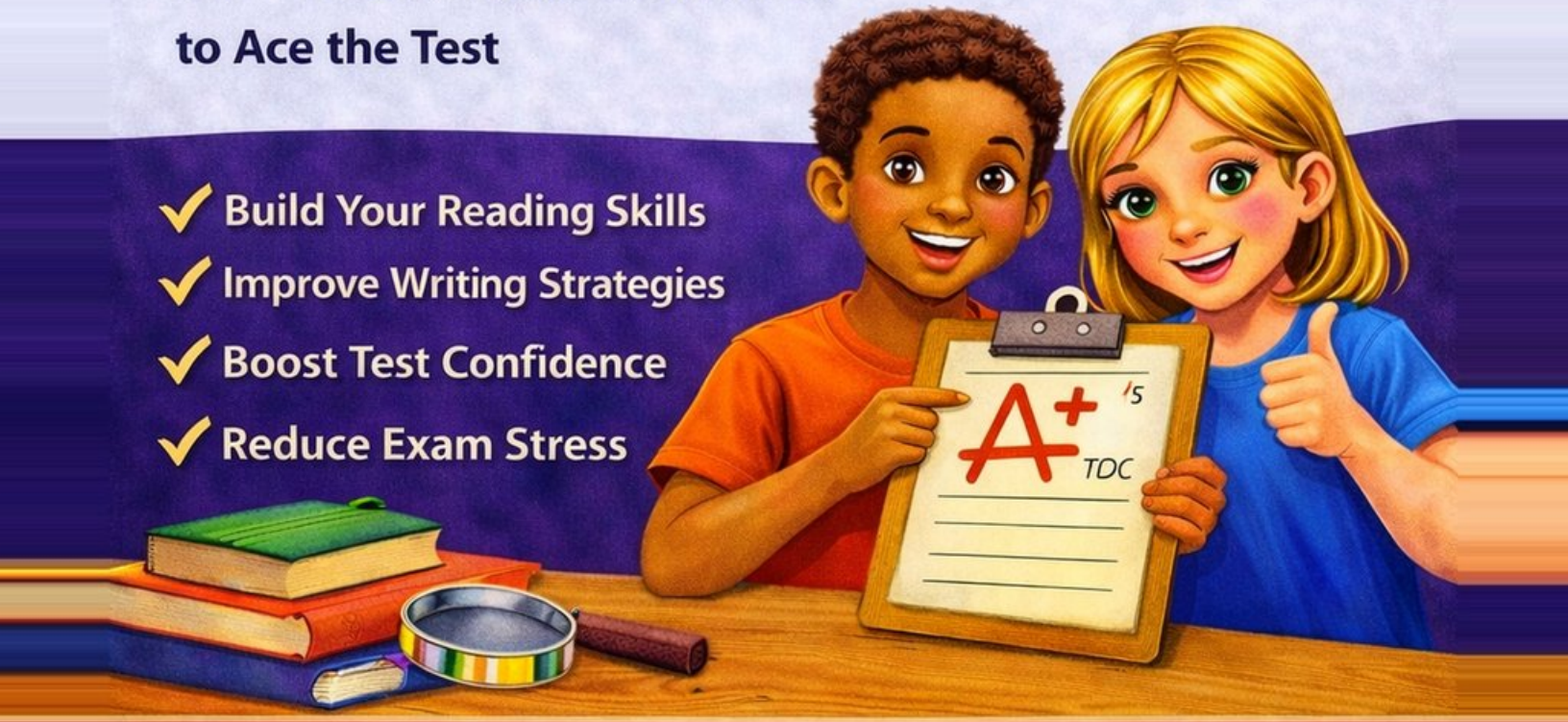
Everything You Need to Help Achieve an Excellent Score

8 Missouri Grade 8

English Language Arts (ELA)

Practice Tests

The Proven Practice You Need to Ace the Test

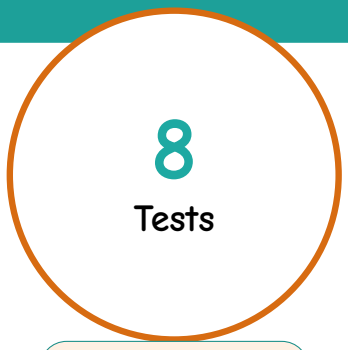


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- ✓ Boost Test Confidence
- ✓ Reduce Exam Stress

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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.

Paper Bridges

1 At the start of the engineering challenge, Ms. Ortega placed a substantial stack of newspaper bundles on each lab table and announced that every team had exactly forty minutes to design and build a bridge strong enough to hold a brick without collapsing or tearing. Groans moved across the room from students who recognized the difficulty of the task. Eli looked at the flimsy pages in front of him—thin, fragile newsprint that seemed to have almost no structural strength—and imagined the bridge collapsing embarrassingly before the timer had reached even halfway, leaving his team with nothing to show for their efforts.

2 His partner, Samira, did not seem worried or overwhelmed by the challenge. She picked up a single sheet and folded it into a narrow, compressed triangular beam, then tapped it firmly against the table, demonstrating its surprising rigidity. *Paper doesn't stay weak if you change its shape*, she said with confidence. *Geometry matters more than material.* Eli wanted to begin taping pieces together immediately and see what would happen, but Samira insisted they test several different designs first, learning from each prototype. For ten frustrating minutes that felt much longer, nothing they built and tested held more than a few heavy textbooks before collapsing or crumpling.

3 Then Eli noticed something important: the strongest model they had created was definitely not the neatest or most aesthetically appealing one. A crooked-looking beam with multiple extra folds and irregular creases actually resisted bending and weight much better than the cleaner, more symmetrical versions they had built. Once he stopped trying to make the bridge appear neat and perfect-looking, his whole approach to the problem changed fundamentally. He and Samira began building an intentionally complex, messy frame of interlocking triangles, strategically stacked supports underneath to distribute weight, and deliberately spread the structural loads across a much wider surface area.

4 When Ms. Ortega carefully lowered the brick onto their bridge structure, Eli held his breath, waiting to see if all their testing and revision would pay off. The paper bowed visibly under the weight but did not buckle or tear catastrophically. Across the room, several other bridges failed immediately when tested, and one other team's attempt failed spectacularly after five seconds with a loud, soft tearing sound. Their bridge, in comparison, lasted long enough for Ms. Ortega to place a second brick on top of the first before she finally removed both and nodded in approval, confirming they had succeeded.

5 Eli grinned broadly at the wrinkled, creased newspaper structure sitting on the table in front of him. It would never appear in an architecture magazine or win awards for beauty or design aesthetics, but it had taught him something far more useful than how to create elegance. Strength was not always obvious at first glance or in a first attempt. Sometimes real strength hid inside patient revision, deliberate awkwardness in design, and the willingness to test ideas that initially looked unpromising or weak.

What the River Keeps

The river does not keep the shape
of yesterday's handprint in the mud.
It carries twigs, light, and lost reflections
past stones that thought they could command it.

Yet every bend remembers pressure.
Every bank is written by return,
by water trying, failing, trying again
until the land agrees to listen.

I used to think progress looked polished,
clean as a ruler's edge.
Now I trust the patient curve
that learns its strength by meeting resistance.

---

9) What does the word *buckle* mean as it is used in paragraph 4 of the story?

(A) to shine brightly
(B) to move in a straight line
(C) to bend or collapse under pressure
(D) to grow wider over time

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) He begins as a patient partner and becomes careless.
(B) He moves from valuing appearance to understanding the importance of testing and revision.
(C) He decides that engineering is not useful outside the classroom.
(D) He learns that teamwork usually slows progress.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) Real strength often develops through experimentation and revision.
(B) Competition usually ruins collaboration.
(C) A perfect first attempt is better than repeated testing.
(D) Paper is stronger than metal in all situations.

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