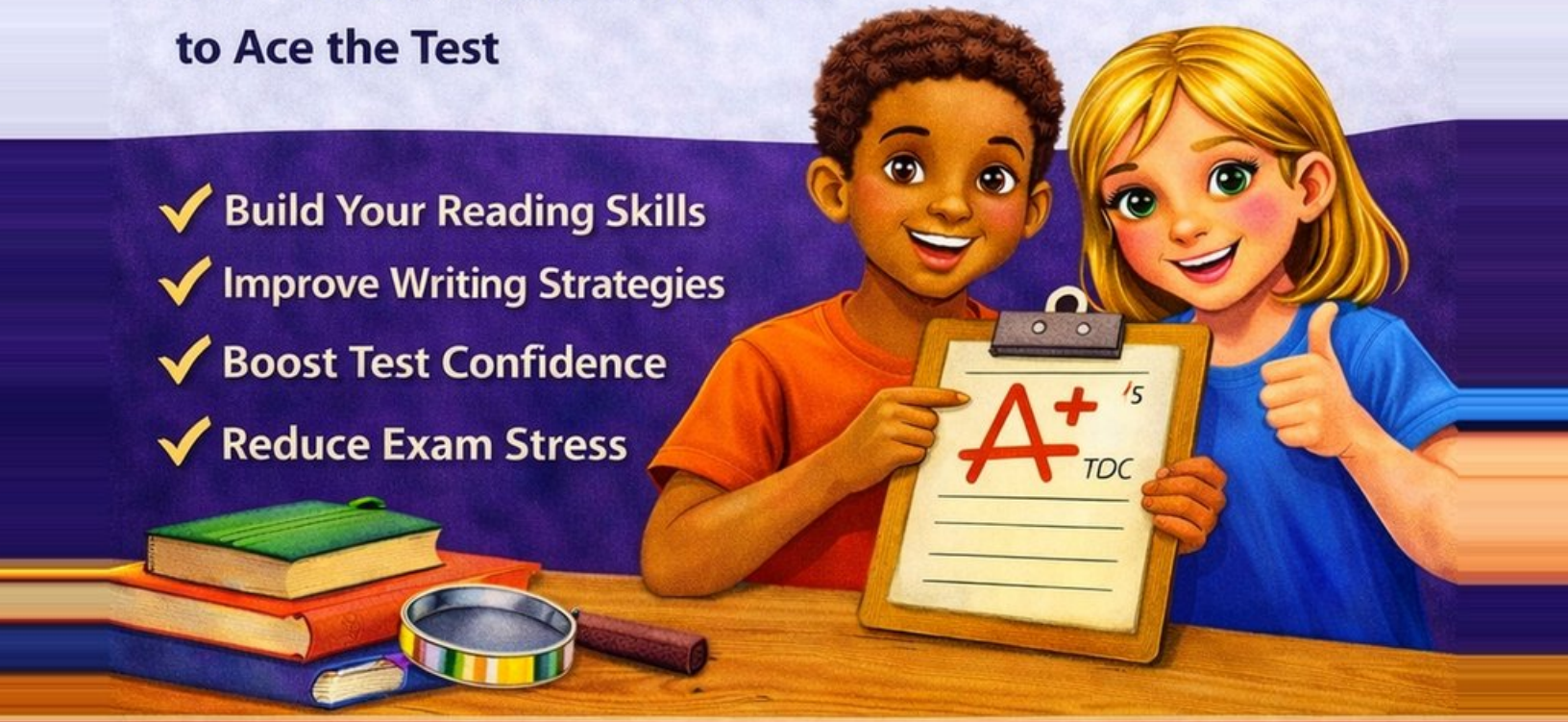
Everything You Need to Help Achieve an Excellent Score

8 Montana Grade 8

English Language Arts (ELA)

Practice Tests

The Proven Practice You Need to Ace the Test

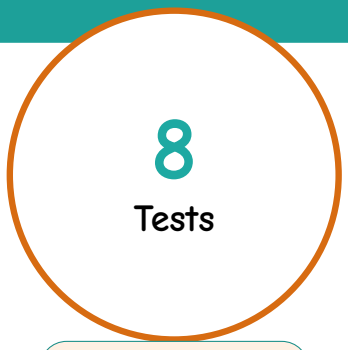


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Smart Practice

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 Spare Key

1 For as long as he could remember, Omar's grandmother had kept a ring of labeled keys in the kitchen drawer beside the dish towels. Most of them opened sheds, cupboards, or locks no one in the family used much anymore. The smallest one, stamped with a number and polished bright from years of handling, had always interested Omar most. When he finally asked what it was for, his grandmother said only, *The old workshop behind the apartment building.*

2 The next Saturday she placed the key in his hand and told him he could help her clean the workshop if he wanted. Inside, Omar found shelves of tools, coffee cans filled with screws, and a long bench covered with small wooden boxes in different stages of completion. He had expected a room of finished objects. Instead he found a room built around unfinished effort.

3 They spent the morning sorting hinges, wiping sawdust from jars, and stacking cut pieces of pine by length. Every so often, his grandmother paused to show him something about the boxes: how a lid could warp if the grain pulled unevenly, why sandpaper had to move with the wood instead of against it, why a joint that looked small could decide whether the whole thing lasted. Omar noticed that none of her explanations were dramatic. They were exact.

4 By afternoon, she let him fit the lid onto one of the smallest boxes. It resisted at first. Omar tried forcing it down, and she stopped him with a quiet laugh. *If you have to bully the wood, you missed what it was telling you.* Together they checked the corners, found the slight unevenness, and corrected it. When the lid settled into place, Omar felt the satisfaction not of winning a struggle, but of finally understanding it.

5 That night he returned the key to the kitchen drawer, but he no longer thought of it as the key to a room. It felt more like a key to a way of paying attention he had not known he was missing.

Workshop Lesson

The drawer held many keys,
but only one opened the work beneath the work:
not the bench,
not the door,
but the patience hidden in the making.

Wood answers slowly.
It tells the truth in resistance,
in grain,
in the edge that almost fits.

To build well is to listen longer
than force would like.

9) What does the word *warp* mean as it is used in paragraph 3?

(A) break into separate pieces
(B) become easier to paint
(C) turn darker over time
(D) bend or twist out of shape

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) He moves from curiosity about the workshop as a place to understanding it as a lesson in exact, patient attention.
(B) He decides that finished objects are more interesting than making them.
(C) He begins as an experienced woodworker and ends disappointed by the craft.
(D) He refuses to return to the workshop after the lid resists.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

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

(A) Tools are more important than patience in craftsmanship.
(B) Good work often depends on learning to notice what resistance is trying to reveal.
(C) Family traditions matter only when they produce useful objects.
(D) Unfinished projects should be avoided whenever possible.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

12) What does the author suggest by saying the room was built around unfinished effort in paragraph 2?

(A) The workshop was too messy to use properly.
(B) The grandmother had stopped making boxes years earlier.
(C) Nothing in the workshop was ever completed.
(D) The workshop mattered because it preserved process and ongoing work, not just finished products.