Computer-Based Sample Test Scoring Guide
Grade 8 ELA
AzMERIT

Updated January 2019

Prepared by the Arizona Department of Education and the American Institutes for Research®
About the Sample Test Scoring Guide

The AzMERIT Sample Test Scoring Guides provide details about the items, student response types, correct responses, and related scoring considerations for AzMERIT Sample Test items.

Within this guide, each item is presented with the following information:

- Item number
- Strand
- Cluster
- Content Standard
- Depth of Knowledge (DOK)
- Static presentation of the item
- Static presentation of student response field (when appropriate)
- Answer key, rubric or exemplar
- Applicable score point(s) for each item

The items included in this guide are representative of the kinds of items that students can expect to experience when taking the computer-based test for AzMERIT Grade 8 ELA.
Grade 8 ELA–Writing Sample Test

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<td>Writing</td>
<td>Text Types and Purposes</td>
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Passage(s):

- *The Stones of Machu Picchu*
- *Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu*

You have been asked to write an informational article on Machu Picchu for a website that focuses on travel to places of historical interest. Write an article that explains to tourists the significance of Machu Picchu as a travel destination. Your article must be based on ideas and information that can be found in the “Machu Picchu” passage set.

Manage your time carefully so that you can
- read the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to
- use evidence from multiple sources; and
- avoid overly relying on one source.

Your response should be in the form of a multiparagraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.
# Grades 6–8 Informative-Explanatory Essay Writing Guide

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<th>Purpose, Focus, and Organization</th>
<th>Evidence and Elaboration</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear controlling idea and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</td>
<td>The response provides thorough and convincing support, citing evidence for the controlling idea or main idea that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</td>
<td>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strongly maintained controlling idea with little or no loosely related material</td>
<td>• Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources</td>
<td>• Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</td>
<td>• Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques (including but not limited to definitions, quotations, and examples), demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text</td>
<td>• Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion</td>
<td>• Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate style and objective tone established and maintained</td>
<td>• Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility.</td>
<td></td>
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## References and Citations

When referring to evidence and information from passages, students should use paraphrasing and short quotations. To credit sources, students should use informal, in-text citations (e.g., MLA author or title tags).
Grade 8 ELA–Reading Sample Test

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<td>Reading for Informational Text</td>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
<td>RI.8.3</td>
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Passage(s):

- *Biofuels: the Ultimate in Recycling*
- *Biofuels: Fuel for the Future or Foolishness?*

How does the author of Passage 1 show that biofuels help with waste management?

- [ ] She names some of the things biofuels can be made from.
- [ ] She describes the impact of companies that make biofuels.
- [ ] She describes how machines produce biofuels in efficient ways.
- [ ] She explains how biofuels reduce toxic chemicals in the environment.

(1 Point)
What is the meaning of the word *organic* as used in paragraph 2 of Passage 1?

- [ ] not produced in a factory
- [x] coming from living things
- [ ] making energy naturally
- [ ] chemical-free

(1 Point)
### Sample Test Scoring Guide
- **Grade 8 ELA**
- **Spring 2019**

The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

#### Part A
What is the position of the author of Passage 1 regarding the use of biofuels?

- A. Newer biofuels have the ability to generate more power than traditional fossil fuels.
- B. Biofuels provide solutions to issues of waste management and limited energy.
- C. Nearly any biological material or waste product can produce biofuels.
- D. Biofuel production mimics a natural process with faster results.

#### Part B
Which detail from Passage 1 supports the response in Part A?

- A. “A company in Idaho makes ethanol using potato waste from a nearby potato processing plant. A cheese factory in California makes it from unused whey.” (paragraph 4)
- B. “When used as a substitute for petroleum, it reduces total air pollution by more than 50 percent and cancer-causing substances in the exhaust by 94 percent.” (paragraph 5)
- C. “Most intriguing of all is the oil produced by a machine developed by Changing World Technologies that uses a thermal depolymerization process (TDP) to take materials apart at the molecular level.” (paragraph 6)
- D. “Although producing biofuels generally costs more than pumping petroleum out of the Earth, the added cost is offset by many benefits.” (paragraph 8)

(1 Point) Student selected correct answer for each part.
This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**
Select the meaning of the word *thermal* in paragraph 6 of Passage 1.

A) having to do with biological matter  
B) having to do with waste management  
C) having to do with heat or temperature  
D) having to do with breaking down matter

**Part B**
Select the phrase from the passage that best supports your answer in Part A.

6. Most intriguing of all is the oil produced by a machine developed by Changing World Technologies that uses a thermal depolymerization process (TDP) to take materials apart at the molecular level. The machine was designed to turn almost any waste product into high-quality oil, pure minerals, and clean water. It applies heat and pressure, the same forces nature employed to turn ancient vegetation into fossil fuels.

*(1 Point)* Student selected correct answer for each part.
How does the author of Passage 1 respond to the negative view of biofuels?

- by showing that positive outcomes justify any costs
- by pointing out that the argument is unsupported
- by emphasizing the lack of other options
- by presenting only one side of the issue

(1 Point)
The author of Passage 2 believes that corn should not be used to create ethanol because it
fails to meet government funding requirements for alternative fuels.

(1 Point) Student selected “fails to meet government funding requirements for alternative fuels” from the dropdown.
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<td>Reading for Informational Text</td>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
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How does the author of Passage 2 lead the reader to think negatively about corn ethanol production?

A. by listing the guidelines for government-approved alternative fuels

B. by focusing on how the use of corn ethanol affects individual consumers

C. by implying that government support for corn ethanol is politically motivated

Ô by providing data about the environmentally unfriendly aspects of ethanol production

(1 Point)
In Passage 2, the author argues that corn ethanol production takes the focus away from important food production. Select the sentence below that supports this claim.

11 The problem with corn ethanol is that it takes about the same amount of fossil fuel to produce an equal amount of ethanol. This leaves us with no net gain in the reduction of carbon emissions, or our use of fossil fuel. . . .

12 But there are more problems with corn ethanol.

13 Corn requires more fertilizer to grow strong and healthy than any other major crop. About 40 percent of all nitrogen fertilizer used for growing our crops is used for corn, and the fertilizer is almost all fossil energy.

14 In spite of over 1,000 uses we have for corn and corn byproducts, about 20 percent of corn grown in the United States is now used to produce ethanol, up from 6.5 percent in 2000. . . .

(1 Point)
### Item Number | Strand | Cluster | Content Standard | DOK
---|---|---|---|---
9 | Reading for Informational Text | Craft and Structure | RI.8.5 | 2

**Read the following sentence from Passage 2.**

“This type of biomass is renewable (inexhaustible), almost without human effort.” (paragraph 17)

**Explain why the phrase “almost without human effort” is an important point in the author’s argument.**

Type your answer in the space provided.

(1 Point)

Student’s response includes one or more of the following:

- Because prairie grasses require less human effort, they are more efficient:
- The prairie grasses do not require fossil fuels (oil, coal, gasoline).
- The prairie grasses produce a net gain in reducing carbon emissions.
- The prairie grasses are easy to produce/grow
- The farmers don’t have to till the fields
- The prairie grasses grow in poor soil
- The prairie grasses grow back every year/without being planted

OR

- Human effort requires time/energy/resources
- Human effort is inefficient
- Corn ethanol is not sustainable because it requires human effort
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Fill out the table to indicate which passage makes each inference listed. Some inferences may apply to both passages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Passage 1</th>
<th>Passage 2</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethanol can be produced from a number of sources.</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some biofuels present more advantages than others.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost is not the only thing to consider when choosing biofuels.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current biofuel technology is not poised to replace current sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔️</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(1 Point) Student selected the correct passage option for each inference.
Passage(s):

- Narcissus Myth
- The Disciple

Read the sentence from paragraph 1 of “Narcissus Myth.”

“However, she was immediately diverted from her investigation by Echo’s gay chatter.”

What does the word *diverted* mean as used in the sentence?

- A to use for another purpose
- B to take attention away
- C to change in direction
- D to be given a break

(1 Point)
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In “Narcissus Myth,” what does Hera’s treatment of Echo reveal about Hera?

A. She is upset with Zeus.
B. She is an unfair goddess.
C. She is an enemy of Artemis.
D. She is friends with many nymphs.

(1 point)
The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**
Read the sentence from paragraph 2 of “Narcissus Myth.”
“He was calling his companions, ‘Is anyone here?’ and she called back in rapture, ‘Here—Here.’”

What does the phrase in rapture mean as it is used in the sentence?

- [ ] with delight
- [ ] at a slow pace
- [ ] with confusion
- [ ] at a low volume

**Part B**
Select two phrases from paragraph 2 that support the answer in Part A.

- [ ] “called back”
- [ ] “still hidden”
- [ ] “did not see her”
- [ ] “answered joyfully”
- [ ] “from the woods”
- [ ] “arms outstretched”

*(1 point)* Student selected correct answer(s) for each part.
Select the sentence from paragraph 3 of “Narcissus Myth” that best explains what causes Narcissus to become obsessed with looking at himself.

3. So Narcissus went on his cruel way, a scorn of love. But at last one of those he wounded prayed a prayer and it was answered by the gods: “May he who loves not others love himself.” The great goddess Nemesis, which means righteous anger, undertook to bring this about. As Narcissus bent over a clear pool for a drink and saw there his own reflection, on the moment he fell in love with it. “Now I know,” he cried, “what others have suffered from me, for I burn with love of my own self—and yet how can I reach that loveliness I see mirrored in the water? But I cannot leave it. Only death can set me free.” And so it happened. He pined away, leaning perpetually over the pool, fixed in one long gaze. Echo was near him, but she could do nothing; only when, dying, he called to his image, “Farewell—farewell,” she could repeat the words as a last good-by to him.

OR

Select the sentence from paragraph 3 of “Narcissus Myth” that best explains what causes Narcissus to become obsessed with looking at himself.

3. So Narcissus went on his cruel way, a scorn of love. But at last one of those he wounded prayed a prayer and it was answered by the gods: “May he who loves not others love himself.” The great goddess Nemesis, which means righteous anger, undertook to bring this about. As Narcissus bent over a clear pool for a drink and saw there his own reflection, on the moment he fell in love with it. “Now I know,” he cried, “what others have suffered from me, for I burn with love of my own self—and yet how can I reach that loveliness I see mirrored in the water? But I cannot leave it. Only death can set me free.” And so it happened. He pined away, leaning perpetually over the pool, fixed in one long gaze. Echo was near him, but she could do nothing; only when, dying, he called to his image, “Farewell—farewell,” she could repeat the words as a last good-by to him.

(1 Point) Student selected one of the two correct highlighted sentences.
Read the sentence from paragraph 1 of “Narcissus Myth.”

“As she listened amused, the others silently stole away and Hera could come to no conclusion as to where Zeus’s wandering fancy had alighted.”

What does the phrase stole away reveal about the nymphs?

- A. It suggests the other nymphs feel guilty around Hera.
- B. It suggests the other nymphs behave strangely around Hera.
- C. It shows the other nymphs are secretly taking things from Hera.
- D. It shows the other nymphs move cautiously in order to avoid Hera.

(1 Point)
The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

In “Narcissus Myth,” how is the reader’s understanding of Echo different from Narcissus’s understanding of Echo?

A. The reader does not know that Echo admires the beauty of Narcissus, but Narcissus knows this.

B. The reader knows the feelings that Echo wants to express, but Narcissus does not know this.

C. The reader does not know Echo has a limited power to speak, but Narcissus knows this.

D. The reader knows that Echo is a nymph, but Narcissus does not know this.

**Part B**

How does the difference described in Part A affect the tone of the passage?

A. It creates a humorous tone because of Narcissus’s love of himself.

B. It creates an inspiring tone because of Echo’s determination to speak.

C. It creates an angry tone because of Narcissus’s negative attitude toward others.

D. It creates a hopeless tone because of Echo’s inability to speak in her own words.

(1 Point) Student selected the correct answer for each part.
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In “Narcissus Myth,” how does the prayer Nemesis answers affect Narcissus?

- A  He reflects on the life he could have led.
- B  He sees the reflection of Echo in the pool.
- C  He looks to Echo in his final moments of life.
- ☐  He understands how he is perceived by others.

(1 Point)
The following question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

**Part A**

What is the central idea of “The Disciple”?

A. When we spend a lot of time with someone, we may not remember to show appreciation for that person.

B. When we focus too much on ourselves, we may not be aware of the other people around us.

C. When a major change happens in life, we should be open to new opportunities.

D. When facing new challenges, we should be kind to those around us.

**Part B**

Select the sentence from the passage that best supports the answer in Part A.

A. “... his pleasure changed from a cup of sweet waters into a cup of salt tears...” (paragraph 4)

B. “... the Oreads came weeping through the woodland that they might sing to the pool and give it comfort.” (paragraph 4)

C. “We do not wonder that you should mourn in this manner for Narcissus, so beautiful was he.” (paragraph 5)

D. “‘But was Narcissus beautiful?’ said the pool.” (paragraph 6)

(1 Point) Student selected correct answer for each part.
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Which statement accurately explains why the Oreads are surprised by the pool’s reaction to Narcissus’s death in “The Disciple”?

A. The Oreads had thought that the pool did not know that Narcissus died, but the pool does know this.

B. The Oreads had thought that the pool was filled with Narcissus’s tears, but the tears are not from Narcissus.

C. The Oreads had thought that the pool would need to be comforted because Narcissus died, but the pool does not know Narcissus.

○ The Oreads had thought that the pool was sad about losing Narcissus’s beauty, but the pool is sad about losing the opportunity to view itself.

(1 Point)
Passage(s):

- *President Herbert Hoover's Rapidan Camp*
- *The Hoovers’ Presidential Getaway* (listening passage)

What is the speaker’s purpose in the audio?

- A. to persuade readers to admire President Hoover
- B. to entertain readers with a story about President Hoover
- C. to inform readers about a home that may be unknown to them
- D. to help readers distinguish between two presidential summer homes

(1 Point)
Why do both Passage 1 and the audio mention the Great Depression? Select two answers.

- [ ] to explain Hoover’s policies during the period
- [ ] to distinguish between Hoover and other presidents
- [x] to emphasize the demanding nature of the presidency
- [ ] to explain why Rapidan Camp eventually stopped being used
- [x] to place Hoover and Rapidan Camp in a specific historical context

(1 Point) Student selected both correct options.
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<td>SL.8.2</td>
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In the audio, how does the speaker try to convince the reader that Rapidan Camp was necessary?

- by emphasizing the hardships of the Depression
- by creating a sense of identification with Hoover
- by calling attention to the noise and confusion of cities
- by discussing Hoover’s nervousness and physical weakness

(1 Point)
Passage(s):

- *Kenai Fjords National Park* (editing task)

The Kenai Fjords National Park in Alaska is not only an impressive collection of enormous glaciers and ice fields. It is also home to some of the most beautiful and unique wildlife in the United States. I know all this because I spent most of last summer there with my parents, who are both research scientists. *If I choose* a different way to spend my summer, I would not have wanted to.

Replace "If I choose" with:

- I had chosen
- If I could have chosen
- I would choose
- If I choose

(1 point)
Because they always make every experience an educational ordeal, my parents made me study many of the plants and animals native to the area before we went to the Fjords. I normally don’t get too excited about the little “educational opportunities” my parents cook, up though I have to admit that learning about all of the wildlife ahead of time was a pretty great idea.

(1 point for each correct answer)
Learning about puffins, seals, humpback whales, and bald eagles helped me appreciate these animals when I actually got to see them up close. For example, when the seals were seen on the first day, I already knew that their long hind flippers are effective for propelling them underwater but not very useful on land.

Replace "the seals were seen" with:

I seen the seals

(1 point)
But there was more than just animals to see in Kenai Fjords. There are almost 40 glaciers in the park and they are truly a sight to see. Glaciers are huge masses of ice that would form when snow falls and sticks around long enough to turn to ice. What is most amazing about glaciers is they can actually move. This happens when the ice mass slides over the solid ground underneath it. Whether it’s the unique animals or the glaciers, it’s easy to see why Kenai Fjords was such a great place to spend my summer.

Replace "would form" with:

- form
- are forming
- formed
- would form

(1 point)