

THE GLOBAL ACHIEVEMENT GAP:
WHY EVEN OUR BEST SCHOOLS DON'T TEACH
THE NEW SURVIVAL SKILLS OUR CHILDREN NEED—AND WHAT
WE CAN DO ABOUT IT

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Figure 1

Texas 10th Grade English Test Sample Question

Lydia has written this report for her U.S. history class. As part of a peer conference, you have been asked to read the report and think about what suggestions you would make. When you finish reading the report, answer the questions that follow.

The American Red Cross

(1) The American Red Cross is an organization that aids people all around the world. (2) It started as a result of the efforts of a dedicated woman. (3) That woman was named Clara Barton. (4) It was during the Civil War that Barton began the work that lead to the establishment of the American Red Cross. (5) She assisted on the battlefield by nursing injured soldiers and helping transport supplies. (6) Eventually the Government of the United States selected her to serve as superintendent of nurses for the army.

1. What is the most effective way to combine sentences 2 and 3? (Circle your answer.)
 - A. It started as a result of the efforts of a dedicated woman, that woman was named Clara Barton.
 - B. It started as a result of the efforts of a woman who was dedicated and named Clara Barton.
 - C. It started as a result of the efforts of a dedicated woman named Clara Barton.
 - D. It started as a result of the efforts of a dedicated woman she was named Clara Barton.
2. What change, if any, should be made in sentence 4?
 - A. Change **was** to **is**
 - B. Insert a comma after Civil War
 - C. Change **lead** to **led**
 - D. Make no change

Figure 2

Texas 10th Grade Math Test Sample Questions

1. Which lists the functions of the form $y = ax^2$ in order from the widest to the narrowest graph? (Circle your answer.)
- A. $y = \frac{7}{3}x^2$, $y = \frac{2}{3}x^2$, $y = \frac{1}{2}x^2$, $y = 2x^2$
 - B. $y = \frac{1}{2}x^2$, $y = \frac{2}{3}x^2$, $y = 2x^2$, $y = \frac{7}{3}x^2$
 - C. $y = \frac{7}{3}x^2$, $y = 2x^2$, $y = \frac{1}{2}x^2$, $y = \frac{2}{3}x^2$
 - D. $y = 2x^2$, $y = \frac{7}{3}x^2$, $y = \frac{1}{2}x^2$, $y = \frac{2}{3}x^2$
2. Lee, Kelly, Linda, and Madison all took the same math test. Linda earned a lower score than Kelly, but she did not earn the lowest score. The highest test-scorer's name does not begin with an L. Madison earned a higher score than Kelly. Which person earned the lowest score on the math test? (Circle your answer.)
- A. Kelly
 - B. Lee
 - C. Linda
 - D. Madison

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Figure 3

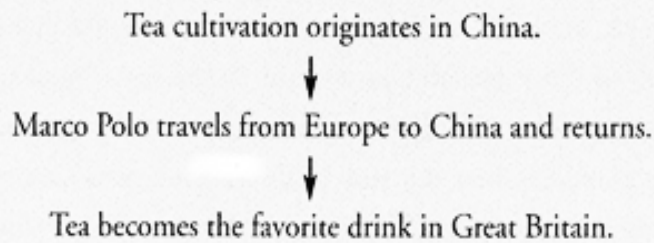
Texas 10th Grade Social Studies Test Sample Questions

- *Member of the Virginia House of Burgesses*
- *Delegate to the Second Continental Congress*
- *Primary author of the Declaration of Independence*
- *Governor of Virginia*

1. Which Revolutionary Era leader is described above? (Circle your answer.)

- A. Thomas Jefferson
- B. John Adams
- C. Benedict Arnold
- D. Alexander Hamilton

Use the diagram and your knowledge of social studies to answer the following question. (Circle your answer.)



2. These three statements best reflect the results of

- A. cultural diffusion
- B. technological innovation
- C. the socialist system
- D. the feudal system

Figure 4

Massachusetts 10th Grade English Test Sample Questions

How much of what we learn adequately explains the world around us? Read the poem "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" to learn what the poet has to say about this question. Answer the questions that follow. (Circle your answer on this sheet.)

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

When I heard the learn'd astronomer, 1

*When the proofs, the figures,
were ranged in columns before me,* 2

*When I was shown the charts and diagrams,
to add, divide, and measure them,* 3

*When I, sitting, heard the astronomer where
he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,* 4

How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick, 5

Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself, 6

In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time, 7*

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars. 8

—Walt Whitman⁶

*Mystical—mysterious

continued on next page

Figure 4, Cont.

Massachusetts 10th Grade English Test Sample Questions

1. Which of the following statements represents the **main** theme of the poem?
 - A. Science cannot fully express the wonder of the world.
 - B. Nature is one's best source of recreation.
 - C. Technology causes more problems than it solves.
 - D. Learning causes one to become ill and fatigued.

2. In line 5, what is conveyed by the phrase "tired and sick"?
 - A. the speaker's sorrow and loss experienced in his life
 - B. a sense of approaching danger
 - C. a sense of the speaker's poor health
 - D. the speaker's boredom and disappointment with the lecture

3. What is the **main purpose** of the phrase "perfect silence" in the last line of the poem?
 - A. to explain why he has to leave the lecture room
 - B. to convey a sense of loneliness and sorrow
 - C. to contrast with the sounds in the lecture room
 - D. to highlight the pleasure of science and learning

4. What do the last three lines of the poem suggest?
 - A. the importance of personal experience with nature
 - B. the dangers of losing track of time
 - C. the importance of learning about astronomy
 - D. the dangers of wandering off alone

Figure 4, Cont.

Massachusetts 10th Grade English Test Sample Questions

5. Which of the following is the **best** synonym for the word *learn'd* as it is used in line 1?

- A. aware
- B. remembered
- C. knowledgeable
- D. invented

The next question is an open-response question.

- *Read the question carefully.*
- *Explain your answer.*
- *Add supporting details.*
- *Double-check your work.*

Write your answer to question 19 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet. (Use the back flyleaf of the book, if you like.)

19. In the poem, a shift occurs at the end of line 4.

- A. Explain what happens before and after the shift.
- B. Explain what causes the shift.

Use relevant and specific information from the poem to support your answer.

Figure 5

Massachusetts 10th Grade Math Test Sample Question

Write your answer to question 21 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet. (Or on the back flyleaf of this book, if you like.)

21. The distance, d , in feet, that a dropped rock falls in t seconds can be estimated using the formula below.

$$d = 16t^2$$

Use the formula to answer the following questions.

- A. What is the distance, in feet, that a dropped rock will fall in 10 seconds? Show your work.
- B. What is the ratio of the **distance** a dropped rock will fall in 30 seconds as compared to the **distance** a dropped rock will fall in 10 seconds? Show your work.
- C. How many seconds will it take a dropped rock to fall 144 feet? Show your work.
- D. To the nearest tenth of a second, how many seconds will it take a dropped rock to fall 80 feet? Show your work.

Figure 6

Massachusetts 10th Grade U.S. History Test Sample Questions

This session contains fifteen multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. [I offer only the first three questions as samples.] Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet. (Or circle your answers on the page.)

1. Why was the Bill of Rights added to the United States Constitution?

- A. to ensure rights of foreigners
- B. to ensure slaves' right to vote
- C. to protect the federal government from the states
- D. to protect the individual rights of citizens from government abuse

2. When people purchase shares of stock in the stock market, they are investing in

- A. corporations.
- B. labor unions.
- C. governments.
- D. political parties.

3. The excerpt below is from Frederick Douglass's "Independence Day" speech in 1852.

The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth of July is yours, not mine.

—Frederick Douglass, "Independence Day" speech (1852)

In this speech, Frederick Douglass was speaking on behalf of which group?

- A. exiled American Indians
- B. deported American Jews
- C. oppressed Irish Americans
- D. enslaved African Americans

Figure 7

2006 MCAS Grade 10 English Language Arts

Writing Prompt: Composition

Works of literature often feature characters with the ability to inspire or lead others.

From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character with the ability to inspire or lead others. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe how the character inspires or leads others, and explain why this character's ability is significant to the meaning of the work of literature.

Figure 7, Cont.

**2006 MCAS Grade 10 English Language Arts Composition:
Topic/Idea Development—Score Point 3**

This composition shows rudimentary topic/idea development. Ideas are clustered in brief paragraphs, leaving little opportunity for development. Organization follows an obvious plan. Details used to support the central idea that “Harry Potter is an inspiring person” are basic and lack development.

Figure 7, Cont.

2006 MCAS Grade 10 English Language Arts Composition:
Topic/Idea Development—Score Point 3

In the fictional novel "Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone" by J.K. Rollings, Harry Potter is an inspiring person. Harry inspires us by his courage, hope, and determination.

Harry's courage is shown through the changes he had to make going from a normal boy's life into a wizarding life. One such change was his ability to catch the Golden Snitch. Also, Harry had inspired many of his fellow classmates to have the courage to try out for the Quidditch Team.

Harry Potter shows the inspiration of hope through his perseverance in the Sorcerer's stone challenge. Hope is shown when Harry defeats the villain Lord Baltimore and the school feels safe again.

Finally, Harry inspires when he shows how determined he can be by overcoming the hardships in his life growing up. Harry's uncle was constantly abusing him verbally. Harry was determined not to let it bother him. Again, the defeat of Lord Baltimore is also an example of Harry's determination. Harry was determined not to give up the stone.

Harry Potter's courage, hope and determination in J.K. Rollings' "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's stone" are an inspiration to anyone in and out of the novel.

Figure 8

Some Popular IM Terms

Teen-favored acronyms	
A/S/L	Age, sex, location
BF/GF	Boyfriend, girlfriend
BRB	Be right back
CD9	Code 9, means parents are around
GNOC	Get naked on cam (Webcam)
G2G	Got to go
IDK	I don't know
(L)MIRL	(Let's) meet in real life
LOL	Laugh out loud
MorF	Male or female
MOS	Mom over shoulder
NIFOC	Naked in front of computer
Noob	Often an insult to somebody who doesn't know much about something
NMU	Not much, you?
P911	Parent emergency
PAW	Parents are watching
PIR	Parent in room
POS	Parent over shoulder
PRON	Porn
PRW	Parents are watching
S2R	Send to receive (pictures)
TDTM	Talk dirty to me
Warez	Pirated software
W/E	Whatever