



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2013**

**Grade 8
Writing**

Writing

- 1 What is the correct form of the underlined word in the sentence below?

We laughed as the dog shaked the rain off his fur.

- A. shakes
 - B. shook
 - C. shaking
 - D. shooked
- 2 Where should a semicolon (;) be added to the sentence below?

At the ice-cream shop, one of my favorite flavors is vanilla it tastes so sweet and creamy.

- A. after *ice-cream*
- B. after *flavors*
- C. after *vanilla*
- D. after *sweet*

- 3 How should the underlined word in the sentence below be spelled?

We scanned the vast crowd for a fammiliar face.

- A. familear
- B. familier
- C. familliar
- D. familiar

- 4 Which edit should be made to the sentence below?

Every November, Americans take time on Veterans day to honor those who served their country in the military.

- A. Change *November* to **november**.
- B. Change *Veterans* to **veterans**.
- C. Change *day* to **Day**.
- D. Change *military* to **Military**.

- 5 What is the **best** way to combine the three sentences below?

Mount Rainier has three named peaks. Mount Rainier is located in Washington. Mount Rainier is an active volcano.

- A. Located in Washington, Mount Rainier is an active volcano with three named peaks.
- B. Mount Rainier is an active volcano, has three named peaks and it is located in Washington.
- C. An active volcano, but Mount Rainier has three named peaks and is located in Washington.
- D. Mount Rainier has three named peaks, it is located in Washington, and it is an active volcano.
- 6 Which sentence is punctuated correctly?
- A. Last night's game which included several players, from last year, was particularly exciting.
- B. Last night's game which included several players from last year, was particularly exciting.
- C. Last night's game, which included several players from last year, was particularly exciting.
- D. Last night's game, which included several players from last year was particularly exciting.

- 7 Which word is **misspelled** in the sentence below?

It will be necessary for the government buildings to be painted in February.

- A. necessary
- B. government
- C. buildings
- D. February
- 8 Which of the following is a sentence fragment?
- A. The American flag fifty white stars on a blue background.
- B. The stars stand for the fifty states that make up the United States.
- C. The number of stars changes when the number of states changes.
- D. The thirteen stripes on the flag stand for the original thirteen colonies.

- 9 Where should a comma be added to the sentence below?

My father said “Get your chores done and you can go to Jacob’s house for dinner.”

- A. after *father*
- B. after *said*
- C. after *chores*
- D. after *house*

- 10 Which word in the sentence below should be capitalized?

The governor toured the towns in the southern counties, and then she traveled to Rush city.

- A. governor
- B. towns
- C. southern
- D. city

When writing responses to prompts 11, 12, and 13, remember to

- **read the prompt carefully,**
- **develop a complete response to the prompt,**
- **proofread and edit your writing, and**
- **write only in the space provided.**

Persuasive Writing

- 11 Some young people think of professional athletes as role models. Do you think that professional athletes have a responsibility to set a good example for young people? Write a paragraph that develops **one** strong argument supporting your opinion.

Response to Informational Text

As you read this passage about a famous explorer, think about how her childhood experiences helped her choose her career. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

My Mother Made Me . . .

Ann Bancroft

Explorer Ann Bancroft, from Minnesota, has always loved outdoor adventures. In 1986, she was the first woman to journey by dog sled to the North Pole. Then in 1993, Ann again made history when she was one of four American women to ski to the South Pole while pulling a sled. They were the first women to complete such a trip! Ann says her mom always encouraged her adventurous spirit.

My mom certainly instilled in me a love of the outdoors and of animals. She encouraged me to seek out my interests by saying go ahead and try—you might just get what you want! My mom always found adventure books for me to read, such as *The Red Pony* and *Rascal*, which had females actively involved in the stories.

When I was young, I climbed bookcases, built rafts, and pretended to be a pirate on the high seas while canoeing! And Mom never discouraged me. I especially loved going outside during snowstorms. I remember going out at night during a blizzard-like storm and walking in the deep, fresh snow, pretending that I was in some remote place in the world pulling a sled.

I guess that, in a sense, I have been training for adventures since I was ten years old!

- 12 Write a paragraph that explains how Ann Bancroft's childhood experiences helped her choose her career as an explorer. Use details from the passage to support your response.

Report

A student created this organizer about Boston. Read the organizer and think about places a tourist could visit in Boston. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.



- 13 Write a paragraph that explains places a tourist could visit in Boston. Select **appropriate** information from the organizer to support the focus of your paragraph.

Response to Literary Text

In this passage, Anna climbs a cliff with her pet sparrow named Eagle on her shoulder. As you read the passage, think about how the author makes the climb up the cliff seem challenging. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

The Cliff

T. A. Barron

She pushed through some leafy vines that dangled from a hemlock, and stepped over a mesh of fallen trunks. Meanwhile, the land grew steadily steeper. And dotted with dark boulders—probably broken chunks of the cliff.

Then—a shadow ahead. The cliff itself! She approached and stood beneath it, hands on her hips. Crab claws! It looked awfully sheer, and taller than she'd thought. Water trickled out of the cracks and flowed down the face, making the rock shiny. And, she knew without question, slippery. Very slippery.

“Looks tough, Eagle.”

The sparrow made a fierce, sharp whistle.

“Of course I'll be careful, you silly.”

She strode over to a deep crack that snaked its way up from the base. Grabbing the edges with her fingers, she pulled herself off the ground. Then she wedged her toes into the crack and crept higher.

Little by little, she climbed. Sometimes she clung mostly to the rock itself, sometimes to the tufts of moss that sprouted from the watery seams. And sometimes, it seemed, to the very air.

As she neared the top of the cliff, the long crack came to a sudden end. What now? She leaned out as far as she dared and scanned the face. There—a thin ledge just to her right. But could she reach it?

She stretched out her hand. Farther . . . and farther . . .

No! Just out of reach.

Anna shook a drop of sweat off her nose. If her hand wouldn't reach, then how about her foot? Clinging tight now with both hands, she lifted one leg. And caught the ledge with her big toe! She wrapped it around the outcropping, braced herself, and—

The lip of rock broke off! She almost fell, but her hands dug deep into their holds and didn't slip. And she listened, heart pounding, as the broken pieces clattered down the cliff.

She steadied herself, despite her sore fingers. And drew an uneven breath. Then, swinging her leg outward again, she caught the ledge at a lower spot.

“Hold tight, Eagle.”

Cautiously, she shifted her weight to the ledge. Her hands searched for new holds as she slid herself across the rocky face. Cold, damp rock scraped against her elbows and knees. The muscles in her thighs ached terribly.

Made it! Eagle drummed her shoulder with his foot. She tilted her head and nuzzled him.

The ledge angled upward, and she moved along it briskly. A few moments later, she pulled herself over a gap at the cliff's edge and stood safely on top.

- 14 How does the author make the climb up the cliff seem challenging? Use details from the passage to support your response.

Before writing, consider

- *the focus/controlling idea of your response*
- *the supporting details/references to text in your response*

A complete response to the prompt includes

- a clear purpose/focus
- coherent organization
- details/elaboration
- well-chosen language and a variety of sentence structures
- control of conventions

Acknowledgments

The New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Maine Departments of Education wish to acknowledge and credit the following authors and publishers for use of their work in the writing portion of the *New England Common Assessment Program—2013*.

“My Mother Made Me” (p. 5) by Ann Bancroft, from U.S. Kids. Copyright © 1995 by Children’s Better Health Institute, The Saturday Evening Post Society. Published by Children’s Better Health Institute.

“The Cliff” (pp. 8–9) by T. A. Barron, from *Tree Girl*. Copyright © 2001 by Thomas A. Barron. Published by Philomel Books.