



2021 STAAR Grade 8 Reading Rationales

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3	Option C is correct	In paragraph 21, Lucy smiles as she reacts to Rodney and his encouraging words in paragraph 20, which "definitely [make] her first day less terrible." She begins to feel accepted at her new school even though she has had a rough start to her first day.
	Option A is incorrect	In paragraph 20, Rodney tells Lucy why he is happy to have her in his group, so in paragraph 21, Lucy is not "unsure about Rodney's motivation for speaking to her."
	Option B is incorrect	Lucy is not "critical of herself" in this paragraph; she is instead expressing optimism that the day is not so bad.
	Option D is incorrect	Lucy's feelings in the current moment are the focus of this paragraph; Lucy is not thinking about what Rodney might do in the future.
4	Option J is correct	The events in paragraphs 1 and 2 are important to the plot because they affect Lucy's attitude at the beginning of the day. Lucy is frustrated, frazzled, and nervous,

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6	Option J is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The conflict and resolution are described, key events are included, and minor details are omitted.
	Option F is incorrect	The resolution of the conflict is not included in this summary, making it incomplete.
	Option G is incorrect	Irrelevant details are included in this summary, and the resolution is omitted, so this is not the best summary of the selection.
	Option H is incorrect	Neither Lucy's main conflict nor the resolution are mentioned in this summary, making it incomplete.
7	Option C is correct	A turning point is the point of highest tension in a story; also known as the climax. When Lucy first enters her second period class in paragraph 10, her face is hot with embarrassment. After Rodney talks to her in paragraph 15, her discomfort is corrected. The turning point occurs in paragraph 15, when Rodney says, "It's not a big deal." This is the point of highest tension in the story.

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9	Option A is correct	Based on these paragraphs, the reader can conclude that identifying a new species requires careful analysis of an animal, because the scientists analyze the “characteristics that set [this octopod] apart from other octopods.”	
	Option B is incorrect	The scientists are analyzing an animal found by accident, not searching for an unknown animal.	
	Option C is incorrect	Land animals are not mentioned in these paragraphs.	
	Option D is incorrect	The scientists work for a government agency, but this is detailed in paragraph 3. There is nothing to suggest government agencies conduct most animal research.	
10	Option H is correct	The photograph of the octopod is included most likely to help the reader better understand why scientists named the octopod after a cartoon character. In paragraph 6, the author explains that the octopod was named Casper “because of [its] ghostlike appearance.” In the photograph, the stark contrast between the dark ocean and the ghostly white octopod is shown.	
	Option F is incorrect	The octopod is shown on the ocean floor in the photograph, but this does not explain why it lives there.	
	Option G is incorrect	The octopod may or may not have been moving when the image was taken, but a still photograph cannot show movement.	
	Option J is incorrect	The octopod is not grasping any objects in this photograph, so this is not the reason for its inclusion.	

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11	Option C is correct	The best summary of the selection is presented in these sentences. The introduction is restated and key details are explained, including when and where the octopod was discovered, why it is considered a new species, and why its discovery is important.
	Option A is incorrect	These sentences are focused only on the video of the “ghostlike” octopod and what the scientists named it. The importance of the discovery of a new species is O a b “ghostli of a MOpti

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13	Option B is correct	From Michael Vecchione’s comments, the reader can conclude that Vecchione is fascinated by the discovery of a new species. In paragraph 2 he states “I was really excited . . .” in reference to discovering the ghostly octopod, and in other paragraphs he talks about how unique and unusual the discovery is.	
	Option A is incorrect	Vecchione says that it would not be a “‘productive’” use of time to look for another specimen but does not say he is not interested.	
	Option C is incorrect	Vecchione is the scientist who was interviewed about the discovery, but this does not mean he was the coordinator for the project.	
	Option D is incorrect	Vecchione appears to understand the significance of this discovery, as noted in paragraph 8, but he does not claim to be the first to do so.	
14	Option H is correct	Definition 3 best matches the meaning of the word <u>screening</u> as used in paragraph 1. The scientists are examining the leaves carefully for the purpose of finding tiny frogs.	
	Option F is incorrect	The scientists want to find the frogs within the leaves; they are not trying to shelter them.	
	Option G is incorrect	Although the scientists are being careful because the frogs are tiny, they are trying to examine the frogs, not guard them.	
	Option J is incorrect	The scientists are trying to uncover the frogs, not shield them from view.	

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15	Option C is correct	In paragraph 1 the author explains that the frogs are very tiny, so scientists must look carefully to find them. In paragraph 3 the author explains why "locating the frogs is extremely difficult" and begins paragraph 5 with "countless challenges . . ." in reference to finding the frogs.	
	Option A is incorrect	Only the mountains of Brazil are mentioned in paragraph 2; there is nothing to suggest tiny frogs are being found worldwide.	
	Option B is incorrect	The tiny frogs in Brazil are brightly colored, but the frogs in New Guinea are brownish green, making them hard to find.	
	Option D is incorrect	Only the Brazilian tiny frogs' poisonous skin is mentioned, and only in paragraph 2, so this idea is not highlighted throughout the selection.	
16	Option J is correct	The reader can conclude that the Brazilian frogs have adaptations that protect them from danger. The frogs' poisonous skin, described in paragraph 2, and their ability to detect vibrations, explained in paragraph 3, are adaptations that keep the frogs safe.	
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 2, the author states that the Brazilian frogs "live in 'leaf litter,' or piles of dead leaves," so they do not "make their homes in treetops."	
	Option G is incorrect	Even with their bright colors, it is difficult for the scientists to find the frogs hidden among the leaves.	
	Option H is incorrect	The frogs live in the leaves, but there is no suggestion that they eat the leaves.	
17	Option C is correct	The author includes the photograph after paragraph 3 to "em they p q c 3 C d 3 n g cC e q	

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18	Option F is correct	The difference between the two scientists' work is that Vecchione uses high-tech equipment (a remotely operated vehicle that takes live videos) to observe animals, but Pie does not. Pie searches on foot and by sorting through leaves with his hands.	
	Option G is incorrect	The ghostly octopod and the tiny frogs are both difficult to find, so this is a similarity between the selections, not a difference.	
	Option H is incorrect	Pie's employer is not described, and Vecchione works for a government agency, so this is incorrect.	
	Option J is incorrect	In paragraph 2 of "A Ghostly New Creature," Vecchione is described as a zoologist, a kind of scientist who studies many animals, and the extent of Pie's research is not mentioned, so this is not a difference between the men's work.	
19	Option C is correct	Both scientists conduct their work in remote areas. The scientists in "A Ghostly New Creature" map the ocean from a ship (paragraph 1) and the scientists in "Tiptoeing Scientists" search for frogs in the "mountains of Brazil" (paragraph 2).	
	Option A is incorrect	Only the scientists in "A Ghostly New Creature" study animals that live in the ocean, so this is not a similarity.	
	Option B is incorrect	Scientists in "Tiptoeing Scientists" find frogs in Brazil by listening for their singing, but scientists in "A Ghostly New Creature" do not indicate that octopods make sounds]M	



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20	Option G is correct	Moore is unlike Vecchione because Moore knows he will likely observe the frog species more than once. Vecchione expresses doubts that he will ever see another ghostly octopod: “The likelihood of encountering another one of these octopods is very small.”	
	Option F is incorrect	Both Moore and Vecchione studied the animals in their natural habitats, so this is not how Moore is unlike Vecchione.	
	Option H is incorrect	Moore found a new species of frog in Papua, New Guinea, but there is nothing to suggest he is searching in other places.	
	Option J is incorrect	Moore found a brand-new species, not one “commonly found throughout the world,” and the same is true of Vecchione.	
21	Option D is correct	These sentences are both used to explain the significance of discovering a new species and are used to convey a similar idea that there are more species to discover.	
	Option A is incorrect	This sentence is used to describe how scientists find tiny frogs, which is unrelated to the idea that there are more species to be discovered.	
	Option B is incorrect	This sentence is used to describe how small the frogs are, which is unrelated to the possibility of finding other new species.	
	Option C is incorrect	This sentence is used to describe the difficulty of catching tiny, jumping frogs, not to express excitement about undiscovered species.	

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22	Option F is correct	Moore’s frogs in “Tiptoeing Scientists” differ from the octopod in that the frogs’ bodies have coloration that protects the frogs by camouflaging them within the leaves (paragraph 4), while the octopod in “A Ghostly New Creature,” does not have coloration for protection (paragraph 4).
	Option G is incorrect	The frogs are found in Brazil and Papua, New Guinea, and the octopod was sighted near an island in Hawaii.
	Option H is incorrect	The frog’s size is smaller than frogs typically seen, and the ghostly octopod’s size relative to other octopi is not mentioned.
	Option J is incorrect	The octopod also has adaptations, which are described in paragraphs 4 and 5 of “A Ghostly New Creature,” so this is not how they differ.
23	Option D is correct	In stanza 2, the reader can tell that the speaker feels relieved that she is going to a familiar place where there will be less conflict. “At least we’re finally/on our way” (lines 7 and 8) expresses relief, and “I won’t have to struggle” (line 10) indicates there will be less conflict.
	Option A is incorrect	The speaker expresses relief that the conflict regarding communication will soon be over, rather than irritation that it exists.
	Option B is incorrect	The speaker says in this stanza she will be around animals more than people, so she is no longer concerned about talking to people who speak different languages.
	Option C is incorrect	The speaker is expressing relief, not confidence, about the change in her situation.
24	Option G is correct	A simile is a figure of speech in which two objects are compared using the word “like” or “as.” The speaker uses the simile “as divided/as the gaps between/languages” in stanza 1 to show she feels torn between two different worlds that have little in common because they speak different languages.
	Option F is incorrect	There is nothing in this simile that suggests the speaker’s desire to learn a new language.
	Option H is incorrect	There is nothing in this simile that suggests the speaker wants to go home again.
	Option J is incorrect	The feeling of being torn between two worlds, and not annoyance at having to listen to others, is expressed in the simile.





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30	Option F is correct	The author most likely includes paragraphs 12 through 14 to explain the food forest concept and design model. The land and labor for food forests is discussed in paragraph 12 and the ideal design for food forests is discussed in paragraph 13. Reasons for this approach are presented in paragraph 14.
	Option G is incorrect	Volunteers are mentioned to explain who does the work in a food forest, not to encourage nonprofit groups to look for help from volunteers.
	Option H is incorrect	The information in these paragraphs is about the concept of food forests in general, not about existing food forests.
	Option J is incorrect	Maximizing sustainable agricultural production is only part of the food forest concept and design discussed in these paragraphs. Maximizing agricultural production is only part of the food forest concept.

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32	Option H is correct	People might assume food forests are a “spin-off” of community gardens because, despite their differences, which are explained in these paragraphs, they both offer residents public areas to harvest food in a community setting.	
	Option F is incorrect	In paragraph 7 the author states that residents “must devote the labor required to maintain their plots,” so the crops in community gardens do need maintenance.	
	Option G is incorrect	Food banks are only mentioned in paragraph 15, not paragraphs 7 through 9, and only in reference to food forests.	
	Option J is incorrect	Food forests are funded by grants; they do not “require residents to make a monetary investment.”	
33	Option B is correct	The author highlights the idea that food forests are an “asset to communities around the country” by explaining the benefits of successful food forests and giving examples of those in Wyoming, California, North Carolina, Oregon, and Washington.	
	Option A is incorrect	The author presents some of the benefits of food forests over community gardens but does not say that “people prefer food forests.”	
	Option C is incorrect	The author emphasizes that the purpose of food forests is practical because they provide fresh produce to the community.	
	Option D is incorrect	Volunteers maintain food forests, and this detail is included only in paragraph 7, so it is not highlighted throughout the selection.	

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34	Option H is correct	The author most likely is explaining the growing popularity of an alternative agricultural practice. The author explains food forests by explaining their purpose, citing real examples of them, and explaining why they are important for food forests to succeed.
	Option F is incorrect	Food forests do involve the community, but this is not the author's overall purpose in writing the selection.
	Option G is incorrect	The purpose of the selection is to provide information about food forests; the author does not urge readers to establish food forests.
	Option J is incorrect	While some problems with food forests are mentioned, the author focuses more on their growing popularity.
35	Option A is correct	The author explains that the park was planted. In this quotation, the author explains that public space should be used for people to enjoy.

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36	Option J is correct	The



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38	Option J is correct	In line 17, the word <u>ultimately</u> means “in the end.” Samantha’s mother is telling her that, in the end, it is her choice to continue orchestra or to try something new.	
	Option F is incorrect	Samantha has been wanting to try something new all summer, so “all of a sudden” is not the meaning of <u>ultimately</u> .	
	Option G is incorrect	Samantha has thought carefully about her decision, but her mother is telling her that, in the end, Samantha can’t let someone else make the decision for her.	
	Option H is incorrect	Choosing to leave orchestra is not just “for the most part” Samantha’s decision; it is entirely her own decision.	
39	Option B is correct	Figurative language is language that uses words that mean something different than their literal interpretation. The playwright uses figurative language in these sentences to show that Alyssa believes Samantha has chosen the newspaper over their friendship. When Alyssa says, “I’m still playing second fiddle,” she feels she’s not as important to Samantha as the newspaper.	
	Option A is incorrect	Alyssa is expressing her own feelings of abandonment; she is not talking about “Samantha abandoning the orchestra.”	
	Option C is incorrect	Alyssa is expressing doubts about her importance to Samantha in these lines; she is not referring to doubts Samantha might have.	
	Option D is incorrect	Alyssa misses Samantha because Samantha is writing for the newspaper; Alyssa is not thinking about her friend missing the violin.	

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40	Option J is correct	Foreshadowing is a literary element that offers a warning or indication of future events. In scene 2, the author foreshadows Samantha’s determination to be honest with Alyssa. Samantha is discouraged because Alyssa won’t listen to her, but after a talk with her mother about making her own choice, she says she’s made her decision.	
	Option F is incorrect	Alyssa indicates that she and Samantha shared a motto “orchestra for life,” which suggests that Samantha has enjoyed orchestra class.	
	Option G is incorrect	There is no indication in scene 2 that Samantha may want to write for the newspaper, only that she wants to try something different.	
	Option H is incorrect	Samantha appears concerned about preserving her friendship with Alyssa, which does not suggest she wants other friends.	
41	Option C is correct	The best summary of scene 2 is presented in this sentence because the conflict (Samantha’s conversation with Alyssa) and its resolution (Samantha deciding she is sure of her choice) are restated.	
	Option A is incorrect	Samantha’s admission that she did not tell Alyssa the news and her final decision to do so are missing, so this summary is incomplete.	
	Option B is incorrect	The summary does not include any mention of Alyssa, who is the source of Samantha’s conflict, so this summary is incomplete.	
	Option D is incorrect	This summary is incomplete. The conflict stemming from Samantha’s conversation with Alyssa is not mentioned in this summary, nor is Samantha’s decision to stick to her plan.	

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42	Option F is correct	In scene 4 the playwright shows that Alyssa has matured by revealing her "decision to try robotics." In line 35 Alyssa says that she is coping in a is Alyssa Teacher 3 a v t { 3166704 matured a 9 a