



# ***New York State Testing Program***

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## **ELA**

## **Common Core Sample Questions**

**Grade**

**7**

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**Martin Eden**  
*by Jack London*

5 The one opened the door with a latch-key and went in, followed by a young fellow who awkwardly removed his cap. He wore rough clothes that smacked of the sea, and he was manifestly out of place in the spacious hall in which he found himself. He did not know what to do with his cap, and was stuffing it into his coat pocket when the other took it from him. The act was done quietly and naturally, and the awkward young fellow appreciated it. “He understands,” was his thought. “He’ll see me through all right.”

10 He walked at the other’s heels with a swing to his shoulders, and his legs spread unwittingly, as if the level floors were tilting up and sinking down to the heave and lunge of the sea. The wide rooms seemed too narrow for his rolling gait, and to himself he was in terror lest his broad shoulders should collide with the doorways or sweep the **bric-a-brac** from the low mantel. He recoiled from side to side between the various objects and multiplied the hazards that in reality lodged only in his mind. Between a grand piano and a centre-table piled high with books  
15 was space for a half a dozen to walk abreast, yet he **essayed it with trepidation**. His heavy arms hung loosely at his sides. He did not know what to do with those arms and hands, and when, to his excited vision, one arm seemed liable to brush against the books on the table, he lurched away like a frightened horse, barely missing the piano stool. He watched the easy walk of the other in front of him, and for the first  
20 time realized that his walk was different from that of other men. He experienced a momentary pang of shame that he should walk so **uncouthly**. The sweat burst through the skin of his forehead in tiny beads, and he paused and mopped his bronzed face with his handkerchief.

25 “Hold on, Arthur, my boy,” he said, attempting to mask his anxiety with **facetious utterance**. “This is too much all at once for yours truly. Give me a chance to get my nerve. You know I didn’t want to come, an’ I guess your fam’ly ain’t **hankerin’** to see me neither.”

“That’s all right,” was the reassuring answer. “You mustn’t be frightened at us. We’re just **homely** people—Hello, there’s a letter for me.”

30 He stepped back to the table, tore open the envelope, and began to read, giving the stranger an opportunity to recover himself. And the stranger understood and appreciated. His was the gift of sympathy, understanding; and beneath his alarmed exterior that sympathetic process went on. He mopped his forehead dry and glanced about him with a controlled face, though in the eyes there was an  
35 expression such as wild animals betray when they fear the trap. He was surrounded by the unknown, apprehensive of what might happen, ignorant of what he should do, aware that he walked and bore himself awkwardly, fearful that every attribute and power of him was similarly afflicted. He was keenly sensitive, hopelessly self-conscious, and the amused glance that the other stole **privily** at him over the top of  
40 the letter burned into him like a dagger-thrust. He saw the glance, but he gave no sign, for among the things he had learned was discipline. Also, that dagger-thrust went to his pride. He cursed himself for having come, and at the same time resolved that, happen what would, having come, he would carry it through. The lines of his

45 face hardened, and into his eyes came a fighting light. He looked about more  
unconcernedly, sharply observant, every detail of the pretty interior registering  
itself on his brain. His eyes were wide apart; nothing in their field of vision escaped;  
and as they drank in the beauty before them the fighting light died out and a warm  
glow took its place. He was responsive to beauty, and here was cause to respond.

50 An oil painting caught and held him. A heavy surf thundered and burst over  
an outjutting rock; lowering storm-clouds covered the sky; and, outside the line of  
surf, a **pilot-schooner, close-hauled**, heeled over till every detail of her deck was  
visible, was surging along against a stormy sunset sky. There was beauty, and it  
drew him irresistibly. He forgot his awkward walk and came closer to the painting,  
very close. The beauty faded out of the canvas. His face expressed his  
55 befuddlement. He stared at what seemed a careless daub of paint, then stepped  
away. Immediately all the beauty flashed back into the canvas. "A trick picture," was  
his thought, as he dismissed it, though in the midst of the multitudinous impressions  
he was receiving he found time to feel a prod of indignation that so much beauty  
should be sacrificed to make a trick. He did not know painting. He had been brought  
60 up on **chromos and lithographs** that were always definite and sharp, near or  
far. He had seen oil paintings, it was true, in the show windows of shops, but the  
glass of the windows had prevented his eager eyes from approaching too near.

He glanced around at his friend reading the letter and saw the books on the  
table. Into his eyes leaped a wistfulness and a yearning as promptly as the yearning  
65 leaps into the eyes of a starving man at sight of food. An impulsive stride, with one  
lurch to right and left of the shoulders, brought him to the table, where he began  
affectionately handling the books. He glanced at the titles and the authors' names,  
read fragments of text, caressing the volumes with his eyes and hands, and, once,  
recognized a book he had read. For the rest, they were strange books and strange  
70 authors. He chanced upon a volume of Swinburne and began reading steadily,  
forgetful of where he was, his face glowing. Twice he closed the book on his  
forefinger to look at the name of the author. Swinburne! he would remember that  
name. That fellow had eyes, and he had certainly seen color and flashing light. But  
who was Swinburne? Was he dead a hundred years or so, like most of the poets? Or  
75 was he alive still, and writing? He turned to the title-page ... yes, he had written  
other books; well, he would go to the free library the first thing in the morning and  
try to get hold of some of Swinburne's stuff. He went back to the text and lost  
himself. He did not notice that a young woman had entered the room. The first he  
knew was when he heard Arthur's voice saying:

80 "Ruth, this is Mr. Eden."

www.gutenberg.org

**Words that could be defined for students are in bold.**

1

The young man's companion does all of the following things to make the young man feel more comfortable EXCEPT

- A taking his hat
- B telling him his family is simple
- C pausing to read a letter
- D showing him a painting

**Key: D**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.1; additional standards may be added after further development.

**Commentary:** This item is aligned to CCLS RL.7.1 because it asks students to analyze the actions of the young man's companion, as well as identify which part of the story was not part of the companion's actions.

**Rationale:** Option D is correct. The host does not show the young man the painting. All of the other options describe subtle attempts the host makes to put the young man at ease.

2

What do lines 55–62 reveal about the young man?

- A He does not prefer lithographs to the painting.
- B He does not think the painting was beautiful.
- C He is clumsy and tends to be forgetful.
- D He is unfamiliar with parts of his surroundings.

**Key:** D

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.3

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RL.7.3 because it asks students to analyze how the young man’s interaction with the setting shapes our understanding of his character.

**Rationale:** Option D is correct. The man thinks the painting is a trick picture because he is unfamiliar with paintings. This illustration of unfamiliarity contributes to the characterization of the man as inexperienced with settings like the one in which he currently finds himself.

3

Why does the young man become interested in the book by Swinburne?

- A He respects the author's descriptions.
- B He heard about it from a friend.
- C He is familiar with the author of the book.
- D He is trying to avoid his companion.

**Key: A**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.1, RL.7.6

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RL.7.1 because it asks students to attend to textual details to determine why the man is engrossed in the text. The question is also aligned to an aspect of RL.7.6. The question requires students to understand the point of view of the young man in order to understand why he is interested in the book. The question does not, however, ask students to contrast two different characters' points of view. This represents a compromise in the alignment of the question.

**Rationale:** Option A is correct. The young man is drawn to the author's writing. The young man thinks that the author "...had eyes, and he had certainly seen color and flashing light." The other options are incorrect because the friend did not recommend the book, he does not know the author, and he is not purposely trying to ignore his friend.

4

The description of the young man's walk serves to illustrate his

- A sense of being in an unfamiliar situation
- B confidence in himself
- C closeness to his friend
- D anxiety about meeting his friend's family

**Key: A**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.1; additional standards may be added after further development.

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RL.7.1 because it asks students to analyze evidence from the text describing the man's walk to draw an inference regarding its role in the characterization.

**Rationale:** Option A is correct. The description of the man's walking, as if he were still at sea, serves to illustrate his general unfamiliarity with the context.

5

Which lines from the passage best support the story's central theme?

- A "He stepped back to the table, tore open the envelope, and began to read, giving the stranger an opportunity to recover himself." (lines 30 and 31)
- B "He saw the glance, but he gave no sign, for among the things he had learned was discipline." (lines 40 and 41)
- C "He cursed himself for having come, and at the same time resolved that, happen what would, having come, he would carry it through." (lines 42 and 43)
- D "An impulsive stride, with one lurch to right and left of the shoulders, brought him to the table, where he began affectionately handling the books." (lines 65 through 67)

**Key: C**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.2

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RL.7.2 because it asks students to determine one of the central themes of the story through an analysis of textual evidence.

**Rationale:** Option C is correct. Option C expresses both the frustrating discomfort the young man feels and his resolve to succeed in his current situation.



## FTC Fact Sheet—Identify Yourself

You might have heard about identity theft: it's what can happen when a thief gets enough of someone's information to commit fraud. Why should people care about it? Because recovering a stolen identity can be a time-consuming and expensive process.

5 Imagine that someone pretends to be you: they use your name; they even convince businesses that they're you and they open a credit card in your name, get a cell phone in your name, or buy things using checks or a credit card that have your name on them.

10 ID thieves can be creative about getting your information. There are some low-tech ways they get it: sometimes they steal garbage, going through it to find personal information, or they steal mail. Of course, it's illegal to steal mail—and to steal your identity.

15 There are high-tech ways, too: ID thieves might put software onto your computer without you knowing it—it can happen when you open an email attachment, click on a pop-up ad, or download some music files, for example. The software, called spyware or badware, lets a thief see everything on your computer, track where you go, and record everything you type on your computer.

20 Unfortunately, even if you're really careful with your personal information, thieves can still get people's personal information. Sometimes, they hack into computer systems at stores or schools, hospitals or businesses. They look for personal information to use or sell to other thieves.

25 It's pretty easy for you and your family to make it harder for a thief to steal your identity. You can start with the low-tech defenses: being careful with your mail and garbage. If your family doesn't have a shredder, you might want to get one. Tell your parents to shred anything that has personal information on it before they throw it away.

And be sure to take care with your purse, your wallet, or your backpack. It's especially important not to carry your Social Security card with you. Keep it in a safe, locked place at home.

30 Practice some routine higher-tech defensive plays, too: protect your computer by installing and turning on an up-to-date firewall along with anti-spyware and anti-virus software. Once you're online, be careful with your personal information. Some sites might ask for a credit card number—maybe for something you're buying, maybe as proof of age. Ask yourself if they really need that number. If  
35 your answer is yes, stop and check. Before you type in your number, look for the closed lock icon in the lower right-hand corner of the screen, and look for the URL that starts with https://. These are two ways to tell if a site is secure.

40 When you get email or pop-ups on your computer, don't respond automatically. Emails that ask you to reply or click a link to "update your account" or "avoid cancellation" could be thieves trying to trick you into giving them your personal information. It's a technique called "phishing," because the thieves are fishing for your information. Pop-ups for free downloads or screensavers could be

45 spyware in disguise; clicking them could let someone see what you do and where you go online. Stop and think before you click—it could help keep your information private, and keep spyware off your computer.

[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)

**Words that could be defined for students are in bold.**

DRAFT

6

How does the information in lines 9–17 help to develop the article?

- A It tells why people should care about identity theft.
- B It describes how thieves obtain information for identity theft.
- C It explains ways people can protect themselves from identity theft.
- D It emphasizes the importance of avoiding identity theft.

**Key: B**

**Aligned to CCLS:** RI.7.5

**Commentary:** This item aligns to RI.7.5 because it asks students to analyze how a section of text (lines 9–17) contributes to the development of the entire passage as a whole.

**Rationale:** Option B is correct. Lines 9–17 explain how thieves obtain information for identity theft. The rest of the passage describes why people should care about identity theft and how to avoid it.

7

Which statement is *not* supported by the information in the article?

- A Schools can be targets of identity thieves.
- B Music downloads can often expose you to spyware.
- C Secure websites can protect your information.
- D Identity thieves can only target people on the internet.

**Key: D**

**Aligned CCSS:** RI.7.1; additional standards may be added after further development.

**Commentary:** This item aligns to RI.7.1 because it asks students to find the textual evidence that supports the statements and determine which statement is not supported by the text.

**Rationale:** Option D is correct. The author explains that identity thieves take information from schools, businesses, mail, etc.—not just from information people share online. The ideas behind options A, B, and C are explicitly stated in the text.

8

Which statement best expresses the author's view of identity theft?

- A Identity theft will eventually be stopped as computer software becomes more sophisticated.
- B Identity theft is a serious threat that can generally be prevented with a few simple habits.
- C Identity theft happens more commonly to adults because they are typically less familiar with computers.
- D Identity theft is an uncontrollable consequence of the amount of personal information that is shared through computers in today's world.

**Key: B**

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.7.2

**Commentary:** This item aligns to RI.7.2 because it asks students to summarize the general idea of the text.

**Rationale:** Option B is correct. The author views identity theft as a real threat to most people, but one that can be generally prevented with low- and high-tech strategies.

9

Read this sentence from the article:

*“Practice some routine higher-tech defensive plays, too: protect your computer by installing and turning on an up-to-date firewall along with anti-spyware and anti-virus software.”*

The word *plays* in this sentence most closely means

- A games
- B scripts
- C techniques
- D attacks

**Key:** C

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.7.4

**Commentary:** This item aligns to CCLS RI.7.4 because it asks students to determine the specific connotation of a word as it is used in a text.

**Rationale:** Option C is correct. In this context, “plays” means techniques for defending against identity theft.

10

The article suggests all of the following strategies for preventing identity theft EXCEPT

- A don't put personal information in the trash
- B don't take your Social Security card out of the house
- C don't enter your credit card on shared public computers
- D don't download free software without considering if it's necessary

**Key: C**

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.7.1; additional standards may be added after further development.

**Commentary:** This item aligns to CCLS RI.7.1 because it asks students to find textual evidence that supports the statements and determine which statement is not supported by the text.

**Rationale:** Option C is correct. The article does not discuss the use of shared public computers. All of the other strategies are presented.

## The Quest of the Silver Fleece

by W.E.B. Du Bois

Night fell. The red waters of the swamp grew sinister and sullen. The tall pines lost their slimness and stood in wide blurred blotches all across the way, and a great shadowy bird arose, wheeled and melted, murmuring, into the black-green sky.

5           The boy wearily dropped his heavy bundle and stood still, listening as the voice of crickets split the shadows and made the silence audible. A tear wandered down his brown cheek. They were at supper now, he whispered—the father and old mother, away back yonder beyond the night. They were far away; they would never be as near as once they had been, for he had stepped into the world. And the cat and  
10 Old Billy—ah, but the world was a lonely thing, so wide and tall and empty! And so bare, so bitter bare! Somehow he had never dreamed of the world as lonely before; he had fared forth to beckoning hands and luring, and to the eager hum of human voices, as of some great, swelling music.

15           Yet now he was alone; the empty night was closing all about him here in a strange land, and he was afraid. The bundle with his earthly treasure had hung heavy and heavier on his shoulder; his little horde of money was tightly wadded in his sock, and the school lay hidden somewhere far away in the shadows. He wondered how far it was; he looked and harkened, starting at his own heartbeats, and fearing more and more the long dark fingers of the night.

20           Then of a sudden up from the darkness came music. It was human music, but of a wildness and a weirdness that startled the boy as it fluttered and danced across the dull red waters of the swamp. He hesitated, then **impelled** by some strange power, left the highway and slipped into the forest of the swamp, shrinking, yet following the song hungrily and half forgetting his fear. A harsher, shriller note  
25 struck in as of many and ruder voices; but above it flew the first sweet music, birdlike, abandoned, and the boy crept closer.

30           The cabin crouched ragged and black at the edge of black waters. An old chimney leaned drunkenly against it, raging with fire and smoke, while through the chinks winked red gleams of warmth and wild cheer. With a revel of shouting and noise, the music suddenly ceased. Hoarse **staccato** cries and peals of laughter shook the old hut, and as the boy stood there peering through the black trees, abruptly the door flew open and a flood of light illumined the wood.

www.gutenberg.org

**Words that could be defined for students are in bold.**



## **“Home”**

*by Rupert Brooke, 1913*

I came back late and tired last night  
Into my little room,  
To the long chair and the firelight  
And comfortable gloom.

5

But as I entered softly in  
I saw a woman there,  
The line of neck and cheek and chin,  
The darkness of her hair,  
The form of one I did not know  
Sitting in my chair.

10

I stood a moment fierce and still,  
Watching her neck and hair.  
I made a step to her; and saw  
That there was no one there.

15

It was some trick of the firelight  
That made me see her there.  
It was a chance of shade and light  
And the cushion in the chair.

20

Oh, all you happy over the earth,  
That night, how could I sleep?  
I lay and watched the lonely gloom;  
And watched the moonlight creep  
From wall to basin, round the room,  
All night I could not sleep.

[www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

**Words that could be defined for students are in bold.**

*Short Answer Constructed Response for "The Quest of the Silver Fleece"*

**11**

How does the author use sound to establish the mood of the story? Use **two** details from the passage to support your answer.

Write your answer in complete sentences.

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**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.3

**Commentary:** This aligns to standard CCLS RL.7.3 because it asks students to explain how the sound descriptions affect the overall mood of the story.

**Rationale:** The response accurately describes how the author uses sound to establish a mood of foreboding in the story (by including “murmuring” in paragraph 1; “the voice of crickets” in paragraph 2; “his own heartbeats” in paragraph 3; “human music, but of a wildness and a weirdness” and “A harsher, shriller note” in paragraph 4; and “staccato cries and peals of laughter” in paragraph 5).

**12** How does the music change the way the boy feels? Use **two** details from the passage to support your answer.

Write your answer in complete sentences.

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**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.1; additional standards may be added after further development.

**Commentary:** This item aligns to CCLS RL.7.1 because it asks students to provide evidence from the text to support analysis of what the text says explicitly.

**Rationale:** The response accurately describes how the music changes the way the boy feels. He initially feels alone and afraid, but the music makes him forget his fear as it draws him closer to the cabin.

*Short Answer Constructed Response for "Home"*

**13**

How does the speaker’s changing perception of the setting affect the way the speaker feels over the course of the poem? Use **two** details from the poem to support your answer.

Write your answer in complete sentences.

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**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.3

**Commentary:** This item aligns to CCLS RL.7.3 because it asks students to analyze how setting shapes a character.

**Rationale:** The response accurately explains that the setting, a room in the speaker’s home, is initially comforting to the speaker (“I came back ... To the long chair and firelight And comfortable gloom”) and that after the speaker is jolted by his encounter with what he thinks is a stranger in his house, his room is no longer comforting and is instead scary (“I lay and watched the lonely gloom ... All night I could not sleep”).

*Extended Constructed Response Paired Passages*

**14**

Compare and contrast how the main character of “The Quest of the Silver Fleece” and the speaker of “Home” feel initially and how each one’s feelings change over time.

In your response, be sure to do the following:

- describe how the character in “The Quest of the Silver Fleece” feels at the beginning of his journey and how his feelings change
- describe how the speaker in “Home” feels upon returning home and how the speaker’s feelings change
- describe similarities and/or differences in the change of feelings experienced in both passages
- use details from both passages in your response

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**Aligned CCLS:** RL.7.1, W.7.2, and W.7.9

**Commentary:** This item aligns to RL.7.1, W.7.2, and W.7.9 because it asks students to provide evidence from the texts to support written analysis of what the texts explicitly say.

**Rationale:** The response accurately describes how at the beginning of his journey the boy is not scared or alone and is in fact hopeful (“he had fared forth to beckoning hands and luring, and to the eager hum of human voices, as of some great music”) and goes on to describe the narrator’s changing feelings (sadness: “a tear wandered down his brown cheek”; loneliness: “the world was a lonely thing, so wide and tall and empty! And so bare, so bitter bare!”; and fear: “starting at his own heartbeats, and fearing more and more the long dark fingers of the night”). The response accurately describes how at the beginning of the poem the speaker’s room is comforting to the speaker (“I came back ... To the long chair and firelight And comfortable gloom”), and goes on to explain that after the speaker is jolted by his encounter with what he thinks is a stranger in his house, his room is no longer

comforting and is instead scary (“I lay and watched the lonely gloom ... All night I could not sleep”).



# Grade 7

## ELA

### Common Core Sample Questions

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