



The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment

Reading Item and Scoring Sampler

SUPPLEMENT

2009–2010

Grade 4

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READING

INTRODUCTION

The 2009–2010 Reading Item and Scoring Sampler Supplement displays released items from the 2009 PSSA operational test. The sampler supplement is to be used in conjunction with the previous year’s sampler. The 2008–2009 Reading Item and Scoring Sampler can be found on the PDE website at <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/>. Select the “Pre K–12 Schools” tab at the top of the page. Then select “Assessment” in the “Learn About” column to the left. Select “Resource Materials” in the “Learn About” column of the next page, and then scroll down to find the appropriate sampler. Alternately, you may type in or click this link to reach the location of the item samplers:
http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/cwp/view.asp?a=108&Q=73314&a_and_tNav=|680|&a_and_tNav=|

This item and scoring sampler supplement contains multiple-choice items and an open-ended item. Each item is preceded by the Assessment Anchor and Eligible Content coding. The multiple-choice answer options are followed by an annotation that explains why the correct answer is correct and the other answer options are incorrect. The correct answer is indicated by an asterisk. The table following each multiple-choice item displays the percentages of students who chose each answer option. The correct answer is also shaded in these tables. The table following the open-ended item indicates the students’ performance at each score point. Sample student responses for each of the scoring levels are also included for the open-ended item.

READING

Read the following passage about wild ponies. Then answer questions 1–10.

Wild Ponies

by John Micklos, Jr.

Cheers rise as the ponies splash into the water. It's a July morning on Assateague (A suh teeg), an island located off the coasts of Virginia and Maryland. Every year at this time, local cowhands round up the wild ponies that live on the southern end of the island. At low tide, they herd the ponies across a narrow waterway called a channel to another island named Chincoteague (SHIN koh teeg). Thousands of people come to watch.

The ponies swim across the channel in about five minutes. The crowd cheers again as the animals reach the shore. Back on dry land, the ponies shake the water from their manes. Then they start to graze calmly. Some wander right up to the fence that separates them from the onlookers.

Soon cowhands herd the ponies through town to the auction grounds. The next day most of the young ponies, called foals, will be auctioned, or sold to the highest bidder. The pony auction does three things:

- It raises money for the Chincoteague Fire Department.
- It allows some people to take home a foal.

- And most important, it keeps the pony population at the proper size. Resources such as food will only support about 150 ponies on the southern end of Assateague Island. A larger number would hurt the island's ecology, or balance of life.

History and Mystery

Assateague is a long, narrow island. It stretches between southern Maryland and northern Virginia. On one side is the Atlantic Ocean. On the other side is a quiet bay.

The ponies have been roaming free on the island for hundreds of years. They are feral animals. This means that their ancestors once were tame.

No one knows exactly how the ponies got to the island. Some people believe that long ago the first ponies were being transported by ship from Spain. They think the ship wrecked near the island in a storm, and the ponies swam ashore.

Most experts, though, think the first settlers of mainland Maryland and Virginia brought the ponies with them from England. Later they turned the animals loose to graze on Assateague Island.

READING

Harsh Habitat

Today's ponies lead a hard life. In the summer they face hot weather and biting insects. In the winter they must grow thick coats to protect themselves from bitter winds.

Spring and fall are the best seasons. The weather on the island is mild, and there is plenty of grass for the ponies to eat. The ponies also eat leaves and twigs. They even munch on poison ivy, which doesn't seem to bother them.

These island grazers may be the size of ponies (less than 58 inches tall), but they are actually horses. Experts think that the harsh habitat, or place where they live, accounts for their small size. In fact, when some of the auctioned foals leave Assateague and receive better food and shelter, they grow to horse size. But people have been calling them ponies for years, and the name has stuck.

Pony Bands

The ponies live together in small groups called bands. Some bands may have as few as two ponies. Others may have a dozen. In most bands there are usually several mares, or adult females, some foals, and one adult male.

The adult male pony is called a stallion. It is his job to protect the band. Sometimes stallions try to steal ponies from other bands. This can lead to fights between stallions. They bite and kick with their heavy hooves until one stallion backs away.

In the spring mares give birth. Within minutes, their foals begin to walk on wobbly legs. Soon they are running and playing. At first they drink their mother's milk to help them grow. Then they begin to eat grass as the older ponies do.

Managing the Herds

There are two main groups, or herds, of wild ponies on Assateague Island. Each herd has 100 to 150 ponies and includes many pony bands. One herd lives on the Maryland side of the island. The other lives on the Virginia side. A fence at the state line keeps the herds apart.

National Park Service rangers manage the herd on the Maryland side of the island. The Chincoteague Fire Department manages the herd on the Virginia side of the island.

Return to the Wild

At the auction, some people bid on ponies to take home. Others just come to watch. The day after the auction, Chincoteague cowhands herd the ponies back to the water's edge. Crowds cheer again as the ponies swim home to Assateague Island. There they will be free to roam again for another year.

READING

MULTIPLE-CHOICE ITEMS

Note: All percentages listed in the tables below the items have been rounded.

A.2.3.1

1. What happens to the ponies when **not** at the auction?
- A They are fed by local firefighters.
 - B They are studied by people who visit the island.
 - C They move around the island freely. *
 - D They help local farmers do farm work.

The student is asked to infer what happens to the ponies when they are not at the auction. The passage states the ponies are “free to roam again,” and “live together in small groups.” Option C is the correct answer. Options A, B, and D are not supported by information in the passage.

A	B	C	D
10%	12%	74%	5%

A.2.2.2

2. Read the sentence from the passage.

“Resources such as food will only support about 150 ponies on the southern end of Assateague Island.”

What does the word resources most likely mean?

- A ideas
- B problems
- C supplies *
- D decisions

The student is asked to determine the meaning of the word “resources.” Using context clues from the given sentence such as “food” and “support,” option C is the correct answer. Options A, B, and D are not definitions of the given word.

A	B	C	D
7%	8%	81%	5%

READING

A.2.4.1

3. The wild ponies eat all of the following on Assateague Island **except**
- A twigs.
 - B insects. *
 - C grass.
 - D poison ivy.

The student is asked to determine what the ponies on Assateague Island do not eat. Option B is the correct answer. Options A, C, and D are relevant details found in the passage.

A	B	C	D
9%	75%	7%	10%

A.2.4.1

4. What is the main idea of the section "Harsh Habitat"?
- A The wild ponies face many difficulties living on Assateague Island. *
 - B With good care, some ponies can grow to be full-size horses.
 - C People have been calling the ponies "horses" for a long time.
 - D Winter is the worst season on Assateague Island.

The student is asked to determine the main idea of the section "Harsh Habitat." In the section "Harsh Habitat" the passage states that "today's ponies lead a hard life." Option A is the correct answer. Options B and C contain information that is not discussed in the section "Harsh Habitat," while option D is a detail in the section, but not the main idea.

A	B	C	D
72%	11%	6%	12%

READING

B.3.3.2

5. Which section of the passage tells where the ponies came from?
- A “History and Mystery” *
 - B “Harsh Habitat”
 - C “Managing the Herds”
 - D “Return to the Wild”

The student is asked to determine which section of the passage tells where the ponies came from. In the section “History and Mystery,” the passage states that “people believe...the first ponies were being transported from Spain,” and “the first settlers brought the ponies.” Option A is the correct answer. Options B, C, and D are sections that discuss information other than where the ponies came from.

A	B	C	D
75%	8%	7%	10%

A.2.3.1

6. The information about the newborn foals suggests that the foals
- A grow strong soon after birth. *
 - B need help learning to walk.
 - C drink milk for a long time.
 - D leave their mothers at birth.

The student is asked to infer information regarding the newborn foals. The passage states that newborn foals are “soon... running and jumping,” which supports option A as the correct answer. Options B, C, and D are not supported by information in the passage.

A	B	C	D
52%	16%	26%	5%

READING

A.2.4.1

7. What is the main reason for the pony auction?
- A to let children ride a pony
 - B to raise money for the cowhands
 - C to find a home for most ponies before winter
 - D to limit the total number of ponies on the island *

The student is asked to determine the main reason for the pony auction. The passage states that “most important, it keeps the population at the proper size,” which supports option D as the correct answer. Options A and B are not supported by information in the passage, while option C is only a minor detail in the passage.

A	B	C	D
3%	28%	23%	45%

B.3.1.1

8. Which sentence from the passage is an opinion?
- A “They are feral animals.”
 - B “At the auction, some people bid on ponies to take home.”
 - C “Assateague is a long, narrow island.”
 - D “Today’s ponies lead a hard life.” *

The student is asked to identify which sentence from the passage is an opinion. Option D is the correct answer because the phrase “hard life” is an opinion. Options A, B, and C are facts found in the passage.

A	B	C	D
28%	11%	12%	49%

READING

A.2.3.1

9. How do the people of Chincoteague Island most likely feel about the ponies?
- A They want to tame all the ponies.
 - B They want to move the ponies to Maryland.
 - C They look forward to seeing them each year. *
 - D They think the ponies should stay on Assateague.

The student is asked to draw a conclusion about how the people of Chincoteague Island most likely feel about the ponies. The passage states that “cheers rise” and “thousands of people come to watch,” which shows people look forward to seeing the ponies every year. Option C is the correct answer. Options A, B, and D are not supported by information in the passage.

A	B	C	D
13%	9%	61%	17%

READING

ITEM-SPECIFIC SCORING GUIDELINE

Item #10

This item is reported under Category A, Comprehension and Reading Skills.

Assessment Anchor:

A.2– Understand nonfiction appropriate to grade level.

Specific Eligible Content addressed by this item:

A.2.3.1– Make inferences and/or draw conclusions based on information from text.

Scoring Guide:

Score	In response to this item the student—
3	demonstrates <i>complete</i> knowledge of making inferences and drawing conclusions by explaining the importance of the pony auction to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands, using three examples from the passage.
2	demonstrates <i>partial</i> knowledge of making inferences and drawing conclusions by explaining the importance of the pony auction to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands. (Example: Student explains the importance of the pony auction to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands, using two examples from the passage.)
1	demonstrates <i>incomplete</i> knowledge of making inferences and drawing conclusions by explaining the importance of the pony auction to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands. (Example: Student explains the importance of the pony auction to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands, using one example from the passage.)
0	has given a response that provides <i>insufficient</i> material for scoring or is inaccurate in all respects.
Non-scorable	BLK (blank)...No response or written refusal to respond or too brief to determine response OT..... Off task/topic LOE.....Response in a language other than English IL..... Illegible

Example—Top Scoring Response (3 Points):

Explanation with Examples
The pony auction is important to the islands because it keeps the population of the ponies left on the islands to the right size. This helps keep the ponies in good health on the islands. The auction also brings the community together because thousands of people come to watch the ponies swim. Finally, the pony auction raises money for the Chincoteague Fire Department.

READING

A.2.3.1 Response Score: 1

10. Use at least three examples from the passage to explain how the pony auction is important to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands.

It raises money for the Chincoteague fire Department, it allows some people to take home a foal and most important it keeps the pony population at the proper size. resources such as food will only support about 150 ponies on the southern end of Assateague Island. a larger number would hurt the island's ecology or balance of life.

The student has given an incomplete answer to the task by using word-for-word relevant copied text.

READING

SUMMATIVE DATA TABLE

Multiple-Choice Items

Sampler Sequence	A	B	C	D
1	10%	12%	74%	5%
2	7%	8%	81%	5%
3	9%	75%	7%	10%
4	72%	11%	6%	12%
5	75%	8%	7%	10%
6	52%	16%	26%	5%
7	3%	28%	23%	45%
8	28%	11%	12%	49%
9	13%	9%	61%	17%

Open-Ended Item

Sampler Sequence	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1	Score Point 0
10	28%	28%	22%	22%

READING

Acknowledgements

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