Released Test Items:
Sample Student Work Illustrating LEAP 21 Achievement Levels
July 2005

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English Language Arts
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LEAP 21 is an integral part of the Louisiana school and district accountability system passed by the state legislature and signed into law in 1997. The primary purposes of the accountability system are to raise expectations for achievement for all Louisiana public school students and to improve public education in the state.

In March 2005, students in grade 8 took LEAP 21 English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies tests. The test scores are combined with other relevant data to create school and district accountability scores, which serve as a means of measuring educational quality and improvement in educational programs over time.

This document is part of a series of materials meant to promote understanding of the knowledge and skills students must have and the kinds of work they must produce to be successful on the LEAP 21. A list of other documents providing background and further information on the LEAP 21 tests can be found on the Louisiana Department of Education Web site at www.louisianaschools.net.

**LEAP 21 Reports**

Louisiana’s grade 8 students are tested each year in March. Individual student, school, district, and state test results are released in phases in May and July. School and district accountability results are reported in the fall.

For LEAP 21, student scores are reported at five achievement levels: *Advanced, Mastery, Basic, Approaching Basic,* and *Unsatisfactory.* The percentage of students scoring at each level is reported for individual schools, districts, and the state. General definitions for achievement levels are given on page 2. Specific definitions of achievement levels for the English Language Arts test were published in the 1999 Released Items documents. The achievement level definitions for all content areas can be found on the Louisiana Department of Education Web site at www.louisianaschools.net. Click on the “Testing” link below the tabs at the top of the page, then on the “Achievement Levels” link at the left of the page.
### LEAP 21

#### General Achievement Level Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td>A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mastery</strong></td>
<td>A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic</strong></td>
<td>A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approaching Basic</strong></td>
<td>A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsatisfactory</strong></td>
<td>A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Purpose of This Document

This document presents student work in the English Language Arts test, which was completed as part of a LEAP 21 assessment. The document includes multiple-choice items, constructed-response (short answer and extended response) items, and a written composition that exemplify what students scoring at specified achievement levels should know and be able to do. A discussion of each item highlights the knowledge and skills it is intended to measure, as well as strengths and weaknesses in the student work on the item.

As you review the items, it is important to remember that a student’s achievement level is based on his or her total test score (cumulative score for all questions in the test) in a content area, not on one particular item or section, and that the sample items included in this report represent a small portion of the body of knowledge and skills measured by the LEAP 21 tests. Additional items will be released in future years of the LEAP 21.
The grade 8 LEAP 21 English Language Arts test is composed of four parts—Writing, Reading and Responding, Using Information Resources, and Proofreading.

1. Writing

In the Writing session of the English Language Arts test, students write a composition in response to a Writing Topic. They are given the opportunity to make notes or complete other idea-generating and organizing activities, write a rough draft, and then write a final draft of their composition. A Writer’s Checklist of useful reminders is provided.

Each student’s composition is scored in two dimensions that address topic development—**Composing** and **Style/Audience Awareness**. The Composing dimension measures the degree to which the composition exhibits

- focus on a central idea,
- support and elaboration of the idea,
- unity of purpose, and
- organization.

The Style/Audience Awareness dimension evaluates the ways in which the student author shapes and controls language to affect readers. Features of Style/Audience Awareness are

- selection of vocabulary (diction or word choice),
- sentence variety,
- tone, and
- voice (or personality that shows in writing).

For each of these two dimensions, a student can earn from 1 to 4 score points.

In addition, the compositions are rated as showing either “acceptable control” or “unacceptable control” in the **Conventions—Sentence Formation, Usage, Mechanics, and Spelling**. An acceptable rating earns one score point, while an unacceptable rating earns none.

A summary of the score points for the Writing session is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension/Scale</th>
<th>Maximum Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style/Audience Awareness</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Formation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usage</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Writing Topic and directions from a LEAP 21 test are shown on page 7. Samples of student work at achievement levels from Advanced to Approaching Basic, with comments, are provided on pages 8 through 15.

2. Reading and Responding

At grade 8, the Reading and Responding session of the LEAP 21 English Language Arts test is composed of four reading passages—excerpts from novels or stories, articles from textbooks or other informational sources, poems, and other materials appropriate to the 8th grade. Each reading passage is the source for four or six multiple-choice items and two short-answer items, depending on the length of the passage. Also included is an essay question based on two passages.

Constructed-response items are scored using item-specific rubrics. A general scoring rubric for 2-point short-answer items follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• The student’s response provides a complete and correct answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• The student’s response is partially correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The student’s response demonstrates limited awareness or contains errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>• The student’s response is incorrect, irrelevant, too brief to evaluate, or blank.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is a general scoring rubric for the 4-point essay item:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>• The student’s response demonstrates in-depth understanding of the relevant content and/or procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The student completes all important components of the task accurately and communicates ideas effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Where appropriate, the student offers insightful interpretations and/or extensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Where appropriate, the student uses sophisticated reasoning and/or efficient procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• The student completes most important aspects of the task accurately and communicates clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The student’s response demonstrates an understanding of major concepts and/or processes, although less important ideas or details may be overlooked or misunderstood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The student’s logic and reasoning may contain minor flaws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• The student completes some parts of the task successfully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The student’s response demonstrates gaps in conceptual understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• The student completes only a small portion of the task and/or shows minimal understanding of the concepts and/or processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>• Student’s response is incorrect, irrelevant, too brief to evaluate, or blank.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the Reading and Responding session, an 8th-grade student completes a total of twenty multiple-choice items, eight short-answer items, and one essay question to earn up to 40 points, as shown in this chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Item</th>
<th>Maximum Points per Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 multiple-choice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 short-answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 essay</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Reading and Responding passage, multiple-choice items, and two short-answer items with student responses are shown on pages 17 through 26.

3. **Using Information Resources**

The Using Information Resources session of the English Language Arts test consists of a number of information resources appropriate for grade 8. The reference materials come from different sources and pertain to one specific topic. At grade 8, for example, the materials may include

- tables of contents,
- indexes,
- bibliographies,
- other reference sources (including electronic sources such as Web sites), and
- articles.

The reference materials occupy several pages in the student test booklet. Students are directed to skim the resources, read the test items, then locate and read the appropriate resource and/or information to answer each item.

The Using Information Resources session of the test has five multiple-choice and two short-answer items. A student can earn up to 9 points, as indicated in the chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Item</th>
<th>Maximum Points per Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 multiple-choice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 short-answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Proofreading

For grade 8, the Proofreading session of the English Language Arts test presents a student essay or letter that is in rough-draft form. Students respond to eight multiple-choice items that address errors in or nonstandard grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage, and, if a letter, format. Three editing choices are provided, as well as the choice to leave the passage as it appears. Each correct answer is worth 1 point, for a possible total of 8 points in this part of the test.

In summary, it is possible for an 8th-grade student to earn a total of 69 points on the LEAP 21 English Language Arts test. The number of raw score points a student would have to achieve to reach each achievement level may change slightly from year to year given the difficulty of that particular form of the test. The spring 2005 raw score range for each achievement level is listed below.

**Spring 2005 English Language Arts, Grade 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Raw Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>60.5 – 69 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>51.5 – 60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>40.5 – 51 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching Basic</td>
<td>28 – 40 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0 – 27.5 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This document presents items that were completed by students as part of a LEAP 21 assessment. The information shown for each item includes

- the correct answer,
- the achievement level or score point,
- the standard and benchmark each item measures, and
- commentary on the skills/knowledge measured by the item.
Below is a Writing Topic used for an 8th-grade LEAP 21 English Language Arts test, followed by samples of student writing at achievement levels from Advanced to Approaching Basic.

Read the topic in the box below and write a well-organized multiparagraph composition of at least 150 to 200 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.

**Writing Topic**

Your teacher has asked you to write a story about a time you received a gift or a compliment that you did not expect.

Before you begin to write, think about a time when you received a gift or a compliment. What was the gift or compliment? Who was involved? What happened during that time?

Now write a multiparagraph story telling what happened the time you received a gift or compliment you did not expect.

- In your story, give specific details and enough information so that your teacher will understand what happened.
- Be sure to write clearly and to check your story for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Use page X in this test booklet for notes, brainstorming, and/or writing an outline. Write a rough draft on pages X and X. Then, you may tear out your rough draft to make it easier for you to write your final draft. Write your final draft on page X. Use page X if you need additional space. When you are finished writing, close your test booklet and place your rough draft under it.

Remember: The prewriting activities on page X and the rough draft on pages X and X will not be scored. Only your final draft on pages X and X will be scored.
Final Draft

'My Surprise!'

Have you ever received a gift you weren’t expecting? I have. I received my gift on April 20, 1996. I was so excited and surprised when I saw him. On April 20, 1996, I received my horse Blaze.

On April 20, 1996, I arrived home from seeing my relatives on my birthday. I was very joyous because I had received many other gifts. I didn’t know what was coming. My mom walked me to our barn with her hands over my eyes. As I looked into the stall I saw a beautiful young sire inside. It with a large red bow around his neck. Inside the stall there were balloons and streamers, but the surprise wasn’t over. Next to the freshly cut bails of hay lay my brand new saddle and bridle. Then I heard a loud noise coming from behind the barn. It was my Uncle Phillip with my new trailer. I sat there so excited that I couldn’t move. This was a great day.
Final Draft (continued)

I didn’t expect to receive this gift on my birthday. My mother didn’t leave me any clues to finding this out. I was very overjoyed when I found out that I just got my very own horse Blaze. That day was the best day of my life. Blaze was a very unexpected gift.

The central idea of this essay—the writer received the surprise gift of a horse, Blaze—is very sharply focused. The writer builds the composition on the element of his or her surprise: “My mother didn’t leave me any clues.” In the introduction, the writer tells how he or she was “excited and surprised when I saw him [the horse].” Then, the writer describes in detail how the gift, the horse and saddle and trailer, was presented (“My mom walked me to our barn with her hands over my eyes”) and decorations were included (“balloons and streamers, but the surprise wasn’t over”). In the conclusion, the writer reaffirms that “Blaze was a very unexpected gift.” Events are presented in a logical order as the writer relates the discovery of each part of the gift. Effective transitions (“As I looked into the stall,” “Next to”) link events. This essay demonstrates consistent skill in the Composing dimension.

The writer engages the audience with strong imagery (“As I looked into the stall I saw a beautiful young sire inside it with a large red bow around his neck”) and vivid modifiers (“freshly cut bales [bales] of hay,” “a loud noise coming from behind the barn”). A rhetorical question, a stylistic technique, is used to introduce the topic. Sentences have varied structures and lengths, producing a fluent composition. The tone is consistent and appropriate, conveying the joy and excitement of the writer. This essay demonstrates consistent skill in the Style/Audience Awareness dimension.

The writer uses a variety of well-formed, accurate sentences. Usage and capitalization are correct as is spelling, with few exceptions (recieved for received, over joyed for overjoyed). Punctuation is correct for this grade level. Overall, this essay demonstrates consistent skill in the Conventions dimension.
On December 25, 1999, I received a gift from my parents, which I never thought I would get. My parents had bought me a violin, or fiddle to be exact, because that's what they use in Cajun music. Even before I had gotten it, I didn't think that was what was in the box. When I opened the box, I looked puzzled, because I had no clue what it was. Then, as they took it out I started screaming in excitement. When I told my parents that I wanted to play, I didn't think that they believed me, so I was very shocked about it.

Ever since I got my violin, I have taken lessons after lessons, and I am still taking them. I have won
A clear focus on the central idea, the gift of the writer’s first fiddle, is maintained throughout the essay. In the beginning, the writer tells about receiving the Cajun fiddle from his or her parents and returns to this in the ending with a note of gratitude for two additional fiddles and “the opportunity to play a roll [role] in my heritage and culture.” Between, the writer develops two ideas with sufficient details and explanation. The first idea is the unexpectedness of the gift, and the second tells what the gift led to—accomplishments that culminate with participation “in a Cajun band, called The Young Aces.” This is, however, one of the few specifics included. This essay demonstrates reasonable skill in the Composing dimension.

The writer uses clear and appropriate vocabulary that sometimes rises above the mundane: *plaques, medallions, puzzled, heritage, culture, opportunity, recently, and exact*. The sentences vary in length, structure, and complexity, producing a fluent reading. The writer demonstrates awareness of the audience and a consistent tone. This essay demonstrates reasonable skill in the Style/Audience Awareness dimension.

Sentences are varied and correctly formed. Capitalization and punctuation are correct for this grade level. Although there is a usage error (*taken for taking*) and some spelling errors (*roll for role and greatful for grateful*), this essay demonstrates acceptable skill in the Conventions dimension.
Achievement Level: Basic

Final Draft

There was one time when I got a gift that I
hadn’t expected for a few more months. I was happy that
I was so happy when I got the gift it was a new pair
of rollerblades.

Later on that day my parents let me go skate
all over town, that was one of the funnest days of my life.
That day I did some awesome trike and I pulled some awesome
grinds off. When I got back to my house I went clean
my roller blades, and I asked my mom why she had bought
me the roller blades, she said it was none of my business, knowing
me I couldn’t leave it at that as I asked again
later and she said just because.

I was so thankful that I must have to my
parents thank you more than 100 times. I felt like I could
have went skate all day long. I was so exited I wish
I could relive that moment all over again.

In this essay, the writer tells about a gift that wasn’t expected “for a few more
months,” rollerblades. Although the narrative between the writer and the
mother includes details about skating that day, the story quickly digresses into
a discussion about why Mom “had bought me the rollerblades.” There is no
apparent point to relating this discussion, since mother responds, “none of
your business” and “just because,” and then the writer leaves the topic
abruptly. The writer ends the essay with an acknowledgement of gratitude and
a wistful “wish I could relive that moment all over again.” Relevant elaboration
is limited. The reader is left with unanswered questions and incomplete
information. This essay demonstrates inconsistent skill in the Composing
dimension.

The tone is not consistent throughout the essay, changing in the exchange
with mother: “Knowing me, I couldn’t leave it at that” and “I was so thankful
that I must have [said] to my parents thank you more than 100 times.” Aside
from trikes (tricks?) and grinds, the vocabulary is generic and overused and the
sentences awkward and rambling. This essay demonstrates inconsistent skill in the Style/Audience Awareness dimension.

Several run-on sentences, usage errors (funnest, went for gone, skate for skating), and some extra and omitted words interfere with fluency. Most capitalization and punctuation are correct. Most words are spelled correctly with the exception of awesom, haddent, and exsited. This essay demonstrates unacceptable skill in the Conventions dimension.
Final Draft

When I got my lawn mower, I got it unexpectedly. I didn't even know before.
He told me. I like it a lot, when my dad gave it to me he said, "You be good in school
and at home, I don't want you to miss anymore school," I said, "Ok dad."

While I was at scoo my dad and
grandmother went to wal-mart and get my
new mower before I came back. When I
got back, I went to my grandmother's
house. My grand mother let me go to
work about six o'clock. My dad came
and got me. I went to his house with
name and he open the door and he
told me, "Here this is yours. I want
you to be good in school and at home.
I don't want you to miss anymore
school either."

My dad always wait till the last
moment to give me something. That's
my dad. I love my dad very much.

Achievement Level: Approaching Basic
Although the writer begins the essay with the topic, the unexpected gift of a lawn mower, the reader soon becomes lost in a random presentation of information. “I didn’t even know before he told me. I like it a lot. When my dad gave it to me he said ’you be good in school.’” The next paragraph is also confusing. There are abrupt changes of subject: the second paragraph ends, “I don’t want you to miss any more school either,” while the third paragraph begins “My dad always wait till the last moment to give me something.” In spite of the gaps, however, the reader can follow the story, and the ending is done well. This essay demonstrates inconsistent skill in the Composing dimension.

The writer is attentive to the audience (“That’s my dad!”) and projects a clear voice that engages the reader (“The[y] both are loved dearly by me”). However, the generic vocabulary, monotonous sentence patterns (“I got”), and overextended sentences (“I went to his house with hime and he opend the door and he told me ’here this is yours.’”) seriously weaken the writing. This essay demonstrates inconsistent skill in the Style/Audience Awareness dimension.

The first line is a fragment, and there are some run-on sentences (“My grandmother left to go to work about six o’clock my dad came and got me”). There also are some usage errors, such as “my dad always wait.” The writer’s use of capitalization and punctuation is mostly acceptable, although the writer has some difficulty with quotations and commas. There are misspellings of unexpectedly, school, before, him, opened. Overall, this essay demonstrates unacceptable skill in the Conventions dimension.
Pages 17 and 18 contain a passage that students read before answering test questions in the Reading and Responding session of a LEAP 21 assessment. Four multiple-choice items with explanations follow.

Test items in the Reading and Responding session measure the following standards:

- ELA Standard 1: Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.
- ELA Standard 6: Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.
- ELA Standard 7: Students apply reasoning and problem-solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.
Chef Paul Prudhomme is a famous cook. In the introduction to his cookbook, *Chef Paul Prudhomme’s Louisiana Kitchen*, he discusses Louisiana cooking. Read the introduction to learn about Chef Paul Prudhomme’s views. Then answer questions that follow.

*Chef Paul Prudhomme’s Louisiana Kitchen—Introduction*

When I was seventeen, not fully knowing what was happening, not realizing why, I set out to become a cook. (The only thing I knew for sure was that I enjoyed eating!) I traveled around the country for twelve years, working full time at restaurants with chefs of every professional and ethnic background. In addition to learning new techniques and methods and the cuisines of various parts of the country, I shared my own heritage of cooking by fixing Cajun and Creole dishes. I was struck by the reactions to my food from people all over the country. I began to understand how unique the traditional foods of my family were. I came to realize that the joy of cooking Cajun and Creole food was not just that I appreciated its goodness so much, but that there was this great pleasure I got from watching other people eat it and seeing the joy in their eyes. At the same time, I would notice when I returned home for visits that my Cajun family and friends didn’t seem to recognize the uniqueness of their cooking. I felt it was one of those situations where if you see something every day, you don’t see it; if you taste something every day, you don’t realize that it’s unique.

That’s one of the things that led me back to Louisiana. And I decided that Louisiana was the place to cook, not only because it was important to me to keep the Cajun culture alive, but because the most creative cooking in the nation was going on in Louisiana. Cooks and cooking as an art were most appreciated here.

Louisiana is a terrific setting for a cook because of its bountiful natural resources, including a variety of wildlife and a wealth of fresh seafood that is extraordinary because of the state’s diverse water resources: the brackish waters in the coastal wetlands and in many of the southernmost lakes, the salt water of the Gulf, and the freshwater lakes and streams throughout the state. Also, our subtropical climate produces a taste in fruits and vegetables that is unmatched—when the taste is there, it’s just really staggering.

It took me many years to understand that it was the use of local fresh products that was the single most important factor in good eating. One of my strongest memories of my mother’s cooking is her use of only fresh ingredients. We had no refrigeration, so we’d go out in the fields to get what we needed. When we dug up potatoes, within two hours they’d be in the pot, cooked and eaten. I couldn’t seem to get a potato to taste like my mother’s until I realized that it wasn’t anything that was done in the kitchen—it was just the freshness of the potato that made it completely different. This principle carries over to all foods.

The ingredients in Cajun food have always depended on what you could get, so it changed depending on where you were. If you lived near New Orleans or the coast, you used seafood. But where we lived, there was no salt water and no transportation to reach it, so we had crawfish, which live in sweet water; and we had an endless supply of game, and there was chicken, pork, beef and all kinds of vegetables.

Cajuns still make use of the plentiful crawfish, as well as chicken and pork (which is frequently smoked) and seasonal game. Filé powder, parsley, bay leaves, cayenne and black peppers and a variety of other hot peppers are the primary seasonings. Rice, an abundant Louisiana crop, is a staple of Cajun cooking.
People often ask me what’s the difference between Cajun and Creole cooking. Cajun and Creole cuisines share many similarities. Both are Louisiana born, with French roots. But Cajun is very old, French country cooking—simple, hearty fare. Cajun food began in southern France, moved on to Nova Scotia and then came to Louisiana. The Acadians adapted their dishes to use ingredients that grew wild in the area—bay leaves from the laurel tree, filé powder from the sassafras tree and an abundance of different peppers such as cayenne, Tabasco peppers, banana peppers and bird’s-eye peppers that grow wild in South Louisiana—learning their uses from the native Indians.

The evolution of Creole cooking, just like the Cajun, has depended heavily on whatever foods have been available. But Creole food, unlike Cajun, began in New Orleans and is a mixture of the traditions of French, Spanish, Italian, American Indian, African and other ethnic groups. Seven flags flew over New Orleans in the early days, and each time a new nation took over, many members of the deposed government would leave the city; most of their cooks and other servants stayed behind. The position of cook was highly esteemed and the best paid position in the household. Those cooks, most of whom were black, would be hired by other families, often of a different nationality. Of course, the cooks would have to change their style of cooking. Over a period of time, they learned how to cook for a variety of nationalities, and they incorporated their own spicy, home-style way of cooking into the different cuisines of their employers. This is the way Creole food was created. Creole cooking is more sophisticated and complex than Cajun cooking—it’s city cooking.

Today, in homes, there is still a distinction between Cajun and Creole cooking; in restaurants, little distinction remains. That’s why I’ve begun referring to the two together as one—Louisiana cooking.
Standard 6: Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.

Benchmark ELA-6-M1: Comparing and responding to United States and world literature that represents the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups.

Achievement Level: Approaching Basic

What is the connection between the seven flags that flew over New Orleans and the change in cooking style?

A. The flags showed the basic differences between Creole and Cajun cooking.

B. The flags marked all the different places where Chef Paul Prudhomme traveled.

C. The flags showed where each kind of Louisiana cooking could be found.

D. The flags marked the change in traditions that introduced cooks to new households.

* correct answer

This is a question students scoring at the Approaching Basic level and above would be likely to answer correctly. It requires students to recognize that the ethnic cuisines of these seven nations, whose flags once flew over New Orleans, significantly influenced Creole cooking. Students should be able to easily eliminate options A and C because there is no textual evidence to support either. Option B may be attractive to students who do not carefully read the text because it mentions that Chef Prudhomme traveled for twelve years before he settled back in Louisiana. However, option D is the only option explicitly supported by the text, specifically paragraph 8.
Standard 6: Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.

Benchmark ELA-6-M2: Identifying, comparing, and responding to a variety of classic and contemporary fiction and nonfiction literature from many genres (e.g., novels, drama).

Achievement Level: Approaching Basic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the main difference between Cajun and Creole cooking?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Cajun cooking is more worldly than Creole cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Cajun cooking uses the same ingredients in each recipe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*C. Cajun cooking is less complicated than Creole cooking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Cajun cooking was influenced by many different nationalities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is a question students scoring at the Approaching Basic level and above would be likely to answer correctly. The question requires students to compare the two forms of cooking and determine their main difference. Students should be able to eliminate option B because there is no textual evidence to support this choice. Options A and D directly contradict the information in the text. Option C is strongly supported in the text by statements such as “Cajun is very old, French country cooking—simple, hearty fare,” and “Creole cooking is more sophisticated and complex than Cajun cooking—it’s city cooking.”
**Standard 7**: Students apply reasoning and problem-solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

**Benchmark ELA-7-M3**: Interpreting the effects of an author’s purpose (reason for writing) and viewpoint (perspective).

**Achievement Level: Mastery**

Chef Paul Prudhomme tells about his mother’s potatoes to show

* A. how much better fresh food tastes.
B. how his childhood influenced him.
C. how much he loves potatoes.
D. how well potatoes grow in Louisiana.

* correct answer

This is a question students scoring at the *Mastery* level and above would be likely to answer correctly. The question requires students to analyze the text to determine the author’s intent in sharing the story of his mother’s potatoes. Although option B might seem plausible, option A is supported by textual evidence. The story of Prudhomme’s mother’s potatoes is used as a supporting detail to the topic sentence: “It took me many years to understand that it was the use of local fresh products that was the single most important factor in good eating.”
Standard 7: Students apply reasoning and problem-solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

Benchmark ELA-7-M4: Using inductive and deductive reasoning skills across oral, written, and visual texts.

Achievement Level: Approaching Basic

The ingredients in Cajun cooking depend on

* A. availability.
B. recipes.
C. time constraints.
D. personal preferences.

* correct answer

This is a question students scoring at the Approaching Basic level and above would be likely to answer correctly. The question requires students to recognize information paraphrased from the text. Students should be able to eliminate options B, C, and D because nothing in the text supports any of them. There is however, explicit textual evidence to support option A: “The evolution of Creole cooking, just like the Cajun, has depended heavily on whatever foods have been available.”
Below are samples of student responses to short-answer items that accompany the passage “Chef Paul Prudhomme’s Louisiana Kitchen.” The rubric used to score each student response appears below the item. Following each student sample is an explanation of why the answer received the score it did.

**Sample 1**

**Standard 6:** Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.

**Benchmark ELA-6-M2:** Identifying, comparing, and responding to a variety of classic and contemporary fiction and nonfiction literature from many genres (e.g., novels, drama).

What characteristics does Chef Paul Prudhomme attribute to Louisiana food?

**Scoring Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Response gives two or more characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Response gives one characteristic <strong>OR</strong> Response demonstrates a limited awareness or may contain errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Student response is incorrect, irrelevant, too brief to evaluate, or blank.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics include freshness, abundance, strongly seasoned, adaptable, popular, ethnically diverse, esteemed, great tasting, etc.
Supporting examples:

**Score Point 2**

What characteristics does Chef Paul Prudhomme attribute to Louisiana food?

The characteristics Chef Paul Prudhomme attributes is that it’s spicy, fresh, sophisticated and complex.

This response is correct and complete because it gives at least two characteristics Chef Prudhomme attributes to Louisiana food: it is 1) “spicy,” 2) “fresh,” 3) “sophisticated,” and 4) “complex.”

**Score Point 1**

What characteristics does Chef Paul Prudhomme attribute to Louisiana food?

He likes cooking here because of all of the spices and he also grew up here so he loves the cooking at Louisiana.

This response is partially correct. The response gives only one characteristic Chef Prudhomme attributes to Louisiana food (“all of the spices”). The additional information is irrelevant to the question.

**Score Point 0**

What characteristics does Chef Paul Prudhomme attribute to Louisiana food?

He put in a lot of work to his great cooking and he now is a chef. He also enjoys doing it.

This response is incorrect. It discusses Chef Prudhomme’s cooking instead of characteristics he attributes to Louisiana food.
Sample 2

**Standard 6:** Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.

**Benchmark ELA-6-M2:** Identifying, comparing, and responding to a variety of classic and contemporary fiction and nonfiction literature from many genres (e.g., novels, drama).

Explain what Chef Paul Prudhomme means in the first paragraph, when he says, “If you see something every day, you don’t see it.”

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Score</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Response demonstrates a full understanding of Chef Prudhomme’s meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Response demonstrates a partial understanding of what Chef Prudhomme meant <strong>or</strong> Response demonstrates a limited awareness or may contain errors.</td>
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**Some of the explanations**

- Chef Prudhomme did not fully appreciate the attributes of Louisiana cooking when he was surrounded by it.
- It is an example of not valuing what you have.
- When you see something every day, it becomes ordinary, but when you go away from that something, you realize the uniqueness of it.
Score Point 2

Explain what Chef Paul Prudhomme means in the first paragraph, when he says, “If you see something every day, you don’t see it.”

_You get so used to seeing it that it’s_ an everyday thing and you grow not to pay attention to it._

This response demonstrates a full understanding of the expression, “If you see something every day, you don’t see it.” The student’s explanation—“you get so used to seeing it that it’s an everyday thing and you grow not to pay attention to it”—is clear and concise.

Score Point 1

Explain what Chef Paul Prudhomme means in the first paragraph, when he says, “If you see something every day, you don’t see it.”

_He means that you see it so much that your eyes don’t see it._

This response demonstrates a limited, partial understanding of Chef Prudhomme’s statement. The student attempts to explain the statement with “you see it so much that your eyes don’t see it.” However, in this sentence, the antecedent of it is unclear, making the student’s explanation vague.

Score Point 0

Explain what Chef Paul Prudhomme means in the first paragraph, when he says, “If you see something every day, you don’t see it.”

_If you don’t see it everyday then it’s really not theirs._

This response is incorrect. It repeats part of the original statement and offers no clear explanation. The meaning of “It’s really not their” is neither clear nor relevant to the question.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT
