



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

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## **ELA**

## **Common Core Sample Questions**

**Grade**

**5**

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**Heidi**  
*by Johanna Spyri*

***Five-year-old Heidi, an orphan, has just been taken by her Aunt Dete to stay with her grandfather, Alm-Uncle, who lives alone in a hut in the mountains in Switzerland.***

1           As soon as Dete had disappeared the old man went back to his bench, and there he remained seated, staring on the ground without uttering a sound, while thick curls of smoke floated upward from his pipe. Heidi, meanwhile, was enjoying herself in her new surroundings; she looked about till she found a shed, built against the hut, where the goats were kept; she peeped in, and saw it was empty. She continued her search and presently came to the fir trees behind the hut. A strong breeze was blowing through them, and there was a rushing and roaring in their topmost branches, Heidi stood still and listened. The sound growing fainter, she went on again, to the farther corner of the hut, and round to where her grandfather was sitting. Seeing that he was in exactly the same position as when she left him, she went and placed herself in front of the old man, and putting her hands behind her back, stood and gazed at him. Her grandfather looked up, and as she continued standing there without moving, "What is it you want?" he asked.

2           "I want to see what you have inside the house," said Heidi.

3           "Come then!" and the grandfather rose and went before her towards the hut.

4           "Bring your bundle of clothes in with you," he bid her as she was following.

5           "I shan't want them any more," was her prompt answer.

6           The old man turned and looked searchingly at the child, whose dark eyes were sparkling in delighted anticipation of what she was going to see inside. "She is certainly not wanting in intelligence," he murmured to himself. "And why shall you not want them any more?" he asked aloud.

7           "Because I want to go about like the goats with their thin light legs."

8           "Well, you can do so if you like," said her grandfather, "but bring the things in, we must put them in the cupboard."

9           Heidi did as she was told. The old man now opened the door and Heidi stepped inside after him; she found herself in a good-sized room, which covered the whole ground floor of the hut. A table and a chair were the only furniture; in one corner stood the grandfather's bed, in another was the hearth with a large kettle hanging above it; and on the further side was a large door in the wall—this was the cupboard. The grandfather opened it; inside were his clothes, some hanging up, others, a couple of shirts, and some socks and handkerchiefs, lying on a shelf; on a second shelf were some plates and cups and glasses, and on a higher one still, a round loaf, smoked meat, and cheese, for everything that Alm-Uncle needed for his food and clothing was kept in this cupboard. Heidi, as soon as it was opened, ran quickly forward and thrust in her bundle of clothes, as far back behind her grandfather's things as possible, so that they might not easily be found again. She

then looked carefully round the room, and asked, "Where am I to sleep, grandfather?"

10 "Wherever you like," he answered.

11 Heidi was delighted, and began at once to examine all the nooks and corners to find out where it would be pleasantest to sleep. In the corner near her grandfather's bed she saw a short ladder against the wall; up she climbed and found herself in the **hayloft**. There lay a large heap of fresh sweet-smelling hay, while through a round window in the wall she could see right down the valley.

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

1

An important contrast in the story is between

- A Heidi's grandfather's concern and Aunt Dete's neglect
- B Heidi's old clothes and her new clothes
- C Heidi's former bedroom and her new bedroom
- D Heidi's cheerfulness and her grandfather's lack of emotion

**Key: D**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.5.3

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.3 in that it asks the student to identify an important contrast within the story.

**Rationale:** Option D is correct. Both the point of view and the narration of actions highlight the two characters' contrasting traits. There is no mention of Aunt Dete's behavior or any contrast between clothes or bedrooms.

2

The narrator of the story helps the reader understand the grandfather by

- A describing his face and revealing his thoughts
- B describing his home and quoting his speech
- C telling Heidi's opinion of him and revealing his past
- D telling his emotions and showing his frustration

**Key: B**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.5.6

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.6 in that it requires the student to understand how a third-person limited point of view (primarily aligned with Heidi) develops the grandfather's character.

**Rationale:** Option B is correct. The grandfather is characterized through the things he says (dialogue) and the setting. The narrator does not describe the grandfather physically, does not reveal his inner thoughts or tell about his past, and does not directly provide Heidi's opinion of him.

3

When the grandfather says in paragraph 6 that Heidi is “not wanting in intelligence,” he means that she

- A seems to be a very bright child
- B says things she does not mean
- C impresses him with her knowledge
- D appears to misunderstand what he is saying

**Key: A**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.5.4, L.4

**Commentary:** This aligns to CCLS RL.5.4 and L.4 in that the question asks the student to determine the meaning of an unknown word or unusual phrasing (“wanting”) from context.

**Rationale:** Option A is correct. Heidi’s curiosity and her sparkling eyes provide evidence of her intelligence, and “not wanting” means “not lacking.” It is clear from the context that the grandfather does not think she is trying to impress him or that she lacks insight into what he is saying.

4

How does the final paragraph contribute to the reader's understanding of the story?

- A It suggests that Heidi will make the most of her new surroundings.
- B It shows that Heidi will feel uncomfortable in her new home.
- C It indicates how poor the family is.
- D It shows how tired Heidi is.

**Key: A**

**Aligned CCLS:** RL.5.5

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.5 in that it requires the student to analyze what a particular portion of a text (the ending) contributes to the structure of the entire passage.

**Rationale:** Option A is correct. The description of the loft, and of Heidi's feelings about it, reveal Heidi's happy adaptability to her new home. The final paragraph does not highlight discomfort, poverty, or tiredness.

## An American Hero: The Biography of César E. Chávez

1 César E. Chávez was a good man who dedicated his life to helping others.

2 César was born to parents who taught him important ideas about hard work,  
the importance of education, and respect.

3 As a young boy, César worked on his family's farm feeding and watering the  
animals, collecting eggs, and bringing water to the house. ...

4 César's parents were very strict and taught him and his sisters and brothers  
to show respect to others.

5 His parents also taught him that it was important to help others. César and  
his family often helped his uncles, aunts, and cousins by giving them food when they  
had little to eat. ...

6 When César was ten years old, his family's home was taken away from them  
because they did not have enough money.

7 César's family moved to California to find work. They began working on  
farms picking fruits and vegetables. César's family would move from farm to farm  
looking for work, just like many other families who also lost their homes. ...

8 Working on the farms was very difficult. Farm workers like the Chávez family  
would work very long hours. They often had few bathrooms and little clean water to  
drink. Farm workers suffered a lot and they were not treated with respect or  
dignity. ...

9 César's family had very little money and many times they did not have  
enough food to eat. César and his family never thought of themselves as being poor.  
César's mother would often tell César and his brother Richard to find homeless and  
hungry men so she could cook them a meal.

10 When César was a teenager, he and his older sister Rita would help other  
farm workers and neighbors by driving them to the hospital to see a doctor. Without  
César's and his sister's help, these people would have had a very difficult time  
getting a doctor's help. ...

11 A few years later, César volunteered to serve in the United States Navy. César,  
like many American men and women, served in the military to fight for freedom and  
to protect the people of the United States.

12 After two years in the Navy, César returned home and married his girlfriend,  
Helen. After a short time, they moved to San Jose, California and began a family.

13 Life changed for César when he met a man named Fred Ross. Fred Ross  
believed that if people worked together they could make their community better.  
Fred Ross hired César to work for him in the Community Service Organization.

14 The Community Service Organization worked to help people. César now  
worked to bring people together to identify problems and find ways to solve their

problems. Many problems were not solved because community leaders did not respect all people.

15 César, Fred Ross, and the Community Service Organization helped people in the community learn how to vote. They also taught people that community leaders respected voters. Community leaders worked harder to solve the problems of voters. César worked in many communities in California to help people gain the respect they deserved.

16 César started the National Farm Worker Association to help improve the working conditions of farm workers. African Americans, Filipinos, white Americans, Mexican Americans and Mexicans, and men and women of all backgrounds joined César.



*Photo Courtesy of César E. Chávez Foundation*

César and other people from the Community Service Organization are getting ready to try to get the farm workers to vote.

17 César and the farm workers wanted the companies and growers that owned the farms to respect farm workers by providing them with fresh water to drink, bathrooms in the fields, and fair pay for a day's work.

18 The companies and growers refused to treat the farm workers with respect and dignity. The growers did everything they could to stop César and the farm workers. They even turned to violence and hurt many farm workers and people who helped the farm workers. This made César very upset.

19 César did not believe in violence. Like Martin Luther King, César wanted to bring change in a nonviolent way. Many people came to help César. Many people

supported César because he believed in nonviolence. Like César, they also believed that farm workers deserved better treatment, respect, dignity, justice, and fairness.

20 César worked hard. He suffered and sacrificed a lot to make farm workers' lives better.

21 After five years, some growers in California agreed with César and started to provide farm workers with fresh water to drink, bathrooms, and better pay. César, the farm workers, and their friends won, making farm workers' lives better.

22 César dedicated the rest of his life to making the world a better place and to serving others. He continued to work to bring respect, dignity, justice, and fair treatment to the poor, to farm workers, and to people everywhere.

23 César died on April 23, 1993. He was sixty-six years old. People all over the world remember César E. Chávez as a man of courage who fought to improve the lives of all people.

<http://chavez.cde.ca.gov/>

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

5

How did Fred Ross change Chávez's life?

- A He convinced Chávez to volunteer for the Navy.
- B He introduced Chávez to his wife Helen.
- C He got Chávez involved with farming.
- D He gave Chávez a job in his organization.

**Key: D**

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.5.3

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RI.5.3 because it asks students to explain the significance of the relationship between Ross and Chávez.

**Rationale:** Option D is correct. The passage claims that Ross changed Chávez's life by hiring him to work for the CSO. Ross had no role in the other events listed.

6

Chávez's childhood was one of

- A living in the same town
- B physical sickness
- C hard work and poverty
- D formal education and routine

**Key:** C

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.5.2

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RI.5.2 because it asks students to summarize a major section of the text.

**Rationale:** Option C is correct. The passage describes Chávez's childhood as one of continual hard work on farms without earning enough money to eat or stay in one place.

7

According to the passage, Chávez encouraged farmers to solve their problems through all of the following EXCEPT

- A voting for community leaders
- B working as a group
- C using nonviolent protest
- D buying their own farms

**Key: D**

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.5.2

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RI.5.2 because it asks students to identify the textual details that support the description of a central idea of the text.

**Rationale:** Option D is correct. Buying their own farms is the only one of the options that Chávez did not suggest.

**8** According to the passage how were the farmers not treated with respect?

- A** They were not given jobs because of their race.
- B** They were not given suitable working conditions.
- C** They were not allowed to vote.
- D** They were not able to speak for themselves.

**Key: B**

**Aligned CCLS:** RI.5.2

**Commentary:** The question aligns to CCLS RI.5.2 because it requires students to understand details from the text that specifically reference a theme in the text.

**Rationale:** Option B is correct. The passage states that the farmers were not being treated with dignity because of the working conditions they were forced to endure.

Paired Passages

**Black Beauty**

by Anna Sewell

*This passage is narrated by a horse named Black Beauty.*

1           When I was four years old **Squire** Gordon came to look at me. He examined my eyes, my mouth, and my legs; he felt them all down; and then I had to walk and trot and gallop before him. He seemed to like me, and said, "When he has been well broken in he will do very well." My master said he would break me in himself, as he should not like me to be frightened or hurt, and he lost no time about it, for the next day he began.

2           Every one may not know what breaking in is, therefore I will describe it. It means to teach a horse to wear a saddle and bridle, and to carry on his back a man, woman or child; to go just the way they wish, and to go quietly. Besides this he has to learn to wear a collar, **a crupper, and a breeching**, and to stand still while they are put on; then to have a cart or a **chaise** fixed behind, so that he cannot walk or trot without dragging it after him; and he must go fast or slow, just as his driver wishes. He must never start at what he sees, nor speak to other horses, nor bite, nor kick, nor have any will of his own; but always do his master's will, even though he may be very tired or hungry; but the worst of all is, when his harness is once on, he may neither jump for joy nor lie down for weariness. So you see this breaking in is a great thing.

3           I had of course long been used to a halter and a headstall, and to be led about in the fields and lanes quietly, but now I was to have a **bit and bridle**; my master gave me some oats as usual, and after a good deal of coaxing he got the bit into my mouth, and the bridle fixed, but it was a nasty thing! Those who have never had a bit in their mouths cannot think how bad it feels; a great piece of cold hard steel as thick as a man's finger to be pushed into one's mouth, between one's teeth, and over one's tongue, with the ends coming out at the corner of your mouth, and held fast there by straps over your head, under your throat, round your nose, and under your chin; so that no way in the world can you get rid of the nasty hard thing; it is very bad! yes, very bad! at least I thought so; but I knew my mother always wore one when she went out, and all horses did when they were grown up; and so, what with the nice oats, and what with my master's pats, kind words, and gentle ways, I got to wear my bit and bridle.

4           Next came the saddle, but that was not half so bad; my master put it on my back very gently, while old Daniel held my head; he then made the **girths** fast under my body, patting and talking to me all the time; then I had a few oats, then a little leading about; and this he did every day till I began to look for the oats and the saddle. At length, one morning, my master got on my back and rode me round the meadow on the soft grass. It certainly did feel queer; but I must say I felt rather proud to carry my master, and as he continued to ride me a little every day I soon became accustomed to it.

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

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

## The Secret Garden

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

*This passage takes place in a garden. Colin is a young boy who was sickly and wheelchair bound, but is beginning to recover and be able to walk. Mary is his cousin, and Dickon is a friend to both of them.*

1 At first the robin watched Mary and Colin with sharp anxiety. For some mysterious reason he knew he need not watch Dickon. The first moment he set his dew-bright black eye on Dickon he knew he was not a stranger but a sort of robin without beak or feathers. He could speak robin (which is a quite distinct language not to be mistaken for any other). To speak robin to a robin is like speaking French to a Frenchman. Dickon always spoke it to the robin himself, so the queer gibberish he used when he spoke to humans did not matter in the least. The robin thought he spoke this **gibberish** to them because they were not intelligent enough to understand feathered speech. His movements also were robin. They never startled one by being sudden enough to seem dangerous or threatening. Any robin could understand Dickon, so his presence was not even disturbing.

2 But at the outset it seemed necessary to be on guard against the other two. In the first place the boy creature did not come into the garden on his legs. He was pushed in on a thing with wheels and the skins of wild animals were thrown over him. That in itself was doubtful. Then when he began to stand up and move about he did it in a queer unaccustomed way and the others seemed to have to help him. The robin used to **secrete** himself in a bush and watch this anxiously, his head tilted first on one side and then on the other. He thought that the slow movements might mean that he was preparing to pounce, as cats do. When cats are preparing to pounce they creep over the ground very slowly. The robin talked this over with his mate a great deal for a few days but after that he decided not to speak of the subject because her terror was so great that he was afraid it might be injurious to the Eggs.

3 When the boy began to walk by himself and even to move more quickly it was an immense relief. But for a long time—or it seemed a long time to the robin—he was a source of some anxiety. He did not act as the other humans did. He seemed very fond of walking but he had a way of sitting or lying down for a while and then getting up in a disconcerting manner to begin again.

4 One day the robin remembered that when he himself had been made to learn to fly by his parents he had done much the same sort of thing. He had taken short flights of a few yards and then had been obliged to rest. So it occurred to him that this boy was learning to fly—or rather to walk. He mentioned this to his mate and when he told her that the Eggs would probably conduct themselves in the same way after they were **fledged** she was quite comforted and even became eagerly interested and **derived** great pleasure from watching the boy over the edge of her nest—though she always thought that the Eggs would be much cleverer and learn more quickly. But then she said indulgently that humans were always more clumsy and slower than Eggs and most of them never seemed really to learn to fly at all. You never met them in the air or on tree-tops.

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

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

*Short Answer Constructed Response for "Black Beauty"*

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In the passage, how does the master treat Black Beauty? Use **two** details from the text to support your answer.

Write your answer in complete sentences.

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**CCLS Alignment:** RL.5.1; additional standards may be added after further development.

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.1 because it asks students to use evidence from the passage to support what is said explicitly and what is implied about how the master (Squire Gordon) treats Black Beauty.

**Rationale:** The response accurately explains that the master (Squire Gordon) is caring but firm with Black Beauty. He wants to break Black Beauty himself so that he will not be frightened or hurt. He treats Black Beauty with pats, kind words, and gentle ways.

**10**

Describe the challenge that Black Beauty faces in the story and how he responds. Use **two** details from the text to support your answer.

Write your answer in complete sentences.

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**CCLS Alignment:** RL.5.2

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.2 because it asks students to describe a challenge that Black Beauty faces and how he responds.

**Rationale:** The response accurately identifies the challenge: being broken in. Black Beauty is not thrilled at first but accepts the bit because he wants to be grown up and please his master.

*Short Answer Constructed Response for "The Secret Garden"*

**11**

How do the robin's feelings toward Colin change from the beginning of the story to the end? Use **two** details from the text to support your answer.

Write your response in complete sentences.

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**Aligned CCLS:** RL.5.3

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.3 because it asks students to compare the feelings of a character from the beginning of the passage to the end, and describe the change.

**Rationale:** The response accurately explains the changes in the robin's feelings toward Colin. He first is anxious because he thought Colin could be dangerous like a cat. He is then relieved when Colin leaves his chair. By the end of the story he identifies with Colin as he observes him learning to walk.

*Extended Constructed Response Paired Passages*

- 12** Both stories are told from the perspective of an animal. How does this perspective affect how the stories are told? Compare and contrast how Black Beauty and the robin view their surroundings. Using details from **both** passages, describe how the animals' perspectives influence how events are described.

In your response, be sure to:

- describe the perspective of Black Beauty from "Black Beauty"
- describe the perspective of the robin from "The Secret Garden"
- explain how each author uses these perspectives to help the reader understand the events as they unfold
- use details from both stories

Write your response in complete sentences.

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**Aligned CCLS:** RL.5.6, W.5.2

**Commentary:** This question aligns to CCLS RL.5.6 because it asks students how the animals' perspective influences how the story is told. It also aligns to CCLS W.5.2 because it asks students to write an explanatory piece.

**Rationale:** The response accurately describes the animals' perspectives in both stories. It explains how telling stories from an animal's perspective allows the reader to see human behavior from a new angle. The response explains how Black Beauty's perspective of "breaking in" and "bits" differs from that of humans because the horse can explain how it feels to him. The response explains how the robin understands Colin's use of a wheelchair and how he compares his learning to walk with learning to fly.



# **Grade 5**

# **ELA**

# **Common Core Sample Questions**

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