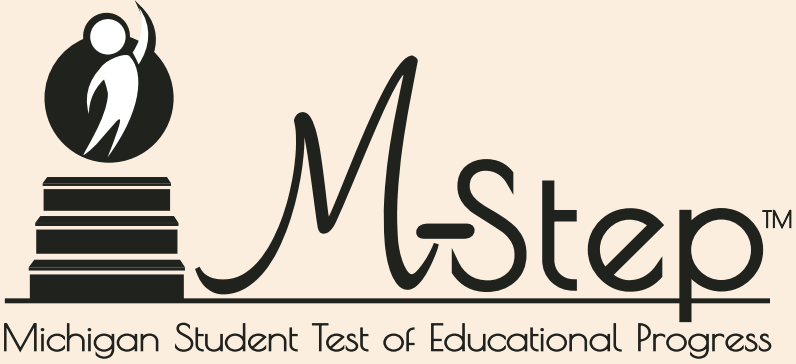


Student Name _____



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Sample Items

Grade

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
Spring 2015

MICHIGAN STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL LAW

The Michigan State Board of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education. It is the policy of the Michigan State Board of Education that no person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, age, sex, marital status, or handicap shall be discriminated against, excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity for which it is responsible or for which it receives financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

The sample items included in this set can be used by students and teachers to become familiar with the kinds of items students will encounter on the paper/pencil summative assessments. The sample items demonstrate the rigor of Michigan's academic content standards. They are not to be interpreted as indicative of the focus of the M-STEP assessments; they are simply a collection of item samples. Every standard is not included in this sample set.

Read the text. Then, answer questions 1 through 7.

Fishy Weather Conditions

By Phillip Cho

Lajamanu, Australia, is a dry little town with 600 residents, sitting right on the edge of the Tanami desert. On a map, Lajamanu looks a lot closer to the center of Australia than any coast. On any given day, red dust blows down the streets, and a dry wind hurries weeds down the dirt roads. Not much happens that is new or unexpected, so imagine how amazed its residents were when live fish rained down on them from a dark gray cloud one afternoon.

That is exactly what happened in the remote Australian village. Raining fish, especially more than 300 miles from an ocean, seems like it must be an elaborate hoax. In some places, however, it happens so often that it doesn't even surprise residents any longer. In Yoro, Honduras, it happens so regularly that they have begun to predict the Lluvia de Peces, or Rain of Fishes, once or twice a year.

How do clouds make fish? The simple answer is that they don't. There is a particular weather phenomenon called a waterspout. A waterspout is just like a tornado, only it forms above oceans, lakes, or rivers. Like a tornado, a waterspout is shaped like a funnel and moves in a circle at high speeds. The speed creates a vacuum effect which causes the funnel to suck everything it passes upward into its highest, widest section. Some waterspouts are only a few feet tall, but others are over a hundred feet high! When they vacuum in the water, waterspouts tend to carry the fish with them, as well as frogs or other small plants or animals.

As these waterspouts reach land, they begin to dissipate, or lose momentum. But since warm air rises, the water and all of the things in it tend to move upward, into the atmosphere, in the form of clouds. When the clouds, carried by wind, travel rapidly over land, they become laden with too much weight, and it begins to rain. This is how the fish and frogs seem to fall from the sky.

Scientists couldn't figure it out at first. To make matters stranger still, the fish in Yoro were very much alive when they rained down to the ground, but they were all blind. In England, it rained fish, frogs, spiders, and snakes, and none were blind. In Lajamanu, Australia, the fish were not only alive, but some were large enough to eat. It was difficult to puzzle out, but the blind fish in Yoro gave them a place to start.

Scientists knew that some fish that lived in deep, underground caves with no light sources often lost their eyesight over generations of adaptation. They simply no longer needed to see. So when blind fish rained down on Yoro, scientists began to connect some dots. Clearly, these particular fish were pulled from an underground water source by force. The waterspout theory began to seem more and more possible.

It has rained fish on every continent, and each time, people have tried in various ways to explain this strange phenomenon. Historically, villagers thought the “fishes from the heavens” might be answers to prayers for food. Others proposed that flashfloods overran river banks and oceans, depositing the fish on the city streets. No scientist had actually seen the rain as it occurred, only the fish left on the ground. But in 1970, a National Geographic team happened to be in Yoro when the Rain of Fishes began. They recorded what was happening and made history by finally proving that the fish really did fall from the sky.

This huge breakthrough wasn't just a spot of good luck. It changed thousands of years of myths and legends into true stories and provided scientific explanations for how fish came to live in deep caves and isolated ponds. It explained ancient cave paintings and shed new light on how species have spread over time. It turned out to be a lot more than just a little fishy weather.

1. The author suggests that raining fish was a welcomed event to some people. Which sentence from the text **best** supports this inference?
 - A. “In some places, however, it happens so often that it doesn't even surprise residents any longer.”
 - B. “In Yoro, Honduras, it happens so regularly that they have begun to predict the Lluvia de Peces, or Rain of Fishes, once or twice a year.”
 - C. “In Lajamanu, Australia, the fish were not only alive, but some were large enough to eat.”
 - D. “It has rained fish on every continent, and each time, people have tried in various ways to explain this strange phenomenon.”

2. Which statement **best** summarizes the central idea of the text?
 - A. Fish adapt to their environments, and in some cases lose certain abilities.
 - B. Animals raining from the sky is an unusual event that can be explained through science.
 - C. Scientists need to capture fish raining from the sky on film before the event is believable.
 - D. Animals live through varying weather conditions despite extreme changes to their environments.

3. Read the paragraphs from the text. Then, answer the question.

Scientists couldn't figure it out at first. To make matters stranger still, the fish in Yoro were very much alive when they rained down to the ground, but they were all blind. In England, it rained fish, frogs, spiders, and snakes, and none were blind. In Lajamanu, Australia, the fish were not only alive, but some were large enough to eat. It was difficult to puzzle out, but the blind fish in Yoro gave them a place to start.

Scientists knew that some fish that lived in deep, underground caves with no light sources often lost their eyesight over generations of adaptation. They simply no longer needed to see. So when blind fish rained down on Yoro, scientists began to connect some dots. Clearly, these particular fish were pulled from an underground water source by force. The waterspout theory began to seem more and more possible.

Which statement **best** summarizes the central idea of the paragraphs?

- A. Scientists were interested in knowing why the raining animals differed from place to place.
- B. Details about animals affected by the unusual event led to an understanding of how it was happening.
- C. The presence of unusual animals brought about the belief that the event was rare and due to special situations.
- D. Understanding how animals change to match their environments helped scientists determine why particular events happened to them.

4. This question has **two** parts. First, answer part A. Then, answer part B.

Part A

Choose the statement that **best** describes what the reference to tornadoes shows about waterspouts.

- A. A waterspout can cause destruction.
- B. A waterspout can carry items within it.
- C. A waterspout is difficult to catch on film.
- D. A waterspout is a unique weather system.

Part B

Choose the sentence from the text that **best** supports your answer in part A.

- A. How do clouds make fish?
- B. The simple answer is that they don't.
- C. There is a particular weather phenomenon called a waterspout.
- D. A waterspout is just like a tornado, only it forms above oceans, lakes, or rivers.
- E. Like a tornado, a waterspout is shaped like a funnel and moves in a circle at high speeds.
- F. The speed creates a vacuum effect which causes the funnel to suck everything it passes upward into its highest, widest section.
- G. Some waterspouts are only a few feet tall, but others are over a hundred feet high!

5. Read the sentence from the text. Then, answer the question.

Lajamanu, Australia, is a dry little town with 600 residents, sitting right on the edge of the Tanami desert.

How does this sentence add to the confusion about raining fish as presented in the text?

- A. It helps the reader picture an area that would make raining fish an unusual event.
 - B. It helps the reader consider whether there were raining fish in neighboring towns.
 - C. It helps the reader know that raining fish was welcomed in the area.
 - D. It helps the reader understand why few people knew about raining fish.
6. How does the last paragraph add to the central idea of the text? Select **three** options.
- A. It describes how species in the area changed over time.
 - B. It illustrates the importance of finding the explanation behind the event.
 - C. It explains how waterspouts came to be a center of scientific research.
 - D. It identifies how the discovery cleared up many different scientific theories.
 - E. It shows how the understanding of waterspouts affected other areas of science.
7. Read the sentence from the text.
- This huge breakthrough wasn't just a spot of good luck.
- Which statement best describes what the phrase "wasn't just a spot of good luck" adds to the meaning of the text?
- A. It explains the idea that the raining fish could only be seen in certain places.
 - B. It establishes that the scientists were fortunate to have made their discoveries.
 - C. It reinforces the idea that hard work went into determining the cause for the raining fish.
 - D. It suggests that the scientists relied heavily on random events to drive their investigation.

8. A student is writing a narrative for class about a speech contest. Read the draft of the narrative and complete the task that follows.

The big day had finally arrived. I had won the local speech contest and had advanced to the regional, representing Madison Middle School. Now it was the state competition. I waited backstage for the host to announce my name. Even though I had practiced much, I was extremely nervous. My heart was thumping, my mouth was dry, and my palms were sweating. "You're ready for this," I told myself. Still, picturing an audience of parents, teachers, and classmates made me want to totally disappear.

Patrick, my best friend, reminded me, "You'll do great. You're prepared. You've come this far."

I nodded affirmatively. Patrick was right. I was ready for this, and besides, I won first place in the earlier contests. Yet, I pictured all eyes on me waiting for me to mess up. My heart was gradually sinking into my stomach.

"You can't back out now," I told myself as Mr. Nichols, the host, announced my name and the title of my speech, "My Hero."

Patrick smiled and gave me a pat on the back. The next thing I knew, I was walking confidently across the stage to the microphone. Taking a deep breath, I greeted the audience and began my speech. I heard my voice, strong and steady. I told myself, "This is great. I feel prepared and have something to share with my audience."

The time flew past. I delivered my conclusion and said a final "Thank you."

In one paragraph, write an ending to the narrative that follows logically from the events or experiences in the narrative.

9. A student wrote a narrative for a creative writing contest. Her teacher suggested that she add a transition sentence to connect the paragraphs below. Read the draft of the narrative and the directions that follow.

On the first day of middle school, Grace marched onto the school bus and slid into an empty seat. She wondered how many more times she would have to ride the bus without her best friend Alex. The noisy bus filled with laughter and the chirping sounds of chatter. The bus driver started the old, tired engine and, with a grumpy tone, told all the students to find a seat. Grace opened her book bag in search of her library book. Unable to locate the book, she sat back in her seat and tried to relax.

Her kindergarten teacher had smiled brightly and sung songs to the class every morning. He had made school exciting and Grace remembered enjoying every minute of her time in the bright, colorful classroom. She thought about meeting Alex at lunch on the first day of kindergarten. They had brought the same type of lunch box and, after a brief introduction, they had decided to swap sandwiches.

Select the **best** sentence to transition between the two paragraphs.

- A. Grace began to daydream about her other teachers, friends, and favorite subjects.
- B. Grace felt a sense of relief as she thought about all the books she had read.
- C. Grace's mind began to focus on her lunch as her stomach grumbled loudly.
- D. Grace's thoughts slowly led her back to another, happier first day of school.

- 10.** A student is writing a letter to the school principal about summer homework. Read the draft of the letter and complete the task that follows.

Students who attend this school have noticed an increase in the amount of summertime homework over the past few years. Teachers hope that by giving homework over the summer, they will help students retain the information they learned during the school year. Some studies show that students score lower on standardized tests at the end of summer vacation than they score on the same tests at the end of the previous school year. The reality is that unless students are engaged in the learning process, they most likely will not remember all that they have learned.

Nonetheless, students spend many hours doing homework during the school year, and some people feel that students deserve a break from this routine. Many students have other commitments during the summer that prevent them from committing to studying for hours each day. Even students without such commitments look forward to spending time outdoors when the weather is nice. These are strong reasons against assigning summer homework.

The student needs to add an introduction that clearly establishes the claim about summer homework. Choose the paragraph that would make the **best** introduction.

- A.** Some people feel that summertime homework is necessary for students to perform well in school. Research can be found, however, to support both the advantages and disadvantages of summertime homework. Both sides of the issue should be carefully studied before making a decision on the issue.
- B.** Students do not get to choose whether or not they want to have homework over the summer. Students should be able to help decide if summertime homework would be beneficial. Teachers and students should work together to decide on the type and amount of summertime homework.
- C.** Currently at our school, students are assigned summer homework by teachers. As a middle school student, I know the concerns that students have regarding this practice. I firmly believe that teachers should not give homework to students over the summer.
- D.** Summer assignments should not be worksheets. Sure, students are assigned summer homework by teachers. But reading books would be better than filling in worksheets.

- 11.** A student is writing an article for her school newspaper about the Library of Congress. Read the draft of a paragraph from her article and answer the question that follows.

The Library of Congress is the world’s largest library. It celebrated its 200th birthday in 2000. It has 16 million books, art works, and CDs. The first library was in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. British troops burned the Capitol in 1814 and ruined many books. The library was then moved to a new place.

The writer wants to replace the underlined phrase to make her meaning more exact. Which word would make her word choice better?

- A.** rearranged
 - B.** relocated
 - C.** switched
 - D.** transported
- 12.** A student is writing an informational report about New York City for a geography class. The student needs to use words that are clear and specific in her report. Read the paragraph from the draft of the report and answer the question that follows.

New York City is often described as a “melting pot.” The term “melting pot” refers to a group of people of different cultures living in the same place. In a melting pot, different customs and traditions “melt” together and become more and more similar to each other. However, some people believe that the idea of a melting pot is not really right. In fact, people of different cultures often live side-by-side while keeping their own customs and traditions.

Which set of words **best** replaces the underlined phrases with more clear and specific language?

- A.** organization, correct
- B.** association, truthful
- C.** community, accurate
- D.** crowd, honest

- 13.** A student has written an essay for his English class about his life before sixth grade. Read the draft of the essay, and complete the task that follows.

Growing up in Chicago, I always felt that one of the best things in life was going to my grandmother's homested. When I grew sick of the humid weather, I welcomed the trip to her northern Wisconsin farm, where cool breezes blew off Lake Superior. Grandma was a fabulous cook, and she wouldn't hear of going out for fast food. She always had a home-cooked meal—made from old family recipes featuring secret erbs and spices—waiting for us. We couldn't wait to get in the door. One thing she always had just for me was pumpkin cake with cream cheese frosting. It didn't matter what we were eating for dinner, we would have pumpkin cake for dessert. It was my grandma's way of saying she loved me, and every time I eat pumpkin cake now, I think of that little farm and Grandma and the wonderful times we shared with her there.

Choose the two sentences that contain errors in spelling.

- A.** Growing up in Chicago, I always felt that one of the best things in life was going to my grandmother's homested.
- B.** When I grew sick of the humid weather, I welcomed the trip to her northern Wisconsin farm, where cool breezes blew off Lake Superior.
- C.** Grandma was a fabulous cook, and she wouldn't hear of going out for fast food.
- D.** She always had a home-cooked meal—made from old family recipes featuring secret erbs and spices—waiting for us.
- E.** We couldn't wait to get in the door.
- F.** One thing she always had just for me was pumpkin cake with cream cheese frosting.
- G.** It didn't matter what we were eating for dinner, we would have pumpkin cake for dessert.
- H.** It was my grandma's way of saying she loved me, and every time I eat pumpkin cake now, I think of that little farm and Grandma and the wonderful times we shared with her there.

14. A student is writing a report about sleep. Read both sources and the directions that follow.

Source 1: "During Sleep" by Dr. Howard Dell

If you are like some people, you may think that sleep is a process during which the body and brain shut off, but this is not the case. The body goes through a series of stages during sleep in which body and brain activity change. Most of these changes are not noticed nor remembered. However, sleep does usually follow a pattern. Muscle activity and breathing slow in the initial stages of sleep. The body's temperature also decreases. Sometimes during sleep, the heart can begin to beat more quickly, blood pressure can rise, and many muscles experience small movements. These changes often happen during dreams.

Source 2:

What Happens While You Sleep

Sleep Stage	Description
Stage 1 Light Sleep	The muscles relax, eye movement slows, and thoughts begin to fade. A person may be easily awakened.
Stage 2 Light Sleep	Eye movement stops, and a person can experience brief dreams. Body temperature begins dropping and heart rate slows.
Stage 3 Moderate-Deep Sleep	The body temperature lowers, and a person is difficult to awaken.
Stage 4 Deep Sleep	The brain uses less energy. The body temperature lowers more than in moderate-deep sleep. A person may sleepwalk.
REM Sleep (REM = rapid eye movement)	Most dreams occur during this stage. The brain uses energy as eyes move quickly, even though the eyelids are closed. Heart rate and blood pressure increase, but many of the large body muscles are inactive.

The student took notes about information in the sources. Select **two** notes that correctly paraphrase, or restate, information from **both** sources.

- A. We dream several times each night.
- B. People can be easily awakened from sleep.
- C. We do not remember what happens during sleep.
- D. People can sleepwalk during a stage of deep sleep.
- E. Our bodies and brains continue to work during sleep.
- F. During some stages of sleep, our bodies decrease in activity.

- 15.** A student is writing a research report about earthworms. Read the sentences from his report and the directions that follow.

Although native to Europe, earthworms are found underground throughout North America and western Asia. They do not live in deserts or regions where there is frost or permanent snow and ice because the ground is too hard. Typically only a few inches long, earthworms have been known to grow to 14 inches in length. Earthworms' bodies are made up of ring-like sections called annuli. These sections are covered in setae, or small hairs, which the worm uses to move and dig tunnels. As the earthworm moves through the soil, their tunnels aerate, or add air to, the ground. An earthworm can eat up to one third of its body weight in a day. That would be equal to a 75-pound child eating 25 pounds of food in one day!

Which source would **most likely** give the student more information for the paragraph from his report?

- A.** www.moreaboutscience.com

Purchase our videos about Milo the Earthworm and find out what adventures he has as he burrows through the ground.

- B.** www.scienceanimalexplorer.com

Here I discuss the different animals I find every week in my backyard and which ones are my favorites.

- C.** www.scienceundertheground.com

You walk on top of the ground everyday. Learn about what crawls and burrows in the dirt below you.

- D.** www.sciencemadefun4u.com

Keep underground creatures from coming into your home in this exciting game.

16. A student is writing an argumentative report about the best way to improve the quality of life in her city. She found possible sources for her report. Read the sources and the directions that follow.

Source 1: "Spending Money for the Town" by Ray Butler

According to Mayor Greg Davidson, the city has received a grant of \$100,000. This money is to be used to improve the quality of life here. He has received several suggestions.

One is that the playgrounds of two parks should be improved. Another is that more trails for hiking and biking should be added. Those additions would help increase exercise. A number of young people have also suggested building a skateboard park.

Source 2: "What Makes People Happy with Their City?" by Rosalie Davis

A recent survey of residents of twenty cities showed some interesting findings. Those people who were most happy with life in their towns had several things in common. All of them had activity programs for children. The activities ranged from swimming and soccer to skating and art. Several of them also had drama and music programs. There were also activity programs for adults. Almost all of the towns included volunteer programs for both adults and children.

The student wrote down some claims to use in her report. Look at the claims on the table. Decide if the information in **Source 1**, **Source 2**, both sources, or neither source supports each claim. Choose the box that appropriately describes each claim. There will be only one box selected for each claim.

		1	2	3	4
		Source 1	Source 2	Both Sources	Neither Source
a.	Claim 1: Towns should build bike trails.				
b.	Claim 2: Towns should solve pollution problems.				
c.	Claim 3: Towns should provide opportunities in the arts.				
d.	Claim 4: Towns should provide activities and equipment for children.				

(Sample answer document for "matching table" items...)

- 17 a ① ② ③ ④
 b ① ② ③ ④
 c ① ② ③ ④
 d ① ② ③ ④

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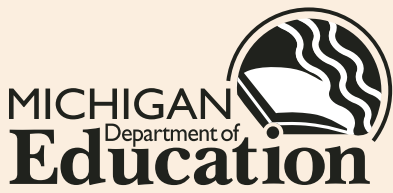
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