



The purpose of these practice test materials is to orient teachers and students to the types of questions on paper-based FSA tests. By using these materials, students will become familiar with the types of items and response formats they may see on a paper-based test. The practice questions and answers are not intended to demonstrate the length of the actual test, nor should student responses be used as an indicator of student performance on the actual test. The practice test is not intended to guide classroom instruction.

**Directions for Answering the
ELA Reading Practice Test Questions**

If you don't understand a question, ask your teacher to explain it to you. Your teacher has the answers to the practice test questions.

To offer students a variety of texts on the FSA ELA Reading tests, authentic and copyrighted stories, poems, and articles appear as they were originally published, as requested by the publisher and/or author. While these real-world examples do not always adhere to strict style conventions and/or grammar rules, inconsistencies among passages should not detract from students' ability to understand and answer questions about the texts.

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Read the passages “from *Bridge to Terabithia*” and “from *The Secret Garden*” and then answer Numbers 1 through 5.

Passage 1: from *Bridge to Terabithia*

by Katherine Paterson

In this excerpt from Bridge to Terabithia, a young boy remembers the first time he brought his best friend to a favorite place in the woods.

- 1 Terabithia was their secret, which was a good thing, for how could Jess have ever explained it to an outsider? Just walking down the hill toward the woods made something warm and liquid steal through his body. The closer he came to the dry creek bed and the crab apple tree rope the more he could feel the beating of his heart. He grabbed the end of the rope and swung out toward the other bank with a kind of wild exhilaration and landed gently on his feet, taller and stronger and wiser in that mysterious land.
- 2 Leslie’s favorite place besides the castle stronghold was the pine forest. There the trees grew so thick at the top that the sunshine was veiled. No low bush or grass could grow in that dim light, so the group was carpeted with golden needles.
- 3 “I used to think this place was haunted,” Jess had confessed to Leslie the first afternoon he had revved up his courage to bring her there.
- 4 “Oh, but it is,” she said. “But you don’t have to be scared. It’s not haunted with evil things.”
- 5 “How do you know?”
- 6 “I can just feel it. Listen.”
- 7 At first he heard only the stillness. It was the stillness that had always frightened him before, but this time it was like the moment after Miss Edmunds finished a song, just after the chords hummed down to silence. Leslie was right. They stood there, not moving, not wanting the swish of dry needles beneath their feet to break the spell. Far away from their former world came the cry of geese heading southward.

8 Leslie took a deep breath. "This is not an ordinary place," she whispered. "Even the rulers of Terabithia come into it only at times of greatest sorrow or greatest joy. We must strive to keep it sacred. It would not do to disturb the Spirits."

9 He nodded, and without speaking, they went back to the creek bank where they shared together a solemn meal of crackers and dry fruit.

Excerpt from *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. Copyright © 1977 by Katherine Paterson. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Passage 2: from *The Secret Garden*

by Frances Hodgson Burnett

10 She was standing inside the secret garden.

11 It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine. The high walls which shut it in were covered with the leafless stems of climbing roses which were so thick that they were matted together. Mary Lennox knew they were roses because she had seen a great many roses in India. All the ground was covered with grass of a wintry brown and out of it grew clumps of bushes which were surely rosebushes if they were alive. There were numbers of standard roses which had so spread their branches that they were like little trees. There were other trees in the garden, and one of the things which made the place look strangest and loveliest was that climbing roses had run all over them and here and there they had caught at each other or at a far-reaching branch and had crept from one tree to another and made lovely bridges of themselves. It was this hazy tangle from tree to tree which made it all look so mysterious. Mary had thought it must be different from other gardens which had not been left all by themselves so long; and indeed it was different from any other place she had ever seen in her life.

12 "How still it is!" she whispered. "How still!"

13 Then she waited a moment and listened at the stillness. The robin, who had flown to his treetop, was still as all the rest. He did not even flutter his wings; he sat without stirring, and looked at Mary.

14 "No wonder it is still," she whispered again. "I am the first person who has spoken in here for ten years."

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- 15 She moved away from the door, stepping as softly as if she were afraid of awakening some one. She was glad that there was grass under her feet and that her steps made no sounds. She walked under one of the fairy-like gray arches between the trees and looked up at the sprays and tendrils which formed them. "I wonder if they are all quite dead," she said. "Is it all a quite dead garden? I wish it wasn't."
- 16 If she had been Ben Weatherstaff she could have told whether the wood was alive by looking at it, but she could only see that there were only gray or brown sprays and branches and none showed any signs of even a tiny leaf-bud anywhere.
- 17 But she was inside the wonderful garden and she could come through the door under the ivy any time and she felt as if she had found a world all her own.

Excerpt from *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. In the public domain.

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Now answer Numbers 1 through 5. Base your answers on the passages “from *Bridge to Terabithia*” and “from *The Secret Garden*.”

1. Fill in the circle **before** the sentence from Passage 1 that helps explain why Jess changed his mind about the forest.

Ⓐ “‘I used to think this place was haunted,’ Jess had confessed to Leslie the first afternoon he had revved up his courage to bring her there.

Ⓑ ‘Oh, but it is,’ she said. Ⓒ ‘But you don’t have to be scared. Ⓓ It’s not haunted with evil things.’

Ⓔ ‘How do you know?’

Ⓕ ‘I can just feel it. Ⓖ Listen.’

Ⓗ At first he heard only the stillness. Ⓡ It was the stillness that had always frightened him before, but this time it was like the moment after Miss Edmunds finished a song, just after the chords hummed down to silence.” (paragraphs 3–7)

2. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

What is the theme of Passage 1?

- Ⓐ Nature can have a powerful effect on people.
- Ⓑ Children need friends who can keep secrets.
- Ⓒ People can find interesting things in forests.
- Ⓓ Children often benefit from being quiet.

Part B

How do Jess and Leslie's actions support the theme from Part A?

- Ⓐ They promise not to tell anyone about Terabithia.
- Ⓑ They are excited about seeing the forest every day.
- Ⓒ They decide not to talk when in the forest.
- Ⓓ They are determined to keep Terabithia sacred.

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3. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

In Passage 2, what does the author mean by saying the roses “were like little trees”? (paragraph 11)

- Ⓐ The rosebushes have thick trunks.
- Ⓑ The rosebushes are tall enough to climb.
- Ⓒ The rosebushes have large, long branches.
- Ⓓ The rosebushes are more leaves than flowers.

Part B

Why is this description of the roses important?

- Ⓐ It shows that the garden lacks color.
- Ⓑ It shows that the rosebushes may be hard to cut down.
- Ⓒ It shows that the garden may be dangerous to play in.
- Ⓓ It shows that the rosebushes have been ignored for a long time.

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4. What role does paragraph 11 have in the passage?

- Ⓐ It shows how difficult it is to keep gardens healthy.
- Ⓑ It helps explain the reasons why Mary is fond of flowers.
- Ⓒ It provides a setting where Mary can meet new characters.
- Ⓓ It helps create the idea that the garden has been abandoned.

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5. Why does the narrator show Mary talking to herself?
- Ⓐ to show how interested Mary is about the garden
 - Ⓑ to show how nervous Mary feels inside the garden
 - Ⓒ to show how little Mary understands about the garden
 - Ⓓ to show how much the garden reminds Mary of other places

Read the passages “Thomas Jefferson’s Vegetable Garden: A Thing of Beauty And Science” and “Thomas Jefferson, Food Pioneer,” listen to the audio clip “Inside Thomas Jefferson’s Vegetable Garden,” and then answer Numbers 6 through 11.

Passage 1: Thomas Jefferson’s Vegetable Garden: A Thing Of Beauty And Science

by Graham Smith

This passage describes the gardens at Thomas Jefferson’s home, Monticello, and discusses the former president’s passion for gardening.

- 1 After Jefferson retired from public life to his beloved Virginia hilltop plantation, the garden “served as a sort of this experimental testing lab where he’d try new vegetables he sought out from around the globe,” says Peter Hatch, the estate’s head gardener. Hatch recently wrote a book about Jefferson’s garden and its history called *A Rich Spot of Earth*.
- 2 Somehow, the author of the Declaration of Independence and the nation’s third president found spare time to meticulously document his many trials and errors, growing over 300 varieties of more than 90 different plants. These included exotics like sesame, chickpeas, sea kale and salsify. They’re more commonly available now, but were rare for the region at the time. So were tomatoes and eggplant.
- 3 In the nearby South Orchard, he grew 130 varieties of fruit trees like peach, apple, fig and cherry. All the time, he carefully documented planting procedures, spacings of rows, when blossoms appeared, and when the food should come to the table. Behind Jefferson’s “zeal to categorize the world around him” was a patriotic mission, Hatch says.
- 4 Jefferson wrote, “The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture.” . . .
- 5 Lots of things failed in the garden. His entries from 1809 show the carrots, beets, sorrel and okra, the cauliflower, tarragon and Chinese melons missing the mark. Jefferson cites Windsor Beans as “killed by bug” and notes on Aug. 21: “From the 7th of Apr. to this day, excessive drought and cold. Now a good rain.”

- 6 Hatch gives some hope to home gardeners who might want to experiment themselves. “The use of the word ‘failed’ is repeated throughout [Jefferson’s] garden book, and one wonders if any gardener has written about failure as much as Thomas Jefferson. He once also wrote that if he failed 99 times out of 100, that one success was worth the 99 failures,” Hatch says.

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Passage 2: Thomas Jefferson, Food Pioneer

by Emily Goodman

This passage highlights Thomas Jefferson’s world travels and discusses how they affected both his gardening and eating habits.

- 7 As an old man, Thomas Jefferson wrote, “No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden. . . . Though an old man, I am but a young gardener.”
- 8 In Jefferson’s day, there were no supermarkets, no refrigerators, and no trucks or airplanes to move food quickly over long distances. Mostly, people ate only what they or their neighbors grew and made. Because of this, most people were familiar only with local plants and were afraid of new ones. Perhaps because Jefferson traveled in Europe—and because he always liked to try new things—he was an exception. He loved to grow unfamiliar plants. He experimented with new foods and plants in his “laboratory” garden at Monticello.
- 9 Using the most-modern farming methods of his time, Jefferson grew many “scary” new plants. (Of course, he learned to eat them, too.) In 1781, he began growing tomatoes, which Europeans thought were poisonous. Later, he introduced the potato, a plant unknown in America at that time. Jefferson also grew other “new” vegetables, such as cauliflower, eggplant, Mexican peppers, and beans from the Pacific Northwest brought back by Lewis and Clark.

- 10 During his travels, Jefferson brought many European plants back to America. For 23 years, he ordered seeds from Paris. Often he sent the seeds on to other American gardeners. He planted nearly 1,000 fruit trees in his Monticello orchard, including peaches, almonds, and cherries. He imported squash and broccoli from Italy and figs from France. And he tried 15 kinds of peas (his favorite vegetable) to see which tasted best.
- 11 From Holland, Jefferson brought home a waffle iron; from Italy, he smuggled rice. (Italian law at the time forbade taking the best rice out of the country. Jefferson did it anyway.) Our third president was the first American to make or use many dishes he had tasted in Europe, such as waffles, macaroni and cheese, and mustard.
- 12 In food, as in his other interests, Jefferson combined great ideas from Europe and America with exciting discoveries of his own. And we can thank him for that!

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Passage 3 Audio Clip: Inside Thomas Jefferson's Vegetable Garden

by Melissa Block and Peter Hatch



Raise your hand so your test administrator can provide you access to this audio passage.

Listen to the audio clip "Inside Thomas Jefferson's Vegetable Garden."

In this audio clip, Melissa Block and Peter Hatch describe Thomas Jefferson's gardens at Monticello. Hatch is Monticello's Director of Gardens and Grounds.

Excerpt from "Thomas Jefferson's Vegetable Garden: A Thing of Beauty and Science" from *All Things Considered* by Melissa Block and Peter Hatch. Copyright 2012 by National Public Radio. Reproduced by permission of NPR via Copyright Clearance Center.

FSA ELA Reading Practice Test Questions

Now answer Numbers 6 through 11. Base your answers on the passages “Thomas Jefferson’s Vegetable Garden: A Thing of Beauty And Science,” “Thomas Jefferson, Food Pioneer,” and the audio clip “Inside Thomas Jefferson’s Vegetable Garden.”

6. The title of Passage 2 calls Jefferson a “food pioneer.” Fill in the circles **before two** sentences that support this description.
- Ⓐ “In Jefferson’s day, there were no supermarkets, no refrigerators, and no trucks or airplanes to move food quickly over long distances.
 - Ⓑ Mostly, people ate only what they or their neighbors grew and made.
 - Ⓒ Because of this, most people were familiar only with local plants and were afraid of new ones.
 - Ⓓ Perhaps because Jefferson traveled in Europe—and because he always liked to try new things—he was an exception.
 - Ⓔ He loved to grow unfamiliar plants.” (paragraph 8)
7. Which **two** sentences should be included in a summary of Passage 1?
- Ⓐ Jefferson’s garden was on a hilltop in Virginia.
 - Ⓑ Jefferson cooked most of his food by boiling it.
 - Ⓒ Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.
 - Ⓓ Jefferson believed plants were important to society.
 - Ⓔ Jefferson kept detailed records of the vegetables he grew.

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8. What does exception mean as it is used in paragraph 8?

- Ⓐ a regular traveler
- Ⓑ a unique individual
- Ⓒ a person who grows vegetables
- Ⓓ a person who does experiments

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9. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which sentence is a point made by Melissa Block in the audio clip?

- Ⓐ Thomas Jefferson was dedicated to public service.
- Ⓑ The garden at Monticello is the largest in the area.
- Ⓒ Monticello's location is ideal for growing vegetables.
- Ⓓ Thomas Jefferson loved growing and eating vegetables.

Part B

What is one way that Melissa Block supports the point in Part A?

- Ⓐ by giving details about Monticello's layout
- Ⓑ by listing Thomas Jefferson's accomplishments
- Ⓒ by quoting Thomas Jefferson's thoughts about his diet
- Ⓓ by interviewing the head of Monticello's gardens and grounds

10. This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which sentence gives a point made by the author of Passage 1?

- Ⓐ Jefferson enjoyed cooking.
- Ⓑ Jefferson was a great president.
- Ⓒ Jefferson kept trying when his plants failed.
- Ⓓ Jefferson thought everyone should have a garden.

Part B

Which sentence from Passage 1 provides evidence for the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "After Jefferson retired from public life to his beloved Virginia hilltop plantation, the garden 'served as a sort of this experimental testing lab'" (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ ". . . when blossoms appeared, and when the food should come to the table." (paragraph 3)
- Ⓒ ". . . 'The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its culture.'" (paragraph 4)
- Ⓓ "'He once also wrote that if he failed 99 times out of 100, that one success was worth the 99 failures'" (paragraph 6)

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- 11.** What information about Thomas Jefferson is included in both Passage 1 and Passage 2?
- Ⓐ He traveled in many different countries.
 - Ⓑ He kept a journal of his experiments with plants.
 - Ⓒ He cooked foods that many people had never eaten.
 - Ⓓ He planted many different kinds of vegetables in his garden.

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Choose the correct word or phrase to fill in each blank in the passage. For each blank, fill in the circle **before** the word or phrase that is correct.

12. We squint when the sun is in our eyes because the bright sunlight hurts.

This is how our brain _____ [A has protected B protects C will protect D protected] our eyes. Protecting our eyes is very important during an eclipse. An eclipse happens when an object moves between you and the object you are viewing.

13. A solar eclipse happens when the Moon moves between Earth and the Sun. The Moon blocks our view of the Sun. Viewing a solar eclipse can be exciting. It is not an everyday event. But can it be viewed safely?

_____ [A Yes, B Yes: C Yes D Yes;] it can.

14. The safest and easiest way to view a solar eclipse is to build a pinhole camera. A pinhole camera lets you see what happens during a solar eclipse without looking directly at the Sun. It is a very valuable tool because it _____ [A let B is letting C has let D lets] you turn your back to the Sun and protect your eyes.

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