

SIRIUS


SAMPLER
*Use with Your
Students!*

**GRADE
7**

READING ZINGERS

Answering the Most Common STAAR® Test Items

**New
TEKS**

- 
- STAAR skill instruction
 - Scaffolded STAAR practice
 - STAAR test tips and strategies

To the Teacher

Grade 7 Reading Zingers helps prepare all students for the STAAR test by focusing on how to **read**, **analyze**, and **answer** STAAR test items by:

1. looking for academic vocabulary or key terms in the items to help focus their thinking
2. applying test-taking strategies that show how to decode test items and avoid traps
3. practicing the most common tested skills with four levels of scaffolded practice (A, B, C, and Mixed Review)

This workbook can be used in many ways, including:

- **Transition Activities** that can be used with partners or small groups.
- **Spaced Review**, such as one day a week, to review content in the format of the test.
- **Intense Review/Preparation** in the weeks before the STAAR test.

Mixed Practice is intended to add another rung to the scaffolding ladder by having students practice with a longer selection and with two skills in tandem. This then facilitates further independent practice, which can be found in our Grade 7 reading workbook, and separate Practice Tests.



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Printed in Texas.

ISBN: 978-1-949656-33-6

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Sampler

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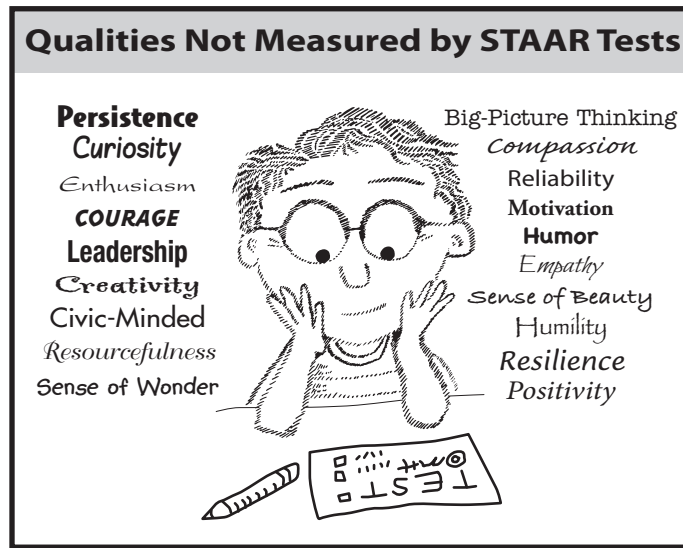
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Dear Students,

There are many important qualities of character and intelligence that the STAAR tests are **not** designed to measure—as this cartoon shows.



What the STAAR Grade 7 Reading test does measure is your ability to answer specific kinds of multiple-choice test questions. The lessons in this workbook will teach you how to approach and successfully answer these STAAR test questions.

Zingers—Answering the Most Common Test Items

Zingers challenge and support **all** students to **think** in ways that help them answer STAAR test questions. Each Zinger lesson presents one of the most commonly tested skills on the STAAR test and guides you to understand the intent of the question and a strategy for how to answer it. The lesson presents several questions, with increasing complexity, to help prepare you for the STAAR test.

Practicing Smart Is the Secret to STAAR Success

There is a secret to success on the STAAR tests—practice, practice, and more practice. However, not all practice is the same . . . so you want to practice smart.

First, practice with test questions that are likely to appear on the actual STAAR test. That’s easy, since this workbook is full of them! Next, focus on your weaknesses—the types of questions that you most need to improve. Think of it like this: if your basketball shot needs improvement, you don’t practice dribbling. Instead, you practice shooting.

Focusing on your weaknesses also means analyzing each test question you get wrong. Why did you get it wrong? If your basketball shot is off, you identify what you are doing wrong (aiming too far left) and correct it with your next shot (aim further right).

When you practice, give each question your full attention. (Take a short break *after* you answer the question.) Your attention is like a muscle that you can build by using it, one practice test question at a time. Do you believe unfocused, sloppy practice of your basketball shot will help you perform during a big game? Your attention is your greatest power. You develop it with practice.

Preparing for the STAAR test can actually be a fun challenge. And when you practice smart, you are building life skills at the same time you prepare for the STAAR test!

Your partners in STAAR success,
The Sirius Education Team

Using This Book for STAAR Success

Skill Instruction with Scaffolded Practice

Each lesson teaches **how to read, analyze, and answer** the STAAR questions for one of the most commonly tested TEKS. Scaffolded **practice A, B, and C** increases in complexity by modifying the number of answer choices.

ZINGER 3 Analyzing Drama

STAAR skill instruction

Playwrights write drama in the form of prose or verse for actors to perform. Dialogue consists of the spoken lines of multiple characters. Stage directions, which are written in italics, tell performers how to present the play.

The STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about drama.

Asking what is important about stage directions or dialogue

Which of the following lines shows that Mr. Clapper is clever?

Asking for an inference or summary based on events in the play

What can the reader infer based on how the play ends?

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

The stage directions in paragraph 35 indicate that Rosales is —

significance of directions/dialogue inference about the play

Practice A Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

The Dilemma – Scene 1

1 [The curtain rises. *Jenny is sitting in a school lunchroom with a notebook and a large textbook. She is wide-eyed and incredulous.*]

2 **JENNY:** But . . . not I thought . . . How can that possibly be right? I did all the steps! I followed all the rules. Ugh! [*She furiously erases something.*]

3 [*Amber enters. She is typing on a cell phone as she walks.*]

4 **AMBER:** Ugh, you are not going to BELIEVE what Spencer posted.

5 **JENNY:** Amber, I don't have time right now to worry about your boy drama.

1 Why does the playwright include stage directions?

A To establish what time of day the action is set

B To establish information about one of the characters

STAAR Tip
Circle the paragraph numbers with stage directions.

2 What can the reader infer about Jenny based on paragraphs 1 through 5?

F Jenny is envious of Amber's relaxed attitude.

G Jenny is apprehensive about something that will happen soon.

STAAR Tip
Circle the words or phrases that describe Jenny.

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Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

The Dilemma – Scene 1 (continued)

6 **AMBER:** [*In an English accent.*] Oh, a thousand pardons, m'lady. Sorry to have troubled you with the tedious affairs of us filthy peasants.

7 **JENNY:** Sorry. I'm just freaking out about the math test in sixth period. I've been studying for days, and I cannot make heads or tails of this statistics stuff.

8 **AMBER:** "Heads or tails"? At least you haven't lost your sense of humor. [*In a mocking voice.*] If a coin is flipped ten times, what is the probability anyone will care?

9 **JENNY:** Amber, I'm being absolutely serious. If I don't get an A on this test, I'll have a C+ for the semester. Me! Jenny Torres! C+! Say goodbye until we're spinsters.

10 **AMBER:** [*Rolls her eyes while continuing to swipe on her phone.*] Now who's being dramatic?

Fewer answer choices

on level practice

Question Analysis

STAAR Think! Both chose answer A for question 5. Explain to Beth why her answer is correct or not correct.

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Mixed Practice

Practice two Zinger skills using longer selections and mixed question types.

Mixed Practice Zingers 7–8

checklist

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Remember to...

Read the questions first.

Use a dictionary.

Annotate the selection based on the questions.

Galveston and Katrina

1 When people today think of deadly hurricanes, we often think of the massive destruction and human toll caused by Hurricane Katrina. The 2005 storm caused catastrophic damage from Florida to Texas. Countless people were displaced from their homes, and parts of the country are still recovering from the damage. Images of New Orleans residents huddled in the Superdome and of wide swaths of the Mississippi coastline swallowed by the storm surge are still fresh in the minds of many Americans. Many still feel that failures by the U.S. government before and after the storm added to the human cost of the tragedy.

2 However, Katrina was not the worst storm in history, and it was not even close. Nor was it the only time the U.S. government may have shared some fault. The deadliest natural disaster in the history of the United States remains the hurricane that struck the island of Galveston, Texas, on September 8, 1900.

3 The unnamed category 4 storm leveled what was, at the time, the largest city in the state and a wealthy center of commerce, killing more than 8,000 people. Storm tides ranging between 8 and 16 feet swallowed homes, which were washed out to sea. A local weather forecaster was quoted in the aftermath saying, "Where 20,000 people lived on the 8th, not a house remained on the 9th, and who occupied the houses may, in many instances, never be known."

4 As with Katrina, many feel that some of the tragedy might have been prevented. But there were significant differences: for one thing, the government had a very different attitude about hurricanes. The U.S. Weather Service, which was then only ten years old, didn't use words like hurricane and tornado. Because tools like satellites and doppler radar did not yet exist, forecasting relied on communication between storm trackers in various locations. Scientists in Cuba had indications that the tendered storm was headed to the Gulf of Mexico, but the U.S. tended to ignore warnings from Cuba for political reasons. These conditions, along with the severity of the storm, combined to make Galveston America's deadliest disaster to date.

5 "The Galveston hurricane made people realize you can't play politics with a weather bureau," Kerry Emanuel, a professor of atmospheric science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, told History.com in 2017. "If you make it political, people will die."

Longer selections

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1 The main reason many residents did not evacuate Galveston was that —

A they did not believe hurricanes were dangerous at the time

B the government had not yet classified hurricanes as a natural disaster

C it was hard to get on and off of the island

D warnings about the storm were not communicated by officials

2 The author includes a quotation in paragraph 3 to help the reader understand —

F the human cost of the storm

G scientific data about the storm and its effects

H that weather forecasters lacked advanced technology

J how the storm compares to other natural disasters

STAAR Tip
Read the first sentence of the paragraph.

Test tips

3 Paragraph 1 is mostly about —

A why hurricanes cause such tremendous damage

B ways the U.S. government could have prevented Hurricane Katrina

C the slow process of recovery following Hurricane Katrina

D general information concerning Hurricane Katrina

4 How does the author support the claim that Katrina is "not even close" to the Galveston disaster?

F By directly comparing numbers and statistics about Hurricane Katrina

G By quoting multiple eyewitnesses who lived through both storms

H By describing the ways the U.S. government failed in each case

J By implying that Galveston's fate was worse because it was not warned

Authentic STAAR test questions

Mixed Practice Zingers 7–8 41

Analyzing Author's Purpose

The **author's primary or main purpose** is the author's reason for writing. Authors write for many different reasons—for example, to inform, persuade, or entertain. In persuasive writing, the author's purpose can be identified by a **claim** (a thesis statement in which the author takes a position) and a call to action (a statement encouraging the reader to do or believe something).

The STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about author's primary or main purpose.

- **Asking about the selection as a whole**

The author wrote this selection most likely to –
 What is the author's main purpose for writing this selection?

- **Asking about a part of the selection**

The author includes the quotation in paragraph 2 to –
 Why did the author include paragraph 4 in the selection?

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

The author uses a quotation from the book *Moby Dick* to –
whole selection **part of the selection**

Practice A **Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.**

Is a hot dog a sandwich? Americans cannot seem to agree on the answer to this age-old question. Some people insist that a hot dog is a sandwich—and they have the dictionary on their side. *Merriam-Webster* defines a sandwich as “two or more slices of bread” but also as “a split roll having a filling in between.” Others, however, insist that a hot dog is not a sandwich because it has only one piece of bread. The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council declared in 2015 that a hot dog is not a sandwich. According to their president, “limiting the hot dog’s significance by saying it’s ‘just a sandwich’ is like calling the Dalai Lama ‘just a guy.’”

- 1 The author wrote this selection most likely to –
 - A convince people that a hot dog is a sandwich
 - B inform people of the debate about hot dogs

STAAR Tip
Label parts of the selection that match the answer choices.

- 2 The author uses the quotation from Merriam-Webster to –
 - F persuade readers that hot dogs must be sandwiches
 - G support the idea that a hot dog can be a sandwich

STAAR Tip
Underline the parts of the selection that reference this quotation.

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

The next time you order a soda at a movie theater or fast-food restaurant, think twice before you reach for a straw. Did you know that a staggering 500 million plastic straws are used in the United States every day? That’s enough to fill 127 school buses! These straws, which are too small to recycle, often end up in the world’s oceans. There, they hurt sea animals and clog coral reefs. Recently, many environmental activists have called for a ban on plastic straws. As a result, several restaurants and fast-food chains have agreed to stop providing plastic straws to customers. Do your part to save the oceans and stop using plastic straws today.

- 3** What is the author’s primary purpose for writing this selection?
- A** To describe the efforts of activists to ban plastic straws
 - B** To convince the reader to stop using plastic straws
 - C** To explain how plastic straws harm marine life

STAAR Tip

Underline words or phrases in the selection that give clues about the author’s purpose.

- 4** The author includes the fact about how many plastic straws are used every day to –
- F** show that Americans use more plastic straws than people in other countries
 - G** explain why it is not easy for Americans to give up plastic straws
 - H** help the reader understand the large scale of the problem

STAAR Tip

Draw a star beside this fact in the selection.

STAAR Think! Elliott chose answer F for question 4. Explain to Elliott why his answer is correct or not.

Practice C Read questions 5–6 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

The United States should get rid of daylight saving time (DST). There is no good reason that Americans should have to change their clocks one hour forward in the spring and one hour back in the fall. We should not have to lose an hour of sleep every spring. In fact, this loss of sleep comes at a great cost. Studies have shown that the switch to DST causes an increase in car accidents. Other studies have found that the number of heart attacks and strokes rises immediately after the spring time change. According to psychology professor Natalie Dautovich, “we know that insufficient sleep can have serious consequences for our health and performance.” Changing the clocks twice a year is inconvenient, annoying, and dangerous. Let’s put this old-fashioned practice to rest and get our sleep back!

- 5 The author’s main purpose for writing the selection is to —
- A encourage people to be more careful after the spring time change
 - B persuade Americans to support ending daylight saving time
 - C explain how daylight saving time affects people’s health
 - D examine the reasons for and against daylight saving time

STAAR Tip

Underline words in the selection that give clues about the author’s purpose.

- 6 Why did the author include the quotation from Natalie Dautovich?
- F To explain one of the reasons why we have daylight saving time
 - G To convince readers to make an effort to get more sleep
 - H To show that most sleep experts agree about daylight saving time
 - J To support the argument that daylight saving time is dangerous

STAAR Tip

Underline ideas or details in the selection that relate to the quotation.

STAAR Think! Evelyn chose answer D for question 5. Explain to Evelyn why her answer is correct or not.

Analyzing Text Evidence and Making Inferences

Text evidence refers to specific **details** in a text that support a particular idea. Authors state some of their ideas directly. Some ideas are not explicit, or stated directly. When you use text evidence to make an educated guess about something that is not explicitly stated in the text, you are making an **inference**.

The STAAR test uses two main approaches when asking you to use text evidence and make inferences about informational texts.

- **Asking you to use text evidence to make an inference about the text**

The reader can conclude that the boat will most likely —

- **Asking you to choose a sentence that supports a particular idea**

Which sentence from the selection best supports the idea that chimpanzees are in danger?

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

Based on the details in paragraph 2, the reader can conclude that –
make an inference choose a sentence

Practice A Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

In 2013, members of the Traditions Club in Bryan, Texas, built a gingerbread house that was bigger—and more impressive—than many ordinary houses. The gingerbread house, which won a Guinness World Record, measured 60 feet by 42 feet and was 21 feet tall. To make this ginormous house, the bakers used 1,800 pounds of butter, 7,200 pounds of flour, and 2,925 pounds of brown sugar! If this seems like a waste of perfectly good food, don't worry—it was for a good cause. The purpose of the gingerbread house was to raise money to build a new trauma center at a local hospital. What a sweet idea!

- 1 Which sentence from the selection suggests that the author thinks the gingerbread house was a worthwhile project?
 - A *The gingerbread house, which won a Guinness World Record, measured 60 feet by 42 feet and was 21 feet tall.*
 - B *If this seems like a waste of perfectly good food, don't worry—it was for a good cause.*

STAAR Tip

Underline words or phrases in the selection that give clues about the author's opinion.

- 2 The reader can conclude that –
 - F the Traditions Club was successful raising money
 - G the house was not taken down for a long time

STAAR Tip

Label text evidence in the selection that supports each answer choice.

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

- 1 Watch out, ant haters. A new kind of ant has invaded Texas in recent years, and it looks as if it plans to stay. Crazy ants were first spotted in Houston in 2002, and they have since spread to 23 counties in Texas. Although these ants are not particularly dangerous to humans (their bite causes only brief, mild pain), what’s shocking is their sheer abundance. Ant researchers at the University of Texas placed nine small test tubes on the ground in a place infested with crazy ants. A day later, the tubes had been filled with roughly 181,000 ants. The researchers did not even have to bait the tubes.
- 2 Crazy ants can be extremely destructive, invading people’s homes and electronics, taking up residence in every cavity they can find, and disturbing local ecosystems. They are able to wipe out fire ants, their natural rival in South America, where both ants are originally from. However, crazy-ant infestations are so extreme in some parts of Texas that some people say they want their fire ants back!

- 3 Which sentence from the selection best explains why crazy ants are of great concern to Texans?
- A *They are able to wipe out fire ants, their natural rival in South America, where both ants are originally from.*
 - B *Crazy ants can be extremely destructive, invading people’s homes and electronics, taking up residence in every cavity they can find, and disturbing local ecosystems.*
 - C *Crazy ants were first spotted in Houston in 2002, and they have since spread to 23 counties in Texas.*

STAAR Tip

Underline words or phrases in the selection that explain why crazy ants might be of concern to people.

- 4 In paragraph 1, the author describes the experiment at the University of Texas in order to –
- F explain the efforts of scientists to get rid of crazy ants
 - G emphasize that crazy ants are unlike other ants
 - H show how rapidly crazy ants spread and multiply

STAAR Tip

Underline the description of the experiment. What do the results of the experiment show?

STAAR Think! Antonio chose answer B for question 3. Explain to Antonio why his answer is correct or not.

Practice C Read questions 5–6 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

- 1 Deep inside a mountain along the Texas-Mexico border, a giant clock is being built that will keep time for 10,000 years. This 200-foot-tall clock—known as the 10,000 Year Clock—was designed by American inventor and engineer Danny Hillis. It is being funded by Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and will cost \$42 million to build.
- 2 When the clock is complete, it will be open to visitors. However, it will be located hours from the nearest airport. Visiting it will require a challenging, daylong hike and a harrowing ascent up a pitch-black vertical mountain tunnel. To get the clock to display the current time, visitors will have to wind up its display wheel. The clock will be powered by solar and thermal energy, as well as mechanical energy from visitors winding it up.
- 3 Bezos hopes the clock will “change the way humanity thinks about time and encourage people to take a longer view of things.” He explained, “Over the lifetime of this clock, the United States won’t exist. Whole civilizations will rise and fall.”

- 5 Bezos most likely believes that people who visit the clock will —
- A be motivated to create their own inventions that will last a long time
 - B feel responsible for ensuring that the clock is maintained
 - C work hard to make sure that the United States continues to exist
 - D think more deeply about how the world will change in the distant future

STAAR Tip

Underline the quotation from Bezos in the selection.

- 6 Which sentence from the selection suggests that the clock is not likely to have many visitors?
- F *“Over the lifetime of this clock, the United States won’t exist. Whole civilizations will rise and fall.”*
 - G *Visiting it will require a challenging, daylong hike and a harrowing ascent up a pitch-black vertical mountain tunnel.*
 - H *The clock will be powered by solar and thermal energy, as well as mechanical energy from visitors winding it up.*
 - J *To get the clock to display the current time, visitors will have to wind up its display wheel.*

STAAR Tip

Underline text evidence relating to visitors in the selection.

STAAR Think! Amy chose answer B for question 5. Explain to Amy why her answer is correct or not.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Remember to...

- Read the questions first.
- Use a dictionary.
- Annotate the selection based on the questions.

Who Was Sally Ride?

- 1 Sally Ride was the first American woman to fly in space. She was born on May 26, 1951, in Los Angeles, California. After high school, she attended Stanford University, where she earned bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in physics.
- 2 Sally Ride applied to be an astronaut in 1977. It was the first time that women were allowed to apply to the astronaut program. Ride was a graduate student when she saw an advertisement that NASA was looking for new astronauts. She was one of thirty-five people, including just six women, selected to the astronaut corps in 1978. More than eight thousand men and women had applied.
- 3 On June 18, 1983, Sally Ride became the first American woman to fly in space. She was a mission specialist on the STS-7 space shuttle mission. A mission specialist does the assigned tasks of a mission. These tasks include using the robotic arm, going on spacewalks, and doing science experiments. During her flight, Ride worked the robotic arm to help release satellites into space. She flew on the space shuttle again in 1984 on the STS-41G mission.
- 4 Ride retired from NASA in 1987. She became a professor at the University of California San Diego. She also looked for new ways to encourage women and girls to study science and mathematics. She came up with the idea for NASA's EarthKAM project. The project lets middle school students select, shoot, download, and study photos of Earth using a camera on the International Space Station.
- 5 In 2003, Ride was inducted to the Astronaut Hall of Fame, which honors astronauts for their accomplishments in spaceflight. She was awarded the 2012 National Space Grant Distinguished Service Award.
- 6 Until her death on July 23, 2012, Ride continued to help students—especially girls—study science and mathematics. In an interview just weeks before her death, she explained, "I never went into physics or the astronaut corps to become a role model. But after my first flight, it became clear to me that I was one. And I began to understand the importance of that to people. Young girls need to see role models in whatever careers they may choose, just so they can picture themselves doing those jobs someday. You can't be what you can't see."

- 1** What is the author's main purpose for writing this selection?
- A** To convince girls to pursue a career in science or mathematics
 - B** To explain who Sally Ride was and why she was important
 - C** To describe how Sally Ride helped more women to become astronauts
 - D** To highlight achievements by women in traditionally male professions
-
- 2** Which sentence from the selection helps explain why Ride was selected to the astronaut corps?
- F** *She was one of thirty-five people, including just six women, selected to the astronaut corps in 1978.*
 - G** *It was the first time that women were allowed to apply to the astronaut program.*
 - H** *After high school, she attended Stanford University, where she earned bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in physics.*
 - J** *These tasks include using the robotic arm, going on spacewalks, and doing science experiments.*
-
- 3** Why did the author include the quotation in paragraph 6?
- A** To show that Ride did not want to be seen as a role model
 - B** To encourage readers to think about how they can be a positive role model
 - C** To provide insight into how Ride spent the last years of her life
 - D** To explain why Ride got involved in encouraging girls to study science and math
-
- 4** The reader can conclude that Ride most likely –
- F** thought that it was important for girls and boys to have equal opportunities
 - G** believed girls were more qualified than boys for careers in science and technology
 - H** considered NASA's policies to be unfair to women
 - J** was selected to the astronaut corps because she was a woman

STAAR Tip

Underline and label text evidence that supports each answer choice.

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Remember to...

- Read the questions first.
- Use a dictionary.
- Annotate the selection based on the questions.

Sprechen Sie Texan?¹

- 1 It would be hard to imagine anyone who knows more about the German spoken today in central Texas than Hans Boas. Serendipity brought him in contact with the folks who can still speak Texas German. There are no more than ten thousand of them. Most are elderly.
- 2 This part of the Texas Hill Country is where former president Lyndon Johnson was raised. Johnson’s mother taught English to German-speaking children.
- 3 As for Boas’s chance encounter with the language, he wrote, “After having ordered lunch in a local restaurant, I overheard a conversation at the neighboring table. Three elderly gentlemen were discussing what types of hunting gear they should purchase. . . . I realized suddenly that they were speaking a variety of German that I had never heard before. . . . I started talking to them in [standard] German and learned about the formerly widespread use of German in central Texas.”
- 4 Soon afterward, Boas began to study Texas German. He studied how Texas German is spoken today. He compared it to the German that was originally brought to Texas in the 1800s. He examined how the language changed as a result of German speakers interacting with English speakers. Boas published the results of his research in a book called *The Life and Death of Texas German*.
- 5 Out of the six thousand languages spoken in the world today, only about three thousand will remain a hundred years from now. Boas found that Texas German is “critically endangered” and will probably be extinct by 2050. A language is extinct when it no longer has any speakers. Linguists hope to understand the reasons for the extinction of languages. Boas concluded that Texas German’s demise will have been caused by English-only laws in the early 1900s. These laws prohibited the use of German as a language of instruction in schools.

¹ Sprechen sie Texan? is German for “Do you speak Texan?”

- 5 The author wrote this selection most likely to —
- A convince the reader to help save Texas German from extinction
 - B tell the reader about Hans Boas and his research on Texas German
 - C explain how the languages spoken in Texas have changed over time
 - D provide information about how languages spread and change
-
- 6 The author includes the quotation in paragraph 3 most likely to —
- F tell an entertaining story about meeting people who speak Texas German
 - G emphasize the fact that mostly elderly people speak Texas German
 - H show that Boas could speak Texas German fluently
 - J explain what inspired Hans’s interest in Texas German
-
- 7 Based on the details in paragraph 3, the reader can conclude that Texas German most likely —
- A can be understood by people who speak standard German
 - B has changed very little from the standard German language
 - C will become extinct within the next fifty years
 - D is used only in casual conversations between friends
-
- 8 Which sentence from the selection suggests that the author is impressed by Hans Boas’s knowledge of Texas German?
- F *He examined how the language changed as a result of German speakers interacting with English speakers.*
 - G *Boas published the results of his research in a book called *The Life and Death of Texas German*.*
 - H *It would be hard to imagine anyone who knows more about the German spoken today in central Texas than Hans Boas.*
 - J *Boas concluded that Texas German’s demise will have been caused by English-only laws in the early 1900s.*

STAAR Tip

Underline and label text evidence that supports each answer choice.

Support your students with academic vocabulary.

Academic Vocabulary

These words appear in STAAR items about author's purpose. Challenge students to identify and define these words in the practice questions. For more help with Academic Vocabulary, see p. vii.

author's main/primary purpose: the author's reason for writing

claim: in persuasive writing, a statement in which the author takes a position

quotation: an extract of text from another source that an author repeats in his or her own work, usually within quotation marks

Help students decode STAAR questions.

Practice A Answer Choice Explanations

Ask students to identify the question types. Question 1 asks about the selection overall, and question 2 references a specific part.

1 A The author does not reveal his or her personal opinion about whether a hot dog is a sandwich.

B Correct. The author provides information about both sides of the debate.

2 F The purpose of the passage is not persuasion, as the author does not take a position in the debate.

G Correct. The Merriam-Webster definition supports the idea that a hot dog can also be considered a sandwich.

Answer choice explanations help teachers give students meaningful feedback.

ZINGER 9 Analyzing Author's Purpose

The author's **primary or main purpose** is the author's reason for writing. Authors write for many different reasons—for example, to inform, persuade, or entertain. In persuasive writing, the author's purpose can be identified by a **claim** (a thesis statement in which the author takes a position) and a call to action (a statement encouraging the reader to do or believe something).

The STAAR test uses two approaches when asking about author's primary or main purpose.

- **Asking about the selection as a whole**

The author wrote this selection most likely to –

What is the author's main purpose for writing this selection?

- **Asking about a part of the selection**

The author includes the quotation in paragraph 2 to –

Why did the author include paragraph 4 in the selection?

Read the question below. Then underline the way the question tests the skill.

The author uses a quotation from the book *Moby Dick* to –
whole selection part of the selection

Practice A Read questions 1–2 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

Is a hot dog a sandwich? Americans cannot seem to agree on the answer to this age-old question. Some people insist that a hot dog is a sandwich—and they have the dictionary on their side. Merriam-Webster defines a sandwich as "two or more slices of bread" but also as "a split roll having a filling in between." Others, however, insist that a hot dog is not a sandwich because it has only one piece of bread. The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council declared in 2015 that a hot dog is not a sandwich. According to their president, "limiting the hot dog's significance by saying it's 'just a sandwich' is like calling the Dalai Lama 'just a guy.'"B

1 The author wrote this selection most likely to –

- A** convince people that a hot dog is a sandwich
- B** inform people of the debate about hot dogs

STAAR Tip
Label parts of the selection that match the answer choices.

2 The author uses the quotation from Merriam-Webster to –

- F** persuade readers that hot dogs must be sandwiches
- G** support the idea that a hot dog can be a sandwich

STAAR Tip
Underline the parts of the selection that reference this quotation.

Practice B Read questions 3–4 first. Then read the selection and answer the questions.

The next time you order a soda at a movie theater or fast-food restaurant, think twice before you reach for a straw. Did you know that a staggering 500★ million plastic straws are used in the United States every day? That's enough to fill 127 school buses! These straws, which are too small to recycle, often end up in the world's oceans. There, they hurt sea animals and clog coral reefs. Recently, many environmental activists have called for a ban on plastic straws. As a result, several restaurants and fast-food chains have agreed to stop providing plastic straws to customers. Do your part to save the oceans and stop using plastic straws today.

3 What is the author's primary purpose for writing this selection?

- A To describe the efforts of activists to ban plastic straws
- B To convince the reader to stop using plastic straws**
- C To explain how plastic straws harm marine life

STAAR Tip

Underline words or phrases in the selection that give clues about the author's purpose.

4 The author includes the fact about how many plastic straws are used every day to –

- F show that Americans use more plastic straws than people in other countries
- G explain why it is not easy for Americans to give up plastic straws
- H help the reader understand the large scale of the problem**

STAAR Tip

Draw a star beside this fact in the selection.

STAAR Think! Elliott chose answer F for question 4. Explain to Elliott why his answer is correct or not.

Incorrect; the selection does not say how many straws people in other countries use.

Practice B Answer Choice Explanations

Ask students to identify the question types. Question 3 asks about the selection overall, and question 4 references a specific part.

- 3 A The author mentions these efforts, but the primary purpose of the passage is persuasion.
- B Correct. The author directly calls for readers to stop using plastic straws in the claim statement (first sentence) and the call to action (last sentence).**
- C The author says that plastic straws harm marine life but does not explain how.
- 4 F The author does not include any information about straw use in other countries.
- G This fact does not help explain why it is not easy for Americans to give up plastic straws.
- H Correct. Knowing that 500 million plastic straws are used each day helps readers understand the magnitude of the problem.**

To obtain a copy of the remaining answers to this Sampler, email:

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Zinger Correlations to Sirius Grade 7 Reading Workbook

Title	G7 Reading Instruction	Practice	TEKS Covered
Zinger 1	Analyzing Poetry	Practice 12, 15	7.8B
Zinger 2	Analyzing Figurative Language	Practice 4, 9, 12, 13, 15	7.9D
Zinger 3	Analyzing Drama	Practice 1	7.8C
Zinger 4	Analyzing Plot Analyzing Character, Setting, and Point of View	Practice 1, 2, 5, 9, 13, 15	7.7B, 7.7C, 7.7D
Zinger 5	Using Context Clues	Practice 3, 10, 12, 13, 16	7.2B
Zinger 6	Analyzing Argumentative Texts	Practice 14, 16	7.8E
Zinger 7	Analyzing Informational Texts	Practice 6, 7, 11	7.8D
Zinger 8	Analyzing Informational Texts Analyzing Argumentative Texts	Practice 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15	7.5G
Zinger 9	Analyzing Author's Purpose	Practice 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 14	7.9A, 7.9B
Zinger 10	Analyzing Informational Texts Analyzing Argumentative Texts	Practice 6, 8, 14, 15	7.5F
Zinger 11	Analyzing Multiple Texts	Practice 7/8, 10/11	7.5E

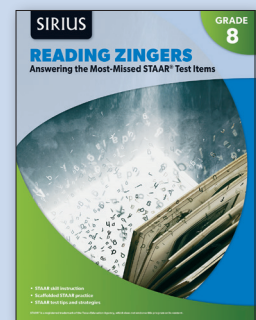
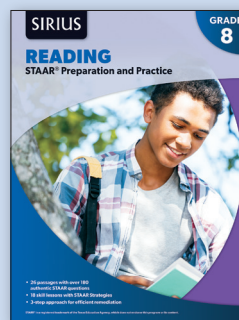
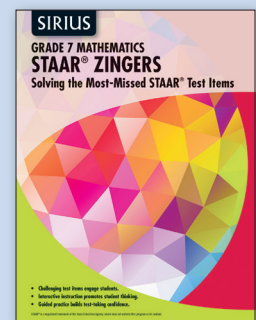
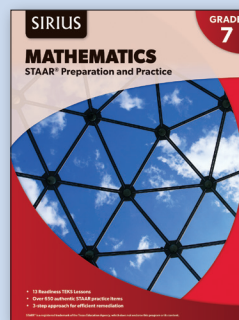
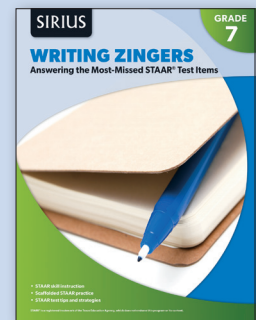
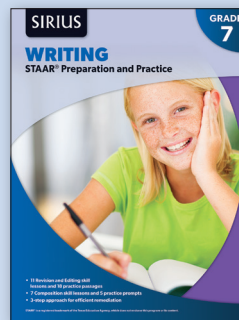
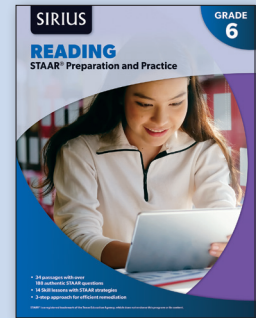
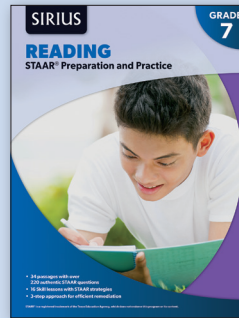
SAMPLER

GRADE 7 READING ZINGERS CONTENTS

- Zinger 1** Analyzing Poetry
- Zinger 2** Analyzing Figurative Language
Mixed Practice 1–2
- Zinger 3** Analyzing Drama
- Zinger 4** Analyzing Plot, Characters, and Conflict
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- Zinger 9** Analyzing Author's Purpose
- Zinger 10** Analyzing Text Evidence and Making Inferences
Mixed Practice 9–10
- Zinger 11** Making Connections Across Texts
Mixed Practice 11

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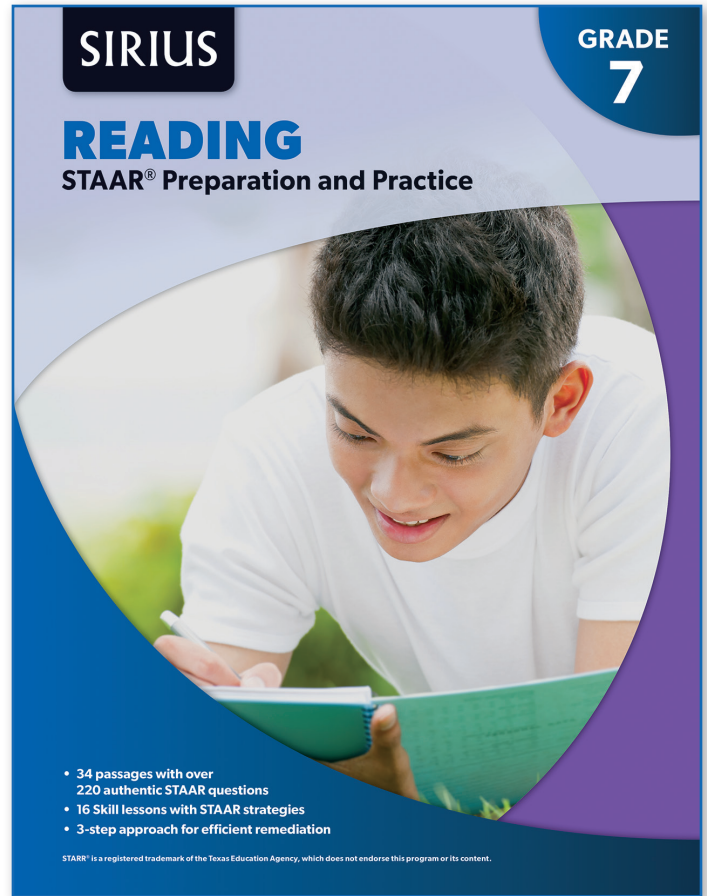
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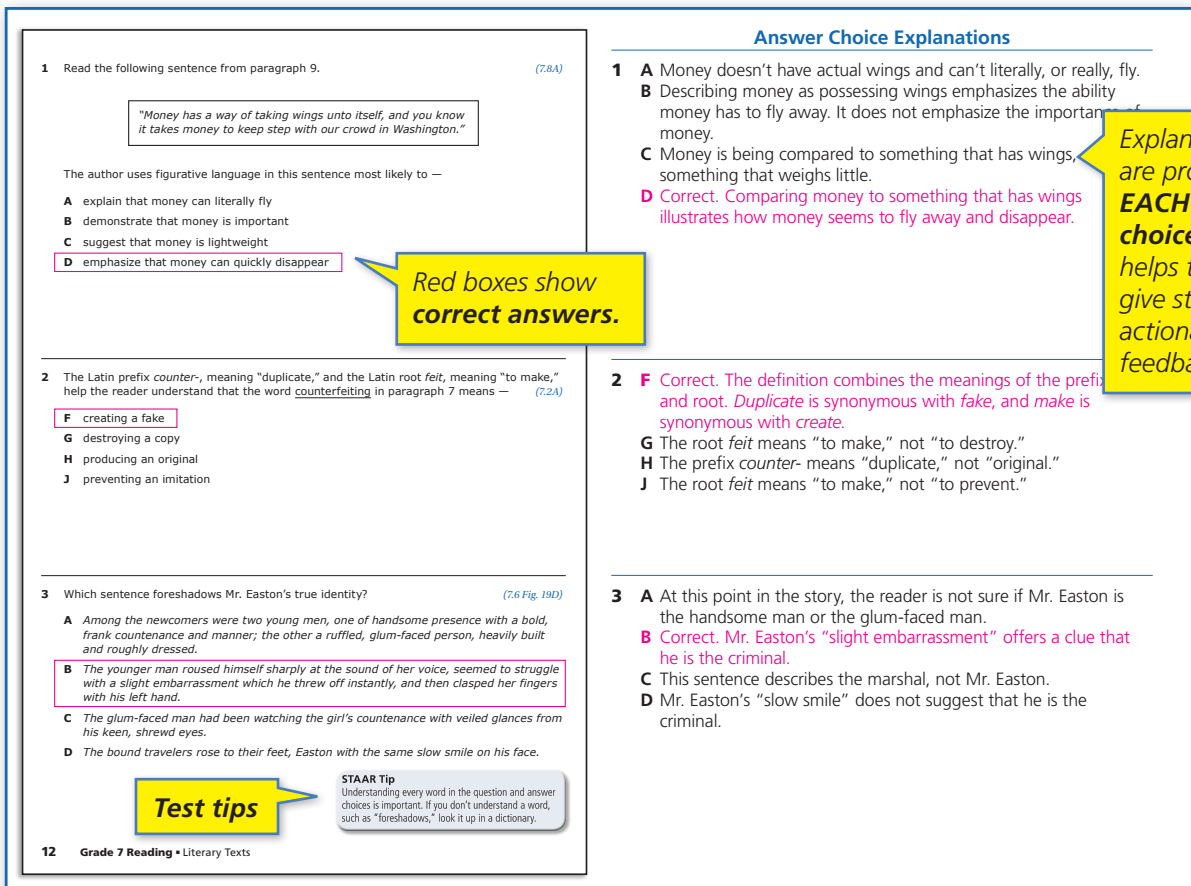
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1 Read the following sentence from paragraph 9. (7.8A)

"Money has a way of taking wings unto itself, and you know it takes money to keep step with our crowd in Washington."

The author uses figurative language in this sentence most likely to —

- A explain that money can literally fly
- B demonstrate that money is important
- C suggest that money is lightweight
- D emphasize that money can quickly disappear

2 The Latin prefix *counter-*, meaning "duplicate," and the Latin root *feit*, meaning "to make," help the reader understand that the word *counterfeiting* in paragraph 7 means — (7.2A)

- F creating a fake
- G destroying a copy
- H producing an original
- J preventing an imitation

3 Which sentence foreshadows Mr. Easton's true identity? (7.6 Fig. 19D)

- A Among the newcomers were two young men, one of handsome presence with a bold, frank countenance and manner; the other a ruffled, glum-faced person, heavily built and roughly dressed.
- B The younger man roused himself sharply at the sound of her voice, seemed to struggle with a slight embarrassment which he threw off instantly, and then clasped her fingers with his left hand.
- C The glum-faced man had been watching the girl's countenance with veiled glances from his keen, shrewd eyes.
- D The bound travelers rose to their feet, Easton with the same slow smile on his face.

Answer Choice Explanations

1 A Money doesn't have actual wings and can't literally, or really, fly.
B Describing money as possessing wings emphasizes the ability money has to fly away. It does not emphasize the importance of money.
C Money is being compared to something that has wings, something that weighs little.
D **Correct.** Comparing money to something that has wings illustrates how money seems to fly away and disappear.

2 F **Correct.** The definition combines the meanings of the prefix and root. *Duplicate* is synonymous with *fake*, and *make* is synonymous with *create*.
G The root *feit* means "to make," not "to destroy."
H The prefix *counter-* means "duplicate," not "original."
J The root *feit* means "to make," not "to prevent."

3 A At this point in the story, the reader is not sure if Mr. Easton is the handsome man or the glum-faced man.
B **Correct.** Mr. Easton's "slight embarrassment" offers a clue that he is the criminal.
C This sentence describes the marshal, not Mr. Easton.
D Mr. Easton's "slow smile" does not suggest that he is the criminal.

Test tips

STAAR Tip
Understanding every word in the question and answer choices is important. If you don't understand a word, such as "foreshadows," look it up in a dictionary.

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Red boxes show correct answers.

Explanations are provided for EACH answer choice. This helps teachers give students actionable feedback.