

Grade 8 Sample Items

Task Generation Model: C1 Narrative Task

Sample Text for Grade 8: “Tom Sawyer” by Mark Twain

The Narrative Task broadens the way in which students may use this type of writing. Narrative writing can be used to convey experiences or events, real or imaginary. In this task, students may be asked to write a story, detail a scientific process, write a historical account of important figures, or to describe an account of events, scenes or objects, for example. This Task Generation Model C1, and the focus is a Narrative Story. In this task, there are a total of six items. Five items will measure the reading literature sub-claims, and one PCR will measure writing claims. A complete Narrative Task for 8th Grade contains six items that are Evidence-Based Selected Response (EBSR) items and one Prose Constructed Response (PCR) item. Students will read a purpose setting statement for the task and then read the first passage. After answering EBSR items, the students will respond to the PCR item.

This narrative task aligns with standards: RL.8.1, RL.8.2, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, W.8.3, and W.8.4

Today you will read excerpt from Mark Twain called “Tom Sawyer.” As you read this excerpt, you will answer questions and write a narrative story about the excerpt.

Read the excerpt from “Tom Sawyer” and answer the questions.

1 Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind:

2 “No—no—I reckon it wouldn’t hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly’s awful particular about this fence—right here on the street, you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn’t mind and SHE wouldn’t. Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful; I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”

3 “No—is that so? Oh come, now—lemme just try. Only just a little—I’d let YOU, if you was me, Tom.”

4 “Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him; Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn’t let Sid. Now don’t you see how I’m fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it—”

5 “Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”

6 “Well, here—No, Ben, now don’t. I’m afeard—”

7 “I’ll give you ALL of it!”



8 Tom gave up the brush with reluctance in his face, but alacrity in his heart. And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple, and planned the slaughter of more innocents. There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash. By the time Ben was fagged out, Tom had traded the next chance to Billy Fisher for a kite, in good repair; and when he played out, Johnny Miller bought in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on, and so on, hour after hour. And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass doorknob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange-peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.

9 He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it! If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village.

10 Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. If he had been a great and wise philosopher, like the writer of this book, he would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do. And this would help him to understand why constructing artificial flowers or performing on a tread-mill is work, while rolling ten-pins or climbing Mont Blanc is only amusement. There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line, in the summer, because the privilege costs them considerable money; but if



they were offered wages for the service, that would turn it into work and then they would resign.

11 The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report.

SAMPLE

1. Part A: What does the word **circumstances** mean as it is used in the last paragraph?
2. position
3. status
4. arrangement
5. fortune

Part B: Which of the phrases from the passage best helps the reader understand the meaning of circumstances?

1. "If he hadn't run out of whitewash he would have bankrupted every boy in the village."
2. "And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth."
3. "There are wealthy gentlemen in England who drive four-horse passenger-coaches twenty or thirty miles on a daily line..."
4. "There was no lack of material; boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash."

2. Part A: Choose one word that describes Tom Sawyer based on evidence from the text.

1. skillful
2. thoughtful
3. deceitful
4. grateful

Part B: Which two details from the passage support your response to Part A?

1. "The boy mused awhile over the substantial change which had taken place in his worldly circumstances, and then wended toward headquarters to report."
2. "Tom considered, was about to consent; but he altered his mind..."
3. "And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth."
4. "Tom said to himself that it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain."

3. Part A: How do the following lines propel the action forward in Tom Sawyer?



“Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticised the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed.”

1. Tom is able to manipulate the young boys into giving up their possessions.
2. Tom wants to finish cleaning the fence early so that he can ride the boat on the river.
3. Tom is able to influence the other boys into washing the fence for him.
4. Tom takes pride in completing the work that his aunt gave him to do.

Part B: Which evidence from the text supports your answer in Part A?

1. “Yes, she’s awful particular about this fence; it’s got to be done very careful;”
2. “And while the late steamer Big Missouri worked and sweated in the sun, the retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by...”
3. “He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it!”
4. “He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through...”

4. Part A: What do the following lines reveal about Tom Sawyer’s character?

“He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.”

1. Tom wanted his friends to help him complete the task that was assigned to him.
2. Tom did not want anyone else to wash the fence because he was proud of his work.
3. Tom persuaded his friends that it was a privilege to assist with his chores.
4. Tom pretended that his job was so hard which made his friends want to whitewash the fence.

Part B: Which sentence from the passage supports your answer to Part A?

1. “Oh, shucks, I’ll be just as careful. Now lemme try. Say—I’ll give you the core of my apple.”
2. “Ben, I’d like to, honest injun; but Aunt Polly—well, Jim wanted to do it, but she wouldn’t let him;”
3. “I reckon there ain’t one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it’s got to be done.”
4. “He had had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence had three coats of whitewash on it!”

5. Part A: Which statement best describes the central idea of the text?

1. Tom misses his friends and enjoys their company while working.
2. Tom is surrounded by friends that will give up their possessions to have fun.
3. Tom is interested in getting people to do his work for him.
4. Tom realizes that chores do not have to be a strenuous task.

Part B: Which sentence best help develops the central idea?

1. "The retired artist sat on a barrel in the shade close by, dangled his legs, munched his apple..."
2. "Boys happened along every little while; they came to jeer, but remained to whitewash."
3. "He would now have comprehended that Work consists of whatever a body is OBLIGED to do..."
4. "He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece..."

PCR

In the passage, the author created a character named Tom Sawyer. Think about the descriptive details that the author used to create that character. The passage ends with Tom Sawyer going to report that his task is complete.

Write an original story to continue where the passage ended. In your story, be sure to include what you have learned about Tom Sawyer to tell what happens next in the passage.