

Sample Constructed Response Items

Grade 8 Reading



Adapted from “Bats”

by W. S. Dallas

Among the sounds which greet the ear of the wayfarer¹ as the shades of evening deepen into night, one of the commonest is a rather faint chirping noise which comes mysteriously from overhead. On looking up in search of the source of this peculiar sound, we may see a small, dark, shadow-like creature sweeping to and fro with great rapidity. It is one of the curious groups of animals called bats, representatives of which are to be met with in all countries, always active at night or in the twilight, and presenting a remarkable general similarity of structure, although in some respects they may differ considerably in habits. In the British Islands some fourteen species have been distinguished.

Like the owls, with which they share the dominion² of the evening air, the bats have a perfectly noiseless flight; their activity is chiefly during the twilight, although some species are later, and in fact seem to keep up throughout the whole night. As they rest during the day, concealed usually in the most inaccessible places they can find, and are seen only upon the wing, their power of flight is their most striking peculiarity in the popular mind, and it is perhaps no great wonder that by many people, both in ancient and modern times they have been regarded as birds. Nevertheless, their hairy bodies and leathery wings are so unlike anything that we ordinarily understand as pertaining to a bird, that opinion was apparently always divided, as to the true nature of these creatures—“a mouse with wings,” as Goldsmith called it once, according to James Boswell, is certainly a curious animal, and very difficult to classify so long as the would-be systematist has no particularly definite ideas to guide him. The likeness of the bat to a winged mouse has made itself felt in the name given to the creature in many languages, such as the “Chauvesouris” of the French and the “Flitter-mouse” of some parts of England, the latter being reproduced almost literally in German, Dutch, and Swedish, while the Danes called the bat a “Flogemues,” which has about the same meaning, and the Swedes have a second name, “Lädermus,” evidently referring to the texture of the wings, as well as to the mouse-like character of the body.

3

But so soon as we have definite characteristics to appeal to in classification, we find no difficulty in assigning these puzzling creatures to their proper place in the system. Bats

¹**wayfarer:** one who travels on foot

²**dominion:** territory over an area



produce their young alive, and nurse them; the milk being produced by special glands. Now, these are characteristics which are peculiar among all animals to the vertebrate class Mammalia. They possess also other characteristics that are unmistakably mammalian. Leaving out of consideration the structure of the internal organs, they have teeth implanted in sockets in the jaws, four limbs, and a hairy covering to the skin, so that they possess more decidedly mammalian characteristics than some other members of the class, such as the marine whales and dolphins (*Cetacea*) and manatees (*Sirenia*), which are still often spoken of as fishes. In point of fact, although organized for flight, the bat may, without any violence to language, be spoken of as a *quadruped*,³ for its forelimbs contain all the parts found in those of other mammals fully developed, and they come into use when the creature is walking on the ground.

Perhaps the special characteristics of the bats will be brought out most distinctly by a comparison of their structure with that of a bird, seeing that the modification of the forelimbs into wings is their most striking distinction from other Mammalia; for, although some other members of the class are spoken of as "flying," such as the Flying Squirrels, Flying Lemurs, and Flying Phalangers, these creatures do not really fly, but merely glide through the air to considerable distances by the action of a broad fold of skin which runs down each side of the body, and which, when stretched between the extended limbs, buoys the creatures up in the air after the fashion of a parachute.

³**quadruped:** an animal, especially a mammal, having four feet

SAMPLE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS
GRADE 8 READING



Grade 8: Adapted from “Bats”

Standard: RI.8.4

Depth of Knowledge (DOK): Strategic Thinking

Achievement Level Descriptor (ALD): 4

CR Item: Explain how the author’s statement, “they possess more decidedly mammalian characteristics than some other members of the class,” in paragraph 3 impacts the meaning of the text. Cite the quote that most strongly supports your answer.

A large rectangular box containing horizontal lines for writing. A large, light gray diagonal watermark reading "SAMPLE" is overlaid across the box.

SAMPLE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS GRADE 8 READING



Rubric:

- 2
 - Response correctly explains how the author's statement in paragraph 3 impacts the meaning of the text
 - Response provides a strong and appropriate quote from the text as support
- 1
 - Response correctly explains how the author's statement in paragraph 3 impacts the meaning of the text
 - Response provides an inappropriate quote from the text or lacks a quote from the text
- 0
 - Response incorrectly explains how the author's statement in paragraph 3 impacts the meaning of the text
 - Response is unable to provide an appropriate quote for an incorrect answer

Answers:

Possible correct explanations should relate to: The author is proving why bats belong in the "mammal" classification category throughout the text.

1. The author is stating his opinion that bats have more mammalian characteristics than some marine mammals.
2. The author is revealing that bats were once considered to be in a different category (birds), but they are classified as mammals.
3. The author is supporting the idea that bats, like other animals that do not resemble typical mammals, do have many mammalian features

Plausible textual support for the first explanation: *The author is stating his opinion that bats have more mammalian characteristics than some marine mammals.* These are the strongest quotes to use from the text.

- "They have teeth implanted in sockets in the jaws, four limbs, and a hairy covering to the skin."
- "marine whales and dolphins (*Cetacea*) and manatees (*Sirenia*), which are still often spoken of as fishes"

SAMPLE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS

GRADE 8 READING



Plausible textual support for second explanation: *The author is revealing that bats were once considered to be in a different category (birds), but they are classified as mammals.* These are the strongest quotes to use from the text.

- "it is perhaps no great wonder that by many people, both in ancient and modern times they have been regarded as birds. Nevertheless, their hairy bodies and leathery wings are so unlike anything that we ordinarily understand as pertaining to a bird, that opinion was apparently always divided."
- "They possess also other characteristics that are unmistakably mammalian."
- "The bat may, without any violence to language, be spoken of as a *quadruped*, for its forelimbs contain all the parts found in those of other mammals. . ."

Plausible textual support for third explanation: *The author is supporting the idea that bats, like other animals that do not resemble typical mammals, do have many mammalian features.* These are the strongest quotes to use from the text.

- "They possess also other characteristics that are unmistakably mammalian."
- "They have teeth implanted in sockets in the jaws, four limbs, and a hairy covering to the skin."
- "Bats produce their young alive, and nurse them; the milk being produced by special glands."
- "The bat may, without any violence to language, be spoken of as a *quadruped*, for its forelimbs contain all the parts found in those of other mammals fully developed, and they come into use when the creature is walking on the ground."



Sample Student Response: Score point 2 (Correct answer and Correct support)

Correct answer—The student response correctly explains (in their own words) how the author’s statement impacts the meaning of the text (see Answers list).

Correct support—The student response should use an appropriate quote from the text (see Answers list).

Example: The author’s statement is to establish the fact that bats are mammals and have more features than marine animals that are placed in the mammal category. For example, there are “marine whales and dolphins (*Cetacea*) and manatees (*Sirenia*), which are still often spoken of as fishes” even though they are mammals.

Sample Student Response: Score point 1 (Correct answer and No support)

Correct answer—The student response correctly explains (in their own words) how the author’s statement impacts the meaning of the text (see Answers list).

No support—The student response uses an inappropriate quote from the text (not shown on Answers list) or lacks a quote.

Example: This statement shows that bats were first thought to be related to birds, but later determined to be mammals because they have fur and produce milk for their babies.

Sample Student Response: Score point 0 (Incorrect answer and Support does not matter)

Incorrect answer—The student response incorrectly explains how the author’s statement impacts the meaning of the text (not shown on Answers list).

Irrelevant support—The student response is unable to support an incorrect answer (even if a correct quote is provided).

Example: Bats should be in their own category for flying mammals because there are flying squirrels and flying lemurs too. The text says, “They possess also other characteristics that are unmistakably mammalian.”



Adapted from *Our Mr. Wrenn*: “Mr. Wrenn is Lonely”

by Sinclair Lewis

The ticket taker of the movie theater is a public personage, who stands out on Fourteenth Street, New York, wearing a gorgeous light blue coat of numerous brass buttons. He nods to all the patrons, and his nod is the most cordial in town. Mr. Wrenn used to trot down to Fourteenth Street, passing other shows, just to get that cordial nod, because he had a lonely furnished room for evenings, and for daytime a tedious job that always made his head stuffy.

He stands out in the correspondence of the Souvenir and Art Novelty Company as “Our Mr. Wrenn,” who would be writing you directly and explaining everything most satisfactorily. At thirty-four, Mr. Wrenn was the sales entry clerk of the Souvenir Company. He was always bending over bills and columns of figures at a desk behind the stockroom. He was a meek little bachelor—a person of inconspicuous¹ blue ready-made suits, and a small unsuccessful mustache.

Today—historians have established the date as April 9, 1910—there had been some confusing mixed orders from the Wisconsin retailers, and Mr. Wrenn had been “called down” by the office manager, Mr. Mortimer R. Guilfogle. He needed the friendly nod of the theater ticket taker. He found Fourteenth Street, after office hours, swept by a dusty wind. Under the elevated station he secretly made believe that he was in Paris, for here Italian boys swayed with trays of violets; a tramp displayed crimson mechanical rabbits, which squeaked, on silvery leading-strings; and a newsstand was heaped with the orange and green and gold of magazine covers.

“Gee!” inarticulated Mr. Wrenn. “Lots of colors. Hope I see foreign stuff like that in the moving pictures.”

He came primly up to the theater, feeling in his vest pockets for a nickel and peering around the booth at the friendly ticket taker. But the latter was thinking about buying Johnny’s pants. Should he get them at the Fourteenth Street Store, or Siegel-Cooper’s, or over at Aronson’s, near home? So ruminating, he twiddled his wheel mechanically, and Mr. Wrenn’s pasteboard slip was indifferently received in the plate-glass gullet of the grinder² without the taker’s even seeing the clerk’s bow and smile.

¹**inconspicuous:** not noticeable

²**grinder:** a machine that takes tickets



Mr. Wrenn trembled into the door of the theater. He wanted to turn back and rebuke this fellow, but was restrained by shyness. He *had* liked the man's "Fine evenin', sir"—rain or shine—but he wouldn't stand for being cut. Wasn't he making nineteen dollars a week, as against the ticket taker's ten or twelve? He shook his head with the defiance of a cornered mouse, fussed with his mustache, and regarded the moving pictures gloomily.

7

They helped him. After a Selig³ domestic drama came a stirring Vitagraph⁴ Western scene, "The Goat of the Rancho," which depicted with much humor and tumult the revolt of a ranch cook. Mr. Wrenn was really seeing, not cowpunchers and sagebrush, but himself, defying the office manager's meanness and revolting against the ticketman's rudeness. Now he was ready for the nearly overpowering delight of travel-pictures. He bounced slightly as a Gaumont film presented the island of Java.

He was a connoisseur of travel-pictures, for all his life he had been planning a great journey. Though he had done Staten Island and taken an excursion to Bound Brook, neither of these was his grand tour. It was yet to be taken. In Mr. Wrenn, apparently fastened to New York like a domestic-minded barnacle, lay the possibilities of heroic roaming. He knew it. He, too, like the man who had taken the Gaumont pictures, would saunter among Javanese natives in "markets with tiles on the roofs and temples and—and—uh, well—places!" The scent of Asian spices was in his broadened nostrils as he scampered out of the theater, without a look at the ticket taker, and headed for "home"—for his third-floor-front on West Sixteenth Street.

He wanted to prowl through his collection of steamship brochures for a description of Java. But, of course, when one's landlady has both the sciatica⁵ and a case of Patient Suffering one stops in the basement dining room to inquire how she is.

³**Selig:** a company that established the first permanent movie studio in Los Angeles

⁴**Vitagraph:** prolific film production company in the early 1900s

⁵**sciatica:** pain that can extend from the hip down the back of the thigh, moving along the sciatic nerve

Achievement Level Descriptor (ALD): 5

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. A large, light gray watermark with the word "SAMPLE" is oriented diagonally across the page from the bottom-left towards the top-right. The paper has a thin black border on the left side. There are no other markings or text on the page.

SAMPLE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS GRADE 8 READING



Rubric:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response makes a correct inference about Mr. Wrenn from paragraph 7• Response provides an appropriate quote from the selection to support the inference |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response makes a correct inference about Mr. Wrenn from paragraph 7• Response provides an inappropriate quote from the selection or lacks a quote to support the inference |
| 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response makes an incorrect inference about Mr. Wrenn from paragraph 7• Response is unable to provide an appropriate quote for an incorrect answer |

Answers:

Possible correct inferences:

1. The movies allow Mr. Wrenn to escape reality.
2. Mr. Wrenn uses movies to visualize himself fighting back against the struggles in his own life.

Plausible support for the first inference: *The movies allow Mr. Wrenn to escape reality.*

- "They helped him."
- "Mr. Wrenn was really seeing, not cowpunchers and sagebrush, but himself, defying the office manager's meanness and revolting against the ticketman's rudeness."
- "Now he was ready for the nearly overpowering delight of travel-pictures. He bounced slightly as a Gaumont film presented the island of Java."
- "He was a connoisseur of travel-pictures, for all his life he had been planning a great journey."
- "He, too, like the man who had taken the Gaumont pictures, would saunter among Javanese natives in 'markets with tiles on the roofs and temples and—and—uh, well—places!'"



Plausible support for the second inference: *Mr. Wrenn uses movies to visualize himself fighting back against the struggles in his own life.*

- "They helped him."
- "Mr. Wrenn was really seeing, not cowpunchers and sagebrush, but himself, defying the office manager's meanness and revolting against the ticketman's rudeness."
- "The scent of Asian spices was in his broadened nostrils as he scampered out of the theater, without a look at the ticket taker, and headed for 'home.' "

Sample Student Response: Score point 2 (Correct answer and Correct support)

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) a correct inference about Mr. Wrenn (see Answers list).

Correct support—The student response should use an appropriate quote from the selection to support the inference (see Answers list).

Example: Mr. Wrenn goes to the movie theater for entertainment which helps him to forget about his own empty life. For example, he imagines that "He, too, like the man who had taken the Gaumont pictures, would saunter among Javanese natives in 'markets with tiles on the roofs and temples and—and—uh, well—places!'" "

Sample Student Response: Score point 1 (Correct answer and No support)

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) a correct inference about Mr. Wrenn (see Answers list).

No support—The student response uses an inappropriate quote from the selection (not shown on Answers list) or lacks a quote to support the inference.

Example: I believe Mr. Wrenn pictures himself in the movie getting revenge against the ticket taker who upset him.



Sample Student Response: Score point 0 (Incorrect answer and Support does not matter)

Incorrect answer—The student response states an incorrect inference about Mr. Wrenn (not shown on Answers list).

Irrelevant support—The student response is unable to support an incorrect answer (even if a correct quote is provided).

Example: Mr. Wrenn gets into a fight with his manager and the worker at the movies. "Mr. Wrenn was really seeing, not cowpunchers and sagebrush, but himself, defying the office manager's meanness and revolting against the ticketman's rudeness."

SAMPLE