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Public Schools of North Carolina
Department of Public Instruction | State Board of Education
Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program

Sample Constructed Response Items

Grade 3 Reading



The text below is divided into two parts. After each part is a constructed response item you will need to answer.

Adapted from *The Adventures of Grandfather Frog:* "Billy Mink Finds Little Joe Otter" (Part 1)

by Thornton W. Burgess

Billy Mink ran around the edge of the Smiling Pool and turned down by the Laughing Brook. His eyes twinkled with mischief, and he hurried as only Billy can. As he passed Jerry Muskrat's house, Jerry saw him.

"Hi, Billy Mink! Where are you going in such a hurry this fine morning?" he called.

"To find Little Joe Otter. Have you seen him?" replied Billy.

"No," said Jerry. "He's probably down to the Big River fishing. I heard him say last night that he was going."

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"Thanks," said Billy Mink, and without waiting to say more he was off like a little brown flash.

Jerry watched him out of sight. "Hump!" exclaimed Jerry. "Billy Mink is in a terrible hurry this morning. Now I wonder what he is so anxious to find Little Joe Otter for. When they get their heads together, it is usually for some mischief."

Jerry climbed to the top of his house and looked over the Smiling Pool in the direction from which Billy Mink had just come. Almost at once he saw Grandfather Frog fast asleep on his big green lily pad. The legs of a foolish green fly were sticking out of one corner of his big mouth. Jerry couldn't help laughing, for Grandfather Frog certainly did look funny.

"He's had a good breakfast this morning, and his full stomach has made him sleepy," thought Jerry. "But he's getting careless in his old age. He certainly is getting careless. The idea of going to sleep right out in plain sight like that!"

Suddenly a new thought popped into his head. "Billy Mink saw him, and that is why he is so anxious to find Little Joe Otter. He is planning to play some trick on Grandfather Frog as sure as pollywogs have tails!" exclaimed Jerry. Then his eyes began to twinkle as he added: "I think I'll have some fun myself."



Rubric:

- 2
 - Response correctly explains the meaning of the phrase presented in the item
 - Response provides an appropriate quote from the selection as support
- 1
 - Response correctly explains the meaning of the phrase presented in the item
 - Response provides an inappropriate quote from the selection or lacks a quote from the selection
- 0
 - Response incorrectly explains the meaning of the phrase presented in the item
 - Response is unable to provide an appropriate quote for an incorrect answer

SAMPLE



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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the phrase “he was off like a little brown flash” refers to Billy Mink moving very quickly.

Correct support—The student response should use either quote from the selection:

- “Billy Mink is in a terrible hurry this morning.”
- “Now I wonder what he is so anxious to find Little Joe Otter for.”

EXAMPLE: The phrase “he was off like a little brown flash” means Billy Mink was going very fast. A quote that shows his quickness is “Billy Mink is in a terrible hurry this morning.”

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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the phrase “he was off like a little brown flash” refers to Billy Mink moving very quickly.

No support—The student response uses an incorrect quote or does not include a quote from the selection to support their answer.

EXAMPLE: The phrase “he was off like a little brown flash” means Billy Mink was in a hurry.

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

Incorrect answer—The student response makes an incorrect statement about what the phrase “he was off like a little brown flash” means in the selection.

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

EXAMPLE: The phrase “he was off like a little brown flash” means that Billy Mink was playing around a lot. A quote that shows this is “Now I wonder what he is so anxious to find Little Joe Otter for.”



Adapted from *The Adventures of Grandfather Frog:* “Billy Mink Finds Little Joe Otter” (Part 2)

by Thornton W. Burgess

Without another word Jerry slipped down into the water and swam over to the big green lily pad of Grandfather Frog. Then he pounded the water loudly with his tail. Grandfather Frog’s big goggly eyes flew open, and he was just about to make a frightened plunge into the Smiling Pool when he saw Jerry.

“Have a nice nap?” inquired Jerry, with a broad grin.

“I wasn’t asleep!” protested Grandfather Frog indignantly.* “I was just thinking.”

“Don’t you think it a rather dangerous plan to think so long with your eyes closed?” asked Jerry.

“Well, maybe I did just doze off,” admitted Grandfather Frog sheepishly.

“Maybe you did,” replied Jerry. “Now listen.” Then Jerry whispered in Grandfather Frog’s ear, and both chuckled as if they were enjoying some joke, for they are great friends, you know. Afterward Jerry swam back to his house, and Grandfather Frog closed his eyes so as to look just as he did when he was asleep.

Meanwhile Billy Mink had hurried down the Laughing Brook. Halfway to the Big River he met Little Joe Otter bringing home a big fish, for you know Little Joe is a great fisherman. Billy Mink hastened to tell him how Grandfather Frog had fallen fast asleep on his big green lily pad.

“It’s a splendid chance to have some fun with Grandfather Frog and give him a great scare,” concluded Billy.

Little Joe Otter put his fish down and grinned. He likes to play pranks almost as well as he likes to go fishing.

***indignantly:** angrily



"What can we do?" said he.

"I've thought of a plan," replied Billy. "Do you happen to know where we can find Longlegs the Blue Heron?"

"Yes," said Little Joe. "I saw him fishing not five minutes ago."

Then Billy told Little Joe his plan, and laughing and giggling, the two little scamps hurried off to find Longlegs the Blue Heron.

SAMPLE



Rubric:

- 2
 - Response correctly identifies the central message in the selection
 - Response includes an appropriate quote from the selection as support
- 1
 - Response correctly identifies the central message in the selection
 - Response provides an inappropriate quote from the selection or lacks a quote from the selection
- 0
 - Response incorrectly identifies the central message in the selection
 - Response is unable to provide an appropriate quote for an incorrect answer

SAMPLE



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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the central message is Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter like to play tricks on others.

Correct support—The student response should use either quote from the selection:

- when Billy Mink says “It’s a splendid chance to have some fun with Grandfather Frog.”
- when Joe Otter is described as “He likes to play pranks almost as well as he likes to go fishing.”

EXAMPLE: The central message of the selection is that Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter like to play tricks on others. One quote that supports this idea is when Billy Mink says, “It’s a splendid chance to have some fun with Grandfather Frog.”

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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the central message is Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter like to play tricks on others.

No support—The student response uses an incorrect quote or does not include a quote from the selection to support their answer.

EXAMPLE: The central message of the selection is that Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter like to play tricks on others.

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

Incorrect answer—The student response makes an incorrect statement about what the central message is in the selection.

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

EXAMPLE: The central message of the selection is that Billy Mink and Little Joe Otter like to be outside all day. A supporting quote is when it says, “He likes to play pranks almost as well as he likes to go fishing.”



The text below is divided into two parts. After each part is a constructed response item you will need to answer.

Adapted from “Beavers at Home” (Part 1)

by James Baldwin

A beaver is a wild animal about three feet in length, and weighing forty or fifty pounds. It is covered with fine, glossy, grayish brown fur. Its tail is nearly a foot long, and has no hair at all, but only little scales, something like those of a fish. When the beaver is swimming about in the water it uses its tail as a kind of rudder.¹

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A beaver cannot bear to live alone. He is never as happy as when he has a large number of friends close at hand whom he can visit every day; for beavers are the best and kindest neighbors in the world, always ready to help one another in building new houses or in repairing old ones.

Of course the first thing to be done when one is going to build a house or a village is to find a good place for it; and the spot which every beaver of sense thinks is best is either a large pond, or, if no pond is to be had, a low plain with a stream running through it. For on such a plain, a pond can be made by causing the water to cover it.

It must be a very, very long time since beavers first learned that the way to make a pond is to build a dam across a running stream. To begin with, they must know which way the stream runs, and in this they never make a mistake.

They first gather together a number of sticks and logs about five feet long, which they carry or roll into the stream. While some of the beavers are doing this—for the safety of the village lies in the strength of the foundation²—others are gathering and piling up many green branches of trees. These branches, which they have cut from the trees with their teeth, are piled among the sticks and logs, and soon a dam is formed that reaches across the stream.

¹**rudder:** a tool used as a guide

²**foundation:** the lowest level when building



When the foundation of the dam has been finished, the beavers pile stones and mud upon it until they have built a wall ten or twelve feet thick at the bottom and two or three feet thick at the top. After all this has been done, the older and wiser beavers go carefully over every part to see if the dam is of the right shape and is strong and safe; for beavers do not like poor work, and they know that a weak dam is easily washed away.

When the dam has been finished and the pond made, the beavers begin to think about their houses. As they like to have their rooms dry, they raise the floors of their houses some distance above the water, so that when the stream rises during the rainy season they will not be flooded.

SAMPLE

**SAMPLE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS
GRADE 3 READING**



Grade 3: Adapted from "Beavers at Home" (Part 1)

Standard: L.3.5a

Depth of Knowledge (DOK): Strategic Thinking

Achievement Level Descriptor (ALD): 4

CR Item: Explain what the phrase "close at hand" means in paragraph 2. Use one quote from the text to support your answer.

A large rectangular box containing 15 horizontal lines for writing. A large, light gray watermark reading "SAMPLE" is oriented diagonally across the center of the box.



Rubric:

- 2
 - Response correctly explains the meaning of the phrase presented in the item
 - Response provides an appropriate quote from the text as support
- 1
 - Response correctly explains the meaning of the phrase presented in the item
 - Response provides an inappropriate quote from the text or lacks a quote from the text
- 0
 - Response incorrectly explains the meaning of the phrase presented in the item
 - Response is unable to provide an appropriate quote for an incorrect answer

SAMPLE



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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the phrase “close at hand” means “nearby” or “not far away.”

Correct support—The student response should use either quote from the text:

- “A beaver cannot bear to live alone.”
- “beavers are the best and kindest neighbors in the world, always ready to help one another in building new houses or in repairing old ones.”

EXAMPLE: The phrase “close at hand” means nearby. One quote that supports this idea is “A beaver cannot bear to live alone.”

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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the phrase “close at hand” means “nearby” or “not far away.”

No support—The student response uses an incorrect quote or does not include a quote from the text to support their answer.

EXAMPLE: The phrase “close at hand” means not far away.

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

Incorrect answer—The student response makes an incorrect statement about what the phrase “close at hand” means in the text.

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

EXAMPLE: The phrase “close at hand” means to hold something tightly. A quote that shows this is “beavers are the best and kindest neighbors in the world, always ready to help one another in building new houses or in repairing old ones.”



Adapted from “Beavers at Home” (Part 2)

by James Baldwin

Beavers are always quite clear in their minds as to what they want, and how to get it, and they like to keep things separate. When they are in the water, they are as happy as they can be; but when they are out of it, they like to be dry. It is sometimes two or three months before the village is finished. But the little round huts are to be used only for winter homes; for during the summer no beaver would think of sleeping indoors or, indeed, of staying very long in the same place.

Everything that a beaver does is well done. The walls of his house are thick and strong, and when he has a large family or many friends to stay with him the house has several rooms in it. No beaver ever thinks of living alone. Sometimes he will have one companion, and sometimes a dozen or more. But however full the house may be, everything is kept in good order. Each beaver has his fixed place on the floor, which is covered with dry leaves and grass. A door is always kept open into the place where their food is kept, and so they never go hungry. There they stay all through the winter eating the bark and tender shoots of young trees which they have carefully stored away, sleeping through the cold stormy weather, and at last getting very fat.

At one time there were many beavers in the West and the South, but now there are very few to be found there. Many years ago a Frenchman who was traveling in Louisiana spent a good deal of time watching beavers and learning about their ways. He hid himself close to a dam which the little creatures had built, and in the night he cut a hole about a foot wide right through it.

He had made no noise while cutting through the dam, but the rush of the water awakened one beaver who was not sleeping as soundly as the others. This beaver left his hut quickly, and swam to the dam to see what was wrong. As soon as he saw the stream that had been dug, he struck four loud blows with his tail, and every beaver in the village left his bed and rushed out in answer to the call. When they reached the dam and saw the large hole in it, they held a meeting as to what they should do. Then the head beaver gave orders to the rest, and all went to the bank to get sticks and mud.

When they had gathered together as much as they could carry, they formed in line and marched with their loads to the dam. The sticks were thrown into the hole and mud and stones were packed upon them. The beavers worked hard and wisely, and in a short time the dam was as good as ever. Then one of the older beavers struck two blows with his tail, and in a few minutes all were in bed and asleep again.

**SAMPLE CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE ITEMS
GRADE 3 READING**



Grade 3: Adapted from "Beavers at Home" (Part 2)

Standard: RI.3.2

Depth of Knowledge (DOK): Strategic Thinking

Achievement Level Descriptor (ALD): 5

CR Item: Identify the main idea of the text "Adapted from 'Beavers at Home' " (Part 2). Include one quote from the text to support your answer.

A large rectangular box containing 15 horizontal lines for writing. A large, light gray watermark reading "SAMPLE" is oriented diagonally across the center of the box.



Rubric:

- 2
 - Response correctly identifies the main idea of the text
 - Response includes an appropriate quote from the text as support
- 1
 - Response correctly identifies the main idea of the text
 - Response provides an inappropriate quote from the text or lacks a quote from the text
- 0
 - Response incorrectly identifies the main idea of the text
 - Response is unable to provide an appropriate quote for an incorrect answer

SAMPLE



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

Correct answer—The student response should state (in their own words) that the main idea of the text is beavers are hardworking animals

Correct support—The student response should use either quote from the text:

- "When they reached the dam and saw the large hole in it, they held a meeting as to what they should do. Then the head beaver gave orders to the rest, and all went to the bank to get sticks and mud."
- "The beavers worked hard and wisely, and in a short time the dam was as good as ever."

EXAMPLE: The main idea of this text is that beavers are hardworking animals. One quote that supports this idea is "The beavers worked hard and wisely, and in a short time the dam was as good as ever."

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

Correct answer— The student response should state (in their own words) that the main idea of the text is beavers are hardworking animals.

No support—The student response uses an incorrect quote or does not include a quote from the text to support their answer.

EXAMPLE: The main idea of the text is that beavers work hard.



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

Incorrect answer—The student response makes an incorrect statement about the main idea of the text.

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

EXAMPLE: The main idea of the text is that beavers put stuff in the water. A supporting quote is “When they reached the dam and saw the large hole in it, they held a meeting as to what they should do. Then the head beaver gave orders to the rest, and all went to the bank to get sticks and mud.”

SAMPLE