



Sample Test Questions

Middle Level Humanities Subtest 1: English Language Arts and Reading



SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

The sample test questions in this document are designed to give you an introduction to the nature of the questions included in the Washington Educator Skills Tests—Endorsements (WEST–E). They represent the various types of questions you may expect to see on an actual test in this test field; however, they are *not* designed to provide diagnostic information to help you identify specific areas of individual strength or weakness or to predict your performance on the test as a whole.

Work through the sample questions carefully before referring to the answer key that follows. The answer key provides the correct response for each question and lists the objective within the test framework to which each question is linked. When you are finished with the sample questions, you may wish to review the test objectives and descriptive statements provided in the test framework for this test field.

In addition to reading and answering the sample questions, you should also utilize the following preparation materials available on the WEST Web site:

- Read **WEST–E Test-Taking Strategies** to understand how test questions are designed to measure specific test objectives and to learn important test-taking strategies for the day of the test.
- Review the **Test Summary and Framework** for your test field to familiarize yourself with the structure and content of the test. This document contains general testing information as well as the percentage of the total test score derived from each content domain described in the test framework.

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SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. As a middle school student reads aloud a story excerpt, the teacher lists words that the student has difficulty identifying, such as *could*, *friend*, *know*, *might*, *their*, and *which*. After the student has finished reading the story excerpt, the teacher asks him to repeat each word that she has listed and to read aloud again from the story the sentence in which each word appears. By focusing the student's attention on the words she has listed, the teacher helps the student develop which of the following word identification strategies?

- A. recognizing high-frequency sight words
- B. using phonics skills
- C. applying knowledge of word structure and syllabication
- D. using semantic cues

2. **Read the sentence below; then answer the question that follows.**

The desperate child *asked* the television viewers to help find her missing dog.

Which of the following synonyms for the word *asked* connotes the greatest degree of urgency?

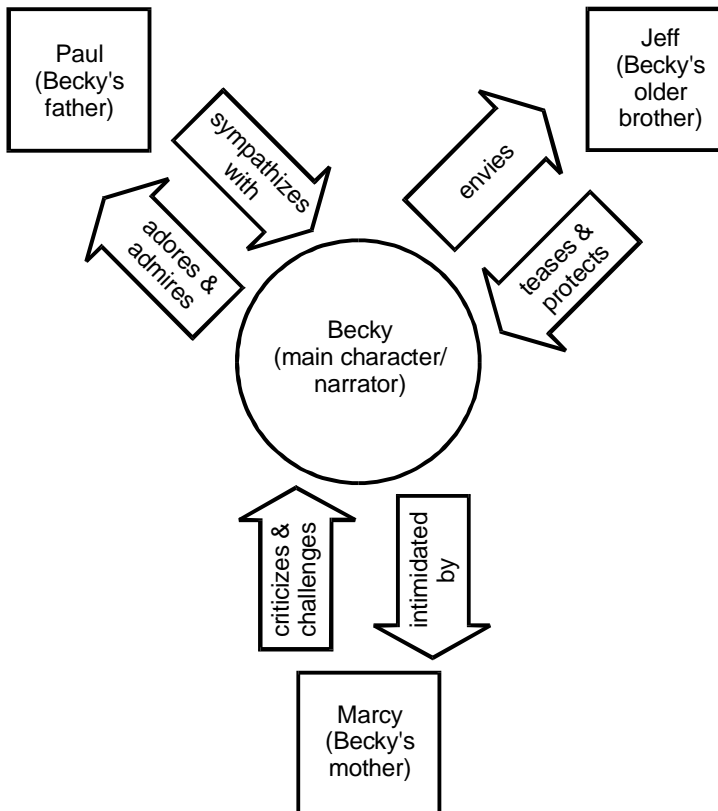
- A. inquired
- B. requested
- C. queried
- D. implored



3. After taking her class on a field trip to a natural history museum, a middle school teacher asks her students during class to tell her what words they read or heard at the museum that were unfamiliar to them. She lists these words on the chalkboard, asks the students to tell her which words they think go together (e.g., *condor*, *raptor*, *vulture*, *carnivore*), and then has the students identify a name for each group (e.g., *birds of prey*). By engaging the students in this activity, the teacher is applying which of the following strategies for building and extending vocabulary knowledge?
- A. using prior knowledge of base words, prefixes, and suffixes to deconstruct and determine the meaning of new vocabulary words
 - B. selecting vocabulary words that are conceptually related and that can be linked to concrete experiences
 - C. using context clues to distinguish the denotative and connotative meanings of new vocabulary words
 - D. selecting vocabulary words that provide opportunities for reading across content areas and applying words in new contexts

4. Use the information below to answer the question that follows.

A middle school teacher discusses with his students a coming-of-age novel that they have all begun reading. The novel is about a girl, Becky, who moves with her family from a small apartment in New York City to a large log cabin in the Alaska wilderness. The story is told from Becky's point of view. As the teacher leads the discussion, he works with the students to create on the chalkboard the graphic organizer below.



By creating this graphic organizer, the teacher helps the students enhance their comprehension of the novel primarily by:

- A. establishing a basic time line for events that take place in the novel.
- B. analyzing the themes of independence and self-reliance in the novel.
- C. using prior knowledge to imagine the setting of the novel more vividly.
- D. clarifying the relationships between central characters in the novel.



5. Use the information below to answer the question that follows.

A middle school teacher is reading a story aloud to her students. The teacher occasionally stops her reading to "think aloud." An excerpt from a transcript of the teacher's reading appears below.

[reading aloud from the story]

"Dick's appearance as he stood beside the box was rather peculiar. His pants were torn in several places, and had apparently belonged in the first instance to a boy two sizes larger than himself. He wore a vest, all the buttons of which were gone except two, out of which peeped a shirt which looked as if it had been worn a month. To complete his costume he wore a coat too long for him, dating back, if one might judge from its general appearance, to a remote antiquity."

[thinking aloud]

"I wonder what *remote antiquity* means. People use remote controls to run a television or a toy from far away, without actually touching them. Maybe *remote* here has something to do with being far away, too. I don't know about *antiquity*, though, except that it sort of sounds like the word *antique*, which is anything really old and beat-up."

Which of the following reading comprehension strategies is the teacher demonstrating for students through this activity?

- A. summarizing the central theme and plot line in a story
- B. recognizing high-frequency sight words in a story
- C. connecting ideas and expressions in a story with prior knowledge
- D. predicting what characters' actions will be in a story



6. **Read the excerpt below; then answer the question that follows.**

The nineteenth century was perhaps the most productive period in the history of American literature. The writers of this period, unfettered by old European influences, began developing a distinctly American voice. Despite having this one voice, the style and subject matter of their works varied greatly, which facilitates organizing these writers into four basic groups. First, writers such as Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and Edgar Allan Poe took a romantic view of the growing nation, writing about nature and the strange and fantastic aspects of human experience. Second, there was the New England Renaissance, which introduced the poetry of the "Brahmins," namely James Russell Lowell and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the philosophical works of the Transcendentalists, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. Third, writers such as Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe addressed in their works the divisive social and political issues that led to the American Civil War, and then after the war, to the urgent need for reconciliation. And finally, there were the realists, regionalists, and humorists, such as Stephen Crane, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain, who wrote variously about urban squalor, the American West, and "local color."

Which of the following patterns of organization is used to present the information in this excerpt?

- A. classification and division
- B. cause and effect
- C. comparison and contrast
- D. problem and solution



7. **Read the excerpt below; then answer the question that follows.**

Need to blow off steam after a stressful workday? Have difficulty falling asleep at night? Feel as though you are always out of breath when performing basic household chores? Exercise may be the remedy. The benefits of exercise are difficult to ignore. For instance, exercise stimulates various chemicals in the brain, which can leave you feeling happier and more relaxed than before you exercised. In addition, five to six hours after exercising, you undergo a natural decrease in body temperature, which makes it easier to fall asleep quickly and to sleep deeply. Further, regular exercise promotes better circulation of blood through your heart and blood vessels and delivery of oxygen and nutrients to your body tissues, raising your cardiovascular fitness level and giving you more physical endurance. Exercise can also help you manage high blood pressure and "bad" cholesterol and prevent some forms of diabetes and cancer. Finally, do not forget that exercise can actually be *fun*!

Which of the following conclusions can be reasonably drawn from the information in this excerpt?

- A. The most harmful effect of sleep deprivation is decreased mental awareness.
- B. Exercise can help a person feel better, have more energy, and maybe even live longer.
- C. The main causes of heart disease are work-related stress, a poor diet, and physical overexertion.
- D. Exercise can help a person achieve both financial independence and lasting personal happiness.



8. Which of the following statements best describes the characteristics of a thesaurus?
- A. A thesaurus provides word definitions and pronunciation keys but does not include examples of words in context.
 - B. A thesaurus provides synonyms and antonyms for words but does not distinguish between their connotative meanings.
 - C. A thesaurus provides word histories but does not include explanations of archaic or obsolete spellings of words.
 - D. A thesaurus presents sets of commonly misused words but does not distinguish between their denotative meanings.

9. **Read the excerpt below from a marketing brochure; then answer the question that follows.**

Many people have the dream of owning a beach house, but only a few are lucky enough to realize that dream. You can be one of the lucky ones who own a beach house if you act now. Our beachfront properties offer the most breathtakingly beautiful ocean views on the coast. Each night, you will enjoy a gorgeous sunset while waves lap gently and soothingly against the shore.

You may think that you cannot afford a beach house, but what you *really* cannot afford is to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Many people enjoy spending a week or two over the summer at the beach. But wouldn't you like to be able to spend all year at the beach? All it takes is one phone call, and your beach-house dream can come true.

Which of the following sentences from the excerpt states a fact rather than an opinion?

- A. Our beachfront properties offer the most breathtakingly beautiful ocean views on the coast.
- B. Each night, you will enjoy a gorgeous sunset while waves lap gently and soothingly against the shore.
- C. Many people enjoy spending a week or two over the summer at the beach.
- D. All it takes is one phone call, and your beach-house dream can come true.



10. **Read the excerpt below from a work of fiction; then answer the question that follows.**

So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and *what* I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be *nothing* to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason.

The style and subject matter of this excerpt suggest that it most likely belongs to which of the following literary genres?

- A. action/adventure
- B. historical fiction
- C. mystery/suspense
- D. science fiction

11. Which of the following events from a novel would be most likely to occur during the resolution of the novel's plot?
- A. The main character receives a letter informing her that she has inherited a large sum of money and that she must claim the inheritance in person.
 - B. In the middle of a torrential downpour, the main character takes shelter in an abandoned house.
 - C. On a train trip, the main character meets a fellow traveler who bears a strong physical resemblance to the main character's mother.
 - D. The main character is reunited with siblings for whom she has been searching for many years.



12. **Read the excerpt below; then answer the question that follows. Note that each sentence in the excerpt has been individually numbered and that errors have been intentionally included.**

¹During our summer road trip, my family and I spotted a large herd of elk in a field driving down a Colorado highway. ²Next, in Utah, my mother described to my sister and me the plant life at the bottom of the Great Salt Lake. ³Passing through Idaho, we saw the Rocky Mountains looming on the horizon to our right outside the car window. ⁴Then, at the end of the trip, in Port Angeles, Washington, my father agreed to let me swim in the ocean.

Which of the following versions of sentences from this excerpt has been edited correctly to eliminate a misplaced or dangling modifier?

- A. Sentence 1: During our summer road trip, driving down a Colorado highway, my family and I spotted a large herd of elk in a field.
- B. Sentence 2: Next, in Utah, at the bottom of the Great Salt Lake, my mother described to my sister and me the plant life.
- C. Sentence 3: Passing through Idaho, looming on the horizon, we saw the Rocky Mountains outside the car window to our right.
- D. Sentence 4: Then, in the ocean, my father agreed to let me swim in Port Angeles, Washington, at the end of the trip.
13. One writer is providing another writer with comments on that writer's first draft of a short story. Which of the following comments from the first writer would be most helpful to the second writer in improving the next draft of the story?
- A. "The plot is very suspenseful. I can't wait to find out what happens next."
- B. "The narrator sounds a lot like the narrator of a story I read by Sandra Cisneros."
- C. "The characters seem a little flat. Adding more dialogue would give them dimension."
- D. "The description of the setting is very detailed. I like the way it appeals to all five senses."



14. Which of the following sentences contains an error in subject–verb agreement?
- A. On the lake and close to shore were several canoes.
 - B. The wheels on my brother's bike is much too small.
 - C. Beside the brook in the woods was a single deer.
 - D. The cowhand with the black boots is a skilled rider.
15. Which of the following sentences contains an error in noun–pronoun agreement?
- A. Robert read the book and returned it to the shelf.
 - B. That little yellow bird must have hurt its wing.
 - C. Please wash the car thoroughly and then wax it.
 - D. My sister told us about its trip to the dentist.
16. For which of the following topics would it be most effective for a writer to organize ideas spatially in a text?
- A. the history of the settlement of Bellingham, Washington
 - B. the view from the top of Mount Rainier in the Cascade Range
 - C. the marriage customs of the Salish people of coastal Washington
 - D. the main agricultural products of the Columbia River Basin



17. An office worker is developing a short memorandum on the subject of the disposal of wastepaper at her company and the potential for recycling it. The worker plans to send the memorandum to the company's senior management team. Given this audience, which of the following versions of the memorandum would be most appropriate for the worker to send?
- A. It's so incredible how much paper we waste around here! I mean, I've been working here for, what, like two years, and it just knocks me out to see how much we chuck. What about the rain forests? And what about all those dumps that are jammed full? Why don't we recycle some of this paper we use? It'd be pretty easy to do, don't you think? I mean, we could just put clean wastepaper in one pile and other junk in another pile. Then, the cleaning crew could pick it up separately, and the garbage guys could take the "clean" stuff to a recycling place.
- B. Have you ever noticed how much paper accumulates in your trash basket each day? Well, it seems like a lot to me, and most of it could be recycled with little effort, I guarantee. In short, all we'd have to do is situate a special box or bag in our cubicles, near our desks, and deposit all clean wastepaper in it. Okay, our cubicles are cramped enough already, I know, without adding something else to them. But just think of the huge benefits we could provide to the environment by enduring a little more cramping in our work space.
- C. In my two years of employment here, I have observed that we throw away an inordinate amount of potentially recyclable paper each day. Considering the depletion of our forests' resources and the strain on landfills that paper causes, we could make a significant positive impact on our environment by beginning to recycle the paper that we use here at the office. Employees could simply separate clean wastepaper from other trash at their desks, the maintenance staff could be asked to collect the trash in two receptacles, and the trash hauler could make separate pickups.
- D. I am shocked and appalled by the amount of potentially recyclable paper that we throw away each day at this office. It is outrageous, and frankly, there is no excuse for it. These irresponsible business practices of ours take an enormous toll on the environment. We must change course immediately. Let each one of us commit now to separating clean wastepaper from other refuse in our work spaces. Our housekeeping staff and waste management workers should likewise be instructed to keep recyclable paper separate from other garbage. It is the only decent thing to do.



18. Use the information below to answer the question that follows.

A writer is conducting research for a paper about how people listen to music. During his research, he finds the excerpt below from an essay and copies it down in his notes.

Listening to music is such a muddle that one scarcely knows how to start describing it. The first point to get clear in my case is that during the greater part of every performance I do not attend. The nice sounds make me think of something else. I wool-gather most of the time, and am surprised that others don't. Professional critics can listen to a piece as consistently and as steadily as if they were reading a chapter in a novel. This seems to me an amazing feat, and probably they only achieve it through intellectual training; that is to say, they find in the music the equivalent of a plot; they are following the ground bass or expecting the theme to re-enter in the dominant, and so on, and this keeps them on the rails. But I fly off every minute: after a bar or two I think how musical I am or of something smart I might have said in conversation; or I wonder what the composer—dead a couple centuries—can be feeling....

—from "Not Listening to Music," E. M. Forster

As the writer begins developing the paper, he decides to summarize the excerpt above and use the summary in the paper. Which of the following summaries of the excerpt would be most appropriate for him to use in the paper?

- A. For E. M. Forster, who has an untrained ear for music, it is difficult to keep his mind from wandering while listening to a performance. However, for others with more practiced ears, listening to a piece of music is a very deliberate and focused activity.
- B. Amateurs such as E. M. Forster scarcely know how to listen to music, and because of this they rarely attend concerts. Professional musicians, though, can find in music the equivalent of a plot.
- C. For E. M. Forster, who is usually restless and easily distracted, novels are more interesting to study than a piece of music. He does admire, though, the ability of musicians to sit through a performance.
- D. Most casual listeners of music, such as E. M. Forster, find concert performances too long and boring, so they do not like to pay attention to them. However, expert musicians receive rigorous training in listening to music, so they are able to tolerate lengthy performances.



19. Use the information below to answer the question that follows.

A writer is developing a literary analysis of the excerpt below.

The first rhythm they became used to was the slow swing from dawn to quick dusk. They accepted the pleasures of morning, the bright sun, the whelming sea and sweet air, as a time when play was good and life so full that hope was not necessary and therefore forgotten. Toward noon, as the floods of light fell more nearly to the perpendicular, the stark colors of the morning were smoothed in pearl and opalescence; and the heat—as though the impending sun's height gave it momentum—became a blow that they ducked, running to the shade and lying there, perhaps even sleeping.

—from *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding

In the analysis, the writer would like to have a thesis statement that focuses on how an element of the setting is used in the excerpt to create a particular mood. For which of the following thesis statements does the excerpt provide the most support?

- A. The dark, turbulent sea creates a mood of apprehension and fear.
- B. The steady blowing of a breeze creates a mood of unbridled optimism.
- C. The intense, unrelenting heat creates a mood of helplessness and despair.
- D. The predictable cycling of the sun creates a mood of quiet complacency.



20. A large group of middle school students gathers in the school's auditorium to listen to a health and fitness expert deliver a speech about the dangers of student athletes using steroids to enhance their performance on the field. After the speech, several of the students comment to one another as they leave the auditorium. Which of the following student comments shows that selective listening has occurred?
- A. "I was really surprised to hear the speaker say that as many as 35 percent of student athletes have used performance-enhancing drugs at least once."
 - B. "I don't agree with the speaker's idea that student athletes should be expelled from school for using steroids, but I do agree that they should be kicked off their sports teams."
 - C. "I thought that the scary stories the speaker told us about student athletes using steroids and ending up in the hospital were a little extreme, but they did help prove how serious this issue is."
 - D. "I don't even play school sports, but if I did, I would think twice about taking advice from a speaker who talks so fast and looks like he's never played a sport in his life."
21. In which of the following speech excerpts is repetition used as a rhythmic device to emphasize a point?
- A. "For instance, there's the story of a 45-year-old man who owned a nice house and a car and who held an advanced degree in engineering but who nonetheless found himself homeless within a year of being laid off, all because the job market was very poor and he had to sell off his material possessions to survive."
 - B. "All I hear today from our political leaders about workers' rights is a lot of blah-blah-blah and yackety-yak, which, unfortunately, causes most workers to pooh-pooh the occasional good policy decision these leaders sometimes make."
 - C. "By 2007, the loss of manufacturing jobs in Michigan had caused that state's unemployment rate to rise to the highest in the nation—higher than Montana's, higher than Missouri's, higher than Maine's, higher even than Mississippi's."
 - D. "Despair not for the corporate executive who loses her job and, with it, her million-dollar salary—despair for the factory worker who loses her job and, with it, her minimum wage and family health care! Hope not for small steps forward in workers' rights—hope for a revolution!"



22. **Use the information below to answer the question that follows.**

An eighth-grade student has been asked to give a five-minute presentation to his class. The student has decided that the general purpose of the presentation will be to inform his classmates. The student has been advised by his teacher to describe something to his audience and to base the presentation on a personal experience. He selects the topic of pet care, because it is familiar to him and he cares about it: his family recently gave him a puppy for his birthday, and the puppy's care has been entrusted entirely to him. Now the student must attempt to narrow the topic of his presentation and develop a specific purpose for it.

Which of the following purpose statements would provide the student with the narrowest, most specific topic for the presentation?

- A. to talk about the importance of respecting and caring for animals
- B. to report to his classmates the advantages and disadvantages of owning a dog
- C. to list the top ten characteristics of a happy and healthy pet
- D. to explain to his classmates three effective ways to housebreak a young puppy



23. Use the information below to answer the question that follows.

A political scientist is developing a presentation on the importance of voting. She plans to give the presentation to a large group of college students who will graduate soon. To better organize her presentation, she distributes a closed questionnaire to the students beforehand. A sample of the questions that she asks appears below.

Of which U.S. political party are you a member?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic	<input type="checkbox"/> Republican	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent/Other
Which area of U.S. policy do you feel is currently most important?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Economy
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Did you vote in the last U.S. presidential election?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you think that the Electoral College is a fair and an effective system for electing the U.S. president?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

The political scientist most likely chose to use this type of questionnaire for which of the following purposes?

- A. developing a better understanding of who is in her audience
- B. providing audience members with an opportunity to rank their feelings on a scale or continuum
- C. allowing audience members to express their opinions fully and freely
- D. assessing whether the feelings of audience members are based on their cultural or religious backgrounds

24. Use the visual image and text below to answer the question that follows.

JULY	
1	2
3	4

AUGUST	
1	2
3	4

SEPTEMBER											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68
82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93
112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123
148	149	150	151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159
169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	178	179	180	181
202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210	211	212	213
222	223	224	225	226	227	228	229	230	231	232	233
261	262	263	264	265	266	267	268	269	270	271	272
286	287	288	289	290	291	292	293	294	295	296	297
311	312	314	315	313	316	317	318	319	320	321	322
347	348	349	350	351	352	353	354	355	356	357	358
377	378	379	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388
404	405	406	407	408	409	410	411	412	413	415	414
424	425	426	427	428	429	430	431	432	433	434	435
444	445	446	447	448	449	450	451	452	453	454	455
460	461	462	463	464	465	466	467	468	469	470	471

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Which of the following statements describes the message that this visual image and text are most likely attempting to convey?

- A. For many children, summer vacation passes by much too quickly, whereas the school year seems to march on almost endlessly.
- B. Because there are more hours of daylight in July and August than in September, children are able to stay outside longer and play more often during the summer.
- C. For many children, the upcoming school year holds the promise of making new friends, whereas summer vacation remains the time for visiting old friends.
- D. Because there is less time for birthday celebrations in September after school starts, children mainly celebrate in July and August.



This visual image would most likely be used to reinforce a message in which of the following media contexts?

- A. a Web site for an employment agency that caters to job seekers interested in travel and adventure
- B. a magazine article about the unique individual paths that people take in various cultures and historical periods
- C. a television commercial for a clothing store that specializes in extreme cold-weather apparel
- D. a newspaper article about recent improvements in personal protective equipment for the eyes, ears, and face



ANSWER KEY

Question Number	Correct Response	Test Objective
1	A	0001
2	D	0001
3	B	0001
4	D	0002
5	C	0002
6	A	0003
7	B	0003
8	B	0004
9	C	0004
10	C	0005
11	D	0005
12	A	0006
13	C	0006
14	B	0007
15	D	0007
16	B	0007
17	C	0007
18	A	0008
19	D	0009
20	D	0010
21	C	0010
22	D	0011
23	A	0011
24	A	0012
25	B	0012



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Page

- 13** Forster, E.M. *Not Listening to Music*. The Provost and Scholars of King's College, Cambridge and The Society of Authors as the E.M. Forster estate.
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- 18** TAB. *School Calendar* Image 41508. www.politicalcartoons.com
- 20** Duke, Larry. Art graphic of "hats." Getty Images.