ENGLISH I EOC WRITING
STAAR® Preparation and Practice

2016 UPDATE

• 16 Revision and Editing passages and 10 Composition prompts
• 18 Skill Lessons with scaffolded practice
• 3-step approach for efficient remediation

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Dear Students,

The STAAR English I assessment measures your knowledge of the English I standards (TEKS). STAAR tests are not designed to measure many important qualities of character and intelligence—as this cartoon shows. But performing well on the STAAR tests is important, so you want to do all you can to succeed on them. That’s where this workbook comes in!

Qualities Not Measured by STAAR Tests

- Persistence
- Curiosity
- Enthusiasm
- COURAGE
- Leadership
- Creativity
- Civic-Minded
- Resourcefulness
- Sense of Wonder
- Big-Picture Thinking
- Compassion
- Reliability
- Motivation
- Humor
- Empathy
- Sense of Beauty
- Humility
- Resilience
- Positivity

What are some other important qualities of character and intelligence missing in STAAR tests?

This workbook was designed to help you prepare for the Writing part of the STAAR English I test by

- teaching the skills to approach and answer different STAAR test questions, and by
- providing practice questions that are similar to those you will answer on the actual test.

But as good as this workbook is, it only helps if you use it. So, please use this workbook!

Practicing Smart Is the Secret to STAAR Success

There is a secret to success on the STAAR tests—practice, practice, and more practice. This is good news because you are in control of how much effort you put into practicing. But not all practice is the same... you need to practice smart.

First, practice with test questions that are very similar to the actual STAAR test. That’s easy because this workbook is full of them! Next, focus on your weaknesses—spend extra time on questions you have trouble with. 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 carefully analyzing each test question you get wrong. Why did you get it wrong? Why is another answer correct? You can learn more from test questions you get wrong, so don’t be afraid of making mistakes. If your basketball shot is off, you identify what you are doing wrong (too far left) and correct it with your next shot (aim further right).

When you practice, give each question your full attention. Do not take a break until 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? No! 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 while you prepare for the STAAR test!

Your partners in STAAR success,
The Sirius Education Team
**How to Use This Book for STAAR Success**

### 3-Step Approach to Differentiate Instruction

This interactive workbook is easily adapted for different needs and includes an optional 3-step approach to efficiently prioritize and individualize remediation when preparation time is limited.

**STEP 1** Identify Your Needs—Diagnostic Tests for Editing and Revision

Use the Diagnostic Tests for the Editing and Revision categories to identify what you know and what you need to review. Record your results in the Progress Monitoring Chart.

**STEP 2** Focus Remediation—STAAR Instruction and Practice

Use your Diagnostic results to focus TEKS instruction and STAAR practice to meet your unique needs.

**STEP 3** Monitor Your Progress—Post Tests

Use the Editing and Revision Post Tests to monitor progress and to identify additional lessons for review.
How to Use This Book for STAAR Success

Focused Remediation is provided by 14 skill lessons and 16 practice passages with questions based on released STAAR items.

Revision Skills

6 Revision Skill lessons analyze released test items and model a 3-step STAAR Strategy that students learn and then apply in Guided Practice.

Editing Skills

7 Editing Skill lessons provide instruction and practice in the grammar, usage, and punctuation rules and conventions that are tested. The 8th skill lesson gives students a strategy for answering STAAR editing questions.

Using Pronouns Correctly

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun or noun phrase. The noun or noun phrase that the pronoun represents is called the antecedent. The antecedent must be clearly understood to be able to use pronouns correctly. Here are some examples of correct and incorrect uses of pronouns:

Correct:

1. She is a writer. (Antecedent: She)
2. I am the best. (Antecedent: I)
3. He went to the store. (Antecedent: He)
4. They went to the store. (Antecedent: They)

Incorrect:

1. It is a writer. (Antecedent: It)
2. I am the best. (Antecedent: I)
3. He went to the store. (Antecedent: He)
4. They went to the store. (Antecedent: They)

Agreement with Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun is a word that either refers to any number of people or things or to any person or thing. The indefinite pronouns used in the STAAR Editing Test are:

- all
- any
- each
- either
- every
- many
- much
- most
- several
- some
- such

Mixed Practice

For each sentence below, draw a box around the indefinite pronoun and underline the correct pronoun for that indefinite pronoun.

1. Everyone on the bus is happy. (Antecedent: Everyone)
2. Neither of the books are interesting. (Antecedent: Neither)
3. Many of the students are asleep. (Antecedent: Many)
4. Most of the students are sleeping. (Antecedent: Most)

Varied activity types give students the most helpful form of practice.

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How to Use This Book for STAAR Success

Revision and Editing Practice

16 passages offer authentic STAAR practice using grade-appropriate selections and test questions that closely match released STAAR tests.

A Cave with Many Occupants

(E1.13C) Things excavated from the cavern show that it was home to many Ice Age animals. (E1.5E) The cave was home to many Ice Age animals back then, and scientists are still exploring the remains that have been found. (E1.13C) This means that the cave was home to many Ice Age animals. The explorers are still looking at the remains that have been found.

An Outlaw Hideout

(E2.11C) The cave was named a National Natural Landmark in 1971. (E2.11C) The state of Texas turned it into a park, and today, the state of Texas has made it a park. The state of Texas has made it a park.

Revision Practice

7 editing and 9 revision passages

Texas's Oldest Hangout

(1) Today people meet in buildings, such as coffee houses and offices. (2) But long before office buildings were built, people still needed a place to meet that was secret, safe, and allowed for a sense of importance or mystery. (3) Longhorn Cavern State Park is that place, Texas, in just such a place. (4) Texas is home to many caverns and caves. (5) For example, Longhorn Cavern, which is at least 400 million years old, was formed in a different manner from the others. (6) Most Texas caverns are created by water dripping through limestone over millions of years. (7) The water, called seepage, wears down the limestone and eventually the water does this it forms the caves. (8) In the case of Longhorn Cavern, the seepage that formed when the water was underground, and that now carved the caverns, out of the limestone. (9) Longhorn Cavern is one of the five river-carved caverns in the United States, and the only such cave in Texas.

Composition Skills and Practice

5 Composition Skill lessons provide step-by-step writing instruction that focuses on the essential components of the expository composition. 10 practice prompts provide ample scaffolded practice of the writing skills students have learned.

Compositions, Practice

Prompt 1

Read the following quotation.

"The best preparation for life is a life of preparation." —Nelson Mandela

Drafting the Thesis

In an essay, the thesis statement, or thesis, states the topic and the writer's main idea about the topic. It should directly respond to the question or direction in the prompt. For the STAAR test, this means creating a claim that can be supported and argued.

Think carefully about the following question.

Can failure make you stronger?

Write an essay responding to the question.

Step-by-step Guided Practice

Skills cover what graders evaluate

Here is a working thesis for the prompt.

Failure can make a person stronger. This thesis does exactly what the prompt asks. It immediately responds to the prompt and makes a specific claim that can be supported. The thesis statement includes a clear response to the question or direction in the prompt.

Brainstorm Ideas

Write down any thoughts and ideas you have in response to the prompt. Don't worry about writing complete sentences. Don't judge your ideas yet. Write down any ideas. Read through them and look for one that answers the prompt, makes an argument or claim, and is an idea you think you can develop into a full essay.

Pre- and post- writing activities provide step-by-step support
Use the Diagnostic Tests to identify skill lessons you need to review. Use the steps below to monitor your progress. Because some skill lessons cover a broad standard or are assessed in multiple ways, those lessons are referred to more than once in the chart. **Boldfaced skill lessons are connected to Readiness TEKS.**

1. Diagnostic: Mark a ✓ in the box beside each question that you answered correctly. Find the total correct.
2. Review: Study the skill lesson and practice associated with each question not checked.
3. Post Test: Mark a ✓ in the box beside each question that you answered correctly. Find the total correct. Refer back to the skill lesson for additional practice. (The Post Test questions are in the exact same order as those in the Diagnostic Test.)

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2 Review: Skill Lesson</th>
<th>3 TEKS</th>
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<td>Combining Sentences (p. 16)</td>
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### REVISION: EXPOSITORY

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<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improving Transitions (p. 19)</td>
<td>E1.13C, E1.15A</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Combining Sentences (p. 16)</td>
<td>E1.13C</td>
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### EDITING

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<td>E1.18A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Using Commas Correctly (p. 63)</td>
<td>E1.18B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Using Verbs Correctly (p. 67)</td>
<td>E1.17A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Using Pronouns Correctly (p. 65)</td>
<td>E1.13D</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Using Correct Sentence Structure (p. 74)</td>
<td>E1.17C</td>
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<td>Choosing Correct Spellings (p. 72)</td>
<td>E1.13D, E1.19A</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Making Verbs Agree with Subjects (p. 70)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>/ 7</td>
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</table>
Revising for Coherence

(E1.15A, E1.16D)

The coherence of a paper refers to how well the paper is organized and how well the ideas and details in each paragraph fit together and flow. On the STAAR test, you will be asked to revise paragraphs to make them more coherent by replacing sentences or inserting sentences into a paragraph.

Typically, STAAR questions about revising for coherence focus on:
- transitions between paragraphs
- clearer or more effective introductions and conclusions
- adding relevant details to paragraphs

STAAR Strategy

The excerpt and question below are from a previous STAAR test. They are based on Leah’s essay asking for longer lunch periods. Read the item and work through the steps that follow to learn how to answer questions like this one.

1. Read the paragraph and the item. Look at the sentence that is going to be added, and think about what idea or detail it will bring to the paragraph.

2. Re-read the paragraph. Ask yourself, does this new sentence explain a more general idea in the paragraph? Does it provide a link between one idea and another? If you answer yes to either question, identify the sentence(s) that the new sentence explains or connects.

(6) When students are rushed, they are more likely to make unhealthy choices.

(7) According to a 2008 study published in the Journal of School Health, diet quality is associated with academic performance. (8) In other words, eating an unhealthy lunch could negatively affect how well a student does in school. (9) Giving students more time to select and enjoy a healthy meal would therefore boost grades.

Leah wants to add the following idea to the paragraph.

Some resort to the faster à la carte line to grab chips and a drink; others skip lunch altogether.

Re-read the paragraph carefully. Where is the most effective place to add this sentence?

F After sentence 6
G After sentence 7
H After sentence 8
J After sentence 9

STAAR English I, 2013, #2
Go through the answer choices, and try the new sentence in each spot. If the location is not close to the sentence(s) you identified in step 2, cross it out.

Choose the answer that gives the most logical spot for the new sentence.

Sentence 6 mentions unhealthy choices without being specific. The new sentence gives specific examples of unhealthy choices. Answer F is correct.

The details in the new sentence don’t flow from the idea in sentence 7, about the relationship between diet quality and academic performance.

The details in the new sentence don’t flow from the ideas in sentence 9. Sentence 9 actually sums up the whole paragraph.

Guided Practice

Read this paragraph and question from a previous STAAR test. Answer the question using what you have learned about revising for coherence. The paragraph is from Katy’s essay about a couple who live in an old school bus named Rosie.

(15) A few months later the bus was ready, and the newlyweds were preparing to move in. (16) They were pleased that their new home had a living area, a bedroom, and a small kitchen, complete with running water and a propane stove. (17) But Mike and Natalie weren’t finished yet. (18) They wanted Rosie to feel like a home rather than a recreational vehicle. (19) They carefully selected artwork to display in the foyer, or entrance, of the bus. (20) They added potted plants and rugs. (21) Wooden furniture was topped with photos, books, and lamps. (22) Mike explained, “We choose the few things that have the most impact, that mean the most to us.”

Katy realizes that she left the following detail out of the paragraph.

*While the Youngs had fun decorating their new home, they knew they had to be wise about what they brought into such a small space.*

Where is the most effective place to insert this sentence?
A  At the beginning of the paragraph
B  After sentence 21
C  After sentence 22
D  This sentence is not relevant to the main idea of the paragraph and should not be inserted.
### Think About Your Thinking

In the chart below, evaluate each answer choice based on what you have learned about revising for coherence. One evaluation has been completed for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Is Answer Correct?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The new sentence seems to be about decorating. The paragraph isn't all about decorating; only the second half is. The new sentence probably goes closer to the end.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Independent Practice

You will have the opportunity to practice revising for coherence in Revision Practice 1 and 3.
Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Miguel wrote this paper in response to a class assignment. Read Miguel’s paper and think about the revisions he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

Texas’s Oldest Hangout

(1) Today people meet in buildings, such as coffee houses and offices. (2) But long before office buildings were built, people still needed a place to meet that was secret, safe, and also had a sense of importance or mystery. (3) Longhorn Cavern State Park in Burnet, Texas, is just such a place.

(4) Texas is home to many caves and caverns. (5) For example, Longhorn Cavern, which is at least 450 million years old, was formed in a different manner from the others. (6) Most Texas caverns are created by water dripping through limestone over millions of years. (7) This water, called seepage, wears down the limestone and eventually by the water doing this it forms the caves. (8) In the case of Longhorn Cavern, the seepage that formed earlier caves in the area became an underground river, and that river carved the cavern, out of the limestone. (9) Longhorn Cavern is one of the few river-carved caverns in the United States, and the only such cave in Texas.
A Cave with Many Occupants

(10) Things excavated from the cavern show that it was home to many Ice Age animals. (11) The cave has also been occupied by groups of people throughout the years. (12) The largest room in the cavern is called the “Indian Council Room.” (13) About 400 years ago Comanche tribal leaders used it as a meeting place. (14) Not only was the cavern used as a meeting place by the Comanche, but it was also used by the Confederate Army as a secret place to hide and manufacture weapons during the Civil War. (15) The soldiers collected bat guano from the cavern, turned it into gunpowder, and hid it there for use against the Union Army.

An Outlaw Hideout

(16) Criminals used the cave. (17) Rumor has it that the notorious criminal Sam Bass used it as a place to hide out from the law. (18) In fact, the entrance to the cave is called the “Sam Bass Entrance.” (19) During Prohibition, the cavern was used as a speakeasy, a place to serve illegal alcohol. (20) The state turned it into a park, and today, the cavern is used for legal gatherings, like weddings and private parties. (21) The park also sponsors a twice-monthly concert series called “Simple Sounds,” where visitors can hear live music enhanced by the amazing acoustics of the cavern.

(22) The interesting way that Longhorn Cavern was formed, along with its exciting and varied history, makes it one of the most important natural landmarks in Texas. (23) In fact, Longhorn Cavern was named a National Natural Landmark in 1971.
Miguel wants to write a thesis statement that accurately conveys the main idea of his paper. Which of the following should he add after sentence 3?

A  Cave enthusiasts from all over love to visit Longhorn Cavern and enjoy its beauty.
B  The cavern is a natural wonder that has been used by animals and people for millions of years.
C  Who wouldn’t want to see such an important natural wonder?
D  It was even readied for use as a nuclear fallout shelter for when President Johnson visited Texas.

Miguel would like to use a more appropriate transition in sentence 5. Which of the following best replaces *For example*?

F  Therefore
G  First
H  However
J  Additionally

What is the most effective way to revise sentence 7?

A  This water, called seepage, wears down the limestone and eventually forms the caves.
B  This water, called seepage, wears down the limestone, and eventually the water it forms the caves.
C  Seepage is what the water is called that wears down the limestone and eventually forms the caves.
D  Seepage, which is what this water is called, wears down the limestone and eventually by the water doing this it forms the caves.
4 Miguel wants to use a more appropriate word than *Things* in sentence 10. Which of these could best replace the word *Things*? 

(F) Items  
(G) Weapons  
(H) Fossils  
(J) Landmarks

5 What is the most effective way to combine sentences 12 and 13? 

(A) The largest room in the cavern is called the “Indian Council Room,” and because about 400 years ago Comanche tribal leaders used it as a meeting place.  
(B) The largest room in the cavern is called the “Indian Council Room, because about 400 years ago Comanche tribal leaders used it as a meeting place.  
(C) The largest room in the cavern is called the “Indian Council Room,” about 400 years ago Comanche tribal leaders used it as a meeting place.  
(D) The largest room in the cavern is called the “Indian Council Room”; however, about 400 years ago Comanche tribal leaders used it as a meeting place.

6 Miguel’s transition from the third paragraph (sentences 10–15) to the fourth paragraph (sentences 16–21) is weak. Which of the following could best replace sentence 16 and provide a more effective transition between these two paragraphs? 

(F) Other people used the cave, too.  
(G) Now the public may visit the cave and view its beauty.  
(H) The cave was the perfect place to hide from the Union army.  
(J) The cave was also used for a variety of illegal purposes.
Using Pronouns Correctly

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun or more than one noun. The word that a pronoun stands for is called its antecedent. Antecedent means “the thing before,” and refers to the noun or proper noun that the pronoun refers to. You might see an item on the STAAR test that requires you to fix agreement between pronouns and antecedents.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Use a singular pronoun to refer to a singular antecedent. Use a plural pronoun to refer to a plural antecedent. Also make sure a pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender.

Mr. Romero is a good coach, and he has helped his players build better skills.

Two soccer matches are scheduled on Saturday. They will be canceled if it rains.

Skill Check

For each sentence below, draw a box around the antecedent and then underline the correct pronoun inside the parentheses.

1. The two bald eagles add more material to (its, their) nest each year.
2. Richard has worked hard to earn (his, their) position as head of the debate team.
3. Neither girl would admit (her, their) role in the practical joke.

Agreement with Compound Antecedents

For two or more singular antecedents joined by or or nor, use a singular pronoun. For two or more antecedents joined by and, use a plural pronoun.

SINGULAR: Either Marisa or Angela left her jacket on the floor.

PLURAL: Pablo and Jackie rode their bicycles to the lake.

Skill Check

For each sentence below, draw a box around the word joining the antecedents, and then underline the correct pronoun inside the parentheses.

4. The singer and the band performed (its, their) songs beautifully.
5. Neither Scott nor Eduardo wanted to add (his, their) name to the petition.
6. If Lisa or Madeline needs a ride, tell (her, them) my mother can drive.
Agreement with Indefinite Pronouns

An indefinite pronoun does not refer to a specific place or thing. Some indefinite pronouns are singular, and some are plural. Some can be either singular or plural, depending on their meaning in a sentence.

Each of the boys thinks he can help paint the garage.

Both of the kittens are sleeping on their backs.

Most of her artwork sells quickly because it appeals to many buyers.

Most of her paintings are small; they can fit on almost any wall.

Skill Check

For each sentence below, draw a box around the indefinite pronoun and then underline the correct pronoun inside the parentheses.

7. Someone from the girls’ tennis team left (her, their) racket on the court.

8. Many of the volunteers stayed at (his, their) posts through the night.

9. Some of the people invited to the party sent (his or her, their) regrets.

Mixed Practice

For each sentence below, draw a box around the antecedent, the word joining compound antecedents, or the indefinite pronoun. Then, underline the correct pronoun in parentheses.

1. Harry and Brad both enjoy spending (his, their) time at the animal shelter.

2. Everyone on the girls’ basketball team played (her, their) best in the big game.

3. Most of the cottages still have snow on (its, their) windowsills.

4. One of the hamsters has escaped from (its, their) cage.

5. None of the guests knew where (his or her, their) host was.

6. Carmen and Mona said (she, they) liked the idea of trying out for soccer.

7. If Lily or Debra arrives soon, please ask (her, them) to help set up the tables.

8. Several of the floral designers have won awards for (his or her, their) flowers.

9. The servers and manager worked hard because (he or she, they) wanted the customers to be happy.

10. We trimmed the lower branches so that we would stop bumping our heads on (it, them).
Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

Gabriel wrote this paper to tell about a personal experience that turned out different than he expected. Read Gabriel’s paper and look for the corrections he needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Trial and Error**

(1) On the morning of our first agility trial, as we made the long drive to the fairgrounds, I sat in the backseat with Gidget, petting her and remembering all the time we have spent preparing for this day. (2) I had read that Shetland sheepdogs excel at dog agility, so as soon as Gidget was old enough, I signed us up for a class. (3) We practiced three times a week, and although it was hard work sometimes, I enjoyed learning with her. (4) Sometimes, when we were learning a new obstacle, she would behave timid at first. (5) The collapsed tunnel and the teeter-totter both made her especially nervous, but I was patient with the training, and eventually she was zipping through that tunnel and cruising over that teeter-totter with ease.

(6) Now we were on our way to our first competition. (7) After so many months of training, I wanted to at least place in our class. (8) I imagined all the other competitors raving about Gidget’s skill and speed on the course, and my amazing handling abilitys. (9) I envisioned us going home with a big ribbon, which I would display next to her dog bed for all our friends to admire.
(10) When we arrived at the fairgrounds, my dad settled Gidget into her crate while I looked at the course map and listened to the judge’s briefing. (11) Then I did my walk-through, the course seemed challenging, but I studied it carefully and was totally focused on my handling strategy. (12) “We can do this,” I whispered to myself as we waited for our turn.

(13) Apparently, I had been so focused on learning the course that I didn’t notice how nervous and distracted Gidget was in the unfamiliar surroundings. (14) The first few jumps went fine, as did the A-frame and even the teeter-totter. (15) When we got to the tunnel, however, Gidget stopped in her tracks and refused to go in. (16) I tried resorting to our training steps, but the judge instructed me to continue passed the obstacle.

(17) Needless to say, we did not bring home a ribbon. (18) “Refusals,” as they are called are faulted heavily, and we also lost points for coming in eight seconds over the SCT, or standard course time. (19) Dad tried to console me. (20) “This was your first time,” he said. (21) “You’ll do much better next time, now that you know how Gidget reacts in a competition environment.” (22) But I was inconsolable. (23) I told my dad I would never try this again. (24) Then I looked down at Gidget’s face, and I saw that she was beaming! (25) She was not disappointed; she was excited and happy! (26) At that moment I knew that agility was a great activity for Gidget and me, not because we might be champions at it, but because it kept us both mentally and physically active. (27) It also would bring us closer together with each new experience. (28) Yes, we’ll keep going to competitions, and we’ll keep getting better. (29) But as far as I’m concerned, the ribbons can wait.
1. What change should be made in sentence 1?  
   (E1.17A)
   A. Change *morning* to *Morning*
   B. Change *sat* to *set*
   C. Change *have spent* to *had spent*
   D. Insert a comma after *preparing*

2. What change is needed in sentence 4?  
   (E1.13D)
   F. Change *Sometimes* to *Sometime*
   G. Change *were learning* to *will have learned*
   H. Change *timid* to *timidly*
   J. Change *at first* to *firstly*

3. What change is needed in sentence 8?  
   (E1.19A)
   A. Change *imagined* to *imagining*
   B. Change *Gidget’s* to *Gidgets*
   C. Change *course* to *coarse*
   D. Change *abilitys* to *abilities*
What is the correct way to write sentence 11?

F  Then I did my walk-through. The course seemed challenging, but I studied it carefully and was totally focused on my handling strategy.

G  Then I did my walk-through, and although the course seemed challenging. I studied it carefully and was totally focused on my handling strategy.

H  Then I did my walk-through, and the course seemed challenging. Even though I studied it carefully and was totally focused on my handling strategy.

J  Then I did my walk-through, the course seemed challenging. I studied it carefully and was totally focused on my handling strategy.

What change needs to be made in sentence 16?

A  Change resorting to resortting

B  Change the comma to a semicolon

C  Change instructed to instructs

D  Change passed to past

What change should be made in sentence 18?

F  Add a comma after called

G  Change heavily to heavy

H  Delete and

J  Change coming to comeing
Drafting the Thesis

In an essay, the thesis statement, or thesis, states the topic and the writer’s main idea about the topic. It should directly respond to the question or direction in the prompt. It should also clearly tell your reader the controlling idea or topic of your essay. For the STAAR test, this means making a claim that can be supported and argued.

STAAR Strategy

Your thesis should respond to the prompt directly and make a thorough claim that can be argued with reasons and examples. Read this prompt from the 2014 STAAR test.

WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Expository

Read the following quotation.

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in getting up each time you fall.

—Nelson Mandela

Think carefully about the following question.

Can failure make you stronger?

Write an essay explaining whether failure can strengthen a person.

Here is a working thesis for the prompt.

Failure can indeed strengthen a person.

This thesis does respond to the prompt directly. However, it is not a detailed claim, and it is unclear what the writer intends to argue in the essay. Here is a revision of the thesis.

Failure strengthens people because it reveals weaknesses that need improvement and motivates people to try harder.

This thesis is more specific. It points out the way that the writer believes failure builds strength. It directly responds to the prompt and makes a specific claim that can be argued. A good thesis will include a “because” type of explanation of the issue.

It is good to think about your thesis as a working thesis and not the final thesis for the essay. As you plan and draft your composition, you may need to revise the thesis slightly to better fit your thoughts. It is much easier to revise your thesis to better fit your essay than to revise your whole essay to fit your thesis.
Guided Practice

Read this prompt from the 2013 STAAR test.

Read the following quotation.

Take risks. Ask big questions. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes; if you don’t make mistakes, you’re not reaching far enough.

—David Packard, co-founder of Hewlett-Packard

Taking risks means not knowing whether the outcome will be good. Think carefully about this statement.

Write an essay explaining why it is sometimes necessary to take a chance.

Improving a Thesis Statement  Now read each thesis statement below and think about how it could be improved to respond better to the prompt, be more detailed, or both.

Write a revised thesis on the lines below each thesis statement.

1. Thesis: It is often necessary to take risks, from big to small, in life.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Thesis: Mistakes are important because they show people what they have left to learn.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Thesis: We can never know if our decisions will turn out to benefit or harm us.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Prompt 1

Read the following quotation.

Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere.

—Carl Sagan

Think carefully about the following question.

What role does imagination play in life?

Write an essay explaining the role imagination has in a person’s life.

Be sure to —
• clearly state your thesis
• organize and develop your ideas effectively
• choose your words carefully
• edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

Brainstorm Ideas

Write down any thoughts and ideas you have in response to the prompt. Don’t worry about writing complete sentences. And don’t judge your ideas—yet. After you think of a few ideas, read through them and look for one that answers the prompt, makes an argument or claim, and is an idea you think you can develop into a full essay.
Organizing Your Ideas and Examples
Use this chart to organize and develop ideas and examples for your essay.

**INTRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**BODY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlling Idea:</th>
<th>Paragraph 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TRANSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Controlling Idea:</th>
<th>Paragraph 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TRANSITION**

<table>
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<th>Controlling Idea:</th>
<th>Paragraph 3 (optional)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**TRANSITION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Controlling Idea:</th>
<th>Paragraph 4 (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restate Thesis:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Final Paragraph**
Write your essay in the box below. Do not add lines inside the box or write outside the box.

Check to make sure your essay has
- a clear thesis statement
- in each body paragraph, a controlling idea that supports the thesis
- in each body paragraph, examples and evidence supporting the paragraph’s controlling idea
- transitions between your ideas
- a concluding paragraph or thought
The coherence of a paper refers to how well the paper is organized and how well the ideas and details in each paragraph fit together and flow. On the STAAR test, you will be asked to revise paragraphs to make them more coherent by replacing sentences or inserting sentences into a paragraph.

Typically, STAAR questions about revising for coherence focus on:
- transitions between paragraphs
- clearer or more effective introductions and conclusions
- adding relevant details to paragraphs

**STAAR Strategy**

The excerpt and question below are from a previous STAAR test. They are based on Leah’s essay asking for longer lunch periods. Read the item and work through the steps that follow to learn how to answer questions like this one.

(E1.15A, E1.16D)

(6) When students are rushed, they are more likely to make unhealthy choices.

(7) According to a 2008 study published in the Journal of School Health, diet quality is associated with academic performance. (8) In other words, eating an unhealthy lunch could negatively affect how well a student does in school. (9) Giving students more time to select and enjoy a healthy meal would therefore boost grades.

Leah wants to add the following idea to the paragraph.

Some resort to the faster à la carte line to grab chips and a drink; others skip lunch altogether.

**Guided Practice**

Read this paragraph and question from a previous STAAR test. Answer the question using what you have learned about revising for coherence. The paragraph is from Katy’s essay about a couple who live in an old school bus named Rosie.

(15) A few months later the bus was ready, and the newlyweds were preparing to move in. (16) They were pleased that their new home had a living area, a bedroom, and a small kitchen, complete with running water and a propane stove. (17) But Mike and Natalie weren’t finished yet. (18) They wanted Rosie to feel like a home rather than a recreational vehicle. (19) They carefully selected artwork to display in the foyer, or entrance, of the bus. (20) They added potted plants and rugs. (21) Wooden furniture was topped with photos, books, and lamps. (22) Mike explained, “We choose the few things that have the most impact, that mean the most to us.”

Katy realizes that she left the following detail out of the paragraph.

While the Youngs had fun decorating their new home, they knew they had to be wise about what they brought into such a small space.

Where is the most effective place to insert this sentence?

A. At the beginning of the paragraph
B. After sentence 21
C. After sentence 22
D. This sentence is not relevant to the main idea of the paragraph and should not be inserted.
In the chart below, evaluate each answer choice based on what you have learned about revising for coherence. One evaluation has been completed for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Is Answer Correct?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The new sentence seems to be about decorating. The paragraph isn't all about decorating, only the second half is. The new sentence probably goes closer to the end.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>This new sentence explains how the Youngs decided on decorations, but it doesn't give specific details. If I add the sentence after sentence 21, it will wrap up the details about decorating and will also lead into the quotation at the end of the paragraph.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The sentence works as a link between the details of decorating and Mike's quotation about the choices they made. The quotation explains and expands on the new sentence.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The new sentence is definitely related to the ideas in the paragraph, so answer choice D can be crossed out.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Think About Your Thinking**

**Independent Practice**

You will have the opportunity to practice revising for coherence in Revision Practice 1 and 3.
1. Miguel wants to write a thesis statement that accurately conveys the main idea of his paper. Which of the following should he add after sentence 3?

- **A** Cave enthusiasts from all over love to visit Longhorn Cavern and enjoy its beauty.
- **B** The cavern is a natural wonder that has been used by animals and people for millions of years.
- **C** Who wouldn’t want to see such an important natural wonder?
- **D** It was even readied for use as a nuclear fallout shelter for when President Johnson visited Texas.

**Answer Choice Explanations**

1. **A** This statement does not tell the reader what the essay is about.
   **B** Correct. This thesis statement fully introduces what the essay will cover.
   **C** This sentence asks a question but does not introduce the reader to the topic of the essay.
   **D** This sentence introduces new information but does not explain what the essay is about.

2. Miguel would like to use a more appropriate transition in sentence 5. Which of the following best replaces *For example*?

- **F** Therefore
- **G** First
- **H** However
- **J** Additionally

**Answer Choice Explanations**

2. **F** *Therefore* is a transition word that means “for that reason” and introduces a conclusion.
   **G** The transition *First* is used to introduce a list, but there is no list here.
   **H** Correct. *However* is used to introduce a contrasting idea, and Miguel is explaining how Longhorn Cavern is different from other caverns in Texas.
   **J** The transition *Additionally* is used to introduce more, similar ideas, not contrasting ideas.

3. What is the most effective way to revise sentence 7?

- **A** This water, called seepage, wears down the limestone and eventually forms the caves.
- **B** This water, called seepage, wears down the limestone, and eventually the water it forms the caves.
- **C** Seepage is what the water is called that wears down the limestone and eventually forms the caves.
- **D** Seepage, which is what this water is called, wears down the limestone and eventually by the water doing this it forms the caves.

**Answer Choice Explanations**

3. **A** Correct. This version eliminates the unnecessary words *by the water doing this it* to make the sentence clearer and more focused.
   **B** Since the subject, *water*, is already stated, the word *it* is a double subject, making this revision awkward. Also, the sentence is still wordy.
   **C** The first part of this revision is worded awkwardly and places the focus on the wrong idea.
   **D** This revision creates more wordiness without fixing the wordiness the sentence already contains.

To obtain a copy of the remaining answers to this Sampler, email: Teachers@SiriusEducationSolutions.com
Example of a 1–2 point essay:

Imagination is good. We would not have Star Wars or other science fiction movies.
The people who discovered flying had a lot imagination and now we fly planes all
over the world. Imagination is a great gift, like willpower.
The Founding Fathers imagine a country like the u.s. The King of England did not
have imagination and did not want American independence. But imagination helped
George Washington just as it helped Steve Jobs create the iPhone and make Apple
one of the richest companies in the world.
When I was eleven, I invented a machine for my science fair. It made donuts with
holes that has different shapes. My mom was proud of and said I was imagination.
My teacher said he would donuts with holes or triangles or stars. But I did not win.
But my mom said I had imagination.

Rationale: The thesis states that imagination is a “great gift,” but this is not directly related to the
prompt and is also vague. Similarly, the organizational structure is weak because the main ideas
for each paragraph are either missing or not clearly stated. The student tries to use an example
from history in the second paragraph, but the lack of focus and abrupt switch to an example about
Steve Jobs hurts the paragraph’s coherence. The last paragraph attempts to use a personal example
related to the topic, but it gives details in an illogical sequence that affect the coherence and clarity.
Also, there is no restatement of the thesis or final conclusion.

Example of a 3–4 point essay:

Everything we have created, from wooden ships thousands of years ago to robotic
rovers currently exploring other planets, started in someone’s imagination. Imagination
is important for its ability to inspire people to make their ideas come to life.
The Founding Fathers imagined a country that was ruled like a democracy instead
of a monarchy. They had many ideals, such as having a free press or people having
the freedom to choose their religion, that they wished would come true. As a result,
they were inspired and dedicated to making their ideal country a reality, and the
United States of America was eventually founded.
Another person with a lot of imagination was Steve Jobs. He founded Apple
Computers in the 1970s, and was responsible for the iMac, iPod, iPhone, iPad, and
other technological devices that have shaped how people communicate, work, and
play. Imagination played an important role in Jobs’ life because it helped him think
of the things his company would build and sell. In fact, most creative people from
songwriters to film directors need imagination in order to help them do their jobs.
Imagination can sometimes lead to daydreaming and wasting time, but even
those things are important for a healthy mind. Imagination leads to inspiration and
determination, and many of our social and technological advances owe a large debt
to imagination.

Rationale: The thesis sentence clearly states the role imagination plays in life. Each body paragraph
is focused to elaborate more on this link. In the first body paragraph, the writer leads with a
historical example and at the end of the paragraph ties this example to the thesis. The first sentence
of the third paragraph acts as a transition between paragraphs and further elaborates on the
thesis of the essay. The conclusion briefly acknowledges the counter-argument to imagination and
progress before restating the main idea.

Check to make sure your essay has
☐ a clear thesis statement
☐ in each body paragraph, a controlling idea that supports the thesis
☐ in each body paragraph, examples and evidence supporting the paragraph’s controlling idea
☐ transitions between your ideas
☐ a concluding paragraph or thought

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SAMPLER

ENGLISH I EOC WRITING CONTENTS

1: Revision
   Diagnostic Test
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2: Editing
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**Explanations**

1. **Correct.** Ella's response to her being asked what she is trying to do is, in fact, a competition.

2. **Correct.** The sentence shows that Ella has decided to compete with Lola.

3. **Correct.** The idiom "play the fool" means to act in order to make people laugh.

4. **Correct.** Ella indicates that Carla is working hard, but not specifically with how Ella has supported her.

5. **Correct.** The paragraph shows that Carla is a strong and confident character.

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