The Piano

Greta did not like change. She didn’t like it when they changed the design on the wrapper of her favorite kind of ice cream (strawberry mango). She didn’t like it when her father shaved his beard, because it made him look too young. And she didn’t like it when she came home to find this . . . thing in the living room. It was old and brown and heavy, and it practically took up a whole wall. It had yellow teeth, and it made noise. It was a piano.

When her older brother Richard started banging on the instrument with his elbows, Greta ran to her room and closed the door. That’s when she noticed something even worse: the toy chest was now in the middle of her room. This was the toy chest that had stood against the wall in the living room forever.

“Don’t you like our new family member?” Greta’s mother asked from outside the door.

Greta opened the door and blurted, “Where did you get that thing?”

“The Kleins are moving out, and they didn’t want to move it.”

“The Kleins are moving?” That meant more change. The Kleins had always lived in the apartment down the hall. It was all too much.

“Yes, and it will all be fine,” said Greta’s mother, and she walked back toward the living room.

Greta closed the door, flopped onto her bed face-down, and did what she always did when she didn’t like what was going on: she fell asleep.

_in her dream, Greta was floating on a raft in the middle of a river. The breeze stirred the water and made the most beautiful sound. The sound rose and fell and became louder when the wind became stronger._

Greta woke up and opened her eyes, but the sound continued. She got up and stumbled into the living room, where her mother sat at the piano. The sound was pouring out of her mother’s fingers, but she was looking straight ahead with her head cocked slightly to the right. Then she stopped playing and remained still, in a different world.

“Come and sit here,” Greta’s mother said as she scooted over and patted the bench next to her.

“I didn’t know . . . ,” Greta began.

“Of course you didn’t know, because I never told you I could play. I started when I was about five years old.”

“Why did you stop?”
"I didn’t really stop. I guess I kind of drifted away from it. When I moved out of my parents’ house, I left the piano behind, and I never got another one.”

Greta stared at her mother’s face, which held a half smile. “You never should have stopped,” said Greta.

“You might be right,” Greta’s mother said, and she stole a quick look at her daughter.

Greta felt like her mother had just told her a secret, and a bubble of warmth rose inside her.

“Will you play some more?” she asked.

Item 1
Selected-Response

What is the MOST LIKELY reason Greta’s mother invites Greta to sit on the piano bench with her?

A. She would like to show Greta how to play the piano.
B. She knows Greta is upset and is trying to comfort her.
C. She would like to explain to Greta how she learned to play the piano.
D. She knows Greta is nervous about having new neighbors.

Item 2
Selected-Response

Which explanation BEST describes the meaning of the phrase drifted away from it as it is used in these sentences from the story?

“I didn’t really stop. I guess I kind of drifted away from it. When I moved out of my parents’ house, I left the piano behind, and I never got another one.”

A. Greta’s mother stopped enjoying music.
B. Greta’s mother felt sad about playing music.
C. Greta’s mother stopped playing the piano bit by bit.
D. Greta’s mother suddenly finished listening to a song.
Item 3
Selected-Response
At the end of the story, Greta asks her mother, “Will you play some more?”

Based on the story, why does Greta MOST LIKELY ask this question?

A. She wants her neighbors to hear her mother playing the piano.
B. She worries that her mother does not like playing the piano.
C. She hopes her mother can become better at playing the piano.
D. She enjoys hearing her mother playing the piano.

Item 4
Selected-Response
Why does the author use dialogue in the scene at the piano?

A. to show how Greta’s feelings are changing
B. to show why Greta’s mother is upset
C. to show Greta’s excitement about having new neighbors
D. to show that Greta’s mother worries about her daughter

Item 5
Selected-Response
Which sentence correctly states the point of view in the story?

A. The story is told by a narrator who provides Greta’s point of view.
B. The story is told by a narrator who provides Greta’s mother’s point of view.
C. The story is told by a narrator who provides Richard’s point of view.
D. The story is told by a narrator who provides many family members’ points of view.
Item 6
Evidence-Based Selected-Response Technology-Enhanced
This question has two parts. Answer Part A, and then answer Part B.

Part A
Which word BEST describes Greta’s mother?
A. generous
B. humorous
C. talented
D. forgiving

Part B
Which sentence from the story BEST supports the answer in Part A?
A. “Yes, and it will all be fine,” said Greta’s mother, and she walked back toward the living room.
B. The sound was pouring out of her mother’s fingers, but she was looking straight ahead with her head cocked slightly to the right.
C. “You might be right,” Greta’s mother said, and she stole a quick look at her daughter.
D. Greta felt like her mother had just told her a secret, and a bubble of warmth rose inside her.
Item 7

Constructed-Response

Explain the theme of "The Piano."

Use details from the story to support your answer. Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.
Item 8

Extended Constructed-Response

Write an ending to the story that starts with Greta's mother saying to Greta, "Now tell me why you were so upset when you saw the piano."

Be sure that your story ending flows naturally from the rest of the story. Use dialogue and descriptions in your story. Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.
## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) ADDITIONAL SAMPLE ITEM KEYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Standard/Element/Genre</th>
<th>DOK Level</th>
<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL3 Literary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>The correct answer is choice (B) She knows Greta is upset and is trying to comfort her. This answer is supported by Greta's mother's earlier comment, &quot;Yes, and it will all be fine.&quot; Choice (A) is incorrect because there is no evidence that Greta's mother wants to teach Greta to play the piano. Choice (C) is incorrect because Greta's mother mentions she knows how to play the piano, but there is not evidence that she would like to explain how she learned to play. Choice (D) is incorrect because although Greta knows her neighbors are moving, the story doesn't provide enough evidence to show that their moving is Greta's main concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL4 Literary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>The correct answer is choice (C) Greta's mother stopped playing the piano bit by bit. Perhaps unintentionally, Greta's mother slowly moved away from playing piano. Choice (A) is incorrect because there is no evidence that Greta's mother stopped enjoying music; she just got out of the habit of playing it. Choice (B) is incorrect because the passage contains no evidence that music made Greta's mother sad. Choice (D) is incorrect because &quot;drifting away&quot; refers to abandoning piano playing altogether, not discontinuing to listen in the middle of a song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL1 Literary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>The correct answer is choice (D) She enjoys hearing her mother playing the piano. The context of the passage supports the idea that Greta enjoys listening to her mother play and that knowing that her mother can play is like &quot;a secret,&quot; causing &quot;a bubble of warmth [to rise] inside her.&quot; Choice (A) is incorrect because there is no suggestion it is important to Greta that others hear her mother play. Choice (B) is incorrect because she is not trying to nudge her mother into doing a difficult task. Choice (C) is incorrect because her mother seems to be an adept pianist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL5 Literary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>The correct answer is choice (A) to show how Greta's feelings are changing. There are two sections of dialogue, with the first showing Greta's dismay at the piano's arrival and the second showing Greta's pleasure at her mother's piano playing. Choice (B) is incorrect because Greta's mother is not upset. Choice (C) is incorrect because Greta's emotions are directed at the piano, not the neighbors. Choice (D) is incorrect because Greta's mother reassures her daughter but does not express worry over her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Standard/Element/Genre</td>
<td>DOK Level</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL6 Literary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>The correct answer is choice (A) The story is told by a narrator who provides Greta's point of view. The story is told from a third person limited point of view, limited to Greta's thoughts and emotions. Choices (B), (C), and (D) are incorrect because the story is not told from the mother's, Richard's, or an omniscient point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL3 Literary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>C/B</td>
<td>The correct answers are choice (C) talented and choice (B) The sound was pouring out of her mother's fingers, but she was looking straight ahead with her head cocked slightly to the right. Greta hears beautiful music and cannot identify the source right away; she is pleasantly surprised to find that it is her mother playing the piano. The correct answer choice for Part B of the item shows text that supports this. In Part A, choice (A) is incorrect because, while it is appealing, Greta's mother's talent with the piano is emphasized more in the passage. Choice (B) is incorrect as there is no indication that Greta's mother is humorous. Choice (D) is incorrect because there is no scenario that requires Greta's mother to be forgiving within the passage. The incorrect options in Part B support incorrect answers in Part A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ELAGSE4RL2 Literary</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>See scoring rubric and sample responses on page 63.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ELAGSE4W3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>See scoring rubric beginning on page 69 and sample responses on page 64.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) SAMPLE SCORING RUBRICS AND EXEMPLAR RESPONSES

Item 7

Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2      | The exemplar shows a full-credit response. It achieves the following:  
  • Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to determine the theme of a story  
  • Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text  
  • Adequately explains the theme with clearly relevant information based on the text |
| 1      | The exemplar shows a 1-point response. It achieves the following:  
  • Gives limited evidence of the ability to determine the theme of a story  
  • Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the text  
  • Explains the theme with vague/limited information based on the text |
| 0      | The exemplar shows a response that would earn no credit. It achieves the following:  
  • Gives no evidence of the ability to determine the theme of a story |

Exemplar Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The theme of the story is to not judge change as always being bad. Greta immediately reacts with suspicion and dread of the new piano. By the end of the story, though, she has learned to welcome it. Greta tells her mother she never should have stopped playing the piano. When Greta learns that her mother can play she feels “a bubble of warmth.” Knowing this secret has brought them closer together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The theme of the story is to think before you judge a change. The piano turns out to be a good change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>This story is about a girl and her mother.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exemplar Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Awarded</th>
<th>Sample Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4              | Greta’s mother said, “Now tell me why you were so upset when you saw the piano.”  
“Well, for one thing, you know me. I don’t like surprises.”  
“That’s for sure! I did know that,” her mother said.  
“Well, then Richard was pounding on the piano really loudly. And it replaced my toy chest.  
My toy chest has always been in that spot in the living room.” Greta felt a little foolish for a moment. She giggled softly.  
“Well,” said her mother, raising her eyebrows, “we could always bring the toy chest back in here and get rid of the piano. Then you can play with your stuffed animals all day.” They both laughed.  
“Now let me show you a simple little melody,” Greta’s mother said, turning to the piano keys. |
| 3              | Greta’s mother said, “Now tell me why you were so upset when you saw the piano.”  
“Because I don’t like change. And this thing was a big change.”  
“Okay,” said her mother. “I understand. I know the piano is a big change. I wonder if we can turn it into something good. Do you want to give it a try?”  
Her mother then gave Greta her first piano lesson. |
| 2              | Greta’s mother wondered why Greta was so upset about the piano. She knew Greta didn’t like change but thought the piano was a good thing. She decided to play the piano to make Greta feel better. |
| 1              | Greta’s mother didn’t know why Greta was so upset. She saw Greta run to her room after Richard played the piano. |
| 0              | Greta’s mother loves the new piano. |
### Four-Point Holistic Rubric

**Genre: Narrative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Trait</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The student’s response is a well-developed narrative that fully develops a real or imagined experience based on text as a stimulus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Effectively establishes a situation and introduces a narrator and/or characters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Organizes an event sequence that unfolds naturally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Effectively uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue and description, to develop rich, interesting experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses a variety of words and phrases consistently to signal the sequence of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses concrete words, phrases, and sensory language consistently and effectively to convey experiences and events precisely</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provides a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Integrates ideas and details from source material effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Has very few or no errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This trait examines the writer’s ability to effectively develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences based on a text that has been read.

|               | 3      | The student’s response is a complete narrative that develops a real or imagined experience based on text as a stimulus. |
|               |        | - Establishes a situation and introduces one or more characters |
|               |        | - Organizes events in a clear, logical order |
|               |        | - Uses narrative techniques, such as dialogue and description, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations |
|               |        | - Uses words and/or phrases to indicate sequence |
|               |        | - Uses words, phrases, and details to convey experiences and events |
|               |        | - Provides an appropriate conclusion |
|               |        | - Integrates some ideas and/or details from source material |
|               |        | - Has a few minor errors in usage and/or conventions that interfere with meaning* |

|               | 2      | The student’s response is an incomplete or oversimplified narrative based on text as a stimulus. |
|               |        | - Introduces a vague situation and at least one character |
|               |        | - Organizes events in a sequence but with some gaps or ambiguity |
|               |        | - Attempts to use a narrative technique, such as dialogue and description, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations |
|               |        | - Uses occasional signal words to indicate sequence |
|               |        | - Uses some words or phrases inconsistently to convey experiences and events |
|               |        | - Provides a weak or ambiguous conclusion |
|               |        | - Attempts to integrate ideas or details from source material |
|               |        | - Has frequent errors in usage and conventions that sometimes interfere with meaning* |
## Four-Point Holistic Rubric

**Genre: Narrative**

### (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Trait</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| This trait examines the writer's ability to effectively develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences based on a text that has been read. | 1 | The student's response provides evidence of an attempt to write a narrative based on text as a stimulus.  
- Response is a summary of the story  
- Provides a weak or minimal introduction of a situation or a character  
- May be too brief to demonstrate a complete sequence of events  
- Shows little or no attempt to use dialogue or description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations  
- Uses words that are inappropriate, overly simple, or unclear  
- Provides few, if any, words that convey events  
- Provides a minimal or no conclusion  
- May use few, if any, ideas or details from source material  
- Has frequent major errors in usage and conventions that interfere with meaning* |
| 0 | The student will receive a condition code for various reasons:  
- Blank  
- Copied  
- Too Limited to Score/Illegible/Incomprehensible  
- Non-English/Foreign Language  
- Off Topic/Off Task/Offensive |

*Students are responsible for language conventions learned in their current grade as well as in prior grades. Refer to the language skills for each grade to determine the grade-level expectations for grammar, syntax, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Also refer to the "Language Progressive Skills, by Grade" chart in the Appendix for those standards that need continued attention beyond the grade in which they were introduced.