

High School Level Reading Assessment Multiple Choice Items

The PSSA Reading Assessment is given in grades 3 through 8 and 11.

- Look at the sample questions included here and practice – your teacher has the correct answers
- Don't give up before you begin – even if the story looks difficult
- Read the questions before you read the story or passage
- Think about the questions while you read
- Use a highlighter or pencil to mark important parts of the story
- You can write notes in the story to help you later
- You will not be able to use a dictionary or thesaurus for the multiple choice questions
- Use reading skills:
 - ❑ prediction – try to guess what the story will be about and what will happen next as you read
 - ❑ previous experience – what do you already know about this subject?
 - ❑ visualize – picture in your head what you are reading about
 - ❑ story maps
 - ❑ check yourself while you read – are you understanding?
 - ❑ figure out an unknown word
 - look for the words **or** and **and** near the word, as they may give a synonym or clue to the meaning of the word
 - use your native language
 - look at the part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, adverb)
 - think about the rest of the sentence and paragraph

Reading Assessment

Multiple Choice Items (continued)

- On a vocabulary question, the unknown word should be the same part of speech as the answer (if the unknown word is a verb, the answer should also be a verb)
- Use the headings in the story to help you find answers
- Watch out for these distracters – they could make you pick a wrong answer:
 - questions or answers with words like **all**, **none**, **always**, **never** – these are tricky
 - the answer choice sounds good but it is not really in the story
 - the answer choice is in the story but it does not really answer the question being asked – (be sure to choose the option that *answers the question*)
 - the answer choice is partially true but not completely true

Reading Assessment

Open Ended Items (Performance)

- Look at the sample Released Performance Task included here and practice using the rubric
- Look at the sample Scored Student Response included here as a model of a great response
- Think about the topic and plan before you begin to write
- Make an outline before you begin to write
- Use a dictionary and a thesaurus
- Use a dictionary with your native language
- Use the rubric to review your answer, and make sure you included what you need for the highest score
- Even if you can not complete the whole question, write what you can so you can receive some points

PENNSYLVANIA WRITING ASSESSMENT DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

FOCUS	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	STYLE	CONVENTIONS
4	The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic. Sharp, distinct controlling point made about a single topic with evident awareness of task (mode)	The order developed and sustained within and across paragraphs using transitional devices including introduction and conclusion. Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions	The choice, use and arrangement of words and sentence structures that create tone and voice. Precise, illustrative use of a variety of words and sentence structures to create consistent writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience	The use of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation. Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
3	Apparent point made about a single topic with sufficient awareness of task (mode)	Substantial, specific and/or illustrative content demonstrating strong development and sophisticated ideas Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation	Generic use of a variety of words and sentence structures that may or may not create writer's voice and tone appropriate to audience Limited word choice and control of sentence structures that inhibit voice and tone	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
2	No apparent point but evidence of a specific topic	Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation	Minimal variety in word choice and minimal control of sentence structures	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation
1	Minimal evidence of a topic	Superficial and/or minimal content		

NON-SCORABLE	OFF-PROMPT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is illegible; i.e., includes so many indecipherable words that no sense can be made of the response • Is incoherent; i.e., words are legible but syntax is so garbled that response makes no sense • Is insufficient; i.e., does not include enough to assess domains adequately • Is a blank paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is readable but did not respond to prompt



**PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT
FALL 2000**

**GRADE 9
WRITING PROMPT SHEET**

PROMPT #1

You will have one class period (but no more than 60 minutes if your class is longer) to plan, write and proofread your response, making any necessary corrections.

Planning:

- Think about what you want to write.
- Reread the prompt to make sure you are writing about the topic.
- Make notes. Use your prewriting skills, such as mapping or outlining.
- Carefully read the five statements below the prompt. Each statement refers to one of the scorable domains: focus, content, organization, style and conventions.

Writing:

- Write your essay on pages 5 and 6 of your writing booklet.
- Proofread your essay and make necessary corrections.

READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

Think about inventions that have affected our lives.

Select an invention and write to explain why this invention has been good or bad for society.

As you write your paper, remember to:

- ★ Identify an invention and clearly state why it has been good or bad for society.
- ★ Include specific facts, details, reasons and examples to explain your choice.
- ★ Present your ideas in a clear and logical order, including an introduction, body and conclusion.
- ★ Use a variety of words and well-constructed sentences.
- ★ Correct any errors in grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.



**PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT
FALL 2000**

**GRADE 9
WRITING PROMPT SHEET**

PROMPT #2

You will have one class period (but no more than 60 minutes if your class is longer) to plan, write and proofread your response, making any necessary corrections.

Planning:

- Think about what you want to write.
- Reread the prompt to make sure you are writing about the topic.
- Make notes. Use your prewriting skills, such as mapping or outlining.
- Carefully read the five statements below the prompt. Each statement refers to one of the scorable domains: focus, content, organization, style and conventions.

Writing:

- Write your essay on pages 7 and 8 of your writing booklet.
- Proofread your essay and make necessary corrections.

READ THE ENTIRE PROMPT CAREFULLY

Your community has been awarded money to build a monument in honor of a person. Decide who should receive this honor.

Persuade your community leaders to accept your choice.

As you write your paper, remember to:

- ★ Choose someone and clearly state why this person deserves this honor.
- ★ Use specific facts, details, examples and reasons to persuade community leaders to select your choice.
- ★ Present your ideas in a clear and logical order, including an introduction, body and conclusion.
- ★ Use a variety of words and well-constructed sentences.
- ★ Correct any errors in grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation.

GRADE 11 — Released Informational Passage and Items

Hobbies can be much more than leisure time diversions. Read the following article to discover what hobbies have contributed to the well-being of many celebrities and answer the questions that follow.

The Inner World of Hobbies

by Robert E. Hood

Too busy for a hobby? If so, you may be too busy for your own good. Hobbies are refreshing, pleasurable, and rewarding. They are much more than mere distractions. They offer a depth of experience, a plunge into another world beyond the occasional harshness and tragedy of daily life.

Some of the great leaders of the 20th century found solace in their hobbies.

During World War I, painting proved to be an invaluable activity for Winston Churchill. Long before he became the renowned leader of Britain, Churchill, as first lord of the admiralty, was blamed for the disastrous Allied defeat at Gallipoli in 1915. He was eased out of his post and reduced to figurehead status in Britain's war cabinet. This was a depressing situation for a dynamic 41-year-old who had served in India and fought in the Boer War, a high-flying man of action with his wings clipped.

"I had long hours of utterly unwanted leisure in which to contemplate the frightful unfolding of war," Churchill wrote in his book *Painting as a Pastime*. "At a moment when every fibre of my being was inflamed to action, I was forced to remain a spectator of the tragedy. And then it was that the Muse of Painting came to my rescue."

Painting gave Churchill a new sense of creativity, relaxing him, freeing him from frustration. "Just to paint is great fun," he wrote. "The colours are lovely to look at and delicious to squeeze out."

Always a spellbinding talker, Churchill was

silent when painting, completely absorbed in the joy of creation. For years he would turn to the paintbrush to escape the brutal pressure of being a world leader. And he became a good painter, too.

During the darkest days of the Great Depression and World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sometimes sought refuge in his hobbies. He had several, dating back to his boyhood when he began collecting prints, books, stamps, and ship models. He liked fishing and sailing and was a strong swimmer.

As a boy, Roosevelt was an omnivorous reader, a pastime that every great leader must develop. And he had a marvelous power of retention, another splendid ability to sharpen.

A lifetime of stamp collecting and reading no doubt helped FDR develop a grasp of geopolitics and a sense of geography that led to his early awareness of the danger of an Adolph Hitler unleashed in the heart of Europe. And his love of ships and sailing certainly made him focus on the need for the United States to have a powerful navy.

Different ways to use a hobby

Of course, hobbies are used in various ways, depending on the user.

U.S. President and General Dwight D. Eisenhower had several hobbies. An enthusiastic amateur photographer, he'd snap off 40 or 50

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shots of a spectacular sunset. During World War II, when he served as Allied supreme commander, he took a brief stab at painting, but didn't get serious about it until after the war.

Ike considered himself a "messy" painter who got more paint on his hands and on the floor than on a canvas. "My hands are better suited to an ax handle than to a tiny brush," he confessed in his book *At Ease, Stories I Tell to My Friends*.

Yet he stayed with painting for years, during his brief stint as president of Columbia University, through two terms as President of the United States, and into retirement.

He drew both landscapes and portraits. "I've burned more [unsuccessful] portraits than anything else," he wrote.

A good athlete who played football and baseball in his youth, Ike later became a dedicated golfer. As president he even had a putting green installed on the White House lawn, and his opponents sometimes criticized him for seeming to spend more time on the links than on the state of the nation. (Nongolfers can be particularly harsh about a game they consider frivolous.)

President Eisenhower was a wise man: He didn't confuse motion with action. He knew when to pick up camera, paintbrush, or golf club—and ignore the scolds of his critics.

Hobby choice is fascinating

How, why, and when people pick hobbies is fascinating to behold.

For example, President Eisenhower developed a yen for painting while watching a professional artist, Tom Stephens, work on a portrait of First Lady Mamie Eisenhower.

In a playful moment, Ike picked up a brush, and using Stephen's portrait of Mamie as a guide, began daubing on a separate canvas. He thought the final result was hilarious and showed it to his wife and the artist.

"It was weird and wonderful," Eisenhower wrote. Everybody laughed, but the artist Stephens urged Ike to continue painting, which he did.

People often select hobbies seemingly at odds

with their persona. Professional basketball star David Robinson is devoted to the piano, playing classical music he learned from his father. The 7-foot-1-inch All-Star center takes a keyboard with him on team road trips. For Robinson, playing Beethoven is both a pleasure and a way of escaping the pressure cooker of professional sports.

On the other hand, musician Quincy Jones has several hobbies, all involving activities a good distance from his work. He finds relaxation in cooking, reading, and the practice of yoga.

The most cerebral and psychologically demanding of all hobbies is probably chess. Intensively competitive, it is the innermost hobby, in which a player struggles against his own limited comprehension to defeat an opponent.

The game appeals to young and old, and in the past 20 years its popularity with kids has boomed. The U.S. Chess Federation reports that more than 35,000 of its 85,000 members are under age 20. Chess clubs and leagues are spreading across the nation.

Legendary movie actor Humphrey Bogart was a chess buff. So is Hollywood producer-actor Ron Howard. Marcel Marceau, the world-renown mime, is a chess hobbyist, as is artist Yoko Ono.

Types of hobbies

The world of hobbies is wide, especially if you accept the dictionary definition—a *special interest or pursuit that is outside one's occupation and that one finds particularly interesting and enjoyable*.

Most all involve either *collecting, making, or doing something*.

Collectors consider themselves the classicists of the hobby universe. If not restrained, however, they become little more than pack rats, warehousing autographs, cards, cans, coins, match boxes, rocks, and shells.

Collectors can require (besides a very patient spouse) a large house, a huge garage, or even a barn (especially if, like baseball Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson, you collect automobiles).

Makers are builders of the hobby world. They

construct model boats, cars, planes; they build birdhouses, furniture, and toys; and turn out baseball bats on lathes in their basement.

The *doers* include the active types, who climb rocks, hike, jog, and swim; they dive beneath the ocean surface and out of airplanes. Sometimes they jump off bridges using bungee cords to stop their fall or off cliffs using hang glider apparatus to soar through the air.

The quiet doer is a benign type, sitting in a rocking chair and listening to music, or playing an instrument, or singing—and collecting CDs, cassettes, and LP records.

Doers also adopt pets—cats and dogs and snakes and insects—which they share with friends or show before judges in competitive shows. (Keeping pets also may be considered a variation on collecting and can trigger a good deal of reading.)

Living with a pet gives you three hobbies and also a good deal of housework: cleaning rugs and cages (or aquariums, if you fancy fish). You can also spend a lot of time and money on visits to veterinarians.

Favorite hobbies come and go

Hobbies, like ancient Rome, may decline and fall (and sometimes get back up again). For instance: Seen any amateur beekeepers lately?

Even stamp collecting, one of the truly grand old hobbies, is experiencing a slump among youngsters. A 1994 survey showed that only 150,000 children collected stamps, down from 2.5 million in 1952.

In 1995, the Postal Service started a program to lure kids back into collecting, stressing the tradition of the hobby and employing new marketing techniques and products targeted at kids. (Let's hope this campaign is successful, for stamp collecting is one of the most educational and rewarding of all hobbies.)

In the era of computers and the Internet, baseball cards and comic books have risen above stamps and coins as popular collectibles. But playing video games now tops the list of the 10

most popular leisure activities of teen-agers.

Dining out (now there's a hobby) and reading books (a pleasant surprise) follow close behind.

Some strange hobbies indeed

As hobbies come and go, unusual ones always capture attention.

Take the case of Rose Hamburger, who died recently at age 105.

For 80 years, while she worked as a realtor, her hobby was handicapping horse races. In 1991, she came out of retirement to work as a handicapper for the *New York Post*, under the pen name of Gamblin' Rose.

Most hobbies don't have the potential to be as lucrative or offer a career possibility as horse race handicapping. But potential for financial reward is not really how most people choose a hobby.

The important thing is to find something you like, and let it envelop you. And, please, don't make work of it.

Now read each question and mark the best answer on your answer booklet.

135. According to the article, the most intellectually demanding hobby is

- A stamp collecting.
- B painting.
- C reading.
- D chess.

136. This article is organized by

- E types of hobbyists.
- F time.
- G collections.
- H popular hobbies.

137. Which is a statement of **fact**?

- A Collectors become little more than pack rats.
- B Eisenhower was a messy painter.
- C Young Roosevelt collected books and ship models.
- D Active hobbyists enjoy collecting.

138. Churchill began painting when he

- E lost his position as first lord of the admiralty.
- F became a renowned world leader.
- G served as an ambassador to India.
- H entered the world of politics.

139. Hood's point of view on hobbies is

- A derogatory.
- B promotional.
- C contradictory.
- D neutral.

140. The word *dynamic* comes from the Greek *dynam*, meaning

- E destructive.
- F changing.
- G forceful.
- H alternating.

141. The **best** definition of the word *cerebral* as used in this article is

- A cerebellum.
- B mental.
- C intuitive.
- D skillful.

142. The word *geopolitics* is made up of two roots, *geo* and *politics*, meaning

- E world and democracies.
- F world and diplomacy.
- G rocks and ecology.
- H earth and governments.

143. The **best** source to research the author of this article is

- A an almanac.
- B an encyclopedia.
- C biographical listings.
- D a periodical index.

144. One category of hobby types the author lists is

- E collecting.
- F playing.
- G dining.
- H painting.

145. Roosevelt's hobby increased his knowledge of

- A politics.
- B geography.
- C dictators.
- D chess.

146. One major theme of the article is that

- E hobbies are healthy diversions.
- F people are never too busy for a hobby.
- G hobbyists become pack rats.
- H hobbies are laborious.

147. The hobby that provided Franklin Roosevelt with a refuge in WWII was

- A chess.
- B stamp collecting.
- C painting.
- D piano playing.

148. One example of Hood's use of simile is

- E "As a boy, Roosevelt was an omnivorous reader."
- F "Collectors . . . become little more than pack rats."
- G ". . . as a realtor, her hobby was handicapping horse races."
- H "hobbies, like ancient Rome, may decline and fall."

149. Which word groupings from the article **best** justify the purposes for a hobby?

- A soothing / fatiguing / spellbinding
- B lucrative / traditional / interesting
- C enjoyable / gratifying / invigorating
- D invaluable / competitive / passionate

150. The word *geography* comes from the Greek *geos* and *graph*, meaning

- E earth + longitude.
- F earth + drawing.
- G world + latitude.
- H world + study.

151. To research the British defeat at Gallipoli, the **best** source to consult is

- A an almanac of world records.
- B a history of World War I.
- C an atlas of Europe.
- D a foreign language dictionary.

152. Rose Hamburger's hobby led to employment as a

- E bookmaker.
- F gambler.
- G handicapper.
- H realtor.

153. Because of a hobby when he was president, Dwight Eisenhower

- A watched professional artists.
- B drew landscapes.
- C painted his wife, Mamie.
- D installed a putting green.

154. In the card catalog, information for this article would be listed under

- E "A" for avocation.
- F "C" for Churchill.
- G "R" for Roosevelt.
- H "V" for vocation.

PENNSYLVANIA READING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This rubric was designed by the Reading Assessment Advisory Committee to be used in the Pennsylvania Reading Assessment. The elements of reading being assessed through this rubric are limited to those that can be addressed through written responses in the on-demand performance portion of the assessment, specifically *Understanding, Comprehension* and *Connections*. *Risk-taking* is also an important element, developing throughout life's learning process. However, given the constraints of this assessment, *Risk-taking* was not included. The RAAC advises that assessments developed at the classroom, school and district levels include this element.

LEVEL 4

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the complexity of the text through detailed elaboration and extensions of text with sophisticated ideas, insights and reflections. There are no errors in text-based facts.
- Exhibits a level of comprehension that extends beyond the literal, to the personal, critical and/or evaluative responses.
- Cites evidence, makes a variety of strong connections to other experiences, texts, concepts, issues and/or cultural settings.

LEVEL 3 *

- Demonstrates confident, coherent and adequate understanding and interpretation of the text through some elaboration and extension.
- There are no major errors in text-based facts.
- Exhibits a level of comprehension that reflects extensions that are more literal or personal.
- Makes connections to personal experiences, other texts and/or background knowledge.

LEVEL 2

- Demonstrates a limited understanding and/or interpretation of the text. There may be errors in text-based facts.
- Exhibits a level of comprehension that consists primarily of literal responses to the text.
- Makes connections between other experiences and text that are disjointed, fragmented, limited and not integral to the text.

LEVEL 1

- Demonstrates an attempt to respond with very limited evidence of understanding of the text.
- There may be errors in text-based facts.
- Exhibits a level of comprehension that consists of disjointed, incomplete or irrelevant responses.
- Might use relevant copied text.
- Makes only distant connections to the text, using sketchy details.

LEVEL 0 - consists of 3 types of responses:

- **Non-Scorable (NS)** papers are blank.
- **Off-Task (OT)** papers show no relationship to task and text, are illegible, irrelevant copied text, or written in a language other than English.
- **Intentionally Off-Task (IO)** papers are ones that have unrelenting profanity, are a refusal to perform, state a baseless charge of too personal or are drawings, scribbling, etc.

*Note - Level 3 (or higher) is to be viewed as the performance standard for all students.

Scored Student Responses
The Inner World of Hobbies
Grade 11 Informational Passage

155. The author of this article seems convinced of the value of developing a hobby. Explain why you agree or disagree with him using examples from the article and your own ideas as support.

As you write, be sure to:

- Explain why you agree or disagree with the author.
- Give specific examples from the article of what hobbies can and cannot do.
- Include your own ideas.
- Write neatly and clearly.
- Use only the space provided.

This article, "The Inner World of Hobbies," stresses that hobbies shape careers. It places much importance on having a hobby so that one can be successful. Although I agree that a hobby can be a healthy pass-time I believe this article is misleading. A hobby is not a key to success, as this article may have one believe.

Hood describes Franklin D. Roosevelt's lifetime hobbies. This great leader was also a stamp collector, a boat model collector, a fisher, and an avid reader. These hobbies no doubt helped FDR gain experience, but can not be attributed to the "early" action taken against Hitler, or the United States' realization of the need for naval power.

Aside from the incredible claims of the author, the passage speaks truthfully about what hobbies can really do. The later half of the article mentions important facts concerning hobbies of the past and of today. Hood continues, classifying every type of hobbyist. He briefly mentions many different and modern hobbies, but still focuses on the classics.

"The Inner World of Hobbies" was an incomplete, and opinionated look at the world of hobbies. It contained some factual information and was an interesting subject, but its author makes unbelievable connections between one's hobby and one's level of success in life.

4— This student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text and task by clearly stating that he/she disagrees with the author and why (e.g., "Although I agree with the author that a hobby can be a healthy pass-time, I believe this article is misleading.") The response cites specific examples from the article (e.g., "Franklin D. Roosevelt's life time hobbies. This great leader...") that support and explain how lives have been enriched. The student continues to elaborate the main idea with more text reference (e.g.,

“classifying every kind of hobbyist.”) and his/hers own ideas. (e.g., “A hobby is not a key to success,...”). This response exhibits a level of comprehension that extends beyond the literal to the evaluative and has no errors in text-based facts.

155. The author of this article seems convinced of the value of developing a hobby. Explain why you agree or disagree with him using examples from the article and your own ideas as support.

As you write, be sure to:

- Explain why you agree or disagree with the author.
- Give specific examples from the article of what hobbies can and cannot do.
- Include your own ideas.
- Write neatly and clearly.
- Use only the space provided.

In Robert P. Hood's article, he stresses the importance of hobbies. I strongly agree with his statement. Throughout his article he offers an immense amount of examples which include the causes and effects of what a hobby can do for you. For example starting in the third paragraph, Hood uses former leader of Britain, Winston Churchill, to show how hobbies are stress relievers. When "he was eased out of his post" he had free time on his hands to contemplate the situation and to evaluate the situation since he became a spectator. The effect of this made him discover a relaxing way to relieve his stress and that was painting. Another example was when Hood described President FDR's hobbies. The cause was The Great Depression and WWII. FDR "sought refuge" to relieve his thoughts and emotion. Being a collector of books, stamps, ship models, prints, and being an intense reader gave him the opportunity to enjoy and relax himself while grasping knowledge on geography. There are just a few excellent examples Hood uses and portrays to the reader in order to make his point come out strongly. I believe having hobbies is a way to escape (possibly) the hardships, it offers a sense of relaxation and puts a person at ease. It takes one's mind off something while providing pleasure and enjoyment. Hobbies can be as simple as listening to music or to collecting cars like Ronnie Jackson. Hobbies are fun and enjoyable thing to have.

4— This student demonstrates a thorough understanding of the text and task by clearly stating that he/she agrees with the author and why (e.g., “intense amount of examples which include causes and effects”) and citing examples from the article (e.g., “starting in the third paragraph, Hood uses former leaders of Britain...”) that support, explain and connect with reasons for the agreement. Through text support and his/her own ideas, the student exhibits a level of comprehension that extends beyond the literal to the personal and evaluative and has no errors in text-based facts.