New York State Testing Program

Educator Guide to the 2021 Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests

engage^{ny}

A Note for the 2021 English Language Arts Tests

Writing
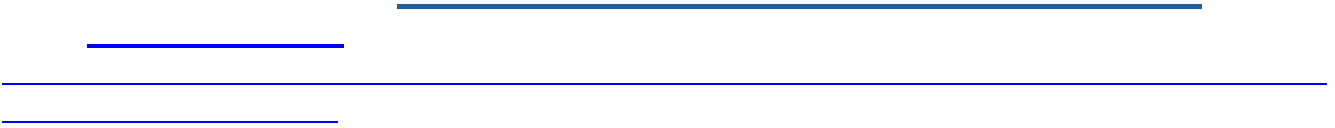
Grades 3–5

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to:

- learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating an understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events (Shift 2: Knowledge in the Disciplines; Shift 5: Writing

Assessing the Learning Standards for English Language Arts

The 2021 Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will focus entirely on the Learning Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy for each grade.

Reading, Writing, and Language

The 2021 Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will assess Reading, Writing, and Language Standards using multiple-choice, short-response, and extended-response questions. All questions will be based on close reading of informational and literary texts, including paired texts. All texts will be drawn from authentic, grade-level works that are worthwhile to read. The length of the texts on the 2021 Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests will typically be:

Length of Texts	
Grade 3	500–600 words
Grade 4	600–700 words
Grade 5	700–800 words
Grade 6	750–850 words
Grade 7	800–900 words
Grade 8	900–1000 words

Please see pages 8–10 for further information about authentic texts and text selection.

Reading and Language Standards will be assessed using multiple-choice questions. Short-response (2-point) questions will primarily assess reading, but will also require writing and command of language. Extended-response (4-point) questions will primarily assess Writing from Sources, whereby student responses will be rated on the degree to which they can communicate a clear and coherent analysis of one or two texts.

Speaking and Listening

While Speaking and Listening Standards will **NOT** be assessed on the State test, they remain two of the most important components of college and career readiness and critical building blocks in students' ability to read and write at grade level. Speaking and Listening Standards provide the dialogic building blocks that directly support students in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to *Read to Learn*.

In Grades 3–5, Speaking and Listening Standards (practiced daily in evidence-based conversations about text) create habits, models, and developmental supports for students so that they are prepared to write from sources, strategically and correctly citing evidence from text to make strong arguments.

In Grades 6–8, Speaking and Listening Standards (practiced daily in evidence-based conversations about text) add to the foundation built in the early grades' instruction by strengthening and evolving habits, models, and developmental supports for students so that they are prepared to write from sources.

Only

Additionally, the use of authentic passages also means that students may encounter passages drawn from works commonly taught at higher grades. Oftentimes, parts of larger, more complex works are perfectly suited for younger readers.

Text Selection

During the test development process, NYS educators approve all passages for use on the NYS Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests. Selecting high-quality, grade-appropriate texts requires both objective text complexity metrics and educator judgement. For the 2021 Grades 3-8 English Language Arts Tests, both qualitative and quantitative measures are used to determine the complexity of the texts. Based on research and the guidance of nationally-recognized literacy experts[1], the following ranges for quantitative measliacy ex1061 (

Test Design

The charts below illustrate the test designs for the 2021 Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests. This chart details the number of passages and the type(s) of questions

Extended-Response Questions

Extended-response questions are designed to assess *Writing from Sources*. They will focus primarily on Writing Standards. In Grade 3, extended-response questions will require comprehension and analysis of an individual text. In Grades 4–8, extended-response questions will require students to read and analyze paired texts. Paired texts are related by theme, genre, tone, time period, or other characteristics. Many extended-response questions will ask students to express a position and support it with text-based details. Extended-response questions allow students to demonstrate their ability to write a coherent essay using textual evidence to support their ideas.

Student responses will be evaluated based on Writing Standards and a student's command of evidence to defend their point.

Sample Responses

Appendix A of this document contains sample responses to previously administered ELA operational test questions that received full credit.

Samples responses can be referenced in the previously released editions of the English Language Arts Test Materials, which can be found on the EngageNY website (https://www.engageny.org/3-8).

Released Questions

Released Questions for the Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Tests are available on the EngageNY website (https://www.engageny.org/ccss-library).

Sample Response to a 2016 Grade 6 Short-Response Question

Note that the two-sentence response below from the 2016 Grade 6 released scoring materials provided on the EngageNY website (https://nysed-prod.engageny.org/resource/released-2016-3-8-ela-and-mathematics-state-test-questions) received full credit.
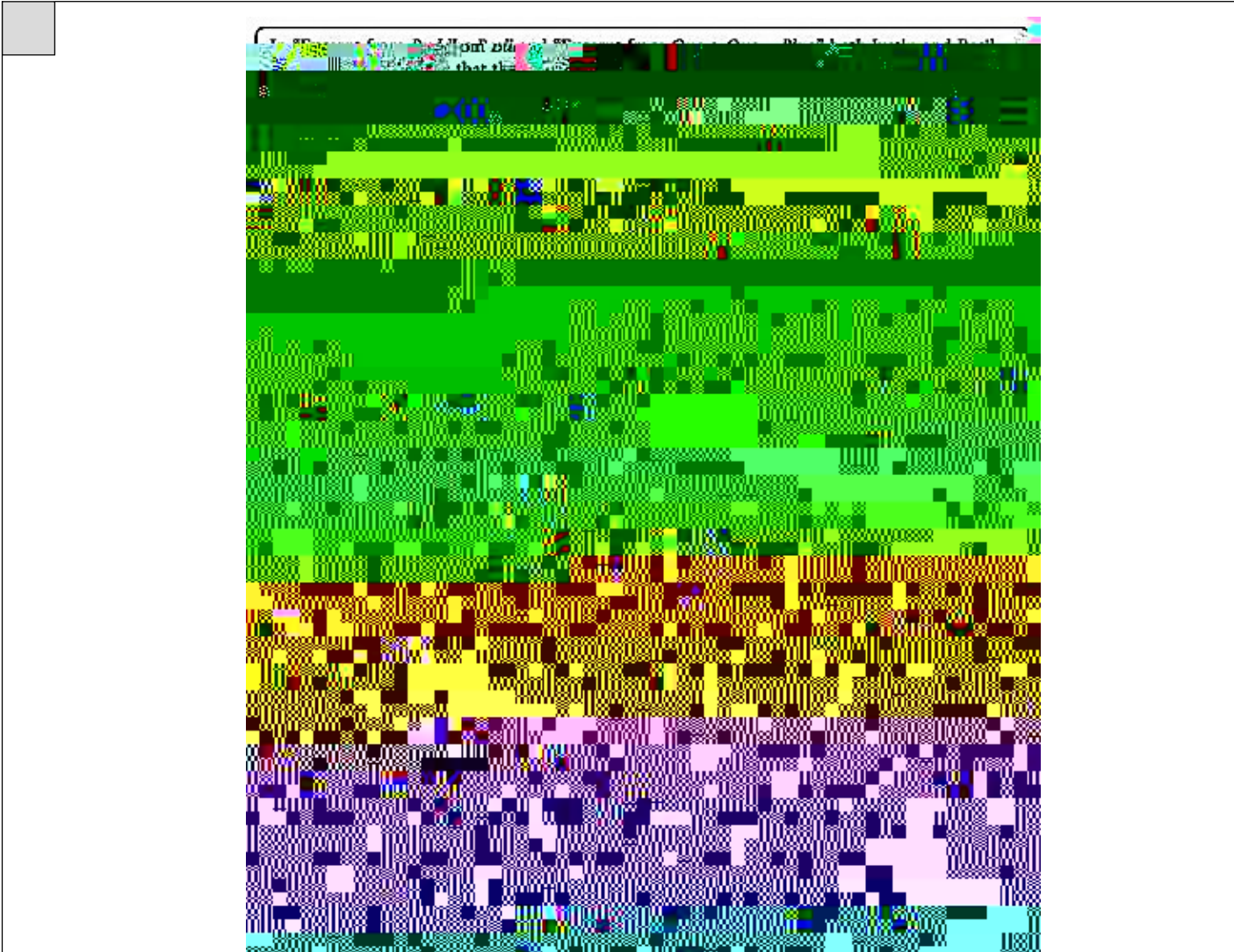
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How does Trin... ...the
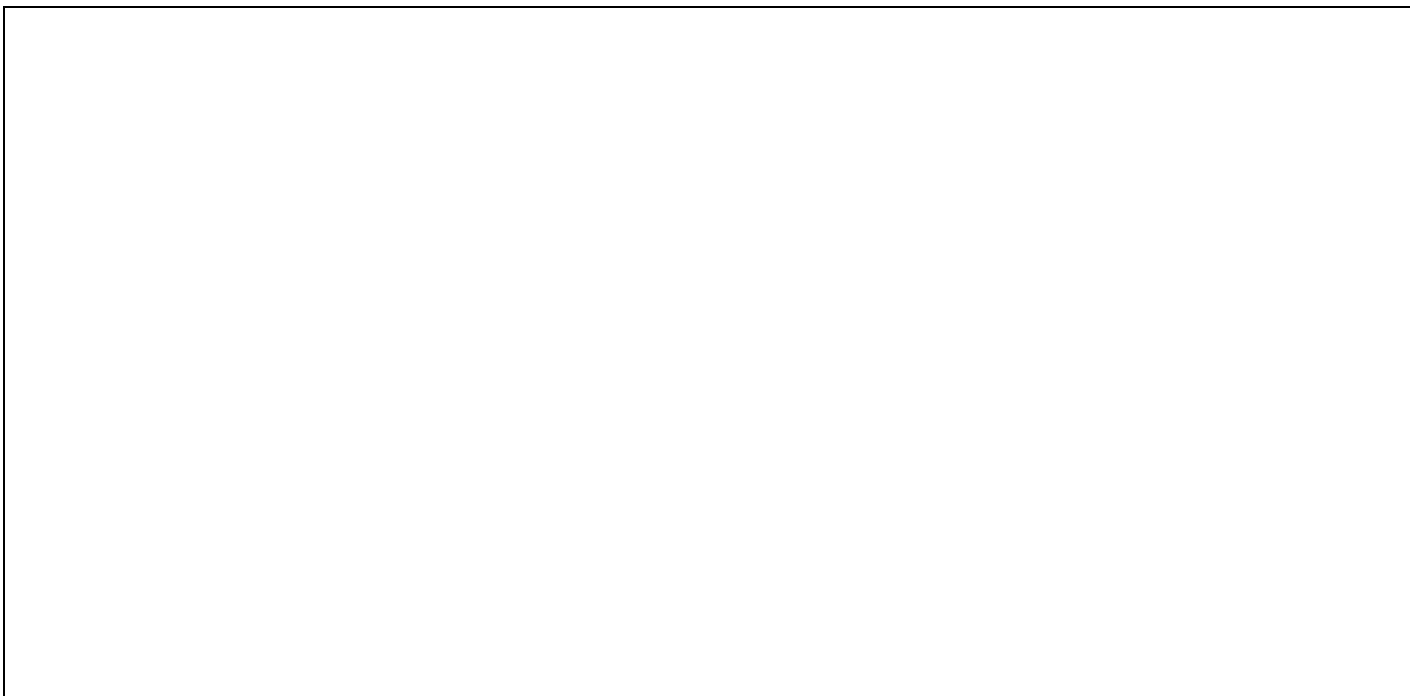
...cerpt from *Katerina's* Wish"? ...

...r response.

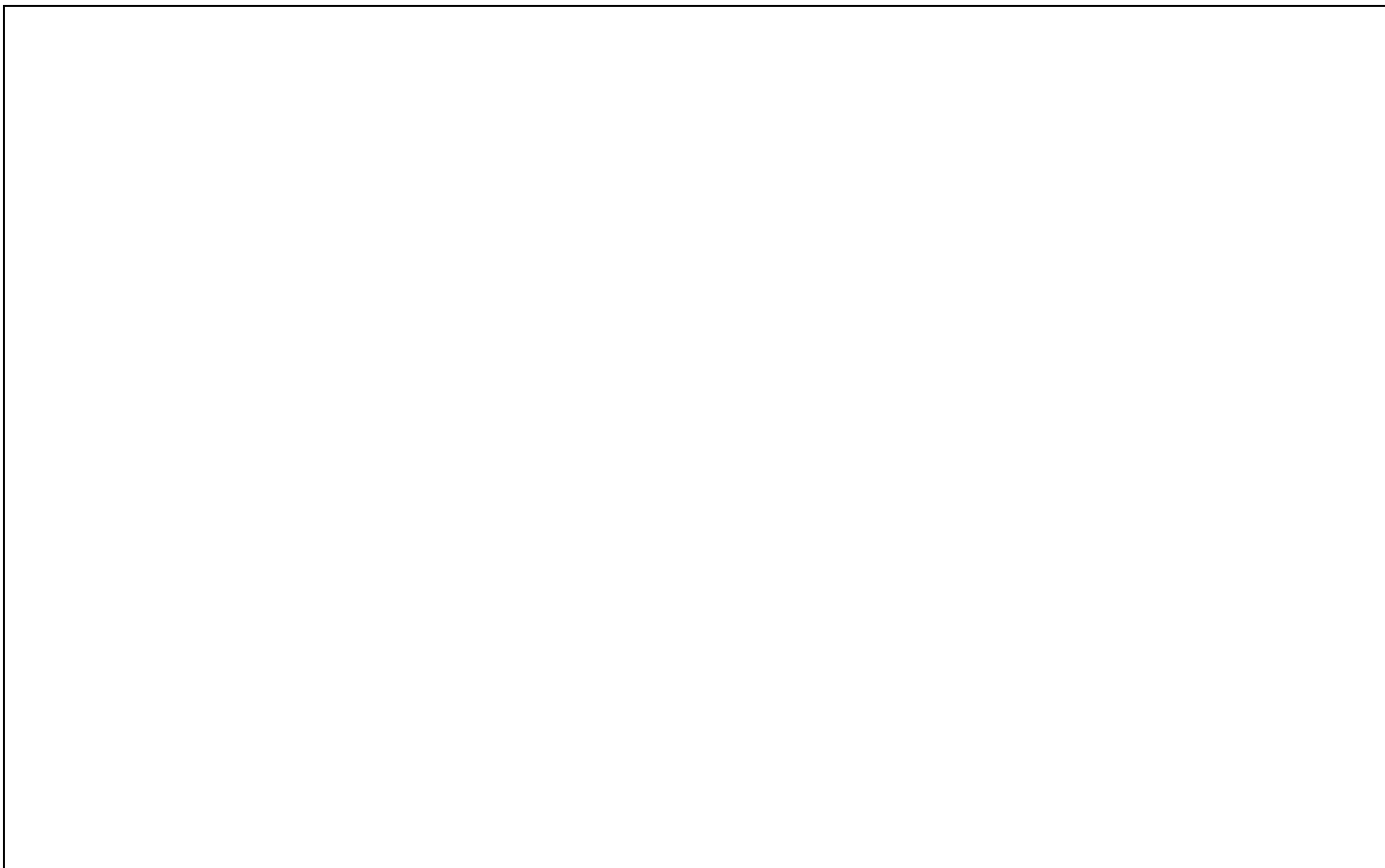...d changes from the beginning... Trina's...

...to the e...

Score Point 2 (out of 2 points)

This response provides a valid inference from the text to explain how Trina's mood changes from the beginning to the end of "Excerpt from *Katerina's Wish*" (*from a sad non-dreaming girl to a girl of happiness and wonder*). The response provides a sufficient number of concrete details from the text for support as required by the prompt (*"By 1901, neither the dream or the countr felt new"* and *To "Around the bend, I stopped in amazement"*). This response includes complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.

**Sample Response to a 2016 Grade 7 Extended-Response Question**

Note that the 2016 Grade 7 response below from the released scoring materials on the [EngageNY website](https://nysed-prod.engageny.org/resource/released-2016-3-8-ela-and-mathematics-state-test-questions) received full credit as a coherent essay which uses textual evidence.

Sample Response to a 2017 Grade 5 Extended-Response Question

Note that the 2017 Grade 5 response below from the released scoring materials on the EngageNY website (https://nysed-prod.engageny.org/resource/released-2017-3-8-ela-and-mathematics-state-test-questions) received full credit as a coherent essay which uses textual evidence.
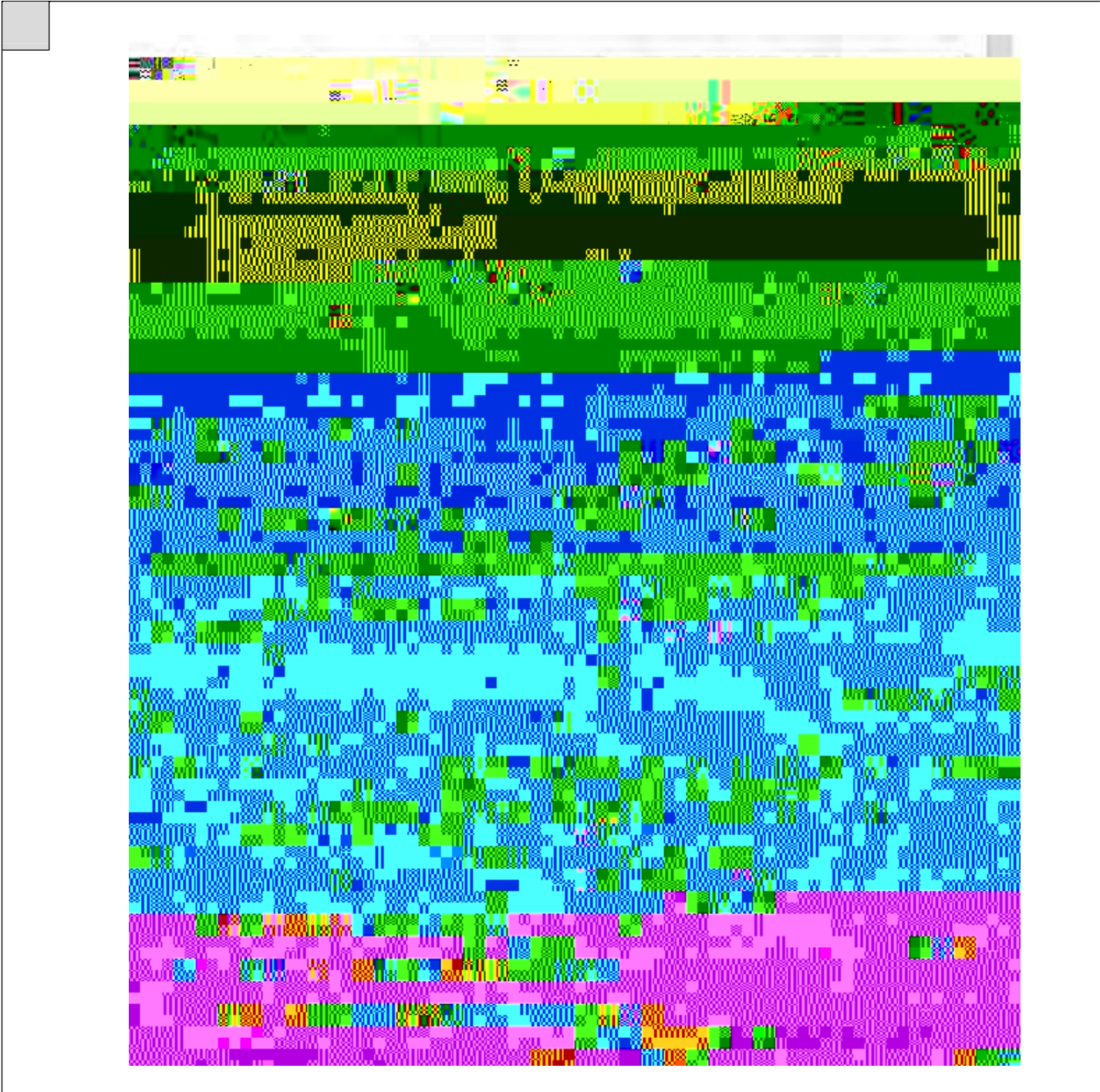
Sample response is continued on the following page.
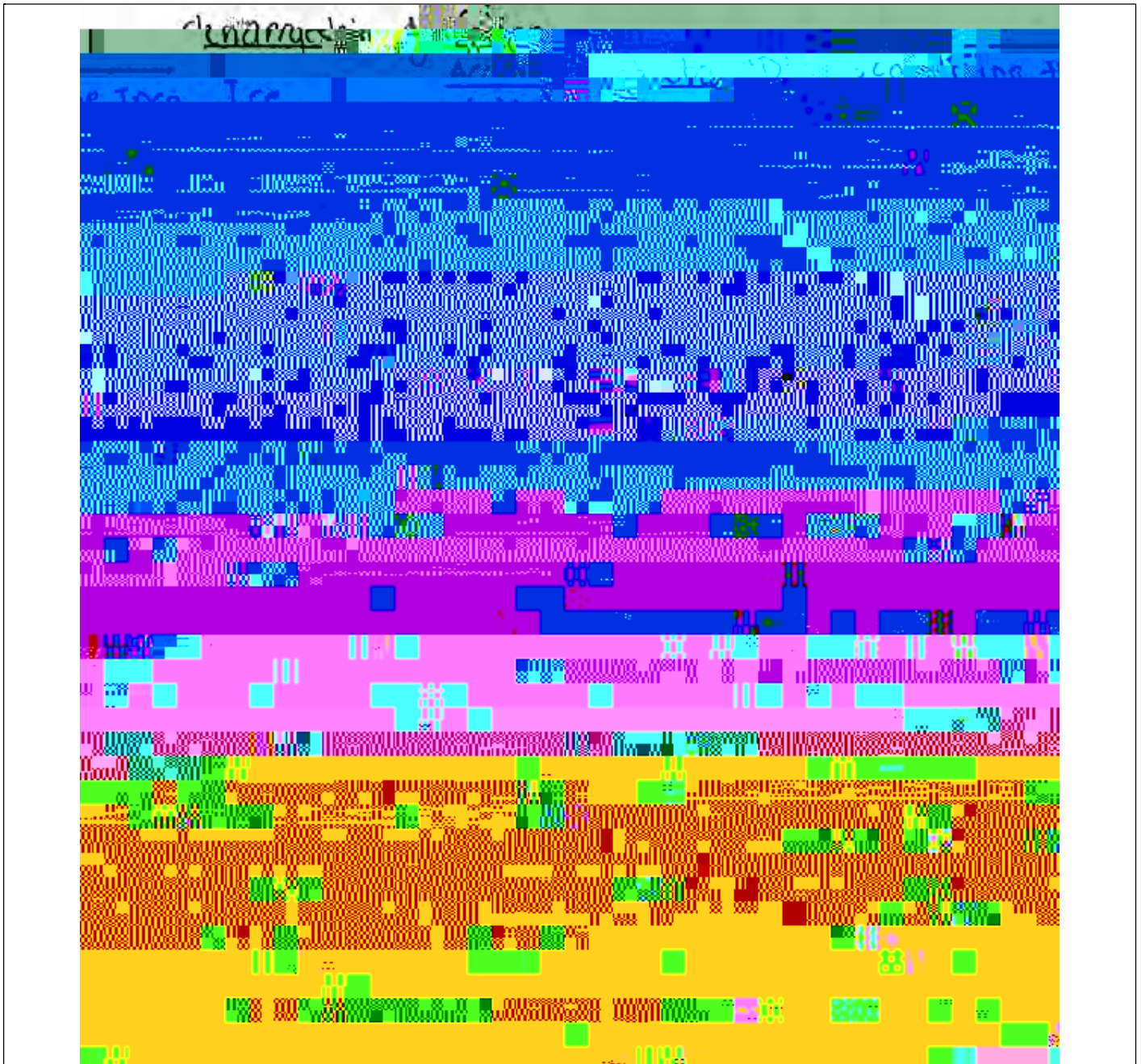
See scoring information for this response on the following page.