



Department  
of Education

# Ohio's State Tests

**ITEM RELEASE**

**SPRING 2017**

**GRADE 8  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

## **Table of Contents**

Questions 1 – 13: Content Summary and Answer Key .....	iii
Stimulus for Questions 1 – 6 .....	1
Question 1: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	5
Question 1: Sample Response .....	7
Question 2: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	9
Question 2: Sample Responses .....	13
Question 3: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	17
Question 3: Sample Response .....	19
Question 4: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	21
Question 4: Sample Responses .....	25
Question 5: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	31
Question 5: Sample Responses .....	35
Question 6: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	43
Question 6: Sample Responses .....	49
Stimulus for Questions 7 – 13 .....	67
Question 7: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	71
Question 7: Sample Responses .....	75
Question 8: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	81
Question 8: Sample Response .....	83
Question 9: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	85
Question 9: Sample Response .....	87
Question 10: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	89
Question 10: Sample Responses .....	91
Question 11: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	95
Question 11: Sample Response .....	97
Question 12: Question and Scoring Guidelines .....	99
Question 12: Sample Response .....	101

Question 13: Question and Scoring Guidelines.....	103
Question 13: Sample Response .....	105

**Grade 8 ELA**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**  
**Content Summary and Answer Key**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Item Type</b>	<b>Content Strand</b>	<b>Content Standard</b>	<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>Points</b>
1	Multiple Choice	Craft and Structure	Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.	B	1 point
2	Multi-Select Item	Key Ideas and Details	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).	B, E	1 point
3	Multiple Choice	Craft and Structure	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	C	1 point
4	Evidence-Based Select Response	Key Ideas and Details	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).	A; B	2 points
5	Hot Text Item	Craft and Structure	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	---	2 points

**Grade 8 ELA**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**  
**Content Summary and Answer Key**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Item Type</b>	<b>Content Strand</b>	<b>Content Standard</b>	<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>Points</b>
6	Extended Response	Argumentative Essay	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.	---	10 points
7	Evidence-Based Select Response	Key Ideas and Details	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.	B; A	2 points
8	Multiple Choice	Key Ideas and Details	Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).	A	1 point
9	Multiple Choice	Craft and Structure	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	C	1 point
10	Hot Text Item	Craft and Structure	Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.	---	1 point

**Grade 8 ELA**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**  
**Content Summary and Answer Key**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Item Type</b>	<b>Content Strand</b>	<b>Content Standard</b>	<b>Answer Key</b>	<b>Points</b>
11	Multiple Choice	Craft and Structure	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.	B	1 point
12	Multiple Choice	Craft and Structure	Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.	D	1 point
13	Multiple Choice	Vocabulary	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.	D	1 point

**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Stimulus for Questions 1 – 6**

# Stimulus for Questions 1 – 6

## Passage 1: Organic Food Starts to Prove Its Worth by Rachel Cernansky

- 1 At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle. In one, all the fruits and vegetables, from apples to zucchini, are labeled “organic.” Often these products cost more than ones that look the same but don’t have the organic label.
- 2 The big price tag can lead people to assume organic food is better than conventionally grown food. But, in the United States, the label simply means that the food has met guidelines set out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- 3 For instance, organic fruits, vegetables and other crops must not have been treated with synthetic fertilizers, certain pesticides or sewage sludge. Meat, eggs and milk must come from animals that have been raised according to specific health and welfare standards. Also, farmers may not treat these animals with antibiotics or growth hormones and must raise them on organic feed. Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content.
- 4 What benefits the organic label might signify, though, has not always been clear.
- 5 For years, scientists have been trying to tease out whether organic foods are themselves different than those grown conventionally. Research is beginning to show organic foods can be better—and not only for the people who eat it. Growing foods organically also can help the environment, new data show.
- ...
- 6 Many people buy organic food because they think it’s healthier. But whether it is remains an open question—even after years of research and debate. A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition. Its findings appeared in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.
- 7 More recently, a team of experts in England and elsewhere came to the opposite conclusion. They reviewed all of the research they could find on this question. The team chose 343 studies for its members to analyze. They published their results in
- the July 2014 *British Journal of Nutrition*.
- 8 Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found. Antioxidants are compounds in many fruits and vegetables. They are not listed on a product’s Nutrition Facts label. But there is evidence that people who consume foods rich in antioxidants have a lower risk of diseases . . . .
- 9 Charles Benbrook is an agricultural economist at Washington State University in Pullman. He also was an author of the *British Journal of Nutrition* study. And he is quick to point out that his team’s analysis does not mean all organic foods are more nutritious. “Every study reports dozens of results involving different nutrients. For some nutrients, organic might be higher. For other nutrients, conventional might be higher. And for a lot, there are no [real] differences,” Benbrook says.
- 10 The study did not identify specific fruits or vegetables where the organic or the conventional variety was more nutritious. However, farming practices can have the biggest impact on nutritionally dense foods, Benbrook notes. “There are only modest differences in the nutrient profile of organic versus conventional cucumbers or lettuce,” he says. But, “there are big differences between conventional and organic berries, apples, tomatoes and other nutrient-dense produce.”
- 11 His group’s study also found that conventionally grown farm crops are four times more likely than organic crops to contain pesticide residues. For many people, that’s enough reason to buy organic.

Excerpt from “Organic Food Starts to Prove Its Worth” by Rachel Cernansky, from *Science News for Students*. Copyright © 2015 by Society for Science & the Public. Reprinted by permission of Society for Science & the Public via Copyright Clearance Center.



**Passage 2: Is organic food  
worth the higher price?  
Many experts say no**  
by David Lazarus

- 12 Kristin DiMarco . . . knew for sure what she *wouldn't* be buying: anything organic.
- 13 "I just feel like I've already built up an immunity to anything that might be in my food," the 26-year-old told me.
- 14 Besides, she said, why would she want to pay a markup that can run double or triple the cost of conventional food?
- 15 "I don't think there's a big-enough difference in quality to justify those prices," DiMarco said.
- 16 She's not alone. The market research firm Mintel released a study last week showing that younger consumers—the fickle Gen X and millennial crowds—are decidedly cynical about the high prices charged for organic goods.
- 17 Only about 40% of Gen Xers believe that organic is organic, Mintel found. And about half of all consumers think labeling something organic is just an excuse to charge more.
- 18 "Consumers are increasingly hard-pressed to justify the added expense," said Billy Roberts, Mintel's senior food and drink analyst. "As such, sales have hit something of a plateau, where they likely will remain until consumers have a clear reason to turn to organics."
- 19 The marketing of organic food should rightly make consumers wary. Is it really better for you? Is it that different from conventional foods?
- 20 According to Consumer Reports, organic foods and beverages run an average 47% more in price than conventional alternatives. In some cases, the markup can be more than 300%. That's a hefty difference.
- 21 What you're paying for, presumably, is a more healthful diet. That means produce that hasn't been drenched in pesticides, chicken and beef that hasn't been pumped full of antibiotics, milk with even more nutritional value.
- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said. "The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it's still at safe levels."
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they're taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no."

Excerpt from "Is organic food worth the higher price? Many experts say no" by David Lazarus, from *the Los Angeles Times*. Copyright © 2015 by Tribune Company. Reprinted by permission of Tribune Company via Copyright Clearance Center.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 1**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 1

What is the connection between paragraphs 6 and 7 in Passage 1?

- Ⓐ Paragraph 6 discusses the results of a scientific study, while paragraph 7 discusses the results of an informal survey of consumers.
- Ⓑ Paragraph 6 presents support for an argument, while paragraph 7 provides an opposing viewpoint to the argument.
- Ⓒ Paragraph 6 describes the cause of the debate, while paragraph 7 provides concrete proof for the solution.
- Ⓓ Paragraph 6 presents the author's viewpoint, while paragraph 7 discusses the public's viewpoint.

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 50.34%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 49.66%

## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. Paragraphs 6 and 7 discuss the conflicting findings of two scientific studies, not the results of a scientific study and the results of an informal survey of consumers.

Rationale for Option B: **Key** – In paragraph 6 the author provides support for the idea that organic food is not any healthier than conventional food, while in paragraph 7 she provides support that refutes this idea.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. While paragraph 6 does summarize the point of debate and give one side, paragraph 7 gives an alternate view and not definitive proof.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. While one can assume that the author's viewpoint is that organic foods are nutritionally better than organic based on the full context of the article, that is not the main crux of paragraph 6, and paragraph 7 is not representative of the public's viewpoint, but is a discussion of support for an alternative point of view.

## Sample Response: 1 point

What is the connection between paragraphs 6 and 7 in Passage 1?

- ☐ Ⓐ Paragraph 6 discusses the results of a scientific study, while paragraph 7 discusses the results of an informal survey of consumers.
- ☒ Ⓑ Paragraph 6 presents support for an argument, while paragraph 7 provides an opposing viewpoint to the argument.
- ☐ Ⓒ Paragraph 6 describes the cause of the debate, while paragraph 7 provides concrete proof for the solution.
- ☐ Ⓓ Paragraph 6 presents the author's viewpoint, while paragraph 7 discusses the public's viewpoint.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 2**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 2

Select **two** ways the author of Passage 1 makes a distinction between organic and conventional food.

- ☐ by describing what aisles in a generic supermarket look like
- ☐ by referring to the amount and type of nutrients contained in products
- ☐ by stating the information provided on a product's Nutrition Facts label
- ☐ by providing information from a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*
- ☐ by listing the requirements for organic food set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Key Ideas and Details

**Content Standard:** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 73.68%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 26.32%



## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for First Option: This is incorrect. Although the author mentions that organic and conventional produce are in separate displays, this does not represent an important distinction.

Rationale for Second Option: **Key** – This is an important difference in the author's argument.

Rationale for Third Option: This is incorrect. The passage merely references this label—it does not contain distinguishing information.

Rationale for Fourth Option: This is incorrect. This study found no significant difference between the types of produce.

Rationale for Fifth Option: **Key** – These requirements are what differentiate organic from conventional produce by statute.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 2**

**Sample Responses**

### Sample Response: 1 point

Select **two** ways the author of Passage 1 makes a distinction between organic and conventional food.

- ☐ by describing what aisles in a generic supermarket look like
- ☒ by referring to the amount and type of nutrients contained in products
- ☐ by stating the information provided on a product's Nutrition Facts label
- ☐ by providing information from a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*
- ☒ by listing the requirements for organic food set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### Notes on Scoring

This response earns full credit (1 point) because the two correct choices are selected.

### Sample Response: 0 points

Select **two** ways the author of Passage 1 makes a distinction between organic and conventional food.

- ☐ by describing what aisles in a generic supermarket look like
- ☒ by referring to the amount and type of nutrients contained in products
- ☒ by stating the information provided on a product's Nutrition Facts label
- ☐ by providing information from a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*
- ☐ by listing the requirements for organic food set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because one of the selected choices is incorrect. In order to receive full credit for this item, both selections must be correct.

### Sample Response: 0 points

Select **two** ways the author of Passage 1 makes a distinction between organic and conventional food.

- ☒ by describing what aisles in a generic supermarket look like
- ☐ by referring to the amount and type of nutrients contained in products
- ☐ by stating the information provided on a product's Nutrition Facts label
- ☐ by providing information from a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*
- ☒ by listing the requirements for organic food set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because one of the selected choices is incorrect. In order to receive full credit for this item, both selections must be correct.

**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 3**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

### Question 3

Read this sentence from paragraph 16 of Passage 2.

“The market research firm Mintel released a study last week showing that younger consumers—the fickle Gen X and millennial crowds—are decidedly cynical about the high prices charged for organic goods.”

Which word could replace the word cynical as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ clear
- Ⓑ resigned
- Ⓒ suspicious
- Ⓓ vague

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 36.65%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 63.35%



## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. While the way they feel is clear, that feeling is that they are suspicious about the high prices charged for organic foods.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. The passage indicates that younger consumers are suspicious and not satisfied with the higher prices, which supports the definition of cynical rather than resigned. The passage shows they do not simply accept the higher prices.

Rationale for Option C: **Key** – The generations mentioned are distrustful of the accuracy of the labeling and the justification for the higher prices of organic vs. conventional foods, making them suspicious of the labels and high prices.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. The generations discussed are not vague about their feelings; they are clear about the way that they feel, and that feeling is that they are suspicious about the high prices charged for organic foods.

## Sample Response: 1 point

Read this sentence from paragraph 16 of Passage 2.

“The market research firm Mintel released a study last week showing that younger consumers—the fickle Gen X and millennial crowds—are decidedly cynical about the high prices charged for organic goods.”

Which word could replace the word cynical as it is used in the sentence?

- ☐ (A) clear
- ☐ (B) resigned
- ☒ (C) suspicious
- ☐ (D) vague



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 4**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 4

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the connection between consumer opinion and sales of organic foods in Passage 2?

- Ⓐ The high price of organic foods is what keeps consumers from purchasing them.
- Ⓑ Consumers believe that organic foods are the best way to add nutrition to their diets.
- Ⓒ The health benefits of organic foods are directly related to what consumers purchase.
- Ⓓ Consumers between 20 and 30 years of age are the most likely to buy organic foods.

### Part B

Which paragraph in Passage 2 provides support for this connection?

- Ⓐ paragraph 13
- Ⓑ paragraph 18
- Ⓒ paragraph 19
- Ⓓ paragraph 23

**Points Possible:** 2

**Content Strand:** Key Ideas and Details

**Content Standard:** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 43.10%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 12.16%

Percent 2 Points Earned: 44.73%

# Scoring Guidelines

## Part A

Rationale for Option A: **Key** – Based on the information in Passage 2, consumers don't believe that organic foods are worth the extra cost and therefore don't purchase them.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. While Passage 1 makes claims about the increased nutritional value, in paragraphs 13 and 23 of Passage 2 it's made clear that the nutritional value is nominal or not important.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. While this may seem like a logical choice based on paragraph 21, paragraphs 13 and 23 contradict this.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. This is a misinterpretation of paragraph 17. These are the consumers least likely to buy organic foods.

## Part B

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. This paragraph supports the idea that nutrition or health benefits are factors in purchasing, but does not support the key in Part A.

Rationale for Option B: **Key** – This paragraph discusses the reluctance of consumers to pay more for organic. This paragraph would also be attractive to those who misread the information and selected option D in Part A.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. This paragraph describes the questions that still surround what makes organic food actually organic, but it does not address the cost issue raised in Part A.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. This paragraph supports the idea that nutrition or health benefits are factors in purchasing, but does not support the key in Part A.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 4**

**Sample Responses**

## Sample Response: 2 points

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the connection between consumer opinion and sales of organic foods in Passage 2?

- ☒ The high price of organic foods is what keeps consumers from purchasing them.
- ☐ Consumers believe that organic foods are the best way to add nutrition to their diets.
- ☐ The health benefits of organic foods are directly related to what consumers purchase.
- ☐ Consumers between 20 and 30 years of age are the most likely to buy organic foods.

### Part B

Which paragraph in Passage 2 provides support for this connection?

- ☐ paragraph 13
- ☒ paragraph 18
- ☐ paragraph 19
- ☐ paragraph 23

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns full credit (2 points) because it identifies the correct response in both Part A and Part B.



## Sample Response: 1 point

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the connection between consumer opinion and sales of organic foods in Passage 2?

- ☒ The high price of organic foods is what keeps consumers from purchasing them.
- ☐ Consumers believe that organic foods are the best way to add nutrition to their diets.
- ☐ The health benefits of organic foods are directly related to what consumers purchase.
- ☐ Consumers between 20 and 30 years of age are the most likely to buy organic foods.

### Part B

Which paragraph in Passage 2 provides support for this connection?

- ☐ paragraph 13
- ☐ paragraph 18
- ☒ paragraph 19
- ☐ paragraph 23

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns partial credit (1 point). Part A has the correct answer; however, the response selected for Part B is incorrect and does not earn a point. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct.

## Sample Response: 1 point

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the connection between consumer opinion and sales of organic foods in Passage 2?

- ☒ The high price of organic foods is what keeps consumers from purchasing them.
- ☐ Consumers believe that organic foods are the best way to add nutrition to their diets.
- ☐ The health benefits of organic foods are directly related to what consumers purchase.
- ☐ Consumers between 20 and 30 years of age are the most likely to buy organic foods.

### Part B

Which paragraph in Passage 2 provides support for this connection?

- ☒ paragraph 13
- ☐ paragraph 18
- ☐ paragraph 19
- ☐ paragraph 23

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns partial credit (1 point). Part A has the correct answer; however, the response selected for Part B is incorrect and does not earn a point. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct.

## Sample Response: 0 points

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the connection between consumer opinion and sales of organic foods in Passage 2?

- ☐ Ⓐ The high price of organic foods is what keeps consumers from purchasing them.
- ☐ Ⓑ Consumers believe that organic foods are the best way to add nutrition to their diets.
- ☒ Ⓒ The health benefits of organic foods are directly related to what consumers purchase.
- ☐ Ⓓ Consumers between 20 and 30 years of age are the most likely to buy organic foods.

### Part B

Which paragraph in Passage 2 provides support for this connection?

- ☐ Ⓐ paragraph 13
- ☒ Ⓑ paragraph 18
- ☐ Ⓒ paragraph 19
- ☐ Ⓓ paragraph 23

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points). Part B offers the correct answer; however, the answer selected in Part A is incorrect. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct. In order to earn partial credit for this item, Part A must be correct.

## Sample Response: 0 points

The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

What is the connection between consumer opinion and sales of organic foods in Passage 2?

- ☐ Ⓐ The high price of organic foods is what keeps consumers from purchasing them.
- ☒ Ⓑ Consumers believe that organic foods are the best way to add nutrition to their diets.
- ☐ Ⓒ The health benefits of organic foods are directly related to what consumers purchase.
- ☐ Ⓓ Consumers between 20 and 30 years of age are the most likely to buy organic foods.

### Part B

Which paragraph in Passage 2 provides support for this connection?

- ☐ Ⓐ paragraph 13
- ☐ Ⓑ paragraph 18
- ☐ Ⓒ paragraph 19
- ☒ Ⓓ paragraph 23

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because the answers selected for both Part A and Part B are incorrect.

**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 5**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 5

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### **Part A**

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) “At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle.” (paragraph 1)
- B) “Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content.” (paragraph 3)
- C) “A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition.” (paragraph 6)
- D) “Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found.” (paragraph 8)

### **Part B**

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 “Buying organic does not necessarily mean there’s more health and nutrition benefits,” she said. “The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it’s still at safe levels.”
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they’re taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 “Is it actually better for you?” she said. “I’d go with no.”

**Points Possible:** 2

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 34.28%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 15.13%

Percent 2 Points Earned: 50.59%

## Scoring Guidelines

For this item, a full-credit response includes:

- C) "A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." (paragraph 6)  
AND
- "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said.  
OR
- "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no."





**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 5**

**Sample Responses**

## Sample Response: 2 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) "At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle." (paragraph 1)
- B) "Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content." (paragraph 3)
- C) "A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." (paragraph 6)
- D) "Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found." (paragraph 8)

### Part B

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said. "The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it's still at safe levels."
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they're taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no."

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns full credit (2 points) because it identifies the correct response in both Part A and Part B.

## Sample Response: 2 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### **Part A**

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) "At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle." (paragraph 1)
- B) "Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content." (paragraph 3)
- C) "A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." (paragraph 6)
- D) "Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found." (paragraph 8)

### **Part B**

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said. "The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it's still at safe levels."
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they're taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no."

### **Notes on Scoring**

This response earns full credit (2 points) because it identifies the correct response in both Part A and Part B.

## Sample Response: 1 point

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### **Part A**

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) "At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle." (paragraph 1)
- B) "Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content." (paragraph 3)
- C) "A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." (paragraph 6)
- D) "Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found." (paragraph 8)

### **Part B**

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said. "The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it's still at safe levels."
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they're taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no."

### **Notes on Scoring**

This response earns partial credit (1 point). Part A has the correct answer; however, the response for Part B is incorrect and does not earn a point. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct.

## Sample Response: 1 point

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) “At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle.” (paragraph 1)
- B) “Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content.” (paragraph 3)
- C) “A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition.” (paragraph 6)
- D) “Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found.” (paragraph 8)

### Part B

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 “Buying organic does not necessarily mean there’s more health and nutrition benefits,” she said. “The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it’s still at safe levels.”
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they’re taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 “Is it actually better for you?” she said. “I’d go with no.”

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns partial credit (1 point). Part A has the correct answer; however, the response for Part B is incorrect and does not earn a point. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct.

## Sample Response: 0 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) “At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle.” (paragraph 1)
- B) “Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content.” (paragraph 3)
- C) “A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition.” (paragraph 6)
- D) “Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found.” (paragraph 8)

### Part B

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 “Buying organic does not necessarily mean there’s more health and nutrition benefits,” she said. “The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it’s still at safe levels.”
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they’re taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 “Is it actually better for you?” she said. “I’d go with no.”

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because the answers selected for both Part A and Part B are incorrect.

## Sample Response: 0 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Select one sentence from Passage 1 that the author of Passage 2 would agree with.

- A) "At the supermarket, there are usually two sections in the produce aisle." (paragraph 1)
- B) "Products with multiple ingredients must contain 95 percent or more organic content." (paragraph 3)
- C) "A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." (paragraph 6)
- D) "Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, they found." (paragraph 8)

### Part B

Select an excerpt from Passage 2 that supports the answer in Part A.

- 22 Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State, said common sense suggests that consuming foods with fewer pesticides will be better for you—but not enough to justify paying significantly more.
- 23 "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said. "The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it's still at safe levels."
- 24 Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they're taking steps to improve themselves and the environment.
- 25 "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no."

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because the answers selected for both Part A and Part B are incorrect.





**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 6**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 6

Are organic foods worthwhile?

Write a multi-paragraph response in which you make and support a claim about whether or not organic foods are worthwhile. Your response must be based on ideas and information that can be found in the passages.

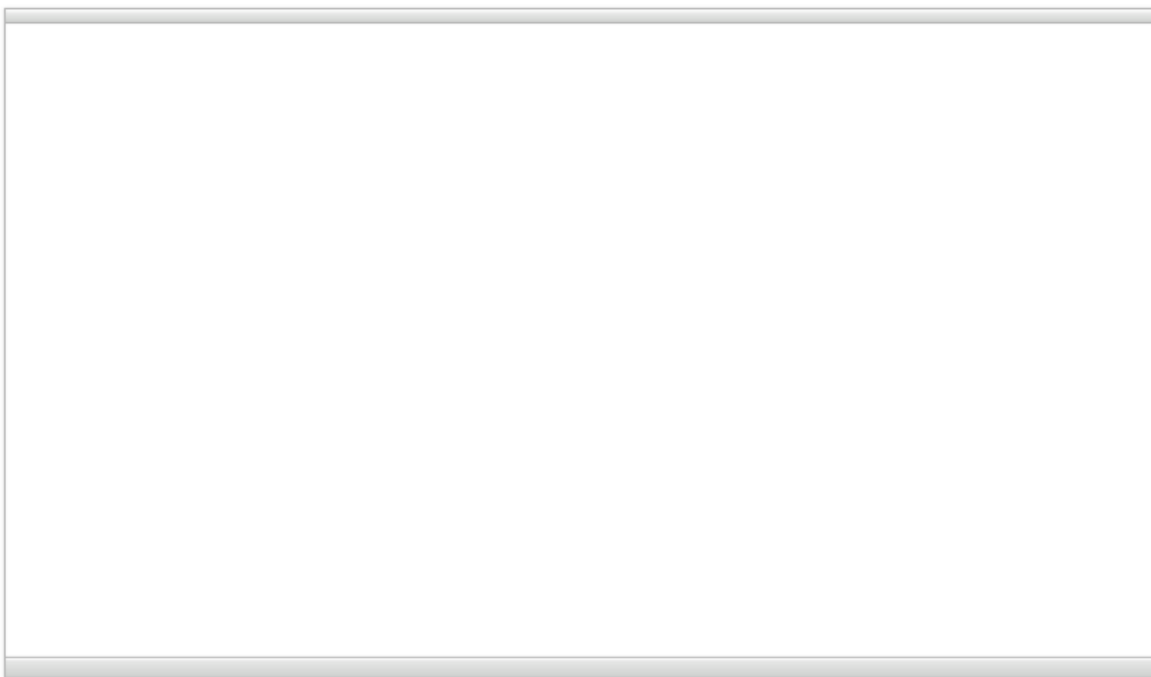
Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- review the passages;
- plan your response;
- write your response; and
- revise and edit your response.

Be sure to:

- include a claim;
- address counterclaims;
- use evidence from multiple passages; and
- avoid overly relying on one passage.

Write your multi-paragraph response in the space provided.



**Points Possible:** 10

**Content Strand:** Argumentative Essay

**Content Standard:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Score Points Earned by Dimension			
Score Point(s) Earned	Purpose, Focus, and Organization	Evidence and Elaboration	Conventions of Standard English
4	1.63%	0.90%	N/A
3	14.11%	9.50%	N/A
2	42.16%	40.46%	76.12%
1	38.62%	35.43%	15.62%
0	3.49%	13.72%	8.26%

Total Score Points Earned										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2.84%	4.06%	5.72%	10.44%	16.24%	16.48%	27.5%	7.39%	7.50%	1.13%	0.69%

# Scoring Guidelines

Ohio's State Test Argumentation Writing Rubric, Grades 6-12 (Score points within each domain include most of the characteristics below.)			
Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-points)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-points)	Conventions of Standard English (Begins at score point 2)
4	<p>The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and effective organizational structure creating coherence and completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A strongly maintained claim with little or no loosely related material</li> <li>Clearly addressed alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>Skillful use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>Logical progression of ideas from beginning to end with a satisfying introduction and conclusion</li> <li>Appropriate style and tone established and maintained</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides thorough, convincing, and credible support, citing evidence for the writer's claim that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smoothly integrated, thorough, and relevant evidence, including precise references to sources</li> <li>Effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques to support the claim, demonstrating an understanding of the topic and text</li> <li>Clear and effective expression of ideas, using precise language</li> <li>Academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>Varied sentence structure, demonstrating language facility</li> </ul>	
3	<p>The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience, and task; and it has a clear claim and evident organizational structure with a sense of completeness. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A maintained claim, though some loosely related material may be present</li> <li>Alternate or opposing claims included but may not be completely addressed*</li> <li>Adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas</li> <li>Adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end with a sufficient introduction and conclusion</li> <li>Appropriate style and tone established</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides adequate support, citing evidence for the writer's claim that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response includes most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally integrated and relevant evidence from sources, though references may be general or imprecise</li> <li>Adequate use of some elaborative techniques</li> <li>Adequate expression of ideas, employing a mix of precise and general language</li> <li>Domain-specific vocabulary generally appropriate for the audience and purpose</li> <li>Some variation in sentence structure</li> </ul>	

Score	Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-points)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-points)	Conventions of Standard English (2-points)
2	<p>The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience, and task but may include loosely related or extraneous material; and it may have a claim with an inconsistent organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A focused claim but insufficiently sustained or unclear</li> <li>Insufficiently addressed alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>Inconsistent use of transitional strategies with little variety</li> <li>Uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end with an inadequate introduction or conclusion</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the writer's claim that includes partial use of sources, facts, and details. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weakly integrated evidence from sources; erratic or irrelevant references or citations</li> <li>Repetitive or ineffective use of elaborative techniques</li> <li>Imprecise or simplistic expression of ideas</li> <li>Some use of inappropriate domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>Most sentences limited to simple constructions</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some minor errors in usage but no patterns of errors</li> <li>Adequate use of punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</li> </ul>
1	<p>The response is related to the topic but may demonstrate little awareness of the purpose, audience, and task; may have an unclear claim and a limited organizational structure. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A confusing, or ambiguous claim</li> <li>Confusing alternate or opposing claims*</li> <li>Few transitional strategies</li> <li>Frequent extraneous ideas that impede understanding</li> <li>Too brief to demonstrate knowledge of focus or organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimal, erroneous, or irrelevant evidence or citations from the source material</li> <li>Expression of ideas that is vague, unclear, or confusing</li> <li>Limited and often inappropriate language or domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>Sentences limited to simple constructions</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of basic conventions. The response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Various errors in usage</li> <li>Inconsistent use of correct punctuation, capitalization, sentence formation, and spelling</li> </ul>
0	<p>This response is minimally related to the topic and demonstrates no awareness of the purpose, audience and task; and has no focus or organizational structure. The response may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be blank or show a written refusal to answer</li> <li>Be presented in a language other than English</li> <li>Include only a restatement of the stem</li> <li>Consist of random keystroke characters</li> <li>Include only bulleted points</li> <li>Include no transitional strategies</li> <li>Have no evidence of a claim/counterclaim</li> </ul>	<p>The response provides no evidence related to the argument, claim or the passages. It may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only direct copy of part of the reading selection</li> <li>No relevant domain-specific vocabulary</li> <li>No evidence or citations from the source material(s)</li> </ul>	<p>The response demonstrates a lack of command of conventions, with frequent and severe errors often obscuring meaning.</p>



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 6**

**Sample Responses**

## Sample Response: 10 points

The debate between organic versus conventional food has been going on for decades. Some say organic foods are the best way to help themselves and the environment. Others say, organic foods are not worthwhile to purchase. Organic foods are not worthwhile, as they are overpriced and lack additional nutrients.

Organic foods are not very different from conventional ones in nutritional value. They have a very minute increase in nutrients, if not any at all. This is shown when the author says, "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits" (Passage 2, 23). This shows that having an organic label does not prove the product has a higher nutritional value. Multiple studies have shown very little support to show that purchasing organic foods benefits your diet. This is shown when the article states, "For a lot, there are no [real] differences" (Passage 1, 9). While people can argue that organic is worthwhile, they won't have science to back them up.

Organic foods are also greatly more expensive. For many, the cost is not worth the gain. This is shown when Lazarus states, "Gen X and millennial crows-- are decidedly cynical about the high prices charged for organic foods" (Passage 2, 16). Younger generations have realized that the markup of organic products is unjust. Organic products can be marked up by several hundred percent, just to have the label of "organic." As the article states, "Organic foods and beverages run an average 47% more in price than conventional alternatives. In some cases, the markup can be more than 300%" (Passage 2, 20). Organic produce is much too expensive to be worthwhile.

Some may say that organic produce contains more antioxidants, therefore making the cost worthwhile. However, scientists have proven that these differences are almost insignificant in the grand scheme of things. This is shown when Lazarus states, "Is it actually better for you?" she said. "I'd go with no" (Passage 2, 25). The small change in antioxidant level does not make a very large difference in one's life. Organic produce is not worthwhile.

Organic foods are not worth the extra money. These foods have very little difference in nutrition to conventional products. They can also be marked up three times their conventional counterparts, just to have the label of organic. Because of this, buying organic products is giving money to a corrupt system.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
4	4	2



### **Notes on Scoring**

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience and task with effective organizational structure, earning the maximum 4 points in the assigned category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response also earns the maximum 4 points for providing thorough, convincing and credible support while citing evidence for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns the maximum 2 points for demonstrating an adequate command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 9 points

Are organic foods worth it or not? Some people believe organic foods are worthwhile, while others disagree. People who argue that organic foods are worthwhile believe that they are healthier, or more nutritious. Others say that buying organic foods is a waste of money. They believe that the only difference between organic foods and conventionally grown foods is the cost. I believe that organic foods are not worthwhile. I believe this because the costs of organic foods is too expensive, and because there is no proof stating that organic foods are definitely, all the way around better for you than conventionally grown foods.

Organic foods cost a lot more than conventionally grown foods. According to David Lazarus, author of *Is Organic Food Worth the Higher Price? Many Experts Say No*, "According to Consumer Reports, organic foods and beverages run an average 47% more in price than conventional alternatives." To me, this means that you pay a lot more for something that really has not proven to be that much more beneficial. The benefits do not outway the cost. Therefore, I believe organic foods are not worthwhile, because of the cost.

Organic foods are not always that much of a healthier option than conventionally grown foods. According to some studies, organically grown vegetables are not that much different than conventionally grown vegetables. According to Rachel Cernansky, author of *Organic Food Starts to Prove Its Worth*, "A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." Although organic foods may have better nutritional value in some areas, conventionally grown foods may have better values in others. In conclusion, I believe this means that organic foods really are not that much better than conventionally grown foods.

On the other side of this debate, some may argue that organic foods are worthwhile. They may argue that conventionally grown farm products are four times more likely to contain pesticide residues. I believe that if the amount of pesticide residue was harmful, those products would not be allowed to be on our store shelves. Others may debate the fact that you pay for a healthier diet when you buy organics. I disagree with that because, again, in some areas organic foods are more nutritious, while in others conventionally grown foods are better. There is no proof that organic foods are without a doubt more healthy than conventionally grown foods. Therefore, organic foods are not worthwhile.

In conclusion, I believe organic foods are not worthwhile. They are 47% more expensive than conventionally grown foods. Also, there is no proof that organic foods are definitely better for you than conventionally grown foods. In every area organic foods nutritional value does not beat conventionally grown foods. Therefore, I believe that organic foods are not worthwhile.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
4	3	2

### **Notes on Scoring**

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is fully sustained and consistently focused within the purpose, audience and task with effective organizational structure, earning the maximum 4 points in the assigned category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response earns 3 out of 4 possible points in the category of evidence and elaboration for providing adequate support when citing evidence for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns the maximum 2 points allowed for demonstrating an adequate command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 9 points

According to Consumer Reports, "organic foods and beverages run an average 47% more in price than conventional alternatives," (Lazarus). Due to only minor differences in conventional and organic foods, organic foods are not worth the higher price. While some may say that organic foods are healthier, it actually remains an open question after years of debate. Organic foods are not worth the price because buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits, according to Lisa Herzig, an associate professor of nutrition at Fresno State. Overall, the price of organic foods can not be justified with current research.

Organic foods are not worth the price because not all organic foods are healthier. "Buying organic does not necessarily mean there's more health and nutrition benefits," she said," (Lazarus). This quote demonstrates an associate professor of nutrition's point of view on the matter, and she does not think that buying organic is always better. Furthermore, she claimed that "The pesticide content will be higher with conventional produce, but it's still at safe levels," (Lazarus). Overall, organic does not always mean better, according to experts.

Due to only minor nutritional differences between organic and conventional foods, organic foods are not worth the extra price. DiMarco doesn't think "there's a big-enough difference in quality to justify those prices," (Lazarus). DiMarco is right. Studies have shown a few major differences in a few foods, but for the most part they're all about the same in nutritional value. Furthermore, the market research firm Mintel released a study last week showing that "younger consumers-the fickle Gen X and millennial crowds-are decidedly cynical about the high prices charged for organic foods. In all, the differences between conventional and organic foods are not big enough to justify the huge price gap.

While some may say that organic foods are healthier, it actually remains an unanswered question. This is shown in the quote, "But whether it is remains an open question-even after years of research and debate. A 2012 study found no real difference between organic and conventional food in terms of nutrition." (Cernansky). Furthermore, a study done by Charles Benbrook, an agricultural economist at Washington State University, shows that "there are no [real] differences" (Cernansky). Based on this evidence (and the lack of evidence that organic food is healthier), it is safe to say that organic foods are not necessarily healthier, thus not worth the price.

Due to few differences in the nutritional values of organic and conventional foods, the price of organic foods is very much unjustified. First, studies show that not all organic foods are healthier. Second, there are only minor nutritional differences between organic and conventional foods. Also, while some may say that organic foods are healthier, it actually remains an open-ended debate. In summation, organic foods are not worth the major price increase over conventional foods.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
3	4	2

### **Notes on Scoring**

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience and task with evident organizational structure, earning 3 out of 4 points in the assigned category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response earns the maximum 4 points for providing thorough, convincing and credible support while citing evidence for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns the maximum 2 points for demonstrating an adequate command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 8 points

How much is too much when it comes to food? With the elevated prices of organic foods, consumers are beginning to wonder whether or not the benefits make it worthwhile to spend more money. Scientists and journalists have conducted studies and researched the difference between organic and conventional food. The effect that organic food has on health and environment make it worth the higher cost.

Organic food can improve one's health. According to information in the passage "Organic Food Starts to Prove its Worth" by Rachel Cernansky, "Organic crops contain, on average 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally...there is evidence that people who consume foods rich in antioxidants have a lower risk of diseases..." In other words, Cernansky is saying that organic crops have more antioxidants than conventional crops, which means it is able to help the immune system more, keeping the body healthy. Also, in conventional crops, "[t]he pesticide content will be higher"(Herzig). This shows that not only do organic foods assist the body's immune system, it also stems the intake of harmful chemicals, such as pesticides.

The improvement in the environment is another reason to buy organic food. According to Cernansky, there have been researches conducted where it is shown that organic foods can be beneficial to the environment. Cernansky also states that "organic fruits, vegetables...must not have been treated with synthetic fertilizers...." That means that when farmers grow crops organically, they must follow specific guidelines, lowering the amount of pesticides, fertilizers, and waste being dumped into the environment.

Some may say that organic and conventional food do not have a big difference and is not worth the higher cost. This is not true because not only does organic food benefit your physical health, it helps your emotional health, giving you emotional satisfaction knowing that they are helping the environment. Organic food creates a more healthy life and a cleaner place to live.

In conclusion, the beneficial effect the organic food has on the environment and health makes it worth the extra money.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
3	3	2

### **Notes on Scoring**

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience and task with evident organizational structure, earning 3 out of 4 points in the assigned category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response also earns 3 out of 4 possible points in the category of evidence and elaboration for providing adequate support when citing evidence for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns the maximum 2 points allowed for demonstrating an adequate command of basic conventions of standard English.



## Sample Response: 7 points

Organic foods are not all that special for such a high price. Organic foods are much more expensive than conventional foods and consumers are starting to wonder if the organic food is worth the money. So far organic food can be up to three times the price of conventional foods and the health benefits may not be all that different. Several scientists are researching the problem and seeing if organic food is worth the ever so costly price. If the research is true about organic foods then the market for organic foods may just disappear.

The farming of organic food is believed to help the environment. That is a real difference between organic food and conventional food. But, organic food may just be worth as much as conventional food. So, the price to sell and create organic food may just be a huge waste if it's not that nutritionally healthy. Organic food is most likely to drop in sales once the research is done for the argument between organic food and conventional food.

"Organic crops contain on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally." Paragraph 8, Passage 1. This shows that organic crops are leaning to health debenefits. "Antioxidants are compounds in many fruits and vegetables. They are not listed on a product's Nutrition facts label." Paragraph 8, Passage 1. Companies are showing only the positives about organic food and no negatives. So, companies are hiding the fact that organic food does not really have health benefits just so they can make more profit.

"Herzig said that what people who consistently eat organic foods are purchasing is the emotional satisfaction of knowing they're taking baby steps to improve themselves and the environment." Paragraph 24, Passage 2. This is a good reason why people also like to buy organic foods. But, even though people are thinking they're eating healthier, they're really not. So, really people are wasting a huge amount of money buying organic foods when they could be using that money to pay off debts.

Overall, people should do his or her research on organic foods and conventional foods. Once everyone does that the organic food industry will be nothing but a barren wasteland. So, if you're going to buy food, make sure it's just conventional or otherwise you would be wasting your money.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
3	2	2



### **Notes on Scoring**

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is adequately sustained and generally focused within the purpose, audience and task with evident organizational structure, earning 3 out of 4 points in the assigned category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response earns 2 out of 4 possible points in the category of evidence and elaboration, as the response provides uneven support for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns the maximum 2 points allowed for demonstrating an adequate command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 5 points

After fully reading and taking the time to understand these articles, I believe that organic foods are not worthwhile. If you are not really willing to pay more for organic foods than I believe that it is not worthwhile to consider purchasing these items. Organic food is for sure a healthy option, but if you have found and recognized that your organic purchases have no real difference from your conventional or regular food options than maybe you should consider a regular purchase that is not organic food.

In passage one, there are claims made that organic food contains more antioxidants than crops that are grown conventionally. Along with this also in paragraph 8 of passage one, it also states that people who consume foods rich in antioxidants have a lower risk of diseases. I think that to consume these antioxidants you do not just have to be consuming organic food. I believe that you can receive key nutrients and antioxidants from other food options as well, not just foods that are considered to be organically grown and marketed.

In passage two, there are different claims made that organic food is not worth purchasing because of the price. I can say that in some cases I personally have noticed a dramatic price difference in organic and conventional foods. I can also say though, that in many cases organic and conventional food do not have a very severe price difference if at all. I would say that you can really see the difference in prices between these two grown foods at stores and shops that are specifically focused on organic food options. At general stores such as supermarkets where organic and conventional foods are seen, that the prices then are not very different from each other. I think that paragraphs 14 and 24 of passage two can be related. Paragraph 14 talks about why people would want to even pay more for food that is double or triple the cost of conventional food. While in paragraph 24 it discusses that some people buy organic food for emotional satisfaction. This can be simplified as stating that people will pay more for an item or items if they believe or are persuaded to believe that this thing is better or more beneficial than something else.

In conclusion, some people will agree that organic food is worthwhile, while others will provide a counter claim arguing that organic food is not in fact worth the money or worthwhile at all. I think though, that is good for people to disagree about this issue because it clearly provides an argument over what could be the positives and negatives of organic or conventional food choices. It is good for people to realize just what they really are buying, and how it is affecting their well being.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score 2)
2	2	1

### **Notes on Scoring**

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience and task but includes some extraneous material. Its organization is also inconsistent, earning 2 out of 4 possible points for this category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response also earns 2 out of 4 possible points for evidence and elaboration because the response provides uneven support for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns 1 out of 2 possible points for demonstrating a partial command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 4 points

Organic food isn't worthwhile. Unless you really enjoy organic food, we eat food everyday that isn't organic. Think about the lunch they serve at schools, hospitals, and even restrannts! The food at these places is most of the time not organic. When we eat food, not many people tend to think about whether their food was grown organically or conventionally.

Another reason organic food isn't worthwhile is in studies done, it never truly says if organic or conventionally grown food is better or worse. If you look at a list of studies, it is most likely that they will all have different results. If they all have different results, how can you really say that the foods are so different?

The final reason organic food isnt worthwhile is the price. Like said in the last paragraph, the types of food grown are not so different. So if you're buying basically the same type of food, they why would you pay 47% to 300% higher prices than normal? There isn't that much of a difference between the two types of food so why would you want to pay that much more for the same food that you would normally buy?

In closing, organic food is not worthwhile.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
2	1	1

### Notes on Scoring

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is somewhat sustained within the purpose, audience and task but includes some extraneous material. Its organization is also inconsistent, earning 2 out of 4 possible points for this category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response earns 1 out of 4 possible points for evidence and elaboration because it provides cursory support for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns 1 out of 2 possible points for demonstrating a partial command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 3 points

There are many reasons to buy, and not to buy, organic foods. Organic foods can have more nutritional value than conventional foods, but the price of organic foods are very high. Some people use the price tag as the sole reason why they pass up organic foods, but others are willing to get past the price if it means a healthier diet.

Organic foods can have numerous benefits for consumers. For many organic foods, there are higher concentrations of nutrients compared to conventional foods. In Article #1, it talks about how there are large differences between conventional produce and organic, nutrient-dense produce, like apples, berries and tomatoes (Cernansky). Also, there can be many health benefits for consuming organic foods too. In the first article, it states, "Organic crops contain, on average, 17 percent more antioxidants than crops grown conventionally, [researchers] found.... there is evidence that people who consume foods rich in antioxidants have lower risk of diseases..." (Cernansky). Since organic foods can provide health benefits with more antioxidants and nutrients

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
1	1	1

### Notes on Scoring

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is related to the topic but demonstrates little awareness of the purpose, audience and task, and it has no discernible organizational structure, earning 1 out of 4 possible points for this category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response also earns 1 out of 4 possible points for evidence and elaboration because it provides cursory support for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns 1 out of 2 possible points for demonstrating a partial command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 1 point

organic food is good for for you .

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
1	0	0

### Notes on Scoring

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is related to the topic but demonstrates little awareness of the purpose, audience and task, and it has no discernible organizational structure, earning 1 out of 4 possible points for this category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response earns 0 out of 4 possible points for evidence and elaboration because it provides no support for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns 0 out of 2 possible points because it demonstrates a lack of command of basic conventions of standard English.

## Sample Response: 0 points

I think they are good because they are healthyer for you. They cost more tho so thats bad.

Purpose, Focus, and Organization (4-point Rubric)	Evidence and Elaboration (4-point Rubric)	Conventions of Standard English (2-point Rubric begins at score point 2)
0	0	0

### Notes on Scoring

**Purpose, Focus, and Organization** – The response is minimally related to the topic and demonstrates no awareness of the purpose, audience and task, and it has no discernible organizational structure, earning 0 out of 4 possible points for this category.

**Evidence and Elaboration** – The response also earns 0 out of 4 possible points for evidence and elaboration because it provides no support for the controlling idea.

**Conventions** – The response earns 0 out of 2 possible points because it demonstrates a lack of command of basic conventions of standard English.





**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Stimulus for Questions 7 – 13**

## Stimulus for Questions 7 – 13

*This article about Pluto was written in 2008, a few years after it was identified as a dwarf planet.*

### **The Trouble with Pluto** by Jennifer Cutraro

1 Quick—how many planets are there in the solar system? It's a simple question, but there's no easy answer. You might have learned there are nine: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. But now that view of the solar system is out of date. Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.

2 How is that possible? Over the past 15 years, larger and stronger telescopes have given astronomers a better look at the far reaches of the solar system. Over that time, they have discovered an entire new class of objects orbiting the sun well beyond the orbit of Neptune. Some of these objects are just as big—or bigger—than Pluto. These discoveries have forced scientists to think deeply about what it means to be a planet.

3 In 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) defined “planet” in a way that kicked Pluto out of the planet tribe. But many astronomers disagreed with the definition. This summer, they and their colleagues met in Maryland for “The Great Planet Debate.” There, scientists on both sides discussed how to define the new objects being discovered far out in the solar system every year. Some hope the IAU will re-visit the definition of a planet when the organization meets again next year.

4 The questions they're wrestling with are hardly new. Scientists have been naming, re-naming and categorizing the various parts of the solar system ever since people began looking at and documenting the objects in the night sky thousands of years ago. Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe. As a result, scientists have sometimes been forced to re-name objects they thought were planets. Or they have had to define new categories of objects entirely. That's just what's happening with Pluto today. And it has been happening for as long as people have been looking toward the night sky.

#### **From Seven to Sixteen**

5 It was the ancient Greeks who first coined the name “planet.” The word means “wandering star,” explains David Weintraub.

He's an astronomer at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. Aristotle, the Greek natural philosopher who lived more than 2,000 years ago, identified seven “planets” in the sky. They're the objects that today we call the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. It was a view of planets that held for 1,500 years, Weintraub notes.

6 “The seven planets according to the Greeks were the seven planets at the time of Copernicus, and those seven included the sun and the moon,” he says.

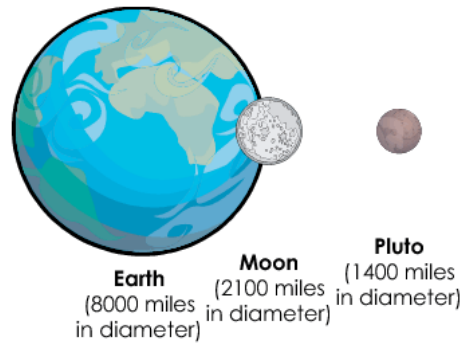
7 Nicolaus Copernicus was the Polish astronomer who suggested that the sun, and not the Earth, was at the center of what we today call the solar system. This was in the early 1500s. He removed the sun from the planet tally. Then, in 1610, Galileo Galilei pointed a telescope to the sky. This Italian mathematician saw, for the first time, the objects we know today as the four moons of Jupiter.

8 Later that century, the astronomers Christiaan Huygens and Jean-Dominique Cassini spotted five additional objects orbiting Saturn. At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth's moon and Mars, should all be called planets. This brought to 16 the number of objects called planets.

9 Between that time and the early 1900s, the number of objects astronomers called planets fluctuated. It went from a high of 16, back to six when the objects circling planets were reclassified as moons. Then it went up to seven when Uranus was discovered, and up still more, to 13. This was after the initial discovery of several objects lying between Mars and Jupiter—objects we know today as asteroids.

#### **The Trouble with Pluto**

10 In 1992, University of Hawaii astronomers David Jewitt and Jane Luu (who is now at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) discovered a new object in Pluto's neighborhood, which is beyond the orbit of Neptune. Within one year alone, scientists identified five more objects in the region of the solar system called the Kuiper belt, named for the astronomer who predicted its existence about 60 years ago.



**This image shows Pluto in relation to other major bodies in the solar system.**

- 11 And all these new objects are what got Pluto into trouble, says Guy Consolmagno. He's an astronomer at the Vatican Observatory and past president of the IAU commission on planets and moons.
- 12 "When we first discovered Pluto, it was the only thing out there," he says.
- 13 And so in 2006, the International Astronomical Union passed a rule that changed Pluto from "planet" to a new classification: "dwarf planet." And just this year, they changed its designation yet again. This time it became part of a new class called "plutoid."
- 14 The new classification considers an object a planet based largely on how it interacts with other objects in the solar system, Consolmagno explains. "The eight major planets are so big they control everything around them," he says. The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun. The gravitational control a planet exerts influences the overall structure of the solar system, Consolmagno says.
- 15 "But Pluto is not so big that it defines the gravitational structure of its neighbors," he says. For that reason, he says, it shouldn't be considered in the same category as the rest of the planets.
- 16 Not all astronomers agree these are the most important traits to consider in planethood. Many others say planets should be classified based on physical characteristics, such as shape, size and geology.

"The Trouble with Pluto" by Jennifer Cutraro, from *Science News for Students*. Copyright © 2008 by Society for Science & the Public. Reprinted by permission of Society for Science & the Public via Copyright Clearance Center. Image of Pluto, Earth, and Moon from Clipart © 2007 (2015). Images #22387899, #22383171, and #20994676.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 7**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 7

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Which statement describes a central idea of the passage?

- Ⓐ Planets have a large gravitational pull that brings other objects into their orbit.
- Ⓑ There is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.
- Ⓒ New technologies have allowed astronomers to learn more about the planets in our universe.
- Ⓓ The number of planets we have identified has increased greatly since the early days of astronomy.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.” (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ “Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe.” (paragraph 4)
- Ⓒ “At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth’s moon and Mars, should all be called planets.” (paragraph 8)
- Ⓓ “The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun.” (paragraph 14)

**Points Possible:** 2

**Content Strand:** Key Ideas and Details

**Content Standard:** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 52.11%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 11.63%

Percent 2 Points Earned: 36.26%

# Scoring Guidelines

## Part A

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. While this information helps scientists define a planet, this itself is not the central idea of the passage.

Rationale for Option B: **Key** – The idea that there is widespread disagreement about the definition of a planet, brought to light by the change in Pluto's planetary status, is the main idea of the passage.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. While this detail is a reason why the definition of a planet has been rethought, it is not the central idea of the passage.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. This is a supporting detail that supports the central idea of the passage.

## Part B

Rationale for Option A: **Key** – This supports the answer in Part A by showing how modern scientists vary in what they consider to be a planet.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. This supports the sentence regarding technology in Part A. It does not provide support for the idea that there is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. This supports the sentence about early astronomy in Part A. It does not provide support for the idea that there is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. This supports the sentence about gravitational pull in Part A. It does not provide support for the idea that there is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.





**Grade 8  
English Language Arts  
Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 7**

**Sample Responses**

## Sample Response: 2 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Which statement describes a central idea of the passage?

- ☐ Ⓐ Planets have a large gravitational pull that brings other objects into their orbit.
- ☒ Ⓑ There is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.
- ☐ Ⓒ New technologies have allowed astronomers to learn more about the planets in our universe.
- ☐ Ⓓ The number of planets we have identified has increased greatly since the early days of astronomy.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- ☒ Ⓐ “Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.” (paragraph 1)
- ☐ Ⓑ “Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe.” (paragraph 4)
- ☐ Ⓒ “At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth’s moon and Mars, should all be called planets.” (paragraph 8)
- ☐ Ⓓ “The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun.” (paragraph 14)

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns full credit (2 points) because it identifies the correct response in both Part A and Part B.

## Sample Response: 1 point

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Which statement describes a central idea of the passage?

- ☐ Ⓐ Planets have a large gravitational pull that brings other objects into their orbit.
- ☒ Ⓑ There is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.
- ☐ Ⓒ New technologies have allowed astronomers to learn more about the planets in our universe.
- ☐ Ⓓ The number of planets we have identified has increased greatly since the early days of astronomy.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- ☐ Ⓐ “Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.” (paragraph 1)
- ☐ Ⓑ “Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe.” (paragraph 4)
- ☒ Ⓒ “At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth’s moon and Mars, should all be called planets.” (paragraph 8)
- ☐ Ⓓ “The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun.” (paragraph 14)

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns partial credit (1 point). Part A has the correct answer; however, the response selected for Part B is incorrect and does not earn a point. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct.

## Sample Response: 1 point

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Which statement describes a central idea of the passage?

- ☐ Ⓐ Planets have a large gravitational pull that brings other objects into their orbit.
- ☒ Ⓑ There is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.
- ☐ Ⓒ New technologies have allowed astronomers to learn more about the planets in our universe.
- ☐ Ⓓ The number of planets we have identified has increased greatly since the early days of astronomy.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- ☐ Ⓐ “Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.” (paragraph 1)
- ☐ Ⓑ “Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe.” (paragraph 4)
- ☐ Ⓒ “At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth’s moon and Mars, should all be called planets.” (paragraph 8)
- ☒ Ⓓ “The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun.” (paragraph 14)

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns partial credit (1 point). Part A has the correct answer; however, the response selected for Part B is incorrect and does not earn a point. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct.

## Sample Response: 0 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Which statement describes a central idea of the passage?

- ☐ Ⓐ Planets have a large gravitational pull that brings other objects into their orbit.
- ☐ Ⓑ There is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.
- ☒ Ⓒ New technologies have allowed astronomers to learn more about the planets in our universe.
- ☐ Ⓓ The number of planets we have identified has increased greatly since the early days of astronomy.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- ☒ Ⓐ “Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.” (paragraph 1)
- ☐ Ⓑ “Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe.” (paragraph 4)
- ☐ Ⓒ “At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth’s moon and Mars, should all be called planets.” (paragraph 8)
- ☐ Ⓓ “The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun.” (paragraph 14)

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points). Part B has the correct answer; however, the answer selected in Part A is incorrect. In order to earn full credit for this item, both Part A and Part B must be correct. In order to earn partial credit for this item, Part A must be correct.

## Sample Response: 0 points

This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

### Part A

Which statement describes a central idea of the passage?

- ☒ Planets have a large gravitational pull that brings other objects into their orbit.
- ☐ There is widespread disagreement among modern scientists about the definition of a planet.
- ☐ New technologies have allowed astronomers to learn more about the planets in our universe.
- ☐ The number of planets we have identified has increased greatly since the early days of astronomy.

### Part B

Which quotation from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- ☐ (A) “Depending on who you talk to today, the answer could be eight, 12, or even 208 and counting.” (paragraph 1)
- ☐ (B) “Over time, new observations and improvements in technology led to a better understanding of the nature of the universe.” (paragraph 4)
- ☐ (C) “At the end of the 1600s, astronomers agreed that the objects orbiting Jupiter and Saturn, along with those two planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Earth’s moon and Mars, should all be called planets.” (paragraph 8)
- ☒ “The larger a space object is, the more powerful is its gravity, the invisible pull that keeps moons circling planets and the planets circling the sun.” (paragraph 14)

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because the answers selected for both Part A and Part B are incorrect.

**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 8**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 8

What impact did the discovery described in paragraph 10 have on the classification system described in the passage?

- Ⓐ It required a reexamination of the criteria used to classify objects as planets.
- Ⓑ It provided an example to support the criteria originally used to classify objects as planets.
- Ⓒ It supplied the founding criteria to evaluate which objects are moons and which are planets.
- Ⓓ It exposed a flaw in the criteria that determine the way the eight major planets are classified.

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Key Ideas and Details

**Content Standard:** Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 61.93%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 38.07%



## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: **Key** – The discovery in 1992 revealed celestial objects in the area near Pluto, which led astronomers to develop the criterion for classifying objects as planets that was based on how planets affect the objects around them.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. The discovery in 1992 caused astronomers to adopt a new criterion for planethood, based on the way an object “defines the gravitational structure of its neighbors”, instead of providing an example to support their original criteria.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. While moons are mentioned throughout the passage and a comparison is implied in the image, the criteria are not used specifically for determining the difference between a planet and a moon, but for distinguishing a planet from any other type of object.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. The discovery in 1992 allowed astronomers to see how Pluto failed to exert enough gravitational force to affect the objects nearby; however, this did not expose a flaw in the way the eight major planets are classified.

### Sample Response: 1 point

What impact did the discovery described in paragraph 10 have on the classification system described in the passage?

- ☒ A It required a reexamination of the criteria used to classify objects as planets.
- ☐ B It provided an example to support the criteria originally used to classify objects as planets.
- ☐ C It supplied the founding criteria to evaluate which objects are moons and which are planets.
- ☐ D It exposed a flaw in the criteria that determine the way the eight major planets are classified.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 9**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 9

Read this sentence from paragraph 3.

“This summer, they and their colleagues met in Maryland for ‘The Great Planet Debate.’”

What does the word colleagues mean as it is used in the sentence?

- ☐ Ⓐ people who are friends
- ☐ Ⓑ people who are in charge
- ☐ Ⓒ people who work together
- ☐ Ⓓ people who travel together

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 10.53%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 89.47%

## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. It may make sense for “colleagues” to refer to those scientists who attended the Great Planet Debate as friends; however, the word “colleagues” refers to people who work together.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. The astronomers may have met with superiors in their jobs to determine a definition for planet; however, the word “colleagues” refers to people who work together.

Rationale for Option C: **Key** – “Colleagues” is a word that refers to people who work together.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. While the passage refers to a meeting in Maryland, the context suggests that the word “colleagues” refers to people who work together, not people who travel together.

### Sample Response: 1 point

Read this sentence from paragraph 3.

“This summer, they and their colleagues met in Maryland for ‘The Great Planet Debate.’”

What does the word colleagues mean as it is used in the sentence?

- ☐ Ⓐ people who are friends
- ☐ Ⓑ people who are in charge
- ☒ Ⓒ people who work together
- ☐ Ⓓ people who travel together



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 10**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 10

Read the following paragraph, then select the sentence that introduces the idea that planets are categorized based on how they interact with other objects.

- 9 Between that time and the early 1900s, the number of objects astronomers called planets fluctuated. It went from a high of 16, back to six when the objects circling planets were reclassified as moons. Then it went up to seven when Uranus was discovered, and up still more, to 13. This was after the initial discovery of several objects lying between Mars and Jupiter—objects we know today as asteroids.

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 40.57%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 59.43%

## Scoring Guidelines

For this item, a full-credit response includes:

- “It went from a high of 16, back to six when the objects circling planets were reclassified as moons.” (1 point)



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 10**

**Sample Responses**

## Sample Response: 1 point

Read the following paragraph, then select the sentence that introduces the idea that planets are categorized based on how they interact with other objects.

- 9 Between that time and the early 1900s, the number of objects astronomers called planets fluctuated. It went from a high of 16, back to six when the objects circling planets were reclassified as moons. Then it went up to seven when Uranus was discovered, and up still more, to 13. This was after the initial discovery of several objects lying between Mars and Jupiter—objects we know today as asteroids.

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns full credit (1 point) because the correct sentence is selected.

## Sample Response: 0 points

Read the following paragraph, then select the sentence that introduces the idea that planets are categorized based on how they interact with other objects.

- 9 Between that time and the early 1900s, the number of objects astronomers called planets fluctuated. It went from a high of 16, back to six when the objects circling planets were reclassified as moons. Then it went up to seven when Uranus was discovered, and up still more, to 13. This was after the initial discovery of several objects lying between Mars and Jupiter—objects we know today as asteroids.

### Notes on Scoring

This response earns no credit (0 points) because the sentence selected is incorrect.



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 11**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 11

What is the author's point of view on planetary classifications?

- ☐ A They do not hold much standing within the scientific community.
- ☐ B They will likely continue to change as scientists learn more.
- ☐ C They cause unnecessary confusion for scientists.
- ☐ D They should not be subject to larger debate.

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 16.28%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 83.72%

## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. Although the author does point out that there was some debate about planetary classifications and disagreement over the change to Pluto's status, she does not take the point of view that planetary classifications do not hold much standing in the scientific community.

Rationale for Option B: **Key** – Throughout the passage, the author highlights how planetary classifications have changed throughout history as scientists have discovered and learned more about planets. In paragraph 4 in particular, she implies that this is something that will likely continue to happen as scientists learn more.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. While the author does point out disagreements that have arisen over planetary classifications, she does not take the point of view that they cause unnecessary confusion for scientists.

Rationale for Option D: This is incorrect. While the author does highlight the debate that occurred between scientists over the change to the definition of a planet in 2006, she does not take the position that planetary classifications should not be subject to larger debate.

### Sample Response: 1 point

What is the author's point of view on planetary classifications?

- ☐ A They do not hold much standing within the scientific community.
- ☒ B They will likely continue to change as scientists learn more.
- ☐ C They cause unnecessary confusion for scientists.
- ☐ D They should not be subject to larger debate.





**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 12**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 12

Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

“Quick—how many planets are there in the solar system?”

Based on the rest of the passage, why does the author introduce the topic in this way?

- ☐ Ⓐ to make the reader ponder a difficult question
- ☐ Ⓑ to suggest that a new planet has been discovered
- ☐ Ⓒ to convince the reader to disagree with current scientific thinking
- ☐ Ⓓ to suggest that the subject is more complicated than the reader may think

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Craft and Structure

**Content Standard:** Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 41.19%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 58.81%

## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. Although this does pose a question, the reason is not to provoke thought or reflection, but to cause a gut reaction.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. The author may be using an effective tactic to hint to readers that she will be discussing the discovery of a new planet; however, the details in the paragraph suggest that the author's topic will discuss how objects are classified as planets.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. While the author is posing a question to the reader, the intent is to show how the answer is more complicated than one might think, not to cause the reader to question or disagree with current scientific thinking.

Rationale for Option D: **Key** – By beginning the passage in this way, the author is hinting that, though the question appears very simple, the subject may be more complicated than the reader would originally think.

### Sample Response: 1 point

Read this sentence from paragraph 1.

“Quick—how many planets are there in the solar system?”

Based on the rest of the passage, why does the author introduce the topic in this way?

- ☐ Ⓐ to make the reader ponder a difficult question
- ☐ Ⓑ to suggest that a new planet has been discovered
- ☐ Ⓒ to convince the reader to disagree with current scientific thinking
- ☒ Ⓓ to suggest that the subject is more complicated than the reader may think



**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2017 Item Release**

---

**Question 13**

**Question and Scoring Guidelines**

## Question 13

Read the sentence.

“Between that time and the early 1900s, the number of objects astronomers called planets fluctuated.”  
(paragraph 9)

Based on the information in the paragraph, what does fluctuated mean?

- ☐ Ⓐ decreased
- ☐ Ⓑ increased
- ☐ Ⓒ stabilized
- ☐ Ⓓ varied

**Points Possible:** 1

**Content Strand:** Vocabulary

**Content Standard:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

**Student Performance on this Question:**

Percent 0 Points Earned: 49.49%

Percent 1 Point Earned: 50.51%

## Scoring Guidelines

Rationale for Option A: This is incorrect. The number of planets decreased at times, but it also increased. “Fluctuated” implies that the number of planets went up and down.

Rationale for Option B: This is incorrect. The number of planets increased at times, but it also decreased. “Fluctuated” implies that the number of planets went up and down.

Rationale for Option C: This is incorrect. The number of planets is not stable. The word “fluctuated” suggests that the number has varied over time.

Rationale for Option D: **Key** – The word “fluctuated” indicates that the number of planets has varied over time.

### Sample Response: 1 point

Read the sentence.

“Between that time and the early 1900s, the number of objects astronomers called planets fluctuated.”  
(paragraph 9)

Based on the information in the paragraph, what does fluctuated mean?

- ☐ A decreased
- ☐ B increased
- ☐ C stabilized
- ☒ D varied

The Ohio Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Copyright © 2017 by the Ohio Department of Education. All rights reserved.