

ISTEP+ English/Language Arts Assessment for Grades 3-8 Part 1 (March) Section Information

This document provides examples of the types of items on *the ISTEP+ Part 1 (Applied Skills) Assessment*. The sample items can serve as models when teachers are constructing items for classroom assessment. It should be noted that this document is not a practice test.

On this website, <http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/istep-grades-3-8>, you may access other critical English/Language Arts information related to the ISTEP+ Assessments, such as:

- Test Blueprints
- Instructional and Assessment Guidance
- WebEx recordings and accompanying PowerPoint presentations located in the Item Samplers section
- English/Language Arts Rubrics, Rubric Guidelines, Editing Checklists

ISTEP+ Part 1 English/Language Arts Assessment Grades 3-8 Section Information

Constructed-Response Section

- ❖ Includes a passage for students to read.
- ❖ Includes several Constructed-Response reading comprehension questions that will ask about the passage. These questions will be scored using the 2-point Constructed-Response rubric.

Writing Prompt Section

- ❖ Includes a passage or pair of passages for students to read.
- ❖ Includes a Writing Prompt that will be a narrative, informative, or persuasive/argument* response based on the passage or pair of passages. It will be scored using the 6-point Writing Rubric and the 4-point Grammar and Usage Rubric.

* Please note that persuasive writing is referenced in the standards at grades 3-5 and argument writing is referenced in the standards at grades 6-8.

Grade Band 3-4 Samples

Inside the United States Mint

How was the United States Mint born?

1 It is the 18th century, and the colonies are breaking free from England. A new country! But what about money? How can they pay for their war against England?

2 In 1775, **John Hancock** suggests that Congress issue bills of credit. People could exchange these paper notes for silver Spanish-milled dollars after the war.

John Hancock: John Hancock was a politician and merchant. He was known for his grand signing of the Declaration of Independence.

3 The colonists already use many types of currencies. If the colonies win, should they use British pounds

(British pounds = money used in Great Britain)

after the war? Or use Spanish-milled dollars? Or invent a whole new currency?

4 **Jefferson** says that our money should be divided into 100 parts. In 1785, Congress invents a new dollar currency and decides from which metals the coins will be made. Now they just need someone to make them!

Thomas Jefferson: Thomas Jefferson is considered a founding father of the United States. He was the third president.

5 In 1792, Congress passes the Coinage Act, creating the Bureau of the Mint to make gold, silver, and copper coins. The United States Mint is born!

6 President George Washington appoints David Rittenhouse, a scientist, as the first Director of the Mint. The Mint produces its first circulating coins: copper cents and half cents.

What does the United States Mint do?

7 The United States Mint makes coins. Its main task is to make sure the people of the nation have enough coins to carry on daily business. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing makes paper money and the United States Mint makes all our nation's coins. In addition to coins for commerce,

commerce = buying and selling

the United States Mint also makes other coins and medals for collectors.

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8 There are six places around the country that make up this federal agency. Each one is called a "facility."

What is a facility?

9 A facility is a place or building set up for certain reasons. As a house has a kitchen for cooking and a bedroom for sleeping but the rooms are still part of one house, so the United States Mint has six facilities with different purposes.

10 From the headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Director of the Mint oversees the facilities in Philadelphia, Denver, San Francisco, and West Point, as well as the U.S. Bullion Depository at Fort Knox, Kentucky (shown on the map).



What coins are made at the facilities?

11 The Mint makes pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars, and dollars. They make special coins too. You might know about the state quarter program. The 50 State Quarters Program ended in 2008—its tenth year—with its final five coins.

12 Here's how the program worked: In 1999, the United States Mint began making a new quarter about every ten weeks to honor one of the 50 states—that is, five new quarters every year—until the program ended. The quarters were made in the same order as the states' "birthdays," as listed in the chart.

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Delaware	Massachusetts	New York	Tennessee	Illinois
Pennsylvania	Maryland	North Carolina	Ohio	Alabama
New Jersey	South Carolina	Rhode Island	Louisiana	Maine
Georgia	New Hampshire	Vermont	Indiana	Missouri
Connecticut	Virginia	Kentucky	Mississippi	Arkansas

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2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Michigan	California	Nevada	Montana	Oklahoma
Florida	Minnesota	Nebraska	Washington	New Mexico
Texas	Oregon	Colorado	Idaho	Arizona
Iowa	Kansas	North Dakota	Wyoming	Alaska
Wisconsin	West Virginia	South Dakota	Utah	Hawaii

The America the Beautiful[®] Program

13 In 2010, the United States Mint began to issue quarters for the America the Beautiful program. By the time the program ends in 2021, there will be a total of 56 quarter-dollar coins released. Each design (on the flip side of the coin) will focus on a different national site in each state, territory, and the District of Columbia.

14 In 2017, Indiana will have its state coin released. The coin will celebrate the George Rogers Clark National Historical Park in Vincennes, Indiana.

Source: <http://www.usmint.gov/kids/>

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ISTEP+ Applied Skills Sample for Classroom Use

Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Grade: 3
Scoring: 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 3.RN.3.2- Identify how a nonfiction text can be structured to indicate a problem and solution or to put events in chronological order.	
Depth of Knowledge: 3 Link to DOK Wheel	

How does the author use the sections “How was the United States Mint born?” and “What does the United States Mint do?” to organize the article? Support your answer with details from the article.

Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Grade: 3
Scoring: 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 3.RN.4.1- Distinguish between fact and opinion; explain how an author uses reasons and facts to support specific points in a text.	
Depth of Knowledge: 3 Link to DOK Wheel	

How does the author support the idea that one job of the United States Mint is to produce special coins? Support your answer with details from the article.



The Flea, the Grasshopper, and the Frog

- 1 The flea, the grasshopper, and the frog once wanted to see which of them could jump highest, so they invited the whole world to come and view the grand sight. Everyone met together in a room to watch the three famous jumpers.
- 2 The king, who was in attendance for the competition, said, "You must have a prize for your contest! I will give my daughter's hand in marriage to the one who jumps the highest."
- 3 The flea was the first to introduce himself. He had very polite manners and bowed to the company on every side. He was used to being around people, which was a great advantage to him.
- 4 Next came the grasshopper. He was not quite as elegant as the flea; however, he knew how to conduct himself. He wore a green uniform, which belonged to him by right of birth. Moreover, he declared himself to have sprung from a very ancient and honorable Egyptian family. In his present home he said he was very highly esteemed; so much so, indeed, that he had been taken out of the field where he learned to jump and put into a card house three stories high.
- 5 "And I can sing so well," added he. "Even sixteen house-bred crickets, who have chirped and chirped and chirped ever since they were born, could never get anybody to build them a card house!"

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6 Both the flea and the grasshopper knew well how to present themselves, and each considered himself quite an equal match for a Princess.

7 The frog said not a word. The house-dog, after going sniffing about him very carefully, confessed that the frog must be of a good family. And the King's old and trusted friend declared that the frog must be gifted with untold talents.

8 "Ah! I say nothing for the present," remarked the old King, "but I observe everything and will form my own opinion. Now let them show us what they can do."

9 And so the match began.

10 The flea jumped so high that no one could see what had become of him, and so they insisted that he had not jumped at all.

11 The grasshopper only jumped half as high, but unfortunately he jumped right into the King's face, and the King was quite disgusted by his rudeness.

12 The frog stood still as if lost in thought; at last people fancied he did not intend to jump at all.

13 "I'm afraid he is ill!" said the dog, and he went sniffing at him again to see if he could find out what was wrong. Then, all at once, the frog made a little sidelong jump into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a low stool close by.

14 Immediately the King gave his judgment.

15 "There is nothing more prized to me than my daughter," said he. "Therefore, it is plain that he who jumps up to her jumps highest, and only someone worthy would ever have thought of that. The frog has shown us that he has good judgment. He has brains in his head!" And thus the frog won the Princess's hand in marriage.

Source: <http://www.kellscraft.com/leapingmatch.html>

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Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Writing Prompt	Grade: 3
Scoring: 6-point Writing Rubric, 4-point Grammar and Usage Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 3.W.3.2: Write informative compositions on a variety of topics that – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State the topic, develop a main idea for the introductory paragraph, and group related information together.• Develop the topic with facts and details.• Connect ideas within categories of information using words and phrases.• Use text features (e.g., <i>pictures, graphics</i>) when useful to aid comprehension.• Provide a concluding statement or section.	
Depth of Knowledge: 4 Link to DOK Wheel	

You have read the story “The Flea, the Grasshopper, and the Frog.” The King held a competition to see who could jump the highest. The prize was his daughter’s hand in marriage. Why did the King think the frog won the competition? What do you think is the lesson of this story? Write an essay that explains the lesson, using details from the story.

Be sure to include

- the lesson of the story
- good descriptive details
- an beginning, a middle, and an end to your story

Grade Band 5-6 Samples

Excerpt from *The Wind in the Willows*

by Kenneth Grahame

Mole loses patience with spring cleaning and decides to leave his home for a while. He ends up by the river, where he meets an interesting character.

The River Bank

1 As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou¹ riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

2 A brown little face, with whiskers.

3 A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice. Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

4 It was the Water Rat!

5 Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

6 "Hullo, Mole!" said the Water Rat.

7 "Hullo, Rat!" said the Mole.

8 "Would you like to come over?" enquired the Rat presently.

9 "Oh, it's all very well to *talk*," said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

10 The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole's whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.

11 The Rat sculled smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his forepaw as the Mole stepped gingerly down. "Lean on that!" he said. "Now then, step lively!" and the Mole to his surprise and rapture found himself actually seated in the stern of a real boat.

¹bijou: something highly prized

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12 “This has been a wonderful day!” said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. “Do you know, I’ve never been in a boat before in all my life.”

13 “What?” cried the Rat, open-mouthed: “Never been in a — you never — well I — what have you been doing, then?”

14 “Is it so nice as all that?” asked the Mole shyly, though he was quite prepared to believe it as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

15 “Nice? It’s the *only* thing,” said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. “Believe me, my young friend, there is *nothing* — absolute nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,” he went on dreamily: “messing — about — in — boats; messing —”

16 “Look ahead, Rat!” cried the Mole suddenly.

17 It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

18 “— about in boats — or *with* boats,” the Rat went on composedly, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. “In or out of ‘em, it doesn’t matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that’s the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don’t; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you’re always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you’ve done it there’s always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you’d much better not. Look here! If you’ve really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?”

19 The Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness, spread his chest with a sigh of full contentment, and leaned back blissfully into the soft cushions. “*What* a day I’m having!” he said. “Let us start at once!”

Source: <http://www.kellscraft.com/WindInTheWillows/WindInTheWillowsCh01.html>

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Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Grade: 6
Scoring: 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 6.RL.2.2- Determine how a theme or central idea of a work of literature is conveyed through particular details; provide a detailed, objective summary of the text.	
Depth of Knowledge: 3 Link to DOK Wheel	

Describe a theme of the excerpt from *The Wind in the Willows* and how it is revealed. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Grade: 6
Scoring: 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 6.RL.2.3- Explain how a plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the narrative advances and moves toward a resolution.	
Depth of Knowledge: 3 Link to DOK Wheel	

How does Mole's reaction to Rat's boat impact the events in the excerpt? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

This is a set of two passages: An article called “*Apollo 11*” and “Telephone Conversation with the *Apollo 11* Astronauts on the Moon July 20, 1969”

Apollo 11

1 During a Congressional address on May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy proposed that the United States accelerate its space program and set as a national goal a manned lunar landing and safe return by the end of the decade. With the launch of *Apollo 11* on July 16, 1969, that goal became a reality. The *Apollo 11* astronauts were Neil Armstrong, mission commander, Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin, lunar module pilot, and Michael Collins, command module pilot. The spacecraft went into lunar orbit 110 kilometers above the Moon's surface. On July 20, Armstrong and Aldrin landed the Lunar Module *Eagle* on the Moon's Sea of Tranquility at 4:18 p.m. Approximately six and one-half hours later, Armstrong put his left foot down on the rocky plain while the largest television audience in history watched live. Michael Collins remained in orbit in the command module conducting scientific experiments and taking photographs. Armstrong and Aldrin "moon walked" for three hours, setting up scientific instruments and collecting soil and rock samples. The astronauts also planted an American flag in the lunar soil and left a plaque commemorating man's landing on the Moon.



President Nixon Greets the Returning *Apollo 11* Astronauts aboard the *USS Hornet*
Source: <http://www.nasa.gov/content/president-nixon-greets-the-returning-apollo-11-astronauts/>

2 The *Apollo 11* astronauts, left to right, Commander Neil A. Armstrong, Command Module Pilot Michael Collins, and Lunar Module Pilot Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin Jr., inside the Mobile Quarantine Facility aboard the *USS Hornet*, listen to President Richard M. Nixon on July 24, 1969, as he welcomes them back to Earth and congratulates them on the successful mission. The astronauts had splashed down in the Pacific Ocean at 12:50 p.m. EDT about 900 miles southwest of Hawaii.

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3 *Apollo 11* launched from Cape Kennedy on July 16, 1969, carrying the astronauts into an initial Earth-orbit of 114 by 116 miles. An estimated 530 million people watched Armstrong's televised image and heard his voice describe the event as he took ". . . one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind" on July 20, 1969.

Source: http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/space_level2/apollo11.html

Telephone Conversation with the Apollo 11 Astronauts on the Moon July 20, 1969

1 [President Nixon speaking.] THE PRESIDENT. Hello Neil and Buzz, I am talking to you by telephone from the Oval Room at the White House, and this certainly has to be the most historic telephone call ever made from the White House.

2 I just can't tell you how proud we all are of what you have done. For every American this has to be the proudest day of our lives, and for people all over the world I am sure that they, too, join with Americans in recognizing what an immense feat this is.

3 Because of what you have done the heavens have become a part of man's world, and as you talk to us from the Sea of Tranquility, it inspires us to redouble our efforts to bring peace and tranquility to earth.

4 For one priceless moment in the whole history of man all the people on this earth are truly one—one in their pride in what you have done and one in our prayers that you will return safely to earth.

5 ASTRONAUT ARMSTRONG. Thank you, Mr. President. It is a great honor and privilege for us to be here representing not only the United States, but men of peaceable nations, men with an interest and a curiosity, and men with a vision for the future. It is an honor for us to be able to participate here today.

6 THE PRESIDENT. Thank you very much, and I look forward, all of us look forward, to seeing you on the *Hornet* on Thursday.

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ISTEP+ Applied Skills Sample for Classroom Use

Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Writing Prompt	Grade: 6
Scoring: 6-point Writing Rubric, 4-point Grammar and Usage Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 6.W.3.2: Write informative compositions on a variety of topics that – <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition and classification.● Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from various sources and texts.● Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.● Include formatting (e.g., <i>headings</i>), graphics (e.g., <i>charts, tables</i>), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.● Choose language and content-specific vocabulary that express ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.● Establish and maintain a style appropriate to purpose and audience.● Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.	
Depth of Knowledge: 4 Link to DOK Wheel	

You have read the article about the first moon landing and a transcript of a phone conversation between President Nixon and the astronauts. Some historians claim that the *Apollo 11* trip to the moon is the most significant event of the twentieth century. Using information from BOTH the article and the telephone conversation, write an essay explaining the significance of this event.

Be sure to include

- an explanation of the significance of the event
- support with relevant details from BOTH the article and the telephone conversation
- an introduction, a body, and a conclusion

Grade Band 7-8 Samples

Excerpt from *The Call of the Wild*

by Jack London

Introduction: Buck, an impressively powerful half sheepdog, half Saint Bernard, was once a pet. He was taken from a sheltered life and turned into a sled dog, forced to work in harsh conditions. John Thornton rescues Buck, who is hurt and exhausted.

1 When John Thornton froze his feet in the previous December his partners had made him comfortable and left him to get well, going on themselves up the river to get out a raft of saw-logs for Dawson. He was still limping slightly at the time he rescued Buck, but with the continued warm weather even the slight limp left him. And here, lying by the river bank through the long spring days, watching the running water, listening lazily to the songs of birds and the hum of nature, Buck slowly won back his strength.

2 A rest comes very good after one has travelled three thousand miles, and it must be confessed that Buck waxed lazy as his wounds healed, his muscles swelled out, and the flesh came back to cover his bones. For that matter, they were all loafing,—Buck, John Thornton, and his two other dogs,—waiting for the raft to come that was to carry them down to Dawson. Skeet was a little Irish setter who early made friends with Buck, who, in a dying condition, was unable to resent her first advances. She had the doctor trait which some dogs possess; and as a mother cat washes her kittens, so she washed and cleansed Buck's wounds. Regularly, each morning after he had finished his breakfast, she performed her self-appointed task, till he came to look for her ministrations as much as he did for Thornton's. John's other dog, equally friendly, though less demonstrative, was a huge black dog, half bloodhound and half deerhound, with eyes that laughed and a boundless good nature.

3 To Buck's surprise these dogs manifested no jealousy toward him. They seemed to share the kindness and largeness of John Thornton. As Buck grew stronger they enticed him into all sorts of ridiculous games, in which Thornton himself could not forbear to join; and in this fashion Buck romped through his convalescence and into a new existence. Love, genuine passionate love, was his for the first time. This he had never experienced at Judge Miller's down in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley. With the Judge's sons, hunting and tramping, it had been a working partnership; with the Judge's grandsons, a sort of pompous guardianship; and with the Judge himself, a stately and dignified friendship. But love that was feverish and burning, that was adoration, that was madness, it had taken John Thornton to arouse.

4 This man had saved his life, which was something; but, further, he was the ideal master. Other men saw to the welfare of their dogs from a sense of duty and business expediency; he saw to the welfare of his as if they were his own children, because he could not help it. And he saw further. He never forgot a kindly greeting or a cheering word, and to sit down for a long talk with them ("gas" he called it) was as much his delight as theirs. He had a way of taking Buck's head roughly between his hands, and resting his own head upon Buck's, of shaking him back and

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forth, the while calling him ill names that to Buck were love names. Buck knew no greater joy than that rough embrace and the sound of murmured oaths, and at each jerk back and forth it seemed that his heart would be shaken out of his body so great was its ecstasy. And when, released, he sprang to his feet, his mouth laughing, his eyes eloquent, his throat vibrant with unuttered sound, and in that fashion remained without movement, John Thornton would reverently exclaim, "God! you can all but speak!"

5 Buck had a trick of love expression that was akin to hurt. He would often seize Thornton's hand in his mouth and close so fiercely that the flesh bore the impress of his teeth for some time afterward. And as Buck understood the oaths to be love words, so the man understood this feigned bite for a caress.

6 For the most part, however, Buck's love was expressed in adoration. While he went wild with happiness when Thornton touched him or spoke to him, he did not seek these tokens. Unlike Skeet, who was wont to shove her nose under Thornton's hand and nudge and nudge till petted, or John's other dog, who would stalk up and rest his great head on Thornton's knee, Buck was content to adore at a distance. He would lie by the hour, eager, alert, at Thornton's feet, looking up into his face, dwelling upon it, studying it, following with keenest interest each fleeting expression, every movement or change of feature.

7 For a long time after his rescue, Buck did not like Thornton to get out of his sight. From the moment he left the tent to when he entered it again, Buck would follow at his heels. His transient masters since he had come into the Northland had bred in him a fear that no master could be permanent. He was afraid that Thornton would pass out of his life as Perrault and Francois and the Scotch half-breed had passed out. Even in the night, in his dreams, he was haunted by this fear. At such times he would shake off sleep and creep through the chill to the flap of the tent, where he would stand and listen to the sound of his master's breathing.

8 But in spite of this great love he bore John Thornton, which seemed to bespeak the soft civilizing influence, the strain of the primitive, which the Northland had aroused in him, remained alive and active. Faithfulness and devotion, things born of fire and roof, were his; yet he retained his wildness and wiliness. He was a thing of the wild, come in from the wild to sit by John Thornton's fire, rather than a dog of the soft Southland stamped with the marks of generations of civilization.

Source: <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/215/pg215.txt>

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Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Grade: 8
Scoring: 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 8.RL.2.2- Analyze the development of a theme or central idea over the course of a work of literature, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide a detailed summary that supports the analysis.	
Depth of Knowledge: 3 Link to DOK Wheel	

How does the behavior of John Thornton's dogs support the theme of showing compassion to others? Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Constructed-Response	Grade: 8
Scoring: 2-point Constructed-Response Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 8.RL.2.3- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a work of literature propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.	
Depth of Knowledge: 3 Link to DOK Wheel	

Explain how Buck changes after he is rescued by John Thornton. Support your answer with details from the excerpt.

The Benefits of Homework

1 Homework complaints are a fact of life everywhere. It takes up time and cuts into family life. Some students say that homework is too repetitive, too hard, and just too much. The stress over homework can lead everyone involved to wonder if it's worth doing at all.

2 However, when homework supports a student's learning and does not take too much time to complete, it can have several benefits. Let's take a look at some of them.

Support for achievement and learning

3 In "Homework Research and Policy," Harris Cooper of the University of Missouri-Columbia reviewed 20 homework studies conducted since 1967. He found that most of the research was in favor of homework. Cooper found that the average high school student in a class that gave homework did better than two-thirds of the students in a no-homework class. In studies comparing the time spent on homework to achievement, most showed that students who did more homework had better grades and test scores.

4 Achievement increases were highest for high school students. However, homework helps students at all grade levels to develop good study habits and positive attitudes toward school. Too much homework, though, can have the opposite effect. Leading education groups agree that students should do about 10 minutes of homework per grade level. Fourth-graders, for example, should do no more than 40 minutes of homework each day. Junior high and high school students could do an hour or more.

5 Homework can also strengthen skills taught at school. What may appear to be "busy work" can actually be skill practice, especially in subjects such as math and spelling. While doing the same kind of math problem over and over may seem boring, it can make knowing how to solve that type of problem automatic.

6 In addition, homework supports better study skills and attitudes toward learning. Since students usually must do homework alone, they learn how to solve problems. This prepares them for later success in school and work. Studying for a test prepares the student not only to learn the material, but also *how* best to study.

Benefits beyond school

7 The benefits of homework go even beyond the classroom. Doing homework helps students learn important skills, such as self-discipline and time management.

8 Homework benefits families as well. A 2007 MetLife survey of teachers, parents, and students across the United States showed that almost 9 in 10 parents said that they liked helping their children with homework because it gave them time to spend with their children.

Conclusion

9 In the MetLife survey, most parents thought that their children's teachers assigned the right amount of homework. Furthermore, most students felt they had enough time to complete the assignments. When homework supports the student and his or her learning goals, the majority of people agree that it can be a valuable learning tool that prepares students for success.

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ISTEP+ Applied Skills Sample for Classroom Use

Sample Item Information for Teachers	
Item Type: Writing Prompt	Grade: 8
Scoring: 6-point Writing Rubric, 4-point Grammar and Usage Rubric Link to ISTEP+ Rubrics	
Indiana Academic Standard 8.W.3.1: Write arguments in a variety of forms that – <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.● Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.● Use effective transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.● Establish and maintain a consistent style and tone appropriate to purpose and audience.● Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.	
Depth of Knowledge: 4 Link to DOK Wheel	

You have read the article “The Benefits of Homework.” The author makes the claim that homework can positively affect student performance in school. Think about the evidence the author provides and consider if it fully supports the claim. Using details from the article, write an argument analyzing how effectively the author supports this claim.

Be sure to include

- your position on how well the author supports the claim
- details from the article to support your position
- an introduction, a body, and a conclusion