

Preview of Common Core State Standards Sample EAGLE Items

Grade 6

English Language Arts

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Grade 6

This item set is based on an excerpt from the novel *The Secret Garden* and the poem “The First Redbird.” The items lead students to consider tone and point of view in prose before completing a culminating task in which they discuss how an author draws readers into places and feelings. A complete item set would target vocabulary, genre, figurative language, and more. In this sample set we provide three items, two with multiple parts.

The Secret Garden tells the story of Mary Lennox, a young girl who goes to live in England with her uncle, whom she never sees. She discovers there is a walled garden on the property that no one has been in for ten years. While walking around, she befriends a robin, who helps her find the key to the garden.

The Secret Garden

by Frances Hodgson Burnett



Mary had stepped close to the robin, and suddenly the gust of wind swung aside some loose ivy trails, and more suddenly still she jumped toward the ivy and caught it in her hand. This she did because she had seen something under it—a round knob which had been covered by the leaves hanging over it. It was the knob of a door.

She put her hands under the leaves and began to pull and push them aside. Thick as the ivy hung, it nearly all was a loose and swinging curtain, though some had crept over wood and iron. Mary's heart began to thump and her hands to shake a little in her delight and excitement. The robin kept singing and twittering away and tilting his head on one side, as if he were as excited as she was. What was this under her hands which was square and made of iron and which her fingers found a hole in?

It was the lock of the door which had been closed ten years, and she put her hand in her pocket, drew out the key, and found it fit the keyhole. She put the key in and turned it. It took two hands to do it, but it did turn.

And then she took a long breath and looked behind her up the long walk to see if anyone was coming. No one was coming. No one ever did come, it seemed, and she took another long breath, because she could not help it, and she held back the swinging curtain of ivy and pushed back the door which opened slowly—slowly.

Then she slipped through it, and shut it behind her, and stood with her back against it, looking about her and breathing quite fast with excitement and wonder and delight.

She was standing inside the secret garden.

“How still it is!” she whispered. “How still!”

Then she waited a moment and listened to the stillness. The robin, who had flown to his treetop, was still as all the rest. He did not even flutter his wings; he sat without stirring and looked at Mary.

“No wonder it is still,” she whispered again. “I am the first person who has spoken in here for ten years.”

She moved away from the door, stepping as softly as if she were afraid of awakening someone. She was glad that there was grass under her feet and that her steps made no sounds. She walked under one of the fairy-like gray arches between the trees and looked up at the sprays and tendrils which formed them. “I wonder if they are all quite dead,” she said. “Is it all a quite dead garden? I wish it wasn’t.”

If she had been Ben Weatherstaff¹ she could have told whether the wood was alive by looking at it, but she could only see that there were only gray or brown sprays and branches and none showed any signs of even a tiny leaf bud anywhere.

But she was inside the wonderful garden and she could come through the door under the ivy any time and she felt as if she had found a world all her own.

¹ the gardener at the house



The First Redbird

by Evaleen Stein

I heard a song at daybreak,
So honey-sweet and clear,
The essence of all joyous things
Seemed mingling in its cheer.

The frosty world about me
I searched with eager gaze,
But all was slumber-bound and wrapped
In violet-tinted haze.

Then suddenly a sunbeam
Shot slanting o'er the hill,
And once again from out the sky
I heard that honeyed trill.

And there upon a poplar,
Poised at its topmost height,
I saw a little singer clad
In scarlet plumage bright.

The poplar branches quivered,
By dawn winds lightly blown,
And like a breeze-swept poppy-flower
The redbird rocked and shone.

The blue sky, and his feathers
Flashed o'er by golden light,
Oh, all my heart with rapture thrilled,
It was so sweet a sight!

UIN:	23001	Subject:	ELA	Grade:	6	Item Type:	MC, copy/paste		
CCSS:	RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.							
MC Key:	C	Item Name:	tone	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	M	DOK	4
Points:	6 (A & B)	Accommodations:		Scoring Method:		AS			
Passage Title(s):	The Secret Garden								
Source info:									

Part A

What is the tone of the excerpt from *The Secret Garden*?

- A. sad
- B. playful
- C. exciting
- D. dull

Part B

Copy five words or phrases from the passage that provide evidence for your choice. Paste the words or phrases below.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

UIN:	23002	Subject:	ELA	Grade:	6	Item Type:	MC/SA			
CCSS:	RL.6.6	Explain how the author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.								
MC Key:	D	Item Name:	POV	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	H	DOK	4	
Points:	3 (A & B)	Accommodations :				Scoring Method:	Mixed			
Passage Title(s):	The First Redbird									
Source info:										

Part A

Which lines **best** describe the speaker’s feelings upon seeing the redbird?

- A. I heard a song at daybreak,/So honey-sweet and clear,
- B. Then suddenly a sunbeam/Shot slanting o’er the hill,
- C. I saw a little singer clad/In scarlet plumage bright.
- D. Oh, all my heart with rapture thrilled,/It was so sweet a sight!

Part B

Explain how the poet develops the speaker’s feelings about the redbird.

UIN:	23003	Subject:	ELA	Grade:	6	Item Type:	essay		
CCSS:	RL.6.9 W.6.2a-f W.6.9a L.6.1a-e L.6.2a-b	Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems, historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. Draw evidence from literary or information al texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. a. Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature... Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.							
MC Key:		Item Name:	essay	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	H	DOK	4
Points:	4	Accommodations :		Scoring Method:	HS				
Passage Title(s):	<i>The Secret Garden</i> , "The First Redbird"								
Source info:									

Explain how the authors of *The Secret Garden* and "The First Redbird" help readers to "see" and experience things in the passage and the poem. Use details, ideas, and examples from *The Secret Garden* excerpt and from the poem "The First Redbird" to support your explanation. Be sure to follow the conventions of standard English.

Sample Constructed-Response Item Rubrics

Grade 6

These are the rubrics and sample responses for the constructed-response **Common Core State Standards Sample EAGLE Items** for Grade 6. These items require a teacher/scorer to hand-score the responses. The rubrics provide guidance to the scorer who must bring his or her own expertise to the task. The sample responses offer one or two ideal responses for each constructed-response item. Other exemplary responses are possible.

Item 2B

Exemplary Response

The poem shows how the speaker feels about the bird. First, the speaker only hears the bird that he or she calls “the essence of all joyous things.” The poet explains how the speaker is searching and hoping to find the redbird in the misty morning. Finally, the poet describes how thrilled the speaker is to finally see the redbird. The speaker says, “It was so sweet a sight!”

or

The poet develops the speaker’s feelings about the redbird by showing how he hears the bird, then looks for him eagerly in the “violet-tinted haze.” As the sun breaks through, the speaker finds what he’s hoping to see. When he finally sees it, he says his heart is thrilled to see such a sweet sight.

or

any other valid response

Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
2	The response is complete and correct. The student explains how the poet develops the speaker’s feelings about the redbird.
1	The response is not complete or is only partially correct. The student does not fully explain how the poet develops the speaker’s feelings about the redbird, or includes minor errors in the interpretation or representation of the text.
0	The student’s response is incorrect, irrelevant, too brief to evaluate, or blank.

Item 3

Exemplary Response

The authors of *The Secret Garden* and “The First Redbird” help the reader experience their stories with their descriptive words and ideas.

In *The Secret Garden*, there is a girl who finds a hidden door. The writer tells us that her heart pounds and her hands shake, which means that she is scared. She even opens the door very slowly. When she gets inside, she is surprised because it is so quiet. She says, “How still it is!” From the description, we know she feels like she found her own special world.

In “The First Redbird,” the writer tells the story of hearing a bird sing a beautiful song. She looks everywhere for the bird because its song is “honey-sweet and clear.” When she finally sees it, she feels very happy. She says, “All my heart with rapture thrilled.” Her poetry shows that the scene fills the speaker with amazement and wonder.

Both authors use beautiful words and description to tell their stories. “The First Redbird” and *The Secret Garden* help the readers experience a new world.

or

any other valid response

Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
4	<p>The response is complete and correct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student explains how the authors of <i>The Secret Garden</i> and “The First Redbird” help readers to “see” and experience things in the passage and the poem.• The student uses details, ideas, or examples from both passages to support the response.• Errors in the conventions of standard English are minimal.
3	<p>The response shows a general understanding, but is incomplete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student does not fully explain how the authors of <i>The Secret Garden</i> and “The First Redbird” help readers to “see” and experience things in the passage and the poem, OR uses details, ideas, or examples from only one passage in support of the response.• Minor errors in the conventions of standard English may be present, but do not impair readability.
2	<p>The response shows partial understanding and is incomplete or incorrect in an important element.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student only partially explains how the authors of <i>The Secret Garden</i> and “The First Redbird” help readers to “see” and experience things in the passage and the poem, OR uses details, ideas, or examples from only one passage in support of the response.• Many errors in the conventions of standard English are present and may somewhat inhibit understanding.
1	<p>The response shows minimal understanding and is significantly incomplete or incorrect in important elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student only minimally explains how the authors of <i>The Secret Garden</i> and “The First Redbird” help readers to “see” and experience things in the passage and the poem, OR does not use details, ideas, or examples from the passages in support of the response.• Errors in the conventions of standard English are significant and the reader struggles to understand.
0	<p>The student’s response is incorrect, irrelevant, too brief to evaluate, or blank.</p>