

Preview of Common Core State Standards Sample EAGLE Items

Grade 8

English Language Arts

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Grade 8

The following item set uses two sources—an article and a pair of folk songs—to build knowledge and offer information about a ghost town in Northern California. In reading and reviewing the sources the student will practice and demonstrate skills relating to close reading, textual analysis, synthesis of information, and writing to learn. A complete item set would apply more scaffolding using traditional and technology-enhanced items to build main idea, supporting detail, and vocabulary knowledge.

Bodie: From Boomtown to Ghost Town

In 1875, miners in Northern California had given up on the town of Bodie. The small beginning of a town was abandoned when people were unable to find more gold. But, when an old mine caved in, more gold glimmered out from the rubble. This discovery was an “excitement.” This term was often used to describe new gold discoveries.

Stagecoaches began streaming into Bodie with miners hoping to get rich. Following close behind them were the carpenters, bankers, and merchants hoping to take the miners’ money for housing and services. What resulted was a boomtown.

Bodie was one of the most famous of all boomtowns. An article in the *Daily Alta California* newspaper, dated September 13, 1878, reported the following:

There are about two hundred houses and cabins, constructed of wood, canvas, adobe and rock; two banks (just opened), general merchandise stores, blacksmith shops, laundries, lodging houses (every place in town necessarily is such) and saloons “till yer can’t rest,” as a Nevada friend remarked. Everybody with anything to sell finds ready purchasers. The character of the sojourners¹ in Bodie does not differ from that to be seen at every “excitement.” They are a hard crowd for the most part.

Just a year later, the *Daily Alta California* described Bodie again:

The stage comes in daily, filled to its utmost capacity, and the departures of those who have made their fortunes or lost their fortunes are as yet very small. Many idle men throng the streets—it is no place for a poor man, who depends solely on the labor of his hands. For that matter, almost every profession is overstocked. Bodie does not need men but capital² to develop her resources, and her mines are fast doing it for her. Saloons and gambling halls abound. There are at least sixty saloons in the place, and not a single church. Still, the morals are not so very bad. There has not been a man killed for a month or two.

As in most boomtowns, merchants and town leaders wanted to help the town attract and keep residents who planned to become wealthy. They wanted the appearance of a permanent and prosperous city. Busy carpenters quickly constructed wood buildings with “false fronts” to make them appear multi-storied and elegant. In short order Bodie had an attractive main street, a brass band, and a semi-professional baseball team.

Life in Bodie, however, was lawless and hardscrabble, not prosperous, peaceful, or stable. As the mining companies did not continue to find enough gold or silver to cover costs, they closed the mines. By 1913 the last big mine closed. Soon, the boomtown had become a ghost town.

Today, curious visitors can visit Bodie State Historical Park by driving the long dirt road in summer or hiking in using snowshoes in winter. Nearly all of the homes and businesses that once served a town of almost 10,000 people have fallen under wind, fire, or snow. The several structures that still stand are not repaired or restored, but caretakers protect them from further damage. Park officials call this protection a state of “arrested decay.”

Visitors can peer into windows and see tables and chairs covered in thick dust as though residents left suddenly upon hearing of another “excitement” without bothering to pack up their belongings. If a stagecoach were to drive down the dirt road, it would not look out of place.

¹ travelers

² money

Boomtown Architecture



Folk Songs of the Gold Rush

Sweet Betsy from Pike

Did you ever hear tell of Sweet Betsy from Pike,
Who crossed the wide mountains with her husband Ike,
With two yoke of cattle and one spotted hog,
A tall Shanghai rooster and an old yellow dog.

They passed the Sierras through mountains of snow,
Till old California was sighted below.
Sweet Betsy, she hollered, and Ike gave a cheer,
Saying, "Betsy, my darlin', I'm a made millionaire."

Lousy Miner

It's four long years since I reached this land
In search of gold among the rocks and sand,
And yet I'm poor when the truth is told,
I'm a lousy miner,
I'm a lousy miner in search of shining gold.

O land of gold, you did me deceive,
And I intend you my bones to leave,
So farewell home, now my friends grow cold,
I'm a lousy miner,
I'm a lousy miner, in search of shining gold.

UIN:	280003	Subject:	ELA	Grade:	8	Item Type:	MC		
CCSS:	L.8.4a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown words and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on <i>grade 8 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies: a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.							
MC Key:	B, B +C	Item Name:	Boomtown definition	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	M	DOK	2
Points:	3	Accommodations:		Scoring Method:		AS			
Passage Title(s):	Bodie: Boomtown to Ghost Town								
Source info:									

Part A

Which definition **best** applies to the term boomtown?

- A. a noisy, busy, and crowded town
- B. a town that grows suddenly and quickly
- C. an abandoned town that is rediscovered
- D. an old town that has become a state historical park

Part B

Which **two** sentences from the article **best** support the definition you chose?

- A. “The small beginning of a town was abandoned when people were unable to find more gold.”
- B. “Stagecoaches began streaming into Bodie with miners hoping to get rich.”
- C. “Following close behind them were the carpenters, bankers, and merchants hoping to take the miners’ money for housing and services.”
- D. “The stage comes in daily, filled to its utmost capacity, and the departures of those who have made their fortunes or lost their fortunes are as yet very small.”
- E. “Life in Bodie, however, was lawless and hardscrabble, not prosperous, peaceful, or stable.”
- F. “Visitors can peer into windows and see tables and chairs covered in thick dust as though residents left suddenly upon hearing of another “excitement” without bothering to pack up their belongings.”

UIN:	280002	Subject:	ELA	Grade: 8		Item Type:	SA		
CCSS:	RI.8.5	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.							
MC Key:		Item Name:	first hand news account vs/current article	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	H	DOK	4
Points:	2	Accommodations:		Scoring Method:		HS			
Passage Title(s):	Bodie: From Boomtown to Ghost Town								
Source info:									

How does paragraph 3 of the article help the reader understand the popularity of Bodie, California in the late 1800s? Use details and examples from the article to support your response.

UIN:	280002	Subject:	ELA	Grade:	8	Item Type:	SA			
CCSS:	RI.8.7	Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.								
MC Key:		Item Name:	Photos help understanding	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	M	DOK	4	
Points:	2	Accommodations :		Scoring Method:	HS					
Passage Title(s):	Bodie: From Boomtown to Ghost Town									
Source info:										

How do the photographs enhance the reader’s understanding of information in paragraphs 4 to 7 of the article?
 What information in those paragraphs is better illustrated by the text, not the photographs?

UIN:	280004	Subject:	ELA	Grade:	8	Item Type:	Copy/paste, MC, SA		
CCSS:	RI.8.9	Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.							
MC Key:	B	Item Name:	Compare folk songs	# Art Pieces:	0	Est. Difficulty:	4	DOK	2-4
Points:	4	Accommodations:		Scoring Method:	Mixed				
Passage Title(s):	Folk Songs, Bodie: Boomtown to Ghost Town								
Source info:									

Part A

Copy the line from each folk song that best shows its main idea. Paste the line into the table below.

Sweet Betsy from Pike	Lousy Miner

Part B

Which folk song gives the **most** accurate representation of what the gold rush was like for the people of Bodie, California?

- A. "Sweet Betsy from Pike"
- B. "Lousy Miner"

Part C

Explain your answer using details and examples from the article.

UIN:	280005	Subject:	ELA	Grade: 8		Item Type:	essay		
CCSS:	W.8.2a-f W.8.9b L.8.1a-d L.8.2a-c	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 informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research: b. Apply <i>grade 8 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction. 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):	Bodie: From Boomtown to Ghost Town								
Source info:									

Write a well-developed multiparagraph composition that explains the expectations of the people who came to Bodie and the reality of life in Bodie. Use details, examples, and ideas from the article and the folk songs as support. Be sure to follow the conventions of standard English.

Sample Constructed-Response Item Rubrics

Grade 8

These are the rubrics and sample responses for the constructed-response **Common Core State Standards Sample EAGLE Items** for Grade 8. 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 2

Exemplary Response

Paragraph 3 shows that Bodie was popular in 1878 by describing the busy streets. Suddenly, there were 200 houses and lots of stores and businesses. People were making money, as the text says, “Everybody with anything to sell finds ready purchasers.”

or

The paragraph describes Bodie when it was a thriving town. It says, “There are about two hundred houses and cabins.” It also talks about the businesses that set up there, including saloons and hotels. The paragraph tells us the people are a “hard crowd.”

or

any other valid response

Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
2	The response is complete and correct. The student explains how paragraph 3 helps the reader understand the popularity of Bodie, California in the late 1800s using details and examples from the article to support the response.
1	The response is not complete or is only partially correct. The student does not fully explain how paragraph 3 helps the reader understand the popularity of Bodie, California in the late 1800s using details and examples from the article to support the response, 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 photographs enhance our understanding of the text by giving a visual aid for things like the “false fronts” and the main street. We can tell that the town once looked nice. On the other hand, some things cannot be seen from the pictures, including the fact that Bodie was lawless and unstable. The text is better for explaining these facts.

or

When I look at the pictures, I can see the text come alive. I see an Old West town with the hotels, saloons, shops, and houses described in the article. The text, however, is better able to describe the history of Bodie. A picture is not able to tell us that information.

or

any other valid response

Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
2	The response is complete and correct. The student explains how the photographs enhance the reader’s understanding of information in paragraphs 4 through 7 of the article and what information in those paragraphs is better illustrated by the text and not by the photographs.
1	The response is not complete or is only partially correct. The student does not fully explain how the photographs enhance the reader’s understanding of information in paragraphs 4 through 7 of the article and what information in those paragraphs is better illustrated by the text and not by the photographs, 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 4C

Exemplary Response

I think that the song “Lousy Miner” describes what life was really like for people in Bodie, California. The article describes the life of miners, and it says that by 1879, the streets were thronged with men who had no jobs and that life was “not prosperous.” In fact, “almost every profession is overstocked.”

or

Life was hard in Bodie, California, so “Lousy Miner” describes the gold rush better than “Sweet Betsy from Pike.” The article explains that life in Bodie was “hardscrabble” rather than “prosperous.” Hardscrabble means earning enough to barely get by. The song says the miner is poor. Bodie eventually became a ghost town.

or

any other valid response

Scoring Rubric

Score	Description
2	The response is complete and correct. The student explains the answer in part B using details and examples from the article.
1	The response is not complete or is only partially correct. The student does not fully explain the answer in part B using details and examples from the article, 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 5

Exemplary Response

There was a big difference between what people hoped for and what life was really like in Bodie, California. When we read the song “Sweet Betsy from Pike,” we see that people thought they’d get rich, but when we read “Lousy Miner,” we see the truth. The song is a little sad because it talks about traveling to a new land to discover gold, but finding nothing and staying poor. The article about Bodie also describes the life of miners. It tells us that by 1913, the last mine closed, leaving the town nearly empty.

The article begins by describing the “excitement” in Bodie. When gold was found, people rushed to Bodie to get their piece of the pie. People built houses, shops, hotels, and saloons. Business was good, and Bodie became a boomtown. As the article puts it, “Everybody with anything to sell finds ready purchasers.” Therefore, there was a short time when people did well.

Unfortunately, things changed fast. Even though town leaders wanted to encourage more people to move to Bodie, there wasn’t really much wealth left. As the article says, “Life in Bodie, however, was lawless and hardscrabble, not prosperous, peaceful, or stable.” When the gold and silver disappeared, no one had jobs anymore, so Bodie became a ghost town.

The “Lousy Miner” song says, “And yet I’m poor when the truth is told, I’m a lousy miner, I’m a lousy miner in search of shining gold.” I think most people who went to California looking for gold sang that song, not “I’m a made millionaire.” Clearly, people wanted to get rich during the gold rush, but Bodie is an example showing that this dream was not realistic.

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 writes a well-developed, multiparagraph composition that explains the expectations of the people who came to Bodie and the reality of life in Bodie.• The student uses details, examples, and ideas from the article and the folk songs 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 the expectations of the people who came to Bodie and the reality of life in Bodie, OR uses details from only two of the sources 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 the expectations of the people who came to Bodie and the reality of life in Bodie, OR uses details from only one of the sources 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 the expectations of the people who came to Bodie and the reality of life in Bodie, OR does not use evidence 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>