

MeTEOR Performance Task

English I

English Language Arts
With Brotherhood



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MeTEOR
CONNECTING THE DOTS

4. Make a prediction of what will come next in the document based on what you have read in the “Preamble.”

5. According to the preamble, what is the purpose of the government?

Study the lyrics to the poem, “America, the Beautiful” and answer questions 6 and 7.

6. How does the author’s use of language contribute to the tone of the poem? Give specific examples from the text.

ARTICLES AND RUBRICS

“A Quilt of a Country” Anna Quindlen, Sep 26, 2001 (Newsweek)

America is an improbable idea. A mongrel nation built of ever-changing disparate parts, it is held together by a notion, the notion that all men are created equal, though everyone knows that most men consider themselves better than someone. "Of all the nations in the world, the United States was built in nobody's image," the historian Daniel Boorstin wrote. That's because it was built of bits and pieces that seem discordant, like the crazy quilts that have been one of its great folk-art forms, velvet and calico and checks and brocades. Out of many, one. That is the ideal.

The reality is often quite different, a great national striving consisting frequently of failure. Many of the oft-told stories of the most pluralistic nation on earth are stories not of tolerance, but of bigotry. Slavery and sweatshops, the burning of crosses and the ostracism of the other. Children learn in social-studies class and in the news of the lynching of blacks, the denial of rights to women, the murders of gay men. It is difficult to know how to convince them that this amounts to "crown thy good with brotherhood," that amid all the failures is something spectacularly successful. Perhaps they understand it at this moment, when enormous tragedy, as it so often does, demands a time of reflection on enormous blessings.

This is a nation founded on a conundrum, what Mario Cuomo has characterized as "community added to individualism." These two are our defining ideals; they are also in constant conflict. Historians today bemoan the ascendancy of a kind of prideful apartheid in America, saying that the clinging to ethnicity, in background and custom, has undermined the concept of unity. These historians must have forgotten the past, or have gilded it. The New York of my children is no more Balkanized, probably less so, than the Philadelphia of my father, in which Jewish boys would walk several blocks out of their way to avoid the Irish divide of Chester Avenue. (I was the product of a mixed marriage, across barely bridgeable lines: an Italian girl, an Irish boy. How quaint it seems now, how incendiary then.) The Brooklyn of Francie Nolan's famous tree, the Newark of which Portnoy complained, even the uninflected WASP suburbs of Cheever's characters: they are ghettos, pure and simple. Do the Cambodians and the Mexicans in California coexist less easily today than did the Irish and Italians of Massachusetts a century ago? You know the answer.

What is the point of this splintered whole? What is the point of a nation in which Arab cabbies chauffeur Jewish passengers through the streets of New York--and in which Jewish cabbies chauffeur Arab passengers, too, and yet speak in theory of hatred, one for the other? What is the point of a nation in which one part seems to be always on the verge of fisticuffs with another, blacks and whites, gays and straights, left and right, Pole and Chinese and Puerto Rican and Slovenian? Other countries with such divisions

have in fact divided into new nations with new names, but not this one, impossibly interwoven even in its hostilities.

Once these disparate parts were held together by a common enemy, by the fault lines of world wars and the electrified fence of communism. With the end of the cold war there was the creeping concern that without a focus for hatred and distrust, a sense of national identity would evaporate, that the left side of the hyphen--African-American, Mexican-American, Irish-American--would overwhelm the right. And slow-growing domestic traumas like economic unrest and increasing crime seemed more likely to emphasize division than community. Today the citizens of the United States have come together once more because of armed conflict and enemy attack. Terrorism has led to devastation--and unity.

Yet even in 1994, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed by the National Opinion Research Center agreed with this statement: "The U.S. is a unique country that stands for something special in the world." One of the things that it stands for is this vexing notion that a great nation can consist entirely of refugees from other nations that people of different, even warring religions and cultures can live, if not side by side, then on either side of the country's Chester Avenues. Faced with this diversity there is little point in trying to isolate anything remotely resembling a national character, but there are two strains of behavior that, however tenuously, abet the concept of unity.

There is that Calvinist undercurrent in the American psyche that loves the difficult, the demanding, that sees mastering the impossible, whether it be prairie or subway, as a test of character, and so glories in the struggle of this fractured coalescing. And there is a grudging fairness among the citizens of the United States that eventually leads most to admit that, no matter what the English-only advocates try to suggest, the new immigrants are not so different from our own parents or grandparents. Leonel Castillo, former director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and himself the grandson of Mexican immigrants, once told the writer Studs Terkel proudly, "The old neighborhood Ma-Pa stores are still around. They are not Italian or Jewish or Eastern European any more. Ma and Pa are now Korean, Vietnamese, Iraqi, Jordanian, and Latin American. They live in the store. They work seven days a week. Their kids are doing well in school. They're making it. Sound familiar?"

Tolerance is the word used most often when this kind of coexistence succeeds, but tolerance is a vanilla-pudding word, standing for little more than the allowance of letting others live unremarked and unmolested. Pride seems excessive, given the American willingness to endlessly complain about them, them being whoever new, different, unknown is or currently under suspicion. But patriotism is partly taking pride in this unlikely ability to throw all of us together in a country that across its length and breadth is as different as a dozen countries, and still be able to call it by one name. When photographs of the faces of all those who died in the World Trade Center

destruction are assembled in one place, it will be possible to trace in the skin color, the shape of the eyes and the noses, the texture of the hair, a map of the world. These are the representatives of a mongrel nation that somehow, at times like this, has one spirit. Like many improbable ideas, when it actually works, it's a wonder.

Preamble to the U.S. Declaration of Independence, 1776



We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

America the Beautiful

Words by Katharine Lee Bates

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet
Whose stern impassioned stress
A thoroughfare of freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved
In liberating strife.
Who more than self their country loved
And mercy more than life!
America! America!
May God thy gold refine
Till all success be nobleness
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for halcyon skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the enameled plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till souls wax fair as earth and air
And music-hearted sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim's feet,
Whose stem impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till paths be wrought through
wilds of thought
By pilgrim foot and knee!

O beautiful for glory-tale
Of liberating strife
When once and twice,
for man's avail
Men lavished precious life!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till selfish gain no longer stain
The banner of the free!

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
Till nobler men keep once again
Thy whiter jubilee!

Constructed Response Rubric

Score Point	Descriptor
3	<p>The 3 response fully accomplishes the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a complete interpretation that goes beyond the text, • has clear logic or reasoning, and • provides specific, relevant support from the text.
2	<p>The 2 response adequately accomplishes the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes an adequate interpretation, • may have minor flaws in logic or reasoning, and • provides general but relevant support from the text.
1	<p>The 1 response minimally accomplishes the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes a minimal interpretation, • may have gaps in understanding or flaws in logic or reasoning, and • may provide sparse or irrelevant support from the text.
0	<p>The 0 response does not accomplish the task requirements. It</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may provide no support from the text, • may be limited to information copied directly from the text and presented as the student's own ideas, and • may be incorrect or illogical.

Letter to the Editor Rubric

Achievement Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Knowledge/Understanding -provides accurate information about the issue (e.g., the problem, the cause, who is involved, what decision needs to be made)	-limited accurate information	-some accurate information	-considerable accurate information	-thorough accurate information
Thinking/Inquiry -summarizes alternate courses of action or opposing views	-limited information about possible courses of action or opposing views	-some information about possible courses of action or opposing views	-considerable information about possible courses of action or opposing views	-thorough (but succinct) information about possible courses of action or opposing views
Application -offers a reasoned conclusion or plan of action -provides reasons designed to appeal to reader	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows limited logic -provides limited support for conclusion	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows some logic -provides moderately convincing support for conclusion	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows considerable logic -provides convincing support for conclusion	-conclusion or suggestions for action shows a high degree of logic -provides highly convincing support for conclusion
Communication -clarity of communication -effectiveness in terms of audience and purpose (follows editorial style and conventions)	-written with limited clarity -limited evidence that writer is considering impact on audience	-written with some clarity -some evidence that writer is considering impact on audience	-written with considerable clarity -considerable evidence that writer is considering impact on audience	-written with a high degree of clarity -extensive evidence that writer is considering impact on audience

Narrative Essay Rubric

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.				
Standard	Exceptional (10-9)	Proficient (8-7)	Emerging (6-1)	Not Evident (0)
<p>Introduction - Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.</p>	<p>____ Effectively hook the reader with a creative, original, and compelling hook</p> <p>____ Effectively sets out a problem, situation, or observation in a compelling and/or creative manner</p> <p>____ Establish an insightful, original, or creative point of view</p> <p>____ Introduce a complex and/or creative narrator, characters, setting, and main idea</p>	<p>____ Hook the reader with a compelling hook</p> <p>____ Effectively sets out a problem, situation, or observation</p> <p>____ Establish an insightful point of view</p> <p>____ Introduce a narrator, characters, setting, and main idea</p>	<p>____ Hook the reader</p> <p>____ Sets out a problem, situation, or observation</p> <p>____ Establish a point of view</p> <p>____ Introduce a narrator, character, setting or main idea</p>	<p>____ Does not hook the reader</p> <p>____ Does not set out a problem, situation, or observation</p> <p>____ Does not establish a point of view</p> <p>____ Does not introduce a narrator or character, setting or main idea</p>
<p>Narrative - Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p>	<p>____ Utilize two or more (teacher discretion) narrative techniques with purpose: dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, multiple plot lines, etc.</p> <p>____ Develop experiences, events, and/or characters and to clearly develop a purposeful theme</p>	<p>____ Utilize narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines</p> <p>____ Develop experiences, events, and/or characters in attempt to convey theme</p>	<p>____ Utilizes some narrative techniques</p> <p>____ Develops some experiences, events, or characters to convey a theme</p>	<p>____ Does not utilize narrative techniques</p> <p>____ Does not use experiences, events or characters to develop a theme</p>

<p>Organization - Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.</p>	<p>___ Use purposefully narrative techniques such as foreshadowing, dramatic irony, suspense, and/or flashbacks in a highly effective manner to create an original plot structure</p> <p>___ Create a smooth progression of experiences or events that is logical, creative, and sophisticated and that uses highly engaging devices</p>	<p>___ Use appropriately techniques such as foreshadowing, dramatic irony, suspense, and/or flashbacks</p> <p>___ Create a smooth progression of experiences or events that is logical and engaging</p>	<p>___ Use techniques such as foreshadowing, dramatic irony, suspense, and/or flashbacks</p> <p>___ Create a progression of experiences or events that is logical or engaging</p>	<p>___ Does not use techniques such as foreshadowing, dramatic irony, suspense, and/or flashbacks</p> <p>___ Does not create a progression of experiences or events that is logical or engaging</p>
<p>Language - Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</p>	<p>___ Use precise, detailed and sophisticated words, phrases, and sensory language to engage the reader and convey a vivid picture</p>	<p>___ Use precise and detailed words, phrases, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture</p>	<p>___ Uses words, phrases, and images to convey a picture</p>	<p>___ Does not use words, phrases, and images to convey a picture</p>
<p>Conclusion - Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.</p>	<p>___ Provide a conclusion that reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolves</p> <p>___ Extends the meaning and purpose to connect to the audience and convey a complex and original theme</p>	<p>___ Provide a conclusion that reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved</p> <p>___ Extends the meaning to convey a theme</p>	<p>___ Provides a conclusion</p> <p>___ Conveys a theme</p>	<p>___ No conclusion</p> <p>___ Does not convey a theme</p>



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