

# **Missouri Assessment Program – Practice Form**

## **Grade 8 English Language Arts**

### **Transcripts of Listening Passages**

The following two pages contain the transcripts of the listening passages in Session 4 of the grade 8 English Language Arts online practice form. The transcripts may be provided to hearing impaired students who need support to access the listening passages. The Test Examiner should read the passages aloud to the student. In circumstances where the student has no hearing, does not sign and cannot read lips, the student may read the passages directly. The passages correspond to the following questions in Session 4:

Passage 1: Questions 1–4

Passage 2: Questions 5–8

The transcripts must remain secure at all times. After testing, the transcripts must be destroyed by the STC or DTC at the building level, and electronic files must be deleted.

## Handwriting

These days, almost everyone uses electronic devices, and most written communication is done using a keyboard. It seems that there is really no reason to pick up a pen anymore or to learn handwriting at school. In reality the opposite is true—good old-fashioned handwriting provides many benefits that keyboarding does not offer.

Scientists have discovered that handwriting can create powerful connections in the brain. According to one expert, a unique circuit in the brain is activated when a person writes by hand. This circuit creates communication pathways between different parts of the brain. It means that you might learn things, connect ideas, and remember things much more effectively if you write them down. These types of mental connections are more difficult to form with keyboarding.

Psychologist Carol Christensen agrees. Christensen has performed studies testing the impact of handwriting. In her tests, students up to grade 8 typically produced better-quality work when they used handwriting.

And it is not only kids and teens who benefit. Experts have found that writing by hand can help everyone, from young children to adults. According to research, using a computer can be distracting, but writing by hand can encourage concentration. As psychologist Paul Bloom states, “With handwriting, the very act of putting it down [on paper] forces you to focus on what’s important.”

No matter how important keyboarding has become, handwriting still remains an important life skill. You may need to jot down notes for your boss, write a shopping list, fill out a form, or write a thoughtful thank-you note. People who have taken the time to develop handwriting skills are equipped to do all of these tasks quickly and easily. Whether in school, at work, or in everyday life, we can all still benefit by learning and practicing handwriting skills.

## The Elgin Marbles

Over the centuries, many items of historical importance have been moved out of their home country. Often this sparks debate on where these artifacts belong. Should they stay in the host country or should they be returned to their original home? The solution is rarely clear. Ultimately, it must be decided by the two nations involved. When deciding the fate of these treasures, their preservation should be the primary concern.

The sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens, Greece, are a famous example. These statues are sometimes called the Elgin Marbles because Lord Elgin brought them from Greece to England in the early 1800s. At that time, many of the Parthenon sculptures had already been destroyed. Lord Elgin took about half of the remaining sculptures back to England. They are now housed at the British Museum in London, England.

England claims to have a right to the statues because Lord Elgin bought them from the sultan who ruled Greece at the time. Greece claims they were never legally sold by the sultan. They should be returned to Greece so they can be displayed with the other ancient sculptures from the Parthenon.

However, the strongest argument involves who can preserve these treasures for future generations to study and enjoy. Greece points out that the statues were damaged in England by pollution in the nineteenth century. They were further harmed by the chisels, acid, and sandpaper the British used to clean them at the time. The city of Athens has been restoring the Parthenon, and a new museum there is designed to keep the statues safe.

England argues that the statues would have been destroyed by war if Lord Elgin had not rescued them. Pollution in Athens may have further damaged the statues. The British Museum maintains that staff take good care of the marble statues and now use safer methods to clean them.

Both countries have strong arguments in their favor. The final decision should be based primarily on which country can best maintain these irreplaceable artifacts.