

2012–2013
North Carolina
Measures of Student Learning:
NC's Common Exams

Sample Items



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6314

MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

English I Sample Items

Diary

"Dear Diary," she wrote, her pen poised
pointed and sharp,
thoughts twirling swirling cavorting in the air
risking life and limb and maybe some blood.

5 The ink sat waiting, impatient, annoyed,
for the clarity to settle in, for the words to coalesce
into some form of sanity.

But somewhere in the woven threads of thought
when the next swipe of the pen touched

10 the puritanical canvas that threatened her equilibrium,
there came not a letter formed, not a word whispered,
but another kind of line –

the dancing marks finding their own path, their own mind.

Words protested, "No! It is our turn!" but were ignored

15 in favor of the image spilling forth from within –

a wounded dragon, reared back in a rage,

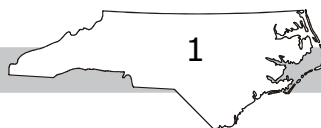
hissing and spitting flames of pain and fury,

pierced through the heart by a spear of loneliness and neglect.

The pen flew, spatters of ink transforming into blood and tears.

20 Words retreated, knowing they'd lost the battle,
soundly defeated by a power they could not match,
even a thousand strong.

At last, she lay, silent, sated, staring at the open page,
wondering when the next attack would come.



Go to the next page.

MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

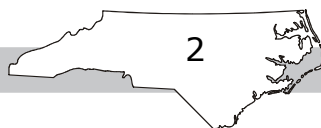
CR – Short

There is a popular idiom that states, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” How does the poem exemplify this idiom? Include at least two details from the poem to support your answer.

MC

In the poem, how are the girl and the dragon related?

- A. The girl wants to write a story about a dragon.
- B. The dragon represents the girl and her situation.
- C. The girl wishes she could turn herself into a dragon.
- D. The dragon illustrates the power the girl wants to have.



MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

OCS Introductory Math Sample Item

This sample item has been removed from this document. The Occupational Course of Study Introductory Math MSL was eliminated effective with the 2013-14 school year. (November 27, 2013)



MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

Advanced Functions and Modeling Sample Item

CR—

The function below determines the amount of yearly tax a person must pay, which is based on the amount of money they earn each year.

$$T(x) = \begin{cases} 0.10x, & \$0 \leq x < \$12,750 \\ 0.07(x - 12,750) + 765, & \$12,750 \leq x < \$60,000 \\ 0.0775(x - 60,000) + 4,072.50, & x \geq \$60,000 \end{cases}$$

- Describe the domain and range of the tax function in context.
- Identify the domain and range of $t(x)$.
- Based on the function provided, explain how the amount of tax owed changes if your earnings increase from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

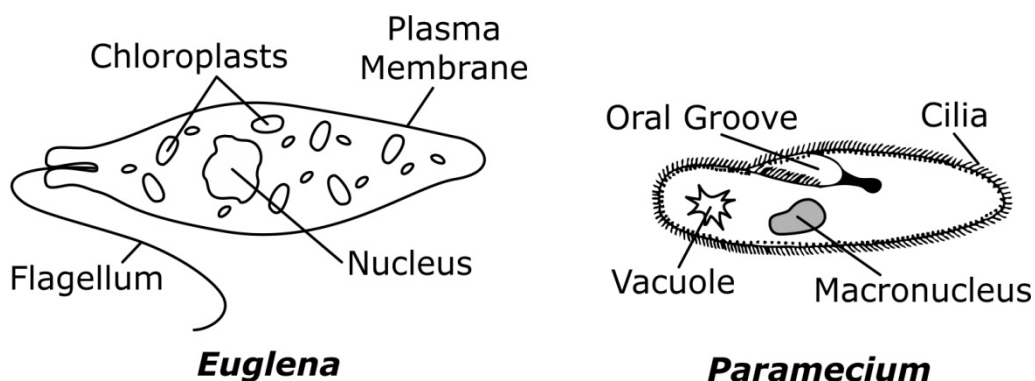


MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

Grade 7 Science Sample Items

MC—

This diagram shows a *Euglena* and *Paramecium*.



How are *Euglena* and *Paramecium* similar?

- A. Both are types of plants.
- B. Both have a cell wall to maintain their structure.
- C. Both have structures that aid them in movement.
- D. Both must produce their own food in order to live.

MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

CR—

The air quality in the atmosphere is very important to the health of humans.

- Give one example of how pollutants enter the atmosphere.
- Describe how humans can remove pollutants in the atmosphere to improve air quality.



MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

Grade 7 Social Studies Sample Item

MC—

TIMELINE OF DEMOCRACY

500 BCE—Democratic principles were found in governments of Greece and Rome

1100s—Democracy is found in Italy

1500s—Democracy is accepted during the Protestant Reformation

1700s—The English's limited democracy spreads to the American Colonies

1940s—West Germany and Japan become democracies

1970s—Portugal, Spain, and Greece become democracies

What does the timeline suggest about the idea of democracy?

- A. Democratic principles have spread throughout the world.
- B. Democratic principles began in the United States.
- C. Democratic principles have spread through North America.
- D. Democratic principles began in the 1100s.

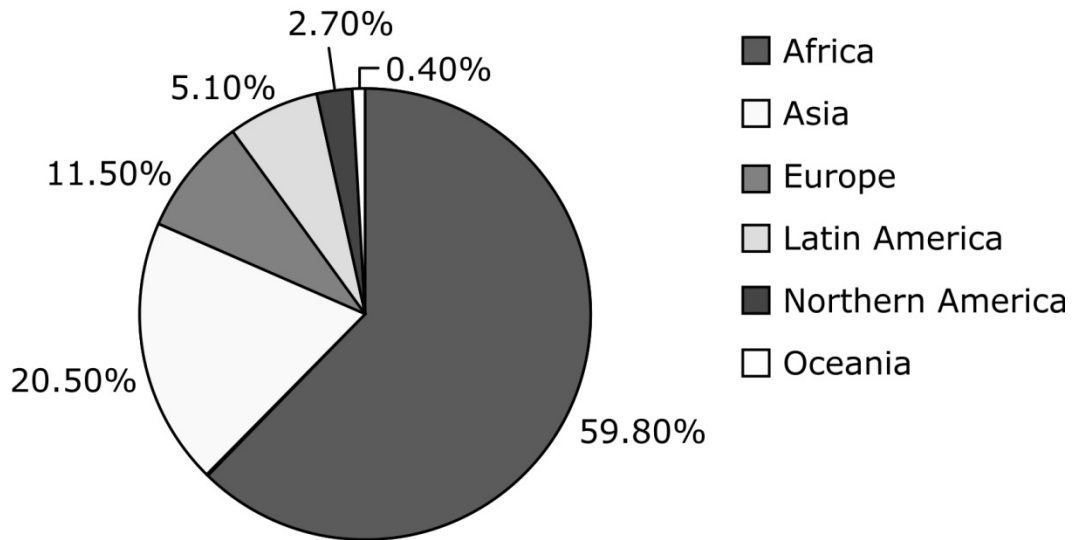


MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

Grade 8 Social Studies Sample Item

CR-

North Carolina Immigrants by Region of Origin, 2006



The pie chart shows the immigrant distribution of North Carolina's population in 2006. Explain how three immigrant groups from the chart contributed to the development of North Carolina.

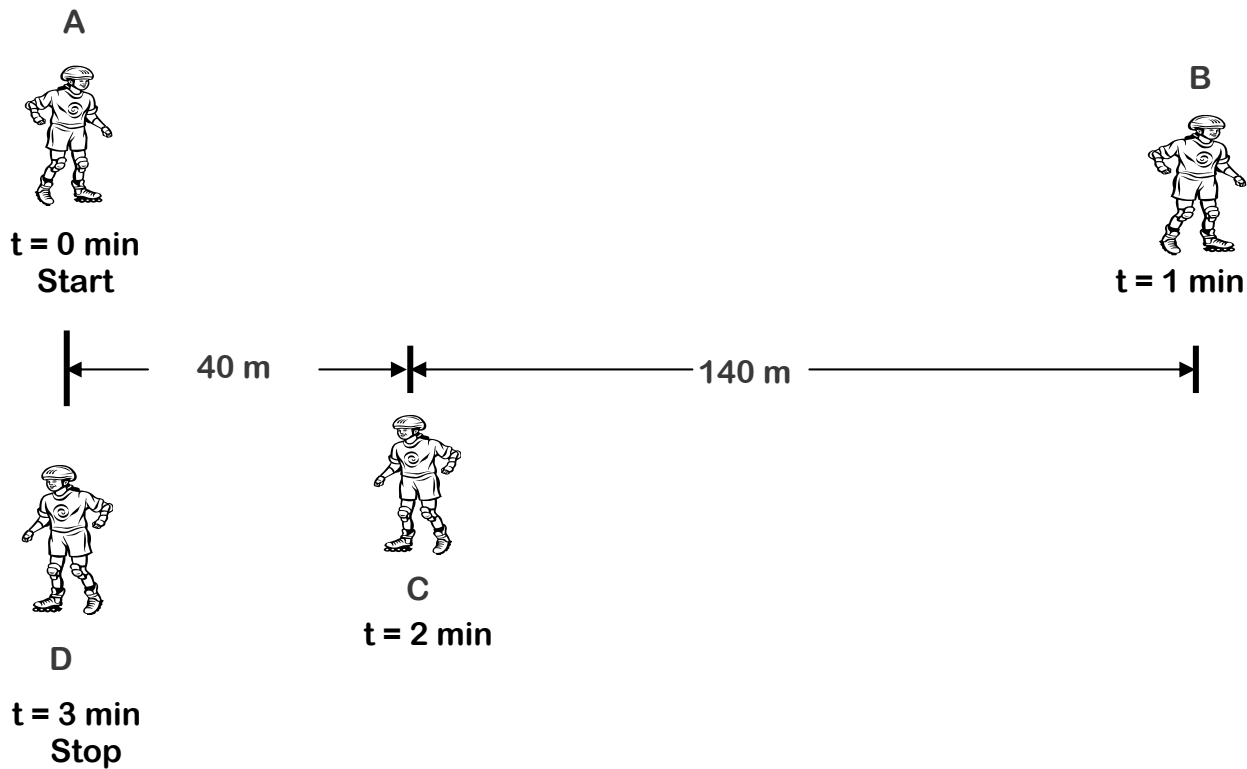


MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

Physical Science Sample Item

CR—

A student is practicing for a big race. At each of the indicated times, she turns around and reverses the direction of travel or changes her speed until she stops at point D. Based on the diagram, how does the student's displacement at point D compare to the total distance travelled? Explain your answer using the terms frame of reference, distance, and displacement. Also, support your answer with mathematical reasoning.



MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

Civics and Economics Sample Item

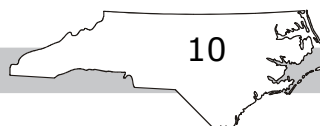
CR-

The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions: for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; . . . and being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us, that may authorize us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours. . . . This makes him willing to quit a condition, which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers: and it is not without reason, that he seeks out, and is willing to join in society with others, who are already united, or have a mind to unite, for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name, property. When any one, or more, shall take upon them to make laws, whom the people have not appointed so to do, they make laws without authority, which the people are not therefore bound to obey; by which means they come again to be out of subjection, and may constitute to themselves a new legislative, as they think best, being in full liberty to resist the force of those, who without authority would impose any thing upon them.

John Locke, *Second Treatise* (1689)

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

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



MSL SAMPLE ITEMS

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 to 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.

Thomas Jefferson, *The United States Declaration of Independence* (1776)

Using the two excerpts above, analyze the relationship between the Enlightenment ideas of John Locke and the founding ideas of the United States as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson. In your response, be sure to provide at least two examples of how Locke may have influenced Jefferson.

