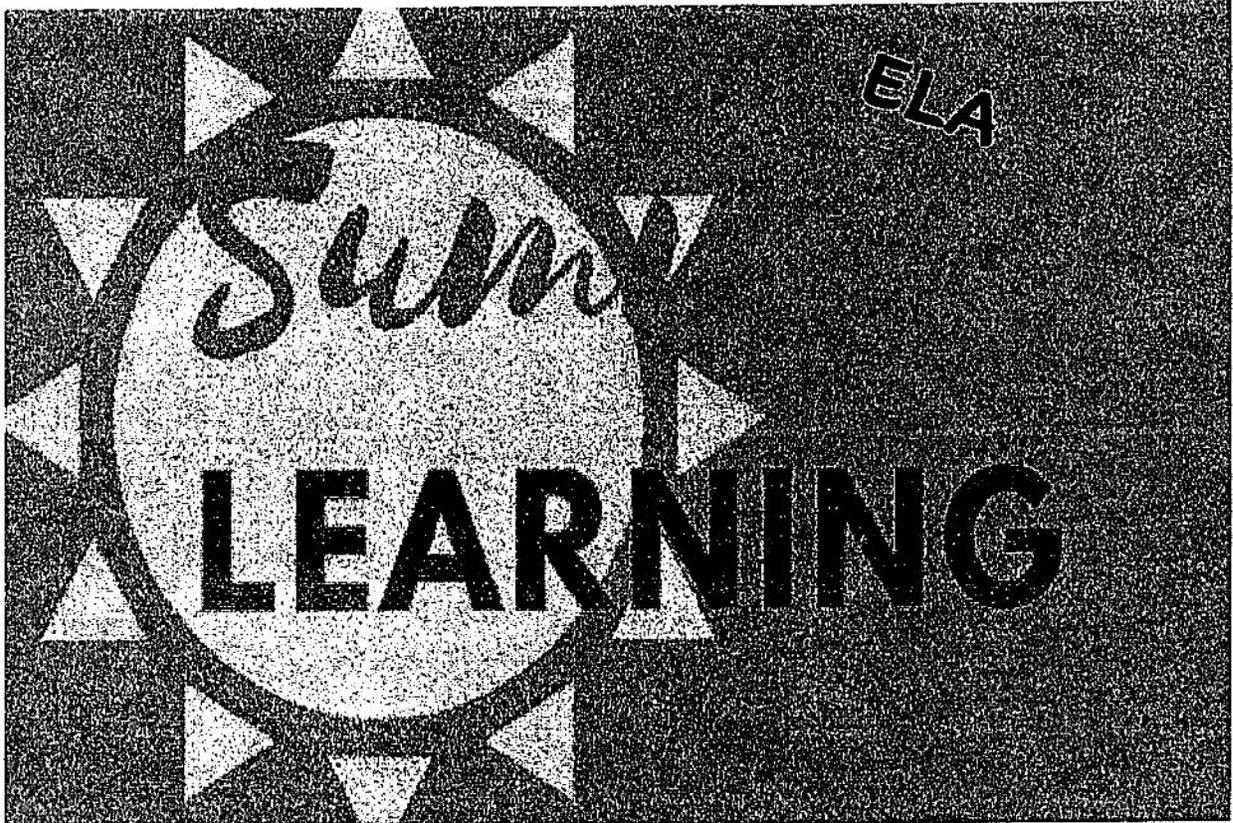


Walt Whitman Middle School 246

Incoming Grade 6



Name: _____

Due Date: Friday, September 5



Dear 246 Scholars,

Throughout the school year, you have worked hard to build a strong foundation of English Language Arts skills. You have grown in the past year academically, socially, and emotionally.

During your summer break, I encourage you to continue fostering a love of learning at home in preparation for grade 6.

Create a plan to complete the summer packet. Use your rubrics to help guide you in answering the questions.

The assignment will be used as data to help your teachers plan for instruction to better support you. In addition, it will count as 5% of your first marking period grade.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, September 4.



Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 36 and 37.

Excerpt from *Marvels in the Muck:* *Life in the Salt Marshes*

by Doug Wechsler



- 1 If it weren't for geese and other birds, the New Jersey salt marsh would seem almost dead in winter. Much of the other marsh life has either gone elsewhere or is hiding. Fiddler crabs winter in burrows beneath the mud. Mummichogs, small marsh-dwelling fish, move into salt marsh pools and hide in the mud during the coldest weather. Blue crabs move into deeper water and become inactive, burrowing into the mud and sand for the winter.
- 2 Have you ever been to a salt marsh? If you have visited a beach on the East Coast or Gulf Coast of the United States, you probably passed right through or over a salt marsh. Salt marshes grow in bays and along creeks and rivers that flow into salt water. Salt marshes are wetlands with grasses and low-growing plants that are flooded by the tides. Salt marshes do best where the water is brackish—that is, less salty than the ocean, but not fresh enough to drink . . .

GO ON

Spring: Return of the Laughing Gulls

3 HA-HA-HA-HAAA-HAAA. The laughing call of a gull overhead is the first sign of spring in this New Jersey salt marsh. Laughing gulls are migrating from shores and marshes farther south. With their black heads, gray backs, white breasts, and red bills and legs, these are the most handsome gulls of the salt marsh. More than any other gulls, laughing gulls need salt marshes to survive. Follow the laughing gulls, and you will learn a great deal about their marshy home.

4 Battered brown grasses are what the laughing gull sees below. Last year's growth of grasses is slowly breaking down. New green shoots will soon pop through. In the marsh, a flock of brant¹ feed on algae. The water is cold. Early spring is a pleasant time to visit the salt marsh. Days are getting warmer but not yet warm enough to bring out the hordes of hungry mosquitoes and biting flies.

King of Grasses . . .

5 Of all the plants that grow in the mud of the salt marsh, one species of cordgrass, smooth cordgrass, stands out as king. In the deepest parts of the marsh, called the low marsh, this is often the only kind of plant you can find. Smooth cordgrass is usually between two and six feet high (sixty centimeters to two meters) though it can shoot up as tall as nine feet (almost three meters). In the high marsh, closer to shore, it grows tall along the creeks and shorter on flat places that are flooded for briefer periods of time. From southern Canada to northern Florida and along many parts of the Gulf Coast of the United States, this one kind of plant makes up most of the marsh. . . .

Rampaging Reed

6 In many places you will see dense stands of grass that you can barely walk through. The common reed, which is also known by its scientific name, *Phragmites* (frag-MY-tees), has stalks about one inch (two and a half centimeters) thick. It is often about 10 feet (3 meters) high, though it can grow as tall as 20 feet (6 meters). *Phragmites* has taken over large areas of salt marsh, eliminating and replacing cordgrasses and other marsh plants. *Phragmites* often gets a foothold in places where the marsh has been disturbed. For example, if mud and sand are dredged² from a boat channel and dumped on the marsh, *Phragmites* will grow on the dirt pile. From there it will start to take over part of the marsh. Like cordgrass, it spreads by growing underground stems called rhizomes. These can be up to 20 feet (6 meters) long. New shoots of grass grow up from rhizomes, and the colony of *Phragmites* expands in all directions.

¹brant: a type of small goose

²dredged: dug up

2-Credit Constructed-Response Rubric

Score	Response Features
2 Credits	<p>The features of a 2-credit response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valid inferences and/or claims from the text where required by the prompt • Evidence of analysis of the text where required by the prompt • Relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt • Sufficient number of facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text as required by the prompt • Complete sentences where errors do not impact readability
1 Credit	<p>The features of a 1-credit response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mostly literal recounting of events or details from the text as required by the prompt • Some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and/or other information from the text to develop response according to the requirements of the prompt • Incomplete sentences or bullets
0 Credits*	<p>The features of a 0-credit response are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A response that does not address any of the requirements of the prompt or is totally inaccurate • A response that is not written in English • A response that is unintelligible or indecipherable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 1.

* Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).

Directions
Read this poem. Then answer questions 38 and 39.

Slender blueflag is a plant that sprouts blue and violet flowers and tends to grow in marshes.

“Blueflags” from *The Collected Poems* of William Carlos Williams

by William Carlos Williams

I stopped the car
to let the children down
where the streets end
in the sun
5 at the marsh edge
and the reeds¹ begin
and there are small houses
facing the reeds
and the blue mist
10 in the distance
with grapevine trellises
with grape clusters
small as strawberries
on the vines
15 and ditches
running springwater
that continue the gutters
with willows over them.

GO ON

The reeds begin
20 like water at a shore
their pointed petals waving
dark green and light.
But blueflags are blossoming
in the reeds
25 which the children pluck
chattering in the reeds
high over their heads
which they part
with bare arms to appear
30 with fists of flowers
till in the air
there comes the smell
of calamus²
from wet, gummy stalks.

¹reeds: tall plants that grow in marshes

²calamus: marsh plant with the fragrance of cinnamon

Planning Page

You may PLAN your writing for question 39 here if you wish, but do NOT write your final answer on this page. Writing on this Planning Page will NOT count toward your final score. Write your final answer on Pages 17 and 18.



GO ON

New York State Grades 6–8 Writing Evaluation Rubric

CRITERIA	NGIS	SCORE				
		4	3	2	1	0*
CONTENT AND ANALYSIS: the extent to which the essay conveys ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support analysis of topics or text(s)	W2 R.1-9	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose —demonstrate insightful analysis of the text(s)	—clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose —demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose —demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s)	—introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose —demonstrate little understanding of the text(s)	—demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
COMMAND OF EVIDENCE: the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided text(s) to support analysis and reflection	W2 R.1-8	—develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence	—develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) —sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some fact of variety	—partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant —use relevant evidence with inconsistency	—demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant	—provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant
COHERENCE, ORGANIZATION, AND STYLE: the extent to which the essay logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language	W2 L3 L6	—exhibit clear organization, with the skilled use of appropriate and varied transitions to create a unified whole and enhance meaning —establish and maintain a formal style, using grade-appropriate, stylistically sophisticated language and domain-specific vocabulary with a notable sense of voice —provide a concluding statement or section that is compelling and follows clearly from the topic and information presented	—exhibit clear organization, with the use of appropriate transitions to create a unified whole —establish and maintain a formal style using precise language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the topic and information presented	—exhibit some attempt at organization, with inconsistent use of transitions —establish but fail to maintain a formal style, with inconsistent use of language and domain-specific vocabulary —provide a concluding statement or section that follows generally from the topic and information presented	—exhibit little attempt at organization; or attempts to organize are irrelevant to the task —lack a formal style, using language that is imprecise or inappropriate for the text(s) and task —provide a concluding statement or section that is illogical or unrelated to the topic and information presented	—exhibit no evidence of organization —use language that is predominantly incoherent or copied directly from the text(s) —do not provide a concluding statement or section
CONTROL OF CONVENTIONS: the extent to which the essay demonstrates command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling	W2 L1 L2	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with few errors	—demonstrate grade-appropriate command of conventions, with occasional errors that do not hinder comprehension	—demonstrate emerging command of conventions, with some errors that may hinder comprehension	—demonstrate a lack of command of conventions, with frequent errors that hinder comprehension	—are minimal, making assessment of conventions unreliable

- If the prompt requires two texts and the student only references one text, the response can be scored no higher than a 2.
 - If the student writes only a personal response and makes no reference to the text(s), the response can be scored no higher than a 1.
 - Responses totally unrelated to the topic, illegible, or incoherent should be given a 0.
 - A response totally copied from the text(s) with no original student writing should be scored a 0.
- * Condition Code A is applied whenever a student who is present for a test session leaves an entire constructed-response question in that session completely blank (no response attempted).

Lined writing area consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

STOP