

## **SAMPLE ITEMS**

The structure of the practice items for this unit is similar to how it appears in Section 1 of the Georgia Milestones EOC assessment:

1. selected-response (multiple-choice) questions (three on the actual test),
2. a constructed-response question, and
3. an extended writing-response question.

Additionally, the instructions for the extended writing prompt are in the same form as those that appear on the EOC assessment.

This section of this test assesses your skill to comprehend reading passages and use information from the passages to write an argumentative essay.

Before you begin writing your essay, you will read two passages and answer two multiple-choice questions and one short constructed-response question about what you have read.

As you read the passages, think about details you may use in an argumentative essay about the use of technology such as smartphones in the classroom.

**These are the titles of the passages you will read:**

1. A Changing Student Body
2. New Technologies Require New Rules

## A Changing Student Body

Many of today's high schools may *look* the same as the high schools of 40 years ago, but their learning environments have changed dramatically. Many classrooms use smart boards instead of chalkboards. Many teachers use Web-based e-books instead of heavy paper textbooks. And many students no longer use notepads and pencils; they use laptops and smartphones. According to data compiled by the research firm Nielsen, 58 percent of Americans between the ages of 13 and 17 owned a smartphone as of July 2012—an increase of more than 60 percent over the previous year.

While the technologies of past generations have not completely disappeared, and the content of what students learn has not necessarily changed, the formats of communication and learning have been altered significantly. One question remains: Will today's parents and educators be able to adapt to new technologies and enable students to use them in the best ways possible?

Because of new technologies, the world has opened up to students at an amazing pace. Instead of having to search for books in a library, students can surf the Internet to find research sources, information about almost any topic, and many more educational aids. New technologies have also changed the way students communicate with one another. Social media and smartphones have become almost essential in the social lives of the modern American student.

So how can educators balance the opportunities of new technologies with the distractions and diversions that they inevitably bring? Should students be allowed to carry their cell phones with them to class? Their tablets? Their laptops?

The answer is yes. Instead of blocking off new technologies, educators should embrace them. According to a nationwide survey, 51 percent of high school students are already bringing their smartphones to school. Educators should take advantage of these tools. Many education-friendly apps and resources boost student learning. By allowing students full access to their handheld devices, teachers can instruct students on proper and polite technology use while enabling them to tap in to powerful resources. There is little difference between a student who is daydreaming or doodling in his notebook and a student who is off-task and fiddling with her phone. By requiring phones to be easily visible, teachers can monitor their appropriate use. We cannot control every aspect of the students' environment; we can only teach them the best learning methods and study habits we know and hope that they become motivated to apply them.

Smartphones can actually increase organization and productivity. Students are becoming accustomed to text-message reminders and apps that help them manage their time and schedules. Ken Halla, a U.S. history teacher, said he was "stunned by how many more kids started doing the homework" after he introduced them to the app Remind101. With this app, students can snap a picture of the day's homework or take a short video from a class lecture for later reference. Smartphones may be tools that extend the hours of learning beyond time in the school building.

Finally, ownership of a smartphone has become a matter of safety and well-being. Students use smartphones not only to communicate with each other but also to communicate with their families and others in cases of emergencies or necessity. Online social engagement is important to the overall emotional development of students today. We simply cannot ask students to be separated from their main mode of communication.

Just as a talented and engaging teacher of 40 years ago inspired students to pay attention to their learning goals, a similar teacher of today encourages students to use technology to enhance their education.

## New Technologies Require New Rules

The use of technology in the classroom has increased at an amazing pace in recent years. It is not uncommon to see students using tablets, writing on laptops, and surfing the Internet during class. While these technologies can provide many wonderful learning opportunities, they also can make it difficult for students to focus on the content they must master. Students should not be allowed to use handheld devices like tablets and smartphones in the classroom merely because these technologies exist.

When students are allowed to surf the Internet and to use their smartphones in class, teachers have little to no control over what the students are looking at or learning. According to a study by Harrison Interactive, 27 percent of smartphone users use their devices for educational purposes (explicitly *not* texting or social networking) two to three times per week, indicating that a majority of students use their smartphones only for texting or social networking. Even adults have difficulty staying on task in meetings when their smartphones are only a swipe away. If teachers want their students to use the Internet or other media, they can present the information to the class via a smart board. There is no need for individual students to have access to the Internet.

For many generations, students have thrived without being able to surf the Internet or contact their friends and family during school hours. Technology use only adds to the many distractions that students face, from peer pressure to extracurricular activities. In a school environment, distractions such as loud ringtones and near-constant texting are unnecessary and undesirable.

High school students are simply too young to be granted full leeway with their handheld devices. Students should be required to leave smartphones and other handheld devices in their lockers or at home. That way our schools can be dedicated learning environments instead of places of distraction and constant media bombardment.

### Item 10

#### Selected-Response

What is the central idea of “A Changing Student Body”?

- A. “And many students no longer use notepads and pencils. . . .”
- B. “Instead of blocking off new technologies, educators should embrace them.”
- C. “Smartphones can actually increase organization and productivity.”
- D. “We simply cannot ask students to be separated from their main mode of communication.”

### Item 11

#### Selected-Response

In “New Technologies Require New Rules,” which claim does the author make in the passage and support with valid reasoning and relevant evidence?

- A. Students use handheld devices mainly for texting and social networking.
- B. Teachers must do more to ban the use of handheld devices in the classroom.
- C. Technology is rarely needed for students to do research for their assignments.
- D. Students in high school are too young to properly use the latest technology.

### Item 12

### Constructed-Response

Which author better advances his or her point of view using rhetoric?

Use details from BOTH passages to support your answer. Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a vertical margin line on the left side, creating a narrow left margin. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page.

## Item 13

### WRITING TASK

There is currently an ongoing debate about the use of technology such as smartphones in the classroom.

Think about BOTH sides of the debate. Should smartphones be allowed in the classroom or should schools be smartphone free? Write an **argumentative essay** in your own words supporting either side.

Be sure to use information from BOTH passages in your **argumentative essay**.

### Writer's Checklist

Be sure to:

- Introduce your claim.
- Support your claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, including facts and details, from the passages.
- Acknowledge and address alternate or opposing claims.
- Organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- Identify the passages by title or number when using details or facts directly from the passages.
- Develop your ideas clearly and use your own words, except when quoting directly from the passages.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions to connect your ideas and to clarify the relationships among claims, counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a conclusion that supports the argument presented.
- Check your work for correct usage, grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

## excerpt from *Les Misérables*

by Victor Hugo

At the moment when the ray of moonlight superposed itself, so to speak, upon that inward radiance, the sleeping Bishop seemed as in a glory. It remained, however, gentle and veiled in an ineffable half-light. That moon in the sky, that slumbering nature, that garden without a quiver, that house which was so calm, the hour, the moment, the silence, added some solemn and unspeakable quality to the venerable repose of this man, and enveloped in a sort of serene and majestic aureole that white hair, those closed eyes, that face in which all was hope and all was confidence, that head of an old man, and that slumber of an infant.

There was something almost divine in this man, who was thus august, without being himself aware of it.

Jean Valjean was in the shadow, and stood motionless, with his iron candlestick in his hand, frightened by this luminous old man. Never had he beheld anything like this. This confidence terrified him. The moral world has no grander spectacle than this: a troubled and uneasy conscience, which has arrived on the brink of an evil action, contemplating the slumber of the just. That slumber in that isolation, and with a neighbor like himself, had about it something sublime, of which he was vaguely but imperiously conscious.

No one could have told what was passing within him, not even himself. In order to attempt to form an idea of it, it is necessary to think of the most violent of things in the presence of the most gentle. Even on his visage it would have been impossible to distinguish anything with certainty. It was a sort of haggard astonishment. He gazed at it, and that was all. But what was his thought? It would have been impossible to divine it. What was evident was, that he was touched and astounded. But what was the nature of this emotion?

The gleam of the moon rendered confusedly visible the crucifix over the chimney-piece, which seemed to be extending its arms to both of them, with a benediction for one and pardon for the other.

Suddenly Jean Valjean replaced his cap on his brow; then stepped rapidly past the bed, without glancing at the Bishop, straight to the cupboard, which he saw near the head; he raised his iron candlestick as though to force the lock; the key was there; he opened it; the first thing which presented itself to him was the basket of silverware; he seized it, traversed the chamber with long strides, without taking any precautions and without troubling himself about the noise, gained the door, re-entered the oratory, opened the window, seized his cudgel, bestrode the window-sill of the ground-floor, put the silver into his knapsack, threw away the basket, crossed the garden, leaped over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

### Extended Constructed-Response

The excerpt was written using third-person point of view. Imagine how the excerpt might be different if Jean Valjean were narrating.

Rewrite the beginning of the excerpt from Jean Valjean's perspective. Write your answer on the lines on your answer document.