Sample ELL Items
Directions: Listen to this passage. Then I will ask you a question.

Teacher:
Long ago, some Native Americans needed a way to travel on water. So they made a canoe. The canoe had a wooden frame. It was covered with the bark from a tree. It was light and easy to paddle.

Which picture shows what this passage tells about?

Correct responses: A
Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the question.

Plants get energy from the Sun. But some plants also eat meat! The Venus flytrap is a meat-eating plant. It can catch and eat insects.

The flytrap has two leaves shaped like ears. The leaves are connected by a hinge. If a bug lands on the leaf, the leaves close. The bug is trapped.

Which word means about the same as *insect*?
A plant  
B meat  
C bug  
D trap

Correct response: C
Directions: Look at the picture and the words above the picture. Listen as I read the words aloud. Then finish the sentence.

The boy likes his new skateboard. In this picture, he _______.

Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Reports on a topic or text.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>• Accurately describes the activity in the picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses appropriate grade-level vocabulary.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., verb tense, subject-verb agreement).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample response: “rides on the sidewalk” or “rides on his skateboard” or something similar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>• Describes some aspect or detail of the picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses simple vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates some command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., verb tense, subject-verb agreement).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample response: “go fast”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>• Response is minimal, irrelevant, or incomplete.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses a language other than English.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Blank or unreadable.</td>
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</table>
Directions: Read the story. Then answer the questions.

The Farmer and the Eagle  
by Aesop

1. One day, a farmer was walking near the forest when he saw an eagle caught in a **snare**. “What a beautiful bird,” thought the farmer. “I must set him free.” Very carefully, the farmer **approached** the bird and untied the cord around its foot. The eagle looked at the man once and quickly flew away.

2. It was a very hot day, and soon the farmer needed to rest. He sat down on a stone wall under a tree where it was cool. But a minute later, the eagle **swooped** down out of the sky and took the farmer’s hat. The bird flew some distance away and dropped the hat on the ground.

3. The man ran after the eagle and picked up his hat. He wondered why the eagle he had treated so kindly would do such a thing. He put his hat back on and started walking back. But suddenly, a large branch from the tree broke off and landed on the wall where he had been sitting. The eagle had saved his life!

**snare**: a trap for catching small animals or birds  
**approached**: went toward; got near to  
**swooped**: flew down suddenly from above

**Part A**
What kind of person is the farmer?

A. mean  
B. selfish  
C. greedy  
D. kind

**Part B**
Which sentence from the story supports the answer to Part A?

A. “One day, a farmer was walking near the forest when he saw an eagle caught in a snare.” (paragraph 1)  
B. “Very carefully, the farmer approached the bird and untied the cord around its foot.” (paragraph 1)  
C. “He sat down on a stone wall under a tree where it was cool.” (paragraph 2)  
D. “The man ran after the eagle and picked up his hat.” (paragraph 3)

**Correct responses:**  
Part A: D  
Part B: B
The kangaroo is an unusual animal. It has strong back legs with large feet and a strong tail, and small front legs. It grows to about 6 feet (2 meters) tall. The kangaroo can leap or jump 30 feet (11 m), and it can travel 30 miles (50 km) per hour. A kangaroo in danger will pound the ground with its feet. Sometimes kangaroos fight by kicking.

Female kangaroos have a pouch on their belly. A baby kangaroo is called a joey. When it is born, the joey is only about one inch (2.5 cm) long, or about the size of a grape. The mother puts the joey in her pouch and feeds it. The joey stays in the mother’s pouch for about ten months until it is ready to live on its own.

Kangaroos are native to Australia. They live in groups called “troops,” “herds,” or “mobs.” They eat mostly plants.

Use words from the text to complete each sentence about kangaroos. Write one word in each blank.

1. Kangaroos _______ in Australia.
2. They are large animals with _______ back legs and a tail.
3. A kangaroo can _______ a long way.
4. A _______ kangaroo called a joey lives in its mother’s _______.

Sample Responses:
1. live
2. strong
3. jump (or leap)
4. baby, pouch

[Source: adapted from http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/kangaroos/]
Directions: Listen to this passage from a speech by President Obama. Then I will ask you a question.

Teacher:
Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America—they will be met.

The last sentence suggests that President Obama's tone (or how he feels) is ________.

A determined  
B angry  
C pleased  
D fearful

Correct response: A

[Source: President Obama's Inaugural Speech, January 2009]
Directions: Read the passage from *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. It takes place in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. Then answer the question.

Winter was every kid's favorite season in Kabul, at least those whose fathers could afford to buy a good iron stove. The reason was simple: They shut down school for the icy season. Winter to me was the end of long division and naming the capital of Bulgaria, and the start of three months of playing cards by the stove with Hassan, free Russian movies on Tuesday mornings at Cinema Park, sweet turnip qurma over rice for lunch after a morning of building snowmen.

And kites, of course. Flying kites. And running them.

For a few unfortunate kids, winter did not spell the end of the school year. There were the so-called voluntary winter courses. No kid I knew ever volunteered to go to these classes; parents, of course, did the volunteering for them. Fortunately for me, Baba was not one of them.

I loved wintertime in Kabul. I loved it for the soft pattering of snow against my window at night, for the way fresh snow crunched under my black rubber boots, for the warmth of the cast-iron stove as the wind screeched through the yards, the streets. But mostly because, as the trees froze and ice sheathed the roads, the chill between Baba and me thawed a little. And the reason for that was the kites.

How does the setting of this story affect the narrator?

A He is excited about wintertime.
B He feels tired and discouraged.
C He wants to leave the city.
D He feels calm and peaceful.

Correct Response: A

[Source: *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini, pages 48-50]
Directions: Look at the picture. Write a paragraph describing what is happening in the picture.
In the first picture, the lake ________.  
In the second picture, the lake ________.  
The second picture looks this way because __________.
### Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Presents claims and findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2      | • Accurately describes the subject and the changes in the pictures.  
• Uses appropriate grade-level vocabulary.  
• Uses conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., verb tense, subject-verb agreement). |
| 1      | • Describes some aspects or details of the pictures.  
• Uses simple vocabulary.  
• Demonstrates some command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage (e.g., verb tense, subject-verb agreement). |
| 0      | • Response is minimal, irrelevant, or incomplete.  
• Uses a language other than English.  
• Blank or unreadable. |
Directions: Listen to the question. Find the picture that answers the question.

Listen to this passage. Then I will ask you a question.

Teacher:
Paolo is a student driver. He is taking a driving lesson. The instructor says, “Park the car perpendicular to the curb.”

Which picture shows what this passage tells about?

Correct response: C
Directions: Read this speech given by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. Then answer the questions.

The Gettysburg Address
by President Abraham Lincoln

1 Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

2 Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

3 But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Part A
What is President Lincoln’s purpose in this speech?
A to dedicate a cemetery for soldiers
B to thank soldiers for their service
C to announce the end of a war
D to convince people to vote for him

Part B
Which sentence from the passage supports the answer to Part A?
A “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” (paragraph 1)
B “Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.” (paragraph 2)
C “We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.” (paragraph 2)
D “But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate — we can not consecrate — we can not hallow — this ground.” (paragraph 3)

Correct responses:
Part A: A
Part B: C
Directions: Look at the three pictures. Tell a story about what you see in the pictures. What is the problem, and how is it solved? Use information from the pictures in your answer.
### Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Present information clearly</th>
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Directions: A student wrote this draft of a report on Angkor Wat, an old city of religious temples in Cambodia. The report has five mistakes in grammar and conventions. Read the draft. Then revise and edit the report to correct the mistakes.

The Mystery of Angkor Wat

Long ago, the Khmer people ruled a vast kingdom that stretched from China to India. The center of that kingdom was a great city called Angkor Wat, which was located in Cambodia. According to the stories, Angkor Wat contained more than 100 stone temples honoring the Hindu gods. For centuries, people tried to find the ancient city, but they failed.

Then, in 1860, French explorer Henri Mouhot stumbled upon some ruins deep in the jungle. It was stone temples and statues of the gods. Almost completely covered by heavy vines and huge trees. After studying the ruins, archaeologists determined that Angkor was built between 802 and 1220. The stone temples was all that remained of a huge city. Angkor was abandoned in 1432, but no one is sure why.

Sample Response:

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Component 2 - Sample Items

Item 1
Directions: You are going to hear a sentence. Listen to the sentence. Then answer the question.

[click here to launch audio in browser]
[text for audio: The children play with a ball.]

What is the sentence about? Point to the picture.

A  B  C  D

Key: A
Cats are small animals covered with fur. They eat meat. They are good pets. Cats sleep a lot. They sleep during the day. They also sleep at night. This cat is resting on a chair. The cat is **comfortable** because it is on a soft blanket.

**Part A**
What does **comfortable** mean?

- A feels hungry
- B feels good
- C is little
- D acts nice

**Key:** B

**Part B**
Look back at the paragraph. Which other word best helps you understand **comfortable**? Click on the word.

**Key:** soft
Items 3 and 4

Directions: Read the passage. Some of the difficult (hard) words are shown in dark print. If you move the pointer over one of these words, you can read what it means. When you finish the passage, answer the questions.
[For the print proposal, definitions are shown at the end of the passage.]

What Are Hurricanes?
Hurricanes are large, swirling storms. They produce winds of 119 kilometers per hour (74 mph) or higher. That’s faster than a cheetah, the fastest animal on land. Winds from a hurricane can damage buildings and trees.

Hurricanes form over warm ocean waters. Sometimes they strike land. When a hurricane reaches land, it pushes a wall of ocean water ashore. This wall of water is called a storm surge. Heavy rain and storm surge from a hurricane can cause flooding.

Once a hurricane forms, weather forecasters predict its path. They also predict how strong it will get. This information helps people get ready for the storm.

There are five types, or categories, of hurricanes. The scale of categories is called the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. The categories are based on wind speed.

Category 1: Winds 119-153 km/hr (74-95 mph) - faster than a cheetah
Category 2: Winds 154-177 km/hr (96-110 mph) - as fast or faster than a baseball pitcher’s fastball
Category 3: Winds 178-209 km/hr (111-130 mph) - similar, or close, to the serving speed of many professional tennis players
Category 4: Winds 210-249 km/hr (131-155 mph) - faster than the world’s fastest rollercoaster
Category 5: Winds more than 259 km/hr (155 mph) - similar, or close, to the speed of some high-speed trains

What Are the Parts of a Hurricane?
Eye: The eye is the “hole” at the center of the storm. Winds are light in this area. Skies are partly cloudy, and sometimes even clear.

Eye wall: The eye wall is a ring of thunderstorms. These storms swirl around the eye. The wall is where winds are strongest and rain is heaviest.

Rain bands: Bands of clouds and rain go far out from a hurricane's eye wall. These bands stretch for hundreds of miles. They contain thunderstorms and sometimes tornadoes.

How Does NASA Study Hurricanes?
NASA satellites take pictures of hurricanes from space. These pictures are shown on TV. They are also shown on the Internet.

Some satellite instruments measure cloud and ocean temperatures. Others measure the height of clouds and how fast rain is falling. Still others measure the speed and direction of winds.

NASA also flies airplanes into and above hurricanes. The instruments onboard gather details about the storm. Some parts of a hurricane are too dangerous for people to fly into. To study these parts, NASA uses airplanes that operate without people.
The eye of Hurricane Dean is shown as it moved through the Caribbean.

Image Credit: NASA

km/hr (kilometers per hour) a way to measure speed
mph (miles per hour) another way to measure speed
baseball a sport
pitcher the player who throws the ball in baseball
fastball a baseball thrown very fast
professional someone who does something very well
tennis a game in which a player hits a ball with a racket
rollercoaster a fun ride; people ride in cars that go up and down very fast
tornadoes dangerous storms with winds that go in a circle
NASA a part of the United States government that explores space
satellites things that are sent into space
instruments tools

Item 3
Based on the passage you just read, fill out the graphic organizer. You can write the answers in your own words. Write the words on the blanks inside boxes 1-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is a hurricane?</th>
<th>1. A hurricane is a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do hurricanes form?</td>
<td>2. Hurricanes form over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How fast are the fastest hurricanes?</td>
<td>3. The fastest hurricanes, in Category 5, are over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>_________ km/hr or _________ mph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are three parts of a hurricane? Write the name of each part.</td>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
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<td>____________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are two ways NASA studies hurricanes?</td>
<td>5. One way NASA studies hurricanes is with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another way NASA studies hurricanes is with</td>
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<td></td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
Box 1: big storm
Box 2: warm oceans/warm water
Box 3: 259 kmh/ 155 mph (student can provide either measure or both)
Box 4: eye, eye wall, rain bands
Box 5: satellites; airplanes
NOTE: Synonyms can be used for any answer.
Item 4

Directions: Imagine that your class is studying weather. You are going to tell your class about hurricanes. Give a short oral presentation. Use the graphic organizer you filled out to create your presentation.

Your presentation must be in your own words. Be sure to tell about:

1. what a hurricane is
2. where hurricanes form
3. the categories of hurricanes
4. the parts of a hurricane
5. how NASA studies hurricanes
Item 5

Directions: Today you are going to write a three paragraph essay. First read the questions about friendship. Then write the essay.

Why is it important to be a good friend? What are some ways to be a good friend? Give examples of how friends behave, or act. Then explain how your examples show that good friends are important.

Hints for Writing:

Paragraph One: Write your introduction. Explain why you think it is important to be a good friend. (This is your main idea.)

Paragraph Two: Explain what it means to be a good friend. What does a good friend do or say? Give at least two examples from real life.

Paragraph Three: Write your conclusion. Explain how your examples support your main idea.
Item 6
Directions: Listen to the poem. It is called “Twilight” and it is by Sara Teasdale. Twilight is the time of day just before it gets dark.

You will hear the poem twice. After you finish listening to the poem, you will answer a question. The question will ask what the poem is mostly about.

[click here to launch audio in browser]
[text for audio:
Twilight
Dreamily over the roofs
The cold spring rain is falling;
Out in the lonely tree
A bird is calling, calling.
Slowly over the earth
The wings of night are falling;
My heart like the bird in the tree
Is calling, calling, calling.]

What does the poem tell about?
A a tree in the snowy winter
B a person who lost a pet bird
C an airplane flying in the sky
D a rainy spring evening

Key: D
Item 7

Directions: Some of the students in City High School believe that they are getting too much homework. The students have decided that a student named Marco will give a presentation to the school's principal, Mrs. Nguyen. Marco will try to persuade, or convince, the principal to change the school's homework policy.

Read the presentation. In some places, there is a blank. Click on the box below each blank. You will see two possible choices for what Marco could say. Some of the possible choices are appropriate for a school presentation, and some are not. Click on the better answer for each choice.

Marco's Speech

Good afternoon, Mrs. Nguyen. My name is Marco, and I am here today to give you a presentation about why high school students should have less homework. A group of students in our school have been discussing this issue, and they decided that I should give this presentation.

We students believe that school is very important, but there are three main reasons why our class thinks the school should give less homework. The first reason is that many of us have jobs after school so that we can earn money for ourselves and our families.

- While performing our after-school jobs, we gain important skills such as working with numbers as well as earning money.
- My friends would rather earn money to buy cool stuff like clothes and games than do math and science homework every afternoon.

Also, in many jobs, English language Learners have the opportunity to practice their new language skills with employers and with customers.

The second major reason for less homework is that many students have important responsibilities at home. Some of us help with meals and housework, while others take care of younger brothers and sisters.

- Don’t you understand that we have to do other important stuff besides study?
- Sometimes our family responsibilities do not end until late in the evening, and if we have too much homework, we don’t get enough sleep.

The third reason is that high school students need some free time for socialization and relaxation.
Thank you for listening to my presentation, Mrs. Nguyen. We would be happy to discuss this issue with you and the rest of the school staff at any time.

Key:

Blank 1: While performing our after-school jobs, we gain important skills such as working with numbers as well as earning money.

Blank 2: Sometimes our family responsibilities do not end until late in the evening, and if we have too much homework, we don’t get enough sleep.

Blank 3: After working all day in school, sometimes we need to talk with our friends, play sports, or just relax.

The correct answers are more formal, polite, and persuasive than the incorrect choices.