

2027 MCAS Sample Student Work and Scoring Guide

Grade 8 English Language Arts Practice Test

Question 28: Extended Response

Reporting Categories: Language and Writing

Standard: [L.PK-12.1](#) – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Standard: [L.PK-12.2](#) – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Standard: [L.PK-12.3](#) – Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Standard: [W.PK-12.2](#) – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Standard: [W.PK-12.4](#) – Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Extended Response Prompt

Write a response that is about **one to two paragraphs** in length. Be sure to:

- Use evidence from the passage to support your response.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Based on “The Green Belt Movement,” write a response that explains the impact Wangari Maathai’s work has had on the environment in Kenya. Use evidence from the article to support your response.

Continue to the following page to see the scoring guides for this question. Sample student responses begin on page 3.

Scoring Guide for Written Expression

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
<u>3A</u> <u>3B</u>	• effective explanation of ideas • effective selection of evidence to support ideas • effective organization
<u>2A</u> <u>2B</u>	• adequate explanation of ideas • adequate selection of evidence to support ideas • adequate organization
<u>1A</u> <u>1B</u>	• minimal explanation of ideas • minimal selection of evidence to support ideas • minimal organization
<u>0A</u> <u>0B</u>	• does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question

Scoring Guide for Standard English Conventions

Select a score point in the table below to view the sample student response.

Score*	Description
<u>2A</u> <u>2B</u> <u>2C</u>	• appropriate control of a variety of sentence structures relative to the length of the response • appropriate control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of the response
<u>1A</u> <u>1B</u> <u>1C</u>	• partial control of a variety of sentence structures relative to the length of the response • partial control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of the response
<u>0A</u> <u>0B</u>	• no control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and/or sentences of insufficient length

*In both Scoring Guides, letters are used to distinguish between sample student responses that earned the same score (e.g., 2A and 2B).

Written Expression—Score Point 3A**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 2A**

Wangari Maathai's work has had a very beneficial impact on the environment in Kenya. She started the Green Belt Movement because she noticed many environmental problems happening in her country and thought that planting trees would help "replenish the soil, provide fuel wood, protect watersheds, and promote better nutrition..." (6) She worked very hard to promote her idea but it took a while for it to actually happen. She finally started the Green Belt Movement in 1977 and it gradually gained more support from other people. Over the years Maathai and the Green Belt Movement has worked to protect forests and other green spaces in Kenya. As stated in the text, "After a series of violent confrontations with Maathai and the Green Belt Movement over Karura Forest in 1999, the regime abandoned its illegal development plans. The forest stands today, vast and green, on the edge of Nairobi's throbbing streets." (18) Clearly, Maathai's work has had a very strong impact on the environment in Kenya.

In addition to impacting the environment in Kenya, the Green Belt Movement has spread to other countries in Africa through the Pan African Green Belt Network. Countries such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda "have integrated the Green Belt Movement's approach." (10) Further, the Green Belt Movement "has incorporated other community activities into tree-planting efforts" (11), which have helped her community in other ways. The passage also notes that the Green Belt Movement started an environmental education program in the early 1990s because Maathai wanted to help people "make the connections between their own personal actions and the problems they witness in their environment and society." (15) Wangari Maathai has had a significant impact on the environment in Kenya but also on other countries and many other people and communities throughout the world.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 3B**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 2B**

Wangari Maathai is an activist whose work on the Green Belt Movement had a positive impact on the environment in Kenya. In the 1970s the Green Belt Movement worked with women in rural areas and were responsible for planting over 30 million trees. They helped the landscape after “forests had been cleared for farms or plantations of fast-growing trees that drained the ecosystem of water and degraded the soil.” These efforts not only benefited the environment but the people as well. She said “As trees grow, they give you hope and self-confidence.” She knew that the trees planted by the Green Belt Movement would help the soil and protect watersheds. Maathai fought for her beliefs and succeeded even though she dealt with many obstacles along the way. In the 1990s Maathai’s Green Belt Movement worked to save Kenya’s forests and natural green spaces. The passage states: “For their boldness, Maathai and Green Belt colleagues were subjected to stints in jail...” Their efforts succeeded in protecting the Karura Forest against illegal development plans. “The forest stands today, vast and green, on the edge of Nairobi’s throbbing streets.” Because of the actions that she took, Wangari Mathai became the first environmentalist to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Wangari Maathai is proof that a woman who is determined and passionate, can really make a huge difference. The people of Kenya will be forever thankful for her dedication to protecting the environment.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 2A**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 2C**

Wangari Mathai realized that water, energy and nutrition were linked to the environment. She taught people that planting trees could benefit the soil, provide wood for fuel and protect watersheds. Wangari Maathai started planting trees in the mid-1970s. The text says, "Her non-governmental Green Belt Movement has planted 30 million trees across Kenya, many of which still stand."

Wangari Maathai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. This helped the environment because it showed people they could make a difference. The text states "Honor this moment by planting trees," she said as the media jammed her cell phone. "I'm sure millions of trees would be planted if every friend of the environment, and especially of me, did." Maathai worked hard to help the environment in Kenya. Her actions had a great impact on the environment and improved the lives of the people there.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 2B**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 1A**

The impact of Mathais work is incredible. She realized streams were disappearing and the desert was expanding. She "came to understand the linkage between environmental degradation and the felt needs of the communities." The organization she started was called the Green Movement. They worked with rural women and helped to plant millions of trees which helped protect the soil and water. Her work won her the Nobel peace prize in 2004 and this recognized her for the impact she had. She made a big difference and was an inspiration for environmentalists and women in Kenya and around the world.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 1A**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 1B**

Wangari Mathai said "As trees grow, they give you hope and self-confidence." She made the environment better by planting trees all over Kenya and she helped the people feel better because they had a better place to live in. It was because of Mathai that the environment in Kenya got better.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 1B**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 0A**

Wangari Mathhai had impact on Kenya because of the green movement and growing new trees helps replenish the soils and perfect the spring waters. For the benefit of the whole community. She was an important impact.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 0A**Standard English Conventions—Score Point 1C**

We need trees to give us oxygen. Trees give many different animals homes and places to live. They rely on trees and other plants to give them a place to live. Everyone should care about trees because we need clean air to breathe.

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)

Written Expression—Score Point 0B

Standard English Conventions—Score Point 0B

Kids like to clime on trees and birds are nested there. animales need trees to suvrive. if there were no trees we couldnt be alive

[Back to Scoring Guides](#)