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## 2025 Gr 8 ELAR Fall Semester Benchmark Review

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Read the selections and choose the best answer to each question.

## An Introduction to Photography

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- 1 Julius didn't want to take an introduction to digital photography. He was an athlete—in the fall he played football and in the spring he played baseball—and he firmly believed athletes didn't take art classes.
- 2 When Julius wasn't on the field, he was in the library, where he loved to read and talk about literature with the librarian. So when the guidance counselor told him that photography was the only elective that fit in his schedule this year, he explained that it "wasn't his thing" and he didn't need to learn how to take pretty pictures.
- 3 On the first day of class, Julius walked into a room stuffed with computer monitors along the walls and a giant screen in the center. The lights were out and the shades were drawn, and there was loud music playing from somewhere. As soon as he found a seat—which was hard to do in the dark—the screen in the middle of the room lit up with a photograph Julius couldn't quite understand. He knew the person in the picture was the school librarian—he saw her every school day—but she looked different somehow. Her face was in shadow, and the colors of her hair and skin were unusual in an interesting way. Suddenly, photography didn't seem like it was just about taking "pretty pictures," and Julius was curious to learn more.
- 4 After the class had five minutes to study the image, Ms. Powers turned the lights on and the music off and asked the class, "What did you see?" Julius listened to other kids' answers: "That was Ms. Dwyer," said one; "Yeah, that was the librarian," said another. After a minute, he raised his hand and asked, "Why didn't it look like her, though?"
- 5 Ms. Powers smiled and said, "That's what we're here to learn all about— welcome to digital photography, a class that won't be like any other class you take in middle school."
- 6 Ms. Powers couldn't have been more right. Throughout the school year, Julius took many photographs of people and learned how to use all the tools and technology Ms. Powers showed him.
- 7 One day at the end of the year, Julius sat at a computer monitor as Ms. Powers helped him put the finishing touches on a photograph. She guided him as he removed the glare from the glasses on his friend's face and figured out how to make the light illuminate only a specific spot in the photograph.

- 8 After Julius was satisfied with his work, Ms. Powers turned to him and said, “Julius, this photograph is incredible. Would you mind if I submitted it to the statewide art competition this month?”
- 9 Julius felt his shoulders move back as he sat up, and an emotion soared through him that he normally only felt after scoring a touchdown or a run. He looked at the photograph, smiled, and looked back at Ms. Powers before saying, “I would be honored.”

## Question 1

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Which sentence best illustrates Julius’s conflict at the beginning of the story?

- He was an athlete—in the fall he played football and in the spring he played baseball—and he firmly believed athletes didn’t take art classes. (paragraph 1)
- When Julius wasn’t on the field, he was in the library, where he loved to read and talk about literature with the librarian. (paragraph 2)
- The lights were out and the shades were drawn, and there was loud music playing from somewhere. (paragraph 3)
- As soon as he found a seat—which was hard to do in the dark—the screen in the middle of the room lit up with a photograph Julius couldn’t quite understand. (paragraph 3)

## Question 2

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The details in the story about the photography classroom emphasize that the students in the class—

- work mainly outdoors
- must get used to the dark
- do a lot of work on computers
- do not often listen to music

## Question 3

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Which detail from the story sparks Julius’s curiosity about photography?

- The elective class fits into his schedule.
- His photograph is chosen for a statewide competition.
- He recognizes someone in a picture.
- The photograph of the librarian is complex and interesting.

## Question 4

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Read this sentence from paragraph 10.

Julius felt his shoulders move back as he sat up, and an emotion soared through him that he normally only felt after scoring a touchdown or a run.

What does Julius's behavior in the sentence reveal to the reader?

- Julius wishes he were playing sports instead of taking photographs.
- Julius feels proud of his achievement in photography class.
- Julius will win a competition with this photograph.
- Julius will want to become a professional photographer.

## Question 5

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What is the best summary of the story?

- Julius must take a digital photography class even though he believes athletes shouldn't take art classes. When he starts the class, he becomes interested in a photograph he doesn't understand, and he wants to learn how to take pictures like it.
- As Julius considers taking a digital photography class, he discusses his options with the guidance counselor and realizes it is the only class that fits in his schedule. He signs up for it but doesn't think he will enjoy the class very much.
- As an athlete, Julius believes that he will never have an interest in art, but when he has to take a digital photography class, he learns to appreciate photography. He becomes very good at taking interesting pictures, and his teacher even asks to submit his work to a contest.
- Julius doesn't want to take a digital photography class. When he walks into the classroom, he can't find a seat because there are no lights on and the music is very loud. When he studies a photograph of the librarian, he realizes why photography isn't for him, but he does his best anyway so he will pass the class.

## Dear Friends by Edwin Arlington Robinson

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1 Dear friends, reproach me not for what I do,  
2 Nor counsel me, nor pity me; nor say  
3 That I am wearing half my life away  
4 For bubble-work that only fools pursue.  
5 And if my bubbles be too small for you,  
6 Blow bigger than your own: the games we play  
7 To fill the frittered minutes of a day,  
8 Good glasses are to read the spirit through.  
9 And whoso reads may get him some shrewd skill;  
10 And some unprofitable scorn resign,  
11 To praise the very thing that he deplores;  
12 So, friends (dear friends), remember, if you will,  
13 The shame I win for singing is all mine,  
14 The gold I miss for dreaming is all yours.

### Question 6

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Read these lines from the poem.

Dear friends, reproach me not for what I do,  
Nor counsel me, nor pity me; nor say  
That I am wearing half my life away  
For bubble-work that only fools pursue.

The main purpose of the repetition used in these lines is to —

- create a rhyme scheme through the use of internal rhyme
- highlight the connection between the actions described
- emphasize the most important points being made
- use alliteration to draw attention to the main theme

## Question 7

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The word *counsel* in line 2 suggests that the speaker's friends —

- support him
- warn him
- give him information
- give him suggestions

## Question 8

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Which lines from the poem **best** support the inference that the speaker is not bothered by others' success?

- Dear friends, reproach me not for what I do,  
Nor counsel me, nor pity me; nor say
- That I am wearing half my life away  
For bubble-work that only fools pursue.
- And if my bubbles be too small for you,  
Blow bigger than your own: the games we play
- To fill the frittered minutes of a day,  
Good glasses are to read the spirit through.

## Question 9

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Which word has the same connotation as *frittered* in line 7 of the poem?

- Idled
- Passed
- Abused
- Consumed

## Question 10

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The free verse structure of the poem helps to convey the speaker's —

- willingness to defy the expectations of others
- commitment to improving his artistic ability
- confusion about the treatment from his friends
- feelings of unrest during the creative process

## Question 11

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The reader could infer that the word friends is possibly being used in the poem to create irony because

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- the speaker's comments about his friends clearly show he does not enjoy their company
- the remarks made by the speaker's friends seem quite inconsiderate and even unkind
- the speaker dismisses his friends without realizing how much he needs their help
- the way the speaker describes his friends shows he does not really know them

## The Friendship 7

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- 1 Space travel in the 1960s wasn't just about NASA making progress in their efforts to understand our world and the galaxy it sits in. Space travel at that time was also about international relations. The United States and its main rival, Russia, were engaged in a "race to space." Both countries wanted to be the first ones in space, and the first to orbit Earth. In April of 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space, and his spacecraft orbited Earth one time.
- 2 While the American astronauts with NASA made it into space soon after, they did not orbit Earth. All of that changed on February 20, 1962, when John Glenn orbited Earth three times in a spacecraft called the Friendship 7. Although Glenn had plenty of experience flying aircraft and fighting as a marine during World War II and the Korean War, orbiting Earth would turn out to be the riskiest event of his lifetime. The flight was anything but smooth.
- 3 Friendship 7 launched at 9:47 am from Cape Canaveral in Florida. It separated from its launch rocket and, going roughly 17,500 miles per hour, it entered into orbit around Earth. Glenn soon saw what he thought were fireflies out his window. These turned out to be tiny droplets of water vapor released from the capsule's air conditioning system. Glenn didn't know it, but this was only the first sign that something wasn't right, and that his trip around Earth would be bumpy.
- 4 Glenn successfully made his way around the planet three times, but in that time his automatic control system malfunctioned, he lost contact with mission control on the ground, and just before his craft reentered Earth's atmosphere, it nearly lost its heat shield. Glenn and the people at mission control handled each of these problems, but during his almost five hours rocketing through space and around the globe, Glenn was in considerable danger. Had the heat shield torn off, for example, the capsule would have burned up as it reentered Earth's atmosphere.
- 5 Hard as it is to believe, more than one man's life was at stake if this mission had failed. Tensions between the United States and Russia were high, and not just in the race to space. The U.S. and NASA desperately needed a win. When Glenn emerged smiling from his capsule and subsequently climbed onto the deck of the USS Noa—the ship that met him where he landed in the Atlantic Ocean— they got the boost they needed. Their orbit was more successful than Russia's had been. And seven years later, NASA put a man on the moon. That's a feat no one could have achieved without the risks John Glenn took in 1962, when he became the first American to orbit Earth.

## Question 12

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Read paragraph 1 from the selection. Choose the phrase that **best** demonstrates why the U.S. and Russia were in a “race to space.”

Space travel in the 1960s wasn’t just about NASA making progress in their efforts to understand our world and the galaxy it sits in. Space travel at that time was also about international relations. The United States and its main rival, Russia, were engaged in a “race to space.” Both countries wanted to be the first ones in space, and the first to orbit Earth. In April of 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person in space, and his spacecraft orbited Earth one time.

- its main rival
- his spacecraft orbited Earth
- efforts to understand our world
- NASA making progress

## Question 13

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What is paragraph 2 mainly about?

- John Glenn’s personal and military history
- The risks and rewards of sending Friendship 7 into space
- The dangers John Glenn faced during his orbits of Earth
- The tensions between Russia and the United States

## Question 14

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The organizational pattern of the selection allows the author to —

- highlight how scientific advancement and politics always intersect
- examine the chronology of events in America’s first Earth orbit
- compare the space programs of Russia and the United States
- explain the main factors involved in the first American Earth orbit

## Question 15

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Read the origin of the word *subsequent*.

From the Latin *sub-* (“closely, up to”) + *sequi* (“follow”)

Based on this information, what is the meaning of the word *subsequently* in paragraph 5?

- Followed
- Next
- Closer
- Eventually

## Question 16

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The author mentions Russia in paragraphs 1 and 5 most likely to —

- put the American space program in historical and political context
- explain how difficult it was for Americans to lose the race to space
- show the reader how knowledgeable she is about international relations
- highlight John Glenn’s military past and wiliness to fight for his country

## Question 17

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Which sentence from the selection **best** states its controlling idea?

- In April of 1961, Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person inspace, and his spacecraft orbited Earth one time.
- Glenn didn’t know it, but this was only the first sign that something wasn’t right, and that his trip around Earth would be bumpy.
- Had the heat shield torn off, for example, the capsule would have burned up as it reentered Earth’s atmosphere.
- Hard as it is to believe, more than one man’s life was at stake if this mission had failed.

In the following story Shannon describes what happens when a character begins hearing mysterious noises at night. Read Shannon's story and look for any corrections she should make. When you finish, answer the questions that follow.

## Whispers in the Dark

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- 1 (1) Sanjay was under his thick comforter and sleeping peacefully when something caused him to stir. (2) It took him some time to fully wake up, and even when he does he spent a few moments wondering if he was still dreaming. (3) His room was normally completely silent at this time, but tonight he could hear faint, unfamiliar voices. (4) These spooky whispers seemed to be coming from somewhere nearby. (5) Sanjay imagined something strange may have crept into the house, and instantly is breaking out in goosebumps and felt a shiver run down his back.
- 2 (6) Leaving his bed was the last thing Sanjay wanted to do, but he knew he had to investigate to have any hope of falling back to sleep. (7) He pulled open his bedroom door inch by inch, anticipating something terrible, but the hallway with its numerous nightlights were completely empty.
- 3 (8) Sanjay forced himself to step into the hall, and as he began to tiptoe along he stepped on a squeaky floorboard. (9) The high-pitched noise nearly made him jump out of his skin! (10) When his breathing returned to normal, Sanjay realized the night was once again quiet and still, but the cold wave of fear that had washed over him was still there.
- 4 (11) Sanjay scurried back to his bedroom, closed the door, and turned on the small lamp next to his bed. (12) He stayed awake for a long time, and even when he did fall asleep he tossed and turned most of the night.
- 5 (13) "Did either of you hear anything odd last night?" Sanjay asked his father and sister the next morning over breakfast.
- 6 (14) Sanjay's father and Mira both assured him they hadn't, which left Sanjay feeling confused and frightened. (15) That night and the next Sanjay once again heard the eerie murmurs, which started shortly after Sanjay went to bed and stopped about a half an hour later. (16) Unlike on the first night, Sanjay was too scared to get up and look around. (17) Then, on the fourth night, he forced himself to get out of his cozy, safe bed to once again attempt to find the source of the mysterious sounds. (18) Avoiding the creaky floorboard and bravely following the frightening voices, Sanjay silently made his way to Mira's bedroom and slowly pushed open the door. (19) Mira was lying on her stomach about a foot away from the television. (20) The volume settings for the television was turned up just loud enough for Mira to make out what the actors on the screen was saying. (21) She gave him a guilty smile.

- 7 (22) "I didn't want to scare you, but I just couldn't miss my favorite show. (23) Our little secret?"  
Mira asked hopefully.
- 8 (24) Sanjay smiled at his big sister and nodded, relieved those voices in the dark were no longer  
the slightest bit spooky and thankful he would finally be able to get a good night's rest.

## Question 18

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What change should be made to sentence 2?

- Change *wake* to *woke*
- Change *does* to *did*
- Change *spent* to *has spent*
- Change *was* to *will be*

## Question 19

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What change needs to be made to sentence 5?

- Change *have crept* to *creep*
- Change *is breaking* to *broke*
- Change *felt* to *has felt*
- Change *run* to *ran*

## Question 20

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How should sentence 7 be changed?

- Change *hallway* to *hallways*
- Change *its* to *their*
- Change *were* to *was*
- Sentence 7 should not be changed.

## Question 21

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What is the correct way to write sentence 15?

- That night and the next Sanjay once again will be hearing the eerie murmurs, which started shortly after Sanjay went to bed and stopped about a half an hour later.
- That night and the next Sanjay once again heard the eerie murmurs, which are starting shortly after Sanjay went to bed and stopped about a half an hour later.
- That night and the next Sanjay once again heard the eerie murmurs, which started shortly after Sanjay is going to bed and stopped about a half an hour later.
- Sentence 15 is written correctly in the story.

## Question 22

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What is the correct way to write sentence 20?

- The volume settings for the television was turned up just loud enough for Mira to make out what the actors on the screen were saying.
- The volume settings for the television were turned up just loud enough for Mira to make out what the actors on the screen were saying.
- The volume settings for the television were turned up just loud enough for Mira to make out what the actors on the screen was saying.
- Sentence 20 is correctly written in the story.

Luke wrote the following paper in response to a class assignment. Before he submits it to his teacher he would like you to read it and look for any revisions he should make. Then, answer the questions that follow.

## In the Shadow of Explosive Volcanoes

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- 1 (1) There are some hazards involved in most jobs, including the study of volcanoes. (2) Why even risk your life to study something so explosive? (3) Yet special scientists take great risks in natural environments for the rewards. (4) They learn more about volcanoes through their study called “volcanology.” (5) Their goals include being able to predict an upcoming eruption, or they may detect a dangerous lava dome collapse. (6) When a volcano’s dome collapses, like one did in Hawaii in 2011, lava can flow out as a fast-moving river of hot rock with clouds of ash.
- 2 (7) Scientists from many different fields work together to discover what’s going on beneath Earth’s surface. (8) They may travel, for example, to the South Pacific to gather samples from a volcano. (9) One volcano called Yasur is a living laboratory because it is continuously-erupting volcano spewing molten rocks. (10) Similarly, scientists dodge chunks of rocks while collecting. (11) It’s dangerous work to learn about the volcano’s chemical makeup. (12) Another aim is to determine how the gasses produced by the volcano might be affecting nearby residents.
- 3 (13) In the past, researchers had to perform most tasks, such as collecting samples, for themselves. (14) They might also collect deadly volcanic gas by hand in bottles, and then send the bottles to a lab to be analyzed. (15) All the while, the researchers could have been breathing in dangerous volcanic gases.
- 4 (16) But today, scientists don’t have to complete such dirty jobs alone. (17) Without a doubt, technology is at the forefront of scientific exploration, and no one knows this better than scientists discovering how volcanoes work. (18) They use technology to gather and interpret data about volcanic behavior.
- 5 (19) Researchers such as geologists also have eyes in the sky, such as satellites and unmanned drones. (20) The drones can swoop over volcanoes and collect air samples; with the data, researchers can make predictions about volcanic hazards. (21) Scientists can also monitor activity, so they can forecast when a volcano might erupt and issue alerts to people living in its shadow.
- 6 (22) Scientists will still risk danger while traveling to study an active volcano, for there are opportunities in Chile, Alaska, Italy, and Greenland, among other countries. (23) They gain valuable insight in the field, just as they do by using technology. (24) It isn’t only about investigating volcanoes because scientists learn why people near a volcano might be experiencing symptoms of illness, so their work has real health significance.

## Question 23

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Luke realizes he has offered a weak thesis in this paper. Which of the following could replace sentence 1 and provide a more effective thesis statement for Luke’s paper?

- A volcano isn’t a subject you want to get too close to, if you know what I mean.
- This paper will address the career of a volcanologist, or a scientist who studies volcanoes.
- Violent volcano eruptions have had negative results for humans and animals alike, and therefore the situation is bad.
- The study of volcanoes can be considered very risky due to a variety of factors.

## Question 24

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Luke has used an ineffective transition in sentence 10. Which word or phrase could **best** replace *Similarly* in this sentence?

- Specifically
- As a result
- Likewise
- In the end

## Question 25

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Which of these sentences could **best** follow and support sentence 20?

- A volcano can occur in a wet area or in the sea.
- One gas collected, for example, is “vog,” or toxic volcanic smog.
- All volcanoes behave differently, that’s why it’s important to study them.
- Scientists have to communicate with local government officials and the public.

## Question 26

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Luke wants to add the following detail to sentence 24.

Such as pock-marked teeth and brittle bones

Where should this example be inserted?

- Before ***volcanoes***
- Before ***people***
- After ***illness***
- After ***significance***

## Question 27

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Luke needs a sentence to help close his paper. Which sentence should be added to the very end of this paper to bring it to an effective conclusion?

- We have a lot to learn about volcanoes.
- As shown in the essay, people who study volcanoes take risks.
- To restate, there are some very real dangers involved in most jobs, including the study of volcanoes that have a high possibility of eruptions occurring at any time.
- The reality is that volcanoes present unique hazards, but volcanologists prepare for the unexpected in the field for the sake of helping people in those at-risk areas.