

**Grade 8**  
**English Language Arts/Literacy**  
**Literary Analysis Task**

**2019 Released Items**

## **2019 Released Items: Grade 8 Literary Analysis Task**

The Literary Analysis Task requires students to read two literary texts that are purposely paired. Students read the texts, answer questions for each text and for the texts as a pair, and then write an analytic essay.

The 2019 blueprint for the grade 8 Literary Analysis Task includes Evidence-Based Selected Response/Technology-Enhanced Constructed Response items as well as Prose Constructed Response prompt.

### **Included in this document:**

- Answer key and standards alignment
- PDFs of each item with the associated text(s)

### **Additional related materials not included in this document:**

- Sample scored student responses with annotations and practice papers
- Scoring Rubric for Prose Constructed Response Items
- Guide to English Language Arts/Literacy Released Items: Understanding Scoring

**Release Items Answer and Alignment Document ELA/ Literacy:  
Grade 8**

<b>Text Type:</b> LAT		
<b>Passage(s):</b> from <i>The Black Pearl</i>		
<b>Item Code</b>	<b>Answer(s)</b>	<b>Standards/Evidence Statement Alignment</b>
<b>FF429340799</b>	<b>Item Type: EBSR</b> <b>Part A:</b> A <b>Part B:</b> B, E	RL 8.1.1 RL 8.4.1
<b>FF429341249</b>	<b>Item Type: EBSR</b> <b>Part A:</b> B <b>Part B:</b> B	RL 8.1.1 RL 8.2.2
<b>FF429342501</b>	<b>Item Type: EBSR</b> <b>Part A:</b> C <b>Part B:</b> D	RL 8.1.1 RL 8.4.1
<b>FF429343697</b>	<b>Item Type: EBSR</b> <b>Part A:</b> C <b>Part B:</b> D	RL 8.1.1 RL 8.3.3
<b>FF429342953</b>	<b>Item Type: EBSR</b> <b>Part A:</b> C <b>Part B:</b> C	RL 8.1.1 RL 8.4.1
<b>FF429350528</b>	<b>Item Type: TECR</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p align="center"><i>from The Black Pearl</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">The text is one interaction among characters.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">The setting remains the same throughout the text.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px;">The repetition of a key idea fails to resolve the conflict.</div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px;"> <p align="center"><b>“The Last Bargain”</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">The text is a series of different interactions.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">The setting changes as the text progresses.</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #add8e6; padding: 5px;">The repetition of a key idea leads to a final understanding.</div> </div>	RL 8.1.1 RL 8.5.1

<p><b>FF429354786</b></p>	<p><b>Item Type: PCR</b> Refer to Grade 8 Scoring Rubric</p>	<p>RL 8.1.1 RL 8.2.2 RL 8.2.3</p>						
<p><b>FF429345509</b></p>	<p><b>Item Type: TECR (additional item)</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #ADD8E6; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Shared Theme</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #90EE90; text-align: center; padding: 10px;">It is important to know what is truly valuable.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #ADD8E6; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Evidence from <i>The Black Pearl</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;"> <i>The Black Pearl</i>: "And the price, gentlemen, remains twenty thousand pesos." (paragraph 22)                 </div> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #ADD8E6; text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Evidence from "The Last Bargain"</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;">                     "The Last Bargain": "But his power counted for nought . . . ." (line 4)                 </div> </td> </tr> </table>	Shared Theme	It is important to know what is truly valuable.	Evidence from <i>The Black Pearl</i>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;"> <i>The Black Pearl</i>: "And the price, gentlemen, remains twenty thousand pesos." (paragraph 22)                 </div>	Evidence from "The Last Bargain"	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;">                     "The Last Bargain": "But his power counted for nought . . . ." (line 4)                 </div>	<p>RL 8.1.1 RL 8.2.1</p>
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<p><b>FF429354128</b></p>	<p><b>Item Type: PCR (additional item)</b> Refer to Grade 8 Scoring Rubric</p>	<p>RL 8.1.1 RL 8.2.1 RL 8.2.3</p>						
<p><b>FF429340074</b></p>	<p><b>Item Type: EBSR</b> <b>Part A:</b> D <b>Part B:</b> B</p>	<p>L 8.4.1 RL 8.1.1</p>						

**Today you will analyze a passage from *The Black Pearl* and a poem titled "The Last Bargain." As you read these texts, you will gather information and answer questions about the themes of each text so you can prepare a written response.**

Read the passage from *The Black Pearl*, in which pearl dealers visit the Salazar family. Then answer the questions.

from *The Black Pearl*

by Scott O'Dell

- 1** They came early in the afternoon, dressed in their best black suits and carrying a scale and calipers and their money in a crocodile bag. The excitement in the town had died after a couple of days, but when word got around that the dealers were going to the Salazars to buy the great black pearl a crowd followed them and stood outside our gate.
- 2** My mother and my two sisters had come back from Loreto, for they too had heard the news of the pearl, and so the fountain in the patio was turned on and the parlor was fixed up with flowers and all the furniture shone.
- 3** The four men wore serious faces and they put their calipers and scales on the parlor table and their brown crocodile bag. They sat down and folded their hands and said nothing.
- 4** Then my father said, "The bag is very small, gentlemen. I doubt that it holds enough money to buy the great Pearl of Heaven."
- 5** The four dealers did not like this. One of them, named Arturo Martín, was big and shaped like a barrel and had small white hands.
- 6** "I have heard that the pearl is the size of a grapefruit," he said. "In which case we have more money than we need. For as you know the large ones are of little value."
- 7** "They do not live long, these monsters," said Miguel Palomares, who was as fat as Martín and had a bald head that glistened. "They often die or become dull before a year passes."

- 8** "And so do many of the small ones," my father said. "Like the pink one Señor Palomares sold us last month."
- 9** Señor Palomares shrugged his shoulders.
- 10** "Before I show the Pearl of Heaven," my father said, "I will tell you the price. It is twenty thousand pesos, no more and no less."
- 11** The four men looked at each other and smiled thin smiles, as if to say that they had made up their minds already about what they would pay.
- 12** My father went out of the room and came back with the pearl wrapped in a piece of white velvet. He laid it on the table in front of the four dealers.
- 13** "Now, gentlemen." With a flourish he unwrapped the pearl and stepped back so all of them could see it. "The Pearl of Heaven!"
- 14** The great pearl caught the light, gathered it and softened it into a moon of dark fire. None of the dealers spoke for a moment or two.
- 15** Then Señor Martín said, "It is as I feared, more like a grapefruit than a pearl."
- 16** "It is a monster all right," Señor Palomares said. "The kind that often has a brief life and is very hard to sell."
- 17** One of the dealers who had not spoken cleared his throat and said, "But still we will make an offer."
- 18** The other dealers nodded solemnly.
- 19** "Ten thousand pesos," said Martín.
- 20** Señor Palomares grasped the pearl in a small, white hand and studied it.
- 21** "I think that I see a flaw," he said after a long time. "Ten thousand is too much."
- 22** "There is no flaw," my father said. "And the price, gentlemen, remains twenty thousand pesos."

- 23** The great pearl was passed around to the other dealers and they all turned it in their hands and squinted at it. At last Señor Martín used the calipers and placed the pearl on the scales. His readings were the same as I had made, almost.
- 24** “Eleven thousand pesos,” he said.
- 25** “Nine thousand more is required,” my father answered. “In your lives you have never seen a pearl like this one nor will you.”
- 26** “Twelve thousand,” said Señor Palomares.
- 27** After that and for most of an hour the price the dealers offered went up two hundred and fifty pesos at a time until the figure reached the sum of fifteen thousand pesos. And then tempers began to rise and my mother brought in a pitcher of cold juice and a platter of buñuelos. I knew that she wanted to take the dealers’ offer, for I stood where I could see her in the hall making gestures to my father. She had set her mind on a beautiful red carriage and four white horses she had seen in Loreto and was fearful of losing her wish if my father did not lower the price.
- 28** Señor Martín wiped his mouth and said, “Fifteen thousand pesos is our last offer.”
- 29** “Then,” said my father, “I shall take the great pearl to Mexico City and ask twice that amount and sell it without haggling to dealers who know its true worth.”
- 30** Señor Palomares picked up the pearl and put it down. His small head was sunk deep in the folds of his fat neck. Suddenly his head came forth like the head of a turtle and he looked at my father who was pacing back and forth.
- 31** “If you remember,” he said, “you made the long journey to the City of México once before. And what did you find there? You found that the dealers are not so generous with their money as we are here in La Paz. And you came home after the long journey with your tail between your legs.”
- 32** Señor Palomares got to his feet and the others followed him.

**33** "Fifteen thousand, two hundred and fifty pesos," he said. "This is our final offer."

From THE BLACK PEARL by Scott O'Dell. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company © 1967.



**1. Part A**

Which word **best** describes the tone of paragraph 27 of the passage from *The Black Pearl*?

- A. tense
- B. eager
- C. consoling
- D. desperate

**Part B**

Select **two** details from paragraph 27 that **most** contribute to the tone identified in Part A.

- A. “. . . for most of an hour . . .”
- B. “. . . tempers began to rise. . . .”
- C. “. . . a pitcher of cold juice . . .”
- D. “. . . a beautiful red carriage . . .”
- E. “. . . fearful of losing her wish . . .”
- F. “. . . lower the price.”

**2. Part A**

Which phrase **best** describes how the author of *The Black Pearl* develops the theme that people’s fortunes are beyond their control?

- A. by hinting that pearl dealers have cheated Señor Salazar in the past
- B. by showing that the dealers will offer Señor Salazar less than he wants for the pearl
- C. by showing that Señor Salazar’s family disagrees with him about whether the pearl is valuable
- D. by hinting that Señor Salazar’s neighbors are only interested in the wealth he could gain from the pearl

**Part B**

Which evidence from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “The excitement in the town had died after a couple of days, but when word got around that the dealers were going to the Salazars to buy the great black pearl a crowd followed them and stood outside our gate.” (paragraph 1)
- B. “The four men looked at each other and smiled thin smiles, as if to say that they had made up their minds already about what they would pay.” (paragraph 11)
- C. “At last Señor Martín used the calipers and placed the pearl on the scales. His readings were the same as I had made, almost.” (paragraph 23)
- D. ““You found that the dealers are not so generous with their money as we are here in La Paz. And you came home after the long journey with your tail between your legs.”” (paragraph 31)

Read the poem "The Last Bargain." Then answer the questions.

The Last Bargain

*by* Rabindranath Tagore

"Come and hire me," I cried, while in the morning I was walking on the stone-paved road.

Sword in hand, the King came in his chariot.

He held my hand and said, "I will hire you with my power."

But his power counted for nought, and he went away in his chariot.

**5** In the heat of the midday the houses stood with shut doors.

I wandered along the crooked lane.

An old man came out with his bag of gold.

He pondered and said, "I will hire you with my money."

He weighed his coins one by one, but I turned away.

**10** It was evening. The garden hedge was all aflower.

The fair maid came out and said, "I will hire you with a smile."

Her smile paled and melted into tears, and she went back alone into the dark.

The sun glistened on the sand, and the sea waves broke waywardly.

A child sat playing with shells.

**15** He raised his head and seemed to know me, and said, "I hire you with nothing."

From thenceforward that bargain struck in child's play made me a free man.

"The Last Bargain" by Rabindranath Tagore—Public Domain

**3. Part A**

What does the word **hire** mean as it is used in the last stanza of “The Last Bargain”?

- A. to make an insincere offer that will soon be forgotten
- B. to form an agreement that is based on an exchange of goods
- C. to form a relationship that is based on a feeling of understanding
- D. to make a quick promise that will be ignored when interest is gone

**Part B**

Which evidence from the poem **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “. . . glistened on the sand . . .” (line 13)
- B. “. . . playing with shells.” (line 14)
- C. “. . . raised his head . . .” (line 15)
- D. “. . . seemed to know me . . .” (line 15)

**4. Part A**

What does line 9 of “The Last Bargain” reveal about the speaker?

- A. The speaker is insulted by the offer.
- B. The speaker is not able to express his wishes.
- C. The speaker is not interested in gaining wealth.
- D. The speaker is becoming frustrated with others.

**Part B**

Which evidence from the poem supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “. . . houses stood with shut doors.” (line 5)
- B. “I will hire you with my money.” (line 8)
- C. “. . . she went back alone into the dark.” (line 12)
- D. “I hire you with nothing.” (line 15)

**5. Part A**

How does the word choice in the last stanza of “The Last Bargain” **most** affect the meaning of the poem?

- A. by indicating the speaker’s conflicted thoughts
- B. by revealing that the speaker is dazzled by beauty
- C. by emphasizing the speaker’s appreciation of simplicity
- D. by suggesting that the speaker is thinking about the future

**Part B**

Which evidence from the poem **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “. . . glistened on the sand . . .” (line 13)
- B. “. . . sea waves broke . . .” (line 13)
- C. “A child sat . . .” (line 14)
- D. “From thenceforward . . .” (line 16)

6. Compare and contrast the structure of the passage from *The Black Pearl* and the structure of the poem “The Last Bargain.” Drag **each** description into the appropriate box. All descriptions will be used.

The text is a series of different interactions.

The setting changes as the text progresses.

The text is one interaction among characters.

The setting remains the same throughout the text.

The repetition of a key idea fails to resolve the conflict.

The repetition of a key idea leads to a final understanding.

from *The Black Pearl*

“The Last Bargain”

7. You have read a passage from *The Black Pearl* and the poem “The Last Bargain.”

Write an essay analyzing how the events in each text contribute to the development of each text’s theme. Be sure to use evidence from **both** texts in your essay.



8. The table shows a shared theme of the passage from *The Black Pearl* and the poem "The Last Bargain."

Complete the table with **one** piece of evidence from **each** text that **best** supports the shared theme. Drag and drop the pieces of evidence that **best** support the shared theme into the appropriate rows of the table. Not all pieces of evidence will be used.

<i>The Black Pearl</i> : "They often die or become dull before a year passes." (paragraph 7)
<i>The Black Pearl</i> : "And the price, gentlemen, remains twenty thousand pesos." (paragraph 22)
"The Last Bargain": "But his power counted for nought . . ." (line 4)
"The Last Bargain": "Her smile paled and melted into tears . . ." (line 12)

Shared Theme
It is important to know what is truly valuable.
Evidence from <i>The Black Pearl</i>
Evidence from "The Last Bargain"

9. You have read a passage from *The Black Pearl* and the poem “The Last Bargain.”

Write an essay in which you analyze how the characters develop the theme in **each** text. Be sure to use evidence from **both** texts in your essay.

**10. Part A**

What is the meaning of **haggling** as it is used in paragraph 29 of the passage from *The Black Pearl*?

- A. losing an opportunity
- B. burdening the family
- C. concealing the truth
- D. debating a price

**Part B**

Which evidence from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "She had set her mind on a beautiful red carriage and four white horses. . . ." (paragraph 27)
- B. "Señor Martín wiped his mouth and said, 'Fifteen thousand pesos is our last offer.'" (paragraph 28)
- C. "'If you remember,' he said, 'you made the long journey to the City of México once before.'" (paragraph 31)
- D. "Señor Palomares got to his feet and the others followed. . . ." (paragraph 32)