
Constructed Response Questions – Grade 6 2013-2014

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Cure It with Candy

by Bart King

Humans of all ages get hiccups. Even animals can suffer from hiccups. Because hiccups are so common, you'd think doctors would know why we get them. But even among medical experts, there is no agreement about what exactly causes hiccups—nor about how to cure them.

A hiccup happens when the diaphragm, a muscle inside your ribcage, contracts. Different events cause the diaphragm muscle to tighten and shorten. For instance, swallowing a fizzy drink bloats the stomach. The pressure from the bloating causes hiccups. Another hiccup trigger is eating spicy foods. Even being surprised or scared can give you the hiccups!

When a hiccup strikes, it also affects the throat and upper body. The hiccuper takes in a quick breath. The back of the hiccuper's tongue moves up, and the throat clamps down. This is what makes the hic sound. Other muscles in the neck and chest shorten and tighten. Finally, the hiccuper's heart slows for a moment. Then, after a few seconds, the whole process starts all over again. Hic! Hic! Hic!

Some people rarely—if ever—get hiccups, and when they do, the hiccups do not last long. For them, hiccups are just a nuisance. Other people can suffer hiccups over and over, for hours or days on end. For them, hiccups are a real problem. (Imagine sitting in a quiet classroom while you have the hiccups.)

What is the best treatment to cure hiccups? There is no sure-fire cure. People try all kinds of remedies, such as eating sugar cubes or honey, and sipping from a glass of water while leaning over (so the head is upside-down).

During a tough attack of the hiccups at the age of 11, a girl named Mallory Kievman tried to cure her hiccups with every method she could think of. She even sipped from a jar of pickle juice. Mallory was surprised that there was no reliable cure. This launched her investigation of home remedies. She discovered about a hundred hiccup cures and began testing them in her family's kitchen.

After tossing out the useless remedies, Mallory determined there were three effective cures: eating sugar, sipping apple cider vinegar, and sucking on a lollipop. She combined these elements into a single product: a hiccup-stopping candy that Mallory called Hiccupops.

Mallory took her lollipop idea to an invention convention for kids. Her Hiccupop impressed the judges so much that Mallory walked away with the top prize. Part of the prize was a patent on the Hiccupop. A patent gives an inventor the full legal rights to his or her creation. Having a patent meant that the Hiccupop was Mallory's legal property. It was hers to keep—or hers to sell.

In order to sell the sucker, Mallory had to fine-tune the recipe. Flavor would be important to shoppers. The Hiccupop mixture would have to be stable. Mallory knew the lollipop needed to last on store shelves. No one would buy the lollipop if it melted or became gummy. To achieve a stable mixture, Mallory had to learn about the science of mixing the ingredients.

Many messy experiments later, Mallory continues perfecting her Hiccupops recipe. She has also learned that the lollipop might be especially helpful to hospital patients. Some patients get hiccups as a side effect of medicine. Now doctors can offer Hiccupops as part of the treatment plan.

Mallory Kievman is already a successful inventor, but she's decided on a different career for her future. She wants to be a doctor. After all, she already has a head start at becoming a hiccup specialist.

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Describe Mallory Kievman’s personality using information from the text to support your answer.
Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes a correct description of Mallory Kievman’s personality and a correct supporting detail. Correct descriptions may include her determination, creativity, intelligence, or helpfulness. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

Mallory Kievman is very determined. She goes through nearly 100 possible hiccup cures before settling on the three that work the best. She does not give up quickly on finding the right cure. She shows determination by finding just the right formula so the Hiccupop will remain stable on store shelves.

A one-point response includes a correct description of Mallory Kievman with an incomplete or missing supporting detail.

Sample one-point response:

Mallory seems like a creative person. She thought of a brand new solution to a problem that a lot of people have.

A response that does not include a correct description of Mallory Kievman’s personality receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

Mallory Kievman is going to be a doctor when she grows up.

Libby's Graduation

by M. G. Merfeld

It was final exam day—for my dog. And I was nervous.

It all started a few months ago when my mom and dad made a deal with me. After years of hearing me pester them about our need for a dog, they agreed to get one if I promised to care for it, train it, and love it.

“The dog will be your responsibility,” Dad warned, “—and not just when it's convenient.”

Libby, a four-month-old yellow Labrador retriever, arrived shortly thereafter. She was a 30-pound ball of fur, claws, and teeth with an uncanny ability to jump, dig, and chew.

“I think she is part-kangaroo,” I said as she bounced up and down on her hind legs to greet me.

She could also run like a racehorse. Each day after school I exercised Libby by taking her for long walks or by repeatedly throwing a tennis ball for her to chase down. When it was too wet to play outside, I lobbed an assortment of furry, squeaky toys up and down the stairs for her to retrieve. She never seemed to tire.

When Libby was six months old, Dad enrolled her in a puppy training class. I was to accompany them each Saturday for five weeks to learn how to train Libby to behave properly.

On the first day of dog school, Libby was as excited as I had ever seen her. She howled and whined and stood on her hind legs when she saw the other dogs in the class. Her tail wagged at about 100 miles an hour as she ran and greeted each of her canine classmates.

“If we could harness her tail's energy,” my dad said, “I think she could generate enough power to light up a small city.”

Despite the distraction of having four potential playmates in the room, Libby breezed through her first class because we had already taught her to sit, lie down, and recognize her name. My homework was to reinforce these ideas throughout the week.

Weeks 2 and 3 were more difficult. We were tasked with training Libby to avoid jumping on people when she met them and to walk on a leash without tugging ahead. When she was introduced to these concepts in class, she responded the way she usually did: she leapt on every dog owner in the class and pulled me around the room like she was leading a team of Alaskan sled dogs.

“Dad, she’s not getting it,” I told him a few days later. “She’d rather greet people and lick them to death than stay down and get a treat.”

“You have to work with her more,” he told me. “She’ll come around.”

When I objected, saying I didn’t have enough time because of baseball practice and homework, my dad gave me his serious look. All he said was, “Remember our deal.”

That was enough for me. Our trainer said we were supposed to keep a “smile” in the leash when we walked, meaning there should be some slack between the owner and the dog. My leash was more of a tight-lipped grin. On our training treks down the street to the park, I frequently commanded Libby to “stop and sit” when she forged ahead. Libby would obediently sit and wait; then she would charge ahead. With so many starts and stops, our 15-minute walks stretched to half an hour.

I grudgingly missed a trip to the water park with my best friend for week 4, so I was not the happiest owner at the class. But the teacher said it was the most important class of the series because she was going to talk about the commands to “stay” and “come.”

“Teaching your dog to come when she is called can save her life,” she said. “If she takes off chasing something into a dangerous area, she has to respond to your call.”

She was right. I had seen Libby bolt across the street once while chasing a squirrel, and I was glad we lived on a quiet street with little traffic. So I worked extra hard on our homework that week.

Now, it was time for her fifth class—her final exam and, hopefully, her graduation. It seemed strange that I was so nervous for Libby’s final test. I wondered what would happen if she failed. Do dogs flunk?

When Libby's turn came, she nailed the sit, lie down, and stay commands. When I told her to stay and I crossed the room, she waited patiently, ignoring the other dogs, tilting her head to one side, and fixing her eyes on mine until I told her to "come." It was impressive. We made our way through the cones pretty well, too, with only a couple of brief "stops" needed when Libby pulled the leash ahead of me.

At the end, the teacher applauded. "I definitely think Libby gets the most improved award," she announced.

I hugged Libby and gave her a jackpot: five sausage treats. "Way to go, Libs," I said as she licked my cheek. I could smell the sausage all over my face, but I didn't care. "I'm so proud of you."

My dad put his hand on my shoulder and patted Libby on the head. "I'm proud of both of you."

"Libby's Graduation" by M. G. Merfeld. Copyright © 2012 by CTB/McGraw-Hill.



A flashback is a scene that takes place before the present time in a narrative story. In "Libby's Graduation," the author begins in the present and then continues with a flashback.

Briefly explain how the flashback affects the story. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response includes a full explanation of how the flashback affects the story with corresponding evidence from the text. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

The flashback shows how the narrator promised to take responsibility for Libby. It helps the reader understand how energetic the dog was when she first came to the family, which proves how much she improved by the end.

A one-point response gives a correct explanation of how the flashback affects the story with limited or missing evidence from the text.

Sample one-point response:

The flashback shows how hard the narrator worked to help Libby pass her test.

A response that does not explain how the flashback affects the story receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

A dog named Libby earned an award.

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Describe how the narrator shows responsibility when caring for Libby. Use details from the text to support your answer.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A sample two-point response includes a correct description of how the narrator shows responsibility for Libby with supporting details from the text. Responses are not scored for grammar usage, conventions, spelling, or punctuation.

Sample two-point response:

The narrator shows responsibility by taking Libby to Puppy Training Class each week and doing the homework for it. The narrator has to give up some fun things, like a trip to the water park, to keep training Libby. But the hard work pays off when Libby graduates from the training class.

A sample one-point response gives a correct description of how the narrator shows responsibility with limited or missing evidence from the text.

Sample one-point response:

The narrator shows responsibility by giving up activities with friends to train Libby.

A response that does not describe how the narrator shows responsibility and includes no relevant information from the text receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

Playing with your pet can be fun.



A student is writing an explanatory essay for a world language class. Read a paragraph from the essay and the directions that follow.

What is the best way to learn another language? Some people say that only living in a country where the language is spoken really works. However, for them that do not have the time or money to move to a different country there are many other options. Listening to music and watching movies in a different language with subtitles can really help, for example.

One sentence in the paragraph above contains a grammar usage and a punctuation error. Type the incorrect sentence below, correcting the **two** errors.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response identifies the incorrect sentence and corrects both the grammar usage error and the punctuation error.

Sample two-point response:

However, for those who do not have the time or money to move to a different country, there are many other options.

A one-point response identifies the incorrect sentence and corrects either the grammar usage error or the punctuation error.

Sample one-point response:

However, for them who do not have the time or money to move to a different country, there are many other options.

A response that does not include either correction receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

However, for them that do not have the time or money to move to a different country there are many other options.



A student is writing an argumentative letter to the editor of his local paper about adopting puppies from shelters. He needs to include more evidence and address counterarguments. Read the paragraph, the student's notes, and the directions that follow.

If you and your family are thinking of adopting a puppy, you should go to a shelter. While there are other ways to get a puppy, such as purchasing a puppy from a breeder, adopting from a shelter is a choice you can be proud of. People may be concerned that the dogs are not healthy, but many shelters will give all dogs their shots before they are adopted. Most importantly, shelters have the best dogs. We got our dog from a shelter, and she is the greatest dog in the world.

Student's Notes:

- Shelters have many different types of dogs.
- When you adopt a puppy from a shelter, you give it a second chance.
- You can buy a puppy from a responsible dog breeder.
- Responsible breeders keep their puppies in clean homes.
- More than 25% of shelter dogs are purebred.
- The average cost to own a dog for one year is between \$600 and \$900.
- About 62% of all households in the United States have a pet.
- A recent poll done by a shelter in Ohio showed 70% of people want dogs under one year old.
- Shelters have older, mature dogs and also have puppies.
- Breeders usually sell only puppies.
- In the US there are 164 million pets and 1 in every 20 will end up in a shelter by the end of the year.

Using information from the notes, rewrite the paragraph, adding relevant evidence and responding to counterarguments.

Type your response in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response provides appropriate and specific details and uses appropriate word choice and organization for the intended audience and purpose. The response shows appropriate transitions and variety in sentence structure.

Sample two-point response:

If you or your family are considering adopting a puppy, try your local shelter. The perfect dog might be waiting there for you. There are 164 million pets in the US, and 1 in every 20 will end up in a shelter by the end of the year. While there are other ways to get a puppy, such as purchasing a puppy from a breeder, adopting from a shelter is a choice you can be proud of. People may be concerned that the dogs are not healthy, but many shelters will give all dogs their shots before they are adopted. Another concern might be that shelters have only mature, mixed-breed dogs. But shelters have both mature dogs and puppies, and more than 25% of shelter dogs are purebred. You can find many different types of dogs at a shelter. Most importantly, shelters have the best dogs. They know you cared enough to give them a second chance. We got our dog from a shelter, and she is the greatest dog in the world.

A one-point response includes mostly related details, but may have some extraneous information or unclear organization.

Sample one-point response:

You should always adopt dogs from a shelter. They need you to give them a second chance. A lot of people in Ohio want puppies, or at least younger dogs. People might think they can only find puppies at a breeder, but really, you can find them in an animal shelter. Shelters have dogs of all different ages.

A response that uses very few relevant details and may be vague, repetitive, or inaccurate receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

Finding the right dog is a great way to come together as a family.



Read the paragraph and the directions that follow.

Marcus knew he could not bring his dog, Trixie, with him to camp. He pleaded with his parents for days to let him bring Trixie, but the camp supervisor would not allow it because residents might be allergic. He hesitated before he entered his brother room and asked, "Stefan will you make sure that Trixie has a good time while I'm away?" Stefan smiled as he put his book down and answered, "I promise you, Trixie won't be bored!"

One sentence in the paragraph contains a grammar usage and a punctuation error. Type the sentence to correct the **two** errors.

Type your answer in the space provided.

Type your answer in this box.

A two-point response identifies the incorrect sentence and corrects the two errors in it.

Sample two-point response:

He hesitated before he entered his brother's room and asked, "Stefan, will you make sure that Trixie has a good time while I'm away?"

A one-point response includes only one correct revision in the incorrect sentence.

Sample one-point response:

He hesitated before he entered his brother's room and asked, "Stefan will you make sure that Trixie has a good time while I'm away?"

A response that may identify the incorrect sentence, but does not include any correct revisions receives no credit.

Sample zero-point response:

He hesitated before he entered his brothers room and asked, "Stefan will you make sure that Trixie has a good time while I'm away?"

DOK: 3

Standards: RI-8: The student will make an inference about an author's intention and identify evidence within the text that supports the inference.

2553



Read the paragraph from the text.

It has rained fish on every continent, and each time, people have tried in various ways to explain this strange phenomenon. Historically, villagers thought the "fishes from the heavens" might be answers to prayers for food. Others proposed that flashfloods overran river banks and oceans, depositing the fish on the city streets. No scientist had actually seen the rain as it occurred, only the fish left on the ground. But in 1970, a National Geographic team happened to be in Yoro when the Rain of Fishes began. They recorded what was happening and made history by finally proving that the fish really did fall from the sky.

What **most likely** did the author intend by mentioning some of the beliefs people had about raining fish at the beginning of the paragraph? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Type your answer in this box.

Level 2 Response

- Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to make a clear inference/conclusion
- Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text
- Adequately explains inference/conclusion with clearly relevant information based on the text

Responses may include (but are not limited to):

- (conclusion) Author wanted to explain why people had different explanations about raining fish.
- (support) the ideas about the meaning of the fish (gift from heaven, the result of heavy rainfall)
- (support) National Geographic was present for the Rain of Fishes.
- (support) Filming the fish made stories believable.

Exemplar:

The author wanted to highlight how for years people had different explanations for why there were raining fish. Some people thought that they were fishes from the heavens, while others thought they came from flash floods. But since no scientists had seen raining fish, it was rather confusing. The mystery was solved when the National Geographic team saw the raining fish.

Level 1 Response

- Gives limited evidence of the ability to make an inference/conclusion
- Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the text
- Explains inference/conclusion with vague/limited information based on the text

Responses may include those listed in the 2 point response.

Exemplar

The author wanted to show that many different people had different explanations for why there were raining fish, however because no one solved the problem, they didn't know the exact reason. The mystery was solved in 1970.

Level 0 Response

A response:

- Gives no evidence of the ability to make an inference/conclusion
OR
- Gives an inference/conclusion but includes no examples or no examples/details that make reference to the text
OR
- Gives an inference/conclusion but includes no explanation or no relevant information from the text

Exemplar:

People have talked about seeing fish fall from the sky for a long time.

DOK: 3

Standards: RL-6: The student will form an inference about a literary text and identify details within the text that support that inference.

2669



What inference can be made about the narrator's feelings about Libby's successes? Support your answer with details from the text.

Type your answer in this box.

Level 2 Response

- Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to make a clear inference/conclusion
- Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text
- Adequately explains inference/conclusion with clearly relevant information based on the text

Responses may include (but are not limited to):

- (inference) They are close.
- (inference) They both have worked hard.
- (inference) The dog has done well in obedience training school.
- (inference) Other inferences supported by the text.
- (support) The narrator uses the word "nailed" to describe how Libby did on the test.
- (support) "It was impressive" shows that the narrator is pleased with Libby's accomplishments.
- (support) The narrator hugged Libby to show her enthusiasm and pleasure about Libby's accomplishments.
- (support) The narrator gave Libby "the jackpot" of five sausage treats to show her pleasure about Libby's accomplishments.
- (support) The narrator says, "Way to go, Libs."
- (support) The narrator says, "I'm so proud of you."

Exemplar:

One inference that could be made about the narrator is that although it was hard work and a lot of responsibility, it was worth it to see Libby succeed. The narrator worked extra hard to train Libby to come when she was called so she wouldn't go into the street. The narrator also gave up a trip to the water park so she wouldn't miss a puppy training class. It was all worth it in the end because Libby not only graduated, but was named most improved.

Level 1 Response

- Gives limited evidence of the ability to make an inference/conclusion
- Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the text
- Explains inference/conclusion with vague/limited information based on the text

Responses may include those listed in the 2 point response.

Exemplar:

One inference is that the narrator is happy about her dog. Libby did a good job in puppy class, she learned to sit and stay.

Level 0 Response:

- Gives no evidence of the ability to make an inference/conclusion
OR
- Gives an inference/conclusion but includes no examples or no examples/details that make reference to the text
OR
- Gives an inference/conclusion but includes no explanation or no relevant information from the text

Exemplar:

Libby is a great dog.

DOK: 3

Standards: W-3.b: 1. (Organization) The student will use information provided in a stimulus to write organized narratives that engage and orient the reader by e. providing closure that follows logically from the narrative

2596



A student is writing a narrative for class about a speech contest. Read the draft of the narrative and complete the task that follows.

The big day had finally arrived. I had won the local speech contest and had advanced to the regional, representing Madison Middle School. Now it was the state competition. I waited backstage for the host to announce my name. Even though I had practiced much, I was extremely nervous. My heart was thumping, my mouth was dry, and my palms were sweating. "You're ready for this," I told myself. Still, picturing an audience of parents, teachers, and classmates made me want to totally disappear.

Patrick, my best friend, reminded me, "You'll do great. You're prepared. You've come this far."

I nodded affirmatively. Patrick was right. I was ready for this, and besides, I won first place in the earlier contests. Yet, I pictured all eyes on me waiting for me to mess up. My heart was gradually sinking into my stomach.

"You can't back out now," I told myself as Mr. Nichols, the host, announced my name and the title of my speech, "My Hero."

Patrick smiled and gave me a pat on the back. The next thing I knew, I was walking confidently across the stage to the microphone. Taking a deep breath, I greeted the audience and began my speech. I heard my voice, strong and steady. I told myself, "This is great. I feel prepared and have something to share with my audience."

The time flew past. I delivered my conclusion and said a final "Thank you."

In one paragraph write an ending to the narrative that follows logically from the events or experiences in the narrative.

Type your answer in this box.

Level 2 Response

- provides an adequate transition from the “body of the story” to the ending/conclusion
- provides an appropriate ending to the narrative that provides a sense of closure and/or follows logically from the events or experiences in the story

Exemplar:

The audience began clapping, rising, and standing up saying, “Way to go, Eric.” gave the audience a final bow and walked backstage, feeling really good about my speech. From this experience, I learned that speaking on stage is an opportunity to share my thoughts with an audience. I also learned that having a good friend and practicing helped me be a better speaker. I was more prepared, sincere, and enthusiastic.

Annotation: This response provides a logical ending, based on the experience as described in the stimulus. This response incorporates a “lesson learned,” which is appropriate and effective although not all “2” responses would include such reflection.

Level 1 Response:

- provides a limited and/or awkward transition from the “body of the story” to the ending or conclusion
- provides a general or partial ending to the narrative about a speech contest that may provide a limited sense of closure and/or somewhat follow logically from the events or experiences in the story

Note: Other “1” responses may have other rubric strengths/weaknesses but would be overall “limited.”

Exemplar:

I bowed and walked off stage. I know that having a good friend and practicing helped me be a better speaker.

Annotation: The response offers a limited sense of closure (“walking off the stage” is self-evident, although it does transition from the stimulus). This response attempts to reflect on the experience, but the sense of closure is limited by the generality—“practice...worked,” which merely repeats an idea from the first paragraph of the stimulus).

Level 0 Response:

- provides a minimal or no transition from the “body of the story” to the ending/conclusion; or the transition relies on summary, repetition of details, or addition of extraneous details
- provides an unclear or incomplete ending to the narrative that provides little or no closure and/or does not follow logically from or contradicts the events or experiences in the story

Exemplar:

My friend Patrick had told me that I would do a good job.

Annotation: While the response is not illogical or extraneous (Patrick *did* tell him he would be fine), it does not provide any sense of closure. Other types of “0” papers might receive the score because the ending is illogical, or because the ending does not flow from the previous paragraph, etc.