



# **ELA 10 PreAP STAAR Distance Learning Packet: Week 4**

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**Directions:**

- 1. Complete each day's work.**
- 2. Read for 30 minutes each day.**
- 3. Complete the reading log daily.**

**Week 4:**  
**Composition: Persuasive Essay**  
**Genre: Expository**

**Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.**

*Sabrina wrote the following personal essay in response to a class assignment. Read Sabrina's paper and look for the corrections she needs to make. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## Looking Up

(1) I can still remember the way my shabby tennis shoes looked as I stared down at them, dreading what was about to take place. (2) It was time for the weekly fifth-grade volleyball game, an inevitable scene of mental anguish for me. (3) It wasn't that I ever expected to be chosen first. (4) I knew I was clumsy and would never be the best player on any team. (5) But every week, I stared at my shoes and simply wished that I wouldn't be picked last. (6) And yet I was last almost every time. (7) No team wanted the girl who dropped the ball, tripped over her own feet, and misses the easy serves.

(8) Years later I realized how much those moments of rejection had affected me. (9) It hadn't been easy being the last one picked, the one the other team members "had" to take. (10) I began to expect the worst in every situation, repeatedly telling myself that I just wasn't good enough. (11) I basically grew up staring at my shoes.

(12) All that began to change during the summer after my freshman year in high school. (13) My mom's oldest sister Aunt Karen, needed some help at her real estate office and offered me a part-time job. (14) I had always looked up to Aunt Karen because she was successful and seemed to lead such a fun, exciting life. (15) Her engaging manner and warm, confident smile couldn't have been more different from the nervous, timid way I approached the world. (16) But that summer she taught me to look at things differently.

(17) Aunt Karen said that the secret to success comes from the inside, not the outside. (18) She described her own adolescence, and I was shocked to learn that her experience had been similar to mine. (19) Notably, she hadn't been good at sports, either! (20) Aunt Karen said she finally realized that what other people thought of her didn't matter nearly as much as what she thought of herself.

(21) She told me that when she started speaking positively to herself and noticing her own good qualities, she stopped being so self-critical.

(22) So that summer I took her advice to heart. (23) I listened to what I was saying to myself and decided to focus more on the good. (24) For example, when I misfiled an important realty document. (25) I reminded myself of all the other documents I had filed correctly. (26) And when Aunt Karen showed me the messy supply closet, I assured myself that I would be great at organizing it. (27) Before long I had learned a valuable lesson. (28) Positive thinking actually works! (29) The more encouragement I gave myself, the better I felt about myself. (30) By the time school started that fall, I was much more confident. (31) I approached people around me with a totally different attitude. (32) My after-school volleyball days were over, but when my Chemistry teacher announced that we should each find a lab partner, instead of looking down at my shoes, I looked up and smiled. (33) And do you know what happened? (34) A very nice girl immediately asked me to be her partner!

1 What change should be made in sentence 2?

- A Delete the comma
  - B Change *inevitable* to **inevitable**
  - C Change *scene* to **seen**
  - D Sentence 2 should not be changed.
- 

2 What change needs to be made in sentence 7?

- F Insert a comma after *girl*
  - G Change *tripped* to **she trips**
  - H Change *misses* to **missed**
  - J Change *serves* to **serve's**
- 

3 What change, if any, should be made in sentence 13?

- A Insert a comma after *sister*
- B Insert a comma after *help*
- C Insert a comma after *office*
- D Make no change

4 How should sentence 18 be changed?

- F Change ***adolesence*** to **adolescence**
- G Delete ***and***
- H Change ***her*** to **their**
- J Sentence 18 should not be changed.

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5 What is the correct way to write sentences 24 and 25?

- A For example, when I misfiled an important realty document, I reminded myself. Of all the other documents I had filed correctly.
- B For example, I misfiled an important realty document, I reminded myself of all the other documents I had filed correctly.
- C For example, when I misfiled an important realty document and reminded myself of all the other documents I had filed correctly.
- D For example, when I misfiled an important realty document, I reminded myself of all the other documents I had filed correctly.

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6 What change should be made in sentence 32?

- F Change ***Chemistry*** to **chemistry**
- G Change ***announced*** to **announsed**
- H Delete the comma after ***partner***
- J Change the comma after ***shoes*** to a period

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## WRITTEN COMPOSITION: Persuasive

Read the following quotation.

Authentic patriotism is not about you, what you believe or what you think is right. . . . Authentic patriotism is not an opinion. It is an action.  
—*Stephen Kiernan*

Think carefully about the following statement.

Some people define themselves by what they believe, while others allow their actions to speak for them.

Write an essay stating your position on which is more important: what a person thinks or what a person does.

Be sure to —

- state your position clearly
- use appropriate organization
- provide specific support for your argument
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling

USE THIS PREWRITING PAGE TO  
PLAN YOUR COMPOSITION.

MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE YOUR COMPOSITION ON  
THE LINED PAGE IN THE ANSWER DOCUMENT.

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# STAAR WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, providing a template for a written composition.

STUDENTS MAY NOT WRITE OUTSIDE THE BOX

# EXPOSITORY

**Genre Definition:** Text that explains an idea that is clear, well-organized, and coherent. Limited amounts of argumentation and narration are used

**Genre Examples:** News articles, textbooks, brochures

## Thinking Jobs:

1. Topic
2. What is the author trying to teach or tell me about the topic?
3. What is the author's point of view?

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question. Then fill in the answer on your answer document.

# Your Brain on Movies

by Aaron Millar

Odyssey Magazine

March 2014

- 1 The fell beast, a black dragon with snake teeth and razor talons, swoops down on the wizard Gandalf. Cut to Frodo, a hobbit from the Shire, holding the ring of power over the fiery Cracks of Doom. As the ring falls, Mount Doom starts to explode, leaving Frodo stranded, surrounded on all sides by red-hot lava, and facing certain death.
- 2 During the final scenes of *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, we experience the full gamut of emotions. We gasp as the flames engulf Frodo; we cheer when Gandalf saves him. But hobbits do not exist, and there never was one ring to bind them all, or save them. So what's going on? There must be a special kind of movie magic that makes us believe what we know to be false and care about what we know isn't real. Well, as it happens, there is a special kind of magic, but it's not in the movie. It's in the minds of people who watch them.

## Handing Over Control

- 3 Dr. Norman Holland, of the University of Florida and author of *Literature and the Brain*, believes this magic is particularly potent when we watch movies on the big screen. "The first thing that happens," he argues, "is you give up control. The movie is in control." In normal life our brains are like tractor beams, busy scanning the environment with our senses, and sucking up any information that seems important or interesting: a sudden loud noise, a car racing towards us. This is called the attentional system, and it literally means the part of the brain that directs what we pay attention to. But as the lights come down in the cinema, and the characters come alive on screen, we switch off our tractor beams and let the movie control our attention instead. Edits, close-ups, sudden on-screen movement—these are all filmmaking techniques that direct our attention and allow us to cede control to the movie.
- 4 As that happens, we become increasingly absorbed in the film: the real world of school and parents and homework disappears. We stop sensing our body, we forget where we are, we are utterly transported to the world of the silver screen. Psychologists call this kind of mental state "flow": when our attention is completely absorbed in one activity and there isn't any juice left in the tractor beam, our attentional system, to suck up any more information. We are effortlessly swept along in the currents of the ride. This is why we love the movies: it's like going on a roller coaster for the brain.

## Are You for Real?

- 5 But there's another kind of magic at work here too: as we give up control, our sense of reality changes. "The way we know things are real," Holland explains,

“is when we interact with them. In a movie theater we’re not planning to do anything—we’re not going to change what we’re watching—and that turns off the systems we use for regulating our actions; in particular it turns off the system that tells us what’s real and what’s not real.” Deep down we know that what we’re seeing is make-believe, but because we’re not going to act upon it, because it doesn’t have a direct physical bearing upon us, we don’t test its plausibility in the same way we do normal life. It’s like that part of our brain goes on a temporary vacation. Film theorists and psychologists call this “suspension of disbelief” and because of it, fell beasts really are frightening, and we genuinely care about what happens to Frodo.

- 6 But something else is happening in the brain to make this possible too. In the same way that a smart phone has different apps for different jobs, and each one has a unique place on your home screen, the mind has different abilities, and each one has a distinct place in the brain. “Your knowledge that you’re only watching a movie happens in the front part of your brain,” Holland explains. “That’s the most advanced part, where you do your thinking and planning.” But emotions come from a different area, the limbic system, in the back of the brain, one of the most primitive parts. “We feel real emotions toward unreal fictions,” Holland says, “because two different brain systems are at work.” In other words, even though our front brain knows that a movie isn’t real, the back brain never gets the message. When Frodo is rescued from the fire, our limbic system automatically produces a physiological response, and a feeling of genuine relief, as if it were actually happening. Movies may be an illusion, but the emotions they produce are real.

### **The Big Screen**

- 7 Sadly, the intensity of the emotions that movies produce in us, and the consequent pleasure we get from watching them, may actually be diminishing. It has to do with the new ways in which we consume them. At home, or on our smart phones, movies are wonderfully convenient. But watching in this way limits their magic because we’re in control: we have the power to stop the film or fast forward bits we don’t like. On top of that, we are bombarded with distractions: unfinished homework lying on the coffee table, the text message that’s just arrived from a friend. The cinema is designed to take us away from all of that, and in doing so, it maximizes the psychological effects of film. “If you’re not giving up control to the movie,” Holland says, “you’re getting a thinned-out movie experience.” More control might be more convenient, but it won’t mean more magic. Surely we deserve better than that, and Frodo does too.

## Maximizing the Magic of Movies

The best environment to watch movies is in the theater; cinemas are designed to maximize the psychological effects of film. But if you're watching at home, try out these simple tips to make your viewing experience richer and more fun.

- **TURN THE LIGHTS OFF.** Remove all sensory information except the lights from the screen. Your brain's attentional system, the part that directs what we pay attention to, will be drawn deeper into the world of the movie.
- **REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.** Turn off your phone and clear the clutter from your coffee table. Your brain's ability to suspend disbelief will be increased if there's nothing drawing attention away from the screen.
- **DON'T TALK.** When you talk during a movie—especially when you analyze what's happening—you're reminding your brain that what you're watching isn't real, reducing the movie's believability and emotional impact.
- **TURN THE SOUND UP.** Onscreen sounds are an important way film makers direct our attention and keep us engaged with the movie. Music is important too: noises and soundtracks affect us emotionally, intensifying the viewing experience.

"Your Brain on Movies" by Aaron Millar, from *Odyssey*, March 2014. Copyright © 2014 by Carus Publishing Company d/b/a Cricket Media.

- 1 Read this quotation from paragraph 4.

*This is why we love the movies: it's like going on a roller coaster for the brain.*

Why does the author use this comparison?

- A** To illustrate the level of excitement a movie can provide
  - B** To explain the filmmaking techniques used by movie directors
  - C** To show how movies help people cope with real-world worries
  - D** To describe the mental processes involved with making a movie
- 

- 2 Which word from paragraph 3 means "powerful" or "effective"?

- F** *potent*
  - G** *racing*
  - H** *attentional*
  - J** *literally*
- 

- 3 What is the primary purpose of the boxed information at the end of the article?

- A** To persuade readers to watch movies in an actual theater rather than at home
- B** To explain why movies watched at home are less enjoyable
- C** To give advice for ways to enhance the home movie-watching experience
- D** To demonstrate why the convenience of watching movies at home is appealing

4 In paragraph 1 of the article, what type of evidence does the author present?

**F** Factual data

**G** Personal experience

**H** Persuasive argument

**J** Anecdotal details

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5 Which statement best expresses the main idea of paragraph 5?

**A** Movies can cause people to become emotional.

**B** The way people relate to a movie depends on how realistic it is.

**C** Movies can make people ignore the difference between reality and fiction.

**D** People lose awareness of their surroundings in a movie theater.

6 According to paragraph 6, what does the limbic system control?

- F** Emotions
  - G** Selective attention
  - H** Comprehension
  - J** Spatial awareness
- 

7 Why does the author include paragraph 7?

- A** To contrast the enjoyment received from older and newer movies
  - B** To express concern regarding the ways people often watch movies today
  - C** To suggest that newer movies lack emotional appeal for viewers
  - D** To explain why theater attendance has declined in recent years
- 

8 Which of these best describes the author's purpose for writing this article?

- F** To inform people about what makes a movie-watching experience enjoyable
- G** To analyze the techniques moviemakers use to create popular movies
- H** To compare the experiences of watching a movie at home and in a theater
- J** To persuade people to avoid watching movies on smart phones

# Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 1

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 1.

A    B    C    D

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 2

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 2.

F   G   H   J

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 3

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 3.

A    B    C    D

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 4

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 4.

F   G   H   J

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 5

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 5.

A    B    C    D

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 6

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 6.

F   G   H   J

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 7

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 7.

A    B    C    D

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

## Your Brain on Movies | QUESTION 8

**Part 1:** Circle the correct answer for Question 1.

F   G   H   J

**Part 2:** Provide justification for your answer.


**Part 3:** Provide justification for why the other answer choices that you did not select were incorrect.

Incorrect Answer	Rationale

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### Independent Reading Log

Day and Date	Title	Pages	1 question or prediction
Day: <i>Monday</i> Date: _____			
Day: <i>Tuesday</i> Date: _____			
Day: <i>Wednesday</i> Date: _____			
Day: <i>Thursday</i> Date: _____			
Day: <i>Friday</i> Date: _____			