

Grade 6 English Language Arts (ELA) Summative Test Study Guide

Test Parameter	Details
Date of Test	Thursday, October 15, 2026
Platform / Format	Google Forms
Total Score	30 Points
Question Formats	Multiple-Choice (MCQ), Short Answer, and Long Answer / Open Response

1. Core Punctuation Topics & Rules

(Links to the slides are linked on the punctuation topic)

Dash (—)

The Dramatic Pause

- **Function:** Emphasizes added information, dramatic interruptions, or sudden shifts in thought.
- **Key Rules:** Use a dash to draw strong attention to extra detail or to interrupt a sentence abruptly. It creates a stronger pause and visual impact than commas or parentheses.
- **Example:** The old wooden chest—hidden beneath years of thick dust—finally clicked open.

Hyphen (-)

The Glue

- **Function:** Joins two or more words together into a single unified concept or descriptor.
- **Key Rules:** Use a hyphen to connect compound adjectives that come *before* a noun (e.g., *well-known author*). Also use hyphens when spelling out compound numbers from *twenty-one* through *ninety-nine*.
- **Example:** The middle-school student gave a well-prepared presentation on ancient Rome.

Parentheses ()

The Whisper

- **Function:** Sets off nonessential, extra background details or side notes.
- **Key Rules:** Use parentheses to include clarifying information. The main sentence must still make complete sense if the parenthetical text is completely removed.
- **Example:** The annual science fair (held every October in the gymnasium) features student inventions.

Ellipsis (...)

The Trailing Voice

- **Function:** Shows pauses, trailing thoughts, narrative suspense, or omitted words in quoted material.
- **Key Rules:** An ellipsis consists of exactly three spaced dots. Use it to indicate hesitation in dialogue, build suspense at the end of a clause, or show where text was removed from a direct quotation.
- **Example:** She slowly reached into the dark opening... and felt something smooth and cold.

Semicolon (;)

The Bridge

- **Function:** Connects two closely related independent clauses without using a conjunction.

- **Key Rules:** Both sides of the semicolon MUST be complete independent clauses (full thoughts that can stand alone as sentences). Do not use a semicolon if a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, so, or*) is already present.
- **Example:** The storm knocked out the local power lines; the neighborhood was dark for three hours.

Colon (:

The Presenter

- **Function:** Introduces a list, an explanation.
- **Key Rules:** The text preceding a colon MUST be a complete independent clause. Never place a colon directly after a verb (such as *is, are, include*) or directly after a preposition (such as *including, such as*).
- **Example:** Make sure to pack the following gear for the camping trip: a sleeping bag, a flashlight, and extra batteries.

Question Mark (?)

The Inquirer

- **Function:** Ends direct questions (interrogative sentences).
- **Key Rules:** Use a question mark strictly at the end of direct inquiries. Do not use a question mark for indirect questions, which simply state or report that a question was asked (use a period instead).
- **Example (Direct Question):** Did you submit your Google Forms assignment on time?
- **Example (Indirect Question):** She asked whether we had submitted our assignments on time.

Exclamation Mark (!)

The Megaphone

- **Function:** Signals strong emotion, excitement, urgency, or forceful commands.
- **Key Rules:** Use exclamation marks sparingly in academic and formal writing to preserve their power. They should follow genuine interjections, high-energy statements, or urgent warnings.

- **Example:** Look out for the falling branch!

2. Practice Test Questions (30 Points Total Alignment)

Section 1: Multiple Choice Questions (10 Points — 1 Pt Each)

1. Which sentence uses a dash correctly to show a dramatic interruption?
 - A) She went to the store—and bought—apples.
 - B) The mystery box—containing a forgotten family heirloom—sat on the attic table.
 - C) I need—to study for—my English test tonight.
 - D) The sun was setting—slowly in the western sky.
2. In which sentence is a **hyphen** used correctly?
 - A) The student was very well-known in his class.
 - B) We read a well-written short story during class today.
 - C) She is a twelve years-old girl.
 - D) The paper was due in twenty-one-days.
3. Identify the sentence that correctly uses **parentheses**:
 - A) The cafeteria (is serving pizza) and salad today.
 - B) We visited Washington, D.C. (the capital of the United States) during spring break.
 - C) (Although it was raining) we went for a long walk.
 - D) My best friend (who lives next door) is named, Alex.
4. What is the main purpose of the **ellipsis** in the following sentence?
"I thought I heard a whisper in the hallway..."
 - A) To join two complete sentences together.
 - B) To introduce a detailed list of items.
 - C) To create narrative suspense and a trailing thought.
 - D) To express a strong command or emotional shout.
5. Which sentence uses a **semicolon** correctly?

- A) Because the bell rang; the students packed their bags.
 - B) She likes reading fantasy novels; her brother prefers non-fiction.
 - C) Studying hard for exams; is important for getting good grades.
 - D) We bought apples, oranges; and bananas at the store.
6. Which sentence follows the proper rule for **colon** usage?
- A) My favorite hobbies are: reading, painting, and running.
 - B) The recipe calls for three main ingredients: flour, sugar, and butter.
 - C) Items needed for class include: paper, pens, and a binder.
 - D) She loves to travel to: France, Italy, and Spain.
7. Choose the sentence that correctly punctuates an **indirect question**:
- A) I wonder when the study guide will be posted?
 - B) The teacher asked if everyone had completed their reading.
 - C) Could you please tell me where the library is?
 - D) She asked me, "Where is the library?"
8. Where would an **exclamation mark** be most appropriate?
- A) The research report must be typed in twelve point font.
 - B) Water boils at one hundred degrees Celsius.
 - C) Look out, that falling branch is about to hit the tent!
 - D) The test contains ten multiple choice questions.
9. Which sentence contains a punctuation error involving a **colon**?
- A) The teacher emphasized one key value: integrity.
 - B) Three students won awards: Maya, Liam, and Noah.
 - C) The tour guide showed us: the fountain, the tower, and the museum.
 - D) He had only one goal for the season: to break the school record.
10. Which number written in words requires a **hyphen**?
- A) One hundred
 - B) Thirty-five
 - C) Four thousand
 - D) Seven hundred

Section 2: Short Answer Questions (10 Points — 2 Pts Each)

11. **Sentence Editing (Semicolons):** Rewrite the following run-on sentence by inserting a semicolon in the correct location:
Original: The rain stopped falling the sun began to shine through the clouds.
12. **Punctuation Insertion (Hyphens):** Insert all necessary hyphens into the sentence below:
Original: The sixty five year old marathon runner finished in record time.
13. **Sentence Transformation (Dash):** Rewrite the sentence below using em dashes to set off and emphasize the descriptive detail:
Original: My dog, a lively Golden Retriever, won first place at the agility show.
14. **Rule Explanation (Question Marks):** Explain why Sentence A ends with a question mark, but Sentence B ends with a period.
Sentence A: Where did you place the dictionary?
Sentence B: The teacher asked where I placed the dictionary.
15. **Error Correction (Colons):** Correct the error in the sentence below and explain why your change was necessary:
Original: The three required school supplies are: a notebook, a pencil, and a folder.

3. Complete Answer Key & Detailed Explanations

Section 1: MCQ Answer Key

1. **B** — *The mystery box—containing a forgotten family heirloom—sat on the attic table.* (Em dashes correctly isolate the interrupting thought for dramatic emphasis).
2. **B** — *We read a well-written short story during class today.* ("Well-written" is a compound adjective appearing before the noun "short story").

3. **B** — *We visited Washington, D.C. (the capital of the United States) during spring break.* (The parenthetical info is extra detail; removing it leaves a complete, grammatical sentence).
4. **C** — *To create narrative suspense and a trailing thought.* (Ellipses signal pauses or trailing off).
5. **B** — *She likes reading fantasy novels; her brother prefers non-fiction.* (Correctly connects two complete independent clauses without a conjunction).
6. **B** — *The recipe calls for three main ingredients: flour, sugar, and butter.* ("The recipe calls for three main ingredients" is a complete sentence before the colon).
7. **B** — *The teacher asked if everyone had completed their reading.* (This is an indirect question reporting a statement, so it takes a period).
8. **C** — *Look out, that falling branch is about to hit the tent!* (Shows urgent warning and strong emotion).
9. **C** — *The tour guide showed us: the fountain, the tower, and the museum.* (Incorrect because "The tour guide showed us" is not a complete independent clause).
10. **B** — *Thirty-five* (Compound numbers between twenty-one and ninety-nine require a hyphen).

Section 2: Short Answer Model Responses

11. Semicolon Insertion:

Corrected: The rain stopped falling; the sun began to shine through the clouds.

Explanation: A semicolon joins two complete independent clauses that are closely related without using a coordinating conjunction like *and* or *so*.

12. Hyphen Insertion:

Corrected: The sixty-five-year-old marathon runner finished in record time.

Explanation: "Sixty-five" is a compound number, and "sixty-five-year-old" functions as a single compound adjective describing the noun "runner".

13. Em Dash Transformation:

Corrected: My dog—a lively Golden Retriever—won first place at the agility show.

Explanation: Em dashes isolate the non-essential detail while drawing distinct attention to the dog's breed.

14. Direct vs. Indirect Question Explanation:

Explanation: Sentence A is a direct question asking for information, so it requires a question mark. Sentence B is an indirect question reporting a past statement; it functions grammatically as a declarative sentence, so it ends with a period.

15. Colon Error Correction:

Corrected: The three required school supplies are the following: a notebook, a pencil, and a folder. (OR: The three required school supplies are a notebook, a pencil, and a folder.)

Explanation: A colon cannot directly follow a verb like *are*. The clause before the colon must be a complete independent clause.

4. Student Study Tips & Test Strategies

The Read-Aloud Test

When reviewing sentences with punctuation marks, read them out loud in your head or whisper them softly:

- **Dash (—):** Take a dramatic pause and change your tone slightly.
- **Parentheses ():** Lower your voice to a whisper, as if telling a secret side note.
- **Semicolon (;):** Take a medium pause (longer than a comma, shorter than a period).
- **Ellipsis (...):** Slow down your voice and let it trail off gradually.

Google Forms Test-Taking Strategies

- **Review Before Submitting:** On Google Forms, you may not be able to edit answers after clicking submit. Double-check each selection.
- **Check Open Response Formatting:** Ensure short answer and long answer responses are typed clearly with capital letters at the start of sentences and proper ending punctuation.

- **Watch Out for Distractors:** Read all 4 multiple-choice options before making your selection. Pay attention to subtle differences in hyphen placement and colon positioning.