## Subpart 1

**Read the passages and answer the questions that follow.**

# The Dust Bowl

1. On April 14, 1935, many people in the southern plains of the United States feared the world was ending. A dense black cloud more than a hundred feet high sped toward them like a giant locomotive.
2. The cloud was made up of dust particles. Like a thick blanket, it blocked out the sun. Winds of more than sixty miles per hour drove the dust into cars and buildings, even when the doors and windows were closed. That day became known as “Black Sunday.” This storm, and others that followed, turned this part of the country into what came to be called the Dust Bowl.

#### Where Did the Dust Come From?

1. From about 1917–1930, there was a great demand for wheat all around the world. The southern plains of the United States were perfect for wheat farms. The land was flat and covered with low grass.
2. There also was a high demand for U.S. beef, so ranchers ran more cattle. The cows ate so much grass that the ranch land was almost as bare as the wheat fields.

#### Drought and Dust

1. The southern plains had been a good place to farm, but in 1931 that began to change. It simply stopped raining. One dry year led into the next—for eight long years.
2. Without rain the top layer of soil became dry and dusty. There were few trees and plants to hold down this layer. When the wind raced across the flat fields, the soil was easily blown away in dust storms.
3. Life in the Dust Bowl was hard. People wore facemasks to keep out the dust. Many people became sick. After years of dust storms, many people had no crops or money and had to leave their land. They usually moved west to look for work. By the end of the period, one-fourth of all the people had left the Dust Bowl.

**BENCHMARK TEST 1**

#### Government Action

1. The storm’s dust cloud even reached the East and hid the sun in Washington D.C., so “Black Sunday” changed the government’s attitude. Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act soon afterward. The government paid farmers to change their methods of farming. Farmers rotated their crops and plowed

the land in curves instead of straight lines. They also planted trees as windbreaks. These and other methods reduced by 65 percent the amount of soil blown away.

#### The Future

1. After the drought ended in 1939, regular rain helped much of the southern plains gradually return to valuable farmland. But some land is still barren and dusty today. Droughts can always happen again. But with modern farming techniques, people in the area hope that the Dust Bowl will remain a part of their past, not their future.

**BENCHMARK TEST 1**

# Passage 2

**The Tennessee Tree Project**

1. Can you imagine what Tennessee looked like hundreds of years ago? No cities, no freeways, and no parking lots. But there would have been lots and lots of trees! Today, more than 2.5 million acres of Tennessee’s native forests have become cities, roads, houses, farms, and commercial timber lots.
2. How is life different without these native trees? Deforestation means that native animals have fewer places to live. It also causes soil erosion because there are no trees or other plants to anchor the soil. Soil erosion means new plants can’t find a foothold and grow.
3. Deforestation even affects the air we breathe. Trees help clean the air. They take in carbon dioxide and release fresh oxygen into the air. Trees also play a key part in the water cycle. They absorb rainfall through their roots and release clean water back into the air through their leaves.
4. We cannot travel back in time to when Tennessee was covered in native forests. But we can replant native trees in many areas of the state, and that is the goal of the Tennessee Tree Project. Since 2007 it has helped plant 540,000 native trees!
5. Each year the project hosts a tree-planting day. And each year the number of volunteers helping plant trees continues to grow. What is it like to be a part of the project?
6. For one day every year groups of Tennessee residents can be found working side by side in rubber boots. Families, schoolchildren, and corporate and community groups all lend a hand. After a little bit of basic instruction, they take their shovels and head out to plant the saplings. Then they tie orange tape around each tree so that it will not be destroyed accidentally.
7. “This is not like going to work,” says volunteer Heather Clark. “We all have a passion to do it. I mean, I live in downtown Nashville and we don’t see a lot of green, so it’s great to get out and enjoy a park on a pretty day.”
8. In 2018 the project launched 250K Tree Day. It was the biggest Tree Day yet. With the help of 28,000 volunteers, the project planted 180,000 trees. At least one tree was planted in all 95 counties in Tennessee. Thanks to the volunteers’ hard work, we can all imagine a greener, tree-filled Tennessee in the future.

Student Name

### Writing Prompt

You have just read two passages about how people can impact the environment. Write a narrative about a group of young people who decide to improve the environment in their local area.

Be sure to include ideas from **both** passages in your essay. Follow the conventions of standard written English.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

* Plan your narrative and do some prewriting in the space provided in your test booklet.
* Write your narrative on the lined pages of your test booklet. Be sure to
* Use information from the passage in your story.

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph narrative story.

Write your essay on the lined pages of the answer document.

**Anything you write that is not on the lined pages will NOT be scored.**

Student Name

The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

**1**

#### Part A

Which statement **best** summarizes the main idea of passage 1?

* 1. The Dust Bowl was a big disaster for farmers.
	2. Congress helped solve the problems in the Dust Bowl.
	3. Drought in the southern plains remains a threat.
	4. After the Dust Bowl, farmers changed the way they farmed.

#### Part B

Which sentence from the text **best** supports your answer in Part A?

**M.** “Life in the Dust Bowl was hard” (paragraph 7).

**P.** “After the drought ended in 1939, regular rain helped much of the southern plains gradually return to valuable farmland” (paragraph 9).

1. “These and other methods reduced by 65 percent the amount of soil blown away” (paragraph 8).
2. “Droughts can always happen again” (paragraph 9).

Using your knowledge of the prefix “de,” the root word “forest,” and the context*,* what is the most likely meaning of the word deforestation in paragraph 11 of passage 2?

**2**

1. trees dying from disease
2. people cutting down large areas of trees
3. planting trees in cities
4. wildlife losing their homes

Test 1 Answer Key Student Name: -----------------



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| --- | --- |
| **Subpart** 1 | **TNELA Standard** I **Complexity** |
|  |
| **1A** | D | Main Idea and Key Details | 5.RI.KID.2 | DOK2 |
| **1B** | R | Main Idea and Key Details | 5.RII.KID.2 | DOK 2 |
| 2 | B | Prefixes and Suffixes | 5.FL.VA.7a | DOK 2 |

Test **1 Rationales**

**1A**

**A** is incorrect. This is trne, but it is not the main idea.

**B** is incorrect. This sentence is a detail, not a summary of the main idea.

C is incorrect. This is a reason for the importance of changed fairming techniques.

**D** is correct This sentence summairizes the main idea of the passage.

**19**

**M** is inconect This is about the disaster, not the ways !People changed their farming. Pis incorrect This sentence sulPpoirts none of the answers above.

**R** is correct This sentence supports answer D above.

**S** is incorrect. This sentence supports incorrect answer C above.

**2**

**A** is incorrect. The passage implies that people were responsible for the loss of trees.

**B** is correct Paragraph 10 makes it clear that the forests were cut down for cities and so on.

C is incorrect. This is not mentioned.

D is incorrect. This is a consequence-not the meaning-of defoirestati on.

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