The Georgia Milestone Assessment System is designed to be a comprehensive, coherent and consolidated assessment system.

The 8th Grade Milestone will have 3 item types.

- **Selected-Response** (Multiple Choice)  
  (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies)

- **Constructed Response**  
  ELA and Mathematics - These items require the student to generate a response as opposed to selecting a response.

- **Extended-Response**  
  ELA - These items require more elaborate answers and explanations of reasoning. Writing prompts and performance tasks are examples of extended-response items.

**ELA Test Parameters:**
- 40 Selected Response
- (10 Norm-referenced items aligned to standards)
- 2 Constructed Responses
- 1 Constructed Response — Narrative Writing

**Math Test Parameters:**
- 50 Selected Response
- (10 Norm-referenced items aligned to standards)
- 3 Constructed Responses
- (1 weighted more heavily)

**Implications for Instruction/Practices to Cultivate:**
- Formative Assessment Practices
- Facilitate/Gradual Release
- Questions—DOK Levels 2-4
- Teacher Models
- Show work, detail thoughts, provide rationales, cite evidence to support answer or claim

**Office of Assessment and Personalized Learning**
Address Questions to dianna.denton@cobbk12.org —Middle School Assessment Supervisor
In this first edition of the Milestone Messenger, sample test items have been provided to demonstrate the question types students will experience on the new test. It is recommended that teachers include these types of questions in their own assessments.

**Sample ELA 8th Grade Items**

*Read the passage below. Then answer the questions that follow.*

![Map of Canada with Ottawa highlighted](image)

**Ottawa Past and Present**

Ottawa, the capital of Canada, is a beautiful city situated at the confluence of three rivers: the Ottawa, the Gatineau, and the Rideau.

The area has a rich history dating back hundreds of years. The first Europeans to see the land on which Ottawa now rests were in search of the Northwest Passage. French explorer Jacques Cartier explored the St. Lawrence River from 1534 to 1542, but rapids (which the French named the Lachine Rapids) prevented him from sailing up the Ottawa River.

It would be another seventy years before a team would brave the rushing rapids. In 1610, Étienne Brûlé became the first European to make it as far as present-day Ottawa. At this time, the area was inhabited by the Algonquin. The French established trade relationships with these Native American inhabitants, swapping manufactured goods for furs to satisfy the growing demand in Europe.

Ottawa itself began as “Bytown.” It was founded in 1826 and was named after Lieutenant-Colonel John By, who supervised construction of a canal on the Rideau River. The Rideau Canal was built to provide a secure route between Montreal and Kingston. It bypasses the stretch of the St. Lawrence River bordering the state of New York.

By the time the Rideau Canal was built, the region had become a British colony. Britain believed that the canal was essential to enable the unfettered movement of goods in case of another war with the United States. The 126-mile-long Rideau Canal was finished in 1832 and is the oldest continuously operated canal system in North America.

A bountiful environment fueled the growing economy in and around Ottawa; just as the first French settlers had capitalized on the abundance of beaver and other animals for their pelts, the huge trees later provided wood for pulp and paper. The region’s sawmills soon became some of the largest in the world.

In 1855, the name Bytown was changed to Ottawa. The name is derived from the Algonquin word *adawe*, which means “to trade.” It was selected as the capital of Canada in 1857 because its location away from the coast made it easier to defend and its position along waterways made it easy to reach.
Ottawa Today
From these humble beginnings arose a beautiful, modern city. Home to almost 900,000 people, Ottawa is Canada’s fourth-largest city. It has become a center for the high-tech industry, which has earned the area the moniker “Silicon Valley of the North.” Both English and French are official languages, giving homage to the city’s roots and accommodating its present cultural diversity.

Parliament Hill rises above downtown Ottawa. This area, a majestic site overlooking the Ottawa River, contains the Parliament building. It is built in the gothic revival style of architecture with hundreds of gargoyles and reliefs carved into the stonework. The grounds are decorated with statues of people and events that have earned a place in Canadian history.

The skyline has been impacted by a height restriction, which was initially intended to facilitate sightlines of Parliament Hill and the Peace Tower, another structure on Parliament Hill, from other parts of the city. Currently, the tallest building is just twenty-nine stories high.

Flanked on both sides by scenic parkways, bicycle paths, trails, and parks, the Rideau Canal continues to serve as a center of activity. In summer, it is busy with sightseeing cruises, canoes, kayaks, and paddleboats; in winter, the canal freezes, becoming one of the largest skating rinks in the world. The canal plays a central role in Winterlude, an annual festival that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. In addition to public skating, Winterlude includes a huge ice playground, an ice lounge, and detailed ice sculptures that are lit up at night.

Ottawa is a city of contrasts. Visitors to the city experience the blending of a historical masterpiece with a bustling modern hub of activity. This synchronization of eras continues to make Ottawa a source of Canadian pride.

Selected Response
Read this paragraph from the passage.

It would be another seventy years before a team could brave the rushing rapids. In 1610, Etienne Brule became the first European to make it as far as present-day Ottawa. At this time, the area was inhabited by the Algonquin. The French established trade relationships with the native inhabitants. They obtained furs from the Algonquin to satisfy the growing demand in Europe.

Which sentence in this paragraph suggests that the land would eventually become a settlement?

A. At this time, the area was inhabited by the Algonquin
B. It would be another seventy years before a team could brave the rushing rapids
C. They obtained furs from the Algonquin to satisfy the growing demand in Europe
D. In 1610, Etienne Brule became the first European to make it as far as present-day Ottawa
**Constructed Response**

How does the narrator organize this article?

**Extended Response**

Read both passages. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Why Video Games Are Bad for You**

Teens today spend a lot of time playing video games. Even when teens are restricted to two hours a day—the maximum time recommended by pediatricians—this adds up to hundreds of hours a year. In fact, the average teen will have played thousands of hours of video games by the time he or she graduates from high school. Every hour wasted playing a video game is one less hour that could be devoted to reading, sports and exercise, homework, and social activities.

Video games have been shown to increase dopamine, a chemical in the brain that carries messages between nerve cells. This physical change may be why some people begin to crave video games. The games also require intense concentration. Players often tune out the world around them, allowing hours to pass without coming up for air.

**Violence and Video Games: A Dangerous Combination**

Among the most popular video games are several titles that are extremely violent. Games that have shooting or violence as objectives simply teach young people the wrong message. Worse, in most of these games, the more violent the player is, the more he or she is rewarded, reinforcing the idea that violence is somehow a path to success.

Studies undertaken decades ago showed a clear connection between watching violent acts on television and violent behavior. Experts worry that video games that require players to role-play violence have an even greater impact. The link between watching violence and having violent thoughts or behaviors is particularly strong among children. A recent study of eighth and ninth graders undertaken at the University of Minnesota School of Professional Psychology found that video game addiction is a problem among adolescents and that this addiction has a negative impact on school performance and aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

Video game manufacturers counter concerns about violence by pointing out that there is a rating system in place to keep the most violent games out of the hands of kids. For some teens, however, a “mature” rating simply increases a game’s appeal. Moreover, many parents do not check the ratings of the games their children play. In one study, 90 percent of the teens surveyed said their parents never check the ratings before allowing them to rent or buy a video game.
The Social Impact
Even games that are not violent have negative effects, however. By their nature, video games are a solitary experience. Even the best games do little to help build social skills such as negotiation and teamwork. For teens, this can have devastating consequences and contribute to social isolation. A study published in a recent issue of a popular psychology journal shows that kids who play video games are more apt to exhibit impulsive behavior and attention problems. Studies also have linked playing video games with anxiety and depression.

There are also physical effects to consider. An increasing number of young people are choosing to play video games rather than engaging in sports, bike rides, or simply spending time outside. Over the long term, the sedentary nature of the games can have a profoundly negative impact on one’s health. Experts suggest that video games may be contributing to the growing obesity problem in the United States.

Some psychologists worry that games confuse reality and fantasy. True, some games teach valuable skills, but these skills may not translate to real life. As a result, young people may learn and practice skills and behaviors that are simply not useful, to the detriment of those that are. In the end, players may find that they have few skills that are useful beyond the virtual world.

Video games are a relatively new phenomenon, and no one can be sure of the long-term impact that gaming will have on a person’s intellect or behavior. Although it is unrealistic to expect teens to forego video games entirely, it is important to consider the potential negative effects of video games before deciding what games to play and how often to play them.

Good News for Gamers

Many people view gamers, those spending time playing video games, as wasting their time. Parents complain that games take time away from more important things like homework and exercise. Doctors and educators worry about the impact of video games on brain development. But an increasing body of research shows that video games, played in moderation, can have many benefits. Given the fact that most teens will spend thousands of hours playing video games by the time they graduate from high school, this is good news!

Brain Fuel

Scientists have long understood that learning to read, speak a foreign language, or play a musical instrument changes the physical structure of the brain. Video games appear to have a similar impact on brain development. Studies show that video games help to strengthen neural circuits in the brain and speed up neurological processes. One recent study showed that people who played action-based video games made decisions 25 percent faster than non-game-players. Video games also appear to build skills for multitasking. A study undertaken at the University of Rochester showed that experienced gamers can pay attention to six things simultaneously, two more than people who rarely play video games.

Role-playing games teach players how to manage limited resources and make strategic decisions to reach both short- and long-term goals. James Paul Gee, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, likens video games to science experiments. Gamers must come up with a hypothesis for how to succeed at the game and then test the hypothesis. If one hypothesis does not work, gamers must come up with an alternative. Steven Johnson, the author of *Everything Bad Is Good For You: How Today's Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter*, says that video game players have to engage in a series of complicated decision-making tasks that he calls “telescoping.” He believes that telescoping provides a unique and vigorous mental workout.
Action and role-playing games also may foster proficiencies needed for academic success. Reading, following instructions, abstract thinking, problem solving, and logic are all part of many, if not most, video games. Games that require participants to navigate through a virtual world reinforce map-reading skills. Many video games teach math-related skills, such as estimation and pattern recognition.

There may also be a link between video games and creativity. In a three-year study, researchers at Michigan State University’s Children and Technology Project found that middle school students who played computer games had higher scores on the Torrance Test of Creativity, a standardized test that involves tasks such as drawing and creative writing. The boost in creativity appears to occur regardless of the type of game played.

Beyond the Brain
Video games teach some positive life lessons. Persistence almost always pays off. Mastering a challenging game or improving a score can build self-confidence. Video games allow children to take on the ego-boosting role of hero. Multiplayer games may foster cooperation and teamwork. In addition to giving a good workout, video games that focus on dance or sports can help build coordination and gross motor skills.

Much of the criticism of video games relates to their violent content. Studies show that playing violent games can desensitize users—particularly children—to violence. Ironically, studies suggest that violent games may have the greatest benefit in terms of brain development. Researchers say that this is due to the fact that violent games stimulate dopamine, the brain chemical that carries messages from one nerve cell to another.

It is true that violent video games are among the most popular titles. Studies suggest that it may not be the violent content that attracts users, but rather the adrenaline rush and reward system inherent in these games. Researchers believe that better understanding the unique qualities of these games may help video game companies integrate the desired elements into games that are not violent.

In the meantime, the abundance of nonviolent games makes it easy to avoid games with violent content. As with movies and television programs, ratings can help steer consumers to appropriate games for children of any age.

Research into the effects of video games is still in its infancy. Given the thousands of games on the market, it will take decades for researchers to truly understand the relative benefits and risks of video games. In the meantime, the best approach is to balance the time spent gaming with other activities. In addition, mixing strategy games with active games that offer an aerobic workout will help ensure that the time spent gaming benefits both brain and body.

This task has more than one (1) part. Read each part carefully and respond.

Part A
Identify the article in which you most agree with the author, and explain the arguments this author uses that you find most compelling, and why.

Part B
Using the author you selected in Part A, identify which argument or arguments you think are less effective. Explain how the author could have strengthened these points for a stronger argument.

Be sure to complete ALL parts of the task.
Use details from the texts to support your answer.
Answer with complete sentences, and use correct punctuation and grammar.
Grade 8 Mathematics Sample Items

Selected Response

Determine the product.

\[ 800.5 \times (2 \times 10^6) \]

A. \( 1.7 \times 10^7 \)
B. \( 1.601 \times 10^7 \)
C. \( 1.7 \times 10^9 \)
D. \( 1.601 \times 10^9 \)

Constructed Response

Does the graph below represent a proportional relationship? Justify your response.

[Graph]

Constructed Response

Jumel and Ashley have two of the most popular phones on the market, a Droid and an iPhone. Jumel’s monthly cell phone plan is shown below, where \( c \) stands for the cost in dollars, and \( t \) stands for the number of texts sent each month.

Jumel: \( c = 60 + 0.05t \)

Ashley’s plan costs $.35 per text, in addition to a monthly fee of $45.

A. Whose plan, Jumel’s or Ashley’s, costs less if each of them sends 30 texts in a month?
B. How much will Ashley’s plan cost for the same number of texts as when Jumel’s costs $75?
C. Explain in writing how you know if there is a number of texts for which both plans cost the same amount.
Grade 8 Social Studies Sample Item

Constructed Response
Source: James Madison, Federalist Paper #51, 1788.

“...the constant aim is to divide and arrange the several offices in such a manner as that they may be a check on the other...(They) should not be so far separated as to have no constitutional control over each other.”

Based on the above quote, which principle of our government is expressed?

A. separation of powers
B. two-party system
C. checks and balance
D. representation

Grade 8 Science Sample Item

1. After a spacecraft takes off, its distance traveled is measured and is represented in this graph.

What is the average speed of the spacecraft?

A. 12 kilometers per second
B. 5 kilometers per second
C. 3 kilometers per second
The chart below shows the approximate weight for each domain on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade measures. Each Georgia Milestones measure is aligned to the state-adopted content standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Approximate Percent of Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>Reading and Vocabulary</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing and Language</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistics and Probability</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers, Expressions &amp; Equations</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algebra &amp; Functions</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Structure of Matter</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force and Motion</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Energy and Its Transformation</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government/Civics</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Georgia Department of Education
John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
September 5, 2014
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Supporting Resources:

Content Standards (frameworks, formative lessons) at www.georgiastandards.org

Evidence Statements (PARCC) at http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs

Accommodations Manual and FAQ
http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Information-For-Educators.aspx

Content Weights
http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Milestones-Assessment-System.aspx

Assessment FOR Learning Modules (more to come) http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Eliciting-Evidence-of-Student-Learning.aspx

Sample items (more to come)
- Georgia OAS/GOFAR—available to CCSD September 30th- www.georgiaoas.org
- PARCC— http://practice.parcc.testnav.com/#
- Milestone Messenger - found on CCSD Blackboard Learn under Assessment 2014-2015

Resources Currently Under Construction:

- Student Study Guides
- Unit of Study for Writing Constructed/Extended Response