English II STAAR Short Answer Practice

"It's HE-RO," the boy argued.

"No," the girl insisted, "it's HER-O."

Picture is from *The Tiny Book of Tiny Stories* by Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Text for picture:
  (1) "It's HE-RO," the boy argued.
  (2) "No," the girl insisted,
  (3) "it's HER-O."

Single Response:
What is the author's purpose in writing this very tiny story?

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For "My Stupid Day" begin reading at 7:00. The text reads: I wake up in the morning and get ready for school. It's the same thing every day. I go to school and it's BORING. I have lunch and talk to the same kids day after day. When I get home, I have the same stupid snack and watch a dumb cartoon. Then it's dinner and homework and the day is over. So I put on my pajamas. I go to bed and then

Single Response:
Why did the author of "My Stupid Day" write his poem in the shape of a clock?

Text #2:

> "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."
> ~Benjamin Franklin, 1746

Single Response:
What is the meaning of Benjamin Franklin's quote?

ANSWER with elements of the question:

PROVE—Provide two quotes that you could use to back up your answer. (Textual evidence from "It's 2012! Ignorance is Inexcusable!" by Joe Peacock)
Quote #1: "_____"
Introduce the quote:

Quote #2: "_____"
Introduce the quote:

EXPLAIN: Reread what you've already said and summarize the main idea.

Short Answer Crossover/Paired Response:
Contrast the above two pieces of text (the clock concrete poem and Benjamin Franklin's quote).
What is different about their messages?

Answer	Prove--quotes from "My Stupid Day"	Explain
	Quote #1— " Quote #2— "	
Answer	Prove—quotes from Benjamin Franklin	Explain
	Quote #1— " Quote #2— "	

Don't forget to use A. P. E.

Text #1:

"It's 2012! Ignorance is Inexcusable!" by Joe Peacock

There were many effects and stories to come out of Wednesday's huge internet blackout in protest of SOPA/PIPA. But I was struck, specifically, by how stupid people can be, and how it has polluted our Internet. It made me realize that as geeks, we have a responsibility to help clean up the mess.

If you missed it, this was spectacularly illustrated by a dedicated Twitter feed collecting and retweeting peoples' utterly ridiculous reaction to having no Wikipedia for a day. There were even people who thought Obama banned Wikipedia.

If you're like me, this sort of thing fills you with outrage. "It's 2012!" you're yelling. "Ignorance is inexcusable!"

And you're right.

As Seth Godin points out, not knowing how to do something is the most easily solved problem any of us has these days. The entire sum of human knowledge is available on a 4-inch device that fits in your pocket. If you own a computer, everything you could ever want to know is one click away.

And that's why we as geeks get aggravated with people taking the time to leave Wikipedia, fire up Twitter, and proceed to demand to know why Wikipedia was down, when Wikipedia put a link directly on the front page explaining why.

"Why didn't they just click?!?" we ask ourselves. If someone is too lazy to just click that link right in front of you and figure it out, perhaps they don't deserve to know. Geeks see stupidity as a problem easily solved by initiative: Just stop being lazy and you'll stop being stupid.

I can't stand not knowing things. I care very much about the things I love, and have a need - not just desire, but need - to know everything I can about them. Even topics I don't necessarily care about get a quick glance from me. I feel it's important that I at least read enough about the news to not be ignorant about it. And you're probably the same way. It's our instinct as geeks.

But something occurred to me yesterday that changed my perspective on the situation. I was reminded of the Internet-wide Blue Ribbon Campaign For Free Speech in 1996, launched immediately after the Communications Decency Act was passed that February. It also featured a day of blacked out websites in protest of government censorship of the internet.

There's a very notable difference between the two protests: Back then, the internet was much smaller - less than 1/100th the size it is now, both in terms of users and active servers. The people who were on the internet back then weren't there to nonchalantly post pictures of their cats to Facebook.

Back then, if you wanted to post pictures of your cat, you not only had to build your own dedicated website for it, you also had to wait roughly 2-3 minutes per picture to upload them, as the only way to get them was scanning physical pictures into inefficiently compressed JPGs of 50-100kB and uploading them over a 28.8K modem, which wouldn't actually upload at 2.8kB. It was usually less than 1kB upload then - and that's only if you were able to afford the best modem of the day.

The people using the internet in 1996 were mostly geeks, with 57.8% of users having either education-based or computer-based occupations.

While not all of them were "computer geeks" per se, they shared a common trait: They were obsessive about what they loved and cared enough about it to learn how to use a computer, learn how to connect to the Internet

via a phone line and modem, learn how to post information to news groups. They were passionate, intelligent and motivated. I know, because I was there.

Today? Not so much. The stream has been polluted by, well, everyone who isn't us. And the result, while shamefully entertaining, is a feeling that the world has gotten stupider.

It probably hasn't. We're just more aware of it now, because everyone has a channel to broadcast their minds with very little barrier to entry.

A geek's natural reaction to this is to sigh, shake our head and make references to the film "Idiocracy," (Which posits a world that has become populated almost exclusively by stupid people because all of the smart people stopped breeding. It's an uncannily fitting metaphor.)

But there's a flip side to this coin. The reaction to SOPA/PIPA should make geeks responsible for educating our less enthusiastic peers.

Geeks can point other people to the resources that teach them what it is they don't know, (even if you have to sigh when you do it.) Geeks could even write and originate the information others need in order to learn about how the internet really works. The fantastic Khan Academy video explaining the SOPA and PIPA bills is a great example - rather than taking the opportunity to create a video lampooning how stupid people can be when they're not geeky, they break everything down to extremely easy-to-understand concepts and then illustrate them.

In 2012, you can become a part of the solution of the global stupidity epidemic. You can be a better geek. Sure, it's inherent in our culture to snark - it keeps the fakers and posers at bay. Yes, some people absolutely deserve to be derided - when they are willfully ignorant and won't listen to your warnings about the consequences; they deserve to learn what it's like to touch the hot stove.

But for those that can and might listen, it's your responsibility as a geek and a knowledge-owner to spread that information and help them. They don't have to be a member of our club to understand why it exists or the work we do. And if they don't understand, at least they'll know where they can find some information.

1. **Go back and number each paragraph.**
2. **Read the question and underline important words to use in your response.**
3. **Brainstorm your answer before writing your final short answer.**
4. **Remember A (Answer), P (Prove), E (Explain). Do not write A.P.E. in your final answer box. This is for brainstorming only.**

Single Response:
Why did the author of "It's 2012! Ignorance is Inexcusable!" include the quote from Seth Godin in paragraph 6?

Answer	Prove--quotes from "It's 2012! Ignorance is Inexcusable!" by Joe Peacock	Explain
	Quote #1—Paragraph # _____ " Quote #2—Paragraph #_____ "	

Text #2:

"Report Reveals Headphones Can Kill You" by Steven Mostyn

While most gadget users will be aware that listening to music through headphones can potentially damage hearing if not done so responsibly, it may come as a shock to learn that headphones can apparently endanger our lives.

Again boiling down to acting with due care and attention, new research offered up by the Maryland Hospital for Children, Baltimore, has uncovered a worrying trend involving U.S. pedestrians being either injured or killed whilst wearing headphones.

According to the study, which covered the use of iPods and other MP3 players, 116 headphone-wearing pedestrians have been either killed or injured between 2004 and 2011—with more than half of that figure struck by trains and the rest hit by road vehicles.

Also, 74 percent of all reported incidents stated that the victim was wearing headphones at the time of the crash, and in 29 percent of cases an audible warning was sounded directly before impact.

In terms of gender and age-specific spread, those most likely to fall foul of a headphone-related rail or road accident are male (68 percent) and aged below 30.

The hospital's research suggests that headphones can lead to "inattentional blindness," which essentially means the wearer is distracted from their immediate surroundings thanks to the brain reducing its focus on external stimuli.

While the above figure may not seem especially high, it's worth noting that the study did not take into account accidents that have befallen headphone-wearers listening to music on their mobile phones or smartphone devices.

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Single Response:

How does the author of "Headphones Can Kill" get and maintain the reader's attention?

Answer	Prove--quotes from "Report Reveals Headphones Can Kill You" by Steven Mostyn	Explain
	Quote #1—Paragraph # _____ " Quote #2—Paragraph #_____ "	

Short Answer Crossover/Paired Response:

In "It's 2012! Ignorance is Inexcusable" and "Headphones Can Kill" technology is being used in ways that are, to be blunt, not smart. **What is the message of these two pieces for the average user of technology?**

Answer	Prove--quotes from "It's 2012! Ignorance is Inexcusable!" by Joe Peacock	Explain
	Quote #1— Paragraph # _____ Quote #2— Paragraph # _____	
Answer	Prove—quotes from "Report Reveals Headphones Can Kill You" by Steven Mostyn	Explain
	Quote #1— Paragraph # _____ Quote #2— Paragraph # _____	