It’s interesting and informative to see how different states test students for mastery of English/language arts conventions and usage and how their past assessments correspond to the lessons in Grammar Keepers. Take a look at the examples below from some released test items that can be viewed online.

Texas—State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)
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http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/staar/testquestions

STAAR Fourth- and Seventh-Grade 2013 Writing Tests

Both grade levels have multiple questions on sentence revision and sentence combining. These types of questions are expertly covered by using the lessons in Part V, “Fragments” and Part VI, “Pitchforking.”

Grade 4:

2. What is the BEST way to revise sentence 19?

F. My mother shrieked about approaching strange animals that warned me.
G. My mother shrieked. As she warned me about approaching strange animals.
H. My mother shrieked about approaching strange animals, she warned me.
J. My mother shrieked and warned me about approaching strange animals.

Grade 7:

12. What is the BEST way to combine sentences 6 and 7?

F. The first stop for these items is probably a materials recovery facility, or MRF, where the real recycling takes place.
G. The first stop for these items is probably a materials recovery facility, an MRF, this is where the real recycling takes place.
H. The first stop for these items is probably a materials recovery facility, where the real recycling takes place, and MRF.
J. The first stop for these items is probably a materials recovery facility and an MRF, where the real recycling takes place.
Many Grammar Keepers lessons match other Grade 4 items.

6. What change, if any, should be made in sentence 4?
   G. Change grabbed to grabbed (Lesson 65, “Words Ending in Consonants”).
   H. Change that to it (Lesson 90, “Pronouns”).
   J. No change should be made.

9. How should sentence 28 be changed?
   A. Change your to you’re. (Lesson 9, “You’re,” and Lesson 10, “Your”)
   B. Change attention to attention. (Part IV, “Spelling”)
   D. Sentence 28 should not be changed.

11. What change, if any, should be made in sentence 33?
    A. Insert a comma after planned. (Lesson 48, “Commas After Beginning Phrases/Clauses,” and Lesson 49, “Commas Before Beginning Phrases/Clauses”)
    B. Delete but. (Lesson 92, “Conjunctions”)
    C. Change she knew to they knew. (Lesson 33, “Subject/Verb Agreement”)
    D. No change should be made in sentence 33.

Grade 7 examples:

19. What change, if any, needs to be made in sentence 7?
   A. Change It’s to Its. (Lesson 7, “It’s,” and Lesson 8, “Its”)
   B. Change are to is. (Lesson 33, “Subject/Verb Agreement”)
   C. Change balance to balence. (Lesson 67, “Ce/Ci/Ge/Gi”)
   D. No change needs to be made in this sentence.
35. What change, if any, needs to be made in sentence 11?

A. Insert a comma after me. (Lesson 48, “Commas After Beginning Phrases/Clauses,” and Lesson 49, “Commas Before Beginning Phrases/Clauses”)


C. Insert quotation marks after the period. (Lesson 57, “Punctuating Dialogue—Chicken Dance”)

D. No change needs to be made in this sentence.

California—California Standards Test (CST)
Copyright © 2009 California Department of Education
http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/css05rtq.asp

Grade 4 examples are taken from the passages “Citrus Fruit in America,” p. 50 and “Visiting Death Valley” p. 62.

79. What is the correct way to write the underlined word in sentence 5? (Lesson 87, “Verbs”)

A. broughted
B. bringed
C. brang
D. Leave as is.

80. What is the correct way to write the underlined word in sentence 12? (Lesson 40, “Apostrophes—Contractions”)

A. That’s
B. Thats'
C. Tha’ts
D. Leave as is.

99. Read these sentences. (Part VI, “Pitchforking”)

They see animals. They see plants.
These are very unusual.

A. They see very unusual animals and plants.
B. There are very unusual animals and plants, and they see them.
C. There are animals, and there are plants, and they are very unusual.
D. They see animals and plants, they are very unusual.
100. Read this sentence. (Lesson 57, “Punctuating Dialogue—Chicken Dance”)

A. “In spite of the harsh conditions, said the ranger, more than 970 kinds of plants grow in Death Valley.”
B. In spite of the harsh conditions, “said the ranger, more than 970 kinds of plants grow in Death Valley.”
C. In spite of the harsh conditions, said the ranger, “more than 970 kinds of plants grow in Death Valley.”
D. “In spite of the harsh conditions,” said the ranger, “more than 970 kinds of plants grow in Death Valley.”

In addition to this small sample, there are more excellent resources available on many state education websites. For example, by visiting the released test materials from Connecticut’s Academic Performance Test,* it’s easy to see how the questions and answer choices relate directly to several GK lessons, such as the use of silent E or subject-verb agreement.

The correlations between the Grammar Keepers lessons and some of the new upcoming assessments can also be made easily. Both Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) have recently released online sample items and performance tasks for English language arts (ELA)/Literacy as a preview for their assessments being used by many states in the spring of 2014–15.**

Clearly, Grammar Keepers is an invaluable and up-to-date teaching resource for all ELA teachers and students.

