

Computer-Based Released Items Grade 8 MCAS English Language Arts Spring 2021

The spring 2021 grade 8 English Language Arts test was administered in two primary formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. The vast majority of students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for students with disabilities who are unable to use a computer, as well as for English learners who are new to the country and are unfamiliar with technology.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is releasing items from both versions of the test to provide information about the knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate.

- Released items from the **computer-based test** are available online at mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items. The computer-based released items are collected in a mini test called an ePAT (electronic practice assessment tool). Items in the ePAT are displayed in TestNav 8, the testing platform for the computer-based tests.
- Released items from the **paper-based test** are available in PDF format on the Department’s website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html.

This document provides information about each released item from the *computer-based test*, including: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, item description, and correct answer (for selected-response items only). Information about unreleased operational items is also presented here, and scoring rubrics are provided for released essay items.

A Note about Testing Mode

Most of the operational items on the grade 8 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same ELA content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

2021 Session Sampling

In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department reduced testing time for students in grades 3–8 through a session sampling approach, in which each student took only a portion of each MCAS assessment. Instead of taking two sessions in each subject, individual students took one session each.

Grade 8 English Language Arts
Spring 2021 Computer-Based Released Operational Items

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)**
1	Reading	RI.8.5	SR	Determine how a text feature is important to a passage.	A
2	Reading	RI.8.3	SR	Use information from a passage to determine why an event happened.	C
3	Language	L.8.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	C
4	Reading	RI.8.4	SR	Explain what an individual’s use of a metaphor reveals about her point of view.	C
5	Reading	RI.8.5	SR	Determine how particular paragraphs help develop the central idea of a passage.	A
6	Reading	RI.8.9	SR	Identify a difference in how two passages present information on a similar topic.	D
7	Reading	RI.8.3	SR	Explain what specific sentences reveal about an individual.	C
8	Language	L.8.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	D
9	Reading	RI.8.8	SR	Identify a shared claim in two passages.	B
10	Reading	RI.8.1	SR	Make an inference about an individual in a passage; select evidence from provided details to support analysis.	D;D
11	Reading	RI.8.4	SR	Identify different tones in two passages on a similar topic.	<i>see page 4</i>
12	Language, Writing	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.1, W.8.4	ES	Write an argument in the form of a letter in support of an idea presented in two passages; support the argument with details from the passages.	<i>see page 5</i>

* ELA item types are selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).

** Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Scoring rubrics for essay items are also provided in this document. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for essay items will be posted to the Department’s website later this year.

**Grade 8 English Language Arts
Spring 2021 Computer-Based Unreleased Operational Items**

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
13	Reading	RL.8.4	SR	Interpret what quotations from a passage suggest about a character.
14	Reading	RL.8.5	SR	Identify the reason behind a character's questions.
15	Language	L.8.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
16	Reading	RL.8.3	SR	Identify what a specific paragraph in a passage reveals about a character.
17	Reading	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the connection between two paragraphs in a passage.
18	Reading	RL.8.3	SR	Make an inference about a character based on his actions.
19	Reading	RL.8.6	SR	Determine how a character's point of view is revealed.
20	Language	L.8.2	SR	Determine the purpose of italics in context.
21	Reading	RL.8.9	SR	Identify a similar topic across two passages.
22	Reading	RL.8.3	SR	Compare the reactions of characters to similar situations across two passages; select evidence from provided details to support analysis.
23	Reading	RL.8.2	SR	Determine whether main ideas are present in one or two passages.
24	Language, Writing	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay that compares the challenges that characters in two passages face; support analysis with details from the passages.
25	Reading	RL.8.4	SR	Determine the technique used to describe the setting in a folktale.
26	Language	L.8.4	SR	Identify a word that would best replace a word in context.
27	Reading	RL.8.1	SR	Make an inference about a character based on a paragraph.
28	Reading	RL.8.3	SR	Analyze the similarity between the actions of two characters.
29	Language	L.8.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
30	Reading	RL.8.3	SR	Determine what a specific paragraph reveals about a character.
31	Reading	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the theme of a folktale.
32	Reading	RL.8.2	SR	Determine the theme of a folktale.

* ELA item types are selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).

Correct Answer for CBT Item #11: Technology-Enhanced Item

In "The Green Belt Movement," paragraphs 23 and 24 express a tone of

appreciation



. "Wangari Maathai's Nobel Lecture" ends with

an inspirational and urgent



tone.

Scoring Rubric for Grade 8 Item #12: Essay

Idea Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL IDEA * • SELECTION AND EXPLANATION OF EVIDENCE AND/OR DETAILS * • ORGANIZATION • EXPRESSION OF IDEAS • AWARENESS OF TASK AND MODE 	
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central idea is insightful and fully developed • Skillful selection and explanation of evidence and/or details • Skillful and/or subtle organization • Rich expression of ideas • Full awareness of the task and mode
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central idea is clear and well-developed • Effective selection and explanation of evidence and/or details • Effective organization • Clear expression of ideas • Full awareness of the task and mode
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central idea is general and moderately developed • Appropriate selection and explanation of evidence and/or details • Moderate organization • Adequate expression of ideas • Sufficient awareness of the task and mode
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central idea may be present and is somewhat developed • Limited selection and explanation of evidence and/or details • Limited organization • Basic expression of ideas • Partial awareness of the task and mode
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central idea is not developed • Insufficient evidence and/or details • Minimal organization • Poor expression of ideas • Minimal awareness of the task and mode
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question.

*For narrative writing (Standard 3), the quality and development of narrative elements will be assessed in place of a central idea. Narrative elements should include, but are not limited to: plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description. Students should use evidence/details to demonstrate understanding of text.

Standard English Conventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SENTENCE STRUCTURE • GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND MECHANICS 	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures relative to length of essay • Consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly consistent control of sentence structures relative to length of essay • Mostly consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little control and/or no variety in sentence structure and/or • Little control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or insufficient length
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentences are formed incorrectly with no control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and/or insufficient length.