

PRACTICE TEST

English Language Arts

Grade 4

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Student Name

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School Name

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District Name



# Grade 4 English Language Arts

## PRACTICE TEST

This practice test contains 11 questions.

### Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in your Practice Test Answer Document.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Practice Test Answer Document. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a short response or an essay. Write your response or essay in the space provided in your Practice Test Answer Document. Only responses and essays written within the provided space will be scored.

Today you will read about a girl who finds some unusual shoes. As you read the story, you will gather information to answer questions and write a narrative story.

Read “Those Wacky Shoes.” Then answer the questions.

## Those Wacky Shoes

by Julie Parker Amery

- 1 I *thought* it was going to be an ordinary Saturday—but, boy, was I wrong.
- 2 I bought some shoes at a thrift shop downtown. They were blue-and-red-checked slip-on sneakers. Unusual. I liked them.
- 3 I put them on outside the store. I got ready to turn right, toward home . . . but my feet turned left! It was as if those wacky shoes were in control. I tried to stop to take them off, but my feet wouldn’t let me. I quickly realized that those shoes were going to take me wherever they wanted.
- 4 The shoes walked me up Main Street, nice and slow. After a few blocks, they turned my feet left up Pine Street. They started picking up speed. I passed a woman walking a beagle. She looked at my shoes and said, “Did you get those at the secondhand store downtown?”
- 5 “Yep.” I hurried along at the pace of a speed-walker.
- 6 “I was stuck in those shoes once,” she said. “They took me all the way to Vermont!”
- 7 “How do I get out of them?” I shouted over my shoulder. By now I was running.
- 8 “You have to outsmart them,” she yelled back. And she said something else, but by then I was too far away to hear.
- 9 *Great*, I thought. *Someone tells me to outsmart a pair of shoes, and I can’t. This doesn’t speak well for my brain.*
- 10 We turned up a dirt path, heading straight for a huge oak. I put my hands over my face, certain I’d smash right into that tree. But my feet started climbing *up* the trunk! I grabbed the trunk with both hands to keep my balance. We went higher and higher.
- 11 Did I mention that I don’t like heights much? I tried not to look down. I kept going, my heart pounding like a giant hammer in my chest, when—suddenly—my feet slipped.

- 12 So those shoes weren't perfect, after all.
- 13 I grabbed a branch with both hands and hung. It sure was high up there.
- 14 Somehow, I managed to pull myself up to sit on a branch. My feet were still. It seemed that when they weren't on something solid, those shoes weren't quite so tough. I tried to pull one off, but it was latching on with all its might. Now what should I do?
- 15 The good thing about being stuck in the tree was that I had time to think up a wild idea.
- 16 I started yelling. Since I was in the middle of nowhere, I had to yell for what seemed like a hundred years. Finally, a kid rode up on his bike.
- 17 "Can you do me a favor?" I called. "Can you get someone to bring a big bucket of wet cement? It would really help me out."
- 18 "We've got cement mix in our garage," he said. "I can make some and bring it to you." And off he went, just like that. I like a kid who doesn't ask a lot of questions.
- 19 Eventually the kid came back, walking this time, and pulling a rusty wagon behind him. The wagon was filled with wet cement.
- 20 "Hey, thanks!" I said. "Now, I'm going to start coming down the tree. I want you to put the wagon right under my feet when I get low enough to jump. Got it?"
- 21 He nodded, and I set to work on shimmying from branch to branch, careful not to let my feet touch anything. I didn't want the shoes to take over again.
- 22 When I was on a lower branch, I jumped. My feet went *luuuurrrrp* as they hit the wet cement.
- 23 "Now, can you find a couple of strong people?" I asked. I stood there in the cement while he was gone, my stomach feeling all twisty. I was scared and excited at the same time.
- 24 The boy returned with a boy and a girl. They looked at me strangely, but I just said, "Could you yank me out?"
- 25 They grabbed me under my arms and pulled.
- 26 My plan worked! The cement held the shoes in place, and I came out of them. I was free!
- 27 "Thanks, guys!" I said.

- 28 "I guess your shoes are stuck in there forever," the girl said.
- 29 "It's OK. I was done with them anyway."
- 30 Then the wagon started rolling down the path. It gathered speed, took a left when it got to the road, went steadily up the hill, and was soon out of sight.
- 31 I sure hope those wacky shoes know how to drive.

"Those Wacky Shoes" by Julie Parker Amery from *Highlights for Children* (December 2009). Copyright © 2009 by Highlights for Children, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Highlights for Children, Inc.

**1 Part A**

Which statement **best** describes the main character between paragraph 4 and paragraph 10 in the story?

- A. The main character is angry because the shoes make her walk quickly.
- B. The main character is frustrated because the shoes seem more clever than she is.
- C. The main character is scared because the shoes seem to be in control of her.
- D. The main character is jealous because the shoes have been tricked by other people.

**Part B**

Which statement from paragraphs 4 through 10 supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "‘Yep.’ I hurried along at the pace of a speed-walker."
- B. "‘I was stuck in those shoes once,’ she said."
- C. "‘*Someone tells me to outsmart a pair of shoes, and I can’t.*'"
- D. "‘I put my hands over my face, certain I’d smash right into that tree.'"

**2 Part A**

Which is a main theme of the story?

- A. Overcoming fear can lead to success.
- B. Being creative can solve problems.
- C. Knowing a lot of information is necessary for solving problems.
- D. Having a positive attitude can help when things are challenging.

**Part B**

Which sentence from the story **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "I *thought* it was going to be an ordinary Saturday—but, boy, was I wrong."
- B. "I tried not to look down."
- C. "The good thing about being stuck in the tree was that I had time to think up a wild idea."
- D. "'Thanks, guys!' I said."

This question is a text-based essay question. Write your essay in the space provided in your Practice Test Answer Document. Your essay should:

- Present and develop a narrative that uses details from the passage.
- Include correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

- 3 In “Those Wacky Shoes,” a girl has to outsmart a pair of shoes. Think about the details the author uses to create the characters, settings, and events.

Imagine that you, like the girl in the story, find a pair of wacky shoes that won’t come off. Write a story about how you find the pair of wacky shoes and what happens to you when you are wearing them. Use what you have learned about the wacky shoes when writing your story.

Read the article “Musical Plumbing” about an inventor named John Kovac, and then answer the questions that follow.

## Musical Plumbing

by Laura Biggs

- 1 When plumbing makes funny noises, it’s not always a good sign. But John Kovac, a harpist from Virginia, likes the pipes to sing. He thinks plumbing pipes make good musical instruments.
- 2 Kovac has made standard harps out of wood for more than 20 years. He says he feels a special thrill when he creates an instrument with his hands and uses it to make music come alive. But it takes years of training and special tools to make a traditional musical instrument. Kovac wanted to share the joy of making instruments with people who might not have the time or money to do it. So he decided to find an easier way.

### The Music of PVC

- 3 Plumbing was the answer. Kovac found PVC pipes at a local hardware store. PVC stands for *polyvinyl chloride*. It’s the white tubing that many plumbers use. You might find it in your house under a sink or in the basement.
- 4 Kovac says that PVC pipes are great for making instruments because they are inexpensive, come in many shapes and sizes, and fit together perfectly.
- 5 Kovac makes harps, guitars, violins, and cellos out of PVC pipes. He also makes uncommon instruments like the *udu* (a curved drum) from Nigeria, the *cuíca* (a friction drum) from Brazil, and the *Rührtrommel* (a stir drum) from Germany.
- 6 His instruments may look as if they come from outer space, but they really work. He and some of his music students and friends even started a band called the East Coast PVC Band.



When Kovac “stirs” the mallet around this *Rührtrommel*, it makes a clip-clopping sound.

### Jamming with Pipes

- 7 Sally Seabright is a violin teacher who plays PVC violin with the band. At first, the rounded shape of the PVC violin made it difficult to hold between her chin and shoulder, but Kovac modified the violin by adding a piece that fits perfectly under her chin.
- 8 That kind of adaptability is what Kovac admires about PVC. He says, “I know it’s not easy for the average person to make a musical instrument, but I hope to enable anyone who has ever dreamed of making a violin, harp, or guitar to fulfill his or her dreams.”
- 9 So if you think making an instrument sounds like fun, try using PVC pipes or other household materials to experiment with different sounds and creations. You could even call a few friends and form your own band! With homemade instruments, you, too, can make the pipes sing.



John Kovac plays his PVC harp.

"Musical Plumbing" by Laura Biggs, from *Highlights for Children* (February 2010). Copyright © 2010 by Highlights for Children, Inc. Text and photographs reprinted by permission of Highlights for Children.

- 4 What is the **main** purpose of paragraph 2?
- A. to explain how to join a PVC band
  - B. to describe how PVC instruments are made
  - C. to explain why Kovac came up with his idea
  - D. to describe the different instruments Kovac makes

- 5 Read the sentence from paragraph 6 in the box.

His instruments may look as if they come from outer space, but they really work.

What does the sentence **mostly** show about the instruments?

- A. They are different than expected.
  - B. They are large like the planets.
  - C. They are heard from far away.
  - D. They are made in dark colors.
- 6 Based on the article, the **most likely** reason the author chose the title “Musical Plumbing” is that the article
- A. describes a group of plumbers who formed a band.
  - B. explains why pipes are shaped like musical instruments.
  - C. describes musical sounds heard from the pipes under a house.
  - D. explains how plumbing materials can make musical instruments.

- 7 A creative person is someone who uses imagination to come up with new ideas. Based on the article, write a paragraph to explain why John Kovac could be called a creative person. Support your response with important information from the article.

**Read the article and folktale about fear. Then answer the questions that follow.**

Read the article “Fear Factors” about the causes of fear.

## Fear Factors

*by Jeanna Bryner*

- 1 What gives you the creeps? Does the sight of a mouse cause you to break into a sweat? Does the thought of the dentist’s office send shivers up your spine?
- 2 Fears come in many varieties. At times, everyone feels afraid. In fact, about 6.3 million people in the United States have specific fears called phobias (FOE-bee-ahz). Scientists are still trying to figure out what causes phobias. One thing they do know: All fears cause a series of reactions inside your body.
- 3 Let’s take a closer look at what’s happening inside your body as your hair stands on end.

### **Fight or Flight**

- 4 Believe it or not, fear can be good for you. Fear is your body’s way of protecting you from dangerous situations. “Mother Nature gave us all an alarm system. And that alarm system is fear,” says Michael Telch, the director of the Laboratory for the Study of Anxiety Disorders at the University of Texas.
- 5 How could fear be healthy? When you spot a growling dog, your body gets prepared for a fast escape. First, a small area in your brain called the amygdala (uh-MIG-duh-luh) sends out an “emergency siren” to your body.
- 6 Right away, your heart begins to beat faster. A racing heart sends more blood to your muscles. That way, you can run from that angry dog more easily. You will even start breathing heavily so your body takes in more oxygen—giving your muscles an extra boost.
- 7 Plus, you break out in a sweat. This sweat helps cool off your body, so you won’t get overheated. Your sweat is full of certain “fear” chemicals. And dogs can smell these chemicals. So dogs really can smell fear!
- 8 Sometimes you get frightened in situations that are not dangerous. For instance, some teens are deathly afraid of speaking in public. If this fear

of public speaking keeps you from going out with friends, it is a type of phobia. "When you have fear of something that's no threat and it interferes with your life, then it's called a phobia," says Telch.

- 9 What causes a person to have a phobia? Some scientists think that childhood experiences could be partly to blame for some phobias. A memory of a scary childhood event would get stored in your amygdala, in your brain. That grape-size area in the brain is considered the fear center. When you recall a past memory, your body prepares to flee.
- 10 "At times, that alarm system can go off when you're not in any danger or harm," says Telch.

### **Fear Not**

- 11 Scientists and doctors are coming up with effective ways to help you overcome your phobias. If a person is very fearful of heights, the doctor will gradually have that person climb to a higher floor of a building.
- 12 "The person might be encouraged to go to the second floor and look over the railing," explains Telch.
- 13 Over time, the person would realize that it's not so scary to be up high.
- 14 Getting over your fears is a slow and complicated process.

"Fear Factors" by Jeanna Bryner, from *Scholastic Action* (October 23, 2006). Copyright © 2006 by Scholastic Inc. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Read the folktale "Conquering Fear" about a boy who tries to conquer his fears.

CONQUERING  
FEAR  
AN ETHIOPIAN FOLKTALE



- 1 Once upon a time in an Ethiopian village, there lived a boy who was so shy and fearful of the world around him that his family called him Miobe, frightened one.
- 2 "Why do you call me that?" the boy asked his grandfather.
- 3 The old man laughed. "Because you are afraid."
- 4 The boy's grandmother, his mother, his father, and the neighbors said the same thing. Miobe pondered these words and decided he must find a way to conquer fear. So when everyone was asleep, he packed a sack and set off into the world to find out what he feared and to conquer it.
- 5 That night he slept under the wide umbrella of sky and stared up at the darkness. Before drifting off, he whispered to himself, "I see you, but I will conquer you, fear."
- 6 At midnight the wolves began to howl. The sound woke Miobe, but instead of running away, he walked toward the sound, saying aloud, "I will conquer you, fear."
- 7 He walked until the sun began to rise, and when he saw its golden orb, he smiled with relief, for he had survived the first night. "I am becoming brave," he said as he walked on.

- 8 Soon he came to a village. For a moment he thought, "I don't know these people at all. They might be unkind to a stranger." But he straightened up and walked right into the village, saying aloud, "I will conquer you, fear."
- 9 He walked into the village square, and there he found the village elders gathered, muttering among themselves. As Miobe came near, they looked up and sneered, "Who are you?"
- 10 "I'm traveling the world to become brave."
- 11 The elders laughed. "Fool! No one can find bravery where it does not exist."
- 12 "What do you mean?" Miobe asked.
- 13 The elders sighed unhappily. "We are finished," said one old man. "Our village is threatened by a monster up on the mountain." Miobe followed the man's gaze to the top of the mountain. "See him, there," the old man said. Miobe squinted. He did not want to insult the man, but he saw nothing there.
- 14 "Look," said another man. "See? It has the head of a crocodile. A monstrous crocodile!"
- 15 "And his body is as horrible as a hippopotamus. A gigantic hippopotamus!"
- 16 "It's like a dragon!" another man cried, "with fire shooting from its snout!"
- 17 Now Miobe began to see the monster. He began to see the smoke and fire, the wrinkled skin, the fiery eyes. "I see," he said, but silently he promised himself he would not be afraid. So he walked away from the elders, into the village proper.
- 18 Everywhere people cowered. The little children hid inside, refusing to go to school. "If the children go outside," the women said, "the monster will come down from the mountain and eat them. Everyone knows monsters eat children."
- 19 The farmers hovered inside their doorways, hoes and rakes in hand; outside their horses stood unharnessed. "We cannot work," they told Miobe. "If we go into the fields, the monster will come down and get us."
- 20 Miobe saw wandering goats, sheep, and cows out at the edge of the village; no one came to milk them or tend to them. No one planted crops. Few left their homes, preferring to hide indoors. "The monster is as big as 10 barges!"<sup>1</sup> they whispered among themselves as Miobe listened. "The monster is going to destroy us!"

<sup>1</sup>barges—huge boats used to carry goods

- 21 Finally Miobe decided it was up to him to destroy the monster. "I wish to conquer fear," he announced, "and so I shall go slay the monster!"
- 22 "No, son, don't do it!" the elders cried. "You will die."
- 23 Miobe shivered and his heart fluttered, but he was determined.
- 24 "I must conquer fear!" he said, and he set off.
- 25 At the base of the mountain, he looked up and felt a chill. The monster looked bigger and more fiery than any dragon, fiercer than a pack of wolves or a nest of snakes. He remembered the days when he had been afraid. He took a deep breath and began to climb.
- 26 As he climbed, he looked up, but now he saw the monster seemed to be smaller. "How peculiar," he said aloud. "My eyes are deceiving me."
- 27 He continued to climb. When he was halfway up, he looked again. He squinted, shielding his eyes, but the monster's eyes no longer seemed so fierce, and the flames no longer shot from its snout.
- 28 "The closer I get, the smaller he looks," Miobe said, puzzled. He continued to climb, though now he pulled his dagger from his sack so that he would be prepared.
- 29 As he came around a bend in the path, he saw the summit before him.
- 30 He gasped. The monster had disappeared.
- 31 Miobe looked behind him. Surely the creature would sneak up from behind to attack. But when he turned, he saw nothing. He heard nothing. He held his breath.
- 32 He looked left. He looked right.
- 33 He continued to climb. At last he reached the summit and all was empty and quiet. Nothing was there. Suddenly he heard a sound at his feet. He looked down and saw a little creature—a toad with wrinkled skin and round, frightened eyes.
- 34 He bent down. "Who are you?" he asked. "How did you become so small?" The monster said nothing, so he cradled it in his hand and walked down the mountain.
- 35 When he reached the village, the people cried, "He's safe!" and they surrounded him. Miobe held out his hand and showed them the tiny wrinkled toad. "This is the monster," he said. . . .

"Conquering Fear: An Ethiopian Folktale" from *Scholastic Scope* (December 2013). Text copyright © 2013 by Scholastic Inc. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

- 8 Read the questions from paragraph 1 of the article in the box.

Does the sight of a mouse cause you to break into a sweat? Does the thought of the dentist's office send shivers up your spine?

What is the **most likely** reason the author included the questions?

- A. to explain what fear is
- B. to give examples of fears
- C. to show that fears can be good
- D. to explain why fear is important

- 9 What does paragraph 25 of the folktale **mainly** show about Miobe?

- A. He is feeling very cold.
- B. He is standing up to his fear.
- C. He thinks the monster is imaginary.
- D. He wishes an elder had come with him.

- 10 Reread the section "Fight or Flight" in the article. Which sentence from the folktale **best** supports the information from the section?

- A. "Miobe pondered these words and decided he must find a way to conquer fear." (paragraph 4)
- B. "He did not want to insult the man, but he saw nothing there." (paragraph 13)
- C. "He began to see the smoke and fire, the wrinkled skin, the fiery eyes." (paragraph 17)
- D. "Miobe shivered and his heart fluttered, but he was determined." (paragraph 23)

This question is a text-based essay question. Write your essay in the space provided in your Practice Test Answer Document. Your essay should:

- Present and develop a central idea.
- Provide evidence/details from the passage(s).
- Include correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

- 11 Based on the article **and** the folktale, write an essay to explain how fear can affect people. Be sure to use information from the article and the folktale to develop your essay.

**MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM**

Grade 4 English Language Arts  
Practice Test Answer Document

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

District Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

**MARKING INSTRUCTIONS**

- Use a No. 2 pencil only.
- Do not use ink, ballpoint, or felt-tip pens.
- Make solid marks that fill the circles completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Do not make any stray marks on this form.
- Do not fold, tear, or damage this form.

1. Part A Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ

Part B Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ

2. Part A Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ

Part B Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ Ⓓ









4. (A) (B) (C) (D)

5. (A) (B) (C) (D)

6. (A) (B) (C) (D)

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