
II. English Language Arts, Reading Comprehension, Grade 3

Grade 3 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension Test

The spring 2008 grade 3 MCAS English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on learning standards in the two content strands of the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (2001) listed below. Specific learning standards for grade 3 are found in the *Supplement to the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (2004). Page numbers for the learning standards appear in parentheses.

- Language (*Framework*, pages 19–26; *Supplement*, pages 6–7)
- Reading and Literature (*Framework*, pages 35–64; *Supplement*, pages 7–9)

The *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* and *Supplement* are available on the Department Web site at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

In *Test Item Analysis Reports* and on the Subject Area Subscore pages of the MCAS *School Reports* and *District Reports*, ELA Reading Comprehension test results are reported under two MCAS reporting categories: **Language** and **Reading and Literature**, which are identical to the two *Framework* content strands listed above.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The MCAS grade 3 ELA Reading Comprehension test included three separate test sessions. Each session included selected readings, followed by multiple-choice and open-response questions. Common reading passages and test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in grade 3 test & answer booklets. Due to copyright restrictions, certain reading passages cannot be released to the public on the Web site. For further information, contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625.

Reference Materials and Tools

The use of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former limited English proficient students only, during all three ELA Reading Comprehension test sessions. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA Reading Comprehension test session.

Cross-Reference Information

The table at the conclusion of this chapter indicates each item’s reporting category and the *Framework* general standard it assesses. The correct answers for multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the table.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 1

DIRECTIONS

This session contains one reading selection with eight multiple-choice questions. Mark your answers by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

Zamani is excited to be going to the market with his father and brothers for the first time. Zamani's brothers will sell the pots they made, and Zamani and his father are hoping to sell a big steer and a calf. Read the story and then answer the questions that follow.

ZAMANI Goes to MARKET

by Muriel L. Feelings

Students read a selection titled *Zamani Goes to Market* and then answered questions 1 through 8 that follow on pages 11 and 12 of this document.

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Zamani Goes to Market: Muriel L. Feelings, Author; Tom Feelings, Illustrator.
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Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 1 through 8 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

1 Based on the story, what is Zamani's job on his first trip to the market?

- (A) to buy a gift
- (B) to carry pots
- (C) to help his father
- (D) to sell sleeping mats

2 What does the author mean in paragraph 7 when she writes, "The market was just coming alive"?

- (A) New market stalls were being built.
- (B) People were beginning to sell things.
- (C) The animals were starting to wake up.
- (D) The crowd was starting to leave the village.

3 Based on the story, why does the tall man argue with Father?

- (A) The tall man wants to pay less for the animals.
- (B) The tall man thinks the market is too big.
- (C) The tall man is angry about the crowds.
- (D) The tall man is in a hurry to go home.

4 According to paragraph 24, Father does **not** leave the market with the boys because

- (A) he must sell the calf first.
- (B) he still has shopping to do.
- (C) he wants to give them a head start.
- (D) he needs to earn more money before returning home.

5 According to the story, why is Zamani so excited at mealtime?

- (A) He wants to see the new gift his father bought for him.
- (B) He is looking forward to going to the market.
- (C) He is eating his favorite food.
- (D) He has a gift to give.

6 According to the story, how does Zamani plan to earn money for his next market trip?

- (A) He will make ugali and sell it at the market.
- (B) He will learn to make pots and sell them.
- (C) He will help care for the livestock.
- (D) He will do errands for his father.

7 Read the sentence from paragraph 7 in the box below.

The aroma of ripe fruit and roasting meat filled the air.

In the sentence, what does the word *aroma* mean?

- (A) a loud sound
- (B) a bright color
- (C) a pleasant smell
- (D) a delicious taste

8 Read the sentence from paragraph 12 in the box below.

He reached into a wooden box and handed Father some paper money.

Which of the following words in the sentence is a **noun**?

- (A) reached
- (B) wooden
- (C) handed
- (D) money

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 2

DIRECTIONS

This session contains three reading selections with sixteen multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. For multiple-choice questions, mark your answers by filling in the circle next to the best answer. For the open-response question, write your answer in the space provided below the question.

Dr. Bastian is a scientist who studies dolphins. Read about his experiments with two amazing dolphins, Doris and Buzz. Then answer the questions that follow.

THE STORY OF DORIS AND BUZZ, the Dolphins Who Talked to Each Other

by Margaret Davidson

- 1 **D**olphins make many kinds of sounds. They squeak, squawk, squeal, mew, rasp, click, and clack. When they are upset or excited they even yelp like dogs. Most of all they whistle.
- 2 But is this really *talking* — the way people talk? Are they really passing information to each other? Or are they only sharing simple feelings and fears — the way other animals like cats and dogs do?
- 3 A scientist named Dr. Jarvis Bastian decided to find out. He worked with two dolphins named Doris and Buzz in a tank at the University of California.
- 4 Dr. Bastian placed four buttons under water. Two buttons were for Doris. Two were for Buzz. Then he got an old auto headlight. This was his signal. Sometimes Dr. Bastian turned on the headlight and let it shine steadily. This meant “push the right-hand button.” Sometimes he let the headlight blink on and off. Then Doris and Buzz were supposed to push their left-hand button instead.
- 5 Before long Doris and Buzz learned to watch the light. They pushed down the correct button with their snouts. Then Dr. Bastian gave them their reward — a piece of fish.
- 6 He made the experiment harder. The dolphins still had to watch the headlight and push down the correct button. But now Doris had to wait. Buzz had to push his button down first. *Then* it was Doris’s turn. If she pushed her button first, neither dolphin got any fish.

- 7 At first Doris and Buzz made a few mistakes. But soon they learned how to do this, too. Now it was time for the last and most important part of the experiment.
- 8 Dr. Bastian put a wooden wall across the pool. Doris and her two buttons were on one side of the wall. Buzz and his two buttons were on the other side. *But only Doris could see the headlight.* Only she could see if it was shining steadily, or blinking. Only she could see what the signal was. But Doris had to wait for Buzz to press his button before she could press hers.
- 9 What would the dolphins do? Dr. Bastian turned on the headlight and watched carefully. Doris stared at it. She looked at her buttons. Then she swam close to the wooden wall and began to whistle loudly. For a few seconds everything was quiet in the tank. Then Buzz whistled back and pressed down one of his buttons. It was the correct one. Now Doris could press her button, and both dolphins would get their fish.
- 10 Again and again Dr. Bastian turned on the headlight. Sometimes it blinked. Sometimes it shone with a steady light. Each time Doris would look — and whistle. Then Buzz would press down the correct button on his side of the wall.
- 11 Was Doris telling Buzz what to do? Or was he just guessing? If so, Dr. Bastian thought, then Buzz was a wonderful guesser. He was right almost every time.

From NINE TRUE DOLPHIN STORIES by Margaret Davidson. Copyright © 1974 by Margaret Davidson. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 9 through 12 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

9 Based on the selection, what does Dr. Bastian want to learn from his experiments?

- (A) how dolphins learn tricks
- (B) whether dolphins can see light
- (C) whether dolphins talk to each other
- (D) what kinds of sounds dolphins make

10 According to the selection, what did Dr. Bastian do **right after** Doris and Buzz pushed the correct button?

- (A) He rewarded them with food.
- (B) He let them play with the buttons.
- (C) He changed what he wanted them to do.
- (D) He taught them how to turn the headlight on and off.

11 What makes the selection **nonfiction**?

- (A) It is about two animals.
- (B) It is divided into many paragraphs.
- (C) It tells an interesting story about dolphins.
- (D) It describes something that really happened.

12 Read the sentence from paragraph 6 in the box below.

He made the experiment harder.

What does the suffix **-er** in **harder** mean?

- (A) full
- (B) like
- (C) most
- (D) more

Children's author Joanna Cole is best known for her Magic School Bus books. Read this selection about her and then answer the questions that follow.

Joanna Cole

by Deborah Kovacs and James Preller

Born:

August 11, 1944, in Newark,
New Jersey

Home:

Sandy Hook, Connecticut

IT BEGAN WITH COCKROACHES

1 **W**hat's Joanna Cole interested in? Well, just about *everything*. And when Joanna Cole is interested in something, she usually writes a book about it. She's written about fleas, cockroaches, dinosaurs, chicks, fish, saber-toothed tigers, frogs, horses, snakes, cars, puppies, insects, and (whew!) babies.

2 "I was never one of those wonderful students who gets straight A's and everything right on the tests," says Joanna Cole. "But I've always been obsessed with logical thinking. I used to argue with my teachers when things didn't make sense to me."

3 Joanna grew up in East Orange, New Jersey. Her interest in science grew from her natural curiosity about the world in which she lived. "We had a small backyard, and I was the gardener in the family. I spent a lot of time planting flowers, daydreaming, watching ants, and catching bugs."

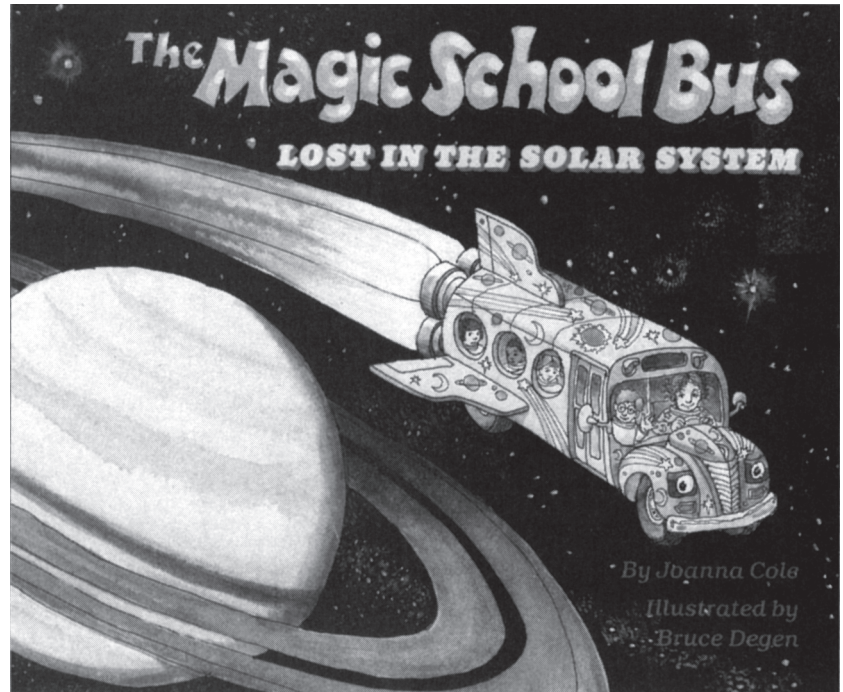
4 All writers must begin somewhere, and Joanna Cole began her career by writing about cockroaches. Joanna was working as a library-teacher in a Brooklyn elementary school when her father gave her an article. Joanna remembers, "It was about cockroaches and how they were here before the dinosaurs. It got me thinking about all those science books I'd read as a kid—insects had been a special interest of mine—and it occurred to me that there wasn't one about cockroaches."

5 As a nonfiction writer, Joanna does a lot of research before she writes a single word. "The impossible dream is to know everything," she says. "When you are writing the book, you must select what you want to go into the book. What always happens is that more things are left out than can go in."

6 "I have a question that I ask myself as I write: Why does the reader want to turn the page? I never feel that kids are going to turn the page just because it's there to turn. There has to be a question that's in a reader's mind—and he or she turns the page to find the answers."

7 “Kids often ask me if it’s fun to be a writer. That question always leaves me a little speechless. Because the answer is, of course, yes and no. When it’s going well, there’s nothing more exhilarating. But it’s so much work!”

8 Joanna has been praised by both teachers and children for being able to make science interesting and understandable. And now, with the *Magic School Bus* series, she’s done the impossible—she’s made science funny.



“When I’m writing a book, it’s almost as if I’m building a cabinet. I want it all to fit together. I work very hard at that.”

9 “Before I started writing the first *Magic School Bus* book, I had a lot of lofty goals—and I had no idea whether they could be achieved. I wanted it to be a very good science book. I also wanted it to be a good story, a story you might read even without the science. And I wanted it to be genuinely funny. Well,

this was terrifying to me. I couldn’t work at all. I cleaned out closets, answered letters, went shopping—anything but sit down and write. But eventually I did it, even though I was scared.”

10 The *Magic School Bus* books were a huge success. Readers across the country loved them. They especially loved the wacky science teacher, Ms. Frizzle. “We were concerned that teachers might be offended by Ms. Frizzle, with her crazy clothes. But what’s happened is that teachers love her. Whenever Bruce Degen, the illustrator, and I go to schools, there’s almost always somebody dressed as

Ms. Frizzle. The teachers are even asking for Ms. Frizzle outfits.”

- 11 In addition to her many science books, Joanna Cole has written over twenty books of fiction including *Don't Tell the Whole World*, *The Clown-Arounds*, *Bony-Legs*, *Doctor Change*, *Monster Manners*, and *The Missing Tooth*.
- 12 Joanna Cole finds pleasure and excitement in each new project she

takes on. “When I was starting to write *The Magic School Bus Inside the Human Body*, I didn't know whose body the bus would travel in. Then I thought of the idea that Ms. Frizzle and her class would go into Arnold's body, and that he would eat them as Cheesie Wheesies. That was one of the happiest moments of my life. I was walking on clouds all day.”

From MEET THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS by Deborah Kovacs and James Preller. Copyright © 1991 by Scholastic Inc. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 13 through 20 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

- 13 Based on the selection, which statement about Joanna Cole is **true**?

- (A) She says writing books is easy.
- (B) She was once a school principal.
- (C) She was interested in science as a child.
- (D) She includes everything about a topic in her books.

- 14 According to the selection, what did Joanna Cole write about **first**?

- (A) babies
- (B) cockroaches
- (C) a funny teacher
- (D) a magic school bus

15 According to the selection, how does Joanna Cole prepare to write a new book?

- (A) She travels to magical places.
- (B) She talks to teachers who read her books.
- (C) She questions students about their interests.
- (D) She gathers information about the topic.

16 Read the sentence from paragraph 6 in the box below.

“I have a question that I ask myself as I write: Why does the reader want to turn the page?”

Why does Joanna Cole **most likely** ask herself the question?

- (A) to keep readers from being confused
- (B) to make the book interesting to readers
- (C) to remember all the information for the book
- (D) to make the writing long enough to become a book

17 According to the selection, what is unusual about Joanna Cole’s books about science?

- (A) The books are short.
- (B) The books are funny.
- (C) She writes books that only include facts.
- (D) She draws her own illustrations for her books.

18 In paragraph 9, who is speaking?

- (A) Ms. Frizzle
- (B) Joanna Cole
- (C) Bruce Degen
- (D) Joanna’s father

- 19 Read the sentences from paragraph 7 in the box below.

“Kids often ask me if it’s fun to be a writer. That question always leaves me a little speechless.”

In the sentence, the word *speechless* means that Joanna Cole

- Ⓐ does not know what to say.
- Ⓑ has a lot to say about the subject.
- Ⓒ has not heard that question before.
- Ⓓ wishes more children would ask questions.

- 20 In paragraph 12, Joanna Cole says, “I was walking on clouds all day.” This is another way of saying she was

- Ⓐ getting a lot of exercise.
- Ⓑ happy with her new idea.
- Ⓒ unsure of what to do next.
- Ⓓ stepping on something soft.

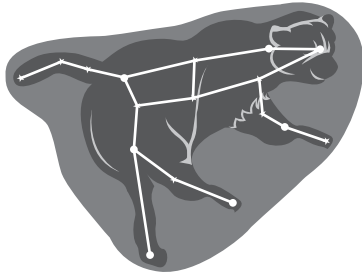
Question 21 is an open-response question.

- Read the question carefully.
- Explain your answer.
- Add supporting details.
- Double-check your work.

Write your answer to question 21 in the lined space below.

21 According to the selection, explain why Joanna Cole’s books are successful. Support your answer with important information from the selection.

Sometimes people describe groups of stars by the pictures the stars seem to make in the night sky. These poems are about two of those pictures. Read the poems and then answer the questions that follow.



Star Pictures

When it's hot at night,
Grandma and I
Sit on the porch
And watch the sky.

5 She points her finger
Here and there
And tells me, "Look,
The Great Bear."

I try to see
10 How it can be
A bear, but it's
Just stars to me.

"Come on," says Grandma.
"There's his toes."
15 And there's his head,
And there's his nose."

I sit and stare,
And stare and stare,
And then I start
20 To see that bear!

—Dee Lillegard

In addition to "Star Pictures," students read a selection titled "Canis Major" and then answered questions 22 through 25 that follow on page 23 of this document.

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"Canis Major" from THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright 1928, 1969 by Henry Holt and Company. Copyright 1956 by Robert Frost. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

"Star Pictures" by Dee Lillegard. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 22 through 25 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

- 22 Read lines 17 and 18 from the poem “Star Pictures” in the box below.

I sit and stare,
And stare and stare,

What is the **most likely** reason that the poet repeats the word “stare”?

- (A) to show what Grandma is doing
- (B) to show what the speaker is thinking
- (C) to show how far away the Great Bear is
- (D) to show how hard it is to see the shape
- 23 In “Star Pictures,” what helps the speaker finally see the star picture?
- (A) The speaker notices the stars getting brighter.
- (B) Grandma shows where each part of the bear is.
- (C) The speaker closes her eyes and imagines the bear.
- (D) Grandma explains how the bear is like other groups of stars.

- 24 In the poem “Canis Major,” what is the Overdog?

(A) the speaker’s pet

(B) the speaker’s dream

(C) a group of stars

(D) a group of pictures

- 25 In the poem “Canis Major,” words like “leap,” “dances,” and “romps” make the dog seem

(A) lively and joyful.

(B) strong and angry.

(C) quiet and wise.

(D) tired and shy.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 3

DIRECTIONS

This session contains three reading selections with sixteen multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. For multiple-choice questions, mark your answers by filling in the circle next to the best answer. For the open-response question, write your answer in the space provided below the question.

The Hello, Goodbye Window is just one of the very special things about visiting Nanna and Poppy's house. Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

The Hello, Goodbye Window

by Norton Juster

Students read a selection titled *The Hello, Goodbye Window* and then answered questions 26 through 34 that follow on pages 28 through 30 of this document.

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From THE HELLO, GOODBYE WINDOW by Norton Juster. Text copyright © 2005 by Norton Juster. Illustration copyright © 2005 by Chris Raschka. Reprinted with permission by Hyperion Books for Children. All rights reserved.

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Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 26 through 33 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

26 According to paragraph 3, when does the narrator like to peek into the Hello, Goodbye Window?

- (A) when Nanna is working in the garden
- (B) when Poppy is playing his harmonica
- (C) when Nanna and Poppy are taking naps
- (D) when Nanna and Poppy are in the kitchen

27 According to the story, what does the narrator like to do at the window before bedtime?

- (A) look at the stars
- (B) see if it will rain
- (C) watch for her dog
- (D) look at the garden

28 Read the sentence from paragraph 14 in the box below.

Sometimes Poppy says in a real loud voice, "HELLO, WORLD! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT FOR US TODAY?"

Why is part of the sentence written in all capital letters?

- (A) to show that Poppy is angry
- (B) to show that Poppy is shouting
- (C) to show that Poppy is asking a question
- (D) to show that Poppy wants someone to answer him

29 According to the story, where do paragraphs 16 and 17 take place?

- (A) by the window
- (B) outside the house
- (C) inside the kitchen
- (D) on the back porch

- 30 In paragraph 27, the narrator imagines herself

(A) taking a trip.
(B) all grown up.
(C) in the garden.
(D) visiting her grandparents.

- 31 Based on the story, which word **best** describes the narrator?

(A) quiet
(B) happy
(C) serious
(D) healthy

- 32 Read the sentence from paragraph 3 in the box below.

So you can climb up on the flower barrel and tap the window, then duck down and they won't know who did it . . .

Which meaning of the word **duck** is used in the sentence?

(A) a bird with webbed feet
(B) a kind of cloth like canvas
(C) to bend the body suddenly
(D) to dip underwater for a moment

- 33 Read the sentence from paragraph 16 in the box below.

. . . there's a tiger who lives behind the big bush in the back . . .

Which word in the sentence is an **adjective**?

(A) tiger
(B) lives
(C) big
(D) bush

In Roman myths, Mercury is the god of money and property. Read this play about Mercury and two workmen. Then answer the questions that follow.

Mercury and the Workmen

retold by Albert Cullum

Characters Mercury, a god
First Workman
Second Workman
His Wife

Setting In a forest near a deep pool.

FIRST WORKMAN Poor me! Poor me! I just dropped my wooden-handled axe into the deep pool! How will I get it out? Poor me! How will I be able to chop trees so I can make money for food? What will I do now? Alas! Poor me! Poor me!

MERCURY Why are you crying, wood chopper?

5 FIRST WORKMAN Alas! Poor me! Poor me!

MERCURY Stop your crying and wailing and tell me what is wrong. Perhaps I can help you.

FIRST WORKMAN How can you possibly help me! I just dropped my axe into the deep pool by accident, and there is no way of getting it out! Oh poor, poor me!

10 MERCURY Allow me to dive into the deep pool and see if I can find your wooden axe. (*He dives into the pool and comes up holding a golden axe.*) Is this the axe you dropped into the deep pool by mistake?

FIRST WORKMAN No, that's not mine. Mine was not a golden axe.

MERCURY Let me try again. (*He dives into the deep pool for the second time and comes up with a silver axe.*) Is this the axe you accidentally dropped into the deep pool?

FIRST WORKMAN No, that's not mine. Mine was not a silver axe.

MERCURY Let me try again, wood chopper. (*He dives into the deep pool for the third time and comes up with an axe with a wooden handle.*) Is this the axe you
20 dropped into the deep pool by accident?

FIRST WORKMAN Oh yes, yes, yes! That is my axe! Thank you for finding it! Now I can chop down trees and earn money for food!

MERCURY You are a very honest man, wood chopper, and to reward you for your honesty, I am giving you the axe with the silver handle and the axe with the golden handle.

He suddenly disappears.

FIRST WORKMAN I am rich! I am rich! I must rush home and tell my neighbor.
He rushes home.

SECOND WORKMAN What are you so excited about?

FIRST WORKMAN Listen! Listen! I dropped my wooden-handled axe into the deep pool by mistake, and a man not only found it for me, but also found an axe with a silver handle and an axe with a golden handle and gave them both to me. I am rich, rich, rich! I must now rush home to tell my wife.
He rushes away.

SECOND WORKMAN How fortunate my friend is. I wish I could be as lucky.

HIS WIFE Don't be so stupid! Why don't you go to the deep pool and throw in your axe and pretend it was an accident.

SECOND WORKMAN That's a great idea! I'll do that now.

He rushes to the deep pool and throws in his axe.

Poor me! Poor me! I have just lost my axe in the deep pool. What shall I do? What shall I do?

MERCURY Why are you crying?

SECOND WORKMAN I just lost my axe in the deep pool. Will you find it for me? I know you can find it if you really try.

MERCURY I will try, wood chopper.

He dives into the deep pool and comes up with a golden axe.

Is this your axe with a golden handle?

SECOND WORKMAN Yes! Yes! Yes! That's my axe! That's the axe I lost!

MERCURY LIAR! LIAR! LIAR! You are a liar! And for punishment I am throwing the axe back into the deep pool, and I will not get your wooden-handled axe for you!

Moral Honesty is the best policy.

. . .

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 35 through 38 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

35 In the play, how does Mercury solve the First Workman's problem?

- (A) He finds the workman's axe for him.
- (B) He gives the workman money for food.
- (C) He helps the workman chop down trees.
- (D) He changes the workman's axe into gold.

36 Based on the play, which word **best** describes the Second Workman?

- (A) hardworking
- (B) untruthful
- (C) helpful
- (D) angry

37 Which of the following shows that the play is a myth?

- (A) It has a main character.
- (B) One of the characters is a god.
- (C) It tells the exact words the characters speak.
- (D) Two of the characters argue with each other.

38 Read the sentence from lines 15–16 in the box below.

Is this the axe you accidentally dropped into the deep pool?

How is the word *dropped* used in the sentence?

- (A) as a common noun
- (B) as a proper noun
- (C) as an adjective
- (D) as a verb

This selection describes how the life cycle of a tree helps create soil. Read the selection and then answer the questions that follow.

SOIL CIRCLE

by Michael Elsohn Ross

- 1 A little seedling sprouts in the shade of bigger trees.
- 2 Its tiny roots reach down into the ground for nutrients and water, which help it to grow.
- 3 At first the seedling is no taller than a turtle . . .
- 4 . . . but each year it grows higher and higher, until one day, a hundred years later, it is a grand old tree.
- 5 Children swing from its limbs, birds build nests on its branches, and caterpillars dine on its delicious leaves.
- 6 Every autumn the tree drops acorns, which are eaten by the jays, squirrels, and deer.
- 7 After many, many more years, the tree becomes old and weak.
- 8 Beetles lay their eggs under the bark, and the young grubs munch on the living tree.
- 9 Woodpeckers peck into the tree to find and eat the grubs. They make nest holes in the rotting trunk to raise their babies in safety.
- 10 The old tree becomes weaker still, and soon mushrooms sprout from its trunk. The mushrooms are part of a fungus that eats the trunk and digests the mighty roots.
- 11 One day, during a wild and furious storm, the old tree sways in the wind and then crashes to the ground.
- 12 Before long a city of tiny creatures appears inside the skeleton-like remains of the tree. Termites, beetles, and sawflies make tunnels as they feast on the wood.

- 13 Slowly, over many years, the bugs and fungi* take apart the tree. It becomes a mound of rotten wood that adds a new richness to the soil. The nutrients from the old tree can now help other trees grow.
- 14 One day a tree seedling sprouts on the old tree's grave.
- 15 Its tiny roots reach into the ground for water and nutrients, and soon it grows tall from the rich soil, water, and sunshine.
- 16 One day it will be a grand old tree that will then die and add a new richness to the soil.
- 17 One day it will complete the soil circle.



DECOMPOSITION FACTS

- Moisture and warm temperatures make a tree decay faster.
- Soil is made up of a combination of minerals, dead plants, and dead animals.
- Millions of insects can live in a dead tree.

* *fungi* — plural of fungus

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Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 39 through 42 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

- 39 According to the selection, which of the following creatures build tunnels in dead tree trunks?

(A) turtles
(B) sawflies
(C) caterpillars
(D) woodpeckers

- 40 What is the **main** idea of the selection?

(A) Animals and insects live in old trees.
(B) Wind and rain can often destroy trees.
(C) Trees and soil are important to each other.
(D) Animals and insects can often cause harm to soil.

- 41 What does the word “circle” in the title “Soil Circle” suggest about soil?

(A) The soil includes many important nutrients.
(B) Some pieces of soil have a round shape.
(C) Insects that live underground go in and out of the soil.
(D) The way soil is made happens over and over again.

- 42 Based on paragraph 8, what are *grubs*?

(A) seedlings
(B) little birds
(C) mushrooms
(D) baby beetles

**Grade 3 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2008 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers***

Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Correct Answer (MC)*
1	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	C
2	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	B
3	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	A
4	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	B
5	12	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
6	12	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	B
7	12	<i>Language</i>	4	C
8	12	<i>Language</i>	5	D
9	15	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	C
10	15	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	A
11	15	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10	D
12	15	<i>Language</i>	4	D
13	18	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	C
14	18	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	B
15	19	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	D
16	19	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
17	19	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
18	19	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	B
19	20	<i>Language</i>	4	A
20	20	<i>Language</i>	4	B
21	21	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	
22	23	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	D
23	23	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	B
24	23	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	C
25	23	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	A
26	28	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
27	28	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	A
28	28	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	B
29	28	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
30	29	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
31	29	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
32	29	<i>Language</i>	4	C
33	29	<i>Language</i>	5	C
34	30	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
35	33	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	17	A
36	33	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	17	B
37	33	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10	B
38	33	<i>Language</i>	5	D
39	36	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	B
40	36	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	C
41	36	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
42	36	<i>Language</i>	4	D

* Answers are provided here for multiple-choice items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for open-response items, which are indicated by shaded cells, will be posted to the Department's Web site later this year.

