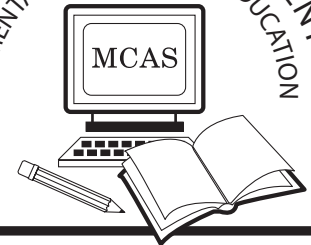


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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION



**MASSACHUSETTS  
COMPREHENSIVE  
ASSESSMENT  
SYSTEM**

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*Release of  
Spring 2008  
MCAS Test Items*

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**July 2008  
Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education**

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This document was prepared by the  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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## *Commissioner's Foreword*

Dear Colleagues:

The vision of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is to work in partnership with policy makers, communities, parents, school districts, and students to build a system that will prepare all students to succeed as productive and contributing members of our democratic society and the global economy. To assist in the achievement of this vision, the Department regularly releases MCAS test items to provide information regarding the kinds of knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate. In keeping with our past practice of releasing all of the test items on which student results are based, I am pleased to announce that the common items from most spring 2008 tests are included in *Release of Spring 2008 MCAS Test Items*. Also included is a limited release of items from the 2008 grades 5 and 7 History and Social Science tests, and the high school U.S. History test.

Due to its length of approximately 600 pages, this publication is available only on the Department Web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html). The test items for individual subjects at each grade level can be easily printed from this site. I encourage educators to use the relevant sections of this document together with their *Test Item Analysis Report Summaries* and *Test Item Analysis Rosters* as guides for planning changes in curriculum and instruction that may be needed to ensure that schools and districts make regular progress in improving student performance.

Thank you for your support as we work together to strengthen education for our students in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education



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# I. Document Purpose and Structure

# Document Purpose and Structure

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to share with educators and the public all of the test items on which the spring 2008 MCAS student results are based. Local educators will be able to use this information to identify strengths and weaknesses in their curriculum and instruction, and to guide the changes necessary to more effectively meet their students' needs.

This document is also intended to be used by school and district personnel as a companion document to the test item analysis reports. Each school receives in the fall a 2008 *School Test Item Analysis Report Summary* and a *Test Item Analysis Roster* for each content area at each grade level tested (e.g., grade 10 Mathematics). These reports provide data generated from student responses. Each report lists, for the school receiving the report, the names of all enrolled students in the grade covered by the report and shows how each student answered each common item in that report's content area. The report labels each item as multiple-choice, open-response, short-answer, or writing prompt and identifies the item's MCAS reporting category. Item numbers in this document correlate directly to the "Item Numbers" in the test item analysis reports.

## Structure

Each subsequent chapter of this document contains information and materials for one MCAS test (one grade level and one content area). For example, chapter II contains information for the grade 3 ELA Reading Comprehension test; chapter XV contains information for the grade 10 Mathematics test. Note that chapters III, VI, and VIII contain information for both the ELA Composition (Part A) and the ELA Reading Comprehension (Part B) tests for the relevant grade.

Beginning with chapter II, each chapter has three main sections. The **first section** introduces the chapter by listing the Massachusetts *Curriculum Framework* content strands assessed by MCAS in that chapter's content area. These content strands are identical to the MCAS reporting categories under which test results are reported to schools and districts. The first section also provides the Web address for the relevant *Framework* and the page numbers on which the learning standards assessed by the test items in the chapter can be found. In addition, there is a brief overview of the test (number of test sessions, types of items, reference materials allowed, and cross-referencing information).

The **second section** contains the common test items used to generate spring 2008 MCAS student results for that chapter's grade level and content area. With the exception of the ELA Composition writing prompt, the test questions in this document are shown in the same order and basic format in which they were presented in the test booklets. The Mathematics reference tools used by students during MCAS Mathematics test sessions (Mathematics Tool Kits for grades 3 and 4; Mathematics Reference Sheets for grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10) are inserted immediately following the last question in the second section of each Mathematics chapter. Students in all the tested grades were also provided with plastic rulers. Images of these rulers are not presented in this document. The reference tools used by students during the high school Science and Technology/Engineering tests (Chemistry Formula and Constants Sheet/Periodic Table of the

Elements for the Chemistry test; formula sheets for the Introductory Physics and Technology/Engineering tests) are inserted immediately following the last question in the second section of the associated chapter. A plastic ruler is also provided to students taking the high school Technology/Engineering test.

Due to copyright restrictions, certain English Language Arts reading passages are not available on the Department's Web site. Copyright information for all common reading passages is provided in the document. Note that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has obtained permission to post all English Language Arts reading passages that appear on its Web site. While the Department grants permission to use the posted test items for educational purposes, it cannot grant or transfer permission to use the passages that accompany the items. Such permission must be obtained directly from the holder of the copyright. For further information, contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625.

The **final section** of each chapter is a table that cross-references each common item with its MCAS reporting category and with the *Framework* standard it assesses. Correct answers to multiple-choice questions and, for the Mathematics tests, short-answer questions are also listed in the table.

Responses to open-response items and compositions written in response to writing prompts are scored individually. An overview of procedures for scoring these responses and compositions is presented in the MCAS Frequently Asked Questions, which are available on the Department's Web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/about1.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/about1.html). Scoring procedures will also be explained further in the MCAS document, *Guide to Interpreting the Spring 2008 MCAS Reports for Schools and Districts*, due for release in fall 2008. Similar guides are currently available on the Department's Web site for previous years' MCAS *School Reports* and *District Reports*. Sample student responses and compositions from previous MCAS administrations may also be viewed on the Department's Web site.

Materials presented in this document are **not** formatted **exactly** as they appeared in student test booklets. For example, in order to present items most efficiently in this document, the following modifications have been made:

- Some fonts and/or font sizes may have been changed and/or reduced.
- Some graphics may have been reduced in size from their appearance in student test booklets; however, they maintain the same proportions in each case.
- For grades 7 and 10, the English Language Arts Composition writing prompt is presented on the same page as the make-up writing prompt, and the four lined pages provided for students' initial drafts are omitted.
- All references to page numbers in answer booklets have been deleted from the directions that accompany test items.

A partial release of common items from the grades 5 and 7 History and Social Science tests, and the high school U.S. History test is included in this publication.

