
II. English Language Arts, Reading Comprehension, Grade 3

Grade 3 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension Test

The spring 2012 grade 3 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 website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

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 grade 3 ELA Reading Comprehension test included two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by multiple-choice, short-response, and/or open-response questions. Selected common reading passages and approximately half of the common test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in grade 3 test & answer booklets.

Reference Materials

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

Cross-Reference Information

The tables at the conclusion of this chapter indicate each released and unreleased common item’s reporting category and the framework general standard it assesses. The correct answers for released multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the released item table.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION

DIRECTIONS

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

When 11-year-old Skate Tate comes home from school, she finds that her Great-Uncle Mort, whose nickname is GUM, has come for a visit. Read the story to learn more about GUM's visit with Skate and her family. Then answer the questions that follow.

from **UNITED
TATES of
AMERICA**

by Paula Danziger

- 1 Opening the front door to my house, I call out, “Mom. I’m home.”
2 She calls back, “In the kitchen. Hurry up. I have a surprise for you.”
3 I rush into the kitchen, wondering what the surprise is.
4 Maybe she’s made my favorite dessert, chocolate cheesecake.
5 I enter the kitchen.
6 It’s not chocolate cheesecake.
7 It’s even better.
8 In the chair, across from my mom, is one of my favorite people in the
 whole entire world.
9 I say what I always say when I see him sitting down, “Watch out, there’s
 GUM on the chair.”
10 “Okay kiddo. Skate on over here.” He says what he always says when he
 first sees me. “Give your old Great-Uncle Mort a big hug.”
11 Then I rush over to him.
12 I say, “You’re not *so* old. If you were, we’d have to call you O’GUM . . . and
 we don’t.”

Reading Comprehension

13 I look at GUM.

14 He's fifty-seven years old . . . that's not old-old . . . not ancient old. He was twenty years old when my dad, his nephew, was born.

15 I hug him and ask at the same time, "When did you get here? How long are you staying? Where are you going next? Do you think you can stay here for a while?"

16 He laughs. "Slow down . . . enough questions for a minute . . . and you forgot an important one . . . one that you always asked first, when you were little."

17 I grin at him.

18 "Ask." He grins back.

19 I know which question he is talking about but now that I am older, I don't ask this anymore even though I do think it.

20 "Ask," he says. "It's okay."

21 I look at my mother, who taught us not to ask.

22 She grins, shrugs, and says, "With GUM, the rules are different. You can ask."

23 "What did you bring me? What did you bring me?" I clap my hands and jump up and down. "What did you bring me?"

24 Once I start asking, it's hard to stop.

25 GUM goes over to a suitcase, opens it up, and pulls out a large package with my name on it. "Gifts from India."

26 The package is filled with lots of smaller packages.

27 I open one.

28 Paper . . . it's absolutely amazing. It looks like there are things in it. I touch it, smile, and think about how I'm going to use it in my artwork.

29 "It's all handmade," GUM tells me. "I visited the factory. They add things like flowers, onion skin, garlic, and fabric."

30 I open a bag filled with squares of fabric . . . silks and suedes and beautiful patterns. "Oh, GUM . . . this is wonderful! I love it. Thank you."

31 "I thought you could use it in your scrapbooks," GUM says.

32 I smile at him. I'm smiling so much that it feels like my face is going to break.

33 GUM is always interested in my artwork.

34 I remember when I was in second grade and making Popsicle stick log cabins.

Reading Comprehension

35 GUM and I must have eaten a gazillion pops until we realized that craft stores sold the sticks without the ices.

36 My Popsicle stick village was very colorful.

37 I open another package.

38 “Oh, GUM . . . these are beautiful. What are they?”

39 “They’re called *bindis*.” He explains, “Indian women wear them on their foreheads.”

40 *Bindis* . . . tiny little dots and other shapes . . . all different kinds . . . material, jewels, plastic, a mixture of all three . . . I just love them.

41 I open another package . . . bracelets . . . large and small.

42 I hold up one of the tiny ones. “Too large for a ring . . . too small for a bracelet.”

43 GUM and I look at each other and say at the same time, “Picture frames.”

44 I pass them over to my mom to look at and she says, “GUM gave some to me, too. I’m going to use them as napkin rings.”

45 Another package to open . . . and it’s beautiful material.

46 GUM says, “It’s an Indian sari, a dress.”

47 “Who’s sari now?” My mom sings an old song that she likes, “Who’s Sorry Now.”

48 GUM and I groan and cover our ears.

49 GUM grins at me. “The D.F. not only has the family habit of punning . . . she has the family habit of not being able to sing on key.”

50 GUM calls Mom The D.F., the Delicate Flower, because she doesn’t like to rough it, to camp out when we travel.

51 I open the last package.

52 Art books from India . . . the work is so beautiful.

53 I just keep smiling at GUM, who keeps smiling back.

54 I am so happy.

55 Even if GUM had arrived with no gifts, I would still be so happy.

56 Being with GUM is the best gift of all.

United Tates of America by Paula Danziger. Reprinted by arrangement with the author and Writers House LLC, acting as agent for the author.

Reading Comprehension

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 1 through 10 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

1 In the story, how do readers **first** discover that GUM is special to Skate?

- Ⓐ Skate is happy that GUM thinks about her artwork.
- Ⓑ Skate is proud of a log cabin she builds with GUM.
- Ⓒ Skate is more excited about opening her presents than she is about visiting GUM.
- Ⓓ Skate is more excited about seeing GUM than she is about eating her favorite dessert.

2 In the story, which gift does Skate open **first**?

- Ⓐ an art book
- Ⓑ a new dress
- Ⓒ small bracelets
- Ⓓ handmade paper

3 Based on the story, what does Skate **most** enjoy doing in her free time?

- Ⓐ baking
- Ⓑ reading
- Ⓒ taking pictures
- Ⓓ making scrapbooks

4 Read the sentence from paragraph 32 in the box below.

I'm smiling so much that it feels like my face is going to break.

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

- Ⓐ She is so happy that she cannot stop smiling.
- Ⓑ She is so happy that she cannot feel anything.
- Ⓒ She does not want others to know she is hurt.
- Ⓓ She does not know why she is smiling so much.

Reading Comprehension

5 How are paragraphs 34–36 **different** from the rest of the story?

- (A) They teach a lesson.
- (B) They solve a problem.
- (C) They describe a memory.
- (D) They introduce a character.

6 According to the story, what is Skate's favorite gift from GUM?

- (A) the trips he takes with her
- (B) the time he spends with her
- (C) the special paper made in a factory
- (D) the dress made from beautiful material

7 Based on the story, what does GUM do that makes him so interesting?

- (A) sing
- (B) shop
- (C) camp
- (D) travel

8 Who is the speaker in the story?

- (A) Skate
- (B) GUM
- (C) a friend
- (D) the mother

Reading Comprehension

- 9 Read paragraph 14 from the story in the box below.

He's fifty-seven years old . . . that's not old-old . . . not ancient old. He was twenty years old when my dad, his nephew, was born.

Which word in the paragraph helps readers understand the meaning of *ancient*?

- Ⓐ old
- Ⓑ twenty
- Ⓒ nephew
- Ⓓ born

- 10 Read paragraph 39 from the story in the box below.

"They're called *bindis*." He explains, "Indian women wear them on their foreheads."

Which of the following words from the paragraph is a **verb**?

- Ⓐ women
- Ⓑ wear
- Ⓒ them
- Ⓓ foreheads

Reading Comprehension

Question 11 is a short-response question. Write your answer to question 11 in the lined space below.

11 Based on the story, how does GUM show that he cares for Skate?

Question 12 is a short-response question. Write your answer to question 12 in the lined space below.

12 Based on the story, how does Skate show that she cares for GUM?

Reading Comprehension

In 1848, James Marshall made an important discovery. Read the selection to find out more about his discovery and answer the questions that follow.

GOLD FEVER!

by Peter and Connie Roop

1 **I**t was January 24, 1848. The sun rose over the California hills. James Marshall was up at dawn. He had to work on a new sawmill.

2 Looking into a hole in the ground by the sawmill, he saw a yellow rock. It was about the size and shape of a pea. Marshall picked up the shiny pebble and made history.

3 The rock was gold! James Marshall put the rock in his hat. He ran to show the other men working on the mill.

4 Captain John Sutter and James Marshall owned the sawmill where Marshall had been digging. Captain Sutter told Marshall to keep his discovery a secret. But, somehow, news of the gold spread quickly.

5 First tens, then hundreds, then thousands of people rushed to California. They all came to strike it rich finding gold!



Sutter's Mill, California

6 For many years, California had been part of Mexico. By 1848, California was owned by the United States. But it was not a state. Only about 2,000 Americans lived in California at this time.

7 By 1849, things had changed. People from all around the world were excited about the gold. Farmers stopped digging in their fields. They went to California to dig for gold. Teachers quit teaching. Bakers stopped baking. Sailors jumped off their ships. Shopkeepers closed their stores. Families packed and left their homes.

Reading Comprehension



- 8 They all had gold fever!
- 9 The only cure for gold fever was to get to California. This rush of folks to find gold was the largest gold rush ever in the United States. The people who came in 1849 were called “forty-niners.” So many people came that California became the thirty-first state on September 9, 1850. James Marshall’s discovery of gold did indeed change history.

“Gold Fever!” by Peter and Connie Roop, from *California Gold Rush*. Text copyright © 2002 by Peter and Connie Roop. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc. Photograph copyright © 2005 by California State Parks.

Reading Comprehension

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 13 through 17 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

13 In paragraph 2, what is the **most likely** reason the rock is compared to a pea?

- Ⓐ to show that it was dirty
- Ⓑ to show that it was small
- Ⓒ to show that it was smooth
- Ⓓ to show that it was colorful

14 Read the sentence from paragraph 2 in the box below.

Marshall picked up the shiny pebble and made history.

Based on the selection, which of the following **best** describes how picking up the pebble “made history”?

- Ⓐ It taught the world how to find gold.
- Ⓑ It proved the importance of sawmills.
- Ⓒ It caused the building of new sawmills.
- Ⓓ It led to the beginning of the gold rush.

15 What is the **most likely** reason the map of the United States is included in the selection?

- Ⓐ to show where California is
- Ⓑ to show how old California is
- Ⓒ to show who lives in California
- Ⓓ to show how many people visit California

Reading Comprehension

16 Based on the selection, people were said to have “gold fever” when they

- Ⓐ paid for doctors using gold.
- Ⓑ found large amounts of gold.
- Ⓒ became ill while searching for gold.
- Ⓓ were able to think only about finding gold.

17 Based on paragraph 5, what does it mean to “strike it rich”?

- Ⓐ to quickly move to a new place
- Ⓑ to suddenly have a lot of money
- Ⓒ to need more money than you have
- Ⓓ to find something you are searching for

**Grade 3 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2012 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers***

Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Correct Answer (MC)*
1	10	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
2	10	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	D
3	10	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
4	10	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	A
5	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	C
6	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
7	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
8	11	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	A
9	12	<i>Language</i>	4	A
10	12	<i>Language</i>	5	B
11	13	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
12	13	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
13	16	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	B
14	16	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
15	16	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	A
16	17	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
17	17	<i>Language</i>	4	B

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

**Grade 3 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2012 Unreleased Common Items:
Reporting Categories and Standards**

Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard
18	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8
19	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13
20	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8
21	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13
22	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13
23	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13
24	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13
25	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10
26	<i>Language</i>	4
27	<i>Language</i>	5
28	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13
29	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14
30	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14
31	<i>Language</i>	5
32	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10
33	<i>Language</i>	4
34	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14
35	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	16
36	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15
37	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	16
38	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	16
39	<i>Language</i>	5
40	<i>Language</i>	4
41	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	16