
III. English Language Arts, Grade 4

Grade 4 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2019 grade 4 English Language Arts test was a next-generation assessment that 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.

Most of the operational items on the grade 4 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.

This document displays released items from the paper-based test. Released items from the computer-based test are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 4 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and constructed-response or essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items and multiple-select items, in which students select the correct answer(s) from among several answer options.

Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 4 ELA test was based on Pre-K–5 learning standards in three content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (2017), listed below.

- Reading
- Writing
- Language

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

ELA test results are reported under three MCAS reporting categories, which are identical to the three framework content strands listed above.

The tables at the conclusion of this chapter provide the following information about each released and unreleased operational item: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, and item description. The correct answers for released selected-response questions are also displayed in the released item table.

Reference Materials

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

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This session contains 8 questions.

Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. 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 response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

Read the article about the man who deciphered, or figured out how to read, ancient Egyptian picture writing called hieroglyphs. Then answer the questions that follow.

Seeker of Knowledge The Man Who Deciphered Egyptian Hieroglyphs

by James Rumford

Background Information

Along the Nile River, the ibis bird uses its long, curved bill to search for food. In ancient Egypt, the ibis was sacred to the god Thoth, who also had a long, curved bill. But instead of searching for food, Thoth searched for knowledge. According to legend, Thoth gave the ancient Egyptians pictures to use for writing. With the gift of writing, the Egyptians became seekers of knowledge, too.

For three thousand years, the Egyptians wrote about their world, covering their temples with words, filling their libraries with books. Then invaders came and destroyed Egypt, and the pictures called hieroglyphs were forgotten.

- 1 In 1790, a French boy named Jean-François Champollion was born. When he was seven, his older brother told him about General Napoleon, the great leader of France, who was in Egypt uncovering the past.
- 2 "Someday I'll go to Egypt, too!" Jean-François told his brother as he sat spellbound, imagining himself with Napoleon, making his own discoveries.
- 3 When Jean-François was eleven, he went to school in the city of Grenoble. There, his brother took him to meet a famous scientist who had been in Egypt with Napoleon.
- 4 The scientist's house was filled with Egyptian treasures. Each one captured the boy's imagination.
- 5 "Can anyone read their writing?" asked Jean-François.
- 6 "No. No one," the scientist replied.

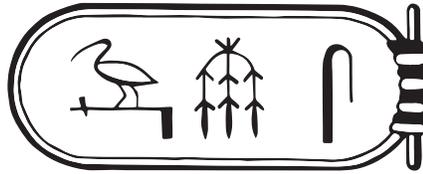
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- 7 “Then I will one day,” said Jean-François, and he left the house full of enthusiasm, sure that he would be the first to discover the key to Egyptian hieroglyphs.
- 8 When Jean-François finished school at sixteen, his brother took him to Paris to meet the scholars who were studying a black stone from Rosetta, Egypt. The stone was covered with Egyptian and Greek words and told of a king of Egypt named Ptolemy. By reading the Greek, the scholars hoped to decipher the Egyptian. But the work was difficult—certainly too difficult for a boy—and the scholars turned Jean-François away. They did not see the fire burning bright in his eyes. They did not recognize the genius who had already learned all the known ancient languages. They did not know that he was a seeker of knowledge, one who would not rest until he had found the answer.
- 9 Scholars everywhere were racing to solve the mystery of Egyptian writing. Unbelievable things were said. Ridiculous books were written. No one had the answer. Then an Englishman discovered that a few of the hieroglyphs on the Rosetta Stone were letters, and he deciphered King Ptolemy’s name. Everyone said that the Englishman would be the first to unlock the door to Egypt’s past—everyone except Jean-François.
- 10 When Jean-François was thirty, he gathered up his notebooks and left Grenoble. He made his way back to Paris—to his brother.
- 11 In Paris, Jean-François studied the Rosetta Stone and other inscriptions. He compared the Greek letters with the Egyptian hieroglyphs and herded together his own alphabet of eagles and lions and dark-eyed chicks. But this wonderful list of letters was no help in reading the language. There were too many pictures he did not understand. What to make of a fish with legs, a jackal with wings, or an ibis god with a long, curved bill? There had to be a link between the pictures and the Egyptian letters. But what was it? Jean-François slept little. He ate almost nothing.
- 12 Then, on a September morning in 1822, Jean-François found a small package on his doorstep—from a friend in Egypt! In it were the names of pharaohs* copied from a temple wall. Each name was a jigsaw puzzle of letters and pictures. Jean-François studied the names and saw the link! The pictures were sounds, too. Not single letters, but syllables, even whole words!

*pharaohs—kings of ancient Egypt

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- 13 One of the names drew him. It began with the hieroglyph of an old, silent friend perched on a sacred staff. This was a picture of the god of writing, Thoth, followed by the letters *m* and *s*.



"Thothmes!"

- 14 "Thothmes!" Jean-François suddenly exclaimed, and the rushing sound of the pharaoh's name, as if carried on wings across the centuries, filled the room.
- 15 Jean-François raced down the street to his brother's office. He burst through the door, exclaiming, "I have the key!"
- 16 Then he collapsed. He had not eaten. He had not slept. For five days, he lay near death.
- 17 On the fifth day, he awoke. "Pen and paper," he whispered, and he wrote of his discovery to the world.
- 18 People all over France celebrated his triumph as Jean-François became the first to translate the ancient writing and open the door to Egypt's past.
- 19 A few years later, the people of France sent Jean-François to Egypt on an expedition to uncover more secrets. He knew Egypt so well in his mind that he felt he was going home. As Jean-François had imagined a thousand times in his dreams, he sailed up the Nile.
- 20 Once ashore, he entered the ruins of a temple. A magnificent flock of ibis suddenly rose up from the reeds and took flight.
- 21 Below, the ibis saw the seeker of knowledge touch the stone walls.
- 22 His fingers dipped into the carved pictures.
- 23 He pressed his ear to the stone and listened to the ancient voices.

Additional Information

Not only did Jean-François figure out that the hieroglyphic pictures were sounds, but he also discovered how some pictures at the end of words became silent and how they seemed to make the words come alive. Here is a simple Egyptian word.



This word means “ibis.” The first two hieroglyphs are the letters *h* and *b*. The picture of the ibis is there to give meaning and a bit of magic to the word.

Seeker of Knowledge: The Man Who Deciphered Egyptian Hieroglyphs by James Rumford. Text and art copyright © 2000 by James Rumford. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

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- 1 Based on paragraph 8, why was it difficult for the scholars to read some of the words on the Rosetta Stone?
- Ⓐ The scholars had only a short time to study the stone.
 - Ⓑ The scholars were too busy to notice details in the stone.
 - Ⓒ The scholars understood only one of the languages on the stone.
 - Ⓓ The scholars were too young to understand the writing on the stone.

- 2 Read the sentence from paragraph 12 in the box.

Each name was a jigsaw puzzle of letters and pictures.

Based on the article, what does the sentence suggest about the hieroglyphs?

- Ⓐ They were fun to play with.
- Ⓑ They were impossible to complete.
- Ⓒ They were created with different materials.
- Ⓓ They were made up of parts that had to be put together.

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3 Read the sentences from the article in the box.

- “Then I will one day,” said Jean-François, and he left the house full of enthusiasm, sure that he would be the first to discover the key to Egyptian hieroglyphs. (paragraph 7)
- He burst through the door, exclaiming, “I have the key!” (paragraph 15)

Based on the article, what is the meaning of **key** as it is used in the sentences?

- Ⓐ button
- Ⓑ sound
- Ⓒ opener
- Ⓓ answer

4 Part A

Based on the article, which sentence **best** describes Jean-François?

- Ⓐ He was fearless.
- Ⓑ He was creative.
- Ⓒ He was well liked.
- Ⓓ He was hard working.

Part B

Which words from the article **best** support the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “. . . captured the boy’s imagination.” (paragraph 4)
- Ⓑ “. . . he left the house full of enthusiasm. . . .” (paragraph 7)
- Ⓒ “. . . one who would not rest until he had found the answer.” (paragraph 8)
- Ⓓ “Scholars everywhere were racing to solve the mystery. . . .” (paragraph 9)

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- 5 Which sentence **best** states the main idea of the article?
- Ⓐ A man finds many important treasures from the past.
 - Ⓑ A man reaches a lifelong goal of understanding hieroglyphs.
 - Ⓒ A man learns that people all over the world write hieroglyphs.
 - Ⓓ A man becomes frustrated trying to answer a difficult question.
- 6 What is the **main** way the article is organized?
- Ⓐ in order of importance of ideas
 - Ⓑ by stating questions and answers
 - Ⓒ in the order that events happened
 - Ⓓ by comparing and contrasting ideas

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- 7 Two examples of figurative language from the article are listed below. Select the phrase that tells the correct meaning for **each** example of figurative language.

“unlock the door to Egypt’s past” (paragraph 9)

- Ⓐ imagined hearing the words of people who wrote the hieroglyphs
- Ⓑ solve the problem of understanding the hieroglyphs
- Ⓒ wondered who had written the first hieroglyphs
- Ⓓ enter a temple that is covered with hieroglyphs

“listened to the ancient voices” (paragraph 23)

- Ⓐ imagined hearing the words of people who wrote the hieroglyphs
- Ⓑ solve the problem of understanding the hieroglyphs
- Ⓒ wondered who had written the first hieroglyphs
- Ⓓ enter a temple that is covered with hieroglyphs

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For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Write your essay in the space provided on the next page. Your writing should:

- **Present and develop a central idea.**
 - **Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).**
 - **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**
- 8** Write an essay that explains in what ways Jean-François was a “seeker of knowledge.” Be sure to use information from the article to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the following page.

**Grade 4 English Language Arts
Spring 2019 Released Operational Items**

PBT Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)**
1	28	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.1	SR	Identify an obstacle faced by individuals in the article.	C
2	28	<i>Language</i>	L.4.5	SR	Determine the meaning of figurative language used in the article.	D
3	29	<i>Language</i>	L.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	D
4	30	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.3	SR	Identify a description of an individual from the article and choose the evidence that best supports the description.	D;C
5	31	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.2	SR	Identify the main idea of the article.	B
6	31	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.5	SR	Identify the organizational structure of the article.	C
7	32	<i>Language</i>	L.4.5	SR	Determine the meaning of figurative language used in the article.	B;A
8	33	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3, W.4.2, W.4.4	ES	Write an essay that explains how an individual in the article is described; use important information from the article as evidence.	

* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR), constructed-response (CR), and essay (ES).

** Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for any constructed-response and essay items will be posted to the Department's website later this year.

**Grade 4 English Language Arts
Spring 2019 Unreleased Operational Items**

PBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Identify how a paragraph supports the reader's understanding of a character in the passage.
10	<i>Language</i>	L.4.5	SR	Identify an example of figurative language from the passage.
11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.1	SR	Determine what a sentence shows about an event in the passage.
12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Make an inference about a character from the passage and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the inference.
13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.2	SR	Identify the theme of the passage.
14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Identify the setting of the passage.
15	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.2	SR	Select evidence that supports the main idea of the passage.
16	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3, W.4.3, W.4.4	ES	Write a narrative from the main character's point of view describing what might happen next in the passage.
17	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.5	SR	Determine how a section of the passage is organized.
18	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.1	SR	Identify a detail related to the topic of the passage.
19	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.7	SR	Analyze how a text feature supports an idea presented in the passage.
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.7	SR	Determine the importance of a text feature to the reader's understanding of the passage.
21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.3	SR	Identify details related to the topic of the passage.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Identify the topic of a section of the poem and choose evidence from the poem that best supports the topic.
23	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.1	SR	Interpret the meaning of a line in the poem.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.9	CR	Write a paragraph that explains an idea from the passage and the poem; use important details from both texts as evidence.

* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR), constructed-response (CR), and essay (ES).