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**2018 and beyond MCAS Grades 3–8**

**English Language Arts (ELA) Test Information**

This document describes the MCAS ELA test designs, question types, and other information related to the ELA tests.

**Standards Alignment**

The MCAS Grades 3-8 ELA tests will be aligned to the [2017 Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Framework](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/). More information can be found [here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tdd/ela.html?section=other).

**Number of Sessions**

All ELA tests will have two sessions.

**Question Types**

The following table contains information about the question types on the tests.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question Type** | **Total Points** | **Grade Levels** |
| Multiple Choice  *Students select one correct answer from among several answer options.* | 1 | Grades 3–8 |
| Multiple Select  *Students select more than one correct answer from among several answer options. These items include two part questions.* | 2 | Grades 3–8 |
| Technology Enhanced *Students taking the computer-based test answer questions using technology such as drag-and-drop and hot spot.* | 2 | Grades 3–8 |
| Short Response (or Constructed Response) *Students construct a short written response, approximately the length of a paragraph.* | 3 | Grades 3 and 4 |
| Narrative and Text-Based Essays *Students write an essay in response to text(s) they have read.* | 7 | Grades 3–5 |
| 8 | Grades 6–8 |

**Test Design**

Each test includes both common and matrix questions. Common questions count toward a student's score, while matrix questions consist of both field-test and equating questions and do not count toward a student's score.

**Common Questions**

Students will read three passage sets and answer the associated questions; each passage set will include a single passage or a passage pairing or tripling. Students will also be asked to write a short response or essay associated with each passage set.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Number of 1- Point Questions** | **Number of 2-point Questions** | **Number of Short Responses** | **Number of Essays** | **Total Points on Test** |
| 3-4 | 15-21 | 3-6 | 1 | 2 | 44 |
| 5 | 15-21 | 3-6 | 0 | 3 | 48 |
| 6-8 | 15-21 | 3-6 | 0 | 3 | 51 |

| **Reporting Category Percentages (+/- 5) by Grade** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Grade 3** | **Grade 4** | **Grade 5** | **Grade 6** | **Grade 7** | **Grade 8** |
| **Reading** | **55%** | **55%** | **45%** | **45%** | **45%** | **45%** |
| **Language** | **25%** | **25%** | **25%** | **25%** | **25%** | **25%** |
| **Writing** | **20%** | **20%** | **30%** | **30%** | **30%** | **30%** |

**Matrix Questions**

Matrix questions which will vary by grade:

* Students in grades 3–4 will read one additional passage set, respond to eight questions (one or two-point) and write either two short response questions or a one-page essay.
* Students in grade 5 will read one additional passage set, respond to eight questions (one or two-point), and write a one-page essay.
* Students in grades 6–8 will read one additional passage set, respond to eight questions (one or two-point), and write a two-page essay.

**Short Responses and Essays**

Item-level directions will indicate the amount of space provided for each response.

Students taking the paper-based test (PBT) will write their responses in their Test and Answer Booklet (grade 3) or Student Answer Booklet (grades 4-8). The amount of space provided for responses on the PBT is as follows:

* Short responses:
  + one hand-written paragraph
* Essays:
  + one hand-written page at grades 3-5
  + two hand-written pages at grades 6-8

On the computer-based test (CBT), students will type their responses into response boxes that provide similar amounts of space to the PBT. As a student types his or her response in the response box, a scroll bar will appear and the student can continue typing. The student can scroll up or down to see the typed response. The amount of space provided for student responses on the CBT is:

* Short responses:
  + 1200 characters (equivalent to one hand-written paragraph)
* Essays:
  + 2500 characters (equivalent to one hand-written page at grades 3-5)
  + 5000 characters (equivalent to two hand-written pages at grades 6-8)

For more information on how to use response boxes, please see the [Student Tutorial](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/student/). In addition, the Exhibits tab, found on the [practice tests](http://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/student/) will be available for students during test administration.