IV. English Language Arts, Reading Comprehension, Grade 5
Grade 5 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension Test

The spring 2011 grade 5 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 5 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, page 10)
- Reading and Literature (Framework, pages 35–64; Supplement, pages 11–13)

The English Language Arts Curriculum Framework and Supplement are available on the Department website 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 5 ELA Reading Comprehension test included two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by multiple-choice and 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 test booklets. Due to copyright restrictions, certain reading passages cannot be released to the public on the website. 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 both ELA Reading Comprehension test 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.
This session contains two reading selections with fifteen multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

When Judi Warren played on her high school’s basketball team, opportunities for girls were different than they are now. Read the selection about Judi and her teammates and answer the questions that follow.

**Judi Warren and the Warsaw Tigers:**  
**Taking Center Stage**  
Warsaw, Indiana, 1976  
by Phillip Hoose

Students read a selection titled “Judi Warren and the Warsaw Tigers: Taking Center Stage” and then answered questions 1 through 11 that followed.

Due to copyright restrictions, the selection cannot be released to the public over the Internet. For more information, see the copyright citation below.

“Judi Warren and the Warsaw Tigers: Taking Center Stage” by Phillip Hoose, from *We Were There, Too! Young People in U.S. History.* Copyright © 2001 by Phillip Hoose. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, LLC.
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Due to copyright restrictions, the selection that appeared on this page cannot be released to the public over the Internet. For more information, see the citation on page 41.
What is the main purpose of paragraph 2?
A. to create drama
B. to explain the conflict
C. to describe the setting
D. to introduce characters

According to the selection, how did Mr. Tallman react at first to the girls’ request for better playing conditions?
A. He was excited.
B. He was surprised.
C. He was disappointed.
D. He was unsupportive.

What does paragraph 7 most suggest about the Title IX law?
A. It only applied to basketball.
B. It helped girls to take part in many sports.
C. It caused a big increase in national tournaments.
D. It encouraged girls to become more physically fit.

In paragraph 9, the description “high-voltage excitement” most likely means that the excitement was
A. brief.
B. shocking.
C. immediate.
D. tremendous.
5 According to the selection, why did the girls gain respect for Mr. Tallman?
   A. because he apologized publicly to them
   B. because he agreed to become their coach
   C. because he explained his decision to them
   D. because he encouraged people to support their team

6 Read the sentence from paragraph 13 in the box below.

   Roosevelt jumped off to a quick eight-point lead, but Judi stole the ball repeatedly in the second quarter, threading her way through defenses and hooking passes over her head for easy baskets.

   In the sentence, what do the words “stole,” “threading,” and “hooking” suggest?
   A. the close score of the game
   B. the teams’ spirit and courage
   C. the opposing team’s mistakes on the court
   D. the fast pace and excitement of the game

7 Based on the selection, which word best describes Judi Warren and her teammates?
   A. scared
   B. generous
   C. determined
   D. embarrassed

8 Read the sentence from paragraph 1 in the box below.

   There was a huge high school boys’ basketball tournament, but there was no post-season tournament at all for girls.

   The prefix post- in the word post-season means
   A. after.
   B. many.
   C. nearly.
   D. between.
Read the sentence from paragraph 1 in the box below.

Judi Warren was an exceptional basketball player who grew up in a small Indiana town during those years of change.

Based on the selection, what does the word exceptional mean?
A. outstanding
B. independent
C. entertaining
D. appreciative

Read the sentence from paragraph 4 in the box below.

Why couldn’t they have uniforms?

The apostrophe in couldn’t shows that it is a
A. possessive noun.
B. contraction.
C. slang word.
D. quotation.

Question 11 is an open-response question.
• Read the question carefully.
• Explain your answer.
• Add supporting details.
• Double-check your work.

Write your answer to question 11 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

Based on the selection, describe the difficulties the Warsaw girls’ basketball team overcame to win the state championship. Support your answer with important details from the selection.
Piki, the young man in this scene from a play, has recently saved a white spider from drowning in a pond. Now, the spider has the chance to repay the kindness, as the young man tries to win the hand of the chieftain’s daughter in marriage. Read the scene and then answer the questions that follow.

The White Spider’s Gift
A South American folktale . . .
by Jamie Turner

Characters
WHITE SPIDER, offstage voice
PIKI, Guarani boy
CHIEFTAIN
TUKIRA, Chieftain’s daughter
KUMA, Guarani boy
DABU, Guarani boy

SCENE 3
TIME: Two days later.
SETTING: The forest; before curtain.

BEFORE RISE: PIKI enters, carrying jar. He approaches spring, kneels down as if to fill jar, then sets jar beside him and sits, looking sad.

SPIDER (From offstage): Piki, Piki, why do you look so sad?

PIKI (Looking up at bush in surprise): Oh, it is you, little spider. (Sighs) My heart is heavy because I shall not win the beautiful Tukira for my wife. I ran well, I shot well, and I fought well. But now I have no hope. Tukira will surely become the wife of Kuma or Dabu.

SPIDER: Yes. I listen as I sit quietly in my yerba bush spinning my web. The women talk as they come to fill their water jars. I heard them speak of the gifts for the lovely princess.

PIKI: Yes, the lovely princess . . . but she will never be mine. Tomorrow we must present our gifts. It is said that Dabu will bring a headdress woven of colorful feathers from rare birds. And Kuma boasts openly of his gift, a necklace of gold, encrusted with the lovely topaz stones of the highlands. But I . . . I have nothing. My mother and I are poor, unlike the families of Dabu and Kuma.

SPIDER: Piki, did you not hear me? I shall help you win Tukira’s hand.

PIKI: But how can you help, little spider?

SPIDER: Go home to your mother, Piki, but return to the spring at sunrise. Your special gift for Tukira will be ready. Be joyful, Piki, for the morning will dawn bright.

PIKI (Puzzled yet hopeful): I shall do as you say, little friend. Bless you for giving me hope.

SPIDER: Bless you, Piki, for taking time to save me from the bubbling spring. I promised on that day to repay your kindness, and I will. (PIKI exits, looking back in wonder at spider’s bush. Lights dim and music plays softly, indicating...
nighttime.) I will spin my most delicate thread and sprinkle it with moon dust. In the center I will form the beautiful guava flower ... the loveliest I have ever spun. And then, rare orchids of many designs. Then I shall spin stars to twinkle around the edges, and then I shall weave all the designs together with a fine, intricate lace. Now I will begin my work, for I must finish before the sun reaches the horizon. (Music continues for 30 seconds, with lights gradually coming up. Music stops.)

PIKI (Entering left, approaching bush): The new day has dawned, and I have returned as you said, friend.

SPIDER: Look beneath the bush, Piki. I have finished your gift.

PIKI (Removing lace mantle from bush; holding it up): Oh, it is beautiful! Never have I seen such delicate lace! It is fit for a princess.

SPIDER: It will be Tukira’s bridal veil. Now, hurry home to show it to your mother, and then take it to the chieftain at the appointed time.

PIKI: How I thank you, White Spider! (Gently folds lace and turns to exit, but KUMA enters, blocks his way. PIKI hides lace behind his back.)

KUMA: Piki, what makes you rise so early? Surely you are not still searching the forests for a gift worthy of the princess? (Laughs)

PIKI: No, Kuma, I am no longer searching. But I cannot talk; I must go now. (PIKI starts to move on, but KUMA stops him roughly.)

KUMA: The women of the village say you have no gift to bring. (Laughs rudely) I have fashioned gold into a necklace for Tukira.

PIKI: Yes, Kuma, I have heard of it. The whole village has heard.

KUMA: And soon Tukira will wear my necklace and become my bride. What will you bring, Piki? Perhaps a bowl of tea leaves? (Laughs) Or a dish of berries? (Laughs harder) Or perhaps the lovely princess would like a new mat woven from dried grass. (Laughs more) Go, Piki, and I shall meet you soon as we stand before the chieftain—unless you decide not to come. I would not blame you.

PIKI (Passing KUMA): I shall be there, Kuma. (Exits, followed by KUMA, laughing. Curtain rises.)

TIME: Later that morning.

SETTING: Chieftain’s home.

AT RISE: CHIEFTAIN and TUKIRA sit side by side. 2ND GIRL combs and arranges flowers in TUKIRA’s hair. MESSENGER sits behind them, tapping a drum as they talk.

CHIEFTAIN: The morning has come, daughter. Soon the three young braves will hear the drum and arrive to present their gifts.

TUKIRA: Father, what if I cannot decide which is the most beautiful gift?

CHIEFTAIN: You will know. Your heart will tell you. And after you choose, I shall give one final test to prove the worthiness of your husband. Stand, now. Here come the youths. (CHIEFTAIN and TUKIRA stand as DABU, KUMA, and PIKI enter, carrying gifts behind their backs. MESSENGER stops beating drum, and VILLAGE PEOPLE enter, gather around. CHIEFTAIN addresses boys.) The three days have ended, and now Tukira will choose among you. Present your gift first, Dabu. (DABU steps forward, kneels, holds out feathered headdress. PEOPLE murmur approval.)
TUKIRA (Taking headdress; with admiration): It is lovely. Such rare feathers and such brilliant colors! Thank you, Dabu. (TUKIRA hands headdress to 2ND GIRL. DABU rises and moves back.)

CHIEFTAIN: Now your gift, Kuma. (KUMA steps forward, kneels, presents necklace to TUKIRA. PEOPLE murmur even louder and lean forward for closer look. KUMA glances back at PIKI scornfully.)

TUKIRA (In admiring tone): What fine gold! And such glowing topaz stones! Thank you, Kuma. (TUKIRA hands necklace to 2ND GIRL.)

KUMA (Pompously): The topaz stones do not compare to the beauty of your eyes, lovely princess. (TUKIRA lowers her eyes, and CHIEFTAIN motions KUMA back. KUMA speaks to DABU and PIKI.) I can see in her eyes that she admires the necklace above all else.

CHIEFTAIN: Piki, you may present your gift now. (PIKI steps forward, kneels, presents lace mantle. PEOPLE gasp, reach forward to touch it, murmuring loudly at its beauty. TUKIRA takes mantle, unfolds it, studies it silently.)

TUKIRA (After a moment): Never have I held such beautiful lace. It is clearly a miracle, for no hands could spin such glistening threads and intricate patterns—so delicate yet so strong. I choose Piki’s lace mantle as the best gift, Father. (PIKI bows head gratefully, rises, steps back. KUMA scowls angrily.)

CHIEFTAIN: You have chosen well, daughter. (Addresses boys) Before I give up my daughter, however, there is one final test.

KUMA (Aside): Aha! Perhaps I shall win yet!

CHIEFTAIN: It is said that the spirit of a great tiger roams throughout our forest. Only the wisest and noblest among the Guaranis can see the spirit. (Motions toward audience) Look into the forest and tell me what the tiger wears around his neck. (PEOPLE murmur: DABU, KUMA, and PIKI gaze out silently.)

DABU (Questioningly): I believe he wears around his neck a . . . a cord of twisted vines?

KUMA (Boastfully): Yes, yes, I see the spirit clearly, but you are wrong, Dabu. He wears about his neck a beaded leather strap. He turns his head now and gazes at me, recognizing me as one of the wise and noble. (Kneels and bows toward “spirit”)

CHIEFTAIN: Piki, what can you see?

PIKI (Puzzled): I have looked and looked, Chieftain, but I see no tiger spirit at all. (PEOPLE murmur.)

CHIEFTAIN: You have shown yourself worthy, young Piki, for it is also said that the tiger spirit never reveals himself where many people are gathered. I do not know what you saw, Dabu, nor you, Kuma, but it was not the great spirit tiger. You alone, Piki, have been truthful. Surely you are the wisest and noblest of all the young Guaranis. You have competed with honor and have won the hand of my daughter in marriage. Let us make ready for the ceremony. It will be tonight.

TUKIRA: And I shall wear the lovely lace mantle for my veil.

PIKI: Yes, you shall. Just as my friend said you would. (PIKI gently places mantle over TUKIRA’s head as curtain falls.)

THE END
12 Why is Piki sad at the beginning of the scene?
   A. He does not feel that he can trust the spider.
   B. He realizes that the spider has angered the chieftain.
   C. He believes he is too poor to win the contest for the best gift.
   D. He does not have enough time to make a gift for the princess.

13 Read the text from line 8 in the box below.

PIKI (Looking up at bush in surprise):

In the line, what is the purpose of the words in parentheses and italics?
   A. The words are spoken aloud by the actor.
   B. The words are recited by the narrator.
   C. The words give directions to the actor.
   D. The words tell the audience what is happening backstage.

14 In line 53, what do the lights “gradually coming up” show?
   A. the sun rising
   B. the spider dying
   C. the storm coming
   D. the chieftain arriving

15 In lines 139–143, why does Tukira choose Piki’s gift as the best?
   A. It is very expensive.
   B. It is unusually beautiful.
   C. It is made from rare bird feathers.
   D. It is handmade by the village women.

16 Based on lines 157–163, what is most likely true about Dabu and Kuma?
   A. They are having difficulty seeing in the dark forest.
   B. They have decided to work together to win the contest.
   C. They are lying when they say they see the great tiger spirit.
   D. They have met the great tiger spirit when hunting in the forest.
### Grade 5 English Language Arts
### Reading Comprehension
### Spring 2011 Released Items:
### Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
<th>Reporting Category</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Correct Answer (MC)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Reading and Literature</td>
<td>13</td>
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* Answers are provided here for multiple-choice items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for the open-response item, which is indicated by the shaded cell, will be posted to the Department’s website later this year.
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<th>Item No.</th>
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<th>Standard</th>
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