



*Release of
Spring 2017
MCAS Test Items*

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**Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education**



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I. Introduction

Introduction

In 2017, Massachusetts began transitioning the state testing program, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), to next-generation tests. The next-generation tests include new item types and are designed to be administered primarily via computer, though the Department is making paper-based versions available during the transition period (and will offer paper-based tests on an ongoing basis as an accommodation for some students).

The first next-generation tests were administered in the spring of 2017 to students in grades 3–8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Next-generation tests for grade 10 ELA and Mathematics and for Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) will be phased in over the coming years. During the phase-in period, the Department will continue to administer legacy MCAS tests (which are paper-based) in those grades and subjects.

As we make this transition, the Department is committed to continuing the regular release of MCAS test items to provide information about the kinds of knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate. To support development of item banks for the next-generation tests, the Department will be releasing a smaller percentage of test items in the early years of the new program, compared to the percentages that were common under our recent release policies. As a way of providing educators and the public with more information about the next-generation items, the Department has developed a brief description of each released and unreleased item on the grades 3–8 tests in ELA and Mathematics. These item descriptions can be found in the tables that appear at the end of each relevant chapter in this publication.

Overview of Spring 2017 Item Releases

This publication contains approximately 40% of the ELA operational items and approximately 14% of the Mathematics operational items from the 2017 next-generation tests in grades 3–8. (Operational items are those items on which student scores are based.) The next-generation items displayed here are the **paper-based versions** of the 2017 operational items that have been released. The **computer-based versions** of the next-generation released items are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items/.

This publication also contains released items from the following 2017 legacy tests:

- All operational test items from the grade 10 ELA and Mathematics legacy tests
- All operational test items from the high school Biology and Introductory Physics legacy tests
- Approximately 50% of the operational test items from the STE legacy tests in grades 5 and 8

In order to support future test development, items from the spring 2017 high school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering tests are not included in this publication. The omission of these items will have no impact on the reporting of results. The reporting category and standard for each item are provided.

Purpose of This Publication

The purpose of this publication is to share with educators and the public the spring 2017 test items that have been released. Educators will be able to use this information as they plan changes in curriculum and instruction that may be needed to improve student performance.

This publication is intended to be used by school and district personnel as a companion document to test item analysis reports. The reports list, for the school accessing the report, the names of all enrolled students in the grade covered by the report as well as information about how each student answered each item contained in this publication. The reports also identify the item type and MCAS reporting category for each item. Item numbers in this publication correlate directly to the item numbers in the test item analysis reports.

Structure of This Publication

Each subsequent chapter of this publication 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 English Language Arts test; chapter XV contains information for the grade 10 Mathematics test. Note that chapter VIII contains information for both the ELA Composition (Part A) and the ELA Reading Comprehension (Part B) tests for grade 10.

Beginning with chapter II, each chapter has three main sections:

- The first section provides information about the content being assessed, including the Web address for the relevant framework and the page numbers on which the learning standards can be found. In addition, there is a brief overview of the test (number of test sessions, types of items, and reference materials allowed).
- The second section presents the released test items for the grade level and content area. Reading passages are included for ELA tests.* For Mathematics and STE tests, any reference sheets that were available to students during testing are provided.
- The final section of each chapter is a table that cross-references each released MCAS common/operational item with its MCAS reporting category and with the framework standard(s) it assesses. Correct answers to released MCAS multiple-choice and selected-response questions are listed for all content areas, as are correct answers to released short-answer questions for Mathematics.

For grades 3–8, the final section of each chapter includes a second table that cross-references each unreleased MCAS operational item with its MCAS reporting category and with the framework standard it assesses.

As described above, an item description is provided for each released and unreleased item on the grades 3–8 tests in ELA and Mathematics. The item descriptions appear in both tables.

Materials presented in this publication are not formatted exactly as they appeared in student test booklets. For example, in order to present items most efficiently in this publication, some fonts and/or font sizes may have been changed, and some graphics may have been reduced in size. All references to page numbers in answer booklets have been deleted from the directions that accompany test items.

Other Resources for Released MCAS Test Items

Educators and the public can also access released items and related materials in other formats:

- The **Question Search application**, found at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/search/, enables users to browse through released MCAS items from the past five years and search for items by grade, question type, curriculum framework, keyword, or other criteria.
- Computer-based versions of released test questions from the next-generation MCAS tests are available on the **MCAS Resource Center website** at mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items/.
- The **MCAS Student Work/Scoring Guides webpage**, found at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/, provides sample student work and scoring guides for essay questions, writing prompts, and other constructed-response questions.

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