



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
**EDUCATION**

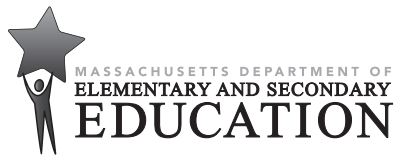
*Release of Spring 2021  
MCAS Test Items*

*from the*

*Grade 5 English Language Arts  
Paper-Based Test*

**June 2021**

**Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education**



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# Overview of Grade 5 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2021 grade 5 English Language Arts (ELA) 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 5 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**, along with associated reading passages. Released items from the computer-based test are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at [mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items/](https://mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items/).

## Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 5 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and 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.

In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department reduced testing time for students in grades 3–8 through a session sampling approach, in which each student took only a portion of each MCAS assessment. Instead of taking two sessions in each subject, individual students took one session each.

## Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 5 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](https://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 document 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.

# Grade 5 English Language Arts

This session contains 19 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.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark led one of the first journeys to explore the wilderness west of the Mississippi River. Seaman was a dog who traveled with them. Read the passage, which includes a story from Seaman's point of view and additional information about his life. Then answer the questions that follow.

### My Favorite Words

from *Lewis and Clark and Me: A Dog's Tale*

by Laurie Myers

- 1 I've seen dogs with good men. And dogs with men who are just plain mean. Most dogs hope for a man they can understand. It's great when you know what you're supposed to do. Lewis knew exactly what I could do, and he let me do it. In fact, it got so that Lewis didn't have to tell me what he wanted me to do. I knew.
- 2 Lewis would shoot an antelope, or some animal, and I'd wait. We'd watch it fall. . . . That's when I'd retrieve the prey. Lewis didn't have to say a word. I knew what to do and when to do it.
- 3 Some men talk all the time, even when they're not telling you what to do. Not Lewis. Lewis and I would walk to the top of a mountain and just stand there, him looking out over the view, and me with my nose high in the air. We didn't say a word. We didn't have to.
- 4 For Lewis and me, it was more than just understanding each other. We suited each other perfectly. Only a few dogs are lucky enough to have a man who suits them like that. I've thought about that, why Lewis and I were so well suited. I'm not sure I know exactly.
- 5 Lewis was a great man. I know that. The men knew it, too. They would do anything for Lewis. They loved him, especially Clark. I think Clark loved Lewis about as much as I did. I never heard Lewis or Clark say a harsh word to each other. And it was more than just getting along. They fit together, too. Of course that was different. They were both men. Dog and man can fit together like no others do. Lewis and I had that fit. By the end of our journey, we were as close as an animal and its hide.
- 6 How did we get that close? I think the wilderness had something to do with it. Lewis and I would have been close anywhere, but the wilderness brought out the best in both of us. We were made for that territory.
- 7 I was made for it in every way: my size, my fur, my paws, my instincts. I love running, hunting, swimming, and retrieving. I was happiest when I was doing those things.

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- 8 Lewis was happiest in the wilderness, too. Sometimes I think Lewis preferred the wilderness to people. He would spend hours looking at plants, examining animal specimens, and measuring the sky. He and I spent a lot of time hiking and exploring. We loved the stimulation of the wilderness. It was perfect for both of us.
- 9 No dog could have a more perfect life than I had. My dreams let me relive it over and over. They fill me with what I saw and what I did. I dream of . . .
- 10 Bears prowling around at night, keeping me awake.
- 11 Lewis and I, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, smelling the salt air.
- 12 Prickly pear cactus needles stuck in my paws, and Lewis tenderly pulling them out one by one.



- 13 And that triumphal return to St. Louis. Men, women, and children running to the docks to meet us. Dogs barking. Horses in an uproar. People shouting and cheering.
- 14 I look at Lewis. He looks at me. He's smiling. He places his hand on my head. I push my head further into his hand. Then he says my favorite words.
- 15 "Good job, Seaman."

**. . . my dog was of the newfoundland breed very active strong and docile . . .**

**Meriwether Lewis**

**September 11, 1803**

### Historical Background

- 16 Where Meriwether Lewis purchased Seaman is a mystery. Newfoundlands were popular along the East Coast, so two likely places are Washington, D.C., where Lewis lived and worked as Thomas Jefferson's secretary, and Philadelphia, where he went to prepare for the expedition. Another possibility is Pittsburgh, where Lewis actually began the journey. Seaman is first mentioned in Lewis's journal on September 11, 1803, as they sailed on the Ohio River from Pittsburgh to St. Louis.
- 17 For years writers called Lewis's dog Scannon. This was not questioned until 1984, when Donald Jackson, a great Lewis and Clark scholar, was doing research about the rivers, streams, and creeks that Lewis and Clark had named. Every name had a meaning, but Jackson could not figure out "Seaman's Creek" in Montana. He went back to the original drawings and writings and discovered that in Scannon, the *c* was actually an *e* and the *nn* was an *m*, thus "Scannon" was actually *Seaman*. Seaman's Creek, now called Monture Creek, still exists in Montana.
- 18 The last time Seaman is mentioned in a journal is July 15, 1806, in Montana when Lewis wrote:

**. . . the musketoes<sup>1</sup> continue to infest us in such manner that we can scarcely exist; . . . my dog even howls with the torture he experiences from them, . . .**

- 19 The expedition arrived back in St. Louis two months later, September 23, 1806. Although most scholars believed Seaman completed the journey (his death or loss would surely have been mentioned in one of the many journals), no one knew for certain until recently, when another Lewis and Clark scholar, Jim Holmberg, discovered a book written in 1814, which listed epitaphs and inscriptions.<sup>2</sup> The book lists an inscription on a dog collar (most likely destroyed in a fire) in a museum in Virginia. The inscription reads:

**The greatest traveller of my species. My name is SEAMAN, the dog of captain Meriwether Lewis, whom I accompanied to the Pacifick ocean through the interior of the continent of North America.**

<sup>1</sup>musketoes—a misspelling of the word "mosquitoes"

<sup>2</sup>epitaphs and inscriptions—brief statements of praise in honor of someone who has passed away

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- 1 What is the **main** purpose of paragraphs 1–3?
- Ⓐ to explain how Seaman solved problems for Lewis
  - Ⓑ to suggest that Seaman was on a journey with Lewis
  - Ⓒ to describe the many tasks Seaman performed for Lewis
  - Ⓓ to introduce the relationship between Seaman and Lewis

- 2 Read the sentence from paragraph 5 in the box.

By the end of our journey, we were as close as an animal and its hide.

Based on the passage, what does the sentence **mainly** imply about Seaman?

- Ⓐ He helped Lewis to stay warm.
- Ⓑ He helped Lewis hunt for food.
- Ⓒ He felt a strong bond with Lewis.
- Ⓓ He spent a lot of time with Lewis.



### 3 Part A

Based on the passage, which sentence **best** describes how others who traveled with Lewis felt about him?

- Ⓐ They trusted and respected him as a leader.
- Ⓑ They admired his intelligence and knowledge about nature.
- Ⓒ They did not understand him, but they liked his determination.
- Ⓓ They did not think he appreciated them, but they served him out of duty.

### Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "Some men talk all the time. . . ." (paragraph 3)
- Ⓑ "They would do anything for Lewis." (paragraph 5)
- Ⓒ "Sometimes I think Lewis preferred the wilderness to people." (paragraph 8)
- Ⓓ "My dreams let me relive it. . . ." (paragraph 9)

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- 4 Read the sentences from paragraph 7 in the box.

I was made for it in every way: my size, my fur, my paws, my instincts. I love running, hunting, swimming, and retrieving.

What is Seaman explaining in the sentences?

- Ⓐ why he will be remembered
- Ⓑ what activities dogs excel at
- Ⓒ what skills Lewis's dogs were taught
- Ⓓ why he was a good choice for Lewis's journey

- 5 Based on paragraphs 9–12, what can the reader infer about Seaman?

- Ⓐ He is sad that Lewis did not stay with him.
- Ⓑ He plans to return to the places he visited.
- Ⓒ He is thankful for the time he spent with Lewis.
- Ⓓ He imagines events that did not happen to him.

- 6 What is the **main** purpose of paragraphs 14 and 15?

- Ⓐ to show a method Seaman used to get the attention of Lewis
- Ⓑ to suggest that Seaman and Lewis were relieved to be back home
- Ⓒ to emphasize how important it was to Seaman that Lewis be proud of him
- Ⓓ to reveal that Seaman and Lewis were surprised by the attention they got when they returned

- 7 What is the **most likely** reason the author includes the section **Historical Background**?
- Ⓐ to show a surprising effect of Lewis and Clark’s journey
  - Ⓑ to argue that Lewis and Clark’s journey needs further research
  - Ⓒ to show that the narrative section of the passage is based on myths and legends
  - Ⓓ to demonstrate that the narrative section of the passage is based on a real dog
- 8 Based on the section **Historical Background**, what interesting discovery did Donald Jackson make as part of his research?
- Ⓐ He learned the real name of Lewis’s dog.
  - Ⓑ He found proof of Lewis’s work in Montana.
  - Ⓒ He found some of Lewis’s previously undiscovered journals.
  - Ⓓ He learned that Lewis’s dog helped locate the state of Montana.
- 9 Which word from the passage contains a prefix meaning “again”?
- Ⓐ relive (paragraph 9)
  - Ⓑ overlooking (paragraph 11)
  - Ⓒ uproar (paragraph 13)
  - Ⓓ discovered (paragraph 19)

### 10 Part A

Which sentence **best** states the **main** idea of the passage?

- Ⓐ Dogs in history rarely receive the praise they deserve.
- Ⓑ Dogs have been hard workers throughout history.
- Ⓒ Dogs can play a significant part in people's lives.
- Ⓓ Dogs can sense people's emotions.

### Part B

Which detail from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "Most dogs hope for a man they can understand." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ "Dog and man can fit together like no others do." (paragraph 5)
- Ⓒ "Seaman is first mentioned in Lewis's journal on September 11, 1803, as they sailed on the Ohio River. . . ." (paragraph 16)
- Ⓓ ". . . another Lewis and Clark scholar, Jim Holmberg, discovered a book written in 1814, which listed epitaphs and inscriptions." (paragraph 19)

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- 11** Determine whether each character trait **best** describes Seaman, Lewis, or both.

loyal to others

- Ⓐ Seaman
- Ⓑ Lewis
- Ⓒ both

happiest in the wild

- Ⓐ Seaman
- Ⓑ Lewis
- Ⓒ both

eager to please others

- Ⓐ Seaman
- Ⓑ Lewis
- Ⓒ both

interested in learning about plants and animals

- Ⓐ Seaman
- Ⓑ Lewis
- Ⓒ both

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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.**

- 12** Based on the passage, write an essay that explains why Lewis and Seaman's relationship was special. Be sure to use information from the passage to develop your essay.

**Write your answer on the next page.**

*You have a total of one page on which to write your response.*

12

Lined area for writing response.

This fable teaches a lesson about learning. Read the fable and answer the questions that follow.

### The Climb

#### A Modern-day Fable

by Patricia C. McKissack



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- 13** What is the **main** purpose of paragraph 1?
- Ⓐ to present a conflict
  - Ⓑ to introduce a character
  - Ⓒ to raise questions for the reader
  - Ⓓ to hint at the ending of the fable
- 14** Based on the fable, why is it considered an honor to be taught by W'Dojo?
- Ⓐ He makes learning easy.
  - Ⓑ He has much knowledge to share.
  - Ⓒ He usually refuses to teach children.
  - Ⓓ He chooses only a few students each year.
- 15** What do paragraphs 5–7 suggest about the boys who do not continue?
- Ⓐ They are not dedicated to their task.
  - Ⓑ They do not understand the directions.
  - Ⓒ They want to prove they are independent.
  - Ⓓ They have better things to do with their time.

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- 16** Read the sentence from paragraph 12 in the box.

Just before they reached the top, the last two boys came to a deep cleft in the rocks.

What does the word **cleft** mean?

- Ⓐ path
- Ⓑ pool
- Ⓒ color
- Ⓓ crack

- 17** Read W'Dojo's statement from paragraph 16 in the box.

"You are worthy of what I have to give."

What does the statement suggest?

- Ⓐ Jomo has tricked W'Dojo.
- Ⓑ Jomo has defeated W'Dojo.
- Ⓒ Jomo has earned W'Dojo's respect.
- Ⓓ Jomo has become part of W'Dojo's family.

- 18** In the fable, what does the mountain represent?
- Ⓐ the boys' goal
  - Ⓑ W'Dojo's past
  - Ⓒ W'Dojo's fears
  - Ⓓ the boys' homes
- 19** How is the title of the fable important?
- Ⓐ It shows that the story will teach a lesson.
  - Ⓑ It relates to the main message of the story.
  - Ⓒ It explains why only one boy will be successful.
  - Ⓓ It suggests that life can be full of disappointment.

**Grade 5 English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2021 Released Operational Items**

<b>PBT Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Item Type*</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Correct Answer (SR)**</b>
1	6	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.5	SR	Determine the importance of given paragraphs to the overall passage.	D
2	6	<i>Language</i>	L.5.5	SR	Interpret the meaning of figurative language used in the passage.	C
3	7	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.3	SR	Identify a description of an individual and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the description.	A;B
4	8	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.6	SR	Determine what is being described in a detail from the passage.	D
5	8	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.1	SR	Make an inference based on details from the passage.	C
6	8	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.5	SR	Determine the importance of given paragraphs in the passage.	C
7	9	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.8	SR	Identify why the author includes a given section in the passage.	D
8	9	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.1	SR	Make an inference based on information from the passage.	A
9	9	<i>Language</i>	L.5.4	SR	Identify the word from the passage that has a prefix with a given meaning.	A
10	10	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.2	SR	Identify the main idea of the passage and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the main idea.	C;B
11	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.3	SR	Identify character traits of individuals in the passage.	C;C;A;B
12	12	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.3, W.5.2, W.5.4	ES	Write an essay that explains the relationship between two individuals in the passage; use information from the passage as evidence.	
13	17	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.5	SR	Determine the purpose of a paragraph in the fable.	B
14	17	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.1	SR	Identify the significance of an event from the fable.	B
15	17	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.3	SR	Identify a description of characters based on information in the fable.	A
16	18	<i>Language</i>	L.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	D
17	18	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.3	SR	Determine what is suggested about a character using details from the fable.	C
18	19	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.2	SR	Determine the importance of the setting of the fable.	A
19	19	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.2	SR	Determine the importance of the title of the fable.	B

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

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

**Grade 5 English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2021 Unreleased Operational Items**

<b>PBT Item No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Item Type*</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.8	SR	Determine the purpose of a paragraph in the passage.
21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.5	SR	Determine how paragraphs are connected in the passage.
23	<i>Language</i>	L.5.5	SR	Interpret the meaning of punctuation used in the passage.
24	<i>Language</i>	L.5.2	SR	Determine the use of punctuation in a sentence from the passage.
25	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
26	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.3	SR	Identify how a problem in the passage was solved and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the solution.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.3	SR	Determine which summary presents events from the passage in the correct order.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.5	SR	Identify the organizational structure of the passage.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.9	SR	Compare how information from two passages contributes to overall understanding of a topic.
30	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.7	SR	Use text features to identify similarities on a topic presented in two passages.
31	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.3, W.5.2, W.5.4	ES	Write an essay that explains how individuals addressed challenges presented in two passages; use information from both passages as evidence.

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