



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
**EDUCATION**

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*Release of Spring 2021  
MCAS Test Items*

*from the*

*Grade 7 English Language Arts  
Paper-Based Test*

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**June 2021**

**Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education**

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This document was prepared by the  
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# Overview of Grade 7 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2021 grade 7 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 7 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 7 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 7 ELA test was based on grades 6–12 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 7 English Language Arts

This session contains 20 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.

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**Read the two passages about how characters respond to severe storms. Then answer the questions that follow.**

In the novel *The View from Saturday*, Nadia's parents have recently divorced, and Nadia's father has remained in Florida while her mother has moved to New York City. In this passage, Nadia's grandfather, who also lives in Florida, asks Nadia for a special favor.

### from *The View from Saturday*

by E. L. Konigsburg

- 1 That evening a northeaster hit the coast. The winds were thirty-five miles an hour with gales up to fifty. There was coastal flooding, which meant that the low lying highways and many side roads and ramps would be closed. That meant that the interstates that were normally bumper to bumper but moving would be bumper to bumper and not moving. Before we went to bed, Dad suggested that we avoid rush hour by starting out late in the morning instead of early.
- 2 The phone rang at midnight. Dad called in to me and said that I should pick up the phone. It was Grandpa Izzy.
- 3 "It's an emergency," he said, pleading. "Our hatchlings will be swept ashore by the winds. We have to harvest them early tomorrow before daylight. Before the birds get them. Margaret and I think you ought to drive up here now so that we can get an early start. Traffic will be impossible in the morning."
- 4 Grandpa was so sincere, so concerned about the turtles, so convinced that we would answer his 911 that it was obvious Dad had never told him that I had canceled all future turtle walks. I waited to see how Dad would turn him down. Dad did his best thing; he remained silent.
- 5 Grandpa said, "Nadia, are you there? Are you on the line, darling?"
- 6 "I am here, Grandpa. . . ."
- 7 "You know what will happen if we don't gather them up. Can't you come?"
- 8 "Dad and I had plans . . ."
- 9 "What plans, darling? You don't want the baby turtles to be blown ashore and die, do you? These are babies, Nadia. They need help."

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- 10 "Dad and I were going to Epcot . . ."
- 11 "Why do you want to go there to see Mr. Walter Disney's Version of the World when you can see Mother Nature's real thing?" I had to smile. Grandpa Izzy always called Disney World *Mr. Walter Disney's Version of the World*. Then he said, "Margaret and I need your help, Nadia. So do the turtles. Sometimes one species has to help another get settled." Grandpa was apologizing for not telling me about Margaret's meddling. I did not know what to say.
- 12 Dad finally spoke up, "Let Mother Nature worry about the turtles. They can take care of themselves."
- 13 But I knew that they could not. I said, "Let me talk to Dad, Grandpa. I will call you back."
- 14 After I hung up, I went into the living room. Dad was in his pajamas. Striped. I had never seen Dad sitting in the living room in striped pajamas. He said, "Don't worry about the turtles, Nadia."
- 15 I explained, "The turtles will be easy to spot—so out of place, washed up on shore. The birds will eat them."
- 16 "They couldn't possibly eat them all."
- 17 "Those that do not get eaten will be lost."
- 18 "But, surely, the tide will come back and carry the seaweed—and the turtles along with it—back out." He smiled again. "What comes ashore always washes back out. That's not a philosophical statement, Nadia. It's a fact."
- 19 "They will be lost at sea."
- 20 "Lost at sea? The sea is their home."
- 21 "They will be lost at sea," I repeated.
- 22 "Nadia," Dad said, "how can that happen?"
- 23 "You have to understand turtles to understand how that will happen."
- 24 "I don't think I do."
- 25 "I told Grandpa I would talk to you."
- 26 My father sat on the sofa, looking out of place in his striped pajamas. He nodded, a slow, thoughtful nod, and I knew that he would pay close attention, and I knew that I could explain it all.

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- 27 "It all starts," I said, "the minute the new hatchlings scamper over the sand toward the light of the horizon. Once they reach the water, they begin a swimming frenzy. They do not eat. They just swim and swim until they reach the Sargasso Sea. That is when they stop, and that is when Mother Nature turns off the swimming-frenzy switch and turns on a graze-and-grow switch. For the next five to ten years, they will stay in the Sargasso Sea, feeding off the small sea animals that live in the floating mats of sargasso grass. Tonight when the wind blows that seaweed ashore, there will be a lot of immature turtles in it—swept along with the sea grass they have called home."
- 28 I paused in my narrative. I focused hard on Dad, and he focused hard on me. "Are you with me?" I asked. My father nodded, so I continued. "Here is the tragic part. Even if the tide does wash them back into the water, they will not be able to get back home because once the swimming-frenzy switch is turned off, it is turned off forever. Turtles do not have an emergency power pack or a safety switch to turn it on. So, there they are, once again at the water's edge, but this time they are without a mechanism for swimming east. And that is why they will be lost at sea. They will want to graze. They will have an appetite, but they will not be where they can satisfy it, and they will not know how to get there because they cannot turn back their internal clock. They will not find home. They will not find food. They will starve and grow weak and be eaten."
- 29 My father did not once look at his watch or the clock on the table by the sofa. His listen-and-learn switch had been turned on, and his own internal clock was ticking. I studied my father, sitting on the pale gray living room sofa in his blue striped pajamas. The storm in our private lives had picked him up and put him out of place. Me, too. I, too, had been picked up from one place and set down in another. I, too, had been stranded. We both needed help resettling.
- 30 "When Grandpa says that we must harvest the turtles, he means that we must gather them up and save them in buckets. Then we take them to Marineland. When the seas calm down, they will be taken fifty miles offshore and placed in the Sargasso Sea."
- 31 Dad smiled. "They need a lift."
- 32 Ginger rubbed herself against my legs. I stroked her back. "Yes," I said, "they do."
- 33 Without another word, we returned to our rooms, Dad and I. We got dressed. When we ran out to the car, the rain was coming down in

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sheets, and the wind was blowing so hard that umbrellas were useless. I held the back door open for Ginger, and she hopped in. Dad and I got pretty wet just from that short run to the car, and Ginger sat on the back seat, panting and smelling like the great wet dog she was.

- 34 The rain battered the car, and the wipers danced back and forth, never really clearing the windshield. There were only a few cars on the road. We didn't pass any of them not only because it was dangerous to do so but also because we welcomed their red tail lights as a guide. Cars coming the other way made spray that splashed over the hood. Dad's hands were clenched on the steering wheel.
- 35 These northeasters dump rain in squalls that last for miles, and then they let up briefly. During one of the few lulls in the storm, Dad leaned back slightly and asked, "What do the turtles do after they've finished their five to ten years in the Sargasso Sea?"
- 36 "They go to the Azores and become bottom feeders for a few years."
- 37 "And then?"
- 38 "And then they grow up. When they are about twenty-five, they mate. The females come ashore and lay their eggs—on the same shore where they were born—and immediately return to the sea, not coming ashore again for two or maybe three years when they are again ready to lay eggs. The males never return to shore."
- 39 Dad said, "You've left something out, Nadia. They are ten when they leave the Sargasso Sea, and they are twenty-five when they mate and lay eggs. What happens during the fifteen years between leaving the Azores and mating?"
- 40 Realization hit me. I laughed out loud. We were riding into a squall again, and Dad was concentrating so hard on driving that I was not sure he was even waiting for my answer. "What is it?" he asked.
- 41 "Another switch," I said.
- 42 He took his eyes off the road long enough to demand, "Tell me, what do they do?"
- 43 "In the years between leaving their second home and their return to their native beaches, they commute. Year after year, all up and down the Atlantic, turtles swim north in the summer and south in the winter. Did you already know that?"



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- 44 "I didn't know for sure, but I had my suspicions."
- 45 I had to smile. "And did you have your suspicions about me?"
- 46 "For a while," he said. Then he took his eyes off the road long enough to return my smile. "But not now."
- 47 "Of course," I said, "I will be doing the same but opposite. I will commute north in the winter and south in the summer."
- 48 "Yep," he said. "And there will be times when you or I will need a lift between switches."
- 49 "Yes," I replied, "there will be times."

*The View from Saturday* by E.L. Konigsburg. Copyright © 1996 by E.L. Konigsburg. Reprinted by permission of Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

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In this passage from the novel *One Thing Stolen*, the narrator recalls an experience that she shared with her best friend, Maggie.

### from *One Thing Stolen*

by Beth Kephart

- 1 It's Maggie's garden. Her split of land off Spruce Street—four feet by twelve feet, and a miniature red picket fence, a scarecrow, an old rain barrel flipped to make a stool. A storm is coming on.
- 2 Some of the other gardeners in this community acre have built canopies out of woven sticks so only part of the sun will fall through. Some have planted planks all around the edges of their plots, like coffins without lids. Somebody's put an easel where a garden should be, and on the brick face of an abandoned house are the flattening branches of an apple tree. Espaliers.
- 3 But Maggie's spot is the prettiest—the straw doll and the barrel and all these hand-painted signs promising: Peas. Clover. Zinnias. Tomatoes. Poppies. In the middle of everything is Maggie's fig tree, which we grew in a bucket on her porch until it was finally big enough for the Big Transfer. We bedded it down with straw a year ago. It's lasted the winter, and now it is March, and a storm is coming on. *Hail like eggs*, the weather guy says. Better batten down.
- 4 We work side by side. We undig the signs. We flip the barrel, unplant the scarecrow, lay a thick sheet of plastic down over everything and now we have to anchor the tarp with the broken plates of the sidewalk concrete that sit across the street in an abandoned yard. Back and forth we go with the weights in our hands, the dirty bits of broken sidewalk. Maggie's wearing her denim flares and her checked shirt and her garden clogs. Her hair is pushed back into a red bandanna and flapping over her shoulders in the wind, because the wind has already started to blow, and it is getting hard to hear each other inside the storm that hasn't happened yet. The skies stew. I stop.
- 5 Something in the fig tree has stirred.
- 6 Furry wings.
- 7 A mother finch, tucked down.
- 8 *Maggie*, I say. *Look*.

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- 9 She is a brunette with a streaked breast coat. Her nest is straw and twigs, a patch of moss, bits of colored paper, and she is perfectly still until I get too close and she spreads her wings. She hops. She returns. Her eyes on us.
- 10 *Three eggs, I hear myself say. And it's only March.*
- 11 *Too early for eggs, Maggie says.*
- 12 The storm is coming—sneaking in beneath the tarp in the places between the concrete chunks. The easel that no one has battened has started to rattle. The branches of the espaliered tree are cranking from the brick. Maggie's hair is a red flag streaming, and mine is one black knot.
- 13 *Nothing we can do.*
- 14 *Three chicks, I say. And a mother.*
- 15 *They'll have to ride out the storm, Maggie says. The nest will have to save them.*
- 16 But a nest is only twigs, I think. It's only leaves and fragile things. The nest is so small and the eggs are so tiny, and the wind is blowing hard, and Maggie's saying, *Come on.*
- 17 The weather is hard and thick. It's time to leave. Between the plots of the community garden and up the street and past the mosque and Manakeesh, we run. Past the lady with the window boxes stuffed with pansies and around to Maggie's house, where Maggie's mom is waiting at the door with two identical towels.
- 18 *You had me worried, she says.*
- 19 *I made some cocoa, she says.*
- 20 *We had to leave the—bird, I say.*
- 21 We sit there, the three of us, listening to the storm. The rain first, and then the hail the size of eggs, and always the wind. I call my mom, tell her I'm here, and then the lights flicker and the power goes and Maggie's dad comes home and they stand, quiet, at the windows.
- 22 It rains all night. The gutters are full of things and the treetops are breaking. The fire-escape stairs bang against the brick behind the house and the trash cans are rolling, and everything inside Maggie's house is very still except for the trembling flames on the candles. We watch the

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storm. We stand in Maggie's flannel shirts and Maggie's sweats, no music on, no lights in the street. Maggie goes to sleep. I stay awake, afraid for the bird.

- 23 The storm breaks before the dawn. The candles run out of wicks. No clocks are ticking. Out in the street the big branches of trees are down and the loosened trash can lids are rolling around and pieces of wash that had been left out on backyard lines are lying on the ground like empty people. I tiptoe down the hall, past Maggie's parents' room, and down the steps in the squish of still wet shoes. Pull open the door. Step out onto the porch. Feel Maggie behind me.
- 24 *Going nowhere without me, she says.*
- 25 She wears her checkered gown over a pair of jeans. She's stuck a tiara into her hair. She hands me a shovel, a rake, a bucket, and we go, and we don't talk, don't say anything about the bird, about the plot, about the too-ferocious storm, and when we get there, the community garden looks like the end of the world.
- 26 The easel smashed into sticks.
- 27 The canopies smashed.
- 28 The espalier yanked away from the wall like a spider's web caught in a broom.
- 29 The planks between plots are down and the compost is sludge. Straw is everywhere, like chopped blond hair. But under Maggie's tarp the plot is dry, her scarecrow and her signs are dry. Up in the tree, the nest is whole.
- 30 The birds have survived.
- 31 *World's greatest miracle, Maggie says.* We sit with our butts against the soaked rim of the barrel and watch the bird come back to life. She spreads her wings. She settles.
- 32 *We didn't have to worry after all, Maggie says.*
- 33 And something in my mind breaks loose and almost free.

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- 1** In *The View from Saturday*, how do the details about the weather in paragraph 1 **mainly** contribute to the passage?
- Ⓐ They represent Dad’s annoyance about having to change his plans.
  - Ⓑ They provide context for the characters’ later discussion and actions.
  - Ⓒ They foreshadow how Nadia will overcome the main obstacle she faces later.
  - Ⓓ They introduce aspects of the local environment that are worth preserving and protecting.
- 2** Based on *The View from Saturday*, how does the author **mainly** reveal Nadia’s feelings in paragraphs 6, 8, and 10?
- Ⓐ By using only quotations, the author illustrates Nadia’s isolation from others.
  - Ⓑ By including only simple words, the author shows Nadia’s patience with others.
  - Ⓒ By using short sentences, the author expresses Nadia’s wish to end the conversation.
  - Ⓓ By including ellipses, the author indicates Nadia’s hesitation to provide a firm answer.

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- 3 Based on *The View from Saturday*, which of the following **best** describes the difference between Dad’s and Nadia’s points of view in paragraphs 14–25?
- Ⓐ Dad sees himself as being in charge, while Nadia considers herself to be his equal.
  - Ⓑ Dad wants to focus on a problem in a family relationship, while Nadia prefers to avoid facing tough issues.
  - Ⓒ Dad thinks that the area around their home is safe to explore, while Nadia worries that the area is hazardous.
  - Ⓓ Dad believes that natural processes will resolve themselves, while Nadia understands that sometimes involvement is necessary.
- 4 In paragraph 35 of *The View from Saturday*, what does the word *lulls* **most likely** mean?
- Ⓐ times of sadness
  - Ⓑ moments of beauty
  - Ⓒ rare instances of kindness
  - Ⓓ temporary periods of calm

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- 5 Which sentence from *The View from Saturday* **best** suggests that Nadia understands how her father feels?
- Ⓐ "Dad did his best thing; he remained silent." (paragraph 4)
  - Ⓑ "I had never seen Dad sitting in the living room in striped pajamas." (paragraph 14)
  - Ⓒ "The storm in our private lives had picked him up and put him out of place." (paragraph 29)
  - Ⓓ "When we ran out to the car, the rain was coming down in sheets, and the wind was blowing so hard that umbrellas were useless." (paragraph 33)

### 6 Part A

Based on *The View from Saturday*, which of the following **best** expresses the main connection between Nadia and the turtles?

- Ⓐ Nadia feels inspired to save the turtles in order to impress her father.
- Ⓑ Nadia recognizes a similarity between her new routine and the turtles' behavior.
- Ⓒ Nadia believes that thoroughly researching turtles will bring her closer to her father.
- Ⓓ Nadia believes that her life seems less difficult after learning about the turtles' challenges.

### Part B

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

- Ⓐ "They will have an appetite, but they will not be where they can satisfy it. . . ." (paragraph 28)
- Ⓑ "His listen-and-learn switch had been turned on. . . ." (paragraph 29)
- Ⓒ ". . . females come ashore and lay their eggs—on the same shore where they were born. . . ." (paragraph 38)
- Ⓓ ". . . 'I will be doing the same but opposite. I will commute north in the winter and south in the summer.'" (paragraph 47)



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- 7 Based on paragraphs 2 and 3 of *One Thing Stolen*, which of the following **best** describes why Maggie's plot in the community garden stands out among the others?
- Ⓐ It is in the best location in the garden.
  - Ⓑ It is extremely creative and easy to maintain.
  - Ⓒ It is carefully planned and visually appealing.
  - Ⓓ It is available for all gardeners to use and enjoy.

- 8 Read the dictionary entry in the box.

**stir:** v. **1.** to blend together: *I stir the different paints in the can.* **2.** to move slightly: *I barely stir when I hear my alarm.* **3.** to affect strongly; excite: *The man's poem will stir their emotions.* **4.** to urge on or incite: *I will stir up the residents to vote.*

Which meaning **best** helps the reader understand the word *stirred* as it is used in paragraph 5 of *One Thing Stolen*?

- Ⓐ meaning 1
- Ⓑ meaning 2
- Ⓒ meaning 3
- Ⓓ meaning 4

### 9 Part A

Based on *One Thing Stolen*, what does Maggie **mainly** reveal about herself through her words and actions?

- Ⓐ She is more reserved than boastful.
- Ⓑ She is more practical than emotional.
- Ⓒ She is more demanding than friendly.
- Ⓓ She is more mischievous than considerate.

### Part B

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

- Ⓐ "Her hair is pushed back into a red bandanna. . . ." (paragraph 4)
- Ⓑ "*The nest will have to save them.*" (paragraph 15)
- Ⓒ "*Going nowhere without me . . .*" (paragraph 24)
- Ⓓ "She wears her checkered gown over a pair of jeans." (paragraph 25)

### 10 Based on *One Thing Stolen*, how does the narrator's attitude **mainly** change throughout the passage?

- Ⓐ from anxiety to relief
- Ⓑ from distrust to tolerance
- Ⓒ from recklessness to caution
- Ⓓ from suspicion to compassion

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- 11 Read the sentences from the passages in the box.

- . . . the wipers danced back and forth, never really clearing the windshield. (paragraph 34 of *The View from Saturday*)
- . . . pieces of wash that had been left out on backyard lines are lying on the ground like empty people. (paragraph 23 of *One Thing Stolen*)
- Straw is everywhere, like chopped blond hair. (paragraph 29 of *One Thing Stolen*)

Based on the sentences, what is similar about the way **both** authors use language?

- Ⓐ They both use alliteration to help illustrate the mood.
  - Ⓑ They both use imagery to help the reader understand the setting.
  - Ⓒ They both use metaphors to show the opinions of the characters.
  - Ⓓ They both use exaggeration to keep the reader interested in the plot.
- 12 Which sentence **best** states a central idea of **both** passages?
- Ⓐ People often care deeply about the survival of threatened animals.
  - Ⓑ People can form new relationships through a shared love of animals.
  - Ⓒ Saving small animals is a way for people to prove themselves to others.
  - Ⓓ Learning about animals can help people develop a sense of purpose in life.

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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 two pages. Your writing should:

- Present and develop a central idea.
- Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

- 13 Based on the passages, write an essay that explains how the storms help to reveal important character traits of Nadia in *The View from Saturday* and the narrator in *One Thing Stolen*. Be sure to use details from **both** passages to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the next two pages.



A large rectangular box with a black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box.

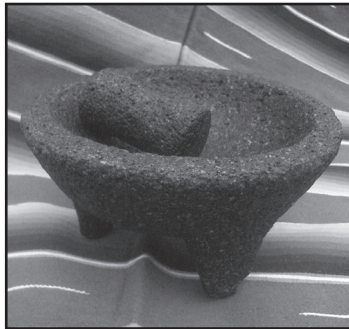
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A *molcajete* is a stone bowl that is used with a utensil to grind spices by hand. In English, the stone bowl is known as a “mortar,” and the utensil is known as a “pestle.” Read this poem by Mexican American author Gary Soto and answer the questions that follow.

### Ode to El Molcajete

by Gary Soto



It's a stone  
In my *abuela's*<sup>1</sup> kitchen,  
A stone which  
Grinds Fresno chiles  
5 And runs with  
The blood of tomatoes.  
The half moon of onion  
Cries sad tears  
Into the stone,  
10 And my *abuela*  
Leaks two or three tears,  
Not from the sadness  
Of a son going away,  
Not for the starstruck  
15 Young couples  
In TV *novelas*.<sup>2</sup>  
It's the onion  
That makes her cry.  
She wipes a tear

<sup>1</sup>*abuela's*—refers to the Spanish word *abuela*, meaning “grandmother”

<sup>2</sup>*novelas*—a Spanish word meaning “stories”

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- 20 With a crushed Kleenex  
And waves a hand  
Over her nose,  
The fumes of the chile  
Lifting toward the ceiling.
- 25 Once, I licked  
A spoon still puddled  
In the *molcajete*,  
And I ran around  
The back yard,  
30 My tongue like a red flag,  
Like the tongue  
Of a dog on a hot day.  
I drank from  
The hose, a gas station  
35 Of water filling up  
My one-gallon stomach.
- Another time  
I took *molcajete*  
To the back yard.  
40 I filled it  
With wet dirt,  
This upside-down turtle,  
This slaughterhouse  
For chiles and tomatoes,  
45 The thousand sheets of onion.  
But it wasn't the onion  
That made me cry,  
But my mother  
Looking out from the window.  
50 She tapped the glass  
And pointed an angry finger  
At the *molcajete*,  
Packed with dirt  
And sprouting a forest  
55 Of twigs and popsicle sticks.



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I don't know  
How my *abuelo*<sup>3</sup> does it,  
Spoons the fire  
Of chile  
60 Onto his *frijoles*,<sup>4</sup>  
And scoops them up  
With tortilla.  
I stand by him when  
He eats. To me,  
65 The chile is a gush  
Of lava. But  
His jaw goes up  
And down, and my mouth  
Goes up and  
70 Down, on red candy,  
The best I can do.  
When I pass  
The kitchen,  
I pet the *molcajete*,  
75 The turtle-shaped stone  
That could snap  
Your tongue  
And make it wag  
Crowns of fire.

<sup>3</sup>*abuelo*—a Spanish word meaning “grandfather”

<sup>4</sup>*frijoles*—a Spanish word meaning “beans”

“Ode to El Molcajete” by Gary Soto, from *Neighborhood Odes*. Text copyright © 1992 by Gary Soto. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Photograph copyright © Wikipedia/Creative Commons.

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- 14 In the first stanza, what is true about the *abuela's* tears?
- Ⓐ They are misunderstood by the family.
  - Ⓑ They remind the grandchild of past experiences.
  - Ⓒ They are a response to stories rather than real life.
  - Ⓓ They come from physical discomfort rather than sorrow.
- 15 In lines 65 and 66, the description "a gush / Of lava" refers to the chile's
- Ⓐ color.
  - Ⓑ texture.
  - Ⓒ spiciness.
  - Ⓓ thickness.

## English Language Arts

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16 Read the lines from the poem in the box.

- She tapped the glass / And pointed an angry finger / At the *molcajete*, / Packed with dirt
- When I pass / The kitchen, / I pet the *molcajete*,

In the lines, what do both the mother's and the speaker's actions toward the *molcajete* **mostly** suggest?

- Ⓐ respect
  - Ⓑ gratitude
  - Ⓒ ignorance
  - Ⓓ carelessness
- 17 Based on the poem, what does the *molcajete* symbolize to the family?
- Ⓐ their dreams
  - Ⓑ their success
  - Ⓒ their religion
  - Ⓓ their traditions

## English Language Arts

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- 18 The poet creates a playful tone in the poem **mainly** through the use of
- Ⓐ imagery.
  - Ⓑ dialogue.
  - Ⓒ character descriptions.
  - Ⓓ contrasting viewpoints.
- 19 What is the **main** effect of the use of Spanish words in the poem?
- Ⓐ It reveals the speaker's culture.
  - Ⓑ It suggests the speaker's confusion.
  - Ⓒ It emphasizes the speaker's passion.
  - Ⓓ It highlights the speaker's education.
- 20 The poem's title is "Ode to *El Molcajete*." Based on the poem, what is an *ode*?
- Ⓐ a poem that is spoken in public
  - Ⓑ a poem that reflects on a single topic
  - Ⓒ a poem that discusses a heroic journey
  - Ⓓ a poem that has a formal rhyme scheme

**Grade 7 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                   | 11              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.5                            | SR                | Analyze how details in a specific paragraph contribute to the overall meaning in a passage.  | B                            |
| 2                   | 11              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.5                            | SR                | Analyze how an author reveals a character in specific sections of a passage.   | D                            |
| 3                   | 12              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.6                            | SR                | Analyze the contrasting points of view of two characters in a passage.   | D                            |
| 4                   | 12              | <i>Language</i>           | L.7.4                             | SR                | Determine the meaning of a word in context.  | D                            |
| 5                   | 13              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.1                            | SR                | Select evidence to support an inference about a character in a passage.  | C                            |
| 6                   | 14              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.2                            | SR                | Determine a central idea in a passage and select evidence for support.   | B;D                          |
| 7                   | 15              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.1                            | SR                | Make an inference based on details from a passage.   | C                            |
| 8                   | 15              | <i>Language</i>           | L.7.4                             | SR                | Use a dictionary entry to determine the meaning of a multiple-meaning word in context.   | B                            |
| 9                   | 16              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.3                            | SR                | Determine what the words and actions of a character reveal about the character and select evidence from the passage for support.   | B;B                          |
| 10                  | 16              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.2                            | SR                | Analyze the development of a character's attitude over the course of a passage.  | A                            |
| 11                  | 17              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.4                            | SR                | Analyze how two authors use a similar literary technique to develop the setting in two passages.   | B                            |
| 12                  | 17              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.2                            | SR                | Determine the shared central idea of two passages.   | A                            |
| 13                  | 18              | <i>Language, Writing</i>  | L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, W.7.2, W.7.4 | ES                | Write an essay that explains how a specific event in two passages helps to reveal important traits of the main characters; use information from both passages to support your explanation. |                              |
| 14                  | 24              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.1                            | SR                | Make an inference based on information from a poem.  | D                            |
| 15                  | 24              | <i>Language</i>           | L.7.5                             | SR                | Analyze figurative language in a poem.   | C                            |
| 16                  | 25              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.6                            | SR                | Analyze how lines in a poem help to reveal characters' attitudes.  | A                            |
| 17                  | 25              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.1                            | SR                | Make an inference about characters in a poem.  | D                            |
| 18                  | 26              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.4                            | SR                | Analyze how a poet creates the tone in a poem.   | A                            |
| 19                  | 26              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.5                            | SR                | Analyze why a poet uses a specific technique.  | A                            |
| 20                  | 26              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.7.4                            | SR                | Determine the meaning of a word in context.  | 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 7 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>  |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 21                  | <i>Language</i>           | L.7.4                             | SR                | Use a Latin root to determine the meaning of a word in context.  |
| 22                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.4                            | SR                | Identify the meaning of a phrase in a passage.   |
| 23                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.3                            | SR                | Determine how an idea could affect individuals in a passage.   |
| 24                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.4                            | SR                | Analyze the effect of word choice in a sentence.   |
| 25                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.6                            | SR                | Determine the main purpose of a paragraph.   |
| 26                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.3                            | SR                | Determine how one individual influenced the project of another in a passage.   |
| 27                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.5                            | SR                | Identify the purpose of a text feature in a passage.   |
| 28                  | <i>Language</i>           | L.7.4                             | SR                | Determine the meaning of a word in context.  |
| 29                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.1                            | SR                | Determine which piece of evidence best supports an inference from a passage.   |
| 30                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.5                            | SR                | Identify a technique the author uses in a passage and determine the most likely reason for its use.                                |
| 31                  | <i>Reading</i>            | RI.7.6                            | SR                | Determine an author's point of view toward a character and select evidence from the passage to support the answer.                 |
| 32                  | <i>Language, Writing</i>  | L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, W.7.2, W.7.4 | ES                | Write an essay explaining how the author keeps the reader's interest; use information from the passage to support the explanation. |

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