



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

*Release of Spring 2022
MCAS Test Items*

from the

*Grade 3 English Language Arts
Paper-Based Test*

June 2022

**Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education**



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



Overview of Grade 3 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2022 grade 3 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 3 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.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 3 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and constructed-response or 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.

Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 3 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.

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.

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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.

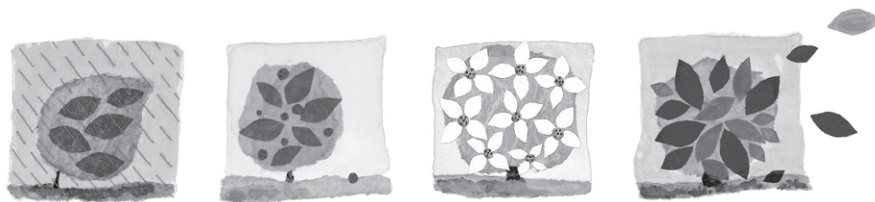
Read the story and the passage about the growth of a forest. Then answer the questions that follow.

Read the story about an old tree.

A Grand Old Tree

by Mary Newell DePalma

- 1 Once there was a grand old tree.
- 2 Her roots sank deep into the earth, her arms reached high into the sky.
- 3 She was home to many creatures. Birds nested among her branches, squirrels scurried through her leaves, caterpillars and ladybugs crawled about.
- 4 The grand old tree flowered, bore fruit, and sowed seeds.
- 5 She had many children. They changed the landscape for miles around, perhaps even farther than the old tree knew.
- 6 The grand old tree lived a long, long time. She basked in the sun, bathed in the rain, swayed in the breeze, and danced in the wind.



- 7 She grew and shed . . .
- 8 . . . many millions of leaves.
- 9 At last, the grand old tree was very, very old. Her branches no longer swayed and danced, but cracked and snapped in the wind.
- 10 Finally she fell, and snow gently covered her.
- 11 The old tree died. She no longer flowered, bore fruit, or sowed seeds, but she was still home to many creatures.

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- 12 Raccoons nested in her trunk, centipedes crawled along her branches,
and lichen grew on her bark.
- 13 The grand old tree slowly crumbled.
- 14 She became part of the earth.
- 15 Today the roots of her grandchildren sink deep into this earth. Their
arms reach high into the sky.
- 16 They are home to many creatures, just like the grand old tree.

A Grand Old Tree by Mary Newell DePalma. Copyright © 2005 by Mary Newell DePalma. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc.

Read the passage about a forest.

How the Forest Grew

by William Jaspersohn

Forest Structure



- 1 Have you ever wondered where forests come from, and how they grow? This story is about a hardwood forest in Massachusetts, though it could be about a forest anywhere because most forests grow the same way. To find out how this Massachusetts forest grew, we must go back in time to see how the forestland looked two hundred years ago.
- 2 Back then, the land was open and green. But the farmer and his family who owned the land and had cleared it, moved away.
- 3 Changes began. The wind blew seeds across the fields. Birds dropped seeds from the air. The sun warmed the seeds, the rain watered them, and they grew.
- 4 In a few years the land was filled with weeds—with dandelions, goldenrod, chickweed, milkweed, ragweed, and black-eyed Susans. Each spring new plants took root. The land began to look different. Burdock and briars grew among the weeds, making the land moist and brushy.

- 5 Blackberries grew, and birds came to eat them—song sparrows, bobolinks, and catbirds. Meadow mice and cottontail rabbits made their nests in the tall grass. Woodchucks, moles, and shrews dug their tunnels in the ground. Snakes came to feed on the small animals. Hawks and owls hunted over the land for their food.
- 6 Time passed.
- 7 And then one summer five years after the farm family left, a white pine seedling sprouted. The white pine is a sun-loving tree. The wind had blown its seed from a nearby forest, and the seed sprouted in the full sunlight.
- 8 That same summer more white pine seedlings sprouted. The land was speckled with tiny dots of green. Year after year, through weeds and low brush, the little trees pushed their way up. Tree scientists call the first trees that take hold on a piece of land pioneer trees. And that is what these white pines were.
- 9 As the pine trees grew, brush-dwelling birds moved onto the land, replacing the field dwellers. Weasels and foxes who caught mice, rabbits, and birds moved in, too.
- 10 Twenty years after the first pine seedling sprouted, the land was covered with white pines. Their branches blocked the sun's rays. The old weeds and grasses died from want of light. When new white pine seedlings tried to grow, they couldn't get sunlight and they died.
- 11 Only those seedlings that liked the shade, such as ash, red oak, and red maple, grew beneath the stands of white pines. In less than fifteen years these new trees were crowding the white pines for space. A struggle had begun, and only the strongest trees would survive. Scientists call this change—from one kind of tree or animal to a new kind—succession. They say that one kind of tree or animal succeeds another.
- 12 As the new trees on the land began to succeed the old pines, the animal life on the land changed, too. The meadow mice moved because their food supply was gone, and there was no more grass for them to build their nests. White-footed mice took their place, making their nests in hollow stumps and logs. For the first time, deer came to live on the land. Now there were places for them to hide and tender shoots for them to eat. Many different birds perched in the trees. Squirrels and chipmunks brought nuts onto the land. Some of these sprouted with the other seedlings.

- 13 One summer afternoon, fifty years after the farm family had gone, a storm broke over the land. Lightning struck the tallest pines, killing some of them and damaging others. Strong winds uprooted more pines, and lightning fires scorched branches.
- 14 But this is how forests grow. The death of some of the pine trees made room for new and different trees that had been sprouting on the forest floor. As time passed, insects and disease hurt the other pines. Every time one of them died, a red oak, white ash, or red maple tree took its place.
- 15 The forest grew. More than eighty years after the farm family had left, the weeds were all gone. So were the pioneer white pines. Red oaks, red maples, and ash trees were everywhere. The forest had reached its middle stage.
- 16 Now on the forest floor came the last of the new seedlings. These were beeches and sugar maples, trees that like the deep shade. The other seedlings—the red oak, red maple, and ash seedlings—needed more light, more water, and different kinds of soil to grow in. So they died, and the beech and the sugar maple seedlings took their place.
- 17 Every autumn the leaves of the trees fell to the ground with dead twigs and branches. All of these things decayed and made a rich layer of stuff called humus. Then slowly, bacteria, worms, and fungi turned the humus into soil from which the trees got food and water. Sometimes an animal or an insect died, and its body became part of the humus, too.
- 18 One hundred years had passed since the farm family had moved. Now, whenever a red oak, red maple, or white ash tree died, it made room for the smaller beeches and sugar maples. These formed a layer below the older trees called an understory.
- 19 Year after year, the beeches and sugar maple trees pushed their branches toward the sky. Hemlocks grew in their shade. Slowly, one by one, most of the red oak, red maple, and ash trees disappeared.
- 20 One hundred and fifty years after the forest had begun, the beeches and sugar maples were the rulers of the land. What was once open fields is now a magnificent forest. It is home for many wild animals.

- 21 In the forest, tree roots hold water and keep the soil from washing away. Humus enriches the soil. All through the world other forests are growing like the one in Massachusetts. The kinds of trees in each forest may be different, but the way they grow is very much the same. Nothing in a forest ever stands still. Old trees are dying and making room for new trees every day.

"How the Forest Grew" by William Jaspersohn, from *Cricket* Magazine (September 1990, Volume 18 Issue 1). Copyright © 1990 by Carus Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of Carus Publishing Company, d/b/a Cricket Media, and/or various authors and illustrators.

English Language Arts

- 1 Based on the story, what does the word **grand** in the title mean?
- Ⓐ magnificent
 - Ⓑ intelligent
 - Ⓒ confident
 - Ⓓ patient
- 2 In the story, what is the most likely reason that the author repeats similar words in paragraphs 2 and 15?
- Ⓐ to show how the grandchildren go through the same process as the grandmother
 - Ⓑ to show that the grandchildren are as hopeful as the grandmother
 - Ⓒ to explain that very little changes from year to year in the forest
 - Ⓓ to explain how all trees need deep roots and tall branches

- 3 Read the sentence from paragraph 6 of the story in the box.

She basked in the sun, bathed in the rain, swayed in the breeze, and danced in the wind.

What does the sentence **best** show about the tree?

- Ⓐ It was very healthy.
 - Ⓑ It preferred calm activities.
 - Ⓒ It enjoyed all types of weather.
 - Ⓓ It hoped for different kinds of weather.
- 4 Based on paragraphs 6–10 of the story, what do the illustrations **best** help the reader understand?
- Ⓐ that the tree has become much larger
 - Ⓑ that the tree has changed over time
 - Ⓒ that the tree has made many seeds
 - Ⓓ that the tree has become stronger

- 5** In the story, what is the purpose of paragraph 14?
- Ⓐ It compares two trees in the story.
 - Ⓑ It shows the effects of the tree's actions.
 - Ⓒ It describes the final step in the tree's process.
 - Ⓓ It introduces a problem for the trees in the story.

- 6** Read the paragraphs from the story in the box.

- She was home to many creatures. Birds nested among her branches, squirrels scurried through her leaves, caterpillars and ladybugs crawled about. (paragraph 3)
- The old tree died. She no longer flowered, bore fruit, or sowed seeds, but she was still home to many creatures. (paragraph 11)
- They are home to many creatures, just like the grand old tree. (paragraph 16)

What is a main idea shared by the paragraphs?

- Ⓐ The trees have strong wood.
- Ⓑ The trees have many branches.
- Ⓒ The trees are a warm place to be.
- Ⓓ The trees are useful in many ways.

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7 Based on the story, how does the author **most likely** feel about the tree?

- Ⓐ She trusts the tree.
- Ⓑ She respects the tree.
- Ⓒ She is amused by the tree.
- Ⓓ She is curious about the tree.

8 Read paragraph 7 of the passage in the box.

And then one summer five years after the farm family left, a white pine seedling sprouted. The white pine is a sun-loving tree. The wind had blown its seed from a nearby forest, and the seed sprouted in the full sunlight.

What does **sprouted** mean as it is used in the paragraph?

- Ⓐ lay in the sun
- Ⓑ began to grow
- Ⓒ started to break
- Ⓓ fell on the ground

- 9 Based on the **Forest Structure** diagram and paragraph 17 of the passage, in which part of the forest structure is humus made?
- Ⓐ Emergent layer
 - Ⓑ Canopy layer
 - Ⓒ Understory or shrub layer
 - Ⓓ Forest floor
- 10 What is the main idea of the passage?
- Ⓐ The people who left the farm caused the forest to grow.
 - Ⓑ The land went through many stages as the forest grew.
 - Ⓒ The sun provided light that helped the forest to grow.
 - Ⓓ The land filled with weeds before the forest grew.

- 11 Which sentence **best** describes a difference in how the authors of the story *A Grand Old Tree* and the passage “How the Forest Grew” show changes in forests?
- Ⓐ The story describes how soil changes, while the passage lists the different plants and trees that grow.
 - Ⓑ The story shows how a single tree changes, while the passage shows how the environment changes.
 - Ⓒ The story shows how sunlight changes trees, while the passage shows that all types of weather can change trees.
 - Ⓓ The story describes how animals that live in a tree change, while the passage lists the different insects that depend on trees.

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- 12 The author of the story and the author of the passage both have many purposes for writing. Determine whether **each** purpose for writing is shown in *A Grand Old Tree*, "How the Forest Grew," or both.

to mainly describe one tree

- Ⓐ *A Grand Old Tree*
- Ⓑ "How the Forest Grew"
- Ⓒ both

to tell about growth in nature

- Ⓐ *A Grand Old Tree*
- Ⓑ "How the Forest Grew"
- Ⓒ both

to explain how long trees live

- Ⓐ *A Grand Old Tree*
- Ⓑ "How the Forest Grew"
- Ⓒ both

to teach about different types of plants

- Ⓐ *A Grand Old Tree*
- Ⓑ "How the Forest Grew"
- Ⓒ both

13 Based on *A Grand Old Tree* and “How the Forest Grew,” write a paragraph that explains how trees are important to animals. Support your response with important details from the story and the passage.

Read the article about the trick caterpillars use to escape from danger. Then answer the questions that follow.

Hanging by a Thread

by Sharon T. Pochron, Ph.D.

- 1 A wasp crept toward a caterpillar on a leaf. Dr. Ignacio Castellanos of Mexico watched. He knew the wasp was a caterpillar predator, which meant it ate caterpillars. He wondered what the caterpillar would do. Would it do anything?
- 2 As the predator walked closer to the caterpillar, the caterpillar spun a silk thread and jumped. It hung from the leaf by its thread. The wasp did not know where the caterpillar went. The caterpillar was safe!

Knowing Without Seeing

- 3 Caterpillars cannot see, hear, or smell very well. Castellanos wondered how the caterpillar knew the predator was approaching. He and Dr. Pedro Barbosa of Maryland wanted to find out. They thought that maybe the caterpillar could feel the leaf wiggle, or vibrate.
- 4 Wasps and stinkbugs eat caterpillars. When these insects walk on a leaf to eat a caterpillar, the leaf wiggles. But the wind, falling sticks, and insects that do not eat caterpillars might also wiggle the leaf. Could caterpillars tell the difference between something safe and something dangerous? Or did they hang from a thread every time the leaf wiggled?



When a wasp shakes a leaf, caterpillars know they must get away—fast!

- 5 The scientists wanted to make the leaf vibrate and watch what the caterpillar did. First, they needed to know how to make the leaf vibrate. They used a special machine to record vibrations. The scientists noticed that wasps made one kind of vibration. Insects that do not eat caterpillars made another kind of vibration. Wind, falling twigs, and dropping water each made a different kind of vibration.

Caterpillars Are Wiggle-Wise

- 6 The scientists put caterpillars on leaves and used another machine to make the leaves vibrate. When the leaves shook the way a predator would shake them, caterpillars behaved as if a real predator were on the leaf. They spun threads and hung.
- 7 When the leaves shook as if the wind were blowing or rain were falling, caterpillars did nothing. When the leaves shook as if insects that do not eat caterpillars were walking on the leaves, the caterpillars ignored the shaking.

- 8 The scientists also found that caterpillars could tell the difference between kinds of predators. Both stinkbugs and wasps have to be very close to a caterpillar to see it, but stinkbugs must be even closer. So when stinkbugs were on the leaf, caterpillars could hang from short threads and not be noticed. When wasps were on the leaf, caterpillars spun longer threads to hang farther down—and out of sight.
- 9 So now we know that caterpillars can tell dangerous wiggles from other kinds of wiggles. People might have to pay attention to what's in front of their nose, but caterpillars have to pay attention to what vibrates under their feet.

"Hanging by a Thread" by Sharon T. Pochron, from *Highlights for Children* (November 2009). Copyright © 2009 by Highlights for Children, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Highlights for Children, Inc. Caterpillar photograph copyright © Kenneth Thomas/Photo Researchers. Wasp photograph copyright © Arthur Twomey/Photo Researchers.

- 14** According to paragraph 1, what does Dr. Ignacio Castellanos **most likely** think the wasp is going to do?

Ⓐ fly to another leaf

Ⓑ make a silk thread

Ⓒ attack the caterpillar

Ⓓ hide from the caterpillar

15 Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 3 in the box.

Castellanos wondered how the caterpillar knew the predator was approaching.

Based on the article, what does the word **approaching** mean?

Ⓐ getting closer

Ⓑ feeling hungry

Ⓒ becoming angry

Ⓓ changing direction

Part B

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

Ⓐ “crept toward” (paragraph 1)

Ⓑ “ate caterpillars” (paragraph 1)

Ⓒ “hung from the leaf” (paragraph 2)

Ⓓ “did not know where” (paragraph 2)

- 16** Reread paragraphs 3 and 4. Which word from the paragraphs **best** helps readers understand the meaning of **vibrate**?
- Ⓐ feel (paragraph 3)
 - Ⓑ wiggle (paragraph 3)
 - Ⓒ walk (paragraph 4)
 - Ⓓ hang (paragraph 4)
- 17** What is the **main** idea of the section **Caterpillars Are Wiggle-Wise**?
- Ⓐ Caterpillars do not use their eyes to see what is near them.
 - Ⓑ Caterpillars swing from long threads when a wasp is near them.
 - Ⓒ Caterpillars know what is on a leaf by the movements the leaf makes.
 - Ⓓ Caterpillars are not afraid of movements a leaf makes because of the falling rain.

- 18 Read the sentence from paragraph 6 in the box.

When the leaves shook the way a predator would shake them, caterpillars behaved as if a real predator were on the leaf.

What does the word **behaved** mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ acted
 - Ⓑ called
 - Ⓒ listened
 - Ⓓ pretended
- 19 Based on the article, how are caterpillars similar to wasps and stinkbugs?
- Ⓐ They all have poor hearing.
 - Ⓑ They all have poor eyesight.
 - Ⓒ They all have trouble smelling food.
 - Ⓓ They all have trouble feeling vibrations.
- 20 Based on the article, for what purpose do caterpillars **mainly** use their silk thread?
- Ⓐ to get out of danger
 - Ⓑ to tie up other insects
 - Ⓒ to keep away from the wind
 - Ⓓ to trap food to be eaten later

Grade 3 English Language Arts
Spring 2022 Released Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)**
1	9	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of the word based on the story.	A
2	9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.5	SR	Identify the effect of a repeated phrase in the story.	A
3	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Identify a description of an object using details from the story.	C
4	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.7	SR	Determine how illustrations support the overall understanding of the story.	B
5	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.5	SR	Identify the purpose of a given section of the story.	C
6	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.5	SR	Determine the main idea shared by paragraphs from the story.	D
7	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.6	SR	Identify the author's feelings about an object in the story.	B
8	12	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	B
9	13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.7	SR	Determine the purpose of a text feature in the passage.	D
10	13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.2	SR	Identify the main idea of the passage.	B
11	14	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.9	SR	Identify a difference in ideas between the story and the passage.	B
12	15	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.9	SR	Determine and compare the authors' purposes for writing in the story and in the passage.	A;C;C;B
13	16	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.9	CR	Write a paragraph that compares an important point presented in both the story and the passage, using important details from both texts.	
14	20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.1	SR	Identify an individual's thoughts using information from the article.	C
15	20	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context and choose evidence from the article that best supports the meaning.	A;A
16	21	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Identify the word from the article that supports the meaning of a content area word.	B
17	21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.2	SR	Determine the main idea of a section of the article.	C
18	22	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	A
19	22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.3	SR	Identify a similarity using information from the article.	B
20	22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.2	SR	Identify the purpose of an object from the article.	A

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

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

Grade 3 English Language Arts
Spring 2022 Unreleased Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
21	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Identify what is suggested about a character in the passage.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Identify how a character feels and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the feeling.
23	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the meaning.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Identify a character's thoughts based on information from the passage.
25	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.1	SR	Identify a character's problem using information from the passage.
26	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Determine a character's motivation in the passage.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.4	SR	Interpret the meaning of a phrase in the passage.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.2	SR	Determine how a character's actions support the main idea of the passage.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.6	SR	Identify the narrator of the passage.
30	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Identify the types of figurative language used throughout the passage.
31	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, W.3.3, W.3.4	ES	Write a story describing what might happen next in the passage.

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