



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

*Release of Spring 2024
MCAS Test Information*

from the

Grade 8 English Language Arts Test

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Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education



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Overview of Grade 8 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2024 grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA) test was administered in two formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. Most students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for eligible students who were unable to use a computer. More information can be found on the MCAS Test Administration Resources page at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html.

Most of the operational items on the grade 8 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.

The Department is not releasing items from the spring 2024 MCAS grades 3–8 tests. Released items from previous years' computer-based tests are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 8 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions 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 8 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.

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 operational item: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, and item description.

Reference Materials

During both ELA test sessions, the use of authorized bilingual word-to-word dictionaries and glossaries was allowed for students who are currently or were ever reported as English learners. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA test session.

Grade 8 English Language Arts
Spring 2024 Computer-Based Operational Items

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
1	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the reason a character asks questions in a passage.
2	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Determine a character’s motivation in a specific paragraph.
3	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Identify what a specific paragraph in a passage reveals about a character.
4	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the connection between two paragraphs in a passage.
5	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Make an inference about a character based on his actions.
6	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.6	SR	Determine how a character’s point of view is revealed.
7	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Identify a common topic explored by the authors in two passages.
8	<i>Language</i>	L.8.2	SR	Determine the purpose of italics in context.
9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Identify a shared theme between two passages.
10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Compare the reactions of characters to similar situations across two passages; select evidence from provided details to support analysis.
11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine whether key ideas relate to one or two passages.
12	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay that compares the challenges that characters in two passages face; use details from the passages to support analysis.
13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Make an inference about an individual based on a specific section of an excerpt.
14	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Determine what a specific paragraph reveals about an individual.
15	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
16	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Choose a phrase that best describes a character in an excerpt.
17	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.2	SR	Determine which statement explains a central idea of an excerpt and a letter on similar topics.
18	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Use context to determine which meaning of a multiple-meaning word is used in a letter.
19	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.5	SR	Determine the effect of specific sentence structures in a paragraph.
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Identify evidence from an excerpt that supports a claim made by an individual in a letter on a similar topic.
21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Analyze the differences in how the authors develop their points of view in an excerpt and a letter on similar topics.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Determine the cause of an event described in an excerpt and a letter on similar topics and analyze its impact.
23	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay that examines what is revealed about the character of an individual in an excerpt and a letter on similar topics; use information from both the excerpt and the letter for support.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Identify how specific lines develop a theme of a poem.
25	<i>Language</i>	L.8.3	SR	Determine which transition word would best replace a colon.
26	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Use context to determine the meaning of a word in a poem given its Latin root.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine how specific details develop ideas in a poem.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.1	SR	Make an inference based on a repeated phrase in a poem.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Analyze how the structure of a poem contributes to the meaning.

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
30	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Determine the tone of a poem.
31	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine the central idea of a poem and identify a quotation from the poem that supports the central idea.

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

Grade 8 English Language Arts
Spring 2024 Paper-Based Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
1	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the reason a character asks questions in a passage.
2	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Determine a character’s motivation in a specific paragraph.
3	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Identify what a specific paragraph in a passage reveals about a character.
4	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the connection between two paragraphs in a passage.
5	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Make an inference about a character based on his actions.
6	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.6	SR	Determine how a character’s point of view is revealed.
7	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Identify a common topic explored by the authors in two passages.
8	<i>Language</i>	L.8.2	SR	Determine the purpose of italics in context.
9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Identify a shared theme between two passages.
10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Compare the reactions of characters to similar situations across two passages; select evidence from provided details to support analysis.
11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine whether key ideas relate to one or two passages.
12	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay that compares the challenges that characters in two passages face; use details from the passages to support analysis.
13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Make an inference about an individual based on a specific section of an excerpt.
14	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Determine what a specific paragraph reveals about an individual.
15	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
16	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Choose a phrase that best describes a character in an excerpt.
17	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.2	SR	Determine which statement explains a central idea of an excerpt and a letter on similar topics.
18	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Use context to determine which meaning of a multiple-meaning word is used in a letter.
19	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.5	SR	Determine the effect of specific sentence structures in a paragraph.
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Identify evidence from an excerpt that supports a claim made by an individual in a letter on a similar topic.
21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Analyze the differences in how the authors develop their points of view in an excerpt and a letter on similar topics.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Determine the cause of an event described in an excerpt and a letter on similar topics and analyze its impact.
23	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay that examines what is revealed about the character of an individual in an excerpt and a letter on similar topics; use information from both the excerpt and the letter for support.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Identify how specific lines develop a theme of a poem.
25	<i>Language</i>	L.8.3	SR	Determine which transition word would best replace a colon.
26	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Use context to determine the meaning of a word in a poem given its Latin root.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine how specific details develop ideas in a poem.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.1	SR	Make an inference based on a repeated phrase in a poem.
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30	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Determine the tone of a poem.
31	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine the central idea of a poem and identify a quotation from the poem that supports the central idea.

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