



MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

*Release of Spring 2026  
MCAS Test Items from the  
Grade 10 English Language Arts  
Paper-Based Test*

**Spring 2026**

**Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education**



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# Overview of Grade 10 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2026 grade 10 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](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html).

Most of the operational items on the grade 10 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.onlinehelp.cognia.org/released-items](http://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/released-items).

## Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 10 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response 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.

## Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 10 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](http://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 table at the conclusion of this document provides the following information about each released operational item: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, and item description. The correct answers for selected-response questions are also displayed in the table.

## 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 10 English Language Arts

## SESSION 1

This session contains 13 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 excerpt about a man named Marcovaldo and then answer the questions that follow.

## The Rain and the Leaves from *Marcovaldo*

by Italo Calvino



- 1 At his job, among his various other responsibilities, Marcovaldo had to water every morning the potted plant in the entrance hall. It was one of those green house-plants with [a] . . . thin stalk from which, on both sides, broad, long-stemmed, shiny leaves stick out: in other words, one of those plants that are so plant-shaped, with leaves so leaf-shaped, that they don't seem real. But still it was a plant, and as such it suffered, because staying there, between the curtain and the umbrella-stand, it lacked light, air, and dew. Every morning Marcovaldo discovered some nasty sign: the stem of one leaf drooped as if it could no longer support the weight, another leaf was becoming spotted like the cheek of a child with measles, the tip of a third leaf was turning yellow; until, one or the other, plop!, was found on the floor. Meanwhile (what most wrung his heart) the plant's stalk grew taller, taller, no longer making orderly fronds, but naked as a pole, with a clump at the top that made it resemble a palm-tree.
- 2 Marcovaldo cleared away the fallen leaves, dusted the healthy ones, poured at the foot of the plant (slowly, so the pot wouldn't spill over and dirty the tiles) half a watering can of water, immediately absorbed by the earth in the pot. And to these simple actions he devoted an

attention he gave no other task of his, almost like the compassion felt for the troubles of a relative. And he sighed, whether for the plant or himself: because in that lanky, yellowing bush within the company walls he recognized a companion in misfortune.

- 3 The plant (this was how it was called, simply, as if any more specific name were useless in a setting where it alone had to represent the vegetable kingdom) had become such a part of Marcovaldo's life that it dominated his thoughts at every hour of the day and night. When he examined the gathering clouds in the sky, his gaze now was no longer that of a city-dweller, wondering whether or not he should wear his raincoat, but that of a farmer expecting from day to day the end of a drought. And the moment when he raised his head from his work and saw, against the light, beyond the little window of the warehouse, the curtain of rain that had begun to fall, thick and silent, he would drop everything, run to the plant, take the pot in his arms, and set it outside in the courtyard.
- 4 The plant, feeling the water run over its leaves, seemed to expand, to offer the greatest possible surface to the drops, and in its joy it seemed to don its most brilliant green: or at least so Marcovaldo thought, as he lingered to observe it, forgetting to take shelter.
- 5 They stayed there in the courtyard, man and plant, facing each other, the man almost feeling plant-sensations under the rain, the plant—no longer accustomed to the open air and to the phenomena of nature—amazed, much like a man who finds himself suddenly drenched from head to foot, his clothes soaked. Marcovaldo, his nose in the air, sniffed the smell of the rain, a smell—for him—already of woods and fields, and he pursued with his mind some vague memories. But among these memories there surfaced, clearer and closer, that of the rheumatic<sup>1</sup> aches that afflicted him every year; and then, hastily, he went back inside.
- 6 When working hours were over, the place had to be locked up. Marcovaldo asked the warehouse foreman: "Can I leave the plant outside there, in the courtyard?"
- 7 The foreman, Signor Viligelmo, was the kind of man who avoided burdensome responsibilities: "Are you crazy? What if somebody steals it? Who'll answer for that?"
- 8 But Marcovaldo, seeing how much good the rain did the plant, couldn't bring himself to put it back inside: it would mean wasting that gift of

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<sup>1</sup> rheumatic—referring to painful inflammation in the joints

heaven. "I could keep it until tomorrow morning . . ." he suggested. "I'll load it on the rack of my bike and take it home . . . That way it'll get as much rain as possible."

- 9 Signor Viligelmo thought it over a moment, then concluded: "Then you're taking the responsibility." And he gave his consent.
- 10 Under the pouring rain, Marcovaldo crossed the city, bent over the handle-bars of his motorbike, bundled up in a rain-proof wind-breaker. Behind him, on the rack, he had tied the pot; and bike, man, and plant seemed a sole thing; indeed the hunched and bundled man disappeared, and you saw only a plant on a bicycle. Every now and then, from beneath his hood, Marcovaldo looked around until he could see a dripping leaf flapping behind him: and every time it seemed to him that the plant had become taller and more leafy.
- 11 At home, a garret<sup>2</sup> with its window-sill on the roof, the moment Marcovaldo arrived with the pot in his arms, the children started dancing around it.
- 12 "The Christmas tree! The Christmas tree!"
- 13 "No, no, what are you talking about? Christmas is a long way off yet!" Marcovaldo protested. "Watch out for those leaves, they're delicate!"
- 14 "We're already like sardines in a can, in this house," Domitilla grumbled. "If you bring a tree in, too, we'll have to move out . . ."
- 15 "It's only a plant! I'll put it on the window-sill . . ."
- 16 The shadowy form of the plant on the sill could be seen from the room. Marcovaldo, at supper, didn't look at his plate, but beyond the window-panes.
- 17 Ever since they had left the half-basement for the garret, the life of Marcovaldo and family had greatly improved. However, living up under the roof also had its drawbacks: the ceiling, for example, leaked a little. The drops fell in four or five distinct places, at regular intervals; and Marcovaldo put basins under them, or pots. On rainy nights when all of them were in bed, they could hear the tic-toc-tuc of the various drips, which made him shudder as if at a premonition of rheumatism. That night, on the contrary, every time Marcovaldo woke from his restless sleep and pricked up his ears, the tic-toc-tuc seemed cheery music to him: it told him the rain was continuing, mild and steady, and was nourishing the plant, driving the sap up along its delicate stalks,

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<sup>2</sup> garret—a small top-floor or attic room

unfolding the leaves like sails. Tomorrow, when I look out, I'll find it has grown! he thought.

- 18 But even though he had thought about this, when he opened the window in the morning, he couldn't believe his eyes: the plant now filled half the window, the leaves had at least doubled in number, and no longer drooped under their own weight, but were . . . sharp as swords. He climbed down the steps, with the pot clutched to him, tied it to the rack, and rushed to work.
- 19 The rain had stopped, but the weather was still uncertain. Marcovaldo hadn't even climbed out of his seat when a few drops started falling again. "Since the rain does it so much good, I'll leave it in the courtyard again," he thought.
- 20 In the warehouse, every now and then he went to peek out of the window onto the courtyard. His distraction from work did not please the foreman. "Well, what's wrong with you this morning? Always looking out of the window."
- 21 "It's growing! Come and see for yourself, Signor Viligelmo!" And Marcovaldo motioned to him, speaking almost in a whisper, as if the plant were not to overhear. "Look how it's growing! It really has grown, hasn't it?"
- 22 "Yes, it's grown quite a bit," the boss conceded, and for Marcovaldo this was one of those satisfactions that life on the job rarely grants the personnel.
- 23 It was Saturday. Work ended at one and they were all off until Monday. Marcovaldo would have liked to take the plant home with him again, but now, since it was no longer raining, he couldn't think of any pretext. The sky, however, was not clear: black cumulus clouds were scattered here and there. He went to the foreman, who, a meteorology enthusiast, kept a barometer hanging over his desk. "What's the forecast, Signor Viligelmo?"
- 24 "Bad, still bad," he said. "For that matter, though it's not raining here, it is in the neighborhood where I live. I just telephoned my wife."
- 25 "In that case," Marcovaldo quickly proposed, "I'll take the plant on a little trip where it's raining," and, no sooner said than done, he fixed the pot again on the rack of his bike.
- 26 Saturday afternoon and Sunday Marcovaldo spent in this fashion: bouncing on the seat of his motorbike, the plant behind him, he studied the sky, seeking a cloud that seemed in the right mood, then he would

race through the streets until he encountered rain. From time to time, turning around, he saw the plant a bit taller: high as the taxis, as the delivery trucks, as the trams! And with broader and broader leaves, from which the rain slid onto his rain-proof hood like a shower.

- 27 By now it was a tree on two wheels, speeding through the city, bewildering traffic cops, drivers, pedestrians. And the clouds, at the same time, sped along the paths of the wind, spattering a neighborhood with rain, then abandoning it; and the passers-by, one after another, stuck out their hands and closed their umbrellas; and along streets and avenues and squares, Marcovaldo chased his cloud, bent over his handlebars, bundled in his hood from which only his nose protruded, his little motor putt-putting along at full tilt, as he kept the plant in the trajectory of the drops, as if the trail of rain that the cloud drew after itself had got caught in the leaves and thus all rushed ahead, drawn by the same power: wind, cloud, rain, plant, wheels.
- 28 On Monday Marcovaldo presented himself, empty-handed, to Signor Viligelmo.
- 29 “Where’s the plant?” the foreman asked at once.
- 30 “Outside. Come.”
- 31 “Where?” Viligelmo said. “I don’t see it.”
- 32 “It’s that one over there. It’s grown a bit . . .” and he pointed to a tree that reached the third floor. It was no longer planted in its old pot but in a kind of barrel, and instead of using his bike Marcovaldo had had to borrow a little motor-truck.
- 33 “Now what?” The boss was infuriated. “How can we get it into the entrance hall? It won’t go through the doors anymore!”
- 34 Marcovaldo shrugged.
- 35 “The only thing,” Viligelmo said, “is to give it back to the nursery, in exchange for a plant of the right size!”
- 36 Marcovaldo climbed onto his bike again. “I’ll go.”
- 37 He resumed his dash through the city. The tree filled the center of the streets with green. The cops, concerned about traffic, stopped him at every intersection; then—when Marcovaldo explained that he was taking the plant back to the nursery, to get rid of it—they let him go on. But, taking first this street then that, Marcovaldo couldn’t bring himself to turn into the one to the nursery. He hadn’t the heart to give up his creature, now that he had raised it with such success: nothing in his

whole life, it seemed to him, had given him the satisfaction he had received from that plant.

- 38 And so he went on, to and fro among streets and squares and embankments and bridges. And foliage worthy of a tropical forest spread out until it covered his head, back, arms, until he had disappeared into the green. And all these leaves and stems of leaves and the stalk, too (which had remained very slim), swayed and swayed as if in a constant trembling, whether a downpour of rain was still striking them, or whether the drops became rarer, or stopped altogether.
- 39 The rain ceased. It was the hour toward sunset. At the end of the streets, in the space between the houses, a light mixed with rainbow settled. The plant, after that impetuous effort of growth that had involved it as long as the rain lasted, was virtually exhausted. Continuing his aimless race, Marcovaldo didn't notice that, behind him, the intense green of the leaves, one by one, was turning to yellow, a golden yellow.
- 40 For quite a while already, a procession of motorbikes and cars and bicycles and children had been following the tree that was moving about the city, without Marcovaldo's becoming aware of them, and they were shouting: "The baobab! The babobab!" and with great "Ooooh's!" of wonder they watched the yellowing of the leaves. When one leaf dropped and flew off, many hands were raised to catch it in flight.
- 41 A wind sprang up; the golden leaves, in gusts, darted off in midair, spinning. Marcovaldo still thought that, behind him, he had the green, thick tree, when all of a sudden—perhaps feeling himself unsheltered in the wind—he looked back. The tree was gone: there was only a thin stick, from which extended a monstrosity of bare stems, and one last yellow leaf at the top still. In the light of the rainbow everything else seemed black: the people on the sidewalks, the façades of the houses that served as backdrop; and over this black, in midair, the golden leaves twirled, shining, hundreds of them; and hundreds of hands, red and pink, rose from the darkness to grab them; and the wind lifted the golden leaves toward the rainbow there at the end of the street, and the hands, and the shouts; and it detached even the last leaf, which turned from yellow to orange, then red, violet, blue, green, then yellow again, and then vanished.

"The Rain and the Leaves" by Italo Calvino, from *Marcovaldo*. Translated by William Weaver. Copyright © 1963 by Giulio Einaudi Editore, S.p.A. English translation copyright © 1983 by Harcourt, Inc. and Martin Secker & Warburg Limited. Reprinted by permission of Lester & Orpen Dennys, Publishers. Photograph copyright © epkangas/123RF.

**1 Part A**

Which central idea about Marcovaldo and the plant do paragraphs 1 and 2 **most clearly** establish?

- Ⓐ Marcovaldo feels a personal connection to the plant's condition.
- Ⓑ Marcovaldo thinks the time he spends on the plant's upkeep is undervalued.
- Ⓒ Marcovaldo believes his efforts to support the plant's development will benefit his own.
- Ⓓ Marcovaldo hopes improving the plant's appearance will be worth the burden of maintaining it.

**Part B**

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

- Ⓐ "At his job, among his various other responsibilities, Marcovaldo had to water every morning the potted plant in the entrance hall." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ "But still it was a plant, and as such it suffered, because staying there, between the curtain and the umbrella-stand, it lacked light, air, and dew." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓒ "Marcovaldo cleared away the fallen leaves, dusted the healthy ones, poured at the foot of the plant (slowly, so the pot wouldn't spill over and dirty the tiles) half a watering can of water, immediately absorbed by the earth in the pot." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓓ "And he sighed, whether for the plant or himself: because in that lanky, yellowing bush within the company walls he recognized a companion in misfortune." (paragraph 2)

- 2 Read the sentences from paragraph 17 in the box.

On rainy nights when all of them were in bed, they could hear the tic-toc-tuc of the various drips, which made him shudder as if at a premonition of rheumatism. That night, on the contrary, every time Marcovaldo woke from his restless sleep and pricked up his ears, the tic-toc-tuc seemed cheery music to him: it told him the rain was continuing, mild and steady, and was nourishing the plant, driving the sap up along its delicate stalks, unfolding the leaves like sails.

Based on the excerpt, what do the sentences **mainly** suggest about Marcovaldo?

- Ⓐ Bringing the plant home has inspired him to prioritize his health.
- Ⓑ Worrying about the plant has caused him to imagine other problems.
- Ⓒ Watching over the plant has made him less concerned about himself.
- Ⓓ Having the plant near him has improved his relationship with his family.

- 3 Read the sentence from paragraph 23 in the box.

Marcovaldo would have liked to take the plant home with him again, but now, since it was no longer raining, he couldn't think of any pretext.

Based on the excerpt, what does the word *pretext* **most likely** mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ excuse
- Ⓑ method
- Ⓒ disguise
- Ⓓ argument

- 4 Read the sentence from paragraph 26 in the box.

. . . he studied the sky, seeking a cloud that seemed in the right mood. . . .

Which quotation from the excerpt uses the same literary device as the sentence?

- Ⓐ “. . . with a clump at the top that made it resemble a palm-tree.” (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ “The shadowy form of the plant on the sill could be seen from the room.” (paragraph 16)
- Ⓒ “. . . speaking almost in a whisper, as if the plant were not to overhear.” (paragraph 21)
- Ⓓ “The tree filled the center of the streets with green.” (paragraph 37)

- 5 Read the sentence from paragraph 26 in the box.

From time to time, turning around, he saw the plant a bit taller: high as the taxis, as the delivery trucks, as the trams!

What does the sentence **mainly** reveal about Marcovaldo?

- Ⓐ His exhaustion is nearly overwhelming.
- Ⓑ He is increasingly thrilled about his future.
- Ⓒ His enthusiasm and amazement are growing.
- Ⓓ He feels distressed and threatened by the vehicles.

- 6 Read the sentence from paragraph 37 in the box.

He hadn't the heart to give up his creature, now that he had raised it with such success: nothing in his whole life, it seemed to him, had given him the satisfaction he had received from that plant.

Based on the excerpt, which idea is **best** supported by the sentence?

- Ⓐ Owning the plant increases Marcovaldo's courage.
  - Ⓑ The plant strengthens Marcovaldo's appreciation for nature.
  - Ⓒ Marcovaldo thinks the plant is more important than friendship.
  - Ⓓ Nurturing the plant provides Marcovaldo with a feeling of fulfillment.
- 7 Read the sentences from paragraph 39 in the box.

The rain ceased. It was the hour toward sunset. At the end of the streets, in the space between the houses, a light mixed with rainbow settled.

What is the **main** effect created by the sentences?

- Ⓐ a sense that the main character is evolving
- Ⓑ a feeling of reluctance for the end of the day
- Ⓒ a sense that the frenzied action is winding down
- Ⓓ a feeling of eagerness for the change that is to come

- 8 Based on the excerpt, select **two** examples of imagery from paragraph 41 that **best** illustrate the effect that Marcovaldo’s trip to the nursery has on the plant.
- Ⓐ “. . . the golden leaves, in gusts, darted off in midair. . . .”
  - Ⓑ “. . . the green, thick tree . . .”
  - Ⓒ “. . . a monstrosity of bare stems . . .”
  - Ⓓ “. . . everything else seemed black. . . .”
  - Ⓔ “. . . hundreds of hands, red and pink, rose from the darkness. . . .”

**For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:**

- **Present and develop a central idea/thesis.**
  - **Provide evidence from the passage(s).**
  - **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**
- 9** Based on “The Rain and the Leaves,” write an essay that analyzes how the changes in Marcovaldo’s emotions are similar to the changes in the plant. Use evidence from the excerpt to develop your essay.

**Write your answer on the next two pages.**





*The Canterbury Tales* was written in the fourteenth century and tells the story of a group of travelers who journey together to Canterbury, England. This excerpt takes place at the beginning of their journey, as their host suggests a way to pass the time while they travel. Read the excerpt and then answer the questions that follow.

from *The Canterbury Tales*

by Geoffrey Chaucer

A handsome man our host, handsome indeed,  
And a fit master of ceremonies.  
He was a big man with protruding eyes  
—You'll find no better burgess<sup>1</sup> in Cheapside—  
5 Racy in talk, well-schooled and shrewd was he;  
Also a proper man in every way.  
And moreover he was a right good sort,  
And after supper he began to joke,  
And, when we had all paid our reckonings,<sup>2</sup>  
10 He spoke of pleasure, among other things:  
'Truly,' said he, 'ladies and gentlemen,  
Here you are all most heartily welcome.  
Upon my word—I'm telling you no lie—  
All year I've seen no jollier company  
15 At one time in this inn, than I have now.  
I'd make some fun for you, if I knew how.  
And, as it happens, I have just now thought  
Of something that will please you, at no cost.  
'You're off to Canterbury—so Godspeed!  
20 The blessed martyr give you your reward!  
And I'll be bound, that while you're on your way,  
You'll be telling tales, and making holiday;  
It makes no sense, and really it's no fun  
To ride along the road [silent] as a stone.  
25 And therefore I'll devise a game for you,  
To give you pleasure, as I said I'd do.  
And if with one accord you all consent  
To abide by my decision and judgement,  
And if you'll do exactly as I say,  
30 Tomorrow, when you're riding on your way,  
Then, by my father's soul—for he is dead—

<sup>1</sup> burgess—citizen

<sup>2</sup> reckonings—bills

If you don't find it fun, why, here's my head!  
Now not another word! Hold up your hands!

We were not long in making up our minds.

- 35 It seemed not worth deliberating, so  
We gave our consent without more ado,  
Told him to give us what commands he wished.  
'Ladies and gentlemen,' began our host,  
'Do yourselves a good turn, and hear me out:  
40 But please don't turn your noses up at it.  
I'll put it in a nutshell: here's the nub:  
It's that you each, to shorten the long journey,  
Shall tell two tales *en route* to Canterbury,  
And, coming homeward, tell another two,  
45 Stories of things that happened long ago.  
Whoever best acquits himself, and tells  
The most amusing and instructive tale,  
Shall have a dinner, paid for by us all,  
Here in this inn, and under this roof-tree,  
50 When we come back again from Canterbury.  
To make it the more fun, I'll gladly ride  
With you at my own cost, and be your guide.  
And anyone who disputes what I say  
Must pay all our expenses on the way!  
55 And if this plan appeals to all of you,  
Tell me at once, and with no more ado,  
And I'll make my arrangements here and now.'

To this we all agreed, and gladly swore

To keep our promises; and furthermore

- 60 We asked him if he would consent to do  
As he had said, and come and be our leader,  
And judge our tales, and act as arbiter,<sup>3</sup>  
Set up our dinner too, at a fixed price;  
And we'd obey whatever he might decide  
65 In everything. And so, with one consent,  
We bound ourselves to bow to his judgement.  
. . . not long after, everyone  
Went off to bed, and that without delay.

Next morning our host rose at break of day:

- 70 He was our cockcrow; so we all awoke.  
He gathered us together in a flock,  
And we rode, at little more than walking-pace

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<sup>3</sup> arbiter—a person who settles an argument

Till we had reached St Thomas' watering-place,  
Where our host began reining in his horse.  
75 'Ladies and gentlemen, attention please!'  
Said he. 'All of you know what we agreed,  
And I'm reminding you. If evensong  
And matins are in harmony—that's to say,  
If you are still of the same mind today—  
80 Let's see who'll tell the first tale, and begin.  
And whosoever balks at my decision  
Must pay for all we spend upon the way,  
Or may I never touch a drop again!  
And now let's draw lots before going on.  
85 The one who draws the short straw must begin.  
Sir Knight, my lord and master,' said our host,  
'Now let's draw lots, for such is my request.  
Come near,' said he, 'my lady Prioress,  
And, Mister Scholar, lay by bashfulness,  
90 Stop dreaming! Hands to drawing, everyone!'  
To cut the story short, the draw began,  
And, whether it was luck, or chance, or fate,  
The truth is this: the lot fell to the knight,  
Much to the content of the company.  
95 Now, as was only right and proper, he  
Must tell his tale, according to the bargain  
Which, as you know, he'd made. What more to say?  
And when the good man saw it must be so,  
Being sensible, and accustomed to obey  
100 And keep a promise he had freely given,  
He said, 'Well, since I must begin the game,  
Then welcome to the short straw, in God's name!  
Now let's ride on, and listen to what I say.'  
And at these words we rode off on our way, . . .

*The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, translated by David Wright. Copyright © 1985 by David Wright.  
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- 10 Read lines 23 and 24 in the box.

'It makes no sense, and really it's no fun / To ride along the road [silent] as a stone.'

Based on the lines, what is the host **most clearly** suggesting about the journey?

- Ⓐ It is filled with many challenges for some people.
  - Ⓑ It is difficult to successfully complete with other people.
  - Ⓒ It will be more enjoyable if people are having conversations.
  - Ⓓ It will be more efficient if there is a guide to show people the way.
- 11 What does the word *accord* mean as it is used in line 27?
- Ⓐ ambition
  - Ⓑ agreement
  - Ⓒ association
  - Ⓓ adjustment
- 12 Based on lines 93–103, which word **best** describes the knight's reaction after he draws the short straw?
- Ⓐ accepting
  - Ⓑ perplexed
  - Ⓒ indifferent
  - Ⓓ disappointed

- 13** Based on the excerpt, determine whether each quotation **mainly** has a friendly, instructive, or commanding tone.

“Truly,” said he, “ladies and gentlemen, / Here you are all most heartily welcome.” (lines 11 and 12)

- Ⓐ friendly
- Ⓑ instructive
- Ⓒ commanding

“Ladies and gentlemen, attention please!” / Said he. “All of you know what we agreed,” (lines 75 and 76)

- Ⓐ friendly
- Ⓑ instructive
- Ⓒ commanding

“And now let’s draw lots before going on. / The one who draws the short straw must begin.” (lines 84 and 85)

- Ⓐ friendly
- Ⓑ instructive
- Ⓒ commanding

“And, Mister Scholar, lay by bashfulness, / Stop dreaming! . . .” (lines 89 and 90)

- Ⓐ friendly
- Ⓑ instructive
- Ⓒ commanding

# Grade 10 English Language Arts

## SESSION 2

This session contains 17 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 articles about the importance of connecting with people of all ages and then answer the questions that follow.**

In this article, the author explains why having friends who are a range of ages has benefits for both individuals and society.

## What We're Missing Out On When We Don't Have Intergenerational Relationships, Personally and Collectively

*by* Laura Newberry

- 1 I want you to take a moment to think about any significant relationships you have with people who are much older or much younger than you, outside of your own family. . . .
- 2 To better understand how we might begin to bridge the divide between generations, I think it's important to look at structural barriers that get in the way—and what we've lost individually and collectively because of that divide.
- 3 To begin to answer these questions, I spoke with Marc Freedman, founder and co-CEO of CoGenerate, a nonprofit finding ways to connect people of different ages, and Kate Hoepke and Sha'Nice Patterson of San Francisco Village, a nonprofit that connects older people to the community members and resources they need to live independently in their homes.

### **The history of age segregation**

- 4 It wasn't always this way.
- 5 As recently as the early 1900s, the United States was one of the most age-integrated societies in the world, according to historians.
- 6 "Older and younger people worked side by side in the fields of an agrarian economy. Multigenerational households were the norm. Even those one-room schoolhouses of yore frequently found children and adults learning to read together under the same roof. Indeed, there was little awareness of age itself. People didn't celebrate birthdays. Most would be hard-pressed even to recall how old they were," wrote Freedman and Trent Stamp of the Eisner Foundation for the Stanford Social Innovation Review.

- 7 Then industrialization came a-knockin', and the drive for efficiency "precipitated a radical reshuffling of American life," they wrote. A cascade of progressive reforms such as the Social Security Act of 1935 had the intended effect of providing a path for older people to retire, and thus shifting them out of the workplace during the Depression. "Then one after another we started creating these institutions focused on older people—nursing homes,<sup>1</sup> retirement communities," Freedman told me. Meanwhile, younger people were put into classrooms with same-age students because of new universal education and child labor laws, while middle-aged folks were at work.
- 8 "The collective result of all these things that are in and of themselves important and valuable was this grievous<sup>2</sup> wound of our society, where the generations cease to meet," Freedman said.

### **Why age segregation is a problem**

- 9 One crushing consequence of this century-long trend is that older people are often disconnected from the rest of society, leading to isolation and ageism. Both are harmful. . . .
- 10 The negative health effects of ageism are also well-documented. When older adults are discriminated against because of their age, they will often internalize harmful stereotypes. In turn, they are more likely to become stressed, depressed or suffer other chronic illnesses.
- 11 "What we are seeing in public discourse is an increasing portrayal of those over the age of 70 as being all alike with regard to being helpless, frail, and unable to contribute to society," eight prominent psychologists wrote in an academic paper about growing ageism. . . .
- 12 In the past, it was a given that older people would be cared for by younger people in their families. . . . The realities of modern life have made it so that elders often live far from their families, or the younger people in their lives are simply too busy or under-resourced to care for them.
- 13 San Francisco Village seeks to directly address this issue by matching seniors with volunteers (who are usually younger) who can help them with daily tasks like grocery shopping and dog walking. This helps Village members remain in their homes and the neighborhoods they love.

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<sup>1</sup> nursing homes—residences that provide personal care to those unable to care for themselves, such as older adults

<sup>2</sup> grievous—serious

- 14 “Our social networks diminish when we get older, and it can feel like the walls start to close in,” said Village executive director Kate Hoepke, who is 68. “Intergenerational relationships help us stay connected to what’s happening in the world. Younger people are able to explain those tremendous social changes—not just technology, but multicultural America, and sexual and gender identity. Younger generations are so ahead of us in terms of inclusion and acceptance and caring for one another.”

### **Benefits of intergenerational relationships**

- 15 The benefits of intergenerational relationships abound for elders. Generativity—or the drive to nurture and help develop the next generation—saves us from stagnation and gives us purpose. The Harvard Study of Adult Development, which began tracking more than 700 men in 1938 and continues today, found that older adults who invested in younger generations were three times more likely to be happy in their 70s than those who did not. They tend to be more alive, more alert and more optimistic about the future.
- 16 Rewards run both ways. When children and younger adults are siloed away from elders, they can develop narrow ideas of what it means to age, according to Shannon Jarrott, a social work professor at Ohio State University and expert on intergenerational community building who I interviewed last year. This can negatively shape how kids imagine their own futures as older adults; wildly, research has found that those with positive perceptions of aging live almost a decade longer, on average.
- 17 “When you separate people into different age groups, you don’t get a sense of what a whole life looks like in its varying chapters,” Freedman said. “This perspective is extremely important—that what’s happening in the present isn’t necessarily what will happen in the future, that there are multiple bites at the apple, that you don’t have to cram everything into this one period of your life.”
- 18 Freedman asserts that uniting the generations is vital to solving major social problems. He pointed to the work of social scientist Arthur Brooks, who argues that young people have particularly strong *fluid intelligence*, or the ability to think flexibly and solve novel problems. Meanwhile, *crystallized intelligence*, or the ability to use a stock of knowledge learned in the past, tends to increase with age.
- 19 “Translation: When you are young, you have raw smarts; when you are old, you have wisdom. When you are young, you can generate lots of facts; when you are old, you know what they mean and how to use them,” wrote Avery Forman for Harvard Business School.

- 20 Neither type of intelligence alone is enough to build movements that shift the status quo, Freedman told me. “Most effective solutions to problems come about from the combining of these perspectives,” he said.
- 21 Tomicka Glenn of BlackRoots Alliance, a Chicago coalition committed to the safety and liberation of Black people, wrote about how she’s seen this dynamic play out among activists: “Real transformative change requires us to stop strategizing within generational silos. Each generation has particular needs and visions for their future, based on the cultural conditions under which they were raised. And if those of us who may be seen as ‘elders’ are honest with ourselves, we can remember how much we resented being dismissed because we were young. Wisdom shows up at every stage of life, and if we are to pass on this planet to future generations, we must recognize the wisdom in one another.”
- 22 A 2022 survey commissioned by CoGenerate found that older and younger people are enthusiastic about the potential of working together to create social change, particularly when it comes to the issues of climate change and mental health. But age segregation has gotten in the way of this kind of coalition building; some 42.6% of respondents said they hadn’t spoken seriously in the past year with non-family members of other generations about a social, community or political issue—and nearly half of those people said this was because they don’t spend much time around people of other generations. . . .

### **What can we do about it?**

- 23 . . . As far as programs that are designed to make this happen, they’re few and far between. And most are geared toward pairing older people with kids and teens. One great example of this is Sage & Seekers, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit seeking to combat social isolation by pairing high school students and elders, who have weekly conversations over the course of two months.
- 24 Otherwise, Freedman recommends thinking about where younger or older people with common interests are likely to be. Think libraries, musical opportunities like choruses and bands, and events at places like community centers, museums and bookstores. And as I mentioned earlier, getting involved in activism and organizing can be a great way to form meaningful bonds with people of different ages.
- 25 “Sometimes you have to be open to trying something new, and push yourself out of your comfort zone to find these kinds of relationships,” said Sha’Nice Patterson of San Francisco Village.

- 26 Patterson, who shares a deep, reciprocal relationship of care with her 93-year-old grandmother, also has some simpler advice for making cross-generational bonds: “If I’m at the grocery store and I see somebody struggling to reach something or to put something in their car, or if they’ve dropped something in the aisle, I’m there to help,” she said. “If you’re looking for those connections, people will almost always accept kindness. Being kind to people, being in that moment, has never served me wrong.”

“What We’re Missing Out On When We Don’t Have Intergenerational Relationships, Personally and Collectively” by Laura Newberry, from *Los Angeles Times* (April 11, 2023). Copyright © 2023 by Los Angeles Times. Reprinted by permission of Los Angeles Times.

In this article published in 2018, the author describes creative ways that communities are encouraging interactions between people of different age groups.

## Fostering Connections Between Young and Old

*by Julie Halpert*

- 1 When Samantha Flores wasn't taking classes at the University of Maryland for her master's degree in cello performance this past academic year, she could often be found hanging out with a bunch of 80-somethings. Ms. Flores, 28, along with another music student, was participating in a new artists-in-residence program at Collington, a nonprofit retirement community in Mitchellville, Md.
- 2 In return for free room and board, Ms. Flores gave concerts to the residents, accompanied the choir on her cello and taught them about music—while getting to know them through happy hours and dining hall meals.
- 3 The program at Collington, an affiliate of the Kendal Corporation, is one of many new programs bringing together old and young people, from babies through graduate students, with the idea that each generation has something to offer the other.
- 4 "It's the way people were meant to grow up and grow old in connection with each other," said Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization that aims to build bridges between old and young.
- 5 On Tuesday, Generations United and the Eisner Foundation released an expansive survey—the first in 20 years—of 180 intergenerational programs. With 39 percent of grandparents having a grandchild living more than 500 miles away, according to a study by Generations United and MetLife Mature Market Institute, these programs create new ways to foster intergenerational interaction.
- 6 "Resources are more wisely used when they connect the generations rather than separate them," Ms. Butts said.

- 7 The survey, conducted with the Ohio State University, found strong public support for these programs. Benefits included reducing loneliness for older adults and increasing levels of engagement for dementia patients who interacted with children. Among adults who participated in such programs, 97 percent indicated it allowed them to feel happy, interested, loved, younger and needed. Children involved in the programs demonstrated higher levels of empathy and a greater ability to regulate their behavior than those who hadn't participated in such programs.
- 8 "This is the wave of the future among senior housing providers," Ms. Butts said. She pointed to another common example of such programs: a preschool class located in the middle of a skilled nursing home.
- 9 "Shared sites can create new environments to confront ageism, break down the barriers of age-segregation and forge long-lasting and life-changing intergenerational bonds," the report said. "Intergenerational programs bring purpose to the lives of young and old."
- 10 Marilyn Haskel, a 72-year-old resident of Collington involved in selecting the students, said the young people often invited fellow music students to practice on the grounds, resulting in pop-up concerts. With no family nearby, Ms. Haskel said, "it was delightful for me to sit down and have conversations about their careers and what they're planning." . . .
- 11 College students at other campuses will have the opportunity to interact with older adults in a program being rolled out this fall called Intergenerational Solutions in Housing. Started by Generations United and New York University and partially supported with a grant from the AARP Foundation, it aims to address two problems: social isolation among older adults and student debt. Graduate students in social work will be matched with older Americans who have a spare room. Ernest Gonzales, an assistant professor of social work at New York University, felt these students were prime candidates, since they have high levels of maturity and altruism\* and many carry a significant amount of student loan debt.
- 12 Students will either live rent-free in exchange for services like grocery shopping and shoveling snow, or they can opt to pay below-market rent with no formal exchange of services. A licensed social worker will oversee the recruitment of graduate students who will handle the on-the-ground matching services, run background checks and home inspections and provide routine check-ins to ensure the matches are successful. A rigorous vetting process will aim to safeguard against thefts and other types of abuse.

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\* altruism—unselfish care for others

- 13 “Every city is wrestling with social isolation” among older adults “and high housing costs, so there’s a real hunger for launching this,” Dr. Gonzales said. The program will debut this fall at N.Y.U. and Washington University in St. Louis; the goal is to expand it to many college campuses across the country. Though an AARP survey found 38 percent of those 45 and older indicating a willingness to share their homes, it’s unclear how many would actually participate, said Emily Allen, senior vice president at the AARP Foundation. She says this could be an important income generator for low-income older adults, but it needs to be tested.
- 14 The Los Angeles L.G.B.T. Center’s new Anita May Rosenstein Campus, scheduled to open early next year, will connect and provide expanded services to two of the most vulnerable populations in the area: seniors and youth. It will contain 99 units. . . . In addition to health care and social services, the center will provide intergenerational programs.
- 15 In promoting social engagement, such programs provide “one of the pillars of healthy aging,” said Dr. Annette Medina-Walpole, chief of the division of geriatrics and aging at the University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry. “This is very much in line with what needs to be happening to engage our older adult community,” she said.
- 16 Yet the Generations United report identified barriers to getting the programs rolled out on a wide scale. Facilities for young and old each have their own requirements on things like staff ratios and square footage which may not be in sync. One recommendation is to ensure that accreditation is more uniform and best serves both populations.
- 17 Ms. Flores hopes those challenges can be overcome, since her experience left such a lasting, positive impression. As her year at Collington comes to a close this August, she plans to stay in touch with the residents, many of whom she now views like family. “I came here thinking I was going to teach them, but I really think they taught me,” she said.

“Fostering Connections Between Young and Old” by Julie Halpert, from *The New York Times* (June 5, 2018).  
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- 14 Read paragraph 19 of “What We’re Missing Out On” in the box.

“Translation: When you are young, you have raw smarts; when you are old, you have wisdom. When you are young, you can generate lots of facts; when you are old, you know what they mean and how to use them,” wrote Avery Forman for Harvard Business School.

Which statement **best** expresses a central idea of the paragraph?

- Ⓐ People develop many new interests as they get older.
  - Ⓑ Sharing life experiences changes how people work together.
  - Ⓒ People have unique strengths and skills at different periods in their lives.
  - Ⓓ Teaching others new concepts and knowledge can help people feel younger as they age.
- 15 In “What We’re Missing Out On,” what is the purpose of the section **What can we do about it?**
- Ⓐ to promote familiar activities that people enjoy at specific ages
  - Ⓑ to suggest how older adults can share their knowledge with students
  - Ⓒ to describe places where teens can volunteer to work with senior citizens
  - Ⓓ to discuss some ways that people can build relationships across generations

- 16 Read the sentence from paragraph 9 of “Fostering Connections Between Young and Old” in the box.

“Shared sites can create new environments to confront ageism, break down the barriers of age-segregation and forge long-lasting and life-changing intergenerational bonds.”

Which word **best** describes the tone of the sentence?

- Ⓐ humble
  - Ⓑ amazed
  - Ⓒ optimistic
  - Ⓓ celebratory
- 17 What is the **main** purpose of paragraph 16 of “Fostering Connections Between Young and Old”?
- Ⓐ to provide historical context about popular intergenerational programs
  - Ⓑ to highlight how an intergenerational program impacted specific individuals
  - Ⓒ to explain why an intergenerational program was determined to be ineffective
  - Ⓓ to acknowledge there are issues that intergenerational programs should consider

- 18 Read the sentence from paragraph 16 of “What We’re Missing Out On” in the box.

Rewards run both ways.

Which detail from “Fostering Connections Between Young and Old” **most clearly** makes a similar claim about intergenerational connections?

- Ⓐ “. . . each generation has something to offer the other.” (paragraph 3)
- Ⓑ “It’s the way people were meant to grow up and grow old. . . .” (paragraph 4)
- Ⓒ “. . . there’s a real hunger for launching this, . . .” (paragraph 13)
- Ⓓ “Facilities for young and old each have their own requirements. . . .” (paragraph 16)

19 Read the sentences from the articles in the box.

- This can negatively shape how kids imagine their own futures as older adults; wildly, research has found that those with positive perceptions of aging live almost a decade longer, on average. (paragraph 16 of “What We’re Missing Out On”)
- The program will debut this fall at N.Y.U. and Washington University in St. Louis; the goal is to expand it to many college campuses across the country. (paragraph 13 of “Fostering Connections Between Young and Old”)

What is the **main** purpose of the semicolon in each sentence?

- Ⓐ to suggest hesitation
- Ⓑ to signal a new thought
- Ⓒ to connect related ideas
- Ⓓ to introduce a correction

**20 Part A**

Which idea is **most clearly** developed in paragraph 12 of “What We’re Missing Out On”?

- Ⓐ Most older people prefer to be cared for by their immediate family members.
- Ⓑ Modern families tend to focus on elders more than families in earlier times.
- Ⓒ Younger generations tend to raise their children in different ways than previous generations did.
- Ⓓ Younger family members have fewer opportunities to interact with older relatives than previous generations had.

**Part B**

Which detail from “Fostering Connections Between Young and Old” **best** supports the idea in the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “With 39 percent of grandparents having a grandchild living more than 500 miles away . . .” (paragraph 5)
- Ⓑ “The survey, conducted with the Ohio State University, found strong public support for these programs.” (paragraph 7)
- Ⓒ “Children involved in the programs demonstrated higher levels of empathy and a greater ability to regulate their behavior than those who hadn’t participated in such programs.” (paragraph 7)
- Ⓓ “College students at other campuses will have the opportunity to interact with older adults in a program being rolled out this fall. . . .” (paragraph 11)

- 21 Determine whether **each** piece of evidence from the articles is **most clearly** a personal anecdote, an expert opinion, or scientific research.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development, which began tracking more than 700 men in 1938 and continues today, found that older adults who invested in younger generations were three times more likely to be happy in their 70s than those who did not. (paragraph 15 of "What We're Missing Out On")

- Ⓐ personal anecdote
- Ⓑ expert opinion
- Ⓒ scientific research

Neither type of intelligence alone is enough to build movements that shift the status quo, Freedman told me. (paragraph 20 of "What We're Missing Out On")

- Ⓐ personal anecdote
- Ⓑ expert opinion
- Ⓒ scientific research

Among adults who participated in such programs, 97 percent indicated it allowed them to feel happy, interested, loved, younger and needed. (paragraph 7 of "Fostering Connections Between Young and Old")

- Ⓐ personal anecdote
- Ⓑ expert opinion
- Ⓒ scientific research

With no family nearby, Ms. Haskel said, "it was delightful for me to sit down and have conversations about their careers and what they're planning."  
(paragraph 10 of "Fostering Connections Between Young and Old")

- Ⓐ personal anecdote
- Ⓑ expert opinion
- Ⓒ scientific research

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Your writing should:

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

- 22 Based on “What We’re Missing Out On” and “Fostering Connections Between Young and Old,” write an essay arguing that programs that connect people of different generations can benefit both individuals **and** society. Use evidence from **both** articles to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the next two pages.





**Read the excerpt and the article about the town of Agloe, New York. Then answer the questions that follow.**

In this excerpt from the fantasy novel *The Cartographers*,\* Francis is telling a story to Nell about events that took place when Nell was a young child. In the story, Francis and some friends (including Nell's parents, Daniel and Tam) make a surprising discovery about a cheap map that they had bought the day before.

from *The Cartographers*

by Peng Shepherd

- 1 I crept out of bed as quietly as possible and eased myself down the creaky wooden stairs to get started on making a pot of coffee. The house was dead silent, except for the faint whistle of the breeze through the trees outside, but the sunlight streaming in everywhere was beautiful. In the bright morning, the house didn't seem quite as gigantic and ridiculous as it had the night before, although it was still far too large for our needs. I padded slowly around the living room, enjoying the view of the woods through each window.
- 2 "Do you know how to work this?" a voice asked softly, and I jumped. . . .
- 3 "Tam," I breathed. "You scared me."
- 4 "Sorry," she whispered. She was in the kitchen, already dressed in jeans and one of Daniel's big T-shirts, holding a metal shape. "I've never seen a coffee maker like this."
- 5 "It's a pour-over," I said, coming over and taking it from her. "I used to have one."
- 6 "Oh good, are we making coffee?" another tired voice asked, and the stairs creaked again as Wally appeared at the foot of them, trying to work his head through the neck hole of a Henley shirt.
- 7 "Not yet," I said from the pantry, and they both looked at me, dismayed. "There aren't any coffee grounds."
- 8 "We forgot to buy any in Rockland yesterday," Tam groaned. "Bear and Daniel are going to be zombies without coffee."
- 9 "I can go," Wally offered. "It's just down the road."

---

\* Cartographers—specialists in the art of drawing maps

- 10 “Thanks,” Tam said, at the same moment that a little burst of high-pitched giggles echoed from upstairs.
  - 11 “I think Nell’s awake,” I said, as a heavier set of footsteps began to thud faintly—Daniel, most likely, going to get you and bring you downstairs, before you woke everyone else up.
  - 12 I thought Tam would go to the landing to meet him, but instead, she grinned mischievously, and jumped toward the counter, where both sets of car keys were resting on a jumble of other papers and junk—gas and grocery receipts, napkins, spare change, and that silly little gas station map.
  - 13 “This is Daniel’s morning to watch her,” she said, snatching the entire bundle for lack of time. “If he tries to hand her off to you, don’t let him! Tell him Wally and I will be back in thirty minutes.”
  - 14 “Let Wally drive, he won’t speed,” I said, shooing them out the door to the long driveway, where the cars waited, their windshields dotted with pollen from the trees.
  - 15 “Did she just run out to avoid toddler breakfast duty?” Daniel asked behind me as the sound of one of the engines shuddering to life rumbled in. I turned to see him holding you, his hair still standing straight up.
  - 16 “She said it was your day,” I said, wagging a finger at him.
  - 17 “What!” He pretended to be affronted, gasping dramatically, which made you laugh. “How about some eggs, Nelly?”
  - 18 Daniel cooked you an egg and a little bit of bacon while I assembled your high chair, to be helpful. Overhead, we heard the others stir a few times, but still none of them had woken up by the time we got you settled at the table and Daniel had cut your food into a bunch of little bites.
  - 19 “I hope they remembered to buy cream and sugar,” I said at the same moment that a sudden crunch of tires on pebbles made us all look to the door.
  - 20 “Just in time,” Daniel started as the door clicked open. “Everyone’s still asleep!”
  - 21 But we both fell silent as Tam and Wally lurched into the room.
  - 22 “Daniel,” Tam gasped. “Francis.”
-

- 23 They came in at a dead run, the car engine still idling outside. Tam was in front of Wally, and he was just behind her, almost as if he were chasing her in. Their eyes were wild and huge, flashing with an emotion I couldn't quite read. Awe, or disbelief, or exhilaration.
- 24 "What's going on?" Daniel asked, half out of his seat, unsure of whether to be panicked or excited. "Are you okay?"
- 25 "We're okay," Tam managed. She crossed the kitchen in two steps and grabbed him by the arm. "Come on. You have to see this."
- 26 "Tam," Wally said, his voice tight. . . .
- 27 Tam could not hear his feeble protests. She was electrified, like a live, leaping wire. "Come on."
- 28 Daniel and I stumbled after her, Daniel carrying you, and Wally trailing all of us, your breakfast still half-finished at the table, the coffee still unmade. She shoved all of us into the back seat and forced Wally again behind the wheel before throwing herself into the front beside him.
- 29 "So, same road as always, right?" she was saying frantically as Wally turned south onto County Road 206, heading for Rockland again, and we began to pick up speed. The old station wagon rumbled over the asphalt, the grass turning from individual blades into a blur of green, as she talked. "Nothing but field."
- 30 "Right," Daniel agreed, humoring her, trying to figure out where this was going.
- 31 The sun grew brighter as Wally drove, casting everything pale pink instead of gray. Tam alternated between urging him to go faster and trying to explain to us what was going on.
- 32 "I had everything in my lap," she was saying, pointing to the bundle of junk she'd grabbed from the counter before leaving the first time with Wally. Beside me, you were bouncing excitedly in your car seat at the prospect of a field trip. "The other set of car keys, receipts, and this." She held up the gas station map.
- 33 "Tam," Wally said again, even weaker this time.
- 34 She unfolded it and spread it across the steering wheel, so she and Wally were both looking at it. "On the way back from the store, as we were talking, I realized that we were passing right through the same area where we'd found that little phantom settlement on this map the night before. 'Where had that place been, along this road?' I asked Wally.
-

- 'Which tree or patch of weeds had it accidentally marked as an entire town?' We laughed about it, and before I knew it, I was holding the map out like this for both of us, so we could see where exactly this town was *supposed* to be, and what it really was instead. What if the spot was a huge bush of poison ivy? Or a cow standing in its corral? I thought being able to tell everyone what it was would make another funny story for tonight."
- 35 Suddenly, the car began to slow. Wally, his lips pressed together and his eyes on the paper, flicked on the hazard lights. We edged toward the shoulder of the road.
- 36 "I know how this is going to sound—I know!" she cried, anticipating our wary stares. "But if you open this map, and you follow it instead of the road . . ."
- 37 She kept it splayed open and pointed out the window as the car finally stopped. Her expression was so full of amazement. So *alive*. I felt like I could see straight down into her soul through her eyes.
- 38 "Just *look*."
- 39 We looked, expecting to see just pure, unbroken field.
- 40 But this time, somehow, just in front of our car—where I'm certain there had been nothing before, or we would have noticed it, it being the only thing we'd seen for miles—there was a tall, thick, wooden pole jutting straight out from the grass, with a big metal sign affixed to it. And just past it, a small turnoff that continued as a dirt road.
- 41 "Huh?" I murmured, before I could stop myself. "That wasn't here before."
- 42 Wally turned off the car, and everyone got out.
- 43 "Was it?" Daniel asked, looking at Wally, since they'd come up in the same car yesterday. He looked as baffled as I felt. "Did we just not see it because we were tired?"
- 44 Slowly, Wally shook his head.
- 45 I stepped forward and inspected the sign. The nails were long rusted, and there was a fine layer of grime on the face of the metal itself that clearly indicated it hadn't somehow been put up in the single day we'd been at the house.
- 46 It was old. It had been there all this time. And it also definitely had not been.
-

47 And the name on the sign matched the name on the map.

48

*Welcome to Agloe  
Home of the famous Beaverkill Fishing Lodge!*

49 Slowly, we turned to peer beyond the sign, out across the field behind it.

50 “What the . . . ,” Daniel murmured, transfixed.

51 “I told you,” Tam said, breathless. “I told you.”

52 Nell, I know how all this sounds, but I swear it’s true.

53 The town is real—if you have the map that shows the way. Your mother and Wally discovered it.

*The Cartographers* by Peng Shepherd. Copyright © 2022 by Peng Shepherd. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

In this article, the author explains the history of the town of Agloe, New York.

## Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality

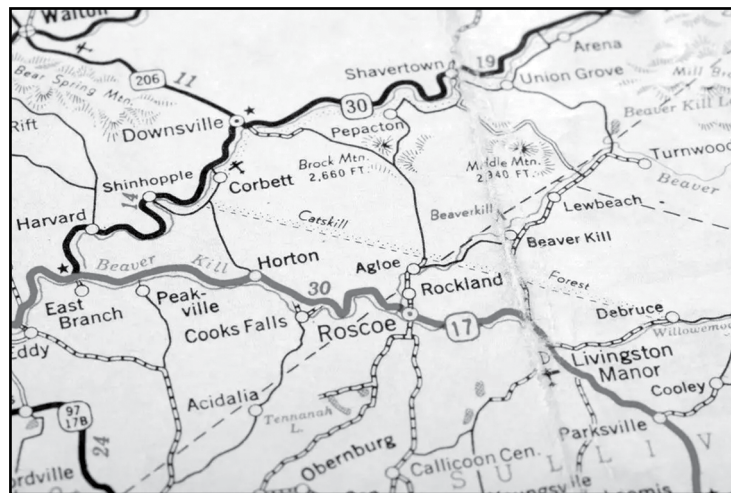
*by Sam Roberts*

- 1 SOMEWHERE NEAR AGLOE, N.Y. — It is one thing to lose your keys or your iPhone, even the love of your life, but to lose an entire town? Yet that is what just happened in upstate New York. Last week, Google did something it almost never does—it wiped a town off its maps.
- 2 Don't blame Google. The town's provenance<sup>1</sup> was suspect.
- 3 How Agloe, a speck of a hamlet in the western Catskills, wound up on maps 90 years ago remains a cartographic enigma. How it persevered is an existential riddle.
- 4 "I've never heard of it before," said Matt Nelson, manager of Beaverkill Angler in Roscoe, a tiny town within shouting distance of Agloe, at least on some maps.
- 5 Describing Agloe as a mere hamlet is particularly apt. When it was first acknowledged, on a free road map distributed by Standard Oil Company of New York, or Socony, gas stations in 1925, its population was given indeterminately as from zero to 500, which was probably a peak.
- 6 Agloe's anomaly begins with its name. Is it a-GLOE or AG-loe?
- 7 "You can take your choice on how you want to pronounce it," Roscoe's official historian, Joyce Conroy, said.
- 8 Even the precise location of Agloe has been a conundrum. The Driving Route Planner website lists its exact geographic coordinates (for the record, latitude 41.964111300, longitude -74.907832100). Complying with those coordinates would deliver you just beyond Bill and Darlene Beers's backyard in the Town of Colchester in Delaware County, barely across the Sullivan County line from Roscoe.
- 9 Following Google's slightly vaguer driving directions, before they were deleted from the web, would still leave you in Sullivan County near a secluded concrete shaft protruding from the Pepacton Reservoir.
- 10 "We were thinking of putting up a historic sign," said Elaine Fettig, the former president of the Roscoe-Rockland Chamber of Commerce, "but where, exactly, would we put it?"

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<sup>1</sup> provenance—origin

- 11 Last week, a reporter for *The New York Times* noticed a mention on [social media] about fake towns, which mapmakers would invent to guard against copyright infringement. An Internet search turned up Agloe and the Google map, complete with the driving directions. Agloe was a mapmaker's creation.
- 12 "It wasn't uncommon for cartographers to put something fictitious so if they spotted another work with it they knew it was lifted," said William Spicer, the president of Maps.com.
- 13 Among those countless copyright traps, Agloe achieved a rare distinction: The name stuck. As early as the 1930s, a fishing lodge named Agloe opened nearby (which later helped Rand McNally successfully claim in a lawsuit that the Agloe on its own map had not been copied from Socony's).
- 14 Agloe survived on road maps by Esso and Exxon into the late 20th century and even long enough to evolve from a so-called paper town into a digital one on websites like Google, where it made its debut only last year.



A 1948 map with Agloe, N.Y. The town in the western Catskills of New York wound up on maps 90 years ago, but visitors will no longer find it on a Google map—or at all.

- 15 It was even mentioned in a 1957 travelogue in *The Times* about “scenic drives through the Catskills,” which rhapsodized about “an unmarked country road that goes north through Rockland and Agloe.” . . .
- 16 What inspired the name? The original mapmakers, Otto G. Lindberg and Ernest Alpers of General Drafting Company, scrambled their initials to form it.
- 17 Why did they plant Agloe in upstate New York? According to Mr. Lindberg’s obituary, he went fishing one day in 1923 and got lost going home. “A mapmaker by profession,” the article said, “he made up his mind to provide the public with maps to prevent such situations.”
- 18 Any serious trout fisherman, like Mr. Lindberg, would have eventually found his way to Roscoe (where there also happened to be a Socony gas station). In 1930, five years after Mr. Lindberg invented Agloe, Ms. Beers’s grandfather, the son of an immigrant Irish family that fled the potato famine and was squeezed by the Depression, sold off a prime angling<sup>2</sup> spot flanked by the Beaver Kill and Spring Brook. The buyers called their new venture Agloe Lodge Farms.
- 19 How had life imitated art? “Among the first guests at Agloe,” a local newspaper explained in 1944 when the lodge was already run down, was “an official of a map publishing firm, who suggested to the owner that he ‘put the place on the map.’ He did.”
- 20 On March 17, though, Google removed it, within hours after *The Times* inquired about its provenance. . . .
- 21 [T]he 123-mile trip from Manhattan to Agloe took about two and a half hours. For any latter-day Magellan,<sup>3</sup> though, the challenge on arrival was proving a negative: that you can’t get here from there.
- 22 Today, where “here” is supposed to be, Agloe groupies can still find a surviving barn; a pale yellow former creamery; a tiny wooden hangar that served a private airport; a reputedly haunted fairy tale castle . . . ; and, of course, the derelict white frame, green-trimmed former Agloe fishing lodge near the intersection of Morton Hill and Rockland Roads.
- 23 “I don’t know anything about it,” said William Ksiazek of Montvale, N.J., the lodge’s current owner. “I know it as the Hempel place.”

<sup>2</sup> angling—fishing

<sup>3</sup> Magellan—Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer in the sixteenth century

- 24 A weather-beaten screen door still bears the initial “H,” after its former owners.
- 25 While there appears to be no visible legacy of Agloe, it still remains on some maps—poised, perhaps, as it nears its 100th year, to reappear.
- 26 “Is it real?” Mrs. Fettig said. “What’s your definition of real? If it exists in enough minds, it’s real.”

“Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality” by Sam Roberts, from *The New York Times* (March 28, 2014). Copyright © 2014 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission of The New York Times Company.

- 23 Which statement **best** describes how the beginning of *The Cartographers* relates to the ending?
- Ⓐ The playfulness of the beginning complements the comedic tone of the ending.
  - Ⓑ The characters introduced in the beginning overcome an obstacle in the ending.
  - Ⓒ The problem introduced in the beginning leads to the answer provided by the ending.
  - Ⓓ The pacing of the events in the beginning builds to an unexpected reveal in the ending.
- 24 Based on *The Cartographers*, which word could **best** replace the word *affronted* in paragraph 17?
- Ⓐ insulted
  - Ⓑ relieved
  - Ⓒ concerned
  - Ⓓ entertained
- 25 What does the figurative language in paragraph 27 of *The Cartographers* **mainly** emphasize about Tam?
- Ⓐ her pride
  - Ⓑ her intensity
  - Ⓒ her adaptability
  - Ⓓ her trustworthiness

- 26 Read the sentences from “Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality” in the box.

- “I’ve never heard of it before,” said Matt Nelson, manager of Beaverkill Angler in Roscoe, a tiny town within shouting distance of Agloe, at least on some maps. (paragraph 4)
- “I don’t know anything about it,” said William Ksiazek of Montvale, N.J., the lodge’s current owner. (paragraph 23)

What do the sentences **mainly** suggest about Agloe?

- Ⓐ Its location has shifted more than once.
- Ⓑ It has inspired the creation of new jobs.
- Ⓒ Its residents have tried to keep it a secret.
- Ⓓ It is unfamiliar even to people in the surrounding area.

- 27 Read the sentences from the excerpt and the article in the box.

From paragraph 40 of *The Cartographers*:

- But this time, somehow, just in front of our car—where I’m certain there had been nothing before, or we would have noticed it, it being the only thing we’d seen for miles—there was a tall, thick, wooden pole jutting straight out from the grass. . . .

From paragraph 8 of “Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality”:

- The Driving Route Planner website lists its exact geographic coordinates (for the record, latitude 41.964111300, longitude -74.907832100).

What is the **main** purpose of the dashes in the sentence from the excerpt and the parentheses in the sentence from the article?

- Ⓐ to indicate indecision
  - Ⓑ to separate items in a list
  - Ⓒ to create a feeling of doubt
  - Ⓓ to set off supporting details
- 28 Which sentence **best** describes the difference between the structure of the excerpt, *The Cartographers*, and the structure of the article, “Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality”?
- Ⓐ The excerpt includes a flashback to show how the characters evolve, while the article outlines solutions to a relevant issue.
  - Ⓑ The excerpt alternates between two perspectives, while the article presents a dialogue between historians and local townspeople.
  - Ⓒ The excerpt describes the setting before introducing the characters, while the article reveals how technology has impacted a traditional tool.
  - Ⓓ The excerpt is a descriptive retelling of what happened, while the article provides background information along with quotes from multiple individuals.

**29 Part A**

Read paragraph 43 of *The Cartographers* in the box.

“Was it?” Daniel asked, looking at Wally, since they’d come up in the same car yesterday. He looked as baffled as I felt. “Did we just not see it because we were tired?”

What is the **main** effect of the word *baffled* in the paragraph?

- Ⓐ It shows the difference between two distinct ideas.
- Ⓑ It creates a sense of mystery about the town of Agloe.
- Ⓒ It emphasizes the symbolic meaning of the name Agloe.
- Ⓓ It highlights a disagreement between two of the characters.

**Part B**

Select **two** words from paragraphs 5–8 of “Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality” that **best** suggest an effect similar to the answer to Part A.

- Ⓐ indeterminately (paragraph 5)
- Ⓑ anomaly (paragraph 6)
- Ⓒ precise (paragraph 8)
- Ⓓ complying (paragraph 8)

**30 Part A**

What idea about Agloe is **mainly** emphasized in paragraph 45 of *The Cartographers*?

- Ⓐ There is interest in restoring Agloe.
- Ⓑ Agloe is most easily accessed by foot.
- Ⓒ Agloe feels familiar to people who have visited there.
- Ⓓ There are indications that Agloe was established a long time ago.

**Part B**

Which paragraph in “Seeking a Town on the Border of Fiction and Reality” **best** suggests an idea similar to the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ paragraph 11
- Ⓑ paragraph 16
- Ⓒ paragraph 22
- Ⓓ paragraph 26

# Grade 10 English Language Arts

## Spring 2026 Released Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)**
1	9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.2	SR	Determine a central idea that is established in two paragraphs of an excerpt and identify a detail that supports the central idea.	A;D
2	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.3	SR	Determine what specific sentences from an excerpt suggest about a character.	C
3	10	<i>Language</i>	L.9-10.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word as it is used in a specific sentence in an excerpt.	A
4	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.4	SR	Identify a quotation from an excerpt that uses the same literary device as another sentence from the excerpt.	C
5	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.3	SR	Determine what a specific sentence of an excerpt reveals about a character.	C
6	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.2	SR	Determine which idea is supported by a specific sentence of an excerpt.	D
7	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.5	SR	Identify an effect created by specific sentences of an excerpt.	C
8	13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.4	SR	Select two examples of imagery from a specific paragraph of an excerpt that illustrate the effect a character's action has on an object.	A,C
9	14	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.4	ES	Write an essay that analyzes how the changes in a character's emotions are similar to the changes in an object; use evidence from the excerpt to develop the essay.	
10	20	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.1	SR	Make an inference based on specific lines in an excerpt.	C
11	20	<i>Language</i>	L.9-10.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word as it is used in a specific line of an excerpt.	B
12	20	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.3	SR	Determine which word describes a character's reaction to a specific event in an excerpt.	A
13	21	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.4	SR	Determine which tone is developed by specific quotations in an excerpt.	A;C;B;C
14	31	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.2	SR	Identify a statement that expresses a central idea of a paragraph in an article.	C
15	31	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.5	SR	Determine the purpose of a specific section in an article.	D
16	32	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.4	SR	Identify a word that describes the tone of a specific sentence in an article.	C
17	32	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.5	SR	Determine the purpose of a specific paragraph in an article.	D
18	33	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.2	SR	Determine which detail from an article makes a claim similar to one made in a specific sentence from another article on a similar topic.	A

PBT Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)**
19	34	<i>Language</i>	L.9-10.2	SR	Determine the purpose of semicolons in specific sentences from two articles on similar topics.	C
20	35	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.1	SR	Determine the idea developed in a specific paragraph of an article and identify a detail from another article that develops a similar idea.	D;A
21	36–37	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.8	SR	Determine whether each piece of evidence from two articles on similar topics is a personal anecdote, expert opinion, or scientific research.	C;B;C;A
22	38	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.9-10.1, L.9-10.2, L.9-10.3, W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4	ES	Write an essay arguing the benefits of specific programs based on two articles on similar topics; use evidence from both articles to develop the essay.	
23	50	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.5	SR	Analyze how details from the beginning of an excerpt relate to the ending of the excerpt.	D
24	50	<i>Language</i>	L.9-10.4	SR	Identify a word that could replace a word used in a specific paragraph of an excerpt.	A
25	50	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.4	SR	Determine what the figurative language in a specific paragraph of an excerpt emphasizes about a character.	B
26	51	<i>Reading</i>	RI.9-10.1	SR	Determine what specific sentences in an article suggest about a location.	D
27	52	<i>Language</i>	L.9-10.2	SR	Identify how the use of dashes in a sentence from an excerpt is similar to the use of parentheses in a sentence from an article on a similar topic.	D
28	52	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.5	SR	Determine how the structures of an excerpt and an article on similar topics differ.	D
29	53	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.4	SR	Determine the effect of a specific word in an excerpt and select two words from an article on a similar topic that suggest a similar effect.	B;A,B
30	54	<i>Reading</i>	RL.9-10.2	SR	Determine the idea emphasized in a specific paragraph of an excerpt and identify a paragraph from an article on a similar topic that expresses a similar idea.	D;C

\* 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 constructed-response and essay items will be posted to the Department’s website later this year.