



MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

*Release of Spring 2026
MCAS Test Items from the
Grade 5 English Language Arts
Paper-Based Test*

**Spring 2026
Massachusetts Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education**



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and Secondary Education

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Overview of Grade 5 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2026 grade 5 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 5 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same ELA content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

This document displays released items from the paper-based test, along with associated reading passages. Released items from the computer-based test are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/released-items.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 5 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items and multiple-select items, in which students select the correct answer(s) from among several answer options.

Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 5 ELA test was based on Pre-K–5 learning standards in three content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (2017), listed below.

- Reading
- Writing
- Language

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

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 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 5 English Language Arts

This session contains 20 questions.

Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

Read this passage about a girl nicknamed Coyote who is going across the country with her dad in a converted school bus. Then answer the questions that follow.

from *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*

by Dan Gemeinhart

- 1 There were big days and there were small days and there were bad days and there were good days and I suppose I could pick any one of 'em for my "once upon a time." But if I'm gonna be truthful—and truthful is something I always aim to be—then really there is only one best place to start this story.
- 2 It all started with Ivan.
- 3 Once upon a time, it was hot and I was sweaty. It was about five months before my thirteenth birthday, give or take. We were someplace in Oregon. Honestly, I don't even remember the name of the town, but I know it was on the dry, hot side of the state, away from the ocean. The whole world was so yellow and shining from the beating-down sun that you had to squint no matter where you looked. The blacktop of the gas station parking lot radiated the heat right back up at you so it felt like you were getting cooked from both sides. I suppose most barefoot people would've been hooting and hopping with that sizzling asphalt burning the bottoms of their feet, but my soles were used to it and I walked along easy as you please. My T-shirt was stuck with sweat to my back. The braid that hung down nearly to my blue jean belt loops slapped wetly against it as I walked.
- 4 The man behind the counter looked at my bare feet and started to say something. "Miss, you can't—" but I knew where he was going with it before he started. That tyrannical "No Shoes, No Shirt, No Service" rule is pretty darn universal in America's gas station convenience stores. I just waved at him and cut him off. "I know, I know," I said, and kept walking. "I'll only be a minute."
- 5 I'd never been in that particular gas station before, but it was exactly the same as every other one, so really I'd been in it a million times. Rows of plastic-wrapped junk food. Walls lined with glass-doored coolers full of pop* . . . and flavored iced teas. I walked past the metal racks of beef jerky and candy bars to the pot of gold at the end of my rainbow: the slushy machine.

* pop—soda

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- 6 There it was, humming in the corner next to the coffee dispenser and soda fountain. My mouth started watering as soon as I saw that neon-colored sugar slush swirling around under the big plastic dome.
- 7 There was a kid standing in front of it, looking up at the churning slurry with desire written plain and clear across his face. He was seven or eight and staring up at the left flavor, which was an unlikely pinkish color labeled "Wild Watermelon."
- 8 "Big mistake," I said, walking up next to him and grabbing a cup from the pull-down dispenser.
- 9 He jerked his head to look at me.
- 10 "What is?"
- 11 I nodded with my chin at the slushy he was coveting.
- 12 "Watermelon. That's a no-go. Never waste your time with anything that claims to be watermelon or banana flavored. It's a scam every time."
- 13 He squinted at me, clearly unconvinced.
- 14 "Doesn't matter anyway," he said. "My mom already said no." He threw his head back dramatically. "But I'm *so hot*."
- 15 I yanked down another cup and held it out to him.
- 16 "Here," I said. "My treat." . . .
- 17 "But Mom said no. I'll probably get in trouble."
- 18 I shrugged. "You're probably gonna get in trouble at some point today anyway. You may as well get a slushy out of it."
- 19 He thought about that for a real short second and then snatched the cup from my hand.
- 20 "But I really would think twice about getting watermelon," I added.
- 21 My advice fell on deaf ears, and in a flash he was pulling down the nob and squirting glistening pink slush into his cup.
- 22 I filled mine with the other flavor, "Funky Fruit Punch," which was the superior choice in every respect.
- 23 The kid looked me up and down as we walked toward the cashier. . . .

* * *

English Language Arts

- 24 Me and the kid walked through the jangling door and back out into the heat. The highway hummed not too far off in the distance.
- 25 The kid took a big slurping suck on his slushy straw. He swallowed and smacked his lips and nodded.
- 26 "Well?" I asked. "How's the Wild Watermelon?"
- 27 He ran his tongue over his lips, considering.
- 28 "Sweet," he said. "Weird. Not really like watermelon at all."
- 29 I nodded and took a suck of my delicious, flavored-as-advertised Funky Fruit Punch.
- 30 "Lesson learned, kid. Now you know."
- 31 He looked glumly at the phosphorescent pinkness in his cup.
- 32 I sighed. It's tough, seeing a kid get a bad break.
- 33 I held mine out to him.
- 34 "Here," I said. "Trade."
- 35 His eyebrows shot high.
- 36 "For reals?"
- 37 "Sure. I don't mind it all that much," I lied. "And you're the one who's getting in trouble. Better make it worth it."
- 38 We swapped slushies and I took a sip of Wild Watermelon. He watched for my reaction.
- 39 "I think," I said, "that the flavor designer at the slushy company needs to spend a little more time eating watermelon." The kid nodded. I tapped my slushy cup against his. "Cheers, kid. Enjoy."
- 40 He said, "Thanks," and I said, "You're welcome," and then he said, "You want a kitten?" and I swallowed a mouthful of syrupy slush and licked my lips and wiped a bit of juice off my chin with my arm and said, "What?"
- 41 "You want a kitten?" he repeated. He pointed to where an older boy sat on the curb next to a big cardboard box. "We're giving 'em away. Want one?"
- 42 I looked out at the big, beat-up yellow school bus parked next to one of the gas pumps.
-

English Language Arts

- 43 There was no way I'd be allowed to get a cat. It was a no-go for sure. I sighed.
- 44 "Well," I said, "let's go take a look, at least."
- 45 There were five kittens in that cardboard box, and when I leaned over to look in they all looked up at me with big round eyes and triangle ears and I tell you I was smitten.
- 46 "Who're you?" the older kid asked, and the younger one said, "She bought me a slushy," and the older kid held out his hand and the younger one handed it over. The older kid took a slurp and smacked his lips and nodded and handed it back. "You wanna kitten?" he asked. They were as brothers as brothers can be, those two.
- 47 I eyed the bus again and cocked an eyebrow. He was nowhere to be seen.
- 48 "Well, I guess I don't know yet. It's complicated."
- 49 Both boys nodded. They had parents. They knew how it was.
- 50 "Go ahead, pick one up," the older boy said. "Take it for a spin."
- 51 I pursed my lips. They were awfully cute, those tiny things with their wispy tails and whiskers. I thought about how I could get away with it.
- 52 The kittens mewed up at me, squealing in scratchy little squeaks. That could be a problem.
- 53 "Which one's the quietest one?"
- 54 Without a moment's pause both kids pointed out the smallest one, a gray-and-white-striped puff of fur off by itself a little ways in a corner of the box.
- 55 "Something's wrong with that one," the younger kid said. "The other ones never shut up. But that one hasn't made a peep since it was born."
- 56 "Really," I said, and narrowed my eyes in approval. "She sounds just about right, then."
- 57 "It's a boy." . . .
- 58 I crouched there, looking at that little silent white-and-gray furball.
- 59 He looked back at me. He had a very serious look about him. Solemn, even. Like maybe he had it backward and what he thought was happening was *him* deciding whether or not to pick *me*. He was not a kitten to be trifled with.
-

English Language Arts

- 60 I set my slushy on the curb and reached in and cradled that little thing in my hand as gentle as I could. A hush fell over my whole self when I felt that trembling soul in my big clumsy hand. He was all fragile-feeling bones and feathery fur and racing, frantic heartbeats.
- 61 I held him right up to my face. He looked back at me, his eyes huge and ears forward. But he didn't make a sound. He didn't meow, didn't growl, didn't squeak, didn't wiggle. We looked deep into each other's eyes, me and that kitten. My heart got a little bigger with each beat.
- 62 I tell you, something changed when that kitten and I looked at each other. Something big. Either something in the universe that had been sitting still for too long started moving again, or something that was moving finally fell still. Either way, it was *something*.
- 63 You see, I'd walked into that gas station alone. And I'd walked out of it alone. Just like I'd walked into and out of gas stations alone every day for, like, years. And maybe, right then and there, holding that kitten, is when I'd just had enough of all that aloneness. It was a quiet moment, and maybe one that anyone watching from outside my heart wouldn't even have noticed . . . but I tell you it was a big moment all the same.
- 64 The kitten yawned, a jaw-gaping yawn that showed off his sharp needle teeth and scaly gray tongue and a decent percentage of his throat.
- 65 "Yeah," I whispered. "You're the one, ain'tcha?"
- 66 "So you want 'im?"
- 67 "Yeah," I answered through a little smile that was just growing on my face. "Yeah, I want him."
- 68 It was about the truest thing I ever said.
- 69 Now, I knew I'd never get permission to keep the warm little ball of perfection I was holding in my hands. It was a "no" without a doubt, and I knew it.
- 70 I knew he wouldn't be happy when he found out. But I also knew that the thing he was always saying was "wherever your heart wants to go, go there and don't look back." And where my heart wanted to go was definitely looking back at me with eyes that were bluer than a Blue Raspberry slushy.
- 71 "Who's that . . . ?" the younger kid asked his brother, and even though I was still stuck in a love-at-first-yawn eye lock with the kitten, I didn't have to look to know who they were talking about. I glanced over my shoulder anyway, 'cause I now had a contraband kitten to keep concealed.
-

English Language Arts

- 72 There he was, in all his glory. . . .
- 73 He was scraping all the bug corpses off the bus's windshield with the little squeegee on a stick that gas stations keep by the pumps, and he was half-dancing and whistling while he did it. He looked totally Funky Fruit Punch. Which he was, so . . . again, flavored-as-advertised.
- 74 "That," I answered, lowering the kitten to my belly to keep him out of sight, "is Rodeo." Both kids squinted up at me. "He's my dad," I added.
- 75 "That dude's your dad?"
- 76 "Yep." I lowered my face and my voice and whispered, "But don't tell him that, okay?"
- 77 Both boys nodded with their serious, syrup-stained faces. They were the kind you could trust, those brothers.
- 78 I looked back at the bus, that kitten pressed up against my T-shirt. Rodeo was doing his cleaning shuffle all around the front of the bus. If I was gonna make this kitten-in-my-hand a kitten-in-my-bus, I was gonna need help.
- 79 I looked at the little kid, who was sucking hard at his slushy and still eyeballing Rodeo.
- 80 "Could you do me a solid, kid?" He scrunched up his eyebrows at me. "A favor," I explained, and he nodded.
- 81 "You see those back windows on the bus with the curtains that got stars on 'em?"
- 82 "Yeah."
- 83 "That's my room. I need you to—"
- 84 "That's your room? Like, your *room* room?"
- 85 "Sure."
- 86 "You live on that bus?"
- 87 "Yeah. So?"
- 88 "I never knew no one who lived on an old school bus."

English Language Arts

- 89 "Well, you can't say that anymore, can you?" I handed the kitten over to him, gentle as could be. "Here's the deal. Ain't no way Rodeo is gonna say yes to this kitten. Yet, anyway. So I'm gonna go ahead and get on and go to my room. Meet me with the kitten at my window on the other side in like a minute. Okay?"
- 90 The kid looked at his brother. His brother shrugged and nodded, the kid looked back at me.
- 91 "So me and you *both* are gonna get in trouble today, huh?"
- 92 I grinned at him.
- 93 "Guess so. But heck, if kittens and slushies aren't worth getting in trouble for, what in the world is?"

The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise by Dan Gemeinhart. Copyright © 2019 by Dan Gemeinhart. Reprinted by permission of Henry Holt and Company.

English Language Arts

1 What does the reader **mainly** learn about Coyote at the beginning of the passage?

- Ⓐ She is an experienced traveler.
- Ⓑ She is an enthusiastic customer.
- Ⓒ She wants to keep to a schedule.
- Ⓓ She likes to wait outside at the gas station.

2 What do paragraphs 4 and 5 **mainly** describe about the gas station convenience store?

- Ⓐ why the store sells certain snacks
- Ⓑ how the store expects customers to act
- Ⓒ why the store requires Coyote to wear shoes
- Ⓓ how the store is like others where Coyote has shopped

3 Read the sentence from paragraph 5 in the box.

I walked past the metal racks of beef jerky and candy bars to the pot of gold at the end of my rainbow: the slushy machine.

Based on the passage, what is the **most likely** reason Coyote describes the slushy machine as “the pot of gold at the end of my rainbow”?

- Ⓐ to show that it is what she is looking for
- Ⓑ to show that it is why the store is popular
- Ⓒ to show that it is available in many colors
- Ⓓ to show that it is exciting for her to operate

4 Part A

Based on the passage, which word **best** describes Coyote when she is at the gas station?

- Ⓐ silly
- Ⓑ kind
- Ⓒ proud
- Ⓓ amused

Part B

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

- Ⓐ “‘I know, I know,’ I said, and kept walking.” (paragraph 4)
- Ⓑ “‘Here,’ I said. ‘My treat.’” (paragraph 16)
- Ⓒ “‘But I really would think twice about getting watermelon,’ I added.” (paragraph 20)
- Ⓓ “‘Well?’ I asked. ‘How’s the Wild Watermelon?’” (paragraph 26)

English Language Arts

- 5 What is the **main** purpose of paragraphs 44–52?
- Ⓐ to show Coyote’s interest in the kittens
 - Ⓑ to describe Coyote’s plan to help the kitten
 - Ⓒ to show Coyote’s conversation with the brothers
 - Ⓓ to explain Coyote’s worries about the school bus

- 6 Read the sentence from paragraph 59 in the box.

Like maybe he had it backward and what he thought was happening was *him* deciding whether or not to pick *me*.

What is the **main** purpose of the italics in the sentence?

- Ⓐ to highlight how Coyote and the kitten are different
- Ⓑ to describe something Coyote wanted to learn about the kitten
- Ⓒ to indicate something Coyote found interesting about the kitten
- Ⓓ to emphasize how the roles of Coyote and the kitten are reversed

English Language Arts

- 7 Read the sentence from paragraph 60 in the box.

I set my slushy on the curb and reached in and cradled that little thing in my hand as gentle as I could.

In the sentence, which phrase **best** helps the reader understand the meaning of the word **cradled**?

- Ⓐ "my slushy"
 - Ⓑ "on the curb"
 - Ⓒ "reached in"
 - Ⓓ "hand as gentle"
- 8 Why are paragraphs 62 and 63 important to the passage?
- Ⓐ They show that Coyote values time by herself.
 - Ⓑ They explain Coyote's decision to accept the kitten.
 - Ⓒ They suggest Coyote's reason for helping the brothers.
 - Ⓓ They describe how Coyote affects people who meet her.
- 9 How does the setting of the passage **mainly** contribute to the plot?
- Ⓐ The afternoon heat makes Coyote feel sorry for the kittens.
 - Ⓑ The arrival of the school bus causes the boys to help Coyote.
 - Ⓒ The discussion at the slushy machine leads to Coyote being given a kitten.
 - Ⓓ The description of the convenience store explains why Coyote ignores the clerk.

10 Part A

Which sentence **best** states a theme developed in the passage?

- Ⓐ Small gifts are quickly forgotten.
- Ⓑ Some things in life require taking a risk.
- Ⓒ People are more alike than they are different.
- Ⓓ People are often admired for unusual reasons.

Part B

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

- Ⓐ “‘Big mistake,’ I said, walking up next to him and grabbing a cup from the pull-down dispenser.” (paragraph 8)
- Ⓑ “‘Sweet,’ he said. ‘Weird. Not really like watermelon at all.’” (paragraph 28)
- Ⓒ “‘She bought me a slushy,’ and the older kid held out his hand and the younger one handed it over.” (paragraph 46)
- Ⓓ “‘But heck, if kittens and slushies aren’t worth getting in trouble for, what in the world is?’” (paragraph 93)

English Language Arts

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Write your essay in the space provided on the next page. Your writing should:

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

11 Based on *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*, write an essay that explains how Coyote’s thoughts and actions show her character traits. Be sure to use details from the passage to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the the next page.

Read the passage about skin. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Skin You're In

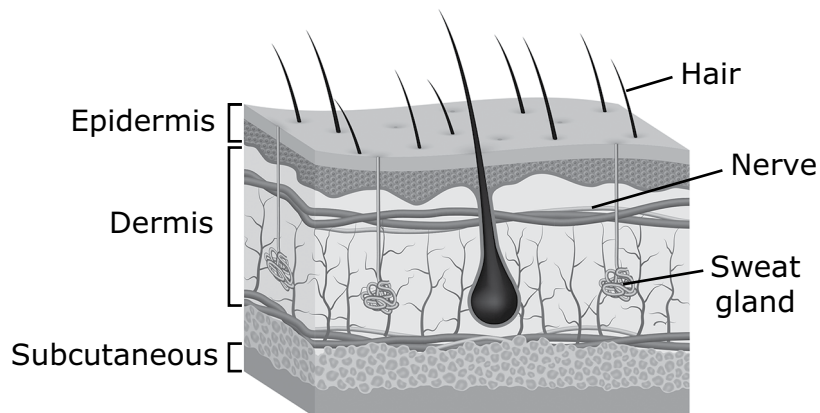
by Charlene Brusso

- 1 The average adult's skin weighs 9 to 15 pounds—the same as a typical bag full of groceries—and makes up about 1/12th of a person's total body weight. Skin has several jobs to do. First, it prevents loss of body fluids and blood. It also protects muscles and internal organs from damage and infection. Skin helps regulate body temperature as well, keeping you from heating up or cooling down too quickly. Nerve endings in your skin give you the sense of touch, and the specialized nerves in your tongue let you taste things. Your skin also manufactures vitamin D, an important nutrient, when sunlight shines on it.

What Is Skin?

- 2 Human skin is less than 1/4 inch thick and can be as thin as 2/100ths of an inch on the eyelids—as thin as paper. It is made up of three distinct layers. The outermost layer, called the epidermis, continually renews itself as the dead cells on top flake off. Your body constantly makes and loses skin cells, shedding 30,000 to 40,000 every minute. That's about nine pounds of dead skin cells every year!

Layers of Human Skin



- 3 The middle, and thickest, layer of skin is the dermis. Nerves in the dermis allow you to identify textures and detect pressure and pain, warmth and cold. The dermis is also home to hair follicles, sweat glands, and sebaceous glands. These small coiled glands make the oils and waxes that protect your skin and help keep it supple, soft, and waterproof.
- 4 Underneath the dermis lies the subcutaneous layer, a strong network of tissue made of fats and sturdy collagen. This soft material helps to cushion the muscles and organs underneath, protecting them from bumps and knocks, and it insulates you from the cold.

A Skin for Everyone

- 5 An animal's skin says a lot about where it lives and how it gets around. An animal with fur-covered skin would be comfortable in the Arctic, but it probably wouldn't be very happy in the tropics unless it also had a way to keep cool. Smooth, hairless skin might be great in the water, but it wouldn't do for the hot sun and scratchy, baking sand of the desert.
- 6 Reptiles and fish are cold-blooded, which means their body temperatures are the same as the air or water around them. Their thin skin has a top layer of tough, overlapping scales. Reptiles shed their scaly skin all at once, every so often, as they grow larger.
- 7 Birds and mammals are warm-blooded, with body temperatures that need to remain constant, no matter what the season. Skin alone won't do, so fur and feathers help insulate them from the cold. Mammals shed some fur in the spring when temperatures begin to rise, since too much can put them in danger of overheating in hot weather.
- 8 Some mammals, like humans and horses, have sweat glands in their skin to help them cool off. Sweat glands give off water mixed with salts and other waste products. Sweat cools the skin when it evaporates off its surface. But some mammals don't sweat very much. Others, along with birds, don't sweat at all. Rabbits have sweat glands only in the skin around their lips. Cats and dogs have them only in the pads of their feet. Dogs and birds also cool off by panting.
- 9 Elephants have no sweat glands at all. They chill by flapping their great, fanlike ears. The skin behind their ears is thin and filled with thousands of tiny blood vessels. By flapping its ears, the elephant cools the blood inside them; as the blood circulates, it cools the rest of the animal's body.

- 10 Ocean dwellers, such as penguins, seals, dolphins, and whales, have the opposite problem: how to keep heat in. They rely on thick skin with a dense layer of fat, called blubber, to reduce heat loss in cold waters. At an average of 20 inches, the bowhead whale has the thickest skin of any animal known. Penguins also have close-packed layers of waterproof feathers to help hold in their heat. Polar bears have an additional feature under their fur: black skin. This keeps them warmer because dark skin absorbs heat from sunlight better than light-colored skin.



Fingerprints are like your
very own signature.

What Are Fingerprints?

Look at the skin on the end of your fingers, and you'll find a wrinkly pattern all your own—your fingerprints. Everyone's are different—even identical twins'. See yours better by pressing your fingers on an ink pad, or coloring them with a marker, and then pressing them on paper. Your very own signature! Only primates (humans, monkeys, and apes) have fingerprints—some monkeys also have skin patterns on their tails. So what are they for? Scientists aren't sure: one idea is that they help us grip things by making the skin less slippery. What do you think?

Sensitive Skin

- 11 Skin is home to the nerve endings that sense touch and taste. Different nerves in your skin feel different kinds of touch. Some detect continuous pressure and squeezing, or vibrations. The sensitive nerve endings in your lips and fingertips can feel the lightest touch. Nerve endings are not spread evenly over the body. In humans, most are found on the fingertips, tongue, and lips. The tip of your finger has about 5,000 nerve endings, while the skin on your back may have only one every two inches.
- 12 Animals are much more sensitive to touch than humans. The whiskers on a dog's or cat's face help them to judge the size of a space and even to follow scents. Each whisker connects to nerves beneath the skin. When whiskers touch anything, even air currents, the nerves send signals to the brain to tell the animal a space is too small to pass through or a scent is coming from a certain direction. Many insects use the tiny, stiff hairs on their wings, antennae, legs, and bodies to detect danger and food. The hairs move with the tiny vibrations of nearby predators or prey.
- 13 Extremely sensitive taste buds as well as nerve endings cover the skin of your tongue. Different kinds of taste buds respond to different flavors: salty, sour, bitter, sweet, and umami, or savory, the flavor you taste in meat, cheese, broth, and soy sauce.
- 14 Feeling and tasting, heating and cooling, protecting your insides and muscles: your skin never sleeps. That is one hard-working organ!

"The Skin You're In" by Charlene Brusso, from *ASK Magazine* (January 2009, Volume 8 Issue 1). Text copyright © 2008 by Charlene Brusso. Illustration 1 copyright © MicroOne/Shutterstock. Illustration 2 copyright © iStockphoto/Jostaphot. Reprinted by permission of Cricket Media, Inc.

English Language Arts

- 12 Read the sentence from paragraph 1 in the box.

Skin helps regulate body temperature as well, keeping you from heating up or cooling down too quickly.

Based on the passage, what does the word **regulate** mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ to measure
- Ⓑ to display
- Ⓒ to control
- Ⓓ to sense

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

It is made up of three distinct layers.

Based on the passage, what is the meaning of the word **distinct** as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ partly hidden
- Ⓑ clearly different
- Ⓒ recently discovered
- Ⓓ frequently changing

- 14** What does paragraph 3 **mainly** describe?
- Ⓐ the roles of glands located in the dermis
 - Ⓑ how oils and waxes help keep skin soft
 - Ⓒ how nerves in the skin detect pain
 - Ⓓ the different parts of the dermis
- 15** Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the idea that skin is used for protection?
- Ⓐ "An animal's skin says a lot about where it lives and how it gets around." (paragraph 5)
 - Ⓑ "Reptiles shed their scaly skin all at once, every so often, as they grow larger." (paragraph 6)
 - Ⓒ "Rabbits have sweat glands only in the skin around their lips." (paragraph 8)
 - Ⓓ "They rely on thick skin with a dense layer of fat, called blubber, to reduce heat loss in cold waters." (paragraph 10)
- 16** What does paragraph 11 **mainly** suggest about the skin on a person's back?
- Ⓐ It is less sensitive to touch than the skin on the fingertips.
 - Ⓑ It has different types of nerves than the skin on the rest of the body.
 - Ⓒ It can detect squeezing and pressure better than it can detect touch.
 - Ⓓ It has thousands of nerve endings spread out evenly across its surface.
-

English Language Arts

- 17 Read the sentence from paragraph 12 in the box.

The whiskers on a dog's or cat's face help them to judge the size of a space and even to follow scents.

Now read the dictionary entry in the box.

judge: v. **1.** to form an opinion **2.** to make a guess or estimate **3.** to decide a contest **4.** to determine a penalty or fine

Which definition of the word **judge** is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ definition 1
 - Ⓑ definition 2
 - Ⓒ definition 3
 - Ⓓ definition 4
- 18 What is **mainly** suggested by the phrase "your skin never sleeps" in paragraph 14?
- Ⓐ Skin is always losing cells.
 - Ⓑ Skin comes in many types.
 - Ⓒ Skin covers the entire body.
 - Ⓓ Skin has many ongoing tasks.

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- 19 How do the headings **mainly** contribute to the reader's overall understanding of the passage?
- Ⓐ They introduce the topics that will be explained.
 - Ⓑ They define key terms to focus on during reading.
 - Ⓒ They highlight questions to be considered during reading.
 - Ⓓ They indicate the levels of importance for the different topics.
- 20 Which sentence from the passage **best** states the author's opinion about skin?
- Ⓐ "That's about nine pounds of dead skin cells every year!" (paragraph 2)
 - Ⓑ "An animal's skin says a lot about where it lives and how it gets around." (paragraph 5)
 - Ⓒ "Animals are much more sensitive to touch than humans." (paragraph 12)
 - Ⓓ "That is one hard-working organ!" (paragraph 14)

Grade 5 English Language Arts

Spring 2026 Released Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR)**
1	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.1	SR	Make an inference about a character based on details from the passage.	A
2	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.2	SR	Determine the importance of a setting described in the passage.	D
3	10	<i>Language</i>	L.5.5	SR	Determine the effect of figurative language used in the passage.	A
4	11	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.3	SR	Identify a character trait of an individual based on a specific part of the passage and choose supporting evidence from the passage.	B;B
5	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.5	SR	Identify the purpose of specific paragraphs from the passage.	A
6	12	<i>Language</i>	L.5.3	SR	Identify the effect of italicized words in a given section of the passage.	D
7	13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a phrase using context from the passage.	D
8	13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.5	SR	Identify the purpose of specific paragraphs from the passage.	B
9	13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.5	SR	Determine how the setting contributes to the development of the plot.	C
10	14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.5.2	SR	Determine a theme of the passage and choose evidence from the passage that supports the theme.	B;D
11	15	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.3, W.5.2, W.5.4	ES	Write an essay that explains the traits of a character; use details from the passage to develop the essay.	
12	21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	C
13	21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	B
14	22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.1	SR	Identify information described in a paragraph from the passage.	D
15	22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.8	SR	Identify information that supports a specific claim in the passage.	D
16	22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.1	SR	Make an inference based on information in the passage.	A
17	23	<i>Language</i>	L.5.4	SR	Determine the correct meaning of a multiple-meaning word in context.	B
18	23	<i>Language</i>	L.5.5	SR	Analyze the use of figurative language in a paragraph from the passage.	D
19	24	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.7	SR	Determine how text features contribute to the overall understanding of the passage.	A
20	24	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.6	SR	Identify a quotation that reflects the author's point of view about a topic.	D

* 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.

Grade 5 English Language Arts Spring 2026 Unreleased Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
21	<i>Language</i>	L.5.2	SR	Determine the purpose of punctuation used in a sentence.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.5	SR	Identify the purpose of a section from the passage.
23	<i>Language</i>	L.5.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.
24	<i>Language</i>	L.5.4	SR	Determine the correct meaning of a multiple-meaning word in context.
25	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.5	SR	Determine the purpose of a paragraph in the passage.
26	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.5	SR	Identify the purpose of a section in the passage.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.4	SR	Identify a phrase that helps to determine the meaning of a word from the passage.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.6	SR	Identify evidence that shows the author's point of view about a topic.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.9	SR	Identify an idea developed in a section of one passage and choose evidence from another passage that supports a similar idea.
30	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.2	SR	Identify a central idea of the passage and choose a phrase that best supports the idea.
31	<i>Reading</i>	RI.5.6	SR	Determine a shared point of view between two passages.
32	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.3, W.5.2, W.5.4	ES	Write an essay explaining an idea based on information from two passages; use information from the passages to develop the essay.

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