



MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

*Release of Spring 2026
MCAS Test Items from the
Grade 7 English Language Arts
Paper-Based Test*

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



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Pedro Martinez
Commissioner

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. Inquiries regarding the Department's compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149-1950 781-338-6105.

© 2026 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Permission is hereby granted to copy for non-commercial educational purposes any or all parts of this document with the exception of English Language Arts passages that are not designated as in the public domain. Permission to copy all other passages must be obtained from the copyright holder. Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education."

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149-1950
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370
www.doe.mass.edu



Overview of Grade 7 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2026 grade 7 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 7 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same ELA content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

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

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 7 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items and multiple-select items, in which students select the correct answer(s) from among several answer options.

Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 7 ELA test was based on grades 6–12 learning standards in three content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (2017), listed below.

- Reading
- Writing
- Language

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

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 7 English Language Arts

This session contains 19 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.

English Language Arts

In the novel *The Road to Wherever*, a boy named June Ball has joined his adult cousins Larry and Cornell, who travel the country repairing old vehicles free of charge. In this excerpt, they are going to help a man named Nico fix an old truck that is special to him. Read the excerpt and then answer the questions that follow.

from *The Road to Wherever*

by John Ed Bradley



- 1 Cornell removes his foot from the gas and works the clutch and the stick, and the truck begins to slow.
- 2 We exit the interstate and follow a ramp to a crossroad. Cornell seems to have miscalculated the distance. He's forced to brake hard as a flashing red light looms up ahead. Larry responds to the quick stop by throwing his left arm in front of me. He's trying to keep me from crashing into the windshield, and I'm fine with it, even though there seems to be some confusion about my age, never mind that I'm belted to the seat . . . but I like that he has my back, or my face in this case. . . .
- 3 I wish you could see what I'm seeing. The sun's climbing up out of the ground and shooting through some trees in the distance, and clouds of birds form swarming dot patterns in the sky. Even the dust in the air twinkles with light, and everything looks new and warm and golden. It was only my first night on the road, and now I'm seeing my first sunup. Mama said Larry and Cornell were giving me a gift. I didn't believe her until now.
- 4 "Wouldn't you love to be one of those birds?" Cornell says. "They look happy, don't they, June?"
- 5 "Oh, man."

English Language Arts

- 6 "I got a world of respect for birds—how they decorate the landscape with little blips of color and sing while doing it. Gotta love a bird, huh, June?"
- 7 "Yes, sir. Nothing like a bird."
- 8 As we hang a left, Larry taps his phone with his index finger, and a voice starts giving directions in a foreign accent. It's the GPS navigator. . . .
- 9 We're in western Indiana now, way out in no-man's-land. Fields full of green plants stretch out on either side of the road, broken only by barns and farmhouses. We motor through towns where everything looks dead. . . . It's starting to feel like we'll never get to where we're going when . . . Cornell brakes and shifts and wheels into a parking lot. It's a dusty old diner from a hundred years ago. Letters on the roof spell out the word SCAR'S.
- 10 What kind of crazy restaurant goes by the name Scar's? I look more closely. The first of the letters, an *O*, has come loose from the metal bracket that attaches it to the roof.
- 11 Past the windows in front you can see dim lights hanging over a long counter. A man on a stool looks to be the only customer. He's sitting with his head pitched forward. Is he sleeping or licking his plate? Because the light is so bad, it's impossible to tell. A much younger guy in an apron is standing next to him.
- 12 Cornell drives around back as Larry reads from his notebook: "Mr. Oscar Alejandro is deceased. Client Nico is his twenty-two-year-old grandson. Nico inherited the diner. Also a '57 Ranchero."
- 13 There's a pickup in the lot, but it looks fairly new. Then I spot the [truck] parked in the grass just past where the lot ends. Weeds growing up around it are so tall they reach above the door handles.
- 14 "That it?" Larry says.
- 15 Cornell leans forward against the wheel, squinting.
- 16 Larry starts reading again: "Nico couldn't afford to have it towed or worked on at any of the area garages. The Ranchero's been parked in the same spot for three years, and somebody recently walked off with the hubcaps. Nico found our website and thought he'd see if we were for real."
- 17 "Anything else?" Cornell says.

English Language Arts

- 18 "Nico makes excellent pancakes." Larry looks up from the notebook.
"Said we should try them even if we can't get the Rancho running."
- 19 Cornell's chuckling and shaking his head as he steps down from the cab.
"Can't get it running," he mumbles as if Larry just told a joke.
- 20 It's been a long trip, and my body's sore from sitting. Larry and I stand out in the lot doing stretches and running in place while Cornell shuffles over to a back door with a sign that says DELIVERIES ONLY. He slaps it with the flat of his hand. The door cracks open, and Cornell turns sideways, tilting his shoulders just enough to show the back of his coveralls.
- 21 "Hey, you made it!" a voice says.
- 22 I can smell butter and syrup. The young guy from the counter steps outside. . . . "I am so impressed," he says. "You're exactly like they said." He brings both hands up and waves to Larry and me.
- 23 "Nico, my name is Cornell Ball. That handsome gentleman over there is Larry Ball, and our dashing young compatriot is none other than June Ball."
- 24 "Well, welcome to Oscar's, everybody. Thank you for coming. You guys must be starving. Would you like coffee or a bite to eat before you get started?"
- 25 "Coffee sounds great," Cornell says. "So does breakfast. But if you don't mind, we'd like a look at the Rancho first."
- 26 My stomach's been growling with the volume cranked, and I almost say, "*We would?*" But then I decide it's no use. . . .
- 27 Nico digs a ring of keys out of his pocket and removes the one for the Rancho. "Here you go, Mr. Cornell. Just for your information, my grandpa bought it new from Campbell Motors up the road and drove it nearly every day of his adult life. I'll tell you the kind of person he was. He'd park it in the grass like that to make sure he wasn't taking a space away from a customer, even when he barely had any customers left. That's why it's still out there where he left it."
- 28 "Am I to understand no one's looked at it yet?"
- 29 "No mechanics, if that's what you mean. For about a year I went out every few days and got the engine going. I was religious about it. Then I got lazy and stopped, and when I went to start it up again, the engine was dead. I'm not very mechanical, I'm afraid. . . . Is this really going to be free except for parts? Is that true?"
-

English Language Arts

30 "Yes, it is, Nico."

31 "But how can you do that? You charge a lot extra for parts, is that how?"

32 "No," Cornell says, looking offended. "That wouldn't be right."

33 "But how do you make money?"

34 "We don't," Larry says, gazing off at a pair of buzzards circling in the sky. "We do this because it brings meaning to our lives." He smiles at Nico now. "Can't tell you how good it makes us feel every time we save another one."

35 Nico covers his face with his hands. He might be crying. "That is . . . well, it's unbelievable. Thank you, thank you so much. I didn't know there were people like the three of you still left in this mean old world."

36 The three of us. That's what he said.

* * *

37 Larry and Cornell walk over to the edge of the parking lot and stand side by side, shoulders nearly touching. It's hard to know what they make of the Ranchero. Their eyes squeeze tight, and so do their lips.

38 "Sorry you had to go through that," Cornell whispers.

39 I need a minute to figure out that he's talking to the Ranchero.

40 In his notebook Larry does a quick sketch of the scene. An odd-looking little pickup sits in a field. A couple of birds circle in the sky—not buzzards but jays, big fat ones. Off to one side is a road. Off to the other is a diner with letters on the roof. Each letter is a tall wooden cutout. In Larry's drawing the letters are all there—the O hasn't fallen off yet—and they're all straight.

41 "June," Cornell says. "There's a Weedwacker in the back of the truck. There on your left as you walk in. Go get it, please. And grab me some protective eyewear while you're at it, will you?"

42 "What is protective eyewear?"

43 "Goggles. You'll see a bunch on the shelves, middle right."

English Language Arts

- 44 The doors to the back squeak a little when I pull them open, and I nearly fall over at the sight of all that's in there. All along I was thinking the container held only "tools and whatnot," as Cornell said, but it's more like a combination Home Depot and auto-parts store, with everything neatly arranged.
- 45 I see rubber belts and hoses and metal objects whose names and functions I couldn't tell you. There are hubcaps, windshields and windows, a fender, bumpers, and doors. . . .
- 46 I see a bunch of other stuff: water jugs and bottles and cans of assorted oils, cleaners, and degreasers, a cardboard box holding bags of sunflower seeds, at least a dozen toolboxes, and a couple of Igloos stacked against a wall. The cooler on the bottom . . . has TIME INSENSITIVE written in permanent marker on the side. The other one has TIME SENSITIVE spelled out on the lid.
- 47 Rearview and side mirrors hang from wires overhead and reflect the light as they twist this way and that. They bump against one another and make a musical tinkling sound like wind chimes. . . .
- 48 I carry the goggles and Weedwacker out to Cornell. He takes his time with the goggles, making sure they fit just right on his face, then he starts pulling the string coiled up in the Weedwacker's motor. The motor starts, and Cornell walks out in the grass and knocks the biggest clumps down. Bit by bit the Ranchero is revealed. The front half resembles a car, but there's a long open box in the back half where the back seat and trunk should be. They made some interesting things to ride around in in the old days. This one is painted black.
- 49 Cornell still has the grass along one side to chop down, but he stops and signals to me. He hands me the goggles and the Weedwacker. "Your turn," he says.
- 50 "But is it . . . ? I mean, I never—"
- 51 "Nothing to it, June. You hold it with both hands here at your side"—he's demonstrating now—"the right one down here, the left one here on this deal here. And you carefully swing it from one side to the other. That little button there is for the gas. . . . You want to take it slow. No hurry, all right? Here's the kill switch if you wrap around something and need to power off. Okay, we always start with the eyewear. Put them on and make sure they fit nice and snug. Today we're just clearing an area. No fancy landscaping moves, you understand? I'm here if you need me."
-

English Language Arts

52 I'm not saying it's the most fun I ever had, but I really do enjoy myself. Everybody seems to have a natural talent at something, and mine might be whacking weeds. Weeds don't stand a chance with June Ball going at them.

53 When I finish, Cornell looks over at Larry and says, "Got ourselves a Weedwacker genius."

* * *

54 Now that we've carved out a clearing, Cornell drives the truck into the field and parks next to the Rancho. He climbs into the container and attaches a coiled hose to the side of a machine that I'd barely noticed until now. "This is a combination air compressor and generator," he says. "A generator generates energy. It's your power source. We're going to be inflating the tires. The compressor will do that—it's your air source. This unit will also power your tools and your lights and fans. Cousin Larry's also got it rigged with a charging station for his phone. Incredible, huh? That's right. All he has to do is plug it in."

55 He gets the generator and compressor started and then hops down, holding the end of the hose. "See how easy?" he says, and blows some air at my face. "Nothing to it."

56 He does the first of the tires and uses a little pen-size stick to check the pressure. Then he has me do the other ones, crouching next to me to make sure I'm doing it right. You squeeze this flat deal shaped like a tongue and the air blows out. You have to be careful because it comes out hard.

57 "Looks like we have a genius for tires, too," he says when I'm done.

58 Next it's Larry's turn to teach me something. He replaces the old battery in the Rancho with a new one. He shows me the different terminals, the positive and the negative, the red and the black, and explains why you don't want to confuse them. Next he takes a five-gallon can full of gas and pours it into the Rancho's fuel tank. . . .

59 Five minutes later and they get it started. There's a muffled explosion and then bullets of smoke shoot from the tailpipe. The Rancho sounds raggedy at first but evens out once Larry fools around with the engine. Then I start hearing another sound. It's coming from behind us. I wheel around, and Nico's standing over by the delivery door. He's clapping his hands so hard you know they've got to sting.

60 "Bravo!" he calls out. "Bravo!"

English Language Arts

- 61 Larry and Cornell give him little waves to show that they appreciate being appreciated. Nico points at me, and I give in and give him one, too. I feel a little weird doing that—it was Larry and Cornell who did the real work. But now all three of them are nodding and smiling at me, showing that I earned it.
- 62 “Feels good, doesn’t it?” Larry says.
- 63 “Yes, sir.”
- 64 “That’s what it’s all about. That right there.”
- 65 Nico says he has to finish cooking our breakfast. Once he goes back inside, Cornell says, “Most jobs we’ll be doing this summer won’t be as easy as this one, June. Nico could’ve made the repairs himself. I wouldn’t want to embarrass him by announcing that, but he really didn’t need us—not to fix his Ford, anyway.” He pauses and looks back at the diner. “We’ll wash it and take it for a test drive later on, but what do you say we try those pancakes first. You hungry, son?”
- 66 He starts walking toward the front of the building even before I answer, and then Larry runs out ahead of him.
- 67 Cornell says, “Whoa there,” and takes off trying to catch him. They’re racing now to see who can reach the diner first. What they don’t know is that I’m fast for a big kid, and suddenly all three of us are hightailing it across the lot. Daddy taught me that by using your arms and legs as pistons you can generate speed, and I should credit him for that because it proves to be the difference. Maybe they’re just being nice again, but I don’t think so. As I move out ahead they start yelling behind me, “No . . . wait . . . come on . . . June, hey, June . . .” Then Cornell reaches out and grabs at my jersey. I feel a tug, but I can see the end zone all of a sudden and there’s no stopping me.
- 68 The little cowbell on the door handle jingles to signal my victory.

The Road to Wherever by John Ed Bradley. Text copyright © 2021 by John Ed Bradley. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers. Photograph copyright © iStockphoto/francescomoufotografo.

English Language Arts

- 1** Which idea about June is **mainly** developed in paragraphs 1–3?
- Ⓐ He is beginning to miss his mother.
 - Ⓑ He is nervous about the new surroundings.
 - Ⓒ He is prepared to share his abilities with others.
 - Ⓓ He is developing a greater appreciation for the journey.
- 2** Based on paragraphs 9 and 10, what do the letters on the roof of the diner **mainly** symbolize?
- Ⓐ how the past shapes the future
 - Ⓑ how something can decline over time
 - Ⓒ how a community responds to change
 - Ⓓ how something can be more important than it seems
- 3** What do paragraphs 18 and 19 **mainly** suggest about Cornell?
- Ⓐ He is excited to go to the restaurant.
 - Ⓑ He is shocked that the vehicle is so old.
 - Ⓒ He strongly believes in his abilities as a mechanic.
 - Ⓓ He frequently worries that jobs might be too difficult.

4 Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 23 in the box.

“Nico, my name is Cornell Ball.”

What is the purpose of the comma in the sentence?

- Ⓐ to note brief pauses
- Ⓑ to indicate a direct address
- Ⓒ to separate items in a series
- Ⓓ to separate independent ideas

Part B

Which sentence from the excerpt uses a comma for the **same** purpose as the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ “Their eyes squeeze tight, and so do their lips.” (paragraph 37)
- Ⓑ “Go get it, please.” (paragraph 41)
- Ⓒ “Cornell still has the grass along one side to chop down, but he stops and signals to me.” (paragraph 49)
- Ⓓ “Nothing to it, June.” (paragraph 51)

English Language Arts

- 5 How do paragraphs 27–29 **mainly** contribute to the development of the excerpt?
- Ⓐ by suggesting how much the Rancho might be worth
 - Ⓑ by explaining how the Rancho came to be in such bad shape
 - Ⓒ by showing what the Rancho could look like after it is repaired
 - Ⓓ by revealing where the Rancho will be moved to after it is fixed
- 6 How do Nico's questions in paragraphs 29, 31, and 33 **mainly** help develop the excerpt?
- Ⓐ They provide details about the Rancho's history.
 - Ⓑ They suggest how unusual the cousins' generosity is.
 - Ⓒ They foreshadow how difficult the cousins' day will be.
 - Ⓓ They create suspense about the Rancho's usefulness.

English Language Arts

- 7 Read the sentence from paragraph 44 in the box.

The doors to the back squeak a little when I pull them open, and I nearly fall over at the sight of all that’s in there.

Based on the sentence, what does the phrase “I nearly fall over” **mainly** reveal about June?

- Ⓐ He is eager.
- Ⓑ He is clumsy.
- Ⓒ He is surprised.
- Ⓓ He is exhausted.

- 8 Based on the excerpt, what do paragraphs 59–61 **mainly** emphasize about Nico?

- Ⓐ his desire to pay the cousins for their time
- Ⓑ his wish to join the cousins on a future trip
- Ⓒ his decision to hire the cousins at the diner
- Ⓓ his gratitude to the cousins for what they did

English Language Arts

- 9 Based on the excerpt, which sentence **best** suggests that Cornell feels a special connection to the vehicles he works on?
- Ⓐ "Cornell leans forward against the wheel, squinting." (paragraph 15)
 - Ⓑ "'Just for your information, my grandpa bought it new from Campbell Motors up the road and drove it nearly every day of his adult life.'" (paragraph 27)
 - Ⓒ "It's hard to know what they make of the Ranchero." (paragraph 37)
 - Ⓓ "'Sorry you had to go through that,' Cornell whispers." (paragraph 38)
- 10 Which statement **best** expresses a theme of the excerpt?
- Ⓐ Helping people is rewarding.
 - Ⓑ Maintaining friendships is important.
 - Ⓒ Performing complex tasks takes practice.
 - Ⓓ Considering different viewpoints promotes growth.

English Language Arts

- 11** Based on the excerpt, choose **one** description that **best** applies to Cornell and **one** description that **best** applies to June.

Cornell

- Ⓐ questions peers
- Ⓑ is willing to learn
- Ⓒ focuses on the past
- Ⓓ is passionate about travel
- Ⓔ shares knowledge with others

June

- Ⓐ questions peers
- Ⓑ is willing to learn
- Ⓒ focuses on the past
- Ⓓ is passionate about travel
- Ⓔ shares knowledge with others

English Language Arts

For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage. The essay should be about four to five paragraphs in length. Be sure to:

- Include a central idea.
- Use evidence from the passage to support the central idea.
- Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

- 12 Based on *The Road to Wherever*, write an essay that explains how the experience repairing the Rancho impacts the lives of the characters. Use evidence from the excerpt to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the next two pages.

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

Read the excerpt from a novel about a young girl and her family, who live in Mexico. Then answer the questions that follow.

from *Esperanza Rising*

by Pam Muñoz Ryan



- 1 "Our land is alive, Esperanza," said Papa, taking her small hand as they walked through the gentle slopes of the vineyard. Leafy green vines draped the arbors and the grapes were ready to drop. Esperanza was six years old and loved to walk with her papa through the winding rows, gazing up at him and watching his eyes dance with love for the land.
- 2 "This whole valley breathes and lives," he said, sweeping his arm toward the distant mountains that guarded them. "It gives us the grapes and then they welcome us." He gently touched a wild tendril that reached into the row, as if it had been waiting to shake his hand. He picked up a handful of earth and studied it. "Did you know that when you lie down on the land, you can feel it breathe? That you can feel its heart beating?"
- 3 "Papi, I want to feel it," she said.
- 4 "Come." They walked to the end of the row, where the incline of the land formed a grassy swell.
- 5 Papa lay down on his stomach and looked up at her, patting the ground next to him.
- 6 Esperanza smoothed her dress and knelt down. Then, like a caterpillar, she slowly inched flat next to him, their faces looking at each other. The warm sun pressed on one of Esperanza's cheeks and the warm earth on the other.

- 7 She giggled.
- 8 "Shhh," he said. "You can only feel the earth's heartbeat when you are still and quiet."
- 9 She swallowed her laughter and after a moment said, "I can't hear it, Papi."
- 10 "*Aguántate tantito y la fruta caerá en tu mano,*" he said. "Wait a little while and the fruit will fall into your hand. You must be patient, Esperanza."
- 11 She waited and lay silent, watching Papa's eyes.
- 12 And then she felt it. Softly at first. A gentle thumping. Then stronger. A resounding thud, thud, thud against her body.
- 13 She could hear it, too. The beat rushing in her ears. *Shoomp, shoomp, shoomp.*
- 14 She stared at Papa, not wanting to say a word. Not wanting to lose the sound. Not wanting to forget the feel of the heart of the valley.
- 15 She pressed closer to the ground, until her body was breathing with the earth's. And with Papa's. The three hearts beating together.
- 16 She smiled at Papa, not needing to talk, her eyes saying everything.
- 17 And his smile answered hers. Telling her that he knew she had felt it.

six years later

- 18 Papa handed Esperanza the knife. The short blade was curved like a scythe, its fat wooden handle fitting snugly in her palm. This job was usually reserved for the eldest son of a wealthy rancher, but since Esperanza was an only child and Papa's pride and glory, she was always given the honor. Last night she had watched Papa sharpen the knife back and forth across a stone, so she knew the tool was edged like a razor.
- 19 "*Cuídate los dedos,*" said Papa. "Watch your fingers."
- 20 The August sun promised a dry afternoon in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Everyone who lived and worked on El Rancho de las Rosas was gathered at the edge of the field: Esperanza's family, . . . the *vaqueros* already sitting on their horses ready to ride out to the cattle, and fifty or sixty *campesinos*, straw hats in their hands, holding their own knives ready. They were covered top to bottom, in long-sleeved shirts, baggy pants

tied at the ankles with string, and bandanas wrapped around their foreheads and necks to protect them from the sun, dust, and spiders. Esperanza, on the other hand, wore a light silk dress that stopped above her summer boots, and no hat. On top of her head a wide satin ribbon was tied in a big bow, the tails trailing in her long black hair.

- 21 The clusters were heavy on the vine and ready to deliver. Esperanza's parents, Ramona and Sixto Ortega, stood nearby, Mama, tall and elegant, her hair in the usual braided wreath that crowned her head, and Papa, barely taller than Mama, his graying mustache twisted up at the sides. He swept his hand toward the grapevines, signaling Esperanza. When she walked toward the arbors and glanced back at her parents, they both smiled and nodded, encouraging her forward. When she reached the vines, she separated the leaves and carefully grasped a thick stem. She put the knife to it, and with a quick swipe, the heavy cluster of grapes dropped into her waiting hand. Esperanza walked back to Papa and handed him the fruit. Papa kissed it and held it up for all to see.
- 22 "*¡La cosecha!*" said Papa. "Harvest!"

Esperanza Rising by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Text copyright © 2000 by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic Inc. Photograph copyright © iStockphoto/francescomoufotografo.

13 Part A

Read the detail from paragraph 1 in the box.

. . . his eyes dance with love for the land.

What does the detail **mainly** emphasize about Papa?

- Ⓐ his desire to travel abroad
- Ⓑ his admiration for the vineyard
- Ⓒ his willingness to learn new skills
- Ⓓ his thoughtfulness toward others

Part B

Which quotation from the excerpt **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "Leafy green vines draped the arbors and the grapes were ready to drop." (paragraph 1)
- Ⓑ "'This whole valley breathes and lives,' he said, sweeping his arm toward the distant mountains that guarded them." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓒ "'Come.' They walked to the end of the row, where the incline of the land formed a grassy swell." (paragraph 4)
- Ⓓ "And his smile answered hers." (paragraph 17)

English Language Arts

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

Then, like a caterpillar, she slowly inched flat next to him. . . .

Which literary device is **most clearly** used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ simile
 - Ⓑ flashback
 - Ⓒ repetition
 - Ⓓ foreshadowing
- 15 What do paragraphs 7–12 **mainly** reveal about Esperanza?
- Ⓐ She changes her mind frequently.
 - Ⓑ She wonders what her future will bring.
 - Ⓒ She listens carefully to her father’s words.
 - Ⓓ She wants her father’s attention to be focused on her.

English Language Arts

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

A resounding thud, thud, thud against her body.

Based on the paragraph, what does the word “resounding” **mainly** suggest about the thud?

- Ⓐ It has lasted for a long time.
 - Ⓑ It is strange and unpleasant.
 - Ⓒ It is powerful and noticeable.
 - Ⓓ It has faded into the background.
- 17 What do paragraphs 15–17 **mainly** show about Esperanza?
- Ⓐ She is waiting for Papa to respond.
 - Ⓑ She has a special connection to Papa.
 - Ⓒ She is thinking about what to say to Papa.
 - Ⓓ She wants the moment with Papa to last longer.

English Language Arts

- 18** What does the description of the *campesinos* in paragraph 20 **mainly** suggest?
- Ⓐ They are moving to another location.
 - Ⓑ They are prepared for the work ahead.
 - Ⓒ They have lived nearby for many years.
 - Ⓓ They want others to help finish the task.
- 19** How do paragraphs 21 and 22 **mainly** contribute to the development of the excerpt?
- Ⓐ by showing how Esperanza embraces a family tradition
 - Ⓑ by explaining why Esperanza accepts a difficult challenge
 - Ⓒ by revealing that the harvest will be shared with all of the employees
 - Ⓓ by showing that the harvest will continue over a period of several days

Grade 7 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.7.1	SR	Analyze how details in specific paragraphs help develop the main character in a passage.	D
2	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.5	SR	Determine what a specific detail symbolizes in a passage.	B
3	10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.3	SR	Analyze how details in specific paragraphs help develop a character in a passage.	C
4	11	<i>Language</i>	L.7.2	SR	Identify the purpose of punctuation in a sentence and choose another sentence from the passage that uses punctuation for the same purpose.	B;D
5	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.5	SR	Analyze how specific paragraphs contribute to the development of a passage.	B
6	12	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.5	SR	Analyze how specific details help develop a passage.	B
7	13	<i>Language</i>	L.7.4	SR	Determine what is suggested by a phrase in a passage.	C
8	13	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.3	SR	Analyze how details in specific paragraphs help develop a character in a passage.	D
9	14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.1	SR	Identify a detail from a passage that supports an inference about a character.	D
10	14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.2	SR	Determine a theme developed in a passage.	A
11	15	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.3	SR	Analyze the qualities of characters in a passage.	E;B
12	16	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, W.7.2, W.7.4	ES	Write an essay that explains how events in a passage impact the characters; use evidence from the passage to develop the essay.	
13	22	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.1	SR	Analyze what a specific detail suggests about a character in an excerpt and choose a quotation from the excerpt to support the analysis.	B;B
14	23	<i>Language</i>	L.7.5	SR	Identify the literary device used in a specific sentence from an excerpt.	A
15	23	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.6	SR	Determine what details in specific paragraphs suggest about the main character in an excerpt.	C
16	24	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.4	SR	Analyze how a specific word impacts meaning in an excerpt.	C
17	24	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.1	SR	Make an inference about a character based on specific paragraphs in an excerpt.	B
18	25	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.3	SR	Analyze what is suggested by details in a specific paragraph in an excerpt.	B
19	25	<i>Reading</i>	RL.7.1	SR	Analyze how specific paragraphs contribute to the development of an excerpt.	A

* 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 7 English Language Arts Spring 2026 Unreleased Operational Items

PBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.5	SR	Identify the structure an author uses to engage a reader in a passage.
21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.4	SR	Analyze the purpose of a phrase in a sentence.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.3	SR	Analyze how specific examples in a passage develop an important idea.
23	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.5	SR	Analyze the differences between two sections in a passage.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.5	SR	Identify the purpose for including specific paragraphs in a passage.
25	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.5	SR	Determine the purpose of a specific writing technique in a passage.
26	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.3	SR	Determine a characteristic of the subject of a passage and identify support from the passage.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.5	SR	Determine a cause and effect relationship developed in a passage.
28	<i>Language</i>	L.7.2	SR	Identify the purpose of punctuation in a sentence.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RI.7.1	SR	Use evidence to support a conclusion in a passage.
30	<i>Language</i>	L.7.5	SR	Analyze the use of figurative language in a passage.
31	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, W.7.2, W.7.4	ES	Write an essay that explains the factors that affect a specific response in the subjects of a passage; use evidence from the passage to support the essay.

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