**MCAS Grades 3–8 English Language Arts (ELA)**

**Test Information**

This document describes the test designs, question types, and other information related to the next-generation MCAS ELA tests at grades 3–8. The tests will be administered in the [spring](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cal.html).

**Standards Alignment**

The grades 3–8 ELA tests are aligned to the [2017 Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Framework](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html). More information about standards alignment can be found [here](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tdd/resources/ela-coding.html).

**Number of Sessions**

The test at each grade level will consist of two sessions administered over two days.

**Question Types**

The following table contains information about the question types on the tests.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question Type** | | **Total Points** | **Grade Levels** |
| Selected Response (SR) | Multiple Choice  *Students select one correct answer from four answer options.* | 1 | Grades 3–8 |
| Multiple Choice – Two-Part  *These items are two-part questions. Students select one correct answer for each part of the question.* | 2 | Grades 3–8 |
| Technology Enhanced *Students taking the computer-based test answer questions using technology such as drag-and-drop.* | 2 | Grades 3–8 |
| Constructed Response (CR) | Short Response  *Students construct a short written response.* | 3 | Grades 3–4 |
| Essay (ES) | Text-Based Essay *Students write an essay in response to text(s) they have read.* | 7 | Grades 3–5 |
| 8 | Grades 6–8 |

**Test Design**

Each test includes both common and matrix questions. Common questions count toward a student's score, while matrix questions consist of both field-test and equating questions and do not count toward a student's score.

**Common Questions**

In the common portion of the test, students will perform the following tasks.

* Read three passage sets.
* Answer 1-point and 2-point selected-response questions worth one or two points for each passage set.
* Write a constructed response (grades 3 and 4 only) or essay for two of the passage sets. The remaining passage set will not include a writing component.

The table below shows the point distribution by question type.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Number of 1-Point Questions (SR)** | **Number of 2-Point Questions (SR)** | **Number of Constructed**  **Responses (CR)** | **Number of Essays (ES)** | **Total Points on Test** |
| 3–4 | 24–28 | 3–5 | 1 | 1 | 44 |
| 5 | 24–28 | 3–5 | 0 | 2 | 48 |
| 6–8 | 24–28 | 3–5 | 0 | 2 | 50 |

**Reporting Categories**

The MCAS grades 3–8 ELA Reporting Categories are based on the strands from the [2017 Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Framework.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html)

**Approximate Percent of Points (+/- 5%) by Grade**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reporting Category** | **Grade 3** | **Grade 4** | **Grade 5** | **Grade 6** | **Grade 7** | **Grade 8** |
| **Reading** | 65% | 65% | 55% | 55% | 55% | 55% |
| **Language** | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| **Writing** | 10% | 10% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% |

**Matrix Questions (do not count toward students’ scores)**

Matrix questions will vary by grade:

* Students in grades 3 and 4 will read two additional passage sets and answer seventeen selected-response questions (one- or two-point). Students will also write either two constructed responses or one essay.
* Students in grades 5–8 will read two additional passage sets, answer seventeen selected-response questions (one- or two-point), and write one essay.

**Constructed Responses and Essays**

Rubrics for constructed-response and essay questions can be found [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tdd/ela.html?section=rubrics). In addition, blank response boxes for the computer-based test will be available for students to practice with. A student’s response can be longer than the space visible in a response box. If a student’s writing fills the response box, a scroll bar will appear, and the student can continue typing. The student can scroll up or down to see their response. The amount of space provided for student responses is below.

* Constructed responses:
  + 1,200 characters (equivalent to one hand-written paragraph at grades 3 and 4)
* Essays:
  + 2,500 characters (equivalent to one hand-written page at grades 3–5)
  + 5,000 characters (equivalent to two hand-written pages at grades 6–8)

Students taking the accommodated paper-based test will write their responses on lined pages as follows:

* Constructed responses:
  + one hand-written paragraph at grades 3 and 4
* Essays:
  + one hand-written page at grades 3–5
  + two hand-written pages at grades 6–8

**Additional Resources**

For more information about the test, see the [student work samples](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/), [released questions](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html) and materials posted on the [MCAS Resource Center](https://mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/).