





## Reading Test General Directions

- This test contains four segments.
- Read each story, article, or poem, and answer the questions.
- For each question, choose the answer you think is best.
- Look at the sample that shows how to answer the question.

### Sample Question:

In the article, what does the word sprout mean?

- A To dig
- B To weed
- C To grow
- D To watch

- When you finish a segment of the test, stop and check your answers. You may not work on a different segment of the test. You will be told when to begin the next segment.

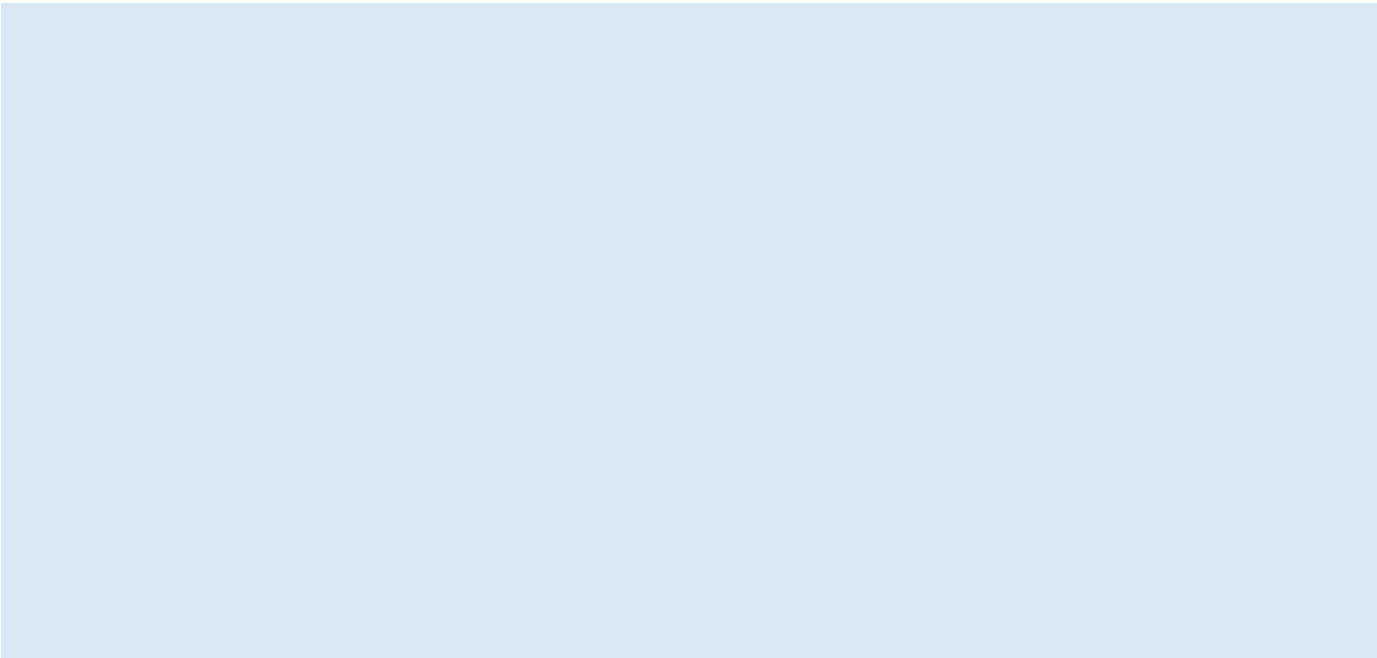






## Segment 1

You will be told when to begin this segment.



# Reading Test — Segment 1

Madan is well-known for his sewing. Read this story to find out if he can make a dress that would fit the moon. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

## A Dress for the Moon

by Indira Krishnan

- 1 Once upon a time a young man named Madan lived in a village in northern India. Madan's father wanted him to become a farmer. But Madan wished to leave the village and find work in town. He promised his father that he would send a part of his earnings home regularly. His father wished him a safe trip.
- 2 In town, Madan learned to be a tailor. He worked hard and soon became known for the fine clothes he made. The entire town wanted clothes sewed by Madan. The more his fame spread, the more proud and boastful Madan became.
- 3 One night Madan sat gazing at the full moon that shone from behind a tall coconut tree. He said, "I am sure I can make a dress for the moon. The moon will praise my handiwork, and then my fame will spread to the sun and stars."
- 4 A breeze carried his words to the coconut tree. Laughing softly, the tree bent down and whispered, "That's one thing you can't do."
- 5 Madan frowned. "How do you know what I can do?" he said. "You are only a tree."
- 6 The coconut tree tried to say something more, but Madan would not listen.
- 7 "If you want to be of some use, tell the moon that I want to make a dress for her. You are tall enough to do that," he said.

- 8 So the tree told the moon about Madan. The moon agreed to have a dress made by the famous tailor from Earth.
- 9 Madan jumped for joy. Quickly he began to sew a dress of smooth white satin for the moon. When it was done, he called out to the coconut tree, "You must give this dress to the moon, as I cannot reach her." The coconut tree agreed.
- 10 The following evening, as Madan waited eagerly for the moon to appear, the coconut tree bent down and whispered, "The moon says your dress doesn't fit. It's too loose."
- 11 Madan was stunned. "It can't be!" he cried. "The clothes I make always fit perfectly." But the moon returned the dress to him, and he had to redo it. He spent the night making the dress a little smaller and gave it back to the tree.
- 12 The next evening the moon rose a little later. Madan waited impatiently. But again the coconut tree bent down and whispered, "The dress is still too loose."
- 13 Madan nearly wept with disappointment. "I can't believe it! How could I go wrong?" he wailed.
- 14 "I tried to tell you before," said the tree. "After the moon is full, she grows smaller each day until you can't see her at all. I have been noticing this for many years. So how can you make one dress that would fit the moon properly? But you wouldn't listen to me."
- 15 Brokenhearted, Madan sat with his head in his hands the whole night.
- 16 At the break of day he saw the moon on the other side of the sky. He whispered, "I am sorry, dear Moon. I am not as great a tailor as I thought."
- 17 "It's all right," said the moon. "After all, I'm the moon. How can I wear clothes as people do?"

- 18 From that day on, Madan resolved to work harder than before. He was not vain anymore, and his hard work brought him more money. He remembered to send a good part of it to his father. People liked him better because he was an excellent tailor and a humble one, too.

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1. Which sentence best describes Madan at the beginning of the story?

- Ⓐ He is shy and works quietly.
- Ⓑ He is proud and seeks greatness.
- Ⓒ He is sad and tries to learn more.
- Ⓓ He is kind and generous to others.

2. Read the following dictionary definitions.

**spread**

1. to open over a larger area (spread out a map)
2. to stretch out: extend (spread my arms wide)
3. to cover something (spread a cloth on the table)
4. to pass from person to person (the news spread rapidly)

Which meaning best fits the way spread is used in paragraph 2 of the story?

- Ⓐ Meaning 1
- Ⓑ Meaning 2
- Ⓒ Meaning 3
- Ⓓ Meaning 4

3. Why does Madan want to make a dress for the moon?
- Ⓐ He thinks the moon will be his friend.
  - Ⓑ He thinks the moon will look prettier in a dress.
  - Ⓒ He wants to impress his father and get more money.
  - Ⓓ He wants the moon to praise him so he will be more famous.
4. The tree thinks Madan's idea to make a dress for the moon is
- Ⓐ silly.
  - Ⓑ mean.
  - Ⓒ smart.
  - Ⓓ clever.

5. After the moon returns the dress the first time, Madan

- Ⓐ asks for help.
- Ⓑ tries again.
- Ⓒ cries all night.
- Ⓓ gives up.

6. In paragraph 14 the word properly means

- Ⓐ loosely.
- Ⓑ correctly.
- Ⓒ happily.
- Ⓓ handsomely.

7. What does Madan send home to his father?
- Ⓐ Clothes
  - Ⓑ Food
  - Ⓒ Jewelry
  - Ⓓ Money
8. Which fact about the moon is most important in the story?
- Ⓐ The moon rises in the evening.
  - Ⓑ The moon shines on the coconut tree.
  - Ⓒ The moon changes its shape all the time.
  - Ⓓ The moon appears in the sky at different times.

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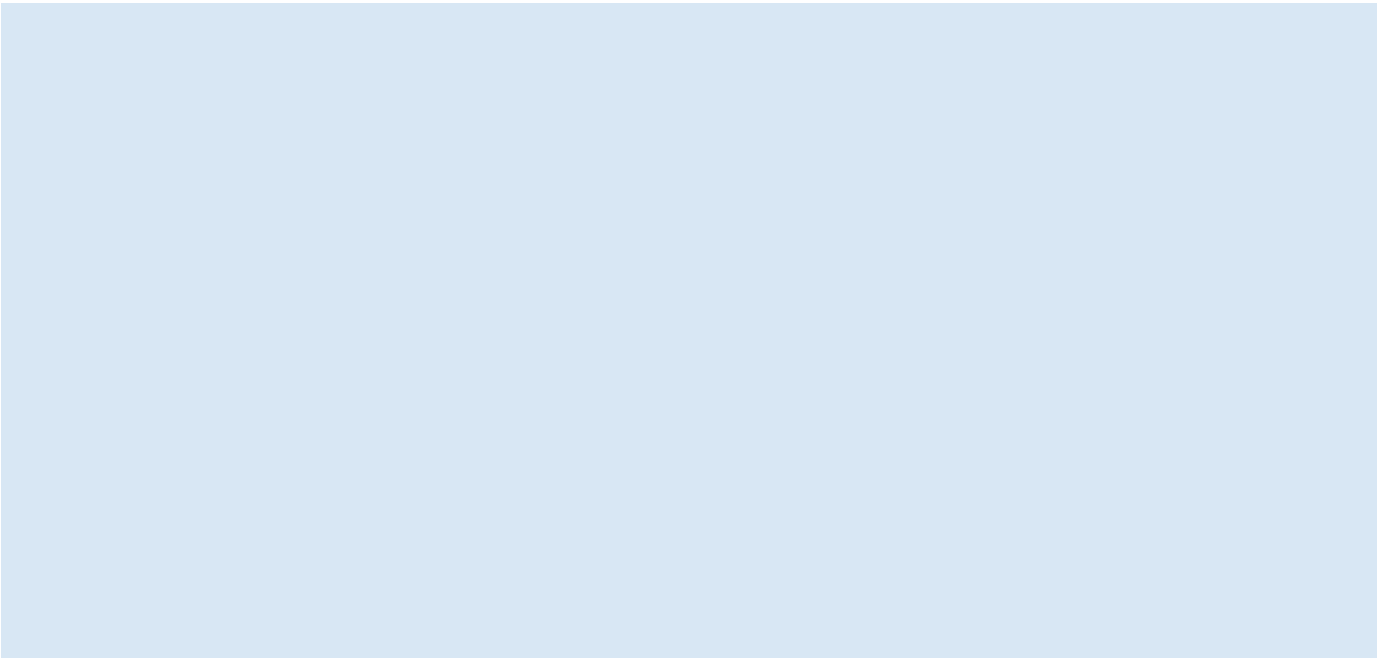
**This is the end of Segment 1.**  
Check your work.





## Segment 2

You will be told when to begin this segment.



## Reading Test — Segment 2

A young girl named Helen Keller was blind and deaf. Read this article about how Helen's teacher helped her learn about the world around her. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

### Helen Keller: The World in Her Heart

by Lesa Cline-Ransome

- 1 Helen found ways to speak to her family. For Father, she made the shape of glasses with her fingers. For baby sister Mildred, she sucked her thumb, and for Mother, she laid her hand against her face. But each day she grew more frustrated and angry, hitting Mildred, kicking at her family, and crying. Her parents tried to make her happy, but Helen's behavior only got worse.
- 2 They needed help, so they sent for a teacher from the Perkins Institute for the Blind, a school in Boston.
- 3 A stranger was here. Helen reached forward to touch her.
- 4 A smooth, round face with no lines.
- 5 *Young.*
- 6 Curly hair, pulled back smooth.
- 7 *Neat.*
- 8 Tight lips, turned up just a little on each end.
- 9 *Trying to hide a smile.*
- 10 And her eyes.
- 11 *Hidden behind glasses.*

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- 12 The stranger will not leave. Each day there is something new. The stranger's hand in hers. Fingers tracing, fists pounding, so many unfamiliar shapes.
- 13 *What do they mean?*
- 14 The stranger stayed by her side every minute of the day. Helen tried to hide, but she was always found. She even tried locking the stranger in her room. Nothing worked. Helen reached for her favorite things: her doll, a piece of hard candy, a bowl of cake batter. The stranger always took Helen's hand in hers, fingers tracing, fists pounding, too many strange shapes.
- 15 *I don't like her.*
- 16 Helen fought. She cried. She touched her cheek.
- 17 *I want my mother.*
- 18 Helen learned her first word at the pump. A cool splash, slippery and wet. *Water*. She learned quickly. With the stranger's help she discovered that each of the movements in her hand was the shape of a letter. And that all of the letters put together made words.
- 19 One by one the words came. Perched high in her favorite oak amid the caresses of plants came *tree*. And *leaves*. A smooth, hard something nestled in the palm of her hand. *Egg*. Then *birds* and *nests*.
- 20 Helen touched everything in her path. *Tell me the name*, she gestured.
- 21 And the stranger taught her to spell the names of her family: *M-o-t-h-e-r*; all the foods she ate: *e-g-g-s* and *b-r-e-a-d* and, her favorite, *c-a-k-e*.
- 22 *Is there a name for everything?*
- 23 *Y-e-s*, the stranger responded.

- 24 *But who are you?* Helen asked by pointing and placing a hand on the stranger's chest.
- 25 The letters were spelled slowly into her hand. *T-e-a-c-h-e-r*.
- 26 *T-e-a-c-h-e-r*. Helen spelled back.
- 27 *I like her*.
- 28 Soon Helen could spell nearly six hundred words. Stepping onto a well-worn path, leading Teacher down past the old barn, Helen paid close attention. She felt the sharp crunch of pine needles underfoot, then the spongy cushion of moss, and the rickety planks of a bridge.
- 29 *Almost there*, she signaled to Teacher.
- 30 When she caught the scent of water she stopped.
- 31 *W-a-t-e-r*, she spelled in Teacher's hand.
- 32 *T-e-n-n-e-s-s-e-e R-i-v-e-r*, Teacher corrected.
- 33 Helen dug in mud up to her elbows, filling holes with water, stacking pebbles one by one, and shaping mounds of mud. She trudged home with dirt-caked fingernails and a dress stiff with dirt, but in her head were many new words, such as *o-c-e-a-n*, *d-a-m*, *m-o-u-n-t-a-i-n*, and *v-a-l-l-e-y*.
- 34 In the heat of the day, Helen soaked in the warmth as *s-u-n*, *s-k-y*, *p-l-a-n-e-t*, and *s-t-a-r* were traced in her palm.
- 35 On other days, as drops poured down on her face, Helen stood perfectly still, her feet in a puddle, drinking in the rain. *C-l-o-u-d-s* and *t-h-u-n-d-e-r* she practiced spelling.

- 36 But it was in the family garden, fragrant with perfumed blossoms, that Helen discovered her favorite spot. *C-l-e-m-a-t-i-s, l-i-l-y, r-o-s-e*, she spelled as she touched each petal. Surrounded by butterflies and bees, beetles and dragonflies, she felt them whirl and crawl and land softly all around her.
- 37 With so many new words came many new questions.

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9. What does paragraph 1 tell readers about Helen?
- Ⓐ She does not recognize her family.
  - Ⓑ She understands the thoughts of her family.
  - Ⓒ She does not enjoy time with her family.
  - Ⓓ She wants to communicate with her family.
10. Why does Helen make “the shape of glasses with her fingers” when she means “Father”?
- Ⓐ Helen’s mother has different glasses.
  - Ⓑ Helen has felt the glasses on her father’s face.
  - Ⓒ Helen’s father has glasses like the teacher.
  - Ⓓ Helen learned about glasses in her teacher’s lessons.

11. Read these sentences from paragraph 12.

The stranger's hand in hers. Fingers tracing, fists pounding, so many unfamiliar shapes.

The author includes these sentences most likely to

- (A) explain how the teacher makes words.
- (B) show how the teacher wants to comfort Helen.
- (C) explain how the teacher's behavior upsets Helen.
- (D) show how Helen expresses her feelings.

12. Which word does Helen first learn to spell?

- (A) Tree
- (B) Water
- (C) Mother
- (D) Teacher

13. Read paragraph 17 from the article.

*I want my mother.*

Why does the author most likely use italics in this sentence?

- Ⓐ To describe Helen's actions
- Ⓑ To inform readers of important ideas
- Ⓒ To show Helen's thoughts
- Ⓓ To explain the meaning of new words

14. Based on information in the article, what does gestured mean in paragraph 20?

- Ⓐ Asked
- Ⓑ Pulled
- Ⓒ Motioned
- Ⓓ Demanded

15. Which sentence from the article shows that Helen is eager to learn?

- Ⓐ "The stranger stayed by her side every minute of the day."  
(paragraph 14)
- Ⓑ "Helen learned her first word at the pump."  
(paragraph 18)
- Ⓒ "The letters were spelled slowly into her hand."  
(paragraph 25)
- Ⓓ "Soon Helen could spell nearly six hundred words."  
(paragraph 28)

**This is the end of Segment 2.**  
Check your work.

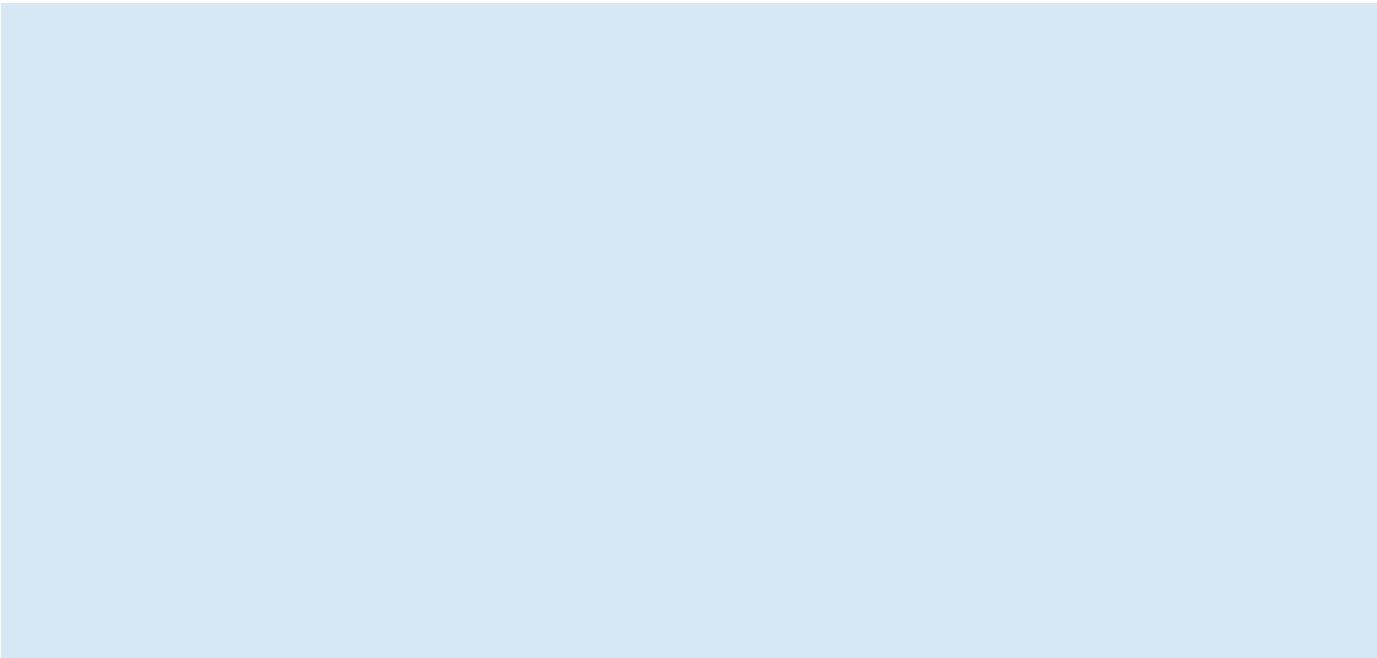






## Segment 3

You will be told when to begin this segment.



## Reading Test — Segment 3

Read this poem about a special day at school when an author visits. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain lines in the poem. The lines are numbered on the left side.

### My Special Day at Third Street School

by Eve Bunting

- 1 AN AUTHOR'S COMING TO OUR SCHOOL.  
Our teacher's so excited.  
The author wrote and said that she  
was glad to be invited.
- 5 Her name is Miss Amanda Drake.  
She's coming on the bus  
from over on Biloxi Street  
just to visit us.
- 10 First, of course, we read her books . . .  
every one we've got.  
Then we borrow fourteen more.  
She's written quite a lot.
- 15 We make a welcome banner  
that we hang up in the hall.  
We draw a million drawings  
just to decorate the wall.
- 20 We fold some origami flowers.  
They're very hard to do.  
We pile them in a basket  
with a note that says "For You."

We make a list of questions  
that we'll ask Amanda Drake.  
Our teacher says "Don't ask her,  
'How much money do you make?'"

25 We squeeze some ice-cold lemonade.  
We bake a chocolate cake.  
Our classroom's looking beautiful  
for Miss Amanda Drake.

30 She's here! She's here! We're in a state  
of great anticipation!  
We stamp our feet and clap our hands  
to show appreciation.

Amanda Drake is tall and thin.  
Her hair is streaked with pink.  
35 It doesn't sound attractive,  
but it's nicer than you think.

She talks to us and reads to us  
and says she loves to write.  
"I'm working, working every day  
40 and sometimes every night.

"Verbs and nouns and adjectives,  
words that show and tell.  
My dictionary's close at hand  
for words that I can't spell.

45 "There's something that I'd like to share  
because it's truly true.  
It doesn't seem like work  
if you are loving what you do."

16. Miss Amanda Drake visits Third Street School because

- Ⓐ the children have made her presents.
- Ⓑ she lives near the school.
- Ⓒ the school is so beautiful.
- Ⓓ she has been invited.

17. Which statement about Miss Amanda Drake is true?

- Ⓐ She writes to ask for directions to Third Street School.
- Ⓑ She arrives in the morning at Third Street School.
- Ⓒ She walks part way to Third Street School.
- Ⓓ She rides the bus to Third Street School.

18. Why do the students want to meet Miss Amanda Drake?

- Ⓐ They like her books.
- Ⓑ They like her pink hair.
- Ⓒ They like the way she reads to them.
- Ⓓ They like the letter she wrote to them.

19. Which line from the poem contains figurative language?

- Ⓐ "We make a welcome banner"  
(line 13)
- Ⓑ "We draw a million drawings"  
(line 15)
- Ⓒ "We pile them in a basket"  
(line 19)
- Ⓓ "We make a list of questions"  
(line 21)

20. In line 32, what does the word appreciation mean?

- Ⓐ Hope
- Ⓑ Thanks
- Ⓒ Wonder
- Ⓓ Surprise

21. Read lines 29–32 from the poem.

She's here! She's here! We're in a state  
of great anticipation!  
We stamp our feet and clap our hands  
to show appreciation.

Which phrase describes the students in lines 29–32?

- Ⓐ Eager to prepare
  - Ⓑ Suddenly shy
  - Ⓒ Full of excitement
  - Ⓓ Suddenly surprised
22. Which quotation contains a detail important to the main idea of the poem?
- Ⓐ "She's coming on the bus"  
(line 6)
  - Ⓑ "Then we borrow fourteen more"  
(line 11)
  - Ⓒ "but it's nicer than you think"  
(line 36)
  - Ⓓ "and says she loves to write"  
(line 38)

23. Who is the speaker of the poem?

- Ⓐ A student at Third Street School
- Ⓑ The principal from Third Street School
- Ⓒ A teacher at Third Street School
- Ⓓ The writer who visits Third Street School

24. What is Miss Amanda Drake's message to the students?

- Ⓐ Ask good questions if you expect good answers.
- Ⓑ Use a tool such as a dictionary when you write.
- Ⓒ Enjoy your job even if you have to work hard.
- Ⓓ Behave kindly toward people when they visit.

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Go on to the next page.

**This is the end of Segment 3.**  
Check your work.





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Grade 3  
Reading  
Item Sampler

# Grade 3 Teacher’s Guide



## MCA Item Sampler Teacher’s Guide

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### An Introduction to the MCA

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments are reading, mathematics and science tests that help schools and districts measure student progress toward the state’s academic standards. The grades 3–8 mathematics assessments became operational in 2011 as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III (MCA-III) and are aligned to the 2007 Minnesota Academic Standards. In 2012, the science assessments became operational as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III (MCA-III) and are aligned to the 2009 Minnesota Academic Standards. In 2013, the grades 3-8 and 10 reading assessments are aligned to the 2010 Minnesota Academic Standards as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III (MCA-III). In 2014, the grade 11 mathematics assessment is aligned to the 2007 Minnesota Academic Standards as the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III (MCA-III).

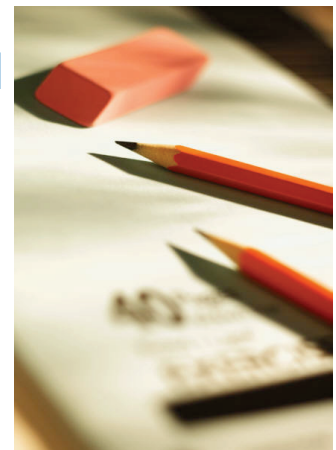
### The Purpose of the MCA Item Samplers

An item sampler is not a complete test. It contains a smaller number of the items than students will see on a full-length test in the spring. The MCA Item Samplers were developed to familiarize students and teachers with the format of the MCA and the kinds of items that will appear on them.

This MCA Item Sampler is not a real test. It should not be used to predict how well students will do on the tests. However, students may feel more comfortable with the tests if they have reviewed the Item Samplers prior to the test.

### How the MCA Item Samplers Were Created

The Item Samplers mirror the format of the MCA. The student directions, segment layouts and answer document each reflect the way the test will look in the spring, except that the Item Sampler is shorter than the actual test. As with all MCAs, the reading passages and the math and reading questions have been thoroughly reviewed by Minnesota teachers prior to testing. Minnesota students have answered these questions on previous tests.



# Grade 3 Teacher's Guide

The distribution of question types and their aligned content selected for the Item Sampler generally reflects a range of items from each strand in the Minnesota Academic Standards. Whenever possible, the Item Samplers have the following designs:

## Reading:

- Three segments
  - The actual MCA has four segments
- Three passages
  - Literature passages, informational passages and text sets will be used if available and aligned for test specifications for that grade level.
- Multiple-choice items
  - Six to eleven multiple-choice items for single passages
  - Twelve to fifteen multiple-choice items for text sets
- Appropriate Lexile of passages for the test specifications of the grade

## The Contents of This Teacher's Guide

The Answer Key identifies the answers to the questions. The key also identifies the strand/sub-strand/standard/benchmark from the Minnesota Academic Standards to which each question is aligned.

## State Standards and Test Specifications

The Item Samplers are primarily intended to familiarize teachers and students with the **format** of the MCA. The best preparation for the **content** of the MCA is done as a part of your curriculum planning. When doing that, reference the Minnesota Academic Standards and the test specifications for the MCA. For further questions about the MCAs, email us at [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us).

# Grade 3 Teacher's Guide

## MCA-III Item Sampler Answer Key Grade 3 Reading

Item #	Correct Answer	Item Type	Skill Domain	SSB	Depth of Knowledge
1	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.3.3	II
2	D	MC	Craft and Structure	3.1.4.4	II
3	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.3.3	II
4	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.3.3	II
5	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.3.3	I
6	B	MC	Craft and Structure	3.1.4.4	II
7	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.1.1	I
8	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.1.1	II
9	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.2.1.1	II
10	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.2.1.1	II
11	A	MC	Craft and Structure	3.2.6.6	III
12	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.2.1.1	I
13	C	MC	Craft and Structure	3.2.5.5	III
14	C	MC	Craft and Structure	3.2.4.4	III
15	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.2.1.1	II
16	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.1.1	I
17	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.1.1	I
18	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.3.3	II
19	B	MC	Craft and Structure	3.1.4.4	II
20	B	MC	Craft and Structure	3.1.4.4	II
21	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.3.3	III
22	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.2.2	III
23	A	MC	Craft and Structure	3.1.6.6	II
24	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	3.1.2.2	III

## Passage Characteristics

Segment	Title	Type	Lexile	Word Count
1	A Dress for the Moon	L	640	116
2	Helen Keller: The World in Her Heart	I	600	632
3	My Special Day at Third Street School	L	N/A	261

# Grade 3 Teacher’s Guide

## Legend:

**Correct Answer** — Answers to multiple-choice questions are listed.

**Item Type** — Multiple Choice (**MC**)

**Skill Domain** — The skill domain to which the item is aligned. The Skill Domains are the following:

- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

**SSB** — The SSB includes the grade, sub-strand, standard and benchmark to which an item is aligned.

**Depth of Knowledge (DOK)** — A classification of the complexity of an item based on Norman L. Webb’s Depth of Knowledge. See the test specifications for an explanation of DOKs.

- Level I: Recall
- Level II: Skill/Concept
- Level III: Strategic Thinking

**Passage Characteristics** — Each passage has several characteristics that are used when constructing the MCAs.

- Type: The reading MCAs use literature passages, informational passages and text sets.
- Lexile: Lexile is a readability measure used on the MCAs to determine text difficulty. (Lexile does not apply to poems.)
- Word Count: The total number of words in the passage, not including the introduction contained before the title.