

Grade 4 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2018 grade 4 English Language Arts test was a next-generation assessment that was administered in two formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. The test included both operational items, which count toward a student's score, and matrix items. The matrix portion of the test consisted of field-test and equating questions that do not count toward a student's score.

Most of the operational items on the grade 4 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In some instances, the wording of a paper item differed slightly from the computer-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, that item was typically replaced with one or more alternative items on the paper test. These alternative items sometimes assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item, or other standards from the same reporting category.

This document displays the **paper-based versions** of the 2018 operational items that have been released. The **computer-based versions** of the released items are available on the MCAS Resource Center website at mcas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 4 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and constructed-response or essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items, in which students select the correct answer from among several answer options.

Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 4 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/.

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 chapter 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 bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former English learner students only. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA test session.

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This session contains 18 questions.

Directions

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

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Student 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 each response in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

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Read the passage from "Hiding Out" about two pet cats who have sneaked out of their house. Then answer the questions that follow.

from "Hiding Out"

by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor



- 1 It was dark, damp, prickly, and smelly under the bush. A good kind of smelly. For Marco, it brought back wonderful memories of the hour he had spent in the yard on his own. But it was the first time that Polo's paws had touched bare ground.
- 2 "It smells like . . . like flower pots!" Polo said breathlessly.
- 3 "Earth," Marco told him.
- 4 "It feels like broom bristles!"
- 5 "Grass," said Marco.
- 6 "It's dark under here, like the inside of a box!"
- 7 "No," said Marco, "it's better. Being outdoors and on your own is about the best thing that can happen to a cat." He stopped talking suddenly. "Shhhh," he warned.
- 8 Mr. Neal was coming back across the yard.
- 9 "Don't make a sound, don't move a muscle, don't wiggle a whisker, don't even breathe!" Marco warned his brother. "If he sees us, it means jail inside forever."

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- 10 There was a rusty squeaking sound of a handle being turned, then footsteps again as Mr. Neal walked away, and finally a new sound that not even Marco could figure out—a soft, shushing, pit-pat sound.
- 11 *Whoosh!*
- 12 A spray of water landed on the bush, filtering down onto the two tabbies.
- 13 Polo's eyes grew huge; his body tensed, ready to spring, but Marco hissed again: "Don't move! Stay where you are."
- 14 And just as suddenly as the shower had descended on them, it was over.
- 15 "Whew!" said Polo. "I thought we were goners."
- 16 They could still hear the shushing sound, however. First the pit-pat sound grew fainter and fainter, then louder and louder, and *whoosh!* There it was again.
- 17 Polo closed his eyes and shivered. "Don't move!" came Marco's warning.
- 18 Once again the shower went away.
- 19 Footsteps. Mr. Neal was coming back to the side door.
- 20 "Uh-oh," Marco heard him say. "I left the door open! Lucky the cats didn't notice." He went inside and closed the screen.
- 21 Any minute he would discover them gone. Any minute he would come looking.
- 22 "See that shed next to the porch?" Marco whispered. "There's a space behind it where we could hide. When I say go, make a run for it."
- 23 The water was coming again. The pit-pat sounds were growing louder.
- 24 "Go!" Marco hissed, and the two tabbies streaked across the wet grass and disappeared behind the shed.
- 25 The space between the shed and the back porch was narrow and even darker than under the bush. It wasn't earth-dirty, it was dust-dirty, with cobwebs, old newspaper, dry leaves, sticks, spiders, and a broken clay pot.
- 26 Polo looked about himself in dismay. "*This* is what we were escaping to?" he asked.
- 27 "Only until the coast is clear," Marco said. "Do you see the trees out there in the yard?"

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28 Polo nodded.

29 "Do you see the fence beyond the trees?"

30 "Yes."

31 "Beyond that fence is the whole world, and it's waiting just for us."

"Hiding Out" by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, from *The Grand Escape*. Copyright © 1993 by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. Reprinted by permission of Atheneum Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing Division.

English Language Arts

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

But it was the first time that Polo’s paws had touched bare ground.

What is the meaning of **bare** in the sentence?

- A. clean
- B. simple
- C. peeled
- D. uncovered

- 2 Read the sentence from paragraph 9 in the box.

“Don’t make a sound, don’t move a muscle, don’t wiggle a whisker, don’t even breathe!” Marco warned his brother.

Based on the details in the passage, what is the **most likely** reason Marco repeats the word “don’t”?

- A. He is grumpy.
- B. He is impolite.
- C. He is nervous.
- D. He is confused.

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3 Based on the passage, what is the **most likely** reason that Marco tells Polo what to do in paragraph 9?

- A. Marco is the older cat.
- B. Marco has been outside before.
- C. Marco knows that Polo is scared.
- D. Marco likes to be in charge of Polo.

4 Based on the details in the passage, why does Mr. Neal go outside?

- A. to let out the cats
- B. to look for the cats
- C. to turn on the water
- D. to clean up the yard

5 Read the sentences from paragraph 20 of the passage.

“Uh-oh,” Marco heard him say. “I left the door open! Lucky the cats didn’t notice.” He went inside and closed the screen.

What do the sentences show about Mr. Neal?

- A. He does not have a lock on the door.
- B. He does not want the house to get cold.
- C. He does not know that the cats are awake.
- D. He does not know that the cats are outdoors.

6 What is the passage **mostly** about?

- A. staying safe
- B. becoming free
- C. enjoying memories
- D. appreciating new things

7 Read these sentences from the passage in the box.

- “It smells like . . . like flower pots!”
- “It feels like broom bristles!”
- “It’s dark under here, like the inside of a box!”

What do **each** of the sentences contain?

- A. a simile
- B. a rhyme
- C. alliteration
- D. personification

8

Part A

Which statement **best** explains how Polo feels when he and Marco hide near the shed?

- A. He is scared to be on the lawn.
- B. He is worried that they will be chilly.
- C. He wonders if they have gotten lost.
- D. He wonders if running away is a good idea.

Part B

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

- A. "The pit-pat sounds were growing. . . ." (paragraph 23)
- B. "The space between the shed and the back porch was narrow. . . ." (paragraph 25)
- C. "'*This* is what we were escaping to?' he asked." (paragraph 26)
- D. "'Do you see the trees out there in the yard?'" (paragraph 27)

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For this question, you will write a story based on the passage. Write your story in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet. Your writing should:

- **Use characters, settings, events, and other details from the passage.**
- **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**

- 9** Based on “Hiding Out,” write a story that tells the events from Polo’s point of view. Use what you know about the characters, setting, and events from the passage to write your story.

Read the passage and the article about exciting jobs working in nature. Then answer the questions that follow.

Read the passage from “Danger Zone.”

from “Danger Zone”

by Carsten Peter

- 1 The ground shakes. Suddenly, it cracks open. The crack is right under my camera gear. I grab my gear just in time! Moments later, hot lava shoots out of the crack. It flies into the air and lands with a splatter.
- 2 As a National Geographic photographer, I’m used to such close calls. I travel to some of the most dangerous places on Earth. There’s nothing I love more than coming face-to-face with an active volcano.
- 3 To get the perfect shot, I’ve crawled into active craters. I’ve dodged globs of flying lava. I’ve stood on the edge of boiling lava lakes.
- 4 It thrills me to think of where the lava comes from. This hot, melted rock starts as magma flowing deep inside Earth. It pushes up through cracks in Earth’s crust. When it erupts, the lava hardens into rock. It builds volcanoes.
- 5 To me, though, volcanoes are more than mountains of rock. As I stand on the rim of a volcano, it feels like Earth is alive under my feet. I hear lava hissing, crackling, and popping. It sounds like music to me.

Getting There

- 6 I’ve explored volcanoes all over the world. My favorite volcano might surprise you. It’s not the most dangerous one. It doesn’t explode with huge fountains of lava. In fact, it may be the strangest volcano on Earth.
- 7 To get to this volcano, my team and I fly to Tanzania in Africa. Then we’re in for a day of hard driving.
- 8 First, we cross a vast valley. It’s hot, dry, and dangerous. Whirlwinds of dust called dust devils swirl in the distance. The valley seems to go on and on. That’s because it’s not just any valley. It’s where the edges of two of Earth’s giant tectonic plates touch. Hot, flowing magma deep under these plates pushes and tugs on them. It slowly pulls them apart.

Magma Rising

- 9 The pushing and tugging creates a giant rift, or gap in Earth's crust. It also weakens the crust. So it's easier for magma to bubble up to the surface here than in many other places.
- 10 Once magma reaches the surface, it's called lava. In spots, lava erupts through cracks in the crust. I see proof of that far off in the distance. A mountain pokes above the valley floor.
- 11 From a distance, it looks like a typical stratovolcano. It towers over the valley like a pyramid. This volcano may have started to form about 700,000 years ago. With each eruption, lava spilled out of the ground and hardened. Then ash settled on top of it. Layer by layer, the volcano grew. Now its steep sides rise nearly 3,000 meters (9,700 feet).

Slip and Slide

- 12 We drive as close to the top of the volcano as we can. Then we grab our gear and start hiking. It's not easy. Thick dust covers the volcano's steep sides. So each time I take a step up, my foot slides partway back. I take another step and slide again. I've moved up, but barely.
- 13 I don't mind. This slippery slope is one way this volcano is odd. It's made of lava rock like other volcanoes. Yet this rock is more crumbly.
- 14 Finally, we make it to the top. We've reached the volcano's crater, or its opening. Here's where lava spills out of the ground. It rises up through vents, or tunnels inside the volcano. Finally it bubbles, flows, or even blasts out.

Rock Art

- 15 I feel like I've climbed to another planet. I've never seen anything like it. Wild rock shapes rise from the crater floor. One looks like a giant wing. It formed when lava spurted out of a vent like a fountain. Then the lava hardened before it could hit the ground.
- 16 I see small, domed mounds and tall, skinny chimneys. Some chimneys spit lava. The lava turns foamy in midair. Then it hardens. It clatters to the ground like silver glitter.

"Danger Zone" by Carsten Peter, from *National Geographic Extreme Explorer* (October 2012, Vol. 6, Issue 2).
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Read the article "Into the Rain Forest."

Into the Rain Forest

by Brenna Maloney



- 1 A rain forest is not a glamorous place. Just ask Lucy Cooke. She's a zoologist, or a scientist who studies animals. She loves weird animals and wild places.
- 2 Her fascination with wildlife started as a child. She watched a nature program about the waxy monkey frog. To her, the frog looked like an alien. She had to know more about this frog. The more she learned, the more she wanted to know about other frogs.
- 3 As a scientist, Cooke still studies frogs and other amphibians. She often travels to rain forests where they live. It's not easy. These forests can be hot, humid, and full of icky surprises. On her frog hunts, she's learned a few things about exploring. Her first explorer's lesson comes in handy even before leaving home.

Pack Carefully

- 4 Cooke often must carry her gear. So she has to pack carefully. She makes a list. At the top is her frog mask and cape. People she meets think they're funny. That's the point. Cooke uses them to get people talking about frogs and how to protect them.
- 5 That's important because frogs face many dangers. A deadly fungus threatens some frogs, for example. Some frogs also have less space to live. That's because people are spreading out and building more homes, cities, and roads. So frogs lose their habitat.
- 6 Some frog species are extinct. Others are at risk of dying out. Cooke wants people to care about these problems. She uses her mask and cape to spread this message.

Bring What You Need

- 7 Other items on her list are more practical. Take her rubber boots, for example. "They make you invincible," Cooke says. She feels safe in her boots. They keep her feet dry as she slogs through the mud. They also protect her from slithering snakes and blood-sucking leeches. These animals can't bite through rubber boots.
- 8 Plenty of bugs bite in the rain forest, too. So Cooke carries bug spray. Yet she makes sure it's safe for the environment. This is important "especially if I'm handling frogs," she says. Frogs absorb things through their skin. Toxic bug spray can kill a frog. Cooke wants to hold and study frogs, not kill them.
- 9 To study frogs, she has to find them first. That can be hard in a dark rain forest. So Cooke packs a headlamp. That way, she can see where she's going. It helps her spot hidden animals, too.

Don't Dress Up

- 10 Of course, Cooke also packs clothes. They're not fancy. "Everyone wears the same uniform," Cooke says. "We're all in baggy trousers, a long-sleeve shirt, a T-shirt."
- 11 These clothes cover a lot of her skin. That's important in the rain forest. If thorns scratch her, the cuts can get infected. If bugs bite her, she can get sick.
- 12 Her clothes protect her, but they also take a beating. They get sweaty and smelly. She does, too. Explorers get used to seeing one another that way, though. "We all stink of mold and bug spray," Cooke says.

Expect Simple Meals

- 13 Explorers use a lot of energy. So they need food that's filling. It must be easy to carry and cook. Some trips last weeks, so the food also must last a long time. That rules out a lot of fresh food. It goes bad too quickly. One kind of food is just right, though.
- 14 In the field, "I eat a lot of plain rice," Cooke says. It gives her energy. It's a little boring, though. So, like most explorers, she has a fantasy meal. It's what she wants to eat when she returns home. Halfway through a trip, she starts thinking about this meal. She dreams of juicy cheeseburgers.
- 15 There are no cheeseburgers in the rain forest. As a special treat, though, "you might eat a little chicken, sometimes," she says.

Keep Cool

- 16 No matter what challenge Cooke faces in the rain forest, she can't panic. She learned this lesson the hard way. While hiking in the Amazon, she suddenly realized she was no longer on the trail.
- 17 Then things got worse. Cooke heard a crash. A tapir charged out of the forest. These animals are strong. They can run very fast. And they often don't like visitors.
- 18 Cooke froze. Yet she felt a little thrill. Tapirs are "very secretive and hard to spot," says Cooke. "It was incredibly frightening, but I knew how lucky I was to be seeing it."
- 19 The tapir ran past her and disappeared. Cooke felt awe and relief. She was still lost, though. She tried to retrace her steps. Finally, she found the trail. "I don't think I've ever been so relieved," she says. Keeping calm may have saved her life.

You're the Guest

- 20 The rain forest is the tapir's home. It's home to a lot of other animals, too. Cooke is just visiting. She was reminded of this on one trip. She stayed in a hut. She soon discovered that she wasn't alone.
- 21 She found cockroaches in her sleeping bag. She shook them out of her gear and her clothes. Then one day, the bugs found her toothbrush. They crawled all over it.
- 22 Cooke took a deep breath. She reminded herself that the bugs belonged there. Her job was to observe and not disturb. Her toothbrush clearly was in the bugs' way. Putting it away solved that problem.

Listen to Your Teammates

- 23 Preventing some problems takes teamwork. Recently, Cooke traveled to South America. She wanted to find the world's most toxic frog. "This frog has enough poison to kill 10 or 15 men," Cooke says. "You have to wear gloves, or you'd be dead in 3 minutes."
- 24 Cooke and her team spent more than a year carefully planning this five-day trip. "For 25 years, I have wanted to see this creature," Cooke says. When she finally did, "I burst into tears. I went to wipe away my tears, when my entire team yelled 'STOP!'" She had poison from the frog on her glove. One touch to her face could have been fatal.
- 25 Being an explorer is a tough job. The food is bad. The bugs are creepy. The danger can be deadly. Cooke says it's all worth it. Her trips have allowed her to spread the word about the threats frogs face. She doesn't mind roughing it, just as long as she remembers her explorer's lessons.

"Into the Rain Forest" by Brenna Maloney, from *National Geographic Extreme Explorer* (September 2013, Vol. 7, Issue 1). Text copyright © 2013 by the National Geographic Society. Reprinted by permission of National Geographic Society. Photograph copyright © Mariusz Jurgielewicz/Hemera/Thinkstock.

English Language Arts

- 19** Read paragraphs 9 and 10 of the passage. Based on paragraph 10, which word means about the same thing as ***erupts***?
- A. falls
 - B. leaks
 - C. bursts
 - D. freezes
- 20** Reread paragraph 15 of the passage. Which word from the passage helps the reader understand the phrase “like a fountain”?
- A. climbed
 - B. formed
 - C. spurted
 - D. hardened
- 21** Based on paragraphs 15 and 16 of the passage, how does the author feel when he visits the volcano in Tanzania?
- A. amazed
 - B. confused
 - C. surprised
 - D. frightened

- 22 Which sentence **best** summarizes the passage?
- A. A photographer nearly loses his camera.
 - B. A photographer works for a famous organization.
 - C. A photographer finds unusual rock formations at a volcano.
 - D. A photographer describes a trip to take pictures of a volcano.
- 23 Which phrase from paragraph 5 of the article helps the reader understand the meaning of the word **habitat**?
- A. “deadly fungus”
 - B. “space to live”
 - C. “spreading out”
 - D. “cities, and roads”
- 24 Read the section “Keep Cool” from the article. Based on the section, what does Cooke mean when she says that she is **relieved**?
- A. She is tired from walking.
 - B. She is grateful to be unhurt.
 - C. She is anxious to get moving.
 - D. She is excited about a new sight.

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- 25 Based on the passage and the article, which character trait is shared by both the author of “Danger Zone” and Lucy Cooke in “Into the Rain Forest”?

A. bravery
B. honesty
C. helpfulness
D. playfulness

26 **Part A**

Which phrase helps the reader understand the meaning of the word *invincible* as it is used in paragraph 7 of the article?

A. unable to be harmed
B. unable to be helped
C. unable to be seen
D. unable to be cold

Part B

Which word from paragraph 7 **best** supports the answer to Part A?

A. practical
B. safe
C. dry
D. slithering

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Write your response to this question in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 27** Based on “Into the Rain Forest,” write a paragraph that explains how Lucy Cooke **most likely** feels about the rain forest. Support your response with important details from the article.

Grade 4 English Language Arts
Spring 2018 Released Operational Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, Item Descriptions, and Correct Answers

PBT Item No.*	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type**	Description	Correct Answer (SR)***
1	26	<i>Language</i>	L.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word used in the passage.	D
2	26	<i>Language</i>	L.4.3	SR	Identify how words are used for effect in the passage.	C
3	27	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Make an inference about a character in the passage.	B
4	27	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.1	SR	Make an inference to determine what a character is doing in the passage.	C
5	27	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Describe a character in the passage based on the character's words and actions.	D
6	28	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.2	SR	Determine the main idea of the passage.	B
7	28	<i>Language</i>	L.4.5	SR	Identify the figurative language used in multiple phrases in the passage.	A
8	29	<i>Reading</i>	RL.4.3	SR	Describe a character's feelings and choose evidence from the passage to support the description.	D;C
9	30	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3, W.4.3, W.4.4	ES	Write a narrative about the events in the passage from another character's point of view.	
19	37	<i>Language</i>	L.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	C
20	37	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a phrase using context from the passage.	C
21	37	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.6	SR	Determine the author's feelings in a passage.	A
22	38	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.2	SR	Determine which sentence best summarizes the passage.	D
23	38	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.4	SR	Use information from the article to determine the meaning of a word.	B
24	38	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	B
25	39	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.9	SR	Identify a character trait shared by the authors of both texts.	A
26	39	<i>Language</i>	L.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context and identify supporting evidence from the article.	A;B
27	40	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.1	CR	Write a paragraph that explains the author's feelings about a topic, using important details from the article.	

* "PBT Item Number" refers to the position of the item on the operational paper-based test. This is the item number that DESE refers to when reporting student results for a PBT item.

** ELA item types are: selected-response (SR), constructed-response (CR), 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 4 English Language Arts
Spring 2018 Unreleased Operational Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Item Descriptions

PBT Item No.*	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type**	Description
10	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.2	SR	Identify a key detail that supports a main idea of the article.
11	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.1	SR	Make an inference based on information from the article.
12	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.7	SR	Explain how the information in a diagram contributes to an understanding of the article.
13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.1	SR	Make an inference based on information from the article.
14	<i>Language</i>	L.4.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word based on understanding of a suffix.
15	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.4	SR	Identify the meaning of a word based on information from the article.
16	<i>Language</i>	L.4.1	SR	Identify the part of speech of words used in the article.
17	<i>Reading</i>	RI.4.8	SR	Identify a point an author makes and evidence from the article used to support it.
18	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.4.1, L.4.2, L.4.3, W.4.2, W.4.4	ES	Write an essay that explains the central idea of the article; use information from the article to support your explanation.

* “PBT Item Number” refers to the position of the item on the operational paper-based test. This is the item number that DESE refers to when reporting student results for a PBT item.

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