

Name _____

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III

Reading Item Sampler
Grade 6



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SAMPLER TEST BOOK MAY BE COPIED OR DUPLICATED.**

Minnesota Department of
Education

Reading Test General Directions

- This test contains four segments.
- You may take notes and highlight in this test book.
- Read each passage, 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 Answered in Test Book:

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. Then use the sticker given to you to seal it. Once you seal a segment, you cannot go back to it. Each segment must be sealed before you move on to the next segment.



Segment 1

You will be told when to begin this segment.

Reading Test — Segment 1

1

Read this passage about native Alaskans traveling to a trade fair. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

The Trade Fair at Sheshalik

by Debby Dahl Edwardson

- 1 The Siberians are traveling with us to the trade fair, traveling along the coast, their boats piled high with the reindeer skins they have brought to trade. Our dogs run along the shore like shadows, their packs bouncing against their ribs—happy to be out in the late night sun, happy to be free. I am happy, too, gliding along in our skin boat, watching them run, wishing I could stretch my limbs and run with them, run for the sheer joy of it, as they do.
- 2 How glorious it is when summer comes again! Glorious to be out on the open water of the summer sea in the nightlong sun, watching the bright ocean ice drift by, dreamlike, on the smooth dark water. Watching the grassy tundra roll past us, nearly close enough to touch, thick with the smell of sunshine and earth and greenery—*Aarigaa!*
- 3 Newborn animals are everywhere, too—birds and caribou and even baby seals—and we ourselves are soon to have a newborn of our own. Nuna, traveling with us, is round as a whale and clumsy in her unaccustomed shape, always forgetting she can no longer bend as fast as a child, and often impatient for her time to come.
- 4 *Because it's her first*, Mama said one time.
- 5 *Because it's a girl, a big round girl*, Aaka had countered, clicking her tongue and frowning the way grandmothers do sometimes. *We need another hunter in this family!*
- 6 Tupaaq smiled wide, eyeing Aaluk: *Girls can be good hunters, too*, he said, winking at me. *Girls are good with arrows.*
- 7 Tupaaq had asked Aaluk to ride in his boat that time, but Aaluk said no, muttering to herself how she'd rather run with the dogs. Aaka had frowned at this, because Tupaaq is from Aaka's village, the village of my father's people, and Aaka favors him.
- 8 *I'll go*, I said. *I'll go in Tupaaq's boat.*
- 9 But Mama shook her head.
- 10 *You're too little*, she said.
- 11 Too little for what? I had wondered, tall as I was. I was big, nearly bigger than Aaluk—big enough, certainly, to ride in Tupaaq's well-made boat.

- 12 *I'm big enough*, I said. Saying it just like that, too, as bossy as Aaluk.
- 13 *Big like a lemming.*¹ Aaluk laughed. Tupaaq laughed, too, which made my cheeks grow warm.
- 14 *Wait until you grow bigger, little lemming. Just wait*, Tupaaq said. Which made me feel like the lemming in the story Tupaaq always tells, the one stuck underneath an old sealskin, hollering at the top of his lungs.
- 15 Suddenly, I want to holler, too, sitting here in my father's boat. I had waited so long for this trip to begin, but now, I realize, I'm ready for it to end, for the excitement of the trade fair to start. Waiting to hear the sound of the drums welcoming us into the Sheshalik inlet and waiting to hear the wavering note of the women's voices, clear as water, singing the songs of Sheshalik, the Sheshalik welcoming songs.
- 16 We begin to hear their songs when we are still too far away to even see the people. The drums—we hear the drums first. The sound grows louder and louder, pulling us swiftly across the surface of the water, guiding us toward the spit of land, green with summer, that is Sheshalik.
- 17 As we round the final bend, the drumming begins to throb in the air around us like a heartbeat and the sweet shrillness of the women's voices shoots across the surface of the water in bright arrows of sound.
- 18 Baby Manu, bouncing on her mother's back in the front of our boat, squeals with delight, trying to sing as the women sing. I, too, am barely able to keep myself from squealing along with her.
- 19 My father has raised our flag, the flag of our whalers, and as soon as the drummers see it, their song changes and they begin, at once, to drum one of our own songs, announcing our arrival with our own music. Suddenly I feel very proud to be from the island, proud to claim such a brave song as the song of my own people, hearing it as if with new ears. The drumming grows louder and louder as we approach the shore, and soon the sound of our own voices joins with the sounds of theirs, sweet as birdsong.
- 20 *Welcoming.*
- 21 Sheshalik, at first sight, is too big to believe—all the tents, the caribou-skin tents of our people, stretching out along the edge of the beach and reaching up inland as far as the eye can see. Overflowing with the sounds of happiness—the kind of happiness that only comes of many, many people, all coming together as one.
- 22 This is my first impression of the Sheshalik trade fair, that all the people of the world must be here. Everyone in the entire world, all here at Sheshalik, preparing to trade.

¹lemming—a small animal, similar to a mouse, that lives in far northern areas

1. 1. Read these sentences from paragraph 13.

Big like a lemming. Aaluk laughed. Tupaaq laughed, too, which made my cheeks grow warm.

Which word best describes how the narrator feels in this excerpt?

- A. Embarrassed
 - B. Frightened
 - C. Invisible
 - D. Upset
-

2. The main reason the author uses italics in the passage is to

- A. signal changes of setting.
 - B. indicate important information.
 - C. show when a character speaks.
 - D. introduce words from other languages.
-

3. Which event signals the arrival of the narrator's family?

- A. People drumming
- B. Flags waving
- C. Babies squealing
- D. Dogs barking

4. In paragraph 19, why does the narrator describe the song by saying she is “hearing it as if with new ears”?

- A. She has never heard this song before.
 - B. The song has more meaning for her this time.
 - C. She is unfamiliar with the words in the song.
 - D. The song is louder than ever before.
-

5. Why is the narrator forbidden to ride with Tupaaq?

- A. The narrator’s grandmother is angry at Tupaaq.
 - B. Tupaaq plans to invite the narrator’s sister instead.
 - C. Tupaaq’s boat is too crowded to carry the narrator.
 - D. The narrator is too young to ride in Tupaaq’s boat.
-

6. In paragraph 15, the narrator says “the women’s voices, clear as water” most likely to reveal that

- A. the sound is perfect and pure.
- B. the words are simple and familiar.
- C. the women sing near the shore.
- D. the women are visible from a great distance.

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This is the end of Segment 1.

Check your work. Then seal this segment.



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Segment 2

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Reading Test – Segment 2

In the Sonoran Desert, natives use plants as medicine. Read the article. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

Your Local Desert Food and Drugstore

by Carrie A. Greer

- 2
- 1 "Mom, my throat hurts and I'm hungry!"
 - 2 "Okay, son, grab a bowl and some scissors and let's go outside."
 - 3 Imagine hearing that from your mom! Go outside to get medicine?
 - 4 Well, for thousands of years that's what the native people of the Sonoran Desert did—they went outside to find food and treatments for their illnesses. More than 400 edible plants grow in the Sonoran Desert and many of these plants can be used as medicines.
 - 5 The Sonoran Desert is an arid region covering 120,000 square miles in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California and parts of Mexico. The Natives, known as the *Tohono O'odham* (means the Desert People), also called the Papago, and the *Akimel O'odham* (the River People), also known as the Pima, and their ancestors, have lived in the Sonoran Desert from roughly 300 B.C. Today, they number around 30,000.
 - 6 The Sonoran Desert is considered a natural pharmacy because a treatment for almost every illness known to man grows there.
 - 7 One of the more common Sonoran Desert plants is the creosote bush. This plant is considered to be the oldest plant in the world and is sometimes called the "drugstore of the desert." The creosote was traditionally used to treat diseases the way penicillin is used today. The creosote has been known to help cure colds, stomach cramps and to heal wounds and burns.
 - 8 The creosote is a tough little plant, too. It is resistant to heat, drought, poor soil and competition. The creosote exudes chemicals in the soil to keep other plants from growing and will fight aggressively for any available water. The creosote usually wins because its root systems are deep and extensive. Amazingly, the creosote can live up to two years without water.
 - 9 The Spanish explorers who first came to the Sonoran Desert called the creosote "Little Stinker" because of the thick, sweet odor the plants emit after a rain storm. This odor is a medicine itself because it contains antibiotic properties and when the leaves of the bush are boiled the smell helps loosen nasal passages. A pre-historic Vicks!

- 10 Because there are so many medicinal uses for the creosote bush, scientists and botanists are still learning what this plant can do. Some scientists are even finding ways to use the creosote bush as a form of chemotherapy for cancer patients.
- 11 The mesquite tree is another common plant and is known as the desert's "tree of life" since it had so many uses. Bean pods from the tree were used for food, the wood to build houses and the tree roots for cords and ropes. Black gum, from the tree, was placed on the gums of teething babies to help relieve pain, and the tree's clear sap was used to soothe sore throats. There is no part of the mesquite tree that cannot be used as a medicine.
- 12 The prickly pear cactus is a classic Western cactus. This "Mickey Mouse ear" looking cactus grows in the desert where nothing else will. The pink, pear shaped fruits are edible and were used by some native peoples as a source of dye for their wool. Some still use this technique today.
- 13 Small skinned sections of the prickly pear pads were held on gums and cheeks to lessen inflammation from gum infections and mouth sores. To cure earaches, a split pad was warmed and placed over the ear. Juice from the prickly pear was used as a soothing skin lotion for minor rashes and sunburn, just like we use aloe vera today. The most remarkable use for the prickly pear cactus was to control the blood sugar levels in diabetics.
- 14 Are you wondering how people found these medicines? One answer is that the native peoples watched what the animals ate. If it helped them with an ailment then it just might help humans. The most probable answer is simply, *trial and error*. A person might be looking for something to eat and eventually realize that after eating this food they began to feel better. On the other hand, one might have found something that had very unpleasant effects on them.
- 15 After gaining a full understanding of how these plants work, the people of the Sonoran Desert had their very own pharmacy in the desert. It is illegal to go out and gather these natural plants today because many of them are protected by the Arizona Native Plant Law; however, with special permission, many of these plants are now sold in ethnic grocery stores in Arizona.

7. Which sentence best illustrates the main idea of the article?
- A. "One of the more common Sonoran Desert plants is the creosote bush."
 - B. "The Sonoran Desert is an arid region covering 120,000 square miles in southwestern Arizona, southeastern California and parts of Mexico."
 - C. "More than 400 edible plants grow in the Sonoran Desert and many of these plants can be used as medicines."
 - D. "It is illegal to go out and gather these natural plants today because many of them are protected by the Arizona Native Plant Law; however, with special permission, many of these plants are now sold in ethnic grocery stores in Arizona."
-

8. The main purpose of paragraphs 1–3 is most likely to
- A. present information that readers need to understand the article.
 - B. introduce a problem and solution that help readers visualize the setting.
 - C. present an unexpected situation that captures readers' attention.
 - D. introduce a relationship between a mother and son that appeals to readers' emotions.
-

9. Which sentence best illustrates the author's opinion?
- A. "One of the more common Sonoran Desert plants is the creosote bush."
 - B. "The most remarkable use for the prickly pear cactus was to control the blood sugar levels in diabetics."
 - C. "There is no part of the mesquite tree that cannot be used as a medicine."
 - D. "Because there are so many medicinal uses for the creosote bush, scientists and botanists are still learning what this plant can do."

- 10.** Which sentence helps support the author’s claim that the Sonoran Desert “is considered a natural pharmacy”?
- A.** “Amazingly, the creosote can live up to two years without water.”
 - B.** “The creosote has been known to help cure colds, stomach cramps and to heal wounds and burns.”
 - C.** “The creosote is a tough little plant, too.”
 - D.** “The Spanish explorers who first came to the Sonoran Desert called the creosote ‘Little Stinker’ because of the thick, sweet odor the plants emit after a rain storm.”
-
- 11.** In the past, how did the native people of the Sonoran Desert determine which plants were safe for humans?
- A.** They used trial and error.
 - B.** They learned from their ancestors.
 - C.** They tried the plants on animals first.
 - D.** They studied how the plants affected the environment.
-
- 12.** Vicks is a strong-smelling medicine currently used to treat colds and congestion. Read this quotation from paragraph 9.

A pre-historic Vicks!

The author included this quotation most likely to

- A.** explain in detail how the plant helps loosen nasal passages.
- B.** provide a sensory description of the scent of the creosote bush when boiled.
- C.** add humor to maintain interest while relating the material to modern times.
- D.** explain a benefit of the creosote bush while providing a distraction from the facts.

- 13.** Why is the mesquite tree known as the desert's "tree of life"?
- A.** Bean pods of the tree were used as nourishing food.
 - B.** The tree grows in the desert where nothing else will grow.
 - C.** Clear sap from the tree was used to relieve sore throats.
 - D.** The native peoples use all parts of the tree to survive in the desert.
-

- 14.** The author would most likely agree that
- A.** native peoples appreciate living in the desert.
 - B.** native plants treat illnesses better than modern medicines.
 - C.** surviving in deserts is difficult without careful study of native plants.
 - D.** using native plants to treat illnesses is a wise use of natural resources.

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Segment 3

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Reading Test – Segment 3

Cats in their various poses have inspired many writers. Read this poem. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain lines. The lines are numbered on the left side.

Catalog

by Rosalie Moore

A California poet, Rosalie Moore, has observed the way cats curl up in velvet balls to "sleep fat" or shrink themselves to "walk thin," and how they can fit themselves anywhere, whether it is in the narrowest opening or the most inconvenient box.

- 1 Cats sleep fat and walk thin.
Cats, when they sleep, slump;
When they wake, pull in—
And where the plump's been
- 5 There's skin.
Cats walk thin.

- Cats wait in a lump,
Jump in a streak.
Cats, when they jump, are sleek
- 10 As a grape slipping its skin—
They have technique.
Oh, cats don't creak,
They sneak.

- Cats sleep fat.
- 15 They spread comfort beneath them
Like a good mat,
As if they picked the place
And then sat,
You walk around one
- 20 As if he were the City Hall
After that.

If male,
A cat is apt to sing upon a major scale:
This concert is for everybody, this
25 Is wholesale,
For a baton, he wields a tail.
(He is also found,
When happy, to resound
With an enclosed and private sound.)

30 A cat condenses.
He pulls in his tail to go under bridges,
And himself to go under fences.
Cats fit
In any size box or kit;
35 And if a large pumpkin grew under one,
He could arch over it.

When everyone else is just ready to go out,
The cat is just ready to come in.
He's not where he's been.
40 Cats sleep fat and walk thin.

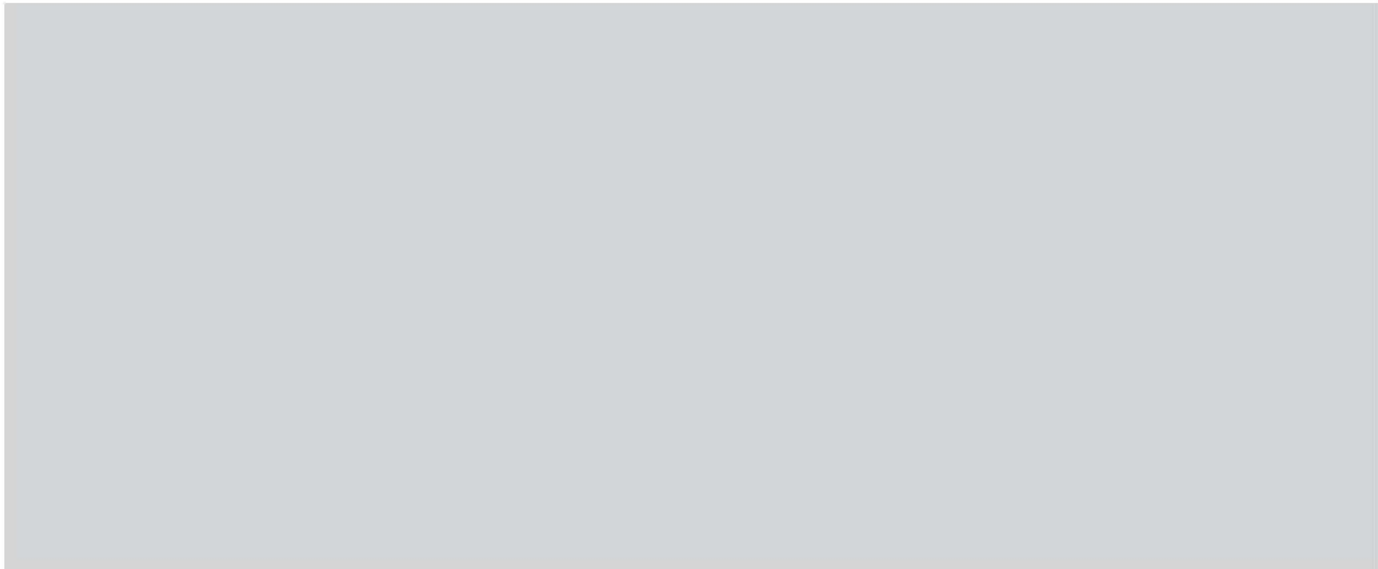
- 15.** What does the speaker say cats do just before they jump?
- A.** "wait"
 - B.** "sneak"
 - C.** "walk"
 - D.** "sing"
-

- 16.** Which lines from the poem contrast quiet and noisy cats?
- A.** Lines 1–3 and lines 7–9
 - B.** Lines 5–6 and lines 14–16
 - C.** Lines 11–13 and lines 23–25
 - D.** Lines 19–21 and lines 37–38
-

- 17.** In lines 14–18, to what does the speaker compare comfort?
- A.** A refreshing nap
 - B.** A nice rug
 - C.** A secret hideaway
 - D.** A public building

- 18.** Which clue helps the reader know that wields in line 26 means “uses” or “carries”?
- A.** The stanza is about a concert.
 - B.** There is an image of a cat singing.
 - C.** The cat’s tail is compared to a baton.
 - D.** The section is about male cats.
-

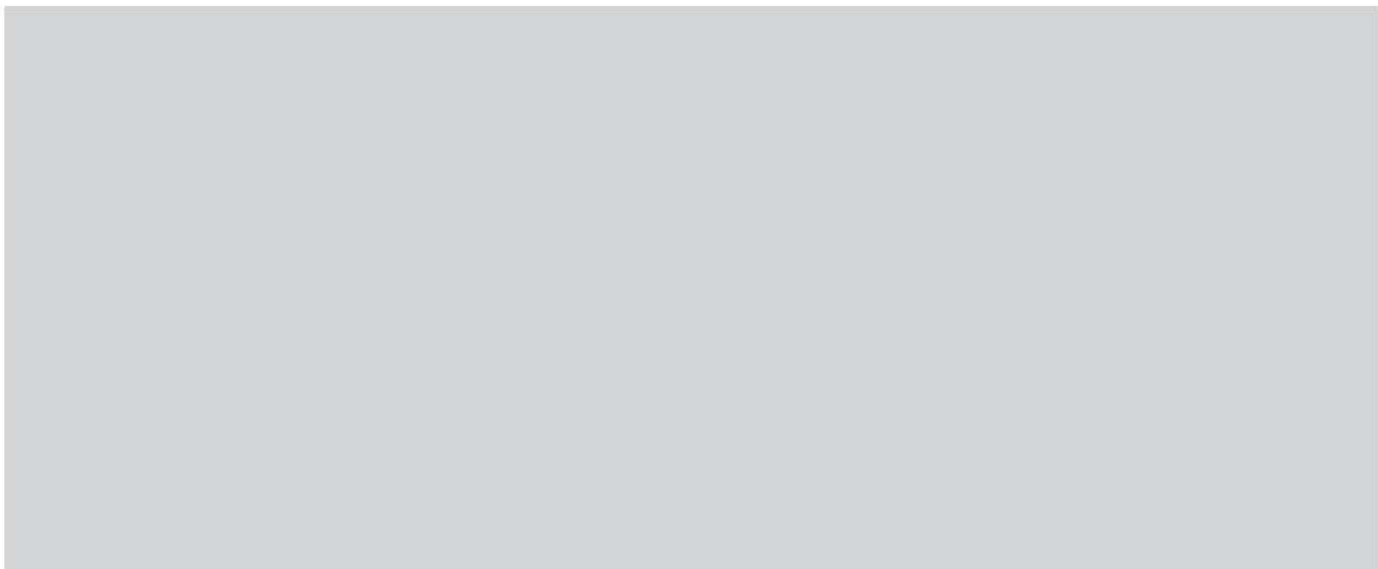
- 19.** Which group of readers would probably enjoy this poem the most?
- A.** People who have cats
 - B.** Scientists who study cats
 - C.** People who are afraid of cats
 - D.** Veterinarians who take care of cats



This is the end of Segment 3.

Check your work. Then seal this segment.

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Segment 4

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Reading Test – Segment 4

Read the following two articles about celebrations of light in Hindu and Persian cultures. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

Selection 1

Diwali: The Indian Festival of Lights

by Virginia Abraham

- 1 What is your favorite holiday? Is it Halloween in October with its spooky trick or treaters, haunted house tours and treat bags bursting with candy? Or, is it Thanksgiving in November with its roasted turkey crammed with apple and walnut stuffing?
- 2 Esha Sharma, a ten year old Indian girl from Norwalk, Connecticut, celebrates the Hindu (Hin-DOO) festival of *Diwali* (DEE-wahl-ee). Esha’s Dad, Arun, and Mom, Juhi, are Hindus born in the state of Punjab in northern India. Hindus all over India celebrate Diwali, the five-day Festival of Lights, in October or November, decided by the Hindu lunar calendar.

What is Diwali?

- 3 Diwali or *Deepawali* means “row of lights.” There are many different origins (and customs) for this holiday, but in Northern India, the legend of the *Ramayana* is popular.
- 4 In the *Ramayana*, the good prince, Rama, who has been forced to leave his kingdom of Ayodhya for fourteen years, returns home after having defeated the demon Ravana. Diwali celebrates the victory of Rama, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.
- 5 The citizens of Ayodhya set up rows and rows of lamps called *diyas* (DEE-yahs) to celebrate his return. A diya is a tiny clay lamp, sometimes hand-painted with intricate designs, that holds a votive candle. Hindus also believe that Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, will visit a home lit in sparkling lights and shower it with riches.

Getting Ready for Diwali

- 6 Diwali is a joyful and colorful holiday. Esha and her mom do many special things to get ready. A few days before, Esha will help her Mom place 21 diyas around the house. The Sharmas set up rows of diyas along the front and back porch railings. They also place one diya in each room.

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- 7 On the evening of Diwali, just after sunset, Esha’s mom will light each diya until it blows out at nightfall. Her mom says that, here in the U.S., the fickle autumn winds blow the diyas out much more quickly than in India.

Elaborate Feasts

- 8 Diwali is also a time to celebrate with food. Esha’s mom always cooks a traditional Indian dinner. This past October, she served *aloo* (spiced potatoes) with *puri* (POO-ree), a whole wheat, fried flat bread. For dessert, the family enjoyed many Indian sweets, including *kheer* (rice cooked in sugared milk and garnished with dry fruits and cardamom) and *ladoos* (round sweets made with gram flour). Esha’s mom also brought home her favorite dessert, *gulab jamunns* (GOO-lab ja-MOONs). These are deep-fried dumplings made with milk powder and pastry flour, soaked in sugar syrup and served hot!

Traditional Indian Dress

- 9 During this festival, after Esha gets home from school, she changes into a traditional north Indian dress called a *salwar kameez* (SAL-waar ka-MEES). A salwar kameez is a knee-length tunic spun in Indian silks (or cotton) and embroidered or beaded with colorful designs. The tunic is worn over matching loose pants that are tied at the waist with a slender white rope. A long *dupatta* (DOO-pa-ta) or scarf, drapes over the neck in a complementary color and design.

A Time for Prayer

- 10 After everyone is dressed, the family gathers for the *puja* (POO-ja) or prayers at home. For a puja, Esha and her mom put statues of gods and goddesses on the kitchen counter, placing diyas and *mithai* (MEE-tie-e) or sweets as offerings before them. The Sharmas put a statue of Lakshmi (lak-SHMEE), the goddess of wealth and Ganesh, the elephant god, on the puja altar. They will then recite prayers and hymnals in their honor.

Celebrating Diwali at School

- 11 There is a large and vibrant Indian community in Norwalk. So, a few years ago, Esha’s mom gathered with other Indian parents and asked the school principal if their children could celebrate Diwali as an important ethnic holiday.
- 12 Now, in every October or November, the schoolchildren at Columbus Magnate in Norwalk honor the festival of Diwali through art and dance. Both Indian and American children perform traditional dances before the entire school body. Notice boards in the school feature artwork illustrating the festival of lights and showcasing photos of family celebrations. Schools across the country are introducing festivals and holidays from various cultures.

Selection 2

Celebrate Light in the Dark

by Celia Taghdiri

- 13 Would your parents allow you to stay up past your bedtime to celebrate light? In Persian culture, it is not only permitted but encouraged, at least once a year. Iranian families celebrate winter solstice, or the longest night of the year, by opening their homes to families and friends and enjoying a scrumptious feast, while honoring an ancient ritual.
- 14 *Shab-e-Yalda* has been celebrated by Iranians for more than 3,500 years. *Shab* means night and *yalda* means birth. This age-old observance symbolizes the victory of the sun over darkness (the birth of the sun out of the womb of the longest night signifying the victory of light over darkness) since the days following December 21 grow longer and the nights, shorter.
- 15 To survive this long and cold night, the first thing Iranians do is warm up their homes. Since there was no electricity in ancient times, Persians kept warm by cuddling next to the *korsi*, an old Persian oven consisting of a wooden box filled with coal. They also burned small fires all night, thinking it would chase away the darkness and evil spirits. Today, Iranians turn on heaters, fireplaces and light candles.
- 16 No Persian celebration is ever complete without mouth-watering foods. The traditional table spread for Shab-e-Yalda includes yummy eggplant stew with lush saffron rice, chicken and yogurt. After dinner, Iranians continue to please their appetites by eating chopped watermelon, pomegranates, dried fruits and nuts. Some families serve the sweet *halva*. The food items are not only satisfying but symbolic.
- 17 Dried fruits and nuts represent prosperity for the days ahead, while watermelon and ruby-red pomegranate seeds are meant to keep you healthy in the wintertime and bring liveliness and joy. The sweet and warm halva helps overcome winter's cold.
- 18 The winter feast continues when the oldest family member gathers all the visitors and recites poetry, tells fortunes and stories. Afterwards, he or she says prayers, thanking God for the previous year's blessings and for prosperity in the coming year. Families play music, tell jokes and enjoy the extended evening.

- 19 Iranians grow excited as December 21 creeps up on the calendar. Grocery stores display signs advertising watermelon and pomegranates, while newspapers print front-page photos of the celebration from past years. School kids run home like jaguars to complete their homework and await sundown to begin the unique celebration.
- 20 Shab-e-Yalda is brief but glorious. It is a time when Iranians reflect on the previous year and share nothing but hope for the days to come. So the next time you suffer from the winter blues, just light a candle and know that the sun will eventually shine.
-

- 20.** The author begins the article by mentioning Halloween and Thanksgiving most likely to
- A.** explain when Diwali is celebrated.
 - B.** describe activities that occur during Diwali.
 - C.** relate Diwali to American holidays.
 - D.** compare American foods to those eaten during Diwali.

- 21.** How is celebrating Diwali different in the United States than in India?
- A.** The meal is more complex in the United States.
 - B.** The diya candles burn a shorter time in the United States.
 - C.** The festival is a shorter length in the United States.
 - D.** The festival clothing is more formal in the United States.
-

- 22.** Which sentence from the article best supports the subheading “Traditional Indian Dress”?
- A.** “Esha and her mom do many special things to get ready.”
 - B.** “A long *dupatta* (DOO-pa-ta) or scarf, drapes over the neck in a complementary color and design.”
 - C.** “After everyone is dressed, the family gathers for the *puja* (POO-ja) or prayers at home.”
 - D.** “Both Indian and American children perform traditional dances before the entire school body.”

- 23.** Which sentence best reveals the author’s attitude about the celebration of Diwali?
- A.** “Diwali is a joyful and colorful holiday.”
 - B.** “Diwali is also a time to celebrate with food.”
 - C.** “A salwar kameez is a knee-length tunic spun in Indian silks (or cotton) and embroidered or beaded with colorful designs.”
 - D.** “For a puja, Esha and her mom put statues of gods and goddesses on the kitchen counter, placing diyas and *mithai* (MEE-tie-e) or sweets as offerings before them.”
-

- 24.** Read this sentence from paragraph 18.

The winter feast continues when the oldest family member gathers all the visitors and recites poetry, tells fortunes and stories.

Which conclusion can readers draw from this sentence?

- A.** Iranian people respect elders of the family.
- B.** The winter feast involves much laughter.
- C.** Iranian people often offer generosity to strangers.
- D.** The winter feast requires the family to stay the night.

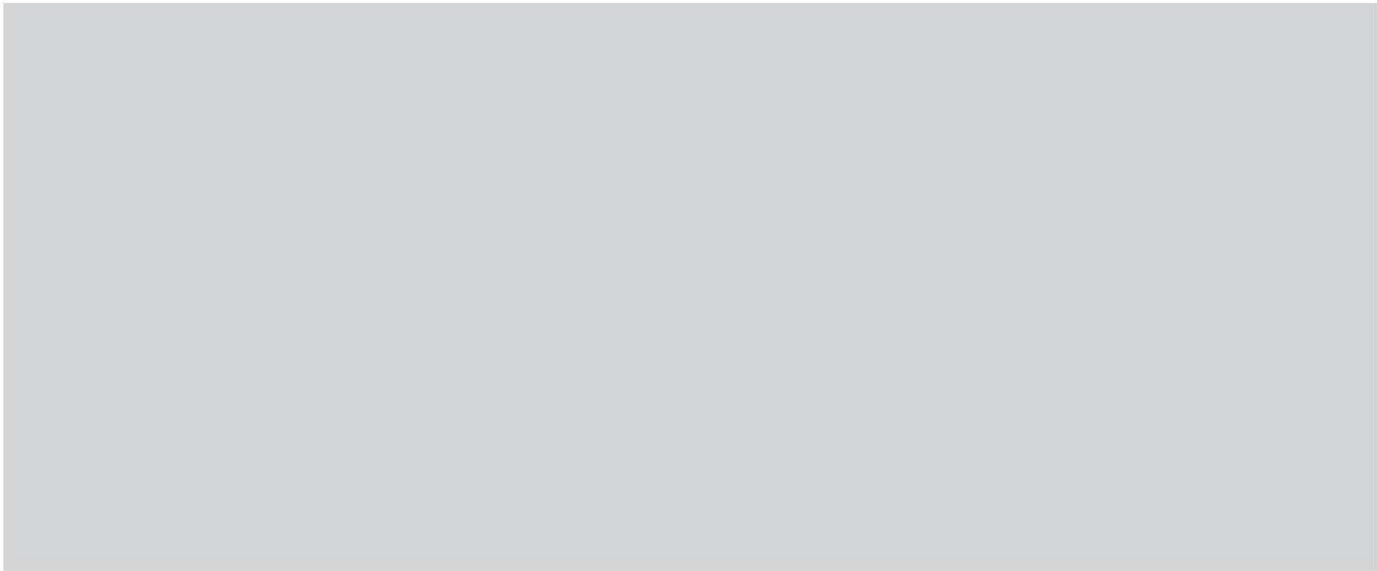
- 25.** In paragraph 19, why does the author compare Iranian children to jaguars?
- A.** To describe their healthy appetites
 - B.** To indicate their eager anticipation
 - C.** To describe their remarkable speed
 - D.** To indicate their extreme dedication
-

- 26.** The celebration of Shab-e-Yalda includes
- A.** sharing gifts.
 - B.** dancing together.
 - C.** reading a newspaper.
 - D.** lighting many candles.
-

- 27.** How are the purposes of “Diwali: The Indian Festival of Lights” and “Celebrate Light in the Dark” similar?
- A.** They entertain with stories of how families celebrate together.
 - B.** They attempt to persuade readers to celebrate specific holidays.
 - C.** They describe cultural festivals in which light is important.
 - D.** They inform readers about ways that people have historically used light.

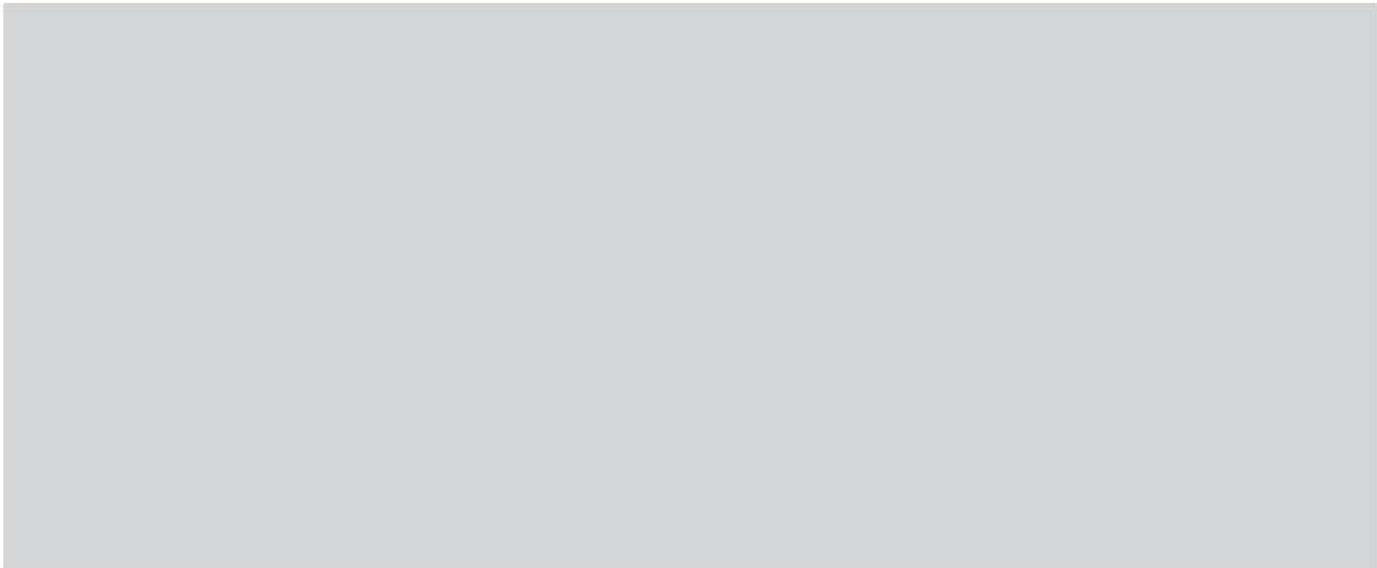
- 28.** According to the articles, how do the people of the two cultures compare regarding their use of light during their celebrations?
- A.** Indians believe light attracts the goddess of wealth; Iranians believe light chases darkness away.
 - B.** Indians and Iranians believe light protects them from danger in the darkness.
 - C.** Indians believe light brings blessings; Iranians believe light improves health.
 - D.** Indians and Iranians believe light brings knowledge.
-

- 29.** The articles are similar because they
- A.** include information about traditional dress.
 - B.** provide details about school celebrations.
 - C.** include foods that symbolize prosperity.
 - D.** develop positive attitudes about the culture.



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**Grade 6
Reading
Item Sampler**

Grade 6 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.



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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:

- Four segments similar to the actual MCA
- 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.

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MCA-III Item Sampler Answer Key Grade 6 Reading

Item #	Correct Answer	Item Type	Skill Domain	SSB	Depth of Knowledge
1	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.3.3	III
2	C	MC	Craft and Structure	6.4.5.5	II
3	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.1.1	I
4	B	MC	Craft and Structure	6.4.4.4	II
5	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.1.1	II
6	A	MC	Craft and Structure	6.4.4.4	II
7	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.2.2	II
8	C	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	II
9	B	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	II
10	B	MC	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	6.5.8.8	II
11	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	II
12	C	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	III
13	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	II
14	D	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	II
15	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.3.3	I
16	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.3.3	II
17	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.1.1	II
18	C	MC	Craft and Structure	6.4.4.4	II
19	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.4.2.2	II
20	C	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	II
21	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	I
22	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	I
23	A	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	II
24	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	II
25	B	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.4.4	I
26	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	II
27	C	MC	Craft and Structure	6.5.6.6	III
28	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.3.3	III
29	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	6.5.1.1	III

Passage Characteristics

Segment	Title	Type	Lexile	Word Count
1	The Trade Fair at Sheshalik	L	1160	821
2	Your Local Desert Food and Drugstore	I	1120	746
3	Catalog	L	N/A	200
4	Diwali: The Indian Festival of Lights/ Celebrate Light in the Dark	I/I	1120/1160	1102

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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.