

Name _____

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III

Reading Item Sampler
Grade 7



**ITEM SAMPLERS ARE NOT SECURE TEST MATERIALS. THIS ITEM
SAMPLER TEST BOOK MAY BE COPIED OR DUPLICATED.**

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

In this passage, the narrator describes a childhood memory in which Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955. Read this passage. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

A Seat on the Bus

written for the Minnesota Department of Education

- 1 A strange thing happened a few weeks ago on the Cleveland Avenue bus. One day after school, I had gone to visit my uncle at his job, which happens to be close to my school. We then rode the city bus home. The bus was crowded, as usual, but we managed to find two seats in the fourth row. Behind us, in the fifth row, were four black people who looked like they were coming home from work.
- 2 The bus stopped at the corner; some white folks boarded and moved directly to the seats occupied by the four black people. Sighing, three of them immediately gave up their seats and began moving to the back of the bus. The fourth person, however, refused to stand. In fact, she simply stared straight ahead, refusing to acknowledge the man looming over her. As you may guess, this behavior did not please the new passenger. (In Montgomery, Alabama, the law states that black and white people cannot sit in the same row on a bus. I guess I had never really thought about this before.)
- 3 The driver, annoyed at the sudden commotion on his bus, looked in the mirror and told the woman to move to the back of the bus and let the man sit down.
- 4 I thought that the woman was perhaps lost in a reverie of some kind and had not heard the driver's instructions. She was slight, wore glasses, and was about my mother's age or perhaps a little older.
- 5 "Surely she knows that she needs to get up," my uncle muttered angrily, putting down his newspaper and staring at the immobile woman. The man without a seat stood over the woman and made his impatience known. The bus idled as the standoff continued.
- 6 The exasperated driver finally stormed back to where the woman was sitting. "I need that seat!" he barked. The woman continued to ignore the growing tumult that was raging around her. I was amazed. Was it possible that she was actually unaware of city laws? The driver was angry, yet he seemed uncertain about a proper course of action. I imagine that he had never encountered a situation like this before. "Well, then, I'll call the police to have you arrested," he said after a few moments. It was obvious that he expected this threat to have its desired effect.

- 7 However, the woman simply looked him in the eye and said, "You may do that."
- 8 I heard several gasps from the other passengers. "Now she's done it," my uncle said. "She's gone too far this time." The driver glared at the woman, then turned and marched up the aisle and out of the bus.
- 9 "Well, if this doesn't beat all," my uncle groaned as he looked out his window. "Now we're going to be late for supper. If we weren't so far from home, I'd say we could get out and walk." Although I nodded in agreement, I was secretly glad we were staying on the bus. I wanted to see what would happen to this brave and stubborn woman. Would the police actually arrest her for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus? For the first time in my life, I began to think about the different rules that apply to different people.
- 10 As my uncle resumed reading his newspaper, I wondered briefly if I should catch up on my homework. I did not want to miss anything, however, so I decided to keep my books where they were. People all around were whispering in angry voices. Some people, of course, were whispering in loud voices, and I know the woman must have heard many of the unkind things they were saying about her. But if the woman's feelings were hurt, she did not show it. She continued to sit impassively.
- 11 A few minutes later, two police officers boarded the bus, followed by the indignant driver. They approached the woman and tried to force her out of the seat. "Why don't you listen to the driver?" one of them demanded.
- 12 "Why do you all push us around?" the lady shot back. Finally, she seemed a little angry.
- 13 "I don't know, but you're breaking the law," the police officer said. Then he grabbed her arm and pulled her up. As the officers led her off the bus, I caught her eye. She looked into my face and gave a little smile. It was odd how two powerful men were forcing her up the aisle, and yet she seemed stronger than both of them. Then she was gone.
- 14 "Thank goodness," my uncle sighed. "Now we can get going."
- 15 "What did she mean by that?" I asked. "When she asked why she gets pushed around?"
- 16 My uncle shook his head. "That's just the way things are," he stated. "You're too young to understand." Then he buried himself in his newspaper again, signaling the end of the discussion. I did not find his answer satisfactory. Something I saw in that woman's eyes helped me understand why a person would risk going to jail for a bus seat. However, I could not help wondering if her sacrifice would change anything in our city.

Today is Monday, and I met my uncle after school as usual. But something was different. The bus rattled as it pulled up to the stop where we got on. It was practically empty, which was unusual in itself. After we took our seats, however, I noticed something else. None of the other passengers were black. I looked out the window as we pulled away. Black people were walking home. My uncle asked the driver, who was different from the one we had had before, what was going on.

18 "You know that incident a few weeks ago, the one that was in the papers, where a lady wouldn't give up her seat?" the driver replied. "She's being tried in court today."

19 My uncle asked what that had to do with people riding the bus.

20 The driver shrugged, clearly annoyed. "Don't ask me," he said. "My job is to drive."

21 I thought of all the half-empty buses in the city, all those untaken rides, and all those unpaid fares. Perhaps that woman's defiance had made a difference after all.

1. Which phrase best expresses the central conflict of the passage?
 - A. Person versus self
 - B. Person versus society
 - C. Person versus nature
 - D. Person versus destiny

2. What does the narrator first think when the woman does not give up her seat?
 - A. The woman is daydreaming.
 - B. The woman must not know the law.
 - C. The woman is too tired to change places.
 - D. The woman must not agree with the law.

3. In paragraph 2, the word looming creates a sense of
 - A. surprise.
 - B. frustration.
 - C. confrontation.
 - D. disappointment.

4. The following paragraph was taken from a newspaper account of the same events described in the passage.

The commute home from work was disrupted for some bus travelers in the city yesterday afternoon. A woman onboard a bus refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. After repeated warnings, police were summoned. They removed the woman from the bus, which resumed its normal operations.

How does the passage differ from the newspaper account?

- A. The newspaper account includes details about the arrival of the police.
 - B. The passage focuses on the day the woman refused to give up her seat.
 - C. The newspaper account mentions commuting troubles the events caused.
 - D. The passage reveals the emotional effect of the events on the other bus riders.
-

5. Which phrase best describes the second bus driver in the passage?

- A. Gruff, because of the lack of riders that day
- B. Offended, because the uncle asks him a question
- C. Curious, because of the information in the newspaper
- D. Perceptive, because he is aware that the woman is being tried in court

6. Which method did the author use to illustrate that most characters in the passage accept the city law of the time?
- A. Describing the uncle's sigh of relief when the woman is removed from the bus
 - B. Including the police officer's response to a surprising question the woman asks
 - C. Emphasizing the bus driver's angry threat to have the woman arrested
 - D. Portraying the people's obvious expectations that the woman follow orders
-

7. Read this sentence from paragraph 8.

The driver glared at the woman, then turned and marched up the aisle and out of the bus.

The author uses the word marched most likely to

- A. indicate that the woman has defeated the driver.
- B. suggest that the driver is going to quit his job.
- C. indicate that others on the bus support the driver.
- D. suggest that the driver is angered by the woman.

8. Paragraph 17 is important to the plot because it shows that the bus
- A. has a different driver than usual.
 - B. always follows its usual schedule.
 - C. is usually full when people leave work.
 - D. provides transportation throughout the day.
-
9. Which quotation from the passage best shows the lasting effect of the events on the narrator?
- A. “‘Now we’re going to be late for supper.’”
(paragraph 9)
 - B. “‘If we weren’t so far from home, I’d say we could get out and walk.’”
(paragraph 9)
 - C. “For the first time in my life, I began to think about the different rules that apply to different people.”
(paragraph 9)
 - D. “As my uncle resumed reading his newspaper, I wondered briefly if I should catch up on my homework.”
(paragraph 10)
-
10. Details in the last paragraph of the passage suggest that
- A. the woman had intended to hurt the bus company.
 - B. the people on the bus will join those refusing to ride the bus and the bus company’s drivers will be fired.
 - C. the bus company’s policy will change because it is losing money since the woman captured the public’s attention.
 - D. the decision in the court case will force the bus company to change.

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This is the end of Segment 1.
Check your work. Then seal this segment.



Segment 2

You will be told when to begin this segment.

Reading Test — Segment 2

Read this poem. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain lines. The lines are numbered on the left side.

Rivulet¹

by Aramís Quintero

1 Through the tender grass
of the green meadow,
among smooth stones
and golden stones,
5 with its ringing, singing, light laughter,
there goes the thread of water.
Rivulet.

It goes hurriedly,
important waters, it says,
10 are waiting for it
out at sea.

But a few steps from
its fountain spring,
it collects in a small pool—
15 the kind that dries
when there is no rain.

And the rivulet says
that the deep ocean awaits.
Fine with me if it says so
20 and if it believes so!

¹Rivulet—a small stream

11. According to the poem, which water source affects the water level in the small pool?

- A.** Water from the rivulet
 - B.** Water from the rain
 - C.** Water from the ocean
 - D.** Water from the sea
-

12. Which sentence best summarizes lines 1–7?

- A.** A drop of rain collects in a small pool.
 - B.** A wide river rushes over different kinds of stones.
 - C.** A creek fills a dry pool near a meadow.
 - D.** A little stream passes through a field of grass.
-

13. In line 6, the word thread refers to

- A.** the sound made by the water.
 - B.** the size of the stream of water.
 - C.** the stones rolling in the moving water.
 - D.** the grass growing along the edge of the water.
-

14. The rivulet is unable to reach the ocean because it

- A.** collects in a pool.
- B.** is not long enough.
- C.** flows under the ground.
- D.** evaporates in the sunlight.

15. Read lines 9–11.

important waters, it says,
are waiting for it
out at sea.

What do these lines tell readers about the rivulet?

- A.** Where the rivulet eventually flows
 - B.** Why the rivulet will fail to reach the ocean
 - C.** Why the waters are essential to the rivulet
 - D.** What to expect once the rivulet reaches the sea
-

16. Which characteristic best describes the rivulet?

- A.** Successful
- B.** Confused
- C.** Motivated
- D.** Disappointed

17. Which pair of lines best expresses how the speaker feels about the rivulet?

- A.** Lines 3 and 4
 - B.** Lines 6 and 7
 - C.** Lines 15 and 16
 - D.** Lines 19 and 20
-

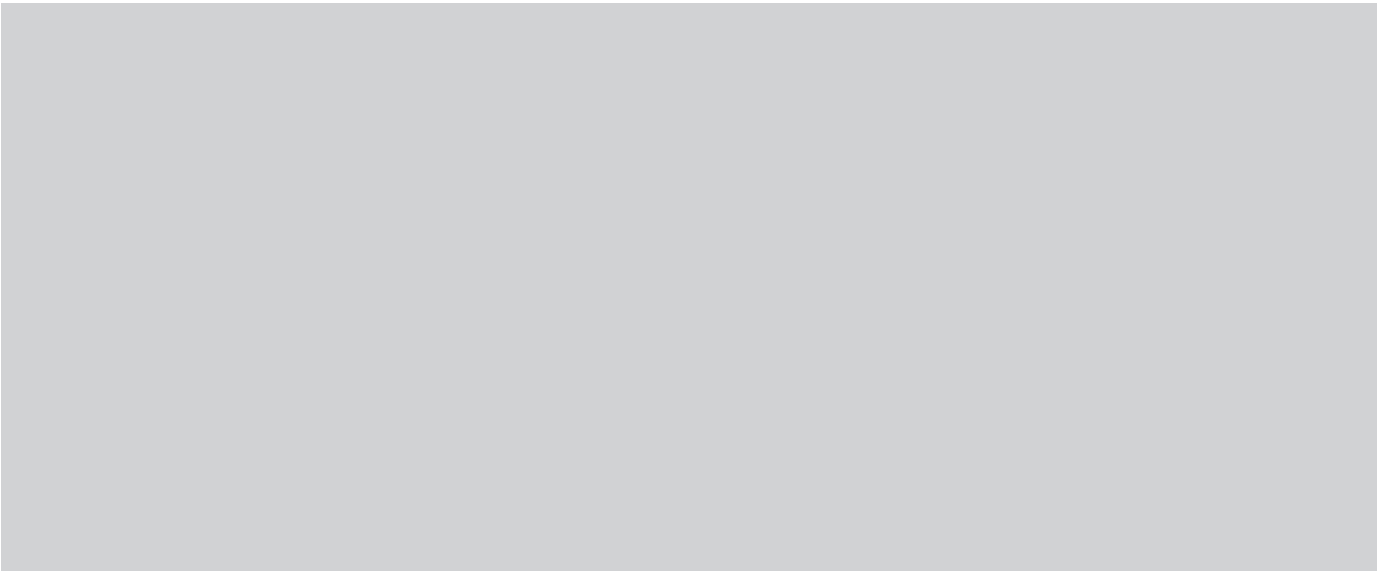
18. The rivulet is in a hurry because it believes that the

- A.** pool is dry.
- B.** fountain is near.
- C.** ocean is waiting.
- D.** rain is approaching.

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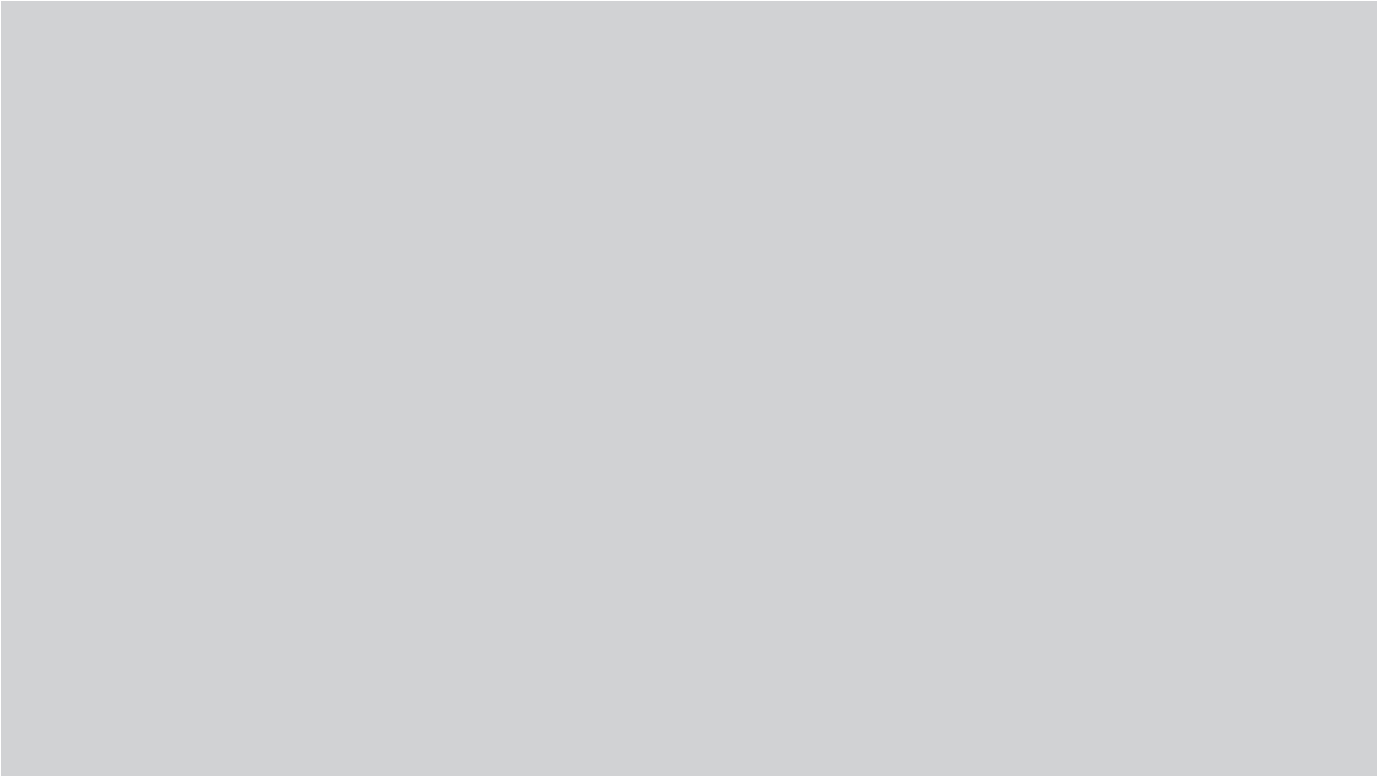
This is the end of Segment 2.
Check your work. Then seal this segment.





Segment 3

You will be told when to begin this segment.



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Reading Test — Segment 3

Read this article about an artist from Turkey. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

The Sightless Artist

written for the Minnesota Department of Education



3

- 1 Drawing and painting require talent and skill. Most people would agree that artists need to see both the objects they are representing and the tools of their art—their paper, canvas, ink, or paint. However, the work of one special painter shows that sight is not always essential for creating great art.
- 2 Esref Armagan has been an accomplished artist for more than 40 years. His artistic achievement is no small feat, considering the fact that the Turkish artist was born without sight. Like many other blind children in Turkey, Armagan did not attend school. He spent much of his childhood drawing on cardboard with a nail, using his fingers to “see” the lines he had made. Later, Armagan experimented with colored pencils and oil paint, applying the paint with his fingers rather than a brush. The finished pieces, however, looked nothing like the simple paintings children often produce. Instead, he created beautiful pictures of colorful birds, still life paintings of flowers, and even portraits of famous people.

Painting Invisible

- 3 How does Armagan paint without the benefit of sight? First, he etches an image

into canvas or wood. Then Armagan “reads” his drawing by touch just as others read books using Braille.¹ Next, he applies paint, using one color at a time to avoid smearing. After waiting a few days for the paint to dry, he applies another color. Little by little, a picture emerges. Armagan uses memories of objects he has touched before, such as a pet parakeet, as a reference for what he is currently painting. Sometimes he uses the drawings of a sighted person, touching the paper and feeling the lines of the other artist’s pen. He creates portraits and landscapes using this process.

The Mind’s Eye

- 4 Armagan has become so famous for his ability to create art without the benefit of eyesight that he has attracted the attention of a group of scientists renowned for their study of the human brain. In 2004, they asked Armagan to come to their facilities in Boston, Massachusetts, so they could learn from him.
- 5 The scientists studying Armagan wanted to understand how much of human vision actually occurs in the brain, so they conducted a series of experiments. First, they asked Armagan to feel three objects—a cone, a cube, and a ball—and then draw them from different points of view. Armagan amazed the scientists with his ability to accurately represent these shapes from many perspectives.
- 6 Later, the scientists used magnetic brain scans to observe Armagan’s brain while he drew objects and responded to verbal commands. They were interested in observing Armagan’s visual cortex, the part of the brain that makes sense of information coming in through the eyes (and sometimes referred to as “the Mind’s Eye”). The scientists discovered that Armagan’s visual cortex was as active as that of a sighted person’s while he was drawing, even though Armagan was unable to see light. This result was quite unexpected, and it gave the scientists further evidence that people use more than just their eyes to “see.”

A Continuing Inspiration

- 7 Because Armagan recognizes that his ability is unique, he has worked with scientists to advance our understanding of vision and the brain. Like many artists, however, he wants to be remembered for his work, not for the unusual way he creates his art.
- 8 Still, Armagan will probably be remembered as much for his story as for his paintings: the little boy who, without sight or formal education, taught himself to create beautiful art that has been exhibited in many countries. Esref Armagan’s example proves that human accomplishment is limitless.

¹Braille—a system of writing using raised dots to represent letters and numbers

19. Which description best represents the main topic of the article?

- A.** The challenges of a blind artist growing up in Turkey
 - B.** The participation of a blind artist in scientific experiments
 - C.** The abilities of a blind artist from Turkey
 - D.** The process a blind artist uses to create his paintings
-

20. In paragraph 3, the author compares Armagan touching his drawings to

- A.** reading books that are printed in Braille.
 - B.** etching an image into canvas.
 - C.** applying colors to paintings.
 - D.** remembering objects that have been touched before.
-

21. The author's main purpose for writing the article is most likely to

- A.** inform readers about the creative process of an artist.
- B.** explain to readers how a part of the human brain works.
- C.** instill in readers an appreciation for individual accomplishment.
- D.** persuade readers to celebrate an artist for his work.

22. Based on paragraph 3, readers can conclude that Armagan's paintings

- A.** are especially colorful.
 - B.** usually resemble the drawings of others.
 - C.** are rarely inspired by memories.
 - D.** take a long time to complete.
-

23. In paragraph 5, which words help readers understand the meaning of perspectives?

- A.** "amazed the scientists"
- B.** "different points of view"
- C.** "represent these shapes"
- D.** "much of human vision"

24. According to paragraph 6, the visual cortex is sometimes referred to as “the Mind’s Eye” because it

- A.** is part of the brain.
 - B.** provides additional light for seeing in the dark.
 - C.** is constantly active.
 - D.** interprets information gained from the sense of sight.
-

25. Which word best describes the author’s tone throughout the article?

- A.** Formal
- B.** Impressed
- C.** Envious
- D.** Sympathetic

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This is the end of Segment 3.
Check your work. Then seal this segment.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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"A Seat on the Bus" written for the Minnesota Department of Education.

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**Grade 7
Reading
Item Sampler**

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 7 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.

Grade 7 Teacher's Guide

MCA-III Item Sampler Answer Key Grade 7 Reading

Item #	Correct Answer	Item Type	Skill Domain	SSB	Depth of Knowledge
1	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.3.3	II
2	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	II
3	C	MC	Craft and Structure	7.4.4.4	II
4	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	III
5	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.3.3	III
6	D	MC	Craft and Structure	7.4.6.6	III
7	D	MC	Craft and Structure	7.4.4.4	II
8	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.3.3	II
9	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.3.3	II
10	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	II
11	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	I
12	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.2.2	II
13	B	MC	Craft and Structure	7.4.4.4	II
14	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	I
15	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	II
16	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	II
17	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	III
18	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.4.1.1	I
19	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.5.2.2	III
20	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.5.1.1	I
21	C	MC	Craft and Structure	7.5.6.6	III
22	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.5.1.1	II
23	B	MC	Craft and Structure	7.5.4.4	II
24	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	7.5.1.1	III
25	B	MC	Craft and Structure	7.5.6.6	II

Passage Characteristics

Segment	Title	Type	Lexile	Word Count
1	A Seat on the Bus	L	780	1045
2	Rivulet	L	N/A	85
3	The Sightless Artist	I	1130	590

Grade 7 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.