
VIII. English Language Arts, Grade 10

- A. Composition
- B. Reading Comprehension

Grade 10 English Language Arts Test

Test Structure

The grade 10 English Language Arts test was presented in the following two parts:

- the ELA Composition test, which used a writing prompt to assess learning standards from the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework’s Composition* strand
- the ELA Reading Comprehension test, which used multiple-choice and open-response questions (items) to assess learning standards from the *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework’s Language and Reading and Literature* strands

A. Composition

The spring 2012 grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) Composition test and Composition Make-Up test were based on learning standards in the Composition strand of the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (2001). The learning standards for the Composition strand appear on pages 72–83 of the *Framework*, which is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

ELA Composition test results are reported under the reporting categories Composition: Topic Development and Composition: Standard English Conventions.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The ELA Composition test included two separate test sessions, administered on the same day with a short break between sessions. During the first session, each student wrote an initial draft of a composition in response to the appropriate writing prompt on the next page. During the second session, each student revised his or her draft and submitted a final composition, which was scored in the areas of Topic Development and Standard English Conventions. The Scoring Guides for the MCAS English Language Arts Composition are available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/elacomp_scoreguide.html.

Reference Materials

At least one English-language dictionary per classroom was provided for student use during ELA Composition test sessions. The use of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former English language learner students only. No other reference materials were allowed during either ELA Composition test session.

Cross-Reference Information

Framework general standards 19–22 are assessed by the ELA Composition.

English Language Arts Test

Grade 10 Writing Prompt

WRITING PROMPT

Often in works of literature, the villain has the greatest impact on the story.

Select a work of literature you have read in or out of school in which the villain has the greatest impact on the story. In a well-developed composition, identify the villain, and explain why the villain has the greatest impact on the story.

Grade 10 Make-Up Writing Prompt

WRITING PROMPT

Often in works of literature, a character feels pressure to succeed.

From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character who feels pressure to succeed. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe how the character feels pressure to succeed, and explain how the character's experience is important to the work as a whole.

B. Reading Comprehension

The spring 2012 grade 10 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on learning standards in the two content strands of the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (2001) listed below. Page numbers for the learning standards appear in parentheses.

- Language (*Framework*, pages 19–26)
- Reading and Literature (*Framework*, pages 35–64)

The *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

ELA Reading Comprehension test results are reported under two MCAS reporting categories, Language and Reading and Literature, which are identical to the two framework content strands listed above.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 10 ELA Reading Comprehension test included three separate test sessions. Sessions 1 and 2 were both administered on the same day, and Session 3 was administered on the following day. Each session included reading passages, followed by multiple-choice and open-response questions. Common reading passages and test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in test booklets. Due to copyright restrictions, certain reading passages cannot be released to the public on the website. For further information, contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625.

Reference Materials

The use of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former English language learner students only, during all three ELA Reading Comprehension test sessions. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA Reading Comprehension test session.

Cross-Reference Information

The table at the conclusion of this chapter indicates each item's reporting category and the framework general standard it assesses. The correct answers for multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the table.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 1

DIRECTIONS

This session contains three reading selections with sixteen multiple-choice questions and two open-response questions. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

Robert Sullivan calls rats a city's "most unwanted inhabitants." But rats are also interesting animals with incredible capabilities. Read the excerpt from Rats and answer the questions that follow.

from RATS
by Robert Sullivan

- 1 A rat is a rodent, the most common mammal in the world. *Rattus norvegicus* is one of the approximately four hundred different kinds of rodents, and it is known by many names, each of which describes a trait or a perceived trait or sometimes a habitat: the earth rat, the roving rat, the barn rat, the field rat, the migratory rat, the house rat, the sewer rat, the water rat, the wharf rat, the alley rat, the gray rat, the brown rat, and the common rat. The average brown rat is large and stocky; it grows to be approximately sixteen inches long from its nose to its tail—the size of a large adult human male's foot—and weighs about a pound, though brown rats have been measured by scientists and exterminators at twenty inches and up to two pounds. The brown rat is sometimes confused with the black rat, or *Rattus rattus*, which is smaller and once inhabited New York City and all of the cities of America but, since *Rattus norvegicus* pushed it out, is now relegated to a minor role. (The two species still survive alongside each other in some Southern coastal cities and on the West Coast, in places like Los Angeles, for example, where the black rat lives in attics and palm trees.) The black rat is always a very dark gray, almost black, and the brown rat is gray or brown, with a belly that can be light gray, yellow, or even a pure-seeming white. One spring, beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, I saw a red-haired brown rat that had been run over by a car. Both pet rats and laboratory rats are *Rattus norvegicus*, but they are not wild and therefore, I would emphasize, not the subject of this book. Sometimes pet rats are called fancy rats. But if anyone has picked up this book to learn about fancy rats, then they should put this book down right away; none of the rats mentioned herein are at all fancy.
- 2 Rats are nocturnal, and out in the night the brown rat's eyes are small and black and shiny; when a flashlight shines into them in the dark, the eyes of a rat light up like the eyes of a deer. Though it forages* in darkness, the brown rat has poor eyesight. It makes up for this with, first of all, an excellent sense of smell. . . . They have an excellent sense of taste, detecting the most minute amounts of poison, down to one part per million. A brown rat has strong feet, the two front paws each equipped with four clawlike nails, the rear paws even longer and stronger. It can run and climb with squirrel-like agility. It is an excellent swimmer, surviving in rivers and bays, in sewer streams and toilet bowls.

**forages* — looks for food

- 3 The brown rat's teeth are yellow, the front two incisors being especially long and sharp, like buckteeth. When the brown rat bites, its front two teeth spread apart. When it gnaws, a flap of skin plugs the space behind its incisors. Hence, when the rat gnaws on indigestible materials—concrete or steel, for example—the shavings don't go down the rat's throat and kill it. Its incisors grow at a rate of five inches per year. Rats always gnaw, and no one is certain why—there are few modern rat studies. It is sometimes erroneously stated that the rat gnaws solely to limit the length of its incisors, which would otherwise grow out of its head, but this is not the case: the incisors wear down naturally. In terms of hardness, the brown rat's teeth are stronger than aluminum, copper, lead, and iron. They are comparable to steel. With the alligator-like structure of their jaws, rats can exert a biting pressure of up to seven thousand pounds per square inch. Rats, like mice, seem to be attracted to wires—to utility wires, computer wires, wires in vehicles, in addition to gas and water pipes. One rat expert theorizes that wires may be attractive to rats because of their resemblance to vines and the stalks of plants; cables are the vines of the city. By one estimate, 26 percent of all electric-cable breaks and 18 percent of all phone-cable disruptions are caused by rats. According to one study, as many as 25 percent of all fires of unknown origin are rat-caused. Rats chew electrical cables. Sitting in a nest of tattered rags and newspapers, in the floorboards of an old tenement, a rat gnaws the head of a match—the lightning in the city forest.
- 4 When it is not gnawing or feeding on trash, the brown rat digs. Anywhere there is dirt in a city, brown rats are likely to be digging—in parks, in flowerbeds, in little dirt-poor backyards. They dig holes to enter buildings and to make nests. Rat nests can be in the floorboards of apartments, in the waste-stuffed corners of subway stations, in sewers, or beneath old furniture in basements. “Cluttered and unkempt alleyways in cities provide ideal rat habitat, especially those alleyways associated with food-serving establishments,” writes Robert Corrigan in *Rodent Control*, a pest control manual. “Alley rats can forage safely within the shadows created by the alleyway, as well as quickly retreat to the safety of cover in these narrow channels.” Often, rats burrow under concrete sidewalk slabs. Entrance to a typical under-the-sidewalk rat's nest is gained through a two-inch-wide hole—their skeletons collapse and they can squeeze into a hole as small as three quarters of an inch wide, the average width of their skull. This tunnel then travels about a foot down to where it widens into a nest or den. The den is lined with soft debris, often shredded plastic garbage or shopping bags, but sometimes even grasses or plants; some rat nests have been found stuffed with the gnawed shavings of the wood-based, spring-loaded snap traps that are used in attempts to kill them. The back of the den then narrows into a long tunnel that opens up on another hole back on the street. This second hole is called a bolt hole; it is an emergency exit. A bolt hole is typically covered lightly with dirt or trash—camouflage. Sometimes there are networks of burrows, which can stretch beneath a few concrete squares on a sidewalk, or a number of backyards, or even an entire city block—when *Rattus norvegicus* first came to Selkirk, England, in 1776, there were so many burrows that people feared the town might sink. Rats can also nest in basements, sewers, manholes, abandoned pipes of any kind, floorboards, or any hole or depression. “Often,” Robert Corrigan writes, “city rats’ will live unbeknownst to people right beneath their feet.”

5 Rats also inhabit subways, as most people in New York City and any city with a subway system are well aware. Every once in a while, there are reports of rats boarding trains, but for the most part rats stay on the tracks—subway workers I have talked to refer to rats as “track rabbits.” People tend to think that the subways are filled with rats, but in fact rats are not everywhere in the system; they live in the subways according to the supply of discarded human food and sewer leaks. Sometimes, rats use the subway purely for nesting purposes; they find ways through the walls of the subway stations leading from the tracks to the restaurants and stores on the street—the vibrations of subway trains tend to create rat-size cracks and holes. Many subway rats tend to live near stations that are themselves near fast-food restaurants. At the various subway stations near Herald Square, for example, people come down from the streets and throw the food that they have not eaten onto the tracks, along with newspapers and soda bottles and, I have noticed, thousands of no-longer-charged AA batteries, waiting to leak acid. The rats eat freely from the waste and sit at the side of the little streams of creamy brown sewery water that flows between the rails. They sip the water the way rats do, either with their front paws or by scooping it up with their incisors.

Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants by Robert Sullivan. Copyright © 2004 by Robert Sullivan. Reprinted by permission of Bloomsbury USA.

- 1 In paragraph 1, what do the different rat names **mainly** show?

- A. Rats are the largest type of rodent.
- B. There are many opinions about rats.
- C. There is little reason to be afraid of rats.
- D. Rats can live in a variety of environments.

- 2 What does the end of paragraph 2 **mainly** emphasize about rats?

- A. their strange diet
- B. their physical abilities
- C. their preference for dry land
- D. their similarity to other mammals

- 3 In paragraph 3, what is the **most likely** reason the author states, “cables are the vines of the city”?

- A. to show why rats enjoy chewing on cables
- B. to show that vines are nutritious for rats
- C. to show that rats like living in vehicles
- D. to show why it is hard to find rats

- 4 What is one of the **main** purposes of the statistics in paragraph 3?

- A. to show how many rats live in city buildings
- B. to show how poorly constructed most cities are
- C. to emphasize the damage rats do to city infrastructure
- D. to emphasize the amount of litter people in cities produce

- 5 Which of the following additions to paragraph 4 would be **most** useful to the reader?

- A. a picture of a rat
- B. a picture of a trap
- C. a picture of a rat nest
- D. a picture of a subway tunnel

- 6 Read the examples from the excerpt in the box below.

- One spring, beneath the Brooklyn Bridge, I saw a red-haired brown rat that had been run over by a car.
- . . . people . . . throw the food that they have not eaten onto the tracks, along with newspapers and soda bottles and, I have noticed, thousands of no-longer-charged AA batteries, waiting to leak acid.

What do the examples show about the author’s research methods?

- A. The author relies on data from published studies.
- B. The author looks for humorous stories about rats.
- C. The author gathers his own field observations.
- D. The author contrasts rats with other animals.

- 7 Which of the following would be the **best** subtitle for the excerpt?
- A. “The Disease Carrier”
 - B. “Toward a Cleaner City”
 - C. “Life on the Train Tracks”
 - D. “Succeeding among Humans”

- 8 In paragraph 1, what does the information between the dashes provide?
- A. a transition
 - B. a definition
 - C. a personal belief
 - D. a familiar comparison

Question 9 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 9 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 9 Based on the excerpt, explain why brown rats have been able to thrive in urban areas. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

Virgil's Georgics are a group of poems about rural life in ancient Rome. Read the excerpt from the Second Georgic and answer the questions that follow.

from the **Second Georgic**

Students read an excerpt from the “Second Georgic” and then answered questions 10 through 13 that follow on page 114 of this document.

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Second Georgic by Virgil, translated by David Ferry, from *The Georgics of Virgil*. Copyright © 2005 by David Ferry. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

- 10 Based on the poem, which of the following **best** describes the poet's tone?
- A. regretful
 - B. admiring
 - C. sarcastic
 - D. proud
- 11 What is the **main** purpose of the examples given in lines 5–17?
- A. to emphasize the skill of Roman artists
 - B. to describe the lifestyle of the average Roman
 - C. to emphasize the farmers' jealousy of the rich
 - D. to describe the luxuries for which the farmers have no need
- 12 Based on lines 18–28, what is the **main** reason the speaker feels rural life is superior to other ways of life?
- A. The gods are frequent visitors.
 - B. Farmers' work is undemanding.
 - C. Nature's gifts promote serenity.
 - D. Farmers can make a lot of money.
- 13 What is the **main** purpose of the colon in line 20?
- A. to create a pause
 - B. to introduce a list
 - C. to link two sentences
 - D. to conclude a thought

In this essay, Judith Ortiz Cofer recalls how her childhood fantasies and her mother's dreams intersect. Read the essay "Volar," which means "to fly" in Spanish, and answer the questions that follow.

Volar

by Judith Ortiz Cofer

1 At twelve I was an avid consumer of comic books—*Supergirl* being my favorite. I spent my allowance of a quarter a day on two twelve-cent comic books or a double issue for twenty-five. I had a stack of *Legion of Super Heroes* and *Supergirl* comic books in my bedroom closet that was as tall as I. I had a recurring dream in those days: that I had long blond hair and could fly. In my dream I climbed the stairs to the top of our apartment building as myself, but as I went up each flight, changes would be taking place. Step by step I would fill out: my legs would grow long, my arms harden into steel, and my hair would magically go straight and turn a golden color. . . . Supergirl had to be aerodynamic. Sleek and hard as a supersonic missile. Once on the roof, my parents safely asleep in their beds, I would get on tip-toe, arms outstretched in the position for flight and jump out my fifty-story-high window into the black lake of the sky. From up there, over the rooftops, I could see everything, even beyond the few blocks of our barrio;¹ with my X-ray vision I could look inside the homes of people who interested me. Once I saw our landlord, whom I knew my parents feared, sitting in a treasure-room dressed in an ermine coat and a large gold crown. He sat on the floor counting his dollar bills. I played a trick on him. Going up to his building's chimney, I blew a little puff of my super-breath into his fireplace, scattering his stacks of money so that he had to start counting all over again. I could more or less program my Supergirl dreams in those days by focusing on the object of my current obsession. This way I "saw" into the private lives of my neighbors, my teachers, and in the last days of my childish fantasy and the beginning of adolescence, into the secret room of the boys I liked. In the mornings I'd wake up in my tiny bedroom with the incongruous—at least in our tiny apartment—white "princess" furniture my mother had chosen for me, and find myself back in my body: my tight curls still clinging to my head, skinny arms and legs . . . unchanged.

2 In the kitchen my mother and father would be talking softly over a café con leche.² She would come "wake me" exactly forty-five minutes after they had gotten up. It was their time together at the beginning of each day and even at an early age I could feel their disappointment if I interrupted them by getting up too early. So I would stay in my bed recalling my dreams of flight, perhaps planning my next flight. In the kitchen they would be discussing events in the barrio. Actually, he would be carrying that part of the conversation; when it was her turn to speak she would, more often than not, try shifting

¹ *barrio* — a Spanish-speaking neighborhood

² *café con leche* — coffee with milk

the topic toward her desire to see her *familia* on the Island: *How about a vacation in Puerto Rico together this year, Querido?*³ We could rent a car, go to the beach. We could . . . And he would answer patiently, gently, *Mi amor*,⁴ do you know how much it would cost for the all of us to fly there? It is not possible for me to take the time off . . . *Mi vida*,⁵ please understand. . . . And I knew that soon she would rise from the table. Not abruptly. She would light a cigarette and look out the kitchen window. The view was of a dismal alley that was littered with refuse thrown from windows. The space was too narrow for anyone larger than a skinny child to enter safely, so it was never cleaned. My mother would check the time on the clock over her sink, the one with a prayer for patience and grace written in Spanish. A birthday gift. She would see that it was time to wake me. She'd sigh deeply and say the same thing the view from her kitchen window always inspired her to say: *Ay, si yo pudiera volar.*⁶

³ *Querido* — dear

⁴ *Mi amor* — my love

⁵ *Mi vida* — my life, used as a term of endearment

⁶ *Ay, si yo pudiera volar* — Oh, if only I could fly

“Volar” by Judith Ortiz Cofer, translated by Elena Olazagasti-Segovia, from *El año de nuestra revolución*. Copyright © 2006 by Arte Público Press—University of Houston. Reprinted by permission of Arte Público Press—University of Houston.

- 14 In paragraph 1, which specific action changes the author from a girl into a superhero?

- A. turning a page in one of her comic books
- B. looking out over the houses in her neighborhood
- C. climbing the stairs to the top of her apartment building
- D. playing a trick on the landlord of her apartment building

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

... I would get on tip-toe, arms outstretched in the position for flight and jump out my fifty-story-high window into the black lake of the sky.

In the sentence, the phrase “black lake of the sky” makes the sky seem

- A. playful.
- B. relaxing.
- C. polluted.
- D. boundless.

- 16 Based on the essay, which characteristic **best** describes the author’s father?

- A. ambitious
- B. practical
- C. content
- D. harsh

- 17 What is the **main** effect of the author’s use of Spanish phrases in the essay?

- A. It captures the author’s cultural environment.
- B. It identifies the intended audience for the essay.
- C. It emphasizes the tension between the author’s parents.
- D. It indicates the time period in which the essay takes place.

Question 18 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 18 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 18** Based on the essay, compare the dreams of the author and her mother. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the essay.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 2

DIRECTIONS

This session contains one reading selection with eight multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

In this excerpt from the novel Bridge of Sighs, the narrator reminisces about “surfing” in the back of his father’s milk delivery truck with his friend, Bobby Marconi. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

from Bridge of Sighs
by Richard Russo

- 1 There were no milk deliveries to residences on Saturdays, just to commercial businesses, and there were relatively few of these in the Borough. My father would finish his deliveries early, then swing by the house for Bobby Marconi and me so we could “surf the truck.” The empty metal milk crates were then stacked and roped off against the side panels to prevent them from sliding and bouncing around when he turned corners. His careful stacking left most of the back empty, and Bobby and I would stand in the space created, our feet planted firmly on the ribbed floor, and pretend to surf, our arms out at our sides to keep our balance as the truck rattled along the wide Borough streets. I always surfed in the forward position, an advantage because you could see the turns coming. Bobby, as athletic in the milk truck as he was elsewhere, surfed more or less blind behind me. Not being able to see what was coming made the game that much more fun, he claimed, though I did help him by calling out “Left!” or “Sharp right!” when a turn approached. The idea was to make it through these turns without grabbing the empty milk crates for balance or the rail that ran the length of the truck, my father chortling appreciatively up front in the driver’s seat as we crashed about.
- 2 Of course my father wasn’t supposed to take Bobby and me on his route, but the rules were lax and people did it all the time, was his thinking. There was no passenger seat, since there weren’t supposed to be any passengers, so if my father braked hard, there was nothing to stop Bobby and me but the metal dash. My father would try to grab us as we flew by, and he was good at it, but you never knew what his big fist would grab hold of—an arm, your hair—and being saved from hitting the console sometimes hurt worse than colliding with it.
- 3 “No, you ain’t gonna do no surfing today,” he’d tell us first thing each Saturday. “Bobby’s dad don’t want him doing that no more.” Mr. Marconi had made that pretty clear early on. Bobby had come home with a knot on his forehead, and his father had wanted to know why, so he’d explained how we always surfed the milk truck. It was fun, he said, and not really dangerous because my father never went fast. Which was true—you *couldn’t* go fast in a milk truck if you tried.
- 4 But the next Saturday, when we pulled up in the truck, Mr. Marconi came out, too, and took my father aside. “Tell me about this surfing,” he demanded, leaning toward him aggressively, his birthmark a bright purple. Lately, things had gotten a little easier between them, so much so that my father had remarked on it, even speculating that his neighbor had decided to bury the hatchet.
- 5 My father explained to him how devoted we were to our surfing on Saturday mornings, how we looked forward to it all week, how Mr. Marconi should hear how we laughed and

shouted there in the back of the truck, how we hated it when he finally said that was enough. He said he was sorry about Bobby getting that lump on his noggin last week. “He don’t like to grab on till the last second,” he explained, which was true. It was Bobby’s fearlessness, his refusal to grab on to the rail or the stacked crates to keep from going flying, that had caused the injury. “Don’t worry,” my father assured him. “I keep a pretty good eye on ‘em.”

6 “You better had,” Mr. Marconi said. “Anything happens to my boy in that truck, you’re responsible.”

7 So the following Saturday, the new rule was No Surfing the Truck, but that made us miserable. There was no reason to be *in* the truck if we weren’t allowed to surf. “Just a *little*,” we pleaded. “Just five minutes? Just around this one corner? Pleeeeease?” And so it was that we wore my father down. Over time we went from No Surfing to No Surfing Till We’re Headed Back Home, thus limiting the amount of time for an injury to occur, to Be Careful, You Two, Because Bobby’s Dad Will Skin Me Alive If He Gets Hurt, and If He Don’t Your Mother Will, because, truth be told, she didn’t like the idea either.

8 Why so much worry about us getting hurt? Well, because that’s what invariably happened. Otherwise, how would we know the game was over? Of course our injuries were not serious—a jammed finger, a skinned knee, usually—and most Saturdays we surfed until I cried, because Bobby, when he was injured, refused to cry, so my father didn’t know he’d been hurt and the fun could continue. I deeply envied Bobby his self-control and tried my best to emulate him, even as I suspected I’d never master the trick. Why he never cried was an even deeper mystery to me than why he never had to pay the bridge toll back when we lived on Berman Court. Every Saturday I’d tell myself that I wasn’t going to cry, but when the time came and I went crashing into the side of the truck, and my father, hearing the impact, turned around in his seat to check on us, my resolution would dissolve, not so much because of the pain as from his expression, which suggested that he knew I was hurt, that I couldn’t fool him anyway, so why try? And then the tears would just *be* there, brimming over, no holding them back.

9 Still, before long we’d forgotten all about Mr. Marconi’s solemn warning, and why not? He had to know we were back at it. One or the other of us always got off the milk truck limping or rubbing an elbow, but we were also in high spirits, laughing and shouting and trying to get my father to promise we’d do it again next Saturday. Which wasn’t hard work, since he enjoyed the whole thing about as much as we did. He never talked about his own childhood, but according to my mother it couldn’t really be called a childhood at all, just an unrelenting series of chores, from sunrise to sunset, bleak and unending, which was why, she explained, he wasn’t anxious for me to have a paper route like Bobby or to be overburdened with responsibilities around the house. I was to keep my room clean and study when I was supposed to, but otherwise I was simply to be the sort of boy my father never had a chance to be. The pleasure he took in our joy when we surfed his milk truck was purely vicarious, and his grin was ear to ear.

10 My own Saturday morning happiness was more complex. It’s true that I looked forward all week to our surfing. As I said, it was about the only time Bobby and I got to spend together. But as the summer wore on I became troubled by the knowledge that part of me was waiting for, indeed looking forward to, my friend getting hurt. It had, of course, nothing to do with him and everything to do with my own cowardice and jealousy. The jealous part had to do, I think, with my understanding that Bobby’s bravery meant he was having more fun, something

that my own cowardly bailing out had robbed me of. Each week I told myself I'd be braver, that this Saturday I wouldn't reach out and hold on for safety. I'd surrender control and be flung about, laughing and full of joyous abandon. But every outing was the same as the last, and when the moment came, I grabbed on. Gradually, since wishing for courage didn't work, I began wishing for something else entirely. I never wanted Bobby to be seriously injured, of course. That would have meant the end of everything. But I did wish that just once he'd be hurt bad enough to cry, which would lessen the gulf I perceived between him and me.

11 And so our milk-truck surfing ended the only way it could. I didn't actually see Bobby break his wrist when he was flung against the side of the truck. I heard the bone snap, though. What saved me from suffering the same fate was my cowardice. I'd seen the curve coming and at the last second reached out and grabbed one of the tied-off milk crates. Bobby, taken by surprise, went flying.

12 He must've known that his wrist was broken, because he went very pale, and when our eyes met and he saw my shock and fear, he immediately sat down with his back to the panel, cradling his hand in his lap against the truck's vibrations. I think what my father heard wasn't the terrible crack of Bobby's wrist but only the silence that followed, and he immediately called back to us, wanting to know if we were all right. When Bobby refused to speak, I said that we were, but he knew better. If we weren't whooping and hollering back there, something was wrong, and more seriously wrong than what happened every other Saturday morning. He didn't just pull over and climb back into the dark interior of the truck, but instead got out, came around and threw the big rear doors wide open so the light could pour in. After one look at the angle of Bobby's wrist, the blood drained out of my father's face. While I expected him to get mad, he didn't, and when he simply closed the doors again, got back into the truck and turned for home, it wasn't Bobby but me who began to cry.

13 Mr. Marconi was sitting on their upstairs front porch reading a magazine when we pulled up at the curb, and he seemed to know something had happened even before my father opened the rear doors of the truck. On the ride back from the Borough, Bobby had gotten sick, and the front of his shirt now glistened with vomit.

14 When Mr. Marconi emerged from the house, my father began "It was an acci—" but Mr. Marconi held up his index finger, as if to say *Wait a minute*, except that he kept holding it there between them, which altered the meaning of the gesture completely. My father seemed to understand that he was being told to hold his tongue and, for the moment, at least, he held it. Mr. Marconi then reached up into the truck, lifted Bobby down and helped him into the station wagon. "I—" my father began again, but Mr. Marconi again held up that index finger and waited until my father backed up onto the terrace, allowing him to go around to the driver's side and get in next to Bobby, who was by this time slumped against the door, having finally passed out from the pain.

15 I was remembering what he'd said to me a few minutes before as we sat together in the back of the truck, everything quiet now aside from the rattling of the milk crates. "You didn't call the turn." He seemed less angry than curious, but it was an accusation just the same. I didn't know what to say, though as soon as he spoke those words, I realized they were true.

- 19 What is the **main** purpose of paragraph 4?
- A. to highlight the setting of the story
 - B. to explain the resolution of a conflict
 - C. to reveal the motivation of a character
 - D. to illustrate the relationship between two characters

- 20 Based on paragraph 7, what happens as the rides in the truck continue?
- A. The rules become less rigid.
 - B. The different rules are compared.
 - C. The rules become clear to the narrator.
 - D. The mother of the narrator adds more rules.

- 21 Based on paragraph 8, what is the **main** reason the narrator is intrigued with Bobby's refusal to cry?
- A. He is worried about Bobby's attitude.
 - B. He does not possess Bobby's willpower.
 - C. He knows that Bobby has a difficult life.
 - D. He is not convinced that Bobby is sincere.

- 22 Based on paragraph 9, what is the **main** reason the narrator's father lets the boys surf the truck?
- A. The father wants to challenge authority.
 - B. The father believes his wife will not mind.
 - C. The father did not have an easy childhood.
 - D. The father did it himself when he was young.

- 23 What is the **main** purpose of paragraph 10?
- A. to explain a new character's views
 - B. to describe a situation the narrator fears
 - C. to provide an analysis of the narrator's thoughts
 - D. to highlight an opportunity presented to the characters
- 24 In paragraph 12, what does the description of the father's reaction emphasize?
- A. his frustration that his son is upset again
 - B. his realization that it is a serious situation
 - C. his anger that the deliveries will be affected
 - D. his impatience at the irresponsibility of the boys

- 25 What does paragraph 15 suggest about Bobby?
- A. He shares the narrator's guilt.
 - B. He senses the narrator's ill will.
 - C. He recognizes the narrator's skill.
 - D. He forgives the narrator's carelessness.

- 26 Read the sentence from paragraph 8 in the box below.

I deeply envied Bobby his self-control and tried my best to emulate him, even as I suspected I'd never master the trick.

Based on the sentence, what does the word *emulate* mean?

- A. teach
- B. avoid
- C. imitate
- D. distract

Question 27 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 27 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 27** Based on the excerpt, explain how surfing the truck reveals the narrator’s feelings about Bobby. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 3

DIRECTIONS

This session contains two reading selections with twelve multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

One of the great accomplishments in modern engineering is the 32-mile tunnel that runs from Britain to France. Read about the challenges the builders faced during the project and answer the questions that follow.

The Channel Tunnel

by Peter Ross

Students read a selection titled “The Channel Tunnel” and then answered questions 28 through 36 that follow on pages 129 through 131 of this document.

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“The Channel Tunnel” by Peter Ross, from *The Seventy Wonders of the Modern World*. Text and illustrations copyright © 2002 by Thames & Hudson Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Thames & Hudson Ltd.
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- 28 Based on paragraph 2, why did the British finally decide to build the tunnel?
- A. It would make Britain more popular.
 - B. It would benefit Britain economically.
 - C. It would make Britain stronger militarily.
 - D. It would encourage people to move to Britain.
- 29 What is the **main** focus of paragraph 3?
- A. the history of mountain tunnels
 - B. the reasons the tunnel was limited to trains
 - C. the advantages of traveling through tunnels
 - D. the problems the tunnel presents for drivers

- 30 Based on the selection, what did the use of accurate optical instruments and overhead satellites suggest about the tunnel project?
- A. It lacked the proper funding.
 - B. It was frustrating to organize.
 - C. It did not require a lot of manpower to complete.
 - D. It would not have been possible before modern technology.
- 31 Based on paragraph 8, how did the length of the tunnel pose potential problems during construction?
- A. It made it harder to finish the tunnel on time.
 - B. It made it harder for workers to breathe in the tunnel.
 - C. It made it more likely that the tunnel would collapse.
 - D. It made it more likely that the ends of the tunnel would not meet.

32 According to paragraph 10, what did the November 1996 fire reveal about the tunnel?

- A. Trains should be kept out of the tunnel.
- B. The emergency functions were well designed.
- C. People would be reluctant to use the tunnel again.
- D. The metal on the train tracks was improperly made.

33 Based on the selection and the illustrations, the running tunnels are used for

- A. train travel.
- B. releasing air.
- C. pedestrian traffic.
- D. evacuating people.

34 In the selection, why is the term “Chalk Marl” capitalized?

- A. It is the name of a famous city.
- B. It is a recognized geologic feature.
- C. It is an outdated term.
- D. It is a foreign term.

35 Read the sentence from paragraph 8 in the box below.

The need for accurate control of the tunnelling operations was therefore *paramount*, . . .

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

- A. useful
- B. successful
- C. most technical
- D. most important

Question 36 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 36 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 36** Based on the selection, explain how the engineers of the Channel Tunnel project ensured the tunnel would be safe for workers and travelers. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the selection.

In this excerpt from the famous Old English epic, Beowulf and his fellow Geats are visiting the Danes, who have been repeatedly attacked by the monster Grendel. With the exception of Unferth, the Danes welcome Beowulf as a hero who can help them defeat the monster. Read the excerpt from Seamus Heaney's translation of Beowulf and then answer the questions that follow.

from *Beowulf*

...

From where he crouched at the king's feet,
Unferth, a son of Ecglaf's, spoke
contrary words. Beowulf's coming,
his sea-braving, made him sick with envy:

- 5 he could not brook or abide the fact
 that anyone else alive under heaven
 might enjoy greater regard than he did:
 "Are you the Beowulf who took on Breca
 in a swimming match on the open sea,
- 10 risking the water just to prove that you could win?
 It was sheer vanity made you venture out
 on the main deep. And no matter who tried,
 friend or foe, to deflect the pair of you,
 neither would back down: the sea-test obsessed you.
- 15 You waded in, embracing water,
 taking its measure, mastering currents,
 riding on the swell. The ocean swayed,
 winter went wild in the waves, but you vied
 for seven nights; and then he outswam you,
- 20 came ashore the stronger contender.
 He was cast up safe and sound one morning
 among the Heathoreams, then made his way
 to where he belonged in Bronding country,
 home again, sure of his ground
- 25 in strongroom and bawn. So Breca made good
 his boast upon you and was proved right.
 No matter, therefore, how you may have fared
 in every bout and battle until now,
 this time you'll be worsted; no one has ever
- 30 outlasted an entire night against Grendel."

Beowulf, Ecgtheow's son, replied:
"Well, friend Unferth, you have had your say
about Breca and me. But it was mostly beer

that was doing the talking. The truth is this:

35 when the going was heavy in those high waves,
I was the strongest swimmer of all.
We'd been children together and we grew up
daring ourselves to outdo each other,
boasting and urging each other to risk

40 our lives on the sea. And so it turned out.
Each of us swam holding a sword,
a naked, hard-proofed blade for protection
against the whale-beasts. But Breca could never
move out farther or faster from me

45 than I could manage to move from him.
Shoulder to shoulder, we struggled on
for five nights, until the long flow
and pitch of the waves, the perishing cold,
night falling and winds from the north

50 drove us apart. The deep boiled up
and its wallowing sent the sea-brutes wild.
My armour helped me to hold out;
my hard-ringed chain-mail, hand-forged and linked,
a fine, close-fitting filigree of gold,

55 kept me safe when some ocean creature
pulled me to the bottom. Pinioned fast
and swathed in its grip, I was granted one
final chance: my sword plunged
and the ordeal was over. Through my own hands,

60 the fury of battle had finished off the sea-beast.

"Time and again, foul things attacked me,
lurking and stalking, but I lashed out,
gave as good as I got with my sword.
My flesh was not for feasting on,

65 there would be no monsters gnawing and gloating
over their banquet at the bottom of the sea.
Instead, in the morning, mangled and sleeping
the sleep of the sword, they slopped and floated
like the ocean's leavings. From now on

70 sailors would be safe, the deep-sea raids
were over for good. Light came from the east,
bright guarantee of God, and the waves
went quiet; I could see headlands
and buffeted cliffs. Often, for undaunted courage,

75 fate spares the man it has not already marked.

- However it occurred, my sword had killed
nine sea-monsters. Such night-dangers
and hard ordeals I have never heard of
nor of a man more desolate in surging waves.
80 But worn out as I was, I survived,
came through with my life. The ocean lifted
and laid me ashore, I landed safe
on the coast of Finland.
- Now I cannot recall
- 85 any fight you entered, Unferth,
that bears comparison. I don't boast when I say
that neither you nor Breca were ever much
celebrated for swordsmanship
or for facing danger on the field of battle.
- 90 You killed your own kith and kin,
so for all your cleverness and quick tongue,
you will suffer damnation in the depths of hell.
The fact is, Unferth, if you were truly
as keen or courageous as you claim to be
- 95 Grendel would never have got away with
such unchecked atrocity, attacks on your king,
havoc in Heorot and horrors everywhere.
But he knows he need never be in dread
of your blade making a mizzle* of his blood
- 100 or of vengeance arriving ever from this quarter—
from the Victory-Shieldings, the shoulderers of the spear.
He knows he can trample down you Danes
to his heart's content, humiliate and murder
without fear of reprisal. But he will find me different.
- 105 I will show him how Geats shape to kill
in the heat of battle. Then whoever wants to
may go bravely to mead, when morning light,
scarfed in sun-dazzle, shines forth from the south
and brings another daybreak to the world."

...

—Translation by Seamus Heaney

* *mizzle* — a fine spray or mist

- 37 Based on lines 8–12, what does Unferth claim was the **main** reason Beowulf went out on the ocean?

- A. to save Breca
- B. to battle Grendel
- C. to kill the sea-beasts
- D. to prove his superiority

- 38 Read lines 17 and 18 in the box below.

... The ocean swayed,
winter went wild in the waves, ...

What is the effect of the imagery in the lines?

- A. It shows the danger Beowulf faced.
- B. It shows the speed of the sea-beasts.
- C. It shows why Beowulf was defeated.
- D. It shows God's anger at the swimmers.

- 39 In lines 67–68, to what does “sleeping / the sleep of the sword” refer?

- A. death
- B. peace
- C. honor
- D. memory

- 40 In lines 74 and 75, what reason does Beowulf give for his survival?

- A. His skill scared the monsters away.
- B. His bravery brought him special favor.
- C. He had help from some sailors.
- D. He found a piece of wood to float on.

Grade 10 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2012 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers*

Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Correct Answer (MC)*
1	109	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
2	109	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
3	110	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	A
4	110	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	C
5	110	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10	C
6	110	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	C
7	111	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10	D
8	111	<i>Language</i>	5	D
9	112	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	
10	114	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	B
11	114	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	D
12	114	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	C
13	114	<i>Language</i>	5	B
14	117	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	C
15	117	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	D
16	117	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
17	117	<i>Language</i>	6	A
18	118	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
19	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
20	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	A
21	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
22	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	C
23	123	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	C
24	123	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
25	123	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
26	123	<i>Language</i>	4	C
27	124	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
28	129	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
29	129	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
30	129	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
31	129	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
32	130	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
33	130	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	A
34	130	<i>Language</i>	5	B
35	130	<i>Language</i>	4	D
36	131	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	
37	135	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	16	D
38	135	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	A
39	135	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	A
40	135	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	B

* Answers are provided here for multiple-choice items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for open-response items, which are indicated by the shaded cells, will be posted to the Department's website later this year.