
II. English Language Arts,
Reading Comprehension, Grade 3

Grade 3 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension Test

The spring 2015 grade 3 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on Pre-K–5 learning standards in two content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (March 2011) listed below. Page numbers for the learning standards appear in parentheses.

- Reading (*Framework*, pages 13–19)
- Language (*Framework*, pages 33–40)

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* 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, **Reading** and **Language**, which are identical to the two framework content strands listed above.

The tables at the conclusion of this chapter indicate each released and unreleased common item's reporting category and the standard it assesses. The correct answers for released multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the released item table.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 3 ELA Reading Comprehension test included two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by multiple-choice, short-response, and/or open-response questions. Selected common reading passages and approximately half of the common test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in grade 3 test & answer booklets.

Reference Materials

During both ELA Reading Comprehension 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 any ELA Reading Comprehension test session.

Grade 3 English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION

DIRECTIONS

This session contains two reading selections with multiple-choice, short-response, and open-response questions. For multiple-choice questions, mark your answers by filling in the circle next to the best answer. For short-response and open-response questions, write your answer in the space below the question.

Read the passage about Claude Monet and answer the questions that follow.

Art Words

- Landscape — a painting that shows a large area of land as it is viewed from one place
- Canvas — a surface for painting made from cloth stretched over a wooden frame
- Sketches — quick, rough drawings of something

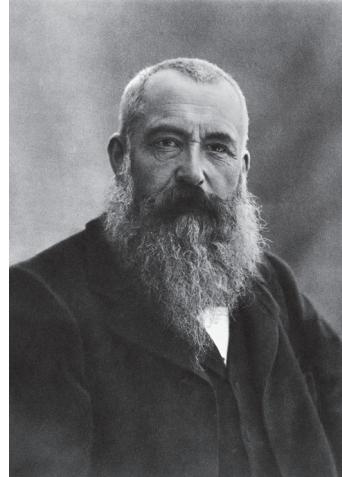
Claude Monet

by Anne Maley

The Man in the Boat

1 It was a sunny morning on the river. The water slapped softly at a boat moving through the water. A man was rowing the boat, but he was not a fisherman on his way out to catch a fish. He was an artist on his way out to paint a landscape. The boat was his floating studio, or working place.

2 The man found a spot on the river and began to set up his easel. Then he watched and waited. When the light looked just right, he began to paint. He covered his white canvas with the colors of trees, water, and sky. When people looked at his painting later, he wanted them to see what he had seen—an early summer morning on the river.



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3 The man in the boat lived long ago in France. He was an artist who loved the outdoors. Most of all, he loved the water. His name was Claude Monet. He is known as one of the greatest landscape painters who ever lived.

The Young Artist

4 Claude Monet was born in France in 1840. He spent his early years in a town where a great river ran into the sea. Claude loved the sea.

5 As a child, Claude was always sketching. People liked Claude's sketches. By working hard, Claude could sketch eight pictures a day and sell them.

6 By the time he was fifteen, Claude was already a famous artist in his home town. He sold his sketches to a shop, which hung them in the window. The shop also showed the work of another artist, named Mr. Boudin.

7 One day the two artists met at the shop. Mr. Boudin said to Claude, "So, young man, it's you who does these little sketches. They have something in them, but why not try painting? I will be happy to give you lessons."

8 At first Claude had no answer. He didn't like Mr. Boudin's paintings. He wasn't sure that he wanted Mr. Boudin to teach him to paint. Finally, Claude agreed.

9 Mr. Boudin taught Claude how to paint sunlight and shadows. He taught Claude a great deal about painting. When the lessons ended, Claude knew that he wanted to be a painter for the rest of his life. At the age of seventeen, Claude went to the city of Paris to study more about art.

The Difficult Years

10 Art school was not what Claude had expected. The teachers at art school said that artists should paint in studios, not outdoors. They had many rules for what to paint and how to paint it. Claude could not follow these rules. He said, "I can paint only what I see."

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11 Claude became very unhappy. He finally left Paris, but he held onto his ideas, and he kept on painting. Claude painted landscapes in parks, near rivers, and beside the sea.

12 Claude also painted large pictures, like “Women in the Garden.” He painted this picture on a canvas that was eight feet tall. First he painted as much of the canvas as he could reach. Then he connected wires to the canvas. He dug a hole and lowered the canvas into the hole. After he had painted the top of the canvas, he used the wires to lift the canvas out of the hole. The painting was finished.



13 Years went by. Claude painted many pictures, but he sold very few. Still, Claude never gave up. He loved his work and hoped that one day others would love it, too.

The Water Garden

14 When Claude Monet was forty-two years old, he and other artists had a large show in Paris. Monet’s paintings were among the best-selling works in the show. Monet felt proud and happy.

15 After that, Monet and his family moved to a house in the country. Monet planted two gardens that are still there today. One was a flower garden. The other was a water garden.

16 Monet made his water garden in the shape of a pear. Around the sides he grew many kinds of flowers and trees. Then he built a high wooden bridge across one end. Water lilies of many colors floated in the water. When it was done, Monet called his garden “a mirror of the sky.”

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17 Monet found great happiness in looking at his gardens and in painting them. His last great work was a group of eight paintings of the water garden called *Water Lilies*. He painted these as a gift to France, his country. Today these paintings still hang in a special place in Paris.

18 Each of the eight paintings shows a different part of the water garden. As you move from one painting to another, you seem to walk around the garden from beginning to end. Because of the way Monet painted these works, you see the garden from morning until night. Walking among these paintings is like spending a whole day in Claude Monet's garden.

19 Monet painted his *Water Lilies* until the day he died at the age of eighty-six. He was almost blind, but he kept on painting. He did not just want to paint, he needed to paint. As he put it, "I paint just as a bird sings."



Water Lilies

"Claude Monet" by Anne Maley, from *SUNBEAMS*, Student Edition. Copyright © 1987 by Harcourt, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Portrait of Artist Claude Monet copyright © Bettmann/CORBIS. "Women in the Garden" by Claude Monet copyright © Alfredo Dagli Orti/The Art Archive/CORBIS. "Nymphéas" by Claude Monet copyright © Reuters/CORBIS.

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Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 1 through 10 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

- 1 According to paragraph 1, Claude Monet used his boat as a place to

- (A) fish.
- (B) read.
- (C) paint.
- (D) sleep.

- 2 Which of the following words **best** describes the setting in paragraph 1?

- (A) sad
- (B) funny
- (C) peaceful
- (D) surprising

- 3 Based on paragraph 3, which of the following things would Claude Monet have **most likely** wanted to paint?

- (A) a dog
- (B) a pond
- (C) a friend
- (D) a building

- 4 In paragraph 14, why did Claude Monet feel “proud and happy”?

- (A) He moved to a new home.
- (B) His garden was completed.
- (C) He was finished with school.
- (D) His work became more popular.

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- 5 Based on the passage, which of the following activities did Claude Monet practice **first**?
- (A) rowing
(B) painting
(C) sketching
(D) gardening
- 6 Based on the passage, what did Claude Monet **most likely** mean when he said that he painted “just as a bird sings”?
- (A) He painted for other artists.
(B) Painting came naturally to him.
(C) He painted while listening to music.
(D) Painting animals was interesting for him.
- 7 Based on the passage, Claude Monet is remembered **mostly** for
- (A) his early drawings.
(B) living in the country.
(C) his landscape paintings.
(D) discovering new places.
- 8 The passage “Claude Monet” is an example of
- (A) drama.
(B) a biography.
(C) a short story.
(D) historical fiction.

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9 In paragraph 17, why is *Water Lilies* in italics, or slanted print?

- (A) It is the name of a book.
- (B) It is the name of a person.
- (C) It is the name of Monet's house.
- (D) It is the name of Monet's artwork.

10 Read the sentence from paragraph 12 in the box below.

Then he connected wires to the canvas.

Based on the paragraph, what does the word **connected** mean?

- (A) cut
- (B) took
- (C) joined
- (D) covered

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Question 11 is an open-response question.

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

Write your answer to question 11 in the lined space below.

- 11** Based on the passage, describe how Claude Monet worked to become a better artist. Support your answer with important information from the passage.

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Read the story to see what the narrator finds when he comes home from school. Then answer the questions that follow.

What Happened on Wednesday

by Johanna Hurwitz

- 1 **W**ednesday started out as a usual day. As soon as I woke, I had to jump out of bed and get dressed quickly so I could take Sammy for his early-morning walk. When we came back, I poured out Sammy’s bowl of puppy food and gave him some fresh water to drink. Then I had to swallow my orange juice and gobble up some toast really fast, grab my backpack, and rush off to catch the bus to school.
- 2 Mom and Mitch left a few minutes later. Mom drops Mitch off at the day-care center, and then she goes on to work.
- 3 Like most days, on Wednesday I got home first.
- 4 As I walked up the stairs leading to our apartment, Mrs. Hoffman, who lives below us, stopped me on the landing. “I’ve been out all day,” she told me. “And when I came in, I heard a strange banging noise. It’s coming from your apartment.”
- 5 I stood on the landing and listened. “I don’t hear anything,” I told her.
- 6 “It comes and goes. I can’t figure out what it is,” she said. “I don’t think it’s the water pipes. I also seemed to be the only person in the building, so I couldn’t ask the Hendersons to check it out.”
- 7 Midge and Alfred Henderson are the friends of my mother’s who own the building.

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- 8 As she spoke, there was a banging sound.
- 9 "There it goes again," said our neighbor. "Maybe I should go upstairs with you."
- 10 I looked at Mrs. Hoffman. She's about twice my mom's age and twice her weight too. I wondered what help she'd be if the pipes were acting up or if there was another sort of problem.
- 11 "That's all right," I said. "I'll figure out what's going on."
- 12 The banging got louder as I reached our door. It was as if someone were inside the apartment and trying to get out. But I knew no one was home. No one but Sammy.
- 13 I admit I was a little bit scared as I turned the key in the lock and opened the door. In front of my eyes was a sight that made me start laughing. It was like something out of a TV comedy. The hind legs of my dog were moving around, but his head was stuck inside an antique metal milk can that my mother kept in the entranceway.
- 14 For some dumb reason Sammy had put his head inside. Now he couldn't get out. It looked awfully funny, but I realized it wasn't something to laugh about.
- 15 I threw down my backpack and went to his rescue. "Hold still, Sammy," I told him as I grabbed hold of his back legs. I tried to brace the milk can with my feet as I pulled on Sammy.
- 16 I heard a muffled bark from the dog, but he was still stuck inside.
- 17 While I was trying to figure out what to do next, the doorbell rang. "It's me, Mrs. Hoffman," a breathless voice called out. "Is everything all right?"
- 18 I let go of Sammy's hindquarters and went to open the door.



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19 “Oh, my heavens!” my neighbor exclaimed.

20 “I’m not sure how he got in. And I’m not sure how he’s going to get out,” I said as we both stared at the part of poor Sammy that wasn’t inside the milk can.

21 “Dial nine-one-one,” said Mrs. Hoffman.

22 “The police?” Why would you call the police? It was pretty awful, but it wasn’t a crime.

23 “No, wait,” said Mrs. Hoffman, hurrying over to our phone. “We should call the fire department. You know how people call them if a cat gets stuck up a tree.”

24 She began punching in the numbers for the fire department. I was glad she was doing it because I felt sure if I did it, I’d get in trouble for making a false alarm. Besides, didn’t people call the fire department when cats were up in trees because there were tall ladders at the firehouse? For sure, one thing we didn’t need here was a tall ladder.

25 I listened as Mrs. Hoffman tried to explain to the person on the line just what the problem was. “It’s not a big emergency. Just a small one,” she said.

26 It *was* a big emergency if you were Sammy, I thought. Poor Sammy kept banging the milk can on the floor. I wondered if he’d be stuck inside forever. I felt so helpless, but I kept patting his rear, just so he’d know I was there.

27 Believe it or not, the fire department actually sent a truck to our building. It arrived just as Mom and Mitch did. Mitch was thrilled to see a big fire engine at our front door. Worried that the house was on fire, Mom came rushing up the stairs with him. I don’t know if she was relieved or not when she saw what the problem was.

28 In the end it took three firefighters and four-foot-long bolt cutters to free poor Sammy from that metal milk can.

29 When the can was cut away, we discovered that it had been the storage place for every piece of food that Mitch hadn’t wanted to

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eat during recent weeks—half sandwiches, a chunk of banana, even a couple of cookies. No wonder my poor, always-hungry dog had stuck his head inside the milk can.

30 “Sorry we had to destroy this can,” the firefighter who cut it open apologized to Mom.

31 “It was either that or have an awfully noisy dog on our hands,” she said, shaking her head.

“What Happened on Wednesday” by Johanna Hurwitz, from *One Small Dog*. Text copyright © 2000 by Johanna Hurwitz. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 12 through 21 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

12 Based on the story, which of the following statements is true?

- A Sammy has been stuck many times.
- B Sammy stays in the apartment during the day.
- C Sammy plays outside when the family is gone.
- D Sammy has lived with the family for many years.

13 Based on the story, why does Mrs. Hoffman think something is wrong?

- A She cannot see the key.
- B She hears an odd sound.
- C She cannot find the dog.
- D She notices an unusual smell.

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- 14 What does paragraph 9 **mostly** show about Mrs. Hoffman?

- (A) She wants to be helpful.
- (B) She wants to get exercise.
- (C) She enjoys being with people.
- (D) She enjoys seeing new places.

- 15 In paragraph 13, why does the narrator think what he sees is “like something out of a TV comedy”?

- (A) He wants to watch it again.
- (B) He watches it for a short time.
- (C) He knows it will have a happy ending.
- (D) He thinks it would not normally happen.

- 16 Read paragraph 19 in the box below.

“Oh, my heavens!” my neighbor exclaimed.

The paragraph **mostly** shows that the neighbor is

- (A) surprised.
- (B) confused.
- (C) curious.
- (D) bored.

- 17 According to the story, firefighters free Sammy by

- (A) pulling him out.
- (B) giving him a treat.
- (C) cleaning out the can.
- (D) cutting open the can.

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- 18 Which of the following **best** describes the setting of the story?

- (A) a fire station in the early evening
- (B) a fire station in the early morning
- (C) an apartment building in the late morning
- (D) an apartment building in the late afternoon

- 19 In paragraph 17, what does the suffix *-less* mean in *breathless*?

- (A) without
- (B) between
- (C) made of
- (D) one who

- 20 Which of the following words from the story is a **compound word**?

- (A) Wednesday
- (B) gobble
- (C) Hoffman
- (D) upstairs

- 21 Reread paragraph 29. Based on the paragraph, a “storage place” is a space in which to

- (A) be alone.
- (B) take a nap.
- (C) keep things.
- (D) wait for something.

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Question 22 is a short-response question. Write your answer to question 22 in the lined space below.

- 22** In the story, why does Mrs. Hoffman say the problem is “not a big emergency” for firefighters?

Question 23 is a short-response question. Write your answer to question 23 in the lined space below.

- 23** In the story, why does the narrator think Sammy’s problem is “a big emergency” for him?

Grade 3 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2015 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers*

Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Correct Answer (MC)*
1	11	<i>Reading</i>	1	C
2	11	<i>Reading</i>	3	C
3	11	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
4	11	<i>Reading</i>	3	D
5	12	<i>Reading</i>	3	C
6	12	<i>Reading</i>	4	B
7	12	<i>Reading</i>	2	C
8	12	<i>Reading</i>	8.a	B
9	13	<i>Language</i>	2	D
10	13	<i>Language</i>	4	C
11	14	<i>Reading</i>	2	
12	18	<i>Reading</i>	1	B
13	18	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
14	19	<i>Reading</i>	3	A
15	19	<i>Reading</i>	4	D
16	19	<i>Reading</i>	3	A
17	19	<i>Reading</i>	1	D
18	20	<i>Reading</i>	8.a	D
19	20	<i>Language</i>	4	A
20	20	<i>Language</i>	1	D
21	20	<i>Language</i>	4	C
22	21	<i>Reading</i>	3	
23	21	<i>Reading</i>	3	

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

**Grade 3 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2015 Unreleased Common Items:
Reporting Categories and Standards**

Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard
24	<i>Reading</i>	3
25	<i>Reading</i>	3
26	<i>Reading</i>	3
27	<i>Reading</i>	2
28	<i>Language</i>	4
29	<i>Reading</i>	8.a
30	<i>Reading</i>	3
31	<i>Reading</i>	1
32	<i>Reading</i>	3
33	<i>Reading</i>	1
34	<i>Language</i>	2
35	<i>Language</i>	4
36	<i>Reading</i>	2
37	<i>Reading</i>	3
38	<i>Reading</i>	2
39	<i>Reading</i>	1
40	<i>Reading</i>	4
41	<i>Language</i>	4