

Minnesota MCA Grade 4 Reading Practice

Exam Materials
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Answer Key Materials
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Name _____

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III

Reading Item Sampler
Grade 4



**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 story, 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.



Reading Test — Segment 1

1

Read this story about a girl who helps her mother. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

I Speak English for My Mom

by Muriel Stanek

- 1 When I was small, Mom helped me do everything. Now that I'm older, I have to help my mom because I can speak English, and she can't.
- 2 At school I use English all the time. At home Mom and I speak Spanish together. And outside our home, I speak for her.
- 3 If a stranger says something to Mom in English, she quickly asks, "*¿Que dijo?*" which means "What did he say?" I tell her in Spanish and then answer for her in English. I feel grown-up.
- 4 "What would I do without you, Lupe!" my mother says. "You are a very good helper."
- 5 At our school a parent must meet with the teacher to get the child's report card. My teacher does not speak Spanish, so I go to the meeting and tell my mother and Mrs. Wells what each one is saying. Mom likes Mrs. Wells because she says I work hard. "*Muchas gracias,*" Mom says to her. That means, "many thanks."
- 6 On the way home, we stop at a Mexican restaurant. It is my reward for getting a good report card. Our neighbors the Gárcias are there, too. Carlos and Claudia Gárcia are my best friends. The grown-ups speak Spanish to one another. The kids and I mix up English and Spanish while we eat ice cream and tell jokes.
- 7 We are beginning to speak a little English to each other. I say to Mom, "How do you do? What is your name?"
- 8 Mom answers in English, "I am fine, thank you. My name is Rosa Gómez."
- 9 "Where do you live?" I ask.

- 10 She says, "I live in Chicago, Illinois."
- 11 "Do you have any children?"
- 12 "Yes, I have one daughter. Her name is Lupe."
- 13 "Very good," I tell her.
- 14 "Thank you very much," she says.
- 15 Then we go back to speaking Spanish. "It takes a long time to learn a new language," Mom says. "But one day you won't have to speak for me anymore."
- 16 "I think maybe I will miss it," I tell her.
- 17 Mom tucks me into bed. "*Buenas noches*," I say to her.
- 18 "Good night," says Mom.

- 1**
- 1.** The reader can tell that Mrs. Gómez wants to
- A.** speak only English.
 - B.** speak only Spanish.
 - C.** speak Spanish and English.
 - D.** speak for her daughter.
-

- 2.** Who tells this story to the reader?
- A.** Rosa Gómez
 - B.** Mrs. Wells
 - C.** Lupe Gómez
 - D.** Claudia García
-

- 3.** What is the most likely reason that Lupe would later miss speaking English for her mother?
- A.** Lupe would not be able to have any more fun with her mother.
 - B.** It has made Lupe feel needed, important, and close to her mother.
 - C.** Lupe would no longer get to speak Spanish to her mother at home.
 - D.** It has made it possible for Lupe to hide things from her mother.

4. What word is the best definition of grown-ups in paragraph 6?

- A. Helpers
 - B. Adults
 - C. Friends
 - D. Teachers
-

5. Why does Mom take Lupe to the Mexican restaurant?

- A. She is repaying Lupe for speaking for her.
 - B. She is rewarding Lupe for getting good grades.
 - C. She wants to treat Lupe's two friends to a meal.
 - D. She wants to give Lupe's teacher a nice dinner.
-

6. Who helps Mrs. Gómez learn to speak English?

- A. Mrs. Wells
- B. Claudia
- C. Mrs. García
- D. Lupe

7. The reader can tell that the author wanted her story to be

- A. thrilling.
 - B. unbelievable.
 - C. true-to-life.
 - D. upsetting.
-

8. How does Mrs. Gómez most likely feel about learning to speak English?

- A. She is determined to learn English, but she understands that it will be difficult.
 - B. She is learning English only so Lupe will not have to go everywhere with her.
 - C. She is learning English only because she needs it to be able to live in Chicago.
 - D. She is angry that she cannot use her native language all the time.
-

9. How does Lupe show respect for her mother at the end of the story?

- A. She tells her mother that it will take her a long time to learn English.
- B. She asks her mother questions in English so she can practice.
- C. She asks her mother to tell her what she would do without her.
- D. She tells her mother she will miss translating and says, "*Buenas noches.*"

Reading Test — Segment 2

The following article is about a tiny but deadly frog. Read this article. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

The Poison Dart Frog

by Jeanette Jenkins

2

- 1 Deep in the lowland rain forest of Colombia, South America, lives a tiny, beautiful frog. Only two inches long and completely golden yellow in color, it looks almost like a toy. But don't touch. Touching this frog can kill you.
- 2 In 1973, scientists discovered this frog. The Embera Choco people of this region have known this frog for generations as the poison dart frog.
- 3 Before guns arrived in the rain forest, the Choco people hunted with blowguns made from palm wood. Darts used in the blowguns were dipped into a very strong poison. This poison comes from the poison dart frog. Small pores all over the frog's skin secrete this colorless, odorless poison.
- 4 Many frogs secrete poisons to protect them from predators, but the poison of the poison dart frog is 20 times more deadly than any other frog. One poison dart can kill 20,000 mice. One drop (200 micrograms) is enough to kill a grown man. The poison itself is a chemical which causes muscle contractions that lead to heart failure. The poison this frog secretes is one of the most toxic poisons known.
- 5 If the frog is lethal to the touch, how do the Choco hunters dip their darts? The hunter simply holds down a poison dart frog with a stick and rubs the dart across the frog's back. That's all it takes. When dry, the dart will be poison for a year. When the dart finds its target, often a bird, the hunter carefully removes the dart to use again. He then cuts away any part of the carcass the dart touched. Even that could be poisonous if eaten.
- 6 The poison dart frog has only two natural enemies, the Choco blowgunners and a frog-eating snake. Of all the rain forest creatures, only this snake is able to eat the frog and live to eat again.
- 7 When approached by would-be predators, the poison dart frog does not try to escape or hide. This bold behavior is unusual in the animal world. Many predators sense danger and retreat when they can't scare this little frog. But if they go

ahead and take a bite, it will be their last. The poison dart frog has been known to hop to within an inch of scientists studying the species. The scientists know to back away.

- 8 Rifles are replacing blowguns in the Colombian rain forest. As years pass, the blowgunners' skills will be forgotten. The tiny, golden poison dart frog will have one less enemy.

10. What is the central idea in this article?

- A.** The frog's poison is powerful and useful.
 - B.** Predators retreat when they meet the tiny and beautiful frog.
 - C.** The frog lives deep in the rain forest.
 - D.** Darts dipped in the frog's poison are used as weapons.
-

11. In paragraph 5, the word carcass means

- A.** strong poison.
 - B.** palm wood.
 - C.** dead body.
 - D.** dry stick.
-

12. The Choco people use poison dart frogs to

- A.** make medicine from darts.
 - B.** study the effects of the frog's poison.
 - C.** trap dangerous snakes.
 - D.** hunt with darts dipped in the frog's poison.
-

13. In paragraph 7, what does the word retreat mean?

- A.** Back away
- B.** Scream loudly
- C.** Hop up and down
- D.** Act surprised and confused

14. Based on the article, a Choco blowgunner most likely uses darts to

- A.** kill animals for food.
 - B.** scare away enemies.
 - C.** capture frogs.
 - D.** cut meat.
-

15. Where is the frog's poison located?

- A.** In its muscles
 - B.** On its skin
 - C.** In its mouth
 - D.** On its feet
-

16. Which question about the poison dart frog does the article answer?

- A.** How long does the frog live?
- B.** What does the frog eat?
- C.** How does the frog make its poison?
- D.** What enemies does the frog have?

- 17.** If a predator comes near a poison dart frog, what will the frog most likely do?
- A.** Move toward the predator
 - B.** Remain in the same spot
 - C.** Jump away from the predator
 - D.** Hide among the leaves
-
- 18.** The author most likely wrote this article to
- A.** introduce readers to the Embera Choco people of Colombia.
 - B.** persuade readers to visit the rain forest of Colombia.
 - C.** inform readers about a deadly animal that lives in South America.
 - D.** warn readers to avoid a dangerous animal that lives in South America.

Reading Test — Segment 3

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

Selection 1

Creatures of the Night

written for the
Minnesota Department of Education

3

- 1 What is that flying around in the dark? Is it a bird? Is it a mouse? Is it a flying mouse?
- 2 Popular myths make bats seem frightening. However, they are actually helpful creatures in danger of vanishing. Disease and human beings are threats to bats. Most bats live only ten to twenty years. For these reasons, bats face an uncertain future. Hopefully, people will take notice of these interesting and useful creatures before they disappear from the planet.
- 3 Although bats fly like birds, they do not look like birds in any other way. The faces of bats look more like the faces of mice. Bats are mammals, not birds, because fur covers their bodies instead of feathers. Depending upon the kind of bat, this fur can be black, brown, red, multicolored, or even white! In addition, female bats nurse their young, a fact that is true of other mammals. Bats are the only mammals that can fly. Even with their wings, bats are some of the smallest mammals on Earth.
- 4 Bats have four slender fingers and a thin skin that stretches from finger to finger to form each wing. One of these fingers acts as a thumb and comes complete with a fingernail. This nail helps the bat cling to various surfaces and hold onto its food. Some bats have tiny wings that may stretch only a few inches. Other bats have wings that can measure up to six feet across from wing tip to wing tip! What a sight that would be in the nighttime sky!
- 5 Most bats are only active at night. Many people believe that bats are blind, but most bats actually have good eyesight. A keen eye is necessary for a bat, which can fly hundreds of feet above the ground looking for a good meal. Bats also use their hearing to locate prey they cannot see in the dark.
- 6 For a bat, nature is an all-you-can-eat buffet. A single bat can eat thousands of flies each night! Gray bats eat beetles, mayflies, and other insects. Fruit bats, as their name suggests, eat fruit; however, they also consume nectar and flower

parts. These bats later transfer pollen to other plants or drop seeds that will grow into more fruit-bearing plants. Larger bats are even known to be great hunters that feast on lizards or frogs.

- 7 Once a bat satisfies its hunger, it needs to find a place to rest. A first choice is a dead tree or a dark cave. However, groups of bats often gather in barns, in attics, or underneath bridges. As seen in books, bats do hang upside down by their feet. Hanging upside down is not a learned skill; it is something that all bats are born with. It is as easy for a bat to hang upside down as it is for most people to stand or sit. Hanging upside down also makes it easy for bats to quickly fly off if threatened.
- 8 People often think of bats as lonesome creatures. In reality, most bats live in large colonies and crowd together to stay safe and warm. Bats spend their lives traveling, hunting, and resting in groups. Most female bats give birth to one baby each year; they take care of their babies in groups like large families. Bats even provide food for the sick among them.
- 9 Some people think that bats are strange. But many plants would disappear without bats, and the many animals that depend on these plants would not survive. There are more than one thousand different kinds of bats, some of which can eat more than five hundred mosquitoes in one hour. If not for bats, the number of insects would be enormous. When people are out enjoying nature and are free of insects, they may have a bat to thank!

Selection 2

Bats at the Library

by Brian Lies

1 Another inky evening's here—
the air is cool and calm and clear.
We've feasted, fluttered, swooped, and soared,
and yet . . . we're still a little bored.

5 All this *sameness* leaves us blue
and makes us ache for something new.
Then word spreads quickly from afar:
a window has been left ajar.

Can it be true? Oh, can it be?
10 *Yes!—Bat Night at the library!*

The sky is lively as we race
together toward our favorite place.
Eager wings beat autumn air—
Look, that's it. We're almost there!

15 Then squeezed together, wing to wing,
we rocket through the opening.

We've waited for this night all year,
but this is it! At last . . .

. . . we're here.

20 For most old bats, this isn't new—
they've got lots of things to do.
They'll flutter off and lose themselves
among the books lined up on shelves.

Other bats, in munchy moods,
25 will study guides to fancy foods
or hang out by a lamp instead
to talk about the books they've read.

But little bats will have to learn
the reason that we *must* return.
30 The ones who haven't come before
have no idea what's in store.

Some of them will drift away
and figure out a game to play,
like shaping shadows on the wall,
35 or wingtip-tag around the hall.

This big box is loads of fun,
blasting brighter than the sun.
Instead of copying books from shelves,
we can duplicate ourselves!

40 Doesn't matter where you look;
there's nothing like a pop-up book!

The fountain water's nice and cool
and makes a splendid swimming pool.

Please keep it down—you must behave!
45 *This library is not your cave!*

It's hard to settle down and read
when life flits by at dizzy speed.
But storytime is just the thing
to rest a play-exhausted wing.

50 And if we listen, we will hear
some distant voices drawing near—
louder, louder, louder still,
they coax and pull us in, until . . .

everyone—old bat or pup—
55 has been completely swallowed up
and *lives* inside a book instead
of simply hearing something read.

Breathless, lost within the tale,
no one sees the sky grow pale.

60 *What is that light? A lamp? The moon?*
Our bookish feast can't end so soon.

It feels as though we've just begun,
but now we leave our books half done.

Through the window, into sky—
65 it's much too late—we've got to fly.

But maybe a librarian
will give us bats this chance again—
and leave a window open wide
to let us share the world inside!

70 For now, we'll dream of things we've read,
a universe inside each head.
Every evening, one and all
will listen for that late-night call:

Can it be true? Oh, can it be?
75 *Yes!—Bat Night at the library!*

19. Which statement is a main idea of the poem?

- A.** Librarians can be forgetful.
 - B.** Librarians can be thoughtful.
 - C.** Libraries are usually closed at night.
 - D.** Libraries are great places to spend time.
-

20. In lines 36–39 of the poem, what are the bats doing?

- A.** Making copies of themselves
 - B.** Removing books from shelves
 - C.** Digging around in a box of books
 - D.** Shining bright lights at each other
-

21. Which sentence from the article shows bats as caring animals?

- A.** "Disease and human beings are threats to bats."
(paragraph 2)
- B.** "Even with their wings, bats are some of the smallest mammals on Earth."
(paragraph 3)
- C.** "As seen in books, bats do hang upside down by their feet."
(paragraph 7)
- D.** "Bats even provide food for the sick among them."
(paragraph 8)

22. Which sentence is the best summary of paragraph 5?

- A.** Bats can search the ground and locate prey while they fly.
 - B.** Bats can make a meal out of anything they catch in the dark.
 - C.** Bats must have good eyesight and good hearing to find food.
 - D.** Bats must be able to see in the dark because they are active at night.
-

23. What information from the article supports the fact that bats are mammals?

- A.** Bats have thumbs and can hang upside down.
 - B.** Bats have fur and can nurse their young.
 - C.** Bats have skin that covers their wings.
 - D.** Bats have faces that look like mice.
-

24. Read line 3 from "Bats at the Library."

We've feasted, fluttered, swooped, and soared,

Which paragraph in "Creatures of the Night" shows how the bats "feasted"?

- A.** Paragraph 4
- B.** Paragraph 5
- C.** Paragraph 6
- D.** Paragraph 7

- 25.** The article helps readers understand the setting of the poem by explaining why bats
- A.** live only indoors.
 - B.** are only active at night.
 - C.** like only cool weather.
 - D.** rest only while hanging upside down.
-
- 26.** Which statement is supported by details in both the article and the poem?
- A.** Bats live in groups that spend time together.
 - B.** Bats hunt with one another for food at night.
 - C.** Bats play a part in helping plants grow.
 - D.** Bats look for food whenever possible.
-
- 27.** Which statement is true about both the article and the poem?
- A.** "Creatures of the Night" suggests that bats and humans can live together, but "Bats at the Library" suggests that bats cannot live around humans.
 - B.** "Creatures of the Night" shows the frightening side of bats, but "Bats at the Library" shows the friendly side of bats.
 - C.** "Creatures of the Night" describes how bats look, but "Bats at the Library" contains no descriptions of bats.
 - D.** "Creatures of the Night" contains information about bats, but "Bats at the Library" uses bats as characters in a story.

28. Based on the article and the poem, the author and the poet most likely agree that bats

- A.** can be hurt by people.
 - B.** are busiest after dark.
 - C.** help people in many ways.
 - D.** are smarter than other creatures.
-

29. Which paragraph in the article describes a problem without offering a solution?

- A.** Paragraph 2
 - B.** Paragraph 3
 - C.** Paragraph 4
 - D.** Paragraph 5
-

30. Which sentence from the article supports the idea that bats are useful?

- A.** "Bats have four slender fingers and a thin skin that stretches from finger to finger to form each wing."
(paragraph 4)
- B.** "This nail helps the bat cling to various surfaces and hold onto its food."
(paragraph 4)
- C.** "A keen eye is necessary for a bat, which can fly hundreds of feet above the ground looking for a good meal."
(paragraph 5)
- D.** "These bats later transfer pollen to other plants or drop seeds that will grow into more fruit-bearing plants."
(paragraph 6)

31. How is the information in paragraph 9 presented?

- A.** The author uses a problem-and-solution approach to show how people can enjoy nature.
 - B.** The author uses a cause-and-effect approach to show how bats help animals and people.
 - C.** The author uses comparison to show how bats depend on plants and animals to live.
 - D.** The author uses ordered steps to show how people can protect plants and animals.
-

32. According to the author of "Creatures of the Night," bats are in danger of vanishing because

- A.** they have naturally short lives.
- B.** they are only able to fly at night.
- C.** they remain in large colonies for most of their lives.
- D.** they are some of the smallest mammals in the world.

33. At the end of the poem, how do the bats feel?

- A.** Excited about leaving the library for home
- B.** Frightened by the light growing in the distance
- C.** Hopeful about visiting the library again in the future
- D.** Angry to be interrupted while having a good time

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Grade 4 Teacher's Guide

MCA-III Item Sampler Answer Key

Grade 4 Reading

Item #	Correct Answer	Item Type	Skill Domain	SSB	Depth of Knowledge
1	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.1.1	III
2	C	MC	Craft and Structure	4.1.6.6	II
3	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.3.3	III
4	B	MC	Craft and Structure	4.1.4.4	II
5	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.1.1	I
6	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.1.1	I
7	C	MC	Craft and Structure	4.1.6.6	III
8	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.3.3	II
9	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.3.3	II
10	A	MC	Craft and Structure	4.2.2.2	II
11	C	MC	Craft and Structure	4.2.4.4	II
12	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	I
13	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.4.4	II
14	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	II
15	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	I
16	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.2.2	II
17	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	II
18	C	MC	Craft and Structure	4.2.6.6	III
19	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.2.2	II
20	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.1.1	II
21	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	II
22	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.2.2	II
23	B	MC	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	4.2.8.8	II
24	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	III
25	B	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.3.3	III
26	A	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	III
27	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.1.1	III
28	B	MC	Craft and Structure	4.2.6.6	III
29	A	MC	Craft and Structure	4.2.5.5	III
30	D	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.2.2.2	II
31	B	MC	Craft and Structure	4.2.5.5	III
32	A	MC	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	4.2.8.8	II
33	C	MC	Key Ideas and Details	4.1.3.3	II

Passage Characteristics

Segment	Title	Type	Lexile	Word Count
1	I Speak English for My Mom	L	550	404
2	The Poison Dart Frog	I	890	413
3	Creatures of the Night/Bats at the Library	Paired	860/N/A	634

Grade 4 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.