

Massachusetts MCAS 2023  
Grade 6 English Language Arts

Exam Materials  
Pages 2 - 26

Answer Key Materials  
Pages 27 - 28



MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Elementary  
and Secondary Education

*Release of Spring 2023  
MCAS Test Items*

*from the*

*Grade 6 English Language Arts  
Paper-Based Test*

**June 2023**

**Massachusetts Department of  
Elementary and Secondary Education**

# Grade 6 English Language Arts

This session contains 15 questions.

## Directions

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

Read the story, written as a series of letters, and then answer the questions that follow.

### from "Your Question for Author Here"

by Kate DiCamillo and Jon Scieszka

- 1 Dear Mrs. O'Toople,
- 2 We are reading this book in school where a kid writes to an author.
- 3 So we have to write to an author.
- 4 We are also studying "Parts of a Friendly Letter."
- 5 So this is also a Friendly Letter.
- 6 In the book we are reading this kid thinks the author's books are really great and then the author writes back and saves the kid's life or something. I'm not sure because I only read the first part of the book.
- 7 Please send a bunch of author stuff so we can get this over with.
- 8 Closing,
- 9 Joe Jones

\* \* \*

- 10 *Dear Joe Jones,*
- 11 *You have reached Maureen O'Toople. I am quite sure, however, that you have not reached her using the method your teacher suggested. Your teacher asked you to pen a Friendly Letter. The letter I received from you was not Friendly. It was, rather, Perfunctory.*
- 12 *And look, I have written you a Perfunctory Letter in return. There's a certain symmetry to that, isn't there?*
- 13 *Yours in the spirit of getting this over with,*
- 14 *Maureen O'Toople*
- 15 *P.S. I'm afraid I have no idea what "author stuff" is. Therefore, I will be unable to send you any.*

\* \* \*

## English Language Arts

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- 16 Dear Maureen O'Toople,
- 17 What the heck kind of author letter was that? I am supposed to ask the questions. You are supposed to send back the author answers. That's how the assignment goes. That is all you have to do.
- 18 There's nothing in the assignment about writing a Perfunctory Letter. But maybe I can get some extra credit because I did that, too.
- 19 So here are the questions, right off the board, just how Mrs. Bund wrote them.
1. Why do you write books?
  2. Where do you get your ideas?
  3. What got you started writing?
  4. Your question for author here.
- 20 Please send some good author answers or Mrs. Bund will give me another C- and then my mom will freak out again and say I'm not applying myself and my dad will ground me and I will miss my baseball team playoffs and have to do whatever they say for the next week.
- 21 I'm Not Kidding,
- 22 Joe Jones

\* \* \*

- 23 *Dear Joe Jones,*
- 24 *No one gets credit for writing Perfunctory Letters. They are an insult to the human spirit. What we humans crave is connection. Perfunctory Letters work counter to that.*
- 25 *But I digress; I digress!*

## English Language Arts

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- 26 *You have posed some questions. And you want some answers, answers that will result in you receiving a grade higher than a C-. I don't know if I can help you, Joe, because I don't feel like answering questions. The older you get, the more questions you get asked, and the more weary you become of answering the questions and the more elusive the answers—any answer, every answer—seem.*
- 27 *What I would like to do is ask a question. I would like to ask you a question. So, let's make a deal, Joe. I'll ask you a question and you answer it. And then, if I feel like it, I'll answer one of your questions. How does that sound?*
- 28 *Here's my first question for you: Are you afraid of thunderstorms?*
- 29 *Yours cordially and only somewhat perfunctorily and more than a little curiously,*
- 30 *Maureen O'Toole*
- 31 *P.S. I'm no fool, Joe. I'm betting good money that you haven't read one single book I've written. Prove me wrong.*
- \* \* \*
- 32 *Maureen O'Toole,*
- 33 *Aw, come on. It's bad enough I have to do this lame assignment. Now I have to write extra? I thought authors were supposed to like getting letters from their kid fans.*
- 34 *But if I don't get these answers, I am hosed. That's what my dad says. Hosed. I don't know what that really means. Like, what does a hose have to do with anything? But I do know it means no TV, no computer time, no baseball, no comics, no music, no phone, no hanging out with my friend James. Basically it means nothing that is really the good part of living.*
- 35 *Why would they do that to me? Do people just get meaner when they get older?*
- 36 *Okay, here's my answer. I am kind of afraid of thunderstorms. Not the rain part. That sounds great on the roof. It's the part between the flash of lightning and the BAM of thunder. It's waiting for the BAM that weirds me out. You just don't know when it's going to happen.*
- 37 *So please send me some author answers. As soon as you can.*

## English Language Arts

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38 Really,

39 Joe Jones

40 P.S. I didn't get a chance to read any of your books yet. I actually picked you mostly to annoy Jennifer, because she is all crazy about your books and always talking about the horses or the princesses or whatever is in them. I usually only read history books that really tell you something. And books that are funny.

\* \* \*

41 *Dear Joe,*

42 *Thank you for answering my question. I, too, like the sound of the rain on the roof. I also like the lightning. It's like some great cosmic flashlight. It makes me think that someone is searching for me. And I don't mind the BAM of thunder because that makes me think that, perhaps, I have been found. That's the way a good book makes me feel, as if I have been found, understood, seen.*

43 *Oh, I'm sneaky, Joe. Right there, in the first paragraph, I have answered your first question. And you know what that means: Now I get to ask you another question. Are you ready?*

44 *What's in your sock drawer besides socks?*

45 *That's the question. Answer it and I'll answer another question of yours. Quid pro quo.*

46 *Amusing myself*

47 *and delighted to be a part of your "lame assignment"*

48 *I remain,*

49 *Maureen*

50 *P.S. "Whatever is in them" is a truly alarming phrase to use in reference to my books. But, as an interesting aside, I am happy to inform you that none of my books (not one) features princesses or horses. Toads, tidal waves, arachnid revolutions, yes. Princesses, no. Horses, no. Do your research, Joe.*

51 *P.P.S. Yes. People do get meaner as they get older.*

\* \* \*

52 Maureen,

53 Ha! You are completely not going to believe what I have in my sock drawer besides socks: Spiders. Or arachnids, as they are scientifically called. One is a wolf spider. The three other ones are jumping spiders. I have to hide them in my sock drawer so my mom doesn't make me throw them out.

54 It's also a good way to keep my sister out of my sock drawer. Because I also have rocks I have collected from all over the country, a real arrowhead I found last summer, and a real Civil War bullet. It's called a minié ball. And not because it is mini. Or a ball. It was named after this guy Minié who invented the rifle used a lot in the Civil War. It is made of lead.

55 But you are still really messing up this assignment. How is that an answer to question one? Are you saying you write books because you like lightning and don't mind thunder? That's what I'm writing down.

56 Joe

57 P.S. Sorry I was alarming you talking about your books. I went and looked at the spider one in the library. The first part of Fangs for the Duchess is pretty good. Most people don't know that spiders squirt venom into their prey that dissolves their innards so they can suck it down. I'm glad you had that in there.

58 But the title is still pretty princess-y.

\* \* \*

59 *Dear Joe,*

60 *Arachnids in your sock drawer! I'm impressed. Truly. But I must take issue with the notion that I am messing up this assignment. What I am doing is enriching your life. And sometimes, in dark and confusing moments, I think that you might be enriching mine. For instance, I have read quite a bit about the Civil War, but I did not know about this gentleman Minié and his invention of the minié ball. Many young boys, boys almost as young as you, went off to fight in the Civil War. I bet you know that. But just think: That minié ball you have could have hit one of those boys on the battlefield, grazed his cheek, wounded him, left him scarred. Who was that boy? What was his name? What story would he tell about that piece of lead in your sock drawer?*



## English Language Arts

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61 *Oh, I delight myself. Why? Because I just answered question number two, that's why. As for the thunder and the lightning, the BAM and the flashlight, it's like this, Joe: If a good book can make you feel found, seen, wouldn't you want to try and work the magic of finding, seeing another? Huh? Wouldn't you?*

62 *Yours,*

63 *Maureen*

64 *P.S. I have a truly world-class arrowhead collection.*

\* \* \*

65 Dear Maureen,

66 That is pretty crazy that somebody like me and James would be sneaking around the woods in Virginia or Pennsylvania trying to shoot other kids just like us. It would be kind of like battling in a baseball series, but with guns. That could really change the whole story of someone's life.

67 Oh, I also forgot to tell you another thing I have in my sock drawer. A half-finished bag of Cheetos. Just in case you need that for your author answers.

68 And I think I understand your crazy answers, but could you speed it up? Since I don't have all my answers, I can't put your letter up on Mrs. Bund's Author Letter Board. And then I got in trouble with our gym teacher, Mr. Brown, because I was late for class because I was explaining things to Mrs. Bund. And then I got in trouble with the principal, Mr. Barnett, because Mr. Brown thought I was talking back to him. And Parent/Teacher Night is coming up and I am going to really get it. So this is kind of all your fault.

69 And now on top of all of that, we have to write a poem. . . . Could you just write me a poem? It would really help me out. You could write it about your arrowheads. What kinds do you have?

70 Yours,

71 Joe

\* \* \*

- 72 *Dear Joe,*
- 73 *As friendly as I am feeling toward you right now (I was impressed with your powers of empathy and imagination vis-à-vis the boys of the Civil War), I will not write you a poem. I, Maureen O'Toople, will NEVER AGAIN be involved in any nefarious activity. Don't ask me to define "nefarious." Suffice it to say that I have done wrong and that my bad behavior resulted in a small amount of time in the hoosegow. Yes, Joe, jail. I, Maureen O'Toople, have been in jail. And it was there, in the dark confines of my cell, that I decided to change my life, to work as much good in the world as I was capable of working.*
- 74 *But I digress. Fortunately, my digression answered another of your questions! Yes, there it is: The answer to question number three. That means that you are that much closer to getting to post my letter on the bulletin board (what a happy day that will be). It also means that I get to ask you another question. Here it is.*
- 75 *What phase is the moon in?*
- 76 *Your writer friend,*
- 77 *Maureen*
- 78 *P.S. I know that you are worried about your poem assignment. I can sense your anxiety from here. I am going to take pity on you. I will show you how simple it is to write a poem. Look around you. Look inside you. Like this, Joe:*
- 79 WHY I WRITE
- I like lightning and*
- thunder, flashlight and the BAM:*
- looking, being found.*
- 80 *Don't panic. You can do it, too. The first line of a haiku is five syllables. The second is seven syllables. And the third line is five syllables. Those are the guidelines. But within the confines of those rules, the sky is the limit. Anything and everything belongs in a poem.*
- 81 *P.P.S. Please don't steal my poem and turn it in as yours, Joe.*

\* \* \*

- 82 Maureen,
- 83 You are kind of driving me crazy. Most adults just boss kids around and make them do stuff just because they say so. But you are more like the lightning, and then I'm thinking about it and BAM, there's the thunder. Are you a crazy, psychic oceanographer like the one in your book Mother Tide? I liked the part about all of the cities being wiped out by the giant waves. But why did you wait so long to get to that good part of the story? Also there seemed to be too much talking before the waves.
- 84 Anyway, I used your idea of anything and everything for a poem. This is it.
- 85     WHAT I HAVE  
          Civil War bullet  
          the story of someone's life  
          hides in my sock drawer.
- 86 I gave it to Mrs. Bund and she was pretty surprised. She even looked like she was starting to cry a little. Then she asked me if I copied it from someplace else. I told her no but I got some help from the Author Assignment I was still working on. I got a B. So I guess you do know what you are doing with author stuff.
- 87 Oh, and I almost forgot—you went to jail? I'll bet you were a spy or maybe a ninja cat burglar. I don't think you were robbing banks or mugging old ladies. I hope you weren't. Were you?
- 88 I think this is the longest letter I have ever written. And I still have to answer your question and give you my last question. Okay. The moon is waxing gibbous. That means it is getting more full. And I have no idea why you need to know that.
- 89 So the last question for the Author Assignment. I was just messing around with you before when I wrote that #4, "Your question here."
- 90 My last Author Question really is—how do you know if you might be a writer?
- 91 Your kid-in-school pal,
- 92 Joe

\* \* \*

- 93 *Dear Joe,*
- 94 *First, allow me to say how delighted I am that you read (and offered an honest—if somewhat flawed—critique of) Mother Tide. It makes me happy that you are going to the library and looking for the books that bear my name. Look for other books, too.*
- 95 *And more happy news: You wrote your own poem! And it's a good one. You took your sock drawer and its contents and applied your imagination and your heart to them and made a wonderful poem. I'm so happy that you got a B. Personally, I would have given you an A. But then, what do I know? I'm just a writer who was once incarcerated.*
- 96 *And speaking of my incarceration, I was not a ninja cat burglar. Or a spy. I am somebody who made a mistake. And when I had the time to consider (there in my filthy jail cell) what I had done and who I was, I decided that I could and would rewrite the story of my life. And I have. Every book I write helps me to understand myself better and to love the world more.*
- 97 *Which brings me to your last question. And that question is: How do you know if you are a writer? For once, I am going to answer a question as directly as I am able. My answer goes like this: You know that you are a writer if you are imaginative. You know that you are a writer if you are curious. You know that you are a writer if you are interested in the things and people of the world. You know that you are a writer if you hold a minié ball in your hand and wonder about its story. You know that you are a writer if you like the sound of rain on the roof. And if you want to tell someone else about your heart and how waiting for the thunder sometimes makes you feel, if you work to find the words to do that, then you are a writer.*
- 98 *So, guess what, Joe?*
- 99 *You're a writer.*
- 100 *I remain,*
- 101 *your fellow writer,*
- 102 *Maureen*

"Your Question for Author Here" by Kate DiCamillo and Jon Scieszka, from *Guys Read: Funny Business*.  
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## English Language Arts

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- 1** What is the **main** function of paragraphs 6 and 7 in the story?
- Ⓐ to establish Joe’s feelings about having to write to an author
  - Ⓑ to reveal that Joe’s life will improve after writing to an author
  - Ⓒ to suggest that Joe’s work with Maureen will likely go smoothly
  - Ⓓ to suggest Joe’s thoughts about writing to Maureen will change

- 2** Read the sentence from paragraph 34 in the box.

But I do know it means no TV, no computer time, no baseball, no comics, no music, no phone, no hanging out with my friend James.

What is the **most likely** reason Joe repeats the word “no” in the sentence?

- Ⓐ to show that he is busy
- Ⓑ to show that he is bored
- Ⓒ to encourage Maureen to trust him
- Ⓓ to cause Maureen to feel sorry for him

## English Language Arts

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- 3 How does paragraph 36 **mainly** help to develop the story?
- Ⓐ It shows that Joe is not confident in his skills.
  - Ⓑ It suggests that Joe has become more curious.
  - Ⓒ It hints that Joe is not serious about the assignment.
  - Ⓓ It shows that Joe has the ability to be thoughtful in his responses.
- 4 Based on the story, what is the **most likely** reason Maureen asks Joe about his sock drawer in paragraph 44?
- Ⓐ to show that she and Joe are both secretive
  - Ⓑ to see if she and Joe share the same hobbies
  - Ⓒ to lead Joe to a realization about how the mind of a writer works
  - Ⓓ to help Joe connect the books she has written to moments in his life
- 5 Read the sentence from paragraph 50 in the box.

*P.S. "Whatever is in them" is a truly alarming phrase to use in reference to my books.*

Based on the story, what does Joe's use of the phrase "whatever is in them" **most likely** demonstrate to Maureen?

- Ⓐ Joe is not happy in school.
- Ⓑ Joe has not read her books.
- Ⓒ Joe is not an observant person.
- Ⓓ Joe does not understand her books.

## English Language Arts

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- 6 Read the sentence from paragraph 51 in the box.

*P.P.S. Yes. People do get meaner as they get older.*

Which of the following details from the story **best** suggests that Maureen is kinder than she implies?

- Ⓐ “. . . as if I have been found . . .” (paragraph 42)
- Ⓑ “Oh, I’m sneaky, Joe.” (paragraph 43)
- Ⓒ “. . . and delighted to be a part of your ‘lame assignment’ . . .” (paragraph 47)
- Ⓓ “Do your research, Joe.” (paragraph 50)

- 7 Reread paragraphs 52–57. Which **two** sentences from the passage **best** suggest that Joe is willing to learn more about a topic when it interests him?

- Ⓐ “You are completely not going to believe what I have in my sock drawer besides socks: Spiders.” (paragraph 53)
- Ⓑ “I have to hide them in my sock drawer so my mom doesn’t make me throw them out.” (paragraph 53)
- Ⓒ “It was named after this guy Minié who invented the rifle used a lot in the Civil War.” (paragraph 54)
- Ⓓ “That’s what I’m writing down.” (paragraph 55)
- Ⓔ “I went and looked at the spider one in the library.” (paragraph 57)
- Ⓕ “I’m glad you had that in there.” (paragraph 57)

## English Language Arts

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8 What does the word *enriching* mean as it is used in paragraph 60?

- Ⓐ fixing
- Ⓑ improving
- Ⓒ explaining
- Ⓓ researching

9 Read Joe's second question from paragraph 19 in the box.

2. Where do you get your ideas?

Which sentence from paragraphs 60 and 61 **best** reveals Maureen's answer?

- Ⓐ *"For instance, I have read quite a bit about the Civil War, but I did not know about this gentleman Minié and his invention of the minié ball."*
- Ⓑ *"Many young boys, boys almost as young as you, went off to fight in the Civil War."*
- Ⓒ *"But just think: That minié ball you have could have hit one of those boys on the battlefield, grazed his cheek, wounded him, left him scarred."*
- Ⓓ *"Oh, I delight myself."*



### 10 Part A

Read paragraph 90 in the box.

My last Author Question really is—how do you know if you might be a writer?

What is the **most** important difference between the last question Joe asks Maureen and the other questions he asks?

- Ⓐ The last question is more compassionate, showing that Joe has grown to care for Maureen.
- Ⓑ The last question is more clearly worded, showing that Joe has learned to express himself well.
- Ⓒ Joe asks the first three questions as part of the assignment but asks the last question to get extra credit.
- Ⓓ Joe asks the first three questions to learn about Maureen but asks the last question to learn about himself.

### Part B

Which detail from the story **best** supports the idea that Maureen recognizes the difference identified in the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ She praises Joe for getting a good grade on his poem.
- Ⓑ She suggests that Joe should look for books by other writers.
- Ⓒ She tells Joe how happy it made her that he read one of her books.
- Ⓓ She explains how Joe has already demonstrated the traits of an effective writer.

- 11 What does the moon **most likely** represent in the story?
- Ⓐ Joe's growing creativity
  - Ⓑ Joe's passion for nature
  - Ⓒ Maureen's changing outlook
  - Ⓓ Maureen's desire for adventure

## English Language Arts

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**For this question, you will write an essay based on the passage(s). Write your essay in the space provided on the next two pages. Your writing should:**

- **Present and develop a central idea.**
- **Provide evidence and/or details from the passage(s).**
- **Use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.**

- 12** Based on “Your Question for Author Here,” write an essay that explains how exchanging letters with Maureen changes Joe. Be sure to use information from the story to develop your essay.

**Write your answer on the next two pages.**

*You have a total of two pages on which to write your response.*

**12**

Handwriting practice lines for the response area.

[illegible]

## English Language Arts

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Read this excerpt from *Words with Wings*, a novel in verse about a girl named Gabby. Then answer the questions that follow.

### from *Words with Wings*

by Nikki Grimes

#### Summer Shift

We packed our bags in June.  
I braced for a summer  
of impossible good-byes,  
and the dread  
5 of living without friends  
ever again.  
To chase away the fear,  
I flipped through a dictionary,  
plucked out the word *hush*  
10 and thought about  
the whisper of wind  
rustling through leaves,  
come next autumn,  
and the silence of their falling.  
15 Then I jumped into  
a soft deep pile of them,  
grabbed an armful  
of red, gold, and  
burnt-orange beauties,  
20 tossed them into the air,  
and I was all right again,  
for a while,  
and I went back to packing  
for the move.

#### Cheri

25 The kids at my last school  
called me weird,  
teased me,  
or left me to myself.  
Except for Cheri,

30    who picked me  
      to sit next to  
      in kindergarten  
      just because she saw me  
      staring out the window  
35    and was dying to know  
      what made me smile  
      when all she saw  
      were raindrops.  
      I was shy about  
40    telling her at first,  
      but Cheri didn't mind  
      my daydreaming.  
      She was color-blind, but said  
      whenever I described  
45    my daydreams,  
      it was like  
      helping her see  
      the rainbow.

### Hope

50    I hope this new school  
      has a Cheri who'll think  
      daydreamers are cool.

### First Day

      I duck down in the seat  
      of my new class.  
      To these kids,  
55    I'm not Gabby yet.  
      I'm just Shy Girl  
      Who Lives  
      Inside Her Head.  
      No one even knocks  
60    on the door  
      for a visit.  
      They don't know  
      it's beautiful  
      in here.

### **Gabby**

65 One week in,  
and already  
my new teacher complains  
about how much I daydream.  
"Gabriella!" he'll say,  
70 "Where have you gone off to  
this time?"  
I try to tell Mr. Spicer  
it's not my fault.  
Blame it on  
75 the words.

### **Words with Wings**

Some words  
sit still on the page  
holding a story steady.  
Those words  
80 never get me into trouble.  
But other words have wings  
that wake my daydreams.  
They fly in,  
silent as sunrise,  
85 tickle my imagination,  
and carry my thoughts away.  
I can't help  
but buckle up  
for the ride!

*Words with Wings* by Nikki Grimes. Copyright © 2013 by Nikki Grimes. Reprinted by permission of Wordsong, an imprint of Highlights.



- 13** Based on the poem, choose the phrases that **best** complete each sentence.

One technique the poet uses in lines 11–14 is to include words that

- Ⓐ are repeated.
- Ⓑ make a comparison.
- Ⓒ exaggerate a description.
- Ⓓ sound like what they mean.

The **most likely** reason the poet uses this technique is to

- Ⓐ explain an important idea.
- Ⓑ question the speaker’s story.
- Ⓒ emphasize a pattern of events.
- Ⓓ bring to life the speaker’s experience.

- 14** Based on the poem, how does the section **Hope** (lines 49–51) **mainly** contribute to the reader’s understanding?

- Ⓐ It suggests Gabby is anxious about making new friends.
- Ⓑ It shows that Gabby’s concerns about other students are unfair.
- Ⓒ It shows that Gabby expects her new classmates to be kinder than her classmates at her old school.
- Ⓓ It highlights Gabby’s confidence that she will adjust to her new school more quickly than she adjusted to her old school.

- 15** How do the details in the section **Words with Wings** (lines 76–89) **mainly** develop Gabby’s point of view?
- Ⓐ They give examples of words Gabby finds interesting.
  - Ⓑ They show that Gabby struggles to remember certain words.
  - Ⓒ They provide examples of words used in stories Gabby enjoys.
  - Ⓓ They suggest that Gabby feels powerless to control her reactions to words.

**Grade 6 English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2023 Released Operational Items**

| <b>PBT Item No.</b> | <b>Page No.</b> | <b>Reporting Category</b> | <b>Standard</b>                   | <b>Item Type*</b> | <b>Item Description</b>   | <b>Correct Answer (SR)**</b> |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1                   | 12              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.3                            | SR                | Analyze how paragraphs in a passage develop a character.  | A                            |
| 2                   | 12              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.4                            | SR                | Analyze the impact of word choice in a passage.   | D                            |
| 3                   | 13              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.5                            | SR                | Determine how a particular paragraph contributes to the development of ideas in a passage.  | D                            |
| 4                   | 13              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.3                            | SR                | Determine the reason for a character's action in a passage.   | C                            |
| 5                   | 13              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.1                            | SR                | Make an inference about a character in a passage.   | B                            |
| 6                   | 14              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.1                            | SR                | Make an inference based on a detail from a passage.   | C                            |
| 7                   | 14              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.1                            | SR                | Select evidence to support an inference about a character in a passage.   | C,E                          |
| 8                   | 15              | <i>Language</i>           | L.6.4                             | SR                | Determine the meaning of a word in context.   | B                            |
| 9                   | 15              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.3                            | SR                | Analyze how an interaction between characters helps to advance the plot in a passage.   | C                            |
| 10                  | 16              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.2                            | SR                | Identify how the interactions of characters help to develop a central idea of a passage.  | D;D                          |
| 11                  | 17              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.4                            | SR                | Analyze symbolism in a passage.   | A                            |
| 12                  | 18              | <i>Language, Writing</i>  | L.6.1, L.6.2, L.6.3, W.6.2, W.6.4 | ES                | Write an essay that explains how a character changes over the course of a passage; use information from the passage to support the explanation. |                              |
| 13                  | 24              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.4                            | SR                | Identify the literary technique used in a specific section of a poem and its purpose.   | D;D                          |
| 14                  | 24              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.5                            | SR                | Explain how particular sections of a passage contribute to the reader's understanding.  | A                            |
| 15                  | 25              | <i>Reading</i>            | RL.6.6                            | SR                | Explain how details in a poem reveal the point of view of the speaker.  | D                            |

\* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).

\*\* Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for any constructed-response and essay items will be posted to the Department's website later this year.

**Grade 6 English Language Arts**  
**Spring 2023 Unreleased Operational Items**

| <b>PBT<br/>Item No.</b> | <b>Reporting<br/>Category</b> | <b>Standard</b>                         | <b>Item<br/>Type*</b> | <b>Item Description</b>   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| 16                      | <i>Language</i>               | L.6.4                                   | SR                    | Determine the meaning of a word in context.   |
| 17                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.3                                  | SR                    | Identify a detail that helps develop a key idea in a passage.   |
| 18                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.7                                  | SR                    | Analyze how an illustration supports a key idea developed in a passage.   |
| 19                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.6                                  | SR                    | Determine an author's point of view in a passage.   |
| 20                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.4                                  | SR                    | Analyze how word choice contributes to an understanding of a passage.   |
| 21                      | <i>Language</i>               | L.6.2                                   | SR                    | Determine the function of punctuation used in a sentence.   |
| 22                      | <i>Language</i>               | L.6.2                                   | SR                    | Determine the function of punctuation used in a sentence.   |
| 23                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.5                                  | SR                    | Analyze how a paragraph in a passage contributes to the development of an important idea.                                     |
| 24                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.5                                  | SR                    | Contrast how particular sections of two passages contribute to the development of ideas.                                      |
| 25                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.3                                  | SR                    | Compare and contrast experiences of characters in different passages.   |
| 26                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RI.6.2                                  | SR                    | Determine how details in a passage help to develop a central idea.  |
| 27                      | <i>Language, Writing</i>      | L.6.1, L.6.2,<br>L.6.3, W.6.2,<br>W.6.4 | ES                    | Write an essay that explains actions taken that led to success; use information from the passages to support the explanation. |
| 28                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RL.6.1                                  | SR                    | Make an inference about a character based on a specific detail from a poem.   |
| 29                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RL.6.5                                  | SR                    | Determine what particular details symbolize in a poem.  |
| 30                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RL.6.6                                  | SR                    | Analyze the reason a poet uses a particular point of view.  |
| 31                      | <i>Reading</i>                | RL.6.2                                  | SR                    | Determine a theme developed in a poem.  |

\* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).