

# Maryland MCAP Grade 4 English Language Arts Practice

Exam Materials  
Pages 2 - 27

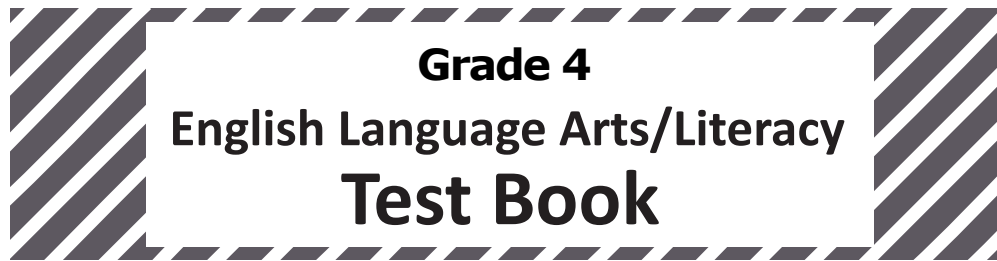
Answer Key Materials  
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Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Maryland Comprehensive  
Assessment Program



*Practice Test*

TEST BOOKLET SECURITY BARCODE

# Section 1

**Directions:**

Today, you will take Section 1 of the Grade 4 English Language Arts/Literacy Practice Test.

Read each passage and question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Mark your answers by completely filling in the circles in your answer document. Do not make any pencil marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

One of the questions may ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided in your answer document. Only responses written within the space provided will be scored.

If you do not know the answer to a question, you may go on to the next question. If you finish early, you may review your answers and any questions you did not answer in this Section ONLY. Do not go past the stop sign.

Today you will read the poem “Why is Nita Upside Down?” and the play *Why the Platypus is Special*. Then you will answer questions about the passages and write a response in which you analyze both texts.

Read the poem “Why is Nita Upside Down?” Then answer the questions.

## “Why is Nita Upside Down?”

by Emma Hearne, Roxana Bouwer, Sarah Bouwer



- 1 Nita's hanging upside down, her long hair tickling at the ground. The trees, the grass, the everything is all the wrong way round.
- 2 Her feet, they poke in the sky. Little Navi is walking by.
- 3 He says, "I've seen you here before. You're upside down again! What for?"
- 4 Her feet swim lightly in the air. She tries to hide behind her hair.

5 “It’s h-h-h-hard to t-t-talk,” she says to him. “I’m not the same. I don’t fit in.”

6 Navi takes her by the hand. He wants to help her understand.

7 They climb to Navi’s look-out spot. From up here they can see a lot.

8 They perch and have a quiet stare at children playing here and there.



9 Those kids are not the same at all.

10 Abe’s round.

11 Chi’s freckled.

12 Lala’s extra-tall.

13 BamBam’s wild and must run free, while Lulu reads quietly.

14 Look at Freya’s crazy hair. And Tim wears glasses everywhere.

15 And me, I am just skin and bone. And you are you. You’re not alone.

16 Each human’s sort of strange, you see. That makes you just the same, like me.

17 This world is really one big game. To play, we can't all be the same.



Used with permission.

18 Nita feels the right way round, thanks to the new friend she's found.

19 Upside down was never fun. Now she plays with everyone.

Used with permission.

- 1 Read the sentence from line 8 of the poem.

They **perch** and have a quiet stare at children playing here and there.

The word **perch** means that Nita and Navi are

- A playing on the swings.
- B hanging upside down.
- C walking around in silence.
- D sitting above the playground.

**2 Part A**

In the poem, why does Nita hang upside down and hide behind her hair?

- A** She enjoys playing at the playground by herself.
- B** She feels like she is different from others.
- C** She likes the way it makes her hair feel.
- D** She wants everyone to see her hanging upside down.

**Part B**

Which detail from the poem **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A** “. . . her long hair tickling at the ground.” (line 1)
- B** “Her feet, they poke in the sky.” (line 2)
- C** “He says, ‘I’ve seen you here before.’” (line 3)
- D** “‘I’m not the same. I don’t fit in.’” (line 5)



**3 Part A**

Which sentence **best** states one theme in the poem?

- A** Differences are useful.
- B** Differences can be frightening.
- C** Differences can be healthy.
- D** Differences should be ignored.

**Part B**

Which detail from the poem **best** shows this theme?

- A** ““You’re upside down again! What for?”” (line 3)
- B** “She tries to hide behind her hair.” (line 4)
- C** “Those kids are not the same at all.” (line 9)
- D** “To play, we can’t all be the same.” (line 17)

Read the play *Why the Platypus is Special*. Then answer the questions.

## *Why the Platypus is Special*

by Pat Betteley

### **CHARACTERS:**

**Narrator 1**

**Narrator 2**

**Rainbow Serpent**

**Big Bagaray**

**Kangaroo's Wife**

**Platypus**

**Goodoo**

**Fish's Wife**

**Bungil**

**Eagle's Wife, Hunter**

- 1 **NARRATOR 1:** Long ago, during the Dreamtime, the Rainbow Serpent made three different types of animals. First, Mammals were created. The Rainbow Serpent told them . . .
- 2 **RAINBOW SERPENT:** You will live on land and enjoy a special gift for survival—fur to keep warm.
- 3 **NARRATOR 1:** Next, the Rainbow Serpent made Fish. He told them . . .
- 4 **RAINBOW SERPENT:** You will live in water and enjoy a special gift for survival—gills to help you breathe underwater.
- 5 **NARRATOR 1:** Then the Rainbow Serpent made Birds. He said to them . . .

- 6 **RAINBOW SERPENT:** You will live in the sky and enjoy special gifts for survival—wings to fly and the ability to reproduce by laying eggs.
- 7 **NARRATOR 2:** After the Rainbow Serpent had finished making the three different types of animals, he realized that he had a lot of pieces and parts left over. He joined them together to create a creature unlike any other in the world. He said . . .
- 8 **RAINBOW SERPENT:** You will be called Platypus. I have given you three special gifts to survive. Like the Mammal, you have fur. Like the Fish, you can swim under the water. And like the Bird, the mother Platypus can lay eggs.
- 9 **NARRATOR 2:** At first, things went along swimmingly for Fish. Birds were on top of the world and Mammals felt all warm and fuzzy. But then, they all began to quarrel about which group was the best. The Mammals called a meeting.
- 10 **BIG BAGARAY:** (thumping his kangaroo tail on the ground) Attention, everyone. I proclaim that Mammals are the greatest of all animals! Only WE have fur!
- 11 **KANGAROO'S WIFE:** Aren't you forgetting someone, husband? The Platypus has fur. Why not pay him a visit? We can ask him to join in our fight against the Fish and the Birds.
- 12 **NARRATOR 2:** So the Mammals visited Platypus and asked him to stand with them.
- 13 **PLATYPUS:** I will carefully consider your request. Thank you for asking me to be a part of your family.
- 14 **NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, a big Murray Cod was speaking at his own meeting.
- 15 **Goodoo:** (jumping out of the water) My fine, finned fellows, it is obvious that Fish are the greatest of all animals. After all, only WE can swim underwater.
- 16 **FISH'S WIFE:** (clearing her throat) A-hem. Husband, what about the Platypus? He also spends most of his life underwater. Maybe we should visit Platypus and ask him to join in our fight against Mammals and Birds.
- 17 **NARRATOR 1:** So, all of the Fish paid a visit to Platypus to ask him to join their cause.
- 18 **PLATYPUS:** I will carefully consider your request. Thank you for asking me to be a part of your family.
- 19 **NARRATOR 1:** A few days later, the Birds held a similar meeting.

- 20 **BUNGIL:** (flapping his wings) Hear ye, hear ye. Anyone can see that Birds are the greatest of all animals. Who else can fly and lay eggs?
- 21 **EAGLE'S WIFE:** There IS another creature that lays eggs, Husband—our friend, Platypus. We should go to him and ask him to join the Birds in our fight against the Mammals and Fish.
- 22 **NARRATOR 2:** The Birds flew off to pay Platypus a visit and asked him to join their cause.
- 23 **PLATYPUS:** I will carefully consider your request. Thank you for asking me to be a part of your family.
- 24 **NARRATOR 2:** As promised, Platypus carefully considered which group to join. But after much thought, he still couldn't decide. Finally, the animals got tired of waiting. All three groups gathered outside his home on the bank of the billabong.<sup>1</sup>
- 25 **BIG BAGARAY:** Join the best of the best—the Mammals!
- 26 **GOODOO:** No, join the most special—the Fish.
- 27 **BUNGIL:** Forget them! Join the best AND most special—the Birds.
- 28 **NARRATOR 2:** Finally, in the cool evening, Platypus came outside. Everyone grew silent.
- 29 **PLATYPUS:** My friends, I have decided. I have parts of EACH of you, and parts of ALL of you. And that is exactly the way I wish to stay. So, while I thank you for asking, I choose not to join any of you.
- 30 **KANGAROO'S WIFE:** Well, I never . . .
- 31 **FISH'S WIFE:** The nerve!
- 32 **EAGLE'S WIFE:** What kind of an answer is that?

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<sup>1</sup>**billabong** a pool of water made from a stream or flooding.

- 33 **PLATYPUS:** Let me explain, friends. The Rainbow Serpent made each of us different from the others. Each of us is special. But just because we're special, that doesn't make any of us better than the others. We're just different. So we ought to respect each other, celebrate our differences, and live together WITHOUT fighting.
- 34 **BIG BAGARAY:** He's right.
- 35 **GOODOO:** That was a good decision.
- 36 **BUNGIL:** You are very wise, friend Platypus!
- 37 **NARRATOR 2:** Now, by chance, a hunter was listening to Platypus talking to the animals that evening.
- 38 **HUNTER:** Impressive! I will go back to my people and tell them about the extraordinary wisdom of the Platypus.
- 39 **NARRATOR 1:** That is why Aboriginal Australians rarely hunt or kill a Platypus.

Adapted from, "Why Is the Platypus Special?" Retold by Pat Betteley, *Faces*, January 2013

- 4 What does the word **quarrel** in line 9 of the play help the reader understand about the relationship between the Mammals, Fish, and Birds?
- A They are getting to know each other.
  - B They are having a disagreement.
  - C They are the best of friends.
  - D They are talking with one another.
- 5 Which sentence from the play *Why the Platypus is Special* **best** supports the idea that Platypus appreciates his friends because of their differences?
- A "I have parts of EACH of you, and parts of ALL of you. And that is exactly the way I wish to stay." (line 29)
  - B "So, while I thank you for asking, I choose not to join any of you." (line 29)
  - C "What kind of an answer is that?" (line 32)
  - D "Each of us is special." (line 33)
- 6 Which quotation from the play *Why the Platypus is Special* **best** supports the idea that the Platypus makes a good decision?
- A "As promised, Platypus carefully considered which group to join." (line 24)
  - B "Finally, in the cool evening, Platypus came outside." (line 28)
  - C "Now, by chance, a hunter was listening to Platypus talking to the animals that evening." (line 37)
  - D "I will go back to my people and tell them about the extraordinary wisdom of the Platypus." (line 38)

Refer to the poem “Why is Nita Upside Down?” and the play *Why the Platypus is Special*. Then answer the questions.

- 7** Read the sentences Platypus repeats throughout *Why the Platypus is Special*.

I will carefully consider your request. Thank you for asking me to be a part of your family.

These words show that Platypus is similar to Navi in the poem “Why is Nita Upside Down?” because

- A** they both take their time to answer their friends.
- B** they both are kind to their friends.
- C** they both have difficulty understanding their friends.
- D** they both feel frustrated with their friends.

- 8 "Why is Nita Upside Down?" and *Why the Platypus is Special* are both about being different. Write an essay that explains how the idea of being different is shown in both passages. Include specific details from **both** the poem and the play to support your answer.





# Section 2

**Directions:**

Today, you will take Section 2 of the Grade 4 English Language Arts/Literacy Practice Test.

Read each passage and question. Then, follow the directions to answer each question. Mark your answers by completely filling in the circles in your answer document. Do not make any pencil marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

One of the questions may ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided in your answer document. Only responses written within the space provided will be scored.

If you do not know the answer to a question, you may go on to the next question. If you finish early, you may review your answers and any questions you did not answer in this Section ONLY. Do not go past the stop sign.

**Read the passages. You will then answer questions about the passages. Finally, you will write a response.**

## An Amazing Airy Adventure

*by Michelle Burchett*

- 1 Imagine jogging early in the morning and hearing voices above you in the sky. Surprised, you look up. A colorful hot air balloon floats peacefully. People in the basket laugh and wave. You wave back.
- 2 Have you ever wondered what it would be like to ride in one of those big, bright balloons? From a distance, it looks exciting. Up close, it's more than exciting. It's an adventure!
- 3 The adventure usually starts before dawn, while it's still dark. Why so early in the morning? Winds tend to be calmest during the first two or three hours of the day, before the sun heats the earth. This gives the pilots the best conditions for launching, flying, and landing.
- 4 Excitement is in the air as the crew pulls the basket out of the trailer and lays it on its side. The basket is made of woven cane that is extremely sturdy but flexible and relatively lightweight. This is where the passengers and the pilot will ride. After the basket is in place, the crew pulls the folded-up balloon—called the envelope—out of its bag and attaches it to the basket. The balloon is ready to be inflated.
- 5 First, cold air is blown into the envelope using big gas-powered fans. Brightly colored nylon fabric billows as the balloon swells and expands. It only takes about ten minutes to fill the envelope, which is amazing considering that some balloons can hold up to 250,000 cubic feet of air. That's like inflating 250,000 soccer balls!
- 6 Next begins the "burn" to heat the air inside the envelope. The pilot ignites a large propane burner located above the basket.
- 7 When the air is warmed enough for the envelope to rise and lift the basket upright, the passengers, many enjoying their first balloon ride, quickly climb in. The passengers act as ballast—a stabilizing<sup>1</sup> weight—to help keep the balloon on the ground until it's ready to launch. For safety, the balloon is also tied-off, or tethered,<sup>2</sup> to the van.

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<sup>1</sup>**stabilizing** balancing

<sup>2</sup>**tethered** tied to

- 8 The pilot repeats safety and landing instructions. After a quick radio check with the “chasers”—members of the crew who will follow the balloon in the van—everyone’s ready for the launch. By this time, the sun is just rising. Since balloons are not equipped with lights, they cannot launch until official sunrise.
- 9 The pilot heats the air a little more. The tie-off is released, and balloon and passengers float up, up, up. Lifting off as the sun rises is amazing. The dawn sky is streaked with brilliant colors, and the balloon becomes part of the spectacle as it joins the sun on its morning trek across the sky. Hot air balloons drift at the same speed as the wind, so there’s no sensation of movement. It feels like you’re floating in a bubble.
- 10 Experienced pilots are very good at “reading the wind.” At different elevations, the wind moves in different directions and at different speeds. By firing the burners to heat the air inside the envelope, or by allowing the hot air to cool instead, the pilot is able to cause the balloon to go up or down in order to catch the different winds. This is the pilot’s only way of steering. The pilot can also pull a cord to open a flap, or vent, on the upper side of the envelope. The escaping air causes the balloon to rotate so that all the passengers can have a good view and take pictures of the incredible sights. It is especially fun spotting wildlife from the air. Imagine flying over an osprey nest and seeing the babies inside, or watching a beaver building its dam on a wilderness stream!
- 11 After about forty-five minutes, the pilot begins looking for a good place to land. The site has to be free of obstructions, such as trees and telephone wires, and big enough to lay out the enormous balloon. It also has to be accessible to the chasers, who have been following on the ground and keeping in radio contact.
- 12 When the pilot spots an open field, he asks the chasers to make sure it is not planted with crops that might be harmed by landing. If the chasers have difficulty finding an access road, the pilot guides them from his aerial viewpoint.
- 13 Passengers are amazed at how softly the balloon sets down. Usually everyone laughs as they jostle together, holding on to the rope handles on the inside of the basket. The flexibility of the cane basket now shows its usefulness. As the wicker material flexes, it absorbs some of the impact with the ground, making for a softer landing.



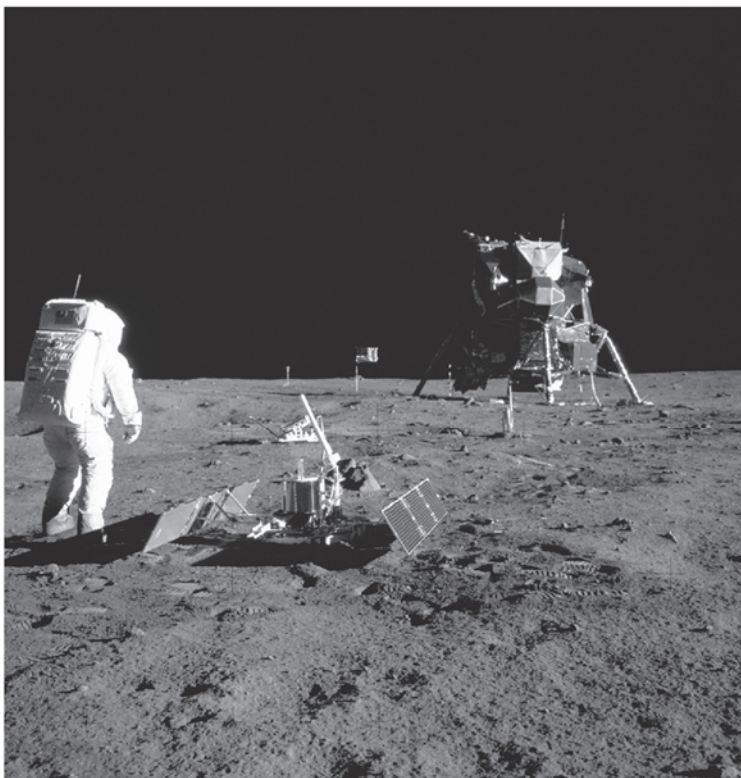
"An Amazing Airy Adventure" and photograph by Michelle Burchett. Copyright April 2016 by Cricket. Reproduced with permission of Open Court Publishing Company via Copyright Clearance Center.

- 1** According to the passage, why do people feel like they are not moving when riding in a hot air balloon?
- A** The balloon floats very high up in the air.
  - B** The balloon moves at the same speed as the wind.
  - C** The balloon becomes part of the morning sky.
  - D** The balloon is lifted up by very hot air.
- 2** What is the only way for a pilot to steer a hot air balloon?
- A** By controlling how much weight is in the balloon
  - B** By opening the flap to make the balloon move in circles
  - C** By looking for clear areas without trees or telephone wires
  - D** By moving the balloon up or down to catch different winds

## Apollo 11: The Eagle Has Landed

by Leigh Anderson

- 1 On July 20, 1969, for the first time in history, human beings stepped onto the Moon. They were American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin. “That’s one small step for man ... one giant leap for mankind,” Armstrong said as he stepped off the ladder. His boots made marks in the dusty grit of the Moon.
- 2 The astronauts had brought a television camera with them. So 242,000 miles away, the world heard Armstrong speak those unforgettable words. People watched in amazement as Armstrong took the first steps on the Moon. Moments later, Buzz Aldrin followed Armstrong out of the lunar module. Meanwhile, astronaut Michael Collins continued orbiting the Moon 69 miles above them. He was in the command ship, *Columbia*, which would take the three astronauts home. But for now Aldrin and Armstrong only had eyes for the surface of the Moon. They had done it! They were the first men on the Moon.



In the public domain.

An astronaut walks on the Moon.

- 3 Apollo 11 had blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, four days earlier. As the rocket sped them into space, each astronaut's body weight increased to about 1,000 pounds. When the ship finally escaped Earth's gravity, the men became weightless, floating around if they weren't strapped in. It was strange to live in zero gravity—things floated away if they weren't attached to something. The astronauts had to eat and drink through tubes and straws. They couldn't shower. And just imagine going to the bathroom! The men could brush their teeth, but they couldn't spit out the toothpaste. Their faces swelled because blood moved through their bodies in a different way. The astronauts said the ship stank, but no one cared. Only the Moon mattered.
- 4 The crew of Apollo 11 had a smooth flight into space. The astronauts had spent hundreds of hours training for this mission. They learned how to operate the equipment and what to do if something went wrong. And Neil Armstrong knew how much could go wrong. On an earlier space mission, his ship had spun wildly. He could have passed out, but he managed to fix the problem.
- 5 Four days after leaving Earth, astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin climbed into the small, bug-like lunar module called the *Eagle*. They were ready to go down to the surface of the Moon. But an alarm began to sound. The ship's computer was overloaded with information, setting off the alarm. Then, from mission control back on Earth, the astronauts heard the words they were waiting for: "We're go, *Eagle*. Hang tight." They launched the *Eagle*. But a new problem came up: the *Eagle* passed the landing site. Aldrin told Armstrong the *Eagle* was nearly out of fuel. Taking the controls, Armstrong coaxed<sup>1</sup> the ship towards a clear area, trying to land before the engine drank the last bit of fuel. With only 16 seconds of fuel left, Armstrong called the control center in Houston. "The *Eagle* has landed!"

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<sup>1</sup>**coaxed** carefully steered



In the public domain.

Buzz Aldrin inside the lunar module called the *Eagle*

- 6 Armstrong and Aldrin took pictures and collected Moon rocks and dust. They placed scientific equipment on the Moon, and did some experiments. Because there was so little gravity, walking felt more like floating. The astronauts described the Moon as black and gray—beautiful in a desert-like way. When their work was finished, Armstrong and Aldrin fired the special engine that lifted the *Eagle* off of the Moon. It was time to head back to the blue, brown, and green planet called home.
- 7 A few years later Apollo 17 was the last manned mission to the Moon. Astronauts Gene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt landed on the Moon on December 19, 1972. We haven't been back—but wouldn't it be wonderful if we could?

"Apollo 11: The Eagle Has Landed" by Leigh Anderson. Copyright May/June 2009 by AppleSeeds. Reproduced with permission of Cobblestone Publishing Company via Copyright Clearance Center.



**3 Part A**

How does the author organize the information in paragraphs 1 and 2?

- A** Order of events
- B** Compare and contrast
- C** Problem then solution
- D** Main idea supported by details

**Part B**

Which reason **best** supports the answer to part A?

- A** The Moon landing is shown to be different from other space trips.
- B** The text explains how humans solved the problem of landing on the Moon.
- C** Moments from the Moon landing are described in sequence.
- D** Evidence is given to prove that people landed on the Moon.

- 4 According to the passage, what **three** things did the astronauts do on the surface of the Moon?
- A They took photographs.
  - B They repaired the lunar module.
  - C They collected objects to bring back to Earth.
  - D They conducted some experiments.
  - E They drew pictures of the Moon.

Refer to the passage "An Amazing Airy Adventure" and the passage "Apollo 11: The Eagle Has Landed." Then answer the questions.

- 5 Select **three** things that piloting a hot air balloon and piloting a spaceship have in common.
- A Zero gravity makes you feel like you are floating.
  - B Using the wind is important for steering.
  - C Training, practice, and experience are important.
  - D You get to look at Earth in a totally different way.
  - E Landing in a clear, safe area is difficult.

- 6** The authors of the two passages use specific details to help the readers understand what it feels like to fly in either a hot air balloon or a spaceship. Write a narrative about an experience related to flying. Your story can be about a hot air balloon ride, a trip in space, or something else, real or imagined. Use information from the passages to help develop the ideas in your narrative.



## MCAP Paper Practice Test Answer and Alignment Document ELA/Literacy: Grade 4

<b>Section 1</b>		
<b>Items 1–8</b>		
<b>Task:</b> Literary Performance Task		
<b>Passage 1:</b> “Why is Nita Upside Down?”		
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Answer(s)</b>	<b>Standards Alignment</b>
1. VR129099	<b>Item Type: SR</b> D	L.4.4
2. VR188190	<b>Item Type: SR</b> <b>Part A:</b> B <b>Part B:</b> D	RL.4.1
3. VR188222	<b>Item Type: SR</b> <b>Part A:</b> A <b>Part B:</b> D	RL.4.2
<b>Passage 2:</b> <i>Why the Platypus is Special</i>		
4. VR129192	<b>Item Type: SR</b> B	RL.4.4
5. MDE0421P08-2_03P	<b>Item Type: SR</b> A	RL.4.3
6. VR202106	<b>Item Type: SR</b> D	RL.4.1
<b>Passages 1 and 2:</b> “Why is Nita Upside Down?” and <i>Why the Platypus is Special</i>		
7. VR188427	<b>Item Type: SR</b> B	RL.4.9
8. VR188439	<b>Item Type: CR</b> Refer to MCAP Informative/Explanatory Performance Task Rubric Grades 4–5	W.4.2

<b>Section 2</b>		
<b>Items 1–6</b>		
<b>Task:</b> Informational Performance Task		
<b>Passage 1:</b> “An Amazing Airy Adventure”		
<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Answer(s)</b>	<b>Standards Alignment</b>
1. VR199111	<b>Item Type: SR</b> B	RI.4.1
2. VR199110	<b>Item Type: SR</b> D	RI.4.3
<b>Passage 2:</b> “Apollo 11: The Eagle Has Landed”		
3. VR199104	<b>Item Type: SR</b> <b>Part A:</b> A <b>Part B:</b> C	RI.4.5
4. VR199106	<b>Item Type: SR</b> A, C, D	RI.4.2
<b>Passages 1 and 2:</b> “An Amazing Air Adventure” and “Apollo 11: The Eagle Has Landed”		
5. VR199100	<b>Item Type: SR</b> C, D, E	RI.4.9
6. VR199102	<b>Item Type: CR</b> Refer to MCAP Narrative Performance Task Rubric Grades 4–5	W.4.3