

# Massachusetts MCAS Grade 5 English Language Arts Practice

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PRACTICE TEST

English Language Arts

**Grade 5**

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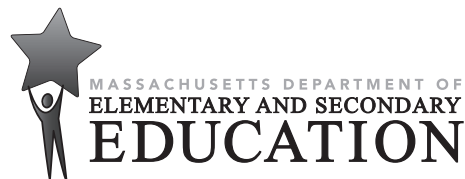
Student Name

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School Name

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District Name



# Grade 5 English Language Arts

## PRACTICE TEST

This practice test contains 14 questions.

### Directions

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

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Practice Test 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 each response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

Read the passage, a Chinese fable about a man named Virtue, and answer the questions that follow.

## Virtue Goes to Town

*by Laurence Yep*

- 1 After Virtue had buried his parents, he went to see the wise woman. "They say you can read a face like a page in a book. Tell me what my destiny is."
- 2 But the wise woman just kept sipping her tea. "What would you have? A quiet, happy life as a farmer? Or a life of sorrow and glory?"
- 3 "I hate being bored," Virtue said.
- 4 The wise woman studied his face a long time. She patted his shoulder sadly. "Then go into town."
- 5 When Virtue arrived there, he saw a long line of men. "I heard that town folk did the oddest things. Are you all practicing to be a fence?" he asked.
- 6 A townsman leaning against a wall looked at Virtue and then looked away again. But Virtue's voice was loud, and he was such a pest that the townsman finally said, "They're hiring workers, Turnip."
- 7 "The name's Virtue. And they can sign me up too. I left the farm to see the world and get rich." He got in line behind the townsman.
- 8 However, it was a hot, summer day and Virtue quickly became impatient. As he wiped at the sweat on his forehead, he shouted, "Hey, can't you go any faster?"
- 9 The foreman sat at his table in the shade. He ignored Virtue and went on just as slowly as ever.
- 10 "Hey, we're not getting any younger," Virtue yelled.
- 11 Still the foreman ignored him.
- 12 "Maybe he's deaf." Virtue started forward.
- 13 The townsman stuck out his arm. "Hey, Turnip, wait your turn."
- 14 "I told you. My name's Virtue. So why don't I just take you right with me, friend?" Virtue tucked his arm into the townsman's. The others were too afraid to say anything else, but everyone watched as he stomped up to the foreman.

- 15 "I can outplow a water buffalo and can harvest more than twenty folk," Virtue said.
- 16 The foreman took an instant dislike to Virtue. "You may be strong; but you're not that strong. No one likes a braggart."
- 17 "It's not bragging if you really can do it," Virtue said.
- 18 The foreman grunted. "I'm the boss here. I say how we do things. Get back there."
- 19 "Come on, friend." With a sigh, Virtue carried the townsman back to the end of the line.
- 20 It took most of the day before Virtue finally reached the table. Virtue made a muscle for the foreman. "No job's too hard for me."
- 21 The foreman put down his brush and folded his hands over his big belly. "I have all of my work crew already. All I need is a cook. Can you do that?"
- 22 Virtue frowned. He thought a cook's job was beneath him, but times were hard and jobs were scarce. "Can I cook?" Virtue said. "I could cook a whale and fricassee a dragon."
- 23 The foreman twiddled his thumbs. He would have liked to turn Virtue away, but he needed a cook. "You only have to cook rice, dried fish and vegetables. I guess even you couldn't ruin that."
- 24 "Whatever I do, I always do well," Virtue promised. "I would make a better worker. But if you want me as a cook, then I'll be the best cook I can be."
- 25 The workers had to get up at sunrise, but Virtue had to get up even earlier to boil the water for their tea. Even so, he always had the tea poured and the cold rice served in bowls before the first man was up. He tried to have a friendly, cheerful word for each of the other workers. "Smile, friend," he would say to one. "We're keeping farm hours now—not town hours."
- 26 And to another, he would say, "We're all in this together, neighbor."
- 27 And to a third, he would grin. "Teamwork. That's how we do it on the farm."
- 28 But all the other men were from town. They never thanked him. In fact, they never spoke to him. Behind his back, they laughed and called him the loud-mouthed turnip.
- 29 Still, Virtue did not give up easily. "These townsfolk will come around once they get to know me."

- 30 At noon, he served them supper. Then, picking up a huge cauldron in each hand, he went down to the river. Each of the cauldrons could have held a half dozen men, but Virtue dipped them into the water and lifted them out as easily as if they were cups.
- 31 After making several trips, he would set the cauldrons of water on big fires. By sunset, they would be bubbling. When the work crew came back, they would wash before they sat down to eat their dinner.
- 32 But one noon, the other workers were delayed. Virtue got hungrier and hungrier as he smelled the food. Finally, he ate his bowlful of rice. Still, there was no sign of anyone. Virtue was so bored that the only thing he could think of doing was to eat another bowlful of rice and wait.
- 33 When no one had shown up yet, he began to feel sorry for himself. "I do my job, but no one appreciates me. So maybe I'll just have another bowlful. That'll show them."
- 34 When he had finished his third bowl, he looked at the cauldron simmering on the big fire. "This rice is going to get burned. I shouldn't let it go to waste." Bored and lonely, Virtue began to eat right from the cauldron. Before he knew it, he had finished the whole cauldron of rice.
- 35 Tired and dirty, the work crew finally came back to camp. They were angry when they found the empty cauldron. "Where's our food, Turnip?" they demanded angrily. But no one went too close to Virtue.
- 36 Virtue gave an embarrassed cough. "My name's Virtue."
- 37 They glared at him. "You're nothing but a big sack of wind. How do you expect us to work on empty bellies?"
- 38 Virtue brightened. "Since I ate all your lunch, let me do all your work. It's only fair."
- 39 The foreman got ready to fire Virtue. "One person couldn't meet our goals by himself."
- 40 "We take turns back on the farm. I'll do their work and they can do mine," Virtue said.
- 41 "You'll kill yourself," one of the work crew objected.
- 42 The foreman thought for a moment and then smirked. "Let him."
- 43 So Virtue left the others back in camp and marched off to work with the foreman. The foreman set a hard pace, but Virtue did not complain. By the end of the day, he had done all the work and more—much to the surprise of the foreman.

- 44 When Virtue came back, he shook his head when he saw the one pot of hot water. "You're supposed to have hot water for me. That wouldn't wash a cat's tail." And then he saw the pot of rice they had cooked for him. "I've done the work of twenty men. I've got the hunger of twenty men. That wouldn't even feed a mouse."
- 45 "We don't have enough firewood," one of the work crew said.
- 46 "Then I'll take care of it myself this time." Picking up an ax in either hand, he marched up to the nearest tree. In no time, he had chopped it into firewood. Then, taking the huge cauldrons, he went down to the river and filled them.
- 47 One cauldron he used for his rice. The other he used for his bath.
- 48 When he finally sat on the ground, he wolfed down the whole cauldron of rice. The others just watched in amazement. Virtue laughed. "I work hard, I eat hard, friends."
- 49 All this time, the foreman had been thinking. "You're not just bragging. You really can do the work of a whole crew." The foreman still didn't like Virtue, but it was more important to get the job finished. "Tomorrow you can do the work again."
- 50 But Virtue had learned a few things since he had left the farm. He winked at the rest of the crew. "We're all a team." He turned back to the foreman. "You're not going to fire them, are you?"
- 51 The foreman had been planning to do that very thing. Then he could pocket all the extra wages. But there was something in Virtue's look that made the foreman think again.
- 52 "No, they can be the cooks," the foreman said grudgingly.
- 53 One of the work crew grinned at Virtue. "No one will ever mistake you for a modest man, but your heart's in the right place." Then he bowed his head to Virtue. And one by one, the others did too.
- 54 And that was why there was only one worker but twenty cooks.
- 55 And even though Virtue went on to become a mighty warrior and general, he never lost his talent for making friends . . . and enemies.

"Virtue Goes to Town" by Laurence Yep, from *The Rainbow People*. Copyright © 1989 by Laurence Yep. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

- 1 In paragraph 1, why does Virtue say that the wise woman “can read a face like a page in a book”?
- Ⓐ She helps people write down their ideas.
  - Ⓑ She creates stories based on people she meets.
  - Ⓒ She knows a lot about people just by looking at them.
  - Ⓓ She shares knowledge with people when she first sees them.
- 2 What is the **main** purpose of paragraphs 1–4?
- Ⓐ to show where Virtue learned his skills
  - Ⓑ to explain why Virtue makes a change in his life
  - Ⓒ to describe why Virtue has a problem with the workers
  - Ⓓ to show that Virtue plans to study with the wise woman



- 3 Read paragraph 15 in the box.

"I can outplow a water buffalo and can harvest more than twenty folk,"  
Virtue said.

Based on the fable, why does Virtue make the claims in the paragraph?

- Ⓐ He is trying to impress the foreman.
  - Ⓑ He is sharing goals that he has set for himself.
  - Ⓒ He is exaggerating to entertain the other workers.
  - Ⓓ He is repeating the prediction of the wise woman.
- 4 In paragraph 44, what is the **most likely** reason Virtue says "That wouldn't wash a cat's tail"?
- Ⓐ He is thinking about his old home.
  - Ⓑ He is amused by the men's actions.
  - Ⓒ He is showing an interest in animals.
  - Ⓓ He is disappointed with the men's efforts.

- 5 In paragraph 50, what is the **most likely** reason Virtue winks at the crew?
- Ⓐ to hint at a big secret
  - Ⓑ to signal them to be quiet
  - Ⓒ to show he is on their side
  - Ⓓ to show he is making a joke
- 6 What does the narrator's point of view **mainly** help the reader learn?
- Ⓐ Virtue's thoughts
  - Ⓑ Virtue's appearance
  - Ⓒ the foreman's background
  - Ⓓ the foreman's good qualities

**7 Part A**

Based on the passage, which word **best** describes the attitude of the workers toward Virtue when they first meet him?

- Ⓐ scared
- Ⓑ curious
- Ⓒ forgiving
- Ⓓ unfriendly

**Part B**

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

- Ⓐ "The others were too afraid to say anything else, but everyone watched as he stomped up to the foreman." (paragraph 14)
- Ⓑ "The workers had to get up at sunrise, but Virtue had to get up even earlier to boil the water for their tea." (paragraph 25)
- Ⓒ "'We're all in this together, neighbor.'" (paragraph 26)
- Ⓓ "In fact, they never spoke to him." (paragraph 28)

- 8 Which paragraph **best** summarizes the events in the passage?
- Ⓐ Virtue eats all of the rice. Virtue becomes a cook. Virtue does all of the work himself. Virtue waits in line to speak to the foreman.
  - Ⓑ Virtue becomes a cook. Virtue eats all of the rice. Virtue waits in line to speak to the foreman. Virtue does all of the work himself.
  - Ⓒ Virtue waits in line to speak to the foreman. Virtue becomes a cook. Virtue eats all of the rice. Virtue does all of the work himself.
  - Ⓓ Virtue eats all of the rice. Virtue does all of the work himself. Virtue waits in line to speak to the foreman. Virtue becomes a cook.
  - Ⓔ Virtue becomes a cook. Virtue waits in line to speak to the foreman. Virtue does all of the work himself. Virtue eats all of the rice.

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

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

- 9** Write an essay explaining what the fable teaches about judging people too quickly. Be sure to use details from the fable to develop your essay.

**Write your answer on the next page.**

*You have a total of one page on which to write your response.*

9

Read the two poems and then answer the questions that follow.

Read the poem "First Night."

### First Night

by Nikki Grimes

- Dear Zuri,  
I wish that you were here.  
I camped out my first night  
in my aunt's backyard.
- 5 Sleeping was hard  
with all the sparkling beauty hanging overhead.
- Night-lights, Zuri, everywhere!  
Clusters of fireflies  
dancing 'round my head,
- 10 keeping me from bed  
for hours.
- And the sky! I've never seen one  
so blue-black, like a thick overcoat  
all buttoned up with stars.
- 15 At midnight, I stretched my arms out  
to slip the darkness on,  
and opened my eyes again  
at dawn.

"First Night" by Nikki Grimes. Copyright © 2001 by Nikki Grimes. First appeared in *Danitra Brown Leaves Town*, published by Amistad. Reprinted by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd.

Read the poem "Beech Leaves."

## Beech\* Leaves

by James Reeves

In autumn down the beechwood path  
The leaves lie thick upon the ground.  
It's there I love to kick my way  
And hear their crisp and crashing sound.

5 I am a giant, and my steps  
Echo and thunder to the sky.  
How the small creatures of the woods  
Must quake and cower as I pass by!

10 This brave and merry noise I make  
In summer also when I stride  
Down to the shining, pebbly sea  
And kick the frothing waves aside.

\*Beech—a type of tree

"Beech Leaves" by James Reeves, from *Complete Poems for Children* (Faber Finds). Copyright © 1986 by James Reeves. Reprinted by permission of the James Reeves Estate.



- 10 In "First Night," what is the **most likely** reason the speaker says "sleeping was hard"?
- Ⓐ The speaker is playing outside.
  - Ⓑ The speaker is admiring nature.
  - Ⓒ The speaker is talking to someone.
  - Ⓓ The speaker is waiting for someone.
- 11 Which word **best** describes the mood in "First Night"?
- Ⓐ amazed
  - Ⓑ gloomy
  - Ⓒ curious
  - Ⓓ weary

- 12 In "Beech Leaves," how does the first-person point of view **mostly** affect the reader?
- Ⓐ It shows the reader that the speaker is lonely.
  - Ⓑ It teaches the reader about the beauty of the area.
  - Ⓒ It causes the reader to think about animals' feelings.
  - Ⓓ It helps the reader understand the speaker's experience.
- 13 In line 8 of "Beech Leaves," what does the word **cower** mean?
- Ⓐ to worry about life
  - Ⓑ to shrink away in fear
  - Ⓒ to greet with gladness
  - Ⓓ to jump up with excitement

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

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

- 14** Compare the speaker's attitude in "First Night" to the speaker's attitude in "Beech Leaves." Be sure to use details from **both** poems to develop your essay.

Write your answer on the next page.

*You have a total of one page on which to write your response.*

14

### Grade 5 English Language Arts Paper-Based Practice Test Answer Key

The following pages include the answer key for all machine-scored items, followed by the rubrics for the hand-scored items.

Item Number	Answer Key	Total Points	Reporting Category	Standard
1	C	1	Language	5
2	B	1	Reading	5
3	A	1	Reading	3
4	D	1	Language	5
5	C	1	Reading	3
6	A	1	Reading	6
7	Part A: D Part B: D	2*	Reading	1
8	C	2*	Reading	2
9	<i>See Rubric</i>	7	Writing Language	2,4 1,2,3
10	B	1	Reading	4
11	A	1	Reading	3
12	D	1	Reading	6
13	B	1	Language	4
14	<i>See Rubric</i>	7	Writing Language	2,4 1,2,3

\*For two-point items, partial credit may be given.

## Scoring rubric for Grade 5 Practice Test Item #9 and #14: Essay

Idea Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL IDEA *</li> <li>• SELECTION AND EXPLANATION OF EVIDENCE AND/OR DETAILS *</li> <li>• ORGANIZATION</li> <li>• EXPRESSION OF IDEAS</li> <li>• AWARENESS OF PURPOSE FOR WRITING</li> </ul>	
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central idea is clear and fully developed</li> <li>• Effective selection and explanation of evidence and/or details</li> <li>• Effective organization</li> <li>• Clear expression of ideas</li> <li>• Full awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central idea is general and moderately developed</li> <li>• Appropriate selection and explanation of evidence and/or details</li> <li>• Moderate organization</li> <li>• Adequate expression of ideas</li> <li>• Sufficient awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central idea may be present and is somewhat developed</li> <li>• Limited selection and explanation of evidence and/or details</li> <li>• Limited organization</li> <li>• Basic expression of ideas</li> <li>• Partial awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central idea is not present and/or not developed</li> <li>• Insufficient evidence and/or details</li> <li>• Minimal or no organization</li> <li>• Poor expression of ideas</li> <li>• Minimal awareness of the purpose for writing</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response shows evidence the student has read the text, but does not address the question or incorrectly responds to the question.</li> </ul>

\*For narrative writing (Standard 3), the quality and development of narrative elements will be assessed in place of a central idea. Narrative elements should include, but are not limited to: plot, character, setting, dialogue, action, and/or description. Students should use evidence/details to demonstrate understanding of text.

Standard English Conventions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENTENCE STRUCTURE</li> <li>• GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND MECHANICS</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent control of a variety of sentence structures relative to length of essay</li> <li>• Consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly consistent control of sentence structures relative to length of essay</li> <li>• Mostly consistent control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or length of essay</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little control and/or no variety in sentence structure and/or</li> <li>• Little control of grammar, usage, and mechanics relative to complexity and/or insufficient length</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentences are formed incorrectly with no control of grammar, usage, and mechanics and/or insufficient length</li> </ul>