


Minnesota MCA Grade 7 Reading Practice

Exam Materials
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Name _____

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series III

Reading Item Sampler
Grade 7



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Reading Test — Segment 1

1

In this passage, the narrator describes a childhood memory in which Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955. Read this passage. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

A Seat on the Bus

written for the Minnesota Department of Education

- 1 A strange thing happened a few weeks ago on the Cleveland Avenue bus. One day after school, I had gone to visit my uncle at his job, which happens to be close to my school. We then rode the city bus home. The bus was crowded, as usual, but we managed to find two seats in the fourth row. Behind us, in the fifth row, were four black people who looked like they were coming home from work.
- 2 The bus stopped at the corner; some white folks boarded and moved directly to the seats occupied by the four black people. Sighing, three of them immediately gave up their seats and began moving to the back of the bus. The fourth person, however, refused to stand. In fact, she simply stared straight ahead, refusing to acknowledge the man looming over her. As you may guess, this behavior did not please the new passenger. (In Montgomery, Alabama, the law states that black and white people cannot sit in the same row on a bus. I guess I had never really thought about this before.)
- 3 The driver, annoyed at the sudden commotion on his bus, looked in the mirror and told the woman to move to the back of the bus and let the man sit down.
- 4 I thought that the woman was perhaps lost in a reverie of some kind and had not heard the driver's instructions. She was slight, wore glasses, and was about my mother's age or perhaps a little older.
- 5 "Surely she knows that she needs to get up," my uncle muttered angrily, putting down his newspaper and staring at the immobile woman. The man without a seat stood over the woman and made his impatience known. The bus idled as the standoff continued.
- 6 The exasperated driver finally stormed back to where the woman was sitting. "I need that seat!" he barked. The woman continued to ignore the growing tumult that was raging around her. I was amazed. Was it possible that she was actually unaware of city laws? The driver was angry, yet he seemed uncertain about a proper course of action. I imagine that he had never encountered a situation like this before. "Well, then, I'll call the police to have you arrested," he said after a few moments. It was obvious that he expected this threat to have its desired effect.

- 7 However, the woman simply looked him in the eye and said, "You may do that."
- 8 I heard several gasps from the other passengers. "Now she's done it," my uncle said. "She's gone too far this time." The driver glared at the woman, then turned and marched up the aisle and out of the bus.
- 9 "Well, if this doesn't beat all," my uncle groaned as he looked out his window. "Now we're going to be late for supper. If we weren't so far from home, I'd say we could get out and walk." Although I nodded in agreement, I was secretly glad we were staying on the bus. I wanted to see what would happen to this brave and stubborn woman. Would the police actually arrest her for refusing to give up her seat on a city bus? For the first time in my life, I began to think about the different rules that apply to different people.
- 10 As my uncle resumed reading his newspaper, I wondered briefly if I should catch up on my homework. I did not want to miss anything, however, so I decided to keep my books where they were. People all around were whispering in angry voices. Some people, of course, were whispering in loud voices, and I know the woman must have heard many of the unkind things they were saying about her. But if the woman's feelings were hurt, she did not show it. She continued to sit impassively.
- 11 A few minutes later, two police officers boarded the bus, followed by the indignant driver. They approached the woman and tried to force her out of the seat. "Why don't you listen to the driver?" one of them demanded.
- 12 "Why do you all push us around?" the lady shot back. Finally, she seemed a little angry.
- 13 "I don't know, but you're breaking the law," the police officer said. Then he grabbed her arm and pulled her up. As the officers led her off the bus, I caught her eye. She looked into my face and gave a little smile. It was odd how two powerful men were forcing her up the aisle, and yet she seemed stronger than both of them. Then she was gone.
- 14 "Thank goodness," my uncle sighed. "Now we can get going."
- 15 "What did she mean by that?" I asked. "When she asked why she gets pushed around?"
- 16 My uncle shook his head. "That's just the way things are," he stated. "You're too young to understand." Then he buried himself in his newspaper again, signaling the end of the discussion. I did not find his answer satisfactory. Something I saw in that woman's eyes helped me understand why a person would risk going to jail for a bus seat. However, I could not help wondering if her sacrifice would change anything in our city.

- 17 Today is Monday, and I met my uncle after school as usual. But something was different. The bus rattled as it pulled up to the stop where we got on. It was practically empty, which was unusual in itself. After we took our seats, however, I noticed something else. None of the other passengers were black. I looked out the window as we pulled away. Black people were walking home. My uncle asked the driver, who was different from the one we had had before, what was going on.
- 18 "You know that incident a few weeks ago, the one that was in the papers, where a lady wouldn't give up her seat?" the driver replied. "She's being tried in court today."
- 19 My uncle asked what that had to do with people riding the bus.
- 20 The driver shrugged, clearly annoyed. "Don't ask me," he said. "My job is to drive."
- 21 I thought of all the half-empty buses in the city, all those untaken rides, and all those unpaid fares. Perhaps that woman's defiance had made a difference after all.

1. Which phrase best expresses the central conflict of the passage?
 - A. Person versus self
 - B. Person versus society
 - C. Person versus nature
 - D. Person versus destiny

2. What does the narrator first think when the woman does not give up her seat?
 - A. The woman is daydreaming.
 - B. The woman must not know the law.
 - C. The woman is too tired to change places.
 - D. The woman must not agree with the law.

3. In paragraph 2, the word looming creates a sense of
 - A. surprise.
 - B. frustration.
 - C. confrontation.
 - D. disappointment.

4. The following paragraph was taken from a newspaper account of the same events described in the passage.

The commute home from work was disrupted for some bus travelers in the city yesterday afternoon. A woman onboard a bus refused to give up her seat to a white passenger. After repeated warnings, police were summoned. They removed the woman from the bus, which resumed its normal operations.

How does the passage differ from the newspaper account?

- A. The newspaper account includes details about the arrival of the police.
 - B. The passage focuses on the day the woman refused to give up her seat.
 - C. The newspaper account mentions commuting troubles the events caused.
 - D. The passage reveals the emotional effect of the events on the other bus riders.
-

5. Which phrase best describes the second bus driver in the passage?

- A. Gruff, because of the lack of riders that day
- B. Offended, because the uncle asks him a question
- C. Curious, because of the information in the newspaper
- D. Perceptive, because he is aware that the woman is being tried in court

6. Which method did the author use to illustrate that most characters in the passage accept the city law of the time?
- A. Describing the uncle's sigh of relief when the woman is removed from the bus
 - B. Including the police officer's response to a surprising question the woman asks
 - C. Emphasizing the bus driver's angry threat to have the woman arrested
 - D. Portraying the people's obvious expectations that the woman follow orders
-

7. Read this sentence from paragraph 8.

The driver glared at the woman, then turned and marched up the aisle and out of the bus.

The author uses the word marched most likely to

- A. indicate that the woman has defeated the driver.
- B. suggest that the driver is going to quit his job.
- C. indicate that others on the bus support the driver.
- D. suggest that the driver is angered by the woman.

8. Paragraph 17 is important to the plot because it shows that the bus
- A. has a different driver than usual.
 - B. always follows its usual schedule.
 - C. is usually full when people leave work.
 - D. provides transportation throughout the day.
-
9. Which quotation from the passage best shows the lasting effect of the events on the narrator?
- A. “‘Now we’re going to be late for supper.’”
(paragraph 9)
 - B. “‘If we weren’t so far from home, I’d say we could get out and walk.’”
(paragraph 9)
 - C. “For the first time in my life, I began to think about the different rules that apply to different people.”
(paragraph 9)
 - D. “As my uncle resumed reading his newspaper, I wondered briefly if I should catch up on my homework.”
(paragraph 10)
-
10. Details in the last paragraph of the passage suggest that
- A. the woman had intended to hurt the bus company.
 - B. the people on the bus will join those refusing to ride the bus and the bus company’s drivers will be fired.
 - C. the bus company’s policy will change because it is losing money since the woman captured the public’s attention.
 - D. the decision in the court case will force the bus company to change.

Reading Test — Segment 2

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

Rivulet¹

by Aramís Quintero

1 Through the tender grass
of the green meadow,
among smooth stones
and golden stones,
5 with its ringing, singing, light laughter,
there goes the thread of water.
Rivulet.

It goes hurriedly,
important waters, it says,
10 are waiting for it
out at sea.

But a few steps from
its fountain spring,
it collects in a small pool—
15 the kind that dries
when there is no rain.

And the rivulet says
that the deep ocean awaits.
Fine with me if it says so
20 and if it believes so!

¹Rivulet—a small stream

11. According to the poem, which water source affects the water level in the small pool?

- A.** Water from the rivulet
 - B.** Water from the rain
 - C.** Water from the ocean
 - D.** Water from the sea
-

12. Which sentence best summarizes lines 1–7?

- A.** A drop of rain collects in a small pool.
 - B.** A wide river rushes over different kinds of stones.
 - C.** A creek fills a dry pool near a meadow.
 - D.** A little stream passes through a field of grass.
-

13. In line 6, the word thread refers to

- A.** the sound made by the water.
 - B.** the size of the stream of water.
 - C.** the stones rolling in the moving water.
 - D.** the grass growing along the edge of the water.
-

14. The rivulet is unable to reach the ocean because it

- A.** collects in a pool.
- B.** is not long enough.
- C.** flows under the ground.
- D.** evaporates in the sunlight.

15. Read lines 9–11.

important waters, it says,
are waiting for it
out at sea.

What do these lines tell readers about the rivulet?

- A.** Where the rivulet wants to go
 - B.** Why the rivulet will fail to reach the ocean
 - C.** Why the waters are essential to the rivulet
 - D.** What to expect once the rivulet reaches the sea
-

16. Which characteristic best describes the rivulet?

- A.** Successful
- B.** Confused
- C.** Motivated
- D.** Disappointed

17. Which pair of lines best expresses how the speaker feels about the rivulet?

- A.** Lines 3 and 4
 - B.** Lines 6 and 7
 - C.** Lines 15 and 16
 - D.** Lines 19 and 20
-

18. The rivulet is in a hurry because it believes that the

- A.** pool is dry.
- B.** fountain is near.
- C.** ocean is waiting.
- D.** rain is approaching.

Reading Test — Segment 3

Read this article about an artist from Turkey. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

The Sightless Artist

written for the Minnesota Department of Education



3

- 1 Drawing and painting require talent and skill. Most people would agree that artists need to see both the objects they are representing and the tools of their art—their paper, canvas, ink, or paint. However, the work of one special painter shows that sight is not always essential for creating great art.
- 2 Esref Armagan has been an accomplished artist for more than 40 years. His artistic achievement is no small feat, considering the fact that the Turkish artist was born without sight. Like many other blind children in Turkey, Armagan did not attend school. He spent much of his childhood drawing on cardboard with a nail, using his fingers to “see” the lines he had made. Later, Armagan experimented with colored pencils and oil paint, applying the paint with his fingers rather than a brush. The finished pieces, however, looked nothing like the simple paintings children often produce. Instead, he created beautiful pictures of colorful birds, still life paintings of flowers, and even portraits of famous people.

Painting Invisible

- 3 How does Armagan paint without the benefit of sight? First, he etches an image

into canvas or wood. Then Armagan “reads” his drawing by touch just as others read books using Braille.¹ Next, he applies paint, using one color at a time to avoid smearing. After waiting a few days for the paint to dry, he applies another color. Little by little, a picture emerges. Armagan uses memories of objects he has touched before, such as a pet parakeet, as a reference for what he is currently painting. Sometimes he uses the drawings of a sighted person, touching the paper and feeling the lines of the other artist’s pen. He creates portraits and landscapes using this process.

The Mind’s Eye

- 4 Armagan has become so famous for his ability to create art without the benefit of eyesight that he has attracted the attention of a group of scientists renowned for their study of the human brain. In 2004, they asked Armagan to come to their facilities in Boston, Massachusetts, so they could learn from him.
- 5 The scientists studying Armagan wanted to understand how much of human vision actually occurs in the brain, so they conducted a series of experiments. First, they asked Armagan to feel three objects—a cone, a cube, and a ball—and then draw them from different points of view. Armagan amazed the scientists with his ability to accurately represent these shapes from many perspectives.
- 6 Later, the scientists used magnetic brain scans to observe Armagan’s brain while he drew objects and responded to verbal commands. They were interested in observing Armagan’s visual cortex, the part of the brain that makes sense of information coming in through the eyes (and sometimes referred to as “the Mind’s Eye”). The scientists discovered that Armagan’s visual cortex was as active as that of a sighted person’s while he was drawing, even though Armagan was unable to see light. This result was quite unexpected, and it gave the scientists further evidence that people use more than just their eyes to “see.”

A Continuing Inspiration

- 7 Because Armagan recognizes that his ability is unique, he has worked with scientists to advance our understanding of vision and the brain. Like many artists, however, he wants to be remembered for his work, not for the unusual way he creates his art.
- 8 Still, Armagan will probably be remembered as much for his story as for his paintings: the little boy who, without sight or formal education, taught himself to create beautiful art that has been exhibited in many countries. Esref Armagan’s example proves that human accomplishment is limitless.

¹Braille—a system of writing using raised dots to represent letters and numbers

19. Which description best represents the main topic of the article?

- A.** The challenges of a blind artist growing up in Turkey
 - B.** The participation of a blind artist in scientific experiments
 - C.** The abilities of a blind artist from Turkey
 - D.** The process a blind artist uses to create his paintings
-

20. In paragraph 3, the author compares Armagan touching his drawings to

- A.** reading books that are printed in Braille.
 - B.** etching an image into canvas.
 - C.** applying colors to paintings.
 - D.** remembering objects that have been touched before.
-

21. The author's main purpose for writing the article is most likely to

- A.** inform readers about the creative process of an artist.
- B.** explain to readers how a part of the human brain works.
- C.** instill in readers an appreciation for individual accomplishment.
- D.** persuade readers to celebrate an artist for his work.

22. Based on paragraph 3, readers can conclude that Armagan's paintings

- A.** are especially colorful.
 - B.** usually resemble the drawings of others.
 - C.** are rarely inspired by memories.
 - D.** take a long time to complete.
-

23. In paragraph 5, which words help readers understand the meaning of perspectives?

- A.** "amazed the scientists"
- B.** "different points of view"
- C.** "represent these shapes"
- D.** "much of human vision"

24. According to paragraph 6, the visual cortex is sometimes referred to as “the Mind’s Eye” because it

- A.** is part of the brain.
 - B.** provides additional light for seeing in the dark.
 - C.** is constantly active.
 - D.** interprets information gained from the sense of sight.
-

25. Which word best describes the author’s tone throughout the article?

- A.** Formal
- B.** Impressed
- C.** Envious
- D.** Sympathetic

Reading Test — Segment 4

Read the following two articles about students who describe being homeschooled. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The paragraphs are numbered on the left side.

Selection 1

You Used to Be Homeschooled?

by Kamala Baudichon

- 1 “You used to be homeschooled?!?” is what I usually hear when I tell friends about myself. People have some pretty interesting ideas about homeschoolers: not doing anything, no school if you just aren’t in the mood for it, waking up late, long breaks. This was never the case with me, nor for most homeschooled kids I know.
- 2 In some ways, homeschooling is more challenging! The responsibility to learn is in your own hands and that takes a lot of self-discipline. Of course, my mother was there to keep me in line, but there isn’t that motivation that public-schooled kids get from being in a building where hundreds of other students are all doing the same thing. It has its own kind of gravitational field that sucks you in and it’s just easier to go with the flow. When you are homeschooled you have to create your own gravity, even when the phone keeps interrupting it or visiting guests expect you to skip school for the week because they think your schedule is so flexible. To top it off, my mother’s choice of curriculum was classical, which is heavy on history, lots of grammar and some pretty difficult literature. But don’t get me wrong, public school can be just as challenging with all the homework, projects, surprise pop quizzes and finals—things I didn’t have much of as a homeschooler.
- 3 As I grew older, I felt like I needed more of something. Being homeschooled from second grade up till my freshman year, I felt a little isolated from the teenage world, even though I had friends from dance and outside classes I took. I wanted to experience the drama of high school and meet friends that I would grow up with and keep for a lifetime. The biggest advantage, according to my mother, was that I would have the influence of many different teachers who specialize in their subjects. So, in my freshman year, I began to take some of my harder classes at Homesource. Once I got my feet wet, the transition into public high school was easier for me.
- 4 I expected to feel intimidated and over-worked, but these feelings never came. Homeschooling experience benefits me at the public school. I was raised in a very nurturing environment, allowing me the space to explore my own interests and figure out for myself what I liked. I have developed a strong sense of self, which helps me to not be so influenced by others. I think I’m very fortunate to have a

bit of both worlds. I really love high school, and I feel that homeschooling has prepared me to make the best out of my high school years.

Selection 2

What School Do You Go To?

by Nicole Perkins

- 5 What school do you go to? Such a seemingly innocent question can end a conversation so quickly when met with the following response: I'm . . . homeschooled.
- 6 How many awkward silences have I created with that answer! Where does one go from there? Suddenly there are no classmate references, no sport rivalries, no inside jokes to revert to. How do you continue the conversation?
- 7 I'm a preschool dropout. From age 5 to 15, I was homeschooled. I never had a recess, I never had a cool lunch box . . . Or at least not a reason to use one.
- 8 I admit, just before my freshman year of high school, I had a meltdown. I was tired of having a small group of friends and no acquaintances. I wanted to branch out into a new world; a world of freedom. I thought, if given the opportunity, maybe I'd break out of my shy shell. I could land in a group where I was suddenly 'normal.'
- 9 So, I took a high school class. I lasted one term. It wasn't that I couldn't handle it; it wasn't that I hated class or didn't fit in. I had finally realized how lucky I was. What's better than having five friends that mean the world to you? A small group of incredibly amazing individuals who I can count on no matter what, who know every incredibly minor detail about my life. It occurred to me while walking anonymously through school halls that I didn't care if I had acquaintances who just knew my name; I wanted the late-night thought provoking emotionally charged discussions my friends could always create.
- 10 I decided to keep my friendships, pursue my advanced education and drop the high school. I enrolled in the Lane Community College in my would-be sophomore year taking a couple classes. Immediately, I fell in love with the instructors, the classes and the people.
- 11 Now I'm dually enrolled at the college and the university. I'm a full time student and working far too many hours to pay for it. I'm constantly exhausted with permanent dark rings under my eyes, I fret over upcoming deadlines and dates.

I'm younger than the bulk of my friends. However, I love each and every bit of it.

- 12 Growing up as a homeschooler definitely has its ups and downs. There were times when I wished I could've participated in a regular public school environment. But I've avoided a lot of things I'm glad I didn't have to go through, and I've jumped into things that I'm incredibly glad I did. Now it doesn't feel so awkward when I say: I was *homeschooled*.

26. Which idea is important in both articles?

- A.** Homeschooling prevents development of meaningful relationships.
 - B.** Homeschooling provides the best preparation for college.
 - C.** Homeschooling is more academically challenging than public schooling.
 - D.** Homeschooling is difficult for many people to understand.
-

27. Which factor motivated the authors of both articles to attend public school?

- A.** Seeking friends
 - B.** Overcoming shyness
 - C.** Becoming a teenager
 - D.** Needing specialized classes
-

28. Which argument does Kamala Baudichon use to suggest homeschooling is more challenging than public schooling?

- A.** Homeschoolers take few breaks during the day.
- B.** Public school peers encourage each other.
- C.** Homeschoolers study a classical curriculum.
- D.** Public school has easier assignments.

29. In paragraph 2, the phrase “create your own gravity” means homeschoolers must

- A.** discipline themselves to study independently.
 - B.** take all subjects seriously.
 - C.** discover for themselves how to make friends.
 - D.** stay on a rigid schedule.
-

30. Why did Kamala Baudichon attend public high school?

- A.** She wanted to change her image as an uncommitted homeschooled student.
 - B.** She lacked interest in the classical literature her mother required her to read.
 - C.** She wanted to experience the challenges of a larger social network.
 - D.** She lacked the organizational skill necessary to succeed as a homeschooled student.
-

31. In paragraph 3, what did Kamala Baudichon’s mother mean when she said public school teachers “specialize in their subjects”?

- A.** They bring varied teaching styles to public schools.
- B.** They think all of their students are uniquely talented.
- C.** They devote time exclusively to particular areas of study.
- D.** They have many years of teaching experience in public schools.

32. In contrast to Kamala Baudichon’s opinion, Nicole Perkins believes that homeschooling

- A.** limited her social connections.
 - B.** helped her avoid negative influences.
 - C.** prepared her well for the future.
 - D.** enabled her to form strong friendships.
-

33. In her early years, how did Nicole Perkins feel when people asked which type of school she attended?

- A.** Uncomfortable
 - B.** Isolated
 - C.** Uninterested
 - D.** Irritated
-

34. Based on her article, readers can conclude that Nicole Perkins believes

- A.** public schools have excellent instructors.
- B.** close friends significantly influence students.
- C.** opportunities to make acquaintances increase with age.
- D.** classroom experience with older students improves performance.

35. Which phrase best describes what revert to means in paragraph 6?

- A.** Refer to something that has been said before
 - B.** Correspond about something in secret
 - C.** Rewrite something to improve its effectiveness
 - D.** Laugh at something with a companion
-

36. In paragraph 9, anonymously means

- A.** with deep thought.
 - B.** without being known.
 - C.** with great confusion.
 - D.** without much excitement.
-

37. Which statement best describes Nicole Perkins' tone in "What School Do You Go To?"

- A.** She uses humor to discuss a serious situation.
- B.** She writes formally to convey important information.
- C.** She writes conversationally to connect with readers.
- D.** She uses slang expressions to impress young readers.

38. Nicole Perkins quit high school after one term because she

- A.** appreciated a more flexible schedule.
 - B.** needed to be academically challenged.
 - C.** preferred having a few close friends.
 - D.** felt prepared to enroll in college classes.
-

39. Which phrase means the same as dually enrolled in paragraph 11?

- A.** Competing with older students and meeting deadlines
 - B.** Taking at least two classes at the same time
 - C.** Attending a college and a university
 - D.** Working full time while taking classes
-

40. Which paragraph best implies Nicole Perkins has been a successful student?

- A.** Paragraph 8
- B.** Paragraph 9
- C.** Paragraph 10
- D.** Paragraph 11

41. Which event in the article indicates the point when Nicole Perkins realized she prefers homeschooling over public high school?

- A.** Attending high school for one term
 - B.** Falling in love with her college classes
 - C.** Joining emotional discussions with friends
 - D.** Having a meltdown before her freshman year in high school
-

42. Which sentence best expresses an important message in both articles?

- A.** Seeking challenges makes a person stronger.
- B.** Clear expectations help people become more confident.
- C.** Different educational approaches offer different advantages.
- D.** Proceeding carefully with major life changes is important.