
VIII. English Language Arts, Grade 10

A. Composition

B. Reading Comprehension

Grade 10 English Language Arts Test

Test Structure

The grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts test was presented in the following two parts:

- the ELA Composition test, which used a writing prompt to assess learning standards from the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*'s **Composition** strand
- the ELA Reading Comprehension test, which used multiple-choice and open-response questions to assess learning standards from the *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*'s **Language** and **Reading and Literature** strands

A. Composition

The spring 2010 grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts Composition test and Composition Make-Up test were based on learning standards in the **Composition** strand of the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (2001). The learning standards appear on pages 72–83 of the *Framework*, which is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

In test item analysis reports and on the Subject Area Subscore pages of the MCAS *School Reports* and *District Reports*, ELA Composition test results are reported under the reporting categories **Composition: Topic Development** and **Composition: Standard English Conventions**.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The MCAS ELA Composition test included two separate test sessions, administered on the same day with a short break between sessions. During the first session, each student wrote an initial draft of a composition in response to the appropriate writing prompt on the next page. During the second session, each student revised his or her draft and submitted a final composition, which was scored in the areas of Topic Development and Standard English Conventions. The Scoring Guides for the MCAS English Language Arts Composition are available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/elacomp_scoreguide.html.

Reference Materials and Tools

At least one English-language dictionary per classroom was provided for student use during ELA Composition test sessions. The use of bilingual dictionaries was allowed for current and former limited English proficient students only. No other reference materials or tools were allowed during either ELA Composition test session.

Cross-Reference Information

Framework general standards 19–22 are assessed by the ELA Composition.

English Language Arts Composition, Grade 10

Grade 10 Writing Prompt

WRITING PROMPT

Often in works of literature, a character's life is affected by a single act or mistake.

From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character whose life is affected by a single act or mistake. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe how he or she is affected by a single act or mistake, and explain how the character's experience relates to the work as a whole.

Grade 10 Make-Up Writing Prompt

WRITING PROMPT

Often in works of literature, characters gain wisdom through experience.

From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character who gains wisdom through experience. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe how the character gains wisdom through experience, and explain how this wisdom relates to the work as a whole.

B. Reading Comprehension

The spring 2010 grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on learning standards in the two content strands of the Massachusetts *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* (2001) listed below. Page numbers for the learning standards appear in parentheses.

- Language (*Framework*, pages 19–26)
- Reading and Literature (*Framework*, pages 35–64)

The *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework* is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

In test item analysis reports and on the Subject Area Subscore pages of the MCAS *School Reports* and *District Reports*, ELA Reading Comprehension test results are reported under two MCAS reporting categories: **Language** and **Reading and Literature**, which are identical to the two framework content strands listed above.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The MCAS grade 10 ELA Reading Comprehension test included three separate test sessions. Sessions 1 and 2 were both administered on the same day, and Session 3 was administered on the following day. Each session included selected readings, followed by multiple-choice and open-response questions. Common reading passages and test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in test booklets. Due to copyright restrictions, certain reading passages cannot be released to the public on the website. For further information, contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625.

Reference Materials and Tools

The use of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former limited English proficient students only, during all three ELA Reading Comprehension test sessions. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA Reading Comprehension test session.

Cross-Reference Information

The table at the conclusion of this chapter indicates each item’s reporting category and the framework general standard it assesses. The correct answers for multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the table.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 1

DIRECTIONS

This session contains three reading selections with sixteen multiple-choice questions and two open-response questions. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

The majestic spire of the Empire State Building is familiar to many people throughout the world, but not many know that the original purpose of the mast was to serve as a landing spot for dirigibles, also known as blimps. Read the excerpt from “The Mooring Mast” and answer the questions that follow.

THE MOORING MAST

by Marcia Amidon Lusted

- 1 When the Empire State Building was conceived, it was planned as the world’s tallest building, taller even than the new Chrysler Building that was being constructed at Forty-second Street and Lexington Avenue in New York. At seventy-seven stories, it was the tallest building before the Empire State began construction, and Al Smith* was determined to outstrip it in height.
- 2 The architect building the Chrysler Building, however, had a trick up his sleeve. He secretly constructed a 185-foot spire inside the building, and then shocked the public and the media by hoisting it up to the top of the Chrysler Building, bringing it to a height of 1,046 feet, 46 feet taller than the originally announced height of the Empire State Building.
- 3 Al Smith realized that he was close to losing the title of world’s tallest building, and on December 11, 1929, he announced that the Empire State would now reach the height of 1,250 feet. He would add a top or a hat to the building that would be even more distinctive than any other building in the city. John Tauranac describes the plan:



The top of the Empire State Building

[The top of the Empire State Building] would be more than ornamental, more than a spire or dome or a pyramid put there to add a desired few feet to the height of the building or to mask something as mundane as a water tank. Their top, they said, would serve a higher calling. The Empire State Building would be equipped for an age of transportation that was then only the dream of aviation pioneers.

* *Al Smith* — four-term governor of New York who headed efforts to construct the Empire State Building after his years in office

4 This dream of the aviation pioneers was travel by dirigible, or zeppelin, and the Empire State Building was going to have a mooring mast at its top for docking these new airships, which would accommodate passengers on already existing transatlantic routes and new routes that were yet to come.

THE AGE OF DIRIGIBLES

5 By the 1920s, dirigibles were being hailed as the transportation of the future. Also known today as blimps, dirigibles were actually enormous steel-framed balloons, with envelopes of cotton fabric filled with hydrogen and helium to make them lighter than air. Unlike a balloon, a dirigible could be maneuvered by the use of propellers and rudders, and passengers could ride in the gondola, or enclosed compartment, under the balloon.



A simulated image of a dirigible docking at the mooring mast

6 Dirigibles had a top speed of eighty miles per hour, and they could cruise at seventy miles per hour for thousands of miles without needing refueling. Some were as long as one thousand feet, the same length as four blocks in New York City. The one obstacle to their expanded use in New York City was the lack of a suitable landing area. Al Smith saw an opportunity for

his Empire State Building: A mooring mast added to the top of the building would allow dirigibles to anchor there for several hours for refueling or service, and to let passengers off and on. Dirigibles were docked by means of an electric winch, which hauled in a line from the front of the ship and then tied it to a mast. The body of the dirigible could swing in the breeze, and yet passengers could safely get on and off the dirigible by walking down a gangplank to an open observation platform.

7 The architects and engineers of the Empire State Building consulted with experts, taking tours of the equipment and mooring operations at the U.S. Naval Air Station in Lakehurst, New Jersey. The navy was the leader in the research and development of dirigibles in the United States. The navy even offered its dirigible, the *Los Angeles*, to be used in testing the mast. The architects also met with the president of a recently formed airship transport company that planned to offer dirigible service across the Pacific Ocean.

8 When asked about the mooring mast, Al Smith commented:

[It's] on the level, all right. No kidding. We're working on the thing now. One set of engineers here in New York is trying to dope out a practical, workable arrangement and the Government people in Washington are figuring on some safe way of mooring airships to this mast.

DESIGNING THE MAST

- 9 The architects could not simply drop a mooring mast on top of the Empire State Building's flat roof. A thousand-foot dirigible moored at the top of the building, held by a single cable tether, would add stress to the building's frame. The stress of the dirigible's load and the wind pressure would have to be transmitted all the way to the building's foundation, which was nearly eleven hundred feet below. The steel frame of the Empire State Building would have to be modified and strengthened to accommodate this new situation. Over sixty thousand dollars' worth of modifications had to be made to the building's framework.
- 10 Rather than building a utilitarian mast without any ornamentation, the architects designed a shiny glass and chrome-nickel stainless steel tower that would be illuminated from inside, with a stepped-back design that imitated the overall shape of the building itself. The rocket-shaped mast would have four wings at its corners, of shiny aluminum, and would rise to a conical roof that would house the mooring arm. The winches and control machinery for the dirigible mooring would be housed in the base of the shaft itself, which also housed elevators and stairs to bring passengers down to the eighty-sixth floor, where baggage and ticket areas would be located.
- 11 The building would now be 102 floors, with a glassed-in observation area on the 101st floor and an open observation platform on the 102nd floor. This observation area was to double as the boarding area for dirigible passengers.
- 12 Once the architects had designed the mooring mast and made changes to the existing plans for the building's skeleton, construction proceeded as planned. When the building had been framed to the 85th floor, the roof had to be completed before the framing for the mooring mast could take place. The mast also had a skeleton of steel and was clad in stainless steel with glass windows. Two months after the workers celebrated framing the entire building, they were back to raise an American flag again—this time at the top of the frame for the mooring mast.

THE FATE OF THE MAST

- 13 The mooring mast of the Empire State Building was destined to never fulfill its purpose, for reasons that should have been apparent before it was ever constructed. The greatest reason was one of safety: Most dirigibles from outside of the United States used hydrogen rather than helium, and hydrogen is highly flammable. When the German dirigible *Hindenburg* was destroyed by fire in Lakehurst, New Jersey, on May 6, 1937, the owners of the Empire State Building realized how much worse that accident could have been if it had taken place above a densely populated area such as downtown New York.
- 14 The greatest obstacle to the successful use of the mooring mast was nature itself. The winds on top of the building were constantly shifting due to violent air currents. Even if the dirigible were tethered to the mooring mast, the back of the ship would swivel around and around the mooring mast. Dirigibles moored in open landing fields could be weighted down in the back with lead weights, but using these at the Empire State Building, where they would be dangling high above pedestrians on the street, was neither practical nor safe.

- 15 The other practical reason why dirigibles could not moor at the Empire State Building was an existing law against airships flying too low over urban areas. This law would make it illegal for a ship to ever tie up to the building or even approach the area, although two dirigibles did attempt to reach the building before the entire idea was dropped. In December 1930, the U.S. Navy dirigible *Los Angeles* approached the mooring mast but could not get close enough to tie up because of forceful winds. Fearing that the wind would blow the dirigible onto the sharp spires of other buildings in the area, which would puncture the dirigible's shell, the captain could not even take his hands off the control levers.
- 16 Two weeks later, another dirigible, the Goodyear blimp *Columbia*, attempted a publicity stunt where it would tie up and deliver a bundle of newspapers to the Empire State Building. Because the complete dirigible mooring equipment had never been installed, a worker atop the mooring mast would have to catch the bundle of papers on a rope dangling from the blimp. The papers were delivered in this fashion, but after this stunt the idea of using the mooring mast was shelved. In February 1931, Irving Clavan of the building's architectural office said, "The as yet unsolved problems of mooring air ships to a fixed mast at such a height made it desirable to postpone to a later date the final installation of the landing gear."
- 17 By the late 1930s, the idea of using the mooring mast for dirigibles and their passengers had quietly disappeared. Dirigibles, instead of becoming the transportation of the future, had given way to airplanes. The rooms in the Empire State Building that had been set aside for the ticketing and baggage of dirigible passengers were made over into the world's highest soda fountain and tea garden for use by the sightseers who flocked to the observation decks. The highest open observation deck, intended for disembarking passengers, has never been open to the public.

"The Mooring Mast" by Marcia Amidon Lusted, from *The Empire State Building*. Copyright © 2004 by Gale, a part of Cengage Learning, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Photograph 1 © Jeff Albertson/CORBIS. Photograph 2 © Bettmann/CORBIS.

- 1 Based on paragraphs 1–3, Al Smith’s attitude is **best** described as
- A. sneaky.
 - B. sociable.
 - C. generous.
 - D. competitive.
- 2 According to paragraphs 3 and 4, what was the “higher calling” for which the mooring mast was built?
- A. to make New York the most important city in the world
 - B. to put New York on the forefront of modern travel
 - C. to serve as a means to harness electricity
 - D. to serve as a weather observation center
- 3 According to paragraph 5, what is the **main** difference between dirigibles and balloons?
- A. The fabric used in dirigibles is lighter.
 - B. Dirigibles can carry fewer passengers.
 - C. Dirigibles use different gases to stay aloft.
 - D. The movements of dirigibles can be controlled.
- 4 In paragraph 8, what is the effect of including Al Smith’s comments?
- A. It shows the uncertainty of the times.
 - B. It shows how unrealistic Smith’s idea was.
 - C. It shows the reader how seriously the idea was taken.
 - D. It shows how dishonest Smith was about the building plans.
- 5 Which of the following **best** describes the transition between paragraphs 12 and 13?
- A. from opinions to facts
 - B. from theory to reality
 - C. from past to present
 - D. from cause to effect

- 6 Read the sentence from paragraph 13 in the box below.

The mooring mast of the Empire State Building was destined to never fulfill its purpose, for reasons that should have been apparent before it was ever constructed.

What does the author imply in the sentence?

- A. The building was a failure without the use of the mast.
- B. The building should not have been built in the first place.
- C. The architects did not try hard enough to solve the problems.
- D. The architects were blind to the potential problems of the mast.

- 7 Read the quotations from Al Smith and Irving Clavan in the box below.

- [It’s] on the level, all right. No kidding. We’re working on the thing now. (paragraph 8)
- “The as yet unsolved problems of mooring air ships to a fixed mast at such a height made it desirable to postpone to a later date the final installation of the landing gear.” (paragraph 16)

What does the contrast between the quotations **mainly** reveal?

- A. the change in the political climate
- B. the advances of technology over time
- C. the differences in the men’s personalities
- D. the change in the expectations for the project

- 8 In paragraph 3, John Tauranac says that the mooring mast would have a higher calling than merely hiding “something as mundane as a water tank.” What is the meaning of *mundane* in the sentence?

- A. useful
- B. unstable
- C. ordinary
- D. decorative

Question 9 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 9 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 9** Based on the excerpt, describe the obstacles the builders of the Empire State Building faced in attempting to allow dirigibles to dock there. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

In one of William Shakespeare's best-known sonnets, the speaker addresses a person with whom he shares a close relationship. Read the sonnet and answer the questions that follow.

SONNET 73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
5 In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
10 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

—*William Shakespeare*

In the public domain.

- 10 What do the images in the sonnet suggest is happening to the speaker as he ages?
- A. He is declining in strength.
 - B. He is losing his conviction.
 - C. He is sharpening his judgment.
 - D. He is developing his imagination.
- 11 What aspect of the season does the poet **most** emphasize in the first four lines of the sonnet?
- A. the brilliant colors of foliage
 - B. the dreaded approach of winter
 - C. the abundant harvest of autumn
 - D. the cautious movements of wildlife
- 12 Which line from the sonnet describes sleep?
- A. “When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang”
 - B. “In me thou seest the twilight of such day”
 - C. “Death’s second self, that seals up all in rest”
 - D. “As the death-bed whereon it must expire”
- 13 What is the **main** theme of the sonnet?
- A. Age differences are no barrier to love.
 - B. People need to be loved as they grow older.
 - C. Happiness changes to worry as loved ones grow older.
 - D. People love more intensely when they know life is ending.

In this excerpt from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow tells a group of sailors about his river journey through the African jungle at the end of the nineteenth century. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

from **Heart of Darkness**
by Joseph Conrad

“Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of over-shadowed distances. On silvery sand-banks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals,¹ trying to find the channel,² till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once—somewhere—far away—in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one’s past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence. And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable³ force brooding over an inscrutable⁴ intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards; I did not see it any more; I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel; I had to discern, mostly by inspiration, the signs of hidden banks; I watched for sunken stones; I was learning to clap my teeth smartly before my heart flew out, when I shaved by a fluke some infernal sly old snag that would have ripped the life out of the tin-pot steamboat and drowned all the pilgrims; I had to keep a lookout for the signs of dead wood we could cut up in the night for next day’s steaming. When you have to attend to things of that sort, to the mere incidents of the surface, the reality—the reality, I tell you—fades. The inner truth is hidden—luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks, just as it watches you fellows performing on your respective tight-ropes for—what is it? half-a-crown a tumble——”

¹ *shoals* — shallow, sandy areas

² *channel* — the deep part of the river where a boat can travel

³ *implacable* — unyielding

⁴ *inscrutable* — difficult to understand

In the public domain.

- 14 What is emphasized by the description in lines 1–6?
- A. the beauty of the day
 - B. the dominance of nature
 - C. the behavior of the animals
 - D. the excitement of the narrator
- 15 Based on lines 16–19, why does the narrator stop seeing the “vengeful aspect”?
- A. He is preoccupied with events from his past.
 - B. He wants to show the pilgrims he is in control.
 - C. He is learning to enjoy the mystery of the jungle.
 - D. He needs to focus on the dangers the river presents.

- 16 Read the sentences from line 24 in the box below.

“. . . the reality—the reality, I tell you—fades. The inner truth is hidden—luckily, luckily.”

What is the effect of the repetition in the sentences?

- A. It highlights the narrator’s forgetfulness.
- B. It emphasizes the distance the narrator has traveled.
- C. It intensifies the sinister atmosphere for the listeners.
- D. It emphasizes the listeners’ lack of interest in the story.

- 17 In line 2, the narrator says the “vegetation rioted,” meaning it
 - A. grew wildly.
 - B. died quickly.
 - C. attacked fatally.
 - D. shook violently.

Question 18 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 18 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 18** Based on the excerpt, explain how the narrator is affected by the jungle environment. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 2

DIRECTIONS

This session contains one reading selection with eight multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

In this excerpt from Love in the Time of Cholera, Florentino Ariza has fallen madly in love with the wealthy Fermina Daza. He has written her a letter to announce his feelings and has waited an excruciating month for her reply. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

from Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez

- 1 He had given Fermina Daza the letter a month before, and since then he had often broken his promise not to return to the little park, but he had been very careful not to be seen. Nothing had changed. The reading lesson under the trees ended at about two o'clock, when the city was waking from its siesta, and Fermina Daza embroidered with her aunt until the day began to cool. Florentino Ariza did not wait for the aunt to go into the house, and he crossed the street with a martial stride that allowed him to overcome the weakness in his knees, but he spoke to her aunt, not to Fermina Daza.
- 2 "Please be so kind as to leave me alone for a moment with the young lady," he said. "I have something important to tell her."
- 3 "What impertinence!" her aunt said to him. "There is nothing that has to do with her that I cannot hear."
- 4 "Then I will not say anything to her," he said, "but I warn you that you will be responsible for the consequences."
- 5 That was not the manner Escolástica Daza expected from the ideal sweetheart, but she stood up in alarm because for the first time she had the overwhelming impression that Florentino Ariza was speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So she went into the house to change needles and left the two young people alone under the almond trees in the doorway.
- 6 In reality, Fermina Daza knew very little about this taciturn¹ suitor who had appeared in her life like a winter swallow and whose name she would not even have known if it had not been for his signature on the letter. She had learned that he was the fatherless son of an unmarried woman who was hardworking and serious but forever marked by the fiery stigma² of her single youthful mistake. She had learned that he was not a messenger, as she had supposed, but a well-qualified assistant with a promising future, and she thought that he had delivered the telegram to her father only as a pretext for seeing her. This idea moved her. She also knew that he was one of the musicians in the choir, and although she never dared raise her eyes to look at him during Mass, she had the revelation one Sunday that while the other instruments played for everyone, the

¹ *taciturn* — reserved

² *stigma* — a mark of disgrace

violin played for her alone. He was not the kind of man she would have chosen. His foundling's eyeglasses, his clerical garb, his mysterious resources had awakened in her a curiosity that was difficult to resist, but she had never imagined that curiosity was one of the many masks of love.

7 She herself could not explain why she had accepted the letter. She did not reproach herself for doing so, but the ever-increasing pressure to respond complicated her life. Her father's every word, his casual glances, his most trivial gestures, seemed set with traps to uncover her secret. Her state of alarm was such that she avoided speaking at the table for fear some slip might betray her, and she became evasive even with her Aunt Escolástica, who nonetheless shared her repressed anxiety as if it were her own. She would lock herself in the bathroom at odd hours and for no reason other than to reread the letter, attempting to discover a secret code, a magic formula hidden in one of the three hundred fourteen letters of its fifty-eight words, in the hope they would tell her more than they said. But all she found was what she had understood on first reading, when she ran to lock herself in the bathroom, her heart in a frenzy, and tore open the envelope hoping for a long, feverish letter, and found only a perfumed note whose determination frightened her.

8 At first she had not even thought seriously that she was obliged to respond, but the letter was so explicit that there was no way to avoid it. Meanwhile, in the torment of her doubts, she was surprised to find herself thinking about Florentino Ariza with more frequency and interest than she cared to allow, and she even asked herself in great distress why he was not in the little park at the usual hour, forgetting that it was she who had asked him not to return while she was preparing her reply. And so she thought about him as she never could have imagined thinking about anyone, having premonitions that he would be where he was not, wanting him to be where he could not be, awaking with a start, with the physical sensation that he was looking at her in the darkness while she slept, so that on the afternoon when she heard his resolute steps on the yellow leaves in the little park it was difficult for her not to think this was yet another trick of her imagination. But when he demanded her answer with an authority that was so different from his languor, she managed to overcome her fear and tried to dodge the issue with the truth: she did not know how to answer him. But Florentino Ariza had not leapt across an abyss only to be shooed away with such excuses.

9 "If you accepted the letter," he said to her, "it shows a lack of courtesy not to answer it."

10 That was the end of the labyrinth. Fermina Daza regained her self-control, begged his pardon for the delay, and gave him her solemn word that he would have an answer before the end of the vacation. And he did. On the last Friday in February, three days before school reopened, Aunt Escolástica went to the telegraph office to ask how much it cost to send a telegram to Piedras de Moler, a village that did not even appear on the list of places served by the telegraph, and she allowed Florentino Ariza to attend her as

if she had never seen him before, but when she left she pretended to forget a breviary³ covered in lizard skin, leaving it on the counter, and in it there was an envelope made of linen paper with golden vignettes.⁴ Delirious with joy, Florentino Ariza spent the rest of the afternoon eating roses and reading the note letter by letter, over and over again, and the more he read the more roses he ate, and by midnight he had read it so many times and had eaten so many roses that his mother had to hold his head as if he were a calf and force him to swallow a dose of castor oil.

- 11 It was the year they fell into devastating love. Neither one could do anything except think about the other, dream about the other, and wait for letters with the same impatience they felt when they answered them. Never in that delirious spring, or in the following year, did they have the opportunity to speak to each other. Moreover, from the moment they saw each other for the first time until he reiterated his determination a half century later, they never had the opportunity to be alone or to talk of their love. But during the first three months not one day went by that they did not write to each other, and for a time they wrote twice a day, until Aunt Escolástica became frightened by the intensity of the blaze that she herself had helped to ignite.

³ *breviary* — a book of prayers

⁴ *vignettes* — decorative sketches

- 19 Read the phrase from paragraph 6 in the box below.

. . . but she had never imagined that curiosity was one of the many masks of love.

What is suggested by the phrase?

- A. Fermina was pretending to be in love.
- B. Fermina found other men more attractive.
- C. Fermina wanted to keep her feelings private.
- D. Fermina was unaware that she was falling in love.

- 20 In paragraph 7, what is **mostly** emphasized by the fact that Fermina knows the exact number of letters and words in Florentino’s letter?

- A. the shortness of the letter
- B. the complexity of the language in the letter
- C. the intensity with which she examines the letter
- D. the fear she has that her father will discover the letter

- 21 Read the sentence from paragraph 8 in the box below.

But Florentino Ariza had not leapt across an abyss only to be shooed away with such excuses.

In the sentence, what does the metaphor “leapt across an abyss” suggest?

- A. Florentino was not as kind as he should have been.
- B. Florentino was not expecting Fermina to fall in love with him.
- C. Florentino allowed Fermina too little time to respond.
- D. Florentino took a risk by being honest about his feelings.

- 22 What **best** shows that Aunt Escolástica’s initial feelings toward Florentino have changed?

- A. She helps Fermina deliver her response.
- B. She is worried he lacks a promising career.
- C. She keeps the secret from Fermina’s parents.
- D. She is intimidated by his authoritative manner.

- 23 Based on paragraph 10, what does Florentino’s eating roses symbolize?
- A. his appreciation for Fermina’s manners
 - B. his confusion over Fermina’s letter
 - C. his irritation with Fermina’s aunt
 - D. his desire for Fermina’s love

- 24 Based on paragraph 11, what is unusual about the love affair between Florentino and Fermina?
- A. It is mostly one-sided.
 - B. It is disapproved of by others.
 - C. It is slowly growing less serious.
 - D. It is conducted entirely through letters.

- 25 Read the phrase from paragraph 6 in the box below.

... she thought that he had delivered the telegram to her father only as a pretext for seeing her.

- Which of the following is the **best** replacement for *pretext* in the phrase?
- A. excuse
 - B. request
 - C. substitute
 - D. possibility

- 26 Read the phrases from the excerpt in the box below.

- ... he crossed the street with a martial stride that allowed him to overcome the weakness in his knees, ... (paragraph 1)
- ... when she heard his resolute steps on the yellow leaves in the little park it was difficult for her not to think this was yet another trick of her imagination. (paragraph 8)

Which word in the phrase from paragraph 1 is the **best** context clue for understanding the meaning of *resolute* in the phrase from paragraph 8?

- A. “crossed”
- B. “martial”
- C. “overcome”
- D. “weakness”

Question 27 is an open-response question.

- Read the question carefully.
- Explain your answer.
- Add supporting details.
- Double-check your work.

Write your answer to question 27 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 27 Based on the excerpt, explain Fermina's mixed feelings about Florentino's declaration of love. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

English Language Arts

READING COMPREHENSION: SESSION 3

DIRECTIONS

This session contains two reading selections with twelve multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

Gardeners use humus, a mixture of decayed animal and vegetable matter, to produce healthy flowers and vegetables. Read the article to discover how backyard composting provides them with a steady supply of this valuable material, and then answer the questions that follow.

MAKING HUMUS BY COMPOSTING

by Liz Ball

Students read a selection titled “Making Humus by Composting” and then answered questions 28 through 36 that follow on pages 121 through 123 of this document.

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“Making Humus by Composting” by Liz Ball, from *Composting*.
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-
- 28 In the article, the author **mainly** appeals to which audience?
- A. organic chemists
 - B. average gardeners
 - C. commercial farmers
 - D. devoted conservationists
- 29 Based on paragraph 2, how does composting “improve” nature’s decomposing?
- A. Composting is more complete.
 - B. Composting is less expensive.
 - C. Composting is cleaner.
 - D. Composting is faster.

- 30 Based on paragraph 5, which of the following products would **most likely** add carbon to a compost pile?
- A. carrot peels
 - B. fallen apples
 - C. purified water
 - D. shredded bark
- 31 Which of the following questions is **not** answered by the “Temperature Fluctuations of the Compost Pile” chart?
- A. What is the length of each decomposition phase?
 - B. Which organism is present at the lowest temperature?
 - C. Which organisms are active during the degradation phase?
 - D. What temperature changes occur during the phases of decomposition?
- 32 Based on the chart “Temperature Fluctuations of the Compost Pile,” in which phases of decomposition can psychrophiles be found?
- A. oxidation, reduction, degradation, conversion
 - B. oxidation, reduction, conversion, maturation
 - C. degradation, conversion, maturation
 - D. reduction, degradation, conversion
- 33 Based on the article, which of the following **best** explains the low temperature of the maturation phase?
- A. Most of the organic activity is complete.
 - B. The compost pile has become smaller.
 - C. The compost pile is affected by autumn weather.
 - D. Heat is dispersed as the humus is spread on the garden.
- 34 Which two terms are used interchangeably throughout the article?
- A. “fresh” and “aged”
 - B. “bacteria” and “fungi”
 - C. “humus” and “compost”
 - D. “nutrient” and “fertilizer”
- 35 Based on the names of the microorganisms in the article, what would **most likely** be true of *photophilic* bacteria?
- A. They would be large enough to be seen.
 - B. They would grow best in light.
 - C. They would be able to see.
 - D. They would produce light.

Question 36 is an open-response question.

- **Read the question carefully.**
- **Explain your answer.**
- **Add supporting details.**
- **Double-check your work.**

Write your answer to question 36 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 36** Explain how the structure and format of the article help the reader understand the process of composting. Support your answer with relevant and specific examples from the article.

After the death of their father, a famous mathematician, two sisters meet to discuss the future. Hal was a student of Claire and Catherine's father. Read the excerpt from *Proof* and answer the questions that follow.

from **Proof**
by David Auburn

CLAIRE: We're selling the house.

(*Beat.*)

CATHERINE: What?

CLAIRE: We—I'm selling it.

5 CATHERINE: *When?*

CLAIRE: I'm hoping to do the paperwork this week. I know it seems sudden.

CATHERINE: No one was here looking at the place, who are you selling it to?

CLAIRE: The university. They've wanted the block for years.

CATHERINE: *I live here.*

10 CLAIRE: Honey, now that Dad's gone it doesn't make sense. It's in bad shape. It costs a fortune to heat. It's time to let it go. Mitch agrees, it's a very smart move. We're lucky, we have a great offer—

CATHERINE: Where am I supposed to live?

CLAIRE: Come to New York.

15 CATHERINE: I can't believe this.

CLAIRE: It'll be so good. You deserve a change. This would be a whole new adventure for you.

CATHERINE: Why are you doing this?

CLAIRE: I want to help.

20 CATHERINE: By kicking me out of my *house*?

CLAIRE: It was my house too.

CATHERINE: You haven't lived here for years.

CLAIRE: I know that. You were on your own. I really regret that, Katie.

CATHERINE: Don't.

25 CLAIRE: I know I let you down. I feel awful about it. Now I'm trying to help.

CATHERINE: You want to help *now*?

CLAIRE: Yes.

CATHERINE: Dad is dead.

CLAIRE: I know.

30 CATHERINE: He's dead. Now that he's dead you fly in for the weekend and decide you want to help? *You're late.* Where have you been?

CLAIRE: I—

CATHERINE: Where were you five years ago? You weren't helping then.

CLAIRE: I was working.

35 CATHERINE: I was *here*. I lived with him *alone*.

CLAIRE: I was working fourteen-hour days. I paid every bill here. I paid off the mortgage on this three-bedroom house while I was living in a studio in Brooklyn.

- CATHERINE: You had your life. You got to finish school.
CLAIRE: You could have stayed in school!
- 40 CATHERINE: How?
CLAIRE: I would have done anything—I told you that. I told you a million times to do anything you wanted.
CATHERINE: What about Dad? Someone had to take care of him.
CLAIRE: He was ill. He should have been in a full-time professional-care situation.
- 45 CATHERINE: He didn't belong in the nuthouse.
CLAIRE: He might have been better off.
CATHERINE: How can you say that?
CLAIRE: This is where I'm meant to feel guilty, right?
CATHERINE: Sure, go for it.
- 50 CLAIRE: I'm heartless. My own father.
CATHERINE: He needed to be here. In his own house, near the university, near his students, near everything that made him happy.
CLAIRE: Maybe. Or maybe some real professional care would have done him more good than rattling around in a filthy house with *you* looking after him.
- 55 I'm sorry, Catherine, it's not your fault. It's my fault for letting you do it.
CATHERINE: I was right to keep him here.
CLAIRE: No.
CATHERINE: What about his remission? Four years ago. He was healthy for almost a year.
- 60 CLAIRE: And then he went right downhill again.
CATHERINE: He might have been worse in a hospital.
CLAIRE: And he *might* have been *better*. Did he ever do any work again?
CATHERINE: No.
CLAIRE: *No.* (*Beat.*) And you might have been better.
- 65 CATHERINE: (*Keeping her voice under control*) Better than what?
CLAIRE: Living here with him didn't do you any good. You said that yourself.
You had so much talent . . .
CATHERINE: You think I'm like Dad.
CLAIRE: I think you have some of his talent and some of his tendency toward . . .
- 70 instability.
(*Beat.*)
CATHERINE: Claire, in addition to the “cute apartments” that you’ve “scouted” for me in New York, would you by any chance also have devoted some of your considerable energies toward scouting out another type of—
- 75 CLAIRE: *No.*
CATHERINE: —living facility for your bughouse little sister?
CLAIRE: *No!* Absolutely not. That is not what this is about.
CATHERINE: Don't lie to me, Claire. I'm smarter than you.
(*Beat.*)
- 80 CLAIRE: The resources . . . I've investigated—

CATHERINE: Oh my *God*.

CLAIRE: —if you *wanted* to, all I'm saying is, the doctors in New York and the people are the *best*, and they—

...

CATHERINE: I hate you.

85 CLAIRE: Don't yell, please. Calm down.

CATHERINE: *I hate you*. I—

(HAL *enters, holding a notebook*. CLAIRE and CATHERINE *stop suddenly*. *Beat*.)

CLAIRE: What are you doing here? . . .

(CLAIRE *stares at* CATHERINE.)

90 HAL: How long have you known about this?

CATHERINE: A while.

HAL: Why didn't you tell me about it?

CATHERINE: I wasn't sure I wanted to.

(*Beat*.)

95 HAL: Thank you.

CATHERINE: You're welcome.

CLAIRE: What's going on?

HAL: God, Catherine, thank you.

CATHERINE: I thought you'd like to see it.

100 CLAIRE: What is it?

HAL: It's incredible.

CLAIRE: What *is* it?

105 HAL: Oh, uh, it's a result. A proof. I mean it looks like a proof. I mean it is a proof, a very long proof, I haven't read it all of course, or checked it, I don't even know if I *could* check it, but if it *is* a proof of what I think it's a proof of, it's . . . a very . . . *important* . . . proof.

CLAIRE: What does it prove?

110 HAL: It looks like it proves a theorem . . . a mathematical theorem about prime numbers, something mathematicians have been trying to prove since . . . since there were mathematicians, basically. Most people thought it couldn't be done.

CLAIRE: Where did you find it?

HAL: In your father's desk. Cathy told me about it.

CLAIRE: You know what this is?

CATHERINE: Sure.

115 CLAIRE: Is it good?

CATHERINE: Yes.

HAL: It's historic. If it checks out.

CLAIRE: What does it say?

HAL: I don't know yet. I've just read the first few pages.

120 CLAIRE: But what does it mean?

HAL: It means that during a time when everyone thought your dad was crazy . . . or barely functioning . . . he was doing some of the most important mathematics in

the world. If it checks out, it means you publish instantly. It means newspapers all over the world are going to want to talk to the person who found this notebook.

125 CLAUDE: Cathy.

HAL: Cathy.

CATHERINE: I didn't find it.

HAL: Yes you did.

CATHERINE: No.

130 CLAUDE: Well did you find it or did Hal find it?

HAL: I didn't find it.

CATHERINE: I didn't find it.

I wrote it.

Curtain

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- 37 In the excerpt, what are the italics in Catherine's lines used to express?
- A. her sadness
 - B. her outrage
 - C. her curiosity
 - D. her eagerness

- 38 In the excerpt, what is the effect of the relatively short lines?
- A. They emphasize the sisters' sorrow about their father.
 - B. They emphasize the heated pace of the sisters' argument.
 - C. They show how tired the sisters are of fighting.
 - D. They show how interested the sisters are in the proof.

- 39 Read the lines from the excerpt in the box below.

CLAIRE: I think you have some of his talent and some of his tendency toward . . . instability. (lines 69 and 70)

CLAIRE: The resources . . . I've investigated— (line 80)

What do the ellipses in the lines show about Claire?

- A. She is being evasive.
- B. She has a lot of energy.
- C. She has a generous nature.
- D. She is jealous of her sister.

- 40 In line 87, what is the **main** effect of Hal's entrance?

- A. The focus of the scene shifts.
- B. The sisters become reconciled.
- C. The father's illness is revealed.
- D. The setting of the play changes.

**Grade 10 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2010 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers***

Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Correct Answer (MC)*
1	103	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
2	103	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
3	103	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	8	D
4	103	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	C
5	103	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
6	104	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
7	104	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
8	104	<i>Language</i>	4	C
9	105	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	
10	107	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	A
11	107	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	B
12	107	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	14	C
13	107	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	11	D
14	109	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	B
15	109	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
16	110	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	C
17	110	<i>Language</i>	4	A
18	111	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
19	115	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
20	115	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	C
21	115	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	D
22	115	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	A
23	116	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	D
24	116	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	D
25	116	<i>Language</i>	4	A
26	116	<i>Language</i>	4	B
27	117	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	12	
28	121	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	10	B
29	121	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
30	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	D
31	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	A
32	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	B
33	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	A
34	122	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	15	C
35	122	<i>Language</i>	4	B
36	123	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	13	
37	127	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	17	B
38	127	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	17	B
39	128	<i>Language</i>	5	A
40	128	<i>Reading and Literature</i>	17	A

* Answers are provided here for multiple-choice items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for open-response items, which are indicated by shaded cells, will be posted to the Department's website later this year.