

# Grade 3 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension Test

The spring 2014 grade 3 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on Pre-K–5 learning standards in two content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (March 2011) listed below. Page numbers for the learning standards appear in parentheses.

- Reading (*Framework*, pages 13–19)
- Language (*Framework*, pages 33–40)

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at [www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).

ELA Reading Comprehension test results are reported under two MCAS reporting categories, **Reading** and **Language**, which are identical to the two framework content strands listed above.

The tables at the conclusion of this chapter indicate each released and unreleased common item’s reporting category and the standard it assesses. The correct answers for released multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the released item table.

## **Test Sessions and Content Overview**

The grade 3 ELA Reading Comprehension test included two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by multiple-choice, short-response, and/or open-response questions. Selected common reading passages and approximately half of the common test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in grade 3 test & answer booklets.

## **Reference Materials**

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

# English Language Arts

## READING COMPREHENSION

### DIRECTIONS

This session contains two reading selections with multiple-choice, short-response, and open-response questions. For multiple-choice questions, mark your answers by filling in the circle next to the best answer. For short-response and open-response questions, write your answer in the space below the question.

*Read the passage to learn about dogs and wolves. Then answer the questions that follow.*

## *from* **Is My Dog a Wolf?**

by Jenni Bidner

### **Close Cousins**

...

1 **I**n the days of your great-great-(add about 1,000 greats)-grandparents, wolves and dogs shared the same ancestor—the ancient wolf. Gradually, over the centuries, dogs evolved and changed to become their own species, and wolves stayed wolves.

2 Even though it has been thousands of years since dogs have been wild, many things a dog does by instinct a wolf also does.

3 How different are they? Well, you can't tame a wolf and turn it into a dog. And a dog that gets lost in the woods will not become a wolf simply because it doesn't live in someone's home. The two species have changed too much in the past thousands of years.

4 Once you understand that dogs and wolves are different, you can look at the ways they are similar. For example, a dog shares a lot more characteristics with a wolf than he does with a cat or a person.

...

### **Can Wolves Be Trained?**

5 **W**olves are very smart animals, but because they are wild, they have much less interest in being trained. They cannot easily (or as reliably) be taught to do tricks, walk on a leash, or sit on command.

6 Dogs, on the other hand, can be trained to do all sorts of things, from shaking hands and jumping through hoops, to guiding blind people, tracking criminals, and sniffing out illegal drugs.

...

## The Nose Knows

7 **D**ogs and wolves can see, of course, but their sense of smell is much more important to them. Their sense of smell is thousands of times better than ours. So, it's not surprising that they use their noses more than we do.

8 Think of your room. Picture your bed, desk, clothes, toys, and posters. Humans are very visual. When we think of something, we tend to picture it in our mind.

9 Your dog probably pictures your room by its smells as well. The smell of your shampoo on your pillow. The stink of your socks under the bed. Sounds crazy, but it's true.

10 Wolves use their sense of smell to find animals such as deer, which they hunt for food. They try to smell dangers, including other wolves or hunters. They also judge the health and moods of other wolves by their smell.

11 Dogs are so good at using their noses that many are given smelling jobs. Police dogs use their noses to detect illegal drugs and chase down criminals.

...



## Hear This

12 **B**oth dogs and wolves can hear better than we can. They can detect quieter noises as well as a wider range of musical notes. That’s why we can’t hear a high-pitched silent dog whistle, but dogs and wolves can.

13 All wolves have upright pointy ears, but dogs have a variety of ear shapes. It doesn’t seem to matter whether your dog has pointed ears, floppy ears, or tiny ears—they can all hear better than we can.

14 Wolf and dog ears also do more than just hear. Their shape and position can change, which is an important tool for communication.

15 Perky ears mean they are paying attention to someone or something. Scrunched-up ears, especially on dogs with floppy ears, can mean they’re worried or fearful. Flattened ears usually mean a warning or aggression. However, softly flattened ears can also be a friendly sign when the dog is trying to please his leader—you!

16 Watch your dog’s ears so you can learn this important part of dog language.

## Through Their Eyes

17 **D**ogs and wolves don’t see colors as well as most people do. They have trouble telling the difference between red, orange, green, and yellow. This means a yellow toy on a red rug might almost be invisible to them.

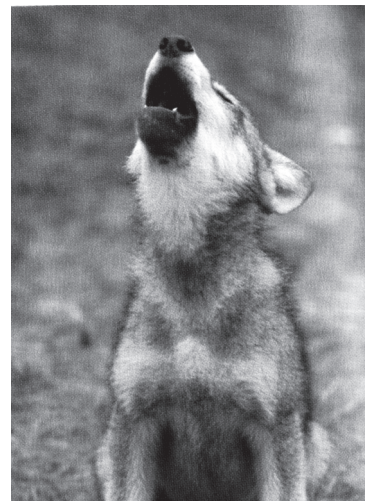
18 Don’t feel too bad for them. They might not be able to appreciate the colors in your art project, but they are excellent at detecting the slightest motion—an important hunting skill.

19 Some dogs have better eyesight than others. Certain dogs (especially those with long noses, such as greyhounds) prefer to hunt with their eyes rather than with their noses. They’re probably using both, but some dogs favor one over the other.

...

## Howling & Yowling

20 **W**olves love to howl, which is best described as wolf singing. Howling together



seems to be a bonding experience for the whole wolf family. A few types of dogs, such as beagles and bloodhounds, love to howl as well.

21 Wolves usually bark only as a warning about possible intruders. But barking is probably the most common dog noise. In fact, dogs tend to bark **a lot**. They bark to warn you about strangers. They bark when they play. They bark when they want attention. And some bark just because they're bored.

22 Both dogs and wolves will snarl and growl as a warning to other animals, people, or things that scare them. Always take a growl seriously. It's one of the ways a dog warns you he is thinking about biting because he's afraid, feels threatened, or needs to protect his home area.

...

### Why Does My Dog Chew My Stuff?

23 **I**t's not because he's mad at you.

24 The wolf pup below is chewing on a deer antler for several reasons. There is some small nutritional value gained by chewing antlers and crunching on bones. It is also the way wolves brush their teeth. (The rough texture of bones scrapes the teeth clean.) But mostly, it is just fun and tastes good.

25 Most of us don't leave antlers lying around the house, so table legs, shoes, and hockey sticks probably seem like good antler substitutes.

26 Many dogs get scared or bored when they are left alone, and chewing on something can be comforting and entertaining to them.

If that "something" smells like you, it is all the more appealing. So when he eats your homework, it really means he misses having you around—but don't try explaining that to your teacher.



...

### Why Does My Dog Dig?

27 **D**igging is a survival tool for wolves, but it's just plain old fun for dogs.

28 Wolves dig holes to hide leftover food and bones, so they'll have a nice snack for later. Some dig to catch small underground animals such as mice and moles, which make tasty snacks. Or they dig to create a cool

# ELA Reading Comprehension

---

hole to lie in during the summer...or a warm snow cave in the winter. Adult wolves dig underground dens for puppies to provide shelter and safety.

- 29 Dogs may dig for some of the same reasons, but one thing is for sure: freshly dug dirt has all sorts of interesting smells. And dogs (and wolves) love to use their noses.

## House Rules

- 30 In the wild, wolves live by wolf rules. Most of their days are spent caring for the young, resting, and hunting. Dogs, however, must live by people rules both inside and outside the home. Their willingness to do this is probably the biggest difference between the two species.

*Is My Dog a Wolf?* by Jenni Bidner. Text and illustration copyright © 2006 by Jenni Bidner. Reprinted by permission of the author Jenni Bidner.

---

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 1 through 10 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

- 1 According to the passage, how long did it take for dogs to become different from wolves?

- (A) many days
- (B) many weeks
- (C) many months
- (D) many years

- 2 Based on the passage, which of the following would a wolf be **unlikely** to do?

- (A) growl at a sign of danger
- (B) obey when told to roll over
- (C) follow the scent of an animal
- (D) chew on the bones of an animal

# ELA Reading Comprehension

---

3 According to the passage, which sense is stronger in dogs than in humans?

- Ⓐ taste
- Ⓑ sight
- Ⓒ smell
- Ⓓ touch

4 Based on paragraph 15, a dog's ears can show what the dog is

- Ⓐ eating.
- Ⓑ feeling.
- Ⓒ hearing.
- Ⓓ smelling.

5 Based on the section "Howling & Yowling," which of the following is **true**?

- Ⓐ Wolves are quiet animals.
- Ⓑ Dogs bark for many reasons.
- Ⓒ Most dogs howl when they are bored.
- Ⓓ Most wolves bark when they are alone.

6 Which section gives information about a dog's sense of sight?

- Ⓐ Can Wolves Be Trained?
- Ⓑ Hear This
- Ⓒ Through Their Eyes
- Ⓓ Why Does My Dog Dig?



# ELA Reading Comprehension

7 Based on the passage, what is **one** reason wolves dig?

- (A) to hide a toy
- (B) to make a home
- (C) to sharpen their claws
- (D) to show their strength

8 What is the **most likely** reason the author wrote the section “Close Cousins”?

- (A) to describe where dogs usually live
- (B) to explain the main idea of the passage
- (C) to explain when the passage was written
- (D) to describe the problems faced by wolves

9 Read the sentence from paragraph 12 in the box below.

They can detect quieter noises as well as a wider range of musical notes.

Based on the paragraph, what does **detect** mean?

- (A) try
- (B) use
- (C) make
- (D) notice

10 Read the sentence from paragraph 13 in the box below.

It doesn't seem to matter whether your dog has pointed ears, floppy ears, or tiny ears—they can all hear better than we can.

In the sentence, the words **pointed**, **floppy**, and **tiny** are all used as

- (A) verbs.
- (B) adjectives.
- (C) proper nouns.
- (D) compound words.





Read the folktale and answer the questions that follow.

## How Brazilian Beetles Got Their Gorgeous Coats

*A Story from Brazil*

*by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss*

1 Long ago in Brazil, beetles had plain brown coats. But today their hard-shelled coats are gorgeous. They are so colorful that people often set them in pins and necklaces like precious stones. This is how it happened that Brazilian beetles got their new coats.



2 One day a little brown beetle was crawling along a wall. Suddenly a big gray rat darted out of a hole in the wall. When he saw the beetle, he began to make fun of her.

3 “Is that as fast as you can go? What a poke you are! You’ll never get anywhere! Just watch how fast I can run!”

4 The rat dashed to the end of the wall, turned around, and ran back to the beetle. The beetle was still slowly crawling along. She had barely crawled past the spot where the rat left her.

5 “I’ll bet you wish you could run like that!” bragged the gray rat.

6 “You certainly are a fast runner,” replied the beetle. Even though the rat went on and on about himself, the beetle never said a word about the things she could do. She just kept slowly crawling along the wall, wishing the rat would go away.

7 A green and gold parrot in the mango tree above had overheard their conversation. She said to the rat, “How would you like to race with

## ELA Reading Comprehension

---

the beetle? Just to make the race exciting, I'll offer a bright colored coat as a reward. The winner may choose any color coat and I'll have it made to order."

8 The parrot told them the finish line would be the palm tree at the top of the hill. She gave the signal to start, and they were off.

9 The rat ran as fast as he could. When he reached the palm tree, he could hardly believe his eyes: there was the beetle sitting beside the parrot. The rat asked with a suspicious

tone, "How did you ever manage to run fast enough to get here so soon?"

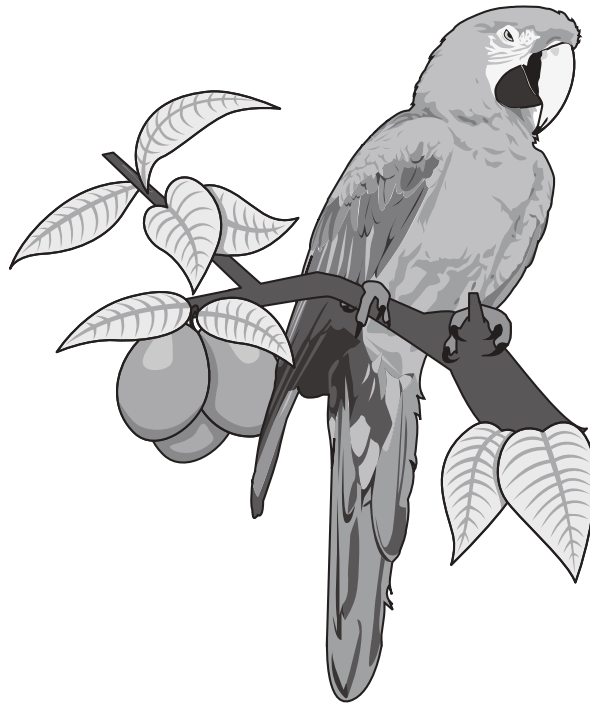
10 "Nobody ever said anything about having to run to win the race," replied the beetle as she drew out her tiny wings from her sides. "So I flew instead."

11 "I didn't know you could fly," said the rat with a grumpy look on his face.

12 The parrot said to the rat, "You have lost the contest. From now on you must never judge anyone by looks alone. You never can tell when or where you may find hidden wings."

13 Then the parrot turned to the brown beetle and asked, "What color would you like your new coat to be?"

14 "I'd like it to be green and gold, just like yours," replied the beetle. And since that day, Brazilian beetles have had gorgeous coats of green and gold. But the rat still wears a plain, dull, gray one.



# ELA Reading Comprehension

---

Mark your choices for multiple-choice questions 12 through 17 by filling in the circle next to the best answer.

12 In the folktale, which of the following is **most likely** true of the beetle?

- (A) She acts hurt, even though she is healthy.
- (B) She acts shy, even though the rat knows her.
- (C) She keeps moving, even though she is bored.
- (D) She is kind, even though the rat is mean to her.

13 In the folktale, what is the **most likely** reason the parrot wants the rat to race the beetle?

- (A) The parrot knows the beetle has wings.
- (B) The parrot wants the beetle to go away.
- (C) The parrot knows the beetle likes excitement.
- (D) The parrot wants the beetle to learn to run faster.

14 Based on paragraph 9, how does the rat **most likely** feel when he sees the beetle?

- (A) calm
- (B) scared
- (C) hopeful
- (D) shocked

15 In the folktale, what is the beetle's reward?

- (A) She becomes wiser.
- (B) She becomes bigger.
- (C) She becomes more jealous.
- (D) She becomes more colorful.

## ELA Reading Comprehension

---

- 16 Which of the following events from the folktale happens **first**?

- Ⓐ The parrot offers a prize.
- Ⓑ The rat runs to the palm tree.
- Ⓒ The beetle walks along a wall.
- Ⓓ The rat makes fun of the beetle.

- 17 Read the sentence from paragraph 10 in the box below.

“Nobody ever said anything about having to run to win the race,” replied the beetle as she drew out her tiny wings from her sides.

Based on the sentence, what does *drew* mean?

- Ⓐ painted
- Ⓑ jumped
- Ⓒ changed
- Ⓓ stretched

# ELA Reading Comprehension

---

Question 18 is a short-response question. Write your answer to question 18 in the lined space below.

**18** Explain a lesson that can be learned from the folktale.

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Grade 3 English Language Arts  
Reading Comprehension  
Spring 2014 Released Items:  
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers\***

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Correct Answer (MC)*</b>
1	11	<i>Reading</i>	1	D
2	11	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
3	12	<i>Reading</i>	1	C
4	12	<i>Reading</i>	1	B
5	12	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
6	12	<i>Reading</i>	5	C
7	13	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
8	13	<i>Reading</i>	6	B
9	13	<i>Language</i>	4	D
10	13	<i>Language</i>	1	B
11	14	<i>Reading</i>	2	
12	17	<i>Reading</i>	3	D
13	17	<i>Reading</i>	1	A
14	17	<i>Reading</i>	3	D
15	17	<i>Reading</i>	1	D
16	18	<i>Reading</i>	3	C
17	18	<i>Language</i>	4	D
18	19	<i>Reading</i>	2	

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



**Grade 3 English Language Arts  
Reading Comprehension  
Spring 2014 Unreleased Common Items:  
Reporting Categories and Standards**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>
19	<i>Reading</i>	3
20	<i>Reading</i>	3
21	<i>Reading</i>	1
22	<i>Language</i>	2
23	<i>Language</i>	4
24	<i>Reading</i>	3
25	<i>Reading</i>	2
26	<i>Reading</i>	3
27	<i>Reading</i>	1
28	<i>Reading</i>	3
29	<i>Reading</i>	1
30	<i>Reading</i>	1
31	<i>Reading</i>	8.a
32	<i>Language</i>	1
33	<i>Language</i>	4
34	<i>Language</i>	4
35	<i>Reading</i>	3
36	<i>Reading</i>	3
37	<i>Reading</i>	3
38	<i>Reading</i>	1
39	<i>Reading</i>	3
40	<i>Language</i>	1
41	<i>Language</i>	4

**Grade 3 English Language Arts  
Reading Comprehension  
Spring 2014 Released Items:  
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers\***

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Correct Answer (MC)*</b>
1	11	<i>Reading</i>	1	D
2	11	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
3	12	<i>Reading</i>	1	C
4	12	<i>Reading</i>	1	B
5	12	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
6	12	<i>Reading</i>	5	C
7	13	<i>Reading</i>	3	B
8	13	<i>Reading</i>	6	B
9	13	<i>Language</i>	4	D
10	13	<i>Language</i>	1	B
11	14	<i>Reading</i>	2	
12	17	<i>Reading</i>	3	D
13	17	<i>Reading</i>	1	A
14	17	<i>Reading</i>	3	D
15	17	<i>Reading</i>	1	D
16	18	<i>Reading</i>	3	C
17	18	<i>Language</i>	4	D
18	19	<i>Reading</i>	2	

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

**Grade 3 English Language Arts  
Reading Comprehension  
Spring 2014 Unreleased Common Items:  
Reporting Categories and Standards**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>
19	<i>Reading</i>	3
20	<i>Reading</i>	3
21	<i>Reading</i>	1
22	<i>Language</i>	2
23	<i>Language</i>	4
24	<i>Reading</i>	3
25	<i>Reading</i>	2
26	<i>Reading</i>	3
27	<i>Reading</i>	1
28	<i>Reading</i>	3
29	<i>Reading</i>	1
30	<i>Reading</i>	1
31	<i>Reading</i>	8.a
32	<i>Language</i>	1
33	<i>Language</i>	4
34	<i>Language</i>	4
35	<i>Reading</i>	3
36	<i>Reading</i>	3
37	<i>Reading</i>	3
38	<i>Reading</i>	1
39	<i>Reading</i>	3
40	<i>Language</i>	1
41	<i>Language</i>	4