

MEA 2007–2008

English Language Arts: Reading Grade 8

The table below shows the entire MEA reading test design, which is made up of 50% literary passages and 50% informational passages. Scores are based on common items only, half of which are released and can be found in this document.

Test Design

CONTENT AREA	COMMON			EMBEDDED FIELD TEST			TOTAL ITEMS PER STUDENT			BASE TESTING TIME	POINTS
	MC	CR	SA	MC	CR	SA	MC	CR	SA		
READING	32	6	0	16	3	0	48	9	0	150 MIN.	56

Each item on the MEA measures a content standard and performance indicator based on Maine's 1997 *Learning Results*.

Item Information Chart

Please refer to the item information chart on the next page for in-depth information on each reading released item. The released item numbers in the chart correspond to item numbers in the practice test and on the MEA Class Analysis Report.

Constructed-Response Scoring Guides

A constructed-response scoring guide includes score point descriptions used to determine the score. Training notes that follow the scoring guide provide in-depth descriptions or particular information also used to determine the score. At least one sample student response is provided for each score point with annotations that explain the reasoning behind the assigned score.

Student Work

Student work samples to supplement these scoring guides are found in the file labeled "Student Work."

Grade 8 Reading Released Item Information

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Practice Test Page Number	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	6	6	6	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10
Type of Text	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
Grade Level Expectation (GLE)	A8	A8	A6	D4	D4	D5	A6	A8	D4	D5	B8	B8	B8	A8	A4	B8	B8	B8	B8
Item Type	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR
Possible Points	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
Answer Key	D	C	D	B	C	C	A	B	B		B	A	D	B	C	C	B	C	
% Who Chose A or Earned 1 Point	3	8	13	3	8	9	88	13	4	18	6	81	4	6	16	3	12	3	20
% Who Chose B or Earned 2 Points	10	13	2	74	32	4	3	69	74	38	87	2	17	86	15	11	61	14	40
% Who Chose C or Earned 3 Points	23	75	13	11	41	75	4	14	5	30	3	15	12	5	62	76	17	59	28
% Who Chose D or Earned 4 Points	64	3	73	11	17	12	5	3	17	9	3	1	67	3	7	9	9	22	8
Statewide Average Student Score					2.65					2.22									2.14

Type of Text: I = Informational, L = Literary

Grade Level Expectation (GLE): See “State of Maine 2007 Grade Level Expectations for Grades 3–8” document available at the Maine Department of Education’s Web site at <http://www.maine.gov/education/lsalt/gles.htm>.

Item Type: MC = multiple-choice, CR = constructed-response

Answer Key: the letter of the correct answer choice

Constructed-Response Item 5

- 5 a. Describe **three** ways the author makes the information in this article easy to read and understand.
b. Explain how **each** way is helpful to the reader.
Use details from the article to support your answer.

Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Item 5

Score	Description
4	Response provides a thorough description of three ways the author makes the information in this article easier to read and understand and explains how each way is helpful. Response includes relevant details from the article as support.
3	Response provides a description of three ways the author makes the information in this article easier to read and understand and explains how two or three of the ways are helpful. Response includes some details from the article as support.
2	Response provides a partial description of two or three ways the author makes the information in this article easier to read and understand and explains how one or more of the ways are helpful. Response includes limited and/or partially correct information from the article.
1	Response is a vague or minimal statement about ways the author makes the information in this article easier to read and understand.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Training Notes for Constructed-Response Item 5

Training notes are not an exhaustive list. Readers scoring the student responses can accept other examples the student offers that are supported by the passage.

A correct response must discuss the author's strategy or strategies rather than just the content of the article:

- The author provides an introduction to give some background information about how solar energy works—this helps the reader to understand how the materials and steps in the project work to make an effective solar oven.
- The author provides a list of supplies—this helps the reader to be prepared for the project before starting.
- The author puts helpful hints in parentheses in the list of supplies and in the steps—this helps the reader because it clarifies and further explains the materials/steps.
- The author numbers the steps and gives specific information within each step—this helps the reader to understand how to do each step correctly and in the correct order.
- The author gives some ideas about using the completed solar oven—this gives the reader some ideas of what kinds of food to cook and reminds the reader that cooking will take longer than in a conventional oven.

Constructed-Response Item 10

- 10 According to the article, why is the Everglades “a very special place”? Explain your answer by using specific information from the article as support.

Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Item 10

Score	Description
4	Response thoroughly explains why the Everglades is “a very special place.” Response uses relevant, specific supporting information from the article.
3	Response generally explains why the Everglades is “a very special place,” but lacks some specific supporting information from the article.
2	Response partially explains why the Everglades is “a very special place.” Response uses limited supporting information from the article.
1	Response gives a vague/minimal answer to the question.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Training Notes for Constructed-Response Item 10

Training notes are not an exhaustive list. Readers scoring the student responses can accept other examples the student offers that are supported by the passage.

Some reasons why the Everglades is “a very special place”:

- incredible variety of plants and animals; tropical plants and animals live side by side with plants and animals from the north
- migrating birds stop and rest there
- helps add to water supplies
- helps filter pollutants from water
- a place that is unique on Earth
- “River of Grass”—unlike other rivers: very wide, very shallow, moves slowly
- composed of marshes and swamps
- one of the largest national parks in the lower 48 states

Constructed-Response Item 19

- 19 How did the different reactions of the birds influence the boy? Use details from the passage to support your explanation.

Scoring Guide for Constructed-Response Item 19

Score	Description
4	Response provides a thorough explanation of how the different reactions of the birds influenced the boy. Explanation includes relevant details from the passage as support.
3	Response provides an explanation of how the different reactions of the birds influenced the boy. Explanation includes some information from the passage as support.
2	Response provides a partial explanation of how the different reactions of the birds influenced the boy. Explanation includes limited details from the passage and/or is partially correct.
1	Response makes a vague or minimal statement about how the different reactions of the birds influenced the boy.
0	Response is totally incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	No response.

Training Notes for Constructed-Response Item 19

Training notes are not an exhaustive list. Readers scoring the student responses can accept other examples the student offers that are supported by the passage.

Some of the ways the reactions of the birds influenced the boy:

- In the beginning, the boy enjoyed just listening to the birds—the sounds of the birds were “a warm bath to him” and “calmed him down.”
- As the boy started to “answer” the birds, he was pleased and encouraged when they answered him back—“their answers sounded like applause.” He wanted to try more and more bird songs.
- The boy became skilled at more complicated bird songs, and he responded to the “impatience” of the bird who repeated a song over and over (“like a fussy choir director”) until he got it right by trying harder. The boy tried different ways to use his fingers and lips and tongue; he did not give up until the bird seemed satisfied.
- The boy continued to seek out more birds to imitate (and audiences to please). He tried larger audiences, but lost interest in singing to flocks of starlings when they did not give him the reaction he wanted—they “would flee at even his best imitations.”
- When he was attacked from behind by a red-winged blackbird, it was his first experience with an audience that did not appreciate him. He did continue to make bird songs, but the reaction of the red-winged bird was always on his mind, causing him to be a little less confident.