
VIII. English Language Arts, Grade 10

A. Composition

B. Reading Comprehension

Grade 10 English Language Arts Test

Test Structure

The grade 10 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 **Writing** strand in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (March 2011)
- the ELA Reading Comprehension test, which used multiple-choice and open-response questions (items) to assess learning standards from the **Reading** and **Language** strands in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy*

A. Composition

The spring 2014 grade 10 ELA Composition test and Composition Make-Up test were based on learning standards in the grades 6–12 **Writing** strand of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (March 2011). The learning standards for the grades 6–12 **Writing** strand appear on pages 53–59 of the *Framework*, which is available on the Department website at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

Each grade 10 ELA writing prompt requires students to write a literary analysis (coded to standard 1 in the grades 6–12 **Writing** strand in the 2011 *Framework*). All grade 10 writing prompts assess standards 4 and 5 in the grades 6–12 **Writing** strand.

ELA Composition test results are reported under the reporting categories **Composition: Topic Development** and **Composition: Standard English Conventions**.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The 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

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

English Language Arts Test

Grade 10 Writing Prompt

WRITING PROMPT

Often in works of literature, a character takes part in a great battle, either literally or figuratively.

From a work of literature you have read in or out of school, select a character who takes part in either a literal or a figurative battle. In a well-developed composition, identify the character, describe the battle the character takes part in and what happens as a result, and explain how the character's experience is important to the work as a whole.

Grade 10 Make-Up Writing Prompt

WRITING PROMPT

Often in works of literature, a character is affected by prejudice.

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

B. Reading Comprehension

The spring 2014 grade 10 English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on grades 6–12 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 47–52)

■ Language (*Framework*, pages 64–67)

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at 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 table at the conclusion of this chapter indicates each item’s reporting category and both the 2011 grades 6–12 *Framework* standard and the 2001 *Framework* general standard it assesses. The correct answers for multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the table.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The 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 reading passages, 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.

Reference Materials

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

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.

In The Wave, author Susan Casey describes an extreme sport and her fascination with it. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

from **The Wave**
by Susan Casey

1 As I watched the surfers launch themselves into the churning ocean and paddle toward the break, I worried for each of them. Their sport seemed more gladiatorial than athletic, like showing up for work each day to grapple with bull elephants.

2 Which is why, a few years later, I was stunned to see a photograph of a man riding a wave more than twice the size of



Sunset,¹ somewhere in the sixty-foot range. The surfer was Laird Hamilton, a six-foot-three, 215-pound twenty-eight-year-old from Hawaii who looked completely at ease inside a barrel² as tall as an office building. His blond hair whipped back in the spray; his muscular arms were spread wide for balance as he plummeted down the wave on a tiny board. He had classically handsome features, chiseled and intense, but no fear showed on his face, only rapt focus. Looking at the picture, I didn't understand how any of this was possible.

3 Since surfing became popular in the mid-twentieth century, faces in the forty-foot range have represented the outer limits of human paddling abilities. Anything bigger is simply moving too fast; trying to catch a sixty-foot wave by windmilling away on your stomach is like trying to catch the subway by crawling. Never mind, though, because even if you could catch it, there would be no way to ride it. Too much water rushes back up the face of a giant wave as it crests, sucking you, the hapless human (not enough momentum), and your board (too much friction) over the falls. So while the most popular surf spots quickly became so overrun that fistfights erupted in the water, all over the world the most impressive

¹ *Sunset* — a surfing beach in Hawaii known for its large waves

² *barrel* — the tube-like part of a wave created when a wave breaks

waves were going to waste. To Hamilton and his friends, this was unacceptable. The rules had to change, and a new system invented. So they came up with a technique called tow surfing.

- 4 Borrowing ideas from windsurfing and snowboarding, they created shorter, heavier surfboards with foot straps, and thinner, stronger fins that sliced through the water like knives. Then they added Jet Skis and water-ski ropes to the mix, using them to tow one another into perfect position at thirty miles per hour. In the optimal spot, just as the wave began to peak, the rider would drop the tow rope and rocket onto the face. The driver, meanwhile, would exit off the back. Using this method, with its increased horsepower and redesigned gear, a surfer could theoretically catch the biggest waves out there. Riding them—and surviving if you fell—was another story.
- 5 Hamilton was the test pilot, followed immediately by other surfers and windsurfers in his circle: Darrick Doerner, Brett Lickle, Dave Kalama, Buzzy Kerbox, Rush Randle, Mark Angulo, and Mike Waltze. Nicknamed the Strapped Crew, they experimented on the outer reefs of Oahu and Maui, far beyond the crowds. “No one was there,” Hamilton said. “No one had ridden waves this size. It was the unknown. It was like outer space or the deep sea. We didn’t know if we were going to come back.”
- 6 Anything involving giant waves qualifies as a risky pursuit, but tow surfing seemed to invite disaster. The sport’s learning curve was a series of hard lessons, and the price of falling was high. It included dislocated shoulders, shattered elbows, and burst eardrums; broken femurs, snapped ankles, and cracked necks; lacerated scalps, punctured lungs, and fractured arches; hold-downs that Brett Lickle described as “sprinting four hundred yards holding your breath while being beaten on by five Mike Tysons.” As for stitches, Hamilton “stopped counting at 1,000.”
- 7 Regardless of its dangers (or maybe because of them), tow surfing’s popularity and visibility grew throughout the 1990s, the surfers venturing onto more treacherous waves every year. They tinkered with equipment. They refined their techniques. Working in teams of two—a driver and a rider—they figured out how to rescue each other in behemoth surf. As the stakes got higher and the margin for error got slimmer, a kind of natural selection occurred. Riders who’d glimpsed their own mortality a little too closely drifted to the sidelines. At the other end of that spectrum was Hamilton. Watching him, you got the feeling that no wave was out of reach. The more intimidating the conditions, the more he seemed to thrive in them.
- 8 Then in July 2001 a surf impresario named Bill Sharp issued a challenge. “For 2700 years,” his press release read, “the Homeric *[sic]* epic known as the *Odyssey* has been associated with beautiful-but-deadly temptresses, forgetful lotus-eaters, and scary, one-eyed monsters. But now thanks to surf wear giant Billabong, it’s associated with an even scarier monster: the elusive 100-foot wave.” The company, the press release continued, would offer a prize of \$500,000 to any man who rode one. This payday was exponentially larger than anything surfing had seen; millions more would come from sponsors in the wake of the triumph. A select group of tow teams would be invited to participate, a crew Sharp referred to as “the Delta Force of surfing.”
- 9 It was a sexy frontier, defined by a nice round number. Marketing that number was Sharp’s intention; he noted that he’d sold the hundred-foot-wave *Odyssey* contest, originally named Project Sea Monster, to Billabong in less than fifteen minutes. Prone to flourishes

of hype, Sharp delivered vivid sound bites: “The Odyssey is Jacques Cousteau meets Evel Knievel³ meets *Crocodile Hunter* meets *Jackass*,” he said. And almost overnight the idea of the hundred-foot wave became the media grail, tow surfing’s equivalent of a moon landing.

10 There were a couple of snags. First, was it physically possible? No one knew how riding a hundred-foot wave might differ from, say, riding a seventy-five-foot wave. As they grow in size, waves increase dramatically in speed and energy. At what point would the forces overwhelm the equipment, or the surfers? “The 100-foot wave would probably kill anyone who fell off it,” *Time* magazine wrote. Honolulu’s then-ocean safety chief, Captain Edmund Pestana, agreed: “It’s a deadly scenario for everyone involved.” The trade journal *TransWorld SURF Business* was blunt: “You’re asking these surfers to take huge risks for our titillation.”

11 Next, even if a surfer wanted to take his chances, finding the wave was a problem. Although they were no longer considered imaginary, hundred-foot waves were not exactly kicking around within Jet Ski range. Further complicating things, for tow surfing’s purposes not just any hundred-foot wave would do. The enormous seas the *Discovery*⁴ encountered; the huge freaks that pop up to batter oil rigs—these are unsuitable, despite their great height. Waves that exist in the center of a storm are avalanches of water, waves mashed on top of other waves, all of them rushing forward in a chaotic jumble.

12 Surfers need giant waves with a more exclusive pedigree. In their ideal scenario, a hundred-foot wave would be born in a blast of storm energy, travel across the ocean for a long distance while being strengthened by winds, then peel off from the storm and settle into a swell, a steamrolling lump of power. That swell would eventually collide with a reef, a shoaling bottom, or some other underwater obstacle, forcing its energy upward and sideways until it exploded into breaking waves. And that’s where the ride would begin—far enough from the storm’s center to be less roiled and choppy, but not so far that its power was too diminished. This was a pretty tall order. If the ocean was a slot machine, rideable sixty- or seventy-foot waves came along about as often as a solid row of cherries.⁵ And the perfect hundred-foot wave? Hit that one and the sirens would go off as everyone in the casino stopped what they were doing to gawk, and the staff rolled in palettes to help you haul away your money.

13 A surfer who intended to participate in the Odyssey, therefore, would be signing up for a global scavenger hunt. Not only would he have to ride the wave, he’d have to scour the oceans to find it, monitoring the weather’s every nuance like a meteorologist, and then show up at precisely the right moment toting Jet Skis, safety equipment, surf gear, and photographers along with him—not to mention a highly skilled partner who didn’t mind risking his life when called upon to do so. This was a surfing competition the way the Space Shuttle was a plane. “The Odyssey makes climbing Everest look easy,” one British journalist wrote. Regardless, Sharp was undeterred. “I think everybody’s ready,” he said. “Now, on the giant days, there’s no wave that anyone’s backing down from.”

³ *Jacques Cousteau meets Evel Knievel* — references to a famous oceanographer and a daredevil stuntman

⁴ *Discovery* — a ship that recorded the largest wave ever encountered up to that time (2000)

⁵ *a solid row of cherries* — a rare winning combination of symbols in a slot machine

- 1 What is the **main** purpose of paragraphs 3–5?
- A. to introduce the major athletes in tow surfing
 - B. to describe the accidents associated with tow surfing
 - C. to identify specialized supplies needed for tow surfing
 - D. to provide background on the development of tow surfing
- 2 Based on paragraph 5, what is the **main** effect of comparing tow surfing to exploring outer space or the deep sea?
- A. It highlights the great fame that is possible.
 - B. It suggests the intense training that is provided.
 - C. It explains the excessive financing that is needed.
 - D. It emphasizes the adventurous spirit that is required.
- 3 In paragraph 10, what is the **main** purpose of the quotations about the Odyssey contest?
- A. to show how popular it had become
 - B. to illustrate the public’s interest in it
 - C. to show people’s concerns about safety
 - D. to present varied perspectives on the project

- 4 Read the descriptions of the waves from paragraph 12 in the box below.

- a blast of storm energy
- a steamrolling lump of power
- exploded into breaking waves

What do the descriptions of the waves **mainly** suggest?

- A. their force
- B. their beauty
- C. their rapid formation
- D. their increasing frequency

- 5 Based on paragraph 12, an “exclusive pedigree” refers to waves that are
- A. part of a continuously rolling surf.
 - B. created by a specific set of conditions.
 - C. found only in the middle of the ocean.
 - D. associated with unique patterns of tides.

- 6 What does paragraph 13 suggest is the **most** crucial part of successfully participating in the Odyssey competition?
- A. being able to predict the weather
 - B. being able to work independently
 - C. being in contact with other competitors
 - D. being in the right place at the right time

- 7 In paragraph 3, what is the **main** function of the information in parentheses?
- A. to highlight the setting
 - B. to provide clarifying details
 - C. to explain complex terminology
 - D. to contrast two differing experiences

- 8 In paragraph 7, what does the word *behemoth* mean?
- A. shifting
 - B. enormous
 - C. enchanting
 - D. comparable

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, explain the challenges that tow surfers face. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

Before he died, Portia's father set up a challenge in his will. In order to win the right to marry her, a man must choose from among three chests the one that contains Portia's portrait. In this excerpt, the Prince of Morocco has come to take the challenge. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

from THE MERCHANT OF VENICE
by William Shakespeare

[2.7.] *The hall of Portia's house at Belmont; PORTIA enters, with the Prince of MOROCCO, and their trains*¹

Portia. Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover
The several caskets² to this noble prince.

5 *Servants draw back the curtains and reveal a table and three caskets thereon*
Now make your choice. [*Morocco examines the caskets*

Morocco. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
The second, silver, which this promise carries:

10 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt:
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard³ all he hath.'
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

Portia. The one of them contains my picture, prince.
15 If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Morocco. Some god direct my judgement! Let me see,
I will survey th'inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?

'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
20 Must give—for what? for lead? hazard for lead?

This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross.⁴
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

25 What says the silver with her virgin hue?
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand.
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

¹ *trains* — attendants

² *caskets* — chests

³ *hazard* — risk

⁴ *dross* — worthless substance

- 30 Thou dost deserve enough—and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady.
- 35 I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding:
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:
- 40 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
Why, that's the lady—all the world desires her.
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
- 45 Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spets in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
- 50 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought—it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth⁵ in the obscure grave.
- 55 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,⁶
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
- 60 Stampéd in gold, but that's insculped⁷ upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. . . . Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!
Portia. There, take it, prince, and if my form
- 65 lie there,
Then I am yours. [*he unlocks the golden casket*
Morocco. O hell! what have we here?

⁵ *cerecloth* — cloth used for wrapping the dead

⁶ *immured* — confined

⁷ *insculped* — inscribed

A carrion Death,⁸ within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.
 70 'All that glisters is not gold,
 Often have you heard that told.
 Many a man his life hath sold,
 But my outside to behold.
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.
 75 Had you been as wise as bold,
 Young in limbs, in judgement old,
 Your answer had not been inscrolled—
 Fare you well, your suit is cold.'
 Cold, indeed, and labour lost.
 80 Then, farewell heat, and welcome frost.
 Portia, adieu! I have too grieved a heart
 To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.
 [he departs with his retinue⁹
 Portia. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.

⁸ *carrion Death* — dead and decaying flesh

⁹ *retinue* — attendants

In the public domain.

- 10** Based on lines 7–12, how is the third casket different from the first two?
- A. It seems older.
 - B. It seems heavier.
 - C. It seems more useful.
 - D. It seems more threatening.

- 11** What does Morocco suggest in lines 35–37?
- A. He hopes his declaration of affection will impress Portia.
 - B. He is concerned someone will think he is inferior.
 - C. He is entitled to wed Portia for many reasons.
 - D. He wants to select someone who is his equal.

- 12** What do lines 42–50 imply about Portia?
- A. She travels widely.
 - B. She is a valuable prize.
 - C. She is demanding of others.
 - D. She changes her mind often.

- 13** Read line 70 from the excerpt in the box below.

‘All that glisters is not gold,

Which familiar saying expresses the same idea?

- A. Honesty is the best policy.
- B. Quality is better than quantity.
- C. Appearances are often deceiving.
- D. Good things come to those who wait.

Question 14 is an open-response question.

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

Write your answer to question 14 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

- 14** Based on the excerpt, explain why Morocco chooses the gold casket rather than the silver or the lead casket. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the excerpt.

In this speech, Ernest Gaines explains his obsession with a small piece of land. Read the speech and answer the questions that follow.

An Obsession

by Ernest Gaines

- 1 **A**N OBSESSION OF mine concerns a half-acre of land in south-central Louisiana. This plot of land is surrounded by sugarcane fields on all sides, some of the rows coming within twenty feet of it. This plot of land is where my ancestors have been buried the past hundred years, where most of the people I knew as a child are now buried. This is Riverlake plantation, Point Coupee Parish, Oscar, Louisiana.
- 2 The first fifteen-and-a-half years of my life were spent on this place. My ancestors for over a hundred years planted the sugarcane here, hoed the sugarcane, plowed it, cut it and, when it was time, hauled it to the mills. They, like too many others who worked this land, are buried here in unmarked graves because they could not afford the headstones.
- 3 A hundred years ago, the land was owned by one man who designated that the land would be a cemetery for the people on that plantation, but he did not give it to them, nor would he let them buy it. Today the land is owned by sixteen people who live all over the country and probably different parts of the world, some of whom I'm sure have never visited the plantation or know anything about the cemetery which lies there. Yet it is their land, and those who are buried there do not own even six feet of the ground.
- 4 Many rural cemeteries have been destroyed all over this country, and day and night I worry that the same fate may happen to this one. There is no law in the state of Louisiana that I am aware of that says it cannot be done. My wife and I and several friends from my childhood are trying to find a way to get control of the land. We have contacted lawyers to work with us and presently we are keeping the place clean of overgrowth, because that is one excuse landowners and developers use to plow under cemeteries. "We didn't know that one was there."
- 5 At a recent interview, I was asked where would I like to be buried and I answered that I'd like to be in the same place where my ancestors are. The interviewer asked me what would I like on my headstone and I said, "To lie with those who have no marks." These are the people for whom I wrote letters as a child, read their letters because many of them could not read nor could they write. Many of them had to go into the fields before they had a chance to go to school. Yet they're the ones responsible for my being

here tonight. Not only did they encourage me to stay in school, but they, and only they, have been the source of all of my writings. I've said many times before that my novels, my short stories, are just continuations of the letters that I started writing for them some fifty years ago, and since I've tried to say something about their lives on paper — their joy, their sorrows, their love, their fears, their pride, their compassion — I think it is only my duty now to do as much as I can to see that they lie in peace forever.

“An Obsession” by Ernest Gaines, from *Three Minutes or Less*. Copyright © 2000 by the PEN/Faulkner Foundation. Reprinted by permission of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

- 15 Which of the following **best** states the irony of the cemetery's ownership situation?
- A. The owners live far away, while those buried there have no rights.
 - B. The owners might try to plow the land under without telling anyone.
 - C. There are no laws that prohibit the destruction of rural cemeteries.
 - D. There are no gravestones in the cemetery, yet many people are buried there.

- 16 Based on paragraph 5, which of the following **best** describes how the author feels about his ancestors?
- A. He feels ashamed of them.
 - B. He feels indebted to them.
 - C. He is jealous of them.
 - D. He is in awe of them.

- 17 Based on paragraph 5, what is the **main** goal of the author’s novels and short stories?
- A. to be entertaining to modern readers
 - B. to provide his ancestors with a voice
 - C. to provide insight into the geography of the area
 - D. to make money from the experiences of his ancestors

- 18 Which of the following sentences **best** shows that the passage is a speech?
- A. “The first fifteen-and-a-half years of my life were spent on this place.”
 - B. “My wife and I and several friends from my childhood are trying to find a way to get control of the land.”
 - C. “Many of them had to go into the fields before they had a chance to go to school.”
 - D. “Yet they’re the ones responsible for my being here tonight.”

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.

It is Christmas Eve, and the narrator of the short story “Powder” is on a skiing trip with his father. The father has promised the narrator’s mother, from whom he is separated, that they will return in time for dinner. Read the story and answer the questions that follow.

Powder

by Tobias Wolff

- 1 Just before Christmas my father took me skiing at Mount Baker. He’d had to fight for the privilege of my company, because my mother was still angry with him for sneaking me into a nightclub during his last visit, to see Thelonious Monk.¹
- 2 He wouldn’t give up. He promised, hand on heart, to take good care of me and have me home for dinner on Christmas Eve, and she relented. But as we were checking out of the lodge that morning it began to snow, and in this snow he observed some rare quality that made it necessary for us to get in one last run. We got in several last runs. He was indifferent to my fretting. Snow whirled around us in bitter, blinding squalls, hissing like sand, and still we skied. As the lift bore us to the peak yet again, my father looked at his watch and said, “Criminy. This’ll have to be a fast one.”
- 3 By now I couldn’t see the trail. There was no point in trying. I stuck close behind him and did what he did and somehow made it to the bottom without sailing off a cliff. We returned our skis and my father put chains on the Austin-Healey² while I swayed from foot to foot, clapping my mittens and wishing I was home. I could see everything. The green tablecloth, the plates with the holly pattern, the red candles waiting to be lit.
- 4 We passed a diner on our way out. “You want some soup?” my father asked. I shook my head. “Buck up,” he said. “I’ll get you there. Right, doctor?”
- 5 I was supposed to say, “Right, doctor,” but I didn’t say anything.
- 6 A state trooper waved us down outside the resort, where a pair of sawhorses blocked the road. He came up to our car and bent down to my father’s window, his face bleached by the cold, snowflakes clinging to his eyebrows and to the fur trim of his jacket and cap.
- 7 “Don’t tell me,” my father said.
- 8 The trooper told him. The road was closed. It might get cleared, it might not. Storm took everyone by surprise. Hard to get people moving. Christmas Eve. What can you do.
- 9 My father said, “Look. We’re talking about five, six inches. I’ve taken this car through worse than that.”
- 10 The trooper straightened up. His face was out of sight but I could hear him. “The road is closed.”

¹ *Thelonious Monk* — a famous American jazz pianist popular in the 1950s and 1960s

² *Austin-Healey* — a British sports car

- 11 My father sat with both hands on the wheel, rubbing the wood with his thumbs. He looked at the barricade for a long time. He seemed to be trying to master the idea of it. Then he thanked the trooper and with a weird, old-maidy show of caution turned the car around. "Your mother will never forgive me for this," he said.
- 12 "We should've left this morning," I said. "Doctor."
- 13 He didn't speak to me again until we were in a booth at the diner, waiting for our burgers. "She won't forgive me," he said. "Do you understand? Never."
- 14 "I guess," I said, though no guesswork was required. She wouldn't forgive him.
- 15 "I can't let that happen." He bent toward me. "I'll tell you what I want. I want us all to be together again. Is that what you want?"
- 16 "Yes, sir."
- 17 He bumped my chin with his knuckles. "That's all I needed to hear."
- 18 When we finished eating he went to the pay phone in the back of the diner, then joined me in the booth again. I figured he'd called my mother, but he didn't give a report. He sipped at his coffee and stared out the window at the empty road. "Come on, come on," he said, though not to me. A little while later he said it again. When the trooper's car went past, lights flashing, he got up and dropped some money on the check. "Okay. *Vámonos.*"
- 19 The wind had died. The snow was falling straight down, less of it now and lighter. We drove away from the resort, right up to the barricade. "Move it," my father told me. When I looked at him, he said, "What are you waiting for?" I got out and dragged one of the sawhorses aside, then put it back after he drove through. He pushed the door open for me. "Now you're an accomplice," he said. "We go down together." He put the car into gear and gave me a look. "Joke, son."
- 20 Down the first long stretch I watched the road behind us, to see if the trooper was on our tail. The barricade vanished. Then there was nothing but snow: snow on the road, snow kicking up from the chains, snow on the trees, snow in the sky, and our trail in the snow. Then I faced forward and had a shock. There were no tracks ahead of us. My father was breaking virgin snow between tall treelines. He was humming "Stars Fell on Alabama." I felt snow brush along the floorboards under my feet. To keep my hands from shaking I clamped them between my knees.
- 21 My father grunted thoughtfully and said, "Don't ever try this yourself."
- 22 "I won't."
- 23 "That's what you say now, but someday you'll get your license and then you'll think you can do anything. Only you won't be able to do this. You need, I don't know—a certain instinct."
- 24 "Maybe I have it."
- 25 "You don't. You have your strong points, sure, just not this. I only mention it because I don't want you to get the idea this is something anybody can do. I'm a great driver. That's not a virtue, okay? It's just a fact, and one you should be aware of. Of course you have to give the old heap some credit too. There aren't many cars I'd try this with. Listen!"
- 26 I did listen. I heard the slap of the chains, the stiff, jerky rasp of the wipers, the purr of the engine. It really did purr. The old heap was almost new. My father couldn't afford it, and kept promising to sell it, but here it was.

- 27 I said, “Where do you think that policeman went to?”
- 28 “Are you warm enough?” He reached over and cranked up the blower. Then he turned off the wipers. We didn’t need them. The clouds had brightened. A few sparse, feathery flakes drifted into our slipstream and were swept away. We left the trees and entered a broad field of snow that ran level for a while and then tilted sharply downward. Orange stakes had been planted at intervals in two parallel lines and my father steered a course between them, though they were far enough apart to leave considerable doubt in my mind as to exactly where the road lay. He was humming again, doing little scat riffs around the melody.
- 29 “Okay, then. What are my strong points?”
- 30 “Don’t get me started,” he said. “It’d take all day.”
- 31 “Oh, right. Name one.”
- 32 “Easy. You always think ahead.”
- 33 True. I always thought ahead. I was a boy who kept his clothes on numbered hangers to ensure proper rotation. I bothered my teachers for homework assignments far ahead of their due dates so I could draw up schedules. I thought ahead, and that was why I knew there would be other troopers waiting for us at the end of our ride, if we even got there. What I didn’t know was that my father would wheedle and plead his way past them—he didn’t sing “O Tannenbaum,” but just about—and get me home for dinner, buying a little more time before my mother decided to make the split final. I knew we’d get caught; I was resigned to it. And maybe for this reason I stopped moping and began to enjoy myself.
- 34 Why not? This was one for the books. Like being in a speedboat, only better. You can’t go downhill in a boat. And it was all ours. And it kept coming, the laden trees, the unbroken surface of snow, the sudden white vistas. Here and there I saw hints of the road, ditches, fences, stakes, though not so many that I could have found my own way. But then I didn’t have to. My father was driving. My father in his forty-eighth year, rumpled, kind, bankrupt of honor, flushed with certainty. He was a great driver. All persuasion, no coercion. Such subtlety at the wheel, such tactful pedalwork. I actually trusted him. And the best was yet to come—switchbacks and hairpins impossible to describe. Except maybe to say this: if you haven’t driven fresh powder, you haven’t driven.

“Powder” by Tobias Wolff, from *The Night in Question: Stories*. Copyright © 1996 by Tobias Wolff. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House, LLC.

- 19 What does paragraph 1 suggest about the narrator’s father?

A. He is not a strict parent.
 B. He is not fond of holiday music.
 C. He enjoys making his wife upset.
 D. He has good feelings about the holidays.

- 20 Read paragraph 12 in the box below.

“We should’ve left this morning,” I said. “Doctor.”

What is the narrator’s tone when he says, “Doctor”?

A. polite
 B. sarcastic
 C. confused
 D. sympathetic

- 21 Read the sentences from the story in the box below.

- He was humming “Stars Fell on Alabama.” (paragraph 20)
- He was humming again, doing little scat riffs around the melody. (paragraph 28)

Based on the story, what does the father’s humming **mainly** show about him?

A. He is growing sleepy.
 B. He is comfortable with risk.
 C. He is worried about being late.
 D. He is recalling a pleasant event.

- 22 Based on paragraphs 27 and 28, what is the **main** reason the father asks the narrator whether he is warm enough?

A. He has been mean to the narrator.
 B. He notices that the storm is getting worse.
 C. He wants to show that he regrets ruining the day.
 D. He wants to distract the narrator from thinking about getting in trouble.

23 Based on paragraph 34, what does the drive through the fresh powder **most likely** symbolize?

- A. accepting society's limitations
- B. disappointing one's relatives
- C. navigating life's challenges
- D. discovering one's purpose

24 What does the narrator's mother **mainly** represent in the story?

- A. the spirit of hope
- B. the beauty of nature
- C. the certainty of loss and death
- D. the real world and its demands

25 Read the details from the story in the box below.

- The father brought the narrator to a nightclub to listen to music.
- The father took the narrator skiing in a snowstorm.
- The father drove with the narrator on a closed road.

What do these details **mainly** emphasize about the father?

- A. He is interested in cultural experiences.
- B. He is only concerned about pleasing his son.
- C. He wants to prove that he is a good role model.
- D. He wants to share memorable experiences with his son.

26 In paragraph 33, the narrator says his "father would wheedle and plead his way past" the troopers. Based on the paragraph, *wheedling* is a kind of

- A. apology.
- B. persuasion.
- C. aggression.
- D. entertainment.

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** Explain how the narrator's attitude toward his father changes from the beginning to the end of the story. Support your answer with relevant and specific information from the story.

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.

Scientists have studied why people prefer certain foods. Read the article that explains the scientists' findings and answer the questions that follow.

The Science Behind Why We Love Ice Cream

by Shirley S. Wang

- 1 Why people prefer certain foods over others depends largely on a combination of taste and texture. While taste sensations are fairly well understood, scientists are just beginning to unravel the mystery of food texture.
- 2 Now, researchers at the Monell Chemical Senses Center in Philadelphia have found that an enzyme in saliva called amylase, which breaks down starch into liquid, could play a key role in determining the appeal of various textures of food. A new genetic study shows that people produce strikingly different amounts of amylase, and that the more of the enzyme people have in their mouth the faster they can liquefy starchy foods.
- 3 Scientists think this finding could help explain why people experience foods as creamy or slimy, sticky or watery, and that this perception could affect our preference for foods. For the numerous foods that contain starch, including pudding, sauces and even maple syrup, what can feel just right to some people is experienced as too runny or not melting enough for others because they produce different amounts of the enzyme.
- 4 The ability to quickly break down starch, which is a type of carbohydrate, is only one part of the puzzle that determines what people like to eat. Taste preferences are driven by a complicated interaction between taste buds and other receptors in the mouth and nose, and the messages they send to the brain. Culture plays a role, as people tend to like foods that are familiar, says Rick Mattes, a foods and nutrition professor at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. And repetition sometimes can win out: Many people initially don't like oysters because of their slimy texture, for instance, but can come to enjoy them after several tries.
- 5 "We all have had the experience of liking a food that someone else complains is too tacky, or slippery, or gritty, or pulpy," says Paul Breslin, a researcher at the Monell center and a professor at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. "This is why a given line of product often comes in different textural forms," such as orange juice with and without pulp, he says.
- 6 Starch comprises or is added to about 60% of the foods people typically eat, so determining how it is digested is key to understanding food-texture preferences, Monell center scientists say. Other research has shown that people have a preference for creamy sensations as well as for foods that start off solid and melt in the mouth such as ice cream and chocolate, says Dr. Breslin, who began the current research because of his interest in creaminess. Amylase also could help explain individual preferences for different brands of ice cream or yogurt, for instance, because they contain different amounts of added starch.

- 7 In their recent work, Monell researchers had 73 adults swirl around in their mouths solutions made up of different concentrations of starch—blobs of translucent gelatinous substances with no particular taste—and rate their runniness over the course of 60 seconds. Depending on the amount of amylase individuals produced, the starch could be reduced to liquid within seconds.
- 8 The researchers also took DNA samples of the participants from a blood sample or cheek swab and studied the link between the numbers of copies of a gene that turns on the production of amylase and how quickly the participant reported the sample turned runny. The findings showed that the number of copies of the gene, called AMY₁, varied widely between individuals. People with higher numbers of gene copies reported that the starch turned to liquid more quickly. The study was published last month in PLoS ONE, a journal of the Public Library of Science.
- 9 The Monell researchers are now investigating whether people with more AMY₁ copies see larger spikes in blood glucose after eating. They also plan to study the link between greater amylase production and food preferences, hypothesizing that people who make more of the enzyme will prefer starchy products because they get a faster blast of glucose into their bloodstream.
- 10 The role of amylase and the rate of starch breakdown also has implications for diabetes. People who digest starch quickly could be more likely to have larger spikes in blood-sugar levels and thus a need for the body to generate more insulin. This continued demand on the body might lead these people to become insulin resistant or even diabetic if the body's ability to produce insulin breaks down, says Abigail Mandel, Dr. Breslin's colleague at Monell and first author on the study.
- 11 Amylase and other enzymes in saliva could also help explain food-texture preferences that are known to vary with age, Dr. Breslin says. For instance, many young children dislike certain fruits because of a perceived sliminess—think of the inside of a tomato. But people's saliva-flow rate tends to slow with age, which might affect their ability to break down starch in the mouth and reduce sensations of sliminess.
- 12 Another factor in food preferences: People vary—probably based on genetics—in their ability to detect other textures, such as fat, and bitter and sweet tastes. Valerie Duffy, a registered dietitian and professor in the department of allied health science at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Conn., has shown in her research that adults with a gene that makes bitter tastes more intense consume fewer vegetables containing bitter compounds, such as kale or spinach.
- 13 But that genetic preference can be changed by repeatedly exposing the individual to the taste or by masking the bitterness, even at an early age, she has found. In a preliminary study with preschoolers, Dr. Duffy's group added a sweet taste to balance out the bitterness of certain vegetables—less than half a teaspoon of sugar to a cup of broccoli or asparagus, for example, during cooking—and found that the children were more accepting of the greens. Even when the sweetness was removed, the children still liked the vegetables more than before because they had developed a positive association with them, she says. "It suggests that people should focus on what they like to eat and make it work for them," Dr. Duffy says.

"The Science Behind Why We Love Ice Cream" by Shirley S. Wang, from the *Wall Street Journal* (November 2010). Copyright © 2010 by Dow Jones and Co. Reprinted by permission of Dow Jones and Co.

- 28 According to paragraph 2, the enzyme amylase may contribute to
- A. how people respond to the feel of foods.
 - B. how people process essential nutrients.
 - C. the amount of saliva produced while eating.
 - D. the number of carbohydrates found in liquids.
- 29 According to paragraph 4, what is one of the major factors involved in determining a person's taste preferences?
- A. age
 - B. gender
 - C. custom
 - D. education

- 30 Based on paragraph 5, the example of the different forms of orange juice would be **most** important to which of the following?
- A. citrus growers
 - B. restaurant owners
 - C. food manufacturers
 - D. advertising executives
- 31 According to paragraph 10, what factor could contribute to diabetes?
- A. severe reactions to sugar
 - B. rapid absorption of starch
 - C. difficulties digesting food
 - D. problems in producing amylase

- 32 What is the **main** idea of paragraph 13?
- A. People can be conditioned to like foods they once disliked.
 - B. People should look for nutritious alternatives to foods they dislike.
 - C. People should mask the taste of foods they dislike with sweeteners.
 - D. People who dislike certain foods as children will like them as adults.

- 33 What is the **main** source of evidence cited in the article?
- A. consumer surveys
 - B. personal anecdote
 - C. academic research
 - D. historical documents

- 34 In paragraph 9, the word *hypothesizing* means
- A. denying.
 - B. teaching.
 - C. forgetting.
 - D. speculating.

- 35 Read the sentence from paragraph 11 in the box below.

For instance, many young children dislike certain fruits because of a perceived sliminess—think of the inside of a tomato.

- The information set off by the dash in the sentence is **best** characterized as
- A. a contrast.
 - B. an opinion.
 - C. an example.
 - D. a definition.

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** Based on the article, explain the significance of scientists' findings about amylase. Support your answer with relevant and specific details from the article.

Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

LOST SISTER

1

In China,
even the peasants
named their first daughters
Jade—

5 the stone that in the far fields
could moisten the dry season,
could make men move mountains
for the healing green of the inner hills
glistening like slices of winter melon.

10 And the daughters were grateful:
they never left home.

To move freely was a luxury
stolen from them at birth.
Instead, they gathered patience,

15 learning to walk in shoes
the size of teacups,
without breaking—
the arc of their movements
as dormant as the rooted willow,

20 as redundant as the farmyard hens.
But they traveled far
in surviving,

learning to stretch the family rice,
to quiet the demons,

25 the noisy stomachs.

2

There is a sister
across the ocean,
who relinquished¹ her name,
diluting jade green

30 with the blue of the Pacific.

¹ *relinquished* — gave up; surrendered

Rising with a tide of locusts,
 she swarmed with others
 to inundate another shore.
 In America,
 35 there are many roads
 and women can stride along with men.

But in another wilderness,
 the possibilities,
 the loneliness,
 40 can stragulate like jungle vines.
 The meager provisions and sentiments
 of once belonging—
 fermented roots, Mah-Jongg² tiles and firecrackers—
 set but a flimsy household
 45 in a forest of nightless cities.
 A giant snake rattles above,
 spewing black clouds into your kitchen.
 Dough-faced landlords
 slip in and out of your keyholes,
 50 making claims you don't understand,
 tapping into your communication systems
 of laundry lines and restaurant chains.

You find you need China:
 your one fragile identification,
 55 a jade link
 handcuffed to your wrist.
 You remember your mother
 who walked for centuries,
 footless—
 60 and like her,
 you have left no footprints,
 but only because
 there is an ocean in between,
 the unremitting space of your rebellion.

—Cathy Song

² *Mah-Jongg* — a game played with small pieces called tiles

- 37 Read lines 18 and 19 in the box below.

the arc of their movements
as dormant as the rooted willow,

What image does the word “dormant” convey?

- A. fertility
- B. restraint
- C. exhaustion
- D. secretiveness

- 38 In the poem, what does the break between lines 25 and 26 suggest?

- A. a shift in setting
- B. a change in speaker
- C. the contrasts of age and youth
- D. the disputes of children and parents

- 39 What do lines 34–40 **most likely** reveal about the sister’s experience?

- A. Her decisions led her to a new relationship.
- B. Her ambition ultimately led to her downfall.
- C. Her life became both successful and adventurous.
- D. Her choices resulted in both opportunity and sacrifice.

- 40 Based on the poem, what does the “jade link” in line 55 **mainly** represent?

- A. a tie to home
- B. an item of beauty
- C. an attempt to escape
- D. a form of punishment

Grade 10 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2014 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers

Item No.	Page No.	Reporting Category ¹	Standard ¹	Correct Answer (MC) ²	2001 Standard ³
1	107	Reading	5	D	13
2	107	Reading	5	D	15
3	107	Reading	8	C	13
4	108	Reading	4	A	15
5	108	Reading	4	B	15
6	108	Reading	1	D	13
7	109	Reading	5	B	8
8	109	Language	4	B	4
9	110	Reading	3		13
10	113	Reading	1	D	17
11	113	Reading	3	C	17
12	114	Reading	4	B	17
13	114	Reading	9	C	15
14	114	Reading	2		17
15	116	Reading	1	A	15
16	116	Reading	3	B	13
17	117	Reading	1	B	8
18	117	Reading	6	D	10
19	121	Reading	3	A	12
20	121	Reading	4	B	15
21	121	Reading	1	B	12
22	121	Reading	3	D	12
23	122	Reading	2	C	15
24	122	Reading	2	D	12
25	122	Reading	3	D	12
26	122	Language	4	B	4
27	123	Reading	3		12
28	126	Reading	1	A	13
29	126	Reading	1	C	13
30	126	Reading	1	C	13
31	126	Reading	1	B	13
32	127	Reading	2	A	13
33	127	Reading	8	C	13
34	127	Language	4	D	4
35	127	Language	2	C	5
36	128	Reading	2		13
37	131	Reading	4	B	15
38	131	Reading	5	A	14
39	131	Reading	2	D	14
40	131	Reading	8.a	A	14

¹ The Reporting Category and Standard columns refer to the current (2011) *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy*. More information about reporting categories for ELA is available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tdd/ela.html?section=testdesign.

² Answers are provided here for multiple-choice items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for open-response items, which are indicated by the shaded cells, will be posted to the Department's website later this year.

³ The Department is providing the standard from the previous (2001) curriculum framework for ELA for reference purposes.