

2024 MCAS ELA CR Webinar_Elementary Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome to our presentation on the MCAS ELA Constructed Responses in grades 3 and 4. My name is Danika Ripley and I am a member of the ELA Test Development Team. This presentation is geared towards elementary classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators and was originally shared as webinar on January 17, 2024 by members of the ELA Test Development Team. In addition to the PowerPoint presentation, you will need to access the participant packet which includes the rubric, anchor papers, and student responses that will be referred to throughout.

Slide 2: During today's session, we will:

- Provide an overview of the MCAS test development and scoring process
- Analyze student work samples from a grade 4 constructed response question
- Individually score student responses
- Review additional resources available on the Department's website

Slide 3: These are the Department's strategic objectives. In partnership with districts, schools and programs, DESE has identified 3 strategic objectives. Today we are focused on Deeper Learning. As part of this session, we want to think about engaging all students in grade-level work and relevant to them. We will connect to the MA frameworks and think about ways to support students in thinking critically, asking questions and making meaning.

Slide 4: Before we look at the grade 4 constructed response questions, it's important that we have some background and understanding of how questions, which we refer to as items, end up on an operational MCAS test. This is the "Life Cycle of an ELA Item".

- From beginning to end, this process takes about two years. As you can see, there are many steps to getting an item onto an operational MCAS test. An operational question is a question (referred to as an item) that counts towards the student's score and has already been through this process. An important part of this process is the fact that teams of current educators are included at multiple points in the process to share their suggestions for ways to refine our items. We work with educators, content experts, and editorial staff throughout the process. This is something that our state is very proud of, as not all states have educators involved throughout the process. We have two educator committees - the Assessment Development Committee or ADC (purple boxes) and the Bias and Sensitivity Committee or BSC (blue boxes).
- There is an Assessment Development Committee for each grade level and content area and a Bias and Sensitivity Committee for grades 3-10. Both committees are tasked with making sure that the passages and items on the MCAS test are grade appropriate, accurate, and aligned to the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks. Let's take a look at this process in a little more depth.
- The ADC and BSC committees review the ELA passages. At these meetings we are looking specifically at the passages to ensure that they are grade appropriate and that they are rich enough to be able to ask a variety of questions about and provide opportunities to reach a variety of the ELA frameworks. We are also looking for ideas for types of questions that can be asked on the test. This includes ideas for the essays and constructed response questions.

- Later in the process, during the item review meeting, we ask educators on the ADC and BSC to review not only the essay and constructed response questions, but also the scoring notes that accompany them. The scoring notes include information and examples that we anticipate students might use to answer the question. It is not an exhaustive list. The scoring notes are important for us to determine if there is enough information in the passage for a student to write a response. They also help us determine if the question is best suited as an essay or constructed response.
- The questions are then prepared to be put on the test and are reviewed by content experts and editorial staff. After the test is administered (that is in the orange box,) the test is separated into operational and field test items. The operational items – which are common to all students, are scored and results sent to the districts and families.
- Multiple-choice field-tested items are machine scored. However, constructed responses and essays are scored through a process called benchmarking. During the benchmarking process, anchor papers and training sets are chosen for each constructed response and essay with training notes for each paper. Anchor papers are actual student papers that represent each of the score points based on the language of the rubric.
- The field test items do not count towards the student’s score, but the educator committees are reconvened at this point to look at the data from these items and to determine whether the item is viable to put be put on the operational test.
- As you can see, our educator teams play an integral role in our process.

Slide 5: Constructed response items are scored through a process called benchmarking. When the benchmarking process is complete, the anchor papers and training sets that have been chosen for each constructed response become part of the scoring materials available to those scoring the items. In addition to the passage and question, scorers have the scoring guide, anchor papers, and annotations to use when scoring. These materials are available in the participant packet and will be referred to throughout the presentation.

- The scoring guide is the rubric. Many of you are likely familiar with the scoring guide already. Scorers pay attention to the specific descriptions of what is expected at each score point. Included with the scoring guide are the scoring notes that were developed with educators during the item review process.
- A set of anchor papers is put together for each constructed response during the benchmarking process. These papers are actual student responses that have been selected to represent each score point. The anchor papers have been selected based on the rubric and the scoring notes that were developed in conjunction with the educator committees. The anchor papers are used to illustrate the expectations at each score point.
- Annotations are additional notes added to each of the anchor papers. These notes are a way to articulate, explain, and expand upon the scoring, providing more of an explanation than the rubric alone.
- While the scoring guide is applied to every Constructed Response item, each CR item has its own set of unique anchor papers, and annotations that are specific to the question.

Slide 6: Today, our focus is the constructed responses. On your screen, you see the Constructed Response Scoring Guide, or rubric. This is available in your participant packet on page 8. Constructed

response items align to one reading standard. Conventions are not considered when scoring the constructed responses. Conversely, essays in all grades are aligned to writing and language standards. The language standards assess conventions. There is a separate session on the grade 3-5 essays being held next week.

The constructed responses ask students to write a paragraph; this is a different expectation than the essays.

- On the left side of the rubric, you see the total points. Students can earn up to 3 points on a constructed response question. For each score point there is specific language that addresses:
 - How well the student understands the reading materials and
 - How the student uses evidence and details to support their response

Slide 7: Let's talk about the expectations for the constructed response questions.

- The MCAS CRs are based on the passage. Students should use the passage to respond to the CR questions.
- Outside information does not count towards a student score. While a student will not lose points for extra information, we want students to focus on answering the question.
 - The paper and computer-based tests have a limited amount of space for students to write; for example on the computer-based test, it is about 1200 characters. With this fixed amount of space, we want students to use the space judiciously to ensure that they are providing details and evidence when responding to the question that is asked.
- And in general we expect the constructed response to be about a paragraph.

Slide 8: The scoring process is thorough and rigorous.

- All MCAS scorers participate and are trained in the responses that they score. What we mean here, is that if a scorer is trained on a grade 3 question, that does not mean they can score all grade 3 questions.
- Each question has a specific set of training materials, some of which you will see today. Scorers must qualify to score each question – they need to demonstrate that they understand the expectations at each score point.
- Scorers are provided the passage, question, They review the scoring notes which include possible responses that students might include. They view the scoring guide (the rubric) which articulate expectations at each score point. They look at anchor papers (student responses) at each score point. And finally, they review the Annotations which provide further explanation of the expectations at each score point, using specific language from the scoring guide/rubric. We are going to look at these components more closely later in this presentation. During this training, the scorers are trained/instructed on the grade level question.
- Scoring is continuously monitored using measures like read behinds and embedded responses in order to ensure accuracy in scoring. And as a reminder, Massachusetts educators are not allowed to score student papers.

Slide 9: Throughout this presentation, you will need to access the participant packet.

This packet includes passage (pages 1-6), the question (page 7), the rubric (page 8) and student anchor papers (pages 9-16). Today's process is to:

- review the question and direction lines. In the interest of time, we will not be reviewing the passage, but have included it for your reference. Please feel free to have it accessible as we discuss the student responses.
- Then we will revisit the scoring guide (the rubric) and
- Finally we will look at student responses that represent each score point. I will be reading each of anchor papers out loud so you can experience the same process that the scorers do when they are trained.

Slide 10: Today we will be looking at a grade 4 CR question from 2022. The question goes with the passage: Home Address: ISS International Space Station.

- The question is: Based on the passage, write a paragraph that explains why teamwork is important on the International Space Station. Support your response with important details from the passage.
- As you can see, Constructed Response expectations and reminders are embedded in the directions.
Students are reminded that their answer should be based on the passage
Students are directed to write a paragraph
The question is stated: why is teamwork important on the International Space Station
Students are reminded to use details from the passage
- Typically, at this point we would talk with the scorers about what the students might include in their responses. Today, we're going to share a few possible things that could be included in a student response. Please keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list. Any reasonable interpretation is acceptable as long as it is supported by relevant evidence from the passage.
- A paragraph explaining why teamwork is so important on the International Space Station may include
 - The ISS was built by teamwork— students might mention how long it took to build, or might mention how many nations participated in the building of the ISS.
 - Students often included that teamwork helps everyone get along.
 - Astronauts need to collaborate on experiments, respect each other's space, and share/use resources sparingly.
 - The astronauts must also work as a team to keep the station clean and running smoothly.
- As I mentioned previously, this is not an exhaustive list, but these are the types of responses we saw for this question. Any reasonable interpretation of the passage is acceptable as long as it is supported by relevant evidence from the passage.

Slide 11: This is the constructed response rubric. As we begin looking at student responses, we will revisit the expectations at the score point before reading the response. As expectations are set for each score point, scorers internalize the language at the score point and view the student response that represents the expectations. Before we look at each score point, we want to set these expectations:

- How comprehension of the passage is demonstrated through understanding of the passage and
- How evidence or details are used from the passage to support understanding

- You will hear us using the language of the rubric frequently and often during this portion of the presentation. This is to ensure that scorers understand what the words of the rubric mean and what they look like in student responses.
- Let's take a look at the language of the score point 3 rubric. Here, we see that a score 3 point shows a
 - full understanding of the reading material
 - Includes important and specific evidence/details for support
- Let's take a look at some score point 3 responses.

Slide 12: OK let's look at the score point 3 anchor. This response is on printed page 10 of your participant packet. Let's recall the score point 3 rubric, the language is

- full understanding of the reading material
- Include important and specific evidence/details for support

As mentioned, this is the anchor for a score point of a 3. The response demonstrates a full understanding of the reading material. The response includes important and specific details to support why teamwork is important. Let's take a look a closer look at this response.

- In the first sentence, the response states that teamwork "keeps everything running".
- This is then supported with specific evidence "everyone needs to pitch in when it comes to cleaning and tidying up otherwise the ISS will never stay clean".
- The response then goes on to provide an additional example of why teamwork is important: "The whole crew works together to keep their space home tidy." and is connected back to the question "teamwork is important on the space station"
- Another example is then provided: "you will live with the people in the ISS for about three months."
- Again, this is supported with evidence from the passage, "This huge machine will be your home for the next three months. Everyone has to work together and get along. You can't go out somewhere to get away from one another."

Throughout the response, the overall idea that teamwork is important is supported. Important and specific details are used to demonstrate a full understanding of the reading material. This is an example of a score point 3.

Slide 13: OK let's look at another score point 3 anchor. This response is on page 11 of your participant packet. Since this is another example of a score point 3, we are looking for

- Demonstration of full understanding of the reading material
- WITH important and specific evidence/details for support

This response also scored a 3. As we mentioned, we want to replicate the scoring process for you today. Scorers are provided with multiple examples of student responses at each score point. Here is our second example of a score point 3.

As you can see, there are some differences between this response and the previous response, However, both responses demonstrate a full understanding of the reading material.

Let's take a closer look at this response.

- First, the response states "there are so many machines on the space station and there is too many for only one person so you need your team"
- This is immediately supported with specific evidence from the passage in the form of a quote

- “The crew works together to check the machines every day”
- Another example is then provided, “The space station needs to be clean”
- and is supported with evidence from the passage, “the whole crew works together to keep their space home tidy”
- A final example is provided, “there are a bunch of projects that you have to do”
- and is again supported with evidence from the passage, “like most of the ISS crew you are a scientist and you need to help each other out with the projects”
- Throughout the response, the overall idea that teamwork is important is supported. Important and specific details are used to demonstrate a full understanding of the reading material.

Slide 14: Now that we have reviewed the language of the score point 3 and seen a few examples, we will look at the score point 2. Another important piece here is to set expectations for each score point for the scorers. Here, we see that a score 2 point shows a

- partial understanding of the reading material
- and includes some important evidence/details for support

Slide 15: OK let’s look at a score point 2 anchor. This response is on page 12 of your participant packet. Again this is a step down and we will see evidence of

- partial understanding of the reading material
- with some important evidence/details for support

This is our first example of a score point 2. This response demonstrates a partial understanding of the reading material. Let’s take a look at this response in more detail.

- The response mentions that, “Astronauts work together to take care of the ISS” but doesn’t provide adequate support for this statement.
- The response then goes on to state that “They help each other fix the ISS and check if it’s working”. Again, support is not provided. In this instance, there is more information in the passage under the heading “Astronauts at Work” that could have been included to provide clarity and demonstrate a fuller understanding of the reading material.
- Overall, the response provides examples of the ways that the astronauts use teamwork, which does address the question of why teamwork is important but the response only includes some important evidence/details for support. Additional supporting details or quotes would have provided clarity to the response.
- The response demonstrates a partial understanding of the reading material and includes some important evidence/details for support.

Slide 16: OK let’s look at another score point 2 anchor. This response is on page 13 of your participant packet. While this is another example of a score point 2, we will again see

- partial understanding of the reading material
- with some important evidence/details for support

This is our second example of response that scored a 2.

In this response, the beginning and ending statements mention that teamwork is important.

- The response pulls a quote from paragraph 29. “Everyone has to work together and get along. You can’t go out somewhere to get away from one another”

- And another quote from paragraph 27. “You have chores at home, you have chores in space. The whole crew works to keep their space home tidy.”
- In both cases, the quotes help to show that teamwork is important, but are not explained with additional details/evidence from the passage. There are additional places in the passage that if more specific information had been added, would have demonstrated a fuller understanding of the reading material. For example, the quote about chores would have benefitted from information in the section “Chores? In Space” as further evidence for why teamwork is important.
- Overall, the response demonstrates a partial understanding of the reading material and includes some important evidence/details for support.

Slide 17: Now that we have reviewed the language of the score point 2, we will look at the score point 1. Here, we see that a score 1 point shows a

- minimal understanding of the reading material
- and includes little or no evidence/details for support

Slide 18: Let’s look at a score point 1 anchor. This response is on page 14 of your participant packet. Remember the key words:

- minimal understanding of the reading material
- little or no evidence/details for support

This is our first example of a score point 1. This response demonstrates minimal understanding of the reading material. There is some evidence provided, however, it includes little details for support.

The response includes the idea that teamwork is important on the ISS.

- There is mention that “astronauts will be staying on the ISS for 3 whole months” And
- they need to “use teamwork in order to get along” And
- they need to “work together to stay safe”
- While evidence from the passage is included, there is no explanation of how these ideas relate to the importance of teamwork on the ISS. There are many important details that could have been pulled from the passage to strengthen any of these ideas.
- The response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the reading material and includes no evidence/details for support.

Slide 19: OK let’s look at another score point 1 anchor. This student response is on page 15 of your participant packet. Since this is another example of a score point 1 anchor, we will still see:

- minimal understanding of the reading material
- little or no evidence/details for support

This is our second example of a score point 1.

In this response, there is some reference to the passage,

- Everyone “has to work together and get along. You can’t go out somewhere to get away from one another.”
- However, there is no support provided to explain how they work together or why they need to get along. There are many places in the passage that could have been used to support this idea.
- In this response, the lack of evidence/support suggests a minimal understanding of the passage.

Slide 20: Now that we have reviewed the language of the score point 1, we will look at the score point 0. Here, we see that a score 0 point shows

- no understanding of the reading material
- Includes insufficient evidence/details for support

Slide 21: OK let's look at an example of score point 0 anchor. This response is on page 16 of your participant packet. Here, we do not see understanding of the reading material and there is insufficient evidence/details for support. As mentioned, the response does not answer the question (why is teamwork important on the international space station) and therefore shows no understanding of the reading material. The response includes no details for support.

Slide 22: At this point, please take the time to review Response A through Response F. These can be found on pages 18-22 in your participant packet.

- First revisit the question (page 8 in your packet) and passage (pages 2-7 in your packet). You will want to refer to both as you read the student responses.
- Then, read Response A. Use the anchor papers in your packet on pages 10-17 and rubric on page 9. These resources are essential when scoring responses. Scorers have these readily available and refer to them as they score each response. As you read the response, you will want to determine which anchor it is most similar to based on the expectations at the score point. Choose the score that best represents the response.
- Continue this process with Response B through Response F.
- When you have read and scored each of the papers, please start the second PowerPoint presentation in this series to learn about how each practice paper was scored.

Slide 23: Here is response A, which is on page 18 of the participant packet. Please read the response and use the resources we provided – the passage, question, anchor papers, and scoring guide (rubric) to determine a score for the paper. Please pause this presentation now, and restart the presentation once you have scored response A.

Slide 24: This paper scored a 2 and is most similar to the anchor paper 2 on page 12

This response includes a list of ways that teamwork is important, but they are not supported with adequate evidence/details from the passage.

The response mentions that “they”

- all have different jobs
- live and work close together
- keep their space home tidy
- These are ideas from the passage but the response lacks evidence and details to support these ideas and connect them back to why teamwork is important. As we noted with the anchor papers, there are multiple important details in the passage that could have been used to support these ideas. Inclusion of important evidence/details would have demonstrated a fuller understanding of the text.
- Overall, this response demonstrates a partial understanding of the reading material and includes some important evidence/details for support.

Slide 25: Here is response B, which is on page 19 of the participant packet.

Slide 26: This paper scored a 3 and is most similar to the anchor paper 3 on page 10

This response paraphrases specific parts of the passage and further explains how it connects to the overall idea that teamwork is important on the space station by providing important information from the passage.

- The section “Chores? In Space?” Is referenced with “The whole crew needs to work together to clean”. Details from the passage about the size of the ISS (bigger than a football field) are used to support this idea.
- Another section of the passage that is referenced, is paragraph 29. “You’re stuck with 5 other people for three months so you need to cooperate”
- And finally, the passage in general is referenced as talking about “all the work that needs to be done and astronauts need to be able to work together”
- This response paraphrases the passage and provides supporting examples. The question is answered by providing multiple reasons and each reason given is supported with important and specific evidence from the passage.
- Overall, the response demonstrates a full understanding of the reading material and includes important and specific evidence/details for support throughout the response.

Slide 27: Here is response C, which is on page 20 of the participant packet.

Slide 28: This paper scored a 0 and is most similar to the anchor paper 0 on page 16.

The response demonstrates no understanding of the reading material as it relates to the question (why is teamwork important on the international space station). It does not answer the question and therefore shows no understanding of the reading material and includes no details for support.

Slide 29: Here is response D which is on page 21 of the participant packet.

Slide 30: This response demonstrates minimal understanding of the reading material.

The response includes several reasons why teamwork is important including:

- “have to live together” and
- “fix something they will need each other’s help”
- However, both reasons are unsupported. There is no evidence/details from the passage to support the reasoning.
- As we mentioned when we discussed the anchor papers for the 1 score point, there are many important details that could have been pulled from the passage to strengthen any of reasons mentioned in the response.

Overall, the response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the reading material and includes no evidence/details for support.

Slide 31: Here is response E which is on page 22 of the participant packet.

Slide 32: This is our last paper that we will score

- This paper scored a 2 and is most similar to the anchor paper 2 on page 13

- The response pulls evidence from the passage
- “You have chores at home, you have chores in space”
- “crew works together to keep their space home tidy”
- The evidence from the passage is not supported. The quotes that are used are not explained, therefore demonstrating only a partial understanding of the reading material. As we noted with the anchor papers, there are multiple important details in the passage that could have been used to support the ideas
- Overall, response demonstrates a partial understanding of the reading material and includes some important evidence/details for support.

Slide 33: We wanted to share some ELA web resources with you today that will be useful.

- ELA Rubrics: These were shown today and are included for constructed response and essay questions. There is one constructed rubric in grades 3 and 4 and grade-band essay rubric for grades 3-5, grade 6-8 and grade 10
- Student Work Samples and Annotations: These are the materials we looked at today. For each released constructed response (or essay) we include a sample set of score responses (the anchors) along with annotations that outline the expectations at each score point using the rubric. This is an excellent resource to use and look at other response or essays that we have released in the past. We have up to 5 years worth of material.
- Released Questions: These are found in the Resource center and include released passage and questions. They are displayed in the platform that the students use when taking the MCAS tests. This is something we encourage you to share with your students so simulate the testing experience. For example, students can type their response in the constructed response box and submit it. Educators can print the score page at the end to see individual students’ responses.
- ELA Test Designs: The ELA test design includes the components of the ELA test. The design includes information about the question types, the number of questions and points and the reporting categories. As we’ve mentioned, the Constructed response questions align to a reading standard and will be reported on through the reading reporting category.
- And finally we have a slide deck posted that include Information about MCAS ELA Essay Scoring. This slide deck includes information about MCAS ELA essay expectations, especially for narrative writing at the elementary and middle school levels.

Slide 34: If you should have any additional policy questions such as test designs or accommodation or general questions, please reach out to the Department by email or phone.

If you need logistical support, including tech support on the testing platform, please contact the MCAS Service Center.

Slide 35: On behalf of the Department, we thank you for viewing our presentation on ELA Constructed Responses in grades 3 and 4.