

Computer-Based Released Items Grade 8 MCAS English Language Arts Spring 2026

The spring 2026 grade 8 English Language Arts (ELA) test was administered in two formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. Most students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for eligible students who were unable to use a computer. More information can be found on the MCAS Test Administration Resources page at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is releasing items from both versions of the test to provide information about the knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate.

- Released items from the computer-based test are available online at mcas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/released-items.
- Released items from the paper-based test are available in PDF format on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/release.html.

This document provides information about each released and unreleased operational item from the computer-based test, including the following: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, item description, and correct answer (for released selected-response items only). Sample responses and scoring guidelines for essay items will be posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/.

A Note about Testing Mode

Most of the operational items on the grade 8 ELA test were the same, regardless of whether a student took the computer-based version or the paper-based version. In places where a technology-enhanced item was used on the computer-based test, an adapted version of the item was created for use on the paper test. These adapted paper items were multiple-choice or multiple-select items that tested the same ELA content and assessed the same standard as the technology-enhanced item.

**Grade 8 English Language Arts
Spring 2026 Computer-Based Released Operational Items**

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description	Correct Answer (SR) **
1	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Analyze how a specific sentence contributes to the plot in an excerpt.	C
2	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Determine the tone suggested by specific sentences in an excerpt.	D
3	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine a central idea of an excerpt based on specific sentences.	D
4	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.4	SR	Analyze what figurative language in an excerpt suggests about a character.	A
5	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.1	SR	Make an inference about the narrator based on a specific paragraph of an excerpt.	A
6	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.3	SR	Determine what a specific paragraph in an excerpt emphasizes about a character.	C
7	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Use a dictionary entry to determine the correct meaning of a word with multiple definitions.	A
8	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.1	SR	Identify a quotation from an excerpt that best supports an inference about a character.	C
9	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Analyze how the author's choice of a specific structure contributes to an excerpt.	A
10	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine a central idea of an excerpt and identify two quotations from the excerpt that support the central idea.	B;B,E
11	<i>Language</i>	L.8.2	SR	Identify sentences in an excerpt that use specific punctuation for a given purpose.	see page 5
12	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.2, W.8.4,	ES	Write an essay that explains how the author develops a specific character trait in an excerpt; use evidence from the excerpt to support the essay.	
13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.4	SR	Determine how a sentence contributes to the mood established in an excerpt.	C
14	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Analyze what a specific paragraph reveals about the author's perspective.	C
15	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Determine how the use of a word clarifies meaning in an excerpt.	A
16	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Analyze how the author's inclusion of specific details affects the reader.	B
17	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.5	SR	Determine the structure of a poem.	A

18	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.2	SR	Determine a central idea based on specific lines from a poem.	A
19	<i>Reading</i>	RL.8.6	SR	Analyze the points of view of two speakers in a poem.	<i>see page 5</i>

*ELA item types are selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).

**Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Page 5 of this document provides correct answers for technology-enhanced (TE) items. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for essay items will be posted at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/default.html.

**Grade 8 English Language Arts
Spring 2026 Computer-Based Unreleased Operational Items**

CBT Item No.	Reporting Category	Standard	Item Type*	Item Description
20	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.5	SR	Analyze the author's purpose for including a specific text element in an article.
21	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.8	SR	Determine how a specific sentence contributes to a central idea in an article.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.6	SR	Determine the purpose of a specific sentence in an article.
23	<i>Language</i>	L.8.4	SR	Identify a word that would best replace a word in context.
24	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.5	SR	Identify the purpose of a specific section in an article.
25	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Identify a sentence from an article that has a specific effect on the reader.
26	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.3	SR	Determine the relationship between information described in different paragraphs of an article.
27	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Select a detail from one article that supports an inference from another article on a similar topic.
28	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.1	SR	Select a detail from one article that develops an idea similar to an idea from another article on a similar topic.
29	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.5	SR	Select details in one article that best illustrate a key concept described in another article on a similar topic.
30	<i>Reading</i>	RI.8.4	SR	Identify quotations from two articles on similar topics that show a particular tone.
31	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.8.1, L.8.2, L.8.3, W.8.1, W.8.4	ES	Write an essay that makes an argument supporting a specific action related to the topic of two articles; use evidence from both articles to support the essay.

* ELA item types are: selected-response (SR) and essay (ES).

Correct Answer for CBT Item #11: Technology-Enhanced Item

Comma used to separate adjectives	Comma used to set off an introductory phrase
"He would have looked frail alongside father's square, solid bulk." (paragraph 6)	"As he came near, what impressed me first was his clothes." (paragraph 4)
"He was clean-shaven and his face was lean and hard and burned from high forehead to firm, tapering chin." (paragraph 7)	"Taking a comb from his shirt pocket, he smoothed back his long dark hair." (paragraph 15)

Correct Answer for CBT Item #19: Technology-Enhanced Item

The Rock believes the Sea is **mainly**
 while the Sea
believes itself to be **mainly**