

---

## II. English Language Arts, Grade 3

# Grade 3 English Language Arts Test

The spring 2019 grade 3 English Language Arts test was a next-generation assessment that was administered in two primary formats: a computer-based version and a paper-based version. The vast majority of students took the computer-based test. The paper-based test was offered as an accommodation for students with disabilities who are unable to use a computer, as well as for English learners who are new to the country and are unfamiliar with technology.

Most of the operational items on the grade 3 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.

**This document displays released items from the paper-based test.** Released items from the computer-based test are available on the RICAS Resource Center website at [ricas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items](https://ricas.pearsonsupport.com/released-items).

The Scoring Guides can be found at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/). They provide the released constructed-response questions, a unique scoring guide for each question, and samples of student work at each score point.

## Test Sessions and Content Overview

The grade 3 ELA test was made up of two separate test sessions. Each session included reading passages, followed by selected-response questions and constructed-response or essay questions. On the paper-based test, the selected-response questions were multiple-choice items and multiple-select items, in which students select the correct answer(s) from among several answer options.

## Standards and Reporting Categories

The grade 3 ELA test was based on Pre-K–5 learning standards in three content strands of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* (2017), listed below.

- Reading
- Writing
- Language

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework* is strongly aligned with Rhode Island’s English Language Arts/literacy standards: the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The RICAS ELA assessment tables articulate this alignment and are available on the RIDE website at [www.ride.ri.gov/ricas](http://www.ride.ri.gov/ricas). The *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy* is available on the Department website at [www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html).

ELA test results are reported under three RICAS reporting categories, which are identical to the three framework content strands listed above.

The tables at the conclusion of this chapter provide the following information about each released and unreleased operational item: reporting category, standard(s) covered, item type, and item description. The correct answers for released selected-response questions are also displayed in the released item table.

## Reference Materials

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

# Grade 3 English Language Arts

This session contains 8 questions.

## **Directions**

Read each passage and question carefully. Then answer each question as well as you can. You must record all answers in this Test & Answer Booklet.

For most questions, you will mark your answers by filling in the circles in your Test & Answer Booklet. Make sure you darken the circles completely. Do not make any marks outside of the circles. If you need to change an answer, be sure to erase your first answer completely.

Some questions will ask you to write a response. Write your response in the space provided. Only responses written within the provided space will be scored.

## English Language Arts

---

**Read the passage and the article about whales and then answer the questions that follow.**

Read the passage *The Whales' Song*.

### The Whales' Song

by Dyan Sheldon

- 1 Lilly's grandmother told her a story.
- 2 "Once upon a time," she said, "the ocean was filled with whales. They were as big as the hills. They were as peaceful as the moon. They were the most wondrous creatures you could ever imagine."
- 3 Lilly climbed onto her grandmother's lap.
- 4 "I used to sit at the end of the pier and listen for whales," said Lilly's grandmother. "Sometimes I'd sit there all day and all night. Then suddenly I'd see them coming toward me from miles away. They moved through the water as if they were dancing."
- 5 "But why did they swim to you, Grandma?" asked Lilly. "How did they know you were there?"
- 6 Lilly's grandmother smiled. "Oh, you had to bring them something special. A perfect shell. Or a beautiful stone. And if they liked you, the whales would take your gift and give you something in return."
- 7 "What would they give you, Grandma?" asked Lilly. "What did you get from the whales?"
- 8 Lilly's grandmother sighed. "Once or twice," she whispered, "once or twice, I heard them sing."
- 9 Lilly's great-uncle Frederick stomped into the room. "That's nothing but a silly old tale!" he snapped. "Whales were important for their meat, and for their bones, and for their blubber. If you have to tell Lilly about whales, then tell her something useful. Don't fill her head with nonsense. Singing whales, indeed!"
- 10 "There were whales here millions of years before there were ships, or cities, or even cave dwellers," continued Lilly's grandmother. "People used to say they were magical."

## English Language Arts

---

- 11 "People used to eat them and boil them down for oil!" grumbled Lilly's great-uncle Frederick. And he stomped back out of the room.
- 12 Lilly dreamt about whales.
- 13 In her dreams she saw them, as large as mountains and bluer than the sky. In her dreams she heard them singing, their voices like the wind. In her dreams they leapt from the water and called her name.



- 14 In the morning Lilly went down to the ocean, to the place where no one fished or swam or sailed. She walked to the end of the old pier. The water was empty and still. She took a yellow flower out of her pocket and dropped it in the water.
- 15 "This is for you," she called into the air.
- 16 Lilly sat at the end of the pier and waited.
- 17 She waited all morning and all afternoon.
- 18 Then, as dusk began to fall, Uncle Frederick came down the hill after her. "Enough of this foolishness," he said. "Come on home. You can't be dreaming your life away."
- 19 That night Lilly awoke suddenly.
- 20 The room was bright with moonlight. She sat up and listened. The house was quiet. Lilly climbed out of bed and went to the window. She could hear something in the distance, on the far side of the hill.

## English Language Arts

---

- 21 She raced outside and down to the shore. Her heart was pounding as she reached the sea.
- 22 There, enormous in the ocean, were the whales.
- 23 They leapt and jumped and spun across the moon.
- 24 Their singing filled the night.
- 25 Lilly saw her yellow flower dancing on the spray.
- 26 Minutes passed, or maybe hours. Suddenly Lilly felt the breeze rustle her nightgown and the cold nip at her toes. She shivered and rubbed her eyes. Then it seemed the ocean was still again and the night dark and silent.
- 27 Lilly thought she must have been dreaming. She stood up and turned toward home. Then from far, far away, on the breath of the wind, she heard
- 28 "Lilly!
- 29 Lilly!"
- 30 The whales were calling her name.

*The Whales' Song* by Dyan Sheldon. Illustrated by Gary Blythe. Text copyright © 1990 by Dyan Sheldon. Illustration copyright © 1990 by Gary Blythe. Reprinted by permission of Dyan Sheldon c/o Caroline Sheldon Literary Agency Ltd.

Read the article "Humpback Whale: The Singer."

### Humpback Whale: The Singer

*by* Natalie Lunis



#### **Underwater Song**

- 1 Deep down in the ocean, a loud series of noises begins. The moans, grunts, squeals, and roars go on for 20 minutes or so. Then they repeat over and over in the same way for hours. Together, the loud, strange noises make up the song of the humpback whale. It is the longest and most complicated song of any animal on Earth.

#### **A Mystery at Sea**

- 2 Sounds that are made underwater usually cannot be heard in the air above. In the past, however, sailors traveling across the sea thought they heard strange noises. The humming-like sounds seemed to come from the water below them. Because of the strange sounds, the sailors told stories about sea monsters that swam near their ships.

## English Language Arts

---

### **A Whale of a Clue**

- 3 For a long time, no one could explain the “sea monster” noises that sailors heard. Then, in the 1950s, people working with the U.S. Navy made an important discovery. They recorded loud underwater moans, grunts, squeals, and roars. They noticed that the sounds went on for a long time—and occurred only when humpback whales were around. Could the unusual sounds be coming from the giant animals?

### **Singing for a Mate?**

- 4 In the 1960s, scientists made more underwater recordings and found that the sounds were in fact coming from humpback whales. The scientists also discovered that the sounds formed song-like patterns. In addition, the singing was coming only from males. Since the singing was heard at the time of year when whales gathered to find a mate, they guessed that the males might be singing to attract females.

### **Long-Distance Swimmers**

- 5 Humpback whales live in all the world’s oceans. During the summer, they swim and feed in cold ocean waters near the North and South Poles. In the fall, they spend weeks traveling to warmer waters near the equator. These warm waters are their winter homes. They are also the breeding areas where males and females find mates and males sing their songs. . . .

### **Staying in Touch**

- 6 Singing is not the only way humpbacks communicate with one another. Scientists have learned that the huge animals also make sounds—known as feeding calls—when they gather to catch fish. The whales also use touch to send messages and share feelings. For example, mother whales often use their large flippers to pet their babies, which are called calves.

### **Facts about Humpback Whales**

- When a humpback whale sings, it usually hangs head down and tail up in the water, holding its flippers out to help it stay in place. Sometimes, however, humpbacks sing while swimming underwater.
- To hear underwater sounds, a person has to be on a boat or ship that does not have a motor. Why? Noise from the motor would get in the way of being able to hear the sounds. Also, the listener should be below the deck and next to the boat's outer shell, or hull.
- Humpback whales are known for jumping out of and back into the water—an action known as breaching. They also loudly slap the water with their flippers and tails. These splashy moves might be a way of sending messages such as "Here I am!" or "Stay out of my way!" to other whales.

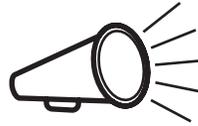
### **Many Questions**

- 7 Scientists still have many questions about humpback whale songs. They still don't know for sure why males sing. They also don't know exactly how the whales make their grunts, moans, roars, and many other sounds. Other questions have to do with how the whales' feeding calls help the animals find and catch their food.

### **A Watery World of Sound**

- 8 There is one thing that scientists who study the ocean know for certain. Sound is very important to whales and many other sea creatures. That's because there is very little light under water, and so it is impossible to see far. Sound, on the other hand, travels well and far through water. So perhaps it isn't so surprising after all that songs are being sung—and heard—deep beneath the sea.

### Sound Check



Humpback whales are hard to observe. They spend most of their time underwater, and many travel thousands of miles (kilometers) each year. Still, scientists around the world continue to study the huge sea animals and their songs. Here are some things they have learned so far:

- All the male humpbacks in the same area sing the same song.
- The songs of whales in different parts of the world are different from one another.
- During each winter breeding season, the songs of the males change, little by little.
- When the whales return to their winter homes the next year, they start singing the most recent versions of their songs from last year. Then, once again, they start changing, little by little.

"Humpback Whale: The Singer" by Natalie Lunis. Copyright © 2012 by Bearport Publishing Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Bearport Publishing Company, Inc. Photograph courtesy of Dr. Louis M. Herman/ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Department of Commerce.

## English Language Arts

---

- 1 Read the sentence from paragraph 4 of the passage in the box.

“They moved through the water as if they were dancing.”

Based on the passage, what does the sentence show about the whales?

- Ⓐ The whales were fast.
  - Ⓑ The whales were close.
  - Ⓒ The whales were graceful.
  - Ⓓ The whales were exercising.
- 2 Which sentence from the passage compares two things?
- Ⓐ ““They were as peaceful as the moon.”” (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓑ ““They were the most wondrous creatures you could ever imagine.”” (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓒ ““Sometimes I’d sit there all day and all night.”” (paragraph 4)
  - Ⓓ ““Then suddenly I’d see them coming toward me from miles away.”” (paragraph 4)

### 3 Part A

In the passage, how does Lilly **most likely** feel when she first hears the whales?

- Ⓐ excited
- Ⓑ relaxed
- Ⓒ frightened
- Ⓓ disappointed

### Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- Ⓐ "She walked to the end of the old pier." (paragraph 14)
- Ⓑ "'This is for you,' she called into the air." (paragraph 15)
- Ⓒ "Her heart was pounding as she reached the sea." (paragraph 21)
- Ⓓ "She shivered and rubbed her eyes." (paragraph 26)

## English Language Arts

---

- 4 Which paragraph retells the events of the passage in the correct order?
- Ⓐ Grandma tells Lilly a story. Lilly dreams about the whales. Lilly drops a flower into the water. Uncle Frederick walks down the hill to get Lilly.
  - Ⓑ Lilly dreams about the whales. Grandma tells Lilly a story. Uncle Frederick walks down the hill to get Lilly. Lilly drops a flower into the water.
  - Ⓒ Uncle Frederick walks down the hill to get Lilly. Grandma tells Lilly a story. Lilly dreams about the whales. Lilly drops a flower into the water.
  - Ⓓ Lilly drops a flower into the water. Lilly dreams about the whales. Uncle Frederick walks down the hill to get Lilly. Grandma tells Lilly a story.
  - Ⓔ Grandma tells Lilly a story. Uncle Frederick walks down the hill to get Lilly. Lilly drops a flower into the water. Lilly dreams about the whales.

- 5 Read the sentence from paragraph 3 of the article in the box.

They noticed that the sounds went on for a long time—and occurred only when humpback whales were around.

What does **occurred** mean as it is used in the sentence?

- Ⓐ moved
- Ⓑ stopped
- Ⓒ changed
- Ⓓ happened

- 6 According to the text box **Facts about Humpback Whales**, what does ***breaching*** mean?
- Ⓐ slapping the water
  - Ⓑ jumping out of the water
  - Ⓒ making noises under the water
  - Ⓓ hanging upside down in the water
- 7 In the article, what is the **main** purpose of the **Sound Check** text box?
- Ⓐ to tell when humpback whales sing
  - Ⓑ to tell where humpback whales sing
  - Ⓒ to tell what scientists like about humpbacks' songs
  - Ⓓ to tell what scientists know about humpbacks' songs



**Grade 3 English Language Arts  
Spring 2019 Released Operational Items**

<b>PBT Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Item Type*</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Correct Answer (SR)**</b>
1	14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.4	SR	Interpret the meaning of a phrase from the passage in context.	C
2	14	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.4	SR	Identify a comparison from the passage.	A
3	15	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Determine how a character feels and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the feeling.	A;C
4	16	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.2	SR	Identify the most appropriate retelling of the passage.	A
5	16	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	D
6	17	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a word in context.	B
7	17	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.7	SR	Determine the purpose of a text feature in the article.	D
8	18	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.2	CR	Write a paragraph that explains how the author describes a topic, using important details from the article as evidence.	

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

\*\* Answers are provided here for selected-response items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for any constructed-response and essay items will be posted to the Department's website later this year.

**Grade 3 English Language Arts  
Spring 2019 Unreleased Operational Items**

<b>PBT Item No.</b>	<b>Reporting Category</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Item Type*</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
9	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.1	SR	Identify the main idea of a section of the passage.
10	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.1	SR	Make a prediction about an individual based on information from the passage.
11	<i>Language</i>	L.3.2	SR	Determine the purpose of punctuation used in the passage.
12	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.1	SR	Determine the motivation of an individual based on information from the passage.
13	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.1	SR	Identify an event from the life of an individual from the passage.
14	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.1	SR	Determine an individual's motivation and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the motivation.
15	<i>Reading</i>	RI.3.3	SR	Identify activities that an individual did at different stages of life in the passage.
16	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, W.3.2, W.3.4	ES	Write an essay that describes how an individual showed determination; use information from the passage as evidence.
17	<i>Language</i>	L.3.2	SR	Analyze the author's use of punctuation in the passage.
18	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Choose evidence from the passage that shows a difference between characters.
19	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Identify a character's motivation and choose evidence from the passage that best supports the motivation.
20	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Determine how a character feels about an event from the passage.
21	<i>Language</i>	L.3.4	SR	Determine the meaning of a phrase in context.
22	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.4	SR	Determine what a phrase from the passage suggests about a character.
23	<i>Reading</i>	RL.3.3	SR	Identify the phrases that describe interactions between characters.
24	<i>Language, Writing</i>	L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, W.3.3, W.3.4	ES	Write a narrative about the feelings of a character based on events from the passage.

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