2027 RICAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Information, Grades 3-8

RICAS English language arts assessments require students to read literary and informational texts as well as write effectively when analyzing text. Students will read one or more texts and then answer a variety of item types. Grades 3-5 students are expected to write one to two paragraph extended responses using evidence from the text(s); while students in grades 6-8 will construct a two-paragraph extended response as well as an essay using evidence from the text(s).

Item Types

Item Type	Description	Total Points per Item	Grade Levels
Selected Response	• **Multiple-choice** • **Multi-select** • **Technology Enhanced**	**1** *(all SR items worth one point)*	**3-8**
Extended Response	**Written Response**	**5**	**3-8**
Essay	**Written Response**	**8**	**6-8**

Extended Response and Essays

The RICAS assessment will indicate to students the amount of space provided for each extended response and essay. For the computer-based test (CBT), students will type their responses into response boxes. A student's response can be longer than the visible space within the response box. Therefore, as the student's writing fills the response box, a scroll bar will appear, and the student can continue typing. The student may use the scroll bar up or down to view their whole written response. The word count limit for student responses on the CBT is:

- Extended Response
  - Grade 3: **300 words** (equivalent to one paragraph)
  - Grades 4-5: **400 words** (equivalent to one to two paragraphs)
  - Grades 6-8: **500 words** (equivalent to one to two paragraphs)
- Essay
  - Grades 6-8: **1200 words** (equivalent to four to five paragraphs)

Test Design

All students in Grades 3-8 will have two ELA sessions for RICAS. The recommended testing times are 2 to 2.5 hours in length for Session #1 and 2 to 2.5 hours in length for Session #2. Schools may plan for one short, supervised break per session (3-5 minutes) to be given at each test administrator's discretion.

Every test includes both common and matrix items. The common items will be used to determine a student's score; whereas the matrix items do not count towards a student's score and are comprised of both field-test and equating items.

Common Items

Grade	Number of items (1 point)	Number of Extended Responses	Number of Essays	Total Points on Test
3-5	40	2	0	50
6-8	37	1	1	50

Matrix Items

Matrix questions do not count toward students' scores and will vary by grade. Students will read passages and respond to different types of matrix questions, including written-response and selected-response questions.

Results

Student performance on the RICAS tests is classified into one of four achievement levels describing how well students met expectations for their grade level/course.

RICAS Performance Levels:

- Level 1: **Not meeting expectations**
- Level 2: **Partially meeting expectations**
- Level 3: **Meeting expectations**
- Level 4: **Exceeding expectations**
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Reporting Category	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8
Reading	58%	58%
Language	30%	26%
Writing	12%	16%

RICAS Resource Center

To access practice tests, tutorials, released items, student work samples, etc., please visit the RICAS Resource Center at **https://ricas.onlinehelp.cognia.org/** .

Note: Rhode Island is administering the MCAS assessments and referring to them as RICAS. Selected resources may be linked to the MCAS website and contain the MCAS branding.