

# English Language Arts, Grades 5-6

1

## The Lion's Share

by Aesop

The Lion went once-a-hunting along with the  
Fox, the Jackal, and the Wolf.

They hunted and they hunted till at last they  
surprised a stag, and soon took its life.

Then came the question how the spoil should be divided.

"Quarter me this Stag," roared the Lion; so the other  
animals skinned it and cut it into four parts.

Then the Lion took his stand in front of the carcass and  
pronounced judgment: "The first quarter is for me

in my capacity as King of Beasts; the second is  
mine as arbiter; another share comes to me for

my part in the chase; and as for the fourth  
quarter, well, for that I should like to see which of  
you will dare to lay a paw upon it."

"Humph," grumbled the Fox as he walked away with  
his tail between his legs; but he spoke in a low growl,

"You may be share the labours of the great,  
but you will not share the spoil."

- a. **What lesson did the wolf, jackal, and the fox learn?**
- b. **Describe how this lesson might apply to humans.**

Submitted by: Karen Patterson

# English Language Arts, Grades 5-7

2

## **Harriet Tubman**

by Mary L. Bushong

Have you ever thought what it would be like to be a slave? You would have to do whatever you were told and would have no time to play. You would have to work even if you were tired or sick. It would not be a happy life.

Harriet Ross born in the state of Maryland in 1820. Both of her parents were slaves. A man who had a lumber plantation owned them, but he also rented out or sold his slaves to other people. When Harriet was just five years old, he began renting her out to work in other people's homes. Harriet did not like inside work and, even when they beat her, she refused to do it. She wanted to be outside and worked very hard there, but her master thought she was very rebellious.

One day when she was fifteen years old, she tried to help another slave who was to run away, but the overseer saw her. (An overseer is a man who made sure the slaves did their work.) He punished her by hitting her in the head with a lead weight, and it almost killed her. She was in a coma for a while; it took months for her to recover. For the rest of her life she suffered from blackouts.

When Harriet was twenty-four years old, she was allowed to marry a freed black man named John Tubman, but she was still a slave. When her owner died a few years later, a notice was put up saying that the plantation and the slaves were to be sold. Harriet was afraid she would be sold to a plantation in the Deep South where she could never escape, so she decided to leave that very night. She knew her husband would betray her, so she told him nothing.

A kind neighbor gave her the name of a person in the next town. With the help of many of these contacts, she made it over the Mason-Dixon Line. (That is the line that divided the northern states from the southern states.) These contacts were part of the Underground Railroad. It was called underground, because it was a secret. It was called a railroad, because it helped move slaves through many stops across the country where they could be free.

Harriet worked and made plans to rescue her family. The next year she rescued her sister's family, and the year after that, helped her brothers move north. Finally, she was able to move her parents to Auburn, NY.

- a. Harriet Tubman is considered to be an inspiration to many people.
- b. Using specific details from the selection, describe what made Harriet such an inspirational woman.

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## English Language Arts, Grades 5-8

3

- a. Explain what a flashback is in a literary work.
- b. Tell the purpose it serves in a story.
- c. Provide an example from literature of a story with a flashback.
- d. Tell what the flashback event was and what purpose it served in the story (Note that the literary device of a flashback can be replaced with other literary devices such as irony, personification, etc.).



Submitted by: Karen Patterson

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

4

Read the following poem written by Robert Frost and answer the questions below.

*The Road Not Taken*

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth.*

*The tool the other, just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.*

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden back.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -  
I took the one less traveled by.  
And that has made all the difference.*

- a. Discuss the lesson Robert Frost intended to illustrate in this poem.
- b. Tell about a real-life situation where this lesson may be valuable.

Submitted by: Karen Patterson

5

Read the following poem by Maya Angelou and answer the question below.

### The Caged Bird

A free bird leaps on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky

but a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the  
sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a  
dawn-bright lawn  
and he names the morning sky his own

but a caged bird stands on the grave of  
dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare  
scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are  
tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

- Compare your personal qualities to those of either the “caged bird” or the “free bird.”
- Give specific examples from the poem and relate them to your qualities and/or experiences.

Submitted by: Karen Patterson

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

**6**

**Read the section below and answer the question that follows.**

What they don't understand about birthdays and what they ever tell you is that when you're eleven, you're also ten, and nine, and eight, and seven, and six, and five, and four, and three, and two, and one. And when you wake up on your eleventh birthday you expect to feel eleven, but you don't. You open your eyes and everything's just like yesterday, only it's today. And you don't feel eleven at all. You feel like you're still ten. And you are – underneath the year that makes you eleven.

taken from **Eleven** by Sandra Cisneros

- a. **Explain what the author is telling the reader about birthdays here.**
- b. **Address both of the issues she is talking about in relation to birthdays.**

**7**

**Read the selection below and answer the question that follows.**

Because the way you grow old is kind of like an onion or like the rings inside of a tree trunk or like my little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other, each year inside the next one. That's how being eleven years old is.

taken from **Eleven** by Sandra Cisneros

- a. **Name the literary device that is used here to make a comparison between birthdays and rings inside an onion or a tree trunk and the little wooden dolls that fit one inside the other.**
- b. **Provide the definition of that literary device.**
- c. **Explain both comparisons.**

Questions 6 - 7 submitted by: Karen Patterson

**MCAS Sample Questions**  
**English Language Arts – Middle School Level**

**8**

**Read the selection below and answer the question that follows.**

It was that time of year again. Ito, the strawberry sharecropper, did not smile. I was natural. The peak of strawberry season was over and the last few days the workers, most of the braceros, were not picking as many boxes as they had during the months of June and July.

As the last days of August disappeared, so did the number of braceros. Sunday, only On – the best picker – came to work. I liked him. Sometimes we talked our half-hour lunch break. That is how I found out he was from Jalisco, the same state in Mexico my family was from. That was the last time I saw him.

When the sun had tired and sunk behind the mountains, Ito signaled us that it was time to go home. “Ya esora <It’s time>,” he yelled in his broken Spanish. Those were the words I waited for twelve hours a day, every day, seven days a week, week after week. And the thought of not hearing them again saddened me.

As we drove home Papa did not say a word. With both hands on the wheel, he stared straight at the road. My older brother, Roberto, was also silent. He leaned his head back and closed his eyes. Once in a while he cleared from his throat the dust that blew in from outside.

Yes, it was that time of year. When I opened the front door to the shack I stopped. Everything we owned was neatly packed in cardboard boxes. Suddenly I felt even more the weight of hours, days, weeks, and months of work. I sat down on a box. The thought of having to move to Fresno and knowing what was in store for me there brought tears to my eyes.

from *The Circuit* by Francisco Jiminez

**Notice the phrase “it was that time of year” is repeated in this selection.**

- a. Explain what purpose this repetition serves.**
- b. Tell what it indicates about the narrator’s attitude towards the situation he is in currently.**

Submitted by: Karen Patterson

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

9

Read the following poem by Carl Sandburg and answer the question below.

### A rithmetic

A rithmetic is where numbers fly like pigeons in and out of your head.

A rithmetic tells you how many you lose or win if you know how many you had before you lost or won.

A rithmetic is seven eleven all good children go to heaven –  
or five six bundles of sticks.

A rithmetic is numbers you squeeze from your head to your hand to your pencil to your paper until you get the answer.

A rithmetic is where the answer is right and everything is nice so you can look out of the window and see the blue sky – or the answer is wrong and you have to start all over and try again and see how it comes out this time.

If you take a number and double it and double it again and then double it a few more times, the number gets bigger and bigger and goes higher and higher and only arithmetic can tell you what the number is when you decide to quit doubling.

A rithmetic is where you have to multiply – and carry the multiplication table in your head and hope you won't lose it.

If you have two animal crackers, one good and one bad, and you eat one and a striped zebra with streaks all over him eats the other, how many animal crackers will you have if somebody offers you five six seven and you say

N o no no and you say N ix nix nix?

If you ask your mother for one fried egg for breakfast and she gives you two fried eggs and you eat both of them, who is better in arithmetic, you or your mother?

- a. Describe the poet's attitude towards arithmetic.
- b. Use specific examples from the poem to support your answer.

Submitted by: Karen Patterson

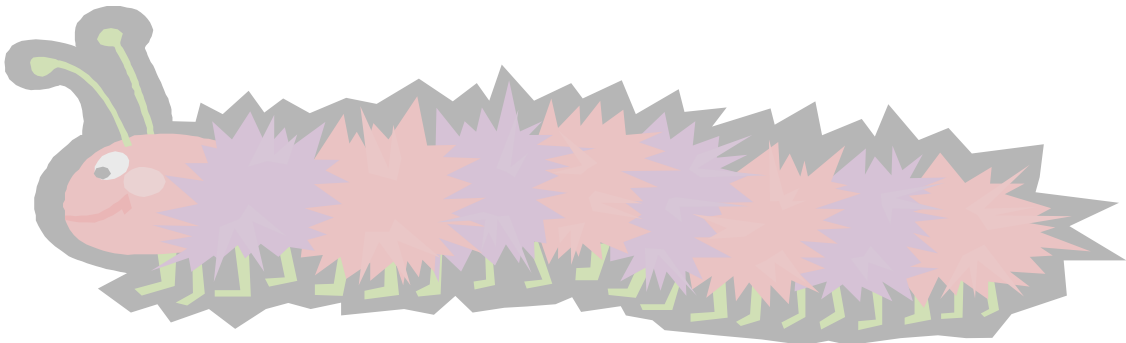
10

Read the following poem by Emily Dickenson and answer the question below.

## How soft a Caterpillar steps –

How soft a Caterpillar steps –  
I find one on my Hand  
From such a velvet world it comes  
Such pluses at command  
Its soundless travels just arrest  
My slow – terrestrial eye  
Intent upon its own career  
What use has it for me –

- Describe the image created by the word “velvet” in this poem.
- Explain why Emily Dickenson describes the Caterpillar’s world as “velvet.”




Submitted by: Karen Patterson

11

Read the following anonymously-written limerick and answer the question below

## Two Limericks



A flea and a fly in the flue  
Were caught, so what could they do?  
Said the fly, "Let us flee."   
So they flew through the flaw in the flute.

There was a young fellow named Hall.  
Who fell in the spring and in the fall;  
'Twould have been a sad thing  
If he'd died in the spring,  
But he couldn't – he died in the fall.

- a. Explain the source of the humor in each limerick above.
- b. Use specific examples from the poems to support your answer.

Submitted by: Karen Patterson

12

## As I Lay Awake

Author Unknown

All of my senses are met by the morning  
As I lay awake breathing in a new day,  
Here by the window I opened last evening,  
How the world changed while I drifted away.  
Darkness is gone, though it seemed it would never;  
Sunlight is smiling and nature survives.  
I can believe that we all live forever  
When I observe how the morning arrives.  
Birds sing their concert and children are playing;  
Flowers have scented the air and it's free;  
Life is renewed and it seems to be saying  
There is a place in its promise for me.  
There are some times in our lives when we savor  
Being a part of a much larger plan.  
Life is a feast and we each add a flavor;  
I'll make it better, believing I can.

The world around us affects us through our senses.

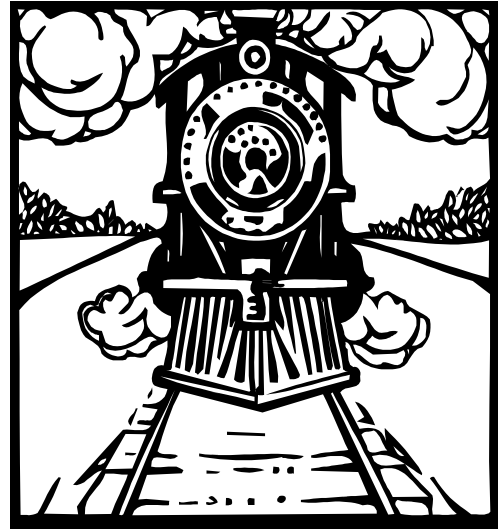
- Give some examples of this from the poem.
- Cite specific words or phrases from the passage that indicate how the author feels about being alive.

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

13

Sitting across the room from one another on the wooden benches of the old-fashioned train, Elizabeth and Sarah exchanged glances and tried feebly to smile. The train was slowing down for the next station, a small town that straddled the border. It came to a halt with a whooshing sigh. The sisters sat silently, waiting with pretended patience for the border officials to make their way through the crowded aisles and passages. Sarah's foot jiggled, as if it were controlled by a separate motor of its own. Elizabeth stared ahead stoically, a fixed smile on her face. Her only movement was a slightly twitching eye; it blinked rather innocently, as if it contained a fleck of dust.



Finally the official came around to their seats. He was fat, elaborately dressed, and had an authoritative strut. He swelled out of his chest, and in a mockingly formal voice he asked for their papers – almost as if he were addressing royalty. Tossing her head and flashing him a winning smile, Elizabeth handed over her passport and visa. Out of the corner of her eye, she noticed that Sarah had frozen. She seemed to be trying to keep herself from visibly quaking. Casually, Elizabeth drew Sarah's papers out of her white, clenched hands and gave them to the official. He received them with a grunt and snarled, "Do you ladies have anything to declare?"

**Authors sometimes choose to indirectly inform readers about a character's personality or feelings through the character's thoughts, actions, and reactions.**

- a. **Compare and contrast how each woman was feeling, and illustrate this by using specific words or phrases from the selection.**
- b. **Describe the kind of person the border official was, and cite the words or phrases that led you to this conclusion.**

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## English Language Arts, Grades 6-7

14

### From a Railway Carriage

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;  
And charging along like troops in a battle  
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the plain  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.  
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering brambles;  
Hers is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And here is the green for stringing the daisies!  
Her is a cart runaway in the road  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill, and there is a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone forever!

R.L. Stevenson

**In this poem, the author uses words to illustrate the feeling of speed.**

- **Give specific examples of some of the words that the author uses to create such an impression.**

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## English Language Arts, Grades 6-8

15

Explain the mood of this selection and list the specific details the author uses to this mood.

### The Cask of Amontillado

by Edgar Allen Poe

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme  
madness of the carnival season,  
that I encountered my friend.

He accosted me with excessive warmth,  
for he had been drinking too much.

The man wore motley.

He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress,  
and his head was surmounted  
by the comical cap and bells.

I was so pleased to see him that I thought  
I should never have done wringing his hand.

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

16

## "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"

by William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd,  
And every fair from fair sometimes declines,  
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd:  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,  
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.  
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,  
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

- a. Explain the metaphor in this sonnet.
- b. Describe the two things that are being compared.

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

17

## O Captain! My Captain!

by Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won,  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;

But O heart! heart! heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

Oh Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up -- for you the flag is flung -- for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths -- for you the shores a-crowding  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!

This arm beneath your head!

It is some dream that on the deck  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse or will,  
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage is closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;

Exult O shores, and ring O bells!

But I, with mournful tread,

Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and Dead.

**In this poem the author is comparing the death of a ship captain to the death of president Abraham Lincoln. He is using a ship as a metaphor for the United States, and the ship's captain serves as a metaphor for the leader of a country.**

- a. **What is the metaphor for the Civil War in this poem?**
- b. **List the details from the poem that led you to this conclusion.**

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

18

Excerpt from:

## Crash

by Jerry Spinelli

happened in English today. A couple of weeks ago we got an assignment: Write an essay about someone you know. Tell what that person means to you.

I wrote about Scooter. Not about the stroke and rehab and all, just the good stuff. I told about his great cooking and the stories in bed and how he came to all my games, even in the rain.

The papers were due today. When I got to class, Webb was already there wearing the old PEACE button. Deluca was there. I took my seat. Webb got up to talk to the teacher. As soon as that happened, Mike went to Webb's desk, and snatched some stapled sheets of paper from it. Probably Webb's essay, I figured. On the way back to his desk, he crumpled it into a ball. When Webb got back, he saw right away what happened. He started looking around frantically for his essay – under his desk, in his books. Kids were giggling. Suddenly, while Webb's back was to him, Mike turned and whipped the paper ball to me. I never didn't catch a ball that was thrown to me in my life. I caught it. The bell rang, everybody settled down, and the class started. The teacher didn't ask for the essays right away. As the period went on, I got more and more curious about Webb's paper. Finally, as quiet as I could, I uncrumpled it. I flattened it against my desktop, shielded it with my book, and read:

One of the most important people to me is my great-grandfather, Henry Wilhide Webb *III*. I feel very fortunate and blessed to have a great-grandfather, but he is more than that to me. He is 93 years old. It is hard to believe that someone who is 80 years older than I can understand how I feel, but he can. He is my best friend.

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

Henry Wilhide Webb *III* gave me my first name. In the year 1919 he ran for his college track team in the famous Penn Relays. Shortly after that, he traveled west to the state of North Dakota, and he settled there and raised a family. But he never forgot that day at the Penn Relays. When I was born, my mother told him that he could name his grandson. He named him Penn. That was me.

We moved to Pennsylvania seven years ago. I have only seen him once since then. I miss him very much. Most of all, I miss the stories that he used to tell me about the old days. Sometimes he makes me sad when he says that he feels himself disappearing like the prairie. My great-grandfather is coming to visit us for two weeks in April. He is coming then because that is when the Penn Relays take place. He says he wants to see them one last time. I do not believe he knows that middle schools and even grade schools now compete in the Relays. I believe the best gift I can give my great-grandfather would be for him to see me run in the Penn Relays. That is why I have been practicing my running every night.

The teacher called for papers. I passed mine in. The bell rang. Everybody packed up. Webb took a last look around his desk. While everybody else headed for the door, he headed for the teacher. I intercepted him. I stuck the essay in his hand. "I found it," I said. "It's wrinkled, but it's okay." He was gaping at me like a hooked fish as I went out the door. Track sign-ups are tomorrow.

- a. **What is Webb's reaction to his great-grandfather saying that he feels himself disappearing like the prairie.**
- b. **Why does he react this way?**
- c. **What does it mean to disappear like a prairie?**

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## **Song of Orpheus**

From King Henry VIII

by William Shakespeare

Orpheus with his lute made trees,  
And the mountain tops that freeze  
Bow themselves when he did sing:  
To his music plants and flowers  
Ever spring: as sun and showers  
There had made a lasting spring

Every thing that heard him play,  
Even billows of sea,  
Hung their heads, and then lay by.

In sweet music such is art,  
Killing care and grief or heart  
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

**In this mythological poem, music affected the flowers and plants.**

- a. Explain this effect, and use specific examples as to how the music affected the flowers and plants.**
- b. Give an example of how certain music affects the mood of movies.**

Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## History / Social Science, Grades 5-8

20

Early civilizations, such as Mesopotamia and Egypt, developed along rivers.

- Identify two ways that rivers helped early people develop stable communities.
- Describe how each development led eventually to the rise of a highly-developed culture.

Submitted by: Therese Goulet

21

There were many civilizations that flourished along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea starting about 3500 B.C.

- On the map below, locate Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, Phoenicia, Crete, Greece, and Rome.
- Explain how the invention of the sail helped to advance the spread of ideas and inventions from one culture to another in this area.



22

- Describe the religious beliefs of the ancient Egyptians.
- Give one specific detail about their beliefs about death, the afterlife, mummification, and the role of at least one Egyptian god.

Questions 21 - 22 submitted by: Ed McTigue

23

## Timeline of Mesopotamia's Empires

The world's first empire arose in Mesopotamia c. 2334 when Sargon of Akkad conquered all of the region's city-states, tore down their walls, and marched to the Persian Gulf where, legend has it, he washed his sword in the water to symbolize his victory over all Sumer. Other mighty rulers and their sons also claimed control of the region during the next 1500 years. They included Hammurabi of Babylonia (1792 B.C.), Tiglath-Pileser III of the New Assyrian Empire (744 B.C.), and Shamshi-Adad of Assyria. There were also times when the region was controlled by invaders from surrounding mountains, including the Hittites (1600 B.C.) and the Kassites (c. 1500 B.C.).

- a. Use the information from the selection to make a timeline showing the important dates in chronological order.
- b. Explain why historians use the abbreviation "c." before some dates.

24

## Early Religions

- a. Define polytheism and monotheism.
- b. Select one ancient civilization that practiced polytheism and describe how daily life was affected by this belief.

Questions 23 - 24 submitted by: Therese Goulet

25

## Egypt's Social Pyramid



Egyptians were famous for their magnificent pyramids. Their social structure, too, might look like a pyramid, with the pharaoh at the apex and farmers and slaves forming the base. Others included government officials, tax collectors, scribes, priests, members of the royal family, nobility, artisans, and laborers.

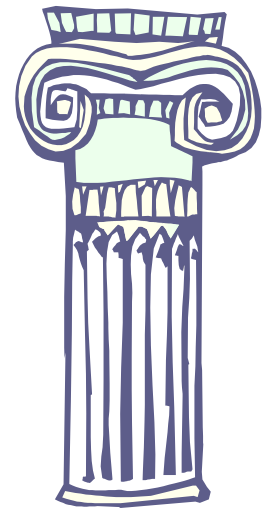
- Make a pyramid that places social groups in the correct order by social rank.
- How is the Egyptian social pyramid similar to modern American social order?
- How is it different?

26

## Athens and Sparta

Athens and Sparta were two city-states in ancient Greece that developed very different values and cultures. These differences can be seen in their governmental, educational, and military systems, as well as in the patterns of daily life and their achievements.

- Compare and contrast Athenian and Spartan cultures.



Questions 25 - 26 submitted by: Therese Goulet

27

## The Golden Age of Greece

*Pericles is remembered as Athens' most outstanding leader. Under his leadership, Athens enjoyed peace and prosperity, which is known today as the "Golden Age of Athens."*

*Pericles had three major goals for the city-state: protection, beautification, and the strengthening of democracy. Pericles protected Athens by building barricades to the sea, known as the "Long Walls," and by building a powerful navy. He made Athens the most beautiful city in the world by building new public buildings and temples, including the Acropolis and the Parthenon. Pericles' third goal, strengthening democracy, was accomplished by spreading power more evenly between rich and poor. As many as 20,000 citizens were government employees. These less could afford to hold office and have their voices heard. Under Pericles, Athens was considered the "School of Greece," a center for art, literature, and ideas.*

- Use details from the selection to write a one-paragraph, imaginary account of what life was like for the average citizen of Athens under Pericles' rule.



Submitted by: Therese Goulet

28

## Greek Contributions to Western Civilization



The Greek civilization has been called the starting point of Western Civilization. Contributors included Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Thales, Thucydides, Aristarchus, Homer, Aristophanes, Ptolemy, and Herodotus, to name a few.

- Choose one of the Greek contributors from the list above.
- Describe the contribution that he made to Western Civilization.
- Explain how this contribution has helped to shape our modern culture.

Submitted by: Therese Goulet

29

An endowment or donation has just been given to an elementary school in a farming community to build an addition. The one condition under which the endowment was made was that it must be used for one of the following classroom types:

- A woodworking shop with tools to build items from clocks to kitchen cabinets
- A sewing room complete with 25 individual sewing machines
- A complete kitchen with modern appliances and tools.

You have been asked to sit on a committee that has been formed to choose which type of classroom to build.

- Choose only one and discuss why it would be the most practical for this particular school.



Submitted by: Karen Patterson

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

30

You are an eighteen-year-old male about to leave home to fight for the Union during the Civil War. All of your necessary supplies must fit in your rucksack, which is the size of today's average briefcase.

- In paragraph format, list the supplies you would take and provide a rationale for each item you carry with you.

Materials:

Wool trousers _____	
Wool Parade Dress Coat _____	
Wool jacket _____	(The pants, dress coat, and socks weighed 6 pounds.)
Wool long-sleeve undershirt _____	
(They didn't wear under-shorts or jockey's)	
Hand-knit socks (to the knee) _____	
Leather ankle high boots _____	
Wool cap _____	
Leather 2" wide belt _____	
(Soldiers often had only one uniform, no more than 2 undershirts or 2 pair of socks at a time.)	
1 Wool blanket (for a bedroll)	2 ½ pounds
canteen filled with 1 pint of water	1 ½ pounds
musket and bayonet	9 ½ pounds
pistol and case	
sword and scabbard	3 ¾ pounds
leather sword belt	¾ pound
leather powder pouch or horn	½ pound (pouch)
leather cartridge case	½ pound
ammunitions case (filled)	4 pounds
shaving mug	
straight-edge razor	
shaving brush	
tin of home-made soap	
tin of toothpaste	
toothbrush	
comb or brush	
perhaps a mirror	
mess kit	
fork or spoon and knife	
(forks were not as popular as spoons)	
perhaps a small "spider" (a three leg	
cast iron fry pan)	
perhaps a small coffee grinder (these	
were so popular some soldiers even	
figured out how to bore out the stock	
of their rifle and fit in a small grinder.)	
food (likely only hard-tack) See recipe	
elsewhere.	



Submitted by: Karen Patterson

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

31

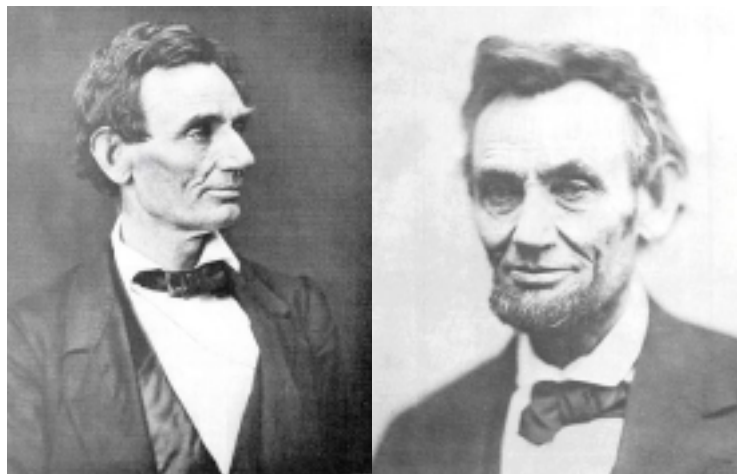
In his famous Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln states that our government is “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

- Provide an example of how the U.S. government is each of these qualities.

32

Look carefully at the two pictures of Abraham Lincoln below. The first was taken in 1860 and the second in 1865.

- a. Contrast the two pictures and explain what could account for the differences in the two pictures.
- b. Give at least three explanations for the change.



The presidential candidate in June 1860

A careworn president faces the camera for the last time, April 10, 1865.

33

Robert F. Kennedy said, “Acts of courage shape human history. Each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.”

- a. Give an example from history of an act of courage.
- b. Explain in detail how the example fits these qualities.

Questions 25 - 27 submitted by: Karen Patterson

## History / Social Science, Grades 6-8

34

Excerpt from  
**The Diary of Anne Frank**

Anne Frank was born in 1929 in Germany. When the Nazis began persecuting the Jews, she and her family, who were Jewish, fled to Holland. Then, during World War II, the Nazis conquered Holland, so thirteen-year-old Anne, her family, and some friends went into hiding in some rooms above a warehouse in Amsterdam. After two years, they were discovered and taken to concentration camps, where the only member of the group who survived was Mr Frank.

While in hiding, Anne kept a diary. The following excerpt was written soon after she and her family moved in.



Saturday, 11 July 1942

Dear Kitty,

Daddy, Mummy, and Margot can't get used to the sound of the Westertoren clock yet, which tells us the time of day every quarter of an hour. I can. I loved it from the start and especially in the night it's like a faithful friend. I expect you will be interested to hear what it feels like to "disappear," well, all I can say is that I don't know myself yet. I don't think I shall ever feel really at home in this house, but that does not mean that I loathe it here; it is more like being on vacation in a very peculiar boardinghouse. Rather a mad idea, perhaps, but that is how it strikes me. The "Secret Annexe" is an ideal hiding place. Although it leans to one side and is damp, you'd never find such a comfortable hiding place anywhere in Amsterdam, no perhaps not even in

*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

the whole of Holland. Our little room looked very bare at first with nothing on the walls; but thanks to Daddy, who had brought my film-star collection and picture postcards beforehand, and with the aid of past, pot, and brush, I have transformed the walls into one gigantic picture. This makes it look much more cheerful, and, when the Van Daans come, we'll get some wood from the attic, and make a few cupboards for the walls and other odds and ends to make it look more lively.

Margot and Mummy are a little bit better now. Mummy felt well enough to cook some soup for the first time yesterday, but then forgot all about it, while she was downstairs talking, so the peas were burned to a cinder and utterly refused to leave the pan. Mr. Koophuis has brought me a book called Young People's Annual. The four of us went to the private office yesterday evening and turned on the radio. I was so terribly frightened that someone might hear it that I simply begged Daddy to come upstairs with me. Mummy understood how I felt and came too. We are very nervous in other ways, too, that the neighbors might hear us or see something going on. We made curtains straight away on the first day. Really, one can hardly call them curtains, they are just loose strips of material, all different shapes, quality, and pattern, which Daddy and I sewed together in a most unprofessional way. These works of art are fixed in position with drawing pins, not to come down until we emerge from here.

There are some large business premises on the right of us, and on the left a furniture workshop; there is no one there after working hours but even so, sounds could travel through the walls. We have forbidden Margot to cough at night, although she has a bad cold, and make her swallow large doses of

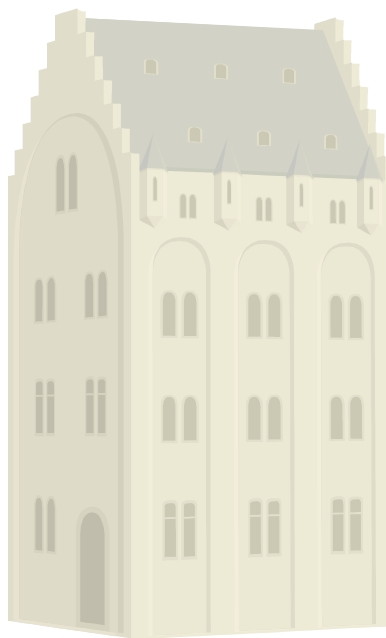
*MCAS Sample Questions*  
*English Language Arts – Middle School Level*

codeine. I am looking forward to Tuesday when the Van Daans arrive; it will be much more fun and not so quiet. It is the silence that frightens me so in the evenings and at night. I wish like anything that one of our protectors could sleep here at night. I can't tell you how oppressive it is NEVER to be able to go outdoors, also, I'm very afraid that we shall be discovered and shot. That is not exactly a pleasant prospect. We have to whisper and tread lightly during the day, otherwise the people in the warehouse might hear us.

Someone is calling me.

Yours, Anne

- a. Use the information you have read to describe the kind of person Anne is.
- b. Describe Anne's feelings as well as specific details about what she heard and saw while living in the Annexe.



Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## Science and Technology, Grades 5-7

### Open-Response Questions:

35

Many fossils have been discovered in the southwestern region of the United States. Scientists have determined that much of this area was covered at one time by a great shallow area. In New England, however, it is much more difficult to find evidence of fossil remains.

- Describe the process by which most fossils are made and preserved.
- Explain two reasons why fossils would be more likely to be found in the American Southwest than in New England.



36

You have been asked to design and build a bluebird house that will be placed on the meadow nature trail. After you research bluebird housing requirements, you realize that bluebirds must have a house with a  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " opening with a light-colored exterior that is able to be cleaned after the brood has fledged and placed in an open area with at least 50 feet separating it from any neighboring bluebird houses.

- Make a list of materials needed to build this birdhouse.
- Make a list of tools that you will need to build this birdhouse.
- Draw and label a birdhouse design. Remember to label your measurements.
- Make a placement diagram showing where you will place your birdhouse in the meadow.



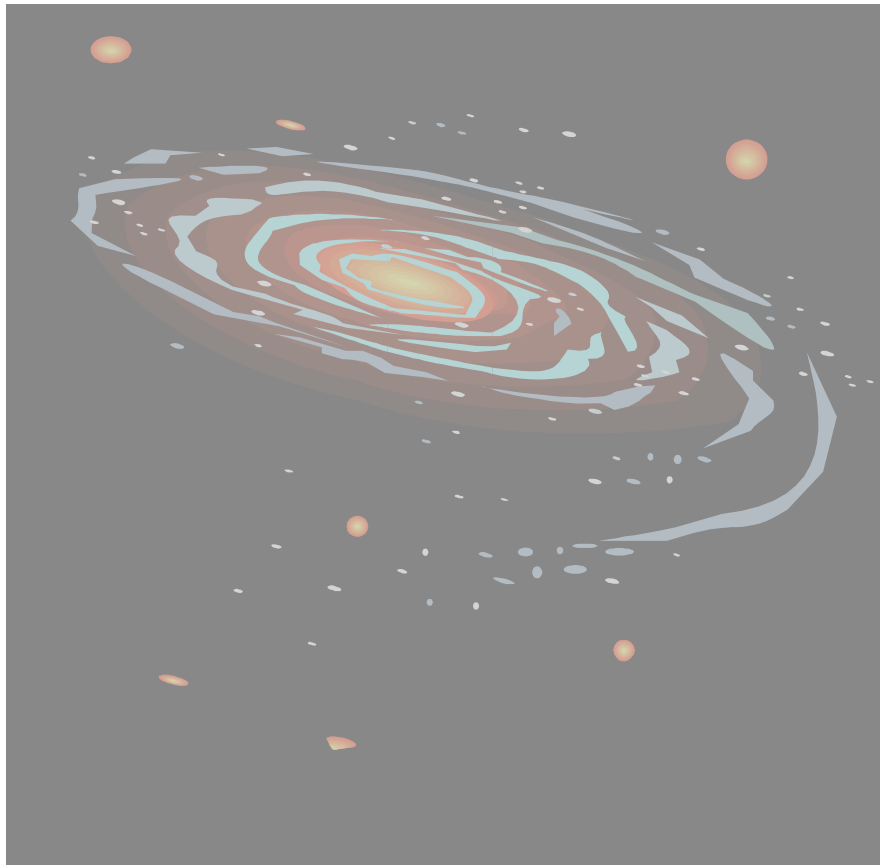
Questions 29-30 submitted by: Ed McTigue

## Science, Grades 5-8

37

Compare and contrast Galileo's and Aristotle's theories about the universe, its center, and its orbital patterns.

- Provide at least two similarities and two differences.



Submitted by: Karen Patterson

## Science and Technology, Grades 6-8

38

### First Steps to the Moon

by Alan B. Shephard, Jr.

Shortly after 4:00 a.m., suited up, I departed Hangar S with Douglas and Gus Grissom for the launch pad. We rode in a transfer van that was like a cramped cattle car. The van stopped at the launch pad, and I stepped out into a strange world of glaring floodlights and banshee wails from a breeze blowing across the super-cold fuel lines. I looked up, for the moment overwhelmed by the gleaming blue-white lights. Then I began the final walk toward the gantry elevator. "Up" was six stories above me. I stopped for one more look at the awesome beauty of the Redstone booster with its Mercury spacecraft. They had an air of expectancy about them. I watched plumes of vapor venting from the liquid oxygen tank and thought: "I never again will see this rocket." I moved into the elevator. The door closing behind me was an unplanned signal for applause and cheering by the men and women who'd worked day and night, always under the shadow of the Russian boosters, to start America's own high road into space. I turned and waved to the launch team. I had the strangest feeling I was taking them along with me. I started to call out to them, but the words chocked in my throat. Then Bill Douglas handed me a box of Crayolas. "Just so you'll have something to do up there," he said.

Soon I was in the sterile White Room that surrounded the capsule that would take me out of the world. John Glenn greeted me with the word that everything was ready. We gripped hands, and then I began the squeeze into the spacecraft. The name Freedom 7 had been painted on the capsule's side. My choice. Freedom because it was patriotic. Seven because it was the seventh Mercury capsule produced. It also represented the seven Mercury astronauts. It was six feet wide at the base of the ablative heat shield. Once I was shoehorned into it and all the suit connections were completed, I could move my eyeballs and not much more. For this flight, NASA had placed a parachute chest pack on a small ledge inside the capsule. The only time I could use it would be if, after my

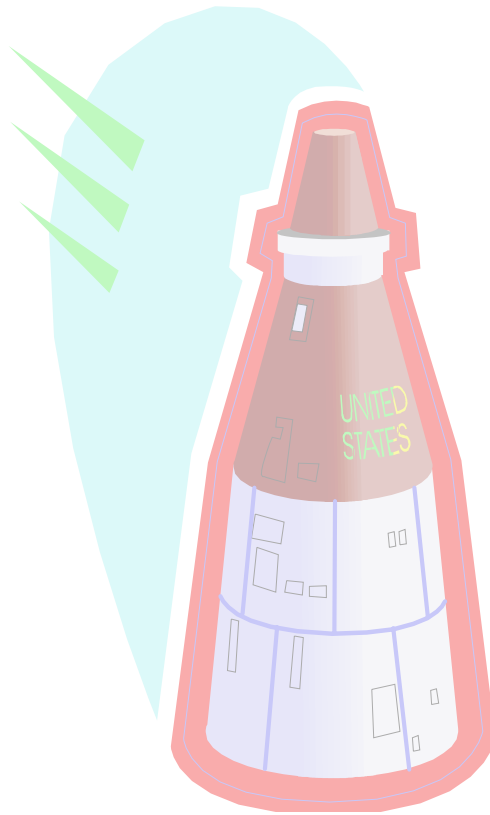
**MCAS Sample Questions**  
**English Language Arts – Middle School Level**

main parachute had opened, something went wrong that required an emergency exit. Then I'd have to clip on the chest pack, open the hatch, and wriggle my way out. The chute was along so that if the fight came apart, no one could say the pilot never had a means of escape. Settled in, I saw a small notice attached to the instrument panel: No Handball Playing in Here. Glenn looked through the hatch and grinned. I handed the notice back to him. They readied the hatch. I Glenn the thumbs-up. "See you soon."

Behind Glenn the gantry crew shouted good-bye. "Happy landings, Commander!" The hatch closed.

**In his excerpt, Alan Shepard stated that he felt as though he was taking other people along with him on his trip.**

- **Citing specific examples from the text, explain what he meant and how he did this.**



Submitted by: Erin Kiley

## English Language Arts: Math, Grades 6-8

39

If 5,000 raffle tickets were sold for a trip, and you bought one of those raffle tickets, what would be your chances of winning the trip? If the second prize in the raffle were a TV/stereo entertainment center, and you bought ten tickets, what would be your chances of winning the entertainment center?

Gauging the likelihood of your winning the trip involves the mathematics of probability. To the mathematician, one form of probability is expressed in a percentage that represents the frequency with which one event takes place in relation to the alternatives. Knowing the probability of a certain event's occurring assists insurance companies in establishing rates for car insurance, manufacturers in spot-checking the quality of goods, and pollsters in predicting the outcome of elections.

You use probability every time you flip a coin or play cards. And you can use probability to determine your chances of winning that trip.

If you bought one raffle ticket, you have one chance out of 5,000 of winning the trip. This is equal to  $1/5,000$  or a 0.02% chance – not very good. With 10 raffle tickets you would expect your chances to increase. Let's examine how much they increase. With 10 tickets out of the 5,000 tickets sold, your chances are  $10/5000$  or 0.2% -- still not very good. Not until you had purchased 1,000 of the 5,000 raffle tickets would you have even a 20% chance of winning that trip.

Now, let's look at your chances for winning the second prize. Because one ticket of the 5,000 had already been drawn for the trip, only

**MCAS Sample Questions**  
**English Language Arts – Middle School Level**

4,999 raffle tickets remain for the entertainment center drawing. You own 10 of these 10,499 tickets. The probability that you will win the entertainment center is  $10/4,999$ , or slightly more than 0.2%.

Of course, these laws of chance do not exclude a stroke of good luck. They do prove, though, that you have only a remote chance of being consistently lucky or unlucky.

- a. In your own words, explain what the mathematical theory of probability is.
- b. Use the selection to cite specific examples of its important role in society today.



Submitted by: Erin Kiley