IV. English Language Arts, Reading Comprehension, Grade 5
Grade 5 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension Test

The spring 2008 grade 5 MCAS English Language Arts Reading Comprehension test was based on learning standards in the two content strands of the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework (2001) listed below. Specific learning standards for grade 5 are found in the Supplement to the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework (2004). Page numbers for the learning standards appear in parentheses.

- Language (Framework, pages 19–26; Supplement, page 10)
- Reading and Literature (Framework, pages 35–64; Supplement, pages 11–13)

The English Language Arts Curriculum Framework and Supplement are available on the Department Web site at www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html.

In Test Item Analysis Reports and on the Subject Area Subscore pages of the MCAS School Reports and District Reports, ELA Reading Comprehension test results are reported under two MCAS reporting categories: Language and Reading and Literature, which are identical to the two Framework content strands listed above.

Test Sessions and Content Overview

The MCAS grade 5 ELA Reading Comprehension test included three separate test sessions. Each session included selected readings, followed by multiple-choice and open-response questions. Common reading passages and test items are shown on the following pages as they appeared in test booklets. Due to copyright restrictions, certain reading passages cannot be released to the public on the Web site. For further information, contact Student Assessment Services at 781-338-3625.

Reference Materials and Tools

The use of bilingual word-to-word dictionaries was allowed for current and former limited English proficient students only, during all three ELA Reading Comprehension test sessions. No other reference materials were allowed during any ELA Reading Comprehension test session.

Cross-Reference Information

The table at the conclusion of this chapter indicates each item’s reporting category and the Framework general standard it assesses. The correct answers for multiple-choice questions are also displayed in the table.
The design and construction of ancient Japanese houses were interesting in many ways. These beautiful homes also provided ideas for Frank Lloyd Wright, a famous architect who designed and built the home called Fallingwater in the United States. Read the selection and answer the questions that follow.

A Japanese Paper House

The Japanese islands experience torrential monsoon rains, earthquakes, and typhoons. The traditional Japanese house from the 16th century featured an elegant roof with wide overhangs to protect against bad weather, and a raised floor to keep out mud. Wooden framing and paper walls allowed for easy rebuilding after an earthquake. With its sliding partitions,* this “breathing house” opened on all sides to let in cool, fresh air and to give glimpses of a beautiful garden outside.

* partitions — panels or screens that divide up a room
**Woven Flooring**

2 Tatami, which are mats woven of fine straw, formed the floor of the traditional Japanese house. They continue to be used in some present-day homes. According to Japanese custom, visitors must remove their shoes when they enter any home, even modern ones. This tradition helps keep the house clean and preserves the delicate tatami.

**A Flexible Layout**

3 The space inside the traditional house could be divided in many different ways by walls, sliding doors, and portable folding screens. Paintings of landscapes, birds, and flowers often decorated these interior partitions. Moving these partitions could change the arrangement and the number of rooms in a few minutes.

**Inside Outside**

4 Walls made of special strong paper mounted on a wooden frame provided privacy while allowing light to enter the house. The sections of the wall could slide easily to either side to allow a view of the garden. This design was especially convenient during the hot Japanese summer, when the house could be completely opened up to catch passing breezes.

**Privacy and Shade**

5 Blinds made of reeds bound together in long flat sheets hung from beneath the roof. They could be rolled down to provide shade. Garden walls were made of bamboo, bark, or twigs.

**Garden Architecture**

6 The gardens were closely linked to the architecture of houses and temples. They were often designed to be seen from inside the building. The gardens featured painstakingly raked gravel, flowering moss, paving stones positioned along a path, ponds where colorful carp swam, pines with twisted shapes, and delicate bridges. Japanese bridges inspired the French Impressionist painter Claude Monet, who had one built in his garden at Giverny and used it in his paintings.

**Traditional House**

7 Intricate wooden brackets without nails supported roofs made of tiles, boards, or thatch. Only natural materials were used. The traditional Japanese house’s boldness, simplicity, and harmony with its surroundings influenced the great international architects of the 20th century, like Frank Lloyd Wright.

**Convertible Space**

8 With its sliding partitions, removable panels, and folding screens, the house could be rearranged for different activities at different times of day. Furniture was limited to pieces that were easy to move: low tables, lamps, and cotton-filled mattresses called futons that were put away during the day and rolled out at night.

**Modern Houses**

9 Today, most houses in Japan are built of concrete because it is quick, easy, and inexpensive. This also saves the forests of Japan, which prevent erosion and landslides caused by heavy rains.
The great American architect **Frank Lloyd Wright** is known for his daring designs. In 1936, he built a house in Mill Run, Pennsylvania, called **Fallingwater**, which is world-famous. Its slabs of reinforced concrete are suspended over a natural waterfall. The **roofs** and **terraces** stretch out horizontally into the forest. When it came time to free the concrete from its casings, the workers were afraid that the whole house would collapse. Then the architect himself grabbed a pickax and removed the wooden supports. The house held fast!

In Japan, a house beside a waterfall is said to ensure long life. This Japanese print belonged to Wright. Katsushika Hokusai, *Waterfall at Ono*, ca. 1833 (Ono Waterfall Along the Kis © Christie’s Images/CORBIS)
1. Based on paragraph 1, what does the description of the paper houses most suggest about the people who lived in them?
   A. They based their designs on historical buildings.
   B. They adapted their designs to deal with nature.
   C. They were unable to get sturdy building materials.
   D. They were trying to copy buildings from other places.

2. According to the selection, what was true about Japanese gardens?
   A. The gardens were used as places of worship.
   B. The gardens were used as a way to escape the tiny house.
   C. The gardens included many beautiful details.
   D. The gardens included plants that could survive in cold weather.

3. What is the most likely reason the selection includes a description of Fallingwater?
   A. Fallingwater was built with paper walls like a Japanese paper house.
   B. The architect of Fallingwater was inspired by Japanese design.
   C. The architect of Fallingwater was Japanese.
   D. Fallingwater had Japanese gardens.

4. Based on paragraph 10, why was Frank Lloyd Wright’s design for Fallingwater considered “daring”?
   A. The house was built in an unusual setting.
   B. The house was built to look like an old house.
   C. The house was built using expensive materials.
   D. The house was built so that the rooms could be rearranged easily.

5. How is the information in the selection mainly organized?
   A. by topic with supporting details
   B. by explaining causes and effects
   C. by the order in which events happened
   D. by describing problems and their solutions
Question 8 is an open-response question.

- Read the question carefully.
- Explain your answer.
- Add supporting details.
- Double-check your work.

Write your answer to question 8 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

8 Based on the selection, describe how the Japanese paper house was designed to be flexible and convenient for daily life. Support your answer with important details from the selection.
The poem “Eraser and School Clock” by Gary Soto describes a school situation that may be familiar. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

Eraser and School Clock

My eraser
Is pink
And car-shaped.
It skids across
My math test,
Which is a mess of numbers,
All wrong, like
When I unscrewed
The back of my watch
And the workings
Fell out.
The teacher frowned
When she saw
The watch,
Its poor heart
Torn out. Now
I’m working
On my math,
And I think,
I think, I think
I know. I look
Up at the school clock
With its hammerlike tick.
I could tear
Open its back,
And perhaps
The springs and gears
Would jump
And time stop.
This test could stop,
And my friends
Freeze, pencils
In their hands,
Erasers, too.

All would freeze,
Including my teacher,
And I could blow
On the skid marks
Of my eraser.

I walk out
To the playground,
My eight fingers
And two thumbs
Wrapped around
A baseball bat.
The janitor
Is frozen
To his broom,
The gardener
To his lasso of
Hose and sprinkler,
And the principal
To his walkie-talkie.
I hit homer
After homer,
And they stand,
Faces frozen
And mouths open,
Their eyes maybe moving,
Maybe following
The flight
Of each sweet homer.
What a dream.
I shrug
And look around
The classroom
Of erasers and pencils,
The clock racing
My answers to the finish.

—Gary Soto
9. Read lines 12–14 from the poem in the box below.

The teacher frowned
When she saw
The watch,

What does the speaker suggest about the teacher in the lines?
A. She is curious.
B. She is uninterested.
C. She is disapproving.
D. She is understanding.

10. Read lines 27–29 from the poem in the box below.

The springs and gears
Would jump
And time stop.

In the lines, what does time stopping represent?
A. the speaker’s past
B. the speaker’s wish
C. the speaker’s mistake
D. the speaker’s curiosity

11. In the poem, what does hitting homers most likely represent to the speaker?
A. luck
B. work
C. wealth
D. success

12. What is the effect of using italics in lines 40–62?
A. It shows that the speaker is daydreaming.
B. It shows that the speaker is thinking out loud.
C. It shows that the speaker is a different person.
D. It shows that the speaker is remembering the past.
Today we know her as Harriet Tubman, a woman who helped many people escape from slavery to freedom during the late 1800s in the United States. Harriet Tubman’s real name was Araminta Ross. This play tells how Araminta and a friend first planned to seek their own freedom in Philadelphia. Read the play and answer the questions that follow.

Young Harriet Tubman

by Mary Satchell

A courageous slave makes a difficult decision. . . .

Characters

Araminta Ross [Minty], young slave girl
Ben
Harriet } her parents
Jim, 16, runaway slave

Time: 1834; late evening during Christmas season.

Setting: The Ross family’s one-room log cabin on Edward Brodas’ plantation near Bucktown, Maryland. Wooden bed with pillow, brightly colored patchwork quilt, and worn blanket, is against wall right. Small bundle is hidden under bed. Large, open fireplace with huge pot hanging over low-burning fire is upstage. Rough-hewn table, benches are center; a candle burns low on table. A window is in the rear wall beside the fireplace. A working door is left.

At Rise: Araminta Ross enters, quickly crosses to bed, and kneels beside it. She pulls bundle from under bed and rises. There is soft knocking at door, which startles her. She hides bundle under bed again, then moves cautiously left as knocking grows louder.

10 Araminta (Guardedly): Who’s there?

Jim (Offstage, behind door): It’s Jim. (Urgently) Let me in, Minty. (Araminta opens door and Jim enters quickly.)

Araminta (Closing door): What are you doing here? Our plan was to meet at midnight. We’ve got at least two more hours till then. (Peers at Jim) Has something happened?

15 Jim (Hesitating): No. Nothing could make me change my mind. (Nervously crosses to table)

Araminta (Suspiciously): Why are you looking like that?

Jim (Defensively): Like what? (Before she can answer) There you go again, Minty. You’re always jumping ahead of everybody and heading the wrong way.
ARAMINTA (*Moving toward* JIM): Jim, I know something’s wrong, so you might as well tell me what it is.

If we’re going to run away to freedom together, we’ll have to learn to trust each other—starting now.

(*Jim sinks onto bench and sighs.*)

JIM: Minty, I’ve been thinking about this all week long. If anything happened to you, it would be my fault.

ARAMINTA (*Exasperated*¹): Jim, nothing’s going to happen, except that we’ll escape to Philadelphia and be free. I’ll find work. You won’t have to take care of me after we cross the freedom line. We can go our separate ways then. (*Studies Jim’s face for a moment*)

JIM (*Morosely*²): Minty, I can’t take you with me.

ARAMINTA (*Fiercely*): What? But you promised!

JIM (*Taking her arm*): You’re too young!

ARAMINTA (*Pulling away angrily*): You went back on your word . . . and after I trusted you!

JIM (*Plaintively*³): But what about your ma and pa? How will they feel if anything goes wrong? (*Rising*) You know what happens when runaway slaves are caught. And what with your older sisters being sold down South the first of this year, it would kill Aunt Harriet and Uncle Ben to lose you, too.

ARAMINTA (*Coldly*): I thought you were my friend. I showed you Papa’s secret fishing place and where he set his hunting traps.

JIM (*Taking a step toward her*): Minty.

ARAMINTA (*Backing away*): Stay away from me! You broke your promise!

JIM (*Persistently*⁴): Minty, you’ve got to understand. You’re young yet, and it may be some years before you have to leave your folks. But this could be my last chance to get away. Old Jake heard that I may be sold down Virginia way right after Christmas. (*Desperately*) We’ve got only a few more days before Christmas is over.

ARAMINTA (*With concern*): Did Old Jake really say that? (*Trying to be reassuring*) Nobody listens to Jake and his talk. Most of the time he’s wrong—you know that.

JIM (*In a low voice*): I’ll need some time before the master finds out I’m gone. I know you’re angry, and you think I’ve betrayed you, but you’ve got to help me get away by keeping our plan to yourself.

ARAMINTA (*Turning away*): So you won’t let me go with you.

JIM (*Pleading*): Please, Minty. There’s no one else I can trust. Martha will tell Ma if she finds out. And you know they wouldn’t let me go. (*Determined*) Minty, I won’t be a slave forever.

ARAMINTA (*Slowly facing JIM*): I can’t refuse to help anybody wanting to be free. Everyone’s got a right to be free.

JIM (*Smiling in relief*): I knew you’d understand. (*Sounds of laughter off*)

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¹ *exasperated* — angry; impatient
² *morosely* — sadly
³ *plaintively* — pleadingly
⁴ *persistently* — refusing to give up
Araminta *(Moving to window to peek behind curtain)*: They’re busy celebrating. Nobody’s going to sleep till long after midnight. *(Returns to table)*

Jim: I’ve already spread the word that I’m sick. *(Lowering his voice)* Said I ate too much, and I was going to lie down in one of the cabins here.

Araminta: That was a good idea. Folks will think you didn’t feel like walking all the way back to the farm.

Jim: I’ll hide in the woods behind the church. When the time’s right, I’ll make my move. You’ll know when I’m leaving, Minty. Listen for three hoots of the old night owl.

Araminta: You’ll need help finding your way North.

Jim: Zeke Hunn promised to take me to his friends on the Eastern shore. They’ll help me get to Philadelphia.

Araminta *(Surprised)*: Ezekiel Hunn? Is he the Quaker who lives right outside of town?

Jim *(Nodding)*: He’s a conductor for the underground railroad.

Araminta *(Frowning)*: What’s the underground railroad?

Jim: It’s a secret route the Quakers and their friends use to help runaways get to freedom.

Araminta *(Astonished)*: A secret way to freedom?

Jim *(Quickly)*: You’ve got to be careful that nobody else finds out.

Araminta: You know I’d never tell a soul, Jim. *(Moves to get bundle under bed)* Here, you’ll need this. *(Hands it to Jim)* It’s some food I packed myself for the road. If Master Brodas or anyone else starts asking questions, I’ll tell them you’re sick with a bellyache, and I don’t know which cabin you’re sleeping in.

Jim: Thanks, Minty. It’ll take some time for them to search every cabin.

Araminta *(Seriously)*: Don’t worry about me, Jim. We’ll meet someday in Philadelphia. I promise you that.

...
What is Araminta preparing to do in lines 7–9?
A. leave Jim behind
B. run away with Jim
C. tell Jim she is staying
D. announce where Jim is

What is the most likely reason Jim hesitates in line 15?
A. He does not want to admit he is afraid.
B. He does not want to talk about the secret plan.
C. He is thinking about staying on the plantation.
D. He is worried about announcing he must go alone.

Based on the play, why does Jim tell Araminta that he must leave immediately?
A. He believes Jake has told others about his plan to flee.
B. He fears he will soon be sent away from the plantation.
C. He thinks Araminta will be unable to leave at that time.
D. He knows he has friends who can help him when he leaves.

Which sentence from the play provides the best clue that Araminta will work to assist escaping slaves in the future?
A. “If we’re going to run away to freedom together, we’ll have to learn to trust each other—starting now.”
B. “You won’t have to take care of me after we cross the freedom line.”
C. “I can’t refuse to help anybody wanting to be free.”
D. “You’ll need help finding your way North.”

Based on the meaning of the word “guard,” what does the word *guardedly* most likely mean?
A. crossly
B. happily
C. excitedly
D. suspiciously
Question 18 is an open-response question.

- Read the question carefully.
- Explain your answer.
- Add supporting details.
- Double-check your work.

Write your answer to question 18 in the space provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

18  In the play, Araminta agrees to stay on the plantation and help Jim escape. Explain
a. why Araminta decides to stay behind and
b. how she helps Jim to make his escape.

Support your answer with important details from the play.
A red haze hung over the water as I floated the canoe on the morning of the fourth day and began to paddle toward the cave where the old man said the Manta Diablo lived.

The sun was up but the haze hung so thick that I had trouble locating the channel. After I found it I searched for almost an hour before I sighted the cave. It was hidden behind a rocky pinnacle and faced the rising sun, and the opening was about thirty feet wide and the height of a tall man, and curved downward like the upper lip of a mouth. I could not see into the cave because of the red mist, so I drifted back and forth and waited until the sun rose higher and the mist burned away.

I had talked to the old man the night before about the cave. We had eaten supper, and the women and children had gone to bed, and the two of us were sitting around the fire.

“You have fished everywhere in the lagoon,” I said, “but not in the cave.”

“No,” he said. “Nor did my father nor his father.”

“Big pearls may grow there.”

The old man did not answer. He got up and put wood on the fire and sat down again.

“The great one itself, the Pearl of Heaven, may lie there,” I said.

Still he did not answer, but suddenly he looked across the fire. It was a fleeting look that he gave me and yet its meaning was as clear as if he had spoken to me and said, “I cannot go to the cave to search for pearls. I cannot go because I fear the Manta Diablo. If you go there, then it is alone. El Diablo cannot blame me.”

And that morning when I went down to the beach he did not go with me. “The wound on my hand hurts very much,” he said, “so I will stay behind.” And the look he gave me was the same I had seen the night before.

At last, about midmorning, the sun burned away the mist and I could see for a short distance into the cave. I paddled through the mouth and soon found myself in a vast vault-like room. The walls of the room were black and smooth and shone from the light that came in through the opening.

1 pinnacle — a tall, pointed structure
Near the mouth of the cave the water was very clear. I picked up my basket and sink stone, took a deep breath, and slipped over the side of the canoe, remembering all that the old man had taught me.

I reached the bottom after about a fathom and a half. I looped my foot in the rope tied to the sink stone and waited until the bubbles that had risen behind me disappeared and I could find the bed of shells I had noticed from above. The bed was five steps away toward the mouth of the cave. I walked carefully in the sand as I had learned to do.

The shells were the largest I had ever seen. They were half the length of my arm and thick through as my body and covered with weed that looked like a woman’s hair. I chose the nearest one, which seemed to be easier to get at than the others. I took out my knife and worked quietly, but a school of small fish kept swimming in front of my eyes, so I failed to pry the shell loose before my lungs began to hurt and I had to go up.

On my second dive I had no sooner reached the bottom than a shadow fell across the bed where I was working. It was the shadow of a gray shark, one of the friendly ones, but by the time he had drifted away my breath was gone.

I dived six times more and worked quickly each time I went down, hacking away with my sharp knife at the base of the big shell where it was anchored to the rock. But it had been growing there for many years, since long before I was born, I suppose, and it would not come free from its home.

By this time it was late in the afternoon and the light was poor. Also my hands were bleeding and my eyes were half-blind with salt from the sea. But I sat in the canoe and thought of all the hours I had spent for nothing. And I thought too of the Sevillano and the great pearl he had found, or said he had found, in the Gulf of Persia.

I filled my lungs and took the sink stone and went down again. With the first stroke of my knife, the shell came free. It toppled over on one side, and I quickly untied the rope from the sink stone and looped it twice around the shell and swam back to the surface. I pulled up the shell, but it was too heavy for me to lift into the canoe, so I tied it to the stern and paddled out of the cave.

Across the lagoon I could see the old man standing among the trees. From time to time during the day I had caught glimpses of him standing there with his eyes fixed on the cave. I knew that I could drown and he would not try to save me, and that he was telling El Diablo all the while that he had not wanted me to go to the cave and that he therefore was not to blame. But I also felt that if I found a pearl he would be willing to take his share because he had nothing to do with finding it.

He came out from the trees as I paddled across the lagoon and strolled down to the beach as if he did not care whether I had found a pearl or not. I suppose this was to show El Diablo and his friends the fish and the long, gray shark that Soto Luzon was without blame.

“A big one,” he said when I dragged the shell ashore. “In my life I have never seen such a monster. It is the grandfather of all oysters that live in the sea.”

“There are many in the cave bigger than this one,” I said.

“If there are so many,” he answered, “then the Manta Diablo cannot be mad that you have taken only one of them.”

“Perhaps a little mad,” I said and laughed, “but not much.”

The mouth of the oyster was closed and it was hard to put my blade between the tight edges of the shell.

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2 *a fathom and a half* — approximately nine feet
“Lend me your knife,” I said. “Mine is blunted from use.”

The old man placed his hand on the hilt of his knife and pulled it from the sheath and then slipped it back again.

“I think it is better if you use your own knife,” he said and his voice began to tremble as he spoke.

I wrestled a long time with the oyster. At last the hard lips began to give a little. Then I could feel the knife sink through the heavy muscles that held them together and suddenly the lips fell apart.

I put my finger under the frilled edge of the flesh as I had seen my father do. A pearl slid along my finger and I picked it out. It was about the size of a pea. When I felt again, another of the same size rolled out and then a third. I put them on the other half of the shell so they would not be scratched.

The old man came and leaned over me, as I knelt there in the sand, and held his breath.

Slowly I slid my hand under the heavy tongue of the oyster. I felt a hard lump, so monstrous in size that it could not be a pearl. I took hold of it and pulled it from the flesh and got to my feet and held it to the sun, thinking that I must be holding a rock that the oyster had swallowed somehow.

It was round and smooth and the color of smoke. It filled my cupped hand. Then the sun’s light struck deep into the thing and moved in silver swirls and I knew that it was not a rock that I held but a pearl, the great Pearl of Heaven.

Excerpt from THE BLACK PEARL by Scott O’Dell. Copyright (c) 1967 by Scott O’Dell. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.
19. Read the details from paragraph 2 in the box below.

- . . . the haze hung so thick . . .
- It was hidden behind a rocky pinnacle . . .
- I could not see into the cave because of the red mist . . .

The details make the setting of the selection seem
A. calm.
B. ordinary.
C. beautiful.
D. mysterious.

20. In the selection, what do paragraphs 4–9 show about the old man?
A. his fear of entering the cave
B. his sorrow over never being in the cave
C. his belief that the pearl is not in the cave
D. his envy of the boy for going into the cave

21. In paragraphs 7–9, what is the most likely reason the old man does not answer the boy?
A. He does not believe the boy has the courage to go into the cave.
B. He is jealous because the boy may find the great pearl in the cave.
C. He does not want to be responsible for the boy going into the cave.
D. He is remembering when the boy first tried to get the great pearl from the cave.

22. Based on the information in paragraph 13, how is a “sink stone” most likely used?
A. as a tool to cut an oyster from the bed
B. as a way to measure how deep the water is
C. as a weight to keep a diver on the ocean floor
D. as a weapon to protect against attacking animals
23. What does the description in paragraph 14 suggest about the shells?
   A. They may be too deep to reach.
   B. They may be too unusual to destroy.
   C. They may be hiding the dangerous stingray.
   D. They may be big enough to contain a great pearl.

24. Read the description from paragraph 33 in the box below.

   It was round and smooth and the color of smoke. . . . Then the sun’s light struck deep into the thing and moved in silver swirls . . .

   What does the description most suggest about the pearl?
   A. its great value
   B. its heavy weight
   C. its unusual shape
   D. its natural beauty

25. What is an important theme of the selection?
   A. A person’s fears can easily be overcome.
   B. Older people’s actions may hide their feelings.
   C. A person must have determination to achieve his goals.
   D. Young people should listen to the advice of those who are more experienced.

26. Read the sentence from paragraph 32 in the box below.

   I felt a hard lump, so monstrous in size that it could not be a pearl.

   In the sentence, which of the following words could best be used in place of the word monstrous?
   A. huge
   B. scary
   C. terrible
   D. unusual
Based on the selection, explain the challenges the boy faces in getting the pearl. Support your answer with important details from the selection.
DIRECTIONS
This session contains two reading selections with twelve multiple-choice questions and one open-response question. Mark your answers to these questions in the spaces provided in your Student Answer Booklet.

You might not ever find yourself in danger of hypothermia, but if you do, the information in this article could save your life. Read the article and answer the questions that follow.

HYPOTHERMIA
by Franklyn M. Branley

If you ski or backpack in cold weather, you’ve probably heard about hypothermia. If you haven’t, it’s something you should know about. The Greek word hypo means under, and therm means heat — so hypothermia means underheating, cooling, or even freezing of the body. The cooling could be fast enough to kill a person. Outside air temperature doesn’t have to be very low. In fact, hypothermia can happen when the temperature is 40° or 50°F, and it often does.

Hypothermia is the chilling of the inner core of the body, as well as of the brain. When this happens, there is rapid physical and mental collapse. Memory lags, people may have trouble saying words correctly, and they may fall down or drop things because their muscles aren’t working properly.

For the body to operate efficiently, its temperature must remain about 98.6°F. People produce more heat than they need, so they usually must get rid of the excess. In hypothermia, however, the body loses more heat than it produces. This condition often occurs when a person gets wet, because most insulation (such as clothing) does not work well when it is wet. The water pushes out the dead air, and water is not a good insulator. One of the deadliest accidents that can happen to a fisherman is to be washed overboard. Fishermen describe a 50-50-50 law of survival: When the water is 50°F, a person has only a 50 percent chance of surviving for 50 minutes.

When exposed to wind, cold, or wet, watch for:

1. Shivering
2. Vague, slow, slurred speech
3. Memory lapses, incoherence, abnormal behavior
4. Immobile, fumbling hands
5. Undue stumbling, lurching gait
6. Drowsiness
7. Exhaustion. Too tired to get up after a rest
8. Unnoticed loss of clothing such as hat or glove

1 efficiently — properly
2 insulation — material that holds heat
How to Prevent Hypothermia

Wear woolen clothing (including underwear).

Keep dry. Wear rain gear that really sheds water. (Test it in a shower to be sure it works.)

Carry a tent, windbreakers, and a stove that is sure to light. Or, if not a stove, carry fire starters that are sure to work even when wood is wet.

Remember, you don’t have to be ice-cold to suffer from hypothermia. A person can die from it even when air temperature is 50°F.

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4   Wind also speeds up heat loss because it speeds evaporation. Wet clothing exposed to the wind is dangerous. The wind cools the water. At 50°F, water is unbearably cold. If it is held against a person by sopping clothing, heat moves rapidly from the body to the water.

5   Whenever you’re outside, keep dry. Wear rain clothes. Also, wear wool. It’s the one fiber that remains an insulator, though not a good one, even when it is wet.

6   While you’re moving — hiking or skiing, for example — your body makes a lot more heat than it does when you’re resting. That’s why some hikers don’t realize they can suffer from hypothermia. They think they can go on and on, even though they may be wet and cold. But this is when they should be most careful. If they are in the woods, they should get out of the wind, set up camp, and build a fire.

7   Otherwise, they may find that once they stop hiking, their production of body heat may drop suddenly by as much as 50 percent. They may start to shiver and become unable to control the shivering. They may slip into hypothermia; their speech will slow, they won’t remember well, and they will stumble and find they cannot hold things. They may become exhausted and drowsy, but they must not sleep — or they might die.

8   Those suffering from hypothermia will find it difficult if not impossible to help themselves, but other people can help. In more advanced hypothermia, a person may be only semiconscious. It’s important that the victim be kept awake and somehow be given warm fluids. . . .

9   If you are careful, you’ll never suffer from hypothermia. If you ski or backpack, take precautions: keep warm, keep active but do not become exhausted, know when to quit, and keep dry. There are many things you can do to keep toasty warm, even when the temperature hovers around zero.

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5 precautions — safety measures
How to Help a Hypothermia Victim

1. Take the victim to a protected place out of the wind and rain.
2. If the person is able to drink, warm fluids should be given.
3. Dress the victim in warm, dry clothes or put into a warm sleeping bag. *Keep the victim awake.*

“Hypothermia” by Franklyn M. Branley, from *Shivers and Goosebumps.* Copyright © 1993 by Franklyn M. Branley. Reprinted by permission of Mary Jane Day.

28. Based on the article, what do many people believe about hypothermia that is not true?
   A. Hypothermia can be caused by cold water as well as cold air.
   B. Body heat that drops suddenly poses a serious danger of hypothermia.
   C. People may show both mental and physical signs of hypothermia.
   D. The air temperature must be below freezing for a person to die from hypothermia.

29. What is the main purpose of paragraph 2 of the article?
   A. to describe the symptoms of hypothermia
   B. to explain how to recover from hypothermia
   C. to describe weather conditions that cause hypothermia
   D. to identify people who are most at risk of hypothermia

30. Based on the article, what causes the greatest danger to a person suffering from hypothermia?
   A. falling asleep
   B. drinking liquids
   C. warming too quickly
   D. removing wet clothing
What is the **main** purpose of the article?
A. to explain how a hiker can get hypothermia
B. to explain how to avoid and treat hypothermia
C. to explain the danger hypothermia poses in certain jobs
D. to explain the first physical and mental signs of hypothermia

Which word **best** describes the author’s tone in the article?
A. gloomy
B. questioning
C. informative
D. enthusiastic

In paragraph 2, which word could **best** be used in place of the word *collapse*?
A. pain
B. challenge
C. endurance
D. breakdown

Read the sentence from paragraph 3 in the box below.

People produce more heat than they need, so they usually must get rid of the excess.

Based on the sentence, the word *excess* is **most likely** related to which of the following words?
A. extra
B. excite
C. examine
D. example
In paragraph 1, the author states that if you have not heard about hypothermia, it is “something you should know about.” Based on the article, explain the most likely reason the author makes this statement. Support your answer with important details from the article.
The Japanese folktale “New Year’s Hats for the Statues” tells the story of an old man’s surprising night. Read the folktale and answer the questions that follow.

New Year’s Hats for the Statues

by Yoshiko Uchida

1 Once a very kind old man and woman lived in a small house high in the hills of Japan. Although they were good people, they were very, very poor, for the old man made his living by weaving the reed hats that farmers used to ward off the sun and rain, and even in a year’s time, he could not sell very many.

2 One cold winter day as the year was drawing to an end, the old woman said to the old man, “Good husband, it will soon be New Year’s Day, but we have nothing in the house to eat. How will we welcome the new year without even a pot of fresh rice?” A worried frown hovered over her face, and she sighed sadly as she looked into her empty cupboards.

3 But the old man patted her shoulders and said, “Now, now, don’t you worry. I will make some reed hats and take them to the village to sell. Then with the money I earn I will buy some fish and rice for our New Year’s feast.”

4 On the day before New Year’s, the old man set out for the village with five new reed hats that he had made. It was bitterly cold, and from early morning, snow tumbled from the skies and blew in great drifts about their small house. The old man shivered in the wind, but he thought about the fresh warm rice and the fish turning crisp and brown over the charcoal, and he knew he must earn some money to buy them. He pulled his wool scarf tighter about his throat and plodded on slowly over the snow-covered roads.

5 When he got to the village, he trudged up and down its narrow streets calling, “Reed hats for sale! Reed hats for sale!” But everyone was too busy preparing for the new year to be bothered with reed hats. They scurried by him, going instead to the shops where they could buy sea bream and red beans and herring roe for their New Year’s feasts. No one even bothered to look at the old man or his hats.
As the old man wandered about the village, the snow fell faster, and before long the sky began to grow dark. The old man knew it was useless to linger, and he sighed with longing as he passed the fish shop and saw the rows of fresh fish.

“If only I could bring home one small piece of fish for my wife,” he thought glumly, but his pockets were even emptier than his stomach.

There was nothing to do but to go home again with his five unsold hats. The old man headed wearily back toward his little house in the hills, bending his head against the biting cold of the wind. As he walked along, he came upon six stone statues of Jizo, the guardian god of children. They stood by the roadside covered with snow that had piled in small drifts on top of their heads and shoulders.

“Mah, mah, you are covered with snow,” the old man said to the statues, and setting down his bundle, he stopped to brush the snow from their heads. As he was about to go on, a fine idea occurred to him.

“I am sorry these are only reed hats I could not sell,” he apologized, “but at least they will keep the snow off your heads.” And carefully he tied one on each of the Jizo statues.

“Now if I had one more there would be enough for each of them,” he murmured as he looked at the row of statues. But the old man did not hesitate for long. Quickly he took the hat from his own head and tied it on the head of the sixth statue.

“There,” he said looking pleased. “Now all of you are covered.” Then, bowing in farewell, he told the statues that he must be going. “A happy new year to each of you,” he called, and he hurried away content.

When he got home the old woman was waiting anxiously for him. “Did you sell your hats?” she asked. “Were you able to buy some rice and fish?”

The old man shook his head. “I couldn’t sell a single hat,” he explained, “but I did find a very good use for them.” And he told her how he had put them on the Jizo statues that stood in the snow.

“Ah, that was a very kind thing to do,” the old woman said. “I would have done exactly the same.” And she did not complain at all that the old man had not brought home anything to eat. Instead she made some hot tea and added a precious piece of charcoal to the brazier* so the old man could warm himself.

* brazier — a metal pan for burning charcoal
That night they went to bed early, for there was no more charcoal and the house had grown cold. Outside the wind continued to blow the snow in a white curtain that wrapped itself about the small house. The old man and woman huddled beneath their thick quilts and tried to keep warm.

“We are fortunate to have a roof over our heads on such a night,” the old man said.

“Indeed we are,” the old woman agreed, and before long they were both fast asleep.

About daybreak, when the sky was still a misty gray, the old man awakened for he heard voices outside.

“Listen,” he whispered to the old woman.

“What is it? What is it?” the old woman asked.

Together they held their breath and listened. It sounded like a group of men pulling a very heavy load.

“Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah! Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah!” the voices called and seemed to come closer and closer.

“Who could it be so early in the morning?” the old man wondered. Soon, they heard the men singing:

Where is the home of the kind old man,
The man who covered our heads?
Where is the home of the kind old man,
Who gave us his hats for our heads?

The old man and woman hurried to the window to look out, and there in the snow they saw the six stone Jizo statues lumbering toward their house. They still wore the reed hats the old man had given them and each one was pulling a heavy sack.

“Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah! Yoi-sah! Hoi-sah!” they called as they drew nearer and nearer.

“They seem to be coming here!” the old man gasped in amazement. But the old woman was too surprised even to speak.

As they watched, each of the Jizo statues came up to their house and left his sack at the doorstep.

The old man hurried to open the door, and as he did, the six big sacks came tumbling inside. In the sacks the old man and woman found rice and wheat, fish and beans, wine and bean paste cakes, and all sorts of delicious things that they might want to eat.

“Why, there is enough here for a feast every day all during the year!” the old man cried excitedly.

“And we shall have the finest New Year’s feast we have ever had in our lives,” the old woman exclaimed.
“Ojizo Sama, thank you!” the old man shouted.

“Ojizo Sama, how can we thank you enough?” the old woman called out.

But the six stone statues were already moving slowly down the road, and as the old man and woman watched, they disappeared into the whiteness of the falling snow, leaving only their footprints to show that they had been there at all.

“In the folktale, what information is **mainly** presented in paragraphs 1–3?

A. the magical setting of the story
B. the lesson that must be learned
C. the events that happened earlier
D. the problem that must be solved

**Reading Comprehension Session 3**

**36** In the folktale, what information is **mainly** presented in paragraphs 1–3?

A. the magical setting of the story
B. the lesson that must be learned
C. the events that happened earlier
D. the problem that must be solved

**37** Read the phrases from paragraphs 4 and 5 in the box below.

- He . . . plodded on slowly over the snow-covered roads.
- . . . he trudged up and down its narrow streets . . .

In the phrases, what do the verbs “plodded” and “trudged” suggest about the old man?

A. He is lost.
B. He is busy.
C. He is tired.
D. He is careful.
What is the most important turning point in the folktale?
A. The old man decides to sell his hats.
B. The old man gives his hats to the statues.
C. The old man and old woman decide to go to bed.
D. The old man and old woman plan their celebration.

Which of the following events best shows that the story is a folktale?
A. The statues come to life.
B. The snowstorm hits the village.
C. The old man weaves straw hats.
D. The village celebrates with a great feast.

In paragraph 6, which of the following words could best be used in place of the word linger?
A. stay
B. help
C. shop
D. change
Grade 5 English Language Arts
Reading Comprehension
Spring 2008 Released Items:
Reporting Categories, Standards, and Correct Answers*

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* Answers are provided here for multiple-choice items only. Sample responses and scoring guidelines for open-response items, which are indicated by shaded cells, will be posted to the Department’s Web site later this year.