



2020 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 & 4 students are expected to construct short responses and/or essays using evidence from the text(s); while, students in grades 5-8 will construct essays using evidence from the text(s).

Item Types

Item Type	Total Points	Grade Levels
Multiple Choice: Students select one correct answer from four answer options.	1	Grades 3–8
Multiple Choice -- Two-Part: These items are two-part questions. Students select one correct answer for each part of the question.	2	Grades 3-8
Technology Enhanced: Students taking the computer-based test answer questions using technology such as drag-and-drop.	2	Grades 3–8
Short Response: Students construct a short written response, approximately the length of a paragraph.	3	Grades 3 & 4
Text-Based Essays: Students write an essay in response to text(s) they have read.	7	Grades 3–5
	8	Grades 6–8

Constructed Responses and Essays

The RICAS assessment will indicate to students the amount of space provided for each constructed 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 amount of space provided for student responses on the CBT is:

- Constructed Responses:
 - 1200 Characters (equivalent to one hand-written paragraph at grades 3 & 4)
- Essays:
 - 2500 Characters (equivalent to one hand-written page at grades 3-5)
 - 5000 Characters (equivalent to two hand-written pages at grades 6-8)

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 1.5 hours to 2 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

All students will read three passage sets and respond to multiple choice items worth one or two points for every passage set. Student will be asked to write a constructed response (grades 3 and 4 only) or essay associated with two passage sets. The remaining passage set will not include a written response.

Grade	Number of 1-Point Items	Number of 2-Point Items	Number of Short Constructed Responses	Number of Essays	Total Points on Test
3-4	24-28	3-5	1	1	44
5	24-28	3-5	0	2	48
6-8	24-28	3-5	0	2	50

Matrix Items (field test & equating items)

The structure of matrix items students may encounter varies by grade:

Grades 3-4	Students will read two additional passage sets, respond to seventeen items (one or two- points) and write either two constructed response questions or an essay.
Grade 5	Students will read two additional passage sets, respond to seventeen items (one or two-points), and write an essay.
Grades 6-8	Students will read two additional passage sets, respond to seventeen items (one or two-points), and write an essay.

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

ELA Reporting Category Percentages	Grade 3 & 4*	Grades 5-8*	
Reading	65%	55%	
Language	25%	25%	
Writing	10%	20%	
Total	100%	100%	*+/-5%

RICAS Resource Center

To access practice tests, tutorials, released items, student work samples, etc., please visit the RICAS Resource Center at ricas.pearsonsupport.com

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.