



2019 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 among several answer options.	1	Grades 3–8
Multiple Select: Students select more than one correct answer from among several answer options. These items include two part questions.	2	Grades 3-8
Technology Enhanced: Students taking the computer-based test answer questions using technology such as drag-and-drop or hot spot.	2	Grades 3–8
Short Constructed Response: Students construct a short written response, approximately the length of a paragraph.	3	Grades 3 & 4
Narrative and Text-Based Essays: Students write an essay in response to text(s) they have read.	7	Grades 3–5
	8	Grades 6–8

Short Constructed Responses and Essays

The RICAS assessment will indicate to students the amount of space provided for each short constructed response and essay.

For the computer-based test (CBT), students will type their responses into response boxes. As the student types his or her response into the response box, a scroll bar will appear and the student can continue typing. The amount of space provided for student responses on the CBT is:

- Short Constructed Responses:
 - 1200 Characters (equivalent to one hand-written paragraph)
- 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. Each session is 120-150 minutes in length. 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. The sets maybe comprised of a single passage and/or a passage pairing or tripling. Every student will be asked to write a short constructed response or essay associated with each passage set.

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	15-21	3-6	1	2	44
5	15-21	3-6	0	3	48
6-8	15-21	3-6	0	3	51

Matrix Items

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

Grades 3-4	Students will read one additional passage set, respond to eight items (one or two-points) and write either two short constructed response questions or a one-page essay.
Grade 5	Students will read one additional passage set, respond to eight items (one or two-points), and write a one-page essay.
Grades 6-8	Students will read one additional passage set, respond to eight items (one or two-points), and write a two-page 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	55%	45%	
Language	25%	25%	
Writing	20%	30%	
Total	100%	100%	*+/-5%

RICAS Resource Center

To access practice tests, tutorials, released items, 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.