

Reading MCA-III Standards and Benchmarks

Grade 3

Key Ideas and Details

Online MCA: 20–30 items

Paper MCA: 24–36 items

Grade 3 Standard 1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Standard Specifications

- Textual evidence may be either explicitly stated or implied.
- Students may be required to cite specific textual evidence literally or to identify such evidence generally.
- Items include, but are not limited to, making inferences, generalizations, and predictions; drawing conclusions; recognizing cause/effect relationships; comparing and contrasting; identifying relevant details; distinguishing between fact and opinion.
- Writing and speaking will be assessed at the classroom level only.

3.1.1.1 Literature

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

3.2.1.1 Informational Text

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

Grade 3 Standard 2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

Standard Specifications

- Items may encompass either parts of a text (e.g., determine the central or main idea of one or more paragraphs, a section, a verse, etc.) or an entire text.
- Items may assess central idea, theme, central message or main idea. Any of these terms may be used when referencing an entire text or an extended section of a text.
- Items may also assess identification of topic and/or subject.

- Items may use the term *author's message* when assessing the central or main idea the author intended to convey to the reading audience. (Items may also use this term in conjunction with and/or when assessing author's point-of-view. See Standard 6).
- *Key supporting details* are considered relevant, or specific, details.
- Items may require summarizing or paraphrasing.
- Items may require distinguishing fact from opinion.
- Item may require recognizing similarities and differences in ideas or themes.

3.1.2.2 Literature

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

Item Specification

- *Recount* means retell.

3.2.2.2 Informational Text

Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

Item Specification

- *Recount* means retell.

Grade 3 Standard 3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Standard Specifications

- For the purpose of assessment, in addition to their literal meaning, the terms *events* and *ideas* may include a consideration of literary elements and concepts—how they develop, interact, and/or shape a character (or an individual) or plot (or someone's story) over the course of a text.
- For the purpose of assessment, the term *individuals* may include inanimate or nonhuman subjects (characteristics, relationships, etc.).

3.1.3.3 Literature

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Item Specifications

- Items may address characterization in a poem as well as a story.
- Items may address basic and/or complex characterization.
- When assessing characterization, items may include evaluation of:
 - character traits (emotions, motivations, attitudes, intentions)

- methods of characterization (behavior/actions, dialogue/speech, thoughts)
- characters' influence or effect on story/plot development (sequence of events, setting—time and place—and /or theme)
- comparison/contrast of characters
- conflict within, between, and/or among characters
- impact of setting on characters
- prediction of characters' likely action in the future
- Items may require the identification of main ideas or supporting ideas that aid in development of character, setting, or events—plot.
- Items may assess literary elements as stand-alone features (e.g., students may be required to identify the events that comprise the main plot, or students may be required to identify the setting of a story).
- Items may assess literary elements in relationship to one another (e.g., students may be required to understand how setting impacts conflict, or how the sequence of events shapes the resolution, how setting and plot work together to create mood etc.).
- In the case of first person point-of-view where the narrator is a character in the passage, items may assess literary point-of-view.

3.2.3.3 Informational Text

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

Item Specifications

- Items do not exclusively assess historical, scientific, or technical texts.
- The term *concepts* refers to big ideas (e.g., perceptions, thoughts, theories, or models).
- *Technical procedures* in a text may refer to, but are not limited to, a how-to text, a list of procedures, directions, etc.
- Items include, but are not limited to, understanding sequence of events and their effect on individuals; cause and effect; impact of setting on individuals (e.g., inventors) and process (e.g., the weather's impact on commercial fishing); and prediction.
- Items may include analysis of the motivation of individuals—real people—and/or interpretation of their actions based on events.
- In the case of literary nonfiction presented as a narrative, such as a memoir, introduction of real people or characters and/or events and their development may be assessed via plot technique (i.e., exposition, rising action), etc.
- If an author uses literary style in informative text, items may assess literary elements such as mentioned above in item specifications for benchmark 3.1.3.3.

Grade 3 Standard 4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

Standard Specifications

- Items are not developed from a predetermined list of words and phrases. Items arise from words and phrases appearing in context and are appropriate to the assessment of reading comprehension.
- *Tone* refers to the author’s attitude towards her/his subject. Author’s tone—as derived from specific words, phrases, figures of speech/figurative language—may be assessed under this benchmark.
- Use context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. Context may appear in close proximity to the word or phrase in question (i.e., in the same sentence, paragraph, or surrounding paragraph) or it may be represented cumulatively throughout the text.
- Determine the meaning of words formed with a known affix added to a known word (e.g., agreeable/disagreeable, comfortable/uncomfortable, care/careless, heat/preheat).
- Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company/companion).
- Use glossary/dictionary entries, both print and digital, to determine/clarify the meanings of words and phrases.
- Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context (e.g., take steps).
- Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe people who are friendly or helpful).
- Distinguish shades of meaning among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered).
- Accurately use grade-appropriate, general academic and domain-specific (including technical) words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went looking for them).
- Items may include, but are not limited to, identification of synonyms, antonyms, multiple-meaning words and phrases, figures of speech/figurative language such as simile, metaphor, and personification.

3.1.4.4 Literature

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language, including figurative language such as similes.

3.2.4.4 Informational Text

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

Grade 3 Standard 5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Standard Specifications

- Analysis may require a consideration of a text in its entirety.
- Items may compare or contrast components of a single text or components of more than one text (e.g., how one paragraph differs from another in function or purpose).
- Items may assess how the structure of the text contributes to the development of theme, setting, plot, topic, concept, and/or idea.
- Author's and/or narrator's tone—as it is made evident from structuring of text—may be assessed under this standard.
- Creation of mood—the emotional atmosphere—as it is made evident from structuring of text, may be assessed under this standard.
- Items may assess recognition of the significance of text features such as photographs, illustrations, examples, captions, headings, graphics, charts, and tables.
- Items may assess author's presentation of sequence of events or sequence of ideas.
- Considerations of text structure may also include the devices used to create lines of poetry (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter, rhyme, syllabication, alliteration, assonance, consonance).

3.1.5.5 Literature

Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as *chapter*, *scene*, and *stanza*; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

Item Specifications

- Items may assess distinguishing features of fiction, drama, or poetry.
- Writing and speaking will be assessed at the classroom level only.

3.2.5.5 Informational Text

Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

Item Specifications

- Use means *refer to* or *recognize the impact of*.

- Items may address author’s method of organization for nonfiction text; problem/solution; cause/effect; compare/contrast; chronological order; classification; description.
 - The author’s sequencing of events may be a consideration in the author’s development of ideas.
 - Because informational text can include literary nonfiction, considerations of text structure may also require evaluation of some literary techniques (e.g., the function of lines of poetry, either created by the author or quoted from another source to convey an idea or further illustrate a point).
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Grade 3 Standard 6

Assess how point-of-view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Standard Specifications

- *Point-of-view* items assessed under this standard may include either the method of narration (i.e., literary point-of-view) or the author’s perspective (i.e., author’s point-of-view.) (Literary point-of-view items may also be assessed under benchmark 3.3.)
- The terms *point-of-view* and *narration*, solely as they relate to the vantage point from which the author presents action of a story, are interchangeable.
- The terms *author’s point-of-view* and *author’s perspective*, solely as they relate to the author’s purpose, may be used.
- Items may use the term *author’s message* in conjunction with and/or when assessing author’s point-of-view or author’s perspective. (Items may also use this term when assessing the central or main idea the author intended to convey to the reading audience. See Standard 2).
- Author’s choices, as they relate to author’s purpose, include stylistic techniques that shape the author’s message. These choices and techniques are therefore assessed under this standard. Considerations of the author’s style include, but are not limited to, development of voice, word choice, syntax, use of different types of language (e.g., literal, figurative, poetic devices, imagery), etc.
- Author’s and/or narrator’s tone—as derived from author’s style—may be assessed under this standard.
- Creation of mood—the emotional atmosphere—as it is made evident from author’s style, may be assessed under this standard.

3.1.6.6 Literature

Distinguish their own point-of-view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

Item Specifications

- The term *their own* refers to the students taking the assessment.
- Items may assess a character’s point-of-view/perspective.

3.2.6.6 Informational Text

Distinguish their own point-of-view from that of the author of a text.

Item Specifications

- The term *their own* refers to the students taking the assessment.
- When assessing the point-of-view of the author, items may use the terms *author's point-of-view* and *author's perspective*. These terms are interchangeable solely as they relate to the author's purpose.
- When assessing literary nonfiction, items may address literary point-of-view (i.e., the method of narration).
- The terms *author's point-of-view* and *author's perspective*, solely as they relate to the author's purpose, may be used. (In literary nonfiction, the author and the narrator may be—but are not necessarily—one and the same.)

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Online MCA: 1–4 items

Paper MCA: 0–2 items

Grade 3 Standard 7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

3.1.7.7 Literature

Assessed at classroom level only.

3.2.7.7 Informational Text

.Assessed at classroom level only.

Grade 3 Standard 8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Standard Specifications

- *Validity of reasoning* refers to logicity or probability (i.e., whether something makes sense for example, an article discussing dinosaurs that gives an obviously incorrect historical time-frame for their existence).
- *Relevance and sufficiency of evidence* refers to the author's credibility (i.e., whether her/his claims are supported by appropriate sources, for example, an article on a life-changing experience featuring quotations from an interview with the featured person).

3.1.8.8 Literature

Not applicable to literature.

3.2.8.8 Informational Text

Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence).

Item Specifications

- Items may assess adequacy, accuracy and appropriateness of author's evidence and credibility of sources.
 - Items may assess the identification of author's use of fact versus opinion or the appropriateness of author's defense of facts or opinions.
 - Items may examine cause-and-effect relationships.
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Grade 3 Standard 9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

3.1.9.9 Literature

Assessed at classroom level only.

3.2.9.9 Informational Text

Assessed at classroom level only.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Grade 3 Standard 10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

3.1.10.10 Literature

Assessed at classroom level only.

3.2.10.10 Informational Text

Assessed at classroom level only.