



Contents at left – click to preview chapters.

If contents are not visible use your toolbar above and click on the indicated button (to open table of contents):



# STANDARDS BASED MCAS

## Primary ELA

- This preview book contains sample chapters only.
- Review materials organized by curriculum standard.
- Instruction, not fill in the blanks.
- Basic skills practice.
- Internet resources aligned to curriculum standards.



TM

### An MCAS Mentor Production

Copyright 2000, all rights reserved. This online document is encrypted to prevent printing.



Next Page - use page number arrows below to navigate.

Students: We will start right in by learning what the standards say. On the tests you will need to know how to write well to respond to the MCAS Writing Prompt. Here are the Standards that the State has set for you. It's what they think you should be able to do.

#### Fourth Grade Composition Standards

Composition Standard # 19: Students will write compositions with a clear focus, logically related ideas to develop it, and adequate detail.
Composition Standard # 20 Students will select and use appropriate genres, modes of reasoning, and speaking styles when writing for different audiences and rhetorical purposes.
Composition Standard # 21 Students will demonstrate improvement in organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone, and word choice (diction) in their compositions after revising them.
Composition Standard # 22 Students will use knowledge of Standard English conventions to edit their writing.

On the next few pages you will see how other students have responded to the Writing Prompt section of the tests. Do you think you can write that well? Of course you can. It just takes practice and you'll get plenty of that in this course.

This course is built around a theme. You will be studying constellations in the sky and the stories that people have made up to go along with the sky pictures. People in cultures all over the world have created myths and stories to go along with the animals, people and other pictures they thought were spelled out by the stars. You'll have a chance to see some star maps to show you what we mean.

You will choose a constellation/ myth pair on which you will base a final multimedia project. You'll be visiting the Library Media Center and the

Internet for ideas and information. Your teacher will explain what you'll need to do to create this project. Along the way, you'll learn how to be a better reader and writer.

### MCAS Rubrics for Evaluating Written Work

A rubric is a guide. It provides a chart or visual guide that helps teachers judge how well you perform on the written parts of the test. We've included the rubrics in this book so you can see how your work is scored.

About the tests: six million student responses are scored by Massachusetts teachers who have been trained to correct your written work on the tests. Open Response items are evaluated by professional scorers. MCAS scoring guides indicate the knowledge and skills you must demonstrate to earn points.

Students' Writing Prompt long compositions are evaluated by looking at:

- topic development, based on a 1-6 point scale
- standard English conventions (grammar, mechanics) using a 1-4 point scale

Students responded to the following Writing Prompt:

Some days are more fun than others. Describe a day that was great for you and tell WHY it was great. Include details so the reader can enjoy the day as much as you did.

You'll see compositions that other students wrote to tell about their great day. You may be asked to write a composition about a day that was great for you too. See if you can write a composition that's as good as the first one in the group.

To help you along the road to better writing, we have a self-evaluation checklist on the next two pages. You can use it to judge your own writing, just like the scorers of the MCAS tests.

## A writing rubric (checklist) for students:

When writing a composition or practicing an MCAS Writing Prompt exercise, does your writing match the scoring rubrics used by the test scorers and your teacher?

Scenario: You just wrote a composition for your teacher. How well did you do? Fill in the checklist below and print it out. Keep it in your notebook. The next time you have a writing assignment come back to this page and fill in the checklist again.

Place a checkmark where you think you did well.

Organization and Content Checklist:	How's My Style:
<input type="checkbox"/> I used important details.	<input type="checkbox"/> I used many different and descriptive words.
<input type="checkbox"/> When I added details, I didn't wander from the main idea. I remembered my Topic Sentence and the subject of the Writing Prompt and stayed on course.	<input type="checkbox"/> I used words that helped people see my meaning. They could use all of their senses to feel and even hear my meaning.
<input type="checkbox"/> I organized my ideas in a logical way.	<input type="checkbox"/> I used different kinds of sentences and didn't start each one with the same word.
<input type="checkbox"/> My composition answered the question in the prompt.	<input type="checkbox"/> I made every effort to make my writing legible. My spelling and grammar were the very best.

My writing is good but I could improve. Maybe I need to add more details or more information.

Organization and Content	How's My Style?
<input type="checkbox"/> I tried to explain my main idea, the one in my Topic Sentence, but I could have added more information or supporting detail.	<input type="checkbox"/> My choice of words was good. My vocabulary choices served a purpose. I didn't use too many extra or unnecessary words.
<input type="checkbox"/> Once in a while my thoughts wandered away from the subject or I didn't totally answer the question in the Writing Prompt.	<input type="checkbox"/> My sentences were pretty good, but they are mostly the same kind of sentence. The sentences could be shorter and more to the point.

<input type="checkbox"/> My story was a little bit disorganized.	<input type="checkbox"/> I could have been a little neater and I know I wasn't watching my spelling and grammar too carefully.
<input type="checkbox"/> My ideas needed to be connected. I don't think every idea I had fit with the topic.	<input type="checkbox"/> The reader can usually see my point.

My writing isn't very clear. My ideas don't really support my topic sentence and some of my information isn't accurate. I don't pay attention to my spelling.

Organization and Content	How's My Style?
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to make my points more clearly. I needed to stay on the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/> My words need to be stronger and more effective.
<input type="checkbox"/> There weren't many details or supporting ideas in my composition.	<input type="checkbox"/> I sometimes repeated the same idea and my writing was choppy. My sentences could have been shorter and to the point.
<input type="checkbox"/> My paragraphs didn't have "flow". My ideas were choppy.	<input type="checkbox"/> My handwriting was sloppy and I didn't check over my spelling.

I know I need to answer the question, stick to the point. I don't add any details and my spelling and grammar are not up to par. I know I can do better.

Organization and Content	How's My Style?
<input type="checkbox"/> I didn't pay attention to the question. My story wandered.	<input type="checkbox"/> People couldn't tell what my ideas were about the subject.
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to get organized. I could have outlined my ideas before I started to write.	<input type="checkbox"/> I started all of my sentences the same way and didn't use descriptive words.
<input type="checkbox"/> I need to add details and more information.	<input type="checkbox"/> I had so many spelling and grammar mistakes that people were distracted and couldn't pay attention to what I was saying.

## Language Standard Four

Students will acquire and use correctly an advanced reading vocabulary of English words, identifying meanings through an understanding of word relationships.

You will learn some new vocabulary words. You learn new words every day. In this MCAS class, we'll ask you to write them on cards, the word will be on one side, the definition from the dictionary will be on the other side. Your teacher may give you some worksheets that will help you learn new words.

On the Internet Resources Page in this book you can learn a new word each day and play with "magnetic poetry". You can learn new words this way: <http://prominence.com/java/poetry/>

1. When you come across a word you don't know, stop and pay attention to it.
2. Re-read the sentence to the end, skipping over the hard word.
3. Stop and guess what the word might mean by looking at how it's used in the sentence.
4. If you can't tell what it might mean, read the sentences before and after. Can you now tell what the meaning is?
5. If you still aren't sure, write the sentence with the unfamiliar word underlined. Write your best guess based on the context. Go to the dictionary, look it up and write down the definition in your own words.

Twelve new vocabulary words for you to learn:

- \_\_\_\_\_1 compassion
- \_\_\_\_\_2 apathy
- \_\_\_\_\_3 unsympathetic
- \_\_\_\_\_4 exclaim
- \_\_\_\_\_5 passive
- \_\_\_\_\_6 acclaim
- \_\_\_\_\_7 proclaim
- \_\_\_\_\_8 patiently
- \_\_\_\_\_9 clamor
- \_\_\_\_\_10 pathetic
- \_\_\_\_\_11 sympathy
- \_\_\_\_\_12 passion

Match the twelve definitions below to the vocabulary words above.

- A. To greet out loud with approval or praise
- B. Able to bear pain without complaint or anger
- C. Not feeling compassionate; lacking favor toward
- D. A very loud uproar or outcry; an expression of dissatisfaction
- E. Feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for someone struck with misfortune
- F. Absence of excitement or emotion; lack of interest or feeling
- G. To announce in an official, formal manner or in an open way
- H. Not participating actively, not reacting visibly
- I. Causing pity, either positively or negatively; sad, pitiful
- J. To cry out or speak suddenly (as in a protest, a surprise or with strong emotion)
- K. Strong feelings of love; a strong desire or enthusiasm for something
- L. Agreement in feeling existing between people; harmony

Use your dictionary to help answer the questions below.

acclaim, apathy, clamor, compassion, exclaims, passion, passive, pathetic, patiently, proclaimed, sympathy, unsympathetic.

1. Each time Charlie sees the baby rabbit, he smiles and \_\_\_\_\_, "Isn't this the cutest little animal?"
2. In the United States, the Federal government \_\_\_\_\_ that July 4th is a national holiday to celebrate our independence won in 1776.
3. When the popular concert star appeared, the \_\_\_\_\_ of fans who also used their feet to create additional noise was so deafening that my ears hurt!
4. The special ceremony to \_\_\_\_\_ Ms. Adel, the church organist, will be held at the Town Hall tonight at 7:00.
5. My aunt has a \_\_\_\_\_ for all things English and travels to England whenever she can save enough money for the trip.
6. It really surprised me to witness Jane's \_\_\_\_\_ attitude to the exciting news that she scored a perfect 100% on the tests because she hardly showed any reaction at all.
7. Bob showed real \_\_\_\_\_ for his friend, Tim, when he gently talked to him after he discovered that Tim had lost his favorite football and couldn't stop crying.
8. The teacher \_\_\_\_\_ waited for his class to quiet so that he could read the morning announcements.
9. When my beloved dog died, friends showed their \_\_\_\_\_ for my pain by calling and coming by to visit.
10. Helen had made such a \_\_\_\_\_ attempt to clean her room; the bed was still rumpled, clothes were stashed in a corner, and her wastebasket was overflowing!
11. My cousin Jim showed \_\_\_\_\_ for my offer of vanilla ice cream because he preferred a less bland flavor like Cherries Garcia.
12. Since it was my third tardy this week, the Principal was very \_\_\_\_\_ to my attempts to waive the detention.

arthritis	align	autograph	argued	angrier
assign	item	frequent	arguing	angriest
description	complex	freckles	occurring	earnest
instrument	laze	deceive	occurred	gentle
squeezable	wrestle	communicate	delinquent	weird
lament	jagged	resolve	compile	weirdest
champion	allowance	delete	ignored	apologize
reply	represent	celery	penetrate	behavior
squash	impossible	escaped	package	operation
dispute	turmoil	strive	tyrant	private
wherever	recess	discredit	southern	exclaim
direct	advantage	accidents	delivery	squelch
direction	excess	couches	drowned	sprout
invade	explosion	injuries	magnet	stable
invasion	pledge	stale	mustard	official
personal	question	skis	replied	obstruct
personality	waste	shame	disgust	irritate
interview	commercial	coarse	commute	aisle
vow	determine	barefoot	stress	guessed
vocal	resources	coward	pursuit	guest
compose	unfortunately	jury	reunion	isle
unusual	whirl	thousand	universe	waist

These are challenge words that you can add to every day for vocabulary practice.

Define the underlined words in a piece from "Alice in Wonderland".

Alice said nothing: she had never been so much contradicted in all her life before, and she felt that she was losing her temper. "Are you content now?" said the Caterpillar.

"Well, I should like to be a little larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind," said Alice: "three inches is such a wretched height to be."

"It is a very good height indeed!" said the Caterpillar angrily, rearing itself upright as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).

"But I'm not used to it!" pleaded poor Alice in a piteous tone. And she thought to herself, "I wish the creatures wouldn't be so easily offended!"

Draw a picture about this story. Choose one of the underlined words to inspire you to draw something wonderful!

If you want to learn more new words, here are some books that can help you.

1100 Words You Need to Know

by Murray Bromberg (Introduction), Melvin Gordon (Introduction).

Paperback (July 1993)

21st Century Guide to Building Your Vocabulary (21st Century Reference), by Elizabeth Read.

Merriam-Webster's Vocabulary Builder by Mary Wood Cornog

The Princeton Review : Word Smart : Building an Educated Vocabulary by Adam Robinson

Vocabulary Cartoons : Building an Educated Vocabulary With Visual Mnemonics by Sam Burchers, et al

## Literature: Standard Sixteen

Students will compare and contrast similar myths and narratives from different cultures and geographic regions.

A myth is a story that has been handed down through the generations. It was sometimes a written story like Aztec and Inca myths. These stories were represented in hieroglyphics on the walls of their temples, but often myths are oral tales that have been told over many generations.

We have used the language of mythology to illustrate and define our literature consistently over time. Scientists have used the terms to define celestial bodies, animals, plants, and most recently our space vehicles. Gemini, Apollo, Mercury are all terms from classical Greek and Roman mythology.

If we have a solid foundation in classical mythology it helps us understand our literary world. From Chaucer, Spenser and Shakespeare, the old tales have been told and retold with new characters and settings.

Greek and Roman classical mythology is not all we have to review when we talk about mythology, however. All cultures have myths that go back to a time before the current generation. In more primitive cultures in places like Papua New Guinea, the ancient myths live on in current law. The unit of currency, the kina, is based on seashells which were traditionally used to barter and trade. The seashell and myths surrounding the distribution of shells from island to island, live on in all that is considered valuable.

If you have completed the final presentations, you have completed this course. To see how well you've done, your teacher may ask you to take a posttest. Good Luck. We know you'll do well.

## Here Are Some Books We Think You'll Like

<a href="#">Maniac Magee</a> , by Jerry Spinelli	<a href="#">King of the Wind</a> , by Marguerite Henry
<a href="#">Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH</a> , by Robert C. O'Brien	<a href="#">Lily's Crossing</a> , by Patricia Reilly Giff
<a href="#">A Visit To William Blake's Inn: Poems for Innocent And Experienced Travelers</a> , by Nancy Willard, ill. by Alice and Martin Provensen	<a href="#">Mick Harte Was Here</a> , by Barbara Park
<a href="#">Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery</a> , by Russell Freedman	<a href="#">Nothing But the Truth: A Documentary Novel</a> , by Avi
<a href="#">M.C. Higgins, the Great</a> , by Virginia Hamilton	<a href="#">One-Eyed Cat</a> , by Paula Fox
<a href="#">Ramona and Her Father</a> , by Beverly Cleary	<a href="#">Out of the Dust</a> , by Karen Hesse
<a href="#">Shiloh</a> , by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor	<a href="#">Queenie Peavy</a> , by Robert Burch
<a href="#">The Dollhouse Murders</a> , by Betty Ren Wright	<a href="#">Rabble Starkey</a> , by Lois Lowry
<a href="#">A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journey, 1830-1832</a> , by Joan Blos	<a href="#">Rascal</a> , by Sterling North
<a href="#">A Girl Named Disaster</a> , by Nancy Farmer	<a href="#">Sarah, Plain and Tall</a> , by Patricia MacLachlan
<a href="#">A String in the Harp</a> , by Nancy Bond	<a href="#">Sing Down the Moon</a> , by Scott O'Dell
<a href="#">Abel's Island</a> , by William Steig	<a href="#">Sounder</a> , by William H. Armstrong
<a href="#">Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions</a> , by Margaret Musgrove, ill. by Leo and Diane Dillon	<a href="#">Stonewords</a> , by Pam Conrad
<a href="#">Belle Prater's Boy</a> , by Ruth White	<a href="#">The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural</a> , by Patricia C. McKissack
<a href="#">By the Shores of Silver Lake</a> , by Laura Ingalls Wilder	<a href="#">The Dark is Rising</a> , by Susan Cooper
<a href="#">Castle</a> , by David Macaulay	<a href="#">The Devil in Vienna</a> , by Doris Orgel
<a href="#">Commodore Perry in the Land of the Shogun</a> , by Rhoda Blumberg	<a href="#">The Friends</a> , by Kazumi Yumoto, translated from Japanese by Cathy Hirano
<a href="#">Earthshine</a> , by Theresa Nelson	<a href="#">The Friendship</a> , by Mildred Taylor, ill. by Max Ginsburg
<a href="#">Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices</a> , by Paul Fleischman, ill. by Eric Beddows	<a href="#">The Great Fire</a> , by Jim Murphy
<a href="#">The Great Gilly Hopkins</a> , by Katherine Paterson	<a href="#">The Night Swimmers</a> , by Betsy Byars, ill. by Troy Howell
<a href="#">The House of Sixty Fathers</a> , by Meindert DeJong	<a href="#">The Pinballs</a> , by Betsy Byars
<a href="#">The Island on Bird Street</a> , by Uri Orlev, translated from Hebrew by Hillel Halkin	<a href="#">The Watsons Go to Birmingham -1963</a> , by Christopher Paul Curtis
<a href="#">The Moorchild</a> , by Eloise McGraw	<a href="#">The Westing Game</a> , by Ellen Raskin
<a href="#">Mr. Popper's Penguins</a> , by Richard and Florence Atwater	<a href="#">Thy Friend, Obadiah</a> , by Brinton Turkle

# TEST-TAKING TIPS

Students: Use these tips to help you prepare for the test.

## Before the test

- Develop a positive attitude. Tell yourself, “I will do my best on this test.”
- Get a good night’s sleep the night before the test.
- Get up early enough to avoid hurrying to get ready for school.
- Eat a good breakfast (and lunch, if your test is in the afternoon).

## During the test

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to directions from the teacher.
- Ask questions if you don’t understand what to do.
- Before you read a selection on the test, preview the questions that follow it to help focus your reading.
- After reading a selection, read the entire question and all the answer choices. Stop and think of an answer. Look to see if your answer is similar to one of the choices given.
- Read each test question carefully. Try to analyze what the question is really asking.
- Slow down and check your answers.
- Pace yourself. If you come to a difficult passage or set of questions, it may be better to skip it and go on. Then come back and really focus on the difficult section.

- The MCAS is **not** a timed test. If you need more time to finish the test, notify your teacher.
- If you are not sure of an answer to a question try these tips:
  - Get rid of the answers you know are not correct and choose among the rest.
  - Read through all the answers very carefully, and then go back to the question. Sometimes you can pick up clues just by thinking about the different answers you have been given to choose from.
  - Go back and skim the story or article to see if you can find information to answer the question. (Sometimes a word or sentence will be underlined to help you.)
- If you get stuck on a question, skip it and come back later.

## After the test

- Before you turn your test in, check it over. Change an answer only if you have a good reason. Generally it is better to stick with your first choice.
- Make sure you marked an answer for every question, even if you had to guess.
- Make sure your answer sheet is clearly marked with dark pencil. Erase any stray marks.
- Don’t worry about the test once it is finished. Go on to do your best work on your other school assignments.