



Defining Postsecondary Expectations for English Language Arts in Massachusetts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to determine what English language arts and mathematics knowledge and skills high school graduates need to enter credit-bearing courses at state colleges and universities, ADP asked postsecondary faculty in the five partner states (Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Texas) to:

1. define their expectations of high school graduates (related to admission and placement decisions);
2. examine what current state standards, high school exit and college entrance & placement assessments currently expect of students; and
3. identify the gaps that may exist among these various sets of expectations.

This “gap-analysis” work consisted of three parts.¹ In **part one**, English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics faculty members from K-12 systems and from two- and four-year colleges in the five ADP partner states examined the content of partner-state high school graduation assessments, national college admission and placement tests, a sampling of postsecondary institutional placement tests, and the GED. The results from part one comprise Education Trust’s five state reports, which reflect the feedback received from faculty members to the aforementioned assessments. These reports discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of the assessments and how well each assessment might serve postsecondary institutions in making admission and placement decisions. By examining individual test items, the faculty members were able to examine the breadth and depth of content coverage, as well as the types and quality of test items.²

In **part two**, using its assessment-to-standards alignment protocol, Achieve conducted studies of the ADP partner states’ ELA and mathematics graduation assessments and

¹ The **Education Trust** gap-analysis reports were originally circulated in 2002 and key findings have been incorporated into this report. The summary tables from the **Achieve** alignment study can also be found in the appendices of this report, and the findings from the **ADP** postsecondary discussions are presented here in this report for the first time. For more information, please visit the **ADP** website <<http://www.americandiplomaproject.org/>>.

² The Education Trust also prepared an analytical “cross-state” report that summarizes their findings.

the corresponding sets of state standards. The results from part two comprise Achieve's ten state alignment reports (i.e., five ELA, five mathematics). These reports discuss how closely the expectations articulated in the state standards are measured by the state's high school assessments. Achieve matched each individual assessment item to the standards, and analyzed how well the items measure students' mastery of the knowledge and skills described in those standards. Achieve was able to report how effectively the assessments measure the states' expectations for high school graduation.

In **part three**, ADP staff met with faculty members from two- and four-year colleges in each of the ADP partner states, representing a range of content areas (organized into the "ELA" and "Math" Teams) to:

- define their expectations for incoming students,
- prioritize their expectations for students, as may be contained in the state's academic standards;
- determine the degree to which the current standards and assessments together reflect those expectations, and
- identify any gaps (missing content) in the standards and assessments.

In this round of discussion, it was particularly helpful to have had a cross-section of faculty from the humanities, sciences and social sciences, since reading, writing and mathematics skills are necessary for success in all credit-bearing courses throughout college, not just in English and mathematics courses.

Following are the essential findings from the "gap analysis":

1. The Massachusetts standards for English language arts contained in the Curriculum Frameworks reflect postsecondary expectations for incoming students that would enable these students to do credit-bearing coursework without the need for remediation.
2. The English Language Arts MCAS could potentially be a useful tool in determining student admission and placement in Massachusetts institutions of higher education; the MCAS writing was seen to be a particularly reliable indicator of college readiness.
3. A predicative validity study needs to be conducted to see how closely performance on the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS predicts postsecondary success and how the MCAS scores correlate to the SAT I, Accuplacer and other national tests that postsecondary institutions currently use for admission and placement.

4. Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS results ought to be reported on high school transcripts. To maximize the usefulness of this information for postsecondary faculty, the results should be broken down by domain or strand.
5. The Grade 10 ELA MCAS is a better indicator of college-readiness than either the SAT I verbal section or the Accuplacer.
6. The passing score for the Grade 10 MCAS (in the “Needs Improvement” category) does not reflect performance that indicates that a student is adequately prepared to begin credit-bearing college coursework.

A detailed discussion of the findings follows.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In Massachusetts, through the three-part process described above, postsecondary faculty identified how closely the ELA Curriculum Frameworks and the Grade 10 ELA MCAS assessment aligned to postsecondary expectations. The following discussion of findings has been organized by the fundamental issues/questions that arose during this review process.

Issues/Questions

1. What are the postsecondary expectations for English language arts in Massachusetts?
2. How closely do the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks align to the postsecondary expectations for students in reading, writing, listening and speaking?
3. How closely does the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS align to the expectations articulated in the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks?
4. How closely does the emphasis on the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS align to the emphasis that postsecondary faculty places on the English language arts knowledge and skills needed to begin college-level work?
5. Is the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS useful – as is – to postsecondary institutions for the purposes of admission or placement?
6. What changes or adjustments to the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS do postsecondary faculty recommend in order to make that assessment more useful to postsecondary institutions for the purposes of admission or placement?

#1 Issue/Question: What are the postsecondary expectations for English language arts in Massachusetts?

Thinking more about what is really needed, rather than bowing to the current state of student English language arts expertise, what follows is a list of minimum skills and concepts articulated by postsecondary faculty in Massachusetts as necessary to do credit-bearing work at state colleges and universities:

1. Identify, construct and analyze oral and written arguments.
2. Identify logical structures and logical fallacies in written and oral text.
3. Marshall evidence in support of an argument.
4. Develop a thesis statement.

5. Construct paragraphs with internal organization (e.g., a thesis statement and supporting sentences).
6. Outline texts.
7. Recognize thesis in and extract essential information from written and oral text.
8. Read multiple texts, of multiple genres, and effectively negotiate among them simultaneously (e.g., comparing the differing treatment of a common theme).
9. Engage in sustained, focused reading.
10. Engage in sustained, focused listening.
11. Recognize rhetorical devices, manipulation, argument, biases, and propaganda in print and television media.
12. Utilize varied vocabulary and an understanding of nuance of language as a tool in effective writing, reading, listening and speaking.
13. Recognize the different purposes and usefulness of various types of sources (e.g., primary versus secondary).
14. Cite sources.
15. Use correct grammar, logic, usage, punctuation and mechanics.
16. Recognize differences in structure among different types of text.
17. Engage in collaborative work with many or few peers, practicing civility and effective communication (this skill becomes essential to success in upper-level, postsecondary courses).

#2 Issue/Question: How closely do the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks align to the postsecondary expectations for students in reading, writing, listening and speaking?

In general, the postsecondary faculty who reviewed the standards felt comfortable with the breadth and depth of the content covered in the Massachusetts ELA Framework. Close to three-quarters of the 27 General Standards were deemed “important” or “vital.” They found the following standards to be most essential:

- **Learning Standard 2.5** (“Summarize in a coherent and organized way information and ideas learned from a focused discussion.”) was deemed *critical* for students to meet in order to realize any success in postsecondary courses.
- **General Standard 4** (“Vocabulary and Concept Development: Students will understand and acquire new vocabulary and use it correctly in English language arts.”) was also identified as critical for success in many disciplines, not English alone.
- The ability to apply **General Standard 5** (“Structure and Origins of Modern English: Students will analyze standard English grammar and usage and recognize how its vocabulary has developed and been

influenced by other languages.”) was noted as having great importance.

- **General Standard 22** (“Standard English Conventions: Students will use knowledge of standard English conventions in their writing, revising, and editing.”) was also deemed essential.
- **Learning Standard 27.8** (“Create coherent media productions that synthesize information from several sources.”) was also recognized as very important; the team viewed it as a counterpart to the research paper.

In addition, postsecondary faculty identified two areas of the Learning Standards that should be given greater emphasis. They include:

- **Non-literary text:** The team felt that the emphasis on literature in the Learning Standards was valuable, but from the standpoint of postsecondary, the team would like also to see a corresponding emphasis on non-literary text in the Learning Standards. For example, Learning Standard 12.5, “Locate and analyze such elements in fiction as point of view, foreshadowing, and irony,” contains skills that are crucial in analyzing non-fiction text as well.
- **Citation of sources and the evaluation of the credibility of sources:** Although noted in the Learning Standards in the earlier grades, they felt that the use and citation of sources should be addressed at the high school level too, as should the evaluation of the *credibility* of sources.

The reviewers had the following concerns about the Framework:

- Postsecondary faculty felt that creative writing received too much emphasis in the Framework considering the small amount of this type of writing that a college student will be expected to produce.
- The team felt that the laudable and compelling goals expressed in overarching statements were not necessarily reflected in the “sub-standards.” They suggested that perhaps with integration across standards, more of these goals might be conveyed to students. For example, faculty found that the General Standards and their corresponding Learning Standards did not always correspond effectively to one another.
- The team thought that certain standards in the Framework inappropriately verged on instructional strategies (e.g., Learning Standards 25.5 and 25.6).
- In the Media Strand, the team felt that there should be mention of the need to evaluate print and non-print media.

#3 Issue/Question: How closely does the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS align to the expectations articulated in the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks?

Answer: Results of the Achieve assessment-to-standards alignment study determined that the Grade 10 ELA MCAS was generally aligned to the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework for Grade 10.

The Achieve assessment-to-standards alignment study revealed that 40 percent of the test items on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS in language and reading were found to be clearly consistent with the content in the standards. Another 45 percent of the items received a “1b”, meaning that they were aligned to only part of a standard, often to the lesser part. The remaining 15 percent were items that were tied to standards that were not specific enough to accurately determine their consistency. (For full table see Appendix 2, Table 1.)

Content Centrality	# of Items	2 (clearly consistent)	1a (standard not specific enough)	1b (item assesses only a part of the standard)	0 (inconsistent)
	40 (100% of test)	40% of all items received a 2	15% of all items received a 1a	45% of all items received a 1b	no items received a 0

In addition, an overwhelming majority of items received “2s” for clearly consistent performance centrality (80 percent). A score of “2” means that there is a strong match between the type of performance (cognitive demand) presented by each item and the type of performance described by the related standard. Eighteen percent received a “1b” (measured the performance in part). One item received a “0”, indicating that the performance demanded on the assessment failed to match the performance demanded in the standards. (For full table see Appendix 2, Table 2.)

Performance Centrality	# of Items	2 (clearly consistent)	1a (standard not specific enough)	1b (item assesses only a part of the standard)	0 (inconsistent)
	40	80% of all items received a 2	no items received a 1a	18% of all items received a 1b	2% of all items received a 0

The inclusion of more than one (but related) knowledge and/or skill within many of the standards is the reason for many of the content and

performance centrality “1b”s. This finding does not indicate a weak alignment of the MCAS to the Curriculum Framework, but is simply a reflection of the way the individual standards have been articulated.

With regard to the level of cognitive demand on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS 90 percent of the test items were rated a level “2” (inference or basic comprehension) or below; ten percent were rated a “3” (interpretation); and no items received a “4 (analysis).” The reviewers stated that testing complex skills and processes such as analysis can be an unreasonable goal of an on-demand assessment. Approximately five percent of the assessment items rated a “3” requiring “strategic thinking.” Faculty reviewers found the great majority of the MCAS items to be at a sophisticated level of “cognitive challenge” and at an appropriate grade level. In addition, faculty said that the MCAS tested a variety of “kinds of knowledge.” (For full table see Appendix 2, Table 4.)

Level of Cognitive Demand	# of Items	4 (analysis)	3 (interpretation)	2 (inference)	1 (basic comprehension)
	40	no items received a 4	10% of all items received a 3	65% of all items received a 2	25% of all items received a 1

#4 Issue/Question: How closely does the emphasis on the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS align to the emphasis that postsecondary faculty places on the English language arts knowledge and skills needed to begin college-level work?

Answer: On the whole, postsecondary faculty found that the MCAS ELA Grade 10 test addressed the set of knowledge and skills necessary for students to take credit-bearing college coursework. Additionally, they agreed that the *level* of reading selections was appropriately challenging, that is, the reading level of the selections was commensurate with the level of reading the team would like to see its incoming freshmen be able to negotiate.

Despite the strengths of MCAS, faculty did point out two concerns with respect to the reading selections. Team members noted that “literary” texts inappropriately outnumbered informational texts. The team considered all of the reading selections to be either explicitly or somewhat literary in nature. They suggested that an article from an academic journal or a similar piece of analytical writing could add balance, especially since this type of text is overwhelmingly the kind that students will be expected to navigate in freshman courses. Team members also took issue with the reading selections being taken almost exclusively from western literature (the exception being Session 1, Reading Selection 2). This western

emphasis does not reflect the emphasis on culturally diverse literature found in the Framework (especially Appendix A of the Framework).

#5 Issue/Question: Is the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS useful – as is – to postsecondary institutions for the purposes of admission or placement?

Answer: Yes, the MCAS results could provide important information to postsecondary institutions as they make decisions regarding admission or placement. Teams members agreed, however, that only scores of “Advanced” and “Proficient” on the MCAS ELA would indicate that a student is college-ready. They made a point of stating that a score of “Needs Improvement” would **not** be a good indicator of college readiness.

Faculty felt that the MCAS writing assignment was a particularly reliable indicator of college readiness, demonstrating that a student is prepared (or not) for a credit-bearing freshman English course. The team studied anchor papers for the writing assignment, which is scored for Topic Development (0-6 points, scored by two scorers, to give a student a possible maximum score of 12) and Conventions (0-4 points, scored by two scorers, to give the student a possible maximum score of 8). After having reviewed the anchor papers, the team concluded that even a minimum Topic Development score of 10 would indicate that these students would be ready for credit-bearing college courses.

In comparison to the SAT I, team members found that the MCAS demanded a similar level of reading comprehension, with which the team was pleased. However, the team saw the SAT I’s lack of a writing assessment as a critical shortcoming. Reviewers also de-emphasized the importance of the SAT I’s “decontextualized content” section (the verbal analogies) and praised the MCAS items for being rooted in the context of the reading selections. In terms of assessing a student’s ability to handle college-level work, postsecondary faculty felt overall that an SAT score was of less value to them than even a high score on the MCAS writing assignment alone.

Reviewers did not find the ACCUPLACER to be a useful tool for assessing a student’s ability to handle college-level coursework. Although some ACCUPLACER items were found to be rigorous, the reviewers cited problems with item construction, test format and the fact that there is too much emphasis on a limited number of reading comprehension skills.

#6 Issue/Question: What changes or adjustments to the Grade 10 English Language Arts MCAS do postsecondary faculty recommend in order to

make that assessment more useful to postsecondary institutions for the purposes of admission or placement?

Recommendations

1. While postsecondary faculty members are familiar with what student performance on both the SAT I verbal section and the Accuplacer means for placement purposes, they are not as familiar with the meaning of student performance on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS. They recommended, therefore, that Massachusetts conduct a predicative validity study to see how closely performance on the Grade 10 ELA MCAS predicts postsecondary success.
2. Postsecondary faculty members recommended that student high school transcripts include Grade 10 ELA MCAS scores reported by strand or domain (e.g., Language, Reading and Literature, Composition, etc.).
3. As noted earlier, the current cut score of 220 indicating “Needs Improvement” may be sufficient for high school graduation, but it is not high enough to indicate college readiness. A minimum score of “Proficient” should be required.
4. Postsecondary reviewers would like to see more balance with respect to the reading selections in terms of the balance between literary and non-literary writing, and the balance between western and non-western literature.
5. Team members determined that the prompt for the writing assignment was too vague to be useful to them in determining whether students can write for a specific audience and purpose. They suggested that providing some scaffolding with the prompt would enable the students to produce a more accurate picture of their writing abilities. (Some faculty members recommended reviewing the writing prompts used as freshman English placement tests in various Massachusetts institutions of higher education as they felt they were challenging enough to elicit strong student essays).
6. The majority of team members favored a text-based prompt for the writing assignment.
7. The MCAS scoring guide for writing also was found to be “broad and vague.” The team conceded that this problem is a result of “the attempt to make the scoring guide durable, while the prompts are annual.” Nonetheless, the team felt that it would be fairer to have a scoring guide for each individual prompt, year to year.

***IN THE FINAL VERSION OF THIS REPORT, POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS WILL BE INCLUDED HERE.***

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: METHODS

What follows is further detail about the methods used in the three parts of the ADP's gap-analysis work:

- In part one, the Education Trust assembled faculty members from K-12 systems and from two- and four-year colleges to examine the content of partner-state high school graduation assessments, national college admission and placement tests;
- In part two, Achieve staff, using an assessment-to-standards alignment protocol, conducted studies of the ADP partner states' English language arts and mathematics graduation assessments and the corresponding sets of state standards; and
- In part three, ADP staff met with faculty members from two- and four-year colleges in each of the ADP partner states to focus on defining postsecondary expectations and to determine the degree to which current ADP partner states' standards and assessments reflect those expectations.

Part One: The Education Trust Protocol

The Education Trust English language arts protocol developed for the assessment analysis study asks reviewers to examine assessments in terms of **Content** and **Demand**. Reviewers were asked to make a judgment about each item on an assessment in terms of its **Grade Level**, **Content/Topic**, **Cognitive Challenge** and **Kind of Knowledge**. The Cognitive Challenge of an item was determined to be **Simple**, **Moderate** or **Complex**; the Kind of Knowledge that each item tests was determined to be **Recall/Recognition**, **Procedural**, **Inference**, **Interpretation** or **Analysis**. Definitions of these terms from the Education Trust Gap Analysis Protocol follow:

COGNITIVE CHALLENGE:

This category asks: How challenging is the item or problem? Cognitive challenge is classified as either *simple*, *moderate* or *complex*.

Simple means that the problem requires only one step or the application of rule, for example, the recall of literal information in a given reading passage, or a very obvious inference or interpretation such as this item that followed the poem "One Perfect Rose":

- Who or what is the messenger sent by the lover to the speaker?
- A. the florist
 - B. the lover's best friend
 - C. a hired messenger
 - D. A friend of the speaker
 - E. a rose

GED practice item (Princeton Review)

On the other end of the scale, **complex** means that the problem is multistep and requires test-takers to be strategic in attacking the item. A “complex” item may also draw on knowledge of more than one domain. “Complex” items tend to be open-ended. However, a few multiple-choice items can be found to be “complex,” for example, the famous SAT analogies such as this one:

ELUCIDATE : CLARIFICATION ::

A. substantiate : evidence

B. postulate : verification

C. propitiate : wrath

D. reveal : obscurity

E. overwhelm : quantity

Moderate, not surprisingly, is between *simple* and *complex*, that is, the item requires at least two steps, but doesn’t necessarily draw on other domains or require a strategy. Multiple-choice reading items that require the test-taker to evaluate the whole text and select a response – for example, to infer the main idea – are often “moderate.”

KIND OF KNOWLEDGE (examples omitted)

Reviewers also analyzed items to determine which cognitive ability – or kind of knowledge – is the primary target of the question. Ideally, tests will be balanced in the “kind” of knowledge tested. The “kind” categories are:

KIND: Recall/recognizable means that only recall or recognition is required to select the correct response. These are typically multiple-choice, but could be short answer.

KIND: Procedural means that the correct response can be produced by applying a practiced rule.

Other “kinds” of knowledge demand understanding of the concept—the answer cannot be produced by procedure alone. In English language arts, these include items that require the use of analytical skills such as the following:

KIND: Inference – Inference describes items that require test-takers to derive meaning or draw a conclusion from given evidence or premises when the meaning or conclusion is not explicitly stated.

KIND: Interpretation –These items require test-takers to explain or translate symbols, figurative language, characters, etc., using information that is not evident in the text. Interpretation items are typically but not always about literature.

KIND: Analysis - Items that demand analysis can also ask for a range of skills including evaluation, synthesis, compare and contrast, and other skills associated with literary analysis. Analysis items tend to be, but aren’t always, open-ended.

Part Two: Achieve Assessment Alignment Protocol

The Achieve English language arts protocol considers four dimensions in its analysis of the degree of alignment between an assessment and a set of standards.

- **Content centrality:** This criterion provides a deeper analysis of the match between the content of each examination question and the content of the related standard by examining the degree or quality of the match. Reviewers assign each item to one of four categories based on the degree of alignment: “2” = clearly consistent; “1a” = not specific enough; “1b” = somewhat consistent; “0” = inconsistent.
- **Performance centrality:** This criterion focuses on the degree of the match between the type of performance (cognitive demand) presented by each examination item

and the type of performance described by the related standard. Each item makes a certain type of cognitive demand on a student (e.g., the item requires a certain performance such as “select,” “identify,” “compare,” or “analyze”). Reviewers assign each item to one of four categories based on the degree of alignment: “2” = clearly consistent; “1a” = not specific enough; “1b” = somewhat consistent; “0” = inconsistent.

- **Challenge:** This criterion is applied to a set of items to determine whether doing well on these items requires students to master challenging subject matter. Reviewers consider two factors in evaluating sets of examination items against the challenge criterion: source of challenge and level of challenge.
 - Source of challenge attempts to uncover whether the individual examination items in a set are difficult because of the knowledge and skills they target, or because of other reasons not related to the subject matter, such as relying unfairly on students’ background knowledge. Reviewers rate each item as having an appropriate (1) or inappropriate (0) source of challenge.
 - Level of challenge compares the emphasis of performance required by a set of items to the emphasis of performance described by the related standard. In addition to evaluating alignment, reviewers also judge whether the set of examination items has a span of difficulty appropriate for students at a given grade level based on the standards, the assessment and supporting materials. Reviewers assign each item to one of four categories indicating its type of cognitive demand: 4 = analysis; 3 = interpretation; 2 = inference; 1 = basic comprehension.
- **Balance and range:** No one assessment can measure the full range of knowledge and skills described in the state standards. Evaluating balance and range provides both qualitative and quantitative descriptive information about the choices states or test developers have made.
 - **Balance** compares the emphasis of content supplied by an item set to the emphasis of content described by the standards. In addition to evaluating alignment, reviewers also judge whether the set of items emphasizes the more important content at the grade level. Reviewers write a succinct summary of the balance of each item set.
 - **Range** is a measure of coverage or breadth (the numerical proportion of all content addressed).

Part Three: ADP Protocol

The discussions at the ADP meetings were structured according to a set of guiding questions (and tasks) that the participants were given in advance of the meeting:

A. Define Postsecondary Content and Competencies

1. Briefly outline the ELA content and competencies that students must know and be able to do if they are to be placed as incoming freshman into credit-bearing ELA courses, as opposed to non-credit/remedial ELA courses.
2. In addition, briefly outline what ELA content and competencies you would add to the core list above to prepare students TO DO WELL in credit-bearing freshman courses and continue to succeed as they progress to upper-level courses in your field.

B. Evaluate the state high school ELA standards

With your core competencies in mind, we would like you to evaluate your state's ELA standards.

1. Within the limitations of administering large-scale, on-demand assessments, please identify the emphasis (in terms of a percentage from one to one hundred) that the different standards, and different strands of standards, should be given on a state test.
2. With respect to the standards listed under each strand, please assign a priority to the content/competency, given what you would expect from freshmen students. Here is the rubric:
 - Give a "3" for vital content.
 - Give a "2" for important content.
 - Give a "1" for nice, but "can-live-without" content.
 - Give a "0" for extraneous, "Who cares?" content.

C. Summary questions about the state's high school ELA standards:

1. If students master the state's high school ELA standards, will they have the competencies they need
 - to avoid placement in remedial college ELA classes? If not, why not?
 - to do well in freshman credit-bearing ELA courses? If not, why not?
 - to do well in your course (including non-ELA courses such as history or philosophy)? If not, why not?
2. Are there any serious gaps in content or competencies outlined in the high school ELA standards? Think back to your list of core competencies; are all of them represented? If you identify gaps, please note them.
3. From what you could tell about the reading level expected of students, does it seem comparable to the reading level you expect of your freshmen students? (Give us your impression of the difficulty of the reading identified in the examples.)

4. Is there an appropriate range of reading genres required of students? (Think about the extent to which the standards require students to demonstrate comprehension of literary text, expository text and persuasive text.)

5. Is there an appropriate range of writing required of students? (Think about the extent to which the standards require students to write narrative, expository and persuasive text.)

6. What are the key points that you would like to see reported to your state about the high school ELA standards?

APPENDIX 2: ACHIEVE ASSESSMENT-TO-STANDARDS ALIGNMENT RESULTS

The following tables represent the results from the Achieve alignment study for the MCAS Grade 10 Test of ELA from spring 2001 and the corresponding 1997 Massachusetts ELA Curriculum Framework.

However, the ELA Team discussed and made recommendations based on the document currently in use: the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, adopted June 2001.

<p>Test Design Multiple-Choice Items: 36 Open-Response Items: 4 Writing Assignment: 1</p>

TABLE 1: Content Centrality

Note: Ratings for Content Centrality are “2” = clearly consistent; “1a” = not specific enough; “1b” = somewhat consistent; “0” = inconsistent.

Standard	# of items	2	1a	1b	0
Learning Standard 4: Vocabulary	3 (7.5%)	1	0	2	0
Learning Standard 5: Language Structure and Conventions	2 (5%)	0	0	2	0
Learning Standard 6: Dialects & Role Standard English	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Standard 7: Influence on English from Other Lang.	1 (2.5%)	1	0	0	0
<i>Language Strand totals:</i>	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	0	4 (10%)	0
Learning Standard 8: Decode	1 (2.5%)	1	0	0	0
Learning Standard 9: Identify basic facts/essential ideas	5 (12.5%)	5	0	0	0
Learning Standard 10: Genres	2 (5%)	2	0	0	0
Learning Standard 11: Identify, analyze theme w/ evidence	1 (2.5%)	1	0	0	0
Learning Standard 12: Structure & elements of fiction	5 (12.5%)	1	1	3	0
Learning Standard 13: Structure & elements of non-fiction	7 (17.5%)	2	3	2	0

(TABLE 1: Content Centrality, continued. Note: Ratings for Content Centrality are “2” = clearly consistent; “1a” = not specific enough; “1b” = somewhat consistent; “0” = inconsistent.)

Learning Standard 14: Poetry	5 (12.5%)	0	2	3	0
Learning Standard 15: Imagery, mood, tone	8 (20%)	2	0	6	0
Learning Standard 16: Compare/contrast myths	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Standard 17: Interpret non-literary works	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Literature Strand totals:</i>	34 (85%)	14 (35%)	6 (15%)	14 (35%)	0
Totals	40 (100%)	16 (40%)	6 (15%)	18 (45%)	0

TABLE 2: Performance Centrality

Note: Ratings for Performance Centrality are “2” = clearly consistent; “1a” = not specific enough; “1b” = somewhat consistent; “0” = inconsistent.

Standard	# of items	2	1a	1b	0
Learning Standard 4: Vocabulary	3 (7.5%)	0	0	3	0
Learning Standard 5: Language Structure and Conventions	2 (5%)	2	0	0	0
Learning Standard 6: Dialects & Role Standard English	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Standard 7: Influence on English from Other Lang.	1 (2.5%)	0	0	0	1
<i>Language Strand totals:</i>	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	0	3 (7.5%)	1 (2.5%)
Learning Standard 8: Decode	1 (2.5%)	1	0	0	0
Learning Standard 9: Identify basic facts/essential ideas	5 (12.5%)	5	0	0	0
Learning Standard 10: Genres	2 (5%)	1	0	1	0
Learning Standard 11: Identify, analyze theme w/ evidence	1 (2.5%)		0	1	0
Learning Standard 12: Structure & elements of fiction	5 (12.5%)	4	0	1	0
Learning Standard 13: Structure & elements of non-fiction	7 (17.5%)	7	0	0	0
Learning Standard 14: Poetry	5 (12.5%)	4	0	1	0
Learning Standard 15: Imagery, mood, tone	8 (20%)	8	0	0	0

(TABLE 2: Performance Centrality, continued. Note: Ratings for Performance Centrality are “2” = clearly consistent; “1a” = not specific enough; “1b” = somewhat consistent; “0” = inconsistent.)

Learning Standard 16: Compare/contrast myths	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Standard 17: Interpret non-literary works	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Literature Strand totals:</i>	34 (85%)	30 (75%)	0	4 (10%)	0
Totals	40 (100%)	32 (80%)	0	7 (17.5%)	1 (2.5%)

TABLE 3: Source of Challenge

Note: Ratings for Source of Challenge are “1” = appropriate, “0” = inappropriate.

Standard	# of items	1	0
Language Strand	6 (15%)	6	0
Literature Strand	34 (85%)	34	0
Totals	40 (100%)	40 (100%)	0

TABLE 4: Level of Cognitive Demand

Note: Ratings for Level of Cognitive Demand are “4” = analysis; “3” = interpretation; “2” = inference; “1” = basic comprehension.

Standard	# of Items	1	2	3	4
Learning Standard 4: Vocabulary	3 (7.5%)	0	3	0	0
Learning Standard 5: Language Structure and Conventions	2 (5%)	2	0	0	0
Learning Standard 6: Dialects & Role Standard English	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Standard 7: Influence on English from Other Lang.	1 (2.5%)	1	0	0	0
<i>Language Strand totals:</i>	6 (15%)	3 (7.5%)	3 (7.5%)	0	0
Learning Standard 8: Decode	1 (2.5%)	0	1	0	0
Learning Standard 9: Identify basic facts/essential ideas	5 (12.5%)	4	1	0	0
Learning Standard 10: Genres	2 (5%)	1	1	0	0
Learning Standard 11: Identify, analyze theme w/ evidence	1 (2.5%)	0	1	0	0
Learning Standard 12: Structure & elements of fiction	5 (12.5%)	1	3	1	0
Learning Standard 13: Structure & elements of non-fiction	7 (17.5%)	0	5	2	0
Learning Standard 14: Poetry	5 (12.5%)	1	3	1	0

(TABLE 4: Level of Cognitive Demand, continued. Note: Ratings for Level of Cognitive Demand are “4” = analysis; “3” = interpretation; “2” = inference; “1” = basic comprehension.)

Learning Standard 15: Imagery, mood, tone	8 (20%)	0	8	0	0
Learning Standard 16: Compare/contrast myths	0	0	0	0	0
Learning Standard 17: Interpret non-literary works	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Literature Strand totals:</i>	34 (85%)	7 (17.5%)	23 (57.5%)	4 (10%)	0
Totals	40 (100%)	10 (25%)	26 (65%)	4 (10%)	0

TABLE 5: Level of Challenge/Balance

Standard	Level of Challenge/Balance of Corresponding Item Sets
<i>Language Strand:</i>	
Learning Standard 4: Vocabulary	3 items at Level 2; appropriate challenge and balance for vocabulary at grade 10.
Learning Standard 5: Language Structure and Conventions	2 items at level 1; appropriate challenge and balance for vocabulary at grade 10.
Learning Standard 6: Dialects & Role Standard English	No items. Not designated for assessment at the state level.
Learning Standard 7: Influence on English from Other Lang.	One item that was a dictionary question, level 1. Could have been omitted.
<i>Literature Strand:</i>	
Learning Standard 8: Decode	One item sufficient for this strand at this grade level.
Learning Standard 9: Identify basic facts/essential ideas	Five items, 4 at level 2. Good representation for challenge and balance at this level.
Learning Standard 10: Genres	Two items, one each at levels 1 and 2. Appropriate number of items on this skill for this grade level.
Learning Standard 11: Identify, analyze theme w/ evidence	One item, but this topic is touched upon in the extended writing prompt, so is well covered at an appropriate level of challenge.
Learning Standard 12: Structure & elements of fiction	Five items, with a range of demand from level 1 to 3. Good coverage and challenge for this skill.
Learning Standard 13: Structure & elements of non-fiction	Seven items at levels 2 and 3 provide good coverage and challenge for this set of skills.
Learning Standard 14: Poetry	Five items, ranging from levels 1 to 3 provide good coverage and challenge for this set of skills.
Learning Standard 15: Imagery, mood, tone	Eight items may seem extensive for this skill, but they assess elements across the genres and so provide an appropriate balance. All items at level 2.
Learning Standard 16: Compare/contrast myths	No items. Perhaps better assessed locally.
Learning Standard 17: Interpret non-literary works	No items. Perhaps better assessed locally.

TABLE 6: Range

Standard	Portion of Standards Assessed
<i>Language Strand:</i>	
Learning Standard 4	1/3 or .33
Learning Standard 5	2/2 or 1.0
Learning Standard 6	0/2 or 0
Learning Standard 7	0/2 or 0
<i>Literature Strand:</i>	
Learning Standard 8	0/1 or 0
Learning Standard 9	0/1 or 0
Learning Standard 10	0/2 or 0
Learning Standard 11	0/1 or 0
Learning Standard 12	1/2 or .50
Learning Standard 13	0/1 or 0
Learning Standard 14	0/2 or 0
Learning Standard 15	0/2 or 0
Learning Standard 16	0/1 or 0
Learning Standard 17	0/2 or 0