Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test

Item Specifications

for

Reading

Grade 8

Dr. Joseph B. Morton
State Superintendent of Education
Alabama State Department of Education
Montgomery, Alabama
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INTRODUCTION

This bulletin provides specific information about the *Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test* (ARMT). Educators representing each State Board of Education district as well as both city and county school systems served on committees to determine the content standards on which the ARMT is based. In addition, educators from throughout the state of Alabama served on committees to review the content of the tests, including selecting reading passages, reviewing specific test items, and determining achievement levels.

Teachers must be familiar with the information in this bulletin so that they may incorporate effective teaching of the reading content standards with classroom assessments. Using classroom assessments with similar test formats from time to time will help to enable students to demonstrate proficiency on the various content standards in reading.

Two types of items are included in the ARMT. Multiple-choice and open-ended items assess student performance on the ARMT in reading. Multiple-choice items carry a point value of one, while open-ended items carry a point value of three. In this document, teachers will see sample reading selections and representative item types for reading.

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DEFINITION OF READING MATERIALS

**Literary/recreational** reading materials are generally read for pleasure, such as magazine articles, poetry, novels, and short stories.

**Informational/textual** reading materials are generally read for information, such as materials containing charts or graphs and materials found in encyclopedias, textbooks, lab manuals, essays, and news magazines.

**Functional** reading materials are generally read for a precise action, such as directions, maps, schedules, menus, catalogues, instructions, and other materials generally encountered in everyday life beyond the classroom.
## CONTENT STANDARDS

### Grade 8

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<td><strong>66</strong></td>
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PASSAGES WITH ITEMS

These are the directions given to students.

DIRECTIONS:
Read each passage. Then read each question about the passage. For some questions you will need to choose the best answer and then mark the space in your answer document. For other questions you will need to write your response in the answer document.
On A Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle

I have a famous relative. She has never been on television, and she does not play professional sports. She is not famous all around the world, but she is very well-known in a small part of it. If you knew her, you would consider yourself lucky. You see, my Grandma Pearl is famous for her peanut brittle.

Peanut brittle is a golden, crunchy candy that is easy to make, but difficult to make well. There are many tricks to making peanut brittle. You have to use uncooked peanuts that are called “raw peanuts.” You have to use the right kind of sugar, too. But my grandma says the most important thing to remember is that you should only make peanut brittle on a clear day.

My hypothesis is that this has something to do with the moisture in the air or barometric pressure, but I really don’t know. I asked Grandma Pearl once why peanut brittle would be flat and chewy if you make it on a cloudy day. “I don’t know why it is,” she said looking at me, “it just is. If you are going to make peanut brittle, you had better do it right and only make it on a clear day.”

Whenever Grandma Pearl gave anyone a present, she always included peanut brittle with it. Every time I visited my grandmother, she would give me a small sack of peanut brittle when I left. Once, when I was visiting her, she sent me down to the market on the corner to buy some raw peanuts. I was proud that she trusted me to buy the right variety. After I located them in the store, I took them to the counter to pay for them. The lady looked at me and said, “You know, these aren’t the kind of peanuts you eat. They’re the kind you cook with.”

“That’s what I’m going to do with them,” I said proudly. “I’m making peanut brittle with my grandma.”

The lady looked at me over her glasses and said, “Why, is Pearl Myers your grandmother?”

“Yes, ma’am, she is,” I said proudly.

“Well, you tell her ‘hi’ from Eileen.” The lady handed me my change and then added, “Your grandmother makes the finest peanut brittle I have ever tasted.”

“My grandma makes the finest peanut brittle anyone has ever tasted,” I said matter-of-factly.

Over the years, I took it for granted that everyone in Whitley County knew of my grandmother’s peanut brittle, and I was seldom surprised. One day, after I was grown, I found myself near her home, so I dropped in for a visit. Grandma Pearl led an active social life and would likely be gone if you just dropped in, but usually I could find her. This time, I found her with two of her friends. They were outside a local business,
operating a bake sale for charity. There were cookies, cakes, pies, and cupcakes of every variety, but everyone who stopped was sure to buy one thing in particular. Prominently displayed were small sacks of peanut brittle with a sign in front of them: “Grandma Pearl’s Peanut Brittle—limit one per customer please.”

But what really sealed my grandmother’s fame was the year one of her friends secretly entered her peanut brittle in the county fair. Grandma didn’t even realize she had done this until they announced her name as the blue ribbon winner. When Grandma went up to receive her ribbon, the judge said, “Pearl, I knew when I saw your name on the entry that the peanut brittle would be good. I didn’t know how good, though. It was the crunchiest, lightest, most flavorful peanut brittle I have ever tasted.”

Grandma said, “Thank you. But it wasn’t the best peanut brittle I ever made. Just average.”

Ever since then, people say they’ll take Pearl’s “average peanut brittle” over anyone else’s best.

What Grandma Pearl says is true. If you want good peanut brittle, you have to make it on a clear day. I’ve got my own rule about peanut brittle. True, you can only make it on a clear day, but it’s good to eat anytime.

1. Which statement is best supported by the information in the story?

   A Grandma Pearl makes average peanut brittle for her friends.
   B A person does not have to be on television to be famous.
   C Peanut brittle is usually flat and chewy on a sunny day.
   D The author visits her grandmother often.

2. Most of the events in this story take place —

   A in the narrator’s home
   B at the market
   C in Whitley County
   D at the county fair
3. Read this sentence from the story.

If you knew her, you would consider yourself lucky.

From this sentence, you can tell that the narrator is —

A proud
B boastful
C popular
D humorous

5. Which of these lines does not depend on the setting of the story?

A Grandma Pearl is famous for her peanut brittle.
B The lady at the market knows Grandma Pearl.
C Grandma Pearl wins a contest for her peanut brittle.
D The narrator finds Grandma Pearl downtown.

4. Which of the following lines from the story best describes Grandma Pearl’s personality?

A She has an active social life.
B She does not like cloudy days.
C She operates a bake sale for charity.
D She is known for her peanut brittle.

6. When Grandma Pearl won a ribbon at the county fair, which plot component did that event represent?

A Climax
B Conflict
C Resolution
D Mood
7. When Grandma Pearl says, “... it wasn’t the best peanut brittle I ever made. Just average,” the reader can tell Grandma Pearl is —

A  conceited
B  bored
C  embarrassed
D  modest

10. According to the story, how does someone make peanut brittle correctly?

Use at least three details from the story to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

11. Grandma Pearl enjoys making and sharing peanut brittle.

Tell why you think Grandma Pearl does this and include at least three details or examples to support your answer.

Write your response in the answer document.

8. The literary element that changes within the story is the —

A  setting
B  point of view
C  characterization
D  theme

9. In the market, when Eileen discovers the identity of the narrator’s grandmother, her mood changes from —

A  friendly to impatient
B  impatient to amused
C  excited to confused
D  helpful to interested
**Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return**

He runs, he twirls  
He jumps, he swirls  
Exuberance shows no restraint.

Excitement spews  
He nips my shoes  
With glee, not with complaint.

He’s quick, he’s fleet  
Beneath my feet,  
A frenzy of jovial bliss.

A look forlorn  
But not of scorn  
Wondering what was amiss.

Each time I go  
He’ll never know  
How long he will have to stay.

But now I’m back  
No more to lack  
Forgotten, his saddened way.

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**Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner**

Upon the couch, or on the chair  
I know my cat can see me there.  
I pat my lap, I beg, implore  
But still she chooses to ignore.

She blinks her eyes and licks her paws  
Lets out a yawn, well, just because.  
She acts aloof and nonchalant,  
She doesn’t seem to care or want.

And if her actions hurt me some  
I don’t get down or feel too glum.  
My cat’s affectionate, although  
Her style is not to let it show.

For all her actions contradict  
What happens next, I can predict.  
If I’m too busy or too tired  
Then my attention is desired!
1. Which actions of the cat in "Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner" show that the cat is nonchalant?

A. The cat can see her owner sitting upon the couch, or on the chair.
B. She wants her owner’s attention only when she is busy.
C. The cat is affectionate, but in a different way than a dog.
D. The cat doesn’t respond to her owner’s calls.

2. In the poem, "Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return," the last stanza can be equated to what part of a plot?

A. Conflict
B. Climax
C. Resolution
D. Mood

3. In "Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner," which of these best describes the personality of the cat?

A. “But still she chooses to ignore.”
B. “She doesn’t seem to care or want.”
C. “She blinks her eyes and licks her paws . . .”
D. “Her style is not to let it show.”

4. Stanza 1 of “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” can best be described as the —

A. conflict
B. climax
C. resolution
D. mood
5. The mood of the poem “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” can best be described as —

A  sad  
B  dramatic  
C  silly  
D  humorous

6. In “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner,” irony is used in stanza 4 to show —

A  the speaker is too frustrated to play with the cat  
B  the cat does the opposite of what the speaker wants  
C  the speaker tries to understand the cat  
D  the cat refuses to play with the speaker

8. Read these lines from the “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner.”

“And if her actions hurt me some
I don’t get down or feel too glum.”

From these lines, you can tell that the speaker is —

A  thoughtless  
B  patient  
C  attentive  
D  busy

9. In the poem “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return,” which of these phrases best describes the dog’s overall nature?

A  “How long he will have to stay”  
B  “With glee, not with complaint”  
C  “Wondering what was amiss”  
D  “Forgotten, his saddened way”
10. How are the attitudes of the dog and the cat toward their owners alike? How are they different? Use examples from the poems to support your response. Write your response in the answer document.

11. Choose either the dog described in the first poem or the cat in the second poem. Explain which pet you would rather own. Use specific details or examples from the poem. Write your response in the answer document.
How to Make a Bluebird Trail

Bluebirds are one of Americans’ favorite songbirds. Native to North America, bluebirds help gardeners and farmers by eating insects and grasshoppers. Recently the bluebird population has declined due to loss of habitat and the introduction of aggressive species of birds such as the House Sparrow and the European Starling.

Experts agree that the bluebird population can increase through the use of a special birdhouse called a bluebird nest box. Some people in rural areas like to build bluebird trails, which is simply a series of bluebird boxes along a route.

To build a bluebird box, it’s essential to understand the kind of nest box bluebirds use. Not just any birdhouse will do.

First, choose a natural wood such as cedar or redwood that has not been treated. Untreated wood does not contain toxins which can harm nestlings. Bluebird boxes should be well ventilated and easy to clean.

Second, never build a perch on a bluebird box. If a bluebird box has a perch, it will attract sparrows or starlings that might drive the bluebirds out.

The size of the entrance hole for the bluebird is also critical. For Eastern Bluebirds, a round entrance hole of one and one-half inches should be used. This prevents starlings from entering the bluebird box.

Once your bluebird box is done, it’s important to place it where it will attract bluebirds. Bluebirds will sometimes nest on the outskirts of cities or towns. But their favorite places are rural areas. They like to nest near open places, with scattered trees. Pastures with fence lines are ideal.

Mount the bluebird box so the entrance hole is about five feet above the ground. Choose a spot with a bush or small tree nearby. This provides the baby bluebirds a safe landing spot away from predators when they first leave the nest.

To make a bluebird trail with several nesting boxes, make sure and space them at least 100 yards apart. This gives each nesting pair the room they need to catch insects and raise their young ones.
Finally, it’s essential to check the boxes on your bluebird trail regularly. Nestlings usually remain in the nest about three weeks. When the baby bluebirds have flown away, clean out the boxes.

To learn more about bluebirds, visit the North American Bluebird Society Internet website at www.nabluebirdsociety.org.

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1. To understand why the author believes bluebird trails are necessary, it is important to know that —

A. other birds live in bluebird boxes
B. bluebirds are only found in rural areas
C. America enjoys songs of the bluebird
D. bluebirds are a useful species of bird

2. Suppose the reader didn’t follow all of the guidelines for building a nest box.

What might result from this?

Use *three* examples from the passage to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.
3. The web shows some important ideas from the passage. Complete the web by writing the important ideas that are missing. Be sure to write the ideas in the same order they are presented in the passage.
Cynthia Moss: African Elephant Researcher

A woman is observing a herd of elephants in the African country of Kenya. She watches them use their trunks to pick up pieces of grass. She also watches them throw dust onto their backs. She takes notes as they eat, rest, and play. She takes pictures of them also. She is careful not to disturb the elephants in any way. The woman is Cynthia Moss. She has been studying elephants for more than thirty years and is considered an elephant expert.

Moss was born in 1940 in New York state, far away from African plains and jungles. She was lured by the excitement of adventure. She thought she’d find that in Africa and moved there several years after graduating from college. After several years of working on her project, she moved into the park and lived among the elephants she was studying.

Moss first had to be able to identify one elephant from another. With her camera, she made a “recognition file.” She noted that no two elephants were exactly the same. She learned to tell the elephants apart by looking at their ears, which are as different as human fingerprints. Instead of being smooth around the edges, elephant ears have various notches and tears. There are also different patterns of veins and sometimes warts and other markings. Moss took close-up pictures of each elephant’s head and made detailed notes for her files. After studying the pictures and notes, she was able to distinguish one elephant from another. She gave each elephant a name, eventually shortening the names to letters and numbers.

Once Moss could identify the elephants, she was able to record their daily movements and activities. She noted relationships between the elephants. It had already been proven that elephants live in family groups of related members. The oldest female, called the “matriarch,” is the ruler of the group. The males separate from the group when they are between 10-15 years old, and travel alone or in small groups.

Moss also observed the connection between mothers and their young. She was impressed by the way the mothers cherish the young. Elephant mothers take good care of their babies. Other females in the family also take care of the young, acting a bit like babysitters.

The work of studying elephants, however, would be less meaningful if Moss didn’t share her knowledge with others. She has given lectures, written several books, and made documentary films on the subject. She also works very closely with the Kenyans who live around the reserve. She learned that some Africans are afraid of the elephants, while others hunt them for their ivory. Her goal is to make all Africans familiar with the elephants, and get them involved in the preservation of their own wildlife. The research that Moss conducts is important, not only for understanding these magnificent animals, but also for ensuring their survival.
1. Based on the information about Moss, you can tell that she —

A  intends to move the elephants to a safer place
B  wants to learn about different animals in Kenya
C  hopes to educate the Kenyans about preserving wildlife
D  wishes to become a famous author

2. In this passage, the word *matriarch* means —

A  powerful elephant
B  young ruler
C  large group
D  oldest female

3. If the author added another paragraph to the passage, what information do you think it would include?

   Explain why you think so.

   Write your response in the answer document.

4. How does the author of the passage feel about Cynthia Moss and her work? How can you tell?

   Use examples from the passage to explain your response.

   Write your response in the answer document.
Grow Your Own Garden

Growing a garden is fun. Flowers bring color and sweet smells into our lives. Homegrown carrots and tomatoes are delicious to munch on. Whether your garden takes up a corner of your yard, or a corner of a windowsill, it’s easy to be successful by following a few simple guidelines.

First, decide what size garden works best for you. Look around your house, yard, or apartment. Think carefully about the space available, as well as the time and effort you want to devote to your project. Plants need soil, sunshine, and water. They need care too. If you are planting a garden in a corner of your yard, choose a spot that gets lots of morning sun. If you live in an apartment, you might decide to place your container garden on a sunny spot on your patio or porch. You can also make a garden with a flowerpot or two on a windowsill that gets morning sun.

Once you have determined the size of your garden, you are ready to choose what to plant. Decide if you want flowers, vegetables, or both. When choosing plants, consider the size and location of your garden and how much sun it will get. Sunflowers that tower six feet in the air need lots of room and sunlight. Other plants do well in the shade. If you are not sure what to plant, look for books about gardens at the library.

After you have decided on your favorite flowers or vegetables, the next step is to make a budget. Make a list of everything you will need, including seeds, plants, potting soil, containers, and tools. Seeds are usually less expensive than plants, but can be harder to grow.

If you are making a container garden, you may need to buy a few large pots or other containers. Pots may be made out of clay, plastic, or wood. You can often find pots and gardening tools, such as shovels and trowels, in secondhand stores or at yard sales.

When everything is ready, it is time to plant! When using packaged seeds, follow the directions on the package. Plants usually come with a tag that includes instructions on care. Water frequently to keep young plants and seeds moist, especially if you live in a hot climate. If you plan carefully, choose the right plants, and take good care of them, you are sure to have a garden everyone will enjoy.
3. According to the passage, there are many decisions a potential gardener must make. How does the reader’s living space affect those decisions?

Explain your response using three examples from the passage for support.

Write your response in the answer document.

4. How does the author show that he or she is qualified to write this passage?

Use at least three details from the passage to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.
Plant for Success!

The Ross Middle School Garden Club plans to raise vegetables. The school is providing a special garden area behind the science building. The club members took a “Plant for Success” class at a local nursery. In the class, they learned how to use the planting information on seed packets. They found out that seed companies print a planting guide on each seed packet. The guide describes when the seeds should be planted in different areas of the country. The members discovered that their area is referred to as Zone 4. In the class they were also told that it is important to know when each crop will reach maturity. The students need to know when the vegetables will be ready to pick so they can plan their harvesting schedule. Below are copies of seed packets for some crops that are being considered by the Garden Club Members.

### Crispy Carrots
Harvest in 70 days
When to Plant:
- Zones 3 and 4: mid-April
- Zones 5 and 6: early April
- Zones 7 and 8: mid-March
- Zones 9 and 10: early March

### Improved Green Beans
Ready to pick in 52 days
When to Plant:
- Zones 1 and 2: late May
- Zones 3 and 4: mid-May
- Zones 5 and 6: late April
- Zones 7 and 8: early April
- Zones 9 and 10: late March

### Super Sweet Corn
Days to Maturity: 90 days
Recommended Planting Dates:
- Zones 1 and 2: Not recommended
- Zones 3 and 4: May 15
- Zones 5 and 6: May 1
- Zones 7 and 8: April 15
- Zones 9 and 10: April 1

### Summer Squash
Ready to pick in 60 days
When to Plant:
- Zones 1 and 2: late May
- Zones 3 and 4: mid-May
- Zones 5 and 6: late April
- Zones 7 and 8: mid-April
- Zones 9 and 10: late March

### Garden King Eggplant
Harvest in 120 days
Best for Zones 5-10
When to Plant:
- Zones 1-4: Not recommended
- Zones 5 and 6: May
- Zones 7 and 8: April
- Zones 9 and 10: April

### Banana Peppers
Ready to pick in 72 days
When to Plant:
- Zones 1 and 2: late May
- Zones 3 and 4: mid-May
- Zones 5 and 6: late April
- Zones 7 and 8: early April
- Zones 9 and 10: late March
2. Imagine that you also lived in Zone 4 and wanted to grow Crispy Carrots and Super Sweet Corn.

Describe the steps you would use to plant and harvest your garden using details from the selection for support.

Write your response in the answer document.

3. Describe how the title of this selection is appropriate for the students’ project.

Use details from the selection to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.

1. If the author added more to the end of this selection, it would most likely —

A explain why the Garden Club chose the seed packets

B describe how the different vegetables taste

C identify the members of the Garden Club

D compare the various seed companies
ITEMS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH A PASSAGE
POETRY ITEMS

These are the directions given to students.

**DIRECTIONS:**
Read each question. Decide which is the best answer to the question. Mark the space for the answer you have chosen.

1. The *rhythm* of a poem is its —
   - A pattern of rhyming words
   - B number of words and syllables per line
   - C pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables
   - D number of lines and stanzas

3. Read the poem below and answer the question that follows.

   Knee deep,
   Warm waters swirl
   Nibbling fish—
   Ouch!
   Pebbles are sharp.
   But the sun continues
   To shine.

   This poem is a —
   - A sonnet
   - B ballad
   - C haiku
   - D lyric

2. Which type of poem must have only fourteen lines?
   - A Ballad
   - B Sonnet
   - C Epic
   - D Limerick
ITEMS BY CONTENT STANDARD
Content Standard 1

Apply strategies, including making inferences to determine theme, confirming or refuting predictions, and using specific context clues, to comprehend eighth-grade literary/recreational materials.

- Applying self-monitoring strategies
- Distinguishing fact from fiction
- Determining sequence

Item Type

Multiple-choice
Open-ended

Additional Information

Items associated with literary/recreational passages and poetry

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The item below references “On a Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” on page 5.

1. Which statement is best supported by the information in the story?

A  Grandma Pearl makes average peanut brittle for her friends.

B*  A person does not have to be on television to be famous.

C  Peanut brittle is usually flat and chewy on a sunny day.

D  The author visits her grandmother often.

The item below references “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” on page 9.

2. Which actions of the cat in “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” show that the cat is nonchalant?

A  The cat can see her owner sitting upon the couch, or on the chair.

B  She wants her owner’s attention only when she is busy.

C  The cat is affectionate, but in a different way than a dog.

D*  The cat doesn’t respond to her owner’s calls.
Content Standard 2

Evaluate the impact of setting, mood, and/or characterization on theme of specific literary selections.

- Identifying the components of plot

Item Type

Multiple-choice
Open-ended

Additional Information

Items associated with literary/recreational passages and poetry.

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The items below reference “On a Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” on page 5.

1. Most of the events in this story take place —

- A in the narrator’s home
- B at the market
- C* in Whitley County
- D at the county fair

2. If you knew her, you would consider yourself lucky.

From this sentence, you can tell that the narrator is —

- A* proud
- B boastful
- C popular
- D humorous
3. Which of the following lines from the story best describes Grandma Pearl’s personality?

A* She has an active social life.
B She does not like cloudy days.
C She operates a bake sale for charity.
D She is known for her peanut brittle.

4. Which of these lines does not depend on the setting of the story?

A Grandma Pearl is famous for her peanut brittle.
B The lady at the market knows Grandma Pearl.
C Grandma Pearl wins a contest for her peanut brittle.
D* The narrator finds Grandma Pearl downtown.

5. When Grandma Pearl won a ribbon at the county fair, which plot component did that event represent?

A* Climax
B Conflict
C Resolution
D Mood

6. When Grandma Pearl says, “...it wasn’t the best peanut brittle I ever made. Just average,” the reader can tell Grandma Pearl is —

A conceited
B bored
C embarrassed
D* modest

7. The literary element that changes within the story is the —

A* setting
B point of view
C characterization
D theme

The items below reference “On a Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” on page 5.
The item below references “On a Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” on page 5.

8. In the market, when Eileen discovers the identity of the narrator’s grandmother, her mood changes from —

A friendly to impatient
B impatient to amused
C excited to confused
D* helpful to interested

The items below reference “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” on page 9.

10. Stanza 1 of “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” can best be described as the —

A* conflict
B climax
C resolution
D mood

The item below references “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” on page 9.

9. In the poem, “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return,” the last stanza can be equated to what part of a plot?

A Conflict
B Climax
C* Resolution
D Mood

11. In “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner,” which of these best describes the personality of the cat?

A “But still she chooses to ignore.”
B* “She doesn’t seem to care or want.”
C “She blinks her eyes and licks her paws . . .”
D “Her style is not to let it show.”
12. The mood of the poem “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” can best be described as —

A  sad  
B  dramatic  
C  silly  
D*  humorous

14. The mood of the poem “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” can best be described as —

A*  light  
B  mysterious  
C  romantic  
D  friendly

13. In “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner,” irony is used in stanza 4 to show —

A  the speaker is too frustrated to play with the cat  
B*  the cat does the opposite of what the speaker wants  
C  the speaker tries to understand the cat  
D  the cat refuses to play with the speaker

15. Read these lines from the “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner.”

“And if her actions hurt me some  
I don’t get down or feel too glum.”

From these lines, you can tell that the speaker is —

A  thoughtless  
B*  patient  
C  attentive  
D  busy
The item below references “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” on page 9.

16. In the poem “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return,” which of these phrases best describes the dog’s overall nature?

A  “How long he will have to stay”
B* “With glee, not with complaint”
C  “Wondering what was amiss”
D  “Forgotten, his saddened way”
Sample Open-Ended Items

The items below reference “On a Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” on page 5.

1. According to the story, how does someone make peanut brittle correctly?
   Use at least three details from the story to support your response.
   Write your response in the answer document.

2. Grandma Pearl enjoys making and sharing peanut brittle.
   Tell why you think Grandma Pearl does this and include at least three details or examples to support your answer.
   Write your response in the answer document.

The items below reference “Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” on page 9.

3. How are the attitudes of the dog and the cat toward their owners alike?
   How are they different?
   Use examples from the poems to support your response.
   Write your response in the answer document.

4. Choose either the dog described in the first poem or the cat in the second poem.
   Explain which pet you would rather own.
   Use specific details or examples from the poem.
   Write your response in the answer document.
Content Standard 3

Distinguish among the sub-categories of poetry, such as ballads, lyric poems, epics, haiku, and limericks, based on their characteristics.

- Identifying rhythm and rhyme scheme

Item Type

Multiple-choice

Additional Information

Phrases or poetry may be used.
Items not associated with a passage will be used.

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The items below reference “Poetry Items” on page 23.

1. The rhythm of a poem is its —

A pattern of rhyming words
B number of words and syllables per line
C* pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables
D number of lines and stanzas

2. Which type of poem must have only fourteen lines?

A Ballad
B* Sonnet
C Epic
D Limerick

3. Read the poem below and answer the question that follows.

Knee deep,
Warm waters swirl
Nibbling fish—

Ouch!

Pebbles are sharp.

But the sun continues to shine.

This poem is a —

A sonnet
B ballad
C haiku
D* lyric
Content Standard 4

Apply strategies appropriate to the type of material, including making inferences to determine bias or theme and using specific context clues, to comprehend eighth-grade textual/informational and functional materials.

- Applying self-monitoring strategies
- Comparing predicted with actual content
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- Confirming author’s credentials
- Determining sequence

Item Type

Multiple-choice
Open-ended

Additional Information

Items apply to textual/informational and functional materials.

Sample Multiple-Choice Items

The item below references “How to Make a Bluebird Trail” on page 13.

1. To understand why the author believes bluebird trails are necessary, it is important to know that —

   A  other birds live in bluebird boxes
   B  bluebirds are only found in rural areas
   C  America enjoys songs of the bluebird
   D* bluebirds are a useful species of bird


2. Based on the information about Moss, you can tell that she —

   A  intends to move the elephants to a safer place
   B  wants to learn about different animals in Kenya
   C* hopes to educate the Kenyans about preserving wildlife
   D  wishes to become a famous author
3. In this passage, the word matriarch means —

A  powerful elephant  
B  young ruler  
C  large group  
D*  oldest female  

4. This passage is designed to —

A  describe a variety of flowers and vegetables  
B*  tell how to create a garden successfully  
C  explain why everyone should grow plants  
D  persuade the reader that gardening is expensive  

5. Which of these is a fact in the passage?

A  “Growing a garden is fun.”  
B  “… you are sure to have a garden everyone will enjoy.”  
C*  “Seeds are usually less expensive than plants…”  
D  “… it’s easy to be successful by following a few simple guidelines.”  

6. If the author added more to the end of this selection, it would most likely —

A*  explain why the Garden Club chose the seed packets  
B  describe how the different vegetables taste  
C  identify the members of the Garden Club  
D  compare the various seed companies  

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Sample Open-Ended Items

The items below reference “How to Make a Bluebird Trail” on page 13.

1. Suppose the reader didn’t follow all of the guidelines for building a nest box.

   What might result from this?

   Use three examples from the passage to support your response.

   Write your response in the answer document.

2. The web shows some important ideas from the passage. Complete the web by writing the important ideas that are missing. Be sure to write the ideas in the same order they are presented in the passage.

   ![Diagram of a web showing important ideas related to bluebirds and nest boxes.](image-url)

3. If the author added another paragraph to the passage, what information do you think it would include?
   Explain why you think so.
   Write your response in the answer document.

4. How does the author of the passage feel about Cynthia Moss and her work? How can you tell?
   Use examples from the passage to explain your response.
   Write your response in the answer document.

The items below reference “Grow Your Own Garden” on page 18.

5. How does the author show that he or she is qualified to write this passage?
   Use at least three details from the passage to support your response.
   Write your response in the answer document.

6. According to the passage, there are many decisions a potential gardener must make. How does the reader’s living space affect those decisions?
   Explain your response using three examples from the passage for support.
   Write your response in the answer document.
The items below reference “Plant for Success” on page 20.

7. Imagine that you also lived in Zone 4 and wanted to grow Crispy Carrots and Super Sweet Corn.

Describe the steps you would use to plant and harvest your garden using details from the selection for support.

Write your response in the answer document.

8. Describe how the title of this selection is appropriate for the students’ project.

Use details from the selection to support your response.

Write your response in the answer document.
ANSWER KEY
“On A Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” (pages 5–8)

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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10. Content Standard 1

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<th>Score Point</th>
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| 3           | demonstrate a thorough understanding of making peanut brittle correctly and include three of the following details:  
• uncooked or raw peanuts  
• right kind of sugar  
• make it on a clear day  
• peanut brittle might be cloudy and chewy if made on a rainy day |
| 2           | demonstrate a general understanding of how to make peanut brittle correctly and include only two of the details. |
| 1           | demonstrate a limited understanding of how to make peanut brittle correctly and may include bare or no support. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
## ARMT GRADE 8 READING

“On A Clear Day You Can Make Peanut Brittle” (continued)

### 11. Content Standard 2

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<tr>
<th>Score Point</th>
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| 3           | demonstrate a thorough understanding that Grandma Pearl was proud of her peanut brittle AND she enjoyed the pleasure it gave others. The response must cite at least three details. Examples could include but are not limited to the following:  
  - She was famous for her peanut brittle because she distributed it so often.  
  - She taught the author how to make it.  
  - She sold it at bake sales.  
  - She won a contest and said it wasn’t even her best attempt. |
| 2           | demonstrate a general understanding of Grandma Pearl’s pride in her peanut brittle and cite at least two details. The response may contain some elements of a score point 3 response, but lack completeness and depth of a 3-point response. |
| 1           | demonstrate a limited understanding of Grandma Pearl’s pride, and may include bare or no support or inappropriate support. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
“Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” (pages 9–12)

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10. Content Standard 1

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| 3           | demonstrate a thorough understanding by comparing and contrasting the attitudes of the animals toward their owners with thorough support. The response may include the following on the dog:  
  • He plays with his owner.  
  • He shows his excitement when his owner gets home.  
  • He is sad when his owner is gone.  
  The response may include the following on the cat:  
  • She pretends not to hear her owner calling her.  
  • She acts like she doesn’t care for her owner when she is called.  
  • Only when her owner is busy or tired does she want her owner’s attention.  
  The response may include this similarity of the dog and cat:  
  • They both care for their owners. |
| 2           | demonstrate a general understanding by either comparing or contrasting the animals’ attitudes toward their owners OR demonstrate a general understanding by comparing AND contrasting the animals’ attitudes toward their owners, but is less complete than a score point 3. |
| 1           | demonstrate a limited understanding by including only one of the required elements. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
“Dog, Upon His Owner’s Return” and “Cat, Showing Affection to Her Owner” (continued)

11. Content Standard 2

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<th>Score Point</th>
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| 3           | state which pet the writer would choose and give a thorough description of the pet’s personality, citing these types of characterization from the poem:  
  • pet’s actions  
  • pet’s expressions  
  • owner’s opinions or feelings for the pet |
| 2           | state which pet the writer would choose and give a general description of the pet’s personality. The response may include some aspects of a score point 3 response, but will lack the depth and completeness of a score point 3 response. |
| 1           | demonstrate limited understanding by including only a statement of which pet the writer would choose. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
“How to Make a Bluebird Trail” (pages 13–15)

2. Content Standard 4

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<th>Score Point</th>
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| 3           | demonstrate a thorough understanding that not following the guidelines could prove hazardous or fatal to the bluebird and include three accurate supporting examples from the passage. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - Using treated wood could poison hatchlings.  
  - A perch will attract aggressive birds that could harm the bluebird.  
  - A hole that is too large could allow predators or other aggressive birds access.  
  - Placing the box away from protective covering could allow predators access to baby birds.  
  - Placing the nesting boxes too close crowds birds who may have to compete for the same food. |
| 2           | demonstrate a general understanding about the hazards involved in incorrectly constructing nest boxes, and include only two examples of support. Response may contain some elements of the score point 3 response, but lacks clarity or is less complete. |
| 1           | demonstrate limited understanding of the consequences of poor box-making and may include bare or no support. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |

3. Content Standard 4

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<th>Score Point</th>
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| 3           | thoroughly and accurately map the main sections of the article in the correct order.  
  - Box 2: Decline in bluebird population OR Building bluebird trails  
  - Box 4: Use of untreated wood OR Materials for building boxes  
  - Box 6: Size of entrance hole  
  - Box 8: Making a bluebird trail |
| 2           | demonstrate that the student generally understands the article, but does not meet the criteria for a score point 3 response because response is not as complete. Either the response includes only two or three correct ideas, or some of the ideas are not in the correct sequence. |
| 1           | demonstrate that the student has limited understanding of the article by including only one correct idea or all of the ideas are out of sequence. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
“Cynthia Moss: African Elephant Researcher” (pages 16–17)

3. Content Standard 4

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| 3           | demonstrate a thorough understanding by citing reasonable and logical information that the paragraph could include. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - future research and/or conservation plans  
  - the future of the African elephant populations due to the success of Cynthia Moss’s work  
  The response will also include a thorough explanation of why the student thinks that is a reasonable prediction. |
| 2           | demonstrate a general understanding of the content of the added paragraph, and include a general explanation of the reasoning. The response may contain correct elements, but lacks the depth and completeness of insight shown by a score point 3 response. |
| 1           | demonstrate a limited understanding of the content of the added paragraph and may include bare or no support. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |

4. Content Standard 4

<table>
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<th>Score point:</th>
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| 3            | include a thorough understanding of the author’s tone in the article as being one of respect and include complete details for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - The author specifically describes Moss’s methods and processes.  
  - The author states that Moss’s work would be less meaningful if she didn’t share it with others.  
  - The author tells about Moss’s respect for both the animals and the Kenyans who work on the reserve.  
  - The author emphasizes Moss’s goal which is to familiarize the country with the elephants in order to preserve them for the future. |
| 2            | include a general analysis of the author’s tone as being positive and include some details for support. The response is not as complete or organized as a score point 3 response. |
| 1            | include a limited analysis of the author’s tone as being positive and include little or no support. |
| 0            | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
“Grow Your Own Garden” (pages 18–19)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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3. Content Standard 4

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| 3           | demonstrate a thorough understanding that the decisions made when starting a garden are dependent upon the reader’s residence and include three examples for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - amount of space available to grow a garden  
  - location of sunlight or shade needed  
  - the size of the space based on the plants’ potential sizes  
  - whether to use yard space or containers |
| 2           | demonstrate a general understanding of how location affects decisions when gardening. The response gives two examples of support and may include some aspects of a score point 3 but is less in-depth and complete. |
| 1           | demonstrate a limited understanding of the decisions made when planting a garden, but with little or no support. |
| 0           | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |

4. Content Standard 4

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<th>Score point:</th>
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| 3            | demonstrate a thorough understanding of the author’s credibility regarding the passage content and include three complete details for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - location of the garden  
  - size of the garden  
  - how to choose the plants  
  - references  
  - budgeting  
  - listing items needed  
  - sources for materials  
  - watering instructions |
| 2            | demonstrate a general understanding of the author’s credibility and include two details for support. The response is not as complete or organized as a score point 3 response. |
| 1            | demonstrate a limited understanding of the author’s credibility with little or no support. |
| 0            | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
2. **Content Standard 4**

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<th>Score point:</th>
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| 3            | demonstrate a thorough understanding of when to plant and harvest a garden for Zone 4 using Crispy Carrots and Super Sweet Corn and include complete details for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - Plant Crispy Carrots in the middle of April and approximately 70 days later (the end of June) the plant will be ready to harvest.  
  - Plant Super Sweet Corn in the middle of May and approximately 90 days later, which is the middle of August, the plant will be ready to harvest. |
| 2            | demonstrate a general understanding of when to plant and harvest a garden for Zone 4 using Crispy Carrots and Super Sweet Corn and include some details for support. The response is not as complete or organized as a score point 3 response. |
| 1            | demonstrate a limited understanding of when to plant and harvest a garden for Zone 4 using Crispy Carrots and Super Sweet Corn with little or no support. |
| 0            | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |

3. **Content Standard 4**

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<th>Score point:</th>
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| 3            | demonstrate a thorough understanding of how the title fits the students’ project and include complete details for support. Examples may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  - They are researching the seed packets first to determine when to plant the seeds.  
  - They discovered what zone they lived in to match when they should plant.  
  - They are planning a schedule to work out when to plant and when to harvest their garden vegetables.  
  - They took a class to learn more about gardening. |
| 2            | demonstrate a general understanding of how the title fits the students’ project and include some details for support. The response is not as complete or organized as a score point 3 response. |
| 1            | demonstrate a limited understanding of how the title fits the students’ project and include little or no support. |
| 0            | demonstrate no attempt to address the prompt. |
# ANSWER KEY

**Poetry Items (page 23)**

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SAMPLE RESPONSE FORMAT
Answer question __ in this box.