



# Exemplar Grade 5 Reading Test Questions



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# Introduction

This booklet explains ACT<sup>®</sup> Aspire<sup>®</sup> Grade 5 Reading test questions by presenting, with their answer keys, sample questions aligned to each reporting category on the test. A key includes the question's depth-of-knowledge (DOK) level,<sup>1</sup> an explanation of the task posed by each question, a thorough explanation of correct responses, ideas for improvement, and more. The exemplar test questions included here are representative of the range of content and types of questions found on the ACT Aspire Grade 5 Reading test. Educators can use this resource in several ways:

- Become familiar with ACT Aspire question types.
- See what typical questions in each ACT Aspire reporting category look like.
- Help reinforce or adjust teaching and learning objectives.
- Learn how ACT Aspire improvement idea statements can help students identify key skills they have not yet mastered.

Each ACT Aspire Reading assessment contains several passages, including literary narratives (prose fiction, memoirs, personal essays) and informational texts (social science, natural science). Within and across grade levels, the passages span a range of complexity levels in order to provide students, teachers, and parents with information about how well students understand texts of increasing difficulty. Students answer a series of selected-response (multiple-choice), technology-enhanced, and constructed-response questions that assess their abilities to recognize meaning in, reason logically about, and make connections between and among texts. ACT Aspire Reading questions operate at various DOK levels, or cognitive complexities, and reflect a range of difficulty appropriate for the grade level.

All levels of ACT Aspire Reading assessments include constructed-response tasks that measure the higher-order cognitive processes necessary for reading and understanding increasingly complex texts. Constructed-response tasks are scored according to rubrics that allow students to receive varying amounts of credit for responses that are correct or partially correct, enabling differentiation between multiple skill levels.

The types of constructed-response tasks in ACT Aspire Reading assessments include the following examples:

- Formulate a conclusion by making connections within a passage, and provide support using specific details from the text.

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<sup>1</sup> Norman L. Webb, "Depth-of-Knowledge Levels for Four Content Areas," last modified March 28, 2002, <http://facstaff.wcer.wisc.edu/normw/All%20content%20areas%20%20DOK%20levels%2032802.doc>.

- Formulate a conclusion by making connections between a pair of passages, and provide support using specific details from both texts.
- Identify cause-and-effect relationships within a passage, and provide support using specific details from the text.
- Identify similarities and differences between the key ideas of paired passages, and provide support using specific details from both texts.

## Reporting Categories

ACT Aspire Reading tests assess skills in the following reporting categories, which are the same as the categories listed in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Reading strand and those found in the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards in Reading.

### Key Ideas and Details

These questions require students to read texts closely; to determine central ideas and themes and summarize information and ideas accurately; and to understand sequential, comparative, and cause-effect relationships.

### Craft and Structure

These questions require students to determine word and phrase meanings and analyze an author's word choice rhetorically; to analyze text structure; and to understand purpose and point of view.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

These questions require students to understand how arguments are constructed and to make connections to prior knowledge and between and among texts.

## Improvement Ideas

ACT Aspire includes simple improvement ideas at the reporting category (skill) level on student and parent reports. These improvement ideas are provided for the lowest performing skill for each subject tested. The skills are always ordered from highest performing to lowest performing based on the percentage of points correct. If the percentages for two or more skills are tied, the skill with the lower number of total points is displayed first.

Keep in mind that the order of skills listed on reports may not always be exemplary of where to focus learning. For example, the skills in which a student performed within the ACT Readiness Range may not always be listed first, and the skills in which a student did not perform within the ACT Readiness Range may not always be listed last. Also, keep in mind the total number of points possible in each skill when interpreting the percentage correct.

There are two levels of improvement idea statements (low and high) for ACT Aspire summative reporting. Low statements are given on the report if the student's lowest skill score is below the ACT Readiness Range for that particular skill. High statements are given on the report if the student's lowest skill score is at or above the ACT Readiness Range for that particular skill.

# Answer Key

This section presents a reading passage and the sequence number, grade, question type, DOK level, alignment to the ACT Aspire reporting categories, and correct response for each question. Each question is accompanied by an explanation of the question and the correct response as well as improvement idea statements for ACT Aspire Reading.

## Passage: “A Second Chance”

### A Second Chance

**SOCIAL SCIENCE:** This passage is an original work of nonfiction.

- What can you do with some empty plastic soda bottles, some plastic bags, and a stick? People around the world are learning to reuse these discarded items to
- 5** build walls for new buildings like schools.

#### The Beginning

- In 2005, Susanne Heisse was worried about the plastic trash she saw in her village on Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. One day,
- 10** she noticed a man stuffing some plastic bags into a plastic soda bottle. This gave her an idea. She and other villagers stuffed plastic bottles with nonbiodegradable trash to use as bricks for a five-foot-tall village wall. They
- 15** placed the “bricks” side by side between wood and chicken wire frames, and then they covered the chicken wire with adobe. The wall looked nice, and it was strong. After this success, many environmental groups
- 20** began working with communities to build structures using the bricks.

#### The Idea Spreads

- In a village in Guatemala, young children collect plastic bottles. The bottles
- 25** are washed and allowed to dry. Near the town center, children and adults sit, stuffing

the bottles from a pile of plastic bags. They use sticks to pack the bags tightly into the bottles, talking and laughing as they work.

- 30** A few hundred finished eco-bricks are stacked nearby, but there is more work to be done. This community is building a two-classroom school with eco-bricks, so they will need about 6,500 of them. Nearby,
- 35** workers pour concrete to make the foundation for the school. The foundation will support concrete posts with chicken wire stretched between them. The eco-bricks will be layered between the chicken wire sheets
- 40** to make the walls of the building. Then the walls will be covered with cement.

- Because the eco-bricks are strong, the completed school will be sturdy. When kept out of the sunlight and covered with stucco or concrete, the bottles will last hundreds
- 45** of years. They also help keep the building cool in summer and warm in winter. Eco-brick buildings cost little to build because the bricks are made from trash and community
- 50** members volunteer to do much of the work.

Plastic-bottle schools have been built in Ecuador, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Uganda. Right now, there are no eco-brick buildings in the United States, but Upcycle

- 55** Santa Fe in New Mexico teaches people how to make eco-bricks and uses them in construction demonstrations.

## Question 1

**A Second Chance**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCE:** This passage is an original work of nonfiction.

What can you do with some empty plastic soda bottles, some plastic bags, and a stick? People around the world are learning to reuse these discarded items to build walls for new buildings like schools.

**The Beginning**  
 In 2005, Susanne Heisse was worried about the plastic trash she saw in her village on Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. One day, she noticed a man stuffing some plastic bags into a plastic soda bottle. This gave her an idea. She and other villagers stuffed plastic bottles with nonbiodegradable trash to use as bricks for a five-foot-tall village wall. They placed the “bricks” side by side between wood and chicken wire frames, and then they covered the chicken wire with adobe. The wall looked nice, and it was strong. After this success, many environmental groups began working with communities to build structures using the bricks.

**The Idea Spreads**  
 In a village in Guatemala, young children collect plastic bottles. The bottles are washed and allowed to dry. Near the town center, children and adults sit,

What is the main purpose of the passage?

- A. To convince readers to start recycling programs in their schools
- B. To persuade readers to build their own homes and schools
- C. To explain the different ways that recycling benefits the environment
- D. To describe how discarded objects can be used in creative ways

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
1	5	Selected response	3	Craft and Structure	D

This selected-response question requires students to analyze the main purpose of a passage (aligns with the Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness anchor standard [CCRA] R.6). To answer the question, students must read the entire passage carefully, determine its implied purpose, and distinguish this purpose from functions that are subordinate or for which no text support exists.

**Correct Response**

Only answer option D accurately describes the main purpose of the passage (“To describe how discarded objects can be used in creative ways”). The other answer options reference information from the passage, but none describe the main purpose of the passage.

**Improvement Idea Statements**

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Craft and Structure	5	As you read, think about the purpose of texts and parts of texts, how texts are organized, how authors use point of view, and how information in texts can help you figure out what words mean.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can. Think about how texts are structured, how authors use point of view, how context helps determine word meanings, and how authors use words and phrases.

## Question 2

**A Second Chance**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCE:** This passage is an original work of nonfiction.

What can you do with some empty plastic soda bottles, some plastic bags, and a stick? People around the world are learning to reuse these discarded items to build walls for new buildings like schools.

**The Beginning**

In 2005, Susanne Heisse was worried about the plastic trash she saw in her village on Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. One day, she noticed a man stuffing some plastic bags into a plastic soda bottle. This gave her an idea. She and other villagers stuffed plastic bottles with nonbiodegradable trash to use as bricks for a five-foot-tall village wall. They placed the “bricks” side by side between wood and chicken wire frames, and then they covered the chicken wire with adobe. The wall looked nice, and it was strong. After this success, many environmental groups began working with communities to build structures using the bricks.

**The Idea Spreads**

In a village in Guatemala, young children collect plastic bottles. The bottles are washed and allowed to dry. Near the town center, children and adults sit,

According to the passage, what happens after the soda bottles are layered to make the walls of a building?

- A. The bottles are washed and dried.
- B. Plastic bags are stuffed into the bottles.
- C. Chicken wire is stretched across the wall posts.
- D. Cement, stucco, or adobe is used to cover the walls.

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
2	5	Selected response	1	Key Ideas and Details	D

This selected-response question requires students to understand a sequence of events in a text (aligns with CCRA R.3). To answer the question, students must carefully read the passage, determine the chronological relationship among steps in building walls using plastic bottles, and identify the step that occurs after soda bottles are layered to make the walls.

### Correct Response

Only answer option D accurately identifies the step that occurs after the bottles are layered to make the wall (“Cement, stucco, or adobe is used to cover the walls”). All other answer options present sequences of events that are not supported by the text.

### Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Key Ideas and Details	5	Read as many grade-level texts as you can. Work on identifying important details, drawing reasonable conclusions, recognizing main ideas and themes, and understanding how parts of a text relate to one another.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can, especially informational texts. Work on identifying main ideas/themes and on recognizing sequences and relationships (comparative, cause/effect).

## Question 3

**A Second Chance**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE:** This passage is an original work of nonfiction.

What can you do with some empty plastic soda bottles, some plastic bags, and a stick? People around the world are learning to reuse these discarded items to build walls for new buildings like schools.

**The Beginning**

In 2005, Susanne Heisse was worried about the plastic trash she saw in her village on Lake Atitlán in Guatemala. One day, she noticed a man stuffing some plastic bags into a plastic soda bottle. This gave her an idea. She and other villagers stuffed plastic bottles with nonbiodegradable trash to use as bricks for a five-foot-tall village wall. They placed the “bricks” side by side between wood and chicken wire frames, and then they covered the chicken wire with adobe. The wall looked nice, and it was strong. After this success, many environmental groups began working with communities to build structures using the bricks.

**The Idea Spreads**

In a village in Guatemala, young children collect plastic bottles. The bottles are washed and allowed to dry. Near the town center, children and adults sit,

Think about the passage “A Second Chance” as you read the following selection.

**From Bananas to Bioplastic**

Elif Bilgin, from Istanbul, Turkey, had always been interested in solving problems. When she was fourteen, she realized that the beautiful sea near her home was becoming more and more polluted with petroleum-based plastic bags and bottles. Elif wondered if plastics could be made from a safer material. She read that plastics can be made from plant materials that contain starch. Elif came up with the idea to make bioplastic from banana peels. Banana peels seemed like the perfect solution because they contain a lot of starch, are plentiful, and do not cost much.

Elif worked on her idea for two years. Ten of her trials were failures. Some of the plastics she made weren’t strong enough, and others decayed quickly. Finally, she succeeded in making a soft plastic. It can be used to cover electric

This question has 3 parts. You must enter your answer for each part in the box provided. Read all parts before answering.

**Part A**

Explain how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic.”

600

**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “A Second Chance” to support your answer to Part A.

600

**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “From Bananas to Bioplastic” to support your answer to Part A.

600

Sequence	Grade	Question type	DOK level	Reporting category	Correct response
3	5	Constructed response	3	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	See sample student responses.

This constructed-response task requires students to make connections between information and ideas in two texts (aligns with CCRA R.9). Specifically, this task requires students to determine how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic.” Students must read both the passage and the selection carefully, compare the information provided in the two texts, and determine how the work described in the passage is similar to the work described in the selection. Students must then construct a written response identifying this similarity, citing evidence from both texts to support their answer.

### Improvement Idea Statements

Reporting category	Grade	Low statement (scored below ACT Readiness Range)	High statement (scored at or above ACT Readiness Range)
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	5	As you read, think about how authors present and support their ideas. Also read different texts on the same topic and think about how these texts are similar and different.	Read as many above grade-level texts as you can. Think about how authors use reasons and evidence to support their ideas. Also, look for connections between and among related texts.

### Scoring Framework

Claim	Evidence
An interpretive statement that explains how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic” (1 point)	A detail from the passage that supports the claim (1 point)
	A detail from the selection that supports the claim (1 point)

**Sample Student Response—Score Point 3****Part A**

Explain how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic.”

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Both found ways to help decrease plastic pollution in the environment.

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**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**A Second Chance**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She made bricks out of garbage like plastic bottles stuffed with plastic bags. They used the bricks to make the walls of a school.

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**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**From Bananas to Bioplastic**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She invented a plastic made from banana peels that is safer.

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**Scoring Rationale**

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- 3** This response earns Score Point 3.
- An acceptable claim is offered in Part A.
  - An acceptable piece of evidence from the passage “A Second Chance” is offered in Part B.
  - An acceptable piece of evidence from the selection “From Bananas to Bioplastic” is offered in Part C.
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**Sample Student Response—Score Point 2****Part A**

Explain how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic.”

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Both women found a way to reuse materials to help the environment.

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**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**A Second Chance**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She made “eco-bricks” out of trash for buildings.

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**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**From Bananas to Bioplastic**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She made a different kind of plastic.

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**Scoring Rationale**

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- 2 This response earns Score Point 2.
- An acceptable claim is offered in Part A.
  - An acceptable piece of evidence from the passage “A Second Chance” is offered in Part B.
  - This response does not receive credit for Part C because it does not offer sufficient support for the claim in the prompt; specifically, it does not address how the plastic Bilgin invented helps the environment.
  - Please note that a student may also receive Score Point 2 if evidence is offered in Parts B and C without a claim as long as a claim is implied (see Scoring Guideline v.)
  - Please note that a student may also receive Score Point 2 if an acceptable claim is offered in Part A and acceptable evidence from the selection “From Bananas to Bioplastic” is offered in Part C.
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**Sample Student Response—Score Point 1****Part A**

Explain how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic.”

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Both involved plastic.

**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**A Second Chance**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She built a school.

**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**From Bananas to Bioplastic**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She made plastic from banana peels so it would decay, not pollute.

**Scoring Rationale**

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- 1 This response earns Score Point 1.
- An acceptable piece of evidence from the selection “From Bananas to Bioplastic” is offered in Part C.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part A because the claim is insufficient. Acceptable responses must identify that the work of both women made a contribution to the environment.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part B because it does not address how Heisse’s work had a positive impact on the environment.
  - Please note that a response may earn Score Point 1 if a claim is offered in Part A.
  - Please note that a response may earn Score Point 1 if evidence from the passage “A Second Chance” is offered in Part B.
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**Sample Student Response—Score Point 0****Part A**

Explain how the work of Susanne Heisse in “A Second Chance” is similar to the work of Elif Bilgin in “From Bananas to Bioplastic.”

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One helps people in person and the other invents things.

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**Part B**

Give one detail from the passage “**A Second Chance**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She worked with villagers.

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**Part C**

Give one detail from the selection “**From Bananas to Bioplastic**” to support your answer to Part A.

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She invented something out of bananas.

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**Scoring Rationale**

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- 0** This response earns Score Point 0.
- This response does not earn credit for Part A because it is a claim of difference, not a claim of similarity.
  - This response does not earn credit for Part B because although it is a true fact from the passage, it supports a claim that is off task (see Scoring Guideline x).
  - This response does not earn credit for Part C because it supports a claim that is off task.
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## Scoring Guidelines

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- i. A credible claim is an interpretive statement based on evidence from the text.
  - ii. Creditable evidence may be verbatim, paraphrased, or a logical inference based on information from the text.
  - iii. Credit may be given to an otherwise insufficient claim if the student offers accurate and appropriate evidence.
  - iv. Credible evidence must indicate a logical connection to the claim.
  - v. Some students may offer evidence that implies a claim. In this case, a point is awarded for each textual detail but not for the implied claim. The maximum score for a response that offers two or more pieces of evidence but no claim is Score Point 2.
  - vi. The maximum score for a response that offers more than one claim but no evidence is Score Point 1.
  - vii. If a response gives the same answer or support twice using different words, it does not earn additional credit.
  - viii. Responses do not have to be in complete sentences or paragraphs. Even a one- or two-word response can receive a point.
  - ix. Extraneous material in a response, as long as it doesn't contradict the appropriate response, is not taken into consideration when assigning a score.
  - x. When a response offers an incorrect claim, evidence is not credible, even if this evidence is listed among the acceptable responses.
  - xi. Each part of the response must be entered in the correct box. Each part can receive a maximum of 1 point, even if multiple pieces of evidence are offered in the same box.
-