5 Maryland MCAP

English Language Arts

Grade 8

Practice Tests



Practice Smart. Score Higher.

Small Steps, Big Gains! Small Steps, Big Gains!

Practice Master Achieve

Reza Nazari

Maryland MCAP Grade 8
English Language Arts:
Five Full Practice Tests
For Confident Prep

Focused Review To Help Students Ace The Test

Quick Start | Skill Check | Confidence

Best for a strong opening stretch

Build momentum with a compact set of full practice tests that sharpen close reading, careful evidence use, and calm decision-making from day one.

Reza Nazari

Built for a strong, steady start to Grade 8 practice

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The Big Day

Your Test Day Playbook.

Calm is a skill. This is how to bring it with you.

◯ The Night Before

- Pack everything tonight. Pencils, eraser, water, ID, approved calculator if needed.
- Do light review only — a single short passage. No new material. No all-nighter.
- Eat something familiar. Tonight is not the night to experiment with anything new.
- Phone out of the room an hour before bed. Protect your sleep like it is part of the grade.

◯ The Morning Of

- Eat protein and complex carbs. Skip the sugar spike — the crash comes during the test.
- Move your body for five minutes. Walk, stretch, shake out your hands. Lower the nerves.
- Arrive early enough to settle, not so early that waiting builds up pressure.
- At the door, four slow breaths: *in for four, hold for four, out for six.* It works.

During the Test

- **Preview the questions**, then read the passage hunting specific answers.
- **Answer every question.** A guess has better odds than a blank — always.
- **Skip hard ones and return.** Easy points protect your time budget. Come back with fresh eyes.
- **Trust your first read.** Change an answer only when you find concrete evidence, not a hunch.
- **Pace by section, not by question.** Check the clock every few minutes, not every question.
- **If anxiety spikes, breathe and reset.** Ten slow seconds saves ten lost minutes.
- **Save 2–3 minutes at the end.** Review flagged items, confirm your bubbled answers.

One last thing.

High school starts soon, but you do not have to wait for it to begin showing up as the reader and writer you want to be. Test day is just a window. Open it, show your thinking clearly, and step through. The next version of you is already on the other side.

— Reza Nazari

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4 When Mateo finally reached his stop, he hesitated uncertainly with one hand gripping the vertical pole. He almost thanked Mr. Givens sincerely for sharing the stories, but the single word *stories* felt much too small and inadequate for what had occurred. What Mr. Givens had actually offered was not mere sentimental nostalgia or wistfulness. It was concrete evidence that a city possessed hidden layers of meaning and history, and that truly noticing those layers required far more than simply passing through the streets without thought. As Mateo stepped down onto the sidewalk and the bus pulled away, the block appeared simultaneously the same as it had been before the conversation and yet completely, fundamentally altered in his perception of it.

5 The very next afternoon, Mateo deliberately brought a substantial notebook with him onto the bus, having made a conscious decision about what he wanted to do. He had no way of knowing whether Mr. Givens would actually be there, whether they would repeat the conversation, or whether the moment had been singular and unrepeatable. He only knew with certainty that he no longer wanted to ride through the city passively, as if it were two-dimensional and flat, without depth or history or meaning. He wanted genuinely to learn how to read the city in true depth, understanding the layers beneath the current surface.

Transfer

A route is never only a route.
It is what repeats until repetition looks invisible,
a map so familiar the eye stops asking questions.

Then someone points beyond the window
and the street unfolds a second language:

Scan Me

brick remembering music,
glass remembering smoke,
an empty lot carrying the shape of a vanished crowd.

Since then I travel differently,
not slower, but less asleep,
listening for what the city keeps saying underneath itself.

---

9) What does the word *nostalgia* mean as it is used in paragraph 4 of the story?

(A) excitement about future plans
(B) sentimental longing for the past
(C) anger about change
(D) confusion about directions

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

10) How does Mateo change over the course of the story?

(A) He starts curious about local history and ends bored by it.
(B) He becomes frustrated that Mr. Givens refuses to answer anything.
(C) He moves from seeing the bus ride as routine to seeing the city as layered with history.
(D) He decides that debate practice has taken too much of his time.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

11) Which statement best expresses a theme of the story?

(A) Public transportation is less useful than walking.
(B) Routine can hide meaning until someone teaches us to look more closely.
(C) Older people always understand cities better than younger people.
(D) Construction usually damages a neighborhood beyond repair.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

12) What does the author suggest when saying the block looked *the same as before and completely altered*?

(A) The bus took Mateo to the wrong stop.
(B) The buildings were physically changing while Mateo watched.
(C) Mr. Givens had given Mateo incorrect directions.
(D) Mateo's perception changed even though the street itself remained the same.

Use the story and poem to answer this question.

13) Why does the author include Mr. Givens's examples of the bakery, theater, and diner?

(A) To show how memory can reveal hidden layers of a familiar place
(B) To explain why the bus route has been shortened
(C) To prove that old businesses were always better than new ones
(D) To show that Mateo wants to become a chef